

**Date:** Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Baptist Tabernacle Auditorium, The Square, Stockton on Tees, TS18 1TE

## **AGENDA**

- 1 Welcome and Evacuation Procedure**
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**  

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 September 2024. (Pages 7 - 22)
- 5 Public Question Time**
- 6 Appointments to Committees and Joint Bodies for 2023/27** (Pages 23 - 26)
- 7 The Stockton-on-Tees Plan 2024-2028** (Pages 27 - 60)
- 8 Powering Our Future - Prudential Borrowing Requirements** (Pages 61 - 84)
- 9 Members' Question Time** (Pages 85 - 94)
- 10 Forward Plan and Leader's Statement**

**Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting**

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

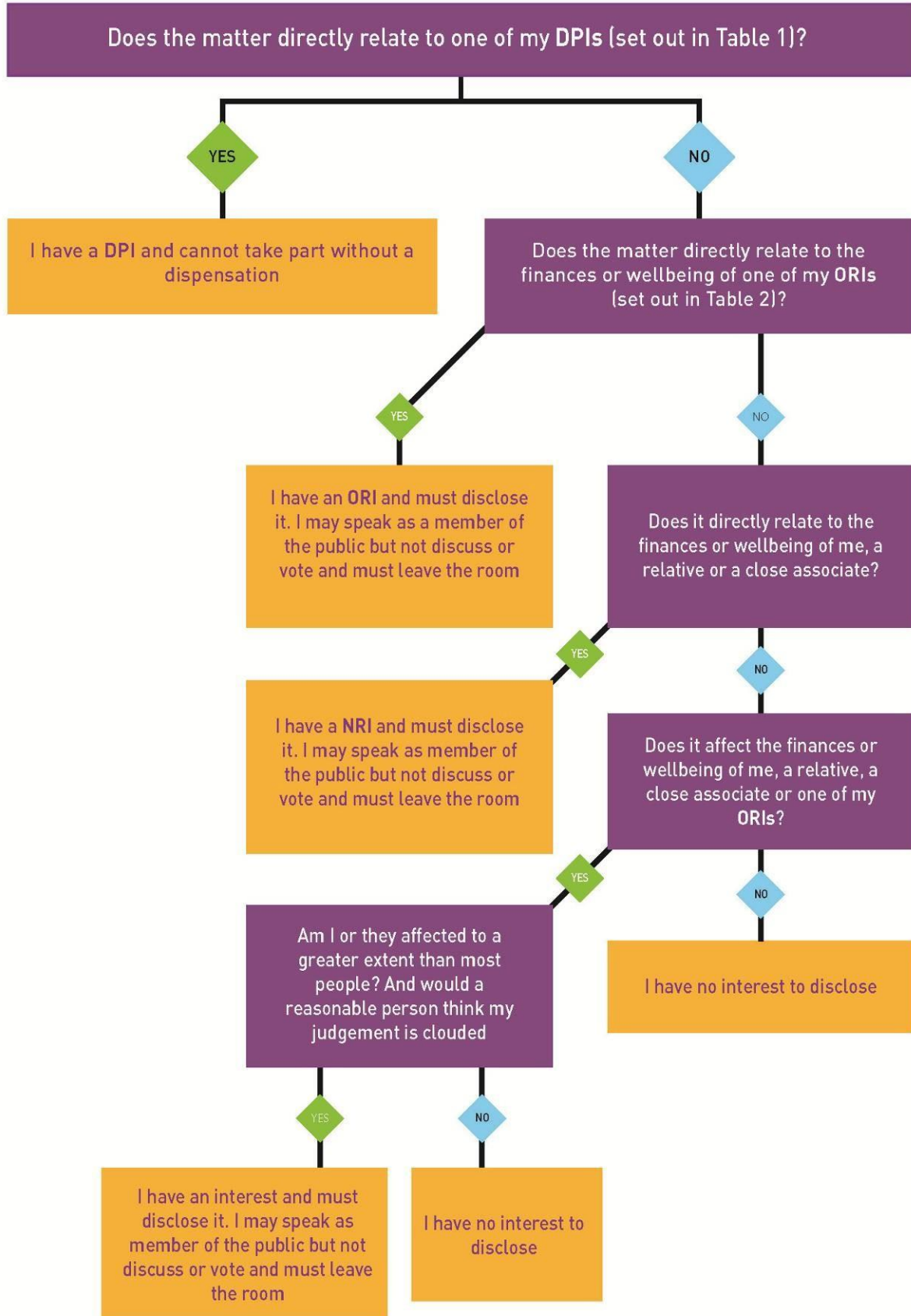
Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Democratic Services Officer, Peter Bell on email [peter.bell@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:peter.bell@stockton.gov.uk)

**KEY - Declarable interests are:-**

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

**Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance**



**Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
<b>Sponsorship</b>	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.
<b>Contracts</b>	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.
<b>Land and property</b>	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.
<b>Licences</b>	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	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.
<b>Securities</b>	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

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

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

## Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

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

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## COUNCIL

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday 18 September 2024.

**Present:** The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr John Gardner), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Stefan Barnes, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Michelle Bendelow, Cllr Clare Besford, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Diane Clarke OBE, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Richard Eglington, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Nathan Gale, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Vanessa Sewell, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Jim Taylor, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Marcus Vickers, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Katie Weston and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

**Officers:** Mike Greene (CE), Garry Cummings (DoF,D&R&DCE), Reuben Kench (DoCS,E&C), Ged Morton (DoCS), Carolyn Nice (DoAH&W), Peter Bell, Julie Butcher, John Devine, Jonathan Nertney and Judy Trainer (DoCS).

**Also in attendance:** Members of the Public.

**Apologies:** Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Mick Moore and Cllr Laura Tunney.

### **COU/135/24 Welcome and Evacuation Procedure**

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the arrangements for the meeting.

### **COU/136/24 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **COU/137/24 Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2024 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **COU/138/24 Public Question Time**

The Worshipful the Mayor informed the meeting that there were no Public Questions.

## **COU/139/24 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

There was no specific appointments process prescribed in the Regulations or Guidance, save that the Council should appoint the Panel and consider the issues detailed at paragraphs 8 – 11 of the report.

The Regulations required a Panel of at least three members, however, the Council's Constitution stipulated that its Panel should comprise four members, with a quorum of 3. None of the Panel members must be serving elected Members of the authority in respect of which it makes recommendations, nor a member of a committee or sub-committee of such authority. Panel Members must also not be disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.

Guidance associated with the Regulations required appointing authorities to be satisfied that proposed Panel members would result in the Panel Membership being sufficiently independent and well qualified to discharge the Panel's functions, and representative of the diversity of communities in the Council's area.

The terms of office of Stockton's previous Independent Remuneration Panel expired on 31 May 2024. The Panel comprised the following non-elected members:

Tony Campbell  
Kate Hoskin  
Mark White  
Terry Laing

Further details of the above non-elected members were attached to the report.

It was proposed that the previous members of the Panel, described above and attached to the report be reappointed.

The functions of the Panel were attached to the report. These were the functions prescribed by regulation and detailed in the Council's Constitution.

It was recommended that Council appoints a Chair. Tony Campbell was the Panel's previous Chair and had lots of experience in this role. It was recommended that he is appointed as the Chair of the Remuneration Panel.

It was recommended that the terms of office of the Panel Members be up to 31 May 2028, unless they were removed, resign or otherwise leave office before then. This would enable preparations for a new Panel to be established (or for the incumbent panel to be re-appointed) during the first year of the new Council, after the 2027 elections.

Council had previously reserved the right to remove any one, or more, of the Panel Members at any time. This power should be retained.

It was proposed that the payments previously agreed for the Panel Members' work be retained. These were:-  
Chair - £350 per day, subject to a maximum for each review of £1,750



Other Panel Members - £75 per day, subject to a maximum of £375 for each review; and All Panel Members – reasonable travel and subsistence expenses.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The previous members of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, as detailed in paragraph 4, and in Appendix 1 of the report, be reappointed, with their terms of office expiring on 31 May 2028.

2. The right be reserved to remove anyone, or more, of the Panel members at any time, as indicated in paragraph 10 of the report.

3. Tony Campbell be appointed as the Chair of the Panel.

4. The Panel's functions, as detailed in the Council's Constitution and Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

5. The allowances for the Panel's work be as specified at paragraph 11 of the report be approved.

#### **COU/140/24 Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan**

Consideration was given to a report on the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan.

Local authority partnerships had a statutory duty to submit a youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services (YJSs). Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the youth justice partnerships responsibilities in producing a plan.

It stated that it was the duty of each local authority, in consultation with partner agencies, to formulate and implement an annual youth justice plan, setting out how YJSs in their area be provided and funded, how they would operate, and what functions would be carried out.

The Youth Justice Plan reports on the vision, strategy, governance, leadership and partnership arrangements. It reflected and built upon strong performance against key national performance measures. It documented key themes around child first principles, workforce development, diversion, exploitation and working with families.

The Youth Justice Plan was produced after consultation with partners. The Plan documents seven key strategic objective for the forthcoming year as follows:-

- 1) Help children stay out of the criminal justice system.
- 2) To reduce reoffending.
- 3) Reduce the use of custody and prioritise effective resettlement.
- 4) Strengthen our responses to Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation.
- 5) To reduce the number of school exclusions.
- 6) To refresh our practice in our work victims and restorative practice.
- 7) To develop a Participation model of practice.

A copy of the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan was attached to the report.

RESOLVED that the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan be approved.

### **COU/141/24 Motion to Council - Winter Fuel Allowance**

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40, moved by Cllr Tony Riordan, seconded by Cllr Niall Innes:-

“Winter Fuel Allowance

Stockton Borough Council notes the recent decision by the Labour led Government to end universal winter fuel payments for our pensioners and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.

The government’s approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent our eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping our older residents of Stockton and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.

Council is deeply concerned that the vast majority of our pensioners who do not meet this threshold will now not receive the payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by ten million (from 11.1million to only 1.2 million).

In Stockton Borough, the number of our pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 30,234. That means 87% of our pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Stockton Borough Council further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments will push thousands of our pensioners into fuel poverty.

Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader, Cllr Bob Cook to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately reversed.
- Council further requests the Leader, Cllr Bob Cook write to the three Members of Parliament, Matt Vickers MP, Chris McDonald MP and Andy McDonald MP, who

represent our pensioners and their families in the Borough asking them to give their formal support to reversing the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility by writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

- Request all group leaders within Stockton Borough Council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be reversed.”

Moved by Councillor Paul Rowling, seconded by Councillor Eileen Johnson that the substantive motion be amended as follows:-

Stockton Borough Council notes the recent decision by the Government to end universal Winter Fuel Allowance (WFA) payments for our pensioners and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

The decision to means-test WFA, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.

The government’s approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent our eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

The significant role that WFA plays in helping our older residents of Stockton and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.

Council is deeply concerned that the vast majority of our pensioners who do not meet this threshold will now not receive WFA payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for WFA payments will fall by ten million (from 11.1million to only 1.2 million).

In Stockton Borough, the number of our pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 30,234. That means 87% of our pensioners currently eligible for WFA payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.

Stockton Borough Council further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which combined by the removal of WFA Payments will push thousands of our pensioners into fuel poverty.

Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader, Cllr Bob Cook, to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking WFA Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be:

i. reversed for the whole of 2024-25 WFA.

ii. the options available to be reconsidered and a revised scheme developed based upon the amount of income received by pensioners including those whose income exceeds the level eligible to receive Pension Credit. The amount of WFA payable above the Pension Credit limit should be gradually reduced as the level of increases to a point where the WFA will cease to be paid. This will provide a scheme which is equitable, a key principle of any good taxation and benefits system, and fair to all.

iii. The Government bring a fully costed scheme to Parliament as part of the March 2025 Budget.

- Council further requests the Leader, Cllr Bob Cook, to write to the three Members of Parliament, Matt Vickers MP, Chris McDonald MP and Andy McDonald MP, who represent our pensioners and their families in the Borough asking them to give their formal support to reversing the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility above, by writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

- Request all group leaders within Stockton Borough Council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new WFA policy to be reversed for 2024-25 and a new equitable WFA scheme to be developed and presented to Parliament as part of the budget in March 2025.

Councillor Tony Riordan raised a point of order that he felt that the amendment to the motion should not be allowed as in-line with the constitution paragraph 3.50 (a) the amendment negated the original motion.

The Worshipful the Mayor ruled that the amendment did negate the substantive motion and therefore the amendment was not allowed.

The substantive motion was then debated.

No further amendments were moved.

At this point and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.65 Councillor Niall Innes requested that a recorded vote be taken; which was supported by at least a quarter of the members present:-

Members in favour of the motion:-

Cllr Stefan Barnes, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Michelle Bendelow, Cllr Clare Besford, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Diane Clarke OBE, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Richard Eglinton, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Nathan Gale, Cllr John Gardener, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Vanessa Sewell, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Jim Taylor, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Marcus Vickers, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Katie Weston and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Members against the motion:- None

Abstentions:- None

The substantive motion was unanimously carried as follows:-

“Winter Fuel Allowance

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represent our pensioners and their families in the Borough asking them to give their formal support to reversing the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility by writing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

- Request all group leaders within Stockton Borough Council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be reversed.”

## **COU/142/24 Members' Question Time**

The following Member Question had been submitted by Cllr Ted Strike for response by the Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture (Cllr Steve Nelson):-

“During the last two winters Stockton Council have supported the use of "Warm Spaces" with financial grants due to the high cost of fuel.

With Ofgen announcing an increase of 10% on gas and electric and the withdrawal of the Winter Fuel Allowance for the vast majority of pensioners "Will Stockton Borough Council be providing this facility again this winter?"

The Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture responded with:-

“The Warm Spaces scheme was introduced in October 2022 in response to the cost of living crisis and the huge increase in utility charges and I’d like to take this opportunity to thank the Fairer Stockton on Tees team for their crucial involvement in the scheme.

In 2023 Warm Spaces were rebranded as Community Spaces with an all year round offer for residents. Social isolation is a silent killer and Community Spaces play a major role in the borough in bringing people together in a warm and welcoming environment.

The scheme has been a major success and an excellent example of partnership working. A report on the scheme is going to the next Cabinet so I won’t go into further details here.

To answer your specific question yes public health funding was provided for the scheme for both 2023/24 and 2024/25. Considering the increasing financial pressures on local authorities and the Council’s Powering Our Future transformation programme, it is imperative that Community Spaces venues are empowered to achieve long-term sustainability by accessing wider funding and are supported with funding bid applications.”

Member Question submitted by Cllr Niall Innes for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-

“Can the Leader of the Council inform me of the total amount this Council has spent on Interim staff from January 2023 to date?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“Can I start by saying that spending on interim staff is a necessary cost. Interim staff can be crucial to keeping our services running effectively whether that’s filling roles during recruitment, covering absences, or bringing in specialist skills when needed.

In terms of spend on interim staff, this is ordinarily funded through existing staffing budgets, so there's no additional cost to the council over and above what we would ordinarily pay.

More exceptionally, when specialist expertise or additional capacity is required, any extra costs are carefully looked at and fully funded. Any decision to bring in interim staff must be justified and managed within our financial controls.

We manage our budgets on an annual cycle aligned with the financial year, not from arbitrary points like January 2023. We don't operate a separate budget for interim staff, as I have already said interim staff are ordinarily funded through existing staffing budgets. Our annual staffing budget is £120 million and if we include our Xentrall shared service £126 million, approximately half our total budget.

Interim staffing is a normal aspect of managing our workforce, allowing us to be flexible and responsive. While we aim to fill permanent roles whenever possible, interim staff ensure that critical roles are filled when needed, keeping our services running smoothly."

Councillor Niall Innes asked the following supplementary question:-

"Does the Leader of the Council believe that it is right that £200k paid per week on interims in the Children and Young People department with consultants on the same amount, considering we find ourselves in a £3.6 million black hole under his leadership?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"I think you'll find that within Children's Services there is a statutory role for the Director of Children's Services. We had to get someone in until we could recruited to the post. If we didn't do that it would have been illegal not to have that statutory Director within the Council."

Member Question submitted by Cllr Niall Innes for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-

"Considering all Councillors receive a generous basic allowance plus special responsibility allowance where applicable, does the Leader of the Council believe it is right Councillors can claim additional expenses that are not in the interest of local residents?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"Thank you for your question, Councillor Innes. The setting of allowances and the policy on expenses are decisions made collectively by this full Council, it is a decision involving all political groups. The basic allowance, set at £9,300, has been frozen for several years, despite recommendations from our independent remuneration panel suggesting otherwise. The decision on allowances and expenses that may be claimed has been agreed upon by all members, from all groups.

Councillors particularly those in leading roles attend conferences, training sessions, and award ceremonies like the MJ Awards not for personal interest but to fulfil their roles, often as a requirement of their responsibilities, and to celebrate the achievements of local government. These events are essential for recognising the hard work of our teams, gaining valuable insights, and bringing back knowledge that directly benefits our residents.

If we cast doubt on expenses that are legitimately claimed in accordance with the policies that we have all agreed upon only serves to undermine us all. If any member believes an expense has been claimed wrongly, the proper action is to refer it to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.

We have this evening approved the appointment of an independent remuneration panel, which will review our allowances and expenses. If changes are needed, should properly be addressed through these processes.”

Councillor Niall Innes asked the following supplementary question:-

“We have already had a motion tonight regarding Labour government removing £300 per year from some of the most vulnerable. We have seen that the Labour Councillors are claiming from the tax payer over £40 for steak and chips and a portion of mussels, £7.29 on a salad box, £7.50 on a cray fish sandwich and a bottle of diet coke. How can the Leader justify his own Councillors lavishly feeding themselves at the tax-payers expense given the discussion here this evening and the continued financial blackhole this Council finds itself in?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“I’m not sure where you got that information from. Obviously they are expenses and Councillors are allowed to claim. There is a lot that we don’t claim. I travel up and down the country and don’t claim what I’m allowed.”

Member Question submitted by Cllr Tony Riordan for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-

“A recent press article following a briefing to a journalist, that you were present at, regarding the vision and regeneration for Stockton Town Centre and the Teesdale area, disclosed to members and the council taxpayers in the Borough, that this Council had purchased the previous Debenhams department store on Stockton High Street.

As the Leader of Stockton Borough Council do you think it is appropriate that members should discover about such a significant purchase via the press, and that the decision to do so was not recorded on the Council's register, which is open to the public?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

I’d like to provide some background to the Council’s decision to acquire the former Debenhams site. Members will recall that the Council already owned part of the Debenhams building through our purchase of Wellington Square. The rear section of the building, which faces Wellington Square, was an extension to the original



Debenhams store and was part of our existing property. However, the front part of the traditional Debenhams building facing the High Street was on a separate property title.

This division was not an issue when Debenhams was operating as a single store, but when Debenhams went into administration, the building effectively became split in two with no internal wall separating the units.

Members will recall shopping in Debenhams but may not have realised that the services supporting the rear extension, such as utilities and infrastructure, were all contained in the older part of the building. Separating these two parts into distinct units would have involved considerable cost and disruption.

Bringing both parts of the building back into single ownership was critical to ensuring the site could be brought back into productive use a key objective for the regeneration of our town centre. When we learned that the front part of the building, owned by a property company, was due to go to public auction, this presented a significant risk. Losing control of the front section, while owning the rear, would have created a barrier to revitalising the entire site and potentially led to blight.

Through direct discussions with the owners' agents, we had the opportunity to remove the building from auction and secure it through a private sale. This required swift action, as the auction date was approaching. We secured an independent valuation to ensure the price was fair, and a delegated decision was made by officers, which was properly recorded but not published at the time due to its exempt status.

Exempt information is used to protect sensitive details that could, if disclosed prematurely, compromise the Council's negotiating position or financial interests. In this case, keeping the information confidential was crucial to avoiding competition that could have driven up the purchase price. Both members and officers have a duty to respect these confidentiality boundaries under our codes of conduct.

Exempt information is vital in many scenarios commercial deals, staff matters, and safeguarding vulnerable individuals. Both members and officers must respect these confidentiality boundaries. We will work on making the process more systematic when exempt information no longer needs to be confidential, and I've asked the officers to look into this, particularly as we continue using and expanding the new ModGov system.

Since taking control of the whole building, we have been able to have more productive discussions with potential tenants. I am pleased to report that we have strong interest and we are discussing terms with a potential tenant. While further work is needed to reach a final agreement, this progress would not have been possible without securing overall control of the site.

In summary, the decision was properly recorded, appropriately confidential, and in the public interest. I would ask all members to respect the need for confidentiality in such matters."

Councillor Tony Riordan asked the following supplementary question:-

"I note the Leaders point about confidential information but that public interest has now lapsed and the decision has been made. Will there be an agreement that following the decision to purchase the Debenhams store in October 2023 £500k plus stamp duty for

land tax and associated fees together with a failure to commission a detailed survey to identify any potential issues with the building structure or systems. A failure to identify repairs and maintenance and a failure to identify a tenant for the on-going revenue costs of £370k per year has created a significant risk to the Council taxpayers of this Borough and can he outline any other decisions that have not been recorded on the public register?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"As far as I know it is now on the public register as it is not confidential anymore. We have got an independent valuation on the building and it would have been complicated if we hadn't bought the site as we own part of it. Detailed talks are on-going with someone to potentially move onto the site."

Member Question submitted by Cllr Tony Riordan for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-

"Despite this council agreeing on the 24th of January 2024 to request Stockton Hotels Company Ltd to publish their Profit and Loss Accounts and Directors Statements, and further questions raised by myself in this chamber on the 29th of May and the 24th of July regarding the publication, these have still not been published on the Council Website (7th September).

Will the Leader agree with me, despite the Council's wishes and the reassurances he has given to these questions, particularly on the 29th of May, when he said "This work has now been completed, and the additional documentation is available on the council's website" (which was clearly incorrect) the lack of publication is indefensible and raises questions as to why there appears to be a reluctance to publish the documents?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"Thank you, Councillor Riordan, for asking this question, as it gives me the opportunity to celebrate a homegrown success. Stockton Hotels Company Ltd is an excellent example of our commitment to regenerating our town.

This hotel stands on the former derelict Kwik Fit site, which once offered nothing to our community. Now, it's a thriving, award-winning business with a 79.2% occupancy rate at the end of August, delivering hundreds of thousands of pounds back to the council, creating 30 directly employed jobs, and supporting many more in our local economy.

This project was always about more than profit; it was about breathing new life into a neglected site and creating opportunities for Stockton.

The success of this hotel is something we should all be proud of proof of what we can achieve when we invest in our community. Would we rather see the site left to decay or celebrate its transformation into a thriving business that benefits Stockton. The answer is clear.

On the publication of documents, let me be clear: we have nothing to hide. The latest Profit and Loss Accounts and Directors' Statements are already on the council's website, and we are working on making earlier shareholder documents accessible, as

required under the Equality Act. This process takes time as it involves adapting documents that weren't originally designed for web use into formats accessible to everyone.

Much of this information is also available on Companies House, and members have always been able to view the documents upon request. This isn't about hiding anything; it's about ensuring accessibility and sharing our achievements properly.

Thank you for asking this question and allowing me the opportunity to celebrate this homegrown success. This isn't just a council success; it's a success for Stockton. We can be proud of what's been achieved."

Councillor Tony Riordan asked the following supplementary question:-

"Will the Leader agree with me that the unpublished Profit and Loss Statements, the Directors Statements, together with the Annual Accounts, which he and I have read, show that the Hotel Company has not paid out one single penny in dividend to the shareholders (the Council Taxpayers of this Borough) despite this Council writing off its ongoing losses and providing a cash injection totalling £465k, together with the ongoing Business Rates Relief scheme set up by the last Government, totalling over £300k for the Hotel, thereby suggesting his previous public statements regarding an annual profit generated by the hotel of £250k going back into the local coffers are incorrect?"

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

"I will need to look into that and I will speak to officers. As far as I'm concerned the accounts that are on the website should show the accounts that companies house would have."

Member Question submitted by Cllr Sufi Mubeen for response by the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety (Councillor Norma Stephenson):-

"Can the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety outline in detail, what action has to been taken to address the sex workers plying their trade on the streets of the Ropner and Town Centre wards?"

The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety responded with:-

"We are aware of the challenges associated with sex workers in the Ropner ward and over the past year we have been working in close partnership with our community, all our partner agencies and local Councillors to come up with a longer-term solution to what is a very complex matter. Members will recall that twelve months ago, we successfully bid for Safer Streets 5 funding for Ropner ward.

This fund provided much needed funding to support the inception of Operation Nightfall. While at that point in time, issues associated with sex work were under reported to both the Council and Cleveland Police, attendance at Ropner Ward surgeries and the subsequent conversations with both Councillors and residents revealed the true extent of the long-standing problem in the area.

As a result of listening to community concerns, Cleveland Police began dedicated patrols in the area and have successfully intervened in situations where women have been in danger.

Alongside this our CCTV operators have also alerted police to potential offenders and a significant amount of intelligence has been gathered. As part of this initiative we also funded the charity A Way Out to support sex workers and attached an officer from our community safety team to work alongside them in problem solving interventions with women at risk of exploitation in this area.

This work continues and CCTV operations have been key to identifying a potential suspect in the recent sexual assaults within this ward resulting in a charge and remand of the alleged suspect.

Following further problem-solving work around this issue, six months ago we were successful in applying for funding from CURV (OPCC) to conduct research with residents, sex workers and local businesses to understand the impact of sex work in Ropner.

It is important to consider that sex workers are often victims of much wider exploitation and are also members of our community which we owe an equal duty of care. From this research it is clear that addiction is an issue, and that many are involved in sex work to fund addiction and are living in hunger and poverty. Some are homeless or living out of inadequate housing. The full report has been shared with police and partners including local Councillors via the Clear Hold Build pilot, Project Harmony. An action plan has been created and a new Problem Solving and Partnership Officer post established through joint partnership funding, which will be leading on the continued work to tackle issues important to the community.

There is no quick solution to this, but we do now have a sound evidence base from the multi-agency intelligence gathering which has taken place and the research conducted, whereas before, the issues were under reported and police had very little information on sex work in Ropner. We will continue our regular engagement and updates to Ward Councillors alongside our continued engagement with the community through both ward surgeries and the established monthly 'drop in' sessions at the Family Hub."

Councillor Sufi Mubeen asked the following supplementary question:-

"Would you agree with me that despite everything that you have outlined the horrendous situation that these wards have to suffer on a daily basis, whether that is being propositioned by sex workers, used condoms on the pavements, having to explain to children what a sex worker is, food and drinks are given to the sex workers outside of peoples homes, sex predators are coming into the area. The situation has not improved and is getting worse. We now need a change of strategy to provide a safe community for residents?"

The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety responded with:-

"I agree this is a problem but I also agreed with you when this first started that this is a pen not a magic wand. We can't change this overnight and I can understand how

residents feel and what has happened over the last week or so has upset a lot of people. We need to work with the sex workers and provide them with an exit strategy.”

As 30 minutes had passed for Members Question Time and in-line with the Council constitution paragraph 3.39 the Worshipful the Mayor closed this item. The remaining Member Questions would be put forward for consideration at the next meeting of Council.

## **COU/143/24 Forward Plan and Leader’s Statement**

The Leader of the Council gave his Forward Plan and Leaders Statement.

Council last met on 24 July 2024. Cabinet last met on 12 September 2024 and considered the following matters:

- 2024/25 Quarter 1, Financial Update and Medium Term Financial Plan
- Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint Delivery
- Accelerating affordable housing delivery (A quality home for all)
- Enhanced Mainstream Schools Consultation
- Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan and the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel

Cabinet would next meet on the 17 October 2024 and then the 14 November before the next meeting of Council. The following items were scheduled for October Cabinet:

- Powering our Futures / Transformation
- Council Plan
- Annual Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

The Leader of the Council reminded Members of the Festival of Thrift taking place at John Whitehead Park in Billingham. There was also the by-election for the Fairfield ward. There was also libraries week taking place from 7 October, a chance to experience what the Council great libraries have to offer. Then many Members will be attending remembrance events across the Borough on remembrance Sunday.

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**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**20 NOVEMBER 2024**

**REPORT OF  
CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

## **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND JOINT BODIES FOR 2023/27**

### **SUMMARY**

This report presents appointments to vacancies on Council committees, boards, panels and joint bodies in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, which is entitled to the seats under political proportionality requirements.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Council is asked to approve the appointments, detailed in the appendix.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Seats must be allocated to political groups as prescribed by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

### **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

Consultation has taken place with the relevant political group leader.

Jonathan Nertney  
Head of Democratic Services  
[jonathan.nertney@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.nertney@stockton.gov.uk)  
Tel number 01642 526312

Background Papers	None
Education Related Item	No
Ward(s) and Ward Councillors	All
Property Implications	None

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### Committees, Boards and Joint Committees

<b>Committee, Board, Panel</b>	<b>Appoint</b>
Audit and Governance Committee	Cllr Mohammed Mazi
Appointments Panel	Cllr Mohammed Mazi
Corporate Parenting Board	Cllr Jack Miller
Members' Advisory Panel	Cllr Jack Miller
Adults Social Care and Health Select Committee	Cllr Jack Miller
Statutory Licensing Committee	Cllr Jason French
General Licensing	Cllr John Coulson
<b>Joint Bodies</b>	
River Tees Port Health Authority	Cllr Mohammed Mazi
Joint Tees Valley Health Scrutiny	Cllr Jack Miller

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## **AGENDA ITEM**

## **REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**DATE 20 NOVEMBER 2024**

## **REPORT OF CORPORATE MANGEMENT TEAM**

### **THE STOCKTON-ON-TEES PLAN 2024-2028**

#### **SUMMARY**

This report provides Council with the final draft of the Stockton-on-Tees Plan 2024-2028.

#### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Plan marks a new direction for our organisation. It sets out a Vision for the future of our Borough, developed with the voice of our communities.

The Plan has been developed to reflect the growing pressures on communities and public services, which mean we can no longer afford to deliver services the way we have in the past. However, we are confident we can work with local stakeholders to put in place new and innovative approaches that will reshape what we do in the best interests of our residents, whilst effectively managing the resources we have.

Once approved, the Stockton-on-Tees Plan will serve as a guiding framework for the Council, along with our partners and communities, to work together towards a shared future that brings our vision to life.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the Stockton-on-Tees Plan (attached at Appendix 1)

#### **DETAIL**

2. Cabinet approved the draft Stockton-on-Tees Plan for stakeholder consultation in October 2024 and a period of consultation took place from 18th October until the 4th November 2024. The Plan will also be considered by Executive Scrutiny Committee on 19th November 2024.
3. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan has been developed to reflect the drivers and priorities for the Council, our partners and most importantly communities.
4. A high-level analysis of data has been carried out to give us a picture of our performance and to set a baseline.
5. The voice of communities has also informed the development of a draft Vision for the Borough:

*Stockton-on-Tees is home – a warm and friendly place, where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and*

*with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place, where everyone can grow and succeed. We work together to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to opportunity. We are Team Stockton-on-Tees.*

6. Five priority areas are proposed as the focus of our activity to turn our Vision into reality. These are:
  - The best start in life to achieve big ambitions
  - Healthy and Resilient Communities
  - A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit
  - An Inclusive Economy
  - A Sustainable Council

Further detail on each of these priorities can be found in Appendix 1.

7. There was wide engagement with communities and Elected Members in developing the draft plan. A formal consultation on the draft plan was used to gather any final views ahead of Full Council approval. The consultation was live from the 18th October until the 4th November 2024 and no responses were received.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

8. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan has drawn from a wide range of data and intelligence. But overall, it represents the voice of the Borough. It has been developed with communities, for communities. We've gathered intelligence from:
  - Our Residents Survey
  - Conversations with Community Groups
  - Face-to-face interviews
  - Our Viewpoint Panel.

Equality and poverty impact assessments will take place for individual areas of work through delivery planning.

9. Key themes from our conversation with communities, and which are reflected in the Plan are:
  - Creating a Borough to be proud of that encourages more young people to stay here
  - Creating employment opportunities and raising aspirations
  - Creating safe communities and reducing anti-social behaviour in town centres
  - Good Schools and Colleges
  - Good transport links – including cycleways & pathways
  - Joint working with communities and creating an inclusive Borough.
10. Working closely with our communities and partners will help us meet the needs of our residents and make Stockton-on-Tees a place we can all be proud of. Some examples of how we will measure success include:
  - The number of children in poverty
  - Educational attainment
  - Feelings of belonging in communities
  - Crime rates & perceptions of crime
  - Satisfaction with employment & accommodation
  - Employment rates & productivity.

11. Consultation also took place with partners through the Place Leadership Board.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

The Plan's strategic priorities will support the Local Authority to deliver its statutory functions and enable it to be an effective Corporate Parent.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Stockton-on-Tees Plan is aligned with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. Financial implications will be considered through any proposed action to deliver and approval sought at that point.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Any and all legal implications will be identified through careful action planning throughout the delivery of the Plan noting, in particular, that growing pressures on communities and public services will require effective management of the Council's resources, and that, any decisions made pursuant to the Plan are also made in accordance with the law to minimise any risk of legal challenge.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Stockton-on-Tees Plan provides the vision for the future of the borough. The greatest risk associated with the Plan is that the development has not been sufficiently robust and that the wrong priorities have been identified. This risk has been mitigated by a detailed development process included considerable consultation with our communities, partners and internally with Members and officers.

## **WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS**

All Stockton-on-Tees wards affected.

Consultation has been carried out with councillors at the following:

- Member Engagement session (09/07/24)
- Member Engagement session (12/07/24)
- Members Briefing Session (24/09/24)

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

All relevant background papers are included within Appendix 1.

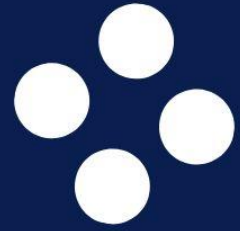
**Name of Contact Officer:** Geraldine Brown

**Post Title:** Head of Policy, Development & Public Affairs

**Email Address:** geraldine.brown@stockton.gov.uk

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# STOCKTON ON TEES



## POWERING OUR FUTURE THE STOCKTON- ON-TEES PLAN 2024-2028



## Introduction

This is our new Council Plan. It sets out a vision for the future of our Borough, which has been developed following conversations with communities. The Council Plan is a framework that the Council, as well as our partners and communities, will use to ensure we work together towards a shared vision that brings our vision to life.

Our Vision is:

*Stockton-on-Tees is home – a warm and friendly place, where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place, where everyone can grow and succeed. We work together to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to opportunity. We are Team Stockton-on-Tees.*

This Plan marks a new way of working for the Council. Pressures on communities and public services have been growing for some time, which mean we can no longer afford to deliver services the way we have in the past. We are confident we can work with local stakeholders to put in place new and innovative approaches that will reshape what we do in the best interests of our residents, whilst effectively managing the resources we have.

Our Council Plan also responds to the policy direction of the new Government and aligns with their priority Missions, particularly in breaking down barriers to opportunity, creating safer communities and kickstarting growth. Our co-ordinated approach to delivery will ensure that national policy and approach, supports local success.



## Contents

- **Introducing our new Council Plan**
  - **Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**
- **Executive Summary – plan on a page, showing our high level vision, priorities & measures of success (printable version)**
- **Developing the plan – with communities and for communities**
- **Picture of the Borough**
  - **Narrative – highlighting our Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges**
  - **Data & intelligence underpinning our priorities**
- **Council Plan priorities & key moves to deliver**
  - **The Best Start in Life to achieve big ambitions**
  - **Healthy and Resilient Communities**
  - **A Great Place to Live, Work & Visit**
  - **An Inclusive Economy**
  - **A Sustainable Council**
- **A framework to deliver for the Council**
  - **Powering Our Future - a Mission-based approach**
  - **Our Design Principles – underpinning our ways of working**
- **A picture of success - the outcomes we will work to achieve**

## **Foreword from Leader/Chief Executive**

This Council Plan marks a new direction for our organisation.

We are proud to be a high performing Council, with evidence to show that we have, and will continue to make a positive difference to the lives of our communities, however, the conditions we are working in have changed and what we have done in the past won't get us to where we need to be in future.

Like most public sector organisations, the pressure on our finances is significant. At the same time, the demand for the services we provide has been rising and our costs have been increasing rapidly, especially in recent years.

Our strong and careful management means we're in a better position than some councils. However, we face some tough decisions about the way we work in future and the services we provide, or in some cases, may have to stop providing. This will mean working differently with our partners and our communities, empowering residents to do more for themselves and harnessing the strengths of our communities to achieve better outcomes for the people of Stockton-on-Tees.

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.

This is a plan that aims to make the Borough the best place it can be over the coming decade, where we all have a part to play.

The plan sets out our key priorities and provides a unifying strategy for the whole of the Borough to make it the best possible place to live and work.

Councillor Bob Cook (Leader of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)

Mike Greene (Chief Executive of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)

**Executive Summary – plan on a page**

## OUR VISION

Stockton-on-Tees is home. It's a warm and friendly place where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of the Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place where everyone can grow and succeed. We will continue to work together to reduce inequalities and barriers to opportunity. We are Team Stockton-on-Tees.

### THE BEST START IN LIFE TO ACHIEVE BIG AMBITIONS

A safe and inclusive community where everyone can thrive. Working hard to prevent the impact of poverty, creating a bright and healthy future with a shared sense of belonging. Supporting children in our care and creating equality of opportunity

### HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Building happy and healthy lives, supporting those who are experiencing poverty. Ensuring that our residents are resilient, independent

### A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT

A vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy that residents can be proud of



### AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

Growing the local economy and cementing our role as the well-connected, economic heart of Tees Valley. Ensuring that all residents can benefit from secure and sustainable jobs

### SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL

A well-run financially sustainable Council that improves outcomes for communities



## WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY TO MAKE OUR VISION A REALITY

#### SOME OF THE THINGS WE WILL DO:

- Support children and families with early development
- Increase access to screening and immunisations
- Work with communities to manage the impact of serious and organised crime
- Progress delivery of our exciting plans for regeneration
- Encourage inward investment from companies that have good and fair operating principles
- Support our residents to access secure and sustainable employment
- Continue to deliver a balanced budget while improving outcomes for communities

#### SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- Get involved with our Family Hubs.
- Volunteer - see what's available at [www.stocktonvolunteers.co.uk](http://www.stocktonvolunteers.co.uk)
- Use and enjoy your local town and village centres
- Use our online forms or call us to report issues such as broken streetlights, damaged street furniture and potholes
- Support local businesses and shop close to home, helping local companies to succeed
- Boost your skills by taking a course with any of the great providers in the Borough
- Share your ideas for doing things differently in your area

#### WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- Our residents will feel like they belong to their community, live for longer and in good health.
- More of our children will have a good level of development and be ready for school when they reach reception age. More will achieve outstanding educational attainment and remain in education, employment and/or training at age 16, building a bright future in our Borough.
- Crime rates will reduce and more residents will feel safe at all times.
- More residents will be happy in their employment and accommodation.
- Employment rates and GVA will increase.
- We will do more with our partners and communities, recognising the part we all have to play in the future of our Borough.

Read the full plan



## **Developing the plan – with communities, for communities**

The Council Plan is underpinned by wide range of data and intelligence. But most importantly, it represents the voice of the Borough. It has been developed with communities, for communities.

We've heard from:

- Over 1600 residents who responded to our Residents Survey;
- Over 100 residents through conversations at Community Groups;
- 72 people who joined us for face-to-face interviews; and
- 117 residents on our Viewpoint Panel.

This has given us a rich insight into the things that matter to our residents, including what's great about the place they live and what could make it better. Using the voice of communities, we have developed a shared Vision for the future of the Borough. Our Vision is:

*Stockton-on-Tees is home – a warm and friendly place, where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place, where everyone can grow and succeed. We work together to reduce inequalities and remove barriers to opportunity. We are Team Stockton-on-Tees.*

Achieving our Vision and delivering on what residents have told us are important to them will be a shared effort. This will include the need for decisive action, support and engagement from the Council, our partners and communities themselves – **we all have a part to play.**

### **Our message to Communities...**

You've told us the kind of place you want to live and work in, and through these conversations we know there are great strengths in your communities. We see the role of the Council, working with our partners, as empowering you to make the most of the resources and facilities in your areas, to improve your wellbeing, engagement and reduce reliance on council services. To make this a reality, we will help to leverage the existing strengths in communities to drive positive change. In this way, we can maximise the potential and capabilities you have, helping you to collaborate, co-produce and lead initiatives that will improve outcomes.

### **Partnerships Powering Our Future...**

Working with our partners, we are stronger together. Public services across Stockton on Tees face shared challenges of decreasing budgets and increasing demand. In response, we will pull together around the needs of our communities, not drift apart into silos. We will work collaboratively to build on our strengths and seek to ensure that services are provided by the organisation or community group best placed to do so.

**Each of our priorities in this Council Plan make it clear how we can all work together to unlock the full potential of communities by doing our bit for the Borough and where we all have a part to play.**

## **Stockton on Tees – a picture of the Borough**

Stockton-on-Tees is a place of contrasts and diversity. Our natural assets, industrial heritage and innovative spirit are fundamental to who we are – as a place and as communities.

The River Tees runs through our Borough, shaping lives past, present and future. It runs alongside Georgian-fronted market squares, nature reserves, spectacular bridges and unforgettable industrial architecture. Our Borough sits between striking landscapes and a stunning coastline, all within easy reach of key centres across Yorkshire and the North East, including Newcastle, York and Leeds.

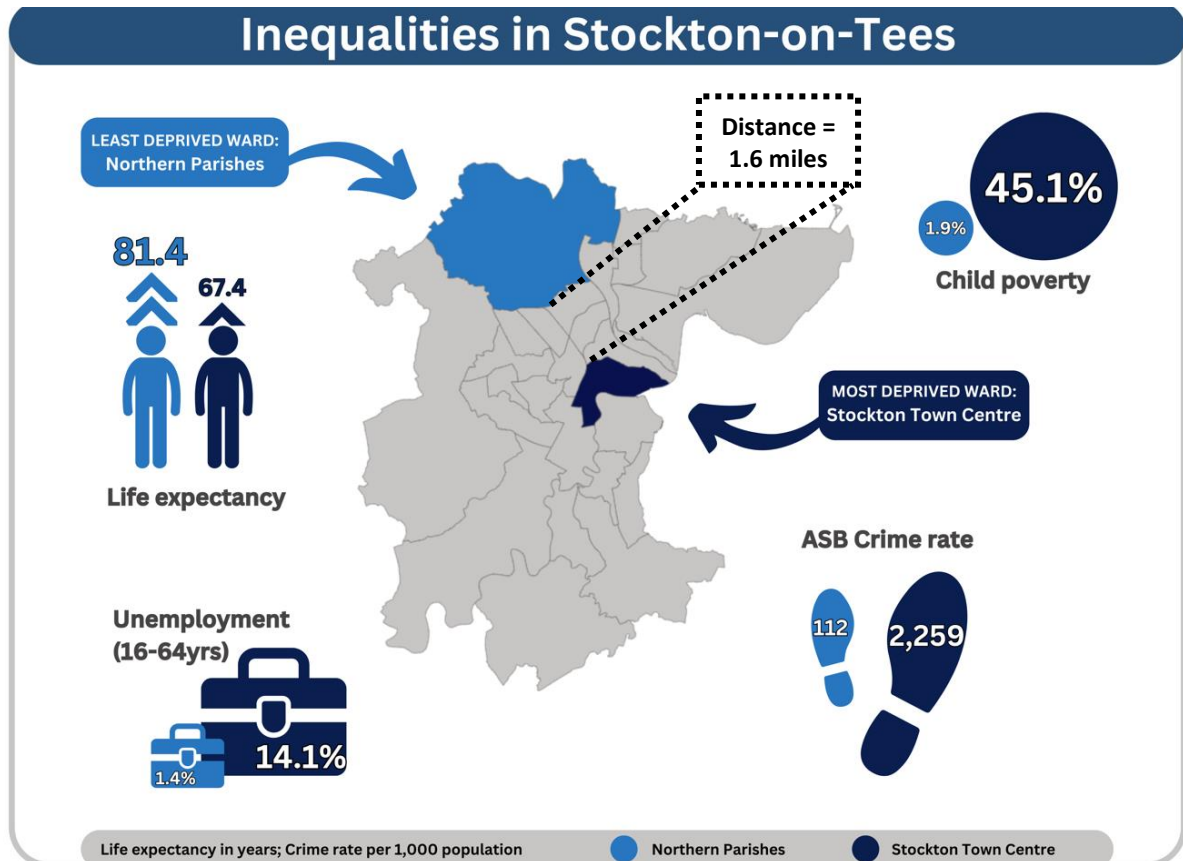
We are the largest Borough in the Tees-Valley with approximately 200,000 residents, making up a diverse and welcoming community, with a strong sense of community spirit.

Our Borough is a place with:

- Some of the warmest, friendliest and most welcoming people in the country.
- Entrepreneurial energy and economic potential – we have highly productive companies and high quality jobs across a number of dynamic sectors, including: chemicals, engineering, environmental technologies, life sciences and digital technologies, as well as a vibrant voluntary sector.
- A fantastic and mixed housing offer, from starter properties to high end executive homes, all at a good level of affordability and served by high quality schools and local services.
- A cultural epicentre, that serves the whole region with an incredible calendar of events, great leisure facilities, plus hugely important cultural assets like The Globe, Billingham Forum Theatre, ARC and Preston Park Museum.
- On top of all this, we have big ambitions for our future and a dynamic approach to Place Leadership and building aspirations, working with our partners.

## Opportunities and Challenges

We are a highly polarised Borough – one of the most polarised in the country - where affluent areas sit alongside places of significant deprivation. High value business and residential areas are in close proximity to many social and economic challenges, that affect the opportunities and life chances of a large proportion of our residents.



The **challenges** we face to reduce inequality and disadvantage are many and varied, however as we take a proactive approach and work together with our partners and communities to overcome and address them, they are not insurmountable.

- Our unemployment rate is higher than the national average and child poverty in the Borough is prevalent, with 1-in-4 children in Stockton-on-Tees living in poverty, rising to 1-in-2 children in some areas of the Borough. Attracting investment and creating jobs will continue to be the focus of the Council to increase opportunity and lift families out of poverty.
- Although crime rates in Stockton-on-Tees are higher than the national average, we have seen some improvements in crime reduction. We are successfully working together with our public sector partners and the voluntary sector to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in high crime rate areas, where we are giving residents opportunities to come together and be involved in shaping their area.

- More than one third of our wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country and there is a gap of almost 19 years in average life expectancy for females between Stockton Town Centre ward and Ingleby Barwick East ward. Addressing this starts early, and we have associated challenges around levels of exercise and chronic illness. We're committed to fighting this discrepancy and making sure all people enjoy a healthy and happy life in Stockton-on-Tees.

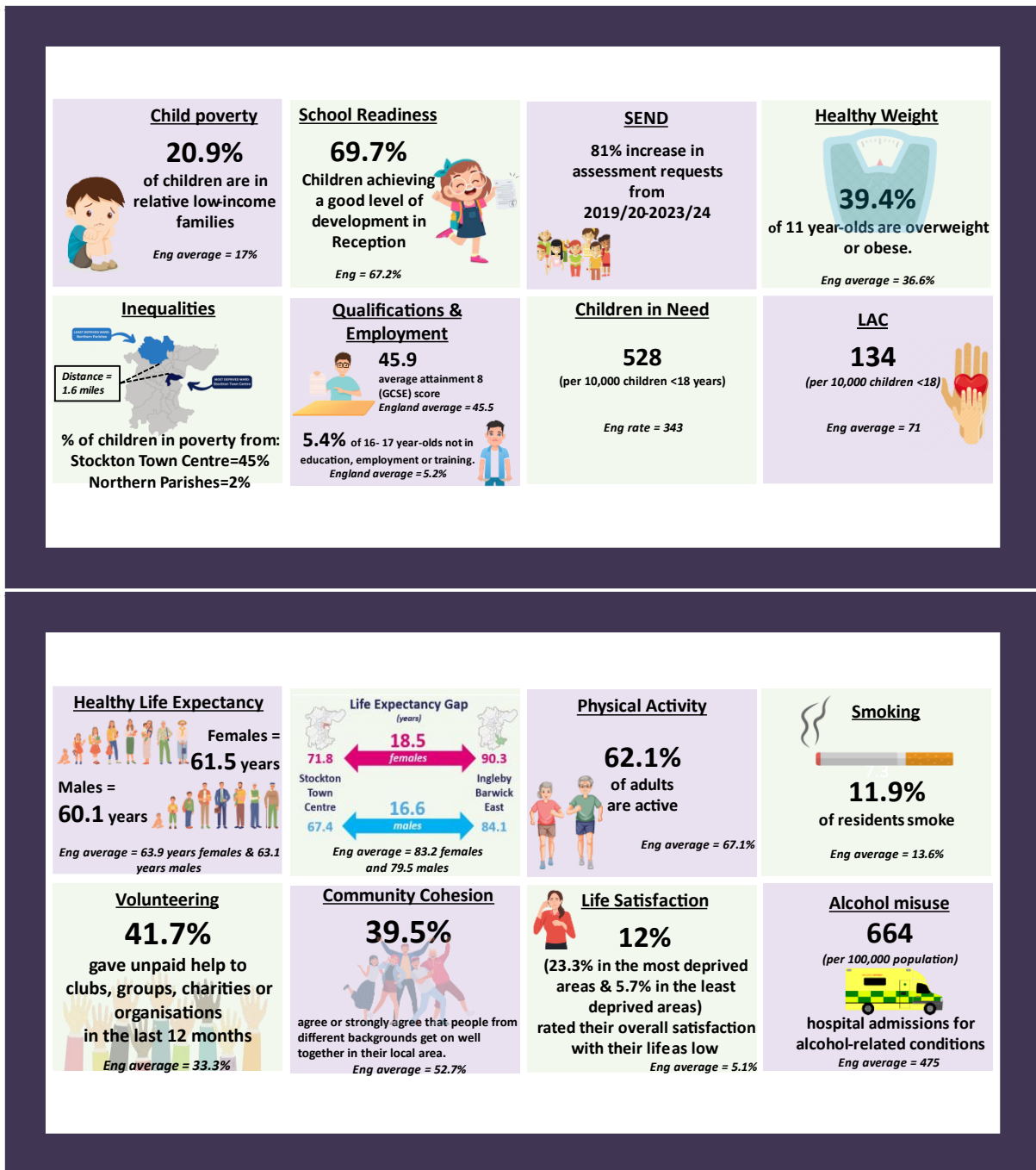
We have **strong foundations** to build on as we work towards delivering our ambitions.

- We are a well-managed council in strong financial health with an excellent track record of delivery. As the economic centre of Tees Valley, with high value clusters and a higher economic output than large northern cities, we are ideally placed to attract investment to grow our business base and our local economy, increasing opportunities for our residents.
- We have a thriving Voluntary and Community Sector, and strong communities that are committed to supporting each other. The number of people who give their time through volunteering sits way above the national average. Alongside this, we have an extensive programme of council activity to break down barriers to opportunity. Our Fairer Stockton-on-Tees commitment and Anti-Poverty Strategy are tackling inequalities and ensuring that we deliver targeted support, including around health inequalities and emotional health and well-being.
- Digital technologies have, and continue to change the way we all live, work and access services. We are a digitally strong borough, sitting well above the national average for Ultrafast broadband coverage, and the number of residents who access the internet. One third of the digital sector in Tees Valley is also located in Stockton-on-Tees – giving us a strong platform for further growth.
- We have high levels of confidence in our town centres and a supply of appropriate brownfield land to be developed, that won't impact on the availability of green space. Our vision for a Care and Health Innovation Zone, along with our excellent transport assets can act as a springboard for investment, increasing economic growth and opportunities for residents.
- As a creative and dynamic events Borough and a place where people want to visit, our thriving cultural offer attracts thousands of visitors each year. Our packed and diverse events programme also provides opportunities for communities to come together, enhancing community cohesion, building pride in place and a sense of belonging.
- We have access to lots of high quality, open green spaces for people to enjoy and for biodiversity to thrive, supporting active and healthy lifestyles through engagement in sport, leisure and options to travel by walking and cycling.

This Plan builds upon our fantastic assets and a strong record of success, whilst also recognising the challenges facing our communities and our economy.




Below is an overview of our key economic statistics...



**Housing**

**84.4%**  
are satisfied with their accommodation



*Eng average = 85.1%*

**Events**

**110,000**  
The number of visitors to Stockton-on-Tees each year to attend our events.

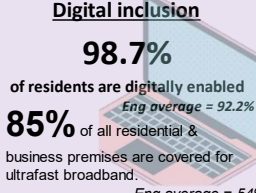


**SIRF**  
*SIRF 2023 brought £1.7m into the Borough*

**Digital inclusion**

**98.7%**  
of residents are digitally enabled  
*Eng average = 92.2%*

**85%** of all residential & business premises are covered for ultrafast broadband.  
*Eng average = 54%*



**Crime**


**111**  
(per 1,000 population) offences recorded



*9% decrease on previous year*

**Environment**


**82.5%**  
have made some or a lot of changes to their lifestyle to help tackle environmental issues



*Eng average = 85.1%*

**Environment**

Over 1100 hectares of publicly-owned green space, with 6% actively managed for biodiversity



**Community Safety**

**52%**  
feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark



*Eng average = 79.4%*

**Recycling**

**25.2%**  
of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting





*Eng average = 41.3%*

**Qualifications**

**8.7%**  
have no qualifications  
*Eng average = 6.5%*

**29.5%**  
have a level 4 qualification or above  
*Eng & Wales average = 33.8%*






**Employment**

**63.4%**  
of residents are satisfied with their current job  
*Eng average = 69.6%*


**Unemployment**

**4.7%**  
of residents are currently unemployed. *Eng average = 3.9%*

**Income**


**£25,000**  
is the median income for Stockton-on-Tees residents



*Eng average = £26,600*

**Finances**

**21%**  
of residents said that have difficulty managing their finances



*Eng average = 6.5%*

**Businesses**

**One-third**  
Of the Tees Valley economy is in Stockton-on-Tees

**Digital Businesses**

**One-third**  
Of Tees Valley's digital businesses are in Stockton-on-Tees



**Productivity**

**£42.60**  
Gross value added (GVA) is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy



*Eng average = £38.41  
Tees Valley average = £29.50*

**Homelessness**


**3**  
People found sleeping rough in one single night (autumn 2023)



*North-East average = 7.41*

**Economic Inactivity**

**27.0%**  
of the borough's population are classed as economically inactive



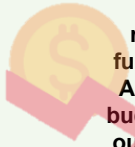
*Eng average = 21.4%  
North-East average = 25.4%  
23.1% economically inactive due to ill health  
Eng average = 26.3%*

The Council has consistently delivered a balanced budget

‘Stockton Council is in strong financial health’ Mazars (External Auditors Nov 2023)

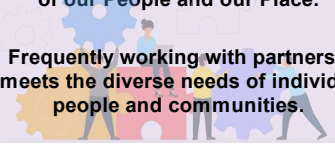


**39%** reduction to our funding since 2010. Alongside growing budget pressures for our public services



Place Leadership Board established to work together to meet the needs of our People and our Place.

Frequently working with partners to meet the diverse needs of individual people and communities.



Planned approach to reduce the budget gap and reshape what we do for the better through the Powering Our Future Programme



**£9 million** budget gap over 3 years



**75%** reduction in carbon emissions since 2010



## Priorities and Key Moves to deliver

We have identified a set of inter-connected priorities and Key Moves that will ensure we work together to overcome our Borough's challenges and achieve our shared vision for our communities.

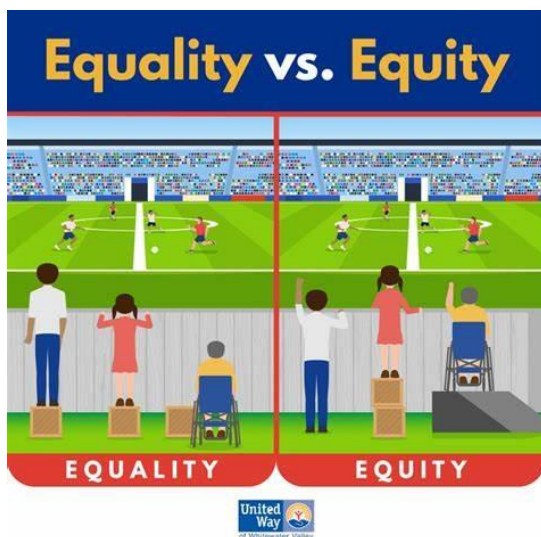
To fully realise these, we will all have a part to play.

Central to everything we do is creating a Fairer Stockton-on-Tees and reducing the inequality that exists across the Borough, while improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

### Creating a Fairer Stockton-on-Tees and reducing inequality

Our Council Plan builds on the [Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework \(2021-2031\)](#) - an ambitious call to action to address the complex issues that can impact quality of life, life chances and life expectancy.

We recognise that a diverse set of responses are required to ensure equity, based on the needs of individuals. As such, we will listen to the needs expressed by individuals and be mindful not to oversimplify. We will also use data and intelligence to make sure we target our activity at the areas of greatest need. This is critical to ensure fairness in communities, and to give all of our children the best start in life.



### Improving population health outcomes

We will focus on interventions in three inter-connected areas, those at a **civic level** (by this we mean the matters controlled by central and local government, such as regulations, fiscal measures, welfare and communication campaigns), alongside those that are **community-based** and **service-based**.

Each of these can make their own impact on health and wellbeing, however we will seek to ensure that together, their impact is greater than the sum of their individual parts. We will do this through a co-ordinated approach to policy setting and delivery using the [Population Intervention Triangle toolkit | Local Government Association](#) approach, which will also support our work around early Intervention and Prevention.

Further detail about our ways of working can also be found in our Design Principles.

## Priority 1: The best start in life to achieve big ambitions

We will support all children to have the best possible start in life, within a safe and inclusive community where everyone can thrive. We will work hard to prevent children and families from experiencing the impact of poverty, creating a bright and healthy future with a shared sense of belonging. We will support children in our care, as part of our approach to create equality of opportunity for all children and young people in the Borough.

### **Key Moves**

#### **Giving Children and Young People the best possible start, in an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.**

We will ensure that all children, young people and families are supported to achieve their full potential through our early years, health and wellbeing, childcare and education system. We recognise communities that seek to improve the health and development of its children, are helping to build strong foundations for future economic growth and prosperity and happy, healthy and nurturing families.

For children in the earliest years of life, prevention and early intervention will focus on strengthening relationships and connections – between parents and their children, the wider community and the services that provide help and support in communities. In doing so, we will support our early years providers, schools and wider teams to collaborate fully, to ensure that quality and inclusivity are at the heart of everything we do. This will ensure that all children and families thrive and develop skills for life. As set out in our [Best Start in Life Strategy](#), we will also:

- Support children and families with the development of early speech, language and communication, while supporting families to provide a positive and healthy home learning environment.
- Encourage access to high quality, inclusive and affordable Early Years education and increase the provision of childcare settings to enable more working parents to access free childcare.
- Support schools to provide wraparound services before and after school, alongside enrichment activities that promote healthy and active lives.
- Ensure that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have their needs met, and that we are a Borough where everyone is included regardless of their need, background or vulnerability. In doing so, we will aim to provide support for children in a local school or setting (where possible) without the need to travel long distances to have their needs supported.
- Working with our partners, we will support good attendance, reduce exclusions and make attendance a priority. We will take a targeted approach to engage with families in a school setting and bring appropriate services together that enable children and young people to access school with support that allows them to thrive.
- We will work with Schools and Post-16 providers to increase the number of children and young people in Education, Employment and Training at ages 16-18 years, helping to grow their ambitions and meeting the needs of local employers.

#### **A safe community for all children and young people**

We will develop our partnership approach to address serious youth violence and build feelings of safety for all Children and Young People.

We will take a Child First approach, as set out in the [Youth Justice Plan](#), which will see us:

- Prioritise the interests of children, including their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential.
- Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their social involvement, leading to safer communities and fewer victims.
- Encouraging children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion.
- Promoting a childhood removed from the justice system, using prevention and diversion.

### **Preventing children and families from experiencing the impact of poverty and taking a targeted approach to reduce the number of children in poverty.**

We will address the emerging issues at home and in school that directly affect children, young people and their families or carers. This will include:

- Maximising free school meals take up and ensuring that the council's school meal provision offers healthy and nutritious options for a balanced diet.
- Implementing a school uniform affordability action plan and the targeted promotion of Healthy Starts Vouchers to increase take up amongst eligible families.
- Continuing to deliver our Holidays Are Fun programme in partnership with the VCSE. Providing activities and healthy meals during school holidays.
- Continue to bring together key stakeholders from across our Borough as a network to address issues relating to our children who maybe in poverty.

### **Support for Children in Our Care**

As Corporate Parents, we are committed to supporting the children we care for and care leavers to have happy and healthy childhoods, achieve their full potential and have a successful adulthood. Our Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out how we will do this by focusing on Safe and Stable Homes, built on love – where children and young people feel safe, secure and cared for. Specifically, we will focus on:

- Providing opportunities to achieve and progress in education, employment and training.
- Creating connections and building communities through networks with opportunities to participate and have fun.
- Supporting children and young people to share their views, wishes and feelings and ensuring we listen, feedback and take action.
- Promoting healthy lives through physical and emotional health and wellbeing - now and in the future.
- Preparing and supporting our care experienced young people for adult lives.
- Supporting and advocating for our children and young people and challenging others to do the same.

### **A bright future and a sense of belonging**

We will support all of our children and young people to have high aspirations for their future in our Borough and to have fulfilled lives. This will take place through our high-quality education settings, alongside a range of sport, leisure and cultural opportunities for children and families. We will also help our young people to explore opportunities across different employment sectors and build a positive, meaningful future for themselves in the Borough.

For our children and young people with complex needs and who need additional support, we will ensure there is a shared responsibility to develop and implement a 'Preparing for Adulthood' pathway. This will support young people during their transition, ensuring that agencies work together so they can move through life stages as seamlessly as possible.

Young people will also have their voice heard and be involved in making a difference, for example through Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) which is an award-winning youth-led movement, working together with us to make the Borough a great place to grow up in.

We all have a part to play... how can you help give our children and young people the best start in life?

The support of a strong community can create a nurturing environment that has a profound effect on children's wellbeing and development, laying the foundations for a bright future. Here are just some of the things you can do to support our Key Moves for this priority and help make our Vision a reality:

- Get involved with our Family Hubs in Billingham, Redhill, Stockton and Thornaby to support and benefit from advice, activity sessions, parenting workshops and much more.
- Volunteer with the Independent Visitors Scheme to spend time with young people in our care who would benefit from a friendship with an adult who can offer support, role model qualities and share in doing fun activities with time away from their placement.
- Encourage school attendance and help increase attainment for the young people in your life, perhaps become a School Governor to ensure high standards of achievement across the Borough's schools.
- Encourage and support children to play and keep moving, making the best use of our leisure services and outdoor spaces.
- Encourage and support students aged 16-18 in the Borough, and raise awareness of the local opportunities available to them as they enter the world of work.

## Priority 2: Healthy & Resilient Communities

**We will ensure that our diverse communities can live happy and healthy lives, and that we support those who are experiencing poverty. We will strive to ensure that our residents are resilient, independent and where ever possible, economically active. We will support residents to be safe and connected to each other in their homes and communities.**

### Key Moves

**Ensuring Happy and Healthy lives for all, we will work hard to reduce health inequalities.**

We recognise that health inequalities are mostly shaped by the social determinants of health, and we will be proactive in addressing this by focusing action on the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. This will include a preventative approach to support healthy lives and communities, and for those experiencing complex and multiple needs, we will look for all opportunities to better coordinate and deliver holistic support and care.

Through delivery of our [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), [Anti-Poverty Strategy](#) and the [Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework \(2021-2031\)](#), we will improve physical and mental health support and shape local places that give people the best possible chance to be healthy. We will work alongside our diverse communities to understand their strengths, where they need support, and how to appropriately tailor this support.

Working with partners and communities to improve and build health, we will:

- Support all children and families to have the best start in life, for example by ensuring access to health and wellbeing support as early as possible.
- Ensure everyone can access a healthy standard of living, for example providing support for skills, education and training to give people better access to job opportunities, particularly for communities facing barriers such as those living with a disability or long-term health condition.
- Support everyone to live in healthy and sustainable places and communities, for example ensuring that our public realm (including town and village centres, parks, nature reserves and connecting pathways) supports active and healthy lifestyles. This includes incentivising safe and accessible options for active travel, as well as involvement with sport and physical activity.
- Helping everyone live long and healthy lives, for example increasing access to screening and immunisations and creating the conditions and support for healthy lives through tackling harm from alcohol and drug misuse and smoking.

### Working with our residents to build resilience and independence in their own homes

We want to support more of our residents to remain in their own homes for longer, and we will work with individuals to co-produce support plans, focussing on the things they want to achieve in their daily lives. Alongside this, we will work with providers to ensure that all services received by our residents are good quality, safe and reliable.

We recognise the invaluable role that carers play to support their loved ones in communities, and we will ensure they receive the support they need to maintain their own independence and wellbeing.



Our work with communities will strengthen resilience through evidence-based public health initiatives, fostering community networks and supporting education on emergency preparedness, including the health and environmental effects of the climate change emergency as well as future pandemics. Communities most likely to be negatively impacted will be prioritised and we will seek to build on factors that promote good health and wellbeing and prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support.

### **Building safe and connected communities**

We will take all opportunities to embed co-production into our ways of working to build strong and connected communities. Through our Communities Mission, we will empower communities and increase individual, family and community level activities, whilst, respecting the rights of local communities to get involved as much or as little as they are able or wish to. This will include close working with our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

Our approach will see us work with communities to tackle the contributing causes to social isolation and loneliness and encouraging and facilitating more ways to connect within the community, whilst providing support for people at greatest risk and promoting good mental wellbeing.

We will also ensure that our communities are better connected. Working with transport partners, we will ensure that the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan supports social equity through good connectivity across all modes of travel, that it promotes safety and security for all.

We will continue to work with our partners through the Safer Stockton Partnership, to make Stockton-on-Tees a safer place, where people are protected from serious harm and live in communities that are safe and welcoming. We will take an intelligence-led, neighbourhood-based approach to manage the impact of serious and organised crime. Alongside this, we will reduce offending rates of the most prolific offenders and address issues of serious violence. Our close work with communities will ensure that we protect the most vulnerable, identifying those at risk and preventing them from being drawn into harm, whilst pursuing and prosecuting those who exploit the vulnerable.

### **Supporting those who are experiencing poverty and work with communities to reduce the impact of poverty**

Living in poverty can prevent our residents reaching their potential and can impact on people's educational attainment, employment, civic engagement and their health and wellbeing.

Through our [Anti-Poverty Strategy](#), we will support those directly affected by poverty by offering opportunities, support, advice, and information. We recognise that achieving our goal will not be quick or easy, nor is it something we can do alone. Our shared ambition is one which places both our communities and partners at the core of our delivery plan. It will see us focus our efforts on tackling food insecurity and poverty, reducing fuel poverty and supporting income maximisation. We will also ensure that we undertake Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) where required to ensure that we have an evidence-based approach which analyses the impact on groups with different characteristics, including poverty.

[We all have a part to play... how can you help build healthy and resilient communities?](#)

We all have a stake in ensuring our communities are places where people can live happily and healthily at every stage of life, and there are many ways you can do your bit, from supporting those experiencing ill-health or reducing social isolation of vulnerable people, to maintaining your own active lifestyle. Here are just some of the things you can do to support our Key Moves for this priority and help make our Vision a reality:

- Engage with organisations such as [Cultivate Tees Valley](#) to work on a community garden that boosts food security and helps improve mental health by working outside together outside together.
- Volunteer with clean-up and litter picking groups in your area, and meet new, like minded friends.
- Make the most of active amenities across the borough, like Tees Active Centres, Shape The Play for football inspired fitness and well-being, ParkPlay for fun and games for all ages.
- Offer your time to transport someone who needs to access medical appointments or social groups through the [Volunteer Driver Scheme](#)
- Know your neighbours - especially those who may be vulnerable, and advise them on the help that's available through local initiatives such as: [Warm Homes Healthy People](#), [Community Spaces](#) or [The Bread and Butter Thing](#).

### Priority 3: A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit

**We will make Stockton-on-Tees a great place to live, work and visit - a Borough that residents can be proud of. It will be a vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy.**

We want Stockton-on-Tees to be a place of choice for younger generations to live, work, play and grow - providing an environment where they can thrive. Creating a great place to live will include an emphasis on children and young people growing up feeling safe, utilising green spaces and building their ambitions around exciting and fulfilled lives in our Borough.

#### **Key Moves**

#### **Our Borough will be a place to be proud of, for communities and business**

We will focus on Place Making and working with communities to improve the places and spaces that impact people's lives, including:

- Delivery of the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint to create inspiring and attractive public spaces and facilities, including the Stockton Waterfront Urban Park, renovated historic Town Hall, alongside a vibrant and distinct retail offer and fresh opportunities to live, work and enjoy right at the heart of our Borough.
- Delivering the masterplan for Billingham to transform the town centre, providing a new residential community, alongside quality public realm that is connected to a revitalised retail area, and linking residents better with enhanced leisure and sports facilities including the new Billingham Sports Hub.
- Delivering our vision for a Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone, which will become a nationally significant site, offering improved infrastructure for health services, medical and social care innovation, with integrated employment and housing offers.
- Implementing the Thornaby Town Deal aspirations and rejuvenating Thornaby Town Centre, including: new leisure facilities, a redeveloped Golden Eagle site and revitalised housing that is accessible and affordable. We will also strengthen links to our other towns and promote active lifestyles through improved cycling and walking routes, alongside delivery of world class engineering and construction training facilities in partnership with NETA Training.
- Maintaining and improving our beautiful local heritage and cultural assets by enhancing historic Yarm High Street's public spaces and enriching its cultural and leisure offer through major improvement and museum extension works at Preston Park.

#### **A vibrant and diverse place – the playground of the Tees Valley**

We have a strong reputation for delivering distinctive, creative and varied events that contribute to our community and economic ambitions. The notion that Stockton-on-Tees is 'an events Borough' has been established over 30 years. It carries the passions and beliefs of our communities, connecting the six towns and connecting generations, cultures and backgrounds to celebrate together, promoting a sense of pride and togetherness. Our festivals and events improve well-being and can be a source of inspiration, a way to learn, grow and build confidence and make new friendships.

To further develop our reputation as a lively and dynamic Borough, that becomes the 'Playground of the Tees Valley' and where people's quality of life is enriched, we will:

- Continue to grow our reputation as a leading presenter of world class outdoor street arts, including international artists and premiere shows.
- Curate a programme of nationally significant largescale events, including the activation and animation of the River Tees and Stockton Waterfront.
- Empower and enable events across our Borough which unite and connect people and our communities, promoting acceptance and respect and building stronger communities through the delivery of local events and celebrations.
- Grow and attract new visitors to the Borough generating direct economic impact in terms of visitor spend and trading, changing perceptions about our Borough and helping us create a compelling offer for inward investment.
- Create exceptional events and exciting experiences, that are inclusive, relevant and diverse and which provide opportunities for participation and volunteering for residents, communities and groups.
- Maximise use of our sport and leisure facilities, including those that offer something different and attract visitors from further afield, such as Tees Barrage International White Water Centre and Air Trail.

### **A great place to live and call home**

We will continue to work with our partners to inform delivery of the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and ensure that the transport network supports inclusivity and creates ease of movement between town centres, places of work, leisure and interest. This will include enhancing the active travel offer, to promote more cycling and walking as a practical choice for everyday journeys, as well as improving bus priority and train station facilities.

We will support the development of aspirational and affordable homes that meet the needs of our residents, set within attractive locations and surrounded by enviable local services.

As part of our approach to support vibrant and healthy communities, we will take advantage of opportunities to make best use of green space, improve energy efficiency and air quality. This will include working with developers and other partners to influence design and delivery, as well as raising awareness about the health impacts of poor air quality and promoting behaviours that can have a positive impact.

Reducing crime and perceptions of crime are crucial in creating great places to live. We will identify those areas with the highest instances of anti-social behaviour and work with perpetrators, as well as communities to support behaviour change and take appropriate action against all persistent offenders. We will also work with businesses to promote safe and welcoming environments that support their companies and their workers to thrive in the Borough.

### **An environment that is well looked after, with outdoor spaces to enjoy and connect local amenities**

We will support an environment that communities want to look after and enjoy, including clean streets, well maintained buildings and green spaces. Our open spaces will be attractive and accessible, including public realm in our town centres, as well as our parks, cemeteries, nature reserves and other grounds. We will support approaches to enhance and maintain these areas for communities to enjoy and keep active. Our approach will also be environmentally sustainable, as we care for our wider environment and enhance biodiversity, as part of our approach to adapt to the impact of climate change.

Promoting active travel will be integral to our approach. We will reduce the barriers that stop people from choosing to travel actively to work and town centres; delivering improvements in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure that will support active travel.

We will progress a transformation review of Waste Services, to enable changes that are efficient and sustainable, reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill and supporting an increase in recycling. Our approach aligns with national policy and the [Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy](#), which can maximise environmental benefits and resources from waste.

We all have a part to play... how can you help create a great place to live, work and visit?

Our Borough has a long and proud history of community spirit, where residents care about the places and spaces they live, and regularly make active contributions. For example by supporting community safety, caring for your area and much more. Here are just some of the things you can do to support our Key Moves for this priority and help make our Vision a reality:

- Present your bin, recycling and green waste in the right way and in a timely fashion to help our Community Services teams keep our streets clean.
- Encourage participation by spreading the word about events, activities and community groups to your friends, family and neighbours when chatting or on social media.
- Embrace active travel options, especially for shorter journeys – these are better for the environment, whilst also helping to stay fit and healthy.
- Take steps to insulate your home, or look out for information and support that can help with home energy efficiency.
- Be proud of Stockton-on-Tees. Talk about and share the success stories of the Borough and its people to showcase Stockton-on-Tees as a great place to live, work and visit.

#### **Priority 4: An inclusive economy**

**We will continue to grow the economy of Stockton-on-Tees and cement our role as the well-connected, economic heart of the Tees Valley. We will ensure that all of our residents can benefit from secure and sustainable economic opportunities.**

Our long-term approach will encourage sustained economic growth across the Borough, and a more equitable distribution of the wealth that we generate. We will focus equally on economic growth, inclusivity and skills development, through a complementary set of themes that develop new economic roles with well paid, good quality jobs, to ensure we become a place recognised for good work, fair pay and responsible business ownership.

#### **Key Moves**

##### **Delivering and sustaining economic growth.**

We will rapidly grow and broaden the employment, business, skills and enterprise base. Our interventions will help businesses to grow faster and to better innovate, whilst also developing new economic roles and functions in Stockton-on-Tees.

We will encourage inward investment from companies that have good and fair operating principles, with benefits to the Borough through the creation of well paid jobs. We will work with businesses to maximise their local impact through their company commitments to things like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental Social and Governance criteria (ESG) and the growing B-Corp movement that seeks to increase the positive impact companies make on workers, communities, customers and the planet.

Through our communications messaging and activity we will work closely with our partners to change the image and investor perceptions of Stockton-on-Tees so we can grow the Borough's profile as a place to live, work and invest.

##### **Ensuring all of our residents can benefit from economic opportunities by delivering and embedding a fairer distribution of wealth.**

Stockton-on-Tees will be recognised place of good work and fair pay. We will strive to ensure that as many employers as possible offer safe and supportive workplaces, that promote and support staff health and wellbeing.

We will support our residents to access secure and sustainable employment, by helping them to develop and make the most of their skills. We will focus efforts on communities that have more prevalent issues with lower skills and lower wages, as well as people facing barriers to employment, such as those living with a disability or those with long term health conditions.

We will work with our local companies to increase their positive impact on local communities, the local environment and supply chains, ensuring that more wealth is retained here and circulates locally. Stockton-on-Tees will be recognised place of responsible business and local ownership.

We will also build on community strengths and grow resilience, by helping to put more economic assets in the hands of our local communities and by encouraging communities to invest and spend with local companies to promote growth.

## **Cementing our role as the well-connected, economic heart of Tees Valley.**

We will work with our partners to deliver our shared strategic transport priorities, including improved connectivity and enhanced infrastructure for our residents, workers and visitors. This will include: new and improved railway stations and providing attractive options for active travel through cycleways and pathways.

Our highway infrastructure will be well maintained, so road users can move around with ease and ensure inward investment continues to flourish. We will also work with communities and providers to increase the use of public transport and ensure options are available that promote inclusion by meeting the needs of communities.

We will maximise our digital strengths, ensuring that digital infrastructure and skills are an enabler for growth across all sectors. This will see us make the most of our high levels of ultrafast broadband and digital inclusion across the borough. We will also build on our established digital cluster, and harness expertise to develop new innovations in care-tech and health-tech that support delivery of our ambitions for a Care and Health Innovation Zone.

### We all have a part to play... How can you support the continued growth of an Inclusive Economy?

There's a big role to play for all of us, by promoting our Borough as a place where business, innovation and careers can thrive, and where there's an expectation of equity and fairness. Here are just some of the things you can do to support our key moves for this priority and help make our vision a reality:

- Support local businesses and shop close to home, helping local companies to succeed, create job opportunities and increase the impact of the 'Stockton-on-Tees £'.
- Become a Stockton-on-Tees Business Ambassador, and talk up your town with confidence and pride, using some of the tools provided by the Council and our partners.
- Boost your skills and knowledge by taking a course with any of the great providers operating across the Borough, this might support your future employment or lead you to a new hobby to enjoy with like-minded people.
- If you run a business, explore Social Responsibility opportunities that will mutually benefit your business, local people and the environment.
- Think about starting your own business, in an area that supports your community or local supply chain. There's lots of support available from [Financial assistance and support for business - Stockton-on-Tees Borough / Council](https://www.investstocktontees.co.uk/business-growth)

## Priority 5: A Sustainable Council

**We will ensure our council is financially sustainable and manages our assets effectively to enhance their local impact. We will be a well-run council across areas of our business and continue to improve outcomes for communities.**

### **Key Moves**

External auditors have recognised us as a well-managed council that consistently delivers a balanced budget, a position we will maintain.

Our bold and ambitious Transformation Mission, delivered as part of the Powering Our Future programme is key to achieve this. A focus on Early Intervention and Prevention will see us create the conditions for people in the Borough to be healthy and maximise their potential, by providing support for them in the right place and at the right time. Our approach will prevent, reduce and delay demand for services. In doing so, we will move away from reactive and fragmented support, whilst enhancing joined up working between public services, communities and individuals. Over time, we will shift the balance of Council resources upstream towards activities that tackle the root causes of more complex issues for individuals and families.

Alongside new ways of working and configuration of services, our Transformation Programme will maximise council income, for example through fees and charges. This will enable a balanced budget, whilst also being more sustainable for communities.

The Council's land and property portfolio will be optimised for community benefit and income generation, recognising the increasing need for financial and environmental sustainability. We will ensure that all council assets are suitable for delivering the services that communities need or contribute to the financial stability of the council. A Corporate Property Review will strategically assess assets to optimise their use, deliver financial savings and generate new income streams.

As an anchor institution in the Borough, the Council has a significant impact through our role as an employer, commissioner and purchaser of goods and services. In-keeping with our commitments set out in the Fairer Stockton on Tees Framework, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy, we will ensure that we continue to operate in ways that are fair, equitable and promote a positive local impact. This will include reducing our energy demand and accelerating a shift towards sustainable energy, whilst reducing harmful emissions and working towards a cleaner environment – for example maximising the use of solar power at the Council's new offices in Dunedin House and looking at alternative fuels to power council fleet.

We will also continue to lead by example, encouraging other organisations in the Borough to maximise their local impact.

We all have a part to play... how can you help us to be a sustainable council that has a positive impact across all parts of the Borough?

While the onus is on us to deliver this priority, there are also things communities can do to help us. Here are some of the things you might want to consider:

- Volunteer with community schemes that interest you, the more people we have involved means the more of us that have an active stake in the development of services and the future of our Borough.



- Think about contacting us online if you can, this costs the Council less money and frees up our resources to help more vulnerable residents who need face-to-face contact most.
- Use our online reporting platform to make us aware of issues at an early stage, so we can address any issues before they get worse.
- Look at ways to reduce our energy demand and support a positive natural environment when using council buildings and public spaces, this will help reduce harmful emissions whilst supporting a more sustainable environment.
- You know your communities and your place best, so please share your ideas for doing things differently in your area – thinking about opportunities for community action or ownership.

## **Powering Our Future – a new Mission Statement and Design Principles for the Council**

To ensure we are set up to achieve the priorities in this plan, we have developed a new, cross-cutting Mission Statement for the Council to Power Our Future.

Our **Mission Statement** 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, and 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 Mission Statement is underpinned by 5 supporting Missions, that provide a high level picture of success:

**Communities Powering Our Future** - 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.

**Place-Making Powering Our Future** - we will lead the renewal of our six towns where it's needed, and work with communities on the improvements they want to see, to ensure they are vibrant spaces that attract residents, shoppers, leisure visitors and businesses.

**Partnerships Powering Our Future** – we will collaborate with other organisations for the benefit of our residents and communities.

**Transformation Powering Our Future** - we will improve the way we work and deliver efficient, effective and value for money services within available financial resources.

**Colleagues Powering Our Future** – we will enable and empower our workforce to do the best they can for our communities.

A set of **Design Principles** will act as 'guard rails' for the Council and be embedded across our ways of working to deliver our Mission Statement and Council Plan priorities. They are:

### Reduce inequality and prioritise prevention

We talk to and listen to people to understand their needs, prioritising tackling the causes of inequality rather than tackling its effects.

For example... *Extensive consultation with the travelling community has informed the development and delivery of a new on-site Community Hub and the bespoke services they can access there, including health advice and services, employment advice and welfare rights.*

### Put communities at the heart of everything we do

The starting point for developing any new project or designing a service is always our communities and we make sure everything we do is planned with their best interests at the forefront.

For example... *We use data and insights to understand the customer when re-designing a service and test prototype designs with them for feedback on how we can make them better, such as with the Making it Real Board in Adult Services.*

#### Enable communities to help and support each other

There are a lot of talented individuals and groups in our Borough who work together to deliver much of the activity and support our communities need. We continuously look for opportunities to encourage this and acknowledge that we aren't always best placed to provide the support an individual or community needs - where this is the case, we work with partners and help others to do this.

For example... *Community support networks are designed into our support and referral services.*

#### Have a 'place-based' approach

We work closely with our partners to deliver services that help make our Borough a better place to live, work and visit. We coordinate activity which contributes to good quality that is accessible and affordable; environmental sustainability; a growing economy, and a thriving leisure and culture offer.

For example... *We involve communities in deciding how best to invest in their neighbourhood using the funds we have available.*

#### Have efficient processes and be digital by design

We look for opportunities to deliver services and communicate with our communities digitally, unless we know that the communities we need to reach are digitally excluded.

For example... *We seek to communicate with our customers digitally through e-mail, text and social media rather than sending letters or calling them.*

#### Use data and intelligence to inform our decisions

We capture data and intelligence and review it regularly to help us forward plan and make the right decisions. We use data and intelligence to evaluate to monitor the impact of our services and functions, always striving for continuous improvement.

For example... *We will use behaviours intelligence gathered from regular surveys to direct and inform the targeted communication and engagement campaigns for the introduction of new waste services.*

### **What will success look like?**

Working closely with our communities and partners will help us meet the needs of our residents and make Stockton-on-Tees a place we can all be proud of.

It will give our children the best start in life by reducing the number of children who live in poverty, ensuring they have a good level of development and are ready for school when they reach reception age, while also supporting children to achieve outstanding educational attainment. It will also support more of our school leavers to remain in education, help them gain employment and/or training to provide opportunities for a better future.

Meeting the objectives set out in this Plan will ensure that our residents feel like they belong to their community, help them to manage their finances better and focus on improving their health and wellbeing so they can live for longer and in good health.

The Plan highlights how we can make the Borough a better place to live, by reducing crime rates and in turn changing perceptions of our Borough, ensuring that residents and visitors feel safe at all times. The success of this plan will be measured by how happy our residents are with the Borough, including whether they are happy with their employment, accommodation and whether they feel worthwhile.

Stockton-on-Tees is already the heart of the Tees Valley economy, however, if the improvements set out in this Plan are met, we can increase the employment rate for our residents and improve our already impressive regional economic performance.

Due to growing financial pressures that public services are dealing with, we will need to ensure that the improvements we make are affordable and efficient. We will also work in partnership with other organisations and with the community to ensure this is feasible.

# Agenda Item 8

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**DATE: 20 NOVEMBER 2024**

**REPORT OF CABINET**

## **COUNCIL DECISION**

**Portfolio Title – Leader of the Council, Councillor Bob Cook**

**Powering Our Future – Prudential Borrowing Requirements**

## **SUMMARY**

This report seeks approval for prudential borrowing to enable delivery of transformation projects approved by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The requirement of £4.3m of prudential borrowing for the acquisition of food and recycling waste receptacles, green waste bins, site preparation costs for a Waste Transfer Station and resurfacing of Wellington Square car park.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS**

Council is recommended to agree the recommendation to allow the most beneficial method of funding the investment required, to aid the immediate financial pressures on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Council is recommended to

1. Approve £4.3m prudential borrowing for the acquisition of food and recycling waste receptacles, green waste bins, site preparation costs for a Waste Transfer Station and resurfacing of Wellington Square car park.

## **DETAIL**

1. The Powering our Future Update report to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 outlined a number of service changes through the Transformation Mission. The report to Cabinet is included as an appendix which provides more detail on each of the proposals.
2. Upfront investment is required to enable some of these service changes and these are detailed below
  - a) Green Waste – a one-off capital cost of £1,000,000 to purchase 40,000 green waste bins
  - b) Waste Transfer Station – site preparation costs of £1,100,000
  - c) New Waste Receptacles - £1,200,000

d) Car Parking – Resurface Wellington Square - £1,000,000

3. The total investment required is £4.3m. If the Council were to fund these costs upfront, and negate the need for borrowing, this would effectively increase the in year financial pressure which would increase the need to utilise earmarked reserves. Alternatively the costs can be funded by prudential borrowing, allowing the cost to be spread over a longer period. This allows the budget savings to be realised straight away, contributing towards the Council’s MTFP. It is therefore recommended that prudential borrowing is used.
4. The costs of prudential borrowing will be funded by the savings or new income generated from the service changes. This has been factored into the financial implications included within the Cabinet report.
5. The prudential borrowing repayments and the repayment terms are summarised in the table below.

	<b>Amount of Borrowing</b>	<b>Annual Repayments</b>	<b>Repayment Term</b>
	£'000	£'000	Years
Green Waste - Bins	1,000	130	10
Waste - Transfer Station – Make good	1,100	75	30
Receptacles	1,200	156	10
Car Parking - Wellington Square Resurfacing	1,000	80	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>441</b>	

## COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

6. 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, but it will also mean that our residents are healthy, happy and feel like they belong.
7. 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.

## CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no direct corporate parenting implications as a result of this report.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The prudential borrowing total amount of £4.3m will cost 441,000 in annual repayments. This will be funded by the savings or new income generated as a result of the transformation proposals included within the report to Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (Appendix A)
10. As outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget Report to Council in February 2024, the Council is forecasting a budget gap across the MTFP of £1.9m in 24/25, £7.1m in 25/26 and £8.1m in 26/27.
11. Using prudential borrowing to fund this investment, allows savings to be made towards meeting this budget. Further details on the financial implications are included in the Cabinet Report (Appendix A)

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. 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**

13. This report provides an update on the development of the Powering Our Futures Programme. There are two main risks associated with the programme. Firstly, the programme does not 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.
14. To manage the risks, the Council has implemented a robust governance structure to manage the Powering Our Future 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**

15. Powering Our Future is a Borough-wide Programme.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Powering Our Future Programme Update (January 2024, April 2024)
- MTFP and Budget Report to Council (February 2024)
- Financial update report to Cabinet (September 2024)
- Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste to Cabinet (February 2024)
- The Environment Act 2021
- Governments 'Simpler Recycling' guidelines 2023

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# Appendix A – For Information Only

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**DATE: 17 OCTOBER 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 including:

- Transformation Powering Our Future – proposals for new ways of working and recommended options for the following reviews:
  - Waste Collection
  - Fees and Charges – Car Parking
  - Fees and Charges – School Meals
  - Fees and Charges - Non-residential care charge
  - Administration and Business Services – Courier Services
  - Community Safety and Regulatory Services.
- Communities Powering Our Future:
  - Building our intelligence, skills and experience
  - Rolling out an Appreciative Inquiry approach
  - Partnership working
  - Effective communication and Proud to Care campaign.
- Partnerships Powering Our Future:
  - Place Leadership Board
  - Business Ambassadors Group.
- Colleagues Powering Our Future – implementation of the Workforce Development Strategy.
- Regeneration Powering Our Future – work is taking place to re-frame this Mission with a focus on Place Making. Further detail will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to agree the updates and recommendations to ensure that the Council continues to deliver its commitment to the Powering Our Future Missions; to address the financial challenges we face at the same time as improving outcomes for communities, including:

## Appendix A – For Information Only

- 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:

1. Approve the recommended options set out in the report in respect of the Waste and Recycling Reviews:
  - Introduction of charging for green waste from 1st April 2025
  - Introduction of weekly food waste and recycling service from 1st April 2026 with the acquisition of associated vehicles and the development of a Waste Transfer Station
  - Cease the provision of the Community Recycling Centres with immediate effect.
2. Approve the removal of the maximum charge for non-residential care.
3. Approve an increase in the charges to schools for the provision of traded school meals service to reflect the true cost of the service provided; and increase the per meal charge for Council maintained schools to £3 per meal to reflect the increased cost of provision.
4. Approve the introduction of Free School Meals auto-enrolment as detailed in paragraphs 71 and 72.
5. Approve the changes to car parking charges in Stockton and Yarm Town centres; including removal of the first hour free parking and introduction of the rate of £1.50 for three hours stay in short stay car parks, alongside an uplift to long stay car parking charges.
6. Note the operational changes in respect of Administration and Business Services, Community Safety and Regulatory Services set out in paragraphs 76 to 81.
7. Note that the changes proposed will contribute £375,000 in 24/25, £2,296,000 in 25/26 and £4,644,000 in 26/27 towards the budget gap estimated within the budget report to Council in February 2024, at the same time as delivering improved outcomes, set out in the detail of the report.
8. Note the progress updates for other aspects of the Transformation Mission outlined in paragraph 10.
9. Note the progress updates for all other Missions of the Powering our Future Programme.

### Cabinet Recommend to Council

10. It is proposed that Cabinet recommend to Council approval of £4.3m prudential

## Appendix A – For Information Only

borrowing for the acquisition of food and recycling waste receptacles, green waste bins, site preparation costs for a Waste Transfer Station and resurfacing of Wellington Square car park.

### Introduction - Powering Our Future

16. The Powering our Future Programme continues to drive our plans to be a bold, brave and innovative Council and work with our partners to 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.
17. Significant progress has been made against all the Missions in the Programme, supporting us in our planned approach to carefully manage our resources over the longer term. This will see us create a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that offer value for money and are valued by our residents.
18. Our approach continues to be iterative, building over time, to engage communities and undertake thorough reviews. This can avoid the need to make short-term cuts, which can be damaging to services and the residents we serve.
19. The remainder of this report provides an update on each of the Missions, for Cabinet comment and approval. Regular reports to Cabinet will ensure that our member-led approach drives the development and delivery of Powering Our Future.

### Transformation Powering Our Future

20. This Mission will identify new and innovative ways of working that are better for communities and more efficient.
21. In April 2024, Cabinet agreed the scope for each of the Transformation Reviews in Phase 1 of the Programme. These provided clarity on the objectives for each project, in alignment with the Council's Mission Statement.
22. The reviews have now moved into Discovery and Design stage. This work has led to a comprehensive understanding of organisational challenges, to develop and refine ideas for transformation making use of research, data and intelligence.
23. As part of this process, we have and continue to carry out extensive engagement with Members and colleagues to ensure robust challenge and feedback in shaping the change. This includes:
  - Members and Colleagues Marketplace Events (providing information about all Phase 1 reviews)
  - Colleagues Community of Practice sessions (managing interdependencies between projects across the programme)
  - Member Briefings
  - Informal Member Engagement Group (a cross-party group met in August to inform fees and charges reviews)
  - Scrutiny Committees (the Scrutiny Programme for 2024-25 has been designed and

## Appendix A – For Information Only

agreed to inform reviews where areas of policy change are anticipated)

24. The findings relating to an initial tranche of reviews have now been concluded. Drivers for change along with options, proposals and recommendations for transformation are summarised below.

25. In addition to the areas below, we have made progress in relation to:

- Discharge to Assess / Reablement – a new way of working is being progressed that will see the council de-commission current provision and reallocate resources for a more joined up approach to reablement. This will focus on supporting more people to live independently through a single-provider approach that makes every contact count and will support high performance of the local system, which is acknowledged as one of the best in the county. This is estimated to save up to £500,000.
- Placement Sufficiency Strategy – this operational strategy sets out our approach to provide a range of accommodation and support services that:
  - Keep children with their families of origin, wherever it is safe to do so.
  - Provide children with alternative, nurturing homes if they need short, or long-term alternative care or support arrangements.
  - Enable our children and young people with disabilities to live an ordinary life.
- Introduction of new practice for Children's Services – this supports us in achieving the objectives set out as part of the placement sufficiency strategy and includes:
  - The creation of an Edge of Care Team designed to work intensively with individuals, siblings and families to maintain them in the family home rather than take them into care. The team has been successful in keeping children out of care, with 73 children and young people being supported by the team since January 2024.
  - The establishment of the Social Work academy and International Recruitment to address recruitment and retention issues.

### Waste Collection & Recycling

26. A Place Committee Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste and Recycling was undertaken in 2023, with the assistance of Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). WRAP provided guidance around a range of considerations on how alternative collection models could support the Council to meet the new requirements set out by the Government, whilst also tackling low recycling rates and increased waste disposal costs.

27. In support of this, in February 2024 Cabinet agreed to: change to fortnightly refuse collections; adopt weekly 'multi-stream' collections of dry recycling and food waste; undertake a review of green waste collections; and implement a comprehensive communication and community engagement plan on proposed changes.

28. Options for implementation have been the focus of a transformation review, which also responded to the following drivers for change:

- Significant gate fee increases linked to changes in the current waste disposal contract arrangements. These costs are already factored into the MTFP and

## Appendix A – For Information Only

contribute to the budget gap.

- A new statutory duty to collect food waste separately, and to treat this waste as recycling.
- Our recycling levels are currently the lowest in the Tees Valley and behind target. Collection model changes have been proven to be the primary catalyst for improving recycling levels.

### Green Waste

29. The current position in respect of the Green Waste service is as follows:

- Collections currently take place for 30 weeks per year although the service is only funded for 26 weeks
- As part of the new 'Simpler Recycling' guidelines, councils are required to provide a 36-week service from April 2026 which would result in a budget pressure for our council of circa £70,000
- There is no charge for the service to households, with the service effectively fully subsidised by the Council
- We are one of the few councils in the country not to charge for the service.

30. It is proposed to introduce a chargeable green waste service from April 2025 at a charge of £40 per annum to households.

31. A range of options are available for charging, and work has been undertaken to understand comparable charges across local authorities. These ranged between £35-£60. In the Northeast, the highest charge is Newcastle at £43, however we understand several Councils are in the process of reviewing their charges. The proposed charge of £40 therefore compares favourably to other local authorities and is the recommended option.

32. Associated with this proposal:

- Residents will be able to sign up to the scheme through a variety of channels from December 2024.
- The first bin will be provided free of charge to each household (effectively paid for from the income collected).
- Households with larger green space will be able to benefit from the new arrangements as additional bins can be purchased on request for a charge of £25.

33. Subject to the pace and level of take-up amongst households, the proposal is estimated to provide up to £600,000 income in year 1 and £1,200,000 in year 2 and future years, before the costs associated with implementation. The income modelling assumption is based on 20% take-up in year 1 with a further 20% take-up the year after. The model has been run following the gathering of intelligence from other comparable authorities who have rolled out chargeable green waste in recent years.

34. There are 2 options for the purchase of the bins which need to be factored into the model:

## Appendix A – For Information Only

- The one-off capital cost of purchasing the bins is £1,000,000 for 40,000 bins. This is expected to cover the take up for years 1 and 2. This cost would exceed any potential new income in the first year.
  - An alternative is to use prudential borrowing powers to fund the bins. This would cost around £130,000 per annum and effectively spread the up front cost over a period of ten years.
35. Given the financial pressure in 2025/26, it is proposed that Cabinet agree to the changes and recommend to Council borrowing £1m to fund the Capital cost associated with the acquisition of a stock of green bins.
36. The Council will work with communities to ensure there is an equitable approach to implementation, which will include extensive community engagement and support for change. We will explore opportunities that can build on community strengths for shared approaches amongst neighbours.

### New Waste and Recycling Service

37. Based on the WRAP modelling, with a preferred option previously proposed by Scrutiny Committee and endorsed by Cabinet (set out a paragraph 12), it is now proposed to progress with the following for delivery:
- Collect food waste and recycling every week
  - Collect residual waste on a fortnightly basis
  - Each household will receive an additional weighted bag for the collection of dry recycling and a new indoor and outdoor caddy for food waste. Giving every household the opportunity to increase the amount of waste that can be collected and recycled on a weekly basis.
38. The introduction of weekly food waste collection is required from April 2026. Since this is a new burden to local authorities, Government is required to cover all additional costs. As members will recall the most cost effective means of collecting this waste is on the same vehicle. This model also results in a cleaner product alongside increasing our recycling rates. This assumed approach is reflected in the options analysis and proposals below.
39. It is proposed that changes will take affect from April 2026 to ensure we meet statutory requirements and allow sufficient lead in time to make operational arrangements and to communicate and support residents with the changes.
40. Back alleys have unique challenges relating to waste collection. High levels of waste are disposed of here, and fly tipping can be an issue if not carefully managed. The proposal therefore includes the retention of waste on a weekly basis for these areas only, in order to address these issues.
41. New receptacles are needed to implement the proposed new model set out at paragraph 22, based on WRAP modelling.

## Appendix A – For Information Only

### Food Waste

42. This requires new receptacles for residents as follows:

- 130,000 5L Internal Food Caddies costing £1.25 per unit to store waste in households
- 130,000 23L Food Caddies costing £3.30 per unit to be used externally and to be collected from waste collection service
- 250 400L Commercial Food Waste bins costing £370 per unit.

43. The Government has committed to fund the costs of food waste collection and disposal. At the current time we do not know our allocation for the new revenue funding but based on the proposal we are estimating that this should be £150k up front to meet enablement costs and then £900k per annum from 26/27 to meet ongoing costs.

### Recycling

44. The recommendation approved by Cabinet to move to weekly recycling and food waste collections and fortnightly residual waste collections, precludes the use of bins as a collection receptacle as the collection vehicle used for this method cannot accommodate a lift for bins and requires recycling to be partially segregated at the kerbside. This was assessed as part of the Scrutiny Review as scenario 4 and it was determined that the use of a co-mingled bin comes with a capital cost of £2.3 million, high contamination rates and a move to a gate fee for recyclable material therefore is not a viable option against the approved recommendation of scenario 3.

45. Under the new service, each property requires an additional recycling receptacle. Feedback from residents suggests they would prefer a bag that is heavier to prevent it from blowing away in heavy winds. Currently the white bags offered to residents have a 500g weight within them. Operational modelling will be undertaken to identify the preferred receptacle that is both efficient and meets residents' needs.

46. Based on the above, the overall estimated cost of new receptacles covering food and recycling collection changes is in the region of £1.2m. This can either be funded in year from one off revenue budgets, which would add to the existing budget gap as included in February 2024 MTFP report, or alternatively the cost could be funded through prudential borrowing, which would allow the cost to be spread over ten years. Based on the overall financial position of the Council, it is therefore proposed that we fund the costs through prudential borrowing to maintain the position outlined in the February 2024 MTFP report to Council.

47. The new food waste collection and disposal service create further logistical demands, including:

- Based on the model proposed, new vehicles are required. The most efficient model involves food waste and recycling collection in one vehicle.
- Additional vehicles will also need secure overnight storage. The Council's depot space is already at full capacity and there is no capacity on our current Fleet

## Appendix A – For Information Only

Operator License to add more vehicles to existing depots, therefore there is a requirement to identify space.

- The collection method means the vehicles will be fuller sooner, creating the requirement for more rounds.

48. To deliver proposals, 22 recycling vehicles are needed. We currently lease 11 vehicles just for recycling which are not suitable to collect food waste. These vehicles will no longer be in use after April 2026.
49. Under the proposed new arrangements, we will continue to lease vehicles as the cost difference between borrowing and buying is negligible. However, there are significant operational benefits to leasing linked fleet management and maintenance.
50. It is proposed to establish a Waste Transfer Station, which will allow waste to be sorted and transferred onto different vehicles ready for transportation to the designated recycling facility. This will require less collection rounds and establish further storage space for vehicles. This would require additional capital investment of £2.5m.
51. Consideration has been given to direct transfer to the Recycling Facility in Hartlepool although this will add significant downtime when considering travelling time as well as waiting times as the facility will be used by a multitude of other local authorities. This would equate to the equivalent of 3 additional rounds therefore the most appropriate and cost-effective solution is to use a transfer station in the Borough, which would allow us to depot the recycling and then arrange separate bulk haulage to the recycling facility.
52. Whilst the acquisition of the land can be funded through the DEFRA Food Waste capital grant of £1.4m, a further borrowing requirement of £1.1m would be required to enable delivery of the overall capital investment outlined above.

### Community Recycling Centres

53. The Council still operates 5 Community Recycling Centres in the Borough. These are on private land, attract significant antisocial behaviour, and we are under increasing pressure from landowners (in fact some have recently closed at the landowner's request).
54. The facilities were opened at a time when we had few recycling opportunities. However, the proposed new waste and recycling model will give residents the opportunity to increase the amount of waste that can be collected and recycled on a weekly basis, in a more convenient way. Other recycling options are also available to communities, and it is therefore proposed to close the Community Recycling Centres with immediate effect.
55. This will prevent fly tipping and offer a financial saving of up to £66,000 per annum increasing to a potential saving of £95,000 upon the increase of the gate fee in 2025 and supports our plans to mitigate the budget gap estimated within the budget report to Council in February 2024,
56. Communication and engagement - the proposals above include a high level of change



## Appendix A – For Information Only

for residents. Supporting our communities to understand this, whilst ensuring high take up from the start of the new arrangements is fundamental to the success of the new service, to delivering higher recycling rates and maintaining an exemplary service. A detailed communications and engagement plan focusing on education and support for residents is therefore being developed and an allocation of £200,000 is included alongside other implementation costs.

57. Cost implications - the overall financial implications from the above proposals are:

	2025/26	2026/27 and Future Years
	£'000	£'000
Green Waste Income	(600)	(1,200)
Alternate Weekly		(1,000)
Recycling centres	(66)	(95)
<b>Estimated</b> revenue food grant (To be announced)	(150)	(900)
Communication & Engagement Costs	200	
Prudential Borrowing Repayments	130	361
<b>Total reduction in budget envelope</b>	<b>(486)</b>	<b>(2,834)</b>

58. There are significant upfront one off costs that will be required prior to April 2026 to allow delivery of the service considering the changes referenced above. These are:

- £1.1m to support Waste Transfer Station (after applying Capital Grant)
- Green Waste receptacles £1m
- Recycling and food waste receptacles £1.2m.

59. In order to fund these one-off costs, it is proposed that Cabinet agree to the changes and recommend to Council approval of prudential borrowing of £3.3m with an annual repayment cost of £361k.

### Fees and Charges Review

#### Non-residential Care

##### Charge

60. Income generated from fees and charges for non-residential care has not been reviewed since 2017. At this time, it was agreed that Stockton would continue implementing the maximum charge of 60% of the cost of a Grade 1 care home placement. As such, the Council has a maximum charge for residents receiving care at home of £459.60 per week. In a number of cases this is below the true cost of care. This is adding to the financial pressures experienced within this service.

## Appendix A – For Information Only

61. Following a change to legislation many years ago, most councils from a national and regional perspective removed the 60% cap. Hartlepool is the only other regional authority that has a cap, which is no more than equivalent of current weekly residential cap which is £802 per week. Having reviewed 24 other authorities, many our CIPFA nearest neighbours, all charge the full cost of the package.

### Recommendations and Benefits

62. It is proposed to remove the maximum charge so that clients with resources over the savings threshold or with eligible incomes would pay the full cost of their care package.

63. We will ensure that all charges are dealt in a fair and consistent way, subject to a financial assessment that ensures we protect residents from impacts of inequality and that they are supported to receive their full eligible income.

64. Proposals support our approach to mitigate the budget gap, set out in the budget report to Council in February 2024.

65. There are currently 49 clients paying the maximum charge. If all of these clients paid the full cost of their care this would generate an additional £300,000 p.a. income. All clients are offered a financial assessment to assess what they can afford to pay, as such a deduction of 50% has been applied to arrive at an estimated additional income of £150,000p.a.

66. To realise these benefits, it is proposed that changes are effective immediately for new clients and implemented in April 2025 for existing clients. This will allow time for an updated financial assessment to be undertaken.

### **Car Parking**

67. Income generated through car parking has been unstable since 2020, with Covid having a significant affect. Shopping behaviours have also changed in this time, with a shift to online and some big-name high-street retailers have left Stockton High Street.

68. Costs to maintain and operate car parks currently outweighs income. Investment needs have also been identified to ensure our car parks remain fit for purpose, and whilst some investment has taken place in recent years, we do not have adequate investment to keep our car parks to the optimum standard.

69. The Council currently offers the first hour free in our car parks. We are an outlier in doing so, and this can disincentivise residents to use active travel such as walking or cycling to visit our town centres.

70. Tees Valley Combined Authority funded a fixed term initiative of free parking within short stay car parks for the period of February 2021 to February 2023. Following this period the council has not been recovering sufficient income to cover the costs of maintaining and operating its car parks.

## Appendix A – For Information Only

71. The Council is currently forecasting a shortfall in car parking of approximately £500,000 against the car parking budget. In addition to this investment is required to maintain and improve car parking infrastructure which is a further budget pressure. There also needs to be consideration of the overhead costs associated with running and maintaining car parks that are not charged to the car parking budget.

### Recommendations and benefits

72. For car parks in Stockton Town Centre and Yarm, it is proposed to remove the first hour free, introduce charging for the first 3 hours and increase long stay in all car parks. Standardised pricing for car park passes available to use at all of these sites, will also be offered at a discounted price. These changes apply to Stockton Town Centre and Yarm only as these are currently the areas a parking charge system is implemented. Options for different pricing have been modelled and are shown below.

<b>Options</b>	<b>Annual increase in income</b>
£0.50 for first 30 mins £1.50 thereafter	£500,000
£1.50 for first 3 hrs	£800,000
£2 for first 3 hrs	£1,250,000

73. The recommended option is £1.50 for the first three hours, which is competitive compared to other car parks within the Tees Valley. For stays up to 1 hour Stockton's new price will be comparable and for stays up to 3 hours it will be the cheapest.

74. The car park surface at Wellington Square Car Park requires resurfacing at a cost of £1m. It is recommended that this is funded by prudential borrowing with the annual borrowing repayments of £80,000 funded from the new income generated from the proposal.

75. To improve customer experience all machines will be upgraded to allow contactless payments. This is alongside the pay by phone method and cash payments already in use. There will also be upgrades to a small number of faulty machines. This will be a one off cost of £80,000, covered by the new income generated within the first year.

76. Enforcement of car parking penalty charge notices will continue to be maintained and potential for additional income linked to the proposal kept under review.

77. With implementation in February 2025, these measures are estimated to generate additional income of £800,000 per year.

78. There are no proposed changes to: Billingham, Norton, Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby.

79. Subject to Cabinet agreement, the new arrangements will be reviewed after 1 year, to consider the impact on residents, visitors, and council finances.

80. The Blueprint for Stockton Town Centre and North Thornaby also considers accessibility into our town centres ensuring residents and visitors have options including utilising active travel, public transport and car parking.

## Appendix A – For Information Only

81. Approval of the recommendations will support the Council to:

- Ensure sustainability of the service and recovery of the associated costs of the service
- Meet the current maintenance and development requirements in and maintain existing car park sufficiency
- Invest in the Highways network/assets with the income generated in line with the Road Traffic Act.
- Encourage more people to visit and stay in Stockton Town Centre, supporting vibrancy and economic growth of the area.

### **School Catering Service**

82. Local authorities are not required to provide school meals, it is a traded service. Other local authorities, including neighbouring ones, have already taken the decision to cease their school meals service, with rising costs being a common reason.

83. Due to rising costs, the existing charges made to schools and academies no longer cover the cost of the service. There is an existing annual budget pressure of £350,000 within this service.

84. The Council has continued to prioritise its school meals service to ensure that we offer healthy and nutritious options for school children in the Borough. Many of the schools and academy trusts within the Borough continue to use the Council's school meals service because of its excellent reputation.

85. The Council currently charge maintained schools based on £2.80 per meal, with a range of prices for academies based on the costs of their particular circumstances, for example geography and size. Typically, a small primary school with low pupil numbers will cost more to provide a school meal service per meal than a larger school where economies of scale can be achieved. These charges do not cover the costs of the service.

### **Free school meals (FSM) auto-enrolment**

86. Whilst the latest Department of Education data estimates that 27.7% of pupils in the Borough are known to be eligible for FSM and all known eligible pupils are taking up this entitlement, these statistics do not account for pupils/households that are not recorded as eligible. It is therefore proposed that the Council operates an FSM auto-enrolment scheme. Using existing data held by the Council, parents/carers identified as eligible for FSM and have a child attending a state or academy school on a full time basis within the Borough will be written to and ask to 'opt out' if they prefer not to be registered. The project will be implemented in the Spring school census (which opens 16.1.25) and then re-run on a regular basis (based on the school census dates) to maximise take-up.

87. It should be noted that currently the Council offers a charged FSM eligibility checker to schools (alongside maintaining eligibility lists and dealing with school queries) which generates £31k per year, it is anticipated that this income will cease.

## Appendix A – For Information Only

### Recommendations and benefits

88. It is proposed to implement the new charges for all maintained schools and academies effective from January 2025. Maintained School meals would increase to £3 per head. Academy Trusts will be charged the full cost of the service being delivered, which varies depending on the size of the Trust (as highlighted in paragraph 70).
89. This will generate additional income to the Council of £300,000. The Council will recover costs of providing this traded service to Academy Trusts, however we will continue with a small subsidy for the remainder of the service.
90. FSM Auto enrolment will seek to ensure that all eligible families receive the benefit they are entitled to, all eligible children benefit from a guaranteed hot daily meal while in school, are able to access other out of school initiatives such as Holidays are Fun (HAF) and that schools secure additional Pupil Premium funding (£1,455 per primary pupil and £1,035 per secondary pupil per year).

### **Administration and Business Services – Courier Services**

91. Progress and savings have been made following a review of mail services 2018, including deletion of first-class mail, promotion of Royal Mail's clean option and cancellation of timed deliveries. However, further opportunities were identified to introduce more efficient processes that are digital by design and informed by insight.

### Plans for New Ways of Working

92. It is planned to cease the existing courier service and implement a new policy and process that aims to reduce paper mail. This can direct greater volumes of mail requiring printing through the Xentrall Design and Print 'Print to Post Service' and the Corporate Mailroom.
93. The move to the Modern.Gov Committee System has provided the facility to move to paperless agenda despatch for Councillors. Combined with the development of fit for purpose meeting rooms in Dunedin House, this improvement is planned for implementation in the coming months and could go live summer 2025.
94. These new ways of working will generate potential savings of £60,000 aligned to plans to mitigate the budget gap estimated within the budget report to Council in February 2024, at the same time as supporting our climate change priorities and improving intelligence and insight of activities to identify future transformation and efficiency opportunities.

### **Community Safety and Regulatory Services**

95. Ensuring efficient use of resources and financial stability - following a review of the corporate senior management structure in May 2022, a number of the Council's regulatory areas were brought together under a single management structure known as Community Safety and Regulated Services. Since then, a significant amount of work has

## Appendix A – For Information Only

been done consolidate our offer and improve the protection we offer to our communities.

96. The final stage of this is a review of the management structure, needed to unlock the final phase of changes with the aim of streamlining functions.

### Plans for new ways of working

97. Streamlining the service management team – plans are being developed to merge the leadership of Trading Standards and Licensing together under one single Service Manager. This will drive out efficiencies in process and resources whilst improving the experience of service users by allowing us to simplify access to services.

### **Transformation Powering Our Future - Next Steps**

98. Should the recommendations above be approved, work will commence to develop detailed delivery plans and implementation will commence in Quarter 3 2024.
99. Discovery and Design work continues on the remaining transformation reviews in Phase 1 of the Programme. Outcomes and proposals will be brought to Cabinet towards the end of 2024.

### **Communities Powering Our Future**

100. This Mission seeks to change our relationship with communities to make sure our residents have happy, healthy lives.
101. Following Cabinet agreement of workstream activity in April 2024, progress has included:
102. Building our intelligence, skills and experience – we are continuing to learn from our communities and best practice in other areas about new ways of working that can improve outcomes across the Borough. Findings from the Residents' Survey and community conversations, alongside our work with Cormac Russell on Asset Based Community Development and the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) have given an improved understanding of the journey we need to take and is informing the Council's future approach to community led development and service design.
103. Alongside this, we have undertaken a review of commissioned services to understand potential opportunities for improved ways of working.
104. Appreciative Inquiry - we are developing a new approach and methodology for 'Let's Talk' Stockton-on-Tees. Using Appreciative Inquiry, we will work with our communities to understand what is working well and how to build on it.
105. Partnership working in communities – we are working with our network of 7 Community Partnerships to gather their views current ways of working and how this can be improved to make a difference for communities. This includes developing a shared

## Appendix A – For Information Only

approach with our partners through the Place Leadership Board.

106. As part of our approach, we are looking at ways to improve our communication with communities, so they are aware of the resources available to support them.

107. The Proud to Care Campaign was launched in May 2024 and continues to receive positive feedback on social media. The campaign shares case studies of people who go the extra mile to build strong communities across our Borough. For example: Pauline Spicer from Ingleby Barwick, the 'Queen of Tea making.' Pauline volunteers every week at Thornaby Warm Welcome Social, making 60-80 cuppas every session. She helps run the Warm Welcome sessions, and in doing so, has made many new friends in the community. New case studies are being sought each week to maintain momentum and continued visibility of the campaign.

### Partnerships Powering Our Future

108. This Mission seeks to ensure we are 'Stronger together.'

109. The Place Leadership Board continues to see strong engagement from partners, developing joint solutions to our shared challenges and opportunities, whilst removing organisational boundaries to meet the needs of our People and our Place. Project activity is progressing across all priority areas, including:

- Developing skills for public service, including options for shared pathways
- Building Pride in Place, including a shared campaign for National Volunteers Week in June 2024
- Support for Care Leavers, including a Single Point of Contact in partner agencies aligned to the support they can offer
- Maximising use of shared resources and aligning approaches to community development and reducing inequalities
- Exploring opportunities for Health and Social Care Integration.

110. A small group of Business Leaders are working together through a new Business Ambassadors Group. This will provide a business-led platform and support to build confidence in Stockton-on-Tees as a place to live, work and invest. The group has informed the development of a communications approach, that can be used to support the profile of businesses and supply chains in our Borough. The group is also considering business-led solutions to improve feelings of safety in our town centres and reduce inequalities by supporting people into employment.

### Colleagues Powering Our Future

111. This Mission seeks to empower our colleagues to do the best they can for communities. We want to be an employer of choice where our colleagues feel valued, informed and involved in a working environment that is fit to meet the future demands of the Borough.

112. Following approval of Workforce Strategy by Cabinet in April 2024, activity is being progressed that that will support us in our Vision to have a talented and diverse workforce

## Appendix A – For Information Only

that is committed, engaged and empowered to deliver the Council's priorities and ambitious Powering Our Future Programme.

- **Organisational Values and Behaviours** – workshops to develop the new values and behaviours are underway with colleagues across the organisation.
- **Communications & Engagement** – we are gathering colleague's views on communication methods. We are also exploring alternative options to the intranet. Work is underway to review how we celebrate success and work continues to further develop the Employee Networks and overall employee engagement offer.
- **Attract & Retain** – 5 Priority Areas of focus include: – Recruitment & Manager Engagement; Exit Interviews; Advertising; Corporate Offer & Employee Benefits and Apprentice & Graduate Opportunities. Following the apprenticeship recruitment process and open day in May, we have 43 new apprentices starting with the council across September and October.
- **Happy & Healthy Workforce** – employees from across the organisation are developing a new Employee Health and Wellbeing Charter and exploring how we can ensure employees are aware of the extensive Health and Wellbeing offer we have available with an emphasis on equity across all areas.
- **Workforce Planning** – we are focusing on how workforce data is accessed, analysed and presented to inform succession planning, talent management and identifying key skills needed for the future.
- **Workforce Development** – we are focusing on leadership and management development and maximising the opportunities available through the apprenticeship route for our existing workforce. E-learning modules continue to be available to all staff via "My Development" and in-person training sessions will take place on key topics on a demand led basis.
- **Smarter Working** – a number of colleagues have been relocated into the recently refurbished Dunedin House and a Smarter Working Policy and Remote Working Guidance have been published. This ensures we have supportive processes and a suitable and vibrant working environment that supports colleagues to do the job in the most efficient and smart way.

### Regeneration Powering Our Future

113. Work is taking place to re-frame this Mission with a focus on Place Making. Further detail will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

### COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

114. 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, but it will also mean that our residents are healthy, happy and feel like they belong.



## Appendix A – For Information Only

115. 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.
116. Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments (EPIA) have been undertaken for individual reviews as required.

### CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

117. 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

118. As outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget Report to Council in February 2024, the Council is forecasting a budget gap across the MTFP of £1.9m in 24/25, £7.1m in 25/26 and £8.1m in 26/27.
119. The measures identified in the report above are summarised in the table below.

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Waste Collection and Disposal		486	2,834
Supporting People to Live Independently at Home	250	500	500
Administration and Business Services - Courier Services		60	60
Fees and Charges - Car Parking	50	800	800
Fees and Charges - School Meals	75	300	300
Fees and Charges - Adult Social Care Cap	-	150	150
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>2,296</b>	<b>4,644</b>

120. The table above demonstrates positive progress towards closing the budget gap, with a lot more work still ongoing with opportunities for greater successes. A number of assumptions have been made within the modelling and financial implications contained in this report. These will be updated in future MTFP reporting and updates brought back to Cabinet.
121. The report contains prudential borrowing requirements, this is summarised in the table below:

	<b>Amount of Borrowing</b>	<b>Annual Repayments</b>	<b>Repayment Term</b>

## Appendix A – For Information Only

	£'000	£'000	Years
Green Waste - Bins	1,000	130	10
Waste - Transfer Station – Make good	1,100	75	30
Receptacles	1,200	156	10
Car Parking - Wellington Square Resurfacing	1,000	80	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>441</b>	

122. The prudential borrowing repayments are included in the changes to budgets described above.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

123. 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

124. This report provides an update on the development of the Powering Our Futures Programme. There are two main risks associated with the programme. Firstly, the programme does not 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.

125. To manage the risks, the Council has implemented a robust governance structure to manage the Powering Our Future 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

126. Powering Our Future is a Borough-wide Programme.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Powering Our Future Programme Update (January 2024, April 2024)
- MTFP and Budget Report to Council (February 2024)
- Financial update report to Cabinet (September 2024)
- Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste to Cabinet (February 2024)
- The Environment Act 2021
- Governments 'Simpler Recycling' guidelines 2023
- SBC Anti-Poverty Strategy 2024-2027

## Appendix A – For Information Only

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## COUNCIL QUESTIONS

QUESTION
<p><u>Carried forward from the meeting of Council held on 18 September 2024</u></p> <p>Member Question submitted by Cllr Ted Strike for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-</p> <p>“Can the Cabinet Member advise me how many buildings SBC own or rent in the Borough?”</p>

QUESTION

Carried forward from the meeting of Council held on 18 September 2024

Member Question submitted by Cllr Lynn Hall for response by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (Cllr Clare Besford):-

“Why did the Cabinet hold the September 'drop- in' session reported in the Leader's Blog, by the Strategic Waste Management Team about waste and recycling behind closed doors?

All Councillors need to be involved in the policy making and implementation as we move to a new waste collection model. How can you achieve this without our input? We were told it was to discuss the key milestones for the service plan and delivery as it will affect our residents or is it yet another policy implemented without consultation.”

QUESTION

Carried forward from the meeting of Council held on 18 September 2024

Member Question submitted by Cllr Lynn Hall for response by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Cllr Lisa Evans):-

“Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that Safeguarding training is essential for senior staff as well as front line staff and members and is she assured the systems are robust and fit for purpose?”

**QUESTION**

Member Question submitted by Cllr Niall Innes for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-

“Can the leader inform me how many staff the Local Authority employ that deal with internal recruitment processes?”



**QUESTION**

Member Question submitted by Cllr Ted Strike for response by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing (Cllr Nigel Cooke):-

“SBC purchased Debenhams without having a survey carried out. Has a surveyed been carried out since the purchase and if so do it show any significant work that needs carrying out, if so how much? If a survey hasn't been carried out will one be carried out in the foreseeable future?”

**QUESTION**

Member Question submitted by Cllr Marcus Vickers for response by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (Cllr Clare Besford):-

“What is SBCs definition or understanding of 'traffic calming measures'?”

**QUESTION**

Member Question submitted by Cllr Jack Miller for response by the Leader of the Council (Cllr Bob Cook):-

“Can the Leader of the Council inform me of what community consultation took place to gain residents views on the proposed changes to bin collections?”

**QUESTION**

Member Question submitted by Cllr Barry Woodhouse for response by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport (Cllr Clare Besford):-

“On our regular ward walkabouts we inspected a number of roads in Billingham Central which were resurfaced this year using microasphalt as a trial. What was the outcome and will we be using microasphalt resurfacing more in the future?”

**QUESTION**

Member Question submitted by Cllr Paul Rowling for response by the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety (Cllr Norma Stephenson):-

“What work is ongoing with our partner agencies to target the illegal use of off-road bikes?”

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