

Date:

Wednesday 23 September 2026 at 6.00 pm

Venue:

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

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. Welcome and Evacuation Procedure (Pages 7 - 10)

3. Minutes Silence - PC Matthew Blades and PC Tom Clough

4. Apologies for Absence

5. Declarations of Interest

6. Minutes (Pages 11 - 22)

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

7. Public Question Time (Pages 23 - 28)

8. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies 2026/27 (Pages 29 - 30)

9. Youth Justice Plan Stockton-on-Tees 2026-2027 (Pages 31 - 64)

10. Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031 (Pages 65 - 84)

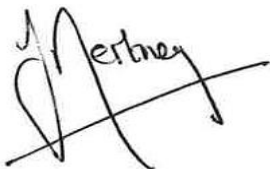
11. Planning Committee and National Scheme of Delegation (Pages 85 - 118)

12. Motions to Council (Pages 119 - 124)

13. Members' Question Time

(Pages 125 - 128)

14. Forward Plan and Leader's Statement



Jonathan Nertney
Head of Democratic Services
Tuesday 15 September 2026

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please.

Contact: Democratic Services Manager, Judy Trainer on email judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk

Key – Declarable interests are :-

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

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance

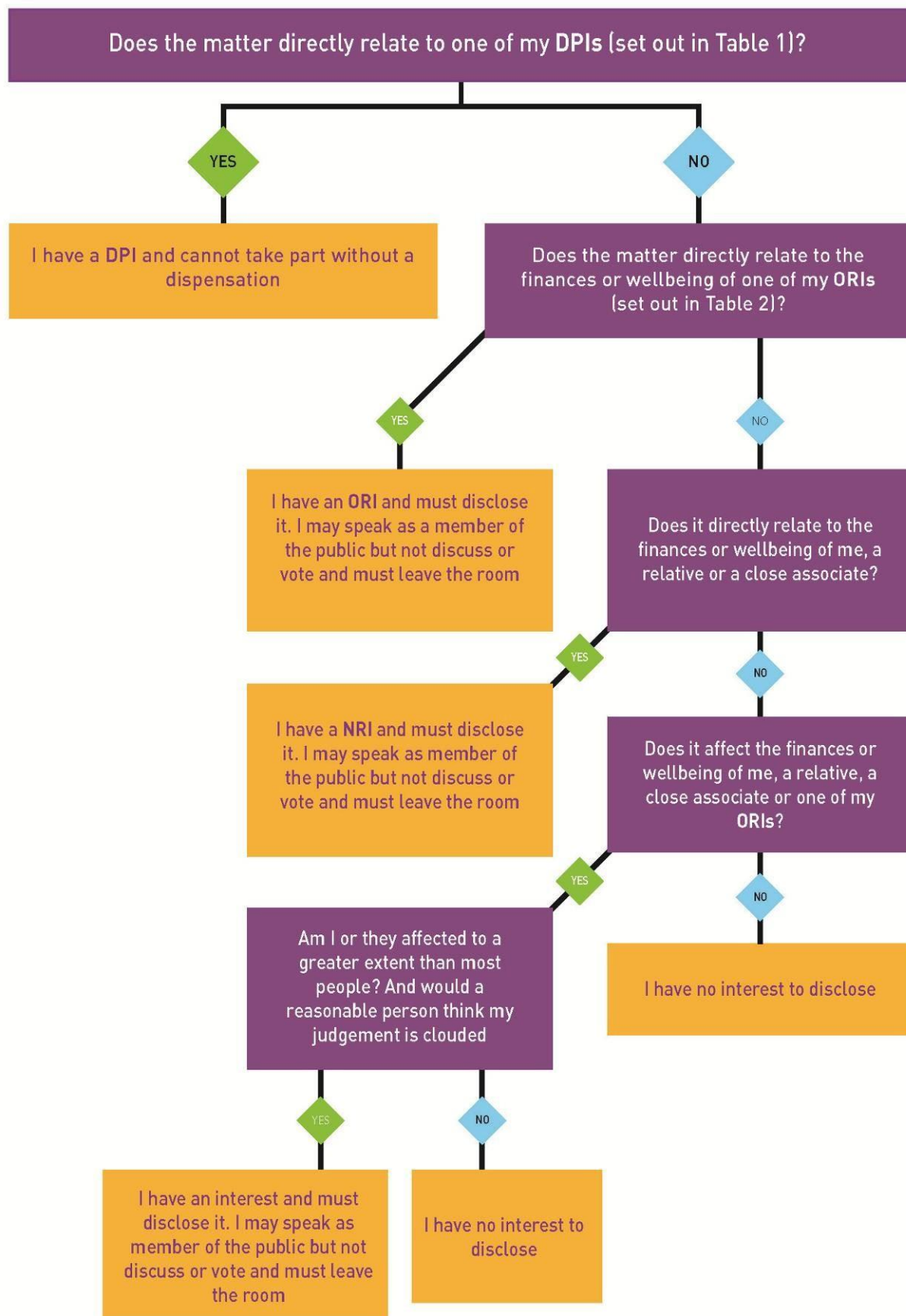


Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registrable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

a) any unpaid directorships

b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority

c) any body

(i) exercising functions of a public nature

(ii) directed to charitable purposes or

(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the Council Chamber entrance indicated on the map below.



In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately start to leave their workspace by the nearest available signed Exit route.

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

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

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

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

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



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

When the Alarm sounds:

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

5. await further instructions.

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

Toilets

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

Water Cooler

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

Microphones

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday 22nd July 2026.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Robert Cook)
Cllr Stefan Barnes, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Michelle Bendelow, Cllr Clare Besford, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Stephen Dodds, Cllr Richard Eglington, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mohammed Mazi, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Jack Miller, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Sufi Mubeen, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Vanessa Sewell, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Jim Taylor, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Marcus Vickers, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston and Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Tracey Carter, Clare Harper, Majella McCarthy, Angela Connor, Julie Butcher, Judy Trainer, Michael Henderson, Peter Bell, John Devine and Junita Agyapong

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Nathan Gale, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Stephen Richardson and Cllr Katie Zagoria

COU/36/25 Livestreaming

The Worshipful the Mayor announced to those present that the meeting was being livestreamed.

COU/37/25 Welcome and Evacuation Procedure

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone and outlined the arrangements for the meeting.

COU/38/25 Declarations of Interest

In the interests of transparency, Councillor Tony Riordan and Councillor Norma Stephenson advised the meeting that they were veterans and Councillor Kevin Faulks advised that a number of his family members were or had serviced in the Armed Forces.

COU/39/25 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May 2026 and 24 June 2026.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May 2026 and 24 June 2026 be confirmed and signed by the Worshipful the Mayor as a correct record.

COU/40/25 Public Question Time

A public question had been submitted by Brian Wragg. However, the questioner was not present at the meeting therefore it was advised that a written reply would be sent to him.

COU/41/25 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies 2026/27

Consideration was given to a report asking Council to make nominations to the TVCA Investment Committee and note the changes to the TVCA Audit and Governance Committee.

The nomination to the remaining seat on the TVCA Investment Committee would be brought back to the next Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Councillor Paul Weston be appointed to the TVCA Investment Committee.
- 2) That the following appointments be made to the TVCA Audit and Governance Committee:
 - Remove Councillor Mohammed Mazi – Replace with Councillor Niall Innes
 - Remove Councillor Niall Innes as substitute Member and replace with Councillor Hugo Stratton

COU/42/25 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Licensing Act 2003 - Statement of Licensing Policy Review 2026

Consideration was given to a report asking the Council to review and agree the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED That the Statement of Licensing Policy be agreed.

COU/43/25 Motions to Council

Motion 1

It was moved by Councillor Barbara Inman and seconded by Councillor Marc Besford:

“This Council notes:

- The increasing use of artificial intelligence to create realistic but false images of real individuals.
- Recent national concerns regarding the creation and circulation of AI generated imagery depicting women and girls in degrading, sexualised or otherwise inappropriate ways.

- That AI generated imagery can also be used to ridicule, humiliate or misrepresent individuals through the manipulation of their appearance, body shape, personal relationships or conduct.
- The growing concern that such behaviour may deter people from participating in public life, standing for election, or engaging in democratic debate.

This Council believes:

- Robust political debate is an essential part of democracy.
- Political disagreement should focus on policies, decisions and ideas rather than personal attacks on an individual's appearance or private life.
- Women and girls are disproportionately affected by online abuse, intimidation, misogyny and degrading portrayals.
- Those serving in public life should be able to do so without being subjected to manipulated imagery intended to humiliate, denigrate or undermine them.

This Council therefore:

- Condemns the use of AI generated imagery which seeks to degrade, intimidate, harass or misrepresent individuals.
- Reaffirms its commitment to respectful political discourse and democratic engagement.
- Encourages all elected representatives, political parties, campaigners and members of the public to engage in political debate responsibly and respectfully.
- Recognises the importance of creating an environment in which women, young people and people from all backgrounds feel able to participate in public life and consider standing for elected office.
- Resolves to support initiatives which promote civility, respect and participation in local democracy."

Councillor Tony Riordan moved, seconded by Councillor Niall Innes that motion be amended as follows:

"This Council notes:

- That abusive behaviour towards those involved in public life can take many forms, including manipulated imagery, intimidation, threats, harassment, discriminatory language, personal abuse and the dissemination of false or misleading information.
- The increasing use of artificial intelligence and other digital technologies including photography to create realistic but false images, audio and video of real individuals.
- Recent national concerns regarding the creation and circulation of AI-generated imagery depicting individuals in degrading, sexualised, misleading or otherwise inappropriate ways.
- That advances in artificial intelligence and digital technology have increased the ability to create manipulated images, audio and video capable of causing distress, reputational harm and public misunderstanding.
- That AI-generated imagery and other digitally manipulated content can be used to create false impressions, misrepresent individuals or events, spread misinformation, cause personal or reputational harm, and undermine public confidence in democratic debate and public institutions.

- The growing concern that such behaviour may deter people from participating in public life, standing for election, or engaging in democratic debate.

This Council believes:

- Robust political debate is an essential part of democracy.
- Political disagreement should focus on policies, decisions and ideas rather than personal attacks on an individual's appearance or private life.
- Civility, mutual respect and high standards of behaviour are fundamental to maintaining public confidence in local democracy and encouraging people from every background to participate in public life.
- Everyone should be able to participate in public life without fear of intimidation, abuse, harassment, discrimination or the malicious manipulation or fabrication of images depicting them. While recognising that different individuals and groups may experience abuse in different ways, this Council believes every person is entitled to the same dignity, respect and protection regardless of gender, race, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation or background, and condemns abuse motivated by misogyny, misandry or any other form of prejudice.
- Those serving in public life should be able to do so without being subjected to manipulated imagery, threats, intimidation, harassment, discriminatory behaviour or personal abuse intended to humiliate, denigrate or undermine them.
- Respectful political debate should challenge ideas, decisions and policies rather than relying upon personal abuse, ridicule, threats, discriminatory language or misleading representations of individuals.
- The standards expected of elected members apply equally within the Council Chamber, on social media, in public meetings and in all forms of political campaigning and communication.

This Council therefore:

- Condemns the use of all imagery generated which seeks to degrade, intimidate, harass or misrepresent individuals.
- Reaffirms its commitment to respectful political discourse and democratic engagement.
- Encourages all elected representatives, political parties, campaigners and members of the public to engage in political debate responsibly and respectfully.
- Recognises the importance of creating an environment in which everyone, regardless of their background or protected characteristics, feels able to participate in public life and consider standing for elected office.
- Resolves to support initiatives which promote civility, respect and participation in local democracy, including the promotion of the Members' Code of Conduct and guidance on respectful behaviour in public life.
- Reaffirms the expectation that all elected members, political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters conduct themselves in a manner that promotes respectful debate, demonstrates mutual respect and maintains public confidence in local democracy.
- Condemns intimidation, threats, harassment, discriminatory language and abusive behaviour directed at any individual involved in public life, whether in person, in correspondence, online, through social media or by any other means.
- Encourages all elected members to consider the impact of both their words and actions, recognising that the tone and conduct of political debate can either encourage or discourage wider public participation in local democracy.

- Supports the consistent application of the Members' Code of Conduct, the Council's Constitution and the Nolan Principles of Public Life in promoting respectful behaviour and maintaining the highest standards of conduct expected of elected representatives.
- Recognises that maintaining a respectful, welcoming and inclusive democratic environment is a shared responsibility of all elected members, irrespective of political affiliation, and encourages members to lead by example both within and outside formal Council meetings.
- Requests that the Monitoring Officer circulate to all Members the relevant provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct relating to respect, bullying, harassment, discrimination, the use of social media and conduct likely to bring the office of councillor into disrepute, together with any existing guidance on maintaining respectful standards of behaviour both within the Council Chamber and in public.
- Establishes a cross-party working group, supported by the Monitoring Officer, to review the Members' Code of Conduct and bring forward recommendations to Council to ensure it remains fit for purpose in promoting civility, respect, accountability and high standards of conduct, including in relation to emerging technologies, online behaviour, any form of image alteration, intimidation, harassment and maintaining public confidence in local democracy."

Councillor Barry Woodhouse suggested that the wording of the amendment be further amended by the insertion of the words "AI generated imagery and" into one of the proposed bullet points so that it would read:

- "Condemns the use of AI generated imagery and all imagery generated which seeks to degrade, intimidate, harass or misrepresent individuals."

Councillor Tony Riordan agreed to incorporate this additional wording into his amendment and it was:

RESOLVED

This Council notes:

- That abusive behaviour towards those involved in public life can take many forms, including manipulated imagery, intimidation, threats, harassment, discriminatory language, personal abuse and the dissemination of false or misleading information.
- The increasing use of artificial intelligence and other digital technologies including photography to create realistic but false images, audio and video of real individuals.
- Recent national concerns regarding the creation and circulation of AI-generated imagery depicting individuals in degrading, sexualised, misleading or otherwise inappropriate ways.
- That advances in artificial intelligence and digital technology have increased the ability to create manipulated images, audio and video capable of causing distress, reputational harm and public misunderstanding.
- That AI-generated imagery and other digitally manipulated content can be used to create false impressions, misrepresent individuals or events, spread misinformation, cause personal or reputational harm, and undermine public confidence in democratic debate and public institutions.
- The growing concern that such behaviour may deter people from participating in public life, standing for election, or engaging in democratic debate.

This Council believes:

- Robust political debate is an essential part of democracy.
- Political disagreement should focus on policies, decisions and ideas rather than personal attacks on an individual's appearance or private life.
- Civility, mutual respect and high standards of behaviour are fundamental to maintaining public confidence in local democracy and encouraging people from every background to participate in public life.
- Everyone should be able to participate in public life without fear of intimidation, abuse, harassment, discrimination or the malicious manipulation or fabrication of images depicting them. While recognising that different individuals and groups may experience abuse in different ways, this Council believes every person is entitled to the same dignity, respect and protection regardless of gender, race, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation or background, and condemns abuse motivated by misogyny, misandry or any other form of prejudice.
- Those serving in public life should be able to do so without being subjected to manipulated imagery, threats, intimidation, harassment, discriminatory behaviour or personal abuse intended to humiliate, denigrate or undermine them.
- Respectful political debate should challenge ideas, decisions and policies rather than relying upon personal abuse, ridicule, threats, discriminatory language or misleading representations of individuals.
- The standards expected of elected members apply equally within the Council Chamber, on social media, in public meetings and in all forms of political campaigning and communication.

This Council therefore:

- Condemns the use of AI generated imagery and all imagery generated which seeks to degrade, intimidate, harass or misrepresent individuals.
- Reaffirms its commitment to respectful political discourse and democratic engagement.
- Encourages all elected representatives, political parties, campaigners and members of the public to engage in political debate responsibly and respectfully.
- Recognises the importance of creating an environment in which everyone, regardless of their background or protected characteristics, feels able to participate in public life and consider standing for elected office.
- Resolves to support initiatives which promote civility, respect and participation in local democracy, including the promotion of the Members' Code of Conduct and guidance on respectful behaviour in public life.
- Reaffirms the expectation that all elected members, political parties, candidates, campaigners and supporters conduct themselves in a manner that promotes respectful debate, demonstrates mutual respect and maintains public confidence in local democracy.
- Condemns intimidation, threats, harassment, discriminatory language and abusive behaviour directed at any individual involved in public life, whether in person, in correspondence, online, through social media or by any other means.
- Encourages all elected members to consider the impact of both their words and actions, recognising that the tone and conduct of political debate can either encourage or discourage wider public participation in local democracy.
- Supports the consistent application of the Members' Code of Conduct, the Council's Constitution and the Nolan Principles of Public Life in promoting

respectful behaviour and maintaining the highest standards of conduct expected of elected representatives.

- Recognises that maintaining a respectful, welcoming and inclusive democratic environment is a shared responsibility of all elected members, irrespective of political affiliation, and encourages members to lead by example both within and outside formal Council meetings.
- Requests that the Monitoring Officer circulate to all Members the relevant provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct relating to respect, bullying, harassment, discrimination, the use of social media and conduct likely to bring the office of councillor into disrepute, together with any existing guidance on maintaining respectful standards of behaviour both within the Council Chamber and in public.
- Establishes a cross-party working group, supported by the Monitoring Officer, to review the Members' Code of Conduct and bring forward recommendations to Council to ensure it remains fit for purpose in promoting civility, respect, accountability and high standards of conduct, including in relation to emerging technologies, online behaviour, any form of image alteration, intimidation, harassment and maintaining public confidence in local democracy.

Motion 2

It moved by Councillor Marcus Vickers, seconded by Councillor Niall Innes and

RESOLVED

The Council notes:

- The courageous and profound contribution made by members of the Armed Forces community to the safety and security of the United Kingdom.
- The physical and mental health benefits of regular exercise, which is vital for veterans transitioning to civilian life or managing service-related injuries and PTSD.
- That there are approximately 8,200 veterans living within the borough of Stockton-on-Tees (UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics)

The Council further notes:

- That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, a pledge that those who serve or have served, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect.
- That several other local authorities, including Manchester, Bolton, and Wigan, have already successfully implemented free leisure access schemes for veterans.
- That while concessions currently exist for those on War Disablement Pensions, many veterans fall outside these specific criteria but still face financial barriers to accessing leisure facilities.

The Council believes:

- That cost should not be a barrier to physical activity for those who have courageously served their country.
- That providing free access to council-operated gyms, swimming pools, and fitness classes is a tangible way to demonstrate our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

- That such an initiative has the potential to reduce the long-term burden on local social care and health services by improving the overall wellbeing of our veteran population.

The Council resolves to:

- 1) Request the Cabinet to undertake a feasibility study into providing free gym, swim, and fitness class memberships for all veterans residing in the borough in line with current provider Tees Active.
- 2) Request that the feasibility study consider:
 - a) eligibility criteria;
 - b) the financial implications, sustainability and funding options;
 - c) operational and administrative arrangements;
 - d) potential partnership arrangements with Tees Active and other providers;
 - e) equality and legal implications; and
 - f) any other matters Cabinet considers relevant.
- 3) Request Cabinet, as part of the feasibility study, to engage with Group Leaders; Shadow Portfolio Holders; Tees Active and any other relevant partners to explore how such a scheme could be integrated into existing leisure provision, having regard to affordability, contractual arrangements and the continued sustainability of existing services.
- 4) Cabinet to consider the outcome of the feasibility study and report back to Council on its findings and any recommendations within six months. Ensure that any such scheme is accessible via the HM Armed Forces Veteran Card or other recognised service ID.
- 5) Should Cabinet resolve to introduce a scheme, it be requested to work with Tees Active, local leisure providers, veterans' organisations and community groups to promote the scheme and maximise awareness and uptake.
- 6) Should Cabinet determine that a scheme is appropriate following the feasibility study, Cabinet be requested, where practicable, to seek implementation in time for Armed Forces Day on 26 June 2027.

COU/44/25 Members' Question Time

Question 1

The following question was submitted by Councillor Ted Strike:

"On Saturday 20th June I attended the opening of the Riverside Urban Park. I would like to congratulate everyone involved from the Funding Grants to the team working on the design and the contractors as well as SBC Officers. This is a wonderful area and hopefully it will be well used and increase footfall into Stockton High St and lead to new businesses opening in the empty shops.

I would like to encourage the cabinet members to go even further.

My question to the cabinet member for regeneration is:

Will Cabinet look into the feasibility and costings of relocating the Police Station onto the High Street on the SBC owned land where The Post Office and The Mall were located? I believe this will encourage more people to come to the High Street as the Police presence will remove the fear many currently have of coming to the High Street, especially on an evening.

If they will not relocate the Police station here can you please advise me what the cabinet intend to do with this large piece of land?"

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Regeneration (Councillor Paul Rowling) responded with:

"I would like to thank Councillor Strike positive words about the waterfront development, even in the short time it has been open it is clear it is going to have a huge impact on the High Street, riverside and the wider central Stockton and North Thornaby area.

On his specific point regarding the police station in Stockton, I'm sure he appreciates that this not decision for this Council but rather one for Cleveland Police themselves. We are, however, working closely with the police on the future use of their assets across the Borough including the current police station which is already situated very close to the High Street and waterfront development

From a community safety perspective, Stockton Town Centre has seen significant improvements in recent years through the delivery of Operation Shield, a highly successful partnership initiative between Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Cleveland Police. Through targeted enforcement, visible patrols, intelligence-led activity and problem-solving interventions, the operation has delivered substantial reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour within the town centre. This work has played a key and important role in changing public perceptions of the High Street and strengthening confidence in the town centre as a safe and welcoming place to live, work and visit.

The successful opening of the Waterfront Urban Park has been supported by this strong partnership approach, with robust operational plans in place to ensure the park remains a safe, attractive and well-used space. Looking ahead, the Council and Cleveland Police will continue to build on the success of Operation Shield through the delivery of priorities set out within the Community Safety Strategy, including further work to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, enhance feelings of safety, and support the continued regeneration of Stockton Town Centre over the coming years

In terms of the land in question, the Council has been reviewing its assets within the Town Centre to understand how they can be best used to deliver the objectives of the Central Stockton and North Thornaby Blueprint. This land will form a key part of the areas future so it is important that any development aligns with our objectives and we have already seen interest as a result on initiatives like the Care & Health Innovation zone and the waterfront development. In due course Cabinet will receive a report and will consider the future of the site."

Councillor Ted Strike asked the following supplementary question:

“Having spoken with my fellow Ingleby Barwick North Ward Councillor to the Police a number of years ago, they advised me that the current Police Station is about three times bigger than their needs. If they were to relocate that would release a prime piece of land right on the riverside front, which would be ideal for redevelopment. If that were to happen, would Cabinet consider going into a partnership with a builder to build high quality apartments and split the profits 50-50 to bring money into the Council.”

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Regeneration (Councillor Paul Rowling) responded with:

“The estate of the police is ultimately theirs to consider. Like many public sector organisations, their requirements have changed over the years, but ultimately, it is a decision for them. We are, however, a willing partner and work very closely with Cleveland Police.

From our perspective, we will always do whatever we can to facilitate them being in the correct location. And that just doesn't mean Stockton Town Centre, that means all of our town centres across the Borough. In terms of your specific request, if you look at the Central Stockton and North Thornton blueprint, you will see what our long-term aspirations are and in due course, you will see reports coming to Cabinet about those. Ultimately, in terms of the Stockton Police Station that is a police asset, and it is up to them what they do with it.”

Question 2

The following question was submitted by Councillor Marcus Vickers:

“How many tree-related issues or service requests were reported to the council during the last financial year 2025/26 and what is the exact number of outstanding or backlogged tree maintenance requests currently on file?”

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Culture (Councillor Nigel Cooke) responded with:

“Our records indicate that in financial year 2025/2026, we received a total of 552 tree related service requests and currently have 136 requests pending. The Arboriculture team prioritise urgent, weather related and other works associated with the health of the tree initially although are also busy working their way through service requests and other works which have arisen as part of our tree inspection regime which is on a 1-3 year frequency depending upon location.”

Councillor Marcus Vickers asked the following supplementary question:

“I am sure all Members regularly get many concerns raised by residents. Therefore, would the Council commit to reviewing its tree management policy again to ensure it is effectively addressing resident concerns and reducing response delays?”

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Leisure and Culture (Councillor Nigel Cooke) responded with:

“Like all policies of the Council, there are natural points when these are reviewed, and amended, if needed. My personal view is that there is not too much wrong with the

current policy. Like Councillor Vickers, and probably every other elected member in this chamber tonight, we all get our share of emails with regard to tree related issues.

There are currently 136 pending requests; this is made-up of works deemed appropriate and those works picked up through the programmed inspections. I think that's something that that we should be really pleased with. We do have a small team of staff, and the service has been the subject of a scrutiny review in the past two years. That scrutiny review did not flag any major areas of concern. We do receive a high number of requests for work, many of which come from ward members for non-actionable works, such as shade, overhanging and satellite signal interference. These do not meet the criteria for intervention."

COU/45/25 Forward Plan and Leader's Statement

"We last met as full Council on 24 June. Since then, Cabinet met on 16 July and, as always, the papers and minutes are available on the Council's website.

Our next scheduled Cabinet meeting will take place on 17 September. As the next Forward Plan has not yet been published, I am not able to provide members with a detailed update this evening on the matters that Cabinet will be considering. Members will, of course, be able to access the Forward Plan through the Council's website and Modern.gov as soon as it is updated.

As we move through the remainder of the year, we know there will be challenging decisions ahead as we continue to manage the significant financial pressures facing local government. These challenges are being felt across the country, and Stockton-on-Tees is no exception.

However, we are fortunate to have committed councillors and dedicated staff across the Council. By continuing to work together, I am confident we can meet those challenges while maintaining our ambition for the Borough and delivering the best possible outcomes for our residents.

There is certainly plenty to be positive about.

Last month, Stockton Waterfront welcomed its first visitors during our Armed Forces Day celebrations. This marked an important milestone in the transformation of Stockton Town Centre and the work to reconnect our High Street with the River Tees.

It was fantastic to see residents and visitors enjoying this impressive new public space. The Waterfront is a major investment in Stockton's future, but it is also a place for our communities to enjoy, and I hope people from across the Borough will continue to make full use of it.

That success was followed by the excellent news that Stockton has been shortlisted as one of just 15 places in the running to become the UK Town of Culture 2028, from almost 400 expressions of interest.

This is a tremendous achievement and a reflection of Stockton's cultural heritage, the ambition behind our town centre transformation, and the contribution of local communities, businesses, cultural organisations and partners. While there is still work to do in the competition ahead, we should all be proud that Stockton is receiving national recognition for its cultural offer and its future potential.

I would also like to congratulate the young people recently elected to our Youth Council and as Members of Youth Parliament, as well as recognising the excellent presentation from BMBF at Cabinet last week. It is important that young people have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions and help shape the future of the place where they live, and I look forward to seeing the contribution they make.

On the subject of national representation, England did not quite manage to go all the way in the World Cup following their semi-final defeat to Argentina. Nevertheless, they provided plenty of entertainment and gave many of us an excuse to discuss tactics, or lack of.

The end of the tournament will also come as a relief to anyone who spent the last few weeks convincing themselves that a 2am kick-off was a perfectly sensible idea before a working day.

Fortunately, there is still plenty to look forward to closer to home.

The Stockton International Riverside Festival returns from 31 July to 2 August and, for the first time, will make use of the new Waterfront alongside the town centre and riverside.

This year's programme will feature around 100 performances from 42 companies, bringing together street theatre, dance, circus, music and art from across the UK and beyond. As one of the country's largest free outdoor arts festivals, SIRF remains one of the highlights of our cultural calendar and a tremendous source of pride for the Borough.

I am sure the festival will once again provide plenty of spectacle, enjoyment and, in some cases, complete bafflement as we all try to work out exactly how some of the performers manage what they do.

The Community Carnival on the Sunday afternoon remains a personal highlight for me, and I look forward to seeing the town filled with residents and visitors enjoying everything the festival has to offer.

The next meeting of Cabinet will take place on 17 September, and the next meeting of full Council will be held on 23 September."

COUNCIL – 23 SEPTEMBER 2026
PUBLIC QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1
Public Question submitted by John Smith:- “When are we going to spend more on the environment such as street cleaning, weeding and generals waste as the area particularly around Bishopton Road West and Oxbridge Lane is an eye sore?” Received 21 July 2026 12:06

QUESTION 2

Public Question submitted by John Smith:-

“Why did the new complex in the High Street over run by £4.1 million given the cost was £39 million according to the poster on the town hall 2024?”

Received 21 July 2026 12:06

QUESTION 3

Public Question submitted by John McDermottroe:-

“Given the significant long-term financial commitment associated with the Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility, will the Cabinet Member confirm the current estimated annual cost to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, including waste treatment charges and anticipated Emissions Trading Scheme costs, and explain what scrutiny has been undertaken to ensure this represents value for money for Stockton taxpayers?”

Received 2 September 2026 13:36

QUESTION 4

Public Question submitted by John McDermottroe:-

“The Council previously identified the Billingham Sports Hub as a key regeneration project. Can the Cabinet Member provide an updated timetable for the scheme, including when construction is now expected to begin and when the facility is expected to open?”

Received 2 September 2026 13:36

QUESTION 5

Public Question submitted by Debbie Finlayson for response by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Regeneration (Cllr Paul Rowling):-

“What progress is being has made regarding the redevelopment of Billingham Town Centre, when will physical redevelopment begin?”

Received 9 September 2026 9:30

QUESTION 6

Public Question submitted by Debbie Finlayson for response by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources and Regeneration (Cllr Paul Rowling):-

“How will residents in Billingham be kept informed and updated on Billingham Town Centre redevelopment.”

Received 9 September 2026 9:30

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies 2026/27

Summary

This report relates to one vacancy on Tees Valley Combined Authority's Investment Committee.

Recommended

That Council considers any nomination to the TVCA Investment Board.

Details

The Investment Committee requires two appointments from Stockton on Tees Borough Council. Council made one appointment at its last meeting therefore one vacancy remains. There is no requirement for the committee to be politically balanced.

Legal Implications

The Investment Committee was established by Tees Valley Combined Authority under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

Consultation with Ward/Councillors

Consultation has taken place with political group leaders.

Background Papers

None

Name of Contact Officer: Ged Morton

Post Title: Director of Corporate Services

Telephone number: 01642 527008

Email address: ged.morton@stockton.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

Youth Justice Plan Stockton-on-Tees 2026-2027

Summary

This report presents the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan 2026-27 for consideration and endorsement.

The Plan sets out how statutory partners will work together to prevent children entering the criminal justice system, reduce reoffending, minimise the use of custody, strengthen responses to serious youth violence and child exploitation, and ensure children's voices shape service delivery. The Plan demonstrates continued commitment to Child First principles and reflects strong partnership working across Children's Services, Police, Probation, Health, Education and the voluntary sector.

Cabinet will be considering this report at its meeting on 17 September 2026 and is being asked to make the following recommendation to Council.

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- 1) Note the contents of the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan 2026-27.
- 2) Endorse the strategic priorities and delivery approach outlined within the Plan.
- 3) Support continued multi-agency collaboration through the Youth Justice Management Board to deliver improved outcomes for children, families and communities.
- 4) Approve the implementation and monitoring arrangements contained within the Plan.

Detail

1. The Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Partnership has developed the Youth Justice Plan 2026-27 in accordance with statutory requirements and Youth Justice Board guidance. The Plan has been approved by the Youth Justice Management Board and reflects a collective commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-led and child-

centred services.

2. The Youth Justice Management Board is chaired by the Director of Children's Services and includes representation from Police, Probation, Health, Education, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and voluntary sector partners. The Board provides strategic oversight, performance scrutiny and governance for youth justice services across the Borough.

The Plan highlights significant achievements during 2025-26, including:

- Continued reduction in First Time Entrants (FTEs), with the rate falling from 154 to 96 and the number of children entering the criminal justice system reducing from 33 to 21. These figures are significantly better than regional and national comparators.
 - Successful use of Child First Out of Court Disposal Panels, diversionary interventions and the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Programme.
 - Continued reduction in the use of custody, with custodial sentences reducing from five to four children.
 - Strengthened partnership responses to serious youth violence, child exploitation and organised crime.
 - Positive feedback from children and families regarding the quality of relationships, intervention delivery and support received.
3. Despite these achievements, the partnership recognises several ongoing challenges:
 - Reoffending rates remain above national and regional averages.
 - A small cohort of children present with increasingly complex needs linked to trauma, exploitation, violence and organised criminality.
 - Serious Youth Violence and school exclusions continue to present risks to children's safety and long-term outcomes.
 - Reductions in external funding streams may impact future prevention and early intervention activity.

4. The Youth Justice Plan identifies the following key priorities for 2026-27:

4.1 Prevent Children Entering the Criminal Justice System

Continuing to strengthen diversionary approaches, Out of Court Disposals, Turnaround interventions, early identification and preventive support through multi-agency partnership arrangements.

4.2 Reduce Reoffending

Improving intervention programmes, strengthening transition arrangements into adult services, addressing health needs and maintaining a strong focus on education, training and employment outcomes.

4.3 Reduce the Use of Custody

Ensuring robust community alternatives are available, strengthening resettlement arrangements and enhancing multi-agency planning for children at risk of custodial sentences.

4.4 Strengthen Responses to Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation

Working closely with the Harm Outside the Home Team, Police, Community Safety and Violence Reduction partners to identify vulnerability, safeguard children and disrupt exploitation.

4.5 Early Intervention and Children's Participation

Ensuring services are informed by children's lived experiences and expanding participation opportunities so children influence both individual plans and wider service development.

5. Progress against the Plan will be monitored through the Youth Justice Management Board and reported through established governance arrangements.

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

6. The Youth Justice Plan adopts a Child First approach and recognises the impact of deprivation, inequality, adverse childhood experiences, exclusion, trauma and exploitation on children's outcomes. The anticipated impact is positive through improved access to services, strengthened prevention activity, reduced offending and better long-term outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

Corporate Parenting Implications

7. There are significant corporate parenting implications. Many children involved within the youth justice system are children in our care, care experienced, or have additional safeguarding needs. The Plan reinforces the Council's commitment to reducing the criminalisation of children in care, promoting positive outcomes and ensuring children receive coordinated support across agencies.

Financial Implications

8. Delivery of the Plan will be supported through a combination of Youth Justice Board grant funding, Ministry of Justice Turnaround funding, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner funding and existing partner contributions. The Youth Justice Service continues to utilise available resources efficiently and benefits from substantial in-kind contributions from Police, Probation and Health partners.
9. There are no immediate additional financial implications arising directly from adoption of the Plan. However, reductions in external funding remain a strategic risk and will continue to be closely monitored through governance arrangements.

Legal Implications

10. The Youth Justice Plan fulfils statutory requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and aligns with expectations set by the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The Plan supports partners in meeting their statutory responsibilities relating to youth justice, safeguarding and crime prevention.

Risk Assessment

11. Key risks identified within the Plan include:
 - Reduced external grant funding impacting prevention and diversion services.
 - Continued challenges associated with serious youth violence and child exploitation.
 - High levels of complexity amongst a smaller cohort of children.
 - Ongoing system and performance reporting changes associated with Youth Justice Modernisation.

These risks will be monitored and managed through the Youth Justice Management Board and relevant council governance arrangements.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

12. The Plan applies across all wards within Stockton-on-Tees. It has been developed through extensive collaboration with statutory and voluntary sector partners and informed by feedback from children, young people and families engaged with youth justice services.

Background Papers

- Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan 2026-27.

Name of Contact Officer : Majella McCarthy

Post Title: Director of Children's Services

Telephone number: 01642 524994

Email address: Majella.McCarthy@stockton.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank



Youth Justice Plan Stockton-on-Tees

2026-2027



Contents

Page

3... Introduction, vision, and strategy

4... Local context

5... Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

9... Update on the previous year

16.. Plans for the forthcoming year

21.. Priorities for the coming year

24.. Appendices and Glossary

Introduction, Vision, and Strategy



Welcome to the Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Plan 2026–27. This plan reflects on the progress we have made to date, acknowledges the challenges that remain, and sets out a clear and ambitious direction for the year ahead. It outlines our shared priorities to deliver high-quality, evidence-led and child-centred youth justice services that improve outcomes, reduce reoffending and keep communities safe.

Developed and agreed by the Youth Justice Partnership, the plan demonstrates our collective commitment to continuous improvement, strong partnership working and delivering meaningful, lasting change for children, young people and families.

The Youth Justice Management Board remains steadfast in its commitment to children and to the principles of Child First practice. Across our partnership, we share a strong ambition for every child to be and achieve the best possible outcomes. Our collective focus remains steeped in promoting positive futures, reducing crime and harm, and building safer, stronger communities for everyone.

Thank you to the continued dedication and innovation of the Youth Justice Team (YJT) and the vital service they deliver for children, families and victims. Over the past 12 months, the Management Board has focused on strengthening its own effectiveness, while maintaining a clear understanding of day-to-day practice and delivery within the service. This has deepened our insight into the challenges and barriers faced by children involved in the youth justice system and reinforced the importance of responsive, proportionate and systemic intervention.

We acknowledge the national and local increase in serious youth violence and the significant impact this has on children, families and communities. In response, the

Board has reflected on how we work collectively across the system to strengthen prevention, early intervention and safeguarding approaches, ensuring responsibility is shared and action is coordinated.

This plan reflects our shared commitment to inclusion, continuous improvement and delivering intervention that is both proportionate and transformative. As a partnership, we work as one to understand the issues that impact on our children and to respond effectively, positively and at pace. The year ahead is no different. We remain focused, purposeful and united in our vision and intentions, with a clear commitment to delivering the best possible outcomes for children and young people in Stockton-on-Tees.

Majella McCarthy, Chair of Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Management Board & Director of Children's Services

Local Context

Stockton-on-Tees is a unitary authority with an estimated population of 196,587 (Census 2021) residents. Within the Borough of Stockton there are 6 town centres: Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby, Yarm, Ingleby Barwick. Stockton Town Centre is located on the north bank of the river Tees.

The population age profile below shows that Stockton-on-Tees has a higher percentage of 10-14 year olds compared to the North East and England. The Census (2021) shows that the total population for Children and Young People (CYP) aged 10-17 years is 20,103 residents this is due to increase by 6.3%. A total of 8% of the population are from a black or other minority ethnic groups.

There are areas of great affluence alongside some of the most deprived in England, with some significant differences around life and health outcomes. There are 28.1% of people are living in the 20% most deprived areas in England, this is significantly worse than England (20.2%) but better than the North East (31.0%).

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) is responsible for the national collection, assurance, analysis and publication of youth justice data. This function underpins its statutory role in overseeing the youth justice system and advising the Secretary of State on performance, practice, and policy improvement. Data gathered by the YJB provides national evidence base on how children are entering, moving through, and exiting the youth justice system.

The latest report shows a youth justice system that is smaller in scale but more complex in demand compared to the earlier period. There has been continued success in preventing children from entering the system, indicating that early help and diversionary approaches remain effective. This marks a positive shift from the earlier report, which reflected a higher flow of children into youth justice and a broader spread of lower-level cases.

While overall activity has reduced, the nature of current demand has changed. The more recent report highlights that ongoing pressure is increasingly driven by a small cohort of children with persistent and entrenched needs, rather than by new entrants. This contrasts with the earlier period, where demand was more evenly distributed across a larger group of children.

Custody continues to be used sparingly and appropriately in both periods, demonstrating consistent practice and decision-making. The current report reinforces that this approach is being maintained even as case complexity increases.

In summary, the comparison shows clear progress in reducing system entry and maintaining proportionate responses. However, the challenge has shifted from managing volume to addressing intensity, persistence, and complexity, requiring more targeted and multi-agency approaches to achieve further improvement.

Governance, Leadership and Partnership Arrangements

Youth Justice Management Board

The Management Board remains committed to providing strategic leadership for youth justice delivery and plays a central role in coordinating the contribution of partners across the system. It maintains a strong focus on accountability, ensuring that statutory functions and the wider youth justice partnership are held to account for performance, quality, and outcomes at both operational and strategic levels. The Board is responsible for setting clear strategic direction, providing robust oversight, and ensuring that youth justice services remain child-first, outcome-focused, and aligned with national standards and Youth Justice Board guidance.

The Board is chaired by the Director of Children's Services and includes representation from statutory partners such as the Local Authority, Police, Probation Service, and Integrated Health Board, alongside local partners including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, (OPCC) the voluntary and the community sector. Attendance over the past year has been consistently strong. The Board meets quarterly and, in addition to monitoring youth justice outcomes, considers emerging trends, policy developments, legislation, research, and inspection findings. It also oversees compliance with Youth Justice Board grant conditions through regular review of performance information and quality assurance activity.

The Board initially identified that a development session would provide an opportunity to refresh and co-produce the Youth Justice Plan. In January 2026, the Board came together for a dedicated development session, providing a timely and valuable opportunity to take stock of its current position and to set a clear focus for development over the next twelve months. The session was recognised as an important moment to reflect on the Board's effectiveness, strengthen collaboration across the partnership, and sharpen its strategic direction in response to the changing and increasingly complex nature of youth justice demand. We revisited the Board's core responsibilities, its role in overseeing and responding to serious youth violence, and the importance of setting clear future priorities. The session also explored how stakeholder voice and co-production can be strengthened, ensuring that children, families, and partners play a meaningful role in shaping services. These conversations were underpinned by a shared commitment to using insight, data, and learning to inform future priority setting.

The depth of insight shared by partners and the constructive challenge offered throughout the session significantly strengthened the quality of discussion. Members demonstrated openness, reflection, and a willingness to challenge and support one another, reinforcing the collective nature of the Board's leadership role. Overall, the session demonstrated a clear collective focus and a strong, shared commitment to the continued development of the Youth Justice Management Board. The high level of engagement reflected a genuine investment from all partners in shaping a more effective, collaborative, and forward-looking approach to supporting children and young people.

Structure

The Youth Justice Team (YJT) is located within Children's Services and is positioned alongside a range of early help and family-focused services, including Family Hubs, the Family Support Team, Family Group Conferencing, Therapeutic Services, Youth Support, and the newly integrated front door, Family Help Point. This structure supports a coordinated, whole-family approach and enables early identification of need, timely intervention, and effective co-ordination between services.

The service model is overseen by three Service Leads, with dedicated leadership for Early Help, Youth Justice and Youth Support, and the Family Help Point. This arrangement strengthens alignment across services and ensures clear accountability while promoting integrated practice across prevention, early intervention, and statutory responses.

The YJT is centrally located within the same building as Early Help and statutory Social Care teams, which facilitates regular informal contact and daily professional discussion, particularly where there is active social care involvement. This co-location supports effective information sharing, joint decision-making, and a cohesive response to children and families with complex or overlapping needs.

Strategic leadership for Youth Justice is provided through the Head of Service role, which spans Family Help Point, Early Help, Youth Justice, and Youth Support. This role is line-managed by the Assistant Director for Early Help, Safeguarding and Children in Our Care, ensuring strong strategic oversight, clear links to safeguarding and corporate parenting responsibilities, and alignment with wider Children's Services priorities.

Resources and Value for Money

Resourcing for youth justice services is provided through a combination of Youth Justice Board grant funding and local partnership contributions. Statutory staffing requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 continue to be met, with the Youth Justice Board grant fully allocated to staffing within the Youth Justice Team and seconded staff funded by their employing agencies.

The service operates with strong management, supervision, and performance oversight arrangements, supported by a management database used to monitor activity and outcomes. The YJT comprises substantive staff and community volunteers and is committed to delivering value for money, with a clear focus on prevention, 'invest to save' approaches, and partnership delivery to avoid duplication and maximise collective resources in supporting positive outcomes for children and young people.

Partnership Arrangements

Youth justice services in Stockton-on-Tees have developed a range of strategic and operational linkages; outlined below:



The range of partners in the team has expanded this year, including the addition of Change Grow Live (Substance Misuse Service). Stronger and revised links have also been established with the Adolescence Team and the Harm Outside the Home Team to jointly tackle Serious Youth Violence. Over the next twelve months, we will further strengthen links with Youth Services to pool resources and enhance early intervention activity.

Most statutory Youth Justice interventions are delivered either in-house or in partnership with key stakeholders. Commissioned arrangements for Speech, Language and Communication services with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust will continue.

Joint working arrangements with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) funded Custody Navigators remain in place to support children within the police station. These services are critical in ensuring that children are appropriately supported at the earliest point of contact and that professionals are present during key 'reachable moments' to influence decision-making and outcomes.

There is a strong and well-established working relationship between the YJT and Children's Social Care for children identified as children in need, children in our care, and care experienced. Clear working protocols are in place to support this partnership. Reducing the criminalisation and offending of children in our care is a shared corporate priority and is embedded within local decision-making through effective collaboration with Police, the Crown Prosecution Service, and the Courts.

Multi-agency pathways have been developed to support the effective implementation of Prevent and Modern Slavery legislation. The YJT is also an integral partner within Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). Where a multi-agency response is required to prevent serious harm, information-sharing agreements ensure that relevant information is available to support holistic assessment and effective planning for children. All information is managed sensitively and in line with data protection principles.

As part of its recent White Paper, **Cutting Youth Crime. Changing Young Lives:** The youth justice system reform and delivery plan, the Ministry of Justice has announced new investment in community alternatives to youth custody. The goal of this new funding is to strengthen opportunities for children and young people to live safely in the community, with the support needed, while awaiting trial and/or sentence. Working together across Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Hartlepool, in partnership with justice systems change organisation, SHiFT, we have secured funding as part of this programme to benefit children and young people at greatest risk of remand to custody across Tees.

Update on the previous year

Help children stay out of the criminal justice system.

During 2024/25, we established bespoke Child First Out of Court Disposal (OOCd) panels, which have played a significant role in driving a sustained reduction in First Time Entrants (FTEs).

The panel brings together volunteers, police representatives, the Youth Justice Team Manager, a Youth Justice Officer, victim representation and administrative support to ensure accurate documentation. The Youth Justice Officer coordinates attendance and invites other professionals involved in the case, such as social workers or personal advisors, where appropriate. This multi-agency model supports informed, shared decision-making, ensuring that outcomes are proportionate, child-centred, and take full account of risk, need, and context.

The strength of this joint decision-making approach has enhanced the consistency and effectiveness of OOCds, increasing confidence across partners and ensuring appropriate diversionary outcomes. As a result, more children are being diverted away from the Criminal Justice System at the earliest opportunity.

This has contributed to a continued decline in the FTE rate in Stockton, representing an excellent level of performance and the lowest number of First Time Entrants recorded in over three years. While performance was already strong 18 months ago, with a rate of 125 (26 children), ongoing system improvements and consistent application of diversionary practice have driven further reductions beyond this baseline.

Two key areas of work have had a particularly positive impact on reducing FTE rates. Firstly, the OOCd panel process has proven highly effective, with 98 children discussed at panel over the past twelve months and only four going on to become First Time Entrants. The vast majority were successfully diverted away from formal criminal justice processes. Secondly, the FTE audit completed in September 2025 identified the need for Youth Justice Officers to take a more proactive role in court proceedings to maximise diversion opportunities. This has led to clear improvements in practice, including the successful diversion of children charged with driving-related offences away from court where appropriate.

The OPCC has agreed to continue funding Triage disposals and interventions for 2025/26, recognising their critical role in early diversion. Over the last twelve months, a total of 99 OOCds were delivered, with Triage remaining the most widely used disposal (53 interventions), followed by Outcome 22 (41 interventions). These figures highlight the importance of proportionate and non-statutory responses in preventing unnecessary criminalisation.

The Turnaround programme has also made a strong contribution to positive outcomes. Against a Ministry of Justice target of 19, we delivered 33 successful interventions by March 2026. Turnaround

support has included family work, access to positive activities, and targeted help with Education, Training and Employment (ETE), supporting children to address underlying needs and reduce the likelihood of further offending.

Reduce the use of custody and prioritise effective resettlement.

Our custody rate has fallen, reducing from 0.23 to 0.18, equating to a decrease from five to four children receiving custodial sentences. Despite this improvement, Stockton's custody rate remains higher than national and local comparators, including the regional average (0.11), England and Wales (0.09) and the Family comparator (0.05). This continues to present a challenge for the partnership, particularly given the seriousness of offences coming before the courts.

Between April and June 2025, three children were sentenced to long custodial terms ranging from four to ten years for serious violent offences. These cases will not be included in the next Youth Justice Board performance dataset and, as a result, the custody rate will reduce further. This reduction partly reflects a reporting time lag, as recent serious custodial cases fall outside the current Youth Justice Board dataset and are not yet captured in the published figures.

Over the past year, we have worked in partnership with HOTH and Cleveland Police to enhance intelligence-sharing, deliver targeted disruption activity in relation to serious youth violence and exploitation, and coordinate multi-agency interventions for children identified as being at risk of involvement in organised crime.

However, the overall custody rate remains impacted by the nature of offending in a small cohort of cases, particularly where children are charged with serious violence, exploitation-related offences and activity linked to Organised Crime Groups operating across the borough. This mirrors the position outlined in last year's report, where serious youth violence was identified as the primary driver behind custodial outcomes.

The Youth Justice Team continues to work proactively to minimise the use of custody wherever possible.

To reduce reoffending

We ensure that all children have a dedicated worker, recognising the importance of consistency and trusted relationships. Recent feedback from children and parents in February 2026, highlights that workers are experienced as supportive, approachable, proactive and reliable, with many children reporting that they felt listened to, understood and safe throughout their intervention. Where children are receiving a Turnaround intervention, practice continues to ensure continuity of worker should they be charged with any offence, which has been identified by families as key to building trust and engagement.

Our interventions remain under continuous review and development, informed directly by the views and experiences of children and parents. Children have spoken positively about the range of activities and interventions they have accessed, including reparation, cookery sessions, outdoor activities and one-to-one work, all of which have supported improvements in confidence, emotional regulation and understanding of behaviour. We have built a flexible intervention offer that responds to different ages, learning styles and individual needs, with a particular focus on positive experiences, relational

work and practical skill-building. Informed by feedback, we are further strengthening how we involve parents and carers, ensuring clear communication, regular updates and opportunities for joint sessions where appropriate.

Across Early Help, Youth Justice, Youth Support and Children's Social Care, staff continue to work closely together to deliver coordinated and effective interventions. This collaborative approach has been instrumental in securing positive outcomes across education, health and wellbeing, with families highlighting the impact of Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) assessments, CAMHS involvement, neurodiversity pathways and therapeutic support. We have strengthened our transition arrangements, including joint development work with Probation colleagues, to ensure that young adults experience a seamless and well-supported transition between services. Additionally working with the newly created transitions team when appropriate, to support the early identification of any adult social care needs.

We have maintained a strong focus on Education, Training and Employment (ETE) through our dedicated ETE worker, providing intensive support to help children re-engage with learning, access alternative provision and develop realistic aspirations for the future. Feedback from parents reflects noticeable improvements in children's confidence, behaviour and engagement with education. Alongside this, we offer a comprehensive health response, with SALT and CAMHS practitioners embedded within the team and monthly health hub meetings enabling coordinated planning. Specialist clinicians from Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust continue to support staff through regular consultations for children with complex needs, strengthening our trauma-informed approach and ensuring children receive timely and appropriate support.

Strengthen our responses to Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation

Over recent years, the Youth Justice Management Board has played a central role in advancing and shaping Stockton-on-Tees' multi-agency response to Serious Youth Violence (SYV). As part of this work, nine partner agencies completed the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) Self-Assessment, which captured the breadth of activity being delivered across the partnership while also highlighting gaps in provision. In response, partners then worked closely with Public Health to complete a Rapid Needs Assessment, providing a robust understanding of local need and identifying effective practice to inform future planning. This process laid the foundations for a more coordinated and evidence-led approach to SYV.

Building on this work, the partnership has now developed a Serious Youth Violence Strategy, which will be presented to the Management Board for approval in Summer 2026. The strategy sets out how agencies will work collectively to prevent and reduce serious youth violence through a public health, whole-system approach. It is informed by local evidence and shaped by the voices of children, young people, families and communities. The strategy outlines a shared vision, principles and priorities, the local SYV needs profile, clear actions and how progress and impact will be measured over time.

The strategy builds on existing work led by Cleveland Police, Community Safety Teams and the Harm Outside the Home Team, including targeted action to disrupt adults and organised crime groups who exploit children. This includes joint problem-solving approaches involving Police, Community Safety, Youth Justice, Education and the voluntary sector, with a clear focus on hotspot locations, areas of

concern and safeguarding-led responses to protect children at risk of harm and exploitation.

This is a live strategy, developed in line with the Serious Violence Duty, and will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains responsive to emerging risks, evidence and learning. Through regular review and strong governance arrangements, the partnership will ensure alignment with the Cleveland Violence Reduction Unit's overarching strategy and wider Stockton-on-Tees priorities, while maintaining a clear long-term focus on achieving sustained reductions in serious youth violence and improved outcomes for children and young people.

To reduce the number of School Exclusions

Education Service have undertaken in-depth discussions with key stakeholders regarding suspension and exclusion to inform a robust, evidence-led action plan. This has supported the development of a strengthened multi-service response, improving collaboration, accountability, and outcomes for children at risk of exclusion. As part of this work, we have completed the Inclusive Education Framework Analysis to ensure a consistent, inclusive approach across the borough, alongside producing a support booklet for schools to clearly identify available services and referral pathways. A shared ABC model focused on behaviour and attendance also supports our schools to access support at an earlier time through our school support service.

Alongside this, Education have focused on building capacity and expertise within schools. They have further developed our governor training package on exclusions, which has seen significantly increased uptake compared to previous years and has received 100% positive feedback. They have also delivered free trauma-informed practice training throughout the academic year and developed a supporting vision statement to embed this approach. Many schools who have accessed these CPD opportunities already show a reduction in suspensions and exclusions. In addition, the Key Adult programme is being implemented across three secondary schools, strengthening relational practice and targeted support for vulnerable pupils.

The service have also expanded alternative provision and early intervention offer. Tiered Alternative Provision (AP) has been further developed across the borough, with increased providers on the framework and strong engagement from schools attending half-termly AP network meetings. Targeted support has been enhanced through the Commando Joe programme, providing 11 secondary schools with one day of support per week over six months, alongside one school participating in the longer-term "Leading the Way" project. Collectively, this work demonstrates a cohesive multi-agency effort to reduce exclusions and improve outcomes for children and young people.

To refresh our practice in our victim work and restorative practice.

Work has continued on delivering the victim support action plan, with a strong focus on improving

how the service supports victims of crime and ensuring compliance with the new HMIP inspection victim standards. An audit tool was developed and used to review ten cases, identifying areas for improvement, many of which had already been implemented or were in progress prior to the audit, providing assurance of ongoing development.

Victim contact data indicates that while initial engagement is moderate, with 55% of victims viewing outreach, there is a significant drop-off in deeper engagement. Only 10% of victims go on to accept support, despite a higher proportion (33%) opting to receive updates, suggesting a preference for low-level, information-based engagement rather than direct intervention. This highlights a need within Youth Justice services to strengthen how support is introduced and delivered, ensuring approaches are trauma-informed, clearly communicated, and responsive to readiness. Increasing follow-up opportunities, building trust over time, and utilising updates as a gateway to more meaningful engagement will be key to improving uptake. Additionally, the low rate of automatic referrals to specialist support services suggests further scope to enhance pathways and ensure vulnerable young people and families are proactively identified and supported at the earliest opportunity.

To strengthen victim voice and feedback, a QR code has been introduced to enable victims to share their experiences directly with the service. Processes with the police have been improved to ensure clearer and more consistent approaches to obtaining victim consent for court cases, and the OOCDC referral form has been enhanced to better capture victim protected characteristics.

In addition, the Youth Justice Coordinator has renewed their Advanced Practitioner accreditation with the Restorative Justice Council, supporting continued high-quality leadership and expertise in restorative and victim-focused practice

To Develop a Participation Model of Practice

Stockton Youth Justice are working with children to develop a participation model of practice that ensures that the children we work with are fully involved in shaping the future of the service. We understand that a participation model in youth justice should be rights-based, trauma-informed, inclusive and meaningful, ensuring children and young people are active partners rather than passive recipients of services.

It is important that children influence their own casework, service delivery, strategic decisions and accountability processes, while being honest about statutory boundaries and safeguarding responsibilities. Participation is embedded into everyday practice through co-produced plans, choice in how interventions are delivered, and regular opportunities for reflection. We want to expand this further by having structured mechanisms such as a child user group, children with lived-experience giving feedback and consultation on future developments and currently exploring how we share information with children in a meaningful way.

Performance over the last year.

First Time Entrants (FTE's)

The rate of FTE's has decreased in the last year (data taken from January – December 25). The latest published YJB data currently has our rate at 96 and this is a significant decrease of the same period

the previous year from 154. The actual numbers of children who have become FTE's is 21 compared to 33 previously. In comparison to the Region 180, Cleveland PCC area 156, Family 139 and England and Wales 150. This is a promising picture and showing clear evidence that early intervention initiative are impacting.

Reoffending Rate

The reoffending rate stands at 58.8% for the last YJB reporting period January 2024- March 2024. This remains higher than other comparatives Region 44.3%, Cleveland PCC 55.8% and England and Wales 33.4%.

Reoffences/Reoffender

The latest reoffences/reoffender rate is 3.60 which is slight increase on the previous rate 3.3. However the current rate is lower than other comparisons of the Region 5.42, Cleveland PCC area 5.14, Family 4.27 and England and Wales 4.64.

Use of Custody

The latest use of custody rate is 0.18, this is a decrease on the previous year of 0.28. Our rate is higher than all other measures. The rate for the is region 0.11, family 0.05 and England and Wales 0.9. The custody rate comes from six custodial sentences being given in the past year. All sentences were for violent offences.

Risks and Issues

The Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Partnership continues to operate within an increasingly complex and evolving landscape. While strong partnership working and service integration have enabled the YJT to maintain high standards of delivery, ongoing financial pressures, policy changes and rising expectations present a number of risks that require careful management.

Children involved in the youth justice system in Stockton remain among the most vulnerable in the borough, particularly those entering custody who often present with multiple and overlapping needs, including exploitation, trauma, health and education needs. Although the overall cohort has reduced, reoffending by a small number of children, particularly those involved in serious or violent offences, continues to present challenges locally and nationally. Serious Youth Violence and school exclusions also remain significant contextual risks, increasing the likelihood of children becoming criminalised. Our 2026/27 plan and newly developed Serious Youth Violence Strategy set out how the partnership intends to respond to these issues through a preventative, child-first and public health approach.

Funding remains a significant and ongoing risk. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) core grant continues to be essential in enabling the delivery of a comprehensive statutory service. In addition, while funding from the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Programme and OPCC Triage funding has been critical in supporting early intervention, this funding has reduced, placing additional pressure on the service to prioritise resources against rising demand. The partnership may be required to redesign aspects of service delivery, potentially reducing our ability to intervene early and effectively with children at risk.

Further pressure arises from national policy changes, including the introduction of mandatory interventions for children found in possession of a knife. While this aligns with a preventative public safety agenda, it may lead to an increase in demand for Youth Justice interventions and resources,

particularly within a context of constrained funding. There is an associated risk that without adequate capacity and flexibility, mandatory responses may inadvertently undermine the Child First principle of proportionate and individualised intervention.

The ongoing Youth Justice Modernisation Programme also presents both opportunity and risk. Modernisation brings the potential for improved data quality, consistency, digital capability and outcome measurement across the system. However, changes to systems, expectations and reporting requirements place additional demands on staff capacity and require sustained investment in training, implementation and change management to avoid unintended disruption to practice or performance. Operational risks linked to systems and infrastructure remain under review. Following the transition to the Pathways case management system, the team has worked hard to minimise disruption; however, data reporting has remained challenging. The planned NEC system upgrade is expected to improve KPI and performance reporting, but until this is fully embedded, there remains an ongoing risk to timely and accurate data submission.

Plans for the forthcoming year

Child First

The Child Focus¹ approach has 4 tenets, which are summarised as:

As children

Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.



Building pro-social identity

Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

Collaborating with children

Encourage children's active participation, engagement and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

Diverting from stigma

Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

A Child First approach remains embedded across all Youth Justice practice in Stockton-on-Tees. Staff consistently refer to our cohort as *children*, which both reflects their developmental stage and supports more effective access to appropriate services. Children are spoken to in a strength-based and hopeful way, focusing on their abilities, resilience and capacity for positive change. This approach is reflected in feedback gathered from children and parents, who consistently describe workers as supportive, understanding and respectful, with many children reporting that they felt listened to, safe and understood throughout their involvement with the service.

Diversion continues to be actively promoted across the Youth Justice Team and wider partnership, contributing to a significant proportion of children being dealt with through OOCs. This reflects our ongoing commitment to avoiding unnecessary criminalisation and responding proportionately to behaviour. The continued use of the PDAT assessment framework has strengthened planning and the quality of interventions, ensuring language is child-focused and developmental. Practitioners consistently talk about behaviours rather than offences, and safety rather than risk, supporting children to develop a positive, pro-social identity. This approach is reinforced by feedback from families, who report meaningful improvements in behaviour, wellbeing and understanding.

Strong partnership working remains central to delivering personalised, child-focused

interventions. Support workers continue to engage children in creative and meaningful ways, including access to music studios, bike projects, photography and positive leisure activities. A multi-disciplinary offer is embedded within the team, including Speech, Language and Communication support, health and CAMHS provision, and Education, Training and Employment (ETE) workers. Feedback from parents demonstrates the positive impact of this joined-up approach, particularly where assessments, mental health support and neurodiversity pathways have helped children better understand themselves and improve engagement with education and daily routines.

We continue to actively promote opportunities for children and families to share their views, including the use of QR codes to make feedback accessible. As a result, children have provided feedback on programmes such as Turnaround and have directly contributed to the design and development of resources within our children's space at the No Limits Hub. The February 2026 feedback report highlights high levels of satisfaction across both children and parents, with strong relationships, clear communication and trust consistently identified as key strengths. One area of learning raised around parental inclusion has been positively received and is informing ongoing improvements in practice.

Overall, we remain firmly committed to ensuring that children and families have a meaningful voice, both in shaping individual intervention plans and in influencing broader service development. Our ambition is to deliver motivational, respectful and relationship-based support, grounded in children's strengths and lived experiences, to promote long-term desistance and improved outcomes for children, families and communities.

Resources and services

Regular financial monitoring reports continue to be presented to the Youth Justice Management Board, enabling members to review spend, consider emerging pressures and agree any required actions. Income and projected expenditure are based on the current Youth Justice Team structure, confirmed funding streams and approved national and local service initiatives. As in previous years, staffing costs account for the majority of expenditure, reflecting the service's commitment to maintaining a skilled, specialist workforce capable of meeting the complex needs of children.

All funding carried forward within reserves remains earmarked for planned Youth Justice activity, and any future use of reserves is subject to approval by the Management Board. There is currently no financial contribution required from Stockton-on-Tees Youth Justice Service towards remand costs; however, this position continues to be monitored and may change should remand numbers increase.

The Youth Justice Team continues to utilise 100% of its available funding, including YJB grant, partner contributions and in-kind support, to deliver statutory and non-statutory services. These resources support improved outcomes for children and families and underpin strong performance. During 2026/27, performance improvement will continue to be driven through a place-based, problem-solving approach, with a particular focus on our most vulnerable and

complex children, enhancing support for First Time Entrants and strengthening engagement with Stockton's diverse communities.

The financial position, detailed in the table on page 26, reflects a slight uplift to the Youth Justice Board grant following the national 2026 settlement. Importantly, confirmation of three-year YJB funding provides greater financial stability and enables more effective forward planning and workforce sustainability.

Funding for the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Programme will continue to be reported separately during the 2026/27 financial year, this also comes with the additional security of three years funding. The service also continues to benefit from payment in kind contributions from Police, Probation and Health partners, which remain integral to delivering a comprehensive multi-disciplinary offer. While the OPCC has confirmed continued funding for the Triage programme for 2026/27, this funding has been reduced by half, increasing the importance of close monitoring and prioritisation to ensure early intervention capacity can be maintained.

Workforce Development

During 2025–26, the team has continued to place a strong emphasis on workforce development and maintaining high standards of practice through a structured programme of learning and reflection. Monthly Effective Practice sessions have been consistently delivered, providing staff with regular opportunities to refresh and deepen their knowledge across a range of key Youth Justice areas, including Early and Late Release arrangements, Home Detention Curfew (HDC), MAPPA processes, victim awareness, and risk, safety and wellbeing. These sessions support consistent practice, reinforce statutory responsibilities and promote reflective learning across the team.

In March 2026, staff attended a specialist conference on stalking delivered in partnership with Forensic CAMHS, recognising stalking as a newly emerging and increasingly complex area of work within Youth Justice and ensuring the team remains informed of developing research, risk factors and intervention approaches.

Several team members have also completed Systemic Practice training, undertaking five-day and fifteen-day courses to strengthen relational, whole-family and formulation-based approaches to assessment and intervention.

In addition, two officers have completed AIM3 assessment and intervention training, and all officers are now fully trained in AIM3, ensuring a consistent, confident and evidence-based response to children presenting with harmful sexual behaviours.

To support workforce sustainability and quality, all new staff complete a comprehensive two-week induction programme, which includes Asset Plus training, ensuring they are well equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools required to deliver safe, effective and child-centred practice from the outset.

Evidence-based practice and innovation

We continue to actively explore and implement evidence-based interventions and resources to ensure our practice is responsive to the individual needs of children. In doing so, we consistently take account of learning needs, special educational needs (SEN), speech, language and communication needs, and neurodiversity, adapting approaches to promote accessibility, engagement and positive outcomes.

To better support children at key points of vulnerability, we have developed custody passports, which provide clear, child-centred information about individual needs, risks and protective factors to support children effectively while in police and youth custody.

The team also continues to use virtual reality (VR) headsets as an intervention for children involved in knife crime, supporting awareness of consequences, victim impact and decision-making in an engaging and developmentally appropriate way.

During 2025–26, we contributed to wider Children's Services resource groups, working collaboratively to develop and strengthen resources and approaches across three priority areas: knife crime, online safety and peer influence. This collaborative work supports consistency across services and ensures that interventions are informed by current evidence, emerging risks and the lived

experiences of children.

Evaluation

Over the past twelve months there has been a significant programme of evaluation and quality assurance activity, which has directly informed the service development plan. The Youth Justice Service remains committed to continuous improvement, with a strong focus on ensuring that practice consistently delivers the best possible outcomes for children and their families. Evaluation enables us to reflect, review and adapt our approaches so that we respond more effectively to the needs of children.

During the year, a range of audits and evaluations were completed. Child-focused audits highlighted strong and consistent Child First practice across assessment, planning and delivery. Assessments were thorough and strengths-based, planning was proportionate and needs-led, and interventions were personalised, flexible and effective. Children consistently felt listened to and supported, with strong multi-agency working contributing to positive outcomes. Areas for learning focused primarily on strengthening case recording and summaries, rather than the quality of practice itself.

The First Time Entrant audit found that most children entered the system due to the serious nature of their offences, in line with national guidance requiring direct court charges, meaning diversion was not always appropriate. Overall court practice was strong, with children and families well supported and clear efforts made to explore diversion wherever possible. However, a small number of missed opportunities were identified, where stronger recommendations for Out of Court Disposals, clearer recording of diversion rationale, or further engagement at the police station may have avoided criminalisation. These findings highlight opportunities to further strengthen confidence, consistency and recording to support continued reductions in FTEs.

In addition, we have considered parent and child feedback, alongside targeted audits on the use of remand beds and the Turnaround programme. Feedback gathered from children and parents indicates high levels of satisfaction, with workers consistently described as supportive, approachable, responsive and trusted. Children reported feeling listened to, understood and safe, while parents highlighted the strength of relationships, clear communication and the positive impact of the service on their child's wellbeing, behaviour and engagement with education. Multi-agency support, particularly around health, communication needs and emotional wellbeing, was identified as having a significant and lasting impact. One area for learning was identified around consistent parental inclusion, reinforcing the importance of maintaining clear communication and joint working with families throughout an intervention.

Learning from all evaluation activity continues to directly inform service improvements and development planning. The Youth Justice Service remains fully committed to ongoing audit and evaluation as a key driver for effective, reflective and child-centred practice, ensuring that children's voices and lived experiences remain central to how services are designed and

delivered.

Priorities for the coming year

1. Help children stay out of the criminal justice system.

We will:

- Embed and consistently promote diversionary practice through OOC panels, including the effective use of Triage, Outcome 22, and restorative interventions.
- Deliver targeted and intensive interventions for children identified through the Turnaround programme, addressing both offending behaviour and underlying needs.
- Maintain delivery of Triage services in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Convene quarterly multi-agency meetings with the Police to review all cases where children become First-Time Entrants to the criminal justice system.
- Develop and implement action plans arising from these reviews to address emerging themes, patterns, and systemic risks.
- Continue to develop and create innovative interventions to effect change for children.
- Work closely with the Youth Support Team to proactively identify and engage children at risk of entering the criminal justice system.
- Strengthen early knife crime prevention and intervention activity.

2. To reduce reoffending.

We will:

- Develop and deliver contemporary, evidence-informed programmes addressing driving-related offences, aligned to risk, responsibility, and harm reduction.
- Facilitate workforce development through structured staff workshops focused on social skills training and positive behaviour change.
- Further strengthen and embed our transition offer in partnership with Probation to ensure continuity of support for young people moving into adulthood.
- Maintain a strong focus on identifying and addressing health needs, ensuring all children are appropriately assessed and supported in relation to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), CAMHS, and Education, Training, and Employment (ETE).
- Continue to provide a comprehensive and accessible offer of sports and physical activity opportunities for the youth justice cohort, promoting wellbeing, resilience, and positive engagement.

3. Reduce the use of custody and prioritise effective resettlement.

We will:

- Continue to convene pre-sentence meetings in all cases where custody is being considered, to ensure robust community-based sentence options are fully explored and recommended

to the Court. All reports will be completed using a Child First approach, clearly evidencing the child's needs, circumstances, strengths, and progress.

- Where appropriate, propose Intensive Supervision and Surveillance, to provide the Court with confidence that children can be managed safely and effectively within the community.
- Ensure all resettlement cases are reviewed through Management Board meetings to identify and address any gaps in provision, with escalation to senior Board members where strategic decision-making is required.
- We will work with the Tees to effectively develop the remand partnership in conjunction with SHIFT.
- Embed early and effective release planning for all children leaving custody, with oversight and progress monitored through monthly resettlement meetings.
- In appropriate cases, work proactively with Courts and defence solicitors to support a single sentencing exercise for children with multiple matters before the Court, reducing delay and promoting proportionality.

4. Continue to Strengthen our responses to Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation.

We will:

- Launch and implement a Serious Youth Violence Strategy, which will be overseen through the Youth Justice Management Board.
- Identify children at risk of SYV and knife crime at the earliest opportunity through HOTH screening, Custody Navigators, the Turnaround Programme, and intelligence relating to POCS and LOCS.
- Deliver targeted, direct interventions for children involved in or at risk of SYV, addressing unmet needs.
- Work in close partnership with the HOTH and Adolescent Social Work Teams to disrupt pathways into serious violence and child exploitation and to promote safe, positive alternatives.
- Recognise and respond to the high prevalence of exploitation among children involved in SYV by embedding NRM considerations within assessment, planning, and intervention.
- Regular oversight of SYV activity through the Youth Justice Management Board.
- Establish Prevention Partnership Panels in partnership with CURV to coordinate early intervention and preventative responses.
- Expand and evaluate SYV interventions, using evidence of impact to inform service development and continuous improvement.

5. Early Intervention and Prevention

We will:

- Strengthen early intervention and prevention through close collaboration with schools, family support services, youth workers, and community partners to identify and respond to emerging risks at the earliest opportunity.
- Deliver the Turnaround Programme to children who have been arrested and are at risk of further offending, providing targeted, preventative support that successfully engages children before patterns of offending become embedded.

- Use Out of Court Disposals (OOCd) as a key prevention and diversion mechanism, ensuring children receive timely, needs-led interventions that support desistance and promote crime-free futures.
- Provide access to wider specialist support services for children engaged with Youth Justice and prevention services, addressing vulnerabilities such as education, health, family context, and wellbeing.
- Expand constructive engagement opportunities, including the Skills for Success programme and creative and positive activity offers, to develop life skills, resilience, and pro-social identity.
- Ensure all early intervention and prevention activity is underpinned by a Child First approach and informed by evidence of what works, with progress and impact reviewed through governance arrangements.

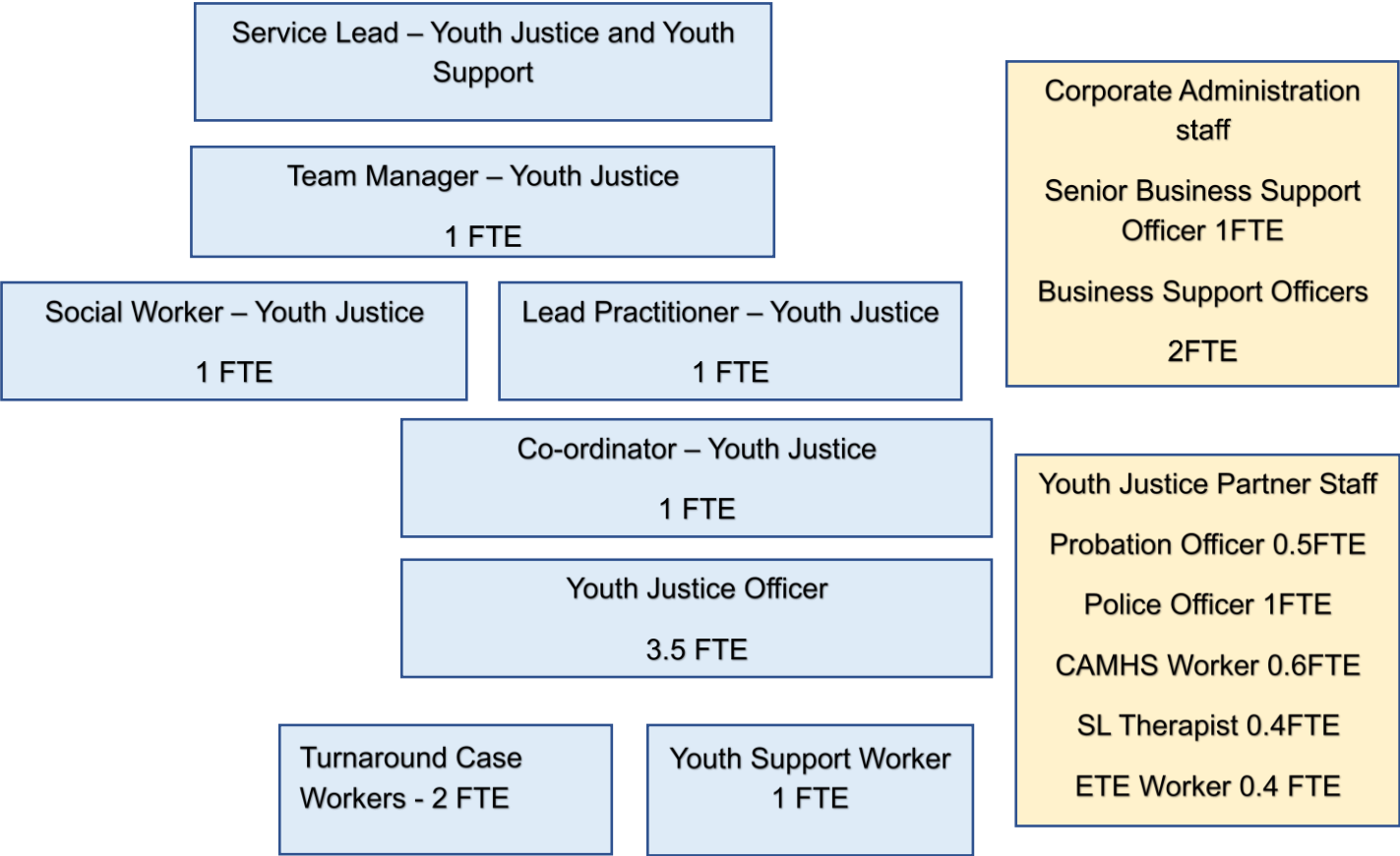
6. Child's Voice

- Place children and young people at the centre of service design and delivery, ensuring their views and experiences directly inform decision-making and practice.
- Use innovative and accessible participation methods, including digital tools, to gather feedback and promote meaningful involvement.
- Build on recent co-production work with children to review and redesign Youth Justice leaflets and written materials, ensuring information is clear, child-friendly, and accessible.
- Continue consultation with children on service environments, including the Youth Justice youth space, using feedback to inform ongoing improvements.
- Expand participation beyond traditional QR-code and paper-based feedback, including exploring the development of a child user group to strengthen sustained engagement and co-production.
- Ensure participation outcomes are embedded within governance and performance monitoring, complementing existing Youth Justice Board priorities relating to reducing reoffending, reducing the use of custody, and preventing children from entering the criminal justice system.
- Monitor progress through the Youth Justice Management Board, including oversight of the Youth Justice Modernisation Programme and its role in driving systemic improvement.

Appendix 1A: Staffing Demographics

Youth Justice Team staff demographics		
GENDER	Female	17
	Male	4
	Other	0
ETHNICITY	White	95.2%
	Asian	04.8%
	Black	0%
	Mixed	0%
	Other	0%
DISABILITY	YES	0
	NO	21

Appendix 1B: Youth Justice Team structure chart



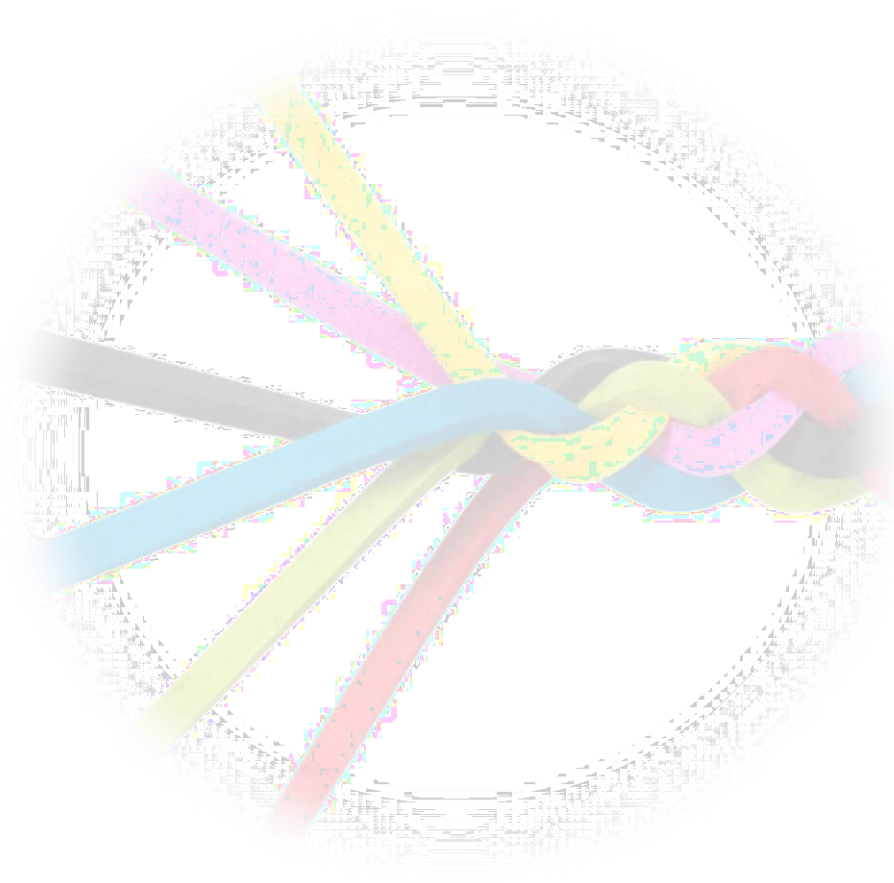
Appendix 2: Budget Costs and Contributions

Below is a summary of the YJT's financial profile for 2023-24. As in previous years, the majority of expenditure was on staffing costs.

BUDGET 2024/25	budget	outturn 2024/2025	outturn variance
Staff	832,086	832,086	0
Premises	42,778	42,778	0
Professional Services	31,500	31,500	
Indirect Staffing Costs (Transport & Training)	12,000	12,000	0
Office Costs	33,420	33,420	0
Central recharges	53,000	53,000	0
Total Expenditure	1,004,784	1,004,784	0
Income	1,004,784	1,004,784	0
Net Expenditure	0	0	0

Glossary

AssetPlus	A strengths based structured assessment tool based on research and developed by the Youth Justice Board looking at the child or young person's offence, personal circumstances and factors affecting desistance from crime
Child Exploitation	Safeguarding activity which focuses 'beyond the child's home and families,' to target those adults who are exploiting (targeting, tricking, and coercing) children for their own purposes and needs.
CURV	Cleveland's Unit for Reduction of Violence
ETAC	Exploitation Team Around the child.
ETE	Education, training, and employment; work to improve educational and learning outcomes
FTE	First-time entrants to the criminal justice system
HOTH	Harm Outside The Home
HMIP	HM Inspectorate of Probation
Justice System	Involves any or all of the agencies involved in upholding and implementing the law: police, courts, youth justice, probation, and custody providers.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
OPCC	Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner
Pathways	The new YOT case management system
PDAT	Prevention and Diversion Assessment Tool
Restorative Justice	The use of restorative approaches within a justice context. Brings those harmed by crime (victims) and those responsible for the harm (the offender) into communication, with a view to repairing the harm caused
Safety & Wellbeing	Terminology introduced by the YJB / AssetPlus to describe potential adverse outcomes where concerns exist that the young person's safety and well-being may be compromised through their own behaviour, personal circumstances or because of the acts / omissions of others
Safeguarding	Action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YJT	Youth Justice Team



For more information on this Plan, please contact the Youth Justice Team

youthjusticeadmin@stockton.gov.uk

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031

Summary

This report presents the Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031 for consideration and endorsement.

The Strategy sets out a five-year partnership approach to preventing and reducing serious youth violence through a public health and whole-system model. The Strategy has been developed in response to the Serious Violence Duty and is informed by local intelligence, a Serious Youth Violence Rapid Health Needs Assessment, multi-agency engagement and the views of over 100 children and young people across Stockton-on-Tees.

The Strategy reflects a shared commitment from partners to reduce violence, address its root causes, strengthen protective factors and improve outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.

Cabinet will be considering this report at its meeting on 17 September 2026 and is being asked to make the following recommendation to Council.

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031.
2. Endorse the vision, priorities and partnership approach outlined within the Strategy.
3. Support implementation of the annual Serious Youth Violence Delivery Plan.
4. Endorse the governance arrangements which place strategic oversight with the Youth Justice Management Board.

1. Detail

- 1.1 The Strategy establishes a long-term commitment to reducing serious youth violence through prevention, early intervention and coordinated multi-agency action. It recognises that serious youth violence is shaped by a range of factors including exploitation, poverty, adverse childhood experiences, educational

exclusion, community influences and family circumstances. The Strategy adopts a public health approach that seeks to address these root causes rather than solely responding to incidents after they occur.

The Strategy has been informed by:

- The Serious Violence Duty
- The Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Rapid Health Needs Assessment.
- Local crime, safeguarding and partnership intelligence.
- Multi-agency workshops and strategic development sessions.
- Engagement with more than 100 children and young people aged 10-18 years.

1.2 The Strategy's vision is that by 2031 Stockton-on-Tees will be one of the safest places in the North East for children, young people and young adults aged 10-24. Partners are committed to reducing harm from serious youth violence, strengthening partnership intelligence, preventing entry into the criminal justice system, building resilience and improving the conditions that help children thrive.

Strategic Priorities

The Strategy is built around four key priorities:

2. Early Intervention and Prevention

2.1 Strengthening universal and targeted prevention activity through Youth Support Services, Family Hubs, the Holidays Are Fun Programme and the Youth United Stockton Alliance (YUSA). This aims to identify risk early, improve resilience and provide positive activities and trusted relationships for children and young people.

3. Deter, Disrupt and Divert

3.1 Delivering intelligence-led interventions to disrupt exploitation, reduce opportunities for violence and divert children away from offending behaviour. Activity includes Custody Navigators, the Youth Justice Turnaround Programme and targeted Youth Justice interventions for children involved in violence or knife crime.

4. Strengthening Family Support

4.1 Providing coordinated support for parents and carers through the Family Help Point, Early Help services and the Youth Justice Health Hub. The Strategy seeks to strengthen parenting capacity, improve wellbeing and equip families to identify and respond to risks associated with serious youth violence.

5. Improving Educational Support

5.1 Reducing exclusions, improving attendance and supporting educational achievement through Prevention Panels, partnership working with schools, targeted emotional wellbeing resources and improved access to education, training and employment opportunities.

5.2 The Strategy will be supported through an Annual Serious Youth Violence Delivery Plan which will set out specific actions, milestones, responsibilities and performance measures and will be reviewed annually.

6. Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

6.1 The Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on communities by reducing violence, improving safety, strengthening community confidence and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. It specifically recognises the relationship between deprivation, inequality and the risk factors associated with serious youth violence and seeks to address these through targeted prevention and support.

6.2 The Strategy promotes equitable access to support services, positive activities, education and opportunities for children and young people who may be vulnerable to violence, exploitation or exclusion.

7. Corporate Parenting Implications

7.1 The Strategy has significant corporate parenting implications. Children in care and care experienced young people can be disproportionately vulnerable to exploitation, missing episodes, criminalisation and serious youth violence. The Strategy strengthens partnership approaches to safeguarding and improving outcomes for these children through coordinated intervention and support.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Delivery of the Strategy will primarily be achieved through existing services, programmes and partnership arrangements across Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Cleveland Police, Health, Education, Youth Justice and voluntary sector partners.

8.2 The Strategy also aligns with resources available through the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence, Public Health initiatives and existing early intervention programmes. There are no immediate additional financial implications arising directly from approval of the Strategy. Future resource requirements will be considered through the Annual Delivery Plan and existing governance arrangements.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 The Strategy supports compliance with the Serious Violence Duty and strengthens multi-agency arrangements for preventing and reducing serious youth violence. The Strategy contributes to statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding, crime prevention, public health and community safety.

10. Risk Assessment

10.1 The principal risks identified within the Strategy include:

- Continued increases in serious youth violence and knife crime.
- Child criminal exploitation and organised criminal activity.
- Educational exclusion and disengagement.
- Emerging safeguarding risks affecting vulnerable young people.
- Financial pressures impacting preventative services.
- Failure to maintain effective partnership coordination and information sharing.
- The Strategy mitigates these risks through clear governance arrangements, multi-agency accountability, intelligence-led responses and annual delivery planning

11. Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

11.1 The Strategy applies across all wards of Stockton-on-Tees.

The Strategy has been developed through comprehensive consultation and engagement involving statutory partners, community organisations, schools, health agencies and over 100 children and young people aged 10-18 years. Their views and lived experiences have directly informed the priorities and actions contained within the Strategy.

Background Papers

Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026-2031.

Youth Justice Plan 2026-27.

Name of Contact Officer: [Majella McCarthy](#)

Post Title: Director of Children's Services

Telephone number: 01642 524994

Email address: Majella.McCarthy@stockton.gov.uk



Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy - 2026–2031







Contents

Section 1 ForewordError! Bookmark not defined.

Section 2 Our Principles 5

Section 3 Needs Assessment..... 7

Section 4 What our children told us..... 8

Section 5 The Vision..... 9

Section 6 Our Priorities 10

Section 7 What success looks like..... 14

Section 8 Governance and Accountability 15

Section 9 Annual Delivery Plan 16

Forword

From Majella McCarthy – Director of Children's Services



We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people in Stockton-on-Tees are safe, nurtured and able to thrive. We recognise that serious youth violence is an increasing concern both nationally and locally, and that addressing it requires sustained early intervention, trusted relationships and resilient communities.

This is an ambitious five-year strategy, recognising that preventing and reducing serious youth violence is a long-term endeavour that will require consistent commitment, partnership working and system transformation over time. Meaningful change will not be achieved quickly; it requires a whole-system, public health approach that tackles root causes, strengthens protective factors and embeds prevention at every stage of a child's life.

The strategy sets out how we will work collectively to prevent and reduce serious youth violence through a public health, whole-system approach. It is informed by local evidence and shaped by the voices of children, young people, families and communities. It outlines our shared vision, principles and priorities, the Stockton-on-Tees needs profile, our key actions, and how progress and impact will be measured over time.

Our strong multi-agency partnership has worked collaboratively to target action to disrupt adults and organised crime groups who exploit children. This includes problem-solving approaches with Cleveland Police, Community Safety, Youth Justice, Education and the voluntary sector, with a particular focus on hotspot locations and areas of concern alongside safeguarding-led responses to protect children.

This is a dynamic and ambitious strategy, developed in line with the Serious Violence Duty. It will be underpinned by an annual delivery plan to ensure it remains responsive to emerging risks, learning and evidence. The delivery plan will be regularly reviewed by the Board, to ensure the strategy remains aligned with the Cleveland Violence Reduction Unit's overarching strategy and the wider priorities of Stockton-on-Tees, while maintaining a clear long-term focus on achieving sustained reductions in serious youth violence and improved outcomes for children and young people.

From Councillor – Clare Besford

Every child and young person in Stockton-on-Tees deserves to grow up safe, supported and able to look to the future with confidence. As Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, I welcome this Serious Youth Violence Strategy as an important statement of our shared determination to prevent harm, reduce inequality and ensure that every child has the best possible start in life.

The impact of serious youth violence reaches far beyond individual incidents. It can leave young people feeling unsafe, limit their confidence and opportunities, and place additional pressure on families who are working hard to protect and support their children. It also affects wider communities, creating fear, damaging trust and weakening the sense of belonging that is so important to strong neighbourhoods. Recognising this harm is why our response must be compassionate, urgent and focused on lasting change.

That lasting change starts from the belief that serious youth violence is not inevitable. It is shaped by the circumstances children experience, the opportunities available to them, and the strength of the relationships and communities around them. This is why the strategy rightly focuses on prevention, early help and partnership working. It recognises that fairness means acting early, listening to children and families, and targeting support where it can make the greatest difference.

Our ambition is for Stockton-on-Tees to be a place where background does not limit potential, where children feel safe in their homes, schools and communities, and where young people are supported to learn, thrive and achieve. By working together across education, health, police, youth justice, community safety and the voluntary sector, we can build the conditions that help children make positive choices and raise their aspirations for the future.

Welcome

Our Principles:

Welcome to the *Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Strategy 2026–2031*, which sets out how partners across the Borough will work together over the next five years to prevent and reduce serious youth violence and create safer communities for children, young people and families.

This strategy sets out our shared vision, ambitions and priorities for tackling serious youth violence through a whole-system, public health approach. It reflects our collective commitment to strengthening early intervention and prevention, addressing the underlying causes of violence, disrupting activity, supporting vulnerable children and families, and improving outcomes for children and young people across Stockton-on-Tees.

The strategy has been developed through extensive partnership working and co-production with organisations and individuals who share responsibility for safeguarding children and reducing violence. This includes:

- Children, young people and families
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Cleveland Police
- Safer Stockton Partnership
- Public Health
- Youth Justice Service
- Education providers, including schools and academies
- Health partners, including North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and NHS providers
- Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations
- Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV)

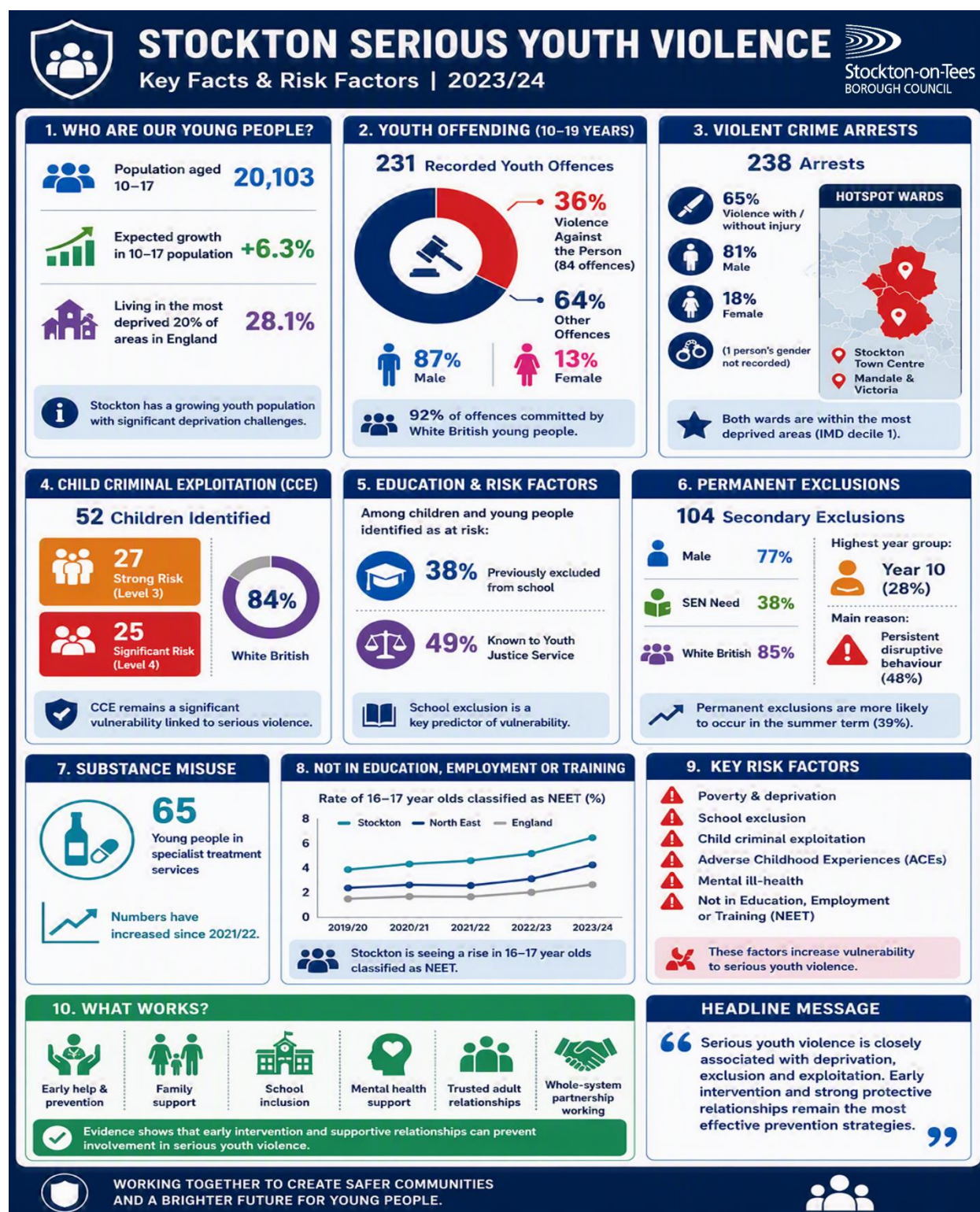
Partnership working and co-production are central to both the development and delivery of this strategy. No single organisation can prevent serious youth violence in isolation and meaningful change will only be achieved through sustained collaboration, shared accountability and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

The strategy has been informed by the Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Needs Assessment, which brought together local data, intelligence and evidence from across health, education, voluntary services, police, youth justice, community safety and children's services. We also worked closely with partners through a series of multi-agency workshops, strategic development sessions and partnership discussions to identify and refine the priorities contained within this strategy.

The voices of children and young people have been at the heart of this work. More than 100 young people aged 10–18 shared their views, experiences and ideas about serious youth violence, safety and prevention. Their insights have strengthened our understanding of both the factors that contribute to violence and the protective factors that help keep children safe.

Together, this evidence, engagement and partnership collaboration have shaped a strategy that reflects what matters most to children, young people, families and communities whilst setting a clear direction for collective action over the next five years.

Serious Youth Violence – Health Needs Assessment:



Source: Stockton-on-Tees Serious Youth Violence Rapid Health Needs Assessment, May 2025

What our children told us:



The Vision

By 2031, partners across Stockton-on-Tees are collectively committed to making the borough one of the safest places in the North East for children, young people and young adults aged 10–24.

We will achieve this through a shared, whole-system approach that:

- Strengthens the protective conditions that enable children, families and communities to feel safe, supported and able to thrive
- Reduces the number of children and young people who experience or are affected by violence
- Prevents children and young people from entering and re-entering the criminal justice system

This vision has been shaped through partnership collaboration and informed by the voices of children, young people and communities. It reflects a collective commitment to sustained, evidence-informed action that addresses the root causes of harm, not just its consequences.

Our Goals:

- ✓ **Reduce harm from serious youth violence** - *We will reduce the number of children and young people who are victims of, or affected by, serious youth violence by strengthening prevention, identifying risk earlier and targeting support where it is most needed.*
- ✓ **We will strengthen partnership intelligence** - *We will strengthen partnership intelligence and continue to build on our Serious Violence Dashboard to monitor, evaluate and better understand the nature and impact of serious violence across our communities. The Dashboard is an interactive strategic digital tool that provides access to anonymised and restricted police and partnership data relating to the nature, scale and drivers of serious violence across the Cleveland Police Force area. This will enable us to better understand need, identify emerging risks and trends, target resources more effectively, and measure the impact of our interventions. By using high-quality data, research, partnership intelligence and the voices of children, young people and families with lived experience to drive continuous improvement, we will ensure services remain effective, evidence-informed and responsive to local need, leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.*
- ✓ **Prevent entry to and escalation within the justice system** - *We will strengthen early help and universal prevention by ensuring all children and young people understand the risks of violence and have access to timely support before harm occurs. This includes improving pathways into services and embedding prevention across education, youth provision and community settings.*
- ✓ **Strengthen the conditions that prevent harm** - *We will improve the protective factors that underpin positive outcomes, including school attendance, inclusion, attainment, emotional wellbeing and family stability, so that children and young people are supported to thrive.*

- ✓ **Build resilient children, families and communities** - *We will empower children, families and communities to play an active role in preventing violence. This includes building confidence, strengthening relationships, and increasing access to safe spaces, positive activities and trusted support networks.*

Our Priorities:

A substantial programme of work is already underway across the partnership. This strategy brings together existing activity aligned to each priority, alongside new and emerging workstreams to strengthen impact over time.

Our priorities are closely aligned with the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) and the Safer Stockton Partnership and are informed by the Stockton-on-Tees Rapid Needs Assessment. They have been shaped through engagement with the Youth Justice Management Board, partner agencies, practitioners, and the voices of children, young people and local communities.

Central to this approach is our commitment to co-production, ensuring children, parents, carers and communities are actively involved in shaping solutions. This includes recognising the importance of safe spaces, positive activities, meaningful opportunities and clear pathways into education, training and employment, ensuring our work reflects lived experience and delivers sustainable, positive change.

Our Four Priorities

Early Intervention and Prevention:

We will strengthen early, proactive and universal prevention and intervention so that children and young people receive the right support at the right time, before needs escalate and risks increase. This will be delivered through improved early identification, increased capacity across services, a strengthened universal youth offer, and coordinated multi agency action informed by high quality data, evaluation and community insight.

We will achieve this by:

- **Youth Support:** We will continue to provide targeted early help and prevention, offering timely and flexible interventions for children, young people and families experiencing vulnerability, exploitation, missing episodes, anti-social behaviour and emerging risks of harm. Through strong relationship-based practice, targeted early help teams will undertake assessments, coordinate whole-family support, lead multi-agency planning and develop safety plans that strengthen protective factors and reduce risk.
- **Family Hubs:** We will continue to strengthen the Family Hub offer, providing accessible, community-based support for children, young people and families from pregnancy through to adulthood. Delivered in partnership with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, health providers and

voluntary sector organisations, Family Hubs will offer a wide range of activities, groups, advice, information and targeted support designed to promote positive family relationships, emotional wellbeing and resilience. By strengthening family stability, reducing isolation and building protective factors, the Family Hub network will play a key role in preventing escalation of need and improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

- **Holiday Activities Fund:** We will continue to deliver the Holidays Are Fun (HAF) programme, providing enriching activities, healthy meals and positive experiences for children and young people during school holiday periods. Targeted primarily at children eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals, the programme will help reduce inequalities, tackle holiday hunger and increase access to safe, supportive environments. Through a wide range of sport, creative, recreational and educational activities, HAF will promote physical and emotional wellbeing, strengthen social connections, build resilience and provide positive opportunities that help reduce vulnerability to exploitation, anti-social behaviour and serious youth violence.
- **YUSA:** We will continue to support and strengthen the Youth United Stockton Alliance (YUSA), bringing together key partners to deliver sustainable, high-quality open access youth provision across Stockton-on-Tees. Through a coordinated and community-based approach, YUSA will provide safe spaces, trusted relationships, positive activities and early intervention opportunities that build resilience and reduce vulnerability to exploitation, offending and serious youth violence. By aligning resources and delivering targeted support within youth settings, the Alliance will help identify and respond to emerging needs at the earliest opportunity, contributing to better outcomes for children and young people while reducing longer-term demand on public services and strengthening the local youth sector.

Deter, Disrupt and Divert:

We will work with partners to target and disrupt the pathways, behaviours and environments that enable serious youth violence, reducing opportunities for harm while increasing safety for children, young people and communities. This will be achieved through intelligence led, trauma informed and safeguarding focused approaches that identify and respond to emerging risks, exploitation, harmful peer influences and locations associated with violence. Strong multi agency partnership working, effective information sharing and timely intervention will be central to preventing escalation and protecting those most vulnerable to involvement in serious youth violence.

We will achieve this by:

- **Custody Navigators:** We will continue to provide Custody Navigators to ensure children and young people entering custody receive timely, trauma-informed support at a critical point. Navigators will provide emotional and practical assistance, support engagement with services, and work with partner agencies to inform sentence planning and early resettlement, with a focus on continuity

of care, maintaining family links where appropriate, and effective release planning to improve outcomes and reduce reoffending.

- **Youth Justice Turnaround Programme:** We will continue to deliver the Youth Justice Turnaround Programme, providing targeted, voluntary interventions for children arrested but not charged. The programme will offer timely, child-centred support to address the underlying causes of offending, including education, wellbeing, family circumstances and exploitation. Through early intervention, restorative and diversionary approaches, and multi-agency working, the programme aims to prevent escalation into the formal youth justice system and reduce further offending.
- **Youth Justice Team:** We will ensure the Youth Justice Team completes comprehensive, high-quality assessments for all children, including those arrested for knife possession, and deliver timely, mandatory interventions in line with statutory requirements. Interventions will be proportionate and trauma-informed, addressing factors such as exploitation, safeguarding risks, peer influence and unmet needs, with the aim of reducing reoffending and increasing safety for children and communities. Collate and utilise contemporary resources, including virtual-reality headsets, to support intervention work with children and maximise positive outcomes and impact.

Strengthening Family Support:

We will strengthen family support by providing effective, coordinated help to parents and carers facing challenges including mental health needs, substance misuse, poverty and difficult home circumstances, reducing risk and improving outcomes for children. We will also equip parents and carers with the knowledge and confidence to understand the risks of serious youth violence, recognise early warning signs, and play a key role in supporting and safeguarding their children.

We will achieve this by:

- **Family Help Point:** We have recently launched a new integrated Front Door to Children's Services, designed to ensure early identification of families' needs and swift access to the most appropriate support. Through this approach, we will ensure that families' needs are identified quickly and that they are connected to the right help at the earliest opportunity, enabling timely, coordinated intervention and preventing the escalation of need.
- **Providing an established offer of support:** Through our established Early Help services, we will continue to provide practical and emotional support to families. This support will focus on parenting, routines, healthy lifestyles and overall wellbeing, helping families to build resilience, address challenges early and improve outcomes for children.
- **Youth Justice Health Hub:** Through the Youth Justice Health Hub, we will provide timely CAMHS and Speech and Language Therapy screening and support for children working with the Youth Justice Team. This will support early identification of mental health needs and speech, language

and communication difficulties, enabling appropriate intervention, improved engagement and better outcomes for children.

- **Upskill the Workforce:** We will upskill the workforce across Children's Services, education, health, youth justice and partner agencies to strengthen our collective response to serious youth violence. This will include training to improve understanding of contextual safeguarding, exploitation, trauma, adolescent development and the drivers of violence, alongside building confidence in identifying early warning signs and responding effectively. A shared, trauma-informed approach will support practitioners to engage children and families in a consistent, strengths-based way, addressing risk while promoting protective factors. By strengthening skills, knowledge and professional collaboration, we will improve early identification, reduce escalation and deliver more effective, preventative support for children and young people at risk.

Improve Educational Support:

We will work across Children's Services and with our educational partners to reduce exclusions and improve attendance and engagement through strengthened educational support, trauma-informed practice and improved alternative pathways for excluded young people. This will include access to high-quality alternative provision, better system integration, and targeted tutoring and mentoring to ensure children and young people are supported to achieve their full potential.

We will achieve this by:

- **Prevention Panels:** We will introduce Prevention Panels within Stockton, utilising the SBC Education Attendance, Behaviour and Concerns (ABC) model to identify emerging issues early and ensure timely, proportionate intervention. These panels will incorporate cases where there has been no further action from Police and will be integrated within existing educational panels to consider all relevant factors and determine the most appropriate support. Working closely with schools and multi-academy trusts, this approach will reduce exclusions and improve school attendance and engagement through coordinated early help, improved system integration and targeted support for children and young people at risk.
- **Working in partnership and maximising resource:** Working with Cleveland Police Early Intervention Officers, schools and other organisations we will strengthen early identification and support for children at risk of serious youth violence. This will include contextual risk awareness, preventative and proportionate interventions, and the use of Pol-Ed resources to support education on personal safety, the law, healthy relationships and wellbeing, helping to reduce escalation and improve safety and outcomes.
- **Youth Support within Schools:** We will work with partners to develop targeted, age-appropriate emotional and life-skills resources for primary and secondary schools, supporting children and young people to build resilience, manage emotions and make safe, positive choices. Resources will

support emotional regulation, confidence, healthy relationships and decision-making, complement existing PSHE and wellbeing provision, and be informed by trauma-informed practice. Through early intervention, this approach will help prevent escalation of need and improve engagement and long-term outcomes.

- **Community Safety Partnership:** We will strengthen post-16 pathways by increasing access to education, training and employment opportunities for young people, particularly 16–17 year olds already known to services. This will include referrals to the Tees Valley Trailblazer scheme to support engagement in skills development, employment pathways and sustained progression. We will also deliver the *Skills to Success* pilot, providing targeted support to build employability skills, confidence and readiness for learning or work. Through coordinated partnership working, this approach will improve participation, reduce the risk of disengagement, and support positive transitions into adulthood.

We will achieve this by:

What success looks like

How will we measure this?

Success will be demonstrated through a sustained reduction in serious youth violence and improved safety, wellbeing and life chances for children and young people. Progress will be measured through a shared performance framework drawing on data from police, health, education, youth justice, safeguarding and community feedback.

Key measures will include:

- ❖ **Police:** A reduction in the number and rate of child and young person victims of violence; fewer knife enabled offences and weapons possession; and positive changes in hotspot and trend data.
- ❖ **Health:** Reduced A&E attendances and hospital admissions for assault and knife-related injuries among under-25s.
- ❖ **Youth Justice:** Fewer first-time entrants, reduced reoffending rates, appropriate use of out-of-court disposals, reduced custody levels, and improved disproportionality outcomes.
- ❖ **Education:** Improved attendance and reduced persistent absence; fewer suspensions and permanent exclusions; improved quality and outcomes within alternative provision; increased use of managed moves; and successful reintegration into mainstream education.
- ❖ **Safeguarding:** Reduced HOTH and child criminal exploitation referrals, fewer missing episodes, improved stability for looked-after children, and reduced exposure to domestic abuse.
- ❖ **Wellbeing and Perception:** Improved perceptions of safety and trust, measured through youth and parent/carer surveys, alongside positive school climate and wellbeing measures.

- ❖ **Participation and Progression:** Increased access to positive activities and improved engagement in education, employment or training, reflected in reduced NEET levels for 16–18 and 16–24 year olds.

This framework will support regular monitoring, learning and accountability, ensuring that our approach remains responsive and focused on achieving meaningful, long-term change.

Governance and Accountability

Strong governance arrangements are essential to ensure that the Serious Youth Violence Strategy is effectively implemented, regularly reviewed and delivers measurable outcomes for children, young people and communities across Stockton-on-Tees.

Overall governance and strategic oversight of this strategy will sit with the Youth Justice Management Board (YJMB), which will act as the lead partnership body responsible for monitoring delivery, scrutinising performance and ensuring partners fulfil their commitments. The YJMB brings together senior representatives from key statutory and voluntary sector agencies and is therefore well placed to provide oversight of the multi-agency response required to prevent and reduce serious youth violence.

The Board will maintain responsibility for:

- Strategic oversight of the Serious Youth Violence Strategy and associated delivery plan.
- Monitoring progress against agreed priorities, objectives and performance measures.
- Reviewing emerging risks, trends and intelligence relating to serious youth violence.
- Ensuring appropriate partnership engagement and accountability across agencies.
- Identifying barriers to delivery and agreeing corrective actions where required.
- Overseeing the use of resources and ensuring activities remain aligned to identified need and evidence-based practice.

Recognising that serious youth violence is a whole-system issue, governance arrangements will be aligned with existing partnership structures to avoid duplication and strengthen accountability. Progress against the strategy will be reported through the Safer Stockton Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring that community safety, public health, safeguarding and wider wellbeing considerations are fully reflected in implementation. This reporting structure provides assurance that serious youth violence remains a strategic priority across the local partnership landscape.

The Serious Youth Violence Strategy is also reflected within the Youth Justice Plan, ensuring alignment with broader youth justice priorities and providing a clear line of accountability between strategic objectives and operational delivery.

Annual Delivery Plan

Delivery of the strategy will be supported by an Annual Serious Youth Violence Delivery Plan, which will set out the specific actions, milestones, responsibilities and performance measures for the forthcoming year. The annual plan will be reviewed and refreshed each year to ensure it continues to respond to local needs, emerging evidence, changing risk factors and the lived experiences of children and young people.

The annual delivery plan will:

- Identify lead agencies and named officers responsible for each action.
- Include measurable outputs and outcomes linked to the strategic priorities.
- Set clear timescales and milestones for delivery.
- Identify resource requirements and opportunities for joint commissioning.
- Reflect findings from local needs assessments, intelligence and performance data.
- Incorporate feedback from children, young people, families and communities.

REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

COUNCIL DECISION

Planning Committee and National Scheme of Delegation

Summary

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduced measures intended to modernise the operation of planning committees and establish a new national scheme of delegation. Following public consultation, the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 were made on 15 July 2026 and will come into force on 31 October 2026. The Regulations introduce mandatory requirements governing the determination of specified planning applications and associated consents, together with a maximum planning committee membership of 13.

The Council is required to amend its Constitution, scheme of delegation and Planning Committee arrangements before the Regulations come into force. This report brings those changes together with the revised Planning Protocol, which has been developed with input from members and officers. A range of potential committee sizes has been modelled for the purposes of this report and the associated political balance calculations. Council is invited to determine the future membership of the Planning Committee, subject to the statutory maximum prescribed by the Regulations.

The report has been brought directly to Full Council because the decisions concern the Constitution, the composition of a non-executive committee and the allocation of non-executive planning functions. Council is asked to settle the substantive arrangements and delegate their administrative implementation, subject to the limits described in the recommendations.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

To comply with the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 and establish clear, lawful and transparent arrangements for determining planning applications from 31 October 2026.

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

1. Note the national requirements and determine the size of the Planning Committee, subject to the statutory maximum of 13 members, having considered this report and Appendix 4
2. Agree that the Planning Committee be reconstituted with effect from 31 October 2026; approve the corresponding political allocation, following confirmation by Democratic Services; appoint members in accordance with the nominations received from political groups; and elect the Chair and Vice-Chair of the reconstituted committee.
3. Approve the constitutional amendments at Appendix 1, incorporating the committee size determined at the meeting, and retain the existing quorum of five and requirement for appropriate member training.
4. Approve the substantive Planning Referral and Triage Protocol at Appendix 2, including the local thresholds, member-request procedure, treatment of own-interest applications and requirements for recording and publishing referral assessments.
5. Nominate the Chair of the Planning Committee as the nominated member for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6. Nominate the Vice-Chair as substitute nominated member and authorise the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth to designate in writing a suitably qualified senior planning officer to act as the nominated officer for the purposes of those Regulations
6. Approve the revised Planning Protocol at Appendix 5 and note the implementation arrangements and workflow contained in Appendix 3, the administrative operation of which will be settled under recommendation 8.
7. Confirm that the Head of Democratic Services will issue the statutory allocation notices and administer outstanding nominations under the proper-officer designation recorded in paragraph 2.158 of the Constitution. Any outstanding permanent appointments will be brought back to Full Council; the authority to administer the process does not itself confer power to appoint. Any proposal to fill an unclaimed allocated seat with another member will be brought to Full Council once the statutory requirements have been satisfied.
8. Authorise the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, Planning Services Manager and Head of Legal Services, to settle the final drafting, numbering and cross-references; approve associated guidance, workflow processes, publication arrangements, internal administrative procedures, implementation documentation and transitional measures; and make consequential amendments necessary to implement Council's decisions. Constitutional updates will be made consistently with paragraph 1.37, and any Local Scheme of Delegation or amendment to it must be agreed by both the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer under paragraph 2.148. This delegation does not permit changes to the substantive thresholds, counting rules, member-request rights or deadline, own-interest

arrangements, committee size, quorum or allocation of decision-making responsibility approved by Council.

9. Agree that any substantive change to those arrangements must be reported to Full Council. Any further substitute nominee needed outside the arrangements approved above must be formally nominated through a lawful Council decision or express delegated authority before exercising the statutory referral function.
10. Agree that the new committee and revised arrangements take effect on 31 October 2026 and request a report to Council after 12 months reviewing the committee's size, local triage criteria and practical operation. The existing arrangements will continue until commencement, subject throughout to the law

Detail

Background and responsibility for the decision

1. The aim behind the national scheme of delegation is to provide greater clarity and consistency about the role of planning committees, enabling committees to focus on key proposals while more minor and technical decisions are made by planning officers. The Regulations replace aspects of the present local discretion over which applications are determined by committee. The Council must therefore amend any existing provision which would permit a different decision-maker from that required by the Regulations.
2. Paragraphs 2.4(a) and 2.4(f) of the Constitution place constitutional amendments, committee composition, political balance and the allocation of chairs and vice-chairs with Council, subject to specific delegations. Paragraph 3.4 permits committee, Chair and Vice-Chair appointments at an ordinary meeting where existing decision-making arrangements are being amended. Motions arising from this report may be made under paragraphs 3.43(e), (f) and (h). These provisions support the direct Council route and appointment sequence proposed in this report.

National scheme of delegation

3. The Regulations distinguish between Schedule 1 applications, Schedule 2 applications and own-interest applications. Schedule 1 applications must be determined by officers. Schedule 2 applications must also be determined by officers unless the nominated officer and nominated member agree to refer them under the statutory gateway. Own-interest applications follow a separate procedure under regulation 6, under which the nominated individuals may agree to committee referral without applying the Schedule 2 significance test.
4. Schedule 1 includes householder applications, minor commercial and minor residential applications, permission in principle, certificates of lawfulness, most reserved-matters applications, applications under planning conditions, prior approvals, biodiversity gain plans and specified applications relating to amendments and planning obligations. The statutory definitions must be applied: for example, the principal minor residential category requires between one and nine dwellings on a site smaller than 0.5 hectares. Connected listed building applications, retrospective applications and own-interest applications require particular attention when classifying a case.

5. Schedule 2 includes larger planning applications, listed building consent and associated planning permission, applications under section 73A for development already carried out, reserved matters relating to a large outline permission, advertisement consent and tree preservation order consent. It also includes specified variations and planning-obligation applications. The definitions and schedules are incorporated into the arrangements at Appendix 2; the local thresholds do not replace them.
6. A Schedule 2 application may be referred where, in the view of both the nominated officer and nominated member, it raises one or more economic, social or environmental issues of significance to the local area, or one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and other material considerations. Both must agree to referral and have regard to the statutory guidance. The significance criteria are alternatives, not cumulative requirements.
7. The guidance gives examples including an outline application for a large allocated residential development, the loss of a community shop in a rural area and changes to a notable listed building in a town centre. It also identifies circumstances unlikely to raise a significant planning matter, such as broad compliance with a detailed site allocation or the resolution of a statutory consultee's technical concern. Significance depends on the circumstances and local context, and new material considerations may justify a different assessment.
8. Existing automatic committee triggers cannot continue where they conflict with the national scheme. Neither the number of representations, a member request nor an officer recommendation to approve a departure from the development plan can, by itself, require committee determination. The changes concern who decides an application; the development plan, other material considerations and relevant consultation requirements continue to apply.

Own interest applications

9. Regulation 6 applies to an application of a kind specified in either schedule which is made, alone or jointly, by or on behalf of the Council, a Council member or a Council officer. It also applies where, in the view of the nominated officer and nominated member, the Council or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest. These applications are dealt with separately from Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 applications. Committee referral requires the nominees' agreement, but not the Schedule 2 gateway test.
10. The local definitions cannot narrow that statutory meaning. Minor Council development remains an own-interest application where the definition is met, and an officer's application cannot be excluded simply because the officer is not senior or personally known to Planning Services. A family connection will be considered on its facts, including whether a member or officer otherwise has an interest. The proposed Protocol requires all identified own-interest applications to receive a referral assessment, while allowing routine cases to remain with officers where committee consideration is not warranted.
11. Interested or conflicted individuals must not participate in the assessment or determination, and substitutes will be used where necessary. Council applications must also comply with the restrictions in regulation 10 of the Town and Country Planning General

Regulations 1992 concerning determination by a committee or officer responsible for managing the land or buildings. The referral arrangements do not remove those restrictions.

Local triage arrangements

12. The guidance allows authorities to identify which Schedule 2 and own-interest applications need consideration by the nominated individuals; it does not require every such application to be assessed by them. A local triage process will help avoid unnecessary delay and provide greater clarity about the cases considered for possible committee referral. The substantive criteria are set out in Appendix 2 and are incorporated into the constitutional framework by reference.
13. Under the proposed arrangements, Schedule 2 applications will ordinarily receive a referral assessment where they attract more than 10 qualifying representations contrary to the case officer's recommendation, exceed 50 dwellings, exceed 2,000 square metres of commercial floorspace, exceed 1,000 square metres of retail floorspace, or involve listed building consent for a Grade I or Grade II* building other than an application solely concerning conditions. These are the proposed local starting points. They lead to consideration of referral rather than automatic committee determination.
14. The representation threshold increases from more than five under the existing arrangements to more than ten. That increase is a local choice, not a requirement of the Regulations, and Council may retain or amend it when approving the Protocol. Its purpose is to focus the numerical trigger on applications attracting a wider level of contrary representations, while other routes allow significant issues to be considered even where few people have responded.
15. Advertisement and tree preservation order consent applications will be excluded from the numerical representation trigger. They remain eligible for consideration under the other routes in the Protocol where applicable. Petitions, duplicate responses and substantially identical pro-forma responses will be counted as specified in Appendix 2 for triage purposes only; all material issues and the extent of representations must still be accurately considered and reported.
16. Any member may submit a reasoned request for an eligible Schedule 2 application to be considered by the nominated officer and member. The request must ordinarily be made within 21 days of publication of the application details and explain the planning grounds and their significance. It will not guarantee committee determination or create a director-level appeal against the nominees' assessment. The nominated officer may also identify an exceptional significant case outside the stated thresholds, including where new material information emerges before determination.

Nominated individuals and referral records

17. The Chair of the Planning Committee is proposed as the nominated member for the purposes of regulations 5 and 6. The Vice-Chair is proposed as substitute nominated member. Rather than embedding a specific post within the Constitution, it is proposed that the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth designate in writing a suitably qualified

senior planning officer to act as the nominated officer. This approach ensures that the statutory role is exercised by an appropriately qualified planning professional whilst providing flexibility to accommodate future organisational changes without requiring constitutional amendment.

18. The statutory nominations are separate from ordinary committee substitution arrangements under paragraphs 3.13 to 3.16 of the Constitution. A substitute committee member does not inherit the Chair's special statutory functions. Statutory cover may be utilised where a nominated individual is unavailable, absent or has an interest preventing participation. It is not intended as a mechanism for obtaining an alternative assessment from a different nominee.
19. The nominees should make every effort to reach agreement. Where necessary, additional information may be obtained before an assessment is completed, provided that unnecessary delay is avoided. If agreement to referral is not achieved, the application must be determined by an authorised officer. Completed referral assessments will be recorded, published where appropriate and summarised periodically for the Planning Committee in accordance with the Planning Referral and Triage Protocol.

Planning Committee size

20. The Regulations limit a committee determining applications under regulations 5 and 6 to no more than 13 members. Stockton's Planning Committee currently comprises 14 members and a reduction is therefore required. Council must determine the future membership of the Committee having regard to the statutory requirements, governance considerations and political balance implications.
21. Illustrative political balance calculations have been prepared for a number of potential committee sizes. Their purpose is to assist Members in understanding the implications of different options before reaching a decision. No preferred committee size is recommended by officers. Members may wish to consider matters including likely workload, continuity of experience, attendance, resilience in the event of interests or absences and the ability to maintain effective and efficient decision-making
22. Different committee sizes may involve different advantages and disadvantages in terms of continuity, resilience, attendance, participation and political representation. Members are invited to consider those factors, together with future workload and operational effectiveness, when determining the size of the Committee. The Constitution permits trained, politically balanced substitutes under paragraphs 3.13–3.16, where the ordinary member is absent for the whole meeting and the required notification has been given. This provides some additional resilience but does not permit a replacement for a single agenda item. Appendix 4 explains the two size options discussed so far. Council may consider another workable number within the statutory limit, provided its political allocation is confirmed before appointments are made.

Political balance and appointments

23. The reconstituted committee will remain politically balanced under sections 15 to 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The calculation must take account of the

allocation across the Council's ordinary committees as well as the individual committee. The indicative allocations at Appendix 4 therefore require confirmation by Democratic Services before the relevant Council resolution, including any implications for other committees.

24. The formal allocation for the present 14-member committee is six Conservative, six Labour, one TIA and one IBIS. IBIS did not nominate when the committee was last constituted and a Conservative member was subsequently appointed by Full Council, following the required process. That arrangement will not automatically carry forward. The seats will be allocated afresh and every group will have the opportunity to nominate to its new entitlement.
25. On the figures supplied for this report, 13 members would produce an allocation of six Conservative, five Labour, one TIA and one IBIS; nine would produce four Conservative, four Labour and one TIA. If the latter allocation is confirmed and approved, there is no allocated IBIS seat and therefore no IBIS vacancy or three-week nomination process for that committee. If IBIS is allocated a seat, it will again have the opportunity to nominate.
26. Council will first determine size and allocation, then appoint members whose nominations are available and elect the Chair and Vice-Chair. Groups can provide conditional nominations in advance for the realistic size options, although the final appointments must reflect Council's actual decision. The resolutions will operate prospectively from 31 October 2026, with the present committee continuing until then. Outstanding nominations and any later alternative appointments will be handled as set out in Appendix 4.
27. The proper officer must give written notice under regulation 14 following the allocation. Regulation 15 permits an alternative appointment where a group has failed to express its wishes within three weeks beginning with the date of that notice. Under the proposed process an advance indication that a group will not nominate will not cause its seat to be offered immediately to another group. Any alternative appointment will be brought to Council after legal confirmation that the statutory conditions are met; the seat does not pass automatically to any group.

Revised Planning Protocol

28. The revised Planning Protocol brings together the work undertaken with members on conduct and good decision-making. Its provisions on pre-application engagement, briefings, committee meetings, decisions differing from officer recommendations, appeals, site visits and training remain relevant. The sections on own-interest applications and committee referral have been aligned with the new national scheme and now refer to the separate Referral and Triage Protocol.
29. Council is asked to approve the substantive Planning Protocol at Appendix 5. Officers may settle supporting guidance, workflow arrangements, implementation documentation and consequential drafting under the implementation delegation, but changes affecting members' rights, substantive committee procedure or the allocation of decision-making responsibility will return to Council. The Protocol does not amend the Members' Code of Conduct or create a referral route outside the Regulations.

Implementation and delegated work

30. Council is asked to settle committee size, allocation and available appointments, the constitutional framework, substantive triage criteria, member-request arrangements and Planning Protocol. Officers will then finalise the supporting documentation and operational arrangements within those decisions. Paragraph 1.37 already permits the Monitoring Officer, on behalf of and in consultation with the Chief Executive, to make specified updating and minor constitutional changes. The express delegation in this report defines the implementation work authorised on this occasion; changes to Local Schemes of Delegation also require the agreement of both officers under paragraph 2.148. Administrative work will cover workflow documentation, implementation materials, internal circulation arrangements, publication processes, accessible guidance and application-handling procedures, without changing the approved thresholds or 21-day member-request period
31. Planning Services, Legal Services and Democratic Services will complete implementation before 31 October. Outstanding applications will be checked against the new scheme, particularly those already expected to go to committee, deferred applications and earlier resolutions subject to a planning obligation or other outstanding action. Transitional instructions will apply the law to those cases and cannot preserve an old decision-making route where it is no longer lawful.
32. Members and officers will receive appropriate briefing, and information will be provided for applicants, agents, parish and town councils and residents.
33. A review after 12 months will consider referral volumes, outcomes and reasons, determination times, committee workload, attendance, quorum and the operation of member requests and local thresholds. It will also consider public access, equality implications and resources, allowing Council to adjust the local arrangements in the light of experience.

Community impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

34. The national requirements are mandatory, but committee size and local triage arrangements remain Council choices. Appendix 6 identifies potential effects and proposed safeguards, including assistance for residents who find written engagement difficult and the continued consideration of material issues irrespective of response numbers. Fewer applications may reach a public meeting at which speaking is available, and that change must be explained accurately.
35. The screening in Appendix 6 is prepared for this report and requires service validation and completion of the Council's normal equality assurance before circulation for decision. Council must consider those implications when settling its local choices; the assessment cannot be deferred until after those choices have been made.

Corporate parenting implications

36. No direct change to the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities is proposed. Applications affecting children, young people or Council services will continue to be

assessed on their individual planning merits through the appropriate decision-making route.

Financial implications

37. Implementation will require officer time for constitutional amendments, records, communication and training. No additional staffing or financial saving from the reduction in membership is proposed in this report. Planning Services have confirmed that the resource implications can be met from existing budgets.

Legal implications

38. The arrangements must comply with the Regulations from 31 October 2026. Determination by the wrong decision-maker could expose an application decision to judicial review. Appendix 1 qualifies the Constitution's general delegation, concurrent, deputy and urgency powers so that they cannot bypass the statutory scheme. It also qualifies paragraph 4.137 of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol to recognise the nominated member's statutory participation in referral assessments, without giving that member authority to determine an application alone. Where officer determination is required, the officer's discretion must not be restricted contrary to regulation 2(2).

Risk assessment

39. The principal risks are incorrect classification, outdated referral procedures, unidentified interests, unavailable nominees and inadequate decision records. The proposed constitutional provisions, substitute nominations, written procedures, training and review address these risks. Completing the political-balance calculation, equality assurance and resource assessment before publication remains part of preparing the report for Council rather than delegated post-decision implementation.

Wards affected and consultation

40. The arrangements apply across all wards. Informal discussions with members and the joint work of Planning Services, Legal Services and the Monitoring Officer have informed the proposals, while the revised Planning Protocol reflects wider member contributions. The final circulation version should record any further group views received without implying that a particular committee size has already been agreed.

Appendices

Appendix 1 — Constitutional amendments for approval

Appendix 2 — Planning Referral and Triage Protocol for approval

Appendix 3 — Implementation Arrangements and Workflow

Appendix 4 — Committee size, political balance and appointments

Appendix 5 — Planning Protocol for approval

Appendix 6 — Equality and poverty screening for service validation before decision

Background papers and references

- Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, SI 2026/854, regulations 2–7 and Schedules 1–2.
- Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions: statutory guidance, especially paragraphs 10, 13–15, 22–26 and 34–35.
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Constitution, October 2025 accessible edition: paragraph 1.37 (printed page 12); paragraphs 2.4(a) and (f) (page 15); paragraphs 2.85–2.91 (pages 37–38); paragraphs 2.141–2.153A (pages 45–47); paragraph 2.158, political-group proper-officer designation (page 52); paragraphs 3.3–3.4 (pages 55–56); paragraphs 3.13–3.16 (pages 57–58); paragraph 3.43(e), (f) and (h); and paragraph 4.137 (page 150).
- Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, SI 1990/1553, regulations 13–15; Local Government and Housing Act 1989, sections 15–17.
- Other relevant legislation and policy: Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025; Town and Country Planning Act 1990; Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992, regulation 10; Equality Act 2010, section 149; the development plan, National Planning Policy Framework and national planning guidance.

Contact Officers

Simon Grundy

Planning Services Manager

Telephone number: 01642 528550

Email: simon.grundy@stockton.gov.uk

Ged Morton

Director of Corporate Services

(Monitoring Officer)

Telephone: 01642 527701

Email: ged.morton@stockton.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Constitutional amendments for approval

Planning Committee functions

The amendments below take effect on 31 October 2026. They replace the conflicting local referral provisions while retaining the committee's other existing functions. The number in paragraph 2.88 must be completed with the figure resolved by Council.

Paragraph	Treatment
2.85(a)	Retain the existing development-plan recommendation function.
2.85(b)	Replace with the provision below.
2.85(c)	Retain the existing power concerning conditions and restrictions, subject to the revised scope of paragraph (b).
2.85(d)	Delete the existing additional local referral triggers.
2.85(e) and 2.86–2.87	Retain the existing plan-making, joint committee and neighbourhood planning functions.
2.88	Insert the membership determined by Council.
2.89 and 2.90	Retain appropriate training and quorum of five.
2.91	Replace the reference to Planning Code with Planning Protocol.

Replacement paragraph 2.85 b

The Planning Committee will discharge the Council's functions as local planning authority by determining applications and associated matters referred to it in accordance with regulation 5(3) or regulation 6(4) of the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026 and the Council's Planning Referral and Triage Protocol. It must not determine an application which those Regulations require an officer to determine. Functions outside their scope remain allocated in accordance with the other applicable provisions of the Constitution.

Replacement paragraphs 2.88 and 2.91

2.88 The Planning Committee will comprise [NUMBER RESOLVED BY COUNCIL] councillors and will be politically balanced. A committee determining applications under regulation 5 or 6 of the 2026 Regulations must not comprise more than 13 members.

2.91 The Council Procedure Rules and the Planning Protocol apply to the Planning Committee.

Additional provisions after paragraph 2.91

2.91A Applications will be identified and considered for possible referral in accordance with the Planning Referral and Triage Protocol approved by Full Council. The Protocol forms part of the Council's arrangements for discharging planning functions under regulations 5 and 6, although its detailed provisions are maintained as a separate document.

2.91B The Protocol cannot require or permit determination by the committee contrary to the Regulations. Substantive changes to the local thresholds, counting rules, member-request rights or deadline, own-interest arrangements or allocation of decision-making responsibility require Full Council approval.

2.91C The Monitoring Officer may, following consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, Planning Services Manager and Head of Legal Services, approve administrative forms, guidance and procedures and minor drafting or consequential amendments. That authority is confined to implementing the substance approved by Council and does not permit alteration of the matters reserved by paragraph 2.91B. Paragraph 1.37 applies to constitutional updating and minor changes, and paragraph 2.148 requires the agreement of both the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to Local Schemes of Delegation and changes to them.

2.91D Constitutional Interpretation - In the event of any inconsistency between this Constitution, any Local Scheme of Delegation, protocol, guidance note, administrative procedure or other local arrangement and the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, the Regulations shall prevail and the local provision shall be interpreted and applied accordingly.

Officer determination and statutory nominations

Applications required to be determined by officers under regulations 4, 5(2) and 6(3) are delegated initially to the Planning Services Manager (or such other officer to be determined from time to time by the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth) and such other officers authorised in writing under the relevant local scheme of delegation. Applicable requirements for approval and recording of sub-delegations continue to apply. The officer determining an application must have no disqualifying interest or conflicting responsibility.

Nominated Officer and Nominated Member

The nominated member shall be the Chair of the Planning Committee. The substitute nominated member shall be the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

The nominated officer shall be a suitably qualified senior planning officer designated in writing by the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth. The Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth may revoke, amend or replace that designation at any time. The Monitoring Officer shall maintain a register of current designations.

Qualification of the general delegation provisions

The general provisions governing officer delegation, including paragraphs 2.141–2.153A, operate subject to the 2026 Regulations. They do not authorise Council or a committee to take back, exercise concurrently or receive for determination an application which the Regulations require an officer to determine, or permit referral outside regulations 5 and 6. General deputy arrangements and the urgency power cannot displace the statutory requirements governing who may undertake referral assessment or determine an application.

No arrangement may restrict the determining officer's discretion contrary to regulation 2(2). Consultation with a member does not give that member authority to approve, direct or prevent the officer's decision. These provisions do not authorise expenditure outside the Council's financial arrangements. The statutory nominated-person functions may be exercised only by a formally nominated person or substitute; they do not pass to another officer merely through a general cascade or concurrent delegation.

Member and officer relations

Add the following qualification at the end of paragraph 4.137 of the Member/Officer Relations Protocol:

For planning applications governed by the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026, the nominated member or formally nominated substitute may participate with the nominated officer or formally nominated substitute in the statutory referral assessment under regulation 5 or 6. This is a specific statutory referral function, not a power for an individual member to determine the application or direct its outcome. The application must be determined by the committee or an authorised officer in accordance with the Regulations.

Committee substitutes

Retain paragraphs 3.13–3.16. Substitution must preserve political composition, the substitute must have received the required training, the ordinary member must be absent for the whole meeting and notification must be given before or on the meeting day. A substitute does not acquire special powers of the member replaced under paragraph 3.15. Acting as a committee substitute, or chairing a particular meeting, does not by itself confer the separately nominated statutory referral role.



Appendix 2

Planning Referral and Triage Protocol

1 Purpose and status

- 1.1 This Protocol identifies the applications to be considered by the nominated officer and nominated member for possible committee referral. Approved by Full Council and incorporated into the constitutional framework by reference, it implements the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026. It does not change the statutory categories or create an automatic right to committee determination.
- 1.2 The Regulations prevail over inconsistent local provisions and the relevant statutory guidance must be taken into account. Functions outside the Regulations remain subject to the other applicable constitutional provisions. The Planning Protocol separately deals with conduct and good decision-making.

2 Nominated persons and cover

- 2.1 The nominated officer shall be the suitably qualified senior planning officer designated in writing by the Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth. The Chair of the Planning Committee shall be the nominated member. The Vice-Chair shall be the substitute nominated member. Substitutes may act where a nominated individual is absent, unavailable or unable to participate because of an interest or conflict. They must not be used to secure a different assessment from that which might otherwise have been reached. Where a further nomination is required, it must be made through a lawful nomination process before the statutory assessment function is exercised
- 2.2 Substitutes may act for absence, unavailability or an interest or conflict. They must not be used to obtain a different assessment from the principal nominee. Where neither principal nor substitute can act, the Monitoring Officer must arrange a further lawful nomination through Council or an express delegated power before the statutory assessment is undertaken. Absence of a nominee does not itself establish disagreement on referral. Ordinary committee substitution under paragraphs 3.13–3.16 does not confer this statutory role; paragraph 3.15 prevents a substitute from inheriting the special powers of the person replaced.

3 Classification and officer authority

- 3.1 Planning Services will record the statutory classification, applying regulation 2 and Schedules 1 and 2. Own-interest applications follow regulation 6; where an application otherwise falls within both schedules, the Schedule 2 category takes precedence. The statutory definitions of householder, minor commercial, minor residential and large outline permission apply without substitution of the local triage thresholds.

- 3.2 A Schedule 1 application must be determined by an authorised officer. A Schedule 2 application not referred under regulation 5(3), and an own-interest application not referred under regulation 6(4), must likewise be determined by an officer. The determining officer's discretion must not be restricted contrary to regulation 2(2).
- 3.3 Classification checks must include connections with listed building consent, section 73A applications, the original permission relevant to a section 73 sequence and the approval connected with a section 106A request or application. Reserved matters relating to a large outline permission are in Schedule 2; the statutory definition concerns outline permission for at least 500 dwellings or at least 50,000 square metres of new building floorspace. A referral assessment cannot reopen issues already settled by the outline permission.

4 Schedule 2 local criteria

- 4.1 A Schedule 2 application will receive a referral assessment where one or more of the following applies:
- a. More than 10 qualifying individual letters or emails express a view contrary to the case officer's proposed recommendation.
 - b. A full or outline application exceeds 50 dwellings.
 - c. A full or outline application exceeds 2,000 square metres of gross commercial floorspace.
 - d. A full or outline application exceeds 1,000 square metres of gross retail floorspace.
 - e. An application seeks listed building consent concerning a Grade I or Grade II* building, excluding applications solely concerned with the variation or discharge of conditions.
 - f. A member has made a valid request under section 5.
 - g. The nominated officer considers that the application may raise an issue within regulation 5(3), despite falling outside the preceding criteria.
- 4.2 These thresholds require an assessment, not committee determination. Both nominees must still agree that the statutory gateway is met and that the application should be referred. A proposal exactly at a stated development threshold does not meet that numerical criterion, although another route may apply.
- 4.3 Advertisement and tree preservation order consent applications are excluded from criterion 4.1(a), but remain eligible under the other applicable routes. Similarly, exclusion of listed building condition applications from criterion 4.1(e) does not remove their Schedule 2 status. Own-interest cases are considered under section 8 rather than the Schedule 2 gateway.

5 Member requests

- 5.1 Any councillor may request consideration of an eligible Schedule 2 application within 21 days of publication of its details. The prescribed form, or equivalent written information, must identify the application, material planning grounds, their local significance and any relevant policies or supporting evidence. A statement of support or opposition without planning grounds is insufficient.
- 5.2 A valid request will be considered by the nominated officer and nominated member, who will apply the statutory test. The requesting member will receive the outcome and reasons. Neither the request nor an approach to a director confers a right to committee determination, and there is no separate local override of the nominees' statutory assessment.
- 5.3 Late requests do not ordinarily trigger assessment under this section. Where new or materially changed information emerges before determination, the nominated officer may use criterion 4.1(g). This does not prevent any material representation received before determination from being considered in the planning decision, whether or not referral is assessed.

6 Counting representations

- 6.1 A qualifying representation is a written response from an individual or organisation expressing a view contrary to the proposed case-officer recommendation. Repeated responses from the same person count once. Responses from a single postal address ordinarily count once unless they clearly represent independently expressed views of different occupants. A representation on behalf of an organisation counts as one organisational response.
- 6.2 A petition counts as one response for the numerical trigger. Substantially identical standard or pro-forma responses also count as one for that purpose, while any materially different content must be considered. The number of signatories and responses must still be recorded and reported accurately, and all material issues considered irrespective of the counting rules.
- 6.3 These rules concern triage only and do not determine the planning weight of an issue. Officers will review the numerical criterion when the recommendation is formulated or materially changes, so that the direction of representations is assessed against the actual proposed recommendation.

7 Schedule 2 gateway assessment

- 7.1 The nominees may agree to referral where, in their view, the application raises one or more economic, social or environmental issues of significance to the local area, or one or more significant planning matters having regard to the development plan and other material considerations. They must have regard to the statutory guidance, including its presumption of officer determination and exceptional committee referral.

- 7.2 The assessment may take place at a meeting or through written or electronic communication. Each nominee must consider the relevant information and record their view. They should make every effort to reach agreement and may obtain further reasonably necessary information before completing the assessment, identifying responsibility and avoiding unnecessary delay.
- 7.3 Where both agree, the application will be referred. Where agreement to referral is not reached, it must be determined by an officer. Neither nominee has a casting vote and neither may independently require committee determination.

8 Own interest applications

- 8.1 The statutory definition in regulation 6 applies. It covers applications of a kind specified in either schedule made, alone or jointly, by or on behalf of the Council, a Council member or a Council officer. It also covers cases where, in the view of the nominees, the Council or any of its members or officers otherwise has an interest. Application information and relevant disclosures will be checked so that such cases can be identified.
- 8.2 All identified own-interest applications will be placed before the nominees. They will consider whether committee referral is appropriate, having regard to the statutory guidance, transparency, propriety and the circumstances. The Schedule 2 significance test does not apply; agreement is nevertheless required. If referral is not agreed, an authorised officer must determine the application.
- 8.3 Routine or minor Council development may be suitable for officer determination but remains an own-interest application where the statutory definition is met. An employee's seniority or familiarity to Planning Services does not remove an application from the definition. A spouse, partner or family connection must be assessed on its facts, including whether a member or officer otherwise has an interest.
- 8.4 Interested or conflicted individuals must take no part in referral assessment or determination. Council applications must also comply with regulation 10 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 concerning responsibility for management of the land or buildings. Legal advice will be obtained where the separation of functions or an interest requires clarification.

9 Records and publication

- 9.1 Every completed assessment will record the application, statutory category, local criterion, nominees and any substitutes, interests considered, relevant information, each nominee's view, outcome and reasons. Where further information is needed, the interim record will identify what is required and who will obtain it; the final assessment will be retained with the application record.
- 9.2 Outcomes and reasons will be published subject to applicable restrictions on personal, confidential and privileged information. Both agreed and declined referrals will be included in a quarterly summary to the Planning Committee. The Monitoring Officer may approve the precise form and administrative arrangements, but not remove these requirements.

10 Implementation and amendment

10.1 This Protocol takes effect on 31 October 2026 and will be reviewed after 12 months.

Internal circulation arrangements, forms, publication mechanics and guidance may be finalised by the Monitoring Officer within Council's implementation delegation.

10.2 Substantive changes to the thresholds, counting rules, member-request rights or deadline, own-interest arrangements or allocation of decision-making responsibility require Council approval. Administrative changes cannot alter the statutory tests, confer an automatic committee referral or restrict an officer's lawful discretion.

Appendix 3

Implementation Arrangements and Workflow

(NOTE: Status of this Appendix - This Appendix is provided for explanatory purposes only)

Council is being asked to approve the substantive governance arrangements contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 5. The workflow, publication arrangements and implementation processes described below illustrate how those arrangements are intended to operate in practice.

Guidance notes, workflow records, publication arrangements, templates and other administrative documents are operational documents and may be amended from time to time by officers, provided that no amendment changes a substantive arrangement approved by Council.

At classification, Planning Services first identifies whether an application falls within the Regulations and whether it is an own-interest application. Own-interest applications proceed to the separate regulation 6 assessment. Other Schedule 1 applications proceed to officer determination, while Schedule 2 applications are checked against the approved local criteria. Functions outside the Regulations follow their existing lawful allocation.

Where a Schedule 2 criterion is met, the nominees assess the statutory gateway and whether referral is appropriate. For an own-interest case, they consider referral under regulation 6 without the Schedule 2 gateway. If more information is required it is obtained before completion; agreement results in committee referral and absence of agreement results in officer determination. The outcome is recorded, published and communicated to a requesting member where applicable.

Route	Assessment	Final decision maker
Schedule 1 and not own interest	No local committee referral assessment	Authorised officer
Schedule 2 with no local criterion	Local screening recorded	Authorised officer
Schedule 2 meeting a local criterion	Both nominees apply regulation 5 and decide referral	Committee if referral agreed; otherwise officer
Own interest	Both nominees consider regulation 6 referral	Committee if referral agreed; otherwise officer
Outside the Regulations	Existing constitutional allocation	Relevant authorised decision maker



Appendix 4

Committee size political balance and appointments

The allocations shown in this Appendix are illustrative only and are based upon the political composition of the Council at the time of publication.

Final allocations will be confirmed by Democratic Services following Council's determination of committee size.

1 Decision on size

Council will determine the actual membership, within the statutory maximum of 13 and with the proposed quorum of five. The decision should reflect effective operation, representation, experience, likely workload and resilience for absence and interests.

Neither the Regulations nor this report prescribes a preferred number below the maximum. The decision should reflect effective operation, representation, experience, likely workload and resilience for absence and interests.

2 Indicative allocations

The following figures have been supplied for the options discussed. They are indicative pending Democratic Services' confirmation against the Council's current group membership and the allocation across its ordinary committees. The allocation approved at the meeting must follow that confirmation.

Committee size	Conservative	Labour	TIA	IBIS
Existing formal allocation of 14	6	6	1	1
13	6	5	1	1
9	4	4	1	0

The present additional Conservative appointment followed IBIS not nominating to its allocated seat. It does not create an entitlement on the reconstituted committee. If a nine-member allocation without an IBIS seat is confirmed, there is no IBIS vacancy; if an IBIS seat is allocated, the group must again have the opportunity to nominate.

3 Other size options and readiness for the meeting

Democratic Services should prepare calculations for other realistic sizes before the meeting, together with any consequential effect on other committees. No unverified allocations for 10, 11 or 12 members are assumed here. If a different size is proposed, Council must receive and confirm the corresponding calculation before appointments; a short adjournment may be necessary if the calculation is not immediately available.

Groups may provide conditional nominations for the realistic alternatives. Such nominations assist the meeting but do not predetermine its choice. Members must satisfy the existing training requirements before sitting, and Council should consider whether an intended nominee is able to meet those requirements by commencement. Committee substitutes remain available under paragraphs 3.13–3.16: the proper officer may consider a request that preserves political composition, the substitute must have relevant training, the ordinary member must be absent for the whole meeting and notification must be given before or on the meeting day. This does not allow substitution for an individual application or confer a nominated-member referral role.

4 Sequence and effective date

Council will determine size, approve the corresponding political allocation, appoint available group nominees and elect the Chair and Vice-Chair. These appointments will take effect on 31 October 2026, alongside the new scheme. The present committee continues until then, and statutory notices can be issued following the September allocation decision. The summons will expressly include determination of committee size and political allocation, appointment of members and the Chair and Vice-Chair, constitutional amendments and approval of the protocols. Proposals made at the meeting must fall within that advertised business.

5 Outstanding nominations and unfilled seats

The proper officer will notify each group's leader, or deputy leader in the leader's absence, in writing under regulation 14 as soon as practicable after the allocation. Wishes must be communicated by a person or group statement authorised under regulation 13. Available valid nominations may be given effect at the meeting. Any outstanding permanent appointments will be brought back to Full Council. Administrative authority to receive a nomination is not, by itself, authority to make the appointment. Paragraph 2.158 expressly designates the Head of Democratic Services for receiving political-group wishes and notifying allocations; it does not expressly grant a general power to make permanent committee appointments.

Where a group has failed to express its wishes within three weeks beginning with the date of the regulation 14 notice, regulation 15 permits Council to make such appointment as it thinks fit. The period begins with that notice, not an informal discussion or advance indication. The precise content of an express refusal, or a nomination received before an alternative appointment, will be considered by the Monitoring Officer under the statutory provisions before advice is given on the next step.

Under the process proposed in this report, a group's indication that it does not intend to nominate will not result in immediate redistribution at the meeting. Any alternative appointment will be brought to Full Council after confirmation that the statutory requirements have been met. The seat will not pass automatically to another group and a contested appointment will be determined through the Council's voting procedure.

An allocated seat may remain temporarily unfilled without preventing the committee from operating, provided the meeting is quorate and participating members are eligible. This

report does not propose separate alternative political-balance arrangements in place of the ordinary statutory allocation and nomination process.

Appendix 5

Planning Protocol

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Protocol is primarily intended for members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Planning Committee and offers practical advice and support when handling planning matters. Its objective is to promote lawful decision-making and minimise the risk of legal challenge. It does not supplement, override or amend the Members' Code of Conduct and should be read alongside that Code, the Council Procedure Rules and the Planning Referral and Triage Protocol.

2 Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 Members and officers have distinct but complementary responsibilities. Members may become involved as ward representatives or as Planning Committee members and should consider whether their involvement in a particular application could affect, or reasonably appear to affect, their ability to determine it impartially. Merely receiving representations or representing a ward does not automatically prevent participation.
- 2.2 Ward members who are not sitting on the committee can represent their constituents' interests, attend as observers and speak in accordance with the public-speaking arrangements. They may participate in appropriate pre-application engagement, consultation on draft heads of terms for planning obligations and officer briefings. They must distinguish their representative role from the statutory role of the decision-maker.
- 2.3 A ward member appointed to the Planning Committee must remain open-minded. Where the member wishes to act as an advocate for a particular outcome, they should seek advice about whether they can also participate in determination; where possible, referring constituents to another ward member may preserve that separation. Advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer or committee legal adviser where the position is uncertain.
- 2.4 Members determining an application must consider its planning merits, exercise judgment and decide on material planning considerations. Applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant Local Plan policies, National Planning Policy Framework, other guidance, representations and professional advice must be considered; non-planning matters must not influence the decision.
- 2.5 Officers provide professional support and advice so that decisions are evidence-based and legally sound, and identify the consequences of proposed decisions. They also determine applications under delegated authority. The determining officer retains responsibility for the professional judgment and decision, and consultation with a member does not transfer that responsibility.

3 Predetermination and bias

- 3.1 Members must remain genuinely willing to consider the application, evidence, representations and advice before deciding. An initial view or predisposition does not, by itself, amount to predetermination, but a closed mind may prevent lawful participation. Members must also avoid actual bias or circumstances giving rise to a reasonable appearance of bias, and seek advice where previous involvement may cause difficulty.
- 3.2 Training and supporting guidance on predetermination, bias and interests will be provided. Members should obtain advice at an early stage so that any necessary arrangements for speaking as a ward representative, withdrawing or using a substitute can be made in accordance with the Constitution.

4 Applications involving members officers or the Council

- 4.1 Proposals involving the Council, members or officers must be handled transparently. Relevant interests must be disclosed promptly, and an interested or conflicted member or officer must not participate in the referral assessment or determination. Whether an application is an own-interest application and whether it is referred are matters for regulation 6 and the Planning Referral and Triage Protocol.
- 4.2 Own-interest status does not automatically require committee determination. Referral requires the nominated officer and nominated member to agree; otherwise an authorised officer must determine the application. Applications made by the Council must also comply with the applicable separation of land-management and planning decision-making responsibilities.
- 4.3 A member or officer who is an applicant or has an interest must not improperly influence the assessment or decision. They may use the same opportunities as other applicants to provide relevant information or respond to issues. Officers must declare relevant outside interests and avoid involvement where a conflict arises.

5 Briefings and contact with applicants and developers

- 5.1 Pre-application discussions can clarify policy and technical requirements and identify improvements. Appropriate engagement between members, applicants and communities is encouraged, provided that no commitment to a decision is given or implied. Members should direct technical requests to officers and explain that an eventual decision will follow the formal planning process and consideration of all material matters.
- 5.2 Planning Committee members should not attend a private meeting with an applicant, developer or objector about a live or prospective application without an appropriate officer present. This does not prevent ordinary constituent contact, but members should avoid commitments and report material information to Planning Services. A written record should be kept of material arranged meetings and discussions involving officers and members.
- 5.3 Pre-committee briefings may be arranged for all committee members where useful for a large, complex or potentially contentious application or a relevant policy issue. They are

for information and clarification, not preliminary decisions or agreement on voting intentions. Substantive committee debate and determination must take place at the formal meeting, subject to the ordinary access-to-information rules.

- 5.4 Briefings may help members identify information needed for the eventual meeting and allow officers time to address reasonable requests in the report. They must not become an unpublished substitute for committee deliberation. Material information necessary to the decision should be made available through the proper application and committee reporting process.
- 5.5 Pre-application briefings involving officers, developers, members and relevant stakeholders may support constructive early dialogue and refinement of proposals. A written record should be shared with attendees. Such briefings are not Planning Committee meetings and confer no assurance of permission; a subsequent application will be determined through the national scheme and applicable constitutional arrangements.
- 5.6 A member's absence from a pre-application briefing does not prevent participation in the eventual determination. Attendance also does not, by itself, prevent participation, although the member must remain open-minded and consider any interest, bias or predetermination issue arising from what was said or done.

6 Committee consideration and member requests

- 6.1 Applications and associated consents will be determined under the national scheme, Constitution and Planning Referral and Triage Protocol. Within the Regulations, committee determination requires lawful referral under regulation 5 or 6. Functions outside their scope follow the existing applicable allocation; neither this Protocol nor a general constitutional referral power overrides a mandatory officer route.
- 6.2 A member may request consideration of an eligible Schedule 2 application through the approved procedure, ordinarily within 21 days of publication of the application details. The request must explain the planning grounds and significance and does not guarantee referral. The nominees will record the outcome and reasons and inform the requesting member; there is no independent director-level override of their assessment.

7 Planning Committee meetings

- 7.1 Regular attendance is important for informed decisions and familiarity with planning policy and practice. Members should read the report and updates before the meeting and, where possible, raise factual questions in advance so that accurate information can be provided. Only members who satisfy the Constitution's training requirements may sit. Substitution must comply with paragraphs 3.13–3.16, including the requirements for training, preservation of political composition, whole-meeting absence and notification; a substitute does not inherit special powers attached to the member replaced.
- 7.2 The Chair is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and for helping members obtain advice, debate relevant issues and reach a clear resolution. Members not sitting

on the committee may attend or speak in accordance with the public-speaking arrangements, which will be explained in supporting guidance.

- 7.3 If an application is deferred, the committee must identify and record the planning reason and the information or action needed before reconsideration. Deferral should assist proper consideration and should not simply avoid a difficult decision. The reason should be sufficiently clear for officers and the applicant to understand what is required.

8 Decisions different from the officer recommendation

- 8.1 Members may reach a different planning judgment from the officer recommendation after considering the development plan, material considerations, evidence and advice. Such a decision must be supported by clear planning reasons explaining the outcome. A disagreement with professional advice is not itself improper, but the committee must be able to identify the evidence and planning basis for its conclusion.
- 8.2 Where members appear minded to take a different decision, the Chair will seek planning and legal advice and help formulate a clear proposed resolution. For refusal, the grounds should identify the relevant harm, policies and other material considerations. For approval, they should explain the basis for departing from the recommendation and identify necessary conditions and planning obligations. Reasons must be clear before the final vote.
- 8.3 The committee will decide whether further evidence or advice makes deferral necessary. The Chair and officers advise on that decision; they do not independently impose deferral. Where deferred, the resolution must record the committee's provisional grounds so that officers can prepare a further report evaluating the evidence, policy basis, legal robustness, appeal risks and potential costs.
- 8.4 That report will normally return to the next available meeting, although external legal or technical advice may require more time. Having considered it, the committee must resolve how to determine the application and identify its final planning reasons before voting. The resolution and decision notice must accurately reflect the decision and any authorised detailed drafting.

9 Appeals following decisions contrary to advice

- 9.1 Members may have an important role in explaining the committee's judgment where its decision is appealed, including attendance at a hearing or inquiry. For written-representation appeals, officers will prepare the Council's statement using the recorded reasons and supporting evidence and may share a draft with relevant members to confirm that it accurately represents the committee's position.
- 9.2 Officers will respect lawful committee decisions and provide appropriate procedural and technical support. Professional officers must nevertheless exercise independent professional judgment and cannot be required to give evidence or subscribe to statements contrary to their genuine professional opinions. Supporting the Council's case does not remove those obligations.

- 9.3 Where an officer cannot properly present the Council's position because of a professional conflict, the Council will consider suitable external planning, legal or specialist assistance. The support will reflect the issues, available evidence, proportionality and approved resources. Members will be advised of the role they may need to play and assisted in preparing relevant evidence.

10 Site visits

- 10.1 A site visit may assist where the site or its relationship with surrounding land cannot adequately be understood from reports, plans, photographs or the presentation. Members may view publicly accessible sites or surroundings themselves, but must not enter private land without permission or engage in lobbying discussions. Material information obtained must be disclosed through the proper process.
- 10.2 A formal visit may be requested with a member referral request, explaining why it would assist, or by the committee when considering an application. A request does not itself secure committee referral. Where a visit is agreed, its planning purpose and any deferral reason must be recorded, along with the requesting member where applicable.
- 10.3 At an organised visit, officers will explain the proposals and relevant viewpoints. Members may seek factual clarification but must not debate the merits or indicate a voting intention. The Chair will maintain that distinction, and applicants or interested parties must not lobby members; any arranged opportunity to provide information must be managed fairly.

11 Member training

- 11.1 Members must complete the training required by the Constitution before participating in determination, and attendance records will be maintained. Refresher and specialist training will cover relevant changes in planning law and policy, the national scheme, material considerations, interests, bias, predetermination and appeal risks.
- 11.2 Members should identify areas in which they need further support and maintain their knowledge throughout their appointment. These local requirements continue to apply independently of any separately commenced national training or certification requirements.

12 Review and amendment

- 12.1 The Director of Corporate Services will review the Protocol in consultation with the Planning Committee, Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, Planning Services Manager and Head of Legal Services. The initial review will form part of the 12-month review of the new arrangements.
- 12.2 Substantive amendments affecting member rights, committee procedure or allocation of decision-making responsibility require Full Council approval. Minor drafting, updating and cross-reference changes and supporting administrative guidance may be settled under the express delegation approved by Council, without altering the substance of this Protocol. Constitutional updating must also comply with paragraph 1.37, including

consultation with the Chief Executive, and changes to Local Schemes of Delegation require the agreement of the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer under paragraph 2.148.

Appendix 6

Equality and poverty screening

Status and purpose

This screening accompanies the proposed national-scheme implementation, local triage arrangements, committee reconstitution and Planning Protocol. It identifies potential impacts and safeguards for service validation and completion of the Council's normal equality assurance before circulation for decision. It is not a record of completed consultation or an assertion that a full impact assessment has already been signed off.

The national allocation of specified planning decisions is mandatory, but committee size, local thresholds and referral procedures remain local choices. The Council must consider the equality implications of those choices when making them. The screening should be revisited if members materially change the proposals, with further advice available before the decision where necessary.

People affected and available information

The arrangements affect applicants, residents, organisations, parish and town councils, councillors and officers across the Borough. They may particularly affect people who need assistance with written or digital processes, including some disabled residents, people with limited literacy or English language skills, and people experiencing poverty or digital exclusion. No completed demographic analysis or consultation dataset has been provided for this screening, so the effects below are potential impacts requiring proportionate validation.

Potential effects and safeguards

Potential effect	Proposed safeguard
Fewer applications at meetings with public speaking	Clear explanation of the change, assistance with representations and a reasoned member-request route for eligible cases.
Difficulty preparing written or digital representations	Accessible guidance, reasonable adjustments and an alternative supported method of communicating representations where required.
Numerical thresholds may disadvantage a small or less organised community	All material issues considered; member requests and the nominated officer's significant-case route do not depend on a minimum number of responses.

Potential effect	Proposed safeguard
Petition, template or shared-address counting may obscure community views	Counts apply only to triage; actual response totals and material issues remain accurately recorded and reported.
Smaller membership reduces resilience or breadth of participation	Council considers representation, attendance, interests and quorum; training and a 12-month review assess practical effects.
Residents do not understand why a case was not referred	Published outcomes and reasons, notification to requesting members and accessible public guidance.

Poverty and participation

Residents with limited resources may have less access to professional advice, reliable internet or time to organise collective responses. The scheme must not equate the volume or sophistication of correspondence with the planning importance of an issue. Assistance and member engagement should help residents identify relevant concerns, while officers continue to assess material matters independently of the response count.

Completion before Council

Planning Services, Democratic Services and where applicable the appropriate equality adviser should validate the likely effects using available service information, recent committee cases, relevant complaints and accessibility experience. The report should record that assurance, any further mitigation and whether a fuller assessment is required. Resource implications of assistance and publication should also be confirmed. These are pre-decision checks rather than matters to be left to the implementation delegation after adoption.

Monitoring and review

The 12-month review should examine use and outcomes of member requests, distribution of referrals, the effects of the counting rules, requests for assistance, public participation and complaints about access. Relevant geographical or demographic information should be considered where available and proportionate, without collecting unnecessary personal data. Evidence of adverse effects should lead to operational improvements within the approved framework or proposals to Council for substantive change.

Provisional assessment

The proposed safeguards address identifiable risks to participation, but a definitive conclusion on local equality and poverty effects depends on the service validation described

above. Council should have the resulting advice before settling the local arrangements, and any material amendment at the meeting should be considered in that context.



COUNCIL – 23 SEPTEMBER 2026

MOTIONS TO COUNCIL

MOTION 1

Motion submitted by Cllr Ted Strike, to be seconded by Cllr Tony Riordan:-

Cleveland Fire Brigade Funding and Thornaby Fire Station

“Council notes that:

Cleveland Fire Brigade is consulting on a proposal to change the staffing arrangements for one of the two fire appliances based at Thornaby Fire Station.

Under the proposal, one appliance would continue to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, while the second would operate for 12 hours a day during daytime hours. The consultation closes on 26 November 2026, after which recommendations will be considered by Cleveland Fire Authority.

Cleveland Fire Brigade is forecasting a funding gap of at least £1.198 million by 2028/29.

The Brigade serves an area with one of the most significant industrial risk profiles in the country, including major petrochemical and other nationally important infrastructure and a significant concentration of upper-tier COMAH sites.

Council believes that:

Cleveland Fire Brigade must receive sufficient and sustainable funding to maintain effective frontline services and respond safely to the particular risks within its area.

National funding arrangements should properly reflect industrial and community risk and not be based principally upon population.

The proposed reduction in the availability of the second appliance at Thornaby raises legitimate concerns about fire cover for Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Yarm and the wider Borough, as well as the safety of residents and firefighters.

Any final decision must be informed by the consultation responses and by clear evidence about its effect on risk, appliance availability, response standards and firefighter safety.

Council resolves that:

1. The Chief Executive responds to the Service Delivery Review consultation on behalf of the Council, expressing Council's serious concern about the proposed reduction in the availability of the second appliance at Thornaby and asking Cleveland Fire Authority to demonstrate, before making any final decision, how appropriate fire cover, response standards and the safety of residents and firefighters will be maintained.
2. The Chief Executive writes to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, sending a copy to the Brigade's Chief Fire Officer, calling upon the Government to address Cleveland Fire Brigade's forecast funding gap of at least

£1.198 million by 2028/29 and to ensure that future funding arrangements properly reflect the significant industrial and community risks within the Brigade's area.

3. The Chief Executive writes to the Members of Parliament for Stockton West and Stockton North seeking their support for sufficient and sustainable funding for Cleveland Fire Brigade."

Received 6 September 2026 12:25

MOTION 2

Motion submitted by Cllr Tony Riordan, to be seconded by Cllr Niall Innes:-

Protecting Stockton Residents from Further Tax Rises

“Council notes that:

People across the borough of Stockton-on-Tees continue to face significant pressure on their household finances.

Inflation (Consumer Prices Index) rose by 2.9 per cent in the twelve months to July 2026, with housing and household services making one of the largest contributions to rising costs.

Since April 2025, the rate of employer National Insurance contributions has increased from 13.8 per cent to 15 per cent, while the threshold at which employers begin paying these contributions has fallen from £9,100 to £5,000. These additional employment costs affect local businesses, charities and other employers and can ultimately place pressure on wages, prices and employment.

Residents in the borough have also faced a 4.95 per cent increase in Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's element of Council Tax for 2026/27, in addition to other household bills and taxation.

Council believes that:

Hard-working people, pensioners, families and businesses across Stockton-on-Tees should not be asked to carry an even greater financial burden.

Sound public finances are essential, but further increases in taxation would risk reducing household disposable income, weakening business confidence and placing additional pressure on local jobs and the borough's economy.

National fiscal decisions should take proper account of their cumulative impact on communities such as Stockton-on-Tees, where many households and businesses are already managing significant increases in their costs.

Council resolves that:

The Chief Executive write on behalf of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to the Chancellor of the Exchequer:

Setting out the cumulative pressures currently facing residents and businesses across the borough.

Requesting that the forthcoming Budget does not introduce further increases in the overall tax burden on working people, pensioners or local businesses.

Asking the Chancellor to prioritise responsible control of public expenditure, economic growth and measures that allow people across Stockton-on-Tees to keep more of the money they earn.”

Received 11 September 2026 18:02

MOTION 3

Motion submitted by Cllr Tony Riordan, to be seconded by Cllr Niall Innes:-

Opposing the Early Release of Serious Offenders

Council notes that:

From 1 October 2026, the Labour Government's new sentencing arrangements will allow many eligible offenders serving standard determinate sentences to be released after serving as little as one third of their custodial sentence.

Although some offences are excluded from these arrangements, the fundamental principle remains that offenders could spend substantially less time in prison than victims, their families and the public were led to expect when the sentence was imposed.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation rated the North East Probation Service as "Requires improvement" overall and its public protection work as "Inadequate". The Stockton and Hartlepool Probation Delivery Unit was rated "Inadequate" for both the assessment and implementation of public protection work.

The inspection found that the North East region was already managing 8,616 people in the community, of this 3,058 people released from prison on licence, while implementing several national policies intended to reduce pressure on prison capacity.

Council believes that:

The first duty of government is to protect the public.

The exclusions set out on 30 August 2026 for life sentences, extended determinate sentences, rape offences, specified serious child sexual and grooming offences, and offences relating to unlawful killing must be maintained and applied fully in every relevant case. No offender convicted of attempted murder, terrorism, serious violence, child abuse, child sexual exploitation or serious domestic abuse should qualify for earlier release under the Progression Model.

A prison sentence should mean what victims, the public and the courts reasonably understand it to mean. Reducing the time an offender spends in custody after a sentence has been imposed undermines confidence in the criminal justice system.

The capacity pressures within the prison estate must not be addressed by transferring greater risk and responsibility onto communities, police forces, probation services and local authorities.

The findings concerning public protection work in the North East demonstrate the serious risks of placing even more offenders under supervision in communities before the probation system is demonstrably able to manage them safely.

The present Government's decision to release many offenders after as little as one third of their custodial sentence is the wrong approach. It prioritises the management of prison capacity over punishment, public protection and the rights of victims.

For victims and their families, seeing an offender released substantially earlier than expected risks creating the unacceptable impression that crime pays. It is an insult to those who have suffered and risks diminishing the seriousness of the crimes committed against them.

“Council condemns the Government’s approach and believes that dangerous and serious offenders should remain behind bars, prisons should have the capacity required to accommodate them and sentences imposed by the courts should be properly served.

Council resolves that:

The Chief Executive write on behalf of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor:

Expressing this Council’s opposition to the release of offenders after serving as little as one third of their custodial sentence.

Condemning the use of earlier release as a means of managing pressure on the prison estate.

Seeking a firm assurance that the exclusions set out on 30 August 2026 for life sentences, extended determinate sentences, rape offences, specified serious child sexual and grooming offences, and offences relating to unlawful killing will be maintained and applied fully in every relevant case, while calling for them to be extended to cover any offences involving attempted murder, terrorism, serious violence, child abuse, child sexual exploitation or serious domestic abuse that might otherwise qualify under the Progression Model.

Requesting that no offender assessed as presenting a significant risk to the public is released early solely because of pressure on prison capacity.

Calling upon the Government to provide sufficient prison places so that serious criminals can serve the custodial sentences imposed upon them.

Requesting sufficient resources for the Probation Service, Cleveland Police and other agencies responsible for protecting people across the borough of Stockton-on-Tees.

Asking that victims are informed promptly of any proposed change to an offender’s release date and are given a meaningful opportunity to raise concerns about their safety and the conditions attached to the offender’s licence.”

Received 11 September 2026 18:02

COUNCIL – 23 SEPTEMBER 2026
MEMBER QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1
Member Question submitted by Cllr Tony Riordan:- “A recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request submitted by a resident revealed that £1975 of this council’s funds had been spent on three Social Media Influencers to promote event campaigns within the Borough. The FOI response made clear that this Labour led Council were unable to provide any recorded reach, impressions, engagement, or performance metrics used to assess the effectiveness of the campaigns. Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that promoting campaigns via Social Media Influencers and not being able to provide any measure of effectiveness is not a good way to be spending local taxpayers’ money.” Received 13 July 2026 6:24

QUESTION 2

Member Question submitted by Cllr Ted Strike:-

"On 18th March 2026 I put forward a motion regarding "Social Care". The motion was passed and a letter written to the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, the response was not a positive one.

We now have a new PM and Chancellor and the PM is putting changes to the unfair Adult Social Care system, which I welcome.

My question to the responsible cabinet member is:

Now we have a new PM and Chancellor, will the cabinet resubmit the letter we sent to the then Chancellor following my motion at the March meeting?"

Received 17 August 2026 10:59

QUESTION 3

Member Question submitted by Cllr Tony Riordan:-

“The Cabinet member will, hopefully, be aware of the finer financial details of the £30 million plus the local taxpayers have pumped into the Globe Theatre, whether that’s by way of borrowing, the use of annual revenue or dipping into the scarce reserves this Labour Led Council holds, They’ll also, hopefully be aware of the promises this Labour led Council made to the local taxpayer regarding the profit sharing agreement with the Ambassador Theatre Group from year 4 of opening. Can the Cabinet member please inform members how much this Labour Led Council has received from the profit share agreement from year 4 onwards?”

Received 11 September 2026 18:02

This page is intentionally left blank