

Date: Thursday 13 February 2025 at 4.30 pm

Venue: Conference Room, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, TS17 6BJ

Cllr Robert Cook (Leader)

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

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Welcome and Evacuation Procedure | (Pages 7 - 8) |
| 2 | Apologies for Absence | |
| 3 | Declarations of Interest | |
| 4 | Minutes | |
| | To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 16 January 2025. | (Pages 9 - 18) |
| | <u>Deputy Leader of the Council and Children & Young People</u> | |
| 5 | School Performance 2023 - 2024 for Vulnerable Pupils | (Pages 19 - 34) |
| 6 | Procedure for Admission of Pupils to Primary and Secondary Schools in September 2026 | (Pages 35 - 54) |
| | <u>Health, Leisure and Culture – Cllr Steve Nelson</u> | |
| 7 | Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030 | (Pages 55 - 82) |
| 8 | Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) | (Pages 83 - 94) |

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

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

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

Contact: Democratic Services Officer, Peter Bell on email peter.bell@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

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

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

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

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

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

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Dunedin House Emergency Evacuation Procedure

In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately leave by the nearest available signed Exit route.

The main evacuation assembly point is the overflow car park, located across the road from Dunedin House.

Once there await further instructions.

- Do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear” which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer.
- And please do not leave the area without permission.

Dunedin House Emergency Evacuation Procedure

CABINET

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday 16 January 2025.

Present: Cllr Robert Cook (Leader), Cllr Pauline Beall (Cabinet Member), Cllr Lisa Evans (Cabinet Member), Cllr Clare Besford (Cabinet Member) and Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Cabinet Member).

Officers: Mike Greene (CE), Garry Cummings (DCE&F, T&P), Reuben Kench, Tara Connor (CS,E&C), (DoAH&W), Ged Morton, Julie Butcher, Kirsty Grundy, Peter Bell (CS), Carolyn Nice, Leanne Maloney-Kelly (A,H&W), Tracey Carter, Iain Robinson (IG&D), Majella McCarthy, Eddie Huntington (C&YP).

Also in attendance: Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Lynn Hall and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

Apologies: Cllr Nigel Cooke (Cabinet Member) and Cllr Steve Nelson (Cabinet Member).

CAB/78/24 Evacuation Procedure

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

CAB/79/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CAB/80/24 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024 be approved.

CAB/81/24 Minutes of Various Bodies

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

Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board – 11 September 2024
Safer Stockton Partnership – 2 October 2024

RESOLVED that the minutes be received.

CAB/82/24 Regeneration Powering our Future

Consideration was given to a report that set out proposals to refresh the Council's Regeneration Mission, with a focus on 'Place Making' that aligns with our Stockton-on-Tees Plan priorities for:

- A great place to live, work and visit
- An inclusive economy.

The Regeneration Mission would provide a core foundation for the Council to achieve our place-based ambitions and will act as a framework for future delivery.

In January 2024, Cabinet agreed a draft Mission Statement and underpinning Missions for the Powering Our Future Programme, which set out a picture of success for the future of the Council. This included a Regeneration Mission, focused on driving economic growth to improve community prosperity and wellbeing.

Since that time, work had taken place to refine each of the Missions, to ensure they provide a foundation to deliver ambitions and priorities set out in the Stockton-on-Tees Plan (agreed by Council in November 2024). There had also been national policy changes and developments in major programmes of work, which were relevant to consider in relation to the Regeneration Mission.

It was therefore considered timely to review and re-set the Regeneration Mission, to position it with an increased focus on Place Making and achievement of Stockton-on-Tees Plan priorities. Achieving this Mission would incorporate significant, large-scale project and programme activity, which would be brought to Cabinet for decision making.

The Regeneration Mission was detailed within the report.

Success would be measured through a set of indicators that formed part of performance reporting for the Stockton-on-Tees Plan. This would include an emphasis on employment, skills and population rates, business growth and diversification of housing.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposals for the Regeneration Mission, set out in sections 4-7 of the report be agreed.
2. Future update reports be received as appropriate for major projects and programmes of work, and as part of Powering Our Future progress reporting.
3. Performance is reported through the Stockton-on-Tees Plan Performance Management Framework.

CAB/83/24 Levelling Up Fund Preston Park Museum & Grounds Enhancements

Consideration was given to a report that provided an update on progress improvements to Preston Park Museum and Grounds (PPMG) funded through Levelling Up Fund grant (LUF) and sought a decision to address financial pressures arising from mandatory unforeseen drainage works.

The programme of works as reported to Cabinet in March 2023 consisted of:-

- a. An extension exhibition and open store space at Preston Park Museum

- b. Improvement to the café and toilets (including demolition of current block)
- c. Enhancements to car parking
- d. Opportunities for an alternate use for the Aviary
- e. The creation of a new feature adjacent to the main entrance to celebrate and highlight the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) heritage and the original route through the Park

Following the most recent report to Cabinet on this matter in March 2023, work began on the Museum extension, exhibition space and open store along with increase to parking capacity in early 2024. The scheme was progressing on site with the car park works largely complete and completion and commissioning of the main build due in Spring 2025.

Work was also underway on the refurbishment of the existing café building which would see new toilets and changing places facility along with the demolition of the current toilet block complete by June 2025.

Initial design work had been undertaken on the reuse of the Aviary, opening it up at surface level, with new planting and seating to create a new space and point of interest. Designs had been developed for the demolition (subject to planning permission) of the dilapidated 1920's South Lodge gatehouse and replace it with a feature to celebrate and highlight the route of the former Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR). Enhancements to the central area (adjacent to and between the café and car park) would improve accessibility and movement of vehicles and pedestrians. This work had progressed at a slower pace in cognisance of the emerging budget issues described within the report.

As work had progressed on the Museum extension, it became apparent that the historic drainage infrastructure which serves the current museum building and to which the new build would connect, did not meet current environmental standards and legal requirements.

This discovery prompted a period of assessment and exploration of mitigating actions in regard to both temporary and permanent solutions along with discussion with Northumbrian Water Limited.

Given the legal requirement to be fully compliant with modern environmental regulations, it quickly became apparent that in order for the facility to be operable both in its current form and following the addition of the extension and exhibition space, an attenuation tank and the addition of a significant length of new drainage as well as a new connection into the nearby network was required and this work was added to the current construction contract.

The cost of the temporary drainage solution (which is currently in place) as well the permanent solution described above (currently under construction) amounts to £950,000.

The terms of the LUF funding committed the Council to the delivery of the exhibition space, café/toilets and parking, with the Aviary, S&DR feature commemoration and central area not forming part of the bid but emerging more latterly in the programme as opportunities to enhance the park and visitor experience.

The core LUF bid could be delivered within the project budget of £12.4m. However, despite some minor value engineering of elements within the exhibition space, the required additional drainage works had exhausted project contingency reserves and the budget reserved for the additional works to the Aviary, S&DR heritage feature and central area.

The budget of £12.4m was fully committed (including fees and contingency) to the exhibition space, car park, toilets and café only, which was in line with the originally envisaged scope of works in the LUF bid.

There were essentially two options for the PPMG programme of works.

Option 1 - Reduce the scope of project works, excluding the Aviary, a S&DR heritage feature and the central area, resulting in delivery of the exhibition space, car park, café and toilets works within existing budget;

Option 2 – Identify funding within the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan to enable delivery of the full scope of the project, Aviary, a S&DR heritage feature and the central area

The cost of the works to the Aviary, S&DR heritage feature and central area as described at paragraph 4 of the report, as well as reinstatement of value engineered elements, was estimated at up to £950,000. These sums were estimates that would be confirmed at the point tenders are finalised, alongside provision for professional fees, contingency and provision for some value engineered items. The cost estimates were broken down within the report.

The sum for interventions was above the current approved funding envelope and as such up to £950,000 would need to be identified to deliver these interventions. It was recommended that funding be identified as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan report to Cabinet in February 2025.

If Cabinet were minded to approve option 2 to ensure the delivery of Aviary, S&DR heritage feature and central area along with reinstatement of value engineered elements, the final design and tender documentation could be prepared in order to achieve an accurate figure for delivery, with agreement of final contract sums and specification delegated to Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing.

If Members were minded to approve Option 1, it should be noted that there would remain a future liability to demolish the structurally unsound South Lodge which would need to be considered in the near future.

RESOLVED that the importance of the Aviary, Stockton & Darlington Railway heritage feature and central area to the Preston Park LUF enhancements be recognised and their delivery be supported, subject to funding being identified as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan report to Cabinet in February 2025.

**CAB/84/24 Additionally Resourced Provision in Mainstream Schools –
Outcome of EMS Consultation**

Consideration was given to a report on Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) in mainstream schools and the outcome of Enhanced Mainstream Schools (EMS) consultation.

In September 2024, a report was considered by Cabinet, for information only, on the consultation relating to increasing capacity in mainstream schools within Stockton-on-Tees, by transferring current Enhanced Mainstream Schools to Additionally Resourced Provision and SEN Units.

The Council had successfully submitted a revised Delivering Better Value (DBV) plan to DfE on 19 February 2024. This plan was formally agreed by Government and required the Council to fully mitigate the aggregated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit by 2027/28, because if left unmitigated the number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) was forecast to reach 2,564 by January 2027 (2,280 at time of submission) which would result in an unmitigated aggregated deficit of £34.8m by the end of 2027/28 compared with a current (end of 2023/2024) deficit of £3.8m.

The plan to reduce the deficit and provide long-term stability was based on eight mitigations, the most significant of which (in terms of deficit reduction and long-term sustainability) was to increase capacity in local mainstream primary and secondary schools thereby reducing the need for significantly more expensive independent special school and out of area special school placements.

There was a need to improve outcomes for children with special educational needs across the Borough and respond to the increasing demand for specialist support at the earliest opportunity. This fits with the Council's vision of providing earlier intervention to reduce demand for expensive placements which were often out of Borough and aligned with the overarching strategy of SEND locally and the priority areas in the Delivering Better Value Action Plan.

The Council had a statutory duty to ensure there was sufficient and suitable educational provision to meet the need of all its children and young people. Stockton-on-Tees had a significant shortfall in provision relating to pupils with Special Educational Needs. There was a need for a Cabinet decision to commit funding to increase the number of placements for children with SEND in the Borough.

The proposal to introduce a model of Additional Resourced Provisions and SEND Units would align with the Department for Education Guidance and allow for clear registration of the provision with benefits to schools and families. It would allow parents to request these schools in line with the duties in the Children and Families Act 2014 and would give parents additional choice of school placements, as opposed to current options of mainstream or special schools.

As a result of the pressure on places, more children were being allocated specialist places within the private sector, including the use of independent and alternative provision to support children not able to access a local special school place. This resulted in lengthy journeys for vulnerable children and pressure on families, whose children were educated away from their local communities. As well as having a significant impact on children's experiences, this was a costly solution; fees charged by the private sector were significantly higher than the costs related to children attending local schools. There were also associated transport costs for children attending schools outside the area which impacted on core revenue funding.

Local and national data demonstrated increasing demand for places for children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans was set to not only continue but expected to accelerate in line with national trends.

In the academic year 2023/2024, 126 children in Years 1-11 transferred from mainstream schools into special schools in and out of the Borough. In the academic year 2024/25 so far, this number was at 65 additional children. With a lack of special school places available, there was a requirement to respond locally to this. Work was also ongoing to upskill and support all mainstream schools in the Borough, however, the impact of this would not be immediately seen.

In September 2024, Cabinet agreed for consultation to take place with all stakeholders to determine that the proposal met the needs and priorities of children and families within the Borough and that school leaders agreed with and understood the proposals. The consultation also gave an opportunity for schools to express an interest in becoming an ARP / SEN Unit for the additional places required.

The consultation was largely positive, with over 251 responses and only 8.37% of those responses disagreeing with the proposals. Over 86% of the responses from parents and carers stated that they strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals.

The proposal was to realign existing EMS provision and transfer them into ARP and SEND Units, with 100 additional places in the areas of need that respond to the increase in demand. For example, to reduce the number of places available where there is a lower demand, i.e. sensory and physical, HI/VI and increase places for children with speech and language needs or autism spectrum disorder.

The establishment of ARPs and SEND Units ensured that where possible more children with an EHCP could be taught alongside, and within, a mainstream school environment. This had educational benefits for those children whilst also assisting the Council to better utilise the limited funding available through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) as it allowed those learners for whom the provision was appropriate to be placed in more cost-effective provision. The establishment of specialist resourced provision across the Borough further increased the range of SEND provision available to meet the needs of children, particularly those children with significant additional needs being able to access a mainstream curriculum.

A number of new schools had applied to be additionally resourced provisions. Some schools, who were EMS had asked to withdraw. This would not impact the children accessing the provision and the EMS would remain operational until all children left.

ARP/SEN Unit place costs plus appropriate top-up funding would be funded from the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This was a ring-fenced revenue grant received on an annual basis from the DfE.

The Council spent £1.9m per annum on EMS provisions for 209 places in Stockton schools, but by transferring these into SEN Units/ARPs and creating up to 100 additional places for children across the Borough, there would be an additional ongoing financial requirement of around £730,000 per year (assuming all placements are full) from High Needs funding in addition to current spend. Without the interventions there was a risk that the 100 children who would be placed in these ARPs would be placed in a an out of area agency placement with an average cost of £60,000 per annum resulting in a total annual cost of £6m.

These changes in provision would therefore deliver a cost avoidance of £5.27m per annum by 2026/27 and the cumulative impact of this was £13.61m by 2027-28 and was summarised within the report.

Some financial modelling based on the transport costs of children in EMS indicated that the creation of 100 new ARP places could add a pressure of around £225k to the Council's annual Community Transport budget. The exact cost would be determined by the placement of the ARPs and the location of the children enrolled and it was important to note that if the ARP places were not made available locally, then this cost pressure would be significantly higher as children would require transport out of area.

There was also an opportunity to deliver some capital works costing around £85,000 at Preston Primary School. This would ensure the creation of a SEND unit that was able to permanently accommodate 16 pupils. This would generate a cumulative saving of £1.59m by 2027-28.

A table within the report summarised the cumulative saving against the unmitigated DBV deficit position of £34.8m.

DfE had announced the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2025/26. The allocation for SBC was £44.2m (£40.78m in 2024/25). This was an increase of 7.4% and an additional £2.2m on the estimated funding in the DBV plan (This was a 3% increase as suggested by DfE).

The proposals described above, supported with the additional HN funding should give the Council a good basis on which to develop a more fit for purpose HN system in the Borough; one that was in-line with the DBV plan and that would enable the LA to mitigate the aggregated DSG deficit by 2027/28.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The recommendation to transfer Enhanced Mainstream Schools to ARP and SEN Units from September 2025 be supported.
2. An additional £730,000 p.a. be invested into these provisions from the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
3. £85,000 be allocated from the High Needs provision capital allocations for investment in the SEND Unit at Preston Primary School to increase capacity from 8 to 16 places in September 2025.

CAB/85/24 Review of the Statement of Principles for Gambling Premises in Stockton-on-Tees

Consideration was given to a report on the Review of the Statement of Principles for Gambling Premises in Stockton-on-Tees.

The Authority was required, by the Gambling Act 2005, to publish a Statement of Principles (policy) that it proposed to apply when exercising its functions under the Act. This policy must be published every three years.

Gambling was regulated in two ways, the Gambling Commission regulated the individuals who provide gambling, carrying out a fit and proper test on licensed operators. The Local Authority issue premise licences to those operators ensuring the premises where gambling was carried out meets legislation and guidance.

Gambling had changed in recent years, traditional methods such as betting shops were being replaced with online gambling. The Gambling Commission regulated online gambling. The number of betting shop premises had reduced by 17 over the past 9 years. The main source of statistical data on gambling was from the Gambling Commission website, further information was attached to the report.

As well as the Gambling Act 2005, the Gambling Commission Guidance for Local Authorities detailed how the local authority should exercise its functions when licensing premises for gambling.

There had been no legislative changes since 2022, as such there had been no material changes to the current policy. The policy has had a refresh regarding look, ease of use and updated information about the Borough, gambling participation and gambling harms, and a copy of the draft was made available to Members.

The draft policy was published for a four-week public consultation. The consultation included stakeholders such as the Gambling Commission, trade associations, licensees, children's services, local residents' groups, responsible authorities including police and public health, and all members. The consultation was also published on the Council website and a public notice was placed on the notice boards of all public libraries. No comments on the draft policy were received.

The Statutory Licensing Committee considered the draft policy at a hearing on 24 September 2024, no additional comments were received.

RESOLVED that the revised Statement of Principles for Gambling Premises in Stockton-on-Tees be agreed and come into effect on the 31 January 2025.

CAB/86/24 2024 Event Summary and 2025 Memorial Lighting Calendar

Consideration was given to a report that provides an overview of the Council's 2024 Events Programme, including commercial and community led events which had been delivered by third parties, including events on Council land. The report also provided details of the delivery of the Council's biggest event, Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) which received very positive feedback in the independent market research, with 92% rating the whole experience positively and 94% feel that SIRF was a good use of Council resources.

In addition, the report provided the suggested calendar for memorial lighting for 2025.

The Borough's event programme continued to be popular with visitor numbers and satisfaction levels remained high over the past year. There had been a good mix of small, medium and large-scale events delivered across the six towns, and some new small scale town centre events included Yard Sessions, Sustainable Environment Fair and Going for Gold.

The Council's resources continued to be deployed across the Borough to enable local event organisers to deliver their own community focussed events which, although

supported, were delivered independently of the Council. Over 25 community and local events were delivered this year, many delivered on Council land and all receiving practical support from the Council, including specialist planning and safety advice, access to relevant Council services, and financial support for safety officers, road closures, signage and programming etc. This support was essential for communities to enable them to manage their own events and celebrations in a safe manner.

Part of our large-scale event programme continued to be temporarily impacted due to the ongoing major redevelopment work on Stockton's Riverside and High Street locations. The suspension of these events which included Stockton's Fireworks, Super Car Saturday and Stockton's Cycling Festival had been planned and communicated to Members and our communities.

The Council's Events Service was working with the Town Team, contributing to the design of the new riverside spaces and planning for the continued use of the existing riverside spaces, and developing a new large-scale programme of events in preparation for the opening of the site.

Internally, there continued to be a joined-up approach across Council teams in the delivery of our events programme and the effort and support provided from service teams including Enforcement, Highways, Legal, Communications, Media, CFYA and Design Services was acknowledged. The effectiveness of this joint working and ability to respond to unexpected challenges had been very evident this year, particularly in relation to the impact of adverse weather and changes to programme and overall delivery.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The success of events programme during 2024/25.
2. The memorial lighting calendar for 2025/26 be approved.

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2025

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET INFORMATION ITEM

Children & Young People - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Lisa Evans

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2023 - 2024 FOR VULNERABLE PUPILS

REASONS FOR PRODUCING THIS REPORT

The annual report on standards for vulnerable groups across the borough enables Cabinet to monitor standards and achievement and to evaluate the impact of local authority monitoring, challenge, intervention, and support.

SUMMARY

This report presents a summary analysis of vulnerable pupil performance in the academic year 2023-2024 for all key stages and all providers in the Borough. It is informed by the latest available data, some of which remains unvalidated and compared to national and regional averages where they exist. It includes performance outcomes for:

1. Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding;
2. Performance by gender;
3. Performance by ethnicity;
4. Children and Young People in Our Care;
5. Children with Special Needs;
6. Children from Service Families;
7. Attendance and exclusion figures for Stockton.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The annual report on standards for vulnerable groups across the borough enables Cabinet to monitor standards and achievement and to evaluate the impact of local authority monitoring, challenge, intervention, and support.

Recommendations

- Cabinet to note and comment as appropriate on standards and achievement across the Borough for vulnerable groups of children.
- Cabinet to note the strong overall performance of Stockton schools at both primary and secondary phases.
- Cabinet to note work undertaken to further reduce educational attainment gap.

DETAIL

1. In Stockton in 2024*:

- a. 9599 of Stockton's 29297 pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium and are classified as disadvantaged. This is 31.6% of the cohort. **This is 4.7% higher than the national average of 27.3%**
- b. 27.1% of pupils in primary schools are eligible for Free School Meals (FSMEver6). **This is 2.9% higher than the national average of 24.2%**
- c. 27.3% of pupils in secondary schools are eligible for Free School Meals (FSMEver6). **This is 3.3% higher than the national average of 24%**
- d. 1.3% pupils are identified as Children in Our Care (CIOC). **This is 0.64% higher than the national average of 0.66%.**
- e. 4,194 of Stockton's 32,182 pupils are classified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support provision, this is 13.0% of the cohort. **This is 0.3% lower than the national average of 13.3%** (Source NCER Census Data - Spring 24 Census exc. subsidiary pupils)
- f. 1,499 of Stockton's 32,182 pupils are classified as having SEN Education Health and Care Plan provision (EHCP), this is 4.7% of the cohort. **This is 0.1% higher than the national average of 4.6%** (Source NCER Census Data - Spring 24 Census exc. subsidiary pupils)
- g. 8.1% of pupils in primary schools have a first language other than English. **This is 14.6% lower than the national average of 22.7%** (Source NCER Census Data - Spring 24 Census exc. subsidiary pupils).
- h. 7.1% of pupils in secondary schools have a first language other than English. **This is 11.4% lower than the national average of 18.5%** (Source NCER Census Data - Spring 24 Census exc. subsidiary pupils).
- i. **12% of pupils in North East are identified as long-term disadvantaged** (3). The highest percentage is in London (15%). Long-term disadvantage varies considerably across the country.
- j. Disadvantaged pupils tend to do worse than their better-off peers.
- k. Those who are disadvantaged for the longest time do worst of all.
- l. 2021/22 data (4) evidences **32.6% of children in Stockton are living in poverty**, compared to 29% in the UK. This is an increase of 7.1% points since 2014/15, whilst the UK average is the same as at that point.
- m. There is no longer any statutory reporting of pupil outcomes at the end of KS1.
- n. Pupil progress data for the end of KS2 is not available in 2024 because these pupils were not assessed at the end of KS1 due to covid restrictions.

*based on the spring census

DISADVANTAGED PUPILS

2. Disadvantaged Pupils in this report are defined as those in receipt of Free School Meals at some point within last 6 years, and who have been eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

3. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. 2024 Stockton DS (Glossary Appendix 1) pupil attainment has improved compared to Stockton 2023 in Y1 phonics, KS2 reading, and in the overall KS2 combined reading, writing and maths benchmark (CRWM)
 - b. The attainment of DS pupils in Stockton is higher than the national and regional average for DS pupils in all 6 of the benchmarks across the primary phase.
 - c. The attainment of DS and NDS pupils in Stockton is above national average in the secondary phase.
 - d. All Stockton 2024 NDS primary attainment outcomes are above national average.
 - e. Secondary KS4 DS (4+EM) and DS Early Years Good Level of Development ranked second against North East regional benchmarks.
 - f. The Stockton 2024 DS/ NDS gap has narrowed compared to Stockton 2023 DS/NDS gap in KS2 reading and CRWM, as well as KS4.
 - g. The gap between Stockton DS and National NDS has narrowed in KS2 reading and CRWM compared to 2023.
4. All the following approaches have supported these improvements:
 - a. A relentless focus on closing the educational attainment gap in all our networks including:
 - Headteacher networks
 - English Leader Networks
 - Maths Leader Network
 - Closing the Gap Clusters
 - Attendance Networks
 - Early Years Networks
 - Library Service.
 - b. Robust challenge and support to strengthen the impact on pupil outcomes via school adviser Monitoring and Evaluation Reviews for our maintained schools and Leadership Development Partner visits for those schools that are part of Raising Achievement Partnerships.
 - c. Bespoke design of training programmes to support schools in reducing barriers to achievement, including Improving Educational Outcomes 5-7 programme and Leading Improvement in Reading programme.
 - d. Comprehensive identification of challenges which impact pupils' educational achievement for all schools across Stockton through the appreciative enquiry: 'Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment'

5. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a. The Stockton 2024 DS/ NDS gap has widened compared to Stockton 2023 DS/NDS gap at the end of the Early Years.
- b. Many of our most disadvantaged pupils have multiple vulnerabilities such as SEND, English as an Additional Language, social care involvement, poor attendance etc. The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt most strongly in these communities. Teacher recruitment/ retention and highly mobile pupil populations are also a challenge in the schools that serve the most disadvantaged communities.

GENDER

6. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. The attainment of girls in Stockton improved in 2024 compared to 2023, particularly in KS2 reading, writing and CRWM, but also in Y1 phonics.
- b. The boy/ girl gap within Stockton is closing compared to Stockton 2023 at the end of EYFS.
- c. The attainment of boys in Stockton compares favourably against national measures in Early Years, KS2 and KS4 attainment.
- d. The outcomes of girls in Stockton compares favourably against national measures in Early Years, KS2 (other than in reading) and KS4 attainment.
- e. The Stockton boy/ girl gap is narrower compared to the national boy/ girl gap at the end of the EYFS, and in KS2 attainment for reading, writing and CRWM, and both KS4 (4+EM) and KS4 Progress 8 measures.
- f. Boys attainment at the end of EYFS, KS2 maths and KS4 attainment ranked first against North East regional benchmarks

7. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT - CHALLENGES

- a. Although still above national, girls' attainment in reading at the end of KS2 continues to be a challenge and has declined in comparison with 2023.
- b. The boy/girl gap in maths at the end of KS2 is wider than national and regional comparators. Both genders outperform their group regionally and nationally.
- c. Although the gap in attainment at the higher standard at the end of KS2 is smaller than the regional and national average, this is because the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standard is lower for both gender groups.
- d. Progress 8 scores for both boys and girls are lower than the national average. Both have declined slightly in comparison with 2023.

PERFORMANCE BY ETHNICITY

8. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. The attainment of both non-white and white pupil groups at the end of EYFS is the highest in the region.
- b. Both white and non-white pupil groups outperform their peers nationally in writing at the end of KS2. Non-white pupils attain particularly well in this area.
- c. Both white and non-white pupil groups outperform their peers nationally for CRWM at the end of KS2
- d. The attainment of non-white pupils at KS4 has improved. While this mirrors the national picture, attainment for this group has improved more than nationally and Stockton ranks second in the region.
- e. Progress 8 scores for non-white pupils have improved.
- f. The attainment of non-white pupils for writing at KS2 ranks first regionally. Stockton is joint second in the region for white pupils.
- g. The attainment of non-white pupils for maths ranks second regionally. Stockton is third in the region for white pupils.
- h. The attainment of both white and non-white pupils for KS4 ranks second regionally.

9. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a) The attainment of non-white children at the end of the EYFS has declined in comparison to 2023. The gap between white and non-white children has increased and is wider than the national average.
- b) The attainment of non-white pupils for reading at the end of KS2 has declined in comparison to 2023. The gap between white and non-white pupils has increased and is wider than the national average.
- c) The attainment of non-white pupils for maths at the end of KS2 has declined in comparison to 2023. Although this means that the gap has narrowed, it is still slightly wider than the national average.
- d) The attainment of non-white pupils for CRWM at the end of KS2 has declined. Although this means that the gap has narrowed it should still be viewed as a challenge.
- e) Networks for EAL have been poorly attended in the last year and some have had to be cancelled.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE

10. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. The number of children in care, in each cohort, when assessments are carried out can often be so small that comparisons with other larger cohorts of children (for example regional and national cohorts) can be very misleading. The changing nature and stability of these cohorts can also make comparisons difficult.
- b. Data shows that outcomes for Children in our Care (CIOC) are in line with the national outcomes for Children in Care at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 (Level 5+ in English and Maths). No progress measures are available currently.
- c. Attendance figures for Children in our Care, although lower than it was prior to the pandemic in 2019, it is in line with national figures for Children in Care and has remained stable.
- d. Robust challenge and support from the Virtual School to schools and other professionals, promotes high quality educational experiences for Children in our Care.
- e. A comprehensive training programme organised and delivered by the Virtual School has provided 62 training sessions for 724 staff, from 68 educational establishments. Virtual Reality Headset Trauma training has been delivered to 35 education settings, social care staff and to a group of police officers. All training has received good or better feedback.
- f. Personal Education Plan completion has improved from 86.2% to 92.7% and quality of plans has improved overall, pleasingly in the top category (Green) from 73% to 79%.
- g. The Virtual School, through strong partnerships with schools, have avoided several permanent exclusions for Children in Care. This is achieved through good relationships, allowing for professional challenge and using a problem-solving approach to support appropriate alternative provision for these children.

11. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a. Suspensions have risen significantly since COVID and are well above the national rate for all Children in Care.

- b. Attendance is still below pre-pandemic levels. The number of Children in Care who have attendance below 50% is higher than pre-pandemic levels, as is the number of children who are not on a school roll.
- c. Take up of training is lower than this time last year as school staff are finding it harder to leave school during the school day.
- d. Availability of Educational Psychology support is a challenge.

**Virtual School Extended Duties for Children with a Social Worker (CWSW)
Data available for Children in Need (CIN) and children on child protection plans (CP)**

12. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. Attainment for Children in Need (CIN) in the primary phase remains stronger than for all Children in Need nationally.
- b. Attainment for Children on a Protection Plan (CP) in the primary phase remains stronger than for all Children on a Protection Plan nationally.
- c. At Key Stage 4 (Level 5+ in English and Maths) both Children in Need and Children on a Protection Plan achieve higher than this group nationally.
- d. Suspensions for CIN and CP are in line with national figures for this group of children.
- e. Attendance figures are in line with national figures for this group of children.

13. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a. Children With a Social Worker (CIN, CP and children who have had a social worker within the previous 6 years) still do significantly worse academically than non-CWSW.
- b. Attendance figures for CWSW is below the figure for all children and is below the figure for Children in Care.
- c. Suspensions for CWSW are above the figure for all children and above the figure for Children in Care. CWSW make up a disproportionate number of those suspended or permanently excluded.
- d. A continued area for development for this group is to continue to promote this group of children as a group in their own right, and to share their challenges through the FOCUS dashboard and accompanying analysis.

CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

- 14. **Overall:** In Stockton-on-Tees 17.7% of pupils have a statutory plan of SEN (statement or EHC plan) or are receiving SEN support (previously school action and school action plus). This compares to an average of 18.1% across All English unitary authorities. This represents a further increase year on year since 2018/19.
- 15. **EHCPs** Across All English unitary authorities, the proportion of pupils with statements of education, health and care (EHC) plans ranges from 2.7% to 6.8%. Stockton-on-Tees has a value of 4.7%, compared to an average of 4.7% in All English unitary authorities. This represents a further increase year on year since 2018/19.
- 16. **SEN Support:** For SEN support the proportion for All English unitary authorities ranges from 10.2% to 16.8%. Stockton-on-Tees has a value of 13.1%, compared to an average of 13.3% in All English unitary authorities. This represents a further increase year on year since 2018/19.

17. **CIOC:** In Stockton-on-Tees, 26.1% of looked after children are on SEN support, compared to 26.0% in All English unitary authorities. 28.5% of looked after children in Stockton-on-Tees have a statement of SEN or EHC Plan, compared to 32.1% in All English unitary authorities.
18. **CIN:** In All English unitary authorities, 21.7% of Children in Need are on SEN support and 27.4% have a statement of SEN or EHC plan. In Stockton-on-Tees, 18.0% of children in need are on SEN support and 21.9% of children in need have a statement of SEN or EHC plan.
19. **Primary Need:** In Stockton-on-Tees the most frequent primary need in **primary schools** is Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) with 33.1% of SEN pupils having this as their primary need. The second most frequent need in primary schools is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) with 14.3% of SEN pupils having this recorded as their primary need.
20. This differs in **secondary schools** with 20.3% of SEN Students having Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) as the most frequent primary need, followed closely with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) with 18.2% of SEN Students having this as their primary need.

In **specialist provisions** in Stockton-on-Tees 20.9% of students have SLCN as their primary need followed by 19.5% with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

21. **Placement:** The majority of children with an EHCP are placed in mainstream school or academy (25.7%). 9.8% of children with an EHCP attend a general further education or tertiary school placement.
22. **Statutory Deadlines:** In Stockton-on-Tees, 99.4% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks, excluding exceptional cases where LAs are allowed to exceed the 20 week time limit, compared to the All English unitary authorities average of 51.3%. Including exceptions, 99.1% were issued within 20 weeks, compared to the All English unitary authorities average of 49.8%.
This has placed Stockton-on-Tees in the top five councils nationally for meeting its statutory deadlines.

23. **EHCPs - WHAT HAS WORKED WELL**

- a. The proportion of children with an EHCP achieving GLD at the end of EYFS has increased to 3.1%
- a. Caseworker Attendance at PCP meetings.
- b. The standardised EHCP template has led to positive feedback regarding provision; and outcomes are now more succinct.
- c. The Annual Review Project and changes to the annual review process have secured positive responses from schools and settings.
- d. More robust decision making at EHC Panel has resulted from caseworkers presenting their own cases.
- e. Parent/carers are signposted to Stockton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) and are able to access SEND caseworkers, as well as the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) and Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) via this route. This ensures parent/carer voice is captured at an earlier point and informs planning.

25. **EHCPs - AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES**

- a. Although the proportion of children attaining GLD has improved by 1.1%, it remains below national.

- b. Outcomes for pupils with an EHCP have fallen in all measures for KS2 and are below national
- c. Outcomes for pupils with an EHCP have fallen in all measures for KS4 and are below national.
- d. The gap between Stockton EHCP and Non-SEN nationally has widened for all measures

26. SEN Support – WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. The proportion of children with SEN Support achieving GLD at the end of EYFS has increased to 25.4%. This is marginally above national.
- b. The proportion of pupils at the end of KS2 achieving the expected standard in writing has remained stable and above average.
- c. The proportion of pupils at the end of KS2 achieving the expected standard in maths has remained stable and above average
- d. The proportion of pupils achieving expected standards at the end of KS4 has increased and is above the national average. This is also the case for Progress 8.
- e. The gap between Stockton SEN Support and Non-SEN nationally has narrowed for GLD and at the end of KS4

27. SEN Support - AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a. The proportion of pupils at the end of KS2 achieving the expected standard in reading has declined and has fallen below the national average
- b. The gap between Stockton SEN Support and Non-SEN nationally has widened for reading and overall performance at the end of KS2.

CHILDREN FROM SERVICE FAMILIES

- 28. From the DfE's Pupil Premium data based on spring 2024 schools census the total number of children from service families in Stockton was 408 pupils; 202 were registered in primary schools, 200 in secondary schools, 5 in a special school and 1 at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). This is an increase of 12 pupils in comparison with 2023.
- 29. The number of children from service families in each primary school, including special schools, eligible for this Pupil Premium funding ranged from 0 to 16 pupils and 5 to 31 pupils for secondary schools.
- 30. According to the 2024 spring census there are 50 primary schools, 13 secondary schools and 3 special schools plus the PRU which have children from service families on their roll.
- 31. As cohorts in each school are very small, analysis of academic achievement and pupil need is carried out on a school-by-school basis.

32. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. We have regularly attended the Ministry of Education Local Authority Partnership (MODLAP) which includes senior leadership membership from local authorities across the United Kingdom.
- b. Through this partnership a wide range of effective practice and useful resources have been signposted, then shared via our networks with school leaders and governors.
- c. In addition, we have supported MODLAP in evaluating the impact of the Armed Forces Covenant and wider support for the Armed Forces community.

- d. Where appropriate, school advisers challenge and support schools' leaders on the targeted support and intervention for this cohort.

33. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a. As Children of Service Personnel cohorts are so small, securing statistically viable data is a challenge.
- b. Although Networks share a variety of toolkits, resources, information and guidance, these events are not necessarily attended by the schools with higher cohorts of Children of Service Personnel on their roll.

PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS AND SUSPENSIONS

34. Context

- a. The top three reasons for permanent exclusion during the academic year 2023/24 were persistent disruptive behaviour or physical abuse against adults or peers. Persistent disruptive behaviour was the biggest reason for permanent exclusion in secondary aged pupils. Physical assaults against adults was the most common reason for permanent exclusion in primary aged pupils.
- b. We have continued to see permanent exclusions for a 'one off incident' where a child has breached a school's behaviour policy. Any such instances are always looked at carefully by the Local Authority and we continue to work with schools to consider alternative methods to permanent exclusion

35. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. We have continued to have no permanent exclusions from our special schools during the academic year 2023/24.
- b. Several permanent exclusions were avoided through the vulnerable learners and placement & governance teams collaborating with and supporting schools, or by offering rigorous challenge at pupil disciplinary meetings for permanent exclusions.
- c. We have continued to deliver annual training for governors and headteachers so that they are up to date with current legislation relating to their statutory duty regarding exclusions from schools and academies.
- d. An external appreciative enquiry during 2023-24, which was multi-agency in its approach identified high exclusions/suspensions as a key area for development. There is embryonic impact from the new ways of working which have been adopted as a result.
- e. Stockton's permanent exclusions during the academic year 2023/2024 was marginally lower than Stockton permanent exclusions recorded during the academic year 2022/23.

36. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

37. Exclusions

- a. During the academic year 2023/24, Stockton received 104 permanent exclusions. 7 of these were for primary aged pupils and 97 were for secondary aged pupils. Although this is a decline it is still too high.
- b. Unfortunately, this year, we have continued to see permanent exclusions of primary aged children.

- c. In Stockton, boys were more likely to be excluded than girls. However, we have seen a rise in the number of girls permanently excluded and at the end of the year the final figure is slightly increased in comparison with the previous year.
- d. There has been an increase in exclusions both regionally and nationally, particularly in Key Stage 3. In Stockton, since September 2022, the highest number of exclusions have been in Y7 and Y10. A high number of Y7 and Y9 pupils have also been permanently excluded during the year.

38. Suspensions

- a. We have continued to see a year-on-year increase in the use of suspensions within the borough.
- b. The number of days lost to learning is high and can equate to weeks, months and academic years of education lost when looking at the total. For example, during the academic year 2023-24, the days lost to learning in our secondary schools were equal to 64 academic years (based on 39 weeks per year).

ATTENDANCE

39. The latest DfE published data for autumn term 2023 and spring term 2024 combined is used in this report to give comparisons with national data. The information details the data for overall absence, persistent absence and severe absence across the school phases.

40. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL

- a. Attendance Networks have taken place on a termly basis throughout the academic year. The Attendance Networks have been well attended by school colleagues across the phases with delegates in a range of positions in school. Colleagues from other agencies have been invited to share key messages with school colleagues on a range of support and information services available to them to support pupils who may need to be navigated to an external team or service. The DfE Attendance Advisor has presented at the spring term network, and this was well received. Overall, the feedback from delegates on the range of attendance focused topics has been positive.

Primary School Attendance: autumn and spring terms 2023-24

- b. Overall absence in primary schools is 5.3% and is the same as the national average. In comparison to local statistical data Stockton is performing better than the regional average of 5.5%
- c. Persistent absence is 14.4% and is better than the national average of 14.6% and the regional average of 15.9%.
- d. Severe absence is 0.7% and is marginally better than the national average of 0.8% and the same as the regional average of 0.7%.

Secondary School Attendance: autumn and spring terms 2023-24

- e. Overall absence in Stockton secondary schools is 9.6%; this is an improvement of 0.1% compared to autumn and spring 2022-23
- f. Persistent absence in Stockton is 27.8%; this is an improvement of 0.8% compared to the autumn and spring combined presented last academic year.

Special School Attendance: autumn and spring terms 2023-24

- g. Stockton special schools' overall absence is 11.8%; this is a 1.3% improvement compared to autumn spring 2022-23. It is better than the national average of 12.9% and the regional average of 13.1%
- h. Persistent absence in Stockton special schools is 32.2%; this is a 1.6% improvement compared to autumn and spring term 2022-23. It is better than the national average of 36.7% and the regional average of 35.2%.
- i. Severe absence in Stockton is 5.2% and is a 2.4% improvement compared to autumn and spring 2022-23. It is better than the national average of 6.4% and the regional average of 7.1%.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) School Attendance: autumn and spring terms 2023 - 24

- j. Stockton has one PRU, overall absence is 49.6% this is an increase in absence of 1.5% compared to autumn and spring 2022-23. It is worse than national average of 41.5% and the regional average of 43.3%.
 - k. Persistent absence in Stockton PRU is 94.8% and is a 1.7% improvement compared to autumn and spring term 2022-23. It is significantly worse than the national average of 81.2% and the regional average of 85.3%.
 - l. Severe absence in Stockton PRU is 52% and is 4.9% worse compared to autumn and spring 2022-23. It is significantly worse than the national average of 38.2% and the regional average of 40.7%.

41. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT – CHALLENGES

- a. Although overall absence in Stockton secondary schools has improved it is worse than the national average of 8.5% and the regional average of 9.5%.
- b. Although persistent absence has improved it is worse than the national average of 23.8% and the regional average of 27.2%.
- c. Severe absence in Stockton is 4.4% which is an increase in the level of severe absence compared to autumn and spring 2022-23. This is worse than the national average of 3.5% and the regional average of 4.2%.

42. WHAT WE ARE DOING TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES

43. Universal

- a. More granular school level analysis of data indicates that schools serving a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils have tended to secure lower overall outcomes.
- b. The Children's Services Transformation is beginning to strengthen targeted multi-agency support with the development of the Team Around the School Support programme (TASS) and closer working partnerships across the Education, Inclusion and Achievement team (EIA).
- c. The Appreciative Enquiry with the focus of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment was completed in summer 2024. The report led to 17 recommendations and work is underway to move these recommendations forward. This process includes a continued focus on identifying and sharing good practice, and making best use of available resources.
- d. Ongoing engagement with leaders of schools and multi-academy trusts with a renewed focus on partnership.
- e. Continue to identify and make visible vulnerable group cohorts.

- f. Continue to promote the need to plan strategically to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
- g. Effective practice from a range of services is shared more widely via Networks and Briefings including:
 - o Headteacher networks
 - o English Leader Networks
 - o Maths Leader Network
 - o EAL and Equalities Networks
 - o Early Years Networks
 - o Personal Development Networks
 - o SENCO leadership briefings
 - o Governor Briefings
 - o Designated Teacher Termly Network Meetings
 - o Trauma Informed Practice in Stockton (TIPS) Network Meetings
- h. Ongoing work to develop the CPD offer for schools from EIA as a whole (including SEND) ensuring that it is more coherently marketed and more closely aligned to schools' needs.
- i. The full range of challenges for our disadvantaged pupils identified by schools across the borough has been collated, analysed and shared across services.
- j. Stockton's Healthy Schools Programme multi-agency offer and accreditation is offered universally and targeted to those schools experiencing the most challenges.
- k. A comprehensive Attendance Strategy has been co-designed in collaboration with our key partners which aims to address the significant challenges we have regarding attendance. This includes promotion of more effective attendance procedures which address the barriers to attendance (rather than simply stepping through the procedures towards legal action).
- l. An Attendance Self-Evaluation toolkit has been designed and shared with all schools. Use of this evidence based support will help schools fine tune their attendance strategies to strengthen their impact.
- m. Promote to all schools the use of the Horizons Emotionally Based School Attendance (EBSA) Programme.
- n. Complete a deep dive into the reasons for Children in our Care suspensions and how we can support schools to keep children in school.
- o. Implementation of a Virtual School Governing Body to further enhance challenge and support for strengthened impact.

44. Targeted Support and Intervention

A summary of the range of support and intervention to address these challenges is below.

- a. **Bespoke targeted programmes aligned to need**
- b. **Targeted support, monitoring and intervention**
 - o Targeted promotion of networks, CPD and support to identified schools.
 - o Targeted support to improve attendance via Attendance Reviews. For example, the Pupil Referral Unit will be offered an attendance review based on the recently devised attendance self-evaluation toolkit to support the scoping out of a targeted action plan to drive forward improvements.
 - o Differentiated Attendance Networks for primary and secondary, to give more focus to the challenges in improving attendance in the secondary phase.
 - o Drop-in support for parent/ carers to ensure needs are being met early on before crisis
 - o Weekly SENCo drop ins with key members of staff
 - o Virtual School monitoring cycle to identify CIOC in need of support through the Virtual School Data Dashboard and regular Virtual School meetings

- Implement Thrive assessments
- Apply Sensory Profiling
- Allocate GCSE English Tuition
- Promote the Key Adult intervention as part of our Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed work.

c. Partnerships with/ between schools

- Challenge and support from our Enhanced Mainstream Schools (EMS) to other schools and settings.
- Embed the use of the Virtual School Speech and Language Intervention that runs as part of the St Johns Inclusion Hub to support early identification of need and appropriate support
- Through the Appreciative Enquiry work, partnerships will be strengthened and good practice shared.

d. Ongoing bespoke support

- Identified via School Strategy Meetings, primarily for maintained schools. For example, via school advisers and specialist teachers.

45. COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

This report is for information only; its contents cover the vulnerable group outcomes at the end of each key stage for Stockton's pupils.

46. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the report.

47. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications to the report.

48. RISK ASSESSMENT

Educational attainment is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

49. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES

This report aligns with the following priorities:

1. The best start in life to achieve big ambitions.
2. Healthy and resilient communities

50. CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

The details of the performance of Looked After Children have been reported to the Corporate Parenting Board in December as part of the Virtual School Head Teachers Report.

51. CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

There has been no consultation as this report is for information only.

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Education related: YES

Background Papers: NO

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: ALL

Property: NONE

APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY

AATI:	Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed
BME:	Black and Minority Ethnic pupils
CIN:	Children in Need
CIC:	Children in Care generally
CIOC:	Children in Our Care i.e. specifically Stockton Children in Care
CPD:	Continuing Professional Development (staff training)
CWSW:	Children With a Social Worker
DCO:	Designated Clinical Officer
DSCO:	Designated Social Care Officer
DS:	Disadvantaged pupils
DS/ NDS gap:	The difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and those who are non-disadvantaged.
EAL:	English as an Additional Language
EHCP:	Education Health and Care Plan
FSM:	Free School Meals
FTE:	Fixed Term Exclusions/ Suspensions
GLD:	Good Level of Development
HMI:	His Majesty's Inspector for Ofsted
KS:	Key Stage
	1. KS 1 and 2 – primary phase
	2. KS 3, 4 and 5 – secondary phase
NDS:	Non-disadvantaged pupils
PDC:	Pathway Development Centre
PEX:	Permanent Exclusion
SEN:	Special Educational Needs
VCD:	Vulnerable Children's Database
WBRI:	White British pupils
4+ EM:	GSCE English and Maths at Grade 4 or above

APPENDIX 2
BIBLIOGRAPHY

(1) NCER 2024

(2) Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) 2024

www.gov.uk/publications

(3) ***The long-term consequences of long-term disadvantage:
Report to the Northern Powerhouse Partnership***

Katie Beynon

Dave Thomson

October 2022

(4) ***New End Child Poverty Coalition Briefing: North East Child Poverty Commission***
July 2023

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13 February 2025

REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

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

PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SEPTEMBER 2026

SUMMARY

This report outlines the admission arrangements the Local Authority (LA) is proposing, for entry into both primary (Reception) and secondary (Year 7) schools in September 2026. To comply with legislation for admission in September 2026, the report includes the co-ordinated timetable, the Published Admission Number (PAN) for all Primary and Secondary Schools for that year and the LA's proposed Admission Policy (Oversubscription Policy) for Community maintained and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for entry in September 2026.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

The main legislation (Chapter 1 of Part 3 of SSFA 1998) requires the LA to publish information annually and to be available for parents when they apply for a place at primary and secondary schools. The information must comply with the new School Admissions Code 2021. The LA **must**, as the admission authority determine, i.e., formally agree its admission arrangements, even if it hasn't changed from the previous year and a consultation has not been required. These arrangements therefore must be determined by **28 February 2025** for admission to Primary and Secondary schools in September 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to agree:

1. The proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Secondary, Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, Academies and Free School (points 5-6 and Appendix 1).
2. The proposed PANs for Primary and Secondary schools for September 2026 (points 7-10 and Appendix 2).
3. The proposed Admission Policy for September 2026 (point 11-14 and Appendix 3).

DETAIL

1. The School Admissions Code (The Code) updated 1st Sept 2021 outlines the overall principles behind setting admission arrangements. It states that:

*'In drawing up their admission arrangements, admission authorities **must** ensure that the practices and the criteria used to decide the allocation of school places are fair, clear, and objective. Parents should be able to look at a set of arrangements and understand easily how places for that school will be allocated.'* (The Code, page 7 paragraph 14)

2. When changes are proposed to admission arrangements, all admission authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements (including any supplementary information form) that will apply for admission applications the following school year. Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities **must** consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years, even if there have been no changes during that period.' (The Code, page 18 paragraph 1.45)

3. In summary:

- We will be rolling forward the current 2025/2026 timetable and dates for the 2026/27 admissions rounds.
- We will be providing an update on the Published Admission Numbers (PAN) of all Stockton schools.
- We are proposing one amendment to the School Admissions Policy for the 2026/27 main round for admission across Stockton-on-Tees maintained community and voluntary controlled schools.

4. The LA consulted with a range of key partners and stakeholders including Schools, Governing Bodies, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan representatives, parents/carers, and the public.

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND TIMETABLE - 2026/27

5. The LA is responsible for administering a co-ordinated scheme for the area in relation to all maintained community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided schools and Academies including Free Schools. The purpose of the co-ordinated admission scheme is to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, every parent of a child living in the LA area who has applied for a school place in the normal admission round receives an offer of one school place on the same day.
6. The LA plans to roll forward the current co-ordinated scheme in operation for 2025/26 admissions round apart from minor date changes. The LA act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the Common Application Forms. The LA will only decide with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the Common Application Form where:
 - it is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority; or
 - an applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or
 - an applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

Appendix 1 attached provides further detail of the proposed Co-ordinated Admission arrangements timetable – 2026/27.

PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBERS (PAN)

7. The current number of Secondary school places available in the borough is **2,616**.
 - a. However, please note that the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust informed the LA that it proposes to reduce St Michael's Catholic School PAN from 210 to 180 for entry in September 2026. In line with the Code, and to assist the LA in its School Place Planning responsibilities the Trust discussed the decision during autumn 2024 with the LA to ensure fairness and transparency.
8. The current number of Primary school places in the borough is **2,615**. However, due to the continued low birth rate across the borough, we have seen a steady fall in pupils requiring a reception school place. In response, a few schools have already successfully reduced their reception intake numbers in recent years, for entry in September 2026, the LA are not proposing any further PAN reductions from its remaining Community schools.
9. However, the following Trust are proposing to reduce the PAN of the following school:
 - a. The Vision 1590 Trust propose to reduce the PAN of one of its academies, namely Whitehouse Primary (in North Stockton) from 55 to 45.
10. In addition, Prince Regent Street Trust increased the number of places available at Hartburn Primary School from 75 to 90 for admission in September 2025 and plan to continue thereafter.

Appendix 2 provides the proposed PANs for September 2026 in Community, VA, Academies and Free Schools and highlights those schools to be considered for expansion and remodelling.

ADMISSION POLICY FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 for Primary and Secondary Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) Schools in Stockton-On-Tees.

11. We are proposing one amendment to the current version of the Admissions Policy being applied to 2025/26 admissions for the remaining Stockton-on-Tees maintained community and voluntary controlled schools (that applies if the schools are oversubscribed).

To remove the following:

Criterion 2. Pupils with a Special Education Need who are going through a statutory assessment and who have been identified as needing a 'named' mainstream school.

12. For information, a few Academy Trusts (Admission Authority) generally propose a range of amendments to their respective admission arrangements. Most are consulting as per the Code requirement to consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7 years.
13. These proposed amendments will help clarify and clear up some criteria held within their respective admission arrangements. These proposals are available on each Trust's / school's website.

Appendix 3 provides further detail on the proposed LA's Admission Policy for September 2026 for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools only, that will give priority to applications for admission to a school if that school is oversubscribed.

14. The attached documents once agreed (determined) will be available on the Councils website at the following link [Admissions arrangements - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#).

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

15. None.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

16. This report does not contain corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

17. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. The Council as Local Education Authority has a duty under The Education Act 1944 to ensure a sufficient supply of school places to meet the needs of the children and young people resident in the borough.

RISK ASSESSMENT

19. Determining the LA's School Admissions arrangements for 2026/27 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

20. Not ward specific. This report does not require any consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

21. None.

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Appendix 1

THE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED, VOLUNTARY AIDED, ACADEMY & FREE PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN STOCKTON-ON-TEES FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

The purpose of this document is to provide information for Elected Members, Governing Bodies, and other Local Authorities, the Diocese, Parish Councils, and parents on the admission arrangements for community / voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, academy and free schools both primary / secondary sectors in Stockton-on-Tees for the school year 2026/27.

The updated School Admissions Code (the Code) was updated in September 2021 and applies to admissions to all maintained schools and Academies. The Code is made under section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ('SSFA 1998'). The Code has been made following consultation under Section 85 (2) of the SSFA 1998 and after being laid before Parliament for forty days. Admission authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements for 2026 comply with the mandatory provision of the Code. The admission arrangements for Stockton on Tees, laid out in this report for 2026/27, are compliant.

CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
(Community, Voluntary Aided, Academies and Free
Schools)

Includes:

Applications for Primary Schools
Applications for Secondary Schools
In year transfer requests

2026/27

Introduction

1. The 1998 Act, as amended by the Education Act 2002, has introduced new statutory requirements for every Local Authority (LA) to draw up a scheme covering every maintained school in its area. Stockton-On-Tees LA has drawn up a full co-ordinated admissions scheme for the main rounds for Primary and Secondary applications and 'in year' transfer requests for the academic year 2026/27.

Interpretation

2. In this scheme:

"the LA" means Stockton on Tees Borough Council acting in their capacity as local education authority.

"the LA area" means the area in respect of which the LA is the local education authority.

"the CAF" means Common Application Form.

"primary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(1) of the Education Act 1996.

"secondary education" has the same meaning as in section 2(2) of the Education Act 1996.

"primary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Education Act 1996.

"secondary school" has the same meaning as in section 5(2) of the Education Act 1996.

"school" means a community, foundation, or voluntary school (but not a special school) which is maintained by the LA.

"VA schools" means those schools which are voluntary-aided church schools.

"Academy" means a publicly funded state school.

"Free School" means a publicly funded state school.

"admission authority" in relation to a community and voluntary controlled school means the LA and, in relation to a VA schools and Academies, means the governing body of that school.

"determination year" means the academic year (i.e., the period from 1 August to the following 31 July) immediately preceding the offer year. This is the academic year in which admission authorities determine their admission arrangements.

"admission arrangements" means the overall procedure, practices, criteria, and supplementary information to be used in deciding on the allocation of school places and refers to any device or means used to determine whether a school place is to be offered.

"in-year admission" means any application for a place in a school in any year of education that is received after 1 September except in the case of admission into Reception and Y7 in which case these will be treated as the 'normal' round of admissions up to the end of the Autumn term.

"nearest appropriate school" is defined as the school closest to the home address with places, unless your child is a baptised Catholic then a place would be offered at the nearest Roman Catholic School with places.

Compliance with the Code

3. It is the responsibility of admission authorities to ensure that admission arrangements are compliant with this Code. Where a school is their own admission authority, this responsibility falls to the governing body or Academy Trust.
4. Section 88P of the SSFA 1998 requires local authorities to make reports to the Schools Adjudicator about such matters connected with relevant school admissions as required by the Code.

5. Objections to the admission arrangements of both maintained schools and Academies can be made to the Schools Adjudicator whose decisions are binding and enforceable.
6. The Secretary of State may refer the admission arrangements of any school to the Schools Adjudicator at any time if the Secretary of State considers that they do not or may not comply with the mandatory requirements of this Code or the law.
7. The Schools Adjudicator may investigate the admission arrangements of any school that the Adjudicator considers do not or may not comply with the mandatory requirements of this Code or the law.
8. Any decision of the Schools Adjudicator will be binding on the admission authority. The admission authority **must**, where necessary, revise their admission arrangements to give effect to the Schools Adjudicator’s decision within two months of the decision (or by **28 February** following the decision, whichever is sooner), unless an alternative timescale is specified by the Adjudicator. An Adjudicator’s determination is binding and enforceable. Where admission authorities fail to implement decisions of the Adjudicator the Secretary of State may direct the admission authority (either the governing body, the local authority, or Academy Trust) to do so under Section 496 or 497 of the Education Act 1996 or the Funding Agreement.
9. The table below sets out the admission authority for each type of school in England.

Type of School	Who is the admission authority?	Who deals with complaints about arrangements?	Who is responsible for arranging / providing for an appeal against refusal of a place at a school?
Academies	Academy Trust	Schools Adjudicator	Academy Trust
Foundation Schools	Governing Body	Schools Adjudicator	Governing Body
Voluntary aided Schools	Governing Body	Schools Adjudicator	Governing Body
Community Schools	Local Authority	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority
Voluntary Controlled Schools	Local Authority	Schools Adjudicator	Local Authority

Applying for a school place

10. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) which will be used for the purpose of admitting pupils into the reception class for primary school and the first year of secondary education in the determination year. In the main rounds for applications for primary and secondary places, an on-line facility will be set up to enable parents to apply for places online. A separate form known as the ‘In-Year Application for a school place or a change of school place’ will be available for any applications made for an “in year transfer” into any year group. There is no on-line facility yet although a form can be requested by contacting the School Admissions team via email school.admissions@stockton.gov.uk or by phoning 01642 526605.
11. The on-line application / CAF and ‘In-Year Application for a school place or a change of school place’ form must be used as a means of expressing one or more preferences for the purposes of section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, by parents permanently resident in the LA area who wish to express a preference for their child:
 - (a) To be admitted to a school within the LA area (including VA schools, Academies and Free School).
 - (b) To be admitted to a school located in another LA’s area (including VA schools and Academies).
12. The on-line application / CAF and ‘In-Year Application for a school place or a change of school place’ form will:

- (a) Invite parents to express up to three preferences with Secondary only providing the option to apply for four preferences by completing the form including, where relevant, any schools outside the LA's area, in rank order of preference.
- (b) Invite parents to give their reasons for each preference.

13. The CAF will:

- (a) Specify a closing date (for the determination year) and where it must be returned.

14. The LA will make appropriate arrangements to ensure:

- (a) That the on-line application / CAF is available on request from the LA and the 'In-Year Application for a school place or a change of school place' form will be available from the LA; and
- (b) That a written explanation of the scheme is available from the LA and on their website.

15. All preferences expressed on the on-line application / CAF are valid applications. The governing body of a VA school / Academy can require parents who wish to nominate, or who have nominated their school on the CAF, to provide additional information on a supplementary form only where the additional information is required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria to the application. Where a supplementary form is required, this will be requested after the VA schools / academies have received information from the LA about who has applied for their schools. Information requested on the supplementary form should be returned by the parent to the individual school by the due date specified by the school.

16. Where a school receives a supplementary form, it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the parent has also completed either the Stockton on Tees on-line application / CAF or, if resident in another area which has a CAF, their home area's common application form, and the school is nominated on it. Where supplementary forms are received directly by VA schools / Academy, the school must inform the LA immediately so it can verify whether a CAF or neighbouring area's CAF has been received from the parent and, if not, contact the parent and ask them to complete one. In these circumstances, the school should also send the LA a copy of the supplementary form if so requested. Under the requirements of the scheme, parents will not be under any obligation to complete an individual school's supplementary form where this is not strictly required for the governing body to apply their oversubscription criteria.

17. Very few Voluntary Aided schools / Academies governing bodies have opted out of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for in year transfers, a list of these schools will be made available for parents by September 2026 on the Stockton website. Parents are still required to complete an application form from the LA and schools need to inform the parents and the LA of the outcome of the request.

Processing of CAFs

18. Completed CAFs (online or paper) should be returned to the LA:

- (a) For secondary schools by the **31 October 2025***. The LA will enter information for all the schools within the Borough onto their system and forward information for applications to Academy Trust / VA schools and other LAs during the week commencing the **10 November 2025**.
- (b) Primary schools by the **15 January 2026***. The LA will enter information for all the schools within the Borough onto their system and forward information for applications to Academy Trust / VA schools and other LAs during the week commencing **26 January 2026**.
- (c) Online applications – the facility to apply for a school place on-line will be open during the time for application – **8 September 2025** to midnight on the **31 October 2025** for secondary and for primary **10 November 2025** to midnight on the **15 January 2026**.

**If the closing date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, any applications received through the post, which includes the post box in the Municipal Buildings, on the Monday morning after that date, will be classed as on time. Any others received after this will be classed as late.*

Allocation of places

19. Places will be allocated using the Equal Ranking Scheme* for Primary and Secondary by all admission authorities within Stockton on Tees.

**Equal Ranking means that all the preferences written on the CAF or on-line form will be considered as a separate application for each school.*

SECONDARY ADMISSIONS - Determining offers in response to the CAF

20. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the CAFs. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the CAF where:

- (a) It is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or.
- (b) An applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or.
- (c) An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parent has nominated.

21. The LAs system for online applications will become 'live' from the **8 September 2025** to midnight on the **31 October 2025** with the closing date for return of paper CAFs also the **31 October 2025**.

22. **Commencing from 10 November 2025** the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every application that has been made for that school. Where parents have requested a place at a school outside of the LA area, the information will be forwarded to the relevant admission authority/authorities. All VA schools and Academies should plan to gather information required from parents and set up admission committees for allocation of places.

23. During the first two weeks of **January 2026** - VA schools, other LAs and Academies, should aim to inform LA of the allocation of places for all applications received in the priority order of their admission policy. Any applications which are refused also need to be listed in order of priority.

24. The LA compares lists and considers all preferences from the parent and if first preference is refused then will look to see where 2nd, 3rd or 4th preferences can be accommodated. The lists will be sent back to the VA schools and Academies for their approval before finalising allocations. Liaison will take place with VAs, other LAs and Academies until the allocation of places is resolved for each application, as required.

25. **By the 31 January 2026** - the LA will match ranked lists for all schools and:

- (a) Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child.
- (b) Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
- (c) Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, they will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy or asked to contact School Admissions for an alternative school.

26. **On 1 March 2026 (or the next working day)** the LA will post letters (2nd class post) to parents to let them know which school has been allocated to their child. If they have applied on-line, they will receive an email on the 1 March or the next working day. The letter will also tell them of their statutory right to appeal if they have been refused a place at their preferred school.

Parents will need to complete an Appeal Form online at [Appeal a school place decision - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#) else request a paper Appeal Form and return to Appeals Service, Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6BJ within **20 school days upon** receipt of the form.

PRIMARY ADMISSIONS - Determining offers in response to the CAF

27. The LA will act as a clearing house for the allocation of places by the relevant admission authorities in response to the CAFs. The LA will only make any decision with respect to the offer or refusal of a place in response to any preference expressed on the CAF where:

- (a) It is acting in its separate capacity as an admission authority, or.
- (b) An applicant is eligible for a place at more than one school, or.
- (c) An applicant is not eligible for a place at any school that the parents have nominated.

28. The LAs system for online applications will become 'live' from the **10 November 2025** to midnight on the **15 January 2026 with the closing date for return of paper CAFs also the 15 January 2026**. Packs for admission to Primary School will be distributed to all parents. Applications are to be made on common application form and all applications returned to LA.

29. **Commencing from 26 January 2026** – the LA will notify the admission authority for each of the schools of every application that has been made for that school. Where parents have requested a place at a school outside of the LA area, the information will be forwarded to the relevant Local Authority. After this date all VA schools and Academies plan to gather information required from parents and set up admission committees for allocation of places.

30. **During the week ending the 2 March 2026** VA schools, Academies and other LAs inform the home LA of allocation of places for all applications received in the priority order of their admission policy. Any applications which are refused also need to be listed in order of priority.

The LA compares lists and considers all preferences from the parent and if first preference is refused, look to see where 2nd or 3rd preferences can be accommodated. The lists will be sent back to the VA schools and Academies for their approval before finalising allocations.

Liaison will take place with VA, Academies and other LAs schools until the allocation of places is resolved for each application, as required.

31. **By week commencing the 16 March 2026** - the LA will match ranked lists for all schools and:

- (a) Where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated schools, that school will be allocated to the child.
- (b) Where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.
- (c) Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated schools, they will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy or asked to contact School Admissions for an alternative school.

32. **On the 16 April 2026 (or the next working day)** the LA will post (2nd class) out a letter to parents informing them of their child's allocated school. If they have applied on-line, they will receive an email on the 16 April or next working day. The letter will tell them which school has been allocated and their statutory right to appeal if they have been refused a place at their preferred school.

Parents will need to complete an Appeal Form online at [Appeal a school place decision - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#) else request a paper Appeal Form and return to Appeals Service, Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6BJ within 20 school days upon receipt of the form.

Secondary & Primary Co-ordinated Admissions timetable 2026/27

SECONDARY	
w/c 8 September 2025	Online applications become live and CAFs and other information to parents.
31 October 2025	Closing date for online applications and for return of CAFs.
w/c 10 November 2025	Lists of applications sent to VA schools, Academies & Free School(s) and other LAs.
w/e 12 January 2026	VA schools, Academies & Free School(s) return full list of applications ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. Other LAs inform LA of preferences they can allocate. Liaison between admission authorities to resolve offers.
31 January 2026	Finalise allocations and further liaison as necessary.
1 March 2026	Or next working day - allocation letters sent out from LA to all parents via 2 nd class post offering places and giving reasons for refusals and right of appeal. Email sent to parents who applied on-line.
May/June 2026	Appeal hearings held.

PRIMARY	
w/c 10 November 2025	Online applications become live and CAFs and other information to parents.
15 January 2026	Closing date for online applications and for return of CAFs.
w/c 26 January 2026	Lists of applications sent to VA schools, Academies & Free School(s) and other LAs.
w/c 2 March 2026	VA schools, Academies & Free School(s) return full list of applications ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. Other LAs inform LA of preferences they can allocate. Liaison between admission authorities to resolve offers.
w/c 16 March 2026	Finalise allocations and further liaison as necessary.
16 April 2026	Or next working day - allocation letters sent out from LA to all parents via 2 nd class post offering places and giving reasons for refusals and right of appeal. Email sent to parents who applied on-line.
June/July 2026	Appeal hearings held

No CAF received by the LA

33. Where no CAF is submitted for primary or secondary school, the child will be offered a place at the nearest appropriate school with a vacancy or will receive a letter from the LA requesting that they make contact to discuss further.

Late applications

34. CAFs received after the closing date will be dealt with after all the other applications have been looked at unless there is a good reason, e.g., if a family moves into the area. If that is the case, the application can be considered along with all of those that came in on time if the allocations have not been started.

The LA will continue to co-ordinate applications for admission in September 2026 for any late applications for primary or secondary, received e.g., after the closing date and post offer date up until the start of that school year.

Waiting lists

35. The LA will maintain a waiting list for all oversubscribed maintained Stockton on Tees Schools. The waiting list will be open for all Primary and Secondary schools for the duration of the next academic term (1st September to 31st December). Places will be allocated, if they become available, in accordance with the LAs published oversubscription criteria.

VA schools, Academies and Free Schools are required to keep a waiting list for at least the Autumn Term of 2026, if places become available at their school, the governing body will allocate places from their own oversubscription criteria and inform the LA. The LA will write to parents informing them of the decision.

36. Where the LA can offer a place to a non-Stockton-on-Tees child from the Waiting List, we will liaise with the home LA, who will write to the parent to confirm the place.

In Year admission to primary & secondary schools

37. Applications for either a primary or a secondary school place outside the normal admissions round are treated as 'in-year' admissions.

38. Requests are regularly received from parents to transfer their child to an alternative school, and it can be for a variety of reasons. In certain cases, it does not always benefit the child or the school and so the Local Authority has laid out procedures which are followed upon receipt of such a request.

39. If you pay your Council Tax to Stockton Borough Council and you want to change your child's school you will need to complete an 'In-Year Application for a school place or a change of school place' form for each child who you want to transfer.

(a) If you are moving away from Stockton to another Local Authority you still need to complete a Stockton transfer form and we will liaise with the other authority. Once they have considered your application, we will contact you with the decision.

(b) If you are moving into the Stockton area you will need to contact your Local Authority for their application form unless you are moving from abroad where, if you contact School Admissions on 01642 526605 or email school.admissions@stockton.gov.uk then a form can be posted or emailed to you.

40. School transfers can take between 10 and 15 school days to complete (were possible) but if there are any issues with the request this can make the process longer.

(a) We will send your transfer form and any other information that you send us to both your current school and your preferred school.

(b) If we receive more than one application on the same day for the same school (that is still maintained by the LA) and year group, we will apply our own over-subscription criteria.

(c) It may be if you have not discussed any concerns with your current school that the Head Teacher requests you attend a meeting before we can process your application any further, as it is not always in your child's best interest to change schools. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child attends their current school until a new school place has been agreed.

41. If you are applying for a Voluntary Aided school or an Academy then their Governing Body or Academy Admissions panel will consider your application and let us know the decision. They may

apply their own Admissions Policy to any applications that they have received. We will contact you on their behalf.

42. The School Admissions Code (1 September 2021) added that all 'admission authorities must inform the LA whether they intend to be part of the LA in-year co-ordination scheme. Almost all schools in Stockton have chosen to this.
43. The LA will, on request provide information to prospective parents about the places still available in all schools within the borough.
44. The Code also states that, apart from designated grammar schools, all maintained schools, and academies, including schools designated with a religious character, that have places available **must** offer a place to every child who has applied for one, without condition or the use of any oversubscription criteria, unless admitting the child would prejudice the efficient provision of education or use of resources. For example, admission authorities **must not** refuse to admit a child solely because:
 - (a) they have applied later than other applicants.
 - (b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a school designated with a religious character.
 - (c) they have followed a different curriculum at their previous school; or
 - (d) information has not been received from their previous school.
45. Where an applicant is offered a school place following an in-year application, and the offer is accepted, arrangements should be made for the child to start school as soon as possible, particularly where the child is out of school.

ADMISSION NUMBERS
Admissions for September 2026

Primary Schools

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Billingham & Wolviston				
	Bewley	Academy	45	45
	Billingham South	Community	60	60
	High Clarence	Academy	15	15
	Oakdene	Academy	45	45
	Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary RC	Academy	30	30
	Pentland	Academy	30	30
	Prior's Mill CE	Academy	60	60
	Roseberry	Community	60	60
	St John the Evangelist RC	Academy	30	30
	St Joseph's RC	Academy	30	30
	St Paul's RC	Academy	30	30
	Wolviston	Academy	15	15
	Wynyard CE	Free School/Academy	60	60

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
North Stockton				
	Crooksbar	Academy	45	45
	Frederick Nattrass Primary Academy	Academy	30	30
	Hardwick Green Primary Academy	Academy	30	30
	Harrow Gate Primary Academy	Academy	60	60
	Norton Primary Academy	Academy	60	60
	Rosebrook	Academy	60	60
	St Gregory's Catholic Academy	Academy	30	30
	St John the Baptist CE	Voluntary-Controlled	30	30
	St Joseph's RC	Academy	40	40
	St Mark's Elm Tree CE	Academy	60	60
	The Glebe	Community	55	55
	Tilery	Community	45	45
	Whitehouse	Academy	55	*45
	William Cassidi CE	Voluntary-Aided	29	29

*please note the Trust propose to reduce the PAN of this school from 55 to 45 for entry in September 2026. However, any potential reduction, if agreed, would be undertaken on the basis that the school would agree to increase numbers if / when extra capacity was needed. This would be in anticipation that additional places will still be required in this planning area in the future.

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Central Stockton	Bowesfield	Community	60	60
	Fairfield	Community	60	60
	Hartburn	Academy	*90	90
	Holy Trinity Rosehill CofE	Voluntary-Aided	60	60
	Mill Lane	Community	30	30
	Oxbridge Lane	Community	30	30
	St Bede's Catholic Academy	Academy	30	30
	St Cuthbert's RC	Academy	30	30
	St Patrick's RC	Academy	30	30
	The Oak Tree Primary Academy	Academy	30	30

*please note for information the Trust informed the LA that it increased the schools PAN from 75 to 90 for entry in September 2025 and to continue thereafter. In line with the Code, and to assist the LA in its School Place Planning responsibilities the Trust discussed the decision during autumn 2024 with the LA to ensure fairness and transparency.

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Thornaby	Bader	Academy	45	45
	Christ the King RC	Academy	60	60
	Harewood	Academy	60	60
	Mandale Mill	Community	60	60
	St Patrick's RC	Academy	50	50
	Thornaby CE	Academy	60	60
	Village	Academy	30	30

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Ingleby Barwick	Barley Fields	Academy	90	90
	Ingleby Mill	Community	60	60
	Myton Park	Community	30	30
	St Francis of Assisi CE	Academy	60	60
	St Therese of Lisieux RC	Academy	30	30
	Whinstone	Academy	60	60

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Eaglescliffe & Yarm	Durham Lane	Community	30	30
	Egglescliffe	Academy	30	30
	Junction Farm	Academy	60	60
	Kirklevington	Academy	20	20
	Layfield	Academy	27	27
	Levendale	Academy	30	30
	Preston	Academy	29	29
	St Mary's CE	Academy	15	15
	The Links	Academy	30	30
	Yarm	Academy	60	60

Secondary Schools

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Billingham & Wolviston	Northfield	Community	330	330
	St Michael's Catholic Academy	Academy	210	*180

please note for information the Trust informed the LA that it proposes to reduce the schools PAN from 210 to 180 for entry in September 2026. In line with the Code, and to assist the LA in its School Place Planning responsibilities the Trust discussed the decision during autumn 2024 with the LA to ensure fairness and transparency.

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Stockton North & Central	North Shore Academy	Academy	180	180
	Ian Ramsey CE Academy	Academy	237	237
	Our Lady and St Bede Catholic Academy	Academy	210	210
	Outwood Academy Bishopsgarth	Academy	180	180
	The Grangefield Academy	Academy	210	210

Planning area	Name of school	Type of school	2025	2026
Stockton South	All Saints CE Academy	Academy	180	180
	Conyers Academy	Academy	224	224
	Egglecliffe School	Academy	235	235
	Ingleby Manor Free School & Sixth Form	Academy / Free School	150	150
	St Patrick's Catholic Academy	Academy	120	120
	Thornaby Academy	Academy	150	150

If demand dictates it after all Admission arrangements have been determined, certain schools may choose to admit above their Admission Number to meet any 'bulge year' – this does not constitute an increase in its agreed Admission Number thereafter.

Please be aware that other primary and secondary schools across the Borough may convert to Academy status during this application round.

Admission Policy for September 2026 for Primary and Secondary Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) School in Stockton-on –Tees

All governing bodies are required by Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to admit to the school a child with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that names the school.

This is not an oversubscription criterion. This relates only to children who have undergone statutory assessment and for whom a final EHC Plan has been issued.

Where there are more applications for a school than there are places available, places will be allocated in order using the oversubscription criteria below:

CRITERIA (In priority order)	EXPLANATORY NOTES
<p>1. Looked after children¹ and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted². Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted³ (or became subject to a child arrangements order⁴ or special guardianship order⁵).</p>	<p>¹ A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school.</p> <p>²A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.</p> <p>³This includes children who were adopted under the Adoption Act 1976 (see Section 12 adoption orders) and children who were adopted under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (see Section 46 adoption orders).</p> <p>⁴Child arrangements orders are defined in Section 8 of the Children Act 1989, as amended by Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.</p> <p>⁵See Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 which defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).</p>
<p>2. Pupils who have a brother or sister permanently living at the same address, who are still at the school when the pupil begins. Please note – this only applies to siblings who are of compulsory school age, not younger siblings who attend a nursery setting attached to a school (Primary applications only)</p>	<p><u>We define brother or sister as follows:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, adopted brother or sister, or children of partners who are permanently living at the same address as a family unit. In all cases, the parent who receives the Child Benefit for those children must permanently live at that address with the children. • We will consider brothers or sisters who live in separate households because the parents are separated and have shared responsibility for the children under conditions covering exceptional social or medical reasons. This does not include separate families living together in the same property. • If there are other family situations where there are different carers, e.g., aunts, uncles or grandparents, each case will be considered individually.

<p>3. Pupils permanently resident i.e., the address at which the child is registered for child benefit, who expresses a preference for that school (proof of address may be required) within the admission zone who have returned a Common Application Form by the closing date (31st October for Secondary applications and 15th January for Primary applications).</p>	<p>When a school is oversubscribed with in-zone applications i.e., there are more applications from children living in the admission zone of the school than there are places available, we will allocate places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to children permanently living in the admission zone (Criterion 3) according to their distance from the school measured in a straight line “as the crow flies” (Criterion 4).
<p>4. Pupils who live closest to a particular school measured in a straight line “as the crow flies”.</p>	<p>The LA uses a Geographic Information System, known as GIS, to identify and measure the distance from the central point of the home to the central point of the school. The distance is measured electronically from the central point of the school taken from the council maintained Local Land and Property Gazetteer, LLPG, (the same point for all applications) to the central point of the home (including flats) also taken from the LLPG. The GIS undertakes all measures in the same way for every applicant, to ensure consistency and fairness.</p>

The oversubscription criteria will be available on our website in September for parents for admission in September 2026.

N.B. please note for primary schools, attendance at a school nursery does not guarantee a place in the reception class of that school.

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13TH FEBRUARY 2025

REPORT OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Portfolio Title - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Steve Nelson

HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2025-30

SUMMARY

1. The local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-30 aims to unite ambitions and commitments across the Council, local organisations, partners and the community to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. The Strategy is owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) as the local statutory group responsible for strategic direction, oversight and assurance on improving health, wellbeing and health inequalities.
2. The new draft Strategy focuses on supporting local action on the building blocks of health and wellbeing, bringing a greater focus on the socio-economic determinants of health and helping maximise collective resource.
3. The Strategy has been developed through a collaborative, evidence-based approach to ensure it aligns with local needs and aspirations. The focus has been on strategic alignment, ensuring fit with the Council Plan, Powering our Future and a range of Council and partner strategic documents e.g. the Integrated Care Board (ICB) plan *Better Health and Wellbeing for All*.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the Strategy, to provide clear direction to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the local health and wellbeing system in improving health and wellbeing and addressing inequalities for the local community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that Cabinet considers and approves the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-30.

DETAIL

4. The Strategy has been developed through a collaborative, evidence-based approach to ensure it aligns with local needs and aspirations. It has been developed based on data, evidence,

insight, community views and through HWB development sessions with HWB support throughout the process. The Strategy is public-facing while providing strategic direction to key partner organisations. Community and service-user views have informed its shaping based on information from a range of consultations, surveys and focus groups conducted over recent years. We will continue to work with groups such as Bright Minds Big Futures and Healthwatch have also agreed to support next steps. In-line with moving to more meaningful co-production with communities (beyond the Strategy document), the focus will be on establishing an ongoing process for developing the work programme articulating delivery; also the process for capturing outcomes and impact (the outcomes monitoring framework).

5. Strategic alignment has been a focus of developing the Strategy, ensuring fit with e.g. the new Council Plan, Team Stockton, Powering our Future and key strategies across SBC and HWB partners.
6. The Strategy adds value through applying a health and wellbeing perspective to key issues and focusing on the collective action that will have the most impact and support efficient use of collective resource.
7. The HWB approved the draft Strategy on 31/01/25. It provides a high-level framework; an annual work programme and outcomes monitoring framework are in development and will be considered by HWB in the coming months.
8. A series of HWB development sessions has been running (September to December 2024), to embed new ways of working in-line with the new Strategy. These sessions have focused on Board function, oversight and added value. Further work will be undertaken on the Board's approach to seeking assurance and monitoring impact / performance at system level. The LGA will also be supporting the Board this year on key issues such as embedding co-production in the life of the Board, learning from areas of good practice.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy supports the delivery of A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees and the Population Intervention Triangle model for addressing health inequality as agreed through Cabinet. It aligns closely with the design principles for the Council and Powering our Future: community- and local place-based approaches, prevention and early intervention, addressing inequality, close partnerships, maximizing efficiency and taking an intelligence- and evidence-lead approach.

The Strategy (and its accompanying delivery plan and outcome monitoring approach) aims to drive improvement in health and wellbeing and reduction in health inequalities across the borough, through a focus on working alongside communities and promoting the conditions that create good health and prevent ill health. This will include community activity and universal support through to early help and targeted support for communities (geographic and non-geographic) who need it most. The Strategy should drive our collective approach to key issues across the borough, and the resulting shaping of support and commissioning of services. As the Strategy is implemented, impact assessments (CIA / Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment) should be carried out in relation to key policies, plans, approaches and service decisions. The voice of the community is key in this process and will be embedded in the implementation of the delivery plan and the life of the Health and Wellbeing Board as this develops further.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

The Strategy will support the Council's work to prevent children and families being in the situation where children need to come into our care. It also aligns with wider activity and plans for the Council, children's services and partners, in ensuring that children in our care and their families and care-givers, and care-leavers, are supported to have the best possible health and wellbeing, accounting for their specific needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no direct revenue or capital spend associated with the Strategy. Work to implement the Strategy may result in financial implications for the Council and / or Health and Wellbeing Board partners, including consideration of how resources could be directed differently e.g. to support earlier prevention activity;

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The production of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy ensures the Health and Wellbeing Board complies with its statutory duties under the Health and Social Care Act (2012). There are no further legal implications.

RISK ASSESSMENT

This Health and Wellbeing Strategy 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

All wards in the Borough will be impacted by the implementation of the Strategy. Where there are specific implications for individual wards in the course of its implementation, ward Councillors will be key in these discussions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A.

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Post Title: Director of Adults, Health and Wellbeing / Director of Public Health

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Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025 - 2030

Strengthening the building blocks
of health and wellbeing together



Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce this new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

The world and our national and local systems, have changed significantly in the last few years and now is a timely opportunity to draw together the collective will we have across local partners, working with local people, to set out how we will improve health and wellbeing. We have made some real progress in recent years, on areas such as reducing smoking, working across partners to address domestic abuse, supporting older people and introducing new arrangements to provide early support to children and families.

We also know that stark differences exist between our communities, in the outcomes they experience and we have significant numbers of local people who live many years in poor health from a relatively young age.

Too many of our children are also growing up in poverty, with the impact that brings on their health, wellbeing and life chances.

Building on many years of joint working, we benefit from strong partnerships across public sector organisations, voluntary and community sector partners and increasingly our local businesses in the Borough. We are also fortunate to have many strengths in our diverse local communities. These are two of the key things that will carry us forward as we work with local people to help them be as healthy as they can be and to fulfil their potential.

Our Borough is changing, with a growing population and a range of regeneration work underway as well as work to ensure local people have access to sport and leisure facilities in Stockton-on-Tees.

Exciting work is also underway to develop a Care and Health Innovation Zone, with the potential for this to bring research, innovation, business, education and training, residential and care and health support together to serve local people and boost our economy.

The health and wellbeing of people is determined in great part by the environment and circumstances they grow up in – we know what a great impact these factors have, such as good quality housing, good and stable work, safe streets, access to green space and built environments that enable healthy choices and connect communities.

The new strategy therefore has a renewed focus on these determinants of health, wellbeing and inequalities. Alongside developing the strategy, we have also been doing some work as a Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure we are making the most of the collective opportunity we have, to drive improvements in health and wellbeing, alongside local people.

The Board has a unique opportunity to do this, as the statutory body responsible for directing and overseeing the local health and wellbeing system and I know the Board is highly committed to delivering on this with and for the Borough.

The new Strategy has been developed through conversations and work with a wide range of partners and communities and this process will continue as we develop our annual delivery plans to underpin the strategy, as well as our approach to monitoring the difference we are making.

I look forward to seeing the impact of this work in the coming months and years.



**Councillor Bob Cook,
Chair of
Stockton-on-Tees
Health and Wellbeing
Board**

1. Introduction

This is the third Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy from the Stockton-on-Tees Health and Wellbeing Board. With this strategy, we are developing a more coordinated, Borough-wide approach, grounded in local action, supported by a joint delivery plan, and overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure stronger alignment.

The role of the Health and Wellbeing Board: The Board plays a crucial role in fostering greater coordination and integration across local organisations, partners, and communities. Its aim is to collectively improve the health and well-being of local residents while narrowing the health inequalities that persist across the Borough.

The Local Health and Wellbeing System: Stockton-on-Tees is fortunate to have a solid foundation of strong partnerships, a vibrant voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and many strengths within local communities. Examples include:

- **Team Stockton:** The Borough's 'Place Leadership Board' unites local leaders and the community to create a shared vision for the area and to work collaboratively to achieve it. Tackling the social and economic factors that affect health, and well-being is a key focus.
- **The Local VCSE:** The sector plays a vital role in prevention and early intervention, particularly in reaching disadvantaged and marginalised groups. A "Making it Real" (MiR) Board, comprised of individuals with lived experience, has also been established.
- **The Council's Powering Our Future Programme:** This direction is transforming how the Council works alongside partners and the local community to create better outcomes for all.
- **Integrated Care Board (ICB):** Across the North East and North Cumbria, the ICB, which brings together the NHS and its partners, has adopted the "Better Health and Wellbeing for All" strategy. This plan places a strong emphasis on addressing inequality and prioritising early prevention.

Where this strategy adds value

This strategy unites the ambitions and commitments across the Council, local organisations, partners, and the community to improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities across the Borough. By bringing these efforts together, we are able to:

- Gain a clearer understanding of our collective actions and how they are interconnected.
- Apply a health perspective to all policies and strategies, assessing their positive or negative impact on health and well-being.
- Identify where we can have the most significant impact, offering opportunities for better coordination, collaboration, and efficient use of our collective resources.

2. Developing the Strategy

The strategy has been developed through a collaborative, inclusive, and evidence-based approach, ensuring it aligns with the needs and aspirations of local communities in Stockton-on-Tees. The approach and priority areas have been shaped by:

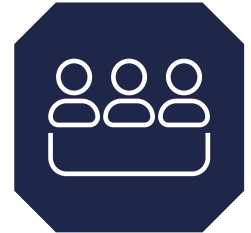
- **Reflecting on the past**

A review of the previous Health and Wellbeing Strategy, assessing successes, challenges, and lessons learned.



- **Diverse perspectives**

Workshops with Health and Wellbeing Board members and consultations across the Council, local organisations, and partners.



- **Collaborative input**

Analysing relevant existing strategies and plans from across the Council and its partners.



- **Community voice**

Incorporating feedback from various consultations, surveys, focus groups conducted over the last few years, as part of service reviews, health needs assessments, strategy development, as well as input from the residents' survey.



- **Evidence and best practices**

Reviewing the evidence base, national and regional policies, and learning from other localities' health and well-being strategies.



- **Local health insights**

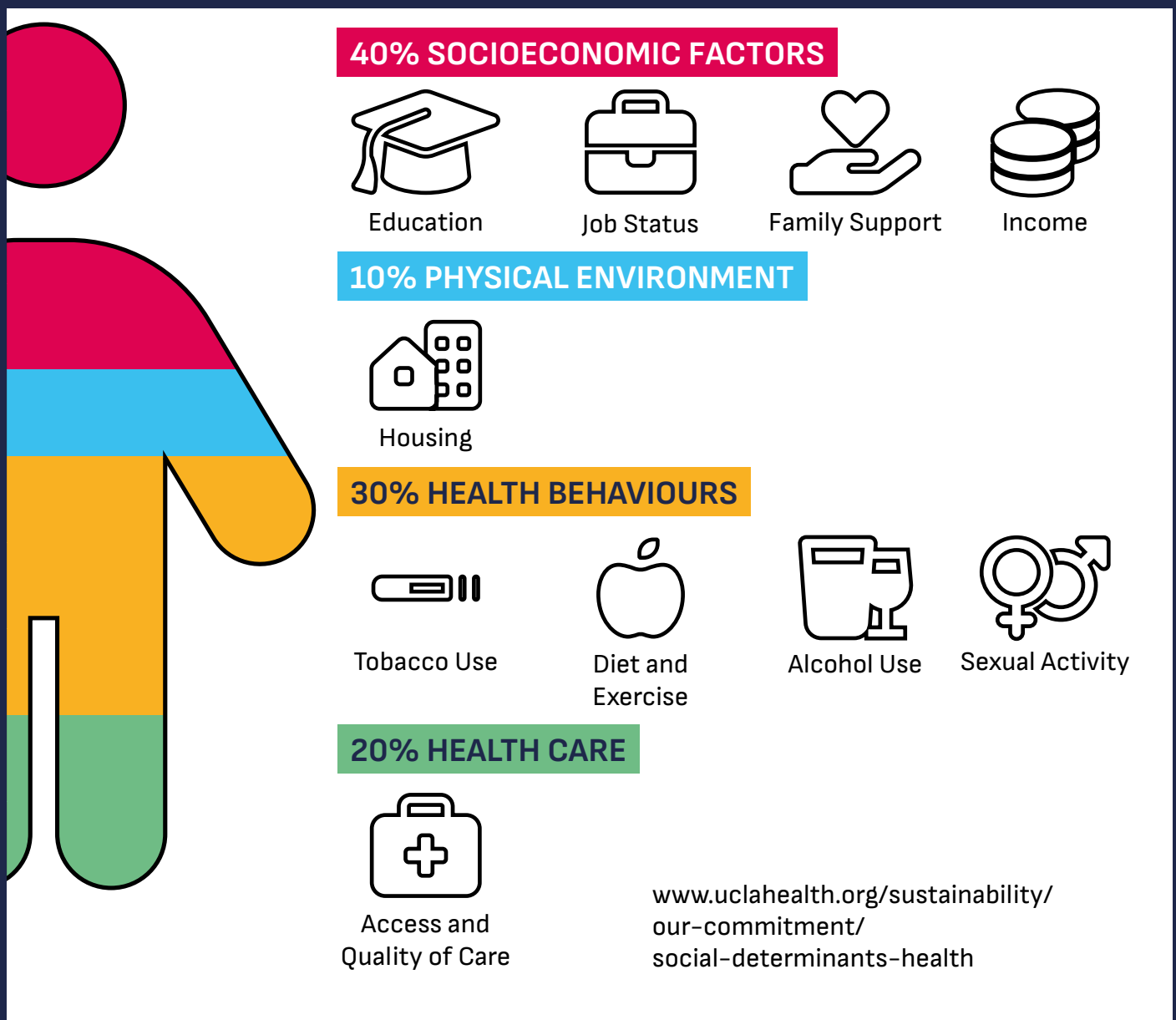
Drawing on local data that highlights the overall health and well-being of the Borough and the factors influencing it.



3. Our collective approach and guiding principles

Through this strategy, we will place a greater focus on our collective efforts to improve the building blocks that contribute to health and well-being. Research shows that factors like education, quality employment, family support, and the surrounding environment (such as housing and green spaces) play a fundamental role in shaping health and well-being. In fact, these factors together have a greater impact on overall health and well-being than access to healthcare, important though this is.

What has the biggest influence on people’s health and wellbeing?



We have a significant opportunity to improve the life chances of all local residents by working together to create the strongest foundations for health and well-being, building on our

many existing local strengths. To steer our collaborative efforts, we will implement five core principles and five key ways of working.

Five core principles

1. Health is

everybody's business

The most effective way to tackle the broader determinants of health is to incorporate a health perspective into all policies and strategies, evaluating their potential impact on health and well-being. This is known as the "Health in All Policies" approach.



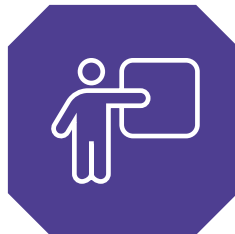
2. Communities at the centre

Working alongside all our communities to understand what is important to them and what would help them to be healthier. By building on the many strengths within local communities, we will work together to create tailored approaches and services that address their specific challenges.



3. Commit to prevention and early intervention

Through a life course approach, across all stages of life, from childhood to old age, acknowledging how early experiences influence long-term health outcomes.



4. Levelling the playing field

Communities across the Borough do not all have the same opportunities to live in good health and wellbeing. Our collective action across communities, organisations and services will seek to leave no one behind, acknowledging the complex web of factors that affect health and wellbeing for individuals and communities.



5. Placed based approach

Our approach will be rooted in local communities and places. A local-first approach will help make the most of local knowledge, networks and resources to provide tailored support. Where it adds value and maximises resources, we will also continue to collaborate with our partners across places and beyond the Borough.



Five ways of working to be smarter with how we work and use collective resources:

- **Greatest impact:** We will work together to ensure the greatest impact based on evidence, for our collective resources.
- **The whole is greater than the sum of the parts:** We will seize all opportunities to better coordinate, integrate and implement shared approaches to key local issues. Evidence shows this delivers better outcomes.
- **Creative and taking measured risks:** We will pilot new ideas, continuously learn, and assess their potential for scaling across our local system.
- **Open to challenge:** Committed to regularly evaluating our impact and adjusting course when necessary.
- **Manage expectations:** We will establish a clear framework for co-production with partners and communities, setting out how and where local people can shape work to improve health and wellbeing and how this will happen. Whilst, respecting the rights of local communities to get involved as much or as little as they are able or wish to.

4. Stockton-on-Tees: Population at a glance

196,587 residents in Stockton-on-Tees

By 2030 estimated to increase to 200,44

Working age (18-64yrs) will decrease by 1.71%

Older age (65+ yrs) will Increase by 15.6%

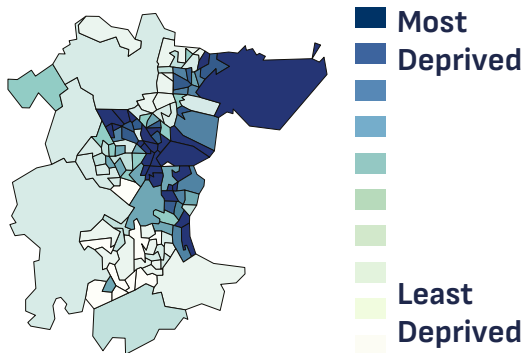
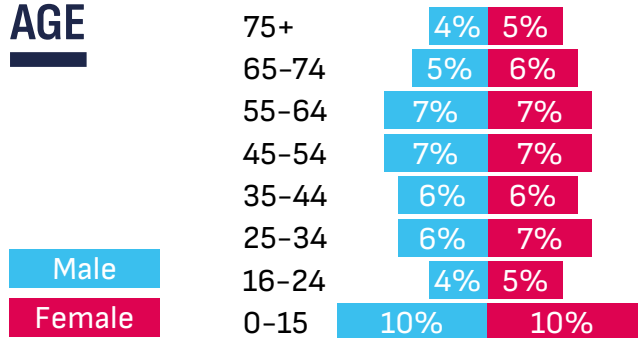


49% of Stockton-on-Tees residents are Male



51% of Stockton-on-Tees residents are Female

AGE



ETHNICITY

White	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other
92%	4.6%	1.1%	1.4%	0.9%

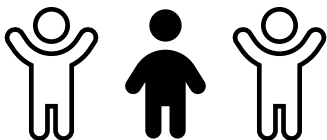
AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY



Gap in Life Expectancy between Highest and lowest wards



Deprivation ranking
113 out of 317



1 in 3 children are living in poverty

Ingleby Barwick East has the highest life expectancy in Stockton-on-Tees: 84.1 years for Males and 90.3 years for Females

Stockton Town Centre has the lowest life expectancy in Stockton-on-Tees: 67.4 years for Males and 71.8 years for Females

We are the largest Borough in the Tees Valley with approximately 200,000 residents, with areas of affluence sitting alongside areas of deprivation. More than 25% of our wards are in the 10% most deprived in the country. Health inequalities remain a key challenge in the Borough, most acutely demonstrated by the life expectancy gap of 16.7yrs for men and 18.5yrs for women between people living in the most deprived wards and those living in the most affluent wards. This gap in life expectancy is one of the widest in the country and has been persistent for some years despite significant efforts across organisations.

5. Strategic focus areas for 2025 - 2030



This strategy has four priority focus areas where we can have the most significant impact and offer the greatest opportunities for collaborative working over the coming years:

All children and families have the best start in life	Page 9
Everyone has a healthy standard of living	Page 11
Everyone lives in healthy and sustainable places and communities	Page 13
Everyone lives long and healthy lives	Page 16





FOCUS AREA 1: All children and families have the best start in life

Page 67



38,581 (19.6%)
Total population
aged 0 - 15 years
(Census 2021)



131 per 10,000
Children
are in care
England:
71 per 10,000
(2022/23)



5,743 (14.8%)
Children in
absolute low
income families
England: 15.6%
(2022/23)



17.4 per 1,000
Conceptions
in under 18's
England: 13.1
(2021)



196 (10.6%)
Women smoking
at time of
delivery
England: 7.4%
(2023/24)



31.9%
Breastfeeding
prevalance at
6 to 8 weeks
England: 49.2%
(2022/23)



75.6 per 10,000
Hospital
admissions
in 0 - 14 years
for unintentional
or deliberate
injuries
England: 75.3
(2022/23)



348 per 100,000
Hospital
admissions as
a result of self
harm in 10 - 24
year olds
England: 319
(2022/23)



90% Children
achieving a
good level of
development at
2 to 2 and a half
years
England: 80.4%
(2023/24)



69.7% Children
achieving a
good level of
development
at the end of
reception
England: 67.2%
(2022/23)

Approximately 39,000 children and young people (ages 0–15) live in Stockton-on-Tees, representing about 20% of the overall population in the Borough. 15% of these children and young people are from low-income families and 58% receive free school meals. In 2022/23, there were more than 550 children in our care, a rate of 131 per 10,000 children, against a national rate of 71 per 10,000 children.

In the Borough, teenage pregnancy rates are higher than the England average. 10.6% of pregnant women are smoking at the time of delivery, and breastfeeding prevalence (6–8 weeks) stands at 31.9% compared to the England average of 49.2%. At year 6, 39.4% of children are overweight or obese, higher than the England average.

90% of children in the borough are achieving a good level of development at 2 to 2 and a half years, higher than the England average. Likewise, 69.7% of children are achieving a good level of development at the end of reception which is above the England average.

What have communities told us:

Some key themes from various consultations, surveys and focus groups:

- Knowledge and awareness of services and prevention offers
- Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Coordination between services
- Access to mental health and emotional wellbeing provision
- Advice and support for breastfeeding
- Identification of young people's needs at the earliest opportunity
- Support for transition periods

Why this is a key focus area:

A good start in life is essential for the lifelong health, well-being, and future opportunities of children and young people. Quality care before and during pregnancy, combined with the right support from early childhood through school and into adulthood, provides the best foundation for life-long health outcomes.

By investing in early childhood development, supporting parents, improving the home learning environment, promoting school readiness, bolstering resilience and mental health in young people, and providing targeted support to families in greatest need, we can ensure that every child is given the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Commitments:

- **Early years**
Children and families are supported to develop a child's early speech, language and communication and provide a positive home learning environment.
- **Inclusive**
Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have their needs met and Stockton-on-Tees is a Borough where all children and young people are included regardless of their need, background or vulnerability.
- **Early intervention**
Children, young people and their families have access to support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.
- **Corporate parenting**
Children in our Care and Care Experienced Young People are supported to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- **Safe from harm**
Children and young people are safe from harm and safe in their communities, protected from bullying, neglect and abuse in the home, online and in the community.
- **Transition**
Ensure there is a joined-up pathway that fully supports young people in their transition to adulthood.
- **Mental health and wellbeing**
Improve access to early support and care for children and young people through schools, primary care and community services.
- **Health and emotional wellbeing in schools**
Supporting schools to offer a holistic approach that promotes healthy behaviours and supports all children to build their resilience, emotional literacy and coping skills.



FOCUS AREA 2: Everyone has a healthy standard of living

Page 70



7.5% aged 18-24 are claiming out of work benefits
England: 4.6%
(2021/22)



24.9% population aged 16-64 are economically inactive
England: 21.2%
(2021/22)



23,061 residents claiming Universal Credit
(April 2024)



16.4% of the population were income deprived
(2019)



121,000 residents who are at working age (16-64 Years)
(Census 2021)



40% of adults who are economically inactive are inactive due to health conditions
(2023/24)



£4,200 gap between 'mean' and 'median' earnings



1,000 residents accessing a food bank on monthly basis
7,000 residents accessing the 'Bread & Butter Thing' in the first 6 months
(Mar 2024)

Stockton-on-Tees has some of the highest poverty and deprivation rates in the country. In 2021/22, 15% (5,743) of children were living in absolute low-income families in the Borough, compared with 15.6% nationally. 7.5% of the population aged 18-24 (965) are claiming out-of-work benefits against 4.6% nationally. As of April 2024, there were 23,061 people claiming universal credit in the Borough.

In 2021/22, 24.9% of population aged 16-64 were economically inactive against 21.2% nationally. The main reason for economic inactivity is health conditions.

Reliance on food banks has increased with data from 'Stockton & District Information and Advice Service' stating that the top reasons for referrals were rising cost of essentials, priority debt, impact of health, low sufficient income, and budgeting issues. There are 5 hubs across Stockton for residents to access the 'Bread & Butter Thing'. Within the first six months, almost 7,000 people across the Borough have utilised The Bread-and-Butter Thing Hubs.

What have communities told us:

Some key themes from various consultations, surveys and focus groups:

- Housing costs and access to affordable housing
- Rising cost of food
- Stigma associated with poverty
- Training and upskilling needs
- Access to foodbanks and pantries
- Lack of jobs
- Rising energy bills

Why this is a key focus area:

There is a well-established link between the money and resources a person has and their mental and physical health. People with the lowest incomes, those at risk of or living in poverty (lacking enough for basic essentials), are at the highest risk of poor mental and physical health. They often face barriers to accessing nutritious food, safe housing, healthcare, and opportunities for education and employment.

There is also clear evidence that employment can improve health, resilience, and well-being, but it needs to be good quality work. This means fair pay, a safe and supportive environment, where people have opportunities for growth and development.

Commitments:

- **Poverty**
We will work to tackle the contributing causes as well as providing direct support, advice and information to people, families, households directly affected by poverty.
- **Equality and poverty impact assessments**
As a Council we will ensure that our policies, practices, and decision-making processes are fair, do not present barriers to disadvantaged and protected groups and those affected by poverty. This will be supported through the systematic use of equality and poverty impact assessments.
- **Food insecurity**
We will ensure people and households who face food insecurity (when people don't have enough to eat and don't know where their next meal will come from) are able to access nutritious food while working to address the underlying causes of food poverty.
- **Housing**
Ensure access to secure, affordable and quality housing, particularly for people and families with the greatest vulnerabilities.
- **Healthy workplace**
We will make Stockton-on-Tees a recognised place of good work and fair pay. As many employers as possible offering safe and supportive workplaces, that promotes and support staff health and wellbeing.
- **Addressing inequality**
We will provide support for skills, education and training to give people better chances to access the job opportunities available. We will focus efforts on communities that have more prevalent issues with lower skills and lower wages, as well as people facing barriers, such as those living with a disability or those with long term health conditions.



FOCUS AREA 3: Everyone lives in healthy and sustainable places and communities

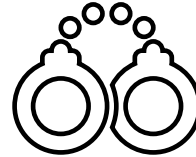
Page 73



7.2%* of residents reported feeling lonely
England: 6.8%
 (2024)



52%* of residents reported feeling safe
England: 79.4%
 (2024)



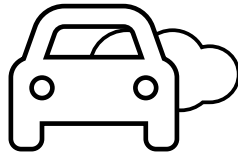
176.8 per 1,000 Crimes
England: 118.1
 (Jun 23 - May 24)



42 per 1,000 Domestic abuse related incidents and crimes
England: 30
 (2022/23)



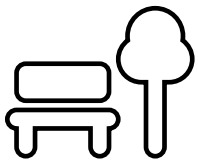
30.6 per 1,000 Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) incidents
England: 17.6
 (Jun 23 - May 24)



5.5% mortality attributable to particulate air pollution
England: 5.8%
 (2022)



Level 2 active travel for Tees Valley. This is a capability rating given by authorities from 0 - 4. Level 2 means there is visible leadership and support and an emerging network.
 (Sept 2024)



1.23% Green space coverage
England: 0.79%
 (2022)

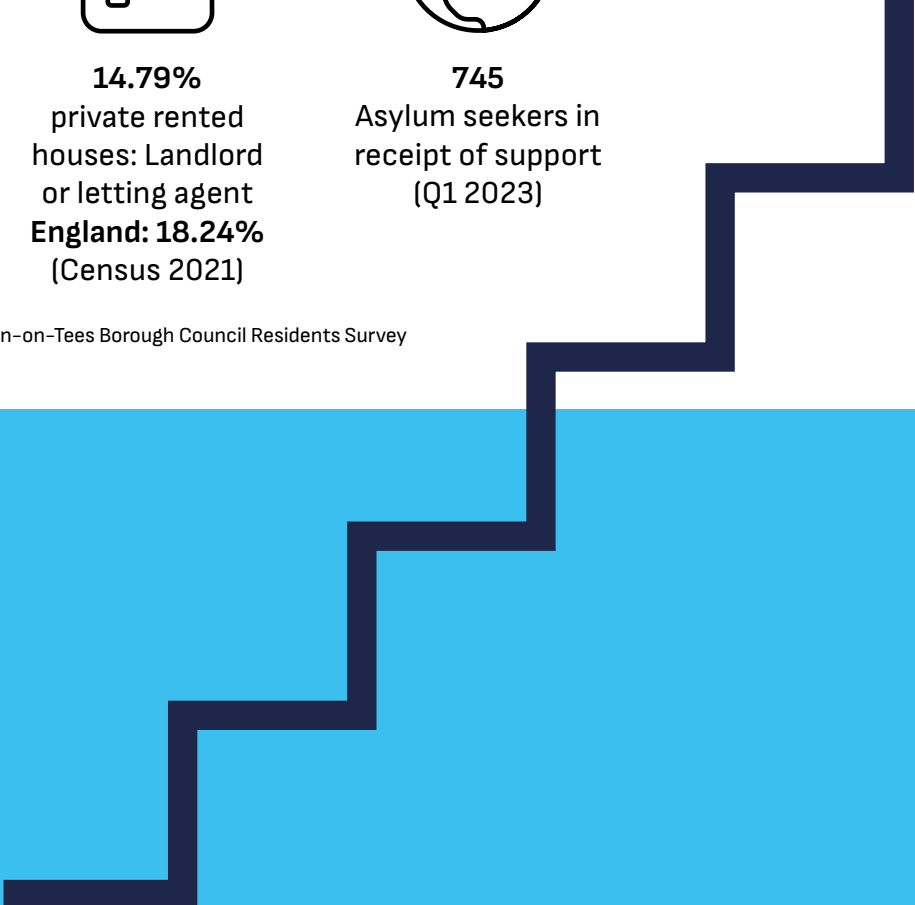


14.79% private rented houses: Landlord or letting agent
England: 18.24%
 (Census 2021)



745 Asylum seekers in receipt of support
 (Q1 2023)

*Information taken from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Residents Survey



The resident survey was conducted last year across Stockton-on-Tees, results show that just over half of residents feel safe and 7.2% reported feeling lonely. Crimes, domestic abuse incidents and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) are currently all higher than the England average, however, there have been some improvements resulting in crime and ASB rates decreasing. Stockton-on-Tees currently has the lowest rates in the Cleveland force area. Mortality rates attributable to air pollution

continue to be lower than the England average. A Stockton-on-Tees Air Quality Strategy is currently in production, which will set out specific measures to support reduction of PM2.5 air pollution levels.

Stockton-on-Tees has similar rates of asylum seekers in receipt of support to Middlesbrough, however, the other authorities within the Tees Valley (Darlington, Hartlepool, and Redcar and Cleveland) remain lower.

What have communities told us:

Some key themes from various consultations, surveys and focus groups:

- Loneliness (social isolation)
- More ways to facilitate physical activity
- Support people to eat more healthily
- Struggling to achieve healthy diet and weight stigma
- Affordability and availability of healthier foods
- More green space closer to homes
- More cycle routes and signposting
- Social and cultural barriers preventing people with disabilities to engage in physical activity

Why this is a key focus area:

The places where we live (our homes and neighbourhoods), the communities we are part of, the natural environment, how we travel; all have a significant influence on our mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Healthy and sustainable places and communities are ones where people feel safe and included, social connections are strong, and environments facilitate healthy, active lifestyles for all ages. Evidence shows that creating such spaces can reduce the risk of long-term chronic conditions, improve mental health, and enhance overall quality of life.



Commitments:

- **Neighbourhood design**

When planning new developments, or improvements to our existing neighbourhoods, we will prioritise opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, improving neighbourhood walkability, and access to local amenities.

- **Green space**

We want everyone to enjoy spending time in the natural environment, with accessible and attractive countryside, parks, recreation grounds, and other natural areas, that more people of all abilities and ages want to use (walking, running, children's play, formal and informal sport).

- **Leisure facilities**

We will invest in and improve our leisure facilities, to ensure that there are accessible and affordable sport and leisure opportunities, supporting increased physical activity and social connection.

- **Active travel**

We will reduce the barriers that stop people from choosing to travel actively to schools, colleges and work. Delivering improvements in walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure, and improving access to public transport, in order to support active travel for people of all abilities and ages.

- **Food environment**

Stockton-on-Tees has a healthier food environment where good food is easily accessible, affordable and which meets diverse cultural and nutritional needs. Healthy food should not be a luxury, and therefore everyone should be able to eat healthily every day, no matter who they are, what they do or where they live.

- **Air quality**

We will reduce air pollution by working with partnerships and networks to influence policy and planning decisions. Increase awareness by providing education on the health impacts of poor air quality and promoting behaviours that improve air quality, with a particular focus on areas and communities that experience the worst air quality.

- **Community safety**

To make Stockton-on-Tees a safer place where people are protected from serious harm and live in communities which are safer and welcoming.

- **Domestic abuse**

We want everyone living or working in Stockton-on-Tees to feel safe, supported and protected from domestic abuse, regardless of their age, sex, gender, sexuality, disability, socio-economic status, faith or background.

- **Community resilience**

We will work with communities to strengthen resilience through evidence-based public health initiatives, fostering community networks and supporting education on emergency preparedness, including the health and environmental effects of the climate change emergency as well as future pandemics. Communities most likely to be negatively impacted will be prioritised.

- **VCSE**

We will continue to support and work with a vibrant and growing voluntary, community & social enterprise sector (VCSE) in Stockton-on-Tees.

- **Co-production**

We will have a clear and consistent approach to co-production with communities and take all opportunities to embed this into practice. Whilst, respecting the rights of local communities to get involved as much or as little as they are able or wish to.

- **Social isolation and loneliness**

We will work together with communities to tackle the contributing causes, encourage and facilitate more ways to connect within the community, as well as providing support for people at greatest risk or impacted.

- **Inequalities**

We will work together with marginalised and disadvantaged groups and communities to better understand their needs, helping to address the barriers they face and ensuring fair access to support and care.



FOCUS AREA 4: Everyone lives long and healthy lives



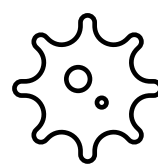
60.1 years
Healthy
life expectancy
(LE) 20.4 years
inequality
in healthy LE
(2018-20)



61.5 years
Healthy
life expectancy
17.6 years
inequality
in healthy LE
(2018-20)



61.6% uptake of
secondary school
vaccinations
(HPV, MenACWY
& Td/IPV)
(2022/23)



80.2%
Aged 65+ uptake
of flu vaccine
(2023/24)



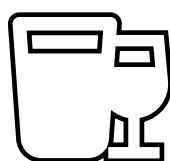
7.3% of eligible
population
received a health
check
England: 8.8%
(2023/24)



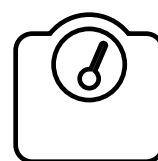
557.1 rate
per 100,000
emergency
hospital
admissions of
COPD
England: 325.9
(2022/23)



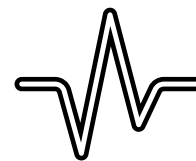
7%
Smoking
prevalence
aged 18+
England: 11.6%
(2023)



664.2 per 100,000
admission
episodes for
alcohol related
conditions
England: 474.6
per 100,000
(2022/23)



71.7%
Aged 18+
overweight
or obese
England: 64%
(2022/23)



249.3 rate per
100,000 smoking
attributable
mortality
England: 202.2
(2017-19)



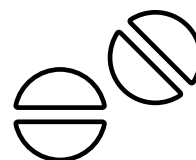
22.8% smoking
prevalence in
adults with a
long term mental
health condition
England: 25.1%
(2022/23)



18.1%
prevalence rate
for depression
(aged 18+)
England: 13.2%
(2022/23)



74.1% unmet
treatment need
(alcohol)
England: 77.6%
(2023/24)



40.2% unmet
treatment need
(opiates and
crack)
England: 57.2%
(2023/24)

Healthy life expectancy is a measure of the average number of years a person would expect to live in good health. In our Borough we see a significant gap in healthy life expectancy for men and women between people living in the most deprived wards and those living in the most affluent wards.

In terms of access to preventative programmes, 62% of adolescents are taking up the offer of secondary school vaccinations, whereas around 80% of those over 65 years are taking up the offer of flu vaccines.

72% of adults in the Borough are overweight or obese. Whilst there has been a decline over the years in overall smoking rates in the Borough, there are still differences between groups and communities locally, with higher smoking rates in people with severe mental illness and routine and manual workers.

In 2022/23, there were 664 per 100,000 admissions for alcohol related conditions, significantly higher than the England average. In terms of mental health, the rate of people living with depression is 18% in the Borough, higher than the national average.

What have communities told us:

Some key themes from various consultations, surveys and focus groups:

- Supporting young people with anxiety about vaccination
- Addressing distrust and vaccine misinformation
- Flexibility of venues and times to access services
- Access to holistic mental health support and services
- Coordinated and joined up services for people with multiple needs

Why this is a key focus area:

It is crucial not only to help people live longer lives, but also to ensure that most of those years are spent in good mental and physical health. Supporting people to make healthier choices empowers them to manage behaviours like smoking, diet, physical activity, and alcohol consumption, which can greatly improve their chances of staying healthy for longer.

Early diagnosis of risk factors and conditions provides an opportunity for timely support, promoting self-care and helping to prevent the onset of long-term chronic conditions. While many people are confident in seeking services to improve and manage their health, some groups require additional support and targeted services to achieve the same level of access and benefit.



Commitments:

- **Vaccinations**

We will support and promote vaccination programmes to prevent serious illness caused by communicable diseases.

Through partnerships and networks with the NHS, UK Health Security Agency and community organisations, we will improve vaccination uptake, with a focus on communities with greater barriers to access.

- **Screening**

We want all residents of Stockton-on-Tees to be able to access all available screening for circulatory disease, respiratory disease and cancers.

- **Smoking**

We will reduce the number of people smoking across all communities, whilst providing focused support for people with low incomes, living with mental illness and pregnant women.

- **Healthier Weight**

As well as tackling the wider causes of obesity, we will support those who are already experiencing overweight or obesity to make sustainable behaviour changes.

- **Alcohol related harm**

We will reduce alcohol related harm in Stockton-on-Tees whilst ensuring that alcohol can be enjoyed responsibly.

- **Drug related harm**

We will reduce the number of people using drugs through primary prevention initiatives and tackling the drivers contributing to drug misuse. We will treat addiction as a long-term health condition, breaking down stigma, and ensuring early help and treatment to reduce drug related harm.

- **Mental Health**

We will continue working to reduce stigma within our communities, enhance access to early support and care, and prioritise strengthening community-based integrated services.

- **Sexual Health**

We will ensure residents of Stockton-on-Tees can make informed choices and when necessary, access appropriate services to live a healthy sexual and reproductive life, free from harm.

- **Independence**

We will provide the right support at the right time to people to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support and maximise their independence.

- **Complex and multiple needs**

For people experiencing complex and multiple needs, we will look for all opportunities to better coordinate and deliver holistic support and care, rather than siloed.

6. How we will deliver and monitor the strategy

- **A joint delivery plan**
Underpinning the strategy will be the development of a joint delivery plan, with measurable objectives, activities, timelines and responsibilities.
- **Outcomes framework and dashboard**
A set of high-level outcomes and process milestones will be developed, that can be monitored over time.
- **Feedback from communities**
We will engage with our communities to gather their feedback on our progress and ensure we are also responding to emerging needs.



AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2025

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet Member for Health, Leisure and Culture – Cllr Nelson

Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG)

SUMMARY

The Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) brings together a range of professionals to scrutinise and advise upon event safety processes and systems for outdoor events. The ISAG looks at plans for a wide range of events and festivals in Stockton on Tees, focusing on events of a significant scale or complexity. All events of scale on Stockton Council land are subject to review by the ISAG, and where requested ISAG will review event safety plans which are hosted on private land.

The ISAG does not take decisions on whether or not an event should go ahead but provides specialist advice and recommendations to landowners, including the Council to enable them to make informed decisions to allow an event or require changes to an event plan. The ISAG provides practical advice and guidance to event organisers and aims to drive up the quality of event plans/safety planning.

The ISAG's independent Chair produces an annual report for information, to highlight significant findings and make recommendations for areas of further work.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

The ISAG Chair's report is presented to Cabinet to allow them to see the level of scrutiny and challenge being brought to bear in relation to events to ensure the public are properly protected. Cabinet are also able to see and comment upon the areas of further work recommended by the ISAG in relation to safety at public events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet note the ISAG's annual report 2024/25
2. Cabinet note the resignation of the current ISAG Chair, and agree to formally acknowledge and thank the Chair for his service.

DETAIL

1. The ISAG was convened nine times during 2024/25 and reviewed 27 event safety plans which is comparable to 2023/24, with the majority of plans coming from external and community event organisers, who want to host events on Council land.

2. The ISAG report confirms that there haven't been any changes to the membership for the group this year and all key organisations have a dedicated resource identified to the ISAG. Whilst this is positive, the report does highlight that attendance by ISAG reps has shown a downward trend from 2023/24, with some meetings operating without all services being represented. This matter has been included as an improvement action for 2025/26.
3. A high number of event safety plans continue to be submitted on time (70% 2024/24, 69% 2023), however despite this, the ISAG have reported delays in the assurance process. There has been an overall increase in the number event safety plans that were being reviewed/updated within 5 days of the event as initial information was incomplete. Multi reviews of event safety plans, together with plans that are submitted late puts pressure on the ISAG to review and provide feedback
4. The ISAG recognises that it is difficult to balance dates for submitting plans and date for review and response. Further recommendation is made to the Council regarding submission dates.
5. The standard and quality of events safety plans is a key focus for the ISAG. The ISAG have highlighted that 6 (22%) event safety plans have not reached full safety assurance this year and whilst this does not mean that an event is unsafe, there is a potential added risk to public safety. The ISAG have highlighted this matter to the Council and continue to encourage event organisers to have early conversations with ISAG, to help the event organiser understand expected safety standards and documentation.
6. The ISAG has delivered focused work of three largescale complex events this year including Yarm Fair, Festival of Thrift and Remembrance Sunday Events, all of which have specific safety challenges and attract large audiences.
7. The ISAG have reported good progress against the Improvement Action plan by the Council, which includes access to event safety information and guidance for event organizer. ISAG note that workshops are programmed in Spring 2025, which are aimed to develop event safety planning skills.
8. The ISAG acknowledge the importance and level of support and advice provided by Council and other emergency service stakeholders who are integral to the success of safe outdoor event planning.
9. To assist event organisers in early planning, ISAG meeting dates for 2025 are included in the ISAG Chair's report, they are;

Tuesday 15 April
Tuesday 20 May
Tuesday 3 June
Tuesday 24 June
Tuesday 22 July
Tuesday 12 August
Tuesday 9 September
Tuesday 30 September
Tuesday 21 October
Tuesday 25 November
10. The full ISAG Annual Report, including an improvement plan, is attached as Appendix 1.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

The ISAG report review of activity in 2024 will not impact on any communities. Where the future approach to events is altered for safety reasons, including for reasons arising from ISAG advice, the potential impact of those changes on any affected communities will be assessed.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

This report does not contain corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ISAG report review of activity in 2024 does not have any financial implications. Where the future approach to events is altered for safety reasons, including for reasons arising from ISAG advice, the potential financial implications of those changes will be assessed on a case by case basis.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

It is the policy of Stockton Borough Council to uphold reasonable standards of public safety at all events in the Borough and to encourage the well-being of all residents and visitors at those public events. The ISAG provides specialist advice to the Local Authority to help it discharge its functions under public event legislation

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Independent Safety Advisory Group is a key part of system that ensures that public events can take place safely and successfully and has robust assurances processes in place to assess and advise on safety risks at outdoor events.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

Not ward specific. This report does not require any consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) Debrief Report 2024/25

Name of Contact Officer: Tara Connor

Post Title: Assistant Director Culture, Libraries and Events

Telephone No. 01642 526753

Email Address: tara.connor@stockton.gov.uk

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**STOCKTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
INDEPENDENT SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP**

DE-BRIEF REPORT 2024/25

OVERVIEW 2024/25

Stockton's Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) have reviewed a full programme of event safety plans in 2024/25, the majority being delivered on Council land and a small number on privately owned land and on the river Tees.

The total number of event plans submitted to the group is consistent with 2023/24 and there remains a wide range of event safety plans for review, including annual community led events and celebrations. The ISAG have also reviewed a limited number of more complex large-scale events and festivals, and are aware that several Council run events are temporarily paused due to major redevelopment of key event spaces.

The standard and quality of events safety plans continues to be a focus for the ISAG and, although there are notable improvements across some event plans, others event safety plans including Yarm Fair, Big Kids Circus and IB Family Fun Weekend have been challenging.

The ISAG have also noted an increase in the number of event safety plans that have not reached full safety assurance this year and whilst this does not mean events are unsafe, there is an increased risk to public safety which the Council need to consider. The ISAG have highlighted this issue to the Council and encouraged continued early conversations with event organiser to help them understand expected safety standards/documentation.

Attendance at scheduled meetings with the event organisers has shown a downward trend from 2023/24, with some meetings operating without all service represented. This matter is included as an improvement action for 2025/26.

The ISAG note that there has been steady progress made against the Improvement Plan, including sharing of information in relation to legislation and good practice guides. The ISAG also note that event training/workshops will start in Spring 2025 and discussions in terms of an accreditation scheme are being considered.

ISAG - FOCUSSED WORK 2024/25

Further to the above and highlighted below are specific areas of work and support that ISAG have delivered in 2024/25.

Yarm Fair:

ISAG continues to prioritise Yarm Fair as a key piece of work due the significant challenges associated with delivery of this event, including space constraints, infrastructure, crowds, traffic management, safety documentation, as well as the impact on residents and businesses.

The Showman's Guild who are the event organisers of Yarm Fair have worked successfully with ISAG and the Council over the past 5 years, and ISAG have previously reported significant improvements in event planning, delivery, and documentation for this event.

Unfortunately, changes to the Showman's Guild safety staff and to their committee structure, has resulted in established event safety arrangements/systems now being questioned by the event organiser. The Showman's Guild have also challenged their responsibility in connection with the Travelling community and the associated Flashings and Ridings, which all occur in conjunction with the Fair. These challenges have contributed to planning delays and, additional pressure place on the ISAG to review multi event plans/documentation outside of agreed timelines. In addition, the ISAG could only 'part assurance' the final event safety plan for Yarm Fair and given the scale and challenges of this event the ISAG have raised this as a risk area.

The ISAG are aware that there were safety issues at the live event which will be reviewed at the technical debrief, planned between the Council and Showman's Guild in February 2025.

Festival of Thrift (FOT):

The ISAG note significant improvements in event planning and safety documentation for the Festival of Thrift event and this follows changes in the FOT's event safety/planning team in 2024/25. The new team have worked closely with ISAG and the Council's Events Service reviewing safety issues raised last year. The working relationship between the new FOT safety team and the ISAG has also improved.

ISAG acknowledge and support the Council's ongoing approach in operating a technical working group, to assist with the delivery of FOT and key areas of safety including traffic management, car parking and crowd management arrangements.

Remembrance Events:

ISAG continues to support 'Remembrance Day' events across the Borough and note the joined-up approach by the Police and Council teams, including Events, Enforcement and Highways. These events are well attended, with audience numbers growing each year. ISAG noted and highlighted the continued financial support and resources provided by the Council to help run these events at a local and Borough level.

EVENTS REVIEWED BY ISAG 2024/25

The number of event safety plans reviewed by ISAG in 2024/25 was 27 and the table below shows the ratio between Council run events and events run by other event organisers, which is consistent with the 2023/24 programme.

The ISAG are aware that several largescale Council events are temporarily paused due to the redevelopment of Stockton riverside and Preston Park Museum locations, and it is likely that the number of Council run event plans will significantly increase from 2026.

For 2024/25, the ISAG have reviewed new events, including Yard Sessions, Environment Fair and Going for Gold and, several events marking the 80th anniversary of the Normandy Landings (D-Day).

Event Plans	Ratio of Event Safety Plans for Review													
	2017	%	2018	%	2019	%	*2020	*2021	2022	%	2023	%	2024	%
SBC	26	48	27	48	19	37	n/a	10	18	42	8	28	7	26
Other	28	51	29	51	32	63	n/a	16	25	58	21	72	20	74
Total	54		56		51		n/a	26	43		29		27	

*2020 and 2021 – event programme impacted by Covid

The ISAG note the following events which were scheduled to be reviewed by the Group but were cancelled during the year, these include the Council’s Halloween Spooky walk, cancelled due redevelopment work at Preston Park, FORP’s Halloween event, cancelled due to resources issues from their team and only one out of three planned Yard Session were delivered.

MEETINGS

Of the 10 ISAG meetings schedule for 2024/25, 9 meetings took place between March 2024 and October 2024. The September 2024 ISAG meeting was cancelled due to event cancellations mentioned above and another event organiser did not have their event plans ready to submit within the scheduled deadline.

All ISAG meetings were held on Microsoft Teams and ran to time. Event organisers are given the opportunity to attend meetings and present their plans and of the 27 event plans submitted 26 events organisers attended and discussed their plans.

As in previous years, a preliminary meeting was held with the event organisers of Yarm Fair to allow early discussions about safety. As mentioned earlier, Yarm Fair remains challenging in terms of its location, scale, and traffic management plans.

MEMBERSHIP, ATTENDANCE & TRAINING

The ISAG’s operating model consists of an Independent Chairman and Vice Chairman, and this arrangement has worked well in 2024/25. All but one of the scheduled meetings have been delivered and led by the Chair or Vice Chair, with one unplanned absence being covered by an Assistant Director from Stockton Council.

ISAG note that here is a planned change of Chairman in 2025/26.

Unfortunately, attendance of core and non-core members of the group has shown a downward trend in 2024/25, with several meetings operating without all service being represented.

ISAG acknowledges the workload pressures of individual members who delivery their ISAG role on top of their own jobs. The incoming Chairman will work closely with individual service reps to ensure that where attendance is not possible, substitutes do attend.

There have not been any changes to the ISAG membership during 2024/25, however there are planned changes in 2025/26 including a Water Safety expert representative, and new Police representatives.

Core Members 2024/25

Carl Marshall	– Independent, Chairman
Russell Smith	– Independent, Chairman (Vice)
Tara Connor	– SBC, Secretariat
James Burrell/Kayleigh Dawson	– SBC, Administration
Simon Milner	– SBC, Highways & Network Safety Representative
Dawn McQuillan	– SBC, Building Representative
Stephen Donaghy	– SBC, Environmental Health
Polly Edwards	– SBC, Licensing
Insp Jon Willoughby/Matt Reeves	– Cleveland Police
Richard Brown	– Cleveland Fire Brigade
Tracy Scott	– NEAS

Non-Core Members

Tim Shurmer	– Emergency Planning Unit
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EVENT APPLICATIONS, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Deadlines:

Of the 27 event safety plans that were submitted for review, 19 plans were received within agreed timescales which is 70%, and this is in comparison with 69% in 2023/24.

There remains a small number of event plans (8 No.) that were submitted late to ISAG for review and, 6 No. plans submitted up to 4 days late and 2 No. submitted 7-10 days after the scheduled deadline.

This year there were 16 (59%) event safety plans that were still being reviewed/updated within 5 days of the event date and final assurance was not confirmed until the week of an event. This is an increase for 2023/24, compared to 9 (31%) event safety plans where final assurance was late.

Late plans put pressure on the ISAG to assess information within short timescales and to provide comments/advice. This can impact the time available for event organisers to respond/provide additional information. In these circumstances, there is a risk that full assurance cannot be achieved on event safety arrangements, and this can lead to the Council deciding whether an event can take place without full assurance.

ISAG acknowledges that it is a difficult balance to schedule enough time for plans to be developed enough to be assessed, against allowing enough time for changes to be made and reassessed for ISAG review. The group has recommended that the Council continues to review and revisit submission dates.

Quality of Event Safety Plans

Improving the quality of event plans and safety standards for public outdoor events remains a priority for the ISAG. Individual representatives on the Group continue to support and work closely with event organisers to help them improve their knowledge and understanding of safety legislation and highlight good practice in terms of event planning/management.

The ISAG have previously reported that most event organisers who attend the ISAG do show improvements in their event planning, applying previous comments and advice made by the Group in their subsequent event plans. Whilst this is encouraging, the ISAG are aware that there are a small number of event organisers who regularly attend ISAG but are still not making progress. This year, the ISAG were unable to fully quality assure 6 event plans and whilst this does not mean that an event is unsafe, it does mean that it is running without full assurance from the ISAG. In one case this year, an event plan for a medium scale event on private land was returned to the event organiser without any assessment/review as the safety information submitted was too limited.

The ISAG chair has reported that quality of event planning is a key area of work highlighted by ISAG, and the group recommends that the Council continues to provide clear parameters of safety requirements to access to Council land for event delivery.

Knowledge Hub:

The Knowledge Hub online resource is used to share information between members and continues to work well. It is particularly useful for large scale events which have high volumes of documentation. Membership to the group is by invite only and is restricted to core members and non-core members.

Incident Management and Counter-Terrorism Awareness/Measures

The ISAG continues to request evidence of incident planning arrangements, CT awareness training and threat risk assessment processes from event organisers in relation to their event planning/safety systems. Incident planning continues to be challenging for the smaller to mid-size community events organisers and additional support from ISAG is required.

The ISAG notes that the threat level during 2024/25 remained constant at 'substantial'. Counter Terrorism/Risk continues to be a standard agenda item for ISAG.

Support to External Event Organisers

The ISAG notes the continued specialist, practical and financial support given to external event organisers from the Council's Events, Enforcement, Highways, Building Control, Environment, Media, and Comms Teams. In addition, support and guidance from external agencies, including the Police, Cleveland Fire Services, NEAS, and the Emergency Planning Unit is acknowledged and vital in terms of effective planning and safe delivery of outdoor events.

Organisations supported include:

- Big Kids Circus
- Billingham Town Council
- CPAD IB Fund
- Festival of Thrift
- Friends of Ropner Park
- N.E Bars Teesside Ltd (Yard Sessions)
- Showman's Guild
- Tees Rowing Club
- Thornaby Town Council
- Yarm District Lions
- Yarm Town Council

COMPLAINTS/COMMENTS

ISAG were made aware of 3 complaint in 2024/25 all in relation to parking and including events delivered Billingham Synthonia Cricket Club, Yarm Town Council and Daisy Chain.

IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/25

There has been steady progress against the 2024/25 Improvement Plan, with a few actions due to be completed by the end of this financial year/event season.

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS	DATE	COMMENTS
Continue to review Group Membership, including a water safety expert/representative.	April 23	Completed Water Safety Rep to join ISAG in 2025/26
'Prevent' Training – Counter Terrorism Legislation	March 23	Deferred to 2024/25 – see workshop
Research other Safety Advisory Groups, with a view to strengthening working practices and building networks	March 25	Deferred to 2025/26 – new chairman role.
Develop a series of event workshop sessions for External Event Organisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Hygiene • Event Management/Safety Plans • Risk • Incident Management • Prevent Training – Counter Terrorism Legislation 	March 25	Event organisers are signposted to national guidance (The Purple Guide), Council's policy and online Act training and guidance. Workshops programme for Spring 2025
Update Council Website and Event Information for Food Hygiene Inspection/Compliance and minimum Food Hygiene Rating Scores	April 2024	Completed Information circulated to all event organisers and Council website reviewed and updated annually
Explore links with Canals and River Trust with regards to any events taking place on the river	March 24	Deferred to 2025/26
Explore an accreditation process for event safety planning.	March 25	Initial discussion with Local Authority Events Advisory Group (LAEOG)
Work with highlighted Event Organisers, where safety plans are not robust	March 25	On going, with support from Council Events Service
ISAG Awareness Training for new representatives	Within 12 months of appointment	Non required

2025/26 ISAG MEETING DATES

Tuesday 15 April
Tuesday 20 May
Tuesday 3 June
Tuesday 24 June
Tuesday 22 July
Tuesday 12 August
Tuesday 9 September
Tuesday 30 September
Tuesday 21 October
Tuesday 25 November

Event Organisers will be contacted in February 2025, informing them of their allocated ISAG date and deadlines for submitting event applications. Organisers are reminded of the purpose/role of ISAG and given further information about the type of information that the group expect to receive.