

# **“Shaping Stockton’s Future”**

## **A DRAFT Sustainable Community Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees**

**2008 – 2021**

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## Foreword from Chair & Vice Chair of Stockton Renaissance

We are delighted to introduce Stockton's new Sustainable Community Strategy, setting out our vision and ambitions for the Borough from 2008 to 2021. The Strategy aims to ensure a better quality of life for all people living in Stockton-on-Tees, now and for our future generations to come. It was developed following extensive public consultation and engagement over the Summer of 2007 and reflects the priorities, concerns and ambitions of all Stockton's communities.

Stockton-on-Tees has the largest population in the Tees Valley, a fantastic riverside location, and a major role to play in ongoing improvements in life in the Tees Valley. In 2007 our Borough is one of the cleanest in the country, crime figures are at an all time low and our education results are better than ever before. These are some of the reasons why our Borough is one of the few in the North East where the population is growing. We want to build upon our success in Stockton over the next thirteen years and ensure local people benefit fully from an increasingly strong economy, and are able to enjoy a better quality of life than ever before.

Within Stockton, we have areas of affluence sitting alongside significant areas of disadvantage, and large differences in need and opportunity still exist. For this reason our focus continues to be 'Promoting Achievement, Tackling Disadvantage', to ensure that all residents benefit from the improvements to our Borough. We want Stockton to become the best place to live in the North East for all our residents and communities. This strategy sets out where, over the next 13 years, we will focus our efforts to achieve this.

**Ken Lupton**  
**Chair, Stockton Renaissance**  
**& Leader of the Council**

**Chris Willis**  
**Vice Chair, Stockton Renaissance**  
**& Chief Executive North Tees PCT**

## Foreword from the Community Empowerment Network

We welcome the many opportunities the community had to influence this important strategy that will help shape our Borough over the next thirteen years. It is a testament to the strong relationship between Stockton Renaissance and the Community Empowerment Network that we worked together to ensure that everyone had the chance to make their voice heard.

We will be working to maintain this level of engagement in future. It is a measure of the success of that engagement that we have had requests from voluntary and community sector colleagues elsewhere to share our engagement process, which is now being promoted as best practice across the region.

We are now looking forward to helping to deliver the far reaching ambitions in this strategy and challenging our public services to achieve even more.

**Julie Derbyshire**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Stockton Residents & Community Groups Association**

## Section 1 - Introduction

### What is Stockton Renaissance?

Stockton Renaissance is a partnership of representatives from Stockton's business, community, voluntary sector and public sector agencies. There is a main partnership board which meets monthly, supported by a network of Thematic Partnerships, which deliver key themes in this strategy and four Area Partnership boards who monitor and challenge progress.

The partnership forms the 'Local Strategic Partnership' for the Borough, drawing together key public sector agencies – including the Council, Police, Health and Training and Employment agencies with private and voluntary sector and community leaders to plan for the future of the Borough. All meetings are open to the public.

It is underpinned by the Community Empowerment Network which brings together all of the voluntary and community groups in the Borough to elect and the support representatives who take part on the Renaissance Partnership boards.

This is how the partnerships fit together:



### What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

All local authorities have a statutory duty to work with partner organisations to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy – a document demonstrating how they will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area.

We are developing a 'Sustainable Community Strategy' to place a greater emphasis on how we meet the needs of existing residents but at the same time ensure the brightest possible future for our generations to come.

### **Why is the strategy important?**

It sets a framework for how public agencies within the Borough will spend their money and deliver their services as well as highlight how they will work together with the private and voluntary sectors in improving Stockton. For example, plans to improve our schools, our local health services and town centres will all be developed and reviewed to fit in with the Sustainable Community Strategy. It also shows central Government that we have a clear vision and set of priorities for our Borough, and encourages new businesses to invest in regenerating Stockton.

### **Who developed this strategy?**

We all did. Stockton Renaissance listened to all residents, communities and key partners in our Borough throughout the Summer of 2007. This involved agreeing key themes and priorities for this new, longer term Sustainable Community Strategy. We also used this as the basis of our consultation on the Local Area Agreement (2008 – 2011), which will form the first three year's delivery plan for this Sustainable Community Strategy.

Stakeholders, including residents and people working in the Borough, took part in a variety of ways including; through the community led Renaissance Area and Renaissance Thematic Partnerships, Youth Forums, Councillor Seminars, Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Network meetings, special Community Empowerment events, Newsletters, On-line consultation and Focus group meetings with our hard to reach groups.

At the same time, we consulted upon the Local Development Framework, the spatial delivery plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy to make sure that we had the land and facilities located in the right places in our Borough to achieve the ambitions outlined in our Sustainable Community Strategy.

The engagement process took place in two distinct phases beginning with consultation on a document setting out our draft themes and key ambitions. The consultation document was developed based upon the results of earlier consultation with local residents, in particular through the Autumn 2006 Residents MORI Survey and through Stockton Renaissance and local councillors.

The consultation asked the following questions:

- Were the themes in the draft Sustainable Community Strategy the right ones and was there anything missing?
- Were the key ambitions under each of the themes the right ones and is there anything missing?
- Was there anything within the draft strategy that should not be there or needed changing?
- What were the ambitions/priorities that we should focus on for the next three years and include in the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 (our three year delivery plan).

Then to ensure that the final document correctly reflected community priorities we went back to the same groups in phase two with a refined draft strategy. This took on board those comments that came through strongly in phase one and outlined the priority areas people wanted us to concentrate upon for the next three years.

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## Section 2 - Our vision for Stockton-on-Tees by 2021

**Stockton-on-Tees is a diverse Borough located at the heart of the Tees Valley. The area has a thriving population of more than 187,000 people and is within easy reach of city shopping and leisure facilities, the coast and rural North Yorkshire. A mixture of urban centres, market towns and villages and with an expanding University, Stockton on Tees is a place with an exciting future.**

The population of the Borough is increasing (up from 175,000 in 1991), and this rise is projected to continue to over 204,400 by 2029. There is a unique social and economic mix, with areas of quite acute disadvantage situated alongside areas of affluence. Whilst fifteen per cent of the population live within the top twenty per cent of most affluent areas of England, thirty four per cent live in the twenty per cent most deprived areas. Our strategy for transforming the area therefore needs to tackle these differences and provide opportunities for all local people.

The Borough forms part of the 'Tees Valley City Region', home to some 720,000 people living mainly around the lower Tees. It includes Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, Darlington, Hartlepool and Sedgefield. We are at the forefront of partnership work to develop the Tees Valley through a new integrated city-region approach and are working towards the vision of the Tees Valley being as affluent as the rest of the country within the next twenty years. This aim forms part of the 'Northern Way' strategy for development of the north of England and is also at the heart of this Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is not enough to focus on economic regeneration, however, alongside improvements in the Tees Valley's economic performance, we must also pay attention to the quality of life of local people by regenerating local communities and providing opportunities and services for individuals, promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage within our Borough.

### ***Our vision for the Borough:***

- ***Stockton-on-Tees driving Economic Renaissance at the heart of a vibrant Tees Valley city-region***
- ***An enhanced quality of place, including renewed town centres and improved local neighbourhoods***
- **Enhanced wellbeing and achievement** for local people.

The **Economic Renaissance** of Stockton-on-Tees is being developed and driven as part of the Tees Valley wide approach, as evidence shows that cities or city-regions with their key facilities and large attractions are the key to making an area prosperous. Stockton has the largest population of the five Boroughs making up the Tees Valley and has led development of the city region business case, governance structure (Tees Valley Unlimited) and investment strategy to transform our local economy over the next 20 years. The business case sets out a full economic analysis and a clear future ambition. Our forward strategy is to continue to build on our economic assets, including a world-class chemicals industry and research base and its potential for future development both for

chemicals and as a national centre for energy development. Stockton's chemicals industry is the largest in the Tees Valley, employing 13,400 people and two of the Tees Valley's major sites – Billingham and Seal Sands – sit wholly or partly within the Borough. The other key elements of our strategy are to extend the logistics industry through development of the Tees as a port and growth of Durham Tees Valley Airport; and to develop skills for local people through continued partnership with Durham (Queen's Campus, Stockton) and Teesside Universities.

In order to attract economic investment and retain skilled people in the area, it is also vital that we **enhance quality of place** – the physical environment of the Borough. This links to the second key ambition of the Tees Valley Business Case, to improve urban competitiveness and liveability. In Stockton we will continue to focus on regenerating our urban core, strengthening the heart of the city-region and linkages to Middlesbrough, and on improving liveability within our more disadvantaged communities through community engagement, housing and neighbourhood renewal schemes. Our local priorities for the economy and quality of place are set out in more detail within Stockton's Regeneration Strategy.

**Enhancing well-being and achievement** of children and adults will ensure top class education, skills development and life opportunities for all our residents allowing them to participate fully into our ambitious Economic Renaissance plans. We will also improve health: for children our vision is of accessible services within local neighbourhoods and targeted campaigns to tackle key issues such as smoking, drugs and alcohol misuse, obesity, sexual health and teenage conceptions. For adults and older adults the focus is improved joint working, commissioning and visioning for vulnerable adults and older people between all local partners, in particular the Council and NHS. A key part of our ambition is to provide **fully integrated children's and adult's services on a geographic basis throughout the Borough focused on early intervention and prevention**. The development of 5 integrated service areas is also aligned to primary health care delivery patches helping us achieve our ambitious vision for fully integrated family support. The leadership and implementation of our new Community Cohesion Strategy on behalf of Stockton Renaissance is also important in promoting a common sense of belonging and pride in the Borough.

Only by working in partnership through Stockton Renaissance, our 'Local Strategic Partnership', can we deliver this vision'. We will work **to promote achievement by local people and communities, and to tackle disadvantage within the Borough**. We will also work in partnership to tackle the overarching disparities of opportunity and achievement between the Tees Valley and the rest of England.

Our vision for Stockton is supported by a variety of other key strategies including the Tees Valley City-Region business case, the Regional Economic Strategy and the Northern Way. This is demonstrated in the table below and shows how we are committed to working with others outside our borders to promote the quality of life for both residents of Stockton and the whole of the North East.



Stockton Borough Vision	Tees Valley City-Region Business Case	Draft Regional Economic Strategy	The Northern Way
Economic Renaissance	Building the economic assets of the city region.	<u>Business</u> Building a new enterprise surge. Boosting productivity Promoting science, innovation and design.	1. Drive innovation 3. Increase returns on investment in transport 6. Improve efficiency and strengthen accountability.
Quality of Place	Improving urban competitiveness and liveability	<u>Place</u> Investing in the economic hearts of our city regions	4. Improve the quality of our places 5. Strengthen devolution at all levels
Well-being and achievement for adults, children and young people.	The Tees Valley liveability objective includes improving skills, housing and reducing social polarisation.	<u>People</u> Skills – enhancing the capability of the workforce. Economic inclusion – increasing the size of the workforce.	2. Improve skills and raise employment

## Section 3 – Core Improvement Themes

***Stockton Renaissance will work to deliver the vision for Stockton-on-Tees by focusing on five core improvement themes and three supporting themes.***

### **Core Improvement Themes:**

#### **1. Economic Regeneration and Transport**

*We will work in partnership across the Tees Valley to bring more people into employment, to strengthen our knowledge base, to promote a more entrepreneurial culture and to strengthen key industrial clusters. We will work to improve access into our town centres and throughout our Borough by all forms of transport.*

#### **2. Environment and Housing**

*We will work to improve the quality of life of local people now and for the future by improving the local environment and housing, and tackling the impact of climate change.*

#### **3. Safer Communities**

*We will tackle crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour within our local communities.*

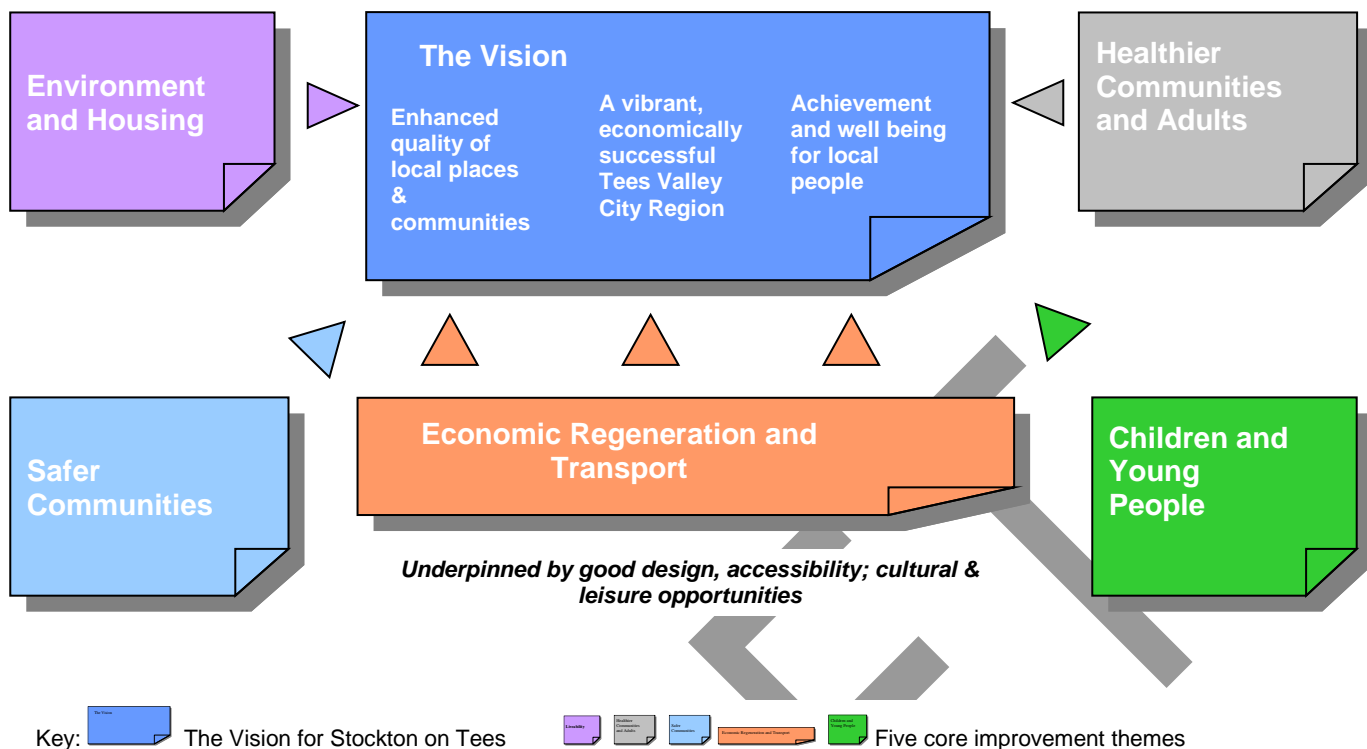
#### **4. Children and Young People**

*We will promote the health, wellbeing and achievement of children and young people, and tackle inequalities and disadvantage experienced by some children and their families.*

#### **5. Healthier Communities and Adults**

*We will promote healthier communities by tackling key public health issues such as smoking, obesity and drug and substance misuse; we will provide care and support for vulnerable adults and older adults within our communities.*

*The diagram overleaf shows how the five core improvement themes link to the overarching vision for Stockton-on-Tees.*



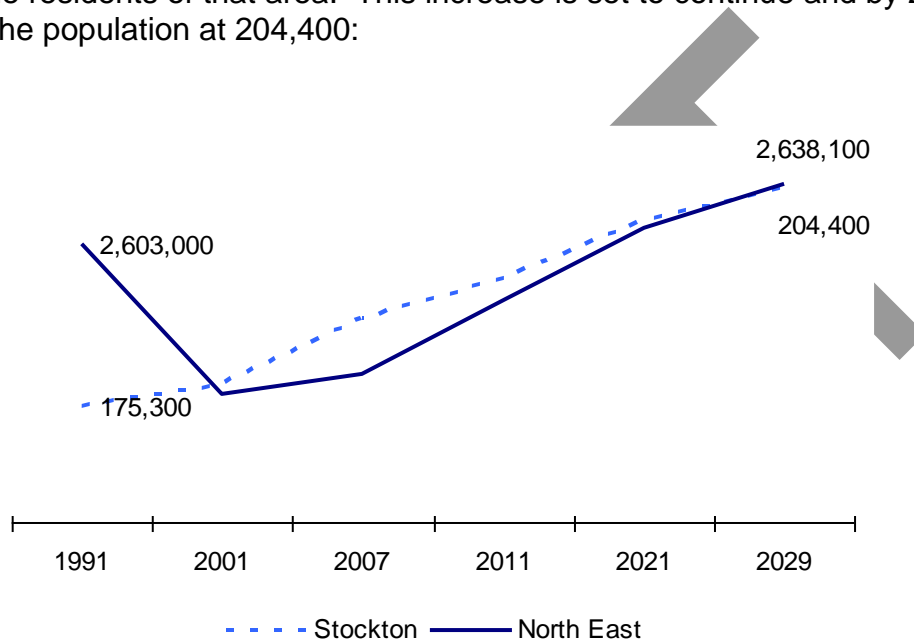
We will continue in partnership with local people our development of the Borough, making sure all new developments are strongly designed, are accessible to multiple communities and include consideration of cultural and leisure opportunities. They will also need to take into account our changing population, in particular the projected 62% growth in over 65 year olds. We have therefore prioritised three supporting themes alongside the five core themes.

- 1. Stronger Communities**  
 We will tackle all core priorities of this strategy in partnership with local communities, encouraging community participation in developments, and promoting cohesive communities across the Borough.
- 2. Older Adults**  
 We will work to ensure improvements take account of the projected 62% growth in people aged over 65 and that all services cater for increasing numbers of older adults in need of care and support.
- 3. Arts, Leisure and Culture**  
 We will use arts, leisure and culture to support core improvements in all priority areas.

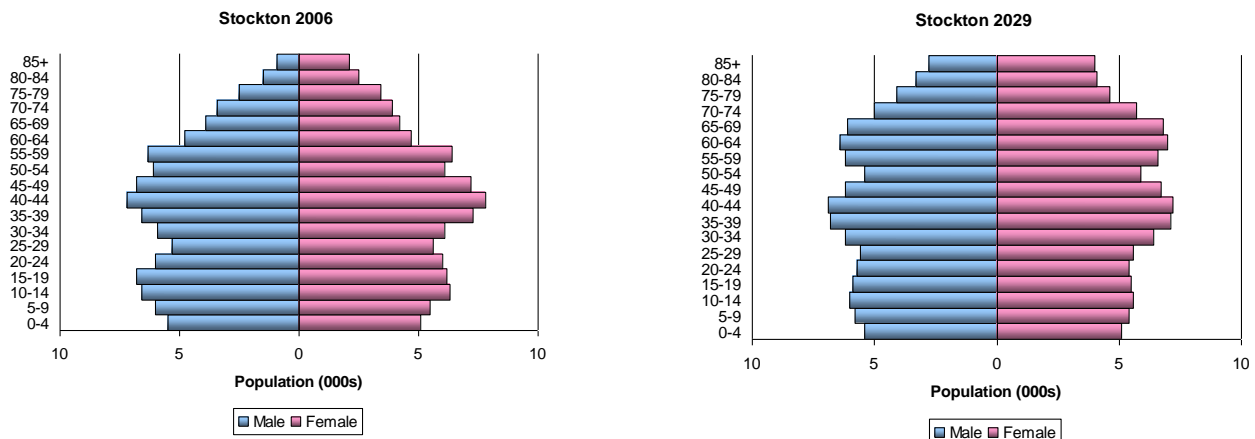
## Section 4 – Living in Stockton – how life has changed

### Population key facts

Stockton currently has a population of 187,300 people who live in 77,600 households (JSU Mid 2007 estimate). The population has risen 6.85% since the 1991 Census compared to a North East average of a 2.93% fall. In particular, the population in the south of the Borough is growing, due to the rapid expansion of the Ingleby Barwick developments, and the profile of the residents of that area. This increase is set to continue and by 2029 estimates put the population at 204,400:



In 2006, people of working age account for 62.7% of the population in Stockton (117,300 people). There 36,900 children (under 16) in the Borough accounting for 19.7% of the population. 33,000 people in Stockton are of retirement age in 2006 (17.6% of the population compared to 18.9% nationally). By 2029 this profile will have significantly changed with 3% fewer children and young people and 62% more people over retirement age:



The Borough has areas of affluence and deprivation alongside each other, with 17 out of 117 areas in the top 20% most affluent in England, whereas 40 are in the 20% most deprived. This is one of the most polarised Boroughs in England.

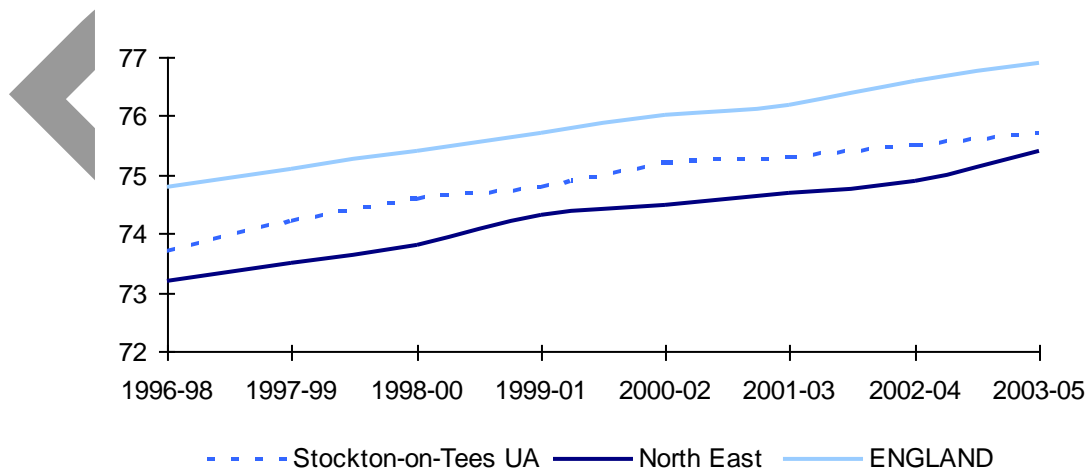
2.8% of the total population defined themselves as non-White in the 2001 Census, up from 1.6% in 1991, and we expect this trend to continue. Stockton has a much smaller Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Community make up than England (9%, 2001), with most BME residents being of Pakistani origin.

Satisfaction with the area as a place to live and with the Council are at the highest levels since 1998 (IPSOS MORI 2006). 84% of residents are positive about Stockton as a place to live. This satisfaction level is significantly higher than findings in 2000 and 2002. 56% of residents are satisfied with the way the Council is running the Borough compared to one in five who express dissatisfaction. The key reasons cited for satisfaction link to cleanliness and good refuse collection along with positive comments on the nature of the area as well as recycling facilities and parks and open spaces.

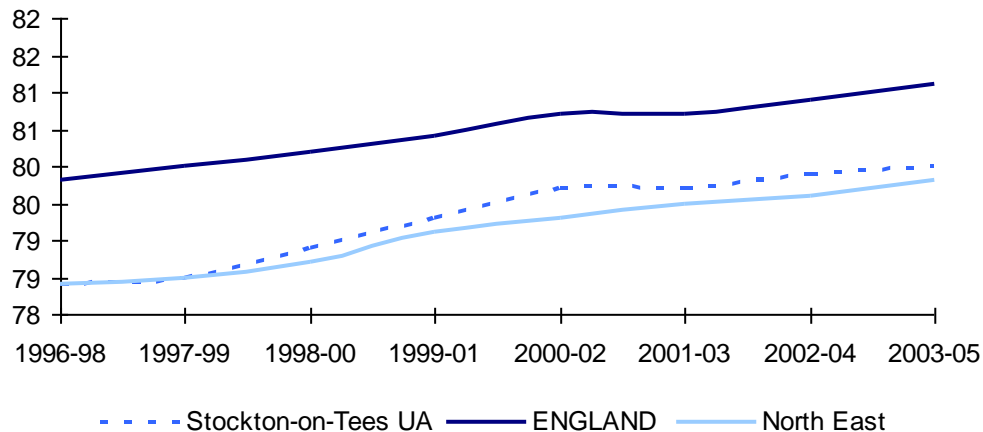
### **Health**

Overall health is improving, with life expectancy increasing significantly over the last 20 years, from 73.7 years for men in 1996/8 to 75.7 in 2003/5. Whilst still some way behind the national average, this nevertheless represents good progress. However great disparities exist with some wards having a life expectancy 10 years less than others, so tackling these differences is vital.

**Male Life Expectancy at Birth**



## Female Life Expectancy at Birth



19.9% of the population of Stockton reported having a limiting long-term illness in 2001 (35,438 people). Within the Borough there is large variation, with 41.0% of residents in the Stockton Town Centre ward having a limiting long-term illness compared to Ingleby Barwick West where the rate is 10.5%. There were 9,229 people in Stockton who were not working as they were permanently sick or disabled accounting for 7.1% of the population.

Early deaths from heart disease and cancer have decreased in Stockton and at a quicker rate than the national average, but significant improvements are still required to close the gap further. In particular, continuing efforts to discourage smoking, a major cause of ill health in the Borough are vital: 29% of adults smoke compared to 26% nationally.

Healthier lifestyles driven by diet and activity levels are also vital. Whilst activity rates in Stockton are above the England average (24% of residents participating in 30 minutes exercise 3 times per week compared with an England average of 21%)<sup>1</sup> obesity rates are high across the North East and represent a major public health challenge.

## Employment

In May 2007, there were 3,615 people claiming Jobseekers Allowance in Stockton, giving an official unemployment rate of 3.1%. This was below the Tees Valley rate (3.8%) and North East average (3.2%) but noticeably higher than the national rate of 2.4%. (JSU, June 2007). There has been a large reduction in the gap between the national unemployment rate and the local rate, from 2.3% in 1998 to 0.7% in 2007.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Stockton</b>	6.0%	5.9%	5.4%	4.4%	4.1%	3.7%	3.3%	2.9%	3.2%	3.1%
<b>Tees Valley</b>	6.6%	6.4%	5.8%	4.9%	4.6%	4.3%	3.8%	3.4%	3.8%	3.8%
<b>North East</b>	5.3%	5.3%	4.8%	4.1%	3.8%	3.6%	3.0%	2.9%	3.2%	3.2%
<b>Great Britain</b>	3.7%	3.5%	3.0%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%	2.6%	2.4%

<sup>1</sup> Sport England Active People Survey (2006)

Within Stockton, unemployment rates vary widely between wards: the highest unemployment rate is found in Stockton Town Centre and the lowest in the Northern Parishes. The table below shows the 2007 unemployment rate by ward:

Ward	% Unemployed	Ward	% Unemployed
Billingham Central	3.6	Norton North	4.2
Billingham East	5.2	Norton South	3.8
Billingham North	1.6	Norton West	1.0
Billingham South	3.6	Parkfield and Oxbridge	6.1
Billingham West	1.2	Roseworth	4.2
Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree	2.0	Stainsby Hill	4.0
Eaglescliffe	1.3	Stockton Town Centre	9.2
Fairfield	1.4	Village	3.8
Grangefield	1.5	Western Parishes	1.6
Hardwick	5.6	Yarm	1.3
Hartburn	1.1		
Ingleby Barwick East	0.8	STOCKTON-ON-TEES	3.1
Ingleby Barwick West	1.0	TEES VALLEY	3.8
Mandale and Victoria	5.0	NATIONAL	2.4
Newtown	6.4		
Northern Parishes	0.6		

### ***Education and Skills***

The schools within Stockton have achieved a significant and sustained improvement in GCSE attainment from 41% in 1999 to 46% in 2004 and 55% in 2006. Stockton was the most improved Borough in the country in 2005/6 and the improvement trend continued in 2006/7. We are now performing at national average levels. These improvements link to higher quality teaching, with OFSTED (the schools inspectorate) judging 96% of lessons satisfactory or better and 77% good or better in 2006.

At Key Stage 2 English the schools within Stockton have observed a 4% increase to 81% in the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or over between 2004 and 2006, The increase has been 3% for Maths (80%) and 1% for Science (88%). Stockton now performs above the England average for all three core subjects.

Improvements have also been achieved in relation to Key Stage 3 results across the Borough, with results now in line with the national scores. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above in 2006 is 72% for English, 77% for Maths and 73% for Science, increases of around 7% since 2004 in all core subjects.

Based on the 2005 Annual Population Survey, 25% of adults in Stockton have a degree, higher degree or professional qualification (NVQ4 and above), a rate much

higher than the region and only slightly below the national average. The number of people with no qualifications in Stockton is lower than the North East and Great Britain (12.4% compared to 14.3%, and 13.8% respectively).

### ***Transport***

Stockton has the lowest percentage of households without a car or van in the Tees Valley (29.6%), and has the highest rate of two-car ownership across the region (22.4%). The lowest rate of car availability was recorded in Portrack and Tilery (64.79% of households having no car or van) and the highest rate of ownership was recorded in Ingleby Barwick (3.5% of households having no car or van).

The quality of the local road network is good and has improved in recent years with the South Stockton link road giving improved access to Ingleby Barwick and Stockton town centre. The Longnewton interchange, currently under construction, will improve road safety on the A66 trunk route. Congestion levels are generally low although there is localised congestion on some A-roads at busy times.

The public transport infrastructure needs improving and this is reflected in low levels of public satisfaction with local bus services. Coverage and frequency of bus services has in many instances declined over the last three years and improving public transport is therefore a key priority.

### ***Housing***

In Stockton in 2001, 27% of people owned their homes outright, with 44% of people owning with a mortgage. 17.2% of people rented from the local authority.

The quality of Council housing stock has significantly improved over the last three years with a 35% increase in homes meeting the Government's decent standard, to 77% in 2007, and an 8% improvement in tenant satisfaction with landlord services to upper quartile levels. Work to improve private sector housing is also underway, with regeneration plans underway in Parkfield/ Mill Lane areas.

In 2005/06, £900,000 was allocated for disabled adaptations to housing, with 245 major and 790 low cost essential adaptations carried out at an average cost of £3,443 and £70 respectively.

### ***Environment***

The quality of our local environment has improved in line with resident's priorities. Refuse collection and parks and open spaces are among the services that residents feel are most important to their quality of life (IPSOS MORI, 2006). In 2006 Stockton was named as one of the country's cleanest Boroughs (Audit Commission top 10%), rising from amongst the dirtiest towns in England in 2001. Satisfaction with standards of cleanliness, waste collection and recycling are all in the top 25% nationally.

Considerable improvement of the Borough's parks and open spaces has also taken place. For example, Ropner Park has been fully restored including a renovated lakeside area and bandstand and a new children's play area, doubling usage, and has along with Billingham Beck Country Park, Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park and

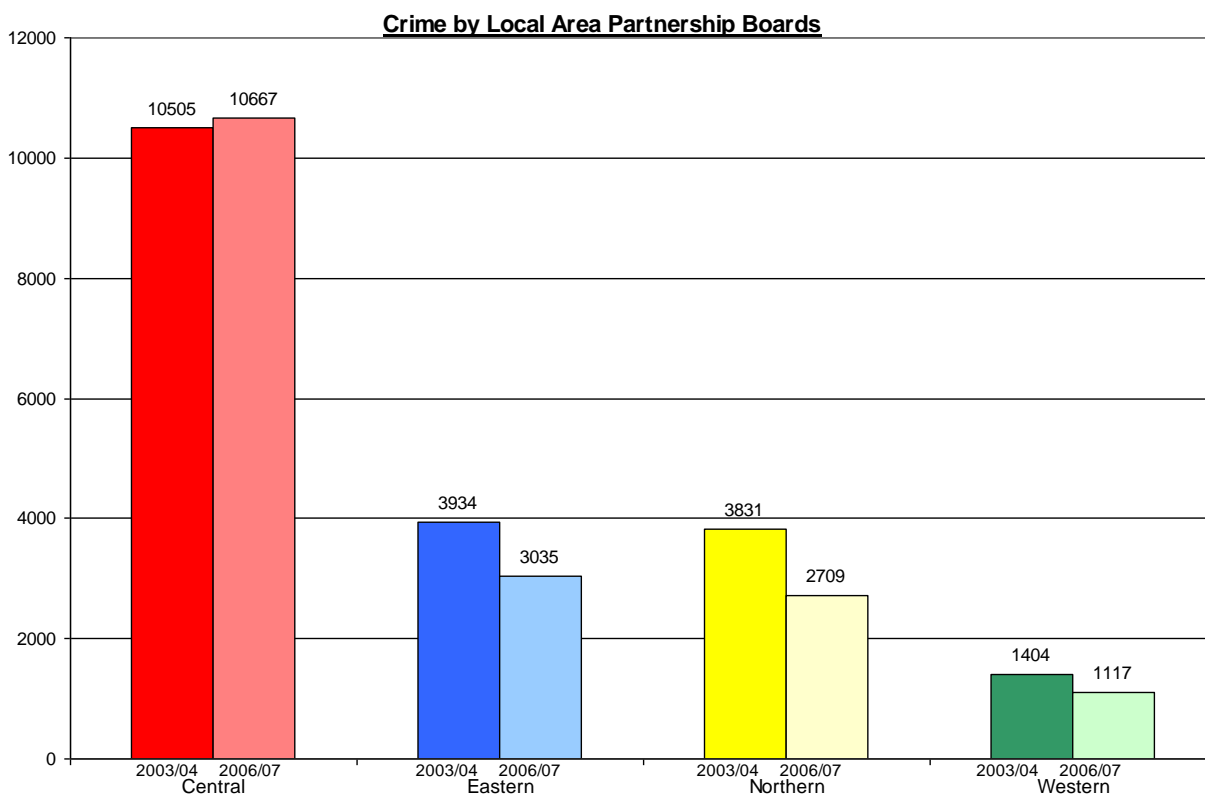


Wynyard Woodland Park been awarded 'Green Flag' status for 2007/08. In 2006 after winning 10 prizes including best city in the Northumbria in Bloom awards, Stockton went on to win silver in the Royal Horticultural Society 'Britain in Bloom' city category.

### Crime

Within Stockton crime rates have fallen significantly over the last two years. In 2006/07 total crime has fallen by 4% to 17,664 crimes (Cleveland Police), giving Stockton the lowest total crime rate in the Tees Valley (lower than Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Darlington and Redcar and Cleveland). The rate of dwelling burglary is the lowest since the 1970s, with violent crime down 13% in the same year. Robbery is down 29% to a very low level with only 131 crimes. Deliberate dwelling fires are also down 28% following a programme of measures to reduce arson.

Significantly fewer people feel unsafe outside during the day (down 15% from 32% ) and after dark (down by 21%) from 2002 to 2006. However tackling crime and anti-social behaviour remains a top priority, in particular for areas experiencing higher crime levels: crime is higher close to town centre areas and in particular Stockton town centre.



In order to tackle crime effectively, 1,800 officers are now employed by Cleveland Police. Anti-social behaviour is being policed using the current available legislation. 33 ASBOs (anti-social behaviour orders) have been sought in the Borough, 15 CRASBOs (criminal anti-social behaviour orders), 208 ABCs (acceptable behaviour contracts) and 5 dispersal orders (Safer Stockton Partnership). There have also been 12 closure orders to end 2006/07 (to combat premises used in the production, supply and use of drugs).

## ***Community Cohesion***

In Stockton 66% of people feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together (IPSOS MORI, 2006). This figure compares favourably with other areas.

Stockton also compares favourably to its peers for the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood (60%); neighbourhood is defined as local walking distance. Within Stockton higher rates of belonging are expressed for the North East (66%), England and Wales (69%), and Great Britain (73%), but a significantly lower sense of belonging is recorded for the local town/village, Stockton Borough and Teesside. This is expected, as within the Borough there are five townships each with their own local identity.

The percentage of adults surveyed who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area is however relatively low (-18.3% net). It is important to note that this measure reflects both national and local decision making structures. Results should also be interpreted within the context of the levels of interest residents have regarding engagement in decision-making. The majority (55%) of people like to know what is going on but are happy to let the Council get on with their job. It is also important to bear in mind that the balance of opinion nationally also tends to be negative. The Home Office Citizenship Survey uses slightly different response scales so direct comparisons are not possible, but it does show that nationally those who do not believe they can influence decisions (62%) significantly outweigh those who do (38%).

## ***Arts, Leisure and Culture***

The River Tees has been the lifeblood of the region and its people for thousands of years. Originally famed as the best salmon river in England during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was steeped in shipbuilding traditions and industry. Lately it has undergone a dramatic rebirth and is now classed a Grade A, 2 Star River for Game and Coarse Fishing. The construction of the Tees Barrage in 1995 created a new river environment: the non-tidal water is once again teeming with wildlife, and the river provides an exciting choice for recreation and sports. Sailing, Kayaking and Fishing now abound and three purpose built water sports centres have now been created, including a White Water Rafting and Canoeing course.

There is designer shopping in the cosmopolitan town of Yarm (along with its picturesque 43-arch railway viaduct and one of the widest cobbled streets in England), and weekly markets in Stockton and other town centres. Stockton International Riverside Festival is the UK's finest street arts festival. Billingham's Folklore Festival is also nationally recognised and there are many other cultural events and venues; Billingham Art Gallery, ARC, Billingham Forum Theatre, Preston Hall Museum, as well as great parks such as Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, Preston Park and Wynyard Woodland Park and Observatory. There has been a significant increase in the usage of parks and open spaces (from 46% in 2004 to 55% in 2006) and events such as Riverside Festival and Billingham Folklore Festival (up from 29% in 2004 to 35% in 2006 (IPSOS MORI).

# **Section 5 – Ambitions for the Future 2008-2021: Core Themes**

**DRAFT**

## Economic Regeneration and Transport

Our vision for Stockton-on-Tees, which is at the heart of an economically successful Tees Valley, which offers above national levels of employment and opportunity to local residents, and improved city-scale facilities for shopping, recreation and leisure.

We will work in partnership across the Tees Valley to bring and retain more people in employment, to strengthen our knowledge base, to promote a more entrepreneurial culture and to strengthen key industrial clusters. We will develop high quality, vibrant town centres, and work to improve transport links within and external to the city core of the Tees Valley.

### What matters most to Stockton-on-Tees Residents?

Residents are now significantly more optimistic about the future of the economy in their Borough. 28% think it will improve significantly in the short term, compared with 21% in previous years. Interestingly, younger residents and those living in North Stockton and Thornaby are more likely than others to think the economy will improve.

Resident priorities for the future economy of the area are quite clear. These are the creation of jobs, regeneration of run down areas, attracting new businesses to the area, and improving the Borough's town centres.

Residents remain concerned about transport services in Stockton with traffic flow, road maintenance, transport information and public transport, particularly buses, all being areas where we need to make progress.

### What are our key ambitions for 2021?

#### ***Ambition: Vibrant and successful Town Centres***

Stockton-on-Tees Borough is unusual in that it has five distinct communities, Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick and Yarm each with its own unique characteristics, history and identity. Town centres are a vital resource for local communities providing neighbourhood shopping, commerce and leisure facilities. All partners in the Tees Valley City Region, the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative and Stockton Renaissance are committed to ensuring all our town centres are modern and vibrant and we will concentrate on redeveloping Stockton, Billingham and Thornaby town centres. We will also seek to improve the gateways into Stockton Town Centre, as well as the links between the town centre and North Shore to the riverside. We will promote diverse and high quality shopping and leisure opportunities within town centres, and develop and support our local markets as key assets.

#### ***Ambition: A strong local economy with better jobs and improved employability***

We aim to be the top business location in the Tees Valley, increasing overall employment levels and our contribution to the national economy. Having a job is a significant factor in your quality of life. Being in paid employment not only offers greater choice and independence, but also provides social and health benefits as well. In Stockton, whilst our levels of unemployment are lower than the north east average, they are still higher than the national average and we aim to close this gap during the

duration of this strategy. It is important that we work closely with existing large employers in the area, in particular our world renowned chemical and renewable industries as well as other large scale employers. We also need to maximise opportunities presented by new growth sectors such as environmental and renewable industries. It is important that we seek to encourage new employers into the Borough as well as promoting more entrepreneurial spirit amongst local residents through new business start-ups. Graduate retention of those studying for degrees within the Borough, and promoting return of those who go away to university to the local area are also critical to encouraging business and enterprise growth.

We will develop the infrastructure to allow business to flourish including the development of Stockton North Shore and Wynyard Park to provide world class office, residential and leisure use. The North Shore developments will also be linked to the University campus on the south side of the river by an iconic new footbridge. We will also work in partnership across the Tees Valley to deliver planned infrastructure investments in the expansion of the Port and Durham Tees Valley Airport, providing an excellent location for the logistics sector. Finally, we will ensure that all Stockton residents have the opportunity to access these new employment opportunities by improving employability in our Borough. We will seek to provide the skills, training and support our residents need to fully benefit from these new opportunities.

#### ***Ambition: Improved city-scale facilities across the Tees Valley***

Stockton-on-Tees is at the heart of the Tees Valley City Region which also includes the four large towns of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar. The influence of the city-region stretches from Peterlee in the North to Northallerton in the South and from Richmond in the West to Whitby in the East. The City Region approach is an important development for Stockton because by working together with our partners in the area we can develop significantly improved city scale facilities for local people.

The aim is to improve the economic competitiveness of the Tees Valley and also the urban environment of the local area. The River Tees will be utilised as a main focal point of the development with a range of business, residential and leisure developments linking the urban core of the city region more strongly together. In particular the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative is already seeing Stockton and Middlesbrough collaborating to regenerate the urban core, focusing on the two town centres and the river corridor that links them. Key to future plans is the Green Blue Heart initiative, which will see the transformation of the derelict land between Middlesbrough and Stockton into an iconic 21<sup>st</sup> century park and leisure area over the next 30 years.

#### ***Ambition: Better use of the River Tees***

Stockton residents have identified the potential for better use of the River Tees, and this aspiration underpins the overall approach to regeneration and to city-region plans, which will help build community pride (see Stronger Communities). The river is in many ways the Borough's greatest asset and biggest challenge. From Thornaby, Yarm and Bowesfield riverside areas in the south, through to the industrial areas at Seal Sands, the river provides development opportunities which if realised would transform the face of the Borough and Tees Valley. The Tees Barrage, located in Stockton, is a major asset giving international standard facilities for watersports within the Borough.

The North Shore regeneration and iconic footbridge will increase business, residential and educational usage of the river area. The Green Blue Heart will include creation of riverside leisure assets and enhanced white water facilities at the Tees Barrage to

attract international events. At the Southern end of Stockton town centre there will also be a riverside focus with new facilities linked to the riverfront. Regeneration plans for the town centre, St Marks Basin and Boathouse Lane will include better links and utilisation of the riverside area.

### **Ambition: Improved transport networks**

Stockton benefits from having good road transport links already, being close to the A19, A1 and A66 and not experiencing the major congestion problems of some other areas, outside of a few local hotspots. However, if we are to continue in this position and tackle congestion where it does occur, we need to be mindful of increasing car usage across the Tees Valley and seek to put in place improvements to public transport, which will encourage people to begin reducing their reliance on the private car. We will seek to improve bus and train services across the Borough and will work with our partners across the Tees Valley to make the vision of a Tees Valley Metro system a reality. We will also seek to maximise the linkages between Stockton and the rest of the UK and beyond. We welcome the new direct train service between Sunderland and London, which will call at Eaglescliffe and will actively support the further development of rail services and the continued expansion of Durham Tees Valley Airport.

Our transport plans will consider the needs of local people in accessing services, such as healthcare facilities and town centre shopping. Local bus services are key to this and are particularly important to younger and older residents who are less likely to have access to private cars. We will work across the Tees Valley to strengthen frequency, timeliness and information on key bus routes and ensure they are available when people need them. For rural communities we will work in partnership to look at new ways of ensuring access to facilities and services for those without cars. We will also seek to minimise the harmful effects of road travel, in particular working to reduce road casualties, and providing facilities for walking and cycling and the related health benefits.

### **What have we achieved so far?**

- Attracted significant amounts of regeneration funding into the Borough including £17.8m from the Single Regeneration Budget and £23.7m of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding
- Demolition has already started in both Billingham and Thornaby to make way for the new town centres, while the plans for the Southern Gateway to Stockton-on-Tees have taken a big step forward with planning consent being given for a new food supermarket.
- Over 800 start-up businesses were established through assistance from Business Support organisations in 2006/07 (over twice the targeted level) with over 30% being run by people from the most deprived wards in the Borough.
- The percentage of young people of school leaving age engaged in employment, training or education has risen from 64% in 2004/5 to 74% in 2006/07 and the number of people moving from incapacity benefit to paid work has almost doubled.
- Stockton has excellent facilities and Office space
- Agreed plans to improve core bus routes Tees Valley wide, through a new Tees Valley Transport Partnership.

## How will we know we are making progress?

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in:

- The Tees Valley Business Case and Development Plan
- Stockton's Regeneration Strategy 2007-2012
- The Local Transport Plan and Area Partnership Transport Plans

The following key Quality of Life Measures will help us track our progress in this area:

- Overall / general satisfaction with the local area.
- The proportion of the population living in the most deprived super output areas in the country
- Percentage of the working age population that is in employment
- The percentage of local residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years that:
  - (a) public transport has got better or stayed the same
  - (b) the level of traffic congestion has got better or stayed the same

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## Environment and Housing

Our vision is of a cleaner, greener Stockton which leads the UK in waste minimisation, has excellent parks and green spaces and the highest quality housing provision. We will have neighbourhoods in which our residents feel pride and have a real sense of belonging and ownership.

We will work to improve the quality of life of local people, in both our urban and rural areas through engaging with local communities, improving the local built and natural environment and quality of place across our Borough.

### What matters to Stockton-on-Tees Residents?

The cleanliness of the Borough remains one of the Council's key priorities and is in the top five priorities for residents (IPSOS MORI, 2006). In a 2006 survey, only 3% of Stockton's streets and open spaces fell below the acceptable level of cleanliness, which is one of the top 10 results reported by any local authority for this key indicator.

The public's satisfaction with cleanliness has risen sharply in recent years, increasing from 53% in 2000 to 79% in 2006. (IPSOS MORI, 2006). Satisfaction with parks and open spaces has also increased, from 59% in 2000 to 73% in 2006 (IPSOS MORI, 2006).

84% of Stockton residents are positive about their neighbourhoods and 57% of council housing residents are satisfied with the quality of service they receive. This has improved every year since 2002. However, almost half identified improving run-down areas as a key priority.

### What are our key ambitions for 2021?

#### **Ambition: Improve waste management**

Nationally the country is still landfilling an unsustainable amount of waste and recycling too little. Government initiatives such as the landfill tax are encouraging local areas to concentrate more of their activities on reducing waste and promoting recycling. Within Stockton, we have concentrated our performance on waste minimisation and we divert more than 90% of our household waste away from landfill. We will continue to improve our approaches to waste minimisation and recycling. The aim is to make Stockton the UK's leading Borough in diverting waste from landfill, working towards a 'zero landfill' target in the longer term for both household and commercial / industrial waste.

#### **Ambition: Create better open spaces**

Developing our parks and green spaces is a key priority for the Borough. Green space is an important natural resource, as it gives space for a variety of activities such as sport, play and culture. Access to open areas has even been shown to improve mental health and wellbeing. We will seek to further redevelop our flagship parks and open spaces, notably Preston Park and the Green Blue Heart, but will also seek to improve our smaller, local facilities so they provide key services at a neighbourhood level. Urban open spaces are also important and across the Tees Valley we have 1,250 hectares of derelict, previously developed land. Attractive open spaces not only



provide leisure opportunities in the urban centre but also help make these areas more attractive to residents, visitors and potential investors and as such makes the community more viable. We will continue to work with our partners at the regional and national level to secure the resources to develop our green infrastructure throughout the Borough. Of course, if our open and green spaces are to be successful and well used they need to be both clean and safe. We will concentrate on continually improving the safety and cleanliness of all open spaces in the Borough.

#### ***Ambition: Tackle Climate Change***

There is now overwhelming evidence that CO2 emissions are having a detrimental effect on our global environment. Predicted effects of global warming include flooding and extremes of temperature. We will need to redesign those services, which could be effected by these changes. Stockton is committed to playing its part in tackling climate change and has already helped develop a Tees Valley climate change strategy and action plan. Whilst climate change is an international issue we are committed to doing all we can locally to reduce its impact.

#### ***Ambition: Improve our housing***

We will improve our housing stock across the Borough and provide sustainable homes, which meet the demands of a 21<sup>st</sup> century lifestyle: built for life, energy efficient and using sustainable building practices. We will be creative and innovative in our approach, demolishing where necessary, updating and rebuilding where appropriate to improve the housing market in the Borough. We will offer people homes they desire by creating mixed communities where residents have a choice from social renting, starter homes, shared equity and large detached properties. We will concentrate our initial activities in the Mandale, Hardwick and Parkfield and Mill Lane areas which have great potential for quality family orientated suburbs and vibrant town centre accommodation. A key priority will be to ensure our approaches to housing meet the changing needs of our community, including the increasing numbers of single person and older adults households in the Borough and to increase the supply of affordable homes. We will also continue working in partnership to ensure that **all** homes across the Borough are modern, energy efficient and safe and that all residents of Stockton have a home, which meets their needs. Our longer term ambition is for housing renewal in all areas that need investment.

#### ***Ambition: Deliver Design Quality***

The quality of the built and natural environment is an important economic driver and influences peoples opinions of an area. Improving the liveability of places is key to attracting and retaining people to live in the local area. Green spaces should be provided for multi-functional uses (wildlife, recreational, cultural etc.) and contribute to the overall high quality natural and built environment. This includes both public and private buildings across the Borough in both our urban and rural locations. Ensuring the highest design quality is especially important to Stockton given its priority to increase investor confidence in all our town centres and the need for regeneration along the riverside. Consideration will be given to social impacts of all developments and the potential for public space to create chances for face-to-face communication and interaction, and spaces for children and young people to play/meet. Development briefs are being prepared for all the key sites to ensure that design quality, including designing out crime is addressed at an early stage with developers.

## What have we achieved so far?

- At Mandale (Thornaby) the first new homes have been occupied as part of the regeneration of the estate. Masterplans have been prepared and development partners appointed at both Hardwick and Parkfield.
- Tees Valley Living secured £19million of funding from central government to invest in housing across Tees Valley including Parkfield.
- Only 0.003% of bins collected by the Council are missed every year.
- Stockton won 10 awards in Northumbria in Bloom 2006, including Best City and won silver at Britain in Bloom 2006.
- The proportion of non-decent homes in the Borough continues to fall.

## How will we know we are making progress?

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in:

- The Boroughs Housing Strategy.
- The Local Development Framework core and supplementary documents.
- The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy and Stockton Climate Change Action Plan.
- Service delivery plans for the Council's refuse collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services.

Longer term progress with this Community Strategy will be tracked using the following quality of life measures:

- Public satisfaction with parks and open spaces.
- House price to income ratio.
- Satisfaction with cleanliness of the local environment.

## Safer Communities

Our vision is for a safe Stockton where all residents are able to live their lives in a Borough free from crime and fear of crime.

We will work to tackle crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour in our communities so all residents feel safe no matter where they live in the Borough.

### What matters to Stockton-on-Tees Residents?

- Many more residents feel safe outside in the daytime compared to after dark. Local residents continue to place crime and anti-social behaviour as the top improvement priority for the Borough.
- Just under half of Stockton residents surveyed think vandalism and graffiti are a big problem in their area.
- Many residents still feel that levels of crime in their areas are getting worse, despite recorded crime levels dropping.
- People feel safer when there is a strong, visible enforcement presence.

### What are our key ambitions for 2021?

#### ***Ambition: Reduce crime and fear of crime***

Safer Stockton Partnership is a Beacon organisation working to reduce crime and fear of crime. Burglary is now at an all time low, with robbery and vehicle crime also down. However we will continue the fight against crime and aim to have levels of crime in Stockton well below national average figures during the duration of this strategy. Despite falling crime levels, fear of crime remains a big problem in our Borough. We will work together to reassure communities through visible enforcement and provide accurate information about crime levels to bring the fear of crime down to a level which better reflects actual crime.

#### ***Ambition: Reduce anti-social behaviour***

Anti-social behaviour can have a significant detrimental effect on residents' quality of life. Even if this behaviour is not criminal or fairly minor, its effects on victims can be quite devastating. Local people see tackling anti-social behaviour as a key priority. We will work together through the Safer Stockton Partnership to reduce levels of vandalism, criminal damage and nuisance behaviour through education, diversionary activities for young people and enforcement action thereby promoting a culture of respect. Also we will make our offensive incident procedures the best in the UK and by acting on this intelligence will create communities which are more cohesive and where diversity is respected.

#### ***Ambition: Reduce the impact of alcohol and drugs misuse***

Drugs and alcohol misuse as well as their related crime remain a concern in the Borough, particularly in our more disadvantaged areas. We will work together to reduce both the supply and use of illegal drugs and the misuse of alcohol through enforcement, education and licensing. We will also continue through our commitment to a healthy Stockton supporting and offering treatment to problem drug and alcohol

users, something we have already improved three years running (see Healthier Communities and Adults).

### What have we achieved so far?

- We have the lowest crime rates in the Tees Valley:
  - In 2006 residents are significantly more likely to feel 'very safe' than they were in 2000 and 2002, with 94% feeling safe outside in the daytime and 54% after dark (IPSOS MORI, 2006).
  - 2005/06 and 2006/07 have seen the lowest number of dwelling burglaries over the last fifteen years
  - Almost all projections on crime categories are down year-on-year (robbery – 29%, vehicle crime - 13% and violent against the person – 12%)
  - 217% increase in the numbers in drug treatment in 3 years
- Our approach to neighbourhood enforcement is ensuring that local people feel safer with a strong visible Enforcement Officer presence within their neighbourhood.
- Our Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership was a Beacon of good practice in 2004/05
- The Safer Stockton Partnership consults residents every three years to establish their priorities for the Borough.

### How will we know we are making progress?

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in the Community Safety Plan, Children and Young Peoples Plan and Community Cohesion Strategy.

Longer term progress will be tracked using the following quality of life measures:

- The percentage of residents surveyed who said they feel "fairly safe" or "very safe" outside:
  - (a) during the day
  - (b) after dark.
- The percentage of residents who think that:
  - (a) vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles;
  - (b) people using or dealing drugs; and
  - (c) people being rowdy or drunk in public places is a very big or fairly big problem in their local area.

## Children and Young People

Our vision across the whole of the Borough is that Every Child Matters – that no child will get left behind and that all will grow up in a loving, stable and safe environment and have opportunities to achieve their full potential.

We will promote the health, well-being and achievement of children and young people and tackle inequalities and disadvantage experienced by some children and their families.

### What matters to Stockton-on-Tees residents?

The most important views are those of children and young people themselves. Recent consultation showed priorities include:

- More places to go, things to do, opportunities for leisure and to keep fit.
- Support in relation to alcohol misuse.
- Mental health services for young people.
- Sexual health.
- Personal safety in public places (in line with concerns of adults).
- Education – attitudes and awareness.
- Tackling bullying, in particular pupils helping pupils.
- Youth clubs catering for a wider age range – older adults and younger children.
- Helping the environment.
- Cheaper bus fares.

Amongst parents, satisfaction within schools is high: primary schools in 2006 was 88%, nursery schools 84% and secondary schools 78%. (IPSOS MORI, 2006) However only 27% of adult residents think play areas are good or excellent with 41% rating them as poor or very bad.

### What are our key ambitions for 2021?

#### **Ambition: Be Healthy**

Children and young people do not always spend time thinking about their health, for example many of Stockton's young people say that they never think about what they eat. However, poor health in childhood cannot only affect children as they grow up but can continue to have a negative impact into adulthood. We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people live healthy and active lifestyles and to reducing health inequalities across the Borough. We will give priority to: improving sexual health, including a reduction in teenage conception rates; reducing levels of substance misuse; improving emotional and mental well-being including tackling bullying; halting the rise in obesity; and maintaining low rates of infant mortality. Renaissance is committed to improving life chances for all our young people and the aim is that by 2021 looked after children in Stockton will have similar levels of physical and mental health and achieve similar results at school as children living at home.

### ***Ambition: Stay Safe***

It is vitally important that children and young people grow up in a caring environment which ensures they are safe at all times. Particular attention must be given to those who are vulnerable including those children who are looked after by the local authority and in foster or adoptive care, for whom long term placement stability will remain a key priority. Renaissance is committed to developing more locally accessible, preventative services so that those in need receive early interventions and those at risk are safeguarded more effectively. Despite road traffic accident figures in Stockton being relatively low, it is also a sad fact that too many children in Stockton are killed or seriously injured in accidents both on the roads and in the home. We aim to reduce the numbers of children hurt or killed in accidents in Stockton to well below national average, whilst also ensuring children can still play and enjoy their childhood. Reducing levels of bullying and providing support for children in relation to bullying are also priorities.

### ***Ambition: Enjoy and Achieve***

High achievement in education has a significant impact on a young person's life chances. We are committed to ensuring Stockton has the highest performing schools anywhere in the country. We will support all children but particularly those from disadvantaged groups to ensure that all our young people meet their full potential. Secondary school buildings will be upgraded over the next 15 years providing transformed facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We will increase the chances for young people to enjoy education, culture and leisure opportunities provided in the Borough with the provision of a good range of youth activities being a key priority. We aim to ensure that childhood remains a time of fun and enjoyment as well as one of educational achievement. At present many opportunities start from age 14, and we will therefore seek to enhance the range of facilities for younger children aged 8 to 13 years. The development of 'Extended Schools' operating a full range of activities and services outside of the core curriculum, as part of a package of integrated services for children and young people will support this ambition.

### ***Ambition: Make a positive contribution***

We already have many opportunities in place for young people to influence the services, which affect their lives, including a Borough-wide consultation panel (Youth Viewpoint) and a network to coordinate young people's opportunities to participate in decision making (the Participation, Involvement & Consultation network). We will seek to further develop our activities to ensure that young people from all sectors of our community can be actively represented in the shaping, planning and delivery of our services. We will support, encourage and celebrate the participation of young people in community life. Unfortunately some of our young people find themselves involved in the youth justice system. We will aim to reduce youth crime in Stockton by tackling its causes, actively working with young people and providing effective, high quality diversionary activities including increased opportunities for cultural activities. We will continually seek to develop and promote our facilities for young people making them as accessible, challenging and enjoyable as possible.

### ***Ambition: Economic well-being***

We will work to improve the level of young people leaving school who are able to access further education, employment and training and to reduce poverty and the



impact of poverty. In order to be at the forefront of development, within an innovative 21<sup>st</sup> Century Borough, it is important that we nurture, develop and drive the creativity of our children and young people. We will build upon our Beacon Status for work on homelessness of young people by developing access to highly effective support and advice services.

### What have we achieved so far?

- Two additional primary schools have been opened since 2003 to meet growing need in the south of the Borough.
- One additional 600-place secondary school has been opened in the south of the Borough.
- Over 55% of 15 year olds achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C in 2006 (an improvement of 8% points from 2003) and 88.5% achieving five or more A\*-G grades including both English and Maths in 2006.
- The average points score for 16-18 year olds gaining qualifications at level three (A level and equivalent) was 275.1 in 2006. This is 7.4 points higher than the average for the North East region and a 45.3 point improvement on 2002.
- We have a top rated Youth Offending Service.
- We have top Children's Services in the North East in 2006.
- We have an excellent fostering service.

### How will we know we are making progress?

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

Longer term progress will be tracked using a selection of the following quality of life measures:

- Ongoing surveys of the views of children and young people on living in the Borough indicate their continuing satisfaction with the Borough.
- Continued improvements in school standards and educational achievement, with a closing of the gap between local and national attainment for 15 year olds at GCSE level.
- Key measures of health including: reduction in levels of substance misuse including smoking, drugs and alcohol, halting the rise in obesity, reducing the rate of teenage conceptions, maintaining low levels of infant mortality.
- Further improvement in the rates of progression and retention in further education, training and employment.

## Healthier Communities and Adults

Our vision is for a healthier Stockton where all residents are able to take control of their own physical and mental health and wellbeing, through living healthy and active lifestyles and having easy access to high quality health services when ill-health does occur.

We will work to promote healthier communities by tackling key public health issues such as smoking, obesity and drug and substance misuse. We will provide care and support for carers, vulnerable adults and older adults within our communities.

### What matters to Stockton-on-Tees Residents?

Residents of the Borough are conscious of the need to maintain good health and have good access to health services. Indeed in 2006 local GPs and local NHS hospitals were some of the most widely used public services in the Borough. However, key challenges still remain:

- Life expectancy in the Borough is lower than the national average.
- Deaths from avoidable causes such as coronary heart disease and cancer amongst men are higher in the Borough than the national average.
- Only one in three residents take half an hour of exercise at least five times per week, which is above the national average.
- The average level of alcohol consumption was nine units per week, which is within safe limits, but residents are concerned about levels of problem drinking and public drunkenness in some areas.
- 23% of residents smoke daily which is about the national average figure, but this rises to a third in our more disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

### What are our key Ambitions for 2021?

#### ***Ambition: Reduce Health Inequalities***

Whilst Stockton enjoys good health figures relative to the rest of the North East and indeed in some areas the rest of the country, there are still too many areas where our residents are not experiencing health as good as the rest of the UK. Death rates from cardiovascular disease and cancers are still higher than the national average and we continue to suffer a legacy from our heavy industrial heritage. Over the duration of this strategy we will aim to reduce health inequalities so that by 2021 health indicators in Stockton are no worse than the country as a whole. We will also work to reduce health inequalities within our own Borough where some wards have life expectancies that are 10 years less than others.

#### ***Ambition: Increase the independence of vulnerable people***

Stockton has an ageing population and a growing number of residents who have additional support needs. As the population ages there will be a need for increasing support for those who can live at home, to do so for as long as they can and wish to. Through implementing this strategy we will promote independent living for older and vulnerable people: for example, by reducing social isolation, providing access to learning and training opportunities, or through practical support such as the provision of



aids and adaptations to existing homes, the development of new supported housing and targeted care support. These measures will help more people live at home in dignity and safety for longer. We will also seek to further develop our support for carers, recognising the important role they play in supporting vulnerable people.

#### ***Ambition: Increased choice and voice for service users***

We are committed to the involvement of the community and service users in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of all their services, not least health and social care. It is imperative that service users have a say on the care they receive, by which agency and how it is delivered. We will maximise the use of consultation and involvement mechanisms in service delivery and planning as well as capitalising on new initiatives such as Direct Payments and budget holding lead professionals to provide care services developed for the individual. By 2021 all residents of Stockton will be able to receive a variety of services uniquely tailored for their individual circumstances.

#### ***Ambition: Improved access to health services***

Having timely and easy access to a range of health and social care services is a key issue for local people. We will continue to develop new, innovative ways of working such as walk-in centres, GPs providing small outpatient operations and joint location of services to ensure that local people can access health services when they want. These developments will be linked to the Pathways to Health Programme and the associated development of new hospital infrastructure. We will also develop support and transport mechanisms for families when there is no alternative but a hospital stay. Access to health services will be a key consideration in our ambitions to improve transport networks (see Economic Regeneration and Transport).

#### ***Ambition: Promote healthy living***

Traditional health services are likely to always be in high demand when an individual falls ill. We will focus on prevention of ill-health and encourage all residents of Stockton to live more healthy lifestyles, focusing in particular on those areas with poorer health records. Whilst the numbers of residents undertaking regular exercise is encouraging, there is always room for more and this strategy aims to assist all residents of the Borough to exercise at least five times a week. Also levels of smoking in the Borough remain too high and we will use new legislation such as the ban on smoking in public places as well as continuing our successful smoking cessation service to help reduce the numbers of people smoking in the Borough. We will also continue to prevent and treat drugs and alcohol misuse. We are committed to developing and improving our environment and will encourage residents to maximise the opportunities provided by the natural landscape of the Borough to improve their physical and mental health. We will continue to improve access to sport and leisure activities across the Borough for all residents. By 2021 Stockton will be one of the healthiest Boroughs in the North East and not lagging behind the rest of the UK on health.

#### **What have we achieved so far?**

- In many key indicator areas Stockton is performing better than national average, these including low birth weight and deaths by accident.
- The Borough is recording increases in the number of visits to pools and sports centres.
- We have improved the numbers of drug users entering treatment for three years running, thereby supporting more people to quit drugs.

- More Older adults are being helped to live at home.
- On track to meet national targets for key health inequality measures.
- We are performing particularly well in helping people quit smoking.

### How will we know we are making progress?

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in the PCT's delivery plans.

Longer term progress will be tracked using the following quality of life measures:

- Life expectancy at birth (male and female)
  - (a) narrow the gap between Stockton and the rest of the country
  - (b) narrow the gap between Stockton's most deprived areas and the rest of the Borough
- The percentage of households with one or more person with a limiting long term illness
- We will further consider including indicators such as age standardised mortality rates for:
  - (a) all cancers
  - (b) circulatory diseases
  - (c) respiratory diseases
- A greater proportion of older and vulnerable adults being helped to maintain independence and live at home longer through improved physical, emotional and mental health
- Service users being able to exercise greater levels of control over the services they receive

# Section 6: Supporting Themes

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## Stronger Communities

Our vision for a stronger and more cohesive society is one where there is a common sense of belonging for all communities and where the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued, and where there is active community participation in public life.

In Stockton we will ensure that everyone has access to similar life opportunities regardless of their background and we will foster strong, positive relationships between groups in the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods. We will seek to develop strong community involvement, increase community pride, promoting equality of opportunity and financial inclusion. A cohesive society will help us achieve all priorities outlined in this strategy.

### What is important in Stockton-on-Tees?

- 66% of Stockton residents think their area is one where people of different backgrounds get on well together, but 13% disagreed.
- 59% thought Stockton was a Borough where ethnic differences are respected but 11% disagreed.
- 69% of Stockton residents feel proud of their local area, but this varies from 83% in the west of the Borough to 52% in the centre.
- Almost 3% of our population are from BME communities and we have over 70 different languages spoken in the Borough.

### What are our key priorities for 2021?

#### **Ambition: Strong community involvement**

If we are to realise our ambitions for the regeneration of the Borough, it is vital that local people are involved. We will work in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to promote participation and volunteering in public life, in particular the democratic process. The role of the locally elected Councillor will be of great importance to act as the community leader and help local people develop their skills and maximise the new opportunities, which will become available as a result of new legislation. Also, where appropriate we will encourage community groups to take ownership and responsibility for their own events and organisations, helping build community capacity throughout the Borough. We have already enjoyed great success through our Area Partnerships and will seek to expand this into greater levels of neighbourhood working and community ownership and management of facilities where possible. Cohesive and inclusive communities are a vital component of our work and we have set up a sub-group of the Renaissance Partnership Board to develop our work in this area. We will also continue striving to involve local people in all aspects of social and cultural life in Stockton as well as ensuring that the necessary support mechanisms are in place to help local people benefit from our economic regeneration activities. In all this the role of the locally elected Member remains of great importance

#### **Ambition: Increased community pride**

We are committed to capitalising on and further developing the sense of belonging and pride Stockton residents have in their communities and ensuring this extends to

welcoming those who add to the strength and diversity of the Borough. We will do this by empowering different groups to develop and celebrate their identity and helping others to understand differences. Stockton has a long history and heritage of inward migration and we will provide opportunities for local people to understand our heritage and the different communities, which make up our Borough. In particular we will work with Children and Young People and through local schools to understand and celebrate the diversity of our local communities, including the history and heritage of our rural areas and villages. We will also use improvements to the Riverside area as an opportunity to promote the Borough and encourage pride in the local area (see Economic Regeneration and Transport).

#### ***Ambition: Promote equality of opportunity***

Through the implementation of this strategy, all residents of the Borough regardless of their background or lifestyle will have equality of opportunity to participate fully in the community and access services. We will make this happen by ensuring our policies and practices have a positive impact on all residents and by tackling discrimination where we find it. To do this we need a thorough understanding of the needs, values, circumstances and aspirations of our residents.

#### ***Ambition: Reducing tension and myth busting***

Despite our best efforts, from time to time we will experience conflict and tension between different communities. We aim to reduce this by working with communities to promote tolerance of difference, to resolve conflicts but also monitor and act on hate crime and anti-social behaviour and this is detailed in the Safer Communities section of this strategy. Much community tension comes from a lack of knowledge and understanding and it is therefore essential that we work with communities to provide factual information and stop negative rumours and stereotypes from starting. We will not tolerate racism, hatred or discrimination in Stockton-on-Tees and through the delivery of this strategy aims to reduce these behaviours in our Borough.

#### ***Ambition: Financial inclusion***

We will work to ensure that all residents are able to benefit from regeneration schemes, particularly the young and old so that they are not denied access to services, facilities and life chances due to a lack of resources. We will also ensure good access to financial advice for adults, and financial education for children within our schools.

#### ***What have we achieved so far?***

- Stockton Renaissance has established a formal community cohesion sub-group, bringing together key local partners and community representatives.
- We developed and distributed a Mythbuster throughout the Borough, which provides easy to digest, factual information about asylum seekers and refugees in an attempt to dispel negative rumours surrounding this group. The Mythbuster has been nationally recognised as good practice.
- The capacity of the local elected membership has been enhanced by increased use of technology and training.
- We are performing well in terms of numbers of local people registered to vote.

#### ***How will we know we are making progress?***

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in the Community Cohesion Strategy.

Longer term progress will be tracked using the following quality of life measures:

- The percentage of people who say that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.
- The percentage of people who feel they belong to their local neighbourhood.

Other possible measures to be considered include the percentage of residents who think that for their local area, over the past three years, community activities have got better or stayed the same, as well as Electoral Commission targets for registration of adults and attainers.

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## Older Adults

Our vision is that people in Stockton grow older with dignity and maintain a high quality and independent lifestyle. This includes access to leisure activities, good housing, a decent income and opportunities to work and access healthcare and personal support when needed.

Stockton's population is ageing and by 2025 there will be 65% more over 65 year olds and a 245% increase in those aged over 85. It is therefore vital to plan for this older population. Considering older adults as those aged over 50, there are a range of different life choices and needs as people age and planning for transitions is important. People within the group will be leading radically different lifestyles (e.g. working or retired) and be experiencing different levels of health, income, personal mobility etc.

### What matters in Stockton-on-Tees?

- The proportion of older men in Stockton is higher than the national average in both the over 50's and over 85's age group.
- Stockton is growing older faster than the national average but we are starting from a younger base, we will not have more than the average proportion of over 65s until the 2020s. However, the population of the UK is ageing rapidly.
- The oldest age groups will grow fastest over the next few years and this is the group, which usually requires the most support.
- The local neighbourhood is crucial to well being – its physical environment, perceived and actual safety, local amenities and its "community spirit."
- People want choice in the services they use, in the activities they undertake and in the people they meet and interact with.
- Better public transport is a key concern of older adults within the Borough today.

### What are our priorities for 2021?

#### ***Ambition: Older adults at the heart of community leadership and development***

We need to engage more effectively with older adults, to increase their participation in planning and delivery of services to ensure their needs and aspirations are effectively addressed. This will mean developing a new approach to community leadership and engagement, involving older adults in thinking about and influencing all the services, which affect their lives. We need to develop our existing community forums that are already working to provide new ways of working on engagement and support to ensure they fully embrace the positive role older adults can play in our communities.

#### ***Ambition: The welcoming community***

The local neighbourhood environment is identified by older adults themselves as one of the most important determinants of their well being. Ensuring that every neighbourhood is welcoming will require joint working between all partners and coordination of a number of services to improve :

- the physical environment – housing, streets, parks and gardens, roads etc
- safety in the community – crime prevention, policing, protection of vulnerable adults
- lifestyles – local facilities and 'community spirit'



Increasing numbers of older adults will have an impact on our neighbourhoods and how we deliver services, in particular health, housing, transport and leisure facilities. During the implementation of this strategy we will need to develop how we deliver services to older adults as their numbers grow in the outlying areas of the Borough, especially as much resource will need to continue being targeted at the urban areas. We will need to ensure that older adults in both the urban and rural areas do not become isolated or experience lower quality services and will seek to increase our numbers of volunteers and other support mechanisms.

***Ambition: Real choice, control and equal access to facilities and services***

Older adults experience particular barriers to access and choice and we will work in partnership to overcome these. We will concentrate on supporting older adults and addressing these barriers:

- transport and in particular increased reliance on public transport compared to younger people.
- a greater likelihood of physical disability or other impairments causing difficulties with mobility.
- a greater likelihood of living alone and a greater risk of experiencing social isolation
- challenges posed by changes in technology.

Eliminating discrimination on grounds of age in relation to key public services and access to work will be vital to ensure that as people grow older they continue to be treated fairly and with respect.

***Ambition: Improving personal well-being***

Individuals need to be able to develop their own integrated package to improve their well-being, including for example:

- Employment opportunities
- Health improvement
- Social care
- Education and lifelong learning
- Leisure and cultural activities

Maintaining a decent income in older age is important to maintain independence and quality of life. We will encourage options for older adults to stay in work for longer and encourage benefit take up for those who are unable to.

***How will we know we are making progress?***

The LAA sets out 3 year targets for delivery and is supported by detailed project and action plans set out in the a series of strategies, notably the Older People's strategy.

Longer term progress will be tracked using the following quality of life measures:

- Healthier life expectancy at age 65.
- Proportion of people over 65 satisfied with both their home and neighbourhood.



## Arts, Leisure and Culture

Our vision is of culture underpinning all aspects of life in our Borough. It is important that we continue to develop not only our sense of community but also our cultural assets.

We will use the arts: music, theatre, dance, literature, architecture, sculpture, film, painting and sport to promote Quality of Life, aspiration and pride in our area to reflect who we are.

### What matters in Stockton-on-Tees?

- 56% of residents are satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.
- 75% are satisfied with libraries.
- 71% of residents are satisfied with events held in the Borough such as Stockton Riverside Festival and Billingham Folklore Festival.

### What are our key priorities for 2021?

#### ***Ambition: Promoting our festivals***

The Stockton Riverside, Riverside Fringe and Billingham International Folklore Festivals are key events locally, regionally and nationally. They attract large numbers of visitors to the Borough as well as attractions from around the world. Festivals such as these, plus other events such as the Preston Park Summer Show are useful both to promote the Borough to a worldwide audience, helping us attract investment and talent, but also for our residents to come together and learn more about the different people living in the Borough. In particular the events aim to provide opportunities for families and children and young people from all of our communities to experience the arts. We will continue to promote and develop our festival provision working with partners across the Tees Valley and beyond to develop world leading cultural festivals. Culture will be integral to our work on Communities and Tourism.

#### ***Ambition: Promote the performing and visual arts***

In order to be at the forefront of development and a vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> Century Borough, it is important that we capture, develop and drive the creativity of our residents. We can do this by promoting the performing and visual arts and so make the Borough more attractive physically but also in terms of attracting new people, business and cultural opportunities to the Borough. The arts also provide an opportunity to celebrate the heritage of the Borough and we will work to develop and share the story of Stockton and all of our communities Borough-wide.

#### ***Ambition: Promote sports and leisure***

Improving sports and leisure opportunities is also vital in order to encourage a healthy, active lifestyle. We will use the regenerated Riverside area for leisure and recreation as well as continuing to improve watersports facilities including expanding white water canoeing and rafting opportunities at the Tees Barrage, particularly in the run up to the 2012 Olympics. We will also increase participation by children and young people in sports in schools.

#### ***Ambition: Raise the profile of our heritage***

Stockton has a rich heritage and through our museums and heritage assets we can tell the fascinating story of the Borough's history and help develop a sense of community pride. Our biggest museum and park sits on a site bounded by the world's first railway line to the west, and the River Tees, alongside which settlements can be traced back to the Iron Age, to the East. We aim to refresh Preston Hall and Park, improving the landscape and visitor facilities, highlighting our rich history.

### ***Ambition: Support achievement in the other themes***

Culture is identified as a supporting theme in this sustainable community strategy because it cuts across our key priorities in so many other areas. For example, by getting culture right we will successfully be supporting our regeneration aims as we will have a more attractive urban environment. By improving our sports facilities we will help people live healthier lifestyles, and by promoting the creative benefits of culture we will be actively supporting our children and young people to enjoy and achieve. Culture is rightly identified as a supporting theme and one to which we pay great importance.

### **What have we achieved so far?**

- Surveys have shown increased satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities over the past 6 years (53% in 2006 compared to 43% in 2000) and in satisfaction with libraries (now 73%).
- Stockton Riverside Festival and Billingham Folklore Festival are internationally renowned and very popular locally.

### **How will we know we are making progress?**

Long term progress will be tracked using the following quality of life measures:

- Percentage of residents satisfied with sports and leisure facilities.
- Percentage of residents satisfied with arts and cultural facilities.

## Consultation and Community Involvement

### What do our residents and service users think?

We believe that whilst it is important to understand how our local population is changing, it is even more important to understand what local people think about living in the Borough.

We have therefore conducted a biennial residents' survey since 1998, with our 2006 survey being our fifth. We use this data for a variety of purposes, in particular:

- Understanding local people's priorities for the Borough and for service improvement.
- Understanding people's satisfaction with public services, the way we engage, communicate and provide services.
- Assessing people's sense of community, belonging and cohesion, as part of our efforts to lead development of strong and sustainable communities.
- Beginning to understand the diverse needs of different groups and communities within our Borough.

On this last point, we supplement our analysis in relation to specific groups with a range of more detailed consultation activities, including:

- A Stockton Viewpoint residents panel family which allows for specific focus on the needs of our Children and Young People, our Disabled residents and our Black and Minority Ethnic communities.
- Booster surveys to our main residents survey exercises, including in 2004 a booster in relation to the views of Black and Minority Ethnic residents, and boosters and separate analysis in relation to our more deprived communities.
- An annual programme of bespoke service based consultation with residents and users including questionnaires, workshops and focus groups.
- Increasing engagement of our local communities as partners in shaping service strategies and delivery. For example through the Children's Trust Board, in relation to Adults and Older Adults care services and in relation to neighbourhood renewal activity where community input is vital to ensure our work is appropriately targeted to local needs.

In particular, Stockton Renaissance and the Council have given a high priority to the development of a strategy for engagement with Children and Young People. Central to this strategy is the Participation, Involvement and Consultation (PIC) network, which coordinates a range of activity. There are active School Councils, a Youth Assembly, an annual Youth Conference sponsored by the Children's Trust Board and production of a magazine by young people for young people. This culture of participation is now being embedded in partnership activity, with more young people becoming involved as members of partnership groups reporting to the Children's Trust Board and as members of the Local Area Partnerships (of Stockton Renaissance). We remain committed to building on this work by seeking to ensure the engagement of Children and Young people and their families to fully reflect the diversity of needs within our communities.

## **Listening to diverse and disadvantaged communities**

We are committed to equality of opportunity for all of our diverse local communities. We have developed bespoke profile information in relation to our more deprived communities, our disabled residents, residents of black and minority ethnic communities and of different faith groups in order that we can better understand the differing experiences and needs of these groups within our community.

## **Resident's views on the most important priorities for improvement**

In 2006 the resident survey highlighted the following 'top 10' improvement areas:

1. Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
2. Facilities for teenagers and children
3. Better leisure / sports facilities
4. Better cleanliness
5. More/ cheaper bus services
6. Improved town centre facilities
7. Creation of jobs
8. Regeneration of run-down areas
9. Attracting new business
10. Provision of affordable housing.

**Our Neighbourhood Renewal areas** highlight similar priorities to those across the Borough, however placing more emphasis on:

- Less drugs in the area
- Better management and maintenance of rented property.

Overall, people living in our neighbourhood renewal areas are as satisfied with the area as a place to live as other residents, but feel considerably less safe walking around outside, particularly after dark, making community safety a particular priority within these areas.

**Our Children and Young People** are also consulted separately; in particular a recent survey mirrored the residents' survey questions. We found that whilst children and young people had similar priorities to adults, in general they were less positive about life in the Borough. Therefore continuing to listen to children and young people and addressing their concerns remains vital.

## SECTION 7 KEY CONTACT POINTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### Economic Regeneration & Transport

**For further details please contact:**

Mark Rowell  
(Economic Regeneration & Transport Partnership)  
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Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1XD  
Tel. 01642 526010  
E-mail [mark.rowell@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.rowell@stockton.gov.uk)

**Supporting Plans & Strategies:**

Regeneration Strategy  
Local Transport Plan  
Neighbourhood Regeneration Plans  
Neighbourhood Management Pilot Plan  
Neighbourhood Renewal Plans  
Local Development Framework

### Environment and Housing

**For further details please contact:**

Gillian Corking (Environment Partnership)  
Gloucester House  
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TS18 1TW

Julie Allport  
(Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership)  
16 Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX  
Tel 01642 527072  
Email [julie.allport@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:julie.allport@stockton.gov.uk)

**Supporting Plans & Strategies:**

Local Agenda 21 Strategy  
Biodiversity Action Plan  
Local Development Framework  
Housing Strategy  
Homelessness Strategy  
HECA Strategy  
Energy Efficiency Best Value Improvement Plan

### Safer Communities

**For further details please contact:**

Mike Batty (Safer Stockton Partnership)  
16 Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX  
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**Supporting Plans & Strategies:**

Community Safety Plan  
Youth Justice Plan

### Healthier Communities and Adults

**For further details please contact:**

Ann Baxter  
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**Supporting Plans & Strategies:**

Health Improvement Plan  
Local Delivery Plan  
Commissioning Strategies  
Drugs Action Team Plan

## **Children and Young People**

***For further details please contact:***

Peter Seller (*Children's Trust Board*)  
Municipal Buildings, Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1LE  
Tel 01642 527043  
E-mail [peter.seller@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:peter.seller@stockton.gov.uk)

***Supporting Plans & Strategies:***

Children & Young People's Plan  
Education Leisure & Cultural Services  
Strategic Plan  
Sure Start Delivery Plans  
School Organisation Plan  
Adult Learning Plan  
Youth Strategy

## **Arts, Leisure & Culture**

***For further details please contact:***

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Partnership*)  
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***Supporting Plans & Strategies:***

Cultural Strategy  
Annual Library Plan  
Museum Plan  
Sport & Active Recreation Strategy  
Parks & Countryside Strategy  
River Tees Navigation Strategy

**If you would like to comment on the overall content of the Strategy or would like further copies, please contact:**

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