



Welcome to our  
2020-2023 Council Plan

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**

The Plan describes how we are going to do this and what we hope to achieve.



## What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan sets out our vision and hopes for the Borough looking forward to 2023 and it explains the priorities we will be working on in the coming year to bring the vision to life.

Of course, we cannot ignore the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on all our lives, and on the future social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our Borough, and in this plan we set out our approach to recovery from its impact, alongside our wider plans.

## Who is the Council Plan for?

The Council Plan is for everyone who lives and works in the Borough. The Council is here to serve and support you, and we take that responsibility very seriously. That's why we've created this Plan: to set out in one place what we aim to achieve and what we will be focussing on the coming year, including our response to Coronavirus.

## Who is involved in it?

We are an ambitious Council, we have big plans for the Borough and we recognise that we can't achieve them on our own. So, whilst this Council Plan focuses on what we plan to do as a Council, we also have a number of partnership plans that set out the exciting work we're doing with our partners, to bring the vision to life.

Find out more by reading:

- 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

You can find all of these on our website [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)

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 they deliver the greatest possible benefit to the Borough.

We're excited to share our Council Plan with you and hope you share our passion and pride for the Borough. We'd love you to join with us to make the next three years a period of growth and prosperity for Stockton-on-Tees.



*Bob Cook*  
**Councillor Bob Cook**  
Leader of the Council



*J. Danks*  
**Julie Danks**  
Managing Director

## About Stockton-on-Tees

### Our Borough

From parks, shops and coffee spots, to galleries, events and festivals, Stockton-on-Tees has something for everyone. It's no wonder our population is growing, business is booming and you tell us you're happy to be here. Before you read our plan for the next three years, here are some things you might like to know about our current borough and the Council that serves it.

### A place people are proud to live

200,000 people call Stockton-on-Tees home. They live in our thriving towns – Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm – and our rural villages. Our population is increasing, with a 2.8% rise over the last seven years, and we're committed to serving this growing community. We're delighted to know people are proud of living in Stockton-on-Tees. 80% of residents say they feel a strong sense of belonging and satisfaction with the local area as a place to live. Our Plan aims to build on this.

### Going places and getting further

Business is booming in Stockton-on-Tees, where 5,000 businesses generate £4 billion for the local economy. We account for a third of the Tees Valley economy overall and our towns provide work for people from across the Borough. Our excellent road and rail connections with London and key northern cities make Stockton a great place to do business. Whilst Teesside International Airport, on the Borough's boundary, provides international connections for our globally ambitious businesses.

However, we know that Coronavirus has had and will continue to have an impact on our economy.

### Alive with events, leisure and culture

There's always something to do in Stockton-on-Tees. Whether that is enjoying our beautiful parks and open spaces, or visiting our beautiful towns. We have a packed year-round events programme – from outdoor sports to open air festivals – that put our Borough on the map, as well as leisure activities based along the River Tees. Preston Park Museum and Grounds and our theatres are great places to explore our history and offer cultural events and family activities. Our Plan will maintain the Borough's reputation as a thriving and vibrant place to be.

### Fighting inequality

Inequality is a challenge in 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 we're not happy with that fact. We also see inequality in life expectancy, with 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, and recognising that Coronavirus may well widen inequality even further.





## Elected by you

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. 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.

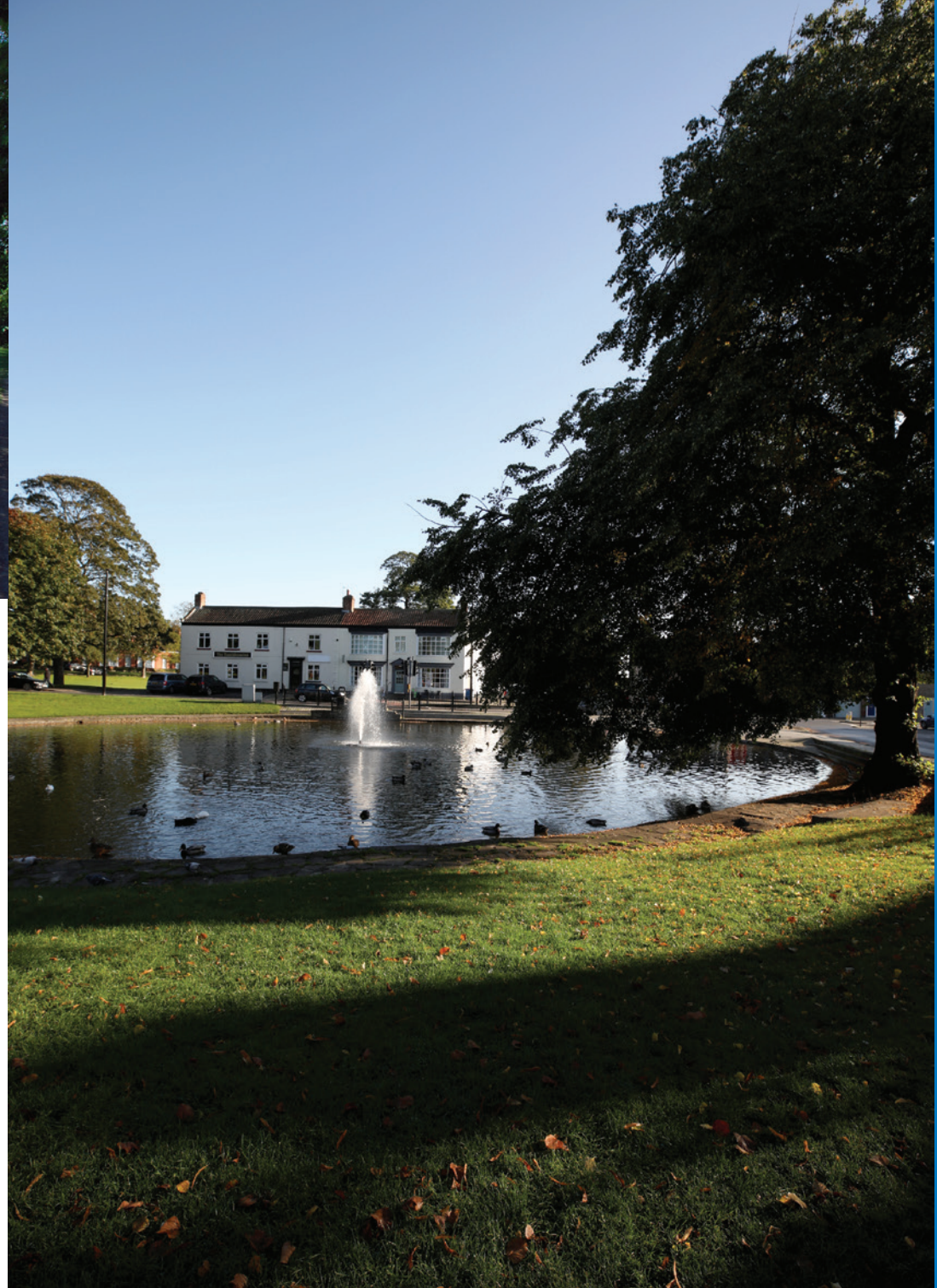
## Working together to make a difference

We have 26 wards, represented by 56 councillors – that's between one and three councillors representing each ward. Following the May 2019 local elections, no political party has overall control of the Council. Just over 70% of our councillors represent

national political parties; the other 30% are independent or represent an independent group. We may be a diverse group of people but we are united by our passion for the local area and the difference we want to make.

## Strong leadership

We have a Leader and Cabinet style administration. That means the Council appoints the Leader, and the Leader appoints the Cabinet. We have strong political and executive leadership, robust scrutiny processes, committed and resourceful employees, solid partnerships and robust financial and corporate governance. We know we have the skills and enthusiasm to do great things for Stockton-on-Tees, and this Plan explains how we're going to do it.



## Committed colleagues

Despite reducing our workforce by 25% over the past 10 years due to funding reductions, we continue to offer effective services thanks to our 3,250 dedicated Council staff. Working closely with elected Members - and with a close and constructive relationship with Trade Unions – our colleagues strive to deliver the very best services. Our dedicated and resourceful employees are a key part of our Plan for the future, and we're proud to be an employer of choice for so many talented people from our region.

## Planning our financial future

We have a strong track record of sound financial management. In the current economic climate, finances are always going to be a challenge, and we work hard to make our budget go further. We have adapted to unprecedented funding reductions over the last eight years, saving around £53m. 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. We carefully target investments to stimulate economic growth, provide great assets and deliver financial returns to offset funding reductions.



## Working in partnership

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 and we have a long and strong history of working successfully in partnership with other organisations.

## Coronavirus pandemic

Since the initial development of this Council Plan we have and still are experiencing the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic. Coronavirus provides huge challenges for us to address in terms of community and economic recovery and dealing with the long term implications of the pandemic. We have reviewed our priorities for the coming year and have adapted these to reflect the focus that is needed to respond to this challenge. You can be assured that we remain committed to delivering the vision set out in this plan but we will of course make sure that all our Coronavirus recovery work is reflected in this Plan and in our priorities.

**We remain a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve. You remain our top priority. Read on to find out how we're going to do this year as part of our plan for the next three years.**

## Our Vision for the Borough

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

A place where people are **healthy, safe and protected** from harm

**This means the borough will be a place where:**

People live in cohesive and safe communities  
People are supported and protected from harm  
People live healthy lives

**This means we will enjoy:**  
Great places to live and visit  
Clean and green spaces  
Rich cultural experiences

A place that is **clean, vibrant and attractive**

**This means that the borough will have:**

A growing economy  
Improved education and skills development  
Job creation and increased employment

A place with a **thriving economy** where everyone has **opportunities to succeed**

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



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, and in response to the specific issues arising from Coronavirus

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

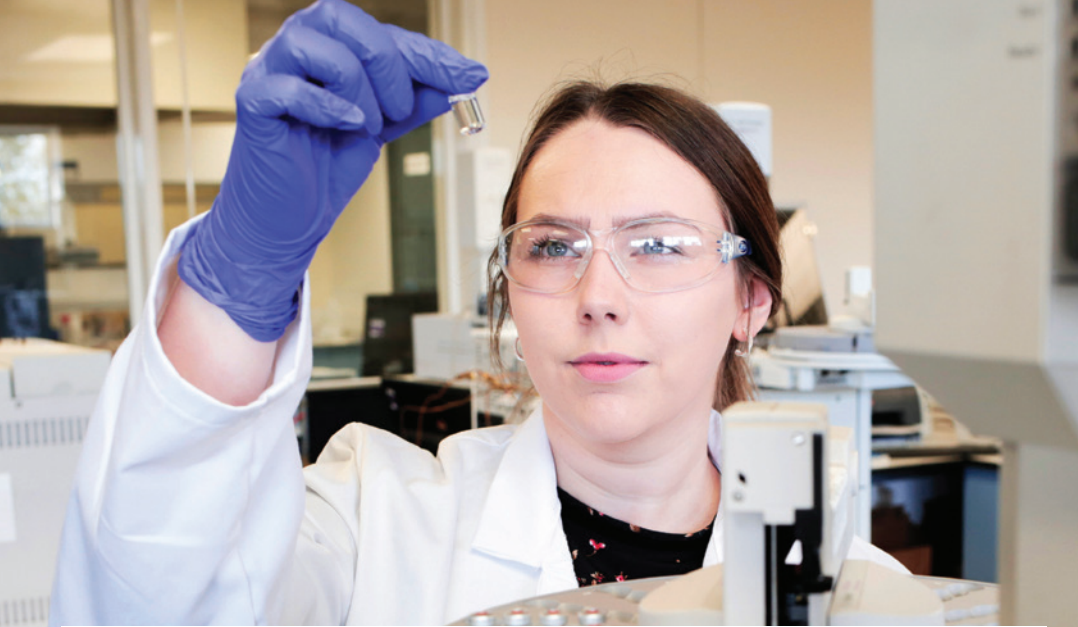
Support voluntary sports clubs to build community capacity

Lead a consultation on community safety priorities

Review our approach in light of Coronavirus to ensure an effective continuation of the Targeted Action Area pilots in Stockton and North Thornaby

Develop a whole-Council approach to improving health and wellbeing to address inequalities, and the impact of Coronavirus

Develop and pilot a physical activity programme in target communities



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, recognising the disruption in education as a result of Coronavirus

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, responding to the implications of Coronavirus

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 recognising and understand the full impact Coronavirus will place on their use

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





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  | Deliver plan for additional tree planting   |
| Continue with the re-development of the former Victoria estate  | To develop and adapt our fantastic annual events programme to work well in the Coronavirus environment. |
| Develop options for increasing housing land   | Improve the visitor facilities in Preston Park  |
| Review delivery of the private landlord-led membership scheme   | Develop the next phase of the River Tees enhancement  |
| Complete Ingleby Barwick leisure and library facility   | Strengthen safety procedures for events on Council land and training for event organisers               |
| Open The Globe  | Improve facilities for playing pitch sports   |
| Review approach to refuse collection and recycling  | Continue to work towards carbon reduction targets at the Council and in the Borough                     |
| Work in partnership with the five Tees Valley local authorities, Durham and Newcastle to procure new waste management arrangement |   |



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, including the financial implications of recovery from Coronavirus

Review office accommodation to ensure maximum cost effectiveness

Improve ways of working using technology, including learning from the arrangements put in place in response to Coronavirus

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





Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL