



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Citizen Focus and Engagement

Portfolio Performance
and Resources
Annual Report 2019/20



www.stockport.gov.uk

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CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Portfolio Summary

Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio was a new portfolio for 2019/20. During the year, we have made significant strides in several areas. These include:



- Introduction of Ami, the Council’s artificial intelligence “chat bot” and Netcall, (including a call back service within the contact centre), both of which have improved the customer experience. We are seeing an increase in call answering times due to these two initiatives now that they have bedded in, with recent months recording between 83% and 85% of calls answered.
- More visits to our museums – despite the temporary closure of the Hatworks for refurbishment and improvements. The relocation of Arc to the Hatworks has already been very successful, increasing use of the building and providing a more diverse range of activities. The link between health and wellbeing and the arts and culture has never been more important than now.
- The numbers of those helped through the digital alliance have significantly surpassed our original targets with 8,032 people receiving training and support against the original target of 5,000.
- We are continuing to develop our digital offer across the web. This shouldn’t be seen as an either/or with other channels for service provision, as the excellent work carried out earlier in the year on fostering demonstrates. Engaging with users and the service has enabled the digital offer to be an integral part of a wider approach to improving the way we recruit foster carers.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 crisis, work on “Our Stockport Conversation” – our plans to engage with residents as we worked towards a borough plan – had to be paused. Some schools did however take part before the crisis hit, and this work will not be wasted. There is now an opportunity to place our residents, including our young people, at the heart of our recovery planning.

The last two to three months have brought significant change for us all due to Covid-19. The libraries and museums teams have played a key role in the Council’s support hub, either operating our Covid-19 helpline or delivering shopping to shielded residents. Our communications have been vital in getting information to local residents and businesses quickly. And doing things digitally has become increasingly important in lockdown.

Cllr Kate Butler,
Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus and Engagement

Revenue Budget (Outturn)

	£000
Cash Limit	5,642
Outturn	5,598
(Surplus)/Deficit	(44)

Reserves

Use of reserves in the outturn above is £0.032m.

CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT

1. DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES



This report is based on the **2019/20 Portfolio Agreement**, approved by Cabinet on 23 July 2019. The link to the Agreement can be [found here](#).

Due to the current situation and unprecedented levels of demand, this report focuses on outturn performance and financial data for 2019/20, rather than the usual, more comprehensive round-up of progress against portfolio priorities.

Highlight and exception commentary is provided for specific areas of performance, and this is linked where possible to specific projects, programmes and activities.

Some data has not been collected, whilst there are some measures for which outturn data is not yet available, particularly where this comes from external sources. In these cases, the latest data is shown in italics along with the period it relates to, in order to provide a complete picture of performance across the portfolio, based on the latest available data.

Consideration is currently being given to the future reporting framework in the light of the Council's response to Covid-19, reflecting the impact of the pandemic and associated measures on key areas of performance, in addition to recovery plans for 2020/21 going forward.

Key to symbols used in tables

	Red; Indicator is performing significantly below target		Getting worse; This indicator has worsened when compared to previous period
	Amber; Indicator is performing below target		Stable; Indicator value has changed by less than 1% when compared to previous period
	Green; Indicator is on track or performing above target		Getting better; This indicator has improved when compared to previous period

Bold measures are included in the Greater Manchester Strategy outcomes framework and/or suite of 'headline' measures included in Corporate Report.

Priority 1: Improving Citizen Experience

We will continue to invest in our contact centre to support customer digital journeys and progress our Digital by Design programme. We are expanding free Wi-Fi access from public buildings across three pilot district centres for an initial period of three years. We will also work to maximise opportunities for service users, local people and other stakeholders to contribute to the development and improvement of Council services and involve them in the decisions that affect such services.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

PI Code	Short Name	Good Performance	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20			
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.1	Number of people helped by the Digital Inclusion Alliance (cumulative).	High	Not applicable	2,021	8,032	5,000		

This funded project finished at year-end and saw us reach 3,032 more people than our 5,000 target. An end-of-project report is being compiled and should be available during May 2020. This will include lessons learned that can be applied in 2020/21. The Council has received additional funding from GMCA to enable the work to continue in 2020/21. Targets are shifting due to Covid-19 and the nature of the work is also changing. This pandemic has really brought it home to people the importance of digital and how digital poverty is akin to being socially excluded as it can mean children don't have access to laptops to continue their schooling, people who are isolating cannot purchase shopping or order medication online, they also become more cut off as they can't access friends and family over social media and they also don't have access to the same level of information as everyone else. In addition they cannot access public services or continue to claim benefits or seek employment. Therefore it may be worth widening the types of measures that we have been monitoring at the very least to include distribution of devices (something we never had to consider when libraries were open).

CFE1.2	Number of community organisations recruited to the DigiKnow network	High	Not applicable	33	35	45		
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There has been no change since Quarter 3. Although the network still exists, the ability for some to deliver digital inclusion activities has been reduced. For examples libraries haven't been able to open and many of the organisations have relied on face-to-face group sessions. We are therefore trying to train and grow the number of digital champions we have who are confident and skilled enough to deliver support and training via the phone or screen sharing. Currently that stands at just 12 people, but they are making a major impact in the range of things they are providing assistance with.

CFE1.3	Percentage of Freedom of Information (FOI) Act requests responded to within 20 working days	High	85.5%	87.0%	93.0%	90.0%		
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By year end, 93% of FOI requests received a response on time, 1,288 out of 1,384 (compared to 1,312 out of 1,505 – 87% – in 2018/19). Up to the end of February, however, the year to date figure was 94.2%. So whilst there has been some impact on responding to FOI requests, as a result of service area diverting resources to the Council's Covid-19 response, this has been limited thus far.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Performance	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20			
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.4	% of Stage 1 complaints upheld (or partially upheld).	Low	36%	28%	37%	34%		
<p>In 2019/20, the Council received 179 Stage 1 complaints (compared with 161 in 2018/19). Of these, 179 complaints, 61 (34%) were upheld.</p> <p>An increase in the percentage of complaints upheld should not be viewed entirely negatively. Officers have received training on complaint handling and have been advised to apologise if a particular service has fallen below the standards expected by complainants. Such findings of fault can help appease complainants who may otherwise escalate the complaint further, although the findings are not in themselves indicative of serious service failure.</p> <p>Further work is planned this year to actively follow up on recommendations, as well as regular monitoring of complaints performance at Directorate level.</p> <p>Services continue to provide examples of 'lessons learnt' from complaints, and it is hoped that certain types of complaints can be reduced or eliminated in future when learning is embedded in teams.</p>								
CFE1.5	% of Stage 2 complaints upheld (or partially upheld).	Low	38%	24%	36%	28%		
<p>In 2019/20, the Council received 102 Stage 2 complaints (compared with 75 in 2018/19). Of these, 102 complaints, 37 (36%) were upheld.</p> <p>Due to the range of services complained about, it is difficult to identify trends in terms of service failure. However, robust recommendations have been made where there have been findings of fault.</p> <p>In terms of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's decisions this year, the Council's performance is on a par with last year, with eight complaints upheld. Significantly, there have been no public reports issued against the Council by the Ombudsman this year (there was one last year). Prior to that, the Council had no public reports being issued since 2007/08.</p>								
CFE1.6	% of Stage 1 complaints responded to within 20 working days	High	90%	91%	88%	90%		
<p>In 2019/20, the Council responded to 158 of the 179 Stage 1 complaints within 20 working days (88%). This slight reduction compared to 2018/20 has partly been the result of complaints being logged against the wrong service area by customers using the online complaints form, and officers therefore not always picking up cases in a timely manner. Ongoing improvements to our complaints management process include officer development in relation to good complaint handling principles, improvements made to the online complaints form, and the roll-out of the Council's case management system (Verint) for complaint management.</p>								
CFE1.7	% of Stage 2 complaints responded to within 20 working days	High	67%	77%	74%	75%		
<p>Similarly, there was a slight drop in the proportion of Stage 2 complaints responded to within 20 working days, with 75 of the 102 2019/20 Stage 2 complaints being responded to on time.</p>								

Priority 2: Access methods and points of access fit for the future

As part of our drive to improve citizen experience, we will engage with existing and potential customers throughout the Borough by ensuring we deliver a 24/7 Library & Information Service. This is through outreach events delivered by library staff, as well as effectively using resources such as our online presence, library apps, and maximising self-service technology.

We will continue to improve our opening hours, allowing citizens to access our libraries during unstaffed periods using Open Plus technology. We will also improve access across the Council by introducing digital processes where appropriate, introducing a more effective telephone system and implementing an appointment-based system at Fred Perry House that will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate emergency drop-in cases.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

PI Code	Short Name	Good Performance	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20			
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE2.1	% of telephone calls to the Contact Centre which are answered	High	81.8% 191,118 of 233,550	81.3% 182,397 of 224,365	80.7% 192,836 of 238,982	82.0%		

Although down on the target, this belies the true picture. There were a couple of months of very slow performance due to conversion to new software and this affected the overall picture. Since January 2020 between 83% and 85% of calls were answered.

The introduction of the new Contact Centre telephone system has had a significant impact on the customer experience. When lines are busy customers are able to request a call back for later the same day when they are put straight through to an agent. Whilst some people will have a short wait to be put through, call back has successfully addressed the problem of peaks and troughs in demand. This has not significantly affected the number of calls but has improved customers' experience.

AMI, which is artificial intelligence web chat facility, has also significantly improved the customer experience. As AMI has been gradually rolled out across the website, usage has increased. There are now around 900 AMI chats each month. Analysis of the AMI statistics has been delayed due to Covid-19 but will be developed over the coming weeks. AMI gathers information to resolve customer enquires directly from the website and enables resolution of queries that would otherwise result in a telephone call.

CFE2.2	% of public contacts received digitally	High	72.0% 748,724 of 1,040,338	75.1% 841,621 of 1,120,051	73.6% 791,381 of 1,075,550	75.0%		
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There is a slight dip in 2019/20 figure compared to 2018/19, but this is staying relatively stable, just below the 75% target.

GMS	Percentage of residents with all five basic digital skills	High	78.0% 2016	Not Available	Not Available	Aim to maximise	Not Available	
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Stockport's performance is very similar to the GM average, with both having increased from around 76% in 2014, but remaining below the national average. The next available data will relate to 2018 and should be available during 2020.

Priority 3: Museums, arts and culture

We will maximise the impact of our culture and heritage assets and work with our local cultural partners to deliver a quality cultural offer for all. Through our library network, we will help to develop an integrated approach to improve citizens' interaction with cultural life, to live well and be able to access support when needed. We will target social isolation as well as priority areas in Stockport, with the aim of ensuring that everyone is at the heart of what we do and that they can fulfil their potential as part of the local community.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

PI Code	Short Name	Good Performance	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20			
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE3.1	Number of visits to Stockport museums	High	131,379	138,413	156,557	100,000		

Stockport Museums closed to the public until further notice on 18th March 2020 due the lockdown. Quarter 4 did see Arc take full occupation of Level 2 in Hatworks Museum as part of a joint ambition to launch a centre of excellence for arts and health at the site. As part of this project, Arc have become a client of the GMCA culture fund. They are the first organisation in Stockport to become part of this scheme and the project will enable them to expand future delivery in Stockport and beyond. A project bid had been submitted to Arts Council England to assist with refurbishment of the rest of the site and was awaiting decision at the end of March. The Arts Council has suspended project grants due to the Covid-19 pandemic and so we will consider other options as part of the recovery stage.

GMS	Number of engagements by Stockport residents with cultural organisations supported by AGMA	High	0.21m	Not Available	Not Available	Aim to maximise	Not Available	
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The 211,223 cultural engagements recorded in Stockport were 1.1% lower than in 2016/17, whereas GM as a whole increased engagements by 7.3% during 2017/18. Whilst Stockport had the 4th highest number of engagements in GM, there were 0.85m engagements where residence was unspecified. The 2018/19 figure should be available during 2020.



CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT

2. FINANCIAL RESOURCES & MONITORING

2.1 Revenue – Cash limit

	Previously Reported £000	Change £000	Current £000
Cash Limit	5,350	292	5,642

Budget changes from previous quarter

A temporary budget adjustment of £0.292m has been made to fund redundancy costs in Museums and Arts; the Library and Advice Service, and in the contact centre.

Outturn Position

Net Cash Limit £000	Net Expenditure £000	Appropriations £000	Surplus £000
5,642	5,630	(32)	(44)

Overall the Portfolio ended the year in surplus by £0.044m. The main activity in surplus was Registrars, following an increase in the fees for issuing registration certificates.

2.2 Earmarked Reserves

Reserve Category	Reserve Narration	To be used for	Approved £000	Change £000	Balance £000
Corporate Reserves					
Reserve Linked to Budget	Transformation - Invest to Save Reserve	Museum Projects	163	32	131
		Total	163	32	131

2.3 Portfolio Savings Programme

Proposal	Risk Rating	Value £000	Value Achieved £000	Additional Information
Improving Citizen Experience (Balancing the cost of services)	GREEN	50	50	Events & Registrars income generation.
Support & Governance	GREEN	400	400	Restructure of the corporate communications service; restructure of the Library Services management and offer, including advice.
Total		450	450	

There are savings linked to the “Improving Citizens Experience” lens linked to other portfolios: **Balancing the Cost of Services**, which seeks to ensure that the cost of Council services is set at an appropriate level. This crosses all portfolios except Inclusive Neighbourhoods. **Financial Landscape**, which is currently referenced in Resources, Commissioning & Governance, includes ensuring financial transactions across the Council are efficient and user-friendly.

Risk rating

Green – good confidence (90% plus) the saving is/will be delivered or minor variances (<£0.050m) that will be contained within the portfolio.

Amber – progressing at a reasonable pace, action plan being pursued may have some slippage across years and/or the final position may also be a little unclear.

Red – Significant issues arising or further detailed consultation required which may be complex/contentious.