

Overview Report

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Overview Meeting 2021

11 February 2021

Community Services and Transport

Context

The Council has a strong track record of sound financial management. In the current economic climate, finances are always going to be a challenge, and we work hard to make our budget go further. We have adapted to unprecedented funding reductions over the last eight years, saving around £53m. Our medium-term financial planning approach has allowed us to continually balance our budget through delivering savings and efficiencies but also to plan ahead and deliver invest-to-save schemes and innovative changes to service delivery models. We carefully target investments to stimulate economic growth, provide great assets and deliver financial returns to offset funding reductions.

Since the initial development of this Council Plan we have and still are experiencing the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. Coronavirus provides huge challenges for us to address in terms of community and economic recovery and dealing with the long-term implications of the pandemic. We have reviewed our priorities for the coming year and have adapted these to reflect the focus that is needed to respond to this challenge.

The challenge for all Members is to ensure that decisions about the basis on which services will be delivered are within the resources available, taking account of a number of factors such as the uncertain financial position, changing demographics, increasing demand, new national legislation and policy direction.

Members are reminded of the Council's Vision that supports decision-making:

- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm, where
 - People live in cohesive and safe communities
 - People are supported and protected from harm
 - People live health lives
- A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed, creating
 - A growing economy
 - Improved education and skills development
 - Job creation and increased employment
- A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive, creating
 - Great places to live and visit
 - Clean and green spaces
 - Rich cultural experiences

The Council plays its part in making sure this is achieved by being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

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Performance Reporting

Performance across the Council Plan was reported on a six-monthly basis to Executive Scrutiny Committee. Please see the link:

<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=SCR>

Community and Transport Services – Director - Jamie McCann

Relevant services include:

- Community Services

Council Plan 2020-2023

The Council Plan sets out the aims and objectives for all services and is refreshed on an annual basis.

The key priorities for 2020-21 for the Community Services and Transport themes are attached at Appendix 1.

Emerging Issues

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Like all other areas of the Council, the last year has been particularly challenging for this area, but also despite this we have been able to continue the work toward council priorities. Emerging challenges and opportunities are summarised as follows in further detail:

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour

Between April 2020 and December 2020, publicly reported crime has decreased by 11.6% equating to 1,499 less victims of crime. Total crime, which combines both publicly reported and police generated crimes also seen a decrease of 856 crimes against the previous year which is a 5.7% decrease.

Violence against the person offences have increased by 449 crimes against the previous year, an 8.5% increase. The majority of this increase being caused by an increase in Stalking and Harassment offences. (+20.1%). Sexual offences have decreased by 4 crimes against the previous year, a 0.8% decrease. Robbery offences have decreased by 11 crimes against the previous year, an 8.0% decrease. Theft offences have decreased by 1,036 crimes against the previous year, a 37.1% decrease. Criminal Damage and Arson offences have decreased by 245 crimes against the previous year, an 11.3% decrease. There were 2 Homicides recorded between April 2020 – December 2020, there were 2 in the previous year, these were both recorded between April 2020 – May 2020. The positive outcome rate for total crime is 13.1% Year to Date, a 1.9% increase against the previous year. Stockton-on-Tees has the lowest crime rate per 1,000 population at 58.2 crimes

To gain a national comparison on how Stockton is performing against other partnerships, data has been obtained from IQuanta. IQuanta is a web-based system that presents statistical information about police and partnership performance across a wide number of measures. The data is very detailed and allows partnerships and police to be ranked and compared in league tables regarding crime types. These league tables are called the 'Most Similar Group' (MSG), compiled using various data such as population figures and deprivation levels with 1st

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position being the best performing. The most up to date data relates to the end of November 2020 and shows that Stockton has a crime rate slightly higher than average within its most similar group and ranked 11th out of 15, with one being the best performing. When considered against the other Tees Valley areas, Stockton is performing the best and better than the Tees Valley average.

In terms of anti-social behaviour in Stockton on Tees, When factoring in Covid-19 ASB related incidents Stockton-on-Tees has the 2nd lowest ASB rate per 1,000 population at 44.8 incidents per 1,000 population, Redcar and Cleveland have the lowest rate at 42.0. With Covid-19 ASB incidents removed Stockton-on-Tees has the lowest ASB rate per 1,000 population at 29.6 incidents per 1,000 population. With Covid-19 incidents included there have been 8,846 Police recorded ASB incidents, an increase of 2,384 incidents against the previous year, a 36.9% increase. With Covid-19 incidents removed there have been 5,851 Police recorded ASB incidents, a decrease of 611 incidents against the previous year, a 9.5% reduction.

There have been 2,295 ASB Service requests recorded by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Civic Enforcement team (including noise and alcohol issues) a decrease of 117 incidents, a -4.9% decrease. Incidences of Begging have decreased by 27.3% against the same period last year. Incidences of Rowdy and Nuisance Behaviour have decreased by 21.3% against the same period last year.

Hate Crime

Through the Safer Stockton Partnership there remains a continued commitment to raise awareness of Hate Crime and the impact it has on communities. Work continues to increase the reporting of hate crime as well as support individuals and organisations to identify hate related incidents. There is an established Tees Strategic Hate Crime Group which aims to develop and agree consistent approaches hate crime reporting and awareness raising across the four local authority areas in Cleveland. Stockton Council are an important part of this group having reviewed and refreshed the Hate Crime Reporting Strategy for Cleveland in 2020. At a local Level the Stockton Hate Crime Group continues to review activity as well as improve engagement with community and minority groups across the borough. Recent work of the local group has included leading on a review of 3rd party reporting centres and the overall hate crime reporting 'journey', with a view to ensuring it remains easy to access and navigate.

Prevent and Channel: Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. The process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The roll out of Prevent awareness raising training has continued throughout the Council and to key partners in education and community based services despite Covid-19. In addition to this a programme of engagement continues within schools and additional briefings have been carried out at Riverside College and Durham University. Following the high profile terror attacks over the past 5 years and in particular the increase in vehicle based attacks, a number of safety measures have been implemented including the purchase of vehicle mitigation equipment to provide added security at major public events.

Stockton continues to be represented at a Tees level on both the Gold Contest Strategic group as well as the Prevent Silver Group which we are responsible for chairing in 2021. There is also a new Prevent Operational group in place for officers within the council to help co-ordinate the partnership response to emerging issues. We continue to promote the online resource page on the council website as well as the Channel referral process which is used to support individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism. On a national level the Home Office is in the process of consulting on a revised approach to managing Channel cases at a local and regional level. 'Operation Dovetail' seeks to transfer additional responsibilities and resources to local authorities to manage the safeguarding risk and improving the multi-agency response

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to dealing with vulnerable people. Following refreshed guidance to this process in late 2020, it will be a priority this year to ensure appropriate changes are made in Stockton on Tees.

Asylum and Migration

Stockton continues to act as a dispersal area for asylum seekers and in 2019 the former COMPAS contract managed by G4S was replaced by the ASST contract which was won by Mears Housing Group in the North East and Humber. Whilst the number of asylum seekers in Stockton on Tees has reduced over the past 12 months, significant challenges remain regarding the delivery of this contract by Mears in the region overall. These challenges are largely based around the impact of Covid-19 on the processing system. This has been further compounded by challenges in commissioning suitable properties. This matter is therefore under constant review and continues to be a priority for the next period.

Operational Response

Much of our community safety operational response is delivered by two key areas.

Civic Enforcement Service:

A full review and re-profile of this service area was completed in 2018 and since then, work has continued to ensure the service continues to meet the needs of the public, businesses, and Members.

A total of 24 Civic Enforcement Officers, supported by a further 3 Case Management Officers make up the profile of the service split between 2 Senior Officers, 18 Civic Enforcement Officers and a further 4 deployed to the Town Centre Operations Team in support of the Stockton Business Improvement District (BID). This team has remained active throughout the Covid pandemic and has been instrumental in supporting council objectives in response to the virus such as supporting food distribution to the most vulnerable in our communities as well as supporting both testing and vaccination delivery alongside business as usual demand.

Whilst Covid-19 has had some impact on the type of service demand on our Civic Enforcement Service, the overall level of requests has remained in line with expectations. Between April and December 2020, the service responded to over 6,500 calls with the majority relating to environmental crime namely fly tipping and other waste related offences.

In respect of Covid related demand, a team of 10 Covid Marshals joined Civic Enforcement in December 2020. COVID Marshals are now deployed throughout the Borough in High Streets, town centres and local areas to help stop the spread of Coronavirus. Marshals are on hand to offer guidance to residents and offer advice and support to businesses which are still open with the information and remind them of their responsibilities to operate safely. They work closely with colleagues in Public Health and the Police to ensure a multi-agency tiered response to matters relating to Covid-19 enforcement and regulation.

Security and Surveillance Service:

This section largely operates in the shadows of the main frontline services, but none the less performs a critical role on behalf of the Council. The majority of this work undertaken on CCTV is subject to reporting controls due to the ongoing nature of investigations conducted by the regulatory authorities.

Whilst primarily charged with conducting surveillance operations using over 280 public space CCTV cameras in Stockton on Tees, the team are also responsible for all security

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requirements, monitoring intruder and fire alarms as well as responding to such activations. The control room is also called on to act as the main communications centre for the Council out of office hours for services such as social care (Emergency Duty Team), Environmental Health, Registration and Bereavement as well as taking emergency out of hours calls for Care for your Area and tradesmen.

The control room deal with over 20,000 telephone calls per year and handle on average 5,000 live incidents on behalf of strategic partners such as Cleveland Police. In 2020, the control room where implicate in over 600 arrests made by the Police for a wide range of offence. Aside from this, operators have assisted in a number of nationally significant operations with regards to organised crime as well as assisting internal department in executing the councils statutory duties.

The technology and infrastructure within the building has been updated in the last twelve months, which includes a significant investment in CCTV cameras across the borough, including parks and open spaces. Furthermore improvement works planned for The Security Centre have been fully completed which includes a new control room, welfare facilities and other needed improvements to ensure the building is fit to meet future challenges.

Aside from the public realm duties undertaken by this service, it should be noted that in order to fund operations, the team also undertake a large proportion of work for the private sector on a contractual basis. This includes alarm monitoring, lone worker tracking and CCTV monitoring for locations such as industrial sites, industrial estates and academies around the United Kingdom.

Potential Areas for In-Depth Review

Members are reminded that topics are being sought for the Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-22. Using the information provided as part of the performance updates and this Overview meeting, the Committee is invited to identify potential topics for review within this theme.

Potential topics will be considered at Executive Scrutiny Committee on 23 March.

- Review to consider the requirements of a Public Space Protection Order in Stockton on Tees.

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Appendix 1 – Council Plan - Key Priorities 2020- 2021 - Community Services

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

We have identified these key priorities for 2020/21 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- Lead a consultation on community safety priorities
- Review our approach in light of Coronavirus to ensure an effective continuation of the Targeted Action Area pilots in Stockton and North Thornaby