



# Leader's Statement

## 2019 - 2020



Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Leader's Statement

As the 2019-20 Municipal Year draws to a close it is my pleasure to take a look back at all that has been achieved over the year and reflect on the progress we are making in delivering the ambitious plans we set out in our 'Big Plans, Bright Future' Council Plan.

We continue to operate in extremely challenging circumstances with uncertainty around reductions in funding and growing demand especially for social care services. We continue of course to provide the very best services we can throughout these challenging times.

I am proud to lead a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve the people of the Borough. I hope you will get a sense of this commitment as we take a look back at the work of Your Council, the areas of Economic Regeneration and Transport, Environment and Housing, Community Safety, Children and Young People, Health and Wellbeing, Strong Communities, Adults and Arts, Culture & Leisure.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Cook". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Councillor Bob Cook  
Leader, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

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

- We were shortlisted in the prestigious 'Overall Council of the Year' award at the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards for a record-breaking tenth year.
- We received a very positive report from the Centre for Public Scrutiny about the operation of review and scrutiny in the Council with well-established arrangements in place for scrutiny to continue to deliver purposeful challenge that is valued and makes a difference to residents' lives.
- We have maintained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation for the eighth consecutive year, securing the highest possible "compliance +" rating in 13 categories.
- We have maintained our Silver Investor in People award and achieved the highest 'Continuing Excellence' level in the Better Health at Work Awards.
- The 2018 Employee Survey completed by nearly 60% of all employees shows that they strongly believe that the Council is a good place to work.
- We have received another extremely positive report from our Auditors, who said: "The Council is well-aware of the financial challenges it is facing in the future" and "The Council remains well placed to face these challenges and officers continue to keep the overall position under close review."
- We have reviewed and re-designed our Constitution and our approach to corporate and information governance to improve accountability and decision making.

# Customer



# Customer Services



# Economic Regeneration & Transport

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

During the last year we have:

- We continued to work with strategic partners to influence and attract investment opportunities to the Borough and continued to raise the profile of the Borough as a place to do business
- We have continued to support existing businesses, encourage children and young people to be enterprising through enterprise programmes, support young adults to set up their own businesses and work with partners to support and develop the ongoing operation of an effective market for business support services
- We have an adopted Local Plan that includes policies for the long-term use of land that is sufficient and of a high quality to be attractive to new investment
- We continued with works to deliver place-based regeneration works across town centres including:
  - The Globe refurbishment
  - Acquisition of Wellington Square and Castlegate Centre
  - Approved major redevelopment of Stockton Town Centre following extensive consultation
  - Commenced public consultation across the Borough's five other towns - Billingham, Ingleby Barwick, Norton, Thornaby, and Yarm
  - Lidl supermarket development on Southern gateway to Stockton town centre
  - Exploring redevelopment opportunities for Thornaby Town Centre
  - Continued engagement with Billingham Town Centre owners, St Modwen, to support their pursuit of redevelopment opportunities with the private sector
  - Construction of the new Ingleby Barwick leisure facility
  - Implemented changes to parking on Yarm High Street in response to a petition from Yarm businesses and continued negotiations with landowners about potential sites for long stay parking.

# Big plans for an outstanding Borough

- We opened the new crematorium in September 2019
- We completed the England Coastal Path Phases 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- We continued to work with Stockton Learning and Skills Service to enable people to access learning opportunities and gain the skills and qualifications required to improve their economic and social wellbeing, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- We engaged with those most vulnerable and facing significant barriers to employment through the Routes to Work programme which provides personalised support to enable individuals to enter employment
- We worked in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority to ensure people have access to training opportunities that provide the necessary skills and qualifications required to meet local business workforce demands and support economic growth.



# Environment and Housing

We aim to make the Borough a better place to live and a more attractive place to do business with clean streets, carefully tended parks and open spaces, affordable and desirable housing. During the last year:

- We have continued the roll out of the Targeted Action Area initiative, working to support our local communities in North Thornaby and Central Stockton
- Worked with registered housing providers to deliver new affordable housing at a range of locations across the Borough including West End Gardens and Alma Street central Stockton, Witham House in Eaglescliffe, Darlington Lane and Queensgate
- We have continued the development of the Victoria housing site with our appointed partner Keepmoat Homes
- We have an adopted Local Plan that includes policies for the long-term use of land that recognises commitments and housing allocations to meet housing need across the Borough
- We have been dealing with a number of high profile planning applications for large scale housing developments in various areas within the Borough such as Stockton, Norton, Yarm and Wynyard



## Big plans for our places and open spaces

- We have been working with partners, commercial organisations and the wider community to reduce Borough-wide CO2 emissions and the Council's greenhouse gas emissions performance continues to exceed reduction targets
- We continued to progress the Affordable Warmth Strategy Action Plan to deliver projects that make a difference to the most vulnerable residents
- We maintained extremely high satisfaction levels with our Refuse Collection service with high levels of customer compliments
- We continued to encourage greater levels of recycling participation and a reduction in waste placed in the wheeled bin
- We achieved high levels of performance in the national road cleanliness surveys which were conducted by the Tidy Britain Group
- We ensured a level of commitment to our residential areas with regular litter picking visits and grass cutting
- We increased the number of wildflower areas that have been planted across the Borough to increase the biodiversity value and reduce the herbicide treatment and grass cutting in rural and semi-rural areas



# Community Safety

We want to make the Borough a place where levels of crime and fear of crime are low and people feel safe and secure. During the last year:

- We continued to deliver effective and efficient community safety services in and around our local communities
- We maintained our Civic Enforcement Service, which is vital to reducing concerns associated with environmental crime, nuisance parking and anti-social behaviour
- We ensured our 250 plus cameras are utilised to support community safety and supported our community safety partners in carrying out retrospective reviews of footage and investigations



# Big plans for keeping our communities safe

- We worked with partners to agree a Youth Justice Plan
- We have worked with various organisations at national and local level during National Licensing Week in June to help to raise awareness of licensing and its impact on everyday lives
- We continued our Setting The Bar scheme, promoting the benefits of operating above the minimum requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 in order to provide a higher standard of premises
- We worked collaboratively with responsible authorities to enhance customer service, fulfil statutory duties, ensure licensed premises are acting in accordance with their licence, and tackle problem premises, contributing to reviews of premise licences when needed.



# Health and Wellbeing

- We want the Borough to be a place where people are supported to be healthy. During the last year:
- We continued the development of the 0-19 wellbeing model for health visiting, school nursing, family weight management and community outreach provision which has moved into its second year of delivery, provided by Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust and Family Action
- We have worked with stakeholders and partners across the system to reshape the local approach to young people's substance misuse
- We worked with the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to support families with the aims of reducing levels of food insecurity and reduce social isolation during the school summer holiday period with 162 sessions delivered to over 1,300 children
- We have supported over 5000 people to have their NHS health checks and almost 500 people their lung health checks
- We continued to offer free and open access stop smoking services, drug and alcohol services, weight management and sexual health services and work with NHS partners and provider to support the full implementation of the NHS Diabetes prevention programme across the Borough



## Big plans for the health of our people

- We worked with pharmacies to offer a range of public health programme including health campaigns, emergency contraception, chlamydia testing, c-card, stop smoking advice and needle exchange
- The Health and Wellbeing Board adopted a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2019-23 and is working on a programme of priorities
- The Interim Director of Public Health published their annual report with a focus on loneliness which promotes systems wide working to improve mental and emotional health and wellbeing and improve social connectedness
- We continued to run a full programme of campaigns to promote public health messages and local services including alcohol, stop smoking, healthy eating, physical activity, mental health, cardio-vascular disease, cancer prevention and winter health.
- We continued our winter health campaign to further improve flu vaccinations across the Borough including staff flu vaccinations in commissioned services such as care homes and among Council staff.



# Children and Young People

We want the Borough to be a great place to grow up, where children and young people are protected from harm and supported to be the best they can be in life. During the last year:

- We maintained take up of the existing free entitlement to 15 hours of education at 100% and take up of disadvantaged 2 year old offer at 95%
- We supported schools to improve performance improved across all key stages over, Stockton is top or 2nd in almost all measures across the North East and, as of March 2020, 92% of children attend good or better schools
- We are closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers, Stockton is one of only 18 Local Authorities narrowing the gap in all three key phases
- We ensured 99.2% parents received one of top 3 choices for primary school admissions and 96.3% were offered a place in top 3 schools in secondary admissions
- We were successful in a proposal to pilot primary mental health practitioners in the Billingham school cluster – adding capacity to enable schools to access emotional health and wellbeing support
- We continue to embed our approach to family support with volunteers working alongside professionals to increase community resilience and independence. Our commissioned service, Family Action, is working with 42 volunteers – two of whom have gone on to secure employment



## Big plans for the young people of our Borough

- We have worked with the Clinical Commissioning Group to commission a specific family support service for children and young people who are on the neurodevelopmental pathway (including autism) – this service provides family support, support for individual young people and training for front line staff professionals
- We have seen a significant increase in the numbers of children in care, a pattern experienced across most north east Councils, an 11% increase since April
- We continue to work with ARC, Stockton Arts Centre, and a social enterprise, Blue Cabin, on a range of proposals to develop cultural and creative opportunities for children in our care
- We have worked with IMPOWER and 4 other Councils on an approach to assessing individual need called Valuing Care and using this to enable us to be more specific about the outcomes we are seeking for children in care and particularly from residential care providers
- Continued to deliver against the areas of improvement identified in the Ofsted inspections of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) and Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND)
- We have remodelled our in-house residential care to add additional beds, and increase our ability to work more intensively with some young people where smaller or solo placements are needed
- We launched the new Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Partnership in April 2019.



# Strong Communities

We are creating an environment where communities are diverse, cohesive, caring and vibrant. During the last year:

- We completed the 2019 Annual Canvass with 95% of the eligible adult population registered and we continue to work towards implementation of Canvass Reform in 2020
- We successfully delivered three major elections during 2019, Local and Parish, European and a snap General Election in December
- Work commenced planning for the May 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner and Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral Elections for which Stockton are the lead
- Assessors from the Local Government Association/North East Regional Employers Organisation found that the Council continued to meet the standards set down in the North East Charter for Member Development with a genuine culture of learning and development amongst its elected members
- We have carried out extensive work throughout the year through the Locality Forums, to provide support people through the introduction of Universal Credit and to support Foodbanks, Holiday Hunger programmes and prepare for the Get Winter Ready Campaign
- Infinity Partnership has focussed on support for people through the introduction of Universal Credit
- We opened the latest Big Community Switch programme in August to provide access to cheaper fuel deals
- We continue to provide financial advice and assistance to residents through Welfare Support and Back on Track
- We have continued to support our Community Asset Transfer Strategy to provide a transparent framework to enable the transfer of building assets to the community - The Clarences Community Centre was transferred to the Billingham & Environmental Link Programme (BELP) in July and The Old People's Welfare Hall in Thornaby is being transferred to a new Management Committee and will now be known as Victoria Park Community Centre

## Big plans for helping our communities prosper

- We continued to provide some direct financial support to VCSE organisations through the Stockton Borough Community Fund
- The active engagement and consultation with the young people of the borough has continued through the Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative, the success of the project was recognised at the national British Youth Council Awards where the initiative was awarded the Best Youth Lead Project
- We have continued to consult widely on major policy proposals and service changes affecting the borough using the My Views online consultation portal, supported by more detailed consultation work with the Viewpoint panel and via drop in sessions. Consultations have been carried out on a wide range of issues, including:
  - Town centre proposals
  - The new Feedback and Complaints Policy
  - Care Home development
  - Early Years and Childcare Services
  - Drug and Alcohol Services
- The borough wide Residents Survey carried out by MORI is complete and results will be analysed and reported soon.



# Adult Services

We are working hard to make sure that people can get the right level and type of support at the right time to help, prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support and maximise their independence. During the last year:

- We have worked with HaST CCG, North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust and Tees Esk & Wear Valley Mental Health Trust to ensure that these organisations continue to work with the Council in a pro-active way for the benefit of the residents and maintain positive working relationships between staff members
- We co-produced the Well Led leadership programme for Care Home Registered Managers has been with the NHS Leadership Academy, the Borough's Care Homes and the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- We facilitated four Peer Support Groups which include a programme of relevant talks and activities
- We continued to roll out the Carers Emergency Card, launched in June 2018, which, in the event of an emergency, identifies a person as being a carer and ensure that plans are put in place for the looked after person to be cared for until the carer is able to resume their caring role, thus giving the carer peace of mind
- The Learning Disability Partnership Board developed an action plan through informal consultation with people with a learning disability to take specific actions forward in employment, housing, care and support/a good day and health and wellbeing
- We invested in Autism day options at Ware Street to ensure it is fit for purpose and enables us to have capacity to meet people needs with Autism and Learning Disabilities in the Borough

- We continued developing the Community Integrated Intermediate Care (CIIC) Project to provide a smoother, more coordinated journey through intermediate care services for residents into a single, equitable and high quality offer of care within the Borough
- The adult Mental Health, Older Persons Mental Health and Learning Disability teams continue to be co-located with Tees Esk & Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Trust staff, ensuring that the needs of Stockton residents are co-ordinated between both health and social care.
- We continued to fulfil our statutory duties regarding Care Act Assessments and Carers Assessments
- We continued to provide Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP), registered professionals who have undertaken additional training approved by the Secretary of State (and regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council) to carry out specific duties under the Mental Health Act 1983
- We continued to fulfil our statutory duties of undertaking safeguarding enquiries, in response to all concerns of abuse/neglect against Adults deemed at risk.



# Arts, Culture and Leisure

We are a Borough where our heritage, festivals, cultural activities, libraries and leisure facilities help us attract visitors and investment, encourage literacy and learning and where sport and active leisure opportunities help people sustain healthier lifestyles. During the last year we have:

- We have continued our delivery of high-profile sporting events including the popular Duathlon, Cycling Festival and Great Tees 10k mass participation run. In addition, The Great North City Games event was hosted in Stockton High Street this year, showcasing world class athletes competing in a top class live athletics event
- Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) Community Carnival continues to thrive as a highlight for many with 1300 participants welcoming 5 new diverse groups from across the Tees Valley as part of the Great Place Tess Valley Combined Authority project delivery
- SIRF 2019 presented 164 shows delivered by 46 companies from across the globe including France, Belgium, Catalonia and Korea
- Our events programme also included smaller scale events like Super Car Saturday, Stockton Stages, Records Fair, Kapow, and a number of specialised market e.g. Youth and Stockton Carers market
- We continue to support community events, providing advice, guidance, financial and practical support. Events including BIFF, Stockton Dragon Boat, Thornaby Show and Singing Christmas Tree on Tour



- This year's Summer Reading Challenge proved popular, following the theme of Space Race as a tribute to the 50th anniversary of the moon landing in 1969. A total of 1615 children and young people took part in the challenges with 1107 completing the task of reading at least 6 books over the summer
- The Crossing the Tees Book Festival took place in early June, 314 people attended events in Stockton and 1510 attended the Festival as a whole
- Preston Park Museum & Grounds (PPMG) has been nominated for the Welcome Accolade for excellent customer service, grew its volunteer community to 220 actively involved individuals and facilitated Arts Award 'Discover' for 140 children
- PPMG signed up to kids in Museums Manifesto and has been 'taken over' by 400 toddlers on Toddler Takeover Days
- The Sport and Active Leisure Strategy was approved by Cabinet in July and will focus on ensuring that more children, young people and those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or at risk of exclusion have the opportunity to be more active.



# Looking Forward

I hope you have enjoyed reading this review of 2019-20. We start the new Municipal Year committed to continuing to deliver the very best services despite facing challenging financial circumstances. Our new Council Plan 2020-23 sets out our ambitious plans for the future and we move forward with a determination to see them through.





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