

Date:

Monday 5 October 2026 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 John Gardner, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Agenda

1. Live Streaming

This meeting will be filmed for live and / or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for 12 months. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy.

If you attend and make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. When admitted to the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for livestreaming and / or training purposes. If you do not wish to have your image captured, please contact Democratic Services prior to attending the meeting.

If there are any technical difficulties with the livestreaming, the meeting will still proceed.

2. Evacuation Procedure (Pages 7 - 10)

3. Apologies for Absence

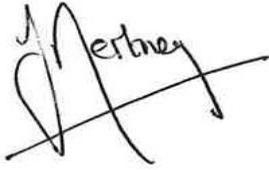
4. Declarations of Interest

5. Minutes (Pages 11 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 7 September 2026.

6. Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes (Pages 17 - 46)

7. Chairs Update and Work Programme 2026 - 2027 (Pages 47 - 48)



Jonathan Nertney
Head of Democratic Services
Friday 25 September 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

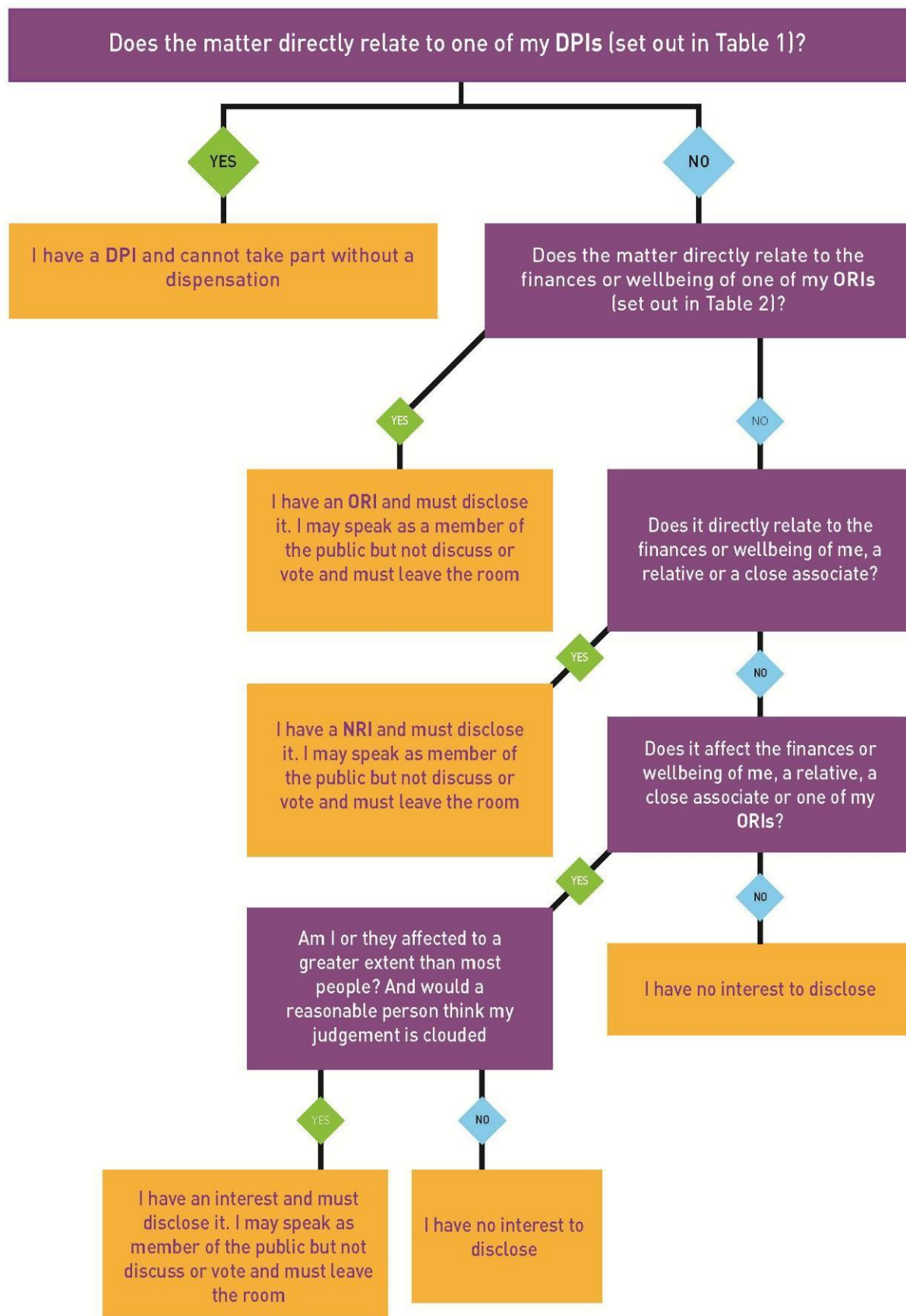


Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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 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

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.

This page is intentionally left blank

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 7th September 2026.

Present: Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Hugo Stratton, and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Kellie Wigley (Children's Services), Neil Mitchell (Neighbourhoods), Martin Skipsey, Ian Coxon and Michelle Gunn (Corporate Services)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

PEO/21/26 Live Streaming

The Chair announced to those present that the meeting would be live streamed.

PEO/22/26 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

PEO/23/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PEO/24/26 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting on 6 July be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PEO/25/26 Progress Update- Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help

The Committee considered a progress update including assessments of progress for implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help. This was the first update to be presented to the Committee, noting that significant progress had been made and all recommendations were on track.

Key points highlighted were:

- The Family Help point was launched in April 2026, along with a self-navigation online triage tool for partners and families, supported through external briefing sessions on referral processes and communications and engagement sessions to raise awareness and promote consistent use.
- Quality assurance activities were also taking place on referrals to be confident in the application threshold.
- Requests for early help increased by 29% from the same time the previous year, referrals to partner agencies increased by 94%, and the number of contacts progressing to statutory assessment reduced by 61%.
- The triage tool had been accessed 1,800 times and 5,400 referrals had been made through the new digital portal platform.

- This data indicated that support was being provided to families far sooner, decreasing the demand on the local authority, and preventing the escalation to statutory assessment.

It was noted that there was duplication within the actions for each recommendation, and therefore it was agreed that recommendations would be combined when the next update is presented, in six months.

AGREED the Progress Update be noted, and the assessment of progress be confirmed. The next progress update would be presented in six months.

PEO/26/26 Xentrall Annual Report

The Committee received the Xentrall Annual Report 2025/26. Xentrall operated design and print services, processing and systems for finance and HR, and ICT services for both Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) and Darlington Borough Council (DBC).

The report outlined how the service had performed, key achievements, and future work for the service. Key points highlighted were:

- SBC and DBC had maintained a rolling annual agreement with Xentrall since 2015, following exceeding its original cost reduction target when established in 2008.
- While SBC and DBC were the two main customers of Xentrall, they also had external customers which generated £1.2million in business.
- Short term staff issues led to a dip in performance for payment of creditor invoices at the start of 2025-26, however this was recovered and performance standards regained by Quarter 3.
- The service had achieved green assessment in the Red/Amber/Green rating system in most of the control checks undertaken by Internal Audit
- It had also maintained certification in the ISO Standards 27001 (Information Security Management) certification and 9001 (Quality Management), and the BACS Accredited Bureau status was maintained. It also was re-certified for continued access to the Government's Public Services Network (PSN).

Members questioned the measurable continued savings to the Council. It was explained that Xentrall was funded through a management fee shared between the two councils, with SBC contributing approximately 60% and DBC 40%. A specific figure for continuing savings was not available as savings were achieved by avoiding the costs that would be incurred if each council operated these services independently. Since the delivery of the initial £14 million savings, the management fee had effectively remained frozen, with annual increases limited to staff pay awards, while the impact of inflation has been absorbed by Xentrall.

The cost of ICT hardware and software was discussed. It was noted that there had been a global shortage of components for ICT due to the demands of creating Artificial Intelligence (AI), and this had driven up prices not only for laptops, but other items required for infrastructure. Members questioned what was being done to mitigate the risks of rising costs and were informed that design work had been ongoing on the replacement of the platform hardware (servers), which was replaced every five years reflecting the industry standard. In addition, procurement to buy new kit was brought forward before prices increased further, and some kit was repurposed by upgrading the

components within. This had saved approximately £500,000 on what it would possibly have cost over a five-year period.

Members raised cybersecurity, and the officer noted that there was a dedicated cybersecurity team in place as well as a contract with a security company to provide 24-7 monitoring service of the whole network. The company either blocked any attacks at source or alerted the team who were on call. Xentrall also worked with the Governance team to carry out phishing simulations to increase awareness with staff of some of the issues the network was facing.

Members also raised the use of AI. Officers noted that Customer Services systems used an element of AI and some social work teams had been testing AI transcription tools, such as Magic Notes, to assist with their note taking and improve efficiency. However, there were limitations to these, and AI would not be making decision on the care of adults and children. The Microsoft applications used by the Council also had AI built into them which staff were able to use to improve efficiency, however some elements had been turned off by Xentrall and boundaries had been drawn to mitigate any risks to information.

AGREED the Xentrall Annual Report be noted.

PEO/27/26 Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Procurement and Governance, outlining Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's procurement arrangements. The presentation included:

- The Council used a Hybrid Model covering Construction and ICT procurement systems and responsibilities, and General goods and services. Service departments identified requirements, while Procurement Service managed compliance, tendering processes and monitoring of social value.
- Procurement processes were defined based on level of expenditure, reflected the legal requirements within the Procurement Act, and were set out in the contract procedure rules within the Constitution:
 - Contracts under £15,000 required demonstration of value for money, goods and services between £15,001 and £179,087 required quotations from four suppliers, one of which had to be a local supplier, and goods and services above £179,087 required a formal tender process, with contracts advertised on the governments Central Digital Platform. Alternatively, contracts could be called off under framework agreements.
 - Construction contracts had significantly higher thresholds, with quotations permitted up to £1million before a full tender process was required. Alternatively, contracts could be called off under framework agreements.
- Framework agreements were in place to pre-select one or more suppliers. For each framework a procurement process had taken place and terms set during this period, which included pricing and/or call off terms. Framework agreements could operate with single supplier or multiple suppliers that were ranked or where further competitions took place.
- Exceptions to following Contract Procedure Rules were recorded.
- Officers could approve contracts up to £500,000 under delegated powers, with contracts over £500,000 requiring Cabinet approval. This was for the total contract figure, e.g. if the contract was for a set amount each year over several years. Procurement decisions were made generally by directors and had to be

recorded through Delegated Decision Records and were subject to consultation with Finance and Procurement Services.

- A public contract register was maintained and available online. The Council managed 551 live contracts at the time of the meeting and contract management was based on risk and value, with varying levels of oversight.

It was noted that the procurement of non-social care services was part of a transformation review to assess how money could be saved in the process, and the findings from this would be brought to the Committee.

The Committee questioned the quotation threshold for construction contracts. It was explained that construction projects were generally of a higher value, often of £100,000 or above, and competition was still achieved through quotations and framework agreements. However, the £1million threshold was locally determined and could be reviewed.

The level of officer delegated decision was also questioned, and it was noted that this had been determined by Full Council previously and included in the Constitution. Procurement controls, finance consultation, and delegated decision recording still applied below the threshold.

Contracts for health and social care long-term placements were discussed. It was noted that decisions for these placements were considered by officer panels, chaired by senior managers, recorded formally and regularly reviewed. These arrangements were often rolling placements rather than traditional fixed-term contracts and notice could be given at any point.

Members also raised examples of low value works and projects where quality concerns had arisen.

The following further information was requested:

- Detail and value of contracts awarded via exceptions to contract procedure rules.
- Detail regarding the construction quotations sought for £15,001 - £1million threshold, including frequency and supplier participation.
- Detail of officer delegated decisions over the previous two years below the £500,000 threshold, including number of contracts approved, total value, and background information on how the limit was established.
- Findings from the transformation review of procurement processes.

AGREED the information provided be noted and information requested be sought.

PEO/28/26 Chairs Update and Work Programme 2026 - 2027

Consideration was given to the Committee's work programme.

AGREED the work programme be noted.

PEO/29/26 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

PEO/30/26 Review of Catering - School Delivery

The Committee received a report following a Powering Our Future Transformation review of catering, which focused on school catering, before it was considered at Cabinet.

Following discussion, the Committees comments would be forwarded to Cabinet.

AGREED that the Committees comments be included in the Cabinet Report.

Chair:

This page is intentionally left blank

People Select Committee

5 October 2026

Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes

Summary

The second evidence gathering session for the Committee's review of Procurement and Tendering Processes will consider evidence from the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO).

Detail

1. As part of the scoping process for the Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes, the Committee identified NEPO as a key contributor. Members wished to understand the how the Council operates in the wider region.
2. The Procurement and Commercial Director of NEPO has therefore been invited to present evidence regarding their role, how the Council sits within the wider region, and any observations from a regional perspective. A presentation has been forwarded in advance and is attached.
3. The agreed scope and project plan for the review is also attached for information.

Name of Contact Officer: Michelle Gunn

Post Title: Scrutiny Officer

Telephone number: 01642 524987

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

This page is intentionally left blank



NEPO

Regional collaborative procurement

People Select Committee evidence | Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Introducing NEPO, our regional role, and how Stockton sits within the wider procurement family.

Steven Sinclair | Procurement & Commercial Director

What this evidence covers

A regional perspective, not an internal audit of Stockton's arrangements.

01 NEPO

02 Regional role

03 Stockton

04 Opportunities

The Committee asked for NEPO's role, how Stockton operates in the wider region, and any observations from that perspective.

The boundary is important

NEPO can explain the collaborative model, regional data and common good practice. Stockton's governance, constitution, internal resourcing and individual contract decisions remain matters for the Council's own officers and Members.

What NEPO is

A public-sector-owned route to collaboration, assurance and commercial leverage.

NEPO is a public buying organisation, governed by the public sector, for the public sector.

Our purpose

- deliver compliant routes to market
- unlock collective value and buying power
- reduce procurement complexity
- help public bodies achieve better outcomes

How we operate

- owned by and accountable to Member Authorities
- commercial solutions across goods, works and services
- shared digital platform and supplier support
- regional collaboration with national reach where appropriate

Procurement powered by people: commercial discipline, public purpose and practical delivery.

How NEPO sits in the regional procurement family

Local accountability remains with councils; NEPO provides the shared commercial infrastructure.



The model works when local knowledge and regional scale are both used deliberately.

NEPO does not replace the Council's role. It gives Stockton and other Member Authorities access to shared procurement infrastructure, market insight, routes to market and support that would be inefficient to replicate twelve times.

What NEPO delivers for Members

Focused on the region, strengthened by national scale.

Scale in two dimensions

MEMBER AUTHORITIES

Regional focus

£656m

Member Authority spend via NEPO solutions

£4.05m

Member rebate

£8.7m

ROI for Members

ASSOCIATE / AFFILIATE MEMBERS

National scale

£667m

Associate Member spend via NEPO solutions

627

active Associates

43

solutions accessed

Why this matters

Regional governance and accountability remain rooted in Member Authorities. Associate use brings wider supplier reach, market engagement and solution resilience. For Stockton, local ownership is supported by market presence beyond the region.

How Stockton works with NEPO

Stockton is part of a wider Member Authority system while retaining local decision-making.

Stockton uses NEPO in the same way as other Member Authorities: choosing collaborative routes where they support local need, value for money and compliance.

Stockton's role

- defines local service requirements and outcomes
- decides when collaboration is the right route
- manages local approvals and contract ownership
- draws on regional support where it adds value

NEPO's role

- provides routes to market and commercial assurance
- aggregates demand where the market responds better at scale
- supports suppliers through Open and NSPP
- shares practice across the twelve authorities
- commercialise to Associates and Affiliates

Open activity: 484 supplier registrations in the Stockton Borough Council area | 175 Council projects | 64 call-offs in the 2025/26 regional report

Observations from the regional perspective

The best procurement outcomes are created before tender and protected after award.

01

Early planning

Start with the outcome, route-to-market options and market conditions before drafting tender documents.

02

Proportionate route choice

Use NEPO, another framework, open tender or in-house provision where the route fits the requirement.

03

Supplier access

Make opportunities visible and usable for SMEs and regional suppliers without weakening compliance.

04

Social value

Use social value where it is relevant, measurable and capable of being delivered through the contract.

05

Contract management

Treat award as the start of delivery: KPIs, performance, change control and benefits tracking matter.

The regional opportunity is not simply to buy together; it is to learn together and shape better demand.

Opportunities for Stockton to consider

Practical areas where regional collaboration can support local priorities.

The question is never “NEPO or Stockton?” It is where local control and regional collaboration combine to deliver the best outcome.

01

Earlier route planning

Use NEPO insight before the route is fixed, especially for high-value or complex procurements.

02

Sharper aggregation choices

Aggregate where scale improves the market response; keep local flexibility where it matters.

03

Supplier confidence

Use Open and NSPP to make public procurement easier for local and regional suppliers to access.

04

Benefits after award

Strengthen contract management, social value delivery and benefits tracking.



NEPO's role

Support local decision-making with regional scale, public-sector governance and practical commercial assurance.

For Stockton, the strongest position is to retain clear local ownership while using NEPO deliberately where collaboration improves value, assurance, supplier access or delivery confidence.

Questions

This page is intentionally left blank

People Select Committee
Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Cllr Marilyn Surtees	Contact details: M.Surtees@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Michelle Gunn	Contact details: Michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk
Departmental Link Officer: Martin Skipsey	Contact details: Martin.Skipsey@stockton.gov.uk
Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? Procurement relates to how the Council purchases goods and works and therefore directly addresses the following Council plan priority: Priority five – A sustainable Council: We will ensure our council is financially sustainable and manages our assets effectively to enhance their local impact. We will be a well-run council across areas of our business and continue to improve outcomes for communities. The actual goods, services and works also support all other council priorities.	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review? Procurement represents a significant proportion of the Council's annual expenditure and there is an expectation that the Council spends money efficiently, secure competitive prices, and demonstrate transparency in purchasing and the awarding of contracts. Robust procurement arrangements ensure high-quality services and infrastructure, can promote sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, and support local businesses and the local economy. The aim of the review will be to ensure procurement processes deliver value for money, are competitive, and transparent.	
The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry What are the Council's contract procedure rules (part of the constitution)? What are the Council's arrangements, structures and procedures for procurement and tendering? What are the pre-procurement stages? How does the Council procure via external organisations e.g. NEPO? What is the breakdown of expenditure through procurement? How is best value duty met when procuring services and/or goods? How are labour costs and overheads within contracts assessed and challenged? How is social value maximised? How are decisions made on whether services are provided inhouse or procured?	

Does the Council procure services with other public sector organisations? What opportunities are there for (further) joint procurement? How often are contracts/procurement reviewed in order to determine best value?
Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work? Council, Cabinet
Expected duration of review and key milestones: Six months (reporting to Cabinet in January 2027) Approve scope and project plan – July 2026 Receive evidence – July 2026 – October 2026 Draft recommendations – November 2026 Final report – December 2026 Report to Cabinet – January 2027
What information do we need? Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.): A councillor's guide to procurement (2025 edition) Local Government Association Contract Procedure Rules Social Value Policy New information: Comparison with other local authorities

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?
Procurement	The legislative remit and Council processes Contract procedure rules Budget and spending areas (i.e. what the Council spends money on)
North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO)	How the Council operates in the wider region How the Council compares to other Local Authorities in the region
LGA	Best practice in procurement processes used
Local Chamber of Commerce	Their experience of the Councils procurement process
How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey) Committee meetings, reports, desk-based research, survey	

How will key partners and the public be involved in the review? Committee 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. Public bodies must have due regard for advancing equality which includes: • removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics • taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people Robust and well managed procurement and tendering arrangement contributes to the financial stability of the Council and thereby ensures SBC continues to deliver the services that communities need.
How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy? Robust and well managed procurement and tendering arrangement contributes to the financial stability of the Council and thereby ensures SBC continues to deliver the services that communities need.
Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation: Examining procurement processes and identifying whether there are any areas where these may be strengthened will ensure the Council is delivering value for money and processes are transparent.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	June 2026	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	23.06.26	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	06.07.26	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	Background evidence Evidence from Procurement Evidence from NEPO/LGA & Local Chamber of Commerce	06.07.26 07.09.26 05.10.26 02.11.26	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	07.12.26	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	December 26	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	16.12.26	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	04.01.27	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	11.02.27	Cabinet / Approving Body

This page is intentionally left blank

Scrutiny Review of Procurement & Tendering Processes

SBC Procurement

Contract Values below £500k



Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Reason for Exception (2025/26 and 2026/27 to date)	Number of contracts	Sum of Overall Value
Procurement when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular third party	51	£12,211,064
Procurement when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular third party AND Provision of personal social services including contracts for the provision of residential care and community support packages which form an alternative to residential care	1	£510,000
Procurement when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular third party AND Urgency, when (but only if it is strictly necessary) the time required to fully comply with these Contract Procedure Rules would be prejudicial to the Council's interests and provided that a written record is kept documenting the reasons for the urgency. In these cases, consideration should still be given to those parts of the process that could still be followed particularly the need for competition	10	£829,131
The execution of mandatory works and services by statutory undertakers	5	£1,566,234
Urgency, when (but only if it is strictly necessary) the time required to fully comply with these Contract Procedure Rules would be prejudicial to the Council's interests and provided that a written record is kept documenting the reasons for the urgency. In these cases, consideration should still be given to those parts of the process that could still be followed particularly the need for competition	31	£1,805,475

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Procurement of works, supplies or services not exceeding the applicable EU threshold to meet the requirements of individual contracts that are used for pilot projects	1	£25,000
Procurement of works, supplies or services not exceeding the applicable EU threshold to meet the requirements of individual contracts that are used for pilot projects AND Procurement of services where the contract length cannot reasonably be determined due to funding uncertainty, and the contract is thus deemed temporary in nature	2	£345,856
Procurement of services where the contract length cannot reasonably be determined due to funding uncertainty and the contract is thus deemed temporary in nature.	1	£17,500
Grand Total	102	£17,310,260

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Procurement when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular third party;

Examples

Purchase of 4 Refuse Collection Vehicles (£323k)

The decision is to purchase 4 x Refuse Collection vehicles that Stockton council have operated and maintained for the last 5 years under a contract hire agreement.

Benefits are:

- Stay with the Mercedes/Dennis Eagle/Terberg combination which is vehicle configuration that works well for Stockton.
- All vehicles will be the same combination that driver, crews, and maintenance staff are familiar with.
- Stay with vehicles we have knowledge of that we have operated and maintained.
- Within the purchase price NRG have agreed to complete a re-work program to the refuse collection body and hopper to eliminate major fabrication issues in this area over the next 5 years.
- NRG have agreed to supply a support vehicle FOC to allow the re-work program to be completed with minimal operational impact.
- The workshop team will over maintain the chassis and bin lift over the remainder of the contract to reduce maintenance costs to Stockton after the vehicles are purchased.
- The vehicle being purchased will be in the best position possible to give the authority reliable service at minimal cost.

Stockton Council commenced their Green Waste service April 2025, they went from an open back collection to a wheelie bin service. The authority requires 4 x refuse collection vehicles with bin lifts to supply.

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Procurement when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular third party;

Examples

All Aboard playscape exhibition at Preston Park Museums (£161k)

The request to appoint “Unusual Projects” directly for the above piece of work has been recommended due to their experience and skills in delivering these specialist playscape exhibitions for museums.

They have experience with similar venues such as Mini Brum (Birmingham Museum), Centre for Life and the National Railway Museum, and have come recommended from the initial design company appointed, KCA.

Playscapes are very specialist as it includes bespoke design and built structures that are robust and suitable for children within the museum. They also have experience in designing and building exhibitions that can be tour-able which is vital for the longevity of this exhibition.

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Procurement when, for technical or artistic reasons, or for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights, the contract may be awarded only to a particular third party;

Examples

Respond Case Management System (£77k 3 yr contract)

A case management system for the Information Governance team to record requests (some statutory) such as Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations requests, Data Protection Act requests, social worker requests from other local authorities, data breaches, MP enquiries, complaints (corporate and statutory), Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigations, and Information Commissioner's Officer enquiries. The system supports officers in coordinating the responses, holding a centralised record, and in the preparation of performance reports.

Procurement will be carrying out an exception Direct Award. It will not be cost effective to procure a new system. The current contract is on a rolling contract and will be renewed on a fixed term contract at a reduced price.

The system is currently supplied by Aptean.

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Urgency, when (but only if it is strictly necessary) the time required to fully comply with these Contract Procedure Rules would be prejudicial to the Council's interests and provided that a written record is kept documenting the reasons for the urgency. In these cases, consideration should still be given to those parts of the process that could still be followed particularly the need for competition

Examples

Lobby Works at Dunedin House (£40k)

The Authority moved into Dunedin House in 2024, with several existing arrangements in place, one being the existing visitor entrance to the building. This is currently one large open plan space with a single set of doors at the entry point. An additional set is urgently required to provide the correct environment for reception staff working in the space and to prevent heat loss during colder months and to comply with the Workplace (H&S Welfare) Regulations 1992.

A detailed design has been completed for an additional set of internal draft lobby doors, together with locking / access arrangements. A detailed quotation has been received from Hobson Smith Construction to undertake the works.

The quote has been checked by the Design Services Team and offers value for money.

Due to the urgency of the installation and the lead in period for the doors an exception has been completed.

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Urgency, when (but only if it is strictly necessary) the time required to fully comply with these Contract Procedure Rules would be prejudicial to the Council's interests and provided that a written record is kept documenting the reasons for the urgency. In these cases, consideration should still be given to those parts of the process that could still be followed particularly the need for competition

Examples

Purchase of 4 new Peugeot Partner Vans (£79k)

A Contract Hire agreement is currently in place for 4 vans and is due to expire on 04/05/2026 with no arrangement in place to replace these vehicles which are still required. This has resulted in an urgent need to replace these vehicles.

The vehicles are operated by Taxation and Economic Growth & Development Services.

These will be replaced by the purchase of the following:

4 x Partner Pro + STD BHD1 100 (With Screen) Brand New unregistered.

NOTE FROM PROCUREMENT: Quotation process not undertaken in compliance with Contract Procedure Rules and without any Procurement Team involvement. Insufficient time to correct process once made aware.

Exceptions to Contract Procedure Rules

Urgency, when (but only if it is strictly necessary) the time required to fully comply with these Contract Procedure Rules would be prejudicial to the Council's interests and provided that a written record is kept documenting the reasons for the urgency. In these cases, consideration should still be given to those parts of the process that could still be followed particularly the need for competition

Examples

Urgent Works at Billingham South Primary School Ceiling Repairs (£262k)

Billingham South Primary School structural issues with lath and plaster ceiling requiring licenced contractor to carry survey and remedial works due to the presence of asbestos debris in loft spaces. Works to be done ASAP. This is urgent due to schools' immediate closure.

There is no time to do a procurement process due to the asbestos issue and need to get children back into school. The school was closed early for school holidays because of the issues.

Construction Route to Market (2025/26 and 2026/27 to date)

Route to Market	Number of contracts	Sum of Estimated Contract Value
Direct Award from Framework Agreement	19	£14,607,603
Exception to Contract Procedure Rules	28	£2,800,423
Further Competition from a Framework Agreement	20	£55,006,378
Quote	20	£3,091,663
Tender	4	£1,767,025
Grand Total	91	£77,273,092

This page is intentionally left blank

People Select Committee – Work Programme 2026- 2027

Date (2pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
Monday 13 April 2026	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision Working Group Lead for Careers	Vanessa Housley, Aishah Waite, Chris Renahan Ian Caley & Fallon Duleavey
Monday 11 May 2026 (4pm)	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision - Working Group Lead for Transitions Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant Overview & Performance - Finance - Revenues, Benefits & Welfare - Corporate Services	Vanessa Housley & Aishah Waite Mike Mackin Sam Dixon Cllr Paul Rowling, Clare Harper, Michelle Connolly, Ged Morton, Leanne Dudhill
Monday 8 June 2026 (Informal)	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations	Vanessa Housley & Aishah Waite
Monday 6 July 2026	Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision - Final Report Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes – Scope and Project Plan	Vanessa Housley & Aishah Waite Martin Skipsey
Monday 7 September 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help Xentrall Annual Report Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes Evidence gathering Review of Catering – School Delivery	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waite Ian Coxon Martin Skipsey Neil Mitchell
Monday 5 October 2026	Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes Evidence gathering	Martin Skipsey NEPO

People Select Committee – Work Programme 2026- 2027

Date (2pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
Monday 2 November 2026	Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant Monitoring: Action Plan – Scrutiny Review of Post 16 Provision Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes Evidence gathering	Sam Dixon Vanessa Housley Martin Skipsey & Andie Mackay
Monday 7 December 2026	Overview & Performance - Strategy, Systems & Improvement - Customer Services & Digital - Culture, Leisure & Events	Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Kellie Hopkins, Tara Connor
Monday 7 December 2026 (informal session)	Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations	Martin Skipsey
Monday 4 January 2027	Scrutiny Review of Procurement and Tendering Processes – Final Report	Martin Skipsey
Monday 8 February 2027		
Monday 8 March 2027	Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Partnership Working in Early Help	Kellie Wigley & Aishah Waithe