

**Date:**

Monday 3 November 2025 at 2.00 pm

**Venue:**

Council Chamber, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive; , Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6BJ

**Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair)**

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

Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Hugo Stratton and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

## Agenda

1. **Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 12)
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**
4. **Minutes** (Pages 13 - 16)  
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2025
5. **Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response** (Pages 17 - 24)
6. **Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grants** (Pages 25 - 46)
7. **Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2025 - 2026**(Pages 47 - 48)

## **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.

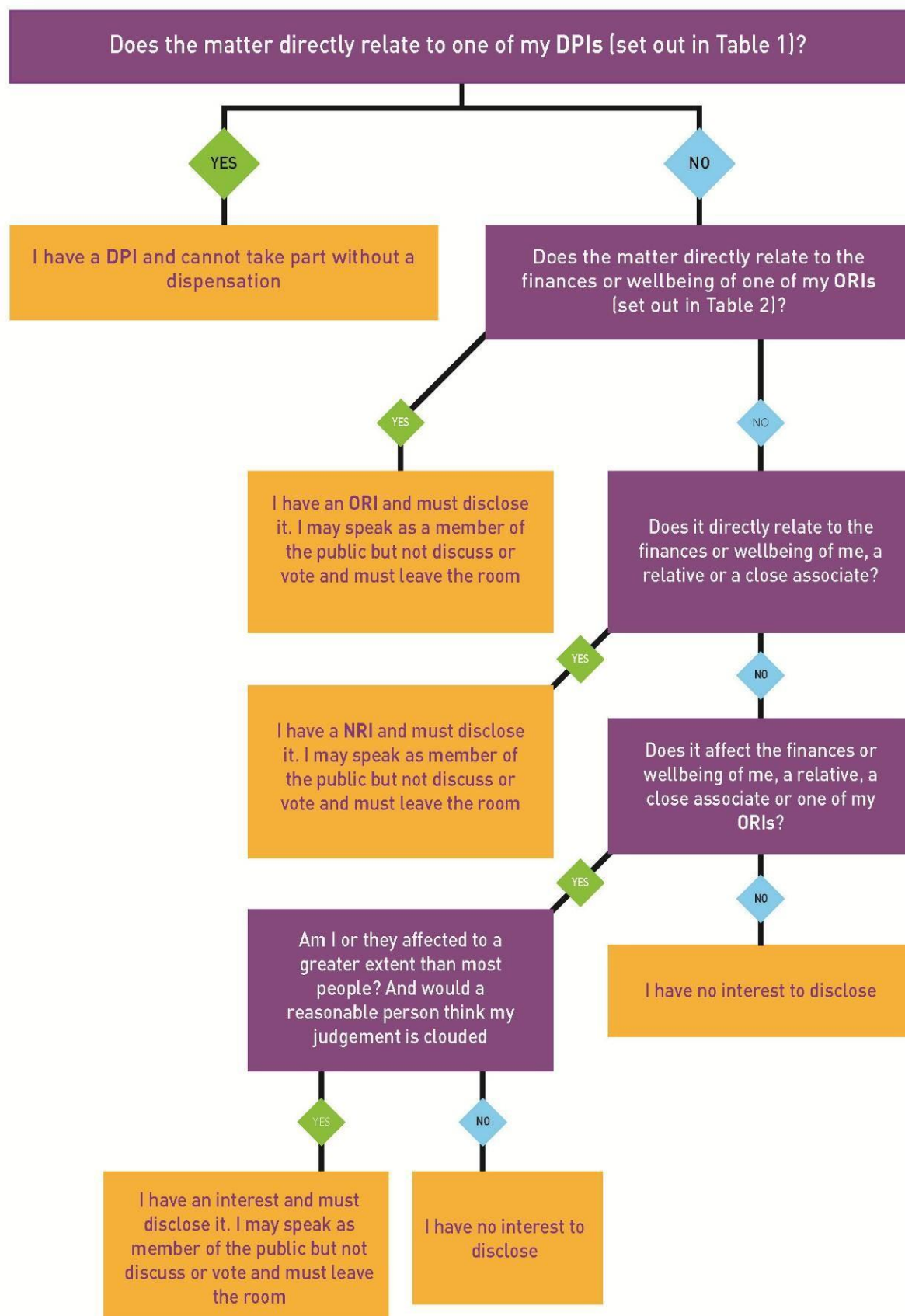
Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please.

Contact: Scrutiny Officer Michelle Gunn on email [michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.gunn@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 Registrable 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 at the front of the Library where a security code will be required to access them. Please ask a Member of Library staff for the security code.

### **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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## Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

### Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the Council Chamber entrance indicated on the map below.



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

The emergency exits are located via the doors on either side of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

**The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2**

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
  - do not stop to collect your belongings
  - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
  - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

**5. 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/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

**Toilets**

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

**Water Cooler**

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

**Microphones**

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## People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 6th October 2025.

**Present:** Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Coulson (sub Cllr Niall Innes) Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr David Reynard, and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

**Officers:** Jane Smith, Hazel Clark (Children's Services), Aishah Waite, Michelle Gun (Corporate Services), Lucy Owen, Marc Besford (Catalyst)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson and Cllr Hugo Stratton

### **PEO/27/25 Evacuation Procedure**

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

### **PEO/28/25 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **PEO/29/25 Minutes**

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **PEO/30/25 Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help**

The Committee received a presentation from Catalyst, a strategic infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector in Stockton-on-Tees. The presentation included an outline of their work, partnership working in Stockton-on-Tees, and how the Council could support the VCSE sector moving forward. The key issues highlighted and discussed were:

- Catalyst felt that partnership working was strong in Stockton-on-Tees, and while different partners did not always agree on issues, this was seen as positive as partners were bringing different viewpoints.
- While officers from Catalyst would represent the VCSE sector at executive level meetings and groups, they would encourage other VCSE organisations and individuals who were delivering services on the ground to join different meetings and working groups to ensure their voices were heard. There was discussion around relaunching Catalyst's previously held Senior Leaders' Forum to create clear pathways to report back from the different groups and boards and Members questioned how it could be ensured that a forum would engage a broad representation of the sector. It was felt that it was important to consult with the sector in the first instance to confirm it was something that it wanted and then shape it as a space for the sector with speakers from partners invited to attend.
- Initiatives such as the Wellbeing Hub and Warm Welcome were highlighted as examples of partners working together with the VCSE sector to provide advice and services for people.

- The Youth United Stockton Alliance (YUSA) was discussed, which was a collective of key partners who delivered youth provision. The purpose was to support the sustainability of high-quality open access youth provision as well as ensuring that there were targeted and focused interventions to support children and young people within youth settings. It was believed that this would reduce pressure on partners such as the Local Authority, NHS, and Police. YUSA worked closely with the Council to highlight their work and had a 'seat at the table' in planning of services for young people. YUSA had been able to provide fully funded training to the sector to create the next generation of youth workers and had engaged with over 2000 young people.
- It was noted that the VCSE sector had experience and expertise to deliver a wide range of services that could be commissioned and should not be seen as a reduced service. The real cost of delivery should also be considered when commissioning or funding the VCSE sector, including administrative costs and costs of utilities.
- It was noted that VCSE organisations often did not have paid staff, and were reliant on volunteers giving their time, therefore when requesting information from them partners should give realistic timescales.
- The Stockton Information Directory was highlighted as an area for improvement to ensure it was accessible and the information on the directory relevant.
- Funding of VCSE organisations was discussed. Groups and organisations were encouraged to work together to submit partnership funding bids, rather than submitting these separately but the challenges around this, when organisations were understandably looking to gain funding to keep themselves going, must be acknowledged. Also, when working with the private sector who wished to fulfil their social contracts the VCSE sector were being encouraged to make clear what support they needed, whether this was volunteering time or goods. It was sometimes appropriate to make financial requests, but this was unlikely to be substantial enough to keep operating a service long term. VCSE organisation usually applied for funding directly with Catalyst able to offer support to identify funding opportunities and also look over funding bids, while not able to write them on other organisations' behalf. It was stressed that it was each funder that decided who their funding was open to and sometimes they specify it was for an infrastructure such as Catalyst if they wanted a strategic organisation to distribute to the sector as a whole.

The Committee received a report regarding learning from visits to Lincolnshire and Sunderland Local Authorities. The report noted:

- Lincolnshire instigated a cultural shift over a decade to reduce reliance on local authority services, making early help "everyone's business", resulting in 80% of Early Help delivery being delivered by external partners.
- The LA carried out extensive consultations with partners and children and young people to ensure there were involved in the transition, as well as providing training to build confidence for partners to lead on early help.
- Sunderland prioritised early identification and partnership-led support and had piloted a duty system within its locality teams, with dedicated teams operating reduced caseloads.
- The visits revealed several common themes across both local authorities including that Early Help could be a shared responsibility with external partners, shifting the burden away from the local authority alone, and embedding expectations across partners.
- The local authorities also invested in training, tools, and clear frameworks to equip partners to confidently lead on cases.

- They had strong gateways and thresholds, so families were supported through universal community-based services first. Officers noted that this linked to the improvements needed to the Stockton Information Directory highlighted by Catalyst.

Members questioned whether moving towards a partnership model where partners provided the majority of early help services would affect the Council's statutory responsibilities. It was explained that the responsibility for statutory interventions and protections would remain with and be provided by the Council and would not be outsourced to partners and/or the VCSE sector.

It was recognised that partners were carrying out a wide range of services and working with families, building up relationships with them, e.g. health visitors, schools, youth workers etc. However, they were referring families into social care services when, given the right support and resources, they would be best placed to support the family. Increased partnership working would be an improved offer for families as they would be receiving the right support earlier and would not have to wait for social care assessments to be carried out, which could be intrusive and/or lead to no further action taking place. This would also take some pressure off social care, so they were more able to concentrate on providing targeted and complex support.

The Committee also received a presentation regarding the Family First Partnership (FFP) Programme reforms which included the journey to date, how partners had been engaged, and an overview of the guidance and changes for family help. The issues highlighted and discussed included:

- The Family First Partnership Programme Guide was published in March 2025, and funding confirmed in April 2025. The reforms were the biggest change to social care since the Children Acts in 1989 and 2004 and aimed to ensure that the right decisions were made at the right time for families, so they received the support that they needed. Partners would be empowered to be part of this process.
- The funding mostly comprised of bringing together existing funding pots, however there was some new funding to assist with ensuring partners were prepared, and the Council had also been granted delivery support from the Department for Education (DfE).
- Engagement had been taking place with partners, such as Health and Police, to ensure they were aware of the social care reforms, and this had been taking place at a time when partners were also experiencing structural changes in their sectors. However, they had shown a commitment and had been involved in the planning and co-design of FFP in Stockton-on-Tees. There was robust governance in place for the reforms.
- Family Help would bring together support workers and social workers into a single service to respond more flexibly to a range of needs families may have. Over the next year the Council would be working with partners to develop Multi-disciplinary Family Help teams.
- A rapid need assessment had taken place to understand the needs of children, young people and families in the borough and had identified that the greatest need for family help and support was during pregnancy and the first year of a child's life and at age 10 – 15 years.
- Family Group Decision Making was similar to the Family Group Conferences that had been operating in the Borough, whereby professionals facilitated conversations with families to assist them in identifying their needs and who within their support network could commit to providing support e.g. an auntie

helping with school pick-up. These types of conversations were frequently used in child protection but less so in early help and it was time to embed it across the system.

- An integrated front door to children service was the main way for organisations and individuals to flag concerns about a child and this was carried out by the Children's Hub (CHUB) shared with Hartlepool Borough Council. The Council had made the decision to bring the CHUB back to Stockton-on-Tees by April 2026 and were in the process of redesigning it.
- Conversations were needed at the front door to understand issues, and this could lead to the appropriate advice and information given to a family, potentially meaning a referral for a more detailed assessment may not be needed and that families were able to access services and support more rapidly.
- Partners were often able to help families without referring to the front door therefore would be encouraged to do so. Councils were one of many organisations that delivered Early Help and it was believed that many referrals to the CHUB could be better dealt with through Early Help if there was a really good partnership system in place. Partners had also expressed that they would like to receive updates, feedback and outcomes from referrals. By sharing this information, it could prevent partners re-referring families to the front door when their needs were better supported elsewhere.
- The changes required training and development for staff, as well as a change of language and terms used e.g. 'Early Help' would be called 'Family Help'. There were also changes to technology used, systems in place, and statutory returns required by the DfE. These would be implemented in a managed way.
- The Council had to submit a detailed Stage 2 Plan to the DfE for the FFP reforms in December, and they would feed back to the Council in January.

The Chair thanked officers for the information.

A report from the Stockton Parent carer Forum, outlining the experience of their members of accessing early help services and views of the partnerships involved, was noted. The report highlighted several areas for improvement including better and purposeful communication and training for professionals on SEND. However, it also acknowledged that Stockton Parent Carer Forum was now involved in the shaping of services through the Families First Partnership reforms meetings.

AGREED that the information be noted.

#### **PEO/31/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2025-2026**

Consideration was given to the Committee's current work programme. The next meeting due to take place on 3 November where there would be progress updates presented for the previous scrutiny reviews of Cost of Living and Disabled Facility Grants.

AGREED the work programme be noted.



People Select Committee

3 November 2025

## Progress Update for Agreed Recommendations – Review of Cost of Living Response

### Summary

Members are asked to consider the evidence and assessments of progress contained within the attached Progress Update on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations in relation to the review of Disabled Facilities Grants for access to the final report, please see [Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response Final Report](#)

### Detail

1. Following the Cabinet consideration of scrutiny reports, accepted recommendations are then subject to a monitoring process to track their implementation.
2. Two main types of report are used. Initially this is by means of Action Plans detailing how services will be taking forward agreed recommendations. This is then followed by a Progress Update report approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Evidence is submitted by the relevant department together with an assessment of progress against all recommendations. Should members of the Select Committee agree, those recommendations which have reached an assessment of '1' are then signed off as having been completed.
3. The assessment of progress for each recommendation should be categorised as follows:

1	Achieved (Fully)	The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.
2	On Track (but not yet due for completion)	The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.
3	Slipped	The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped.

		An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay.
4	Not Achieved	<p>The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved.</p> <p>An explanation for non-achievement of the recommendation would be provided.</p>

4. The Committee received a progress update report in May 2025 and there was one recommendation that remained incomplete, recommendation 2 which stated:

“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. or if the Select Committee does not agree with the view on progress, the Select Committee may ask for a further update.”

5. The Committee requested a briefing report in the Autumn for this recommendation, which is attached at **appendix 1**. The link officer will be in attendance to present the briefing.
6. Members are asked to review the briefing report and indicate whether they agree that the recommendation is now fully achieved.

Name of Contact Officer: Michelle Gunn

Post Title: Scrutiny Officer

Telephone number: 01642 524987

Email Address: [michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk)

## **Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response and School Uniform Action Plan**

### **Briefing Note November 2025**

This briefing note provides an overview of the key projects undertaken by the FSOT & CE team, in partnership with other Council teams and external stakeholders, since the previous update to the People Select Committee in May 2025.

#### **1.0 School uniform distribution**

Over the last two summers, the FSOT team has coordinated a preloved school uniform donation across the Borough. Hundreds of good quality items have been donated for distribution to families at the Council's Summer Here to Help Events.

In the months leading up to the event, school uniform collection points were set up across libraries, Tees Active venues and SBC buildings. For 2025, people were asked to donate non-branded uniforms to make it easier to match these items to those in need. People were also invited to add a cheap supermarket uniform item to their shopping as a donation and this proved successful as the amount of new items donated increased this year.

These events continue to be a successful way to provide uniform, with around 700 items of school uniform being collected by families at this year's event on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

One parent told us that she always struggles to get trousers to fit her son because he's big for his age and we found 3-4 pairs of trousers. She was 'over the moon' because it was going to save her lots of money.

A young girl whose mum didn't speak English as her first language was translating for her mum. We managed to get trousers and shirts for the girl and her brother. The girl and her mum were so happy and grateful.

The FSOT & CE team have worked in partnership with Thirteen Housing to distribute remaining uniforms via small pop-ups during the summer holidays. Staff have also fulfilled several individual requests via professionals working with families. However, this has been quite labour intensive, and a more efficient model is required. Officers are currently working with staff at the Council's Family Hubs to develop a project ensuring uniform provision across all four hubs. Existing stock, left over from the summer collection, would be shared out to the hubs, giving the chance to tailor the offer to the schools in that area. Families and/or professionals could then call into their local hub when they need uniform.



2.0 Back to School Campaign

Throughout the summer, the FSOT and School Support teams worked in partnership with the Junction Multibank on the ‘Back to School’ campaign. This involved distributing around 600 school backpacks filled with high quality school essentials to families across the Borough.

The bags were given out at our summer Here to Help event and also via Family Hubs, Family Action, CIOC event, Transitions events and the HAF programme. This project followed on from the Kit Out initiative at Easter where Multibank provided sports equipment to 40 families identified by our School Support team.



3.0 Prom Project

School proms create a significant burden on family finances, with many of the families we have spoken to describing costs of £500 or more just for a dress. This issue was raised at a Positive Living Forum meeting earlier this year, where a member described the pressure on her family to afford what she needed to attend prom. Pressure to keep up with peers can lead parents into debt or result in young people being unable to attend.

The Second Dance Prom Project was born from this, working with colleagues in School Support, Bright Minds Big Futures and Wellington Square to collect over 200 preloved outfits and hold our first catwalk event. 35 young people went away with prom outfits and this pilot event gave the team the confidence to continue into the next academic year with an earlier launch event in October and a programme of pop-up shops in Wellington Square from now until May.

# A SECOND *Dance*

Thursday, 1-4pm, 5 Wellington St.

*Launch Party*

A second dance launch party gives you the chance to try on and pick the perfect prom attire, from suits to dresses and everything in between. Pay what you feel and look amazing!

Oct 30 2025

Wednesday, 3-5:30pm

5 Wellington St.

*Pop Up Shop*

Nov 26 2025

Wednesday, 3-5:30pm

5 Wellington St.

*Pop Up Shop*

Jan 14 2026

Wednesday, 1-4pm

5 Wellington St.

*Pop Up Shop*

Feb 25 2026

#### 4.0 Family Action Supporting Families Fund

The FSOT has worked with Family Action to secure £2000 from the Banks Group to create a 'Supporting Families Fund'.

The fund has already provided crucial support to families in need as the case studies (attached as appendix 1) demonstrate.

#### 5.0 School Uniform Policy Letters to Schools

As previously updated, letters have been issued, on behalf of the People Select Committee, to all schools in the Borough, advising them to update their school uniform policies. A low number of responses was received to these letters. Many schools have updated their uniform policies to make them more affordable for families. However, affordability remains a key concern for parents, hence the continued necessity for the work outlined in this report.

#### 6.0 Free School Meals Auto-Enrolment Phase 2

Following a successful pilot project, with over 300 pupils auto-enrolled, phase 2 of the Council's free school meal auto-enrolment commenced in July 2025. Led by the FSOT team, staff across the Council have supported this project to ensure as many entitled pupils as possible are enrolled for free school meals. Data matching and inputting was completed before the start of the new academic year in September. Officers also continued to work with schools that input their own free school meals claims to provide accurate information and respond to any queries on this project. A final figure for the number of pupils enrolled during phase two of this project will be provided following the closure of the Autumn Census 2025.

In addition, due to the success of the SBC auto-enrolment pilot project, the Local Government Association requested for an SBC representative to present at an online webinar on free school meals auto-enrolment in July 2025. A link to the webinar recording and blog can be accessed here: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/social-care-health-and-integration/what-now-fsm-registrations-role-local-councils-driving>

## **Appendix 1 – Family Action Supporting Families Fund Case Studies**

### **Case Study 1: Supporting a Young Family Facing Medical Challenges**

A young family, recently relocated to the area from India, due to the father's company-sponsored work placement. Following a critical medical emergency, where the family's three-month baby stopped breathing, resulting in an urgent hospital visit, the family were provided with a baby sleep monitor. This device, placed under the cot mattress, will alert the mother if the baby stops breathing during sleep. The monitor has offered both practical and emotional support, allowing the mother to rest more easily and reduce her anxiety. This in turn, has supported her to care for her other children.

Additionally, she has accessed support through a Family Action befriending volunteer, who helped her register at the local library and connect with baby and toddler groups at the family hub and in the wider community. This has reduced the family's social isolation, helped her build friendships, and established a local support network. Her 3-year-old daughter now regularly attends these groups, where she interacts with children her age and has made significant progress in her English-speaking skills, boosting her confidence and supporting her early development.

### **Case Study 2: Creating Stability for a Survivor of Human Trafficking and Her Son**

XXX is a 4-year-old boy who has already experienced significant trauma and instability in his early years. XXX is currently non-verbal and believed to be deaf. He is undergoing assessments to better understand his needs. His mother is a survivor of human trafficking, and together they have faced multiple relocations and periods of homelessness. Most recently, they were forced to leave their previous accommodation when the landlord unexpectedly ended the tenancy, leaving them without a home and with very few possessions.

They have now moved into a new property, which is intended to be their permanent home—a vital step toward stability and recovery. However, the property was completely unfurnished and the family urgently needed essential household items. The mother is receiving Universal Credit, but this does not stretch far enough to cover the cost of furnishing the home. The family received bedding and home furnishing items to help transform the empty property into a true home. These items were used to create a cosy, age-appropriate bedroom for XXX. The support has had a profound impact on both mother and child, creating a sense of safety and permanence. The improved living conditions have also opened opportunities for further engagement with support services and the local community, helping the family take meaningful steps toward rebuilding their lives.

### **Case Study 3: Supporting XXX's Emotional Well-being Through Meaningful Activities**

XXX lives with his family. Recently, XXX has become increasingly secluded and is struggling to leave his home. XXX finds joy in cooking with his grandma and spending

time outdoors in the garden - activities that previously helped ease his anxiety and encouraged him to engage with others. However, due to his current circumstances, he has been unable to participate in these meaningful experiences.

Through the support fund, XXX was able to acquire cooking and baking equipment tailored to his interests. This empowered him to take the first steps toward rebuilding his confidence and reconnecting with his grandma in a way that felt safe and enjoyable. Cooking with his grandma has not only provided comfort but has also served as a gentle bridge to help him overcome the anxiety associated with leaving his home. This small but significant intervention has helped XXX begin a journey toward greater independence, emotional resilience, and social engagement.

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People Select Committee  
3 November 2025

# Progress Update for Agreed Recommendations – Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

## Summary

Members are asked to consider the evidence and assessments of progress contained within the attached Progress Update on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations in relation to the review of Disabled Facilities Grants for access to the final report, please see [Final Report - Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant.pdf](#)

## Detail

1. Following the Cabinet consideration of scrutiny reports, accepted recommendations are then subject to a monitoring process to track their implementation.
2. Two main types of report are used. Initially this is by means of Action Plans detailing how services will be taking forward agreed recommendations. This is then followed by a Progress Update report approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Evidence is submitted by the relevant department together with an assessment of progress against all recommendations. Should members of the Select Committee agree, those recommendations which have reached an assessment of ‘1’ are then signed off as having been completed.
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2	On Track (but not yet due for completion)	The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.
3	Slipped	<p>The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped.</p> <p>An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay.</p>
4	Not Achieved	<p>The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved.</p> <p>An explanation for non-achievement of the recommendation would be provided.</p>

5. To further strengthen the monitoring process, from August 2020, the Progress Update report will also include references on the evidence of impact for each recommendation.
6. For progress update reports following the completion of a review, the relevant Link Officer(s) will be in attendance.
7. **Appendix 1** (Review of Disabled Facilities Grants) sets out the outstanding recommendations for this Committee. Members are asked to review the update and indicate whether they agree with the assessments of progress.

Name of Contact Officer: Michelle Gunn

Post Title: Scrutiny Officer

Telephone number: 01642 524987

Email Address: [michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
<b>Review:</b>	<b>Disabled Facilities Grants</b>
<b>Link Officer/s:</b>	<b>Sam Dixon</b>
<b>Action Plan Agreed:</b>	<b>November 2025</b>

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

<b>Recommendation 1:</b>	In relation to the recent announcement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government regarding extra funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), officers be requested to monitor the impact of this extra funding on the Council's waiting list; updates to be provided to the Select Committee as part of the monitoring of the review recommendations.
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	April 2025 / Ongoing
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Monitoring Waiting List Numbers</b> - Waiting List Numbers are recorded every month in our Business Unit Plan, will be reported back to Committee</li> <li>• <b>Increase capacity in Team</b> – Two new Adaptation Housing Surveyors have been recruited to increase capacity in delivery of DFG's – Expected start dates are mid April 2025</li> </ul>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of waiting list</li> <li>• New staff in post</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the end of Sept 2025, 121 people are currently on the DFG Current Waiting List New staff are now in post</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully Achieved</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DFG waiting List has reduced by over 200 cases compared to the figures from June 2023.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waiting List is monitored monthly within the Housing and a Fair Stockton-on-Tees Service Plan</li> <li>Two new staff in post who commenced in April 2025</li> <li>Waiting Times reduced from 24-30 months to 12-18 months at the end of Sept 25</li> </ul>
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<b>Recommendation 2:</b>	Officers explore the potential to engage with Teesside University to produce a study on the impact of DFG's on people lives in the Borough and how long this potentially allows them to remain living in their own home
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	Initial feedback April 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Meet with University's</b> – Awaiting date from Teesside University to discuss whether this would be something that they would be able to assist with, originally in diary for 25<sup>th</sup> February however this was cancelled by the uni. Would like feedback from Committee to ensure I have scope of work correct.</li> </ul>
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest from Universities and the appetite for one to undertake this</li> <li>Report produced</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with Foundations (National Body for DFG's) advised work was ongoing with regards to this subject.</li> <li>Separate report attached</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track / Fully Achieved</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate report attached</li> <li>Is the attached report sufficient for the People Committee or do they want me to continue to progress via the university study route?</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation 3:</b>	Housing Investment & Migration Support team work with Planning to explore building upon the requirements for accessibility/adaptability in new build properties when the Local Plan is next updated and, prior to this, lobby government to make the relevant Building Regulations mandatory.
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon & Simon Grundy
Date:	July 2025
Agreed Action:	Internal Meeting with Planning

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

Agreed Measure: Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of current policies and whether any changes can be implemented</li> <li>Letter to be sent to central government</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions ongoing in line with updating Local Plan however this may be a number of years before this may come into effect</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings ongoing</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation 4:</b>	The Leader and Chief Executive support officers in their ongoing discussions with Registered Provider's to explore their current and future plans for adaptations and also explore joint working to support Registered Providers to take up their responsibility, to ease pressure on the waiting list.
Responsibility:	Jane Edmends
Date:	June for Thirteen
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Meet with Thirteen</b> – Initial meetings with Thirteen (as the main RP in Stockton) have taken place at an Assistant Director level and are progressing positively. Future meetings scheduled with Thirteen to ensure discussions continue to move forward positively.</li> <li><b>Meet with all other RP's</b></li> </ul>
Agreed Measure: Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of each of the RP's adaptation policy</li> <li>Understanding of which adaptations each RP will undertake themselves</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thirteen meetings drawing to a close</li> <li>Meetings with other RP's to follow</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate report attached</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation 5:</b>	Officers explore with Registered Providers a register of adapted properties within the Borough which details the type of adaptations, to assist the Nomination and Lettings Team in advertising and matching individuals with appropriate properties.
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## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

Responsibility:	Jane Edmonds
Date:	June 2025 for Thirteen October 2025 for other RP's
Agreed Action:	<b>Meet with RP's</b> – tied into 4 above, this discussion will take place with all RPs to see if they would share this information with the Council we can explore the potential of a setting up a register.
Agreed Measure:	Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with all RP's</li> <li>• Interest from RP's</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relates to recommendation 4 above</li> <li>• Thirteen conversation's progressing first as they are the largest RP in Stockton</li> <li>• Other RP discussion will follow</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings held with Thirteen and are progressing well</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation 6:</b>	<p>Communication to residents and applicants be improved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reviewing and updating information on SBC website and explore whether the Foundations template and link to adaptmyhome.com will give residents sufficient information to decide whether to apply for an assessment/DFG.</li> <li>- exploring introducing a system to ensure clear and consistent communications to keep applicants informed of their position in the process at regular intervals to reduce misunderstandings and manage expectations.</li> <li>- sharing key information of DFG scheme available with external stakeholders to ensure potential applicants are aware of support available.</li> <li>- ensuring an appropriate route for residents to communicate with the Housing Investment &amp; Migration Support team is in place.</li> <li>- a singular customer feedback survey covering all processes and services involved in a DFG is developed, to ensure this is only collected once.</li> </ul>
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## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	April – June 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Speak to SBC Digital Team</b></li> <li>• <b>Review current letters and look to see how these can be improved</b> – Leaflets for customers produced to show where they are in within the DFG process and updated letters drafted so they can be informed every 3-6 months. These leaflets have been provided to the Parents and Carers Forum and initial feedback has been received.</li> <li>• <b>Engage with External Agencies</b> – engage initially with Parent and Carers forum to get an initial steer on where to start</li> <li>• <b>Review current resident contact information and pathway</b></li> <li>• <b>Produce Single Customer Feedback form</b> – New feedback form current under construction and can be shared with Committee</li> </ul>
Agreed Measure:	<p>Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFG Form available online</li> <li>• Letters updated</li> <li>• Information sent to customers 3-6 monthly</li> <li>• Wider public knowledge of DFG</li> <li>• New pathway established for residents</li> <li>• New form so residents only have to complete one form for the whole DFG process</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion still ongoing to enable DFG to be complete online</li> <li>• Letters updated April 2025</li> <li>• Customers updated every 3 months from April 2025</li> <li>• Pathway established for residents which shows where they are in the process and the time they are expected to wait in each stage</li> <li>• DFG Application forms simplified in April 2025</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers aware at the very start of the process and are updated every 3 months</li> <li>• Reduction in complaints</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendation 7:</b>	Officers explore streamlining processes to understand their impact and benefit of implementing:

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– referral form used by the Occupational Therapy Team be reviewed to ensure it captures all relevant information to enabled to make a decision on eligible works.</li> <li>– removing the requirement for Occupational Therapist to approve the scheme of works for straightforward cases</li> <li>– allowing electronic forms to be uploaded</li> <li>– requiring only two quotes rather than three for the application</li> </ul>
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	April – June 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Referral form to be reviewed</b> – Referral form has been reviewed and updated and share with OT colleagues for comment</li> <li>• <b>Investigate whether this would be possible</b></li> <li>• <b>Engage with SBC internal Digital Team</b></li> <li>• <b>Review with Procurement team</b></li> </ul>
Agreed Measure:	<div>Success</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated Referral Form</li> <li>• Removal or review of current process</li> <li>• Introduction of new Digital form</li> <li>• Acceptance that 2 quotes is acceptable</li> </ul>
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral Form Updated April 2025</li> <li>• Current DFG software package due to expire, currently exploring with the Digital team a new software package which has been specifically built for DFG's via Foundations</li> <li>• Looking at an 'away day' with the OT Team and Housing Investment to share understand and confirm the DFG process – potentially Jan 2026</li> <li>• Procurement</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New software potentially to go live Jan 2026 whereby OT's will be able to input referral's directly into this system</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation 8:</b>	Further examination of if/how the Home Improvement Agency can be utilised to provide early help and prevention, to ease budgetary pressure for DFG
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	August 2025



## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

Agreed Action:	<b>Engage with HIA team to explore options available</b>
Agreed Measure: Success	HIA able to complement DFG
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OT now sits in First Contact so is actively reviewing and distributing resident requests therefore quickening up the referral process, providing DFG / HIA advice and waiting times right at the beginning of the process to ensure expectations are handled right from the start.</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OT Team Managers do not have to filter referrals themselves, and this is being done by the OT in First Contact</li> </ul>

<b>Recommendation 9:</b>	Use of flat pack extensions is explored in more detail to see if they would provide a viable and cost-effective option.
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	July 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Engage with flat pack providers</b></li> <li><b>Engage with Planning and Building Control</b></li> </ul>
Agreed Measure: Success	Whether viable or not
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is being discussed on the back of the Local Plan update however planning and building control need specific construction and material information to advise whether this would be acceptable</li> <li>Foundations have recently covered this subject during at one of their seminars in Birmingham</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slipped</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

<b>Recommendation 10:</b>	Following correspondence from the Royal British Legion to the Council, officers review whether it is possible for military compensation to be exempt from the means test for DFG's and report back
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	June 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feed into overall arching request of Council</b> - Jonanthan Nertney is leading on a council wide request for this to be exempt from all SBC means tests</li> <li>• <b>Review previous Data-</b> currently looking at previous years data to see how many residents</li> </ul>
Agreed Measure:	Success Review of current and council wide policies
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information showed that over the past 3 years we did not have anybody that this affected DFG wise</li> <li>• Therefore, changing this would have a minimal impact on DFG delivery.</li> <li>• OT referral form updated to include whether a client is a current serviceperson or a veterans so this can be picked up early in the process</li> <li>• Council wide change so waiting for final sign off</li> </ul>
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Track</li> </ul>
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring in place from DFG aspect</li> <li>• Council wide change so awaiting final sign off</li> </ul>

<b>Assessment of Progress Gradings:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	Fully Achieved	On-Track	Slipped	Not Achieved

# People Select Committee

## Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

**Sam Dixon**  
**Service Lead - Housing Investment & Migration Support**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025**

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Recommendation 1

- New staff now in post x 2
- Monitoring Waiting List
  - Review of those on waiting list
  - Means testing sooner and follow up
  - New Panel process
  - New Feasibility process
  - New 'You are Here' leaflet

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Recommendation 2, 3, 4 & 5

- **Recommendation 2 – University Study**  
Separate Report - [DFG Impact](#)
- **Recommendation 3 – Increase New Build**  
Initial meetings held with planning but will be part of Local Plan update too.
- **Recommendation 4 & 5 – RP's**  
Separate report - [RP Progress](#)

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Recommendation 6 – Communication

- All Letters updated
- Pathway established
- Customer feedback updated
- DFG Application Form simplified

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Recommendation 7 – Streamlining Processes

In addition to Recommendation 1:

- Referral form updated
- Implementation of new software system
- Discussion ongoing with procurement
- Away Day with OT/DFG teams with Foundations present

# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Recommendations 8 & 9

### Recommendation 8 – HIA

- OT now in First Contact

### Recommendation 9 – Flat Pack Extensions

- Discussions ongoing
- Foundations covering subject also so awaiting their outcomes to take this further



# Disabled Facilities Grants

## Recommendation 10 – Military Compensation

- Council wide approach
- Impact minimal on DFG's
- Monitoring now in place
- OT referral form updated to include this



# THANK YOU

## Any Questions

# **Recommendation 2: Impact of Disabled Facilities Grants**

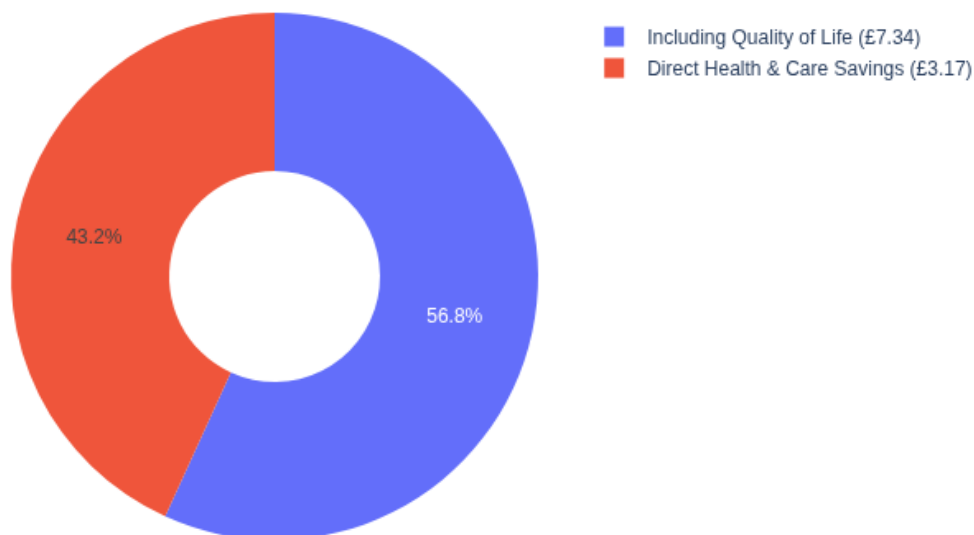
## **People Scrutiny Review Report**

**3 November 2025**

### **DFG Impact on Health & Social Care**

- Studies suggest that home adaptations delay entry to residential care for at least four years.
- Delaying residential care by four years can save the public purse over £220,000 per person, based on average annual residential care costs of £55,952. These savings demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of investing in DFG adaptations.
- If DFG resources double, it is estimated that 8,500 fewer people will need residential care per year.
- A package of minor adaptations results in a 26% reduction in injuries from falls which could save £500m nationally for health and social care services in the UK.
- According to Public Health England's falls prevention toolkit, every £1 invested in home assessment and modification saves £3.17 in health and care costs. When quality-of-life improvements are included, the savings increase to £7.34 per £1 spent.

Return on Investment per £1 Spent on DFG Adaptations



### **Worked Example**

- The average cost of a low-level DFG is £6,500 because this would improve a client's quality of life this would be a saving of £47,710 for health and social care costs.
- The maximum DFG available for high level DFG's £30,000 this would be a saving of £220,200 for health and social care costs

### **Breakdown of Cost Avoidance**

- Average residential care in Stockton-on-Tees: £55,952 per year - £1076 per week. Adaptations can delay or prevent the need for residential care.
- Average daily home care (2 hours/day) in Stockton-on-Tees: £19.34 per hour, £38.68 per day, £270.76 per week or £14,052,20 per year. Adaptations reduce the need for intensive home care.
- Average national Emergency hospital admissions due to falls: £2,000–£5,000 per incident. Adaptations such as grab rails and stairlifts help prevent falls.
- Average national Hospital bed days: Older adults use 65% more bed days than average. Safer home environments reduce this burden.

### **System Wide Benefits**

- DFG adaptations contribute to system-wide efficiencies by:
  - enabling faster hospital discharge,
  - reducing delayed transfers of care,
  - and lowering demand on social care services.
  - Prevent deterioration in health, aligning with the Care Act 2014's emphasis on prevention and wellbeing.

### **Strategic Efficiency**

- DFGs are more cost-effective than building new accessible homes.
- They leverage existing housing stock, reduce housing churn, and help individuals remain in their communities and preserving social ties.
- However we are currently dealing with a housing crisis and therefore more adaptable new homes also need to be built.

### **End Note**

- Is this level of detail adequate for Recommendation 2 or would Committee like more localised evidence?

**Information from Centre for Ageing Better, University of Bristol, [which.co.uk](http://which.co.uk) and Public Health England.**

# **Recommendation 4 & 5: Registered Providers**

## **People Scrutiny Review Report**

**3 November 2025**

### **Recommendation Update**

Initial engagement with Registered Providers (RPs) has focused on Thirteen Group, given their status as the largest RP stockholder in Stockton-on-Tees following the Council's stock transfer to Tristar Homes (now Thirteen) in 2010. As previously noted in Committee discussions, the Stock Transfer Agreement stipulated that £1 million be allocated by the RP for adaptations within their Stockton-on-Tees housing stock over a 25-year period.

Although progress has been slower than anticipated, discussions have been constructive and continue to move forward.

### **Proposed Future Working Arrangements**

- Occupational Therapy (OT) assessments and adaptation requests will be forwarded to Thirteen upon completion.
- Thirteen will evaluate each request and determine approval.
- Approved adaptations will be added to Thirteen's waiting list and funded from the £1 million budget.
- For adaptations beyond Thirteen's delivery capacity (e.g., extensions), Stockton Borough Council (SBC) will undertake the work via its Minor Works Procurement Framework. These works will still be funded from the £1 million budget, with SBC applying a management fee.
- Monthly meetings will be held to monitor waiting lists, budget commitments, and expenditure.
- Any Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) works completed by SBC from April 2025 onward will be reclaimed from Thirteen against the £1 million allocation.

### **Caveats**

- All residents have the right to apply for a DFG. In such cases, SBC will liaise with Thirteen to seek approval. If permission is denied, residents will be informed and provided with contact details to raise the matter directly with Thirteen.
- Where Thirteen's waiting list offers a shorter timeframe than the DFG process, residents will be advised and given the option to transfer to Thirteen's list.

### **Current Issues**

- VAT implications remain under discussion, with concerns regarding potential double VAT charges on works delivered by SBC.
- A Data Sharing Agreement is required to enable SBC to maintain a comprehensive database of adapted properties.

**Sam Dixon**

**Service Lead – Housing Investment & Migration Support**

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## People Select Committee – Work Programme 2025- 2026

<b>Date (4pm unless stated)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Monday 7 April 2025</b>	Monitoring: Action Plan Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant	Sam Dixon
<b>Monday 12 May 2025</b>	Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response  Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Draft) Scope and Project Plan</li> <li>• Background Presentation</li> </ul>	Haleem Ghafoor  Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waite
<b>Monday 2 June 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Help &amp; Family Hubs</li> </ul>	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waite Hazel Clark and John Lathaem
<b>Monday 7 July 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Care</li> <li>• School Support</li> </ul>	John Lathaem & Aishah Waite Louise Nixon Mandie Rowlands
<b>Monday 8 September 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PITSTOP</li> <li>• HDFT</li> <li>• Family Action</li> </ul>	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waite Cheryl Hall Sarah Massiter Emma Crawford
<b>Monday 6 October 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catalyst</li> <li>• Best practice from other Local Authorities</li> <li>• Family First Reforms</li> </ul>	Lucy Owens Hazel Clark, Aishah Waite & Jane Smith
<b>Monday 3 November 2025</b>	Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response  Monitoring: Initial Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facility Grant	Rebecca Saunders-Thompson  Sam Dixon



## People Select Committee – Work Programme 2025- 2026

<b>Date (4pm unless stated)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Monday 3 November 2025 (informal)</b>	Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations</li> </ul>	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waite
<b>Monday 8 December 2025</b>	Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help – Final Report	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waite
<b>Monday 5 January 2026</b>		
<b>Monday 2 February 2026</b>		
<b>Monday 2 March 2026</b>		

**To be scheduled**

Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision