

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
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Part A – Items considered in public

<p>A4</p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update and Strategy</p>	<p align="center"><u>STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p align="center"><u>CABINET/COUNCIL DECISION</u></p> <p align="center"><u>PROFORMA</u></p> <p>Cabinet Meeting 9 February 2026</p> <p>1. <u>Title of Item/Report</u></p> <p>Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy</p> <p>2. <u>Record of the Decision</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Strategy.</p> <p>This was the final report in setting the Council’s 2026/27 Budget and Council Tax and outlining the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position to 2029. The report also included an update on the financial performance for 2025/26.</p> <p>The report outlined the budget for 2026/27 and indicative MTFP for future years. The provisional finance settlement was announced on 17 December 2025, and this indicated the funding for 2026/27 along with provisional allocations for 2027/28 and 2028/29, with the final allocations to be confirmed in February.</p> <p>The MTFP provided an indicative financial envelope to support sustainable decision making and prioritisation over the planning period. It would be reviewed and refreshed annually to reflect updated demand, inflation, funding</p>
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Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>assumptions and delivery progress.</p> <p>Like many councils across the country, the Council continued to see greater demand for council services and rising costs which had resulted in overspending against it's budget. The areas that were experiencing the greatest budgetary challenges were Adults Social Care, Children's Social Care and Home to School Transport. As a result, the Council had needed to use reserves to dampen the impact; the Council needed to ensure it had healthy reserves to mitigate for future unpredicted pressures and therefore these need to be replenished. The report included a Reserves Policy outlining the plan of how this would be achieved.</p> <p>Across the MTFP the Council was predicting the continued rising demand and cost pressures seen in recent years, which would exceed the increase in funding available. This had resulted in a budget gap of £6.7m in 2026/27, with a predicted budget gap of £13.8m in 2027/28 and £18.4m in 2028/29.</p> <p>In response to bridging this gap, a renewed Phase 2 of the Powering Our Future programme encompassing Outcome based reviews, Council wide initiatives and efficiency reviews had been identified. This programme built on the positive progress made through the Powering our Futures Phase 1 transformation reviews already identifying £9.9m of savings by 2028/29. Residents feedback through the Let's Talk Money budget consultation had been used to help identify the areas for review.</p> <p>The scale and pace of savings required, particularly in the later years of the plan, represented a significant delivery challenge. While the Council had a strong track record through Phase 1 of Powering Our Futures, Phase 2 would</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>require early validation of assumptions, rigorous governance through the established gateway process, and regular reporting to Members. Given the low level of reserves, timely corrective action would be required where delivery risk emerges, including adjusting sequencing, scope or mitigations as necessary.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED to Council that:-</p> <p>1. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, Members note that the Section 151 Officer confirms that the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) represent a robust budget which has been prepared in line with best practice; b) provide adequate working balances; c) set out that reserves and provisions are adequate for their purpose. <p>General Fund Budget</p> <p>2. A 2026/27 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council of £134,206,810 be approved.</p> <p>3. A 2026/27 Council Tax requirement for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council inclusive of Parish Precepts £135,318,668 be approved.</p> <p>4. The 2026/27 budget and indicative 2027/29 MTFP be approved as outlined in paragraphs 54-129 of the report, the level of General Fund Balances and the release of reserves to balance the 2025/26 in year financial position as set out in paragraphs 13-43 of the report.</p> <p>5. The outcome of the Let's Talk Money Budget Consultation be noted as</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>set out in paragraphs 44-46 and in Appendix A to the report.</p> <p>6. The reserves policy at Appendix B to the report be approved.</p> <p>7. £1.428m of capital receipts be applied to the capital programme, as set out in paragraphs 39-41 of the report, for the following interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapeutic Children’s Home • Xentrall ICT Network • Accommodation • Replacement Vehicle Ramps • Parks Improvements Programme • Foster Carer adaptations <p>8. This will allow £1.428m of Council resources previously earmarked for the above schemes to be transferred into the Transformation Reserve.</p> <p>9. Prudential borrowing of £6.5m be approved to fund vehicle replacement purchases over the next three years, with members noting the borrowing repayments will be variable each year reflective of annual spending requirements, described in paragraphs 61-69 of the report and call on the MTFP outlined at paragraph 99 of the report.</p> <p>10. Prudential borrowing of £1m be approved to fund the resurfacing of Wellington Square Car Park with annual borrowing repayments of £80,000 per annum, provided for within the MTFP, and modify the pre-existing borrowing approvals accordingly.</p> <p>Taxation SBC</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>11. The Council Tax for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council prior to Parish, Fire and Police Precepts be increased by 4.95%, which includes the Government Levy of 2% in respect of Social Care, ie to £2,139.91 at Band D (£1,426.61 at Band A).</p> <p>Fire, Police & Parish</p> <p>12. The Council note the Police & Crime Commissioner is yet to set their precept for 2026/27. This information will follow for Council.</p> <p>13. The Council note the Fire Authority is yet to set their precept for 2026/27. This information will follow for Council.</p> <p>14. The Council note the Parish precepts as set out in paragraph 143 of the budget report.</p> <p>Capital</p> <p>15. The Capital Programme attached at Appendix G & H to the report be approved.</p> <p>Council Tax - Statutory Requirements</p> <p>16. Members approve the statutory requirements for Council Tax as shown in Appendix I - to follow for Council.</p> <p>17. The Council must set its Local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme annually by 11 March of the preceding financial year. Cabinet therefore recommends to Council that the current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be retained for the financial year 2026/27 incorporating the updates for the prescribed requirements in regulations and to reflect updated income figures in</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>the table at Schedule 1. The scheme is available here www.stockton.gov.uk/CTR.</p> <p>18. The Chief Finance Officer be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Transport, to make further adjustments to the income table and/or disregard additional funds should the government issue revised publications with regards to these matters after 18 February, to ensure that Government's intentions for additional support is maintained.</p> <p>Capital Strategy</p> <p>19. The Capital Strategy as set out at Appendix J of the report be approved, including the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy.</p> <p>Treasury Management/Prudential Code</p> <p>20. The Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Appendix K to the report be approved.</p> <p>Investment Strategy</p> <p>21. The Investment Strategy as set out at Appendix L to the report be approved.</p> <p>Organisational and HR</p> <p>22. The Pay Policy Statement including the pay and grading structure at Appendix M to the report be approved.</p> <p>Members Allowances</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>23. Members allowances be frozen for 2026/27. This will mean that these allowances have been frozen since 2013/14.</p> <p>Cabinet RESOLVED that:-</p> <p>24. The Fees and Charges Policy attached at Appendix C to the report be approved.</p> <p>25. Cabinet recommend to Council the estimates of income generation included within the Fees and Charges Policy.</p> <p>3. <u>Reasons for the Decision</u></p> <p>The report outlines recommendations to Cabinet in respect of Cabinet and Council decisions in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026/27 budget, MTFP and Capital Programme • Council Tax • Reserves Policy • Fees and Charges Policy • Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy, Organisational and HR, Members Allowances <p>4. <u>Alternative Options Considered and Rejected</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>5. <u>Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest</u></p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>The meeting was advised that each Cabinet Member had been granted a dispensation for a 4-year period in respect of all decisions relating to the setting of the Council Tax and precepts and Members Allowances and did not need to individually declare those interests.</p> <p>6. <u>Details of any Dispensations</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>7. <u>Date and Time by which Call In must be executed</u></p> <p>Midnight, 17 February 2026 for recommendation 24 only.</p> <p>Proper Officer</p>
A5	A Children’s Integrated Front Door for Stockton-on-Tees (Update)	<p align="center"><u>STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p align="center"><u>CABINET DECISION</u></p> <p align="center"><u>PROFORMA</u></p> <p>Cabinet Meeting 9 February 2026</p> <p>1. <u>Title of Item/Report</u></p> <p>A Children’s Integrated Front Door for Stockton-on-Tees (Update)</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>2. <u>Record of the Decision</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to a report on a Children’s Integrated Front Door for Stockton-on-Tees.</p> <p>The report provided an update on the disaggregation of the joint Children’s Hub with Hartlepool Borough Council and the development of a new Integrated Early Help and Safeguarding Front Door for Stockton-on-Tees. Rising demand, evolving national Families First reforms, and the need for a more locally responsive service had driven the decision to bring the front door inhouse from April 2026.</p> <p>The proposed model would create a single access point for early help and safeguarding, supported by multiagency triage, digital tools, and alignment with Family Hubs. The report outlined progress to date, implications for workforce, finance, and partnership working, and requested Cabinet approval to formally withdraw delegated authority from Hartlepool to enable the transition.</p> <p>A comprehensive options appraisal was undertaken with input from a range of support services to ensure all decisions were lawful, feasible, affordable, and aligned with corporate and public expectations. Following this process, an ‘Early Help Integrated Front Door’ was identified as the preferred approach because it best met statutory safeguarding duties while offering the strongest alignment with national reform priorities, local accountability, and improved outcomes through early intervention.</p> <p>Although complex to implement in the short term, this model provided enhanced</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>support for children, families, and partners, promotes financial transparency and resource efficiency, and strengthens partnership working and demand management. It represented the most suitable solution for delivering long-term improvements.</p> <p>A range of partners both statutory and non-statutory had been engaged with the process of developing the design and approach to the Children’s Front Door. The approach was endorsed by the Families First Partnership Board September 2025. Partners would continue to be engaged in the development of the front door, and the multi- agency response.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The establishment of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council’s in-house Integrated Front Door arrangements (Early Help and Safeguarding) be approved to be operational from 1 April 2026, replacing the current shared front door arrangements. 2. The Council’s delegation/arrangements for Hartlepool Borough Council to discharge the relevant front door functions on its behalf be withdrawn, with effect from 23:59 on 31 March 2026, and to confirm that the Council will resume full responsibility for delivery from 1 April 2026. 3. <u>Reasons for the Decision</u> <p>The Children’s Hub serves as the primary point of contact for anyone with concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person living in Stockton-on-Tees. The Hub is currently delivered in partnership with, and</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>managed by, Hartlepool Borough Council.</p> <p>This report asks members to note the update regarding the disaggregation of the Children’s multi-agency hub, and the commencement of a new service within Stockton-on-Tees. This change will strengthen the Council’s commitment to the Powering Our Futures Mission by enhancing service responsiveness for local communities and aligns with the Early Intervention and Prevention work programme.</p> <p>4. <u>Alternative Options Considered and Rejected</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>5. <u>Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>6. <u>Details of any Dispensations</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>7. <u>Date and Time by which Call In must be executed</u></p> <p>Midnight, 17 February 2026</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
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		Proper Officer
A6	Tenancy Policy	<p align="center"><u>STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p align="center"><u>CABINET DECISION</u></p> <p align="center"><u>PROFORMA</u></p> <p>Cabinet Meeting 9 February 2026</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Title of Item/Report</u> Tenancy Policy 2. <u>Record of the Decision</u> Consideration was given to a report on Tenancy Policy. <p>The Council completed a Large-Scale Stock Transfer (LSVT) of its councils housing stock in 2010 but retained a small number of properties (as detailed in paragraph 1 of the report). Since then these properties had been leased to a local Registered Provider, who issued Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreements when properties became available for letting. Due to recent changes in this arrangement, the Council is now responsible for issuing appropriate Tenancy Agreements to its current and new tenants. To do this the Council was required to prepare and publish a Tenancy Policy.</p> <p>A Tenancy Policy sets out the types of tenancy that a landlord would issue to its tenants and the principles and processes that will be followed in granting and</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>ending tenancies.</p> <p>A copy of the Tenancy policy was attached to the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed Tenancy Policy attached at Appendix A to the report be approved. 2. The proposed Tenancy Agreement changes for existing tenants as detailed in paragraph 9 of the report be agreed. 3. Subject to consultation with local Registered Providers as detailed in paragraphs 10 & 11 of the report, delegated authority be given to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing to make any further or necessary amendments to the Tenancy Policy. 4. Should it become necessary to amend the Tenancy Policy in response to the Renters Rights Act 2025 (as detailed in paragraph 12 of the report), delegated authority be given to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing to make any necessary amendments. <p>3. <u>Reasons for the Decision</u></p> <p>To ensure compliance with relevant legislation and provide transparency in the types of tenancy that will be offered by the Council. A Tenancy Policy will</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>support the effective use of the Council's housing stock (current and future) to address housing need across the borough.</p> <p>4. <u>Alternative Options Considered and Rejected</u> None</p> <p>5. <u>Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest</u> None</p> <p>6. <u>Details of any Dispensations</u> None</p> <p>7. <u>Date and Time by which Call In must be executed</u> Midnight, 17 February 2026</p> <p>Proper Officer</p>
A7	Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) 2025	<p align="center"><u>STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL</u></p> <p align="center"><u>CABINET DECISION</u></p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
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		<p align="center"><u>PROFORMA</u></p> <p>Cabinet Meeting 9 February 2026</p> <p>1. <u>Title of Item/Report</u></p> <p>Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) 2025</p> <p>2. <u>Record of the Decision</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to a report on the Annual report of the Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) 2025.</p> <p>The Independent Safety Advisory Group (ISAG) brought together a range of professionals to scrutinise and advise upon event safety processes and systems for outdoor events. The ISAG looked at plans for a wide range of events and festivals in Stockton on Tees, focusing on events of a significant scale or complexity. All events of scale on Stockton Council land were subject to review by the ISAG, and where requested ISAG would review event safety plans which were hosted on private land.</p> <p>The ISAG did not take decisions on whether an event should go ahead but provided specialist advice and recommended to landowners, including the Council to enable them to make informed decisions to allow an event or require changes to an event plan. The ISAG provided practical advice and guidance to event organisers and aimed to drive up the quality of event plans/safety planning.</p> <p>The ISAG’s independent Chair produced an annual report for information, to</p>
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Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>highlight significant findings and make recommendations for areas of further work.</p> <p>The full ISAG Annual Report, including an improvement plan, was attached to the report.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the ISAG's annual report 2025/26 be noted.</p> <p>3. <u>Reasons for the Decision</u></p> <p>The ISAG Chair's report is presented to Cabinet to allow them to see the level of scrutiny and challenge being brought to bear in relation to events to ensure the public are properly protected. Cabinet are also able to see and comment upon the areas of further work recommended by the ISAG in relation to safety at public events.</p> <p>4. <u>Alternative Options Considered and Rejected</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>5. <u>Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest</u></p> <p>None</p> <p>6. <u>Details of any Dispensations</u></p> <p>None</p>

Stockton on Tees Borough Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Monday 9 February 2026

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision
		<p>7. <u>Date and Time by which Call In must be executed</u></p> <p>Not applicable. For noting only.</p> <p>Proper Officer</p>
A1		
A2		