

Welcome to our 2021-24 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 in 2021/22.

What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan sets out our vision and hopes for the Borough looking forward to 2024 and it explains the priorities we will be working on in the coming year to bring the vision to life. This plan is again developed in a difficult financial context, where our long term funding from Government is not clear. Of course, we all continue to be affected by COVID-19, which is not only having an major impact now, but will have long term impact on the future of our Borough. We have set out in this plan how we intend to approach recovery and have included this in our wider plans for 2021/22.

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 COVID-19.

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 Adult Social Care Strategy
- The Communities Strategy
- The Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy

You can find all of these on our website www.stockton.gov.uk

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 as we continue to steer a path through COVID19 towards another period of growth and prosperity for Stockton-on-Tees.

Councillor Bob Cook and Julie Danks

About Stockton-on-Tees

Our Borough

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. Here are some things you might like to know about our borough.

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, supported by a thriving and active voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. We're delighted to know people are proud of living in Stockton-on-Tees.

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.

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. Although of course impacted by COVID-19, we hope to be able to return to our year-round events programme, and to ensure we can all continue to enjoy the wide range of activities, events and facilities that put our Borough on the map. 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 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.

The climate change challenge

The effects of climate change are becoming ever more apparent. We know that the changes that are required to our transport, homes, industry and lifestyle are challenging and must be long term. The Council is working with a sense of urgency to develop plans in partnership with businesses and other agencies to drive down carbon production and reduce consumption of energy and raw materials. Everyone in the Borough can make a difference.

About our Council

Elected by you

We are a unitary authority elected to serve the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. We are the largest of the five local unitary Councils that make up the Tees Valley region. We have 26 wards, represented by 56 councillors. Following the May 2019 local elections, no political party has overall control of the Council. We have a Leader and Cabinet style administration. That means the Council appoints the Leader, and the Leader appoints the Cabinet.

Planning our financial future

In the current economic climate, and especially as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, finances are always going to be a challenge, and we work hard to make our budget go further. 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.

Our people, our services, our commitment

We always struggle to tell you about our priorities for the year ahead as all of our teams work as if what they deliver is the number one priority. Our teams have risen to the many challenges of COVID-19, continuing to deliver high quality, value for money services, monitored through annual service plans, and by working with key partners in the public, business and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Our adult and children's social care, help and support teams and education support teams work all year round to protect our residents from abuse and exploitation, working alongside the teams in Public Health, Community Safety, Licensing, Trading standards, Welfare Rights, Housing, Catering, Registrars, Bereavement Service, Community Engagement and Environmental Health work to make sure that the Borough is a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm.

Our refuse and recycling, street cleaning, groundworks, parks and maintenance teams all work alongside the teams in heritage, libraries, museums, events and countryside and green space to make sure that the Borough that is clean, vibrant and attractive. Whilst the Planning, Building Control and Housing Development teams make sure that the Borough has great places to live.

Our Business Support, Inward Investment, Learning and Skills and Town Centre Development teams are working hard to support businesses in the Borough to ensure we have a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed and our Transport teams continue to manage and improve our highways networks ensure that residents and businesses can move freely around the borough.

And all of our teams, whether on the front line or working in the vital support functions that are needed to make it all happen, are all ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

We're proud to deliver all of these services, however when we look at the situation in the Borough in 2021 and weigh up all of the challenges and opportunities that we face right now and in recovering from the impact of COVID-19 on residents, the community and voluntary sector and businesses, we have identified the following key priorities for the coming year as part of our vision, which remains unchanged.

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

A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive

This means we will enjoy:

- Great places to live and visit
- Clean and green spaces
- Rich cultural experiences

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

This means that the borough will have:

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

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

Our priorities for 2021/22

1. Improve the support we give to families to help them stay together where they can and to provide more capacity in the Borough to support children where this isn't possible.
2. Help schools to improve pupil wellbeing, reduce exclusions, improve careers advice and to continue the drive to improve educational attainment for all pupils, including those with additional needs, recognising the disruption caused by COVID-19 and the 'catch up' support required.
3. Develop a new approach to support the best start in life through a focus on 'pregnancy, birth and beyond', and an emphasis on speech, language and communication development
4. Develop more services to help people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and to make sure that they are not lonely.
5. Improve the quality of care within adults' residential homes in the Borough and to support them as they continue to adapt to dealing with the challenges arising from COVID-19.
6. Review out of area placements and day options provision for adults to ensure as many services as possible are provided within the Borough.
7. Continue to lead the public health response to COVID-19 and support the approach to recovery, working with partners in the Health and Wellbeing Board
8. Work with the NHS on the proposals as outlined in the 'Integration and Innovation' White Paper and the forthcoming Health and Care Bill.
9. 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.
10. Consult on, develop and deliver a new community safety plan in consultation with key partners, reflecting the community safety priorities of residents.
11. In partnership with Cleveland Fire Brigade, support the Arson Reduction Strategy, aimed at further reducing deliberate fire setting within our communities.
12. Explore the options around the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) in Stockton on Tees.

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

Our priorities for 2021/22

1. Deliver a new place branding campaign for the Borough to encourage inward investment and development.
2. Develop and implement the vision for our town centres, recognising and understanding the full impact COVID-19 will place on their use.
3. Develop options for increasing the availability of employment land.
4. Increase skills and employment prospects including a new Employment and Training Hub to support people into work, including those most impacted by COVID-19
5. Develop local supply chains and social value in contracts to stimulate local economic activity
6. Deliver the major transport related projects at the Portrack Relief Road, Billingham & Eaglescliffe Station improvements, Elton Interchange, and improvements along the A689 corridor.
7. Understand and respond to the implications of changes in travel patterns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic

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

Our priorities for 2021/22

1. Develop options to increase the number of affordable homes in the Borough.
2. Continue redevelopment of the Sycamores estate in Stockton.
3. Review the private landlord-led membership scheme to ensure that we continue to support the improvement of the quality of private rented homes in the Borough.
4. Work in partnership with the five Tees Valley local authorities, Durham and Newcastle to procure new waste management arrangements.
5. Develop an ambitious carbon reduction and environmental sustainability strategy for the Borough.
6. Develop and adapt our events programme across the Borough to respond to the pandemic and inspire confidence about our futures.
7. Attract new visitors and tell the stories of our communities through Preston Hall Museum & Grounds.

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

Our priorities for 2021/22

1. Review our office accommodation and exploit digital technologies to ensure maximum cost effectiveness and accessibility, including learning from the arrangements put in place in response to COVID-19
2. Review surplus land and assets and develop plans for disposal or development
3. Launch an updated website with new and improved online services.
4. Deliver the Shaping a Brighter Future programme to ensure this remains a great place to work.
5. Respond to the Local Government and Parliamentary boundary reviews.
6. Lead on the COVID-19-secure delivery of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayor, Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner elections and 3 local by-elections in May 2021.
7. Create opportunities for work experience, internships and apprenticeships in the Council's workforce.
8. Review the Medium Term Financial Plan, in the context of ongoing uncertainty on the funding of local government and to account for the immediate and longer term implications of COVID-19.