STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport team ambition respect

Citizen Focus and Engagement

Portfolio Performance and Resources Mid-Year Report 2020/21

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ONESTOCKPORT

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CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT - PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Portfolio Summary

This mid-year report from the Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio 2020/21 covers the period from April to September 2020. Throughout this period, restrictions (of varying degrees) relating to the Covid-19 pandemic have been in place. Despite these however, performance across the portfolio is generally positive at mid-year.

We are currently forecasting that we will meet our targets relating to responses to complaints and Freedom of Information requests, with performance so far exceeding 2019/20 levels. Whilst this is extremely encouraging, we do have to sound a slight note of caution – due to the pandemic, volume of these was lower than usual during this period. Initial evidence from Quarter 3 suggests volumes may be returning to more typical levels however, and it will be important for us to continue to monitor performance in these areas.

We are continuing to improve performance relating to answering calls to the Contact Centre, including all our colleagues in this team being trained to support the Coronavirus Helpline, and to the number of council contacts made digitally. Initiatives to address levels of digital exclusion have had to adapt to pandemic-related restrictions on face-to-face contact, but their ability to adapt, e.g. via remote sessions, means targets relating to Digiknow and individuals supported to get online are on track, and the digital lending library facility continues to expand. The number of "Digital Champions" dropped significantly during the first lockdown, but numbers are now getting back close to pre-Covid levels – achieving the year-end target will be challenging however.

Work continues to reinstate additional library services after setbacks due to the need to deploy some libraries colleagues to deliver localised test and trace and the more recent national restrictions. This includes delivering the One Stockport Hub in Merseyway. The six-week public consultation ended on October 19th. Work continues with this project in order to provide a temporary Covid-safe centrally located library service, considering the consultation responses and other feedback provided both from the Committee and others. Further detail is provided in the separate report, *Library Restoration Phase 2 and One Stockport Hub.*

New measures relating to registration of births and deaths have been introduced for the first time, and Covid-19 has presented significant challenges across the country with registering these within nationally-prescribed timescales and achieving the year-end targets now looks unlikely. This is a nationwide issue however and we are currently outperforming regional and national averages.

I was particularly pleased that three organisations in Stockport were awarded funding from the Cultural Recovery Fund, with a total of £364,667 being awarded to help their future sustainability whilst they cannot carry out normal activities. The council offered advice and support to organisations in submitting bids through the Stockport Cultural Network.

The Covid-19 pandemic then has presented several challenges to the work of this portfolio, and I am

pleased that we have managed to rise to these challenges. There will be new Covid-related challenges to deal with in the remainder of the financial year, but I am confident that we will continue to rise to these challenges.

Cllr Kate Butler, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus & Engagement

Revenue Budget (Forecast)		Capital Programme

	£000
Cash Limit	4,996
Forecast	5,729
(Surplus)/Deficit	733

Reserves
Approved use of reserves balance is £0.251m, planned draw down at Q2 is £0.058m.

There is no capital programme associated with the Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio.

CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT
1. DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

This report is based on the **2020/21 Portfolio Agreement**, considered by the Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee on 22nd September and approved by Cabinet on 6th October 2020. The link to the Agreement can be found here.

Updates on **key programmes of work and other activities** are referenced within the Portfolio Priorities within this section of the report, alongside the latest available **performance data**. The Portfolio Agreement included updates where available to the end of July, and this report reflects the picture as at the end of October where this is available.

Performance measures are categorised to reflect the council's influence and responsibility as Council, Partnership or Contextual. These categories are used to determine the type of target used as numerical, comparator, direction of travel or if no target is set. Definitions for these categories and target types are included within the Agreement.

Highlight and exception commentary is provided for performance measures. Where performance or progress in delivering priorities is impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions, this is reflected within the commentary. As highlighted in the Agreements, it has not been possible to set annual targets for some measures due to these impacts, but 'direction of travel' will continue to be shown for these.

For those measures reported quarterly, a full-year forecast is included where possible, based on actual performance to date as well as other factors expected to affect performance in future quarters.

The Portfolio Performance Dashboards are being launched alongside these reports, and the Sustainable Stockport Dashboard can be found here. This contains further historical trend data in addition to comparative data (where available) the latest of which relates to 2019/20.

In response to feedback from Scrutiny Committees, the criteria for RAG rating and direction of travel status has been clarified and is included below. The rationale for any variations to this will be clearly highlighted within the commentary.

Key to symbols used in tables

R	Red; Indicator is performing significantly (>5%) below target	⬇	Getting worse; The forecast year-end position for this indicator is less favourable than the previous year-end.
A	Amber; Indicator is performing slightly (<5%) below target	➡	Stable; The forecast year-end position for this indicator is within 1% either side of the previous year-end.
G	Green; Indicator is on track or performing above target	⬆	Getting better; The forecast year-end position for this indicator is more favourable than the previous year-end.

Bold measures are included in the Greater Manchester Strategy outcomes framework and/or suite of 'headline' measures included in Corporate Report
Data in italics is provisional / forecast

Priority 1: Improving citizens' experience of interacting with the council

Engaging and consulting with citizens to inform council decision-making
A list of consultation and engagement activity during Quarter 2 2020/21 is set out in Appendix 1 – selected highlights are described below.

During Quarter 2 we sought to understand some of the impacts of Covid-19 on the lives of residents and the priorities of communities. Quarter 2 also saw the launch of One Stockport and a programme of engagement around priorities for the future of Stockport to inform the development of the Borough Plan. This included:

- Online workshops with public sector and VCSE partners and the Youth Participation group.
- A survey carried out with Stockport Clinical Commissioning Group in August to gather insight into residents' experiences of lockdown and their priorities for the future of Stockport.

There were also several neighbourhood consultation and engagement initiatives including:

- North Reddish Local Centre Improvements.
- A6/Railway Road Junction changes.
- Active Neighbourhoods in the Heatons and Active Engagement Romiley (enabling residents to make short trips on foot, by cycle or by public transport, instead of by car).

Engagement with young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), parents and carers and SEND champions has continued as part of the SEND improvement journey. This has included specific co-design initiatives around: the SEND Local Offer; development of support resources; action plans and frameworks to support improvements and case study work.

Other consultation included:

- Design proposals for Lisburne SEND school.
- Stockport CAN (Climate Action Now) – the council's climate change strategy.
- One Stockport Hub (the consultation opened at the end of Quarter 2).

Regular insight continued to be gathered from community leaders through monthly forums and networks.

A performance measure relating to engagement has been developed to provide a more detailed picture of the engagement that is being carried out with residents across the council. As this indicator has not been used previously, a proposal of how engagement activity will be measured against the indicator will be set out prior to implementation in Quarter 3 performance reporting. It is proposed that:

- The indicator is a count of the citizen-focused engagement activity that has taken across the council in each quarter with Stockport residents or service users, VCSE groups and businesses.

- Engagement activity will be counted by a specific programme of work and not by the individual instances of engagement in relation to the programme. (For example, the Borough Plan engagement is counted once, not each workshop, survey or forum).

- Engagement on public realm and neighbourhood improvement initiatives will be counted per

scheme per neighbourhood; the same scheme proposal in two separate neighbourhoods would count for two initiatives.

- Where engagement is carried out across two quarters, it will be listed in the appendix of activities in all quarters that it takes pace but will only be counted in the quarter in which the activity began. In subsequent quarters, the activity will have a count of zero.

It is proposed that the following activity is not included in the measure of engagement activity:

- Internal staff engagement or consultation.

- Regular meetings, forums or other ongoing engagement with stakeholder groups, unless these are time limited and in relation to a specific project. In these instances, they would not be counted separately from any other engagement relating to the programme of work as detailed above.

These types of engagement will be referenced in the written update where the purpose is to improve citizen experience.

Using human-centred design to improve the citizen. experience of council services
The Strategy and Design service continued to support service areas to design human-centred solutions to improve citizen experience when accessing council services. This included testing the new "Report a Flood" online form through testing of the user journey and map functionality and design of user experience testing (to be carried out in Quarter 3).

Stockport Family colleagues were surveyed about their experience of using the "No Wrong Door" service in order to incorporate feedback into improvements of the service for families.

Following best practice as set out by Gov.UK to create useable and accessible digital services
An Accessibility Steering Group was set up in June 2020. The Group has drawn up an action plan which is currently being worked through. Activity to date includes:

- Drafting of a Corporate Policy on Accessibility – this is expected to be signed off as part of a wider Equality and Diversity work programme.

- Development of Level 1 training on accessibility to raise awareness of accessibility. It will be included as part of Equality and Diversity training on E-Learning and will be mandatory for all staff.

- Reviewing accessibility of the council's website – including a more in-depth review of most used content (with a focus on PDFs) to ensure that the most used content is accessible.

- Holding discussions with the council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on approaches to Corporate Policy and future governance over elements of the project plan, for example relating to procurement of systems and sites, website content and commissioning reports.

Activities planned for Quarter 3 include:

- Procuring an accessibility tool for the website.
- Securing formal CLT approval on the policy.
- Reviewing third party, word press sites to also ensure they are accessible
- Developing more detailed (Level 2 and 3) staff training to be added to the E-Learning site.
Reviewing how complaints are handled within the council and identifying improvements

A review of complaints processes, performance and associated resourcing has been carried out, responding to a request made by the CRMG Scrutiny Committee.

In Quarter 2, Business Intelligence officers worked with complaints leads to develop a complaints dashboard that will be shared with senior Directorate managers. The complaints dashboard will help identify trends and performance in the of handling of corporate complaints, and statutory adults and children's complaints. Any lessons learnt will feed into further development of case management systems and complaint handling training for officers.

The aim of the complaints dashboard is to encourage ownership of issues that arise out of customer dissatisfaction to bring about service improvement and enhance the quality and timeliness of our responses to complaints.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Council Measures								
PI Code	**Short Name**	**Good Perfor-mance**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**			
			Actual	**Actual**	**Forecast**	**Target**	**Status**	**Trend**
CFE1.1	**FOI requests responded to on time (% and number).**	**High**	**87.0%**	**93.0%**	**95.0%**	**95.0%**	G	⬆

A total of 93.1% of FOI requests (472 of 507) were responded to on time in the first half of the year. That consisted of 94.7% (177of 187) in Quarter 1 and 92.2% (295 of 320) in Quarter 2. There are however still 17 'live' cases from Quarter 2, so whilst the Quarter 2 response rate is currently 92.2%, if all 17 live cases are responded to on time, this would increase to 98%. The current Quarter 2 performance based on requests responded to on time, where the deadline has now passed is 97%. Current levels of performance therefore suggest the year-end target will be reached.

PI Code	**Short Name**	**Good Perfor-mance**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**			
			Actual	**Actual**	**Forecast**	**Target**	**Status**	**Trend**
CFE1.2	**Stage 1 complaints upheld (% and number).**	**Low**	**28.4% (33 of 116)**	**33.9% (41 of 121)**	**30.0%**	**33.0%**	G	⬆

A total of 8 out of 34 Stage 1 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 (23.5%) were upheld – 5 out of 12 (41.7%) in Quarter 1 and 3 out of 22 (13.6%) in Quarter 2. The reduction in the proportion of complaints upheld is viewed as a result of no fault being found in the decision made to reduce the bin collection service for the remainder of the financial year and requests for Council Tax reductions that were ruled to be unfounded.

It is worth noting that numbers of complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 (12 and 22 respectively) were significantly lower than in the same quarters in 2019/20 (56 and 22 respectively) and 2018/19 (37 and 48). An increase in complaints in Quarters 3 and 4 to pre-Covid levels may affect the forecast year-end position.

PI Code	**Short Name**	**Good Perfor-mance**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**			
			Actual	**Actual**	**Forecast**	**Target**	**Status**	**Trend**
CFE1.3	**Stage 2 complaints upheld (% and number).**	**Low**	**23.8% (19 of 80)**	**29.8% (25 of 84)**	**30.0%**	**31.0%**	G	➡

A total of 8 out of 28 Stage 2 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 (28.6%) were upheld – 3 out of 12 (25.0%) in Quarter 1 and 5 out of 16 (31.2%) in Quarter 2.

As with Stage 1 complaints, it is worth noting that numbers of complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 (12 and 16 respectively) were significantly lower than in the same quarters in 2019/20 (36 and 27 respectively) and 2018/19 (21 and 17). An increase in complaints in Quarters 3 and 4 to pre-Covid levels may affect the forecast year-end position.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perfor-mance	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21			
			Actual	Actual	Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.4	Stage 1 complaints responded to on time (% and number).	High	91.4% (106 of 116)	88.4% (107 of 121)	95.0%	90.0%	G	⬆

A total of 32 out of 34 Stage 1 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 (94.1%) were responded to on time – all 12 in Quarter 1 and 20 out of 22 (90.9%) in Quarter 2.

Again however, note that levels of complaints were significantly lower than in the equivalent quarters in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perfor-mance	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21			
			Actual	Actual	Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.5	Stage 2 complaints responded to on time (% and number).	High	77.1% (64 of 83)	76.2% (77 of 101)	80.0%	73.0%	G	⬆

A total of 24 out of 31 Stage 2 complaints in Quarters 1 and 2 (77.4%) were responded to on time – 8 out of 12 (66.7%) in Quarter 1 and 16 out of 19 (84.2%) in Quarter 2. There was lower performance in Quarter 1 as members of the central complaints team were partially deployed to support services dealing with the impact of Covid-19, in particular, Mortality and Bereavement services, during the first wave of the pandemic.

Again however, note that levels of complaints were significantly lower than in the equivalent quarters in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perfor-mance	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21			
			Actual	Actual	Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.6	**Telephone calls to the Contact Centre that are answered (% and number).**	High	81.3% (182,397 of 224,365)	80.7% (192,836 of 238,982)	88.0%	82.0%	G	⬆

In Quarters 1 and 2 a total of 87.8% of calls were answered (85,333 out of 97, 213) – 90.8% in Quarter 1 and 85.7% in Quarter 2.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perfor-mance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.8	**Number and % of Digital Contacts**	**High**	**75.1%** 841,621 of 1,120,051	**74.4%** 884,427 of 1,188,424	**80.0%**	**75.0%**	G	⬆

During Quarter 1 and Quarter 2, 91.5% of contacts with the council were via digital means: 91.9% in Quarter 1 (692,196 out of 753,469) and 91.2% in Quarter 2 (731,706 out of 802,005).

Digital Contacts have been strongly impacted by Covid-19, with significantly more residents using digital channels to find out information on services that affect them, such as bin collection dates, which have seen an increase from 40,446 visits in Mar 20 to 217,157 in September 2020.

This measure includes all contacts for the Contact Centre, AMI chat bot (which replaced the non-digital web chats in June 19), transactional and non-transactional forms, auto-phone lines for libraries and payment, selected self-service internet pages and external emails to key service accounts. The measure will be further developed over the next few months to ensure that all possible and relevant contacts are being recorded.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perfor-mance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.9	Number (and %) of births registered on time	High	96% (3026 of 3136)	98% (2872 of 2930)	58%	98.0%	R	⬇

This is a nationally set indicator, measuring the number of births registered within the nationally-prescribed deadline of 42 days since the birth of the child. The national target is for 98% of births per annum to be registered within that timescale. (which Stockport achieved in 2019/20).

The pandemic has significantly affected performance against this target as between 24/03/20 and 22/06/20, birth registrations were suspended to focus on death registrations. In Quarters 1 and 2, 57.9% of births were registered on time (986 of 1704) – 37.3% in Quarter 1 and 64.8% in Quarter 2. Though well below the 98% target, Stockport's performance is significantly better than the average of 39% across England and Wales.

There are 48 outstanding birth registrations that are over the 42-day threshold. This is due to parents not having booked their registration after restrictions were lifted, rather than service capacity. Stockport Register Office continues to work closely with Stepping Hill Hospital and is engaging with new parents to ensure targets are met through formal requisitioning letters. Work is also underway to see if the service can link with community nursing and other key partners to catch new parents at health visits and similar settings, to encourage parents to book an appointment and register on time.

Stockport Register Office took a pro-active approach to ensure registration meets Covid-19 guidelines. Early in the pandemic, staff were redeployed to bolster resources elsewhere in the team. They returned to their substantive positions at the end of August 2020.

Though the service is currently operating at 62% the year-end performance has been estimated as 58%. More stringent lockdown measures, such as those in place until 2nd December at least, are likely affect registration rates as people are less able or willing to make and attend appointments to register their child.

It is usual for birth registrations to decrease over the festive season, so the service has previously tended to focus more on death registrations (as death rates peak over the winter). This year will be slightly different however – though there will be the usual focus on death registrations, the service has the capacity to flex up birth registrations quickly should this be deemed necessary.

| PI Code | Short Name | Good Perfor-mance | 2018/19 Actual | 2019/20 Actual | 2020/21 | | | |
					Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.10	Number (and %) of deaths registered on time	High	88% (1475 of 1685)	87% (1590 of 1823)	83%	90.0%	R	⬇

This is the number of deaths registered (without coroner involvement) within the nationally-prescribed deadline of 5 days since a death occurs. The Stockport target reflects the national target of 90%.

In the first half of 2020/21, 83.1% (914 of 1100) of deaths in Stockport were registered on time (82.1% in Quarter 1; 85.0% in Quarter 2. Currently only 25% of Register Offices are meeting the 90% target across the UK and only one of the 11 regions across the country (North East) is currently hitting the target.

Priority 2: Increasing citizens' access to digital technology

Working with the Stockport Digital Inclusion Alliance (DigiKnow) to improve and join up community level digital support

The council is an active member of the DigiKnow Alliance meeting weekly with core partners and arranging full partnership events in Stockport as well as contributing to the Greater Manchester wide network of Digital Inclusion Leads.

One good example of joined-up working (at a community and national level) is the story of Mable, who is 91 and lives in Bredbury. She was lonely as her family live abroad. She was befriended by a mutual aid worker who delivered her shopping. She thought video calling would help her stay in touch with family, so she contacted DigiKnow for help. DigiKnow linked in to the national "DevicesDotNow" initiative which secured a tablet and SIM for Mable, and Starting Point trained the mutual aid volunteer to become a digital champion so she could support Mable in how to use the tablet to reach her family. Mable's story highlights how joining up offers available in the community can make a big difference to individuals' lives. A short video highlighting Mable's story is available here.

Working with all Portfolios to address the barriers to digital inclusion.

The three main barriers to people being online are motivation, digital skills and access to a suitable device and data. The pandemic has heightened the need for people to be online and so provided a motivation for previously apathetic people to get online, however, with libraries and schools closing for a time, the barrier of accessing devices and data has grown. The council has worked with DfE, schools and colleagues in social care to ensure the most vulnerable children in our borough have access to what they need to continue school work and surplus devices donated to DigiKnow.

Colleagues in Adult Social Care and IT have come together to provide tablets to care homes and worked with DigiKnow to provide any skills coaching required. The close connection between digital exclusion and financial exclusion has become more apparent and work has been undertaken to ensure inclusion officers understand this link. More money has been made available in the form of grants to support activities and the Stockport Local Fund awarded nearly £10,000 to a DigiKnow partner to enable the new digital lending library to form. Data remains a barrier to getting online for people on low incomes and more could be done to increase and promote our Wi-Fi infrastructure across the borough.

Digital Lending Library.

Stockport's Digital Lending Library (run by DigiKnow partner Starting Point) received funding from the Stockport Local Fund and it's first device was loaned in July. A total of 35 laptops and tablets have been loaned in this period. Examples of the impact in this short time include:

- Sarah borrowed a laptop for her child who was struggling to do school work on a smart phone.
- John borrowed a tablet to update his Universal Credit journal and apply for jobs.
- Joy borrowed a tablet and data SIM card to keep in touch with her daughter in America.
- Audrey borrowed a tablet and has been supported by a digital champion to start an online wellbeing course.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Council Measures								
PI Code	**Short Name**	**Good Perform-ance**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**			
			Actual	**Actual**	**Forecast**	**Target**	**Status**	**Trend**
CFE2.1	Number of individuals supported to get online or improve their digital confidence and skills (cumulative).	High	2,332	8,425	10,000	10,000	G	⬆

By the end of Quarter 2, a total of 9,043 people had received support with digital issues. Covid-19 has had an impact on the volume of individuals the DigiKnow alliance has been able to reach in Quarters 1 and 2. Libraries and other venues that would usually offer access to digital equipment and skills support have had to close. The alliance has been working to retrain digital champions to enable them to provide support remotely via Zoom and screen sharing, but the nature of training has, for a time, needed to provide more one-to-one support than group support, which is more resource intensive. This has therefore affected the volume of people reached. Once an individual learns the basic skills, they are encouraged to join a group remote session.

Voluntary organisations have also received support with digital skills to help enable them to continue some form of face-to-face (albeit remote) sessions with their clients. In Quarter 2, 17 voluntary organisations were helped in this way, thus supporting the resilience of the third sector during a time of crisis.

PI Code	**Short Name**	**Good Perform-ance**	**2018/19**	**2019/20**	**2020/21**			
			Actual	**Actual**	**Forecast**	**Target**	**Status**	**Trend**
CFE2.2	Number of community groups to join the DigiKnow network (cumulative)	High	33	35	40	40	G	⬆

By the end of Quarter 2, a total of 39 community groups had joined the DigiKnow network – just one fewer than the year-end target of 40.

Involvement of local community groups and organisations is vital to the approach of the DigiKnow Alliance. People most likely to be digitally excluded are typically those who are less likely to engage with more formal forms of adult learning due to barriers such as financial difficulties, health and disability issues, language issues or social isolation. Our 'trusted faces in local places' approach is to deliver digital skills support through established and trusted community groups and organisations who already provide social support. Recruiting more community groups should mean helping more hard-to-reach groups. Progress against this target is good.

As our digital support offer grows however (in terms of also offering devices through the new digital lending library, particularly vital while the libraries are not at full capacity) the alliance recognises the need to take a more strategic approach and look to engage organisations who can support in other ways. The additional four organisations recruited are a mix of community organisations, businesses and voluntary sector coordinators.

Consideration will be given as to how this growing mix of different types of alliance member can be better reported in future periods.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Forecast	2020/21 Target	2020/21 Status	2020/21 Trend
CFE2.3	Number of digital champions	High	Not Applicable	35	36	38	A	→

As lockdown came into force in March 2020, the number of digital champions available dropped from 35 to just 12. Many older volunteers, for example, needed to shield themselves. Time was taken to retrain the digital champions remaining to be able to deliver support remotely instead of their usual in-person sessions, and over the next two months membership increased to 30, taking advantage of volunteers who had been furloughed. Recruitment continues in earnest, however, while new volunteers join, some have needed to return to work so the total figure at end of Quarter 2 remains below target. Given that numbers plummeted to just 12 at the start of lockdown, good progress in this area has been made.

As the figures only account for digital champions that have registered with our main delivery partner (Starting Point), consideration is being given to how we can collect a better picture of the wider digital support activity that is ongoing in the borough. For example, the Targeted Prevention Alliance (TPA) will assist people in acute need in cases where they have no money and urgently need help to apply for benefits. There may be many different things TPA workers need to address in this scenario and digital support in filling in online forms will be just one of them. As this support is not purely digital training, we do not currently count this action as being delivered by a 'digital champion', although this support is recognised as vital and counted in CFE2.1 (number of people who have received digital support). Similarly, library workers are an important element of digital support when helping someone using one of our public computers. While the support to the individual is recorded in CFE2.1, this worker/volunteer is currently not counted within our digital champion figures as they are not providing training as such.

Priority 3: Facilitating citizens' access to arts and culture

Refreshing our local cultural strategy
A small working group has been convened with cultural organisations in the borough to develop initial ideas for a new cultural strategy for Stockport, linked to the forthcoming Borough Plan. Once these have been further developed, wider engagement will take place with other organisations and individuals to formulate the strategy, which we hope to have available by April 2021.

Supporting cultural networks and organisations and individuals working in the sector
Three organisations in Stockport have benefitted from the Cultural Recovery Fund. In total, £364,667 investment has been awarded through the scheme so far in 2020/21. Awards have been made to NK Theatre Arts, Stockport Plaza Trust and Rising Stars NW CIC. The council offered advice and support to organisations who were planning to submit bids through the Stockport Cultural Network and it's pleasing to see this level of funding coming into the borough. A new performance indicator had been proposed measuring the amount of funding awarded to the cultural sectors from external grants. As this is a new indicator, no historical data is available, and no target was set for 2020/21 (this may be reviewed in future years). It is also currently difficult to forecast the value of awards by year-end, as many of the normal funding schemes have closed due to the pandemic and it is not known when they will be relaunched.

Shaping our Forward Plan for Museums
The Museums Forward Plan will be revised, considering the impact of the pandemic, and the need for people to engage in museums in new ways. It is anticipated that the new Forward Plan will be available by April 2021.

Identifying opportunities for our library offer to support the delivery of wider outcomes
Quarter 2 saw the Covid-safe restoration of seven libraries in Stockport: Hazel Grove, Heatons, Marple, Reddish, Bramhall, Brinnington, Cheadle and the Home Library Service from the start of July 2020. During this first phase of restoration of library services, the council has adhered to government guidelines and used the national library reopening toolkit to identify those libraries that were most suited to the delivery of a Covid-safe service. Within the library service, we have restored book borrowing, printing and digital access. Plans are in place for the remaining library services, including the reintroduction of browsing, Heritage and Archives.

Across the restored library services, we had a total footfall of approximately 14,000 during Quarter 2, which is around 15% of pre-Covid footfall levels.

It should be noted that as part of the council's ongoing response to Covid-19, 11 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff (25% of the libraries workforce) were seconded the Contact Centre for Locality Test and Trace (eight FTE) and library calls (three FTE). There is an ongoing need for the council to provide locality test and trace.

Work is in progress to deliver a temporary central library facility through the One Stockport Hub project in Merseyway Shopping Centre and it is expected that this will open in February 2021.

Initiatives this quarter included:

- A member of our Libraries team continued our online Storytimes on our Social Media pages where people could watch stories being read three times a week.

- Our delivery of hearing aid batteries saw us deliver direct to the door of our 1000th customer. We have combined this service with our Home Library Service, and this has been a real lifeline for more vulnerable members of our community.

- Stockport Libraries supported our GMP colleagues by providing books no longer needed by the Library service for people to read whilst they were detained in police custody. This gives better access to books for people held in police custody, including children.

- Our Reading Ahead challenge (in partnership with Stopford Open Learning) came to an end. It was run through public libraries, adult learning organisations, colleges, workplaces and prisons. Reading Ahead invites participants to pick six reads and record, rate and review them in a personal reading diary in six months, usually from January to June. After completing their diary, they receive a certificate and can enter a national prize draw. This year, 99 students signed up and 41 completed the challenge. This is an increase of 21% on previous years' starters.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Council Measures

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Forecast	Target	Status	Trend
CFE3.1	**Number of visits to Stockport museums.**	**High**	138,413	156,557	10,000	10,000	G	⬇

Due to the closure of museum sites in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visitor numbers for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 fell well below previous years' visitor figures (with no visitors at all in Quarter 1 and 1,837 in Quarter 2). Two out of seven sites reopened in early August, the Air Raid Shelters and Bramall Hall. A third site, Stockport War Memorial Art Gallery, reopened in late October. Due to the need to limit visitor numbers within these sites at any one time for health and safety reasons, it was necessary for us to move to online admission tickets only. For track and trace reasons, we cannot currently accommodate walk-up visitors – all bookings need to be made online. These two factors combined have had a detrimental effect on the ability of the service to maximise its number of visitors. Should the current situation remain the same, we are confident that we should meet the 20/21 revised visitor target of 10,000.

CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MONITORING

2.1 Revenue – Cash limit

	Previously Reported Q1.5 £000	Increase/ (Reduction) £000	Budget at Q2 £000
Cash Limit Budget	4,841	155	4,996

Budget Changes since previously reported at Quarter 1.5

The cash limit budget has increased by £0.155m from the previously reported total, being a transfer from contingencies following the agreed pay award for staff covered by National Joint Council (NJC) agreements.

Outturn Forecast

Net Cash Limit £000	Forecast Net Expenditure £000	Forecast Appropriations £000	Forecast Outturn £000
4,996	5,787	(58)	733

The financial resources in this portfolio total £4.996m. The forecast position is a £0.733m deficit based on updated Q2 (Period 6-7) information. This equates to 14.7% in variance terms of the net cash limit budget. This includes a combination of additional costs and reduced income due to Covid-19.

The forecast deficit is driven by Covid-19 and its effect on closing museums and arts venues and the inability of the Events Team, and to a lesser extent Registrars, to host functions and other revenue earning activities.

The overall forecast has fallen by £0.097m since the last forecast as more staff cost savings have been factored in libraries and museums due to the prolonged activity restrictions. Car parking income has also held up more than previously expected with residents and visitors still attracted to the Bramhall Park and Bramall Hall gardens.

2.2 Earmarked Reserves

Most earmarked reserves are held at a corporate level and services produce a business case to drawdown funds, which is approved through Corporate Leadership Team and Members. This strategic approach is designed to provide financial resilience for the Council and to ensure that Council reserves are used on an invest-to-save basis and to support Council priorities. The exceptions to this are ringfenced reserves and the Directorate Flexibility Reserve.

The table below reflects any approved revised balances in reserves, aligned to the 20/21 Reserves Policy report taken to Cabinet on the 6th October.

Reserve Category	Reserve Narration	To be used for	Balance of Reserve/ "Approved Use" £000	Planned use of Reserves / "Approved Use" 2020/21 £000	Balance of Reserve/ "Approved Use" £000
Linked to Budget	Transformation –Double Running	Phased Savings – Library Service	80	0	80
Linked to Budget	Transformation – Double Running	To support 2020/21 phased savings – museums offer.	40	(40)	0
Linked to Budget	Transformation – Invest to Save	Museum Projects	131	(18)	113
TOTAL			**251**	**(58)**	**193**

2.3 Portfolio Savings Programme

Proposal	Risk Rating	Value £000	Achieved or Identified £000	Additional Information
Library Services Offer	GREEN	250	250	Achieved. Covid-19 issues notwithstanding.
Review of Information & Governance	GREEN	100	100	Achieved. Covid-19 issues notwithstanding.
Museums Offer	GREEN	150	150	Achieved. Covid-19 issues notwithstanding.
Balancing the Cost of Services Phase 2	AMBER	70	55	Most of the saving was centred on raised statutory fees in Registrars. In isolation the additional yield should be achieved but coronavirus is affecting other income yields.
TOTAL		570	555	

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 be 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.

2.4 Capital Programme

There is no capital programme associated with this portfolio.

Appendix 1: Consultation and Engagement Activity during Quarter 2 2020/2021

Programme	Date	Engagement activity	Purpose
SEND Improvement	July- Sep	Co-design (various)	Continuation of co-design of SEND Improvement work
One Stockport	Aug-Sep	Workshops and conversations on vision and values of One Stockport movement	To understand the views of stakeholders and to gather the momentum of the movement
Borough Plan Engagement	July-Sep	Surveys, workshops and conversations with VCSE partners	A series of engagement activities around priorities for the future of Stockport to help inform the Borough Plan
Climate Change	July-Sep	Climate change consultation	Borough-wide consultation on council's climate strategy
Libraries	September	Consultation	Consultation of services and facilities in the One Stockport Hub
Lisburne SEND School	July-Aug	Consultation	To inform the next stage of the project
Highways and Transport	Aug-Sep	Active Neighbourhoods consultations	Consultation with Heatons and Romiley residents around introduction of active neighbourhoods (encouraging people to walk/ cycle or use public transport for shorter journeys)
	Aug-Sep	North Reddish district centre improvements	Consultation on improvements to bus stops, pavements and new street furniture
	Aug-Sep	A6/Railway Road consultation	Brough-wide consultation on junction changes
GM Ageing Narrative Campaign (Public Health)	Aug-Sep	Interviews for GM Ageing Narrative campaign	To gather case studies on older people's contribution during the pandemic
All Age Living Prospectus	July	Interviews via video call or telephone	To inform the market strategy for the All-Age living prospectus- interviews with participants (residents of Stockport) of previous round of research.