Stockport team ambition respect

Citizen Focus and Engagement

Portfolio Performance
and Resources
Annual Report 2020/21

STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

www.stockport.gov.uk

ONESTOCKPORT

CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT - PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Portfolio Summary

This report covers activity within the Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio in 2020/21.

I would like to start by thanking the outgoing portfolio holder, Cllr Kate Butler for her passion, commitment and the progress she has made with this portfolio over the last two years.

Throughout 2020/21, restrictions (of varying degrees) relating to the Covid-19 pandemic have been in place. Inevitably, this has had an impact on a number of initiatives, performance measures and budgets across the portfolio – and that impact is drawn out within the report.

Despite these challenges, in terms of the citizen experience, we are continuing to see improvements to the proportion of telephone calls to our Call Centre that are answered, as well as the proportion of enquiries that we are able to answer digitally. The number of complaints received in 2020/21 was lower than in previous years. The council centralised all Stage 2 and statutory complaints functions during the second half of the year. It is expected that these changes will result in continued performance improvements in 2021/22, even if the number of complaints received return to pre-pandemic levels.

Covid had a significant impact on digital exclusion initiatives. The number of active "Digital Champions" initially fell as a direct result of the pandemic. However, numbers have since recovered steadily. We also ended the year just shy of the target of helping 10,000 people to get online since the Digital Alliance was established in 2018/19. The target relating to organisations joining the "Digiknow" network was achieved, however. In addition, the Digital Lending Library was launched in August 2020 and over 300 devices were lent in its first six months of operation.

In terms of registering births and deaths within prescribed deadlines, we have performed above the national average in terms of both. Despite a significant backlog at the start of the year due to Covid restrictions and more babies born in 2020/21 than in previous years, over 2,500 births were registered on time.

Last year we added a contextual measure in relation to the engagement and consultation the council carries out. The range of engagement activity that has taken place is summarised at the end of the report. Of particular note is the engagement relating to the Borough Plan. The plan was finalised in Quarter 4 and involved input from over 3,800 individuals and organisations.

Although the number of Freedom of Information Requests that were dealt with on time fell below target this year, this can largely be attributed to the impact of the pandemic on the workload of many teams across the council.

Finally, in terms of our museums, the year-on-year growth we have seen in museum visitor numbers was not possible this year due to government restrictions on museum opening and operation. However, Bramall Hall, Air Raid Shelters and the Art Gallery reopened from 17th May 2021 and other attractions will reopen later in the year – so we fully expect to see a recovery of visitor numbers in 2021/22.

Cllr David Sedgwick, Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus & Engagement

Revenue Budget (Outturn)		Capital Programme
	£000	There is no capital programme associated with the Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio.
Cash Limit	4,834	
Outturn	5,282	
(Surplus)/Deficit	448	

Reserves:
Approved use of reserves balance is £0.251m; a net draw down of £0.040m is included in the outturn.

CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT
1. DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

This report is based on the **2020/21 Portfolio Agreement**, considered by the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee on 8th September and approved by Cabinet on 6 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 Mid-Year Report included updates where available to the end of October 2020, and this report reflects the picture as at the end of March 2021 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.

The Portfolio Performance Dashboards have been updated to reflect 2020/21 data where available, and the Citizen Focus and Engagement 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; This indicator has worsened when compared to previous period
A	Amber; Indicator is performing slightly (<5%) below target	➡	Stable; Indicator value has changed by less than 1% when compared to previous period
G	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
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
The nature of the last year, including the ongoing restrictions on face-to-face meetings and other activity in response to the pandemic has inevitably had an impact in terms of the engagement and consultation carried out by the council. Notwithstanding this, the council has continued to carry out engagement and consultation activities with residents, including the use of more innovative means of online engagement such as the "virtual video booth" used during the Borough Plan engagement.

The following neighbourhood consultations with residents and local businesses took place:

- High Lane Village Neighbourhood Plan.
- Heaton Mersey Common Path Improvements.
- Proposal to unite Nevill Road Infant and Junior Primary schools
- Traffic calming measures along Windlehurst Road between the A6 (Buxton Road) and Broadhurst's Bridge.

Quarter	Programme	Number of responses
Quarter 3	Marple Leisure and Community Hub	385
	Romiley District Centre Improvements	448
	Lisburne Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) School	53
	Cheadle Towns Fund	29
Quarter 4	Heaton Mersey Common Path Improvements	1,010
	Traffic calming measures along Windlehurst Road between the A6 (Buxton Road) and Broadhurst's Bridge.	827
	Proposal to unite Nevill Rd Infant and Junior Primary schools	118
	High Lane Village Neighbourhood Development Plan	32

Other examples of using user research, engagement and consultation to inform council activity and decision making in 2020-21 included:

- Covid communications shaped as a result of insight carried out at a GM level as well as engagement with particular groups such as the youth council or Healthwatch.
- Consultation with the public was undertaken on One Stockport Hub.
- Engagement with over 3,800 individuals and organisations in shaping the Borough Plan.

A list of key consultation and engagement activities undertaken during 2020/21 is set out in Appendix 1.

Using human-centred design to improve the citizen experience of council services
Co-production and human-centred design are key to understanding how services work through the eyes and experiences of those that use them, and to improving residents' experience when interacting with the council. We have worked closely with our Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) partners to co-design solutions to support our communities during Covid-19. Co-design and engagement activity related to our Covid-19 response includes:

- Co-design of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme with parents, carers and schools.
- Co-design mechanisms for the discretionary allocation of the Covid Winter Grand Fund.
- Open dialogue with providers of food support to identify current offer, opportunities and challenges and scope need for a Food Network.
- Ongoing parent/carer and young person involvement in SEND improvement.
- Co-design of the Community Champions Programme with our VCFSE partners, including initiatives focused on vaccination take-up.

In 2020-21 we continued to develop our approach to using human-centred design across a range of services and programmes, including those described below.

Communications Planning and Training
An annual communications plan and revised style guide has been rolled out across the council, providing colleagues in all teams with a consistent but adaptable approach to the visuals, language and tone used in all council communications. The guides are being incorporated into relevant training for colleagues, including the induction training for new starters and sessions run for colleagues that explore the language used when talking and writing to residents, how we understand their experiences and what information they need from us at each point in their contact with the council to make their experience clearer, simpler and faster.

Insight into our aging population
Since launching the Prospectus for All Age Living, we recognised the importance of engaging with local people to understand their challenges and pain points and to gain an insight into our ageing population. We therefore commissioned research through an independent organisation to investigate this. The methodology involved collecting data via desk research, remote workshops, video footage reviews and ethnographic and "deep dive" interviews with Stockport residents (both before and after the beginning of the pandemic). This resulted in the development of personas, customer journeys and emerging themes. Findings are currently being shared with colleagues in order to identify the possible solutions that will deliver against the objectives of the Prospectus and how these could be prioritised, strategically aligned and tested. This has enabled us to:

- Explore what people need to help them to age well and safely in their own homes
- Identify opportunities and challenges for technology-enabled living.
- Develop outline implementation plans for delivering against the living well at home objectives.

Co-production embedded in Stockport Family and Education Services
Activity undertaken in Stockport Family and Education Services included:

- Consultation on the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant to enable Stockport families and young people to shape future investment for inclusion of children and young people with SEND.

- Consultation with young people on their involvement in the Education Health and Care Planning process.

- Ongoing parent/carer involvement in SEND Board, workstream and sub-group activities covering various aspect across the range of SEND improvement work.

- The review of Stockport's SEND Local Offer website included a workshop to ascertain young people's views on SEND Local Offer.

- Ongoing parent/carer and VCFSE involvement in co-development of Holiday Activities and Food Programme for Easter, Summer and Christmas Holidays.

- A number of Young people attended a Scrutiny Review Panel meeting to share thoughts directly with elected members on Children & Young People's Participation & Mental Health Services.

- Parent/carer and young people's involvement in recruitment to key posts within Stockport Family and Education Services.

Following best practice set out by Gov.UK to create useable and accessible digital services
To ensure users can access our web platforms we have installed an accessibility toolbar that has the capability to read text and PDFs aloud, translate text and change the colour and structure of a website site to each user's preference. The preferences are then saved and are reused each time the site loads.

An update has been published to the council's accessibility statement outlining the progress the team has made in ensuring www.stockport.gov.uk meets the required accessibility standards. The team have worked alongside suppliers to upgrade our accessibility tracking tools. These tools highlight risks or issues and score the website against the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. The work is then analysed, prioritised and delivered accordingly. An internal review is also being carried out of all third-party online platforms.

Accessibility is now taken forward as a standard requirement for all digital services and an online training course is due to be released before the summer to support colleagues in meeting these requirements when designing or commissioning digital services.

Reviewing how complaints are handled within the council and identifying improvements
In Quarter 4, the council brought together Statutory Adult Social Care, Statutory Children's Social Care, Corporate Complaints and Schools Complaints into one complaints team within Citizen Focus (CSS). The aim of this one team approach to complaints is to improve the overall service for complainants, response times and consistency in complaint handling across the council.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Council Measures								
PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.1	Freedom of Information (FOI) requests responded to on time (% and number).	High	87.2% (1,312 of 1,505)	93.1% (1,288 of 1,384)	90.8% (1,014 of 1,117)	95.0%	A	⬇

The 2020/21 outturn fell short of both the target and the 2019/20 figure. This slight reduction in response times can be largely attributed to organisational capacity when dealing with the immediate impact of, and needs arising from, the pandemic. The Information Commissioner's Office anticipated response times would be affected and this has been borne out in Stockport.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.2	**Stage 1 complaints upheld (% and number).**	Low	**28.4% (33 of 116)**	**33.9% (41 of 121)**	**28.9% (26/90)**	**33%**	G	⬆

Targets for upheld complaints are set based on an average of the performance of the last three years. Fewer complaints were received in 2020/21. This is thought to largely be as a result of the pandemic. The year-end outturn of 28.9% achieved the 2020/21 target and reduced from 33.9% the previous year.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.3	**Stage 2 complaints upheld (% and number).**	Low	**23.8% (19 of 80)**	**29.8% (25 of 84)**	**31.1% (19/61)**	**31%**	G	⬇

Though the year-end outturn target for Stage 2 corporate complaints was missed, it has been rated as "green" as the outturn was just 0.1% above the year-end target. To illustrate the rationale for this, one more complaint upheld would have changed this figure to 32.7% and one less upheld to 29.5%.

As predicted, the percentage of complaints upheld at Stage 2 marginally increased when compared to the previous year; the upheld complaints – many of which were only partially upheld - tended to relate to issues regarding delays, perceived lack of communication and general service delivery resulting from resourcing and process changes during the pandemic/lockdown.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Actual	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)	88.9% (80/90)	90%	A	➡

The year-end outturn was below target by 1.1%, the equivalent of one complaint. There was a slight improvement in response times when compared to the previous year, although fewer Stage 1 complaints were received in 20/21 than in previous years.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21			
					Actual	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)	82.4% (56/68)	73%	G	⬆

The year-end outturn was above target and there was an improvement in response times compared to 2019/20, although the numbers of Stage 2 complaints received was lower than in previous years.

A continued improvement in response times is forecast for 2021/22 following the establishment of the Central Complaints Team which has brought together four complaints customer processes into one management structure / reporting line from April 2021. This is intended to improve the customer journey, complaints monitoring and quality assurance.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21		
					Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.6	**Telephone calls to the Contact Centre that are answered (% and number).**	**High**	**81.3% (182,397/ 224,365)**	**80.7% (192,836/ 238,982)**	**89.3% (167,313/ 187,288)**	**82%**	G	⬆

A new telephony system was introduced in 2019/20 helping better monitor call handling, as was AMI, an artificial intelligence "chat bot", which helps people to resolve their queries on the website. Both were expected to have positive impact on call handling rates and AMI was expected to reduce the number of emails and phone calls.

Since the introduction of these systems, the proportion of calls answered has increased from 80.7% in 2019/20 to 89.3% and the total number of calls reducing by 21.6% during the same period. The council saw a reduction of 21.6% in call volume to the contact centre over the last year. However, it is not possible to know how much this reduction can be attributed to changes in behaviour during the pandemic as opposed to the impact of digital solutions such as AMI.

It should be noted that the contact centre, bolstered with support seconded from other teams such as libraries, also completed many more outbound calls during the pandemic to those that were shielding and had indicated that they needed support. Between April 2020 and March 2021, 8,516 outbound calls were made.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21		
					Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.8	**Number and % of Digital Contacts**	**High**	**75.1% (841,621/ 1,120,051)**	**74.4% (884,427/ 1,188,424)**	**90.2% (2,260,047/ 2,506,774)**	**75%**	G	⬆

This measure includes transactional on-line forms, self-service internet transactions for libraries and telephone payments, Ami contacts, My Account and social media contacts and self-service webpage visits. Bin collection day finder visits were around ten times higher than their usual levels from April to October 2020.

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21		
					Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.9	Number (and %) of births registered on time (within 28 days)	High	96.5% (3,026 of 3,136)	98.0% (2,872 of 2,930)	74.2% 2,562/ 3,452	98%	A	⬇

The pandemic has had a huge impact on birth registration, with all registrations nationally suspended for several months during the first lockdown in 2020. As no birth registrations were allowed to take place, a significant backlog had already built up at the start of the year and this resulted in all UK local authority areas failing to hit their targets this year.

Stockport however achieved significantly higher than the national average with 74.2% of Births being registered on time (despite over 500 additional babies being born in this period than is 2019/20) compared to the national average of 54.6%. Taking these issues into account therefore, performance on this measure has been rated as "amber".

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.10	Number (and %) of deaths registered on time (within 28 days)	High	87.5% (1,475 of 1,685)	87.2% (1,590 of 1,823)	81.5% (1,798 of 2,205)	90%	A	⬇

Meeting our local authority death registration target depends on many factors including timeliness of registration by doctors and timeliness of the customer in making the appointment with the registration service. Although we did not meet our target for death registrations, we did achieve higher than the national average with 81.5% of deaths being registered on time. The national average for the registering deaths on time for 2020/2021 was 75.8%.

The General Register Office also provides data that shows the number of deaths that would have been registered on time if situations beyond the council's control had been removed (e.g. paperwork being sent from the hospital/GPs on day four or later). This figure was 89% for 2020/2021, just below the 90% target. This measure has therefore also been rated as "amber".

Contextual Measure

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE1.7	Number of engagement/ co-production initiatives	Not Applicable	Not collected	Not collected	32	Not Applicable	-	-

Further information on engagement and co-production activity undertaken in 2020/21 is set out on pages 5 and 6 above and in Appendix 1.

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.
Covid-19 has highlighted the human impact of digital exclusion across the UK. Having a device, or enough devices for a household, and access to data, has become an essential commodity as people have had to find new digital ways to do everyday essential tasks from ordering groceries and prescriptions, to schooling, working from home or staying in touch with family.

The council and core members of the DigiKnow Alliance have been working with partners to expand the provision of community level digital support. We have provided training to voluntary sector organisations to use Zoom and other digital technology to reach their clients so that their important work can continue while their face-to-face service has had to stop.

Our connections with national charities have enabled us to receive a good share of devices to either gift to people in need or to add to our own digital library stocks. Over 150 devices have been donated through national schemes (not including those from DfE), and the Alliance, through its close connections in the community, has been distributing these to the people who would benefit the most. For example, we have received 50 smart phones from Hubbub's Community Calling Scheme to help those fleeing violence and persecution to keep in contact with family and vital services. The Alliance has received 77 devices from the Connecting Families programme (funded by Children in Need) and have just been awarded 30 devices as part of Good Things Foundation funding to provide digital inclusion support to those with learning needs. The council, with the DigiKnow Alliance has been instrumental in gathering insight at community level about what is needed and connecting this into the wider schemes so that we can inform their offer and channel their help to where it is most needed.

Working with all Portfolios to address the barriers to digital inclusion.
We have been actively recruiting new partners and spreading the word of how DigiKnow can help individuals. In particular we have focused on raising awareness of the Digiknow offer with schools, colleges and families with school-age children and on understanding the needs of families so these can be better met. We have also supported care homes to use tablets to enable residents to connect with loved ones.

We have distributed Department for Education laptops to schools and care leavers - 429 to children with social care support, 63 to care leavers and 272 to year 10 students who had to homes school.

Whilst our digital inclusion programme has previously focused predominantly on growing digital skills, Covid-19 has highlighted device and data gaps within our communities. Joining up insight at community level to inform regional support has led to 34 devices being provided to Stockport College by the GM Tech Fund as part of 'wave 2'. As part of the first wave, the GM Tech Fund previously distributed 30 tablet-packages between three secondary schools at the start of the pandemic.

Although there has been a greater focus on device distribution, by routing device borrowers through Starting Point, we have been able to offer digital skills support too, including support for parents to help their children use the internet safely. We have also linked in with adult education colleagues to promote online safety courses via our colleges.

Digital Lending Library

Stockport's Digital Lending Library launched in August thanks to a grant from the Stockport Local Fund and a donation of 65 laptops from DfE. Additional funding from GMCA's Get GM Digital fund has helped Starting Point better manage the huge demand they have experienced and answer the 2,875 phone calls that they have received into their DigiKnow helpline.

In the first 6 months since launching the digital library, 307 devices or data packages have been loaned, with referrals coming from a range of sources including self-referral. A refurbishment scheme was launched in January. Seed funding was awarded to Community Computers (part of the Stockport charity Renewal Northwest). In return for donations of computer equipment the charity will maintain the digital lending library devices and refurbish devices that can be offered for sale at low cost (under £100) to those on low incomes. We now recycle all unwanted council computer equipment through the charity so it can be refurbished to benefit Stockport residents.

Covid-19 is having an effect on the demographics of people requiring digital support. Prior to the pandemic over 80% of all digital inclusion support offered by Starting Point's digital champions was taken by those over 65. However, since the pandemic we have seen a greater demand for digital support from those of school or working age including:

- 41% of devices were provided to support education.
- 40% of devices supported people with their mental health, isolation and wellbeing.
- 19% of devices loaned has helped people look for work.

Users of the service reported very high levels of satisfaction, with 99% agreeing that the support received had a positive impact on their lives and 98% agreeing that they were now more confident with using technology.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Partnership Measures							
PI Code	**Short Name**	**Good Perform-ance**	**2018/19** **Actual**	**2019/20** **Actual**	**2020/21** **Actual**	**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	9,387	10,000	R ⬇

This measure tracks the total number of people helped to get online since the establishment of the Digital Inclusion Alliance in Stockport in 2018/19.

In the face of the pandemic, the Alliance acted swiftly, retraining digital champions so that now all DigiKnow support sessions are delivered online with initial contact for help made possible by the creation of a new, dedicated DigiKnow Helpline. However, traditional face to face support such as that provided in libraries has been more challenging to provide due to restrictions and social distancing. Busy libraries like the Heatons and Reddish have each still clocked up over 1,000 hours of public computer usage this year despite being physically closed for a period.

It is likely that the total number of individuals helped to get online is higher than the numbers presented here, but it has not been possible to ascertain the number of additional unique individuals supported through:

- Library bookable PC sessions.
- Device loans through the lending library.
- Calls to the DigiKnow helpline.

		Good Perform-ance	**2018/19** **Actual**	**2019/20** **Actual**	**2020/21** **Actual**	**Target**	**Status** **Trend**
PI Code	**Short Name**						
CFE2.2	Number of groups to join the DigiKnow network (cumulative)	High	17	19	40	40	G ⬆

The involvement of local groups and businesses is vital to the continued success of the DigiKnow alliance. At December's CRMG it was agreed to remove the word 'community' from the measure so a wider range of partners could join the alliance.

The number of 35 that we reported on at the beginning of the year counted each council library as one Online Centre. The council and all libraries now count as one group – so the increase to 40 is an overall increase of 21 further groups joining the Alliance (and a further seven have joined since the end of March).

PI Code	Short Name	Good Perform-ance	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21			
			Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE2.3	Number of digital champions	High	-	35	32	38	R	⬇

The DigiKnow Digital Champions are a group of dedicated, digital skills volunteers who are managed by our delivery partner Starting Point. Before the pandemic all digital skills support was delivered face-to-face and they have retrained to provide the same level of support via online channels only. Their numbers have fluctuated over the year but are now looking more stable.

Despite a slight drop in the of digital champions, they have been able to keep up with demand and have delivered an impressive 299 remote group training sessions and 1,191 one-to one-remote support sessions between them.

Following a recommendation at December's CRMG Scrutiny Committee, consideration is being given as to how we can collect a better picture of the wider digital support activity that is ongoing in the borough and build on the support given from our own workforce, council members and wider volunteers. During 2021/22 work will be undertaken to develop further these three distinct levels of Digital Champion.

- Level 1: Digital Champion with Starting Point focusing purely on digital support and training.

- Level 2: Digital Champion with an Alliance organization offering digital support as just one element of support such as TPA's key workers and library workers helping with public computer queries etc.

- Level 3: Digital champions who are front line workers or volunteers who are able to signpost to where digital support is available but do not provide training themselves. This could include council members and community champions etc.

Work will be undertaken to explore whether digital inclusion material or training may help onboard Level 2 and 3 digital champions to advocate for digital where appropriate and signpost to support

Priority 3: Facilitating citizens' access to arts and culture

Refreshing our local cultural strategy
A Cultural Strategy Board has been established with representation from a number of individuals and organisations who have expressed an interest in helping to drive this work forward. The strategy has been drafted to link closely to the new Borough Plan and projects are being identified for delivery in 2021/22. There will be ongoing engagement with the cultural sector to continually refine and refresh the strategy and the plans and projects which arise from this.

Supporting cultural networks and organisations and individuals working in the sector.
The Cultural Network has continued to operate during 2020/21, but the focus has been of mutual support of the sector and individuals working in the sector in the Borough. The network will be refreshed in 2021/2022 to focus on the key priorities outlined in the cultural strategy.

Shaping our Forward Plan for Museums.
Museums have been closed for the majority of 2020/21 and staff have been redeployed to other services. Once staff return in May 2021, the Forward Plan for museums will be reviewed with the team in the light of the cultural strategy and to reposition the service following the closure period and the impact of Covid-19.

Identifying opportunities for our library offer to support the delivery of wider outcomes
The delivery of this work has been impeded by the implications for libraries throughout the pandemic. Library services have been affected by the many lockdowns and tiering restrictions that have applied in Stockport over the last year with Covid-safe appointment-based services and bookable Public PC sessions in place for much of 20/21, which has proved to be a much more staff intensive way of running a library service, and so has impacted on the number of libraries the council has been able to open during this period. In addition, it was necessary to second a number of libraries staff to manage Locality Test and Trace and library calls.

Quarter 4 saw the Covid-safe restoration (still having social distancing; one-way systems; capacity limits etc.) of a further three libraries in Stockport: Cheadle Hulme, Heald Green and One Stockport Hub. This meant we had 12 operational libraries open to the public, as well as our Home Library Service, online e-resources offer, and an outreach community offer in Bridgehall and Offerton. The focus for 2021/22 is a return to a fully operating library service, although some regular activities require the removal of social distancing before they can resume due to space limitations.

Despite the constraints the service has operated within this year, notable initiatives 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 continued via our Home Library Services team. We have now delivered to over 1,000 customers.

- We continued our Library Speaker Series online. With an author visit per month taking place for Stockport residents and people across the world. Our three events this quarter saw nearly 150 people come together on Zoom to listen and interact with our guest speakers.

- We facilitated the gifting of over 1,600 Bookstart Packs to nurseries and childminders across Stockport.
- We celebrated LGBT History Month in February with a host of online events and goody bags

available from our open libraries.

- We celebrated Shakespeare Week in March with an online cook-a-long demonstration from Food Historian Seren Charrington-Hollins and goody bags available from our open libraries.

Cultural Sector funding

The 2020/21 Citizen Focus and Engagement Portfolio Agreement proposed a new performance measure relating to external cultural sector funding obtained by local cultural sector organisations with support from the council (CFE3.2: Cultural Sector Grants). When this measure was originally proposed, a number of funding streams for culture were available to bid into and the intention was to establish a baseline relating to funding obtained via these streams during 2020/21.

Following the lockdown of the cultural sector, these schemes were immediately suspended and pending applications (including those from Stockport). Monies were transferred into a Cultural Recovery Fund which focused on helping cultural institutions survive pending the reopening of the sector and helping them to relaunch their offer. Three organisations in Stockport (NK Theatre Arts, Stockport Plaza Trust and Rising Stars CIC) have received approximately £0.5m in total from this fund. None of these funds have flowed directly to the council and whilst the council has provided support to organisations in their bids, it cannot legitimately claim a role in securing this funding. CFE3.2 has therefore been removed from the report.

Measuring Performance and Reporting Progress

Partnership Measure

PI Code	Short Name	Good Performance	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	Target	Status	Trend
CFE3.1	Number of visits to Stockport museums.	High	138,413	156,557	3,484	10,000	R	⬇

As all museum sites were closed 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 were unable to accommodate walk-up visitors – all bookings had to be made online. These two factors combined have had a detrimental effect on the ability of the service to maximise the number of visitors. Sites were closed again from early November for the remainder of 2020/21 so there were no visitors in Quarter 4. Bramall Hall, Air Raid Shelters and the Art Gallery are due to reopen from the week of 17th May.

Contextual Measure

PI Code	Short Name	Good Performance	2017/18 Actual	2018/9 Actual	Trend
CFE3.3 (GMS)	Number of engagements by Stockport residents with cultural organisations supported by AGMA.	High	0.21m	0.46m	⬆

The 460,000 cultural engagements recorded in Stockport were 117.8% higher than in 2017/18, and GM as a whole increased engagement by 40.5%. Whilst Stockport had the joint second highest number of engagements in GM behind Manchester, there were 184,000 engagements where residence was unspecified.

CITIZEN FOCUS AND ENGAGEMENT
2. FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND MONITORING

2.1 Revenue – Cash limit

Budget Outturn

	Previously Reported (Q3) £000	Increase (Reduction) £000	Outturn Budget £000
Cash Limit	4,834	0	4,834

Budget changes from the previous quarter

No changes have been made to the cash limit since the Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Update to the council presented at Cabinet on 9th February 2021, and Corporate Resource Management and Governance (CRMG) Scrutiny Committee on 13th April 2021

Outturn Position

Net Cash Limit £000	Net Expenditure £000	Appropriations £000	(Surplus) / Deficit £000
4,834	**5,322**	**(40)**	**448**

The portfolio's net expenditure after appropriations is £0.448m in deficit, or 9.3% above the £4.834m cash limit. This is less than the forecast given in previous reports as the ongoing closures has realised more savings in the final quarter, particularly in Libraries. The services that rely more on income generation and less on cash limit/taxpayer support such as Museums and Arts, Events and Registrars are the drivers behind most of the deficit.

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 the current balances in reserves. The planned use of these reserves will form part of the annual in year review of the council's reserves policy, aligned to 2021/22 financial planning and anticipated commitments.

Reserve Category	Reserve Narration	To be used for	Approved £000	Appropriations 2020/21 £000	Balance £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 – museum offer	40	(40)	0
Linked to Budget	Transformation – Invest to Save	Museum Projects	131	0	131
	TOTALS		**251**	**(40)**	**211**

2.3 Portfolio Savings Programme

Proposal	Risk Rating	Value £000	Value Achieved or Identified £000	Additional Information
Library Services Offer	Green	250	250	Achieved.
Review of Information & Governance	Green	100	100	Achieved.
Museums Offer	Green	150	150	Achieved. Covid issues notwithstanding.
Balancing the Cost of Services Phase 2	Amber	70	55	Expected to be achieved now that the Registrar service has returned to more typical operation.
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.

Appendix 1: Consultation and Engagement Activity 2020/21

Quarter	Programme	Purpose	Count
Q2	SEND Improvement	Continuation of co-design of SEND Improvement work	1
	One Stockport - Vision and Values	Workshops and conversations to understand the views of stakeholders and to gather the momentum of the movement	1
	Borough Plan Development	Surveys, workshops and conversations with VCSE partners regarding priorities for the future of Stockport to inform the borough plan	1
	Climate Change	Borough-wide consultation on council's climate strategy	1
	Libraries	Consultation of services and facilities in the One Stockport Hub	1
	Lisburne SEND School	Consultation to inform the next stage of the project	1
	Highways and Transport	Consultation with Heatons and Romiley residents around introduction of active neighbourhoods (encouraging people to walk/ cycle or use public transport for shorter journeys)	2
		Consultation on North Reddish Town Centre improvements, including bus stops, pavements and new street furniture	1
		A6/ Railway Road Borough-wide consultation on junction changes	1
	GM Ageing Narrative Campaign (Public Health)	Interviews for GM Ageing Narrative campaign, to gather case studies on older people's contribution during the pandemic	1
	All Age Living Prospectus	To inform the market strategy for the All-Age living prospectus- interviews with participants (residents of Stockport) of previous round of research.	1
Q3	SEND Improvement	Continuation of co-design of SEND Improvement work	1
	Borough Plan Development	Ambitions priorities and needs of residents to inform development of the borough plan	1
	Marple Leisure and Community Hub	Gauge preferences for design options	1
	Carers Service	inform development of new carers service	1

Quarter	Programme	Purpose	Count
	School admission arrangements and holiday dates consultation	Consultation on proposed changes to admission criteria and term dates	1
	Romiley District Centre Improvements	Consultation	1
	Cheadle Towns Fund	Consultation	1
	A34 MRN Corridor Improvement Plan	Consultation	1
	Rediscovering the Underbanks survey	Consultation	1
	Assisted Digital pathways	Interviews with third sector organisations to gather insight on assisted digital pathways	1
	Report a flood online form	User testing the redesign of the Report a flood online form	1
Quarter 4	SEND Improvement	Ongoing parent/carer involvement in SEND Board, workstream and sub-group activities covering various aspect across the range of SEND improvement work	1
	Borough Plan Development	Engagement with VCSFE partners on the draft plan and sessions with VCSFE , public and private sector partners to begin to discuss the action and delivery of the vision set out in the plan.	
	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	Ongoing parent/carer and VCFSE involvement in co-development of HAF Programme for Easter, Summer and Christmas Holidays	1
	Scrutiny Review of Children & Young People's Participation & Mental Health Services	Young people's attendance at Scrutiny Review Panel to share thoughts directly with elected members	1
	Uniting Nevill Rd Infant and Junior schools	Consultation	1
	Covid Winter Package Grant	Consultation with schools (survey) and third party VCSE orgs (co-design session) on mechanisms for discretionary allocation of CWP	1
	Heaton Mersey Common Path Improvements	Consultation on proposed improvements	1
	Windlehust Road Traffic Calming Measures	Consultation on proposed improvements	1
	High Lane Village Neighbourhood Development Plan	Neighbourhood Plan consultation	1

Quarter	Programme	Purpose	Count
	Community Champions programme	Co-production of a Community Champion programme with a focus on Covid safe behaviours and wider VCFSE development	1
		TOTAL	**32**