

Date: Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 3.00 pm

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

Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Chair)
Cllr Ross Patterson (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Pauline Beall
Cllr Carol Clark
Cllr Lynn Hall
Cllr Niall Innes
Cllr Tony Riordan
Cllr Laura Tunney

Cllr Marc Besford
Cllr Richard Eglington
Cllr Shakeel Hussain
Cllr Sufi Mubeen
Cllr Marilyn Surtees

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 9 January 2024. | (Pages 9 - 14) |
| 5 | Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25 - Selection of In Depth Scrutiny Reviews | (Pages 15 - 48) |
| 6 | Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste (Executive Summary for Information) | (Pages 49 - 52) |
| 7 | Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response (Executive Summary for Information) | (Pages 53 - 56) |
| 8 | Forward Plan of Key Decisions | (Pages 57 - 60) |
| 9 | Select Committee Chairs' Updates | (Pages 61 - 72) |
| 10 | Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 | (Pages 73 - 74) |

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

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

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

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

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

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

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

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

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Microphones

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

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Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday 9 January 2024.

Present: Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Chair), Cllr Ross Patterson (Vice-Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Richard Eglinton, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Marilyn Surtees

Officers: Sarah Bowman-Abouna, Carolyn Nice (AH &W); Garry Cummings, Clare Harper, (FD&R); Rebecca Saunders-Thompson, Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllrs Carol Clark and Laura Tunney

1 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes

Members requested an update on queries raised at the previous meeting on the Thornaby Town deal and spending on road and pavement repairs as part of 'Our Places' section of the Council Plan update. Officers confirmed that information would be provided.

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Winter Planning Update

The Select Committee received an update on winter planning work across the Council and work with partners.

Key issues discussed were as follows:

- Members welcomed early winter planning from April/May and queried if Members were involved in specific planning events. Officers responded that a local authority representative was always present at Integrated Care Board (ICB) planning events and feedback from various groups was disseminated to Members as part of the wider planning process. The Council was committed to commencing early winter planning to ensure that residents could remain at home and out of hospital as much as possible.
- A discussion on covid statistics was held. Members were informed the Office for National Statistics still coordinated the gathering and dissemination of national covid data. The scale of this project was reduced by the national government in October 2023 but it still provided the most accurate data on

covid levels. Officers were also able to obtain data from acute trusts on the number of covid patients in hospital.

- A discussion was held on government funding for the retention of staff in care homes.
- Members queried how the virtual frailty wards operated. Officers outlined that the purpose of the wards was to assist those with complex health needs who no longer needed to remain in hospital but required ongoing support services in their own homes.
- Members praised *The Bread and Butter Thing* initiative.
- Members praised the success of the Community Spaces initiatives and highlighted the continuation of some community groups throughout the summer months. Officers agreed to present a report to the Adult Social Care and Health Committee on the Community Spaces initiative.

Further information was requested in respect of:

- Gritting and flood management as part of the Council's winter maintenance programme.
- Project Viper and if the database had identified any individuals at risk.
- Details of training to be provided to Members on the RAYVN communications programme.
- The number of Council staff who had received flu and covid vaccines as part of the Council's vaccination programme.
- The number of people accessing virtual frailty wards.
- Figures for those utilising *The Bread and Butter Thing* scheme.
- The number of groups who have continued with the Community Spaces initiatives throughout the summer of 2023 and information on how £60,000 worth of funding would be utilised to support and sustain groups.

AGREED

- 1) That the winter planning update be noted.
- 2) That responses to the queries set out above be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

5 Financial Update and Medium-Term Financial Plan

The Select Committee received an update on the Council's financial performance and position as of 30th September 2024 for the current year (2023/24) and an outline of plan for the 2024/25 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The projected overspend was approximately £6.9million and this has been communicated to Council managers and staff. The report also highlighted that work was underway to assess reserves and this would be incorporated into the MTFP report in February 2024.

Key issues discussed were as follows:

- A discussion was held on funding provided by the Council to Tees Active Limited for energy support and a difference between figures on Tees Active accounts and Council reports. Officers provided an explanation and confirmed that accurate figures were contained in the Council's budget and end of year report for 2023/24 but they would investigate this issue and provide clarity on figures.
- Members raised concerns about not receiving information and reports in a timely manner so they could be scrutinised accurately. Officers responded that the financial situation was moving at a fast pace and Members would be briefed on the updated financial situation in January. It was also confirmed that the Council's financial position had not changed significantly since receipt of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement before Christmas 2023.
- Members queried how much the annual maintenance cost for the waterfront development would be. Officers responded that the current estimate was £380,000 but work in this area was ongoing.
- Members questioned if solar panels installed on the Ingleby Barwick leisure centre would generate income. Officers responded that income would be generated, and figures would be provided.
- Members queried why the Council's office accommodation project had been revised by £2.5million. Officers explained that original figures for this project had been determined several years ago and a report outlining the new position had been presented to Cabinet in July 2023. It was also confirmed that the sale of Municipal Buildings had not been included in current figures because the Stockton Town Centre blueprint consultation was ongoing.
- Members questioned if a worst case scenario and best case scenario could be included in future financial reports. Officers responded that due to reduced termed settlements and uncertainty on a national level, it was currently difficult to forecast. It was also highlighted that, because of this uncertainty, other Councils had chosen to only set budgets for 1 or 2 years.
- Members queried why revisions to programmes had not been presented to full Council for approval. Officers explained that updates to programmes within year only needed to be referred to Cabinet for approval for funding changes and additions.
- Discussions were held on the release of information to Members as part of the upcoming budget setting. Officers assured Members that work was continuing and a report was due to be presented to Cabinet and Members briefing session. It was also commented that, through the scrutiny function, Members would be involved in some of the larger transformation reviews.
- Members raised concerns about the procurement of a new household waste recycling centre. The Chair of the Place Select Committee reassured Members that this had been covered as part of the Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste and would be picked up in the subsequent action plan.

Further information was requested in respect of:

- The Council's bid submission to the government's Winter Pressure Fund.

AGREED

- 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 be noted.
- 3) That responses to the queries set out above be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

6 Forward Plan of Key Decisions

AGREED that the Forward Plan be noted.

7 Select Committee Chairs' Updates

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

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee -

Members noted the update from the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair.

Children and Young People Select Committee -

The Children and Young People Select Committee update was noted.

Crime and Disorder Select Committee –

As part of the Committee's current review of Outdoor Play Provision, funding issues were highlighted as an ongoing concern.

The final progress update for the Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land was also highlighted.

The Committee Chair explained that links to relevant issues and legislative changes had recently been included within the Committee's work programme document to provide Members with further information for consideration.

Members questioned if an update on winter tree maintenance could be provided and raised specific issues surrounding tree maintenance. The Chair agreed that an update from officers would be provided on this issue. Officers added that the first progress update for the Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management would be provided in the current year.

Members questioned if an answer could be provided on how often the online mapping system detailing Council owned land and private land was updated. Officers agreed to look into this and provide a response.

People Select Committee -

The Chair highlighted the current Scrutiny Review of the Cost of Living Response and praised the Council for its robust approach to the cost of living situation.

Place Select Committee -

Members noted the update from the Place Select Committee Chair.

AGREED that the Chairs' updates be noted.

8 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

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Agenda Item 5

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 MARCH 2024

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25 – SELECTION OF IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEWS

SUMMARY

The report presents proposals for the scrutiny work programme for 2024/25 for consideration and approval by Executive Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Scrutiny Committee is asked to approve the Work Programme for 2024/25.

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

1. The current year’s work programme is summarised below. This includes an indication of when current reviews are scheduled to conclude.

Select Committee	In-Depth Review Topics	Standing Items
Adult Social Care and Health	Access to GP and Primary Care (due to conclude June 2024) Adult Safeguarding (not started)	Annual Monitoring Consideration of NHS Service Changes (as and when required) Overview and Performance Reports Frontline visits (To be resumed) (Members also involved in Joint Scrutiny arrangements)
Children and Young People	Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment (due to conclude June 2024) HAF Programme (not started)	Annual Monitoring Overview and Performance Reports Frontline visits (To be resumed)
Crime and Disorder	Play Area Distribution, Maintenance and Accessibility (due to conclude May 2024) Vaping (not started)	Annual Monitoring Overview (and Performance) reports

People	Cost of Living Response (complete)	Annual Monitoring
	Disabled Facilities Grants (not started)	Overview (and performance) reports
	Adult Carers' Service (not started)	
Place	Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste Collections (complete)	Annual Monitoring Overview (and performance) reports
	Roadside Advertising (due to conclude July 2024)	

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

2. In previous years, it has been the practice for the Chair of Executive Scrutiny Committee to write to all Members in January each year to invite suggestions for in-depth scrutiny review topics. The suggestions received are prioritised by the Scrutiny Team using the PICK scoring system. The topic suggestions are reported to Scrutiny Liaison Forum (comprising Cabinet Members, Select Committee Chairs and CMT). Executive Scrutiny Committee are the decision-making body that sets the priorities and programme for the year ahead, allocating in-depth reviews to individual Select Committees. The setting of an annual work programme does not preclude topics being added to the programme mid-year where the need arises.

3. Over the years, we have sought to ensure that topics selected align with the priorities of the Council and this has been reflected in the prioritisation of the topics by Members. In 2009, cross-party support was secured to devoting the entire scrutiny work programme to support a three-year programme of EIT (Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation) reviews. The programme included Member-led scrutiny reviews alongside officer-led work. The programme delivered significant savings and transformation and ensured that all Members were able to input into reviews and influence decision making.

4. A similar approach is now proposed in relation to the Council's Powering our Futures Programme (including transformation reviews). The Chair of the Committee has communicated this proposal to all Members and at the same time inviting Members to advise of any urgent matter, or any issue already listed on the programme, that they feel should still be reviewed in 2024/25.

5. In January 2024, Cabinet received an update on the Powering our Future programme. A copy of the Cabinet report is attached at **Appendix 1**. Cabinet agreed:

- a) the draft Mission Statement and Council Missions set out at Sections 2 & 3
- b) the approach to Communities Powering Our Future, set out at Section 4
- c) the areas of focus for Team Stockton, set out at Section 5
- d) in principle the scope of Phase 1 Transformation reviews set out at Section 6. It was also agreed that the Powering Our Future Programme Board has responsibility to agree the final scope, based on the outcome of the rapid review (detailed in Section 6) and consideration of full Project Initiation Documents
- e) to note the findings from the Employee Survey, and agree the priority work strands for the Workforce Development Strategy (Section 7)
- f) the Smart Working Policy set out at Section 7 and attached as an appendix to the Cabinet report
- g) to note the areas of focus for Regeneration Powering Our Future (Section 8) and agree to receive future updates on individual areas of activity.

6. The following review areas are proposed for scrutiny review:

Committee	Potential In Depth Review Topic
Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee	Transformation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reablement Service
Children and Young People Select Committee	Transformation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HAF Programme• Corporate Parenting
Crime and Disorder Select Committee	Regeneration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcoming and Safe Town Centres
People Select Committee	Transformation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disabled Facilities Grants
Place Select Committee	Regeneration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable Housing

7. The usual pro forma have been completed in respect of all of the proposed topics. These are attached at **Appendix 2**. If agreed by Executive Scrutiny Committee, work on the above topics would commence at the conclusion of reviews that are already underway. Other reviews on the current scrutiny work programme would be deferred until the following year and the merits of completing that work revisited at that time.

8. Alongside the formal scrutiny process, forums such as Members' engagement sessions and informal working groups can be established to inform Transformation Reviews as appropriate. These can enable Members to inform policy development and proposals for change, ahead of Cabinet decision making.

CONSULTATION

9. Councillors have been asked to advise of any urgent matter, or any issue already listed on the programme, that they feel should still be reviewed in 2024/25.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

RISK ASSESSMENT

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

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Name of Contact Officer: Judy Trainer
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Background Papers:

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Not Ward Specific

Property Implications:

None

APPENDIX 1

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE: 18 JANUARY 2024

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Portfolio Title – Leader of the Council, Councillor Bob Cook

Powering Our Future – Programme Update

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Powering Our Future Programme. It includes:

- Draft Mission Statement and Council Missions for Cabinet approval
- Communities Powering Our Future
 - Building intelligence and insight to inform our future approach to community development
- Partnerships Powering Our Future
 - Developing a 'Team Stockton' approach with our partners
- Transformation Powering Our Future
 - Details of scope for Phase 1 reviews, for Cabinet approval
- Our Colleagues Powering Our Future
 - Employee Survey results informing our Workforce Development Strategy
 - Smart Working Policy for Cabinet approval
- Regeneration Powering Our Future
 - Driving economic growth to increase prosperity and wellbeing in communities.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

Cabinet is recommended to agree the Powering Our Future approach to ensure that the Council has a clear plan to address the financial challenges we face, at the same time as improving outcomes for communities, including:

- Creation of opportunities to build brighter futures for our communities and reduce inequality, using the limited amount of money we have available.
- Carefully managing our resources, creating a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that are valued by our residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Agree the draft Mission Statement and Council Missions set out at Sections 2 & 3
- Agree the approach to Communities Powering Our Future, set out at Section 4
- Agree the areas of focus for Team Stockton, set out at Section 5
- Agree in principle the scope of Phase 1 Transformation reviews set out at Section 6. It is recommended that the Powering Our Future Programme Board has responsibility to agree the final scope, based on the outcome of the rapid review (detailed in Section 6) and consideration of full Project Initiation Documents.
- Note the findings from the Employee Survey, and agree the priority work strands for the Workforce Development Strategy (Section 7)

- Agree the Smart Working Policy set out at Section 7 and attached at appendix 1
- Note the areas of focus for Regeneration Powering Our Future (Section 8) and agree to receive future updates on individual areas of activity.

1. Introduction

Powering Our Future sets a new strategic framework for the Council, initially agreed by Cabinet in July 2023. Since July, work has taken place to develop and refine the focus of the programme, to ensure it addresses the challenges and opportunities we have as a Borough.

The conditions we are working in have changed. We know we are a strong council, however what we have done to get here, won't get us to where we need to be in future. Like most public sector organisations our finances are under significant pressure, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan report to Cabinet in December 2023.

We must think differently and creatively about how we respond to the challenges ahead as we strive to achieve the best for our Borough, while we carefully manage the money we have available.

Although we can no longer afford to meet the needs of our residents in the way we have in the past, we are confident we can work with our partners and communities to put in place new and innovative approaches that will not only save money, but also reshape what we do, in the best interests of our residents – we will do this through our Powering Our Future Programme.

2. Council Mission Statement

It is proposed that the Council sets a new Mission Statement to Power Our Future. Our Mission Statement sets out a picture of success for the council. It is underpinned by 5 Missions, focused on how we will achieve success.

Our draft Mission Statement, for Cabinet approval is: *We will be a bold, brave and innovative Council. Together with our partners we will make sure Stockton-on-Tees is a fair and equal place, where everyone is proud to live and work, where our communities flourish and people feel they belong. We want everyone in our Borough to participate in building a brighter future for all of us.*

3. Council Missions

Communities Powering Our Future – changing our relationship with communities to make sure our residents have happy healthy lives

- We need to change the way we work with our communities, to use their knowledge, skills and strengths to help them deliver positive outcomes for themselves. Not only will this save money, it will mean that our residents are healthy, happy and feel like they belong.
- We will empower communities and increase individual, family and community level activities, helping people and communities to be independent and have less reliance on Council services.

Partnerships Powering Our Future – stronger together

- By working with partner organisations we can make sure our residents have support when they need it and that Stockton-on-Tees provides opportunities which make it a great place to live, work and play.

Transformation Powering Our Future – new and innovative ways of working that are better for communities and more efficient

- Our ambitious and entrepreneurial spirit will make sure our residents have bright futures. We will work with our partners and communities in new ways, embracing technology and new ways of working to create opportunities and reduce inequality, using the limited amount of money we have available.
- We will continue to carefully manage our resources. We will focus on creating a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that offer value for money and are valued by our residents.

Colleagues Powering Our Future – empowering our colleagues to do the best they can for communities

- Our talented workforce will step up to the challenging budget situation by using their knowledge and skills to work with our partners and communities in innovative, adaptable and dynamic ways with the best interests of our residents being the focus of everything they do.

Regeneration Powering Our Future – driving economic growth to improve community prosperity and wellbeing.

- Our exciting regeneration projects will make sure Stockton-on-Tees is a place of choice for business. Not only will this generate more income through Council Tax and Business Rates, there will be more employment opportunities too, which will reduce demand on services, saving us money.
- Our Borough will be recognised for its thriving economy at the heart of Tees Valley and as a place where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

The remainder of this report provides an update on activity for each of the Missions.

4. Communities Powering Our Future

Initial work has focused on developing baseline information to better understand our communities. This includes data analysis, a resident's survey and a conversation with communities, based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Wellbeing Measures and four open questions:

- What is good about the place you live?
- What would make it better?
- What could you do where you live to make it better?
- What do you need help with to make it better?

There have been around 1400 responses to the Residents Survey to date.

This will build an understanding of our communities that will be explored further using an Appreciative Inquiry Approach. Appreciative Inquiry is a participative learning approach. It focuses on community strengths and 'what works', which will be used to inform a future Vision for the Borough that is developed with, and jointly owned by communities.

In parallel to this, officers are reviewing existing activity delivered by the Council. We are gathering insight and intelligence of our current commissioned health and wellbeing services, including Adults and Health, Public Health, Children's Services and Housing. This will enable us to understand impact and target future community development in the areas that need it most. It will inform our ways of working with partners to reduce inequalities and increase the amount of activity delivered in communities, by communities. Evidence shows that community-led activity improves local outcomes, as it is designed and delivered by those who know their communities and their place best. In future, the Council will support strong and empowered communities, where wellbeing is improved.

5. Partnerships Powering Our Future

We will be Stronger Together. Our collective power with partner organisations will make a positive difference to our communities, and we will remove organisational boundaries to help improve the services our communities can access.

Through collaborative working, our residents will experience seamless services that are joined up across partner organisations.

We will strive to build a network of local partners that speak and act with ‘One Voice’ as a recognised ‘Team Stockton’.

An initial meeting of Team Stockton in November 2023 demonstrated a strong commitment across partners. Priority areas for collaboration were identified as:

- Developing skills for public service
- Attracting and retaining talent
- Building Pride in Place
- Maximising use of shared resources
- Maximising digital technology
- Health and Social Care Integration.

A workplan focused on these areas is being developed, with initial milestones identified.

6. Transformation Powering Our Future

As previously reported to Cabinet, our Transformation Programme will ensure we:

- Reduce the budget gap by £9m and deliver a balanced budget each year
- Continue to deliver good and efficient services with the resources we have available.

The table below outlines an initial tranche of reviews and high-level scope of areas identified for review as part of Phase 1 of the Transformation Programme.

Theme	Project Name	Project Description	Scope
CORPORATE SUPPORT	Customer Contact and Access to Services	How residents, visitors, partners and businesses get in touch with us and access services	<p>Review of all the ways that people contact the Council to access services, with the aim to improve service delivery, community satisfaction and make effective use of organisation resources to ensure value for money</p> <p>The review will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • methods of contact /access to services • use of technology • roles and responsibilities • service offer & standards • structure alignment, future operating arrangements

	Administration and Business Services	Administration and Business Services	<p>Review of organisation wide admin and business service functions including PA, Reception Services, Mail and Courier Services and all admin support.</p> <p>The review will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functions to be undertaken • customer access • use of technology • roles and responsibilities • structure alignment, future operating arrangements
	Fleet Management	Use and management of Council Vehicles	<p>The review will consider current vehicle usage and future management</p> <p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demand for services • current and emerging statutory requirements • a revised approach for vehicle acquisition and fleet management including a financial forecasting model. • links to Environmental Strategy
	Xentrall Shared Services with Darlington Borough Council	To review the partnership and consider expanding the current arrangements	Desktop baseline assessment to identify opportunities, risks and implications associated with potential expansion of shared service with Darlington. To inform future operating arrangements
FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP	Debt Management	How the Council collects money it is owed	<p>Review of organisation wide debt management functions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • functions to be undertaken • customer access • roles and responsibilities • structure alignment, future operating arrangements • digitisation of process
	Fees and Charges	How the Council sets its fees and charges for services	Review of all fees & charges, with a view to ensuring an organisation wide approach and to increase revenue

CARE AND SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS	Children in our Care	Children in our Care	<p>Review of current placement practice and financial position including fostering, reunification and edge of care processes. It will focus on development of a future model to ensure that the number of children in our care reduces, and more children stay in their home.</p> <p>Where children are placed in our care, it will ensure that placements are cost effective and meet the required standards and agreed needs of the child.</p> <p>This includes commissioning, procurement and partnership arrangements. It covers all placement provision as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Homes • Foster Carers • Independent Fostering Arrangements (IFA) • Special Guardianship Order (SGO) • Child Arrangement Order • Supported Accommodation
	SEND (special educational needs & disabilities) / High Needs	Support for Children with special educational needs and disabilities	<p>Review of current use of high need funding to ensure that funding is sufficient and proportionate to meet current and future needs of children and young people, and reduction of exiting DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) deficit. The scope includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council maintained schools, free schools and academies, budgets • Redesign of High Needs Banding • Better value for pupils • CPD (Continuous Professional Development) for school leaders and Children’s Service • Sufficiency of provision
	Transitions to Adulthood	How the Council supports children with disabilities and those with special educational needs and disabilities as they become adults	<p>Review the arrangements to prepare and plan for people with needs to transition into adulthood. The scope will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educational needs and disabilities • Mechanism for planning lifelong support • Partnership opportunities

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure alignment future operating arrangements
	<p>Intermediate Care</p>	<p>Support to help people live at home for longer</p>	<p>Review of mechanisms and services to support people living at home & avoiding the need for long term residential care. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home care services • Care at home market, home care market (including discharge to assess) • Reablement Service & Rosedale Service. • Commissioning of future service requirements <p>This will not review all of adult care but will influence spend across the whole service area.</p>
	<p>Early Intervention and Prevention</p>	<p>Early Help for children and families to help them remain healthy, happy and safe in their homes</p>	<p>Review of existing policy, process and operating arrangements to consider areas for improvement and opportunities to work more collaboratively across the wider organisation, as well as with schools and partners to transform and deliver an effective early intervention and prevention offer for Stockton children and families. The review will consider and/or impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health & Domestic abuse services • Commissioned services • Libraries • Benefits & Financial Inclusion • Homelessness Prevention & Temporary Accommodation • Early Years • Children's early help • Relationship with schools • Youth Services • Young Offenders • One Call • Adult Learning & Skills • VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector), public sector partners & wider communities • Service alignment & future operating arrangements

	Community Transport	Transport arrangements for adults and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and looked after children (LAC)	<p>The review will consider policy, and delivery requirements to meet policy priorities</p> <p>The scope will include Homes to School Transport provision to both mainstream and SEND and LAC children as well as Adult Transportation to the Council's two Adult Day Care Centres. It will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles & responsibilities • service offer • structure alignment, future operating arrangements • digitisation of process and customer access.
COMMUNITY SERVICES	Waste Collection	Reshaped recycling, green waste & residual waste collection service	<p>Review of the domestic, green and food waste collection service provision including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operational delivery/optimisation, waste minimisation • opportunities for income generation, financial stability and investment • digitisation of process and customer access • consideration of climate change agenda and national policy / legislation.
	Community safety and regulatory services	Provision of community safety and organisation wide regulatory services	<p>Review of all Community Safety and Regulatory Service provision within the authority with a view to rationalising leadership, aligning priorities and responsibilities, and ensuring services are on a strong footing to meet future legislative changes that have either recently been implemented or are due shortly.</p> <p>The review will also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current & emerging statutory requirements • operational delivery/optimisation • digitisation of process and customer access

To ensure the programme is focused on those areas where we can make the biggest difference given the current pressures, the Powering Our Futures Programme Board has undertaken a high-level rapid review of the programme plan with advice from Inner Circle consulting.

This will ensure that our capacity is prioritised effectively, and scope of the reviews is aligned to our aims of being more innovative, creative and working more collaboratively with our communities and partners. This will in turn enable us to provide good outcomes whilst being in a stable financial position.

Cabinet is recommended to agree in principle the scope of Phase 1 reviews as set out above. It is recommended that the Powering Our Future Programme Board (comprised of Corporate Management Team Members) has responsibility to agree the final scope, based on the outcome of the rapid review (noted above) and consideration of the full Project Initiation Documents.

Whilst there is a need to act with urgency to realise savings in the short-term, the Transformation Programme will form part of a longer-term approach to Powering Our Future. A proposed timetable for Phase 2 reviews will be brought to a future meeting of Cabinet for approval.

7. Our Colleagues Powering Our Future

Our Colleagues will be key to delivering Powering Our Future. We want to ensure that our workforce can step up to the challenging budget situation by using their knowledge and skills to work with our partners and communities in innovative, adaptable and dynamic ways with the best interests of our residents being the focus of everything they do.

An Employee Survey took place in September / October 2023. This has formed the baseline for our Workforce Development Strategy and will also support the future review of our Investors In People Accreditation, which expires in July 2024.

Employee Survey Results

1,613 employees completed the survey which is approximately 46% of the workforce.

Overall, the results are positive and equivalent to, or slightly above the industry average. This is reassuring, especially given the amount of change (internally and externally) and challenge that has been experienced over the last few years.

Our highest scores included the following areas:

- My role enables me to work well with others
- I understand what is expected of me in my role
- My behaviours reflect the organisation's values
- I understand how my role contributes to the organisation.

Areas identified for improvement were:

- I am rewarded in ways that match my motivations
- I am consistently recognised when I exceed expectations
- I get appropriate recognition for the work I do
- I have a say in decisions that affect my role.

Workforce Development Strategy

The Employee Survey, together with our Workforce Profile Data, has formed the evidence base for the Workforce Development Strategy, which is focused around the following areas:

- **Organisational Culture** - To have a strong organisational culture of shared values and behaviours that guide the way we work and how we make decisions, aligned to Powering Our Future ambitions
- **Communications & Engagement** - To have an effective communication and engagement strategy at all levels. This will ensure our colleagues and stakeholders understand corporate aims and priorities. It will facilitate bold, innovative and collaborative working, and ensure everyone understands the reason and context for change

- **Smarter Working** – To ensure we have the right resources, processes and working environment to do the job in the most efficient and smart way. This will empower staff to do their best for communities
- **Attract & Retain** – To have the best people with the right skills to Power Our Future. It is important we remain competitive with our Employee Reward Offer to be an attractive employer of choice and retain a talented and dedicated workforce.
- **Happy & Healthy Workforce** – To ensure that everyone supports and pays attention to their own as well as their colleagues' wellbeing.
- **Workforce Planning** - To ensure we have a workforce fit for the future we will embed and improve workforce planning across our organisation so that we understand our workforce profile to address future demands.
- **Workforce Development** – To provide employees with development opportunities to support retention, succession planning, future leaders and ensure we have a workforce with the right skills able to meet current and future demands. We will empower our colleagues to use their skills and talent to be innovative, entrepreneurial, dynamic and adaptable in all that they do.

Each of the areas above will form a workstrand of the Colleagues Powering our Future Mission. A project management approach will be coordinated through the Colleagues Powering our Future Steering Group. Cabinet will be updated on workstrand progress in future Programme Update reports.

Smart Working Policy

A Draft Smart Working Policy is attached at Appendix 1 for Cabinet approval. This forms part of the Council's Workforce Strategy and is key to Powering our Future. The policy will replace the Flexible Working Pilots and builds on the report considered by Members' Advisory Panel in October 2022, which recognised that a one size fits all approach is not appropriate and that a customer and business focused approach needs to be retained.

The draft policy sets out high-level principles for Smart Working, which will be supplemented by detailed guidance, training and support for our employees.

Our Principles for Smart Working are:

- We will be Bold, Brave and Innovative in the way we work
- We will work more collaboratively with our stakeholders, including our communities and partner organisations
- We will drive innovation and continuous improvement, whether through service changes or challenging and changing working practices
- We will use our resources such as data, technology, equipment and workplaces more efficiently
- Our Colleagues will have more choice about where and when they work, to improve community wellbeing and reduce inequality.

8. Regeneration Powering Our Future

Our approach to regeneration and economic growth will be critical to the future prosperity and wellbeing of our communities.

Our exciting regeneration projects will make sure Stockton-on-Tees is a place of choice for business. Not only will this generate more income through Council Tax and Business Rates, but there will also be more employment opportunities too, which will reduce demand on services, saving us money.

The focus of our activity will be:

- Building a bright future for Our Six Towns - our towns are at the heart of our communities and we have a large scale programme of investment across all of them to make sure we adapt to the changing face of retail and the pressures that they face.
- Delivering our ambitions for a Care and Health Innovation Zone at Teesdale Business Park and the adjacent Marshalling Yards in Thornaby
- Ensuring we have the transport infrastructure that connects communities with opportunities for work, learning and leisure
- Developing a bold Place Brand that celebrates our assets, reflects the strengths and vibrancy of our communities, to reinforce our Pride in Place, attract investment and talent to our Borough.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

Powering Our Future puts communities at the heart of everything we do. It will change the way we work with our communities so they use their knowledge, skills and strengths to help them deliver positive outcomes for themselves. Not only will this save money, it will mean that our residents are healthy, happy and feel like they belong.

Our approach will:

- Empower communities and increase individual, family and community level activities, helping people and communities to be independent and have less reliance on Council services.
- Always look for opportunities to be innovative and improve the way we work, so that we remain in the best possible financial position now and in the future
- Ensure that if we redesign a service, we will do this in a way that minimises impact for our residents, communities and partner organisations.

A Community Impact Assessment will be undertaken for individual reviews as required.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct impacts on Corporate Parenting as a result of this report. Implications will be identified as part of individual project activity for Powering Our Future.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan update report to Cabinet in December 2023, the Council is forecasting a budget gap of £9m by 2026/27. The Transformation Programme will ensure we address the budget gap and deliver a balanced budget each year.

The achievement of financial savings from the Phase 1 reviews will be essential to addressing the budget gap. Updates will be brought back to future Cabinet meetings regarding Phase 1 and Phase 2 reviews.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal impacts as a result of this report. Implications will be identified and legal advice sought/provided as part of individual project activity for Powering Our Future.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This report provides an update on the development of the Powering out Futures Programme. There are two main risks associated with the programme. Firstly, the programme doesn't achieve the levels of financial savings needed to put the Council on a financially sustainable footing. Secondly, the programme does not improve outcomes for our communities. Both these risks could lead to reputational risk.

To manage the risks, the Council has implemented a robust governance structure to manage the Powering our Futures programme. The structure includes senior management oversight, steering groups for each strand of the programme, clearly defined projects and programme and project management arrangements and regular reporting to Cabinet. In addition, the programme will be appropriately resourced with additional officer capacity to ensure outputs are achieved that lead to delivering the aims of the programme.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

Powering Our Future is a Borough-wide Programme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Financial Update and MTFP Report to Cabinet (December 2023)

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Smarter Working

Human Resources
January 2024

Introduction

The Council's Smarter Working Policy forms part of the Council's Workforce Strategy and is key to the Powering our Future Programme.

Powering our Future sets the Council's ambition to be a bold, brave and innovative Council. Where together with our partners, we will make sure Stockton-on-Tees is a fair and equal place, where everyone is proud to live and work, where our communities flourish and people feel they belong. We want everyone in our Borough to participate in building a brighter future for all of us.

Our Colleagues will be critical to the success of the Council's Powering our Future Programme and will be empowered to do the best they can for our communities.

It is important that our talented workforce can step up to the challenging budget situation by using their knowledge and skills to work with our partners and communities in innovative, adaptable and dynamic ways with the best interests of our residents being the focus of everything they do.

This will include Smarter Working.

Working smarter applies to all of our employees. This policy is not just about the ability to work remotely; we recognise that many of our employees might not be able to choose where they work but the principles of working with our communities and partners, and doing the right work in the most productive way for the benefit of our residents will apply.

This Policy sets out our high-level principles for Smarter Working, which will be supplemented by detailed guidance, training and support for our employees.

Our Smarter Working Principles are:

- We will work collaboratively with our stakeholders.
- We will drive innovation and continuous improvement.
- We will use our resources efficiently, including data, technology, equipment and workplaces
- Colleagues will have more choice about when and where they work.

What is Smarter Working?

Smarter working is about working with our communities and partners in an innovative, efficient and effective way to meet the needs of the people in our Borough. This will include:

- Being Bold, Brave and Innovative in the way we work
- Working more collaboratively with our stakeholders, including our communities and organisational partners
- Driving continuous innovation and improvement whether through service changes or challenging and changing working practices.
- Using our resources such as data, technology, equipment, and workplaces more efficiently
- More choice about where and when you work, to improve community wellbeing and reduce inequality.

Smarter Working Principles

1. We will work collaboratively with our stakeholders.

We need to move away from our 'traditional' role as a provider of services to one where we enable and empower our communities to do more for themselves in partnership with external organisations and the Council.

In order to do this, we need to change the way we work with our communities, partners and other stakeholders so that we use their knowledge, skills and strengths to deliver positive outcomes for local people. As a result, we need to collaborate more with colleagues internally and externally, consider more integration, joint working and delivery.

This will include removing barriers and silos to ensure we can work collaboratively across teams to secure the best outcomes for our residents and communities.

We need all of our employees to understand and think community and partnership ways of working in everything we do.

2. We will drive innovation and continuous improvement.

We need to focus on providing efficient services that offer value for money and are valued by our residents. We will therefore always look for opportunities to be innovative and improve the way we work, so that we can meet our communities' needs in the most efficient way.

Key to smarter working is a desire to improve working practices and business processes that continue or better meet the needs of our communities ideally by reducing red tape and steps needed in a process.

We will develop a culture that embraces challenge to our service delivery and working practices, where our employees are empowered and involved in improving not only what we do but how we do it. Our employees will need to be adaptable, skilled and resilient to changes in our services and practices.

3. We will use our resources efficiently.

We need to use our resources as efficiently as possible including:

- data to performance manage our services and target resident needs.
- take advantage of existing and new technology to streamline processes and make services more accessible.
- use other equipment in new and innovative ways to make our ways of working more efficient and effective.

Our physical working environment needs to be fit for purpose and office accommodation should encourage shared use of the workplace with spaces that allow for collaboration, innovation and creativity.

Guidance on smarter technology is Coming Soon...

4. More Choice about where and when you work.

We recognise that some of our frontline employees are not able to have a choice as to where or when they work, however, as far as is possible our HR policies and manager discretions will build in as much flexibility whilst meeting business demands.

For our employees who can work remotely, greater flexibility is available to determine where and when work is undertaken, provided that this is in accordance with a manager, team and service area's expectations and requirements. Employees will be provided with the necessary technology, tools and information to work remotely, and be able to decide on the best location based on the task to be completed in support of working with our communities and partners in an innovative, efficient and effective way to meet the needs of the people in our Borough.

When determining where and when work is undertaken employees must ensure:

- they are maximizing the positive impact of their work for communities.
- The needs of the Council are being met efficiently and effectively, and in a way that can demonstrate continuous improvement.
- they remain flexible and adaptable to meet changing work requirements.
- they are available to spend time in the workplace to meet and collaborate with colleagues.

Guidance on Remote Working together with expected behaviours is here ([link to follow](#))

Statutory Flexible Working Requests

This policy does not affect an employee's right to request statutory flexible working – please see [Intranet](#) for further information

Review of this Policy and Smarter Working Arrangements

A 12month corporate review of our Smarter Working arrangements will take place to ensure that the necessary support, training, expectations and behaviours are being embedded.

Individual teams and services can review their smarter working arrangements at any time to ensure that the smarter working principles and service demands are being met as efficiently and effectively as possible.

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

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

Reablement Service

To consider transformation of Adult Social Care reablement pathway in the context of the Health and Social Care Act 2022, including challenges and opportunities associated with these legislative measures that aim to make it easier for health and care organisations to deliver joined-up care for people who rely on multiple different services, current developments in services, and the focus on prevention.

This service ensures people have the opportunity to maximise their independence when they need it. This can include both step up care as well as step down, to avoid hospital admission and ensure safe discharges. It is also a service to promote and support people to be more independent and reduce the need for long term service provision for as long as possible.

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

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

Public interest justification:

Research has continued to evidence that most people prefer to remain in their own homes and communities¹, development of services, such as reablement, aim to promote independence of older people despite incremental age associated with long term conditions and frailty.

Reablement is an intensive, time-limited intervention provided in people's homes or in community settings, multi-disciplinary in nature, focussing on supporting people to regain skills around daily activities. It is goal-orientated, holistic and person-centred irrespective of diagnosis, age and individual capacities.

Supporting people back to independence (as independent as they are realistically able to achieve with the use of support and assistive technology) is an essential part of the health and social care commitment to welfare of the local population where additional support is necessary.

The public would expect the NHS and Social Care to work collaboratively and align their services to ensure a coordinated and efficient hospital discharge support (step down) and preventative support (step up) in the community. The effective use of technology should be a key enabler within this offer.

¹ Wiles, JL, Leibing, A, Guberman, N, Reeve, J, Allen, R. (2012) "The meaning of 'aging in place' to older people". *Gerontologist*, 52. Pp. 357-366.

<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Legal: Adult social care reform (People at the Heart of Care)² is focused on ensuring the social care system would work better for people and carers and meet the increasingly complex needs of an aging population and of younger adults who needed support. A principle of the policy was for social care to be more joined up; and a focus on prevention and early intervention; choice, control and support for people to live independent lives.</p> <p>The Health and Care Act 2022 turned the above intentions into law and, amongst other changes, removed the delayed discharge regime and confirmed 'discharge to assess' (D2A).</p> <p>Economic / Social: Adult social care is operating in a challenging environment, with high levels of change, uncertainty, financial pressure, increasing and complex demand and workforce shortages. This makes it necessary to reflect and review services to assess good practice, focus on prevention and stop needs from escalating and help keep people in their homes for longer. A key to this was working collaboratively and sharing resources.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>During 2023/24, projected Q2 figures show an overspend on the older people residential framework (30 care homes) of £1.3m for 23/24. Actual demand is 6% higher than budgeted.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>In 2024/25 there are several strands of work progressing that link into the scrutiny review of reablement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Powering our future (PoF) Project: Review of the Reablement / Intermediate Care Service offered by the Council to support people to live independently, reduce long stay care home admissions and maximise use of technology to ensure best use of Council resources.2. Tees Community Equipment service (TCES) Review: Assessment of the future size and offer from TCES across Tees to support hospital discharge and community support. This is a Tees wide review with the LAs and the ICB.
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>Support delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible and offer help to people who are feeling lonely.• continue to work with adult residential care and care at home providers to improve quality of care and to continue to support them as they respond to the challenges arising from COVID-19.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-system-reform-next-steps-to-put-people-at-the-heart-of-care>

- engage with individuals, families, carers and communities when developing adult social care support and continue to collaborate with the NHS to ensure health and care services work effectively together.

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

Primary:

- To review and evaluate the impact of the Health and Social Care Act 2022 on how effectively the services commissioned and directly delivered by both Adult Social Care and the NHS are effectively collaborating and delivering efficient support for people being discharged from hospital who require care and support.
- The services offered by the Council is maximising the independence for people and delivering the outcomes people expect.

Secondary

- The use of technology is an effective enabler for people's independence and supports people to live their lives as independently as possible.

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

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

Holidays Are Fun (HAF) Programme

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

The Scrutiny Committee could consider if HAF is inclusive of and attended by those families who most need it and the impact that the programme has had on families health and social and economic wellbeing. Other considerations could include:

- how the programme can maximise the involvement of schools and education providers
- how elected members can promote and encourage eligible members of their communities to engage with the programme
- if the programme is offering value for money as it moves into its final year of national funding

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

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

Public interest justification:

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

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

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

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

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

<p>The money is allocated as a grant for a specific purpose and spend is monitored through DfE. The programme should offer the opportunity to help more families at an early stage offering help and support beyond the holiday periods leading to short- and longer-term savings. Having a safe place for children to go during holiday periods helps parents who are working to reduce childcare cost, it also offers the opportunity to work with families who need support to return to work.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>No</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>Supporting 'our people' to live healthier lives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting the local economy using local providers to deliver.• Supporting schools to work during holiday periods, supporting their local communities offering healthy meals and activities to children and young people• Offer specific and focused provision for children and young people with special educational needs.• Supporting vulnerable groups such as, children in our care, children in need of help and support, children with additional needs and young carers.
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To improve delivery of the HAF programme ensuring that eligible young people are enabled to attend and are offered fun and appropriate activities.• To maximise the role of schools and education settings in the planning and delivery of the HAF programme• To ensure the project is value for money and develop a plan for sustainability beyond current funding• To ensure provision covers the whole borough and offer is accessible by children in rural areas• To increase provision for children with additional needs• To improve provision for young people aged 13 years and over• To understand how agencies are working together to provide help and support for families who access HAF outside of holidays.

Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

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

Corporate Parenting – Developing Education, Employment and Training (EET) opportunities for Care Experienced young people.

Care Experienced young people leave learning and employment to become Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) at higher than national average rates here in Stockton-on-Tees.

Building on the Scrutiny Review which took place in 2021-22 and the work of the Corporate Parenting Board to develop a strong Corporate Parenting Strategy and offer of support for Children in Our Care and Care Experienced Young People, it is proposed that the Scrutiny Committee could consider:

- if the Council's revised employability offer will increase success rates of Care Experienced young people who are progressing through work tasters, work placements, work experience, apprenticeships.
- how we work with key partners to develop their employability offer for Care Experienced young people
- how we ensure Care Experienced young people receive a smooth transition through key stages and transition points i.e. school into post-16; Y12 into Y13; Y13 into Y14; local education to Higher Education; local learning into employment including apprenticeships

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

Public interest justification:

Increasing the number of care experienced young people in education, employment and training is in the public interest for the following reasons:

- promotes social inclusion
- fosters economic growth and productivity within the borough
- empowers our children and young people
- contributes to a more skilled and diverse workforce
- reduces dependency on services

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

The cost of one young person experiencing NEET was calculated by Price Waterhouse Coopers at, accounting for inflation, as £73k. There are considerable benefits for the individual and wider community if EET rates increased.

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

EET rates for Care Experienced young people are below national average

<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>A scrutiny review of Care Leaver EET commenced during 2021-22. The final action plan has yet to be fully completed however it is acknowledged that, with the renewed focus on strengthening our Corporate Parenting role and offer, this plan could be further built upon with ambitious goals incorporated.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>Increased EET rates among Care Experienced young people and young adults. Fulfilling corporate parent role. Engaging local partners to increase opportunities for Care Experienced residents.</p>
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <p>Greater understanding of the SBC Employability offer for Care Experienced young people and opportunities to further develop it.</p> <p>Increased opportunities with partner organisations for work tasters, work experience, extended work placements and apprenticeships leading to employment.</p> <p>Increased support for Care Experienced young people at point of transition</p>

Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

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

Welcoming and Safe Town Centres

As we progress with our ambitious redevelopment of our town centres, fostering feelings of safety and creating a welcoming town centre are crucial for several reasons. Firstly, a safe environment encourages residents and visitors to engage in activities, boosting economic vitality through increased foot fall and business opportunities. Secondly, a welcoming town centre promotes community cohesion and pride, attracting investment but also fostering a sense of belonging amongst residents. Cultivating and developing a positive perception of our town centres which can be a welcoming a safe place to visit is an essential component of our regeneration strategy.

Over recent years, a significant amount of work has gone into our town centre both from a regeneration investment perspective, but with also from a community safety standpoint. A substantial amount of investment has been made in community safety measures such as new CCTV cameras and the provision of additional Civic Enforcement Officers to patrol and work with key stakeholders to problem solve issues within our town centre. Furthermore, last year seen the introduction of our first Public Space Protection Order to tackle both aggressive begging and street drinking in both Stockton Town Centre and Norton Village.

These measures alongside additional support from our strategic partners has resulted in sustained reductions in key areas of crime and disorder. Despite this however, the public perception of safety in the town centre continues to be poor amongst both perspective visitors to the town but also commercial investors despite rates of crime falling and additional investment being made.

It is therefore vital that we scrutinise what is currently in place in terms of promoting safety in the town centre, how effective the measures are in addressing crime and disorder whilst also further exploring what more can be done to positively promote Stockton on Tees Town Centre to address negative perceptions and improve feelings of safety.

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

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

Public interest justification:

Having a safe and welcoming town centre in which visitors feel confident to visit serves several public interest considerations.

1. Community well-being: It provides a secure environment for the community to come together both generally and for planned events. This can serve to improve community cohesion and improve feelings of belonging and pride.
2. Public Health: Low rates of crime and disorder alongside feelings of improved safety can contribute to reduced stress levels and improve mental health outcomes for our communities.
3. Economic Prosperity: A safe and welcoming town centre can attract improved footfall and as a result attract businesses and further investment which can stimulate economic activity through the creation of jobs and other training opportunities.

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

Having a safe and welcoming town centre has a significant impact on the social, economic, and environmental well-being for our communities. From a social wellbeing perspective, a safe and welcoming town centre encourages community cohesion and inclusivity by providing a welcoming environment which is open and accessible to all parts of our community regardless of background. It can become a place where different community groups can come together in a shared area.

In summary, a safe and welcoming town centre positively influences social interactions, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being and prosperity of the communities we serve.

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

A significant amount of investment has been made in respect of community safety measures in our town centre over recent years. This has resulted in a number of positive outcomes for our communities. A scrutiny review of this topic could look to assess how effective these services have been and what more can be done within existing resources to develop and improve feelings of safety for visitors and businesses.

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

There are no specific reviews taking place currently that directly relate to developing a welcoming town centre and also feelings of safety.

Several other scrutiny reviews have taken place previously which may be considered in order to inform the review and provide additional research and evidence. In particular the scrutiny review of Public Space Protection Orders.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This scrutiny topic looks to support delivery of the Council Plan and falls within a number of key focus areas such as:

- A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm;
- A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive,
- A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to success.

Having a welcoming and safe town centre for our community directly relates to all three visions for our borough, in line with our current Council Plan.

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

A review of how the current community safety measures within Stockton on Tees Town Centre are performing and recommendations on what more can be done.

A review of how our strategic partners such as Cleveland Police, Stockton BID and the wider VCSE sector help support our aim of a safe and welcoming town centre.

Recommendations as a result of the review, on how we can improve negative public perceptions of the town centre and its safety through new and innovative means of engagement.

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

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

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

A DFG is a means tested grant provided by the Council to make an individual's home suitable to their needs (works may include for example widening doors / installing ramps, stairlifts and level access showers and building extensions to accommodate a downstairs bedroom/bathing facilities). Monies to fund DFG's is provided to LA's via the Better Care Fund.

The review will explore:

- the Councils current approach to delivery of a DFG (are we doing enough to support vulnerable residents / can the customer journey be improved) and
- the Councils use of discretionary funding (financial loan assistance) to ensure that the delivery of DFG's continues to meet both individual needs and are cost effective.

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

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

Public interest justification:

Demand for DFGs continue to rise at a time when building costs have significantly increased. The result of this is an increasing number of DFG applications costed above the maximum grant threshold (£30k) and a growing waiting list (in terms of numbers of those waiting for a DFG and time taken from the point of application to DFG works commencing). This impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals and potentially their ability to remain living independently in their home

As noted above building costs have risen significantly over recent years resulting in an increasing number of residents needing to make greater financial contribution to the cost of their DFG, specifically in instances where the value of DFG works is above the maximum £30,000 threshold. SBC has adopted measures to support individuals who do not have the financial means available to contribute to a DFG in the form of discretionary loans with the aim of preventing residents 'falling out' of the system.

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

Issuing DFG's helps the most vulnerable residents with disabilities in the Borough live independently in their own homes for longer, preventing pressures on other council and health services and supporting hospital discharge.

DFG legislation includes the Regulatory Reform Act which gives Council's the authority to bring in discretionary policies and procedures to support their residents, therefore there is the scope to modify, influence or improve this service area.

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

The demand for DFG's has risen year on year and is acknowledged by Government. The Council aim to deliver an efficient DFG service (from the point of application through the

completion of works). This review will explore both current and potential alternative options to ensure the service is delivered in an efficient, effective and customer focused way.

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

Good practice guidance has been issued by Central Government (produced on their behalf by produced by 'Foundations'). <https://www-foundations-uk-com/guides/>

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

DFG directly supports the following Council plan priority: "To support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible" (Council Plan Objective - '*A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm*').

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

To ensure SBC is delivering an effective, efficient and quality DFG service which meets our residents needs. Whilst also exploring whether SBC is offering sufficient financial support (loan) to enable vulnerable residents to secure a DFG in the face of rising building costs?

Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

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

Affordable Housing

Like many local authorities demand for affordable and social housing is increasing. As a 'non stock holding' local authority we rely on Nomination Agreements with Registered Housing providers to address housing need and on relationships both Registered Housing providers and private developers to increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough. Currently we are experiencing increasing demand for affordable housing from all needs groups (i.e. families / singles & couples / those with health needs / those seeking supported housing to enable independent living) at a time when the number of affordable housing units available (via Nomination Agreements) is reducing.

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

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

Public interest justification:

To ensure that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council can address the housing needs (in both general and supported housing) for both current and future generations.

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

The provision of good quality, affordable housing makes a direct (positive) impact on the health and well-being of the boroughs residents and also helps address inequality. As such supporting affordable housing delivery addresses key objectives detailed in the Council Plan and the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework.

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

Number of applicants registered on Tees Valley HomeFinder (Housing Register):
Qu 2 2023/24 = 1331 / Qu 3 2023/24 = 2039

Number of applicants registered on Tees Valley HomeFinder (Housing Register) by band at the end of Qu 3):

Band 1 = 271

Band 2 = 452

Band 3 = 371

Band 4 = 945

Average number of properties advertised on Tees Valley HomeFinder (*per week* within the borough):

2022/23 = 16 / Qu 1 and Qu 2 2023/24 = 12 / Qu 3 = 10

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

No

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The topic directly supports the following key objectives of the Council plan:

- *A Place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm &*
- *Making the borough a place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed*

How:

- By providing good quality, affordable housing.
- By supporting independent living.

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

To identify potential options for how the council can increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough and therefore address housing need.

PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC WASTE COLLECTIONS, KERBSIDE RECYCLING AND GREEN WASTE

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Place Select Committee's scrutiny review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste.
- 1.2 Levels of recycling in the Borough are amongst the lowest in the country. The cost of the weekly collection of general waste is increasing rapidly. Food waste collection will be a requirement in the coming years and a proactive approach could contribute to the Council's carbon reduction targets. The collection of garden waste/green waste also benefits some communities more than others.
- 1.3 Overall, the Council's approach to waste reduction could be improved to reduce the financial and carbon cost. Therefore, this review aimed to consider the potential public resistance but also give appropriate consideration to the importance of the environment, the costs of service delivery, and the direction of national policy over food waste.
- 1.4 The Select Committee's key findings were as follows:
 - Nationally, due to the Resources & Waste Strategy & Environment Act 2021, weekly food waste collections will become mandatory by 2026.
 - As part of the Government's 'Simpler Recycling' reforms, the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) will also be introduced from October 2025. Local authorities will also be able to charge for the collection of green waste.
 - Locally, from 2026, the energy from residual waste gate fee is expected to double following the necessary procurement of a new residual waste disposal facility.
 - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) currently has the lowest recycling rate in the Tees Valley (25.2% in 2022/23) and the highest level of residual waste per household in the country. SBC is also one of a small number of local authorities to collect weekly residual waste in a 240-litre bin.
 - Therefore, SBC's waste management service must be re-evaluated to ensure it is sustainable and financially viable. This includes the frequency of recycling and residual waste collections.
 - An assessment of SBC's waste and recycling service by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has provided the Committee with additional data on the Council's current performance compared to similar local authorities.

- WRAP's review also included an assessment of 4 alternative collection scenarios. This included performance levels (percentage recycled and amount of residual waste), carbon impact, and revenue and capital costs.
- Scenario 3 (fortnightly refuse collection with a weekly 'multi-stream collection of dry recycling and food waste) resulted in the lowest levels of residual waste, the highest levels of recycling and the lowest level of carbon impact. This scenario had the joint highest level of projected number of staff.
- In a closed session, the Committee received information on the projected costs for each scenario. Scenario 3 had the lowest level of:
 - projected total revenue costs (excluding garden waste)
 - projected annual 'whole system' costs relative to the current baseline costs assuming 2026 and 2028 EfW (Energy from Waste) gate fee (the only scenario to achieve savings). However, container capital costs (vehicles included in projected revenue costs) also had to be considered for scenario 3.
- SBC has enjoyed high levels of customer satisfaction for its waste and recycling collection service. Material collected for recycling is also of a high quality with low levels of contamination. Both factors need to be considered when deciding on any changes to the service.
- A comprehensive communications plan on proposed changes is vital to ensure residents are sufficiently informed before changes are implemented. Following this community engagement would be required for a short time to help embed the changes. A project manager and ICT software would also need to be resourced.

Conclusion

- 1.5 Through this review, the Committee has evaluated the Council's current waste management strategy. It has been evidenced that the Borough has the highest level of residual waste per household in the country and the lowest recycling rate regionally.
- 1.6 Owing to several factors, the Council must implement an alternative waste management strategy which is both financially viable and reduces the Council's carbon impact. These include the introduction of national legislation on weekly food waste collections, the unprecedented financial pressures exerted on local authorities and the Council's commitment to carbon reduction to combat climate change.
- 1.7 Therefore, the Committee has considered four alternative collection scenarios and has concluded that weekly dry recycling and food waste collections and fortnightly residual waste collections is the most appropriate choice. The implementation of a comprehensive communication and community engagement plan to inform residents of these changes has also been recommended. Additionally, it has emerged that the Council's green waste collection service should be revaluated in light of the Government's 'Simpler Recycling' reforms.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend:

- 1) That the council adopt a fortnightly refuse collection service.**
- 2) That scenario 3 (fortnightly refuse collection with a weekly 'multi-stream collection of dry recycling and food waste) is adopted as the Council's new waste and recycling collection service, when considering timescales around national mandated services and local waste disposal arrangements.**
- 3) To review the green waste collection service in line with updated government guidance.**
- 4) That a comprehensive communications and community engagement plan on proposed changes is implemented to ensure residents are sufficiently informed prior to the enactment of any changes, and to help embed the changes, to the waste and recycling service.**

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PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COST OF LIVING RESPONSE****1.0 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the People Select Committee's scrutiny review of Cost of Living Response.
- 1.2 In response to the ongoing cost of living crisis, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) has introduced a number of initiatives (for example the Cost-of-Living on-line HUB / Warm Spaces / Food Aid Fund) to support the Borough's residents. This review has built on the 'Scrutiny Review of the Cost of School Uniform' which was undertaken in 2020 and the recommendations of the 'Scrutiny Review of Child Poverty' undertaken in 2022. This review has considered SBC's response to ensure the Council effectively supports the current and emerging needs of its residents, whilst also evaluating its current approach to inform/provide a steer for ongoing and future activity.
- 1.3 As detailed in the 13 July 2023 Cabinet report, "Powering Our Futures – Delivering People, Place Economy", the Council is committed to the development of an Anti-Poverty Action Plan (to be co-developed with partners and those with lived experience). The plan will focus on how the Council can help prevent and mitigate the impact of poverty. This review will inform the development of this plan.
- 1.4 This review has considered the key components of the cost of living approach adopted by the Council at a time of increasing service demands (for both advice and support). Consequently, it has explored the possibility to develop, change and, if appropriate, grow the Council's services around the cost of living work to support more residents in the Borough.
- 1.5 The Select Committee 's key findings were as follows:
 - Poverty in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees is a long-term issue which has been exacerbated by the ongoing cost of living situation. There is a notable disparity in life expectancy across the Borough, with a difference of 21.1 years for males and 17.1 years for females. 9 of the Borough's 26 wards are in the 10% most deprived in the country.
 - The Council's Cost of Living response has included both immediate short-term interventions and long-term strategies. This approach has gained recognition from the Local Government Association (LGA) and praise from external partners in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. It has also been recognised by being nominated for an APSE award.
 - Examples of the Council's Cost of Living response include: the online 'Here to Help Hub', which provides information on benefits, advice and support available; the 'Cost of Living Booklet', which is updated quarterly and available online and in print; quarterly newsletters, energy crisis support; and the establishment of Warm Spaces (Community Spaces) in partnership with the VCSE sector. There are also a wide range of other projects to meet any emerging needs, for example The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT),

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) work, employee support, work around Child Poverty etc.

- As part of the review, site visits were arranged to two TBBT hubs, Victoria Park Community Hall, Thornaby and The Salvation Army, Stockton. This provided Members with the opportunity to speak to staff, co-ordinators and volunteers and witness the bag preparation and packaging processes prior to collection from members of the public. Members who attended acknowledged the importance of this initiative in alleviating some of the financial pressures residents are currently facing in light of high food prices.
- During the review, an additional online session was held to receive evidence from an LGA representative on local authority management of the Cost of Living situation. It was evident that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council was leading the way on many aspects of this work. However, it was noted that the challenges around this will continue to grow. Therefore, it is important to continue to provide support to those affected by the Cost of Living.
- The importance of 'lived experience' has been repeatedly highlighted throughout this review. It has been evidenced that, as the Cost of Living situation has developed, services across the Borough have noted that the demographics of those seeking help and support has changed. For example, there has been increase in those with mortgages or residents from more affluent wards approaching the Council and agencies for help.
- Debt advice and debt management has been a consistent and prevailing theme throughout the evidence gathering process. It is necessary to consider the value that income maximisation support can have in providing one solution to this problem.
- The continuation of issues with the affordability of school uniform has been discussed at length and this is an area where long term intervention will be needed if school uniform policies across the Borough remain restrictive.
- The stigma associated with poverty and receiving support has been raised. However, innovative approaches to reducing this stigma have also been evident, particularly support provided to young people and families through schools.
- In response to the Cost of Living situation, the Council's Customer Services team has been the first point of contact for concerned residents approaching the Council. The volume of calls received, and level of residents in deep distress, has significantly increased since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic. This has impacted on call response times, staff retention, recruitment, training, and the mental wellbeing of Customer Services staff. In response, additional support and training has been put in place for Customer Services staff.
- A range of benefits and initiatives are available to all Council staff members. Targeted support and training have also been provided to staff across the Council. Worthy of note, work with the Council's Community Service staff on men's health and wellbeing has resulted in the achievement of an LGC Award for Best Wellbeing Initiative. This targeted approach could possibly be extended to other areas of the Council where there is a need.

- This review has demonstrated the integral role of the Council's Cost of Living response, and its continued partnerships with external organisations, in supporting residents through the ongoing cost of living situation and the development of the Council's 'Powering Our Futures' initiative. It is essential that the Council continues to maintain and foster relationships with the VCSE sector to provide the best possible solution for residents during these unprecedentedly challenging times.
- As stated above, it is apparent that Cost of Living challenges will continue to grow and evolve. Therefore, the need to continue to develop this work is necessary.

Conclusion

- 1.6 This review has highlighted how the existing challenges associated with poverty and inequality across the Borough have been compounded by the ongoing cost of living situation. Additional challenges have arisen through the widening demographic of those affected by the cost of living. However, the evidence submitted has confirmed that the Council's proactive approach has provided a comprehensive response and resulted in regional and national recognition. The contribution of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector in mitigating the effects of poverty must not be underestimated and the continuation of partnership working is essential for future strategic planning.
- 1.7 Consequently, the review's recommendations seek to respond to persistent concerns (such as the affordability of school uniform and debt management) and provide a commitment to develop an anti-poverty strategy to cement the Council's long-term coordinated approach. Ensuring that residents and Council staff continue to be sufficiently supported is integral in this endeavour.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend:

- 1) That findings from this review will inform the development of the Council's Anti-Poverty Action Plan/Strategy as part of the 'Powering Our Futures' programme. This will be coordinated with partners and will advocate the importance of lived experience.**
- 2) That the Council continues to work with schools and governors to address the issues around the affordability of school uniform and provide options to expand the provision of pre-loved uniforms are explored, through devising an action plan clearly outlining the steps to be taken to address these issues. The action plan will be shared with the Committee and progress reported as part of the wider recommendations. In addition, the Council will meet with Multi-Academy Trust school improvement leads to advocate the need for affordable school uniforms and the ongoing promotion of pre-loved ones.**
- 3) That the income maximisation service is widely promoted through Stockton News and social media channels as a means of assisting residents with debt management and financial difficulties.**
- 4) That, building on the success of previous staff drop in sessions around Cost of Living this targeted approach continues where there is a need.**
- 5) That, building on the existing success of the work undertaken, to continue to build on best practice from across the country working alongside the LGA.**

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Statutory Forward Plan

Key Decisions

1 March 2024 - 30 June 2024

Description of Matter / Decision Required Key Decision?	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Leader	Identity of Decision Taker (eg Cabinet or Council or Joint Arrangement)	Decision Due Date	Principal Consultees	Method of Consultation	How Interested Parties may submit representations to decision-takers and end date for representations	Reports and background papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration	Notes / Comments
<p>Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy The report to Council to set the Council's budget and Council tax for 2024/25 and approve the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>Key</p>	<p>Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive</p> <p>Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive</p>	<p>Leader of the Council</p> <p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration and Deputy Chief Executive</p> <p>Cabinet</p>	<p>12 Feb 2024</p> <p>12 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet and Council</p>	<p>Members briefings and meetings will be held with Councillors</p>	<p>clare.harper@stockton.gov.uk, Sarah.Whaley@stockton.gov.uk</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy</p>	<p>Key Decision</p> <p>A CIA is not required.</p>
<p>Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste To receive the final report of the Place Select Committee</p> <p>Key</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport</p>	<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services</p>	<p>15 Feb 2024</p> <p>15 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>Cabinet report</p>	<p>Rebecca.Saunders-Thompson@stockton.gov.uk, Sarah.Whaley@stockton.gov.uk</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste</p>	<p>Key Decision</p> <p>CIA is not required.</p>

Description of Matter / Decision Required Key Decision?	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Leader	Identity of Decision Taker (eg Cabinet or Council or Joint Arrangement)	Decision Due Date	Principal Consultees	Method of Consultation	How Interested Parties may submit representations to decision-takers and end date for representations	Reports and background papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration	Notes / Comments
<p>Annual Procurement Plan/ Higher Value Contracts and Social Value Update Report The report seeks approval from Cabinet for the procurement of higher value contracts. The report includes all known contract awards scheduled for 2024/25. The report also includes a Social Value update.</p> <p>Key</p>	<p>Director of Corporate Services</p>	<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>14 Mar 2024</p>		<p>The report seeks approval from Cabinet for the procurement of higher value contracts. The report includes all known contract awards scheduled for 2024/25. The report also includes a Social Value update.</p>	<p>martin.skipsey@st ockton.gov.uk Martin.skipsey@st ockton.gov.uk</p>	<p>Annual Procurement Plan/ Higher Value Contracts and Social Value Update Report</p>	<p>A CIA is not required</p>

Description of Matter / Decision Required Key Decision?	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Leader	Identity of Decision Taker (eg Cabinet or Council or Joint Arrangement)	Decision Due Date	Principal Consultees	Method of Consultation	How Interested Parties may submit representations to decision-takers and end date for representations	Reports and background papers submitted to decision-taker for consideration	Notes / Comments
<p>Local Plan Five-Year Review Regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require a review of local plans at least once every 5 years from their adoption.</p> <p>The Current Stockton on Tees Local Plan was adopted on the 30 January 2019 and thus a review needs to be complete by 31 January 2024.</p> <p>Key</p>					Cabinet and Council	Meetings	simon.grundy@stockton.gov.uk	Local Plan Five-Year Review	A CIA is not required

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Scrutiny Review – Access to GPs and Primary Medical Care	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The fourth evidence-gathering session took place at the meeting in January 2024 which focused on submissions from the Clinical Directors (accompanied by Operational Leads) of the Borough's four Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Areas outlined and discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of any access issues within the PCN area (pressure points at different times of the week / day, impact of COVID, staffing). • Management of patient contact (systems, prioritisation, triage) – communication to patients / are these effective / any issues? • Mechanisms for the public to raise concerns about access issues and how this is communicated / managed / responded to. • Do practices seek feedback around access – how has this informed arrangements? • Summary of any planned changes within PCN practices to improve access or improve patient experience (e.g. linked to capacity and access plan, modern general practice access models, etc.).
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The next (and final) evidence session in March 2024 (originally planned for February 2024) will consider patient / public views on this scrutiny topic, including feedback from the Committee's survey which has been issued to the Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) within each of the Borough's 21 general practices.
On track – yes / no	No – due to the need for more time to collect / collate the patient / public views element, the Committee's final report will now be presented to Cabinet in June 2024 (as opposed to May 2024).

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>Public Health: The SBC Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022 was considered by the Committee in January 2024 – Members looked forward to a timelier production of the next annual report.</p> <p>Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB): The Committee considered the TSAB Annual Report 2022-2023 at its meeting in February 2024. Member questions focused on the conversion rate of reported concerns to Section 42 enquiries, joint-working between adults and children's services (also raised during consideration of last year's Annual Report), the impact of promotional campaigns regarding adult safeguarding matters, available resources within this area of work, and the support given to staff who work in this domain.</p> <p>SBC Safeguarding Concerns – Analysis (including DoLS activity): A report was presented to the Committee in February</p>

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

	<p>2024 in relation to SBC analysis on safeguarding concerns – this included commentary on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) matters. Challenges associated in recruiting Relevant Persons Representatives (RPRs) were raised and discussed by Members.</p> <p>CQC / PAMMS Report Updates: The Committee considered the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) quarterly report (Q3 2023-2024), including PAMMS assessment feedback published during this period, at its meeting in February 2024. Members expressed deep concern about the latest Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) CQC outcomes, and discussion ensued about the historical issues raised by the Committee in relation to this Trust (culminating in the Committee sending a letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care back in April 2022 calling for a public inquiry). It was agreed that TEWVs Lead Governor be asked to attend a forthcoming meeting to inform Members what the Governors view of this latest CQC report was and what they were doing to address the concerns outlined by the regulator. An invite to the Committee meeting in April 2024 has since been issued.</p> <p>Members were also informed of the imminent closure of Teesdale Lodge Nursing Home, with assurances provided over the transfer of residents and staff to other services. Further details on this development were subsequently shared with the Committee.</p>
<p>Requests for more information</p>	<p>None</p>

NHS Updates / Consultations

Key Issues / Problems or Concerns

New Health Scrutiny Arrangements: New health scrutiny arrangements began on 31 January 2024. The main focus of the changes is the removal of the power of health overview and scrutiny committees (HOSCs) to formally refer matters of concern relating to major service reconfiguration to the Secretary of State. Instead, the Secretary of State may act proactively, further to a request that he or she may receive from anyone – although such action would be subject to consultation with the HOSC, amongst others. Guidance has been produced by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) summarising these changes (see <https://www.cfgs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024-01-09-HEALTH-SCRUTINY-PRIMER.pdf>) – this has been circulated to the Committee.

Grange Dental Practice: In January 2024, the Committee Chair was notified of a proposed minor relocation of its services by Grange Dental Practice (Norton). These proposals were subsequently shared with the Committee (as well as relevant Cabinet Members and Directors) for comment – views were then submitted back to the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB), with Members expressing no objections to the planned changes.

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

	<p>North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB): NENC ICB is providing guidance in relation to staying well and assisting services during the current cold season. Its 'Here to Help this winter' webpage promotes a range of advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking after yourself • Think pharmacy first • GP practices • NHS 111 • Urgent Treatment Centres • A&E and 999 • Looking after your mental health • Be wise, immunise (vaccinations) <p>For further details, see https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-winter/.</p>
<p>Requests for more information</p>	<p>None</p>

Regional Health Committees	
<p>Key Issues / Problems or Concerns</p>	<p>Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: As part of the agreed rotational arrangements, the chair and support function for the Committee is being undertaken by SBC during 2023-2024.</p> <p>The last meeting took place on 15 December 2023 – items included a winter plan update, future plans for non-surgical oncology, an update on the state of dentistry, and community water fluoridation proposals. The next meeting is scheduled for 15 March 2024, with anticipated items to include both the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) and North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS) Quality Accounts. An update on developments around the recent NENC ICB re-structure has also been requested.</p> <p>In addition, the Committee requested an informal briefing on TEWVs use of physical intervention / restraint, a source of previous Member concern – this has since been arranged and will take place on 4 March 2024.</p> <p>Southern Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) / Integrated Care System (ICS) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: No meetings are currently scheduled.</p> <p>North East Regional Health Committee: No meetings are currently scheduled.</p>
<p>Requests for more information</p>	<p>None</p>

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>No updates have been received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Opportunities for Adults (TBC) • Care at Home (March 2024)
Requests for more information	None

Next Scrutiny Review
TBD

Remaining 2023-2024 Meetings (all 4.00pm unless stated)
Tuesday 19 March 2024

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update March 2024

Scrutiny Review – Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The Select Committee's current review is being carried out utilising an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) model.</p> <p>An AI model is a collaborative process that involves all stakeholders, from top management to frontline employees and, in the case of this review, much stronger involvement with the education sector to create a shared vision and find solutions in a creative and innovative way.</p> <p>As part of the review, two all day stakeholder workshops are being held in March around the two areas agreed by the Committee as the focus of its work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 March 2024 – Attendance • 22 March 2024 - Communication (vocabulary, oracy and literacy) <p>All Head Teachers and a wide range of stakeholders have been invited to the events.</p> <p>Both events will be opened with a key note speech from Anthony Douglas CBE. Once the Chief Executive of Cafcass and now adviser to the Irish government, Welsh government and the DfE, he has been working with us on our Inquiry into reducing the educational attainment gap.</p> <p>Pupil voice interviews are also taking place in four primary and four secondary schools.</p> <p>In addition, an online survey has been rolled out across children's services based on the same key questions for the pupil voice interviews.</p> <p>Alongside engagement, the Committee have been received presentations and updates to provide background to their review. These have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • December – New Team around the School Partnership Offer • January – Draft Attendance Strategy • February – Early Help Appreciative Inquiry
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	<p>Stakeholder Workshops</p> <p>March Meeting – Report – Outcomes for vulnerable groups.</p>
On track – yes / no	Yes

Children and Young People Select Committee Chair's Update March 2024

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

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or concerns	<p>The Select Committee received progress updates in relation to agreed actions from previously completed reviews of Care Leavers EET and signed off all actions in relation to the review of Child Poverty.</p> <p>Further progress updates are scheduled as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Leavers EET – July 2024 • Contextual Safeguarding – July 2024

Next Scrutiny Review
TBD

Remaining 2023-2024 Meetings (all 5.00pm unless stated)
13 March 2024

Crime and Disorder Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Scrutiny Review – Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The third evidence-gathering session took place in January 2024 and involved a contribution from the SBC Town Centres Development team. Areas outlined and discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centres Development department's responsibility for development of new facilities. • Interdepartmental consultations on new facilities (i.e. how this works / what is the process?). • Summary of new and improved play / informal sport provision under the Town Centres programme (inc. new Stockton waterfront plans). • Understanding of revenue commitments around large-scale play facilities (historic and future projections). <p>The latest (and final) evidence session was held in February 2024 and focused on information regarding external bodies associated with this scrutiny topic, the experiences of other Local Authorities, and the views of Stockton Parent Carer Forum. Ahead of the next phase of the review (summary of evidence / draft recommendations session), Members were provided with some potential options to reflect upon.</p>
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The informal 'summary of evidence' session will take place in March 2024 where the Committee will reflect on all the information received during this review. Draft recommendations will then be formulated.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>No updates have been received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Asset Management (March 2024) • Fly-Grazed Horses (TBC)
Requests for more information	None

Crime and Disorder Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	Work Programme 2023-2024: An additional ' <i>Other Information Sources / Updates</i> ' section had been added to the Committee's work programme document – this reflected some key crime and disorder / community safety issues (with links included providing more detail) which the Committee may be interested in scrutinising further (outside of any ongoing in-depth review work). Members were encouraged to contact either the Chair / Vice-Chair or Scrutiny Officer if they had queries on any of the stated topics.
Requests for more information	None
Next Scrutiny Review	
TBD	
Remaining 2023-2024 Meetings (all 4.30pm unless stated)	
Thursday 21 March 2024	

People Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Scrutiny Review – Cost of Living Response	
Achieved since last meeting	The Committee meeting in January 2024 was an informal summary of evidence session held via Teams. Draft recommendations were discussed and agreed. The draft final report was presented to the Committee in February 2024 and agreed.
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The Committee's agreed final report will be presented to Cabinet in March 2024.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	No updates have been received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting. Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future (TBC)
Requests for more information	None

Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	No reports received since previous update.
Requests for more information	None

Next Scrutiny Review
TBD

Remaining 2023-2024 Meetings (all 4.00pm unless stated)
Monday 4 March 2024 (cancelled)

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Place Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Scrutiny Review – Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste Collections	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The draft final report was presented to, and agreed by, the Committee in January 2024.</p> <p>The Committee's final report was presented to Cabinet on 15 February 2024. All recommendations were endorsed.</p>
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	An Action Plan in relation to the review's agreed recommendations will be drafted and presented to the Committee for approval in April.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Scrutiny Review – (Unauthorised) Roadside Advertising	
Achieved since last meeting	<p>The initial tri-partite meeting to discuss this review took place in January 2024. The draft scope and project plan was presented to the Committee in February 2024.</p> <p>The proposed aim of the review is for the Council to adopt a co-ordinated approach to the control of roadside advertising, allowing (where appropriate and safe to do so) legitimate roadside advertising, while controlling, efficiently and effectively, inappropriate roadside advertising.</p> <p>Identified contributors include Council officers, Cleveland Police and the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). It is anticipated that the Committee's final report will be presented to Cabinet in September 2024 although it may be possible to bring the reporting date forward.</p> <p>At the February meeting, the Committee received a presentation on the powers and legislation and the types of unauthorised roadside advertising including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banners and event advertising • Fly posting • Roadside trailers • A Boards
Problems or concerns	None
Planned next month	The first evidence-gathering session is scheduled for the Committee meeting in March 2024 and will include contributions from planning.
On track – yes / no	Yes

Place Select Committee Chair's Update – March 2024

Monitoring	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	<p>The following updates have been received by the Committee since the last Executive Scrutiny Committee meeting:</p> <p><u>Burial Provision</u> A further update was presented to the Committee in January 2024. There were three outstanding recommendations – one was marked as 'fully achieved' and two were classified as 'slipped'. The Committee agreed that a further update would not be provided by officers until land acquisition had progressed significantly.</p> <p><u>Residents Parking Zones</u> A further progress update was presented to the Committee in January 2024. There were seven outstanding recommendations, and all recommendations were categorised as 'fully achieved', subject to Cabinet Member approval of the new Residents Parking Zones policy and a Members briefing session in March 2024. Therefore, the Action Plan was marked as fully achieved and no subsequent updates to the Committee are required.</p> <p>Future progress updates regarding previously completed reviews will be received by the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burial Provision (TBC) • Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space (April 2024)
Requests for more information	None
Overview / Performance and Quality Assurance	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	No reports received since previous update.
Requests for more information	None
Crustacean Deaths Collaborative Working Group	
Key Issues / Problems or Concerns	A meeting of the Work Group is scheduled to take place on 27 February and an update will be provided at the meeting.
Requests for more information	None
Next Scrutiny Review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD 	
Remaining 2023-2024 Meetings (all 4.00pm unless stated)	
Monday 11 March 2024	

Executive Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

In addition to the Standing Items:

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

Date	Item	Attending
4 July	Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 – Selection of In-Depth Reviews	Jonathan Nertney
	Council Plan 2022-2025 Update	Garry Cummings/ Ian Coxon
5 September	MTFP Update	Garry Cummings
	Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 – Update	Jonathan Nertney
7 November	MTFP Update	Garry Cummings
	Council Plan Update	Garry Cummings/ Ian Coxon
9 January	MTFP Update	Garry Cummings
	Winter Planning Pressures	Sarah Bowman Abouna
5 March	Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25 – Selection of In Depth Scrutiny Reviews	Jonathan Nertney Garry Cummings Geraldine Brown
	Final Report of People Select Committee – Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response – Executive Summary for Information	Judy Trainer
	Final Report of Place Select Committee – Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste – Executive Summary for Information	Judy Trainer

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