

**Date:** Monday 13 May 2024 at 4.00 pm

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

**Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair)**  
**Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair)**

Cllr Ian Dalgarno  
Cllr Niall Innes  
Cllr David Reynard  
Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Cllr John Gardner  
Cllr Eileen Johnson  
Cllr Hugo Stratton

## **AGENDA**

- |          |  |                 |
|----------|--|-----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Evacuation Procedure</b>  | (Pages 7 - 8)   |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>   |                 |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>  |                 |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Minutes</b>   |                 |
|          | To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 8 April 2024                                  | (Pages 9 - 10)  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Action Plan for Agreed Recommendation - Review of Cost of Living Response</b>                 | (Pages 11 - 20) |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</b>  |                 |
|          | To receive the draft scope and project plan and a background presentation from the link officer. | (Pages 21 - 42) |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2024-2025</b>                              | (Pages 43 - 44) |

**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: Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Harrison on email [rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk)

**KEY - Declarable interests are:-**

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

**Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance**



**Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

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

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

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

## Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Microphones**

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

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## PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 8 April 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Paul Weston (Chair), Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Hugo Stratton and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

**Officers:** Fallon Dunleavy, Julie Marsden (R&IG), Neil Mitchell (CSE&C), Margie Stewart-Piercy (AH&W), Michelle Gunn (CS) and Judy Trainer (CS).

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair).

### **PEO/1/24 Evacuation Procedure**

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

### **PEO/2/24 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **PEO/3/24 Minutes**

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **PEO/4/24 Initial Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future**

The Select Committee considered a progress update including assessments of progress following implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Home Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future. This was the first time the update had been presented to the Committee, and members received a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Employment & Training Hub's work to support the green agenda and green skills.

Key issues discussed were as follows:

- There were 130 apprenticeship opportunities available from a range of employers and colleges at the Energy Event
- The solar panels on Municipal Buildings would remain on the building and new solar panels would be installed on Dunedin House
- Water meters were being installed in buildings if this was feasible, e.g. in Tees Active buildings, and investigations would take place regarding harvesting rain water on a number of sites.
- The report to cabinet on 15 February 2024 reported a 61% overall reduction in CO2 since 2010 and 89% of the Council's actions were either established or

progressing.

AGREED that Progress Update be noted and the assessments of progress be confirmed with all actions signed off as fully complete.

**PEO/5/24 Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough**

The Select Committee considered a progress update including assessments of progress following implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough. This was the third time the update had been presented to the Committee, and there were two outstanding recommendations.

It was noted that recommendation 11 (lessons learnt from the junior/toddlers play area at Preston Park be used to inform future play provision designs), was assessed as “2 – on track”. Although feedback suggested that these play areas had been well received by users, further work needed to be carried out from completed projects for inclusivity and accessibility and therefore one more update would be presented to the Committee in six months time.

AGREED that Progress Update be noted and the assessments of progress be confirmed.

**PEO/6/24 Chairs Update and Work Programme 2024 - 2025**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The next meeting would be held on Monday 13 May 2024. The scope and project plan for the next review, Disabled Facilities Grant, would be presented to the meeting along with a background presentation.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

People Select Committee

13 May 2024

## **ACTION PLAN FOR AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS – REVIEW OF COST OF LIVING RESPONSE**

### **Summary**

Members are asked to consider the Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Review of Cost of Living Response will be implemented and target dates for completion.

### **Detail**

1. The Committee's final report of the Review of Cost of Living Response was considered by Cabinet in April 2024. Cabinet accepted the recommendations contained within.
2. These are now subject to the procedure for monitoring the implementation of agreed recommendations. An Action Plan has now been drawn up and is attached at **Appendix 1**. This sets out how the relevant departments will be taking forward the agreed recommendations, and includes target dates for completion.
3. Members should consider and agree the Action Plan. The Committee will receive a detailed progress update on the implementation of recommendations approximately 12 months after the Action Plan has been agreed.

**Name of Contact Officer: Michelle Gunn**

**Post Title:** Scrutiny Officer

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**ACTION PLAN: Review of Cost of Living Response**

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
1	That findings from this review will inform the development of the Council's Anti-Poverty Action Plan/Strategy as part of the 'Powering Our Futures' programme. This will be coordinated with partners and will advocate the importance of lived experience.	<p>Findings from this review shared with Anti-Poverty Project Group and included in Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. This work forms part of the 'Powering Our Futures Programme' under the 'Communities' Mission strand.</p> <p>Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to Lived Experience Group for comment and consultation.</p> <p>Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to Cabinet for approval in September 2024.</p> <p>Implementation of Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan and continuing dialogue with Anti-Poverty Project Group and Lived Experience Group.</p>	<p>Anti-Poverty Project Group received findings from scrutiny review and findings included in Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan approved by Lived Experience Group.</p> <p>Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan approved by Cabinet.</p> <p>Ongoing conversations with Anti-Poverty Project Group and Lived Experience Group to ensure Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan is fulfilling aims.</p>	<p>A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees (FSOT) Team/ Anti-Poverty Project Group</p> <p>FSOT Team</p> <p>FSOT Team</p> <p>FSOT Team</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>April 2024</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
2	That the Council continues to work with schools and governors to address the issues around the affordability of school uniform and provide options to expand the provision of pre-loved uniforms are explored, through devising an action plan clearly outlining the steps to be taken to address these issues. The action plan will be shared with the Committee and progress reported as part of the wider	<p>Council Officers to develop action plan.</p> <p>Action plan to be approved by People Select Committee.</p>	<p>Action plan created.</p> <p>Action plan approved.</p>	<p>Haleem Ghafoor/ Rebecca Saunders-Thompson/ Vanessa Housley</p> <p>Haleem Ghafoor/Rebecca Saunders-Thompson</p>	<p>April/May 2024</p> <p>May 2024</p>

**ACTION PLAN: Review of Cost of Living Response**

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No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
	recommendations. In addition, the Council will meet with Multi-Academy Trust school improvement leads to advocate the need for affordable school uniforms and the ongoing promotion of pre-loved ones.	Action plan to be carried out and progress reported to People Select Committee until completion.	Updates on progress and completion of action plan.	Haleem Ghafoor/Rebecca Saunders-Thompson	May 2025
3	That the income maximisation service is widely promoted through Stockton News and social media channels as a means of assisting residents with debt management and financial difficulties.	<p>This area of work is covered by the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Pension Credit advice and support drop-in sessions to be held in Community Spaces across the Borough.</p> <p>Continued partnership working on debt management and financial support advice services with Stockton District Information and Advice Service (SDAIS) and Moneywise (Tees Credit Union).</p>	<p>Strategy and Action Plan will be delivered as above (recommendation 1).</p> <p>Increase in residents accessing pension credit advice and support with applying for pension credits.</p> <p>Residents continue to be supported and access debt management and financial support services.</p>	<p>FSOT Team/ Communications Team</p> <p>FSOT Team (coordination)/ Revenues, Benefits and Welfare Team (delivery)</p> <p>FSOT Team (coordination)/ Revenues, Benefits and Welfare team, SDAIS and Moneywise (delivery)</p>	<p>May 2025/Ongoing</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
4	That, building on the success of previous staff drop-in sessions around Cost of Living this targeted approach continues where there is a need.	<p>FSOT Team stall at the Employee Engagement Day on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024.</p> <p>Staff drop-in sessions to be arranged across a range of services/workplaces.</p>	<p>Staff provided with Cost of Living advice and support.</p> <p>Staff provided with targeted support and advice on Cost of Living issues.</p>	<p>FSOT Team</p> <p>FSOT Team</p>	<p>May 2024</p> <p>May 2025/Ongoing</p>

**ACTION PLAN: Review of Cost of Living Response**

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
5	That, building on the existing success of the work undertaken, to continue to build on best practice from across the country working alongside the LGA.	<p>Continue to attend LGA Cost of Living Network.</p> <p>Consultation with LGA and other Council representatives, when developing projects and strategies, as appropriate.</p> <p>Consultation of evidence-based research when developing projects and strategies, as appropriate. For example from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Children North East Poverty Proofing</p> <p><i>(For information – Manchester City Council have already been consulted during the development of the Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan.)</i></p>	Future strategies and projects will be enhanced by continued engagement with the wider public sector.	FSOT Team	Ongoing

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**Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response – Draft School Uniform Action Plan**

***Recommendation 2 - That the Council continues to work with schools and governors to address the issues around the affordability of school uniform and provide options to expand the provision of pre-loved uniforms are explored, through devising an action plan clearly outlining the steps to be taken to address these issues. The action plan will be shared with the Committee and progress reported as part of the wider recommendations. In addition, the Council will meet with Multi-Academy Trust school improvement leads to advocate the need for affordable school uniforms and the ongoing promotion of pre-loved ones.***

<b>Research</b>			
<b>Proposed Actions / Progress</b>	<b>Success Measures</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
Conduct research on school uniform policies to compare with previous research undertaken in 2020.	Research will provide information on changes in school uniform policies across the Borough. This will inform a targeted approach to promote best practice schools and support schools to make uniform policies more affordable.	Rebecca Saunders-Thompson	August/September 2024
Building on existing research (conducted by Clare Branson, Catalyst), undertake mapping exercise of pre-loved uniform availability across the Borough.	Information on pre-loved school uniform to be updated on Council website to provide more support.	Rebecca Saunders-Thompson/ Emma Chudley/John Paul Stabler	August/September 2024
Explore alternative projects to be delivered across the Borough to support families to access school uniform provision.	Potential increase in families accessing support with school uniform costs.	Rebecca Saunders-Thompson	May 2025
<b>Communication</b>			
<b>Proposed Actions / Progress</b>	<b>Success Measures</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
Correspondence sent to Multi-Academy Trust school improvement leads and Boards of Governors for all schools to advocate the need for affordable school uniforms and the ongoing promotion of pre-loved ones.	Support and feedback which details positive action received.  Schools increase availability of pre-loved uniform and access to more affordable school uniform.	Rebecca Saunders-Thompson/ Vanessa Housley	July/September 2024

	Schools increase co-location of pre-loved school uniforms across different venues to increase accessibility for parents/carers.		
Attend Closing the Gap, Personal Development Network and other relevant meetings to provide an update on scrutiny review and gather feedback.	Senior school staff provided with recommendations from the review and encouraged to re-evaluate school uniform policies to increase affordability.  Council Officers to receive feedback from schools on policies and procedures for children/families experiencing financial difficulties.  Feedback will also assist with mapping exercise for pre-loved uniform promotion.	FSOT Team	December 2024
Continued promotion of pre-loved school uniform including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School and academy websites</li> <li>- Newsletters (eg Cost of Living Newsletter)</li> <li>- Keeping You in Touch (KYIT)</li> <li>- SBC staff drop-in sessions</li> <li>- Stockton News</li> <li>- Via Community Spaces network</li> <li>- Via The Bread and Butter Hubs</li> <li>- Child Poverty Project Group events</li> <li>- Via Stockton Food Power Network (food pantries and foodbanks)</li> <li>- Family Hubs</li> <li>- Relevant events</li> <li>- Social media channels</li> </ul>	Increased awareness and uptake of pre-loved school uniform.	FSOT Team (coordination and delivery)  Emma Chudley/John Paul Stabler (delivery)	Ongoing
<b>Events</b>			
Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
Free pre-loved school uniform shop at the Summer Here to Help event, July 2024	Residents provided with free school uniform	FSOT Team	July 2024

Free pre-loved school uniform stall at relevant staff and community events	Residents provided with free school uniform	FSOT Team	Ongoing
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<b>People Select Committee</b>
<b>Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</b>
<b>Outline Scope</b>

<b>Scrutiny Chair (Project Director):</b> Cllr Marilyn Surtees	<b>Contact details:</b> <a href="mailto:M.Surtees@stockton.gov.uk">M.Surtees@stockton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager):</b> Michelle Gunn	<b>Contact details:</b> <a href="mailto:michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk">michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk</a> 01642 524987
<b>Departmental Link Officer:</b> Sam Dixon (SBC Housing Regeneration & Investment Manager)	<b>Contact details:</b> <a href="mailto:Sam.Dixon@stockton.gov.uk">Sam.Dixon@stockton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</b>	
<p>Disabled Facilities Grant directly supports the following Council plan priority: “To support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible” (Council Plan Objective - ‘A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm’).</p>	
<b>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</b>	
<p>A Disabled Facilities Grant is a means tested grant provided by the Council to make an individual’s home suitable to their needs. Works may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• widening doors and installing ramps or grab rails</li> <li>• improve access to room and facilities via stairlifts or level access showers</li> <li>• building extensions to accommodate a downstairs bedroom/bathing facilities</li> <li>• adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use</li> </ul> <p>Monies to fund DFG’s is provided to Councils via the Better Care Fund.</p> <p>An individual must occupy the property the grant is applied for as their main residence and intend to occupy the property for the full grant period of 5 years. An individual can also apply if they are a landlord and have a disabled tenant. The Local Authority needs to be satisfied that the work is necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person’s needs and that the work is reasonable and can be done, depending on the age and condition of the property.</p> <p>Demand for DFGs continue to rise at a time when building costs have significantly increased. The result of this is an increasing number of DFG applications costed above the maximum grant threshold (£30k) and a growing waiting list (in terms of numbers of those waiting for a DFG and time taken from the point of application to DFG works commencing). This impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals and potentially their ability to remain living independently in their home</p> <p>The significant rise in building costs has resulted in an increasing number of residents needing to make greater financial contribution to the cost of their DFG, specifically in instances where the value of DFG works is above the maximum £30,000 threshold. SBC has adopted measures</p>	

to support individuals who do not have the financial means available to contribute to a DFG in the form of discretionary loans with the aim of preventing residents 'falling out' of the system.

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

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

- What is the customer journey when applying for DFG?
  - How do residents find out about DFG?
  - How is the Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment carried out and how long does this take?
  - What is the process once a referral is made by an OT and passed to the Housing Investment (HI) team?
  - What is current the current waiting list with HI?
  - How long does it take from application to receiving DFG?
  - What is the current waiting list with HVE and external contractors?
  - How are residents kept informed throughout the process?
  - What checks take place to ensure quality of the work once DFG has been received?
- Is Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's current approach to delivering DFG providing enough support to vulnerable residents?
- How does SBC's approach compare with other Local Authorities?
- Should SBC implement any of the Good Practice Guidance issued by Central Government in 2018.
- How many residents are needing to access discretionary funding (financial loan assistance) to make financial contribution to the cost of their DFG?
- Are there any other measures that can be taken to assist residents who do not have the financial means available to contribute to their DFG?
- How many residents applying don't meet the criteria and what advice/support is provided to those not eligible for any funding for DFG?
  - Are there any Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organization that provide assistance that is/can be signposted to?

**Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**

Council, Cabinet

**Expected duration of review and key milestones:**

10 months (report to Cabinet in March 2025)  
Approve scope and project plan – May 2024  
Receive evidence – May – December 2024  
Draft recommendations – January 2025  
Final Report – February 2025  
Report to Cabinet – March 2025

<p><b>What information do we need?</b></p> <p>Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):</p> <p>Good practice guidance issued by Central Government (produced on their behalf by produced by 'Foundations'). <a href="https://www-foundations-uk-com-guides/">https://www-foundations-uk-com-guides/</a></p>	
<p>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</p>	<p>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p>
<p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information and evidence relating to key lines of enquiries from:</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Integrated Early Intervention &amp; Prevention</li> <li>• Building Services</li> </ul>
<p>Representative from other Councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do they provide DFG/Is there anything we could learn?</li> </ul>
<p>Representatives from VCSE - for example Five Lamps, disability support groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five Lamps experience as service provider</li> <li>• Disability Groups experience with access/using service</li> <li>• Age Concern UK</li> </ul>
<p>Stockton &amp; District Information &amp; Advice Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other support are residents being signposted to</li> </ul>
<p><b>How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</b></p> <p>Committee meetings, reports, desktop research, benchmarking, consultation with VCSE</p>	
<p><b>Communities powering our futures: How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</b></p> <p>Engagement with groups that may have or may in the future access disabled facilities grant including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous applicants</li> <li>• Making it Real Board</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Viewpoint</li> <li>• Parent/Carer Forum</li> <li>• Teesside &amp; District Society for the Blind</li> <li>• BMBF</li> </ul>	

Engagement will include not only asking for their experience but also for solutions and, dependent on feedback received, may result in focus group sessions.

A detailed engagement plan will be developed to plan this work

**How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?**

The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics. Public bodies must have due regard to the need to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

**How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?**

Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA):

Vulnerable Groups - the review outcomes will support the JSNA key issue that people with physical disabilities should be supported to enable them to live as independently as possible and achieve their full potential.

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023:

All people in Stockton-on-Tees live well and live longer.

All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities.

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

DFG's helps the most vulnerable residents with disabilities in the Borough live independently in their own homes for longer, preventing pressures on other council and health services and supporting hospital discharge. The review will consider how SBC can deliver this crucial service in the most effective and efficient way whilst still meeting vulnerable resident's needs. It will also explore whether SBC is offering sufficient support to enable residents secure a DFG in the face of rising building costs.



<b>Project Plan</b>
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<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Details/Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Scoping of Review</b>	Information gathering	<b>March/April 2024</b>	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	<b>10.04.24</b>	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Agree Project Plan</b>	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	<b>13.05.24</b>	Select Committee
<b>Publicity of Review</b>	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	<b>TBC</b>	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
<b>Obtaining Evidence</b>	Integrated Early Intervention & Prevention Building Services	<b>03.06.24</b>	Select Committee
	Foundations	<b>08.07.24</b>	Select Committee
	Customer Feedback	<b>02.09.24</b>	Select Committee
		<b>07.10.24</b>	Select Committee
		<b>04.11.24</b>	Select Committee
		<b>02.12.24</b>	Select Committee
<b>Members decide recommendations and findings</b>	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	<b>06.01.25</b>	Select Committee
<b>Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders</b>	Circulation of Report	<b>TBC</b>	Scrutiny Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	<b>TBC</b>	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Final Agreement of Report</b>	Approval of final report by Committee	<b>03.02.25</b>	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
<b>Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee</b>	Consideration of report	<b>04.03.24</b>	Executive Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report to Cabinet / Approving Body</b>	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	<b>13.03.25</b>	Cabinet / Approving Body
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# People Select Committee

## Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)



Sam Dixon – Housing Regeneration and Investment Manager

13<sup>th</sup> May 2024

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Introduction

- What is a DFG
- Governance
- Access to DFG's
- Different Stages
- Timescales
- Current Pressures

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## What is a DFG

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a capital grant contributing to the cost of home adaptations, to enable eligible disabled people to continue living safely and independently. A DFG is available to disabled people of all ages in all housing tenures, depending on eligibility.

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Funding

- Housing Grants and Construction Act 1996
- Part of Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) programme
- Pooled budgets between the NHS and Local Authorities (LA)
- Funding passed to LA's

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Eligibility

- HIA / DFG
- Maximum Grant
- Means Test
- Passported Benefits
- Types of eligible adaptations

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Housing Assistance Policy

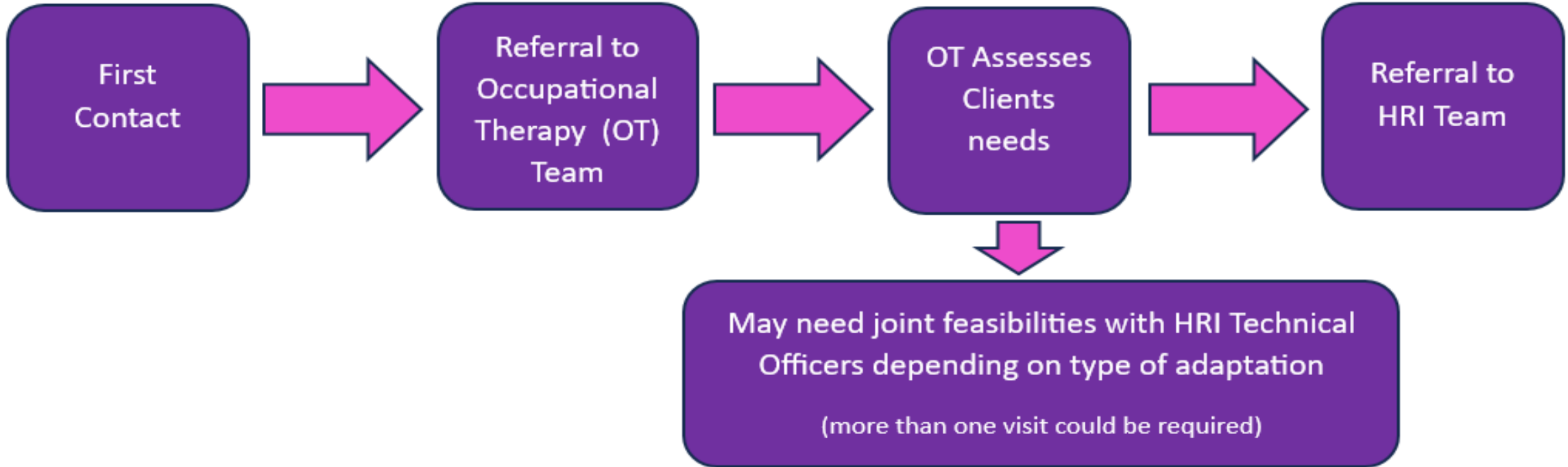
- The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales)
- Housing Assistance Policy (HAP)
- What included in SBC's



# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Accessing a DFG / Process

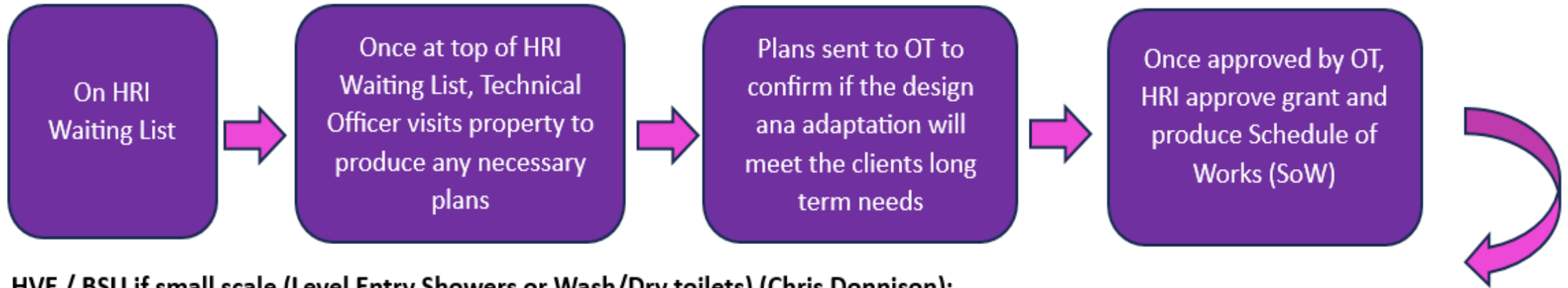
### 1 – First Contact / Occupational Therapy (Krasen Saltikov)



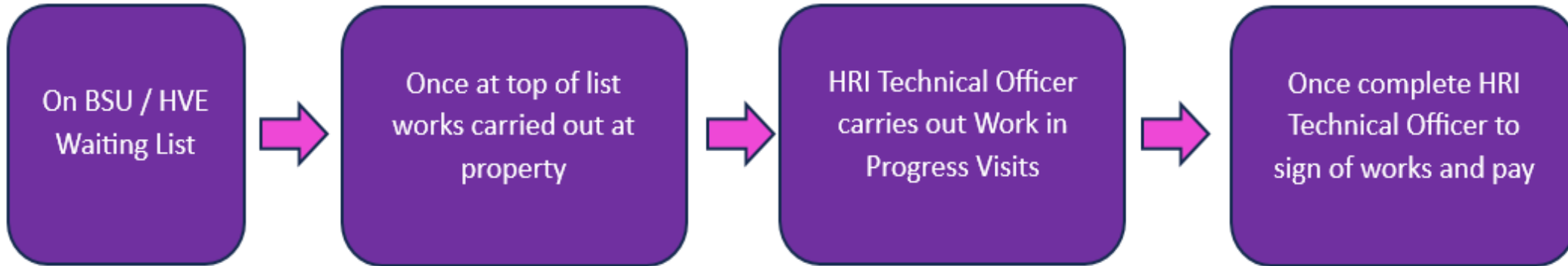
# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Process cont...

### 2. Housing Regeneration and Investment (HRI) (Sam Dixon)



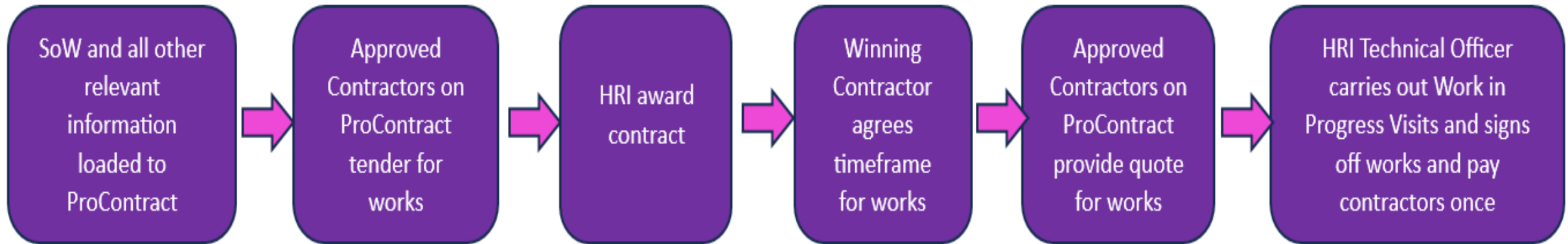
### 3. HVE / BSU if small scale (Level Entry Showers or Wash/Dry toilets) (Chris Donnison):



# Disabled Facilities Grants

Process cont...

## 4. All other works (HRI – Sam Dixon)



# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Timescales

- Occupational Therapy (OT) current waiting list
- OT current waiting times
- Housing Regeneration & Investment (HRI) current waiting list
- HRI current waiting times
- HRI previous waiting list/times
- Building Services Unit (BSU/HVE) current waiting list
- BSU current waiting times

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Government Target Timescales

There are 5 key stages of delivering a home adaptation.

**Stage 0:** first contact with services

**Stage 1:** first contact to assessment and identification of the relevant works;

**Stage 2:** identification of the relevant works to submission of the formal grant application

**Stage 3:** grant application to grant approval

**Stage 4:** approval of grant to completion of works.

Type	Target timescales (working days)				
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Total
Urgent & Simple	5	25	5	20	<b>55</b>
Non-urgent & Simple	20	50	20	40	<b>130</b>
Urgent & Complex	20	45	5	60	<b>130</b>
Non-urgent & Complex	35	55	20	80	<b>180</b>

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Current Pressures

- Waiting Lists Increasing
- Upper DFG Limit
- Balancing budget
- Registered Providers
- New recommendations from 2018
- Customer Feedback

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Potential Items to look at

- Customer experience of DFG journey
- Review of existing DFG / HAP Policies
- Review of 2018 Government recommendations
- Can we support DFG budget any better?
- Increased reliance on DFG from Registered Providers (RP)
- Customer Feedback

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Potential Plan

- Deep Dive of DFG / HAP Policies and funding
- Review of OT processes
- Review of HRI processes
- Review of BSU/HVE processes
- Customer Experience and Feedback



# Thank You

# Any Questions / Feedback

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## People Select Committee – Work Programme 2024- 2025

Date (4pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
<b>Monday 8 April 2024</b>	Monitoring: Initial Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future  Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough	Neil Mitchell/Julie Marsden  Jane Webb / Margie Stewart-Piercy
<b>Monday 13 May 2024</b>	Monitoring: Action Plan Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response  Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Draft) Scope and Project Plan</li> <li>• Background Presentation</li> </ul>	Haleem Ghafoor/Margie Stewart-Piercy  Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 3 June 2024</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 8 July 2024</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 2 September 2024</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 7 October 2024</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul> Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough	Sam Dixon  Margie Stewart-Piercy
<b>Monday 4 November 2024</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	Sam Dixon

## People Select Committee – Work Programme 2024- 2025

<b>Date (4pm unless stated)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Tuesday 2 December 2024</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant •	Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 6 January 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant •	Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 3 February 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant  TBC Overview Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Services, Environment and Culture</li> <li>• Corporate Services</li> <li>• Finance, Development and Regeneration</li> </ul>	Pauline Beall/ Nigel Cooke/ Carolyn Nice/ Sam Dixon/ Jane Edmends  Cllr Bob Cook/ Cllr Steve Nelson/ Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE/ Garry Cummings/ Reuben Kench/Julie Butcher/ Lorraine Dixon
<b>Monday 3 March 2025</b>	•	