

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 OCTOBER 2021

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

**A FAIRER STOCKTON-ON-TEES: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR REDUCING
INEQUALITIES IN THE BOROUGH – POST ENGAGEMENT FINAL DRAFT**

SUMMARY

This report seeks cabinet approval to the final draft of the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees strategic framework following the period of engagement initiatives after the presentation of the framework to Cabinet in July 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the final draft of the framework;
2. Note the feedback on the framework to date;
3. Note the proposed next steps;
4. Agree to receive an annual report on progress.

DETAIL

1. The consultation draft of 'A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees' strategic framework was agreed at Cabinet in July 2021.
2. The framework outlines:
 - a) The key causes of inequality, based on analysis of available research, with the key focus on income, wealth and power;
 - b) The basis of a strategic approach, recognising the need to take action across strategy, interventions, practice and for the Council as a major employer, commissioner, provider.
3. The strategic framework sets out a vision and ambition for reducing inequality over the next ten years.
4. To realise the ambition outlined in the framework, it identifies five key interventions
 - a) Tackling fundamental issues across the borough as a whole;
 - b) A focus on reducing the inequalities faced by identified disadvantaged communities;
 - c) A focus on deprived neighborhoods, and in particular building on the work in the Targeted Action Areas, focusing on these areas as the first area priorities;
 - d) A focus on the most marginalized;
 - e) An emphasis on the Council as a major employer, commissioner and purchaser

5. The framework includes a proposed governance and accountability structure, and an engagement plan.

ENGAGEMENT

6. Significant engagement has taken place since the approval of the draft. The framework has been well received and has received much support. There is considerable support for both the contents of the framework and for the Council's role in taking a strategic lead.
7. Following consultation it is proposed to make only minor changes to the framework, and to progress to the adoption of the framework and the development of the business plan for implementation.
8. The proposed final draft is attached at **Annex 1**.
9. The details of the engagement outcomes are included in **Annex 2**.

NEXT STEPS

10. There a temporary post of coordinator has been recruited to. The primary role is to develop the business plan for the framework for 2021/22 and beyond.
11. The key elements of this plan are:
 - a. To define specific elements of borough wide intervention and the delivery mechanisms for these
 - b. To work with colleagues to update and refresh the JSNA sections relevant to the work with disadvantaged communities;
 - c. To refine the proposals for the deprived areas. At this stage, it is proposed that 3 initial priority areas be identified, based on further analysis of IMD data;
 - d. To lead the development of proposals for working with the most marginalised individuals
 - e. To develop the action plan for the Council as an organisation
 - f. To establish the multi-agency steering group.
 - g. To identify the resource requirements for future year's delivery

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

12. An impact assessment will be undertaken on an annual basis to accompany the annual business plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The strategic framework identifies the need for additional resources to deliver the strategy, around coordination and delivery and also around intervention. At this stage, resources have been committed for the temporary coordinator and to support additional development activity in year 1.
14. Additional proposals will be included in the budget report for 2022/23.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The basis for taking action is to some extent found in the Equality Act 2010.

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. The implementation of the strategy will be managed in line with established risk assessment systems. Although the strategy is non-statutory, it has been designed to

ensure that there are effective approaches in place to ensure that the needs of children and young people are identified, assessed and responded to in line with statutory requirements.

17. The strategy also forms an element of the local area's response to the 20129 SEND Local Area Inspection.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

18. The strategic framework delivers a key priority in the Council Plan:

Fighting inequality

Inequality is a challenge in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. We have affluent areas alongside areas of deprivation. Nine of our wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country and there is a gap of 21 years in average life expectancy amongst men between the most and least deprived wards. We're committed to fighting this discrepancy and making sure more people enjoy a healthy and happy life here.

We will:

Develop a new approach to tackling inequality in the Borough and to ensure that we deliver targeted support and help to those currently living in poverty to improve their outcomes, including around health inequalities and emotional health and wellbeing

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

19. The strategy sets out a broad based approach to tackling inequalities. The specific needs of those who have been in the care system are identified as one of the key communities which provide a focus for this work.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

20. Members have been informally consulted. An engagement plan has been developed to support additional engagement between June and October.

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Education related? Yes or No

Background Papers

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not applicable.

Property

There are no implications for council property.

Annex 1



A FAIRER STOCKTON-ON-TEES

A strategic framework for tackling inequalities

2021-31

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Foreword

From the Leader of the Council

I am delighted to introduce fairer Stockton-on-Tees, the strategic framework for tackling inequalities in the Borough.

This is an ambitious collective call to action, and sets out an approach for the next 10 years. The impact of inequalities is a significant one across the country and our borough. It impacts on quality of life, life chances, and life expectancy.

Some members of our community start less well, have more difficult lives and die earlier than others purely because of where they live, or the circumstances into which they are born.

Tackling inequalities has long been a key priority for this Council. What this strategy does, for the first time, is map out a clear plan for action to do all we can to reduce unfair differences. It will not be easy, and that is why we have set out a ten year commitment. It will also require the involvement of a wide range of partners across the Borough including a key role for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

It will also require additional investment, and we believe the framework can help us to focus on a range of ways we can align existing spend, and take advantage of funding opportunities which may become available from Government and other sources. This is especially important in the context of COVID-19 recovery.

This document is a consultation draft on a strategic framework. It outlines our analysis, our assessment of available evidence, and sets out a series of proposals for action to reduce the gaps in our society. We are publishing this as part of our role as the key 'place shaper' for the Borough, and to fulfil a commitment in our Council Plan.

We can do something about this and we are determined to. We look forward to working with you to turn this framework into action.

Cllr Bob Cook

Introduction and definitions

Defining inequality

There are many different definitions of inequalities...but in essence inequalities can be summarized as: **'avoidable and unfair differences in status between groups of people or communities'**

The concept is most often applied to thinking around:

- income and living standards, and the link to poverty (and often, to child poverty, which is measured by income)
- health outcomes, with an emphasis on life expectancy – and the differences in this which can be seen across geography and between different communities. Of considerable interest at the current time is the inequality associated with the impact of COVID-19, not just on incidence, illness and death but on take up of vaccination
- the specific 'disadvantage' faced by some communities e.g. young, old, BAME communities who face specific challenges
- Housing choice and quality, and the lack of choice facing some communities and in some areas
- Place: it should not matter where you live

Our starting point

The Council Plan sets out our ambition:

Fighting inequality

Inequality is a challenge in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. We have affluent areas alongside areas of deprivation. Nine of our wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country and there is a gap of 21 years in average life expectancy amongst men between the most and least deprived wards. We're committed to fighting this discrepancy and making sure more people enjoy a healthy and happy life here.

We will:

Develop a new approach to tackling inequality in the Borough and to ensure that we deliver targeted support and help to those currently living in poverty to improve their outcomes, including around health inequalities and emotional health and wellbeing

The evidence tells us that, as the issues are complex, so our approach should be similarly multi-dimensional. We need to work at preventing and mitigating inequalities simultaneously. As an organisation and provider of services, we need to direct efforts across policy, strategy, service design and operational practice (attitudes as well as skill) in addition to implementing interventions which promote equality in life opportunities.

Our strategy has adopted the following key set of principles to support our work:

- That differences are unfair;
- That they are measurable;
- That we do not have to accept them and we can do something about it

Our strategic framework is also underpinned by the following:

- Although we accept that the causes of inequality have a nation and indeed global dimension, we can take concerted action locally to tackle the fundamental causes, reduce the impact and protect the most vulnerable;

- Although this strategy will require additional investment to achieve its ambitious outcomes, there is much good work already underway across the Borough which we can align to these objectives. What is required is focus, commitment and sustained emphasis;
- That whilst a key focus for us is on closing outcome gaps for disadvantaged communities and deprived areas with the rest of the Borough, we also must focus on closing the gaps between the Borough and the country;
- That is why our strategy is based around action everywhere across the Borough, with more intensive action where is most needed.

What are we trying to achieve?

Our aim is to reduce inequalities across the Borough, closing the gap in outcomes. Our focus is on three inter-related and connected outcomes frameworks

Borough wide outcomes framework

These measures set out the key areas where we want to make a difference for the Borough as a whole. This is based on the 3 fundamental causes and the six key environmental factors. An initial framework is set out below. We want to develop this further.

Domain	Measures
Income	% below 60% of median income
Wealth	% with savings or assets Levels of debt
Power	% who feel they have control over their lives
Work	% in work % in 'good jobs': pay, stability; progression
Learning	Educational attainment gaps % take up of early years entitlement Highest skill levels
Housing and physical environment	% in decent housing Private rented sector standards? Energy efficiency Access to open space
Social and cultural networks	% feel engaged in their community
Health	Life expectancy gaps Years of healthy living
Access to services	Customer experience and use data

In addition...**for disadvantaged communities**, we will use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment analysis as the basis for determining key measures of success again linked to the framework above

In addition...**for deprived areas** we will identify key activities and interventions designed for each area based on the framework above.

Causes

Our analysis has drawn on available evidence and research which suggests that the fundamental causes of inequalities stem from uneven distributions of income, wealth and power. These are in turn made worse by a number of key environmental factors

Although action to address the wider environmental causes and influences, such as the availability of 'good' work, housing, education, social networks and access to services and action to mitigate negative individual experiences, risks and lifestyles are important, they alone will not solve the problem. Going 'upstream' to tackle the fundamental causes of inequalities such as lack of power and money also needs to be part of our strategy.

<i>Causes: uneven distribution of...</i>	<i>Exacerbated by variations in environmental factors...</i>	<i>Creating negative individual experiences...</i>	<i>Leading to poorer outcomes, such as...</i>
→	→	→	→
<p>Income from work and other sources – an ability to afford essentials and more</p> <p>Wealth and resources – an ability to build up resources to generate further; have a stake</p> <p>Power and control – not having enough say in key life events; reliance on others, sense of powerlessness</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Leading to...</p> <p>Marginalisation, exclusion and injustice</p>	<p>Work</p> <p>Education and learning</p> <p>Housing and physical environment</p> <p>Social and cultural experiences</p> <p>Safe, stable, consistent family life</p> <p>Access to services and support</p>	<p>Unstable, low paid work</p> <p>Cognitive delay, undiagnosed needs</p> <p>Poor quality housing, overcrowding, lack of open space</p> <p>Exclusion from cultural activity, sport, leisure</p> <p>Inflexible services – not listening or personalised</p> <p>Increased marginalisation, isolation, despair</p> <p>Family breakdown</p> <p>Personal experience of neglect / abuse / trauma</p>	<p>Increased morbidity (illness)</p> <p>Mortality</p> <p>Obesity</p> <p>Aggression, violence and abuse</p> <p>Substance misuse</p> <p>Behavioural issues</p> <p>Crime / ASB / disruption</p> <p>Inability to trust, or form safe relationships</p> <p>Risk taking behaviour</p> <p>Vulnerable to exploitation</p> <p>Lack of empathy for others</p>

Our strategic approach

In defining our overall strategic approach, we have taken the following into account.

In terms of scale, we need to operate in a range of ways to make a difference: we need to be affective at the level of the individual, for specific communities and for the Borough as a whole;

In terms of focus, we need to take action in three main ways:

- **Undoing** some of the consequences of the fundamental causes of inequality: the unequal distribution of income, wealth and power.
- **Preventing** some of the more harmful environmental causes and influences which combine to prevent some communities taking advantage of the support and resources available.
- **Mitigating** the negative impact which individuals experience as a result of the fundamental causes and environmental conditions.

We recognise that we also need to adopt the basic principle of: action everywhere, more targeted action where the gaps are widest.

We propose an approach which also recognises that it will not be enough to either just focus on geography or the needs of specific 'communities of interest' but which must do both.

We also propose that there is a specific set of actions for the Council as a key employer, commissioner and provider of services, building on what we already do in this area, such as around the recruitment of apprentices and on local social value and giving this a sharper focus on inequalities.

The commitment recognises that there will need to be additional investment, but also that much can be achieved by the alignment of existing resources, focusing our efforts to deliver this framework consistently, and with purpose over a long term timescale.

Our strategic framework

We propose an approach which is based on five key areas of focus:

1. Tackling fundamental issues across the borough as a whole;
2. A focus on reducing the inequalities faced by identified disadvantaged communities;
3. A focus on deprived neighbourhoods;
4. A focus on the most marginalised;
5. An emphasis on the Council as a major employer, commissioner and purchaser

Tackling fundamental issues across the borough as a whole

Although there are many international and national factors involved in this element which are beyond the remit of this strategy, it is proposed that there is a focus on a set of key objectives focusing on a borough wide approach to raising incomes; creating wealth; and developing a proactive approach to empowering individuals to have more control over the lives and the decisions that impact on them.

This approach is borough wide, builds on a range of exiting initiatives and strategies and seeks to combine them into a focused approach which will target the fundamental issues. It is anticipated that this will include a focus on the following:

- Income maximisation through opportunities for good work and the take up of benefits. This element will be focused on the strategic implementation of the inclusive growth approach and the Employment and Skills Hub as the key 'delivery vehicle' for a range of interventions.

- Poverty reduction through a specific focus on child poverty. This strand will be addressed through the Children and Young People Select Committee's work on child poverty in 2021
- A renewed emphasis on the best start for children and a specific focus on speech, language and communication issues
- Debt management and credit schemes, which tackle the issues faced by those most impacted by lack of credit, debt and economic exclusion
- Local supply chain development to support local enterprise
- Local co-production, engagement and decision making
- An emphasis on providing communities with the means of controlling assets where these can be used to generate additional income.

A focus on reducing the inequalities faced by identified disadvantaged communities

We will take a coherent and focused approach to closing outcome gaps for the most disadvantaged communities.

Disadvantaged communities are recognised as geographies and communities of identity. There is strong interplay between environmental and socio-economic factors which can be both a cause and an effect of inequality. Societal systems, structures and cultural perceptions can create disadvantage for communities of identity. *The Equality Act (2010)* legislates protection against discrimination of communities with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation). However, due to the multi-faceted nature of inequality, this alone does not guard against the compounding factors which lead to inequality in life chances and health outcomes. This element will draw on the work in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which has identified priorities for each group and the basis of effective responses.

Clearly level of need will vary within a defined population, however the risk of compounding disadvantage, inequality and inequity are highest within the named vulnerable groups. For example, there is a strong correlation between children in need, substance misuse, poor mental health, and offending.

This element will identify, work with, profile and develop detailed approaches to work with a number of specific communities:

1. *Acute need*
 - a. *Those who are homeless or fleeing domestic abuse;*
 - b. *Those who misuse substances;*
 - c. *Those who are engaged in sex working*
2. *Learning difficulty or disability*
 - a. *Those with learning disabilities*
 - b. *physical disabilities*
 - c. *mental health difficulties*
 - d. *sensory impairment*
3. *Additional vulnerabilities*
 - a. *Refugees and asylum seekers;*
 - b. *BME communities;*
 - c. *English is an additional language;*
 - d. *In receipt of adult social care support*
4. *Families in need*
 - a. *Families living in poverty*
 - b. *Children in need (CIN or child protection)*
 - c. *Families with a young carer*

And will focus on six key 'gaps'

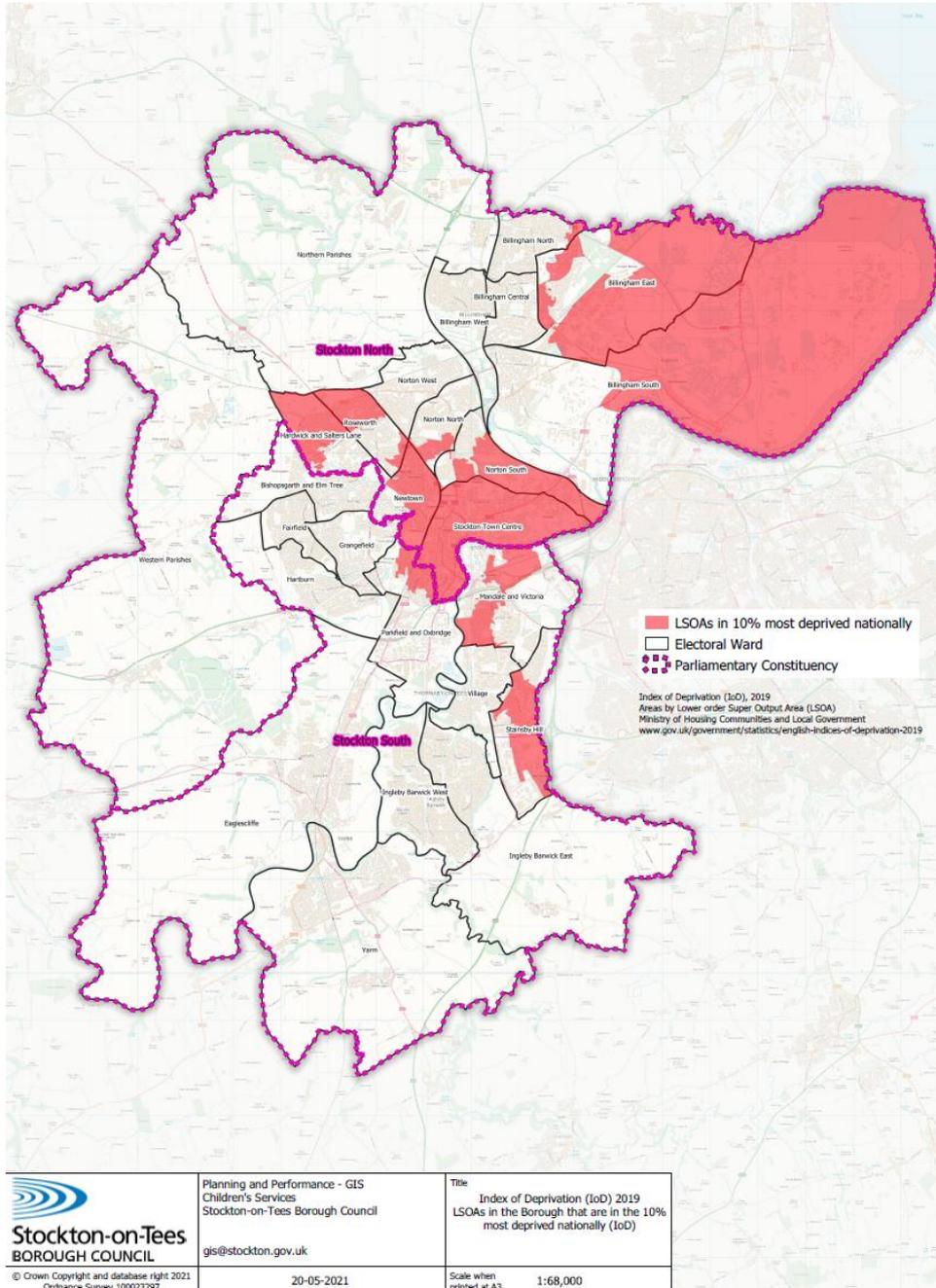
- good and stable jobs
- learning and skills development
- housing and physical environment
- family, social and cultural networks
- health outcomes
- access to services.

A focus on deprived neighbourhoods

We will also identify and focus on a number of targeted, deprived neighbourhoods where even more concerted efforts are needed to close key outcome gaps.

We will identify and target neighbourhoods initially through a focus on the IMD, but will work with local communities to identify natural communities, and to develop a local area analysis based on other sources of data, including Experian Mosaic, as well as primary ethnographic and experience based research, to develop local action plans.

We will take into account existing targeted area work and partnerships, and will initially focus on the Targeted Action Areas as the basis for further action.



We will again focus on the six key environmental factors which combine to widen inequalities.

- good and stable jobs
- learning and skills development
- housing and physical environment
- family, social and cultural networks
- health outcomes
- access to services.

A focus on the most marginalized

Our strategy will also seek to identify and work with a small number of individuals and families who may require different approaches to the delivery of support and services. This work will also focus on the impact of lived experiences, abuse and trauma, which lies at the heart of exclusion and marginalization for many individuals.

These will be families and individuals with complex lives and this work will focus on the personalization and intensity of support and challenge, working restoratively, targeting 'high-risk' individuals and providing very personalized and intensive support to those who need the most help.

An emphasis on the Council as a major employer, commissioner and purchaser

We will also develop the role of the Council as an organisation with a focus on how the Council's employment, commissioning and procurement responses can support the development of a Fairer Stockton-on-Tees.

The key areas where we will focus are:

- Policy and strategy alignment to ensure all strategies include an inequalities 'lens
- Impact assessment – assessing the impact of decision making on inequalities and embedding this into the Council's decision making process.
- Service design principles to support the priorities in this framework – tools and examples to support implementation of tackling inequalities in all future service design work
- Practice – the development of practice frameworks which emphasis personalized support
- Procurement, purchasing – using our collective power in the market to support the framework: local purchasing
- Workforce – effective local recruitment and employment policies, employee benefits and support

Our analysis suggests that much of this framework is in place, but does not currently help to inform a concerted focus on reducing inequalities. Our emphasis in year 1 will therefore be to align current work.

Indicative action plan for the period October 2021 – March 2023

Key action area	Proposed action	By March 2022	By October 2022	By March 2023
Fundamental	<i>Implement key proposals to tackle fundamental causes</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment hub 2. Pathways to work 3. Benefit take up 4. Access to credit 5. Food and fuel poverty 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child poverty strategy 2. Early years strategy 3. Local supply chain action plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minimum income guarantee 2. Local 'share' scheme 3.
Disadvantaged Groups	<i>Work with key community leaders Audit and review needs and gaps Develop and implement specific actions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define and develop plans to close gaps 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement plans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review
Deprived Places	<i>Identify, develop and implement areas based change plans to close outcome gaps</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Define areas – using IMD and local data 3. Establish local governance 4. Identify funding and capacity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop and implement change plans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement and review 2. Local asset transfer / ownership
Most vulnerable / complex	<i>Identify and review models of delivery to most complex</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Review models and data 6. Identify cohort 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Review current contracting 4. Agree development model 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Implement and review
SBC	<i>Develop organization based tools and approach</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Staff training 8. Develop policy 9. Adopt impact tool 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Employment plan 6. Commissioning for social value plan 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4.

Engagement plan

The steering group will oversee further implementation. At this stage it is envisaged that the following will be in place:

- Local engagement and empowerment programmes in deprived areas;
- Engagement with for a representing disadvantaged communities;
- An ongoing programme of research, case study development and testing

Delivering the Strategy

Governance and accountability

- Cabinet will provide overall accountability and oversight to the delivery of the strategy. Updates will be provided at least 6 monthly.
- A Multi-Agency Steering Group will be established to oversee the implementation of the strategy
- Each of the targeted local areas will have a community led implementation group to oversee the development and delivery of the deprived areas element of the strategy

Resources

- The strategy will aim to align, focus and secure visible benefit from existing funding across the multi-agency partnership and steering group.
- However, it is anticipated that additional funding will be required to support delivery and implementation as this framework is implemented. There may be opportunities to access external funding for specific programmes.
- Coordination Team
 - A small coordination team will be required to coordinate delivery, and to support local action in deprived communities.
- Investment plan
 - Additional revenue funding will be required to support the design, development and delivery of additional actions to support the delivery of the strategy.
 - Additional capital investment will be required to support activity in targeted delivered areas. This would require access to additional external sources of capital funding, should there be a plan to reconfigure some communities and implement significant physical change.

Annex 2

A FAIRER STOCKTON-ON-TEES: A FRAMEWORK FOR TACKLING INEQUALITIES 2021-2031

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In July 2021, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council began an open consultation to inform the direction of the A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees strategy.

Views gathered would be used to help map out an approach to tackling inequality across the Borough over the next ten years, leading to a clear and measurable action plan to reduce unfair differences that residents experience.

Consultees were asked four questions:

- (i) What do you understand by 'inequality'?
- (ii) What causes inequality?
- (iii) Which groups/communities do you think are most affected by these inequalities?
- (iv) What three things would you suggest we can do to tackle inequalities in the Borough?

The open-ended nature of these questions meant responses had to be evaluated qualitatively, rather than quantitatively.

The consultation was open from Tuesday 27 July 2021 and closed on Sunday 19 September. It was shared with members of the Viewpoint panel, promoted to residents on the Council's social media channels and extended to attendees of various forums/groups (see Appendix 1)

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The consultation received more than 60 responses via the online survey hosted at www.stockton.gov.uk/afairerstockton-on-tees from promotion online, the Viewpoint panel members and featured contributions from group/forum members who opted to feedback via the survey than give their views verbally at a meeting.

Below is a summary of notable and/or recurring themes that were borne out in the answers to each of the four questions:

KEY THEMES 1 – “WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY ‘INEQUALITY’?”

- *Inequality is inextricably linked to opportunity or the lack thereof, in terms of economic advancement into better employment or housing or regarding a person's prospects of living safely, comfortably and free from fear*
- *It is desired that every person regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, needs, financial situation or other characteristic has equal opportunities, respect, access and participatory stake in their life and local community*
- *People from a deprived area experience less opportunities and access to services than those from more affluent areas*
- *Disabled people suffer from not being able to access places and services*
- *Variables in the delivery of services may unknowingly contribute to worsening equality divides*

- *Inequality can stem from generational deprivation and the legacy impact of drug and alcohol abuse*

KEY THEMES 2 – “WHAT CAUSES INEQUALITY?”

- *Unequal distribution of resources, including health, employment, education and housing, due to factors outside the affected individual’s control which in many cases are systemic and structural*
- *“Lack of respect for the benefits of education. Peer pressure. Poor parenting. Ill health and poor lifestyle choices”*
- *“Insufficient finances for basic needs, inadequate parenting, lack of education and poor health”*
- *A lack of activities and outlets for young people such as youth/sporting clubs*
- *“Poor planning of services that don’t take into consideration the barriers some groups will face trying to access them”*
- *Education is key in fighting against inequality as it gives people more options, support and benefits leading to aspiration to have a stake in the improvement of their circumstances*
- *“Society should give the same opportunities to all as far as possible to allow people to realise their potential”*
- *“Parents not investing time in their children as they don’t know how to do so appropriately. Foetal alcohol and drug use in early pregnancy is impacting children’s education and social/emotional functioning. Increasing marginalisation of ‘difficult’ kids in schools is leading them to be exploited by criminals in ‘county lines’ gangs*
- *A lack of stable employment, comprehensive public transport system, improvement of hospitals in the area*
- *Poor housing, limited job opportunities or low-paid and insecure contracts, under-resourced schools, cuts to services, financial exclusion, digital exclusion, homelessness, addiction, mental health issues*
- *“The imposition of policies that have not included the voices of lived experiences to inform debates”*

KEY THEMES 3 – “WHICH GROUPS/COMMUNITIES DO YOU THINK ARE MOST AFFECTED BY THESE INEQUALITIES?”

- *People on low incomes and ethnic minority groups – “resources should be proportionately allocated to those most in need with strong focus on providing good quality jobs, homes and education. Individual interventions focussing on health will not reduce the gap in life expectancy”*
- *Poor working-class families with low education/qualification attainment*
- *“Women, black people, ethnic minorities and LGBT people”*

- *“People who have low parental guidance and upbringing. If a child has no standards at home growing up the standards of their future children will also be low. This chain needs to be broken”*
- *“The sick and disabled, the unemployed, immigrants and refugees”*
- *“Those who are financially deprived”*
- *People with mental health issues*
- *Vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, disabled people and those on a low income*
- *Those with long-term health care issues and single parents*
- *Anyone who disengages with statutory education and anyone who can work but does not want to*
- *“I have worked in many third-world countries and found the strongest communities where there were the largest inequalities. We have to give opportunities to everyone not just in so-called bad areas. SBC need to develop a reward scheme for families who want to improve their lifestyle. Grandparents provide the majority of childcare while both parents work – SBC should become the grandparent where it’s needed”*
- *“One’s lack of mental ability to earn a fair paying job – this may be genetic or environmental. Poorer people are unable to see further than their immediate surroundings and so only aspire to what they deem their grandest looking neighbour has”*
- *Drug and substance abusers*
- *Pensioners and care home residents needing social care “that is not fit for purpose at present”*
- *“Don’t ignore affluent areas. There are many parents there who don’t know how to support or engage their kids. Look at Facebook sites in Billingham, Ingleby Barwick and Yarm and see the level of antisocial behaviour being demonstrated. Give young people meaning in their lives. Young parents need help. 16-25 year-olds need educating on the impact of drugs and alcohol on babies’ development. Get basic cooking/DIY into schools”*
- *Those in the most deprived wards such as Stockton Town Centre and Tilery*
- *Those living on benefits and lack government funding in areas such as school/training/apprentice opportunities*
- *Tenants in privately rented accommodation which is of a very poor standard*
- *People with limited ability to assert/know their rights*
- *Groups whose English is a secondary language. Refugees/asylum seekers with no support network and new to our culture and laws*

KEY THEMES 4 – “WHAT THREE THINGS WOULD YOU SUGGEST WE CAN DO TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN THE BOROUGH?”

- *Good quality jobs, housing and education. More youth and sport clubs in poorer areas with low fees*

- *Parenting classes, cooking classes, sports groups*
- *Ensure the Council employ people based on their merits and suitability, reduce the stigma around where people come from and take action against all forms of racism*
- *Improve social housing standards including a greater mix with private housing to end stigma. More regular checks on all children for domestic, health and education progress. Free, quality education and training to the unemployed.*
- *Zero tolerance on antisocial behaviour, zero tolerance on bullying and assessment of “what the quiet people are needing”*
- *Encourage a desire for education, encourage an appropriate lifestyle*
- *Crack down on antisocial behaviour, provide activities for young people to build respect for others and support local business to create local jobs*
- *Support those on a low income to attend further education or training or set up businesses. Plan services with the disadvantaged in mind and consider concession schemes to encourage those would really benefit from certain services*
- *“Positive discrimination, purposeful connections/engagement, open/honest conversations”*
- *Set up groups to counter social isolation and introduce activities to help people be creative like gardening*
- *Have more control over private landlords that have people in deplorable conditions, greater police presence to make problem areas safer including a bigger presence in Stockton Town Centre*
- *Education to eradicate prejudice, fund rehabilitation services and “be closer to communities so the Council knows what is going on”*
- *Access to IT for school children who don't have it at home in funded after-school clubs, breakfast/after-school clubs providing health food for children in families on low-incomes*
- *Access to community groups specifically set up to be accessible in various formats and languages. Peer mentor programmes established including befriending*
- *“Health and wellbeing strategies that come from the community – bottom-up not top-down. More youth workers on the ground with activities for young people to get them engaged on positive paths”*
- *More training in the community, initially leading to jobs with the Council. Better housing and support services for vulnerable people – “stop putting them in Hartington Road”*
- *“Develop a meaningful participatory approach to decision-making and seek support from a successful organisation (Thrive – <https://thrive-teesside.org.uk>) that has a track record of working this way. Implement the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act as good practice and ensure lived experience is at the heart of the implementation and monitoring of this”*
- *“Find a way to engage with the people most likely to suffer from inequality and speak to them in their ‘language’ so they understand their options and how you could help. Young people engage more with social media channels whereas an asylum seeker may relate more to someone from their own country speaking their language. Needs to be properly funded with passionate people employed to help others access the support they need”*

- *Financial inclusion, digital inclusion and mental health provision*
- *Equality-proof policies, equality-proof services and highlight good practice*

There was also a supplementary question which asked for any other ideas or viewpoints to be considered:

- *Investigate the work of Professor Clare Bambra who highlights the need for structural and not behaviour change interventions*
- *“Reduce the number of pubs and night clubs/their hours of operation”*
- *More exercise and healthy lifestyle programmes*
- *Stop badging individuals/groups as disadvantaged – will never boost their morale or motivation. Needs a positive language spin to cultivate a more positive spirit across the Borough (e.g. improvers – not marginalised, not deprived, not uneducated, not employed)*
- *“The time for action is now because eventually this will implode if left unaddressed”*
- *Open up channels of communication with ordinary people and don't rely on online fact-finding. People without computers should have the same chance to have their thoughts, ideas and complaints heard.*
- *“This needs to be a long-term investment. A generational investment of 50-70 years”*
- *“Social services require improvements to child services, more resources, better skills, incentives to get the best staff”*
- *Undertake regular audits of companies' equal opportunities policies and ensure legislation is adhered to. Ensure people have the means to challenge their pay grades and have appropriate adaptations to places of work made as needed*
- *“Fighting inequality is vital and support and prevention measures are key to success in this area. I hope that you will continue to prioritise this”*
- *“Don't forget the children that live in the villages, they are unlikely to have regular access to swimming, cinemas etc – they also need equality with their peers living in the towns”*
- *Increased community involvement – not just consultation but in decision-making*
- *Increase access to skills, financial and digital inclusion and mental health/wellbeing provision. Support the creation of jobs. Progression pathways for less academic children to be considered earlier on. Better promotion of brilliant services available which are under-utilised due to lack of awareness.*

ENGAGEMENT MEETINGS SUMMARY

Members of the initial steering group also presented an outline of the framework at various meetings with stakeholders, groups and forums to gather the following key feedback:

- *“We need to make sure we engage with the Food Power Network and link the work with the ‘Food Poverty Reduction Strategy’*
- *Consider social value and how this links to procurement/commissioning of services*

- *Action plan to be developed requires specific details on how it'll target and support communities of interest – i.e. BME communities for example with employment/apprenticeship opportunities*
- *The importance of feeling valued by communities means we should ensure they input to the development of any plans*
- *Request for a spotlight to be put on non-visible/hidden disabilities to increase understanding reduce marginalisation and exclusion*
- *Concern around access to higher education that only those with parents with higher incomes can help finance university attendance and higher levels of achievement*
- *Port Clarence viewed as isolated with poor transport links but with a strong community spirit not found in the more affluent wards*
- *Do deprived communities know how to access support to resolve their problems? Do we need a greater physical SBC presence there?*
- *Strengthen the emphasis on education – adult education as well as for children/young people*
- *Utilise a Borough-wide focus AND a focus on disadvantaged communities – i.e. not geographical*
- *Maximise the support/capacity of the library service*
- *Only the people in the identified areas/communities can say what is important to them rather than a top-down approach. Develop something within a community and they will feel ownership of it*
- *Physical environment can be the biggest barrier for those with disabilities. Can SBC go beyond meeting the minimum legislation requirements?*
- *The impact of crime and fear of crime on the ability of residents to access services and opportunities and that this is not just an issue for some neighbourhoods*
- *Lifetime housing provision for disabled people – make sure homes are able to be adapted and developed as time goes on – during planning stages, can you fit additional equipment if someone needed that home with a disability?*
- *Digital exclusion is a big factor – during the pandemic, those who couldn't access technology can be 'lost' from the system and negatively impact their progress. Community centres that supported people have closed down due to austerity in the past decade – what's coming to replace them?*
- *Income maximisation – some benefits only available to those with online access. Libraries help with this, but does it need promoting more or given increased resource?*
- *Young people coming through education now post-COVID, how well-adjusted will they be compared with previous generations? Lack of youth clubs/centres mentioned*
- *We need to include some benchmarking data on digital inclusion to monitor progression on increasing usage and ensuring access to digital devices*

- *Some evidence that Fairfield and Grangetown have digital divide issues (although not necessarily the most deprived areas)*
- *Difficult to engage those who are not IT-literate or without access to devices*
- *Ensure child poverty work fits with the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees strategy*
- *Emphasis on the use of social value in commissioning – paying the living wage in particular*
- *Reduce and support those on zero-hour contracts into more stable employment*
- *Suggestion to develop a Tackling Inequalities framework template to help support partner organisations in business planning/future strategies*
- *Rural areas still suffering from poor transport links to centres and facilities. Issues relating to young people – especially digital exclusion – need considering*
- *Effects of the cut to Universal Credit and rise in National Insurance taxation may deepen the existing problems*
- *Request to consider trauma-informed practice in particular when working with 14-17 year-olds with an outcome-led focus that raises aspiration*
- *Integration is key – mainstream services must be accessible to all*
- *Asylum seekers and refugees may not be aware of what healthcare is available to them such as mental health support, cancer screening, dentistry and GP services*

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF CONSULTEES (to date – ongoing dialogue will continue into the next phase)

- Viewpoint Panel members
- Followers of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) social media channels
- Stockton-on-Tees Infinity Financial Inclusion Partnership
- SBC BAME staff forum
- SBC Bright Minds, Big Futures group
- SBC LGBT staff forum
- SBC Disability staff forum
- Catalyst Digital Inclusion forum
- SBC Children and Young People’s scrutiny committee
- 7 Community Partnerships
- Roseworth Big Local members
- Catalyst stakeholders/members in general
- Catalyst Asylum Seeker and Refugee forum
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Safer Stockton Partnership
- Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network
- Stockton-on-Tees Education Improvement Service