

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY**

26 JULY 2022

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL PLAN 2021/24 UPDATE

Summary

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the Council Plan 2021/24 and progress on the priority actions in 2021/22.

Recommended that the report be noted.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

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

DETAIL

1. This report focuses on the implementation of the Council Plan 2021/24. This is therefore the year end update on progress during 2021/22.
2. As members will recall a new Council Plan 2022/25 was agreed by Cabinet in February 2022 and at Council in March 2022.
3. An update on each of the Council Plan priorities is set out in Annex 1. The report indicates significant progress in all areas of this year's priorities.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITY FOCUS IN 2021/22

4. Cabinet were also provided with a report in September 2021 with an overview of the work being undertaken to address the four key service areas identified in the 2019 residents survey as priority areas for improvement:
 - a. Community Safety. We have appointed 12 additional Civic Enforcement Officers. This additional resource will focus on our main town and village centres, supporting the local economy and continuing efforts to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. This additional resource has also allowed more time for the existing Civic Enforcement Officers to focus on resident priorities deeper within our communities, as identified by surveys and recent consultations.
 - b. Road and pavement maintenance and repairs including targeted grounds maintenance and pavement and kerbside maintenance. We have carried out an additional 26 carriageway schemes, an area covering 23,500 square metres or approximately 4km of carriageway. Four of these schemes were trial areas for a new material using a rubber crumb additive made from recycling old car tyres. In addition approximately 4,500 square metres of planned patching work has been carried out, which is the equivalent of treating 2,000 potholes. We have continued large-scale street cleansing works resulting in a cleaner and more attractive environment for our residents, businesses and visitors. In total, we have undertaken 76 job requests from all areas of the Borough including embankment clearances, weed removal, major fly tip clearance, graffiti clearance, programmed cleansing of the A66, autumn leaf

clearance, bonfire removal and back alley rubble removal. We also carried out additional gritting during the winter to enable completion of scheduled refuse collections.

- c. Support services for elderly people building on the Adult Social Care Strategy. The Council continues to work with stakeholders to support the delivery of services for older people post COVID. This work has included looking at how services, such as day opportunities, should evolve to meet the new expectations of people and their families, addressing the challenges of local care markets through support with recruitment and retention and implementing key actions following the Social Care Reform White Paper last year.
- d. Family hubs. A major restructuring of family support functions has been undertaken, including a successful procurement of a strategic partner to support aspects of delivery. The family hubs offer has been improved to offer a wide range of support to communities including drop-ins, parenting courses, health advice and community activities. The family support offer has now been streamlined and also now includes therapeutic work and family group conferencing. Family workers are now based within family hubs alongside other services and partner agencies. Family Action, our appointed strategic partner, have commenced working with us to improve the offer of universal family support for those children and families involved with social care services.

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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
<p>1. Improve the support we give to families to help them stay together where they can and to provide more capacity in the borough to support children where this isn't possible.</p>	<p>Strategic partnership for families live from 1 April (volunteering, support and family time). Additional borrowing to support additional in house and joint venture children's home provision agreed by Cabinet.</p>
<p>2. Help schools to improve pupil wellbeing, reduce exclusions, improve careers advice and to continue the drive to improve educational attainment for all pupils, including those with additional needs, recognising the disruption caused by Covid and the 'catch-up' support required.</p>	<p>Whole pathway commissioning for CAMHS process continues. Billingham schools EHWB offer, to be extended to North Stockton. SEND strategy action plan for 22/23 agreed. Additional places in special schools commissioned, additional models being developed for special / mainstream hybrid provision.</p>
<p>3. Develop a new approach to support the best start in life through a focus on 'pregnancy, birth and beyond', and an emphasis on speech, language and communication development.</p>	<p>Best Start strategy in place. Speech and language programme delivered in partnership with I-CAN. Programme of evidence based training is being rolled out to early years settings to support them to improve speech language and communication development and that capital funding has been provided for schools to develop language rich outdoor environments for the early years.</p>
<p>4. Develop more services to help people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and to make sure that they are not lonely.</p>	<p>The Council developed Social lights with Catalyst. Social Lights is a volunteering service that supports vulnerable people to access communities. There has now been a total of 12 volunteers who have completed training to become Social Lights volunteers and Catalyst are continuing to promote the service and recruit more</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	<p>supporters. Initial feedback has been positive: clients and families supported by Social Lights Team have expressed how valuable this support is to them and their families.</p> <p>Wag & Co, a visiting dogs charity which the Council has commissioned to provide support befriending vulnerable older people in their own homes as well as in care homes / hospitals, have restarted visits following COVID restrictions.</p> <p>The Council's Reablement Service provides Home Care and Rehabilitation to people in Stockton and is rated "Good" by the Regulator Care Quality Commission. A work strand is currently underway to enhance the "out of home" activities and support provided to people within the Reablement Services. Social Inclusion and community focus to rehabilitation in addition to care at home.</p>
<p>5. Improve the quality of care within adults' residential homes in the borough and to support them as they continue to adapt to dealing with the challenges arising from Covid.</p>	<p>Supported care homes in the Borough to take up the opportunity to play an active part in research to improve care for all, foster innovation and enhance people's experiences of care. 9 care homes are currently registered as being 'research ready' with work ongoing to encourage other care homes to engage.</p> <p>The fourth cohort of the Well Led Programme is nearing completion. 18 managers across the sector have been active with similar positive results to previous groups.</p> <p>Developed a Health and Care homes Collaborative in partnership with Senior Clinical Matrons at North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust. Community Matrons will be running peer support sessions with staff in care home settings to develop partnership working, staff skills and implement learning from case studies.</p> <p>Cruse Bereavement have been commissioned to offer support to staff, residents and their family and friends who may have experienced loss and bereavement. The offer includes access to one to one and group support, online resources, and training for staff.</p> <p>Provider and Market Management (PAMMs) inspection undertaken in all care homes. Ratings produced for every home, action plans agreed and implementation monitoring carried out. Contract management and compliance meetings held with all care homes to complement PAMMs inspections.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
<p>6. Review out of area placements and day options provision for adults to ensure as many services as possible are provided within the borough.</p>	<p>The Council is preparing to engage with the market to share demand information and seek further local opportunities for residential provision for people with a learning disability and autism to support people to return to the borough and ensure people who may require residential care are able to remain in Stockton on Tees</p> <p>With respect to day opportunities provision, the need for equipment to meet people’s personal care needs, including hoists, has been identified as a reason for referrals to out of Borough day opportunities. As a result, work is on-going to look at how the successful Changing Places grant application can be used to enhance the way our in-house day opportunities are provided and increase in-Borough options for individuals</p> <p>Social Work teams are continuing to support adults who previously used the Croft in Sunderland to access Ware Street in Stockton-on-Tees. There are 3 people accessing the Croft and work is ongoing to enable these individuals to transition to Ware Street.</p>
<p>7. Continue to lead the public health response to Covid and support the approach to recovery, working with partners in the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p>	<p>Public Health continues to provide public health and infection control advice to education, workplaces and social care settings and responds to queries regarding covid from members of the public.</p> <p>Working with UKHSA and OHID to provide surveillance of covid infections in Borough.</p> <p>All testing sites are being closed for testing, with Wellington Square continuing to host walk in vaccination clinics providing low threshold access to evergreen offer and spring booster.</p> <p>Post covid support pilot project with Tees Active has started to see patients referred through GPs and North Tees Post covid service.</p> <p>Working with SBC and NHS comms to promote vaccinations and updated covid prevention advice.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
<p>8. Work with the NHS on the proposals as outlined in the Integration and Innovation White Paper and the forthcoming Health and Care Bill.</p>	<p>Work continues with the NHS on supporting social care providers regarding infection prevention and control, hospital discharges and community rehabilitation.</p> <p>The work of the ICS continues, planning around the design for potential Integrated Care Partnership and model for Tees Valley and Place based working.</p> <p>Executive Design Team for ICS established, three meetings held with meeting of NHS Finance leads and LA Directors of Resources imminent. SBC has representation on key groups.</p> <p>A delay to the implementation of the Integrated Care System has been announced, this will now be early July depending on Legislation being passed.</p> <p>There are ongoing discussions regarding the Integrated Care Board, the Integrated Care Partnership and the proposed four Sub-Committees.</p>
<p>9. Develop a new approach to tackling inequality in the borough and to ensure that we deliver targeted support and help to those currently living in poverty to improve their outcomes, including around health inequalities and emotional health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Cabinet report on Fairer Stockton-on-Tees in April 22 included Action Plan for 22/23.</p>
<p>10. Consult on, develop and deliver a new community safety plan in consultation with key partners, reflecting the community safety priorities of residents.</p>	<p>A new community safety strategy has been developed with key partners as part of the Safer Stockton Partnership. This strategy was approved and published on the 1st April as required.</p>
<p>11. In partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade, support the Arson Reduction Strategy, aimed at further reducing deliberate fire setting within our communities.</p>	<p>Arson reduction strategy support on going, with daily work in partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade taking place. The Cleveland plan is a long term strategic vision for Stockton on Tees and we will continue to support this aim which is also aligned to the wider community safety strategy.</p>
<p>12. Explore the options around the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) in Stockton-on-Tees.</p>	<p>Scrutiny review of PSPO commenced via the Crime and Disorder Select Committee took place with a set of recommendations approved by Cabinet in February 2022. An action plan has been developed and agreed by the Crime and Disorder Select Committee, who will hear timely updates on progress.</p>

OUR PLACES

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

Great places to live and visit

Clean and green spaces

Rich cultural experiences

PRIORITY	UPDATE
13. Develop options to increase the number of affordable homes in the borough.	Preparatory work ongoing. This links to the wider Asset Strategy and will be formed by a recently commissioned a Specialist/Supported Housing Needs Assessment (due to report in 2022/23).
14. Continue redevelopment of the Sycamores estate in Stockton.	The development of the Sycamores continues with Keepmoat leading the development and sales. The former Elm House site (bungalow development) is complete and after significant interest all bungalows are now let.
15. Review the private landlord-led membership scheme to ensure that we continue to support the improvement of the quality of private rented homes in the borough.	Following Cabinet approval in September 2021, work is underway to inform a Selective Licensing Option appraisal, once complete a update report will be presented back to Cabinet.
16. Work in partnership with the Tees Valley local authorities, Durham and Newcastle to procure new waste management arrangements.	The procurement concluded in February 2022 with preferred bidder expected July 2022. The process of developing inter-authority agreements continues and a Local Authority Special Purpose Vehicle (LASPV) working group has been agreed by the project board. Cabinet report to be tabled to approve LASPV recommendations.
17. Develop an ambitious carbon reduction and environmental sustainability strategy for the borough.	The strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2022.
18. Develop and adapt our events programme across the borough to respond to the pandemic and inspire confidence about our futures.	Reflecting the changing levels of COVID restrictions, the Council's Autumn and Winter event programme has included a return of a number of large-scale events. The Fireworks and Sparkles events were particularly well attended.

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	Event Support for new events across the Borough is continuing and the contribution of the Independent Safety Advisory Group is being reviewed as part of the annual cycle of continuous improvement.
19. Attract new visitors and tell the stories of our communities through Preston Hall Museum and Grounds.	Preston Park has continued to attract high levels of visitors throughout the pandemic. The museum has reopened to the public and exhibitions delayed by Covid are now being restaged, including the Behind the Seams show. Overall visitor numbers are slightly lower than the same period in 2019. The Levelling Up Fund bid for South Stockton includes significant investment in the museum and grounds and detailed plans for new exhibition space, rail heritage features, improved toilets and café are being worked on.

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
<p>20. Deliver a new place branding campaign for the borough to encourage inward investment and development.</p>	<p>Brand name, concepts and design completed. 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</p>
<p>21. Develop and implement the vision for our town centres, recognising and understanding the full impact Covid will place on their use.</p>	<p>Stockton – transition from Castlegate progressing. Only three tenants remain unresolved. CPO has been served to ensure decant. procurement for Waterfront park and demolition has been undertaken and contractors will be appointed in May with demolition to commence soon afterwards.</p> <p>Thornaby – Town Deal priorities and funding approved by Cabinet with full business case submitted in May 2022.</p> <p>Billingham – Update valuation report received. Bid being prepared for Levelling Up fund Round 2 to be submitted in July 2022.</p> <p>Ingleby Barwick – public engagement undertaken in February 2022 with detailed design of park extension taking place in 2022.</p> <p>Norton – public engagement for duck pond improvements completed in September 2021 and implementation anticipated to begin spring 2022. Public engagement for southern end traffic improvements undertaken in December 2021 with expected implementation in summer 2022.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	<p>Yarm – planning application for town hall refurbishment submitted January 2022. New toilet provision identified within existing Library and agreed with stakeholders. Likely implementation summer 2022.</p>
<p>22. Develop options for increasing the availability of employment land.</p>	<p>Draft Options Appraisal for Durham Lane Industrial Estate received in January. Site investigations are continuing. We are also exploring other potential sites across the borough.</p>
<p>23. Increase skills and employment prospects including a new Employment and Training Hub to support people into work, including those most impacted by Covid.</p>	<p>Second temporary hub now operational in Wellington Square. Permanent solution will be within Wellington Square and construction work has now started on site with completion due in May 2022. Established links with many businesses and partners, including with Teesworks. Social media now operational and promoting training and job opportunities. Initial Hub recruitment now complete. Work continues on “spoke” links.</p>
<p>24. Develop local supply chains and social value in contracts to stimulate local economic activity</p>	<p>Social value measures are incorporated into council contracts with other opportunities being reviewed, particularly within large construction contracts. Review of current procurement activity to identify potential opportunities for local employers will be undertaken later in the year.</p>
<p>25. Deliver the major transport-related projects at the Portrack Relief Road, Billingham and Eaglescliffe Station improvements, Elton Interchange, and improvements along the A689 corridor.</p>	<p>Portrack Relief Road – Design complete and land negotiations ongoing, planning application on hold. It has been confirmed City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding cannot be used on road schemes so alternative funding will be required to enable the scheme to be delivered.</p> <p>Billingham Station – New bridge and lifts planned for completion by end of 2022.</p> <p>Eaglescliffe Station – Full business case submitted. Bridge to be delivered by Network Rail, car park and access road by SBC in 2022/23. Planning application for car park submitted.</p> <p>Elton Interchange – Planning permission granted, developer funding received, contract signed with a start on site due summer 2022.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
	<p>A689 – Awaiting a decision on Major Route Network bid submitted to DfT which includes an upgrade to the A19/A689 junction. Footway/cycleway bridge & Hanzard Drive designs completed awaiting developer funding to deliver schemes.</p>
<p>26. Understand and respond to the implications of changes in travel patterns as a result of the Covid pandemic</p>	<p>National Highways & DfT statistics show that for the north traffic flow on main roads is now back to 99.8% of pre-Covid levels. Car traffic is 98.4% pre-Covid levels. Light & Heavy goods vehicle movements are 9.4% & 4% respectively higher than pre-Covid levels. Bus patronage levels are around 25% below pre-Covid levels on weekdays and 22% down at weekends while rail travel still remains around 65% pre-Covid levels. The TVCA have launched a Bus Service Improvement Plan with the LA's and are due to enter into an Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators to help encourage more people back on to buses.</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
27. Review our office accommodation and exploit digital technologies to ensure maximum cost effectiveness and accessibility, including learning from the arrangements put in place in response to Covid.	The project team has been established to take forward the required works to Dunedin House. Initial surveys are underway as well as discussions on the internal layout/design and a plan and timeline is currently being developed.
28. Review surplus land and assets and develop plans for disposal or 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.
29. Launch an updated website with new and improved online services.	The new website was launched in March 2022. The new site includes additional online services and a new "My Council" feature which allows residents to create an account which allows a tailored view of the website content.
30. Deliver the Shaping a Brighter Future programme to ensure this remains a great place to work.	The Shaping a Brighter Future programme has taken a significant step forward this year as all elements of the programme were transferred into permanent ongoing services from October 2021. The mainstreaming of the programme signifies the permanent commitment to the agreed workforce culture statement and to the activities and policies which make it a reality.
31. Respond to the Local Government and Parliamentary boundary reviews.	<p>Local Government Boundary Commission further limited consultation closed in January 2022. The Commission have advised of their final recommendations on 29 March and we expect to implement these recommendations following Parliamentary approval at the 2023 Local Elections.</p> <p>The Boundary Commission for England continue to consider and consult upon the proposed Parliamentary Constituencies, final report expected July 2023.</p>

PRIORITY	UPDATE
<p>32. Lead on the Covid-secure delivery of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayor, Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner elections and 5 local by-elections in May 2021.</p>	<p>May 2021 Elections completed and reviewed. Business continuity arrangements have seen a change in print supplier. Consideration is being given to the Elections Bill 2021 and the impact this will have on electoral services. In addition the Fixed Term Parliament Act has been repealed.</p>
<p>33. Create opportunities for work experience, internships and apprenticeships in the council's workforce.</p>	<p>The apprenticeship programme continues to be successful with 41 new apprenticeship appointments made as part of our annual apprenticeship programme in September 2021. As at 31st December 2021 the Council had a total of 103 Employees undertaking an apprenticeship qualification. The apprenticeships are at all levels (Level 3-7) and in all Directorates.</p> <p>In addition to our commitment to apprenticeships, the Council has also created 7 "Kickstart" opportunities for 16-24 year olds on Universal Credit and as of 31 December 2021 had recruited 3 individuals to the scheme.</p>
<p>34. Review the Medium Term Financial Plan, in the context of ongoing uncertainty on the funding of local government and to account for the immediate and longer term implications of Covid.</p>	<p>The Medium Term Financial Plan Strategy report was approved by Council in February, as part of the budget setting cycle.</p> <p>A wider review of the MTFP will be required once there is further clarity around the Fair Funding Review and on the future of business rates retention.</p>