

AGENDA ITEM

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

27 JULY 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

COUNCIL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Summary

This report provides an update on the Council Plan and the priority actions for 2020/21.

Recommended that the report be noted.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

To update on the progress in implementing the Council Plan priorities taking into account the impact of COVID-19.

DETAIL

This report again focuses on the implementation of the Council Plan 2020/21. However, given the exceptional circumstances in which activity to deliver the priorities has been undertaken, the report also summarises some of the key additional activities undertaken over the past 12 months in response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 impact

1. A detailed report on the implications of COVID-19 was presented to Cabinet in April 2021. It described the impact of COVID-19 in Stockton and on the Council, our response and where next in terms of ongoing response and recovery.
2. Despite the impact of COVID-19 work has progressed on many priorities in the Council Plan. Services and staff have responded flexibly, innovatively and effectively to ensure there is minimum disruption to service delivery. This reflects a huge commitment and effort from all services in responding quickly to the challenges, and in maintaining service provision, even as services are impacted by positive cases, staff absence through isolation or changing guidance and levels of restriction.
3. We have had to adapt and change the way services are delivered. Further details are included in the April 2021 Cabinet report, but the following summarise some of the key additional roles and responsibilities throughout the past 12 months:
 - Safe working practices and COVID-Secure status for the organisation, ongoing democratic involvement through the delivery of virtual meetings and COVID-secure elections in May for the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayor, Police and Crime Commissioner and Council and Parish by-elections.
 - Home working for the majority of office-based staff through adoption of Microsoft Teams, and roll out of laptops and tablets
 - Mobilised volunteers to deliver 3,397 food parcels, 3,024 prescriptions and undertake 936 shopping trips and many other kinds of help to the vulnerable during lockdown

- Continued to carry out assessments for adults who have a need and support services are commissioned including home care and reablement.
- Adapted ways of working at Rosedale rehabilitation centre to keep people safe, healthy and provide a high quality of life
- Intensified our work with schools, creating a single point of contact for queries, and the development of a vulnerable children matrix so we can ensure support is being provided to the most vulnerable children, co-ordinated the preparation and delivery of on average 1,300 packed lunches each day.
- Led the local public health response; developed outbreak management plans and responses, including the provision of advice, guidance, support and risk assessment support to workspaces, schools and other settings, 7 days a week.
- Played a leading role in the provision of PPE, delivering over 3 million pieces of equipment.
- Set up testing sites and helped others to set up theirs – in schools, workplaces and in the community.
- Recruited and trained a dedicated team of COVID Marshals to help keep residents and businesses safe across Stockton-on-Tees.
- Created a logistics hub at the back of Splash by installing a marquee and converting the sports activity hall.
- Distributed over £33m of business grants to a range of businesses across the Borough.
- Introduced innovative ways of delivering some of our services in COVID-19 conditions such as at Halcyon Centre, Funky Feet, Rosedale rehabilitation centre, on-line libraries, on-line events, Tees Valley Music Service, short breaks for children and families and many more.
- Introduced new services such as working in partnership with Catalyst to establish the Community Support Team and the Shielding Hub

Council Plan priorities

4. In this context, the delivery of priorities in the Council Plan has been sustained wherever possible. COVID-19 has had an impact in delaying only some actions, or in requiring others to be put on hold. In some cases this was as a result of direct Government advice and guidelines, in some down to the fact that some activities had to be paused or suspended as staff were not able to undertake their usual roles, and in others it was related to the restrictions imposed on other partners. The detail of this is set out in **Annex 1**.

Conclusions and next steps

5. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, we have continued to make considerable progress on the implementation of the actions in the Council Plan in 2020/21. Very few priorities are on hold, though some are being refocused to reflect the experience and impact of COVID-19, and have therefore been reprofiled for completion in 2021/22.
6. The key priorities for 2021/22 identified as part of the emerging work on recovery are set out in the new Council Plan 2021-24 approved by Council in March 2021.
7. An update on the priorities for 2021/22 will be brought to Cabinet in October 2021.

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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 on year end position
1. Plan and implement new ways of improving children's emotional health	Whole Pathway Commissioning work led by TEWV for the Tees Valley. Mental health support team established for Billingham schools. New high level approach reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2021. Some delays to process, and clarification needed on the start date for a new model.
2. Improve the support we give to families to help them stay together	Review of family support model being undertaken. New single family support function created in Children's Service review. New model to be in place for September 2021.
3. Help schools to improve pupil wellbeing and reduce exclusions	New outreach and pathway centres commissioned. Outreach programme developed for maintained schools, TVCA funded programme in place, and a new framework for alternative provision put in place for school use. Will continue to be monitored throughout 2021/22.
4. Improve the consistency and continuity of social work practice	Phase 2 of work with South Tyneside to support care planning; includes additional audits and recommendations. Outcomes built into phase 2 of the review to take place by November 2021.
5. Reduce the number of children who need to be in care	Valuing Care model being implemented. Contextual safeguarding model being developed to safeguard most vulnerable young people jointly with Hartlepool BC and Cleveland Police, for implementation autumn 2021.
6. Increase capacity in our fostering service and residential children's homes	Work to develop fostering options continues. Work on new 5 bed children's home commenced. Project work underway with Tees Valley Councils on further residential children's homes. Business case developed for Tees Valley Councils to consider in summer 2021.
7. Review the quality and suitability of our 'out of area' adults' placements to try, where possible, to support people to return to live in the borough	Analysis and understanding of reasons for out of area placement, specifically for people with complex care and support needs. Procurement of a new residential framework starting April 2021 for people with learning disability and autism which allows the Council to tender for additional provision to expand the residential offer in Stockton on Tees to

Priority	Update on year end position
	support people returning from existing OOB placements. Supporting 2 people to take up a tenancy at Kirkdale House Apartments from existing OOB residential placements. A review of functional mental health placements over the past 2 years identified 11 out of 20 placements were OOB. Further work is being undertaken to identify the service offer we need in Stockton on Tees to meet this need and will develop with the market during 2021/22. Financial analysis complete.
8. Continuously improve quality of care within adults' residential homes, and in response to the specific issues arising from Coronavirus	Preparation for new contractual framework for care homes. Continuing the care home protection group; continuing to address serious concerns under the protocol; distribution and monitoring of the ICF grant. Delivery of the second Well led cohort during 2020, which supported 16 managers of care homes and home care to develop their leadership competence. Continued engagement with all care home managers through the Leadership and Peer Support Group, which has provided invaluable as a forum to allow managers to meet, listen to guest presenters and share experiences/information. Quality Assurance Assessments (PAMMs) and contract compliance visits.
9. Progress integration opportunities with the NHS	Intermediate care workforce in place. Integration and shared roles staffing model rolled out across Health and social care. Development and launch of a new Stockton Integrated single point of access (iSPA), available 7-days a week. Continued progress on workforce integration across wider Health and Social care is ongoing. New hospital discharge pathways implemented. The Council has worked collaboratively with colleagues in the NHS to accelerate the deployment of ICT integration between the Council, NHS and care providers. This includes implementation of NHS Mail and Data Security and Protection Toolkit across all care providers; full deployment of capacity Tracker across all homes; and the introduction of proxy access for Medication.
10. Develop and test a community pathfinder approach, to support people who are lonely and living in social isolation	Work to be progressed as part of more detailed work on inequality and area working models as included in new priority in Council Plan 2021-24 will be reported to Cabinet in July 2021. In partnership with Catalyst, the council has funded a community volunteer coordinator post (2 years) whose role will impact on people who may be suffering loneliness in the community.
11. Develop coordinated approach to identifying adults at risk of poor health and design coordinated offer of early intervention and support	Approach to use data and intelligence to identify those most at risk has been paused due to COVID-19.
12. Support voluntary sports clubs to build community capacity	Moved to largely reactive response around funding issues. Recovery plan to refocus on proactive capacity building.
13. Lead a consultation on community safety priorities	The new community safety plan is on track for implementation in September 2021 following the consultation exercise which ended in April 2021.

Priority	Update on year end position
14. Review our approach in light of Coronavirus to ensure an effective continuation of the Targeted Action Area pilots in Stockton and North Thornaby	Work to be progressed as part of more detailed work on inequality and area working models as included in new priority in Council Plan 2021-24 will be reported to Cabinet in July 2021. Also developed approach working with community sector to maintain and increase engagement in the areas
15. Develop a whole-Council approach to improving health and wellbeing to address inequalities, and the impact of Coronavirus	Work to be progressed as part of more detailed work on inequality and area working models as included in new priority in Council Plan 2021-24 will be reported to Cabinet in July 2021.
16. Develop and pilot a physical activity programme in target communities	Work to be progressed as part of more detailed work on inequality and area working models as included in new priority in Council Plan 2021-24 will be reported to Cabinet in July 2021.

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
17. Develop a strategy to accelerate affordable housing delivery	This will be undertaken during 2021/22. The work will assess current affordable housing pipeline and consider sufficiency and potential interventions. It will include a housing needs assessment and link to Asset Review.
18. Continue with the re-development of the former Victoria estate	The development continues. Marketing commenced, show home open and sales are increasing. Elm House site development is now underway.
19. Develop options for increasing housing land	This is linked to Priority 17 above and will be part of the priority included in the Council Plan 2021-24.
20. Review delivery of the private landlord-led membership scheme	It was agreed by Cabinet that this work will be extended due to the impact of COVID-19 and will report to Cabinet in Autumn 2021.
21. Complete Ingleby Barwick leisure and library facility	Completed and opened Ingleby Barwick leisure and library facility.
22. Open The Globe	Completed the restoration of the Globe theatre. The art deco building has been restored to its former glory and has been handed over to the Ambassador Theatre Group who will deliver world-class comedy and music acts.
23. Review approach to refuse collection and recycling	The Waste Strategy for England consultation has been released and we are working on our responses which will be submitted in July 2021.
24. Work in partnership with the five Tees Valley local authorities, Durham and Newcastle to procure new waste management arrangement	This is being led by Hartlepool BC, with a board of all seven local authorities and managed by a team of consultants, now at preferred supplier stage.
25. Deliver plan for additional tree planting	Ongoing work on plan, funding opportunities and community engagement. Further implementation will be included as part of the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy to be completed by December 2021. We have planted 3,500 trees so far this year.

Priority	Update
26. To develop and adapt our fantastic annual events programme to work well in the Coronavirus environment	Current programme suspended due to COVID-19. Planning for 2021 programme continues and has been included as a priority in the 2021-24 Council Plan.
27. Improve the visitor facilities in Preston Park	Work on toilet improvements underway. Wider investment proposals on hold due to COVID-19.
28. Develop the next phase of the River Tees enhancement	Some work to develop prioritised interventions undertaken, but some work on hold due to COVID-19.
29. Strengthen safety procedures for events on Council land and training for event organisers	Paused as a result of suspension of current events programmes. As restrictions are relaxed work will continue on the development of a programme for the second half of 2021 and beyond.
30. Improve facilities for playing pitch sports	Planning for the development of multi-use facilities continues.
31. Continue to work towards carbon reduction targets at the Council and in the Borough 2020	Work to progress to net zero emissions is progressing. Further implementation will be included as part of the Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy to be completed by December 2021.

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
32. Ensure effective careers provision and support for all pupils, recognising the disruption in education as a result of Coronavirus	Implementation of recent Scrutiny review continues. Update given to schools on COVID-19 implications March 2021. This activity is included in the new priority for the Council Plan 2021-24.
33. Continue to work with early years settings and schools to raise educational attainment for all pupils, including those with additional needs	Schools to support 'catch up'. New provision for children at risk or exclusion and having been excluded being commissioned. SEND strategy being developed for June 2021.
34. Develop an approach to inclusive growth, responding to the implications of Coronavirus	New structure established to focus on Inclusive Growth. EES Hub opened on 12 th April 2021. This will develop and expand to include further partners and focus on skills and employment. Particular focus on impact of COVID-19 and included as a priority in the Council Plan 2021-24.
35. Develop options for increasing the supply of employment land	Work has commenced but this will not be complete this year and it will be incorporated into 2021-24 Council Plan. This will focus on the quality of land and how we can bring sites forward.
36. Review our approach to business engagement and develop a place branding campaign for the borough	Place branding campaign is being developed with plan for launch in the new year. This will focus on attracting investors and developing business in the Borough. Service review completed, Scrutiny review completed which outlines the role of the team going forward supporting business. Significant levels of support have been provided throughout current pandemic.
37. Develop and implement the vision for our town centres recognising and understand the full impact Coronavirus will place on their use	Masterplans and investment for each of the six town centres was approved at February 2021 Cabinet and Council. Roadmap of development and delivery in place showing completion of all physical aspects of town centres by 2025.
38. Work with Tees Valley Combined Authority on improving regional economic and transport infrastructure	Continue to link with TVCA as part of the Council Plan 2021-24 priorities.

Priority	Update
39. Work with Tees Valley Combined Authority on regional skills development	Continue to work with TVCA to develop a Strategy for skills across Tees Valley. This will link with work on Employment and Skills Hub and has been incorporated into the Council Plan 2021-24.
40. Develop routes to work to assist those furthest from employment	Successful Tees Valley wide 4-year programme, possibility of further extension in duration and scope. Monthly monitoring and output related funding agreement.
41. Maintain a safe transport network to ensure reliable access to learning and employment	Delivery of the overall programme of works for 2020/21 has been slightly delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 and adverse weather in Q4. Road casualties in 2020 are significantly down from 2019 mainly due to lower levels of traffic on our network as a result of COVID-19 related lockdowns.
42. Strengthen adult careers advice and guidance	Developmental work undertaken on the design of a dedicated service. Implementation delayed due to COVID-19.
43. Provide an integrated approach to early language development through reading	To be implemented as part of wider early years strategy following peer review. Strategy due to be agreed September 2021.

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
44. Review our medium-term financial plan following the national budget changes	MTEP report approved by Council in February 2021. The plan will be reviewed following the Spending review and any changes to Local Government Finance. The impact of COVID-19 will also be included in reports to Cabinet throughout the year.
45. Review office accommodation to ensure maximum cost effectiveness	The long-term plan is still on target and is linked to Town Centre redevelopment. A review of office use linked to the ways of working over recent months will be undertaken in 2021/22.
46. Improve ways of working using technology, including learning from the arrangements put in place in response to Coronavirus	The long-term plan is still on target and is linked to Town Centre redevelopment. A review of office use linked to the ways of working over recent months will be undertaken in 2021/22.
47. Review surplus land and assets and develop plans for disposal or development	Work is underway but completion of the review will be delayed until 2021/22. This will also link with the affordable housing and employment land actions.
48. Improve our online services for Revenues and Benefits customers	Whilst challenging in the current environment, this is on track and some online forms and interactions have gone live.
49. Deliver the Shaping a Brighter Future programme to ensure this remains a great place to work	The Shaping a Brighter Future programme has been refocussed this year due to impact of COVID-19 on employees. SBF now focuses on employee health and wellbeing and developing Setting the Scene staff updates and Induction programmes which are adapted to the virtual working arrangements under COVID-19.
50. Respond to the Local Government boundary review	Progressing in accordance with the project timeline. The next phase of consultation commenced in May 2021.
51. Deliver the 2020 apprenticeship recruitment programme	The 2020 Apprenticeship recruitment programme was scaled back due to COVID-19. However, recruitment of 14 apprentices was completed in 2020/21 and a further 15 are planned for September 2021. The Council is also participating as an employer in the Kickstart programme and has identified a number of 6-month work placements for 16 to 24 year olds in receipt of Universal Credit.

Priority	Update
52. Review the financial implications of recovery from Coronavirus	Refer to Priority 44 above