

Date: Tuesday 28 March 2023 at 10.00 am

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,
Stockton on Tees, TS18 1TU

Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Chair)
Cllr Maurice Perry (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Barry Woodhouse
Cllr Laura Tunney
Cllr Tony Riordan
Cllr Kevin Faulks
Cllr Marilyn Surtees
Cllr Ian Dalgarno
Vacancy

Cllr Ted Strike
Cllr Niall Innes
Cllr Carol Clark
Cllr Lynn Hall
Cllr Barbara Inman
Cllr Pauline Beall

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 8)
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 17
January 2023. (Pages 9 - 12)
- 5 Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 - Selection of In-
Depth Scrutiny Reviews** (Pages 13 - 56)
- 6 Executive Summary for Information - Final Report of
the Crime and Disorder Select Committee - Tree Asset
Management** (Pages 57 - 62)
- 7 Executive Summary for Information - Final Report of
the People Select Committee - Home Energy Efficiency
and Green Jobs for the Future** (Pages 63 - 66)
- 8 Executive Summary for Information - Final Report of
the Place Select Committee - Planning (Development
Management) and Adoption of Open Space** (Pages 67 - 70)

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| 9 | Select Committee Chairs' Updates | (Pages 71 - 82) |
| 10 | Overview and Scrutiny End of Term Report (2019 - 2023) | (Pages 83 - 128) |
| 11 | Forward Plan of Key Decisions | (Pages 129 - 132) |
| 12 | Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme | (Pages 133 - 134) |

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Democratic Services Manager, Judy Trainer, judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk on email
Judy.Trainer@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

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Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday 17 January 2023.

Present: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley (Chair), Cllr Maurice Perry (Vice-Chair), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr Hilary Vickers (sub for Cllr Jacky Bright), Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Judy Trainer, Gary Woods, Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Rachel Harrison (CS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Ted Strike

1 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 November 2022

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee – Scrutiny Review of Care at Home – Executive Summary for Information

The Committee considered the Executive Summary from the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's Review of Care at Home due to be considered by Cabinet later in January 2023.

Members commented that this had been an important and valuable piece of work which highlighted that:

- Staff needed to feel valued
- Strong communication with residents was vital
- There were recruitment and retention issues which needed to be addressed
- It was important to establish trust between the service provider and those accessing services
- The benefits of sharing of good practice
- Listening to service users was essential

Members discussed the need to ensure a consistent level of service regardless of how it was accessed or funded (via the Council or paid-for privately).

AGREED that the report be noted.

5 Children and Young People Select Committee - Scrutiny of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships

The Committee considered the Executive Summary from the Children and Young People Select Committee's Review of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationship which was due to be presented to Cabinet in February.

The draft final report had been considered by the Select Committee on 11 January 2023 and had been approved for submission to Cabinet subject to recommendation 9 being amended as follows:

That an options appraisal is undertaken on how Children's Services can achieve the best outcomes for young people through improved practice and additional capacity and focus, including through the use of voices of experience. This will include options for structure and effective multi-agency working.

Members acknowledged the importance of recommendation 5 which called for a training and support programme for Children's Services staff and commented that training should be comprehensive and targeted at all levels.

AGREED that the report be noted.

6 Select Committee Chairs' Updates

Members were provided with updates from the Chairs of each Select Committee. Updates and discussion included:

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee –

Members emphasised their disappointment that the local CQC inspectors would no longer be providing an overview of local services as had been previous practice and were surprised that similar updates were not routinely being provided to other overview and scrutiny committees in the region.

Members continued to have significant concerns around the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) and highlighted the important role that the Governors of TEWV needed to perform in scrutinising and challenging the Trust.

It was highlighted that North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT patients were still having to attend pre and post-natal visits whereas County Durham and Darlington NHS FT had resumed home visits by midwives. Home visits had been suspended during the pandemic but Members were concerned that these should resume for safeguarding reasons. The Select Committee Chair gave an undertaking to raise this at a forthcoming meeting with the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS FT.

Children and Young People Select Committee –

Members noted the update from the Children and Young People Select Committee Chair.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee –

Members noted the update from the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Chair.

People Select Committee –

Members noted the update from the People Select Committee Chair.

Place Select Committee –

The Place Select Committee Chair advised that he had attended an initial meeting of the joint working group examining Crustacean Deaths. The first meeting had discussed the scope of the work and a more detailed update would be provided to the March meeting.

AGREED that the updates be noted.

7 Forward Plan of Key Decisions

AGREED that the Forward Plan was noted.

8 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme

The Chair drew attention to the letter and proforma which had been sent to all Members inviting topic suggestions for in depth scrutiny review in 2023/24.

A draft programme would be presented to Executive Scrutiny Committee for consideration on 28 March which would be reviewed by the Committee after the local elections.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

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Agenda Item 5

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 – SELECTION OF IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEWS

SUMMARY

The report summarises topic suggestions received and prioritisation scoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Scrutiny Committee are asked to set a draft Work Programme for 2023/24 for review following the local elections.

WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

1. The current programme is summarised below. All reviews have been completed.

Select Committee	In-Depth Review Topics	Standing Items
Adult Social Care and Health	Day Opportunities for Adults Care at Home	Annual Monitoring Consideration of NHS Service Changes (as and when required) Annual Overview Meeting Quality and Performance Reports (including health) Frontline visits (currently paused) (Members also involved in Joint Scrutiny arrangements)
Children and Young People	Child Poverty Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships	Annual Monitoring Annual Overview Meeting Quality and Performance Reports Frontline visits (currently paused)
Crime and Disorder	Bonfires on Public Land Tree Asset Management	Annual Monitoring Annual Overview Meeting

People	Tees Credit Union Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future	Annual Monitoring Annual Overview Meeting
Place	Residents Parking Zones Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space	Annual Monitoring Annual Overview Meeting

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR 2023/24

2. Councillors and officers were invited to submit topic suggestions for the scrutiny work programme for 2023/24. The suggestions have been prioritised ahead of the local elections and are reported to Executive Scrutiny Committee to agree a draft work programme.
3. Following the May 2023 elections, the draft work programme will be reported back to Executive Scrutiny Committee for their review and approval.
4. A “PICK” priority scoring system is used to allocate a score to each topic suggestion. It should be stressed that the score is a tool to aid prioritisation and is not binding in any way. All topic suggestions received, and their scores are attached at **Appendix 1**.
5. The topics scored “above the line” are listed by Select Committee (**Appendix 2**) on the basis that Select Committees tend to complete two in depth policy reviews each year. Members are reminded that Select Committees have flexible remits and there is the option to move reviews between Committees.
6. The PICK scoring system is attached at **Appendix 3**. Supporting information is attached at **Appendix 4**.

COMMENTS FROM SCRUTINY LIAISON FORUM

7. Scrutiny Liaison Forum met on 14 March to discuss the prioritisation of topics. Their views are set out below:
 - As the Access to GP and Primary Care review could not be completed by the Select Committee during the current municipal year, this should be carried forward as the first review of the ASCH Select Committee during 2023/24
 - The Adult Carers’ Service review should be carried out by People Select Committee and consideration given to one of the People Select Committee reviews being conducted on a Task and Finish basis to accommodate the additional work
 - Officers to investigate the issues in relation to the Noise Control Policy in conjunction with the Cabinet Members and report back to a future Members’ Policy Briefing
8. **Appendix 2** has been updated to reflect the discussion from Scrutiny Liaison Forum.

CONSULTATION

9. Councillors and officers have been asked to propose topics for the work programme.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The work programme is resourced within existing budgets. No legal implications are identified at this stage.

RISK ASSESSMENT

11. There is a need to meet legislative requirements and for the Council to put in place internal mechanisms to ensure the safety and quality of key services in addition to deploying resources in the most effective way. The selection of appropriate topics for review can help to support service improvement; the selection of inappropriate topics will lead to the waste of officer and Member time and resources.

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Name of Contact Officer: Judy Trainer
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<u>Background Papers:</u>	None
<u>Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:</u>	Not Ward Specific
<u>Property Implications:</u>	None

Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

Ref No.	Suggested Topic	Public Interest	Impact	Council Efficiency & Performance	Keep in Context	Council Plan Priority	Outcome	Total	Comments
1	Access to GP and Primary Care	3	3	1	3	2	3	15	Referred from 2022/23 programme
2	Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste	3	3	2	3	1	3	15	
3	Disabled Facilities Grants	2	3	1	3	2	3	14	
4	Adult Safeguarding Team	2	3	1	3	2	2	13	
5	Safety of staff in the Night Time Economy	2	2	1	3	2	3	13	
6	Cost of Living Response	3	3	0	1	2	3	12	
7	HAF Programme	3	3	0	1	2	3	12	
8	Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment	2	3	1	2	2	2	12	
9	Play Area Distribution, Maintenance and Physical Activity	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	
10	Adult Carers' Service	2	2	1	2	2	2	11	
11	Roadside Advertising	1	2	2	3	1	2	11	
12	Supporting Family Placements	2	2	1	1	2	2	10	
13	Noise Control Policy	2	2	2	3	0	1	10	
14	Council Tax Empty Property and Second Home Levy	2	2	1	2	1	2	10	
15	Recruitment and Retention	1	2	2	2	1	2	10	
16	Community Assets Based Approach	2	2	1	1	2	2	10	

Appendix 2

Topic Suggestions by Committee

Select Committee	Potential Topics (In order of start date)
Adult Services and Health	Access to GP and Primary Care Adult Safeguarding
Children and Young People	Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment HAF Programme
Crime and Disorder	Safety of staff in the Night Time Economy Play Area Distribution, Maintenance and Physical Accessibility
People	Cost of Living Response Disabled Facilities Grants Adult Carers' Service
Place	Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste Collections Roadside Advertising

PICK Priority Setting

P for Public Interest

Members' representative roles are an essential feature of Scrutiny. They are the eyes and ears of the public, ensuring that the policies, practice and services delivered to the people of the District, by both the Council and external organisations, are meeting local needs and to an acceptable standard. The concerns of local people should therefore influence the issues chosen for scrutiny. This could include current issues. For example, dignity is consistently cited as a high priority for service users (e.g. Mid Staffordshire Enquiry, care in Winterbourne hospital) and scrutiny committees are well placed to influence the agenda locally and drive forward better-quality services). Members themselves will have a good knowledge of local issues and concerns. Surgeries, Parish Councils, Residents Associations and Community Groups are all sources of resident's views. Consultation and Surveys undertaken by the Council and others can also provide a wealth of information.

I for Impact

Scrutiny is about making a difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. Not all issues of concern will have equal impact on the well-being of the community and there may be issues which are important to residents but where the Council can exert little or no influence. This should be considered when deciding the programme of work, giving priority to the big issues that have most impact and where scrutiny can tangibly influence the outcome. To maximise impact, particularly when scrutinising external activity, attention should also be given to how the committee could influence policy and practice.

C for Council Performance

Scrutiny is about improving performance and ensuring the Council's customers are served well. With the abolition of external inspection regimes, scrutiny has an even more important role to play in self-regulation. Members will need good quality information to identify areas where the Council, and other external organisations, are performing poorly. Areas where performance has dropped should be our priority. As well as driving up Council performance, scrutiny also has an important role in scrutinising the efficiency and value for money of Council services and organizational development. In the current financial climate, the challenge for scrutiny is investigating whether improvements can be made within existing resources or with less resource and identify ways that demand for services can be reduced.

K for Keep in Context

To avoid duplication or wasted effort priorities should take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered. Is there another review happening or planned? Is the service about to be inspected by an external body? Are there major legislative or policy initiatives already resulting in change? If these circumstances exist Members may decide to link up with other approaches or defer a decision until the outcomes are known or conclude that the other approaches will address the issues. Reference should also be made to proposed programmes of work in the Council's plans and strategies and whether topic suggestion is in line with the Council's four policy principles.

Council Plan

All topic suggestions should be in line with the Council Plan.

Outcome

Greater weighing will be given to those suggestions where it is clear that scrutiny will make a tangible difference, can exert influence, achieve savings and reduce pressure on demand for services.

Scoring System

- **P**ublic Interest: the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen

Score	Measure
0	no public interest
1	low public interest
2	medium public interest
3	high public interest

- **I**mpact: priority should be given to the issues which make the biggest difference to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area

Score	Measure
0	no direct impact
1	low impact
2	medium impact
3	high impact

- **C**ouncil Performance and efficiency: priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well or proposals will identify efficiencies/ savings and reduce pressure on demand for services. NB a higher score is given to low performance.

Score	Measure
0	'Green' on or above target performance
1	'Amber',
2	low performance 'Red'

- **K**eep in Context: work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Score	Measure
0	Already dealt with/ not a Council/ public sector priority
1	Longer term aspiration or plan
2	Need for review acknowledged and worked planned elsewhere
3	Need for review acknowledged

In addition, extra weighting will be given to suggestions which are in line with the Council's priorities and where it is clear that scrutiny can achieve a positive outcome:

- **C**ouncil Plan Priority

Score	Measure
0	Not a Council Plan priority
1	Council Plan priority but worked planned elsewhere
2	Council Plan priority and need for review acknowledged

- **O**utcome

Score	Measure
1	Low value added
2	Medium value added
3	High value added

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Appendix 4

1

Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Access to GPs and other primary care

Some years ago we covered the issue of access to GP's. Since the start of the pandemic there has been a significant change in how the public contacts and gains access to their clinicians.

My concern is that people feel unsure about contacting their GP. They are no longer sure whether they will see a GP or alternative professional or indeed whether they will have to engage with a machine on-line and answer questions.

I feel there are folk that have very personal issues that do not want to discuss on the phone their issues and are ignoring coming forward because of this, possibly to their detriment.

I know from experience getting through the switchboard is difficult and frustrating, and observed two women at my surgery speaking to the receptionists saying they could not get through online or on the phone to get a doctor's appointment. They were nearly in tears.

Talking to folk many state they are having issues getting to see a doctor.

I would like the scrutiny to find out whether these are significant issues, whether this is actually happening on a large scale and what is being done to improve matters.

I would like clear guidance up in every surgery that gives simple guidance on contacting your doctor.

I would like the online service to be simple and a phone service fit for purpose, not one that cuts you off after 45 mins and tells you lines are closed over lunchtime.

Many folk work, that is their only available time!

If GP's are finding that their workloads are too heavy and they are unable to see all patients that want to be seen then a clear appropriate service should be put in place that allows them to see those patients clearly needing attention more urgently.

At the moment this seems hit and miss.

This review is not about GP bashing. I am enormously grateful to GP's and primary care for the work that they have done. It is about trying to find a better system for seeing your GP. I don't think some surgeries are aware of how much discontent there is out in the public world about the trials of getting to see a GP.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification: Public lack of understanding of health demands on GP's and frustration getting to see a health professional.
Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area: As above
Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area: N/A
Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?): Not known
How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan? Health of local citizens
What would you want the outcome of the review to be? As above
Signed: E Cunningham Date: 17/2/22
Please return to: Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section Democratic Services Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1LD Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Domestic Waste Collections, Kerb-side Recycling and Green Waste Collection

Levels of recycling in the Borough are amongst the lowest in the country. The cost of weekly collection of general waste is increasing rapidly. Food waste collection is likely to be a requirement in the coming years and a proactive approach could contribute to our carbon reduction targets. The free collection of garden waste/green waste benefits some communities more than others. Our approach to waste reduction overall could be improved to reduce the financial and carbon cost.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Waste and Recycling collections impact every resident in the Borough and are a key service and a statutory duty that SBC deliver to residents. The service is highly visible and impacts on every household.

Our waste and recycling provisions are very popular with residents and have regularly received excellent customer service feedback.

However, collecting refuse weekly in a 240L bin does bring with it a negative effect on the overall household waste recycling rate which the council can achieve. Residents currently have access to a large residual waste disposal capacity of 240 litres every week. This amount of refuse disposal capacity acts as a key disincentive for residents to recycle due to the convenience factor which the 240L green wheeled bins provide. Generally, only those residents with a keen interest in recycling, will recycle.

It is expected that the government will issue a date, in March 2023, for SBC to rollout mandatory weekly food waste collections by 1st April 2026. As a result of this rollout date, which also aligns with the start date of the council’s new waste disposal contract, our current waste and recycling collection services should be reviewed to ensure an efficient, effective and resilient service in the future.

Due to the introduction of mandatory weekly food waste collections, there are significant opportunities to deliver carbon reductions and environmental benefits across the whole service.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Defra minister Lord Benyon recently highlighted food waste collections as the biggest contributors to local councils reducing the waste sectors carbon emissions and making implementing them successfully a priority when it comes to improving the Environment.

By diverting food waste from the general waste stream which is sent for recovery through Energy from Waste (EfW) and moving this waste stream to recycling will provide positive outcomes in all areas.

Reducing residual waste and increasing recycling also brings with it financial advantages to the Authority. Our current waste disposal contract does have a competitive gate fee until 2026 however the gate fee reduces further when collecting material for recycling.

There are major financial pressures which local authorities will need to deal with over the coming years and with the expected increase of gate fees from the new waste disposal contract on 1st April 2026, waste and recycling collections should be seen as an opportunity to help with the financial pressure on the authority.

The most common reason given for retaining weekly collection is the potential for food waste to create a smell and a hazard if it is uncollected for up to 2 weeks. This is particularly likely in warm weather. However, the introduction of mandatory weekly food waste collections from 1st April 2026, would resolve this issue and the benefits of alternative weekly collection of other residual waste may then outweigh the disadvantages.

Our continued failure to increase recycling and reduce our carbon impact could become the subject of national Government challenge and penalties as climate change accelerates.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Stockton’s current recycling rate is the lowest in the Tees Valley at 24.3% in 2020/21, ranking SBC 328 out of 338 authorities nationally. This compares to the Tees Valley average of 30.58%, the northeast average of 32.84% and a national average of 42%.

Stockton’s 240L weekly residual waste capacity has a significant impact on residual waste per household (KG/HH), which can be seen when compared to other Northeast Authorities. With Stockton having the highest KG/HH of the 7 authorities. This can be seen in the below table.

Year	Authority	Residual Household Waste per household (KG/HH)
2019-20	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	707.3
2019-20	Middlesbrough Borough Council	677.6
2019-20	Hartlepool Borough Council	581.7
2019-20	County Durham	552.2
2019-20	Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	516.5
2019-20	Darlington Borough Council	507.6
2019-20	Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council	493.4

The Joint Waste Management Strategy (JWMS) and the Tees Valley Outline Business Case (TV OBC) has a target of a 45%-50% Tees Valley Recycling rate by 2027, with a national target of 65% recycling rate for municipal solid waste by 2035. Without significant collection model changes this would not be achievable.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

There are a number of reviews being looked at nationally around waste at the moment with some of the key areas highlighted below:

The requirements of the Resources and Waste Strategy for England 2018 and the Environment Act 2021 places a statutory duty on all waste collection and unitary authorities in England to collect food waste separately and to treat this waste by recycling. We are awaiting clarity around the details of start date and funding however after discussions with Defra it is expected SBC will need to collect food waste by 1st April 2026.

The Government have also now released their response to the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation. DRS will be introduced nationally from October 2025 and will include single use drinks containers of plastic bottles and cans. Glass will be excluded from the scheme.

Local Authorities will now need to understand how the introduction of DRS will impact the kerbside recycling collections, as any drinks container in scope that would have been placed in the kerbside recycling container will now find its way to a DRS drop off point. It is anticipated that a 'levy' of around 20p will be added to each drinks container upon purchase and this will be refunded to the customer once the item has been returned.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is another element of the strategy and places the responsibility onto packaging producers to cover the full net cost of dealing with the packaging they place on the market. It is expected local authorities will receive payments from 2024/25 for any packaging which finds its way to kerbside waste streams. The details of how this funding mechanism will work is not yet known, though it is believed to be based on the quality and quantity collected material.

Consistency in Collections is another consultation which will impact SBC collections with legislation which placed a requirement on councils to collect glass, metal, plastic, paper and card, food and garden waste separately. Consultation in this area is also discussing whether green waste collections should be free of charge.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The project would contribute to the Councils Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Strategy, specifically Aim 3 to "Maximise the use of existing resources, minimise waste and achieve high levels of re-use and recycling".

By reviewing the waste and recycling collections as a result of the introduction of weekly food waste collections this would also help support the Councils aspirations to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions if changes are made from the review of waste and recycling collections.

The project would also help achieving the targets set out in the Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy (TVJWMS) which aims to increase recycling levels, reduce the carbon impact of waste management and reduce the amount of waste generated by households.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

Greater clarity about how SBC could reduce carbon and increase recycling through an improved waste and recycling approach, taking account of the potential public resistance but giving appropriate consideration to the importance of the environment, the costs of service delivery, and the direction of national policy over food waste.

Signed: Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

Date: March 2023

Please return to:

Judy Trainer
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Stockton on Tees
TS18 1LD

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Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) (Specifically Discretionary Funding/Approach)</p> <p>Demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) continue to rise at a time when building costs have also significantly increased. The result of this is an increasing number of DFG applications being costed above the maximum means tested grant (£30k threshold). The rationale for this review is to review the discretionary funding provided by the Council (for example financial loan assistance) to ensure that those requiring a DFG can continue to live independently in their homes.</p> <p>Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.</p>
<p>NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>Building costs have risen significantly over the last year resulting in an increasing number of residents needing to make a greater contributions to their DFG if it goes over the maximum £30,000 threshold. SBC has adopted measures to try to tackle this in the form of discretionary loans with the aim of preventing residents ‘falling out’ of the system. However, with rising building costs a large DFG (for example a property extension is now averaging between £45-£50,000k) residents are needing to seeking increasing loan support (in this example to obtain a loan of between £15-£20,000). Are we doing enough to support vulnerable residents at this time, is there anything else we can do to improve the service provided?</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Issuing DFG’s helps the most vulnerable residents with disabilities in the Borough live independently in their own homes for longer thus releasing other pressures on other services in the borough including the NHS. DFG legislation includes the Regulatory Reform Act which gives Council’s the authority to bring in discretionary policies and procedures to support their residents, therefore there is the scope to modify, influence or improve this service area.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>The demand for DFG’s rises every year which has been acknowledged by government and the increase of funding available for LA’s. We are very focused on delivery, so residents get their adaptation as soon as practicable/ possible. Is our process efficient? Are we providing enough value for money? We have a waiting list for DFG’s, are we doing enough for residents?</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>Good practice guidance has recently been issued by Central Government (produced on their behalf by produced by ‘Foundations’). This guidance is currently being reviewed to identify opportunities and potential policy changes and will involve colleagues across a number of service areas including, Housing, Adult Services (Occupational Therapy Team) and the Home Improvement Agency Team (which has recently been brought back in house).</p>

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?	
DFG is a specific Council plan priority which is: "To support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible" which comes under ' <i>A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm</i> '	
What would you want the outcome of the review to be?	
To ensure we are delivering an effective and efficient service. Whilst also exploring whether SBC is offering sufficient financial support (loan) to enable vulnerable residents to secure a DFG in the face of rising building costs?	
Signed: Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing	Date: March 2023
Please return to: Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section Democratic Services Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1LD Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158	

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Adult Safeguarding Team

The Adult Safeguarding team is working across Stockton and forms part of the Teeswide Adult Safeguarding Board (TSAB) The team is involved in delivering on Making Safeguarding Personal in all of the work it undertakes. The service is currently engaged in the Team Around the Individual which helps support those individuals with a higher degree of risk and support needs. The service is also looking at its performance and processes to ensure it remains effective. The team has been in place for several years and it would be an opportunity to review the work and ensure that it remains effective and is protecting the vulnerable people of Stockton.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

The work of the safeguarding team is of interest to the residents of the Borough as they need to be assured that the Local Authority is effective to not only safeguarding vulnerable adults in the community but also responding to any concerns raised are dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

It is also important that the service can give assurances about the work it undertakes to all of the key stakeholders and partner agencies it works alongside such as Teesside Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), Police, Ambulance, Health etc. The team often works with issues and situations that generate a high profile in the local media and community.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

The work of the service impacts on all aspects of the community and the service should be able to display a level of competence and effectiveness in keeping vulnerable adults that will instil a confidence in the community that it serves

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

No immediate saving identified however the service is looking internally at both the processes it works with and how best to capture and manage its performance. The review would hopefully provide some external oversight to this.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):	
<p>The service is under review as part of the Quality Assurance it provides to TSAB. No other formal reviews at this point however the service as part of Adult Social Care is working towards a self-assessment in preparation for the CQC inspection process</p>	
How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?	
<p>The Safeguarding Team helps support the council plan as part of its vision</p> <p><i>“Making the Borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm”</i></p> <p>The service helps to protect vulnerable adults in the Borough when concerns have been raised about their safety and wellbeing.</p>	
What would you want the outcome of the review to be?	
<p>The review would provide assurance of the work currently being undertaken by the team to ensure it remains effective. The review can also help give an oversight to the team’s performance and its processes to ensure it continues to work to the standard expected and in keeping with all current policies, legislation and procedures relating to Adult Safeguarding.</p>	
Signed: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Date: March 2023
Please return to:	
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**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Safety for staff in the night time economy</p> <p>Safety for staff in the night time economy including restaurants, take aways and pubs. Would it be possible for licences to include conditions that arrangements are made for staff to travel home safely when working unsocial hours / when public transport is not an option.</p> <p>Can a survey be done of existing businesses to find out what arrangements already exist (a template for good practice).</p> <p>Desired outcome: - raise awareness of vulnerability of staff (often young, often female) when having to travel after public transport ceases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reward good practice with a star rating etc – publicity - Encourage others to provide safe transport home for staff after the end of public transport provision <p>Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.</p>
<p>NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>Safety of workers (particularly young, particularly female.)</p> <p>Grow confidence in Stockton’s night time economy.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Young workers, females feeling confident to take jobs in the night time economy. Provide good examples of responsible employers.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>May help to lower crime and reduce need for police presence.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>Don’t know.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>Making Stockton a safer place to work.</p>

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

More awareness of safety issues for people working into the early hours. More businesses providing transport / arranging taxis etc.

Signed: Cllr Eileen Johnson

Date: 18/01/23

Please return to:

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Scrutiny Section
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Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Cost of Living Response</p> <p>In response to the ongoing Cost of Living crisis SBC has introduced a number of initiatives (for example the Cost-of-Living on-line HUB / Warm Spaces / Food Aid Fund) to support the Borough's residents.</p> <p>This review would consider SBC's response to ensure we effectively support the current and emerging needs of our residents, whilst also evaluating our current approach to inform/provide a steer for ongoing and future activity.</p> <p>Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.</p>
<p>NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>The impact of inequalities is significant and impacts on quality of life, life chances and life expectancy. We have affluent areas alongside disadvantaged areas in the Borough. Nine of our 26 wards are in the 10% most deprived in the country and there is an average male life expectancy gap of 21 years between the most and least deprived areas.</p> <p>At this time, the rising costs of food, fuel and other essentials are combining with this existing disadvantage and vulnerability to put households under significant pressure. This leaves them at risk of hardship and poor wellbeing in the short-term and reduced opportunity in the long-term.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>The cost-of-living crisis continues to bite, many families are coming under financial strain and parents are having to make cutbacks in order to keep their children fed and warm. In 2022, the rising costs of fuel, food and other essentials combined with this existing disadvantage and vulnerability to put households under significant pressure.</p> <p>The North East Child Poverty Commission says almost two in five children in the North East (38 per cent) are living in poverty, rising to almost half – 47 per cent – of North East children living in a household with an under five.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>Improving opportunities for some of the most vulnerable people in our borough. Improving their motivation and self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing and their own economic wellbeing thus improving life chances.</p>

<p>Consider/review the key components of our Cost-of-Living approach adopted by the Council at a time of increasing service demands (for both advice and support).</p> <p>Exploring the possibility to develop, change and if appropriate grow the Council's services around the Cost-of-Living work to support more residents in our borough. Whilst also reviewing the impact of services being delivered (via the wider FSOT performance framework).</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>This review will build on the 'cost of school uniform' review which was undertaken in 2020 and the recommendations of the Child Poverty scrutiny review undertaken in 2022.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>This review supports the work on inequality as outlined under the people theme. A key priority is to 'Develop and implement Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework' in the Council Plan 2022/23.</p>
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversight of the issue• Review of our response• Recommendations for future action
<p>Signed: Leader of the Council Date: March 2023</p>
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section Democratic Services Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1LD</p> <p>Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158</p>

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Holidays Are Fun (HAF) Programme

HAF is a DfE funded programme that provides activities and healthy meals to children and young people during holiday periods, predominantly for those on free school meals. It is delivered in partnership through SBC and Catalyst. It involves a range of providers delivering a variety of activities.

The Scrutiny Committee could consider if HAF is being attended by those families who most need it and how far it is reaching. Other considerations would be whether we should involve schools and education providers more, what constitutes a healthy meal and is this being provided consistently. Also, if and how we could involve more families and increase attendance for those who are not eligible but are willing to pay.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

HAF is a holiday activity programme ran across the Borough. It aims to engage children and young people who are eligible for free school meals and offers activities alongside a healthy meal. There are a range of providers involved including schools. Public interest would be based on

- Eligibility criteria (FSM with some scope for parents to pay)
- Spread - are activities reaching all areas of the Borough and are they accessible
- Cost – reassurance that the money allocated by DfE being spent appropriately.
- Healthy Meals – what constitutes a healthy meal and what is being provided.
- Fairness and transparency- how is the money allocated, monitored and evaluated as good value.
- Vulnerable children and young people – is HAF reaching the right young people who are most in need. How are agencies working together to support families to access and what work is being done to offer support after the holiday period.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

The programme is aimed at those most in need, holiday times can be difficult for families especially under the current cost of living crisis. Offering a safe place to go, with fun activities alongside a healthy nutritious meal will help families during long and difficult times of the year. Therefore, it essential that the funding allocated is maximised and provides value for money. Alongside this, longer term appropriate support for families.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

The money is allocated as a grant for a specific purpose and spend is monitored through DfE. The programme should offer the opportunity to help more families at an early stage offering help and support beyond the holiday periods leading to short- and longer-term savings. Having a safe place for children to go during holiday periods helps parents who are

<p>working to reduce childcare cost, it also offers the opportunity to work with families who need support to return to work.</p>	
Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):	
No	
How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?	
<p>Supporting 'our people' to live healthier lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting the local economy using local providers to deliver.• Supporting schools to work during holiday periods, supporting their local communities offering healthy meals and activities to children and young people• Offer specific and focused provision for children and young people with special educational needs.• Supporting vulnerable groups such as, children in our care, children in need of help and support, children with additional needs and young carers.	
What would you want the outcome of the review to be?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To improve delivery of the HAF programme ensuring that the right young people attend and are offered fun and appropriate activities.• To ensure the project is value for money and provide actions to improve.• To ensure provision covers the whole borough and offer is accessible by children in rural areas• To increase provision for children with additional needs• To improve provision for young people aged 13 years and over• To develop a plan for sustainability beyond current funding• To increase engagement and attendance and develop systems to expand the opportunities to pay for activities.• To understand how agencies are working together to provide help and support for families who access HAF outside of holidays.	
Signed: Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Date: March 2023
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section Democratic Services Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1LD</p> <p>Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158</p>	

Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Narrowing Gaps in Educational Attainment

Covid and lockdown has had a disproportionate impact on educational outcomes for disadvantaged, Children in our Care (CIOC) and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) pupils.

A scrutiny review will allow us to explore and spotlight the impact of what we already do, what new initiatives exist and what could still be done to maximise impact.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Stockton has a number of schools in areas of high disadvantage. Poverty should not be a reason for poorer attainment and the people who live in these areas deserve the best for their children and young people. The public in these areas need re-assurance that this is a commitment of the council and that all services are pulling together to ensure the best possible outcomes for children who are in receipt of pupil premium funding. This funding was introduced to support work in this area. The key challenge then is to find out what strategies can be used to make a difference to the achievement of groups, such as disadvantaged pupils with low income backgrounds. This same principle needs to be applied to children on the SEND register or Children In Our Care (CIOC).

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

The educational achievement gap has a huge impact on aspirations and opportunities and can feed into a cycle of other socioeconomic trends. Educational achievement, and its relationship with socioeconomic background, is one of the enduring issues in educational research. This makes it vital that the services of the council to school join up in a coherent and purposeful way to the benefit of the wider socioeconomic context.

Improved results, better support and a wider view will help to break down the disadvantage for these families and press reset for many of these children and young people.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

A review of all of the services which feed into the support of these families and challenge to their service providers should not look so much at cuts and savings but innovative ways of working, better using the resources we have and making any efficiency savings through a renewed approach.

<p>An understanding of how the Council, together with its partners, can collectively respond to tackle the issues identified.</p>	
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>There is not a similar review going on in this area though there may be a review of the service as a whole linked to the council's innovative 'Transformation and Change Programme'.</p>	
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>The children and young people strategy (endorsed by cabinet in 2019) sets out how partners in Stockton-on-Tees will work together for children and young people and their families. It is a partnership strategy, closely aligned to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The strategy is designed to provide a framework for action which complements the plans and priorities of each partner organisation.</p> <p>This work complements and supports this over arching vision in joining up services and providing the strongest support to deliver the best possible outcomes.</p>	
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <p>An audit of what works well and what can be done better. A renewed look at how things are done and by whom. An improvement to the multi-agency approach being offered. An improvement in educational attainment for disadvantaged children and young people including CIOC and SEND pupils. A reduction in the achievement gap for vulnerable children and young people.</p>	
<p>Signed: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p>	<p>Date: March 2023</p>
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section Democratic Services Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1LD</p> <p>Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158</p>	

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Play Area Distribution, Maintenance and Physical Accessibility</p> <p>The provision of play areas is uneven across the Borough with significant variations in the play value, age and accessibility of equipment and sites. Many older play areas are in decline and there is insufficient budget to maintain all the current sites.</p> <p>The majority of new sites are established through planning obligations and consequently increase provision in areas where new development is taking place, while there are limited opportunities to establish or improve play areas in existing residential areas.</p> <p>There is a need to review whether the current combination of larger destination/neighborhood sites and smaller local sites best meets local needs. In addition, all sites are subject to challenge relating to accessibility and play value, and our approach to both should be reviewed.</p>
<p align="center">NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>Play facilities do tend to receive a great deal of public attention, social media comments (both positive and negative) can be challenging.</p> <p>Public consultations are usually well attended, and it does attract some concern about how a development is being utilised (vandalism and ASB are often cited).</p> <p>Overall having an effective portfolio of play provision is a positive step, we do need to ensure that all developments are accessible by the greatest number of people and have significant play value to ensure their importance to children’s development.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Play is essential to a young person’s development. To enable meaningful play, we do need to ensure that we maintain a portfolio of high quality assets within communities.</p> <p>Play is not only important to child development but can also act as a community cohesion tool, bringing together different age groups and demographics.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>Stockton-on-Tees currently have 36 play areas and 9 MUGA’s in the borough that we are responsible for. A life expectancy survey was undertaken by RoSPA in 2019 and following this an estimate of costs was obtained to replace any equipment with a life expectancy of less than 5 years, the figure at that time was around £750k. All play facilities are inspected either weekly or fortnightly based on the usage of the</p>

sites. Play facilities are a depreciating asset with budgets mainly set for basic maintenance, and would not cover equipment replacement or replacement of safety surfacing when necessary.

When new play areas are installed, whenever possible a nominal maintenance payment is provided however when this budget is exhausted the play equipment may need to be removed if damage occurs or items fail as the nominal payment for maintenance may not be sufficient to cover replacement equipment as the costs can significantly increase and materials may not be available. All play facilities have serviceable life expectancy however there is currently no play equipment or safety surfacing renewal budget factored in to new play schemes.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

None

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Play facilities are an essential element to allow **people to live healthy lives** to ensure activity is established at an early age therefore reducing long term health conditions.

By ensuring that play spaces are equitable and deliver a similar play value across the Borough we are helping **to implement the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework.**

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

Clear strategic guidance upon the development of new play areas and priorities and rationalisation of existing play provision.

Budgetary provision for maintenance of play areas is proportionate the number of play areas that are retained.

Signed: Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and
Community Safety

Date: March 2023

Please return to:

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Scrutiny Section

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Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Adult Carers’ Service

The Carers Service provides assessment support to those people identified as carers in the Stockton area. The Service provides a range of services to carers and hosts a number of stakeholder events to support this endeavour. The team also has the Shared Lives Service as part of its remit and although this is a new area, we are keen to develop and grow this service and would welcome the oversight of the Scrutiny Committee around all aspects of its work.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

The Carers Service works across the whole of the Borough providing advice and direct support to Carers. The community need to have assurance and confidence that the service provided is timely and effective in all aspects of its work.

The Shared Lives work is developing in Stockton and has raised interest with the local media.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

People should receive care and support in their own home for as long as possible and central to that is the work of the unpaid carers in our borough. The work of the Carers services in supporting these individual’s is crucial to this and the benefit to people and their families is immense. There is also the financial burden that would be felt by the Local Authority if carers were not supported in their role in a robust and effective manner.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

The work of the service reduces the need for people to receive care in their own homes or come into care, this not only benefits the people who use our service and their families but also helps reduce the need for formal care arrangements to be in place thus impacting on the financial spend of the Council

<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>No formal reviews at this point however the Service as part of Adult Social Care is working towards a self-assessment in preparation for the CQC inspection process</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>The key priorities from the Council plan as set out below are examples of how the work of the Carers Service supports the plans delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “engage with individuals, families, carers and communities when developing adult social care support and continue to collaborate with the NHS to ensure health and care services work effectively together• support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and offer help to people who are feeling lonely”
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <p>The Carers Service would benefit from the review providing an assurance of the work it undertakes currently. This oversight would also provide a focus on the Shared Lives service as it continues to develop.</p>
<p>Signed: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Date: March 2023</p>
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section Democratic Services Municipal Buildings Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1LD</p> <p>Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158</p>

**SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
SUGGESTED REVIEW – PRO FORMA**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Roadside Advertising

Over the last few years there has been a notable increase in the amount of unauthorised advertising material being placed on, or adjacent to the highway. This varies from fly posting on the back of road signs, to trailers specifically designed to be left on, or adjacent to the roadside, including on walls and fencing, and has led to increasing concern within the Council, and from the general public. The removal of unauthorised signing can be controversial as the removal of signs can generate adverse comments from businesses and event’s organisers. The organisers of smaller events, in particular, often feel aggrieved as the display of signs and or flyers in the locality are often the only publicity for their events.

The control of advertising on or adjacent to the highway covers many different service areas (highways, planning, enforcement etc.) and each service tackles the issue as they deem appropriate. The proposed outcome of the review would be for the Council to adopt a coordinated approach to the control of roadside advertising allowing, where appropriate and safe to do so, legitimate roadside advertising while controlling, efficiently and effectively, inappropriate roadside advertising.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Members of the public tend not to be aware of the legal position in regards to advertising signs and can be confused about the process for authorisation and therefore may not be aware they are committing an offence or causing a problem.

In certain circumstances the inappropriate siting of roadside advertising can constitute a safety hazard to pedestrians and /or a distraction to motorists.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

One of the Councils four key policy principles is creating economic prosperity and the appropriate advertising of businesses and events can assist with achieving this aim.

Promotion of local events can assist with social inclusion however inappropriate roadside advertising can also be harmful to the local street scene environment.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

The control of advertising on or adjacent to the highway covers many different service areas (highways, planning, enforcement etc.) and each service tackles the issue as they deem appropriate. This can lead to different departments tackling issues inconsistently and multi handling the same complaint. A coordinated approach should set out clear responsibilities and avoid double handling issues with any complaint being dealt with efficiently using the appropriate control mechanism.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

While individual services manage this issue on an individual basis there are no other coordinated reviews currently taking place.

Which of the Council's four policy principles does the proposed scrutiny topic support? (see page 3)

One of the Council's four key policy principles is creating a thriving economy and the appropriate advertising of businesses and events can assist with achieving this aim.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

The proposed outcome of the review would be for the Council to adopt a coordinated approach to the control of roadside advertising allowing, where appropriate and safe to do so, legitimate roadside advertising while controlling, efficiently and effectively, inappropriate roadside advertising.

Signed: Cllr Jim Beall

Date: 17 February 2023

Please return to:

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**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Supporting family placements – our role in supporting foster carers, connected carers and special guardians</p> <p>As corporate parents it is important to understand how young people are cared for and looked after if they are not living with their birth parents but can and want to remain within their wider family.</p> <p>A scrutiny review could consider how we can continue to develop and improve in this area. This could include what it means to be a foster carer or a connected carer , and how we can improve recruitment and support. Additionally, it could consider how we can increase the numbers of family members who want to be Special Guardians, including how we support those who are already looking after children.</p> <p>Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.</p>
<p align="center">NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>We currently have over 580 children in our care within Stockton on Tees. As a Local Authority we have a responsibility to ensure our children are safe, cared for and go on to enjoy successful and productive adult lives. It is important that the public understand how our children are cared for and what this means.</p> <p>Many residents of Stockton on Tees, care for young people as foster carers or Special Guardians. Informing the public of what happens in these arrangements and how they can become a foster carer or Special Guardian is important if we are to maintain quality and increase capacity within this area.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Caring for children who are no longer living with their birth parents is important. Also reducing the number of cared for young people who are living out of area or in residential placements within the borough is important for both the children and the cost to the Local Authority. Children and young people are happier and more successful when they have a stable home, and if this is with a family member the child will be happier, more resilient and successful in their adult life.</p> <p>Children and young people, in the majority of cases, should live within their own communities and attend local schools. This also helps our children to maintain and develop friendships, develop a strong identity and sense of belonging.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>Planning for children to live with foster carers or Special Guardians is significantly less expensive than placing them in high-cost residential placement. The cost of external</p>

<p>residential placements places a huge financial strain on the council budget. More importantly in many cases the expensive provisions are unable to meet the young people's identified needs.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>No</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>In its role as the corporate parent for children and young people in our care, this scrutiny will cut across several areas of the council plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People live in cohesive safe communities – topic will cover; keeping children in our care safe within their own communities?• People are supported and protected from harm – topic will cover; children in our care feeling safer and more protected when they are with a loving and supportive family?• People live healthy lives – the topic will cover – children in our care being healthy and living healthier lifestyles when supported by a Foster Carer or SGO• Improved education and skills development – the topic will cover the Virtual School and the work it does with children who are not with their birth families.
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members gain an understanding of what it means to be a connected carer, foster carer or Special Guardian and how we can improve recruitment of this vital resource• Gaining an insight in the experiences of children and young people and how, as a council, we can improve.• Gain an understanding of the lived experience of children, young people who don't live with their birth parents. Identify areas for improvement.• Gain an understanding of how various parts of the council work together to support young people in foster care and special guardianship arrangements. How this compares to other areas, what can we learn and improve on.• Gain an understanding of how healthy, safe and successful these arrangements are compared to residential and other arrangements. How can we improve?• Gain an understanding of the multi-agency approach and how each area contributes to the child or young person's life and how agencies can continue to improve the support they offer carers.• Explore the delivery and impact of new and innovative ways of working and if and how these can be used in Stockton on Tees.
<p>Signed: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People</p> <p>Date: March 2023</p>
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section TS18 1LD</p> <p>Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158</p>

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Noise Control Policy

At present, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council does not provide clear, objective noise advice/guidance to developers and a supplementary planning document to this effect does not exist. There needs to be a consistency in the approach to noise assessment and a consideration of National & International guidelines (Noise Policy Statement for England, Planning Practice Guidance - Noise, WHO documentation).

There is a cumulative effect of noise on neighbourhoods and the aim of this review is to protect residents from noisy developments and to improve the management of noise complaints.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

This review could improve community engagement in the planning process.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

As a result of this review, developers would be provided with clear written advice/guidance on this issue. This review also has the potential to protect and improve the environment and residents' health and quality of life.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

A planning noise advice policy, or similar, would improve the planning process, reduce complaints and improve community and developer engagement.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

Unknown.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

SBC Local Plan

Local Plan & National Planning Policy

1.5 All Local Plans are required to be consistent with the national policy set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the principles and objectives that are required to underpin approaches to plan-making and development management.

SD1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

1. In accordance with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), when

the Council considers development proposals it will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals for sustainable development can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

2. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise - taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or,
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Strategic Priority 6:

To promote equality and diversity whilst ensuring all of Stockton-on-Tees Borough residents live in strong, prosperous, cohesive and sustainable communities in a safe, healthy and attractive environment.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

15 other Local Authorities have already adopted the 'Planning Noise Advice Document: Sussex': <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media.121802.smx.pdf>. It is hoped that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council would also adopt/ follow this guidance.

Signed: Cllr Mick Stoker

Date: 15 February 2023

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**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Review of Council Tax Empty Property and Second Home Levy

Long term empty property premium

Currently properties which have been empty and unfurnished for 2 years or more attract a 150% council tax charge due to a 50% premium being applied. The premium was introduced in 2013 with 50% being the maximum premium permitted in regulations at that time. Regulations have since changed and Councils are now permitted to apply premiums of:

- 100% where the property has been empty for more than two years*.
- 200% where the property has been empty for between five and 10 years.
- 300% where the property has been empty for more than 10 years.

* The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, currently making its way through Parliament having completed its second reading in January includes that the premium of 100% can be applied after just one year rather than two.

Given that Local Authorities now have options to introduce alternative council tax premiums to empty and unfurnished properties depending on the length of time the property has been empty a review is required. The review will consider the impact on the Council's taxpayers, the Council's finances and the number of empty properties in the Borough.

Second home property premium

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, also includes the introduction of a premium for second home properties (properties unoccupied but substantially furnished).

Currently second home properties attract a 100% council tax charge; the Bill includes a premium of 100% thereby permitting Council's to increase the council tax charge for such properties to 200%.

With the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill due to be enacted during the 2023/2024 financial year, it is appropriate to consider the impact of introducing a council tax second home property premium alongside the long-term empty property premium review.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Council tax charges for empty and unoccupied properties impacts all home owners and landlords with properties in the Borough.

Whilst a decision to increase the empty and second home premiums will raise additional income for the Council and may result in empty properties being brought back into use

<p>sooner these benefits need to be considered alongside the additional expenditure placed upon home owners.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Properties left empty for long periods can have a negative effect on the surrounding area. Such properties may look neglected with overgrown gardens and can attract anti-social behaviour. Increasing the long term empty property premium may help to address these issues.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>Increasing the long term empty property premium will raise additional income for the council. It may also reduce the number of long term empty properties and therefore has the potential for reducing the work of the empty homes team.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, currently making its way through Parliament having completed its second reading in January includes changes to the empty property and second home premiums which should be considered during the 23/24 financial year and in good time to make any changes necessary to future council tax charges.</p> <p>Some neighbouring and other LA's have reviewed/are in the process of reviewing.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>Contributes to 'We are committed to being a Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve' within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• review the Medium Term Financial Plan, to reflect changes in Government funding arrangements and legislative changes
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise additional income for the council• Bring empty properties back into use sooner• Reduce the negative impact long term empty properties have on the Borough's communities.
<p>Signed: Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing Date: March 2023</p>
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer Scrutiny Section</p> <p>Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158</p>

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Recruitment and Retention</p> <p>Recruitment and retention of suitably qualified, experienced, and able people is essential in order to maintain and improve service delivery, achieve the Council Plan objectives and ensure the council is fit to meet future challenges. Improving service delivery requires us to recruit a workforce with the capacity to deliver. There is a perception that since the pandemic there are higher numbers of staff leaving the Council, compounded by difficulties in recruiting to some posts, particularly in specialist areas.</p> <p>Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.</p>
<p align="center">NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>The workforce provides the foundation for the efficient and effective delivery of key public services provided by the Council.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>The council is significant employer and the workforce contribute directly to the local economy. The delivery of services by the workforce is fundamental to what the council does. A failure of service delivery due to being unable to recruit and retain staff will have significant impacts across all aspects of well-being for our residents and communities.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>An efficient and effective workforce is essential to maintain council performance.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>No</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>The workforce is an essential element of delivering upon all council plan objectives.</p>
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <p>Provide some focussed recommendations around issues impacting upon recruitment and retention. Recognising that basic pay and benefits is predominately set by national drivers, consider how we can tailor a “Stockton-on-Tees” approach to improving recruitment and retention, potentially looking at:</p>

- ways of working (flexibility, hybrid);
- fairness;
- employee well-being;
- career development and progression;
- employee consultation and engagement.

Signed: Leader of the Council

Date: March 2023

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**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Community Assets Based Approach

Evidence suggest that adopting a community asset-based approach can help to better understand and meet need, address inequalities and build community capital and capacity, with the aim of improving efficiency, outcomes and satisfaction in relation to services and support.

It is proposed the scrutiny review would seek to understand the existing work across SBC and key partners, research evidence base and learning from other areas in relation to community asset-based approaches, with a view to developing an approach that can be adopted across the Council and inform our work with partners as a lead organisation for shaping place, our economy and relationship with our diverse communities. This will be in the context of the understanding we have of our local place and communities. There is some existing good practice and the opportunity to build on, to take a more systematic approach across the organisation and influence our work with partners, in line with the research evidence base.

The proposed outcome will be:

- Clear understanding of current work underway across the Council to take a community assets-based approach.
- Agreement to develop an approach to community asset-based working based on current practice, evidence base and learning from elsewhere, that can be adopted (and adapted as needed) across the Council in our work and in our work with partners. It is proposed the approach would inform strategic approach and cover implications for policy, practice, service / model design commissioning and delivery, and evaluation and ongoing impact monitoring.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
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INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

The aim is to look at how we actively work alongside our communities and consider how we can more effectively do this through considering the development of an approach that can be adapted and adopted across Council working and our work with partners.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

As set out below, developing an approach to community asset-based working will help ensure a good understanding of the views, assets and needs of our communities. The aim will be to work alongside communities to identify priorities, design our spaces, build our economy and design approaches and models of support, in the context of available resources. Evidence suggests that working with communities in this way can help to meet

<p>need, maximise resource and assets and therefore aim to support efficient and effective working and build community capital and satisfaction.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>Taking a community asset-based approach aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Understand what is important to communities to help align Council priorities with this whilst developing a mature relationship with communities that enables honest discussion about Council provision within the available resources- Develops a relationship with communities that enables the Council to work alongside communities to build on and maximise the significant resources available within communities- This should help design models of support and services (internal, partnership and commissioned) in different ways that maximise the resources across the system, reduce and address demand, address inequalities and help to build and maximise satisfaction, prosperity and wellbeing of residents- Therefore aims to improve performance and appropriate use of Council and partner services as well as e.g. the use of our town centres and areas of regeneration because they more effectively meet community needs, with greater community understanding and ownership and reduced waste
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>There is existing work in different areas of the Council to build on regarding working with our communities as well as learning from other areas and the research base in relation to community asset-based working. For example there is also regional work to build on through the regional Directors of Public Health network, links to work across the evolving Integrated Care System and ongoing work to further develop strengths-based approaches in social care. The review will fit with the work to address inequalities through our Fairer Stockton-on-Tees approach; and our work to evolve the Council Plan and the approach to strategic planning for the organisation as well as to make better use of our intelligence which includes qualitative intelligence from our communities. The work also fits with other strategic work e.g. refreshing the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and implementing the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Early Years Strategy.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>See context above. Evidence points to the need to involve and work alongside the communities we serve to understand and effectively meet the needs of our population in the context of the resources available and to help address inequalities. The aim of the Council Plan is to provide strategic direction to the work of SBC and it is important to use the assets embedded in our communities as we establish our priorities in relation to our people, our places and our economy; and how we deliver on these.</p>
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <p>Clear understanding of current work underway across the Council to take a community assets-based approach. Agreement to develop an approach to community asset-based working based on current practice, evidence base and learning from elsewhere, that can be adopted (and adapted as needed) across the Council in our work and in our work with partners. It is proposed the</p>

approach would inform strategic approach and cover implications for policy, practice, service / model design commissioning and delivery, and evaluation and ongoing impact monitoring.

Signed: Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and
Community Safety

Date: March 2023

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CRIME AND DISORDER SELECT COMMITTEE**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF TREE ASSET MANAGEMENT****1.0 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's scrutiny review of Tree Asset Management.
- 1.2 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) has a legal responsibility to inspect, maintain and manage its tree stock which is located across the Borough. There are currently many thousands of trees within parks, open spaces, woodlands and residential estates, including around 30,000 trees as part of the highway stock, for the Council to manage. During 2020-2021, over 2,000 requests for service were received – these ranged from emergency works (e.g. fallen trees or limbs / structural damage to property) through to more routine enquiries (e.g. pruning due to general nuisance factors such as shading, leaf fall, etc., which tends to be of a seasonal nature).
- 1.3 Trees can, at times, be contentious for residents who often express strong and vocal views on their presence, especially those which are in residential locations where concerns about the safety of trees, potential damage and other perceived nuisance factors are a particular issue for officers to deal with. However, as often recognised as part of the ongoing climate change debate, the wider benefits of trees cannot be underestimated and include the removal of air pollution, providing a valuable habitat for insects and birds, and acting as a natural flood defence, as well as the proven mental health benefits that a green environment brings.
- 1.4 SBC aims to operate a three-year inspection cycle where all its tree assets are checked and any routine, statutory or essential priority works are programmed – this is based upon a range of factors, primarily to ensure compliance with the Local Authority legal duty-of-care, and to ensure a high standard of tree management that delivers maximum benefits to the public in-line with best practice. Resources, though, are stretched, with a substantial growing backlog in essential and routine programmed works that have been identified through the ongoing inspection regime. An increasing proportion of reactive work is dominating the work programme (exacerbated by major storm events and the resultant emergency call-out work) and there has been an increase in customer complaints due to lack of service and long delays.
- 1.5 One of the key themes within the Council Plan is clean and green spaces, and the recent publication of the Council's Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy 2022-2032 also has implications for the future levels of tree stock, as do new tree planting schemes and land adoptions / transfers from new developments across the Borough. It is therefore important, and timely, to review the Council's existing operational arrangements and resilience levels to ensure that it is equipped to deal with both existing and planned tree assets.

- 1.6 An internally focused piece of work, the main aims of this review were firstly to ascertain the Council's legal responsibilities and its current policy for the management of public tree stock, before examining the inspection and maintenance programme, the pressures contributing to the existing backlog, and the strategy / resources in place to address this. Importantly, the Committee then considered likely / potential future demand and the impact this may have on required operational arrangements.
- 1.7 It was found that Local Authorities have a legal duty of care to ensure they have a defensible system of tree inspection and maintenance for their land and premises. This requires regular inspections (by a qualified person) of all trees and woodlands within a Council's ownership, implementing essential tree maintenance (so there is no danger or unacceptable risk to persons or property), and maintaining adequate records of surveys and inspections. A fundamental aspect behind this review, however, was the fact that the maintenance work required resulting from the three-year SBC survey / inspection cycle was under significant strain, culminating in a substantial growing backlog in essential programmed works that had been identified through the ongoing inspection regime. Unplanned work brought about by storm damage had further exacerbated pressure on the service, leading to increasing delays and frustration with the Council.
- 1.8 Several pieces of legislation are relevant to the management of tree stock covering matters such as the maintenance of trees adjacent to the highway network (Highways Act 1980), the ability of the Local Authority to make and serve Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) on private land where it is deemed necessary (Town and Country Planning Act 1990), and, more recently, obligations on Local Authorities to manage their assets in a way which will improve air and water quality, increase biodiversity, whilst targeting resource efficiency and waste (Environment Act 2021). It is also important to stress that, linked to its duty of care outlined in the previous paragraph, a Council is potentially liable for injury or damage caused by trees through claims of nuisance and / or negligence if it fails to comply with this legal duty – this may include damage or injury caused by falling trees and branches.
- 1.9 Outlined by the SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure Team, the Committee was informed about the wide-ranging benefits of trees and of adding to the existing tree canopy. Many of these were, naturally, linked to the overarching environment, though others were associated with helping peoples' mental health, providing sustainable fuel and food sources, and positively impacting an area's affluence and house prices. Indeed, trees were recognised as a significant asset within the Council's Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy 2022-2032, with around 24,000 new trees planted / intended during this and the previous winter season.
- 1.10 Whilst it was very important to understand the positive developments around strengthening the Borough's green infrastructure and associated carbon capture, the focus of this review was on the management of the Council's tree stock. Mindful that the current SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service was a very small team with responsibility for managing tens of thousands of trees within the Borough's towns, highways, parks, cemeteries, open spaces and 400 hectares of woodland, the Committee expressed deep reservations over its ability to cope with the Council's additional tree planting commitment that was already underway. The service was clearly under huge pressure already, and attempts to eat into the increasing delays to essential programmed

work are always at the mercy of external factors such as adverse weather (creating potential emergency situations) and season-specific activity, as well as resource limitations. The Committee also note the service's view that the Council's existing current tree management arrangements represented minimum service requirements.

- 1.11 Probing possible solutions to address the ongoing maintenance backlog, the Committee was interested to hear about the costs of using external organisations to assist (which were stated as being far higher than those of the Council's own service), as well as thoughts around alternative models of in-house delivery. The concept of an additional resource within the service (i.e. a second team) to undertake routine maintenance, thereby allowing the existing specialist staff to focus on more technical operations, was an intriguing proposal (even if this was on a seasonal rather than annual basis) which should be investigated further. In the meantime, and certainly in the future if existing arrangements do not change, there is an increasing need to manage public expectations about what can realistically be achieved by such a small team.
- 1.12 The Committee was keen to ascertain how the resources SBC had to manage its tree stock compared with those of its neighbours (albeit acknowledging the geographical differences of other areas). SBCs in-house staffing levels were found to be broadly in-line with all Tees Valley Local Authorities, though available equipment capacity varied across the five Councils.
- 1.13 To gain an Elected Member perspective (and thereby their Ward constituents) of local tree-related issues, the Committee undertook a survey to identify general themes regarding trees, discover the level of awareness of existing tree management policy / procedures, and experiences of dealing with the SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service. Feedback highlighted that the management of trees was a specific issue in many areas of the Borough, and that whilst Ward Councillors had received a positive service from the Council's in-house team, it was also recognised that resources were limited and impinged on the ability to respond to requests and undertake routine work.
- 1.14 Aside from the clear concerns regarding capacity to keep-up with demand, let alone address the growing backlog of required work, the Committee heard about the growing spectre of ash dieback, a disease which is likely to have substantial implications for all Local Authorities across the country. Whilst this is yet to become a significant issue within the Borough (though will in the coming years), the Committee fully support the stated need to put a management plan in place which identifies required resources for high-problem areas across Stockton-on-Tees. To this end, the Committee also advocates that an ash tree survey is undertaken to establish the potential extent of this issue.
- 1.15 On the crucial topic of finance, the Committee was pleased to learn of the various funding streams that SBC had previously tapped into to support the planting of trees, aftercare and associated activities. It is vital that potential routes to help the 'green' drive, as well as the maintenance of this burgeoning canopy, continue to be sought. The importance of not just focusing on tree planting but on the survival and future thriving of new additions to the Borough's tree stock should also be emphasised, as should the key message which was frequently raised during this review of ensuring that tree planting is done in the right places (with the correct species) in order to make future maintenance easier and minimise revenue costs.

- 1.16 The management of SBC tree stock is, ultimately, a question of resourcing and is therefore very difficult to address given the existing, and likely future, pressures on Local Authority budgets. The current financial climate makes it hard to justify recommending a spending increase anywhere within the Council, though the Committee observes that tree planting is a SBC priority – should this continue to be the case moving forward, it seems incumbent upon the Council to back this up with an appropriate resource allocation which allows its officers to undertake the required maintenance of an enlarging tree stock, something which not only strengthens the Borough's move to a cleaner and greener future, but also ensures residents and visitors are kept safe. If this cannot happen, then it is imperative that the Council makes it clear to its residents what tree management service it can realistically deliver, and that this remains in-line with its legal duty of care.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) refreshes its tree and woodland management policy and procedures, and as part of this:**
 - a) **Reaffirms its mandatory (minimum) service requirements and where work is prioritised (e.g. high-use public areas).**
 - b) **Reflects within it the realistic cycle of essential maintenance of the Borough's tree stock (and that this be updated as and when required).**
 - c) **Emphasises a key message throughout this review regarding the planting of the correct species of tree in the right places (helping to minimise future maintenance requirements and revenue costs).**
 - d) **Ensures the updated policy and procedures are published on relevant Council platforms, with an appropriate communications plan to ensure the local population can read its content and understand what future service it can expect.**
 - e) **Utilises both print (e.g. Stockton News) and electronic mediums to raise awareness of the current issues around tree management within the Borough, including responsibilities in relation to trees on private land.**
- 2) **Tree Preservation Order (TPO) planning procedures be reiterated to all SBC Ward Councillors and relayed to residents periodically via the Council's multiple communication mechanisms (emphasising the enforcement action that can be taken if processes are not followed).**
- 3) **Regular engagement continues between the SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service and other relevant Council departments (in particular the SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure Team) regarding environmental projects and tree planting maintenance.**

(continued overleaf...)

Recommendations (continued)

The Committee recommend that:

- 4) A detailed business case be produced for consideration by SBC management regarding a potential reinforcement team within Grounds Maintenance to undertake smaller scale routine maintenance, thereby allowing the existing Tree and Woodland Management Service specialist staff to focus on more technical operations.**
- 5) Corporate funding be sourced for an ash tree survey to be undertaken as soon as possible to establish the potential extent of the looming arrival of ash dieback within the Borough, along with a plan on how this will be managed (including anticipated resource requirements).**
- 6) Consideration be given to strengthening administrative support to the SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service to enhance communications between the team and Ward Councillors / residents regarding tree management enquiries / complaints (particularly around the responses to issues raised and plans / timescales to address them).**

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PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GREEN JOBS FOR THE FUTURE

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future.

1.2 The overall aim of the review was to understand what funding was available for home efficiency improvements and whether this met the needs of Stockton residents. The review also examined the work that was taking place across the Tees Valley to create a local workforce fit for the demands of a green economy of the future.

1.3 The Committee examined the following key lines of enquiry:

- What financial support is currently available nationally and locally to help with home energy efficiency? Does this support reflect the needs of Stockton households taking into account our property base?
- What has been the take-up of funding available?
- What are the requirements for registered social landlords and private landlords to ensure a minimum energy efficiency standard within their housing stock?
- What opportunities are there for collaboration with key partners and the community?
- Are relevant courses offered by local education providers? What potential other courses could be offered if there was more demand?
- What is being done to encourage young people to consider education/training and careers in new and expanding green industries?
- What loans or grants are available to support adult education and training in green jobs?
- What work is taking place with business to understand local skills shortages in green industries?

1.4 The Select Committee's key findings were as follows:

- Climate change is a global and national issue which impacts the lives of Stockton residents and will continue to do. This issue is also exacerbated by the ongoing energy crisis.
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) aims to become net zero by 2032, whilst aiming for the Borough to be net zero by 2050. The Council has developed an Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy. This review has highlighted SBC's four high level objectives to deal with climate change and achieve net zero in line with local and national targets.
- The Government has also committed to improving energy efficiency and achieving net zero. The Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS) is one example, examined as part of this review, of a government-led initiative to assist people in making their homes more energy efficient and reducing the use of fossil fuels.

- Previous energy efficiency schemes, such as 'The Warm Homes Fund', have been delivered across the Tees Valley and have provided assistance to residents in receipt of qualifying benefits and fuel poor households. Uncertainty over the level and type of future government funding for these schemes has also been raised.
- The review heard evidence that homeowners are encouraged to take a 'fabric first' approach to home energy efficiency. The aim is to ensure that a home is efficiently insulated before thinking about an upgraded boiler or heat pump.
- Currently, there are several alternatives to fossil fuel based systems which residents could use to make their homes more energy efficient. These include heat pumps (ground source and air source), solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, solar water heating systems, and biomass systems. This review has outlined the advantages of these alternatives and problems, such as cost and a general lack of understanding.
- The review suggested that the Council should concentrate on raising awareness of new home heating technologies and ensure that a communications package is implemented. The aim is to educate the Borough's residents and ensure that uptake of grants is high (regardless of who is delivering the scheme).
- As of 2020, 12.9% of households in the borough of Stockton-on Tees were classed as 'fuel poor'. This is lower than the regional average for Northern England of 14.4%. However, across the Borough, the level of fuel poor households ranges from 30.5% in Mandale and Victoria to 3.4% in Ingleby Barwick.
- This review has uncovered that it is not currently a requirement for new homes to have solar panels, and other energy efficiency/generation measures, to be fitted as standard. Members suggested that correspondence should be sent to the relevant government minister to urge that legislation is passed regarding delivering increased energy efficiency/ energy production standards on new housing through more stringent building regulations.
- Evidence of continuing investment in 'green jobs' on Teesside was presented, including developments in sectors ranging from advanced manufacturing to health and biologics. Members commented that over half of projected 'green jobs' required a bachelor's degree but only a small percentage required GCSEs. There were also concerns over the length of time that 'green technologies' have taken to develop.
- In terms of Stockton's approach to 'green jobs', the Council's Employment and Training Hub is working in partnership with external organisation to deliver workshops, provide training, and host recruitment events.

Conclusion

The consequences of climate change have an impact on each Stockton-on-Tees borough resident and will continue to do so. As part of global efforts to combat climate change, this review focussed on the improvement of home energy efficiency and the development of local employment in green industries.

The ongoing national energy and cost of living crises means that there is an increased need for residential dwellings to be more energy efficient and residents to be fully aware of funding available to make the necessary improvements or changes. Likewise, it is essential that regional investment in emerging green industries continues to provide employment opportunities to address current skills shortages.

Following this review, our recommendations centre on awareness raising of grants and alternative fossil fuel-based systems along with writing to government to urge them to improve energy efficiency standards on new housing developments. The recommendations have also captured the Council's continued commitment to deliver its Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy and 'green jobs' workshops and training.

Recommendations

1. That correspondence is sent to the relevant government minister to urge that legislation is passed regarding delivering increased energy efficiency/ energy production standards on new housing through more stringent building regulations.
2. That a communications package is implemented to raise awareness amongst residents of new home efficiency initiatives and grants.
3. That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) Employment and Training Hub, and the Business and IP Centre, continue to work with external businesses and agencies to deliver 'green jobs' workshops, training and host recruitment events aimed at all levels including entry level jobs.
4. That there is continued delivery of the four high-level objectives outlined within SBC's Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy. This includes an overall aim for the authority to be Net Zero* by 2032 and the wider borough by 2050. *Net zero means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere, by oceans and forests for instance.

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PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT) AND ADOPTION OF OPEN SPACE

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space.

1.2 The overall aim of the review was to examine the work of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) Planning Service, namely pre-application advice, the effectiveness of the Council's planning support service (resources / performance) and planning enforcement. In addition, the review focussed on the issues surrounding the maintenance and adoption of open space land on new residential developments.

1.3 The Committee examined the following key lines of enquiry:

- How effective is the current planning support function (national performance indicators, responding to demand (applications / complaints))?
- How does the service compare with other Local Authorities in terms of income generation and resources available within the team? How has this changed over time, and how has COVID-19 impacted the service?
- Is officer practice consistent and transparent in the process elements of providing pre-application advice, making planning decisions and planning enforcement (e.g. how the Council considers pre-application queries, report content, and approach to enforcement (unauthorised developments / breaches of approved applications))?
- What themes are emerging from planning complaints regarding how a decision is made (rather than the merits of the decision) – how is this being reflected in future planning consideration / support (if valid)?
- How many open space areas on new developments could feasibly be adopted by SBC or other public body – what are the barriers to this?
- How are developers being held to account regarding maintenance of such open spaces? How are fee-paying residents' concerns heard and acted upon?
- What realistic options exist to ensure open land on new developments is maintained in an appropriate way to support a positive image of the Borough? What can be learnt from approaches outside Stockton-on-Tees?

1.4 The Select Committee's key findings were as follows:

- The planning system should be viewed as an assessment, rather than a set of 'rules', based on the individual merits of each case.
- Funding for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) planning system is mainly obtained through 'major' (large scale commercial schemes) applications; however, a higher proportion of officer time is spent on householder applications.
- In the Tees Valley region, SBC receive the second highest amount of planning applications, with Darlington Borough Council being the highest. Most applications are submitted online. From 2017/18 to 2021/22, 77% of applications received by SBC were from householders. 4% of applications were for 'major'

schemes. On average, SBC receive 1350 pre-applications per year, again these are mainly from householders (53%).

- The level of planning applications fell during the first half of 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but returned to pre-COVID levels by Christmas 2020, and rose in the year 2021-2022.
- On average, SBC receive 450-500 enforcement cases a year. Cases have increased year on year between 2017-2022. Generally, there is 4-year enforcement period for operational development and 10-year period for use of land and breaches of condition. These timeframes may change within the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill.
- SBC is achieving governments set targets for speed (decision made within target or within an agreed extension of time) and quality (percentage of the total number of decisions made that are then overturned at appeal). It is not yet known what the implications of the Government's Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill will be for the service.
- SBC has a corporate complaints procedure. In general, complaints are based on disgruntlement about the outcome of an application. In the last 15 years, the Council has not been found of causing injustice by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO).
- Since 2017/18, SBC has won 96 planning appeals, which was more than double the number of cases lost (47).
- SBC has a comparative number of planning services staff to the five Tees Valley Local Authority areas. Between 2016 and 2022, the number of planning service staff has reduced from 21 to 16. As part of a planning services review in 2019, Senior Enforcement Officer and Enforcement Officer posts were deleted. Within the service, the number of Planning Officers has increased from four to six. Planning enforcement is now dealt with by Planning Officers who have always been involved in the enforcement process.
- The current SBC planning service structure is the minimum the service could operate on and there would be a risk to service delivery with fewer staff. The option to recruit a dedicated enforcement officer, if required, could be explored.
- There is a shortage of qualified Planning Officers across the North-East of England and an issue of qualified staff being recruited into the private sector or recruitment agencies. Some other local authorities are recruiting more senior planning officers and offering higher salaries to attract and retain more experienced planning officers.
- SBC provide a discretionary 'One Stop Shop' online pre-application advice service. The service's target response time is 15 working days. SBC is one of two councils in the Tees Valley, along with Redcar & Cleveland Council, who do not currently charge for their pre-application service.
- Based on figures from benchmark authorities, it is expected that the number of pre-application enquiries would reduce significantly if SBC charged for the service.

- The methods for identifying the type and size of open space required on a new development, as part of the planning application process, were explained as part of this review. The Council only have the power to inform developers on the size of open spaces and how they should be maintained. Lower maintenance options for open space areas, including grassed areas, bulbs and trees were raised. It should also be noted that the Crime and Disorder Select Committee have concurrently undertaken a Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management.
- A commuted lump sum (for the equivalent of 25 years maintenance) is required to adopt open space. Consequently, developers are hiring external management companies to maintain their open spaces. Budget and resource constraints prevent SBC from adopting more open spaces without the financial contribution and there are resource pressures with maintaining already adopted open spaces.
- It was highlighted that it would be useful for residents and Members to be able to access a list or database which would include the locations of open space across the borough and the contact details for the management companies responsible for each space.
- The review included site visits to five residential developments across the Borough to view the differences and similarities between privately maintained and SBC maintained open spaces. The visits provided Members with the opportunity to express some of their concerns (and residents' concerns) over the variances in maintenance levels.
- Responses on the effectiveness of SBC's Planning function was requested from developers and agents. Feedback was generally positive, and SBC was highly regarded within the Tees Valley region for its approach and assistance with planning applications.

Conclusion

This review has provided an opportunity to present an overview of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC's) planning service and its good performance measured against national targets as well as regionally. The merits of the planning pre-application advice service have also been outlined along with the positives and negatives of charging for pre-application advice.

Through this review, the Committee have acknowledged that, due to financial issues, the preference for developers to contract private companies to maintain open space on new developments is likely to continue. Therefore, it is necessary that there is a greater degree of transparency and accountability regarding the maintenance of open spaces and any changes to charges passed on to residents for this service.

Consequently, our recommendations focus on the need to review current planning enforcement powers and planning conditions for the maintenance of open space. It has also been recognised that the current pre-application process should be re-evaluated and options for charging for pre-application advice should be explored.

Recommendations

1. That options for introducing a charge for pre-application advice for larger developments, but not for households/individuals, are investigated.
2. That the current response time of 15 working days for pre-application enquiries is re-evaluated to determine if it should be extended.
3. That current planning enforcement powers are reviewed and the opportunity of employing an enforcement officer is explored.
4. That *Maps @Stockton* is enhanced to provide information on those responsible for the maintenance of individual open spaces across the borough.
5. That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provide guidance to town or parish councils, where approached, and continue to liaise with developers on adoption of open space.
6. That planning conditions for maintenance of open space be reviewed and options for SBC to obtain a copy of the maintenance agreement for each new residential development is investigated.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

Scrutiny Review – Care at Home	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The Committee's agreed final report was presented to Cabinet in January 2023 where all recommendations were subsequently endorsed.</p> <p>A draft Action Plan in relation to the review's recommendations was considered (and then agreed) at the Committee meeting in February 2023.</p> <p>One of the recommendations called for a joint letter from the SBC Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee to be sent to the relevant care minister and local MPs regarding the key findings of the review, reiterating the need for appropriate future support of the sector – this was drafted, agreed and emailed to the Minister of State (Department of Health and Social Care) on 20 February 2023 (hard-copy sent 21 February 2023), with copies sent to the two local MPs, one of whom had since sent the Minister of State subsequent correspondence with reference to the Committee's work.</p>
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The first update on progress of the agreed actions in relation to the review's recommendations will be considered in 2023-2024.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) – Annual Report 2021-2022: The TSAB Independent Chair presented the latest TSAB Annual Report to the Committee in January 2023. Members raised questions in relation to the high number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) applications (compared to neighbouring Councils), and repeated queries raised during the presentation of the previous year's Annual Report (2020-2021) around Adults and Children's Services joint-working, and health professionals being less likely to identify safeguarding concerns due to Primary Care access limitations.</p> <p>CQC / PAMMS Report Updates: The Committee considered the latest CQC quarterly report (Q3 2022-2023), including PAMMS assessment feedback published during this period, in February 2023.</p> <p>Public Health: Due to the annual overview meetings not taking place in February (as usually scheduled), an update from Public Health has been requested outlining the impact of COVID on local health initiatives as well as the current situation around vaccinations and Strep A. This will be circulated electronically to the Committee once received and queries will be fed back to the</p>

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

	service. Assurance has also been given the Director of Public Health Annual Report is in production and will be available for the Committee to consider once finalised.
Requests for more information	Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) – Annual Report 2021-2022: Further to discussions at the January 2023 meeting, TSAB provided follow-up information via a written submission – this was subsequently relayed to the Committee.

NHS Updates / Consultations

Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	Chronic Pain: The Committee received a presentation in February 2023 regarding the issue of chronic pain from a member of the NHS England Chronic Pain Stakeholder Group. Members were struck by the stated prevalence of this condition, and felt this was something which could, and should, be progressed further via the new Integrated Care Board / Integrated Care Partnership arrangements.
Requests for more information	None

Regional Health Committees

Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: As part of the agreed rotational arrangements, the chair and support function for the Committee is being undertaken by Darlington Borough Council during 2022-2023 (as things stand, SBC will assume this role in 2023-2024).</p> <p>The next formal meeting, and last of the current municipal year, is scheduled to take place on 17 March 2023. Agenda items include an update on NHS dental services within the Tees Valley, a Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) Quality Account presentation, a briefing on the development of Community Diagnostics Centres, and the Tees Valley Clinical Services Strategy.</p> <p>Southern Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) / Integrated Care System (ICS) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: No meetings are currently scheduled.</p> <p>North East Regional Health Committee: No meetings are currently scheduled.</p>
Requests for more information	None

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>The following progress updates have been received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting:</p> <p><u>Multi-Agency Support to Care Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Task & Finish)</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this previously completed review was considered in January 2023. It was agreed that the one outstanding action (how the SBC contracting team, and the Care Home Protection Group, gains information and feedback from clients and families) could be deemed 'fully achieved', therefore no further progress updates will be required.</p> <p>Strategies for gaining friends and family feedback continue to be explored and evaluated by the Group. Processes are continuing to be developed to ensure that this remains consistent and that the Group's profile and pathways into the Group are seamless.</p> <p><u>Care Homes for Older People</u> The fourth update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this previously completed review was considered in February 2023. Progress was highlighted around activities programmes, use of technology to support personalised care, promotion of adult social care careers, and dementia friendly accreditation.</p> <p>Whilst all outstanding actions were deemed 'fully achieved', the Committee raised concerns in relation to recommendation 6 (<i>that all care homes be required to work towards Dementia Friendly accreditation as part of the new contract arrangements</i>) and the stated staffing issues within Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) which were prohibiting the future delivery of Positive Approach to Care (PAC) training. The Council was encouraged to continue pushing the need for this training with TEWV, and a further update on developments would therefore be required later in 2023.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Homes for Older People (TBC – 2023-2024) • Hospital Discharge (Phase 2 – discharge to an individual's home) (Mar 23) • Day Opportunities for Adults (Mar 23) • Care at Home (TBC – 2023-2024)
Requests for more information	None

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

Remaining 2022-2023 Scrutiny Reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to GPs and Primary Care

Remaining 2022-2023 Meetings (all 4.00pm unless stated)
Tuesday 21 March 2023

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update March 2023

Scrutiny Review – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships	
Achieved since last meeting	The Select Committee's final report was considered by Cabinet in February and all recommendations were approved.
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The Action Plan will be presented to the Select Committee following the local elections.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>The final performance report was considered by the Select Committee in March.</p> <p>Key issues highlighted included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands on children's services were complex and increasing and there were well recognised national challenges around capacity and funding • Having received a positive focused visit in December 2021, the September 2022 focused on the "front door" was less positive and pointed to a number of areas for improvement. Building blocks for an effective response and key actions already implemented were outlined • Work was underway for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion (SENDI) Inspection which would take place in the next three years • The Help and Support offer continued to evolve in line with relationship-based practice model • There continued to be a significant demand pressure across children's social care services. Priorities for the year ahead included implementing the actions from the Focused Visit and the current visit and implementing the recruitment and retention plan • There were extremely good relationships with schools and Stockton schools performed well overall. Priorities would include narrowing the gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds • A lot of work had been carried out to ensure sufficiency of school places and there were high rates of children being allocated their first choice of school • The Schools Capital Programme had implemented significant investment at Stockton schools • Progress against the SEND strategy was being monitored through the multi-agency SEND Strategic Group which would evolve into the Local Inclusion Partnership

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair’s Update March 2023

Problems or concerns	None
Requests for more information	None

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>The March meeting received a presentation from the Economic Development Team on work around employment, education and skills with schools, colleges and universities. The update has been requested as a recommendation of the Place Select Committee review of Business Support and Engagement.</p> <p>Future monitoring items to be scheduled after the local Elections are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Plan – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships • Further Progress Update – Care Leavers EET • Further Progress Update - Initial Progress Update – Child Poverty

Remaining 2022-2023 Scrutiny Reviews
None

Remaining 2022-2023 Meetings (all 5.00pm unless stated)
None

Crime and Disorder Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

Scrutiny Review – Tree Asset Management	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>Following an informal 'summary of evidence' session in January 2023 where the Committee subsequently formulated a number of draft recommendations, the draft final report was considered (and then agreed) at the Committee meeting in February 2023.</p> <p>The Committee's final report was presented to Cabinet later in February 2023 where the recommendations were endorsed (note: an executive summary of the Committee's final report appears elsewhere on this agenda).</p> <p>A draft Action Plan in relation to the review's recommendations was presented to the Committee in March 2023 – this was subsequently approved.</p>
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The first update on progress of the agreed actions in relation to the review's recommendations will be considered in 2023-2024.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>The following progress updates were received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting:</p> <p><u>Fraud Awareness (Personal)</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this previously completed review was considered in February 2023. It was agreed that the one outstanding action (supporting the provision of digital projects enabling older people to learn about devices / how to use the internet) could be deemed 'fully achieved', therefore no further progress updates will be required.</p> <p><u>Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish)</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this previously completed review was considered in March 2023. It was agreed that the one outstanding action (future communications protocol / agreement between Cleveland Police and SBC Ward Councillors) could be deemed 'fully achieved', therefore no further progress updates will be required.</p> <p>It was highlighted that engagement and communication with a range of stakeholders has been undertaken as a result of the work done in this Borough by Cleveland Police. So far this year, Stockton Neighbourhood Policing Team have recorded the highest level of face-to-face engagement with the public across the entire force area by a significant margin. Furthermore, other engagement activity has also continued.</p>

Crime and Disorder Select Committee Chair’s Update – March 2023

	<p><u>Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this previously completed review was considered in March 2023. It was agreed that the one outstanding action (increased dedicated and visible multiagency presence within the Borough’s town centres to support local businesses and reassure residents / visitors in identifying and responding to ASB) could be deemed ‘fully achieved’, therefore no further progress updates will be required.</p> <p>The additional 12 Civic Enforcement Officers have now been fully embedded within the town centre areas to supplement the wider team already providing a service to businesses and the visiting public. The team are working alongside multi-agency partners, including Cleveland Police, with a problem-solving approach having been adopted and working well. Leading up to the implementation of a PSPO in Stockton Town Centre and Norton Village in April, additional joint working with partners such as CGL and our own Housing Services is also fully in place.</p> <p><u>Bonfires on Public Land</u> The first update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this previously completed review was considered in March 2023. Good progress made across all recommendations, including the promotion of fire safety in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade, a new approach to partnership-working (with a clear strategy to deal with ASB hotspots, fire safety and reporting routes for the bonfire – demonstrated through the Operation Bonfire approach) implemented in 2022 which will be further developed throughout the year, and continued work to identify and accurately track bonfire hotspots. One action is yet to be fully achieved, therefore a further update will be required later in 2023.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly-Grazed Horses (TBC – 2023-2024) • Bonfires on Public Land (TBC – 2023-2024) • Tree Asset Management (TBC – 2023-2024)
Requests for more information	None

Remaining 2022-2023 Scrutiny Reviews
None

Remaining 2022-2023 Meetings (all 4.30pm unless stated)
None

People Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

Scrutiny Review – Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future	
Achieved since last meeting	The draft final report was presented to the Committee in January and the final report was presented to Cabinet in February.
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The action plan will be presented to the Committee in March 2023.
On track – yes/no	Yes.

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	No update since the last meeting.
Requests for more information	None.

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>The following progress updates were received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting:</p> <p><u>Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)</u> The first update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this review was presented in January 2023. All five actions were fully achieved. No further updates are required.</p> <p><u>Disability Inclusive Borough</u> The first update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this review was presented in January 2023. There were thirteen outstanding actions - eight were fully achieved and five were on track. A further update will be presented to the Committee in September/October 2023.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tees Credit Union – March 2023
Requests for more information	None.

Remaining 2022-2023 Scrutiny Reviews
None.

Remaining 2022-2023 Meetings (all 1.30pm unless stated)
20 March 2023 – 1:30pm

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Place Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2023

Scrutiny Review – Planning (Development Management) & Adoption of Open Space	
Achieved since last meeting	The draft final report was presented to the Committee in January and the final report was presented to Cabinet in February.
Problems or concerns	None.
Planned next month	The action plan will be presented to the Committee in March 2023.
On track – yes / no	Yes.

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>The following progress updates were received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting:</p> <p><u>Business Support and Engagement</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this review was presented in January 2023. All three outstanding actions were fully achieved. No further updates are required.</p> <p><u>Parking on Grass Verges (T&F)</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this review was presented in February 2023. The one outstanding action was fully achieved. No further updates are required.</p> <p><u>Highways Asset Management (inc. Potholes and Flooding)</u> The second update on the agreed Action Plan in relation to this review was presented in February 2023. There were seven outstanding actions – six were fully achieved, one had slipped. It was agreed that a further update would be presented in September/October 2023.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents Parking Zones (March 23)
Requests for more information	None

Crustacean Deaths Collaborative Working Group	
<p>Since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Collaborative Working Group have met twice (3 February and 3 March). Evidence has been received from representatives of the North East Fishing Collective and an academic in Marine Biology from Newcastle University. A further three meetings are planned for 31 March, 28 April and 9 June. Due to the Chair of the Place Select Committee stepping down, a new Member representative from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will have to be selected</p>	

**Place Select Committee
Chair’s Update – March 2023**

following the May 2023 elections.

Remaining 2022-2023 Scrutiny Reviews
None

Remaining 2022-2023 Meetings (all 2.00pm unless stated)
Monday 27 March 2023

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

28 MARCH 2023

REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SBC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – END-OF-TERM REPORT (2019-2023)

SUMMARY

The report asks Executive Scrutiny Committee to consider the SBC Overview and Scrutiny - End-of-Term Report for 2019-2023.

RECOMMENDATION

That the SBC Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report (2019-2023) be presented to Cabinet and Council.

WORK PROGRAMME 2019-2023

1. The attached report provides a summary of the work carried out by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) overview and scrutiny function over the last four years.
2. The report provides highlights of all work undertaken across the Council's scrutiny committees as well as joint arrangements on a wider footprint. The four principles of effective public scrutiny are again acknowledged.
3. The End-of-Term Report will be presented to Cabinet and Council. This is in line with the Council's constitution and Statutory Guidance.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4. The work programme is resourced within existing budgets.

RISK ASSESSMENT

5. The scrutiny programme meets legislative requirements and is an important internal mechanism to ensure the safety and quality of key services. The selection of appropriate topics for review seeks to support service improvement.

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Background Papers: None
Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not Ward Specific
Property Implications: None

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Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview and Scrutiny

End-of-Term Report
2019-2023

Executive Scrutiny Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

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Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to present this end-of-term report which provides details of the work undertaken by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny function over the last four years.

The 2019-2023 Council term began with a host of new Members taking their place on our scrutiny committees alongside many Councillors who had previously served in such a capacity. This mix of fresh perspectives combined with experience has again proved useful as we have sought to examine another vast range of topics and, ultimately, contribute to making services within the Borough as good as they can be. It was especially good to see the cross-party working and co-operation of all scrutiny members to work together to bring about positive change.

Of course, it goes without saying that the most significant development since the local elections in 2019 was the emergence of COVID-19, the impact of which has been, and continues to be, enormous. Organisations were required to quickly switch priorities, business became far from 'as usual', and ways of working had to be adapted to follow ever-changing national guidance. Against this extremely challenging backdrop, the need to maintain an oversight on local services, as well as understand, and indeed sometimes question, new practices were crucial in continuing to serve the people of the Borough in a safe and timely manner. The use of Microsoft Teams and remote meetings was also crucial in keeping the scrutiny programme on track, and thanks must go to Xentrall Shared Services and their ICT personnel for the swift roll-out and training programmes which enabled a seamless transition.

As detailed within this report, you will see that the Council's Select Committees have again covered a multitude of topics during the 2019-2023 term, many of them involving very challenging and complex issues for which there are rarely straightforward answers. We remain grateful to all those who contributed to the numerous in-depth reviews, whether they be Elected Members or officers of the Council, or representatives of external partners who operate within the Borough. We are lucky to have strong relationships with a plethora of organisations across Stockton-on-Tees and beyond, and are grateful for their understanding of the important role scrutiny has in maintaining and improving good quality local services.

These last four years have witnessed a very turbulent period in the country's history, and we close this latest Council term conscious of some serious issues which require continued focus, not least challenges involving ongoing inflationary pressures, energy costs, climate concerns, and difficulties for public services in terms of recruitment and retention. As we thank all Committee Members (working diligently in addition to their other elected duties) and officers supporting the scrutiny function, we also wish those re-elected and newly elected Councillors well in their future scrutineer roles for 2023 and beyond. Being a 'critical friend' to the Council and its various partners will continue to be an important factor in ensuring we offer the local population services which they need and deserve.



Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley
Chair
Executive Scrutiny Committee



Cllr Maurice Perry
Vice-Chair
Executive Scrutiny Committee

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

Scrutiny helps to ensure that local people receive high quality services. Facilitated through Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's scrutiny committee structure, it involves Councillors working with local people, the community, Council services and other organisations. The Council's Select Committees meet on a regular basis and also gather information through site visits and a range of engagement activities.

The scrutiny work programme for 2019-2023 has again comprised a range of in-depth reviews, including strategic elements linked to corporate priorities, as well as topical issues of public concern.

Recognising the increasing pressure on the Council's finances, it is imperative that in-depth scrutiny reviews promote the Council's policy priorities and, where possible, seek to identify efficiencies and reduce demand for services. This remains an embedded part of the Select Committees' work.

Members have continued to maintain a focus on the quality and safety of local services, particularly in relation to adult social care, services for children and young people, and NHS provision accessed by local residents.

This balanced programme of work has met the four principles of effective public scrutiny as set out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS), a social purpose consultancy and national centre of expertise whose purpose is to help organisations achieve their outcomes through improved governance and scrutiny, both in policy and in practice. These state that good scrutiny work:

- Provides constructive 'critical friend' challenge
- Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public
- Drives improvement in public services
- Is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role

'The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding an authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.'

Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. Conversely, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership, and service failure.'

taken from the Ministerial foreword of 'Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils and combined authorities' by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published in 2019

Four Principles of Effective Scrutiny

This report describes some of the highlights of our work reflecting the four principles of effective public scrutiny (full details on each year's work programme can be found at Appendix 1-4).

Provides constructive 'critical friend' challenge

The importance of Select Committees constructively challenging executive policy-makers and decision-makers is crucial in holding organisations and individuals to account, which can ultimately play a significant role in service development and improvement. Scrutiny work over the last four years has enabled Committee Members to consider evidence from both internal Council and external sources, discussing and questioning numerous difficult, sometimes sensitive, issues across a diverse range of topics.

Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public

Ensuring that the voice of the public is sought, and indeed heard, is a key function of the scrutiny process, and reviews over the last four years have significantly benefitted from such consultation. Getting the perspectives of local residents and organisations has enabled Select Committees to gain real insight into how people feel about a specific topic (as well as related issues), how it impacts them in their community, and what ideas can be pursued to improve a situation.

An important feature of scrutiny work is the gathering of a range of views that allows Select Committees to fully understand a particular problem or concern. This is achieved by engaging with the public, be they residents, businesses, or external partners of the Council, and can involve a variety of methods such as surveys, Committee visits to sites across the Borough (and beyond), and by using social media platforms.

Drives improvement in public services

The driving force behind effective scrutiny work is the desire to ensure that local services are good or better. All work is conducted on the basis of being a 'critical friend' in order to secure continual improvements in services to residents, whether these are delivered directly by the Council, in partnership with other local organisations, or solely by external bodies themselves.

Is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role

The Council's Executive Scrutiny Committee co-ordinates the overall scrutiny work programme at Stockton-on-Tees. Topics for the in-depth review programme are sought from all Members and officers. Following a prioritisation process that considers all suggestions, the Committee agrees the in-depth topic review programme on an annual basis.

This Committee also has oversight of both performance on the Council Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and receives six-monthly updates on both. Executive summaries for all completed scrutiny review final reports are considered for information and shared learning.

SBC Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Overview and scrutiny at Stockton-on-Tees is organised in the following way, with an Executive Scrutiny Committee that agrees the overall work programme, and five themed Select Committees:

EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

 Chair Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley	 Vice-Chair Cllr Maurice Perry
--	--

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH	CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE	CRIME & DISORDER	PEOPLE	PLACE
 Chair Cllr Evaline Cunningham	 Chair Cllr Carol Clark	 Chair Cllr Pauline Beall	 Chair Cllr Marilyn Surtees	 Chair Cllr Chris Barlow
 Vice-Chair Cllr Clare Gamble	 Vice-Chair Cllr Barbara Inman	 Vice-Chair Cllr Paul Weston	 Vice-Chair Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell	 Vice-Chair Cllr Mohammed Javed

The Executive Scrutiny Committee has 18 Members, and each Select Committee comprises nine Councillors – all are politically-balanced.





Care Homes for Older People

2019-2020

(click [here](#) for full report)

The overall aim of the review was to seek to understand the reasons why care homes in Stockton-on-Tees were not achieving the same level of Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings as the Tees and national average, and to identify what activities could take place by the Care Homes, the Local Authority and wider stakeholders to improve CQC ratings. The SBC Integrated Strategy Team and the SBC Procurement Team were planning activity with local care homes to improve quality of provision, and the involvement of the Select Committee would support this process.

Several factors impacting upon CQC inspection outcomes were found, including poor care planning, lack of personalised care, and poor records management. Most significantly, however, recruitment and retention issues remained key challenges across the sector, with a number of local providers experiencing high turnover of management and staff. The Council was actively working to drive-up standards and performance, and the Committee commended its quality assurance work and the introduction of the Well-Led Programme which had contributed to improved CQC ratings over the last 12 months.

	Outstanding The service is performing exceptionally well.
	Good The service is performing well and meeting our expectations.
	Requires improvement The service isn't performing as well as it should and we have told the service how it must improve.
	Inadequate The service is performing badly and we've taken action against the person or organisation that runs it.

Nine recommendations were made which reflected the importance of strong leadership and management, promoted personalised care and the benefits of technology (particularly around records and medicines management), and sought to ensure appropriate staffing levels were maintained. Improving the perception of a career in adult social care was a further proposal, as was the need for the facilitation of effective dialogue between SBC and the regulator. [Reported to Cabinet: February 2020](#)

Impact...

- Contributed to continued improvement in local care home CQC ratings.
- Supported continued, and widened, access to the Council's successful Well-Led Programme.
- Encouraged the development of varied activities programmes within and outside care homes.
- Stockton Digital Care Homes Group established to implement digital connectivity solutions, and excellent uptake by providers for the Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT).
- Number of care homes utilising National Early Warning Score (NEWS) observations has increased significantly, which has helped staff identify a deteriorating person.
- Called for the Council to promote and improve the local standing of careers in adult social care – six-month pilot focusing on recruitment and retention in the care sector subsequently undertaken.
- Improved relationship between SBC and the CQC regarding intelligence / data-sharing.
- Strengthened reporting of CQC and PAMMS inspection results to Committee.

(click [here](#) for full report)

In an extension to the originally intended Hospital Discharge review (focusing on discharge from hospital to an individual’s own home), this first phase briefly examined the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic on hospital discharge to care homes, an issue which gained national attention following the UK Government’s response to a surge of hospital admissions in March 2020. The review focused on the national guidance, the process around hospital discharge to care homes, and any potential learning ahead of an anticipated second COVID-19 surge.

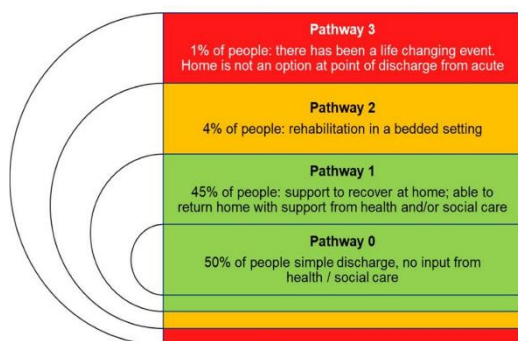


Figure 1: Discharge to Assess model

Some of the Borough’s care homes expressed unease at being pressured into accepting patients without knowing if they were infected, as well as the, at times, unclear nature of discharge arrangements. Already established relationships between local health and care providers, however, were further enhanced via the onset of regular multi-agency meetings from March 2020, and the support provided by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust was commended, in particular the work of the Infection Prevention and Control team (whose guidance and training was frequently heralded by care homes as part of this review) and the Community Matrons.

Reassuringly, local services in both the health and social care sectors indicated that they felt better-prepared ahead of a second COVID-19 surge following experiences from the first phase, though controlling numbers requiring hospital admission and, in turn, discharge to care homes remained critical. The Committee was mindful, though, that the actions of national Government, and the compliance of the general population to any local restrictions put in place, were outside the control of local health and social care providers, who were ultimately left to manage what remained an unpredictable and fast-changing public health emergency. [Reported to Cabinet: November 2020](#)

Impact...

- Urged the continued regular engagement between local NHS Trusts, SBC and care providers regarding escalation-planning and how this would be managed.
- Enabled local care homes to raise issues and recommended (and subsequently received) responses from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust regarding communication concerns (which were then fully addressed by the Trust and led to strengthened links).
- Supported regular testing of care home staff and residents, and a quicker turnaround in the notification of test results which became available to providers within 24-48 hours.

(click [here](#) for full report)

The second phase of the Hospital Discharge review focused on the discharge of individuals from hospital back to their own home (not care homes). The Committee’s main aims were to examine the discharge process from local hospitals who provide treatment for the Borough’s adult residents (including the wider communication with relevant partner organisations around hospital discharge), and to ascertain the key issues around discharge from both an NHS Trust and patient perspective to ensure a safe and sustained return home following hospital input. A further element was to explore how carers were identified when needing hospital treatment and the measures required for ensuring the people they care for were supported during their stay in hospital (and potentially for a time following their discharge). Reflecting on the information gathered, the Committee would then seek to determine if any improvements could be made to existing policies and procedures.

Following detailed contributions from a range of local health and care providers, the Committee fully supported the emphasis on getting individuals back to their usual residence at the earliest opportunity (once it was clinically safe to do so) via the *Discharge to Assess* model and *Home First* initiative. Evidence of well-established local NHS Trust and social care co-working (e.g. Integrated Discharge Team, Integrated Single Point of Access, involvement in discharge planning) was once again widely welcomed, as was the planning of discharge from the point of admission (and the stated involvement of the patient and their identified family / carers in these discussions). Enhancing processes around the identification of, and engagement with, young carers and providing clarity around post-discharge follow-up and / or signposting to other routes of support were areas for development. [Reported to Cabinet: July 2021](#)



Impact...

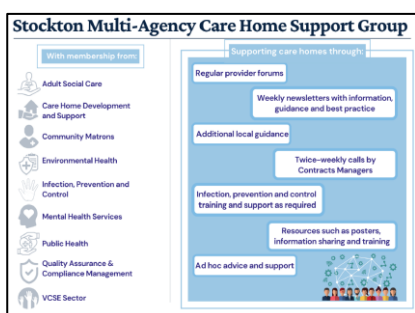
- Local NHS Trust discharge policies reviewed / updated to reflect the Committee's findings.
- Greater focus on identifying carers (of all ages) and raising awareness of / working with carer support services (i.e. Eastern Ravens for young carers).
- Highlighted the successful NTHFT *Home But Not Alone* pilot and urged relevant partners to ensure plans for the continuation of the Five Lamps *Home from Hospital* initiative were in place beyond mid-2022 when funding was due to expire (this was subsequently extended).

Multi-Agency Support to Care Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic (T&F) [\(click here for full report\)](#)

2021-2022

This task and finish review sought to consider and understand the interplay between the local health and care sector since the emergence of COVID-19, analyse relevant data and intelligence in relation to local care home providers as part of assessing the impact of support provided by key stakeholders, and determine if any improvements could be made to current policies and practice. Care home-related updates provided to the Committee in the previous 18 months, as well as the findings and subsequent actions undertaken regarding two scrutiny reviews the Committee had completed involving care homes, namely *Care Homes for Older People* (pre-COVID) and *Hospital Discharge (Phase 1) (discharge to care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic)*, were also factored in.

Local data demonstrated that, despite widespread concerns aired in the national media regarding individuals being discharged from hospitals to care homes in the early stages of the pandemic without having a COVID-19 test, almost all COVID-19 cases within the Borough's care homes could not be attributed to hospital discharge. Indeed, no evidence was found of any correlation between the first discharge to a care home from a hospital setting and any COVID-19 infection of residents (average time from first discharge to first infection was 49 days).



Strong local partnership-working was again evident, including the support provided via several collaborative groups initiated in response to COVID-19 (not just within the Borough but also regionally). Ensuring such initiatives involved input from care home residents' families / carers was reinforced by the Committee, which also expressed concern regarding the approach of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) during this time and the sense of a shortfall in oversight from the regulator. [Reported to Cabinet: November 2021](#)

Impact...

- Stressed the importance of ensuring the voice of residents and their families / carers is clearly articulated (whether through direct representation or via another appropriate mechanism) in any current and future multi-agency professional group that is convened to support care homes.
- Continued efforts to reach-out to those staff who remained reluctant to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.
- Recommended continuation of the Care Home Protection Group (now known as the Social Care Protection Operational Group) was subsequently realised, with a refreshed Terms of Reference to broaden its scope, and a focus on how best to gain direct feedback from residents and families.

Day Opportunities for Adults

2021-2022 / 2022-2023

(click [here](#) for full report)

The main aims for this review were threefold. Firstly, it sought to understand the current model used by SBC to deliver day opportunities, including their purpose, accessibility and promotion. Secondly, it wanted to ascertain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which, in light of the development of new remote approaches to support the wellbeing of individuals, had prompted an understandable reflection on what and how day opportunities are offered in the Borough. Finally, the Committee was keen on learning about alternative methods of delivery from a community-based perspective which could potentially herald a move away from traditional building-based 'service-driven' provision.

People using these services are generally some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents and very often have families and carers whose own wellbeing is directly impacted. Enabling a wider range of community-based day opportunities that are meaningful to individuals was fully supported by the Committee, though there was also much evidence of the satisfaction of, and indeed reliance on, existing building-based provision from people who access services and their families / carers.

Several recommendations were made, including the creation of co-production groups that can support the future development of day opportunities, stronger links between SBC Adults and Health and SBC Children's Services directorates to identify and support opportunities that are most meaningful to younger people (as part of transitioning), and follow-up work with Catalyst regarding the views of the wider VCSE sector around future day opportunities involvement. A new provider peer group to share good practice / resources (inc. volunteering opportunities as a gateway to employment) was also proposed. [Reported to Cabinet: May 2022](#)

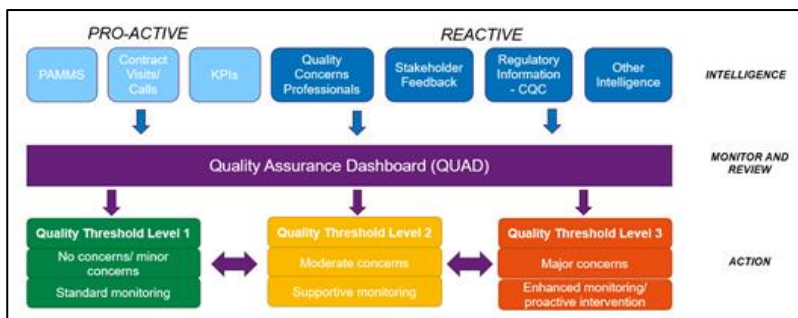


Virtual Site Visit: Allensway (Feb 22)

Impact...

- Specifications for future day opportunity contracts have been updated to include a requirement that providers have measures in place to enable people accessing services to establish involvement mechanisms.
- Regular meetings have taken place between Catalyst and SBC to collaborate on information-sharing and establish stronger relationships between day opportunity providers and the VCSE sector.

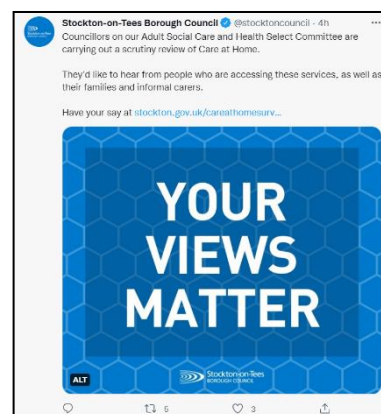
This scrutiny topic gave the Committee the opportunity to understand the Care at Home system (regulations, promotion of, access to, funding / costs to the individual (inc. use of direct payments), Council involvement) and how the Council contracts for Care at Home. Assessing the existing quality of provision of the Council’s contracted providers was another key feature, as was ascertaining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee then sought to establish future priorities for this type of service to ensure continued good-quality provision which was available in the right place at the right time.



The Committee learnt about the refreshed contracting approach following reflections upon previous arrangements which highlighted challenges around performance levels and staff travel time. The Council’s management of contracts through a variety of both proactive and reactive intelligence-gathering routes appeared robust, and the lack

of a significant waiting list (around 10 as of November 2022) suggested that the local market was being catered for at present, though with a level of fragility that had developed since the beginning of this year. This was principally down to staff recruitment and retention issues and the significant escalation in costs during 2022.

As well as provider engagement, the Committee was keen to seek the views of those accessing services (and their families / informal carers). Themes to emerge included issues around communication (lack of clarity regarding visit times and changes to visits (times and staff attending); problems liaising with offices), duration of visits (not long enough), and some uncertainty on how to raise a complaint / concern – however, comments about the actual care received were generally positive. In conclusion, the Committee called for authorities to fully support the Care at Home sector (thereby boosting its profile and also helping alleviate pressures on other already stretched parts of the health and care system) or face the possible consequences of a dwindling number of providers operating in the market. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2023](#)



Impact...

- Recommendations made to further boost the profile of the Care at Home sector and encourage joint-working between the Council and providers around recruitment and retention. Improving communications between provider and service-user regarding any changes to planned visits was another focus, as was the facilitation of platforms for all providers to share ideas / learning / concerns, and closer links between the sector and local NHS Trusts.
- Joint letter from the Committee Chair and SBC Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care sent to the Minister of State in the Department of Health and Social Care regarding the key findings of the review and reiterating the need for appropriate future support of the sector.
- Action Plan in relation to the review’s recommendations approved in February 2023 – monitoring of progress to follow in 2023-2024 (and beyond if required).

Further Committee Scrutiny

As well as conducting in-depth reviews, the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee considers a range of other health and care-related activity which takes place within the Borough. Adopting a collaborative approach with internal services and the Council's external partners, key items include the presentation of annual reports, reflections on the findings of the independent regulator of health and social care in England, and holding providers to account.

One of the most important roles of the Committee is to consider the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust's (NTHFT) Quality Account. Members receive an annual presentation outlining performance against the Trust's quality priorities and the emerging priorities for the year ahead. The Committee then prepares a statement of assurance for inclusion in the Trust's final published version.

A host of other Annual Reports are presented to the Committee during the year which allows Members to identify areas of good practice and challenge / seek assurance for any elements which are a cause for concern. These are provided by Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), whose representatives have attended Committee to highlight the key aspects of their national 'State of Care' report, as well as comment on the local health and care environment.

Another regular feature of the Committee's work is to consider quarterly CQC reports which give an overview of the regulator's published findings following inspections of local health and care providers. Significantly impacted by the emergence of COVID-19 in early-2020, the Committee has repeatedly expressed concern to the CQC about its level of visibility, the detail of its reports, and the length of time between inspections. Issues have also been raised about the new inspection regime which the CQC has adopted.

In terms of the CQC quarterly report, as the number of published inspection outcomes has reduced since 2020, the Committee has increasingly leant on the Council's PAMMS reports which are now included within these quarterly deliberations. PAMMS (Provider Assessment and Market Management Solutions) is an online assessment tool developed in collaboration with Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) East and regional Local Authorities., and is designed to assist in assessing the quality of care delivered by providers. PAMMS assessments consist of a series of questions over a number of domains and quality standards that forms a risk-based scoring system to ensure equality of approach.

In discharging its duty to hold providers to account, the Committee has requested responses from key local organisations which had seen concerns raised by the regulator in relation to their services. Representatives of Butterwick Limited attended Committee in February 2022 to address long-standing CQC concerns at both Butterwick Hospice Stockton (adults) and Butterwick House (children / young people), and senior staff from NTHFT gave a presentation in November 2022 in response to issues raised in relation to the Trust's maternity services. Much time has also been given to the ongoing challenges being experienced by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV), concerns which resulted in the Committee sending a letter to the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care calling for a public inquiry into the continued failings and lack of notable improvement of the Trust.

**CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) INSPECTION OUTCOMES
&
STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL (SBC)
PROVIDER ASSESSMENT AND MARKET MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
(PAMMS) ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

QUARTER 3 2022-2023

The CQC is the national inspectorate for registered health and adult care services. Inspection reports are regularly produced, and these are published on a weekly basis.

The CQC assesses and rates services as being 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires Improvement', or 'Inadequate'. Where providers are found to be in need of improvement or inadequate, the CQC make recommendations for improvement and / or enforcement action. Specific actions taken in each case can be found in the relevant inspection report.

Where inspections are relevant to the Borough, a summary of the outcome is circulated to all Members each month. An update from Adult Services is included which summarises the position in relation to service provision and any actions taken at that time.

Quarterly Summary of Published Reports

This update includes inspection reports published between October and December 2022 (inclusive). These are included at [Appendix 1](#) and contain the results of all inspections of services based in the Borough (irrespective of whether they are commissioned by the Council).

During this quarter, 16 inspection results were published. Please note: there is a time lag between dates of the inspection and the publication of the report. In addition, where concerns are identified by the CQC, re-inspections may take place soon after the initial report is published. When the outcomes are made available within the same quarter, the result of the most recent report is included in this update.

The main outcomes from the reports are as follows:

- 11 Adult Care services were reported on (6 rated 'Good'; 4 rated 'Requires Improvement'; 1 rated 'Inadequate')
- 1 Primary Medical Care service was reported on (1 rated 'Good')
- 4 Hospital / Other Health Care services were reported on (2 rated 'Outstanding'; 1 rated 'Good'; 1 rated 'Requires Improvement')

A summary of each report and actions taken (correct at the time the CQC inspection report was published) is outlined below. Links to the full version of the reports, and previous ratings where applicable, are also included.

PAMMS Assessment Reports

SBC are utilising the Provider Assessment and Market Management Solutions (PAMMS) in the quality assurance process. PAMMS is an online assessment tool developed in collaboration with Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) East and regional Local Authorities. It is designed to assist in assessing the quality of care delivered by providers. The PAMMS assessment consists of

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Domestic Abuse and its Impact on Children (Task & Finish)
 (click [here](#) for full report)

2019-2020

This review was undertaken by a small Task and Finish Group of Committee Members. The overall aim of the review was to better understand the impact of domestic abuse on children and the effectiveness of interventions to inform the Domestic Abuse Strategy and future commissioning decisions.

Evidence was received from Council employees, representatives from Harbour and from the Police. During the course of the review Members were presented with a range of information which depicted the service demand was increasing and the rise in domestic abuse incident reports. Multi-agency working was highlighted as a important tool and early contact could be invaluable.

The review culminated in a number of recommendations aimed at providing training led by the Domestic Abuse Steering Group, establishing clear communication pathways and collaboration opportunities. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2020](#)

Impact...

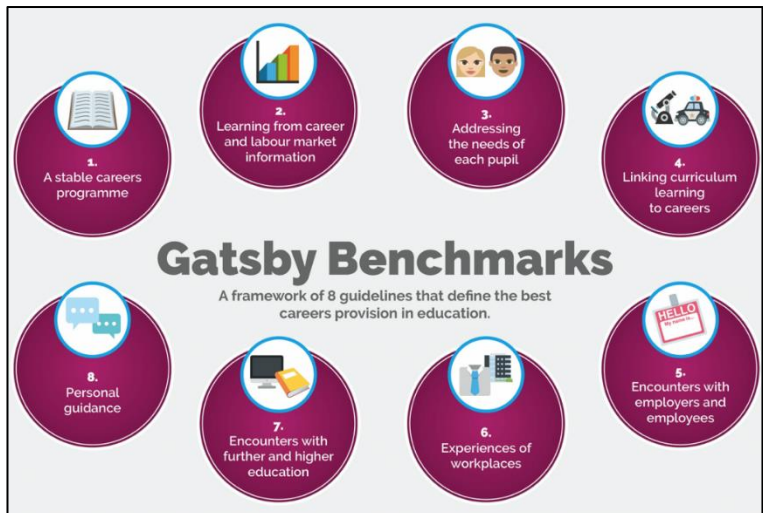
- Families have benefited from the provision of the ALTER programme which has been delivered by Harbour’s Link Worker in Children’s Social Care. Had this provision not been available, there is a risk that the perpetrators of abuse who engaged in the ALTER programme may not have any intervention at all.
- An approach to domestic abuse training will be embedded within the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Strategy 2023-2028.
- The Domestic Abuse Steering Group now receives regular feedback from Cleveland Police and Education Leads on the effectiveness of Operation Encompass and this has been in place from February 2020.
- Opportunities for collaboration and joint working have been considered across the Tees / Tees Valley footprint. Collaboration has brought greater insight and understanding of those impacted by domestic abuse and has directly contributed to an increase in treatment pathways for perpetrators.

Careers Provision
 (click [here](#) for full report)

2019-2020

The overall aim of the review was to develop a clear and joined-up approach across Stockton which supports schools in their role, is clear on the role of all partners including the Council, and how the system can work more effectively for young people.

The Select Committee recognised that a meaningful and positive careers programme improves self-esteem, promotes higher attainment, reduces drop-out rates from schools and colleges and has significant economic benefits. The Gatsby Benchmarks provided the framework for best practice



in career guidance and our recommendations sought to encourage all of our schools and colleges to aspire to meeting these standards. This will, in turn, enable our children and young people to make informed choices and better understand the opportunities that are open to them as they transition from education into employment. [Reported to Cabinet: March 2020](#)

Impact...

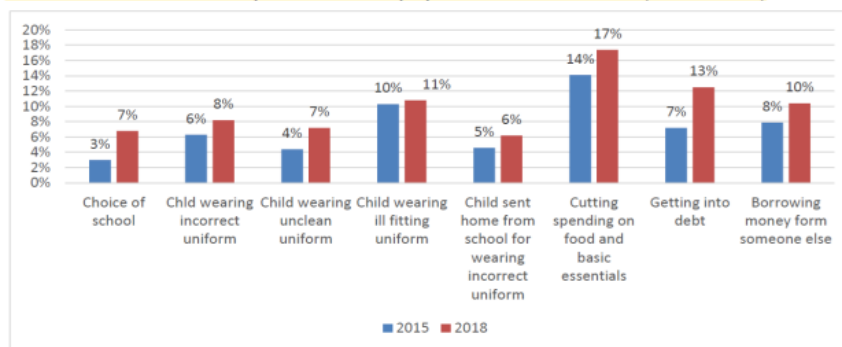
- Destinations data showed a limited impact of lockdowns, on both the 2020 and 2021 school leaver cohorts which suggests the CEIAG work that was completed, was effective.
- All education establishments in the Careers Hub were encouraged to ensure students have access to Independent and Impartial Careers Guidance from a qualified adviser.
- Continue to enable and encourage schools to maintain a lead from senior management teams on their Governing bodies.
- The Council worked with stakeholders to promote opportunities for apprenticeships and work experience across the Borough.
- Significant increases in schools meeting the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Cost of School Uniform
(click [here](#) for full report)

2020-2021

The aim of the review was to understand the issues raised by residents about the cost of school uniform and the opportunities locally to support parents in meeting those costs. It was recognised that the Council had a limited role in relation to this issue which was largely a matter for schools. The focus of the review was therefore on working with schools to identify the issues for them and for parents and identifying if there are options to support parents in meeting the costs of school uniform.

Cost of school uniforms: the impact on children – proportion of children affected (2015 and 2018)



N=948 in 2015, 946 in 2018

Through the course of the review, it was found that school uniform played an important role in contributing to the ethos of a school and sets the tone of the school. It was a way of ensuring that children living in disadvantage were not identifiable through their clothing. Schools needed to ensure that uniform was accessible and affordable. The Committee also recognised the importance of providing support to families struggling to meet uniform costs and were impressed by the support offered by Stockton-on-Tees schools and local community organisations. [Reported to Cabinet: December 2020](#)

Impact...

- The Select Committee report was well received by Academy Trusts and Schools. Messages were reinforced at Closing and Gap Sessions, Secondary and Primary Heads meetings and Governors' Briefing Sessions.
- Support was secured from the two local MPs and new legislation was subsequently passed putting the DfE best practice guidance on a statutory footing.

Care Leavers EET

(click [here](#) for full report)

2020-2021 / 2021-2022

The main aim of the review was to examine whether the Council was doing enough and what more needed to be done to further improve performance and outcomes for young people.

The Select Committee found that more work needed to be done for Children in Our Care regarding the transition into independent living. It was recognised that Children in Our Care did not enjoy the inherited opportunities and access to family help and support. Often struggling to overcome issues with mental and emotional health and low aspirations, these children can feel locked out from achieving success.

A number of recommendations were formulated as part of this review which sought to recommend more help for Children in Our Care to become work ready and maximise their opportunities through strengthened partnership working and a sustainable model to increase access to work experience and job opportunities with local employers and partners agencies. [Reported to Cabinet: July 2021](#)

Impact...

- Data used to be recorded on an annual basis but was now live data; continuous tracking had led to significant improvements and transformation
- New structures had brought teams together to meet demand and capacity; a clear vision allowed for workers to ensure that the child remained at the centre of the plan
- There had been an increase in young people moving towards Employment, Education and Training; performance was now above the national average

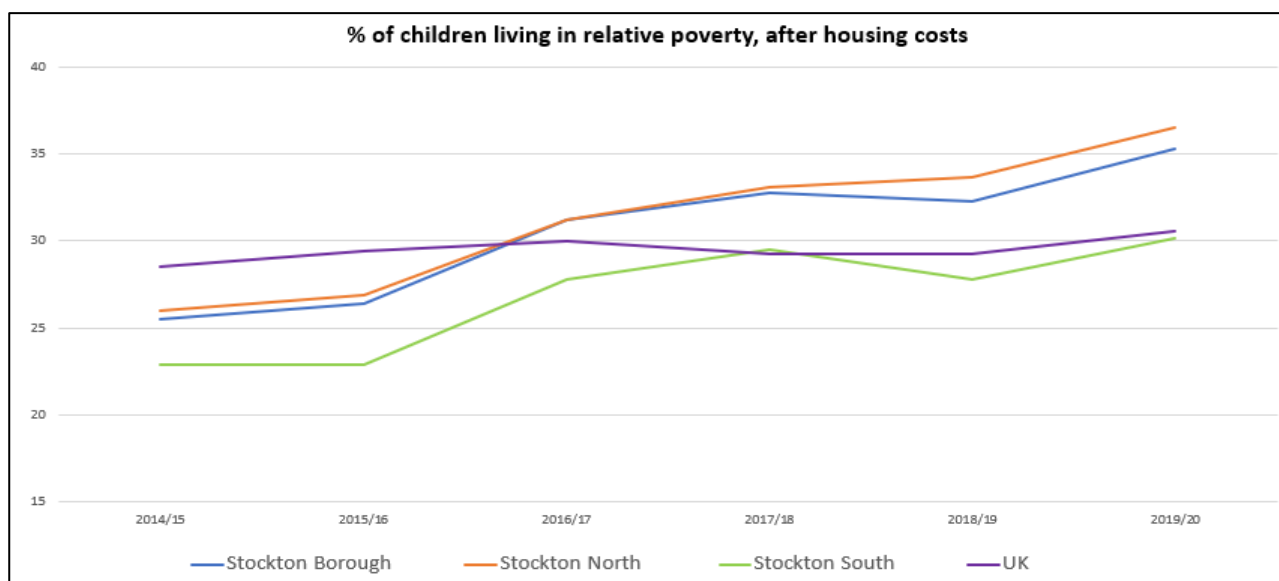
Child Poverty

(click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022 / 2022-2023

The overall aim of the review was to gain an insight and understand the specific issues relating to child poverty.

Data presented to the Committee showed that a large proportion of children in the Northeast were living in poverty, the second highest rate in the UK. Due to a number of factors the Committee were made aware that this position would worsen significantly due to welfare changes, the increased cost of living, energy prices rising and lack of employment security.



Evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated that the impact of poverty on children is profound. With children experiencing a range of health damaging impacts, negative educational outcomes, long term social and psychological problems, and poor life chances in adulthood.

The recommendations from this review sought to better understand the issues by working with families experiencing poverty, to enhance the support and interventions in place and each year to focus on a key priority for targeted action. [Reported to Cabinet: June 2022](#)

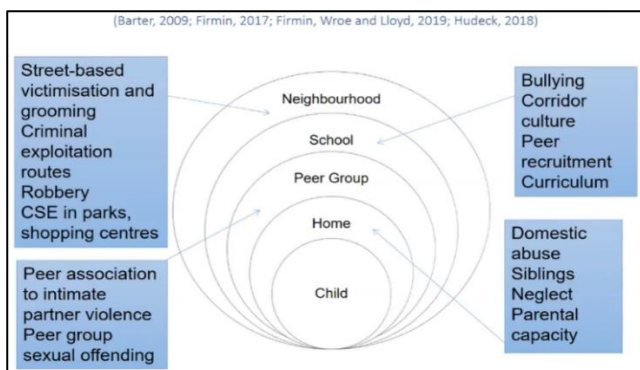
Impact...

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Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships ([click here](#) for full report)

2022-2023

The aim of the review was to assess the Council’s response and approach to the issues of contextual safeguarding. This review examined the factors leading to a focus in this area and understand the work of the multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) hub. Within this context, the review has also examined violent and coercive behaviour in youth relationships.



Evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated as children grow, their sphere of influence expands from their primary care givers along with family and long-time friends to wider influences with access to the internet and mobiles cutting across traditional barriers extending their sphere of influences even further. The review found tackling extra familial risk requires a holistic approach involving a wide range of partners and the community. [Reported to Cabinet: February 2023](#)

Impact...

- The Committee’s recommendations sought to raise awareness of contextual safeguarding and strengthen the local multi-agency response, including that clear outcome measures are defined to determine success of interventions and approaches. Support around this issue for SBC Children’s Services staff and schools was also encouraged, and a community guardian programme within schools and communities across Stockton-on-Tees was proposed in order to provide wider community support.
- An Action Plan in relation to the review’s recommendations will be presented to the Committee for approval early in the new Council term.

Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home
 (click [here](#) for full report)

2019-2020

In response to concerns regarding crime in local neighbourhoods, this review aimed to support local residents who may be vulnerable due to their individual circumstances, including age and housing arrangements. It undertook an assessment of local relevant public services and how they contribute to the protection of the vulnerable, as well as an evaluation of local community infrastructure and whether more support was needed to help promote safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents.

Throughout the review, contributing organisations stressed the importance of working in partnership, and that the relationships evidenced during the Committee’s information-gathering were critical in protecting older people and promoting safety and wellbeing. However, it was also noted that older people living at home may not want help (even though their families may want them to have assistance), and that organisations need to work sensitively to ensure any needs are identified and met, whilst maintaining, as far as possible, an older person’s independence.

Twelve recommendations ensued, headed by the need for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Cleveland Police to provide assurance around the measures put in place to address the failings highlighted in the Force’s recent HMICFRS PEEL assessment around identifying vulnerable victims and providing adequate safeguarding. Further requests were directed at the Council and its key partners, Thirteen Housing Group and Catalyst, and a continued push for better information-sharing between local organisations was advised. **Reported to Cabinet: January 2020**



Impact...

- Commitment made by all partners to continue to share information in a timely manner. Intra-partnership information-sharing saw further improvements since the emergence of COVID-19, supported by developments in technological aids such as Microsoft Teams which allow for quick and efficient meetings.
- Catalyst’s VCSE directory updated – includes befriending and other support services in the local VCSE sector that can be offered to a wide range of residents including those older residents living independently at home. Older people feature as a dedicated category, along with a breakdown of services which provide ‘social inclusion’.

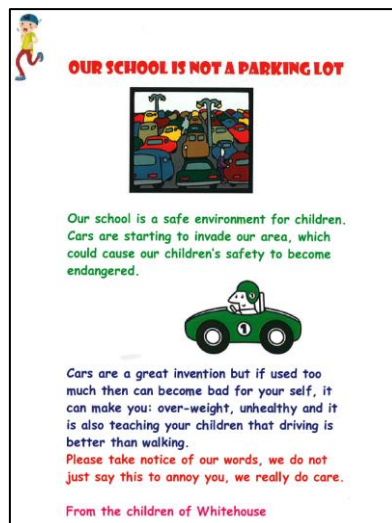
CCfA: Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School
 (click [here](#) for full report)

2019-2020

A Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) provides Councillors with the opportunity to ask for a discussion to take place at scrutiny committees on issues where local problems have arisen, and where all other methods of resolving the issue have been exhausted. The issue of obstructive and illegal parking around Whitehouse Primary School was proposed and subsequently approved for consideration by the Committee, whereupon a detailed investigation ensued involving key stakeholders such as Ward Councillors, relevant Council officers, senior representatives from the school, and residents and parents who were keen to put forward their views.

Pertinent to the problems associated with Whitehouse Primary School was the increase in pupils from beyond the designated admission zone and the geographical nuances of the school, factors

which are extremely difficult to influence. Whilst greater enforcement of illegal parking would be welcomed (at all schools), restrictions around current enforcement resources hinders the Council's ability to penalise such activity as much as many would like. It would also be unfair to single out one school above others for increased enforcement patrols.



Concluding that the suggested Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to ban / regulate parking was not appropriate, the Committee instead agreed a number of alternative measures which both supplemented previous work on this issue, and provided further means of promoting more responsible parking around the school itself. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2020](#)

Impact...

- Termly correspondence sent by the school to parents / carers regarding parking issues (includes development and circulation of a 'parking pledge'), with evidence of more considerate parking based on cumulative impact of all measures.
- School purchased 'little people bollards' to deter inconsiderate parking – concept shared with other schools within the Borough.
- 20mph speed limit on the Barlborough Avenue side of the school since implemented.
- New Junior Road Safety Officers appointed (including at Whitehouse Primary School).
- Research into 'School Streets' initiative (awaiting decision on possible implementation).

Fly-Grazed Horses

2019-2020 / 2020-2021

(click [here](#) for full report)

Fly-grazed horses are those that are being deliberately allowed to graze on land (either on a tether or roaming free) without the landowner's (private or Local Authority) permission. They pose a real risk to public health, whether wandering onto roads due to being grazed on land with inadequate or poorly maintained fencing (as happened during an incident on Durham Lane, Eaglescliffe, in October 2019), or breaking free from tethers. Horses may also be left to graze in public spaces, making footpaths, play areas and nature reserves unsafe for users / pedestrians, and create significant restoration costs caused by damage to Council assets / land.



This review comprised several important elements, the first of which involved the establishment of the Council's and other relevant organisations' roles and responsibilities for fly-grazed horses on both Council and non-Council land. Other aspects included identifying the extent of concerns across the Borough in relation to fly-grazed horses, understanding the costs to the Council in undertaking its statutory

responsibilities (and beyond), and considering more proactive means of addressing fly-grazed horses via education or enforcement options which may be used with horse-owners. Finally, the intention was for this review to provide conclusions and recommendations which could inform the creation of a formal Council fly-grazed horses policy.

In attempting to address the longstanding concerns associated with this practice, the Committee discovered a rather short-term and potted historical approach which lacked an overarching policy that made clear who should be doing what and by when. That said, this issue is not an easy one to address. The Committee respect the rights of individuals to own horses, but also the rights of other residents across the Borough not to be affected by a horse being fly-grazed near to their property, or for people to be at risk of horses escaping from fields after being placed there. The ensuing recommendations sought to establish clearly defined processes, supported and adhered to by all key stakeholders and made available to increase public awareness, which would provide a framework for managing future cases. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2021](#)

Impact...

- Cleveland Police intend to produce a protocol based on Kent Police's response (essentially a recovery and green yard service). Need for policy added to the Police Executive Risk Register.
- Council webpages publicly available containing horse welfare information, advice to landowners and the public, as well as SBC and RSPCA contact details (will be available for hosting formal policy document once live). Since updated to note public information for equine identification law, advice for tethering, grazing on Council Land and advice for private landowners.
- SBC officers continue to support both horse-owners and those impacted by illegal grazing, and retain contact details and close relationships with all horse-owners.
- Cleveland Police senior and operational staff identified to work with SBC Animal Welfare.

Fraud Awareness (Personal)

2020-2021 / 2021-2022

(click [here](#) for full report)

The aim of this review was principally two-fold: firstly, to raise awareness of fraud against the person, and secondly, to ascertain the ways in which local victims of this crime were identified and supported. In addition, the Committee sought to understand the process for reporting (personal) fraud offences, including the role of key stakeholders in the handling of cases, and establish how the public were made aware of the required reporting mechanisms (and how this was reinforced by local organisations, including work around reducing the risk of becoming a victim of fraud). Mindful of the ongoing pandemic, the identification of any local COVID-19-related fraud concerns (and whether any targeted awareness-raising / support may be required) would also be an important factor in this work.

The Committee found that fraud was a complex and, sadly, all too prevalent crime in today's world. The broad range of national, regional and local organisations (a number of whom were listed within the report) involved in countering those manipulative perpetrators of this practice were testament to the frequency in which it was carried out.

Understandingly, this was often in a reactive way as fraudsters continually change their point of attack, seizing upon opportunities that, latterly, had even stooped to seeking gain from a global pandemic. The Committee fully supported every available means to bring such people to justice.



Behind every act of fraud is a victim, a fact that can sometimes be overlooked when analysing crime trends and attempting to nullify perpetrators, and a key message from this review was that everyone was susceptible to this type of crime (not just older people as some would believe). Locally, the Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS) provided invaluable support to victims, but was subject to potential demand pressures as a result of the drive to increase the reporting of fraudulent activity and continually emerging scams. [Reported to Cabinet: May 2021](#)

Impact...

- Views of the Committee encouraging the sharing of relevant fraud information with SBC (laid out in a subsequent letter from Lead Cabinet Member) expressed to Action Fraud.
- Post-review inspection by the City of London Police stated that Cleveland Police were good at supporting victims and safeguarding the most vulnerable victims of fraud.
- Ongoing efforts to spread the fraud prevention and scams awareness message continue across a range of forums – one particular social media post on a banking scam reached over 10,000 people and was shared widely.
- Article concerning rogue traders carrying out home maintenance and repair work was included in the Spring 2022 edition of Stockton News. An article on Christmas scams was planned for the next Winter edition.
- 16 key scams awareness messages distributed to the SBC Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative to aid awareness-raising around fraud crime with young people.

Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish) ([click here](#) for full report)

2021-2022

This task and finish review focused on information-sharing and communications in Stockton-on-Tees between neighbourhood policing, local Ward Councillors, local residents and other key stakeholders. It sought to ensure that appropriate information-sharing mechanisms were in place with a view to strengthening effective partnership-working within the Borough.

Cleveland Police Community Engagement Ward Pledge

Every neighbourhood in Cleveland has a dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) that works together with the local community and partners to:

- ✓ Prevent crime and anti social behaviour and tackling criminality
- ✓ Care and support our people
- ✓ Serve the public and put our communities at the heart of all we do
- ✓ Recognise and safeguard vulnerable victims

As a minimum expectation concerning engagement, we pledge to provide:

- ✓ Key message statements from the NPT Chief Inspector to your elected representatives on a monthly basis
- ✓ Regular contact with relevant partners to address neighbourhood priorities
- ✓ An update to the community of progress against the identify progress
- ✓ A two-way mechanism to obtain views, advice and feedback from the community
- ✓ NPT to engage with community and faith groups
- ✓ Advance notice of community engagement opportunities via the Ward newsletter and social media platforms
- ✓ Visible patrols in hotspots for anti-social behaviour and crime
- ✓ Bespoke Ward Newsletters on a bi-monthly basis
- ✓ At least one community meeting per month in each Ward
- ✓ Scanning and analysis of local issues to identify up to three Ward priorities on a bi-monthly basis
- ✓ A designated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) assigned to every school
- ✓ Engagement opportunities with ongoing youth outreach in our Wards
- ✓ Effective use of social media to engage communities and provide effective feedback
- ✓ Ward profiles to help understand the demographics and engagement needs of each area in the Force

The Committee's Task and Finish Group found that numerous engagement mechanisms were used by Cleveland Police, both internally and externally, in order to carry out and communicate its core functions. Ensuring officers within Cleveland Police recognise the critical role of Councillors as a partnership-tool with which to address policing issues was emphasised, as was the importance of the communications feedback-loop which, if effective, enables confidence to be built between the Force and Councillors / the public.

Concerns were expressed about the Force seemingly being in a constant state of change, with officers across all ranks arriving and departing at an alarming rate which inevitably impacts upon the ability to forge relationships within communities. Whilst alternative methods of communicating (accelerated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic) were to be embraced, being as physically visible within Wards as possible would continue to be important for Councillors (as evidenced with the Ward Councillor survey undertaken as part of this review) and their residents (as reflected in the desire for more Police visibility via recent consultations) as the Force looks to deliver strong engagement as part of its service plans. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2022](#)

Impact...

- All Stockton district PCSOs asked to make monthly contact with their Ward Councillors.
- Stockton neighbourhood officers have a Victims Code of Practice (VCOP) compliance rate of 100% for their 102 live crimes (as of 02/11/2022).
- SBC Ward Councillor survey repeated in October 2022 – feedback demonstrated that there were still mixed feelings about the level of communications with Cleveland Police.
- So far in 2023, Stockton Neighbourhood Policing Team have recorded the highest level of face-to-face engagement with the public across the force area by a significant margin.

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)

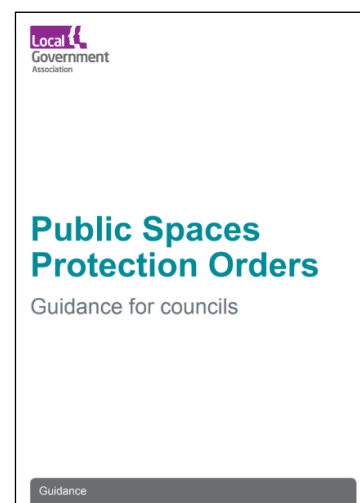
2021-2022

(click [here](#) for full report)

This scrutiny topic provided the opportunity for the Committee to consider the potential benefits and challenges from introducing a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) within the Borough. It allowed the Committee to understand what a PSPO was (powers designed to stop individuals or groups from committing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in a public space, they can include restrictions on consuming alcohol in a public place or controlling the presence of dogs) and the process which needs to be followed, consider existing ASB it could help to address, and learn about the experiences of other Local Authorities, many of whom had utilised such Orders as an additional tool to respond to crime / ASB in their areas. Crucially, what the review did not set out to do was to decide whether a PSPO should actually be implemented.

The Committee found that, whilst the Council was well-placed to be aware of the community safety issues within the locality and already had a range of options to counter ASB, concerns clearly continue (as evidenced in the report) around the behaviour of a minority of individuals who were having an adverse impact on the Borough's public spaces. Perceptions and fear of crime continued to be high, and, as noted by several contributors to this review, this was as important and significant as actual recorded cases. As such, the case for exploring further options was strong, especially if these options led to more visible and quicker action to instil confidence in the public.

Evidence demonstrated that there were a range of opinions around PSPOs (including widespread concerns that they target vulnerable individuals), and the Council must therefore ensure that, should it wish to proceed with plans for a potential Order within the Borough, it seeks views from a wide variety of stakeholders (i.e. public, local businesses, special interest groups (depending on the issues an Order seeks to prohibit), key partners) to validate any future decision. [Reported to Cabinet: February 2022](#)



Impact...

- To reinforce existing mechanisms for reporting ASB and promote operational successes in identifying and addressing ASB within the Borough, a shared approach for partnership communications has been developed further, including an increase in media releases and leaflet drops / Civic Enforcement Officer visits to hot-spot areas.
- Easy-read flowchart of the existing PSPO consultation, implementation and review procedures finalised and circulated to relevant stakeholders. This agreed process, alongside the Committee's other recommendations (e.g. adoption of a formal definition of 'aggressive begging' by SBC), has assisted in providing a framework for the initiation of a PSPO in Stockton Town Centre and Norton Village from April 2023.

Bonfires on Public Land

(click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022 / 2022-2023

Like many Local Authority areas, Stockton-on-Tees experiences an increase in bonfires between mid-October and mid-November each year. However, whilst bonfires themselves bring an inherent safety and environmental risk to the local community, associated disorder linked to this practice has become as much, if not more, of an issue for the Council and its local partners to manage during the traditional 'bonfire night' season.



Focusing on bonfire activity upon public land, the aims of this review were to firstly establish the extent of bonfire-related concerns (e.g. personal safety, damage to property, fly-tipping, etc.) within the Borough during the traditional 'bonfire night' season. The Committee then sought to understand what the Council and its partners had historically done to identify, address and reduce bonfire-related issues, and then investigate what, if any, further measures could be put in place to strengthen the management, or reduction, of bonfires during this time period.

In summary, there was a general consensus from all partners who contributed to this review that bonfires themselves were not a major issue within the Borough (greater concerns were expressed in relation to the associated behaviours around bonfires (as well as fireworks)), though the Committee acknowledged that sporadic cases across Stockton-on-Tees had previously provided challenges for the Council and its partners despite the very established annual planning, response and review joint-working. Continuing to focus resources on these identified areas (and any emerging ones), particularly around education and diversion, remained paramount in the drive to further reduce the negative elements which bonfires can clearly foster. [Reported to Cabinet: September 2022](#)

Impact...

- Recommendations called for the Council to review its own public engagement approach to fire safety messaging across all available communication mechanisms (highlighting the dangers of bonfires and the impact on local residents), as well as consider adopting the Shrewsbury Town Council approach in emphasising a zero tolerance towards unauthorised bonfires (including contact routes for permission to light a bonfire on public land and the potential consequences for failing to seek permission).

Tree Asset Management

(click [here](#) for full report)

2022-2023

Whilst not explicitly crime and disorder related (this piece of work was allocated to the Committee in order to balance the distribution of scrutiny topics across the five themed Select Committees), this predominantly internal review provided an opportunity to consider the known issues around maintenance of the Borough's tree stock. Central to this was the substantial growing backlog in essential and routine programmed works that had been identified through the ongoing inspection regime.





The current SBC Tree and Woodland Management Service was a very small team with responsibility for managing tens of thousands of trees within the Borough's towns, highways, parks, cemeteries, open spaces and 400 hectares of woodland. The service was clearly under huge pressure already, and attempts to eat into the increasing delays to essential programmed work were always at the mercy of external factors such as adverse weather (creating potential emergency situations) and season-specific activity, as well as resource limitations. Add to this the Council's additional tree planting commitment in response to the ongoing climate crisis debate, and the emerging issue of ash dieback disease, and the Committee expressed deep reservations over the existing situation regarding management of the Borough's trees.

The current financial climate for Local Authorities made it hard to justify recommending a spending increase anywhere within the Council, though the Committee observed that tree planting was a SBC priority – should this continue to be the case moving forward, it therefore seemed incumbent upon the Council to back this up with an appropriate resource allocation which allowed its officers to undertake the required maintenance of an enlarging tree stock, something which not only strengthens the Borough's move to a cleaner and greener future, but also ensures residents and visitors are kept safe. If this could not happen, then it was imperative that the Council made it clear to its residents what tree management service it could realistically deliver, and that this remains in-line with its legal duty of care. [Reported to Cabinet: February 2023](#)

Impact...

- Recommendations included a refresh of the SBC tree and woodland management policy and procedures to provide clarity around mandatory service requirements, the realistic cycle of essential maintenance, responsibilities regarding trees on private land, and key message throughout this review regarding the planting of the correct species of tree in the right places (helping to minimise future maintenance requirements and revenue costs). Strengthening service resources was also encouraged, and planning around ash dieback was urged.
- Action Plan in relation to the review's recommendations to be approved in March 2023, with update on progress of the agreed actions to be received in 2023-2024.

People Select Committee

Smarter Working in Stockton (Accommodation and Buildings) (Task & Finish) 2019-2020 (click [here](#) for full report)

This review was undertaken by a small Task and Finish Group of Committee Members who reviewed the current arrangements within the context of the Smarter Working programme, and the future needs of the Authority and workforce.

A part of the review, the group visited existing Council buildings (Stirling House, Kingsway, Municipal Buildings, 16 Church Road, Bayheath House) and spoke with members of staff. Visits to North Tyneside Council, Thirteen Group and the Cleveland Police Community Safety Hub also informed the review.

Having reviewed the options available, the Group believed the best solution would be for the Council to move towards having a single main building for its office accommodation needs, as current arrangements were no longer suitable for modern workspace.

Reported to Cabinet: November 2019



Kingsway House

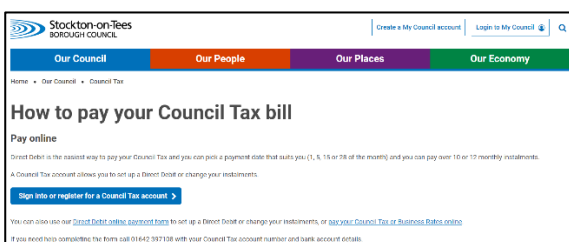
Impact...

- Focus group of over 80 staff, made up of all directorates across SBC, was set up.
- The Smarter Working in Stockton project leads communicate with this group regularly.
- There is an ongoing process of planning and providing appropriate alternative office accommodation.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme (Reporting-In) (click [here](#) for full report)

2019-2020 / 2020-2021

In 2019, the People Select Committee commenced work on a review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. It was expected that any changes to the scheme would be introduced from April 2021. However, due to the impact of Covid 19, the Select Committee considered a report in October 2020 on the risks of forecasting, developing, and consulting on changes during the pandemic.



The Select Committee concluded that more time was needed to understand the financial impact of Coronavirus on customers and their ability to pay a minimum contribution, the rise in caseload and any wider welfare reforms that may come through as part of the government's response to the pandemic.
Reported to Cabinet: December 2020

Impact...

- It was agreed that it would not be appropriate to make changes impacting on the financial aspects of the scheme until more was known about the affordability of the current scheme and any alternative proposals.
- In the meantime, it was proposed that funds could be set aside to provide more targeted support to those struggling to pay the minimum 20% contribution using section 13A of the local government Finance Act.

Public Consultation

(click [here](#) for full report)

2020-2021

The aim of the review was to improve performance of the consultation activity itself and of all Council activities that use the results of the consultations.



The review was well-timed following the town centre consultation and this consultation was well received by the Committee. It was agreed that paper versions of consultation forms should be retained for future large-scale consultations where appropriate. The recommendations also incorporated the need to increase engagement with young people and build on the work of Bright minds Big Futures (BMBF).

It was valuable to receive evidence from Ipsos MORI, Bluegrass Research Limited and North Tyneside Council, to learn more about private sector approaches to consultation and areas of good practice in other Local Authorities. [Reported to Cabinet: December 2020](#)

Impact...

- Work has continued to ensure all consultations are fully inclusive, including offering paper consultation forms and public meetings for large-scale consultations.
- The coverage in Stockton News, under the 'Your Views Matter' heading, remains a key a focus to ensure high-quality engagement.
- Consultations have continued to be shared on Council social media channels to help raise the profile of the activity, as well as to encourage participation, show transparency and ensure effective consultation.

Carbon Monoxide Awareness

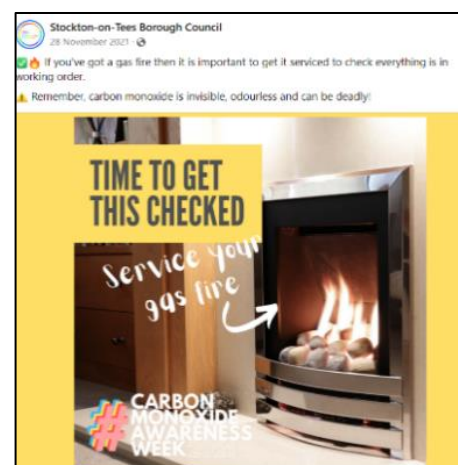
(click [here](#) for full report)

2020-2021 / 2021-2022

This review was undertaken to provide a greater understanding of the work of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and external organisations in raising awareness about carbon monoxide poisoning.

The review was enhanced by the attendance of representatives from several Housing Associations and the North East Ambulance Service at evidence sessions. Holding the meetings remotely allowed for an increased number of external contributors to provide information on best practice and answer Members' questions.

The review's recommendations supported a continued promotion of Carbon Monoxide poisoning awareness raising through existing platforms. The Committee also recommended that legislation should be extended to ensure that Carbon Monoxide alarms are fitted in all properties, including holiday homes, for gas and solid burning fuel appliances. [Reported to Cabinet: July 2021](#)



Impact...

- Letters were sent to both local MPs and positive responses were received.
- Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety and Fire, also responded that the Government has consulted on proposals to extend building and housing regulations to require the provision of carbon monoxide alarms to oil and gas heating installations and to social housing.
- Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week was promoted in the November 2021 Stockton News and via social media channels.

Disability Inclusive Borough (click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022

This review explored how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council could contribute to a more disability inclusive borough the Committee were keen to understand hidden as well as physical disabilities. This was a very wide review, and the Committee were acutely aware that the review was part of an on-going journey to make our Borough disability inclusive.



Hearing directly from individuals and disability groups provided an invaluable insight and highlighted that there was no room for complacency. Contributors included Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Officers, Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF), Dementia Friendly Stockton Project, Horizons Specialist Academy Trust, Stockton Parent Carer Forum, Daisy Chain, Guide Dogs for the Blind, RNID and Middlesbrough Council.

The review has demonstrated that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is committed to putting every person who needs support at the heart of all that they do and providing appropriate support and services to employees and residents across the Borough with disabilities. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2022](#)

Impact...

- The recommendations support a continued promotion of good practice across the Council and wider community, but also, awareness raising and improved communication with disability groups.
- Project group led by Children's Services, with representatives from SBC Adults and Health, are delivering a programme of work to engage with families and stakeholders to co-produce and develop a vision to improve outcomes for children and young people with disabilities, and their families, that prioritises early identification / promotes independence.
- The outline design for the new civic hub includes a changing place facility and one will be considered as part of the new improvements to Preston Park.

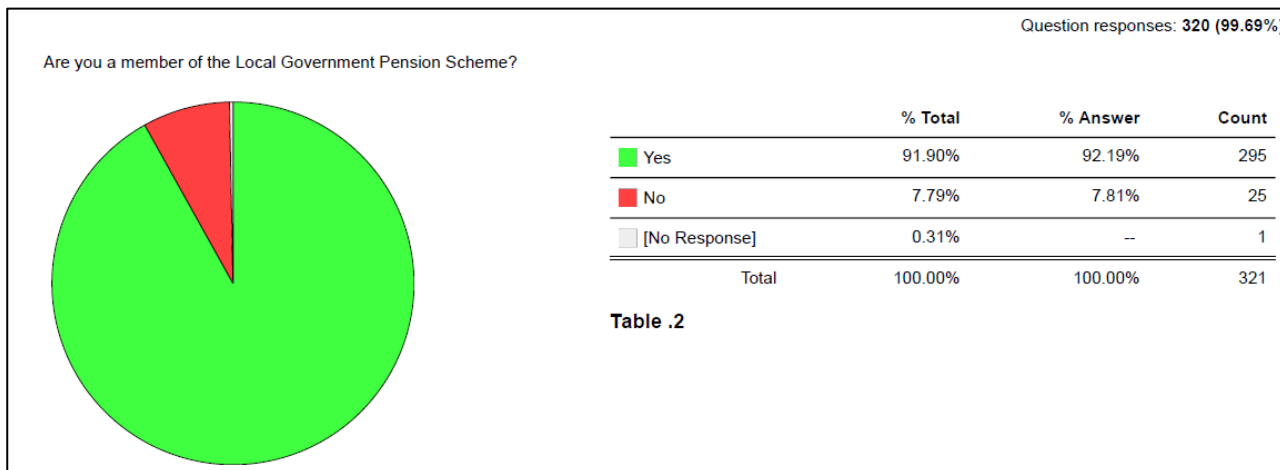
Local Government Pension Scheme (Task & Finish) (click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022

This task and finish review investigated the reasons why 15% of the Council's workforce had chosen not to be members of the Teesside Local Government Pension Scheme and to consider what steps might be needed to address this.

As part of the review, staff were invited to complete an online survey. Feedback from this survey provided a valuable insight and contribution. The Committee's findings confirmed that affordability

was the main barrier for employees not joining the Scheme. The staff survey also revealed a general lack of understanding and a need for better information to be provided, in plain English.



The review’s recommendations sought to raise awareness of the benefits of the Scheme and to help employees to make better informed choices and improve take-up. [Reported to Cabinet: March 2022](#)

Impact...

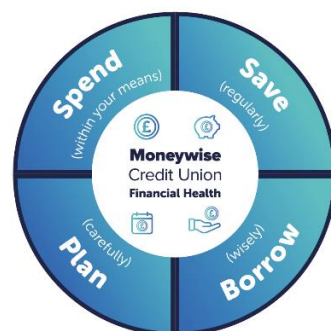
- Increased LGPS membership.
- Increase in the number of employees accessing the AVC scheme.
- It has been confirmed that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is the top performing Authority across the whole country. This is based on the number of scheme plans as a percentage of LGPS membership.

Tees Credit Union
 (click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022 / 2022-2023

The aim of this review was to consider the operation of the Credit Union since the merger with Moneywise in 2017 to ensure that it is serving the needs of the people of the Borough and specifically supporting the vulnerable who rely on it for the provision of loans, banking services and savings accounts at reasonable rates.

The Select Committee concluded that the Credit Union provided local, accessible, and flexible support and noted that since their merger with Moneywise, their financial position had significantly improved with increases in loans, savings and membership. The Credit Union is well thought of by its members and all customers are encouraged to save. As well as the online service, the Credit Union maintains a valuable high street presence which has excellent footfall. [Reported to Cabinet: July 2022](#)

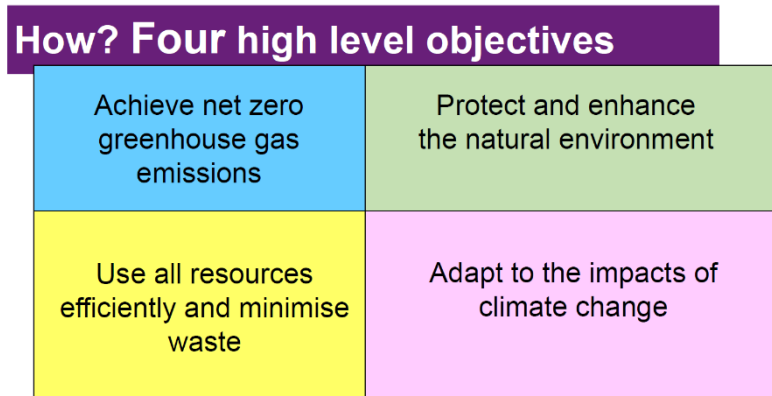


Impact...

- The recommendations and action plan focused on exploring further opportunities to promote the Credit Union and strengthen partnership working with other financial providers and sectors.
- Initial progress update due to be presented to the People Select Committee in March 2023.

(click [here](#) for full report)

The aim of the review was to understand what funding was available for home efficiency improvements and whether this met the needs of Stockton residents. The review also examined the work that was taking place across the Tees Valley to create a local workforce fit for the demands of a green economy of the future.



As part of global efforts to combat climate change, this review focussed on the improvement of home energy efficiency and the development of local employment in green industries. [Reported to Cabinet: February 2023](#)

Impact...

- The Committee’s recommendations centre on awareness raising of grants and alternative fossil fuel-based systems along with writing to government to urge them to improve energy efficiency standards on new housing developments.
- The recommendations have also captured the Council’s continued commitment to deliver its Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy and ‘green jobs’ workshops and training at all levels, including entry level jobs.
- Action Plan in relation to the review’s recommendations to be approved in March 2023, with update on progress of the agreed actions to be received in 2023-2024.

Area Transport Strategy (click [here](#) for full report)

2019-2020

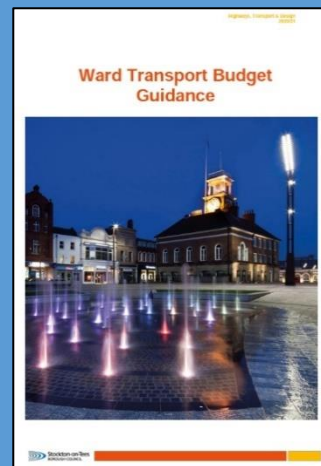
The Area Transport Strategy (ATS) scheme provides the community with an opportunity to influence where the Council targets its limited funding on improving the highway. Whilst the Committee endorsed this fundamental principal of engaging with the public, the evidence received demonstrated a number of challenges and frustrations with the existing scheme. A stakeholder survey was also issued as part of the evidence-gathering process.

The Committee recognised that the Community Participation Budget (CPB) process already enables the public to identify potential solutions to issues across the Borough, and provides a quicker response to community-originated suggestions than the ATS presently allows.

Therefore, the Committee recommend that the existing ATS scheme ceases at the end of the current financial year, with the yearly ATS funding allocation to be transferred to the CPB on a Ward-by-Ward basis determined by population per Ward. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2020](#)

Impact...

- The Ward Transport Budget (WTB) guidance document was circulated to all Ward Councillors on the launch of this budget in July 2020.
- The WTB funding from the Local Transport Plan (LTP) has been transferred into a specific budget account, separate to the Community Participation Budget (CPB).



Business Support and Engagement (click [here](#) for full report)

2020-2021

This review was initiated to examine the Council's overall business support / engagement role, how this was utilised and viewed externally, and whether the necessary resources were in place to satisfy existing and future demand. Of further consideration was the key interface with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), both in terms of their business support activity and the funding streams that they either manage or can access.



The Committee received evidence from representatives of the Council's Business and Enterprise Team, as well as from a range of wider business support partners including the Tees Valley Combined Authority, the North East England Chamber of Commerce / Department for International Trade, and Teesside University. To gain insight into the impact of the Council's support offer, the Committee also received contributions from local businesses, though the intended visits to the Fountain Shopping Mall, Drake the Bookshop and Fusion Hive were unable to take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. [Reported to Cabinet: December 2020](#)

Impact...

- The 'Invest in Stockton-on-Tees' website has been launched which includes a feature for current and prospective business owners to search for available property and land.
- The Inclusive Growth Strategy has also been completed.

Planters in Residential Streets (Task & Finish)

2020-2021

(click [here](#) for full report)

This review provided an opportunity to evaluate the current condition of planters across the Borough to determine whether they should be retained, removed, or maintained. Contributions from Council Officers, Parkfield Resident's Association, Cultivate Tees Valley, and Catalyst highlighted the importance of planning and coordinating a sustainable community project and obtaining funding.

A key finding was that it would be beneficial to maintain the planters through sustainable community planter projects. The recommendations reflected this view and invited groups, residents, local businesses and Town and Parish Councils to get involved in the future maintenance of planters. The group also recognised that residents should be consulted informally to gather their views on the proposed options for planters in their wards. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2021](#)

Impact...

- £50,000 was secured from the Queens Platinum Jubilee grant by the Community Partnerships, Cultivate and Sprouts. Part of this grant was to work with residents and businesses on 70 planters across the borough and linked to the Edible Stockton initiative and the Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network. It is intended that ongoing support will be provided through the Community Partnerships to identify other avenues of funding and options to build on the successes of the project to look at other planters and work to support other residents living in these areas. Ingleby Barwick Town Council have also provided funding towards two planters in Ingleby Barwick.



Wren Street (Before)



Wren Street (After)

Burial Provision

2020-2021 / 2021-2022

(click [here](#) for full report)

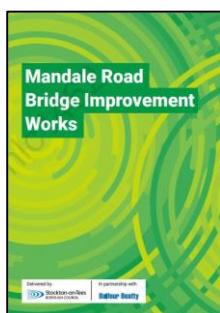
This review provided Members with the opportunity to review the current levels of burial provision within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. Members were asked to determine if there was sufficient capacity to allow the Council to continue to provide the appropriate choice to residents. The recommendations reflected the need for a new burial site or sites, primarily in the central or western areas of the Borough. Consideration was given to both the increasing size of the Borough and the addition of the new crematorium. [Reported to Cabinet: May 2021](#)

Impact...

- A review of Council owned land has been completed and it was identified that there were no suitable options and that it was a necessity to consider private land.
- A subsequent review of private land has been undertaken and a handful of potentially suitable options were identified and are being further investigated.
- In addition, several discussions have occurred with Town and Parish Councils on burial requirements and advice has been offered.

Highways Asset Management (including Potholes and Flooding) (click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022



The aim of this review was to evaluate the opportunities for maintaining the Highways Infrastructure Asset as efficiently as possible, both now and in the future. This review also considered the impact of increasing demands, financial pressures, and climate change issues.

The review uncovered that the existing budget is not sufficient to manage the Highways Infrastructure Asset at a steady state. Therefore, the Council are currently managing a deterioration of the asset, utilising the principals of asset management. [Reported to Cabinet: January 2022](#)

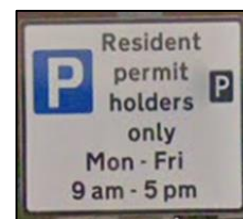
Impact...

- In addition to using recycled rubber in materials, the Council have now moved to the use of warm asphalt on the majority of sites and over the course of the 2022-2023 financial year this has resulted in a saving of 10.2t of CO2 as compared to the use of traditional surfacing materials which is the equivalent of 7 cars off the road.
- The Leader of the Council wrote to both local MPs in September 2021. Subsequent to the letter, the Tees Valley Combined Authority and Stockton as the local highway authority was one of the Mayoral Combined Authorities that moved from the traditional one year highway capital funding mechanism to a five year settlement plan via the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. This surety of funding over a longer period will allow for better planning and co-ordinating of works. It will also allow for larger schemes to be programmed as funding profiles can be adjusted within the 5-year funding period.

Residents Parking Zones (click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022 / 2022-2023

This latest parking-related scrutiny topic was proposed with a view to informing an overdue revision of the existing 'high-level' Council policy on Residents Parking Zones, something which had not been reviewed since 2004. It was seen as an opportunity to examine the eligibility criteria for such a zone, the pros and cons associated with their implementation, and the experiences and approaches of other Local Authorities.



Following engagement with key Council officers, local business groups, and SBC Ward Councillors, the Committee's recommendations were intended to provide a framework for strengthening awareness around what Residents Parking Zones can and cannot achieve, the process following a request for one, and the key elements within the determination and, potentially, implementation of a scheme. [Reported to Cabinet: July 2022](#)

Impact...

- It is hoped that, through this piece of work, clarity around both the benefits and challenges of Residents Parking Zones will help manage public expectations and also assist the Council in terms of administration, maintenance and enforcement requirements.
- An initial progress update is due to be presented to the Committee in March 2023.

Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space (click [here](#) for full report)

2022-2023

The aim of the review was to examine the work of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's (SBC) Planning Service, namely pre-application advice, the effectiveness of the Council's planning support service (resources / performance) and planning enforcement. In addition, the review focussed on the issues surrounding the maintenance and adoption of open space land on new residential developments.

The review included site visits to five residential developments across the Borough to view the differences and similarities between privately maintained and SBC maintained open spaces. The visits provided Members with the opportunity to express some of their concerns (and residents' concerns) over the variances in maintenance levels. [Reported to Cabinet: February 2023](#)



Impact...

- This review has provided the Committee with the opportunity to highlight the need for a greater degree of transparency and accountability regarding the maintenance of open spaces and any changes to charges passed on to residents for this service.
- It has also been recognised that the current pre-application process should be re-evaluated and options for charging for pre-application advice should be explored.
- Action Plan in relation to the review's recommendations to be approved in March 2023, with update on progress of the agreed actions to be received in 2023-2024.

Other Scrutiny Work

Quality Assurance

Historically, and in more recent times, there have been several national serious failures of care in health, adult social care, and children's services. It remains vital that Councils respond to this and ensure that there are local mechanisms for effective oversight of the **quality and safety** of services provided to their residents.

As part of a wider 'web of accountability', scrutiny committees have a role to play in highlighting concerns, monitoring high-level performance, and being assured that commissioners, providers, and inspectors are performing their roles. This relates to external providers as well as contributing towards the increased expectation that Councils ensure rigorous internal review and challenge.

The Children and Young People Select Committee receive regular performance reports in respect of children's services. The Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee receive a range of other reports and updates are provided as part of the enhanced performance management arrangements – these include Annual Reports from the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), Care Quality Commission (CQC), NHS Trusts, Healthwatch Stockton-on-Tees, and quarterly round-ups of published CQC and PAMMS inspection reports.

To complement this work and improve their understanding of the issues, Members on Adult Social Care and Health, and Children and Young People, Select Committees have previously undertaken **site visits to frontline services** on a rolling programme. Due to the emergence of COVID-19 in the early part of this four-year Council term, such visits were suspended due to social distancing guidance – it is, however, envisaged that a programme of visits will re-start when the 2023-2027 term begins.

Overview Reports

Recognising the overview role of the scrutiny function, annual **Overview Meetings** provide Members with a summary of all the Council directorates and their associated services related to the theme of each Select Committee.

- Adults and Health
- Children's Services
- Corporate Services
- Community Services, Environment and Culture
- Finance, Development and Regeneration

This provides the opportunity to question Cabinet Members and senior officers on their performance, and understand the challenges and issues arising ahead of the next year's programme.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee
Overview Meeting 2022
15 February 2022
Adults and Health

Context

Members are reminded of the Council's Vision that supports decision-making:

- 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

The Council plays its part in making sure this is achieved 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

Performance Reporting

Performance across the Council Plan was reported on a six-monthly basis to Executive Scrutiny Committee. Please see the link
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aks/stockton/users/public/admin/kab71.p?cmte=SCR>

Monitoring

It is crucial to ensure that once recommendations have been accepted by the relevant organisation (most often the Council's Cabinet), Select Committees have the opportunity to monitor their implementation. At Stockton-on-Tees, this happens through the development of an **Action Plan** which is then agreed by the relevant Select Committee.

This is followed by **Progress Updates** on outstanding recommendations, the first of which is usually presented around 12 months after the Action Plan has been approved (though can be requested earlier). Further progress updates are provided (as deemed necessary by the relevant Select Committee) until all actions can be signed-off as fully achieved.

Training and Development

Following the 2019 elections, the Member Induction Programme incorporated a dedicated scrutiny training session for each Select Committee, which included bespoke information relevant to their individual themes. Facilitated by the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) (now known as the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)), a dedicated training session for senior Council officers was also held to highlight the role and benefits of the scrutiny process.

A similar programme is being designed for all Members after the 2023 elections, and this will include the foundations of a scrutiny review for each Committee, in addition to dedicated questioning and challenge training, and guidance for Committee Chairs.

Our approach to scrutiny enables us to take a collaborative approach within the Council. This is extended to close working with colleagues across the Tees Valley and the North East as a whole. Members have the opportunity to attend the Regional Scrutiny Networks, regional and national conferences, and events hosted by external organisations such as Quality Account Stakeholder events hosted by NHS Trusts. CfGS training courses (often held remotely) are periodically advertised and available to Members.

Profile of the Scrutiny Function

The Council's scrutiny function continues to receive a wide profile, principally due to regular attendance at Committees from the local media (sometimes leading to even higher-profile coverage, as seen below). This has generated substantial interest in the topics under consideration and the role of Councillors in representing their residents.



Internally, the Scrutiny Team have been involved in several Democratic Services awareness-raising sessions for various Council directorates / departments which has further highlight the role and importance of the scrutiny function amongst Council officers.

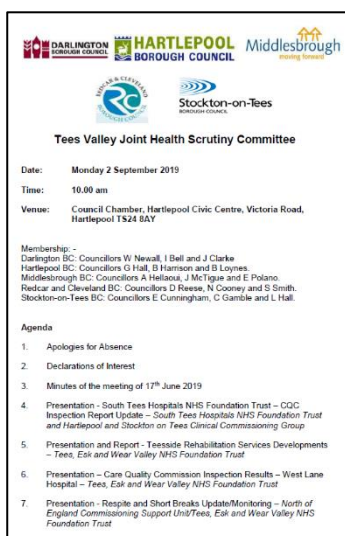
Regional Scrutiny

Joint Health Scrutiny Committees

From a broader perspective, Councillors from Local Authorities across the region scrutinise various health and social care matters via joint committees.

The **Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**, chaired and supported by the five involved Councils (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees) on an annual rotational basis, plays an important role in holding health and care providers to account and responding to proposals for change. Consideration of health service issues frequently means that local Councillors are reflecting the concern of their residents – an important aspect of scrutiny's role.

The Joint Committee has monitored multiple aspects of activity across the Tees Valley, including:



- Provider responses to Care Quality Commission (CQC) reports
- North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) performance updates
- Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) Quality Accounts
- Respite / short-breaks provision updates
- Roseberry Park remedial works updates (following the Joint Committee's task and finish work in 2018-2019)
- Local COVID-19 response (NHS / Public Health)
- Teesside Rehabilitation Services development
- West Lane Hospital updates (including visit to re-branded site)
- Tees Suicide Prevention Plan
- Community Mental Health Transformation Programme
- Breast Diagnostic Services
- Urgent and Emergency Care Access
- Integrated Care System (ICS) developments

Stockton-on-Tees will be responsible for chairing and supporting the Joint Committee for the 2023-2024 municipal year.

On a wider level, the **North East Regional Health Committee** also exists to, where appropriate, consider issues impacting upon a larger geographical area. The Committee, however, has not been convened during this reporting period.

Cleveland Police and Crime Panel

Until late-2021, we continued to support the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel on behalf of the four Boroughs covered by Cleveland Police (from 2022, support of the Panel was transferred to Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council). The Panel's role is to:

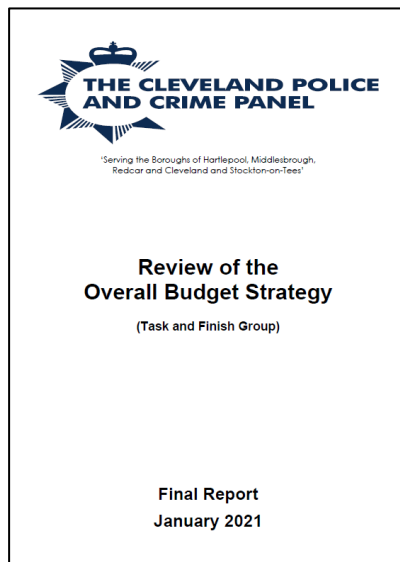
- Scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
- Review the Police precept
- Contribute to the development of the Police and Crime Plan
- Considering proposed appointments by the PCC
- Carry-out investigations

Since its inception, the Panel has established a **Budget Strategy Task and Finish Group**. This ensures that each year the Panel's consideration of the PCC precept proposal is informed by more in-depth consideration of the wider budget situation in advance of the formal meeting to agree the precept.

Ahead of the 2021-2022 budget setting process, the Task and Finish Group met three times to receive information about the Police and Crime Commissioner's overall budget strategy for the forthcoming financial year. With contributions from the Acting PCC and Chief Finance Officer from the Office of the PCC, discussion took place about funding and planning assumptions, total funding projections, funding pressures, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In view of the information provided and the discussion that subsequently followed, a majority of the Group recommended that the proposal of the Police and Crime Commissioner to set the Band D Police Element of the Council Tax within Cleveland for 2021-2022 at £265.73 (an increase of £5.19, or 1.99%, over the 2020-2021 level) should be endorsed.

The Group felt that Cleveland Police had made very good progress under the current Chief Constable and were keen to support the Force in meeting demand, as well as helping to ensure that service improvements were maintained and further strengthened. However, concerns remained as to the allocation of resources across the whole of Cleveland, in particular Hartlepool and East Cleveland. The Group strongly urged the Force to ensure, as far as possible, that any additional funding made available through a precept rise benefitted all four Local Authority areas, and that the public could see tangible evidence of a return on their investment.



At the conclusion of each municipal year, the Panel produces an **Annual Report** detailing highlights of its activity during the previous 12-month period. Accessible via the PCC website (<https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/cleveland-police-and-crime-commissioner/office/police-and-crime-panel/>), the last version (2020-2021) published before Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council took on the role of supporting the Panel included the following...



- Role of the Police and Crime Panel
- Panel Membership and Attendance at Meetings
- The Panel's Core Programme
- Annual Report of the PCC
- Police and Crime Plan – Strategic Programme 2020-2021
- Panel Training
- Review into the role of PCCs
- Resignation of the PCC
- Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS)
- National Police and Crime Panel Conference
- Task and Finish Scrutiny
- HMICFRS Integrated PEEL Assessment Report 2019 update
- Heroin Assisted Treatment (HAT) Programme – Evaluation Feedback
- Complaints

Regional Joint Member / Officer Scrutiny Network

We continue to take part in the **North East Joint Member / Officer Scrutiny Network** which allows Councillors from across the region to share their work. The network also benefits from the input of guest speakers who provide their expertise and insight on important topics – this has included regular contributions from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and attendance from representatives of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

At the most recent network meeting in February 2023, we presented the key findings and recommendations from the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's recently completed review of Care at Home. During subsequent discussions, the network Chair encouraged all Local Authorities to use the Committee's work to 'temperature-check' their own local Care at Home markets.

Overview and Scrutiny Team

The Scrutiny Team is based at Municipal Buildings in Stockton and is part of the Council's Corporate Services directorate.



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Supports:

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- Crime and Disorder Select Committee



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- Place Select Committee



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Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Scrutiny Challenge for a better Borough 2019-20

What is overview and scrutiny?

Scrutiny helps to ensure that local people receive high quality services through the Council's Scrutiny Committees checking that the services and policies meet the needs of local people. It involves Councillors working with local people, the community, Council services and other organisations.

Checks and Balances

The Council's Cabinet make decisions and decide on priorities, and the Scrutiny Committees ensure that they are held to account for delivering them and that any public concerns are represented.



We have **56** Councillors **7** are on Cabinet and the remaining **49** can take part in overview and scrutiny

5

Select Committees



Adult Social Care and Health



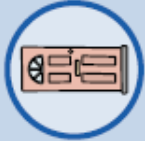
Children and Young People



Crime and Disorder



People



Place

What they do

Service Reviews • Performance Reviews • Frontline Service Visits • Emerging Trends and Issues • Scrutinise External Organisations

7

Service Reviews

- Smarter Working in Stockton – Accommodation & Buildings** – assessed the suitability of office accommodation within the existing ten Council buildings, as well as options for future workspace provision.
- Domestic Abuse and its Impact on Children** – examined the impact of domestic abuse on children and the effectiveness of interventions to inform the Domestic Abuse Strategy and future commissioning decisions.
- Area Transport Strategy** – explored the existing ATS scheme to establish if it was fit for purpose, inclusive, and allowed the public to have the appropriate level of influence, while being an efficient and effective process.
- Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home** – looked at local community infrastructure to determine whether more support was needed to help promote the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable residents (with a particular focus on those aged 80 or over).
- Obstructive and illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School** – investigated a Councillor Call for Action submitted in relation to long-standing problem parking within the vicinity of the school.
- Care Homes for Older People** – examined why the Borough's Care Homes were not achieving the same level of CQC ratings as the Tees and national average, and identified what activities could be undertaken by the Care Homes, the Local Authority and wider stakeholders to improve quality in our Homes.
- Careers Provision** – looked at the importance of having a meaningful and positive careers programme in order to increase self-esteem, attainment and reduce drop-out rates from education, which also helps children and young people to make informed choices and understand the opportunities that are open to them.
- Contaminated Land** Inspection Strategy as part of an Officer-led reporting in review in January 2020.
- A number of other reviews began during 2019-20 and will be completed in 2020-21. These involve **Hospital Discharge**, **School Uniforms**, **Fly-Grazed Horses**, **Local Council Tax Support Scheme**, **Public Consultation**, **Business Support and Engagement** and **Planters in Residential Streets**.

Executive Scrutiny Committee

- Co-ordinates the overall scrutiny work programme
- Oversight of Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- Considered a 'call-in' regarding the ongoing Globe restoration in July 2019

Focus on Health

- Performance and quality of local hospital Trusts
- Regional health service changes and reconfiguration of acute services
- Monitoring of CQC care home ratings
- Overview of Adult and Public Health Services

Focus on Police and Crime

- We support the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel:
- Scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner
 - Review the Police precept
 - Comment on the Police and Crime Plan
 - Carry out investigations

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Scrutiny Challenge for a better Borough 2020-21

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5 Select Committees



Adult Social Care and Health



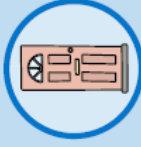
Children and Young People



Crime and Disorder



People



Place



We have **56** Councillors **7** are on Cabinet and the remaining **49** can take part in overview and scrutiny

Executive Scrutiny Committee

- Co-ordinates the overall scrutiny work programme
- Oversight of Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- Considered the Council's response to and recovery from COVID-19

Focus on Health

- Performance and quality of local hospital Trusts
- Regional health service changes and reconfiguration of acute services
- Monitoring of COC care home ratings
- Overview of Adult and Public Health Services

What they do • Service Reviews • Performance Reviews • Frontline Service Visits • Emerging Trends and Issues • Scrutinise External Organisations

7 Scrutiny Reviews

- **Hospital Discharge (Phase 1)**: examined the impact of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic on hospital discharge to local care homes, with a focus on the national guidance, the process around discharge to care homes, and any potential learning ahead of an anticipated second COVID-19 surge. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39360.pdf>
- **Cost of School Uniforms**: investigated whether school uniform policies in Stockton-on-Tees were accessible and affordable, and examined the support available for families struggling to meet uniform costs. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39602.pdf>
- **Fly-Grazed Horses**: probed the Council's and other relevant organisations' roles and responsibilities for fly-grazed horses on both Council and non-Council land, and identified the extent of concerns across the Borough regarding this practice in order to inform the creation of a formal fly-grazed horses policy. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39790.pdf>
- **Local Council Tax Support Scheme**: explored the revision of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and considered the risks of forecasting, developing and consulting on changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39593.pdf>
- **Public Consultation**: evaluated, with a view to improving, the performance of the consultation activity itself and of all Council activities that use the results of the consultations. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39595.pdf>
- **Business Support and Engagement**: assessed the Council's overall business support / engagement role, how this was utilised and viewed externally, and whether the necessary resources were in place to satisfy existing and future demand. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39604.pdf>
- **Planters in Residential Streets (Task & Finish)**: investigated the options for retaining, maintaining or removing planters in residential streets, and whether planters could be given a new lease of life by seeking third-party or community involvement. <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att39786.pdf>
- Several other reviews began during 2020-21 and will be completed in 2021-22 – these involve **Hospital Discharge (Phase 2 – discharge to an individual's own home)**, **Care Leavers EET**, **Fraud Awareness (Personal)**, **Carbon Monoxide Awareness** and **Burial Provision**.

Focus on Police and Crime

We support the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel:

- Scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Review the Police precept
- Comment on the Police and Crime Plan
- Carry out investigations

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Scrutiny Challenge for a better Borough 2021-22

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The Council's Cabinet make decisions and decide on priorities, and the Scrutiny Committees ensure that they are held to account for delivering them and that any public concerns are represented.

5 Select Committees



Adult Social
Care and Health



Children and
Young People



Crime and
Disorder



People



Place

What they do

- Service Reviews
- Performance Reviews
- Frontline Service Visits
- Emerging Trends and Issues
- Scrutinise External Organisations

We have **56** Councillors **7** are on Cabinet **49** can take part in overview and scrutiny and the remaining

Executive Scrutiny Committee

- Co-ordinates the overall scrutiny work programme
- Oversight of Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- Considered executive summaries from completed Select Committee reviews

11 Scrutiny Reviews

- **Hospital Discharge (Phase 2)**: looked at the discharge process from local hospitals to an individual's own home (not care homes), learned the key issues around discharge from both NHS Trust and patient viewpoints, and explored how carers were identified when needing hospital treatment.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att40837.pdf>
- **Multi-Agency Support to Care Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Task & Finish)**: examined the overall interplay between local care homes and their various health and care partners since the pandemic began, as well as analysing relevant data and intelligence to assess the impact of the support provided.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att41523.pdf>
- **Care Leavers EET**: assessed education, employment or training (EET) support for care leavers and explored whether the Council was doing enough and if more needed to be done to further improve performance and outcomes for young people.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att40870.doc>
- **Fraud Awareness (Personal)**: ascertained the ways in which local victims of this crime were identified and supported, and sought to understand the process for reporting (personal) fraud offences; including the role of key stakeholders in the handling of cases and how the public were made aware of the required reporting mechanisms.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att40515.pdf>
- **Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish)**: focused on information-sharing and communications in Stockton-on-Tees between neighbourhood policing, local Ward Councillors, local residents and other key stakeholders to ensure that appropriate and effective engagement mechanisms were in place.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att41976.pdf>

- **Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)**: considered the potential benefits and challenges from introducing a PSPO within the Borough, and the process which needs to be followed should the Council wish to implement such a measure to address existing anti-social behaviour.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att42178.pdf>
- **Carbon Monoxide Awareness**: aimed to gain a wider understanding of the Council's role in raising awareness of Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning and the installation of CO alarms, as well as external organisations' responsibilities/ actions.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att40853.pdf>
- **Local Government Pension Scheme (Task & Finish)**: investigated the reasons why a portion of the Council's workforce had chosen not to be members of the Teesside Local Government Pension Scheme and considered what steps might be needed to address it.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att42383.pdf>
- **Disability Inclusive Borough**: explored how the Council could contribute to a more disability inclusive Borough.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att41988.doc>
- **Burial Provision**: recognised the importance of making sure the Council provided sufficient burial space within the Borough, the impact on the Council if it were unable to provide the appropriate choice to residents, and considered the allocation of appropriate resources to ensure that any future demand was met and was delivered in a timely manner.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att40517.pdf>
- **Highways Asset Management (inc. Potholes & Flooding)**: assessed the opportunities for maintaining the Highways Infrastructure Asset as efficiently as possible (currently and in the future), set within the context of increasing demands, financial pressures, and climate change issues.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att41985.pdf>
- Several other reviews began during 2021-22 and will be completed in 2022-23 - these involve **Day Opportunities for Adults, Child Poverty, Bontires on Public Land, Fees Credit Union and Residents Parking Zones**.

Focus on Health

- Performance and quality of local hospital Trusts
- Regional health service changes and reconfiguration of acute services
- Monitoring of QCC care home ratings
- Overview of Adult and Public Health Services

Focus on Police and Crime

For most of 2021-22 we supported the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel:

- Scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Comment on the Police and Crime Plan
- Collate and produce the Panel's Annual Report

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Scrutiny Challenge for a better Borough 2022-23

What is overview and scrutiny?

Scrutiny helps to ensure that local people receive high quality services through the Council's Scrutiny Committees checking that the services and policies meet the needs of local people. It involves Councillors working with local people, the community, Council services and other organisations.

Checks and Balances

The Council's Cabinet make decisions and decide on priorities, and the Scrutiny Committees ensure that they are held to account for delivering them and that any public concerns are represented.

5 Select Committees

5



Adult Social Care and Health
Children and Young People
Crime and Disorder
People
Place

What they do

- Service Reviews
- Performance Reviews
- Frontline Service Visits
- Emerging Trends and Issues
- Scrutinise External Organisations

Executive Scrutiny Committee

- Co-ordinates the overall scrutiny work programme
- Oversight of Council Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- Considered executive summaries from completed Select Committee reviews

We have **56** Councillors **7** are on Cabinet **49** and the remaining **7** can take part in overview and scrutiny

10 Scrutiny Reviews

10

- **Day Opportunities for Adults:** sought to understand the current model used by SBC to deliver day opportunities, ascertain the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and learn about alternative methods of delivery from a community-based perspective which could potentially herald a move away from traditional building-based 'service-driven' provision.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att42653.pdf>
- **Care at Home:** examined the Care at Home system and how SBC contracted for these services, assessed the quality of provision of the Council's contracted providers and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and sought to establish future priorities to ensure continued good-quality provision which is available in the right place at the right time.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att44044.pdf>
- **Child Poverty:** as all 12 of the region's Local Authorities, including Stockton-on-Tees, were included in the top-20 areas which saw the biggest increases in child poverty between 2014-15 and 2018-19, this review aimed to gain an insight of and understand the specific issues relating to this topic.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att42858.pdf>
- **Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships:** assessed the Council's response and approach to the issues of contextual safeguarding, and examined the factors leading to a focus in this area and the work of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) hub (within this context, the review also examined violent and coercive behaviour in youth relationships).
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att44334.docx>
- **Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future:** investigated what funding was available for home efficiency improvements and whether this met the needs of Stockton-on-Tees residents, and examined the work that was taking place across the Tees Valley to create a local workforce fit for the demands of a green economy of the future.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att44298.pdf>
- **Bonfires on Public Land:** established the extent of bonfire-related concerns (e.g. personal safety, damage to property, fly-tipping, etc.) within the Borough during the traditional 'bonfire night' season, learnt what the Council and its partners have historically done to identify, address and reduce bonfire-related issues, and investigated what, if any, further measures could be put in place to strengthen the management, or reduction, of bonfires during this time period.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att43232.pdf>
- **Tree Asset Management:** an internally focused piece of work, this review ascertained the Council's legal responsibilities and its current policy for the management of public tree stock, examined the inspection and maintenance programme (including the pressures contributing to the existing backlog, and the strategy / resources in place to address this), then considered likely / potential future demand and the impact this may have on required operational arrangements.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att44329.pdf>
- **Tees Credit Union:** considered the operation of the Tees Credit Union since the merger with Moneywise in 2017 to ensure that it was serving the needs of the people of the Borough, and assessed if the Credit Union was specifically supporting the vulnerable who rely on it for the provision of loans, banking services and savings accounts at reasonable rates.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att42996.pdf>
- **Residents Parking Zones:** provided an opportunity to revise the existing 'high-level' Council policy on Residents Parking Zones, and probed the eligibility criteria for such a zone, the pros and cons associated with their implementation, and the experiences and approaches of other Local Authorities.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att42992.pdf>
- **Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space:** examined the work of the SBC Planning Service (namely pre-application advice, the effectiveness of the service (resources / performance) and planning enforcement), then focused on the issues surrounding the maintenance and adoption of open space land on new residential developments.
<http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att44302.pdf>

Focus on Health

- Performance and quality of local hospital Trusts and care services
- Regional health service changes and reconfiguration of acute services
- Monitoring OQC ratings for local health and care providers
- Challenging the regulator regarding new inspection regimes

Reflection and Future Planning

- Produced the Overview and Scrutiny: End-of-Term Report 2019-2023 (including how reviews have impacted upon services)
- Prepared scrutiny induction/ training materials ahead of the new Council term (2023-2027)

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STATUTORY FORWARD PLAN

KEY DECISIONS
(indicated by ■)

01 MARCH 2023 - 30 JUNE 2023

Description of Matter/ Decision Required	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Leader	Identity of Decision-Taker (eg Cabinet or Officer or Joint Arrangement)	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Principal Consultees	Method of Consultation	How Interested Parties may submit representations to decision-takers and end date for representations	Reports and background papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration	Notes/ Comments
1] Annual Procurement Plan/Higher Value Contracts	Director of Corporate Services	Councillor Cook - Leader of the Council	Cabinet	■													Cabinet	Meetings and email	martin.skips@stockton.gov.uk	None	Key Decision A CIA is not required
The report seeks approval from Cabinet for the procurement of higher value contracts. The report includes all known contract awards scheduled for 2023/24.																					
2] Local Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document	Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive	Councillor Cooke - Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing	Council	■													The document has been prepared alongside numerous internal departments who have an interest in the design of new developments. The statutory consultation has sought comments from all those included on the Local Plan consultation database and other	A statutory period of consultation fulfilling the requirements of the: • The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 • The Stockton-on-Tees Statement of Community Involvement (2016) This has	Statutory consultation ends on the 19th December 2022. Representations can be made to planningpolicy@stockton.gov.uk	The documents to be adopted will be the: • Local Design SPD • The following Technical Appendices o Landscaping and trees o Play areas o Shop fronts and advertisements •	Key Decision A CIA has been prepared
Supplementary Planning Documents form a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications providing guidance on the interpretation and application of Local Plan policies. It is necessary for the document to be adopted by the Council for use.																					

Description of Matter/ Decision Required	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Leader	Identity of Decision-Taker (eg Cabinet or Officer or Joint Arrangement)	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Principal Consultees	Method of Consultation	How Interested Parties may submit representations to decision-takers and end date for representations	Reports and background papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration	Notes/ Comments
																	interested groups/residents' thorough consultation activities to raise awareness of the draft document.	included the preparation of a consultation plan with activities to raise awareness and seek responses. Public Consultation was undertaken from 21st November to 19th December 2022 with documents available in all libraries/customer service centres and on the Council Website. Responses were sought via an online consultation form, paper response form and where appropriate accepted in other		Design Process Overview Background papers will be: • Community Impact Assessment • Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation Screening Report • Strategic Environmental Assessment Determination and Statement of Reasons • Consultation Statement	

Description of Matter/ Decision Required	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Leader	Identity of Decision-Taker (eg Cabinet or Officer or Joint Arrangement)	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Principal Consultees	Method of Consultation	How Interested Parties may submit representations to decision-takers and end date for representations	Reports and background papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration	Notes/ Comments
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Executive Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-2023

In addition to the Standing Items:

- Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme
- Select Committee Chairs' Updates
- Statutory Forward Plan

Date	Item	Attending
17 May	Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee – Day Opportunities for Adults	Gary Woods
26 July	MTFP Update	Garry Cummings
	Council Plan and COVID-19 Update	Julie Danks / Ian Coxon
	Final Report of the Children and Young People Select Committee – Child Poverty	Judy Trainer
	Final Report of the People Select Committee – Tees Credit Union	Judy Trainer
	Final Report of Place Select Committee – Residents Parking Zones	Gary Woods
20 September	Annual Report 2021/22	Judy Trainer
	Final Report of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee – Bonfires on Public Land	Gary Woods
25 October	MTFP Update	Garry Cummings / Tony Montague / Claire Harper
	Scrutiny of Crustacean Deaths	Jonathan Nertney
15 November	Council Plan and COVID-19 Update	Julie Danks / Ian Coxon
	Scrutiny of Crustacean Deaths	Jonathan Nertney
17 January	Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee – Care at Home	Gary Woods
	Final Report of the Children and Young People Select Committee – Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships	Judy Trainer

<p>28 March</p>	<p>Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24</p> <p>SBC Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report (2019-2023)</p> <p>Final Report of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee – Tree Asset Management</p> <p>Final Report of the Place Select Committee – Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space</p> <p>Final Report of the People Select Committee – Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future</p>	<p>Jonathan Nertney</p> <p>Jonathan Nertney</p> <p>Gary Woods</p> <p>Rebecca Saunders-Thompson</p> <p>Rebecca Saunders-Thompson</p>
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