

## **Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee**

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee was held on Tuesday 22 July 2025.

**Present:** Cllr Marc Besford (Chair), Cllr Nathan Gale (Vice-Chair), Cllr Stefan Barnes, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Mohammed Mazi (sub for Cllr Vanessa Sewell), Cllr Jack Miller, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

**Officers:** Sarah Bowman-Abouna, Angela Connor, Graham Lyons, Rob Papworth (A,H&W); Chris Renahan (R&IG); Geraldine Brown, Francesca Magog, Gary Woods (CS)

**Also in attendance:** None

**Apologies:** Cllr Vanessa Sewell

### **ASCH/23/25 Evacuation Procedure**

The evacuation procedure was noted.

### **ASCH/24/25 Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

### **ASCH/25/25 Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes from the Committee meeting held on 17 June 2025.

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting on 17 June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **ASCH/26/25 Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone**

Further to the initial briefing on the Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone received by the Committee in June 2024, an update on developments in relation to this initiative had been requested. Presented by the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Assistant Director – Inclusive Growth and Development and the SBC Head of Policy, Development & Public Affairs, information was provided as follows:

- The Zone (and its health spine): The original footprint of the Zone had evolved in the last 12 months to recognise its broader impact, though key elements remained which included the new and recently opened Community Diagnostic Centre, Durham University's strategic buildings, and Tees Marshalling Yards. Sited within the middle of the Tees Valley itself, the Zone was well connected from a transportation perspective, with both the A19 and A66 nearby, and Thornaby Station situated within its boundaries.

A masterplanning exercise had identified a 'health spine' running across the Zone. From Stockton town centre and the ongoing development of the Urban Riverside

Park, this spine covered a 'live, work, learn' cluster (encompassing a multi-generational living concept), an open innovation campus (encouraging thinking that was not confined to within a building / closed environment) and the Marshalling Yards transformation, with offshoots across the Infinity Bridge and towards the White Water Course and Teesside Park Shopping Centre. To realise this vision, key projects involved the delivery of a community consultation strategy, the creation of an active / sustainable travel plan for the whole site, making Teesdale innovation ready, and reactivating the waterfront.

- From Concept to Delivery: Encouraging buy-in from a host of organisations (educational, health, Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), businesses) had led the Council and its partners to a successful point, but there was now a need to move from concept to delivery. Whilst the regeneration element to the vision was significant (particularly the Marshalling Yards part), it was important not to lose sight of the skills and education aspects also associated with this development.

Two distinct time periods had been identified to start bringing this vision to reality. Short / medium-term (0-5 years) goals involved the now-achieved delivery of the Tees Valley Community Diagnostic Centre, exploration of further community health facilities in Stockton town centre (which could be delivered relatively quickly and aligned with the recently published 10-year health plan for England), garnering interest from private health providers in the area, and delivery of the previously announced Medical School. Medium / long-term (5 years+) aims focused on the Tees Central area and the unlocking of the Marshalling Yards site.

- Governance: As the approach had developed, it was appropriate to re-consider governance arrangements to ensure these were fit for purpose. The previous Board and five workstreams were stood down and would be replaced with a Strategic Programme Board (to act as champions for the Zone and engage in regional and national policy discussions that may impact it) which had oversight of, and provided direction to, three new working groups covering Skills, Research and Innovation, and Masterplanning and Infrastructure.
- Workstream Focus: Over the next 12 months, the Skills Working Group would focus on raising aspirations / ambitions campaign working with the TVCA (linked to the local growth plan), the consideration of barriers to entering training and identifying potential solutions (whilst also promoting health and care sectors as a career opportunity), developing and piloting some innovative models, and obtaining and analysing destination data from training providers.

The Research and Innovation Working Group's attention would centre on consideration of an Innovation Hub (a feasibility report would make any recommendations for next steps) and pursuing opportunities for care-tech and health-tech (cross-fertilisation of expertise).

From a Masterplanning and Infrastructure Working Group perspective, in addition to the meetings which had already taken place between SBC, DB Cargo and Network Rail to discuss the consolidation of assets (baselining work needed to be completed before further works were undertaken), efforts would involve further stakeholder engagement and building of strong relationships to ensure a clear programme of delivery and progression of ambitions for the site, and the consideration of a separate masterplan for Tees Central (which would likely be

required). It was noted that Homes England had offered financial support in the form of revenue funding for some development work (to be determined).

Welcoming this latest update, the Committee asked whether neighbouring Middlesbrough Council was being engaged in discussions / work around the Zone and requested confirmation of who was leading the new working groups (given Members were encouraged to engage with the previous five workstreams when receiving the initial briefing in June 2024).

Regarding the Homes England reference, the Committee queried what was happening to a stalled site within the Zone footprint. Members were informed that Homes England were no longer the owners of the site in question, and that the Council was currently trying to ascertain the situation with the new owners.

The Committee sought clarity on whether community health facilities would be town centre-based or situated within the Zone itself – SBC officers reiterated that options were being explored with a focus on what could be implemented quickly. Responding to a similar enquiry about the anticipated Medical School, it was confirmed that, if this went ahead, it would be in the Teesdale site and that the Council and relevant partners were presently working through potential plans. It was also noted that the Zone docked into the overarching Stockton-on-Tees Plan.

AGREED that the Tees Valley Care and Health Innovation Zone update be noted.

### **ASCH/27/25 SBC Adult Social Care Strategy Refresh**

The Committee was presented with a report in relation to the ongoing refresh of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adult Social Care Strategy.

The existing strategy covered the 2021-2025 period, and to inform the development of the new version, SBC had asked the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to complete an engagement exercise with local communities (at no charge to the Council) to identify what was important to consider in relation to future provision. Led by the SBC Strategic Development Manager (Adults & Health) and supported by the SBC Interim Director of Adult Social Care, feedback was summarised via the report and accompanying presentation slides, the key elements of which included:

- The creation of the Making It Real Board (MIRB) had initiated a different focus around engagement, with the Council recognising the importance for it to be open to public views / judgements about existing provision. This NDTi exercise (completed between February and March 2025, with a report presenting the findings completed in May 2025 and shared with the MIRB in June 2025) gave an early and unfiltered assessment of how local people were feeling about the current social care market.
- There were 177 responses in total – 81 conversations with people in community settings (who were not necessarily already using adult social care services), 76 from a survey, and a further 20 responses from providers.
- The report showed that most people who took part in the engagement felt that the Borough's adult social care services were average in helping people to live their best lives, and likewise with feeling that people were getting the early intervention and prevention they needed.

- There was a just-above average rating for how safe people felt where they lived (a measure which was not only about services, but tied into wider feelings around safety), and a below average rating about the availability of housing for people with support needs or disabilities (an issue which the Council was already trying to address).
- A summary of the findings highlighted several areas requiring development. To improve care and support, services should be personalised and flexible, older adults needed help to stay in their homes, individuals with learning disabilities wanted more independence, and carers required adaptable support. Peer support was also valuable for connection and sharing information, and reducing delays and increasing awareness of available services (facilitated by the availability of information in different formats) would make a big difference. The need for clearer communication between health, social care and housing to create a more connected and effective system was also noted.
- In terms of next steps, the plan was to work in partnership with the MIRB to co-produce a new Adult Social Care Strategy for 2026-2030 by November 2025.

Responding to the information provided, the Committee drew attention to the significant rise in the number of people using adult social care services since the last (and current) strategy was produced and felt this should be reflected in the new version. Other observations included the need to look after staff working within these vital services, that the MIRB was a small group which did not necessarily reflect the full community, and the importance of organisations working together to share good practice.

Whilst recognising that good communication between system partners and with the public was crucial, the Committee also highlighted the need for continuing focus on the experiences of people contacting the Council, many of whom preferred to see a face / hear a voice as opposed to utilising digital mediums (which were becoming the default communication tool). From a staffing perspective, Members urged the supply of information on training availability and uptake in order to ascertain whether this was adequate enough.

Concern was expressed by Members on the spelling errors within the accompanying NDTi presentation slides (particularly those relating to place names) – SBC officers stated that this had been fed back to NDTi.

Looking ahead, clarity was sought on the steps leading up to the publication of the new strategy in November 2025 and whether the Committee would have any further opportunities for input. SBC officers commented that future consultation with communities was anticipated (including with those groups who had already engaged via the NDTi-related exercise), and that another update could be brought back to the Committee prior to final publication if required.

AGREED that the 'New Adult Social Care Strategy – Feedback report from National Development Team for Inclusion and Next Steps' document and the accompanying presentation slides be noted.

## **ASCH/28/25 Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service**

Consideration was given to the draft scope and project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service, the proposed aims of which would be to provide assurance around its current delivery, highlight any gaps in the service and, in turn, help shape future developments for local provision.

Several contributors had been identified in relation to this scrutiny topic, including relevant teams / officers from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adults, Health and Wellbeing directorate, the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB), North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT), and Eastern Ravens (specifically around young carers transitioning into the adult carers service). As with all in-depth reviews, it was also vital to understand the experiences of those using the service, therefore such feedback would be sought and considered. It was anticipated that the Committee's final report would be presented to the SBC Cabinet in February 2026.

Referencing the adult social care discussions earlier in this meeting, the Committee highlighted the significant increase in the number of identified carers across the Borough which the updated Adult Social Care Strategy also needed to acknowledge and plan for.

AGREED that the draft scope and project plan for the Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service review be approved.

## **ASCH/29/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2025-2026**

### **CHAIR'S UPDATE**

The Chair had no further updates.

### **WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2026**

Consideration was given to the Committee's current work programme. The next meeting was due to take place on 23 September 2025 where the latest Healthwatch Annual Report (2024-2025) would be presented, along with the first update on progress of the agreed actions in relation to the recommendations from the previously completed Access to GPs and Primary Medical Care review, and the latest quarterly CQC / PAMMS report. The first evidence-gathering session for the review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service would also be held. In terms of the remaining items listed for this meeting, these would need to be pushed back to a later date to ease pressure on the agenda.

Regarding the paused Reablement Service review, reference was made to the recent circulation of the requested Peopletoo report, with views sought on how the Committee wished to proceed with this information. In order to properly scrutinise the document, it was agreed that an informal session should be arranged to enable Members to question relevant SBC officers, as well as the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, on the content.

The Committee was reminded about the forthcoming visit (28 July 2025) to the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT) discharge and command centre at the University Hospital of North Tees, Stockton.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Chair's Update and Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee Work Programme 2025-2026 be noted.
- 2) in relation to the paused Scrutiny Review of Reablement Service, an informal evidence-gathering session be scheduled to consider the recently shared Peopletoo final report.

Chair: .....