

Health & Wellbeing Board

A meeting of Health & Wellbeing Board was held on Wednesday 17th December 2025.

Present: Cllr Lisa Evans (Chair), Sarah Bowman-Abouna, Fiona Adamson, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Clare Besford, Natasha Douglas (Sub for Peter Smith), Karen Hawkins, Cllr Shakeel Hussain (Sub for Cllr Lynn Hall), Majella McCarthy, Cllr Jack Miller, Lucy Owens and Jamie Todd

Officers: Michael Henderson, Yvonne Cheung, Steve Errington, Stacie Thursby and Sidney Wong (Adults, Health and Wellbeing)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Tracey Carter, Cllr Lynn Hall, Diane Monkhouse, Carolyn Nice, Peter Smith and Matt Storey

HWB/25/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure and housekeeping arrangements for the Council Chamber were noted.

HWB/26/25 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

HWB/27/25 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 29 September 2025 and 24 October 2025 be approved as a correct record.

HWB/28/25 Better Care Fund

The Board considered a report providing an update on the submission of the Stockton-on-Tees Better Care Fund (BCF) Quarter 2 2025/26 return to NHS England.

Members were advised that the Quarter 2 return had been completed in collaboration with system partners, endorsed by the Better Care Fund Assurance Group and formally approved by the Pooled Budget Partnership Board. The return was submitted to NHS England on 11 November 2025 in line with national reporting requirements. The report confirmed compliance with the four national BCF conditions and provided an overview of income, expenditure and activity for Quarter 2.

The Board was informed of progress against the four national BCF metrics. Performance on discharge on the Discharge Ready Date and delayed discharge days was reported as broadly on track and performing better than regional and national comparators. Performance on reducing non-elective admissions for people aged 65+ was slightly below plan, while admissions to long-term residential and nursing care were reported as above the planned level, reflecting increased acuity and complexity of need.

Key points raised in discussion:

Members noted that delivery of some schemes remained challenging and would be kept under review.

The Board discussed pressure relating to delayed discharge.

It was recognised that performance on discharge was influenced by wider system pressures, including workforce capacity and acute demand, and that progress would be dependent on addressing these pressures collectively.

Members noted the positive benefits of collaborative system working.

The Board discussed the challenges associated with rising complexity of need and carer breakdown, and the impact this had on long-term care admissions.

Assurance was provided regarding the actions in place to mitigate pressures, including reablement, additional therapy support and continued focus on Home First approaches.

RESOLVED that: the submission of the Stockton-on-Tees Better Care Fund Quarter 2 2025/26 report to NHS England be acknowledged.

HWB/29/25 Director of Public Health - Annual Report

The Board received the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2025, entitled Building Healthy Communities – Connecting People and Place.

The report focused on the importance of placing communities at the heart of efforts to shape healthy places and reduce health inequalities. It highlighted how health and wellbeing are influenced by both physical environments and the communities people identify with and set out a community-centred public health approach to improving outcomes across the Borough.

The report reviewed progress against the recommendations of the 2024 Director of Public Health Annual Report and outlined examples of local work already underway, including community wellbeing champions, peer advocacy, neighbourhood health pilots and the integration of health considerations into planning processes. A series of proposed actions were identified to further embed health creation, address inequalities and strengthen community-centred approaches across the system.

Key points raised in discussion:

Members welcomed the strong emphasis on community-centred approaches and the clear links to the priorities within the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Board noted the importance of partnership working across the Council, the NHS and the voluntary and community sector in addressing the wider determinants of health.

The proposed actions were supported as a practical framework for taking the work forward.

RESOLVED that the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2025 be noted and the proposed actions supported.

HWB/30/25 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Board considered a report and presentation relating to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2030.

Members were reminded that the Strategy set out the collective priorities and goals for improving health and wellbeing and addressing inequalities across Stockton-on-Tees. The Strategy was underpinned by a set of shared principles for working together, including Health in All Policies, prevention and early intervention, levelling the playing field and a place-based approach.

Key points raised in discussion:

Members emphasised the importance of translating the Strategy into clear actions, measures and accountability through the associated action plan and monitoring framework.

Members provided feedback on the draft Strategy and welcomed the significant amount of positive work already taking place across the Borough to support health and wellbeing. It was recognised that much good work was underway, but that this was not always visible or well understood.

The Board discussed the importance of the Strategy being accessible and clearly communicated. Members supported the development of a two-page, easy-read version of the Strategy, alongside the full document, and noted that short videos were also being developed to support engagement, particularly with younger people.

It was suggested that the Strategy should be supported by a clear web presence, explaining what partners were doing, how residents could get involved and how the Strategy translated into practical action locally. Members agreed that further discussion would be helpful on how best to present this information and engage communities.

The Board noted that a deeper dive discussion on the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be scheduled for January, to allow further consideration of delivery, priorities and accountability.

Members also discussed the scale of ambition set out in the Strategy and the need to be realistic about what could be delivered, particularly in the context of capacity and system pressures. The importance of linking the Strategy clearly to outcomes, priorities and measurable impact was emphasised.

Members highlighted accessibility, including for the Deaf community, and encouraged greater connection between groups and organisations developing accessible approaches, so that effective practice can be shared and replicated.

RESOLVED that the Strategy 2025–2030 and discussion be noted and /or action as appropriate.

Chair: