

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

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<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Partnership Working in Early Help</p> <p>Key lines of inquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How effective are early help interventions in preventing escalation of needs in children and families?• What evidence-based interventions have a significant impact on children and families.• Are families getting the right support at the right time to prevent escalation of needs?• What is the local authority's and partnership offer across EH.• What is the demand on external partnerships to deliver EH interventions.• How do outcomes for children and families receiving EH compare to those who do not?• How accessible are services?• How effective are information sharing protocols across the partnership? <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What evidence exists to show EH interventions lead to sustainable outcomes for families?• How effective and strong is the partnership offer?• What happens to families after they leave EH Services? Are they successfully moving on independently or do they require further support and interventions?
<p>NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>This review will contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• protecting our children from harm• supporting sustainable and safe communities• prevention of escalating risks in families that may cause mental health issues, substance misuse, exploitation, and domestic abuse
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>The effectiveness of early help services to support children and families will positively impact on their wellbeing, community integration, employability.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>This review will contribute to greater understanding of interventions and approaches which are effective at supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity. The review will also identify where partnership working can be improved.</p>

<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>The Early Help Strategy is being refreshed.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <p>This review will contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best start in life• A safe community for all children and young people• Healthy and resilient communities• Happy and healthy lives for all
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <p>Greater understanding of the effectiveness of early help services in Stockton Improved partnership working with all partners taking responsibility for supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity More accessibility through a menu of support services for children and families.</p>
<p>Signed: Cllr Lisa Evans Date: 13.02.25</p>
<p>Please return to:</p> <p>Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD</p> <p>Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158</p>

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Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Animal Welfare, Kennelling and the Protection of Pets

As part of the Council's Environmental Health Service, our Animal Welfare division performs several critical functions to protect the public and ensure the welfare of animals, including statutory control over stray dogs.

The Council's Animal Welfare Service has a distinguished history of serving the residents of Stockton-on-Tees, consistently providing exemplary care for animals. This dedication has earned us the RSPCA Gold Standard award annually since its inception.

In addition to our Council responsibilities, the short-term kennelling facility at the Security Centre is an asset, which is also utilised by the Police for housing dogs involved in daily operations, such as the arrest of suspects with dogs or the detention of dangerous dogs.

Despite the commendable efforts of our officers, the demand for our services continues to rise, both in terms of the number of animals we handle and the complexity of cases. This trend is mirrored in our Adult Social Care Services, where rehoming animals, particularly dogs, presents significant challenges for our staff.

Further challenges are evident in the private sector's provision of long-term kennelling for dogs in our care. Costs are escalating, and the availability of space is diminishing, reflecting similar issues faced by local authorities nationwide. The increasing costs are driven by factors such as rising operational expenses, stricter regulations, and higher demand for kennelling services. Additionally, the limited availability of space is exacerbated by the growing number of animals requiring care and the competition for kennelling facilities.

Our current contract with the existing provider is set to expire in the next couple of years, which adds urgency to our need to address these challenges. This review presents an ideal opportunity to assess long-term challenges and formulate recommendations for the future provision of animal welfare services, kennelling, and property protection. Key areas for consideration include:

1. **Financial Sustainability:** Exploring funding options and cost-saving measures to ensure the continued provision of high-quality animal welfare services.
2. **Capacity and Infrastructure:** Assessing the need for additional kennelling facilities or partnerships to accommodate the growing number of animals.
3. **Staffing and Training:** Ensuring our officers are adequately trained and supported to handle the increasing complexity of cases.
4. **Collaboration with External Agencies:** Strengthening partnerships with the Police, private kennelling providers, and other local authorities to share resources and best practices.
5. **Community Engagement:** Raising awareness and encouraging responsible pet ownership to reduce the number of stray and abandoned animals.

By addressing these challenges, we aim to continue providing excellent care for animals and ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

The protection of pets and in particular dogs is a very emotive topics which captures the attention of the public generally. We know that there is a significant interest around the welfare of animals following several high profile cases of animal abuse nationally. Furthermore the level of demand on these services clearly demonstrates that it's a well used and well received service which is further evidenced by the awards it has won.

Reviewing the Council's Animal Welfare Services is of significant public interest for several reasons:

1. **Public Safety:** Ensuring effective control over stray and dangerous dogs is crucial for public safety. By reviewing these services, we can identify areas for improvement to better protect residents from potential harm.
2. **Animal Welfare:** The community expects high standards of care for animals. A review can help maintain and enhance these standards, ensuring that animals receive the best possible care and treatment.
3. **Resource Allocation:** With increasing demand and rising costs, it's essential to ensure that resources are used efficiently. A review can help identify cost-saving measures and funding opportunities to sustain high-quality services.
4. **Transparency and Accountability:** Regular reviews demonstrate the Council's commitment to transparency and accountability. They provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of current practices and make informed decisions for future improvements.
5. **Community Engagement:** Engaging the community in discussions about animal welfare can raise awareness and promote responsible pet ownership. This can lead to a reduction in the number of stray and abandoned animals, benefiting both the community and the animals.
6. **Interagency Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships with the Police, private kennelling providers, and other local authorities can enhance service delivery. A review can identify opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing.
7. **Long-term Planning:** With the current contract for kennelling services set to expire, it's crucial to plan for the future. A review can help anticipate long-term challenges and develop strategies to address them, ensuring the sustainability of animal welfare services.

By addressing these public interest justifications, the review can lead to improved services, better outcomes for animals, and enhanced safety and well-being for the community we represent.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Reviewing the Council's Animal Welfare Services is essential for our community's well-being. By controlling stray and dangerous dogs, we can keep our streets safer. High standards of animal care build trust within the community, given the emotive nature of the topic suggested.

In terms of economic considerations, managing rising costs and resources efficiently is crucial, especially with the significant increase in future costs. A more informed approach will allow for cost avoidance and may also lead to further income by considering different models of delivery. A focus on working with other agencies, making smart policy decisions, and involving the community in animal welfare discussions will ensure a healthier, safer, and more financially stable future for animal welfare services and the for the protection of pets generally.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

The Council's Animal Welfare Team provides award winning services to our community. The team itself deal with a wide range of interventions that promote animal wellbeing and public health, including dealing with stray dogs. In terms of demand on services due to stray dogs, in the financial year 2022/2023 the Animal Welfare Service dealt with 802 requests for service concerning dogs and dog related complaints. In this period 337 dogs were required to be kennelled. In the financial year 2023/2024 this number increased to 353. Furthermore, the length of time that dogs are required to stay in long term kennelling provision is increasing.

The cost of long term kennelling has also increased along with demand for spaces. Soft market testing has evidenced a significant gap in local providers and a huge increase in costs to use national providers of kennel spaces for example.

This review will therefore look to consider the options potentially available to the Council to ensure long term sustainability of key statutory services whilst also looking to offset or reduce significantly the potential future costs of maintaining services at the current level.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

There are no linked reviews taking place in this area currently. No similar review has taken place previously.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Reviewing the Council's Animal Welfare Services is closely linked to building healthy and resilient communities. Effective animal welfare services ensure public safety by controlling stray and dangerous dogs, which reduces the risk of attacks and injuries. This fosters a sense of security and well-being among residents. Furthermore, this topic has direct links into both the Partnership and Regeneration Missions of the 'Powering our Future' program whilst also ensuring financial stability of the organisation in the future.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

- **Financial Sustainability:** Exploring funding options and cost-saving measures to ensure the continued provision of high-quality animal welfare services.
- **Capacity and Infrastructure:** Assessing the need for additional kennelling facilities or partnerships to accommodate the growing number of animals.
- **Staffing and Training:** Ensuring our officers are adequately trained and supported to handle the increasing complexity of cases.
- **Collaboration with External Agencies:** Strengthening partnerships with the Police, private kennelling providers, and other local authorities to share resources and best practices.
- **Community Engagement:** Raising awareness and encouraging responsible pet ownership to reduce the number of stray and abandoned animals.

Signed: Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE

Date: 14/02/2025

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Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Post 16 Provision

We have a strong Post 16 offer in Stockton. There are five Post 16 providers in the Borough offering a range of courses and qualifications to fulfil a variety of different passions and career aspirations. Achievement for Young People at the end of their Post 16 Education is growing rapidly with a 97.7% A Level pass rate across the Borough- this is higher than the national average. The number of students completing Post 16 Education is growing with an increase of over 300 students over 5 years.

However, enrolment figures for in Borough providers have been impacted in recent years with more Stockton students choosing to attend out of Borough providers in Middlesborough and Darlington. There are a range of possible reasons to explain this trend, one being the allure of new surroundings and an opportunity to meet new people. In Borough Providers offer similar courses with only one out of Borough provider beating In Borough A Level A*-B outcomes.

Since 2023, our Careers team have surveyed Young People approaching the end of Year 11, asking about their readiness for leaving school. The survey found that 13.1% of students hadn't had a careers discussion at all in advance of sitting their GCSEs. A further 18.1% of students surveyed said they hadn't made a clear decision about their next steps after school. These findings suggest that Stockton students are largely unaware of the current offer available to them. In order to attract more students to in Borough Post 16 providers, we must improve our existing communications strategy to effectively reach our target audience.

Post 16 Education is a suggested area for scrutiny. It is easy to recognise and celebrate the positives of our current offer- high achievement, high satisfaction amongst Young People and parents as well as large proportions of students continuing onto Higher Education, however, we are not complacent and recognise that there are areas that would benefit from development. These include:

- Attraction & Retention rates
- Current NEET statistics
- Internal awareness of strategic funding opportunities
- Communication & Marketing of our offer

In presenting some key areas of improvement to the Select Committee, we hope to gain a fresh perspective on possible solutions to these issues. Recommended solutions will provide a positive sense of direction to inform the Post 16 enhancement strategy that is already in development.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
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INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

For many residents, Education is an area of high priority and interest as it affects them or someone they know on a daily basis, whether they are a student themselves, a teacher or a parent or relative of a student attending school within the Borough. During the most formative

years of a Young Persons life, the quality of Education received is crucial to their intellectual growth as well as their social and emotional development and economic independence. Children are our future and it is therefore of paramount importance that we look after their best interests- we must ensure that Post 16 Education providers in our Borough are as effective as possible in meeting all student's needs.

This scrutiny provides a significant opportunity in which the experiences of local residents can be channelled through the voice of Elected Members, informing our Post 16 enhancement strategy and improving the overall provision of Post 16 Education in our Borough.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

As previously mentioned, our Post 16 offer is strong, however, statistics show that a small minority of 16-17 year olds in our Borough are at risk of or have become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) since beginning KS5. Economic inactivity significantly impacts upon an individual's economic growth potential and is often associated with an increased likelihood of involvement in antisocial behaviour and crime. During the 2022/23 academic year, 1.6% more students who attended a Post 16 provider IN BOROUGH (5.3%) dropped out in Year 12 than those OUT OF BOROUGH (3.7%) Overall, 7% of our Year 13 students, whether they attended a Post 16 provider in or out of Borough were NEET by the end of November 2024. These numbers are much too high.

A minority of students choose to dropout within the first three months of starting a Post 16 qualification, a core focus of the Post 16 enrichment strategy is to improve transitional support. Post 16 education involves an increase in independence, greater difficulty of work and a new structure to the day. These factors are often responsible for dropouts, but it is also important to consider other external factors such as health and wellbeing, financial situation and access to transport. We aim to make the transition from secondary school to Post 16 education as seamless as possible, helping Young People to overcome some of these factors and avoid becoming NEET.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Over 40% of Stockton students leave the Borough for Post 16 Education. This equates to approximately £7 million lost in funding for our Post 16 providers. As Post 16 Ofsted outcomes are largely stronger than our main out of Borough competitors, we are keen for more Stockton students to benefit from this high-quality provision.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

An Appreciative Inquiry report was published in 2024 which outlined 17 recommendations in order to narrow the attainment gap within Stockton Borough, some of which include:

- Improved Communications with Young People & Parents
- Strengthening understandings of career pathways
- Strengthening our existing transitions arrangements
- Strengthening the enrichment offer

Our Post 16 enrichment strategy encompasses many of the key recommendations and aims to establish a refreshed approach to strengthening our current offer and tackling the challenges. Work in this topic area is reviewed on a monthly basis by a Post 16 strategic board, consisting of Headteachers from our five Post 16 providers as well as the Director for Children's Services.

Aside from this, there are no current and ongoing reviews into this topic area.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The most relevant excerpt from the Council Plan is: 'by working closely with our partners- it will support children to achieve outstanding educational attainment. It will also support more of our school leavers to remain in education, help them gain employment and/or training to provide opportunities for a better future'.

This perfectly aligns with our ambitions for our Post 16 offer. We aim to work collaboratively with our Post 16 providers to encourage aspiration amongst our Young People, ensuring that every Young Person in our Borough is equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence to fulfil their true potential. Key actions to enable this include:

- Adapting the curriculum towards local labour markets
- Launching a 'Stockton Born and Bred' initiative, showcasing successful people from the local area to inspire aspiration and a 'can do' attitude
- Stockton Talent Employer Presentations by local business leaders to spotlight local businesses
- Development of an AI tool that matches skill sets to careers for students

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

The scrutiny committee shall consider the challenges and proposed solutions to our current Post 16 offer, offering further enhancements informed by the experiences and opinions of local children, parents and carers. Feedback will be used to strengthen the Post 16 enrichment strategy that is currently in development, therefore yielding a greater impact.

Signed: Cllr Lisa Evans

Date: 14/02/25

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Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Stockton-on-Tees Adult Carers Support Service

The Adult Carers Service was brought in house to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in January 2018 and works with adults who are providing informal care and support for Adults in Stockton on Tees.

Since then, the Carers service has developed significantly with over 5000 referrals during this time. They are currently working with 3200 unpaid carers within Stockton -on-Tees offering ongoing advice, information and support alongside statutory carers assessments, support planning, carers personal budgets and time out support.

Whilst this service is considered to be effective it would be of benefit for the Carers Service to be scrutinised to provide assurance around its current service delivery.

It is also hoped that this level of scrutiny will also help highlight any gaps in the service provided and in turn help shape future developments for the service

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

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Public interest justification:

The 2014 Care Act gave carers the same legal right to assessment and support as the person they care for. There are over 5.7 million carers nationally with an estimate of over 20,000 of those living within Stockton on Tees. Carers are more than twice as likely to suffer from poor physical and mental health and financial hardship than their non caring counterparts.

Unpaid carers play a vital part of the care and support around their loved ones. National estimates of the cost of unpaid care is around £24,000 for each carer providing 35 hours per week care to a loved one. Without continuing to provide significant support to enable carers to maintain their own health and wellbeing both health and social care services would be required to provide further costly interventions to enable these individuals to maintain their independence health and wellbeing.

By providing information, advice and support to carers we are able to ensure they promote their own wellbeing, prevent carer breakdown and establish resilient communities.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Carers play a substantial and vital role in meeting social care needs. The cost of replacement care locally for Stockton-on-Tees would be estimated to be around £480million annually. By sustaining carers within their caring role we are ensuring the stability of local adult health and social care services. Identifying and providing support to these individuals is not just mandated by the 2014 Care Act but a sound economic and socially responsible decision.

Addressing the needs of an increasingly complex and aging population with care and support needs. The People first social care reform policy lists as one of its priorities the need for social care to be joined up and focused on prevention and early intervention. Addressing the needs of carers enables us to prevent and delay the need for complex and costly social care interventions.


As carers are reportedly more than twice as likely to suffer from poor physical and mental health than their non caring counterparts providing robust support mechanisms can also prevent those individuals from developing to needing services in their own right. One third of people in a caring role report feeling often or always lonely which again has a significant impact on the potential for requiring services and support.

1 in 7 people within employment are also in a significant caring role. 2 in 5 of these will leave their employment due to their caring role. This has a cost of around £5.4Billion nationally to the UK economy from both the loss to the labour market, the cost of recruiting and training and the impact on benefits claims.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Currently we are supporting nearly 2000 Carers with a Direct Payment which amounts to a projected spend of £550,000 for this provision in this financial year.


4.2% of our residents are providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care, which is a decrease from 6% in 2011.



9.9%
of population provide unpaid care

However, we have seen an increase in the percentage of carers delivering between 20-49 hours (2.3%) and those delivering at least 50 hours (3.4%) of unpaid care.

We currently support **2436** carers through our own Carers' Service.



We support 1.2%
of our population through carers service

We have 110 carers who currently make use of the Time Out service provided by Adult Carers Service. This service provides a “sitting service” on an ad hoc basis to allow for carers to attend appointments, social activities etc.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

There are no formal reviews however the Carers service did have some initial involvement with the Transitions programme as part of Powering our Futures. Carers service is working with Mobilise to help identify carers from some of the hard to reach parts of the diverse community that exists within the borough

<https://support.mobiliseonline.co.uk/stockton-on-tees>

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

- To provide support to people to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support and maximise their independence.
- Maximise opportunities to support carers.
- Ensure that the person who needs care, their families and those most important to them have the full opportunity to identify their own way forward.
- Ensure that we embed the principles of prevention and early intervention through every aspect of work that we do.
- Fully explore the use of technology to support people who need care.

- To ensure people can get the right level and type of support at the right time.

- To work with, and within, communities.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

Primary: To understand the impact of the carers service on promoting the wellbeing and needs of unpaid carers. Identifying where the service is reaching its objective and where future focus needs to be concentrated to improve service delivery and satisfaction for carers

Secondary: To understand and identify where partnership working can be improved to promote the rights and needs of carers, ensuring they are being treated as expert partners and identified for support when required.

Signed: Cllr Pauline Beall

Date: 14/2/25

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**Select Committee Work Programme
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Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Children Affected by Domestic Abuse

The impact of domestic abuse on children cannot be underestimated, with children estimated to witness three-quarters of abusive incidents and many also having themselves experienced physical and emotional abuse. The impact of domestic abuse is felt by children regardless of their age. This impact is now recognised in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021: children exposed to domestic abuse or experiencing domestic abuse in their own relationships are regarded as victim-survivors in their own right.

Domestic abuse can seriously affect families and the physical, mental and emotional health, wellbeing and development of children and young people. Children and young people can develop emotional, behavioural and developmental issues such as anxiety, challenging and aggressive behaviour or withdrawal, delayed speech, language and communication and low self-esteem affecting their ability to form healthy relationships and educational attainment. In 2020/21 the local domestic abuse service found that children were exposed to three quarters of domestic abuse incidents, whilst a third of referrals to Children's Services were related to domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse can be experienced by anyone and disproportionately affects children and young people. Domestic abuse can be one of the factors resulting in child exploitation and can contribute and exacerbate multiple disadvantage. In 2020/21, services in Stockton-on-Tees reported that 17% of homeless presentations were related to domestic abuse and 20% of substance misuse service users had experienced domestic abuse.

The proposed aim of this review is to articulate the local offer for children and young people affected by domestic abuse, which will be multi-agency, and be able to communicate this clearly, appropriately and consistently as an organisation and a system. The outcome of which will be that frontline professionals, families and children and young people will be aware of and able to access support to prevent domestic abuse having an enduring negative impact on the lives of children and young people.

Key lines of inquiry:

- How does the experience of domestic abuse impact on children and young people throughout their lives (immediate and longer term) including representation of children's voices?
- What is evidence-based practice to tackle and reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people who have been exposed to or experienced domestic abuse?
- What is the local authority's offer for children affected by domestic abuse in Stockton-on-Tees?
- What is in place across partners to mitigate the effects of domestic abuse on children in the borough?
- What is in place in the borough to prevent the experience of domestic abuse as a child from having an enduring negative impact on individual behaviour and attitudes?

Outcomes:

- Maximise the opportunities for a collaborative approach to addressing the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people across service areas within the local authority and across the system.

- Consistent and effective and evidence-based approaches in the response to children and young people who have been exposed to or experienced domestic abuse.
- Building skills and knowledge of frontline staff in order to provide a tiered response to domestic abuse in relation to children and young people (i.e. brief intervention, sign posting, intervention and specialist provision).

The existing domestic abuse strategic outcomes framework (logic model) will be used, and expanded as appropriate in light of this review, to monitor performance against the strategic outcomes relating to impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. This will include key performance data, and where appropriate comparator data, which may be identified as part of the review.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

This review will contribute to:

- protecting our children from harm
- supporting sustainable and safe communities
- reducing enduring trauma

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

This review will recommend activities to positively impact on the lives of children and young people and, as parents of the future, subsequent generations/families

Identifying evidence-based approaches to reducing the enduring impact of domestic abuse will contribute to improved wellbeing of individuals and families. Domestic abuse is one of five domains of multiple disadvantage. Reducing the impact of domestic abuse contributes to reducing overall experience of multiple disadvantage.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Reducing the impact of domestic abuse on individuals may reduce the need (demand) for services.

This review will contribute to greater understanding of interventions and approaches which are effective at protecting children and young people from harm. The review will also identify where services and practice can be improved.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) specifies the definition of domestic abuse and the definition of a victim-survivor of abuse including exposure to (being aware of, hearing or seeing) domestic abuse. This definition will be promoted to system partners as part of providing a consistent and cohesive approach.

The Domestic Abuse Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees highlights the importance of intervening early to minimise the impact of domestic abuse on children.

The *Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy* and the *Violence Prevention Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees* are in development and are complementary to this work.

This review will take account of the [proposed] alcohol scrutiny review.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This review will contribute to:

- Best start in life
- A safe community for all children and young people
- Healthy and resilient communities
- Happy and healthy lives for all

The outputs (e.g. review of evidence-based practice) from this review will also contribute to the Powering Our Futures transformation reviews: Early Intervention and Prevention of Complex Lives.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

A collaborative, comprehensive, effective approach to supporting children and young people who experience domestic abuse in Stockton-on-Tees.

Signed: Cllr Bob Cook, Cllr Norma Stephenson, Cllr Lisa Evans **Date:** 13.02.25

Please return to:

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Community involvement to understand levels of awareness and barriers to accessing treatment support for alcohol.

Alcohol is embedded in our culture and our day to day lives. Alcohol is associated with socialising, relaxing, celebrating and commiserating. Alcohol is acceptable, affordable and readily available. Yet alcohol-related harm is not only felt by individuals, it impacts on our families, our communities, our services and workforces as well as our wider economy. The impact of alcohol harms is disproportionately greater for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities.

Harm from alcohol does not only relate to cohorts who are drinking at hazardous levels and have multiple other complexities in their lives (which is being looked at through other routes including the Early Intervention and Prevention review and links to the ongoing Safer Town Centres scrutiny review).

There is also a cohort of adults who are drinking at hazardous levels (are alcohol dependent) and alongside are currently able to ‘function’ for example in having stable accommodation, holding down a job and / or having stable family networks and relationships. Home drinking is a key factor for this cohort.

We know there is a cohort of drinkers that does not identify as alcohol dependent and does not seek support – in fact it is estimated that of adults experiencing alcohol dependency in Stockton-on-Tees during 2023/24, 74% were not in treatment (*National Drug Treatment Monitoring System), see Figure 1. This unmet treatment need has not significantly reduced in recent years.

Figure 1. Unmet treatment need for alcohol in Stockton-on-Tees (NDTMS*)



There are several factors which contribute to this, including lack of awareness of what constitutes hazardous drinking and dependence; ability to function despite dependence; social acceptability of consumption of alcohol; fear of employer finding out/risk to employment and stigma associated with seeking treatment. Nevertheless, this cohort will still experience significant health and wellbeing harms from alcohol, are likely to have shorter lives in poorer health and there may still be some impacts on e.g. their family relationships.

The focus of this review is to understand how to improve awareness and access to support, to address this unmet treatment need in our communities. The outcomes of which will be improved awareness of the harms caused by hazardous drinking for this cohort in our community; and improved opportunity to access treatment support.

Key lines of inquiry

- Why are an estimated 74% of people in the borough with alcohol dependence not in treatment and support services?
- What support is available for people drinking alcohol across the spectrum of levels harmful to their health through to dependence?
- What can we do differently to increase the proportion of people with alcohol dependence accessing support?
- How can we best engage and work with people drinking at hazardous levels who do not access treatment services, to improve these outcomes?

The existing alcohol strategic framework will be adapted to produce an outcomes framework (logic model) which will be used, and expanded as appropriate in light of this review, to monitor performance against the strategic outcomes relating to alcohol treatment unmet need. This will include key performance data, and where appropriate comparator data, which may be identified as part of the review.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

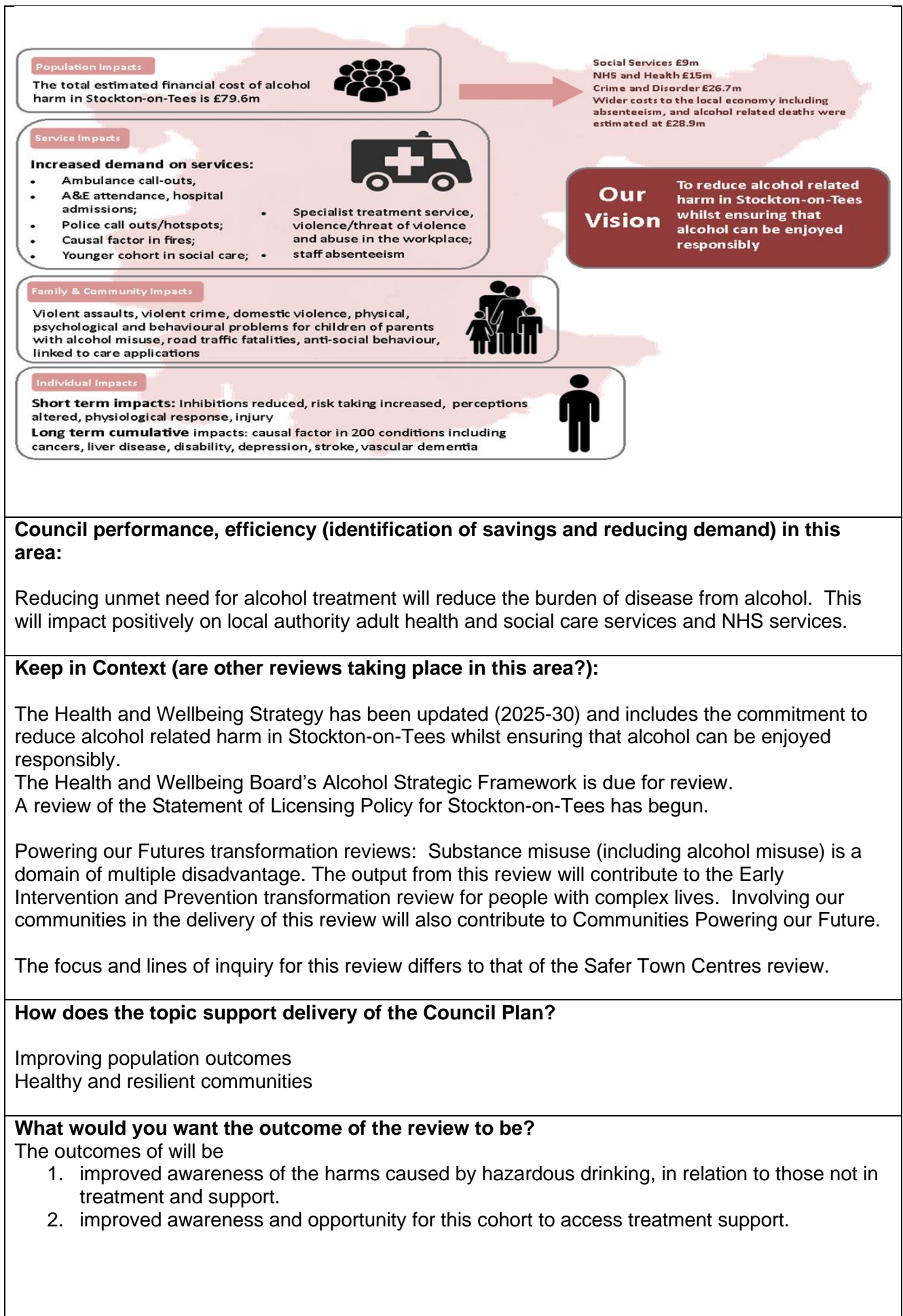
NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
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INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

This review will contribute to:
Safer and resilient communities
Health & wellbeing

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

The impact is illustrated in the figure below, which is taken from the Alcohol Strategic Framework for Stockton-on-Tees (2019-2023)



Signed: Cllr Bob Cook, Cllr Pauline Beall

Date: 14 February 2025

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Strength and Breadth of Additionally Resourced SEND Provision in Mainstream Schools

Since 2017, Stockton on Tees have had an enhanced mainstream school (EMS) model in place which supports children who require additional support than normally available in mainstream when they have a particular area of need i.e. a cognition and learning difficulty. In recent years, these placements have been overpopulated (for example for children who have language and communication needs) and underutilised in other areas (HI/VI & Physical Needs), resulting in high levels of high needs funding been distributed to settings without the children in situ to receive support.

In October 2024, the council began a consultation to repurpose its EMS provision into Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) and SEND Units. This would allow for the flexibility to meet the demand for placement, give parents the right to choose these placements for their children and also bring the provision in Stockton on Tees in line with Department for Education guidance by registering the provisions as resourced provision.

Additionally resourced provisions in mainstream are designed to support children with SEND who require more tailored support but do not require a place in a special school.

Key concerns relating to this are as follows:

- Increasing demand – current demand outweighs the number of places available and although a 9% increase was anticipated and taken into consideration, there is currently a 15% increase in demand from 2024 to 2025. This increase is largely in Early Years provision (children between 2-4 years old)
- Funding and resources – the council are required to ensure that the ARP & SEND Units are adequately resourced and funding to ensure its success for the children accessing the provision. This will have an impact of approximately £750,000 additional from high needs funding per year.
- Parental confidence and engagement
- Capital Funding
- Consistency in provision

In December 2024, the government requested that all councils begin to consider creating resourced provision within their mainstream's schools, with an announcement of further funding awaiting in Spring 2025. This new funding can be used to adapt classrooms to be more accessible for children with SEND, and to create specialist facilities within mainstream schools that can deliver more intensive support adapted to suit the pupils' needs and this coincides with the work already in development in Stockton.

In presenting these key areas to the Select Committee, we hope to highlight the issues and find solutions to the ongoing sufficiency and funding difficulties, ensuring that children in Stockton on Tees have access to the most appropriate support to meet their special educational needs.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Ensuring the strength of additionally resourced provision in Stockton on Tees is a matter of public interest as it directly impacts the educational outcomes, wellbeing and future opportunities of children and young people with SEND from the borough. With rising demand for SEND support, is a need for greater transparency and accountability to ensure that all children receive the support they require.

Effective scrutiny of this provision will help identify any gaps, promote best practices and inform decision making. This is crucial for not only the children and families effected, but for the wider public, leading to benefits for community inclusion, social cohesion and ensuring that children remain within Stockton on Tees.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Strengthening additionally resourced SEND provision has wide reaching social, economic and environmental benefits for the area. It is anticipated that creation of these provisions will reduce the number of children who are attending schools out of the area to have their needs met, this reduces the reliance on community transport and ensures that our children can foster a peer group within the local community, also potentially reducing future reliance on social and welfare services, such as housing or adult social care. It is also anticipated that placing children in the right provision at the earliest opportunity will be reduced to some extent suspensions and exclusions of these children and increase attendance within the borough.

Sustainable investment in inclusive school facilities futureproofs educational infrastructure, creating accessible environments that benefit not just children with SEND, but the wider school community, leading to more inclusive, economically resilience and sustainable educational settings.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

We are currently spending £1.9m on EMS provisions for 209 places in Stockton schools, but by transferring these into SEN Units/ARPs and creating up to 100 additional places for children across the borough, there will be a required investment of up to £730k per year (assuming all placements are full) from high needs funding in addition to current spend.

To place 100 children in Independent Special Schools would increase the cost to the DSG to £6m per year. However, it would also result in additional transport costs which would be a direct cost to the LAs General Funds and would also have a detrimental impact on the transport review and cost saving plans.

Moving to the ARP/SEN unit model, although costing £730k extra per year for the maximum additional placements, would ultimately save £5.3m of High Needs funding per year (assuming all places are filled).

	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m
Unmitigated Cumulative DSG deficit	3.57	5.31	11.51	21.24	34.84
Increase capacity in SBC mainstream prim/sec schools (cumulative savings).		(1.29)	(6.55)	(13.35)	(23.64)
% of overall deficit					67.8%

Cost and savings based on an additional 100 places:

Financial Year	2025/26 (part yr)	2026/27 (full yr)	2027/28 (full yr)	Total
Cost of 100 places in Independent Special #	£3.5m	£6m	£6m	£15.5m
Additional cost of 100 places in SEN Units/ARPs	£430k	£730k	£730k	£1.89m
Annual saving against unmitigated forecast	£3.07m	£5.27m	£5.27m	£13.61m

Based on average £60k p.a.

** Assume all places filled from September 2025

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

This is an ongoing piece of work with ARP and SEND Units commencing from September 2025. (except for two current SEND units from September 2024)

There are no other reviews taking place in this area.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This work aligns with the council's priorities to ensure that all children have a bright future and a sense of belonging and giving children the best possible start in life, this is greater achieved when our children are educated and build connections within the borough. It aligns with the council vision to have a sustainable community where everyone belongs and is valued.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

To ensure that SEND provision in mainstream schools in Stockton on Tees is accessible, effective and sustainable.

It is anticipated that the review would provide clear recommendations on improving the funding, sufficiency and quality of provision for children with SEND in Stockton on Tees and identify any gaps in the provision, including where additional or increased investment may be necessary.

Signed: Cllr Lisa Evans

Date: 12.02.25

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Adult Education & Skills

The Council play a significant role in supporting residents and employers to develop their skillset to help drive economic growth, increase employment and build strong and inclusive communities. The demand for these programmes continues to grow and is a key driver to support the wider aspirations of the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Powering our Future programme to help address the inequalities we face in the Borough. It is vital these programmes continue to positively respond to an evolving economic landscape and support our ambitions to drive economic growth, and increase prosperity and wellbeing.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

The Centre for Progressive Policy's Cost of Living Vulnerability Index shows Stockton-on-Tees to be one of the most vulnerable local authorities in the country:

- our poorest residents face a 3% higher inflation rate than average because a much greater proportion of their income is spent on essentials of food and energy. For them, it is a struggle to afford the basic essentials of everyday living
- Stockton-on-Tees has some of the highest poverty and deprivation rates in the country
- as a Borough, we have poorer health, higher unemployment and economic inactivity rates and high benefit claimant rates
- as of April 2024, there were 23,061 people claiming universal credit in the Borough
- in some wards, there are lower levels of educational attainment and lower quality housing stock (around 60,000 houses are estimated to lack basic insulation) than most other local authorities.
- 7.5% of the population aged 18 to 24 (965) are claiming out-of-work benefits against 4.6% nationally
- in 2021 to 2022, 24.9% of population aged 16 to 64 are economically inactive against 21.2% nationally
- in 2022 to 2023, 18.7% of children were living in relative low-income families against 19.8% nationally
- there are currently 740 (known) NEETs in Stockton-on-Tees
- Government statistics show that care leavers are three times more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) than other young people. This has been associated with negative long-term consequences, including higher rates of homelessness, mental health problems and imprisonment.

Equally;

- 8.7% of residents have no qualifications which is higher than both the national and Tees Valley average.
- 57% of residents are qualified to NVQ Level 3 which is lower than the national and Tees Valley average.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Social

- **Social inclusion:** employment and skills development contribute to social inclusion by ensuring that people from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to work and opportunities for advancement. Reducing inequality and promoting a sense of belonging.
- **Health:** people in stable employment are more likely to have access to healthcare, improving overall public health. The Social networks formed through work can enhance mental well-being and reduce isolation.

Economic

- Employment opportunities help to stimulate the economy by providing individuals with income, which they then spend on goods and services
- A skilled workforce tends to be more productive, which boosts the overall output of an area
- Employment and the development of new skills help reduce poverty by offering stable incomes to individual and families, reducing dependencies on local government

Environmental

- As businesses shift toward sustainable practices, the creation of green jobs can improve environmental well-being while simultaneously providing employment and skills development opportunities.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

There is increasing demand on these Services which are supported utilising external funding allocations such as the Adult Skills Fund, Apprenticeship Funding and UKSPF project funding.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Priority 1: The best start in life to achieve big ambitions

Giving Children and Young People the best possible start, in an inclusive community where everyone can thrive -

To increase the number of children and young people in Education, Employment and Training at ages 16-18, helping to grow their ambitions and meeting the needs of local employers.

Support for Children in Our Care -

Provide more opportunities to achieve and progress in education, employment and training

Priority 4: An inclusive economy

Ensuring all of our residents can benefit from economic opportunities by delivering and embedding a fairer distribution of wealth -

To support our residents to access secure and sustainable employment, by helping them to develop and make the most of their skills. Focusing efforts on communities that have more prevalent issues with lower skills and lower wages, as well as people facing barriers to employment, such as those living with a disability or those with long term health conditions.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

That the support provided to residents and employers through adult learning and employment initiatives continues to be fit for purpose and fulfils the priorities of the Council plan, Inclusive Growth Strategy and Powering our Futures programme.

Also, to better understand the support available for these groups and to streamline our approach to supporting our disadvantaged communities, including care leavers and NEETs to improve basic skills around English, maths and digital inclusion, leading to sustainable employment, by working more effectively across all Council services to improve outcomes.

- Better coordination of services for Care Leaver and NEETs within the Borough, working more closely with the Employment and Training Hub to support young people into employment.
- Targeted engagement with most disadvantaged communities to raise aspirations and improve uptake of English, maths and digital skills training.
- Raise aspirations of young people by developing a careers offer that better aligns with the skills of young people and the needs of businesses

Signed: Cllr Nigel Cooke

Date: 17 February 2025

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Community Participation Budget (CPB) and Ward Transport Budgets (WTB)

To review the effectiveness and desirability of these 2 budget schemes, giving consideration to the scope of interventions that are eligible, processes for determining the priorities for use of the funds, and the management of the projects that are funded through CPB and WTB.

The Committee will need to consider the value of CPB and WTB in the context of significant ongoing budget pressures for the Council as a whole. The Committee will also need to consider the revenue implications of the type of projects funded through these budgets.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
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INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

The projects that CPB and WTB are typically used for, are those that generate significant resident interest and engagement, albeit it at a local level.

The direct involvement of Ward Councillors in prioritising the use of these budgets is a matter of public interest.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Whilst the application of CPB and WTB results in projects that are small scale and local in character, they connect directly with resident's concerns and can have a significant impact on social and environmental well-being. The Committee may wish to explore whether this is genuine and sustained impact.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

The small scale and local, bespoke nature of the interventions funded through CPB and WTB, is not likely to represent the most cost-effective method of commissioning or procuring the work that is undertaken. In addition, the allocation of a sum to each Ward might be seen to stimulate demand, creating a desire to spend the money because it's available, looking for eligible projects. However, the direct involvement of Ward Councillors and the input of the communities they represent, helps to ensure that the interventions are well focused and likely to meet a genuine need.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The projects supported contribute to the achievement of our priority 3, a great place to live, work and visit. They also contribute to the priority for healthy and resilient communities. The principle of co-commissioning is also relevant to the way in which CPB and WTB are delivered, with residents directly influencing the purpose and specification of works.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

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

Signed: Cllr Clare Besford

Date: 14 February 2025

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Discharge to Assess (not reablement), outcomes for people leaving hospital.

Discharge to assess (D2A) is a program that helps people leave the hospital when they are safe and clinically fit for discharge. Once the person has been discharged, D2A provides ongoing care and assessment in the community dependent upon their pathway and level of need.

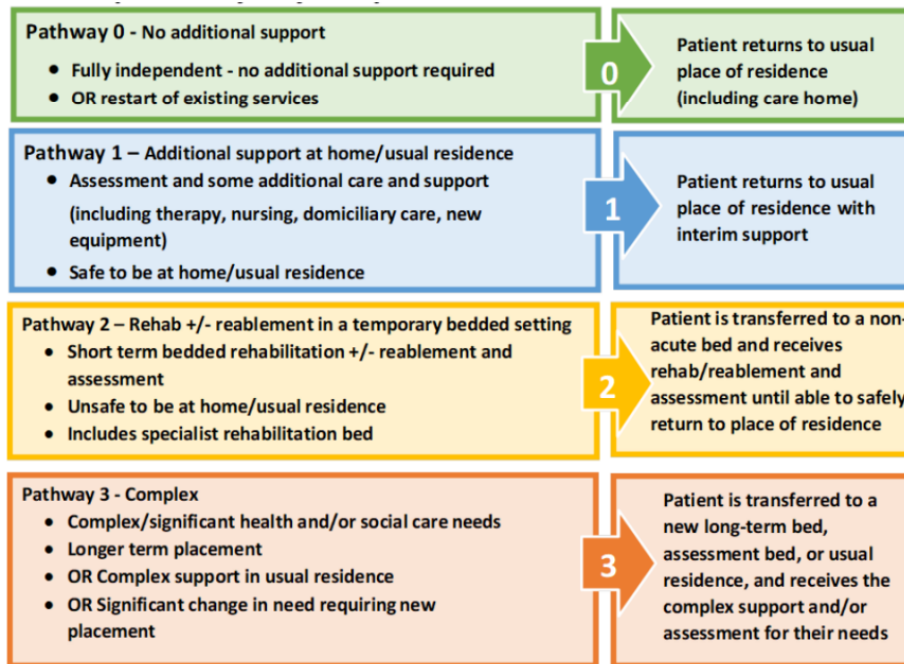
How does it work?

- People are discharged from the hospital as soon as their acute medical treatment is complete
- People are assessed in their home or in the community
- Assessments are based on the person’s needs, environment, and level of function
- The goal is to help maximise people’s independence.

There are 4 key pathways for D2A (see figure 1 below).

In 2024/25 ASH looked at Reablement service, which is a key service in pathway 1 (below).

Figure 1: D2A pathways



This review will focus on:

- Pathway 0: where people go home with an existing care at home package.
- Pathway 2: where people go into in house or spot residential beds prior for a period of rehabilitation or assessment prior to a decision about going home.
- Pathway 3: people who have health needs and are like requiring residential care long term.

This review could help understand:

- The process for supporting people efficiently and accurately through the D2A process, including the role and impact of Integrated Single Point of Access (ISPA) and Trusted Assessors.
- How effective are “in house” and commissioned residential care in supporting people to an appropriate long-term setting. This should include support for these services with therapeutic input to maximise people’s independence.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Why is this important?

- D2A reduces the amount of time people spend in the hospital, which for people who no longer require specific care from the hospital helps prevent people from losing strength, mobility, or getting an infection.
- It improves the experience of vulnerable people
- It helps ensure people receive timely and appropriate recovery support

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Social: D2A should support equitable access for any individual who has assessed needs and will be provided free, at the point of contact, to all those that need the service.

Economic: D2A should effectively manage resources and enable the beds to benefit more people. This should include suitable arrangements made for those that should be managed elsewhere (e.g. end-of-life). Use of community beds also supports the wider residential care home market.

Environmental: By ensuring a range of good quality local provision in Stockton on Tees, residents are enabled to remain living in the borough. Travel and associated fuel costs and usage for families are reduced along with related fuel emissions.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Actual activity - Hospital Discharge		Prepopulated demand from 2024-25 plan			Actual activity (not including spot purchased capacity)			Actual activity through only spot purchasing (doesn't apply to time to service)		
		Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Service Area	Metric									
Reablement & Rehabilitation in a bedded setting (pathway 2)	Monthly activity. Number of new clients	65	64	64	21	30	31	37	46	47
Reablement & Rehabilitation in a bedded setting (pathway 2)	Actual average time from referral to commencement of service (days) All packages (planned and spot purchased)	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9			
Other short term bedded care (pathway 2)	Monthly activity. Number of new clients.	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other short term bedded care (pathway 2)	Actual average time from referral to commencement of service (days) All packages (planned and spot purchased)	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Short-term residential/nursing care for someone likely to require a longer-term care home placement (pathway 3)	Monthly activity. Number of new clients	7	7	7	0	0	0	11	9	11
Short-term residential/nursing care for someone likely to require a longer-term care home placement (pathway 3)	Actual average time from referral to commencement of service (days) All packages (planned and spot purchased)	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6			

Actual activity - Community		Prepopulated demand from 2024-25 plan			Actual activity:		
Service Area	Metric	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
Social support (including VCS)	Monthly activity. Number of new clients.	104	104	104	104	104	104
Urgent Community Response	Monthly activity. Number of new clients.	522	496	566	672	574	705
Reablement & Rehabilitation at home	Monthly activity. Number of new clients.	16	11	18	58	40	30
Reablement & Rehabilitation in a bedded setting	Monthly activity. Number of new clients.	4	4	4	5	10	10
Other short-term social care	Monthly activity. Number of new clients.	4	5	5	0	0	0

Demand for D2A remains high.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

MT03: Supporting People to Live Independently

MT11: Front Door

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

- Ensuring happy and healthy lives for all – we will work hard to reduce health inequalities.
- Working with our residents to build resilience and independence in their own homes

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

- Position on how effective the current pathway is supporting people to independence.
- Impact of current bed-based offer, both in house and commissioned.

Signed: Cllr Pauline Beall

Date: 13/02/25

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Planning, Governance, and Oversight of Major Capital Projects by/for Stockton Borough Council

Several major capital projects undertaken by Stockton Borough Council have, and continue to raise concerns with both members, and residents of the Borough, with regards to budget overspend, a perceived lack of forward planning to identify known/obvious risks, and a perceived determination to thwart scrutiny when concerns are raised.

The scrutiny process would examine the governance and decision-making structures that have been used on major capital projects, the information, analysis and assurance that fed into key decisions, and how decisions were made and challenged during the projects such as The Globe Theatre, Preston Park/Hall, Debenhams, Post Office/Glam, Ingleby Barwick Leisure Centre, and the continual regeneration of Stockton High Street.

In recent years Major Capital Project governance, or lack of it, seems to be the root cause for what is widely acknowledged as the main cause of a project failing to be executed on time, and on budget.

Stockton Borough Council has, unfortunately, overspent on several Major Capital Projects, resulting in extensive borrowing costs to rectify issues arising during the project. This extensive borrowing has a serious and negative impact on the financial revenue available to fund council services.

The scrutiny process would seek to identify lasting improvements made to the way in which Stockton Borough Council delivers Major Capital Projects, and not see past problems repeated.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

As elected representatives of the residents of Stockton Borough, members are acutely aware of the scrutiny that residents take in viewing how the Council spends their money on services, and how major capital projects, when failing to be executed on time and on budget, impact on the services they seek. The trend to overspend, fail to plan, and thwart scrutiny on Major Capital Budgets undertaken by SBC is not lost on residents.

There are many stakeholders who have a vested interest in the financial affairs of Stockton Borough Council, including central government, partner agencies, local public auditors and the various communities we serve. All of these look at the way the Council operates a degree of financial stewardship to help ensure that SBC spends its money wisely. This, therefore, is a key task of financial scrutiny.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

It should also be accepted that members must carry out periodic 'post implementation reviews' of major capital projects to determine whether these were delivered on time and within budget, achieved their stated aims and delivered the outcomes and value for money anticipated. This has been lacking within SBC.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

The scrutiny process is a reactive challenge to decision making, budgeting, service delivery or performance issues. In effect, using evidence to hold the council to account for its expenditure or to investigate pertinent financial concerns.

Identifying the reasons why major capital projects have gone over budget, and in the case of The Globe Theatre by excessive amounts, should have been a wake-up call for SBC, and should have been subject of an in-depth scrutiny procedure at the time. This may have identified the trend (perceived lack of governance and oversight) for allowing major capital projects to overspend the allocated budget.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Members must ensure our council is financially sustainable and manages our assets effectively to enhance their local impact. Members must ensure we have a well-run council across areas of our business and continue to improve outcomes for communities.

We all endeavour to make Stockton-on-Tees a great place to live, work and visit - a Borough that residents can be proud of. That is a vibrant and diverse place with an environment that is well looked after and outdoor spaces to enjoy.


We all want Stockton-on-Tees to be a place of choice for younger generations to live, work, play and grow - providing an environment where they can thrive. Creating a great place to live will include an emphasis on children and young people growing up feeling safe, utilising green spaces and building their ambitions around exciting and fulfilled lives in our Borough.

These ambitions can be supported by ensuring when major capital projects are developed to invite people and attract people into our Borough they are seen to be well thought out, delivered on time, and on budget to demonstrate that our council is sustainable and well managed.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

To determine that major capital projects undertaken by SBC, have the full backing of our residents, they are value for money, they have social value, and most importantly they are well planned, with a strong governance and oversight framework that gives confidence to members and residents.

Signed:



Date:

16/2/25

Please return to: Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Delivering Best Value – Improving Stockton’s Procurement Process

To look at how SBC goes out to tender with external providers, and how we can not only ensure the process delivers best value for money but encourages local businesses to tender for work.

The review would focus on the current procurement process in place, and the obstacles in place to ensure that when the council goes out to tender for business, it seeks quotes from a wide range of sources, encourages local businesses to tender for business. This will cover all directorates and will also look at whether external providers (such as grounds maintenance) are able to provide certain services cheaper than internally. The review will also look at how we can ensure greater competition to help drive down costs.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

As this topic relates to how the council spends the money it receives from the residents of the borough of Stockton, it is of course within their interest to ensure we are able to ensure this council is truly delivering best value for money for residents.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Such a review would seek to have a very positive impact on the well-being of the area. In delivering best value for money, it would seek to support the drive to make savings and free up resource for other areas. In ensuring best value, it reduces the financial pressures and drives forward efficiencies. This topic would also look to support the local economy by ensuring local business was more easily able to tender for work, with greater emphasis put on going out to tender with to a much wider reach.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

As mentioned above, this review looks specifically at the current tendering process, how it is currently undertaken and how it can be made more efficient to ensure best value from the work undertaken by external providers. From greater competition from a wider range of sources we can ensure the best possible price, while also looking to support local businesses. The review would also investigate whether we can deliver certain services cheaper externally than we could internally. Such moves are specific to drive efficiencies and drive down costs to the council. This would then free up resources and ensure savings are made.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

I am unaware of any other topics taking place in this area, which is a clear reason why one should take place to ensure best value for money.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This review would like to compliment the 'Powering our Future' programme as it actively looks to ensure the council is working efficiently (in driving down costs by delivering best value for money) and also ensure greater working with external partners to deliver best value for money while also supporting local businesses.

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

To see the tendering process of the council work actively to deliver best value in the quotes it receives.
To help support local businesses and encourage them to tender for business.
To look at whether external providers are able to provide certain services (grounds maintenance for example) cheaper and more efficiently than internally.

Signed: Cllr Niall Innes

Date: 15/02/2025

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
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**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Scrutiny Review of Fly Tipping

To scrutinise the current procedures around fly tipping, through enforcement especially, and what we can do to save costs to the borough through CFYA.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Fly tipping is a blight on local communities, not only is it an eyesore, it can attract pests, and effect local businesses

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Economic savings through the reduced rate of fly tipping and catching offenders, enhances social pride in areas.

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Recent freedom of information report has CFYA report and enforcement report for Mandale and Victoria at 232 and 104 fly tips respectively.

With only 8 issues fly tipping penalties (4paid)

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

No

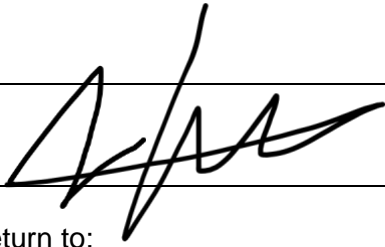
How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

To reduce costs especially in the CFYA department

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

A more robust plan to reduce the amount of fly tipping and to issue more penalties to those responsible for the act.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Judy Trainer', written over a horizontal line.

Date: 06-02-2025

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158

**Select Committee Work Programme
Suggested Review – Pro Forma**

Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?

Children Not in School (CNIS)

Children not in school covers a range of scenarios where a child is not accessing a full-time education. The range of reasons a child may not be accessing a full time education at a school is vast and covers;

- All reasons for absence from school including authorised absence, unauthorised absence
- Pupils on reduced/part-time time tables
- Pupils who are accessing Alternative Provision not in a registered school (whether arranged by the school or the local authority)
- Pupils receiving Home and Hospital Provision
- Pupils who are CME (Children Missing Education)
- Children who are EHE (Electively Home Educated)
- Children who have no school base and are EOTAS (Educated Other Than at School)
- Children who move into the borough and are waiting for a school place

Safeguarding of children in education is secure

- Identifying all scenarios where a child may be or become a CNIS.
- Provide clarification around overall responsibility and oversight to ensure systems are in place and there are no gaps.

Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.

NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS.
PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION.

Public interest justification:

Safeguarding of Children who go missing from education.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Timely engagement and access to education results in meeting the councils key priorities

Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:

Strengthened systems for Children Not in School has the potential to:

- improve attendance further
- improve pupil outcomes
- reduce associated anti-social and criminal activity
- reduce demands on community safety resources

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):

Improving Attendance particularly in secondary schools is one of the key aspects of the Appreciative Enquiry.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This scrutiny would support delivery of the following design principles:

- reduce inequality and prioritise prevention
- put communities at the heart of everything we do
- use data and intelligence to inform our decision

What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

Safeguarding of children in education in Stockton is secure

- Identifying all scenarios where a child may be or become a CNIS.
- Ensuring a system or process is in place for each scenario thus minimising the time children are out of education
- Provide clarification around overall responsibility and oversight to ensure systems are in place and there are no gaps.
- Support for resource (if necessary)
- Assure accountability across teams and services and ensure the children of the borough have access to the education they are entitled

Signed: Cllr Lisa Evans

Date: 14/02/25

Please return to:

Judy Trainer, Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD

Email: judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk; Tel: 01642 528158