

Date:

Thursday 1 October 2026 at 4.30pm

Venue:

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

Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy (Chair)

Cllr Katie Zagoria (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Ray Godwin,
Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Alan Watson

Agenda**1. Livestreaming**

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.

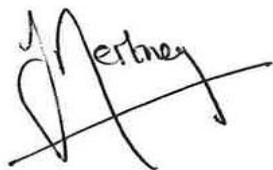
If you attend and make a representation to the meeting, you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. When admitted to the Council Chamber you are also consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for livestreaming and / or training purposes. If you 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 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 July 2026.

- 6. Scrutiny Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget** (Pages 13 - 56)
- To consider and agree the draft final report.
- 7. Overview & Performance Report: SBC Neighbourhoods (Regulated Services: Trading Standards, Community Safety & Emergency Planning)** (Pages 57 - 84)
- 8. Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates** (Pages 85 - 110)
- To consider information in relation to this scrutiny topic from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Community Safety and SBC Care For Your Area departments.
- 9. Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027** (Pages 111 - 122)



Jonathan Nertney
Head of Democratic Services
Wednesday 23 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: Senior Scrutiny Officer, Gary Woods on email gary.woods@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

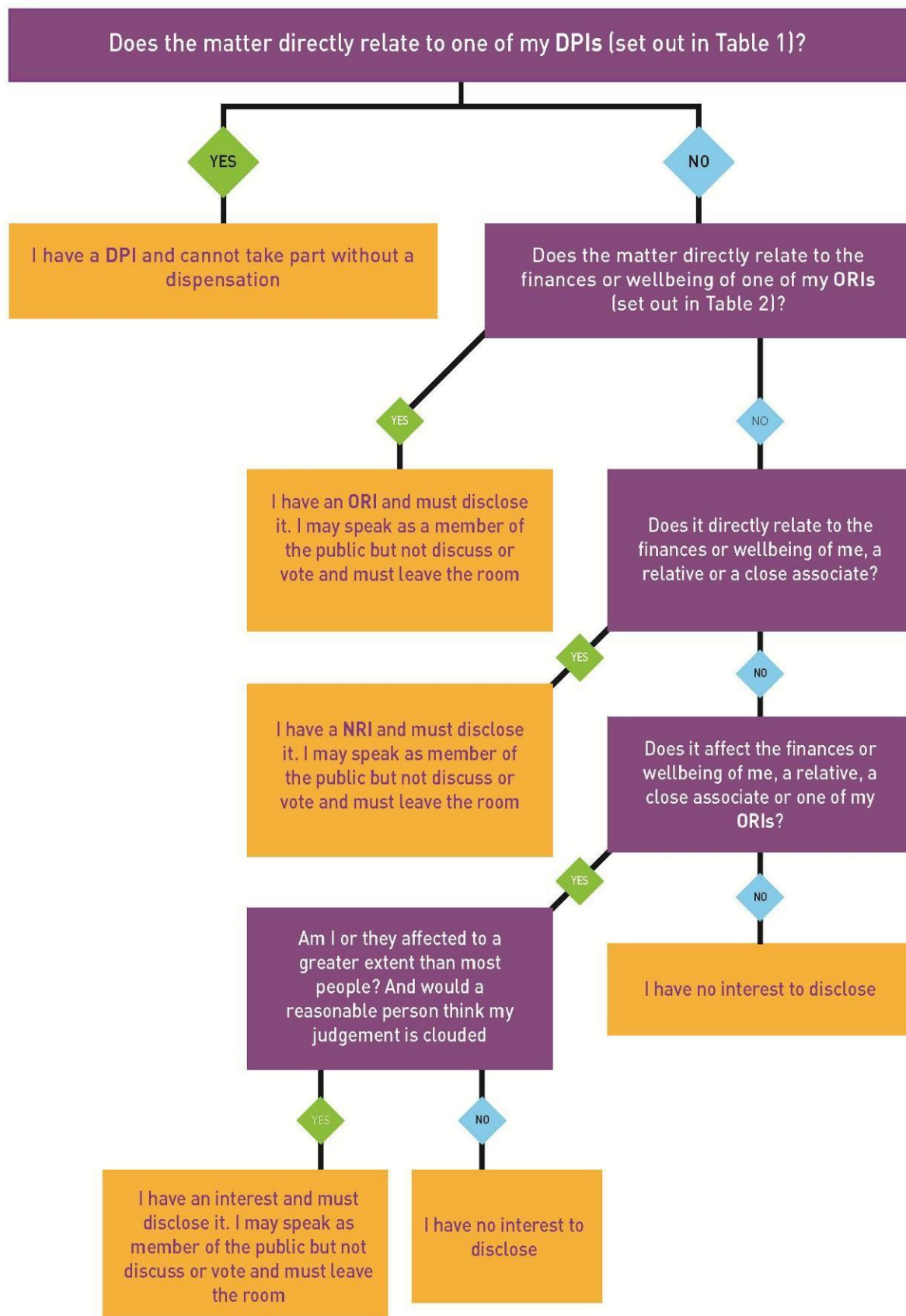


Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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 to the left of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber and the rear of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
 - do not stop to collect your belongings
 - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
 - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

5. await further instructions.

- **do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear”** which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

Toilets

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

Water Cooler

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

Microphones

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

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Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of the Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday 30 July 2026.

Present: Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy (Chair), Cllr Katie Zagoria (Vice-Chair), Cllr Carol Clark (sub for Cllr Barbara Inman), Cllr Bob Cook, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Alan Watson

Officers: Richard Bradford (A,H&W); Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Barbara Inman

CSS/23/26 Livestreaming

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

CSS/24/26 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CSS/25/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CSS/26/26 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Community Safety Select Committee meeting which was held on 2 July 2026 for approval and signature.

AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2 July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CSS/27/26 Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates

Consideration was given to the draft scope and project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates.

As defined by the College of Policing, '*alley gates were lockable gates installed to prevent access by offenders to alleyways, such as those which ran along the rear of older-style terraced housing in the UK*'. Whilst the alley gate programme in Stockton-on-Tees had historically delivered clear community safety benefits, the asset base has now reached a stage where increasing maintenance costs, ageing infrastructure, and the lack of a long-term funding strategy present growing challenges. The proposed main aims for this review would therefore be to assess whether existing arrangements continued to meet local needs, provide value for money and support wider community safety and environmental protection objectives, and to inform future policy on the use of current and future alley gates in Stockton-on-Tees.

Several contributors had been identified in relation to this scrutiny topic, including Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) departments (Community Safety, Care For Your Area, and Housing Services), SBC Ward Councillors, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, local housing associations, and the Borough's Town and Parish Councils. A resident view would also be sought via relevant resident associations / community groups. It was anticipated that the Committee's final report would be presented to the SBC Cabinet in February 2027.

Reflecting on the proposed key lines of enquiry for this review, the Committee drew attention to the reference on the maintenance of these gates and felt costs needed to be fully understood, as well as which budget/s were used (or should be used) to pay for installation and upkeep. It was noted that the number of alley gates differed in each ward, and that the condition of them were often impacted by vandalism / anti-social behaviour – exploring the design of these, including whether other Local Authorities used similar or different gate, was therefore suggested.

AGREED that the draft scope and project plan for the Alley Gates review be approved.

CSS/28/26 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027

CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed the Committee that, after several requests, a rather unsatisfactory response had now been received from Cleveland Police regarding outstanding actions in relation to the Committee's 2020 review on fly-grazed horses. Members, noting ongoing concerns with horses getting onto the road in Port Clarence, were asked how they wanted to proceed – it was agreed that relevant representatives from the force should be asked to attend a future meeting to explain its position and address any subsequent Member comments / questions.

WORK PROGRAMME 2026-2027

Consideration was given to the Committee's current work programme. The next meeting was due to take place on 1 October 2026 where items would include the first evidence-gathering session in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates, and the latest overview and performance update regarding community safety (regulated services and emergency planning) matters. The draft final report following the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and Ward Transport Budget (WTB) review would also be presented to the Committee for approval.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Chair's Update and Community Safety Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027 be noted.
- 2) Cleveland Police be requested to attend a future Committee meeting to explain its position on fly-grazed horses.

Chair:



Scrutiny Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget

Community Safety Select Committee
DRAFT Final Report

October 2026

Community Safety Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Dunedin House
Columbia Drive
Thornaby
Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 6BJ

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Select Committee – Membership

Councillor Mrs Ann McCoy (Chair)
Councillor Katie Zagoria (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Robert Cook
Councillor John Coulson
Councillor Jason French

Councillor Ray Godwin
Councillor Shakeel Hussain
Councillor Barbara Inman
Councillor Alan Watson

Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank the following people for contributing to its work:

- Phil Hardie (Highway Network & Traffic Team Leader) – Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC)
- Simon Milner (Highways Manager) – SBC
- Corinne Moore (Head of Digital Services & Systems) – SBC
- Natalie Sargeant (Customer Development Lead) – SBC
- Sarah Robinson (Community Engagement Team Manager) – SBC
- Jem Bagdatlioglu (Consultation Officer) – SBC
- SBC Ward Councillors who provided their views on this scrutiny topic via a Committee survey
- Town and Parish Councils who provided their views on this scrutiny topic via a Committee survey
- Local residents who provided their views on this scrutiny topic via a Committee survey

Contact Officer

Gary Woods (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

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Email: gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk

Foreword

TBC



Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy
Chair
Community Safety Select Committee



Cllr Katie Zagoria
Vice-Chair
Community Safety Select Committee

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The review will contribute to the following Stockton-on-Tees Plan 2024-2028 priorities:

- *Priority 2: Healthy & Resilient Communities:* We will support residents to be safe and connected to each other in their homes and communities.
- *Priority 3: A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit:* We will make Stockton-on-Tees a great place to live, work and visit - a Borough that residents can be proud of. It will be a vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy.
- *Priority 5: 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.

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

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provides Elected Members with two budget schemes that, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund project ideas within their wards:

- The Community Participation Budget (CPB) can be used to fund a variety of developments ranging from small engineering schemes that improve the function of the space on or adjacent to the highway, to small projects that improve the local amenity space. The CPB is divided between wards on the basis of population-per-ward.
- The Ward Transport Budget (WTB) is an allocation of the Council's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement budget that is allocated on a ward-by-ward basis to undertake potential projects identified to address transport-related issues raised by members of the public via their local Ward Councillors.

The projects that the CPB and WTB are typically used for are those that generate resident interest and engagement, albeit at a local level. Whilst these are generally small-scale and local in character, they connect directly with resident concerns and can have a significant impact on social and environmental wellbeing. Through the direct involvement of Ward Councillors and the input of the communities they represent, interventions should be well focused and likely to meet a genuine community concern.

Although there are a number of examples where both the CPB and WTB has been utilised to make positive differences across the Borough, several issues have arisen over the years in relation to these budget schemes. Ward Councillors can feel frustrated about what projects are deemed eligible / not eligible, the costs associated with a proposal, and the time taken from submission of a proposals to it being realised. In some cases, the completion of a project has created future revenue implications around maintaining / sustaining work developed via CPB or WTB funds. From an administrative perspective, there is also a need to be mindful of the officer time spent on developing schemes which then are not progressed through to implementation.

The main aims for this review will be to:

- understand the scope of interventions that are eligible through these two budget schemes, the processes for determining the priorities for use of the funds, and the management of the projects that are funded through CPB and WTB.

- establish the effectiveness of these two budgets and whether projects funded through the CPB and WTB have had genuine and sustained impact.
- ascertain the communication of the CPB and WTB to Ward Councillors and wider public awareness of these two funding streams.
- consider the value of CPB and WTB in the context of significant ongoing budget pressures for the Council as a whole.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What are the underlying aims of the CPB and WTB, have these changed since they were introduced, and how are the two budget schemes different / interlinked?

How much does each Ward / Ward Councillor have access to, and has this changed over time (if so, why)? How much has been spent by Wards / Ward Councillors in recent years, and what available funds have not been used (and what happens to these)?

What is considered an eligible / ineligible proposal, and how is this determined? Have criteria changed over the years?

What is the process for submitting, considering and deciding upon proposals? Who is involved and what is the timeframe for determining the validity and progression of a project?

How effective have completed projects been and how are these assessed? Have they created future revenue pressures?

How aware are Ward Councillors about these schemes – how are they communicated, and how are they kept updated on any submitted proposals?

Are residents of the Borough made aware about these potential funding opportunities and how they can submit ideas / proposals?

Is there an appetite to maintain existing CPB / WTB arrangements?

Can the Council learn anything from similar schemes being used in other Local Authorities?

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

- Clarity about the criteria and eligibility of work and the avoidance of unfunded future revenue pressures arising from the one-off capital works.
- Confidence that the level of investment made through the CPB and WTB represents value for money and is justifiable in the context of overall budget pressures.

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Community Safety Select Committee's scrutiny review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget.
- 1.2. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provides Elected Members (also known as Ward Councillors) with two budget schemes that, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund project ideas within their wards:
 - The **Community Participation Budget (CPB)** offers opportunities to fund a variety of developments ranging from small engineering schemes that improve the function of the space on or adjacent to the highway, to small projects that improve the local amenity space. The CPB is divided between wards on the basis of population-per-ward.
 - The **Ward Transport Budget (WTB)** is a share of the Council's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement budget that is allocated on a ward-by-ward basis to undertake potential projects identified to address transport-related issues raised by members of the public via their local Ward Councillors.
- 1.3. The projects that the CPB and WTB are typically used for are those that generate resident interest and engagement, albeit at a local level. Whilst these are generally small-scale and local in character, they connect directly with resident concerns and can have a significant impact on social and environmental wellbeing. Through the direct involvement of Ward Councillors and the input of the communities they represent, interventions should be well focused and likely to meet a genuine community concern.
- 1.4. Although there are a number of examples where both the CPB and WTB has been utilised to make positive differences across the Borough, several issues have arisen over the years in relation to these budget schemes. Ward Councillors can feel frustrated about what projects are deemed eligible / not eligible, the costs associated with a proposal, and the time taken from submission of a proposal to it being realised. In some cases, the completion of a project has created future revenue implications around maintaining / sustaining work developed via CPB or WTB funds. From an administrative perspective, there is also a need to be mindful of the officer time spent on shaping schemes which are then not progressed through to implementation.
- 1.5. The main aims for this review were to understand the scope of interventions that were eligible through these two budget schemes, the processes for determining the priorities for use of the funds, and the management of the projects that were funded through CPB and WTB. In addition, the Committee sought to establish the effectiveness of these two budgets and whether projects funded through the CPB and WTB had seen genuine and sustained impact. Ascertaining the communication of the CPB and WTB to Ward Councillors (as well as wider public awareness of these two funding streams) and exploring the value of CPB and WTB in the context of significant ongoing budget pressures for the Council were also important considerations.
- 1.6. The Committee found that both CPB (£200,000 per annum) and WTB (£150,000 per annum) allocations are divided between wards based on population. It is important to note that the CPB can match-fund WTB schemes where there may be a shortfall in available budget. Conversely, WTB funding cannot be used for CPB projects as the latter are more environmentally focused (rather than transport-related).

- 1.7. The CPB and WTB can be directed towards local issues where the concerns of constituents do not meet the evidence thresholds for funding via core budgets. SBC offers further flexibility with regard carry-forward of unspent funding into the following year (subject to Cabinet Member approval), the ability to draw down from the following year's allocation early if a larger project exceeded a single year's funding, and the option of pooling budgets with neighbouring wards. However, a caveat also exists that unspent allocations may be re-absorbed or re-allocated (a decision that would ultimately be taken by the Cabinet Member, depending on the Council's financial position) – something which should prompt all Ward Councillors and their respective residents to ensure potential projects are identified and submitted.
- 1.8. As of mid-2026, the Committee was informed that both budget schemes had a significant underspend for the 2025-2026 and early-2026-2027 period (58% for the CPB and 73% for the WTB), though it was also acknowledged that much of this could be attributed to limitations on the capacity to develop and deliver projects, as well as a frequent need to follow statutory procedures, rather than a lack of demand. Indeed, subsequent evidence showed that numerous proposals (worth an estimated £340,000) had been submitted and were still being assessed or were now in programme.
- 1.9. Whilst there had been a clear effort to provide guidance on the types of projects that would be eligible under each scheme, comments from some Ward Councillors appeared to show an element of confusion and disillusionment around what these budgets should be used for. Concern was raised over allocations being spent on work that, in the view of Ward Councillors, should be covered by core funding rather than the CPB or WTB.
- 1.10. Two key issues were identified following the submission of project ideas; 1) the potential for proposals to create ongoing revenue or maintenance costs, and 2) required officer time spent on developing schemes, many of which are then not progressed through to implementation. Whilst these were important factors, the most pressing concern in relation to receiving and determining submissions centred on the significant limitations in officer resource (with only one dedicated staff member processing proposals from 27 wards and 56 Ward Councillors) – a critical pinch point which, alongside delays sometimes created by the need for statutory duties to be observed, appears to undermine the ability to make local improvements in a timely fashion.
- 1.11. SBC Ward Councillors (34) who responded to a Committee survey were almost unanimously aware of the eligibility criteria for both the CPB and WTB, though some expressed a desire for this to be simplified / widened so the wishes of residents and their representative/s could be satisfied. Other themes that emerged from the feedback received included CPB and WTB allocations having to be used for projects that, in their opinion, should be funded through central budgets, high / excessive quotes (work could / should be done for less), limited officer capacity to process submitted proposals (with delays sometimes leading to increased costs), and the time taken from submission of a proposal to it being realised (if approved). A lack of appropriate updates on progress of a proposal was a frequently aired concern (though 22 of the 34 survey respondents stated they did receive updates) – time will tell if the new online case management platform enables improved communication with Councillors – with only 38% (13) of Elected Members 'satisfied' with the delivery of approved works.
- 1.12. Although eliciting a limited response (6 of 16), the Committee's survey of local Town and Parish Councils revealed both a lack of awareness of these budget schemes from some, and examples where the CPB and / or the WTB had helped fund projects from others. There was a clear appetite for greater clarity and communication with Town and Parish Councils in relation to these funding pots, with numerous suggestions put forward on what they could contribute towards.

- 1.13. A large majority of the 97 residents who responded to a further Committee survey (issued via the SBC Community Engagement Team) were unaware of the CPB (67) and WTB (81), with only eight having engaged with their respective SBC Ward Councillor regarding a CPB or WTB-related project / proposal. There were repeated calls for more information and transparency around these budget schemes (including from those who belonged to resident / community groups), along with a vast range of views on what the allocated funding might be used for. The Committee recognises the number of responses reflects a very small proportion of the Borough's population, but feedback nevertheless provides an indication of a lack of public awareness which the Council and its Ward Councillors have a responsibility to grow.
- 1.14. Research on similar Member-led budget models used by other Local Authorities demonstrated differences in available funding, governance / control measures, and project eligibility, though also highlighted the same experiences in terms of the creation of revenue / maintenance pressures, expectations versus deliverability, and officer capacity. One key difference between SBC and other Local Authorities was the transparency of such schemes to the public, with several examples provided where local residents were able to see individual Ward Councillor spend (City of Stoke-on-Trent), a breakdown of projects funded along with photographic evidence (Hillingdon), and interactive maps of projects completed through their current scheme (Royal Borough of Greenwich).
- 1.15. The CPB and WTB are laudable funding schemes that have delivered tangible benefits across Stockton-on-Tees, but evidence also suggests they are not working as efficiently as they could / should. It is clear that Ward Councillors greatly value these budgets (with 31 of the 34 survey respondents wanting both schemes to continue in their current form or with minor changes), but there appears to be a fundamental flaw around the level of resource (only one dedicated officer) to support the determination of, and communication around, project proposals, as well as issues in relation to eligibility criteria and quoted costs which need to be considered. Furthermore, given the essence of these budgets is to address resident concerns, it is incumbent upon both SBC and its Ward Councillors to ensure local people are regularly made aware of the opportunities these schemes offer (though if frustrations already exist around the time taken from submission of a proposal to it being realised, this will only increase the pressure on assessing, determining and implementing projects). These budget schemes continue to be a democratic means of addressing local issues, and greater efficiency in proceeding from proposal to decision (and then, if approved, to delivery) will strengthen their credibility in the eyes of both Ward Councillors and the residents they serve.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **Both the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and the Ward Transport Budget (WTB) should remain as separate Member-led schemes.**
- 2) **With due regard to the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Ward Councillor survey feedback, SBC reviews and refreshes the guidance available to SBC Ward Councillors on CPB and WTB eligibility criteria and scheme delivery processes (which should include approximate timelines involved in the most common project proposals).**
- 3) **SBC considers creating additional resource to support the processing of CPB / WTB proposals (and subsequent communication on these to SBC Ward Councillors).**

(continued overleaf...)

Recommendations (continued)

The Committee recommend that:

- 4) **SBC continues to develop, and then implements, its new CPB / WTB-related digital case management and submission system (to include a Members Briefing at the appropriate time).**
- 5) **SBC strengthens processes around communication between relevant SBC Ward Councillors and officers designing a CPB / WTB scheme if, after feasibility checks are undertaken, environmental or other factors mean the original scope cannot be achieved.**
- 6) **Annual updates be provided to all SBC Ward Councillors on the state of CPB / WTB proposals (including the in-year and full four-year Council term budget position).**
- 7) **SBC Ward Councillors be supported to increase engagement with local resident and community groups to generate and discuss project proposals at ward level via Ward surgeries and Members newsletters.**
- 8) **To increase wider understanding and promotion of these budget schemes, SBC:**
 - a) **publishes a short annual summary on its website of projects funded through CPB and WTB in each ward.**
 - b) **uses its website to confirm budget allocations, processes for applications, any deadlines for season-specific works, and principal contacts for enquiries.**
 - c) **periodically advertises its CPB / WTB website link to the Borough's Town and Parish Councils, and local residents, via all available communication mediums.**
- 9) **SBC introduces an annual report to the relevant SBC scrutiny committee on the CPB and WTB (allocations, proposals, spend, carry-forward, etc.).**

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1. This report outlines the findings and recommendations following the Community Safety Select Committee's scrutiny review of Community Participation Budget (CPB) and Ward Transport Budget (WTB).
- 2.2. The main aims for this review were to understand the scope of interventions that were eligible through these two budget schemes, the processes for determining the priorities for use of the funds, and the management of the projects that were funded through CPB and WTB. In addition, the Committee sought to establish the effectiveness of these two budgets and whether projects funded through the CPB and WTB had seen genuine and sustained impact. Ascertaining the communication of the CPB and WTB to Ward Councillors (as well as wider public awareness of these two funding streams) and exploring the value of CPB and WTB in the context of significant ongoing budget pressures for the Council were also important considerations.
- 2.3. The Committee identified the following key lines of enquiry:
- What are the underlying aims of the CPB and WTB, have these changed since they were introduced, and how are the two budget schemes different / interlinked?
 - How much does each Ward / Ward Councillor have access to, and has this changed over time (if so, why)? How much has been spent by Wards / Ward Councillors in recent years, and what available funds have not been used (and what happens to these)?
 - What is considered an eligible / ineligible proposal, and how is this determined? Have criteria changed over the years?
 - What is the process for submitting, considering and deciding upon proposals? Who is involved and what is the timeframe for determining the validity and progression of a project?
 - How effective have completed projects been and how are these assessed? Have they created future revenue pressures?
 - How aware are Ward Councillors about these schemes – how are they communicated, and how are they kept updated on any submitted proposals?
 - Are residents of the Borough made aware about these potential funding opportunities and how they can submit ideas / proposals?
 - Is there an appetite to maintain existing CPB / WTB arrangements?
 - Can the Council learn anything from similar schemes being used in other Local Authorities?
- 2.4. The Committee took evidence from the SBC Neighbourhoods (formerly SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture) and SBC Corporate Services directorates, and surveys were issued to SBC Ward Councillors, the Borough's Town and Parish Councils, and local residents (circulated to existing engagement mechanisms via the SBC Community Engagement Team). Similar Member-led budget schemes offered by other Local Authorities were also considered.

3.0 Background

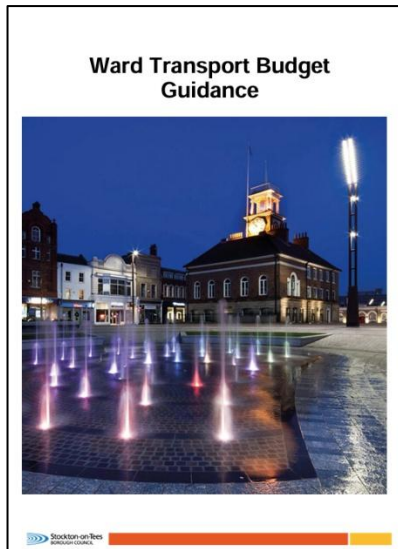
- 3.1 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provides Elected Members (also known as Ward Councillors) with two budget schemes that, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund project ideas within their wards:
- The [Community Participation Budget \(CPB\)](#) offers opportunities to fund a variety of developments ranging from small engineering schemes that improve the function of the space on or adjacent to the highway, to small projects that improve the local amenity space. The CPB is divided between wards on the basis of population-per-ward.
 - The [Ward Transport Budget \(WTB\)](#) is a share of the Council's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement budget that is allocated on a ward-by-ward basis to undertake potential projects identified to address transport-related issues raised by members of the public via their local Ward Councillors.
- 3.2 The projects that the CPB and WTB are typically used for are those that generate resident interest and engagement, albeit at a local level. Whilst these are generally small-scale and local in character, they connect directly with resident concerns and can have a significant impact on social and environmental wellbeing. Through the direct involvement of Ward Councillors and the input of the communities they represent, interventions should be well focused and likely to meet a genuine community concern.
- 3.3 Although there are a number of examples where both the CPB and WTB has been utilised to make positive differences across the Borough, several issues have arisen over the years in relation to these budget schemes. Ward Councillors can feel frustrated about what projects are deemed eligible / not eligible, the costs associated with a proposal, and the time taken from submission of a proposal to it being realised. In some cases, the completion of a project has created future revenue implications around maintaining / sustaining work developed via CPB or WTB funds. From an administrative perspective, there is also a need to be mindful of the officer time spent on shaping schemes which are then not progressed through to implementation.
- 3.4 Historically, the Council's scrutiny function has played a role in the development of these two budget schemes:

CPB: In December 2017, as part of an officer-led 'reporting-in' review, the SBC People Select Committee considered an [update report](#) which outlined the financial situation with regard the CPB, detailed uncommitted ward allocations at that time, and included the Council's CPB guidance document.

The Committee's request for changes to the list of eligible projects (to broaden the scope of the CPB) and its proposal for budget allocations to be set per Member (as opposed per ward) were noted within a [Cabinet report](#) that was subsequently presented in May 2018. Cabinet resolved to endorse continued use of the CPB guidance, with the expenditure of any uncommitted ward allocations of the CPB to be considered at the discretion of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport. The process of officers providing recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport of potential changes to the list of eligible projects, and how the budget was allocated across the wards, was also supported.

Community Participation Budget	
People Select Committee – 18 th December 2017	
Summary	
This report outlines the current financial situation with regards the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and highlights details of uncommitted Ward allocations.	
Recommendations	
1. Endorse the expenditure of uncommitted Ward allocations of the Community Participation Budget at the discretion of the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport, as outlined in the Community Participation Budget Guidance.	
2. Officers to provide recommendations to the Cabinet Member of eligible projects requested by local residents.	
Background	
1. Prior to the Community Participation Budget being in existence some funding for local projects was allocated to a Borough wide fund called the Minor Highway Improvement Budget, which was prioritised by officers.	
2. In 2006/07, following comments from Ward Councillors that this budget was not evenly distributed across the Borough, the Members Advisory Panel approved changes to this budget.	
3. The Community Participation Budget (CPB) started in 2007/08 under the name the Small Environmental Improvements Budget with a funding allocation of £400,000 per year. The name of this budget was then changed to reflect the importance of community participation in the development of project ideas for the wards.	
4. The budget is divided across the Borough on a ward-by-ward basis based on the ward populations.	
5. The CPB can be used to fund a variety of projects ranging from small engineering schemes that improve the function of the space on or adjacent to the highway or small projects that improve the local amenity space. Details of eligible and ineligible projects can be found within the CPB Guidance (see Appendix 1).	
6. While any unspent funding from previous years can be carried forward and added to the following year's allocation this should be kept to a minimum. Justification for carrying forward funding should be reserved for committed projects which cannot be delivered before the financial year end due to work programme capacity issues or other delivery constraints. However, the majority of funding that has been carried forward previously each year has been uncommitted to a specific project.	

WTB: In 2019, the SBC Place Select Committee undertook an Area Transport Strategy (ATS) review, the [final report](#) of which was presented to, and subsequently endorsed by, Cabinet in January 2020. A key recommendation was for the existing ATS scheme to cease at the end of the then financial year (31 March 2020), with the yearly ATS funding allocation to be transferred to the CPB on a ward-by-ward basis determined by population-per-ward (this addition to CPB funding should be ring-fenced for transport-related spend only). The Committee also recommended that the new ring-fenced transport-related element of the CPB should not be tied to the future of the overall CPB initiative (i.e. it is not dependent upon the existence of CPB).



As a result of the Committee's ATS review, from 2020-2021, an annual budget of £200,000 was allocated from the Local Transport Plan (LTP) to a new scheme called the Ward Transport Budget (WTB). Supporting this refreshed approach, a [WTB Guidance](#) document was circulated to SBC Ward Councillors which set out the flexibility of the budget (with the provision to combine more than one year's budget, allow matching funding from the CPB, and also from neighbouring ward allocations) and highlighted that any project with a Borough-wide / strategic impact / benefit would be considered as part of the wider LTP.

4.0 Findings

Origins / aims / characteristics of the two budget schemes

- 4.1. The origins and evolution of the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and Ward Transport Budget (WTB) were summarised as follows:
- **CPB:** Introduced in 2007 as the Small Environmental Improvements Budget (providing a modest, flexible funding mechanism for local environmental works that were not prioritised through core budgets), the scheme was later re-named to reflect community participation and Member input (with Ward Councillors promoting projects based on local priorities). This annual Borough-wide pot was initially £400,000 per year (revenue-funded) and was allocated by population. Over time, the eligibility expanded to small engineering works, and in 2019, through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), the scheme was reduced to £200,000 per year, with tighter eligibility introduced to reflect long-term maintenance impacts.
 - **WTB:** This scheme began following a Place Select Committee review of the Area Transport Strategy in 2019 which saw the budget move from an area-based pot that Members would bid into to obtain funds to ward-based allocations which made it easier for Members to access. From April 2020, £200,000 per year was allocated (reduced to £150,000 from 2024-2025), with funding ring-fenced for transport issues. WTB operated within a structured, evidence-led framework – Members shaped priorities, while officers assessed, designed and delivered schemes to ensure they met safety, legal and affordability requirements.
- 4.2. Despite both budget schemes being Member-led, there were some key differences between them:
- **CPB** was revenue funding, which had been identified within the MTFP and supported broader community-focused capital works.
 - **WTB**, meanwhile, was capital funding from the Council's annual allocation toward highway priorities from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, and was strictly transport-focused (spending was audited to ensure it was directed toward transport priorities).

CPB could match-fund WTB schemes where there may be a shortfall in available budget. However, WTB funding could not be used for CPB projects as the latter were more environmentally focused (rather than transport-related). Crucially, it was important to emphasise that both budgets remained Council funds, where Members influenced priorities and officers retained overall responsibility for determining validity and for delivery.

- 4.3. The Council's core highway budgets prioritised statutory duties and road safety interventions at locations with proven casualty records (based on recorded evidence from the Cleveland Police road casualty database). The Department for Transport (DfT) assessed how Council's spent money, and if this was judged to have been used unwisely, funding could be withheld. CPB and WTB budgets operated differently because they allowed flexibility and could be directed where the concerns of constituents did not meet the evidence thresholds for funding via core budgets. The availability of the CPB / WTB therefore filled the gap between evidence thresholds and lived experience of the Borough's residents.

- 4.4. In summary, these budgets allowed Members to make local improvements that complemented SBCs core budget and made a real difference to residents (providing flexibility for smaller-scale issues that were not prioritised elsewhere). However, there were challenges to address around delivery capacity alongside the Council's statutory duties (leading to pressures on timescales), the potential for sustainability and revenue implications, and the future communication and visibility of these schemes (particularly to / for residents).

Budget allocations and spend

- 4.5. Both CPB and WTB allocations were divided between wards based on population. Whilst unspent funding could be carried forward into the following year, it was encouraged to be kept to a minimum as there was the possibility it could be re-absorbed or re-allocated (that decision would ultimately be taken by the Cabinet Member, depending on the Council's financial position). For larger projects that exceeded a single year's funding, there was the option to draw down from the following year so as not to delay delivery of good projects (with the caveat that this could not be done during election years where future budgets and memberships were undetermined).

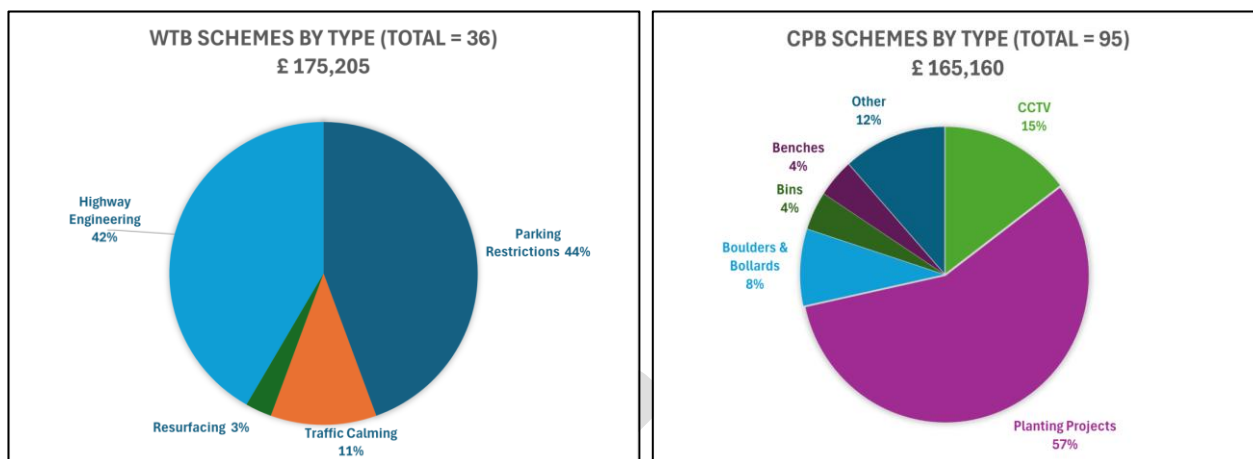
Ward	WTB	CPB	Ward	WTB	CPB
Billingham Central	£5,706	£7,607	Ingleby Barwick South	£8,722	£11,629
Billingham East	£5,335	£7,113	Mandale & Victoria	£5,811	£7,748
Billingham North	£5,486	£7,314	Newtown	£2,594	£3,459
Billingham South	£5,969	£7,959	Northern Parishes	£5,314	£7,085
Billingham West & Wolviston	£4,993	£6,658	Norton Central	£4,924	£6,566
Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree	£5,167	£6,890	Norton North	£5,357	£7,142
Eaglescliffe East	£4,866	£6,487	Norton South	£4,860	£6,480
Eaglescliffe West	£5,120	£6,827	Ropner	£5,287	£7,049
Fairfield	£7,375	£9,833	Roseworth	£5,959	£7,945
Grangefield	£2,605	£3,473	Southern Villages	£1,910	£2,547
Hardwick & Salters Lane	£5,564	£7,419	Stainsby Hill	£5,852	£7,803
Hartburn	£7,285	£9,713	Stockton Town Centre	£5,082	£6,777
Ingleby Barwick North	£8,853	£11,805	Village	£5,731	£7,641
			Yarm	£8,273	£11,031

- 4.6. As per the tables above, the individual allocations for each of the Borough's 27 wards were outlined (it was reiterated that there was only one dedicated SBC officer to manage all the enquiries, investigations and deliveries), with graphics showing that both schemes had an underspend (58% unspent for the CPB and 73% unspent for the WTB). This situation may reflect capacity to develop and deliver rather than a lack of demand, and could be alleviated by addressing resident concerns about the condition of the Borough's highways (reflected in the annual National Highways & Transport Survey – see graphic below), something which had been undertaken in some wards via the WTB.

Highway Maintenance							
Reference	Indicator	Stockton	Quartile	NHT Highest	NHT Average	NHT Lowest	Difference %
KBI23	Condition of highways	29%	2	52%	27%	11%	2%
KBI24	Highway maintenance	46%	1	56%	43%	35%	3%
KBI25	Street lighting	65%	1	70%	60%	49%	5%
KBI26	Highway enforcement/obstructions	45%	1	54%	40%	32%	5%
HMBI01	Condition of road surfaces	26%	3	52%	26%	10%	0%
HMBI02	Cleanliness of roads	46%	2	57%	45%	35%	1%
HMBI03	Condition of road markings	44%	2	61%	43%	33%	1%
HMBI05	Provision of street Lighting	58%	2	65%	57%	44%	1%

National Highways & Transport (NHT) Survey 2025: Public Satisfaction (546 responses (16.6%))

- 4.7. As of May 2026, CPB schemes costing just over £165,000 and WTB schemes totalling just over £175,000 were in development and committed (see below graphics), whilst the cost of those projects that were not progressed came to nearly £432,000. It was emphasised that any underspend in relation to either budget reflected schemes that were either in development or constrained by delivery factors, not by a lack of demand / interest.



Project eligibility

- 4.8. With regard the types of projects which each budget scheme could fund:

- **CPB:** Schemes should focus on local community and environmental improvements, must demonstrate local need and community benefit, and must be feasible and deliverable.

The CPB could be used to capital fund projects, but SBC needed to be mindful of proposals that created ongoing revenue or maintenance costs. Eligibility was therefore refined to avoid unfunded liabilities, and some schemes would only become eligible where third-parties (e.g. Town / Parish Councils or resident groups) took on maintenance.

- **WTB:** This was far stricter and operated within a tightly defined framework, where funding could only be used for transport, safety and accessibility interventions. All schemes required evidence-based assessment (e.g. safety data / speed surveys) to demonstrate eligibility, with projects triggering ongoing revenue costs or amenity scope being excluded.

- 4.9. The Committee asked if Members were able to use allocated funds for repairing potholes (an issue which was frequently raised by residents). It was stated that neither the CPB nor WTB was generally used for potholes and that approval of such work would have to meet the necessary intervention levels. In terms of road re-surfacing, officers noted that there was more highway needing attention than the Council had a budget for.

- 4.10. Proposed new schemes had the potential to create ongoing revenue costs which may in turn influence eligibility. Examples of such projects (and associated revenue implications) included the installation of CCTV (requiring monitoring costs), planting (needing maintenance / watering), bins (to be emptied / serviced), road markings (necessitating periodic refresh and enforcement), and speed indicator devices (creating energy costs, with mobile devices needing to be rotated to different locations).

4.11. Processes / Timescales:

- **CPB:** These schemes started with Members submitting project requests, supported by evidence of community need – officers then assessed feasibility, eligibility, costs and risks, and whether consultation was required. Seasonal deadlines applied to some CPB activity (e.g. planting) to allow delivery to be completed within the financial year – late submissions may be deferred to the next year (contributing to perceptions of delay).
- **WTB:** This was far more structured, with proposals initially submitted via the online Member portal which then triggered officer investigation (site visits, surveys, historic data review) – only once these were done could the detailed design begin. Often these works required a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), therefore it was not unreasonable for such schemes to take up to nine months before they started to hit work programmes. It was also important to highlight that delivery was reliant on workload and capacity – for both the WTB and CPB, the Council had only one dedicated officer dealing with 27 wards and 56 Members, and there was an additional need to factor in required input from other SBC departments (e.g. Design Services, Legal Services) which may result in extended timescales.

- 4.12. To emphasise the timelines involved in some CPB / WTB-related projects, examples were given on the steps required (along with the approximate timescales for each) for introducing double yellow lines and traffic calming measures (both involving a stringent legal process), as well as litter bins.

Step or milestone	Approximate timescale
Request received. Logged for audit and tracking; initial feasibility checks commenced	4 weeks
Initial site assessment, including review of collision history and existing speed survey data	
Advise Ward Councillors of survey requirements and costs (7-day speed survey if required)	6 weeks
Arrange and undertake a 7-day speed survey and provide results to Councillors	
Feasibility decision and options discussion with Councillors, including site visit if required	4 weeks
Design of preferred option; prepare drawings and outline costs	8 weeks
Internal cost check with Highway Operations and final proposal issued to Councillors	4 weeks
Councillor decision to proceed using the Ward budget allocation	1 week
Consultation with Ward Councillors and quarterly OTG / Police	6 weeks
Any informal consultation with directly affected businesses/residents	
Update Councillors. Finalise report & seek Cabinet Member approval	4 weeks
Instructions to Legal to draft TRO, agree drafts, and arrange advertising	4 weeks
Statutory advertising (notices on-site, press, online) cannot be reduced	21 days
If there are no objections, publish the 2nd advert in the press	1 week
If there are no objections, the scheme will be approved and added to the Works Programme	12 weeks

Flowchart: Traffic Calming

- 4.13. Reflecting on the workforce resources that the Council had to support these schemes, the Committee commented that whilst funding may be available to support viable projects, there was clearly a capacity issue in terms of getting proposals implemented / delivered. In response, officers suggested that, in order to ensure the Council was prioritising the most impactful repairs to the Borough's highway, details on what roads were listed on the maintenance programme could be shared with Members to see if these locations mirrored what residents were raising concerns about.

4.14. Current situation:

- **CPB:** 95 schemes were currently being worked through (the vast majority of which were now in the programme for delivery, with a very small number either still being investigated / consulted upon or requiring further information), totalling just over £165,000. 57% concerned planting projects, 15% for CCTV, 8% in relation to boulders and bollards, 4% for bins, and 4% for benches. The remaining 12% was marked 'other' for projects involving different themes / categories.
- **WTB:** A total of 36 schemes were in progress (nearly half of which were now in the programme for delivery, with the remainder being almost evenly split between the 'investigate / consult', 'further information required', or 'awaiting programming' stages), totalling just over £175,000. 44% of these were in relation to parking restrictions, 42% for highway engineering, 11% for traffic calming, and 3% for resurfacing.

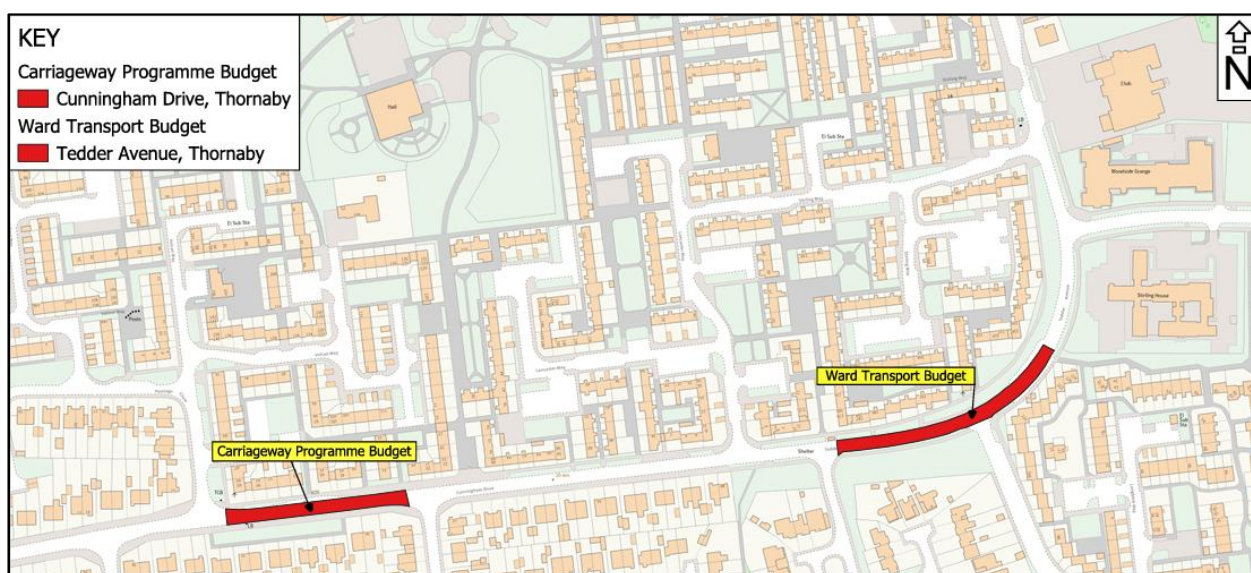
- 4.15. **Scheme delivery:** Using internal SBC teams to deliver CPB and WTB schemes avoided contractor overheads and allowed for a consistent approach to standards across the Borough's highway network. Benefits were also highlighted in relation to long-term assurance (in-house teams could be re-directed quickly to undertake priority / emergency works), the ability to efficiently deliver smaller schemes which were aligned with wider maintenance activity, and supporting jobs / retaining skilled staff (the latter being particularly important as these same professionals were relied upon to carry out the Council's statutory duties in maintaining the Borough's highways, deliver winter services by gritting through the cold winter nights, and responding to emergency incidents like flooding).
- 4.16. **Proposals not taken forward:** There had been 48 proposals not taken forward in the last 14 months (covering the full 2024-2025 financial year and the 2025-2026 financial year to date). 21 were not progressed for reasons such as cost eligibility or a lack of evidence (e.g. a demonstrable safety issue), 17 had technical constraints (e.g. the proposal conflicted with another planned scheme), and 10 did not proceed due to other priorities (e.g. re-direction of funds to alternative schemes). It was important to note that significant officer time / resource was required on an application even if a decision was subsequently made not to proceed.

Examples and effectiveness of approved schemes

- 4.17. Several projects facilitated through the CPB and WTB schemes over the past year were highlighted, including physical traffic calming measures, village gateway features to encourage reduced speeds, and parking restrictions.



- 4.18. Examples were also given of carriageway and footway resurfacing where Members chose to use their budgets to bring forward schemes that were already identified as future contenders within SBCs five-year programme (this would allow delivery to be accelerated into the current financial year rather than waiting for their scheduled year). This included a live case in Thornaby (see graphic below), where resurfacing on Cunningham Drive was already programmed for the 2026-2027 year – Members had requested that their budget be used to bring forward resurfacing further along the same route on Tedder Avenue, enabling a larger area of works to be completed while resources were already on site (making a bigger difference to the condition of the highway and a noticeable improvement for residents).

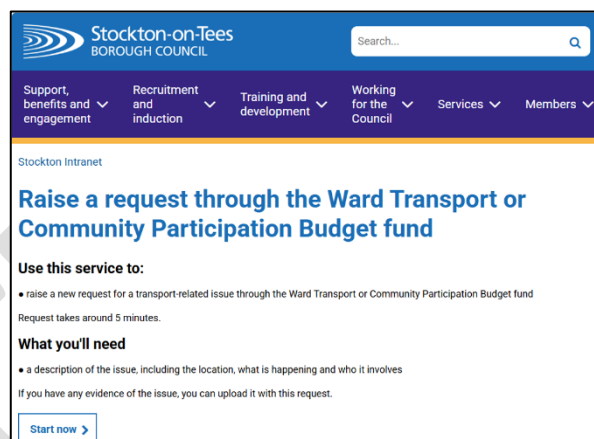


- 4.19. **Effectiveness:** For traffic-calming schemes, speed surveys were conducted before and after implementation – this provided an objective, evidence-based measure of impact on vehicle speeds. Results from schemes delivered this year on Wynyard Road and Wolviston Road showed significant speed reductions – this enabled SBCs enforcement resources to be targeted elsewhere and also had a positive impact on partners (particularly the police).
- 4.20. For parking restrictions, SBC could look at the locations Members had requested double yellow lines for to overcome parking problems. Supporting this scrutiny review, a sample of completed CPB / WTB schemes were assessed after 12 months which focused on service requests, parking and anti-social behaviour (ASB), and repeat incidents – this showed that no service requests had been received into the SBC Civic Enforcement Team at most locations, with only low-level interventions where they did arise. Such a positive impact allowed Civic Enforcement Officers to turn their focus to issues like ASB and other frontline priorities.

Communication of schemes

- 4.21. **Elected Members:** With regard Members, following an internal 'lean' review, an online platform was being developed to raise requests through the CPB and WTB – this case management solution would show the progress of current schemes and available budgets, with improved record-keeping and communication.
- 4.22. Improved guidance documents in relation to these schemes would be produced and circulated to Members highlighting issues raised within this review, including the level of detailed investigation, revised costs to reflect inflation, and available resource. A presentation on the new online case management platform was provided in July 2026 which covered the following:

- **Online form introduction:** A new online form had been designed to provide a consistent way of submitting new WTB requests. The form gathered the details needed to help assess proposals more effectively, reducing the need for follow-up emails seeking further information. Requests were securely recorded and managed by SBC officers through a single end-to-end process, improving the management and tracking of proposed schemes from submission through to outcome.
- **Where to access the online form:** The form would be easily accessible in the Members area of the SBC intranet.
- **Online form – introduction page:** The introduction page explained the purpose of the form and what information would be needed before submission. The page used the same look and feel as other Council online forms, thereby providing a familiar experience.
- **Reporting new issues:** The form enabled the submission of new issues for investigation. To avoid duplication, Members only needed to state each issue once.
- **Issues within your ward:** The online form was intended for reporting issues within a Member's ward boundary. Issues outside a ward could easily be raised by the relevant Member.
- **Ward Member agreement:** Where a ward had multiple Members, requests should be agreed by all Members before submission to prevent any potential delays.
- **Providing issue information:** Providing detailed information helped the request to be assessed more efficiently. Members could include features like 'what is happening', 'how often', 'who is affected' and 'where it is located'?
- **Resolving the issue:** Members should share any ideas or suggestions they might have for resolving the issue. Suggestions were optional and would be considered as part of the assessment process.
- **Uploading evidence:** Members could easily upload files they think were relevant, such as photos of the affected site or location. Photos, documents or correspondence could help provide additional context.
- **Final check before submitting:** An easy-to-follow 'Check your answers' page allowed Members to review their answers before submission. Members could return to any section to update information if needed.
- **Confirmation:** Members would receive instant confirmation that their request had been successfully submitted. A unique reference number was provided to help track the request, and a confirmation email was automatically sent for a Member's records.
- **What happens next?:** Requests were securely transferred into the Council's case management system. All details and supporting evidence were stored together in one place – this helped officers assess, track and manage requests efficiently.



- 4.23. Regarding the presentation content, the Committee felt that further thought was needed around the requirement for all Members within a split ward to be in agreement on a submission, noting that some wards were represented by Councillors from different political parties who may not be willing / feel able to share proposals. SBC officers responded by stating that each ward had a single budget and that this requirement was simply asking if all Members within that ward were aware of the proposals. Assurance was also given that the second phase of this new digital development would allow Members to view progress of requests and check available budget balances.
- 4.24. Reflecting on the existing CPB / WTB submission process, the Committee asked whether the new digital platform would mean Members relying on the online system for updates rather than the current arrangement which involved communication with the sole SBC officer who was responsible for processing proposals. It was confirmed that digital developments would not replace the option for contact with officers, but that the system (which enabled information to be shared and received at any time of the day) should be the primary means of communicating.
- 4.25. In response to a subsequent query on whether the new platform would increase the workload of the responsible officer (who, it was felt, already had too much to deal with) and cause an added layer of bureaucracy, Members were informed that the online submission / tracking of proposals aimed to strengthen the efficiency and timeliness of decision-making and the implementation of projects, as well as the communication of these potential / successful schemes. It was also stated that an additional SBC staff member was now supporting the main officer in relation to CPB and WTB applications, and that, moving forward, a shared inbox for correspondence was being introduced to provide resilience in picking-up queries.
- 4.26. Committee comments concluded with Members welcoming sight of their budgets (including what had been spent / what was left) as part of this new development and acknowledging the benefits of this new system.
- 4.27. **Public:** In terms of communicating the schemes to the public, Members played a role in promoting these via ward surgeries / Councillor newsletters, and SBC had historically included articles in Stockton News to highlight the availability of the budgets and the projects it had delivered. It remained important to emphasise that schemes delivered through the CPB and WTB had often generated visible, localised benefits, and strengthened links between Members and their communities.

Views of SBC Ward Councillors

- 4.28. On 8 May 2026, the Committee issued a survey to all SBC Ward Councillors (56) on this scrutiny topic. A total of 34 responses were received before the survey closed on 12 June 2026 – feedback and selected quotes are outlined as follows:

1) *Understanding & Clarity*

*Are you aware of the eligibility criteria for the **Community Participation Budget (CPB)**?*

Yes:	33	No:	1
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*Are you aware of the eligibility criteria for the **Ward Transport Budget (WTB)**?*

Yes:	34	No:	0
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Do you have any other comments on the eligibility criteria for either budget?

'Items that are eligible but potentially could and should be funded by other means and not CPB / WTB; for example, dropped kerbs, road line markings, bigger schemes where WTB will not cover.'

'I am not aware of any criteria for CPB, even though this has been requested on numerous occasions from officers overseeing projects. Executive officers have been requested to identify the criteria; they have been unable to. Officers overseeing the various projects submitted across the Borough have been inconsistent in their advice causing frustration.'

'I've used the budgets since their inception in 2008; they fund practical and visible improvements that matter to residents that would never get prioritised through normal channels. They strengthen communities and make residents feel that they matter. It's often useful to be able to pool budgets with neighbouring wards working together to fund a larger project. Internal Council charges are high. As an example, annual maintenance of planters or bulbs can reduce budgets by a significant amount.'

'I believe that the criteria can be extremely strict and restrictive. Where we could get services cheaper in our wards, we are not always able to use our budgets which is wrong. Not only do our budgets allow us to invest in areas / repair areas, we should also be given the ability to get the most out of our budgets.'

'It's not my / our knowledge of the eligibility; it's officers who feel they have the right to override Councillors and wishes of residents which is the issue for me.'

'No - the criteria is clear and helpful.'

'Residents elect Ward Councillors to represent local priorities. Removing control of the above budgets weakens the democratic mandate and disengages local residents from their elected Councillors. Councillors are the ones that speak with their residents daily and know where residents want this money spending.'

'The eligibility criteria needs to be widened. A single pooled budget would be better with more discretion given to Councillors as to how it is spent.'

'Although I have said 'yes' to both questions, I think sometimes it can be a little unclear as to what is expected from Ward Councillors and what should be part of the Council budget.'

'Scope and eligibility of projects could be even extended.'

'No, very self-explanatory.'

'The eligibility criteria are generally appropriate, but could benefit from clearer guidance and practical examples to reduce ambiguity, particularly where projects overlap. A degree of flexibility would also help support innovative or cross-cutting initiatives. Simplifying the criteria could improve consistency and speed of delivery.'

'Budgets need to be kept to help Councillors make changes in their ward on things that Council won't carry out. Better internal charges need to be looked out as they are excessive (e.g. £1k for bin).'

'...CPB and WTB ensure decisions are made by Councillors who actually live in, represent and understand their communities, rather than being dictated centrally by officers or Cabinet Members removed from day-to-day ward issues. These budgets are one of the last remaining examples of genuine localism within Stockton-on-Tees and should be strengthened, not undermined... The real issue is not the existence of CPB and WTB, but the excessive internal charging structures imposed by the Council itself. Councillors are routinely quoted over £2,000 for wildflower planting, nearly £4,000 for CCTV provision and around £1,000 for a single bin, drastically reducing what can actually be delivered for residents...'

2) Submitting Proposals

Do you find it easy to submit a CPB / WTB proposal?

Yes:	28	No:	6
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Do you have any other comments on submitting of proposals?

'The staff handling the proposals put forward do not have the capacity to handle the volume of cases which causes inevitable delays.'

'I appreciate [the supporting officer] has a huge workload and pressure instilled upon him to serve all Councillors. It may be easy to submit but difficult to keep on top of, with delays then increasing costs which is unfair. There is also too often that solutions that should be resolved by the Council are instead pushed to 'CPB / WTB' to resolve (e.g. dropped kerbs)...

'Although I have no problem in the initial submission process, I find progress is then very slow and difficult due to the workload of the officer dealing and progressing the submission.'

'Quicker acknowledgment on submission.'

'No - they are well handled by [the supporting officer].'

'It's not the submitting of proposals that is the issue, it's the inordinate amount of time it takes to get things done. This I assume is due to lack of staffing. However, whatever the reason, I believe the lack of resources brings the Council into disrepute.'

'The amount of time taken to check and confirm if proposals can go ahead is too long. Only one dedicated officer to cover all wards is insufficient, especially during periods of absence or holidays. It can often take over 12 months from submitting a proposal to it getting the go ahead.'

'The actual process of submitting them is fine, but getting updates isn't. We often have to go seek them out.'

'The process is generally straightforward, but clearer guidance and improved transparency on timescales would help reduce delays and uncertainty.'

'Honestly, it can be quite an arduous process, with it being often very difficult to get things signed off.'

'I think Councillors of any particular ward should decide wholly what to use these for and have autonomy for this.'

'Unfortunately, the officer dealing with budgets is overwhelmed by demands, hence progress is very slow and can take up to a year or more.'

'The submission of proposals depends on which officer is assisting as to whether it is an easy or difficult / frustrating process; this inconsistency is sourced in the absence of any CPB criteria. This is, and has always been, unacceptable and raised on numerous occasions with officers, with no action taken to resolve the matter. Further, it is often the case when departments have regularly overspent their allocated budgets they seek to leverage unspent but identified projects from members budgets to ease their financial problems. This is viewed as the reason for the scrutiny topic submission and it is seen as to what it is, a money grab.'

3) Communication

Do you receive updates on proposal progress?

Yes:	22	No:	12
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Do you have any other comments on CPB / WTB communication?

'Some of our proposals have got 'forgotten about' and I have to send a reminder. Always have to ask for updates on the availability of funds and are only given current year not the 4-year spreadsheet.'

'[The supporting officer] keeps me updated.'

'As before, staff handling proposals do not have the capacity to communicate in a timely manner.'

'I suppose I go through periods when I become impatient for updates because I am under pressure myself to deliver. That isn't always necessarily the officer's fault. However, there have been times when updates are not forthcoming, even after plenty of time has passed and little to no pressure applied for updates.'

'Projected timescales and any amendments would be helpful to be able to advise residents.'

'Certain officers are very good when it comes to communication and some are not. Continually having to chase for updates is not right and is frustrating to us as Elected Members and our residents.'

'Sometimes – usually when it's either done, or it's the millionth time we've been told we can't do that without much of an explanation.'

'Communication can sometimes be lacking due to the workload of the officer dealing with the process.'

'Communication does happen to an extent but largely depends on the Councillor chasing it. Things just seem to get bogged down in the system, with very patchy communication.'

'Very slow.'

'Poor.'

'As always, communication could be better but it is satisfactory.'

'As a new Ward Councillor, it would have been useful if someone had explained that these budgets were available and scope of usage. Also, how much is made available, how it's calculated, and when allocated.'

'Whilst I receive updates, its usually only when I've requested an update.'

'Communication could be improved, particularly in raising awareness among residents and providing clearer, more consistent information.'

4) Delivery

How satisfied are you with the delivery of approved works?

Satisfied:	13	Neutral:	13	Dissatisfied:	8
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If dissatisfied, has this affected your willingness to propose further schemes?

Yes, significantly:	0	Yes, somewhat:	8	No:	14
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Do you have any other comments on the delivery process?

'Generally have to keep asking officers for updates / dates for schemes to be implemented. Would be great if we could have regular updates of where we are at in the scheme and approximate implementation dates.'

'Needs to be as simple approach and execution as possible and not to over administrate this.'

'The delivery process works well overall, but clearer timelines and more regular updates would improve transparency and reduce delays.'

'Excessive costs are prohibitive and extortionate. Bulb planting costs are totally unrealistic so buy ourselves. Need to select carefully to get value for money for our residents. Save budgets for larger schemes.'

'Generally, I believe it takes longer now to see schemes materialise than when I was a 'newer' member. This can become quite frustrating, however, there have also been instances when a scheme has been delivered incredibly quickly.'

'Needs to be quicker.'

'Occasionally, projects take some time but understand there is not just my ward needing work done.'

'Greater input from Councillors and residents on projects and delivery. Helps with projects that would never be put into practice.'

'Process is completely under-resourced and takes far too long. Reluctant to propose new schemes until we know outcome of previous ones. Once approved, it then joins a long queue to get included on the work programme.'

'Waiting times for delivery are unacceptable and have worsened in my time as a Councillor.'

'Due to the workload of the officer dealing with the Ward and Transport participation budget, I often find it difficult to progress schemes. This is further complicated due to the lack of scope available within Council departments to actually complete the scheme. This can be frustrating and, at present, I have several outstanding schemes awaiting completion.'

'Often takes a long time to process.'

'While delivery is fine, it is the cost of delivery that I have a problem with. Our budgets are modest in size and allow us autonomy in our wards. However, the pricing used by the Council is restrictive and in cases absurd which eats into our budgets.'

'More staff need to be directed in processing requests.'

'There are times when what we have been delivered is not exactly what we asked for. This may be due to Chinese whispers as we do not have direct contact with the person who is designing the job. Also, our inability to interpret the drawings correctly.'

'We just wanted some simple parking bays in the side of a field that wasn't really used for a street with poor parking. With regular bays, we could have had space for four cars. Instead, they gave us bays for parallel parking, with a completely unnecessary path around it, and left it in a mess for months. They send us small technical drawings that are quite difficult to decipher as someone who isn't a specialist in that, and I've made the error of wrongly assuming that it would be what we've asked for and they would tell us if there were changes to it. Instead, we're sent that and have to try and spot the many changes that have been made.'

'The delivery process is frustrating; Members view the allocation of the WTB / CPB as being vitally important to deliver projects outside of the Council-led programme. On each occasion, it is evidenced that a great deal is sliced off to recover costs into the department's budget for resources, particularly salaries and administrative costs.'

5) Budget Management

Are you informed of how much your annual Ward allocation is for CPB and WTB within one financial year?

Yes:	22	No:	12
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Should Members be allowed to carry forward unspent budget?

Yes, always:	29	Yes, but only in exceptional circumstances:	0
Yes, but only with an identified scheme:	5	No:	0

Do you feel the current level of flexibility in how CPB / WTB can be used is appropriate?

Yes:	18	No:	16
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Do you think the ongoing cost of maintaining assets or services introduced through CPB or WTB funding should be met through individual members' budgets rather than central funding?

Yes:	10	No:	24
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Should Ward Councillors continue to be able to pool CPB and / or WTB funding with neighbouring wards to deliver shared schemes?

Yes:	33	No:	1
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Do you have any other comments on the CPB / WTB budget management process?

'Potentially to allow Members greater control of CPB to shop around themselves rather than overinflated Council prices.'

'WTB has limited flexibility in what it can be used for. Often solutions are financially out of reach for this fund.'

'If ward budgets cannot be enhanced across the board, I believe that more money should be put into the most deprived wards where the needs are the greatest.'

'More flexibility on what we use it for.'

(Regarding carry forward of unspent budgets) 'Those schemes identified sometimes require multi-year commitment to setting aside the budget; however, upon delivery, the budget has not taken account of inflation and other costs. The budgets have remained static for a number of years, but with costs rising. This is unacceptable for SBC to support and manage budgets.'

'Budgets are vastly underspent because of difficulty and delays in getting schemes to fruition. Whole process is understaffed, with one staff member covering all wards along with other duties; he does his best but needs support. This is a valuable resource for dedicated Councillors and process should be easier and less time-consuming; we promise residents resolution which can take years to deliver!'

'Quarterly review with officers championing this with relevant Councillors of use, non-use and potential use will be of assistance and help to raise awareness of these budgets, and also the maximum potential that can be used as some residents have a larger expectation of the pot size in cases and are quite surprised when we have to say 'no', or that we feel whilst a genuine ask, the budget will not stretch to cover the ask so we cannot really pursue.'

'Allowing budgets to be carried forward helps with projects that would never be completed. The flexibility is good for helping to achieve goals that, without the budgets, would never be delivered. Working together could be good on certain projects where costs would be inflated and never be completed for residents.'

'The process is generally sound, but improved transparency and clearer oversight would strengthen budget management.'

'Regular updates would be helpful rather than having to request information.'

'We only get budget info if requested. We should receive or view up-to-date info including committed spends.'

'I am aware that colleagues need to save money through multiple years to pay for a large project. Therefore, I don't see the issue for a ward to carry money forward. However, I think that if there appears to be a situation where Members are struggling to find 'things' to spend their funds on, officers should be more proactive to reach out to state what the funding could go towards. Under such circumstances, perhaps the funds could go to something unrelated to the CPB / WTB policy, such as supporting a SBC maintained school with a certain budget pressure, etc.'

'The management process for CPB and WTB has become increasingly difficult and less transparent in recent years. Previously, Councillors received regular and accessible updates on remaining balances and committed spend, allowing wards to plan effectively for both short-term and long-term projects. That process has deteriorated significantly, with Councillors now frequently having to chase officers for basic budget information, often waiting considerable periods for responses.

This lack of readily available financial information makes it unnecessarily difficult for Councillors to understand exactly what funding remains available and what has already been committed. For budgets intended to support responsive local decision-making, this creates avoidable delays and uncertainty.

A further major issue is the excessive internal charging structure applied to CPB and WTB projects. The costs quoted for relatively straightforward interventions are often extraordinarily high and severely restrict what Councillors can realistically deliver within their wards...'

6) Impact & Effectiveness

How much impact do you believe CPB-funded projects have in your ward?

High impact:	25	Low impact:	0	No impact:	0
Moderate impact:	9	Very low impact:	0		

How much impact do you believe WTB-funded projects have in your ward?

High impact:	23	Low impact:	1	No impact:	0
Moderate impact:	10	Very low impact:	0		

Do you have any other comments on the impact & effectiveness of the CPB / WTB process?

'The CPB and WTB are more valuable now than ever. These initiatives allow us to respond to highlighted issues in our ward while also allowing us to pool money from different financial years to facilitate a larger vision / project. Without these budgets, we would lose so much and it would negatively impact on our ability to deliver within our ward.'

'Could be a more streamlined process, with adequate resources.'

'Residents do not always see where their Council tax is spent and value initiatives in their communities. This is a neighbourhood / ward budget that does have an impact.'

'I think the projects that have been done in the wards should be published (perhaps in Stockton News).'

'The CPB and WTB have a clear and positive impact, delivering visible improvements and real benefits to local communities.'

'I don't think the spending outcomes should be considered on how big their impact is. Sometimes funding may go towards a project that doesn't have a big impact, but it does make a difference. Furthermore, had the funding not come from CPB or WTB, it probably wouldn't come from anywhere else.'

'If we could spend these budgets on a wider range of projects then they would have a bigger impact.'

'The relatively small budget limits the impact. However, agility of use on small jobs can have a high impact in a very localised area of the ward.'

'CPB and WTB budgets are one of the last remaining examples of genuine localism within Stockton and should be increased, not reduced or removed. Any move to remove or dilute these budgets would represent a clear centralisation of power away from local communities and Ward Councillors into the hands of the current administration and senior officers.'

'CPB-funded projects have a high impact on my ward as it is what residents are asking for and it matters to them enormously. WTB projects are difficult to fulfil as the cost of many projects that the residents would like far exceed the WTB, such as traffic calming. So I agree that the unused budgets be rolled over to the next year to fund larger schemes.'

'We've been able to do so little because we keep being told 'no'. We have a lot of budget left because we keep being told 'no', often without much explanation. Even if we get something approved now, it's unlikely to be in place for the election, so residents don't think we've done much, when actually we've tried so, so hard to spend it. It also often feels like officers have particular things they would like us to spend it on, because they don't want it coming out of other budgets. The longer I spend as a Councillor, the more it feels like the system isn't designed to benefit us or our residents.'

'I believe they would have more impact if they were completed within a more appropriate timescale. Targets should be set for engineering projects and if not an investigation should happen to find out why and improved processes put in place to correct it so the issue does not arise again.'

'The flexibility of these budgets is one of their greatest strengths. Ward Councillors understand the specific needs of their communities far better than centralised Council processes and are therefore best placed to determine local priorities. The budgets themselves are highly effective. The frustrations and inefficiencies that exist largely stem from internal Council processes, excessive charging structures and poor budget transparency, rather than any failing on the part of Councillors or residents.'

7) Future Direction

Should the CPB and WTB schemes continue in their current form?

Yes:	19	Yes, with major changes:	3
Yes, with minor changes:	12	No:	0

Are you aware that your CPB allocation can be used to part fund or top up your WTB budget to deliver highways and transport schemes?

Yes:	30	No:	3
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Do you have any other comments on the CPB/WTB process?

'The budget should be allocated on areas of need and deprivation. Some affluent wards struggle to find schemes to use up their budgets and end up with things like pretty hanging baskets, whilst other deprived wards, which are desperate for resources, cannot fund anywhere near the demands of their communities.'

'Combine both budgets.'

'We must leave it as it is.'

'I feel that dropped kerbs should be funded from the central budget.'

'Many Councillors deliberately save and pool their allocations over several years in order to deliver larger scale projects and long term improvements that would otherwise never happen in their wards. Removing or reducing these budgets would directly undermine that ability to plan and invest locally.'

'Retaining CPB and WTB is a vital link between elected Cllrs and their local communities, delivering local projects which enhance the area.'

'The biggest issue with both budgets is down to the management and progression of identified schemes.'

'Greater Councillor input is key. Without these budgets, nothing would get done.'

'It is getting more and more difficult to progress schemes. This is not a reflection on any particular staff member as he does his best to cope under enormous pressure. I would like to be kept better informed as to what is happening but am reluctant to bother him and pile on more pressure.'

'Must be kept. Increase amount. Review internal charges.'

'We should allow flexibility in how Councillors spend these budgets, allowing them to get value for Council taxpayers money. Reducing internal costs to realistic levels would help deliver for our residents. We must protect these decisions made locally for the benefit of our communities.'

'The budgets should continue to be separate as there may be confusion between capital and revenue spending.'

'Officer support appears to be under-resourced.'

'I think CPB and WTB should be combined to make one budget, that has the scope of both budgets. I think administratively this would make the process easier.'

'The CPB / WTB process is effective overall, but could benefit from greater consistency, clearer guidance, and continued focus on timely delivery to maximise impact.'

Views of local Town & Parish Councils

4.29. On 29 May 2026, the Committee issued a survey to the Borough's Town Councils (4) and Parish Councils (12) on this scrutiny topic. Six responses were received before the survey closed on 17 July 2026, with anonymised feedback outlined below:

- 1) *Is your Town / Parish Council aware of the **Community Participation Budget (CPB)** that provides SBC Ward Councillors a small budget which, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund eligible projects within their wards?*

'Until our new clerk arrived who has experience of Councillor Neighbourhood Budgets, our Parish Council was not aware.'

'Yes'

'Yes, but unsure of the total amount.'

'Yes'

use their allocation on their "pet projects".

'Currently as a councillor since 2023 then moved onto the Clerk to [redacted] Parish council this community budget has never been mentioned within the meetings that I am aware of.'

- 2) *Is your Town / Parish Council aware of the **Ward Transport Budget (WTB)** that provides SBC Ward Councillors a small budget which, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund eligible projects within their wards?*

'Yes'

'No'

'Yes'

use their allocation on their "pet projects".

'Yes, but unsure of the total amount.'

'The ward councillor has never to my knowledge mentioned that a budget was available from Stockton Borough Council. It may benefit the Parish councils to be given an indication of funding available at the beginning of each new financial year, that does not necessarily mean it is an open pot however I would expect each proposal to stand on its own merits if approved.'

- 3) *Has your Town / Parish Council ever been approached by either SBC or your respective SBC Ward Councillor regarding a CPB or WTB-related project?*

'No we have had to ask and [redacted] use their allocation on their "pet projects".'

'The SBC ward Councillors are invited to send a 'Ward Report' to our monthly Town Council Meetings. We receive regular reports for [redacted] who detail if schemes using their CPB are used. Unfortunately [redacted] Ward Councillors rarely submit such a report and we rely on Social Media to find out about schemes.'

'Yes - both CTB and WTB related projects.'

'Only recently because we have asked for money.'

'Yes'

'Whilst I have been on the [redacted] Parish Council since 2023 the budget schemes have never been mentioned, whilst the [redacted] is a small monetary budget, had I been aware I think a request may have been put forward!!'

4) Can you give any examples of joint-working with SBC / SBC Ward Councillors on CPB or WTB-related schemes?

'In recent years the Parish Council has requested the following items that were subsequently funded by the CPB or WTB:-

- A dropped kerb to improve access to the village hall
- Chevron signs on [REDACTED] - which do seem to have helped to reduce the number of cars running off the road
- Various bins and benches
- Speed limit reductions between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
- Tree Planting.'

'Playground equipment in 2026.'

'Installation of CCTV; potential collaboration with Town Council, SBC and the Police re: antisocial behaviour in [REDACTED].'

'None known.'

'N/A'

'We have asked for money for Christmas lights, benches, playground equipment.'

5) Can you give any examples of your Town / Parish Council undertaking or completing environmental or transport-related schemes that are / were not linked to either the CPB or WTB?

'None, because we did not know we could get this money.'

'The Parish Council carries out environmental work not linked to the CPB on its own land around the Parish such as provision of a community orchard, ongoing provision of a playground and football pitch, landscaping and access improvements to the war memorial site. The only transport related scheme that the Parish Council has funded was the provision of mobile 'no parking' signs for use outside of the village primary school. This project relies on staff having the time to place the signs at the start and the end of the school day. The cost of other transport schemes are too high for the Parish Council to be able to consider funding from its limited resources.'

'No'

'Installed Benches, Wildflower displays, Litter Picking grants.'

'The only work undertaken within [REDACTED] off memory was the traffic calming scheme in October 2004, unfortunately as a resident of [REDACTED] that is the only scheme that comes to mind.'

'We are trying to get SBC to add 2 x toucan crossings, but they ran out of money in 2024 and never bothered to tell the Parish Councils similarly they didn't tell us about [REDACTED] Cycle Path being cut short, it was disgusting to read this in the [REDACTED] Newsletter.'

6) Would your Town / Parish Council welcome more involvement / engagement with the CPB and WTB? If so, how would you like this to happen?

'To share the funding out rather than [REDACTED] use their allocation on their "pet projects".'

'Yes, we would like updates via emails and meetings and for Councillors to be transparent.'

'Yes. This could be done by publishing transparent criteria and a published timeline, receiving regular updates on available funds, approved projects and upcoming opportunities. Each [REDACTED] Town Council ward receives an annual, small, community ward budget. This funding could be used to support projects that are funded through the CPB/WTB, enabling effective partnership working between the Town Council and Stockton Borough Council.'

'My original thoughts still apply that the Parish council are to be made aware of SBC funding at the beginning of the financial year, then potential projects forwarded to be considered on their merits & benefits to the community.'

'Yes. Info on the amount of budget for the area, what has been spent and on what project.'

'The current system of discussing possible projects for the WTB and CPB with SBC Ward Councillors at Parish Council meetings is working well. The Ward Councillors regularly attend the PC meetings and are open to considering requests from the Parish Council that reflect the needs of the local residents.'

7) *Given the existence of the CPB and WTB, what would be the priority for your Town / Parish Council in terms of potential project proposals?*

'Repairing potholes and re-surfacing the roads when the number of potholes becomes un-manageable; effective traffic calming; a CCTV system. An increased CPB and WTB budget that reflects the land area of the Ward. With the rural wards the budgets have to be divided across many villages, all of which have different needs and priorities. In the urban wards one project funded by the CPB or WTB could be of benefit to the majority of the residents in that ward as they all live in a more concentrated area. In the rural wards this is less likely to be the case as one project is often only of benefit to one village.'

The Parish Councillors think it is important that the SBC Ward Councillors continue to have a dedicated budget that they can allocate for use in the Wards they represent. It is felt that if the funding was allocated from a more central fund, as it has been in the past, the rural areas with the lower populations will lose out to the urban areas.'

'Discussions with the Parish councillors at meetings to understand their thoughts on potential schemes, again as stated earlier it has to benefit the community in our local Parishes.'

'Deliver 20mph zone around [REDACTED] Primary School and [REDACTED] Playground, install pedestrian crossings on [REDACTED] Road, contribution towards new playground equipment.'

'Christmas Lights, War Memorial Repairs, Speed Signs, Playground Equipment, Pedestrian Crossings, new litter bins, new benches, grants for allotment toilets.'

- 'Projects that address anti-social behaviour / youth engagement
- Health and wellbeing initiatives
- Initiatives that support families
- Projects that improve local amenities, safety and accessibility.'

'Road adoptions, potholes, traffic calming.'

Views of local residents

- 4.30. On 5 June 2026, the Committee issued a survey to local residents (circulated to existing engagement mechanisms via the SBC Community Engagement Team) on this scrutiny topic. A total of 97 responses were received before the survey closed on 3 July 2026 – feedback and selected quotes are outlined as follows:

- 1) Are you aware of the **Community Participation Budget (CPB)** that provides SBC Ward Councillors a small budget which, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund eligible projects within their wards?

Yes:	30	No:	67
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- 2) Are you aware of the **Ward Transport Budget (WTB)** that provides SBC Ward Councillors a small budget which, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund eligible projects within their wards?

Yes:	16	No:	81
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- 3) Have you ever engaged with your SBC Ward Councillor regarding a CPB or WTB-related project / proposal?

Yes:	8	No:	89
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- 4) If you answered 'yes' to question 3, was the project / proposal implemented? If not, do you know why?

'No. It concerned a proposed cycle path which although local seemed was outside the scope of a CPB or WTB and was passed on to SBC. Subsequent to this it seems to have gone into a black hole.'

'Yes the proposal was implemented. It was in relation to some tree planting to replace trees which had been planted by developers and had then died.'

'Many years ago, myself and a neighbour approached our ward councillor with regards to the antisocial behaviour of youths gathering on the external staircase leading to our flats and wondered if it was possible to have the access gate removed to the foot of the stairs rather than half way up and for the walls to be built up. I am unsure if the councillor did this out of her budget for the area or if it was Stockton Council themselves, but it was implemented.'

'Requested that a street sign be put up at end of road. No one had noticed that there was not one.'

'We have had support with planters, dog bins, dropped kerbs and having a chicane relocated.'

- 5) Do you belong to any resident / community group within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees?

Yes:	15	No:	81	Not Answered:	1
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- 6) If you answered 'yes' to question 5, would your resident / community group welcome more involvement / engagement with these two budget schemes? If so, how would you like this to happen?

'Yes, emails sent to residents.'

'Thornaby warm welcome group may benefit from a scheme.'

'Can you let me have more information regarding the qualifying criteria to receive a grant? I'm a member of two Stockton based choirs... I'm sure both would welcome contributions towards their running costs.'

'Yes, by promoting the contact details.'

'Yes have the details of the two budget schemes emailed.'

'Neighbourhood watch.'

'Yes I think the councillors should reach out to community groups, rather than community groups having to contact them. Perhaps they could raise more awareness of these pots of money and how they can be used by community groups.'

'Yes it would like to be involved. If the ward councillors attended residents association meetings and explained about their budgets and listened to suggestions that would be helpful.'

7) *Given the existence of these two budget schemes, what would be the priority for you in terms of potential project proposals within your locality?*

Comments / suggestions included:

- 'Better transport, fix potholes, better thought on implications of house building especially on A689.'
- 'The Elmtree beck is very badly overgrown - please tidy it up.'
- 'A ward scheme to monitor scooter riders / motorbike riders that annoy everyone.'
- 'As I was unaware of them and do not know what they are for, it is impossible to answer this question.'
- 'Monthly waste skips for residents large unwanted items.'
- 'Knowing more about the schemes, knowing what has been asked for and what's been considered, what the outcomes of suggestions have been, what was successful, how many people benefited.'
- 'Sort the public footpath out between Duneside and Dillside for school children and parents walking across. Not wide enough and murder in winter due to spring / water seepage flooding ground.'
- 'Explaining to the public what these schemes encompass and budgets that are available.'
- 'Security cameras and anti-social behaviour problems.'
- 'Potholes, anti-social behaviour, dog fouling.'
- 'Make their existence or possibility of being proposed and brought into existence known to the resident taxpayers.'
- 'Tidy up the open spaces on Bassleton Lane. Improve cycleways.'
- 'Try to combat pavement parking to support the elderly and disabled.'
- 'Use the budget to set up a community space. Currently, Wynyard has zero community facilities. Failing that, use budget to improve pedestrian / cycle routes from Wynyard to Wynyard Road / Billingham.'
- 'I think someone needs to start looking at the way vehicles park and taking them to prosecution.'
- 'If my Ward Councillors had a newsletter (even an online one), they could keep us in touch with proposals. Although I knew the CPB existed, I have no idea if it has been used in my ward. Never heard of the other fund.'
- 'Provide more fruit trees to create 'free to eat' orchards.'
- 'More dog waste bins, a campaign to get people to pick up their dog waste and request some officers to distribute fines.'
- 'Speed control measures. Village improvements e.g. planters, flower beds and tidied local amenities such as the play park and overall ground maintenance.'

- 4.31. Reflecting on the data provided, the Committee felt there was a clear need for SBC to strengthen communication of these budget schemes to the public, with Members providing examples of how they as Ward Councillors engaged local residents in proposed projects (e.g. letters seeking views, newsletter updates). Officers emphasised the need for residents to understand that these were Member-led schemes rather than Council-led interventions, and that the public recognise that these projects arise from Members listening to the community.

Other Local Authority approaches to Member-led schemes

- 4.32. Comparisons with other North East Local Authority Member-related budget schemes demonstrated variance in the level of funding available, along with differences in governance and control, and project eligibility / purpose. The below graphic highlighted the budget models, key features and key constraints of similar schemes operated by Hartlepool, South Tyneside, Durham, Northumberland, Doncaster and Stockton-on-Tees Councils.

Authority	Budget Model	Key Features	Key Constraints
Hartlepool	✗ No member budget	Previously £3–5k	Strict evidence-led prioritisation
South Tyneside	✓ Pooled CAF budgets	Schemes voted across wards	Less individual control
Durham	✓ £19k per councillor	Broad community schemes	Not highways-focused
Northumberland	✓ Capital MLIS programme	Asset-based schemes	No revenue allowed
Doncaster	✓ £3k per Member	Community & voluntary funding	Limited scope for highways
Stockton	✓ CPB & WTB split	Member input + officer control	Capacity and eligibility constraints

- 4.33. Although funding models differed quite considerably between these six Local Authorities, there were common challenges around revenue and maintenance pressures, expectations versus deliverability, and officer capacity and competing priorities. Highways-related projects were becoming increasingly evidence-led (a national trend), but Member budgets did allow for some flexibility (albeit within limits). It was felt that the current model in Stockton-on-Tees provided a balance between project flexibility and control, but that SBC was experiencing similar challenges to other Local Authorities in terms of operating such budget schemes.

- 4.34. A paper highlighting further Member-related budget schemes offered by Local Authorities across the country (including links for further detail) was also provided to the Committee in May 2026:

- **Cheshire West and Chester Council**

Member Budget Scheme Guidance Note 2026-2027

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/asset-library/member-budget-scheme-guidance-2026-27.pdf>

- £5,000 per Member (2026-2027)
- Published timetable for applications to be received / processed / paid
- Published process for applications and basic criteria which needs to be met (including links to guidance, Cheshire's crowdfunding scheme, and potential external funding support)

- **City of Doncaster Council**

Councillors' Ward Budgets

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/the-council-democracy/councillors-ward-budgets>

- £3,000 per Member
- Can be allocated to voluntary and not-for-profit groups
- Published terms and conditions, and examples of previous allocations

- **City of Stoke-on-Trent**

Ward and Environment Budget Launched for 2024/25

[Building Better Neighbourhoods: Ward and Environment Budget Launched for 2024/25 | Stoke-on-Trent](#)

- 'Ward Budget Spend' included on each Councillor's personal webpage (e.g. https://www.stoke.gov.uk/homepage/84/councillor_spend_breakdown?uid=45712)

Councillor Lynn Watkins			
1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027			
Budget: £5000 Spend : £3648			
All Councillors have a dedicated budget of £5,000 per year to address local priorities and issues within their wards, as identified through their local communities. This is a Councillor-led process, and it is the responsibility of Ward Councillors to promote its availability and encourage individuals and groups to submit suggestions for proposed projects and needed work within their Ward. IMPORTANT - evidence of your account details must be provided when completing the application as this will delay payment.			
Organisation	Amount	Approved date	Project
Food Bank (Stephens Church)	£100	22/09/2026	Contributions towards The foodbank has started back up in St Stephens church and is being run alongside Jericho by the Jericho volunteers
Burslem Remembers Steering Group	£100	22/09/2026	Contributions towards a memorial of those from across the city who lost their lives in WW1. 2 and later of those who worked, lived in Burslem- based on extensive local research
Potteries helping hands dementia group CIC	£150	25/08/2026	Contributions towards a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum

- **City of Westminster**

Apply for Ward Budget funding

<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/about-council/democracy/apply-ward-budget-funding>

- £46,000 per ward (annually)
- Money not used carries-forward to next year (within four-year Council cycle)
- Published case studies and endorsements

- **Hillingdon Council**

Ward budget scheme

<https://pre.hillingdon.gov.uk/strategies-policies-projects/ward-budget-scheme>

- Published breakdown of projects funded from May 2022 – November 2023 (including graphics – see overleaf)

Eastcote

- Refurbishment of the kitchen in St Lawrence Church - £3,000
- A defibrillator for Deane Park and Bessingby Park Bowls Club - £1,175
- The removal of old trees and planting of new trees within the Wild Orchard at Eastcote House Gardens - £700
- Installation of a toddler swing at Pembroke Park Estate, Coleridge Drive - £750
- Paris 2023 trip and additional stationary for 5th Eastcote Methodist Church Guides - £800



- **North Yorkshire Council**
Councillor locality budgets
<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/community-and-volunteering/councillor-locality-budgets>
 - £5,000 per Member (annually)
 - Published funding allocations that have been approved
- **Oxford City Council**
Funding from your local ward councillor
<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/grants/funding-local-ward-councillor>
 - £1,500 per Member (annually)
 - Published spend data
- **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**
Ward Budget Summaries
<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/homepage/233/ward-budget-summaries>
 - Two funds: Community Leadership Fund (CLF) and a ward capital budget
 - CLF budgets are managed by individual councillors – the ward capital budget is managed by all ward councillors collectively
 - Published ward budget summaries (annually)
- **Royal Borough of Greenwich**
Ward budget funding for local projects
https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200245/grants/1954/ward_budget_funding_for_local_projects
 - £16,500 for wards with three Councillors (over four-year Council term); £11,000 for wards with two Councillors
 - Published list of funded projects / previous schemes (including interactive maps)

Please see our interactive map below for examples of projects funded through the current scheme



- **Wealden District Council**
Councillor Ward Budgets Scheme
<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/councillors-and-committees/councillor-ward-budgets-scheme/>
 - £10,000 per Member (annually)
 - Published application deadline
 - Published list of decisions (including reason and amount applied for / approved)

4.35. Again, whilst it was recognised that funding allocations and processes / governance differed from the SBC model, it was also apparent that these schemes were very transparent to the public. Councils elsewhere provided individual Ward Councillor spend (City of Stoke-on-Trent), a breakdown of projects funded along with photographic evidence (Hillingdon), and interactive maps of projects completed through their current scheme (Royal Borough of Greenwich).

5.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

- 5.1. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) provides Elected Members (also known as Ward Councillors) with two budget schemes that, through engagement with the local community, can be used to fund project ideas within their wards. Whilst these are generally small-scale and local in character, they connect directly with resident concerns and can have a significant impact on social and environmental wellbeing. Both budgets are Council funds, where Members influence priorities and officers retain overall responsibility for determining validity and for delivery.
- 5.2. Introduced in 2007 as the 'Small Environmental Improvements Budget' (providing a modest, flexible funding mechanism for local environmental works that were not prioritised through core budgets), this scheme was later re-named the **Community Participation Budget (CPB)** to reflect community participation and Member input, with SBC Ward Councillors promoting projects based on local priorities. The CPB is revenue funding which has been identified within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and supports broader community-focused capital works.
- 5.3. The **Ward Transport Budget (WTB)** began following a SBC Place Select Committee review of the Area Transport Strategy in 2019 which saw the budget move from an area-based pot that Members would bid into to obtain funds to ward-based allocations (making it easier for Members to access). WTB is capital funding from the Council's annual allocation towards highway priorities from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, operates within a structured, evidence-led framework, and is strictly transport-focused (spending is audited to ensure it is directed toward transport priorities).
- 5.4. Both CPB (£200,000 per annum) and WTB (£150,000 per annum) allocations are divided between wards based on population. It is important to note that the CPB can match-fund WTB schemes where there may be a shortfall in available budget. Conversely, WTB funding cannot be used for CPB projects as the latter are more environmentally focused (rather than transport-related).
- 5.5. The CPB and WTB can be directed towards local issues where the concerns of constituents do not meet the evidence thresholds for funding via core budgets. SBC offers further flexibility with regard carry-forward of unspent funding into the following year (subject to Cabinet Member approval), the ability to draw down from the following year's allocation early if a larger project exceeded a single year's funding, and the option of pooling budgets with neighbouring wards. However, a caveat also exists that unspent allocations may be re-absorbed or re-allocated (a decision that would ultimately be taken by the Cabinet Member, depending on the Council's financial position) – something which should prompt all Ward Councillors and their respective residents to ensure potential projects are identified and submitted.
- 5.6. As of mid-2026, the Committee was informed that both budget schemes had a significant underspend for the 2025-2026 and early-2026-2027 period (58% for the CPB and 73% for the WTB), though it was also acknowledged that much of this could be attributed to limitations on the capacity to develop and deliver projects, as well as a frequent need to follow statutory procedures, rather than a lack of demand. Indeed, subsequent evidence showed that numerous proposals (worth an estimated £340,000) had been submitted and were still being assessed or were now in programme.
- 5.7. Whilst there had been a clear effort to provide guidance on the types of projects that would be eligible under each scheme, comments from some Ward Councillors appeared to show an element of confusion and disillusionment around what these budgets should be used for. Concern was raised over allocations being spent on work that, in the view of Ward Councillors, should be covered by core funding rather than the CPB or WTB.

- 5.8. Two key issues were identified following the submission of project ideas; 1) the potential for proposals to create ongoing revenue or maintenance costs, and 2) required officer time spent on developing schemes, many of which are then not progressed through to implementation. Whilst these were important factors, the most pressing concern in relation to receiving and determining submissions centred on the significant limitations in officer resource (with only one dedicated staff member processing proposals from 27 wards and 56 Ward Councillors) – a critical pinch point which, alongside delays sometimes created by the need for statutory duties to be observed, appears to undermine the ability to make local improvements in a timely fashion.
- 5.9. SBC Ward Councillors (34) who responded to a Committee survey were almost unanimously aware of the eligibility criteria for both the CPB and WTB, though some expressed a desire for this to be simplified / widened so the wishes of residents and their representative/s could be satisfied. Other themes that emerged from the feedback received included CPB and WTB allocations having to be used for projects that, in their opinion, should be funded through central budgets, high / excessive quotes (work could / should be done for less), limited officer capacity to process submitted proposals (with delays sometimes leading to increased costs), and the time taken from submission of a proposal to it being realised (if approved). A lack of appropriate updates on progress of a proposal was a frequently aired concern (though 22 of the 34 survey respondents stated they did receive updates) – time will tell if the new online case management platform enables improved communication with Councillors – with only 38% (13) of Elected Members ‘satisfied’ with the delivery of approved works.
- 5.10. Although eliciting a limited response (6 of 16), the Committee’s survey of local Town and Parish Councils revealed both a lack of awareness of these budget schemes from some, and examples where the CPB and / or the WTB had helped fund projects from others. There was a clear appetite for greater clarity and communication with Town and Parish Councils in relation to these funding pots, with numerous suggestions put forward on what they could contribute towards.
- 5.11. A large majority of the 97 residents who responded to a further Committee survey (issued via the SBC Community Engagement Team) were unaware of the CPB (67) and WTB (81), with only eight having engaged with their respective SBC Ward Councillor regarding a CPB or WTB-related project / proposal. There were repeated calls for more information and transparency around these budget schemes (including from those who belonged to resident / community groups), along with a vast range of views on what the allocated funding might be used for. The Committee recognises the number of responses reflects a very small proportion of the Borough’s population, but feedback nevertheless provides an indication of a lack of public awareness which the Council and its Ward Councillors have a responsibility to grow.
- 5.12. Research on similar Member-led budget models used by other Local Authorities demonstrated differences in available funding, governance / control measures, and project eligibility, though also highlighted the same experiences in terms of the creation of revenue / maintenance pressures, expectations versus deliverability, and officer capacity. One key difference between SBC and other Local Authorities was the transparency of such schemes to the public, with several examples provided where local residents were able to see individual Ward Councillor spend (City of Stoke-on-Trent), a breakdown of projects funded along with photographic evidence (Hillingdon), and interactive maps of projects completed through their current scheme (Royal Borough of Greenwich).
- 5.13. The CPB and WTB are laudable funding schemes that have delivered tangible benefits across Stockton-on-Tees, but evidence also suggests they are not working as efficiently as they could / should. It is clear that Ward Councillors greatly value these budgets (with 31 of the 34 survey respondents wanting both schemes to continue in their current form or with minor changes), but there appears to be a fundamental flaw around the level of resource (only one dedicated officer) to support the determination of, and communication around, project proposals, as well as issues in relation to eligibility criteria and quoted costs which need to be considered. Furthermore, given

the essence of these budgets is to address resident concerns, it is incumbent upon both SBC and its Ward Councillors to ensure local people are regularly made aware of the opportunities these schemes offer (though if frustrations already exist around the time taken from submission of a proposal to it being realised, this will only increase the pressure on assessing, determining and implementing projects). These budget schemes continue to be a democratic means of addressing local issues, and greater efficiency in proceeding from proposal to decision (and then, if approved, to delivery) will strengthen their credibility in the eyes of both Ward Councillors and the residents they serve.

Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

- 1) **Both the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and the Ward Transport Budget (WTB) should remain as separate Member-led schemes.**
- 2) **With due regard to the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Ward Councillor survey feedback, SBC reviews and refreshes the guidance available to SBC Ward Councillors on CPB and WTB eligibility criteria and scheme delivery processes (which should include approximate timelines involved in the most common project proposals).**
- 3) **SBC considers creating additional resource to support the processing of CPB / WTB proposals (and subsequent communication on these to SBC Ward Councillors).**
- 4) **SBC continues to develop, and then implements, its new CPB / WTB-related digital case management and submission system (to include a Members Briefing at the appropriate time).**
- 5) **SBC strengthens processes around communication between relevant SBC Ward Councillors and officers designing a CPB / WTB scheme if, after feasibility checks are undertaken, environmental or other factors mean the original scope cannot be achieved.**
- 6) **Annual updates be provided to all SBC Ward Councillors on the state of CPB / WTB proposals (including the in-year and full four-year Council term budget position).**
- 7) **SBC Ward Councillors be supported to increase engagement with local resident and community groups to generate and discuss project proposals at ward level via Ward surgeries and Members newsletters.**
- 8) **To increase wider understanding and promotion of these budget schemes, SBC:**
 - d) **publishes a short annual summary on its website of projects funded through CPB and WTB in each ward.**
 - e) **uses its website to confirm budget allocations, processes for applications, any deadlines for season-specific works, and principal contacts for enquiries.**
 - f) **periodically advertises its CPB / WTB website link to the Borough's Town and Parish Councils, and local residents, via all available communication mediums.**
- 9) **SBC introduces an annual report to the relevant SBC scrutiny committee on the CPB and WTB (allocations, proposals, spend, carry-forward, etc.).**

Glossary of Terms

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CPB	Community Participation Budget (SBC)
DfT	Department for Transport
MTFP	Medium-Term Financial Plan (SBC)
NHT	National Highways & Transport
SBC	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
WTB	Ward Transport Budget (SBC)

DRAFT

Overview & Performance Report: SBC Neighbourhoods (Regulated Services: Trading Standards, Community Safety & Emergency Planning)

Summary

The Committee will receive an overview and performance report from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Neighbourhoods directorate which provides details of key achievements and challenges in 2025-2026 for the Regulated Services department (with specific focus on Trading Standards, Community Safety, and Emergency Planning), as well as any emerging issues within these areas of Council activity.

Detail

1. In 2025, to facilitate the important overview function of scrutiny committees and provide the opportunity to hold SBC Cabinet Members and services to account, a decision was made to resume overview and performance reporting to the Council's Select Committees. It was agreed that this should take place twice-yearly.
2. As part of the consideration of an overview-only report by the Community Safety Select Committee in April 2026 (which focused on the Environmental Health and Licensing functions within the SBC Regulated Services department), it was stated that the reporting of performance measures would not commence until September / October 2026. Performance information is now available and forms a key part of this latest update which covers the Trading Standards, Community Safety, and Emergency Planning functions of the SBC Regulated Services department.
3. A report has been provided in advance and is included within these meeting papers. Relevant SBC Cabinet Members and Directors / Assistant Directors are scheduled to be in attendance to provide a summary and address any Member comments / questions.

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REPORT TO COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

1 OCTOBER 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW REPORT

Summary

The Community Safety and Regulatory portfolio is one which is made up of a range of services, focused on protecting our communities and local businesses. This includes Civic Enforcement, CCTV and Community Safety alongside Trading Standards, Environmental Health and our Licensing Service. Included in this group of services is both Emergency Planning (including the major incident plan) and organisational business continuity.

This report gives an overview of the key achievements and challenges in 2025/26 for Community Safety which incorporates Civic Enforcement and Surveillance alongside Trading Standards.

Key Achievements

1. Community Safety continues to play a critical role in protecting residents, supporting vulnerable people and property making Stockton-on-Tees a safe place to live, work and visit. The service delivers a broad range of functions including antisocial behaviour case management, CCTV, Accredited Alarm Receiving Centre monitoring, civic enforcement, community cohesion, violence reduction activity, business continuity and emergency planning, working closely with Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, NHS partners, housing providers and the voluntary and community sector.
2. During 2025/26 the service continued to deliver effective responses to antisocial behaviour through early intervention, enforcement and problem-solving approaches. Multi-agency working through the Joint Action Group (JAG) process enabled targeted intervention in community hotspots, ensuring resources from the Council and partners were directed towards the issues causing greatest concern to residents. Partnership operations addressing nuisance behaviour, environmental crime, street drinking, off-road bikes and youth-related disorder have contributed to improved community confidence and safer neighbourhoods.
3. The Council's CCTV and Control Room service continued to provide an important public protection function, supporting investigations, safeguarding vulnerable people, assisting emergency services and helping to manage major events across the Borough. The service remains highly regarded by partners and

routinely provides evidential support to police investigations, contributing to the detection and prevention of crime.

4. The Civic Enforcement Team maintained a visible presence within communities and town centres, tackling environmental crime, fly tipping, littering, dog fouling and other issues affecting residents' quality of life. Targeted enforcement activity has been supported by intelligence-led deployments and joint operations with partner agencies.
5. Community cohesion and community engagement work continued to strengthen relationships with local communities and key stakeholders. The service successfully supported several major events across the Borough, helping to ensure they were delivered safely and effectively whilst promoting positive community participation.
6. This year's merger of the Trading Standards and Licensing services has created a stronger, more joined-up regulatory function, bringing together expertise that often overlaps in supporting businesses, protecting consumers and safeguarding communities. The new structure has improved collaboration, streamlined decision-making and created opportunities to share resources more effectively. By working as a single service, we are better placed to respond to emerging issues, deliver efficiencies and provide a more consistent service to residents and businesses. It has been a positive step forward that strengthens our ability to meet both current and future challenges.
7. New Emergency Planning and Resilience arrangements were implemented with current Major Incident Plans maintained and tested throughout the year. The service supported several multi-agency exercises and real incidents, ensuring the Council remained prepared to respond effectively to emergencies and fulfil its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act. Business continuity arrangements across the Council have continued to mature, strengthening organisational resilience and ensuring critical services can be maintained during periods of disruption.



Civic Enforcement Service

8. The Civic Enforcement Service brings together Civic Enforcement Officers and Case Management Officers to provide a coordinated response to antisocial behaviour, environmental crime, unsafe and inconsiderate parking, unauthorised encampments and other issues affecting the safety and quality of life of residents. Civic Enforcement Officers provide a highly visible uniformed presence across town centres, neighbourhoods, parks, schools and identified hotspot locations. Alongside patrol and enforcement duties, officers gather evidence and intelligence, engage with residents and businesses, support vulnerable individuals and work closely with Case Management Officers to progress appropriate interventions.
9. Case Management Officers provide the problem-solving and investigative capacity behind the frontline service. They coordinate responses to persistent and complex antisocial behaviour, work with victims and affected communities, prepare evidence for formal action and bring together Council services, the Police, housing providers and other partners. This integrated model enables the service to move beyond responding to individual incidents and to address repeat offenders, repeat victims and locations experiencing disproportionate levels of harm.
10. During 2025/26, the service continued to deliver a combination of early intervention, education, visible patrols and proportionate enforcement. Permanent investment in Civic Enforcement Officers secured additional frontline capacity, with thousands of patrol hours delivered across the Borough. Officers supported targeted activity through the Joint Action Group process and initiatives including Operation Shield, providing coordinated patrols with Cleveland Police and partners in Stockton Town Centre and supporting the preparation and safe opening of Stockton Waterfront Urban Park.
11. Performance information demonstrates the scale of activity delivered through this partnership approach. During 2025/26, 3,181 antisocial behaviour hotspot patrols were recorded and 11,092 reports of antisocial behaviour were received across Police and Council systems. The combined reporting rate remained the lowest in Cleveland, although levels of reporting must be considered alongside public confidence and willingness to report concerns. Recorded Public Spaces Protection Order activity included instructions, warnings, fixed penalty notices and confiscations, reflecting the emphasis placed on securing compliance before progressing to formal enforcement where appropriate.
12. The impact of targeted activity has varied between locations, reflecting the different causes and complexity of local antisocial behaviour. Between July 2025 and March 2026, recorded antisocial behaviour reduced by 34.21% in Ropner, 10.17% in Billingham and 2.63% in Norton. Stockton Town Centre experienced a 5.88% increase over the same period, demonstrating the continuing concentration and complexity of demand within the town-centre

environment. In the six months to May 2026, shop theft in Stockton Town Centre reduced by 17.8%.

13. The service also reviewed and strengthened the Public Spaces Protection Orders for Stockton Town Centre and Norton. The revised arrangements respond to local evidence and provide powers to address behaviours including aggressive begging, street drinking, public urination and defecation, dog fouling and the irresponsible use of off-road or electric bikes and scooters. Public consultation attracted 528 responses, with 93% of respondents identifying begging as an issue in Stockton Town Centre and 96% identifying street drinking as a problem. A total of 87% considered that the proposed Stockton Town Centre Order would increase their sense of safety.
14. Case Management Officers have worked alongside Civic Enforcement Officers to secure longer-term outcomes in the most persistent cases. This has included gathering and coordinating evidence to support warnings, statutory notices, closure activity and applications for court orders. One recent example involved evidence supplied by the team contributing to a three-year Criminal Behaviour Order restricting a persistent offender from entering Norton Village following repeated antisocial behaviour and racial abuse directed towards a Civic Enforcement Officer.
15. The service continues to balance a significant range of competing demands. Regular resources are required around schools, town centres and other known pressure points, while officers must remain available to respond to environmental crime, antisocial behaviour, unauthorised encampments and emerging community concerns. Some locations require double-crewed deployments due to operational risks, reducing the geographical coverage available at any one time. Frontline officers can also face verbal abuse, intimidation, online harassment and physical violence when carrying out their duties, reinforcing the importance of officer safety, appropriate staffing arrangements and organisational support.
16. Overall, the combination of visible enforcement and specialist case management has strengthened the Council's ability to respond to immediate community concerns while also addressing the underlying causes of persistent antisocial behaviour. Future priorities will include maintaining intelligence-led patrols, embedding the revised Public Spaces Protection Orders, strengthening case-management and evidential processes, developing the use of technology and continuing to work with partners to target repeat offenders, victims and locations.

Security and Surveillance (CCTV)

17. The Security and Surveillance Service provides a critical public protection function for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, operating a modern CCTV and

Control Room service that supports crime prevention, public safety, safeguarding, emergency response and the effective management of public spaces. Working closely with Cleveland Police, emergency services, Council services and a wide range of partners, the service provides 24-hour monitoring and coordination capabilities that contribute significantly to community safety outcomes. The service plays an important role in supporting investigations, protecting vulnerable individuals, monitoring high-risk locations and providing reassurance to residents, businesses and visitors.

18. The service is delivered through a team of skilled Control Room Operatives who monitor the Council's CCTV network, respond to incidents in real time and coordinate information sharing with operational partners. The team provides direct support to Civic Enforcement Officers, Police officers and emergency responders, enabling rapid deployment to incidents and supporting effective decision-making through live intelligence and evidential footage. The Control Room also acts as an important communication hub during major incidents, severe weather events, community events and other situations requiring coordinated multi-agency responses.
19. During 2025/26, the service continued to provide extensive support to Cleveland Police investigations, Council enforcement activity and safeguarding interventions. CCTV operators routinely assisted in locating vulnerable and missing persons, monitoring high-risk incidents, identifying suspects and preserving evidential footage for criminal investigations. The service also supported targeted partnership initiatives including Operation Shield and wider town-centre safety activity, providing live intelligence to officers deployed within Stockton Town Centre and other identified hotspot locations.
20. The scale of activity delivered by the service demonstrates its importance to both public safety and operational effectiveness. During 2025/26, the Control Room monitored 589 Open space and 481 Remote site CCTV cameras across the Borough, supported 6510 live incidents, fulfilled 2402 evidential requests from Cleveland Police and partner agencies and assisted with 1036 Arrests. CCTV footage directly contributed to investigations involving antisocial behaviour, violence, retail crime, environmental offences and public order incidents, ensuring partners were able to access high-quality evidential material when required.
21. The CCTV network played a significant role in supporting efforts to tackle antisocial behaviour, retail crime, violence and public disorder. Through close partnership working with Cleveland Police, Civic Enforcement Officers and local businesses, the service contributed to intelligence-led operations designed to improve perceptions of safety and reduce offending. This partnership approach has been particularly important within Stockton Town Centre, where the concentration of activity, footfall and vulnerability requires a coordinated and highly visible response from multiple agencies. The service

also supported wider reductions in shop theft and antisocial behaviour through real-time monitoring and evidential support to operational partners.

22. Alongside its community safety role, the service supported the safe delivery of major events across the Borough, including activity associated with Stockton Waterfront Urban Park and wider town-centre events. CCTV operators provided situational awareness, monitored crowd movements, supported emergency planning arrangements and enabled a coordinated response to emerging issues. During the year the service has supported all planned events across Stockton on Tees, providing reassurance to organisers, emergency services and the public whilst helping ensure events were delivered safely and effectively.
23. The service also continues to make a significant contribution to safeguarding and vulnerability management. Operators regularly identify individuals who may be at risk due to mental health concerns, exploitation, substance misuse, rough sleeping or other vulnerabilities and work with partners to ensure appropriate interventions are made. This preventative role often takes place away from public view but remains an important element of the service's daily activity, helping vulnerable people access timely support and reducing the risk of harm.
24. As demand continues to evolve, the service faces increasing expectations regarding the use of technology, evidential standards, information governance and resilience. The growing complexity of investigations, increasing public expectations and the need to maintain ageing infrastructure require ongoing investment and modernisation. Maintaining a skilled workforce capable of operating increasingly sophisticated systems while supporting partners across a broad range of incident types also remains a key priority. Future investment will focus on ensuring the CCTV estate remains reliable, resilient and capable of meeting modern evidential and operational requirements. The CCTV Control Room also provides an in-house, professionally qualified drone service, delivering operations in support of anti-social behaviour (ASB) investigations, surveys, environmental monitoring, and event management. The service regularly supports the police and partner agencies, providing aerial intelligence and operational assistance when required.
25. Overall, the Security and Surveillance Service remains a highly valued and effective component of the Borough's community safety infrastructure. By combining technology, skilled operators and strong partnership working, the service continues to protect vulnerable people, support law enforcement, enhance public safety and contribute to the Council's wider ambitions for safe, healthy and resilient communities. Future priorities will include reviewing CCTV infrastructure requirements, strengthening analytical capabilities, maximising the benefits of emerging technologies and ensuring the service remains resilient, effective and responsive to changing community needs.



Trading Standards

26. The Trading Standards Service plays a vital role in protecting consumers, supporting legitimate businesses and maintaining confidence in local markets. The Service delivers a wide range of statutory functions including product safety, fair trading, intellectual property enforcement, doorstep crime prevention, age-restricted sales, food standards, animal feed enforcement and metrology. Working closely with regional and national partners, the Police, HMRC, Border Force, businesses and neighbouring authorities, the Service helps ensure that residents are protected from rogue traders, scams, counterfeit goods and unsafe products whilst supporting a fair and competitive trading environment.
27. The Service adopts an intelligence-led approach to regulation and enforcement, targeting resources towards areas of greatest risk and harm. Officers work proactively with businesses to improve compliance through advice, education and engagement whilst taking robust enforcement action where necessary. This balanced approach helps businesses understand and meet their legal obligations whilst ensuring that consumers are protected from unfair or illegal trading practices.
28. During 2025/26, the Service continued to support vulnerable residents through interventions targeting scams, fraud, doorstep crime and financial exploitation. Officers worked with partners to identify and safeguard individuals at risk, providing advice, support and preventative interventions designed to reduce harm and build resilience within local communities. The Service also continued to support the National Trading Standards Scams Team and regional intelligence arrangements, contributing to wider efforts to tackle organised criminality and consumer detriment.
29. In January 2025, working in partnership with Safer Communities and other local Trading Standards Services, a Financial Fraud Advocate (FFA) was established, hosted by the Victim Care and Advice Service. The role of the FFA is to help fraud and scam victims recover their financial losses and to reduce the risk of repeat victimisation. In its first 1½ years of operation up to June 2026, the FFA has hit the £1million barrier, recovering a grand total of £1,285,666.88, including £358,620.16 for fraud victims within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

30. The scale of activity delivered by the Service demonstrates its importance in protecting both consumers and legitimate businesses. During 2025/26, Trading Standards Officers carried out 1722 enforcement actions, including 360 inspections and compliance visits. In addition, the team investigated 820 complaints and service requests and helped local consumers obtain £164,270 in redress following the supply of faulty or misdescribed goods and services.
31. Protecting children and vulnerable people remains a significant area of focus. Throughout the year, the Service undertook targeted activity relating to age-restricted products, including alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, knives and other regulated goods. During 2025/26, Trading Standards carried out 8 underage sales test purchase exercises using young volunteers to test whether retailers were complying with their responsibilities concerning the sale of age restricted products. In total 94 test purchase attempts were carried out with a young volunteer, with 18 of these resulting in a positive sale, giving a failure rate of 19%. Underage sales test purchasing exercises, retailer engagement and educational activity are used to promote compliance and reduce the risk of harm to young people. Where necessary, formal enforcement action was taken against businesses that failed to meet their legal responsibilities.
32. The Service also played an important role in supporting wider community safety priorities through partnership working with Community Safety, Licensing, Environmental Health, Cleveland Police and regional enforcement agencies. Joint operations targeted illicit tobacco sales, underage sales, nuisance premises and criminality linked to the local economy. This collaborative approach enabled intelligence to be shared effectively and ensured that enforcement activity addressed both the symptoms and underlying causes of community harm. In 2025/26, targeted joint operations within the Borough resulted in the seizure of 512,620 illicit and counterfeit cigarettes, 97.7kg of hand rolling tobacco and 1329 illegal vapes.
33. In addition to enforcement activity, the Service continued to provide significant support to local businesses. Officers delivered advice, guidance and regulatory support to help businesses comply with consumer protection legislation, product safety requirements and fair-trading standards. In 2025/26, officers provided advice and guidance on a range of Trading Standards issues to 305 businesses across the Borough. This preventative approach helps create a level playing field for compliant businesses whilst reducing the need for formal enforcement action.
34. The Service also contributes to the Council's broader public protection responsibilities through specialist functions relating to food standards, animal feed enforcement, and legal metrology. During the year, officers undertook 381 inspections and interventions across these specialist areas. These actions are designed to maintain high standards of compliance and protect public confidence in local businesses and supply chains. Activity in these areas often

takes place away from public view but remains an important component of the Council's regulatory responsibilities.

35. Trading Standards will continue to take formal enforcement action where circumstances warrant it, to protect both consumers and legitimate businesses. This can occur when the trader concerned has engaged in fraudulent activity, has deliberately or persistently contravened legal obligations, posed a serious safety risk or caused significant consumer detriment. In 2025/26, the Service obtained 11 closure orders under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, against premises involved in the supply of illicit and counterfeit tobacco and vaping products. Officers also used new powers under the Tobacco Products (Traceability and Security Features) Regulations 2019 to make two 'Track and Trace' referrals to HMRC, following the seizure of illicit tobacco. Both traders subsequently received £5000 fines from HMRC. Another trader involved in the supply of illicit tobacco was sentenced to 2½ years imprisonment in his absence at Teesside Crown Court in July 2025, following the conclusion of a long and complex investigation.
36. In another long running case at Teesside Crown Court in July 2025, a rogue builder was sentenced to 44 weeks imprisonment suspended for 18 months and ordered to undertake 120 hours of unpaid community work and pay £41,321 in compensation to the victims, after pleading guilty to unfair trading offences in relation to substandard and unfinished building work. In another rogue trader case carried out in conjunction with the Regional Investigations Team, two directors of a home improvement company in Billingham were ordered to pay £27,336 in compensation to victims under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.
37. As consumer behaviour, technology and criminality continue to evolve, Trading Standards faces increasing challenges associated with online marketplaces, social media-enabled fraud, counterfeit goods, and increasingly sophisticated scams. These issues are exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, with more residents vulnerable to rogue traders and mass marketing scams. The Service must continue to adapt its enforcement and intelligence capabilities to respond effectively to emerging threats whilst maintaining its statutory responsibilities across a broad range of regulatory functions.
38. Given the broad remit of Trading Standards, new legislation is often on the horizon. The Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 in particular, will present a challenge over the next year or so, creating a generational tobacco ban on 1st January 2027 and bringing in a range of new controls over tobacco products, nicotine products, herbal smoking products and non-nicotine vapes.
39. The sale of illicit goods is now often not an isolated issue, with Organised Crime Groups exploiting high streets up and down the country and using local businesses to front criminal networks. This issue has recently been highlighted

by BBC reporting and has caught the attention of policy makers in Parliament. Trading Standards Officers are at the forefront of this and the challenges that it provides in terms of stretched resources, targeted intelligence-led enforcement, increased joint working initiatives and issues around officer safety and wellbeing.

40. The Service has been successful in obtaining funding from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for a Tobacco and Vapes Apprentice and the successful applicant is due to start by the end of October 2026. Whilst the role will be focussed on tobacco and vapes enforcement, work across the full range of Trading Standards duties will also take place, with a view to completing the Level 6 Trading Standards Apprenticeship by April 2029.
41. Trading Standards is a small specialist team consisting of 8 officers, including 3 current Apprentices working to complete the Trading Standards Officer qualification. Whilst this presents a challenge, it highlights the importance that the Service has placed on a 'grow your own' approach to help future-proof service delivery in a specialist area that is traditionally hard to recruit into. This is particularly important given the age profile within the team, with 3 of 5 qualified officers aged 58 or above and likely to retire in the next year or so. Workforce sustainability will be an issue going forward that will need to be managed carefully.
42. The Trading Standards Service remains a highly effective and valued public protection service. By combining intelligence-led enforcement, business support, consumer protection and strong partnership working, the Service continues to safeguard residents, support economic confidence and contribute to the Council's ambition of creating safe, healthy and resilient communities. Future priorities will include strengthening intelligence capabilities, tackling emerging consumer threats, supporting vulnerable residents, enhancing regional collaboration and ensuring businesses are supported to meet changing regulatory requirements.



Challenges

43. The nature of community safety and regulated services continues to evolve, with increasing complexity and demand across a range of issue areas. While overall partnership arrangements remain strong, demand associated with antisocial behaviour, vulnerability, exploitation, mental health-related incidents and repeat locations continue to place pressure on resources.
44. The Service operates within a challenging financial environment whilst responding to increasingly complex cases requiring intensive partnership intervention. Many community safety issues have broader social causes and require sustained multi-agency responses rather than single-service solutions, creating demands on officer time and partnership resources.
45. Community safety issues are becoming increasingly complex and often involve multiple underlying causes including vulnerability, mental health, substance misuse, exploitation, poverty and social exclusion. As a result, incidents rarely sit within the remit of a single organisation and increasingly require coordinated responses involving the Council, Police, health services, housing providers and voluntary sector partners. While partnership arrangements remain strong, the intensity and duration of interventions required to support individuals, families and communities continues to place pressure on frontline services and specialist case management resources.
46. Although long-term crime levels have reduced and partnership activity continues to deliver positive outcomes, antisocial behaviour remains one of the issues most frequently raised by residents. Public expectations for visible enforcement, rapid intervention and immediate resolution continue to grow, particularly within town centres, neighbourhood hotspots and public spaces. Balancing community expectations against available resources requires careful prioritisation, effective communication and a continued focus on intelligence-led deployment to ensure resources are targeted where they can have the greatest impact.
47. The Borough's town centres continue to experience concentrated levels of demand associated with antisocial behaviour, vulnerability, retail crime, street drinking and wider community safety concerns. Significant investment in regeneration, including Stockton Waterfront Urban Park, has increased the importance of maintaining safe, attractive and welcoming public spaces. This requires sustained partnership activity involving Civic Enforcement, CCTV, Police, businesses and other stakeholders to manage both actual crime and public perceptions of safety.
48. The Council's CCTV and surveillance infrastructure remains a critical component of the Borough's public protection arrangements. However, advances in technology, increasing evidential standards, cyber resilience requirements and public expectations regarding service capability require ongoing investment. Maintaining and modernising CCTV systems, control room

technology, communications infrastructure and associated digital capabilities remains a significant challenge within a constrained financial environment. Failure to modernise risks reducing operational effectiveness and limiting the ability of services to respond to emerging threats and opportunities.

49. Across Community Safety, Trading Standards, CCTV, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, services rely upon experienced and highly skilled officers operating within increasingly specialist disciplines. Areas such as safeguarding, serious violence, exploitation, intelligence development, regulatory enforcement, emergency response and resilience planning require specialist knowledge and ongoing professional development. Recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff remains challenging across the sector, particularly where demand and complexity continue to increase. Maintaining workforce resilience, succession planning and organisational knowledge will remain an important priority over the coming years. It is also true that there is both a national and local trend in terms of violence and threats faced by these employees. Often taking organised crime groups head on, this leaves officers as target for intimidation and threats of violence which impacts on employee retention.
50. The regulatory environment continues to evolve, creating both opportunities and challenges for local authorities. Emerging legislation and national policy developments relating to antisocial behaviour, violence against women and girls, serious violence, public protection (vapes and tobacco), consumer protection, online harms, resilience and public safety (Martyn's Law) are likely to generate additional responsibilities and expectations. Services must remain agile and responsive to ensure that policies, procedures, training and operational practices remain compliant whilst continuing to deliver effective outcomes for residents and businesses.

Emerging Issues

51. The continued development of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) initiatives, serious violence duties and vulnerability-focused interventions will require sustained partnership effort and resources. Increasing expectations from national policy and legislation are likely to generate additional demand for preventative and enforcement activity.
52. The growing use of technology in both criminality and community engagement presents opportunities and challenges. The Service will need to continue adapting to emerging threats whilst ensuring CCTV, intelligence and analytical capabilities remain effective.
53. Changes in patterns of antisocial behaviour, including the use of social media to organise gatherings, nuisance behaviour and potential community tensions, will require increasingly flexible and intelligence-led responses.

54. There is also an increasing emphasis nationally on prevention, early intervention and place-based approaches to community safety. Strengthening community resilience, supporting vulnerable individuals at an earlier stage and addressing the root causes of crime and antisocial behaviour will continue to shape service priorities over the coming years.

Stockton-on-Tees Plan – Progress 2026

Community Safety

Summary

Following Council agreement of the Stockton-on-Tees Plan in 2024, it was agreed that The Community Safety Select Committee would receive annual performance updates of the Tier 2 outcomes.

The indicators attached (Appendix 1) provide The Community Safety Select Committee with an update on the Council's progress against the high-level outcomes identified in the Stockton-on-Tees Plan.

Recommendations

The Community Safety Select Committee is recommended to note and comment on the update attached at Appendix 1.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To Ensure Transparency and Accountability:

Regular reporting against the Stockton-on-Tees Plan enables Members to monitor progress, assess the effectiveness of service delivery, and ensure that the Council remains accountable to residents and partners.

2. To Support Evidence-Based Decision Making:

The report provides an overview of outcomes, highlighting both achievements and areas requiring improvement. This evidence base supports informed decision-making and prioritisation of resources.

3. To Drive Continuous Improvement:

Identifying areas for improvement allows for timely intervention and the implementation of corrective actions. This promotes a culture of continuous improvement across services and contributes to better outcomes for communities.

4. To Align with Strategic Priorities:

Monitoring progress against the Stockton-on-Tees Plan ensure that the organisation remains focused on delivering its strategic objectives and that progress is aligned with the Council's vision and long-term goals.

5. To Inform Future Planning and Budgeting:

Insights from the report can inform future service planning, policy development, and budget setting, ensuring that resources are targeted effectively to meet community needs.

6. To Highlight and Celebrate Success:

Recognising areas of strong progression helps to motivate staff, share best practice, and reinforce the Council's commitment to delivering high-quality services.

Detail

1. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan (2024) set a Vision for the future of the Borough, developed with communities, for communities:
 - a. Our Vision: Stockton-on-Tees is home. It's a warm and friendly place where we welcome others and come together as a single community. We are a diverse and inspiring Borough, culturally rich and with confidence in a future that we can all share and be proud of. At the economic heart of the Tees Valley, we are a dynamic, safe and healthy place where everyone can grow and succeed. We will continue to work together to reduce inequalities and barriers to opportunity.
2. The wider plan was developed to reflect the drivers and priorities that can turn our Vision into reality, and included a picture of success, underpinned by key outcome measures (What success looks like – Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council).
3. Outcomes centre around our priority areas of:
 - The Best Start in Life to Achieve Big Ambitions
 - Healthy and Resilient Communities
 - A Great Place to Live, Work and Visit
 - An Inclusive Economy
 - A Sustainable Council
4. Appendix 1 provides the first year's progress report against key outcome measures, it includes:
 - a. The vision and priorities
 - b. Key indicators (current position and direction of travel)
 - c. Activity to date
 - d. Planned activity
 - e. Key metrics

5. This includes:

- a. Areas where the Council performs above the national average, and demonstrates strong performance trends aligned to our ambitions:

	Indicator
9	Deaths attributable to particulate air pollution (particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter [PM2.5])
20	Number of fly tipping incidents per 1,000 population

- b. Areas where the Council shows strong performance relative to national averages, however there is a need to manage local trends to improve outcomes:

	Indicator
15	Drugs and alcohol: Proportion of the opiate and/or crack prevalent population (18+) that are not in treatment (unmet need)
16	Drugs and alcohol: proportion of alcohol-dependent population (18+) that are not in treatment (unmet need)

- c. Areas where the Council demonstrates strong performance trends aligned to our ambitions:

	Indicator
12	Percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
21	Percentage of people who agree adults in their communities can be trusted

- d. Known areas of challenge that inform targeted activity to improve outcomes:

	Indicator
3	% of proactive licensing activities that resulting in safeguarding, compliance or risk-reduction outcomes
13	Rate of violent crimes per 1,000 population

14	Rate of crimes and ASB incidents recorded in an area per 1,000 population [MONTHLY]
18	Hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions (narrow) (KJS amend from A&E alcohol) (DSR per 100,000 population)
19	Rate of alcohol-specific mortality (DSR per 100,000 population)

e. Indicators that are specific to SBC with a positive trend:

	Indicator
1	Number of live licences across all regimes
2	Number of reactive service requests received
4	Number of requests to pest control regarding public nuisance pest treatment
5	Number of stray dogs taken into our care
6	Food premises requiring inspection as determined by risk analysis and statutory FSA inspection framework
7	Number of complaints received regarding potential statutory nuisance requiring investigation
8	Number of complaints received regarding suspected food safety/hygiene issues/offences
10	Number of live investigations across all Trading Standards legislation
11	Total requests for service to Community Safety

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

6. The Council Plan drew from a wide range of data and intelligence. But overall, it represents the voice of the Borough. It has been developed with communities, for communities. Intelligence has been gathered from:
 - Our Residents Survey
 - Conversations with Community Groups
 - Face-to-face interviews
 - Out Viewpoint Panel
7. Key themes from our conversation with communities, and which are reflected in the Council Plan are:
 - Creating a Borough to be proud of that encourages more young people to stay here
 - Creating employment opportunities and raising aspirations
 - Creating safe communities and reducing anti-social behaviour in town centres
 - Good Schools and Colleges
 - Good transport links – including cycleways & pathways
 - Joint working with communities and creating an inclusive Borough
8. Working closely with our communities and partners will help us meet the needs of our residents and make Stockton-on-Tees a place we can all be proud of. Some examples of how we will measure success include:
 - The number of children in poverty
 - Educational attainment
 - Feelings of belonging in communities
 - Crime rates & perceptions of crime
 - Satisfaction with employment & accommodation
 - Employment rates & productivity

Corporate Parenting Implications

9. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan's strategic priorities will support the Local Authority to deliver its statutory functions and enable it to be an effective Corporate Parent.

Financial Implications

10. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan is aligned with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. Financial Implications will be considered through any proposed action to deliver and approval sought at that point.

Legal Implications

11. Any and all legal implications will be identified through careful action planning throughout the delivery of the Stockton-on-Tees Plan noting, in particular, that growing pressures on communities and public services will require effective management of all Council's resources, and that, any decisions made pursuant to the Council Plan are also made in accordance with the law to minimise any risk of legal challenge.

Risk Assessment

12. The Stockton-on-Tees Plan provides the vision or the future of the Borough. The greatest risk associated with the Stockton-on-Tees Plan is that the development has not been sufficiently robust and that the wrong priorities have been identified. This risk has been mitigated by a detailed development process including considerable consultation with our communities, partners and internally with Members and officers.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward Councillors

All Stockton-on-Tees Wards are affected.

Background Papers

Council Plan (Council Report, November 2024)

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Appendix 1 – Measuring Progress

a) The vision, priorities and key indicators



Community Safety & Regulated Services		Service Priorities				
		THE BEST START IN LIFE TO ACHIEVE BIG AMBITIONS	HEALTHY AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES	A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT	AN INCLUSIVE ECONOMY	SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL
Unique Indicator Code	Priority	Linked to above priority				
CSRS001	Ensuring Stockton on Tees is a place where people <i>feel welcome</i> and are healthy, safe and protected from harm	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
CSRS002	Working in partnership <i>and engaging in problem solving activity</i> with strategic partners across the borough, regionally and nationally	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

b) Key indicators (current position and direction of travel)

	Indicator	Latest data	Trend
1	Number of live licences across all regimes	3123	
2	Number of reactive service requests received	2032	
3	% of proactive licensing activities that resulting in safeguarding, compliance or risk-reduction outcomes	58%	
4	Number of requests to pest control regarding public nuisance pest treatment	1912	
5	Number of stray dogs taken into our care (moved from T3)	312	
6	Food premises requiring inspection as determined by risk analysis and statutory FSA inspection framework [change to %]	757	
7	Number of complaints received regarding potential statutory nuisance requiring investigation [change to %]	1669	
8	Number of complaints received regarding suspected food safety/hygiene issues/offences	654	
9	Deaths attributable to particulate air pollution (particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter [PM2.5])	4.3%	
10	Number of live investigations across all Trading Standards legislation	819	
11	Total requests for service to Community Safety	18,137	
12	Percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live	67%	
13	Rate of violent crimes per 1,000 population	37.3	
14	Rate of crimes and ASB incidents recorded in an area per 1,000 population [MONTHLY]	12.01	
15	Drugs and alcohol: Proportion of the opiate and/or crack prevalent population (18+) that are not in treatment (unmet need)	42.8%	
16	Drugs and alcohol: proportion of alcohol-dependent population (18+) that are not in treatment (unmet need)	72.3%	
17	Alcohol related crime and disorder		
18	Hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions (narrow) (KJS amend from A&E alcohol) (DSR per 100,000 population)	705	
19	Rate of alcohol-specific mortality (DSR per 100,000 population)	20.1	
20	Number of fly tipping incidents per 1,000 population	11.8	
21	Percentage of people who agree adults in their communities can be trusted (from from TS to CS)	36%	

b) Activity to date

7,11,12,14,21	Continued delivery of multi-agency Joint Action Group (JAG) activity targeting antisocial behaviour hotspots and community concerns.
2,3,7,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,21	Supported investigations through the Council's CCTV and Control Room service, providing evidential material and operational support to Cleveland Police and partner agencies.
2,4,5,7,11,12,20,21	Delivered targeted civic enforcement operations addressing littering, fly tipping, dog fouling and environmental crime.
7,11,12,14,21	Coordinated partnership responses to persistent and complex antisocial behaviour cases, achieving positive outcomes for affected residents.
2,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,21	Supported safeguarding activity through information sharing and participation in multi-agency risk management arrangements.
2,10,11,12,21	Delivered community engagement initiatives to address local concerns and promote community cohesion.
11,12,21	Supported the safe delivery of major borough events through planning, coordination and operational deployment.
12,21	Maintained effective emergency planning arrangements and participated in multi-agency emergency exercises.
11	Reviewed and updated business continuity plans across Council services.
3,13,14,15,16,17,18,19	Delivered preventative work in relation to violence reduction, vulnerability and community safety priorities.
7,11,12,21	Worked with housing providers to resolve neighbourhood issues and improve resident outcomes.
14,15,16,17,18,19	Supported enforcement activity relating to street drinking and associated public space concerns.
11,12, 13,14,21	Continued monitoring and management of community tensions across the Borough.
11,13,14	Developed intelligence-led approaches to identifying emerging community safety risks.
11,12, 13,14,21	Maintained strong partnership working through the Safer Stockton Partnership and associated delivery groups.

d) Planned activity

12,14, 15,16,21	Continue delivery of targeted antisocial behaviour interventions and hotspot-based problem solving.
12,13,14,21	Further develop partnership approaches through the Joint Action Group framework.
12,21	Implement priority actions arising from Community Safety Partnership strategic assessments.
12,13,21	Continue strengthening responses to violence against women and girls.
13	Deliver further activity linked to the Serious Violence Duty and prevention agenda.
12,21	Expand community engagement and resident participation opportunities.
2,11	Review and enhance CCTV capability and future infrastructure requirements.
12,13,14	Continue targeted civic enforcement operations based on local intelligence and resident feedback.
12,21	Develop further analytical and intelligence capabilities to support evidence-based interventions.
12,21	Deliver community cohesion initiatives supporting inclusion and community confidence.
12,21	Further strengthen safeguarding links across partner organisations.
3,7,10,11,12,15,16,17,18,19,21	Continue support for town centre management and public space safety initiatives.
11,12,21	Enhance business continuity arrangements and organisational resilience planning.
12,21	Participate in regional and local emergency planning exercises.
12,21	Review major incident preparedness arrangements and associated plans.
11	Continue workforce development, training and succession planning activity.
13,14	Strengthen preventative approaches focused on repeat victims, locations and offenders.
3,4,5,6,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19	Support delivery of Council Plan outcomes relating to safe, healthy and resilient communities.
4,20	Continue partnership work addressing environmental crime and quality-of-life issues.
13,14	Monitor emerging national policy and legislative developments affecting community safety services.

e) Key Metrics

	Indicator	Polarity	Previous 2 years (R-L)		Previous year	Latest data	Trend
1	Number of live licences across all regimes	High is good	2358	2789	2891	3123	
2	Number of reactive service requests received	High is good	1572	1805	2032		
3	% of proactive licensing activities that resulting in safeguarding, compliance or risk-reduction outcomes	High is good	81%	86%	86%	58%	
4	Number of requests to pest control regarding public nuisance pest treatment	Low is good	1616	1968	1924	1912	
5	Number of stray dogs taken into our care (moved from T3)	Low is good	337	347	358	312	
6	Food premises requiring inspection as determined by risk analysis and statutory FSA inspection framework [change to %]	Low is good	697	697	721	757	
7	Number of complaints received regarding potential statutory nuisance requiring investigation [change to %]	Low is good	1686	1604	1511	1669	
8	Number of complaints received regarding suspected food safety/hygiene issues/offences	Low is good	738	759	789	654	
9	Deaths attributable to particulate air pollution (particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter [PM2.5])	Low is good	4.9%	5.5%	4.6%	4.3%	
10	Number of live investigations across all Trading Standards legislation			836	754	819	
11	Total requests for service to Community Safety	Low is good	11,616	17,767	18,959	18,137	
12	Percentage of people who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live	High is good			67%	67%	
13	Rate of violent crimes per 1,000 population	Low is good	42.3	46.7	40.7	37.3	
14	Rate of crimes and ASB incidents recorded in an area per 1,000 population [MONTHLY]	Low is good	10.15	12.06	11.41	12.01	
15	Drugs and alcohol: Proportion of the opiate and/or crack prevalent population (18+) that are not in treatment (unmet need)	Low is good	-	45.6%	43.9%	42.8%	
16	Drugs and alcohol: proportion of alcohol-dependent population (18+) that are not in treatment (unmet need)	Low is good	-	74.5%	70.8%	72.3%	
17	Alcohol related crime and disorder	Low is good					
18	Hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions (narrow) (KJS amend from A&E alcohol) (DSR per 100,000 population)	Low is good	616	689	664	705	
19	Rate of alcohol-specific mortality (DSR per 100,000 population)	Low is good	13.7	20.8	20.2	20.1	
20	Number of fly tipping incidents per 1,000 population	Low is good	6.1	8.7	11	11.8	
21	Percentage of people who agree adults in their communities can be trusted (from from TS to CS)	High is good			39%	36%	

Metric 17 currently has no data

COMMUNITY SAFETY
SELECT COMMITTEE

1 OCTOBER 2026

Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates

Summary

The first evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Alley Gates will consider information from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Community Safety and Care For Your Area departments.

Detail

1. Further to the Committee's approval of the scope and plan for the review of Alley Gates at its last meeting in July 2026, the SBC Community Safety and Care For Your Area departments were asked to provide an initial submission addressing the following:
 - *Legislation associated with this community safety measure*
 - *Location / condition of Borough's alley gates*
 - *Budgets / costs for installation / maintenance (and how these have changed over time)*
 - *How effective have they been (benefits / challenges created)?*
 - *Any feedback from residents of homes adjacent to gated alleys about the value / effectiveness of this community safety measure?*
 - *Future policy options / considerations*
2. A presentation has been prepared and is included within these meeting papers. Relevant SBC officers are scheduled to be in attendance to provide an overview of the submission and respond to any comments / questions.
3. Ahead of this first evidence session, Members may wish to familiarise themselves with:
 - College of Policing: Alley Gating
<https://www.college.police.uk/research/crime-reduction-toolkit/alley-gating>
 - Stockton-on-Tees: Alley Gates
<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/alley-gates>
4. A copy of the agreed scope and plan for this review is included for information.

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Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Officers Attending

- **John Angus** - Principal Projects Officer - Regeneration and Inclusive Growth
- **Andie Mackay** – Construction and Facility Services Manager - Community Services, Environment and Culture
- **Richard Bradford** - Community Safety Services Manager - Neighbourhoods

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Background

- 2001/02 – Pilot project to install Alleygates to 3 streets in the Newtown Ward
- Aim was to reduce Crime and ASB in these areas as a Community Safety initiative
- Middlesbrough and Hartlepool had already run similar pilots at this time
- Following the success of the Pilot, funding secured from the Capital Programme
- In addition, funding was also received from:
 - Neighbourhood Renewal Fund,
 - Cleaner Safer and Greener Fund,
 - New Opportunities Fund

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

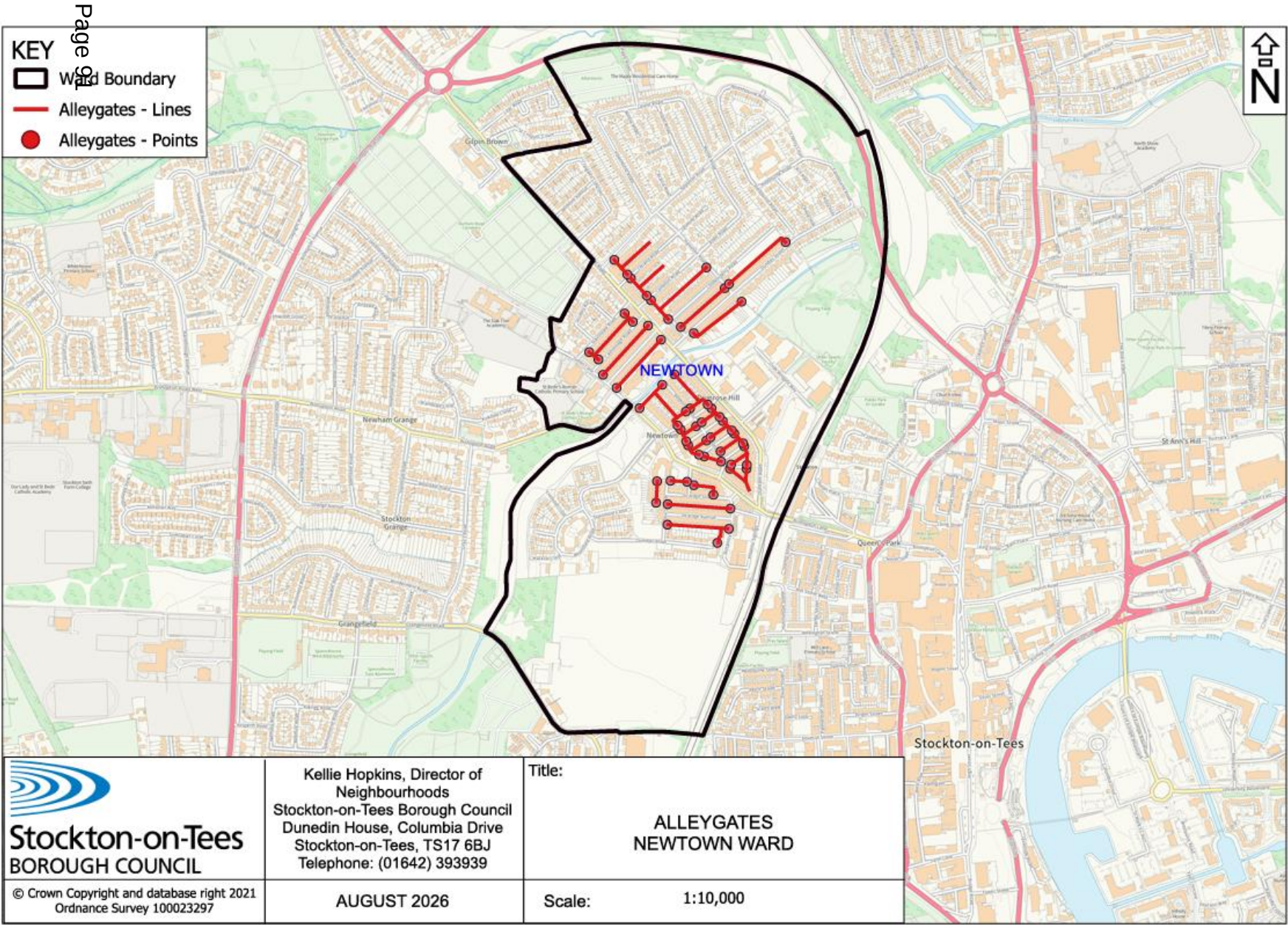
Background

- The Alleygates programme ran until 2012/13
- Some additional gates installed via Ward Councillors CPB
- 327 Gates on Council owned/adopted land
- Some are owned and the responsibility of Thirteen Group
- Early stages the programme was installed under the Highways Act using TR Orders
- 2005 Legislation introduced “Gating Orders” through Clean Neighbourhoods and Env Act
- 2014 Crime and Policing Act Introduced

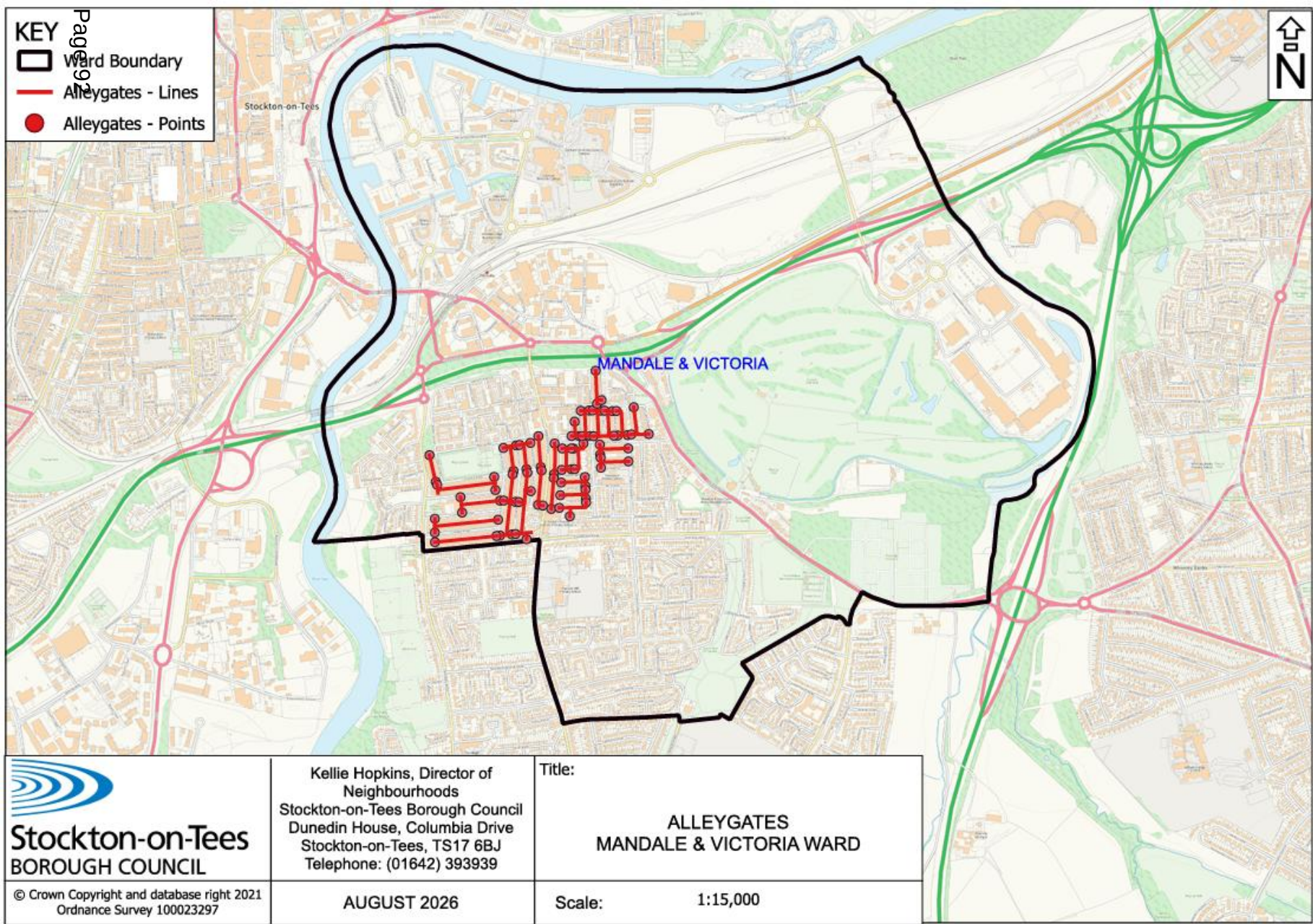
Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

- Alleygates QGIS Drawings
- 2026 Alleygates Master Sheet

WARD	No GATES / WARD
Billingham South Ward	2
Norton South Ward	9
New tow n Ward	61
Hardw ick & Salters Lane Ward	1
Mandale & Victoria Ward	82
Norton Central Ward	6
Southern Villages Ward	1
Stockton Tow n Centre Ward	61
Billingham West & Wolviston Ward	1
Ropner Ward	116
Village Ward	1
Yarm Ward	3
	344



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KEY

Ward Boundary

Alleygates - Lines

Alleygates - Points

WARD	No GATES / WARD
Billingham South Ward	2
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Stockton-on-Tees

BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Ordnance Survey 100023297

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Telephone: (01642) 393939

AUGUST 2026

Title:

ALLEYGATES
ROPNER WARD

Scale:

1:15,000

23/09/2026

7

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Legislation associated with Alley Gates

- During the pilot and the early stages of the alley gate programme legislation under the Highway Act was utilised with Traffic Regulation Orders.
- In 2005 new legislation introduced to allow the installation of alley gates through Gating Orders via the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.
- In 2014 Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act introduced Public Space Protection Orders which replaced the previous legislation to allow the installation of gates to restrict access. A PSPO can be used to restrict activity that has a detrimental effect on the locality, is (or likely to be) persistent in nature, is (or likely to be) unreasonable and justifies the restrictions being imposed. A PSPO must clearly set out what the detrimental activities are and what is deemed 'anti social' or 'unreasonable' so can be challenging.

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

How effective have the Alley Gates been?

2005 data highlighted that the Alley gate programme had resulted in a substantial decrease in incidents of crime in the gated areas:

- 43% reduction in Domestic Burglary
- 64% reduction in Deliberate Fires
- 58 % reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- 52% reduction in Fly tipping.

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Feedback from the Community

In 2004 a consultation exercise was undertaken to gauge the views of residents where alley gates had been installed and been in place for over six months. The response was very positive.

- The majority of respondents felt **safer** since the gates were installed.
- The majority of respondents felt **burglaries have reduced** since the gates were installed.
- The majority of respondents felt **people loitering has reduced** since the gates were installed.
- The majority of respondents felt **vandalism has reduced** since the gates were installed.
- The majority of respondents felt **fly tipping has reduced** since the gates were installed.
- The majority of respondents **would** move to other alley gated areas.

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Lawrence Street, Stockton - April 2024



Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Lawrence Street, Stockton - April 2024

- Resident injured by gate falling on them.
- Following accident investigation all gates were assessed.
- Professional engineers inspected the alleygates and provided an engineering recommendation to upgrade the current hinge mechanism.
- £70,000 allocated to undertake emergency upgrades.
- Gates currently assessed on a 6 month rota

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Public Reported Stats

- 2023 – **28** reports vis Flare System
- 2024 – **226** reports via Flare System (Year of Lawrence Street Accident)
- 2025 – **126** reports via Flare and Alloy (Maintenance programme had started in year)
- 2026 (up to September) **70** reports via Alloy
- [Alley gate damage Alloy.xlsx](#)
- [Alley gate damage Flare.xlsx](#)

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Non – Budgeted Maintenance Spend (Not including Inspections)

- 2023/24 – **£9,000**
- 2024/25 – **£25,000**
- 2025/26 – **£43,000**

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Financial Implications

- The costs of replacement of one set of gates are estimated by the manufacturer as between £5,000 - £7,000 depending on location and individual requirements. Lock replacements are £90 plus 2 hrs labour. Cost of removal of current gates set (no replacement) is £1,000. Current inspection and maintenance identified works have no budget allocation and are currently an overspend on the Highways budget.
- Total replacement of all alley gates on the scheme would be in excess of £2m.

Scrutiny Review – Alley Gates

Future Policy Options/Considerations

- No Change – (High Risk)
- Replace fully like for like in a multi year program (Funding)
- Re-evaluate locations and reduce the numbers – replace key Alley Gates (Consultation)
- Remove all current alley gates – phased over multiple years (Budget and Political Resistance)
- Any other current options, CCTV etc?
- Consultation – gather modern data about what residents think/feel

Thank you

Any Questions?

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Community Safety Select Committee
Review of Alley Gates
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy	Contact details: ann.mccoy@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Gary Woods	Contact details: gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk 01642 526187
Departmental Link Officer: Richard Bradford (SBC Community Safety Manager)	Contact details: richard.bradford@stockton.gov.uk
Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? Reviewing the current and future position on alley gates is closely linked to building healthy and resilient communities. Effective use of gates contributes directly to public safety by protecting properties and creating safe enclosed spaces for community use – this fosters a sense of security and wellbeing among residents. Furthermore, this topic has direct links into both the Partnership and Regeneration ‘missions’ of the <i>Powering Our Future</i> (POF) programme whilst also ensuring financial stability of the organisation in the future.	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review? <i>‘Alley gates are lockable gates installed to prevent access by offenders to alleyways, such as those which run along the rear of older-style terraced housing in the UK. While normally a burglary prevention tool, alley gates can also prevent other crimes such as littering and anti-social behaviour by preventing access to alleys by non-residents and better controlling the space. Alley gates are usually made of iron or steel and are bespoke in relation to the requirements and specifications of an individual alley. The residents of homes adjacent to the gated alley are then left to operate the gates, either using keys or a key code.’ (College of Policing)</i> The alley gate programme in Stockton-on-Tees was initiated in 2001 following a pilot scheme in Newtown in which three alleyways were gated using eight alley gates. The programme was introduced as a community safety measure aimed at reducing crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fear of crime in residential areas experiencing high levels of these issues. An evaluation carried out in 2008 by Cleveland Police demonstrated that alley gates were effective in reducing crime and ASB, with an overall reduction of 55% in incidents in the 12 months following installation, and reductions of up to 88% in some locations. After the Newtown pilot, the programme was expanded across the Borough, primarily within wards experiencing higher levels of deprivation and crime. By 2012-2013, a total of 327 alley gates had been installed, providing security benefits to approximately 4,643 properties.	

The dedicated alley gate installation programme and associated budget came to an end in 2012-2013. Since that time, any new gates have been delivered through the Community Participation Budget (CPB), subject to legislative criteria being met. Some of the more recently installed gates have been re-used from housing regeneration areas. Currently, the Council continues to manage 327 alley gates across the Borough, with the oldest approaching 14 years-old and the average age of the asset base being just under nine years.

In 2014-2015, 109 fault reports were recorded, equating to an average repair cost of £114 per fault. Faults arise from a combination of vandalism and general wear and tear, with repeat issues occurring in areas experiencing ongoing ASB. All gates are subject to an annual programme of scheduled maintenance, which includes general inspections and routine works such as greasing of hinges. In addition, unscheduled reactive repairs are undertaken in response to fault reports. However, dedicated budget provision for alley gate maintenance has remained static since 2012-2013 and is forecast to be exhausted (forecast maintenance and repair costs show a rising trend as the asset base continues to age).

The alley gate programme has historically delivered clear community safety benefits; however, the asset base has now reached a stage where increasing maintenance costs, ageing infrastructure, and the lack of a long-term funding strategy present growing challenges. The main aims for this review will therefore be to assess whether existing arrangements continue to meet local needs, provide value for money and support wider community safety and environmental protection objectives, and to inform future policy on the use of current and future alley gates in Stockton-on-Tees.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What legislation is relevant to the use of alley gates?

What are the benefits of installing alley gates; what challenges are created by using them?

Where in the Borough are alley gates in place; what condition are they in; how effective have they been?

How much does it cost to install, maintain and replace alley gates; what has been spent on this provision? What is the dedicated budget for maintenance and why is this no longer available?

What are the likely ramifications if alley gates are removed? Are there any viable alternatives to alley gates that may be more cost-effective?

How do residents of homes adjacent to gated alleys feel about the value / effectiveness of this community safety measure?

What is the Council's preferred option regarding the future use of alley gates across the Borough? If they continue to be valued, what funding will be available to support them?

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

Council, Cabinet, emergency services, local housing associations, residents.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

5 months (report to Cabinet in February 2027)

What information do we need? Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.): - College of Policing: Alley Gating (https://www.college.police.uk/research/crime-reduction-toolkit/alley-gating) - Stockton-on-Tees: Alley Gates (https://www.stockton.gov.uk/alley-gates)	
<i>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</i> Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) - Community Safety - Care For Your Area - Housing Services SBC Ward Councillors Cleveland Police Cleveland Fire Brigade Housing Associations Town / Parish Councils Residents Associations / Community Groups	<i>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</i> ➤ Location / condition of Borough's alley gates ➤ Benefits / challenges created ➤ Budgets / costs for installation / maintenance ➤ Future policy options / considerations ➤ Views on this community safety measure ➤ Benefits / challenges created (e.g. access) ➤ Impact of removal / viable alternatives ➤ Benefits / challenges created (e.g. access) ➤ Views on this community safety measure ➤ Views on this community safety measure ➤ Views on this community safety measure
How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey) Committee meetings, reports, research, resident engagement, site visits (TBC).	
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 Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.	

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

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030: Community Safety: To make Stockton-on-Tees a safer place where people are protected from serious harm and live in communities which are safer and welcoming (Focus Area 3: Everyone lives in healthy and sustainable places and communities)

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

A review of alley gates provides an opportunity to assess current performance and drive efficiencies by moving from a predominantly reactive maintenance model to a more planned, risk-based approach. By identifying gates with recurring faults, evaluating value for money, and aligning investment with areas of greatest need, the Council may be able to reduce repeat demand, manage future replacement costs more effectively, and identify potential savings through improved asset management and prioritisation.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	July 2026	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	13.07.26	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	30.07.26	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	SBC Community Safety SBC Care For Your Area	01.10.26	Select Committee
	TBC	22.10.26	
	TBC	26.11.26	
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	17.12.26	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	January 2027	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	28.01.27	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	[23.03.27]	Executive Scrutiny Committee
Report to Cabinet / Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	15.02.27	Cabinet / Approving Body

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COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE
Work Programme 2026-2027

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
30 April 2026	Overview Report: Adults, Health & Wellbeing (Community Safety & Regulated Services: Environmental Health & Licensing) Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture	CLlr Norma Stephenson OBE / Marc Stephenson / Stephen Donaghy / Leanne Maloney-Kelly / James O'Donnell Phil Hardie / Simon Milner
28 May	Monitoring: Action Plan – Children affected by Domestic Abuse Monitoring: Progress Update – Welcoming and Safe Town Centres Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget - SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture - Ward Councillor Survey Feedback - Other Local Authority Schemes Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (January & March 2026)	Louise Hollick / Mandy MacKinnon Sharon Cooney / Richard Bradford Simon Milner / Andrew Corcoran
2 July	Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget - SBC Digital Services and Systems - Town / Parish Council Survey Feedback - Local Resident Survey Feedback	Natalie Sargeant
30 July	Review of Alley Gates (Draft) Scope and Project Plan	Richard Bradford
30 July (informal)	Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations	Simon Milner
1 October	Overview and Performance Report: Neighbourhoods (Regulated Services: Trading Standards, Community Safety & Emergency Planning)	CLlr Norma Stephenson OBE / CLlr Nigel Cooke / Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson / Leanne Maloney-Kelly / Richard Bradford / Patrick Walker

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE Work Programme 2026-2027

Date (4.30pm unless stated)	Topic	Attendance
	Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget (Draft) Final Report Review of Alley Gates - SBC Community Safety - SBC Care For Your Area	Cllr Richard Eglington / Kellie Hopkins / Craig Willows / Phil Hardie / Simon Milner Richard Bradford Andie Mackay / John Angus
22 October	Air Quality: Annual Update Monitoring: Progress Update – Fly-Grazed Horses Review of Alley Gates TBC	Stephen Donaghy Stephen Donaghy / Jamie Bell
26 November	Monitoring: Action Plan – Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget Review of Alley Gates TBC Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (May & September 2026)	Phil Hardie / Simon Milner
17 December	Review of Alley Gates TBC	
28 January 2027	Review of Alley Gates TBC	
25 February		
25 March	Overview and Performance Report: Neighbourhoods (TBC)	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson

2026-2027 Scrutiny Reviews

- Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget
- Alley Gates

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Monitoring Items (scheduled / to be scheduled)

- Fly-Grazed Horses (Progress Update) – October 2026
 - Welcoming and Safe Town Centres (Progress Update) – TBC (early-2027)
 - Children affected by Domestic Abuse (Progress Update) – TBC (early-2027)
 - Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget (Action Plan) – TBC
-

OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES / UPDATES

- **Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP):** The SSP is the local community safety partnership and works together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) – meeting dates, agendas and minutes can be accessed via <https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Cid=1144&Year=0>. Every three years, the SSP undertake a Crime and Disorder Audit and, following public consultation, produce a Community Safety Plan which sets out how agencies within the Partnership intend to achieve targets in crime reduction – the latest version is the [Stockton-on-Tees Community Safety Strategy 2022-2025](#).

Part two of the [Police and Crime Commissioner Review](#), recommended that the Home Office undertake a full review of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) across England and Wales. The CSP review ran from March 2023 to January 2024 and has now concluded – it sought to clarify the role of CSPs, and improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, making it easier for them to serve the needs of their communities in tackling crime, disorder, and antisocial behaviour. As a result of the review, the Home Office will be developing new guidance for CSPs, which will reflect the context CSPs currently work within and set out recommended minimum standards, as well as suggestions for good practice.

- **Serious Violence Duty:** The Duty (Aug 22) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-serious-violence-duty-factsheet> and associated guidance (Dec 22): https://www.gov.uk/government/news/efforts-to-tackle-serious-violence-and-homicide-stepped-up?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=66d44b4c-9d22-4f1d-aed7-517818847183&utm_content=immediately. The Home Office plan to update the guidance to the Serious Violence Duty (SVD) – the LGA will be giving views (Councils have contributed to this).
- **Martyn's Law:** The Home Office has [released new guidance materials](#) to support public understanding of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025—commonly known as Martyn's Law—by publishing a myth buster and a one-page leaflet aimed at clarifying the Act's scope and dispelling common misconceptions.

The Institute of Licensing has [published Martyn's Law guidance](#) which has been produced to support licensing professionals, operators, regulators and partners as the UK prepares for the implementation of the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025.

In April 2026, the Home Office published the Section 27 statutory guidance for the [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Act 2025](#), commonly referred to as [Martyn's Law](#). The guidance explains the core concepts of the legislation and helps those responsible for premises and events determine whether they fall within its and how to meet their legal duties. Separately, the SIA will shortly publish its draft Section 12 Guidance, which explains how it will exercise its functions as the regulator. This document and a public consultation

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

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regarding the SIA's regulatory approach will be published in the near future. All relevant information can be found [here](#), which hosts a range of Martyn's Law materials, including links to the Section 27 Guidance.

- **Modern Slavery:** [New modern slavery risk assessment and due diligence guidance for local authority commissioners of adult social care](#), produced by the University of Nottingham Rights Lab in tandem with the LGA, was published in October 2023 - it provides advice on to how to set up effective local systems to identify and manage the risks of modern slavery in adult social care. The LGA has established a modern slavery network for Council officers leading on work to tackle modern slavery – the network meets quarterly via Teams and aims to share good practice and discuss current issues. In March 2025, the Home Office [published its end of year summary for the National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) and Duty to Notify Statistics in 2024. The statistics provide a breakdown of the number of potential victims of modern slavery referred into the NRM. 19,125 potential victims of modern slavery were referred to the Home Office last year, representing a 13 per cent increase compared to the preceding year. The [Home Office has published their Action Plan on modern slavery](#), which sets out the Home Office and partners' actions to tackle modern slavery over the next 12 months, and long-term ambition over the coming years. It sets the strategic approach for the next financial year, reflecting current parameters and constraints (including resourcing and budget). Middlesex University and Anti-Slavery International have completed [research exploring the role of local authorities as first responders](#). The report looks at the challenges and opportunities facing Councils, and focuses on the need to improve training, awareness, and collaboration to strengthen the local response to modern slavery.

The LGA has [updated its councillor guide on tackling modern slavery](#). The guide provides advice to Councillors on how they can increase awareness and understanding of modern slavery across their Council and community, as well as how Councillors can scrutinise the work of the Council and its partners on modern slavery, ensuring accountability.

In November 2025, the Human Trafficking published updated [Slavery and Trafficking Survivor Care Standards \(Care Standards\)](#) which aim to improve service provision by ensuring that adult survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery consistently receive high quality care wherever they are in the UK.

In February 2026, the Home Office [published its end of year summary for the National Referral Mechanism \(NRM\)](#) and Duty to Notify Statistics in 2025. Government has also published a [summary of responses](#) to the call for evidence on the identification of victims of modern slavery, alongside the [publication of a written Ministerial statement](#). Respondents to the consultation highlighted the importance of trauma-informed approaches, training gaps among practitioners, children requiring different approaches, and the value of multi-agency collaboration.

Anti-Slavery International has also published [A Training Framework for Local Authorities as Modern Slavery First Responders in England and Wales](#) which Council officers may find helpful.

- **Youth Offending:** *Turnaround* is a voluntary youth early intervention programme led by the Ministry of Justice. The programme provides multi-year grant funding to Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) across England and Wales until March 2025, enabling them to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. The eligibility criteria for *Turnaround* includes; children involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB) – ranging from coming to notice for repeated involvement in ASB up to and including receiving a Civil Order for ASB. The Ministry of Justice is encouraging all community safety teams to engage with their local YOT Manager or Management Board to discuss a referral pathway for eligible children so they can be offered support via *Turnaround*.

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- **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):** The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issued a press release in August 2023 expressing concern that [Councils were not doing enough to help victims of ASB](#). The Ombudsman has also produced a [learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour](#) document which includes scrutiny questions for Councillors. The [ASB Action Plan](#) has since been updated (March 2024).

The Victims and Courts Bill includes new powers for the Victims' Commissioner to scrutinise the treatment of victims of anti-social behaviour. The Commissioner has already taken a close interest in ASB but to date, her focus has been on the criminal justice system. This additional power will enable future Commissioners to look more widely at the victim experience. In preparation for this, the Office of the Victims' Commissioner is undertaking a mapping exercise, to look at the victim journey across all agencies, identifying sources of data, gaps in policy and obstacles to victims reporting and getting support. The Commissioner is keen to receive any case studies and feedback about current processes.

The Home Office has updated the ASB statutory guidance for frontline professionals to housing providers and LAs which has been updated on [gov.uk](#). These changes have been made following the recommendations of the Victims' Commissioner's 2024 report, "[Still living a nightmare: Understanding the experiences of victims of anti-social behaviour](#)". Key updates include:

- Enhanced recommendations for victim participation and support throughout the ASB Case Review process.
 - Clearer guidance on the role of a single point of contact for victims
 - Stronger emphasis on the use of independent chairs for case reviews.
 - Alignment with the Victims Code to ensure victims of criminal ASB are referred to support services, regardless of whether criminal charges are pursued.
 - Additional guidance on the interface between ASB and safeguarding, including domestic abuse and exploitation.
- **Counter-Terrorism:** In July 2023, the Government published its [updated counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST](#), which judges that risks from terrorism are rising. In related matters, SBC rolled-out mandatory staff training around the Prevent and Protect duty at the end of April 2023. In March 2024, the Government [published a new definition of extremism](#), updating the one in the 2011 Prevent Strategy and to reflect the evolution of extremist ideologies and the social harms they create. The Government also recently published a [progress report one year on from the publication of the Independent Review of Prevent](#). This sets out that 30 of the 34 recommendations are now complete, including updated statutory guidance, training and the assessment framework, the launch of a new [Standards and Compliance Unit \(STaCU\)](#) to handle complaints and provide oversight.

On 30 September, Counter Terrorism Policing launched ACT for Local Authorities. Led by National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), ACT for Local Authorities uses CTP's regional network of Counter Terrorism Security Advisers and Prepare Officers to enhance the capabilities of local authorities in delivering the Protect and Prepare elements of the [national counter terrorism strategy](#). ACT for Local Authorities strengthens local authority capabilities in protective security across five key areas: planning and development, licensing, community safety, transport and highways, and emergency planning. ACT complements the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, offering tailored information, guidance, and access to specialists. Local authorities will be able to access resources – including toolkits and videos for each of the five priority areas – primarily through [the ProtectUK website](#) to support their consideration and understanding of terrorist risks, protective security and preparedness.

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

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In June 2026, Counter Terrorism Policing launched a new product designed to support organisations in security and preparedness from acts of terrorism as well as wider criminal threats. This [Roadmap](#) provides a practical introduction for those starting out, while also offering further guidance and resources to organisations building on existing work to enhance safety, protect people, and strengthen preparedness.

A significantly revised version of the National Counter Terrorism Security Office's (NACTSO) online [ACT security awareness e-learning course](#) has also recently been published, primarily targeted at staff working within venues and public spaces but is also relevant to critical national infrastructure sites and members of the public.

- **Fire & Rescue:** [State of Fire & Rescue 2022](#) - His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England. Arson and deliberate fire setting remain a significant issue for Cleveland Fire Brigade with Cleveland being the arson capital of the UK – in October 2022, Cleveland Fire Brigade [appealed for everyone to become a FireStopper in a new bid to reduce arson and violent attacks on Firefighters](#).
- **Shoplifting:** Police to treat shoplifting like organised crime (BBC online article published in October 2023): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-67191793>. In November 2024, it was reported that incidents of shoplifting had reached a 20-year high, according to figures recorded by the police. A survey of shopkeepers by the Association of Convenience Stores found that 94 per cent felt that the problem had worsened in the last 12 months: [Sky: 'We need help': Workers say shoplifting is 'out of control' after surge in brazen thefts](#).
- **Dangerous Dogs Act 1991:** The Government has added the XL Bully breed type to the list of dogs banned under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 in England and Wales. From 31 December 2023, breeding, selling, exchanging, advertising, rehoming, gifting, abandoning, and allowing an XL Bully dog to stray will be illegal, and these dogs must be muzzled and on a lead in public. From 1 February 2024 it will be a criminal offence to own an XL Bully in England and Wales unless the owner has a Certificate of Exemption. [Defra has published further information about how to prepare for the ban which will be updated regularly](#), and they will continue engagement with stakeholders. In March 2024, the LGA wrote to Council chief finance officers on behalf of DEFRA about new burdens funding relating to the XL Bully Ban for 2023-24.
- **Licensing:** [Legislation has been introduced into Parliament to amend the Licensing Act 2003](#) so that it is easier to get changes to licensing hours for special events or occasions, such as significant sporting events, through Parliament. The Bill is more concerned with parliamentary process than the contents of the Licensing Act itself. The Local Government Association (LGA) understands this legislation has Government support, so is likely to complete its parliamentary stages and become law.

In July 2025, the Transport Select Committee launched [a new parliamentary inquiry looking at taxi and private hire vehicle licensing](#). This inquiry examined whether the current licensing framework provides authorities with the tools they need to successfully regulate the sector. The Committee published its ['Raising the standard' report](#) in June 2026 – this included a [submission from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council](#). In January 2026, the Government [launched a consultation on the future of taxi and private hire vehicle licensing](#). The proposals represent a significant change from the current system, and Councils are encouraged to respond. The consultation is open until midday on 1 April 2026.

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Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Trading Standards are working together to push for a national change to the Licensing Act by gathering national support and evidence via a short survey: [Licensing Act loophole survey](#). The goal is to close the loopholes which undermine the work from Local Authorities and regulatory services to protect communities and public health. One major issue is the transfer of alcohol licences during a review or appeal. Organised crime groups are exploiting this bypassing licences to individuals with no known links to the criminal activity.

October 2025 saw calls for better monitoring of gambling venues, following investigation by the BBC which found that more than a third of Councils have not been able to carry out an inspection in the past year. The LGA said Councils struggled to fund proactive inspections, and welcomed plans to give it new powers to block new gambling premises opening on high streets. The Government also launched a [call for evidence](#) on what will be significant alcohol licensing reform, building on the recommendations of the [Licensing Taskforce recommendations and the government's response](#) (the LGA will be responding, but Councils are encouraged to submit their own response by 6 November), and [launched a call for evidence to inform their plans to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco](#) (Councils are encouraged to respond by 3 December and the LGA will also be submitting a response).

The Government has since [published its national licensing policy framework](#), which only applies to on-sales premises. Whilst this is not statutory guidance, Government is clear that licensing authorities should demonstrate how they have had regard to the guidance when next reviewing their licensing policy. It has also produced an [analysis of the responses received](#) to the call for evidence on alcohol licensing reform.

The [statutory guidance](#) governing England's new primate licensing regime received a targeted update on 2 March, refining several operational points ahead of the law coming into force on 6 April 2026.

The Tobacco and Vapes Act now has Royal Assent. The law introduces stronger enforcement powers, including the ability to implement a retail licensing scheme and tackle illicit tobacco and vape sales. The English Devolution Act also has received Royal Assent – this will introduce more robust national standards in taxi and PHV licensing, as well as national enforcement powers, and will introduce cumulative impact assessments in gambling licensing.

The Government has also announced a draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Bill in the King's Speech, setting out the most significant overhaul of taxi and PHV legislation in more than a century. The LGA will work with Government to develop the Bill.

- **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)**: The LGA and DAC conducted a survey regarding DHRs - [the results can be found on the LGA website](#). The LGA, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) formed a Domestic and Related Deaths Review (DARDR) forum for those who are involved in commissioning DARDRs or DHRs. There are currently 195 members of the forum from Councils, police, Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners and health. The forum set up a task group to give recommendations to government to consider in the forthcoming output from a review of DARDRs. The second phase will begin shortly where access to qualified chairs and costs will be considered.

In March 2026, Surviving Economic Abuse published a landmark new report, "[Hidden risks, fatal consequences: Economic abuse in Domestic Homicide Reviews](#)", which examines the role of economic abuse in domestic abuse-related deaths across England and Wales. The report finds that economic abuse is a significant and often overlooked factor in domestic homicides. Analysis of 454 Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) showed that 231 cases (51%) involved economic abuse by a current or former partner,

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

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equating to at least one victim dying every 19 days. The majority of cases involved a female victim and male perpetrator, and victims experiencing economic abuse were typically younger than those in non-economic abuse cases. However, fewer than half of DHR panels recognised the presence of economic abuse, and only a small number of in-depth reviews made recommendations to address it. The findings also highlight repeated missed opportunities by agencies to identify and respond to risks linked to economic abuse.

The revised Domestic Homicide Review (DHR), soon to become the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) guidance, is expected to be published in early autumn 2026. Key changes include:

- Updated review criteria aligned with the statutory definition of domestic abuse
- A new Scoping Review process
- Strengthened guidance on engagement with families and communities
- Enhanced oversight through the DHR Quality Assurance Board
- New templates to improve consistency and efficiency.

Death notifications received after publication must follow the new guidance. Chairs must complete mandatory training in order to be eligible to chair a review and CSPs should use the Register of Accredited Chairs to appoint DARDR Chairs. The new guidance will contain more detailed guidance that CSPs should consider when they are seeking to appoint a DARDR Chair (e.g. experience of report writing, understanding of confidentiality, understanding of trauma-informed practice), but evidence of a previous DHR/DARDR is not explicitly required. The Home Office will host a series of informative webinars in October/November following publication.

- **Fires involving e-bikes and e-scooters:** The Office for Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) has written to heads of trading standards, asking that, where resources and prioritisation allow, Trading Standards services identify and inspect bike repair businesses and where possible inform OPSS of their findings.
- **Social Cohesion:** Dame Sara Khan has published her [independent review into social cohesion and resilience](#). Recommendations include the establishment of a new Office for Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience (OSCDR), a 5-year Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience Strategy (SCDR) and Action Plan, and that Government should better engage with Local Authorities over actions that could undermine social cohesion – for example in relation to asylum dispersal.

The LGA and the Belong Network [have published guidance to support councils to build cohesive communities](#). This January 2026 guidance includes a clear summary of legal obligations, examples of effective tools and strategies for embedding cohesion in council services and outlines the practical steps required to develop effective cohesion strategies. It also shares good practice examples from councils throughout the guide.

In March 2026, Government [published a new Cohesion Strategy](#) which sets out its priorities in this area. Crucially, the guidance recognises the important role councils play in building cohesive communities.

In June 2026, British Future and the British Muslim Trust have published a report: Understanding Anti-Muslim Hostility: Foundations for Action examining majority public attitudes and prejudices towards Muslims in Britain, as well as Muslim attitudes and experiences of prejudice and hostility. You can [download a copy of the report here](#) or [read a news summary here](#).

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- **Safe Access Zones Around Abortion Clinics:** Councils have been contacting the LGA regarding Safe Access Zones around abortion clinics. The LGA have been engaging with government to ensure safe access zones can be established. Legislation will come into force from 31 October 2024 and will make it illegal for anyone to do anything that intentionally or recklessly influences someone's decision to use abortion services, obstructs them, or causes harassment or distress to someone using or working at these premises. The law will apply within a 150-metre radius of the abortion service provider. The College of Policing and the Crown Prosecution Service will be publishing operational guidance to ensure there is clarity and consistency with the enforcement of the new offence. Further information is available at: [Protection zones around abortion clinics in place by October - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/protection-zones-around-abortion-clinics-in-place-by-october-2024).
- **Trading Standards:** Illegal imported sweets which contain banned additives linked to cancer and behavioural problems are "flooding UK high streets", councils have said (see February 2025 article: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/feb/13/imported-sweets-american-candy-flooding-uk-high-streets-councils-banned-additives?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery). The warning first came from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, which said that demand for American confectionery was being driven by influencers on social media platforms, leading to high street shops and smaller convenience stores stocking the products.
- **Crime and Policing Bill:** Early-2025 saw the UK Government introduce the Crime and Policing Bill to Parliament. Key provisions include:
 - **Powers for Theft Recovery:** Police can now enter properties without a warrant to recover stolen items located via electronic tracking, such as 'find my phone' apps. This change enables swifter action during critical investigation periods.
 - **Protection for Retail Workers:** The bill introduces a specific offence for assaulting retail workers, ensuring better safeguards for employees in shops and supermarkets.
 - **Addressing Antisocial Behaviour:** New "Respect Orders" will ban habitual offenders from town centres, and police are empowered to seize vehicles like off-road bikes and e-scooters used irresponsibly in public spaces.
 - **Combatting Knife Crime:** Measures include increased penalties for selling dangerous weapons to minors and the creation of a new offence for possessing a blade with intent to cause harm.
 - **Violence Against Women and Girls:** The bill strengthens Stalking Protection Orders, criminalises spiking incidents, and restricts registered sex offenders from changing their names to evade detection (note: publication of a new VAWG government strategy is expected later in 2025).
 - **Child Protection:** A new duty mandates adults in specific roles to report instances of child sexual abuse, implementing recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.
 - **Public Order Enhancements:** The legislation bans face coverings used to conceal identity during protests and criminalises climbing on designated war memorials, promoting respect for public monuments.
- **Young Futures Programme:** The Young Futures Programme is a national, cross-government plan to prevent youth violence by proactively identifying and supporting young people most at risk. Central to the strategy are Young Futures Hubs, local centres that bring together mental health services, education, career advice, youth workers and police. Prevention Partnerships, which are multi-agency panels, will be introduced where there are Violence Reduction Units. This will work with communities, charities, schools, health services and police to map risk, co-ordinate early interventions and tailor support packages. These panels harness VRU expertise and local knowledge to spot vulnerabilities early, reduce youth involvement in crime (including knife crime and violence against women and girls), and offer continuous, evidence-based support. Each area with a VRU area will introduce a Prevention Panel from October 2025. Roll out to further areas is expected from April 2026.

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- **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG):** The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy publication is scheduled for September 2025.
- **Domestic Abuse:** A Sanctuary Scheme is a victim survivor centred initiative which aims to enable households at risk of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes (if it is safe and their choice) and reduce repeat victimisation through the provision of enhanced security measures (sanctuary) and support. The Local Government Association (LGA), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse (STADA) are working in partnership to clarify current practice. In September 2025, surveys were sent to all Council Directors of Housing to delegate to relevant colleagues to complete.

A national reciprocal housing scheme is being developed, led by Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse and Clarion Housing, to provide secure housing options for domestic abuse survivors who need to relocate while retaining their tenancy rights. Building on the Whole Housing Approach toolkit, several local schemes already exist, and the national initiative aims to expand this support across England. With 2.4 million people experiencing domestic abuse in 2022, housing remains a key barrier to safety, making reciprocal moves a vital lifeline that prevent re-victimisation, reduce homelessness pressures, uphold tenancy security under the Domestic Abuse Act, widen rehousing options, and offer consistent support for both survivors and landlords. Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse would appreciate if councils completed this [survey](#).

In December 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed £499m over the next three years to support domestic abuse duties, providing LAs with the financial certainty they have called for – this is a £19m uplift to the £480m announced as part of the provisional allocations published on 18 December in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. From April 2026, domestic abuse funding will be included within the new ringfenced Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant, enabling local authorities to take a more integrated approach to supporting vulnerable people across these three areas.

On 9 July, MHCLG published two new research reports contributing to the evidence base on housing and domestic abuse:

- Research on Sanctuary Schemes, examining how Sanctuary Schemes are delivered across England and the role they can play in helping victim-survivors remain safely in their homes where this is their preferred option. [Domestic abuse sanctuary schemes: process evaluation findings - GOV.UK](#)
- Research on a Shared Outcomes Framework, exploring how outcomes for victim-survivors accessing domestic abuse safe accommodation and housing support services can be measured and understood more consistently. [Domestic abuse safe accommodation: victim-survivor outcomes - GOV.UK](#)

Together, the reports provide insights into effective practice, service delivery and outcomes, supporting local authorities, housing providers, commissioners and specialist services. The research was informed by practitioners and victim-survivors, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

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- **Civil Resilience:** In November 2025, the [LGA updated guidance](#) designed to support Councillors in strengthening their approach to civil resilience. It provides an overview of the Council's responsibilities in this area, along with targeted sections outlining the role of Ward Councillors and portfolio holders. A new section also outlines how officers can support Elected Members in fulfilling their civil resilience roles.
- **Deepfakes and Synthetic Media:** The LGA's [Deepfakes and Synthetic Media Unpacked](#) is a short, accessible video series introducing what deepfakes and synthetic media are, why they matter for local government and what practical steps officers and councillors can take to reduce potential risks.
- **Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Cleveland:** Further information on the office of the PCC can be found on via <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/> - this includes engagement with the **Cleveland Police and Crime Panel (PCP)**. Access to PCP agendas and papers can be found via <https://www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk/commissioner/office/the-work-of-cleveland-police-and-crime-panel/>.

On 13 November 2025, Government announced the abolition of PCC elections when current terms end in 2028. It is intended that where there are directly-elected Mayors, the Deputy Mayor for policing model will continue. This will also be the case for where new Strategic Mayoral Authorities (SMAs) will be established. Where there are not Mayors, it is expected a new local Policing and Crime Board is established to local government leaders together to oversee the police force. These Boards are said by government to not be a return to the bureaucratic and invisible committee-based oversight of policing that existed before the establishment of PCCs. Government proposes these Boards include the leaders of each upper tier authority from the force area and up to two co-optees. The LGA is working with the Home Office with regards to how these police boards might operate.

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