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