

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**13 OCTOBER 2022**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET INFORMATION ITEM**

**Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook**

**COUNCIL PLAN 2022/25 UPDATE**

**Summary**

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the priorities included in the Council Plan 2022/25.

**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 2022/25. This is therefore the mid-year update on progress during 2022/23.
2. An update on each of the Council Plan priorities is set out in Annex 1. The report indicates progress in all areas of this year's priorities.

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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. Help to keep families together by developing and embedding a new family support offer; enhanced respite support and new provision for children in our care	Strategic partnership launched 1 April with a focus on contact for birth parents and support for families Proposals for new children’s homes developed Step up step down procedure developed. SMART Early Help Hub Launched.
2. Support achievement for all pupils	SEND local area revisit – positive outcomes with all areas for action achieved. Exploring proposals for a new free school. New arrangements for Fair Access implemented (to ensure school placements for vulnerable children). School support team in place, acting as a single point of contact for schools about children and families in need of early help, helping schools with preventative work and enabling them to become more equipped to intervene at the earliest opportunity.
3. Develop and embed a new contextual safeguarding hub with our partners in Hartlepool to protect children from exploitation	MACE Hub launched and leading to successful action based on better intelligence, disruption activity and improving practice.
4. Develop joint commissioning arrangements and new provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities	New special school opened – NEAS Kiora Hall – Sep-22. Early years pathway and speech and language programme delivered in partnership with I-CAN. Working on a planned expansion of Abbey@Northshore provision. Work ongoing on capital expansion at Bishopton PRU. New occupational therapy jointly commissioned service with Abbey Hill. Success of Pathway Development Centres at Key Stage 1 & 2.
5. Support the Arson Reduction Strategy in partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade	Continued support for Cleveland Fire Brigade Arson Reduction Strategy is being provided by our Community Safety Team. Deliberate fire setting in Stockton on Tees puts our communities at risk therefore joint working within the wider Safer Stockton Partnership has taken place. Joint patrols in deliberate fire setting hotspots has taken place and will continue throughout the plan period.

	<p>A dedicated preventative approach will be taken through the ‘bonfire’ period to tackle seasonal increases in deliberate fire setting across Stockton on Tees.</p> <p>A Crime and Disorder Select Committee review of bonfires on public land has been undertaken, with recommendations aligned to the arson reduction strategy agreed.</p>
<p>6. Maximise the effectiveness of the additional investment made in our community safety related services in order to protect residents</p>	<p>Following the additional investment made by the Council within our Community Safety related services we were able to appoint an additional 12 Civic Enforcement Officers. These officers are on top of the existing team of 20 Civic Enforcement Officers already employed by the Council. The additional 12 Civic Enforcement Officers are now in position and are actively working within all of our town centre settings, with the objective of ensuring they are safe and welcoming places to visit and shop.</p> <p>The investment in additional resources for the town centres has also meant that the existing Civic Enforcement Officers are able to spend much more time within our wider communities with a focus on tackling ASB, environmental crime and issues related to vehicles, including parking.</p>
<p>7. Consider and develop a new serious violence reduction strategy In partnership with other responsible authorities</p>	<p>Consideration of the new serious violence reduction duty has continued following guidance being made available after the Royal Assent of the Police Crime Sentencing and Court Act. The introduction of serious violence reduction in the Community Safety Plan has been completed.</p> <p>A new Violence Reduction Unit (CURV) has been introduced following additional funding from the Home Office, in Cleveland. Stockton BC is represented on this group and part of the decision-making process for funding allocation and the introduction of new initiatives to tackle serious violence.</p>
<p>8. Give due consideration to the new Protect Duty placed on local authorities as part of the wider national counter-terrorism strategy</p>	<p>Information on the development of a new Protect Duty is still not available from central government. Locally, the Publicly Assessable Locations (PALs) pilot is ongoing. A new Protection and Prepare Group will sit in October to develop plans for protecting the town centre from terror incidents following the development works.</p>
<p>9. Work with our partners in the VCSE sector and the Community Partnerships to tackle food poverty in the Borough</p>	<p>We have arranged two multi-agency workshops for Autumn 2022 on <i>Collaborative Approaches to Healthy Weight in Stockton-on-Tees</i> to consider collective intelligence, priorities and next steps, which have been positively received by partners.</p> <p>The Council works in partnership with the Food Power Network which aims to improve access to support for people experiencing food poverty. We plan to commence a food growing pilot, based on community growing and access to healthy food which will also support people’s mental wellbeing and help address social isolation.</p> <p>To support families during the school holidays, we commission a holiday enrichment programme working closely with Catalyst, the VCSE and communities. The programme supported children and their families across the Borough during the Summer holidays, through the provision of healthy food and free activities.</p>
<p>10. Support people to live healthy lives through a focus on chronic conditions / long term conditions, alcohol, smoking, obesity / physical activity, mental health</p>	<p>The Council is working closely with primary care colleagues as the NHS health check is reinstated, to identify and support those at risk from diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, stroke and dementia. We are also supporting NHS partners to address health inequalities through primary care, focusing initially on healthy weight, and to roll-out the new NHS lung check through our close links with our communities.</p>

	<p>We continue to embed learning from the pandemic, ensuring communities can access support by phone / web-based support where this works for them, as well as face-to-face support for example through our commissioned stop smoking and drug and alcohol services.</p> <p>The multi-agency Physical Activity Steering Group continues to meet to create environments and conditions where people are more able to be physically active. In March / April 2022, the Beat the Street programme engaged 19,585 people across the Borough in walking, cycling or scooting, supporting their physical and mental health.</p> <p>The mental health steering group was established, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The group coordinates across partners, providing strategic oversight, and has been looking at collaboration across TEWV and Healthwatch re: patient voice. The Council also continues to commission bereavement support, the mental health training hub and is undertaking significant amounts of work on suicide prevention and drug-related deaths.</p>
<p>11. 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>The outbreak management workstream continues to meet to maintain an overview of the current position on Covid and plan for Winter, working with colleagues in UKHSA and wider partners.</p> <p>The local Covid Control Group has been evolved into a Health Protection Collaborative, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Collaborative provides assurance to the Board on local Health Protection matters and supports local system working to ensure a robust and resilient local health protection system, including Covid response and learning from the pandemic, flu and winter resilience as we head into Autumn and Winter.</p> <p>The Council has extended its contract with the Covid community champions and continued to work jointly with them to identify and address issues related to Covid and recovery, linking to broader wellbeing of our communities. Examples include mental wellbeing, links to foodbanks and post-Covid syndrome. Over 150 individuals and organisations are members of this champions network.</p> <p>The Council has commissioned a Tees Active Post-Covid (long Covid) programme to support those with less severe post-Covid symptoms, who have a medical condition which can be improved by increasing their physical activity levels. Access to the service has recently been broadened to include GP referral as well as referral from the hospital post-Covid clinic.</p>
<p>12. Support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and offer help to people who are feeling lonely</p>	<p>The Council currently supports 1034 people to live independently at home, providing approximately 10,400 hours of home care per week. We have engaged with providers and people accessing the service to understand and identify barriers to good care and identify solutions to address these challenges. For example, support for recruitment and retention of carers. We are piloting technology to support people to remain at home, including activity monitoring in a person's own home.</p> <p>The Council has extended the contract for the delivery of Social Lights for a further 12 months (to March 2024) building on the positive impact this service has achieved over the past 18 months. Feedback from people accessing the service and families has been positive: expressing how valuable this support is to them and their families. During 2021/22 there has now been a total of 10 people successfully matched with volunteers and a further 23 who are being supported to match with suitable volunteers. In addition, Wag &amp; Co, visiting dogs charity who we have commissioned to provide</p>

	<p>support befriending vulnerable older people in their own homes as well as in care homes / hospitals have matched 6 further vulnerable people in Q1.</p>
<p>13. Continue to work with adult residential care and care at home providers to improve quality of care and to continue to support them as they respond to the challenges arising from COVID-19</p>	<p>The Transformation Team continue to work collaboratively with colleagues in Procurement, Economic Strategy, Public Health and external stakeholders to develop and implement solutions to challenges or leadership, training, activities and technology which underpin good care and support. The Social Care Protection Operation Group (SCPOG) will deliver additional Infection Prevention and Control support to be coordinated by Public Health/ North tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust and will design and deliver a winter preparedness seminar scheduled on 12 October 2022.</p>
<p>14. Engage with individuals, families, carers and communities when developing adult social care support and continue to collaborate with the NHS to ensure health and care services work effectively together</p>	<p>All in house day opportunities services have been having regular engagement with people using their services and families to gather views on what is working well and what needs further development. A day service we commission for people with autism (Ware Street) is due to be re commissioned later this year. People accessing the service and families have been involved in reviewing the service, advising on the specification, helping write the specific questions to ask potential providers and will be included as part of the tender and evaluation process. Following the consultation on home care in 2021/22 with people accessing the service and other stakeholders, the Council is going back out to talk to all stakeholders on possible future options for home care to gather their views and reflect on the changes we have seen over the past 12 months.</p>
<p>15. Review out of area placements and day options provision for adults</p>	<p>The current framework for residential care for people with a learning disability has insufficient capacity to meet demand in the Borough. The Council intends to reopen the framework to invite current and new providers to develop further residential provision to meet identified need. A new framework for Older People and Mental Health has been designed to further develop residential accommodation in the borough. There is an engagement meeting with current and new providers on 20 September following which the new framework will be tendered and new services developed. The Council is also leading a collaborative project as a member of the Tees Local Implementation Group (LIG) to identify opportunities across Tees for new providers. Following a market engagement event on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 we have continued to work with partners and the new ICS to identify and develop provision in Borough. The Council is reviewing how our in-house day opportunity providers can deliver more community based activities for individuals and maximise opportunities for people to develop relationships within their communities. The Council is also implementing the successful Changing Places grant to support the need for people to access opportunities in the borough and reviewing its commissioned day opportunities and re-tendering the contract for Ware Street.</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
16. Continue to develop the Invest Stockton-on-Tees branding campaign and attract inward investment into the Borough	Micro site and promotional video completed. Work is ongoing to develop full website with launch expected in Spring. Social media interface being monitored and will be adjusted accordingly. A report will be presented to Cabinet in November providing an update on inward investment.
17. Develop options for increasing the availability of employment land across the Borough	Belasis Business Park – work continues with prospective occupiers Durham Lane Business Park – Knight Frank now appointed as an agent for the site. KF are now dealing with interested parties. Work due to start imminently on the Car Park/Footbridge works as well as modifications to the entrance junction. Dynamo Park – continue to liaise with the developer following submission of their planning application.
18. Finalise and implement the Inclusive Growth Strategy to support residents to benefit from growth	Final version of strategy signed off in August 2022. Action Plan under development.
19. Develop the Employment and Training Hub model to develop skills and support residents into employment	The new Employment and Training Hub opened in August following 6 months of provision in its temporary location. There have been over 1000 registrations with the Hub and over 130 have gained employment.
20. Develop a procurement charter with partners to promote social value and identify potential areas of development of supply chains in order to support local business	A pilot of a new approach to social value has been completed and a new Social Value Policy is currently being developed. This will be used to formulate a charter.
21. Deliver the major transport-related projects at the Portrack Relief Road, Billingham and Eaglescliffe Station improvements, Elton Interchange, and improvements along the A689 corridor	Portrack Relief Road - On hold due to budget gap of around £10m to £15m. Billingham Station - Work started due for completion March 2023. Eaglescliffe Station - Planning approved for phase 1 access road improvements and contract awarded due for completion Autumn 2022. Phase 2 – Car park planned start Spring 2023 with completion Winter 2023. Network Rail delivering new bridge 2023/24. Elton interchange – Onsite due for completion October 2023. Improvement along A689 – On hold due to developers refusing to fund their elements and no decision yet by Government on Major Road Network bid.

<p>22. Understand and respond to the implications of changes in travel patterns as a result of the Covid pandemic</p>	<p>Weekday car traffic approximately 95% volume of pre-Covid traffic with more peak spreading, goods vehicles around 5% higher than pre-covid levels, rail around 90% and bus 65% pre-covid levels. TVCA negotiated lower concessionary fare payments for 2022/23 due to lower bus patronage and Government keeping Bus Recovery Funding until end of financial year.</p>
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## 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
23. Continue the redevelopment of Stockton Town Centre including demolition of Castlegate and development of the Urban Park	The redevelopment continues. The majority of businesses have decanted from the centre and demolition is now underway.
24. Finalise the arrangements for the Town Deal in Thornaby	Priorities agreed and approved at Cabinet.
25. Finalise the plans for improvements in Yarm, Preston Hall Museum and Grounds and cycleway infrastructure in line with the Levelling Up fund allocation	Options under development across overall LUF programme, report to Cabinet planned December 2022.
26. Continue redevelopment of the Sycamores and Elm House estates in Stockton	The development of the Sycamores continues with Keepmoat leading the development and sales. The former Elm House site (bungalow development) is complete and after significant interest all bungalows are now let.
27. Finalise the review of the private landlord led licensing scheme	A report will be presented to Cabinet in November providing an update to members.
28. Assess options for accelerating affordable and specialist housing across the Borough	A Housing needs assessment is currently being undertaken, due to report in 2022/23.
29. Continue the programme of road and pavement maintenance and repairs	50% of the external road reconstruction projects have been completed via Tarmac and 29% of our internal footpath maintenance schemes are now complete with a further schemes to complete before April. Labour shortages are proving challenging and material costs for core materials such as Tarmac has increased by 30% with a further increase to follow in October which will impact upon the planned programme aligned to available budget.
30. Implement the first stage objectives of the Carbon Reduction and Environmental Sustainability Strategy and develop the partnership and community work as a basis for future activity	A new Strategy Action Plan Coordinator has been appointed and work has commenced on developing a delivery action plan together with baseline monitoring data. A Climate Coalition has been initiated to engage with the business, community and voluntary sectors.



<p>31. Develop and adapt our borough-wide events programme to respond to the pandemic, incorporating celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and preparations for the Stockton &amp; Darlington Railway Bicentenary</p>	<p>An extensive programmes of events have been supported and delivered across the six townships. Financial and in-kind support has been provided to external event organisers and community groups as well as residents who wanted to hold street parties. Approx. 140 Street Parties were delivered across the four day back holiday and numerous community events and beacon lighting ceremonies. Supported including costs for road closures, other event infrastructure and jubilee packs (300 packs issued).</p> <p>Autumn/Winter community led events across the Borough have been incorporated with the Council's Event Delivery Framework/programme and it is anticipated that support will be delivered for events such as Remembrance Sunday and Christmas Celebrations/activities.</p> <p>The Council's Events Programme includes a number of events that are designed to engage and be delivered Borough-wide. This includes 'You Heard Us' A Visual Arts Commission which toured across the six towns, 'Zest', a Creative Writing project targeted at primary/secondary school across the towns and the return of the Santa Bus.</p> <p>There was a real team effort from staff across the Council in organising our local arrangements following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The respective Lord Lieutenancy offices have been very complimentary about how the Council responded.</p>
<p>32. Support the Combined Authority and Bus Operators in delivering the agreed outcomes set out in the Tees Valley Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan and Scheme</p>	<p>Stockton working on bus corridor improvement schemes across the Borough funded by the City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement to provide better bus priority measurers. SBC staff involved in working groups looking at ticketing, fares, marketing and network improvements to encourage people back to bus following covid pandemic (as above still only around 65% pre-Covid levels.)</p>

## 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
33. Review the Medium Term Financial Plan, to reflect changes in Government funding arrangements and legislative changes	The Report to Cabinet in September 2022 presents an update to the forecast financial position for 2022/23 based on information for the first quarter. The MTFP remains under regular review particularly in the context of current inflationary pressures. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is expected in December 2022.
34. Develop proposals for the redevelopment of Dunedin House to support flexible working arrangements and the re-location of staff from current buildings	Esh Construction are now appointed to undertake design and costing work on Dunedin House.
35. Review the Council's land and assets and develop plans for disposal or for any potential development	This is an ongoing piece of work and linked to the revision of Playing Pitch Strategy and Accommodation Review. Updates will be provided to Cabinet as detailed proposals are developed.
36. Add new features and functions to the Council website and improve online services for customers	The new Council website went live on 28 <sup>th</sup> February with 152 live self-serve transactions. Since go live we have added an additional 54 self-serve transactions (total of 206) Up to 31 August 2022, 12,330 customers had signed up for new My Council accounts. We are continuing with the development of more self-serve solutions and the redesign of the Stockton Information Directory and other Council websites.
37. Launch a new Council Volunteering Strategy to support our employees to volunteer in the community and to provide additional volunteering opportunities at the Council	A new Council volunteering strategy is under development. Next steps are include providing and communicating further opportunities for our employees. Our leave policy already provides for some unpaid leave for employees to undertake volunteering in the Borough.
38. Implement the new flexible working arrangements to capitalise and build on the technological advancements and new working practices developed during the pandemic	Project Team/Groups established. Employee engagement taken place. Action Plan and timetable agreed. Proposed to take recommendations to key groups, working towards implementation in January 2023.
39. Continue to develop the Bright Minds Big Futures initiative to ensure that the voice of	The SBC Correspondents are an army of young people who attend the events of SIRF and take photographs, video footage and interviews of everything that goes on and share it on social media.

<p>young people is heard and valued in the development and delivery of Council policies and services</p>	<p>Every year as part of the National Takeover Day, the Council opens its doors to members of BMBF to take over departments and services for a unique opportunity to find out more about what the Council does. BMBF work closely with Cultivate Tees Valley to develop growing and environmental spaces for young people. BMBF also campaign and raise awareness of key issues with Local Ward Councillors, Members of Parliament and Heads of Service at the Council</p>
<p>40. Respond to and implement the Local Government and Parliamentary boundary reviews</p>	<p>Work to implement the Local Government Boundary Commission recommendations is on track. The Polling Districts and Place review stemming from these changes will commence on 21st September and work is on-going to produce the revised Boundary register on the 1st December. New Boundaries will come into effect for the May 2023 elections. The Boundary Commission for England have completed their second phase of consultation in April, analysis is now being undertaken and this will be followed by a final consultation stage later in the year allowing comments to be made on any revisions to the initial proposals. The proposed Parliamentary Constituencies, final report is expected July 2023.</p>
<p>41. Develop and implement the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework</p>	<p>The framework has been agreed by Cabinet and an action plan is being developed. Work is focusing on supporting people in the current financial climate with website containing information on support. We are also looking at identifying Warm areas for residents.</p>