Stockton-on-Tees BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Community Safety Select Committee

Agenda

Date:
Thursday 26 November 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 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 22 October 2026.

6. Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations – Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget (Pages 17 - 22)

7. Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates (Pages 23 - 38)

To consider information in relation to this scrutiny topic from:

- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Housing Services
- Thirteen Housing Group

8. Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP) – Previous Minutes (May & September 2026) (Pages 39 - 46)

9. Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027 (Pages 47 - 58)



Jonathan Nertney
Head of Democratic Services
Wednesday 18 November 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.

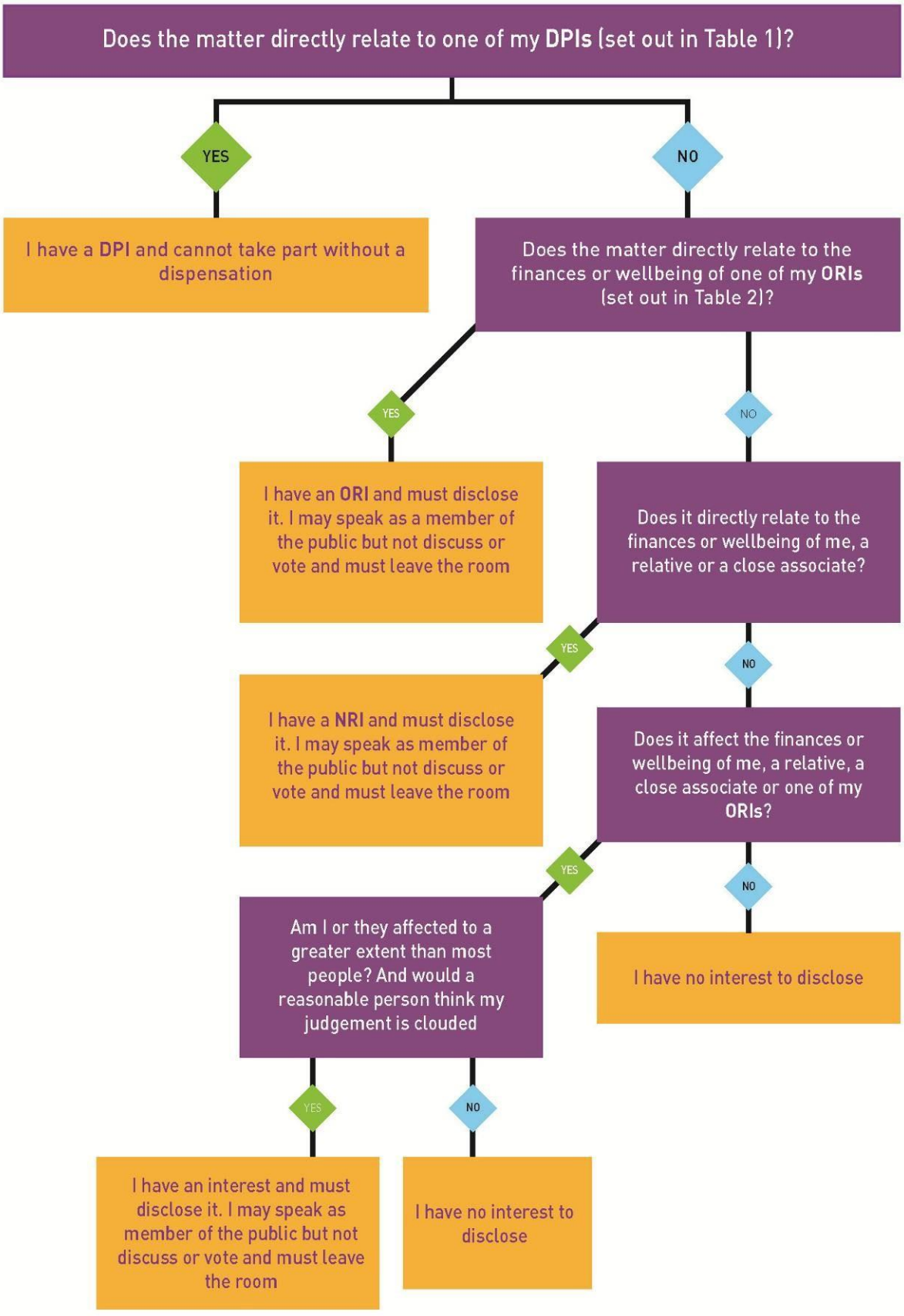
Contact: Senior Scrutiny Officer, Gary Woods on email gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk

Stockton-on-Tees BOROUGH COUNCIL

Key – Declarable interests are :-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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 Registerable 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.

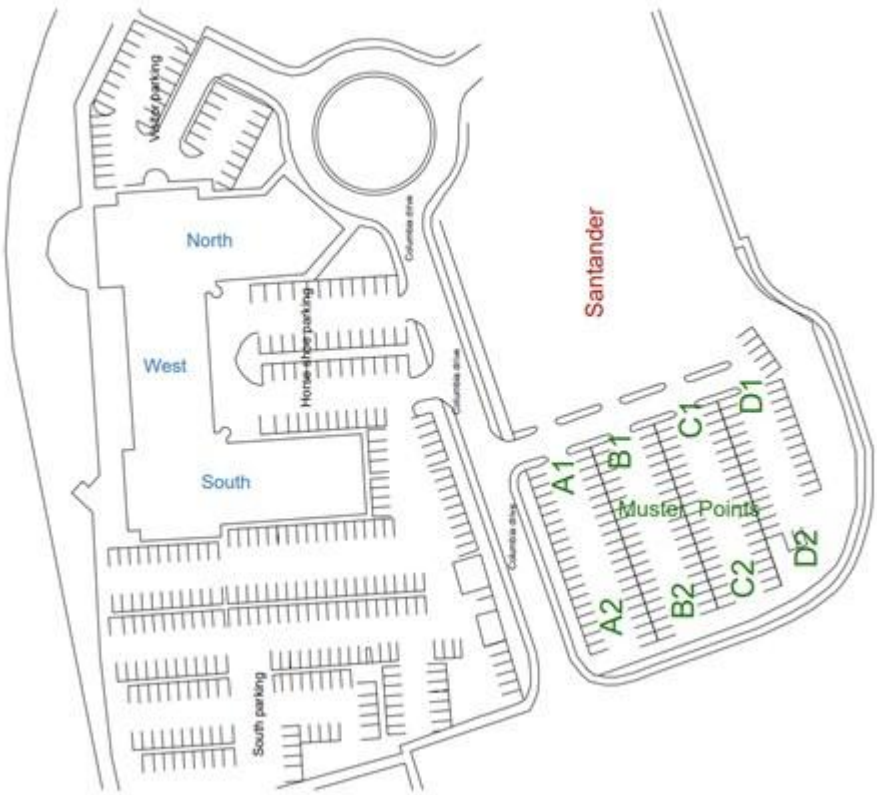
The emergency exits are located via the doors to the left of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber and the rear of the Council Chamber.

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 22 October 2026.

Present: Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy (Chair), Cllr Katie Zagoria (Vice-Chair), Cllr Bob Cook, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Tony Riordan (sub for Cllr John Coulson)

Officers: Richard Bradford, Stephen Donaghy (N); Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: Jamie Bell (Cleveland Police)

Apologies: Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Alan Watson

CSS/37/26 Livestreaming

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

CSS/38/26 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CSS/39/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CSS/40/26 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Community Safety Select Committee meeting which was held on 1 October 2026 for approval and signature.

AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 1 October 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CSS/41/26 Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates

The second evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Alley Gates considered information from Cleveland Police. Submitted by the District Commander – Stockton (and presented by the Chief Inspector – Stockton Neighbourhood Policing Team), responses to the Committee's lines of enquiry were noted as follows:

- The force's awareness / experience of this community safety measure: From a policing perspective, alley gates had been one of the most effective situational crime prevention measures implemented within local communities. Historical evaluations had demonstrated significant reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) following installation, including overall reductions of 55% and reductions of up to 88% in some locations. Whilst these figures related to earlier evaluations, there was no evidence to suggest that the underlying causes of ASB,

environmental crime, criminal damage, or opportunistic offending had diminished to the extent that such protective measures were no longer required.

- Benefits / challenges created (e.g. access) through the use of alley gates: The benefits of alley gates extended beyond recorded crime reduction. They restricted access routes used by offenders, and reduced opportunities for burglary, criminal damage, drug-related activity, fly-tipping, littering and youth nuisance, whilst providing reassurance to residents and improving perceptions of safety. They also assisted partner agencies by creating a more manageable environment in which communities could take pride in and maintain their local area.

- Potential impact on these localities if existing alley gates are removed: The removal of alley gates would present a significant risk to public safety and community confidence. Many of the locations where gates were installed remained areas that experienced high levels of demand relating to crime and ASB. Removing these physical barriers would restore unrestricted access to rear alleys and other vulnerable spaces, creating opportunities for offending that currently did not exist. In my professional opinion, this would be likely to increase incidents of ASB, criminal damage, fly-tipping, environmental crime, and acquisitive offences, resulting in increased demand on Cleveland Police, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC), and wider community safety partners.

  Whilst there were recognised maintenance costs associated with the ageing gate infrastructure, these costs should be balanced against the financial and social costs of increased crime, enforcement activity, investigations, environmental clean-up, and victim support services that were likely to follow any significant removal programme. In many cases, prevention represented better value than responding to criminality after it had occurred.

- Any viable alternatives to alley gates (which may be more cost-effective): At present, I am not aware of any alternative intervention that could deliver the same level of sustained crime prevention, environmental improvement and community reassurance at a comparable cost. Additional patrols, CCTV, target hardening and engagement activity could all contribute to community safety, but they should be viewed as complementary measures rather than replacements for a proven physical access control system.

- Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a police perspective: Cleveland Police supported the continued retention of alley gates across Stockton-on-Tees, supported by a sustainable maintenance and replacement programme focused on areas of greatest community safety need. Retaining this infrastructure protected previous investment, supported ongoing crime reduction, helped safeguard vulnerable communities, and contributed positively to the wider objectives of the Safer Stockton Partnership (SSP).

  In summary, alley gates remained a proven and cost-effective community safety measure. Removal would be likely to have a detrimental impact on crime reduction, ASB, public confidence, and partner agency demand, whilst retaining them continued to deliver tangible benefits for residents and neighbourhood safety.

SBC WARD COUNCILLOR & TOWN / PARISH COUNCIL SURVEYS

Proposed questions for inclusion in a survey to be issued to all SBC Ward Councillors were shared and subsequently agreed. The Committee also agreed that these questions could be circulated to local Town and Parish Councils (replacing references to 'wards' with 'Town / Parish Councils') so they could provide views on this scrutiny topic.

SCOPE AND PROJECT PLAN

Members were reminded that a written submission in response to Committee lines of enquiry had been received (and subsequently shared prior to this meeting) from Cleveland Fire Brigade. The next formal evidence session in November 2026 was scheduled to involve contributions from SBC Housing Services and local housing associations.

AGREED that the information provided by Cleveland Police be noted.

CSS/42/26 Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations – Fly-Grazed Horses

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the outstanding recommendations from the Committee's previously completed review of Fly-Grazed Horses.

Members were reminded that this review was undertaken in 2020, with the last update on progress being received in October 2023. At that time, the Committee agreed that there was little to be gained in requesting any future progress updates in relation to the outstanding recommendations until the national picture became much clearer and Cleveland Police could reach a firm position on the way forward regarding a joint formal policy.

In recent months, Cleveland Police was approached to see if there had been any developments from a force perspective that might enable some further progress on this issue. In July 2026, the force confirmed (following discussions within the operations department's senior leadership team) that the issue of fly-grazed horses was not regarded as a strategic risk for the organisation and that matters would continue to be managed through existing operational procedures and local problem-solving arrangements.

As a result of this position, those recommendations (1, 2 and 6) that involved, or were linked to, the development of a joint formal policy framework and associated enforcement infrastructure remained unfulfilled and were therefore not achieved. Updates on other work linked to this scrutiny topic were noted as follows:

- Recommendation 6 (*Relevant SBC departments identify specific areas of Council land requiring a zero-tolerance approach based on location alone, along with an assessment of the resources required to support the enforcement of the new formal policy on these pieces of land and any other land where a horse's presence poses an identified risk*): SBC Environmental Health continued to address all complaints of this nature (as set out previously) on a case-by-case basis. Ongoing monitoring of horse locations, contact with horse owners, and case management

remained in effect, with all cases referred to SBC being addressed by suitably qualified officers.

- Recommendation 7 (*Consideration be given to arranging a future microchipping clinic in the Borough (in conjunction with the British Horse Society)*): As per the October 2023 update, local charities remained in considerable financial pressure (both post-pandemic and as a result of cost-of-living crises), with donations dramatically reduced. The availability of free microchipping sessions for the public, or other offers to the public, were not currently being undertaken.

An example of positive action / tangible success was highlighted following issues with fly-grazed horses on differently owned land in Port Clarance during the end of 2023 / early-2024. There had been an increase in the number of visible horses, with growing concerns about them getting onto the highway and being near children's play areas. SBC took the decision to employ the country's leading equine bailiff company to seize the horses (which were subsequently re-homed) – this sent a firm message to horse-owners and led to a significant reduction in horses being fly-grazed since.

With regard the action taken in Port Clarence in 2024, the Committee asked if this merely dispersed the problem to other parts of the Borough. Members were informed that this did not lead to issues within other Stockton-on-Tees locations, but may have resulted in horses being placed in neighbouring Local Authority areas instead. It was also noted that horses no longer had the same value they used to have (with owners therefore being less inclined to pay for the retrieval of any which had been seized).

AGREED that the Fly-Grazed Horses progress update be noted, the assessments for progress be confirmed as stated, and the action plan be signed off as incomplete.

CSS/43/26 Air Quality – SBC Annual Status Report 2026

The Committee received an update on the state of air quality in Stockton-on-Tees.

Further to the briefing that was given to the Committee in November 2025 following approval of the new Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Air Quality Strategy by SBC Cabinet, the latest annual status report on the quality of the Borough's air had since been produced and was provided for information. A supporting presentation was also included and, summarised by the SBC Environmental Health Service Manager, covered the following:

- Air Quality Objectives
- Air Quality Emission Pathway
- NO2, PM2.5 & PM10
- Particulate Matter (PM)
- Automatic Monitoring
- UK Monitoring Network
- Diffusion Tubes
- Air Quality Data Processing
- Clean Air Day
- KS2 Project
- Air Quality Strategy & Annual Status Report (ASR)

It was stated that Stockton-on-Tees continued to have very good air quality which was improving incrementally year-on-year. Two real-time monitoring stations (one in Eaglescliffe and the other in Stockton) were in place to continuously check for particulate matter (PM) – these were calibrated every 2-4 weeks to ensure accuracy and fed information into the national network. Diffusion tubes were also placed across the entire Borough to ascertain nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels.

The provision of information to the public, work with businesses, and education planning with schools (including participation in assemblies and attending parent-teacher evenings), was highlighted, as were the key messages within the latest Annual Status Report (ASR) which confirmed that Stockton-on-Tees had no requirement for an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) as its air quality was good, and NO2 and PM levels remained well below the national limits. Importantly, most monitoring locations showed an improving trend compared to 2024 – this reflected positively upon the work undertaken, and which continued to be done, in relation to this topic (not least the ongoing electrification of the general vehicle fleet which was contributing to declining NO2).

Final comments included recognition from DEFRA (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs) on SBCs transparent reporting, very strong monitoring and quality assurance, clear mapping and presentation of monitoring data, excellent adherence to monitoring requirements, the inclusion of benzene as a monitoring element (despite it not being legally required), and continued referencing to public health outcomes. The Council's next priority would be the continued delivery of its Air Quality Strategy covering the 2025-2030 period.

Welcoming this very positive update (particularly given the Borough was within the vicinity of a large petrochemical site), the Committee drew attention to some of the actions in relation to the measures listed within the SBC Air Quality Strategy. In response to concerns raised around two actions (RAG-rated 'red') linked to the '*we will reduce vehicle emissions from our fleet*' (no. 28), Members heard that fleet vehicles were changed on a cycle of necessity (not yearly), and that the timeline for these specific actions should read '2025-2030' (not 'From 2025'). Like many of the actions identified, progress was to be measured over the full five-year plan, though the ambition remained to see incremental gains each year.

Continuing this theme, the Committee sought clarity around the Council's intention to '*produce a green fleet and sustainable procurement strategy*' (no. 19, and also RAG-rated 'red'). The SBC officer stated that engagement took place with all Council departments as part of the production of the SBC Air Quality Strategy and reiterated that targets associated with this action should be viewed as five-year ambitions (2025-2030) as opposed to annual goals. Members were also reminded that SBC was yet to complete a full year's reporting cycle since the adoption of the overarching strategy which was agreed in July 2025 (the latest ASR only reported on 2025 activity).

Observing that benzene levels were only monitored at one station within the Borough (Eaglescliffe), the Committee asked if the production of this particular chemical was related to aviation fuel. Assurance was given that aviation fuels would not affect air quality at ground level, and it was explained that DEFRA only supported one benzene-monitoring location (which, due to the low levels being recorded, was likely to be removed anyway). It was subsequently highlighted that diesel / heavy vehicles were more impactful upon the quality of air.

Returning to the notion of a ‘green fleet’, the Committee queried if any plans were in place to promote the electrification of local taxis / private hire vehicles. Further information would be requested from the SBC Licensing Manager, though it was noted that specifications around the age and classification of such vehicles already existed.

AGREED that the Stockton-on-Tees air quality update be noted, and further information be provided as identified.

CSS/44/26 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027

CHAIR’S UPDATE

The Chair informed Members that the Committee’s final report following its recent review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget was presented to, and subsequently endorsed by, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Cabinet last week (15 October 2026). Key findings and recommendations were emphasised, including the need for strengthened communications around these budget schemes, and the work already underway regarding digital solutions.

WORK PROGRAMME 2026-2027

The next meeting was due to take place on 26 November 2026, with anticipated agenda items including the next Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates evidence-gathering session and the presentation of the proposed action plan linked to the Committee’s recommendations following its recently completed Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget review.

AGREED that the Chair’s Update and Community Safety Select Committee Work Programme 2026-2027 be noted.

Chair: …….

Agenda Item 6

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

26 NOVEMBER 2026

Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations – Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget

Summary

Members are asked to consider the proposed Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget will be implemented and target dates for completion.

Detail

1. The Committee's final report of the review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget (see link below) was considered by Cabinet in October 2026. Cabinet accepted the recommendations contained within.

   https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/documents/s24266/Committee%20Report.pdf

2. These are now subject to the procedure for monitoring the implementation of agreed recommendations. An Action Plan has been drawn up and is attached at **Appendix 1**. This sets out how the relevant departments will be taking forward the agreed recommendations and includes target dates for completion.

3. Members should consider and agree the Action Plan. The Committee will receive a detailed progress update on the implementation of recommendations approximately 12 months (or sooner if specifically requested) after the Action Plan has been agreed.

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Post Title: Senior Scrutiny Officer
Telephone Number: 01642 526187
Email Address: gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk

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This document was classified as: OFFICIAL

APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN: Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
1	Both the Community Participation Budget (CPB) and the Ward Transport Budget (WTB) should remain as separate Member-led schemes.	CPB/WTB to continue as separate Member-led schemes, retaining the existing distinction between CPB revenue funding and WTB capital funding.	Both schemes continue to operate separately with clear governance and budget arrangements.	Highways, Transport and Design	Ongoing
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).	WTB/CPB guidance documents are updated as required and ready to be discussed at Members Briefing post elections. Clear guidance providing clearer eligibility criteria, practical examples of eligible schemes, requirements and indicative timescales for common proposals.	Revised CPB/WTB guidance completed and incorporated into the Member induction programme.	Highways, Transport and Design	May 2027
3	SBC considers how existing resources can best support and improve the timely processing of CPB / WTB proposals and ensure effective communication with SBC Ward Councillors throughout the process.	Existing resources have been reviewed following the service review. Additional support will be provided through the reallocation of existing capacity, including Business Support resource, to assist with routine administration, requests and communication.	Improved resilience in processing requests and responding to member enquiries, with reduced reliance on a single officer.	Highways, Transport and Design	Complete
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).	Continue development and implementation of the digital CPB/WTB submission and case-management system, including visibility of request progress and available balances.	Digital submission and case management system operational, with Members briefed on its use through the Member induction programme.	Highways, Transport and Design	May 2027

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APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN: Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
		Provide a Member briefing before full implementation.	Members able to view request status and budget information. Member briefing delivered.		
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.	Develop the digital case management solution to provide automated email updates to Members at key project milestones. Where a scheme cannot progress, or the original scope needs to change following feasibility or technical assessment, Members will receive a clear update setting out the reasons for the decision or change.	Members have greater visibility of scheme progress, via the digital case management system. Clear rationale / reasons why a scheme cannot be progressed is included.	Highways, Transport and Design	May 2027
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).	Provide all Members with an annual statement covering CPB/WTB allocations, committed spend, available balances and current proposals, including the cumulative four-year electoral-cycle position.	Annual statement issued to all Members.	Highways, Transport and Design	April 2028
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.	Annual CPB/WTB statements provided to Members, will include a summary of schemes delivered within their ward, alongside current allocations, commitments and available balances. This can then be used via ward surgeries, newsletters and engagement with resident	Provision of an annual summary to all Members, highlighting activity to support communication and engagement with local community stakeholders.	Highways, Transport and Design	Annually (following commencement of new electoral cycle)

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APPENDIX 1

ACTION PLAN: Review of Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget

No.	Recommendation	Proposed Actions / Progress	Success Measures	Responsibility	Date
		and community groups to showcase completed projects.			
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.	Develop a dedicated CPB/WTB webpage setting out: • the purpose of each budget and how they operate • annual budget allocations • examples of the types of schemes that may be eligible • how potential proposals can be raised through Ward Members • relevant submission or seasonal deadlines • Ward Member contact details • an annual summary of schemes delivered through CPB and WTB The webpage will provide a single source of information which can also be promoted periodically to residents, community groups and Town and Parish Councils.	Dedicated CPB/WTB information is published and maintained on the Council website, providing residents and community organisations with clear information on the budgets, eligible proposals, how to contact their Ward Members and examples of schemes delivered.	Highways, Transport and Design	May 2027 May 2027 Ongoing
9	SBC introduces an annual report to the relevant SBC scrutiny committee on the CPB and WTB (allocations, proposals, spend, carry-forward, etc.).	Produce an annual CPB/WTB monitoring report to the Cabinet Member for Transport covering allocations, proposals, expenditure, commitments and carry-forward/reallocation position for consideration by the relevant scrutiny committee.	Annual report to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport	Highways, Transport and Design	April 2028

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Agenda Item 7

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE

26 NOVEMBER 2026

Scrutiny Review of Alley Gates

Summary

The third evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Alley Gates will consider information from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Housing Services and Thirteen Housing Group.

Detail

1. Previously identified as a required contributor towards the Committee's ongoing review of Alley Gates, **SBC Housing Services** was asked to provide a response to the following:

   - *Your department's awareness of / involvement in / experience of this community safety measure*
   - *Any feedback from landlords / private sector tenants on their experiences of this community safety measure (e.g. issues that have arisen, complaints / compliments, value / effectiveness)*
   - *Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a SBC Housing Services perspective*

   A paper containing views on the above has been prepared and is included within these meeting papers. SBC Housing Services representatives are scheduled to be in attendance to provide an overview of the submission and respond to any comments / questions.

2. **Thirteen Housing Group** was also asked to respond to similar lines of enquiry:

   - *Your organisation's awareness of / involvement in / experience of this community safety measure*
   - *Any feedback from tenants on their experiences of this community safety measure (e.g. issues that have arisen, complaints / compliments, value / effectiveness)*
   - *Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a Thirteen Housing Group perspective*

   A presentation relating to the above questions has been prepared and is included within these meeting papers. Thirteen's Head of Communities is scheduled to be in attendance to provide an overview of the submission and respond to any comments / questions.

3. In advance of this session, Members may again wish to familiarise themselves with some relevant background material in relation to this scrutiny topic::

   - 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.

Name of Contact Officer: Gary Woods
Post Title: Senior Scrutiny Officer
Telephone Number: 01642 526187
Email Address: gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk

Adult Social Care and Health Select Committee
Alley Gates
SBC Housing & A Fairer Stockton on Tees response to the key lines enquiry

Your department's awareness of / involvement in / experience of this community safety measure

The **Selective Licensing and Private Sector Housing teams** respond to housing disrepair complaints and inspect rental properties. This includes an assessment of external areas, yards, outbuildings and the safe exit from a building.

As part of the Thornaby Town Deal funding programme, the **Housing Regeneration Team** received funding to tackle poor-quality housing and deliver environmental improvements across North Thornaby.

Any feedback from landlords / private sector tenants on their experiences of this community safety measure (e.g. issues that have arisen, complaints / compliments, value / effectiveness)

The **Selective Licensing Team** has advised that there are alley gates within all three of boroughs selective licensing areas of Central Stockton, North Thornaby and Newtown.

It is the view of the team that their presence has contributed to reduction in anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, burglary and criminal damage by restricting unauthorised access to rear alleyways. Officers report that this has improved the environmental quality of rear service areas and provided residents with greater reassurance regarding safety and security.

Alley gates also assist private landlord licence holders in complying with licence conditions relating to 'the management of external areas, waste and prevention of nuisance'. The team can request that landlords provide tenants with keys to ensure secure and convenient access is maintained.

Alley gates support the wider Selective Licensing objectives to create safer, cleaner and more attractive neighbourhoods, alongside improving housing and environmental conditions.

Similar feedback has been provided by the **Private Sector Housing Team**, with many residents suggesting many they feel safer where alley gates are in place.

The service has also received complaints from residents when gates have become damaged or inoperable, with concerns commonly relating to increased fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and reduced feelings of security.

A key element of the North Thornaby Town Deal project undertaken by the Housing Regeneration Team was an environmental improvement programme which includes a comprehensive scheme of repairs and repainting works to alley gates within the Victoria and Mandale Ward. The works were undertaken to improve the appearance, functionality, and security of the alley gate network, helping to reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour and enhance the local environment.
The programme included:

- Servicing and maintenance of all gates, including greasing hinges and rollers and carrying out repairs to locking mechanisms.
- Repainting of all alley gates.
- Replacement of gate signage, with four signs installed per gate where signs were missing, faded, or damaged.
- Replacement of broken locking mechanisms where required.
- Replacement of damaged barrels where required.
- Replacement of drop pins and end retainers where required.
- Renumbering of all gates where numbers were missing or had deteriorated.

Installation of four new replacement gates where existing gates were beyond economical repair.

In total, 83 alley gates were repaired and refurbished, including the installation of four new gates. The total cost of the programme was £44,905.75.

The project has contributed to improving the appearance of the area, enhancing community safety, extending the lifespan of the alley gate infrastructure, and supporting the wider regeneration objectives of the Thornaby Town Deal programme. Feedback from residents was very positive.

Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a SBC Housing Services :

Whilst formal surveys have not been undertaken, operational experience suggests that alley gates are generally viewed positively by residents and landlords and contribute to positive property and neighbourhood management and community safety objectives.

Key contacts:

Joy Swithenbank Service Lead (Private Sector Housing)	Sam Dixon Service Lead (Housing Investment & Migration Support)

thirteen
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Alley Gate Review

Angela Corner, Head of Communities

Homes. Communities. Support.

Information requested

1. Your organisation's awareness of / involvement in / experience of this community safety measure

2. Any feedback from tenants on their experiences of this community safety measure (e.g. issues that have arisen, complaints / compliments, value / effectiveness)

3. Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a Thirteen Housing Group perspective

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Your organisation's awareness of / involvement in / experience of this community safety measure - Summary

Thirteen has a limited number of alley gates within its housing portfolio

Due to mixed-tenure arrangements, Thirteen has limited direct involvement in the management of Stockton Borough Council's alley gates.

However, Thirteen work closely with Stockton Borough Council and Partners to address any community or resident related issues

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Colleague (anecdotal) feedback

Housing teams – they report alley gates can help to reduce crime, ASB and motorbike nuisance

Caretakers - Alley gates reduce and minimise the amount and frequency of fly tipping, but they don't prevent – need to do more work with communities/residents

The effectiveness of gates can be affected by access arrangements and gates not being consistently secured

Access arrangements need to accommodate ongoing maintenance and environmental management

This is generic insight – Happy to support a more detailed review however we would need street names of all locations

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Customer perception/ feedback

Online Survey sent to 60 of our involved customers who live across Stockton

We received 10 responses from the 60 customers invited to participate

Comments
"I think they should remain"
"They have a positive impact on the community"
"I think there should be more"
"People need to keep them locked"

Summary

"Despite the small sample size, customer feedback was broadly positive, with 80% reporting a positive overall impact.

However, experiences varied across individual measures."

Happy to support with a more in-depth customer consultation by specific gate/area level if required

Impact in your local area
20% no impact
40% positive impact
40% very positive impact

Perception of crime
60% no change
40% much better

Perception of ASB
10% much worse
40% no change
20% a little better
30% much better

Reduction of motorbikes
10% much worse
40% no change
50% much better

Reduction of fly-tipping
10% much worse
50% no change
10% little better
30% much better

Feeling safe
10% much worse
40% no change
10% a little better
40% much better

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Any other views relating to this scrutiny topic from a Thirteen Housing Group perspective

Alley gates alone may not address the underlying causes of crime, ASB and fly-tipping

For sustainability and maximum impact – Community engagement, involvement and codesign at a local level could be considered

Reviewing good examples of alleyway regeneration projects

1. Community ownership and involvement throughout
2. Communal activities
3. Good neighbour agreements
4. Reporting issues and ASB



Illustration purposes only

Summary
"Alley gates can be an effective community safety measure, but their long-term success depends on resident ownership, positive behaviours and wider neighbourhood improvements. Physical investment needs to be matched by investment in people and communities."

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 *Powering Our Future* (POF) programme whilst also ensuring financial stability of the organisation in the future.

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

> *'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)

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)

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)	*What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?*
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) • Community Safety • Care For Your Area • Housing Services	➢ Location / condition of Borough's alley gates ➢ Benefits / challenges created ➢ Budgets / costs for installation / maintenance ➢ Future policy options / considerations
SBC Ward Councillors	➢ Views on this community safety measure
Cleveland Police	➢ Benefits / challenges created (e.g. access) ➢ Impact of removal / viable alternatives
Cleveland Fire Brigade	➢ Benefits / challenges created (e.g. access)
Housing Associations	➢ Views on this community safety measure
Town / Parish Councils	➢ Views on this community safety measure
Residents Associations / Community Groups	➢ 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 Cleveland Police SBC Housing Services Thirteen Housing Group Other Council Approaches	**01.10.26** **22.10.26** **26.11.26**	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	**07.01.27**	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	**15.01.27**	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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Safer Stockton Partnership

A meeting of Safer Stockton Partnership was held on Wednesday 20th May 2026.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Chair), Alan O'Donoghue (Deputy Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Dawn Tyerman, Sharon Cooney, Marc Stephenson, Anna Waddington, Lucy Owens, Leanne Maloney-Kelly, Jamie Bell, Jen Moore, Steven Harris, Adam Bateman, Claire Spencer, Mandy Mackinnon, Rachel Parker, Vanessa Housley, Sarah Bowman-Abouna.

Officers: John Devine.

Also in attendance: NA

Apologies: Cllr Clare Besford

SSP/1/26 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted

SSP/2/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

SSP/3/26 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meetings held on Wednesday 21st January 2026 & Wednesday 18th March 2026 were agreed as a true record.

SSP/4/26 Recorded Crime & Disorder Report

Members were presented with the Recorded Crime & Disorder report, the report focused on the recorded crime in the Stockton on Tees Borough over a 12-month period starting in April 2025 to April 2026.

Officers highlighted the following sections of the report to Members:

- Publicly reported offences had increased from the previous year by 14.8%.
- Police generated crime had also increased slightly from the previous year by 2.8%.
- Publicly reported Anti-Social Behaviour had seen a 1.5% reduction.
- Death or serious injury caused by illegal driving had the largest reduction since last year with -60%.
- Homicide showed a large increase of 200% but that was an actual increase of 2 incidents over the last year.
- Theft had increased by 21.8%.
- Criminal Damage & Arson had overall shown a reduction of 1.6% however Arson showed an increase of 14.0% since last year.
- Drug offences had reduced by 6.1%.
- Public Order Offences had increased by 4.2%.

Officers informed Members that a portion of the increases highlighted above could be attributed to Operation Magnolia, which was a retrospective recording of historical offences in Kirklevington. The increase in certain crime types across Cleveland was discussed with members, and how support multi agency support could be the solution. With Members and Officers agreeing that the Cost-of-Living crisis and low employment could be a contributing factor, and what early intervention work could be done to tackle it.

Members Agreed to note the report.

SSP/5/26 ASB Charter (Six Month Update)

Representatives from Cleveland Police presented to Members the six-month update of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Charter. Within the report Officers informed the Partnership that there had been a 29% reduction in the number of victims of ASB, Billingham Central and Yarm had seen a 9% reduction in the period. Alongside further an 11% reduction in Hardwick and Slaters Lane, while Stockton Town Centre had seen the highest reduction of 12%.

Partners praised officers for their actions and the results shown in the report. It was acknowledged that public perception would still be a challenge, but work had to be done to increase awareness.

Officers then spoke on their ongoing enforcement activities and the focus on the next period. The Police had undertaken targeted patrol activity, while strengthening internal processes through daily scrutiny and training.

Members Noted the Update

SSP/6/26 Op Shield Update

Members were given an update on Operation Shield by Officers. Officers started the update by giving members a brief recap of Operation Shield, it had been launched in 2025 in partnership with Cleveland Police, Stockton Recovery Services, Stockton BID, Wellington Square, the Crown Prosecution Service as well as other partners.

As noted in the Recorded Crime & Disorder Report ASB continued to decrease across the Borough, but the reduction is more pronounced in the Stockton Town Centre ward with a reduction of 6.45%. The day-to-day implications of the reductions could be seen in the fewer incidents of ASB, noise and vehicle nuisance.

Members were aware that the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) had been strengthened and expanded in recent weeks, for up to three years. Since the new PSPO’s had come into force it had been used by Police and Council Officers on 92 occasions, to disrupt or challenge perpetrators of ASB.

Officers suggested that they bring back a public quarterly report on the new PSPOs, to explain how changes were made and had led to an increase in detecting and disrupting a wider range ASB.

Members AGREED to not the report.

SSP/7/26 Prevent (CT) Update

Members were given an update on Prevent (CT) Programme; there had been a Cleveland wide meeting on Prevent in which Stockton was well represented. There were currently 8 referrals on the system, 3 active investigations with 6 in review. Officers expected guidance on Martins Law from the Home Office for how it would affect the Councils strategy.

Members noted the update.

SSP/8/26 PSPO

This report was restricted due to the links to Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/9/26 IQuanta Report

Members were presented with a restricted report that provided an overview on crime comparisons against other similar CSPs utilising iQuanta.

This report was a restricted document due to the statistical information only made available as an intelligence tool for partnerships until released by the Home Office.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/10/26 Community Safety Annual Report

This item was restricted due to the sensitive victim information and multiagency intelligence contained within the Community Safety Annual Report.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/11/26 CSP Action Plan

Due to the connection to an ongoing Police investigation this Agenda Item was restricted.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/12/26 AOB

As it was their last Safer Stockton Partnership meeting partners gave their thanks to Sharon Cooney & Lucy Owens for their work on behalf of the Partnership.

Chair: .....

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Safer Stockton Partnership

A meeting of Safer Stockton Partnership was held on Wednesday 16th September 2026.

Present: Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Chair), Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Clare Besford, Dawn Tyerman, Marc Stephenson, Alan Turner, Anna Waddington, Leanne Maloney-Kelly, Jamie Bell, Mark Hall, Andrew Stephen, Steven Harris, Adam Bateman, Mandy Mackinnon, Mandy Rowlands, Darren Hope, Sarah Bowman-Abouna.

Officers: **John Devine & Junita Agyapong.**

Also in attendance: NA

Apologies: Alan O'Donoghue (Deputy Chair), Ann Powell, Jen Moore.

SSP/13/26 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

SSP/14/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

SSP/15/26 Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 20 May 2026 were agreed as a true record.

SSP/16/26 Recorded Crime and Disorder Report

Members were presented with the Recorded Crime & Disorder report, the report focused on the recorded crime in the Stockton on Tees Borough over a 12-month period from August 2025 to August 2026

Officers highlighted the following sections of the report to Members:

- Total Crime numbers had risen by 27.5%
- Publicly reported crime & Police generated crime had also risen by 31.5% and 7.9% respectively.
- Increased amount of proactive Policing of historic offences which Officers explained would be partly due to the increases.
- A change had been made to how Robbery was reported which Officers informed members was the reason for the 81.7% increase shown in the report.
- Shoplifting had shown the largest increase of 156.3% which Officers and Members noted was connected to the continued Cost of Living Crisis.
- Drug related offences had seen a decrease of 7.4%.

Officers acknowledged that there were several areas of improvement noted with in the report but were confident that with continued work from their Officers improvements would be made.

Members also discussed the increase in Shoplifting, Officers explained that this was due to increased engagement with retailors and a streamlined reporting process.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/17/26 DASG Annual Report

Members were presented with the annual update report on the Stockton On Tees Borough Council Domestic Abuse Strategy. Officers began by briefly giving an overview of the strategy for newer members of the partnership, before moving onto the three year update.

Officers highlighted the key achievements to members:

- Successful relaunch of the Safe at Home (sanctuary scheme).
- Increase in sanctuary provision.
- Significant growth in domestic abuse workforce training and awareness activities.
- Increased opportunities to identify domestic abuse.
- Improved perpetrator programme completion rates with Harbour.
- Improved data management and monitoring arrangements.
- Improved system collaboration on evidence-based interventions for children and families

The future priorities for the Strategy were also discussed with Members, Officers explained that they had started to explore the provision of female only temporary accommodation. As well as the sustainability of specialist services, support pathways for children and young people, how to respond on other prevalent issues such as child to parent violence and abuse (CAPVA) and responding to recommendations set out in local reviews on domestic abuse and the early years.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/18/26 Fire Prevention Methodology

Officers from Cleveland Fire Brigade presented a report to members on “Tackling Fire Fatalities & Injuries Through Better Targeting”.

The report looked at changes which had been made in the County Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) following a decrease in Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF) but increased fatalities. Officers were keen to share the insights from the report with Members and implement the changes CDDFRS had already made.

Officers explained that ADFs in the CDDFRS area had decreased to an all-time low as of 2023/24 (199 instances), but Fire deaths were at an all time high of 7. A number of post fire reviews were conducted which found that if the 9 fire fatalities review 0 had been in the high or very high-risk rating, but they had all been medium risk of below.

The solution that was found was to enhance the NFCC aligned risk model, so that it incorporated additional information and factors such as Blue Badge holders, assisted bin collections and those receiving single person council tax discount. The CDDFRS reported that the results had been better identification of hidden vulnerabilities, more homes prioritised for Home fire safety visits (HFSV) and this created a clearer operational picture for crews.

Evidence of the success of the new approach was shown in the drastic drop in fatalities from a high of 7 in year to 31 March 2024 to only 1 in the year to 31 March 2026 period. A similar reduction was shown in the number of fire related hospitalisations from 8 severe cases in the year to 31 March 2024 to 1 severe case in the year to 31 March 2026 period.

Officers from Cleveland Fire Brigade stated their aim to implement this new approach from CDDFRS but they would need the help of all partners to make it a success. Partners agreed to work with the Fire Brigade to provide the extra data within the GDPR guidance.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/19/26 Op Shield Update

Members were given an update on Operation Shield by Officers. Officers started the update by giving members a brief recap of Operation Shield, it had been launched in 2025 in partnership with Cleveland Police, Stockton Recovery Services, Stockton BID, Wellington Square, the Crown Prosecution Service as well as other partners.

Officers discussed the public consultation that had been undertaken on the new, expanded and strengthened Public Spaces Protection Oder (PSPO). It was noted that support for the new version of the PSPO had peaked at 97.4%. However there had also been a number of pessimistic comments with members of the public stating “What’s the point in changing the PSPO, if we aren’t going to enforce it?”. That feedback and all other feedback had been brought back to the dedicated Town Centre Officers, which had led to an increase in the level of productivity.

This was evidenced by the increased level of proactive disruption of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Officers showed examples of this by informing members that between April 2025 and August 2025 there had been a recorded 56 uses of the PSPO. But since the new PSPO had come into effect between April 2026 to August 2026 there had been 298 recoded uses of the PSPO.

Officers and Partners agreed that it was important that through visible and proactive prevention of ASB that public confidence in the PSPO would grow.

Members praised Officers and partners for their hard work, commitment and to the joint work being undertaken to deliver the PSPO.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/20/26 Prevent (CT) Update

Following an annual inspection from the Home Office Stockton on Tees Council had passed its assessment. There were no other updates on Local cases to bring to members attention at the time of the meeting.

Members AGREED to note the report.

SSP/21/26 Any Other Business

At the commencement of the meeting Members and Partners observed a moment of silence for PC Tom Clough and PC Matthew Blades who were tragically killed in the line of duty.

SSP/22/26 PSPO

This report was restricted due to the links to Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/23/26 Project Forge

This report was restricted due to the links to Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/24/26 IQuanta Report

Members were presented with a restricted report that provided an overview on crime comparisons against other similar CSPs utilising iQuanta.

This report was a restricted document due to the statistical information only made available as an intelligence tool for partnerships until released by the Home Office.

AGREED that the report be noted.

SSP/25/26 CSP Action Plan

Due to the connection to an ongoing Police investigation this Agenda Item was restricted.

AGREED that the report be noted.

Chair: .....

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)	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 / Phil Hardie / Simon Milner Richard Bradford John Angus
22 October	Air Quality: Annual Update Monitoring: Progress Update – Fly-Grazed Horses Review of Alley Gates • Cleveland Police	Stephen Donaghy Stephen Donaghy / Jamie Bell Jamie Bell
26 November	Monitoring: Action Plan – Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget Review of Alley Gates • SBC Housing Services • Thirteen Housing Group Minutes of the Safer Stockton Partnership (May & September 2026)	Phil Hardie / Simon Milner Joy Swithenbank / Joanne Parker Angela Corner
7 January 2027 (informal)	Review of Alley Gates • Summary of Evidence / Draft Recommendations	Richard Bradford
28 January	Review of Alley Gates • (Draft) Final Report	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson / Richard Bradford
25 February		
25 March	Overview and Performance Report: Neighbourhoods (TBC)	Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE / Kellie Hopkins / Marc Stephenson

COMMUNITY SAFETY SELECT COMMITTEE
Work Programme 2026-2027

2026-2027 Scrutiny Reviews

- Community Participation Budget and Ward Transport Budget
- Alley Gates

Monitoring Items (scheduled / to be scheduled)

- 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) – November 2026

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 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.

In related matters, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a report in September 2026 on public safety at events, containing 37 recommendations, including making Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) statutory. The report will be of interest to Councils and partners involved in event safety.

- **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.

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- **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*.

- **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.

  More recently, updated ASB statutory guidance has been published following stakeholder feedback. Many suggestions have been incorporated into the final document. Two versions are available. Frontline practitioners should continue to use the July 2025 guidance until 26 October 2026. The October 2026 guidance October 2026 guidance, which reflects changes introduced by the Crime and Policing Act 2026, takes effect on 26 October 2026 and replaces the earlier version.

- **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.

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.

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- **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.

  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.

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- **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, 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.

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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.

- **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).

- **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.

- **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.

The LGAs Safe Accommodation Survey (June-July 2026) highlights Councils' work to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse, alongside financial pressures and shortages of suitable accommodation. Of the 49 responding English Councils, 73% reported that financial pressures affected their ability to provide safe accommodation to a great or moderate extent. 78% identified a shortage of accommodation suitable for victims with specific needs, while 69% reported shortages in overall supply. Although 86% said provision met identified needs to a great or moderate extent overall, the findings highlight gaps for particular groups. Partnerships with specialist organisations were the most common approach to addressing different needs.

In anticipation of the Domestic Abuse Protective Order (DAPO) rollout, questions have been raised by Council housing, social care and legal teams about Local Authority involvement in DAPOs. Information is sought from pilot areas on locally produced guidance and case studies demonstrating good practice. Clarification is also requested on whether an evaluation of the pilots is expected before the national rollout referred to as taking place in November.

- **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.