

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

16 SEPTEMBER 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Leader of the Council - Councillor Bob Cook

UPDATE ON ACTIONS IN REPOSE TO THE 2019 RESIDENTS' SURVEY

SUMMARY

This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the work being undertaken to address the four key service areas identified in the 2019 residents survey as priority areas for improvement:

- Community Safety
- Road and pavement maintenance and repairs
- Support services for elderly people
- Family hubs

The focus of service delivery over the period since the survey was carried out, at the end of 2019, has necessarily been on responding to Covid-19. It is timely now to report to Cabinet the planning and actions that have been taken to deliver improvements in these services.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

To provide Cabinet with an update on the action taken to respond to the areas identified by residents as most in need for improvement in the Borough.

DETAIL

1. The residents survey is carried out every 4 years to explore residents' attitudes to living in the Borough, as well as understanding public perceptions of the Council and the services it provides. The survey is an important planning tool and provides information that is used in the Council planning and individual Service planning processes.
2. It is positive to note that the 2019 overall results for the Council were still in-line with or higher than national benchmarks and attitudes towards the Council remain positive;
 - 70% of respondents satisfied with how the Council runs things, compared with 63% nationally
 - 66% of respondents trust the Council a great deal or fair amount, compared to 61% nationally
 - 52% believe the Council provides value for money, compared with 49% nationally
 - 81% of residents are satisfied with their local area, compared with 83% nationally.

3. This overall response is positive and provides important context, however, the focus of this report is to look at the areas identified by residents as most in need of improvement. The report considers the four areas where a majority of residents want to see improvements: Community safety, Road and pavement maintenance and repairs, Support Services for elderly people, and Family Hubs.

Community Safety

4. Residents want to see improvements on anti-social behaviour and crime, and in the delivery of services from Community Safety Officers: Anti-social behaviour (ASB) emerges as a clear issue in the research, both in terms of importance and need for improvement. Just under half of residents citing ASB as needing improvement and over a third of residents citing that the level of crime needs to be reduced. Only 32% are satisfied with the work of Community Safety Officers. It is probably worth noting that the response to a question about the role of Community Safety Officers is likely to have elicited a response which reflects general perceptions about ASB and crime levels and also members of the public may not be able to distinguish between Council enforcement employees and Police roles. Despite the fact that there may be a number of causes for the satisfaction rating, a comprehensive response to this finding has been developed and is underway:
5. Two key priorities were built into the 2021-24 Council Plan which will help address the issue:
 - “Consult on, develop and deliver a new community safety plan in consultation with key partners, reflecting the community safety priorities of residents”
 - “Explore the option around the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders in the Borough”
6. The Community Safety Plan consultation closed on 31 April 2021 and the results are currently being analysed and will be considered by the Safer Stockton Partnership later in the year. The results will be used to produce a Community Safety Plan which will set out how agencies within the Partnership intend to achieve targets in crime reduction over the next 3 years. The use of Public Space Protection Orders is currently being considered as a scrutiny review by the Crime and Disorder Select Committee and their findings will be reported to Cabinet later this year.
7. Additional short-term resource of £410k has been proposed in the Quarter 1 MTFP report at this meeting which will allow for the recruitment of additional community enforcement officers. This will allow for an enhanced service to be delivered in support of the re-opening of the local economy and post-pandemic recovery in Stockton on Tees.
8. Aside from this additional investment, existing work programs have continued and resulted in a reduction in both crime and anti-social behaviour in Stockton on Tees which now has the lowest levels of crime and ASB in Cleveland. There were 15,393 publicly reported offences in the Borough last year, a 4.6% decrease from the same period the previous year. This is the lowest rate in Cleveland Force area. Stockton-on-Tees has also seen a 2.8% fall in the levels of anti-social behaviour over the last year and has the lowest rate of in the Cleveland Force area.
9. A comprehensive communication strategy is under development to ensure that perceptions are aligned to the actual results being achieved in crime reduction in our communities.

Road and pavement maintenance and repairs

10. Road and pavement maintenance and repairs continue to be a concern for residents with only 30% of respondents expressing satisfaction with road maintenance and repairs and 35% with pavement maintenance. There is currently a large funding gap between the funding we receive for highway infrastructure maintenance on an annual basis and the level that is required to maintain the infrastructure in its current condition. As a result, at present we are effectively managing the deterioration of the infrastructure assets as efficiently as possible, with the funding available. The required steady state funding for the Highways Infrastructure Asset in 2020/21 was £9,551,000 and the actual funding received for the same period was £5,480,936. Additional short-term resource of £400k has been proposed in the Quarter 1 MTFP report at this meeting which will fund additional repairs and maintenance work to support the Borough in the Covid recovery phase this year.
11. The Place Select Committee is currently undertaking a scrutiny review of Highways Asset Management (including potholes and flooding) where ten specific lines of enquiry are being considered. Following the review a series of recommendations will be identified, together with an Action Plan, which will be reported to Cabinet in December 2021.
12. Through asset management a targeted programme of resurfacing works is and will continue to be undertaken. At the time of the 2019 Survey, approximately 18% of unclassified roads were known to be in poor condition, however, since then this figure reduced to 13% during 2019/20 and is currently at 10% for 2020/21. Further improvements through targeted interventions will be made during 2021/22.
13. The 2021 National Highways and Transportation Survey has recently being undertaken (this is a random survey of 3,300 Stockton residents, requesting views on a range of transport related subjects, including maintenance), with results expected in October 2021. The results will be analysed on a ward by ward basis and used to assist with future targeted interventions where necessary.
14. Continue to consider/utilise new technologies and materials as appropriate, particularly those which assist in preventing the accelerated deterioration of carriageways, thereby reducing the need for more costly intervention treatments in future.
15. A comprehensive communications strategy is being developed to better inform residents and stakeholders of the challenges that local Highway Authorities face in terms of managing and maintaining the road infrastructure with the budgets that are available. The strategy will also highlight the work completed and the reporting mechanisms available for residents to use to report highway issues.
16. Additional funding of £250k has also been proposed in the MTFP report at this meeting to provide targeted grounds maintenance and pavement and kerbside maintenance. The additional resource allocation in CFYA will be used to provide an boost to street cleansing service to be delivered post-pandemic. The Covid-19 outbreak inevitably led to some reduction in service levels in street cleansing which includes litter picking and weed clearance. The additional resource will allow us to catch up on cleansing activity and better respond to Member requests coming through to the team.

Support Services for elderly people

17. Satisfaction with the provision of support services for elderly people in the Borough was reported at 42% in 2019. It is important to reflect that this survey result reflects the position before the pandemic and a great deal of activity has been undertaken to support elderly residents throughout the pandemic and in support of the care home and homecare organisations providing services for elderly people in the Borough throughout this period. A task and finish scrutiny review of the impact and effectiveness of the multi-agency support

to care homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic began in April 2021 and will report later this year. This review will consider the pandemic period and will also ensure that any long term learning from the multi-agency work during this period is recognised and maintained.

18. It is also important context to note that the issue of funding for adult social care services has been raised consistently by the Leader for a number of years. Concerns about the funding of Service have been raised through the LGA and ANEC and the impact of the funding shortfall may be reflected in the survey results.
19. Despite the funding challenges, the improvement in services for elderly people is a priority for the Council and is reflected in three key priorities in the 2021-24 Council Plan:
 - a. “Develop more services to help people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and to make sure that they are not lonely”
 - b. Improve the quality of care within adult residential homes in the Borough and to support them as they continue to adapt to dealing with the challenges arising from Covid-19.”
 - c. Review out of area placements and day options provision for adults to ensure as many services as possible are provided within the Borough.”
3. An updated Adult Services Strategy for 2021-24 has recently been finalised following extensive engagement and consultation with stakeholders, partners and service users. The strategy sets out a clear way forward for development and improvement.
4. Providing support to people to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support and maximise their independence is fundamental to the work of adult social care. Where people receive care is vitally important. People want to be independent, and they want to remain in their own homes. For older people this is often a home they have lived in for years and that has been at the heart of the family. It is our aim to ensure people have good quality services provided, whenever possible, within their own homes. Scrutiny reviews of Day Opportunities for Adults and of Care at Home are underway as part of the 2021/22 Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee work programme, recommendations from these review will be reported to Cabinet later this year. We are also working with housing providers and care providers to develop new supported housing schemes to ensure our residents have the best opportunities to remain living independently within the Borough and are maximising opportunities to support carers. We are ensuring that the person who needs care, their families and those most important to them have the full opportunity to identify their own way forward and we are exploring the use of technology to support people who need care. In June 2021 Cabinet approved the plans to bring the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service (including minor adaptation, handyperson and home repairs/improvement and related advice & information) and the Shared Lives Service (where carers share their home and family life with the person receiving support) in house. This move follows the improvements in the carers service which was brought in-house in 2019 following a comprehensive service review and delivery options appraisal.
5. We also want to ensure people can get the right level and type of support at the right time. We want residents of Stockton on Tees to receive good quality care when they need it, either within their home or as close to home as possible. We will ensure people know what help and support is available and how they can access it. As part of this focus on the quality of provision we are currently implementing a comprehensive action plan designed to return the Rosedale Centre to a good rating following the recent CQC inspection.
6. Cabinet approved a new approach to the commissioning of Older People’s and mental health care homes in April 2021. The commissioning framework addresses structural challenges in the market related to over-supply and also means we will only be contracting with care homes that are rated as Good by the Care Quality Commission. The revised

approach to commissioning is also supported by the ongoing delivery of the Well-Led leadership programme for registered care home and homecare managers in the Borough.

Family Hubs

7. In 2019 39% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the services delivered by the Family Hubs. Family hubs are for all families and children aged 0–19 years, are based in the community, and host a range of services delivered by the local authority, health services and voluntary sector organisations.
8. The family hub service has been going through a period of change since 2018, evolving from what were originally known as children’s centres. A new vision was formed with a clear idea to develop a community-based model that would operate within the overall plan for ‘early help’ and include whole-family support. The model was proposed to improve outcomes for children and young people and life chances for families in Stockton-on-Tees overall, by offering access to a range of appropriate, timely and accessible support.
9. In 2018 the children’s centres were renamed family hubs and were placed at the centre of this new model of delivery. There are currently four family hubs provided by the local authority, one in each of the most deprived areas of Stockton-on-Tees. The offer within each hub differs and reflects community need. Some hubs include a café or library, and all offer childcare through creches on site. The Council have worked to ensure that there is consistency across hubs in delivering core services.
10. The model includes universal functions and services, which are available to all and where the focus is on preventing difficulties from emerging; secondary prevention, which places a greater emphasis on identifying vulnerable children, young people and families and ensuring that there are specific preventative programmes and actions in place to reduce risks; and a more targeted approach, with a strong emphasis on case management and the delivery of targeted, evidence-based practice.
11. There are an increasing number of services and programmes offered within family hubs, delivered by family hub staff or other organisations. Services include evidence-based parenting programmes from antenatal to teens, mindfulness and relaxation for children of all ages, sleep workshops, and youth groups. Drop-in sessions are provided by a number of different services and professionals, including health visitors and midwives.
12. Family hub staff also help parents to navigate the system and access the right support at the right time, so that they are empowered to meet the needs of their family. The support available through the hubs is advertised using social media and presentations to schools, and referrals can come through any means, including self-referral.
13. 2018 was a year of mobilisation with the full service developing during 2019. Since then we have experienced an increase in positive customer feedback, increased contact with families and positive feedback from a peer review carried out in 2019. In addition the Early Intervention Foundations recently published a case study highlighting the new family hub model as an example of good practice.
14. Over the past year, in response to Covid-19, the hubs have moved to delivering parenting programmes virtually, and increasing their use of social media. For those unable to access the digital offer, phone support has continued to be offered. The hubs have provided support with holiday activities, help with food and other essentials especially during lock down when the centres remained open for this work. Local communities have been active in help and support through volunteering and parent carer forums. The EPEC –

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities recruits parents from communities to deliver parenting programmes to their own communities.

15. Currently a review of family work is underway, and this includes the commissioning of a strategic partnership with a provider to help us develop and improve our support to families within communities. This should enable us to further enhance the family hubs service.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

There are no corporate parenting implications arising from the report

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None as a direct result of this report. The financial implications of the actions identified in this report have been incorporated in the MTFP and the 2021/22 budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications arising from the report

RISK ASSESSMENT

Existing management/operational systems and procedures are sufficient to control and minimise the risks arising to low to medium status.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

The work takes place across all wards.

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