

Cabinet

A meeting of Cabinet was held on Thursday 12th March 2026.

Present: Cllr Lisa Evans (Leader), Cllr Pauline Beall (Cabinet Member), Cllr Clare Besford (Cabinet Member), Cllr Nigel Cooke (Cabinet Member), Cllr Richard Eglington (Cabinet Member), Cllr Paul Rowling (Cabinet Member) and Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Cabinet Member).

Officers: Mike Greene, Peter Bell, Adam Bateman (Adults, Health and Wellbeing), Neil Brama, Julie Butcher, Tracey Carter, Jane Edmonds, Mike Greene, Kirsty Grundy, Clare Harper, Reuben Kench, Gill McCleave, Neil Mitchell, Ged Morton, Carolyn Nice (A,H&W), Iain Robinson, Martin Skipsey, Jane Smith, Edwin Squire (Primary Headteacher Representative), Marc Stephenson and Gary Woods.

Also in attendance: Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley and Cllr Stephen Dodds.

Apologies: None.

CAB/96/25 Evacuation Procedure

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and the evacuation procedure was noted.

CAB/97/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CAB/98/25 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2026.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2026 be approved.

CAB/99/25 Scrutiny Review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service - Final Report of Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee's review of Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service.

The Care Act 2014 gave carers the same legal right to assessment and support as the person they care for. The most recent Census 2021 found that there were 5.8 million unpaid carers in the UK, with 1.7 million of these people providing 50 or more hours of care per week (Key facts and figures | Carers UK).

Carers play a substantial and vital role in meeting social care needs, with the cost of replacement care locally for Stockton-on-Tees having previously been estimated to be

around £464 million annually. From an early intervention and prevention perspective, addressing the needs of carers enables Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) to delay or possibly avert the need for complex and costly social care interventions, and by sustaining carers within their caring role, the stability of local adult health and social care services is supported. Identifying and providing support to these individuals was not just mandated by the Care Act 2014, but a sound economic and socially responsible decision (which may also prevent carers themselves needing services in their own right). Providing information, advice and support to carers ensured they promoted their own wellbeing, carer breakdown be prevented, and resilient communities are established.

The local Adult Carers Support Service was brought in-house to SBC in January 2018 and worked with adults who were providing informal care and support for adults across the Borough. Since then, the service had developed significantly, with over 5,000 referrals during this time. As of June 2025, it was working with 3,200 unpaid carers within Stockton-on-Tees, offering ongoing advice, information and support alongside statutory carers assessments, support planning, carers personal budgets, and time-out assistance. SBC were also supporting nearly 2,000 carers with a direct payment, which amounted to a projected spend of £550,000 for this provision in this financial year.

In related matters, the Adult Carers Support Service had also had some initial involvement with the transitions programme as part of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Powering Our Future (POF) initiative – a new way of operating for the Council which sought to work with partners and communities to put in place new and innovative approaches, allowing SBC to not only save money but also reshape what it does for the better, and in the best interests, of local residents.

Whilst the existing offer was considered to be effective, it was felt that it would be of benefit for the service to be scrutinised to provide assurance around its current delivery. It was hoped that this review would help highlight any gaps in the service and, in turn, help shape future developments for local provision.

The Committee took evidence from key personnel from within the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adults, Health and Wellbeing directorate, the NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB), North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT), Mobilise (an external organisation working with SBC), and Eastern Ravens Trust. In addition, the Committee considered the recently published Care Quality Commission (CQC) report following the late-2024 inspection of SBC adult social care services, as well as other Local Authority approaches / good practice in supporting carers. Committee Members also visited the LiveWell Dementia Hub to engage with staff and carers.

RESOLVED that:-

1. In terms of general Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service development, SBC should:
 - a) Ensure measures are put in place as part of the review of the Council's 'front door' to strengthen identification of carers and the promotion of the local support offer (including the Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service).
 - b) Ascertain and consider the findings from the London School of Economics and Political Science (Care Policy and Evaluation Centre) research project on what

support combinations help improve carers' lives and what works to facilitate availability of and access to this support.

c) Consider ways to increase the response rate for its annual carers consultation survey.

2. Regarding the partnership with Mobilise (the UK's digital platform for unpaid carers), SBC should:

a) Develop its own in-house digital support offer for local carers to build on / complement the services available through this external provider.

b) Ensure it has the necessary quality and performance controls in place (including the need to report on measurable targets) to monitor the effectiveness of this arrangement.

c) Seek to understand any separate arrangements that Council's outside the North East have with Mobilise and whether these enhance the offer to carers more than the ongoing partnership with the 10 North East Local Authorities.

3. In relation to the Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service 'Time Out' element, SBC should:

a) Complete an internal review of the booking system to identify ways of creating more flexibility for carers when requested a break from their caring role.

b) Consider whether it would be appropriate to introduce a standing / means-tested charge for the service to broaden this for more carers going forward, enabling greater sustainability of its provision and importance (as identified via the LGA Peer Assurance Challenge of SBC Adult Social Care in July 2024).

4. Promotion of the Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service offer to young carers should be strengthened so they are more informed about the support available to them when they reach 18.

5. Consideration should be given to the ways in which the Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service can build on what appeals to young carers when they approach / reach 18 so they are more compelled to seek support in their caring role when they become young adults.

6. The new carers awareness e-learning module be rolled out to SBC staff, Members and external partners.

7. SBC further considers how the local support offer for carers can be promoted within the wider health system (including general practices and community settings).

8. SBC provides a response to the Committee on the carer-related commentary included within the Care Quality Commission (CQC) final report on SBC adult social care (published in October 2025).

CAB/100/25 Adult Social Care Strategy 2026-2030

Consideration was given to a report on the Adult Social Care Strategy 2026-2030.

The current Adult Social Care Strategy ran from 2021-25 and provided the Council and the public with a clear set of priorities. Having a strong understanding local needs for care and support was a key requirement of the local authority Care Quality Commission (CQC) assurance framework, so having a new set of priorities from 2026

was agreed as essential to support the next phase in the Council's journey to meet the evolving needs of the local population.

The draft Adult Social Care Strategy 2026-30 was developed in partnership with the MIRB.

The plan was originally developed in late spring 2025 in collaboration with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) who supported the Council in engaging with citizens and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups to understand what they believed the priorities for Adult Social Care should be over the next 4 years.

Working with the MIRB, this information was reviewed and a set of key priorities developed along with an intentionally slimmed down strategy, acknowledging the Adult Social Care Strategy's place alongside the Stockton on Tees Plan 2024 and Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030. The approved draft version was shared with key partners during November / December 2025 to gather their views. Engagement included VCSE providers (through a direct Catalyst mailshot and discussions with key partners at the Health and Wellbeing Forum), Healthwatch, NHS partners (North Tees Hospital, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust) and social care providers.

Based on this feedback, a revised version was developed and shared at Adult Social Care Senior Management Team and Corporate Management Team for agreement.

RESOLVED that the final version of the Strategy be endorsed and the further work that will be progressed to develop accessible formats with support from the Making it Real Board (MIRB) be noted.

CAB/101/25 Levelling Up Fund - Yarm Public Realm

Consideration was given to a report that provided a progress update on the Round 1 Levelling Up Fund programme of interventions along with a summary of the public engagement undertaken to inform whether the Council should proceed with the Yarm High Street public realm proposals as presented to the public in May 2025. In response to the majority 'no' vote that was received, the report sets out a series of options to inform a decision on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget for Yarm High Street.

The report provided a summary update of all Levelling Up Fund (LUF) interventions before focusing specifically upon the Yarm High Street public realm element of the programme.

The approved LUF programme was developed in response to the publication of LUF Round 1 application in 2021 with the objectives of delivering major proposals in Yarm and Eaglescliffe under the priority themes of Transport, Culture and Town Centre Regeneration.

The bid focussed on delivery of improvements to cultural facilities in, and enhancements to, Preston Park Museum and Grounds (PPMG), redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall and public realm enhancements on Yarm High Street and delivery of cycleway connections in Yarm and Eaglescliffe.

In March 2023, Cabinet noted that work had been underway to develop a greater level of understanding on the scope, cost and deliverability of the agreed interventions and approved a funding profile to reflect the proposed interventions across Yarm High Street, PPMG and Cycleway infrastructure.

Since then, work had been underway to deliver a range of interventions at PPMG, with completion of the Spence Building in September 2025, a remodelled cafe and new toilets, additional parking and improvements to the Aviary and playground. A planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of South Lodge was submitted in January 2026.

Work to create an improved cycle link along Durham Lane to connect key employment sites and surrounding residential areas commenced in January 2026 and were on programme to complete in September 2026. The route would be comprised of segregated cycle routes, shared route, and new crossing facilities between Elton Interchange and Cleasby Way junction, extending to the new western access to Eaglescliffe Station.

The programme of works for Yarm High Street, as set out in the LUF Round 1 bid was focussed on a public realm scheme and the redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, in partnership with Yarm Town Council, to bring the building back into use as visitor attraction and to replace the public toilets that were displaced because of the works. The redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall was completed in September 2023 and new public toilets, located at Yarm Library opened in November 2022.

To help shape the public realm element of the High Street intervention and to gain insights into understand local priorities and opportunities, two periods of public consultation were undertaken in 2022.

The first period of consultation was undertaken in August 2022, for a period of three weeks. The consultation was promoted widely on social media and local media. Staffed engagement events were held in Yarm Library, and an online consultation form was available on the Council's website.

The results, published in October 2022, demonstrated that the top five improvements identified were: improving footpaths, reducing street clutter, adding more planting, improving connections and accessibility to the River Tees and providing more seating and places to rest. The findings from the initial public consultation were analysed and used to shape and develop a package of concept designs for Yarm High Street.

Concept designs were presented for a second round of consultation in December 2022 for a period of 4 weeks. Consultation provided the opportunity for members of the public to share their views through in-person consultation events held in Yarm Library and an online consultation form.

The proposals included new paving along the High Street, new landscaping, seating areas and improved public spaces, de-cluttering of pavements, new cycle parking as well as potential enhancements to the River Tees and Snaiths Field Playground.

The results published in January 2023 showed that 69 per cent of respondents agreed that the locations of proposed works were in the most appropriate places on the High Street, 64 per cent of respondents agreed that the proposals identified the right mix

and type of improvements and 53 per cent of respondents said they would be accepting of the small loss of some parking spaces to deliver the scheme.

In response to public feedback received at this stage, which identified that enhancing spaces beyond Yarm High Street was a local priority, schemes to improve connections to and along the River Tees and upgrading the existing playground at Snaith's Field were developed.

The first phase of works focused on resurfacing the existing footpath and repairing root damage along True Lovers Walk, which were completed in September 2025, successfully improving access along walkways.

In response to feedback received, the scope of improvements to True Lovers Walk was broadened to consider two existing fishing pontoons located along the route.

A visual ground-level inspection of the pontoons was undertaken in autumn 2024, which found the pontoons to be in poor condition and their structural integrity compromised. Both structures were subsequently closed to the public.

Following the inspections an officer recommendation to remove the existing pontoons emerged, on the basis that their deteriorating condition, public safety concerns, ongoing maintenance and unknown structural defects below the water line made the pontoons a financial and legal liability to the Council. The cost for removing both pontoons was estimated at approximately £20,000.

Works to upgrade Snaith's Field playground were completed in October 2025. The installation of new play equipment, provision of new seating and resurfacing works to the existing footpath have made the location more accessible, which has been well received by users of the park.

In May 2025, proposals for a series of improvements to the public spaces on Yarm High Street, developed in response to the two periods of public consultation were presented.

Following publication of the scheme in May 2025 some concerns were raised regarding the appearance of the proposed planters and a revised design was undertaken to incorporate a more subtle and refined finish to the planter material, in keeping with the character of the High Street. Furthermore, a commitment was made at Cabinet in July 2025 to assess the cost of re-providing pontoons in the current locations.

Despite these refinements to the scheme, a variety of representations were made to the Council throughout summer and autumn of 2025 in opposition to the proposed scheme, culminating in an instruction to pause the planned start of works whilst further public engagement took place to make sure any interventions reflected local views.

Local people were invited to share their views on the proposed improvements to Yarm High Street over a 4-week period ending in early January 2026 under the banner of 'Yarm High Street - You Decide'. In-person engagement events were held in Yarm Library as well as an online form that was available on the Council's website.

The purpose of the engagement was to understand public views on whether the Council should proceed with the proposed scheme and from the 1,564 responses

received, results showed that 225 (14 per cent) respondents agreed that Yes - the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed whilst 1339 (86 per cent) people expressed a view that No – the Council should not proceed with the scheme as proposed.

A full summary of the engagement results was attached to the report.

As the recent engagement process produced an 86 per cent 'No' response as to whether the Council should proceed with the scheme as proposed, a decision was sought on next steps for use of the remaining approved budget.

As per the report to Cabinet in March 2023, the approved budget for the Yarm High Street element of the LUF programme was £4,600,000 to support interventions including a public realm scheme, redevelopment of Yarm Town Hall, relocation of public toilets, improvements to Snaiths Field and enhanced access to the River Tees.

The £4.6m was made up of £1m Council funding (from the previously approved £3million from the MTFP in 2020/21 for investment in interventions in Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm), £3.5m LUF and £100k Yarm Town Council funding. To date c.£2.25m had been spent or committed leaving a balance of c.£2.35m made up of c.£950k Council co-funding and c.£1.4m LUF.

The Levelling Up Fund was administered opposite MHCLG under the Government's Regeneration Funding Simplification Programme – Local Regeneration Fund (LRF).

The Local Regeneration Fund simplified capital funding by consolidating the Levelling Up Fund, Town Deals, Future High Streets Fund and Pathfinders Pilot into a single funding pot. The LRF programme attempted to provide a greater flexibility and allow for more local control, enabling local authorities to make decisions about moving funding between projects, cancelling and creating new projects.

Taking the flexibilities afforded by the Local Regeneration Fund into account, alongside the remaining c.£2.35m budget, a range of uses for the funding could be considered. The make-up of the remaining budget (LUF and SBC funding) allowed for potentially more than one alternative use as the remaining budget could be considered as a single sum or separate budget strands by funding source.

To aid deliberation on potential next steps, a range of alternative courses of action are set out below. The options were by no means exhaustive, rather an attempt to categorise the potential alternatives within the existing LRF remit, options outside of the LRF remit and potential to split the funding by source.

Retain Funding in Yarm High Street / LUF Round 1 boundary

- Remove Council co-funding into Council reserves (£950k)
- Develop alternative scheme on Yarm High Street.
- Develop alternative scheme in Yarm and Eaglescliffe area.
- Utilise LUF to offset borrowing (approved at Council in February 2025) c£950k to deliver Aviary, Stockton & Darlington Railway heritage feature and Central Area.
- Explore increased scope of interventions in PPMG beyond planned programme.
- Retain LUF money (c£1.4m) for alternative scheme in Yarm and Eaglescliffe area (including High Street)

Reallocate some or all funding from Yarm / LUF Round 1 boundary to interventions across the Borough

- Remove Council co-funding into Council reserves
- Hold LUF funding for a period of time as contingency across LRF programme.
- Identify and develop a new project to allocate some or all LUF funding.
- Allocate to an existing project elsewhere in the Borough

Following the commitment to revisit the principle of removing the fishing pontoons, made at Cabinet in July 2025, further evaluation, including a dive inspection, had since been undertaken to establish the cost and deliverability of removing and replacing the two existing wooden pontoons.

The estimated cost of removing the existing pontoons and replacing with a modern standard, similar sized structure using composite and steel materials to provide improved durability and a longer service life would be approximately £135,000.

A decision on replacing the pontoons would be subject to securing the necessary permits and consents along with a detailed risk assessment to ensure they meet the Council's statutory duties and are safe for public use.

Cabinet was asked to consider whether to proceed with the removal of the pontoons only, or the removal and installation of new pontoons.

Given the condition of the pontoons, in either scenario they must be removed which was estimated at £20,000. The cost of removal and installation of the pontoons, if instructed, would be deducted from the remaining allocated funding of £2.35m as set out in paragraph 28 of the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The findings of the public engagement undertaken in relation to the Yarm High Street public realm scheme be noted.
2. With regard to the £2.35m remaining funds from the allocated budget for Yarm High Street:-
 - a) The £950,000 of SBC co-funding be returned to support the Council's MTFP and financial position.
 - b) £950,000 of the remaining LUF funding be used to repay the borrowing associated with the additional expenditure at Preston Park Museum.
 - c) The remaining £450,000 LUF funding be committed in the Yarm area.
 - d) Delegated Authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to produce a shortlist of possible projects that could be achieved with the remaining budget of £450,000 and then engage with the residents and businesses of Yarm for their priorities. The list is to include the costs of each item on the list and to include the consideration of the replacement of the pontoons, to enable residents and businesses to consider the value for money and extent of the works available when providing their priorities.

CAB/102/25 Accelerating affordable housing delivery ('A quality home for all') - update

Consideration was given to a report on accelerating affordable housing delivery ('A quality home for all').

A previous report presented to Cabinet on the 12 June 2025 outlined that the Council, like most local authorities continued to experience an increased demand for affordable housing (both sale and rent). This increase, set against a background of limited supply, was placing growing pressure on the Council's ability to prevent homelessness and support vulnerable adults and care leavers access independent accommodation.

To respond to these challenges, Cabinet agreed to adopt a 'Hybrid Delivery Model' to increase affordable housing supply whereby each potential development site (as it comes forward) was assessed against 3 delivery routes - Enabling, Direct Delivery or a Partnership Structure and approved 'in principle' to a small number of housing sites for affordable housing provision.

Following the assessment of the Raleigh Road site against the 3 delivery options, Cabinet was asked to approve the disposal of this site to North Star Housing Group to facilitate the delivery of social rented housing.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The direct award of the disposal of the Raleigh Road site to North Star Housing Group for the development of affordable social housing (as outlined in paragraphs 1 to 7 of the report) be approved.
2. The progress made on the other smaller sites identified in the 12th June 2025 Cabinet report, in relation to bringing each forward for affordable housing provision be noted (as outlined in paragraphs 8 to 10 of the report).
3. Following the conclusion of the competitive procurement exercise for the three smaller vacant sites (as detailed in paragraph 10 of the report) that the decision to proceed with a site disposal of each site to a Registered Provider for the provision of affordable housing, with a housing mix that reflects the Boroughs identified housing needs be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration.

CAB/103/25 Revisions to the Council's Constitution

Consideration was given to a report on revisions to the Council's Constitution.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The wording within the Council's Constitution be amended to be clear and consistent that if there are over 1000 signatures on a petition, then referral to Council is automatic and that only final responses, not all correspondence, will be published.
2. The Council's Constitution specifies that electronic petitions are only accepted via the Modern.Gov platform to enable the Council to set the parameters of the petition (i.e. that the petition can only be signed by a person if they live, work or study in the Borough).

3. The Council's Constitution be amended to extend the composition of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee to include the Group Leader and Deputy Group Leader of each political party on the Council (where they are not already a member of the Forum in another role).

CAB/104/25 Council Motion - Flying the Union Flag

Consideration was given to a report that requested Cabinet review the Council's Flag Flying Policy following approval of the Council motion to fly the Union Flag on Council premises and consideration by Members' Advisory Panel.

Members' Advisory Panel acknowledged the significant costs that would be involved with installing external flagpoles in new locations, including the site surveys that would be required even before a final decision was made. The Panel also noted that in several of the potential new locations, flags were already being flown in the vicinity by local Town Councils.

The Panel felt that a better solution to implementing the Council motion would be to fly the Union Flag internally in reception areas at the list of public facing buildings referred to in the appendix to the report, which included libraries and customer service centres across the Borough.

RESOLVED that the Council's existing flag flying policy be endorsed with an addendum that the Union Flag be flown internally in reception areas at public facing buildings (including libraries and customer service centres) across the Borough.

CAB/105/25 Council Motion - Livestreaming Meetings

Consideration was given to a report that requested Cabinet approve proposals for the livestreaming and recording of meetings following the Council motion to livestream all Council meetings and consideration of implementation details by Members' Advisory Panel.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposals for the livestreaming and recording of meetings, and associated expenditure, set out in report and protocol be approved.
2. Meetings held outside of the Dunedin Council Chamber should not be livestreamed.
3. Officers look into the feasibility of holding Annual Council meetings in the Dunedin Council Chamber and consider bringing a further report to Members.
4. Photographs of past Mayors and Aldermen be displayed digitally on a television screen in the Civic Reception area and that this television to have the ability to display the livestreams of Council meetings as they are taking place.

CAB/106/25 Social Value Annual Report

Consideration was given to a report that presented the Social Value Annual Report, detailing the progress achieved in advancing the Council's Social Value Policy during 2025 and outlining planned developments for 2026/27.

Cabinet approved the Social Value Policy in March 2023, and the annual report at Annex 1 of the report provided an update on the social value delivered during 2025. It included case studies illustrating the range and impact of outcomes achieved, along with statistical information on the associated financial proxy value.

Since last year's report, the Council's approach to social value continued to develop, including:

- The appointment of a dedicated Social Value Officer,
- A refresh of the Themes Outcomes Measures (TOMs) that are used to measure social value and the associated financial proxy values,
- Alignment of the refreshed TOMs to the Stockton on Tees Plan,
- Updates to the Social Value Calculators and dashboards used during the procurement process,
- Closer work with Catalyst to ensure the VCSE sector benefits from social value commitments,
- Initial work to explore how social value commitments made in Section 106 Agreements and Development Agreements can be captured and reported, and
- Networking with various community organisations/ VCSE organisations to understand how social value can help them
- Working both regionally and sub-regionally to share good practice and approaches to social value.

Work planned for 2026/27 included:

- Work with Catalyst to develop a unified Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value Framework to ensure a consistent, strategic approach to allocating social value contributions and CSR-related financial donations from local businesses,
- Continue to develop processes to monitor and capture social value commitments made through Section 106 Agreements and Development Agreements,
- Identify other contract opportunities to include social value.
- Use social value case studies in press releases to demonstrate how suppliers, providers and contractors contribute to the borough through their social value commitments.

The next steps would be as follows:-

- Continue the development of the Council's approach to Social Value and Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Continue to monitor the financial proxy values of social value.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Social Value Annual Report (Annex 1 of the report) be noted.
2. The work undertaken during 2025/26 and the planned work in 2026/27 be noted.

CAB/107/25 Annual Procurement Plan/Higher Value Contracts

Consideration was given to a report on Annual Procurement Plan/Higher Value Contracts.

The report sought approval from Cabinet for the award of planned higher value contracts where the value exceeds the limit on officer delegated authority and which are either funded within the approved MTFP / Capital Programme or were subject to a bid for external funding.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contracts listed in Annex 1 of the report be approved.
2. Authority be given to the relevant Director or Assistant Director to make the specific contract award decision and any subsequent contract variation, annual inflationary uplifts (where allowed in the contract terms and conditions) and extension decision in accordance with the delegations listed in Annex 1 of the report.

CAB/108/25 Minutes of Various Bodies

In accordance with the Council's Constitution or previous practice the minutes of the meeting of the bodies indicated below were submitted to members for consideration:-

TSAB – 8 October 2025
SSP – 26 November 2025
TVCA Cabinet – 30 January 2026

RESOLVED that the above minutes be received.

CAB/109/25 Child Poverty (2025 update report)

Consideration was given to a report on Child Poverty (2025 update report).

Appendix A of the report outlined the progress made by the Council and its partners during 2025 to alleviate child poverty across the Borough.

Following the recent publication of the Government's national child poverty strategy, 'Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty' (December 2025) the report also highlighted examples of actions taken by the Council which support this national agenda.

The Stockton-on-Tees Child Poverty Network continued to meet quarterly, bringing together external partners, including Family Action, SDAIS and Moneywise, with Council service leads to discuss the key issues children and families living in poverty were experiencing across our Borough. This was a collaborative group that worked to find solutions to these issues and improve the lives of children and young people.

Appendix A of the report provided details of key achievements; however notable examples included:

- Delivery of the Free School Meals Auto-enrolment project, resulting in almost 400 children being registered and an increase of almost £500,000 in pupil premium.
- Implementation of a year-round offer for residents to obtain free pre-loved uniform from any of the borough's Family Hubs.

- 10,286 children/young people attended the borough's Holidays Are Fun Activity Programme (which provides healthy meals, enrichment activities and free childcare places to children from low-income families).
- Targeted work undertaken in North Thornaby as part of the wider Early Intervention and Prevention project.
- Direct support to families at key points in the year – for example, through the Back to School Campaign & the Second Dance Prom Project, helping to ease family financial pressures associated with children returning to school and the costs of prom season.

Next steps would include:-

- Using the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) to deliver rapid, preventative, and targeted support to households, particularly families with children, at risk of financial crisis.
- Targeting eligible families with children to help them access the Warm Homes Discount scheme and signposting them to help maximise their incomes.
- Supporting primary schools with the rollout of free breakfast clubs.
- Promoting the changes to free school meal eligibility to schools, parents/carers and undertake the Council's third auto-enrolment project.
- Continuing to support young people and families to access free uniform and prom outfits.
- Providing targeted intervention and events to support families most in need.

RESOLVED that the report and actions taken to addressing and alleviating child poverty during 2025 be noted.

CAB/110/25 Procedure for admission of pupils to Primary & Secondary schools in September 2027

Consideration was given to a report on the procedure for admission of pupils to Primary & Secondary schools in September 2027.

The report outlined the admission arrangements the Local Authority (LA) was proposing, for entry into both primary (Reception) and secondary (Year 7) schools in September 2027. To comply with legislation for admission in September 2027, the report included the co-ordinated timetable, the Published Admission Number (PAN) for all Primary and Secondary Schools for that year and the LA's proposed Admission Policy (Oversubscription Policy) for Community maintained and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools for entry in September 2027.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposed Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for Primary, Secondary, Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, Academies and Free School (points 4-5 and Appendix 1 of the report) be agreed.

2. The proposed PANs for Primary and Secondary schools for September 2027 (points 6-8 and Appendix 2 of the report) be agreed.

3. The proposed Admission Policy for September 2027 (point 9-11 and Appendix 3 of the report) be agreed.

CAB/111/25 School Performance 2024 – 2025 for Vulnerable Pupils

Consideration was given to a report on School Performance 2024 – 2025 for Vulnerable Pupils.

The report presented a summary analysis of vulnerable pupil performance in the academic year 2024-2025 for all key stages and all providers in the Borough. It was informed by the latest available data, some of which remained unvalidated and compared to national and regional averages where they existed. It included performance outcomes for:

1. Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding.
2. Performance by gender.
3. Performance by ethnicity.
4. Children and Young People in Our Care.
5. Children with a Social Worker.
6. Children with Special Needs.
7. Children from Service Families.
8. Attendance and exclusion figures for Stockton.

Strong attainment outcomes for vulnerable pupils were achieved in Stockton-on-Tees despite significant underlying structural inequalities.

In interpreting the performance of vulnerable groups, it was important to acknowledge that the Borough continued to experience some of the most pronounced neighbourhood-level inequalities in the country, which was often masked by Borough-wide averages. These inequalities intersect with the wider system challenges highlighted through work on Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP), which identified an estimated 2,205 adults experiencing Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD) locally each year.

Many of the vulnerabilities seen among children and young people such as suspensions, poor attendance, SEND, social care involvement and unstable housing were understood to be early indicators of future risk, underlining the critical importance of whole-family, place-based and early intervention approaches.

Together with partners, the Council was working to strengthen the collective system response by removing organisational boundaries, improving multiagency data sharing, aligning resources, and building a shared “One Voice” approach around prevention.

This strategic alignment ensured that work to improve educational outcomes was supported by wider efforts to address the root causes of inequality, stabilise families experiencing complex lives, and create the conditions for long-term positive change.

Key Headlines included:-

- Overall attainment for vulnerable groups shows positive direction of travel, with notable improvements for disadvantaged pupils, girls, non white pupils, and pupils with SEND.
- Stockton frequently outperforms national benchmarks across multiple groups and all key stages.
- Gender outcomes are strong, with both boys and girls performing well compared with national figures and holding high regional rankings.
- Children in Our Care achieve well, especially at EYFS and KS4, supported by strong partnership work from the Virtual School.
- Children with a Social Worker show improving trends in key areas including suspensions and attendance.
- SEND outcomes at KS2 and KS4 have strengthened, both for pupils with EHCPs and for those receiving SEN Support.
- Exclusions practice is increasingly effective, with no permanent exclusions in special schools and several exclusions prevented through early intervention and challenge.
- Attendance work is having measurable impact, with primary and special school attendance performing better than national/regional levels and secondary attendance improving. However, PRU attendance is a significant concern, with very high persistent and severe absence.
- Suspensions and attendance challenges continue for Children in Our Care and for Children with a Social Worker.
- Early Years outcomes for children with SEND remain below national, despite progress elsewhere.
- Permanent exclusions remain too high, especially in KS3, and numbers have increased slightly overall.
- Access to specialist services (e.g., EP and Speech & Language) remains a barrier for some groups.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CAB/112/25 Stockton-on-Tees Best Start in Life Plan 2026-2031

Consideration was given to a report on the Stockton-on-Tees Best Start in Life Plan 2026-2031.

The report provided an overview of the Stockton-on-Tees Best Start in Life Plan 2026–2031. The plan set out the Borough’s vision, strategic priorities and commitments for improving outcomes in the earliest years of a child’s life spanning pregnancy to age five.

As part of national policy direction, Stockton-on-Tees had been set ambitious targets by Government for the proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of reception. By the 2027/28 academic year, at least 78.5% of children were expected to achieve a GLD, with a specific target of 63.1% for children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). For context, in 2024/25, 69.6% of children in Stockton-on-Tees achieved a GLD, compared with 53.8% of children eligible for FSM. The Best Start in Life plan aimed to align and mobilise collective resources to support progress toward these targets, which would serve as core metrics for monitoring performance and assessing impact over the lifetime of the plan.

The Stockton-on-Tees Best Start plan identified five strategic priorities:

- Foundations for a Healthy Childhood – supporting healthy routines, nutrition, immunisation, physical activity and home safety.
- Home Learning and Play – supporting parents to integrate play, talk and learning into daily life.
- Speech, Language and Communication – promoting early communication skills and streamlining pathways for additional support.
- High Quality Early Years Education – ensuring access to high quality provision, inclusive practice and sufficient childcare places.
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing – supporting secure parent child relationships, early identification of needs and access to appropriate programmes.

To support delivery, each priority had a named lead and a multi-agency working group responsible for driving actions forward and ensuring progress was monitored effectively. The development of the Best Start Family Hub a requirement of DfE Best Start funding was a central component in delivering the plan and had its own multi agency working group.

SBC Communications Team were leading on the design and formatting of the plan, which had been produced in accordance with the Council's policy and standards for the publication of strategies.

As part of the terms of the Best Start Grant, the plan must be published on the SBC website by 31st March 2026 in line with DfE requirements, and this included adherence to the national 'Best Start' branding.

An annual delivery plan would outline how partners across the local system would implement the priorities set out in this strategy, including the key milestones, actions and performance measures required to monitor progress and impact. The delivery plan would be overseen and coordinated by the Best Start Strategic Group with regular reporting to the Families First Partnership Board and Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED that the Stockton-on-Tees Best Start in Life Plan 2026 – 2031 be approved.

CAB/113/25 Local Authority School Governor Appointment

Consideration was given to a report on Local Authority School Governor Appointment.

There was a vacancy to be filled for a Local Authority governor at Bowesfield Primary School.

Cllr Sufi Mubeen was considered for the position.

Criteria:

- Knowledge of the local community
- Commitment to Education.

RESOLVED that Cllr Sufi Mubeen be appointed Local Authority governor for Bowesfield Primary School.

CAB/114/25 Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Strategy (ES&CRS) 2022-32 Annual Monitoring Report

Consideration was given to a report on the Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction Strategy (ES&CRS) 2022-32 Annual Monitoring Report.

Climate change poses a real threat to society and biodiversity. There were already increasing impacts of flooding, high winds, heat waves, significant wildfires and species collapse. To limit climate change there needed to be a reduction in carbon emissions building on the work already achieved.

Local authorities were increasingly expected to play a central role in responding to climate change but were often constrained by severe resource limitations. Given current financial pressures, the Council simply not able to take on the full breadth of climate related responsibilities that national policy sometimes assumes.

However, the reality was that significant and potentially dangerous changes in weather patterns were already locked in due to existing global emissions. These impacts more frequent extreme heat, flooding, coastal surges, and storm events would continue to intensify over the coming years.

As a local authority, the Council had a statutory and moral duty to protect residents, safeguard essential services, and maintain the conditions for local economic activity. This meant that, irrespective of the capacity to act on mitigation measures, the Council would inevitably be required to strengthen the resilience of the local infrastructure.

Therefore, the focus in the coming years must shift toward:

- Prioritising climate adaptation and resilience, recognising that these measures will be essential to keep people safe and services functioning.
- Investing in the robustness of critical systems—transport, energy, water, digital connectivity—even where funding is limited, by embedding resilience into every decision, project, and procurement opportunity.
- Advocating for the necessary resources, so that local authorities are properly equipped to meet the challenges that are already unfolding.

Climate change was no longer a distant threat it was a present and escalating risk. The primary responsibility was to ensure communities could withstand the impacts that were already inevitable.

Stockton Council's Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy (ES&CRS), adopted in 2022 set out the direction needed and described the actions that would contribute to the achievement of net zero.

The Council had made significant progress within the resources available, achieving a steady decline in carbon emissions over a long period. However, substantial additional investment would be required in the coming years if the Council would remain on target for Net Zero by 2032.

Continued concentration on measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions from assets and fleet, were an urgent priority, alongside investing in solar energy generation and counterbalancing natural solutions.

RESOLVED that the annual monitoring report be noted.

CAB/115/25 Resolution to exclude the public from the meeting for part of agenda item - Making New Public Space Protection Orders for Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre (2026-2029)

RESOLVED that:-

1. To exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during the consideration of Pack 3 and the Exempt Appendix to the report on Making New Public Space Protection Orders for Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre 2026-2029 due to the likelihood that if members of the public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information and

2. The information is exempt information because it is

- a. information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- b. information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) or
- c. information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings under Paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972 and

3. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

CAB/116/25 Making New Public Space Protection Orders for Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre (2026-2029)

Consideration was given to a report on making new Public Space Protection Orders for Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre (2026-2029).

In Spring 2025, the Community Safety Select Committee published Scrutiny Review of Welcoming and Safe Town Centres, stating that as Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council redevelops its town centres, safe and welcoming spaces remain essential. The introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in 2023 for selected zones in Stockton and Norton was highlighted as a key step towards these goals. The Committee recommended evaluating the 2023 Orders, including their principles, implementation, and resourcing.

PSPOs help prevent anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public areas and were widely used across England and Wales. The existing Public Spaces Protection Order for both Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre would expire at midnight on 2 April 2026.

The report sought Cabinet approval to make new PSPOs for these areas for the period 2026–2029. In determining whether to make new Orders, Cabinet must be satisfied that the statutory conditions in section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 were met on the evidence presented. The making of a PSPO was a fresh statutory decision and there was no presumption of continuation when an Order expires.

In Stockton, proposed restrictions included failure to comply with a requirement not to consume alcohol or to surrender alcohol (commonly referred to as street drinking controls), begging, anti-social loitering, anti-social driving / vehicle use, public urination/defecation, dogs off-lead, and dog fouling. Requirements also mandate moving temporary structures, providing personal details to officers if breaching the Order or causing ASB, and leaving the area when directed. Norton's proposed conditions included street drinking controls, begging, ASB loitering, and anti-social vehicle use, with similar requirements for providing details and vacating the area when instructed.

The report offered Cabinet the context needed to decide on the next steps for the PSPOs in both Stockton Town Centre and Norton.

A substantial and diverse body of evidence had been gathered from frontline council services, local businesses, partner agencies, cultural and faith organisations, and the police. This material indicated that a range of behaviours including but not limited to street drinking, begging, anti-social loitering, intimidation, vehicle-related disorder, drug- and alcohol-related nuisance, urination and defecation in public spaces, temporary structures associated with ASB, and irresponsible dog control continue to occur within defined areas of Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre.

These behaviours were consistently reported across independent sources as having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of residents, businesses, staff, visitors and vulnerable groups, and were described as persistent, recurring, and unreasonable in their impact. Evidence highlighted obstruction and intimidation of the public, harm to business operation and customer confidence, degradation of the public realm, environmental health issues, and reduced feelings of safety particularly among families, older people and those using key transport routes or community facilities. Public consultation results further demonstrated strong community support for proportionate measures to address these issues.

It remained for Cabinet, as the statutory decision-maker, to consider this evidence in the round and determine whether it was satisfied on reasonable grounds that the legal tests in section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 were met, and that the proposed restrictions were necessary and proportionate at this time

For transparency and to support Cabinet in applying the statutory tests in section 59, the evidence base had been organised into three Evidence Packs as follows:-

- Pack 1 contains representations from statutory consultees;
- Pack 2 contains evidence from relevant Council services; and
- Pack 3 contains representations from external consultees including businesses, community organisations and civic partners.

Cabinet had noted that Pack 3 contained sensitive and commercially confidential information relating to businesses and other organisations who have contributed their views and is therefore recommended for consideration as exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The contents of the report and the considerations relevant to the making of new Public Spaces Protection Orders for Stockton Town Centre and Norton Town Centre from 3 April 2026 be noted.

2. Having considered the evidence and applying the statutory tests in section 59 of the Anti social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Cabinet was satisfied on reasonable grounds that the legal conditions for making a new Public Spaces Protection Order were met and therefore approval was given to the making of the proposed Orders for (i) Stockton Town Centre (2026–2029) and (ii) Norton Town Centre (2026–2029).

3. Fixed penalty notice rate be set at £100.00 for breaches of the new Orders, consistent with current arrangements.

4. Delegate authority be given to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing and the Director of Corporate Services to make such minor drafting, typographical, formatting, mapping, cross-referencing or other consequential amendments to the approved Orders as are necessary prior to making them, provided that such amendments do not alter the substance, scope, or effect of any prohibition, requirement, or restricted area approved by Cabinet.