

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

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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?

Protection of Property (excluding Pets)

Under Section 47 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities must take reasonable steps to protect the moveable property of adults with care and support needs who are being cared for away from home. This duty applies when no suitable arrangements have been made, and it requires the local authority to prevent or mitigate the loss or damage of the adult’s personal property. The local authority has the power to enter the persons property and deal with the moveable property in any way which is deemed reasonably necessary. The person must give permission for this, or a best interest decision can be made under the Mental capacity Act 2005.

In Stockton this process is managed by the adult Social Care Financial Services team (ASCFS) who make the necessary arrangements. At the moment the team hold the keys for 25 properties. Which are visited weekly to maintain their insurance and upkeep. The Care Act states that we can claim reasonable expenses for this work which we currently visit weekly

- Whether current arrangement for fulling the Care Act duty to protect properties are fit for purpose.
- Whether ASFCS has the capacity, procedures and resources to manage increasing numbers of properties.
- Whether the council is recovering reasonable expenses as allowed by legislation.
- Whether risk, accountability and decision-making processes (including one of mental capacity act decisions are clear, consistent and auditable.

Outcome

- Updated and strengthened procedures, with clear roles and responsibilities
- Improved efficiencies and reduce avoidable demand on ASCFS
- A clear policy on charging and recovery of reasonable expenses.
- A better oversight of risk, security and property condition.

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

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Public interest justification:

- The public expects the council to safeguard the belongings and homes of vulnerable adults who are unable to do so for themselves.
- Ensuring that property is not lost damaged or at risk is essential to maintain dignity, preventing exploitation, and ensuring people can return home safely when ready.
- Responsible use of public funds.

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

Effective protection of property supports vulnerable adults to maintain stability, reduce financial harm, and avoid homelessness due to property deterioration.

(E,G repairs, deep cleaning, pest issues, insurance lapses, which in turn supports wider economic resilience.

Timely and appropriate protection can also reduce environmental risks such as damage, vandalism-social behaviours or unsafe conditions in empty properties within neighbourhoods.

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

- A review could identify opportunities to streamline weekly inspections, reduce unnecessary visits, and clarify where responsibility lie.
- There may be scope to recover more reasonable expenses in line with the care act, therefore reducing the net cost to the council.
- Improve consistency and clarity in decision making and could reduce the number of inappropriate referrals and cases requiring prolonged involvement.
- Overall, the review could propose improvement in performance, reduce demand on ASCFS and ensure statutory activity is being delivered efficiently.

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

Protection of Pets is currently being considered as part of the animal welfare considerations

No other reviews are taking place in regards to protection of property arrangements. This area has not been examined for a number of years and the duty has increased demand since the implementation of the care act and mental capacity Act.

The review would compliment wider work around safeguarding prevention, and financial services but does not duplicate existing activity.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The topic aligns with the council plan :

- Supporting vulnerable adults
- Building resilience
- Delivering efficient and sustainable services.
- Ensuring people can live independently longer.

Protecting property prevent escalation of need, avoids crisis situations, and assists people to return to their home safely, maintaining independence, safety and community wellbeing.

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

- Assurance around statutory duties under the Care Act are being effectively acted upon.
- Recommendations for improved process, capacity and resourcing.
- Clear guidance thresholds for when council should intervene.
- An approach for charging for reasonable expenses.
- Improve risk management and better governance oversight.
- Reduce pressures on ASCFS, through smarter more efficient systems.

Signed: Cllr Pauline Beall

Date: 24/02/2026

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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?

Outcomes for people being discharged from hospital.

There is a national statutory guidance regarding discharge from hospital that the local authority works to. There are 4 pathways for consideration:

Pathway 0 – discharges home or to a usual place of residence with no new or additional health and/or social care needs, they may receive informal support from family friends.

Pathway 1: discharges home or to a usual place of residence with new or additional health and/or social care needs discharge for people who may require formal support upon discharge will return home with a tailored package of therapy and other necessary support to aid recovery.

Pathway 2: discharges to a community bed-based setting which has dedicated recovery support. New or additional health and/or social care and support is required in the short-term to help the person recover in a community bed-based setting before they are ready to either live independently at home or receive longer-term or ongoing care and support

Pathway 3: discharges to a new residential or nursing home setting, for people who are considered likely to need long-term residential or nursing home care. Should be used only in exceptional circumstances

The guidance also states that NHS bodies and local authorities should ensure that, where appropriate, unpaid carers and family members are involved in discharge decisions.

Performance data shows that people come out of hospital in a timely way, but there is no data regarding the outcomes for people and the level of involvement from carers and family members.

The concern is that although the discharge is timely and is able to meet individuals needs it may not always be the outcome that the person wants, and the discharge process may impact on future care needs.

The aim of the scrutiny would be to understand the discharge pathways, how the pathways can be more personalised to individuals and support their longer-term goals alongside supporting the short term needs of discharging safely from hospital.

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

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Public interest justification:

Any member of the public or their family can suffer a health crisis at any time that requires an admission into an acute hospital. It is important that when being discharged from this facility that their views and wishes are heard and that their long-term goals are supported. The majority of people admitted would like to return from hospital to the place they were admitted from, and this should be supported.

<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved discharge outcomes for people to remain in their communities.• Maintain social connections.• Use local resources.• Have own front door key.• Reduce demand on residential care.
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>If people are discharged into a bed based service then it may be more difficult for them to return home in the long term. This will increase our demand for residential services and the financial contribution that the local authority makes to this. People returning to their own homes are more likely to remain involved in the local community, using local resources and supporting the neighbourhood.</p> <p>Support independence.</p> <p>For the full year 24-25 there were a total of 2688 people were supported on discharge Pathway 0 Contacts = 1066 Pathway 1 = 829 clients 957 provisions) – All Reablement Pathway 2 = 696 clients (807 provisions) Pathway 3 = 97 Clients (106 provisions) This is the last full years data available at this time</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>Front door review under the Powering our Futures Programme will be considering staffing and processes but this review will be more focussed on the outcomes for the person and ensuring that they are fully involved in decision making.</p> <p>Both reviews will run alongside each other and findings shared.</p>
<p>How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting independence• Reducing long term care• Improving well being• Person centred services.• Resilient thriving communities.
<p>What would you want the outcome of the review to be?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is discharge pathway currently used and how personalised are they?• Strengthen the involvement of individuals, carers, families in discharge planning.• Outcomes for post discharge promoting independence and wellbeing.• Reduce and avoid residential admissions.• Support people to return home

- Partnership working and ensuring all partners are working to same 'Home First' principles.

Signed: Cllr Pauline Beall

Date: 24/02/2026

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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?

Uptake of key vaccinations to support Winter wellbeing in 65+ year old adults

Winter illness through infectious disease, particularly Covid, flu and pneumococcal disease, have a significant impact on the wellbeing of local people, particularly those in vulnerable groups including older people. Together with other factors, these infectious diseases also significantly contribute to demand on the health and care system over the Winter months; and to business continuity pressures across all sectors. The impact of these three infections can be significantly mitigated by vaccination, with national vaccination programmes in place.

Population uptake of some vaccinations is lower than regional and national figures for some vaccinations. Uptake of vaccinations also varies across groups of the population, both nationally and locally. Misinformation also impacts on uptake of vaccinations. Informed choice is also an important aspect of implementing vaccination programmes.

Implementation of vaccination programmes is lead by the NHS, supported by a range of partners, including social care and public health. The focus of the review would be to:

Support activity to maximise uptake of vaccinations for Covid, flu and pneumococcal infection in 65+ year olds, as part of activity to support Winter wellbeing.

The desired outcome would be:

Increased awareness of robust information, and implementation of tools, to support informed decision-making about vaccination uptake in local people aged 65+ years.

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

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Public interest justification:

Protection of public health is a statutory duty of the Council (together with partners), discharged through the Director of Public Health. Infectious disease has a significant impact on the local population and the health and care system, particularly during Winter. There are significant programmes of work in place across partners to maximise the uptake and impact of national vaccination programmes. Vaccinations remain one of the most important and effective tools in preventing and minimising the impact of infectious disease across the population.

Informed personal choice is an important aspect of all vaccination programmes, which must be balanced with other considerations.

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

Vaccinations remain one of the most important and effective tools in preventing and minimising the impact of infectious disease across the population. Vaccinations delivered

through national vaccination programmes are free at the point of use. Infectious disease has a significant cost to society, with some population groups particularly impacted through serious illness or mortality. Infectious disease also has a significant impact on the health and care system, particularly during Winter, adding to the pressure on services at times of significant service demand. This contributes to delays, waiting times, hospital occupancy etc. The spread of infectious disease also significantly impacts business continuity across all sectors, through direct staff sickness absence and through staff absence due to caring for relatives e.g. children and older adults.

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

Vaccination programmes are lead by the NHS, therefore it is proposed the lead officer role would sit with the NHS, with SBC public health lead officer support alongside. SBC public health works closely with the NHS, care sector and wider partners on improving vaccination uptake across different populations and communities in the borough. Uptake of flu vaccination is lower in 65+year olds across the borough (71%), than the regional average (72% - ICB North East & North Cumbria footprint). Covid vaccination uptake is under 70% across 65yrs-80+yrs age groups and 49% in 65-69yr olds. Pneumococcal vaccination uptake is 75% locally which is higher than the England average (74%) but increasing this further would be beneficial. Supporting work to promote vaccination uptake would help protect the health of vulnerable older groups in the population and would support work to address the rising demand across health and social care, particularly in the Winter months.

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

No other reviews are taking place on this currently.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The topic supports the Council plan, in particular the priorities on *Healthy and Resilient Communities* and that on *An Inclusive Economy*. It also supports delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

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

- Increased awareness of Covid, flu and pneumococcal vaccinations for 65+ year olds available to protect against infectious disease, particularly in Winter
- Increased awareness of the key messages and evidence-based information to support informed decision-making
- Further strengthen work across partners to increase uptake of Covid, flu and pneumococcal vaccinations for 65+ year olds

Signed: Cllr Pauline Beall

Date: 24/02/2026

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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?

Supported Housing (*for the purpose of this review supported accommodation is accommodation for adults 18yrs+).

Is defined as housing accommodation provided alongside support, supervision or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community. Individuals using supported housing include:

- older people
- people with a learning disability
- people with a physical disability
- autistic people
- individuals and families at risk of or who have experienced homelessness
- people recovering from drug or alcohol dependence
- people with experience of the criminal justice system
- young people with a support need
- people with mental ill health
- individuals and families fleeing domestic abuse and their children

Supported housing provides a vital service for the most vulnerable people in society. Within Stockton on-Tees, supported housing is accommodation provided by a range of providers including registered providers, as well as charities, voluntary organisations, community interest companies and private providers that offers a level of support to tenants which is over and above that which would normally be provided.

The provision of supported accommodation within the borough (current and future) should match the borough's identified needs and be flexible to meet changing support needs over time. However, at this present time the Council has limited control over supported accommodation providers setting up new supported accommodation which can have several negative implications including for example:

- **Financial:** all rental costs may not be covered by the subsidy received by the Council, leading to a potential financial pressure on the Council.
- **Accommodation and care:** may not be of the 'quality' which meet the Council's aspirations.
- **Accommodation:** may not be in locations considered appropriate by the Council (for example areas with limited support services within the vicinity or leading to an oversupply of an accommodation type within a small location).
- **Lack of control:** if the Council has limited control over the establishment of new supported accommodation, this can result in the placement of individuals who have no connection to our borough.

The **Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023** became law in June 2023 and is designed to improve the quality, safety and oversight of supported housing across England. It responds to longstanding concerns about inconsistent standards and exploitation of vulnerable residents. The Key components of the Act include:

- National Supported Housing Standards (property quality, support and care)
- Locally led licensing schemes to apply to providers of supported housing (which will link to Housing Benefit eligibility)

- A strategic planning duty for LA's (including the production of a Supported Housing Strategy)
- The introduction of a National Supported Housing Advisory Panel
- Strengthened planning and information sharing

Whilst the Act is welcomed, there is currently no firm timeline for its detailed implementation (the only confirmed timeline is for the publication of a Supported Housing Strategy by March 2027). The concern in this interim period is the continued growth of supported accommodation within the borough, particularly where provision is not required or where existing provision may not meet the standards expected by the Council.

Summary of the suggested considerations if scrutinised may include:

1. **Financial Sustainability:** Assessing the financial impact of the expanding supported housing provision on the Council.
2. **Community considerations:** Exploring the scale and distribution of both commissioned and non-commissioned across the borough.
3. **Strategic planning:** Exploring the evidence base used to inform future supported housing commissioning provision
4. **The quality of current supported accommodation:** Reviewing examples of current supported housing provision (standards of accommodation and support being delivered).
5. **Engaging with Supported Accommodation Providers:** Gathering insights from current providers to understand their views, challenges and concerns regarding the current landscape.
6. **Preparation for the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act:** Exploring the Councils ongoing work to ensure readiness for the Act's introduction.
7. **Lived experience** – vulnerable adult experiences and outcomes.

Outcome of the review: to provide assurance that all commissioned supported accommodation within the borough addresses the borough's identified housing need; and that both commissioned and non-commissioned supported accommodation, is of a quality expected by the Council, delivering positive outcomes for our vulnerable residents.

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:

A scrutiny review of Supported Housing is of public interest for the following reasons:

1. **Service Provision:** To provide assurance that current supported housing provision – both accommodation and support - meets standards expected by the Council and provides a pathway to independence (were appropriate).
2. **Financial:** To ensure Council resources are being used efficiently and that all supported housing sector provision represents good value for money.
3. **Transparency and Accountability:** To assess the effectiveness of existing practices, strengthen oversight and support informed decisions making for future improvements.
4. **Collaboration:** To facilitate engagement with current accommodation providers.

5. Long-term Planning: To provide assurance that the Council is appropriately prepared for the introduction of Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act and positioned to implement its requirements effectively.

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

Social: As noted previously to ensure that supported housing provision – both accommodation and support – meets the standards expected by the Council.

Economic: As noted previously to ensure Council resources are used efficiently and that all supported housing sector provision represents value for money.

Environmental: n/a in this instance.

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

The provision of appropriate supported housing accommodation supports the ability of our residents to live independently and also contributes to addressing the financial pressures faced by several Council services (i.e. homelessness and adult services).

The review will support the Council to identify current resource pressures when a full Housing Benefit subsidy is not received.

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

There are no linked reviews taking place in this area currently.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

This review would support the following priorities detailed within the **Stockton-on-Tees Plan**:

- Priority 2: Healthy and Resilient communities
- Priority 3: A great place to live, work and visit
- Priority 5: A sustainable Council

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

Service Provision: To provide assurance that current supported housing provision – both accommodation and support - meets standards expected by the Council.

Financial: To ensure Council resources are being used efficiently and that all supported housing sector provision represents good value for money.

Transparency and Accountability: To assess the effectiveness of existing practices, strengthen oversight and support informed decision-making for future improvements.

Collaboration: To facilitate engagement with current accommodation providers.

Long-term Planning: To provide assurance that the Council is appropriately prepared for the introduction of Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act and positioned to implement its requirements effectively.

Signed: Cllr Richard Eglington

Date: 24/02/26

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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?

Best Start in Life Programme

It is proposed that 'Best Start in Life' is selected as a scrutiny topic. Early childhood outcomes are among the strongest predictors of long-term health, education and wellbeing, and local performance in this area significantly influences future demand across Children's Services. Scrutiny could add real value by examining how well partners work together across maternity, health visiting, Early Help and early education to reduce inequalities and ensure all children receive the foundations they need to thrive

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

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Public interest justification:

School Readiness is a recognised local and national priority as are the areas of reducing inequality and strengthening early years provision. As demonstrated in the IMD and in our vulnerable groups report, Stockton on Tees is an area of wide inequalities. All these areas are affected directly by the Better Start in Life programme. In addition, the plan is funded directly by at DfE Best Start grant which should directly expand and enhance accessible, high-quality services for families. Finally, this plan positively impacts on the area of corporate parenting by strengthening early identification, targeted intervention, and access to high quality early years support for Children in Care and children with a social worker.

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

All the 3 highlighted areas of well-being will be impacted positively by this area of work. More children being ready for school should impact directly on children's GLD scores at the end of their Reception class year. The impact of achieving the very aspirational targets for GLD is that children's start to education is better which will improve future educational attainment and reduce inequality. **(Social/Economic)**
But it is not just in the outcomes that we will see impact on the social and economic well-being of the area. The means by which these outcomes will be achieved are through five key strategic priorities:
Foundations for a Health Childhood – supporting healthy routines, nutrition, immunisation, physical activity, and home safety **(Child's Environment)**
Home Learning and Play – supporting parents to ensure play and talk and learning are part of a child's everyday life **(Child's environment)**
Speech, Language and Communication – Promoting early communication skills and streamlining pathways for support in this area **(Social)**
High Quality Early Years Education – Ensuring access for all children to high quality, inclusive provision **(Social/Economic)**

Emotional Health and Well Being – supporting parent/child relationships, early identification of needs following on to appropriate support programmes (**Social/economic**)

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

Overall funding of SEND provision is a huge spending area for the council.

The BSIL aims to align and mobilise our collective resources to support children's progress towards GLD.

One of the direct outcomes of the BSIL programme is to raise expectations of all children earlier.

Crucially, Communication and Interaction is a crucial area of SEND spending and this area of need will be directly actioned by the strategic priority of **Speech, Language and Communication**.

Another area of need which results in high spending on SEND is Social, Emotional and Mental Health. This area of need will be directly actioned by the strategic priority of **Home, Learning and Play** as well as **Emotional Health and Well-being**.

The BSIL plan SHOULD allow early identification of need and therefore better more timely interventions and adaptations in early year settings and schools. This should deliver savings against the SEND budget eventually as interventions at an older age are more financially costly than simple, early adaptations and moving children from a mainstream setting into a specialist setting is also costly in terms of time and resource.

Overall, there should be significant medium to long term savings for the council in the medium/long term if this programme is successful.

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

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

- **78.5% of children to achieve GLD by 2027/28 (rise of 8.9% from 2024/25)**
- **63.1% of children with FSM to achieve GLD by 2027/28 (rise of 9.3% from 2024/25)**
- **Lessen inequality through targeted supported for healthy routines, immunisation, nutrition, and physical activity outside and inside the home.**
- **Support parents in creating a fun learning environment in the home.**
- **Provide support in early communication skills and signposting/streamlining paths to additional support.**
- **Ensuring high quality provisions across the Early Years area of education**
- **Support parent/child relationships.**

- **The BSIL Plan directly supports the council in meeting its statutory duties relating to early childhood development, safeguarding, early education, health integration and SEND.**
- **The BSIL Plan reflects the council's commitment to the development of Best Start Family Hubs.**
- **The BSIL plan will support families in all wards of the Borough.**

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

To be assured the plan is delivering it's aims through being streamlined and aligned across maternity, Early Help, health visitors and education.

To be assured that the plan adheres to "Best Start" branding which is a requirement and is addressing inequalities.

To be assured that children are receiving the outcomes in each of the strategic priorities so that they can thrive.

Signed: Cllr Clare Besford

Date: 26th February 2026

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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?

Serious Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation

Serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation continue to present significant risks to some of our most vulnerable children. A focused scrutiny review would allow Members to examine current partnership responses, identify gaps in early intervention, and assess the effectiveness of prevention and disruption activity. Given national trends and local pressures, this is a timely topic that would offer strong assurance about how well we are protecting children from harm and supporting them to stay safe.

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

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Public interest justification:

- Serious youth violence is a recognised local priority. Stockton-on-Tees’ Youth Justice Plan explicitly identifies the need to “*strengthen our responses to Serious Youth Violence and Child Exploitation*” as one of its core strategic objectives for the year. The plan also acknowledges the need to address high levels of school exclusions and custody rates, both of which correlate with increased risk of involvement in youth violence.
- The same plan notes that the borough contains areas among the *most deprived in England*, with socioeconomic disadvantage having a *profound influence on children’s opportunities and risk factors*.
- A 2024 national thematic JTAI inspection identified the need for stronger multi-agency responses to serious youth violence, citing gaps in coordination across social care, health, youth justice, schools, and police
- Serious youth violence has an impact on local communities, local authority and police resources, educational placements, and outcomes for children and young people.

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

Stockton on Tees profile shows:

- Population: 20,103 children and young people aged 10–17 (Census 2021), with a relatively higher share of 10–14 year olds than regional and national averages.
- Deprivation: 28.1% of residents live in the 20% most deprived areas nationally; child poverty rates (absolute and relative) are above England averages.
- Crime and offending: 231 offences by 10–19 year olds (Apr 2023–Mar 2024), with 36% Violence Against the Person; 87% of offences were committed by males; 16–17 year olds account for the most offences; 92% identify as White British.
- Arrests: 238 children and young people arrested for violent crimes in the same period; two wards (Stockton Town Centre; Mandale & Victoria) show the highest concentrations and are among the most deprived.

- Court outcomes: 21 children received court orders for high gravity offences in 2023/24; 14 related to violent offences.
- Exploitation risk (Harm Outside the Home): 52 children referred in 2023/24 for risk of child criminal exploitation (CCE).
- Education: persistent absence has improved from the 2022 peak but remains high; exclusions are significantly above England averages, particularly in secondary schools; 28% of permanent exclusions occurred in Year 10; 38% of excluded pupils had SEN; NEET among 16–17s is rising.
- Substance misuse: 65 children and young people in specialist treatment during 2023/24 (up since 2021/22).
- Who is most affected: boys, children living in the poorest neighbourhoods, those with multiple disadvantage/ACEs, children in care, and those excluded from school are at heightened risk.

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

A co-produced serious youth violence strategy is currently being drawn up, with a focus on partnership working and an emphasis on universal education and early prevention.

The Youth Justice Management Board meets quarterly and its terms of reference and membership is currently being refreshed.

The Safer Stockton Partnership includes representation from the Youth Justice Team and oversees the community safety plan, including responses to youth violence.

There are good working relationships with Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) CURV, who lead and coordinates a whole system, preventative approach, working with local authorities, police, schools, health, and community organisations to tackle violence within our communities.

There are plans to pilot youth justice prevention panels in Stockton on Tees. These panels form part of Young Futures Programme, led by the Home Office and aligned with the national Safer Streets Mission. These panels aim to identify vulnerable young people early, before they enter the criminal justice system, and connect them with coordinated support. This will support with diversion and early intervention approaches.

As well as a Youth Justice Team, the council also has a Youth Support Team who provide early intervention, a Harm outside the Home Team (HOTH) who manage children at risk of exploitation, and an Adolescent social work team.

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

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Service Priorities in the council plan:

- Strengthen Early Help: ensuring families receive help at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure children are safe, supported, and protected from abuse and harm
- Reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system
- Reduction in the percentage of youth offenders reoffending
- Numbers of care leavers in custody
- Number of children open to the Harm Outside the Home (HOTH) team

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

Greater understanding of the effectiveness of partnership working in Stockton in addressing serious youth violence.

Co-produce with partners an early intervention and prevention strategy that addresses early indicators of possible risk of serious youth violence, such as anti-social behaviour, education suspensions and exclusions, risks of criminal exploitation.

Increasing community responses and resilience.

Identification of any gaps in service provisions across the partnership.

Understanding roles and responsibility for all organisations with the serious youth violence strategy.

Signed: Cllr Clare Besford

Date: 24.02.26

Please return to:

Email: judith.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?

Review of Alternative Provision (AP) for Children and Young People

This scrutiny topic seeks to review Stockton Borough Council’s approach to Alternative Provision (AP) for children and young people who are unable to thrive in mainstream education.

There are growing concerns regarding:

- Rising youth anti-social behaviour
- Persistent school absence
- Disruptive pupils remaining in mainstream schools for extended periods without effective intervention

The current system may not be identifying or supporting young people early enough, resulting in negative outcomes for:

- The young person
- Schools
- Local communities

The intended outcome of scrutiny is to assess whether Stockton has:

- Sufficient high-quality AP places
- Effective referral pathways
- Strong partnerships with community-based providers

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:

Youth anti-social behaviour and school absence are issues of significant public concern across Stockton-on-Tees.

Residents, schools, and families have a strong interest in ensuring that:

- Young people are engaged in positive, structured activity
- Behavioural issues are addressed early
- Public spaces are safe and welcoming

High-quality Alternative Provision can reduce ASB, improve attendance, and prevent escalation into criminal or exploitative behaviour, making this review clearly in the public interest.

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

Effective Alternative Provision can:

- Improve life chances for vulnerable young people
- Reduce youth-related ASB and associated community impacts
- Support safer neighbourhoods

Economically, early intervention through AP can reduce:

- Long-term costs linked to exclusion, youth justice, and social care
- Pressure on schools and public services

Environmentally, reducing ASB improves the use and enjoyment of public spaces, contributing to community well-being.

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

The review would consider:

- Current AP capacity and demand within Stockton
- Waiting times and thresholds for accessing AP
- The cost of reactive interventions compared with early AP support

Improving access to high-quality AP may:

- Reduce repeat ASB incidents
- Reduce exclusions and persistent absence
- Lower future demand on enforcement, policing, and social care services

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

This scrutiny would sit alongside:

- Existing work on youth ASB
- School attendance improvement initiatives
- SEND and inclusion strategies

The review would focus specifically on Alternative Provision and early intervention, avoiding duplication while adding value.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The Council Plan commits to:

- Supporting children and young people to achieve their potential
- Keeping communities safe

- Preventing problems rather than reacting to them

A review of Alternative Provision supports these aims by ensuring vulnerable young people receive appropriate support at the right time.

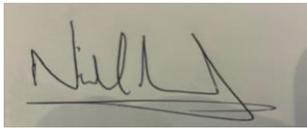
What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

The review would aim to:

- Assess whether current AP provision meets local need
- Identify gaps in availability, quality, or referral processes
- Explore opportunities to support community-based providers, such as voluntary or third-sector organisations
- Make recommendations to improve outcomes for young people and communities

The overall aim is a coherent, high-quality Alternative Provision offer that reduces exclusion, improves engagement, and addresses youth ASB effectively.

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'Nilly' with a horizontal line underneath.

Date: 26/01/2026

Please return to:

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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?

School Transport Provision

For local councils responsible for the welfare and education of their residents, scrutinising the efficiency, safety, and cost effectiveness of school transport services is a fundamental duty

Costs have rocketed in recent years, and assurances are needed for long term sustainability of the service, its funding and ensure complex needs of children within our responsibility are being met

An holistic review to further understand the service its expectations, limits, duties and finance is needed to see new ways of working, reassure those with complex needs can be supported and to empower families and children and consider environmental impact.

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:

Case studies, such as reviews conducted by the Local Government Ombudsman in various UK councils, frequently highlight instances where inadequate route planning for smaller rural schools resulted in unnecessary mileage and inflated fuel costs. Effective scrutiny demands performance indicators related to cost per pupil journey and the utilisation rate of vehicles, pushing contractors towards efficiency gains.

The costs associated with School Transport are rising exponentially and need to be urgently looked at.

Beyond operational mechanics, the scrutiny process must incorporate feedback mechanisms that genuinely reflect the experience of parents and students

Moreover, policies related to fare structures for non-entitled pupils must be reviewed for equity, ensuring they do not inadvertently penalise lower income families seeking optional travel arrangement

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

Social – Ensure resilience to support children with complex needs to maintain education attainment

Environmental – review of journeys, number of journeys, vehicles used

Financial – rising costs to deliver adding to council budget pressures

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

Financial reduction in service provision by streamlining and reviewing
Long term savings in support children with complex needs as social value gain

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

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Review financial pressures
Transformation on ways working
Ensuring protect those with complex needs.

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

Public Engagement & Consultation on School Transport
Review of operational mechanism and performance contracts.
Support further in-house provision rather than contracted.
Leverage connections with Education Board/Schools to participate and share in responsibility

Signed:

M L VICKERS

Date: 27/1/26

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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?

Transition from Children’s Services to Adults’ Services

The transition from Children’s Services to Adults’ Services is a significant period for young people with SEND, disabilities, long-term health conditions, or social care needs. Evidence from previous scrutiny committees, local families and national reviews show that the transition can sometimes be inconsistent, confusing or delayed, leaving young people without clarity on future support.

Key concerns include: -

- Variability in when and how transition planning begins.
- Limited understanding among families of eligibility for Adult Social Care.
- Potential gaps between the end of an EHCP and Adult Care Assessments.
- Pressures on both Children and Adults’ Services affecting timeliness.
- The need for stronger multi-agency coordination (schools, health, colleges, ICB, social care).

Scrutiny is needed to examine how effective current pathways are, identify any gaps or duplication and ensure Stockton-on-Tees is delivering consistent, person-centred transitional support. The review would focus on improving continuity, reducing risk, and strengthening outcomes for vulnerable young people entering adulthood.

A focus on the local offer and effectiveness of the Transitional Operation Group in improving earlier multi- agency planning to support YP and avoid future risk.

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:

Transition affects some of the most vulnerable residents in the Borough. Parents, carers, and young people have highlighted confusion around roles, responsibilities, and future care options. The period between ages 14–18 is critical for life outcomes, safeguarding, and independence. Examining this issue through scrutiny provides transparency and reassurance that the Council is:

- meeting its statutory duties under the Children and Families Act and Care Act
- supporting young people to achieve the best life chances.
- ensuring services are responsive and coordinated A public review will help ensure that residents have confidence in local transition arrangements and that the Council is delivering high-quality, well-planned provision.

<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>stronger transition pathways improve young people’s wellbeing, independence, social inclusion, safeguarding, and stability during a major life change. Economic: Improved Preparing for Adulthood planning helps young people access employment, training, and further education, increasing long-term economic participation while reducing the likelihood of high-cost crisis interventions.</p> <p>Environmental: Clearer local pathways and community-based support reduce the need for out-of-area placements and excessive travel, keeping young people closer to their support networks.</p> <p>To allow for the development of key skills such as employment, training, skills and further education</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p> <p>Effective transitions reduce duplication, avoid service gaps, and lower long-term demand on Adult Social Care by supporting young people to develop independence skills early. Timely assessments and coordinated planning can: - prevent emergency placements - reduce reliance on high-cost adult care services - streamline multi-agency processes - ensure resources are used efficiently across both directorates The review offers an opportunity to identify where system improvements could free up capacity, strengthen joint working, and reduce unnecessary future pressures.</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p> <p>Explore initiatives used by other authorities to learn good practice that may be applicable to SBC</p>

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The review supports several Stockton-on-Tees Council Plan priorities and Powering our Futures by including: - Supporting vulnerable people to live their best lives - Providing high-quality, person-centred services - Working in partnership to improve outcomes - Helping residents access education, employment and training - Promoting independence and reducing inequalities Ensuring a smooth, coordinated transition into adulthood contributes directly to improving life chances, safeguarding wellbeing, and providing value for money.

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

The aim is to facilitate 'a significant improvement' in the current offer as was evidenced in the recent CQC/ Adult Social Care Inspection Report.

Provide a level of oversight and ensure all staff consistently apply a systematic approach when following processes in place to support YP transitioning into adulthood.

A clear understanding of the current transition pathway, including strengths and weaknesses. - Recommendations to improve early planning, communication, and coordination. - Stronger multi-agency working between Children's Services, Adults' Services, SEND, education, and health. - Clear and understandable information for families on eligibility and future support. - Reduced gaps between services at key transition points (e.g., end of EHCP, start of adult care). - Assurance that statutory duties are being met consistently and effectively. - A more resilient Preparing for Adulthood framework that improves outcomes for young people and reduces long-term demand on service

Potential KPI's

. Timeliness & Process KPIs

1.1 % of young people with a transition plan started by Year 9 (age 14)

- Measures early planning in line with statutory expectations (SEND Code of Practice).

1.2 % of young people referred to Adults' Services at least 6 months before their 18th birthday

- Ensures Adults' Services can assess and plan support without crisis.

1.3 % of adult care assessments completed before the young person turns 18

- Key measure of timely and coordinated handover.

1.4 % of transitions with *no gap* between end of Children's Services support and start of Adults' Services support

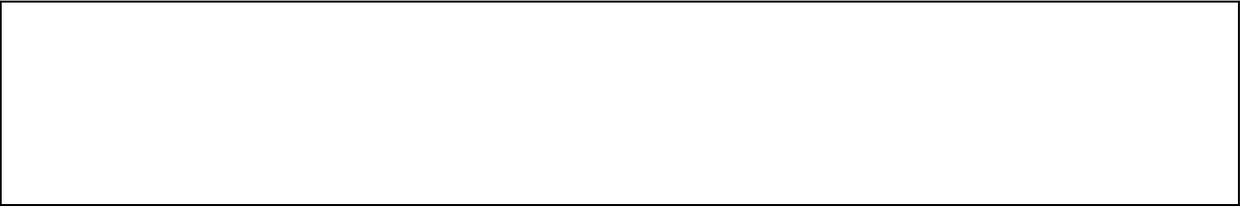
- Direct measure of continuity of care.

2. Experience & Satisfaction KPIs

2.1 Satisfaction score of young people regarding the transition process

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collected through annual survey or review tool. 2.2 Satisfaction score of parents/carers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflects the quality of communication, support, and clarity of information. 2.3 % of young people reporting they feel prepared for adulthood <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A key Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) outcome.	
3. Education, Employment, and Independence KPIs 3.1 % of young people with SEND in education, employment, or training (EET) age 18–25 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A crucial indicator of longer-term outcomes. 3.2 % of young adults accessing independent or semi-independent living options <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tracks development of independence skills and alternatives to high-cost placements. 3.3 % of young people with EHCPs whose outcomes for adulthood are reviewed annually <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measures how effectively goals are aligned to future needs.	
4. Multi-Agency Coordination KPIs 4.1 % of cases with documented multi-agency transition meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflects partnership between Children’s Services, Adults’ Services, ICB/health, schools, etc. 4.2 % of transition plans including contributions from Health services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures physical and mental health needs are planned for appropriately. 4.3 Number of joint cases overseen by Preparing for Adulthood or Transition Team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates cross-directorate collaboration.	
5. Financial & Efficiency KPIs 5.1 % reduction in crisis placements at age 18–20 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If transition is effective, emergency responses should fall. 5.2 % of transitions resulting in planned, costed support packages <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps avoid budget volatility between directorates. 5.3 Unit cost comparison of planned vs. unplanned transition cases <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence for efficiency and early intervention benefits.	
6. Safeguarding & Risk KPIs 6.1 Number of safeguarding referrals during transition period <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A risk-sensitive measure; aim is reduction through better planning. 6.2 % of transitions with documented risk assessment and mitigation plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures vulnerable young people are monitored appropriately.	
Signed: Cllr Jack Miller Cllr Lynn Hall	Date: 12/02/26
Please return to: Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158	

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL



Select Committee Work Programme Suggested Review – Pro Forma

<p>Summary of issue you wish to be scrutinised, including key concerns and outcome for scrutinising the topic?</p> <p>Please be clear about the focus of the review and desired outcome.</p> <p>Supply Teaching</p> <p>With the ban on zero hours contracts now including agency, I thought this would be good opportunity to do this.</p> <p>Under how the legislation is currently written, a supply teacher would be able to sign onto a zero hours contract, and after 12 weeks, would have to be offered a contract with the average number of hours worked. This is obviously great for the staff themselves. Being on these contracts means it's very difficult to get a mortgage, difficult to rent, there's no sick pay etc.</p> <p>However, I can see the knock-on effect being that if a lot of supply teachers sign up during a busy period, their average hours in the 12 weeks will be pretty high, at which point the agency will have to pay them during quiet periods (e.g. during the first fortnight in September, you're lucky to get a couple of days of work, after 6 weeks of not being paid at all). I suspect agencies will pass this additional cost onto schools via the daily rate they're charged, rather than reduce their own profit margins. This will either massively increase the cost for schools, or they will end up directly hiring more cover supervisors. This might be a good option for school finances, but these cover supervisors are often paid around minimum wage and term time only (which comes out to about £18,000 a year), because this job only requires maths and English GCSE, and no A Levels, no degree, and no teaching qualifications. Either schools will end up hiring massively overqualified teachers (for me, this would be a pay cut of £10,000 a year), or filling schools with staff with a few GCSEs and no teaching qualifications to cover short-term absences. I don't think either is good.</p>
<p>NOTE: THE ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO THE ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE WIC PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATION NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.</p>
<p>Public interest justification:</p> <p>Ensuring that children and young people are educated by trained teacher, who receive the appropriate pay and working condition. I am aware that there is at least one school in Stockton-on-Tees which as a rule, does not take qualified teachers for day-to-day cover, they only employ "cover supervisors" who do not require any specific qualifications.</p>
<p>Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:</p> <p>Attracting the best professionals to work within our school and impacting on the outcomes in education for the children and young people of the Borough.</p>
<p>Council performance, efficiency (identification of savings and reducing demand) in this area:</p>
<p>Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):</p>

The Employment Rights Bill addresses zero-hour contracts which may affect supply teachers' employment rights and conditions. Both the NASUWT: Teachers Union and NEU are campaigning for professional entitlements, including decent pay and working conditions, for supply teachers.

There are currently no transformation reviews regarding this issue.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Ensuring the supply teachers/cover have the appropriate qualifications to teach the subjects ensures that children and young people are receiving a good standard of education. This therefore impacts on Priority one – The best start in life to achieve big ambition, specifically Key Move – Giving children and young people the best possible start, in an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

The topic also impacts on Priority four – An inclusive economy; Key Move – Ensuring all our residents can benefit from economic opportunities by delivering and embedding a fairer distribution of wealth, with the new pathway for securing supply cover work being an example of how Stockton-on-Tees can be a place of good work and fair pay.

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

A more localised not-for-profit solution to supply cover in schools that benefits both school, students, and supply teachers themselves.

Signed: Katie Weston

Date: 21/01/2026

Please return to:

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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?

Alley Gates

The alley gate programme in Stockton-on-Tees was initiated in 2001, following a pilot scheme in Newtown in which three alleyways were gated using eight alley gates. The programme was introduced as a community safety measure aimed at reducing crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and fear of crime in residential areas experiencing high levels of these issues.

Following the pilot, the programme was expanded across the borough, primarily within wards experiencing higher levels of deprivation and crime. By 2012/13, a total of 327 alley gates had been installed, providing security benefits to approximately 4,643 properties.

An evaluation carried out in 2008 by Cleveland Police demonstrated that alley gates were effective in reducing crime and ASB, with an overall reduction of 55% in incidents in the 12 months following installation, and reductions of up to 88% in some locations.

The dedicated alley gate installation programme and associated budget came to an end in 2012/13. Since that time, any new gates have been delivered through the Community Participation Budget, subject to legislative criteria being met. Some of the more recently installed gates have been reused from housing regeneration areas.

The Council currently manages 327 alley gates across the borough. The oldest gates are approaching 14 years old, with the average age of the asset base being just under nine years. All gates are subject to an annual programme of scheduled maintenance, which includes general inspections and routine works such as greasing of hinges. In addition, unscheduled reactive repairs are undertaken in response to fault reports.

In 2014/15, 109 fault reports were recorded, equating to an average repair cost of £114 per fault. Faults arise from a combination of vandalism and general wear and tear, with repeat issues occurring in areas experiencing ongoing anti-social behaviour. Dedicated budget provision for alley gate maintenance has remained static since 2012/13 and is forecast to be exhausted. Forecast maintenance and repair costs show a rising trend as the asset base continues to age.

Key areas for consideration includes:

- **Ageing Infrastructure**
A significant proportion of the alley gate stock is approaching the end of its expected lifespan, leading to increased maintenance requirements and higher risk of failure.
- **Rising Maintenance and Repair Costs**
Projected costs for scheduled maintenance and reactive repairs continue to increase year-on-year. The existing budget has not increased in line with demand and is forecast to be fully expended.
- **Absence of a Long-Term Funding Strategy**
There is no identified funding solution for the replacement of gates that are no longer economically repairable. The estimated cost of replacing all gates is approximately £1.5 million, with individual gate replacement costs of around £4,600 each.

- **Repeat Faults and Uneven Demand**

Some locations experience repeated faults linked to ongoing anti-social behaviour, creating pressure on maintenance budgets and operational resources.

- **Limited Asset Condition Data**

No comprehensive condition survey has been undertaken, limiting the Council's ability to prioritise investment or develop a planned replacement programme.

The alley gate programme has historically delivered clear community safety benefits; however, the asset base has now reached a stage where increasing maintenance costs, ageing infrastructure and the lack of a long-term funding strategy present growing challenges.

A Scrutiny Committee is considered the right and proper arena to consider the future of alley gates in Stockton-on-Tees, ensuring that any future approach remains effective, affordable, and aligned with wider Council priorities.

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 proposed review of the future of alley gates clearly meets the public interest test, as it relates directly to issues that affect residents safety, quality of life and the local environment. Alley gates play a significant role in protecting communities from crime and anti-social behaviour, safeguarding homes, supporting resident wellbeing, and preventing environmental issues such as fly-tipping, littering and illegal access to rear spaces.

Members, through their representative role, are well placed to reflect the concerns raised by residents at ward surgeries, Parish Councils, Residents Associations and community groups, where alley gate condition, accessibility and effectiveness are often highlighted. The review will enable Scrutiny to assess whether existing arrangements continue to meet local needs, provide value for money, and support wider community safety and environmental protection objectives.

By drawing on local intelligence, community feedback, and consultation evidence, scrutiny can influence future policy and practice to ensure services remain responsive, proportionate and aligned with residents expectations, thereby strengthening public confidence in the Council's approach to neighbourhood management and community safety.

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

A review of the future of alley gates represents a high-impact scrutiny issue with clear potential to influence social, economic and environmental well-being across the borough.

Alley gates directly affect community safety by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, supporting residents sense of security and wellbeing in some of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

They also contribute to environmental protection by restricting access to rear alleyways, helping to deter fly-tipping, littering and other environmental crime which can place additional burdens on Council services. The Council has significant influence over policy, funding, asset management and partnership approaches relating to alley gates, meaning scrutiny can tangibly shape future outcomes rather than simply highlighting concerns. By examining effectiveness, sustainability, and alignment with wider community safety and regeneration

strategies, scrutiny can inform strategic decision-making, prioritise limited resources where they will have the greatest impact, and support improvements that deliver measurable benefits for residents and neighbourhoods.

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

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

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

There are no linked reviews taking place in this area of focus currently. No similar reviews have previously been taken recently on this topic.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Reviewing the current and future position on alley gates, is closely linked to building healthy and resilient communities. Effective use of gates contributes to directly to public safety by protecting properties and creating safe enclosed spaces for community use. 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?

For the relevant committee to consider:

Key areas for consideration includes:

- **Ageing Infrastructure**
A significant proportion of the alley gate stock is approaching the end of its expected lifespan, leading to increased maintenance requirements and higher risk of failure.
- **Rising Maintenance and Repair Costs**
Projected costs for scheduled maintenance and reactive repairs continue to increase year-on-year. The existing budget has not increased in line with demand and is forecast to be fully expended.
- **Absence of a Long-Term Funding Strategy**
There is no identified funding solution for the replacement of gates that are no longer economically repairable. The estimated cost of replacing all gates is approximately £1.5 million, with individual gate replacement costs of around £4,600 each.
- **Repeat Faults and Uneven Demand**
Some locations experience repeated faults linked to ongoing anti-social behaviour, creating pressure on maintenance budgets and operational resources.
- **Limited Asset Condition Data**
No comprehensive condition survey has been undertaken, limiting the Council's ability to prioritise investment or develop a planned replacement programme.

In order to provide clarity on the future policy on the use of current and future alley gates in Stockton on Tees.

Signed: Councillor Norma Stephenson OBE

Date: 10.02.2026

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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?

Animal Welfare, Kennelling and the Protection of Pets

As part of the Council's Environmental Health Service, our Animal Welfare Team 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 and recently one of only a few local authorities nationally to receive the platinum award for continual excellent.

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 national 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, increase in veterinary costs 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 year which also 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 i.e. recent change to duties around XL bullies.
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 Councils 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 dog related requests the Animal Welfare Service deals with an average of 700 requests for service per annum.

Since 2022 the service has kennelled:

2022/2023 - 337 dogs

2023/2024 – 247 dogs

2024/2025 – 358 dogs

2025/2026 – 260 dogs (April to December)

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: 21/01/2026

Please return to: Judy Trainer,

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?

Review of Stockton Borough Council’s Procurement and Tendering Processes

This scrutiny topic seeks to examine Stockton Borough Council’s procurement and tendering processes, with a particular focus on whether they consistently deliver best value for money for the Council and local taxpayers.

There are concerns that current procurement arrangements may lead to high unit costs, limited competition, and insufficient challenge to labour and overhead charges within contracts. For example, instances have been highlighted where the cost of relatively small items of council-provided infrastructure (such as memorial benches) appears disproportionately high, with a significant element attributed to labour costs.

The intended outcome of scrutiny is to gain a clear understanding of:

- How procurement decisions are made
- How value for money is assessed
- Whether alternative delivery or procurement models could achieve better outcomes

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:

Procurement represents a significant proportion of Stockton Borough Council’s annual expenditure and directly affects the level of council tax, service delivery, and public trust.

Residents expect the Council to:

- Spend public money efficiently
- Secure competitive prices
- Demonstrate transparency in how contracts are awarded

Scrutiny of procurement is therefore in the clear public interest, particularly during a period of financial pressure and the development of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP).

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

Effective procurement can:

- Support local businesses and employment
- Ensure high-quality services and infrastructure

- Promote sustainable and environmentally responsible practices

Conversely, inefficient procurement can:

- Divert resources away from frontline services
- Limit opportunities for local suppliers and SMEs
- Increase the Council's carbon footprint through inflexible or outdated contracts

This review would assess whether current procurement practices are contributing positively to Stockton-on-Tees' social, economic, and environmental well-being.

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

The review would consider:

- Whether current procurement processes achieve competitive pricing
- How labour costs and overheads within contracts are assessed and challenged
- Whether in-house delivery, shared services, or alternative suppliers could provide better value

By identifying inefficiencies or structural issues, the review could highlight potential savings, help reduce future cost pressures, and support more sustainable service delivery.

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

This scrutiny would complement, rather than duplicate:

- Ongoing financial planning through the MTFP
- Internal audit activity
- Statutory procurement compliance requirements

The review would focus specifically on value for money and outcomes, rather than compliance alone.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

The Council Plan includes commitments to:

- Deliver value for money
- Use resources efficiently and responsibly
- Maintain public confidence in decision-making

A review of procurement directly supports these objectives by ensuring that council spending aligns with strategic priorities and delivers maximum benefit to residents.

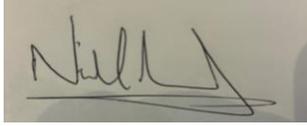
What would you want the outcome of the review to be?

The review would aim to:

- Provide assurance that procurement processes deliver value for money
- Identify opportunities to improve competitiveness and transparency
- Recommend practical changes to procurement practices where appropriate
- Inform future budget-setting and procurement strategies

Ultimately, the outcome sought is a procurement approach that is robust, transparent, and demonstrably cost-effective, ensuring public funds are used to the greatest possible benefit.

Signed:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'Nilla' followed by a stylized flourish.

Date: 26/01/2026

Please return to:

Email: judith.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?

Bereavement Services - Strategic Review and Development

Bereavement services represent a critical component of public health and social care infrastructure, providing essential support to individuals navigating the profound loss of a loved one. Given the universal experience of grief and the significant impact it has on mental health, community cohesion, and overall wellbeing, the quality and accessibility of these services should be subject to regular scrutiny. A bereavement services council scrutiny topic review aims to assess the effectiveness, equity, and responsiveness of existing provisions against established standards and community needs. Such reviews are vital mechanisms for ensuring accountability and driving continuous improvement in a sensitive and often under-resourced sector.

To consider how best the Council can support bereaved families with a holistic review in current services and provision and look at options to expand its service and provision further for example additional burial space, grave options, natural burial, funeral and headstone services, supporting the bereaved through counselling and more.

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:

Statistically it is known that every person will arrange 1 funeral in their life, and the bereavement journey and stages of grief are not the same for everyone. This will ensure the upmost dignity and respect for a deceased and support the bereaved. This topic will explore options to tackle funeral poverty with average “basic” funerals now exceeding £3-4k, as well as enhancing our crematorium and cemeteries, and making the traumatic bereavement journey easier for all. This will also look to ensure revenue generated from the crematorium is directly reinvested within the service.

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

Social: tackle funeral poverty, consider all faiths, communities and individuals, consider mental impact and wellbeing support for the bereaved

Environmental: consider impact bereavement has on the environment such as natural burial, longevity of gas cremators and plans to replace.

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

Reduction in 'public health funeral' costs by considering in-house funeral service to reduce public health funeral costs but also tackle funeral poverty to residents.
Reduction in funeral poverty and costs of dying to bereaved families within the borough.
Supports growing Councils bereavement offering following crematorium establishment and ensure funds generated from the crematorium are reinvested into the service

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

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

Transformation: utilise digital solutions to support service delivery; supporting residents to tackle funeral poverty, support the environment and more and tackle a topic that is often treated as a taboo subject

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

To raise public conversation of bereavement and the work of the authority.
To look at a strategic plan to tackle issues in relation to bereavement such as wellbeing, funeral poverty, impact on the environment and consider a wide scope of options for service development, whilst ensuring funds generated are redirected and remain within the service.

Signed:

M L VICKERS

Date: 27/1/26

Please return to:

Email: judith.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?

Library Provision in the Borough

Overall use of libraries is in decline nationally. Members are invited to consider whether access to books, information and advice, supported by expert professional librarians, remains a priority. Consideration should also be given to the role of our libraries in bridging a digital divide and enabling people to gain free, technically supported access to the internet and web-based resources.

The review should look at future delivery options and resource implications, to provide a framework of principles and outcome priorities for the service.

Reflecting the priority outcomes identified by the Select Committee, the PoF Review will develop options for future service delivery, linked to Council objectives and achieving the required levels of savings. These future delivery options would be the basis of public consultation.

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:

Library authorities (unitary, county or metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the [Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964](#) (PLMA) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons for all those who live, work or study in the area (section 7).

In providing this service, councils must, among other things:

- encourage both adults and children to make full use of the library service (section 7(2)(b))
- lend books and other printed material free of charge for those who live, work or study in the area (in accordance with section 8(3))

When considering changes to its library service, a local authority must ensure that the new service model will continue to meet its statutory duty under the PLMA. In order to do so, the local authority should ensure that it has completed the following processes:

- Local needs assessment
This is a detailed analysis of the needs and desires of the local community, including demographic data, accessibility and transport, patterns of use and demand, views of users and non-users.
- Equality Impact Assessment
Like all public bodies, library services must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) can demonstrate compliance with the PSED and ensure that that no specific communities or groups will suffer any adverse impact from changes to the service.
- Community consultation

The proposed changes must be subject to a full consultation process with as wide an audience as possible, including library users, staff, and local community groups.

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

The Select Committee review will not in itself impact on the social and economic well-being of the area, because the Select Committee's findings will inform a second stage review and consultation. That second stage review will aim to fully understand impact of different options.

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

Baseline and background information will be provided to the Committee to understand current and recent performance, including data on levels of usage at the various sites, types of service use, and profile of services users.

Shifting trends and user expectations will also be set out, covering for example the increasing proportion of books and information provided digitally.

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

The existing service is delivered in a variety of ways, including mobile and online services, libraries integrated into other Council facilities, and libraries co-located with other partners, such as Tees Active.

It will be important to consider the reach, value and effectiveness of the service in its various forms. The local context will also influence the assessment of impact and value.

The Council is reviewing Customer Services, which is delivered in part through library buildings. The wider role of library staff in supporting residents with impartial and objective information and guidance, represents an important context for this review.

How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan?

To varying degrees, the library service supports the following Council priorities;

Our People - helping the people of the Borough to be healthy, safe and protected from harm.

- Supporting people to live in cohesive and safe communities
- Making sure people are supported and protected from harm
- Helping people to have healthy lives

Our Places - making sure the Borough is vibrant, clean and attractive.

- Providing great places to live and visit
- Providing clean and green spaces
- Offering rich cultural experiences

Our Economy – creating and supporting a thriving economy where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

- Developing and supporting a growing economy
- Improving education and skills development
- Supporting job creation and increased employment

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

A clear understand of what the Committee considers the priorities of a library service to be, in terms of its range of functions, method of delivery, scale and distribution.

Signed: Cllr Nigel Cooke

Date: 05/03.2026

Please return to:

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?

Tree Maintenance & Policy

Review existing tree policy and maintenance routines to ensure effective and efficient maintenance that balances residents needs, and supports the natural environment

A fundamental element of successful council tree management lies in adopting proactive, rather than reactive, maintenance schedules. Reactive maintenance, which involves pruning or removing trees only after damage has occurred or a complaint has been lodged, is inherently more costly and dangerous.

To look at alternative working options and upskilling of colleagues to carry out basic maintenance as well as reviewing existing tree policy to be more practical support both resident needs, but also ensure greater protection of trees and the natural environment.

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:

Tree maintenance within local council jurisdictions represents a critical intersection between urban planning, public safety, environmental stewardship, and fiscal responsibility. Effective management of the public tree stock is not merely an aesthetic concern but a vital component of maintaining healthy, resilient, and safe urban environments. Council scrutiny of tree maintenance protocols is essential to ensure that public funds are spent efficiently, risks associated with tree failure are minimised, and the ecological benefits provided by urban trees are maximised.

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

Environmental Impact: Effective maintenance and planting regime to support tree life in balance with resident needs and safety and reduce maintenance needs.

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

Scrutiny panels must therefore investigate the council’s policy on remedial work versus removal. For example, the replacement of mature trees with saplings represents a significant ecological deficit spanning decades. A robust maintenance program should prioritise tree preservation through appropriate pruning techniques, such as crown thinning or lifting, especially for veteran trees protected under Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):
How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan? Safety of Residents Support Environment and Biodiversity Value and develop our staff
What would you want the outcome of the review to be? Public Consultation of Tree maintenance Effective maintenance and appropriate replanting regime Review of Existing tree policy
Signed: M L VICKERS Date: 27/1/26
Please return to: Email: judith.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?

Waste Collection Services:

Review existing provision to look at smarter recycling and for the authority to lead by example.
 Consider reinstatement of weekly general waste collection if collecting all waste and separating roadside.
 Simplify the food waste collection service alongside the green/garden waste collection service
 Full holistic review on current waste service provision both to residents, commercial clients and as an authority with greater procurement and provision of recycling receptacles within public spaces.

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 provision of municipal solid waste collection, particularly through the ubiquitous wheelie bin system, stands as a fundamental service underpinning public health, environmental sustainability, and civic order

 While often taken for granted, the efficiency, cost, and methodology of this service are subjects of intense public interest and scrutiny.

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

Public scrutiny frequently targets the clarity and consistency of recycling guidelines associated with the bins. Confusion over what materials belong in which bin, often exacerbated by varied regional standards (for example, differing rules on plastic film or cardboard recycling, as well as different waste tools used across adjacent council boundaries), leads to high contamination rates.

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

The cost differences associated with collecting mixed dry recycling versus residual waste, and how these differences are communicated to the public regarding council tax contributions, become central to the debate. Residents question whether the specified bin sizes, collection methods, and frequency adequately reflect the true cost of sustainable disposal.

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?):
How does the topic support delivery of the Council Plan? To comply with legislation regarding waste collection as well as looking at cost savings, transformation and making our borough cleaner and greener and easier for residents to recycle.
What would you want the outcome of the review to be? Consider reinstatement of weekly refuse collection Expansion of Council leading by example with recycling in public spaces, green spaces etc. Review of current receptacles for recycling including food waste & garden waste
Signed: M L VICKERS Date: 27/1/26
Please return to: Email: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk Tel: 01642 528158