

Date:

Monday 18 May 2026 at 4.00 pm

Venue:

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

Cllr Jim Beall (Chair)

Cllr Steve Nelson (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

Agenda

1. **Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 10)

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

4. **Minutes** (Pages 11 - 14)

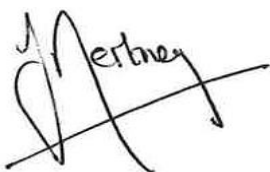
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 April 2026

5. **Progress Update of Previously Agreed Recommendations - Affordable Housing**
(Pages 15 - 24)

6. **Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare, Kennelling, and the Protection of Pets**
(Pages 25 - 48)

To receive the draft scope and project plan and a background presentation from the link officer

7. **Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme** (Pages 49 - 50)



Jonathan Nertney
Head of Democratic Services
Friday 8 May 2026

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

Key – Declarable interests are :-

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

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

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

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

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

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

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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

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

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Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday 20th April 2026.

Present: Cllr Jim Beall (Chair), Cllr Steve Nelson (Vice-Chair), Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees and Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

Officers: Chris Renahan, Andrew Corcoran, Iain Robinson, James O'Donnell, Vivian Lattimer, Judy Trainer and Junita Agyapong

Also in attendance: Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Richard Eglington

Apologies: None

PLA/1/26 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

PLA/2/26 Declarations of Interest

The were no declarations of interest.

PLA/3/26 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PLA/4/26 Scrutiny Review of Governance of Capital Projects

The Select Committee considered the final report of the Scrutiny Review of the Governance of Capital Projects. Members agreed some amendments to the wording of the report.

The following changes were agreed:

- Members agreed that the wording should clarify that quarterly updates to the Capital Programme are available to all Members (paragraph 4.8).
- Members agreed that, in the Thornaby Town Deal case study, the term "Members" should be replaced with "local councillors" (paragraph 4.11).
- Members requested confirmation of the Cabinet approval date for the current governance structure to be included in the wording or removal of the reference (paragraph 4.16).
- Members agreed that the wording should reflect that some, but not all, governance documents are sensitive, and that only those containing commercial, legal or public interest considerations are not publicly available (paragraph 4.18).

- Members agreed that the final sentence be removed (paragraph 4.32).
- Members agreed that the wording be amended to clarify that the Council has made significant progress in implementing the governance framework, providing a clearer basis for the conclusion reached (paragraph 5.6).

Members also asked for information to be circulated to Committee Members on the governance framework that was in place prior to the introduction of the current framework in November 2024.

AGREED that, subject to the amendments above, the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

PLA/5/26 Overview Report: SBC Regeneration and Inclusive Growth

The Committee received an overview report and verbal update on Regeneration and Inclusive Growth on key achievements, challenges and emerging issues for 2025–2026, which included town centre developments, inclusive growth and regeneration activities.

Members were informed that the report was intended to provide a high-level overview to complement in-depth scrutiny review work and provided the opportunity to ask questions of Directors and Cabinet Member on the services that fell within the remit of the Select Committee. The report covered a wide range of work across the Directorate, including the Council's large capital regeneration programme, inclusive growth activity, skills and employment initiatives, inward investment, planning policy developments and strategic asset management.

It was explained that Cabinet had taken a decision to start preparation for a new Local Plan and information would be presented to Planning Committee on planning reforms.

Officers outlined proposals for a new approach to performance reporting across the Council. Members were informed that:

- Executive Scrutiny would receive high-level reports on progress against Council-wide priorities.
- Select Committees and Cabinet would receive more detailed, service-specific performance updates bi-annually.

The Scrutiny Officer undertook to circulate the schedule of planned performance updates to Select Committee Members.

Members were invited to provide feedback on the type and level of performance information they would find most useful to help shape future reporting and ensure it supported effective scrutiny.

PLA/6/26 Chair's Update and Work Programme 2026/27

Consideration was given to the Work Programme

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

Chair:

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Place Select Committee

18 May 2026

Progress Update for Agreed Recommendations – Review of Affordable Housing

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 Affordable Housing. For access to the final report, please see [Final Report - Scrutiny Review of Affordable Housing.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, when 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. If any recommendations remain incomplete, or if the Select Committee does not agree with the view on progress, the Select Committee may ask for a further update.
4. 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.
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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 will be in attendance.
7. **Appendix 1** (Review of Affordable Housing) 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](#)

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Email address: michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Affordable Housing

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Affordable Housing
Link Officer/s:	Jane Edmends
Action Plan Agreed:	June 2025

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.

Recommendation 1:	The outcomes of the Affordable Housing Option Appraisal to date are supported, and officers be requested to carry out further investigation into a hybrid model to address the borough's affordable housing need, which should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling (which may include for example the Council seeking an increased requirement for the provision of affordable housing on sites the Council owns i.e. above our minimum planning requirement) • Partnerships with Registered Providers and Developers – partnerships may be a single partner or several partners and can come from a variety of sectors • Direct delivery (model to be determined)
Responsibility:	Assistant Director Housing and FSOT (Jane Edmends) / Service Lead Strategic Housing (Alan Glew)
Date:	End June 2025 (report to Cabinet) Long term action – annual review
Agreed Action:	Report to Cabinet (June 2025) to detail the outcome of the option appraisal process and seek approval for next steps.
Agreed Measure:	Success Report approved by Cabinet The number of affordable housing units delivered in the borough is increased (to secure a positive delivery trajectory)
Evidence of Progress (December 2025):	(a) SBC is part of the Governments Council Housebuilding Skills & Capacity Programme; we are 1 of 10 'vanguard' LA's being supported by the Local Government Association to explore skills and support requirements for local authorities exploring direct housing delivery.

APPENDIX 1
PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Affordable Housing

	<p>(b) Work is ongoing to make best use of S106 commuted sum monies (pre-market engagement planned for late November 2025)</p> <p>(c) Work is ongoing to identify best use of the small sites identified within the report to accelerate affordable housing delivery.</p>
Assessment of Progress (December 2025): (include explanation if required)	2. On track – as noted above work is ongoing to explore a range of delivery mechanisms.
Evidence of Impact (December 2025):	Not directly at this stage
Evidence of Progress (May 2026):	<p>(a) Cabinet approved (March 2026) the direct transfer of the first small site to North Star to develop affordable housing – use of the Councils <u>enabling function</u>.</p> <p>(b) Pre-market engagement exercise has been undertaken to inform the procurement of the remaining small sites.</p>
Assessment of Progress (May 2026): (include explanation if required)	2. On track
Evidence of Impact (May 2026):	Not directly at this stage (evidence of impact will be long-term)

Recommendation 3:	Given the current demand for social/affordable housing, the Council (via its website and other means as appropriate) provide regular updates to applicants regarding general property availability and demand (for example with information on the average number of properties advertised per month/the average number of bids made on each property per month), in an attempt to manage applicant expectations.
Responsibility:	Team Leader Lettings & Nominations (Carol Bruce)
Date:	First update by end October 2025 End March 2026 (seeking feedback)
Agreed Action:	<p>Website to be updated (within 1 month of each quarter end) with the detail highlighted in action 3</p> <p>To explore options of seeking feedback from applications on Tees Valley HomeFinder to understand if the above information is of use/can be improved.</p>

APPENDIX 1 PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Affordable Housing

Agreed Measure:	Success	Applicants registered on Tees Valley HomeFinder are better informed / improved awareness of waiting times etc.
Evidence of Progress (December 2025):		SBC website has been updated to include further under the 'Waiting Times' section, now includes ' social housing property availability' section detailing the number of properties advertised by type and the average number of bids received on an estate by estate basis Social housing property availability 2025 to 2026 - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Assessment of Progress (December 2025): (include explanation if required)		2. On track (will continue to be updated on a quarterly basis)
Evidence of Impact (December 2025):		Additional information to inform customer choice and manage expectations
Evidence of Progress (May 2026):		1. Fully achieved
Assessment of Progress (May 2026): (include explanation if required)		Quarterly updates have and will continue to be made to this section of the website. To update TVLP applicants of the number of properties advertised and the average number of bids made on each property type Social housing property availability 2025 to 2026 - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Evidence of Impact (May 2026):		TVLP applicants are aware of housing demand by property type and location, they can use this information to better inform their areas of choice/bidding activity.

Recommendation 4:		Following Cabinet approval, and six months after the implementation of the revised Common Allocation Policy, an update be provided back to the Committee on the impact of banding changes (i.e. to provide a breakdown of applicants who have secured accommodation).
Responsibility:		Team Leader Lettings & Nominations (Carol Bruce)
Date:		Report to be prepared late Jan/Feb 2026 – to cover the 6 month period Jul to Dec 2025
Agreed Action:		Updated report to be provided back to Committee
Agreed Measure:	Success	Banding changes have supporting those in 'highest' housing need

APPENDIX 1
PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Affordable Housing

Evidence of Progress (December 2025):	n/a as action not due until early 2026
Assessment of Progress (December 2025): (include explanation if required)	As above
Evidence of Impact (December 2025):	As above
Evidence of Progress (May 2026):	See Appendix A.
Assessment of Progress (May 2026): (include explanation if required)	1. Fully achieved
Evidence of Impact (May 2026):	Changes to the Common Allocation Policy were intended to better support households in the greatest housing need. As set out in Appendix A, the changes to the Common Allocations Policy have not resulted in any unintended consequences. However, demand from priority applicants continues to exceed the supply of available properties advertised through Tees Valley Homefinder.

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
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APPENDIX A

Tees Valley Home Finder (TVLP)

Analysis of the housing register for the period July 2025-December 2025*

(*6 months after the changes to the Common Allocation Policy were implemented)

Band 1*: Applicants subject to regeneration or demolition were added to Band 1* following the review of the Common Allocations Policy.

There are no large scale decant programmes running at present. *The number of applications in this category remains low and the number of allocations made reflect this when compared to the same period in the previous year.*

Housing Register	No		No	Trend	Allocations Made	No		No	Trend
Jul-24	1	Jul-25	1	↔	Jul-24	0	Jul-25	0	↔
Aug-24	1	Aug-25	1	↔	Aug-24	0	Aug-25	0	↔
Sep-24	1	Sep-25	1	↔	Sep-24	0	Sep-25	0	↔
Oct-24	3	Oct-25	3	↔	Oct-24	0	Oct-25	2	↑
Nov-24	2	Nov-25	3	↑	Nov-24	1	Nov-25	0	↓
Dec-24	2	Dec-25	2	↔	Dec-24	0	Dec-25	0	↔

Band 1: Changes were made to the homeless need categories within Band 1, meaning that not all homeless clients will receive a Band 1 under the new allocations policy ([Assessing housing need - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#) details applicants who now qualify for a Band 1). The impact of this change has been to reduce the number of Live Band 1 cases on the Housing Register. Although new Band 1 categories were added for Care Leavers, Emergency Medical and Child Protection cases, the number of cases in each of the new Band 1 categories remains low.

Given the reduction in number of applicants in this banding, a reduction in the number of successful allocations to Band 1 was also expected but remains the highest in terms of number of allocations made.

Housing Register	No		No	Trend	Allocations Made	No		No	Trend
Jul-24	277	Jul-25	176	↓	Jul-24	36	Jul-25	23	↓
Aug-24	220	Aug-25	130	↓	Aug-24	20	Aug-25	26	↑
Sep-24	211	Sep-25	105	↓	Sep-24	14	Sep-25	13	↓
Oct-24	203	Oct-25	77	↓	Oct-24	37	Oct-25	14	↓
Nov-24	194	Nov-25	66	↓	Nov-24	35	Nov-25	13	↓
Dec-24	203	Dec-25	62	↓	Dec-24	29	Dec-25	11	↓

APPENDIX A

Tees Valley Home Finder (TVLP)

Band 2: New categories were added to the Common Allocations Policy under Band 2 for those with severe overcrowding and homelessness. *The reduction in Band 1 applications has led to increased allocations to Band 2, allowing those who have been waiting and blocked by the volume of Band 1 applications previously to obtain suitable housing.*

Housing Register	No		No	Trend	Allocations Made	No		No	Trend
Jul-24	550	Jul-25	451	↓	Jul-24	5	Jul-25	13	↑
Aug-24	534	Aug-25	465	↓	Aug-24	1	Aug-25	16	↑
Sep-24	528	Sep-25	474	↓	Sep-24	1	Sep-25	17	↑
Oct-24	513	Oct-25	476	↓	Oct-24	5	Oct-25	18	↑
Nov-24	505	Nov-25	476	↓	Nov-24	8	Nov-25	20	↑
Dec-24	520	Dec-25	469	↓	Dec-24	6	Dec-25	26	↑

Band 3: New categories were added to Band 3 for Intentionally homeless and armed forces (with no urgent housing need). *The impact of these new categories is negligible with few applicants being banded under these new categories and the number of allocations to Band 3 has increased over the monitoring period.*

Housing Register	No		No	Trend	Allocations Made	No		No	Trend
Jul-24	505	Jul-25	475	↓	Jul-24	8	Jul-25	5	↓
Aug-24	502	Aug-25	452	↓	Aug-24	2	Aug-25	7	↑
Sep-24	483	Sep-25	453	↓	Sep-24	0	Sep-25	3	↑
Oct-24	490	Oct-25	458	↓	Oct-24	0	Oct-25	3	↑
Nov-24	487	Nov-25	457	↓	Nov-24	1	Nov-25	3	↑
Dec-24	517	Dec-25	460	↓	Dec-24	5	Dec-25	6	↑

Band 4: No changes were made to Band 4 following the Common Allocations Policy review and allocations to this band remain relatively static over the monitoring period. *The reduction in number in this band may be due to the annual renewal process.*

Housing Register	No		No	Trend	Allocations Made	No		No	Trend
Jul-24	1835	Jul-25	1797	↓	Jul-24	7	Jul-25	2	↓
Aug-24	1782	Aug-25	1685	↓	Aug-24	0	Aug-25	4	↑
Sep-24	1757	Sep-25	1646	↓	Sep-24	1	Sep-25	5	↑
Oct-24	1818	Oct-25	1725	↓	Oct-24	2	Oct-25	4	↑
Nov-24	1844	Nov-25	1734	↓	Nov-24	3	Nov-25	2	↓
Dec-24	1924	Dec-25	1709	↓	Dec-24	7	Dec-25	4	↓

APPENDIX A

Tees Valley Home Finder (TVLP)

General Information

Tighter monitoring of applicants in all priority bandings ensures that those in Bands 1, 2 & 3 who are not engaging with the bidding process have their banding reviewed. This ensures that the banding is still appropriate (i.e. there has not been a change in an applicant's housing situation) and an applicant is actively seeking rehousing.

An annual renewal process also automatically closes applications where applicants fail to respond to reminders to keep their housing application live. *This has potentially led to lower housing register numbers over the last 12 months.*

In addition, the introduction of Local Connection rules as part of the Common Allocation Policy Review has further reduced housing register numbers, with 24 applicants closed prior to assessment where applicants had no identified local connection to the borough.

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Place Select Committee
Review of Animal Welfare, Kennelling, and the Protection of Pets
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Jim Beall	Contact details: Jim.beall@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Michelle Gunn	Contact details: Michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk
Departmental Link Officer: Marc Stephenson	Contact details: Marc.stephenson@stockton.gov.uk

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The review will address the following priority of the Stockton-on-Tees Plan:

Priority Two – Healthy and resilient communities: we will ensure that our diverse communities can live happy and healthy lives, that we support those who are experiencing poverty. We will strive to ensure that our residents are resilient, independent and where ever possible, economically active. We will support residents to be safe and connected to each other in their homes and communities.

Animal Welfare also has direct links into both the Partnership and Regeneration Missions of the 'Powering our Future' program.

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

As part of the Council's Environmental Health Service, the Animal Welfare Team performs several critical functions and interventions to protect the public, ensure the welfare of animals, and promote animal wellbeing, including the statutory control over stray dogs. The service has a strong track record of high-quality provision, receiving the RSPCA Gold Standard award annually since its inception and recently one of only a few local authorities nationally to receive the platinum award for continual excellent. In addition to our Council responsibilities, there is a short-term kennelling facility at the Security Centre, which is also utilised by the Police for housing dogs involved in daily operations, such as the arrest of suspects with dogs or the detention of dangerous dogs.

The service currently receives an average of 700 requests per year with the demand for animal welfare services rising, both in the number of animals handled and the complexity of cases. This national trend is mirrored in Adult Social Care Services, where rehoming animals, particularly dogs, presents significant challenges for staff.

In addition, the length of time that dogs are required to stay in long term kennelling provision is increasing while at the same time, the availability of long-term kennelling is becoming more limited, and the associated costs are escalating. This reflects similar issues faced by local authorities nationwide. The increasing costs are driven by factors such as rising operational expenses, stricter regulations, increase in veterinary costs and higher demand for kennelling services.

The review will therefore assess the long-term challenges and consider options for the future provision of animal welfare services, kennelling, and property protection. Key areas for consideration include:

1. **Financial Sustainability:** Exploring funding options and cost-saving measures to ensure the continued provision of high-quality animal welfare services.
2. **Capacity and Infrastructure:** Assessing the need for additional kennelling facilities or partnerships to accommodate the growing number of animals.
3. **Staffing and Training:** Ensuring our officers are adequately trained and supported to handle the increasing complexity of cases.
4. **Collaboration with External Agencies:** Strengthening partnerships with the Police, private kennelling providers, and other local authorities to share resources and best practices.
5. **Community Engagement:** Raising awareness and encouraging responsible pet ownership to reduce the number of stray and abandoned animals.

The overall aim of the review will be to address the challenges to the long-term sustainability and cost of services and thereby continue to provide excellent care for animals and ensure the safety and well-being of the community.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What is the minimum (statutory) service that the Council must provide?
What services are the Council providing above the minimum required and why?
What is the current position on “put to sleep”?
How effectively does the current service safeguard animal welfare?
How long are animals at council funded facilities?
How has demand for the service changed, e.g. number/complexity of cases, and what impact is this having on the service?
How is the service funded?
Are there any income-generation opportunities?
What current partnership arrangements are in place and how effective are these?
What are the options for increasing capacity to meet an increased demand? E.g. additional facilities, shared provision, alternative models?
What training is required for animal welfare officers?
Is additional training or support required to manage more complex and/or sensitive cases?
What public engagement is being carried out to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce abandonment and dangerous dog incidents? How effective are these?

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

Cabinet, Council, key partners e.g. police, other local authorities, public

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

7 months, reporting to Cabinet in January 2027

Scope and Project Plan –18 May 2026

Evidence gathering June 2026 – October 2026

<p>Draft recommendations – 9 November 2026 Final Report – 14 December 2026 Submission to Cabinet – 21 January 2027</p>
<p>What information do we need?</p>
<p>Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory requirements • Existing policy/service <p>New information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice from across the country

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)	What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?
Animal welfare officers	Council responsibilities regarding animal welfare The current service offer including short-term kennelling facility and long-term kennelling arrangements The demand on the service Veterinary arrangements and cost Training received Funding of the service
Police	Police responsibilities regarding animal welfare The number of animals/dogs they deal with and kennel What happens in the long term to dangerous dogs and the animals of suspects they seize
Other local authorities	Best practice in providing animal welfare services and meeting demand for services Training provided for staff
Local Veterinary Services	Health implications for long term kennelling Veterinary costs
Dogs Trust	Demand for pets and issues with rehoming Partnerships with private kennels and Council
RSPCA	View on Council Animal Welfare provision Partnerships with private and Council kennels
Communications Officers	The communication strategies for promoting responsible pet ownership
<p>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p> <p>Committee meetings, reports, case studies</p>	

How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?

Attendance at meetings, information submissions

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.

Providing an effective animal welfare service ensures public safety of all residents by controlling stray and dangerous dogs, which reduces the risk of attacks and injuries. This fosters a sense of security and well-being among residents.

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

By reducing the risk of attacks and injuries and fostering a sense of security and well-being contributes to Focus Area 3: Everyone lives in healthy and sustainable places and communities.

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

The review will be seeking to explore funding options and cost-saving measures, ensuring officers are adequately trained and supported, and strengthening partnerships to ensure the continuation of high-quality animal welfare services that is able to respond to the increasing complexity of cases.

It will also seek to raise awareness with residents and encourage responsible pet owners to reduce the number of stray and abandoned animals.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	April 2026	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	17.04.26	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	18.05.26	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed		Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence		15.06.26 13.07.26 14.09.26 12.10.26	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	09.11.26	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	November/December 2026	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	November/December 2026 TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	14.12.26	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	19.01.27	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet/Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	21.01.27	Cabinet / Approving Body

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REVIEW OF ANIMAL WELFARE, KENNELLING & PROTECTION OF PETS

Ensuring humane care and safety
for companion animals



OVERVIEW

Council Responsibilities

The Council balances statutory and discretionary duties to protect animal welfare and public safety effectively.

Service Pressures and Sustainability

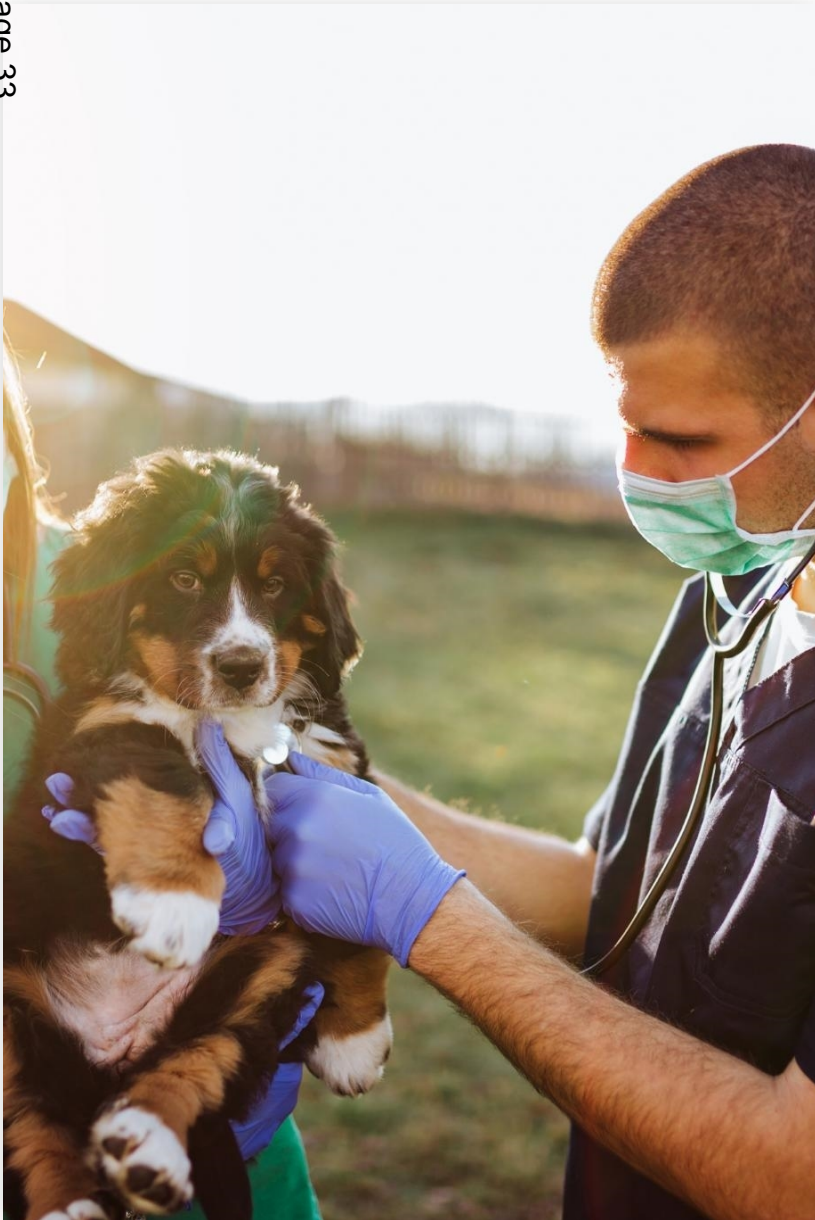
Increasing demand and rising costs create pressure, making sustainability essential for ongoing animal welfare services.

Commitment to High Standards

The Council maintains high animal care standards through external recognition and collaborative partnerships.

Future Challenges and Decision-Making

Identifying future challenges ensures informed decisions to keep services effective and aligned with corporate goals.



BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Role of Animal Welfare Services

Animal welfare services protect animals and the public through statutory and broader welfare duties.

Complex and Sensitive Work

Work involves vulnerable individuals, multi-agency coordination, and handling neglected or dangerous animals.

Rising Demand and Challenges

Increased demand reflects changes in pet ownership, cost pressures, and reduced rehoming capacity.

Need for Sustainable Services

Planning is crucial to maintain lawful, effective, and compassionate animal welfare services for the future.



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Supporting Healthy Communities

Animal welfare services contribute to creating healthy, resilient communities by managing stray and dangerous animals effectively.

Integration with Public Health

Animal welfare intersects with public health, community safety, and social care to promote overall wellbeing in the borough.

Risk Reduction and Confidence

Effective animal welfare fosters public confidence by reducing risks of injury or distress related to animals in the community.

Supporting Vulnerable Individuals

The service supports vulnerable individuals who struggle to care for pets, enhancing social care and wellbeing outcomes.



AIM OF THE REVIEW

Sustainability and Care Quality

Assess long-term sustainability of animal welfare and kennelling services while maintaining high standards of care.

Operational and Financial Assessment

Examine financial pressures and operational capacity to handle growing demand and service complexity effectively.

Improvement and Innovation

Identify opportunities for efficiency, innovation, and improvement without compromising animal welfare or statutory duties.

Governance and Community Alignment

Ensure the service is resilient, well-governed, and aligned with the needs of the community it serves.



CORE FUNCTIONS

Stray Dog Control

The service manages statutory stray dog control to ensure public safety and animal welfare in the community.

Welfare Enforcement

Enforcement of animal welfare laws involves cooperation with police, vets, and charities to protect animals in complex cases.

Kennelling Services

Provision and commissioning of kennelling services provide safe shelter for seized or stray animals requiring care.

Collaborative Case Management

Officer collaboration with multiple agencies ensures effective response to complex animal welfare situations.



STRAY DOG PRIORITY

Stray Dog Control Importance

Stray dog control is essential for reducing risks and preventing aggression and injuries in the community.

Reuniting Lost Pets

Effective services reunite lost dogs with owners, minimizing distress for animals and residents.

Humane Care for Unreunited Dogs

When reunification fails, dogs are cared for safely and humanely to protect their welfare.

Community Safety and Confidence

Effective stray dog management supports public confidence and promotes community safety.



SERVICE STRENGTHS

High Performance Record

The service consistently achieves high standards, demonstrating professionalism and expertise in animal welfare.

Recognition and Awards

Achieving RSPCA Gold and Platinum status reflects the service's sustained excellence and external validation.

Stakeholder Confidence

Recognition reassures residents and stakeholders about the high standard of animal care provided.

Challenges Ahead

Maintaining strengths amid financial constraints and increasing pressures is vital for ongoing success.



DEMAND AND TRENDS

Increasing Service Demand

The service receives around 700 requests yearly, with rising demand and complexity.

Complex Case Challenges

Cases demand more time and resources due to kennelling, legal, and safeguarding needs.

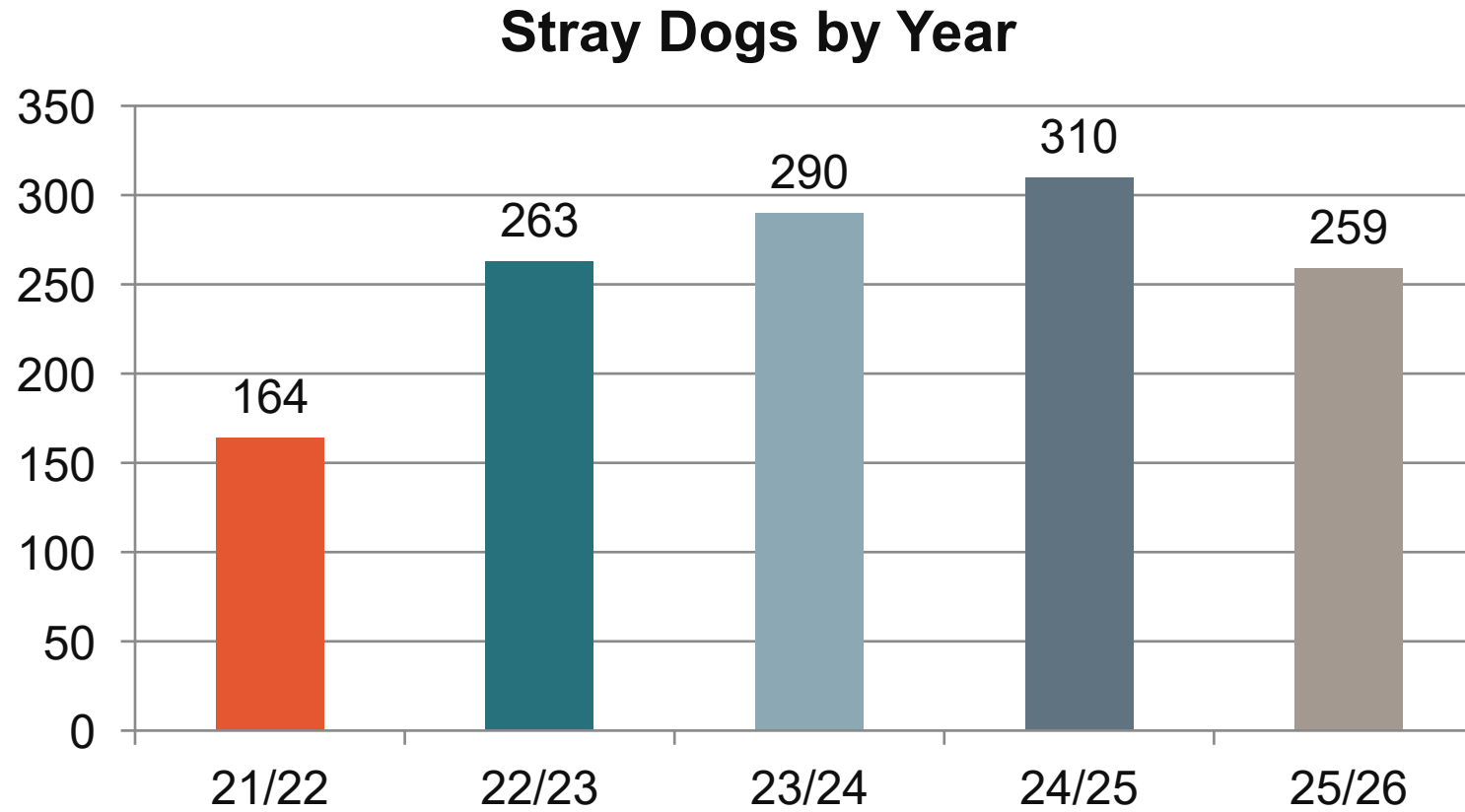
National Trends Impact

Challenges stem from changing pet ownership, reduced rehoming, and increased costs.

Planning for Sustainability

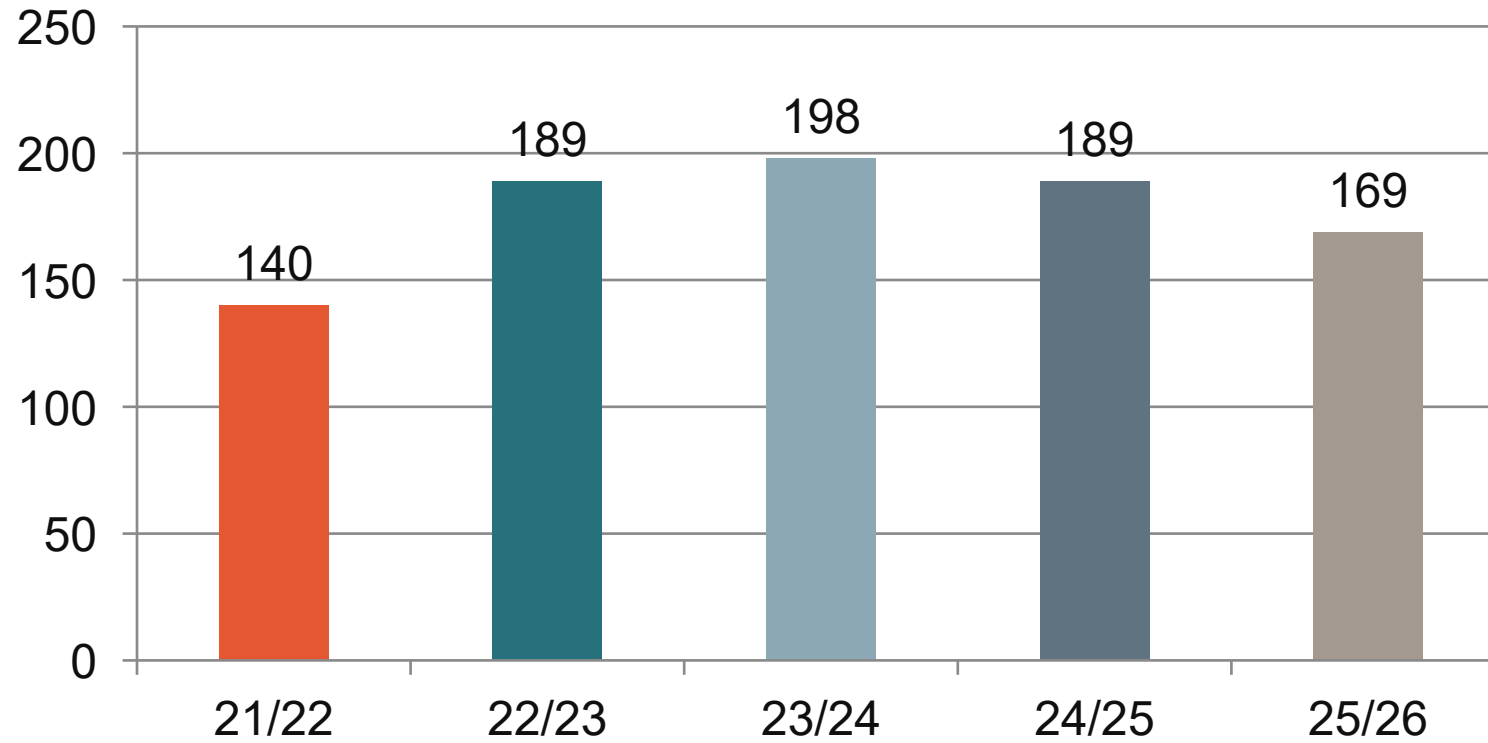
Understanding trends aids in resource allocation and developing preventative partnerships.

TOTAL STRAY DOGS BY YEAR



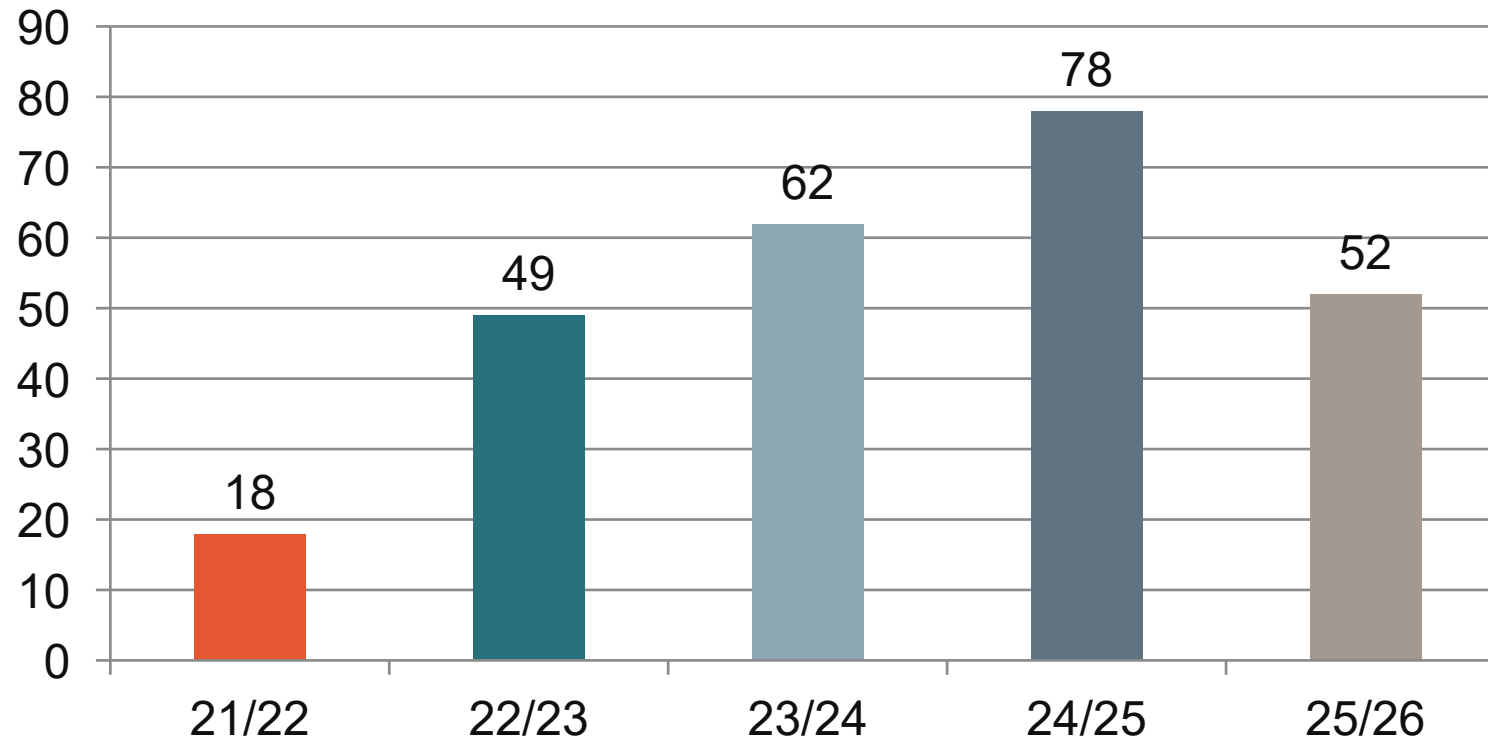
DOGS RETURNED TO OWNER

Returned to Owner

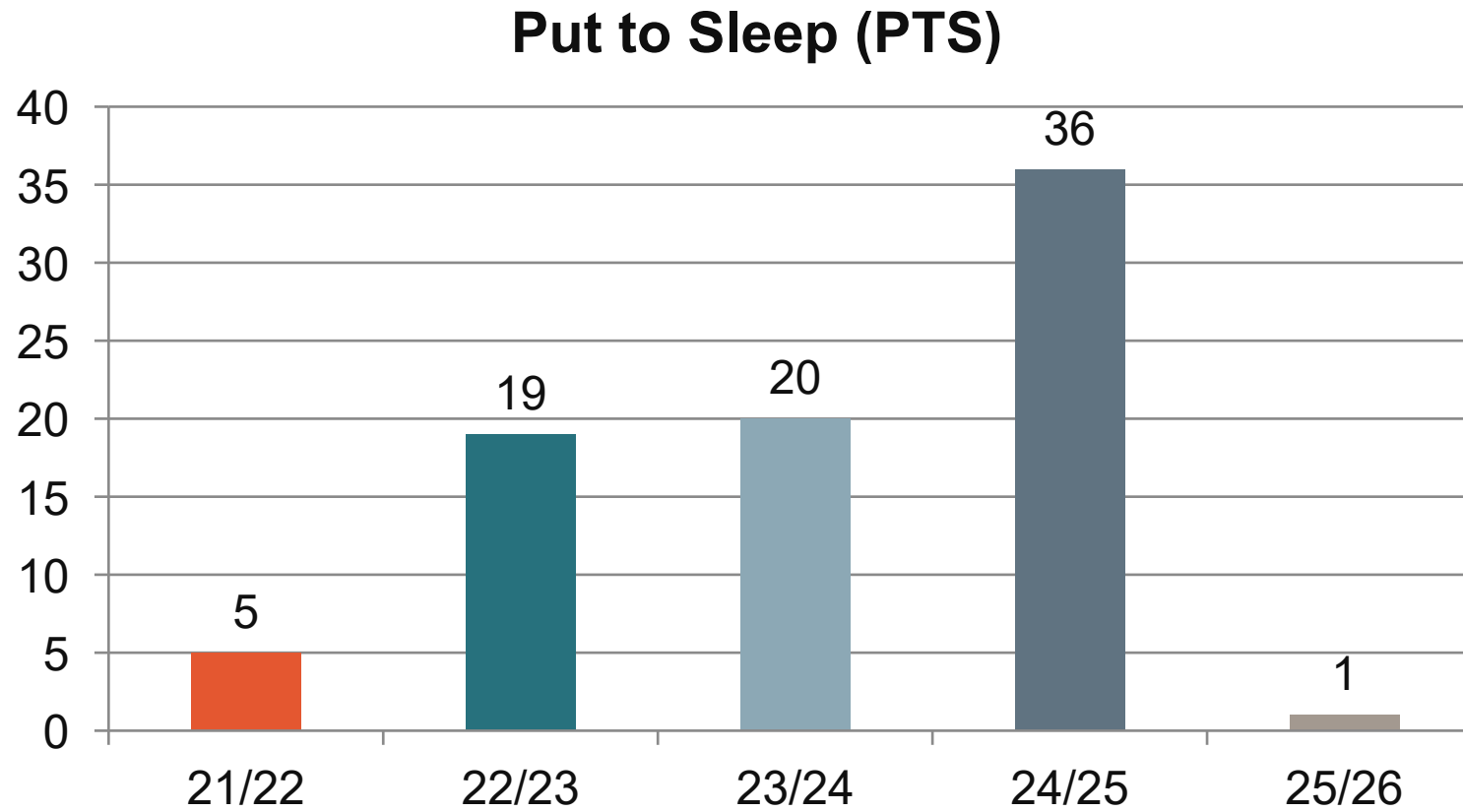


DOGS SENT TO DOGS TRUST

Dogs Trust Rehomed



DOGS PUT TO SLEEP





KENNELLING PRESSURES

Extended Kennelling Duration

Animals often stay in kennels longer due to limited long-term provision availability, increasing pressure on resources.

Rising Operational Costs

Operational and veterinary expenses are increasing, creating financial challenges for managing kennelling services effectively.

Sustainability and Welfare

Improving kennelling arrangements is essential to ensure sustainability and maintain high animal welfare standards.



KEY CHALLENGES

Financial Sustainability

Maintaining adequate funding is crucial to support ongoing animal welfare operations and services.

Capacity and Staffing Pressures

Limited capacity and staff shortages create challenges in effectively managing animal welfare cases.

Ongoing Training and Development

Continuous training is essential for officers to handle complex and sensitive animal welfare situations.

Partnership and Collaboration

Collaborative efforts among multiple organizations are key to addressing animal welfare challenges effectively.



STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

Diverse Stakeholders

Animal welfare services involve officers, police, local authorities, vets, and charities working together.

Collaboration Benefits

Effective partner collaboration helps manage demand, share expertise, and provide proper animal care.

Public Engagement

Engaging the public promotes responsible pet ownership and helps prevent animal abandonment.

Strengthening Relationships

Reviewing and improving stakeholder relationships supports better future animal welfare service delivery.



OUTCOMES AND NEXT STEPS

Continuous Improvement Focus

The review targets clear outcomes that foster ongoing improvement and sustainability in animal welfare services.

Strengthening Partnerships

Efforts to build stronger collaborations aim to increase efficiency and enhance community engagement.

Evidence-Based Decisions

Findings and recommendations will inform Cabinet decisions in January 2027 for future service direction.

Protecting and Supporting Communities

The review ensures animal welfare services continue to protect animals and support local communities effectively.

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Place Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027

Date (4pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
Monday 20 April 2026	Scrutiny Review of Governance of Capital Projects – Final Report Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centres Development • Inclusive growth & Development 	Iain Robinson, Neil Bramma & Andy Corcoran Cllr Richard Eglington, Tracey Carter, Iain Robinson, & Chris Renahan
Monday 18 May 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Affordable Housing Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare, Kennelling and Protection of Pets – Scope and Project Plan	Jane Edmonds Marc Stephenson & Stephen Donaghy
Monday 15 June 2026		
Monday 13 July 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Domestic Waste Collections, Kerbside Recycling and Green Waste Collections	Dale Rowbotham
Monday 14 September 2026		
Monday 12 October 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update – Muslim and Faith Burials	Dale Rowbotham & Darren Robinson
Monday 9 November 2026	Overview & Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services • Environment, Leisure & green Infrastructure • Housing and A Fairer Stockton-on-Tees 	Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Richard Eglington, Reuben Kench, Craig Willows, Neil Mitchell, Carolyn Nice, & Jane Edmonds
Monday 14 December 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Burial Provision	Chris Renahan

Place Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027

Date (<u>4pm unless stated</u>)	Topic	Attendance
Monday 11 January 2027		
Monday 15 February 2027		
Monday 15 March 2027		

To Schedule:

Scrutiny Review of Animal Welfare, Kennelling and Protection of Pets