

Date: Monday 18 September 2023 at 4.30 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, The Square,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TU

Cllr Robert Cook (Leader)

Cllr Nigel Cooke
Cllr Clare Gamble
Cllr Steve Nelson

Cllr Lisa Evans
Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy
Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE

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 13 July 2023 | (Pages 9 - 20) |
| 5 | Financial Update and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 Quarter 1 | (Pages 21 - 30) |
| 6 | SBC Overview and Scrutiny - End-of-Term Report 2019-2023 | (Pages 31 - 76) |
| 7 | Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman complaints | |
| | 2022/23(LGSCO) | (Pages 77 - 82) |
| 8 | Appointment to Outside Body - Teesside International Airport Board limited | (Pages 83 - 84) |
| 9 | LA Governor Appointments | (Pages 85 - 88) |
| 10 | Minutes of Various Bodies | (Pages 89 - 96) |
| 11 | Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2023 | (Pages 97 - 126) |

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 Officer, Peter Bell on email peter.bell@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

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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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Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday, 13th July, 2023.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Chair), Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Steve Nelson and Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E.

Officers: Mike Greene (CE), Ged Morton, Julie Butcher, Jonathan Nertney, Geraldine Brown, Judy Trainer (CS), Garry Cummings, (F,D&R&DCE), Martin Gray (ChS), Reuben Kench (CS,E&C), Carolyn Nice, Sarah Bowman-Abouna (A&H).

Also in attendance: Cllr Pauline Beall (Assistant Cabinet Member), Cllr Marc Besford (Assistant Cabinet Member), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Ted Strike.
Members of the public.

Apologies: None.

CAB 9/23 Welcome and Evacuation Procedure

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.

CAB 10/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CAB 11/23 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

CAB 12/23 Medium Term Financial Plan - Draft Outturn March 2023

Consideration was given to a report that updated Cabinet on the draft financial performance and position as at 31 March 2023.

Overall there was an improvement in the draft outturn 2022/23 financial position compared to that projected at December of around £200,000.

The Report highlighted the inflationary pressures being experienced by local authorities and set out that these would be considered further in future MTFP update reports.

The Capital Programme had been updated to incorporate new schemes and reflect those schemes completed as at the financial year end.

RESOLVED that the draft outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2023 and the updated Capital Programme be noted.

CAB **Powering our Future Report**
13/23

Consideration was given to a report that built on existing programmes of activity, including Fairer Stockton-on-Tees and the Transformation Programme (set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan, agreed at Cabinet in February 2023). It provided further detail about how these initiatives would be achieved, as part of a comprehensive approach to strategic planning, transformation and delivery for the Council.

Following the Council elections in May and confirmation of the new administration, it was timely to set out a refreshed strategic planning process to deliver Members' ambitions for the future of the Borough.

The report set out how this brought together existing and planned areas of activity to 'Power our Future', improving outcomes for Our People, Our Place and Our Economy. It was proposed that delivery was based around a long-term Vision for the Borough that be developed collaboratively with communities and puts them at the heart of everything the Council worked towards.

The recommendations in the report recognised that Stockton-on-Tees was a high performing council. However, in order to maintain excellence and respond to growing community and service pressures, the Council would need to adapt and accelerate delivery. The report identified headline Objectives to 'Power our Future', and provided detail on relevant areas of activity including:

Developing a new and ambitious long-term Vision for the future of the Borough. Led by communities and empowering them to identify the place they want to live and spend time. This would begin a new, on-going 'conversation' with residents to set shared ambitions and inform approaches to delivery.

Council Plan – developing a new Council Plan focused on People, Place and Economy. This would provide a framework to deliver the Vision developed with communities, including key deliverables and measurable outcomes. It will drive prioritisation and future service planning.

Working with partners – confirming a shared Vision and developing collaborative approaches to delivery that remove organisational boundaries to meet the needs of individuals. An inclusive and streamlined approach can ensure that the Council maximise the impact of shared resources.

Fit for Future – focusing on the areas where the Council need to do things differently over the short, medium and longer term, including:

- Service Transformations - ensuring that the council delivers excellent and efficient services that are financially sustainable and reduce inequality
- Powered by Communities – an asset based community development approach that works with communities to shape and drive our priorities, actions and monitoring through understanding and acting upon: What communities can do best; What communities require help with; What communities need outside

agencies to do for them

- Fairer Stockton-on-Tees – the Council’s strategic framework to reduce inequalities, address the underlying causes of poverty whilst focusing activity on our most deprived neighbourhoods

- Powering our People through Workforce Development – ensuring we have a workforce that is fit for the future by investing in, supporting and developing our staff, attracting and retaining a talented and committed workforce empowered to deliver services and work with communities.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The overall approach to strategic planning and delivery set out in this report be agreed.
2. The Powering our Future Objectives set out within the report be agreed.
3. The Powering our Future Principles set out within the report be agreed.
4. A Big Conversation take place with communities to develop a Vision for the future, from September 2023.
5. A new approach be agreed to strategic planning being introduced during 2023 leading to a new Corporate Plan being approved in June 2024.
6. The Council establish a Place Leadership Board to develop our approach to joint working with partners.
7. Progress be noted and future plans be agreed for the Transformation Programme, focused on Outcome-based Reviews, Service Reviews and delivering improvements in Children’s Services.
8. The alignment of Fairer Stockton-on-Tees with the Powering Our Future programme and the medium-term priority actions that will be progressed to address inequality in the Borough be noted.
9. Asset Based Community Development - an approach be agreed and programme of work is developed to embed working with our communities and partners in all that we do, based on their strengths and resources - to shape and drive our priorities, actions and monitoring of impact.
10. The development of a Workforce Strategy and Action Plan be agreed to ensure we have a workforce that can support and deliver services which are fit for the future and that a further report be presented to Cabinet.

**CAB
14/23**

Vibrant and Thriving Town Centres - Regeneration Update

Consideration was given to a report on the Council’s ambitious regeneration programme and outlined proposed next steps for place-based economic development and growth.

Ensuring the Borough's town centres are prosperous, vibrant places that are fit for future generations was key to attracting investment, creating opportunities, and improving outcomes for communities across Stockton-on-Tees.

The level of ambition was attracting significant interest from private developers, who were keen to be involved in the next phase of design and development. The report provided an update on progress to date, along with proposals to confirm future focus. It included:

- A progress report on regeneration plans for Stockton Town Centre, Thornaby and Billingham
- A proposal to consider future facilities in Stockton Town Centre, including options for the leisure centre, library and register office as well as proposing plans for the historic Town Hall and Shambles
- An update on the redevelopment of Dunedin House and our Office Accommodation Strategy
- An update on the Thornaby Town Deal and in particular the potential requirement to provide a loan to enable the development of NETA facilities
- Proposals to see a Sports Hub created in Billingham on the former Billingham Campus site

The report also considered the strategic importance of areas with further development potential, including Teesdale Business Park and the Marshalling Yards.

Building on work to date, the report proposed that regeneration blueprints be developed for each of the six towns, which would outline the vision and future strategy for these areas. The blueprints would be used to promote and inform future investment and form the basis for detailed masterplans for key sites where appropriate.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The development of regeneration blueprints for our six town centres outlining a regeneration narrative and development strategy be approved. This includes an externally commissioned blueprint for Stockton Town Centre and Teesdale.
2. The preparation of development briefs be approved and agreement to undertake more formal engagement with potential development partner/s for:
 - a. The current Municipal Buildings site and surrounding area. This should consider options for retaining/incorporating the current Stockton Central Library site
 - b. The Stockton Waterfront site adjacent to the urban park

3. Options be re-assessed for the future leisure offer for Stockton Town Centre as a component of the Stockton and Teesdale blueprint
4. The development of a Masterplan and business case be approved for development at Teesdale, based around potential for a Care and Health Zone
5. The repurposing of the Town Hall be approved in principle and the principle of re-locating the Register Office and service into the building.
6. A further report be brought once plans have been developed to allocate the funding, which is currently approved for the town centre redevelopments
7. The commitment be confirmed to supporting redevelopment in Billingham Town Centre and the work underway to assess redevelopment options for Billingham in light of the unsuccessful Levelling Up Bid be noted.
8. The allocation be approved of £4m from the £6m provided from the Tees Valley Combined Authority to help drive economic growth in Billingham as part of their refreshed 10-year investment plan in July 2022 to support the development of the Sports Hub on the former Billingham Campus site.
9. Work ongoing with Education Training Collective (ETC) to explore funding options to support the redevelopment of the NETA facility as part of Thornaby Town Deal be noted and agreement to recommend a loan of up to £4m with a further report to Council seeking formal approval should a loan be required.
10. The revised cost estimate be approved and the revised funding profile be agreed to deliver the Office Accommodation Strategy.

**CAB
15/23** **Indigenous Growth Fund Update**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF) Strategic Initiatives Programme including progress to date, changes in the economic market, and proposed programme reprofiling to stimulate inward investment, support inclusive growth, and be a catalyst for job creation across the borough using the IGF that the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) has allocated to the Council.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The reprofiled IGF Strategic Initiatives Programme at table 2 be approved and the allocation of resources from the Indigenous Growth Fund be noted.
2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance, Development and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing for expenditure of the initiative's defined in the programme.
3. Delegation be given to the Director of Finance, Development and

Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing the authority to amend the value of individual initiatives within the overall scope of the total IGF allocation to meet future market demand.

CAB Powering our Future - Senior Management Capacity Review

16/23

Consideration was given to a report on a proposal for a restructuring of the senior management of the Council (Corporate Management Team) and included the creation of a new directorate including the recruitment of a new Director post to optimise senior leadership capacity, ensure the delivery of our ambitious economic growth programme and the Powering our Future Programme provide capacity to deliver on the agreed ambitions of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

In order to ensure effective senior leadership during this period of transformation and change and to ensure that council priorities are delivered, changes were required to the Council's current senior management structure. This would see the creation of one additional director and a rebalancing of portfolios across the corporate management team. The proposed changes would provide additional strategic leadership and focus, in addition to providing support to members and the Chief Executive to lead and deliver the Council's transformation, regeneration and growth plans.

The proposals identify that separating out the regeneration and place making functions from the council's finance functions and transformation programme would increase capacity and focus enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency resulting in overall better outcomes for communities and the borough as a whole. The fundamental issue in bringing forward these proposals was that there was a lack of senior capacity and therefore the ability to deliver and continue delivering over the medium to longer term was at risk unless this is strengthened.

Services 'in scope' of the new Regeneration and Growth directorate include:-

- Place development
- Economic Development
- Major Projects
- Highways Design
- Property/Assets/FM
- Planning and Building Control
- Learning and Skills

It was proposed that these services form the core of the new directorate. The review also considered that fairer Stockton on Tees and strategic housing could be better delivered if more closely aligned with the existing adults and health portfolio. As this change was only relatively minor, in terms of the number of employees affected, it had already been made under delegated powers by changing line management responsibilities.

Services 'in scope' of the revised Finance, Transformation and Performance directorate included:-

- Finance
- Revenues, Benefits and Welfare
- Xentrall
- Powering our Future Programme
- Strategic Planning and Performance

In addition, the additional responsibilities also of the Deputy Chief Executive would remain.

The process to introduce a new director would take some time, usually at least 6 months (or more) for a senior level recruitment, therefore be necessary to put in place some interim arrangements whilst that process begins.

There was a recognition that as the transformation programme delivered out, that the management capacity needed by the council would need to flex and change. The report therefore recognised that at the culmination of the transformation programme it was likely to be necessary to take a fresh look at senior capacity at that time.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The post of Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth be created with the responsibilities as set out within the report.
2. The modifications to the role of the Director Finance, Development and Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive including a change in job title to Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance with the responsibilities as set out within the report be approved.
3. The Chief Executive be delegated to make whatever arrangements are necessary to implement the new directorate structures, including any necessary changes to responsibilities at or below director level.

CAB
17/23 **Volunteering Policy**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council's Volunteering Policy.

In recognition of the importance of volunteering to the Borough's residents and communities Cabinet considered an approach to employer supported volunteering, that encompassed employee volunteering leave of absence, volunteering as part of a team development day and employer organised volunteering opportunities.

In July 2021 Cabinet endorsed 'People Power: A Volunteering Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees 2021 to 2026'. This Volunteering Strategy was co-produced by the Council and Catalyst with the aim of informing, supporting, and developing volunteering within the borough.

The vision detailed in the Volunteering Strategy was to ensure that the Council had a borough where:

- More people will be sharing their skills and talents for the good of the community through volunteering.
- Volunteering in the Borough will be a positive experience for volunteers and the people and organisations they volunteer with.
- The contribution volunteers make to the Borough will be recognised and celebrated.

The Council's current leave of absence policy provided employees with the ability to request unpaid leave to undertake volunteering in work time. Subject to Cabinet approval it was proposed to introduce a new employee policy, this specifically outlined the commitment to supporting employees to volunteer within the borough of Stockton-on-Tees in work time. A full copy of the proposed Employee Volunteering Policy was attached to the report.

The policy would also form part of the approach to Stockton Futures. By encouraging and supporting Council employees to take time of work to volunteer in our community we will be supporting the principles of:

- Empowered communities - Understanding our communities & helping them to thrive in the way that they choose;
- Collaborate with communities – starting a new conversation with residents & communities to describe what we want the Borough to be like in future;
- Positive conversations - Focussing on the strengths of people & communities;
- People Centric – removing organisational boundaries to ensure that we meet the needs of individuals ;
- Equality - Aiming to reduce inequality across the Borough in everything we do;
- Doing things differently - Developing creative & original ways to make a difference;
- Stronger together - Developing a shared understanding of what we can do together to have the biggest impact.

RESOLVED that the Employee Volunteering Policy be approved.

**CAB
18/23** **Electoral Update**

Consideration was given to a report that provided feedback from the Local and Parish Elections in May 2023 and gave an update on the further implementation of the Elections Act 2022.

The next scheduled elections were the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections and Tees Valley Mayoral Elections in May 2024. Stockton would again be the lead for these elections and preliminary planning work would commence shortly. In addition, the next Parliamentary Elections would need to be held by

28 January 2025. It was likely that the Parliamentary elections would be on new boundaries and in Stockton's case, constituency boundaries would be shared with Middlesbrough and Darlington.

**CAB
19/23** **Modern Slavery Statement**

Consideration was given to a report on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement.

The Council was committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in the delivery of its services and corporate activities. The Council recognised that modern slavery and human trafficking remained a hidden blight on society and that the Council had a responsibility to be vigilant in spotting associated risks and to strive to ensure that its supply chains were free from modern slavery and human trafficking at any level.

The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement detailed the steps the Council had taken to understand potential modern slavery and human trafficking risks related to its business and the measures adopted with the aim of ensuring that these offences were not committed through the delivery of services or via supply chains. A copy of the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement be approved.

**CAB
20/23** **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report in the Public Interest**

Consideration was given to a report on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report in the Public Interest.

On 30 May 2023 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman wrote to the Chief Executive to confirm that after consideration of a complaint they had received, they have decided to issue their findings as a public interest report. The Ombudsman could issue a public interest report where they thought it was important to raise awareness of an investigation, because of its seriousness and significance and that by highlighting the learning from complaints, it could help to improve services for others. The facts of the case were detailed within the report.

The Ombudsman required that the Council discuss their findings and recommendations at a high decision-making level of elected members, which for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council was Cabinet.

The Council had accepted the Ombudsman's recommendations in full and the actions to improve processes and policies to ensure other young adults and their families were treated fairly and in line with statutory and good practice guidance would all be fully completed within the three-month timeline.

The Ombudsman completed the investigation into this complaint by issuing a report because it was considered to be in the public interest to do so, given the significant injustice caused to the complainant, and because it was considered to be a significant topical issue.

To comply with requirements surrounding a Report in the Public Interest, a notice was required to be put in two local newspapers advising of the existence of the report and how a copy could be obtained by any member of the public. A physical copy would be available through the Customer Service access point at the main library.

RESOLVED that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Report in the Public Interest following Investigation Reference 22 010 732 be noted and all the recommendations contained within be fully implemented.

**CAB
21/23** **Xentrall Annual Report 2022/23**

Consideration was given to a report on the Xentrall Annual Report 2022/23. The annual report allowed Cabinet to review the progress and performance of Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership and demonstrated how Xentrall had delivered savings across the board whilst continuing to improve performance and customer satisfaction. Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership, was established in May 2008 and was in its sixteenth year. The Xentrall services were:

- ICT (strategy and operations)
- Transactional HR (payroll, pensions, recruitment, sickness absence)
- Transactional Finance (creditors, debtors, banking, schools finance)
- Design & Print (professional buyer, in-house design and print)

The original business case identified a number of efficiencies and benefits to be delivered resulting in initial savings of £7.4m over the original ten-year period of the partnership. The successful partnership arrangement had delivered all these plus additional efficiencies and benefits and significant additional savings as reported to Members over previous years. At the same time the quality and performance of services had not been compromised but improved, with both customer and staff satisfaction increasing over the life of the partnership.

This was a significant achievement for a public/public partnership and it compared very well to other private sector partnerships many of which had failed over the same period or been brought back in-house and for a variety of reasons. Both Councils had benefited both financially and through a continued programme of service improvements brought throughout the lifetime of the partnership.

Despite the internal and external challenges faced by the partnership, Xentrall continued to perform well and deliver developmental projects alongside its day-

to-day services to both Councils and external customers. The negative impact on supplies caused by the pandemic and war in Ukraine was subsiding, but the additional pressure of inflation continued to be a concern, particularly at renewal points in external contracts. Future activities of Xentrall were detailed within the report

As with previous years, the continual service improvement mentality within Xentrall would be applied to leverage any further service improvements and/or savings for both Councils. Xentrall would also continue to assess new partnering and business opportunities, should these arise. This aligned with its business plan of tactically growing the business, which in turn helps to support both Council's Medium-Term Financial Plans.

CAB
22/23 **Minutes of Various Bodies**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution or previous practice the minutes of the meeting of the bodies indicated below were submitted to Cabinet for consideration:-

TSAB – 19 April 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes as detailed be received.

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook

FINANCIAL UPDATE AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (2023/24 QUARTER 1)

SUMMARY

This report summarises the Council's financial performance and position at the end of the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

The financial position for the Council for the first quarter of the financial year (to 30th June 2023) highlights a projected overall overspend of £3.7m. The biggest pressures continue to be pay award and Children's Services and more details are provided in the body of the report. The position will continue to be closely monitored and managed throughout the remainder of the financial year, however if the pressures materialise as expected, we will need to review earmarked reserves to identify where the shortfall can be funded from in order to avoid using general fund balances.

The Report highlights the significant financial challenges presented by the current inflationary environment in both the current year and into the medium term. Whilst we are still awaiting details of the financial settlement for next year it is inevitable that there will be significant challenges in the future. These challenges are not unique to Stockton and are being faced by many Councils across the Country, many of which are in a more difficult financial position. Whilst we are able to re-direct earmarked reserves to resolve immediate pressures this is not sustainable over the medium to long term and the position needs to be addressed.

Members will be aware of the commitment to commence a transformation programme and this is underway with Children's Services a key area of focus. Work is underway to look at areas where savings can be materialised sooner as well as areas where spend can be reduced, through the transformation work.

The report also presents an update on the Capital Programme.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS

To update Members on the Council's financial performance and the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the update to the Medium Term Financial Plan and the current level of General Fund balances be noted.
2. That the revised Capital Programme at **Appendix A** be noted.

DETAIL**FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023****GENERAL FUND**

1. The following table details the projected budget outturn position for each Directorate in 2023/24, based on information to 30th June 2023. The position includes the emerging impact of inflationary pressures and details of the key variances are described in subsequent paragraphs of the report.

Directorate	Annual Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance Q1 Over/(Under)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults, Health & Wellbeing	86,453	86,453	0
Children's Services	48,754	53,754	5,000
Community Services, Environment & Culture	52,407	52,641	234
Finance, Development & Regeneration	13,246	13,101	(145)
Corporate Services	11,677	11,465	(212)
Corporate Items	9,747	7,070	(2,677)
Total	222,284	224,484	2,200
Pay Offer Pressure		1,500	1,500
Revised Total	222,284	225,984	3,700

2. The projected position indicates a significant financial pressure for the current financial year, largely as a result of inflationary pressures, the pay award offer and pressures on placements for children. The position will be kept under close review for the remainder of the year, with actions to be identified to mitigate the position.

Reasons for Variances over £100,000**Adults, Health and Wellbeing**

3. We are seeing some early indications of financial pressures caused by an increase in number and costs of residential placements. Work is underway to mitigate these pressures which includes a continued focus on supporting people to live independently and given it is early in the year, it is currently envisaged that these actions will mitigate the pressures.
4. Inflationary uplift on Public Health contracts is increasing costs by £130,000. This is being funded by inflation on the Public Health grant which was announced recently.

Children's Services

5. Members will be aware of the ongoing financial pressures we are experiencing in relation to children in our care. The MTFP outturn report in July outlined another significant overspend against budget, and additional resources were allocated as part of the 2023/24 budget in February, however pressures are exceeding those additional resources. The costs of Children in our Care continue to be the main element of the pressure.
6. The transformation programme is now underway and there is a key focus on placement sufficiency and how we provide care for our looked after children. The work is wide ranging, linked to the overall Children's Services improvement journey and will focus on outcomes for children as well as cost but at this point in time it is difficult to predict financial savings. There were also assumptions on savings from initiatives incorporated into the budget however the

activity to generate the savings has been delayed. These activities are being reviewed and incorporated into the transformation programme, which together with a robust programme management approach should ensure plans are implemented.

7. The service area is also experiencing higher staffing costs due to agency staff covering vacancies and this means that the turnover target agreed at budget setting is not being achieved and this is adding to the service pressure. Again, this is an area of focus of the transformation programme.

Community Services, Environment and Culture

8. Members will recall that additional resources have been allocated towards inflation costs, specifically energy and fuel. The Council procures energy through the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) and they aim to minimise cost increases by purchasing in advance where it is beneficial to do so. NEPO have purchased the majority of our energy for the current year in advance, in order to minimise any potential risks of supply shortage and higher prices. The result of this is that the lower energy prices will start to materialise in future years. The energy market continues to remain volatile and it is an area that we are keeping under constant review.
9. The costs of providing concessionary transport is expected to be lower than budgeted by (£400,000). This will be partly offset by lower car parking income of £230,000.
10. Income generated through the sale of recyclable materials is higher than budgeted due to a positive market value for these items currently being experienced (£120,000).
11. There is an anticipated overspend on grounds maintenance costs of £230,000 due to additional activity including at grass verges adjacent to highways.
12. The Service are experiencing cost pressures relating to Community Transport Services of £264,000 due to an increase in the volume of services required to be delivered.

Finance, Development and Regeneration

13. A small percentage of local housing rent allowances are not eligible for subsidy creating a pressure of £220,000.
14. These are offset by employee savings of (£540,000).

Corporate Services Directorate

15. Employee savings due to staff turnover are forecast to be (£300,000).

Corporate Areas

16. Treasury Management costs (AMRA) are expected to be lower than budget (£1,000,000). The Council is currently benefiting from an improved cash flow position meaning that external borrowing will not be required as soon as originally anticipated. The recent increases in interest rates also result in significantly higher than projected income from external investments.
17. The Council receives grants from Government for business rate reliefs and our business rate 'top up' that we receive as part of the overall Local Government Finance system. These grants have benefited from inflationary uplift which has been higher due to the higher rates of inflation and income is anticipated to be (£1,800,000) higher than budget.

Pay Offer 2023/24

18. The National Local Government Employers organisation have offered a pay award to local government employees of a flat rate £1,925 per annum. The unions have rejected this offer and are balloting its members on potential industrial action. If this offer were implemented, employee costs would increase by around 5.9% in 2023/24. Members will recall that the Budget for 2023/24 was set including a provision for a pay award of 4%. The additional cost should the offer be accepted is projected at £1,500,000. It should be noted that this additional cost will also carry forward in future years.

Employee Turnover

19. Members will recall in the budget report to Council in February 2023, we introduced an employee turnover provision in staff budgets. This is a budgeted saving of £2,500,000 across all staff budgets reflecting financial savings that arise naturally through staff turnover and vacancies during recruitment periods. The projected performance against this saving is included in the numbers above by directorate, but the overall total is a shortfall of £300,000 mainly due to the agency costs outlined in Children's Services.

General Fund Balances & Reserves

20. The Council aims to retain General Fund Balances at a prudent level, currently at £8,000,000. There are no additional balances available to fund the overspend.

21. Should the position summarised in the paragraphs above materialise at year end and reductions in spending are not identified, then the balances available at the end of the financial year would be £4,300,000. This would be below the £8m threshold by £3,700,000 and then those balances would require to be replenished in 2024/25.

22. In addition to the £8m General Fund balances the Council holds a number of earmarked reserves. This is funding earmarked for specific reasons such as insurance fund, fleet renewal fund, Public Health and Adults Integration reserves but could be re-directed to fund core expenditure. If savings do not materialise to fund the overspend, in order to replenish the general fund reserves, we would need to look at redirecting funds from these reserves.

23. Members will recall from the MTFP report in July that the overspend last year was funded by surplus balances of £1.4m as well as releasing earmarked reserves of £2.3m. The use of reserves to fund overspends is not sustainable and it is a key area that we must work to avoid as part of the transformation programme.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

24. There continues to be a high level of uncertainty in terms of future funding for local government:

- There is limited information available for indicative national funding totals for 2024/25, however there is no further information available for future years.
- The Local Government Finance Settlement is unlikely to be announced until mid/end December.

25. This funding uncertainty coincides with significant volatility and uncertainty on expenditure and income pressures. Inflation and interest rates will continue to impact on future position and the pay award for 2023/24 is uncertain.

26. Members will recall that savings were built into the budget in February 2023 alongside the introduction of the Council's transformation programme. This will be intrinsically linked to the MTFP and update reports will be presented to Cabinet.

CAPITAL

27. As with revenue expenditure and income, the public sector and local authorities are now experiencing significant pressures relating to capital schemes and construction contracts. The position will be closely monitored and any impact on the Capital Programme identified.

28. The Capital Programme is shown at **Appendix A** and summarised in the table below:

CAPITAL PROGRAMME Up to 2026	Current Approved Programme £'000	Programme Revisions £'000	Revised Programme £'000
School Investment Programme & Childrens Services	46,630	1,217	47,847
Housing Regeneration Development & Growth	35,754	1,819	37,573
Town Centres	118,524	1,002	119,526
Transportation	43,239	661	43,900
Community & Environment, Culture & Leisure	17,743	1,765	19,508
Adults & Public Health	447	170	617
Total Approved Capital MTFP	262,337	6,634	268,971

Reasons for movements over £100,000

New schemes

Transportation

29. A S278 contribution totalling £120k in respect of Green Lane/Yarm housing developments, funding via the developer has been added to the programme.

30. Grant funding from TVCA for £660k for road widening works on the A19 / A689 has been added to the programme

Community & Environment, Culture & Leisure

31. Improvements to the play provision at Redbrook Park has been included, £110k funded from developer agreements.

32. Habitat restoration scheme at Billingham Beck has been included, £120k funded from developer agreements.

Other

33. Works at Whitton Landfill site have been included, £170k funded from RCCO.

Additional funding

Schools Investment Programme

34. Grant funding for Schools Capital Maintenance for 2023/24 has been added to the programme, £1,162k.

Transportation

35. National Highways funding has been agreed for West Stockton, £150k.

36. A contribution for £270k has been agreed with Middlesbrough Borough Council for works at Newport Bridge, along with £150k allocated from the City Region Sustainable Transport grant.

Community & Environment, Culture & Leisure

37. Building planned maintenance programme has been added to the programme, £1,222k funded from RCCO.

38. £197.9k has been added to the capital programme to deliver improvements at Wynyard Woodland Park, funded from developer agreements.

Housing

39. Grant funding for Disabled Facilities for 2023/24 has been included in the programme, £1,804.6k.

Town Centres Investment

40. The Capital Programme has been revised to reflect the match funding element for Yarm LUF, £1,952k which includes additional funding of £323.6k from external contributions and RCCO.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

41. As part of the process of making changes to policy or delivery of services, we consider the impact on our communities. No changes to policy or service delivery are proposed as part of this report.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

42. No direct implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

43. The report summarises the financial position for 2023/24 based on information for the first quarter of the financial year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

44. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

45. This update to the MTFP is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

46. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy – Council 22 February 2023.
Financial Outturn Report – Cabinet 13 July 2023

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Appendix A

CAPITAL PROGRAMME Up to 2026	Current Approved Programme	Programme Revisions	Revised Programme	Expenditure Apr 2017 - June 2023
SCHOOL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME & CHILDRENS SERVICES				
School Investment Programme	38,325,765	1,162,074	39,487,839	16,251,524
Children Investment	8,304,268	54,663	8,358,931	505,279
SCHOOL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME & CHILDRENS SERVICES	46,630,032	1,216,737	47,846,769	16,756,802
HOUSING REGENERATION, DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH				
Housing Regeneration	1,465,311	0	1,465,311	5,451
Inclusive Growth & Development	6,986,642	0	6,986,642	370,718
Private Sector Housing	220,881	1,819,293	2,040,174	412,158
Office Accommodation	27,080,721	0	27,080,721	471,066
HOUSING REGENERATION DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH	35,753,555	1,819,293	37,572,848	1,259,393
TOWN CENTRES				
Stockton Town Centre Schemes	2,864,451	50,000	2,914,451	982,073
Reshaping Town Centres	10,662,960	(1,000,000)	9,662,960	427,843
Billingham Town Centre	10,000,000	0	10,000,000	245,956
Thornaby Town Centre	29,800,440	0	29,800,440	1,854,245
Re-Development of Castlegate Site	43,635,313	0	43,635,313	15,241,848
Yarm & Eaglescliffe LUF	20,048,000	1,952,000	22,000,000	1,584,976
Infrastructure Enhancements, Regeneration & Property Acquisitions	1,512,366	0	1,512,366	54,248
TOWN CENTRES	118,523,530	1,002,000	119,525,530	20,391,189
TRANSPORTATION				
City Regional Sustainable Transport	20,047,605	(170,000)	19,877,605	0
Other Transport Schemes	19,778,305	781,439	20,559,744	14,547,549
Developer Agreements	3,413,351	50,000	3,463,351	3,027,134
TRANSPORTATION	43,239,261	661,439	43,900,700	17,574,683
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE & LEISURE				
Energy Efficiency Schemes	1,132,724	0	1,132,724	1,131,078
Environment and Green Infrastructure	11,578,774	467,889	12,046,663	2,376,598
Building Management	2,187,916	1,222,002	3,409,918	613,097
Vehicle Replacement	2,843,438	75,266	2,918,704	1,283,710
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE & LEISURE	17,742,852	1,765,157	19,508,009	5,404,483
ADULTS & HEALTH				
Adults & Public Health Investment	446,628	170,000	616,628	89,872
ADULTS & HEALTH	446,628	170,000	616,628	89,872
Total Approved Capital MTFP	262,335,858	6,634,626	268,970,484	61,476,422

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Leader of the Council – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Bob Cook

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

SUMMARY

A Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report has been produced for the recently concluded four-year Council term (covering the period 2019-2023) and is attached for Cabinet’s information.

RECOMMENDED THAT THE REPORT BE NOTED


The latest statutory overview and scrutiny guidance highlights the need to maintain a strong organisational culture, including regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny, and communication of scrutiny’s role and purpose to the wider Local Authority. It is therefore recommended that the contents of this report be noted.

DETAIL

1. An Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report was produced for the period 2019-2023 and is attached at **Appendix 1**. The report highlights the work of the Council’s scrutiny function during the last four years and contains infographics which summarise each year’s work programme in detail (these infographics act as each year’s Annual Report). Importantly, it also includes examples of how the outcomes from Select Committee reviews have impacted upon future service provision.
2. The End-of-Term Report was considered by each Select Committee prior to the recent Local Government Elections, as well as the Council’s Executive Scrutiny Committee.
3. It is important to note that review recommendations were made at a certain point in time, and naturally as the report covers a four-year period, a number of the issues covered have since developed further.
4. Aside from those relating to recently completed reviews, the majority of scrutiny recommendations from this period have been subject to monitoring by Select Committees and have been signed-off as complete.
5. Production of the End-of-Term Report and consideration by Cabinet and Council (20 September 2023) supports the aims of the statutory guidance. Consideration of the report by Council also fulfils the requirements of the SBC Constitution.


CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

6. As previously noted, all five of the Council's Select Committees and the Executive Scrutiny Committee have considered the Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report 2019-2023 during March 2023. The report was also circulated to all SBC staff for information via the Keeping You in Touch (KYiT) weekly newsletter on 5 May 2023.



KYiT
WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

5 May 2023

 **Overview and Scrutiny**
End-of-Term Report 2019-2023

SBC Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report 2019-2023 ✓

The recently published SBC Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report 2019-2023 provides a compilation of all scrutiny activity during the soon-to-be-completed four-year Council term. You can access the report on the [Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council website](#).

Key highlights include:

- what 'Overview and Scrutiny' is, and how this is organised at the Council
- completed reviews during 2019-2023 (listed in order of Select Committee, links to each final report are included for wider reading, as are 'impact' boxes to demonstrate how the Select Committees' work has led to service change / improvement)
- other scrutiny-related work (quality assurance, monitoring, training and development, promoting the scrutiny function)
- regional scrutiny involving SBC
- annual infographics giving brief summaries of the reviews undertaken by each of the Select Committees during the individual municipal years from 2019-2023 (see appendices)

7. In addition, the report has been shared with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) as an example of local overview and scrutiny activity. CfGS has recently contacted the Scrutiny Team with a view to using this as a case study for other Local Authorities.

NEXT STEPS

8. The Overview and Scrutiny – End-of-Term Report 2019-2023 will be submitted for consideration at the Council meeting in September 2023.

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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	

<h3>ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH</h3>  Chair Cllr Evaline Cunningham  Vice-Chair Cllr Clare Gamble	<h3>CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE</h3>  Chair Cllr Carol Clark  Vice-Chair Cllr Barbara Inman	<h3>CRIME & DISORDER</h3>  Chair Cllr Pauline Beall  Vice-Chair Cllr Paul Weston	<h3>PEOPLE</h3>  Chair Cllr Marilyn Surtees  Vice-Chair Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell	<h3>PLACE</h3>  Chair Cllr Chris Barlow  Vice-Chair Cllr Mohammed Javed
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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.

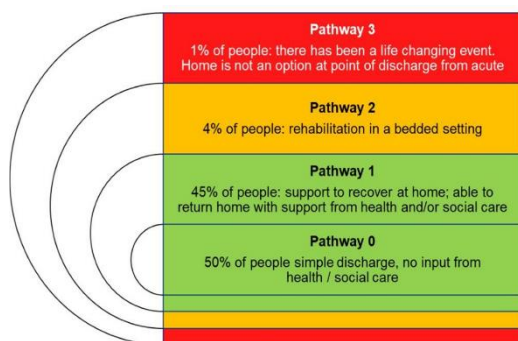


Figure 1: Discharge to Assess model

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...

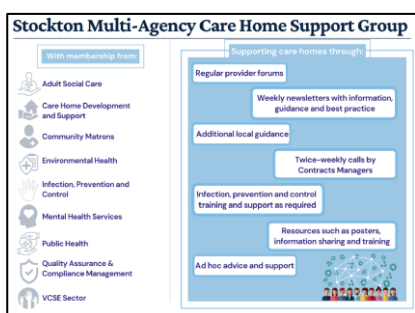
- Local NHS Trust discharge policies reviewed / updated to reflect the Committee's findings.
- Greater focus on identifying carers (of all ages) and raising awareness of / working with carer support services (i.e. Eastern Ravens for young carers).
- Highlighted the successful NTHFT *Home But Not Alone* 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 (click [here](#) for full report)

2021-2022 / 2022-2023

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](#)

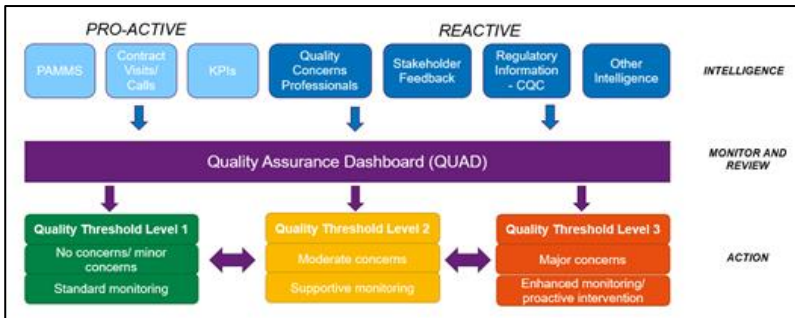


Virtual Site Visit: Allensway (Feb 22)

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.

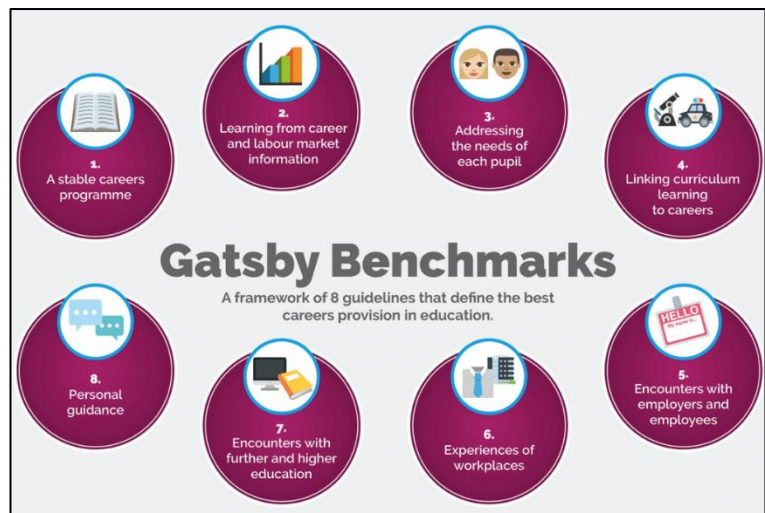
Careers Provision

(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.

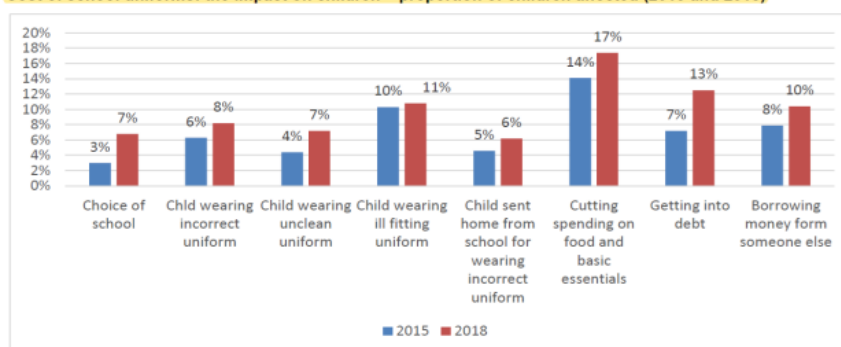
Cost of School Uniform

(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

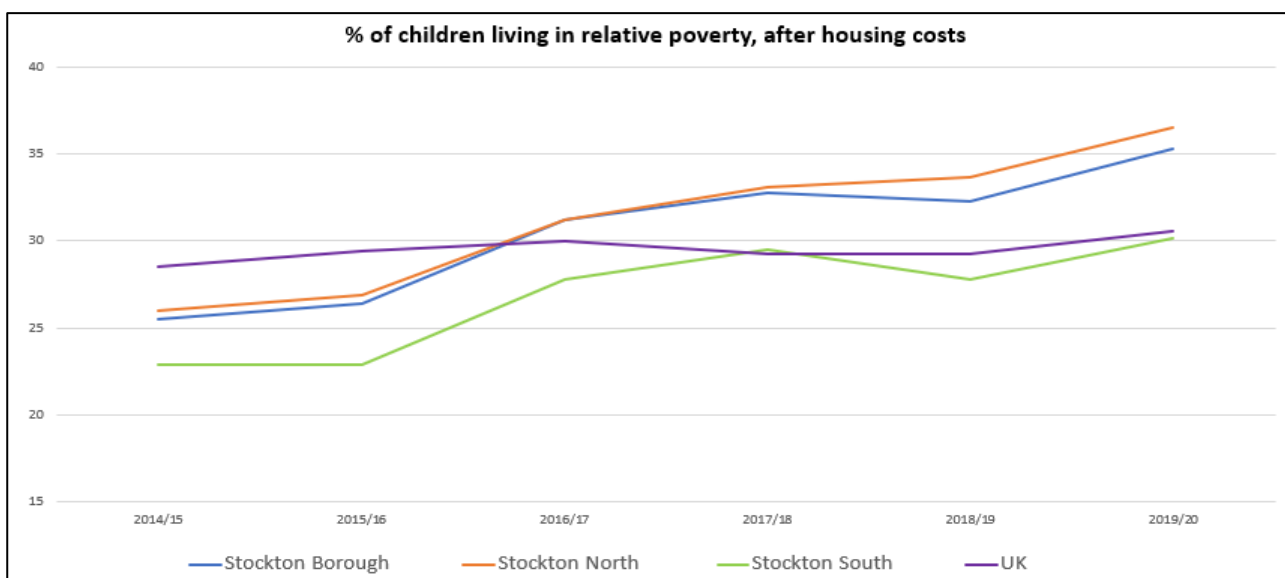
Child Poverty

(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](#)

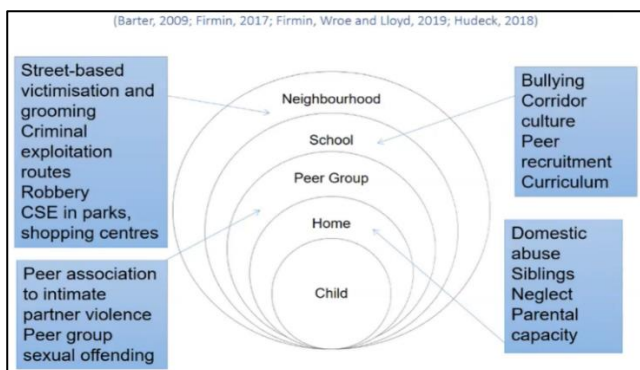
Impact...

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- 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.

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.



Action Fraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre
0300 123 2040

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.



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)

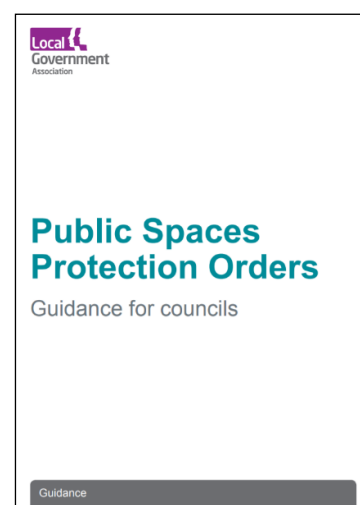
2021-2022

(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

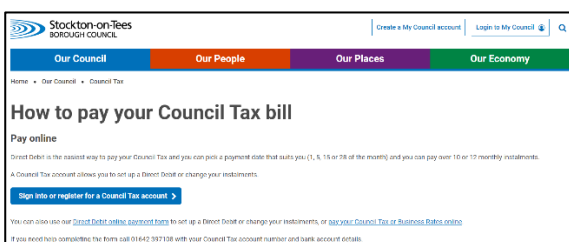
Impact...

- 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

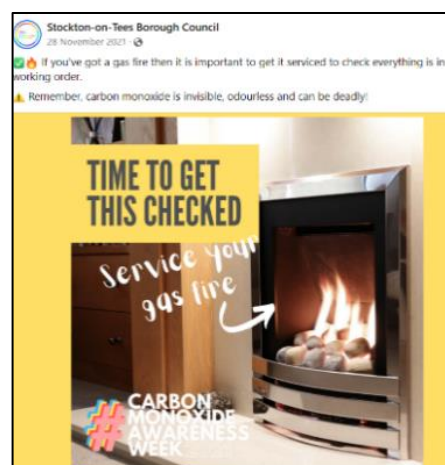
(click [here](#) for full report)

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.

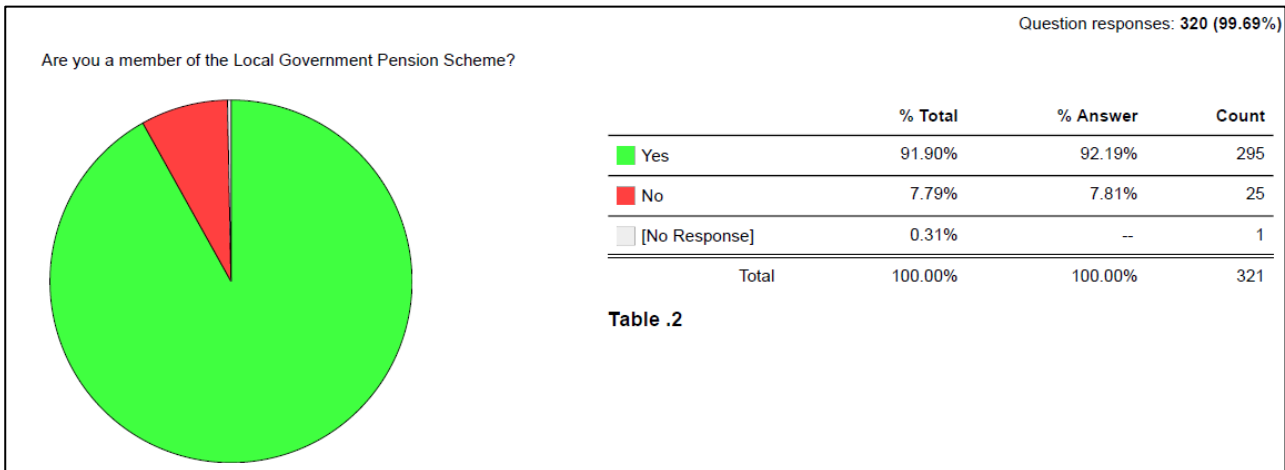
Local Government Pension Scheme (Task & Finish) (click [here](#) for full report)

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...

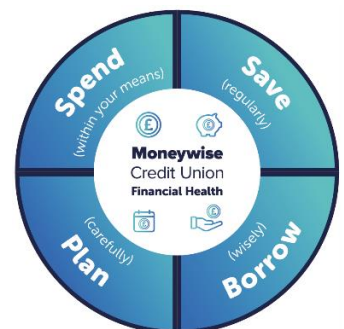
- Increased LGPS membership.
- Increase in the number of employees accessing the AVC scheme.
- It has been confirmed that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is the top performing Authority across the whole country. This is based on the number of scheme plans as a percentage of LGPS membership.

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](#)

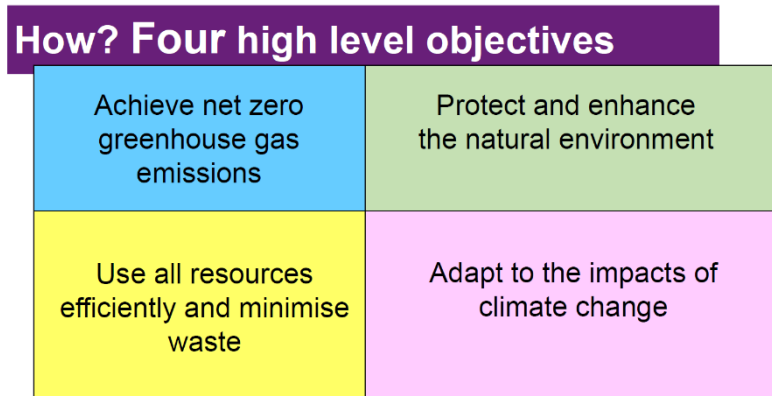


Impact...

- 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

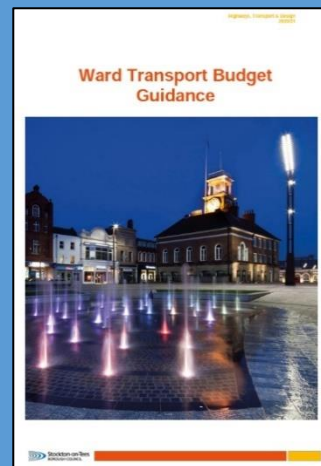
The Area Transport Strategy (ATS) scheme provides the community with an opportunity to influence where the Council targets its limited funding on improving the highway. Whilst the Committee endorsed this fundamental principal of engaging with the public, the evidence received demonstrated a number of 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)

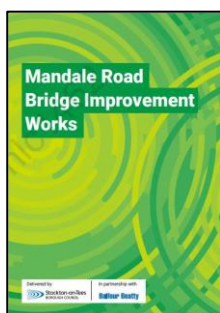
This review provided Members with the opportunity to review the current levels of burial provision within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. Members were asked to determine if there was sufficient capacity to allow the Council to continue to provide the appropriate choice to residents. The recommendations 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.

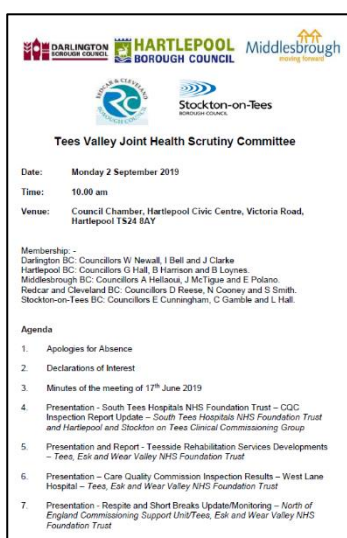
Regional Scrutiny

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:

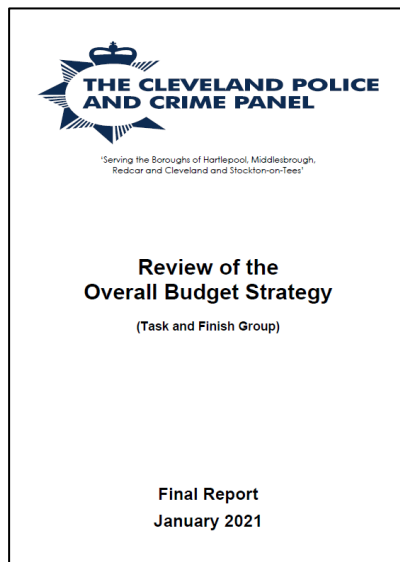
- Scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
- Review the Police precept
- Contribute to the development of the Police and Crime Plan
- Considering proposed appointments by the PCC
- Carry-out investigations

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:

- Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee
- Crime and Disorder Select Committee



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Senior Scrutiny Officer

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Supports:

- People Select Committee
- Place Select Committee



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For general enquiries, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 01642 528158 or at scrutiny@stockton.gov.uk. Further information can be found by visiting our website www.stockton.gov.uk/scrutiny.

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



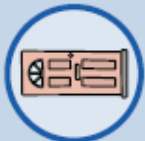
Adult Social Care and Health
Children and Young People



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



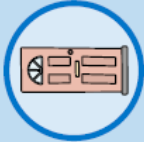
Children and Young People



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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5 Select Committees



Adult Social
Care and Health



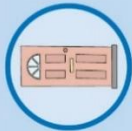
Children and
Young People



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

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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 **49** can take part in overview and scrutiny and the remaining

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

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)

10 Scrutiny Reviews

- **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>

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Bob Cook

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGSCO) COMPLAINTS. LOCAL AUTHORITY REPORT FOR STOCKTON ON TEES FOR 2022/23.

SUMMARY

The report provides Cabinet with details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's annual review letter for the Council for 2022/23. There were 34 enquiries submitted to the Ombudsman during the year, of these 10 met the threshold for a detailed investigation by the Ombudsman. Of the 10 complaint investigations, 7 were upheld. All recommendations made by the Ombudsman, following their investigations, have been implemented. There was one formal public interest report that has been published, however this relates to a decision made in 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet notes the report which sets out that no LGSCO formal public interest reports has been received in 22/23, however there has been one formal public interest report that has been published. This relates to a decision made in 2023/24.
2. Cabinet note that effective procedures remain in place to ensure that all learning from Ombudsman recommendations and findings take place.

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure Members are aware of the position regarding complaints to the Ombudsman about the Council.

DETAIL

1. The Ombudsman published in July 2023, its annual letter and summary of statistics on the complaints and enquiries it has received about Stockton on Tees Borough Council and the decisions made in that respect, for the year ended 31 March 2023.
2. It is positive to note that, whilst all complaints are considered very seriously and all recommendations and learning have been adopted, there have again been no formal public interest reports issued during the year. Of the 34 complaints and enquiries dealt with by the Ombudsman in 2022/23, 10 received a detailed investigation, with 7 of the 10 complaints being upheld.
3. A copy of the 2022/23 performance is attached at **Appendix 1** to the report. A useful

guide to interpretation of the Ombudsman's statistics is available on the [LGO website](#).

4. **Number of complaints received** - There has been a consistent number of complaints made to the Ombudsman in 2022/23, 34 which is the same number received in 2021/22. To provide some context for the number of complaints for the Borough, please see **Appendix 2** for comparisons with Tees Valley, Northeast and CIPFA Nearest Neighbours Local Authorities. The profile of the complaints received for Stockton across the categories set by the Ombudsman is as follows:

Category	Complaints received 2021/22	Complaints received 2022/23
Adult Care Services	11	6
Benefits & Tax	4	7
Corporate and Other	0	3
Education and Children's Services	11	15
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	2	1
Highways & Transport	1	0
Housing	1	1
Planning & Development	4	1
Other / "Null" insufficient information to categorise	0	0
Total	34	34

5. **Number of decisions made by the Ombudsman in 2022/23** – The Ombudsman made 37 decisions in 2022/23, again consistent with the 37 decisions in 2021/22.

Decision outcome	2021/22	2022/23
Closed after initial enquiry	14	13
Incomplete or invalid	2	1
Detailed investigation - Not Upheld	8	3
Detailed investigation - Upheld	5	7
Referred back for local resolution	7	13
Advice given	1	0
Total	37	37

6. **Number of detailed investigations undertaken and uphold rate** - Detailed investigations decreased from 13 in 2021/22 to 10 in 2022/23, however the of complaints upheld increased from five to seven. The Upheld rate of 70% compares with a national rate of 74%. The Ombudsman do now prioritise cases where it is in the public interest to investigate. As a result of this, the Ombudsman are less likely to carry out investigations into 'borderline' issues and are finding a higher proportion of fault. While working in this more sustainable way the Ombudsman are seeing a steady increase to the upheld rate. Of the seven complaints upheld, two related to Adults Care Services (the same as 2021/22), one relating to a care provider and the other occupational health, and five Education and Children's Services, two relating to SEN, two relating to social care and one the HAF programme.
7. **Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority** - The Council's Customer Feedback and Complaints policy provides robust procedures for dealing with complaints about Council services at an early stage. The LGSCO annual report and

figures suggest that the council is managing its early resolution processes well, and it considered that one of the 7 cases upheld, provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint was investigated by the Ombudsman. Satisfactory remedies provided by the authority significantly reduces the workload of the Ombudsman and subsequently the Local Authority. Although only one of the 7 cases upheld provided this, the Early Resolution process, which was introduced across the whole authority from October 2019 is working well. The authority received a total of 202 complaints in 2022/23, with 167 or 83% resolved at Early Resolution stage. An increase in our approach to consider remedies as part of our complaints process will benefit both the Local Authority and the LGSCO, should it progress to them.

8. **Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations** – This is a key indicator monitored by the Ombudsman and performance in 2022/23 shows that 100% of the recommendations made by the Ombudsman with respect to any complaints upheld, have been actioned. This compares with a national compliance rate of 99.3%
9. **Public Interest Reports** – The Ombudsman publishes public interest reports for more serious cases in order to share the lessons learned from the cases they investigate, as well as holding authorities to account. In 2022/23 38 Public Interest Reports were issued nationally. None of these reports were published for the Borough of Stockton on Tees in 2022/23. However there has been one formal public interest report that has been published but this relates to a decision made in 2023/24.
10. **Learning** - All matters raised with the Ombudsman are reviewed by the Corporate Governance Group and Directors on a quarterly basis and by the Council's Corporate Management Team, to ensure that learning is shared and actioned by the relevant service area. More detailed reviews are also shared with the appropriate Directors and where necessary Cabinet Portfolio leads to ensure that appropriate action is taken. The authority participates in and has benefitted from national training provided by the LGSCO and has a positive and constructive relationship with the Ombudsman via the Ombudsman Local Authority Link Officer for Stockton. The Ombudsman issue guidance and focus reports throughout the year, and any that are of particular relevance and value are sent on to service for consideration. Examples of guidance issued in 22/23 were on "Councils cannot allow multiple care home contracts to run in tandem", 'Guidance on care finance decisions (DoLs)' and 'Children being denied chance to thrive (SEN)'.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. None as a direct result of this report. The financial implications of individual complaints would be dealt with separately as part of the responses to those complaints.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. They may, however, arise on a case-by-case basis, depending on the particular circumstances of the complaint and related decision and Legal Service input is called upon in these cases. The Corporate Governance Group also has a Legal Service representative.

RISK ASSESSMENT

13. Existing management/operational systems and procedures are sufficient to control and minimise the risks arising too low to medium status.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD / COUNCILLORS

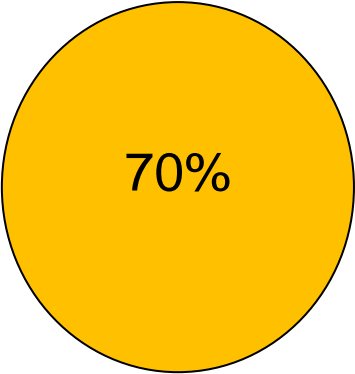
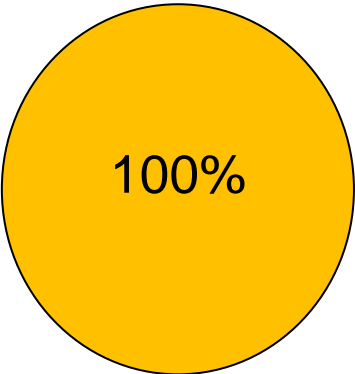
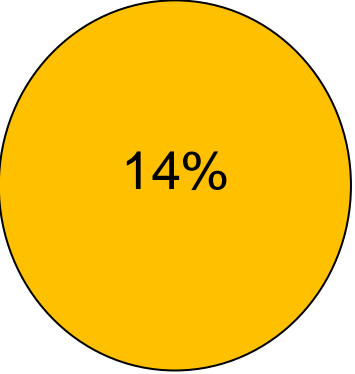
14. The Ombudsman complaints information does not indicate any significant ward specific information or trends.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

15. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's annual review of Local Government complaints for 2022/23 has been published and relevant extracts have been included in this report. A copy of the complete report can be viewed on the [LGSCO website](#).

Contact Officer: Martin Skipsey
Post Title: Assistant Director of Procurement and Governance
Telephone No: 01642 526364
E-mail Address: martin.skipsey@stockton.gov.uk

Appendix.1

Complaints upheld		
	<p>70% of complaints we investigated were upheld.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 72% in similar organisations.</p>	<p>7 upheld decisions</p> <p>Statistics are based on a total of 10 investigations for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</p>
Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations		
	<p>In 100% of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 99% in similar organisations.</p>	<p>Statistics are based on a total of 5 compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.		
Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation		
	<p>In 14% of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.</p> <p>This compares to an average of 13% in similar organisations.</p>	<p>1 satisfactory remedy decisions</p> <p>Statistics are based on a total of 7 upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</p>

Appendix 2**Tees Valley**

Tees Valley Local Authorities	Upheld 21/22	Upheld 22/23	Compliance with Recommendations
Stockton	38% (5/13)	70% (7/10)	100%
Darlington	83% (5/6)	67% (6/9)	100%
Hartlepool	20% (1/5)	0% (0/2)	N/A
Middlesbrough	77% (10/13)	73% (8/11)	89%
Redcar & Cleveland	83% (5/6)	100% (11/11)	86%

Northeast

Northeast Authorities	Upheld 21/22	Upheld 22/23	Compliance with Recommendations
Durham	55% (17/31)	52% (11/21)	100%
Gateshead	25% (2/8)	57% (8/14)	100%
Newcastle	50% (4/8)	70% (7/10)	100%
North Tyneside	69% (6/13)	91% (10/11)	100%
Northumberland	52% (15/29)	84% (16/19)	100%
South Tyneside	46% (6/13)	67% (4/6)	100%
Stockton	38% (5/13)	70% (7/10)	100%
Sunderland	76% (8/11)	50% (4/8)	100%

CIPFA Nearest Neighbours

Nearest Neighbours	Upheld 21/22	Upheld 22/23	Compliance with Recommendations
Dudley	67% (14/21)	78% (21/27)	100%
Northeast Lincolnshire	60% (3/5)	88% (7/8)	100%
Plymouth	73% (11/15)	67% (14/21)	100%
Rotherham	67% (12/18)	86% (6/7)	100%
North Lincolnshire	78% (7/9)	67% (2/3)	100%
Derby	80% (4/5)	71% (10/14)	100%
Stockton	38% (5/13)	70% (7/10)	100%
Doncaster	65% (11/17)	75% (9/12)	100%
Wakefield	57% (13/23)	71% (10/14)	100%
Bolton	64% (14/22)	94% (17/18)	94%
Wigan	71% (5/7)	80% (12/15)	100%
Warrington	82% (9/11)	89% (8/9)	100%
Telford & Wrekin	73% (8/11)	44% (4/9)	100%
Walsall	67% (6/9)	86% (12/14)	100%
Darlington	83% (5/6)	67% (6/9)	100%
Halton	33% (2/6)	80% (4/5)	100%

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook

APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY – TEESSIDE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BOARD LIMITED

SUMMARY

This report asks Cabinet to appoint a representative to the Teesside International Airport Board Limited.

RECOMMENDATION

Councillor Norma Stephenson be appointed to the Teesside International Airport Board.

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

There is a need for Cabinet to appoint to the Board as there is an entitlement to a seat as a shareholder.

COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. It is not considered that this report gives rise to any requirement for an assessment to be undertaken.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

2. There are no corporate parenting implications arising directly from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

5. Categorized low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

6. Members have been consulted through the report to Cabinet.

Name of Contact Officer: Jonathan Nertney, Head of Democratic Services

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14th September 2023

REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor Lisa Evans

LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS ON SCHOOL/ACADEMY GOVERNING BODIES

SUMMARY

In accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school/academy governors, approved as Minute CAB 27/13 of the Cabinet (13 June 2013), Cabinet is invited to consider the nominations to school/academy Governing Bodies listed in the **Appendix** to this report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the expiry of current Governors terms of office and a number of resignations, vacancies exist on the Governing Bodies detailed in the **Appendix** to this report. Under powers vested in them by paragraph 79 of the 1996 Education Act; Section 19 of the 2002 Education Act and Section 38 of the 2011 Education Act, the Local Authority has a duty to appoint representatives to serve as Governors on the Governing Bodies of all Schools maintained by them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The appointments are made to the vacant Governorships in line with agreed procedures subject to a Personal Disclosure and DBS clearance.

DETAIL

1. In accordance with the procedure for the appointment of school/academy governors, approved as Minute CAB27/13 of the Cabinet (13 June 2013), Cabinet is invited to consider the nominations to school/academy Governing Bodies listed in the **Appendix** to this report.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

2. None.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

3. None

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

6. This Local Authority Representative appointment process is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

7. All Schools and all political parties.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

8. None.

Name of Contact Officer: Vanessa Housley

Post Title: Senior Advisor

Telephone No. 01642 527656

Email Address: vanessa.housley@stockton.gov.uk

Vacancies for LA Governors on School Governing Bodies
For Consideration at Cabinet on 14th September 2023

SCHOOL	VACANCY	CRITERIA	NAME OF NOMINEE
Harewood Primary School	Ralph Jordinson – Resignation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good knowledge and understanding of the school • Professional expertise useful to the governing body • Local connection to the school. 	Mark Jones (School Nomination)
Whitehouse Primary School	Aileen Dixon - resignation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional expertise useful to the governing body • Local connection to the school. 	Fleur Carney (School nomination)
Billingham South Primary School	Re-Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good knowledge and understanding of the school • Local connection to the school. 	Re-Appointment of Cllr B Cook (School Nomination) Term of office to run continuously

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

18 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook

MINUTES OF VARIOUS BODIES

SUMMARY

The attached minutes are for consideration by Cabinet.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS

To enable Cabinet to view the minutes of various bodies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the minutes of the meetings detailed in the appendices be received.

DETAIL

1. In accordance with the Council's Constitution or previous practice the minutes of the meeting of the bodies indicated below are submitted to members for consideration:-

TVCA – 30 June 2023

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

2. This report is not the subject of any Community Impact Implications.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

3. This report is not the subject of any Corporate Parenting Implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4. Where applicable, as specified in the minutes.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5. Where applicable, as specified in the minutes.

RISK ASSESSMENT

6. This report is categorised as low to medium risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

7. Not applicable.

Name of Contact Officer: Jonathan Nertney
Post Title: Head of Democratic Services
Email Address: jonathan.nertney@stockton.gov.uk

TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY CABINET

Friday 30th June 2023 at 10am

Teesside Airport Business Suite, Teesside International Airport, Darlington

These Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next Cabinet meeting and are therefore subject to amendments.

<u>ATTENDEES</u>	
<u>Members</u>	
Mayor Ben Houchen (Chair)	Tees Valley Mayor
Councillor Stephen Harker	Leader, Darlington Borough Council
Councillor Mike Young	Leader, Hartlepool Borough Council
Chris Cooke	Mayor of Middlesbrough
Councillor Alec Brown	Leader, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Councillor Robert Cook	Leader, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Siobhan McArdle	Chair, Business Board
<u>Officers and Others in Attendance</u>	
Julie Gilhespie	Group Chief Executive, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Emma Simson	Interim Group Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Gary Macdonald	Group Director of Finance & Resources, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Tom Bryant	Assistant Director Transport & Infrastructure, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Shona Duncan	Head of Business & Skills, Tees Valley Combined Authority
Mike Greene	Managing Director, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
John Sampson	Managing Director, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Denise McGuckin	Managing Director, Hartlepool Borough Council

Ian Williams	Chief Executive, Darlington Borough Council
Clive Heaphy	Interim Managing Director, Middlesbrough Council
Sally Henry	Governance Officer, TVCA
<u>Apologies</u>	None

TVCA 01/23	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
TVCA 02/23	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>The Leaders of Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Councils as members of Development Corporation Boards, declared an interest in item 3.</p> <p>The Tees Valley Mayor declared an interest in item 3 as a member of the Freeport Board.</p> <p>The Leaders of the constituent authorities declared an interest in item 10 as funding recipients, should the Adult Education budget be approved.</p>
TVCA 03/23	<p>GOVERNANCE & APPOINTMENTS</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to consider several items of business at its Annual General Meeting.</p> <p>The Chair invited Cabinet members to ask questions or comment on the paper and appointments. No questions or comments were received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. agreed the appointments as set out at Appendix 1; ii. agreed the members' allowances scheme for 2023-24 at Appendix 2; iii. noted (a) the approval of the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting of 17th March 2023 and (b) that the interim Monitoring Officer will review the Constitution in time for the next TVCA Cabinet meeting.

<p>TVCA 04/23</p>	<p>MAYOR'S UPDATE REPORT</p> <p>The Chair introduced a report providing a general update on the key activities of the Mayor and Combined Authority since the last Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>Cabinet were invited to ask questions or comment on the report. No questions or comments were received.</p> <p>The Mayor congratulated all the Local Authority Leaders on their recent election successes and said he looks forwards to working with them all.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the update.</p>
<p>TVCA 05/23</p>	<p>OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT</p> <p>Cabinet were provided a report which summarised the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the period of July 2022 to June 2023.</p> <p>Cabinet members were invited to ask questions or comment on the report. No questions or comments were received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the report.</p>
<p>TVCA 06/23</p>	<p>QUARTER 4 BUDGET REPORT AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE</p> <p>Cabinet was provided a report which provided an update on the financial position of the Combined Authority for the period ending 31 March 2023 and presented a revised Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>Cabinet members were invited to ask questions or comment on the report.</p> <p>A Cabinet member enquired why there appeared to be an increase in borrowing in 2024/25 but a decrease in expenditure?</p> <p>The Group Director of Finance & Resources confirmed that the borrowing levels in the earlier years of the Investment Plan are front loaded linked to the proposed programmes and projects that are designed for delivery earlier in the plans to drive economic growth. He further explained that the allocations in later years have confirmed allocations and extrapolations of those allocations. A prudent approach is taken to the potential for future Government grant allocations and additional funding therefore no additional allocations are shown until confirmed which is why the later years total funding appears to reduce.</p>

	<p>As such borrowing will appear as a greater proportion of total funding until additional Government grant allocations are confirmed nearer to the time. The MTFP is updated quarterly to capture new allocations and changes to overall funding so that TVCA Cabinet is kept informed of any changes.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Noted the quarter 4 outturn position for 2022/23; and ii. Noted the revised Medium-Term Financial Plan.
<p>TVCA 07/23</p>	<p>TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT</p> <p>Cabinet members were provided a report which advised of the 2022/23 performance against the treasury management and prudential indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy, approved by the Authority in January 2022.</p> <p>Cabinet members were invited to ask questions or comment on the report. No questions or comments were received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the contents of the report.</p>
<p>TVCA 08/23</p>	<p>LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) UPDATE</p> <p>Cabinet members were provided a report which detailed progress made on the implementation of the approved Tees Valley LEP Integration Plan, including the rebrand to Tees Valley Business Board.</p> <p>The Chair of the Business Board advised Cabinet that good progress has been made in implementing the LEP Integration Plan, including recruitment to the Tees Valley Business Board. Following a recruitment campaign, a number of Expressions of Interest have been received from applicants with a good geographical and sectoral spread. The Tees Valley Mayor suggested it would be useful for Cabinet members to review the draft shortlist of Business Board members prior to the final paper being presented to Cabinet in September.</p> <p>Cabinet members were invited to ask questions or comment on the report. No comments were received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Noted the government's approval of the LEP Integration Plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Noted Tees Valley LEP has rebranded to Tees Valley Business Board. iii. Noted progress made on the implementation of the approved Integration Plan.
<p>TVCA 09/23</p>	<p>APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS 2024</p> <p>Cabinet were provided a report which advised of the need to appoint a returning officer (CARO) in relation to the Mayoral election in 2024.</p> <p>The Group Chief Executive advised that TVCA do not have the resources or necessary experience themselves so are very supportive of the recommendation within the report.</p> <p>Cabinet members were invited to ask questions or comment on the report. No comments were received.</p> <p>RESOLVED that Cabinet agreed to appoint Mike Greene, the Local Returning Officer of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council as the Combined Authority Returning Officer in relation to the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral Election 2024.</p>
<p>TVCA 10/23</p>	<p>ADULT SKILLS</p> <p><i>At this point in the meeting, a resolution was proposed to exclude the press and public under paragraph 3 of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, in order that Cabinet could consider matters of a confidential nature. The resolution was proposed by Cllr Young and seconded by Cllr Brown.</i></p> <p>Cabinet were invited to approve the allocations to be made to the adult skills providers for the 2023/24 academic year, for the Adult Education Budget and the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ).</p> <p>Cabinet were also advised of the approach to implementing changes to funding rates, and the required procurement of the adult skills provision from the 2025/26 academic year.</p> <p>Cabinet members were invited to ask questions or comment on the report and allocations..</p> <p>A Cabinet member enquired about the allocation of funds for low level access courses. He was advised that, as part of the Adult Education Budget, a decision was made to procure and ringfence £3m for Learning for Inclusion. TVCA are undertaking a review of Learning for Inclusion and once this is complete in October, consideration will be given to the approach of a funding uplift.</p>

	<p>RESOLVED that Cabinet:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Approves the allocations to the adult skills providers for the 2023/24 academic year as set out in appendix 1. ii. Notes the approach to applying funding rate uplifts from 1 August 2022. iii. Notes the approach to the procurement of adult skills provision for the 2025/26 academic year, with a further report to be received to agree the procurement process and specification. iv. Agrees that, following the approval of the allocations set out in Appendix 1, the operational management of the Adult Education Budget and the FCFJ is handled in line with existing TVCA processes, including in year additional funding awards and reductions which shall be approved by the Group Director for Finance and Resources.
	<p>The Chair advised Cabinet members that it is convention for the Leaders to agree Portfolios amongst themselves. He advised that certain decisions are delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with The Mayor and Portfolio Holder. Portfolios broadly reflect the responsibilities of the Combined Authority and further information will be forwarded to Cabinet members after the meeting.</p> <p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Friday 22nd September 2023 at 10am</p>

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 SEPTEMBER 2023

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Lead Cabinet Member - Children and Young People - Councillor Lisa Evans

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2023

Summary

This report outlines how the Local Authority (LA) is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare and includes information about the supply of and demand for childcare, details on any gaps in provision and an action plan on how they will be addressed.

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – June 2018, requires Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable and within available resources, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). Local authorities are also required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting this duty.

Recommended that the report be noted.

Detail

1. The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – June 2018, requires Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable and within available resources, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).
2. To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account:
 - what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means for their area,
 - the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists,
 - the state of the labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce,
 - the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience, and expertise,

- should encourage schools in their area to offer out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays,
 - should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market; and
 - should encourage providers to take sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.
3. The Local Authority is required by legislation to maintain a service that provides information, to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 and from 1st September 2017 publish this information electronically on the local authority website and update it at a minimum termly on 1st January, 1st April, and 1st September ensuring parents are aware of:
 - Early education places for two, three and four year olds;
 - The option to continue to take up their child's 15 hour early education place until their child reaches compulsory school age;
 - How to identify high quality provision in their area.
 4. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment provides information on how the Local authority is meeting its legal duty as detailed earlier in this report.
 5. Take-up of universal 3 & 4 year places continues to be high at 100.4% take-up, which is 5% higher than 2022 and higher than the national average of 92%. 4yr old take-up is 101% and 3 year old take-up is 99.6% as per figures from the January 2023 census collection.
 6. Take-up of 30 hour free childcare places for working parents of 3 & 4 year olds has increased to 1697 which is an increase of 13.51% on the previous year and there are now 87% of primary schools offering places.
 7. Stockton continues to maintain a high percentage take-up of 2 year funded places (95%), which is an increase of 2% on the previous year. Reports on national 2 year old take-up are issued by the DfE on a termly basis, based on data submitted to DfE by LAs at the end of each term. As per the summer term report Stockton-on-Tees is ranked 2nd against its statistical neighbours, 3rd regionally and 14th nationally for take-up of places.
 8. The table on page 20 of the assessment shows the number of 0-4 places available by ward and take-up at a ward level for 30 hour places and 2yr old places. To be noted the number of children eligible for 2yr olds is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions and doesn't include any on-line eligibility applications received by Stockton.
 9. In some cases, the percentage take-up up of 2 year places by ward can be over 100%, this is due to parents accessing childcare outside of the ward area where they reside, as parents may travel to access a childcare provider of choice if in a different ward area.
 10. At the time of writing the report there were 1,432 recorded vacancies in registered provision a increase of 2.5% against 2022. Vacancies are monitored on a termly basis to ensure there are sufficient places available for parents. If there was a significant reduction in places steps would be taken to ensure parents had access to alternative places in close proximity to either their places of work or home. When new providers enter the market, the assessment is used to inform them of any gaps in childcare at a ward level basis. If there was a need, the authority would work with providers to offer additional places by either increasing number of places or opening new provision.
 11. Childcare costs in Stockton are lower than regional and national charges. A full-time place for a child under two in a nursery averages £235.17 per week in Stockton, regional £252.77

and national 289.98. A full-time place with a childminder in Stockton is £159.61, regionally £225.08 and nationally £247.72.

12. Funded childcare places are available for children aged 2, 3 & 4 years old and Tax Free Childcare is available to offset the cost of childcare for children aged 0-11, this is a government subsidy of up to 20% off the full cost of childcare.
13. Stockton has a good range of quality childcare across the borough with the majority (98.5%) of provision rated good or outstanding as at July 2023, which is higher than the national percentage (96%) and regional percentage (97%) as at March 2023.
14. The number of nurseries, Pre-school, and out of school settings remains relatively unchanged although there has been a reduction in childminders of 12 with a loss of 104 childcare places, but this has not impacted on the sufficiency of places available to meet the needs of parents/carers.
15. On 15 March the Chancellor announced a significant new investment of £4.1 billion in childcare funding for the early years and childcare sector over the next couple of years. This included reducing the age of children eligible for 30 hours funded childcare for working parents, which is to be rolled out in stages.
16. Roll out of the entitlement will be phased over the next couple of years. 15 hours funded childcare will be available to eligible working parents of two year olds from April 2024, and parents of children aged nine months up to two years from September 2024. The full 30 hours funded childcare will be available from September 2025.
17. The Government is also uplifting the hourly funding rate paid to providers, to deliver the existing free hours offers in England, helping providers to manage cost pressures. The Government will provide £204 million in 2023-24, paid from September 2023, and £288 million in 2024-25.
18. Schools and local authorities will be funded to increase the supply of wraparound care, so that parents of school age children can drop their children off between 8am and 6pm – tackling the barriers to working caused by limited availability of wraparound care. By September 2026 it is expected that all schools are able to offer wraparound on their own or in partnership.

Strategic Priorities

19. Appendix 1, attached to this report outlines our strategic strengths and weaknesses and lists the strategic priorities to ensure a smooth roll out of the childcare expansion.

Consultation and Engagement

20. Consultation has been undertaken with parents/carers and childcare providers to inform the sufficiency assessment.
21. Providers were surveyed from 15 May to 9 June 2023 to gather information on their current demand for childcare and insight on their future sustainability and barriers to delivering on the expansion to childcare.
22. There were 122 responses to the survey, of which, 44 respondents were childminders, 32 private nurseries, 29 school nursery, 8 out of school providers, 6 pre-school playgroups and 3 independent schools.
23. When asked if demand had changed during the last year, 32.79% stated it had remained the same, 21.31% stated it had decreased slightly, 18.85% stated it had increased slightly,

21.31% stated it had decreased slightly, 14.75% stated it had increased a lot and 12.30% stated it had decreased a lot.

24. The top two reasons stated for the reduced change in demand are parents choosing to use only one provider for 30 hours funded childcare (9.76%), followed by parents wanting fewer hours/shorter days (9.15%). For an increased change in demand the top two reasons are increase in demand for wraparound care (8.54%) and increased demand for 30 hours funded childcare (8.54%).
25. Nearly 25% of those surveyed stated there was demand they could not meet and 21.71% stated they have increased fees.
26. Nearly 5% have made staff redundant in the last year and 9.02% were considering making staff redundant in the future. 51 temporary/agency staff are currently employed in the sector. Many stated recruitment of staff was very difficult with level 3 non-management staff being the most difficult positions to recruit. Nearly 32% stated staff recruitment was a barrier to them accessing training.
27. 27.87% stated that projected income was insufficient to meet costs and 33.61% stated projected income is enough to meet costs. When asked if they had cash reserves 40.98% stated they did not have cash reserves, of those that answered this question. When asked how confident they were about financial sustainability over the next year 40.98% were confident or very confident whereas 20.5% were unconfident or very unconfident.
28. When asked if they can meet demand for the extension to childcare 54.92% stated yes and 44.26% stated no. when asked if they would restrict the number of funded places 45.08% stated yes and 49.18% stated no.
29. Parents/Carers and parents-to-be were surveyed from 17 April to 14 May 2023 to assess demand for the expansion to childcare. Response rate to the survey was low and therefore not a good representation of the population surveyed. However, it did provide some insight into the demand for the new entitlements. Over 78% of those who responded said they would stop using informal childcare and move to formal childcare arrangements once funded childcare was available for their child. When asked about their working arrangements nearly 60% worked atypical hours, followed by 11.49% working term-time only. When asked if they will be considering taking up employment once a funded place is available for their child, for those currently not working, 49.43% responded yes. 62.07% would prefer to take up their funded place in a private nursery, followed by 18.39% preferring a combination of private nursery, childminder, and/or pre-school playgroup.

Next Steps

30. The sufficiency assessment will be placed on the Stockton Information Directory once it has been through the Cabinet process, so it is available for parents/carers, childcare providers, and employers to read.
31. A project plan will be produced to implement the new funded childcare offer.

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Appendix 1 Strategic Priorities

Aspect	Strategic Strength	Strategic Weakness
Resources	Dedicated small Families Information Service (FIS) team supporting parents in finding childcare and distributing funding payments to childcare providers and schools.	<p>Lack of capacity within the FIS Team to support the childcare expansion.</p> <p>Transfer to a new system in 23/24 – 24/25 will create additional work for the team including training on the system, supporting the sector in its use and updating current processes.</p> <p>Decision required on the lead for the expansion to wraparound care for schools. Currently being co-ordinated by Manager, Sufficiency early years and childcare and CIOC</p>
Early Years Workforce	Dedicated workforce, skilled workforce	<p>Recruitment and retention issue across the sector will be exacerbated with the expansion to childcare.</p> <p>More staffing will be required for the younger age group 9mths to under 2yrs as staff to child ratios are higher 1:3.</p> <p>Low pay across the sector is a barrier to recruiting new entrants, with rates determined by funding received from the council.</p> <p>More work required on engaging with local colleges to promote working in early years, courses available and the need to highlight what it is like working in the sector i.e., working to the early years foundation stage regulations</p>
Early Years Entitlements	95% of funding the council receive is passported to providers, as per funding guidance. This will increase to 97% sometime in the future.	<p>The average passported amount nationally is currently 97%</p> <p>Pressure on the sector to deliver more funded places limits their income as funding for some providers is less than what they charge. They are already incurring additional costs due to the cost of living crisis and other cost increases.</p>
Childcare sector	Currently there are sufficient high quality flexible childcare places in Stockton to meet the needs of parents	<p>Could be a lack of places for younger children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providers may limit funded places, • some do not deliver to young children, • premises may need adapting to cater for younger children, equipment, and resources etc. • there may not be enough places for children with SEND due to higher staff to child ratios. <p>Demand is difficult to predict, data on those working parents already accessing a place exists but non-working, may choose to take up employment when funded childcare is available, is reliant on parent surveys and</p>

Appendix 1 Strategic Priorities

		estimating demand based on the previous implementation of 30-hour free childcare
Wraparound care	<p>Information gathered by FIS team from schools, annually, on their wraparound care offer provide a good basis of where provision needs to be developed to meet government aims.</p> <p>40% of schools already offer a full wraparound service.</p> <p>The childcare sector is already offering wraparound care to support working parents.</p>	<p>Parental demand for wraparound care is not known and would require schools to survey parents of children attending the school to assess demand to determine whether developing a provision would be sustainable.</p> <p>Not all schools have a full understanding of the wraparound care offered by the childcare sector.</p>
Marketing and Promotion	<p>FIS Team produces an annual plan for promotion of childcare entitlements, linking in with the Corporate Marketing Team</p> <p>Communication pack produced by DfE for all the funded childcare offers</p>	<p>Lack of capacity in current team limits outreach work that can be undertaken attending engagement events to promote childcare benefits and the expansion to childcare.</p> <p>Marketing materials need developing for the expansion of childcare for Stockton families</p>

Strategic priorities

Resources

Recruit additional capacity to the FIS Team or tap into other available resources within the council. Decision to be made on who will lead on the wraparound care development work.

Early Years Workforce

Engage with colleges, training providers and childcare providers to develop a recruitment strategy.

Early Years Entitlements

Ensure the council can passport the maximum funding to the sector.

Agree with finance funding available from DSG to fund increased capacity within teams.

Childcare sector

Consult further with the sector on their ability to meet increased demand, taking into account the younger age group and children with SEND.

Wraparound Care

Produce assessment of current provision available for each school.

Produce a standard survey which schools can use to start to assess demand.

Marketing and Promotion

Produce a plan of activity to promote the new childcare expansion to parents and employers and produce marketing materials to use at engagement events.

Stockton-on-Tees

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

August 2023



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Introduction

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – June 2018, requires Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

The duty is detailed in the following sections of the Acts:

Childcare Act 2006

- Section 6 secures sufficient childcare for parents;
- Section 7 secures free early years provision free of charge;
- Section 7A discharges its duty;
- Section 9 gives LA's the power to attach requirements to the arrangements they make with providers (other than the governing body of a maintained school) to deliver childcare including free early years provision;
- Section 9a allows regulations to be made which prescribe the requirements local authorities may or may not impose when they make arrangements;
- Section 12 provides information, advice, and assistance to parents about childcare in the area;
- Section 13 to secure the provision of information, advice and training to childcare providers and childcare workers

Childcare Act 2016

- Section 1 places a duty on the secretary of state to secure the equivalent of 30 hours free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying children;
- Section 2 allows the Secretary of state to discharge her duty under section 1 of the Act by placing a duty on English local authorities to secure free childcare for qualifying children;

To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should consider:

- what is 'reasonably practicable' when assessing what sufficient childcare means for their area;
- the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
- the state of the labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce;
- the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience, and expertise;
- should encourage schools in their area to offer out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays;
- should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market; and
- should encourage providers to take sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.

The Local Authority is responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in the report, geographical division, and date of publication. However, the report should include:

- a specific reference to how we are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: children with special educational needs and disabilities disabled children; children from families in receipt

of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up free places; school age children; and children needing holiday care.

- Information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility, and quality of provision; and
- Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

In addition, the Local Authority is required by legislation to maintain a service that provides information, to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 and from 1st September publish this information electronically on the local authority website and update it at a minimum termly on 1st January, 1st April and 1st September, ensuring parents are aware of:

- Early education places for two, three and four year olds;
- The option to continue to take up their child's 15 hour early education place until their child reaches compulsory school age;
- How to identify high quality provision in their area.

The Stockton-on-Tees childcare market

Stockton-on-Tees has a robust childcare market with a combination of 47 privately owned and voluntary sector childcare providers in addition to 115 childminders. Three Independent Schools also provide early years places for 3 & 4 year olds. Primary schools (60) play a key role in offering the majority of universal 15 hour places for 3 & 4 year olds and 83% are now offering 30 hour free childcare places, 10 also deliver 2yr funded places, and many offer before and after school places for school aged children.

The Local Authority has an excellent relationship with childcare providers and good partnership working has ensured that the quality of settings in Stockton is exceeding the national average, ensuring the closing the gap for children.

The childcare sector works closely with Local Authority Officers to explore sufficiency issues and identify workable solutions.

The report

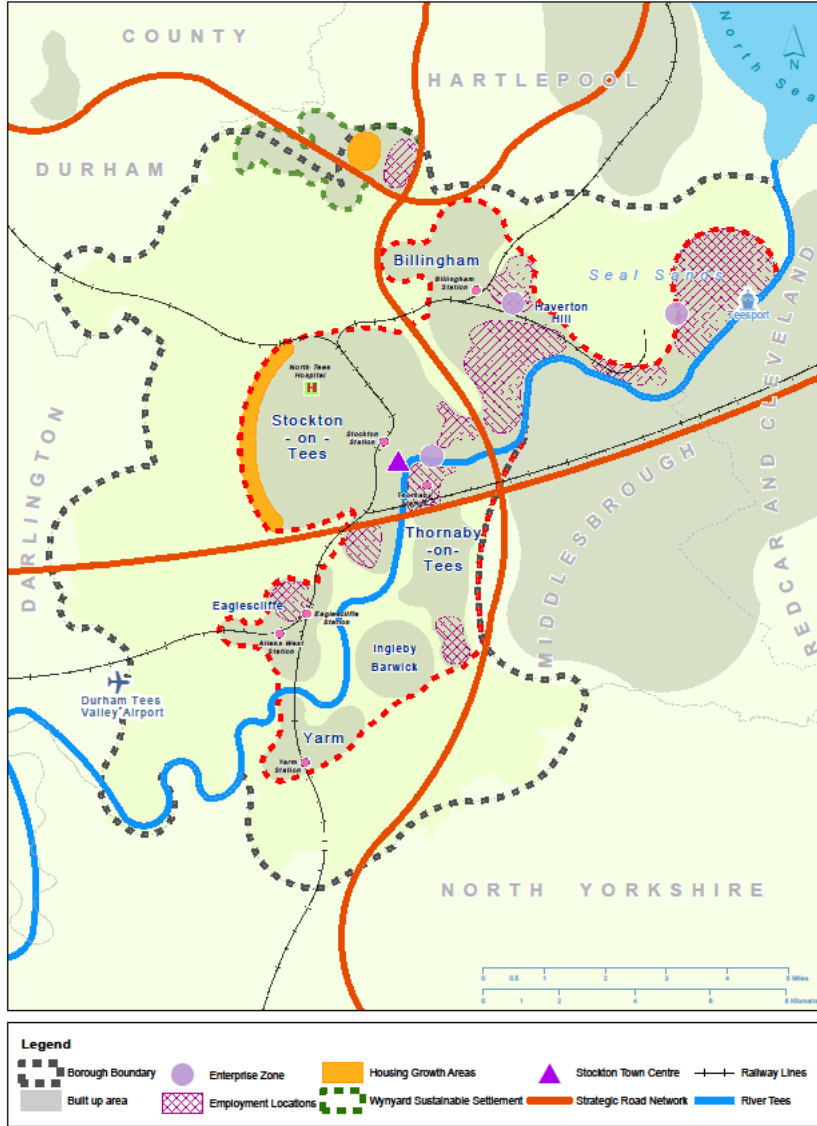
This report considers what the Local Authority means as 'sufficient childcare' in the borough and includes the following:

- Background and contextual information regarding population, Labour Market Information (LMI), early years and childcare numbers across the borough.
- Information about the supply of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility, and quality of provision.
- The state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers, in particular ward areas and the amount and type of supply that currently exists.
- The quality and capacity of childcare providers.
 - Details of how gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

This Assessment Report will be updated and reported to the Council's Cabinet for endorsement annually. The Assessment Report will also be made available and accessible to parents on the [Stockton Information Directory](#).

Stockton-on-Tees in context

Economic Geography



Location and Economic Profile

Stockton-on-Tees is a Borough of wide contrasts, a mixture of busy town centres, urban residential areas, and picturesque villages. The Borough covers approximately 20,000 Hectares.

The principal settlements are Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm; whilst Wynyard is expected to grow into a substantial residential location.

The River Tees courses through the Borough and sustains a variety of uses; from a working river upstream; a leisure destination; and forming part of the tranquil green corridors.

The Borough is bounded by County Durham to the north; Darlington to the west; Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, and Hartlepool to the east; and Hambleton to the south.

Stockton-on-Tees benefits from good access to the strategic road network – A1M, A19, A66 and A67 – and a network of bus routes that provide frequent services to connect residents to work and leisure destinations predominantly across Tees Valley, and for the movement of goods and services.

There are six train stations in total providing frequent access to destinations in Tees Valley and across the North, and a direct link to London via the East Coast Mainline.

The Borough is home to Durham Tees Valley Airport.

The Borough forms part of the Tees Valley Combined Authority wider functioning area, which is home to some 677,200 people.

Demographic profile

In 2020 the population was 198,253 living in around 88,785¹ dwellings. In the last ten years, it is estimated that the population has risen by 6,429 people between 2010 and 2020. The population in the Borough is projected to grow to 199,862 by 2031 which is an increase of 0.82% over the ten-year period 2021-2031. 17.23% of the population within Stockton-on-Tees are children and young people aged (0-14), which is higher than across the North East (16.55%) and slightly lower than England (17.37%).

Estimated resident population in '000s (% of total population)

Projected Year	2020	2024	2028	2032
Age 0-4	11,099	10,344	10,024	9,905
	5.60%	5.18%	5.00%	4.94%
Age 5-9	13,027	12,087	11,107	10,756
	6.57%	6.05%	5.54%	5.37%
Age 10-14	12,973	13,473	12,719	11,648
	6.54%	6.74%	6.35%	5.81%
All Ages	198,253	199,757	200,364	200,459

Source: [ONS Population projections for Local Authorities – Table 2](#)

The percentage of the Borough's population from a black minority ethnic background decreased from 5.4% in 2011 to 1.1% in 2021². The largest minority ethnic group is Asian or Asian British, this group accounts for 4.6% of the population, within this group, the largest BME group is Pakistani or British Pakistani.

¹ Council Tax

² Census

Using indices of multiple deprivation³, the Borough is ranked 113 most deprived out of the 317 local authorities in England. However, whilst 19.99% of the population live within the top 20% of most deprived areas of England, 19.38% live in the 20% least deprived areas.

Labour Market Information (LMI)

In 2021 there were estimated to be around 85,000 jobs in Stockton-on-Tees. 13,000 jobs (15.3% of jobs) were in the “Wholesale and Retail Trade” sector and 10,000 (11.8% of jobs) in manufacturing, whilst it only makes up 7.6% of the workforce in Great Britain, and 9,000 (10.6% of jobs) were in “Human Health and Social Work Activities”. These sectors make up similar proportions of the labour market to figures for England.

Within the “Human Health and Social Work Activities” there were an estimated 342 jobs associated with businesses classified as ‘Child Day Care Activities’ in Stockton-on-Tees.

77.9% of jobs in Stockton-on-Tees are in the private sector, which is similar to the proportion for Great Britain (76.5%) yet higher than the Tees Valley (74.8%) and North East (71.5%) figures. In Stockton-on-Tees 57.2% of males and 42.8% of females make up the private sector workforce. Conversely, 27.3% of males and 72.7% of females make up the public sector workforce.

Driven largely by replacement demand, more than 100,000 jobs were projected in the region between 2017 and 2027, implying an average annual rate of 10,000 jobs. 6% of those job opportunities over that time were forecast to be new jobs. The remaining 94% were forecast to be replacement jobs from those who would leave the workforce by 2027.

Employee jobs by industry 2021	Stockton-on-Tees (Employee Jobs)	Stockton-on-Tees %	North East %	Great Britain %
Mining And Quarrying	100	0.1	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing	10,000	11.8	9.2	7.6
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning	200	0.2	0.4	0.4
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management	1,000	1.2	0.8	0.7
Construction	6,000	7.1	5.0	4.9
Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair of Vehicles	13,000	15.3	13.9	14.4
Transportation And Storage	5,000	5.9	5.3	5.1
Accommodation And Food Service Activities	7,000	8.2	8.7	7.5
Information And Communication	2,500	2.9	2.9	4.5
Financial And Insurance Activities	2,250	2.6	1.9	3.6
Real Estate Activities	900	1.1	1.8	1.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	8,000	9.4	6.8	8.9

³ IMD 2015

Employee jobs by industry 2021	Stockton-on-Tees (Employee Jobs)	Stockton-on-Tees %	North East %	Great Britain %
Administrative And Support Service Activities	7,000	8.2	7.4	8.9
Public Administration and Defence	3,500	4.1	6.8	4.6
Education	7,000	8.2	10.2	8.8
Human Health and Social Work Activities	9,000	10.6	15.2	13.7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	1,250	1.5	1.7	2.3
Other Service Activities	1,200	1.5	1.8	1.9

Economic activity

Economic activity refers to the number or percentage of people of working age who are in employment plus those that are unemployed (actively seeking and available for work). Economic activity rates in Stockton-on-Tees (76.4%) are higher than the Tees Valley (74.1%) and North East (74.0%) and lower than Great Britain (78.5%).

A model-based estimate of unemployment strengthened by figures from DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) benefit claimants is available which predicts that for the year ending December 2022 around 3,900 people were unemployed in Stockton-on-Tees. As a proportion of the economically active population (4.2%) the figure is equivalent to the Tees Valley and lower for the North East figure (4.6%) but lower than nationally (3.6%).

Indicator Numbers in Bold (Figures and percentages relate to the population aged 16-64 unless stated)	Stockton-on-Tees	Tees Valley	North East	Great Britain
Economic activity	93,300 (75.8%)	310,600 (74.5%)	1,209,400 (74.7%)	31,449,700 (78.4%)
Employment rate	87,800 (71.2%)	290,000 (69.4%)	1,135,900 (70.2%)	30,024,000 (74.8%)
Employees	79,000 (64.7%)	255,700 (61.6%)	1,012,700 (62.6%)	26,204,400 (65.3%)
Self-Employment	8,600 (6.4%)	33,800 (7.7%)	120,000 (7.4%)	3,730,000 (9.3%)
Unemployment (Model-based) Percentage is proportion of economically active population	5,200 (5.6%)	20,600 (6.6%)	73,400 (6.0%)	1,425,700 (4.4%)

Economic Inactivity

Economic inactivity refers to people who are of working age (16-64 but are not actively seeking work. Reasons for this may include sickness, study, retirement or choosing to look after family/home. An estimated 23.6% of residents in Stockton-on-Tees are economically inactive which is higher than Great Britain (21.5%) but lower than regionally (26.0%) and then the Tees Valley (25.9%).

Patterns of work

A slightly lower percentage of employee jobs are full-time (more than 30 hours a week) in Stockton-on-Tees compared to the wider North East Region and the rate for Great Britain.

Employee jobs (2021)	Stockton-on-Tees	North East	Great Britain
Full-Time	68.2	65.9	68.1
Part-Time	31.8	34.1	31.9

Working age benefits

The claimant count includes those seeking Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), which is an employment benefit payable to people under pensionable age who are available for and actively seeking work. It also includes those on Universal Credit who are the equivalent of JSA claimants due to being out of work and having requirements to look for work.

Stockton-on-Tees has now rolled out the “full service” of Universal credit so all new claimants will claim the benefit. Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseeker’s Allowance so the number of people recorded as being on the claimant count is likely higher than before the rollout and comparisons to other areas and previous years are difficult.

As of May 2023, a total of 4,870 people made up the ‘claimant count’, which is 4.0% of the working age population. The highest number of claimants is in the 25-49 age group, making up almost 60% of the claimant count in Stockton-on-Tees.

Claimant Count by Gender (May 2023)

	Stockton-on-Tees		North East	Great Britain
	(Numbers)	(%)	(%)	(%)
All People	4,870	4.0	4.1	3.7
Males	2,965	5.0	5.0	4.3
Females	1,900	3.1	3.2	3.1

Source: ONS claimant count ([NOMIS](#))

Claimant Count by Age (May 2023)

	Stockton-on-Tees		North East	Great Britain
	(Numbers)	% of claimants	% of claimants	% of claimants
Aged 18 to 24	1,005	7.5	5.8	4.8
Aged 25 to 49	2,825	4.5	4.8	4.2
Aged 50+	1,035	2.5	2.8	2.7

Source: ONS claimant count ([NOMIS](#))

Income

Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022 the average gross weekly pay of Stockton-on-Tees residents is £609.40; more than the average for the North East region (£580.30), but lower than Great Britain as a whole (£642.20).

Average (Median) gross weekly pay 2022

Gross Weekly Pay	Stockton-on-Tees	North East	Great Britain
Full-Time Workers	£609.40	£580.30	£642.20
Male Full-Time Workers	£669.10	£623.30	£687.50
Female Full-Time Workers	£512.40	£532.80	£594.50

Source: [ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – resident analysis](#) (via [NOMIS](#)) (in published reports, median earnings rather than the mean will generally be used. The median is the value below which 50% of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.)

Potential impact from approved and strategic housing developments

The Local Authority considers any potential future children yield numbers in terms of planning sufficient childcare places from approved housing developments across the borough. All housing developments must include a percentage of affordable housing within its development that is considered when planning any future childcare arrangements. The Local Authority also considers the impact on the ‘childcare offer’ of the other strategic sites (1,000 or more homes) and their likely pupil yield numbers.

The demand for childcare

Population of children

Estimated population aged 0-15 as a percentage of total by Ward area and 5 year change					
Ward	2015 Population (0-15 year)	2020 Population (All Ages)	2020 Population (0-15 year)	% change 2015-2020	% of ward 2020 population
Billingham Central	1,595	7,408	1,669	4.64%	22.53%
Billingham East	1,772	7,221	1,737	0.87%	24.05%
Billingham North	1,462	8,399	1,355	-7.32%	16.13%
Billingham South	1,447	6,517	1,378	-4.77%	21.14%
Billingham West	658	5,208	722	9.73%	13.86%
Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree	1,020	6,322	952	-6.67%	15.06%
Eaglescliffe	1,952	10,579	1,992	2.05%	18.83%
Fairfield	832	5,433	827	-0.06%	15.22%
Grangefield	1,161	6,530	1,210	4.22%	18.53%
Hardwick and Salters Lane	1,824	7,894	2,106	15.46%	26.68%
Hartburn	982	6,257	999	1.73%	15.97%
Ingleby Barwick East	2,353	10,740	2,323	-1.27%	21.63%
Ingleby Barwick West	3,024	12,850	3,133	3.60%	24.38%
Mandale and Victoria	2,520	12,326	2,570	1.98%	20.85%
Newtown	1,809	7,080	1,671	-7.63%	23.60%
Northern Parishes	700	4,236	859	22.71%	20.28%
Norton North	1,269	6,471	1,253	-1.26%	19.36%
Norton South	1,331	7,905	1,280	-3.83%	16.19%
Norton West	924	5,971	914	-1.08%	15.31%
Parkfield and Oxbridge	1,866	9,512	2,072	11.04%	21.78%
Roseworth	1,731	7,338	1,745	0.81%	23.78%
Stainsby Hill	1,225	6,222	1,195	-2.45%	19.21%
Stockton Town Centre	1,224	7,605	1,437	17.40%	18.90%
Village	1,392	6,853	1,472	5.75%	21.48%
Western Parishes	553	3,522	621	12.30%	17.63%
Yarm	1,556	11,020	1,918	23.26%	17.40%

Source: [ONS – Small area population estimates – experimental statistics](#)

Estimated child population by 5-year age band as a percentage of total by Ward area						
Ward	Age 0-4		Aged 5-9		Aged 10-14	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Billingham Central	475	6.41%	558	7.53%	531	7.17%
Billingham East	495	6.86%	579	8.02%	574	7.95%
Billingham North	382	4.55%	415	4.94%	463	5.51%
Billingham South	345	5.29%	489	7.50%	456	7.00%
Billingham West	204	3.92%	230	4.42%	237	4.55%
Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	268	4.24%	312	4.94%	318	5.03%
Eaglescliffe	501	4.74%	635	6.00%	723	6.83%
Fairfield	224	4.12%	269	4.95%	283	5.21%
Grangefield	253	3.87%	411	6.29%	458	7.01%
Hardwick and Salters Lane	669	8.47%	754	9.55%	584	7.40%
Hartburn	256	4.09%	346	5.53%	330	5.27%
Ingleby Barwick East	552	5.14%	788	7.34%	830	7.73%
Ingleby Barwick West	774	6.02%	1,034	8.05%	1,140	8.87%
Mandale and Victoria	791	6.42%	832	6.75%	784	6.36%
Newtown	442	6.24%	579	8.18%	556	7.85%
Northern Parishes	242	5.71%	238	5.62%	325	7.67%
Norton North	375	5.80%	387	5.98%	415	6.41%
Norton South	390	4.93%	387	4.90%	428	5.41%
Norton West	251	4.20%	318	5.33%	301	5.04%
Parkfield and Oxbridge	681	7.16%	653	6.87%	604	6.35%
Roseworth	519	7.07%	592	8.07%	549	7.48%
Stainsby Hill	330	5.30%	403	6.48%	386	6.20%
Stockton Town Centre	484	6.36%	429	5.64%	422	5.55%
Village	428	6.25%	538	7.85%	442	6.45%
Western Parishes	165	4.68%	182	5.17%	236	6.70%
Yarm	581	5.27%	563	5.11%	657	5.96%

Source: [ONS – Small area population estimates population projections for Local Authorities: Table 2](#)

Note: The latest Census data based on new ward areas is currently unavailable.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN and those registered with a disability)

The Department for Education (DfE) 'Children with SEN' published 22/06/2023 based on where the pupil attends schools using the January 2023 school census indicated that there was a total of 1,608 pupils with Education, Health and care Plan, an increase of 123 pupils on the previous year.

Pupils in all school with EHC (Education Health and Care) Plans/Statements including independent schools and general hospital											
19/20			20/21			21/22			22/23		
Total pupils	Pupils with statements	%	Total pupils	Pupils with statements	%	Total pupils	Pupils with EHC Plans	%	Total pupils	Pupils with EHC Plans	%
33,952	1252	3.7	34,029	1355	4.0	34,228	1485	4.3	34,397	1608	4.7

Children 0-5 with SEN or a Disability accessing early years in either a PVI (Private, Voluntary, or Independent) setting or school

For the academic year 2022/23 there were 70 children aged 0-5 assessed through the Early Years One Point Panel for additional support/funding who were accessing early years and childcare provision in Stockton.

Children and Young People's Disability Register

The Local Authority has a duty to have a 'Children's & Young People's Disability Register, which can be found on [Stockton's Local Offer](#). The purpose of the register is to gather information on disabled children or children with a complex need which will assist with service planning to meet their needs, now and in the future. As of 1st July 2023, the details of 473 children have been registered by parents and carers.

Diagnosis	Age				Total
	1-7	8-12	13-17	Above 18	
Asperger's	0	1	1	0	2
Attachment Disorder	0	5	6	13	49
ADHD	2	1	13	45	61
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	6	17	54	88	165
Development Delay	6	28	46	45	125
Epilepsy	0	7	17	19	43
Learning Difficulties	9	28	85	119	241
Physical Impairment	4	12	24	34	74
Sensory Loss Hearing	0	2	5	13	20
Sensory Loss Visual	0	9	6	17	32
Speech & Language Difficulties	7	35	61	49	152
Waiting for Diagnosis	5	16	32	15	68
Total number of children	14	59	167	233	473

Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Disability Register July 2023

The supply of childcare

Registered childcare

Data has been supplied by the Local Authority's Families Information Service (FIS).

Since September 2008 childcare for children aged less than 8 years old has had to be registered on one of two Ofsted childcare registers.

- **The Early Years Register (EYR)** – all childcare providers caring for children aged up to five are required to join the Early Years Register (unless exempt).
- **The Ofsted Childcare Register (OCR)** – this has two parts:
 - The compulsory part – providers of childcare to children aged 5 to 7 years must register on the compulsory part of the OCR (unless exempt);
 - The voluntary part – providers of childcare to children aged 8 and over, and care for children of any age that is activity based or provided in the child's own home, can choose to be registered on the voluntary part of the OCR if they meet the requirements.

The following section provides an overview of registered provision.

Number of registered childcare places in Stockton

Type of provision	Number of registered childcare places							
	0-1 years	2 years	3-4 years	5-7 years	8+ years	Total places	% all places	Number of providers
Childminding	119	125	124	343	179	890	13.69	115
Day Nursery	542	789	836	207	68	2442	37.55	40
Out of School Care	0	0	119	331	202	652	10.03	23
Pre-school / Playgroup	6	107	109	0	0	222	3.42	7
Maintained Nursery	0	134	2162	0	0	2296	35.31	60
Totals by age range	667	1155	3350	881	449	6502		
% of all registered places	10.26	17.76	51.52	13.55	6.91			
Total registered places 0-5 years = 5172 (79.54% of total places)								

Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023 Note: The number of places in maintained school is based on a full-time place as the majority of schools now offer 30 hour funded places.

Primary schools also offer childcare which wraps around the school day. 83% of primary schools offer breakfast clubs and 67% offer some form of after school club, of these only 60% are open until 5pm or later to meet the needs of parents who work full-time.

Comparing number of childcare places to 2022, there has been a reduction of 104 childminding places, an increase of 122 day nursery places and a reduction of 52 out of school places.

Number of childminders has reduced by 12, number of day nurseries has remained the same, number of out of school providers has reduced by 1.

Geographical distribution of childcare places

The following table details the number of childcare places and the number of vacancies, by type of childcare provider, based on Local Authority ward areas.

Ward	Number of registered childcare places					Number of Vacant Places
	Child-minding	Day Nursery	Out of School Care	Pre-School Playgroup	Total Places	
Billingham Central	6	0	0	32	38	17
Billingham East	15	220	0	0	235	46
Billingham North	25	0	0	0	25	1
Billingham South	15	150	69	0	234	134
Billingham West & Wolviston	56	0	0	20	76	19
Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	34	63	0	0	97	49
Eaglescliffe East	25	318	20	0	363	70
Eaglescliffe West	26	0	76	18	120	66
Fairfield	46	55	0	0	101	36
Grangefield	12	59	0	0	71	25
Hardwick	20	56	0	0	76	3
Hartburn	45	212	137	0	395	91
Ingleby North	105	34	72	0	211	109
Ingleby South	148	104	130	48	430	78
Mandale & Victoria	0	165	0	0	165	72
Newtown	0	110	18	0	128	77
Northern Parishes	15	108	0	0	123	39
Norton Central	20	70	0	0	90	1
Norton North	48	0	0	0	48	15
Norton South	40	92	32	0	164	50
Ropner	29	86	16	0	131	35
Roseworth	0	72	0	0	72	36
Southern Villages	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stainsby Hill	38	170	0	38	246	137
Stockton Town Centre	22	24	0	0	46	13
Village	24	168	34	0	226	119
Yarm	75	106	48	66	295	94
Total	890	2442	652	222	4206	1432

Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Vacancies

Vacancies are calculated against registered places. Many settings are likely to operate fewer places than they are registered for. For example, a childminder may be registered for 6 children but could choose to care for no more than 4. The FIS had records of 1,432 vacancies in registered provision as of July 2023. This represents 34.05% of total places.

The majority of recorded vacancies were in day nurseries, accounting for 59.35% of total vacancies. The highest number of vacancies was for children aged 3-4 years old (412 vacancies, 28.77% of total).

Vacancies by age range and type of provision

Age range	Number of vacancies by type of provision				
	Childminding	Day Nursery	Out of school care	Pre-school	Total
0 - 1	47	197	0	3	247
2	45	266	0	33	344
3 – 4	40	297	38	37	412
5 – 7	77	72	142	0	291
8 -17	41	18	79	0	138
Total	250	850	259	73	1432

Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Compared to 2022 the total number of vacant places has increased by 35 places (2.5%). The largest increase in places is in 2yrs places, which equates to an increase of 5.2%.

Charges

The FIS hold detailed information on charges for individual settings, across a number of different charging patterns. Below are the average charges by setting type. For further information on an individual providers charges please visit to the www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org.

Charging period	Type of provision / Charges					
	Day Nursery	Childminder	Pre-School playgroup	Out of School Club	School Breakfast Club	School After School Club
Per hour	£8.51	£4.46	£5.54	£5.70		
Per session / half day	£31.75	£16.49	£16.42	£13.14	£2.84	£3.95
Per day	£50.05	£35.33	£38.01	£30.56		
Per week	£235.17	£159.61	£151.55	£93.33		

Source: Stockton-on-Tees BC FIS July 2023

Compared to 2022 charges the cost of a full-time place in a day nursery or with a childminder has remained relatively the same. The weekly cost for a place in a school breakfast club has remained the same; for an after school club it has reduced by 22%, this is mainly due to the fact that more data has been gathered from schools on the provision they offer.

Comparing childcare costs to the national childcare survey 2023, produced by Coram Family and Childcare the cost per week in a day nursery for a child under 2 in England is £289.98 and for the North East is £252.77, for childminders the cost is £247.72 and £225.08, respectively.

Working parents can claim support with childcare costs through the Tax Free Childcare scheme which provides a contribution of up to 20% towards the cost of childcare, this also includes registered after school activities.

Opening times

As with charges there is considerable variation in opening times, both within and between different types of provision. For further information on an individual provider's opening and closing times please visit to the www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org.

Most nurseries open from 7.30am until 6.00pm, playgroups tend to open from 9.00am until 3.30pm. Breakfast clubs are delivered by private providers and schools opening from 7.30am until the start of the school day. After school clubs again are delivered by private nurseries and schools opening after the end of the school day and closing between 4.30pm and 6.00pm. Childminders offer childcare from early in the morning (from 6.00am) until late in the evening (up to around 10pm), occasional overnight care and at weekends, including Sundays, they also offer care wrapped around the school the day. Currently 2 childminders open on Saturdays and 2 childminders open on a Sunday.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)

In 2021, a £220m programme was rolled out nationwide in all 151 English local authority areas. The Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) aims to offer valuable support to families on lower incomes, through access to rewarding activities alongside healthy meals.

The policy aims that there should be free holiday clubs available for school-aged children eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM). It is not expected that all eligible children will attend. Local Authorities are also encouraged to make provision available for non-eligible children who can pay.

Activities should include provision across a range of outdoor and indoor sport, physical activities, arts and crafts, games and play, food learning and cooking, and trips etc.

Expected outcomes for children and families:

- Eat more healthily in the school holidays.
- To be more active in the school holidays.
- To take part in engaging and enriching activities to support the development of resilience, character, and wellbeing along with wider educational attainment.
- To be safe and not socially isolated.
- To have greater knowledge of health and nutrition.
- To be more engaged with school and other local services.

Government grant funding covers coordination and provision of free holiday places for six weeks a year: four weeks in the summer, one week at Easter (2021) and one week at Christmas.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme for Stockton-on-Tees has been rebranded to Holidays Are Fun. The programme is funded by the Department for Education and delivered by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in partnership with Catalyst and is offered to school aged children in receipt of benefit related free school meals. Within Stockton-on-Tees, we have expanded this offer to families on universal credit, in financial difficulty and vulnerable families. The programme aims to offer valuable support to families on lower incomes, through access to rewarding activities alongside healthy meals.

The HAF clubs will offer the chance to:

- develop new skills or knowledge
- consolidate existing skills and knowledge
- try out new experiences
- have fun and socialise
- have a healthy meal

The Council is offering a programme of activities for school age children from reception class to Year 11 across Stockton-on-Tees over the six weeks summer holidays. An estimated 17,000 places will be available to 8,000 children who are in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, and they will be eligible for four hours of activities a day for four weeks of the summer holidays including a nutritious meal. There is a wide range of activities on offer including sports, dancing, cooking, swimming, ice skating, horse-riding and film making delivered by partners across the Borough to offer children and young people some fantastic opportunities and experiences.

Early Years funded places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds

All children who meet the prescribed criteria can take up high quality early education, regardless of their parents' ability to pay – benefiting their social, physical, and mental development and helping to prepare them for school. Evidence shows that regular good quality early education has lasting benefits for all children.

Universal entitlement

The Local Authority is required by legislation to secure early education places by offering 570 hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks for **every** child in the borough from the relevant date; until the child reaches compulsory school age (the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday). Take-up of the universal entitlement for 3 & 4 year olds as of January 2023 is 100.4%, which is higher than the regional average of 98.6% and the national average of 93.7%. The take up by age is 101% for 4 year olds and 99.6% for 3 year olds.

All primary schools in Stockton-on-Tees have nursery classes; 81.14% of places accessed in summer term 2023 were through maintained provision.

No. of 3 & 4 year olds taking up universal funded early education places by type of provider.						
Type of provider	No. of children 201	No. of children 2019	No. of children 2020	No. of children 2021	No. of children 2022	No. of children 2023
PVI	492	584	621	613	743	820
Childminders	0	34	37	68	31	37
Independent	139	103	100	103	106	107
Maintained	4347	3998	3993	3784	3523	3535
Special schools	16	7	8	4	0	12
Total	4994	4726	4751	4572	4266	4355

Source: DfE 'Provision for Children under 5 years of age in England: January 2023' published 6 July 2023

Extended entitlement (30 hours free childcare)

In September 2017, the Government introduced an extended free childcare entitlement for working parents (employed persons, self-employed persons, and parent on zero hours contracts) of three- and four-year-olds which provides eligible parents with a total of 30 hours of free childcare per week, over 38 weeks or the equivalent number of hours across more weeks per year. As of July 2023, there were 1697 children accessing a 30 hour places.

In its March 2023 budget statement government announced a significant investment in childcare by lowering the age group of children eligible for 30 hours free childcare per week to children from aged 9 months, of working parents. This will be a phased roll out with 2 year old children being eligible from April 2024 and children from 9 months old from September 2024. Children from aged 9 months to 2 years old will be eligible for 30 hours free childcare from September 2025.

No. of 3 & 4 year olds taking up a 30 hour free childcare place by type of provider	
Type of provider	Actual no. of children benefitting from 30 hour free childcare
PVI	756
Childminders	118
Independent schools	0
Maintained nursery	823
Special schools	0
Total	1697

Source Stockton-on Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Compared to 2022 30 hour place take-up has increased by 202 places (13.51%). The number of primary schools in Stockton now offering 30 hour places has increased to 87%, an increase of 7% compared to 2022, providing parents with more choice of where they can access their funded place.

Stockton has a conversion rate of 93.34% for parents applying for a 30 hour code with HMRC and then going on to access a 30 hour place with a childcare provider/school.

Two year old entitlement

At the end of July 2023, there were 593 two year olds accessing a free childcare place, this equates to 95.34% of eligible children accessing a place. Percentage take-up is calculated from information received from DWP on the number of potentially eligible 2yr olds. Since the launch of the offer of funded 2yr places the number of eligible children on the list has decreased by 59%, this is due to both a fall in birth rate and parents moving onto Universal Credit which for some has made them ineligible for a free place.

No. of 2 year olds taking up a free early education place by type of provider								
Type of provider	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PVI	722	785	760	681	656	589	508	438
Maintained	95	48	65	82	86	150	131	120
Special schools	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Childminders	35	44	43	56	61	42	37	35
Total	852	877	868	819	803	781	676	593
Percentage take-	78%	93%	94%	93%	98%	94%	92%	95%

Source: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Comparing Stockton take-up to national, regional, and statistical neighbours

Stockton is ranked 3rd out of the 12 North East LAs for take-up of 2yr places, 2nd out of its 11 statistical neighbours and nationally we are ranked 14th out of 152 LAs.

Disability access fund

The disability access fund is available for childcare providers to claim an additional £828 per child per year for a child attending their setting who is attracting disability living allowance. It was introduced in April 2017 and is for children who are claiming universal 3 and 4 year old early years entitlement. The provider can spend the funding on resources, equipment, minor adaptations, or staff training to benefit the child.

Disability Access Fund	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No. of children benefitting	30	30	30	26	45	50

Source Stockton-on Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Early years pupil premium

Early years pupil premium was introduced in April 2015 and is an extra amount of funding providers receive to help them support their most disadvantaged children. Children qualify if they are 3 or 4 years old, are receiving government-funded early education, and their parents receive benefits used to access free school meals.

Early Years Pupil Premium	Sum 2017	Sum 2018	Sum 2019	Sum 2020	Sum 2021	Sum 2022	Sum 2023
No. of children benefitting	647	689	697	541	694	741	692

Source Stockton-on Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Data on sufficiency of early years funded places and take-up of places by ward					
Ward	No. of places available for 0-4yr olds	No. of 3&4yr olds accessing a 30 hour funded place	2yr funded		
			No. accessing a place	No. eligible as per DWP	Percentage take-up
Billingham Central	176	64	20	36	55.56%
Billingham East	256	108	52	33	157.58%
Billingham North	9	2	0	8	0%
Billingham South	236	61	37	24	154.17%
Billingham West & Wolviston	131	97	4	2	200%
Bishopsgarth & Elm	182	84	7	8	87.5%
Eaglescliffe East	387	132	21	7	300%
Eaglescliffe West	139	60	3	3	100%
Fairfield	130	74	11	9	122.22%
Grangefield	104	13	14	11	127.27%
Hardwick & Salters	138	35	37	57	64.91%
Hartburn	268	103	16	4	400%
Ingleby Barwick North	167	65	10	13	76.92%
Ingleby Barwick South	370	180	17	13	130.77%
Mandale & Victoria	280	58	48	61	78.69%
Newtown	123	35	37	53	69.81%
Northern Parishes	179	86	7	10	70%
Norton Central	124	40	24	9	266.67%
Norton North	109	30	3	31	9.68%
Norton South	132	33	34	32	106.25%
Ropner	153	33	36	37	97.3%
Roseworth	234	43	55	46	119.57%

Data on sufficiency of early years funded places and take-up of places by ward					
Ward	No. of places available for 0-4yr olds	No. of 3&4yr olds accessing a 30 hour funded place	2yr funded		
			No. accessing a place	No. eligible as per DWP	Percentage take-up
Southern Villages	26	17	0	1	0%
Stainsby Hill	254	76	31	29	106.9%
Stockton Town Centre	167	22	16	55	29.09%
Village	348	60	43	22	195.45%
Yarm	300	86	10	8	125%
Total	5122	1697	593	622	95.34%

Source Stockton-on Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Quality of provision

Stockton has a good range of quality childcare across the borough with the majority (98.5%) of provision rated good or outstanding as of July 2023, which is higher than the national percentage (96%) and regional percentage (97%) as of 31 March 2023. Support and challenge are given to settings and childminders that are less than good to improve provision and Ofsted ratings.

Ofsted Inspection Outcomes	Outstanding	Good	Requiring Improvement	Inadequate	Met	Met (with actions)	No action (CM Agency Support Visit)	Not Met (with Actions)	No. Awaiting Inspection
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Childminders	13	75	1	0	15	0	5	1	5
Providers	9	35	1	0	5	0	0	0	4
Total	22	110	2	0	20	0	5	1	9

Source Stockton-on Tees Borough Council FIS July 2023

Number and percentage of 3 & 4 year old children benefitting from funded early education in PVI and maintained nursery, primary and special schools by Ofsted inspection rating

Ofsted rating	Stockton		North East		England	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Outstanding	827	19.6%	10,750	20.6%	229,305	20.6%
Good	3,269	77.7%	38,501	73.9%	814,994	73.3%
Requires Improvement	113	2.7%	2,586	5%	52,359	4.7%
Inadequate	0	0%	297	0.6%	15,446	1.4%
Total	4,209	100%	52,134	100%	1,112,104	100%

Source: DfE 'Provision for Children under 5 years of age in England: January 2022' published 6 July 2023

Number and percentage of 2 year old children benefitting from funded early education in PVI and maintained nursery, primary and special schools by Ofsted inspection rating

Ofsted rating	Stockton		North East		England	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Outstanding	85	15%	1,807	22%	24,184	21%
Good	485	83%	6,087	74%	87,664	75%
Requires Improvement	8	1%	235	3%	3,091	3%
Inadequate	3	1%	64	1%	1,299	1%
Total	581	100%	8,193	100%	116,238	100%

Source: DfE 'Provision for Children under 5 years of age in England: January 2022' published 6 July 2023

If you would like to read the latest Ofsted report for an individual setting these can be found on the Stockton Information Directory on each childcare provider record at www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org

Analysis of provider and parent surveys

Provider Survey

Providers were surveyed from 15 May to 9 June 2023 to gather information on their current demand for childcare and insight on their future sustainability and barriers to delivering on the expansion to childcare.

There were 122 responses to the survey, of which, 44 respondents were childminders, 32 private nurseries, 29 school nursery, 8 out of school providers, 6 pre-school playgroups and 3 independent schools

When asked if demand had changed during the last year, 32.79% stated it had remained the same, 21.31% stated it had decreased slightly, 18.85% stated it had increased slightly, 21.31% stated it had decreased slightly, 14.75% stated it had increased a lot and 12.30% stated it had decreased a lot.

The top two reasons stated for the reduced change in demand are parents choosing to use only one provider for 30 hours funded childcare (9.76%), followed by parents wanting fewer hours/shorter days (9.15%). For an increased change in demand the top two reasons are increase in demand for wraparound care (8.54%) and increased demand for 30 hours funded childcare (8.54%).

Nearly 25% of those surveyed stated there was demand they could not meet and 21.71% stated they have increased fees.

Nearly 5% have made staff redundant in the last year and 9.02% were considering making staff redundant in the future. 51 temporary/agency staff are currently employed in the sector. Many stated recruitment of staff was very difficult, with level 3 non-management staff being the most difficult positions to recruit to. Nearly 32% stated staff recruitment was a barrier to them accessing training.

27.87% stated that projected income was insufficient to meet costs and 33.61% stated projected income is enough to meet costs. When asked if they had cash reserves 40.98% stated they did not have cash reserves, of those that answered this question. When asked how confident they were about financial sustainability over the next year 40.98% were confident or very confident whereas 20.5% were unconfident or very unconfident.

When asked if they can meet demand for the extension to childcare 54.92% stated yes and 44.26% stated no. when asked if they would restrict the number of funded places 45.08% stated yes and 49.18% stated no

Parent/Carer Survey

Parents/Carers and parents-to-be were surveyed from 17 April to 14 May 2023 to assess demand for the expansion to childcare. Response rate to the survey was low and therefore not a good representation of the population surveyed. However, it did provide some insight into the demand for the new entitlements. Over 78% of those who responded said they would stop using informal childcare and move to formal childcare arrangements once funded childcare was available for their child. When asked about their working arrangements nearly 60% worked atypical hours, followed by 11.49% working term-time only. When asked if they will be considering taking up employment once a funded place is available for their child, for those currently not working, 49.43% responded yes. 62.07% would prefer to take up their funded place in a private nursery, followed by 18.39% preferring a combination of private nursery, childminder, and/or pre-school playgroup.

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