

COUNCIL PLAN 2020-23



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Foreword

We are pleased to introduce our Council Plan for the next three years. This Plan sets out our vision and hopes for the Borough looking forward to 2023, and the key priorities we will be working on as your Council in the coming year to do our part in bringing the vision to life.

You will see in this plan that we want the Borough to be:

- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm
- A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive
- A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed

Of course we know that however hard we work, we can't achieve this vision alone, so we work with key people, organisations and partners to help us deliver it and we have regional and national alliances which bring huge benefits to the Borough. So whilst this plan focusses on what we plan to do as a Council, you might also find it interesting to read some of the exciting work we are doing with our partners in these partnership plans which, alongside our Council Plan, are bringing our vision to life:

- The Community Safety Strategy
- The Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- The Economic Growth Strategy
- The Children's and Young People's Strategy
- The Adults Strategy
- The Communities Strategy

Here at the Council, we have an instinct to collaborate and we work hard to be an effective partner, so you can be sure that we are co-ordinating and driving all the benefits from these closely related plans to make sure that deliver the greatest possible benefit to the borough.



Councillor Bob Cook
Leader of the Council



Julie Danks
Managing Director

The Borough

Stockton-on-Tees is the largest of the five local unitary Councils (Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Darlington and Hartlepool) that make up the Tees Valley region.

We have a population of almost 200,000 people living in Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm and a number of smaller rural villages. Our population is growing, with a 2.8% increase over the last seven years. People are proud of living in Stockton on Tees with 80% expressing a strong sense of belonging to the local area satisfaction with the local area as a place to live. However, inequality remains a real challenge as we have areas of great affluence existing alongside areas of deprivation with nine of our wards in the 10% most deprived wards in the country. We also see an inequality in the large differences in life expectancy between the most and least deprived parts of the borough, with a gap of 21 years in average life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards.

We are seeing economic growth in the borough and now at £4 billion, it accounts for a third of the Tees Valley economy. The borough enjoys excellent connections to the national road network and direct rail connections to London and key northern cities. With a strong international profile for business, the 5,000 businesses across the borough and wider region enjoy global connectivity with Teesside International Airport on the borough's boundary.

We have beautiful parks and open spaces and our vibrant town centres play a key role in supporting our communities. Our packed year-round events programme, Preston Park Museum and Grounds and leisure activities based along and on the River Tees mean that there is always something happening in the borough.

The Council

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council became a unitary authority on 1 April 1996. We are a public body elected to serve the borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

We have 56 councillors and 26 wards, with between one and three councillors representing each ward. No political party has overall control of the Council following the May 2019 local elections. Just over 70% of our councillors represent national political parties; the other 30% are independent or represent an independent group. We have a Leader and Cabinet style administration.

We have strong political and executive leadership, robust scrutiny processes, committed and resourceful employees, solid partnerships and robust financial and corporate governance.

We have a strong track record of sound financial management and we have adapted to unprecedented funding reductions over the last eight years, saving around £45m. Our medium-term financial planning approach has allowed us to continually balance our budget through delivering savings and efficiencies but also to plan ahead and deliver invest-to-save schemes and innovative changes to service delivery models.

Working closely with elected Members and with a close and constructive relationship with Trade Unions, the Council's 3,250 employees strive to deliver the very best services. We have reduced our workforce by 25% or over 1,200 employees due to the funding reductions.

At a time when there are increasingly limited public financial resources available, striking the balance between working with others or intervening and doing things ourselves is a constant challenge. We have an instinct to innovate, collaborate and lead. We carefully target investments to stimulate economic growth, provide great assets and deliver financial returns to offset funding reductions. We have a long and strong history of working successfully in partnership with other organisations.

We remain a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

Our Vision for the Borough

We want the borough of Stockton-on-Tees to be....



We will play our part in making sure this is achieved by being

A Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve

Our Vision and what it means

We want the borough to be....

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm	A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed	A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive
This means the borough will be a place where:	This means that the borough will have :	This means we will enjoy:
People live in cohesive and safe communities	A growing economy	Great places to live and visit
People are supported and protected from harm	Improved education and skills development	Clean and green spaces
People live healthy lives	Job creation and increased employment	Rich cultural experiences

We will play our part in bringing about this vision for the Borough by being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve

This means that we will make sure that we provide:

- Financial sustainability and value for money**
- Dedicated and resourceful employees**
- Strong leadership and governance**

Working towards the vision over the coming year

Making the borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm means creating a place where:

People live in cohesive and safe communities

People are supported and protected from harm

People live healthy lives

**We have identified these key priorities for 2020/21 to help us achieve this vision.
This year we will:**

Plan and implement new ways of improving children's emotional health

Improve the support we give to families to help them stay together

Help schools to improve pupil wellbeing and reduce exclusions

Improve the consistency and continuity of social work practice

Reduce the number of children who need to be in care

Increase capacity in our fostering service and residential children's homes

Review the quality and suitability of our 'out of area' adults placements to try, where possible, to support people to return to live in the borough

Continuously improve quality of care within adults residential homes

Progress integration opportunities with the NHS

Develop and test a community pathfinder approach, to support people who are lonely and living in social isolation

Develop coordinated approach to identifying adults at risk of poor health and design coordinated offer of early intervention and support

Support voluntary sports clubs to build community capacity

Lead a consultation on community safety priorities

Continue with the Targeted Action Area pilots in Stockton and North Thornaby

Develop a whole-Council approach to improving health and wellbeing to address health inequalities

Develop and pilot a physical activity programme in target communities

Working towards the vision over the coming year

Making the borough a place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed means creating:

A growing economy

Improved education and skills development

Job creation and increased employment

**We have identified these key priorities for 2020/21 to help us achieve this vision.
This year we will:**

Ensure effective careers provision and support for all pupils

Continue to work with early years settings and schools to raise educational attainment for all pupils, including those with additional needs

Develop an approach to inclusive growth

Develop options for increasing the supply of employment land

Review our approach to business engagement and develop a place branding campaign for the borough.

Develop and implement the vision for our town centres

Work with Tees Valley Combined Authority on improving regional economic and transport infrastructure

Work with Tees Valley Combined Authority on regional skills development

Develop routes to work to assist those furthest from employment

Maintain a safe transport network to ensure reliable access to learning and employment

Strengthen adult careers advice and guidance

Provide an integrated approach to early language development through reading

Working towards the vision over the coming year

Making the borough a place that is clean, vibrant and attractive means creating:

Great places to live and visit

Clean and green spaces

Rich cultural experiences

**We have identified these key priorities for 2020/21 to help us achieve this vision.
This year we will:**

Develop a strategy to accelerate affordable housing delivery

Continue with the re-development of the former Victoria estate

Develop options for increasing housing land

Review delivery of the private landlord-led membership scheme

Complete Ingleby Barwick leisure and library facility

Open The Globe

Review approach to refuse collection and recycling

Work in partnership with the 5 Tees Valley local authorities, Durham and Newcastle to procure new waste management arrangements

Deliver plan for additional tree planting

Develop a programme of events in towns across the borough

Improve the visitor facilities in Preston Park

Develop the next phase of the River Tees enhancement

Strengthen safety procedures for events on Council Land and training for event organisers

Improve facilities for playing pitch sports

Continue to work towards carbon reduction targets at the Council and in the Borough

Working towards the vision over the coming year

We are committed to being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve

This means we will provide:

Financial sustainability and value for money

Dedicated and resourceful employees

Strong leadership and governance

**We have identified these key priorities for 2020/21 to help us achieve this vision.
This year we will:**

Review our medium term financial plan following the national budget changes

Review office accommodation to ensure maximum cost effectiveness

Improve ways of working using technology

Review surplus land and assets and develop plans for disposal or development

Improve our online services for Revenues and Benefits customers

Deliver the Shaping a Brighter Future programme to ensure this remains a great place to work

Respond to the Local Government boundary review

Deliver the 2020 apprenticeship recruitment programme