

**Date:** Thursday 16 May 2024 at 4.30 pm

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

**Cllr Robert Cook (Leader)**

Cllr Pauline Beall  
Cllr Nigel Cooke  
Cllr Lisa Evans  
Cllr Clare Gamble  
Cllr Steve Nelson  
Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE

**AGENDA**

- 1 Evacuation Procedure**
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**  
  
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 April 2024 (Pages 7 - 12)
- 5 Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision - Final Report of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee** (Pages 13 - 78)
- 6 Delivering Better Value Agreement with DfE** (Pages 79 - 84)
- 7 A Fairer Stockton on Tees Progress Update** (Pages 85 - 94)
- 8 Selective Licensing of Private Rented Accommodation** (Pages 95 - 330)
- 9 Director of Public Health Annual Report 202324** (Pages 331 - 368)

**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.

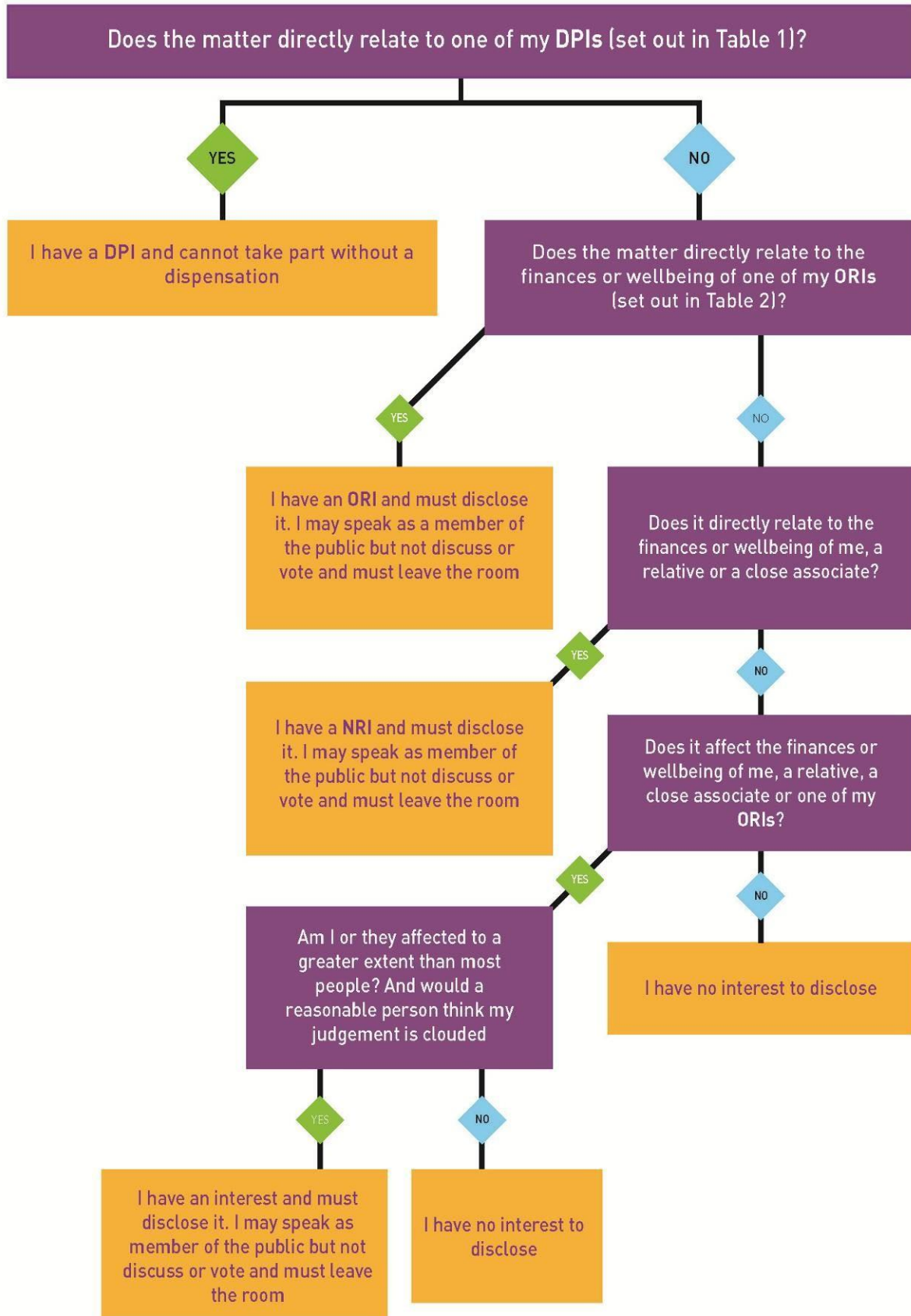
Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

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**

Subject	Description
<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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## CABINET

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday 18 April 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Robert Cook (Leader), Cllr Pauline Beall (Cabinet Member), Cllr Nigel Cooke (Cabinet Member), Cllr Lisa Evans (Cabinet Member), Cllr Clare Gamble (Cabinet Member), Cllr Steve Nelson (Cabinet Member) and Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Cabinet Member).

**Officers:** Geraldine Brown, Mike Greene, Reuben Kench, Ged Morton, Carolyn Nice, Eddie Huntington, Iain Robinson, Marc Stephenson, Peter Bell, Julie Butcher and Michelle Gunn.

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Marc Besford and Cllr Marilyn Surtees

**Apologies:** , .

### **CAB/88/23 Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

### **CAB/89/23 Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

### **CAB/90/23 Minutes**

There were no interests declared.

### **CAB/91/23 Minutes of Various Bodies**

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

TVCA Cabinet – 15 December 2023

TSAB – 11 October 2023

SSP – 20 September 2023

RESOLVED that the above minutes be received.

### **CAB/92/23 Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response - Final Report of the People Select Committee**

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the People Select Committee's review of Cost of Living Response.

The report outlined the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response. The review had considered the key components of the cost of living approach adopted by the Council at a time of increasing service demands, for both advice and support. Consequently, it had explored the possibility to develop change, and, if appropriate,

grow the Council's services around the cost of living work to support more residents in the Borough.

The Committee had taken evidence from Council Officers, Bright Minds Big Futures, and following partners/organisations:

- Thrive Teesside, Catalyst
- Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network
- Unite the Union
- Local Government Association
- Tees Credit Union
- Stockton & District Advice & Information Service.

In addition, the Committee visited two The Bread and Butter Thing Hubs during the course of the review.

Following approval by Cabinet, an action plan would be submitted to the Select Committee for their endorsement.

The report was approved by the Committee and summarised evidence presented to the Committee over the preceding months. Progress had continued and many of initiatives referred to were now operational, as outlined below:

#### The Bread & Butter Thing (TBBT)

TBBT was now live at five venues across the Borough allowing residents to enjoy high-quality food shopping at lower costs to help boost financial resilience.

A maximum of 80 households could register for each venue and, currently, you can register to shop at:

- Teesside Vineyard Church, Thornaby (Mondays)
- Salvation Army, Stockton (Tuesdays)
- New Life Family Centre, Billingham (Wednesdays)
- Redhill Family Hub, Roseworth (Thursdays)
- Newtown Community Resource Centre, Stockton (Fridays)

Following the success of previous Here to Help events held across the Borough, planning was underway for a large-scale event to be held on Saturday 20 July 2024 in Stockton Town Centre. The focus of this event would be families and young people. As well as providing advice and support this event would offer a range of activities for residents to enjoy.

Individual schools had established their own schemes to assist parents or carers with the cost of school uniform, including the availability of pre-loved uniforms. Assistance with school uniform costs vary across schools so it was advisable to check a school's website for specific information on uniform cost support. Several clothing banks across the Borough also stock pre-loved uniform and social media groups had been created for the purpose of offering pre-loved school uniforms. An updated mapping exercise of pre-loved uniform provision and support with school uniform costs across the Borough would be conducted as part of the action plan for this review.

RESOLVED that:-



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

### **CAB/93/23 Powering Our Future - Programme Update**

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on the Powering Our Future Programme. It included:

- Communities Powering Our Future – confirmation of priority workstreams and 'Getting Ready' exercise
- Partnerships Powering Our Future - draft Partnerships Charter for Cabinet approval
- Transformation Powering Our Future:
  - Draft scope for 14 Transformation Reviews.
  - Update on Xentrall Shared Services and Digital, Data & Technology (DDAT) projects.
- Colleagues Powering Our Future - draft Workforce Strategy for Cabinet approval.
- Regeneration Powering Our Future – update on Our Six Towns and the Tees Valley Care & Health Innovation Zone.

The framework for Powering Our Future was agreed by Cabinet in July 2023. Since then, work had taken place to develop and refine the focus of the Programme to ensure that it effectively responds to the challenges and opportunities facing the Council and the Borough.

In January 2024, Cabinet agreed the following Mission Statement for the Council:

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

Cabinet also agreed the areas of focus for 5 underpinning Missions:

- Communities Powering Our Future.

- Partnerships Powering Our Future.
- Transformation Powering Our Future.
- Colleagues Powering Our Future.
- Regeneration Powering Our Future.

Powering Our Future set out a planned approach to carefully manage resources over the longer term. It would see the Council create a new relationship with communities, while providing efficient services that offer value for money and were valued by residents.

The Council approach would be iterative, building over time, to engage communities and undertake thorough reviews. This can avoid the need to make short-term cuts, which could be damaging to services and the residents the Council served.

The remainder of the report provided an update on each of the Missions, for Cabinet comment and approval. Regular reports to Cabinet would ensure that the Member-led approach drives the development and delivery of Powering Our Future.

The Missions were as follows:-

#### Communities Powering Our Future

This Mission sought to change the Council's relationship with communities to make sure residents have happy, healthy lives. Three workstreams had been identified for this Mission, these were:

- Communications.
- Community Engagement.
- Community Development.

#### Partnerships Powering Our Future

This Mission sought to ensure we are 'Stronger together'. A Charter had been drafted, setting out proposed terms of engagement for the Council to observe when entering into any Partnership. This sought to ensure that the Council engaged in strong partnerships that delivered better outcomes for communities, efficiently and with available resources.

The draft Partnership Charter was attached to the report. Subject to Cabinet agreement, this would be embedded into working practices.

#### Transformation Powering Our Future

This Mission would identify new and innovative ways of working that were better for communities and more efficient. Proposals for the detailed scope of 14 Transformation Reviews that form Phase 1 of the Programme were attached at to the report for Cabinet approval. The purpose of the scope was to identify areas of review or improvement within a given project. The scopes aimed to provide clarity on the objectives of the project, in alignment with the Council's Mission Statement.

#### Colleagues Powering Our Future

This Mission sought to empower colleagues to do the best they can for communities. A copy of the draft Workforce Strategy was attached to the report for Cabinet approval.

#### Regeneration Powering Our Future

This Mission would drive economic growth to improve community prosperity and wellbeing.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The updates on individual Missions be noted.
2. The Partnership Charter attached at Appendix 1 of the report be agreed.
3. Updates on the Xentrall Shared Services and DDAT projects in the Transformation Powering Our Future section be noted.
4. The scope for the 14 Transformation Reviews attached at Appendix 2 of the report be agreed.
5. The draft Workforce Strategy set attached at Appendix 3 of the report be agreed.

3. Reasons for the Decision

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

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

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight Friday 26 April 2024

Proper Officer

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REPORT TO CABINET

16 MAY 2024

REPORT OF CRIME  
AND DISORDER  
SELECT COMMITTEE

## CABINET DECISION

**Lead Cabinet Member – Health, Leisure and Culture – Cllr Steve Nelson**

### SCRUTINY REVIEW OF OUTDOOR PLAY PROVISION

#### SUMMARY

The attached report presents the outcomes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's review of Outdoor Play Provision.

#### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) / DECISION(S)

This topic was included on the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023-2024. Although not explicitly crime and disorder related, this piece of work was allocated to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee in order to balance the distribution of scrutiny topics across the five themed Select Committees. The review is now complete, and the recommendations have been endorsed by the Crime and Disorder Select Committee for submission to Cabinet.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) SBC ensures both revenue and renewal considerations are an intrinsic part of any existing and future outdoor play space proposal within the Borough to maximise the long-term sustainability of such sites.
- 2) To encourage a greater sense of community ownership, consideration be given to approaching relevant Town / Parish Councils and the local business community within the vicinity of existing outdoor play spaces to potentially support the development / maintenance of a site.
- 3) Regarding future proposals by developers for new outdoor play spaces, SBC does not adopt any site installed by a developer which contravenes the key outcomes from this review.
- 4) SBC considers support of existing play areas before any additional outdoor play spaces are agreed / approved.
- 5) Regarding inequality of outdoor play provision across the Borough, SBC clarifies where it is deemed there is little / no provision and possible steps to address these inequalities (including, in exceptional cases, the provision of new play spaces).

- 6) As part of a required rationalisation process in relation to the existing outdoor play offer:
  - a) Informed by the recent (March 2024) RoSPA assessments and an analysis of the distribution of existing outdoor play provision, proposals for the removal / repurposing of sites be developed with the aim of reducing pressure on the overall parks budget.
  - b) Complementing sub-section a), SBC undertakes a piece of work around those sites requiring more urgent attention to ascertain costs of either removing the play area or raising it to an appropriate standard.
  - c) Further detail be provided around the anticipated longer-term maintenance requirements of the new Stockton waterfront park and the impact that this may have on the available funds for maintaining other existing outdoor play spaces.
  - d) With due regard to the SBC Powering Our Future initiative, appropriate consultation (particularly with Stockton Parent Carer Forum and SBC Ward Councillors) is conducted around any proposed changes to existing outdoor play provision.
- 7) Reflecting the main outcomes from this review, SBC develops and publishes an outdoor play provision strategy which includes the following elements:
  - The Council's aims in relation to the provision of outdoor play spaces.
  - The locations and assessments of existing and outdoor play provision, as well as any planned developments.
  - The key challenges associated with providing these spaces.
  - How the Council will seek to address these key challenges (including guiding principles).
  - Timelines for action and who will be accountable.
- 8) This final report be shared with the SBC Planning Committee for information only.

## DETAIL

1. It is widely accepted that play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Play facilities are therefore seen as an essential element to allow people to live healthy lives and help ensure activity is established at an early age, thus reducing long-term health conditions.
2. Previous analysis has indicated that outdoor play provision is uneven across the Borough, with significant variations in the play value, age and accessibility of equipment and sites. Many older play areas are in decline and, as is being felt by Local Authorities up and down the country, there is insufficient budget to maintain all the current sites.
3. In terms of new sites, the majority of these are established through planning obligations and consequently increase provision in areas where new development is taking place. Conversely, there are limited opportunities to establish or improve play areas in existing residential areas. In either case, it should be noted that all sites are subject to challenge relating to accessibility and play value.
4. Play areas can be an emotive topic and have elicited a range of comments (both positive and negative) from the public with regards the existing offer. Like so many other Council-related activities, balancing public expectation with the realities of deepening Local Authority funding pressures is becoming an increasing challenge. There is a well-established need to maintain

an effective portfolio of high-quality play area assets within the Borough's communities, but this must be sustainable, provide value-for-money, and be accessible to as many people as is feasibly possible.

5. The aim of this review was to:
  - Examine the Borough's existing outdoor play offer in terms of play value and distribution, and identify locations where there is currently an imbalance in provision.
  - Ascertain who is responsible for individual facilities and what the management / maintenance and sustainability requirements are now, and are likely to be in the future (including revenue costs).
  - Consider accessibility / inclusivity factors in relation to play provision so practical and financial implications are understood and factored into decisions around existing and future plans.
  - Contribute to future policy around play area provision, giving an appraisal of potential options.
6. The Committee has taken evidence from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) departments (Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure; Community Services; Inclusive Growth and Development; Town Centres Development), considered key external bodies in relation to this scrutiny topic, and reached out to other Local Authorities regarding their views / experiences around outdoor play provision. Stockton Parent Carer Forum provided input and Members visited several sites across the Borough to observe examples of the existing offer.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

7. As the report concludes, whilst there will be an understandable reluctance to compromise much valued resources for children / young people and their families across Stockton-on-Tees, it is clearly not sustainable to keep all existing play sites open, and difficult decisions will need to be made around removing / repurposing some sites. Allied to this, longer-term thinking about the maintenance and replacement requirements of the Borough's existing and planned future offer must ensue to ensure quality, safe, accessible, and geographically balanced provision that lasts.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

8. There are no direct implications in the report.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9. There are a number of financial implications if the Council is to address the issues raised as part of this review. One of the Committee's recommendations requires further clarity on the longer-term maintenance requirements of the new Stockton waterfront park and the impact that this may have on the available funds for maintaining other existing outdoor play spaces. In terms of the existing outdoor play provision offer, the Committee has identified the need for the removal / repurposing of some sites to relieve pressure on the overall parks budget, though savings made as part of this required exercise may be partially reduced by the possible need to address the current inequality of provision in certain parts of the Borough. As noted within the Committee's findings, '*the Borough has a large amount of valuable play equipment with no plan for the future*' – this will also require consideration if the Council wishes to ensure a sustainable offer.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10. SBC must continue to ensure it meets its legal duty of care (as outlined within the Committee's report) regarding the maintenance of its outdoor play provision offer.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

11. The review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

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

12. This review is relevant to all Wards across the Borough.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

13. None.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Gary Woods

**Post Title:** Senior Scrutiny Officer

**Telephone No.** 01642 526187

**Email Address:** [gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk)



# Crime and Disorder Select Committee

## Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision



**Final Report  
April 2024**

Crime and Disorder Select Committee  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 1LD

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## Select Committee - Membership

Councillor Pauline Beall (Chair)  
Councillor Paul Rowling (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor John Coulson  
Councillor Richard Eglington  
Councillor Jason French  
Councillor Shakeel Hussain  
Councillor Barbara Inman  
Councillor Sylvia Walmsley  
Councillor Alan Watson

## Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank the following people for contributing to its work:

- Councillor Sally Ann Watson (Former Committee Member) – Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC)
- Reuben Kench (Director of Community Services, Environment and Culture) – SBC
- Neil Mitchell (Head of Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure) – SBC
- Graham Clingan (Strategy and Greenspace Development Manager) – SBC
- Stephen Bowerbank (CFYA Asset Manager) – SBC
- Keith Jackson (Senior Care for Your Area Technician) – SBC
- Andie Mackay (Construction and Facility Services Manager) – SBC
- Chris Renahan (Assistant Director – Inclusive Growth and Development) – SBC
- Simon Grundy (Planning Services Manager) – SBC
- Antony Phillips (Place Development Manager) – SBC
- Iain Robinson (Assistant Director – Town Centre Development) – SBC
- Mike Smith (Programme Delivery Manager) – SBC
- Emma Zenaj (Strategic and Communication Lead) – Stockton Parent Carer Forum

Plus:

- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for conducting updated assessments of the Borough's existing play sites during the course of this review.
- Other Local Authorities who provided information on their approach to the provision of outdoor play spaces.

## Contact Officer

Gary Woods (Senior Scrutiny Officer)  
Tel: 01642 526187  
Email: [gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk)

## Foreword

On behalf of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee, we are pleased to present the final report and recommendations following our review of Outdoor Play Provision.

Pressures on Local Government services continue to be well documented. Whilst financial challenges surrounding statutory provision are gaining increasing attention, the resulting need to prioritise strained budgets on 'must do's' inevitably squeezes the available resources for services that are not legally required. Although the provision of outdoor play spaces falls into the non-statutory category, the Council has nevertheless developed a strong portfolio of play sites within the Borough.

In recent years, however, there has been a realisation that maintaining these areas to the desired standard is becoming difficult given the existing funding envelope. In addition, concerns about the growing unevenness in the distribution of play spaces, as well as issues raised around accessibility, have prompted this focused exploration of the current outdoor play offer. This review has sought to establish the key challenges associated with the topic and determine an appropriate way forward for the provision of outdoor play spaces.

As ever, we are grateful to those Council officers who gave their insight and expertise on this scrutiny topic, in particular representatives from the SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture directorate. We would also like to thank the Stockton Parent Carer Forum for its input into the review, a contribution which had a profound impact on the Committee's thinking. Funding constraints mean the Council's outdoor play offer is likely to look different in the future, but making this as accessible to as many as possible remains just as important as ensuring a quality, safe, geographically balanced, and sustainable range of play facilities.



**Cllr Pauline Beall**  
Chair\*  
Crime and Disorder Select Committee



**Cllr Paul Rowling**  
Vice-Chair  
Crime and Disorder Select Committee

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\* Cllr Beall was Committee Chair until 3 April 2024; Cllr Rowling became Committee Chair on this date.

**Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?**

The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2023-2026 key objectives (and associated 2023-2024 priorities):

*A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm*

- Continue to develop and enhance provision and support for children and young people with additional needs or accessing alternative provision.
- Support people to live healthy lives and address health inequalities through a focus on early prevention, long-term conditions, substance misuse, smoking, obesity, physical activity and mental health.
- Work with our communities and partners to develop our approach to healthy places, in the context of regeneration plans and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

**What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?**

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

Previous analysis has indicated that outdoor play provision is uneven across the Borough, with significant variations in the play value, age and accessibility of equipment and sites. Many older play areas are in decline and, as is being felt by Local Authorities up and down the country, there is insufficient budget to maintain all the current sites.

In terms of new sites, the majority of these are established through planning obligations and consequently increase provision in areas where new development is taking place. Conversely, there are limited opportunities to establish or improve play areas in existing residential areas. In either case, it should be noted that all sites are subject to challenge relating to accessibility and play value.

Play areas can be an emotive topic and have elicited a range of comments (both positive and negative) from the public with regards the existing offer. Like so many other Council-related activities, balancing public expectation with the realities of deepening Local Authority funding pressures is becoming an increasing challenge. There is a well-established need to maintain an effective portfolio of high-quality play area assets within the Borough's communities, but this must be sustainable, provide value-for-money, and be accessible to as many people as is feasibly possible.

The main aims for this review will be to:

- Examine the Borough's existing outdoor play offer in terms of play value and distribution, and identify locations where there is currently an imbalance in provision.
- Ascertain who is responsible for individual facilities and what the management / maintenance and sustainability requirements are now, and are likely to be in the future (including revenue costs).

- Consider accessibility / inclusivity factors in relation to play provision so practical and financial implications are understood and factored into decisions around existing and future plans.
- Contribute to future policy around play area provision, giving an appraisal of potential options.

**The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:**

What is meant by the term 'outdoor play provision' – what does this encompass (what does it not)?

How is 'meaningful play' determined – what are its characteristics and how does / should this impact upon play provision?

Are there any legislative requirements around outdoor play provision?

What is the Borough's existing outdoor play offer – where are these sites located, what do they provide, what is their play value, and where are the identified gaps in provision?

How should the provision of major new play facilities planned for Stockton Waterfront influence decisions around the distribution and management of play provision elsewhere in the Borough, and will it have any impact on budgets to maintain existing facilities?

How are existing sites managed / maintained and what is the cost of this to the Council? How has this changed over time and what are the future projections based on the current offer?

What is the process around new play provision created as part of new developments? What are the responsibilities of developers and the Council, how does this change over time, and what are the implications of this?

What are the accessibility / inclusivity requirements around outdoor play sites? Has the Council been challenged regarding this and what is realistically achievable in the context of available space and financial constraints?

What feedback has been received from the public regarding outdoor play provision?

Can we learn anything from other Local Authorities who are likely to be wrestling with similar challenges regarding outdoor play provision?

What are the potential future options around outdoor play provision (including alternative funding possibilities)? How does / might this feed into key corporate policies such as Fairer Stockton-on-Tees / Powering Our Communities?

**Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:**

- Clear strategic guidance upon the development of new play facilities and priorities and rationalisation of existing play provision.
- Budgetary provision for maintenance of play provision is proportionate to the number of play areas that are retained.

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's scrutiny review of Outdoor Play Provision.
- 1.2 It is widely accepted that play is an essential part of every child's life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Play facilities are therefore seen as an essential element to allow people to live healthy lives and help ensure activity is established at an early age, thus reducing long-term health conditions. However, despite these recognised benefits, concerns have been increasing in recent years around the closure of play facilities across the country, as well as other issues such as declining quality, inequality of distribution and accessibility.
- 1.3 From a Stockton-on-Tees perspective, previous analysis has indicated that outdoor play provision is uneven across the Borough, with significant variations in the play value, age and accessibility of equipment and sites. Many older play areas are in decline and, as is being felt by Local Authorities up and down the country, there is insufficient budget to maintain all the current sites. In terms of new sites, the majority of these are established through planning obligations and consequently increase provision in areas where new development is taking place. Conversely, there are limited opportunities to establish or improve play areas in existing residential areas. In either case, it should be noted that all sites are subject to challenge relating to accessibility and play value.
- 1.4 Play areas can be an emotive topic and have elicited a range of comments (both positive and negative) from the public with regards the existing offer. Like so many other Council-related activities, balancing public expectation with the realities of deepening Local Authority funding pressures is becoming an increasing challenge. There is a well-established need to maintain an effective portfolio of high-quality play area assets within the Borough's communities, but this must be sustainable, provide value-for-money, and be accessible to as many people as is feasibly possible.
- 1.5 The main aims of this review comprised three key elements. Firstly, the Committee endeavoured to establish the distribution of the Borough's existing outdoor play offer and identify any areas where provision was lacking. The second strand focused on the key issue of responsibility for individual facilities and associated management / maintenance and sustainability requirements. Finally, accessibility / inclusivity factors in relation to play provision were to be considered so practical and financial implications could be understood and factored into decisions around existing and future plans.
- 1.6 The Committee found that there is no statutory obligation for Local Authorities to provide outdoor play spaces. However, there are legal requirements associated with the inspection and maintenance of such sites – responsibilities SBC is fully aware of. Regarding accessibility / inclusivity considerations, there is a need to be mindful of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which aims to ensure that all those who are disabled have the same access to public services (and by implication, public parks and playgrounds) as those who are not disabled.



- 1.7 A number of external bodies provide advice and guidance on designing, developing and installing play spaces – these include Play England (national children’s play charity for England), Association of Play Industries (API) (lead trade body in the play sector), and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) (help people recognise and reduce their risk of accidents, at home, on the road, at work and at leisure). The latter is used by SBC to carry out annual inspections of existing play areas and safety surfacing, assessments of life-expectancy of equipment / areas, post-installation inspections of new sites, and ‘play value’ assessments.
- 1.8 As of December 2023, the Borough had 49 publicly accessible play areas and 20 sites with informal sport facilities (some of these were located at the same sites). SBC owned and managed the vast majority of these, and also managed five sites on behalf of Town / Parish Councils (*note: any facilities not freely accessible to the public (e.g. those located within school grounds, sports centres, or locations such as RSPB Salthome) were not within scope of this review*).
- 1.9 The categorisation of play areas is based mainly on the quantity and size of play equipment, but also took into consideration the provision of other facilities and services. ‘Destination’ sites are larger play spaces within parks that serve a wide catchment area and provide good play value for a range of users from toddlers to teenagers. ‘Neighbourhood’ sites are mainly situated within larger green spaces of a community (with a more moderate quantity of equipment), whilst ‘doorstep’ sites are smaller facilities which are located on green space or self-contained zones within housing areas (many of which have been installed by housing developers).
- 1.10 Ongoing inspection and maintenance of the Borough’s outdoor play sites is a significant pressure area for SBC, involving a budget which has not been uplifted since before 2017. Indeed, there was a £60,000 shortfall in the annual budget allocation (£114,000) compared to the amount spent as of 14 September 2023 (£83,000) plus anticipated costs in relation to outstanding work still to complete (£92,000). If there is a desire to maintain the existing level of outdoor play provision across the Borough, a capital injection appeared necessary. Critically, the present budget is earmarked for maintenance only and is not a replacement fund – as such, the Borough has a large amount of valuable play equipment with no plan for the future.
- 1.11 Regarding ‘play value’ (determined by looking at the overall site, ambience, and suitability / value of equipment / features for the age groups for which the site is designed), SBC aims for a minimum rating of ‘good’ at each of its facilities – however, a raft of existing sites fell short of this when last assessed (2018). Recognising that a more up-to-date re-evaluation was required to provide an accurate picture of the current state and value of local facilities, RoSPA was recently commissioned by SBC to conduct an updated play value assessment of the Borough’s existing outdoor play spaces. The results of this showed that, of the 39 play sites assessed:
- Only four scored at least ‘good’ across all graded categories; nine sites were rated at least ‘average’ across all graded categories (*note: SBC officers advised that the ratings given are RoSPAs assessments and are not national averages – in practice, a site rated ‘average’ is probably above the national average*).

- Dependent upon usage and vandalism, seven had a (worst-case scenario) life expectancy of play equipment of 3-5 years plus; three sites were deemed to have 5-8 years plus.
  - A number of ‘neighbourhood’ play areas appeared to have surface issues.
- 1.12 The last significant investment in Stockton-on-Tees facilities was back in 2008 (though not all areas benefitted at that time), and since then, many sites had been provided or improved with section 106 contributions (funding from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure) as a result of housing developments. However, this had the potential for a higher density of smaller-space provision, and those areas of the Borough which had not seen new housing had therefore not gained in relation to additional / upgraded play facilities – a growing inequality of provision across the Borough has thus developed. As per the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA), forthcoming changes to planning obligations (the Infrastructure Levy (IL)) are due to be introduced – this would largely replace planning obligation except for ‘large and complex sites’, with the Council potentially losing its ability to use section 106 funding as it currently did.
- 1.13 In terms of the future creation of new play facilities, SBC planning advice indicated that larger scale developments were likely to justify a need for on-site provision due to the level of population increase across the site (indeed, policy direction indicates a preference for on-site provision). For smaller developments, however, there may be no requirement for open space to be provided, and it may be more appropriate for an off-site contribution (where necessary and justified). Where SBC was to assume responsibility for the maintenance of either on-site or off-site open space, the Council required a commuted revenue lump-sum for the equivalent of 25 years maintenance – however, whilst this covered grounds maintenance, cleansing, and maintenance of the equipment in the play area, it did not tend to cover the future renewal of the play area. Careful consideration is therefore required around whether SBC should be adopting future play sites from developers (particularly in terms of proximity to other existing provision), and the Committee urges a focus on supporting the current portfolio as far as possible before additional spaces are agreed (adding to the long-term financial burden associated with these areas).
- 1.14 The high-profile Stockton waterfront scheme, which includes a new ‘destination’ play area, is a significant development with regards this scrutiny topic. Whilst assurance was given that longer-term revenue requirements for this substantial addition to SBCs play offer would be picked up and included as part of the future MTFP budget-setting process, the Committee remain concerned that, since SBC was not in a position to maintain what it already had (with Local Authority funding likely to get even tighter), this would further compound financial challenges which may have potential implications for other existing provision across the Borough.

- 1.15 From an accessibility / inclusivity perspective, there is a significant cost attached to certain play equipment which is not necessarily compatible for all those with a similar need (e.g. wheelchair-users). SBC should be commended for its previous engagement with Stockton Parent Carer Forum to better facilitate access for all, and there is a clear need to continue this dialogue as the Council reflects on the findings of this review, and makes future decisions around the types of equipment sourced and, as importantly, the location of this (particularly given the comments received from the Forum's members in relation to the value of the smaller 'doorstep' sites).
- 1.16 Councils are adopting different approaches towards their outdoor play provision, ranging from increasing provision / consultation on proposed investment in facilities to rationalising / removing existing sites. For SBC, whilst there will be an understandable reluctance to compromise much valued resources for children / young people and their families across Stockton-on-Tees, it is clearly not sustainable to keep all existing play sites open, and difficult decisions will need to be made around removing / repurposing some sites. Allied to this, longer-term thinking about the maintenance and replacement requirements of the Borough's existing and planned future offer must ensue to ensure quality, safe, accessible, and geographically balanced provision that lasts.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **SBC ensures both revenue and renewal considerations are an intrinsic part of any existing and future outdoor play space proposal within the Borough to maximise the long-term sustainability of such sites.**
- 2) **To encourage a greater sense of community ownership, consideration be given to approaching relevant Town / Parish Councils and the local business community within the vicinity of existing outdoor play spaces to potentially support the development / maintenance of a site.**
- 3) **Regarding future proposals by developers for new outdoor play spaces, SBC does not adopt any site installed by a developer which contravenes the key outcomes from this review.**
- 4) **SBC considers support of existing play areas before any additional outdoor play spaces are agreed / approved.**
- 5) **Regarding inequality of outdoor play provision across the Borough, SBC clarifies where it is deemed there is little / no provision and possible steps to address these inequalities (including, in exceptional cases, the provision of new play spaces).**

*(continued overleaf...)*

### **Recommendations (continued)**

The Committee recommend that:

- 6) As part of a required rationalisation process in relation to the existing outdoor play offer:
  - a) Informed by the recent (March 2024) RoSPA assessments and an analysis of the distribution of existing outdoor play provision, proposals for the removal / repurposing of sites be developed with the aim of reducing pressure on the overall parks budget.**
  - b) Complementing sub-section a), SBC undertakes a piece of work around those sites requiring more urgent attention to ascertain costs of either removing the play area or raising it to an appropriate standard.**
  - c) Further detail be provided around the anticipated longer-term maintenance requirements of the new Stockton waterfront park and the impact that this may have on the available funds for maintaining other existing outdoor play spaces.**
  - d) With due regard to the SBC *Powering Our Future* initiative, appropriate consultation (particularly with Stockton Parent Carer Forum and SBC Ward Councillors) is conducted around any proposed changes to existing outdoor play provision.****
- 7) Reflecting the main outcomes from this review, SBC develops and publishes an outdoor play provision strategy which includes the following elements:
  - The Council's aims in relation to the provision of outdoor play spaces.**
  - The locations and assessments of existing and outdoor play provision, as well as any planned developments.**
  - The key challenges associated with providing these spaces.**
  - How the Council will seek to address these key challenges (including guiding principles).**
  - Timelines for action and who will be accountable.****
- 8) This final report be shared with the SBC Planning Committee for information only.**

## 2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's scrutiny review of Outdoor Play Provision.
- 2.2 The main aims of this review comprised three key elements. Firstly, the Committee endeavoured to establish the distribution of the Borough's existing outdoor play offer and identify any areas where provision was lacking. The second strand focused on the key issue of responsibility for individual facilities and associated management / maintenance and sustainability requirements. Finally, accessibility / inclusivity factors in relation to play provision were to be considered so practical and financial implications could be understood and factored into decisions around existing and future plans.
- 2.3 The Committee undertook several key lines of enquiry:
- What is meant by the term 'outdoor play provision' – what does this encompass (what does it not)?
  - How is 'meaningful play' determined – what are its characteristics and how does / should this impact upon play provision?
  - Are there any legislative requirements around outdoor play provision?
  - What is the Borough's existing outdoor play offer – where are these sites located, what do they provide, what is their play value, and where are the identified gaps in provision?
  - How should the provision of major new play facilities planned for Stockton Waterfront influence decisions around the distribution and management of play provision elsewhere in the Borough, and will it have any impact on budgets to maintain existing facilities?
  - How are existing sites managed / maintained and what is the cost of this to the Council? How has this changed over time and what are the future projections based on the current offer?
  - What is the process around new play provision created as part of new developments? What are the responsibilities of developers and the Council, how does this change over time, and what are the implications of this?
  - What are the accessibility / inclusivity requirements around outdoor play sites? Has the Council been challenged regarding this and what is realistically achievable in the context of available space and financial constraints?
  - What feedback has been received from the public regarding outdoor play provision?
  - Can we learn anything from other Local Authorities who are likely to be wrestling with similar challenges regarding outdoor play provision?

- What are the potential future options around outdoor play provision (including alternative funding possibilities)? How does / might this feed into key corporate policies such as Fairer Stockton-on-Tees / Powering Our Communities?
- 2.4 It was acknowledged that there were associated issues around vandalism and CCTV coverage, but these aspects would not be focused upon during this review, nor would any ongoing changes in related legislation.
- 2.5 Contributions were sought and subsequently received from a number of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) departments, including Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure, Community Services, Inclusive Growth and Development, and Town Centres Development. The Committee also considered key external bodies in relation to this scrutiny topic and reached out to other Local Authorities regarding their views / experiences around outdoor play provision. Stockton Parent Carer Forum provided vital input and Members visited several sites across the Borough to observe examples of the existing offer.

### 3.0 Background


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

*'...it is important that councils can maintain their core leisure and green spaces so our residents can keep active, host community events, and enjoy top-quality, safe, children's play areas, all of which benefit the mental and physical health of people who use them.'*

(Local Government Association (responding to Government pocket parks programme), Oct 19)

3.2 Despite these recognised benefits, concerns have been increasing in recent years around the closure of play facilities across the country, as well as other issues such as declining quality, inequality of distribution and accessibility.

#### 793 PLAY PARKS HAVE BEEN CLOSED DOWN IN THE LAST TEN YEARS



**793 PLAYGROUNDS**  
HAVE BEEN CLOSED IN THE UK OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

0-30  
31-50  
51-100  
101-200  
201+

AGGREGATE INDUSTRIES

This new data shows a total of 793 playgrounds have been closed in the UK over the last ten years. It also revealed that there have been 28,734 reports of vandalism and 2,786 injuries in play parks across the UK over the last five years.

The latest data comes after a separate series of freedom of information requests revealed local authorities shut 214 playgrounds in financial years 2014-16, blaming 'unprecedented budget constraints'.

Reflecting on the recent insights, Kirstin McCarthy, Director of Sustainability of Aggregate Industries, said: "We know that playgrounds and access to them are an essential provision for young families – not only for physical wellbeing but also mental and emotional wellbeing too."

"We understand budgets are tight and funding to local governments is squeezed but naturally to see the closure of so many playgrounds is still surprising."

#### England's playgrounds crumble as council budgets fall

Children suffering from 'shameful' failure to protect play with park budgets falling by £350m in 11 years

'The swings are missing': Children in Newcastle left with nowhere to play



Some councils have been forced to cut back by more than 80% since 2011. Photograph: Richard Johnson/Alamy

Playgrounds around England are falling to pieces, missing large pieces of play equipment, or simply being locked up, as councils facing huge budget cuts struggle to maintain them. In some of the poorest parts of the country, family groups are warning that children face a summer spent indoors because of a lack of safe and free spaces to play.

The head of Play England has said that children's mental health will suffer as a result, and has called for radical change from what he called a "shameful" lack of protection for children and play in planning.

A Guardian analysis of the collective annual park budget around England - which includes local authority play provision - has found that it has fallen by more than £350m, adjusted for inflation, since 2011.

Laura Sharman 09 February 2022

#### Access to public play spaces is 'unfair and unequal' research finds

Campaigners have calls for councils to receive ring-fenced funding to ensure every child has access to a public playground after finding access to play is 'unfair and unequal' across the UK.

A freedom of information request by the Association of Play Industries (API) found some regions have almost five times the amount of free-access play provision than others.



Image: Olesia Bilkei / Shutterstock.com

The research found the West Midlands has the worst play provision in the UK playground, while in London there are 866 children per playground.

In Scotland, there are just 196 children per playground, while children in Wales twice the number of playgrounds than children in London.

Mark Hardy, chair of the API, said: 'We are lobbying the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Local Government (DLUHC) to provide local authorities with access to a national public playgrounds so that every child has a safe, local, high-quality place to play.'

William Eichler 03 May 2023

#### London councils struggle to keep playgrounds open

Local authorities in London are struggling to maintain their playgrounds due to a lack of funding, new survey reveals.

A poll of three-quarters of the capital's councils found that the majority (88%) say that children's play is a priority.

However, the London Play survey also found that a third of respondents believe the play facilities provided are not adequate for demand.

More than two thirds of respondents also warned that revenue for staff to manage and maintain play areas over the next three years is likely to either decrease or stay the same.



Image: 1000 Words / Shutterstock.com

[Aggregate Industries](#) (Mar 23): top left  
[The Guardian](#) (Aug 23): top right  
[LocalGov](#) (May 23): bottom right  
[LocalGov](#) (Feb 22): bottom left

- 3.3 From a Stockton-on-Tees perspective, previous analysis has indicated that outdoor play provision is uneven across the Borough, with significant variations in the play value, age and accessibility of equipment and sites. Many older play areas are in decline and, as is being felt by Local Authorities up and down the country, there is insufficient budget to maintain all the current sites. In terms of new sites, the majority of these are established through planning obligations and consequently increase provision in areas where new development is taking place. Conversely, there are limited opportunities to establish or improve play areas in existing residential areas. In either case, it should be noted that all sites are subject to challenge relating to accessibility and play value.
- 3.4 Play areas can be an emotive topic and have elicited a range of comments (both positive and negative) from the public with regards the existing offer. Like so many other Council-related activities, balancing public expectation with the realities of deepening Local Authority funding pressures is becoming an increasing challenge. There is a well-established need to maintain an effective portfolio of high-quality play area assets within the Borough's communities, but this must be sustainable, provide value-for-money, and be accessible to as many people as is feasibly possible.



## 4.0 Findings

### Legislative Requirements

- 4.1 Whilst there was no statutory obligation for Local Authorities to provide outdoor play spaces, there were legal requirements associated with the inspection and maintenance of outdoor play provision:
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#): There is a duty under section 3 and 4 to ensure the health and safety of users, so far as is reasonably practicable.
  - [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#): Require a risk assessment of facilities, a safety policy for meeting the risk, and appropriate training.
  - [Occupier's Liability Act 1957 \(Revised 1984\)](#): This Act requires that people can expect to be reasonably safe when using the playground. Greater care is required where children are concerned.
- 4.2 The British and European safety standard BS EN1176 and the Health & Safety Executive strongly recommend that all play areas be inspected annually by an independent qualified body such as RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). BS EN1177 concerns a safety surfaces standard ('impact absorbing'). These standards and safety guidelines are not a legal requirement but are considered to be good professional working practice. SBC was aware of its responsibility in regard to maintaining and repairing play area equipment and playground facilities.
- 4.3 The [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#) aimed to ensure that all those who were disabled had the same access to public services (and by implication, public parks and playgrounds) as those who were not disabled. Successful play spaces should, as far as was reasonably possible, offer the same quality and extent of play experience to disabled children and young people as was available to those who were not disabled, whilst accepting that not all equipment could be completely accessible to everyone.

### Key Outdoor Play Bodies

#### Play England ([playengland.org.uk/](http://playengland.org.uk/))

- 4.4 Play England is the national children's play charity for England. Its vision is for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years, as set out in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Article 31\)](#) and the [Charter for Children's Play](#).
- 4.5 Advocating movement and physical activity, the stimulation of the five senses, provision of good places for social interaction, children being allowed to manipulate natural and fabricated materials, and, crucially, children being offered challenge (all guiding principles which SBC would endorse), Play England published the following 10 principles for designing successful play spaces which should ensure they:



- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution.

The organisation were previously more active in terms of officers on the ground, though now tended to focus on the provision of strategic advice.

### Association of Play Industries (API) ([api-play.org/](http://api-play.org/))

4.6 The lead trade body in the play sector, API represents the interests of manufacturers, installers, designers and distributors of both outdoor and indoor play equipment and safer surfacing. It also promotes best practice and high-quality play provision within the play industry, and has campaigned on the following:

- **Equal Play:** API's latest campaign is based on new research which shows that children's access to public play areas is unequal and unfair. Some areas of the UK have almost five times the number of children per playground as others. Children's opportunities to play outdoors are a postcode lottery.  
<https://www.api-play.org/news-events/equal-play-campaign/>

- **Nowhere to Play:** API's research uncovered an alarming decline in play provision with hundreds of playgrounds set to close. Local Authorities cited lack of budget to maintain, repair or replace equipment as reasons for the closures.

<https://www.api-play.org/news-events/nowhere-play-campaign/>



4.7 API is dedicated to inclusive play. Its members recognise that every child is unique, with their own individuality and strengths, but with one common thread that binds them all together – their innate desire to play. When it comes to playgrounds, all children look for exciting, diverse and stimulating play experiences that foster both individual exploration and group interaction. Its members strive to create play spaces which welcome and accommodate children of all abilities, so that all users can find something that brings them joy.  
<https://www.api-play.org/inclusive-play/>

## Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) ([rospa.com/](https://www.rospa.com/))

- 4.8 RoSPA is a not-for-profit organisation that has worked for more than 100 years to help people recognise and reduce their risk of accidents, at home, on the road, at work and at leisure. Its goal is to enable everyone to live their lives to the full, safely.
- 4.9 RoSPAs Play Safety department provides advice and information on playground management and the safety of indoor and outdoor play areas. This includes guidance on inspections, maintenance, design, surfacing, fencing, and a code of good practice for play areas.  
<https://www.rospa.com/policy/play-safety/advice>
- 4.10 RoSPA Play Safety offer a variety of playground inspections to suit requirements. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) commission RoSPA to carry out annual inspections of existing play areas and safety surfacing, assessments of life-expectancy of equipment / areas, post-installation inspections of new sites, and play value assessments.  
<https://www.rospa.com/policy/play-safety/inspections>

### Play Value / Meaningful Play

- 4.11 'Play value' relates to the quality and variety of the play experience, and RoSPA had developed an industry-standard methodology for assessing this. Three broad aspects of a site were looked at:
- The overall site (ignoring equipment, but including the landscape setting, site safety, etc.)
  - Ambience (visual appeal, condition, and layout)
  - Suitability and value of play equipment and features for the age groups for which the site is designed (toddlers, juniors, or teenagers)
- A detailed set of criteria was used with sites given overall ratings (*excellent, good, average, below average or poor*) for each of these three elements.
- 4.12 SBCs aim was for a minimum grading of 'good', and previous scores for each of the Borough's sites were provided to the Committee. However, it was noted that these assessments were quite dated (2018) and would need to be re-evaluated to provide an accurate picture of the current state and value of local facilities.
- 4.13 In November 2023, the Committee was informed a re-assessment of the Borough's existing sites was not yet scheduled – contact with RoSPA, either as part of or after this review, could be initiated, though (this was subsequently done in February 2024, with the results available at **Appendix 1**). Whilst wanting to get a fair and updated measure of standards across the Borough's facilities, Members pointed out that any official assessment of play value was not necessarily an indicator of popularity, and that even a simple space could be creatively used by children and young people, some of whom come from outside the local catchment area to access it.

## Existing Borough Offer

- 4.14 As of December 2023, the Borough had 49 publicly accessible play areas, and 20 sites with informal sport facilities (some of these were located at the same sites). SBC owned and managed the vast majority of these sites, and also managed five sites on behalf of Town / Parish Councils (*note: any facilities not freely accessible to the public (such as those located within school grounds, sports centres or locations such as RSPB Salthome) were not within scope of this review*). Maps and lists of all play areas and informal sport facilities across the Borough (including planned developments) were shared with the Committee – see **Appendix 2-5**.

### Informal Sports Facilities

- 4.15 There was a variety of informal sports provision across the Borough, mostly involving multi-use games areas (MUGAs) which were sometimes accompanied by outdoor gyms and / or skateparks. Kick walls and / or other surfaced games areas were also highlighted, as was one third-party MUGA in Billingham (Roscoe Road).



Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA): *John Whitehead Park, Billingham*

- 4.16 The site at Stillington had now been completed and was only awaiting lighting (it was, however, very muddy, so opening could be delayed), and the planned site at Kirklevington was a new additional MUGA. Despite having a lot of play area provision, Ingleby Barwick only had Romano Park as an informal sport facility.

### Play Areas

- 4.17 The Council categorised play areas as follows (these classifications were based mainly on the quantity and size of play equipment, but also took into consideration the provision of other facilities and services):
- **'Destination' sites (4)**: As larger facilities within parks, these served a wide catchment area and had been invested in considerably by SBC in recent years. They offered a wide variety of equipment that provided good 'play value' for a range of users from toddlers to teenagers.



'Destination' Site: *Preston Park, Eaglescliffe*

- **'Neighbourhood' sites (18):** These were mainly situated within larger green spaces of a community, with a more moderate quantity of equipment (generally suitable for a range of users, which may include toddlers, juniors, and teenagers). They preferably have access to toilets and refreshments and were close to other facilities which add to the overall recreational value of the site (though this was not essential).



'Neighbourhood' Site: *Victoria Park, Thornaby*

- **'Doorstep' sites (27):** Smaller facilities which were located on green space or self-contained zones within housing areas, many of which had been installed by housing developers. They contain a small quantity of equipment which was not suitable for all age ranges (often being designed for younger children).



'Doorstep' Site: *Grangefield Park*

It was noted that there was variance even within these three categories (for example, one site within the Borough contains just a single slide).

- 4.18 Maps showing catchment zones for all existing / intended provision were also presented, though it was noted that these were only crude indicators as users can travel from outside these areas, particularly for the larger 'destination' sites like Preston Park and Wynyard Woodland Park. The Committee was also reminded that the maps did not indicate 'play value' which, as had been previously seen, varied from site-to-site across the Borough, something which may be a factor in how far young people and / or families were prepared to travel to use specific facilities. These graphics did, however, allow SBC to identify gaps in provision which may then feed into section 106 (s106) considerations (see paragraph 4.47).
- 4.19 The Committee queried whether the actual use of some of the current play sites was monitored in any way. Members noted several variables (e.g. weather, school holidays) which impacted upon play area usage, and officers confirmed that tracking this was a challenge due to multiple entries to an individual site and the limits on resources to carry out such a task. That said, there may be an opportunity to link-in with relevant community groups to establish play area 'traffic', though it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to ask SBC staff to sit and monitor the number of people using a particular site.
- 4.20 Highlighting the Council's previously stated desire for the Borough's play areas to receive a 'good' play value rating, the Committee referred to the shared play area lists that had shown a raft of sites falling short of this minimum aim when last assessed. Members commented that updated RoSPA assessments may assist in understanding the costs of improving any below-standard provision – this information may, in turn, play a factor in what the Committee recommended regarding future prioritisation of sites.
- 4.21 Noting that the Councillor role enabled them to get 'out and about' within their communities, Members were not surprised to see preconceptions about the state of facilities realised when analysing the play value scores, many of which were deemed 'average', 'below average' or 'poor'. Mindful, too, that the last tranche of significant investment was over 15 years ago, the Committee queried if the Council would be better served to focus on quality over quantity – SBC officers subsequently confirmed that they would welcome a future concentration on fewer sites that had an improved offer.

- 4.22 In terms of the 2018 play value assessment outcomes, SBC officers stated that a number of these should perhaps have been represented as 'not applicable' for certain age-ranges as some sites were not aiming to cater for all children and young people from toddler to teen. In response, Members observed that there were instances where all three categories were ranked 'poor', and also highlighted concerns that areas were being used by some young people despite them being targeted at much younger children, with associated problems arising such as bad behaviour / language which caused parents of toddlers / juniors to have a negative experience or even stay away from sites.
- 4.23 Focus was drawn onto those play sites owned by Town / Parish Councils (most of which were deemed to offer 'poor' play value), with Members keen to ascertain what pressure was put on these bodies to repair / replace equipment. SBC officers noted that some Town / Parish Councils had invested in recent years to strengthen their outdoor play offer, though did this out of their own budget which, like SBCs, was limited and stretched.
- 4.24 Emphasising the need to ensure value-for-money as part of any investment, Members pointed to problems with soft matting within certain play areas which did not appear to be overly durable despite the high cost. SBC officers gave assurance that value-for-money considerations were prioritised when designing a new play space (not just regarding the equipment itself, but also the maintenance of the overall facility).

### Site Visits

- 4.25 Committee Members undertook visits to the following existing play area sites across the Borough in December 2023 (see **Appendix 6** for observations):
- Preston Park, Eaglescliffe ('Destination')
  - Simonside Grove, Ingleby Barwick ('Doorstep')
  - Windmill Park, Ingleby Barwick ('Neighbourhood')
  - South Thornaby, Thornaby ('Neighbourhood')
  - Victoria Park, Thornaby ('Neighbourhood')

### Recent Developments

- 4.26 During the course of this review, developments in relation to the following existing 'destination' sites emerged:
- [Romano Park, Ingleby Barwick](#) (Jan 24): Completion of improvement works, including a revamped play area with a unique, 'dragon fort' feature (which was the first of its kind).  
<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/article/12552/Dragon-Fort-feature-completes-impressive-upgrades-to-Romano-Park-in-Ingleby-Barwick>
  - [Ropner Park, Stockton](#) (Mar 24): The new tower for the play area (see **Appendix 7**) had recently received planning consent, with the play area refurbishment now scheduled to commence in late-April 2024. The play area would be closed during this time and will take approximately two months to complete.

## Maintenance

- 4.27 Emphasising that the ongoing inspection and maintenance of the Borough's outdoor play sites was a real pressure area for SBC, officers explained that checks and any required actions were undertaken to ensure that playground equipment remained safe and compliant with relevant standards. Whilst there were legislative requirements around the need to inspect (see paragraph 4.1), with potentially costly repercussions if this was not carried out, there was no defined legal standard in terms of how that was conducted – that said, the Council's insurers would expect that processes conformed with good practice. In essence, inspection and maintenance procedures were about managing risk.
- 4.28 The existing inspection regime comprised weekly / fortnightly checks on any signs of weathering and vandalism, and a quarterly check on the strength / stability of equipment (including rotting / corrosion of materials). Reactive inspections were undertaken in response to any calls or intelligence around faults, and an annual independent inspection also provided external scrutiny of local play provision.
- 4.29 Pressures on the existing inspection and maintenance budget associated with Stockton-on-Tees outdoor play spaces were outlined (current year up to 14 September 2023 – see graphic right). This had been exacerbated by increasing incidents of vandalism, and was an amount which had not been uplifted since before 2017 – a situation which contributed to ongoing challenges around this scrutiny topic.
- Budget Financial Pressures Today**

  - The Annual Budget allocation is £114,000.
  - Covers - Parks, Open Spaces, Cemeteries, and Allotments
  - Current Spend to date – £83,000
  - Outstanding Work to do - £92,000

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Big plans, bright future
- 4.30 Efforts were made to find alternative funds (e.g. underspends within the SBC directorate) and longer-lasting materials (e.g. use of bark instead of expensive soft matting), and removing any equipment or whole sites was a last resort given the current brief to keep areas open as long as they were safe. Critically, the present budget was earmarked for maintenance only and was not a replacement fund – as such, the Borough had a large amount of valuable play equipment with no plan for the future.
- 4.31 The Committee expressed deep concern over the absence of a replacement fund for the Borough's play area equipment which would inevitably deteriorate over time. The use of bark instead of soft matting / surfaces as a more cost-effective solution was also debated, with Members (who were mindful of the Committee's previous review on Tree Asset Management) asking whether SBC had the ability to produce its own bark for the Borough's outdoor play spaces. Officers stated that any attempt to generate chippings would require a sifting process as only soft bark could be used for play areas, and maintenance was still needed for this material to ensure it was kept at the right level (though it was much less costly than matting). The use of bark also provided potential challenges around accessibility, though Members countered that measures could surely be put in place to enable all users to access equipment (e.g. footpaths in between chippings).



- 4.32 Reference was made to the rising demand for statutory Council provision which inevitably had a knock-on effect regarding budgetary pressures for non-statutory services. The Committee also noted that Councillors in Stockton-on-Tees were fortunate to have access to a Ward budget which helped support improvements to their locality, a welcome resource which Members in other Local Authority areas did not have.
- 4.33 Two queries were raised in relation to play area insurance policies and the lifespan of the Borough's existing sites. For the former, officers stated that as long as SBC made facilities as safe as they could be, insurers would assume liability for claims against the Council. Regarding the latter, Members heard that this was difficult to estimate given each play space was different to others (though RoSPA did conduct life-expectancy evaluations). It was, however, noted that the last significant investment into outdoor play space (2008) reflected the focus on natural play (and therefore incorporated numerous wooden products), and that this was predominantly capital funding which did not include a maintenance element.
- 4.34 Mindful of the proposed developments in relation to Stockton waterfront (see paragraph 4.61), the Committee asked if play space planning included considerations around maintenance of any new sites intended for this zone. In response, it was confirmed that officers within the SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture directorate had provided views and calculations with regards play space proposals, and whilst this aspect had not always been factored-in in the past, confidence was expressed that longer-term thinking would feature strongly in the plans to revamp Stockton Town Centre. Members responded by urging any future commitment on capital spend to also consider ongoing revenue costs.
- 4.35 Attention returned to the financial pressures outlined in association with the inspection and maintenance of sites. Noting the £60,000 shortfall in the annual budget allocation (£114,000) compared to the current (as of 14 September 2023) amount spent (£83,000) plus anticipated costs in relation to outstanding work still to complete (£92,000), Members felt this demonstrated the justification for the Committee's review and also asked for a breakdown on how much of the £83,000 already spent pertained specifically to play areas. The percentage spend against the annual budget for the three previously completed financial years (though not including the current 2023-2024 year) was subsequently provided as follows:

Total Budget £114,000	Percentage spend over last 3 Years		
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Parks and Open Spaces	94%	94%	93%
Cemeteries	2%	2%	1%
Allotments	3%	3%	7%
Cemeteries (Other)	1%	1%	0%
	100%	100%	100%

- 4.36 Regarding inspection schedules, the Committee queried if the current SBC programme was a regulatory requirement or was something the Council chose to do. The legislative need to conduct inspections was reiterated, as was the flexibility in which these could be carried out (since there was not a legally

defined manner in which to do this). In terms of SBC, officers took a snapshot of an individual site's use – if this was a more popular facility, it would be inspected more frequently. However, it was also noted that the inspection and maintenance team comprised of only four technicians for the whole of the Borough, thus limiting the capacity for more regular oversight.

**Creation of New Sites**

**Inequality of Existing Provision**

4.37 Reasons for the growing inequality of outdoor play provision across the Borough were outlined. The last significant investment in Stockton-on-Tees facilities was through the then Government's Play Builder programme back in 2008 (though not all areas benefitted at that time), and since then, many sites had been provided or improved with section 106 money (contributions from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure – see paragraph 4.47) as a result of housing developments. However, this had the potential for a higher density of smaller-space provision, and those areas of the Borough which had not seen new housing had therefore not gained in relation to additional / upgraded play facilities.

4.38 The following examples of inequality of provision in both south Billingham and west Stockton were provided:

**South Billingham (right):**  
The Bulgarth was currently the only play area in south Billingham, comprising just one piece of equipment.



**West Stockton (left):**  
Currently the only play provision in Fairfield and Hartburn wards was this single slide at Limbrick Avenue. However, a small 'doorstep' play area was planned for the Elmwood Centre, Hartburn.

- 4.39 The introduction of new play areas, often with limited value, as part of housing developments was explored, with Members expressing concern that some of this may be happening against the advice of Council officers or built just so the Council could say it was using section 106 contributions. Officers acknowledged that there were play areas within the Borough that were not appropriate and in need of investment, and that a clear rationale needed to be made available, and properly assessed, for the future development of new and existing sites. There was also a planning issue at the heart of this, too, something which the Committee may wish to probe further as part of this review.
- 4.40 Specific attention was drawn to the existing situation at Norton Meadows (Stockton), with the Committee relaying concerns from local residents who were paying a management fee to a developer in relation to nearby play provision which was deemed by the wider community to be a public area and therefore accessible to anyone. Asked if there were similar examples elsewhere, SBC officers stated that they were not aware of other such issues within the Borough, and that individual planning conditions would need to be understood to determine any further action – officers subsequently confirmed that no issues had been raised regarding any other third-party-owned sites.
- 4.41 The Committee emphasised its awareness that, like within most Council services, money was tight and needed to be spent wisely. To this end, when considering future outdoor play provision plans, Members may need to move away from localism in the pursuit of what was best for the Borough as a whole.
- 4.42 Focus moved onto the environmental agenda, with Members questioning if this was considered as part of the planning for new play sites. Officers highlighted the SBC environmental strategy (one of the aims of which was to increase biodiversity and natural spaces), as well as the need to consider the play value of green spaces and how the environment could be used to enhance play (which in some cases could be more cost-effective than actual equipment). The inclusion of sensory equipment to promote accessibility was also probed, with the Committee informed that there was ongoing dialogue with the Stockton Parent Carer Forum regarding the development of facilities – that said, this was a challenging area given the wide range of accessibility needs.
- 4.43 The Committee asked if a larger capital commitment towards Stockton-on-Tees play spaces was now needed as part of a political agreement. In response, it was stated that if there was a desire to maintain the current level of outdoor play provision across the Borough, a capital injection would appear necessary. Recognising the existing financial situation which the Council was experiencing, the Committee Chair urged that Councillors refrained from requesting feasibility studies for new play areas while this review was being undertaken.

### **SBC Planning / Place Development**

- 4.44 Policy SD5 of the existing [SBC Local Plan](#) (adopted 30 January 2019) sought to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment (which included green infrastructure networks and assets), whilst policy ENV6 required that green infrastructure should be integrated, where practicable, into new developments, but also allows for ‘appropriate contributions’ towards green infrastructure. In addition, the Council had two Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provided further guidance

on the provision ('Planning Obligations SPD') and quantity / quality / proximity ('Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD') of open space.

- 4.45 Whilst the ultimate aim was to improve the provision of open space and recreation facilities in the Borough, developer decisions on building new rather than improving existing assets were effectively about the scale of a proposed development and the level of impact (population growth) this would have:
- Larger scale developments were likely to justify a need for on-site provision due to the level of population increase across the site (indeed, policy direction indicates a preference for on-site provision).
  - For smaller developments, however, there may be no requirement for open space to be provided and it may be more appropriate for an off-site contribution (where necessary and justified).

Where sites were situated on the periphery of settlements, existing open space and play areas may not be nearby or readily accessible.

- 4.46 In terms of facilities managed and funded by individual housing developments or residents under a service charge, the planning system did not seek to restrict or prevent the use of the facility for any resident. Privately maintained areas of public open space were not intended to be for the exclusive use for residents of an estate.

- 4.47 [Planning obligations](#) (also known as 'section 106' / 's106' agreements) must meet the tests set out under the [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) regulation \(122\)](#) which are:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development (the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD sets local standards for quantity, quality and proximity)

Contributions towards off-site provision must be identified and must also be fully costed schemes to be compliant with the tests set out in the CIL (*note: the Council was not able to ask for a generic figure derived from the calculator as a contribution and instead must highlight a particular scheme and the associated costs of the delivery of that scheme*).

- 4.48 Funding via s106 was generally only for capital projects, and revenue funding towards ongoing running costs was unlikely to be available. Where SBC was to assume responsibility for the maintenance of either on-site or off-site open space, the Council required a commuted revenue lump-sum for the equivalent of 25 years maintenance. All calculations were based on the approved landscaping scheme, and this sum was placed in an interest-bearing account, with the interest used solely for grounds maintenance.
- 4.49 Maintenance costs were generally only acceptable where it related to the maintenance of open space provision being secured. However, there was no legal requirement for a developer to ask the Council to adopt or maintain the open space, and they could instead choose to maintain it themselves – this was often funded through an additional service charge to a management company from the occupants of a development. Where long-term maintenance may be

delivered by a management company, a management plan was provided and agreed to ensure the open space was suitably maintained in perpetuity.

- 4.50 As per the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA), there would be forthcoming changes to planning obligations as the Infrastructure Levy (IL) was due to be introduced (this was mandatory, pre-set and non-negotiable). The IL will largely replace planning obligation except for 'large and complex sites', with the Council potentially losing its ability to use s106 funding as it currently did (SBC officers previously stated that this finance provides the Council with more control over the quality of provision to ensure better play value). A response to the technical guidance was still awaited by SBC, as was the associated secondary legislation.
- 4.51 SBC officers added that the Council's aim was for sustainable places within the Borough which contributed to the Public Health (health and wellbeing) agenda. It was also noted that there can be a significant time lag between the agreement and subsequent implementation of a developer's plan, and that views on the appropriateness of provision can be subjective as some prefer open spaces, some play areas, and others landscaped sites.
- 4.52 The Committee asked for clarity around the identification of responsibility for inspecting / maintaining new play area sites and was informed that arrangements were usually set out within a planning application. Planning conditions involving the maintenance of open space were usually included as part of any agreed development, with the failure to comply subject to enforcement measures. As part of the application process, developers were now asked for 'phasing plans' to demonstrate key timelines for implementation – however, the Council was reliant on the public to report any breaches of an agreed development in order to initiate potential enforcement action.

The screenshot shows the website for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. The header includes the council logo and navigation links: 'Create a My Council account' and 'Sign in to My Council'. The main navigation bar has four categories: 'Our Council', 'Our People', 'Our Places', and 'Our Economy'. The breadcrumb trail reads: 'Home > Our Places > Planning and Building Control > Planning applications'. The page title is 'Planning enforcement'. The main content area states: 'We can take enforcement action if we find there has been a breach of planning control.' Below this, it says 'When we will take enforcement action' and provides a definition of a breach of planning control, referencing the Town and Country Planning Act (Section 171). There are expandable sections for 'Examples of planning breaches' and 'Issues that we cannot investigate'. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Report a breach of planning control' with a sub-note about using the public access service to check planning history, and a purple button labeled 'Submit a request for planning enforcement'.

- 4.53 Members questioned the ramifications of developers going bust. Officers stated that this was a rare occurrence – however, should this happen, management companies were in place, with service charges paid by residents of a development then covering the ongoing maintenance of a site.

- 4.54 Regarding the decision to use a management company for maintenance of outdoor play provision, the Committee queried if there was any requirement for a developer to inform residents of such an arrangement. SBC officers noted that this was usually identified as part of conveyancing and that residents had the option for a vote if they were concerned about the upkeep of a play site within their estate (this was not something which involved the Council).
- 4.55 Referencing the 25-year lump-sum payment to the Council for transfer of maintenance responsibilities of a designated site, the Committee asked what elements these payments were expected to cover. Grounds maintenance, cleansing, and maintenance of the equipment in the play area was subsequently listed, though it was noted that the lump-sum did not tend to cover the future renewal of the play area.
- 4.56 Pointing to an apparent absence of understanding of the revenue costs associated with new outdoor play provision, Members asked if the Council had to go along with a developer's proposals or whether there was any scope to ask it to invest in one of the Borough's larger 'destination' sites (as opposed to installing yet another facility which may be of lesser play value and would add to ongoing maintenance requirements). SBC officers responded by reaffirming earlier advice – that much depends on the scale of a development and associated impacts, with a clear link between a development site and a 'destination' play / open space site needing to be established.
- 4.57 The Committee drew attention to the planned new play area in Kirklevington which was near an existing site – this appeared contradictory to the requirements of the Open Space, Recreation and Landscaping SPD in terms of proximity considerations. As had been observed during previous Committee reviews, the need for timely dialogue between Council services over issues which involved multiple SBC directorates / departments was again evident, and it was also suggested that the final report of this particular review should be shared with the SBC Planning Committee.
- 4.58 Members raised the issue of residents not knowing who to complain to about concerns around a third-party-owned play site – it was suggested that the respective local MP be approached should the management company not adequately address any identified problems in the first instance.

#### Confirmed Developments

- 4.59 Several 'doorstep' sites were intended across the Borough – these involved SBC plans for Hardwick Community Park, Stockton and the Elmwood Centre, Stockton. Third-party facilities at Yarm Back Lane, Stockton (x2), Allens West, Eaglescliffe, and Kirklevington were also scheduled – see **Appendix 4-5**.

#### SBC Town Centres Development

- 4.60 As a key department involved in the development of new facilities, particularly the new Stockton waterfront plans, the SBC Town Centres Development service was asked to provide input into this review.

- 4.61 The team was made up of a broad range of roles with the focus on overseeing and co-ordinating the development, design and delivery of capital projects, predominantly under the funding umbrellas of the Levelling-Up Fund, Towns Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Future High Streets Fund, as well as town centre business engagement and market management. The management and delivery of the new Stockton waterfront scheme (see graphic below) required close liaison with the developers.



- 4.62 The inclusion of formal play space and equipment within the new Stockton waterfront park was established as a fundamental element of the space at concept stage and through the preliminary design process in 2021. The SBC Town Centres Development team relied upon the expertise and knowledge of colleagues within SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure as plans for the urban park were in development, particularly in regard to play equipment. This collaboration, along with public consultation in summer 2022, led to a design brief for the play space being developed by Ryder Architects in October 2022.
- 4.63 Since then, officers from both SBC Town Centres Development and SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure had attended workshops and meetings to refine the design of the park, and had featured on the appraisal panel for prospective play equipment providers as part of the initial procurement phase for play equipment. The interrelationship between Council teams extended to site visits and individual design meetings, as required, alongside the architect design team.
- 4.64 As part of the assessment process for Stockton waterfront play equipment providers, the sustainability and quality of materials was a key consideration with regards minimising maintenance liabilities and the need to replace equipment. Warranties and guarantees on equipment, along with spare parts, had also been sought as part of the procurement / design of play equipment and play areas to cover any issues or defects with equipment in the short-term. Furthermore, allowance for some maintenance and repair / replacement packages had been included within the initial costing for equipment, minimising revenue commitments for maintenance as far as possible in the early years of operation. Beyond this, longer-term revenue requirements would be picked up and included as part of the future Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) budget-

setting process, with detailed work undertaken already with colleagues across the Council to assess the revenue impact of the park in its entirety from its completion in early-2026 (*note: a request was subsequently made for further information on this detailed work, but specifics were not provided*).

- 4.65 Further refinement to specific elements of equipment and play areas were still to be made, with additional input from SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure colleagues intended. Given the Council was potentially oversubscribed in terms of equipment, identifying best 'play value' would be central to discussions.
- 4.66 Led by the SBC Town Centres Development team, in addition to the Stockton waterfront plans (with the intention of using naturally differing levels as part of the offer), new and improved play / informal sports provision had been delivered, or was under development, at:
- [Romano Park, Ingleby Barwick](#) (complete)
    - Installation of new bespoke play feature and new play equipment.
    - Repairs and replacement of some existing equipment and surfacing
    - Installation of accessible play equipment and sensory trail,
    - Clean and remarking of existing MUGA surface
  - [Victoria Park, Thornaby](#) (complete)
    - New play equipment and accessible elements throughout the park
  - [Snaiths Field, Yarm](#) (still in preliminary design stage)
    - Improvements to existing play space, surfacing and equipment planned. Still in preliminary design stage

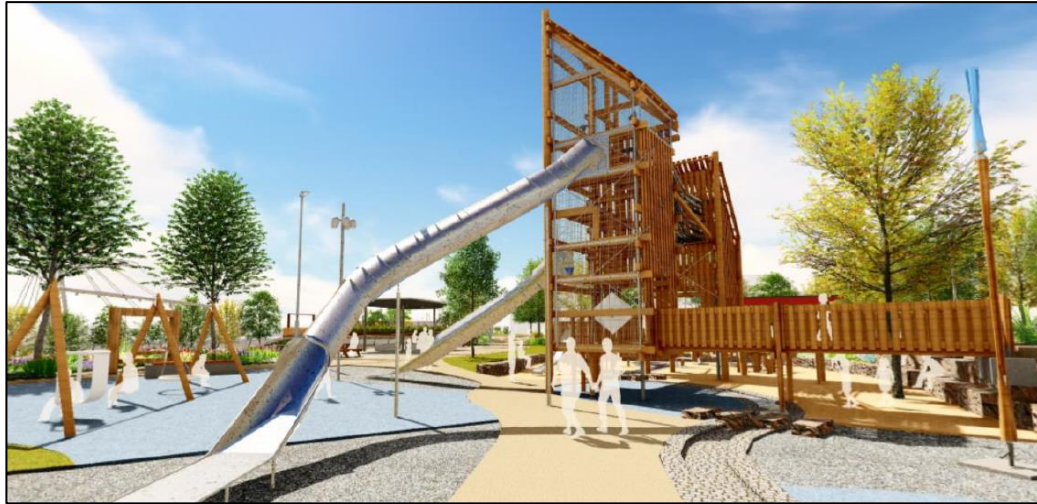
These three play facilities would be maintained within existing revenue budgets for play and open space.

- 4.67 The Committee began its questioning on the developments at Snaiths Field. It was reiterated that plans for this site revolved around building on what was already there (akin to what had happened at Romano Park), though Members were advised that fitness equipment aimed at adults was unlikely to feature since there was little evidence that this apparatus was well used – indeed, there was a desire to veer away from this type of provision due to the liabilities it carried and the vandalism it can attract (Members subsequently noted evidence of this at Kiora Hall, Roseworth).
- 4.68 Staying with the Snaiths Field offer, Members asked if maintenance of this particular site lay with Yarm Town Council (YTC). Officers confirmed that SBC had responsibility for inspecting and maintaining the play area on behalf of the Town Council, and would consult with the latter regarding developments. The Committee drew attention to other outdoor play facilities in Yarm which were not maintained by SBC and queried why this was the case – it was subsequently confirmed that Snaiths Field was owned by YTC which previously owned the play equipment within; Willey Flats was owned by SBC, however YTC agreed a 50-year lease on the land in 1995 – the conditions of that lease included maintenance obligations.



- 4.69 Broad enthusiasm was expressed by Members on the proposals for the Stockton waterfront development, though the need for adequate security of the site was also highlighted. Officers stated that SBC was very conscious there may be individuals who did not wish to use the space as it was envisaged, and that whilst some aspects of anti-social behaviour were hard to stop, the Council must be mindful of those who spoil good intent. It was also noted that making play spaces open and visible can help minimise inappropriate behaviours, and that CCTV can assist in identifying issues but requires adequate monitoring. Officers added that fencing around the waterfront park was being considered in order to manage risk.
- 4.70 In terms of the Stockton waterfront plans, the Committee reflected on the fact that this would, ultimately, add another significant resource to the Council's portfolio which would need to be maintained. Given SBC was not in a position to maintain what it already had, and that Local Authority funding was likely to get even tighter, this would represent a further challenge regarding decisions on existing provision across the Borough.
- 4.71 Continuing this theme, the Committee acknowledged the ongoing developments around the Stockton blueprint to make it a more attractive place – however, it was also stressed that establishing long-term revenue costs was a key consideration in ensuring sustainable provision. Responding to a subsequent query around the consultation exercise on the Stockton waterfront, SBC officers confirmed that feedback had indeed impacted upon the design of the play space and that it was hoped that this would ensure a positive visitor experience. After working on this for four years, there was confidence and excitement about the new development, and the introduction of risk / jeopardy in the play space remained important (particularly to teenagers), though did provide a challenge with regards modern regulations. Officers were asked if any visuals of the Stockton waterfront plans could be provided to the Committee following this meeting – these were subsequently shared (see graphics below).





- 4.72 Mindful of the anticipation around the scale and content of the Stockton waterfront plans, Members asked if larger play spaces were inherently more appealing to users and whether the Council had any evidence of this. SBC officers felt that much would depend on the perceived play value associated with an individual site, but it was known that young people (and adults for that matter) travelled from greater distances to use, for example, the skate park at Preston Park (even from outside the Borough). As had been discussed in previous evidence sessions for this review, resource limitations meant it was difficult to ascertain overall use for specific provision, and smaller offers may still have value for very young children or for those who were not as close to a larger 'destination' site.
- 4.73 When considering the appeal of larger play areas and the potential that this can lead to an overwhelming number of users, the Committee wondered whether this might be managed by considering the level of equipment in smaller nearby sites which could be tweaked to appeal to a broader range of ages (thereby relieving pressure on the 'destination' locations). For those larger play areas, SBC officers noted that the Council does try to make a space available and applicable to a spread of ages and needs.
- 4.74 Given the ongoing financial challenges faced by the Council, Members felt the Borough was in a fortunate position to have several sizeable play sites already in existence (with another imminent). As such, in order to safeguard these well used and much valued spaces, resources may need to focus on preserving the quality of such areas in the first instance, with smaller areas being addressed where and when funding and staffing allowed. The Committee did, however, also highlight the situation for those young children and / or their families who were unable to travel to larger sites – this would need careful consideration in terms of the overall future prioritisation of the Borough's outdoor play provision.
- 4.75 The issue of accessibility was raised, with the Committee acknowledging the significant cost attached to certain equipment which was not necessarily compatible for all those with a similar need (e.g. wheelchair-users). SBC officers agreed that sourcing appropriate resources was difficult, though noted innovative approaches that adapted spaces and promoted access for a wider range of users. The Council was aware of equipment options which could be used at different heights and also for the need for ramps / suitable surfacing to foster easier access.

## Accessibility / Inclusivity

### Scope UK ([scope.org.uk/](https://www.scope.org.uk/))

- 4.76 As the disability equality charity in England and Wales, Scope UK had previously highlighted that inaccessible playgrounds were stopping too many disabled children from having fun and friendship, all because playgrounds were not designed with their needs in mind. 49% of families with disabled children faced accessibility problems with their local playground, with 10% of parents of disabled children saying their child got hurt using inaccessible equipment. <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/lets-play-fair/>
- 4.77 Scope UK had therefore called for Local Authorities to work with families to create inclusive playgrounds, so that every disabled child can play. Over 31,236 people signed its [open letter](#) in England and Wales calling for Government to introduce a multi-million pound inclusive playgrounds fund, helping to make play fair. Scope UK delivered this to Government departments in England and Wales in November 2022.

### Stockton Parent Carer Forum ([stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk/](https://stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk/))

- 4.78 Most Local Authority areas included a designated group which provided a voice for parents and carers with special educational needs (SEN) children. Stockton Parent Carer Forum was the local entity, and had around 1,800 individuals listed on its database (a small amount given the total number across the Borough who had a child with SEN), received some funding to aid its activities, and was run entirely by volunteers (there were no paid roles). Its hub was based at Newtown Community Resource Centre, and if a family was struggling, the Forum was often the first port-of-call to assist them and help the breaking down of any barriers. From a strategic perspective, its role was to ensure consideration of the Forum's voice in the development of services / facilities.
- 4.79 Regarding outdoor play areas, the Forum began working with SBC around three-and-a-half years ago when public focus on the Borough's play offer had sharpened. Work with the Council was initiated in order to reflect views and influence plans, with issues around accessing the larger 'destination' sites and a lack of changing places / accessible toilets raised (the latter being a real area of concern, with families noting that the provision of a disabled toilet did not necessarily make a site accessible due to the complex needs of a child / young person). Visits were also undertaken to some of Stockton-on-Tees' existing play areas, as well as Daisy Chain park (an exclusive offer for SEN children), with the types of play / equipment that were more appropriate for the Forum's members, how play was different for children with SEN, and how equipment could be made more accessible, all explored.
- 4.80 A highlight for the Forum, and a good example of an accessible space, was the newly refurbished Victoria Park in Thornaby (an area visited by Members in December 2023 as part of the Committee's evidence-gathering for this review – see **Appendix 6**). Wynyard Woodland Park also had positive features in terms of layout and sensory experiences, and Tinkers Yard (Norton) was also liked. Whilst it was difficult to pinpoint what a 'perfect' park was for a child with SEN, allowing families to make their views heard was important. What was evident was that families were compelled to use some spaces outside the usual busy

times (as this was an easier situation to manage), and did travel within and outside the Borough (e.g. Thirsk, Northallerton, Picton) to use facilities that were more accessible for their child/ren.

- 4.81 Picking up on the positives in relation to Victoria Park, the Committee enquired as to what made the Forum's families warm to this site. The mix of provision for different age-ranges, risk and challenge, and sensory considerations were all subsequently praised. It was, however, stated that the toilet facilities at this site were run by Thornaby Town Council, and were only open when a representative was present.
- 4.82 The key issue of changing areas was discussed, with SBC officers noting that plans for Preston Park and the new Stockton waterfront park would both include such facilities. Members suggested that future developments for new / existing outdoor play spaces could / should incorporate or utilise other nearby offers like coffee shops (enabling toilets / changing places). Seeing a play area as part of an overall collection of facilities within a designated location (rather than in isolation) was a concept supported by the Committee, something which local enterprise may wish to get involved with through the opening of their own establishment or by possibly sponsoring a play space.
- 4.83 Referencing the notion that some play spaces were too busy / noisy for families with SEN children, Members asked if quieter areas would help. The Forum Co-Chair felt that decisions on whether and when to access play areas were taken on an individual basis depending on family circumstance / need, but that many looked for somewhere quieter / smaller during peak times (e.g. school holidays) – this may not be as inclusive a space, though. When thinking about accessibility, it was important to consider how SEN children and their families tended to be viewed by wider society, and the fact that it required a high degree of confidence to go into a public space if they had previously had a negative experience.
- 4.84 Reflecting on the perspectives of these families, the Committee commended the Forum for shining a light on the value of smaller provision which some may regard as less important compared to the larger, busier play spaces – indeed, this emphasised the significance of neighbourhood sites such as Victoria Park, Thornaby. That said, Members were still keen to know the extent to which so-called 'doorstep' provision was accessed – the Forum agreed to attempt to ascertain this for the Committee and subsequently provided responses from its members, a selection of which included:

*I find the ones in housing estates the only ones we can go to as they're quiet. Bigger parks are far too busy to manage*

*I do think they should be more widely publicised though there are loads in Ingleby and some are quite well hidden!*

*They're a life line for us we struggle to access the bigger parks – my worry is if they make these little treasures better they will become inaccessible for us due to increased foot fall if that makes sense*

*... I don't drive so places like Preston park and ropner park are not just somewhere we can pop too often, although we would love too!*

*yes this is the part that is getting missed in consultation. Whilst the destination parks are great they are accessible to all for a variety of reasons. That's why the smaller ones are so important.*

*I see a massive purpose for these types of parks. They are often quieter so for our children they do help. They are also within walking distance for people who maybe don't have the transport to get to the bigger parks or just simply don't want to fight to get a parking space. They can be community building too, where you can meet other parents which allows a little less isolation.*

*They do have downsides in that gangs of older youths do tend to hang around and even break equipment. They are often not kept clean enough and broken glass can be an issue. But CCTV and timed lighting can be a help for this along with a scheduled care for your area maintenance program.*

*Although I'm only in Norton for me to get my 2 little ones to somewhere like ropner park it's 2 buses, which is a struggle in itself!*

*Also if one become unregulated or something upset them for example, it's not just a case of ok let's head home. It's then checking bus times, waiting for buses, buses being crowded, people staring, anxiety higher than my blood pressure and spending the rest of the night wondering why I bothered in the first place!*

*my worry is they will rip them all out as they don't see the value*

- 4.85 The Forum was thanked for its previous input on play area provision and the Co-Chair was asked to reflect this back to families. For their part, the Forum expressed gratitude for being given the opportunity to be part of the Committee's work and to highlight the variety of challenges faced by its members, some of which impacted their ability to access spaces that others took for granted.

### Other Council Experiences

- 4.86 SBC officers had contacted other Local Authorities for views / experiences around this scrutiny topic. Feedback was relayed which demonstrated the differing approaches to the provision of outdoor play areas, including:
- **Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council:** No consideration of rationalising spaces thus far, but, since 2018, any new play spaces that were required within new housing developments as part of the planning process would not be adopted (these would need to have a management company in place to maintain / inspect and repair). Any Section 106 off-site contribution raised from any new development would go to support existing play spaces for refurbishment or replacement.
  - **Wakefield Council:** Looking at a current proposal to remove five play areas, all of which were on tarmac surfacing, and three of which were of poor play value. The Council was looking at reducing its play area provision, not so much for financial reasons, but more around compliance and quality of what it was actually providing.

- [Leeds City Council](#): Increasing its provision, but also removed a couple of areas in consultation with ward members and residents. New provision was installed where there had never had a play area and the Council had obtained a commuted sum. Where possible, the Council liked to refurbish existing play areas before building new.

4.87 In addition, links to a selection of publications by several other Local Authorities were provided for the Committee's perusal. This included:

- [Brighton & Hove City Council](#)
  - [State of Play: current public play facilities across Brighton & Hove, describes the unavoidable impact of aging play equipment and makes suggestions to protect play provision across the city in the future](#)
- [Burnley Council](#)
  - [Burnley's Play Area Strategy 2017-2026](#)
- [Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council](#)
  - [Children's Play Areas / Playgrounds](#)
- [Newcastle City Council](#)
  - [Inclusive Play](#)
  - [Play Area Investment Plan](#)
- [Rochdale Borough Council](#)
  - [Play Area Strategy 2022-2031](#)
- [Walsall Council](#)
  - [Public consultation opens for proposed £1.6million investment in play facilities](#)



4.88 The decision of Barnsley not to adopt new play areas required within new housing developments as part of the planning process was discussed, with Members noting concerns that had previously surfaced around the use of management companies to maintain / inspect and repair a site (as well as other wider issues). SBC officers observed that this arrangement was not necessarily something that they would propose, though some spaces within the Borough did already involve management company oversight.

4.89 Continuing with this theme, it was suggested that the alternative situation of Councils assuming responsibility for future inspection / maintenance of a play area (requiring a 25-year lump-sum to cover maintenance) could be seen as a good deal for the developer who was able to pass long-term financial liabilities to a Local Authority. Shifting attitudes around play area expectations may lead to more sustainable provision, though ensuring the correct standard of any equipment was vital, irrespective of who was ultimately responsible for the provision of a specific play space.

## Future Options / Considerations

- 4.90 During the concluding session of the review's evidence-gathering phase, some suggested principles / discussion points were outlined regarding the possible future direction of travel regarding outdoor play provision across Stockton-on-Tees. Potential options included:
- Consider rationalisation of facilities while ensuring all communities had equitable access to play?
  - Encourage informal play or play outside of a formal setting?
  - Only develop / encourage new sites where there was a clear lack of provision and where SBC had a clear commitment of revenue for appropriate upkeep and renewal?
  - Focus resources on a smaller number of larger 'destination' sites which could cater for a wider demographic / catchment? This would allow SBC to invest its limited resources to ensure it meets a wider range of users and concentrate its revenue obligations.
  - Deliver / encourage 'doorstep' or 'neighbourhood' facilities only in areas where residents cannot easily access destination sites?
  - Should SBC continue to provide formal play provision in the Borough's rural country parks or should it prioritise urban, local provision?
  - Require officers to develop a strategy for play provision based on the guidance of scrutiny?
- 4.91 These potential options for the future provision of outdoor play spaces across the Borough were based on two overriding factors – firstly, SBCs current revenue budget did not allow it to maintain existing formal play parks to the standard it desired, and secondly, that the Borough had an unequal distribution of play facilities, and the Council should work to 'balance' provision to allow as many people as possible to benefit from play. Members were also reminded of the importance of informal play and the integration of the natural environment in terms of designing play spaces.
- 4.92 In related matters, the popularity / use of a site being enhanced by parking availability was raised. SBC officers noted that links with walking / cycling routes were also beneficial, and that whilst it would be challenging to address all inequalities which may / may not impact on play space use / access, factoring-in the ease of which people could get to / from sites should form part of a future strategic view of the Borough's offer.
- 4.93 The Committee further probed the definition of 'easy access' by pointing out the fact that some people did not have the ability to travel to larger 'destination' sites and therefore valued the provision of smaller play areas that were closer to their place of residence. SBC officers added that a focus on developing new / existing large-scale provision may be hindered by surrounding environmental restrictions, and that a balanced approach may well be needed to ensure the greatest access possible for the Borough's residents.
- 4.94 Members commented that the development of a Council play strategy, setting out principles for future decisions around outdoor provision, may be a useful outcome in determining any change to the existing offer. Given that revenue considerations were clearly critical, the Committee also expressed a need to see more detail around existing cost pressures of inspecting / maintaining current sites – this was subsequently provided (see paragraph 5.8).

## SBC Powering Our Future

- 4.95 Considerations around future engagement / communications in relation to this scrutiny topic need to be set within the context of the Council's '[Powering Our Future](#)' initiative – 'a new way of working for the Council which will see us work with our partners and communities to put in place new and innovative approaches allowing us to not only save money but also reshape what we do for the better and in the best interests of our residents'. Powering Our Future sets an outcome-focused direction for the Council and was based around five key missions; Colleagues, Communities, Partnerships, Transformation and Regeneration.
- 4.96 Initial work within the 'Communities' strand had focused on developing baseline information to help SBC better understand its communities. The recent residents survey and community conversations had allowed SBC to ask:
- what is good about the place you live?
  - what would make it better?
  - what could you do where you live to make it better?
  - what do you need help with to make it better?
- 4.97 The responses were helping SBC to build an understanding of its communities and would allow the Council to further explore its communities' strengths and what 'works well'. This would help SBC to inform a future 'Vision for the Borough' that was developed with, and jointly owned, by communities.

## Disability Action Plan

- 4.98 The [Disability Action Plan](#) (published on 5 February 2024) sets out the immediate actions the Government will take in 2024 to improve disabled people's everyday lives and lays the foundations for longer-term change, and includes measures looking at the accessibility of playgrounds.



- 4.99 The Department for Work and Pensions subsequently confirmed that the Disability Unit will create an online hub of information for local authorities on creating accessible playgrounds with a new families disabled people's experience panel helping to support the hub's development. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13415/>

## Funding

- 4.100 Given ongoing and well-established pressures on Local Authority budgets, the following potential funding streams were identified for consideration as part of any future outdoor play plans:



- **Fun & Active Playgrounds:** Playground Funding: Ultimate Guide To The Latest Government Initiatives & More  
<https://fun-play.co.uk/playground-funding-ultimate-guide-to-government-initiatives/>
- **Association of Play Industries (API):** Funding solutions for playground projects should try to be as inventive as possible. Some of the most successful playground projects have used several sources of funding – from section 106 payments to council match-funding and community-led fundraisers. A list with links to relevant websites is available at:  
<https://www.api-play.org/resources/funding/>
- **Local Government Association (LGA):** Identifying additional financing options for public sport and leisure services (including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)).  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/identifying-additional-financing-options-public-sport-and-leisure-services>

## 5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

- 5.1 Previous Council analysis highlighted issues with existing and proposed outdoor play provision, particularly with regards to a developing unevenness in the distribution of facilities, and cost pressures around the maintenance of sites / replacement of equipment. This review has therefore looked to fully examine the current situation in relation to the Borough's outdoor play spaces, with specific emphasis on three main elements: distribution of sites, maintenance requirements / costs, and accessibility / inclusivity factors.
- 5.2 The benefits associated with outdoor play provision are long-established in terms of a child's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. However, a challenge for SBC (as well as other Councils) is to ensure a high-quality play area offer which provides value-for-money and is, crucially, sustainable. The well documented pressures on Local Authority budgets have raised understandable questions about the ability to maintain existing facilities, let alone develop new ones.
- 5.3 There is no statutory obligation for Local Authorities to provide outdoor play spaces. However, there are legal requirements associated with the inspection and maintenance of such sites – responsibilities SBC is fully aware of. Regarding accessibility / inclusivity considerations, there is a need to be mindful of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which aims to ensure that all those who are disabled have the same access to public services (and by implication, public parks and playgrounds) as those who are not disabled.
- 5.4 A number of external bodies provide advice and guidance on designing, developing and installing play spaces – these include Play England (national children's play charity for England), Association of Play Industries (API) (lead trade body in the play sector), and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) (help people recognise and reduce their risk of accidents, at home, on the road, at work and at leisure). The latter is used by SBC to carry out annual inspections of existing play areas and safety surfacing, assessments of life-expectancy of equipment / areas, post-installation inspections of new sites, and 'play value' assessments.
- 5.5 As of December 2023, the Borough had 49 publicly accessible play areas and 20 sites with informal sport facilities (some of these were located at the same sites). SBC owned and managed the vast majority of these, and also managed five sites on behalf of Town / Parish Councils (*note: any facilities not freely accessible to the public (e.g. those located within school grounds, sports centres, or locations such as RSPB Salthome) were not within scope of this review*).
- 5.6 The categorisation of play areas is based mainly on the quantity and size of play equipment, but also took into consideration the provision of other facilities and services. 'Destination' sites are larger play spaces within parks that serve a wide catchment area and provide good play value for a range of users from toddlers to teenagers. 'Neighbourhood' sites are mainly situated within larger green spaces of a community (with a more moderate quantity of equipment), whilst 'doorstep' sites are smaller facilities which are located on green space or self-contained zones within housing areas (many of which have been installed by housing developers).

- 5.7 Ongoing inspection and maintenance of the Borough's outdoor play sites is a significant pressure area for SBC, involving a budget which has not been uplifted since before 2017. Indeed, there was a £60,000 shortfall in the annual budget allocation (£114,000) compared to the amount spent as of 14 September 2023 (£83,000) plus anticipated costs in relation to outstanding work still to complete (£92,000). If there is a desire to maintain the existing level of outdoor play provision across the Borough, a capital injection appeared necessary. Critically, the present budget is earmarked for maintenance only and is not a replacement fund – as such, the Borough has a large amount of valuable play equipment with no plan for the future.
- 5.8 Regarding 'play value' (determined by looking at the overall site, ambience, and suitability / value of equipment / features for the age groups for which the site is designed), SBC aims for a minimum rating of 'good' at each of its facilities – however, a raft of existing sites fell short of this when last assessed (2018). Recognising that a more up-to-date re-evaluation was required to provide an accurate picture of the current state and value of local facilities, RoSPA was recently commissioned by SBC to conduct an updated play value assessment of the Borough's existing outdoor play spaces. The results of this showed that, of the 39 play sites assessed:
- Only four scored at least 'good' across all graded categories; nine sites were rated at least 'average' across all graded categories (*note: SBC officers advised that the ratings given are RoSPAs assessments and are not national averages – in practice, a site rated 'average' is probably above the national average*).
  - Dependent upon usage and vandalism, seven had a (worst-case scenario) life expectancy of play equipment of 3-5 years plus; three sites were deemed to have 5-8 years plus.
  - A number of 'neighbourhood' play areas appeared to have surface issues.
- 5.9 The last significant investment in Stockton-on-Tees facilities was back in 2008 (though not all areas benefitted at that time), and since then, many sites had been provided or improved with section 106 contributions (funding from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure) as a result of housing developments. However, this had the potential for a higher density of smaller-space provision, and those areas of the Borough which had not seen new housing had therefore not gained in relation to additional / upgraded play facilities – a growing inequality of provision across the Borough has thus developed. As per the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA), forthcoming changes to planning obligations (the Infrastructure Levy (IL)) are due to be introduced – this would largely replace planning obligation except for 'large and complex sites', with the Council potentially losing its ability to use section 106 funding as it currently did.
- 5.10 In terms of the future creation of new play facilities, SBC planning advice indicated that larger scale developments were likely to justify a need for on-site provision due to the level of population increase across the site (indeed, policy direction indicates a preference for on-site provision). For smaller developments, however, there may be no requirement for open space to be provided, and it may be more appropriate for an off-site contribution (where necessary and justified). Where SBC was to assume responsibility for the maintenance of either on-site or off-site open space, the Council required a

commuted revenue lump-sum for the equivalent of 25 years maintenance – however, whilst this covered grounds maintenance, cleansing, and maintenance of the equipment in the play area, it did not tend to cover the future renewal of the play area. Careful consideration is therefore required around whether SBC should be adopting future play sites from developers (particularly in terms of proximity to other existing provision), and the Committee urges a focus on supporting the current portfolio as far as possible before additional spaces are agreed (adding to the long-term financial burden associated with these areas).

- 5.11 The high-profile Stockton waterfront scheme, which includes a new ‘destination’ play area, is a significant development with regards this scrutiny topic. Whilst assurance was given that longer-term revenue requirements for this substantial addition to SBCs play offer would be picked up and included as part of the future MTFP budget-setting process, the Committee remain concerned that, since SBC was not in a position to maintain what it already had (with Local Authority funding likely to get even tighter), this would further compound financial challenges which may have potential implications for other existing provision across the Borough.
- 5.12 From an accessibility / inclusivity perspective, there is a significant cost attached to certain play equipment which is not necessarily compatible for all those with a similar need (e.g. wheelchair-users). SBC should be commended for its previous engagement with Stockton Parent Carer Forum to better facilitate access for all, and there is a clear need to continue this dialogue as the Council reflects on the findings of this review, and makes future decisions around the types of equipment sourced and, as importantly, the location of this (particularly given the comments received from the Forum’s members in relation to the value of the smaller ‘doorstep’ sites).
- 5.13 Councils are adopting different approaches towards their outdoor play provision, ranging from increasing provision / consultation on proposed investment in facilities to rationalising / removing existing sites. For SBC, whilst there will be an understandable reluctance to compromise much valued resources for children / young people and their families across Stockton-on-Tees, it is clearly not sustainable to keep all existing play sites open, and difficult decisions will need to be made around removing / repurposing some sites. Allied to this, longer-term thinking about the maintenance and replacement requirements of the Borough’s existing and planned future offer must ensue to ensure quality, safe, accessible, and geographically balanced provision that lasts.

## **Recommendations**

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **SBC ensures both revenue and renewal considerations are an intrinsic part of any existing and future outdoor play space proposal within the Borough to maximise the long-term sustainability of such sites.**
- 2) **To encourage a greater sense of community ownership, consideration be given to approaching relevant Town / Parish Councils and the local business community within the vicinity of existing outdoor play spaces to potentially support the development / maintenance of a site.**
- 3) **Regarding future proposals by developers for new outdoor play spaces, SBC does not adopt any site installed by a developer which contravenes the key outcomes from this review.**
- 4) **SBC considers support of existing play areas before any additional outdoor play spaces are agreed / approved.**
- 5) **Regarding inequality of outdoor play provision across the Borough, SBC clarifies where it is deemed there is little / no provision and possible steps to address these inequalities (including, in exceptional cases, the provision of new play spaces).**
- 6) **As part of a required rationalisation process in relation to the existing outdoor play offer:**
  - a) **Informed by the recent (March 2024) RoSPA assessments and an analysis of the distribution of existing outdoor play provision, proposals for the removal / repurposing of sites be developed with the aim of reducing pressure on the overall parks budget.**
  - b) **Complementing sub-section a), SBC undertakes a piece of work around those sites requiring more urgent attention to ascertain costs of either removing the play area or raising it to an appropriate standard.**
  - c) **Further detail be provided around the anticipated longer-term maintenance requirements of the new Stockton waterfront park and the impact that this may have on the available funds for maintaining other existing outdoor play spaces.**
  - d) **With due regard to the SBC *Powering Our Future* initiative, appropriate consultation (particularly with Stockton Parent Carer Forum and SBC Ward Councillors) is conducted around any proposed changes to existing outdoor play provision.**

*(continued overleaf...)*

**Recommendations (continued)**

The Committee recommend that:

- 7) Reflecting the main outcomes from this review, SBC develops and publishes an outdoor play provision strategy which includes the following elements:**
  - **The Council's aims in relation to the provision of outdoor play spaces.**
  - **The locations and assessments of existing and outdoor play provision, as well as any planned developments.**
  - **The key challenges associated with providing these spaces.**
  - **How the Council will seek to address these key challenges (including guiding principles).**
  - **Timelines for action and who will be accountable.**
- 8) This final report be shared with the SBC Planning Committee for information only.**

## APPENDIX 1: Stockton-on-Tees Outdoor Play Provision – Updated RoSPA Assessments (Mar 24)

Site	Ward	P'code	Town/ Village	Designation	Owner	Site Assessment	Ambience	Toddler	Junior	Teen
Bishopsgarth	Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	TS19 8EL	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Good	Good	Average	Below Average	Average
Bluehall Rec	Norton Central	TS20 2JS	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Below Average	Average	Below Average
Bowesfield	Eaglescliffe East	TS18 3HD	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Below Average	Poor	Poor	Poor
Bullgarth	Billingham South	TS23 1ER	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Good	Poor	N/A	N/A
Carlton Avenue	Billingham West	TS22 5HU	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Good	Poor	Below Average	N/A
Cowpen Bewley W Park	Billingham East	TS23 3NF	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Good	Below Average	Poor	N/A
Devonport	Stockton Town Centre	TS18 2LE	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Excellent	Average	Below Average	N/A
Earls Meadow	Ingleby Barwick South	TS17 0PL	Ingleby B'k	Doorstep	SBC	Average	Good	Poor	Poor	N/A
<i>Elmwood Centre (planned)</i>	<i>Hartburn</i>	<i>TS18 5EP</i>	<i>Stockton</i>	<i>Doorstep</i>	<i>SBC</i>			<i>Not applicable</i>		
Grangefield Park	Grangefield	TS18 4LY	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Below Average	N/A
<i>Hardwick CP (planned)</i>	<i>Harwick &amp; Salters Lane</i>	<i>TS19 8QE</i>	<i>Stockton</i>	<i>Doorstep</i>	<i>SBC</i>			<i>Not applicable</i>		
Harold Wilson	Village	TS17 0HG	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Average	N/A
Hazeldean	Ingleby Barwick North	TS17 5NJ	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Below Average	N/A
High Grange	Billingham North	TS23 3UE	Billingham	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Below Average	Below Average	N/A
Hillbrook	Ingleby Barwick North	TS17 5BN	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Below Average	N/A
John Whitehead Park	Billingham Central	TS23 2DD	Billingham	Destination	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Leven Park	Yarm	TS15 9EY	Yarm	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Excellent	Average	Below Average	N/A
Limbrick Avenue	Fairfield	TS19 7PP	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Average	Below Average	Poor	Poor	N/A
Littleboy Park	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 7LD	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Below Average	N/A

## APPENDIX 1: Stockton-on-Tees Outdoor Play Provision – Updated RoSPA Assessments (Mar 24)

(continued)

Site	Ward	P'code	Town/ Village	Designation	Owner	Site Assessment	Ambience	Toddler	Junior	Teen
Long Newton	Eaglescliffe West	TS21 1BZ	Long Newton	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Good	Poor	Poor	N/A
Mary Street	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 7EW	Thornaby	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Good	Poor	Poor	N/A
Mill Lane	Stockton Town Centre	TS18 1BL	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	N/A
Newham Grange Park	Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	TS19 8AA	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Below Average	Below Average	Poor	N/A
Northshore	Stockton Town Centre	TS18 2SQ	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Excellent	Below Average	Poor	N/A
Port Clarence	Billingham South	TS2 1SH	Billingham	Neighbourhood	SBC	Good	Average	Poor	Average	Good
Preston Park	Eaglescliffe East	TS18 3RH	Eaglescliffe	Destination	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	N/A
Primrose Hill MUGA	Newtown		Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Ragworth Comm Centre	Roseworth	TS19 0LN	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Below Average	Average	Poor	Poor	Poor
Rievaulx Avenue Skate Park	Billingham Central		Billingham	Doorstep	SBC					
Redbrook	Roseworth	TS19 9HJ	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Average	N/A
Rochester Road	Roseworth	TS19 9DZ	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Average	Good	N/A	Below Average	Average
Romano Park	Ingleby Barwick South	TS17 0QP	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	N/A
Romney Green	Billingham North	TS23 3GQ	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Below Average	Poor	Poor	N/A
Ropner Park	Ropner	TS18 4DT	Stockton	Destination	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Average	N/A
Simonside	Ingleby Barwick South	TS17 0PE	Ingleby B'k	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Average	Poor	Poor	N/A
South Thornaby	Stainsby Hill	TS17 9JG	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Good	Good	Below Average	Average	N/A
<i>S'ton Waterfront (Planned)</i>	<i>Stockton Town Centre</i>	<i>TS18 3AD</i>	<i>Stockton</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>SBC</i>			<i>Not applicable</i>		
Thorpe Thewles	Northern Parishes	TS21 3JW	T Thewles	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Good	Below Average	Below Average	N/A
Tinkers Yard	Norton North	TS20 1NP	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Average	N/A



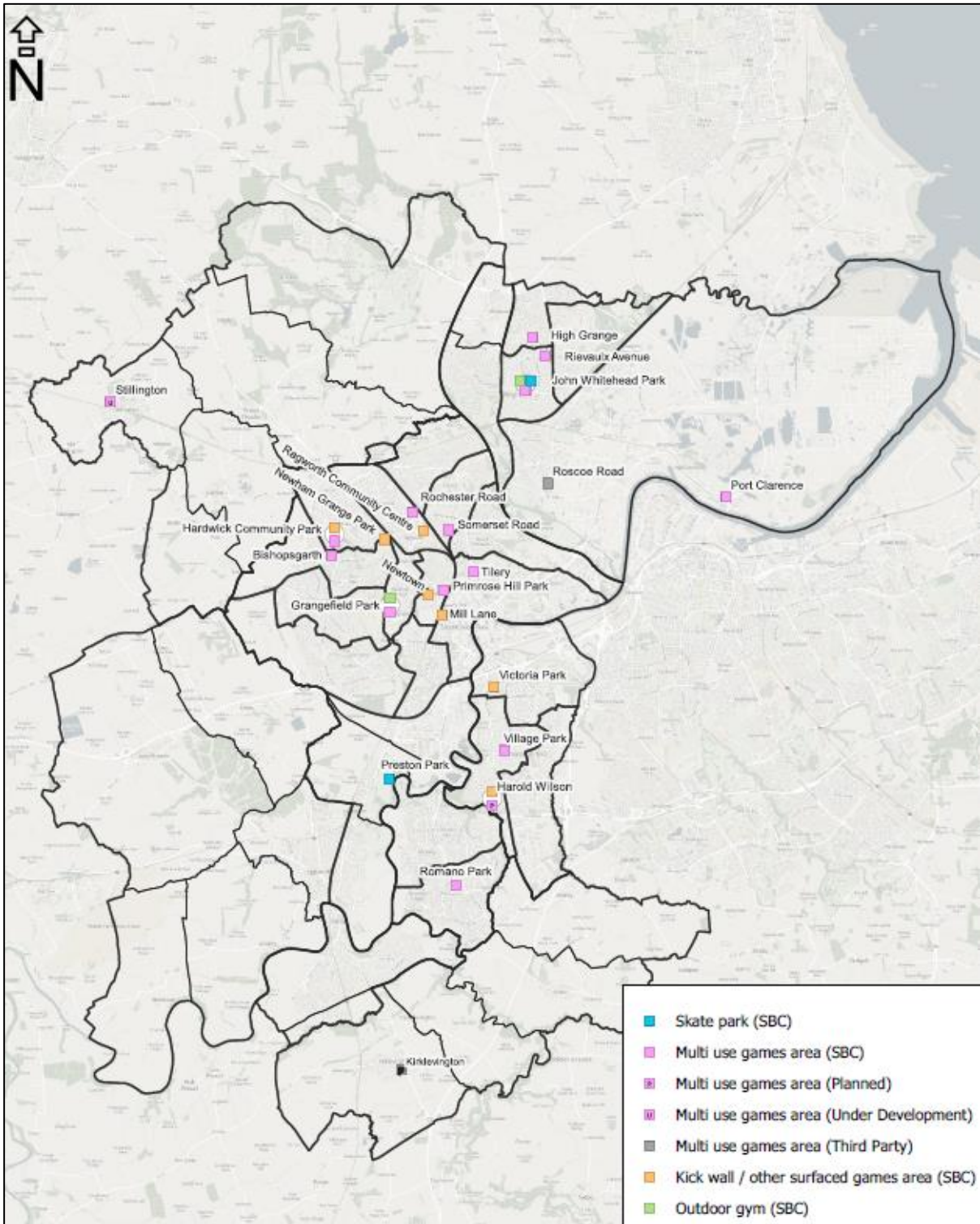
**APPENDIX 1: Stockton-on-Tees Outdoor Play Provision – Updated RoSPA Assessments (Mar 24)***(continued)*

Site	Ward	P'code	Town/ Village	Designation	Owner	Site Assessment	Ambience	Toddler	Junior	Teen
Victoria Park	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 6HJ	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	N/A
Village Park	Village	TS17 8JT	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Average	Below Average
Windmill Park	Ingeby Barwick South	TS17 0JH	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Average	Average	N/A
Wynyard Woodland Park	Northern Parishes	TS21 3JG	T Thewles	Destination	SBC	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Below Average

**RoSPA Play Value Assessments**

- \* The Play Value of each element of the site should be looked upon individually and assessed against the purpose that the operator has designated for the site (ie Toddler, Junior, Mixed, teenage etc).
- \* The Operator should aim for a minimum rating of Good for; the Site Overall, Ambience, and for those age groups for which the site is designed for.
- \* The assessments given are RoSPAs assessments and are not national averages. In practice a site rated "average" is probably above the national average

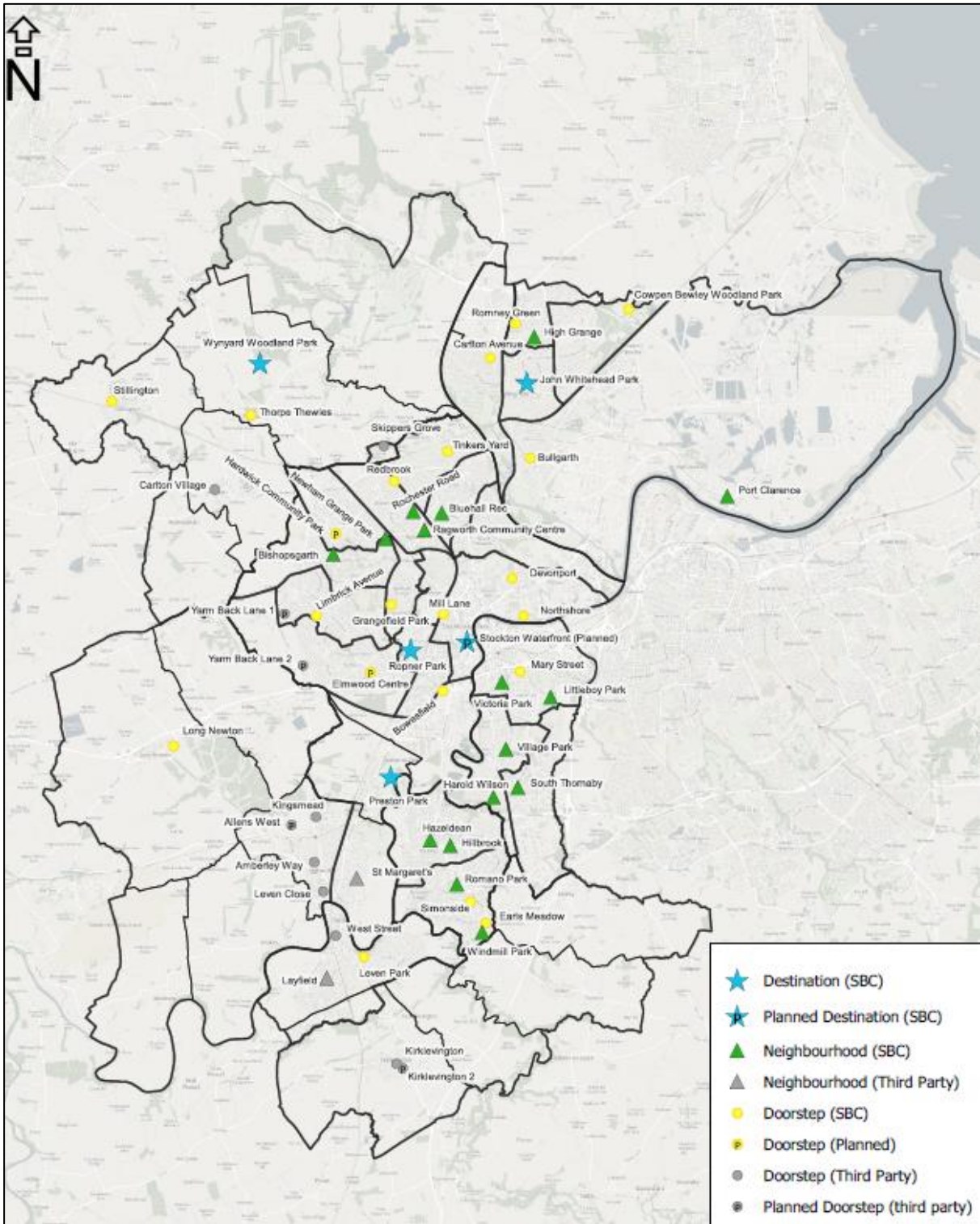
**APPENDIX 2: Stockton-on-Tees Informal Sport Facilities – Distribution (Dec 23)**



## APPENDIX 3: Stockton-on-Tees Informal Sport Facilities – List (Dec 23)

Site	Town / Village	Type:				Owner	Ward	Postcode
		Skate park	Multi use games area	Kick wall / other surfaced games area	Outdoor gym			
Bishopsgarth	Stockton		✓			SBC	Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	TS19 8EL
Grangefield Park	Stockton		✓		✓	SBC	Grangedfield	TS18 4LY
Hardwick Community Park	Stockton		✓			SBC	Hardwick	TS19 8RQ
Harold Wilson	Thornaby		Planned	✓		SBC	Village	TS17 0HG
High Grange	Billingham		✓			SBC	Billingham North	TS23 3UE
John Whitehead Park	Billingham	✓	✓		✓	SBC	Billingham Central	TS23 2DD
Kirklevington	Kirklevington		Planned			Third party	Yarm	TS15 9YZ
Mill Lane	Stockton			✓		SBC	Stockton Town Centre	TS18 1BL
Newham Grange Park	Stockton			✓		SBC	Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	TS19 8AA
Newtown	Stockton			✓		SBC	Newtown	TS19 0AT
Port Clarence	Billingham		✓			SBC	Billingham South	TS2 1SH
Preston Park	Eaglescliffe	✓				SBC	Eaglescliffe East	TS18 3RH
Primrose Hill Park	Stockton		✓			SBC	Newtown	TS19 0GA
Ragworth Community Centre	Stockton			✓		SBC	Roseworth	TS19 0FB
Rievaulx Avenue	Billingham		✓			SBC	Billingham West	TS23 2BD
Rochester Road	Stockton		✓			SBC	Roseworth	TS19 9DZ
Romano Park	Ingleby Barwick		✓			SBC	Ingelbey Barwick South	TS17 0QP
Roscoe Road	Billingham		✓			Third party	Billingham South	TS23 1HP
Somerset Road	Stockton		✓			SBC	Norton Central	TS20 2ND
Stillington	Stillington		Under development			SBC	Northern Parishes	TS21 1JL
Tilery	Stockton		✓			SBC	Stockton Town Centre	TS20 2AU
Victoria Park	Thornaby			✓		SBC	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 6HJ
Village Park	Thornaby		✓			SBC	Village	TS17 8JT

**APPENDIX 4: Stockton-on-Tees Play Areas – Distribution (Dec 23)**



## APPENDIX 5: Stockton-on-Tees Play Areas – List (Dec 23)

Site	Town/ Village	Designation	Owner	Play Value (2018 assessments)			Ward	P'code
				Toddler	Junior	Teen		
Amberley Way	Eaglescliffe	Doorstep	Eggle' & Eaglecliffe PC	Poor	Poor	N/A	Eaglescliffe	TS16 0NQ
Bishopsgarth	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Average	Average	Average	Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	TS19 8EL
Bluehall Rec	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Average	Good	Good	Norton Central	TS20 2JS
Bowesfield	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Poor	Poor	Eaglescliffe East	TS18 3HD
Bullgarth	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Poor	N/A	Billingham South	TS23 1ER
Carlton Avenue	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Below Average	Poor	Billingham West	TS22 5HU
Carlton Village	Carlton	Doorstep	Carlton PC	Not available			Northern Parishes	TS21 1QD
Cowpen Bewley W Park	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Average	Below Average	Average	Billingham East	TS23 3NF
Devonport	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Improvements made since 2018			Stockton Town Centre	TS18 2LE
Earls Meadow	Ingleby B'k	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Poor	Poor	Ingleby Barwick South	TS17 0PL
<i>Elmwood Centre (planned)</i>	<i>Stockton</i>	<i>Doorstep</i>	<i>SBC</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>			<i>Hartburn</i>	<i>TS18 5EP</i>
Grangefield Park	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Good	Below Average	Below Average	Grangefield	TS18 4LY
<i>Hardwick CP (planned)</i>	<i>Stockton</i>	<i>Doorstep</i>	<i>SBC</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>			<i>Harwick &amp; Salters Lane</i>	<i>TS19 8QE</i>
Harold Wilson	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent (2023)	Good (2023)	N/A	Village	TS17 0HG
Hazeldean	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Average	Average	Below Average	Ingleby Barwick North	TS17 5NJ
High Grange	Billingham	Neighbourhood	SBC	Below Average	Below Average	Below Average	Billingham North	TS23 3UE
Hillbrook	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Below Average	Average	Below Average	Ingleby Barwick North	TS17 5BN
John Whitehead Park	Billingham	Destination	SBC	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Billingham Central	TS23 2DD
Kirklevington	Kirklevington	Doorstep	Kirklevington & C L PC	Improvements made since 2018			Yarm	TS15 9LQ
<i>Kirklevington 2 (planned)</i>	<i>Kirklevington</i>	<i>Doorstep</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>Not available</i>			<i>Yarm</i>	<i>TS15 9YZ</i>
Kingsmead	Eaglescliffe	Doorstep	Eggle' & Eaglecliffe PC	Poor	Poor	Poor	Eaglescliffe West	TS16 0SD

## APPENDIX 5: Stockton-on-Tees Play Areas – List (Dec 23)

(continued)

Leven Close	Eaglescliffe	Doorstep	Eggle' & Eaglecliffe PC	Poor	Poor	Poor	Eaglescliffe West	TS16 0JT
Leven Park	Yarm	Doorstep	SBC	Average	Average	Average	Yarm	TS15 9EY
Limbrick Avenue	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Poor	poor	Fairfield	TS19 7PP
Littleboy Park	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Good	Average	N/A	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 7LD
Long Newton	Long Newton	Doorstep	SBC	Poor	Poor	Below Average	Eaglescliffe West	TS21 1BZ
Mary Street	Thornaby	Doorstep	SBC	N/A	Poor	Poor	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 7EW
Mill Lane	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Poor	Poor	Stockton Town Centre	TS18 1BL
Newham Grange Park	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Average	Below Average	Below Average	Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	TS19 8AA
Northshore	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Not available			Stockton Town Centre	TS18 2SQ
Norton Meadows	Stockton	Doorstep	Developer	Not available			Norton West	TS21 3NB
Port Clarence	Billingham	Neighbourhood	SBC	Poor	Average	Good	Billingham South	TS2 1SH
Preston Park	Eaglescliffe	Destination	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Eaglescliffe East	TS18 3RH
Ragworth Comm Centre	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	Poor	Poor	Poor	Roseworth	TS19 0LN
Redbrook	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Below Average	Below Average	Roseworth	TS19 9HJ
Rochester Road	Stockton	Neighbourhood	SBC	N/A	Below Average	Average	Roseworth	TS19 9DZ
Romano Park	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Ingleby Barwick South	TS17 0QP
Romney Green	Billingham	Doorstep	SBC	Not available			Billingham North	TS23 3GQ
Ropner Park	Stockton	Destination	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Ropner	TS18 4DT
Simonside	Ingleby B'k	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Poor	Poor	Ingleby Barwick South	TS17 0PE
Skippers Grove	Stockton	Doorstep	Developer	Not available			Roseworth	TS21 3NB
South Thornaby	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Poor	Below Average	Below Average	Stainsby Hill	TS17 9JG
Stillington	Stillington	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Poor	Poor	Northern Parishes	TS21 1LF
S'ton Waterfront (Planned)	Stockton	Destination	SBC	Not applicable			Stockton Town Centre	TS18 3AD
St Margaret's	Eaglescliffe	Neighbourhood	Eggle' & Eaglecliffe PC	Not available			Eaglescliffe East	TS16 9EG

## APPENDIX 5: Stockton-on-Tees Play Areas – List (Dec 23)

(continued)

Thorpe Thewles	T Thewles	Doorstep	SBC	Below Average	Below Average	Poor	Northern Parishes	TS21 3JW
Tinkers Yard	Stockton	Doorstep	SBC	Constructed since 2018			Norton North	TS20 1NP
Victoria Park	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Good (2023)	Good (2023)	Average (2023)	Mandale & Victoria	TS17 6HJ
Village Park	Thornaby	Neighbourhood	SBC	Average	Average	Average	Village	TS17 8JT
West Street	Yarm	Doorstep	Yarm TC	Poor	Poor	N/A	Yarm	TS15 9DB
Windmill Park	Ingleby B'k	Neighbourhood	SBC	Below Average	Average	Below Average	Ingeby Barwick South	TS17 0JH
Layfield	Yarm	Neighbourhood	Yarm TC	Poor	Below Average	Average	Yarm	TS15 9DN
Wynyard Woodland Park	T Thewles	Destination	SBC	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Northern Parishes	TS21 3JG

**APPENDIX 6: Committee Site Visits (Dec 23)**

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**Preston Park (Destination)**



*Observations / Comments*

- A couple of pieces of equipment currently out of commission (need replacing).
- Zip line removed as it had gone rotten, and high-rope climbing frame / walkway / slide structure is now 10 years-old (potentially moving towards the end of its life-span). However, existing focus is only on maintaining equipment, not replacing it (which costs significantly more).
- Not enough funding available for redevelopment of play site (even though plans are in place) – allocated monies for Preston Park is for the main building, not the park area.
- Difficult to achieve inclusivity here.
- Bark regularly topped-up but has to be raked every day – in this regard, it may be better to have a different type of ground surface (pulverised / crumb tyres an option, but concerns have been raised about potential risks to health regarding such material). SBC trialling carpet over existing soft surface.
- Integration with landscape was a key part of planning for the Preston Park outdoor play space.
- More high value equipment for teenagers within the play area, though this increases maintenance challenges and safety considerations. As such, more regular maintenance is required at this site (by two officers on a daily basis).





**Simonside Grove, Ingleby Barwick (Doorstep)**



*Observations / Comments*

- Sense of tokenism about this site – very little play value provided by the developer.
- Use could be very low given its proximity to residents' houses (a number of which will likely have personal play equipment within their own garden spaces) and nearby Windmill Park.
- Potential to convert this land into a shared community facility (e.g. orchard / garden) to benefit the environment and the local population.



**Windmill Park, Ingleby Barwick** (Neighbourhood)



*Observations / Comments*

- Next to a school that was involved in the park's development (which is now 12 years-old).
- Maintenance requirements not overly burdensome (general wear and tear), despite high usage – zip line does not cause maintenance problems.
- Aimed more at younger children (older children tend to navigate towards nearby Romano Park) – less vandalism occurs.
- No access to WiFi (which can encourage young people to gather) – this is only available at Wynyard Woodland Park.
- Park uses slopes / environment to create value.
- Simonside Grove (above) predates this park – there would be even less relevance for Simonside if this had already existed, given their proximity to one another.



**South Thornaby** (Neighbourhood)



*Observations / Comments*

- Located in centre of community – spread across three designated zones with different types of equipment in each (aimed at different age-groups).
- Well positioned given the nearby proximity of a community centre.
- Issues with vandalism / anti-social behaviour – some equipment removed.
- Surface recently re-painted.
- Value of some equipment questionable (quite bland) – Council does get involved in terms of choices made but developers sometimes are unwilling to engage.



**Victoria Park** (Neighbourhood)



*Observations / Comments*

- Previous issues with vandalism at this site (some shards of glass evident during the visit).
- Recently developed as part of Town Deal.
- Location of play space (surrounded by housing) gives it a good community feel.
- Variety of equipment for all ages.
- Roundabout is wheelchair-friendly – demonstration of what is possible regarding accessibility.



APPENDIX 7: Ropner Park, Stockton – Developments (Mar 24)



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## CABINET INFORMATION ITEM ONLY

### AGENDA ITEM

Delivering Better Value in SEND

DATE April 2024

REPORT OF SENIOR  
MANAGEMENT TEAM

### CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Lisa Evans

Delivering Better Value Agreement with DfE.

#### Summary

The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet that the Council successfully submitted a revised Delivering Better Value plan (DBV) to DfE on February 19, 2024. The plan was approved on behalf of the Council by the Director of Childrens Services and the Councils 151 Officer after positive scrutiny by DfE advisors and in accordance with delated authority. The Council is now awaiting the formal signature to the plan and agreement by Government Ministers.

Resulting from the submission, the LA is now in Phase 2 of the DBV programme which provides DfE grant funding to support the implementation of the action plan and SBC has been allocated £1m for this purpose. This funding, covering financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25, was originally based on 3 main initiatives but following the re-submission of the DBV plan it has been agreed with DfE to re-align the plan with the 8 DBV initiatives described later in this report (para 7a-h).

The agreement requires the Council to fully mitigate the aggregated DSG deficit by 2027/28 where lasting sustainability and reaching an in-year balance can be demonstrated for its High Needs Funding Budget.

Schools' forum with the DCS and AD for Education agreed to undertake a review of what was needed and how best to delivery for local children and school's forum to look at how they could support with extra places for SEND children who might otherwise need to be placed in expensive independent placements. School leaders were open to suggestions and a range have agreed to either expand existing provision or look at some capital works to create new spaces. Some of this work has begun and other elements are at the feasibility and planning stages.

The school's forum's banding group also agreed to some commissioning work for communication and speech and language needs prioritising work with younger children but also looking at transition work for older children. This is now underway, led by children's head of strategy and commissioning.

School leaders are now looking at creative ways of supporting groups of children with high needs funding rather than just individuals. This could mean moving individuals to be with one or two others to use funding more effectively whilst keeping them attached to a mainstream school.

The work programme described above may well necessitate some invest to save proposals which may not result in immediate savings but should result in a more fit for purpose HN system in Stockton; one that is in-line with the revised DBV plan and that will enable the LA to mitigate the aggregated DSG deficit by 2027/28.

School's forum have been kept abreast of developments and have helped to co-construct these innovative solutions in partnership with LA officers and the Director of Children's Services.

Considerable work has been undertaken to fully understand the needs of children and young people with EHCP plans together with consultation with school leaders and School Forum which has informed a DBV plan that will increase the number of children with a EHCP in mainstream schools through inclusion, improve outcomes for children and young people and reduce the need for EHCP's through earlier access to resources, and reduce costs and the need for out of area and costly settings.

**It is recommended that the report be noted.**

### **Background Information**

1. The Council entered the original Delivering Better Value agreement 2021/22 with a plan for financial years 2021/22 to 2026/27. The extended plan which now ends in 2027/28 reflects regional sufficiency pressures due to the increase in Children and Young People requiring Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP's).
2. The number of children and young people who have a EHCP in Stockton on Tees is 2048 which represents growth of 41% since 2019 which is consistent with national growth statistics and being reflected in the majority of Local Authorities in the region and nationally.
3. If left unmitigated the number of EHCP's is forecast to reach 2,564 by Jan 2027 which would result in an unmitigated aggregated deficit of £34.8m by the end of 2027/28 compared with a 2023/2024 forecast deficit of £3.57m.
4. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by Childrens Services and Finance and Performance Data colleagues which has informed the demand for EHCP's by the age and primary needs of children and young people requiring EHCP's and the sufficiency and budget required to meet these needs.
5. The SEND needs, sufficiency and budget analysis is the most comprehensive the Council has undertaken in this area, is the first time that detailed demand has been aligned with costs and has informed and enabled the production of a DBV plan that will improve outcomes for children and young people by meeting their needs earlier and increasing sufficiency in local mainstream schools; reducing the demand for EHCP's through earlier prevention and reducing budgets by reducing the necessity of more complex plans and out of area sufficiency.
6. The needs analysis evidences the increase in demand for services for children and young people with ASC (autism spectrum condition), SEMH (social, emotional, and mental health) and SLCN (speech, language and communication needs). Growth in these and other demands put pressure on in area sufficiency and budget sustainability through the need for out of area special and independent schools.



7. The evidence based needs analysis with the input of school leader has provided the key influencers on the plan and informed the following key strategies within it:-

**a. Strengthen support in early years.**

This project will upskill early years settings and practitioners, providing training opportunities and invest in appropriate resource to identify and meet need at the earliest opportunity through specialist knowledge and intervention. Objectives will also be achieved through the commissioning with schools and settings of quality speech and language intervention as well as communication and oracy support.

**b. Increase training and support locally.**

A robust CPD programme which will be available to stakeholders including schools, settings, and parents, with a particular focus to those working directly with children in the classroom. The aim of this will be to both provide support and sustainable skills in the workforce to embed good practice.

**c. Strengthen local offer through greater buy in from partners.**

Development of an integrated services model covering sensory support (HI/VI) speech and language, occupational therapy and we will develop a front door service for families. A Team around the School Service will work in targeted schools to navigate the array of services both within children's services but also health, police, community support and the wider local area providing a one stop shop to bring a variety of agencies together to work in complete partnership with the school.

**d. Strengthen EHC Plan Annual Review process to ensure EHC Plans meet the needs of all children.**

A robust review of current policy and process to ensure it meets statutory requirements but is also accessible to families, children and young people with clear pathways and strengthened outcomes. This will be completed in conjunction with the DfE Change programme and with the partnership of the parent carer forum.

**e. Increase capacity in local schools through capital projects.**

Increasing specialist placements locally within mainstream schools and introducing SEN Units and creating additional enhanced mainstream school places in line with rising need. These will be a combination of expansions, new provisions and creative solutions from mainstream schools. Special schools have also agreed to offer support where needed.

**f. Review of alternative provision and specialist support**

Addressing the rising challenges of high numbers of pupils at risk of, or permanently excluded from schools in Stockton and ensuring alternative provision is high quality and meets need and demand alongside early intervention to identify and support needs of children.

**g. Develop and implement a strategic banding review for mainstream schools.**

A review of the high needs funding banding system currently in place to ensure it meets the needs of children and supports school to invest in their provision and support effectively. This has been developed in collaboration with schools and is looking at the creative use of funding beyond the one child focus.

**h. Develop our post 16 offer to create more opportunities and clear pathways.**

Development of a hybrid post 16 provision and increased opportunities for supported internships, alongside strengthening pathways and transition planning.

**Consultation and Engagement**

As part of work with schools forum, the parent carer forum and bespoke strategic sessions with a range of school leaders and council officers ideas have been considered developed and worked through. Families and young people have also been consulted and engaged fully in the process.

**Next Steps**

7. We will appoint a temporary post for the strategic lead of DBV for initially 12 months and, work with the DfE and local partners to develop good practice and continue to work with schools to develop capital work and feasibility for future projects while also giving consideration of the AP Free School. Specific next steps are as follows:

<b>Project Milestones</b>	<b>By When</b>
Implementation of resourced provision in Stockton Schools which will highlight good practice and areas of expertise and used to fill gaps within other schools.	September 2024: Phase 1 September 2025: Phase 2
Development of a SEND Front Door Service to address inequalities with parental support, satisfaction and lived experience.	May 2024: Implementation
Development of a comprehensive SEN Support strategy starting from the early years outlining our commitment to support children with SEN in mainstream schools and promoting an inclusive learning environment for all.	January 2025: Completion of strategy
Investment in specialised SEND services including educational psychologists, speech therapists and occupational therapists who will provide tailored support to meet the needs of our children with SEND.	Summer 2024: Discovery Phase
Implementation of strengthened multi-agency collaboration through SEND Development Group strategic partners aligned. This will address needs holistically and promote seamless transitions between services and phases of education.	April 2024: Group establishment
Invest in CPD, ongoing training and development opportunities to strengthen and enhance inclusive e teaching practices in mainstream classrooms.	July 2024: Initial Implementation
A robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan and identify continuous improvement and sufficiency.	December 2024

**Name of Contact Officer: Elisha Smith**  
**Post Title: Service Lead SEND**  
**Telephone No. 01642 527164**  
**Email Address: elisha.smith@stockton.gov.uk**



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## AGENDA ITEM

## REPORT TO CABINET

DATE 16 MAY 2024

## REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

### CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Leader - Councillor Robert Cook

#### A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Progress Update

##### Summary

As members will recall Cabinet endorsed 'A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees: A Strategic Framework for Reducing Inequalities' in October 2021. The Fairer Stockton-on-Tees (FSOT) Framework details the Councils long term vision and commitment (over a 10 year period) to tackling inequalities in the borough. This report provides an overview of recent activity to address poverty and inequality including examples of how we work in partnership and collaboration with both our local communities and wider statutory and VCSE partners.

The FSOT Framework is fundamentally aligned to the Councils Powering Our Futures programme (specifically the Communities Powering Our Future and Transformation Powering Our Future missions).

##### **Recommended that the report be noted.**

Cabinet are asked to:

1. Note the range and variety of activity (detailed in **Appendix 1**) which has been undertaken or is ongoing in partnership with our local communities, VSCE and broader partners.
2. Note that whilst the FSOT Framework is aimed at addressing inequalities, due to the current economic situation and the cost of living challenges faced by many of the boroughs residents there has been a focus on addressing and mitigating the impact of poverty.
3. Note that work is ongoing with those with lived experience to develop an Anti-Poverty Plan (and supporting Action Plan) and this will be presented back to Cabinet at the September 2024 meeting.

##### Detail

###### Embedding FSOT within the Council

1. Since the introduction of a FSOT work has been ongoing to ensure that all Council employees understand the role they play in addressing inequality and that poverty and inequality are considered in all decisions made. A programme of promotional activity has been undertaken which has included the introduction of a FSOT logo (see **Appendix 1**),

the logo is intended to clearly identify activity which supports the Councils approach to address poverty and inequality and is used by all Council Service directorates.

2. To ensure all policies, strategies, and decisions (at all levels of the organisation) are considered with a “poverty and inequality lense” a Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) Toolkit is being developed. It is anticipated that the EPIA Toolkit (including guidance and templates) will be rolled out from summer 2024. This will include training/support for both existing colleagues and all new starters and will be incorporated within the ‘workforce development’ plan developed as part of the Colleagues Powering our Future workstream.
3. As members will recall one of the key commitments of the FSOT Framework was to consider the Council as a major Commissioner and purchaser. The Council has adopted a Social Value Policy which is directly aligned and supports key council strategies including the FSOT Framework. In addition a Corporate Social Responsibility working group has been established bringing together colleagues from across the Council, Catalyst and Thirteen with the aim of ensuring the boroughs local businesses can support the activities of our local VCSE organisations (by volunteering time, services and/or monies). This programme of activity will be ongoing and to date has included CRS Breakfast Networking events (which have brought business and VCSE representatives together) and a dedicated web page on the Catalyst website.
4. In April 24, Cabinet approved the scope of the 14 Transformation Reviews as part of the Powering our Futures Programme of activity. A number of these reviews such as the Early Help and Prevention Review will be cross cutting, outcome based reviews which will have a specific focus on in addressing and supporting those experiencing inequality.

#### Cost of living focused activity

5. **Appendix 1** provides a detailed overview of the work undertaken to directly support those who are experiencing poverty and or financial challenges. Some examples are detailed below:

##### *Universal activity targeted to all residents of the borough:*

- Establishment of a Here to Help Hub (a one stop shop) on the Councils website providing information on a range of support services available, from the Council and its wider partners.
- Cost of Living Booklets (2 to date). The initial booklet culminated in a 10,000 print run due to demand for copies from SBC venues, community and partner venues and wider venues such as GP’s services). Feedback from residents has been positive in terms of ensuring they receive timely advice on the range of support services available to them.
- Here to Help Events were held across the seven Community Partnership areas (between Sept 23 to March 24). Events brought together a range of support services (internal and external to SBC), events were well attended and positively received.
- Community Spaces (previously know as Warm Spaces) to date there is a network of nearly 70 Community Spaces who have developed not only to support residents over the winter months but are now implementing/developing a broader support offer (i.e. social isolation and facilitating leaning & skills courses). Most venues (supported by residents and VCSE partners) are committed to providing a year round offer and provide practical examples of communities, with some seed funding from the Council building on their strengths and supporting themselves.

### Targeted activity

- Winter Warm Boxes funded through monies secured through Stockton District Advice and Information Service distributed to residents in need.
- Introduction of The Bread and Butter Thing (funded by Household Support Fund monies and Thirteen), five mobile food hubs have been established across the borough to provide affordable food to people on low income whilst reducing food waste, supporting nearly 400 families each week. Each Hub is now run by local volunteers and an anchor VCSE partner.
- Food Aid Fund (again monies secured by the Household Support Fund) supported over 60 organisations support residents struggling with food related issues.

### Support to colleagues (Council and partner):

- Cost of Living quarterly newsletter. The quarterly e-newsletter was created to ensure colleagues have access to a range of information to best support and refer residents they are working with.
- Attendance at Staff Engagement Events to support colleagues who may themselves be experiencing financial pressures.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

6. The FSOT Framework will support residents across all wards of the borough. Engagement with local ward members has and will continue to be undertaken when activity is locality focused.

## **Next Steps**

### Going forward

7. Examples of current / ongoing FSOT focused activities include:
  - The development of an Anti-Poverty Plan (and Action Plan). This work is being developed through a bottom-up approach ensuring that residents affected or have lived experience of poverty/financial insecurity can contribute and influence the Plan through a co-produced approach. For example, Thive (a local organisation advocating the voice of poverty lived experience) have both led on the recruitment and supported peer researchers who have carried out a range of interviews and developed case studies. Once drafted the Anti-Poverty Plan (and supporting Action Plan) will be presented to Cabinet.
  - A larger scale Here to Help event is planned for July this year. This event will be held on Stockton High Street, the event will include a range of activities for families and young people and will again be supported by a range of partner organisations.
  - As part of Project Harmony (operating within the Ropner Ward) the Council will continue to work with Cleveland Police and our wider statutory and VCSE partners. This will include working closely with residents to help empower communities to help them build on their strengths, improve community engagement with services and boost community confidence to strengthen trust and collaboration at a community level.
  - Ongoing support to local community groups and organisations, at the Clarences for example local residents are being assisted to develop support services which they have

identified and will be delivered by the community (including cost of living focused activities aimed at supporting those most affected/disadvantaged).


- Delivery of the 2024 Household Support Fund (6-month grant funding allocation covering April to September). Once again funding will be aligned to a number of initiatives which directly support low income and/or finally vulnerable households in the borough.


**Name of Contact Officer:** Jane Edmends  
**Post Title:** Assistant Director Housing & A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees  
**Telephone No.** 01642 526682  
**Email Address:** jane.edmends@stockton.gov.uk



**ADDENDIX 1:**


**Examples of Fairer Stockton-on-Tees (FSOT) initiatives undertaken and work ongoing**

<p><b>FSOT Branding</b></p> 	<p>FSOT identity (brand) has been launched and is increasingly being embedded into inequality and poverty related activity across the council. Guidance on use of the brand has been circulated and published via KYIT.</p>
<p><b>Working directly with our local communities, community engagement and development</b></p> <p><i>(Powering Our Communities)</i></p>	<p>Examples include the ongoing work with residents in the Clarendons to assist them in developing support services which directly support their local community needs and working with local residents as part of Project Harmony to help empower residents and build on community strengths.</p>
<p><b>Anti-Poverty Plan</b></p> <p><i>(Powering Our Communities)</i></p>	<p>Both the Anti-Poverty Plan and supporting Action Plan are being developed through a ‘bottom up approach’ ensuring that residents affected by poverty and those with lived experience can contribute, influence and are directly involved / engaged in formulating this work. Examples of how this is being progressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thrive (local organisation advocating the voice of live experience) has led on the recruitment and supported Peer Led Researchers to carry out in depth interviews/case studies.</li> <li>- Feedback from Thrive (via 50 lighter touch interviews).</li> <li>- Nearly 100 conversations have taken place with service users and groups across the borough to understand the issues affecting families in relation to poverty.</li> <li>- The range of conversations, surveys, interviews etc. continue to take place and feed into the strategy and action plan.</li> </ul> <p>The Anti-Poverty group (made up of residents with lived experience) now also meets bi-monthly to help support and develop this work.</p>

<p><b>Equality &amp; Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) Toolkit</b></p>	<p>Ongoing development through a cross SBC 'Task and Finish Group'. The Group have agreed a project plan and an initial EPIA template and guidance. Next steps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing a data warehouse to support Officers in completing EPIA's (core data accessibility held in 1 place).</li> <li>- Developing an online EPIA forms.</li> <li>- Launching and embedding the EPIA process in all service teams (ensuring EPIA is considered at the being of a decision making progress and/or project rather than at the end of the process).</li> <li>- A process for ongoing monitoring &amp; evaluation.</li> </ul>
	<p>In addition to the work to embed Corporate Social Responsibility within Council procurement processes, Council officers are working with Catalyst to bring together VCSE organisations and local businesses. Several events have been held, bringing together businesses and VCSE organisations, via a Corporate Social Responsibility Network aimed at maximising the role businesses can play through CSR (volunteering time, services or money) to address inequality. These events now take place quarterly led by a project group comprised of private, public and VCSE representatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Catalyst have been successful in securing National Lotteries monies to fund a CSR bespoke role who will work alongside SBC to further develop the CSR work.</li> <li>- A <a href="#">Quarterly CSR newsletter</a> continues to be developed and shared across both businesses and VCSE sector.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3-yr peer advocacy pilot for those with complex needs</b> <b>(Powering Our Communities)</b></p>	<p>The pilot programme (led by Public Health) addresses the challenges faced by its residents with multiple complex needs, aiming to build support and achieve transformative outcomes through peer advocacy. The project is funded through ICB health inequalities funding and has been developed based on local need, national evidence &amp; good practice. Delivery by Recovery Connections (Contract awarded Nov 2023), peer advocates have been recruited and trained. Action research &amp; evaluation with peer researchers via Teesside University is ongoing (NHIR funding for research secured).</p>

### Examples of Cost of Living activity

<p><b>Cost of Living Scrutiny Review</b></p>	<p>The work undertaken by the Council in response to the Cost of Living challenges has been subject to a recent scrutiny review (People Select Committee). The Committee took evidence from a range of partners including Thrive Teesside, Catalyst, the Stockton-on-Tees Food Power Network, Unite Union, the Local Government Association, Moneywise, and Stockton and District Advice &amp; Information Service. Recommendations from this scrutiny review will influence ongoing development of the Anti-Poverty Action Plan and the Councils ongoing approach to supporting residents.</p>
<p><b>Here to Help <a href="#">COL HUB</a></b> (one-stop information point on the Councils website)</p>	<p>The top five pages visited over recent months were Household Support Fund, Support for people with long term disabilities or long-term health conditions, Energy Saving schemes and advice, Welfare assistance schemes and the Winter Wellbeing guide.</p>
<p><b>Cost of Living Booklet 'We're here to help'</b></p>	<p>The booklet was refreshed and reissued in Autumn 2023. This culminated in a 10,000 print run due to the number of requests for copies (SBC venues, community and partner venues and wider external venues such as GP surgeries). Feedback from residents and partners has been positive i.e. the booklet has been essential in helping those affected by the Cost of Living situation. The 2023/24 edition is attached <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>COL Quarterly newsletter</b> (for partners and colleagues)</p>	<p>The latest edition for January 2024 can be seen <a href="#">here</a>. The e-newsletter has been created to help support employees and people we work with manage through these difficult times using the help and support that is available from the Council and our partner organisations. The next newsletter will be distributed at the beginning of April 2024.</p>
<p><b>Winter Wellbeing</b></p>	<p>In partnership with Public Health, a Winter Wellbeing guide and a webpage was developed to help support those affected during the winter months.</p>
<p><b>Winter Warmth Boxes</b></p>	<p>Funding through an energy provider was secured through CAB and circulated to those residents needing Winter Warmth Boxes which contained Thermos flask, Thermal hat, Thermal gloves, Thermal socks, Wind up torches, 3 Hot Chocolate sachets, Cost of living Here to Help booklet, CAB leaflet etc.</p>
<p><b>Here to Help Events</b> (overview of those held / Summer 2024 planning)</p>	<p>Events have been held across the 7 Community Partnership areas between Sept 23 – March 24, bringing together internal/external colleagues to support our residents on a range of issues. These continued to be developed, for example, a larger scale event will be held on the 20 July in Stockton High Street with activities and events for families and young people.</p>

<p><b>Regular features in Stockton News</b></p>	
<p><b>Data Bank Project</b></p>	<p>Supporting vulnerable individuals and families with free mobile data, calls and texts. This work is supported by the <a href="#">Good Things Foundation</a>. In March 2024, 15 vouchers have been issued.</p>
<p><b>Food Aid Fund (Winter 2023)</b></p>	<p>Funding secured through the Household Support Fund the Council to provide grant funding to 60 organisations to support residents struggling with food related issues.</p>
<p><b>'The Bread &amp; Butter Thing'</b></p>	<p>5 mobile food hubs have been established across the Borough, each providing affordable food for people on a low income whilst reducing waste and building communities. All 5 Hubs are now up and running (and being fully maximised with nearly 400 families being supported each week). Details on locations can be found <a href="#">here</a>. An article of promoting the Hubs can be viewed <a href="#">here</a>. An event to bring together the volunteers to offer support, thanks and training opportunities will be held in Summer 2024. Since the schemes launched (until the end of March 2024) 6752 sets of good had been sold / and the schemes have an collective active membership list of 2300 members.</p>
<p><b>Community Spaces</b> (previously known as Warm Spaces)</p>	<p>Work is ongoing with VCSE partners to develop a <i>year-round offer</i>. Funds (£60k split between 2023/24 and 2024/25) have also been secured from Public Health to support organisations become sustainable in the long-term during. To date, a network of more nearly 70 Community Spaces continue to develop and grow, with outreach support from key organisations, activities to combat social isolation and positively impact outcomes for individuals and families. A range of provision continues to be offered through venues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Access to funding workshops with regular access and support to funding information.</li> <li>- Stockton Learning &amp; Skills continue to offer free courses across our Community Spaces including creative writing, crafts, local history and art.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Council's Welfare Advice and Information Officer has been providing outreach support in some venues.</li> <li>- The Employment and Training Hub also continue to offer support at Community Hubs to access jobs and training provision. Between August and October 2023, over 70 people registered with the Hub, and therefore extended the pilot work into 2024.</li> <li>- Tees Active are continuing to provide reduced-rate sessions for soft play and swimming, with an improved offer of extending the soft play times at IB Leisure and Billingham Forum.</li> </ul> <p>An interactive directory and map of venues across Stockton-on-Tees can be seen <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Child Poverty</b></p>	<p>Currently, work is ongoing to explore auto-enrolment of eligible pupils onto free school meals. The benefits are two-fold (a) pupils whose parents/carers may have been unaware they qualify for FSM can now enjoy a hot and nutritious meal (links to FSOT's food poverty / health objectives) and (b) each FSM allocation adds pupil premium to a school's funding.</p> <p>As part of the Here to Help offer, we will be holding activities for children and young people at an event on the 20 July 24 to provide free provision to ensure that our children and young people have 'something they have attended' during the summer holidays.</p> <p>Quarterly Child Poverty events will now also be held with key partners and service leads to continue to develop areas of work needed to support this agenda.</p>
<p><b>Community Transport (Volunteer Driver Scheme)</b></p>	<p>Working in partnership with Catalyst, Volunteer Matters have been appointed to develop a volunteer driver scheme. The initial 1 year pilot is currently in the process of recruiting volunteer drivers.</p>

Approved

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## AGENDA ITEM

## REPORT TO CABINET

16 MAY 2024

## REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

### CABINET DECISION

#### Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing – Councillor N Cooke

#### SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION

##### SUMMARY

As members will recall a report was presented to Cabinet in October 2023, which sought approval to commence consultation on the proposed implementation of Selective Licensing in 3 areas of the borough **Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown**. This decision was informed by an evidence based assessment (**Appendix 1** 'Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal' and **Appendix 2** the 'Supporting Evidence Base') informed by relevant Government Guidance (DLUHC Selective Licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities' updated June 2023). At this meeting, Cabinet granted approval 'in principle' to pursue a Selective Licensing scheme in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown and for a programme of public consultation to be undertaken.

This report details the consultation process undertaken, the responses received, and the considerations given to the views/representations received. Following consideration of the consultation findings, Cabinet are asked to determine whether they now wish to proceed with Selective Licensing designations in the Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown areas.

##### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS

The private rented sector has seen rapid growth over recent years and as per the 2011 census now accounts for 17% of the borough's housing stock and is a significant tenure in the 3 areas proposed for Selective Licensing (50% in Central Stockton, 41% in North Thornaby and 45% in Newtown). Whilst the Council recognises that private rented housing provides a valuable housing offer in terms of meeting housing need and providing choice it can also bring a challenge. Some of these properties are poorly managed and in areas of low housing demand and/or higher-than average levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Selective Licensing is an additional tool which the Council will use, working alongside a range of other existing measures to improve property condition standards and the management of private rented housing in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. As noted above the proposed Selective Licensing designated areas have been identified following a evidence-based assessment, which was carefully undertaken in accordance with Government Guidance.

##### RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Note the consultation programme undertaken with the aim of ensuring that the Council took “reasonable steps to consult with person who are likely to be affected by the designation” as required by Section 80(9) of the Housing Act 2004, and in accordance with Government guidance. The consultation process undertaken is detailed in the ‘Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report’ **Appendix 3** chapter 2).
2. Note the outcome of the consultation process as detailed in **Appendix 3** ‘Consultation Findings Report’ and the Council’s considerations of these representations **Appendix 4** ‘Summary of representations made to the consultation and the Council’s considerations and responses’.
3. Agree that the Selective Licensing Proposal Paper (**Appendix 1**) and the Supporting Evidence Base (**Appendix 2**) met the legal requirements for introducing Selective Licensing designations (as detailed in paragraphs 4 to 6 of this report).
4. Agree, subject to approval of recommendations 1, 2 and 3 to authorise the designation of Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown, as delineated in the attached red line maps (**Appendix 5a, 5b and 5c**, with supporting street listings), for Selective Licensing to last for 5 years from the date of the designations coming into force.
5. Note that there are no changes proposed to the Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown areas as previously considered by Cabinet on the 12 October 2023 (red line maps **Appendix 5a, 5b, 5c**).
6. Note that changes are proposed to the License Conditions previously considered by Cabinet (12 October 2023) and to approve the proposed License Conditions attached at **Appendix 6**.
7. Approve the final fee structure and discounts as detailed in paragraph 16 - 19 of this report.
8. Agree that authority to issue the required statutory notifications in relation to Selective Licensing Designation is delegated to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration.
9. Note that upon approval (if granted), that the scheme will be publicised via an agreed communications plan and in accordance with the Regulations before the designations come into force.
10. Agree that subject to the issue of statutory notifications, that the Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration be authorised to decide the date from which the Council will begin to accept applications for Selective Licensing.

## DETAIL

### Background

1. The private rented sector has grown significantly in recent years both nationally and locally. Within the borough of Stockton-on-Tees, the percentage of households renting their home from a private landlord has increased from 13.1% to 17% between the 2011 and 2021 census’. Nationally, the private rented sector (based on the 2021 census) accounts for 20.3% of the total housing stock in England. With the Department of Communities and Local Government (now DLUHC) highlighting that areas are considered as having a high proportion of privately rented properties if they are above this national level. The 3 proposed Selective Licensing designated areas have a private rented sector well above the national and borough averages; Central Stockton 50%, North Thornaby 41%, and Newtown 45%.
2. Whilst the Council recognises that the private rented housing sector provides a valuable housing offer (in terms of providing housing choice and meeting housing need) it can also bring



challenges; some properties are poorly managed, some do not meet satisfactory standards and/or are in areas where private rented housing is a significant tenure.

3. On the 12 October 2023, Cabinet considered the evidence base for Selective Licensing (**Appendix 2**), what other options to Selective Licensing are available to the Council (detailed on pages 22 to 23 of **Appendix 1**) and how Selective Licensing would fit within the Council's corporate strategies, including the Housing Strategy (detailed on pages 13 to 15 of **Appendix 1**). It was noted that the Council had undertaken a detailed assessment of evidence available in terms of proposing the 3 Selective Licensing areas to ensure that it complies with the statutory tests.

#### The legal framework for Selective Licensing

4. Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (the Act) sets out the scheme for licensing private rented properties in a local housing authority area. Under section 80 of the Act, a local housing authority can designate whole or any part of its area as subject to Selective Licensing, subject to two prerequisites. Firstly, section 80(9) of the Act requires the housing authority to have taken reasonable steps to consult persons likely to be affected by the designation, and to consider any representations made in response. Secondly, section 80(2) of the Act requires that the proposed licensing scheme must satisfy one or more of several specified statutory conditions, which are set out in sub sections 80(3)(a),(b) and (6) of the Act:

a) *That the area is, or is likely to become, an "area of low housing demand"; and that the proposed designation will contribute to the improvement of the social or economic conditions in the area when combined with other measures taken in the area by, or in cooperation with, the local authority;*

b) *That the area is experiencing a "significant and persistent problem" caused by anti-social behaviour ('ASB'); that some or all of the private sector landlords letting premises in the area have failed to take action which it would be reasonable for them to take to combat the problem; and that the proposed designation will, when combined with other measures, lead to a reduction in or elimination of the problem.*

5. In March 2015, the Government extended the conditions for designation of selective licensing in England. The Selective Licensing of Houses (Additional Conditions)(England) Order 2015/977 came into force on 27 March 2015, and permits licensing where:-

The area contains a high proportion of properties in the private rented sector, being properties which are occupied under assured tenancies or licenses to occupy, and one or more of specified further conditions also apply:

- Housing conditions: the local housing authorities consider it appropriate and intends to carry out inspection of a significant number of properties to determine the existence of category 1 and 2 hazards, with a view to taking any necessary enforcement action;
- Migration: the area has "recently experienced or is experiencing an influx of migration into it"; a significant number of properties are occupied by migrants; and the designation will assist the local housing authority to preserve or improve conditions in the area, ensure properties are properly managed, or prevent overcrowding;
- Deprivation: the area is "suffering from a high level of deprivation, which affects a significant number of the occupiers of [the] properties" and the designation will contribute to a reduction in deprivation;
- Crime levels: the area "suffers from high levels of crime"; criminal activity affects persons occupying the properties; and the designation will contribute to a reduction in crime levels "for the benefit of those living in the area".

6. Having due regard to the above. the areas proposed for Selective Licensing are:

- **Central Stockton**

This is an area of older, predominantly terraced housing and forms part of the Stockton Town Centre and the former Parkfield and Oxbridge (now the Ropner) wards. Selective Licensing is proposed on the basis this area is or is likely to become an area of low housing demand, has a high concentration of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

In the proposed Selective Licensing designated area **50% of properties are private rented** (significantly above the national average of 20.3% and borough average of 17%). This is also an area where:

- House prices are considerably lower both than the national and borough averages.
- 10% of properties in the proposed designation area were empty as of the end of March 2023, compared to a national average of 2.7% and the borough average of 2.4%.
- 63.5% of properties empty in the area have been empty for longer than 6 months.
- 89.1% of properties with the area fall into Council Tax Band A (compared to the 39.1% borough average and the national average of 23.5%).
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation identified that the Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield & Oxbridge ward (which this area straddles) are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

- **North Thornaby**

This is an area of older, predominantly terraced housing and forms part of the Mandale & Victoria ward. Selective Licensing is proposed on the basis that this area is or is likely to become an area of low housing demand, has a high concentration of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

In the proposed Selective Licensing designated area **41% of properties are private rented** (significantly above the national average of 20.3% and borough average of 17%). This is also an area where:

- House prices are considerably lower both than the national and borough averages.
- 11.2% of properties in the proposed designation area were empty as of the end of March 2023, compared to a national average of 2.7% and the borough average of 2.4%.
- 69% of properties empty in the area have been empty for longer than 6 months.
- 80.5% of properties with the area fall into Council Tax Band A (compared to the 39.1% borough average and the national average of 23.5%).
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation identified the Mandale and Victoria ward is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

- **Newtown**

This is an area of older, predominantly terraced housing and forms part of the Newtown ward.

Selective Licensing is proposed on the basis that this area is experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, with high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average), and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

In the proposed Selective Licensing designated area **45% of properties are private rented** (significantly above the national average of 20.3% and borough average of 17%). This is also an area with:

- Higher-than-average crime rates when compared to other areas of the borough.
- Higher than average reported ASB incidents when compared to other wards. The ward also ranks above the borough average for crime per 1000 population for reports of domestic abuse, criminal damage and arson.
- 11.2% of properties in the proposed designation area were empty as of the end of March 2023, compared to a national average of 2.7% and the borough average of 2.4%.
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation identified that Newtown is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

7. The detailed evidence basis for the justification to why each of 3 areas is proposed as a Selective Licensing designated area is included in **Appendix 1** (the Selective Licensing Proposal paper) and **Appendix 2** (Evidence Base). These document how the proposed areas met the legal criteria for designation.

#### Selective Licensing Consultation

8. Before a Selective Licensing designation area can be approved it is a legal requirement to consult for a period of not less than 10 weeks. The Council's consultation commenced on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and closed at 4pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024. In summary the consultation consisted of:

- A resident\*, business and stakeholder questionnaire (\*the term 'resident' includes tenants of private rented and Registered Provider properties, and owner occupiers).
  - o Promoted through the distribution of 5,600 leaflets to addresses within the 3 proposed Selective Licensing areas and areas directly adjacent to / surrounding each of the 3 areas. This was supported by a press release, an article in the November edition of Stockton News, the Council's website, and social media.
- A landlord questionnaire (which was also shared with letting/managing agents).
  - o Promoted through direct contact with 260 private landlords and letting agents using a PLuSS distribution list and the Council's Landlord Accreditation scheme. A further 426 letters were sent to landlords and letting agents who were identified via Land Registry checks and via the Government approved Tenancy Deposit Schemes.
- Attendance at several community events (at the request of local community groups and representatives).
- 2 landlord events (one in person and one on line).
- Direct correspondence to stakeholders (including the borough's Members of Parliament, Thornaby Town Council, registered Housing Providers, local ward councillors, Thornaby Town Council, Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade).

9. In total 231 completed questionnaires were received, 12 email responses and 3 written replies from organisations representing landlord groups (the PLuSS, National Residential Landlords

Association and safeagent). **Appendix 3** 'Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report' provides a detailed breakdown of responses on a question-by-question basis (broken down by respondent group). The open questionnaire responses, the 12 email responses and the NRLA, PLuSS and safeagent replies were also analysed and are reported separately as detailed in **Appendix 4**, which also details the Council's considerations and response/s to the comments received.

### Overview of the consultation findings

10. A breakdown of the questionnaire responses has identified that 112 (49%) responses were received for Central Stockton, 77 (33%) for North Thornaby and 42 (18%) for Newtown. The table below details the questionnaire responses by responder group and area:

	Total number of responses received	Total % of responses received	Number of responses by area		
			Central Stockton	North Thornaby	Newtown
<b>Landlord/managing agent</b>	99	43%	43	36	20
<b>Residents</b>	116	50%	59	37	20
<b>Stakeholder*</b>	16	7%	10	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>42</b>

\* Analysis of stakeholder responses identified a response was made by the MP for Stockton North, Cleveland Police, a local business, VCSE groups and others who identified themselves as an 'other interested party'.

11. **Support for Selective Licensing** (total responses):

- **72 (62%) of residents** who responded to the consultation questionnaire agreed with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 32 (28% disagreed), 6 (5%) were not sure and 6 (5%) did not respond to the question.
- **11 (69%) of stakeholders** agreed with the proposal, 3 (19% disagreed), 0 (0%) were not sure and 2 (13%) did not respond to the question.
- **3 (3%) of landlords and letting/managing agents** agreed with the proposal, whilst 82 (83% disagreed), 6 (6%) were not sure and 8 (8%), 0 (0%) did not respond to this question.

12. Breaking down responses by responder group, landlords/managing agents are generally opposed to the Selective Licensing proposal in each of the 3 areas. Residents and stakeholders are generally supportive of the proposal in the Central Stockton and Newtown, the position is mixed in North Thornaby:

#### **Central Stockton:**

Landlords/managing agents (of those who responded to the question):

- **2 (5%) agree** with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 2 (5%) are not sure and 34 (90%) do not agree.

Residents and stakeholders (of those who responded to the question):

- **48 (74%) agree** with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 3 (4%) are not sure and 14 (22%) do not agree.

#### **North Thornaby:**

Landlords/managing agents (of those who responded to the question):

- **0 (0%) agree** with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 1 (3%) was not sure and 33 (97%) do not agree.

Residents and stakeholders (of those who responded to the question):

- **17 (44%)** agree with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 3 (7%) are not sure and 19 (49%) do not agree.

**Newtown:**

Landlords/managing agents (of those who responded to the question):

- **1 (5%) agreed** with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 3 (16%) are not sure and 15 (79%) do not agree.

Residents and stakeholders (of those who responded to the question):

- **18 (90%)** agree with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, 0 (0%) are not sure and 2 (10%) do not agree.

**13. The proposed Selective Licensing Fee (£653.00 per property):**

- Of the 90 landlord/managing agents who responded to this question only **5 (4.5%) agreed** with the proposed fee, the majority 85 (76.5%) did not support the fee proposal.
- When split by proposed Selective Licensing area 33 (of 37) landlords did not support the fee proposal in Central Stockton, 34 (of 34) did not support in North Thornaby and 18 (of 19) in Newtown.

**14. License conditions:**

Landlords/managing agents (of those who responded to the question):

- Of the 85 landlords/managing agents who responded to this question **37 (44%) agreed** with the proposed license conditions, whilst 48 (56%) disagreed.
- When considered at an area level the position varied i.e. 14 (of 36) landlords agreed with the license conditions in Central Stockton, 13 (of 33) in North Thornaby and 10 (of 16) in Newtown.

Residents and stakeholders (of those who responded to the question):

- Resident/stakeholder support for the proposed license conditions varied for each of the proposed areas, for example 54 (of 66) agreed in Central Stockton, 21 (of 41) in North Thornaby and 20 (of 21) in Newtown.

Several narrative comments were received in relation to the license conditions from all parties and following consideration changes are proposed. These changes are detailed in chapter 1 of **Appendix 4** and in the updated Selective License conditions attached at **Appendix 6**.

15. As noted previously **Appendix 3** 'Selective Licensing Consultation Findings Report' provides a detailed breakdown of responses on a question-by-question basis (broken down by respondent group). Whilst **Appendix 4** 'Summary of representations made to the consultation and the Council's considerations and responses' details all narratives replies received (as the consultation provided an opportunity for all respondents to comment on their proposal in their own words). All comments received were considered and the following key themes were identified:

- Selective licensing is not necessary/the Council has existing powers to address poor landlords/will not benefit those involved.
- Landlords will decide to sell their properties.
- Landlords will pass the costs onto tenants by increasing rents.
- It is just another income for the Council.
- Selective Licensing treats good and bad landlords in the same way / penalises good landlords.
- Reclassification of homes as holiday lets (i.e. Airbnb).

- The fee is too high.
- Discounts are not sufficient.
- The scheme will not include all properties / should include Registered Housing providers.

The proposed Selective Licensing Fee

16. The key concerns themes raised by landlords/managing agents included:

- Costs being passed onto tenants (rents increasing).
- The Selective Licensing scheme being a “money making scheme”.
- The fee being another tax on landlords.
- The fee being too high.
- The proposed £50.00 discount not being enough.
- There should be more discounts i.e. for landlords who own multiple properties, for studio flats, early applications and that discounts should be multiple.

For residents and stakeholders concerns related to:

- Costs would be passed onto them (rents increasing).
- Existing difficulties due to the current cost of living challenges.

17. As highlighted in the 12 October 2023 Cabinet report, the proposed fee structure is based on meeting the running costs of Selective Licensing over a 5 year period. The Council is not permitted, nor does it seek, to make a financial profit from Selective Licensing. That said, in recognition of the concerns noted, a review of the proposed fee has been undertaken. Whilst it is **not proposed** to alter the proposed fee structure, Cabinet are asked to approve an **updated fee discount** proposal (detailed overleaf).

The proposed Selective Licensing Fee

<b><u>STANDARD FEE APPLICATION = £653.00 per property</u></b>	
Application Fee	£178.00 per property.
Annual Fee	£95.00 per property for each of the 5 years the scheme will be in operation.

<b><u>LATE FEE APPLICATION = £753.00 per property</u></b>	
*Where an application is received more than 28 calendar days after the property becomes licensable and reminders are sent, and/or an incomplete application is received (and returned) and is not complete within a 28 calendar day period.	
Application Fee	£278.00 per property.
Annual Fee	£95.00 per property for each of the 5 years the scheme will be in operation.

Fee discount proposal

<p><b>A. £50.00 per property for accredited landlords (members of the Council’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme, a member of PLuSS, or those who are members of national landlord scheme) <u>at the time of the license application.</u></b></p> <p>This discount will be applied to the Annual Fee (on a pro-rata basis).</p>	<p>Detailed in the original proposal – <b>NO change</b></p>
<p><b>B. £75.00 per property for those who as of 31.5.24 are either members of the Council’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme or a full PLuSS member.</b></p> <p>This discount will be applied to the Annual Fee (on a pro-rata basis).</p>	<p><b>NEW</b> discount</p>
<p><i>Please note discount A or B WILL NOT be cumulatively applied</i></p>	
<p><b>C. Discount for landlords with 2 or more properties.</b></p> <p><b>£25.00 discount per property will be applied after the application of property 1.</b></p> <p>This discount will be applied to the Standard Application Fee.</p>	<p><b>NEW</b> discount</p>

18. Members are asked to note that a detailed programme of advertising / direct contact will be made with private landlords to raise awareness of the Selective Licensing designation if supported by Cabinet. In addition this would be supported by guides and support for landlords will the aim of ensuring that all apply / supply the necessary documentation within the required timelines, therefore mitigating ‘late fee’ charges.
19. The rationale for the revised discount proposal is to support those landlords who have actively worked in partnership with the Council, to recognise the application process for administering multiply properties owned by the same landlord/letting agent and maintaining a fee structure which is as low as possible both in terms of the initial Application Fee and Annual Fee.

Next steps

20. Should Cabinet agree to proceed with Selective Licensing this will trigger a formal notification by way of a designation notice, which must be followed by a period of at least 3 months before any scheme can come into effect. Following the issue of the designation notice Cabinet are asked to delegate authority to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration to set a date for license applications to be invited and processed. Once effective, the scheme will be in place for a period of 5 years, subject to periodic reviews.
21. To deliver Selective Licensing it is important that appropriate and suitably qualified staff are appointed. Phased recruitment will commence once a final Cabinet decision has been made, phased recruitment will allow the team to ‘flex’ depending on the number of Selective Licensing applications received.

Renters (Reform) Bill update

22. As part of its 2019 manifesto the Conservative party committed to “create a fairer private rental sector” with the Government aiming to deliver this through the Renters (Reform) Bill. Jacob Young MP has recently written to Members of Parliament (letter dated 27.3.24) on this matter and included in this correspondence was reference to “*undertaking a review of local authority licensing schemes*”. The letter notes that with the introduction of a new Property Portal (where landlords will be legally required to register themselves and their properties) some landlord

groups have sought assurance this will not duplicate existing licensing scheme (both Selective and HMO Licensing). Whilst the letter references this review will aim to reduce burdens on landlords no detail is provided on what this will entail, nor a timeline of the review. In addition the Renters (Reform) Bill is part way through the legislative process and is now at the 'report stage' at the House of Commons. A series of amendments to the Bill have been proposed which include a reference to removing the ability of local housing authorities to designate areas "as *subject to selective licensing*". The Bill and the proposed amendments will be subject to further debate/scrutiny by the House of Commons and House of Lords prior to receiving Royal Assent. This situation will be closely monitored, and should Cabinet decide to move forward with the Selective Licensing designations then this will be considered and acted upon as/when further information is made available regarding what the final Bill will entail.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

23. As noted within the body of this report a Selective Licensing designation will affect three areas of the borough, Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown and all private sector landlords and private sector occupiers in these areas. To inform the Selective Licensing scheme due regard has been given to both legislation and Government guidance and the Council is confident that it has robust evidence to justify the proposals and meet the relevant statutory tests. The introduction of Selective Licensing is intended to enhance the both the management and condition of private sector housing, it is not considered to have an adverse differential impact on groups or individuals with protected characteristics living in proposed designated areas.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

24. The proposed Selective Licensing scheme will be self-financing through the charging of fees. As noted within the body of the report, the proposal is to introduce a standard fee of £653.00 per license with 3 discounts available (as detailed in table following paragraph 17-19). All monies received via income will be ring-fenced to deliver the scheme and will not be used to fund any other Council services. The scheme will be closely monitored, and a team proportionate to the demand of the service will be employed.

25. A limited number of roles will be appointed to prior to the scheme formally accepting applications with the aim of ensuring that once live the scheme can be delivered in a quick and effective manner. Salary costs incurred will be recoverable via the Selective Licensing fee income.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

26. As noted in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report, Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (the Act) sets out the scheme for licensing private rented properties in a local housing authority area.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

27. A risk assessment has been undertaken to inform the Selective Licensing proposal, this include financial risks, the potential of legal challenge and practical scheme implementation issues. Existing management systems and daily route activities have been identified to mitigate and reduce potential risks.

## **AFFECTED WARDS AND CONTUATION WARD/COUNCILLORS**

28. Stockton Town Centre: Councillors P Beall and P Rowling.  
Ropner: Councillors S Hussain and S Mubeen.  
Victoria & Mandale: Councillors R Eglington and N Gale.  
Newtown: Councillor M Surtees.



## BACKGROUND PAPERS

29. Selective Licensing Consultation Narrative Responses (collation of all comments received).  
Details are available.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Jane Edmends  
**Post Title:** Assistant Director (Housing & A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees)  
**Telephone No:** 01642 526682  
**Email Address:** [jane.edmends@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:jane.edmends@stockton.gov.uk)

### Supporting Appendix Information

Appendix Ref.	Appendix Name	Appendix Overview
1	Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal	Details the rational for the Selective Licensing proposal.  <i>This document formed part of the 12.10.23 Cabinet report (no changes have been made).</i>
2	Selective Licensing Supporting Evidence Base	Details the evidence basis for the 3 proposed Selective Licensing designation areas.  <i>This document formed part of the 12.10.23 Cabinet report (no changes have been made).</i>
3	Consultation Findings Report	Provides the details of consultation question replies on a question by question basis and by responder group.
4	Summary of representations made to the consultation and the Council's considerations and responses:	Provides details of the narrative responses received as part of the consultation exercise, the key themes and what considerations the Council has made.
5a	Red line map: Central Stockton (with street listing)	Details the proposed Central Stockton designation area.  <i>This document formed part of the 12.10.23 Cabinet report (no changes have been made).</i>
5b	Red line map: North Thornaby (with street listing)	Details the proposed North Thornaby designation area.  <i>This document formed part of the 12.10.23 Cabinet report (no changes have been made).</i>
5c	Red line map: Newtown (with street listing)	Details the proposed Newtown designation area.  <i>This document formed part of the 12.10.23 Cabinet report (no changes have been made).</i>
6	Selective Licensing Conditions	Details the proposed NEW Selective Licensing conditions. Updated following analysis of the consultation replies.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SELECTIVE  
LICENSING SCHEME  
PROPOSAL**

**2023**

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## FOREWORD

Over recent years the borough of Stockton-on-Tees has seen a growing privately rented housing sector (rising from 5.2% of the borough's housing stock in 2001 census to 13.1% in 2011 and 17% in the 2021 census).

Whilst Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Council) recognises that private rented housing provides a valuable housing offer in terms of meeting housing needs and providing housing choice it can also bring a challenge. Some of these properties are poorly managed, are in areas with high concentrations of private rented housing (well above the national average of 20.3%), experience low housing demand and/or higher-than-average levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

We want to achieve a healthy private rented sector with good quality properties all managed to a high standard. This document (and the supporting information outlined in the attached appendices) sets out the Council's proposal to introduce Selective Licensing in **Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown**, which we believe will support this objective.

We are a listening Council, and to inform our next steps, we will undertake a consultation exercise to ensure that everyone who is likely to be affected by the proposed introduction of Selective Licensing has an opportunity to comment and give their views. We encourage residents, private sector landlords, local businesses and our partner agencies in the statutory, community and voluntary sectors to consider our proposal and feedback their views. Information about the different ways to participate in the consultation is detailed in Chapter 9 of this proposal paper and in Appendix 3: Consultation Plan.



**Councillor N Cooke**  
**Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing**

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Housing Act 2004 gives the Council powers to introduce Selective Licensing for privately rented properties. This document (and **Appendix 1** – Supporting Evidence Base) sets out the Council’s proposal to implement Selective Licensing of privately rented homes in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT AT THIS STAGE THESE PROPOSALS ARE NOT FINALISED. Following consultation, the Council will consider all responses received. We will then publish a Consultation Report and prepare a report for the Council’s Cabinet for a decision on whether the three areas identified should be designated as a Selective Licensing area.

- 1.1 Within the borough of Stockton-on-Tees there is a growing private rented sector. The private rented sector accounted for 5.2% of the borough’s housing stock in the 2001 census, 13.1% in the 2011 census and 17% in the 2021 census. This sector is important in meeting the borough’s housing needs, so it is vital that accommodation on offer meets satisfactory standards and is well managed.
- 1.2 Within the borough there are concentrations of private rented accommodation often in areas suffering low housing demand and/or experiencing high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Although many landlords operate professionally, the Council is concerned about landlords who rent out properties that fail to meet satisfactory standards of tenancy and property management.
- 1.3 Selective Licensing is a scheme where all private landlords of properties within a defined boundary must have a licence before they can let those properties out. The licence will have conditions attached to ensure the properties are and continue to be safe and well-managed.
- 1.4 For the Council to be able to declare a selective licensing designation it must be able to satisfy one or more of the following conditions:
  - low housing demand (or a likelihood to become such an area),
  - a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour,
  - poor housing conditions,
  - high levels of migration,
  - high levels of deprivation, and/or
  - high levels of crime.
- 1.5 A designation can be in force for a maximum of 5 years.
- 1.6 This document makes the case for introducing a Selecting Licensing Scheme within 3 areas of the borough - **Central Stockton, North Thornaby** and **Newtown**. The Council is proposing that Selective Licensing is required within each of the proposed locations on the basis that:

- **Central Stockton** and **North Thornaby** are areas that are or are likely to become areas of low housing demand, have high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and are experiencing high levels of deprivation.
- **Newtown** is an area experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, with high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

1.7 The Council is therefore undertaking a consultation exercise to ensure that everyone who is likely to be affected by the proposal has an opportunity to express their views and understands the rationale which supports the introduction a Selective Licensing scheme.

### **The proposed designated area**

1.8 This document has been prepared to support the proposal for the introduction of a Selective Licensing Scheme in 3 areas of the borough; '**Central Stockton**', '**North Thornaby**' and '**Newtown**'.

1.9 These 3 areas have been identified using an evidence-based approach. A summary of the evidence is incorporated into chapter 4 of this report, with a full breakdown of the evidence detailed in **Appendix 1 – Supporting Evidence Base**.

**The Council is keen to hear the views of those who are likely to be affected by the Selective Licensing proposal, including local tenants, landlords, managing agents and members of the community who live, operate businesses or provide services in the proposed designated areas and/or the surrounding areas.**

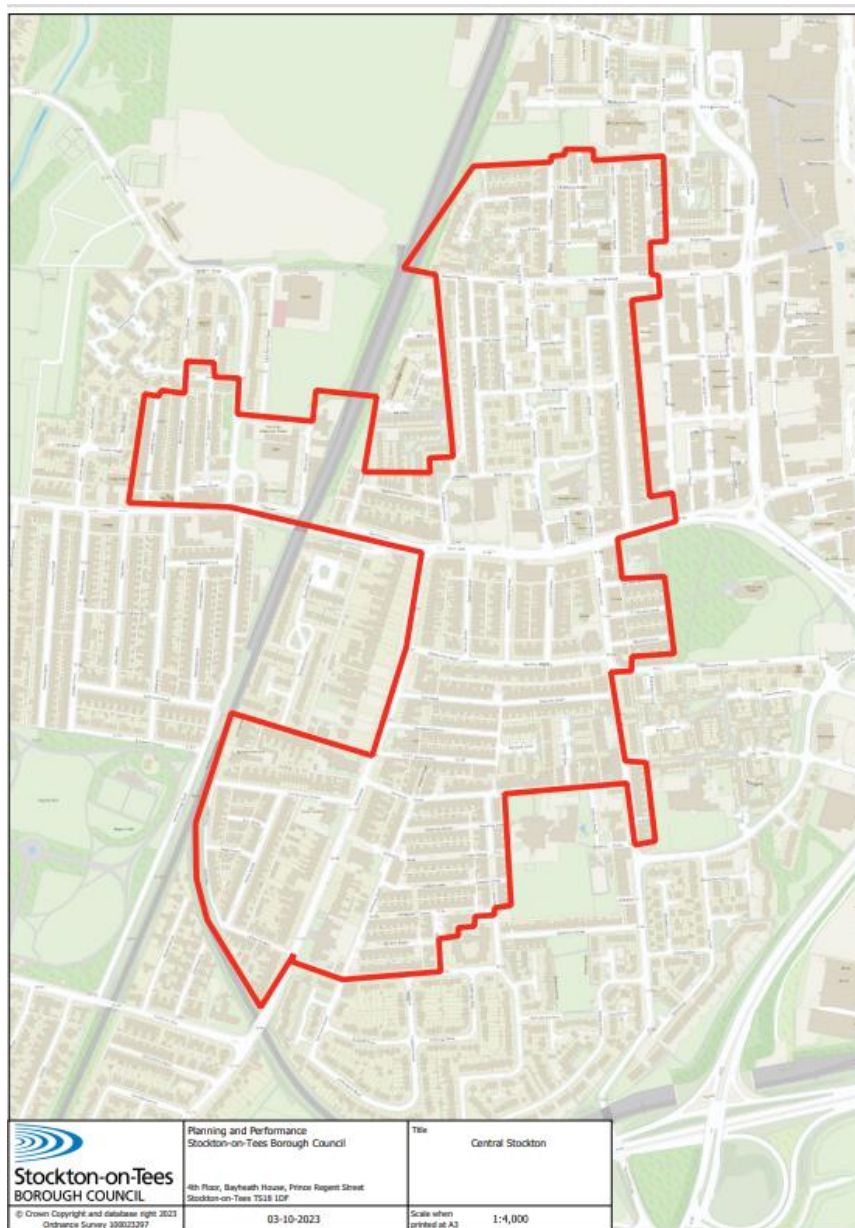


## Central Stockton

This area is predominantly older terraced housing and forms part of the Stockton Town Centre and Roper wards. Throughout this document and all supporting information, the area will be referred to as **Central Stockton**.

In the proposed Selective Licensing designated area 50% of properties are private rented (well above national and borough averages).

**The map below identifies the proposed Central Stockton Selective Licensing designated area:**



## North Thornaby

The area is predominantly older, terraced housing and is in the Mandale & Victoria ward. Throughout this document and all supporting information, the area will be referred to as **North Thornaby**.

In the proposed Selective Licensing designated area 41% of properties are private rented (well above national and borough averages).

**The map below identifies the proposed North Thornaby Selective Licensing designated area:**

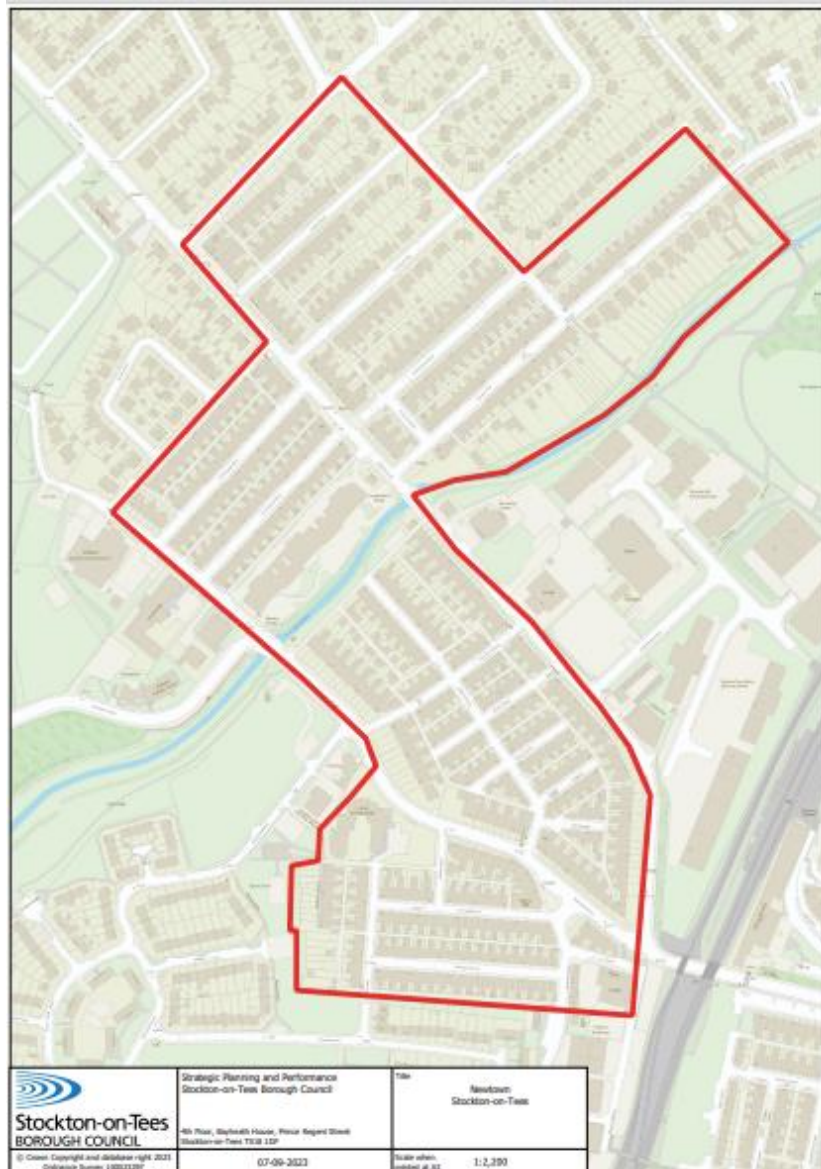


## Newtown

The area is predominantly older, terraced housing and is in the Newtown ward. Throughout this document and all supporting information, the area will be referred to as **Newtown**.

In the proposed Selective Licensing designated area 45% of properties are private rented (well above national and borough averages).

**The map overleaf identifies the proposed Newtown Selective Licensing designated area:**



**Larger maps of each proposed designated area, together with a list of streets included in the proposal are shown in Appendix 2.**

## CHAPTER 2: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This section of the report summaries the legal requirements necessary for the introduction of Selective Licensing in an area.

2.1 Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 (the Act) sets out the scheme for licensing private rented properties in a local housing authority area. Under section 80 of the Act a local housing authority can designate the whole or any part of its area as subject to selective licensing, subject to two prerequisites. Firstly, section 80(9) of the Act requires the housing authority to have taken reasonable steps to consult persons likely to be affected by the designation and to consider any representations made in response. Secondly, section 80(2) of the Act requires that the proposed licensing scheme must satisfy one or more of a number of specified statutory conditions, which are set out in sub sections 80(3)(a) and (b) and (6) of the Act: -

*a) That the area is, or is likely to become, an “area of low housing demand”; and that the proposed designation will contribute to the improvement of the social or economic conditions in the area when combined with other measures taken in the area by, or in cooperation with, the local authority;*

*b) That the area is experiencing a “significant and persistent problem” caused by anti-social behaviour (‘ASB’); that some or all of the private sector landlords letting premises in the area have failed to take action which it would be appropriate for them to take to combat the problem; and that the proposed designation will, when combined with other measures, lead to a reduction in or elimination of the problem.*

2.2 The Act goes on further to state in section 80(4) that in deciding whether an area is, or is likely to become an area of low housing demand a local housing authority must take into account, among other matters:

- a) The value of residential premises in the area, in comparison to the value of similar premises in other areas which the authority consider to be comparable (whether in terms of types of housing, local amenities, availability of transport or otherwise);
- b) The turnover of occupiers of residential premises; and
- c) The numbers of residential premises which are available to buy or rent and the length of time for which they remain unoccupied.

2.3 Guidance produced by Communities and Local Government: ‘Approval steps for Additional and Selective Licensing Designations in England’ adds that local housing authorities should also consider other factors in determining low demand which may include:

- a) A lack of mixed communities in terms of tenure, for example, a high proportion of rented property and a low proportion of owner-occupied properties;
- b) A lack of local facilities, for example shops closing;
- c) The impact of the rented sector on the local community, for example, poor property condition, anti-social behaviour etc.; and
- d) Criminal activity.

2.4 In March 2015, the Government extended the conditions for designation of Selective Licensing in England. The Selective Licensing of Houses (Additional Conditions) (England) Order 2015/977 came into force on 27 March 2015, and permits licensing where:

The area contains a high proportion of properties in the private rented sector (PRS), being properties, which are occupied under assured tenancies or licences to occupy, and one or more of specified further conditions also apply:

- Housing conditions: the local housing authorities consider it appropriate and intends to carry out inspections of a significant number of properties to determine the existence of category 1 and 2 hazards, with a view to taking any necessary enforcement action.
- Migration: the area has “recently experienced or is experiencing an influx of migration into it”; a significant number of properties are occupied by those migrants; and the designation will assist the local housing authority to preserve or improve conditions in the area, ensure properties are properly managed, or prevent overcrowding.
- Deprivation: the area is “suffering from a high level of deprivation, which affects a significant number of the occupiers of [the] properties” and the designation will contribute to a reduction in deprivation.
- Crime levels: the area “suffers from high levels of crime”; criminal activity affects persons occupying the properties; and the designation will contribute to a reduction in crime levels “for the benefit of those living in the area”.

2.5 In addition, in making a Selective Licensing designation, the local authority must, under section 81 of the 2004 Act:

- a) Ensure that it exercises its power to designate consistently with the Council’s overall housing strategy; and
- b) Seek to adopt a co-ordinated approach in connection with dealing with homelessness, empty properties and anti-social behaviour, both as regarding (i) combining Part 3 licensing with other available courses of action and (ii) combining Part 3 licensing with measures taken by other persons.

Furthermore, the authority must not make a particular designation under section 80 unless:

- (a) it has considered whether there are any other courses of action available to them (of whatever nature) that might provide an effective method of achieving the objective or objectives that the designation would be intended to achieve; and
- (b) it considers that in making the designation it will significantly assist in achieving the objective or objectives (whether other courses of action are also taken).

## Amended General Approval – April 2015

2.6 The Secretary of State has power to give general approvals for Selective Licensing designations, meaning that any licensing scheme compliant with the statutory tests would come into force subject only to compliance with any further conditions specified in the approval. The first General Approval was issued in March 2010 and required only that consultation on selective licensing take place for a minimum of ten weeks.

2.7 On 1 April 2015, an amended General Approval was issued. The Secretary of State's consent is now required for implementation of any Selective Licensing scheme which covers more than 20% of a local housing authority's geographical area, or more than 20% of the private rented sector homes in the district area.

*(The Council's Selective Licensing proposal does not cover more than 20% of our geographical area, nor does it cover more than 20% of the private rented sector homes in our borough).*

2.8 Where a Selective Licensing designation is made it applies to privately rented properties in the area. Subject to certain exemptions (which are detailed in Appendix 6), **all properties in the private rented sector which are let or occupied under a tenancy or licence, are required to be licensed by the local housing authority**, unless a property is a House in Multiple Occupation and is required to be licensed under Part 2 of the Act.

2.9 Owners of rented properties will be required to make an application to the Council for a licence and will need to nominate either the manager or the owner to be the licence holder. Landlords will require a licence for each individual property they rent out within the designated area.

The data collected by the Council (detailed in this document and the supporting evidence Appendix 1 – Supporting Evidence Base) provides an evidence base that Selective Licensing is required in the 3 proposed areas and how it would contribute to the Council's strategic priorities (as detailed in Chapter 3 of this document).

### Licence Conditions:

2.10 Each licence is valid for up to 5 years and will contain conditions with which the licence holder will be required to comply. The conditions will include issues relating to tenancy management (including tenant referencing), ensuring properties are safe, and conditions on dealing with anti-social behaviour. The Council's draft Selective Licensing Conditions are detailed in Appendix 4.

### Fit and Proper Person:

2.11 In addition to ensuring compliance with the licence conditions, the Council will need to determine that the proposed licence holder is a 'fit and proper' person in terms of their suitability to manage their property/properties before issuing a licence. The Council will use the statutory test set out within sections 66 and 89 of the Act when determining fitness and propriety.

### **Selective Licensing fees:**

- 2.12 Costs associated with the administration of a Selective Licensing scheme are recouped via fees charged to the landlord. Details of the Council's proposed Selective Licensing fee structure are detailed in Chapter 6 of this document.

### **Selective Licensing enforcement:**

- 2.13 Failure to apply / obtain a licence when a property is let could result in an unlimited fine if convicted or a civil penalty of up to £30,000. In addition where a breach of a licence condition is identified, this could lead to a fine of £5,000 or a civil penalty for each breach.
- 2.14 In addition, local authorities and tenants can claim back from landlords up to 12 months benefit/rent paid during the period a property has not been licensed (Rent Repayment Order). Landlords who continually fail to licence a property can have control of their property taken away from them through a Management Order.
- 2.15 During the period of the designation, a programme of pro-active property inspections will be undertaken, and the Council will act where breaches of licence conditions are found. These enforcement activities will not be met from the revenue from fees.
- 2.16 Our enforcement activities will be targeted only at situations where action is needed and will be carried out in a transparent, accountable, proportionate and consistent manner. The Council will work constructively with individuals or businesses that can evidence they are trying to comply with the law and help them to comply with the law.

## CHAPTER 3: STRATEGIC HOUSING CONTEXT

This chapter demonstrates how the proposed Selective Licensing designation is consistent with and would contribute to the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities.

3.1 The **Council's Housing Strategy 2018-23** acknowledges that the private rented housing sector is a critical component of our local housing market and articulates our approach to working with private landlords to deliver good housing, which will support the health, well-being and prosperity of our residents.

3.2 There are three objectives in the Council's Housing Strategy which are consistent with the implementation of Selective Licensing:

- Objective 1: Supporting Housing Growth and Increasing Choice
- Objective 2: Strong Communities
- Objective 3: Meeting Housing Needs and Supporting Vulnerable People

The significant increase in the private rented sector at a borough wide level is referenced in the Housing Strategy.

Nationally the private rental sector accounts for 20.3% of the total housing stock in England (2021 Census) with the Department Communities and Local Government (now known as the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities) highlighting that areas are considered as having a 'high proportion' of privately rented properties if they are above this national level. The 3 areas where a Selective Licensing designation is proposed have private rental housing stock levels well above this national threshold. In acknowledgement of the growing significance of the private rental housing market, our Housing Strategy identifies that the Council aims to support good landlords whilst taking a proactive approach to tackling rogue and irresponsible landlords.

3.3 The proposal to introduce Selective Licensing will also support and compliment the Council's broader strategic priorities, as detailed overleaf: -



Relevant aim / objective of each identified strategy	How will Selective Licensing contribute?
<b>Council Plan 2023 - 2026</b>	
<p><i>Relevant Plan priorities:</i></p> <p>A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm.</p> <p>A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive.</p> <p>A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed.</p>	<p>Selective Licensing is recognised as a tool to improve the management of homes in the private rented sector, as well as addressing issues often associated with low housing demand (for example empty properties / anti-social behaviour).</p> <p>Selective Licensing will also contribute to addressing the need for affordable, safe and quality housing.</p>
<b>Joint Health &amp; Well Being Strategy (2019 – 2023)</b>	
<p><i>Relevant Plan priorities:</i></p> <p>All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities</p>	<p>Housing has an impact on the health and well-being of individuals, families and our local communities. The proposal to introduce a proactive inspection regime will impact positively in terms of identifying poor property conditions and addressing hazards (including excess cold, damp and mould and trips and falls).</p>
<b>Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-2025)</b>	
<p><i>Relevant Plan priorities:</i></p> <p>Preventing and relieving homelessness.</p>	<p>The introduction of Selective Licensing will help to ensure that private rented homes used to accommodate homeless households, and/or prevent homelessness are of a satisfactory standard and are well managed.</p> <p>Selective Licensing will also help to tackle poor management practices which can lead to households losing their homes and presenting as homeless.</p>
<b>Community Safety Strategy (2022 – 2025)</b>	
<p><i>Mission statement:</i></p> <p>To make Stockton a safer place where people are protected from serious harm and live in communities which are safe and welcoming.</p>	<p>The introduction of Selective Licensing would support the improvement of management standards of private rented landlords and help to reduce anti-social behaviour, the negative impact of which affects the desirability and demand of local neighbourhoods.</p>

<b>A Fairer Stockton on Tees Strategic Framework 2021 - 2031</b>	
<i>Relevant key area of focus:</i>  A focus on deprived neighbourhoods (including housing and physical environment).	Selective licensing will help the Council address inequality by working to ensure no-one lives in sub-standard private rented homes that can negatively impact on health and life expectancy.

3.7 Given the strategic context detailed above, the use of Selective Licensing is clearly consistent with the Council's overall approach to housing and will directly support the key priorities referenced above.

## CHAPTER 4: WHY THE COUNCIL IS PROPOSING SELECTIVE LICENSING

Before proposing a Selective Licensing designation and commencing consultation, the Council needs to identify the problems affecting the areas to which the designation will apply and provide evidence to support its Selective Licensing proposal. This chapter summaries the Council's evidence base for proposing the designation in 3 areas of the borough:

Central Stockton and North Thornaby are areas that are or are likely to become areas of low housing demand, have high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and are experiencing high levels of deprivation.

Newtown is an area experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour again with high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

In addition, this chapter details what actions we have and/or are already taking and alternative courses of action considered.

4.1 As highlighted previously the Council knows that a number of landlords of privately rented properties are 'good' landlords, provide quality accommodation and a good standard of management. Unfortunately, there are a significant number who continue to let out poor quality properties or do not manage their properties appropriately. The impact of not managing properties and tenancies can lead to anti-social behaviour, high crime rates, and low housing demand, all having a negative impact on local neighbourhoods. The introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme in specific areas of the borough would be an additional tool available to the Council to tackle the problem of low housing demand, poor quality, poorly managed private rented housing and address anti-social behaviour. The Council believes that Selective Licensing will: -

- Help to address the issues described above and in turn help increase property demand, reduce turnover and void rates.
- Ensure tenanted properties are managed appropriately.
- Support empty properties being brought back into use.
- Support landlords, as licensed landlords should attract and retain good tenants whilst those who continue to allow occupation by irresponsible tenants or manage their properties poorly will be targeted, and appropriate enforcement action taken will be taken.
- Make a direct and tangible difference to deprivation factors driven by anti-social behaviour, high crime and poor housing conditions.

4.2 In June 2022, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities published 'A Fairer Private Rented Sector'. This document references the role of Selective Licensing as a tool available to local councils to address local housing issues, including poor housing quality, low

housing demand and antisocial behaviour. Referencing Nottingham City Council (who introduced Selective Licensing scheme in August 2018) as one positive example.

### Evidence to support the Council's Selective Licensing proposal

4.3 The Council has undertaken a detailed and robust assessment to determine whether Selective Licensing would be appropriate for the three proposed areas. Appendix 1 - Supporting Evidence Base sets out to confirm that in arriving at our proposal the Council has closely followed the requirements of the Government guidance.

4.4 In conducting its research, the Council has used a variety of data sources including for example:

- Office of National Statistics (ONS) – Census data 2011 and 2021
- Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Score: IMD2019
- National Rent Deposit Scheme
- Local Housing Allowance – April 2023
- Land Registry UK House Price Index
- Right Move house sales and rental data
- Zoopla house sales and rental data
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2022/23 data (Council tax, Empty Homes and Civic Enforcement)
- Office of Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID)
- Experian Mosaic Public Sector
- Police Recorded ASB incidents data for 2020/21 within the borough
- Police Recorded Crime incidents data for 2020/21 within the borough

### A summary of our key evidence/findings:

4.5 As noted previously in this document, the private rented sector has grown significantly over recent years and plays a vital role in the borough's overall housing market. Data from the 2021 census demonstrates that this sector continues to grow both nationally, regionally and locally.

4.6 Whilst private rented housing is a tenure of choice in all the borough's wards, in some areas of our borough the concentrations are significantly above the national and borough average.

#### The national position:

Nationally the private rented sector accounts for **20.3%** of the total housing stock in England\*

\*Data source: 2021 Census

#### The local position:

The private rented housing accounts for **17%** of the borough's total housing stock.

\*Data source: 2021 Census

Areas proposed for inclusion within the Selective Licensing designation:	
Area	Estimated % of private sector rented properties
Central Stockton	50%
North Thornaby	41%
Newtown	45%

4.7 In summary the assessment has identified:

Central Stockton:

- House prices are considerably lower both than the national and borough averages.
- 10% of properties in the proposed designation area were empty as of the end of March 2023. Compared to a national average of 2.7% and the borough average of 2.4%.
- 63.5% of properties empty in the area have been empty for longer than 6-months.
- 89.1% of properties with the area fall into Council Tax Band A (compared to the 39.1% borough average and the national average of 23.5%).
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation identified that the Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield & Oxbridge ward (which this area straddles) are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

North Thornaby:

- House prices are considerably lower both than the national and borough averages.
- 11.2% of properties in the proposed designation area were empty as of the end of March 2023. Compared to a national average of 2.7% and the borough average of 2.4%.
- 69% of properties empty in the area have been empty for longer than 6-months.
- 80.5% of properties with the area fall into Council Tax Band A (compared to the 39.1% borough average and the national average of 23.5%).
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation identified the Mandale and Victoria ward is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

Newtown:

- Higher-than-average crime rates when compared to other areas of the borough.
- Higher than average reported ASB incidents when compared to other wards. The ward also ranks above the borough average for crime per 1000 population for reports of domestic abuse and criminal damage & arson.

- 11.2% of properties in the proposed designation area were empty as of the end of March 2023. Compared to a national average of 2.7% and the borough average of 2.4%.
- The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation identified that Newtown is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country.

### **What has the Council done and/or is doing to improve the Private Rented Sector?**

4.8 The Council is committed to improving housing conditions and management practices in the private rented sector and our actions to date are detailed below. It is important to note that several projects are ongoing and will compliment the proposed selective licensing scheme.

#### **Private Rented Voluntary Accreditation Scheme:**

The Council has operated a free Accreditation Scheme since 2009, this is a voluntary scheme where landlords agreed to sign up to a code of standards which sets a minimum standard for property condition and management practice.

As of the end of June 2023 116 landlords are members of the scheme and 947 properties are accredited. Whilst we welcome the positive engagement of those landlords who have joined the scheme, accredited properties only represent a small percentage of the private rented stock across the whole of the borough.

There is no compulsory element to the scheme, landlords can opt in or not. The Council's experience of running this scheme has demonstrated that good landlords chose to join the scheme and it is a positive way to engage with landlords. However poor landlords are unlikely to join a voluntary scheme, which is why the mandatory approach using Selective Licensing powers is needed as an additional tool to address poor standards in the private rented sector.

#### **Private Landlords Supporting Stockton (PLuSS) scheme:**

The landlord led, PLuSS scheme has been in operation since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 and was agreed with the Council as an alternative to Selective Licensing (previously proposed for Central Stockton and North Thornaby).

PLuSS is led by landlords, with applications processed by the Council. Landlords are required to adhere to a Code of Conduct, which was developed and agreed by landlords and the Council. As part of the scheme, landlords have established a tenant referencing scheme and have introduced an advice line for members.

To help with its implementation the Council assisted with the promotion of the scheme and advertised the scheme in Stockton News (the Council's community magazine).

As with the Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme, becoming a member is voluntary. As of the end of June 2023 there are 149 PLuSS members, of which 91 own or manage 627 properties within either the Central Stockton or the North Thornaby areas. Only 1 application to join PLuSS has been received since January 2022.

The scheme has demonstrated that good landlords chose to join and that it is a positive way to engage with landlords. However once again poor landlords are unlikely to join or be

accepted as members, which is why the mandatory approach using Selective Licensing powers is needed as an additional tool to address poor standards in the private rented sector.

Under both the Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme and the PLuSS scheme, the Council seeks to work with landlords to improve property conditions. For landlords who have chosen not to be a member of either scheme, the Council has taken a pro-active approach of targeted formal inspections. Through this pro-active approach properties are improved either by landlords actively undertaking repairs or through enforcement action taken by the Council.

#### 'Stockton Rental Standard':

With the aim of supporting **all** landlords the Council introduced the 'Stockton Rental Standard' in 2014, this document was mailed out to all landlords known to the Council and is currently available to view on the Council's website (<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/rental-standard-introduction>). The 'Stockton Rental Standard' is intended to be a quick and easy guide aimed at helping and supporting private landlords to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and that the Council will not tolerate unsatisfactory property conditions and poor standards of management.

#### Empty Property Approach:

The Council works informally with property owners to provide them with support, advice and encourage them to explore options to return their properties back into use. Whilst this can be effective, where property owners fail to engage, the Council will, where appropriate, take enforcement action. We have returned empty homes back to use via Empty Dwelling Management Orders and taken formal enforcement action by using the powers available under the Building Act 1984, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 and Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to deal with problems associated with empty properties. By serving notices we have required work to be undertaken and where an owner has failed to do so we have undertaken work in default.

#### Community Safety:

The Council has a dedicated Community Safety Team, who work in partnership with the Police, Fire Brigade and other key agencies to both deter and reduce crime, nuisance and anti-social behaviour in the Borough. The dedicated teams are also responsible for ensuring that the environment within the communities which we serve remains clean, tidy and free from damage.

The team is made up of the Civic Enforcement Service, Case Management Officers, and CCTV operators. This group works out of a central control room which also acts as a community service hub. This enables the team to have access to a range of information and resources to ensure that the most vulnerable groups in our communities are protected regardless of housing tenure.

#### Homelessness Prevention:

The Council recognises that a good quality, affordable and well managed private sector provides a viable housing offer. The Council's Homelessness & Housing Solutions Team engages with all landlords on a regular basis and offers a range of potential interventions to

either prevent or relieve homelessness. This includes financial support to assist tenants and landlords (to ensure a tenancy is sustainable), examples include a Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme and the use of Discretionary Housing Payments.

#### Use of Existing Powers:

In addition to these schemes/initiatives, the Council uses a range of existing enforcement powers to improve housing conditions (including the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Building Act 1984, the Housing Act 2004, Empty Dwelling Management Orders etc.). This is supported by the operation of a mandatory HMO Licensing Scheme and a reactive approach to responding to complaints from tenants and partner agencies regarding housing conditions.

Through the Housing and Planning Act 2016, the Government introduced a range of new measures to help tackle rogue landlords who rent out substandard properties. The powers include the extension of Rent Repayment Orders, the ability to impose civil penalties up to £30,000, Banning Orders, the introduction of a data base for rogue landlords/property agents and the introduction of a tougher “fit and proper person” test for landlords. The introduction of these new measures has been broadly welcomed by good private sector landlords and local authorities. The Council is and will be prepared to use these new powers as/when appropriate.

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) which allows local authorities to inspect privately rented properties to ensure the condition of those properties do not have an adverse effect on the health, safety or welfare of tenants or visitors to those properties. Where necessary the Council will serve statutory enforcement notices to ensure that conditions are improved.

The current level of property inspections, are in the main, based on a reactive service i.e. when a complaint (request for service) is made to the Council. We assess the information received and where appropriate undertake a HHSRS inspection and assessment to determine whether action needs to be taken. Whilst this approach does improve property conditions it does not tackle property management standards, nor does it have a widespread impact to bring about improvements in property standards without a major increase in resources. In addition, it is likely that requests for assistance received by the Council from private rental tenants under-represent the scale of disrepair problems in private rented homes in the proposed areas of designation. The introduction of Selective Licensing will enable the Council to carry out proactive inspections of all properties within the proposed designated areas, ensuring that poor or unsafe housing conditions are identified and remedied, thereby raising standards. By improving property conditions this will assist in retaining and attracting occupants to the area.

Selective Licensing will also ensure that the Council is made aware of the person responsible for managing the property, reducing the time taken to identify the liable party. Currently, this can be problematic and costly to the Council in terms of both time and resources, especially in the case of absentee landlords.

#### What alternative courses of action have the Council considered?

- 4.9 In 2018 the Council proposed the introduction of Selective Licensing in 2 areas of the borough. During this Selective Licensing consultation period, private sector landlords approached the Council with an alternative proposal, one which they considered would achieve the same



outcomes as Selective Licensing. The Council's Cabinet subsequently agreed to postpone a decision on Selective Licensing to allow for a period of engagement with private sector landlords and the establishment of a Landlord Led Membership scheme (Private Landlords Supporting Stockton (PLuSS)).

4.10 As noted previously the PLuSS scheme commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2019. Of the 149 members, 91 landlords own or manage properties (totaling 627) within either the Central Stockton or the North Thornaby areas. This equates to only 41% of properties which would have been included in the proposed 2018 Selective Licensing designation. The remaining 58 member landlords own or manage properties across the wider borough.

4.11 The Council's experience of working with PLuSS has been mixed. A significant number of the PLuSS members operate in a professional manner with good procedures and policies. However, there have still been examples of individual landlords with little knowledge of their legal responsibilities.

4.12 The table below provides an overview of the wider options explored by the Council.

Option: Enforcement of Housing Standards			
Outcome	Barriers	Risks	Resource Implications
<p>Repair of individual private rented properties.</p> <p>Effective tool for dealing with health and safety standards.</p>	<p>Effective tool but does not go far enough to tackle the scale of the issues across the designated areas.</p> <p>In the main is a reactive approach (action is taken when a complaint is received).</p> <p>Some tenants are fearful of reporting issues to the council.</p> <p>Does not tackle ASB issues / poor tenant behaviour or poor management standards.</p>	<p>Taking action to tackle hazards can be slow (waiting for a report in the first instance).</p> <p>Not all landlords willing to engage/take appropriate action, Council needs to pursue formal enforcement action.</p>	<p>Resource intensive.</p> <p>Can only achieve widespread impact in terms of property condition with a substantial increase in Council resources.</p>

Option: Management Orders (in isolation)			
Outcome	Barriers	Risks	Resource Implications
<p>Remove the property from the irresponsible landlord.</p> <p>Improves management standards.</p> <p>Is a forceful sanction for landlords that do not comply with Selective Licensing.</p>	<p>Process requires considerable resources / gathering of evidence / authorisation by the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber).</p> <p>The Council does not manage housing stock, we would need to bring in another organisation to manage and maintain the property.</p>	<p>Does not provide a long-term solution to poor management of the private rented housing (up to 5 years and then the property is returned to the original owner).</p> <p>Intervention is a last resort for a small number of properties.</p>	<p>Resource intensive.</p>
Option: Landlord Accreditation scheme (in isolation)			
Outcome	Barriers	Risks	Resource Implications
<p>Good landlords join and sign up to good property and management conditions.</p> <p>Enables good and effective engagement with landlords.</p> <p>Supports good property and management conditions.</p> <p>Prospective tenants' access good quality accommodation.</p> <p>Supports the Council address housing need and relieve homelessness.</p>	<p>Voluntary scheme, irresponsible landlords do not join.</p> <p>Experience to date demonstrates all landlords are not willing to engage / join.</p>	<p>Limited effect on a concentrated area (demonstrated by the numbers of landlords who are current members).</p> <p>Less responsible landlords do not join / no direct impact on them.</p> <p>Less responsible landlords do not improve their standards of property management and / or condition.</p>	<p>No additional resource implication as a scheme is in operation.</p> <p>To provide more incentives to join the scheme would require Council resources.</p>

4.13 A coordinated Selective Licensing approach where landlords must register and adhere to the terms of the licence conditions, and where the ultimate sanction is that the responsibility of managing a property can be removed from them (with a management order), represents a much clearer and stronger sanction. **Continuing as now is not a viable option.** Combining and coordinating the activities detailed in this chapter with Selective Licensing will support the Council achieve the aims of our proposed designation.

## CHAPTER 5: HOW THE PROPOSED SELECTIVE LICENSING SCHEME WILL BE DELIVERED

This chapter explains how the Council will administer and implement Selective Licensing should the proposed designation be approved.

- 5.1 Should the designation be granted it will come into force no sooner than three months from the date of designation. Once the designation is in force, every privately rented property (house, flat or room) unless already licensed as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) or exempt (**Appendix 6**) will require a licence to operate in the area and landlords will be responsible for making an application to the Council for a licence.
- 5.2 It is expected that compliant landlords will apply for the relevant licence shortly after the designation and the Council will introduce a proactive enforcement programme to identify unlicensed properties.
- 5.3 Failure to apply for a licence can lead to an unlimited fine upon conviction in the Magistrates' Court or a civil penalty of up to £30,000 imposed by the Council. Following a conviction any rent or Housing Benefit that has been paid to the landlord by either the tenant or the Council during the period the property was rented out without a licence (up to a maximum of 12 months) may also be reclaimed back through a Rent Repayment Order.
- 5.4 An application for a licence would need to be submitted for each property in accordance with the specified requirements. Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 outlines that the Council may require the application to be accompanied by a fee fixed by the Council. The Council is not permitted to make a profit from the introduction of Selective Licensing and fee income is ring-fenced for use on the scheme. The fee, however, should consider the costs incurred in administering the Selective Licensing Scheme. The Council's proposed Selective Licensing fee structure is detailed in Chapter 7.
- 5.5 As part of the application process, proposed licence holders and managers will be required to provide information that they are 'fit and proper persons' and that they have satisfactory management arrangements in place, including dealing with anti-social behaviour. In circumstances where the Council are not satisfied that the license holder or manager is not 'a fit and proper person', and/or the management arrangements are unsatisfactory, then it can refuse to grant a licence.
- 5.6 It is the Council's intention to ensure that the application process is streamlined and as simple as possible for landlords. The licence application process will involve landlords (and/or their managing agents) submitting supporting documentation as well as completing an application form. The Council is currently exploring an on-line application process. This will enable an application to be completed on-line, supporting documentation to be uploaded and payment of the licence fee also to be made on-line.

### **Licence conditions:**

5.7 As part of the licensing requirements all licence holders will be required to comply with various licensing conditions. Some conditions will be mandatory (imposed by the Housing Act 2004) which the Council has no discretion to vary, and some conditions will be discretionary (local conditions). Details of the proposed licensing conditions can be found in Appendix 4.

### **Selective Licensing in operation:**

5.8 The Council is also committed to ensuring that the introduction of Selective Licensing is meaningful in terms of improving the designation areas by raising the standard of property management of privately rented properties and give residents and local businesses within the area confidence. The Council's intention is to inspect all private rented properties licensed under the proposal. The purpose of the inspection is to both ensure that properties meet the required standard and provides an opportunity to provide advice and assistance to landlords and tenants.

5.9 Licensing also places a legal requirement on landlords (or their managing agents) to undertake a reference check on tenants prior to offering a tenancy. By doing so the licence holder will be able to make an informed choice as to whether a prospective tenant is suitable for the property. To support landlords the Council will operate a FREE tenant reference service (for landlords with properties within the designed areas). ALL references should be obtained by the license holder via the free Council tenant referencing service.

5.10 All aspects of the administration of the licensing application process (including undertaking property inspections, advice to support landlords throughout the process and reference checks) will be undertaken by a dedicated Selective Licensing Team. Fee income from licence fees shall be used to cover the additional costs incurred by the Council in employing these staff.

5.11 The Council anticipates that the introduction of Selective Licensing will see an increase in the level of housing conditions and anti-social behaviour enforcement activity within the area. In addition, enforcement action will also be needed if a landlord fails to licence their property or fails to comply with the licence conditions. Where enforcement action is needed this shall be carried out by the Council's Private Sector Housing and/or Community Safety Teams.

5.12 The Council also recognises that a tenant's behaviour is equally as important as a landlord in securing improvements within our local communities. We intend to work closely with occupiers to ensure they understand their responsibilities as a tenant. Selective Licensing Officers will provide an increased local presence within the designated areas, which will allow them the opportunity to get to know and build relationships with residents, with the aim of increased information sharing and identification of issues/concerns. The property inspection visit will also provide an opportunity to discuss tenant responsibilities as detailed in their tenancy agreement and offer support to ensure the tenant can successfully sustain their tenancy.

5.13 In conclusion, the Council's Selective Licensing proposal will enable a period of intense support to landlords, tenants and residents.

## CHAPTER 6: THE PROPOSED FEE STRUCTURE

This chapter details the Council's proposed fee structure, should a Selective Licensing designation be approved.

- 6.1 It will be necessary to charge a fee to cover the costs and overheads associated with operating the scheme. The Council's proposed fees are based on the actual costs of administering a scheme in the proposed designed areas. **The Council is not permitted and does not intend to seek or make a financial profit from Selective Licensing.**
- 6.2 Proposed fees will be calculated based on the staff needed to cover the processing of the estimated number of applications, the operation and development of the scheme. Cost estimates for the scheme include salaries and on costs and all anticipated non-salary revenue spend.
- 6.3 Each year the Council will review the cost of running the scheme and the projected revenue stream from licences. This means that the fee charged may need to be adjusted upwards or downwards after each annual review depending upon whether the applications received deviate from the number of private rented properties we have assumed will need to be licensed.
- 6.4 The Council proposes to set the fee at a level that ensures full cost recovery for the scheme and is a balance between a reasonable cost for landlords whilst also seeking to ensure that the scheme is successful and appropriately resourced.

### The proposed fee:

- 6.5 In accordance with the Housing Act 2004 section 87(7), the fee amounts are based on:
- (a) The staff employed to process the application; and
  - (b) The costs of delivering the scheme, including staff, on costs and internal recharges.
- 6.6 **The proposed license fee is £653.00 per property.** Some local authorities seek payment of the license fee in one payment (at the time a licence application is made), others have broken their fee costs down to include an Application Fee (charged at the time of the license being applied for) plus an annual fee. It is proposed that the Council operate this second fee model. The table overleaf details the fee structure:

<b>Standard Application Fee</b>	
<b>Application Fee</b>	<p><b>£178.00 per property.</b></p> <p>This payment <u>must</u> accompany a selective licence application.</p>
<b>Annual Fee</b>	<p><b>£95.00 per property.</b></p> <p>Full payment of the first year's annual fee must be made within 30 days of written confirmation from the Council that the application will be approved otherwise there will be no discount or licence issued.</p> <p>The licence will only be issued on receipt of the Application Fee and the Annual fee by the Council.</p>
<p>The applicant will be charged the annual fee(s) from the date of the Selective Licensing designation date.</p> <p>Where the application is made in the last quarter of the year, a 25% discount may be applied to that year's annual fee. This discount would only be applicable where no additional officer time had been spent in researching or monitoring the property, prior to the application being submitted and where an earlier application was not possible.</p> <p>The licence holder or applicant will be invoiced when the annual fee payment is due to be paid. To facilitate timely payment an annual payment system will be operated by the Council.</p> <p>The Council will only give a refund of fees paid to a landlord if a duplicate application has been made or an application has been made for an exempted property by mistake.</p> <p>The costs covered by the <u>Application Fee</u> include processing the application, administration, guidance / provision of advice and on costs.</p> <p>The costs covered by the <u>Annual Fee</u> include ongoing scheme administration, monitoring and compliance with the licence.</p>	
<b>Fee Discounts</b>	<p>A discount of <b>£50.00 per property</b> will be applied where a landlord is accredited at the time of the application**. The discount will be deducted from the total licence fee to be paid (application + annual).</p> <p>** Accredited landlords: where a landlord is a member of the Councils Landlord Accreditation Scheme, a member of the P LuSS (Private Landlords Supporting Stockton) scheme or a member of a national scheme (National Residential Landlord Association 'NRLA' or British Landlords Association 'BLA') at the time of licence application.</p>

<b>Late Application Fee</b>	
<b>Application Fee</b>	<p><b>£278.00 per property.</b></p> <p>Where an application is received more than 28-calendar days after the property becomes licensable and reminders are sent. And/or an incomplete application is received (and returned) and is not completed and within a 28-calendar day period.</p> <p><i>Where an application is received more than 28 calendar days after the property becomes licensable and reminders are sent.</i></p> <p><i>And/or where an incomplete application is received and after being returned to the applicant, the complete application is not received within 28 calendar days from the date it was returned to the applicant.</i></p> <p>This payment <u>must</u> accompany a selective licence application.</p>
<b>Annual Fee</b>	<p><b>£95.00 per property.</b></p> <p>Full payment of the first year's annual fee must be made within 30 days of written confirmation from the Council that the application will be approved otherwise there will be no discount or licence issued.</p> <p>The licence will only be issued on receipt of the Application Fee and the Annual fee by the Council.</p>
<p>The applicant will be charged the annual fee(s) from the date of the Selective Licensing designation date.</p> <p>Where the application is made in the last quarter of the year, a 25% discount may be applied to that year's annual fee. This discount would only be applicable where no additional officer time had been spent in researching or monitoring the property, prior to the application being submitted and where an earlier application was not possible.</p> <p>The licence holder or applicant will be invoiced when the annual fee payment is due to be paid. To facilitate timely payment an annual payment system will be operated by the Council.</p> <p>The Council will only give a refund of fees paid to a landlord if a duplicate application has been made or an application has been made for an exempted property by mistake.</p> <p>The costs covered by the <u>Application Fee</u> include processing the application, administration, guidance / provision of advice and on costs.</p> <p>The costs covered by the <u>Annual Fee</u> include ongoing scheme administration, monitoring and compliance with the licence.</p>	

**6.7 The final fee and the level of the proposed discount will be finalised following the consultation process.**

## CHAPTER 7: THE BENEFITS AND PROPOSED AIMS OF SELECTIVE LICENSING

This chapter details what the Council sees as the benefits of Selective Licensing for the Council, landlords, tenants, residents and wider stakeholders and summarises the Council's aims and objectives.

7.1 It is expected that introducing a Selective Licensing designation will bring both direct and indirect benefits to communities, landlords, tenants, property owners and the Council. In summary the proposal will:

- Support the Council tackle a neighbourhood rather than ad-hoc / individual properties.
- Give a clear message to landlords and tenants that bad practice and behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Improve property conditions and management, tackle issues of low demand and anti-social behaviour.

### Proposed aims and outcomes of Selective Licensing:

7.2 The Council's aims and objectives over the five-year scheme are:

Objective	Actions	Target outcome	Benefits
Reduce low housing demand	<p>Monitor compliance against the predicted number of licensable addresses.</p> <p>Carry out compliance checks of properties licensed under the Selective Licensing scheme.</p> <p>Take both formal and informal action.</p> <p>Support landlords in dealing with anti-social tenants/ occupiers.</p>	<p>Make the designated areas attractive and safe places to live.</p> <p>Reduce the number of empty and long-term empty residential properties</p>	<p>Strengthen links between the Council and private landlords by providing information and support.</p> <p>A vibrant and sustainable private rented housing market in the 3 areas proposed for Selective Licensing.</p> <p>Fewer empty properties.</p>



<p>Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB)</p>	<p>Take enforcement action to reduce ASB incidents in private rented properties.</p> <p>Support for landlords in dealing with anti-social tenants/occupiers.</p> <p>Through tenant contact inform/educate occupiers of their responsibilities to act within their tenancy agreement and reduce the risk of eviction by addressing ASB behaviours incidents by them.</p> <p>Tenants understand the consequence of unacceptable behaviour.</p>	<p>A reduction in ASB behaviour linked to tenants/occupiers in the private rented sector.</p> <p>Help tenants understand their responsibilities.</p>	<p>Strengthened links between the Council and private landlords by supporting them with information and support.</p> <p>Reduce incidents of ASB.</p> <p>Tenants improve their behaviour and meet the requirements of their tenancy agreement.</p> <p>A vibrant and sustainable private rented housing market in the 3 areas proposed for Selective Licensing.</p>
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7.2 The Council believes that Selective Licensing will provide a framework to enable it to achieve the above objectives. It will also enable the Council's use data and intelligence to identify properties and undertake proactive compliance visits/inspections.

7.3 Throughout the period of the 5-year designation, the Council will adopt a robust monitoring and evaluation process of the scheme which will inform the evaluation (impact and effectiveness) of the Selective Licensing designation.

## CHAPTER 8: RISK ANALYSIS

This chapter considers the potential risks and implications of making a Selective Licensing designation.

8.1 The 2015 Selective Licensing Guidance requires local authorities to carefully consider any potential negative economic impacts that Licensing may have in their area. The Council has considered potential risks and how these can be mitigated. A Risk Register (**Appendix 7**) details current and proposed controls that would be implemented subject to the scheme receiving approval to proceed. Risks would be managed within the Council's existing management systems.

8.2 An overview of the key risks are detailed below:

[A Selective Licensing designation will have a negative impact on the proposed areas:](#)

The Council has identified three areas as needing support and intervention. The proposed introduction of Selective Licensing should not have a negative impact on the chosen areas as 'intensive support' will be provided during the period of the designation.

[Displacement:](#)

Good and bad private sector landlords could decide to sell their properties and move elsewhere due to the proposed introduction of Selective Licensing (linked to the license fee and the perceived increase in obligations).

The Selective Licensing Team will play a key role in convincing landlords of the economic benefits of investing in their properties, renting them out responsibly and retaining them for the long term to generate an income that over time will offset the Selective Licensing Fees, as well as generating confidence and greater stability in the area.

Having spoken to other local authorities operating Selective Licensing schemes, there is limited evidence to suggest that displacement has occurred.

[Rogue landlords move to other areas:](#)

It is unlikely that such landlords will move to other areas of the borough where property prices are higher. The enforcement of housing conditions will continue in all areas of the borough.

[Increase in the number of empty properties:](#)

Landlords may decide to leave their properties empty, to avoid paying the licence fee and complying with the Selective Licensing conditions. The Council's Empty Property Officer will provide advice and support and ensure long-term empty properties are actively targeted for intervention. In addition, landlords with properties that have been vacant for over 2 years will have to pay an Empty Homes Premium (this means that the owner will have to pay 150% of the Council Tax charge, correct as at 1.8.23).

**Increase in the number of evictions to avoid licensing:**

Tenants who receive a notice of eviction will be supported by the Council. The Council will also use its powers under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 to intervene where appropriate and will consider enforcement action against landlords who have unlawfully evicted tenants.

**Resistance from private sector landlords:**

All attempts will be made to engage with landlords to help them understand the benefits that Selective Licensing will bring to the areas proposed within the designated areas.

**Rental charges increase as landlords pass on the cost of obtaining a licence to their tenants:**

The Council will try to discourage this by keeping the licence fee as low as possible.

**Rogue or criminal landlords continue to operate without a licence:**

A range of measures will be in place to monitor the operation of private landlords in the area. The Council will operate a robust enforcement policy should an unlicensed landlord be identified.

## CHAPTER 9: HOW THE COUNCIL WILL CONSULT

This chapter details the Council's consultation arrangements, specifically who, when and how the consultation will take place.

9.1 Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 section 80(9) states that when considering designating an area for selective licensing the local authority must: -

- Take reasonable steps to consult persons who are likely to be affected by the designation; and
- Consider any representations made in accordance with the consultation and which are not withdrawn.

9.2 Appendix 3 details the Council's Consultation Plan. In preparing our Consultation Plan we have given due consideration to DCLG Guidance on 'Selective Licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities' (published March 2015) and our statutory duty to consult to ensure we have taken reasonable steps to consult those likely to be affected by the proposed designation'.

### Consultation Plan (overview):

9.3 The Council will use a variety of methods to consult with those likely to be affected by the proposed designation. **Appendix 3** 'Consultation Plan' provides further details of the actions the Council will take to encourage feedback. Our methods of consultation will include:

- Consultation leaflet delivered to residents and businesses within the proposed designated areas and the immediate surrounding areas.
- A mail out to know landlords and managing agents.
- Press release to local media/press.
- The use of Stockton News.
- Information on the Council's website.
- Email to relevant ward members and MP's.
- Email to relevant Council partners, stakeholders and other potential interested parties.

### How to respond to the consultation:

9.4 A questionnaire will be available to complete on the Council's website, a paper version can be downloaded from the website and/or posted out to those wishing to make a postal reply.

### Details of the consultation period timeline:

9.5 The minimum 10-week consultation will be extended to allow for distribution of the publicity material and for the festive period. The consultation period will run from Monday 6.11.23 to 4pm Friday 19.1.24.

Consultation response/feedback:

- 9.6 Following the conclusion of the consultation period, the Council will consider all responses received (that have not been withdrawn) and will publish an anonymised summary of responses received and will explain how these have been either acted upon or not (and give reasons). A copy of this consultation report will be published.
- 9.7 Details of the above will then be reported back to the Council's Cabinet. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Council's Cabinet will then make a final decision as to whether to proceed (or not) with the Selective Licensing proposal (including the scope and the scale of the designated areas).

## CHAPTER 10: THE PROPOSED SELECTIVE LICENSING IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

This chapter outlines the proposed implementation timetable.

12 October 2023	'In principle' approval by the Council's Cabinet to undertake public consultation with all those likely to be affected by the proposed Selective Licensing designation.
6.11.23 to 19.1.24	The period of the consultation.  *Deadline for consultation responses to be received by the Council is <u>4pm</u> on Friday 19 January 2024.
Indicative timeline	
22.1.24 to mid Feb 2024	Analysis of consultation feedback and consultation report published.
14.3.24	Report back to the Council's Cabinet for final consideration (report will include details of consultation replies).
Late March to mid-June 2024	On the assumption the Council's Cabinet endorses the Selective Licensing proposal, notice of proposed designation is published.  Notice of proposed designation will run for 3 months.
Mid/late June 2024	Commencement of the Selective Licensing scheme, 3 months after the designation as required by the Housing Act 2004.

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Should you require any further information about the Council's Selective Licensing proposal please do not hesitate to contact us through one of the contacts detailed below.

<b>Council website address</b>	<a href="http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selectivelicensing">www.stockton.gov.uk/selectivelicensing</a>
<b>Email</b>	Selectivelicensingconsultation@stockton.gov.uk
<b>Write to</b>	Stockton on-Tees Borough Council Selective Licensing Consultation (Private Sector Housing) Housing & A Fairer-Stockton-on-Tees 16 Church Road Stockton on Tees TS18 1TX
<b>Telephone</b>	01642 528010

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# **APPENDIX 2**

## **Selective Licensing Supporting Evidence Base**

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **SELECTIVE LICENSING SCHEME PROPOSAL**

**Supporting Evidence Base**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This document has been produced to support the case for the introduction of Selective Licensing which will cover three designated areas of the Borough, they are **Central Stockton** (Stockton Town Centre and \*Parkfield and Oxbridge wards), **North Thornaby** (Mandale and Victoria ward) and **Newtown** (Newtown ward).

\*We acknowledge that the Parkfield and Oxbridge ward has since been re-named in the re-drawing of the ward boundaries to 'Ropner Ward' as of May 2023. The data used in this document for example The Census 2021, IMD 2019, etc. was captured under the previous ward boundary, therefore we refer to the Parkfield and Oxbridge ward throughout this document, however the streets in the potential Selective Licensing area now fall into the Ropner ward.

**Appendix 1** outlines the methodology and evidence used to build a comprehensive picture of each of the areas identified above. It has been produced to ensure that the Council's proposal meets with the guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government<sup>1</sup> (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC). This information has been critical in terms of justifying (or not) the inclusion of streets within the Selective Licensing scheme proposal.

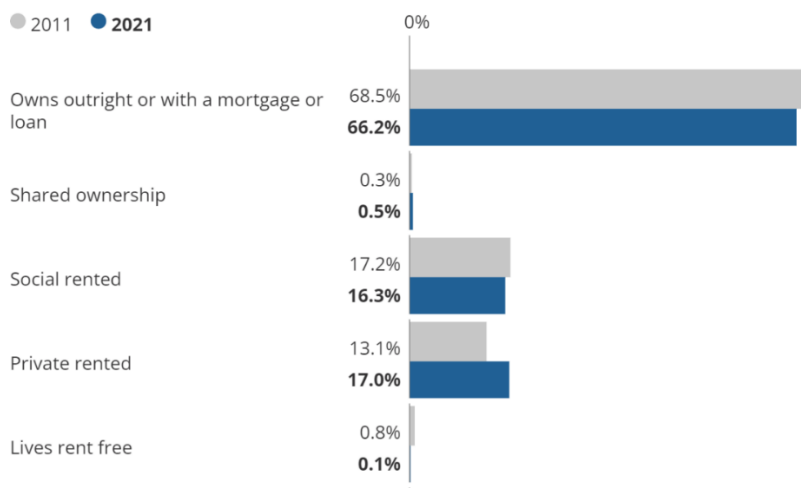
### OUR BOROUGH – IN CONTEXT

In the 10 years between the 2011 and 2021 census<sup>2</sup>, the Borough saw a slight reduction of 2.3% in homeownership, 0.9% in social housing and 0.7% in the number of those who live rent free. The private rented sector increased by 3.9% and shared ownership by 0.2%. The upward trend in the private rented sector was also seen nationally with an increase to 20.3%.

Figure 1 shows the decrease in homeownership and social rented properties as well as those who live rent free within the Borough and an equivalent increase in the percentage of those who rent within the private sector or purchased a home through a shared ownership scheme.

**Figure 1 – Percentage of households by Housing Tenure**

Percentage of households by housing tenure, **Stockton-on-Tees**



Source: Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021

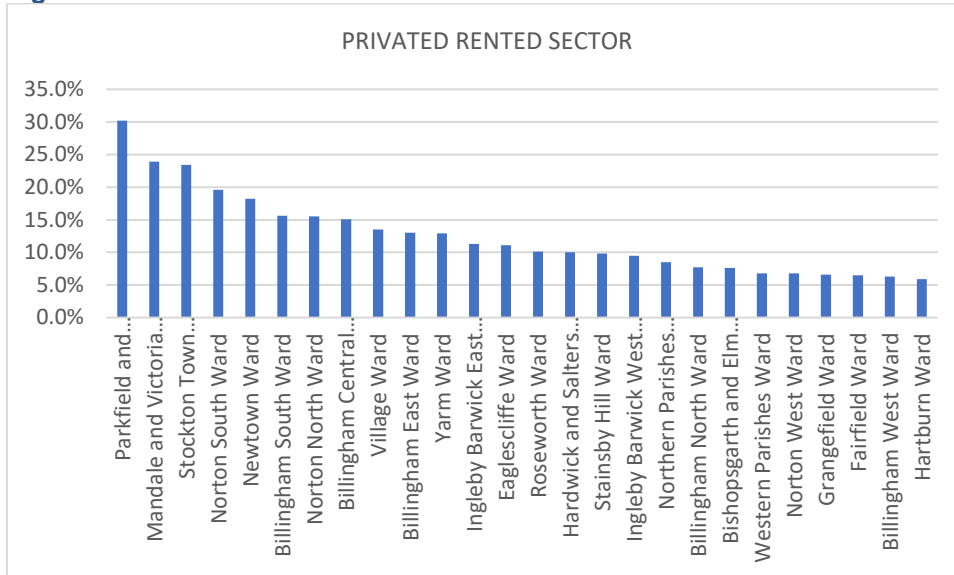
<sup>1</sup> Selective licensing in the private rented sector: A guide for local authorities DCLG published April 2015

<sup>2</sup> Data and analysis of the 2021 Census, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

### Private Rented Sector by ward

Figure 2<sup>3</sup> illustrates the proportion of private rented homes in each of the boroughs 26 wards. Parkfield and Oxbridge is ranked first, Mandale and Victoria second, Stockton Town Centre third, Norton South fourth and Newtown is ranked fifth.

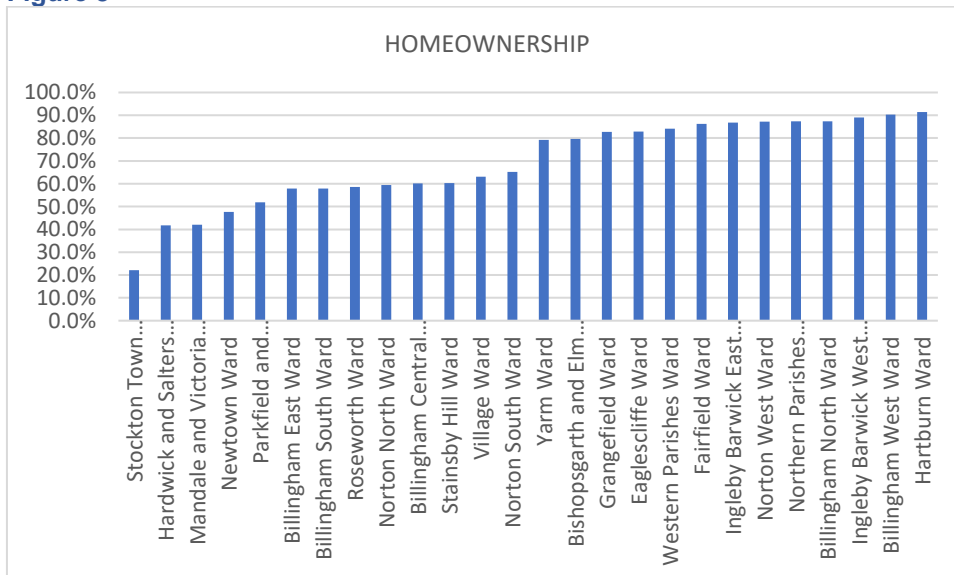
Figure 2



### Homeownership by ward

In relation to homeownership Figure 3<sup>4</sup> highlights that home ownership within the Borough is significantly lower in the Stockton Town Centre ward (ranked lowest in terms of the boroughs 26 wards), Mandale and Victoria (ranked third lowest), Parkfield and Oxbridge (ranked fifth lowest) and Newtown (ranked fourth lowest).

Figure 3



<sup>3</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 - [IMD 2019 Website](#)

<sup>4</sup> IMD 2019 - [IMD 2019 Website](#)

## **METHODOLOGY & EVIDENCE BASE**

The methodology and evidence used to identify the proposed Selective Licensing designated area is built on the analysis of data from a wide variety of information sources and the most up to date information available to us.

### **Criteria**

To declare a Selective Licensing designated area, the Council must be able to satisfy one or more of the following conditions:

- low housing demand (or it is likely to become such an area)
- a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behavior (ASB)
- poor housing conditions
- high levels of migration
- high levels of deprivation (including health data)
- high levels of crime

### **The case for introducing a Selective Licensing Designated Area**

Since approval was granted to further explore Selective Licensing an exercise has been undertaken to determine whether the Council has an evidenced rational that will meet the statutory requirements. This exercise did not simply 'refresh' the evidence previously considered, rather each of the borough's wards were considered against an extensive list of measures specifically linked to Selective Licensing. This exercise identified the 'highest' ranking wards as Stockton Town Centre, Mandale & Victoria, Parkfield & Oxbridge (which following the May 2023 boundary changes now forms part of the Ropner Ward), Newtown and Hardwick/Salters Lane. However as Selective Licensing is a tool to address conditions and management of private rented housing, a further tenure mapping exercise was then undertaken which discounted the Hardwick and Salters Lane ward (as private rented housing is not the significant tenure in this locality).

This initial exercise was then followed by a robust examination of each of the remaining wards to determine whether the issues faced were consistent across the ward as a whole or whether there are concentrations of streets experiencing problems which could justify the implementation of Selective Licensing.

### **Data Sources**

A wide variety of statistical information was gathered and used to inform the detailed assessment including:

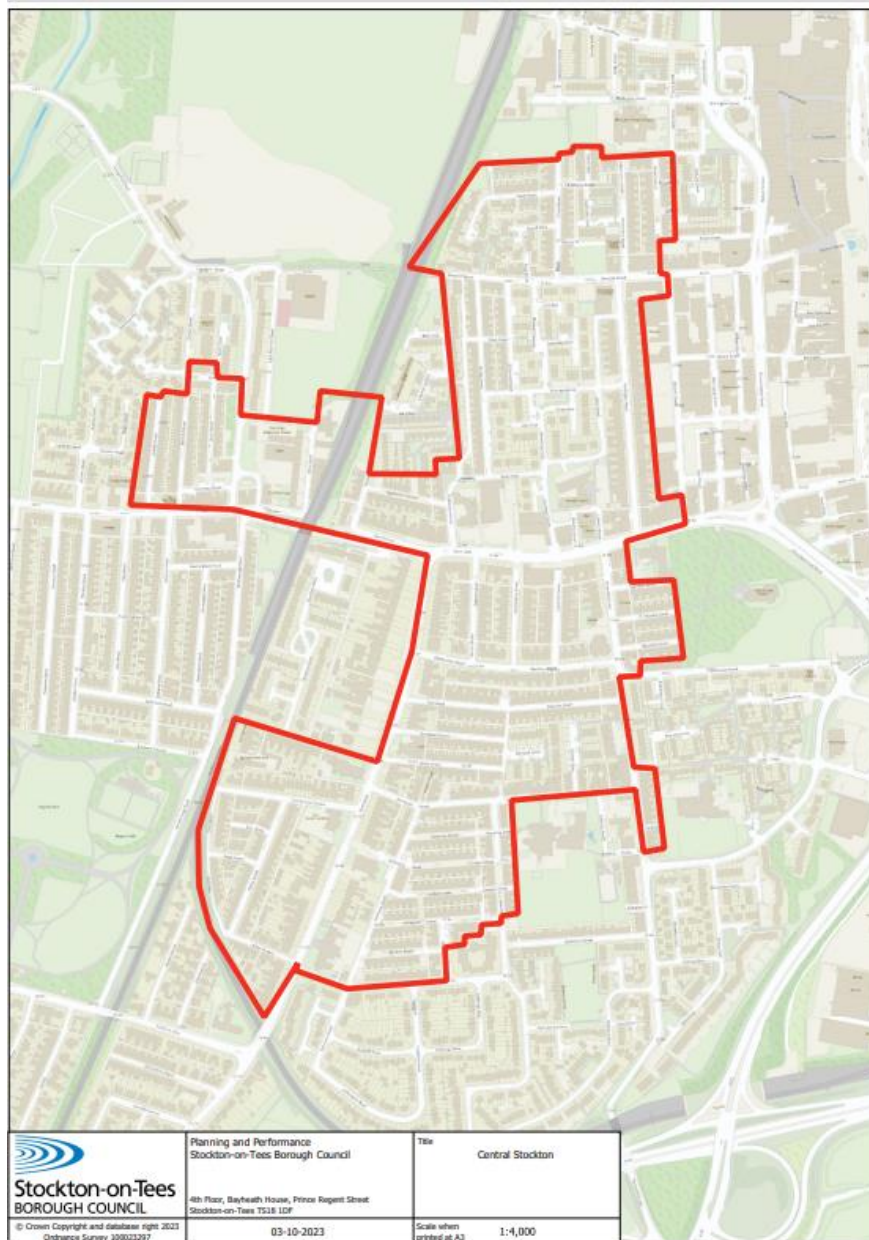
- Office of National Statistics (ONS) – Census data 2011 and 2021
- Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Score: IMD2019
- National Rent Deposit Scheme
- Local Housing Allowance – April 2023
- Land Registry UK House Price Index
- Right Move house sales and rental data
- Zoopla house sales and rental data
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 2022/23 data (Council tax, Empty Homes and Civic Enforcement)
- Office of Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID)
- Experian Mosaic Public Sector
- Police Recorded ASB incidents data for 2021 within the borough
- Police Recorded Crime incidents data for 2021 within the borough

# CHAPTER 2

# CENTRAL STOCKTON

## CENTRAL STOCKTON

The Central Stockton area straddles the Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield & Oxbridge wards. It consists primarily of traditional terraced housing including some larger three-story properties that have been split into individual units of accommodation. The map below identifies the proposed Central Stockton Selective Licensing area within the red boundary.



## CENTRAL STOCKTON OVERVIEW

Stockton Town Centre ward is in Stockton North and is home to just under 8,000 people, 4.1% of the Borough's population. Experian Mosaic Public Sector (EMPS) highlights this area is likely to be predominantly home to single people and home sharers who are likely to be renting their homes from social or private landlords. Levels of household income are likely to be limited. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, it is the highest-ranking ward in terms of deprivation in the Stockton-on-Tees Borough (with the 1<sup>st</sup> being the most deprived and the 26<sup>th</sup> being least deprived)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Stockton Town Centre Ward Profile 2023



Parkfield and Oxbridge ward is in Stockton South and is home to just over 9,700 people, 4.9% of the Borough’s population. Experian Mosaic Public Sector (EMPS) highlights this area is likely to be predominantly home to single people and home sharers who are likely to be renting their homes from private landlords. Levels of household income are likely to be limited. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, it is the 4<sup>th</sup> most deprived ward in Stockton-on-Tees Borough (with the 26<sup>th</sup> being least deprived)<sup>6</sup>.

### PROPOSED SELECTIVE LICENSING DESIGNATED AREA

Selective Licensing is proposed on the basis this area is likely to become an area of low housing demand, has a high concentration of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The narrative below provides an overview of Central Stockton, highlighting the evidence used to support the decision-making process regarding the choice of the Selective Licensing designated area.

### LOW HOUSING DEMAND

When identifying if an area is suffering from, or likely to become, an area of low housing demand, it is recommended by the DCLG that the local housing authority consider the following factors:

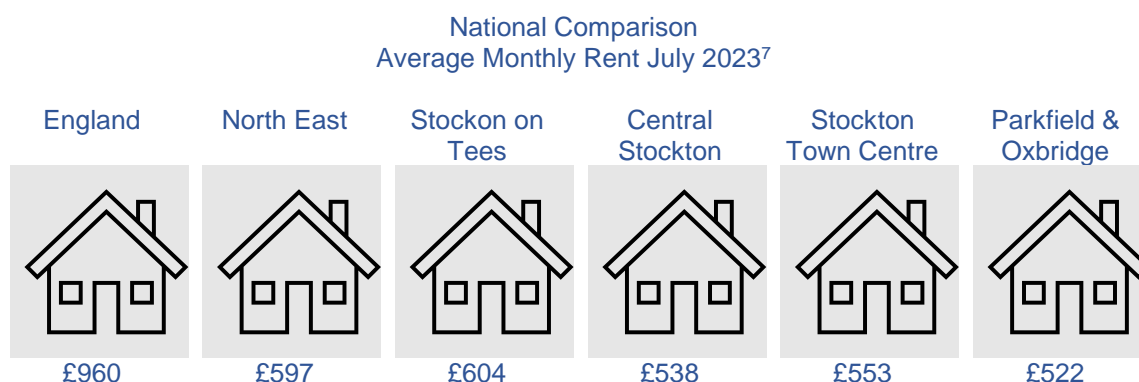
- **Residential property value** – values in the areas in comparison to the value of similar properties in other comparable areas.
- **Turnover of occupiers** – turnover of residential premises (both rented and owners-occupied).
- **Availability of properties** – the number of residential premises which are available to rent or buy, and the length of time they have remained unoccupied.
- **Empty Properties and Long-Term Empty Properties** – the general appearance of the locality and the number of boarded up shops and properties.

The evaluation undertaken by the Council has identified that the proposed Selective Licensing area is currently demonstrating indicators of low housing demand.

### Private Rented Sector

Central Stockton covers a residential area where 50% of the properties are privately rented. In comparison the private rented sector accounts for 20.3% of homes nationally and 17% in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

**Figure 4: Availability of property for rent and rental values:**



<sup>6</sup> Parkfield and Oxbridge Ward Profile 2023

<sup>7</sup> Right Move Private Sector Rental Prices

The above highlights that in July 2023 the average rental price within the borough was slightly higher than the North-East average (at £604) but remained significantly lower than the national average. The average rental price for the Central Stockton designated area was lower than the Borough average.

Based on properties available for rent within the proposed Central Stockton designated area the average monthly rental value for different types of property is<sup>8</sup>:

**Table 1 – Rental Prices Per Calendar Month (PCM)**

Property Type	Stockton-on-Tees	Stockton Town Centre	Parkfield and Oxbridge
	PCM	PCM	PCM
1 Bed Flat	£433	£395	£375
2 Bed Terrace	£658	£564	£595
3 Bed Terrace	£723	£700	£595
Shared Housing	£375	£208	n/a

The Local Housing Allowance rates for Stockton-on-Tees, are set nationally and have not changed since April 2020 despite rental price increases. When compared to the above table the weekly local housing allowance rates do not meet the weekly rental costs of most tenures, this places pressure on individuals to meet the shortfall from other allowances or benefits.

### Local Housing Allowance Rates

The table below shows the Local Housing Allowance rates for Stockton-on-Tees. These are set nationally and as noted have not changed since April 2020.

**Table 2**

Number of Bedrooms	Weekly LHA Rate – April 2023
Shared Accommodation Rate	£65.00
One Bedroom	£86.30
Two Bedroom	£99.65
Three Bedroom	£115.00
Four Bedroom	£155.34

LHA rates are based on private market rents being paid by tenants in the [broad rental market area](#), this is the area within which a person might reasonably be expected to live. The Valuation Office Agency Rent Officers maintains rental information for each category of LHA rates. These are the 'list of rents'. Mathematical calculations are applied to the list of rents to determine the LHA rate which is set as the lower of:

- the 30th percentile on a list of rents in the BRMA
- the existing LHA

### Empty properties

Nationally 2.7% of the total housing stock is vacant<sup>9</sup>. Based on Council Tax records at the end of March 2023 within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees 2.4% of the residential housing stock was empty.

As of March 2023, Council Tax records indicated that empty properties in the Central Stockton proposed designated area account for 10% of all empty properties in the Borough yet this area covers less than 1% of the geographical area.

<sup>8</sup> Right Move July 2023 and Zoopla July 2023

<sup>9</sup> DLUHC– vacant dwellings 2022

### Long Term Empty Properties

Long term empty properties are those which have been empty for longer than 6 months. The number of long-term properties as a percentage of all empty properties in the Borough is 36.7%. The data presented here is from March 2023 and identified that 63.5% of the empty properties in the Central Stockton area have been empty for longer than 6 months.

Properties that are left empty for long periods of time can have negative effects on a residential area, as outlined below:

- Less housing on the market available to buy or rent at a difficult time within the housing market.
- They can attract ASB including vandalism, litter and sometimes arson.
- Market values are often reduced as neighbors move away and confidence is reduced.
- They are a wasted resource both financially and in terms of potential housing or community use.
- The reduced spending power of the local area impacts on local businesses and the general economic stability of the area.

### House Prices

A desktop review of house prices and general market conditions was undertaken to set the context for this proposal. Based on an average of house prices in July 2023:

- The average UK house price was £287,546<sup>10</sup>.
- The average house price in Stockton-on-Tees is much lower at £163,665 (all) and £115,573 for terraced houses<sup>11</sup>
- Average house prices in the Stockton Town Centre ward are £125,000 and in Parkfield and Oxbridge is £140,000. This differs considerably with the average house prices in the proposed designated area of Central Stockton.<sup>12</sup>  
Based on postcodes within the proposed Central Stockton Selective Licensing area the average sold price for 2 bedrooomed properties was £64,300 and for 3 bedrooomed terraced properties £70,900<sup>13</sup>
- One property sold in the Central Stockton area for £81,500 in 2022, having previously sold for £140,000 in 2007. The house prices in this area are significantly below the average house price within the Borough.<sup>14</sup>

Figure 5 (overleaf) provides a comparison of the average sold property prices for July 2023.

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<sup>10</sup> Land Registry Sold Prices July 2023

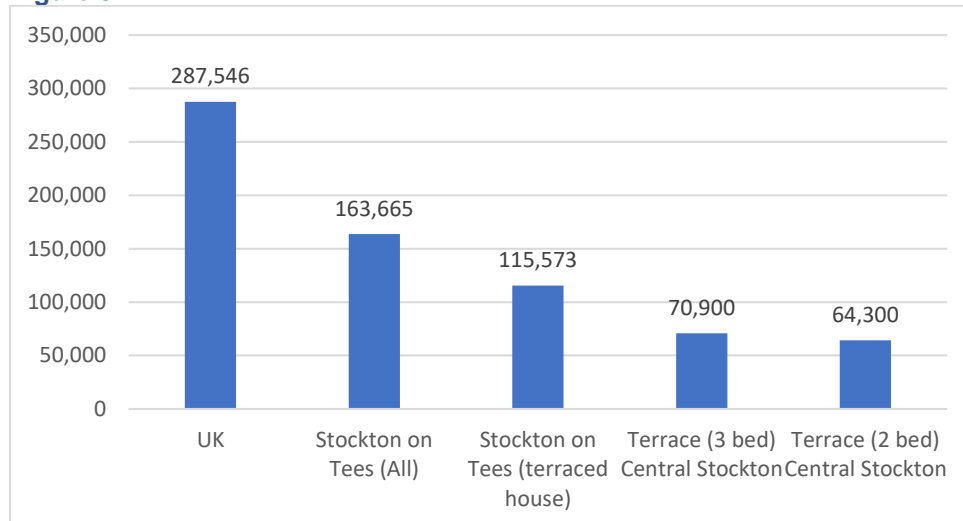
<sup>11</sup> Land Registry Sold Prices July 2023

<sup>12</sup> Land Registry Sold Prices July 2023

<sup>13</sup> Right Move – Sold Prices July 2023

<sup>14</sup> Right Move – Sold prices.

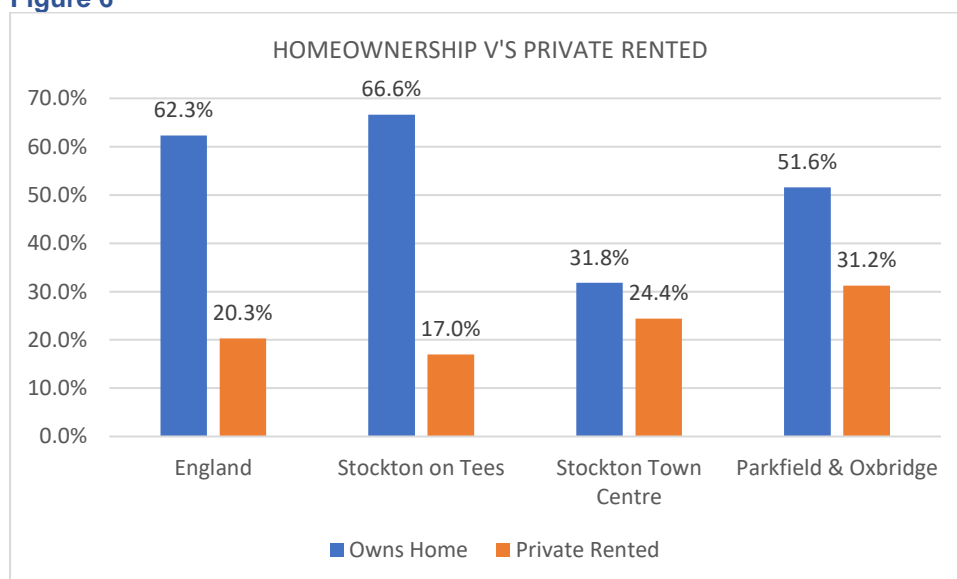
**Figure 5**



### Barriers to Housing

Households within the Central Stockton designated area are more likely to rent their homes. Stockton Town Centre ward has the lowest homeownership of the 26 wards within the borough at just 31.8%, with most of the population likely to be occupying private or social rented accommodation. Parkfield and Oxbridge ward ranks 5<sup>th</sup> lowest of the 26 wards with 51.6% owning their own homes and a larger percentage of households renting from the private sector at 31.2%.

**Figure 6**

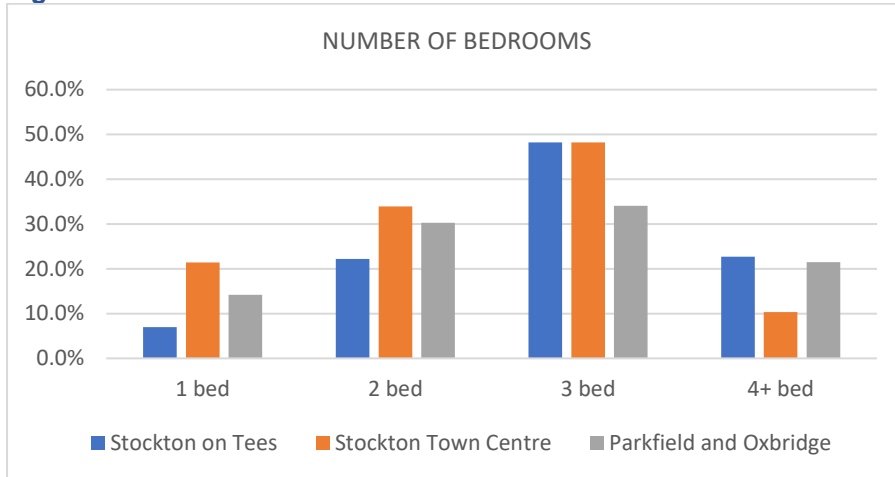


Another reason why this may be the case is that the housing stock in the area is predominantly older terraced houses, which may have been converted into flats/apartments.

### Number of Bedrooms

Figure 7 shows there is a higher number of 1 and 2-bedroomed accommodation in Central Stockton compared to the wider Borough, with the same number of 3-bedroomed houses in Stockton Town Centre. There is a significantly lower percentage of 4 plus bedroomed houses in Stockton Town Centre and an equivalent percentage of 4-bedroomed housing in the Parkfield and Oxbridge area compared to the Borough.

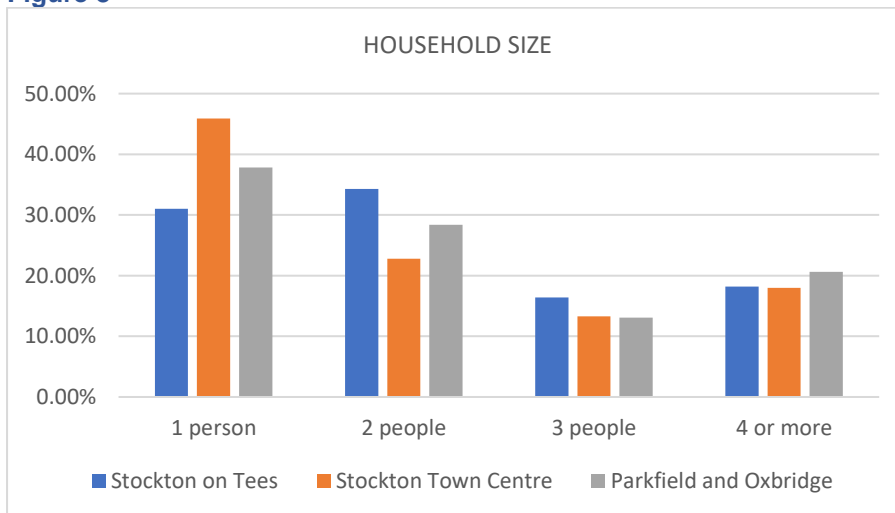
**Figure 7**



### Housing Composition

Figure 8 illustrates there is a higher percentage of single person households in Central Stockton than in the rest of the Borough, with 46% in Stockton Town Centre and 37.6% in Parkfield and Oxbridge as opposed to 31% across the Borough. This is likely to be linked to the fact that there is a higher concentration of flats/apartments in the Central Stockton area.

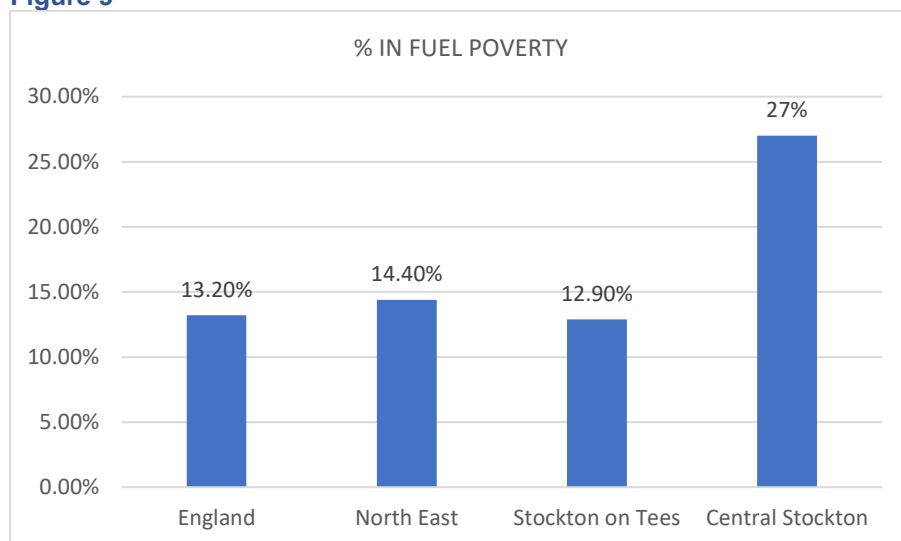
**Figure 8**



### Fuel poverty

Figure 9 (overleaf) demonstrates that households in the designated area within Central Stockton suffer significantly in relation to fuel poverty than the wider Borough, North East and nationally with 27% classed as being in fuel poverty.

**Figure 9**



### **Council Tax Banding**

On an annual basis all Local Councils set the amount of Council Tax payable by residents based on the value of the property at a set in April 1991. The analysis of properties by location and Council tax band can help identify lower value areas as the assessed value of properties falling into band A does not exceed £52,000. Whilst, this system is now significantly out of date, the evidence of house prices within the proposed Central Stockton designated area suggests that for these lower value properties, prices have not improved greatly.

In the Central Stockton area in 2023, 89.1% of households fell into Council Tax band A compared to 39.1% in the wider Borough and 23.5% nationally.

### **Housing Conditions: Requests for service (Private Sector Housing)**

Legislation is available to local authorities to ensure that property conditions in private rented properties do not have an adverse effect on the health, safety or welfare of tenants or visitors to a property. Where necessary the Council will serve statutory repair notices on landlords to ensure that conditions are improved.

The Housing Act 2004, through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), provides local authorities with the powers to calculate the seriousness of certain hazards, with Category 1 hazards being the most serious.

Table 3 (overleaf) represents the number of complaints relating to housing disrepair in private rented properties. Over a 3-year period from April 2020 to March 2023, 17% of these complaints related to properties in the proposed Central Stockton Selective Licensing designated area and of the Category 1 hazards identified in the Borough, 24% of these were within the Central Stockton area.

Following a similar pattern, of the statutory notices served, 39% and 20% related to properties in the Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield & Oxbridge wards, with 50% of the notices served relating to properties in proposed Central Stockton area.

**Table 3**

<b>REQUESTS FOR SERVICE</b>			
Year	Wards		Selective Licensing Area
	Stockton Town Centre	Parkfield & Oxbridge	Central Stockton
2020 – 2021	10%	14%	13%
2021 – 2022	16%	14%	20%
2022 - 2023	13%	14%	17%
<b>CATEGORY 1 HAZARDS</b>			
	Stockton Town Centre	Parkfield & Oxbridge	Central Stockton
2020 – 2021	21%	16%	26%
2021 – 2022	8%	14%	18%
2022 – 2023	25%	18%	30%
<b>NOTICES</b>			
	Stockton Town Centre	Parkfield & Oxbridge	Central Stockton
2020 – 2021	0%	20%	0%
2021 – 2022	67%	11%	72%
2022 - 2023	24%	29%	43%

**What does the data tell us?**

Table 4 summarises the information presented previously showing the difference in data at both a national and local level.

**Table 4**

Area	Private Rent Stock %	% Properties in Council Tax Band A	% Empty Properties	Average House Prices
England	20.3% (2021)	23.5% (2021)	2.5% (2021)	£289,818 (2021)
Stockton-on-Tees	17% (2021)	39.4% (2021)	2.4% (2022)	£168,571 (2021)
Central Stockton	50% (2021)	89.1% (2021)	10% (2021)	£67,600 <sup>15</sup> (2023)

The census 2021, identified a significant rise in private rented stock across the country but in Central Stockton the number of private rented properties is more than double the national and local average at 50%.

The proportion of properties in Council Tax band A in Central Stockton is double the number in the Borough and almost 4 times as many as the England average. Council Tax band A is the lowest council tax that can be paid and relates to the value of housing stock in an area.

Central Stockton has a significantly higher percentage of empty properties compared to the wider Borough with an even higher percentage of empty dwellings falling within the designated area boundary.

Average house prices in Central Stockton are significantly lower than the rest of the Borough and nationally.

**DEPRIVATION**

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are a national measure used to determine deprivation across the country. It considers several factors that impact on an individual's/family's circumstances that lead to a categorisation of deprivation. There are seven overarching deprivation indicators which are:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills, and Training Deprivation

<sup>15</sup> Right Move – sold house prices for 2022-2023

- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of the above measures are produced using a range of factors from different datasets available to determine where an area is on the deprivation scale in relation to other wards in England.

The indices are presented in two different ways Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA's) and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's). The MSOA provides information at a ward level and LSOA's provide more in-depth statistical analysis for wards.

### General Information regarding deprivation in Central Stockton

Both wards are more densely populated than the Borough (Census 2021). Stockton Town Centre has 1917.1 and Parkfield and Oxbridge has 2147.9 people per square kilometer compared to the Borough which records 959.3 people per square kilometer.

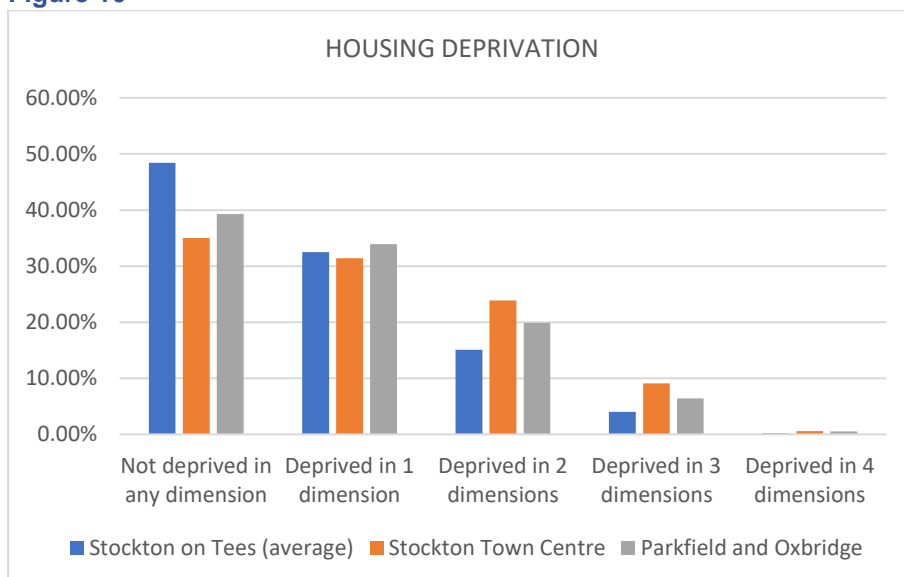
In 2019 the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) found Stockton-on-Tees to be the 73<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Local Authority area out of a total of 317 Local Authorities:

- Stockton Town Centre and the Parkfield & Oxbridge wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country. Of the 26 wards in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, the Stockton Town Centre ward has the highest level of deprivation, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest proportion of children living in poverty and the highest proportion of older people living in poverty. The Parkfield & Oxbridge ward has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest level of relative deprivation in the Borough.

### HOUSING DEPRIVATION

Housing deprivation is measured by four dimensions: Employment, Education, Health and Disability and Overcrowding. Figure 10 illustrates that both Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield and Oxbridge record a higher percentage of people who are deprived in two or more dimensions.

Figure 10





## Income

Comparing both wards with the Borough overall, there are more households likely to have a net annual income of less than £15,000<sup>16</sup>, which will make households more dependent on Universal Credit and other benefits as well as Free School Meals if they have children of school age between 4 and 16 years and claiming Council Tax benefits.

## Out of Work Benefits

- The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work is higher than the Borough average of 4.1%, with Stockton Town Centre being 11% and Parkfield and Oxbridge being 9.3%<sup>17</sup>.
- The percentage of residents 16 to 64 claiming universal credit is higher than the England average of 6.6% and the Borough average of 7%. The number of claimants in Stockton Town Centre is 16.9% and in Parkfield & Oxbridge it is 12.1%.
- The percentage of residents 18 – 24 claiming universal credit is higher than the England average of 9.2% and Borough average of 13.1%, with Stockton-on-Tees being 16.9% and Parkfield & Oxbridge being 16.3%.

## Unemployment

Of the working age population within Stockton-on-Tees which is 53.3%, 3.3% are unemployed. This is in stark contrast to the Central Stockton wards who have a combined adult unemployment level of 9.7% and youth employment of 6.8%. The adult unemployment rate within Stockton Town Centre is 11%, with youth unemployment being 6.4%, whilst Parkfield and Oxbridge have a lower adult unemployment rate than Stockton Town Centre at 8.3% the youth unemployment rate is higher at 7.2%

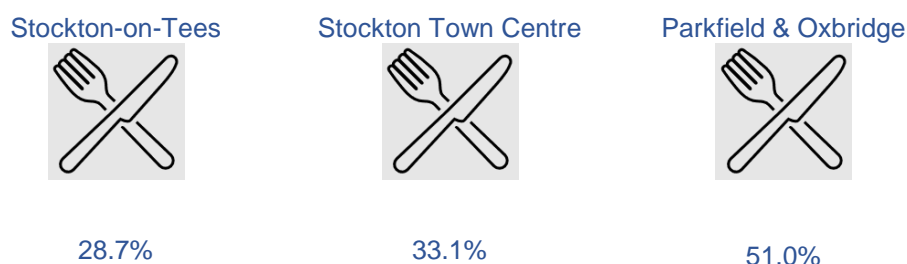
## Number of Council Tax claimants

The total number of people claiming Council Tax benefits across the Borough is 16,988. Of this number 1637 or 9.6% live in the Stockton Town Centre ward and 1010 or 5.9% live in the Parkfield and Oxbridge ward.

## Number of Children accessing Free Schools Meals (4 - 16 years)

There is a high percentage of households with school aged children, in the Central Stockton designated area, who are accessing Free School Meals, which indicates a significant level of deprivation based on several qualifying criteria.

**Figure 11 – Percentage of Children Accessing Free School Meals (FSM) (4 to 16 years)<sup>18</sup>**



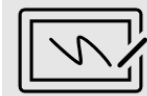
<sup>16</sup> Ward profiles 2023

<sup>17</sup> ONS March 2023

<sup>18</sup> Spring 23 Pupil Census (January 2023)

## EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND TRAINING

### Children and Young People



Both Stockton Town Centre and Parkfield and Oxbridge have the joint second lowest percentage of children reaching a good level of development out of the Borough's 26 wards with an attainment rate at the end of reception of 65.5% in comparison with the top ranked ward at 86.3%.



The Borough average for achieving a grade 5 and above (1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest) in English and Maths GCSE is 53.2%. In Stockton Town Centre ward it is 50.6% and the Parkfield & Oxbridge ward 44.2%<sup>19</sup>, this is in comparison to the highest-ranking ward of 73.9%.

The Educational attainment of children is often linked to deprivation and the table above demonstrates that children in the Central Stockton designated area do not perform as well as those across the Borough and significantly lag their peers in the highest-ranking ward.

### Adults



The percentage of adults with no qualifications in Stockton Town Centre is 40.1% which is the highest percentage within the Borough, in Parkfield and Oxbridge it is 25.2%.



Only 10% of adults aged 16 – 74 in Stockton Town Centre have a degree, HNC or professional qualification. In Parkfield and Oxbridge it is higher at 20.7%.

## HEALTH

Health indicators, including general health of the population, life expectancy and self-harm, are often used as a determinant of the effects of deprivation on a community<sup>20</sup>.

### Life Expectancy at birth (Males and Females 2016-20<sup>21</sup>)

- Over the period 2016 – 2020 life expectancy at birth in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees was 78.4 years for a male and 81.3 years for a female, which is lower than the national average of 79.5 years for males and 83.2 years for females.
- Stockton Town Centre ward has the lowest life expectancy at birth for males in Stockton-on-Tees at just 67.4 years. This is 16.7 years lower than the Ingleby Barwick East ward where the life expectancy at birth for males is 84.1 years. The female life expectancy at birth is 71.8 years which is the lowest in the Borough. In contrast, Ingleby Barwick East has a life expectancy of 90.3 years, 8.5 years greater than Stockton Town Centre ward.
- Parkfield & Oxbridge ward has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest life expectancy for females and 5<sup>th</sup> lowest life expectancy for males of the Boroughs 26 wards at 77.7 years and 74.4 years respectively.

### Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm 2016/17-2020/21<sup>22</sup>

Five-year Hospital Episode Data relating to emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm indicates that Stockton Town Centre ward had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number at 232.7 and

<sup>19</sup> Data Source: DfE KS4 Revised Data 2022, Summer 2022 Pupil Census, NCER

<sup>20</sup> ONS – Census 2021 General Health

<sup>21</sup> The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities analysis of ONS death registration and mid-year population estimates.

<sup>22</sup> Hospital Episode Statistics (HES)

Parkfield & Oxbridge ward had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of hospital admissions for intentional self-harm at 267.7 of all wards in the Borough. This is in comparison to the Norton West ward that had the lowest number of hospital admissions for self-harm at 25.8.

### Disability

A person is classed as disabled under the Equality Act of 2010<sup>23</sup> if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities, which is likely to affect a person’s household income as they are less likely to be in employment and more likely to rely on universal credit and other benefits. Within Stockton Town Centre 24.9% of people are classed as being disabled under the Equality Act, this is higher than the Stockton-on-Tees average which is 19.9%. Parkfield and Oxbridge is lower than the borough average with only 19.4% of people classed as having a disability under the Equality Act.

### Crime

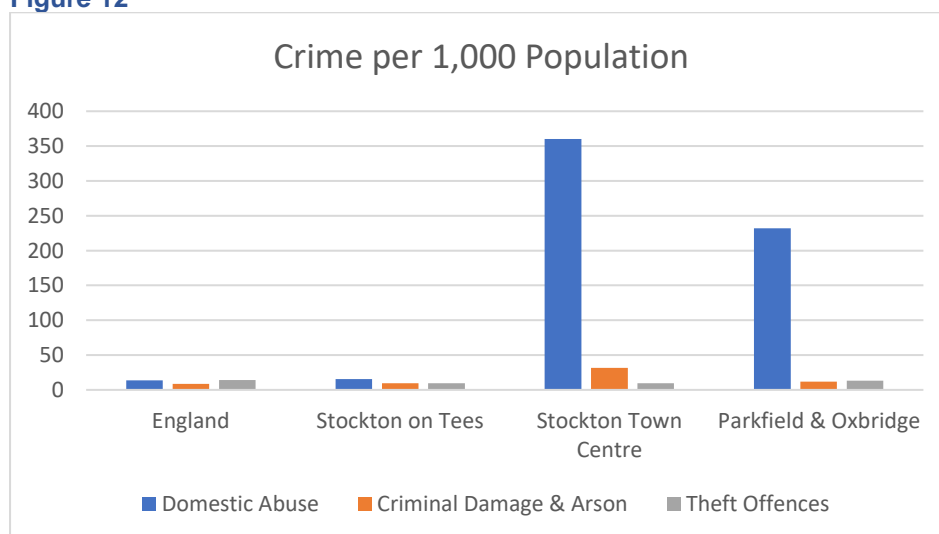
The Stockton Town Centre ward was ranked the highest for crime in the Borough of the 26 wards, with Parkfield and Oxbridge ranking third overall. Whilst the rank for Stockton Town Centre is very high it must be viewed with caution, as the ward covers the Town Centre which can be the cause of higher crime levels linked to its night-time economy.

**Table 5 – Percentage of Recorded Crimes (2020/21)<sup>24</sup>**

	% of all recorded incidents	
	Stockton Town Centre	Parkfield & Oxbridge
Domestic abuse crimes	11.8%	7.6%
Recorded criminal damage and arson offences	12.3%	6.0%
Recorded theft offences (excl. burglary, vehicle crime or robbery)	22.9%	6.9%
Recorded anti-social behaviour incidents	16.0%	7.9%

Figure 12<sup>25</sup> details the number of crimes per 1000 of the population compared to England and the wider Stockton-on-Tees Borough.

**Figure 12**



<sup>23</sup> Equality Act 2010 Definitions

<sup>24</sup> Police Crime data 2020/21

<sup>25</sup> Police Crime data 2020/21

# CHAPTER 3

# NORTH THORNABY

## NORTH THORNABY

The North Thornaby area forms part of the Mandale and Victoria ward and consists primarily of traditional terraced housing. The map below identifies the proposed North Thornaby Selective Licensing area within the red boundary.



## NORTH THORNABY OVERVIEW

Mandale and Victoria Ward is in Stockton South and is home to just under 12,500 people. Experian Mosaic Public Sector (EMPS) highlights the area is predominantly home to families with children who are likely to have limited resources and squeezed budgets. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, it is the 8th out of 26 (with 26th being least deprived) most deprived ward in Stockton-on-Tees Borough.<sup>26</sup>

## PROPOSED SELECTIVE LICENSING DESIGNATED AREA

Selective Licensing is proposed on the basis this area is likely to become an area of low housing demand, has a high concentration of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The narrative in this chapter provides an overview of North Thornaby, highlighting the evidence used to support the decision-making process regarding the choice of the Selective Licensing designated area.

<sup>26</sup> Mandale and Victoria Ward Profile 2023

## LOW HOUSING DEMAND

When identifying if an area is suffering from, or likely to become, an area of low housing demand, it is recommended by the DCLG that the local housing authority consider the following factors:

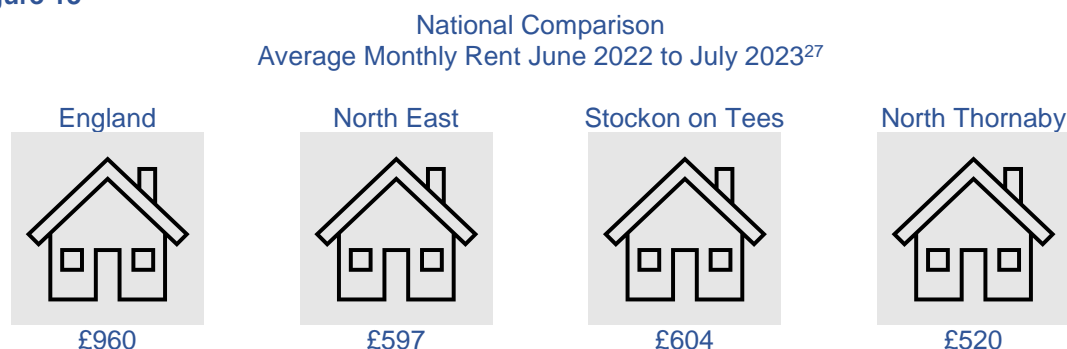
- **Residential property value** – values in the areas in comparison to the value of similar properties in other comparable areas.
- **Turnover of occupiers** – turnover of residential premises (both rented and owners-occupied).
- **Availability of properties** – the number of residential premises which are available to rent or buy, and the length of time they have remained unoccupied.
- **Empty Properties and Long-Term Empty Properties** – the general appearance of the locality and the number of boarded up shops and properties.

The evaluation undertaken by the Council has identified that the proposed Selective Licensing area is currently demonstrating indicators of low housing demand and the evidence detailed below supports this.

### Private Rented Sector

North Thornaby covers a residential area where 41% of the properties are privately rented. Based on the availability of property for rent within the North Thornaby area, average rental values are lower than the Borough, North East and national averages. However, as is shown later in this document people are more likely to be on lower incomes or reliant on Universal Credit and other benefits to offset their household bills.

Figure 13



Based on properties available for rent within the proposed North Thornaby Selective Licensing designated area the average monthly rental value is<sup>28</sup>:

Table 6

	Stockton-on-Tees	North Thornaby
Tenure	PCM	PCM
1 Bedroom Flat	£433	£368
2 Bedroom Terrace	£658	£550
3 Bedroom Terrace	£723	£641
Shared Housing	£375	n/a

<sup>27</sup> Right Move July 2023

<sup>28</sup> Data Source: Right Move, July 2023

## Local Housing Allowance Rates

The table below shows the Local Housing Allowance rates for Stockton-on-Tees. These are set nationally and as noted previously have not changed since April 2020.

**Table 7**

Number of Bedrooms	Weekly LHA Rate – April 2023
Shared Accommodation Rate	£65.00
One Bedroom	£86.30
Two Bedroom	£99.65
Three Bedroom	£115.00
Four Bedroom	£155.34

LHA rates are based on private market rents being paid by tenants in the [broad rental market area](#), this is the area within which a person might reasonably be expected to live. The Valuation Office Agency Rent Officers maintains rental information for each category of LHA rates. These are the 'list of rents'. Mathematical calculations are applied to the list of rents to determine the LHA rate which is set as the lower of:

- the 30th percentile on a list of rents in the BRMA.

## Empty Properties

Nationally 2.7% of the total housing stock is vacant<sup>29</sup>. Based on Council Tax records at the end of March 2023 Borough wide, 2.6% of the housing stock are empty properties.

Within the proposed North Thornaby licensing area, as of March 2023, Council Tax records indicated that 11.2% of properties were empty and yet this area covers less than 1% of the geographical area of Stockton-on-Tees.

## Long Term Empty Properties

Long term empty properties are those which have been empty for longer than 6 months. Nationally the percentage of long-term empty properties is 0.85% (Data source: DCLG 2017 Live Tables on Dwelling Stock).

The data presented here is from March 2023 and identified that of the empty properties within the proposed Selective Licensing designated area 69% have been empty for longer than 6 months.

Properties that are left empty for long periods of time can have negative effects on a residential area, as outlined below:

- Less housing on the market available to buy or rent at a difficult time within the housing market.
- They can attract ASB including vandalism, litter and sometimes arson.
- Market values are often reduced as neighbours move away and confidence is reduced.
- They are a wasted resource both financially and in terms of potential housing or community use.
- The reduced spending power of the local area impacts on local businesses and the general economic stability of the area.

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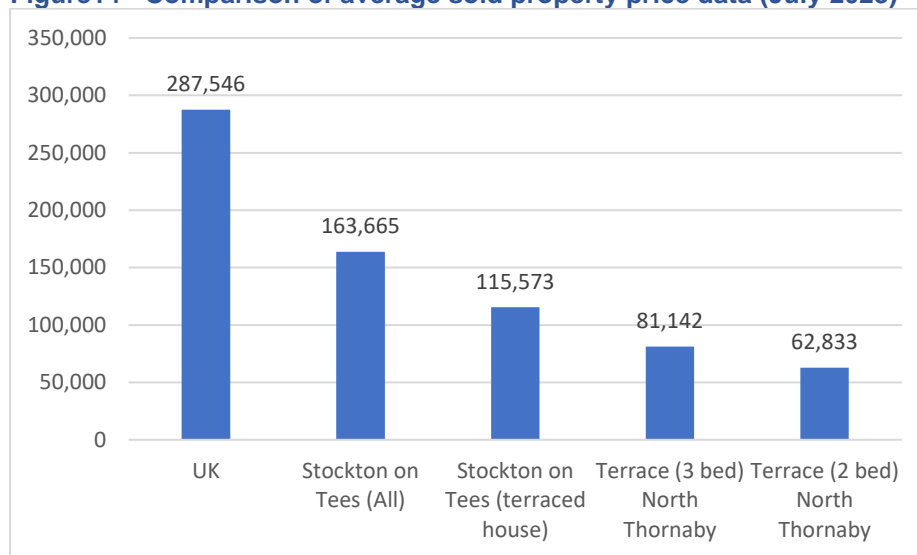
<sup>29</sup> DLUHC– vacant dwellings 2022

## House Prices

Figure 14 shows the average of house prices in North Thornaby as of July 2023:

- The average UK house price was £289,818.<sup>30</sup>
- The average house price in Stockton-on-Tees is much lower at £163,665 (all) and £115,573 for terraced houses<sup>31</sup>
- Average house price in the Mandale and Victoria ward is £131,000. This differs considerably with the average house prices in the proposed designated area of North Thornaby<sup>32</sup>. Based on postcodes within the proposed North Thornaby Selective Licensing area the average sold price for 2 bedroomed properties was £62,833 and for 3 bedroomed terraced properties £81,142<sup>33</sup>

**Figure14 - Comparison of average sold property price data (July 2023)**



## Barriers to Housing

Figure 15 (overleaf) highlights that homeownership within the Mandale and Victoria ward is significantly lower at 37.5% than the Borough (66.6%) and national (62.3%) averages.

There is also a higher proportion of privately rented properties within the ward (32.5%) compared to the borough average (17%) and national average (20.3%). Within the Selective Licensing area (North Thornaby) the number of private rents increases further to 41%.

<sup>30</sup> Land Registry Sold Prices July 2023

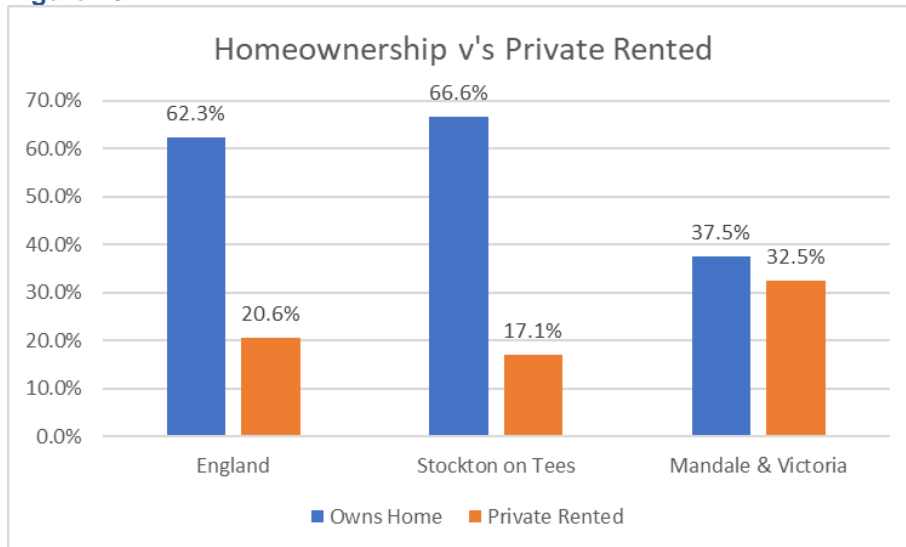
<sup>31</sup> Land Registry Sold Prices July 2023

<sup>32</sup> Land Registry Sold Prices July 2023

<sup>33</sup> Right Move Sold Prices July 2023



**Figure 15**

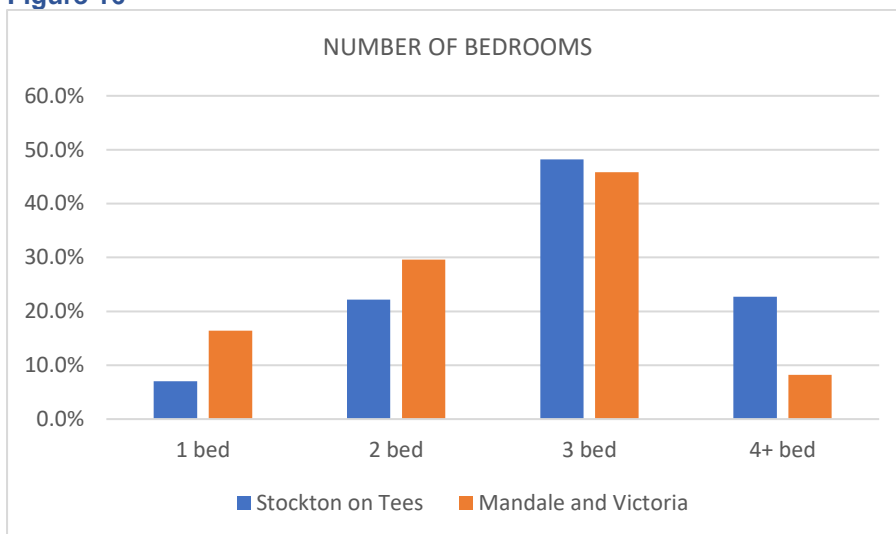


### Number of Bedrooms

Figure 16 highlights there is a higher number of 1 and 2-bedroomed accommodation in North Thornaby, a similar number of 3-bedroomed houses and a lower percentage of 4+ bedroomed houses compared to the wider Borough.

One reason why this may be the case is that the housing stock in the area is predominantly older terraced houses and a number have been converted into flats/apartments.

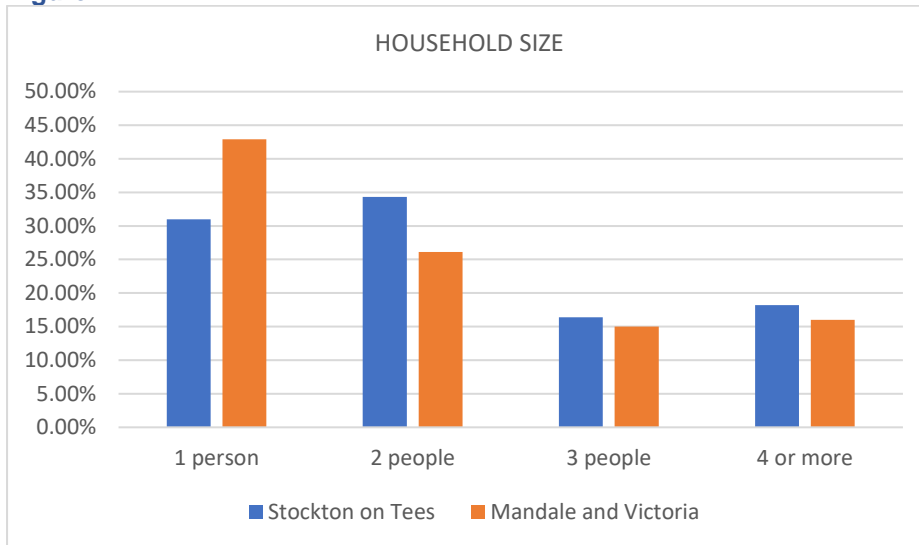
**Figure 16**



### Household Composition

As can be seen in figure 17 (overleaf) there is a higher concentration of single person households in the North Thornaby area compared to the Borough. This is likely to be linked to the higher number of flats/apartments in that area.

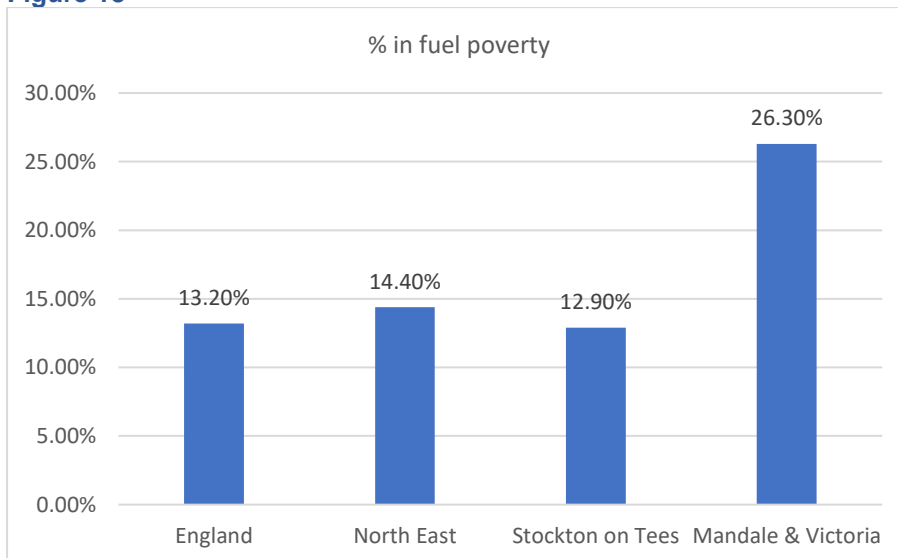
**Figure 17**



### Fuel poverty

Figure 18 suggests that households in the Mandale and Victoria ward suffer significantly in relation to fuel poverty with the percentage standing at 26.3% as opposed to 12.9% for the wider Borough.

**Figure 18**



### Council Tax Banding

On an annual basis all Local Councils set the amount of Council Tax payable by residents based on the value of the property set in April 1991. The analysis of properties by location and Council Tax band can help identify lower value areas as the assessed value of properties falling into band A does not exceed £52,000. Whilst, this system is now significantly out of date, the evidence of house prices within the proposed North Thornaby designated area suggests that for these lower value properties, prices have not improved greatly.

In the North Thornaby area in 2021 80.5% of households fell into Council Tax band A compared to 39.1% in the wider Borough and 23.5% nationally.

### Housing Conditions: Requests for Services (Private Sector Housing)

Legislation is available to local authorities to ensure that property conditions in the private rented properties do not have an adverse effect on the health, safety or welfare of tenants or visitors to a property. Where necessary the Council will service statutory repair notices on landlords to ensure that conditions are improved.

The Housing Act 2004, through the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), provides local authorities with the powers to calculate the seriousness of certain hazards, with Category 1 hazards being the most serious.

Table 8 details the number of complaints received regarding housing disrepair in private rented properties. Over a 3-year period from April 2020 to March 2023, 10.6% of these complaints related to properties in the proposed North Thornaby Selective Licensing designated area and of the Category 1 hazards identified in the Borough, 6% of these were within the North Thornaby area.

Following a similar pattern, of the statutory notices served, 13.6% related to properties in the North Thornaby wards, with 100% of the notices served relating to properties in proposed North Thornaby designated area.

**Table 8**

REQUESTS FOR SERVICE		
Year	Mandale & Victoria Ward	Selective Licensing Area
2020 – 2021	16%	10%
2021 – 2022	14%	12%
2022 – 2023	13%	10%
CATEGORY 1 HAZARDS		
Year	Mandale & Victoria	Selective Licensing Area
2020 – 2021	6%	3%
2021 – 2022	10%	6%
2022 – 2023	15%	10%
NOTICES		
Year	Mandale & Victoria	Selective Licensing Area
2020 – 2021	60%	60%
2021 – 2022	0%	0%
2022 – 2023	14%	14%

### What does the data tell us?

Table 9 summarises the information presented previously showing the difference in data at both a national and local level. The census 2021, showed a significant rise in private rented stock across the country but in North Thornaby the number of private rented properties is more than double the national percentage at 41%.

**Table 9**

Area	Private Rent Stock %	% Properties in Council Tax Band A	% Empty Properties	Average House Prices
England	20% (2021)	23.5% (2021)	2.5% (2021)	£289,818 (2021)
Stockton-on-Tees	17% (2021)	39.4% (2021)	2.4% (2022)	£168,571 (2021)
North Thornaby	41% (2021)	80.5% (2021)	11.2% (2021)	£71,988 (2023)

The proportion of properties in Council Tax band A in North Thornaby is double the number in the Borough and almost 4 times as many as the England average.

North Thornaby have a significantly higher percentage of empty properties compared to the wider Borough with an even higher percentage of empty dwellings falling within the designated area boundary.

House prices within North Thornaby are significantly lower than the rest of the Borough and nationally.

## **DEPRIVATION<sup>34</sup>**

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation are a national measure used to determine deprivation across the country. It considers several factors that impact on an individual's/family's circumstances that lead to a categorisation of deprivation. There are seven overarching deprivation indicators which are:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Each of the above measures are produced using a range of factors from different datasets available to determine where an area is on the deprivation scale in relation to other wards in England.

The indices are presented in two different ways Middle Super Output Areas (MSOA's) and Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's). The MSOA provides information at a ward level and LSOA's provide more in-depth statistical analysis for wards.

### **General Information regarding deprivation in North Thornaby**

In 2019 the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) found Stockton-on-Tees to be the 73<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Local Authority area out of a total of 317 Local Authorities:

- Mandale and Victoria ward is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked at 5659 of 7529 wards, where the higher the score the more deprived the ward<sup>35</sup>
- Mandale and Victoria ward is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country. Of the 26 wards in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, Mandale and Victoria has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest level of relative deprivation in the Borough.

## **HOUSING DEPRIVATION**

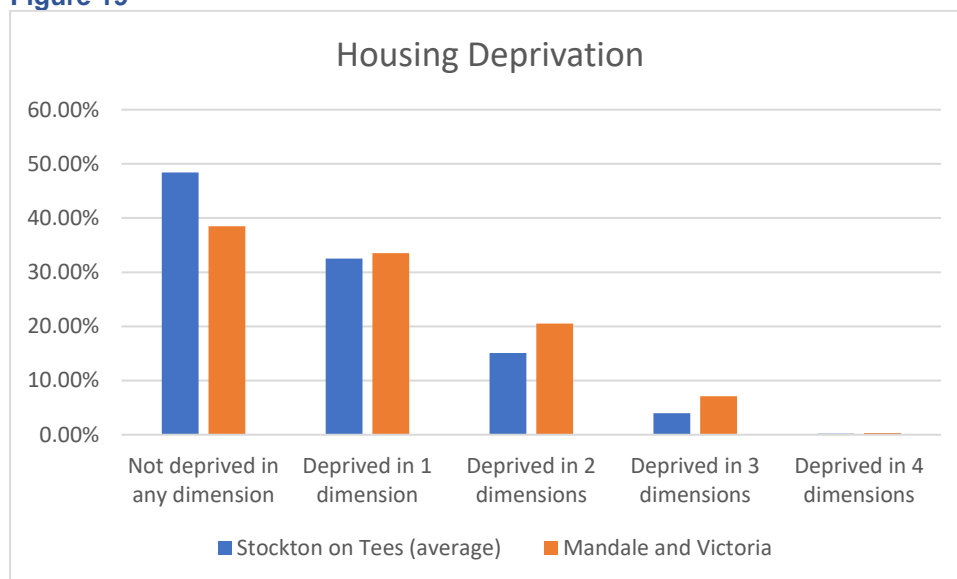
Housing deprivation is measured by four dimensions: Employment, Education, Health, and Disability and Overcrowding. Figure 19 illustrates that both Mandale and Victoria record a higher percentage of people who are deprived in two or more dimensions.

---

<sup>34</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019

<sup>35</sup> Ward Based National Ranks IMD 2019

**Figure 19**



### **Income**

Comparing the ward with the Borough overall, there are more households likely to have a net annual income of less than £15,000<sup>36</sup>, which will make households more dependent on Universal Credit and other benefits as well as Free School Meals if they have children of school age between 4 and 16 years and claiming Council Tax benefits.

### **Out of Work Benefits**

- The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work is higher than the Borough average of 4.1%, with Mandale and Victoria being 5.8% (ONS March 2023).
- The percentage of residents 16 to 64 claiming universal credit is higher than the England average of 6.6% and the Borough average of 7%. The number of claimants in Mandale and Victoria is 9.7%.
- The percentage of residents 18 – 24 claiming universal credit is lower than the England average of 9.2% and Borough average of 13.1%, with Mandale and Victoria being 5.4%.

### **Unemployment**

3.3% of the boroughs working age population are unemployed. The unemployment rate in North Thornaby is nearly double the borough average at 5.6% (adult unemployment is 5.8% and the youth unemployment is 5.4%).

### **Number of Council Tax Claimants**

The total number of people claiming Council Tax benefits in the Borough is 16,988 of which 1709 or 10.1% live in the Mandale and Victoria wards. This ward ranks first in the Borough for the number of Council tax claimants.

<sup>36</sup> Ward profiles 2023

Figure 20 - Percentage of Children Accessing Free School Meals (FSM) (4 to 16 years)<sup>37</sup>



As can be seen from Figure 20, the percentage of children accessing Free School Meals is significantly higher in North Thornaby than across the Borough. Children are eligible for Free School Meals if the household earnings are less than £7,400.

## EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND TRAINING

### Children and Young People's Attainment



In North Thornaby the percentage of children reaching a good level of development at the end of reception is 72.4% in comparison with the top ranked ward with a percentage of 86.3%.



The Borough average for achieving a grade 5 and above (1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest) in English and Maths GCSE is 53.2%. In North Thornaby it is 40.2% in comparison to the highest-ranking ward of 73.9%<sup>38</sup>

Educational attainment within children is often linked to deprivation and the table above demonstrates that children in the North Thornaby designated area do not perform as well as those across the Borough and significantly lag their peers in the highest-ranking ward.

### Adult Attainment



The percentage of adults with no qualifications is 29.3%.



Only 14.5% of adults aged 16 – 74 in North Thornaby have a degree, HNC or professional qualification.

## HEALTH

<sup>37</sup> Spring 23 Pupil Census (January 2023)

<sup>38</sup> DfE KS4 Revised Data 2022, Summer 2022 Pupil Census, NCER

Health indicators, including general health of the population, life expectancy and self-harm, are often used as a determinant of the effects of deprivation on a community<sup>39</sup>.

### Life Expectancy at birth (Males and Females 2016-20<sup>40</sup>)

- Over the period 2016 – 2020 life expectancy at birth in Stockton-on-Tees was 78.4 for a male and 81.3 for a female, which is lower than the national average of 79.5 for males and 83.2 for females.
- The life expectancy for the Mandale and Victoria ward is 74.9 years for males and 76.8 years for females, a difference from the Borough wide total of 3.3 years and 4.5 years respectively. The difference when compared to the highest-ranking ward in terms of age is significant at 9.2 years for males and 13.5 years for females.

### Self-Harm<sup>41</sup>

Five-year Hospital Episode Data relating to emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm indicates that North Thornaby has the 12<sup>th</sup> highest number hospital admissions for intentional self-harm of all wards in the Borough at 132.9. This is in comparison to the Norton West ward that had the lowest number of hospital admissions for self-harm at 25.8.

### Disability

A person is classed as disabled under the Equality Act of 2010<sup>42</sup> if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities, which is likely to affect a person’s household income as they are less likely to be in employment and more likely to rely on Universal Credit and other benefits. Within Mandale and Victoria 23.8% of people are classed as being disabled under the Equality Act, this is higher than the Stockton-on-Tees average which is 19.9%.

## CRIME

**Table 10 - Crime per 1,000 population<sup>43</sup>**

	England	Stockton-on-Tees	Mandale & Victoria
Domestic Abuse	13.5	15.4	26.0
Criminal Damage and Arson	8.6	9.5	20.9
Theft Offences	14.3	9.4	26.1

The ward was the location for 10.7% of Stockton-on-Tees Borough's recorded crimes; 10.6% of domestic abuse crimes, 13.8% of recorded criminal damage and arson offences, 10.7% of recorded theft offences (excl. burglary, vehicle crime or robbery) and 9.5% of all recorded anti-social behaviour incidents.

In comparison with the Borough, the North East and England, the Ward has a higher rate per 1,000 population for recorded crime; recorded criminal damage and arson; and, recorded theft offences (excl. burglary, vehicle crime or robbery). Domestic abuse crime recorded rate per 1,000 was greater in the Ward than the Borough and England; and the anti-social behaviour incident rate per 1,000 was greater than the Borough, North East and England. Considering fires, the Ward was the location for 0.07% of all primary and 0.27% of secondary fires in England.

<sup>39</sup> ONS – Census 2021 General Health

<sup>40</sup> Source: The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities analysis of ONS death registration and mid-year population estimates.

<sup>41</sup> Source: Hospital Episode Statistics (HES)

<sup>42</sup> [Equality Act 2010 definition](#)

<sup>43</sup> Police crime data 2020/21



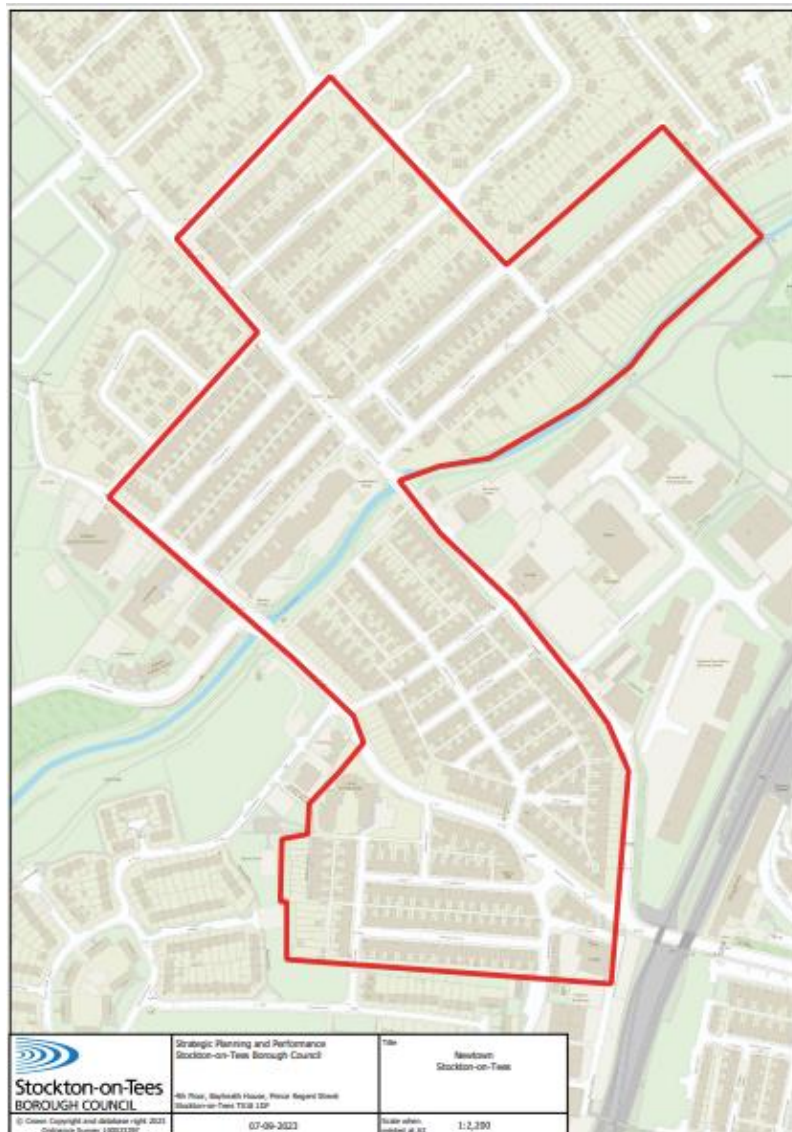


# CHAPTER 4

# NEWTOWN

## NEWTOWN

This is an area of older, predominately terraced housing and forms part of the Newtown ward. The map below identifies the proposed Newtown Selective Licensing area within the red boundary.



## NEWTOWN OVERVIEW

The Newtown Ward is in Stockton North and is home to just under 7,200 people. Experian Mosaic Public Sector (EMPS) highlights this area is likely to be home to predominantly families with children who are likely to have limited resources and squeezed budgets. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, it is the 2nd (out of 26, with 26th being least deprived) most deprived Ward in Stockton-on-Tees Borough<sup>44</sup>

The proposed Selective Licensing designation area covers a residential area which accounts for 2% of the housing stock in the Borough. Within this area 45% of properties are privately rented.

<sup>44</sup> Newtown ward profile 2023

## PROPOSED SELECTIVE LICENSING DESIGNATED AREA

Selective Licensing is proposed on the basis that this area is experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, with high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The narrative below provides an overview of Newtown, highlighting the evidence used to support the decision regarding the choice of the Selective Licensing area.

The Newtown ward is the most densely populated ward in the Borough with 3857 people per square kilometer whilst it is 959.3 per square kilometer in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

## SIGNIFICANT AND PERSISTENT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

When identifying if an area is suffering from, ASB, it is recommended by the DCLG that the local housing authority consider the following factors:

- **Crime:** tenants engaged in poor tenant type behavior, engaged in vandalism, criminal damage, burglary, or theft.
- **Nuisance Neighbours:** resulting in harassment, intimidation, noise or nuisance affecting members of the public. Tenants engaged in begging, anti-social drinking, drugs or prostitution as examples.
- **Environmental crime:** where tenants are engaged in graffiti, flyposting, fly-tipping, litter, waste, and drugs as examples in/around the curtilage of the property.

ASB is not exclusively but can include acts of:

- Verbal abuse, intimidation or harassment behavior of tenants or neighbours.
- Noise, rowdy and nuisance behavior affecting persons living in or visiting the vicinity.
- Animal related problems.
- Vehicle related nuisance.
- Anti-social drinking or prostitution.
- Illegal drug taking or dealing.
- Graffiti and fly posting, and
- Litter and waste within the curtilage of the property.

If ASB is being carried out within the immediate vicinity of the property, and is being caused by the occupiers of it, then it would be reasonable to expect a landlord to ensure that those persons are not conducting themselves in such a way that is adversely impacting on the local community. This applies equally to visitors to the property.

ASB can have significant effect on individuals, families, and areas, with higher levels of ASB causing a blight on the area concerned. For example, those experiencing anti-social behaviour are likely to be fearful, unhappy living in the area areas and want to leave leading to increased property turnover.

ASB is defined by the Housing Act 2004 as “Conduct on the part of occupiers of, or visitors to, residential premises:

- Which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to persons residing, visiting, or otherwise engaged in lawful activities in the vicinity of such premises, or
- Which involves or is likely to involve the use of such premises for illegal purposes”.

To inform the assessment the Council has considered its own data and that recorded by Cleveland Police. This information evidenced problems of ASB in the proposed designated area.

### Crime rates

Compared to other areas within the Borough, Newtown has relatively high levels of crime. For 2020/21 the crime rate was responsible for 5.6% of the Borough's total recorded crime.

### Anti-Social Behaviour (Ward Profile)

Newtown is the location for 6% of all recoded anti-social behaviour incidents within the Borough, ranking it as 5 of the boroughs 26 wards.

Newtown is also responsible for 8.3% of the Borough's fly-tipping removal.

### Police ASB Incidents (2020/21) – Figure 21

The number of reported ASB incidents to the police in 2021/22 is illustrated on the heat map (Figure 21) on page 35. This heat map evidences clusters of ASB incidents:

Nuisance incidents	– 171
Personal incidents	– 17
Environmental incidents	– 14

Figure 21 highlights the level of ASB incidents reported to Cleveland Police in the proposed Newtown Selective Licensing designation area, concentrates of ASB activity are clearly evidenced (darker shading).

### Council ASB (2022/23) – Figure 22

Figure 22 highlights (via heat mapping) the number of ASB incidents reported to the Council in the Newtown Selective Licensing designated area.

As can be seen on Figure 22 reports of ASB made to the Council follow similar patterns as those reported to Cleveland Police.

The main causes of ASB and Environmental Nuisance reported to the Council as summarised in the Table 11 below:

**Table 11**

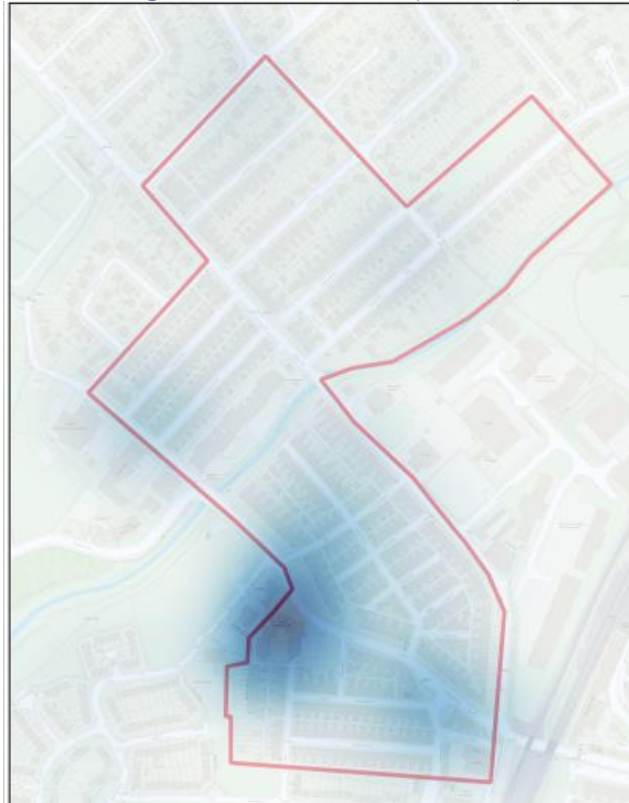
Issues	Percentage
Anti-social behaviour	24%
Noise/Animal	21%
Litter/Rubbish	17%
Vehicle	17%
Dog Fouling	10%

**Figure 21: Police ASB Incidents (2020/21)**



 <b>Stockton-on-Tees</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL <small>© Crown Copyright and database right 2022          Ordnance Survey 100023297</small>	Map produced by the Strategic Planning and Performance Team Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD Telephone: (01642) 393939	Title
		Selective Licensing
	06-09-2023	

**Figure 22: Council ASB (2022/23)**



 <b>Stockton-on-Tees</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL <small>© Crown Copyright and database right 2022          Ordnance Survey 100023297</small>	Strategic Planning and Performance Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council 4th Floor, Mermaid House, North Regent Street Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1EP	Title
		Newtown Council ASB Data Stockton-on-Tees
	13-06-2023	Scale 1:2,380 Current as of

**Figure 23: Police Reported Crime (2020/21)**



 <b>Stockton-on-Tees</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL <small>© Crown Copyright and database right 2022          Ordnance Survey 100023297</small>	Map produced by the Strategic Planning and Performance Team Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD Telephone: (01642) 393939	Title
		Selective Licensing
	06-09-2023	

## CRIME

The table below shows that the incidence of domestic violence is very high compared to the Borough and national average, and criminal damage and arson are high.

**Table 12 Crime per 1,000 population<sup>45</sup>**

	England	Stockton-on-Tees	Mandale & Victoria
Domestic Abuse	13.5	15.4	29.4
Criminal Damage and Arson	8.6	9.5	18.7
Theft Offences	14.3	9.4	3.7

The heat map shown in Figure 20 below highlights that there is a high level of crime in the Selective Licensing designated area with most of the area affected, with the area at the bottom of the map showing a significant level of crime.

## DEPRIVATION

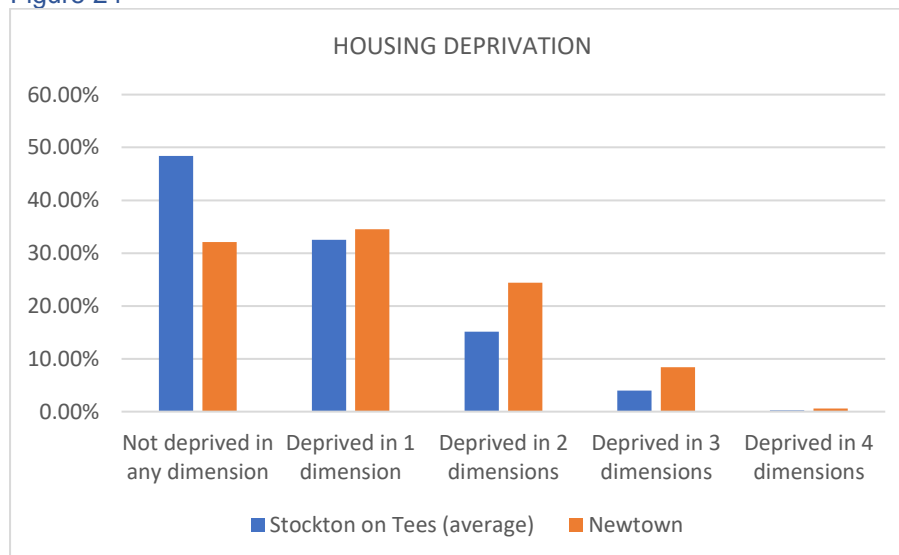
In 2019 the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) found Stockton-on-Tees to be the 73<sup>rd</sup> most deprived Local Authority area out of a total of 317 Local Authorities:

- Newtown ward is in the 10% most deprived wards in the country and is ranked at 6812 of 7529 wards, where the higher the score the more deprived the ward<sup>46</sup>
- Newtown has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of relative deprivation in the Borough of the 26 wards.

## HOUSING DEPRIVATION

Housing deprivation is measured by four dimensions of deprivation: Employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding. As can be seen from Figure 24 below Newtown suffers from significantly more deprivation in relation to the four dimensions compared to the wider Borough.

**Figure 24**



<sup>45</sup> Police Crime Data 2020/21

<sup>46</sup> Ward Based National Ranks IMD 2019

## UNEMPLOYMENT

Of the working age population within Stockton-on-Tees which is 53.3%, 3.3% are unemployed. This is in stark contrast to the Newtown ward which has a significantly higher level of unemployment compared to the Borough average at 10.4%, with adult unemployment being 9% and youth unemployment being 11.9%.

### Out of Work Benefits

- The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work is higher than the Borough average of 4.1%, with Newtown being 9.0% (ONS March 2023).
- The percentage of residents 16 to 64 claiming universal credit is higher than the England average of 6.6% and the Borough average of 7%. The number of claimants in Newtown is 14.1%.
- The percentage of residents 18 – 24 claiming Universal Credit is significantly higher than the England average of 9.2% and Borough average of 13.1%, with Newtown being 23.7%.

### Percentage of Council Tax Claimants

The total number of people claiming Council Tax benefits across the Borough is 16,988 of this number 1083 or 6.4% live in the Newtown ward and 57.9% were accessing free school meals.

### Number of Children accessing Free Schools Meals (4 - 16 years)

There is a high percentage of households with school aged children, in the Newtown designated area, who are accessing Free School Meals, which indicates a significant level of deprivation based on several qualifying criteria.

Figure 25 – The percentage of Children Accessing Free Schools Meals (FSM) (4 to 16 years)<sup>47</sup>



## EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS

### Children and Young People's Attainment



In Newtown the percentage of children reaching a good level of development at the end of reception is 70.5% in comparison with the top ranked ward with a percentage of 86.3%.



The Borough average for achieving a grade 5 and above (1 being the lowest and 9 being the highest) in English and Maths GCSE is 53.2%. In Newtown it is 43.0% in comparison to the highest-ranking ward of 73.9%<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Spring 2023 Pupil Census (January 2023)

<sup>48</sup> Data Source: DfE KS4 Revised Data 2022, Summer 2022 Pupil Census, NCER

The Educational attainment of children is often linked to deprivation and the table above demonstrates that children in the Newtown designated area do not perform as well as those across the Borough and significantly lag their peers in the highest-ranking ward.

### Adult Attainment



The percentage of adults with no qualifications in Newtown is 31%.



Only 12.6% of adults aged 16 – 74 in Newtown have a degree, HNC or professional qualification.

## HEALTH

### Life Expectancy at birth – Males and Females 2016-20<sup>49</sup>

Over the period 2016 – 2020 life expectancy at birth in Stockton-on-Tees was 78.4 for a male and 81.3 for a female, which is lower than the national average of 79.5 for males and 83.2 for females.

The life expectancy for the Newtown ward is 74.2 years for males and 76.6 years for females, a difference from the Borough wide total of 4 years and 4.7 years respectively. The difference when compared to the highest-ranking ward in terms of age is significant at 9.9 years for males and 13.7 years for females.

### Self-Harm

Five-year Hospital Episode Data relating to emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm indicates that Newtown 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number hospital admissions for intentional self-harm of all wards in the Borough at 237.1. This is in comparison to the Norton West ward that had the lowest number of hospital admissions for self-harm at 25.8.

### Disability

A person is classed as disabled under the Equality Act of 2010<sup>50</sup> if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities, which is likely to affect a person's household income as they are less likely to be in employment and more likely to rely on universal credit and other benefits. Within Newtown 23.4% of people are classed as being disabled under the Equality Act, this is higher than the Stockton-on-Tees average which is 19.9%.

### Empty properties

Nationally 2.7% of the total housing stock is vacant (DLUHC– vacant dwellings 2022). Based on Council Tax records at the end of March 2023 Borough wide, 2.6% of the housing stock are empty properties.

Within the proposed Newtown licensing area, as of March 2023, Council Tax records indicated that 11.2% of properties were empty and yet this area covers less than 1% of the geographical area of Stockton-on-Tees.

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<sup>49</sup> Source: The Office of Health Improvement and Disparities analysis of ONS death registration and mid-year population estimates.

<sup>50</sup> [Equality Act 2010 definition](#)



### **Long Term Empty Properties**

Long term empty properties are those which have been empty for longer than 6 months. Nationally the percentage of long-term empty properties is 0.85% (Data source: DCLG 2017 Live Tables on Dwelling Stock) is vacant.

The data presented here is from March 2023 and identified that of the empty properties within the proposed Newtown designated area, 11.2% have been empty for longer than 6 months.

Properties that are left empty for long periods of time can have negative effects on a residential area, as outlined below:

- Less housing on the market available to buy or rent at a difficult time within the housing market.
- They can attract ASB including vandalism, litter and sometimes arson.
- Market values are often reduced as neighbours move away and confidence is reduced.
- They are a wasted resource both financially and in terms of potential housing or community use.
- The reduced spending power of the local area impacts on local businesses and the general economic stability of the area.

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# APPENDIX 3

## Consultation Findings Report

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SELECTIVE  
LICENSING SCHEME  
PROPOSAL**  
Consultation  
Findings Report

## CONTENTS PAGE

Chapter 1: Overview
Chapter 2: The Consultation Programme
Chapter 3: An Overview of the Collated Consultation Responses
Chapter 4: Consultation Responses Landlords & Agents
Chapter 5: Consultation Responses Combined - Residents (Tenants and Owner Occupiers) & Stakeholders
Chapter 6: Consultation Responses Additional Information
Chapter 7: Consultation Analysis
<b>APPENDIX INFORMATION</b>
Appendix A: Red Line Maps
Appendix B: Consultation Plan
Appendix C: Selective Licensing Letter & Leaflet

## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

1. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, the Councils Cabinet considered a proposal to commence consultation on the proposed implementation of Selective Licensing in three designated areas of the brough, in **Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown**.
2. Selective Licensing is proposed in Central Stockton and North Thornaby on the basis that they are areas that are or are likely to become areas of low housing demand, have high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and are experiencing high levels of deprivation. Newtown is proposed as an area experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, with high concentrations of private rented (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation. **Appendix A** provides a red line map of each of three proposed areas.
3. Approval was granted to commence a detailed programme of public consultation to ensure the Council takes “reasonable steps to consult with persons who are likely to be affected by the designation” as required Section 80(9) Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004 and in accordance with Government guidance.
4. This report details the variety of methods the Council sought to actively seek the views of those who may be affected and the findings of the formal consultation exercise.
5. Consultation commenced on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and closed at 4pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The minimum 10-week consultation period was extended due to the consultation period covering the festive period. In summary the consultation consisted of the following:
  - A resident\*, business and stakeholder questionnaire (\*the term resident includes tenants of private rented and Registered provider properties and owner occupiers).
  - A landlord questionnaire (which was also shared with letting/managing agents).
  - Attendance at several community events (at the request of local community groups and representatives).
  - 2 landlord events (one in person and one on-line).

### **Survey high level analysis:**

6. In total 231 completed questionnaires were received from all parties. In addition to the questionnaires 12 emails were received along with written responses from NRLA / PLS / Safeagent. (copies of each are included in the Summary of Representations made to the Consultation & the Councils Considerations and responses document).
7. **3 (3%) of landlords and letting/managing agents** who responded to the consultation questionnaire agreed with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing for privately rented properties within the proposed areas, whilst 82 (83% disagreed), 6 (6%) were not sure and 8 (8%) did not respond to the question.

A breakdown of responses for landlords and letting/managing agents for each of the three proposed Selective Licensing areas is detailed on page 11.

8. **72 (62%) of residents** who responded to the consultation questionnaire agreed with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing for privately rented properties within the proposed areas, whilst 32 (28% disagreed), 6 (5%) were not sure and 6 (5%) did not respond to the question.
9. **11 (69%) of stakeholders** who responded to the consultation questionnaire agreed with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing for privately rented properties within the proposed areas, whilst 3 (19% disagreed), 0 (0%) were not sure and 2 (13%) did not respond to the question.

A combined breakdown of responses for residents and stakeholders for each of the three proposed Selective Licensing areas is detailed on page 23.

## CHAPTER 2: THE CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

1. Part 3 of the Housing Action 2004 section 80(9) states that when considering designating an area for selective licensing the local authority must: -
  - Take reasonable steps to consult persons who are likely to be affected by the designation; and
  - Consider any representations made in accordance with the consultation and which are not withdrawn.
2. Guidance 'Selective licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities' (issued by the Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities (DLUHC), last updated 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023) sets out the following consultation requirements:

*Local housing authorities are required to conduct a full consultation. This should include consultation of local residents, including tenants, landlords and where appropriate their managing agents and other members of the community who live or operate businesses or provide services within the proposed designation. It should also include local residents and those who operate businesses or provide services in the surrounding area outside of the proposed designation that will be affected. Local housing authorities should ensure that the consultation is widely publicised using various channels of communication.*

*If the designation does not require the confirmation of the Secretary of State because of its extent, then the local housing authority must consult on the proposed scheme for at least 10 weeks. If the scheme requires the Secretary of State's confirmation, then the local housing authority should still aim to consult for at least 10 weeks unless there are special reasons for not doing so.*

*The consultation should be informative, clear and to the point, so the proposal is readily understood. It should inform local residents, landlords, letting/managing agents and businesses about the proposed designation, giving the reasons for proposing it, why alternative remedies are insufficient, demonstrating how it will tackle specific problems together with other specified measures, and describing the proposed outcome of the designation. It should also set out the proposed fee structure and level of fees the authority is minded to charge (if any). Consultees should be invited to give their views, and these should all be considered and responded to.*

*Once the consultation has been completed the results should then be published and made available to the local community. This should be in the form of a summary of the responses received and should demonstrate how these have either been acted on or not, giving reasons.*

3. The Consultation Plan (**Appendix B**) adopted was based on meeting the requirements set out by the DLUHC guidance and to ensure that consultation undertaken was as robust and meaningful as possible. The Consultation Plan has been updated to reflect the actions taken by the Council (see narrative in the 'Outcome' column on pages 5-7).
4. As mentioned previously the consultation commenced on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and closed at 4pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024 (exceeding the 10-week minimum period required).



5. Consultation took the following format:

**Residents and business:**

- A **Letter and consultation booklet: (Appendix C)**.were delivered to all addresses (both residential addresses and business premises) within the 3 proposed Selective Licensing areas and to those areas directly adjacent. In total over 5,600 letters (with a consultation booklet) were distributed.

The above were supported by several community sessions, Council officers attended at the request of local community groups and/or community representatives. Details of these events are included in the Consultation Plan (**Appendix B**).

**Private landlord and letting/managing agents:**

- 260 members of PLuSS and the Councils Landlord Accreditation Scheme were contacted via email (a copy of the consultation booklet was included/attached). A further 426 Letters were sent to landlords who were identified via Land Registry checks and via the Government approved Tenancy Deposit Schemes. Additionally, as/when further landlords were identified or directly contacted the Council the same information was shared.
- 18 Letting/managing agents operating within 3 proposed Selective Licensing areas were identified and also directly contacted.
- 2 Face-to-face engagement sessions were held, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023 (face to face event) 16 landlords attended and on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023 (on-line via Teams) 12 landlords attended.

**Key Stakeholders:**

- Direct contact was made with a number of wider stakeholders including both Members of Parliament for the borough, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Registered Housing Providers with housing stock within the proposed Selective Licensing areas.
- Direct contact was also made to the National Residential Landlords Association and British Landlords Association.
- A presentation was made at the Safer Stockton Partnership (22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023).

**Other stakeholders:**

- To contact a range of VCSE partners, promotion of the Selective Licensing consultation was undertaken via the Catalyst on-line bulletin.

**Council Members:**

- All local members within Ropner, Stockton Town Centre, Mandale and Victoria and Newtown wards were consulted on the proposal and made aware of the consultation exercise.

**Other means of consultation:** In addition to the above the following methods to share information were used;

- **Stockton News:** to engage a wider audience including landlords not already directly contacted, the Selective Licensing consultation featured in the November 2023 edition. Stockton News is delivered to every household in the borough.
- **Press release:** to promote the on-line consultation a press release was issued.
- **Social media:** Information posted between 18<sup>th</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> January. (Including 2 before the consultation, letting people know it was coming).
- **The Councils website:** included details of the proposal, maps and street addresses and how to respond to the consultation and/or seek further information were included on a dedicated Selective Licensing webpage.

In addition to the above, a **dedicated phone line and email address** was made available. Individuals who called or emailed were encouraged to complete the online consultation survey.

6. During the period of the consultation, replies were encouraged via the Councils on-line consultation portal. However, paper copies of the consultation survey were made available and shared as requested (and a pre-paid reply envelope supplied).

## CHAPTER 3: AN OVERVIEW OF THE COLLATED CONSULTATION RESPONSES

1. As highlighted previously a total of 231 consultation responses were received to the questionnaire and 12 further responses were received via email.
2. A high-level analysis of the 231 collated responses is summarised below.

The detail of responses broken down by respondent groups **Landlords & Letting/Managing Agents** and **Residents (tenants and owner occupiers) & (along with) Stakeholders** at an area level can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

**Respondents were initially asked to let us know, which proposed designated Selective Licensing area that they were completing the consultation for.**

**QUESTION: Which area you are completing this survey for?**

**TABLE 1**

Area	Total number of responses received	% of responses received
Central Stockton	112	49%
North Thornaby	77	33%
Newtown	42	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Respondents to the consultation were categorised into the groups detailed below.**

**QUESTION: Please tell us if you are a Landlord or Letting/Managing Agent, Resident or Stakeholder?**

**TABLE 2**

	Total number of responses received	Total % of responses received	Responses by area		
			Central Stockton	North Thornaby	Newtown
<b>Landlord/managing agent</b>	99	43%	43	36	20
<b>Residents</b>	116	50%	59	37	20
<b>Stakeholder*</b>	16	7%	10	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>42</b>

\* Analysis of stakeholder responses identified a response was made by the MP for Stockton North, Cleveland Police, a local business, VCSE groups and others who identified themselves as an 'other interested party'.

Those who responded to say that they were landlords or letting/managing agents were then asked if they were a member of a recognised landlord group. 38 respondents were members of Private Landlords Supporting Stockton (PLuSS)

**QUESTION: Are you a member of PLuSS, the Council’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme or a National Landlords Association?**

**TABLE 3**

National Landlord Association	10
PLuSS	38
SBC Accreditation Scheme	13
No response	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>100*</b>

\* 1 Respondent highlighted that they were a member of both a National Landlord Association and PLuSS

**86 landlords or letting/management agents owned or managed properties within the proposed designated Selective Licensing areas.**

**QUESTION: Do you own and/or manage properties within the proposed Selective Licensing areas?**

**TABLE 4**

No	6
Yes	86
No response	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>

Of those who responded most landlords or letting/managing agents, 57, owned or managed 1 to 3 properties in the proposed designated Selective Licensing areas. 4 landlords or letting/managing agents owned or managed over 20 properties in the proposed designated Selective Licensing areas.

**QUESTION: If you own or manage properties within the proposed designated Selective Licensing areas, how many properties do you own or manage?**

**TABLE 5**

Number of properties owned?	All areas	Central Stockton	North Thornaby	Newtown
		1 - 3	17	26
4 - 10	18	9	6	3
11 - 20	5	3	2	0
21 +	4	4	0	0
No response	15	10	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>

Looking at the overall responses 86 respondents agree and 117 disagree to the introduction of selective licensing. Looking at responses by group, residents and stakeholders are in favour of the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing, with 72 residents and 11 stakeholders agreeing. Landlords and letting/managing agents are opposed to the proposals with 82 of those who responded disagreeing with the proposal.

**QUESTION 6: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing in the proposed area?**

**TABLE 6**

	Landlords		Residents		Stakeholders		All	
No	82	83%	32	28%	3	19%	117	51%
Not sure	6	6%	6	5%	0	0%	12	5%
Yes	3	3%	72	62%	11	69%	86	37%
No response	8	8%	6	5%	2	12%	16	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>		<b>116</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>231</b>	

Respondents in the landlord or letting/managing agent group were asked whether they thought the proposed Selective Licensing fee of £653 for a 5 year licence was reasonable. Of the 90 landlord or letting/managing agent responses received, 5 respondents agreed with the proposed fee, the majority disagreed with the proposed fee.

**QUESTION: Do you agree that the proposed Selective Licensing fee of £653 per property is reasonable?**

**TABLE 7**

	No. of responses	% of responses
No	85	86%
Yes	5	5%
No Response	9	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100%</b>

Respondents were then asked if they agreed with the proposal to offer a discount on the proposed Selective Licence fee. There was a mixed view of the proposal to offer a discount with 46 respondents disagreeing and 40 respondents agreeing with the proposal.

**QUESTION: Do you agree with the proposal to offer a discount?**

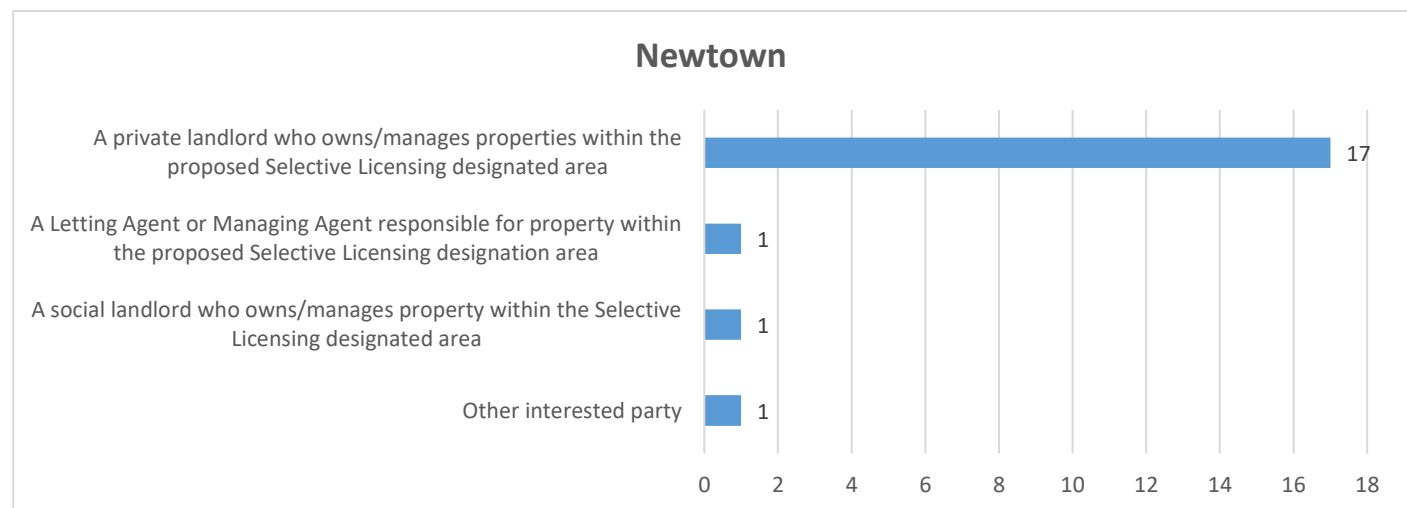
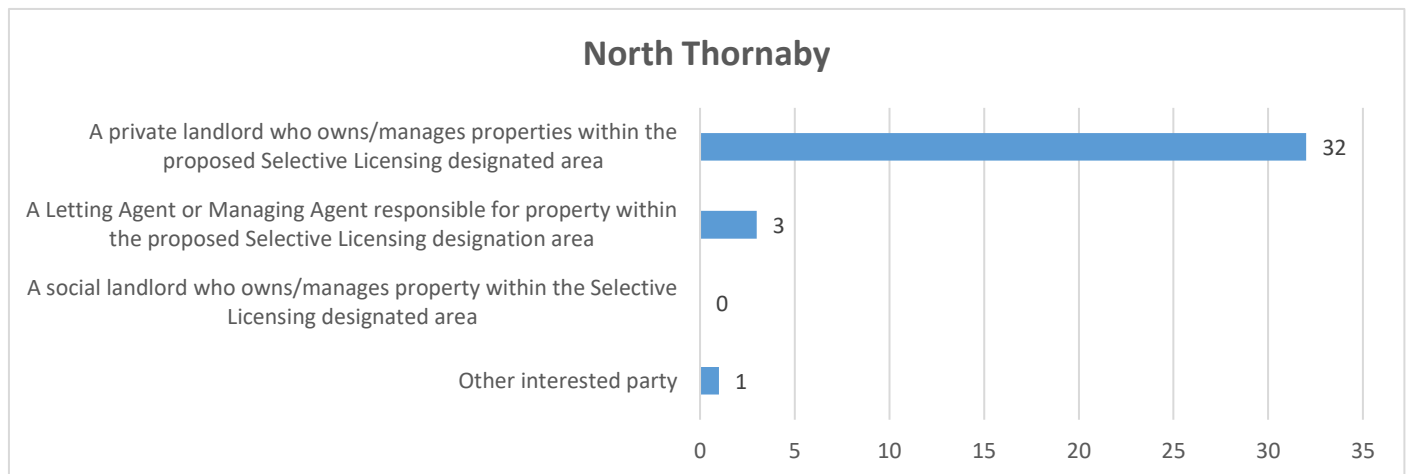
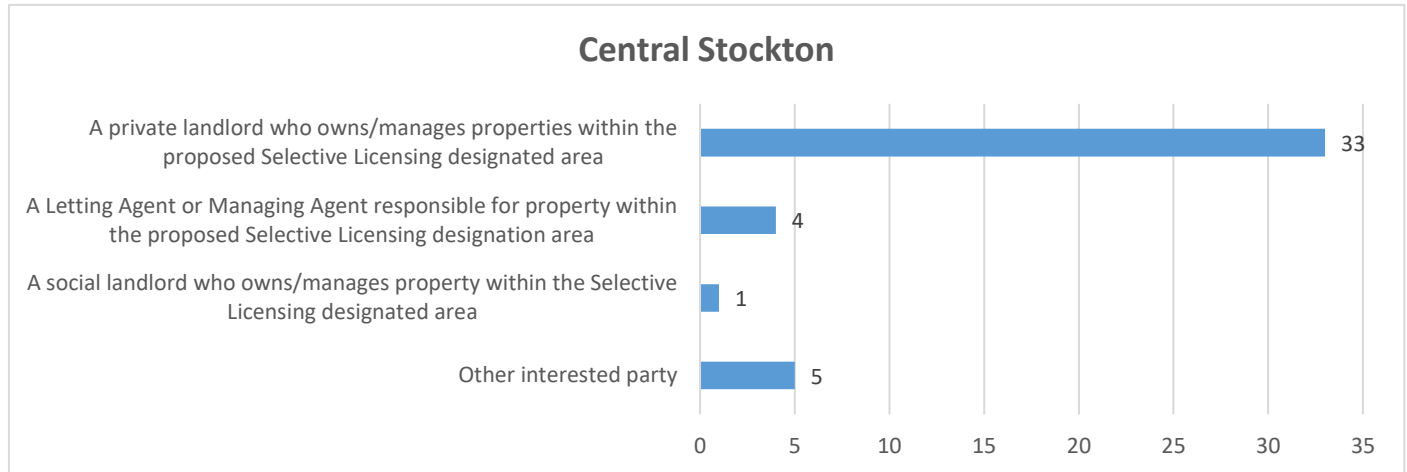
**TABLE 8**

	No. of responses	% of responses
No	46	47%
Yes	40	40%
No Response	13	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100%</b>

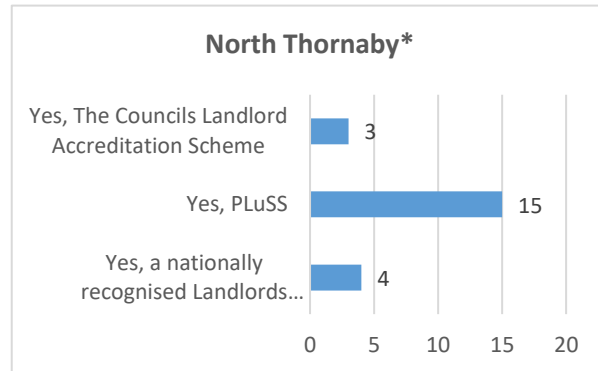
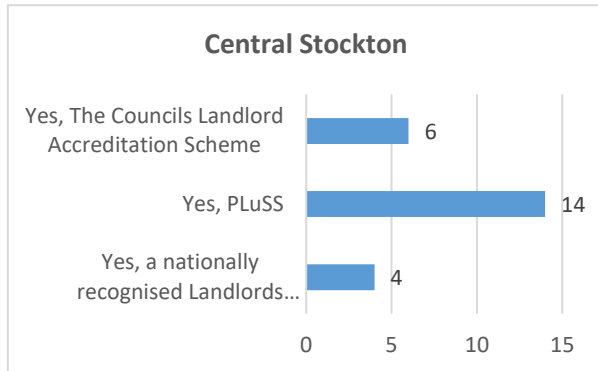


# CHAPTER 4: CONSULTATION RESPONSES LANDLORDS & AGENTS

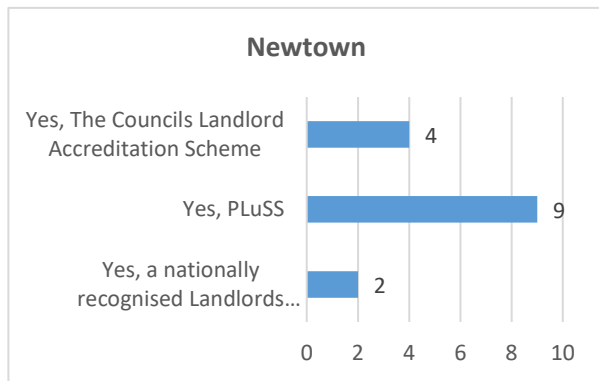
**QUESTION: Please tell us if you are a Landlord or Letting/Managing Agent who owns/manages properties in the proposed Selective Licence areas?**



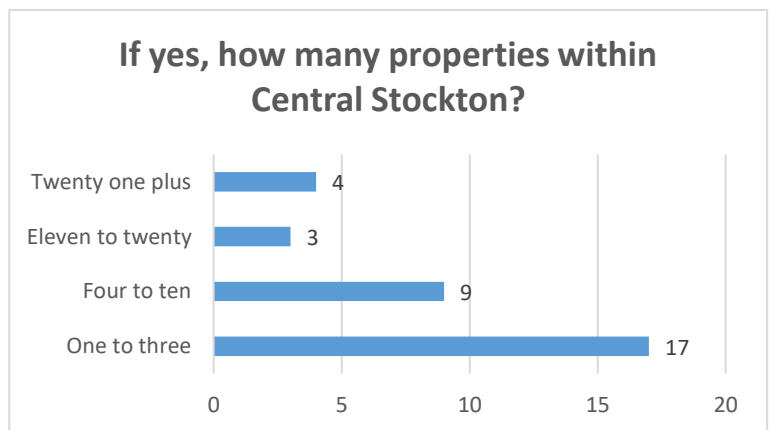
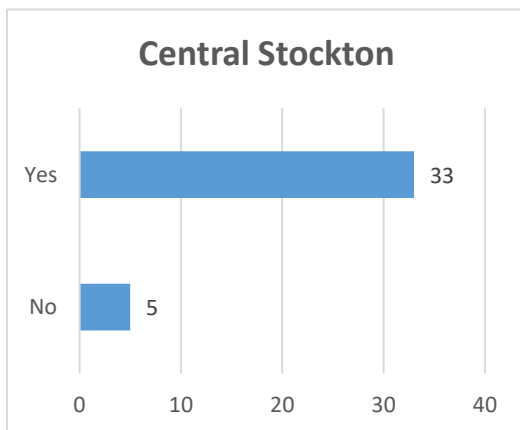
**QUESTION: Are you a member of P LuSS (Private Landlords Supporting Stockton) or the Council’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme or other nationally recognised Landlord Associations**



\* 1 Respondent highlighted that they were a member of both a National Landlord Association and a member of P LuSS

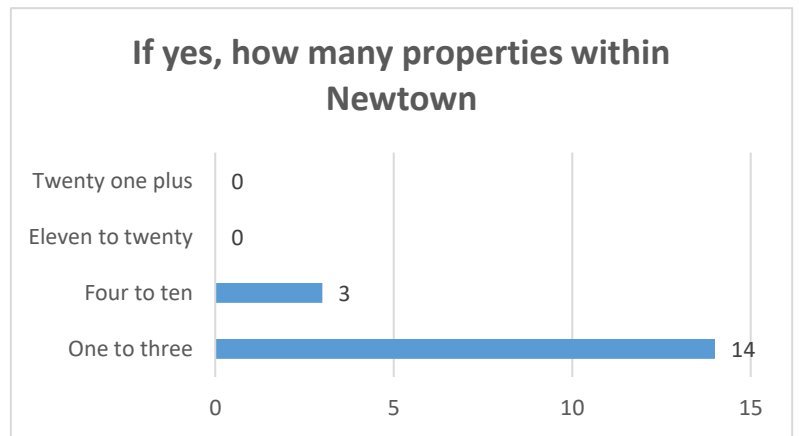
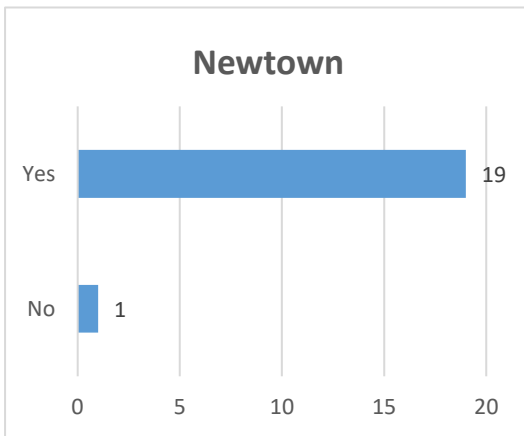
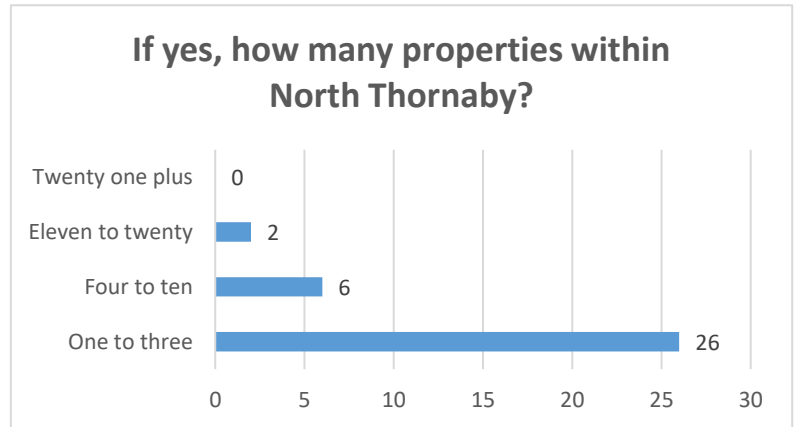
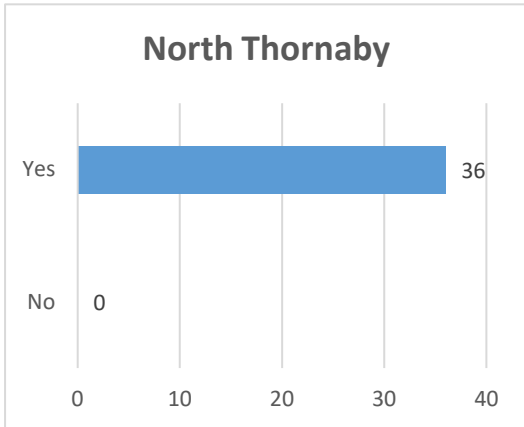


**QUESTION: Own or manage properties within the proposed designated area**

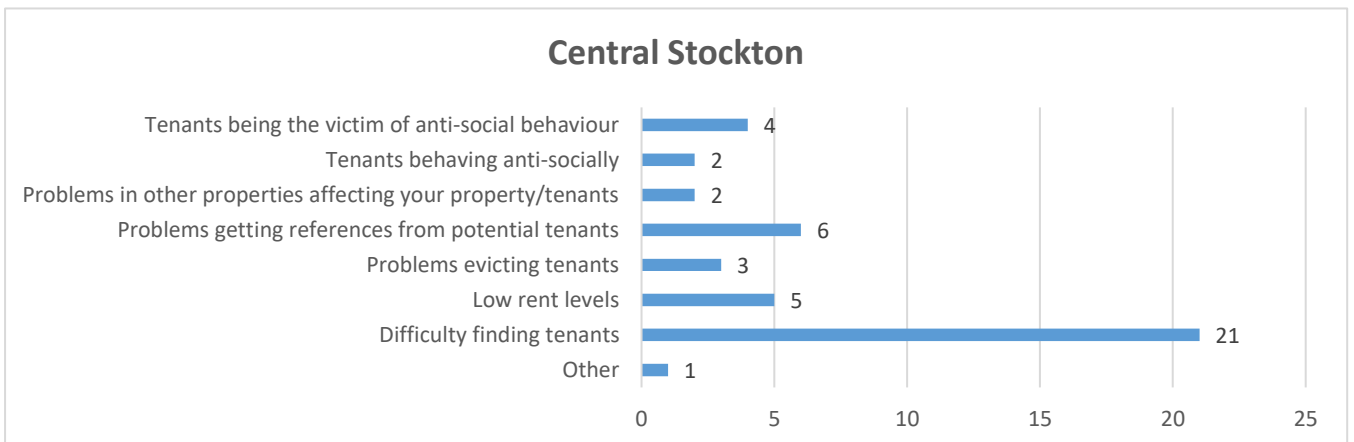


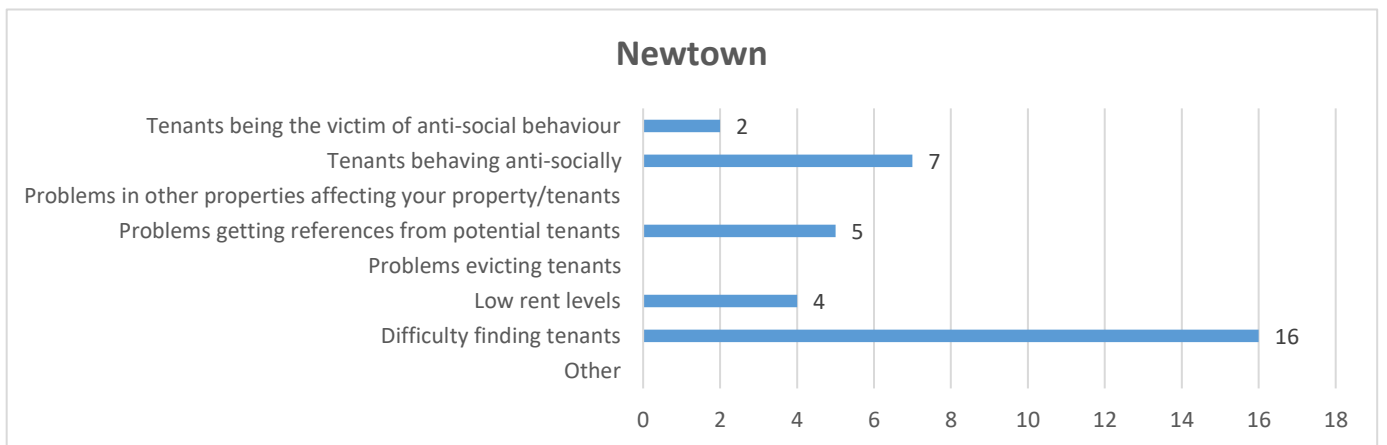
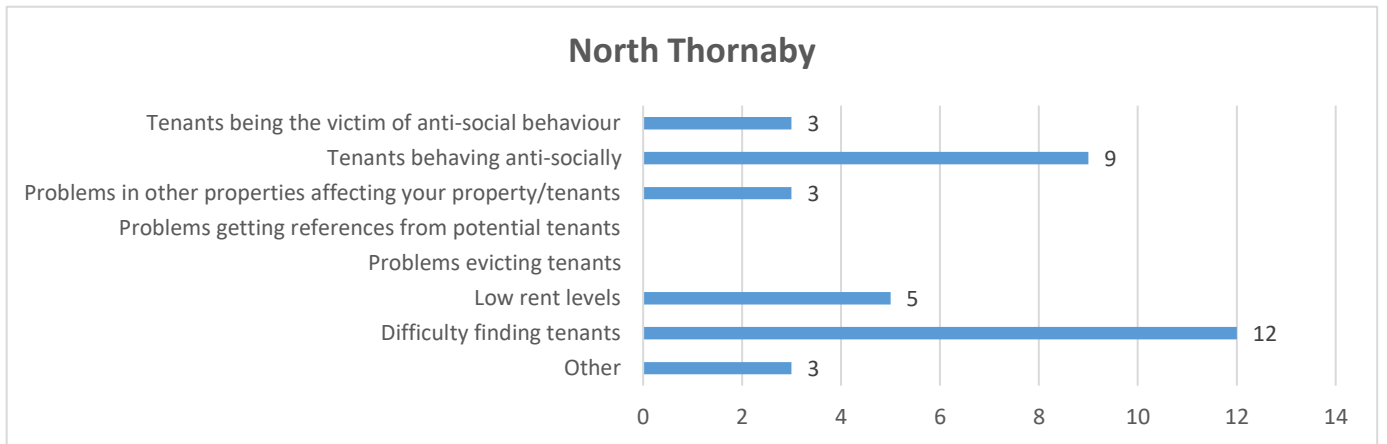


**QUESTION: Own or manage properties within the proposed designated area (continued)**

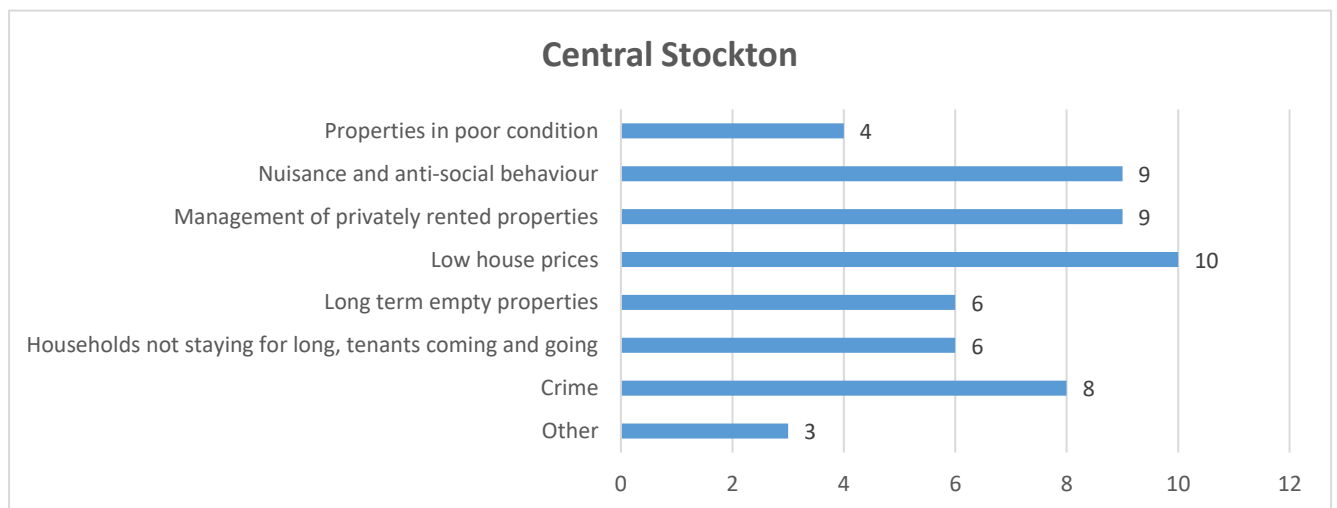


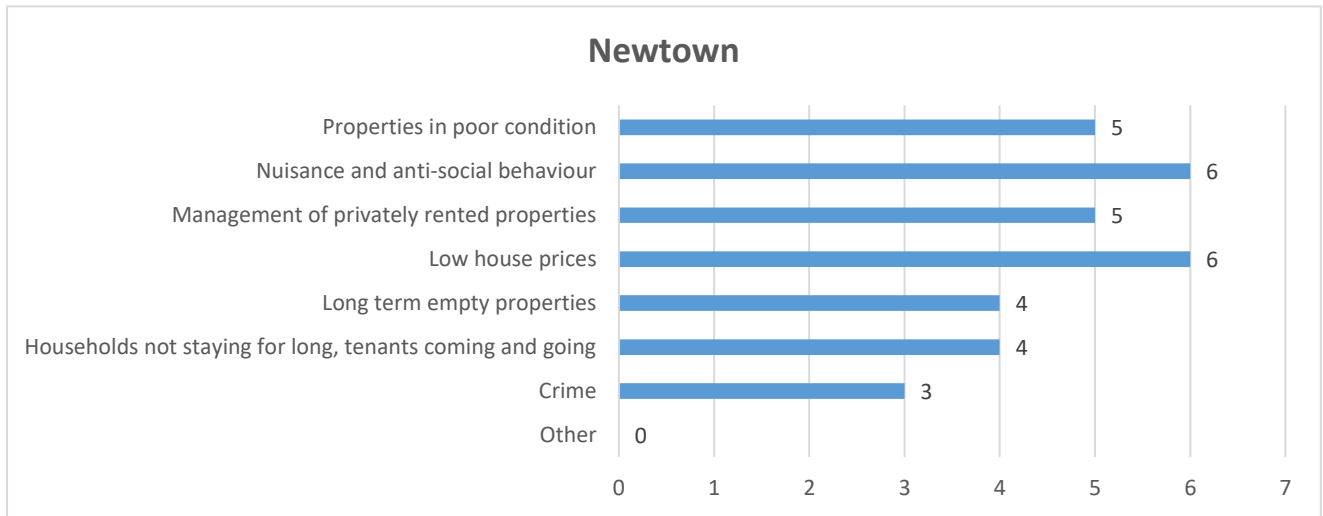
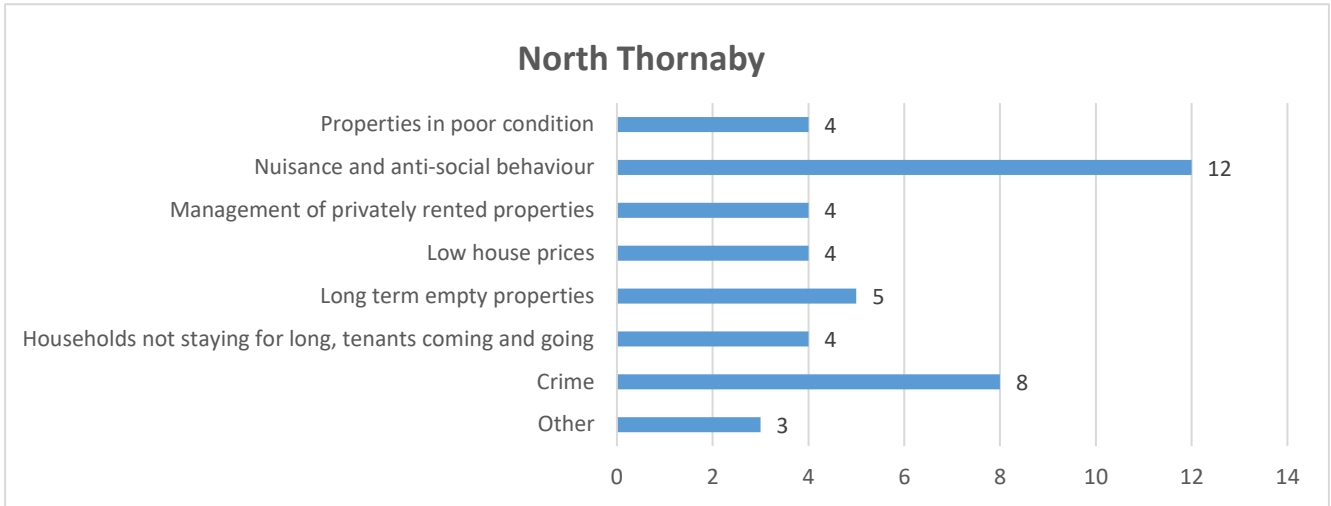
**QUESTION: Have you had any problems with any of the following where you own, let and/or manage properties**





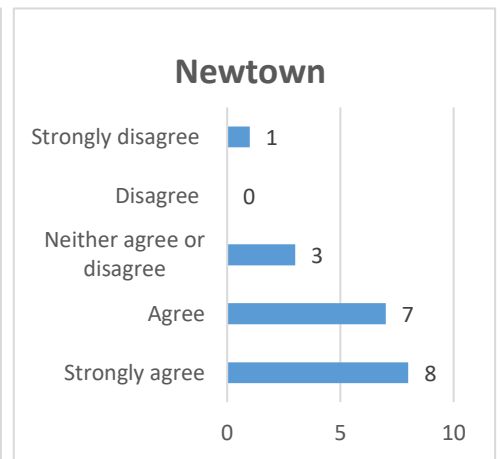
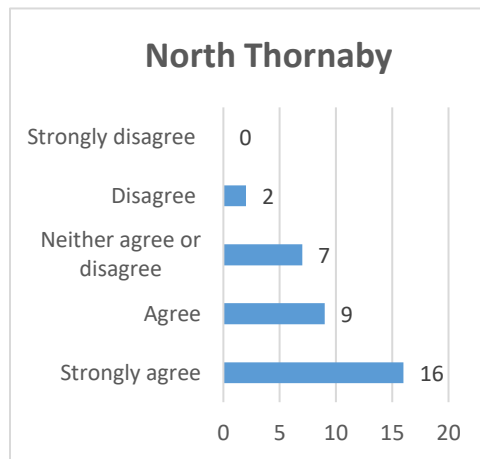
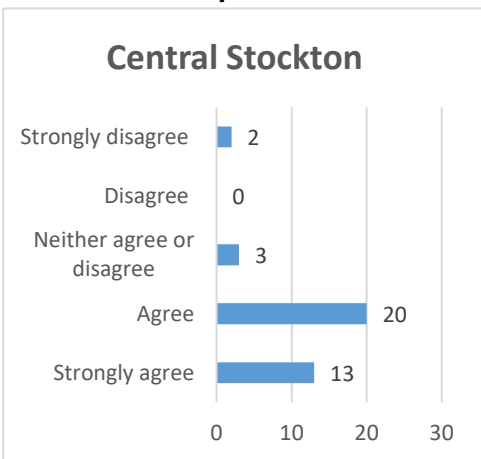
**QUESTION: Do you think any of the following are an issue in the proposed designated (Selective Licence) areas?**



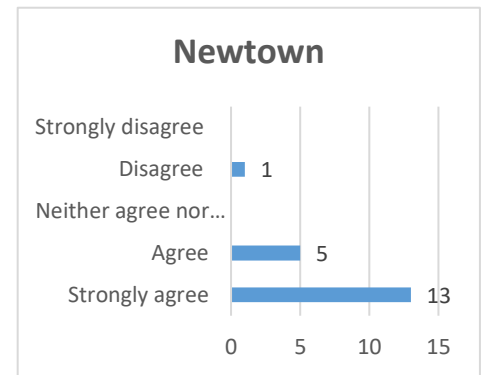
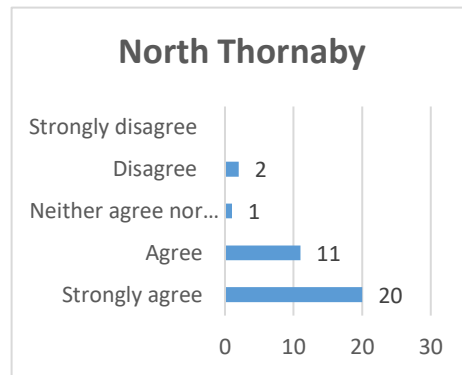
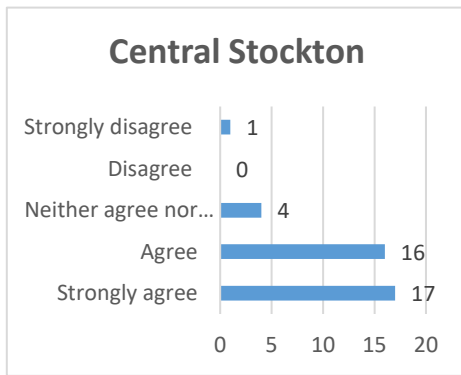


**QUESTION: To what extent do you agree that private landlords should take the following actions?**

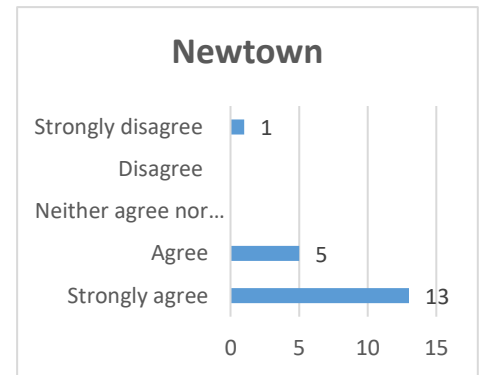
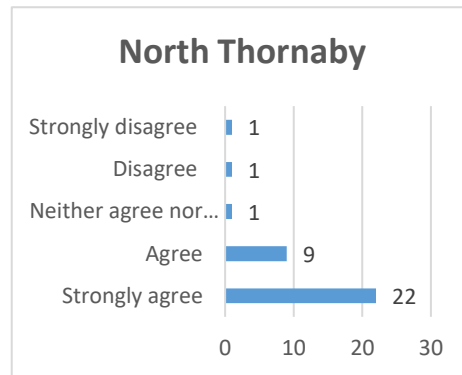
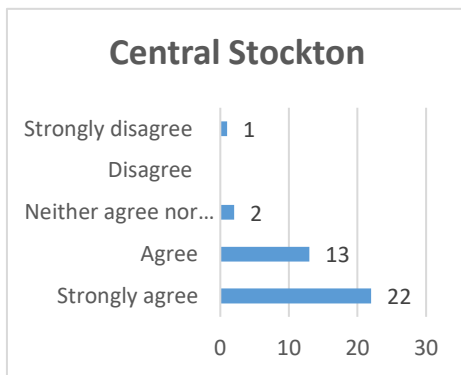
**Obtain and keep references for tenants**



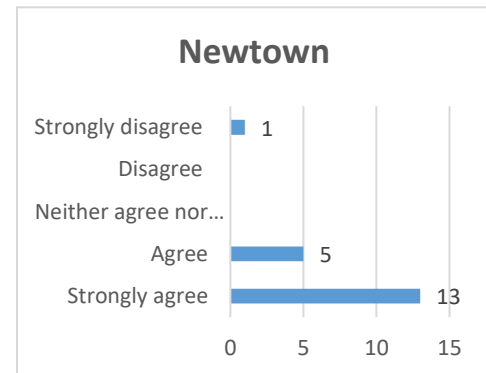
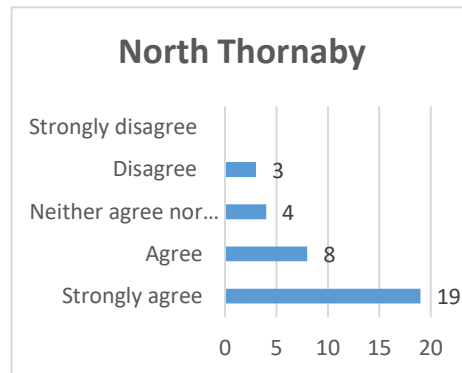
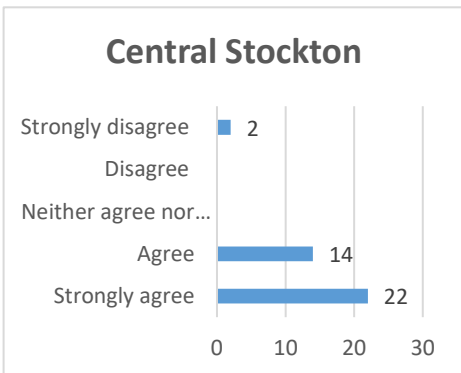
**Ensure that properties are kept secure and free from rubbish between tenancies**



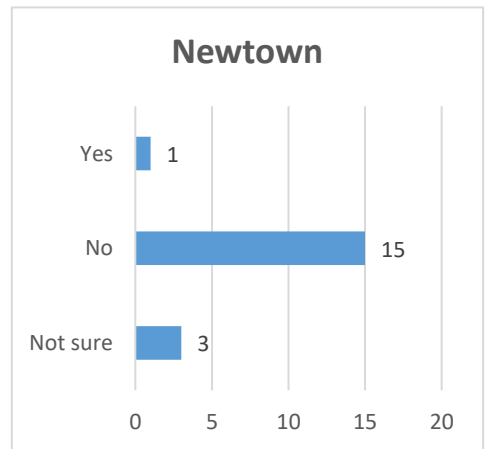
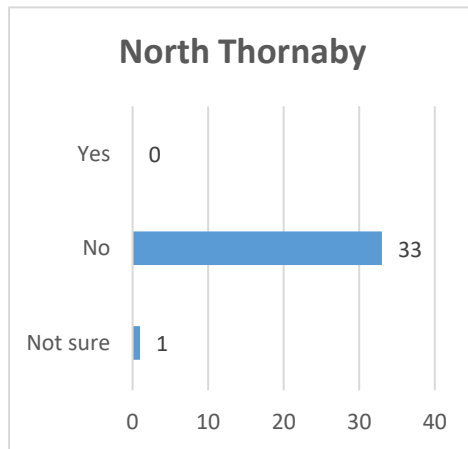
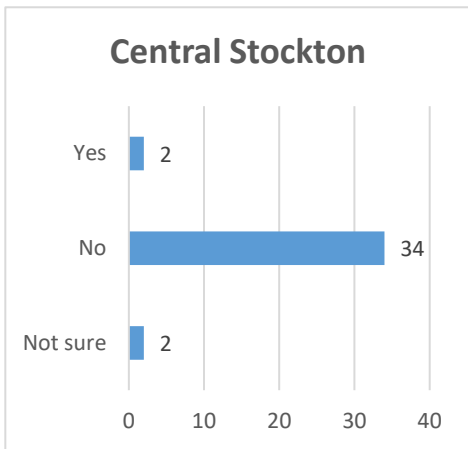
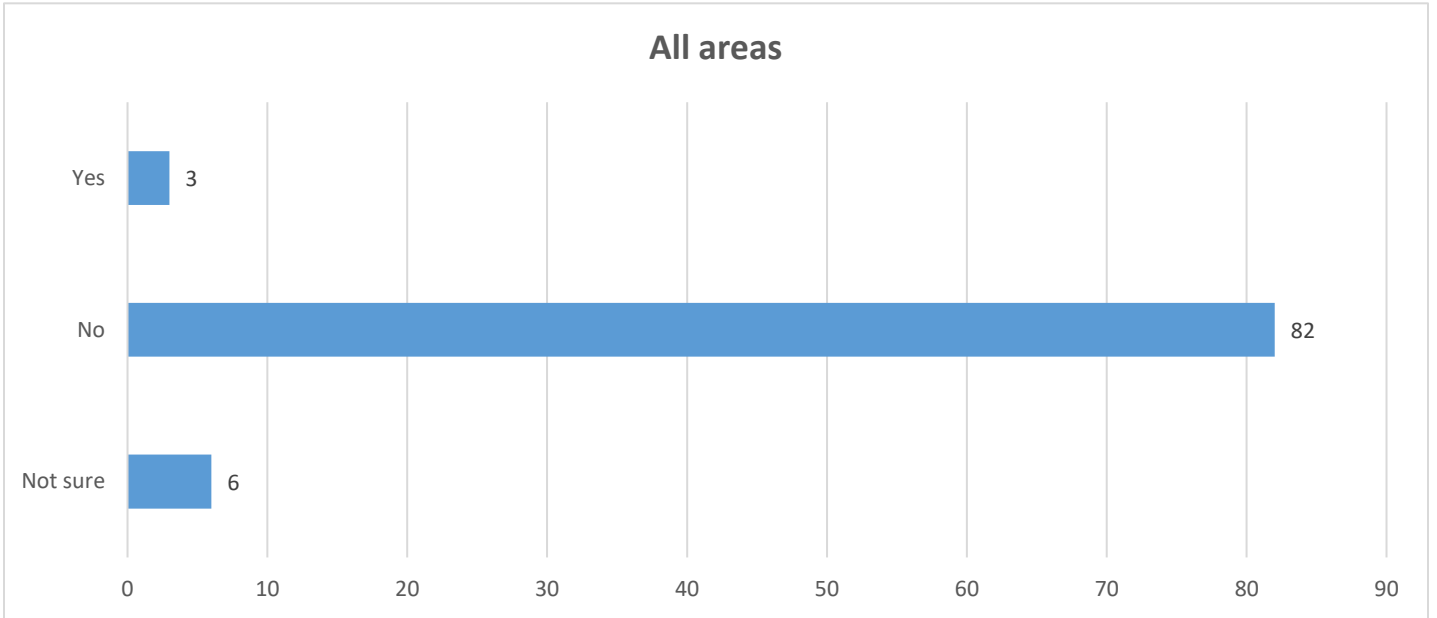
**Ensure that tenants know that anti-social behaviour is unacceptable**



**Provide information to tenants including emergency contact numbers**

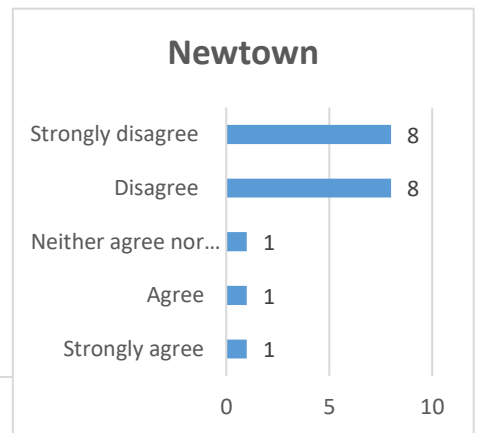
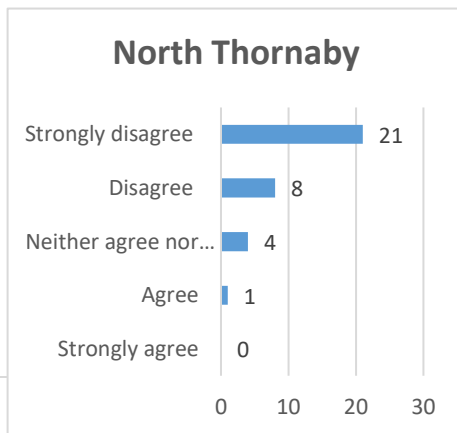
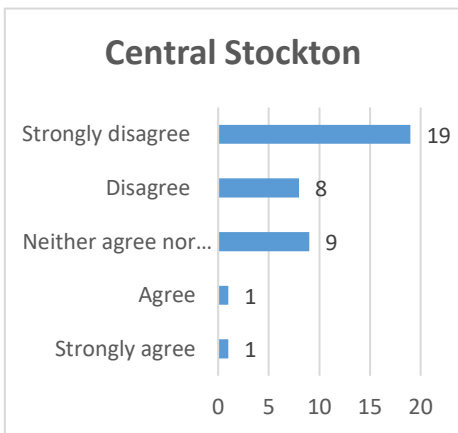


**QUESTION: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing**

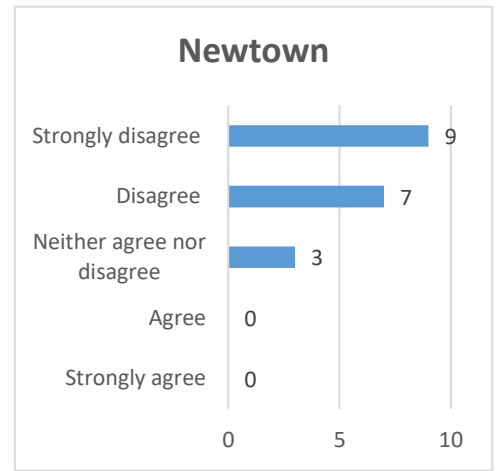
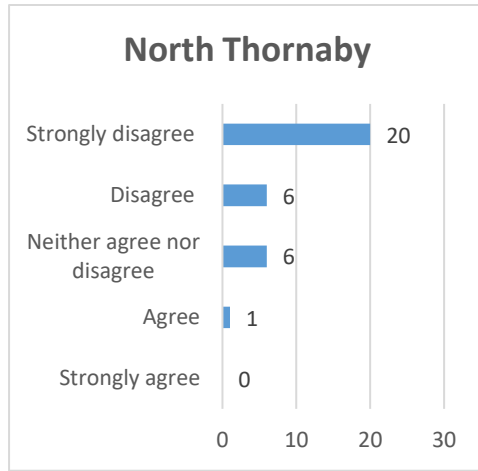
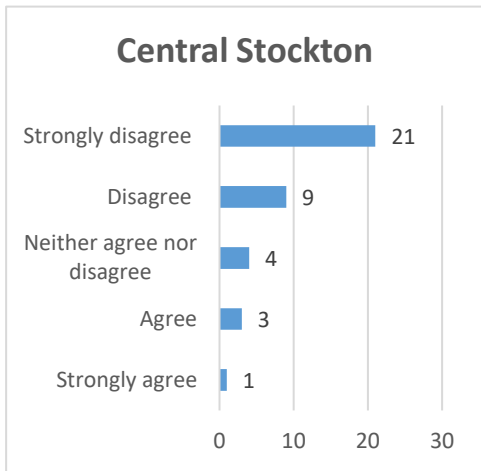


**QUESTION: To what extent do you think Selective Licensing will address the following issues?**

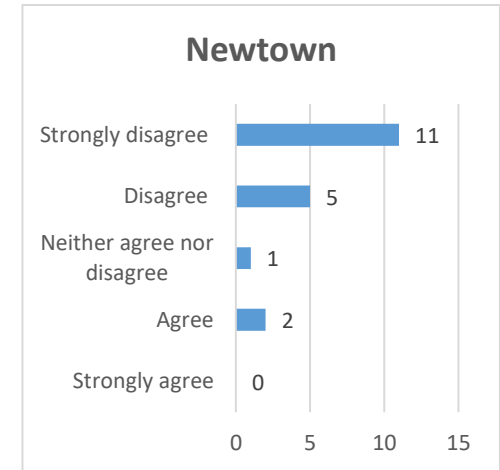
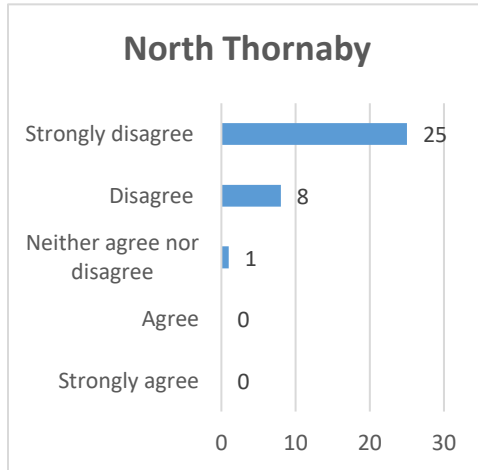
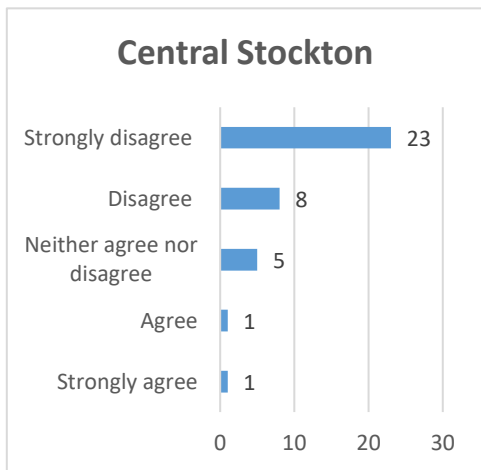
**Management of privately rented properties**



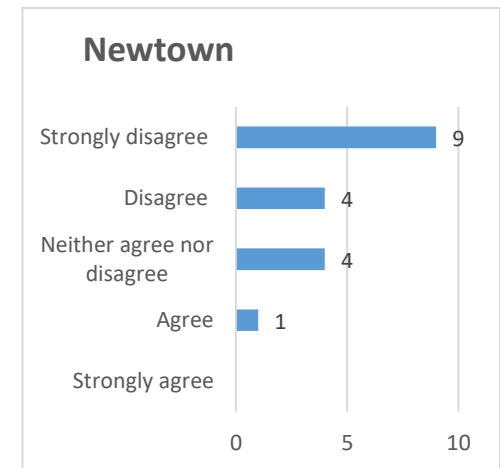
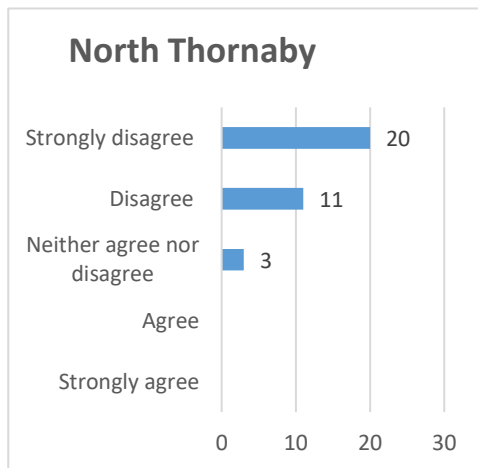
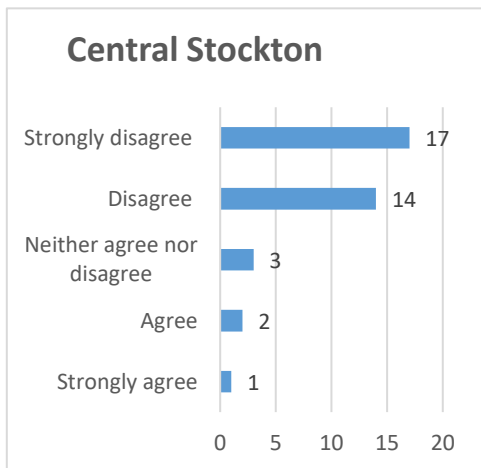
**Long term empty properties**



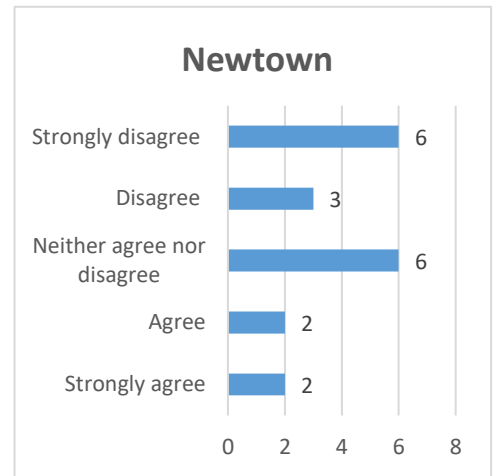
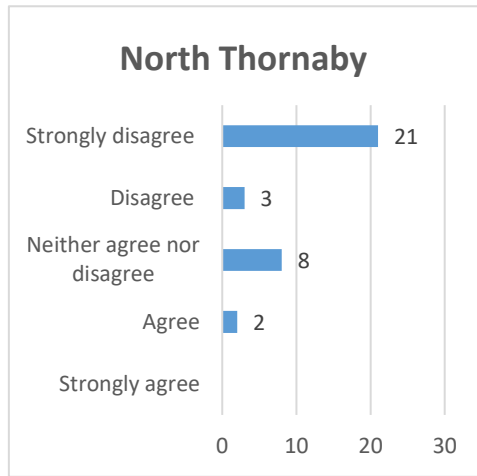
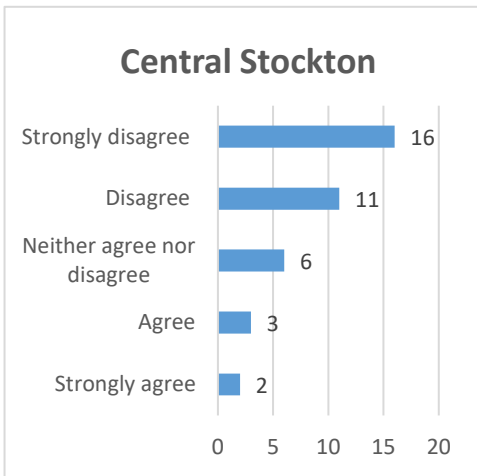
**Low house prices**



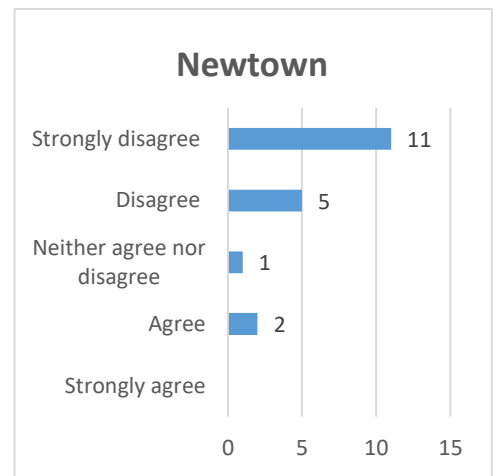
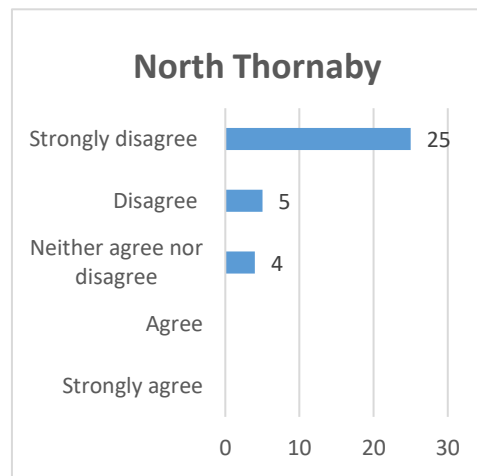
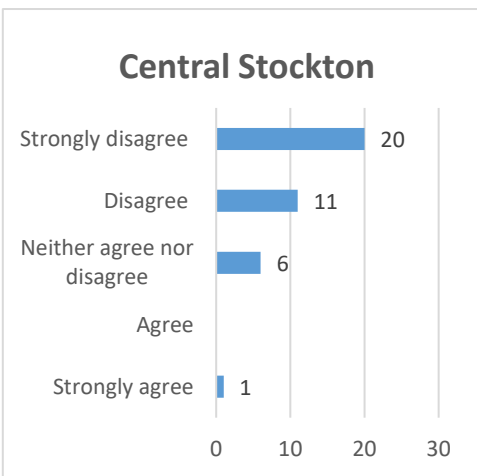
**Tenants coming and going, not staying long**



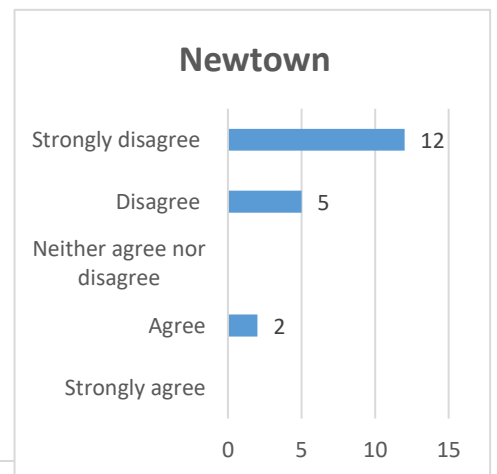
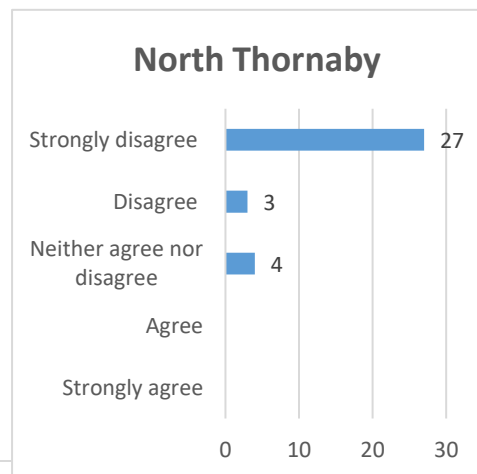
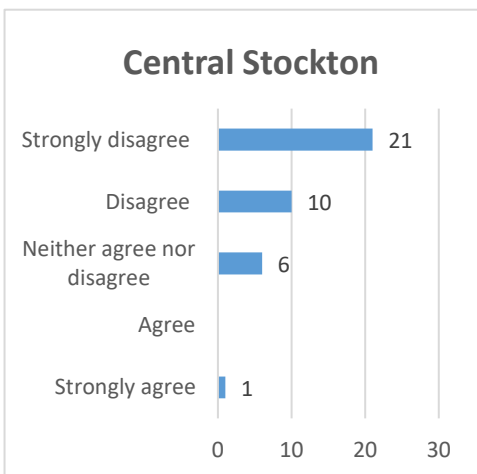
### Properties in sub-standard conditions



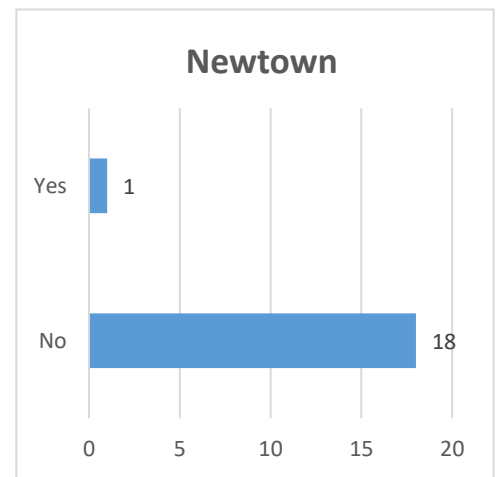
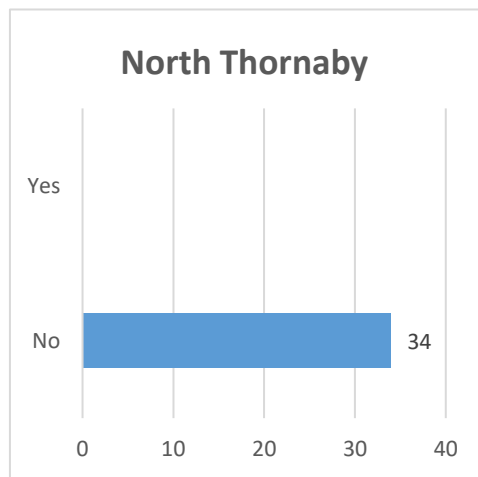
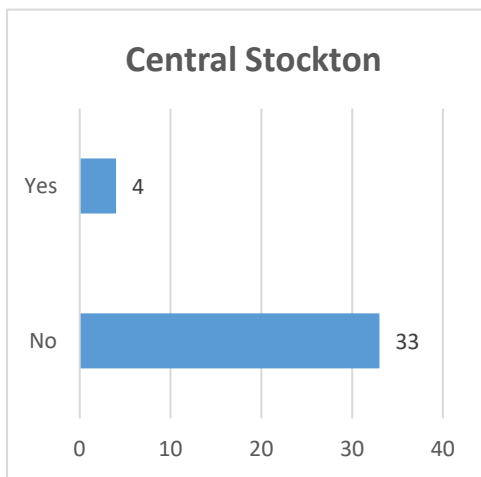
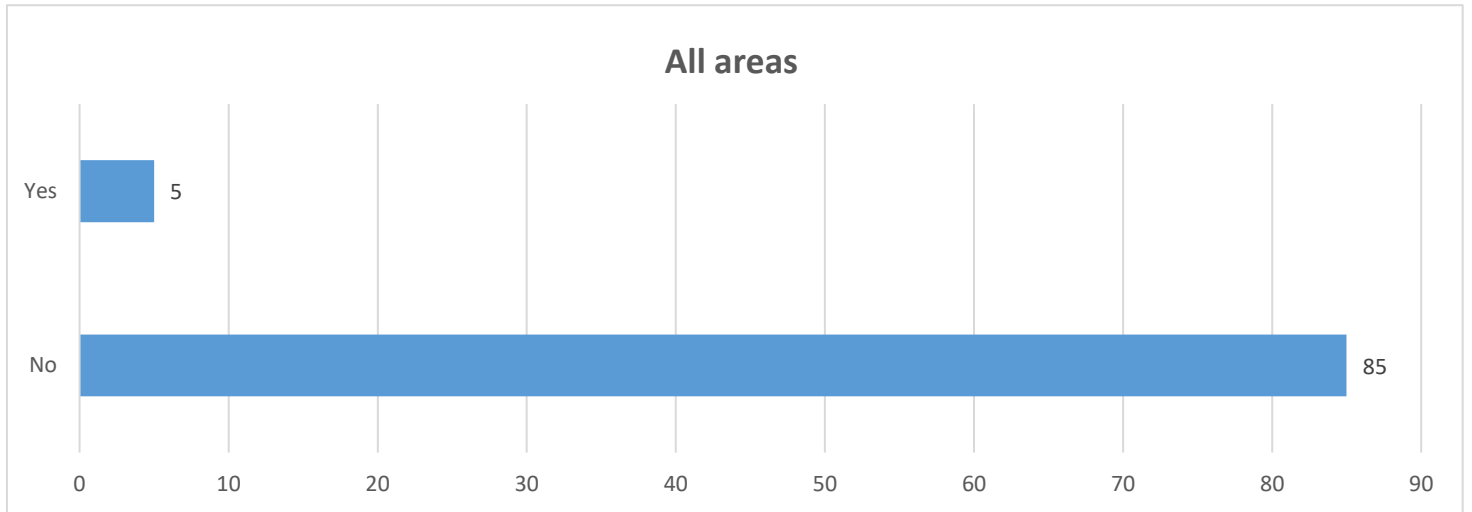
### Nuisance and anti-social behaviour



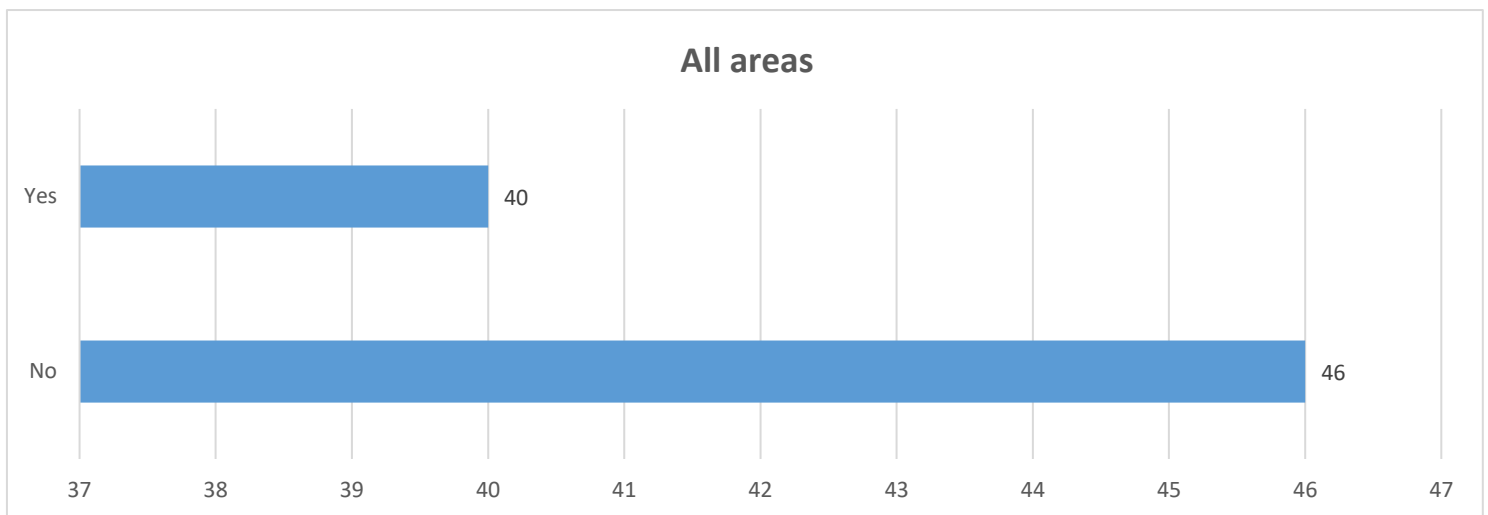
### Crime



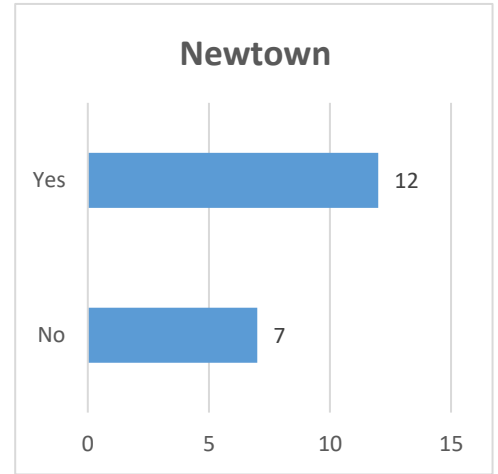
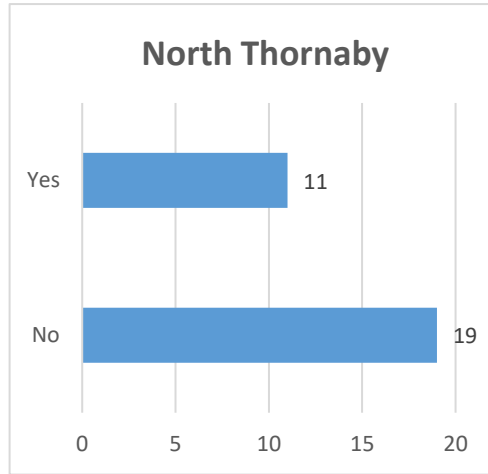
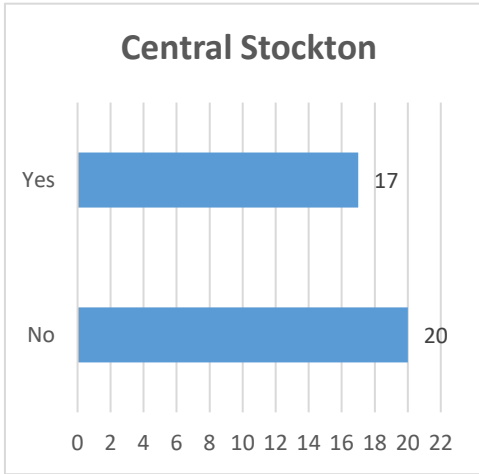
**QUESTION: Do you agree that the proposed Selective Licensing fee of £653 per property is reasonable?**



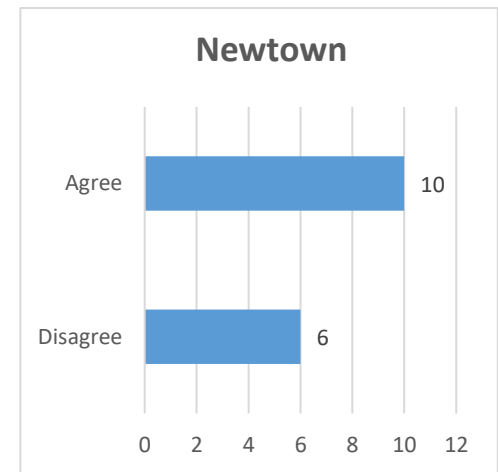
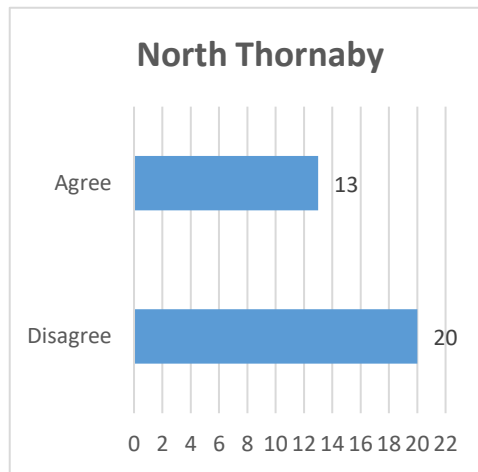
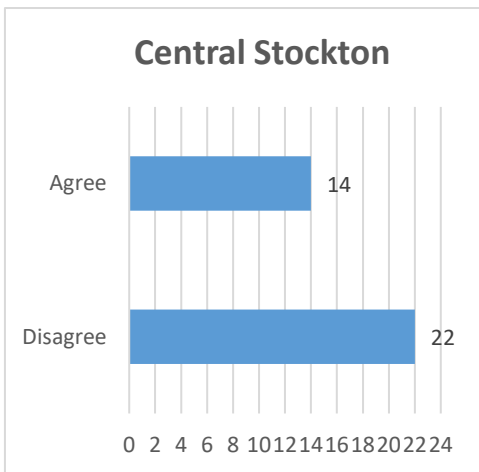
**QUESTION: Do you agree with the proposal to offer a discount?**





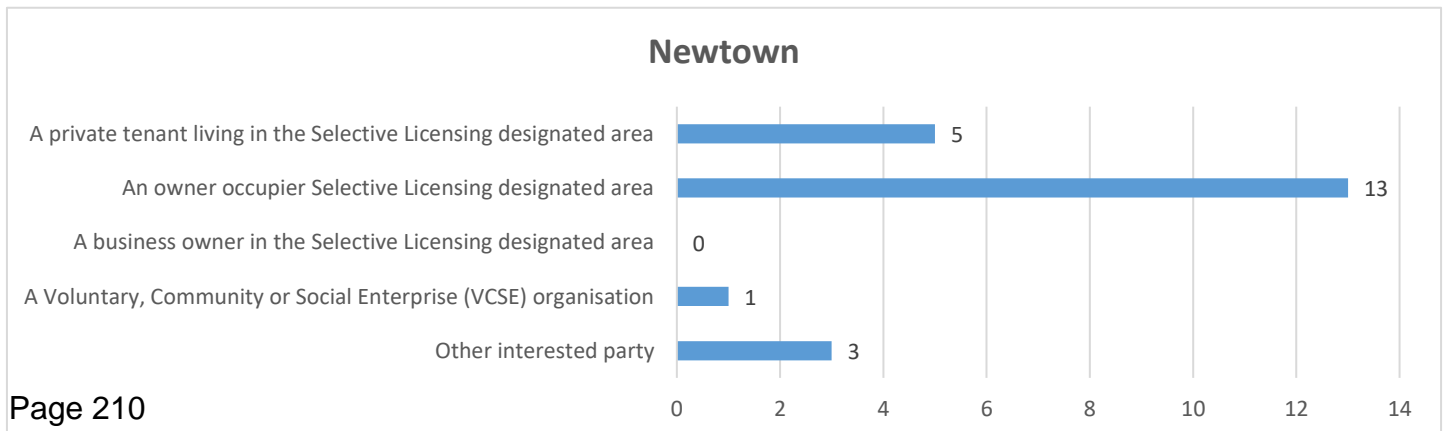
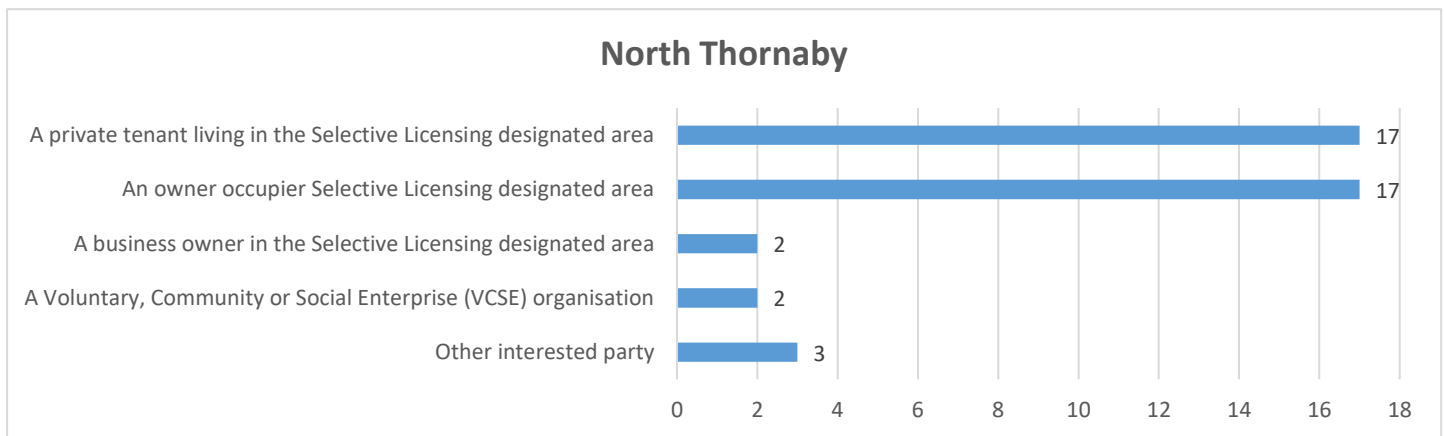
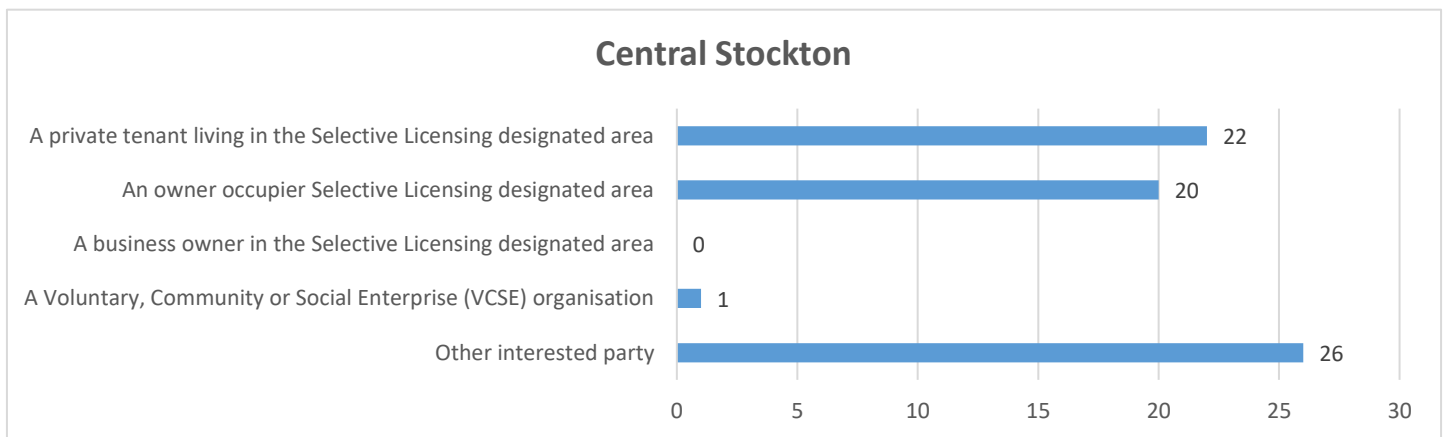


**QUESTION: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed licence conditions which a licence holder would have to comply with?**

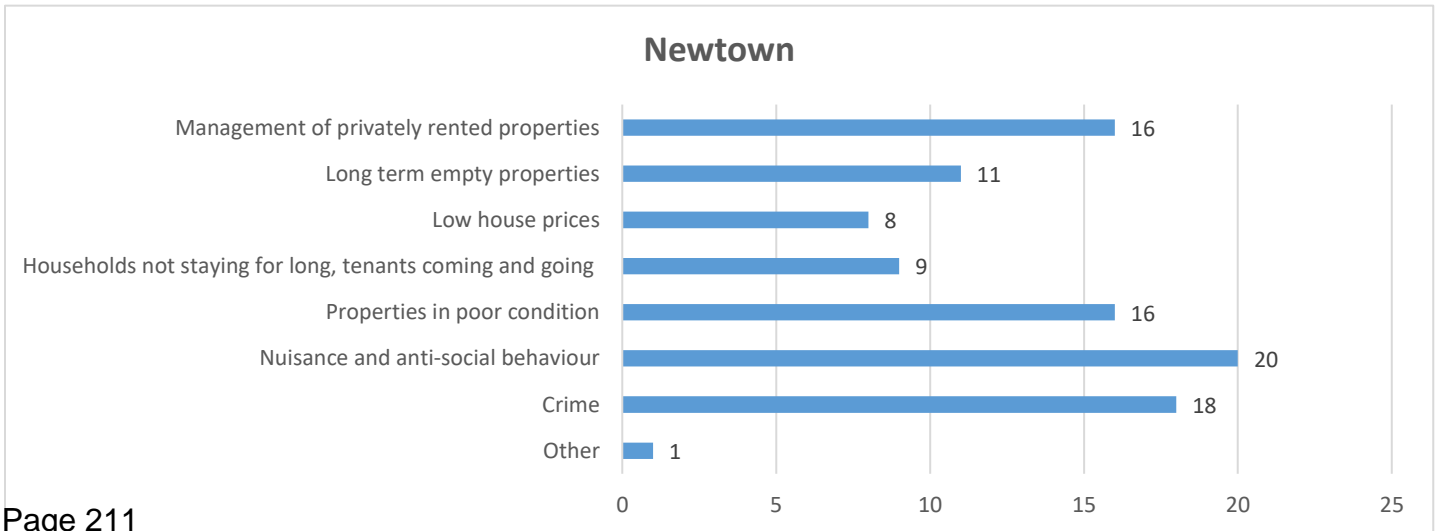
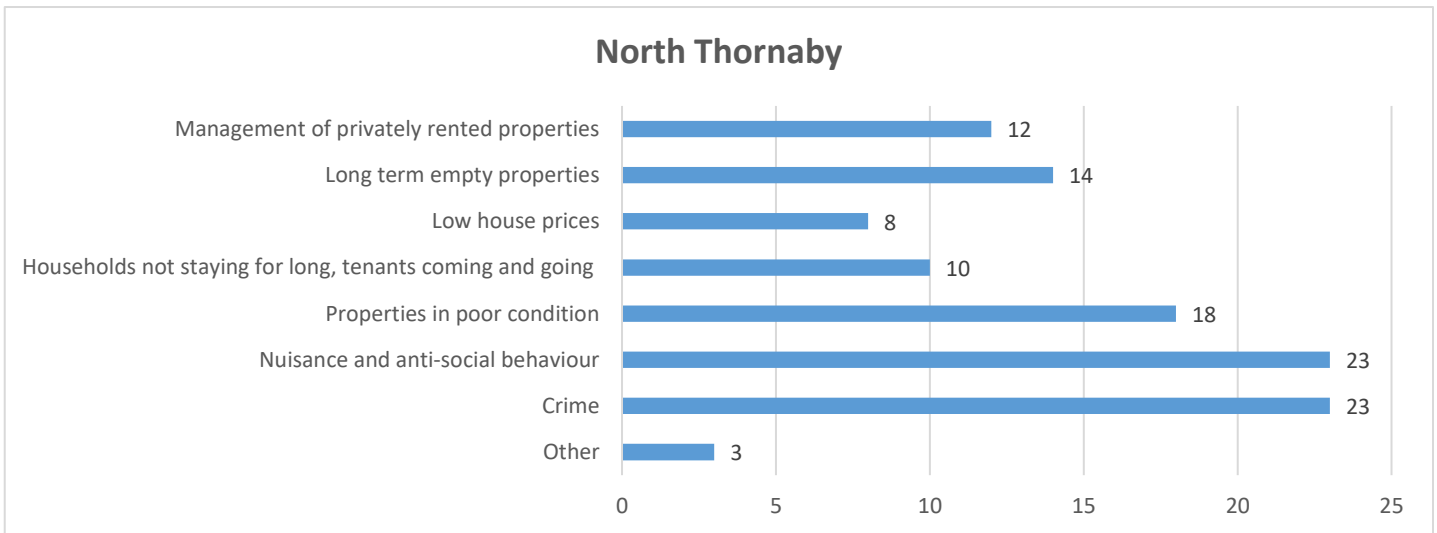
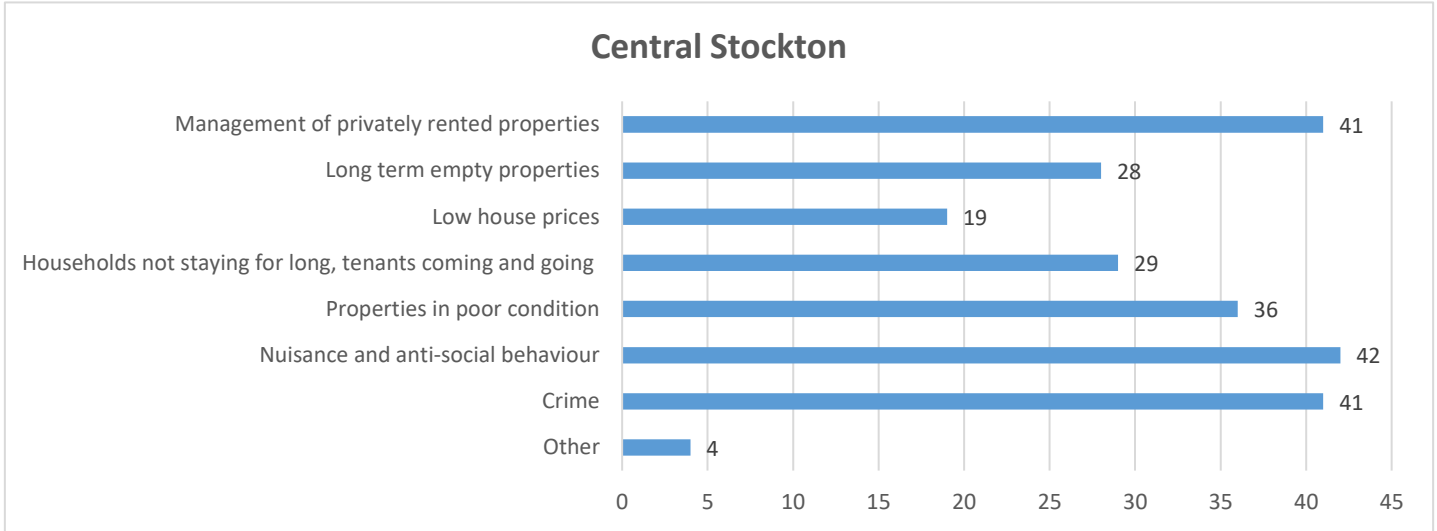


# CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION RESPONSES COMBINED - RESIDENTS (TENANTS AND OWNER OCCUPIERS) & STAKEHOLDERS

**QUESTION: Please tell us if you are a private tenant, owner occupier or other interested party in the proposed Selective Licence areas?**

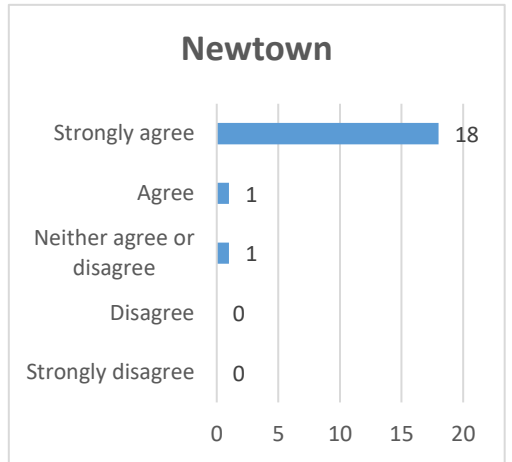
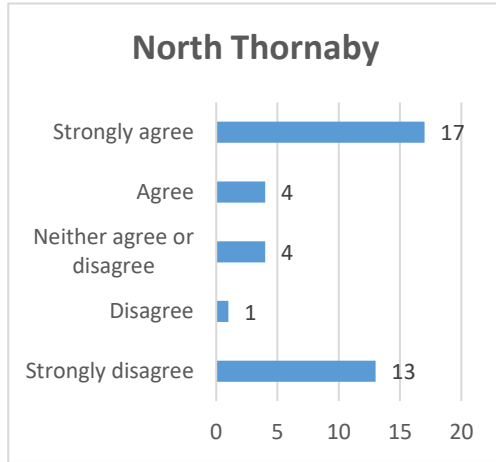
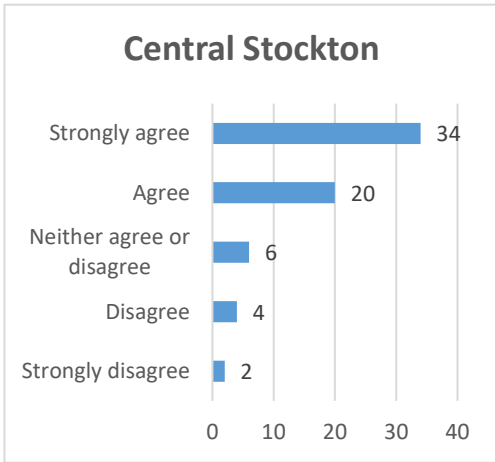


**QUESTION: Do you think any of the following are an issue in the proposed designated (Selective Licence) areas?**

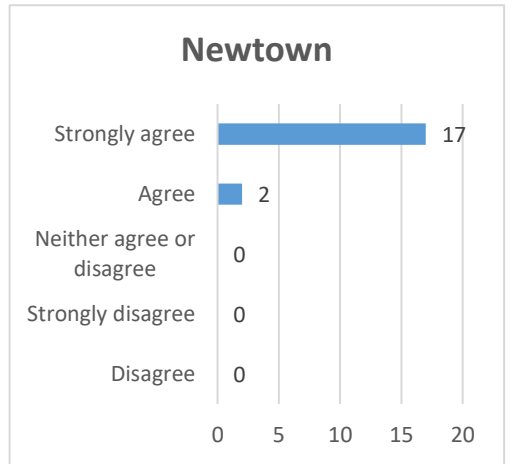
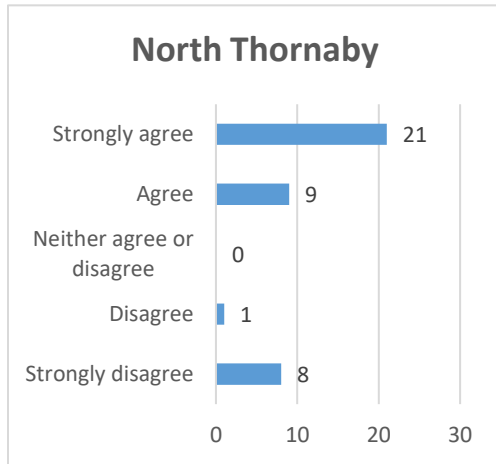
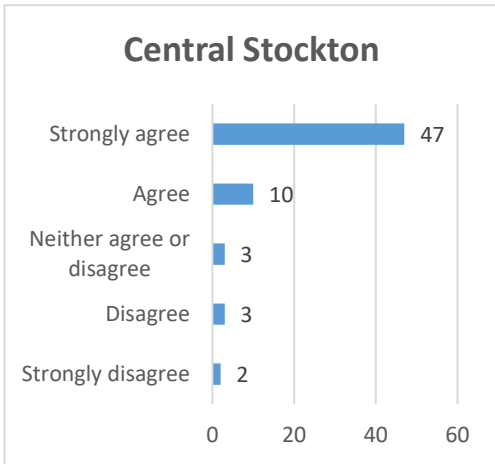


**QUESTION: To what extent do you agree that private landlords should take the following actions?**

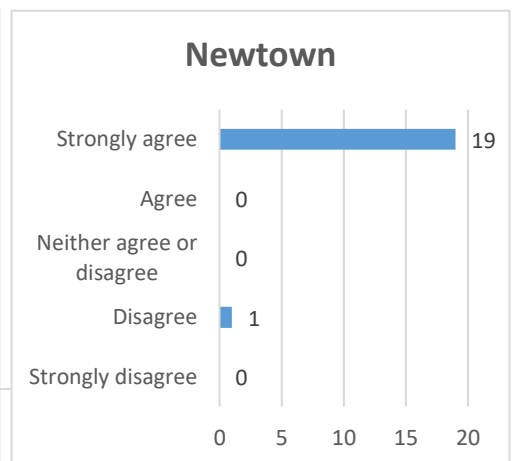
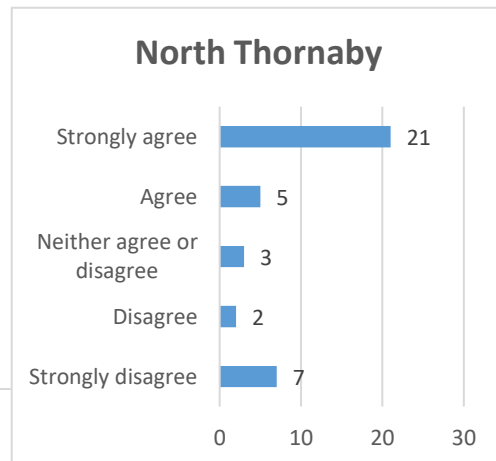
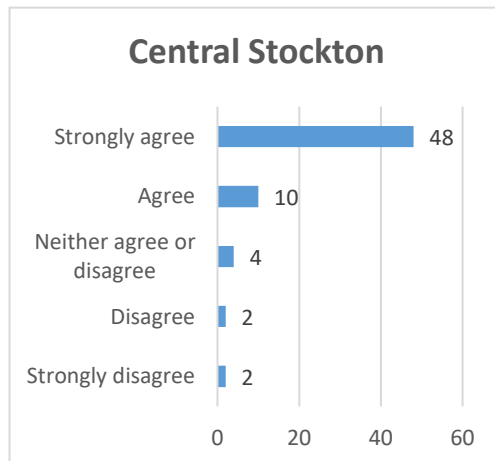
**Obtain and keep references for tenants**



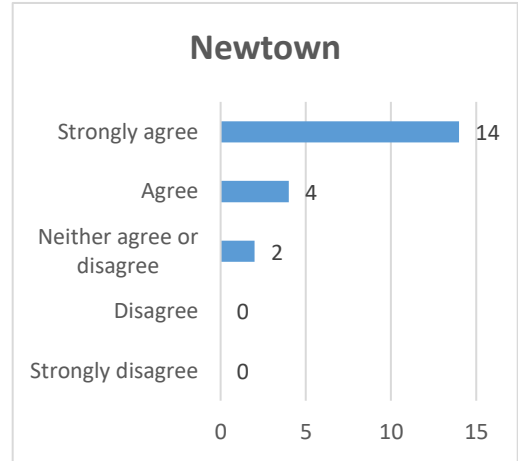
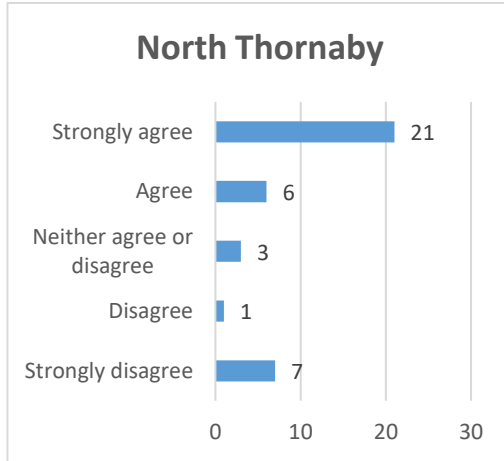
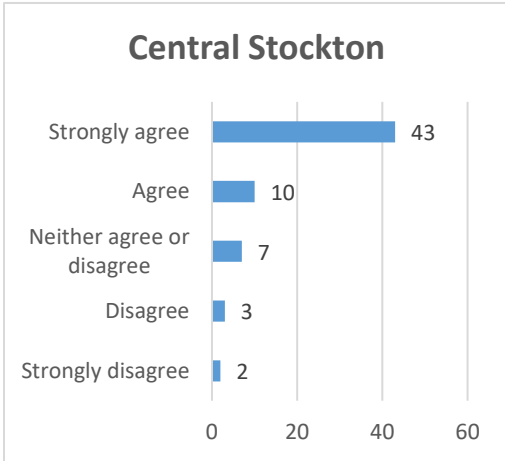
**Ensure that properties are kept secure and free from rubbish between tenancies**



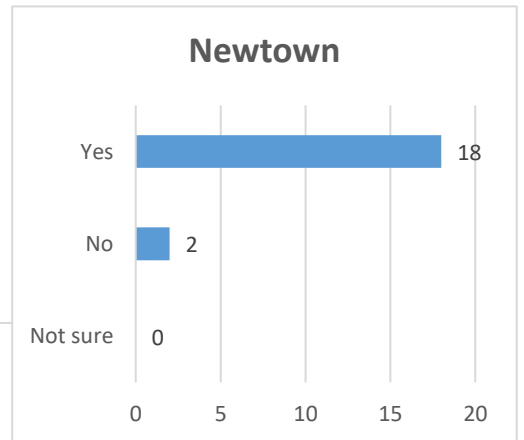
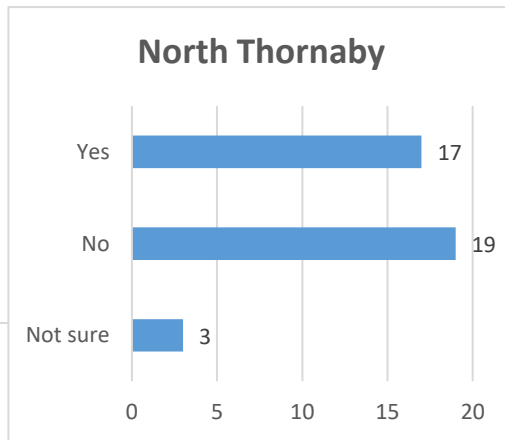
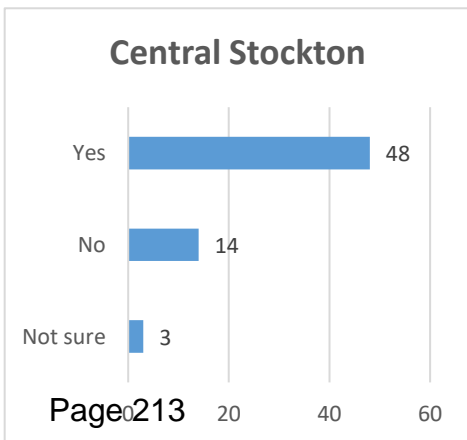
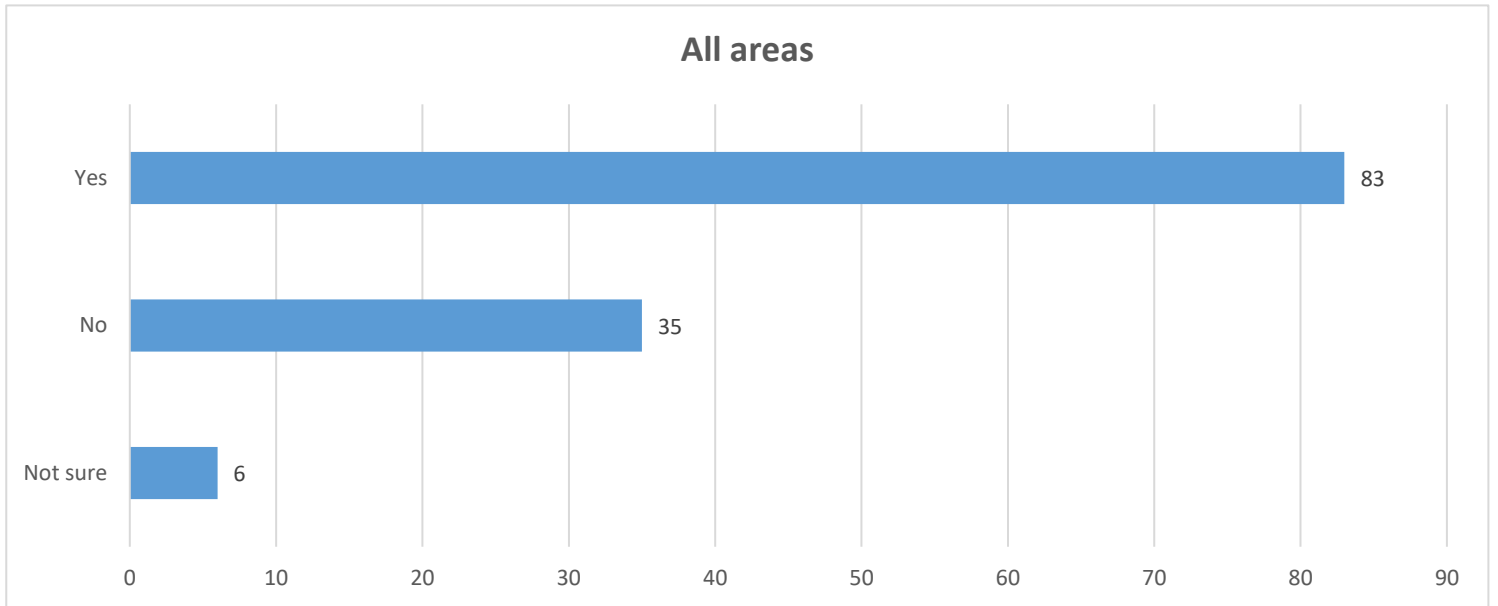
**Ensure that tenants know that anti-social behaviour is unacceptable**



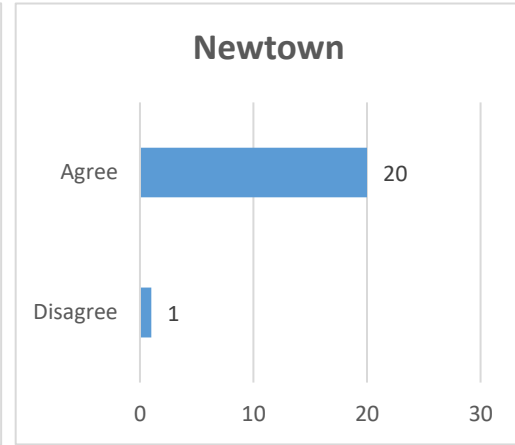
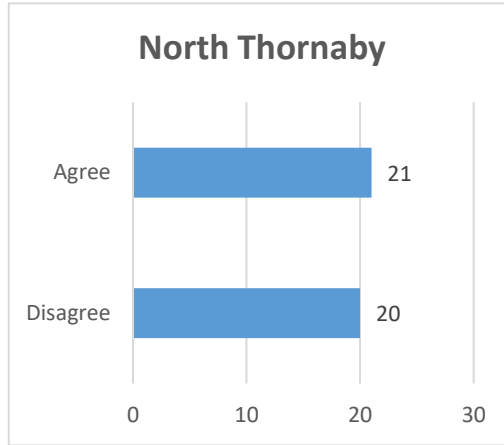
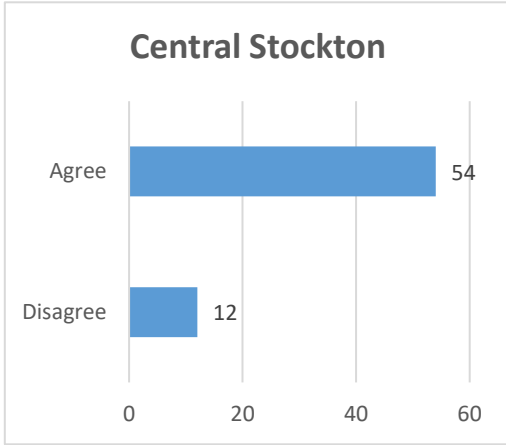
### Provide information to tenants including emergency contact numbers



### QUESTION: Do you agree with the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing



**QUESTION: Do you agree or disagree with the proposed licence conditions which a licence holder would have to comply with?**



## CHAPTER 6: CONSULTATION RESPONSES ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Narrative replies

1. All questionnaire respondents had the ability to provide additional narrative replies as part of the consultation survey. All replies have been collated and are attached in the 'Summary of Representations made to the consultation and of the Councils considerations and responses' document.

### Landlord 'face to face' engagement

2. Details of the key issues raised by landlords and letting/managing agents at these 2 events are also detailed in the 'Summary of Representations made to the consultation and of the Councils considerations and responses' document.

### Email replies

3. As noted previously 12 written submissions received by email were made. In summary the replies were received from:
  - 7 emails identified as private sector landlords.
  - 1 email identified as a private sector property management company.
  - 1 unknown.
  - 1 from P LuSS.
  - 1 from the National Residential Landlords Association.
  - 1 from Safeagent (a not-for-profit accreditation scheme for letting and managing agent).

## CHAPTER 7: CONSULTATION ANALYSIS

1. Analysis of all feedback received (summarised in the bullet points below) has been reviewed. The key consultation/feedback themes and the Council's response are detailed in the 'Summary of Representations made to the consultation and of the Councils considerations and responses' document.
  - Questionnaire consultation responses (to both the questions and open-ended narrative supplied).
  - 12 emails received.
  - Issues raised at the landlord engagement and community events.
  - Responses received from the NRLA / P LuSS/ Safeagent



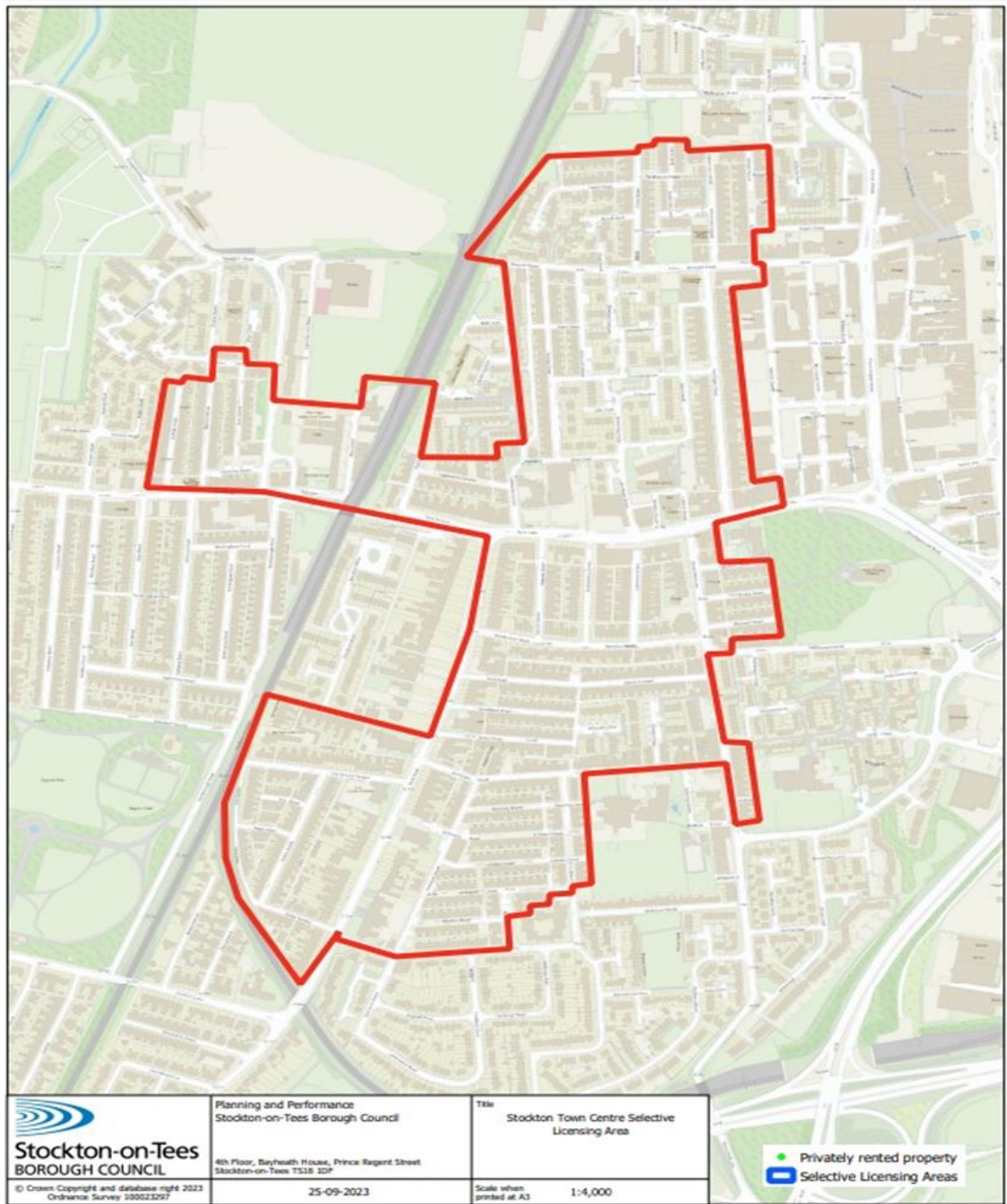
# APPENDIX A

## Red Line Maps

## Appendix A

The Councils Selective Licensing designation proposal will cover 3 areas of the borough **Central Stockton**, **North Thornaby** and **Newtown**. The proposed designation maps have been labelled to assist people in recognising each location. A comprehensive list of streets is also provided.

**Map 1: Central Stockton**

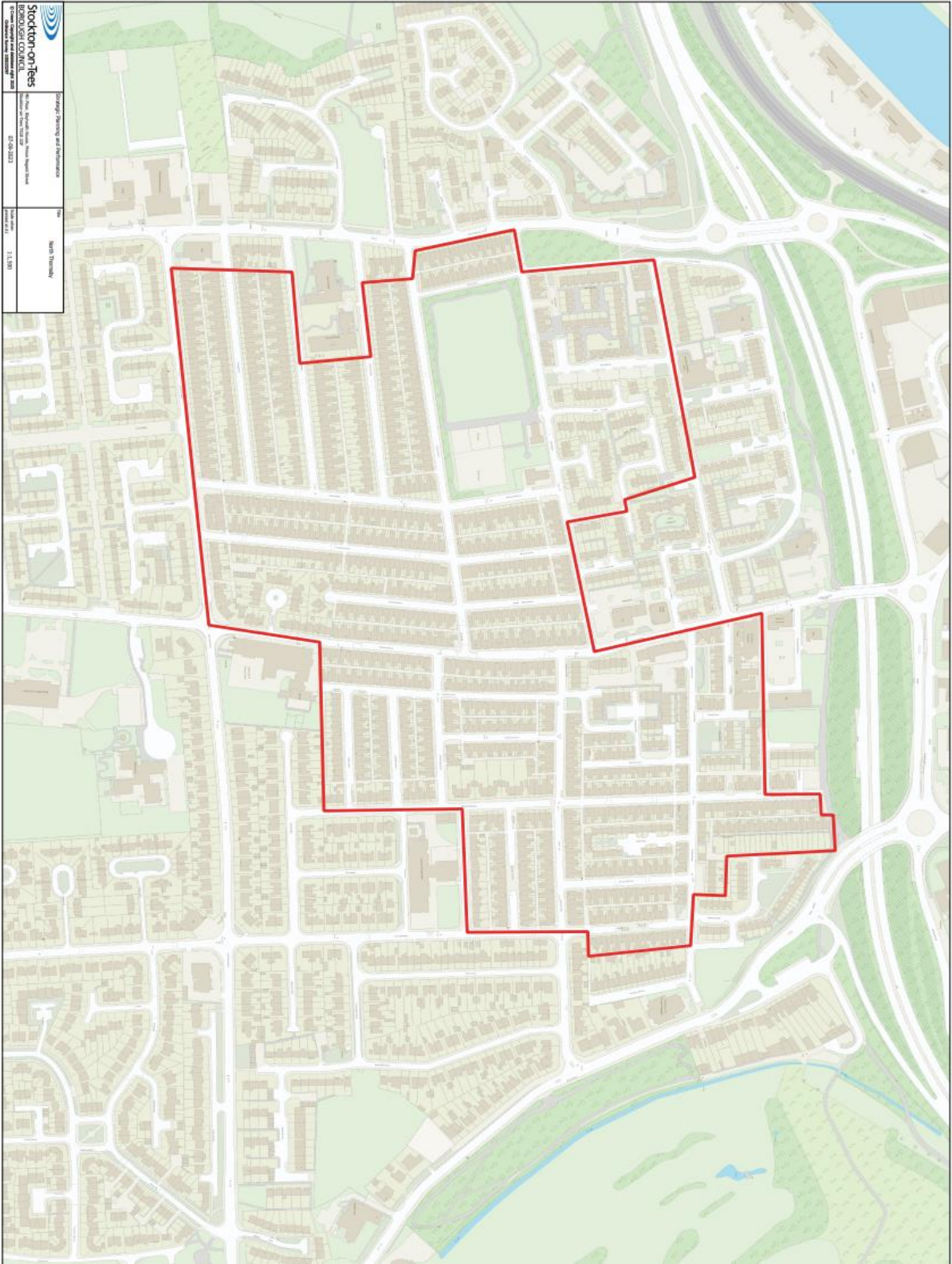


**Street list: Central Stockton**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Property number if applicable</b>
Arlington Court	43 - 48
Arlington Street	81 - 127 (odds), 86 - 140 (evens)
Bakery Street	No residential accommodation
Bluebell Crescent	
Bowesfield Lane	1 - 13 (odds), 19A - 55 (odds), 2 - 40 (evens)
Bramley Parade	
Bute Street	
California Close	
Camden Street	70 - 124 (evens), 71 - 107 (odds)
Carr Street	14 - 20 (evens), 24 - 27, 29
Childeray Street	12 - 16 (evens)
Cranbourne Terrace	
Dennison Street	2 - 6 (evens), 1 - 31 (odds)
Dixon Street	
Dovecot Street	74 - 134 (evens), 87 - 119 (odds)
Edwards Street	
Eggleston Terrace	
Eleanor Place	
Ewbank Drive	9 - 43 (odds)
Fagg Street	
Grove Street	
Hartington Road	
Hope Street	
Iris Close	
Lavender Close	
Lawrence Street	
Leybourne Terrace	
Lightfoot Grove	
Manfield Street	
Mary Street	
Melbourne Street	
Middleton Walk	1 - 7 (odds), 31 - 49 (odds)
Norfolk Street	
Northcote Street	2 - 72 (evens), 53 - 87 (odds)
Outram Street	
Oxbridge Lane	19 - 81 (odds)
Palmerston Street	
Park Road	
Park View	
Parliament Street	1 - 7 (odds)
Petch Street	
Poplar Grove	
Richardson Road	Richard Hind Caretakers House, 11 - 43 (odds)
Roker Terrace	
Rokerby Street	

Rose Street	
Russell Street	
Scarth Walk	
Shaftesbury Street	
Sheraton Street	47, 87 - 89
Skinner Street	2
Snowdrop Place	
Spring Street	1 - 23 (odds)
Springholme	
St Bernard Road	
St Cuthbert's Road	
St Peters Road	
Suffolk Street	
Sydney Street	42 - 60 (evens)
Tarring Street	
The Groves	
Trinity Street	
Tulip Close	
Varo Terrace	
Villa Terrace	
Walter Street	
Waverely Street	61 - 91 (odds), 62 - 96 (evens)
Westbourne Street	
Westcott Street	
Whitwell Close	
Winston Street	
Woodland Street	
Wren Street	53 - 93 (odds), 56 - 102 (evens)
Yarm Lane	27 - 71 (odds), 64 - 116 A (evens)
Yarm Road	1 - 93 (odds), 48 - 108 (evens)

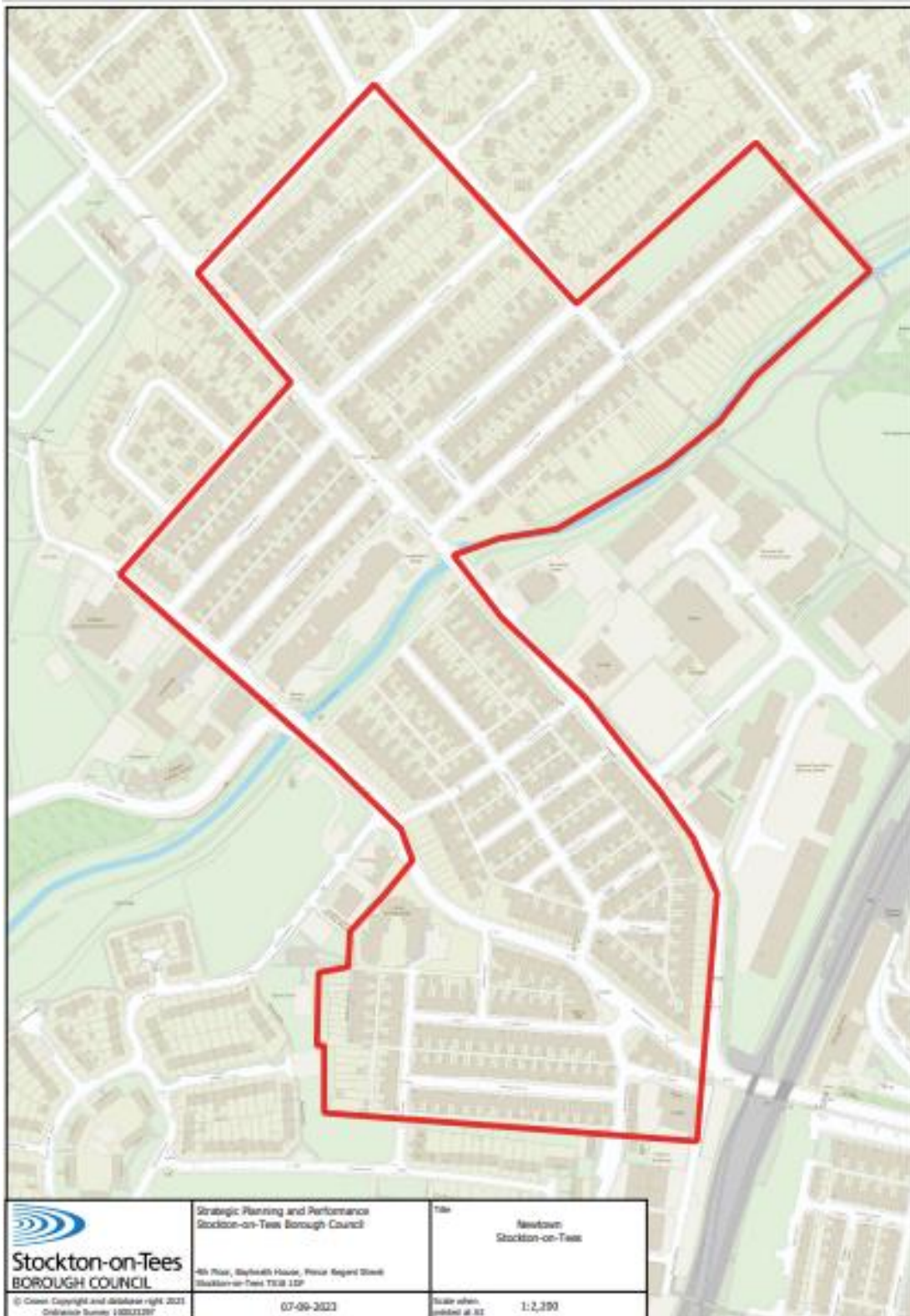
### Map 2: North Thornaby



**Street list: North Thornaby**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Property number if applicable</b>
Cambridge Road	
Camelon Street	
Cardwell Walk	
Cheltenham Avenue	
Cobden Street	
Cranworth Green	1 - 17 (odds)
Cranworth Street	No residential accommodation
Cromwell Terrace	
Cuthbert Close	1 - 37 (odds), 26 - 28 (evens)
Derby Close	
Derby Terrace	
Dorothy Terrace	
Easton Street	
Eldon Street	
Eldon Walk	
Elizabeth Street	
Ellerburne Street	
Eric Avenue	
Falkirk Street	
Francis Walk	
Gilmour Street	12 - 80 (evens), 100 -116 (evens)
Grange Road	
Havelock Street	
Henley Grove	
Heslop Street	
Imperial Avenue (Langley House)	
Lanehouse Road	1 - 113 (odds)
Langley Avenue	1 - 61 (odds), 2 - 76 (evens)
Mansfield Avenue	21 - 115 (odds), 32 - 136 (evens)
Oxford Road	
Palmerston Court	
Park Terrace	
Peel Street	17 - 73 (odds), 10 - 42 (evens)
Roseberry View	
Salisbury Street	
Scarborough Street	
Spring Close	
St Paul's Road	
Stanley Close	
Stainsby Street	
Stranton Street	
Teesdale Terrace	
Thornaby Road	123 - 159 (odds)
Victoria Road	
Westbury Street	39 - 171 (odds), 82 - 196 (evens)

### Map 3: Newtown



**Street list: Newtown**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Property number if applicable</b>
Appleton Road	1 - 33 (odds)
Bedford Street	
Bishopton Road	1 - 35 (odds), 2 - 92 (evens)
Britannia Road	No residential accommodation
Castlereagh Road	
Craggs Street	
Dundas Street	1 - 87 (odds), 2 - 122 (evens)
Durham Road	3 - 135 (odds), 58 - 126 (evens)
Ezard Street	
Green Lane	1 - 6
Hamilton Road	1A - 11 (odds)
Lambton Road	
Londonderry Road	1 - 121 (odds), 2 - 114 (evens)
Mellor Street	
Newtown Avenue	
Primrose Street	No residential accommodation
Samuel Street	
St Paul's Court	
St Paul's Street	1 - 17
St Paul's Road	
St Paul's Terrace	
Stavordale Road	1 - 47 (odds)
Vicarage Avenue	
Vicarage Street	
Zetland Road	



# APPENDIX 3 B

## Consultation Plan 2023

## Appendix B

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the aims and objectives of the Council's Consultation Plan in relation to the proposed implementation of a Selective Licensing scheme across designated areas in the borough.

Issues raised by all stakeholders through this consultation process will be accurately reported to the Council's Cabinet in order that due regard can be given, and informed decisions can be taken in relation to the selective licensing proposal. As this is a consultation, it may result in changes to the Council's Selective Licensing proposal.

### 2. CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Section 80(9) of the Housing Act 2004 states that before considering making a designation for Selective Licensing the local housing authority must:

- Take reasonable steps to consult persons who are likely to be affected by the designation; and
- Consider any representations made in accordance with the consultation. In accordance with the legislation the Council will not consider representations which are withdrawn.

Local housing authorities are therefore required to conduct a full consultation. This should include consultation with local residents, tenants and landlords (where appropriate their managing agents) and other members of the community and local businesses who live or provide services in the proposed designated areas and surrounding areas.

The consultation period required by the Department for Communities and Local Government (now the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC) is a minimum of **ten weeks**.

### 3. THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The consultation will be available both digitally and in a paper format. The digital consultation format will be primarily communicated to residents, private sector landlords and wider stakeholders, with an option to a request paper copy. The consultation process will target the following audiences and groups:

- Private tenants and local residents
- Private landlords and letting agents
- National landlords' associations
- Ward Councillors, local Members of Parliament and Thornaby Town Council
- Local businesses
- Registered Provider landlords
- Interested parties such as Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire & Rescue, Stockton District and Advice Service

- Safer Stockton Partnership and Housing, Neighbourhood and Affordable Warmth Partnership members
- Stakeholders/members of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) via Catalyst
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's relevant Community Partnerships

Whilst direct consultation will attempt to be as exhaustive as possible, any interested groups not already identified and consulted directly will also be encouraged to complete the questionnaire or make comments. Groups not consulted directly are considered likely to hear about the proposal through wider communications methods.

Communications methods include, but are not limited to:

- a) Information on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council website
- b) Stockton News delivered to all households in the borough
- c) Direct mail to all residents, businesses and other stakeholders within the proposed selective licensing areas and/or in the surrounding areas (outside of the proposed designation)
- d) Direct mail to known landlords, managing/letting agents
- e) Engagement events with landlord and managing/letting agents
- f) Direct mail to partner agencies
- g) Press releases to local media/press
- h) Direct mail to members of the Safer Stockton Partnership and Housing and Affordable Warmth Partnership
- i) Email to local ward councillors and Members of Parliament
- j) Social media
- k) Catalyst e-bulletin (VCSE newsletter)

#### **4. HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION**

A questionnaire will be available to complete on the Council's website, a paper version of the questionnaire can be downloaded from the website and/or posted out on request.

#### **5. HOW ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION WILL BE DEALT WITH**

Throughout the consultation process a record of each consultation replies (that are not withdrawn) will be recorded and all issues raised will be formally logged.

The findings of the consultation will be analysed, and the Council will publish an anonymised summary of responses received and will explain how these have been either acted upon or not (and give reasons). A copy of this consultation report will be published and placed on the Council's website under the Selective Licensing pages.

Details of the above will then be reported back to the Council's Cabinet. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Council will then make a final decision as to whether (or not) to proceed with the Selective Licensing proposal (including the scope and the scale of the designated areas).

## 6. TIMESCALES AND REPORTING

	When will this be undertaken?
Consultation material issued (via mail-drop/letter and/or email)	By 3.11.23
Consultation period	6.11.23 to 4pm 19.1.24
<i>Indicative timeline</i>	
Consideration of all consultation replies  <i>Then</i>  Report Produced	From 22.1.24 to mid-February 2024

Detailed overleaf is our Consultation Plan.

Method	Target Audience	Outcome
<p>Consultation leaflet delivered.</p> <p><i>Detailing the proposal and inviting feedback.</i></p>	<p>Local residents, and businesses in the 3 proposed Selective Licensing designated areas and adjacent / surrounding areas.</p> <p>Known landlords and managing agents.</p>	<p>5,600 leaflets were distributed to the streets within the Selective Licensing and surrounding areas.</p> <p>In addition approximately 300 leaflets were distributed to Private Landlords and letting agents using the PLUS distribution list and the Council's own Landlord accreditation list.</p> <p>An additional exercise was undertaken to identify other landlords through land registry checks and the tenancy deposit scheme.</p>
<p>Landlord/Letting/Managing engagement sessions.</p> <p><i>Promoting the consultation and inviting feedback.</i></p>	<p>Landlords with properties in the 3 proposed Selective Licensing designated areas and adjacent / surrounding areas.</p> <p>Local letting/managing agents.</p>	<p>Two engagement sessions were held with landlords.</p> <p>1 face to face session – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023</p> <p>1 online session (via Teams) – 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023.</p>

Method	Target Audience	Outcome
<p>Stockton News</p> <p><i>Promoting the consultation and inviting feedback.</i></p>	<p>Residents of the borough.</p> <p>Businesses owners.</p> <p>Landlords.</p> <p>Service providers in the Area.</p>	<p>The SL consultation was promoted through the November 2023 edition of Stockton News.</p> <p><a href="#">Stockton News November 2023</a></p>
<p>Press releases (and social media)</p> <p><i>Promoting the Councils website as a means to see further information and inviting feedback.</i></p>	<p>A wider audience of residents, businesses, and stakeholders within the borough.</p>	<p>Press release out first on <a href="#">17 October 2023</a>, and then again when the consultation was opened on <a href="#">3 November 2023</a>.</p> <p>Social media: 6 posts between 18 October and 16 January. (2 before the consultation, letting people know it was coming).</p>
<p>Attendance (and/or direct contact) with relevant Partnership.</p> <p><i>Promoting the consultation and inviting feedback.</i></p>	<p>Safer Stockton Partnership.</p> <p>Housing and Affordable Warmth Partnership.</p> <p>Applicable Community Partnerships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer Stockton partnership – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.</li> <li>• North Thornaby Community Partnership meeting attended on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023</li> <li>• Stockton community partnership was cancelled but followed up with an email inviting people to respond to the consultation.</li> <li>• MA HFSOT meeting cancelled but followed up with an email inviting people to respond to the consultation.</li> <li>• Attendance at 2 resident's surgeries in central Stockton</li> </ul>

Method	Target Audience	Outcome
		<p>(Ropner ward) on 11.12.23 and 8.01.24 (attended upon request).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at 2 Bread and Butter sessions and 2 Little Sprouts sessions at Victoria Park, Arlington Park, and the Salvation Army, to gauge feedback from tenants/residents – Dates for sessions were on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024.</li> </ul>
<p>Letter/email correspondence</p> <p><i>Detailing the proposal and inviting feedback.</i></p>	<p>Key Council Partners; Registered Housing Providers, the Police the Fire Brigade.</p> <p>National Landlords Associations/representatives.</p> <p>Members of the Councils Voluntary Landlord Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>Members of the VCSE sector.</p> <p>Local members of parliament.</p> <p>Local ward members.</p> <p>Thornaby Town Council.</p>	<p>Letters and emails were sent out to key stakeholders through a variety of source.</p> <p>Most were direct emails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reponses have been received from some Registered Housing Providers and Cleveland Police.</li> <li>Responses have been received from the NRLA and PLUS.</li> <li>Catalyst emailed organisations who are on their distribution list on behalf of the Council to advise VCSE colleagues of the Selective Licensing consultation and invited them to contribute their views.</li> <li>Emails were sent to both MPs to advise of the consultation and invite</li> </ul>



Method	Target Audience	Outcome
		<p>them to respond. 1 local MP responded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings were held with all councillors of the SL wards prior the commencement of the consultation.</li> </ul>
<p>Council Website</p> <p><i>Full documentation available, including the on-line questionnaire.</i></p>	<p>Borough residents and wider residents.</p> <p>Landlords.</p> <p>Service providers in the area.</p> <p>Potential interested parties.</p>	<p><a href="#">Selective Licensing</a></p>

# APPENDIX C

## Selective Licensing Letter & Leaflet

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL

Dear resident

**Selective Licensing of private rented properties - we want to hear your views**

The Council is proposing the introduction of Selective Licensing of private rented properties within 3 areas of the borough in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. We are contacting you as you live in or close to one of these areas. Enclosed for your information is a Selective Licensing information leaflet which explains what Selective Licensing is, how it will work and also includes a map of each of the 3 areas.

We want to ensure that all those who may be affected can get involved and tell us what they think. On the back of the leaflet, we have detailed the ways you can do this. Please take the time to read the leaflet and to feedback your views. Have your say, as your opinion counts.

To find out more please contact us on:

Telephone: 01642 528010

Email: [SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk).

Thank you for getting involved.

**Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council**

# Selective Licensing

A guide for residents, businesses, landlords, letting and managing agents and other stakeholders.





Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is considering introducing Selective Licensing of private rented homes in 3 areas of the borough, in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. This leaflet tells you about the Selective Licensing proposal and how you can get involved in the consultation as we want to hear the views of all those who may be affected.

### **What is a Selective Licensing Scheme?**

The Housing Act 2004 gives Council's the power to introduce the selective licensing of private rented homes, within a designated area. Under the scheme owners or managers of private rented properties are legally required to get a licence for each property they rent out in the designated area.

### **Why is Selective Licensing needed?**

Central Stockton and North Thornaby are areas of low housing demand, have high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and are experiencing high levels of deprivation. Newtown is an area experiencing significant and persistent problems caused by high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour again with high concentrations of private rented properties (well above the national average) and is experiencing high levels of deprivation. The Council proposes to use Selective Licensing as a tool to tackle issues associated with private rented housing.

### **How does Selective Licensing work?**

All private landlords would need to apply for a licence for each residential property they let in the three proposed designated areas. The licence will last for five years and the licence holder, usually the property owner, will have to meet certain criteria to obtain a licence and comply with the licence conditions. This means a landlord must meet a certain standard before they can legally rent out a property.



### **Selective Licence conditions**

Some of these are mandatory conditions which relate to gas, electrical and fire safety, to providing tenants with a tenancy agreement and carrying out pre-tenancy reference checks. The Council is also proposing additional conditions relating to tenancy and property management and landlords having a plan in place to tackle anti-social behaviour perpetrated by their tenants.

Full details about the proposed conditions can be found at [www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023).

### **Where will it apply?**

The Selective Licensing Scheme will apply in the following areas:

- Central Stockton
- North Thornaby
- Newtown

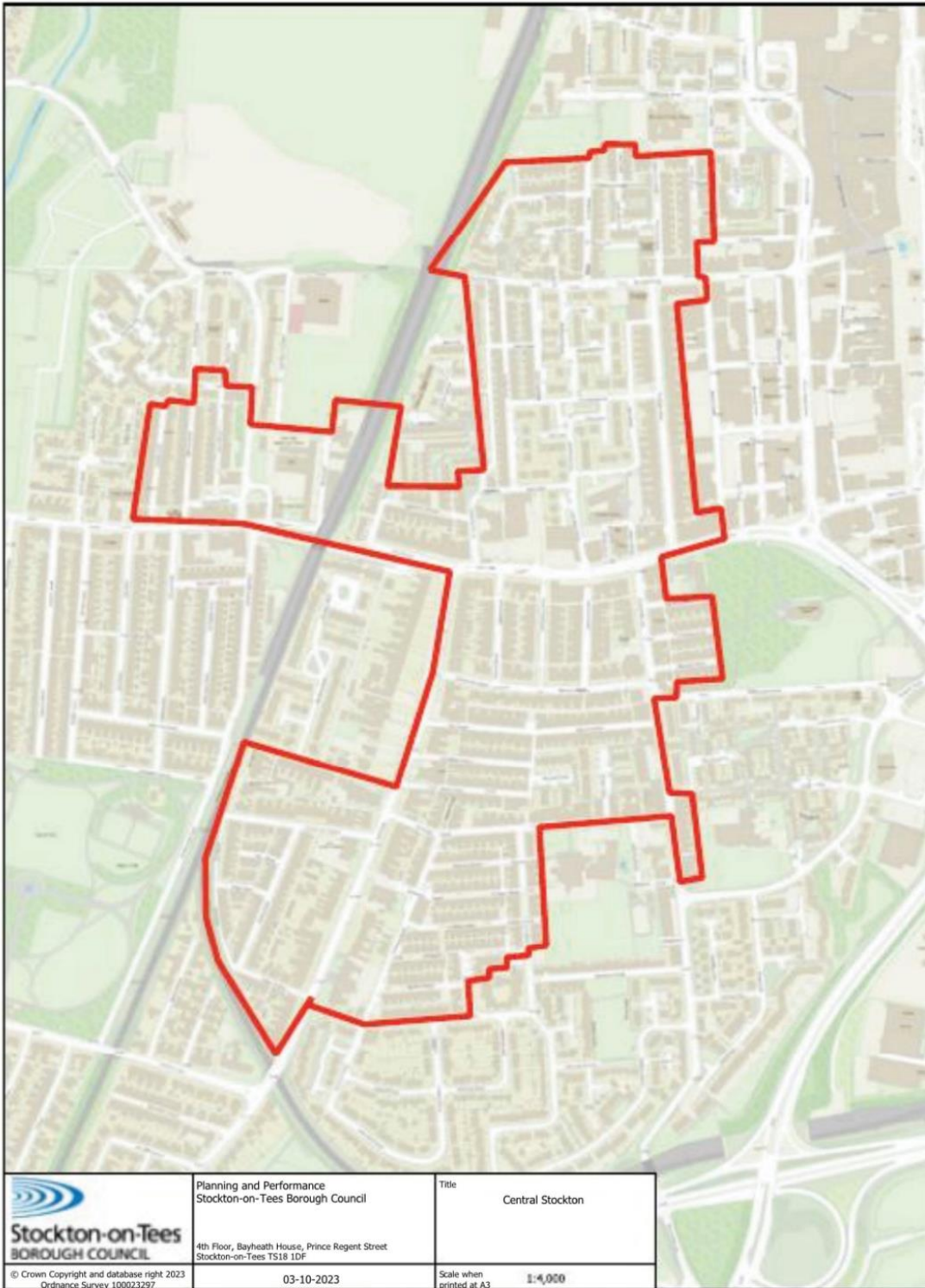
A map of each of the 3 proposed Selective Licensing areas is included in this leaflet. A full list of streets and larger maps can be found at [www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023).

### **How were the areas identified?**

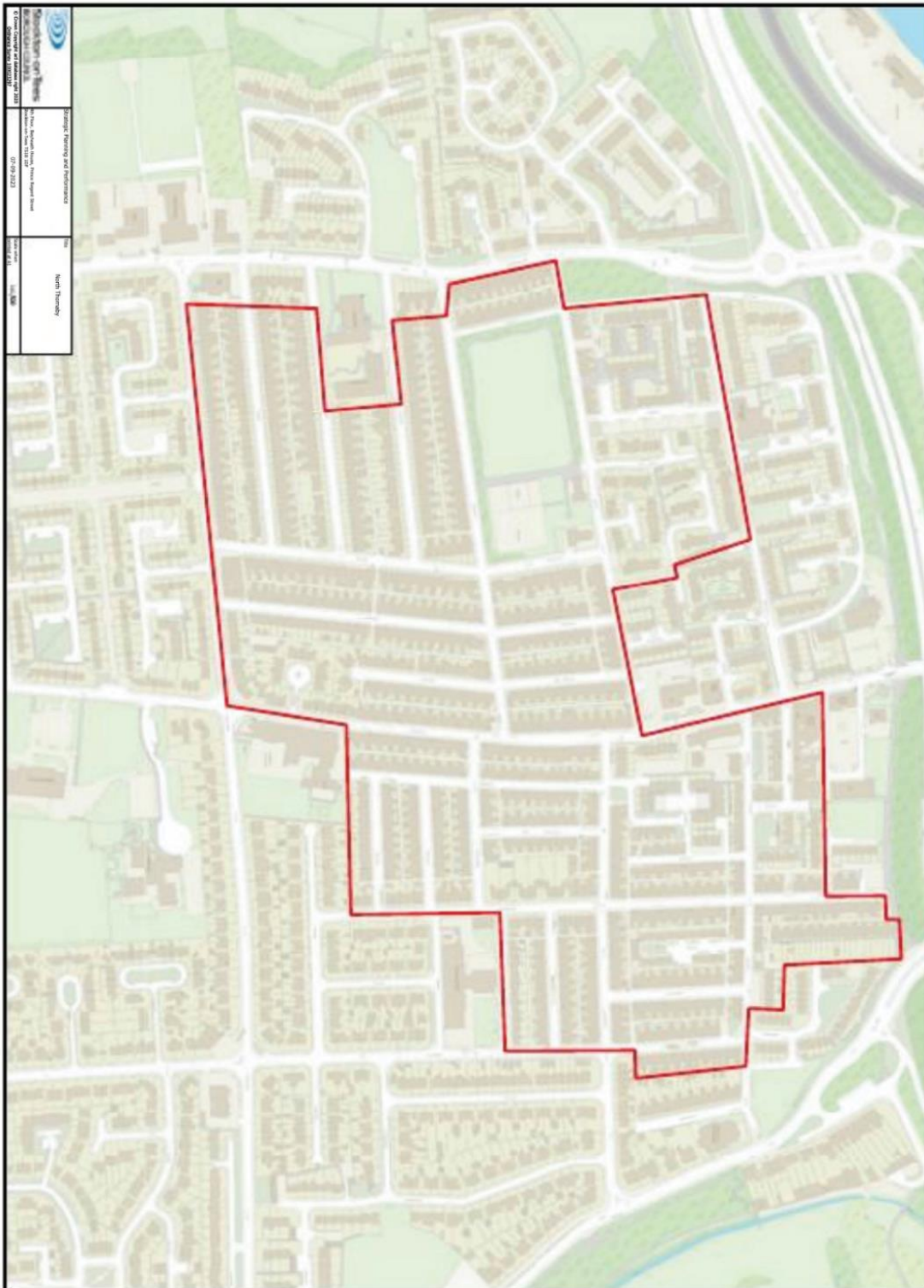
The three areas were identified using a range of information. This can be found at [www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023).



**Map 1: The proposed Central Stockton Selective Licensing designated area**



**Map 2: The proposed North Thornaby Selective Licensing designated area**





**Map 3: The proposed Newtown Selective Licensing designated area**



### **What are the benefits of Selective Licensing?**

The Council believes Selective Licensing will benefit the community and it will ensure that all private rented homes within the designated area will be managed and maintained to a satisfactory standard. Some of the benefits include for example:

Benefits for tenants:

- Improved management of private rented housing.
- A better understanding of the standards of private rented housing.
- Confidence that the Council will help if licence conditions are not met.

For the wider community:

- Improved property conditions and management of private rented housing.
- Less anti-social behaviour.
- Private landlords will be required to reference all new tenants.

For landlords:

- A level playing field, where all landlords are required to operate in the same way and licence their properties.
- Improved reputation of private landlords.
- Support for landlords dealing with anti-social behaviour.

### **Will landlords have to pay for a licence?**

Yes. The proposed standard licence fee per property would be £653.00. This fee will cover the five-year licence for one licence holder.

It is proposed that a fee discount of £50.00 per property will be offered to accredited landlords (members of PLuSS or the Councils Landlord Accreditation Scheme or a member of the National Residential Landlords Association or the British Landlords Association).

### **What would happen to private landlords who let their property without a licence or don't meet the licence conditions?**

Failure to get a licence could lead to an unlimited fine or a Civil Penalty of up to £30,000. In addition, where a breach of a licence condition is identified this could lead to a fine of £5,000 or a Civil Penalty for each breach.

### **Who is being consulted?**

The Council is contacting residents, landlords, businesses and stakeholders who live, operate or have an interest in the proposed Selective Licensing areas and those in the immediate surrounding areas.

You can get more information including details of the full proposal on the Council's website [www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023).

## Have your say – your opinion counts

The consultation period starts Monday 6 November 2023 and will end at 4pm on Friday 19 January 2024. This is your opportunity to let us know your views.

You can respond to the consultation by:

- a) Use this QR code or visit [www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-consultation-2023](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-consultation-2023) to complete the questionnaire online.
- b) Contacting us by email or telephone to ask for a copy of the questionnaire and we will post a copy out for to you to complete.



Telephone: 01642 528010

Email: [SelectiveLicensingConstulation@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:SelectiveLicensingConstulation@stockton.gov.uk)

### What happens at the end of the consultation period?

The Council will make a final decision on Selective Licensing at the end of the consultation period, after it has considered all the responses received.

The Council has 3 possible options:

1. To decide not to implement Selective Licensing.
2. To amend the Selective Licensing proposal.
3. To proceed with Selective Licensing.

The Council will publish the findings and its next steps once the consultation is complete.

### Find out more

A full copy of the Selective Licensing Scheme Proposal and all supporting documents can be found on the Councils website [www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/selective-licensing-scheme-2023).

### Contact us

Telephone: 01642 528010

Email: [SelectiveLicensingConstulation@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:SelectiveLicensingConstulation@stockton.gov.uk)



# **APPENDIX 4**

## **Summary of Representations made to the Consultation and the Council's Consideration of Responses**

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**SELECTIVE  
LICENSING  
SCHEME  
PROPOSAL**

**Summary of representations made to  
the consultation & the Council's  
considerations and responses**

2024



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Chapter 3: NRLA / P LuSS / Safeagent: comments received in written submissions and the Councils response	
Chapter 4: Landlords/managing agents, residents & stakeholders: main themes of the consultation narrative responses and the Council response	
<b>APPENDIX INFORMATION</b>	
<b>Appendix 4 (1)</b>	NRLA / P LuSS / Safeagent responses
<b>Appendix 4 (2)</b>	12 email responses received
<b>Appendix 4 (3)</b>	Landlord/Managing Agent face to face consultation sessions x 2 (Q &A)

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction and changes made in response to consultation feedback

Section 80 (9)(b) Housing Act 2004 requires the Council to consider any representations made in accordance with the consultation which are not withdrawn. The representations received are captured in this document and accompanying Appendices 1 to 4. The tables in this Chapter summarise the Council's considerations and responses in relation to the Licence Conditions and the proposed Selective Licence fee discount.

### Licence Conditions:

Licence Condition	Previous wording	Summary of Feedback	Response
Condition 9.3	The occupants of adjoining properties are provided with direct contact details of the licence holder in case of an emergency or to enable them to inform the licence holder of problems affecting their properties.	General Management - Requirement that neighbouring properties should be provided with a licensee's details in person is not reasonable when a managing agent is appointed and should be capable of being discharged by the agents' details being provided. In many cases it might also prompt a better response. If an owner's details are ultimately required they can always be reached via the Land Registry.	See Table of Deletions and amendments to proposed licence conditions. Page 7
Condition 10.2	On occupation or in the event of a change in circumstances, all tenants of the licensed property are provided with the following up to date, written information in respect of the licence holder and if applicable, the person appointed to manage the property:  (a) Name and contact address,	Tenancy Management - it is not reasonable that this condition cannot be discharged by provision of a managing agents' contact details, where appointed.	See Table of Deletions and amendments to proposed licence conditions. Page 7

<p><b>GENERAL</b></p>	<p>(b) Daytime telephone number,                  (c) E-mail address, (if applicable),                  (d) Emergency telephone number,                  (e) Alternative contact details.</p>		
<p>Condition 3</p>	<p>Condition requiring the licence holder, to keep electrical appliances made available by them in the house in a safe condition and to supply the Authority, on demand, with a declaration by them as to the safety of such appliances.</p>	<p>Safety of Electrical Appliances - it is unclear how it is proposed compliance be evidenced - if it is suggested 'PAT' testing is required, this is beyond the current statutory requirement and as such disproportionate</p>	<p>This is a Mandatory Licence condition as set out in legislation. Landlords will be required upon demand to declare the safety of such appliances. The Council will make a template self-declaration form available for landlords.</p>
<p>Condition 12</p>	<p>Conditions requiring the taking of reasonable and practicable steps to prevent or reduce anti-social behaviour by persons occupying or visiting the house and the use of the premises for illegal purposes.</p>	<p>It would be helpful if landlords were obliged to keep a record of complaints received (including the details of the complainant), not just actions they have taken. It may be that they take no action but have received reports. This will enable a full picture of issues to be built up, which could assist in any enforcement action either by the landlord themselves, or by the Police/SBC.</p>	<p>This has been considered and the Council feel the proposed Licence Conditions will address ASB issues.</p>
<p>Condition 12.2</p>	<p>Have a clear and written action plan which outlines the procedures for preventing and dealing with anti-social behaviour. This action plan should be reviewed on an annual basis and be provided to Stockton on Tees Borough Council upon request and within 7 days of that request.</p>	<p>Tackling ASB - it is not reasonable to expect landlords to develop individual action plans. This is a specialist area. What might be reasonable would be to expect landlords to adopt appropriate drafted plans produced by SBC/the scheme management.</p>	<p>The Council will make draft/template ASB action plans available for landlords.</p>

<p>Condition 12.7</p>	<p>Attend, or be represented at home visits, interviews, multi-agency meetings or case conferences arranged by the Council or its partners when necessary.</p>	<p>What will be the dispensation for landlords not living nearby who self-manage, they will not be able to attend home visits, interviews, multi-agency meetings or case conferences arranged by the Council or its partners when necessary.</p>	<p>If a landlord was not able to attend then the Council would expect the landlord to make arrangements to be represented or take part in an online meeting.</p>
<p>Condition 13</p>	<p>Conditions requiring the licence holder to manage the external areas of the property and to ensure the property is free from accumulations of waste and that there are suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and disposal of refuse and waste.</p>	<p>Timescales for landlords to take action - i.e. if graffiti has been left on a property, or say the gate has been pulled from the frame - how quickly are landlords expected to take action?</p>	<p>The timescales to take action will be dependent upon the extent of the work required and will be assessed on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>Condition 13</p>	<p>Conditions requiring the licence holder to manage the external areas of the property and to ensure the property is free from accumulations of waste and that there are suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and disposal of refuse and waste.</p>	<p>With regard to waste/refuse - the tenants should be provided with clear information about how, when and where to dispose of their waste.</p>	<p>The requirement to provide tenants with details of their responsibilities regarding waste storage and disposal is included in Condition 10.4</p>
<p>Condition 13</p>	<p>Conditions requiring the licence holder to manage the external areas of the property and to ensure the property is free from accumulations of waste and that there are suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and disposal of refuse and waste.</p>	<p>External Areas, Refuse etc - it should be the SBC's responsibility in liaison with the tenant to ensure the provision of the 'full range of recycling and refuse containers' as this is a function of Council Tax which, where in occupation, is the responsibility of a tenant Overall - the scheme and licence conditions need to specify that appropriate terms in a tenancy agreement will have the effect of discharging various of the imposed administrative / notification requirements.</p>	<p>The Council are of the opinion that these conditions are required to address issues relating to waste collection, storage and disposal.</p>

		<p>I feel that "all reasonable and practicable steps ... taken to prevent and respond" referenced multiple times within the conditions need to be more strictly defined. As a tenant it could be argued that by the definition landlords could just barge in whenever they feel like under the guise of making sure antisocial/criminal/other behaviours are not taking place, but it leaves open the possibility to curtail tenants right to privacy if taken too far.</p> <p>A condition to an enhanced minimum energy efficiency standard of at least a SAP band D should be imposed with a view of increasing that to a band C within a suitable period.</p>	<p>This will be considered further and we will reflect any changes in the final conditions.</p> <p>Landlords are required to comply with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards 2018, which means a property is required to have an EPC rating of band E. The EPC rating of all licenced properties will be checked and if the property is below an E rating landlords will be required to take steps to improve the rating.</p>
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### Table of amendments to proposed licence conditions

Proposed Condition topic	Deletion from existing conditions	Amendment	Reason / change
General Management		9.3	Condition 9.3 - After licence holder insert 'or if applicable the person appointed to manage the property'
Tenancy Management		10.2	Condition 10.2 - After licence holder, replace 'and' with 'or'

### Proposed amendment: Fee Proposal /scheme discount

Summary of Feedback	Response
The proposed discount for PLuSS members is too low and does not reflect PLuSS members co-operation with the Council.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
There should be a discount for owners of more than one property.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
There should be a discount for studio flats / flats in one block.	Where a landlord is the owner of two or more flats, a discount of £25 will be applied following the first application.
The fee discount is not enough.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.



## CHAPTER 2: Summary of positive responses received

The Council would like to acknowledge some of the comments received during the consultation in support of the proposed scheme:

- As a resident in Wren Street I am very happy to see it is included in the area.
- I'm generally against bureaucracy for the sake of it and unnecessary government/Council interference but I think the idea has merits and hope that it would help to get rid of some bad landlords and raise standards with the remainder, as well as encouraging more pride in the area generally.
- Licensing needs to be introduced to regulate private landlords to ensure the upkeep of living conditions and standards are as high as possible. This would benefit all local residents and the community as a whole. The terrace where I live was once a very nice residential area. Please do all you can to put this wrong right.
- This model has worked to some degree in similar neighbourhoods in Middlesbrough. It won't solve all the problems, but will help.
- It might make landlords more accountable stopping them putting anybody in their house just for the rent.
- I strongly agree as a home owner in Newtown my house price has plummeted due to all the anti-social behaviour, drug dealing. Private landlords not vetting their tenants and letting their properties go into states of disrepair.
- I would like the above to be introduced because of the amount of houses, flats and HMO's that are in my area and landlords are really not bothered about the decent home owners who have to live amongst this.
- Something like this is long overdue it will be a success as long as there are consequences for people who own these properties and don't take responsibility for the tenant's tenure. If this is not the case it will be another toothless exercise.
- Essential for the rental sector to operate fairly and efficiently and to prevent crime and poorly managed properties.
- In the absence of long promised legislation in this area I welcome the Council's proposals which has the potential to address many of the issues raised earlier in the survey. Good landlords should have no problem though I suspect those who fail their tenants will have issues. All the more reason to have the scheme.
- In my opinion, this would ensure the affected areas are kept to a social standard.
- Would be a helpful measure to help reduce disproportionate crime and ASB levels in the area.
- Selective licensing will hopefully disincentivise 'slum landlords' from operating property within the area leading to an improvement in the condition of the housing in the area. Better quality housing is easier to care for by occupants reducing financial and health burdens.
- Go ahead and bring the quality of housing up to standard.



CONTINUED..

- I think it would improve the quality of life for people living in the area greatly.
- I think it's worth a try to help and bring the standard of living up. Providing people with housing is so much more than just giving someone a building to live in, a landlord should not be classed as good just by mending broken things, but also supporting tenants. Hopefully selective licensing will give both tenants and landlord the help to communicate effectively.
- We welcome the targeted nature of the selective licensing proposals.
- We would welcome any proposal that agents who are license holders should undergo training.

## CHAPTER 3: NRLA / P LuSS / Safe Agent: Comments Received in written submissions and the Councils response

Submission	Consultation Responses	Council's Response
NRLA	<p>Landlords are usually not experienced in managing antisocial behaviour and do not have the professional capacity to resolve tenants' mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency. Suppose there are any allegations about a tenant causing problems, and a landlord ends the tenancy. In that case, the landlord will have fulfilled their obligations, even if the tenant has any of the above issues. This moves the problems around Stockton on Tees Council but does not help the tenant, who could become lost in the system, or worst, move towards the criminal landlords. They will also blight another resident's life.</p>	<p>The Council understands that is the responsibility of all residents in the borough not to cause anti-social behaviour. The Council do not expect landlords to be responsible for the behaviour of their tenants. We require landlords to include clauses in their tenancy agreements about ASB, to manage their tenancies and ensure that ASB caused by their tenants is effectively addressed and if necessary appropriate action taken.</p> <p>The Council will work with landlords who are experiencing issues with tenants who are causing ASB and if the designations are approved a dedicated resource will be available within the Selective Licensing Team.</p>
NRLA	<p>Furthermore, the overcrowding issue is complicated for a landlord to manage if the tenant has overfilled the property. A landlord will tell a tenant how many people are permitted to live on the property and that the tenant is not to sublet it or allow additional people to live there. Beyond that, how is the landlord managing this matter without interfering with the tenant's welfare? Equally, how will the Council assist landlords when this problem arises?</p> <p>It is impractical for landlords to monitor tenants' everyday activities or sleeping arrangements.</p>	<p>The Council believes there are steps that landlords can take to determine if a property has been sublet or overfilled. The Council does not believe that these inspections would impact the tenants' welfare.</p> <p><i>In the licence conditions, it states that the licence holder should undertake inspections a minimum of every twelve months and to keep a written record of the issues found and the action taken.</i></p>

		<p><i>The NRLA's own guidance recommends that "inspections should be no less than every three months" (Source: <a href="#">The landlord's essential guide to periodic property inspections   NRLA</a>).</i></p> <p><i>As stated above, the Council will work with landlords who are experiencing issues with tenants, and are proposing that, if the schemes are approved, dedicated resources will be appointed to work with the existing teams (including Private Sector Housing, Civic Enforcement &amp; Planning) to support this work.</i></p>
NRLA	Regarding reducing antisocial behaviour and those landlords must tackle such activity within their properties, it should be highlighted that landlords and agents can only enforce a contract; they cannot manage behaviour.	The proposed Selective Licence conditions provides landlords with actions that they can take to demonstrate that they are dealing with ASB associated with their properties.
NRLA	Stockton on Tees Council has many existing enforcing powers that can rectify the identified problems as part of the Council's housing strategy.	The Council acknowledges that landlords are subject to existing regulations and laws. However, the existing regulations and powers do not require landlords to declare themselves to the Council. This means there is no obligation for landlords to make their properties known to the Council.
NRLA	The Council also has a wealth of housing enforcement legislation that can be used to enforce against poor standards in the PRS, such as the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), Improvement Notices, Hazard Awareness Notices, Prohibition Orders and Emergency Remedial Action, civil penalties and criminal prosecutions. These powers are available to the local authority now and do not need consultation to use.	The Council acknowledges that landlords are subject to existing regulations and laws. However, the existing regulations and powers do not require landlords to declare themselves to the Council. This means there is no obligation for landlords to make their properties known to the Council or to be proactive in improving conditions.
NRLA	The NRLA advocates using Council tax records to identify tenures used by the private rented sector and those landlords in charge of those properties. Unlike discretionary licensing, landlords do not require self-identification, making it harder for criminal landlords to operate under the radar. With this approach, the Council would not need to consult and implement changes immediately.	<p>If the schemes are approved the Council will include but not be limited to) the following in their approach to identify non-compliant landlords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring applications followed by door-to-door visits in potential unlicensed hot spots to</li> </ul>

		<p>ensure tenants and landlords know their licensing obligations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concentrated enforcement activity in areas to identify unlicensed addresses, to ensure that licensed addresses have the correct licence in place and to ensure compliance with licence conditions.</li> <li>- The use of application and case management systems to help identify properties that are a high priority for inspection, including properties without gas and electric safety certificates and</li> </ul>
NRLA	<p>If the scheme is approved, the Council should consider providing an annual summary of outcomes to demonstrate to tenants and landlords' behaviour improvements and the impact of licensing on the designated area over the scheme's lifetime. This would improve transparency overall.</p>	<p>The Council intends to produce an annual review of the licensing schemes, which will show how the Council is tracking against the scheme objectives, and provide transparency to landlords, tenants and residents of the borough on the scheme.</p>
PLuSS	<p>We do not believe that the scheme will bring about significant improvements, while the costs will discourage investment by landlords.</p>	<p>The Council are mindful of the impact of the cost-of living crisis on our Private Rented Sector. Furthermore the Council appreciates that the private rented sector plays a very important role in providing decent homes throughout the borough. However, as outlined in the evidence base, there is evidence of persistent issues relating to low housing demands and ASB in the proposed designated areas. In light of the evidence, the Council believes that it has to take steps to address these issues.</p>
PLuSS	<p>The ability of landlords to reclassify properties as 'holiday homes' (e.g. for Air BnB lettings) may lead to many properties being ineligible for Selective Licensing or indeed for any enforcement action by the Council.</p>	<p>In February 2024 the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) introduced changes to short-term let rules. The proposed planning changes would see a new planning 'use class' created for short term lets not used as a sole or main home. The Selective Licensing Team would work closely with colleagues in the Council's</p>

		Planning team to ensure short-term lets have secured appropriate planning permission.
PLuSS	In documentation presented so far the Council has failed to set any measurable target outcomes against which the success of its proposed scheme can be measured, if it goes ahead.	The Council intends to produce an annual review of the licensing schemes, which will show how the Council is tracking against the scheme objectives, and provide transparency to landlords, tenants and residents of the borough on the scheme.
PLuSS	Running the scheme will be a distraction for the Private Sector Housing Team and will waste valuable internal resources, even after allowing for the funding that registration fees will generate.	If the schemes are approved, dedicated resources will be appointed to work alongside the existing teams (Private Sector Housing, Civic Enforcement & Planning) to support this work.
PLuSS	We respect the good intentions of the Council in wanting to engage with tenants and ensure that they understand their role in the physical maintenance of their properties and as good neighbours in their locality, but we doubt whether visits by Housing Officers will achieve anything in this regard.	The aim is to visit all properties. This will provide the opportunity for members of staff to engage with residents and offer advice and support where necessary.
PLuSS	We suspect that a significant minority of PRS properties in the proposed areas will not be submitted for registration under the proposed scheme, and these will include many of the properties in the worst repair and most in need of enforcement action. The scheme will instead focus on registered properties, because they will tend to have more cooperative landlords and can be inspected easily	As detailed above if the schemes are approved the Council will include (but not be limited to) the following in their approach to identify non-compliant landlords: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring applications followed by door-to-door visits in potential unlicensed hot spots to ensure tenants and landlords know their licensing obligations.</li> <li>- Concentrated enforcement activity in areas to identify unlicensed addresses, to ensure that licensed addresses have the correct licence in place and to ensure compliance with licence conditions.</li> <li>- The use of application and case management systems to help identify properties that are a high priority for inspection, including properties without gas and electric safety certificates and</li> </ul>

		properties with a record of ASB incidents or complaints
PLuSS	The proposed discount for PLuSS members is derisory and does not reflect PLuSS members co-operation with the Council.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
PLuSS	There should be a discount for owners of more than one property.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
PLuSS	There should be a discount for studio flats / flats in one block.	Where a landlord is the owner of two or more flats, a discount of £25 will be applied following the first application.
PLuSS	The fee discount is not enough.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
Safeagent	<p>We would urge Stockton on Tees Council to work closely with accredited lettings &amp; management agents to ensure that the regulatory effort associated with the licensing schemes is focussed on the greatest risks. The highest priority should be tackling rogue landlords and agents, not policing the compliant.</p> <p>Many rogue landlords and unaccredited agents operate “under the radar”. Resources should, therefore, be directed towards these serious cases. There is danger that too much time will be spent on those properties and landlords where an existing, reputable agent is best placed to ensure compliance with license conditions.</p> <p>We would urge the Council to fully recognise the compliance work reputable agents carry out as part of their day to day work. We would also suggest that the Council work closely with accredited agents to proactively seek out and identify unlicensed properties.</p>	<p>As detailed above if the schemes are approved the Council will include (but not be limited to) the following in their approach to identify non-compliant landlords:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitoring applications followed by door-to-door visits in potential unlicensed hot spots to ensure tenants and landlords know their licensing obligations.</li> <li>- Concentrated enforcement activity in areas to identify unlicensed addresses, to ensure that licensed addresses have the correct licence in place and to ensure compliance with licence conditions.</li> <li>- The use of application and case management systems to help identify properties that are a high priority for inspection, including properties without gas and electric safety certificates and properties with a record of ASB incidents or complaints.</li> </ul> <p>The Council will consider further improving our engagement with accredited agents.</p>

Safeagent	The proposed five year fee of £653, paid on application and then in annual instalments, seems reasonable. However, we would suggest a higher discounts for accredited landlords and agents – say £100 rather than £50.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
Safeagent	<p>We note that the Council’s proposal documents says that “the introduction of Selective Licensing will help to ensure that private rented homes used to accommodate homeless households, and/or prevent homelessness are of a satisfactory standard and are well managed”</p> <p>In this context, we would suggest that, in cases where a private landlord is assisting the Council by offering permanent accommodation to meet homelessness duties, license applications should be accepted without any fee being payable.</p>	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
Safeagent	We are supportive of any requirement to obtain references for prospective tenants. safeagent is actively involved in promoting good practice in tenant referencing. We would be happy to discuss our work in this area with the Council.	Noted
Safeagent	We would further suggest that discounted fees for safeagent agents would provide an incentive to positive engagement with training that is fully compatible with the requirements of the licensing scheme.	This has been considered and we will reflect any changes in the final fee discount proposal.
Safeagent	For our members, dealing with actual and perceived anti-social behaviour in the PRS is a day to day activity. However, in general, we have concerns about the assumed link between the amount of PRS accommodation in the neighbourhood and the incidence of ASB. There may be some correlation between incidences of ASB and the prevalence of PRS accommodation on the area. However, correlation does not imply causation. The causes of ASB are many and varied. It is not, in our view, reasonable to expect agents and landlords to play a disproportionately large part in tackling them.	<p>The Council understands that is the responsibility of all residents in the borough not to cause anti-social behaviour. The Council do not expect landlords to be responsible for the behaviour of their tenants. We require landlords to include clauses in their tenancy agreements about ASB, to manage their tenancies and ensure that ASB caused by their tenants is effectively addressed and if necessary appropriate action taken.</p> <p>The Council will work with landlords who are experiencing issues with tenants who are causing ASB and if the designations are approved a dedicated resource will be available within the Selective Licensing Team.</p>

<p>Safeagent</p>	<p>We believe that regular information on implementation of the scheme should be made available in a clear and consistent format. Reports to local landlord and agent forums, representative bodies and other stakeholders should include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The estimated number of private rented properties that require licensing under the Selective licensing scheme.</li> <li>• The number of applications received in respect of these properties.</li> <li>• Progress in processing (granting, querying or refusing) the licence applications received.</li> <li>• Analysis of the reasons for any queries or refusals and the extent to which remedial action is identified and taken as a result.</li> <li>• Analysis of the outcomes of ongoing inspections and the extent to which remedial action is identified and taken as a result.</li> <li>• Progress reports across the whole 5 year period covered by the scheme.</li> </ul> <p>This should help to enable the Council to work in partnership with landlords, agents, representative bodies and other stakeholders to ensure the success of the scheme.</p>	<p>The Council intends to produce an annual review of the licensing schemes, which will show how the Council is tracking against the scheme objectives, and provide transparency to landlords, tenants and residents of the borough on the scheme.</p>
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## CHAPTER 4: Landlords/managing agents, residents & stakeholders – main themes of the consultation narrative response and the Council response

The consultation focused on the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the Council’s proposal to introduce Selective Licensing and the three proposed designations. The consultation also sought views on the proposed licence conditions and fees. The consultation questionnaire also provided respondents with the opportunity to comment on the proposals in their own words and provide any comments they would like to make about the Selective Licensing proposal. These narrative comments have been collated into a background paper (full details are available on request).

All comments have been reviewed and the table below provides details of the main themes and the Council’s response:

Theme	Example comment	Council response
PRS licensing is unnecessary / no benefit to those involved / is already covered by existing legislation	“everything the Council is proposing is covered by legislation”	<p>Whilst the Council acknowledges that many landlords operating in the borough keep their properties to a high standard, the evidence presented shows that there are large scale issues with low housing demand, crime and ASB in the proposed designated areas that Selective Licensing can help to address.</p> <p>The Council acknowledges that landlords are subject to existing regulations and believes that many landlords will meet the licence conditions and do keep their properties in good condition. However, the existing regulations and powers do not require landlords to declare themselves to the Council. This means there is no obligation for landlords to make their properties known to the Council or to be proactive in improving conditions.</p> <p>Selective Licensing provides the Council with additional powers to take action against those landlords who fail to manage their properties or place their tenants in unsafe properties.</p>
	“not necessary and will not solve the problems”	
	“I have managed properties in 8 areas where Selective Licensing has been introduced. In all cases they have run for 5 years and at no point can any change good or bad be attributed the selective license”	
	“Selective licensing will be counter-productive”	
	“Selective licensing is not necessary”	
	“Additional burden on responsible landlords”	
	“Waste of time and money. Already imposed on Teesside and didn’t work. Just a con for landlords”.	

Theme	Example comment	Council response
Licensing will lead to higher rents (landlords will pass on the costs)	“Additional costs of Selective Licensing would make it even more difficult for me to keep the rents as reasonable”	The Council has spoken to several Local Authority’s who have advised that they have not experienced increased rent in areas covered by Selective Licensing. However in acknowledgment of concerns raised by landlords and tenants, changes in the proposed Selective Licensing scheme discount are proposed.
	“Bad landlords will simply pass on the costs”	
	“Costs will be passed onto tenants”	
	“Selective Licensing will only result in landlords passing the license fee onto tenants”	
	“If the scheme happens my landlord will increase my rent”	
	“the license fee will only be added to tenants rents. Rents are only just affordable”	
Theme	Example comment	Council response
It is a money-making scheme / another income for Stockton Council	“money making venture”	The Council is not permitted, nor does it seek to make a financial profit from Selective Licensing. The proposed fee has been calculated based on anticipated costs for operating the scheme, which have been informed by the number of properties the Council has estimated will require a licence.
	“unclear how funds raised will benefit the areas”	
	“obvious this is a way of Councils obtaining funding”	

Theme	Example comment	Council response
<p>The introduction of Selective Licensing / a Selective License fee will result in landlords selling up</p>	<p>“I’m already struggling I’ll be selling my property if the license fee comes in and buy elsewhere”</p>	<p>The Council has spoken to several Local Authority’s who have advised that they have not experienced landlords selling their properties. The private rented sector is a growing sector both in the borough and in the 3 proposed Selective Licensing designation areas.</p>
	<p>“if approved I will no longer be investing in the proposed areas and intend selling up”</p>	
	<p>“this could tempt the landlord to sell up increasing the housing shortage”</p>	
	<p>“I worry about landlords deciding to sell up”</p>	
	<p>If this is introduced I will either sell my properties or pass the whole cost onto my tenants”</p>	
Theme	Example comment	Council response
<p>Licensing treats good and bad landlords in the same way / rouge landlords will not join</p>	<p>“efforts should be made to tackle bad landlords and not penalise good ones”</p>	<p>The Council’s intention is to use the regulatory framework provided by Selective Licensing to focus on those that do not comply and impact negatively on the reputation of those responsible landlords.</p>
	<p>“you are discriminating against good landlords”</p>	
	<p>“selective licensing penalises good landlord’s”</p>	<p>The Council will operate Selective Licensing in accordance with relevant legislation and Government Guidance.</p>
	<p>“only good landlords will sign up, bad landlords will not sign up and will pay hide and seek”</p>	
<p>As a compulsory scheme the Selective License fee is too high</p>	<p>“fee level is disproportionately high”</p>	<p>As noted previously, the Council is not permitted, nor does it seek to make a financial profit from Selective Licensing. The proposed fee has been calculated based on anticipated costs for operating the scheme, which have been informed by the number of properties the Council has estimated will require a licence.</p>
	<p>“its too expensive”</p>	
	<p>“I will find it difficult to afford to pay for licensing”</p>	

Theme	Comment	Council response
<p>The proposed discount is too low</p>	<p>“proposed discount for PLuSS members is too low”</p>	<p>The Council has considered scheme discounts, and a revised discount is proposed for members of PLuSS and/or the Councils Landlord Accreditation Scheme and for landlords with 2 or more properties.</p>
	<p>“there should be a better discount for more than 1 property”</p>	
	<p>“the discount fee for good landlords is not good enough”</p>	
	<p>“there should be a discount for landlords with multiply properties plus a discount for studio flats”</p>	
	<p>“while any discount is better than no discount – the proposed discount for PLuSS is derisory” and does not reflect all the cooperation with the Council over 5 years</p>	
Theme	Example comment	Council response
<p>Properties will be reclassified as holiday homes</p>	<p>“landlords can reclassify properties as ‘holiday homes’ (e.g. for Air BnB lettings) which will not be eligible for Selective Licensing</p>	<p>In February 2024 the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) introduced changes to short-term let rules. The proposed planning changes would see a new planning ‘use class’ created for short term lets not used as a sole or main home. The Selective Licensing team would work closely with colleagues in the Council’s Planning team to ensure short-term lets are only operated by those who have secured appropriate planning permission.</p>
	<p>“landlords will reclassify properties”</p>	

Theme	Example comment	Council response
<p>Anti-social behaviour is not the landlords' responsibility</p>	<p>"We are not babysitters and cannot control how tenants conduct their lives"</p>	<p>The Council understands that is the responsibility of all residents in the borough not to cause anti-social behaviour. The Council do not expect landlords to be responsible for the behaviour of their tenants. We require landlords to include clauses in their tenancy agreements about ASB, to manage their tenancies and ensure that ASB caused by their tenants is effectively addressed and if necessary appropriate action taken.</p> <p>The Council will work with landlords who are experiencing issues with tenants who are causing ASB and if the designations are approved a dedicated resource will be available within the Selective Licensing Team.</p>
	<p>"More needs to be done by Stockton Council to tackle crime and ASB and penalising landlords this is the wrong way to do it"</p>	
	<p>"The Council tends to blame the landlord for tenants or neighbours behaviours"</p>	
Theme	Example comment	Council response
<p>The proposed Selective Licensing designation areas should cover all properties (Registered Housing providers)</p>	<p>"I do agree, however this should also apply to Thirteen"</p>	<p>As detailed in the Selective Scheme proposal, private rented housing is a significant tenure in the 3 proposed designation areas.</p> <p>In drafting the Selective Licensing scheme proposal the Council has ensure relevant legislation and Government Guidance has been adhered too.</p>
	<p>"This is a pointless exercise. Most housing is owned by social housing landlords who are exempt"</p>	
	<p>"Selective Licensing will only work if all rented properties are covered and not just private rented properties"</p>	
	<p>Please expand and improve this clause to make it more useful."</p>	

# **APPENDIX 4 (1)**

## **NRLA / P LuSS / Safeagent Responses**



Suite 323, Tootal Buildings, Broadhurst House  
56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6EU

0300 131  
6400  
info@nrla.org.uk  
www.nrla.org.uk

Stockton on Tees Council

19<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

### Selective Licensing Proposals

The NRLA is an association following the merger of the National Landlords Association and the Residential Landlords Association. Our membership represents over 100,000 landlords and agents, the largest organisation in the sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation regarding the introduction of selective licensing in Stockton on Tees. The NRLA objects to the relevance of the introduction of Selective licensing by Local Authorities. Although we sympathise with the aims of Stockton on Tees Council, we believe that Licensing does not align with the successful completion of these objectives.

The NRLA seeks a fair legislative and regulatory environment for the private rented sector while ensuring landlords know their statutory rights and responsibilities.

### Main Objections

#### Antisocial behaviour and low housing

Landlords are usually not experienced in managing antisocial behaviour and do not have the professional capacity to resolve tenants' mental health issues or drug and alcohol dependency. Suppose there are any allegations about a tenant causing problems, and a landlord ends the tenancy. In that case, the landlord will have fulfilled their obligations, even if the tenant has any of the above issues.

This moves the problems around Stockton on Tees Council but does not help the tenant, who could become lost in the system, or worst, move towards the criminal landlords. They will also blight another resident's life.

Furthermore, the overcrowding issue is complicated for a landlord to manage if the tenant has overfilled the property. A landlord will tell a tenant how many people are permitted to live on the property and that the tenant is not to sublet it or allow additional people to live there. Beyond that, how is the landlord managing this matter without interfering with the tenant's welfare? Equally, how will the council assist landlords when this problem arises?

It is impractical for landlords to monitor tenants' everyday activities or sleeping arrangements.

Regarding reducing antisocial behaviour and those landlords must tackle such activity within their properties, it should be highlighted that landlords and agents can only enforce a contract; they cannot manage behaviour.

#### Existing Enforcement Powers

Stockton on Tees Council has many existing enforcing powers that can rectify the identified problems as part of the council's housing strategy. These include:

1. Criminal Behaviour Orders
1. Crime Prevention Injunctions
1. Interim Management Orders
1. Empty Dwelling Management Orders
1. Improvement Notices (for homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard)
1. Litter Abatement Notices (Section 92 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990)
1. Fixed Penalty Notices or Confiscation of equipment (Sections 8 and 10 of the Noise Act 1996)
1. Directions regarding the disposal of waste (for example, Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990)
1. Notices to remove rubbish from land (Section 2-3 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949)

The council also has a wealth of housing enforcement legislation that can be used to enforce against poor standards in the PRS, such as the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), Improvement Notices, Hazard Awareness Notices, Prohibition Orders and Emergency Remedial Action, civil penalties and criminal prosecutions. These powers are available to the local authority now and do not need consultation to use.

#### Conclusions and alternatives

The NRLA advocates using council tax records to identify tenures used by the private rented sector and those landlords in charge of those properties. Unlike discretionary licensing, landlords do not require self-identification, making it harder for criminal landlords to operate under the radar. With this approach, the council would not need to consult and implement changes immediately.







Suite 323, Tootal Buildings, Broadhurst House  
56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6EU

 0300 131  
 6400  
info@nrla.org.uk  
www.nrla.org.uk

If the scheme is approved, the council should consider providing an annual summary of outcomes to demonstrate to tenants and landlords' behaviour improvements and the impact of licensing on the designated area over the scheme's lifetime. This would improve transparency overall.

The NRLA has a shared interest with Stockon on Tees Council in ensuring a high-quality private rented sector but strongly disagrees that the introduction of selective licensing is the most effective approach to achieve this aim both in the short term and long term.

Yours Faithfully,

Samantha Watkin  
Senior Policy Officer  
National Residential Landlords Association  
[Samantha.Watkin@nrla.org.uk](mailto:Samantha.Watkin@nrla.org.uk)





PLUSS  
21 Yarm Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 3NJ

FAO: Jane Edmends - Assistant Director - Housing and A Fairer Stockton  
Gary Knight - Private Sector Housing Team Manager

Selective Licensing Consultation  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
16 Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TX

By Email To: [selectivelicensingconsulta\(on@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:selectivelicensingconsulta(on@stockton.gov.uk)  
[Jane.Edmends@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Edmends@stockton.gov.uk)  
[Gary.Knight@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Gary.Knight@stockton.gov.uk)

Friday, 19 January 2024

## Response to Selective Licensing Consulta(on

This is the response of PLUS S to the proposal that has been put forward by Stockton-on-Tees

Borough Council ("the Council") for a Selective Licensing Scheme covering Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown. At the (me of wri(ng informa(on about the scheme can be found at [h>ps://www.stockton.gov.uk/Selective-licensing-scheme-2023](https://www.stockton.gov.uk/Selective-licensing-scheme-2023).

As we have already expressed views in previous documents and in mee(ngs with the officers, we focus overleaf on the key points:

We believe the scheme should not go ahead because:

1. We do not believe that the scheme will bring about significant improvements, while the costs will discourage investment by landlords.
2. The ability of landlords to reclassify properties as 'holiday homes' (e.g. for AirBnB listings) may lead to many properties being ineligible for Selective Licensing or indeed for any enforcement action by the Council.
3. In documents presented so far the Council has failed to set any measurable target outcomes against which the success of its proposed scheme can be measured, if it goes ahead. The evidence of improvement from other LHA Selective Licensing Schemes is anecdotal and almost no schemes provide measurable targets for outcomes against which real achievement can be measured, instead choosing to focus on number of registrations and inspections carried out. The audit report by  
Northampton City Council  
(<https://commitee.northamptoncity.gov.uk/documents/s143098/Selective%20licensing%20JG%20180922%2019%20Aug%202022.pdf>) on their own scheme is a case in point.
4. Running the scheme will be a distraction for the Private Sector Housing Team and will waste valuable internal resources, even after allowing for the funding that registration fees will generate.
5. We respect the good intentions of the Council in wanting to engage with tenants and ensure that they understand their role in the physical maintenance of their properties and as good neighbours in their locality, but we doubt whether visits by Housing Officers will achieve anything in this regard.
6. We suspect that a significant minority of PRS properties in the proposed areas will not be submitted for registration under the proposed scheme, and these will include many of the properties in the worst repair and most in need of enforcement action. The scheme will instead focus on registered properties, because they will tend to have more cooperative landlords and can be inspected easily.

If the scheme is to go ahead, then we submit that:

1. The proposed discount for PLuSS members (£50 per property over 5 years) is derisory and does not fully reflect:
  - a. all the cooperation with the Council from PLuSS as an organisation (short for 'Private Landlords Supporting Stockton') and from PLuSS members individually over the last 5 years; and
  - b. because PLuSS members are good landlords they will be easy (and therefore cheap) for the Council to deal with under Selective Licensing.
2. Discounts should also be given for the following, because in each case it will be cheaper for the council to administer, so it is fair and reasonable:
  - a. Applying online instead of on paper
  - b. Multiple properties per landlord or agent
  - c. Flats in a house (including studio flats)
  - d. Early bird applications
3. All discounts should be cumulative since each discount reflects a saving expected to be made by the Council in its administration costs.
4. We respect the intentions of the Council for the proposed tenant referencing scheme (and the Council has operated something similar in the past with success); however, the scheme must be based on very good and complete data and must also offer fast turnaround for landlords and agents to rely on it for letting decisions.

Yours faithfully



Dominic Ferard, Chair, PLuSS Committee

[dominic@pluss.me.uk](mailto:dominic@pluss.me.uk) for PLuSS <https://www.pluss.me.uk>



## STOCKTON ON TEES COUNCIL'S SELECTIVE LICENSING PROPOSALS

### A RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION FROM SAFEAGENT – JANUARY 2024

#### INTRODUCTION

**safeagent** [www.safeagents.co.uk](http://www.safeagents.co.uk) is a UK wide, not for profit accreditation scheme for lettings and management agents operating in the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

**safeagent** firms are required to:

- deliver defined standards of customer service
- operate within strict client accounting standards
- maintain a separate client bank account
- be included under a Client Money Protection Scheme

Firms must provide evidence that they continue to meet **safeagent** criteria on an annual basis, in order to retain their accreditation. The scheme includes 1700 firms, with over 2500 offices.

**safeagent** is an accredited training provider under the Rent Smart Wales scheme and meets the requirements for training of agents under the Scottish Government Register. **safeagent** also operates a Government approved Client Money Protection Scheme.

#### SAFEAGENT AND LICENSING

**safeagent** is supportive of initiatives such as Selective Licensing, providing they are implemented in a way that takes account of the Private Rented Sector (PRS)'s own efforts to promote high standards.

**safeagent** believes that positive engagement with voluntary schemes and the representative bodies of landlords and agents (such as **safeagent**) is essential to the success of initiatives such as Selective Licensing. We are mindful that the operational problems associated with lack of such engagement have been highlighted in House of Commons Standard Note SN/SP 4634.

The same note sets out how important it is for licensing schemes to avoid being burdensome. We believe that promoting voluntary schemes - and offering discounted licence fees to accredited landlords and agents, can help to achieve this. Voluntary schemes often require members to observe standards that are at least compatible with (and are often over and above) those of licensing schemes. We believe, therefore, that if Stockton on Tees Council were to allow discounts based on membership of **safeagent** (as well as other similar bodies) implementing and policing the licensing scheme would

ultimately be less costly and more effective, allowing resources to be concentrated in the areas where they are most needed.

This is a commonly accepted approach by many English Local Authorities. We would further point out that, in Wales, the Welsh Government has recently recognised the importance of membership of specified bodies such as **safeagent** and is offering discounted fees to members as a consequence <https://www.rentsmart.gov.wales/en/>

## **PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM IN THE PRS - THE ROLE OF AGENTS**

**safeagent's** engagement around the country, with various local authorities, suggests that lettings and management agents have a key role to play in making licensing, accreditation and other, voluntary regulatory schemes work effectively. Agents tend to handle relatively large portfolios of properties, certainly when compared to small landlords. They tend, therefore, to be in a position to gain an understanding of licensing based on wider experience. They become expert in trouble shooting and ensuring that the balance of responsibilities between the agent and the landlord is clearly understood. This, amongst other things, can help to prevent non-compliance due to misunderstandings about local licensing arrangements.

Since October 2014, it has been a requirement for all letting agents and property managers to belong to a government-approved redress scheme. In May 2015, new legislation required agents to display all relevant fees, the redress scheme they belong to and whether they belong to a client money protection scheme. On 1 April 2019, new legislation required letting agents and property managers that hold client money to be members of a government approved client money protection scheme.

At **safeagent** we operate one of the six government approved Client Money Protection Schemes. **safeagent** ensures its members maintain defined service standards, have Client Money Protection arrangements in place, keep separate client accounts and comply with their legal obligation to be a member of a redress scheme. We also have an extensive online training offering to support their professional development. All this can be of assistance to councils who are trying to drive up standards in the PRS.

To assist councils in regulating the private rented sector and effectively utilising these enforcement powers, we developed an Effective Enforcement Toolkit. Originally published in June 2016, the second edition was published in 2018. The third and most recent edition of the **safeagent** Effective Enforcement Toolkit, developed in conjunction with London Trading Standards, was published in 2021. It can be downloaded free of charge from our website: <https://safeagents.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/safeagent-Effective-EnforcementToolkit-2021.pdf>

## **STOCKTON ON TEES COUNCIL'S PROPOSALS - SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **Partnership Working with Lettings and Management Agents**

We would urge Stockton on Tees Council to work closely with accredited lettings & management agents to ensure that the regulatory effort associated with the licensing schemes is focussed on the greatest risks. The highest priority should be tackling rogue landlords and agents, not policing the compliant.

Many rogue landlords and unaccredited agents operate “under the radar”. Resources should, therefore, be directed towards these serious cases. There is danger that too much time will be spent on those properties and landlords where an existing, reputable agent is best placed to ensure compliance with license conditions.

We would urge the council to fully recognise the compliance work reputable agents carry out as part of their day to day work. We would also suggest that the Council work closely with accredited agents to proactively seek out and identify unlicensed properties.

### **Proposed Licensing Area**

We welcome the targeted nature of the selective licensing proposals.

### **Selective Licensing Fee**

The proposed five year fee of £653, paid on application and then in annual instalments, seems reasonable. However, we would suggest a higher discounts for accredited landlords and agents – say £100 rather than £50.

The discount should be made available to landlords who engage agents who are members of national schemes such as **safeagent**. We would suggest that this is justified because **safeagent** members and the landlords who engage them are less likely to be non-compliant and that, as a result, there could be reduced costs to the council. We would also suggest that **safeagent** membership mitigates the need for full compliance visits to be carried out by the council. For example, the timing and content of visits could be risk based, recognising that the risk of non-compliance is much lower in the case of properties managed by **safeagent** agents.

In our detailed comments below, we point out some of the areas where compliance with key standards is an inherent part of the **safeagent** scheme.

### **Fee Waiver – Tackling Homelessness**

We note that the council’s proposal documents says that *“the introduction of Selective Licensing will help to ensure that private rented homes used to accommodate homeless households, and/or prevent homelessness are of a satisfactory standard and are well managed”*

In this context, we would suggest that, in cases where a private landlord is assisting the Council by offering permanent accommodation to meet homelessness duties, license applications should be accepted without any fee being payable.

Furthermore, this approach could become more structured if the council were to enter into partnership arrangements whereby lettings agents source properties for council referrals of homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. **safeagent** is currently working on a model whereby a “Social Lettings Agency” is created through links to one or more established local agents. This is an alternative to the traditional approach whereby entirely new voluntary sector entities need to be set up. We would be happy to discuss this model with the council at any time.

## LICENCE CONDITIONS

### Tenant Referencing

We are supportive of any requirement to obtain references for prospective tenants. **safeagent** is actively involved in promoting good practice in tenant referencing. We would be happy to discuss our work in this area with the Council.

### Tenancy Management

**safeagent** agents are expected provide and fill in a tenancy agreement on behalf of the landlord. they will always make sure the terms of the tenancy are fair and help the tenant to understand the agreement.

They will always provide clear information to the tenant about any pre-tenancy payments and what these cover. They will explain any requirement for a guarantor and what the guarantor role entails.

At the end of a tenancy, they will always serve the tenant with the correct period of notice as set out in the tenancy agreement.

Under **safeagent's** service standards, agents are required to take a deposit to protect against possible damage. They are required to explain the basis on which the deposit is being held and the purpose for which it is required, as well as to confirm the deposit protection arrangements. When joining **safeagent**, agents are asked to provide details of the number and value of the deposits they have registered with the scheme.

Agents are asked to authorise **safeagent** to contact the scheme to verify this information.

During the course of a tenancy, **safeagent** agents will check the condition of the property and draw up a schedule to outline any deductions to be made from the tenant's deposit. They will return the deposit in line with timescales and processes required by the statutory tenancy deposit schemes. **safeagent** agents are also required to:

- Have a designated client account with the bank
- Operate to strictly defined Accounting Standards
- Be part of a mandatory Client Money Protection Scheme.

These requirements provide additional security for client monies held, over and above the requirements of the Stockton on Tees council licensing scheme. Again, this is an area where increased **safeagent** membership would be of benefit to the Council and local tenants.

### Licence Conditions Relating to the Property

We welcome Stockton on Tees Council's drive to improve property standards. We believe that **safeagent's** standards go a long way to ensuring compliance with license conditions.



Under **safeagent's** service standards, **safeagent** agents are expected to visit any property to be let with the landlord and advise on any action needed before letting the property. This includes any repairs and refurbishments needed to put it into a fit state for letting. They will also go with possible new tenants to view unoccupied property. Tenants can, therefore, be confident that **safeagent** agents have provided advice to the landlord concerning any repairs or refurbishments which are necessary.

**safeagent** agents are expected to explain both the landlord's and the tenant's the rights and responsibilities. To guard against misunderstandings, they will arrange for the preparation of a schedule of the condition of the property.

**safeagent** agents are required to ensure that tenants are provided with copies of safety certificates on gas and electrical appliances before they commit to the tenancy. They will provide details of the condition of the property, plus a list of its contents. The property will have undergone all required safety checks on furnishings, and gas and electrical services.

Thereafter, **safeagent's** standards require agents to carry out property inspections periodically, as agreed with the landlord, in line with normal good practice. **safeagent** and our firms would anticipate inspections to be carried out every 6 months as a minimum, to identify any problems relating to the condition and management of the property. In line with common practice, records of such inspections would contain a log of who carried out the inspection, the date and time of inspection and issues found and action(s) taken. Under a licensing scheme, this information could be shared with the council in an appropriate format.

This requirement exceeds the licence conditions which require "*annual inspections*" only.

Tenants will be fully aware of access arrangements. **safeagent** agents are expected to arrange in advance a time for access, in order to inspect the condition of the property in accordance with the tenancy agreement. **safeagent** agents will arrange to have routine maintenance work carried out, up to a limit agreed with the landlord. The agent will refer expenditure above that limit to the landlord.

## Training

We would welcome any proposal that agents who are license holders should undergo training.

Membership of **safeagent** means that agents already have access to an extensive training package, engagement with which should reduce the need for the local authority to intervene. Although not a *condition* of **safeagent** membership, **safeagent** offers short courses and qualifications in Lettings & Management at Levels 2 and 3, which are Ofqual recognised.

**safeagent** offers training to those who have been involved in lettings and management for some time as well as those who are just starting out. Training is available for principals of firms as well as employees. Thus, **safeagent's** Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is designed to cater for a wide range of professional development needs. Training is easily accessible and can be undertaken when it suits the trainee. Any candidate completing the **safeagent** Foundation Lettings Course successfully also has the opportunity to use the

designation '**safeagent qualified**'. **safeagent** Foundation Lettings Course (Wales) is also approved training recognised by Rent Smart Wales, the Welsh Government's regulatory body as meeting the requirements for agents to have complying with their licensing requirement.

One advantage of this approach is that it makes it easy to ascertain (through on-line monitoring) that participants have in fact undertaken the required training, prior to or immediately after accreditation. Modules available cover:

- Pre-tenancy issues
- Responsibilities and liabilities
- Setting up a tenancy
- During a tenancy
- Ending a tenancy
- General law concepts, statute vs contract
- Relationships
- Obligations
- Process
- Considerations for corporate tenants
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

In addition, **safeagent** provides mini online courses designed to cover a number of elements in more detail, as appropriate to the learner's role, include topics such as:

Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs)
Client Money
Consumer Protection Regulations (CPRs)
Deposits
Disrepair
Electrical Appliances & Safety
Gas Appliances & Safety
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
Housing, Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
Inventories and schedules of condition
Joint Tenancies
Notice Requiring Possession

We would further suggest that discounted fees for **safeagent** agents would provide an incentive to positive engagement with training that is fully compatible with the requirements of the licensing scheme.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

For our members, dealing with actual and perceived anti-social behaviour in the PRS is a day to day activity. However, in general, we have concerns about the assumed link between the amount of PRS accommodation in the neighbourhood and the incidence of ASB.

There may be some *correlation* between incidences of ASB and the prevalence of PRS accommodation on the area. However, correlation does not imply *causation*. The *causes* of ASB are many and varied. It is not, in our view, reasonable to expect agents and landlords to play a disproportionately large part in tackling them.

Furthermore, we would strongly advise against any proposals which imply a parity of approach between the PRS and the social rented sector. Social landlords are publicly funded (and regulated) to develop and manage housing on a large scale. Their social purpose brings with it wider responsibilities for the communities in which they work. As private businesses, PRS landlords and their agents, whilst having clear responsibilities to manage their properties professionally cannot reasonably be expected to tackle wider social problems.

## Suitability of Licence Holder

We support any requirement that the proposed licence holder should be a 'fit and proper' person and that there are suitable management arrangements in place. We believe that this requirement highlights the importance of lettings and management agents belonging to recognised accrediting bodies like **safeagent**, who themselves apply a fit and proper person test.

All principals, partners and directors of a **safeagent** firm are asked to make the following declaration on application:

*– “I confirm that: for a period of 10 years prior to this application I have had no conviction for any criminal offence (excluding any motor offence not resulting in a custodial sentence) nor have I been guilty of conduct which would bring the Scheme or myself into disrepute; I am not an undischarged bankrupt nor is there any current arrangement or composition with my creditors; I am not nor have I been a director of a company which has within the period of 10 years prior to this application entered into liquidation whether compulsory or voluntary (save for the purpose of amalgamation or reconstruction of a solvent company) nor had a receiver appointed of its undertaking nor had an administration order made against it nor entered into an arrangement or composition with its creditors; nor have I at any time been disqualified from acting as a Director of a company nor subject to a warning or banning order from the Consumer Markets Authority or the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.*

*If I am subject to any current claim or am aware of any impending claim for professional negligence or loss of money or if I have been the subject of any investigation by the Consumer Markets Authority and/or local Trading Standards Office, full details of the circumstances are set out in a report enclosed with the application; all information provided by me in connection with this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct”*

We believe this certification is broadly in line with Stockton on Tees council's licensing conditions and is another example of where promotion of **safeagent** membership through discounts could help to ensure compliance.

## Complaints

All **safeagent** firms are required to have a written customer complaints procedure, available on request. Our guidance sets out how the first step for complainants is to ask the firm they are dealing with for a copy, which will outline the method by which they can seek to resolve any issues.

In line with statutory requirements, all **safeagent** members must also be members of a recognised redress scheme. Firms are required, at the request of the complainant, to refer the complaint to a redress scheme once their in-house procedure has been exhausted. They are also required to comply with any award determined by the redress scheme, within the timescale prescribed.

Under co-regulation schemes elsewhere in the UK, **safeagent** has undertaken to review any complaints that have been adjudicated upon by any of the redress schemes. Under such an arrangement, **safeagent** can report to the Council on the number of complaints reaching this stage and on the adjudications made. Non-compliance with a redress scheme's adjudication would eventually lead to disqualification of the agent from **safeagent**. We would be happy to come to a similar arrangement with Stockton on Tees council.

## MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHEME

We believe that regular information on implementation of the scheme should be made available in a clear and consistent format. Reports to local landlord and agent forums, representative bodies and other stakeholders should include at minimum:

- The estimated number of private rented properties that require licensing under the Selective licensing scheme
- The number of applications received in respect of these properties
- Progress in processing (granting, querying or refusing) the licence applications received
- Analysis of the reasons for any queries or refusals and the extent to which remedial action is identified and taken as a result
- Analysis of the outcomes of ongoing inspections and the extent to which remedial action is identified and taken as a result
- Progress reports across the whole 5 year period covered by the scheme.

This should help to enable the Council to work in partnership with landlords, agents, representative bodies and other stakeholders to ensure the success of the scheme.

## CONCLUSION

It seems to us that many of the licencing requirements in the Stockton on Tees council scheme highlight how important it is for landlords to work with reputable agents such as **safeagent** members. Offering a discount to licence holders who work with a **safeagent** accredited agent would help to promote this.

**safeagent** would welcome a collaborative approach with Stockton on Tees Council, based on shared objectives. We believe that agents who are members of a recognised body are more likely to embrace Selective Licensing and less likely to generate complaints or breaches of their licence. Discounted fees for **safeagent** members would be a significant incentive to positive engagement by agents. In return, the Council would experience reduced administration and compliance costs.

## CONTACT DETAILS

### **safeagent**

Cheltenham Office Park

Hatherley Lane

Cheltenham

GL51 6SH

Tel: 01242 581712 Email: [info@safeagentcheme.co.uk](mailto:info@safeagentcheme.co.uk)

**APPENDIX 1 – COMPATIBILITY OF SAFEAGENT SERVICE STANDARDS WITH TYPICAL SCHEME CONDITIONS**

<b>Example Scheme Conditions</b>	<b>SAFEAGENT Service Standard Requirements</b>
Fees	SAFEAGENT promotes complete transparency in agency fees. Members provide landlords with a statement of account as often as agreed.
Rent Liabilities and Payments	SAFEAGENT agents collect the rent and pass it on every month or as otherwise agreed. The agent will keep a separate clients' account to hold all monies.
Contact Details	SAFEAGENT agents are expected to respond to tenant and other legitimate enquiries in a timely manner. Up to date contact details will enable them to respond to tenants' requests for maintenance or repairs which might in some cases have to be referred to the landlord for approval.
State of Repair	SAFEAGENT agents visit the property with landlords and advise on any action needed before letting the property. This includes any repairs and refurbishments needed to put it into a fit state for letting. They will also go with possible new tenants to view unoccupied property. Tenants can be confident that SAFEAGENT agents have provided advice to the landlord concerning any repairs or refurbishments which are necessary.

<p>Access and Possession arrangements</p>	<p>SAFEAGENT agents will visit the property periodically during the course of the tenancy as often as agreed with the landlord. Tenants will be fully aware of access arrangements. At the end of a tenancy, they will always serve the tenant with the correct period of notice as set out in the tenancy agreement.</p>
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<p><b>Example Scheme Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>SAFEAGENT Service Standard Requirements</b></p>
<p>Repairs and Maintenance</p>	<p>SAFEAGENT agents will arrange to have routine maintenance work carried out, up to a limit agreed with the landlord. The agent will refer expenditure above that limit to the landlord.</p>
<p>Access, Cleaning and Maintenance of Common Parts</p>	<p>SAFEAGENT agents will arrange in advance a time for access to the property in order to inspect the condition of the property in accordance with the tenancy agreement.</p>
<p>Level of Facilities</p>	<p>SAFEAGENT agents ensure that tenants are provided with copies of safety certificates on gas and electrical appliances before you commit to the tenancy. They provide details of the condition of the property, plus a list of its contents. The property will have undergone all required safety checks on furnishings, and gas and electrical services.</p>

Deposits	SAFEAGENT agents provide and fill in a tenancy agreement and take a deposit to protect against possible damage. They will explain the basis on which it is being held and the purpose for which it is required.
References	SAFEAGENT agents choose a tenant in a way agreed with the landlord, taking up references or checking the tenant's rent payment record.
<b>Example Scheme Conditions</b>	<b>SAFEAGENT Service Standard Requirements</b>
Complaints & Dispute Handling	<p>SAFEAGENT agents explain both the landlord's and the tenant's the rights and responsibilities. To guard against misunderstandings, they will arrange for the preparation of a schedule of the condition of the property.</p> <p>During the tenancy, they will arrange to check the condition of the property and draw up a schedule to outline any deductions to be made from the tenant's initial deposit. They will return the deposit as soon as possible, less any appropriate deductions.</p>



# **APPENDIX 4 (2)**

## **12 E-mail Responses**

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Opposition to the selective licensing proposal

**Categories:** Completed

Hi,

I am writing as a landlord to register my opposition to this licensing proposal.

My points are made in brief below and I am sure they resonate with many private landlords.

- I am a landlord who operates around the areas outlined in this proposal, so I am very disappointed to have not been contacted directly. I have only found out about this consultation via the Stockton on Tees News publication which came through my door.
- This has all the hallmarks of a stealth operation as, given my above point, the article itself is at the very bottom of page 23 - basically hidden away as far as you could push it.
- You have all the names and addresses of all registered landlords so why not use that? I suspect you didn't because you know the vast majority of landlords will not agree with this consultation.
- In what way does the Council believe this will deter poor quality landlords? The Council has known for many, many years who these landlords are, where the properties are and where the complaints come from and so what has actually happened is the Council has failed to actively support its community. This proposed action is a tax on all landlords, whilst you already know which landlords cause the most issues and/or offer poor services and so do not need to introduce this additional cost to all.
- The Council should be using the information it already has, the complaints it receives and comments from its community and take ownership of the resolution of the problem, not seek additional monies. If these landlords are so bad, they are the least likely to pay anyway. So rather than create more problems for the Council to deal with, deal with the issues you already know.
- As a private landlord I am tired of hearing about poor landlords or slum landlords. The reason they exist is not that landlords do not pay an annual licence, it is because you have failed to act for many years in addressing the problem.
- Most, many if not all landlords will have no choice but to pass any additional cost on to the tenants. As a landlord, I seek fair rents and in fact mine are around 10% to 15% below average as I value my tenants. This creates further issues in retaining good tenants and offering good rates in the market.
- If they cannot or are reticent to pass on the costs, landlords will not have funds to maintain properties, the infrastructure will suffer and blight will increase, not decrease.
- The way this additional burden is planned does not make sense. Where you have failing schools, low quality hospitals, poor performing Councils - do you charge them more for this underperformance? Of course not, it doesn't make sense. You deal with the issues and not make matters worse in already difficult circumstances.

I want to see good quality provision, but this is not the way to do it. The Council, regrettably, has avoided its responsibilities to its community and is now seeing an opportunity to resolve this by a stealth tax. My position is the Council should already be delivering on improving services, it is paid to do this by Council Tax, business rates and HM Government funding. The Council has already had enough funding and enough time. The Council just needs to start to deliver.

- I note that the documentation states that an outcome will be a better reputation for Private Landlords. The simple truth is the Council already has the means to deal with these very well known individuals and their businesses, but chooses to spend its time and resources elsewhere. In ignoring the problem this Council, like others, has quietly passed the adverse reputation onto landlords, whilst it is the Council's lack of ownership on behalf of its community that is at fault here
- All the other benefits listed would improve if the Council deals with the issues it already knows about regarding private landlords and already has the means to deal with
- I fail to see how the additional cash you seek from largely good providers will generate the benefits you are proposing. Quite frankly, that is a leaflet to homeowners and more effectively, a page on your website. Again, this is something you should already be offering effectively if this is such a problem.

I completely reject this idea as nothing more than a stealth tax, wrapped up in soundbites.

As I have outlined above, the process the Council has followed is questionable to ensure a low turnout. The suggestions are old and tired and are exactly the areas the Council already has funding to deliver on. It simply has chosen not to. The additional costs will be passed on to tenants & no doubt largely ignored by the problem landlords - again, you already know who they are and so will not address any of the areas you are suggesting.

Time for a rethink please.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Fw: Undeliverable: My Views

**Categories:** Completed

**Delivery has failed to these recipients or groups:**

[selectivelicensingconsultations@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:selectivelicensingconsultations@stockton.gov.uk) ([selectivelicensingconsultations@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:selectivelicensingconsultations@stockton.gov.uk))

The email address you entered couldn't be found. Please check the recipient's email address and try to resend the message. If the problem continues, please contact your email admin.

Any opinions or statements expressed in this email are those of the individual and not necessarily those of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and solely for the use of the intended recipient. If you receive this in error, please do not disclose any information to anyone and notify the sender at the above address.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's computer systems and communications may be monitored to ensure effective operation of the system and for other lawful purposes.

Although we have endeavoured to ensure that this email and any attachments are free from any virus we would advise you to take any necessary steps to ensure that they are actually virus free.

I have experience of having had 'Selective Licensing' forced upon me in two other towns.

It serves only as an added expense and for me as a responsible landlord its an extra stress factor among many others negative financial factors effected over the past 5 years.

Tenants can make complaints to you as normal when repairs are needed and not carried out, **and you have the mechanism to deal with the Landlords under the defects protocol and there is no need for change other than create 'jobs for the boys!'**

**TO PUT IT BLUNTLY ..YOU AND THE GOVERNMENT ARE FOOLS!!**

**YOU HAVE NO PROPERTIES TO OFFER TENANTS AND RELY ON US PRIVATE LANDLORDS TO USE OUR FINANCES TO SUPPLEMENT THE TOWNS RENTAL PROPERTIES!**

**PLEASE GO AHEAD WITH YOUR STUPID PLAN!! I'LL JUST SELL MY PROPERTIES AND LEAVE IT TO YOU TO FIND MY TENANTS ACCOMMODATION!!**

**I trust I have given you my views unambiguously!**

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Selective licensing

**Categories:** Completed

Dear Sir/madam

Thank you for your undated letter received Monday 4th December 2023. I write with regard to the property of 25 Manor Street, Stockton-on-Tees. I have read through the leaflet and have the following comments.

I do understand the reasoning behind this selective licensing initiative if it is aimed at rogue landlords. However, I do feel it is targeting and discriminating against the landlords who go to out of their way to ensure that the properties are well managed (through a recognised estate/letting agents) and that tenants are happy with the property.

I have let my property through Reeds rains for the past six years and have complied with all the legislation and safety issues appropriate to the property. I have kept the rental of the property down as much as I can to enable tenant affordability ( £300 per calendar month). There have been no increases over the period of the six years.

A blanket approach to these areas will make it very difficult for those of us landlords who are trying to provide a safe house and environment for families to live in.

Speaking personally, I feel I am being targeted unfairly with the selective licensing fee, when the real problem of rogue landlords is not being tackled.

If this goes ahead, then I will be seriously considering selling the property thus creating a shortage of rental property in the Stockton area. This would be done with a heavy heart.

It says in your letter that my opinion counts, so I do hope that you take the time to read this message and make an overall informed opinion on the way forward.

Stockton, I believe is a wonderful area and has so much going for it. It seems such a shame to Target localised areas instead of looking at the wider overarching picture fair to everyone.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:**  
**CC:**  
**Subject:**

**Follow up:** Follow up  
**Follow up status:** Completed  
**Completed on:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 4:39:00 PM  
**Categories:** Completed

To Whom It May Concern,

I have recently received the consultation material regarding Selective Licencing in Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown.

I represent a large property management business which manages approximately 50 properties in and around these areas. We let our properties in a safe, legal and compliant fashion and our landlords are aware of both their legal and moral obligations. I believe our private landlords contribute enormously to the community in these areas.

I have significant objections as to the viability of the scheme and whether it will in any way contribute to an increase in housing standards across the applicable areas as suggested.

We are already in a significant housing crisis. Landlords are already under assault from a number of tax grabs, high interest rates and higher costs. Many are leaving the sector daily. Selective Licensing represents a further cost that will inevitably either be passed on to tenants or contribute to more landlords leaving the sector leading to higher relative demand, higher costs for tenants and more empty houses. This will all leading to further anti-social behaviour. Ironic!

More importantly, I see no evidence whatsoever further taxes, apologies "Licences" will provide any significant improvement to housing standards. I would suggest years of cutbacks from central government is the biggest contribution to the depravity, not private landlords. Stockton Borough Council is already asleep at the wheel. If I were, for example, to call the 01642 528010 number quoted on the literature provided to discuss these proposals, nobody ever answers- it always goes to voicemail. Where would this money even go? How exactly would it make things better? And even if it was spent on improvements, why is the onus on private landlords to foot the bill? The vast majority of which are honest and hard-working and already doing their fair share of the heavy lifting. Objectively, landlords are already on a level playing field legally; how will this change things other than requiring more administration and cost?

As it stands there is zero evidence of any tangible improvements Selective Licencing would make and as such time as that changes I consider any such proposal an offensively blatant tax grab.

I am more than happy to discuss this over the phone and if you do call me on 07403 597113 there's a decent chance I'll actually answer it- unlike Stockton Borough Council.

I stand vehemently against it.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Consultation Response

**Categories:** Completed

Dear Sirs,

You have sent me a brochure regarding the proposed introduction of licensing for 3 areas of the borough. I have two properties which will be affected. I am writing to suggest that the proposal is flawed and should not be adopted. The reasons are as follows:

1. Additional costs associated with letting property in your area will almost certainly result in rents being increased across the board to the detriment of all tenants.
2. Rogue landlords who deliberately flout acceptable standards will work outside your scheme anyway.
3. If the aim is to increase standards of housing, penalties could be imposed on those landlords whose property is not maintained acceptably rather than all landlords including those who behave responsibly. The principal of 'the polluter pays' is fairer. The council already has ample powers to crack down on offending landlords and to make them pay the costs of enforcement.

Tenants already get full information regarding standards for rented property and their rights via the 'How to Rent' Leaflet.

Anti-social behaviour will not be affected. Problem tenants who behave badly will doubtless damage even the best accommodation.

Toughening up referencing for privately rented properties will simply make it more difficult for the poor to find a home. Both my current tenants failed the referencing process, but I housed them anyway.

It is not clear what assistance the council are suggesting they will provide landlords with. Will they speed up the eviction process for anti-social behaviour issues? Re-house the offenders? I do not believe that any meaningful assistance will be forthcoming.

It has always been the case that a few rogue landlords have besmirched the reputation of everyone. The licensing system will not change this.

Finally, if standards of accommodation are to be increased across the board, an independent inspectorate for council housing (with appropriate sanctions) must be set up too. Some social housing is in a very poor state.

The bottom line is that this is all about raising money for the council. The people who will pay for it are the tenants.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** STOCKTON ON TEES COUNCIL'S SELECTIVE LICENSING PROPOSALS  
**Attachments:** SAstockton.docx (51.7 KB)

**Categories:** Completed

Please find attached a response to the above consultation from **SafeAgent**.  
We would be grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this response.

SafeAgent Associate



[Safeagent - The Sure Sign of professionalism \(safeagents.co.uk\)](http://safeagents.co.uk)

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Urgent: Selective Licensing Consultation  
**Urgent:** High

**Attachments:** SBC Selective Licensing Consultation 1st Jan 2024.pdf (182.48 KB)

**Categories:** Completed

Dear Sirs,

I am in receipt of your recently received second class posted letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 in regard to the above, copy attached.

Noting from the enclosed leaflet that the consultation is stated to have commenced 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and to be closing Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January, the importance of the issues at stake, their impact on individual stakeholders and the need to properly consider and respond to the implications, together with the lateness of it being notified to me, can you please confirm that the consultation deadline will be extended in order to ensure fairness and due process?

This is all the more important given that SBC is in apparent breach of its own published Consultation Plan (Appx 3 on it's website) in so far as the relevant consultation materials should have been issued to me '(via maildrop/letter and/or email' by 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2023 to enable the statutorily required 10 consultation period; and according to my own Managing Agents (Manners & Harrison, High St, Stockton) at least, the indicated contact with 'Known' or 'Local letting/managing agents' has not occurred. I note that SBC knows my identity and address as a landlord for property within the areas proposed to be affected by the scheme, as if evidenced by its ability to rapidly raise and issue to me Council Tax bills for periods of voids.

I look forward to your urgent response please.



**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Landlord licensing Scheme

**Follow up:**

Good Morning

I just wanted to contact you in relation to the potential landlord licensing scheme that may be brought into force in the Newtown and other areas of Stockton.

I have already filled out the online form regarding my views on this, however I feel I also need to contact yourselves regarding my views on the scheme.

I am a current landlord of a property in the Newton area, and have been for many years now. I take great pride in been a landlord and abide by all the regulations required. All my safety checks are done yearly, any repairs required are done promptly and my tenants are all vetted and credit checked and referenced by previous landlords.

I understand your frustrations with private properties in that area that are not maintained, and the tennants are not dealt with when in breach of their tenancy, but this is down to a handful of slum landlords who are responsible for this. I feel that if the scheme was to go ahead it should only be targeted at the slum landlords, and not at the decent hard working landlords like myself. Slum landlords should be dealt with on an individual basis as I feel it's unfair to tarnish every landlord with the same brush.

I also think it's disproportionate to target landlords directly for the behaviour of their tennants. I resided in the Newton area for many years and witnessed a lot of the people who were committing the ongoing antisocial behaviour and criminality, and they were regularly under the influence of drink or drugs, and clearly had underlying additicion issues of their own. These issues and addictions are not down to a landlord to deal with. I agree that landlords should work along side the council and police if their tennants are causing issues within the community, and I as a landlord I would always co-operative and support any action that needed to be taken. Also a lot of these tennants that are causing the ongoing issues in the area are also in social housing, however they never get dealt with regarding their behaviour when they breach their tenancies, but it is expected of private landlords to deal with theses issues immediatly, and also have the privilege of paying to have to do so, whilst all social housing is exempt from this scheme !

This scheme has also been proven not work, as this scheme has already been put in place in various different areas in Middlesbrough, and the crime and antisocial behaviour in those areas has not reduced at all. All this scheme has achieved in those areas is that it has pushed the decent landlords out, as they have not been able to meet the costs for the scheme and they have been forced to sell their houses to the slum landlords, thus resulting in increased crime and antisocial behaviour, and more run down properties. If anything this scheme makes the problem worse as it does not work.

Given the current economic climate, and the cost of living crisis and the massive Morgage increases, do you really think it's fair and justified to target honest landlords with well maintained properties when it's only a handful of slum landlords that are causing the ongoing issues ?

I will look forward to your response, and I hope you take on board all my points when making the decision to either go ahead with the scheme or not.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Stockton Selective Licensing

**Follow up:**

Dear Sirs

I am a Teesside Landlord.

I am aware of your proposals for 3 designations.

**I object to the Stockton Designation.**

The starting point is to say that I have no confidence, at all, in the Authority taking any notice of objections to the proposal.

Whilst I object to the proposed Stockton designation I accept, in reality, that you have already decided it will be going ahead, and this 10 week consultation is nothing more than a disingenuous PR exercise required in order to "tick the necessary boxes" in an attempt to seek to avoid legal challenge (in respect of this designation, at least) and avoid requiring the approval of the Secretary of State for your revenue generating plans.

I consider the Authority to be rapacious and opportunist.

I do not consider there is sufficient evidence to justify the designation for Stockton on the grounds stated (low housing demand/deprivation). The legal basis for designation is not met on the information provided and I consider the basis of the proposal for the Stockton designation to be egregiously flawed.

I expect this to be subject to challenge by judicial review proceedings.

There is little point setting out the detailed reasons for your errors as these will be stated in a formal Part 54, CPR Letter Before Claim, following your inevitable decision to designate.

In that regard, where (as we intend) an application for judicial review is made of the scheme, and where permission to seek judicial review is granted by the Administrative Court (the first stage of a challenge under CPR Part 54), please would you confirm that you will delay commencement of the scheme until the legal challenge (and any rights of appeal by any parties or interveners) have been exhausted.

I would remind you that, where a designation does not require confirmation, it cannot come into force until 3 months after it is made, but can be delayed by the Authority (Section 82 (3) and (7) of the Housing Act 2004). If you decline to provide this confirmation, then in the event that permission is granted and you intend to press ahead with the Stockton scheme before the outcome of the proceedings, it would be necessary for injunctive relief to be sought against the Authority.

I would invite you to withdraw your proposed designation for the Stockton area to avoid the otherwise inevitable legal challenge.

I consider the conduct of the Authority in relation to the intended Stockton designation to be disgraceful. I have seldom encountered such a disingenuous proposal, manifest in error and obfuscation. The Authority must be held to account for its unlawful behaviour.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:** Selective Licensing Consultation <SelectiveLicensingConsultation@stockton.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Selective licensing

Dear Selective Licensing,

I am a Teesside Landlord and own/ Manage multiple properties around the area.

I am aware of your proposals for 3 designations.

**I object to the Stockton Designation and I think it's disgusting to bring selective licensing to Stockton Centre**

The starting point is to say that I have no confidence, at all, in the Authority taking any notice of objections to the proposal and I determine this will already be going ahead!

Whilst I object to the proposed Stockton designation I accept, in reality, that you have already decided it will be going ahead, and this 10 week consultation is nothing more than a disingenuous PR exercise required in order to "tick the necessary boxes" in an attempt to seek to avoid legal challenge (in respect of this designation, at least) and avoid requiring the approval of the Secretary of State for your revenue generating plans.

I consider the Authority to be rapacious and opportunist.

I do not consider there is sufficient evidence to justify the designation for Stockton on the grounds stated (low housing demand/deprivation). The legal basis for designation is not met on the information provided and I consider the basis of the proposal for the Stockton designation to be egregiously flawed.

There is little point setting out the detailed reasons for your errors as these will be stated in a formal Part 54, CPR Letter Before Claim, following your inevitable decision to designate. I expect this to be subject to challenge by judicial review proceedings.

In that regard, where (as we intend) an application for judicial review is made of the scheme, and where permission to seek judicial review is granted by the Administrative Court (the first stage of a challenge under CPR Part 54), please would you confirm that you will delay commencement of the scheme until the legal challenge (and any rights of appeal by any parties or interveners) have been exhausted.

I would remind you that, where a designation does not require confirmation, it cannot come into force until 3 months after it is made, but can be delayed by the Authority (Section 82 (3) and (7) of the Housing Act 2004). If you decline to provide this confirmation, then in the event that permission is granted and you intend to press ahead with the Stockton scheme before the outcome of the proceedings, it would be necessary for injunctive relief to be sought against the Authority.

I would invite you to withdraw your proposed designation for the Stockton area to avoid the otherwise inevitable legal challenge.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:**  
**Subject:** P LuSS Response to Selective Licensing Consultation  
**Attachments:** P LuSS Response to Stockton Selective Licensing Consultation Jan 2024.pdf (205.78 KB)

**Follow up:**

**Categories:** Completed

I attach the formal response from P LuSS to your Selective Licensing Consultation.

**From:**  
**Sent on:**  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Selective Licensing Consultation Submission  
**Attachments:** Stockton on Tees Selective Licensing Consultation Response 19th January 2024.docx (472.95 KB)

**Follow up:**

**Categories:** Completed

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find enclosed the NRLA's submission to the council's selective licensing consultation.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

**Senior Policy Officer**  
National Residential Landlords Association



W [www.nrla.org.uk](http://www.nrla.org.uk)

National Residential Landlords Association, is a trading name of National Residential Landlords Association Ltd, Company No.12187275 . Registered office: Suite 323, Tootal Building, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU



Please be mindful that if this email has arrived outside of normal business hours, there is no expectation for you to reply until normal business hours resume.

# **APPENDIX 4 (3)**

## **Landlord/Managing Agent face to face consultation sessions x 2 (Q &A)**

**Appendix 4****SELECTIVE LICENSING CONSULTATION****QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

<b>Raised by</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Raised through</b>
Private Landlord	What will the fees be used for?	The fees will be used to implement and run the Selective Licensing scheme should it go ahead. This includes the recruitment of staff, the establishment of the licensing process; including the issuing of the licenses, inspections of properties and operation of the scheme throughout the five year period.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	What is the discretionary discount and how will this work?	The discretionary discount is £50 per property for individuals who are part of an appropriate accreditation scheme, SBC accreditation scheme, PLuSS or the national landlord association.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	Will the Council consider any other discounts, e.g. early bird discount, discounts for online applications?	The council will consider any proposals put forward.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	Query regarding the legality of charging per flat in a larger accommodation – checking legislation.	We will review the legislation in respect of this.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	What about a private company running the scheme instead of the council?	Referring back to the last time the council consulted on the proposal to introduce a Selective Licensing scheme in 2 areas of the borough, Private Landlords put forward an alternate proposal. At this point SBC's Cabinet agreed to support the proposal submitted. This scheme was called Private Landlords Supporting Stockton (PLuSS) and was introduced in 2018, however the scheme has not attracted the number of private landlords that it had expected to.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23

Private Landlord	Will there be an extension to the Selective Licensing scheme beyond 5 years?	At this point in time, we are consulting on the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing in 3 areas of the borough for a period of five years. If a Selective Licensing is approved it will be for a period of five years. If Selective Licensing is implemented, we will monitor performance against relevant indicators over the five years. If we determine that we want to extend beyond the five years, then we will need to go through the consultation process again to do so. At present we cannot say if we will want to extend beyond that point, neither are there any plans to propose introducing Selective Licensing to any other area within the Borough.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	How will the Council measure outcomes?	As mentioned previously, if Selective Licensing is implemented, we will monitor performance against relevant indicators over the five years to measure our progress towards the agreed outcomes.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	Who will be responsible for Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) enforcement?	ASB enforcement within the Selective Licensing area will be through the new team working closely alongside our existing ASB enforcement service.	Private Landlord Meeting 29.11.23
Private Landlord	Tenant referencing – how would it work?	We will be replicating the previous tenant reference scheme used by the Council. Where prospective tenants are subject to background checks, including contact with former landlords.	Private Landlord Meetings 29.11.23 & 06.12.23
Private Landlord	Are the fees a one-off payment?	No, the proposed fees are not a one-off payment, the breakdown is as follows: License cost will be an upfront fee of £178. There will then be an annual fee of £95 for each of the five years.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23



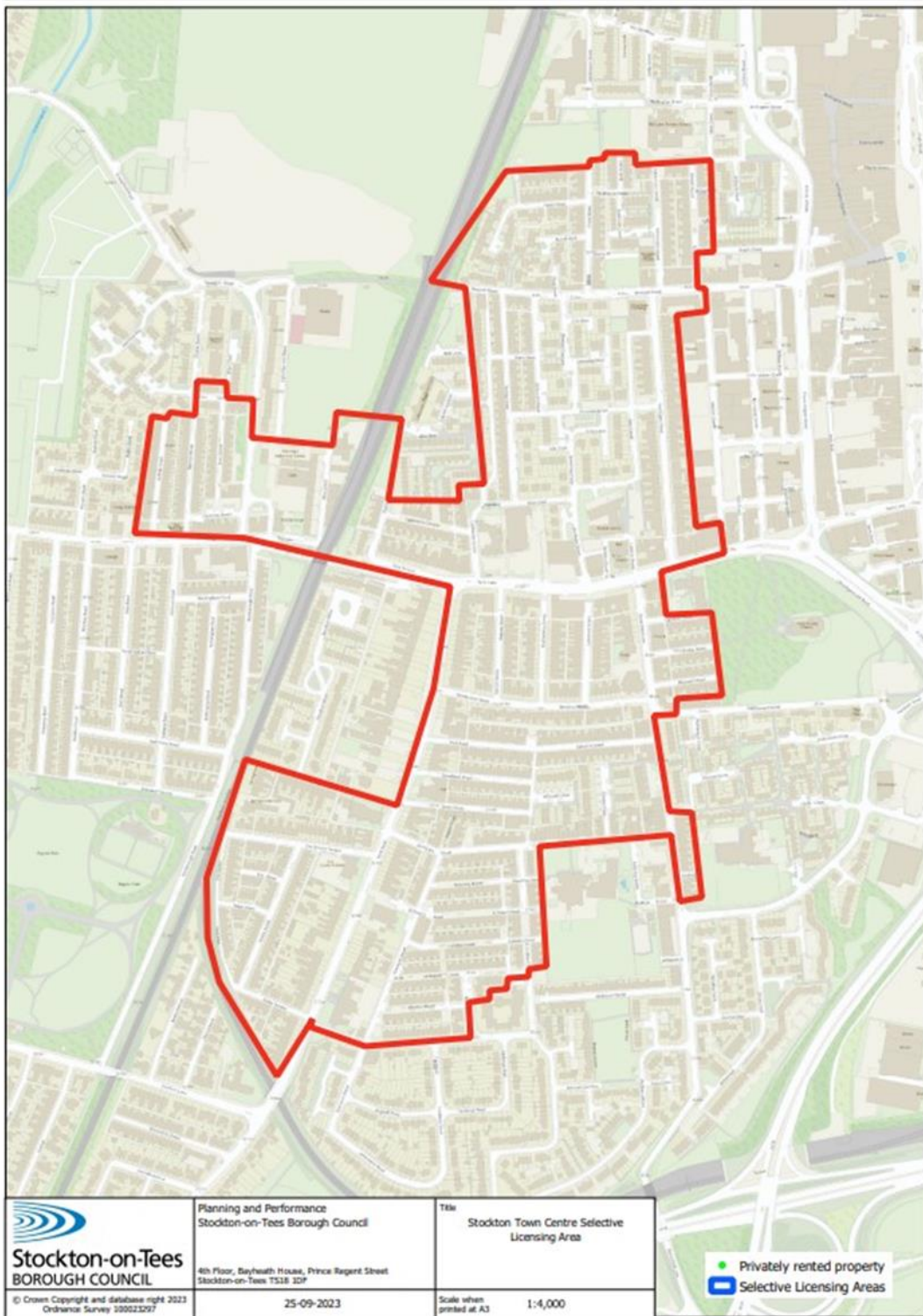
Private Landlord	Will you be employing people or will this be the responsibility of an existing team.	If the schemes are approved, we will be creating a new team to work with the existing teams (Private Sector Housing & Civic Enforcement) to support this work.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	Can the existing accreditation scheme not be extended to accommodate selective licensing?	The accreditation scheme is voluntary and there are no requirements for Private Landlords to join other than on a voluntary basis. In addition, as it is a voluntary process it comes with no statutory obligations and no legal recourse to action should we need to address any issues.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	What are the number of properties that are to be covered?	The report that was presented to Cabinet that had been published on the internet provides the following details. The percentage of properties in each area: Central Stockton – 50% North Thornaby – 41 % Newtown – 44%	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	What would be the timeline for bringing in Selective Licensing should it go ahead?	The consultation responses will be collated on a weekly basis to identify themes and at the end of the consultation process the analysed information will be reported back to Cabinet. These Cabinet report papers will be published on the internet the week before the meeting and as they are public meetings anyone is welcome to attend.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	Do Thirteen and other housing associations reference their tenants?	Yes. In order to register for housing on MyThirteen (Thirteen housing register) or Tees Valley HomeFinder (housing register for the SBC area) all new applicants will be asked about their housing history.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	What are your data sources?	The Selective Licensing proposal paper, maps and appendices that have been published on the internet provide details of the relevant data sources which included information from the 2021 Census	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23

		(which is updated regularly), Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019, Local intelligence related to Crime and Anti-social behaviour, NHS Health data.	Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	What other methods of licensing have been explored?	Following a previous consultation process on the proposal to introduce Selective Licensing in 2018, several landlords approached the council with a proposal to consider an alternative approach and the PLuSS scheme was established. However, this scheme did not reach and achieve the expected membership over the following years.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23
Private Landlord	What happens if I decide to sell my property given the reforms around Section 21?	A Temporary Exemption Notice can be issued where the Council are notified of a valid reason for issuing such a Notice. This can be extended by another 3 months beyond the original date if the Council consider that there are exceptional circumstances that justify the service of a second Temporary Exemption Notice.	Private Landlord Meeting 06.12.23

# **APPENDIX 5a**

## **Red Line Map (& street listing) : Central Stockton**

## Central Stockton



**Street list: Central Stockton**

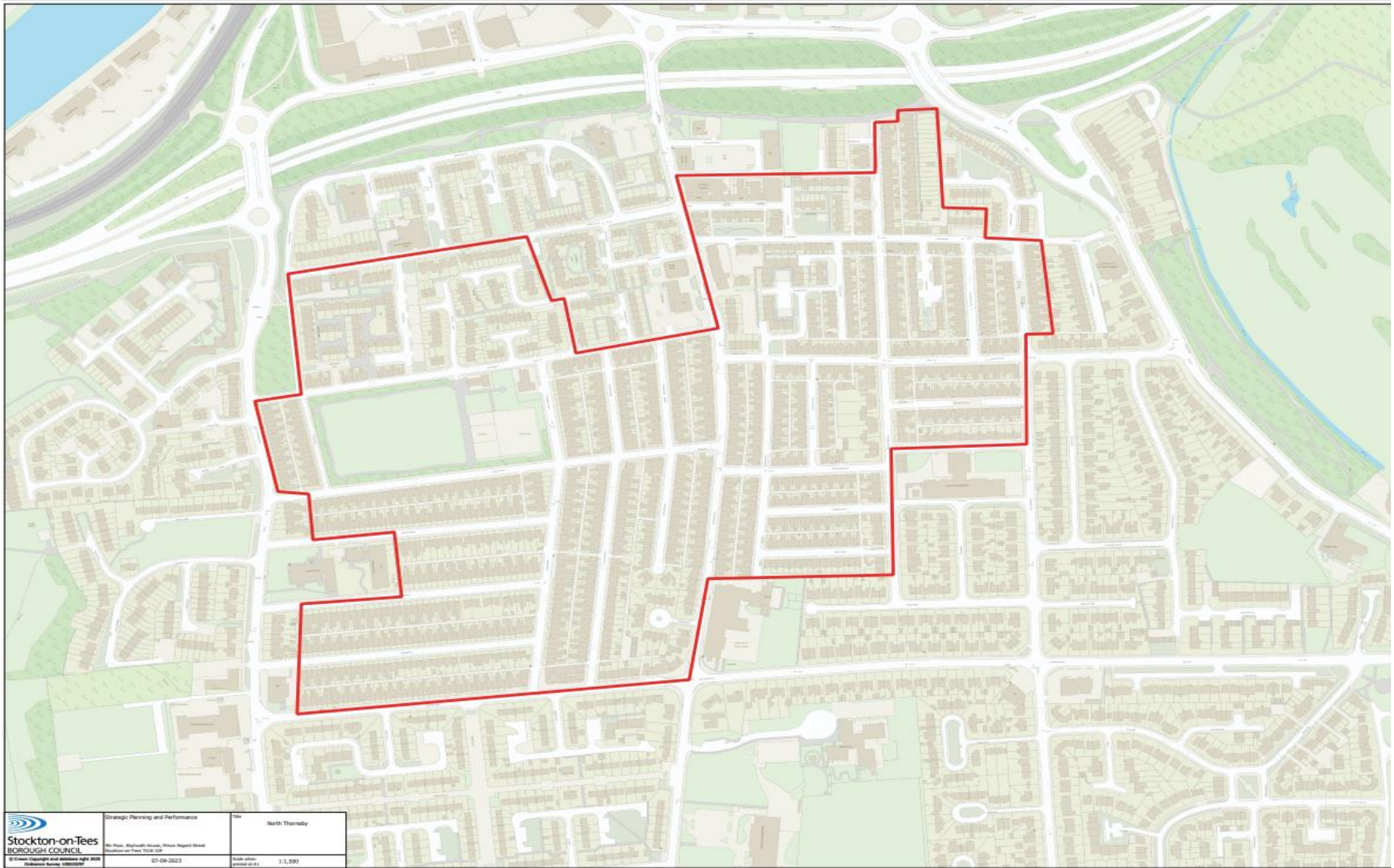
<b>Street</b>	<b>Property number if applicable</b>
Arlington Court	43 - 48
Arlington Street	81 - 127 (odds), 86 - 140 (evens)
Bakery Street	No residential accommodation
Bluebell Crescent	
Bowesfield Lane	1 - 13 (odds), 19A - 55 (odds), 2 - 40 (evens)
Bramley Parade	
Bute Street	
California Close	
Camden Street	70 - 124 (evens), 71 - 107 (odds)
Carr Street	14 - 20 (evens), 24 - 27, 29
Childeray Street	12 - 16 (evens)
Cranbourne Terrace	
Dennison Street	2 - 6 (evens), 1 - 31 (odds)
Dixon Street	
Dovecot Street	74 - 134 (evens), 87 - 119 (odds)
Edwards Street	
Eggleston Terrace	
Eleanor Place	
Ewbank Drive	9 - 43 (odds)
Fagg Street	
Grove Street	
Hartington Road	
Hope Street	
Iris Close	
Lavender Close	
Lawrence Street	
Leybourne Terrace	
Lightfoot Grove	
Manfield Street	
Mary Street	
Melbourne Street	
Middleton Walk	1 - 7 (odds), 31 - 49 (odds)
Norfolk Street	
Northcote Street	2 - 72 (evens), 53 - 87 (odds)
Outram Street	
Oxbridge Lane	19 - 81 (odds)
Palmerston Street	
Park Road	
Park View	
Parliament Street	1 - 7 (odds)
Petch Street	
Poplar Grove	
Richardson Road	Richard Hind Caretakers House, 11 - 43 (odds)
Roker Terrace	
Rokerby Street	
Rose Street	
Russell Street	
Scarth Walk	
Shaftesbury Street	
Sheraton Street	47, 87 - 89

Skinner Street	2
Snowdrop Place	
Spring Street	1 - 23 (odds)
Springholme	
St Bernard Road	
St Cuthbert's Road	
St Peters Road	
Suffolk Street	
Sydney Street	42 - 60 (evens)
Tarring Street	
The Groves	
Trinity Street	
Tulip Close	
Varo Terrace	
Villa Terrace	
Walter Street	
Waverely Street	61 - 91 (odds), 62 - 96 (evens)
Westbourne Street	
Westcott Street	
Whitwell Close	
Winston Street	
Woodland Street	
Wren Street	53 - 93 (odds), 56 - 102 (evens)
Yarm Lane	27 - 71 (odds), 64 - 116 A (evens)
Yarm Road	1 - 93 (odds), 48 - 108 (evens)

# **APPENDIX 5b**

## **Red Line Map (& street listing): North Thornaby**

## North Thornaby





**Street list: North Thornaby**

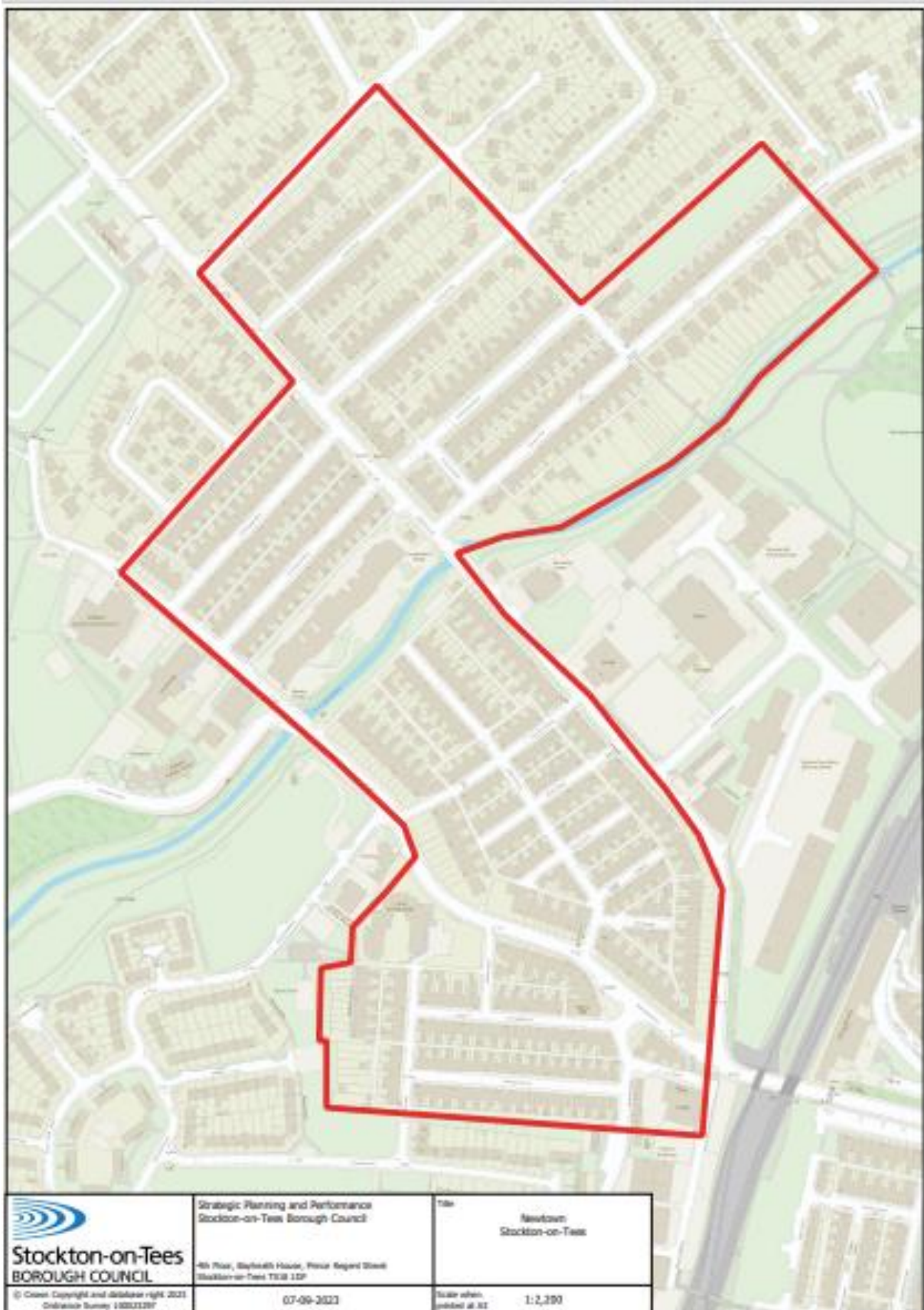
<b>Street</b>	<b>Property number if applicable</b>
Cambridge Road	
Camelon Street	
Cardwell Walk	
Cheltenham Avenue	
Cobden Street	
Cranworth Green	1 - 17 (odds)
Cranworth Street	No residential accommodation
Cromwell Terrace	
Cuthbert Close	1 - 37 (odds), 26 - 28 (evens)
Derby Close	
Derby Terrace	
Dorothy Terrace	
Easton Street	
Eldon Street	
Eldon Walk	
Elizabeth Street	
Ellerburne Street	
Eric Avenue	
Falkirk Street	
Francis Walk	
Gilmour Street	12 - 80 (evens), 100 - 116 (evens)
Grange Road	
Havelock Street	
Henley Grove	
Heslop Street	
Imperial Avenue (Langley House)	
Lanehouse Road	1 - 113 (odds)
Langley Avenue	1 - 61 (odds), 2 - 76 (evens)
Mansfield Avenue	21 - 115 (odds), 32 - 136 (evens)
Oxford Road	
Palmerston Court	
Park Terrace	
Peel Street	17 - 73 (odds), 10 - 42 (evens)
Roseberry View	
Salisbury Street	
Scarborough Street	
Spring Close	
St Paul's Road	
Stanley Close	
Stainsby Street	
Stranton Street	
Teesdale Terrace	
Thornaby Road	123 - 159 (odds)
Victoria Road	
Westbury Street	39 - 171 (odds), 82 - 196 (evens)

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# **APPENDIX 5c**

## **Red Line Map (& street listing): Newtown**

## Newtown



**Street list: Newtown**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Property number if applicable</b>
Appleton Road	1 - 33 (odds)
Bedford Street	
Bishopton Road	1 - 35 (odds), 2 - 92 (evens)
Britannia Road	No residential accommodation
Castlereagh Road	
Craggs Street	
Dundas Street	1 - 87 (odds), 2 - 122 (evens)
Durham Road	3 - 135 (odds), 58 - 126 (evens)
Ezard Street	
Green Lane	1 - 6
Hamilton Road	1A - 11 (odds)
Lambton Road	
Londonderry Road	1 - 121 (odds), 2 - 114 (evens)
Mellor Street	
Newtown Avenue	
Primrose Street	No residential accommodation
Samuel Street	
St Paul's Court	
St Paul's Street	1 - 17
St Paul's Road	
St Paul's Terrace	
Stavordale Road	1 - 47 (odds)
Vicarage Avenue	
Vicarage Street	
Zetland Road	

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# APPENDIX 6

## Mandatory & Discretionary Licence Conditions REVISED

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **SELECTIVE LICENSING SCHEME PROPOSAL**

**Appendix 4:  
Mandatory & Discretionary Licence Conditions**



## SUMMARY OF LICENCE CONDITIONS

### MANDATORY CONDITIONS

			Page
Condition	1	- Gas Safety	3
Condition	2	- Electrical Installation	3
Condition	3	- Safety of Electrical Appliances	4
Condition	4	- Safety of Furniture	4
Condition	5	- Smoke Alarms	4
Condition	6	- Carbon Monoxide Alarms	4
Condition	7	- Tenancy Agreements	5
Condition	8	- Tenant Referencing	5

### DISCRETIONARY CONDITIONS

Condition	9	- General Management	6
Condition	10	- Tenancy Management	6
Condition	11	- Property Management	7
Condition	12	- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	8
Condition	13	- External areas, refuse and waste	9
Condition	14	- Security	9
Condition	15	- Compliance Inspections	10
Condition	16	- Licence Fee Payment	10
Condition	17	- Notification of Changes	10
Contact Details			10

\*Where there is a reference in this document to providing certification, declarations, etc to the Local Housing Authority, the Authority, the Council or Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, this shall be taken to mean unless otherwise stated that this is provided to the Selective Licensing team using the contact details provided on page 10.

## Mandatory Licence Conditions – Housing Act 2004, Schedule 4

### Condition 1 - Gas Safety

**Condition requiring the licence holder, if gas is supplied to the house, to produce to the Local Housing Authority annually for their inspection a gas safety certificate obtained in respect of the house within the last 12 months.**

- 1.1 If gas is supplied to the house, the licence holder shall provide annually to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, within **14 days** of the annual gas safety inspection, a copy of a valid gas safety certificate issued by a Gas Safe registered engineer, complying with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended).
- 1.2 In addition if gas is supplied to the house, the licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a copy of a valid gas safety certificate issued by a Gas Safe registered engineer within the previous 12 months, complying with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended).

### Condition 2 - Electrical Installation

**Condition requiring the licence holder, to ensure that every electrical installation in the house is in proper working order for safe and continued use; and to supply to the authority on demand with a declaration as to the safety of such installations.**

- 2.1 The licence holder must ensure that a full periodic inspection and testing of the electrical installation in the house is undertaken in accordance with BS 7671 (or any British Standard which subsequently replaces this) at intervals of no more than 5 years and a relevant Electrical Installation Condition Report is provided.

**Where an Electrical Installation Condition Report or Periodic Inspection Report (PIR) expires during the term of the licence, an up to date report must be provided to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council within 28 days of the expiry date.**

- i. Where any defects or deficiencies are specified on the Electrical Installation Condition Report making the installation unsatisfactory, that works to remedy those defects or deficiencies must be completed no later than **28 days** following the date of the report and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is informed upon completion of such works.
- ii. If the Electrical Installation Condition Report specifies the installation is satisfactory but lists any other remedial works or recommendations those works are completed no later than **12 months** following the date of the report and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is informed upon completion of such works.
- iii. The licence holder must supply to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **7 days** of that demand, a copy of a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report issued by a qualified and competent person.

### Condition 3 - Safety of Electrical Appliances

**Condition requiring the licence holder, to keep electrical appliances made available by them in the house in a safe condition and to supply the Authority, on demand, with a declaration by them as to the safety of such appliances.**

- 3.1 The licence holder must ensure that all electrical appliances, other than those supplied by the occupiers, are kept in a safe condition.
- 3.2 The licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a declaration as to the safety of electrical appliances.

### Condition 4 – Safety of Furniture

**Condition requiring the licence holder, to keep furniture made available by them in the house in a safe condition and to supply the Authority, on demand, with a declaration by them as to the safety of such furniture.**

- 4.1 The licence holder must ensure that all furniture, other than furniture supplied by the occupiers, whether new or second-hand complies with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988, (as amended) and is in a safe condition.
- 4.2 The licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a declaration as to the safety of that furniture.

### Condition 5 – Smoke Alarms

**Condition requiring the licence holder to ensure that a smoke alarm is installed on each storey of the house on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation and to keep each such alarm in proper working order.**

- 5.1 The licence holder must ensure that a smoke alarm is installed on each storey of the house on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation (including a bathroom or lavatory) and to keep those alarms in proper working order.
- 5.2 The licence holder must ensure that smoke alarms are repaired or replaced once informed and found that they are faulty.
- 5.3 The licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a declaration as to the condition, positioning and testing of such alarms.

### Condition 6 – Carbon Monoxide Alarms

**Condition requiring the licence holder to ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room in the house the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a fixed combustion appliance (other than a gas cooker) and to keep them in proper working order.**

- 6.1 The licence holder must ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room (includes a hall or landing), which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation (including a bathroom or lavatory) and where that room contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers) and to keep those alarms in proper working order.

- 6.2 Ensure carbon monoxide alarms are repaired or replaced once informed and found that they are faulty.
- 6.3 The licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a declaration as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.

### Condition 7 – Tenancy Agreements

**Condition requiring the licence holder to supply to the occupiers of the house a written statement of the terms on which they occupy it.**

- 7.1 The licence holder shall provide a written statement to the occupiers of the house detailing the terms on which they occupy it; i.e. a tenancy agreement and must provide Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a copy of that agreement.

Guidance on the terms of tenancy agreements can be obtained from the Office of Fair Trading and your local Citizen Advice Bureau. Further details may be found on the following web page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/model-agreement-for-a-shorthold-assured-tenancy>

### Condition 8 – Tenant Referencing

**Condition requiring the licence holder to demand references from persons who wish to occupy the house.**

- 8.1 The licence holder must demand and obtain references for **all prospective** occupiers of the house to enable the licence holder to make an informed decision regarding allowing occupancy of the property.
- 8.2 All references shall be obtained by the licence holder via the **FREE** Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council tenant referencing service using the Council's approved form. A tenancy reference check will only be completed if all of the information requested has been provided and validated.
- 8.3 The licence holder must retain all references obtained for occupiers for the duration of this licence and must provide Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a copy of pre-let reference checks, along with full names and dates of birth of each occupant.

**Details of how to contact Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in respect of the tenant referencing service can be found at:** **Detail to be inserted prior the implementation date of Selective Licensing.**

## Discretionary Licence Conditions imposed by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council – Housing Act 2004, Section 90

### Condition 9 – General Management

#### Conditions relating to the general management of the property and tenancy by the licence holder.

The licence holder must ensure that:

- 9.1 Any persons involved with the management of the house are to the best of their knowledge “fit and proper persons” for the purposes of the Act.
- 9.2 A copy of the licence including the conditions attached to it is provided to all tenants.
- 9.3 The occupants of adjoining properties are provided with direct contact details of the licence holder *or if applicable the person appointed to manage the property* in case of an emergency or to enable them to inform the licence holder of problems affecting their properties.
- 9.4 Inspections of a licensed property are undertaken a minimum of every twelve months.
- 9.5 A written record of the inspections must be kept for the duration of the licence and contain the following details; who carried out the inspection, the date and time of the inspection, details of the issues found and the action taken.
- 9.6 The licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within **14 days** of that demand, a copy of the written record of an inspections.

### Condition 10 – Tenancy Management

#### Conditions requiring the licence holder to manage the tenancy.

The licence holder must ensure that:

- 10.1 A detailed inventory is carried out, provided to and agreed with each tenant before commencement of their occupation of the house and kept on file by the licence holder at their home or business address. (*Template inventory forms are available from SBC*).
- 10.2 On occupation or in the event of a change in circumstances, all tenants of the licensed property are provided with the following up to date, written information in respect of the licence holder *or if applicable the person appointed to manage the property*:
  - (a) Name and contact address,
  - (b) Daytime telephone number,
  - (c) E-mail address, (if applicable),
  - (d) Emergency telephone number,
  - (e) Alternative contact details.

- 10.3 On occupation or in the event of a change in circumstances all tenants of the licensed property receive written confirmation detailing up to date arrangements, including timescales that have been put in place to deal with;
- (a) Repair issues
  - (b) Emergencies should they arise
  - (c) Anti-social behaviour and nuisance
  - (d) The management arrangements that will be put in place for an emergency or in the licence holder's, or if applicable, the manager's absence.
- 10.4 Upon occupation all tenants of the property receive written information detailing;
- (a) Their responsibilities to maintain at all times any garden, yard and other external areas within the curtilage of the house, and to ensure they are kept in a reasonably clean and tidy condition.
  - (b) Their responsibilities in respect of waste storage and disposal, to include details of what day refuse and recycling collections take place and what type of receptacle to use for household waste and recycling.
  - (c) Their responsibilities to make arrangements for any extra rubbish that cannot fit in the bins to be collected and/or disposed of as soon as is reasonably possible and ensure that such rubbish, where possible, is stored at the rear of and within the boundary of the property until collection/disposal.
  - (d) That for larger household items such as sofa's, beds, fridge freezers etc the Council operates a bulky waste collection service. For more information and associated costs please visit <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/bulky-waste>
- 10.5 If the licence holder receives a reference request for a current or former tenant he/she must refer the matter to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's tenancy referencing service who will also carry out a reference check.
- 10.6 If accommodation is provided on a furnished basis and includes electrical appliances, on occupation all tenants of the property are provided with copies of user manuals or equipment provided as part of the agreement for the occupation of the property.

## Condition 11 – Property Management

### Conditions requiring the licence holder to manage, maintain and repair the property.

The licence holder must ensure that:

- 11.1 Reasonable and practical steps are taken to respond to repair and maintenance issues at their property and that any works to deal with repairs are undertaken within a reasonable period of time after they are notified.
- 11.2 The occupiers are provided with reasonable notice of arranged access requirements to carry out work to the property. Save in the case of an emergency, a minimum of 24 hours notice must be given in writing and as far as practicable access will be arranged at a convenient time for the occupier.
- 11.3 All repairs to the house or any installations, facilities or equipment within it are carried out by competent and suitably qualified persons, for example Gas Safe registered operatives for gas appliances and an electrical contractor who is a member of an approved scheme, such as NICEIC, BSI, NAPIT, ELECSA or BRE.

## Condition 12 – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

**Conditions requiring the taking of reasonable and practicable steps to prevent or reduce anti-social behaviour by persons occupying or visiting the house and the use of the premises for illegal purposes.**

*Anti-social behaviour is serious or persistent behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress within a community or society. It can cover a range of issues, from annoying disturbance, such as loud music to serious acts of violence or harassment. This behaviour may be caused by individuals or involve groups of people. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council are committed to working with landlords and housing associations to tackle both the causes and effects of anti-social behaviour in our communities.*

The licence holder must;

- 12.1 Ensure that all reasonable and practicable steps are taken to prevent and respond to instances of anti-social behaviour in all its forms.
- 12.2 Have a clear and written action plan which outlines the procedures for preventing and dealing with anti-social behaviour. This action plan should be reviewed on an annual basis and be provided to Stockton on Tees Borough Council upon request and within **7 days** of that request.
- 12.3 Ensure that each tenant/occupant is made aware of their own personal responsibility for their own behaviour and the behaviour of others both living at and visiting the address. tenants shall be made aware that if they, other occupiers or their visitors:
  - Engage in criminal activity in the locality; or
  - Cause nuisance or annoyance to neighbours; or
  - Use abusive or threatening language or behaviour to neighbours; or
  - Fail to store or dispose of refuse properly; or
  - Cause damage to fixtures, fittings, fire prevention or alarm equipment or installations, or to the fabric of the premises; or
  - Fail to give access to the landlord or his agent upon reasonable notice, to inspect and undertake works with their property [or for the purpose of maintaining communal areas];

They may be liable to enforcement action which may include possession proceedings either under the terms of the tenancy, pursuant to section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 or pursuant to Grounds 13 or 14 of schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988. Alternatively, the landlord may seek an injunction under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

- 12.4 Ensure that upon demand, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, are provided, within **7 days** of that demand, with the full names and date of birth of each occupant of the property.
- 12.5 Co-operate with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Cleveland Police and any other relevant agencies in resolving complaints of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity involving tenants, occupiers or visitors to the property. The licence holder and/or their nominated managing agent must not ignore or fail to take action against any complaints regarding their tenants or property.

Written records of action taken, if any, shall be maintained and made available for inspection by an authorised officer at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council upon request.

- 12.6 Ensure that Cleveland Police and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council are informed immediately, where they have reason to believe that their tenant's behaviour or the behaviour of any other occupant or visitors to the property involves criminal activity
- 12.7 Attend, or be represented at home visits, interviews, multi-agency meetings or case conferences arranged by the Council or its partners when necessary.
- 12.8 During the course of the inspections detailed at 9.4 above, ensure that the occupiers are not in breach of tenancy terms and conditions in relation to anti-social behaviour. The written records of inspections made, conditions noted and actions taken as a result of your inspection shall be maintained and made available to Stockton on Tees Borough Council upon request.
- 12.9 Keep a written record of the inspections for the duration of the licence and contain the following details: who carried out the inspection, the date and time of the inspection, details of the issues found and the action taken. The licence holder must supply Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, upon demand and within 14 days of that demand, a copy of the written record of those inspections.
- 12.10 Ensure that the occupants of the property are aware of the services available to them and how they too can report nuisance and anti-social behaviour to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council or Cleveland Police.

### **Condition 13 – External Areas, Refuse and Waste**

**Conditions requiring the licence holder to manage the external areas of the property and to ensure the property is free from accumulations of waste and that there are suitable arrangements for the collection, storage and disposal of refuse and waste.**

- 13.1 The full range of recycling and refuse containers appropriate to the Council are available at the start of a tenancy.
- 13.2 The licence holder must ensure that the gardens, yards and other external areas are cleared of rubbish, debris and accumulations and are cleaned between tenancies.
- 13.3 The licence holder must ensure that all refuse and unwanted items are cleared from the house before a new tenant moves in.
- 13.4 The licence holder shall undertake repairs to ensure that the exterior of the property is maintained in a reasonable decorative condition and state of repair, including the removal of graffiti.

### **Condition 14 – Security**

**Conditions requiring the licence holder to ensure the property has suitable arrangements for the ongoing security of the property.**

- 14.1 The licence holder must ensure that the property is secured when unoccupied by taking reasonable steps to secure the property from unauthorised entry within 24 hours of notification of damage to door entrances/windows etc. The security measures used must not be detrimental to the amenity of the area e.g. windows and doors must not be boarded up.
- 14.2 The licence holder must arrange for a lock change to be undertaken where previous occupants have not surrendered keys, prior to new occupants moving in.



- 14.3 The licence holder must ensure that where window locks are fitted, keys are provided to the relevant occupants.
- 14.4 The licence holder must ensure that where alley gates are installed to the rear of the licensed property, that the occupant(s) is (are) made aware of how to obtain a key.
- 14.5 The licence holder must ensure that where a burglar alarm is fitted to the house, that the occupant(s) is (are) made aware of the code, how the alarm is operated and the circumstances under which the code for the alarm can be changed.

### Condition 15 – Compliance Inspections

#### Condition requiring the licence holder to allow the Council to undertake Licence compliance checks.

- 15.1 The licence holder must ensure that the Council are allowed to undertake Licence compliance checks of their properties. Council officers will give the Licence holder at least 24 hours notice of these checks and produce valid authorisation at the time of visit. If the inspection is because the Council suspects there has been a breach of Licence conditions, then no notice period will be provided.

### Condition 16 – Licence Fee Payment

#### Condition requiring the licence holder to pay a licence fee.

- 16.1 The licence holder must, make arrangements within 14 days upon demand by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to pay any outstanding balance in respect of the licence fee.

### Condition 17 – Notification of Changes

#### Conditions requiring the licence holder to ensure that the relevant persons are notified of certain changes.

- 17.1 The licence holder must inform Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, within **7 days** of any changes in the licence holder's circumstances or the circumstances of the person appointed to manage the property.

## CONTACT DETAILS

Further information regarding Selective Licensing in the Stockton-on-Tees area can be obtained by contacting the Selective Licensing team as follows:-

By e-mail to: [selectivelicensing@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:selectivelicensing@stockton.gov.uk)

By letter to: Selective Licensing  
Adults, Health & Wellbeing (Housing and A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees)  
16 Church Road  
Stockton on Tees  
TS18 1TX

By telephone to: *TO BE INSERTED prior scheme implementation.*

This service is open between 8.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on Fridays.

Information is also available on the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's website at: *TO BE INSERTED prior scheme implementation.*

## AGENDA ITEM

## REPORT TO CABINET

16TH May 2024

## REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

### CABINET/COUNCIL INFORMATION ITEM

Health, Leisure and Culture - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Steve Nelson

### DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

#### Summary

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24 is brought to Cabinet for consideration.

**Recommended that the report be noted.**

#### Detail

1. Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), the Director of Public Health has a duty to prepare an independent annual report. This report follows the Director of Public Health report presented in November 2023 which reviewed the public health response to Covid-19 in Stockton-on-Tees.
2. The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24 highlights the challenge of persistent health inequalities experienced by people in Stockton-on-Tees. Health inequalities and poor health and wellbeing have a significant impact on people's lives, are unjust and largely preventable.
3. The report highlights existing examples of good practice and strong partnerships with other organisations and the voluntary and community sector but is clear that a holistic and systematic approach is required to go further and faster in addressing inequalities.
3. The proposed approach with interventions in civic society, community and services based on a self-assessment complements the Council's Powering our Future policy.

#### Consultation and Engagement

- 5 The report describes some of the key work undertaken with partners and communities to address health inequalities. Working collaboratively with communities, partners and councillors is essential in addressing health inequalities.

### **Next Steps**

7. Cabinet is asked to receive the report. Embedding learning and monitoring of public health activity will continue to be overseen and reported through the Lead Member, Corporate Management Team and Health and Wellbeing Board as part of core business.

**Name of Contact Officer: Sarah Bowman-Abouna**

**Post Title: Director of Public Health**

**Telephone No. 01642 527054**

**Email Address: [sarah.bowman-abouna@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.bowman-abouna@stockton.gov.uk)**

**Director of Public Health  
Annual Report  
2023/24**

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## Foreword

This year's Annual Report highlights the challenge of the health inequalities experienced by people in Stockton-on-Tees. We know our residents are experiencing even more challenges as a result of the cost-of-living situation and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As I write, local authorities are also experiencing unprecedented financial pressures, making our responsibility even more pressing to drive better outcomes and make best use of our resources.

Fortunately, in Stockton-on-Tees we have excellent partnership working with other organisations and a strong voluntary and community sector. This helps us to be more innovative in our approach and to continue to make real sustainable impacts on health inequalities. We will need to work together ever more closely across partners. The voice of local people in all of this is also absolutely crucial and you will find some examples of the great work going on in our community, contained within this report. Also highlighted here are some actions we can take together across partners and communities in the borough to build on this work and go further and faster in improving outcomes and reducing inequality.



**Cllr Steve Nelson**  
**Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture**

## Introduction

We must not be tempted to become disheartened by the fact that inequality in all its guises persists both nationally and here in our borough, despite the actions that are being taken to try and address this. The impact inequality and poor wellbeing have on the lives of local people is very real, unjust and often rooted in preventable causes. This said, I think we have a better opportunity than ever to address this in a meaningful way – there is a real will and passion to address inequality across our local health and wellbeing system and to work in partnership together with communities, who sit at the heart of all we do.

The good news is that we have really strong local building blocks, through the many strengths and work in our local communities and organisations. Secondly, we do have some evidence of what works in helping to improve outcomes and address inequality. The challenge is to apply this systematically across all partners in the borough and to commit to following this through despite wider changes and challenges, so that we can realise the impact. This report proposes an approach to help us, working across the local health and wellbeing system and agreeing a strategic approach and practical actions across civic, community and service areas.

I hope the report is useful in helping drive forward our collective activities to improve outcomes with, and for, local people.



**Sarah Bowman-Abouna**  
**Director of Public Health**



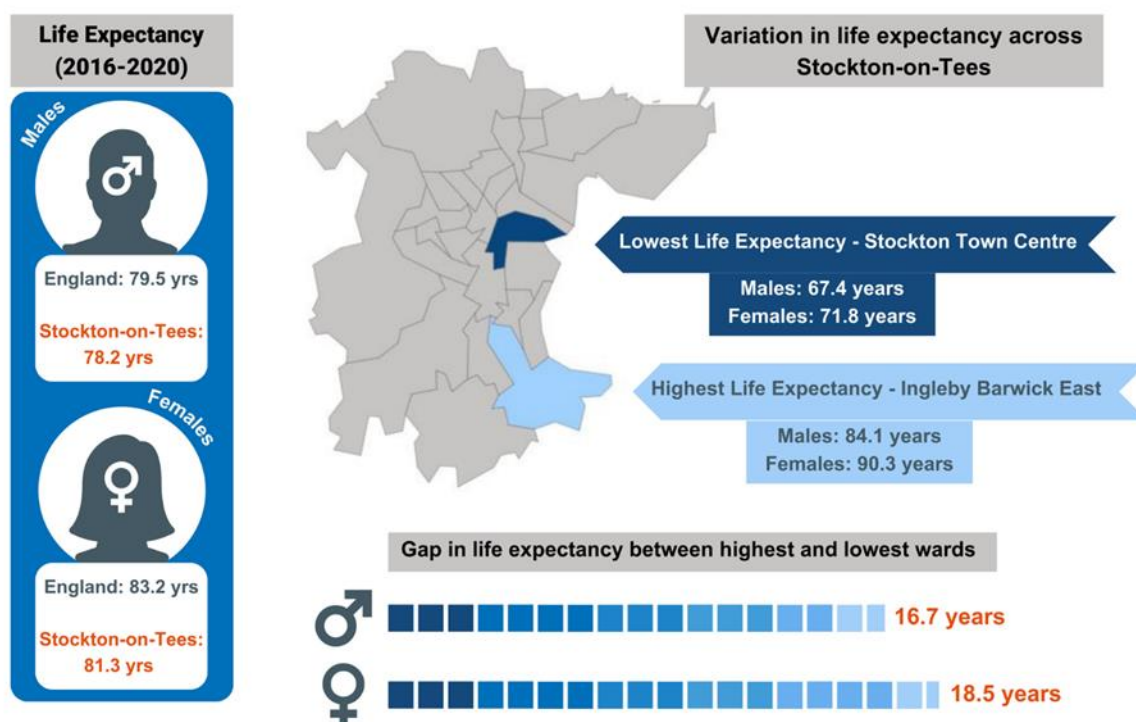
## Executive Summary

- Though much good work is underway, health inequalities still manifest themselves every day across our borough.
- A holistic and systematic approach is needed, to address health inequalities across the borough.
- There is some clear evidence on the approach we could take to progress this locally. It is clear, that action must go beyond addressing poverty and deprivation (important though these are) to address the multiple factors that impact on people's lives and underpin inequality.
- Much local work is underway, within the local community, the Council and the wider system. Some examples are outlined in this report – it is crucial we collectively understand the impact we are having in seeking to address inequalities through both the stories of our local people and the data we collect.
- The Population Intervention Triangle (PIT) is proposed as a way of bringing this together and progressing work further.
- The PIT model focuses on action in civic society, the community and services; and also the interface between these and complements the Council's Powering our Future policy.
- To support this, a number of practical tools can be used to make sure the approach is embedded across the Council and wider local system. A self-assessment with partners is a helpful way of starting this process.
- The report makes some recommendations on the next steps we could take as a local system to go further, faster in addressing inequalities.

## Our picture in Stockton-on-Tees

We have recently had the opportunity to review some of our key measures of health and wellbeing, as part of our local Health and Wellbeing Board developing its Strategy for the next few years. Across the population, life expectancy has increased for females from 81.4yrs to 82.1yrs (from 2011-15 to 2016-20). It has remained static for males at 78yrs (2011-15 to 2016-20). However, there is a wide discrepancy in life expectancy at ward level across the borough as shown in **Figure 1** (more detail - **Appendix 1**).

**Figure 1: Inequality in life expectancy across Stockton-on-Tees**



The gap between people living in the most deprived wards and those living in the most affluent wards is 16.7yrs for men and 18.5yrs for women. This gap in life expectancy is one of the widest gaps in country and has been persistent for some years despite significant efforts across organisations. Though we have some examples of really good practice, it has proven challenging to put in place systematic action across all organisations in the local health and wellbeing system. Local statutory organisations will also need to work more closely together with communities, to understand how to make change happen together.

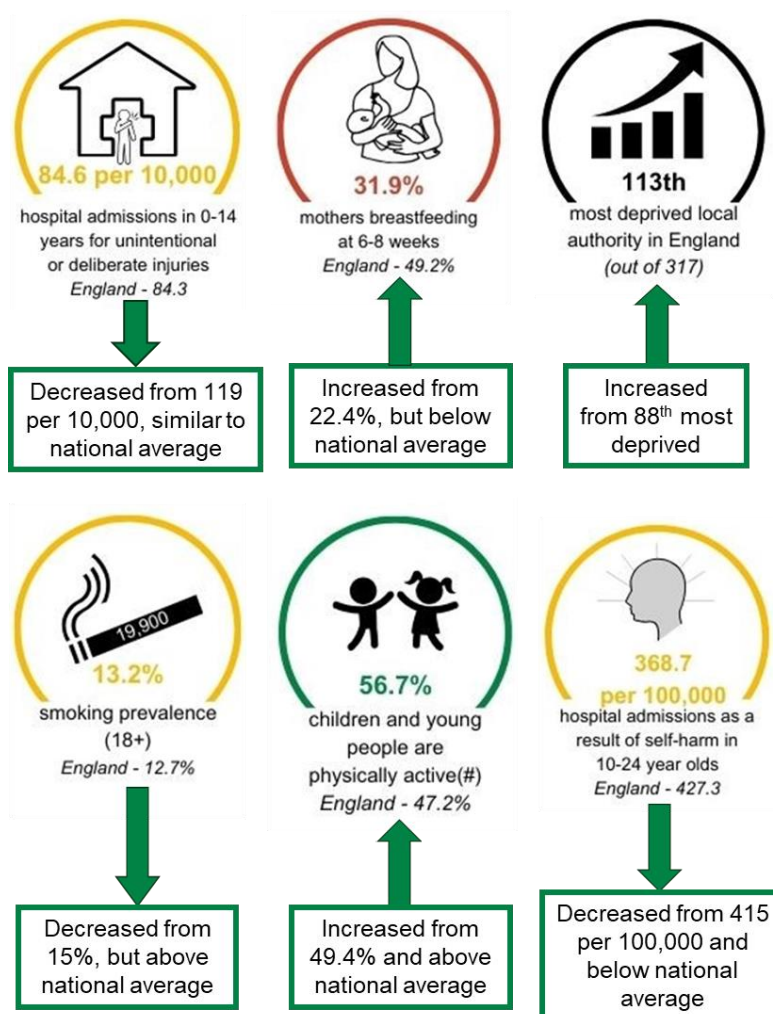
### **Inequality in life expectancy**

- Inequality in life expectancy across different parts of the borough has increased for females between 2011-13 and 2018-20. All but two deciles have seen a decrease in life expectancy, and this decrease has been greatest in the most deprived areas. In particular, the gap between the most deprived and next most deprived decile has widened.
- For males, inequality in life expectancy seems to have reduced however this may be due to a reduction in life expectancy in some of the borough's affluent areas (**Appendix 2**). Particularly striking is that the 7yr gap between the most deprived decile and the next has not reduced.
- This picture for females and males emphasises the need for targeted action working with the most deprived communities as well as action across the whole population (the sliding scale or 'proportionate universalism' approach).

Importantly, we also have local inequality in healthy life expectancy. That is, there are big differences across our borough, in how long people are living in good health. Healthy life expectancy is 61.5yrs for females and 60.1yrs for males (compared to England figures of 63.9yrs for females and 63.1yrs for males – 2020 data). At the same time, retirement age and the cost of living have increased meaning more local people need to work while in poor health or are unable to work as long as they need to due to their health. This clearly means an impact on society, on individuals, families and community life, as well as the opportunity for some to contribute to the local economy.

Encouragingly, there has been some progress in outcomes since our last Health and Wellbeing Strategy was published in 2019 (compared with most recent data: **Figure 2**).

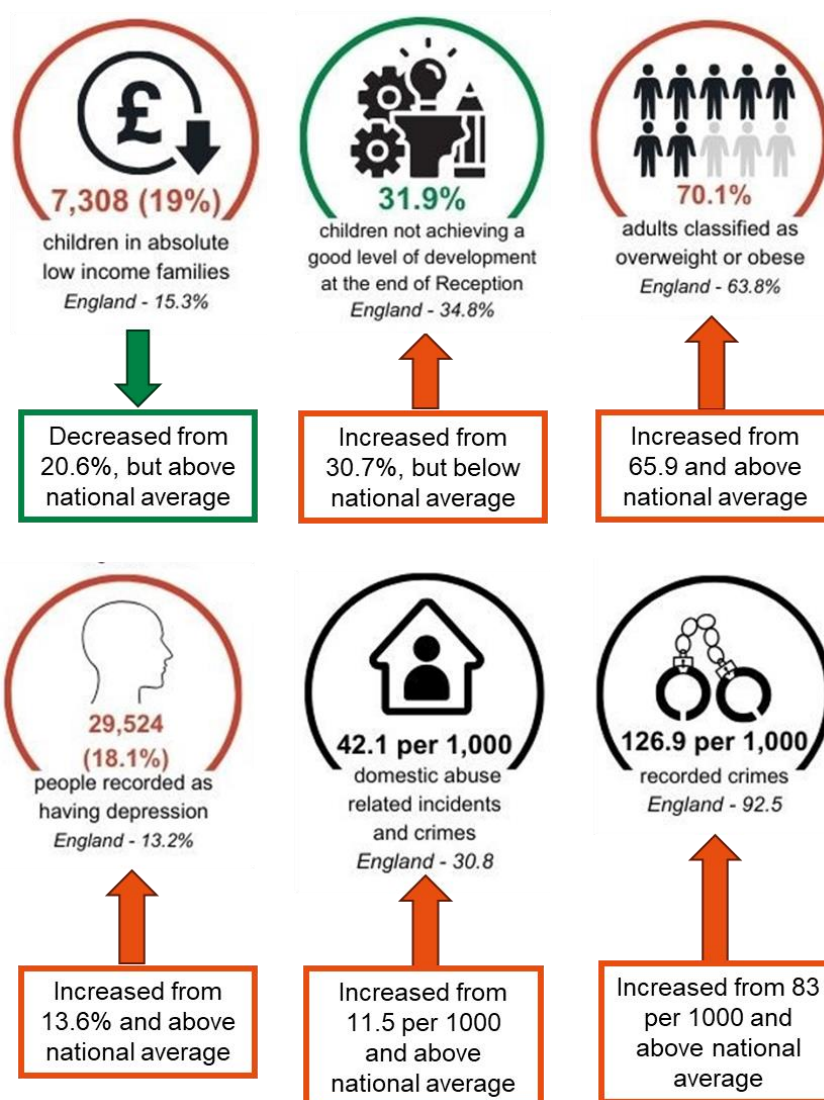
**Figure 2: Improved outcomes (since 2019) - Examples**



These improvements are positive news, though as the data above shows some outcomes that have improved remain worse than the national average. Figures for the whole borough also mask inequalities across different parts and communities of the borough. For example, there has been a drop in smoking across the population both nationally and locally in the last decade. Change in national policy (e.g. smoke free public places from 2017) has been a key factor in this change and has impacted the acceptability of smoking to the general public. At the same time, smoking remains the key preventable cause of premature illness and death. Smoking rates also remain highest (and higher than the national average) in some of the groups in our community that are susceptible to worse health outcomes, such as workers with routine and manual occupations, people with a mental illness and pregnant women. Inequalities therefore remain.

Equally, some of our population indicators illustrate the ongoing challenge in improving health and wellbeing in the borough (**Figure 3**).

**Figure 3: Worsening outcomes or outcomes illustrating inequality (since 2019) – Examples**



These figures also show that health remains poorer in some of our communities than others. These communities are more likely to experience poor health and the factors that lead to poorer health. Often, several factors combine to mean that some communities are disproportionately impacted and have disproportionately poorer outcomes. For example, communities who live in areas of greater deprivation, and some ethnic groups, are more likely to be overweight or obese. Some of the figures are root causes of poor outcomes and inequality. While less children are living in absolute poverty, almost 20% of our local children remain in families who are in absolute poverty and the impact this brings on health, wellbeing and overall life chances. Of course, there are always examples where people are able to overcome these disadvantages and inequality but at population level the evidence is clear that factors such as deprivation lead to poorer outcomes.

Perception and culture are also important. For example, where more recent local figures show that reported crime may be reducing, communities tell us that fear and perception of crime is a significant concern for residents and this will inevitably impact on other issues such as feelings of safety, mental wellbeing and how comfortable people feel to be active outdoors in their local neighbourhoods.

## What do local people say?

Working with local communities in a different and more meaningful way is a priority for the Council and important to many local partners. The Council's Powering our Future programme gives focus to this, looking to understand and build on strengths and assets in communities and work closely with communities to shape our local priorities, to develop how we work together to deliver them and to understand whether we are collectively making a difference. This is a large programme of work but will be built on existing building blocks of good work in the community and in partner organisations. We are very fortunate to have a strong and vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the borough as well as the many small and larger actions that people carry out in the neighbourhoods and communities every day to support each other. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the impact that wider issues continue to have on local people, such as the cost of living and the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council carried out a residents' survey in late 2023 which had 1,637 responses and provided a snapshot of the views of local people.

### Residents' survey – some headlines

- 70% feel satisfied or very satisfied with life overall
- 16% felt very anxious, 16% anxious on the previous day
- 81% felt they can rely on people if they have a serious problem
- 7% always felt lonely and 40% some of the time or occasionally
- 40% had volunteered in the last 12 months
- 56% felt they belong to their neighbourhood
- 50% felt safe (walking alone after dark) in their neighbourhood

To build on this we need to forge closer links across our diverse communities in the borough to feel safe and connected and less anxious or lonely (63% of the residents survey were age 50yrs + and 92% were of white ethnicity). As well as many examples of good work across the local community, there are examples of the Council and partners reshaping our approach to working with communities which we can build on:

- The Powering our Future programme is focusing on supporting and empowering community capacity building and seeking to embed co-production and partnership with communities, learning from other areas
- A Making it Real Board has been established to provide a community view and voice on strategy and decision-making on health, wellbeing and adult services in the Council
- Co-design and co-production are taking place in a range of work areas including support for people caring for those with substance misuse issues; the new model for sexual health services; community-based interventions and support for healthy weight; and the design of the children and young people's health and wellbeing model, with children and families

## What works? Addressing health inequalities

Given the existing work underway, what more can be done to see a real shift in addressing health inequalities? The research evidence points to balancing action on where there is the most scope to improve health, cost effectiveness and fairness (focusing on the building blocks of health, which are not evenly distributed).

### Robust research evidence on addressing health inequalities tells us to:

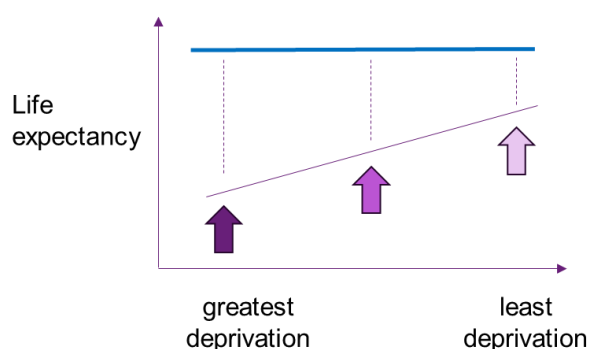
1. Provide **support across the population, according to level of need** - not just those in the most acute need or the areas of greatest deprivation. I.e. A mix of population interventions and high risk (targeted) approaches is needed
2. Understand and address the **relationship between** the many factors that drive inequality – rather than just a focus on poverty
3. Focus on **population and place**, not just individual behaviour to address the root causes of health inequality and build protective factors

### 1. The 'sliding scale' approach (proportionate universalism)

In his seminal research-based report *Fair Society, Healthy Lives* (2010), Prof. Sir Michael Marmot set out that to address health inequalities, it is important to provide support across the population, tailoring this to the level of need (a 'proportionate universalism' approach). This means a mix of population-wide approaches is needed, from universal through to early help and then to more targeted approaches working with communities at greatest risk. Though supporting local people with the greatest need is very important, focusing just on these communities will not improve overall population health and wellbeing; it will also lead to need escalating in groups of the population who previously needed less or minimal support. This feels particularly pertinent currently, when the cost-of-living situation means that people who were previously managing (or even managing well), are finding themselves in need of extra support.

To achieve this sliding scale approach (**Figure 4**), more 'effort' (resource, innovation) is needed to increase outcomes in areas and communities of greatest disadvantage, whilst maintaining support across the spectrum of the population:

**Figure 4: Improving outcomes across the population**



Maintaining this approach can be challenging in extremely resource-stretched times, however it should be seen as an invest to save opportunity with a focus on maximising existing resources and innovating to work in different ways rather than on a requirement for additional resource. That said, a period of transition from reactive-focused to more prevention-focused approaches will be needed. Strategic coordination and leadership across the local health and wellbeing system is key to successfully making this shift.

Marmot also described that deprivation is only one factor leading to inequality and that people experience inequality because of the interplay between various factors e.g. sex, race, disability.

## 2. Intersectionality – the relationship between drivers of inequality

**Inequality is a complex issue – we cannot expect simple solutions to solve complex problems.**

**‘One size fits all’** approaches aimed at reducing inequality, **leave people behind.**

**System-wide leadership** and working alongside **communities**, help shape approaches that promote equity and improve outcomes.

*‘It’s not just about lived experience but a critical reading of that lived experience that can shape policy-making. There is always a risk that it becomes just about people’s experiences, not about the people that need to hear them.’ (VCSE interviewee, IPPR\*)*

\* <https://www.ippr.org/articles/an-intersectional-approach-to-poverty-and-inequality-in-scotland>

Intersectionality is ‘A lens...for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other’ Crenshaw (1989). It is crucial that we understand and address the relationship between the many factors that drive inequality. Poverty is very important but is only one of these factors. As well as being supported by the research evidence, this approach is used by a range of bodies including governments, the World Health Organisation and the World Economic Forum.



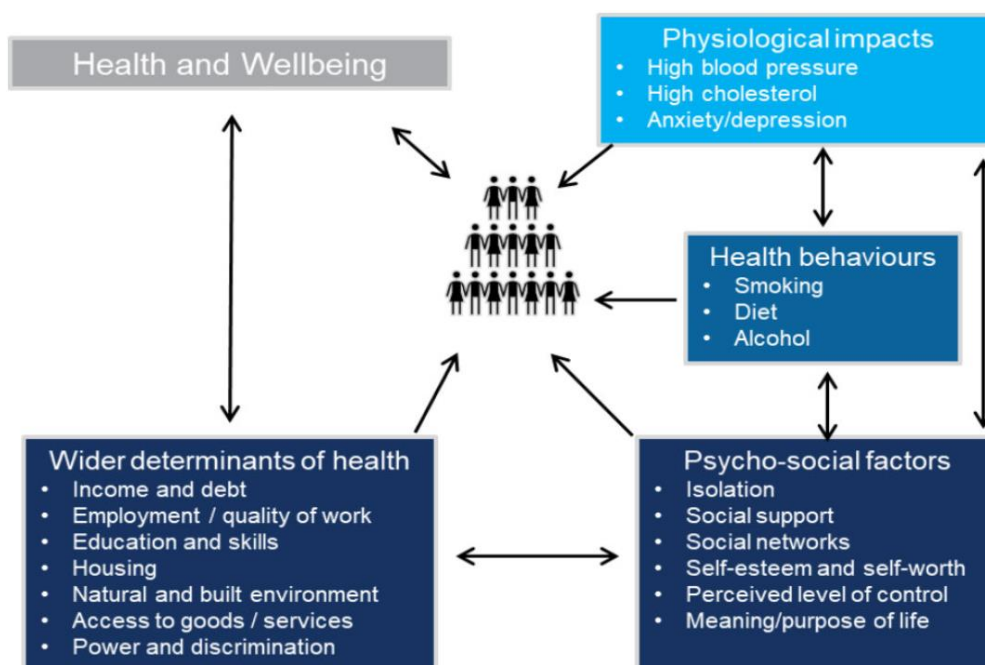
In 2021 an Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) report\* in Scotland looked at research on policy, and on speaking to people with direct lived experience (**Appendix 3**). It recommended:

- Targeted approaches that focus on eradicating barriers to access experienced by specific groups.
- More democratic policy making, engaging with experts in intersecting inequalities and ensuring policy makers reflect the community.
- Embed partnership working with experts by experience, building long-term relationships with people with direct experience of poverty and / or other forms of inequality.
- Gather evidence and develop recommendations on how to address persistent gaps in understanding of e.g. BAME groups.
- Recognise that dismantling structural inequalities will take time, sustained work and appropriate resourcing.

### 3. Population and place focus

To effectively and sustainably address health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing, research evidence also highlights the importance of focusing on population and local place-level actions, rather than just on individual behaviour. Doing so helps not only address the root causes of health inequalities but also build protective factors such as resilience, healthy relationships and social connections, hope for the future and social and emotional development in children. A simplified system map of the causes of health inequalities is shown in **Figure 5** below which is also supported by Marmot’s work.

**Figure 5: System map of the causes of health inequalities**



(Adapted Labonte model, PHE 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-inequalities-place-based-approaches-to-reduce-inequalities/place-based-approaches-for-reducing-health-inequalities-main-report>). The model is a simplification and there are many interactions between the different factors.

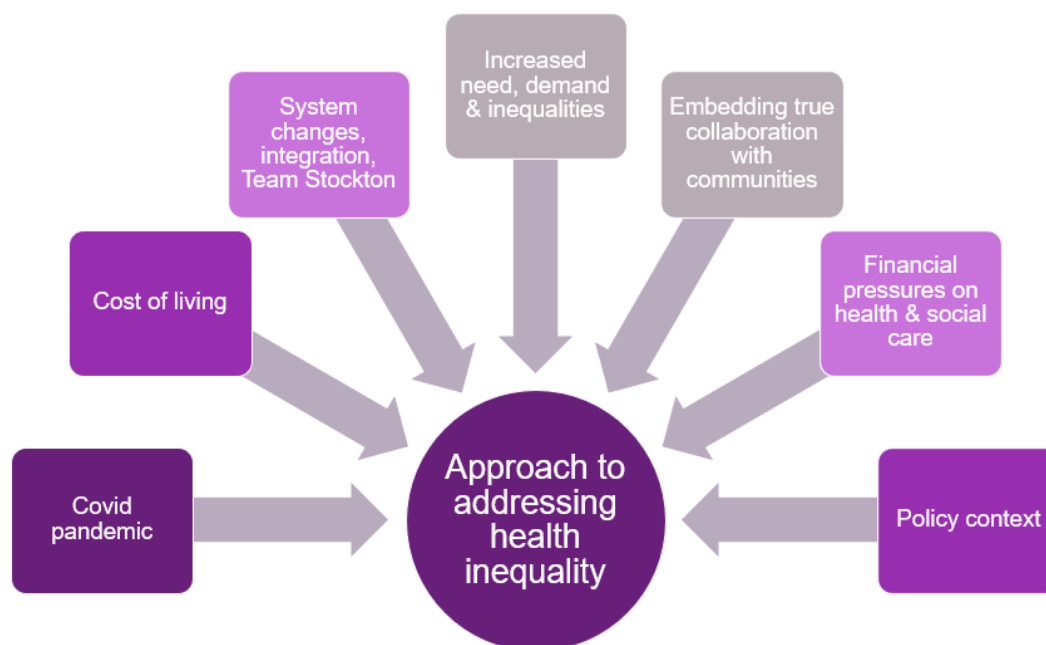
The learning from this approach shows:

- Health inequalities stem from variations in the wider determinants of health and whether people have access to psycho-social mediating and protective factors. This means that people do not have the same opportunities to be healthy.
- Given the range of causes, a joined-up, place-based approach is needed to tackle the complex causes of health inequalities.
- Interventions that solely rely on individual behaviour change are likely to widen inequalities given the complex pathways impacting on capability, opportunity and motivation to change.
- Action on behaviours and conditions need to be addressed within the context of their root causes (the wider determinants of health). For example, we know that a significant proportion of the gap in life expectancy in the borough is due to circulatory and respiratory diseases and cancer (**Appendix 4**), however addressing the wider causes such as access to green space and the impact of planning on health (not just lifestyle factors e.g. alcohol) will help to prevent these conditions and improve wider health outcomes.

There is a critical role for **local areas** to play in reducing health inequalities across the population, by taking a **joined-up place-based approach** - and utilising the **leadership, expertise** and **local levers** that are available to create **conditions that help people to be healthy**.

## Current local context

While sadly inequalities in health and wellbeing have been a feature locally and nationally for some time, the context has changed in a way that now presents an opportunity to galvanise and drive forward local action in a way that has not been possible before. Some of the main factors affecting our collective approach to addressing health inequalities are summarised as follows:



Across the local health and wellbeing system there has been:

- A renewed focus on addressing health inequalities across the system, including the *A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees* framework to address inequalities being adopted with an initial focus on poverty. Also, a recognition of the need to look at the interface between geographical place and community characteristics (gender, race, experience, etc.) that impact on inequalities.
- The recent development of a Place Leadership Board for Stockton-on-Tees to lead joined up working across key partners, to develop a shared vision for the borough.
- The ongoing refresh of key strategic documents across partners including the corporate plan for the Council and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- The evolution of the Integrated Care System (ICS) including the development of a 'place plan' for the Tees Valley and the regional ICB Strategy Better Health and Wellbeing for All.
- An increasing drive towards closer joint working and health and care integration.
- Development of the Council's Powering our Future programme which covers communities, partnerships, colleagues, transformation and regeneration. This programme is being implemented and includes cross-cutting work on the approach to early intervention and prevention.

## Local action

Across the Council, community and partners a range of activity is already taking place to address inequality. A few examples are highlighted in this report followed by suggested next steps on how we build on these, make the approach more systematic across partners and respond to the evidence on addressing the complex causes of inequality and wider socio-economic determinants. The examples span targeted work with those in the community with the most complex needs; examples of a 'sliding scale' (proportionate universalism) approach according to level of need; and wider community and cost-of-living activity. In reality, there is often cross-over between these approaches.

### 1. Targeted support

#### Working with people with multiple needs

Across the borough there are many examples of working with some of the most vulnerable communities which we can learn from and build on, particularly with joined up approaches in mind that build on strengths and work with individuals and families.

#### Stephen's story

Stephen (not his real name, 18yrs old) was referred to our local Individual Placement Support (IPS) service (Stockton Hartlepool Employment Connections, SHEC) in September 2023. He was using Cannabis daily and other drugs, including ketamine and crack cocaine weekly when he could afford to do so. Experiencing suicidal feelings, he was referred to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) in October 2023.

Our substance misuse provider Change Grow Live (CGL) and CAHMS worked closely together and with Stephen, with a clear reduction plan of his substance use and a package of psychosocial interventions. Stephen engaged well with this support and was motivated by his potential future and desire to work. He was then introduced to our local Individual Placement Support service by their key worker and though he was very motivated, Stephen struggled with low self-esteem and a previous apprenticeship that he had broken down due to a lack of understanding of his mental health needs and substance misuse. The IPS Employment Specialist worked with Steve to:

- Help him to produce a CV and applications
- Liaise with employers, training providers, and other agencies that fit his goal
- Work on a statement of disclosure, so Stephen could confidently be upfront about his journey
- Provide one-to-one support
- Allay his feelings of being overwhelmed
- Keep track of appointments, applications and interviews

Stephen has now been successful in securing a mechanics apprenticeship, is substance free and his mental health is stable. He is being supported to begin living independently. At his most recent interview, he spoke highly of the support he had received and how positive he felt about his future.

Latest figures show that 11 people from Stockton-on-Tees (who were in structured treatment for substance misuse) were supported into employment in the first year of the IPS programme - a real achievement with SHEC as a new provider having also built relationships with local businesses in that time. The service supports local people of different ages.



*(Local 55 year old male)*

In addition, we are testing a new approach working with a range of partners for peer advocates to work alongside some of the individuals in the borough with the most complex needs, based on learning and approaches from elsewhere. The advocates will work with people who are often experiencing mental ill health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and housing needs to help identify what is important to them and how barriers to support available can be removed. Working alongside Teesside University we are looking forward to evaluating and learning from the programme, using peer research. The intention is to use this to inform our collective approach to working with communities with multiple needs, building on their strengths and helping us co-design models of support that will meet their needs.

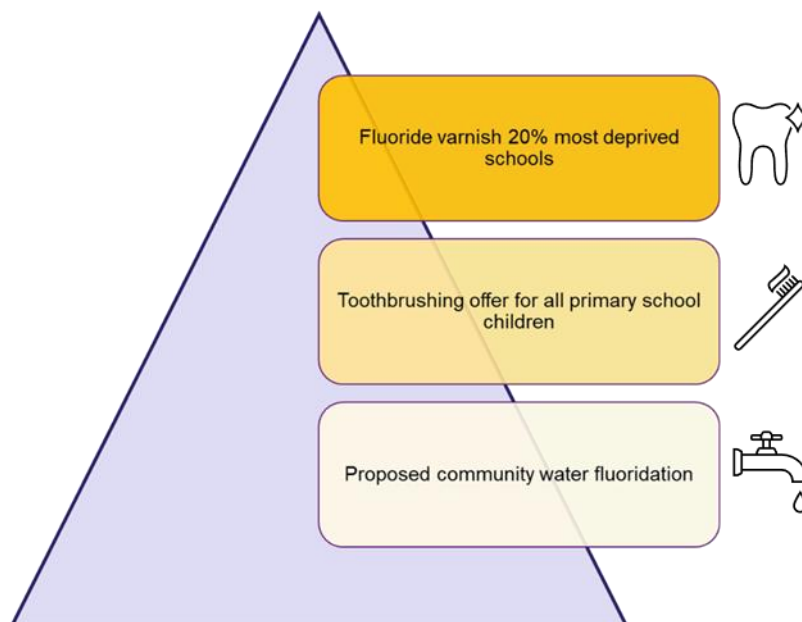
#### **Mobile vaccination clinics for homeless people**

During the pandemic it became clear that people with pre-existing chronic conditions were at particular risk of harm from covid. Whilst many homeless people experience poor health uptake of covid vaccinations was low. The NHS, the council's housing and public health teams and local hostels worked closely to offer mobile vaccination clinics in accessible locations, at the right day and time for the target group and to complement the offer with food vouchers and further health and wellbeing support.

## 2. Tailoring support according to need

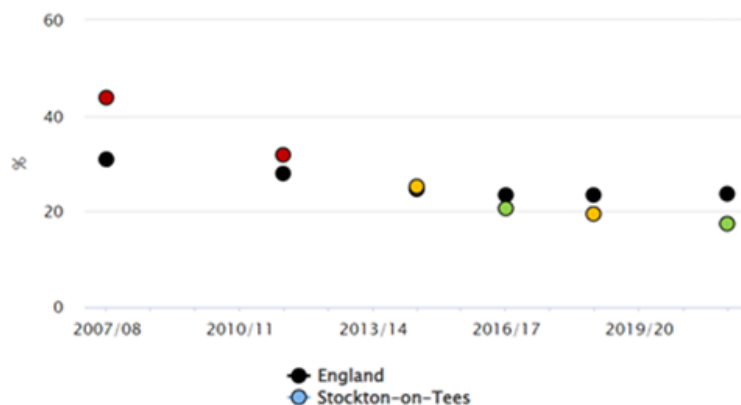
### Oral health

Good oral health is an important part of health and wellbeing. Tooth extraction because of decay is the main reason for children needing a general anaesthetic. School absence, pain and impact on self-esteem are also associated with decay. In Stockton-on-Tees we have historically had a 'sliding scale' approach to support (universal through to targeted) which has helped improve outcomes:



Fluoride varnish is currently being reinstated following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, the Bill introducing community water fluoridation is going through the parliamentary process. This will benefit the whole population with a particular benefit in areas of greatest deprivation. The local toothbrushing programme and fluoride varnish provision, have helped reduce dental decay in children over recent years, supported by population-wide health promotion work on reducing sugary diets which also help promote healthy weight. The borough's Community Wellbeing Champions (a network of 70+ individuals and voluntary and community organisations across the borough, funded through public health) have also helped distribute oral hygiene packs in the community.

**Figure 6: Percentage of 5-year-olds with experience of visually obvious dental decay**

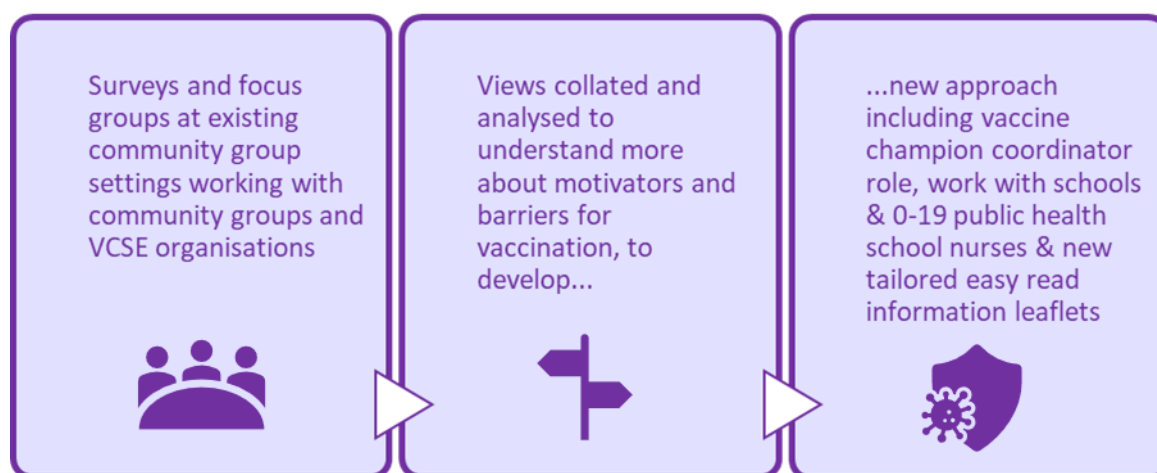


Source: Dental Public Health Epidemiology Programme for England: oral health survey of five-year-old children (Biennial publication - latest report 2022) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/oral-health-surveys-and-intelligence-children>

### Secondary school-age vaccinations

Historically, we have had good immunisation rates in our children and young people across the borough. However, this has changed locally and nationally and secondary school age vaccination uptake in Stockton-on-Tees has fallen significantly in the last two years to below the England average (including HPV vaccine for 12–13 year-olds, Meningococcal ACWY vaccine and Tetanus, Diphtheria and Polio for 14-15 year-olds). We know that vaccinations remain one of the best population-wide ways of protecting health.

In 2023, the Council’s Public Health team used inequalities funding from the Integrated Care Board to work with a local behavioural insights organisation in carrying out research in local communities. The research focused on understanding attitudes and behaviours regarding the vaccinations among the young people, their parents and carers and professionals e.g. teachers. It was particularly focused on seeking views from communities in more deprived areas and young people identifying from BAME communities where it has previously been harder to hear the communities’ views.



## NHS Health Check

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) can affect anyone but is more frequently found in people living in the poorest neighbourhoods. Cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke remain one of the biggest killers in England. The free NHS health check is promoted locally to assess the risk of CVD in anyone over 40 who has not yet been diagnosed with a chronic condition linked to CVD and to offer advice and support to make changes to live more healthily.



This free Check is offered to all 40-74yr olds through their GP. It aims to detect risk of heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease & stroke and provide help to prevent these conditions. Locally public health works with GP practices and others such as community champions to successfully promote uptake of the check among communities in the most deprived areas, who are at greater risk.

- 40% of local people taking up the Check are from the most deprived areas
- 1,024 people from these areas had their Check in the 12 months (2022/23 – 2023/24)

### 3. Cost of living and wider community support

The Council is committed to addressing poverty by providing Cost of Living support. This is supported by the current development of an Anti-poverty strategy and the outstanding work of the Stockton Infinity Partnership and the local Welfare Support service, which supports residents to claim benefits to which they are entitled. The Infinity Partnership is recognised as the most effective Financial Inclusion Partnership in the country and ensures key partners work together to maximise income and assist those in debt.

Amazing work is done in the community in Stockton-on-Tees, through a range of groups and organisations. This work is the backbone of community resilience in the borough and a huge support to local people. A few case studies are highlighted here.



### 'Rosie'

Rosie (not her real name, >60yrs old) disclosed she is on medication to help with her mental health issues. Having previously been a school cook, she was glad to be invited to a cooking session where she received a slow cooker and casserole cookbook free of charge. Rosie believes this has saved her money on energy bills. Staff learnt she needed financial support and referred her to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who have assisted with her immediate and longer-term issues, going 'above and beyond' in her words. Rosie is regularly helped with emergency food parcels when the CAB are working on complex financial issues that can't be resolved overnight.

It came to light that some of Rosie's financial issues stemmed from supporting family members, who have since been offered supported and referred to services such as the Stockton-on-Tees Active Travel Hub as they were eligible for a free bike. Rosie has also been helped by Thirteen's Hardship Fund. She said: 'This community pantry and lunch club really is a godsend; I don't know how I would manage without it most weeks.'



### **'Wayne' – Norton Community Pantry**

Wayne is a single man in his 30s who depends on benefits and cares for his three children between Friday and Sunday each week, and regularly through school holidays. He lives in private rented accommodation which he struggles to afford and has severe mental health problems. Wayne has disclosed that he often does not eat for a few days to ensure he has enough food in stock for when his children visit over the weekend. He attends the pantry each week and regularly receives an emergency food parcel.

Staff have referred him to the CAB for financial support and advice. To aid his mental health, they have also facilitated access to training via Thirteen and volunteer sessions to improve green spaces at St Michael's Church in Norton. Wayne has also been referred to the Green Doctor to receive emergency funds to get his energy supply reinstated at home.

Wayne said: 'I've never received any support before and didn't know what help was out there, so I'm very grateful for the support that has been given to me.' The CAB are currently working towards a personal independence payment award for Wayne which would improve his situation, alongside seeking more affordable housing.

The PALS Hometown Project is an innovative approach to improving men's mental health awareness and well-being in Stockton-on-Tees, with a focus on the Town Centre wards. The project enables regular meetings that allow men of all ages to talk about their mental health, isolation and overall wellbeing in a safe, community space lead by peers. It connects people and signposts them to relevant services through initiatives like Infant Hercules Men's Choir (with 110 members) and community wellbeing walks.



*PALS project*



### **Alan – community spaces**

Community spaces started life as ‘warm spaces’ as the cost-of-living crisis began to take hold and sprung up across the borough in a range of venues. They have evolved to become wider community spaces welcoming people from the local community, running a range of activities and combatting loneliness and social isolation. Alan (70yrs old, Thornaby) offers invaluable support as a volunteer at one of the community spaces:

*‘Alan has been an absolute godsend in the success and sustainability of the Warm Welcome social drop in. He is full of the enthusiasm and just gets on with whatever needs doing, whether that is making drinks, welcoming people, calling bingo, tidying up or spreading the word about the group.*

*Alan is so cheerful and the group love him. He is very approachable and has been a real hit with his sense of humour. Alan has donated prizes himself to the bingo games played at each session and has even asked a local business to donate prizes too. It is such a relief to be able to leave the group in Alan’s capable hands when regular staff cannot lead the sessions. He is not fazed by this and seems to enjoy the responsibility. He is full of energy and keen to think of new ways to expand the group and add extra activities that people will enjoy.*

*Alan is a real community star!’*

(Community spaces staff member)

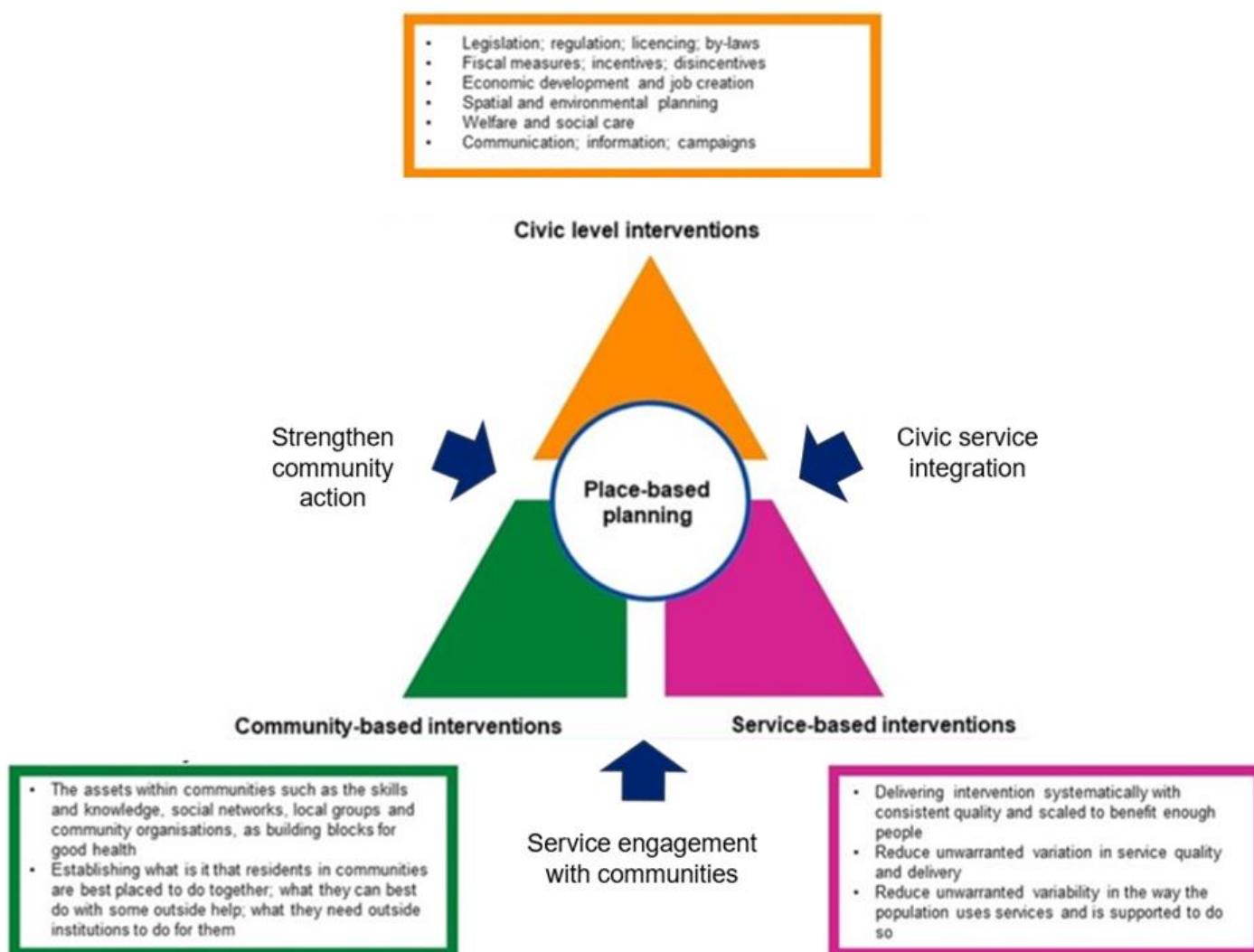


Alan volunteering at one of the borough’s community spaces

## Approach – what next in Stockton-on-Tees?

As addressing health inequalities is complex, it is helpful to coordinate and plan our activity through a single evidence-based approach, which will help the partners across the borough to act in a systematic and structured way, focusing on local place.

### The Population Intervention Triangle (PIT)



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-inequalities-place-based-approaches-to-reduce-inequalities/place-based-approaches-for-reducing-health-inequalities-main-report>

The Population Intervention Triangle (PIT) model sets out that to be effective, system leadership and planning is needed to implement action on civic, service and community interventions. The elements in the model have the potential to reduce inequalities at population scale.

- **Civic** interventions have the greatest reach of any intervention. Local authorities are a driving force as leaders of place and are well-placed to act on many drivers of inequality. There are

tools available to help implement healthy public policy on the following, which both impact on health and wellbeing and address inequality e.g. economic development, spatial planning, welfare, community safety and impact as a major local employer.

- **Services** can achieve significant outcomes due to their direct impact with individuals but must be delivered with system, scale and sustainably - and deliver further and faster to the most disadvantaged communities.
- **Community** - it is important that all partners and communities understand the value of community assets in reducing reduce health inequalities (e.g. skills and knowledge, social networks, local groups and community organisations, as building blocks for good health). Community-centred approaches focus on changing the conditions that drive poor health alongside individual factors. They aim to increase people's control over their health and lives.
- Particular focus on **joint working across the interfaces** between the civic, service and community sectors will enable the whole to become more than the sum of its parts.

The model is accompanied by a range of practical tools and more detail on specific actions that can support its delivery to produce measurable population level change. It is based on focusing on place and not just individual problems or issues and was developed through practical experience, including addressing health inequalities between and within local geographies.

The PIT model can be used at a variety of levels:

- To support **cross-organisational working** at the strategic place-based level, including with population health management.
- At a **topic or condition level**, it can (for example) support whole system approaches to main elements of health inequalities and prevention (aimed at wider determinants, behaviours or health conditions).
- By **individual partners** (for example primary care; voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector) as a framework to easily see how their contributions fit on a place basis.

### **The PIT approach: What is our current position?**

A self-assessment, co-produced across partners and the community, would support shared strategic direction and action across the system and is recommended as a next step. However, an overview of some key points is captured here. Strategic bodies such as the Place Leadership Board and Health and Wellbeing Board support work across the interface between civic, community and service activity.

#### **Civic intervention**

Key strategies and policies are in place and leaders across the local system have identified addressing inequality and improving health and wellbeing as priorities. There is the opportunity to embed addressing inequality and equity impact assessment and to join up across the system further through identifying shared strategic outcomes. Also to acknowledge and implement the intersectionality approach and glean learning from other areas that have taken a 'Marmot places' approach.

There are pockets of good practice in relation to designing approaches and models of support and in commissioning e.g. work to build social value in contracts. The Council is continuing to develop further as a lead employer in the borough and to embed addressing inequality specifically throughout commissioning processes. Much work is underway on practice and workforce e.g. development of welfare support and the employment hub, with the opportunity to employ a 'Making Every Contact Count' approach.

It is important to embed into our monitoring frameworks: measuring impact on the gaps between worst and best outcomes in our communities; and community voices and the outcome of community conversations. The indicators set out in Marmot's review provide an evidence-based starting point for measuring whether we are addressing the root causes of inequality

#### **Service-based intervention**

Currently we have some services and models that are based on the best available evidence and are tailored according to need. However, this is not consistently the case across the health and wellbeing system – this approach is needed at scale to have a meaningful and sustainable impact and to go further and faster where there is the greatest need. Embedding equity impact assessment will also support this.

Starting from the experience and journey of communities and individuals (rather than services) will help in designing more joined up approaches and support. To design models that are tailored according to need, a more nuanced understanding is needed of the many inter-related factors leading to inequality in communities, with services responding to these and not focused on individual issues where this is over-simplistic.

### **Community-based intervention**

Focused work is under way in the Council to better understand the strengths and assets in communities, as well as community views. This is being developed focusing on supporting community development and community engagement, and learning from other areas across the UK who are further along in establishing a new partnership with local people. Working with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) we are embarking on a self-assessment process to help us determine our readiness and next steps in this work. There is the opportunity to then join this up with strategic partners to identify a common approach and next steps. We know that there are groups in our local population who we need to work more closely with to understand their strengths and needs so we can agree together a coherent approach to working together.

The work with communities will have implications for how we work as statutory organisations in the future, including how we shape and support our workforce. There are some good examples of working closely with communities on specific issues and agendas and there is the opportunity to broaden this and embed into strategy and policy. We also need to ensure commissioning processes allow co-production and support to small community organisations who may be best placed to deliver on particular issues.

Lastly our impact monitoring approaches can be developed to capture the experience of our local communities and sit these alongside quantitative data to inform collective evaluation, planning and decision-making.

**In summary**, a huge amount of work is going on in the community and across organisations to address inequalities and their causes. We can build on this by **agreeing a shared approach** across partners in the borough that is rooted in research evidence and addresses the **complex relationships** between the causes of inequality. The **PIT approach** brings together civic, service and community action to do this. A self-assessment will highlight gaps in our current work and identify next steps and how we work together. There are some starting points in systematically embedding addressing inequality into all our key **policies, approaches** and **services**, working across **partners** and **communities**.

## Next steps

**Key message: To help address inequalities and improve health and wellbeing, we need a systematic, evidence-based approach agreed and implemented across partners and communities and embedded in strategy, policy, design, action, monitoring and evaluation.**

A co-produced self-assessment will identify actions across partners and the community. To continue to drive forward addressing inequalities, our current position in the borough points to some initial next steps.

1. **Adopt the Population Intervention Triangle (PIT) approach**, working with partners and communities to embed this, driven by strategic leadership across the borough and the local health and wellbeing system e.g. Health and Wellbeing Board, Place Leadership Board. The strategic approach will help define how we work together as a health and wellbeing system and out of this will fall programmes and activities in-line with the evidence base.
2. It is proposed the PIT is used to **support** the implementation of the **A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees framework** with a focus on the wider determinants of health to support addressing inequalities in general (beyond specifically health inequalities). The approach will provide next steps beyond the initial focus on poverty, proposing how to address the complex inter-related causes of inequality through both a strategic approach and practical tools.
3. Work across local partners and the community to **co-produce a self-assessment** (particularly in relation to the civic and service aspects) on our current position and generate recommendations and actions. The recommendations can be linked with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy as they are updated and will help to highlight initial areas of focus and short- and longer-term actions.
4. **Consider** adopting a **'Marmot place' approach** or using the learning from Marmot place sites.
5. Explore **LGA support** for the self-assessment process and / or bespoke LGA support programmes to embed addressing inequality across the Council and local system e.g. policy and leadership support.
6. **Adopt** and embed an **equity impact assessment** approach across all Council strategies, policies and programmes of work, engaging experts in intersecting inequalities e.g. Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, LGA, Health Foundation, Association of Directors of Public Health, National Development Team for Inclusion.



7. **Adopt** more **sustainable approaches** to creating the conditions for maximising health and wellbeing and addressing inequality e.g. taking the next step from providing shorter-term crisis food provision, to a strategic approach to the local food environment.
8. Continue to focus on **supporting community building**, focusing on assets and strengths.
9. Continue to move towards **embedding working with the community** in developing policy, designing approaches to issues and models of support / services, commissioning processes and understanding impact on outcomes.
10. Explore opportunities to embed the approach to addressing inequalities across the collective workforce, such as **adopting a Making Every Contact Count approach** focusing on advice and brief interventions on a small number of consistent key issues.
11. Embed the model in the Council's transformation agenda (Powering our Future) – for example
  - a. Communities: Through supporting a **better understanding of communities** where there is currently a gap in our knowledge and our joint working e.g. some BAME communities. Working with communities to address inequality and build protective factors through the PIT approach, will also support the move to **earlier intervention and prevention**.
  - b. Transformation: Through **informing our approach** to design of models of support and services. The approach will promote **early prevention** through focusing on wider socio-economic determinants of health, balancing targeted and universal activity and providing a structure to help address the complex interactions between factors that lead to inequality, beyond deprivation.
  - c. Partnerships: Through providing a **structured approach** to determining priorities and approach across strategic partners; and aligning activity and systematically monitor impact.
  - d. Regeneration: Through helping to embed addressing **wider socio-economic determinants** of inequalities and health and wellbeing through policy and practical action.
  - e. Colleagues: Through embedding an approach to prevention and addressing inequality in our **workforce planning**; and embedding e.g. Making Every Contact count across our current workforce to **maximise their impact**.
12. Identify and **address gaps in our understanding of local communities**, through work with the community, local intelligence and research evidence. For example, the experience of people in varying ethnic groups and the LGBTI community.
13. **Ensure** local strategic outcomes / **impact monitoring approaches explicitly capture impact in inequalities**, using the Marmot indicators as a basis. A logic model approach can lend itself well to clearly linking actions and measures to strategic outcomes and
14. will be used to monitor the new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Life expectancy

Life expectancy across the population for females (2011-15) was 81.4 years.

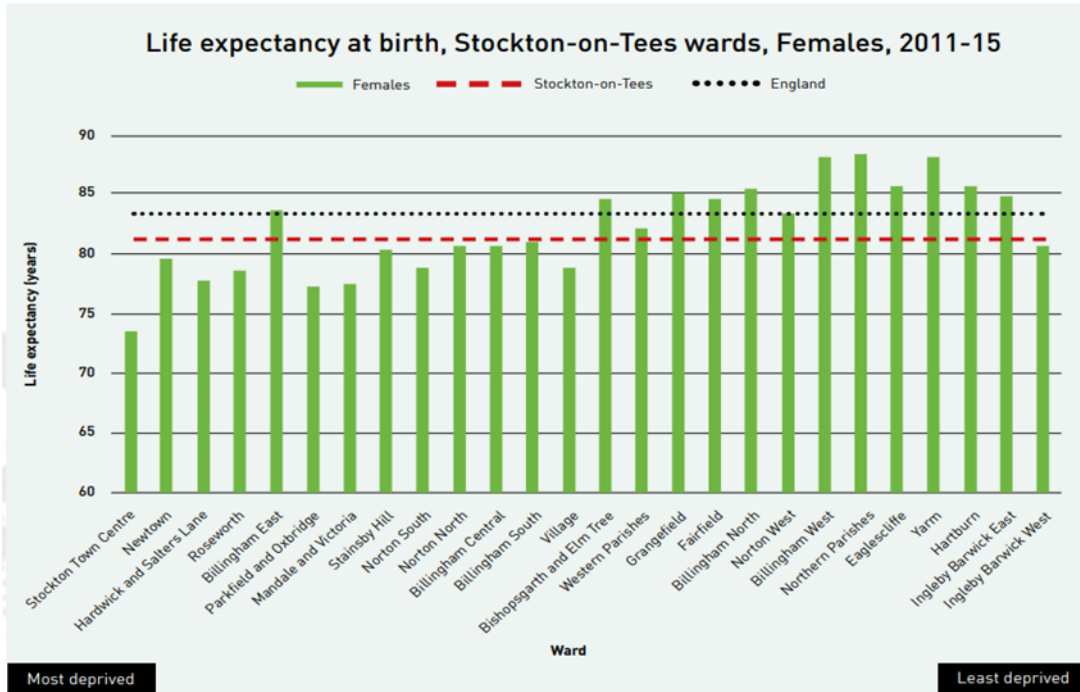


Figure 1 Life expectancy at birth, Stockton on Tees wards, females 2011-15

Life expectancy across the population for females (2016-20) was 82.1 years.

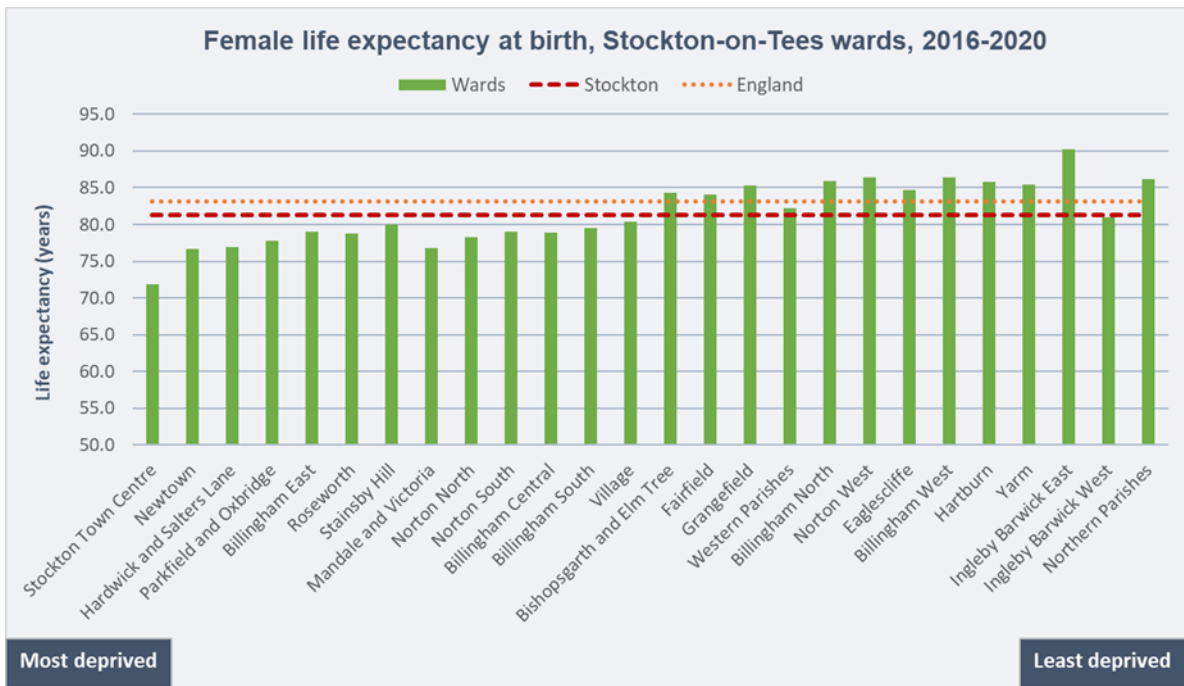


Figure 2 Life expectancy at birth, Stockton on Tees wards, females 2016-20

Life expectancy across the population for males (2011-15) was 78 years.

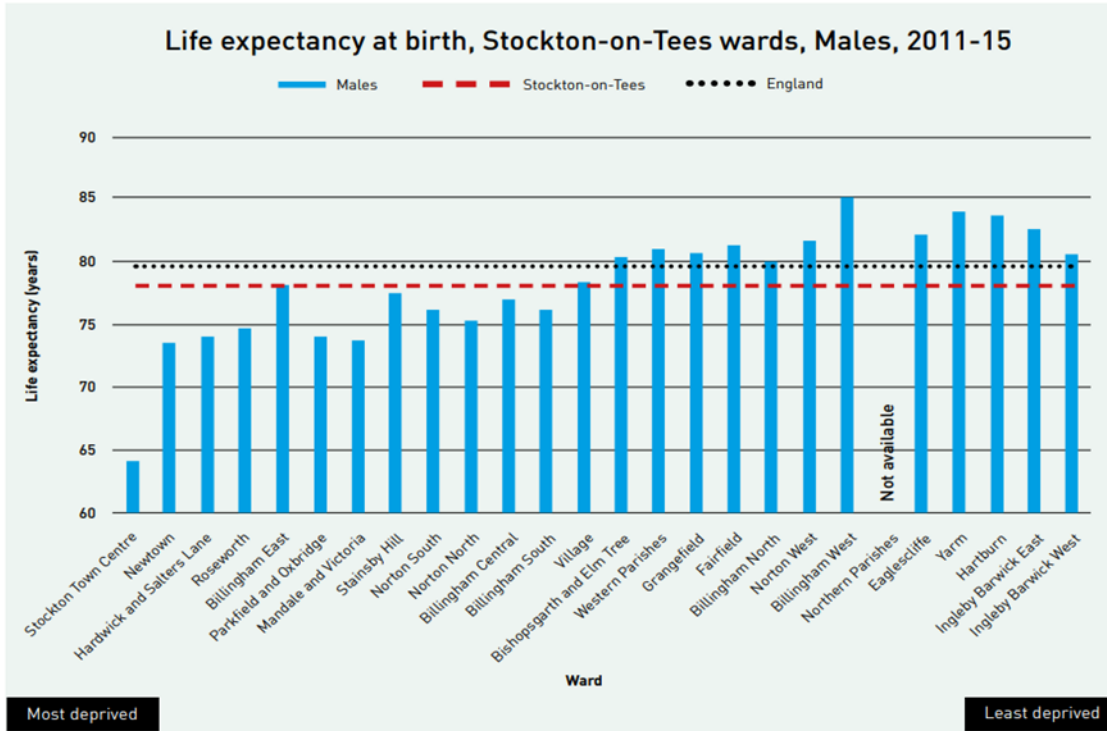


Figure 3 Life expectancy at birth, Stockton on Tees wards, males 2011-15

Life expectancy across the population for males (2016-20) was 78 years.

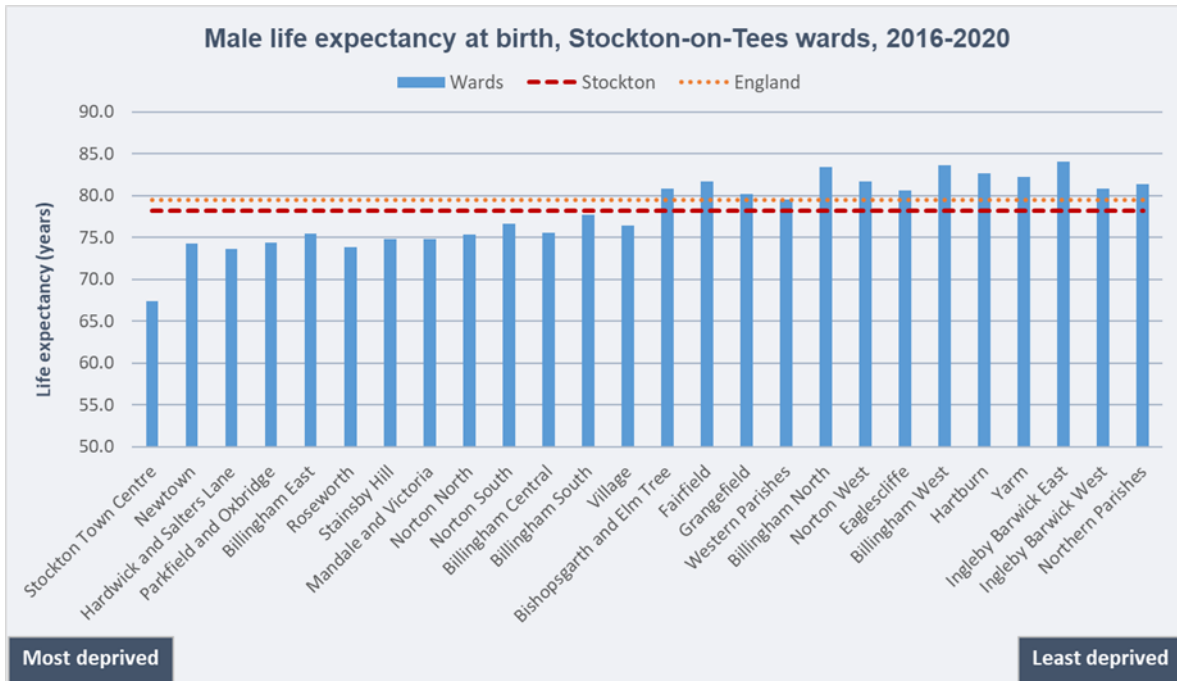


Figure 4 Life expectancy at birth, Stockton on Tees wards, males 2016-20

## Appendix 2: Inequality in life expectancy

### Females

For females there has been an increase in the slope of inequality from 11.4 years to 13.9 years. The gap in LE from decile 1 to decile 2 in 2011-2013 was approximately 1.8 years, this increased to 4 years in 2018-2020. Life expectancy for females has decreased in all deciles except decile 6 and decile 8 where there been a small increase (0.1yrs). The most significant decrease is in decile 3 has seen the greatest decrease (3.9 years).

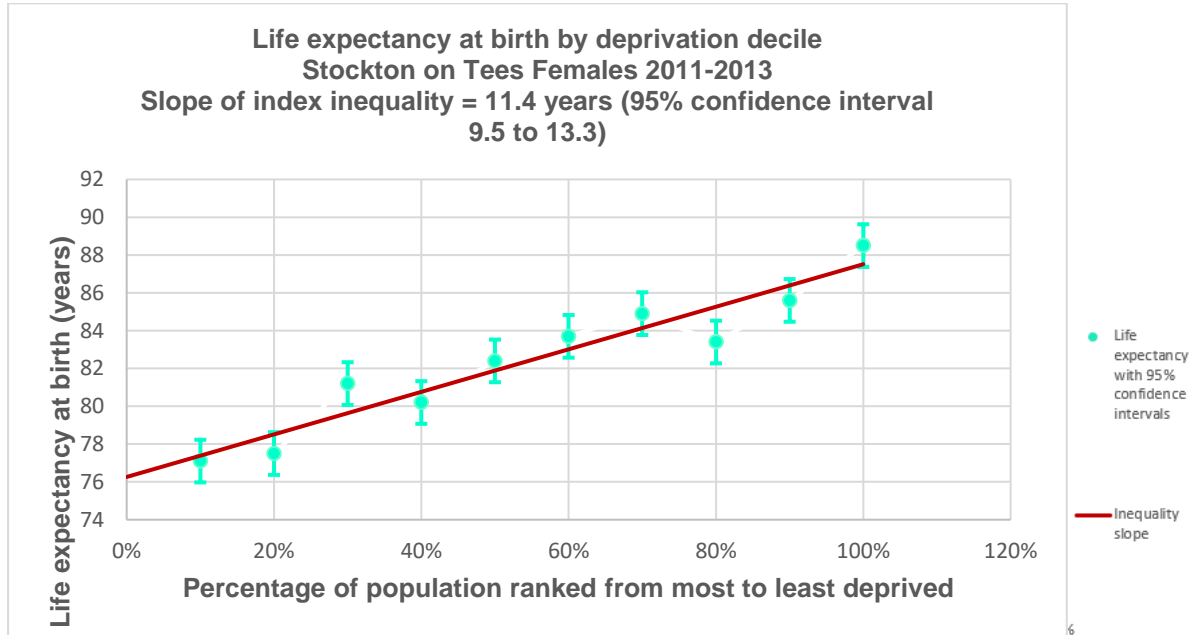


Figure 5 Life expectancy at birth by deprivation decile, Stockton on Tees, females, 2011-13

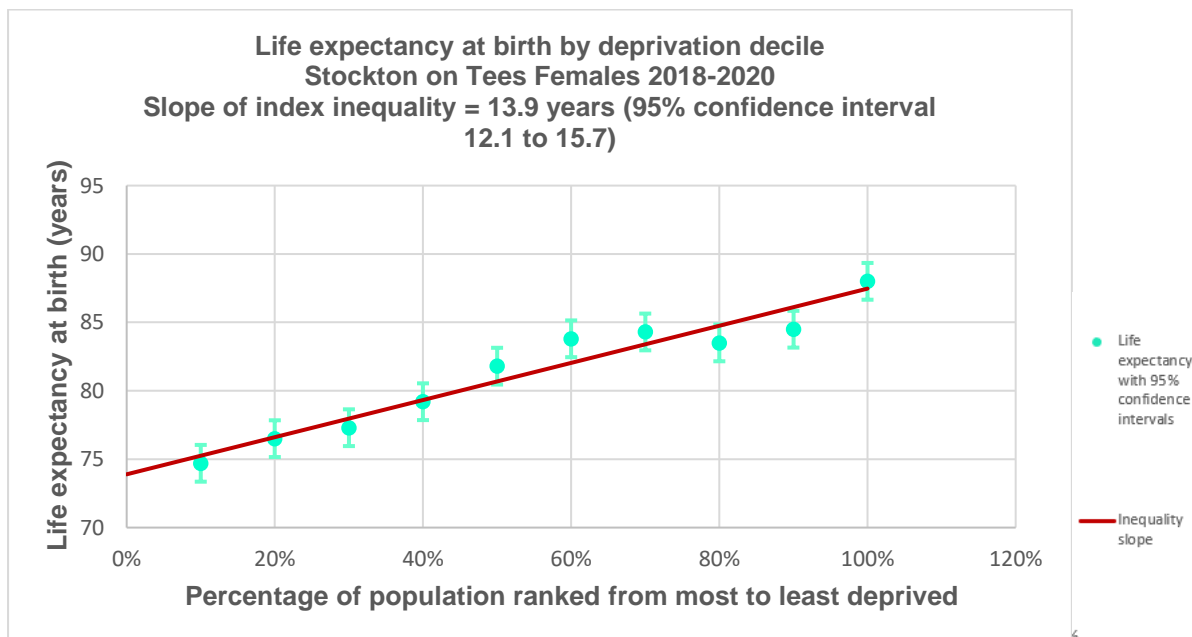


Figure 6 Life expectancy at birth by deprivation decile, Stockton on Tees, females, 2018-20

**Males**

For males the slope index of inequality reduced from 17.3 in 2011-3 to 14.5 in 2018-20. The explanation is not clear, but the 2011-13 data may well have been skewed by the 3rd least deprived decile, which has ‘pulled the line upwards’ at the right-hand end, whereas the line for 2018-20 is not influenced by such extremes and so may be ‘flatter’ as a result.

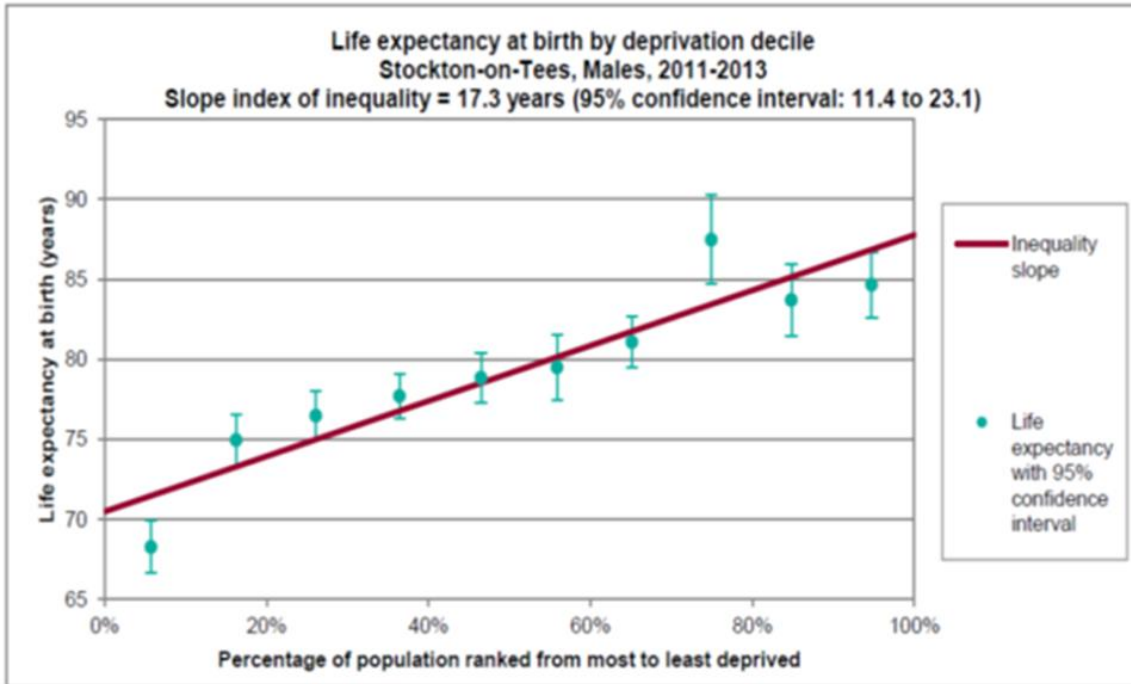


Figure 7 Life expectancy at birth by deprivation decile, Stockton on Tees, males, 2011-13

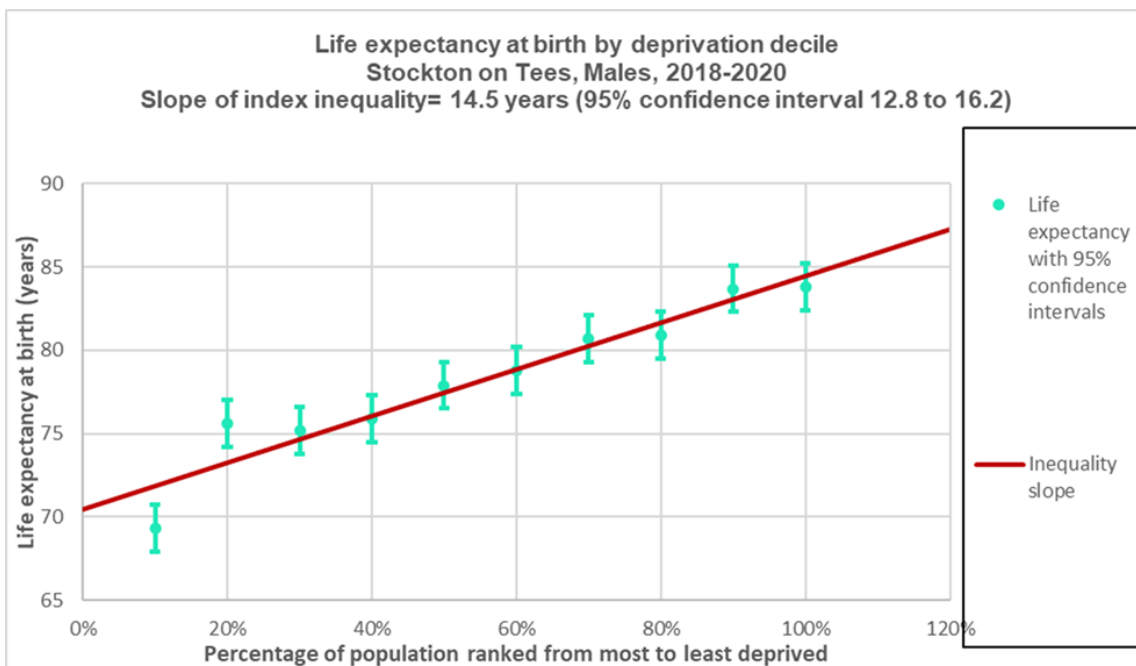


Figure 8 Life expectancy at birth by deprivation decile, Stockton on Tees, males, 2018-20

**Appendix 3: Intersectionality**

The IPPR report *Intersectionality: Revealing the realities of poverty and inequality in Scotland* (2021) (<https://www.ippr.org/articles/an-intersectional-approach-to-poverty-and-inequality-in-scotland>) made recommendations for Scotland’s Poverty and Inequality Commission based on existing research on policy, and on speaking to people with direct experience of living with multiple factors impacting their wellbeing and access to services. It looked at access to public services such as housing and healthcare, to digital access, the reliability of social security, food insecurity, no recourse to public funds status and barriers to employment.

The Scottish government’s diversity wheel illustrating intersectionality, showing how personal characteristics intersect with systems and structures to shape a person’s experience (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/using-intersectionality-understand-structural-inequality-scotland-evidence-synthesis/pages/3/>).

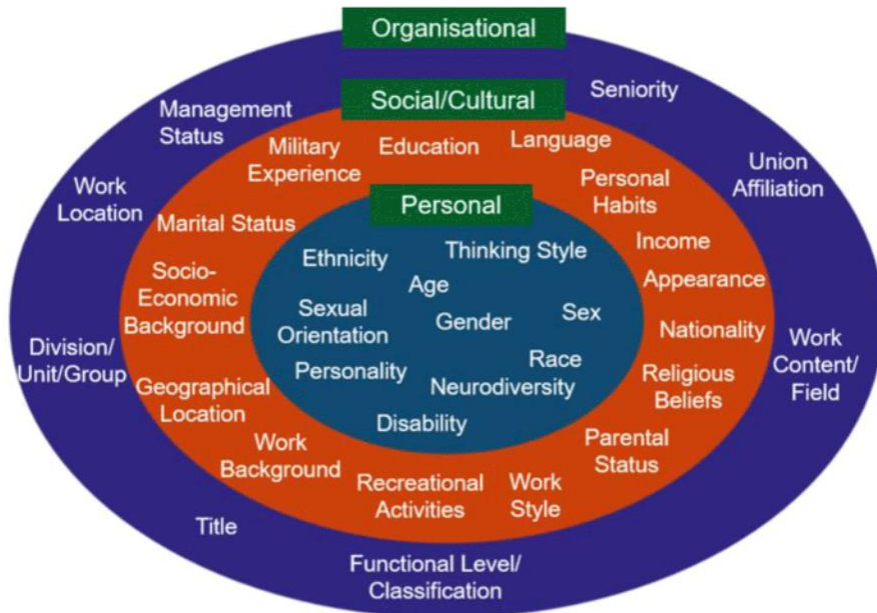


Figure 9 Diversity wheel. Scottish government 2022

**Appendix 4: Breakdown of the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived quintiles of Stockton-on-Tees by cause of death, 2020 to 2021**

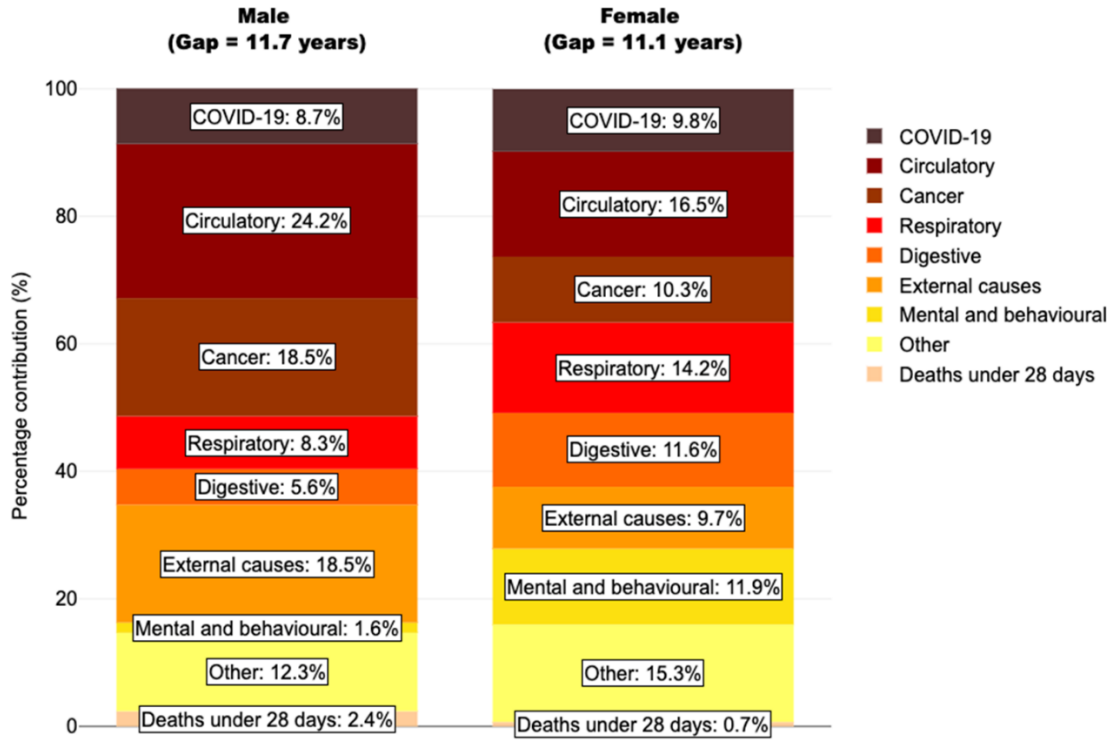


Figure 10 Life expectancy gap between most and least deprived population quintiles by cause of death. Stockton on Tees. 2020-21

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