

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-20 – MID YEAR UPDATE REPORT

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Council Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be noted.

DETAIL

1. The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

2. There are no community impact implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3. There are no financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4. There are no legal implications.

RISK ASSESSMENT

5. The reporting of progress on the key objectives in the Council Plan is categorised as low risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce the risk.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

6. There are no corporate parenting implications.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES

Policy Principles:

- Protecting the vulnerable through targeted intervention
- Promoting equality of opportunity through targeted intervention
- Developing strong and healthy communities
- Creating economic prosperity

This report covers all of the Council's services and therefore covers all of the policy principles.

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Big Plans, Bright Future

COUNCIL PLAN 2017-20

Mid Year Update Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Though we continue to face huge ongoing financial and economic challenges, we remain ambitious for Stockton-on-Tees and we never lose sight of the fact that we are here to serve the people of the borough. The scale of the challenge is unprecedented and leaves us facing more difficult decisions, but we continue to deliver on the big plans set out in the Council Plan.

We are committed to developing the Council and ensuring we deliver high quality, customer focused services that meet the changing needs of our communities. We have continued to develop as an organisation including:

- Been shortlisted as one of only six finalists in the “Local Authority of the Year” category of the Municipal Journal awards.
- Been shortlisted in eight categories and for overall Council of the Year at the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) awards. In addition, our Sporting-STEPs scheme scooped us APSE’s “Best Service Team – Sports, Leisure & Cultural Services” accolade.
- Continued with significant capital investment projects including the redevelopment of The Globe theatre, the development of the Hampton by Hilton hotel, the development of the new Ingleby Barwick leisure facility and the crematorium.
- Continued our programme of service reviews as we adapt to huge ongoing funding reductions.
- Received another extremely positive report from our Auditors, who said: “As we have seen in recent years, the Council is exploring different service models to preserve service delivery along with financial stability.”
- Maintained our Silver Investor in People award, achieved the Gold Better Health at Work award accreditation and maintained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the sixth consecutive year, securing the highest possible “compliance +” rating in 9 categories
- Continued to implement improvements in direct response to the Ipsos MORI residents’ survey undertaken across the Borough in 2015.
- Launched the new “My Views” consultation portal, which provides an improved online platform to support consultations on service changes and proposals.
- Supported our schools to achieve record exam results and Ofsted ratings

OUR VISION

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT

...is of an economically prosperous borough that is dynamic, exciting and inviting with infrastructure to support the development of business start-ups, business growth, new jobs and skills.

**BIG PLANS FOR
AN OUTSTANDING BOROUGH**

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

...is to make the borough a better place to live and a more attractive place to do business with clean streets, carefully tended parks and open spaces, affordable and desirable housing.

**BIG PLANS FOR
OUR PLACES AND OPEN SPACES**

COMMUNITY SAFETY

...is to make the borough a place where levels of crime and fear of crime are low and people feel safe and secure.

**BIG PLANS FOR
KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

.....is of a great place to grow up, where children and young people are protected from harm and supported to be the best they can be in life.

**BIG PLANS FOR THE
YOUNG PEOPLE OF OUR BOROUGH**

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

...is for a place where people are supported to be healthy.

**BIG PLANS FOR
THE HEALTH OF OUR PEOPLE**

STRONG COMMUNITIES

...is for communities that are diverse, cohesive, caring and vibrant.

**BIG PLANS FOR
HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES PROSPER**

ADULTS

...is that people can get the right level and type of support at the right time to help, prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support and maximise their independence.

**BIG PLANS FOR
THE CARE WE PROVIDE**

ARTS, CULTURE AND LEISURE

...is of a borough where our heritage, festivals, cultural activities and leisure facilities help us attract visitors and investment, and where sport and active leisure opportunities help people sustain healthier lifestyles.

**BIG PLANS FOR
GREAT EXPERIENCES**

OUR COUNCIL

...is of a Council that prides itself on being open, honest and fair. On leading by example. On having big plans and the determination to see them through. We're facing difficult financial challenges and we can't do all we used to do so we're facing some tough decisions. Throughout this we'll stay focused on delivering genuine value for money, on setting the highest standards of public service, on communicating clearly and regularly with the community we serve and on being challenging, innovative and well organized.

AMBITIOUS, EFFECTIVE AND PROUD TO SERVE

OUR POLICY PRINCIPLES

The Council has to take decisions about the basis on which services will be delivered with the resources available. In doing this we have to take account of a number of factors such as reduced funding, changing demographics, increasing demand for services and new legislation and national policy direction. However under-pinning all our decisions are our four policy principles. We apply these principles to all our decision making. Wherever possible we will:

- **Protect the vulnerable through targeted intervention by**
 - protecting people who are subject to or at risk of harm
 - helping people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
 - supporting people who are financially excluded
 - assisting people whose circumstances make them vulnerable

- **Create economic prosperity by**
 - ensuring the businesses and people of Stockton-on-Tees are part of a thriving and productive Tees Valley economy

- **Promote equality of opportunity through targeted intervention by**
 - tackling health inequalities
 - meeting the skills gap
 - improving access to job opportunities
 - tackling fuel poverty
 - improving education and training opportunities
 - improving access to affordable housing
 - improving financial and digital inclusion

- **Develop strong and healthy communities by**
 - providing mainstream services that are available where needed
 - providing preventive services that are available where needed

OUR CULTURE

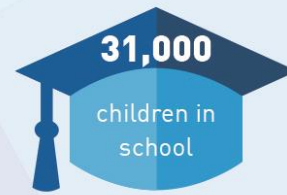
We deliver services by drawing on our workforce culture – the values and behaviours we have agreed we want to encourage here at the Council.

We are an organisation where we all make a positive contribution at work for the whole council. Where we never lose sight of the fact we are here to serve the people of the borough.

This is a place where...

- **We are valued, trusted and supported**
- **We are heard**
- **We take responsibility for our own development**
- **We work hard**
- **We are not afraid to try something new**
- **We belong**

OUR PLACE



During the last year in Stockton-on-Tees



OUR RESOURCES

We've had to adapt to funding unprecedented funding reductions over the last six years and are still confronted with having to find further savings. At the same time demand for services – particularly adult social care and children's services – continues to rise.

Finding additional savings by 2019/20 isn't going to be easy. Many difficult decisions will need to be made. We've made difficult decisions in the past which means we are as well placed as we can be in the future.

What we can be sure of is that we are in as good a position as we can be. We have a strong track record of sound financial management and we have been dealing with these problems successfully for many years. We have continued our programme of service reviews through our **Medium Term Financial Plan**:

- We have restructured and reduced the size of our senior management team to ensure it reflects the council's changing shape and size
- We're continuing to focus on managing demand and reducing costs in our big areas of spend such as adult social care, children's social care, energy and waste
- We have received another extremely positive report from our Auditors, who said: "As we have seen in recent years, the Council is exploring different service models to preserve service delivery along with financial stability."
- We have made a long term commitment to continue to invest in our employees through the **Shaping a Brighter Future** programme
- We are challenging and changing the way we think about work, how we do it and how we can work smarter through our **Smarter Working in Stockton** programme

OUR PEOPLE

Working closely with elected Members, the Council's workforce of 3,250 people strive to deliver the very best services across the borough in the face of unprecedented challenges arising from reductions in funding and increased demand for services.

We pride ourselves that we value, care for and invest in our employees, we do this because we are ambitious and want to continue to deliver our services well. This investment in employees has been a long term commitment which is encapsulated in our **Shaping a Brighter Future** programme.

This programme is looking at who we are and how we do things, at staff support and development, at helping employees to make the very best of their existing skills and talents and develop their potential, to cope with stresses, and to be happy and well-motivated in the job that best suits them.

The 2016 Employee Survey results provided a measure of the value of the investment in our employees from their perspective. The results showed that:

- we continued to maintain a high survey response rate at 70% and extremely positive results with only 1 of the 44 questions yielding a positive agreement rate lower than 50% and 16 questions scoring an agreement rate over 75%
- we compare very favourably with a national Civil Service survey conducted in the same period last year
- the employee response rate and results are extremely good and should be celebrated, particularly when they are read in the context of significant change and work pressures and alongside the extremely positive MORI resident survey from 2015.

During the last year we have continued to build on this and have maintained our Silver Investor in People award and also achieved the Gold Better Health at Work award accreditation.

OUR WAYS OF WORKING

We are a successful organisation with a long and positive track record of continuous improvement.

We are challenging and changing the way we think about work, how we do it and how we can work smarter through our **Smarter Working in Stockton** programme.

Aimed at delivering savings identified in the **Medium Term Financial Plan** and supporting our **Shaping a Brighter Future** programme we will improve how we:

- Use evidence to shape our services and our decision-making
- Provide digital access to our services
- Use existing and new technologies to help us work differently
- Make optimum use of the places where we work
- Ensure that our policies, processes and procedures are as efficient and productive as they can be

OUR CUSTOMERS

We are committed to developing the Council and ensuring we deliver high quality, customer focused services that meet the changing needs of our communities.

We have continued to implement improvements in direct response to the Ipsos MORI residents' survey undertaken across the Borough in 2015. The results showed:

- a general improvement from the last survey and help us to focus our work in areas that we think need improvement
- our results are very positive with almost 9 in 10 residents satisfied with the local area (just 7% are dissatisfied)
- over 7 in 10 are satisfied with how the Council runs things (just 12% are dissatisfied)
- 7 in 10 trust the Council a great deal/ fair amount (with only 7% saying "not at all")
- Almost 7 in 10 agree that the Council acts on residents' concerns a great deal/ fair amount (just 6% say "not at all")
- Almost 6 in 10 agree the Council provides value for money (19% disagree)

Last year we also maintained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the sixth consecutive year, securing the highest possible "compliance +" rating in 9 categories. We have also launched the new "My Views" consultation portal, which provides an improved online platform to support consultations on service changes and proposals.

ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT

Strategic links

The Economic Strategy sets out the Council's long term vision and ambitions in relation to economic growth is reviewed and approved annually by Cabinet.

The Economic Growth Plan sets out what will be delivered in the next 3 years to deliver the outcomes and ambitions in the Economic Strategy and is also reviewed and approved annually by Cabinet.

Cabinet receive quarterly update reports for the themes of 'Business', 'Place', and 'People' plus an 'Annual Round-Up' report. These quarterly reports contain key indicators plus key announcements and developments.

Have a successful business base where existing companies have experienced sustainable growth and new businesses have been created and attracted

- Developing an understanding of growth and growing sectors not currently based in the Borough.
- Influencing the quality of the services and information to ensure local businesses receive the maximum level of support available. Supporting the operation of an effective market for business support services and finance remains a priority.
- Continuing to identify and support additional key sectors within the Borough's economy.
- Working with strategic partners to increase the number of local businesses exporting and support those that already export to increase their presence in key international markets.
- Effectively promoting the Borough as a place to invest trade and visit. Creation of 'Made in Stockton' brand.
- Stockton Start up Programme 2017 has been a success with 5 young people completing the programme in August.
- Continue to identify growth opportunities under-represented in the Borough and wider Tees Valley economy and support the realisation of new enterprises and innovation activity in high potential sectors.
- Continue to provide a package of support to prospective retail businesses to support the sustainability and diversity of the Borough's town centre offer.

Provide sufficient sites and premises in vibrant, connected and distinctive places that businesses are attracted to

- Employment land review undertaken as part of evidence base review for Local Plan. Draft allocations for employment land to support and enable growth over the plan period (2017-32) included within the publication draft local plan.
- Land acquired at Belasis to safeguard employment land at strategic location
- Ongoing delivery of place based regeneration works across Stockton town centre including public realm enhancements on Silver Street, Bishop Street and wider cultural quarter; work on town centre wide legibility strategy underway.
- Progress made on Globe redevelopment; due on site in earnest late17/early18.
- Hampton by Hilton hotel due on site late October 2017.
- Townscape Heritage works under development, submission to HLF in March 18 for stage 2 bid.
- Completion of The Georgian Theatre redevelopment March 17.
- Cinema feasibility underway.
- Continued support to Stockton Town Centre BID Team. Successful events this summer include `Stockton by the Sea` and `Stockton in the Spotlight.
- Design work for new Ingleby Barwick leisure facility now at an advanced stage with work set to start and plans to open in winter 2018/19 on course.
- Development of key infrastructure proposals continues in partnership with the TVCA to ensure our assets are enhanced and maintained to facilitate further growth in our economy and housing needs.
- Continued engagement with key providers to deliver superfast broadband to employment and locations across the Borough and delivery of improved services in residential areas across the Borough, in particular rural areas.
- Submission of 2 major bids for Housing Infrastructure Fund and for the National Productivity Fund.
- Way finding improvement works undertaken in Stockton Town Centre, Teesdale and Northshore to complement opening of Durham University International Study Centre on Queens Campus.
- Works to Mount Leven roundabout almost complete.
- Works to install lighting on Newport Bridge now complete.
- Operating a transport scheme to help people in Norton, Hartburn and Wolviston Village who don't have access to regular local bus services
- Continue to be the leading Authority for the Tees Crossing project. Facilitated an Information/Engagement event July to September.
- Work continues on a pan northern and national basis to support improved rails services including the operation of a Thornaby to London train service from 2020.
- Phase 1 of the England Costal Path is now complete with Phase 2 due to start shortly.

Ensure that people have the opportunity to learn/train and gain the appropriate level of skills to maximise the employment opportunities available in the economy

- Continue to work with Stockton Learning and Skills service with targeted provision to maximize the potential of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Helping to increase higher level skills by improving access to appropriate learning and training. Promoting and encouraging people to undertake higher level/degree apprenticeships.
- Aim to increase participation in the labour market by creating a range of flexible jobs to enable under-represented groups to access employment, for example job carving and flexible working.

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

Provide sufficient sites and premises in vibrant, connected and distinctive places that people choose to live, work, play and visit

- Street lighting installation programme now entered its seventh and last phase.
- Big Community Energy Switch scheme continues.
- Environmental designations and appropriate classification/protection afforded to sites across the borough to maintain high quality environment and green/open space.
- Minimum environmental standards in respect of renewable energy, recycled materials and BREEAM ratings included within draft local plan.
- Objectively assessed housing need undertaken and translated into borough wide housing requirement.
- Housing sites assessed as part of SHLAA process and translated into housing allocations across plan period to meet identified housing requirement (10,125 units).
- Publication of Draft Local Plan presented to Cabinet in September and will be published for public feedback between 25 September and 6 November 2017.
- Continue to help people hit hardest by welfare reforms through targeted help.
- Continue to work with partners to build over 2500 new homes including more than 500 affordable homes, prioritising brownfield sites.
- Phase 1 of the West End Gardens redevelopment site in Central Stockton completed by Thirteen Group in June 2017. 65 new homes have been delivered.
- Voluntary purchase agreement for Victoria has been reached with the final leaseholder. A rolling programme of demolition will conclude with the full clearance of the entire site.
- Thirteen Group have purchased Alma Street, a vacant, town centre redevelopment site. Indicative redevelopment proposals (new housing) are being considered by the Councils One-Stop Shop.
- Private Sector Housing, over 160 landlords now members of the Councils Voluntary Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
- Recently dealt with a small number of high profile planning applications in rural areas such as Kirklevington.
- Scrutiny review of high rise buildings being undertaken.

Deliver effective environmental services

Waste and Recycling

- The contract that we currently have in place for the disposal of household waste allows us to divert the majority of household waste from landfill to an Energy From Waste (EFW) alternative. This allows waste to be used as the main source of fuel in a process which generates a significant amount of electricity which is then sold to the energy market.
- The landfill rate can fluctuate depending on planned and unplanned maintenance shutdowns as well as other factors; fortunately the facility has been operating fully during this quarter and, although exact rates are not available at the moment, it is expected that in excess of 90% of all residual household waste was sent to the EFW facility with recycling rates currently standing at around 24%. Whilst this is an area that requires improvement there is minimal positive impact which can be achieved through community engagement and marketing.
- The rate of growth of domestic properties continues to increase across the borough which increases pressure on resources required to deliver the service, as well as associated disposal costs.

Street Cleansing

- Street Cleansing has been re-aligned in the last 12 months following the last service review which saw significant revenue reductions
- Core resources are deployed across primary retail areas, main arterial routes, principle walking routes as well as residential areas across the Borough which generates greatest levels of litter.
- Despite the significant revenue challenges, we are still able to provide a weekly litter picking visit to all residential streets and a mechanical sweeping visit every 5 weeks.

Grounds Maintenance

- Grounds Maintenance has been re-aligned in the last 12 months following the last service review which saw significant revenue reductions.
- The service has been re-aligned to direct resources towards core activities such as grass cutting, herbicide spraying of soft areas and footpaths and vegetation control.
- All bedding areas were removed as part of the last review although the move towards the creation of less labour intensive wildflower areas in 7 locations around the borough. These wildflower areas have been much-admired by both Members and residents to an extent that more than 150 compliments have been received.
- Plans are in place to extend wildflower areas next year as resources allow. Furthermore, we are reviewing grass cutting arrangements to leave some areas in a more natural state of cultivation to encourage wildlife and biodiversity; this will include some rural and semi-rural locations. On the same theme, we are reviewing the use of chemical spray around trees in locations where we may encourage natural growth and would again be looking at Parks, Cemeteries and some rural locations.
- We have been notified that it is the intention of Thirteen Housing Group to take responsibility of all Grounds Maintenance issues on their estates with effect from April 2018.

Highways Maintenance

- Highways maintenance continues to provide key services in maintaining the roads across the Borough.
- The highways inspection arrangements are currently being reviewed as part of a policy review which will supersede any national best practice on inspections as each local authority will be required to determine their own inspection arrangements based upon local needs.

Crematorium

- Following the decision to approve the £6.25m capital project works are progressing to ensure that the building and grounds meets the expectations and needs of the Council and, most importantly, our residents.
- Full planning is due to be submitted for a crematorium with ample car parking to serve the needs of our community.
- Manicured grounds as well as memorial areas provide a tranquil backdrop for the facility.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Strategic links

The Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP) deals with crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse related crime. The Partnership sets out its current ambitions in the Community Safety Plan.

Deliver effective community safety services

- Partnership working continues to be a key objective to achieve desired outcomes within the Community Safety Plan, which include collaborative working with internal partners including Youth Services and external agencies including Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade.
- The Safer Stockton Partnership also provides the opportunity to share best practice, key priorities for each organisation as well as opportunities for enhanced joint working.
- The new Civic Enforcement Services has now been established with the recruitment of new staff to join the established team.
- A Members Seminar will be held in November during which the priorities of the service will be communicated to Members
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Environmental issues such as littering, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles
 - Civic enforcement such as issuing car parking fines and dangerous and obstructive parking
- Significant improvements to key priorities and tasking within the CCTV team have been undertaken within the last 12 months with an emphasis on increased monitoring across areas with high incidences of criminal activity and ASB, as well as increased proactive monitoring of Stockton High Street. These actions have resulted in a huge increase in positive outcomes such as early intervention for ongoing incidences which have allowed SBC or Police resources to be directed, or by providing CCTV footage which is then used in prosecutions.

Deliver effective licensing services

- Licensing Services have continued to review the operating model and service standards during the last 6 months by proactively assessing and automating business processes. Improvements include a text messaging facility which has saved postage costs and time. The use of Facebook as a tool to engage and communicate with members of the trade have been explored and are seen as another opportunity to save money and resources and is expected to be live in November 2017.
- Software is also being introduced to reduce officer time and paper journeys which provides bespoke thorough testing of topographical matters related to new taxi drivers applicants.
- Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Policy is under review including exploring the opportunity to move towards age restriction policy for taxis as opposed to an emission standard which will increase the standards of licensed vehicles and improve emissions.
- 854 taxi drivers have completed a safeguarding course, equating to a 94% completion rate. The remaining 6% of drivers have had their drivers licences suspended.
- Training activities in the last 6 months have centre around firework licensing in preparation for Autumn 2017 and training for members on the full range of licensing.
- In supporting the vibrant night time economy, officers have continued to undertake proactive joint enforcement activities with the Police on a monthly basis and out of hours focusing on compliance for taxis and alcohol licensed premises.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Strategic links

The Health and Wellbeing Board brings together people from a number of agencies and organisations to develop and oversee the delivery of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). The JHWS is the overarching plan to improve the health and wellbeing of children and adults in our borough and to reduce health inequalities.

The Director of Public Health Annual Report is an independent report on the health of the population and outlines some of the key health and wellbeing challenges and opportunities in Stockton Borough.

Give every child the best start in life

- We have designed a new 0-19 service, in close consultation with stakeholders. The service will include:
 - 0-19 Healthy Child Programme
 - Growing Well, Growing Healthy service to support healthy weight
 - Family Outreach and Volunteer Service
- Working with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ensure robust support is in place for families where parental substance misuse and / or parental mental ill health are present. This supports the work of the LSCB, aiming to reduce the number of children on child protection plans
- Developing our approach to risk-taking behaviour and building resilience in children and young people, together with partners, to reduce the impact of e.g. smoking, poor mental health, alcohol
- Delivering additional support to families around healthy weight, through specific targeted programmes; and through developing opportunities for physical activity to be a greater part of the school day

Address ill health prevention

- Leading work to refresh the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy across partners, with a renewed focus on the assets in communities and support available for them
- Redesigning the support for people to stop smoking, including a focus on pregnant women, people with mental ill health and those living in more deprived areas
- Working closely with the NHS to ensure coordinated and consistent opportunities to help people stop smoking and to prevent them starting smoking, linking with regional work on a Smoke Free NHS. Smoking and COPD have a great impact on both health and social care services
- Supporting a whole-systems approach to improving diabetes prevention and care, across the Council, NHS and VCSE with a particular focus on prevention through physical activity, diet, tackling smoking and working with particular communities e.g. BME communities. Public Health works closely with the NHS to implement the National Diabetes Prevention Programme in 2018
- Funding a new Domestic Abuse Coordinator post to help embed the work of the new Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- Supporting the prevention and early identification of CVD and COPD through NHS Health Check (Healthy Heart Check) and Lung Health Check Programmes provided through GP practices, particularly ensuring support for our more deprived communities
- Working closely with the Tees LAs and NHS to ensure provision of a confidential, accessible sexual health service focusing on reducing unintended pregnancies and reducing sexually transmitted infections, particularly building on our outreach work in the community
- Working across partners to ensure high quality, holistic treatment and support for people affected by substance misuse and ensuring our approach to preventing and addressing substance misuse is based on evidence and local need

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Strategic links

The Children's Services Strategy sets out what will be delivered in the next 3 years to deliver the Council's outcomes and ambitions in relation to children and young people and is reviewed and approved annually by Cabinet. Cabinet receive quarterly update reports that contain key indicators plus key announcements and developments.

The Children and Young People's Partnership brings together people from a number of agencies and organisations, across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors to ensure a focus on the things that will make the most difference for children and young people. The Partnership sets out its current ambitions in the Children and Young People's Plan.

Provide the best start in life for children and families

- The procurement process for the commissioning of new approaches to the delivery of the 0-19 pathway has been undertaken, with an evaluation of tenders in September.
- The rollout of the 30 hours free childcare entitlement for eligible (working) families has commenced. There are around 600 families signed up so far, with the expectation this will increase to around 2300 over time. There are currently 1600 places planned, and additional investment through capital will significantly increase provision.

Support families through effective early help

- A review of our approach, pathways and processes for early help is currently being undertaken to support more effective practice and to consider how early help can best support a reduction in demand for social care.
- A domestic abuse coordinator has been recruited to help drive forward the implementation of the domestic abuse strategy.

Improve education and learning outcomes for all children and young people

- A detailed report on educational outcomes was presented to Cabinet in September 2017. This report evidenced a much improved position in relation to the numbers of schools judged good or better.

	All schools		Primary schools		Secondary schools	
	% schools judged good / outstanding July 2017	% change since June 2016	% schools judged good / outstanding July 2017	% change since June 2016	% schools judged good / outstanding July 2017	% change since June 2016
Stockton	94	+9	96	+3	89	+45
England	89	+2	91	+3	79	+2
North East	87	-2	91	-2	66	-2

- A report detailing the progress made to date in redefining the role of the Council in education was considered at Cabinet on 12 October. This model outlined savings, changes in service provision, and a new model for income generation.
- Although no Tees Valley bids to the Government's Strategic School Improvement Fund were successful in round 1, work continues through the Tees Valley School Improvement Board to support bids in round 2.

Ensure children and young people in need of help and protection get the help and support they need

- An expanded approach to Family Group Conferencing is currently being developed, focused on the recruitment of coordinators who will roll out the identification and training of additional FGC Coordinators.
- The implementation of the Signs of Safety approach continues, with the roll out of all relevant systems and process, and its use as standard in child protection conferences.
- The number of children on child protection plans continues to reduce based on the effective introduction of an additional safety meeting to review issues prior to consideration in a child protection conference.
- The Council, is participating in the Frontline scheme for the recruitment and training of social workers – an initial cohort of 4 Frontline trainees has commenced in September.
- There continues to be a focus on recruitment and some signs of success with 16 new social workers recruited this year including 13 experienced social workers.

Improve outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers

- A new approach to edge of care has been developed and consultation is shortly closing on the proposals. This will result in a different model of support for young people who are at risk of coming into care as a result of difficult or problematic behaviours.
- All residential care homes managed by the Council and via the Spark of Genius North East Joint venture continue to be rated good or outstanding.

Work collaboratively, effectively and efficiently

- A regional peer challenge is due to take place in mid-October around planning and sufficiency for children in our care, measuring progress since the Ofsted inspection.
- A new system to support the implementation of early help and troubled families claims is nearing completion.
- A new region wide cap on rates of social worker agency staff commenced on 4 September.

STRONG COMMUNITIES

Strategic links

The Brighter Borough For All - Tackling Poverty Framework sets out a plan for tackling poverty in the Borough.

The Stockton Strategic Partnership brings together different parts of the public sector as well as private, business, community and voluntary sectors.

Deliver effective local democracy

- Stockton was the lead for the first TVCA Mayoral Election on 4 May and this was quickly followed by the snap General Election on 8 June. This work took place alongside four other by-elections, the elections for the Member for the Youth Parliament, the 2016 Annual Canvass, the 2017 postal vote refresh exercise and a Household Notification Exercise during February 2017. Despite the challenges, the 2017 polls at Stockton were delivered successfully. Clear roles and good communications continue to contribute to this success and will stand us in good stead for future elections.
- Electoral registration continues to have a positive impact on registration levels. There are currently 143,689 electors on the Register (95% of the adult population; an increase of 3% from the Revised Register published on 1 December 2016) and 2,123 attainers (46% of 16/17 year olds; an increase of 27% from the Revised Register published on 1 December 2016).
- The 2017 canvass is underway. A pleasing 64% response rate was achieved at the end of the initial write out. Door knocking will take place between 8 September and 20 October 2017 and final Household Enquiry Forms will be mailed on 30 October prior to publication of the revised Register on 1 December 2017.
- A Community Governance Review has been undertaken following the receipt of a petition calling for the splitting of Grindon into two separate parishes. A reorganisation order will be made to implement the changes which will come into force at the next ordinary parish elections in May 2019.
- An urgent review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings was carried out by the Place Select Committee and an additional review of Billingham Event

Infrastructure has commenced.

- The Better Health Programme (BHP – acute services reconfiguration) is now a key element of the local Sustainability and Transformation Plans following consideration being given to the best arrangement for on-going scrutiny of the STP processes
- Governance support continues to be provided for the Council's main decision making bodies. In addition, support is provided to the SLSCB decision making structure.
- The Mayor continues to be supported in his attendance at events he is both invited to and hosts. There are 10 hosted events which are ever present with the Civic calendar, refreshed where appropriate to ensure they are engaging and inclusive.

Provide financial advice and support to our communities

- Cabinet continued to receive regular updates on the monitoring of outcomes and impacts of welfare reform and a summary of actions undertaken by the Council to mitigate against circumstances arising from the implementation of these changes. The Council approved a motion seeking amendments to the Local Housing allowance reforms which are due to be implemented in 2018.
- The Welfare Rights Unit are producing some excellent results, with over £2.6m in additional benefits paid in 2016-17 to some of the borough's most vulnerable people. This is almost double the total achieved last year, due to effectively targeted benefits take up work and more robust recording through a new case management IT system.
- The Welfare Rights team, working in partnership with the Council's Housing Benefits Service, identified over 1,300 such households containing an over 85 year old. Successful claims totalling over £500k were made last year for combinations of Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit, Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit and Carer's Allowance for this very vulnerable group of people.
- Your Community Bank, Tees Credit Union has had a successful year. Adult membership has grown to nearly 3,000, with junior membership also showing similar levels of growth to over 500 members. Tees Credit Union has negotiated with Moneywise Credit Union (Newcastle) to amalgamate and create a stronger and more financially robust credit union.

- The Council continues to support the Infinity Partnership, which is a forum of organisations in the borough that are committed to promoting and progressing financial inclusion. The partnership aims to ensure that everyone in the borough has the opportunity to access and use the financial services they need to avoid or overcome disadvantage or poverty caused by financial exclusion.
- The Adult and Health Select Committee have undertaken a review of Access to Services for People with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism. One of their recommendations is for the People Select Committee to monitor the support provided by the DWP to people in receipt of benefits with learning disabilities and/or autism.
- The crisis payment scheme is intended to be a fund of last resort. 2016-17 saw a small increase in support applications claims meeting the eligibility criteria, with over £102k paid to claimants, mostly in relation to settlement support.
- The Warm Homes Healthy People service was re-launched on the 2nd October following last year's success.
- Customer Services continue to make referrals to the Welfare Rights Unit for customers who make an application for a Blue Badge who are not in receipt of benefits for a benefit check (100 to date), one customer was found to be entitled to £230.96 per week in unclaimed benefit. From the 1st December the Contact Centre will be handling Welfare Rights calls.

Support the continued development of a strong and vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector

- We continue to provide support to the VCSE sector through our partnership with Catalyst, our partner organisation which provides an effective voice, representation and support for the third sector within the Borough. This partnership was further strengthened this year with a new long term funding agreement. Catalyst continues to offer a broad range of support to the sector with a newly formed Community Group Forum (for smaller organisations) complementing the established Voice Forum for larger third sector organisations.
- The Catalyst Awards held in June and the Mayors Civic Awards in May highlighted some of the heroes of the sector with a wide range of lifetime, individual and organisation awards reflecting the thriving sector.
- Direct grant aid and support to organisations across the borough continue to be

made through the Stockton Borough Community Fund (administered by the Tees Valley Community Foundation).

- We continue to transfer assets to our communities through the Community Asset Transfer Strategy. The successful transfer of Marsh House Sports and Community Centre to Onsite Building Trust was achieved in July and work continues to support a consortium bid seeking transfer of Primrose Hill Community Centre.
- The growing success of Volunteering in the borough was celebrated in Volunteering month 2 in June – with the first Volunteers Market held with 45 organisations advertising their volunteering opportunities. The Stockton on Tees Volunteering website continues to develop.
- Work has begun on updating the Compact between the Third Sector and the Council.
- The membership and action plans of the four Locality Forums have been refreshed with work focussed on tackling poverty in the borough.

Deliver effective consultation and engagement

- The new “My Views” on line consultation portal continues to be developed to provide an easy to use way for residents to take part in Council consultations.
- We continue to use the Viewpoint Resident’s panel to find out what residents think about the services and benefits we provide and what improvements and changes they think we need to make.
- Work has begun on the development of surveys to gather views from young people and businesses. This information will be used alongside the residents’ survey to help us improve services.

ADULT SERVICES

Strategic links

The Adult Social Care Strategy: Promoting Independence sets out what will be delivered in the next 3 years to deliver the Council's outcomes and ambitions in relation to adults social care services and is reviewed and approved annually by Cabinet.

Work with individuals, their families and carers

- We want people to take good care of themselves and each other. Individuals don't just receive help, they are often the people who provide care and support to loved ones. This is why we need to provide the necessary support and information for Carers.
- Where people do need support, we will offer a wide range of support that enables people to grow older with dignity, without always being dependent on care services. Many people wish to remain in their own homes and we will help them to achieve this by making adjustments to their homes and introducing new technology.

Working in partnership

- We are continuing to develop integration between the NHS, Social Care and other partners. This will focus on ensuring people remain well for as long as possible and are looked after in and by their local neighbourhood when they need further support. We will support people to avoid unnecessary admission into long term care or into hospital by providing a joined-up response.
- This year, Public Health has led the development of the revised Domestic Abuse Strategy for Stockton-on Tees, working with partners.
- We are also working with Local Authority leads from across the region to develop and deliver Suicide Prevention plans and the Better Health at Work Programme.
- We continue to offer specialist Public Health advice to the NHS to ensure services are commissioned based on the best evidence and on the needs of the local population.

Delivering our statutory duties

- We continue to work with clients and carers to ensure that identified social care needs are met in a personalised way.
- Where services are provided direct by the Council, Care Quality Commission inspection outcomes have been positive (e.g. Lanark Close Short Breaks Service).
- We continue to ensure provision of a range of mandated Public Health services (Health and Social Care Act 2012) and the interventions that wrap around them e.g. sexual health services, NHS Health Check, National Child Measurement Programme and the Public Health core offer to the CCG.

Safeguarding adults

- We work with partners including the NHS, police, ambulance and fire and rescue services to ensure people are safeguarded and able to live independently and free from abuse.
- We work in partnership to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse and work with a number of partners to raise awareness of domestic abuse. The Council works to ensure that responsive, good quality services are provided to vulnerable people and their families as they need them.
- We are working closely with partners to work sensitively with clients who are showing signs of self-neglect and where this is having a negative impact on their wellbeing.
- We continue to host the Tees-wide Safeguarding Adults Board Business Unit, to support the Board to function appropriately.
- We have implemented the recommendations of a Lean and Scrutiny review of the Deprivation of Liberty function to provide assurance that the relevant clients are safeguarded in the most efficient way.

Focussing on prevention and early intervention

- The focus on early intervention and prevention is aimed at motivating people to access preventative support and services by embedding prevention in every approach.
- We will work with partners and neighbourhoods and communities to develop a combined approach to health promotion and improvement, encourage 'at risk' groups to attitudes and behaviours to healthy living, and work with volunteers and informal carers to improve their health and well-being and that of the people around them, in their families workplaces and communities.
- We are designing a coordinated handholding and signposting service, to help adults access lower level support, working closely with the VCSE.
- Public Health is also supporting social care to embed key health and wellbeing messages and brief interventions into the work of social care teams. This is further supported by our work to promote national and regional prevention campaigns and awareness days on health and wellbeing issues.
- We have developed an innovative not-for-profit home care service with Five Lamps, a charity delivering a range of social and financial inclusion services. Five Lamps Home Care Service supports people in Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick to build their independence and wellbeing.

Moving towards integrated working with the NHS

- We continue to develop integrated arrangements working closely with local health services to respond to pressures on the health and care system and deliver services in a more joined-up way.
- Public Health is developing community-based health and wellbeing profiles, to inform the development of these integrated arrangements. The new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will support this approach, coordinating the Council, NHS, VCSE and other partners to focus on a community-based approach to improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

Maximising returns from using scarce financial resources

- Applying strategic commissioning to ensure that resources are directed to meet local need.
- Working in partnership to ensure that all publicly available resources are used to deliver maximum benefits to local people, including investment in evidence based prevention.
- Ensuring that we achieve best value for money in the services we commission and provide.
- An increased focus on both primary and secondary prevention in adult services and more widely through the Health and Wellbeing Board will reduce the burden on health and social care services. We are scaling up evidence-based interventions to help achieve this e.g. the work to address smoking.

Ensuring most effective and appropriate use of our own and our providers workforces

- We continue to address the training and development needs of our staff.
- We work with commissioned providers to ensure that they are able to implement workforce development appropriately, including providing access to some mandatory e-learning programmes. As part of our approach to prevention, we will also build capacity across the workforce, in delivering key health and wellbeing messages and brief interventions.

ARTS, LEISURE AND CULTURE

Deliver sustainable events and attractions that contribute to the delivery of vibrant and economically successful town centres and economic prosperity

- Since April, Council staff have run 7 specialist markets including a new records market and the celebration of the 192nd anniversary of the first passenger rail journey.
- Major events like the River Rat Race, Cycling Festival and Stockton Stages attracted significant visitor numbers and positive media coverage.
- Events like Mayors Sunday and Armed Forces Week have maintained the profile of our Civic role.
- Events like the opening of the refurbished Georgian and the BBC Music Heritage Plaque for the Globe have raised awareness of the improvements the Council is making to Stockton.
- SIRD, our biggest event, successfully presented over 90 shows in 4 days. 91% of visitors believed SIRD is a good use of Council resources, 92% think it is a good promotion of the town, 87% were satisfied with the event overall, it generated an estimated £1.4million spend in the Borough.
- The SIRD Carnival was the biggest in the 31 year history of the event, 1400 people took part including 10 groups with participants with additional needs and 6 early years and family groups.

Deliver an effective library service that supports literacy, access to knowledge and inspiring activities for everyone in safe accessible spaces across the Borough

- We have maintained 9 professionally staffed libraries and one mobile across the Borough attracting approximately 630,000 visitors in the 6 months to date. Around 294,000 items have been issued. Our staff have presented over 1600 events supporting reading, literacy, local history, arts and crafts to around 39,000 adults and children.
- The partnership with Newcastle Building Society at Yarm Library was shortlisted for an APSE award in the Public Private Partnership category and for the Edge Awards in the Physical Category for innovation in buildings, interiors and design.
- Our work in supporting children and young people with autism has been recognised both nationally and internationally through the Society of Chief Librarians and the International Federation of Library Associations.
- A successful bid to the Arts Council's Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund will provide two new library spaces designed to provide sensory experiences and new technology skills for all age groups and especially targeted at people with disabilities or who live with long term conditions such as dementia.

Support all sectors of our communities to secure enjoyment, learning and achievement through sport and active leisure

- Participation in the 'Sisters R Doing it' running programmes continue to grow with 63 groups involving in excess of 1200 women in locations across the Borough including Norton, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Billingham and Stockton.
- Events like Rat Race and Cycling Festival are planned to maximise the participatory element, creating an enjoyable and inspiring goal for people's personal healthy lifestyle efforts.
- As our strategic partner and facility manager, Tees Active Limited (TAL) have run a range of programmes and open sessions across the major leisure facilities at SPLASH, Billingham Forum, Thornaby Pavilion and the Barrage. Total visits are up 3% on the same period last year, approximately 23,000 for the 5 months to August. Barrage visits are up 4% on last year, health & fitness up 6.5%, school swimming lessons up 7% to a record 2000 school swimmers per week.
- The award winning Club 55 collaboration between TAL, Thirteen, Mind and Age UK aimed at inactive older adults attracted 335 individuals making over 4,000 visits.
- Leisure and Sports Development Team won the APSE 'Sports and Leisure Service Team of the Year' award for its Sporting Steps programme. Weekly the programme attracts 41 different adults with learning disabilities and mental health conditions.

OUR COUNCIL

Strategic links

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) summarises the Council's financial position over the next 3 years and is reviewed and approved annually by Cabinet and Full Council. Cabinet receive quarterly update reports that contain key indicators plus key announcements and developments.

The Shaping a Brighter Future programme is a long term commitment to continue to invest in our employees. The Smarter Working in Stockton programme is challenging and changing the way we think about work, how we do it and how we can work smarter. Cabinet receive an annual report on progress.

Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership, was established in May 2008. Cabinet receive an annual report that contains key indicators plus key announcements and developments.

Deliver a balanced and sustainable medium term financial plan

- MTFP was prepared and approved by Council and monitoring reports have been reported to Cabinet. Work has commenced on the review in preparation for 2018 budget report.
- We are still awaiting details and confirmation of the proposals around business rate retention and this makes planning particularly difficult.
- The majority of the savings programme has been delivered or is on target and the programme is now integrated with the Smarter Working Programme across the Council.
- Pro-active Treasury Management activity, in line with our strategy and advice from our advisors is leading to diversification of investments is leading to increased investment income which is mitigating problems caused by reducing base interest rates.
- Continued to support the preparation of business cases and plans for major developments such as the Globe theatre, the Hampton by Hilton hotel and the crematorium.

Maximise and safeguard income for the Council

- The overall Council Tax collection rate for 2016-17 was 96.3%. Long term collection rates remain very high, with over 98.5% of the annual debit collected after three years. Levels of recovery including the issue of summonses remain very much on par with volumes issued last year.
- The overall Business Rates collection rate is ahead of target at the end of September.

Ensure the Council uses its assets effectively

- Completed the school investment strategy which will result in £37m investment and this has been approved by Cabinet.
- Completed the asset transfer of Marsh House Avenue Community and Sports Centre to Onsite Building Trust on behalf of a partnership including a range of voluntary organisations which will see the facility remain in community use and enhanced.
- Progressing the disposal of the former EDC site and Blakeston site.
- Currently undertaking a review of all land and assets to develop the next phase of our disposal strategy.

Develop and ensure delivery of a robust governance framework

- A revised Council Plan and reporting arrangements have been developed.
- Statement of Accounts completed and approved by Audit Committee, audited with no material errors.
- Annual governance statement prepared and presented to Audit Committee.
- Audit plan delivered and shared audit service with Darlington now in place.

Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services

- Development and implementation of the Smarter Working in Stockton (SWiS) programme is now well underway. This will consider the use of technology to transform the way we work and interact with our customers.
- Completed reviews of Revenues and Benefits, Information and Improvement Service, Commissioning and Procurement. The procurement review resulted in a new procurement function within a revised corporate operating model and this is now in place.
- Customer service front line performance continues to be strong. Demand varies but in the first half year 60.3% of calls were answered within 3 minutes and 89% of queries were dealt with at the first point of contact.
- We continue to work on the “Do-it-online” campaign to promote channel shift, 10 Revenues and Benefits forms have been added to the website plus the new corporate change of address form. As at the 30th September the following customer services have dealt with:
 - 5604 Online forms completed
 - 51049 visits to our Customer Service Centre’s
 - 114309 calls to Customer Services (excluding switchboard)
 - 11709 e-mails
 - 8488 registrations for My Stockton

Continue to attract, develop and support diverse, capable and resilient employees

- We continue to invest in the development of our workforce through the Shaping a Brighter Future programme.
- We continue to transform how we deliver services through our programme of service reviews. So far this year we have seen a further net reduction in our workforce of 93. The total reduction in the workforce over the past 6 and a half years is now 1,170 people, a reduction of 28%.
- We continue to work to improve the diversity of our workforce with progress towards our target of having a workforce that is reflective of our residents, customers and stakeholders. Our recently published Workforce Equality Information Report highlights small steps forward. We have retained our Disability Confident Employer Status and are working towards achieving Higher Level accreditation. We have continued to perform well in our Equal Pay Audit and we support our four active Age, LGBT, BME and Disability Staff Forums. We have taken another step towards the Council target of being a Living Wage Employer with the introduction of a new rate of pay for apprentices and deletion of the two lowest pay bands.
- We have introduced a new programme of apprentice recruitment to meet the newly introduced Public Sector duty.
- Our programme of recruiting hard to fill posts is proving successful – the high profile social worker recruitment campaign has been particularly effective.
- We have updated the Intranet and introduced a weekly “Hive” micro-survey to help us communicate effectively with and understand the views and needs of our employees.
- We have carried out a Scrutiny review of sickness absence to ensure that our policies and support mechanisms are working as effectively as possible to support our employees to be at work. Sickness absence levels have fallen to an average of 3.9 days lost per FTE in the first half of the year, a 9% improvement on the same level last year.
- We have updated and revised the Domestic Violence policy to support employees and to bring the policy in line with the new Domestic Violence Strategy.

Deliver effective communication

- We have agreed the 2017/18 Key campaigns agreeing to focus our communications activity on eight key external campaigns:
 - The Council's vision is of an economically prosperous Borough that is dynamic, exciting and inviting with infrastructure to support the development of business start-ups, business growth, new jobs and skills.
 - The Council's priority is to protect the vulnerable
 - The Council's vision is for the borough to be a place where people are supported to be healthy.
 - Stockton-on-Tees offers an exciting year-round programme of world-class events that deliver amazing experiences for our residents and visitors and bring huge economic value to the Borough.
 - We have six thriving towns in the borough – each with their own distinct character and history. We value and support them all.
 - We're providing more of our services online. Visit www.stockton.gov.uk to carry out a wide range of Council business.
 - We need more people to become SBC-Foster Carers in the Borough.
 - At Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council – we're all ambitious, effective and proud to serve
- We continue to produce the popular Stockton News. The May and July editions have been delivered to all households in the borough.
- We continue to provide an active and responsive media service. During the first half of the year the team dealt with 378 media enquiries and issued 183 Press Releases as well as managing a number of high profile media events for the launch of The Globe and in support of major events such as SIRF.
- We continue to support our 42 social media sites across a range of platforms as well as 8 websites, providing vital information as well as promoting events and public campaigns.