

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

18 NOVEMBER 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook

COUNCIL PLAN 2021/24 UPDATE

Summary

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the Council Plan and the priority actions for 2021/22.

Recommended that the report be noted.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

To update Cabinet on the progress in implementing the Council Plan priorities.

DETAIL

1. This report focuses on the implementation of the Council Plan 2021/24. As members will recall a new Council Plan was agreed by Cabinet in February 2021 and at Council on . This is therefore the first 6 monthly update on progress for this year.
2. An update on each of the Council Plan priorities is set out in Annex 1. The report indicates significant progress in all areas of this year's priorities.

Ongoing COVID-19 actions

3. In addition to the focus on delivery of the key agreed priorities, the Council continues to respond to the ongoing challenge of COVID-19 both in terms of response and longer term recovery. Key ongoing actions in this area include;
 - a. Ongoing delivery of testing provision;
 - b. Management of outbreaks;
 - c. Advice and information to residents, businesses and organisations;
 - d. Supporting the vaccination programme, including a focus on inequalities in take up;
 - e. Collation and analysis of data and intelligence to support targeting of actions and mitigation of impacts, with a particular focus on those already with poorer health and / or economic outcomes (at population level) including those living in deprivation; people with a disability / learning disability; people from BAME communities; people who have existing poor health / are at risk of poor health e.g. existing chronic conditions, overweight / obese, those who use substances or tobacco
 - f. Working in partnership with Catalyst on the Community Support Team and the Shielding Hub.
 - g. COVID-19 Marshalls

- h. Enforcement role;
 - i. Supporting staff to return to the office;
 - j. Responding to the challenge of Long COVID
4. Longer term recovery is a key element in the Council Plan and a number of actions in the Council Plan are targeted at supporting long term recovery including:
- a. The early years strategy focused on tackling development day in speech , language and communication;
 - b. The ongoing support to care homes in managing long term implications;
 - c. The Fairer Stockton on Tees Framework;
 - d. The emphasis on the employment skills hub;
 - e. Supporting business recovery and the emphasis on town centres;
 - f. Restoring the events programme;
 - g. Managing the Council's finances through the MTFP

Additional priority focus in 2021/22

5. Cabinet were also provided with a report in September 2021 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:
- a. Community Safety including the additional £410K to allow for the recruitment of additional community enforcement officers to support post COVID-19 economic recovery across the Borough.
 - b. Road and pavement maintenance and repairs including the additional £250K funding approved for targeted grounds maintenance and pavement and kerbside maintenance.
 - c. Support services for elderly people building on the Adult Social Care Strategy recently aged.
 - d. Family hubs, where as noted in the September report a major restricting of family support functions is currently being undertaken, including a commissioning exercise for a strategic partner to support aspects of delivery.
6. A number of actions are already underway to respond to the specific challenges identified as was outlined in the report, linked to the key priorities in the Council Plan. The more detailed updates include references to these where appropriate.
7. Any ongoing focus on these areas will be incorporated into the revised Council Plan for 2022-25 and future Council Plan update reports.

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OUR PEOPLE

Making the borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm means creating a place where:

People live in cohesive and safe communities

People are supported and protected from harm

People live healthy lives

PRIORITY	UPDATE
1. Improve the support we give to families to help them stay together where they can and to provide more capacity in the borough to support children where this isn't possible.	New proposals for commissioning of family support to be implemented in 2021/22. Currently out to tender for a strategic partner. Help and Support/Children's Social Care review to be implemented by December 2021. Significant development of the Family Hub offer, responding to the MORI survey, and
2. Help schools to improve pupil wellbeing, reduce exclusions, improve careers advice and to continue the drive to improve educational attainment for all pupils, including those with additional needs, recognising the disruption caused by Covid and the 'catch-up' support required.	New EHCP plan format co-produced with parents. New service to support and challenge schools on their understanding and ability to support children with autism commissioned. Occupational therapy support function to support education need in schools commissioned. Extensive mental health lead support training offer in place. Whole pathway commissioning for CAMHS process continues. New pathway development centres commissioned to support reduced exclusion. Fair Access process reviewed and implemented (supports children seeking a school place with additional needs).
3. Develop a new approach to support the best start in life through a focus on 'pregnancy, birth and beyond', and an emphasis on speech, language and communication development.	Strategy agreed September 2021. Additional support for a speech and language programme, in partnership with I-CAN in place. Capital investment in communication rich environments for school based early years provision programme in place. Funding to be allocated by December 2021.
4. 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.	The "Social Lights" project continues to be trialled for people with a learning disability (in partnership with Catalyst). 7 volunteers have been

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	recruited to date with further engagement events planned. The sitting service continues to provide increased hours to support carers.
<p>5. Improve the quality of care within adults' residential homes in the borough and to support them as they continue to adapt to dealing with the challenges arising from Covid.</p>	<p>Engaged 20 managers and deputy managers across the borough to a fourth well led cohort to start in January 2022. This will be a face-to-face (in line with current guidelines) programme as requested by participants.</p> <p>Working in partnership with colleagues in the NHS to deploy digital solutions to support better care and support between care homes and primary /secondary care, including NHS Mail (to support safe and efficient communication between homes and primary care) and proxy medication (which allows care home staff to access and manage parts of a resident's GP online services account to order repeat medications).</p> <p>Re-introduced face to face leadership and peer support groups (in line with current guidelines) to allow sharing of good practice.</p>
<p>6. Review out of area placements and day options provision for adults to ensure as many services as possible are provided within the borough.</p>	<p>Established future need for people with learning disability which we will take to the market to identify potential new developments. One residential option has been identified on Durham Road and should be completed in Spring 2022.</p> <p>Completed a market engagement exercise with over 30 accommodation providers and will be issuing the framework tender on 05 November to put the new arrangement in place.</p>
<p>7. Continue to lead the public health response to Covid and support the approach to recovery, working with partners in the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p>	<p>Local contact tracing and outbreak management continues to deal with high demand. Community testing focus on community collect with roll out to all libraires and targeted approaches for vulnerable groups. Programme of pop-up and walk-in vaccination clinics in cooperation with NHS to address vaccination inequalities. Working with NHS and Tees Active on local Long Covid offer.</p>
<p>8. Work with the NHS on the proposals as outlined in the Integration and Innovation White Paper and the forthcoming Health and Care Bill.</p>	<p>Work continues with the NHS on supporting social care providers regarding infection prevention and control, hospital discharges and community rehabilitation.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	<p>The work of the ICS continues, planning around the design for potential Integrated Care Partnership and model for Tees Valley and Place based working.</p> <p>Executive Design Team for ICS established, three meetings held with meeting of NHS Finance leads and LA Directors of Resources imminent. Proposed model for “place” to be forwarded to NHSE/I by 17 November. SBC has representation on key groups.</p>
<p>9. Develop a new approach to tackling inequality in the borough and to ensure that we deliver targeted support and help to those currently living in poverty to improve their outcomes, including around health inequalities and emotional health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Framework agreed at Cabinet in October 202 following extensive engagement with partners and a public survey. Implementation plan for 2021/22 developed and underway. Two coordinators recruited, start 1 November. Health and Wellbeing Board endorsement of the strategy and to oversee a focus on tackling health inequalities.</p>
<p>10. Consult on, develop and deliver a new community safety plan in consultation with key partners, reflecting the community safety priorities of residents.</p>	<p>Consultation with public and key partners completed. Partnership Strategic Assessment providing the evidence to inform priorities now complete. Partnership session to finalise the draft plan in October 2021.</p>
<p>11. In partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade, support the Arson Reduction Strategy, aimed at further reducing deliberate fire setting within our communities.</p>	<p>Re-launch of Arson Reduction Strategy amongst partners facilitated via SSP in August. Improving statistics relating to deliberate fire setting with further community work planned to reduce combustible items available for fire setting funded by brigade and supported by SBC. Dedicated multi-agency operation to address deliberate fire setting through the bonfire period to commence between October and November.</p>
<p>12. Explore the options around the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) in Stockton-on-Tees.</p>	<p>Scrutiny review of PSPO commenced via the Crime and Disorder Select Committee. Second evidence gathering session completed, Committee due to report in February 2022.</p>

OUR PLACES

Making the borough a place that is clean, vibrant and attractive means creating:

Great places to live and visit

Clean and green spaces

Rich cultural experiences

PRIORITY	UPDATE
13. Develop options to increase the number of affordable homes in the borough.	Preparatory work ongoing. This links to the wider Asset Strategy with a Specialist/Supported Housing Needs Assessment also being undertaken.
14. Continue redevelopment of the Sycamores estate in Stockton.	The development of the Sycamores continues with Keepmoat leading the development and sales. The former Elm House is progressing, Planning permission secured / legal agreements secured / practical completion of bungalows Nov 21 / handover to Thirteen Dec 21
15. Review the private landlord-led membership scheme to ensure that we continue to support the improvement of the quality of private rented homes in the borough.	Following Cabinet approval in September 2021, work is now underway gathering evidence to inform Selective Licensing Option appraisal
16. Work in partnership with the Tees Valley local authorities, Durham and Newcastle to procure new waste management arrangements.	The procurement is continuing to determine preferred bidder until December 2021. The process of developing inter-authority agreements continues and a Local Authority Special Purpose Vehicle (LASPV) working group has been agreed by the project board. The LASPV will be the contracting entity for the ERF Project Agreement.
17. Develop an ambitious carbon reduction and environmental sustainability strategy for the borough.	Initial work to define the scope and structure of the strategy has been completed. Workshops between specialist council staff and members have begun to explore options and likely priorities, as a basis for wider consultation.

PRIORITY	UPDATE
18. Develop and adapt our events programme across the borough to respond to the pandemic and inspire confidence about our futures.	<p>As Government restrictions on outdoor events have been lifted, the Council's Autumn and Winter events programme has been confirmed and includes popular large scale community events such as Halloween, Fireworks and Christmas Sparkles.</p> <p>Event support for the new events 'across the Borough' programme and community/local event delivery continues to be a priority. The Independent Safety Advisory Group has also been reinstated and will provide advice and guidance on health and safety issues as event delivery recommences.</p>
19. Attract new visitors and tell the stories of our communities through Preston Hall Museum and Grounds.	<p>Preston Park has continued to attract high levels of visitors throughout the pandemic. The museum has reopened to the public and exhibitions delayed by Covid are now being restaged, including the Behind the Seams show. Overall visitor numbers are slightly lower than the same period in 2019. The Levelling Up Fund bid for South Stockton includes significant investment in the museum and grounds.</p>

OUR ECONOMY

Making the borough a place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed means creating:

A growing economy

Improved education and skills development

Job creation and increased employment

PRIORITY	UPDATE
20. Deliver a new place branding campaign for the borough to encourage inward investment and development.	Brand name, concepts and design completed. Micro site and promotional video prepared and launched in July. Work is ongoing to develop full website.
21. Develop and implement the vision for our town centres, recognising and understanding the full impact Covid will place on their use.	<p>Stockton – transition from Castlegate nearing completion on programme and procurement for Waterfront park and demolition will commence in December 2021. Procurement for new buildings will commence in February 2022.</p> <p>Thornaby – Town Deal full business case on programme for submission March 2022.</p> <p>Billingham – purchase from St Modwen paused awaiting outcome of Government’s levelling up fund announcement in late October 2021.</p> <p>Ingleby Barwick – public engagement planned for November 2021 with detailed design of park extension taking place in early 2022.</p> <p>Norton – public engagement for duck pond improvements completed in September 2021 and implementation scheduled for January 2022. Public engagement for southern end traffic improvements scheduled for November 2021 with expected implementation in the spring of 2022.</p> <p>Yarm – Heritage Lottery bid for Town Hall restoration will be submitted in late 2021 following outcome of Government’s levelling up fund announcement in late October 2021. New toilet provision identified</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	within existing Library and agreed with stakeholders. Likely implementation early 2022.
22. Develop options for increasing the availability of employment land.	Purchase of Durham Lane Industrial Estate is completed. We are working with owners of Dynamo Park to facilitate junction improvement works to bring forward this site for Development. Both aided by IGF. We are also exploring other potential sites across the borough.
23. Increase skills and employment prospects including a new Employment and Training Hub to support people into work, including those most impacted by Covid.	Initial (temporary hub) established in Wellington Square. Permanent solution will be within Wellington Square and this is expected to be complete later this year. Established links with many businesses and partners, including with Teesworks. Social media now operational and promoting training and job opportunities. Recruited to key posts.
24. Develop local supply chains and social value in contracts to stimulate local economic activity	<p>Social value measures are incorporated into council contracts with other opportunities being reviewed, particularly within large construction contracts. A report is to be presented to Cabinet in December.</p> <p>Review of current procurement activity to identify potential opportunities for local employers will be undertaken later in the year.</p>
25. Deliver the major transport-related projects at the Portrack Relief Road, Billingham and Eaglescliffe Station improvements, Elton Interchange, and improvements along the A689 corridor.	<p>Portrack Relief Road – Design complete and land negotiations ongoing, planning application on hold as updated costings submitted to TVCA for consideration.</p> <p>Billingham Station - Start on site expected in February 2022 and completion planned for November.</p> <p>Eaglescliffe Station – Full business case submitted to TVCA in August 2021. Bridge to be delivered by Network Rail, car park and access road by SBC 22/23.</p> <p>Elton Interchange – Planning permission granted, advanced utility diversion works being progressed.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	A689 – Major Route Network bid submitted to DfT including A19/A689 improvements. Footway/cycleway bridge & Hanzard Drive designs completed awaiting developer funding to deliver schemes.
26. Understand and respond to the implications of changes in travel patterns as a result of the Covid pandemic	DfT statistics (Oct 2021) show that nationally car traffic is back to 95% pre-Covid levels while Light & Heavy goods vehicle movements are 13% above pre-Covid. Bus levels increasing but still below pre-Covid levels at 80% while rail travel still remains at 65%.

OUR COUNCIL

We are committed to being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve, this means we will provide:

Financial sustainability and value for money

Dedicated and resourceful employees

Strong leadership and governance

PRIORITY	UPDATE
27. Review our office accommodation and exploit digital technologies to ensure maximum cost effectiveness and accessibility, including learning from the arrangements put in place in response to Covid.	<p>Approach now agreed for pilot around flexible working and Staff have commenced return to work in September.</p> <p>A project has now commenced following the acquisition of Dunedin House to plan the maintenance and improvement works and design the new workspace in advance of relocating staff.</p>
28. Review surplus land and assets and develop plans for disposal or development.	Work now commenced on this. The programme has been impacted by resource availability and Covid work but is now progressing.
29. Launch an updated website with new and improved online services.	The Website development is on track for launch by the end of February 2022. The new site includes additional online services and a new “My Council” feature which allows residents to create an account which allows a tailored view of the website content.
30. Deliver the Shaping a Brighter Future programme to ensure this remains a great place to work.	The Shaping a Brighter Future programme has taken a significant step forward this year as all elements of the programme were transferred into permanent ongoing services from October 2021. The mainstreaming of the programme signifies the permanent commitment to the agreed workforce culture statement and to the activities and policies which make it a reality.
31. Respond to the Local Government and Parliamentary boundary reviews.	Stage Two of the Local Government Boundary Commission review was completed on 19 July. LGBC have advised of a delay in producing their final recommendations, which are now expected on 23 November.

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	<p>Stage One of the Boundary Commission for England which considers the initial proposal for constituencies was completed on 02 August. The next stage will commence in early 2022.</p> <p>Both reviews have been considered by the members and Council noted all comments received at their meeting on 14 July.</p>
<p>32. Lead on the Covid-secure delivery of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayor, Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner elections and 5 local by-elections in May 2021.</p>	<p>All elections took place that were scheduled for May 2021 and a review of business continuity arrangements has commenced. Consideration is being given to the Elections Bill 2021 and the impact this will have on electoral services, in addition to possible changes to the Fixed Term Parliament Act.</p>
<p>33. Create opportunities for work experience, internships and apprenticeships in the council's workforce.</p>	<p>The apprenticeship programme continues to be successful with 41 new apprenticeship appointments made in the first 6 months of this year. The 41 new apprentices join the 108 apprenticeships already in place across the Council. The apprenticeships are at all levels (Level 3-7) and in all Directorates. Work experience and internships continue to take place across the Council, the process is under development and an updated programme is on track to be launched later in the year.</p>
<p>34. Review the Medium Term Financial Plan, in the context of ongoing uncertainty on the funding of local government and to account for the immediate and longer term implications of Covid.</p>	<p>Out turn report presented to Cabinet in July. Wider review of MTFP will be required in lead up to budget setting following clarity of funding from Spending Review, Fair Funding Review and information on future of business rates retention. Report to be presented in December.</p>