

Date: Monday 31 July 2023 at 1.30 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TU

Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair)
Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Michelle Bendelow
Cllr John Gardner
Cllr David Reynard
Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Cllr Ian Dalgarno
Cllr Sufi Mubeen
Cllr Hugo Stratton

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----------|--|-----------------|
| 1 | Evacuation Procedure | (Pages 7 - 8) |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest | |
| 4 | Minutes | |
| | To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 March 2023 | (Pages 9 - 12) |
| 5 | Overview Reports 2023 | |
| | - Community Services, Environment and Culture - Corporate Services - Finance, Development and Regeneration | (Pages 13 - 32) |
| 6 | Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2023-2024 | (Pages 33 - 34) |

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Scrutiny Support Officer, Rachel Harrison on email Rachel.Harrison@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

| Subject | Description |
|--|--|
| Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain |
| Sponsorship | Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. |
| Contracts | Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged. |
| Land and property | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income. |
| Licences | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer. |
| Corporate tenancies | Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of. |
| Securities | Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. |

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

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People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 20th March, 2023.

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE, Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Neil Mitchell, (CS, E&C); Chris Renahan, Margie Stewart-Piercy (FD&R); Rebecca Saunders-Thompson (CS)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Vice-Chair), Cllr Lee Spence, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley

**PEO
32/22** **Evacuation Procedure**

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

**PEO
33/22** **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**PEO
34/22** **Minutes 16 January 2023**

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**PEO
35/22** **Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations - Progress report for the previously completed Tees Credit Union review.**

The Select Committee considered a progress update including assessments of progress following implementation of the recommendations from the Tees Credit Union review. The overall aim of the review had been to consider the operation of the Credit Union since its merger with Moneywise in 2017 to ensure that it was serving the needs of the people of the Borough and specifically supporting the vulnerable who rely on it for the provision of loans, banking services and savings accounts at reasonable rates. This was the first time the update had been presented to the Committee. There were six outstanding recommendations.

The Committee commended the report and the work of Council Officers, the Tees Credit Union, and the Stockton & District Advice & Information Service.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Progress Update be noted, and the assessments of progress be confirmed.
- 2) the Action Plan in relation to the recommendations from the previously completed Scrutiny review be signed-off as fully achieved (no further updates required).

**PEO
36/22** **Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future**

The Head of Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure and the Assistant Director of Inclusive Growth and Development, presented an action plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future would be implemented and target dates for completion. The overall aim of the review had been to understand what funding was available for home efficiency improvements and whether this met the needs of the borough's residents. The review also examined the work that was taking place across the Tees Valley to create a local workforce fit for the demands of a green economy of the future.

Actions were focused on highlighting the need for new housing stock to be more energy efficient through tighter building regulations along with a commitment to raise awareness of new home energy efficiency initiatives and grants available to residents. Actions also focused on highlighting and promoting 'green jobs' at all levels, including entry level jobs. Timescales to implement actions ranged from September 2023 to March 2024.

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

The Committee welcomed the inclusion of recommendation one which focused on writing to government to urge that legislation was passed to improve energy efficiency measures in new homes.

It was stated that energy efficiency measures should be improved in older and new homes.

It was suggested that the number of onshore windfarms should be increased. Responding to questions on the Council's 'Big Community Switch', officers informed the Committee that the scheme was being constantly monitored and as soon as the volatility in the energy markets eased, the scheme would be resumed.

Questions were raised about the upcoming hydrogen trial in residential areas in Redcar and if officers had more information on this. Officers responded that they would conduct further research on the trial and provide information to Members.

AGREED that the Action Plan be approved, and the further information be provided as requested.

PEO 37/22 End of Term Report 2019-2023

Members were presented with the Scrutiny End of Term Report 2019-2023. Officers introduced the report and highlighted the achievements across the Scrutiny Committees during this term.

The following points were raised by the Committee:

The Committee commended the work of Council officers on the report and discussed the reviews undertaken.

A further update on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, following the May 2023 elections, was requested.

AGREED that the report be noted.

PEO Work Programme 2022-2023

38/22

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.
The Chair had nothing to update.
The next meeting would be held following the May 2023 elections.

AGREED that the Work Programme and Chair's update be noted.

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People Select Committee
Overview Meeting 2023
31 July 2023
Community Services, Environment and Culture

Context

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

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm where:

- This means the Borough will be a place where:
 - People live in cohesive and safe communities
 - People are supported and protected from harm
 - People live health lives

- This means that the Borough will have:
 - A growing economy
 - Improved education and skills development
 - Job creation and increased employment

- This means we will enjoy:
 - Great places to live and visit
 - Clean and green spaces
 - Rich cultural experiences

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

Performance Reporting

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

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

Community Services, Environment and Culture Director – Reuben Kench

Relevant services include:

- Customer Services and Digital
- Culture, Libraries and Events

Council Plan 2023-2026

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

The key priorities for Community Services, Environment and Culture are attached at Appendix 1.

Emerging Issues

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Emerging challenges and opportunities are summarised as follows:

Customer Services and Digital - Priorities for the year ahead

Relevant Services

- Customer Service Excellence
- Digital Services Group
- Telephone Contact Centre
- Customer Service Centres (Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby)
- Design and development of Council Web-sites
- Design and development of Online self-serve solutions
- MS 365 implementation and adoption
- Design, configuration and maintenance of customer related ICT solutions

Key Priorities 2023/24

- Design and implement digital solutions to reduce cost and provide a positive customer experience (Aiming for Digital transactions > 50% of all Customer Service transactions)
- Deliver a high standard of Customer Service Performance (Satisfaction rating > 90%; Average Call wait times < 8 minutes)
- Sustain Customer Service Excellence (CSE) external accreditation
- Lead, support and guide the digital transformation of Council services (supported by DSG)
- Embed MS365 in working practice to improve efficiency and service delivery
- Design and implement WCAG compliant GOSS websites to replace legacy websites

Customer Services and Digital – Challenges and opportunities

Key Challenges

- Contact centre resource planning is difficult due to:-
 - Staff retention / recruitment and training
 - Service changes and cost of living crisis resulting in increased service demand
- Limited Digital capacity to leverage opportunities for digital transformation within Transformation Programme timescales.

Key Opportunities

- Leveraging Digital Services Group and the strong culture of collaboration to drive digital transformation;
- Embedding MS 365 capabilities to improve workforce efficiency;
- Utilising Netcall Contact Centre to join up access to Council services providing a consistent 'front door' for customers.

Culture, Libraries and Events - Priorities for the year ahead

Relevant Services:

- Museum and Heritage Service
- Events Service
- Libraries and Information
- Tees Valley Museum Group/NPO

Key Priorities 2023/24

Museums and Heritage –

- Manage and deliver the major capital scheme project across PPMG within timescales and budgets
- Develop an interim Museum and Park visitor offer which can be delivered during the capital works including access to the Museum, café and car parks
- Review of PPMG operational systems and staffing resources post improvement works
- Develop a commercial and income strategy for the upgraded Visitor Destination (PPMG)
- Commence the rationalisation, decanting and moving of the Museum collection (NHLF Dynamic Collections Funding)
- Develop a digital strategy for PPMG to improve operational systems, customer experience and to support new programmes of work/exhibitions

Tees Valley Museum Group TVMG/NPO –

- Continue to lead and manage the TVMG consortium of the 5 local authority Museum Services, supporting programs that add value to Museum services core offer across the Tees Valley including:
 - Enhancing exhibitions and programming
 - Supporting learning
 - Improving all forms of accessibility
 - Community engagement and co- curation
 - Audience development
 - Staff development
 - Policy development
 - Promoting partnership working
 - Disseminating best Practice
- Recruit new members for the TVMG Board and set up a youth advisory group
- Completion of Poverty Proofing programme
- Embed fully the 'Museum of Missing Stories' programme which connects under-represented people and communities across the Tees Valley to their local Museums through sharing stories and adding them relevant objects to Museum collections.

Events –

- Deliver the Council's 2023/24 annual events programme
- Support and facilitate the delivery of the Festival of Thrift in Billingham
- Create a largescale event programme including events of national/international importance, which capitalises on the new Riverside Urban Park Development, and which demonstrable positive impacts to wellbeing, economic growth and place marketing
- Continued development and support for programme of events across the Borough
- Recruit new members for the SIRF Strategic Board and set up an independent oversight group
- Bid for additional Arts Council England Funding (Project Grants) to sustain SIRF delivery and to meet future aspirations in terms of programme
- Develop an environmental approach for the Council's festival and events programme
- Develop and support the delivery of the key strands of the S&DR Bicentenary Project, including leading an extensive festival, events and activity programme
- Review processes for Third Party Events requests on Council Land
- Introduce safety workshops for external community and charity led event planners.
- Continue to lead on Stockton's Independent Safety Advisory Group
- Work in partnership to develop a coherent programme of public artwork and activities in the Stockton Town Centre

Library and Information -

- Review Library and Information Services strategic framework and delivery model to continue to support Council priorities and local communities
- Continue to develop and deliver a programme of events and activities that support reading for pleasure (adults and children)
- Review performance management framework for Libraries and Information services including book issues, footfall, access to digital/PCs etc.

- Review of our Children's Programme to support the Council's Early Years strategy, with specific focus on speech and language development, which will include enhanced training for Library staff
- Strengthen Digital and ICT system support and maintenance with Libraries.
- Develop a digital inclusion action plan to support residents and communities, reducing the digital divide
- Enhancing the Innovation Station offer, including new digital equipment (as part of the Library Improvement Fund 50k) and introduce a new programme of learning activities
- Bid for ACE funding for the Crossing the Tees Book Festival 2025- 2028
- New Mobile Library Bus expected to be in service by January 2024
- Secure further funding for the Tees Valley Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) via the TVCA Shared Prosperity Fund
- Review the strategic direction of the Joint Archives Service

Culture, Libraries and Events – Challenges and opportunities

Museums –

- Opportunities to develop key partnerships with national organisation such as the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and The National Gallery to support and expand future programmes.
- Understand additional resources required to support the newly developed PPMG, including staffing structures and maintenance regimes within PPMG site
- Difficulties in recruiting staff due to pressure on the Culture Sector may lead to capacity issues.

TVMG/NPO -

- Opportunities to further develop place-based partnerships with other local cultural organisations, to deliver high quality and broader cultural opportunities to a wider and deeper audience
- Partners within the TVMG consortium may have differing levels of capacity and resources for cultural investment
- Difficulties recruiting staff within the Cultural and Heritage sector in relation to TVMG and across the consortium organisations

Events -

- Opportunity to support and work with new and emerging small businesses, artists and professionals within the culture sector in the Tees Valley
- New 'purpose built' events space will increase capacity for large scale work of national and international significance
- Impact on event delivery during the redevelopment of the Riverside Capital work, requires redesign of annual event programme for 2023 and 2024
- Increasing infrastructure and production costs due to cost of living/inflation rises may require redesigning of some events
- Balancing environmental impact against artistic quality and ambition, particular for national and international work

Library and Information

- Opportunity to review the Library outreach services in line with Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles
- Opportunity for Library Service to obtain Arts Council England/Libraries Connected new Accreditation Scheme
- Strengthen relationships/engagement with families, community groups, schools and nurseries
- Options for replacement footfall counters which are coming to end of lifespan/effectiveness
- Working with Prison Service to maximise Library Services within Prisons
- Review the longer-term delivery of the Tees Valley BIPC, aligning to the Council's Economic Development Team

APPENDIX 1 – COUNCIL PLAN - KEY PRIORITIES 2023-2024 - Community Services, Environment and Culture

A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive means we will enjoy:

- great places to live and visit
- clean and green spaces
- rich cultural experiences

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- finalise the plans for improvements in Yarm, Preston Hall Museum & Grounds and cycleway infrastructure in line with the Levelling Up fund allocation
- develop and implement the 2023 borough-wide events programme, incorporating celebrations for the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and ongoing preparations for Stockton & Darlington Railway Bicentenary

We will play our part in bringing about this vision for the Borough by being A Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve. This means that we will make sure that we provide:

- financial sustainability and value for money
- dedicated and resourceful employees
- strong leadership and governance

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- add new features and functions to the Council website and improve online services for customers

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People Select Committee
Overview Meeting 2023
31 July 2023
Corporate Services

Context

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

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- This means the Borough will be a place where:
 - People live in cohesive and safe communities
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- This means that the Borough will have:
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Performance Reporting

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Corporate Services Director – Ged Morton

Relevant services include:

- Communications
- Human Resources
- Legal Services
- Procurement and Governance
- Democratic Services

Council Plan 2023-2026

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

The key priorities for Corporate Services are attached at Appendix 1.

Emerging Issues

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Emerging challenges and opportunities are summarised as follows:

Communications - Priorities for the year ahead

- Deliver the media and social media requirements of the 2023/24 annual communications plans, including plans to support delivery of a full year of events and activities across our borough in 2023/24.
- We continue to develop our Social Media presence. For example, monthly reach figures for June 2023 showed over 1.1million impressions across our main corporate accounts. We will continue to develop new approaches across all platforms recognising that they key to successful engagement with our residents is ensuing that we generate relevant, high quality and interesting material.
- Social media metrics are collected monthly to ensure that we are reaching our residents appropriately and to inform future content.

Communications – Challenges and opportunities

Whether it is in respect of urgent public information, such as a school closure or dealing with a significant incident, responding to media enquiries, or ensuring our residents are aware of our latest events and activities in the borough the team operate in a fast-paced environment. Ensuring effective communication and engagement with our diverse communities and stakeholders and how we extend our reach to ensure that none of our residents are excluded remains at the forefront of the team's work, balanced at all times by the sensitivities of working in a political environment.

Human Resources - Priorities for the year ahead

The HR Service team of remains focussed on providing a proactive HR support service to the whole organisation. We will

- Lead the development of a new workforce strategy which will address organisation wide issues encompassing
 - Workforce planning
 - A Great Place to Work
 - Employer of choice
 - Employee Recognition
 - Employee Engagement
 - Supporting our employees
 - Developing our Employees
 - Developing our Future Leaders
- Continue to provide a professional, responsive HR Advisory Service across the Council and to Schools & Academies in relation to Sickness, Disciplinary, Capability and Grievance issues.
- Develop an action plan for the Employee Health, Wellbeing & Engagement Team including a calendar of events and activities for 2023/24 and run a regular Blog/Newsletter via KYIT and on service Plasma Screens.
- Deliver the Council's Corporate Training & Development programme including mandatory training for Employees and Managers
- Deliver the annual apprenticeship programme, and support ad hoc recruitment of apprenticeships within the Council and maintained Schools to support workforce planning

Human Resources – Challenges and opportunities

The Council face a number of workforce challenges which the development of a workforce strategy will help address capacity is frequently highlighted by managers as a significant area of concern

Attracting talented people and retaining them continues to be an area of focus. In common with many public sector organisations difficulties are faced in attracting and retaining the right skilled and diverse workforce, particularly in areas where the private sector can offer more competitive pay and benefits or where there are only limited number of qualified people to draw from.

As of 31 March 2023, the Council employed 62 Apprentices on apprenticeship contracts. This is an increase from 56 apprenticeships at March 2022 and 42 at 31 March 2021. Opportunities to “grow our own” will address pressures of recruitment and retention over time, but it is important to ensure that apprentice opportunities are created in the areas where the future demand is predicted by effective workforce planning.

We continue to face the challenge of Sickness Absence. Sickness absence has steadily increased since 2014 with levels remaining challengingly high at 10.1 average days lost per FTE last year compared with 9.8 days in 2021/22. Absence due to Stress, Anxiety, Depression & Mental Health is the lead reason for absence (27%). Musculoskeletal is the second highest reason (17.4%) and is particularly high in some manual roles.

Legal Services - Priorities for the year ahead

The Legal Services team remains focussed on providing a proactive and broad-based legal service to the organisation through:

- The Property, Contracts and Regulatory team
- The Children's Social Care team
- The Adults & Litigation team
- The Legal support team

- And, through the delivery of Monitoring Officer and Proper Office functions.

Legal Services – Challenges and opportunities

We continue to face operational demands arising from pressures which are mirrored right across the organisation this year has seen increasing demands in adults' litigation and across SEND (supporting our statutory duties) as well as commercial and property work. Investment in the legal team around children's services is now showing real dividends with a much-reduced reliance on external support. We will continue to review workload and operating arrangements. Recruitment and retention of qualified and experienced lawyers remains an ongoing challenge. More than ever there is a need to grow our own and invest in opportunities that bring in new colleagues such as apprenticeships.

Procurement and Governance - Priorities for the year ahead

- Develop Children's services Brokerage (Transformation Programme)
- Commission training to support RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act)
- Manage the Councils responsibilities with regard to complaints, customer feedback and comments FOI/ DSAR, information requests and MP enquiries.
- Deliver annual programme of corporate and bespoke health and safety training
- Support development of Power BI Corporate Dashboard and management information to CMT/ SMT/ CGG and Operational Dashboards.
- Ensure adequate insurance arrangements are in place
- Review claims handling requirements
- Support the regional OPEN project. OPEN is the new e-procurement platform launched by NEPO and the north-east local authorities of which our Council is an important part. During the course of 2023 the system will be rolled out across all of the authorities and will be used to advertise tendering opportunities.
- New Public Contract Regulations
- Risk Management development.

Procurement and Governance – Challenges and opportunities

New legislative changes will necessitate a range of updates to work including in respect of the Council's contract procedure rules contained in the constitution. Supporting services to adapt, change, challenge and become more efficient in the use of public money will continue to be an important part of how the team supports the Council particularly through the transformation reviews. The successes of for example in the efficiencies created by a move to brokerage services in adults will be expanded out to support children's services.

We will continue to develop and improve upon our approaches to risk management providing services with live data and assurance around the risks that they face, helping council services to better proactively manage their risks in a timely way and deliver improved outcomes.

The team have recently completed a service review and restructuring to ensure that they are more agile and fit for purpose for the demands now faced by the Council.

Democratic Services - Priorities for the year ahead

- Prepare for the delivery of the 2024 elections programme ensuring a high-quality experience for voters and candidates and that the Electoral Commission performance standards are achieved.

- Prepare for the implementation of the Parliamentary boundary review and ensure election readiness in the event that a general election is called;
- Continue to Implement the requirements of the Elections Act 2022 and promote awareness with voters;
- Deliver the Electoral Registration service ensuring that electoral registers are as accurate as possible and ensuring that everyone who is eligible and wants to vote is able to do so and that the Electoral Commission performance standards are achieved;
- Implement the replacement for the Governance and Meeting Management system moving from E-genda to the modern.gov system;
- Promote and enhance the Scrutiny function to drive service improvement and hold policy makers to account;
- Promote and support the Civic Mayor as first citizen of the Borough;
- Continue to provide efficient and effective support for Council and Committee meetings and to all members supporting them in their role and personal development.

Democratic Services – Challenges and opportunities

Through 2023 and into 2024 the elections team will operate at a state of preparedness in respect of any general election, as well as planning for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Tees Valley Combined mayoral elections in 2024. Election planning at pace usually begins in the September before the election.

The introduction of a new Governance and Meeting Management system with the modern.gov system replacing E-Genda has been a major project for the team, the system will support the core functioning of the Council's democratic processes. The system is intended to support governance and meeting management that is paperless, secure and straightforward. Modern.gov is used by over three hundred clients in a wide range of sectors including local authorities, housing associations, fire authorities, health and higher education.

APPENDIX 1 – COUNCIL PLAN - KEY PRIORITIES 2023-2024 – CORPORATE SERVICES

A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive means we will enjoy:

- great places to live and visit
- clean and green spaces
- rich cultural experiences

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- develop and implement the 2023 borough-wide events programme, incorporating celebrations for the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and ongoing preparations for Stockton & Darlington Railway Bicentenary

We will play our part in bringing about this vision for the Borough by being A Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve. This means that we will make sure that we provide:

- financial sustainability and value for money
- dedicated and resourceful employees
- strong leadership and governance

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- launch a new Council Volunteering Strategy to support our employees to volunteer in the community and to provide additional volunteering opportunities at the Council
- implement the new flexible working arrangements to capitalise and build on the technological advancements and new working practices developed during the pandemic
- respond to and implement the Local Government and Parliamentary Boundary Reviews

People Select Committee
Overview Meeting 2023
31 July 2023
Finance, Development and Regeneration

Context

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 - Job creation and increased employment

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

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Finance, Development and Regeneration Director – Garry Cummings

Relevant services include:

- Finance
- Revenues, Benefits & Welfare
- Xentrall
- Strategy and Performance

Council Plan 2023-2026

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

The key priorities for Finance, Development and Regeneration are attached at Appendix 1.

Emerging Issues

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Emerging challenges and opportunities are summarised as follows:

Finance - Priorities for the year ahead

The priority for the service is to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council.

Delivery of the transformation programme across the Council is a key focus and priority.

We will need to consider any Government Spending announcements and how they link with the MTFP.

Finance – Challenges and opportunities

The Council's approved MTFP includes an estimated budget gap for future years of £4.5m. Given the level of savings already delivered in recent years, the delivery of these savings will be challenging .

We are continuing to experience high levels of inflation and interest rates which are impacting upon the cost of delivering services.

The cost of Children in our Care continues to be an area of financial pressure, and this is a key area of focus.

Revenues, Benefits & Welfare - Priorities for the year ahead

- Introduce a corporate debt management strategy, understanding an individual's indebtedness to the council and beyond.
- Implement an improved collection strategy, using data intelligence to target enforcement to those who are able and choose not to pay and supporting the financially vulnerable.

- Optimise customer self-service options for council tax, including a promotional campaign for customer portal sign up.
- Deliver schemes to help with the cost of living, including but not limited to Household Support Fund, Discretionary Housing Payments and Crisis support.
- Respond to and implement Government's review of business rates and revaluation.
- Review the delivery of the Council's cashiering function.
- Review of corporate administration functions.

Revenues, Benefits & Welfare – Challenges and opportunities

Challenges

- Maintaining council tax collection levels due to impact of cost of living crisis.
- Government's migration of housing benefit to universal credit.
- Respond to government initiatives e.g. business rate consultations, administration of new schemes.

Opportunities

- Further development of automation of council tax processes.
- Expand the offer of welfare support via an outreach worker.
- Review of circumstances with a view to reducing fraud in council tax discounts and reductions.

Xentrall - Priorities for the year ahead

Based on the Looking Forward priorities of the Xentrall Annual Report 2022/23, activities across Xentrall include:

- a) Continuing to help the Council retain the benefits that have been gained through agile working and help exploit the technology enabled opportunities and innovation that have also arisen across Council services, including further exploitation of the 365 suite of products.
- b) Continuing to develop and exploit the HR/Payroll systems for the benefit of the Council and continue to assess and take on new academy business as and when opportunities arise.
- c) Continuing to develop and exploit the main financial system and satellite systems.
- d) Continuing to maintain and enhance our security measures which keep our systems and data safe.
- e) Continuing to support events, campaigns and activities across the Council with eye-catching and effective printed media and materials.
- f) Continue to assist in planning for the move to Dunedin House and designing the underlying ICT infrastructure required, both for the building itself and as a backup data centre to replace the one currently at Municipal Buildings.

Xentrall - Emerging Issues & Challenges

Service delivery is influenced by a range of internal and external factors that develop over time. Current and emerging challenges and opportunities across Xentrall Shared Services are summarised as follows:

- Supporting Academies is a significant part of Xentrall HR and Finance activities and this income supports the Xentrall financial model. Academies transferring into Multi-Academy

Trusts (MATs) sometimes results in a migration away from Xentrall's services as some MATs have their own in-house provision. This reduction has been countered by additional Academies coming on-board with Xentrall, but this cannot be guaranteed.

- Most Council services could not function without their ICT systems and data. Resilience and security are designed into our systems, but the volume and complexity of threats continues to rise. Targeting end-users can be an easier way to break into an organisation's systems, rather than trying to "break down the front door". The continued awareness and vigilance of end-users is a key element to ICT defences and is something that continues to be a focus.
- **Strategy and Performance - Priorities for the year ahead**
 - Implement new children's services education/early years/send information management system
 - Implement children's services systems and information improvements
 - Implement new corporate strategic planning framework
 - Implement new corporate performance management framework

Strategy and Performance - Challenges and opportunities

- Service review to add capacity to deliver new functions
 - Staff consultation June-July
 - Appointments to new/vacant posts throughout August
 - Transitional period Sep-Dec to move functions/projects/people around and introduce new ways of working

APPENDIX 1 – COUNCIL PLAN - KEY PRIORITIES 2023-2024 - FINANCE, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed means that the Borough will have:

- a growing economy
- improved education and skills development
- job creation and increased employment

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- continue to develop the Invest Stockton-on-Tees branding campaign and attract inward investment into the Borough
- develop options to bring forward development on vacant employment land
- continue to deliver the objectives in the Inclusive Growth Strategy and using an agreed Action Plan
- develop a procurement charter with partners to promote social value and identify potential areas of development of supply chains in order to support local business

A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive means we will enjoy:

- great places to live and visit
- clean and green spaces
- rich cultural experien

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- continue the redevelopment of Stockton Town Centre including demolition of the Castlegate Centre and development of the Urban Park, new leisure centre, library, customer services and registry office
- deliver interventions for a Town Deal in Thornaby
- finalise the plans for improvements in Yarm, Preston Hall Museum & Grounds and cycleway infrastructure in line with the Levelling Up fund allocation
- development of a business case to actively accelerate the provision of affordable and specialist housing provision within the Borough
- Strategy action plan which includes coalitions with residents, businesses, and partners

We will play our part in bringing about this vision for the Borough by being A Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve. This means that we will make sure that we provide:

- financial sustainability and value for money
- dedicated and resourceful employees
- strong leadership and governance

We have identified these key priorities for 2023 to 2024 to help us achieve this vision. This year we will:

- review of Medium Term Financial Plan including delivery and funding
- develop a Corporate Debt Strategy
- respond to and implement Government's review of Business Rates and Revaluation
- develop and deliver a transformation programme across all services to support the Medium Term Financial Plan
- deliver proposals for the redevelopment of Dunedin House to support flexible working arrangements and the re-location of staff from current buildings
- review the Council's land and assets and develop plans for disposal or for any potential development
- add new features and functions to the Council website and improve online services for customers
- continue the development and roll out of the Cost-of-Living Hub to support the Borough's residents

People Select Committee – Work Programme 2023- 2024

| Date (1.30pm unless stated) | Topic | Attendance |
|--|--|---|
| Monday 31 July 2023 | Overview Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services, Environment and Culture • Corporate Services • Finance, Development and Regeneration | Cllr Bob Cook/ Cllr Steve Nelson/ Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE/ Garry Cummings/ Reuben Kench/Julie Butcher/ Lorraine Dixon |
| Monday 4 September 2023 | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope and Project Plan | TBC |
| Monday 2 October 2023 | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence Gathering | TBC |
| Monday 6 November 2023 | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence Gathering | TBC |
| Monday 4 December 2023 | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence Gathering | TBC |
| Monday 8 January 2024 (informal) | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations | TBC |
| Monday 5 February 2024 | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Draft) Final Report | TBC |
| | Overview Reports | TBC |
| Monday 4 March 2024 | | |

Remaining Monitoring Items (to be scheduled)**Progress Updates**

- Disability Inclusive Borough
- Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future

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