

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

<p>Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2020/2021</p>

15 JULY 2020

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

REVIEW OF 2019-2020

2. The topics considered by the Panel in 2019-2020 are listed below for Members' information:
 - Infrastructure Delivery (including Broadband, Transport, Local Plan) – Final Report issued.

Updates

- M Homes and Forward Plan.
- Snow Centre.
- Boho Digital Expansion Site.
- Centre Square.
- Historic Buildings and local conservation area protection.

Ongoing Investigations

- Recycling and Waste Management/Waste Disposal Facility.
The aim of the investigation is to examine recycling and waste management delivery in Middlesbrough and reduce the amount of waste produced in Middlesbrough which needs managing, thereby reducing costs and protecting the environment.
- Teesside Crematorium.
The aim of the investigation is to examine any potential impacts of bereavement services offered by neighbouring local authorities on those provided by Middlesbrough Council at Teesside Crematorium.

The Panel was scheduled to receive updates on Flood Risk Management and Air Quality at the April meeting but this meeting was cancelled due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and subsequent Government lockdown.

BACKGROUND

3. At the start of every Municipal Year, scrutiny panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year.
4. Work programmes are useful as they provide some structure to a scrutiny panel's activity and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work.
5. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather information/views from a number of sources. Below is a list of topics which are anticipated to be of particular interest to the scrutiny panel. Members are advised that the list of possible topics is not exhaustive and that additional topics can be added and considered at the scrutiny panel meeting.

Topical issues

Topic	Details
Net Zero Teesside	Net Zero Teesside is a Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) project, based in Teesside in the North East of England. It aims to decarbonise a cluster of carbon-intensive businesses by as early as 2030 and deliver the UK's first zero-carbon industrial cluster. ¹
England Tree Strategy Consultation	This consultation will inform a new England Tree Strategy which will be published later this year. The strategy will set out policy priorities to deliver an ambitious tree planting programme. It will focus on expanding, protecting and improving woodlands, and how trees and woodlands can connect people to nature, support the economy, combat climate change and recover biodiversity. This will ensure that trees are established and managed for the many benefits they provide for people, the economy, the climate and nature itself. ²

Suggestions

Suggestion	Details
The effect of planning applications on traffic increases (Kader Community Council)	This is an issue regularly raised by residents at meetings who feel that traffic issues are not discussed at the early stages of developments.
Planning and Public Engagement (Nunthorpe Parish)	Councillors noted that the webpage of Middlesbrough Council is far from easy to navigate, and, in particular, Councillors are particularly aware of the difficulty residents encounter in providing

¹ <https://www.netzeroteesside.co.uk/project/>

² <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/forestry/england-tree-strategy/>

Council)	<p>responses to planning matters. So many people are raising this concern that a Nunthorpe resident has produced a guide to assist people who wish to access Middlesbrough Council's Planning Department's documents electronically and who hope to provide a response on-line. The Parish Council was informed that people find the process so cumbersome that they give up. Some may then send an email directly to the Planning Department. Others regard the complex nature of the planning matter under consideration as requiring an extended and detailed response which is not possible due to the restriction of the number of words permitted by the Council, and so these residents may also send an email directly. However, there are disadvantages in direct communication because non-electronic submissions are not generally accessible to others.</p>
<p>Planning and Public Engagement (Stainton and Thornton Parish Council)</p>	<p>As part of the scrutiny work programme, I would appreciate if the Council could look at its planning portal. The site can be difficult to access and any comment made against a particular application is often "timed out" before the objection/observation is made.</p> <p>If a planning application has been submitted and given an application number, any subsequent alterations/resubmissions are attached to the original planning reference and NOT included in the weekly/monthly planning lists, meaning that any alterations MAY go unnoticed. This problem needs addressing.</p>
<p>Housing and MDC (Councillor)</p>	<p>The role of MDC in housing development and how will its role expand and develop as the commercial viability of housing sites is brought into question after Covid.</p>
<p>Liveable Streets (Councillor)</p>	<p>Closing off streets in suburban areas and encouraging pedestrians and cycling with landscaping and greenery replacing road furniture.</p>
<p>Cycling Provision (Councillor)</p>	<p>Given the drive by Government to encourage eco-friendly transport and funding streams attached to the same. Look at cycling provision within the town.</p>
<p>Business Support Post-Covid 19 (Councillor)</p>	<p>Regular updates (maybe even as a standing agenda item) on how business development is working after Covid. Empty business premises are an inevitability and we need to be looking at how the Council, and TVCA, are trying to encourage new start-ups, innovation in terms of use of empty premises and look more generally at the state of the property market and retail/hospitality sector in Middlesbrough as we recover.</p>
<p>The impact of Covid 19 on future economic growth in the town (Regeneration)</p>	

<p>The future of town centres (Regeneration)</p>	
<p>Capital Programme Post-Covid 19 (Councillor)</p>	<p>Updates on the capital programme and an analysis of its post-Covid viability, the East Middlesbrough Community Facility and progress thereon and an update on TAMP.</p>
<p>Consultation with communities (Regeneration)</p>	
<p>Grass verges policy on maintenance and damage (Councillor)</p>	
<p>Parking on grassed verges (Councillor)</p>	<p>This makes the grassed areas within virtually every ward look an eyesore. I've checked with officers, and there isn't any policy on this subject, and no policy to repair damaged verges.</p>
<p>Good management of trees (Councillor)</p>	<p>The current policy is only to treat trees which are dead, diseased or dying. This policy is outdated, as many trees within every ward need either crown reducing/crown thinning and cleaning from crossed branches. This enables the tree to survive longer and also enables residents to appreciate trees, where there may be friction due to them encroaching onto properties by overhanging branches.</p>
<p>Side waste of refuse (Councillor)</p>	
<p>Open spaces and cemeteries (Councillor)</p>	
<p>Enforcement - littering and fly tipping (Member of the Public)</p>	<p>I would like to suggest that litter, and particularly litter thrown from vehicles, is examined with a view to taking action to reduce this.</p> <p>I am constantly dismayed by the huge quantity of litter thrown from vehicles onto the verges, and into the hedges, where I live (Brass Castle Lane).</p> <p>This issue is far from restricted to one road. It is equally bad along the B1365 for example, as well as many other places.</p> <p>It is an offence to throw litter from vehicles, for which I understand</p>

	<p>the owner of the vehicle is liable. However, at a recent Community Council meeting I asked a representative from Cleveland Police attending whether this is policed and action taken. The answer given was the police regard this as a Council matter and do not take any action.</p> <p>The quantity of litter has reduced hugely during the present lockdown. Partly due to less traffic. But mainly due to takeaway food outlets (McDonalds and others) being closed. I have no doubt the litter will return as soon as the lockdown is over and takeaway food outlets reopen.</p> <p>I believe there are a number of steps which could be taken which should help to reduce the problem. One might be a clear warning on all takeaway food containers that throwing litter from a vehicle is a criminal offence for which the owner of the vehicle is liable.</p> <p>Another suggestion I have heard of is all take-away food packaging should contain the vehicle registration number so it can be traced to the owner.</p> <p>I believe it would also assist if there were a small number of well-publicised prosecutions.</p>
<p>Fly tipping, the responsibilities of property management companies and enforcement (Member of the Public)</p>	<p>I'd like to suggest fly tipping as a scrutiny topic. Certain areas of the town are plagued by illegal rubbish dumping, making it an unpleasant and sometimes dangerous place to live.</p>
<p>Maintenance and repair of pavements (Member of the Public)</p>	<p>Due the recent Covid-19 virus, I have been encouraged to take daily exercise during this period. The state of the local pavements need attention, not because many are cracked, but because they are uneven and move. If we are encouraging elderly people the exercise more, the Local Authority needs to ensure that this can be done safely.</p>
<p>Enforcement - dog walking (Member of the Public)</p>	<p>Some dog owners are becoming a problem; some are trying to walk 6 or seven dogs at a time, some think nothing of leaving their dogs the run loose in public areas, and some pickup dog poo but then throw it into bushes.</p>

Updates

<p>Flood Risk</p>	<p>Considered annually by the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel</p>
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Air Quality	Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019
Boro Youth Climate Action Team	The Boro Youth Climate Action Team is a group of young individuals within Middlesbrough aiming to help contribute positively towards the ongoing climate crisis. ³ Their aim is to get Middlesbrough educated and more eco-friendly.

6. It should be noted that the topics and updates outlined above are suggestions. The content of the scrutiny panel's work programme is entirely a decision for the panel to make. When considering the work programme, the panel is advised to select topics that are of interest to it, as well as topics that the panel feels by considering, could add value to the Local Authority's work.
7. In addition to undertaking the agreed work programme, scrutiny panels have also previously responded on an ad-hoc basis to emerging issues - such as considering relevant new legislation, guidance or Government consultation documents. This approach occasionally results in further topics being identified for investigation or review throughout the year.
8. On occasion ad-hoc scrutiny panels may also be established throughout the year to undertake additional investigations, for example to examine areas of work which overlap more than one scrutiny panel.
9. The scrutiny panel is also advised that, under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities have a responsibility of community leadership and a power to secure the effective promotion of community well-being. Therefore, in addition to the scrutiny panel's generally recognised powers (of holding the Executive to account, reviewing service provision, developing policy, considering budget plans and performance and financial monitoring), panels also have the power to consider **any** matters which are not the responsibility of the Council but which affect the local authority **or** the inhabitants of its area. For example, nationally, local authorities have undertaken scrutiny work on issues such as post office closures, rural bus services, policing matters and flood defence schemes.

Scrutiny work plan prioritisation aid

10. Members may wish to use the aid attached at **Appendix 1** to prioritise issues where scrutiny can make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

11. The scrutiny panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year.

³ Boro Youth Climate Action Team Facebook Post

12. When considering its work programme, the scrutiny panel is asked to ensure that topics agreed for inclusion:
 - Affect a group of people living within the Middlesbrough area.
 - Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.
 - Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or the scrutiny panels have considered during the last 12 months.
 - Do not relate to an individual service complaint.
 - Do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council Committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.
13. It is suggested that the scrutiny panel has a mixture of working styles in its programme. This can include detailed and in-depth reviews, shorter topics, or one-off investigations.
14. Once the scrutiny panel has identified the areas of priority, support staff will draw those topics into a programme for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RECOMMENDATION

15. That the scrutiny panel identifies topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2020/21, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. Within the report, reference is made to: DEFRA, Net Zero Teesside, Boro Youth Climate Action Team Facebook Page and Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019.

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APPENDIX 1

