

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday 19th May 2026.

Present: Cllr Sylvia Walmsley (Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks (Vice-Chair), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Tony Riordan and Cllr Marilyn Surtees

Officers: Calum Titley, Judy Trainer, Gary Woods and Michelle Gunn

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Carol Clark

ESC/6/26 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

ESC/7/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

ESC/8/26 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting on 22 April 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

ESC/9/26 Adult Social Care Front Door Business Case/Options Appraisal

The Committee received an update report outlining plans to redesign the Adult Social Care (ASC) "Front Door" to improve how residents accessed help and support.

The current model created delays for residents by routing them into formal assessment processes when their needs could be met through more timely, proportionate support.

A more responsive model focusing on early, flexible intervention would enable people to receive the right support at the right time, improving outcomes and reducing demand on formal assessment pathways.

The new, integrated approach was proposed to:

- Improve access and response times
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention
- Reduce unnecessary demand on statutory services
- Provide better outcomes for the residents of Stockton-on-Tees

This change was informed by both the CQC inspection (2025) and the LGA Peer Review (2024), which highlighted the need to improve access, reduce hand offs, and strengthen early support.

Key issues highlighted and discussed included:

- The importance of engaging with partners and the voluntary sector in the development of the model was recognised
- There was a need to ensure the workforce was equipped with the appropriate skill set
- The requirement for a broad range of contact options was identified, albeit it was noted that 95% of adults had access to smartphones
- There were no plans to change the contact telephone number; however, Members emphasised the importance of adequate resourcing at the initial point of telephone contact
- The proposed menu of options was positively received
- A phased approach to implementation had already commenced, with early data indicating an increase in issues being resolved at an earlier stage

AGREED that the update be noted.

ESC/10/26 Scrutiny Review of Capital Projects

The Committee considered the Executive Summary of the Place Select Committee's Scrutiny Review of Governance of Capital Projects which had been presented to Cabinet with all recommendations agreed.

Overall, the Committee had concluded that the Council had made significant progress in building a strong and credible governance framework for its capital programme, the systems now in place provided a solid foundation for delivering projects that benefited residents, supported regeneration, and met the strategic ambition of the Borough. Continued focus on governance, communication, risk management and workforce capability would further improve delivery, ensuring that capital projects achieved their intended outcomes and continued to contribute positively to the Borough's growth and development.

AGREED that the Executive Summary be noted.

ESC/11/26 Scrutiny Review of Children Affected by Domestic Abuse

The Committee considered the Executive Summary of the Community Safety Select Committee's Scrutiny Review of Children affected by Domestic Abuse which had been presented to Cabinet with all recommendations agreed.

It was noted that this was a complex topic to review about an issue that was multifaceted. Whilst it was not within the gift of the Committee to prevent this type of abuse occurring, the review had allowed a spotlight to be shone on how aware local services were of this issue, how they responded to any cases they identified, and how they worked together to raise awareness and react to domestic abuse across the Borough. Addressing the causes of domestic abuse was a deep-rooted challenge for society in general, but it remained incumbent on organisations and their staff to be vigilant, appropriately trained, and suitably responsive to this all too prevalent issue.

AGREED that the Executive Summary be noted.

ESC/12/26 Scrutiny Review of Children Not in School

The Committee considered the Executive Summary of the Children and Young People Select Committee's Scrutiny Review of Children Not in School which was due to be presented to Cabinet in June.

Overall, the review highlighted the wide range of reasons a child may not be accessing full time education at school and demonstrated that, while Stockton had strong systems in place for quality assurance, multi-agency working and engagement with families, there were pressures relating to emotional and mental health needs and rising demand linked to SEND. The Committee's recommendations therefore focused on strengthening staffing capacity, consistency and partnership working to reduce time out of education and improve outcomes for vulnerable children.

AGREED that the Executive Summary be noted.

ESC/13/26 Forward Plan

AGREED that the Forward Plan be noted.

ESC/14/26 Chairs' Updates

Members were provided with updates from the Chairs of each Select Committee.

AGREED that the Chairs' Updates be noted.

ESC/15/26 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme

Members requested that themes arising from Complaints Monitoring and Ombudsman report be presented at the September Committee meeting.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

Chair: