

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Date:	Wednesday 28th January, 2026
Time:	4.30 pm
Venue:	Mandela Room (Municipal Buildings)

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest.

3. Minutes - Overview and Scrutiny Board - 18 December 2025 3 - 12

To receive the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. Scrutiny Chairs Update

To receive updates from Scrutiny Panel Chairs.

5. Executive Forward Work Programme 13 - 26

To consider forthcoming Executive Decisions.

5.1 Forward Plan Actions Progress

To provide members of the overview and scrutiny board with an update on outstanding forward plan actions arising from the previous meeting.

- *Investment in Temporary Accommodation Proposals for investment alongside a social investor to purchase properties to reduce the expenditure on temporary accommodation*

6. Executive Member Update - Public Health

The Executive Member for Public Health will be in attendance to provide an update on her portfolio.

7. Final Report of the OSB Task and Finish Group - Community Cohesion 27 - 54

To consider the Final Report of the OSB Task Finish Group into Community Cohesion.

8. Artificial Intelligence - Update 55 - 76

The Head of ICT and Digital will be in attendance to provide an update on how the Council uses Artificial Intelligence.

The Council's Artificial Intelligence Policy and associated Single Member Executive Report is attached for OSB's convenience.

9. Any other urgent items which, in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered.

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Corporate Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Tuesday 20 January 2026

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors L Young (Chair), J Ewan (Vice-Chair), D Branson, E Lynch, D Coupe, J Kabuye, L Lewis, T Mohan, I Morrish, J Platt, M Saunders, Z Uddin, G Wilson and J Young

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Scott Bonner/ Sue Lightwing, 01642 729708/ 01642 729712, scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk sue_lightwing@middlesbrough.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on Thursday 18 December 2025.

PRESENT: Councillors L Young (Chair), J Ewan (Vice-Chair), D Coupe, J Kabuye, T Mohan, I Morrish, J Platt, Z Uddin, G Wilson, J Young and B Hubbard (Substitute for M Saunders)

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Mayor C Cooke and Councillors J Rostron and N Walker

OFFICERS: S Bonner, H Dalby, L Graham, A Humble and S Lightwing

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors D Branson, E Lynch, L Lewis and M Saunders

25/43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

25/44 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 19 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 19 November were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/45 SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair invited Scrutiny Panel Chairs to present their updates.

The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel advised OSB that the Panel had met on 1 December at which it heard final evidence gathering in relation to its topic on healthy placemaking with a focus on childhood obesity. The Panel's next meeting would consider evidence relating to its next topic, Violence Against Women and Girls. The Chair of the Panel also advised that the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee met on 11 December where it received an information from Health Colleagues regarding an update on the University Hospital Tees Strategy, Respite Care and Palliative Care services.

The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel submitted a written update which was read by the Democratic Services Officer. The update advised that the Panel had last met on 8 December where it received information from the Interim Director of Education and Partnerships and the STSCP Partnership Manager regarding the STSCP's annual report. The Panel also considered the Terms of Reference for its current review into Out of Area Specialist Provision. The Panel's next meeting was scheduled for 26 January 2026.

The Chair thanked the Panel Chairs for their updates and asked the Board to note the information.

NOTED.

25/46 EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced the report for OSB's consideration. A copy of the Executive Forward Work Programme was attached at Appendix one of the report and Members were asked to raise any issues they had in relation to any of the items listed.

The Chair commented the entry relating to the Artificial Intelligence Policy, which was to be considered by the Mayor, would be brought to January's meeting of OSB for an overview.

A Member queried if any further information was available relating to the 200 homes associated with the Forward Plan Item, "Investment in Temporary Accommodation Proposals for investment alongside a social investor to purchase properties to reduce the expenditure on

temporary accommodation."

ORDERED that:

1. Further information about the 200 homes in the Temporary Accommodation Forward Plan item be circulated to the Board
2. The contents of the Forward Plan be noted.

25/47

FORWARD PLAN ACTIONS PROGRESS

There were no actions relating to the Executive Forward Plan following the previous meeting of OSB.

NOTED.

25/48

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE - ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Chair welcomed the Executive Member for Adult Social Care to the meeting and invited her to provide her update.

The Executive Member had been appointed to her position in May 2025 and, as such, had not been in post for a full year. Members were advised that most of what was to be covered in the update could be found in the Executive Member's updates to Council.

Beginning with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, both the Executive Member and Adult Social Services were happy with the progress made with Adult Social Services having been taken out of monitoring.

The Adult Social Care Vision had been drafted and was scheduled to be considered at the January meeting of Executive. The Executive Member and Adult Social Care Director met regularly, who in turn, met regularly with the CEO of the Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency to understand how the Council and voluntary sector could work collaboratively. It was commented that some work undertaken with the voluntary sector had gone by the wayside.

The Executive Member had undertaken several site visits and spoken to Social Care staff to understand the work they were doing. A Social Work celebration day had been held in the Town Hall Crypt and the Executive Member was pleased to recognise a drama group and some service users from her previous tenure as portfolio holder for Adult Social Care.

Since her previous tenure Adult Social Care portfolio holder, the Executive Member had found services had changed, namely with additional activity. These included sensory loss drop-ins, which had made a big difference to people's lives. There had also been events for people with learning difficulties and autism.

Adult Social Care was facing challenges, such as efficiency requirements being made at the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) and across the Health and Social Care landscape. These changes had knock-on impacts for Adult Social Care services and its relationships with healthcare colleagues.

There was a positive driver around neighbourhood health management, with services becoming localised, rather than centralised in hospitals, which impacted positively on service users. New legislation was being introduced but there was little detail on this.

As part of the Fair Pay Fundin Agreement there had been a national consultation about social workers pay which could filter to all council staff. Members were advised that previously, all Local Authority pay awards were agreed nationally but this was replaced by Job Evaluation processes which were subjective to individual Councils.

Reforms had been introduced with regards to Mental Health Services, and a significant amount of work was being undertaken to accommodate those changes. The changes had increased demand on social care bespoke Community Support Packages, and as such there was a move to allow people to remain in their own homes.

Homelessness and Domestic Abuse services were undergoing service reviews. It was commented that many people accessing services did not want accommodation, and some services users were difficult to house due to challenging behaviours. Increasingly, the Council had to rely on private sector housing. However in cases where damage was done to properties by service users the repair bill fell to the Council. It was suggested this issue could potentially be examined by Scrutiny.

In terms of the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda, the Executive Member had taken on the role of Chair of the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership.

Members were also advised that Adult Social Care had achieved its savings targets which had been achieved largely through the project work on Levick Court. In the proposed budget there was some growth for Adult Social Care.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for her update and invited questions from the Board.

A Member commented that he agreed with the localisation of healthcare services as this made it easier for people without their own transport to access those services.

It was queried if patient transport was available as part of the Adult Social Care offer. It was clarified this could be reassessed as part of the merger between North and South Tees hospitals. The Member further commented that a volunteer driver scheme had operated in this capacity some time ago. It was clarified this was no longer possible as the company that had provided this service had folded. This was being examined to see if a similar service could be reestablished.

A Member asked how the Hospital at Home service was monitored. It was stated this was a national initiative with the aim of preventing people needing to access hospitals. It was also clarified there was oversight from relevant clinicians remotely. However, this was primarily an NHS driven service with limited intervention from Adult Social Care.

A Member queried, that in terms of the budget for Adult Social Care, if there was a possibility of the service being able to operate without reliance on the social care precept which had been introduced in 2015. It was clarified that due to the complexity of services and the increasing demands placed upon them, this was unlikely. However, it was emphasised that the service was operating as efficiently as it could.

It was also discussed, and clarified, that Middlesbrough was a Dementia Friendly town as well as an Age Friendly town. It was also highlighted that many shops that identified as Dementia Friendly were no longer open.

Members were advised that the Staying Put Agency were commended in the DFG Home Adaptation Service of the Year award at the National Health Awards 2025. The Board expressed their thanks to all staff involved.

There were no other questions from the Board.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for her update and asked the Board to note the information presented.

At this point in the meeting the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and the Director for Adult Social Care withdrew from the meeting.

NOTED.

25/49 **REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET – FORECAST YEAR-END OUTTURN POSITION AT QUARTER TWO 2025/26**

The Chair welcomed the Executive Member for Finance, the Director of Finance and Transformation and the Head of Financial Planning and Business Partnering to the meeting.

The Executive Member provided a brief overview of the attached report and advised OSB that the forecasted budget outturn at quarter two, without any additional mitigations, showed a

£1.8 million overspend. This was an improved position on the quarter one position which forecasted £4.5 million overspend. It was also commented that such forecasted overspends were normal at this point the financial year.

The largest budget pressure was within Children's Services however contingency planning was in place to reduce those pressures. All directorates were required to produce recovery plans.

The Council's reserves continued to forecast growth despite the projected overspend of £1.8 million. Additional funds were being allocated to capital budgets.

The Executive Member invited questions from the Board.

It was reaffirmed that the Council's reserves were growing, and Members' attention was drawn to a graph located at figure one on page 48 of the report pack, which illustrated this. It was projected that by 2029 the Council's reserves could reach approximately £40 million. It was also commented there had been improvements in the resilience index, and it was hoped the Council would emerge as average in this regard. Previously, the only Councils with lower reserves than Middlesbrough were those that sought financial assistance.

A conversation took place during which it was commented that a report seen by the Audit Committee had given a different impression of reserves than those identified by the Executive Member. It was clarified that Audit reports were retrospective in nature which may have given a different impression of the reserves status.

It was also stated that having sufficient reserves was beneficial for the Council, as it determined what the Council could and could not afford. Having low reserves often led to applications for additional financial assistance from government. It was also clarified that there was no ideal level of reserves that a Council should have.

A conversation took place about the government settlement which had been announced prior to the meeting starting. It was stated that indications were Middlesbrough was a beneficiary of the settlement and that in such a process there would always be those Councils that gained and those that lost.

A Member queried that, for Council services projecting an overspend, would reserves be used to cover the shortfall. It was clarified the actual budget outturn was unknown, but it was known that the reserves would be higher than they were in previous years. It was also clarified that overspending would need to exceed £6 million to prevent additional funding placed in the reserves.

A Member referred to the graph at figure one in the report and commented that approximately £8.3 million of this total was from bad debt provision. This was acknowledged. It was clarified that the Council was satisfied with the levels it had for bad debt. It was also stated the collection fund process was doing well.

A Member drew OSB's attention to paragraph 4.31 of the report which referenced a £700,000 saving relating to contractual spending reviews and how this was a double count of a 2024/25 saving.

It was clarified that this was a further expansion of the £700,000 saving which was too ambitious. One of the issues under examination was looking at contracts against revenue budgets rather than capital budgets. It was commented that it would be preferable to remove the saving to prevent missing that target the following year.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member and Officers for their information and asked the Board to note the information presented.

NOTED.

The Board was advised the report was submitted as read and informed Members that the Council Plan was being reevaluated to ensure performance measures were more closely aligned to the Council's objectives. The Mayor also stated that 97% of the objectives in the Council Plan Workplan had been completed.

There were no questions from the Board on the report.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for his presentation and asked that the information presented be noted.

NOTED.

25/51

2026/27 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026/27 AND 2029/30

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Finance and the Mayor to deliver their presentations relating to the draft budget 2026/2027.

The Executive Member for Finance delivered her presentation which included the following points:

- During the 2024/25 financial year the Council had been required to save £14 million.
- There had been a requirement to seek Exceptional Financial Support totalling £4.7 million. The Council did not draw down on all of this, however.
- During the same period there had also been reversals to savings required in Area Care, Welfare Rights and Street Warden provision.
- For the 2025/26 financial year, savings requirements and income generation was £7 million.
- There was £2.5 million available for service growth which included 20% increase for Area Care expenditure, as well as an increase in pest control staffing from one to four members of staff.
- A priorities fund was established which totalled £4.4 million and was split across childhood enrichment, shop front improvements and Councillor ward allocation.
- In terms of additional funding being made by the government, there was a total of approximately £21 million in additional funding from central government. This was based on the best information when the draft budget report was written. However, a cursory review of the government's announcement showed the Council's projections were largely accurate.
- This funding would be allocated across several initiatives including service demand pressures and inflationary changes.
- After required spending, the remaining addition funding totalled approximately £6.4 million.
- Reserves were rising and were predicted to total approximately £40 million.
- The planned spending in the draft budget was affordable due to the Council's improved financial position as well as improved governance and budget spending controls.
- The draft 2026/27 budget proposed no cuts to services; no increase in core council tax; a 2% increase on the Adult Social Care precept which would cover increased costs of statutory services and £6million worth of investment in front line services.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Finance for her presentation and invited questions from the Board.

A discussion took place about the monetary value of the 2% Adult Social Care Precept. It was clarified that the Adult Social Care Precept would cost 53p per week for a Council Tax Band A property where it was the equivalent of 80p per week for a Council Tax Band D property. The amounts would change depending on the household type. It was clarified this was for the Middlesbrough element of the Council Tax liability.

A Member sought, and was provided with reassurance, that the Council would have sufficient funds to deal with unexpected financial shocks. It was also clarified that increasing Council Tax to the maximum 4.99% would generate a little more than £2 million.

A Member stated that in previous years the Council had been told to increase its Council Tax

by the maximum permitted. However, given the additional funds available was there an opportunity to keep the increase at zero. The Mayor stated that the Fair Funding process did not happen in year one, but was phased in over three years. As such the Council was taking the most reasonable approach to ensure that all aspirations were being covered. It was commented that it was possible such a freeze could happen in year two, but this was dependent on the status of Fair Funding process. The Council would have a better idea where the end settlement was going to be as time progressed.

The S.151 officer stated that they would always recommend the maximum increase to Council Tax. However, increases needed to be placed in the context of government settlement which was intended to equalise Council Tax. It was stated that while the settlement from government seemed favourable for Middlesbrough there were still unknowns.

It was stated that the government settlement had taken into consideration not only levels of deprivation in the town but also the ability for the Council to raise Council Tax. When Middlesbrough's average Council Tax level was correlated against its dwellings it meant Middlesbrough had a low ability to raise Council Tax.

In terms of green waste, a Member queried if there was a profit as result of charging for this. It was clarified there was a larger income than was planned for and would still be in profit when taking the service costs into account. The Member further queried if a reduction could be provided to users of that service. It was stated that when the service was introduced the fees were based on what other Councils charged for a similar service. It was stated the service was still quite new and that additional data was needed to fully evaluate its financial performance. The Member was also advised that as the budget was out to consultation, their suggestion could also be put forward as part of that process.

A discussion took place about the make-up of the Council Tax bill during which it was clarified that, while Council Tax bills contain amounts relating to the Police and Fire authorities this did not impact on Middlesbrough Council. Those amounts were only included on the Council Tax bill as Middlesbrough administered the Council Tax process.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Finance for her presentation and invited the Mayor to deliver his presentation.

The presentation included the following points:

- Services were provided with more realistic budgets which would give them an opportunity to achieve their targets.
- These areas included investing £1.7 million into Environment Services and roles including Neighbourhood Caretakers.
- There were areas of growth in the Council which included childhood enrichment programmes such as £300,000 investment in every ward to ensure that young people had access to a youth club or youth service.
- There was also £200,000 investment in the 10x10 programme.
- In terms of jobs and growth, this included investment of £580,000 in the tech sector, while culture and events would see a £200,000 investment in the Council's museums offer and £300,000 for cultural events. In this area there was a push to holding cultural events across the town and not just in the Town Centre, as well as holding organised fireworks events.
- To make the town safer there was a planned investment of £650,000 to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour which included additional resources in CCTV operators. On this matter, consultation with the police suggested the Council needed to do more to tackle the issue of missing children.
- In terms of improving housing standards, a £300,000 investment was planned for the creation of an empty properties team.
- Play parks would receive a £700,000 investment, both in terms of revenue and capital budgets, that would see the appointment for a Play Park Fitter as this area had suffered over recent years.
- To support communities there would be £600,000 available for areas with higher levels of deprivation in the north, east, south and west of the town. It was highlighted there were 11 areas in the town that fit the relevant criteria with Newport ward being used as an example. This work would involve both working with the recipient communities as well as elected Members. councillors.

A Member queried if the £600,000 would be split equally across the town. It was clarified that £150,000 would be spent in each area but would be spent in relevant Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA). There were several areas in each part of the town that could receive such funding. Targeting investment, in this way was more effective at resolving problems in those areas.

A Member queried if any of the deprived areas identified fell within the South of the Town, specifically in Wards such as Marton and Stainton. It was stated that southern wards likely to receive some of the investment were within Hemlington and Coulby Newham wards.

It was reaffirmed that funding for this initiative would be based on small areas in each North, South, East and West area of the town should those areas meet set criteria.

The Mayor continued with his presentation which included the following points:

- In terms of supporting and protecting vulnerable residents, a £210,000 investment would be made to remodel access to Adult Social Care. £600,000 would be provided for those with additional and complex needs.
- Any shortfall in Cleveland Police's victims of crime services would be covered by the Council, which would be approximately £200,000.
- Additional support would be made available for homelessness services.

A Member queried what additional support for homelessness would look like. It was clarified there would be a mix of sheltered and standard temporary accommodation. An example was provided whereby if a house had been classed as an empty property but was brought back into use, and it was appropriate, this could be used for a family.

The Member further queried if this initiative would primarily be for those near homelessness. It was clarified there would be cases for both. A discussion took place during which it was commented there was a need to move away from existing practices and providers of homelessness accommodation to a more effective method of providing accommodation.

A Member commented that while the points raised by the Mayor were good, they asked what the benefits were to areas that did not have high levels of deprivation. It was commented the investments would not just be available for areas with high levels of deprivation. An example of youth provision and area care improvements would benefit all areas of the town was provided.

In terms of temporary accommodation, a Member commented it may be a better improve properties to a standard whereby residents would stay in the property for longer. It was stated that while permanency was an ambition, the current pressures facing services meant this was not possible. There was also a need to reduce the number of empty properties and that improved properties would be to the same standard as for a private landlord.

A discussion took place around allocation of investment to areas with higher levels of deprivation. It was stated that targeting investment in areas of high deprivation areas was sometimes the right thing to do and that resistance to this approach sometimes occurred within the same ward. It was also stated that such an approach could be perceived as wasteful, but that such areas had not had the investment they should have received previously.

A Member sought clarification on the amount of money available to improve properties as £300,000 did not seem sufficient. It was clarified that £300,000 would employ staff to carry out the work, however there was approximately £6million available from capital funds to improve properties. The Mayor stated that, were the Council improve an empty property, it would expect any debts owed to the Council to be paid before that work began or the debt would be written off should the property be transferred to the Council.

The Mayor continued with his presentation and made the following points:

- £110,000 was to be available to support the work of Foster workers and Kinship carers.
- There would be no cuts to services in the proposed budget which would see £6million

worth of investment for the Council.

A Member queried how 'parent officers' would work in practice. It was clarified those officers would be tasked to families rather than just parents or young people to try and reduce the number of missing child episodes.

A Member commented that it was sometimes difficult to secure the time of Neighbourhood Caretakers and it was important for communities that this happen.

Overall, the Mayor stated that with increased investment and planned to spend the Council was making progress on planned outcomes. It was also stated it was important for Middlesbrough to receive its fair share of funding. From an Area Care perspective, there was a need to increase this work as a matter of routine as the Neighbourhood Caretakers were undertaking this work on an as-needed basis.

Members expressed thanks to the Neighbourhood Caretakers and the work they undertook. It was also stated that planned work should be carried out with all elected Members being advised to ensure priorities were addressed. The Mayor had requested that a forward plan be created to capture this work.

A Member commented that investment in cultural events, which included a Fireworks display, may not deter the creation of local bonfires which often led to Anti-Social Behaviour. Reference was made to an initiative whereby the Council could hire skips to improve clean up activity. The Mayor stated that a different approach had been used for this year's bonfire activity which included placing a bonfire on Homerton Road boulder rings. It was acknowledged that, in some areas, it was better to manage bonfire activity rather than enforce it. Other similar initiatives included creating murals on walls where graffiti was common.

A Member queried the status of the Civic Centre building. It was clarified that it was currently vacant but that opportunities were being explored with the Arts Council.

Members discussed the use of youth clubs and youth provisions, during which it was stated that youth clubs would be reinvigorated from existing clubs and not Council ran. This approach would feature as part of a Youth Strategy as this would allow connections with young people.

A discussion took place, during which Members commented that events for young people needed to act as outreach activities as well.

In terms of bonfires, it was clarified that, from a liability perspective, the Council was mitigating risk in its approaches to manage bonfire activity.

Members also discussed the benefits of encouraging greater youth participation.

The Chair thanked the Mayor and Executive Member for Finance for their presentations and asked the Board to note the information presented.

NOTED.

25/52

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Officer to provide an update on the Community Cohesion Task and Finish report.

Members were advised that Democratic Services had been working with the relevant Service Area to complete the report started by the Task and Finish Group.

It was intended that a final draft of the report be presented to OSB at its January 2026 meeting.

NOTED.

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Chief Executive – Erik Scollay
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Relevant Executive Member:	Not applicable
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Submitted to:	Overview and Scrutiny Board
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Date:	28 January 2026
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Title:	Executive Forward Plan
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Report for:	Discussion
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Status:	Public
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Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
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Key decision:	Not applicable
Why:	Not applicable

Subject to call in?	Not applicable
Why:	Not applicable

Proposed decision(s)

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider and Notes the content of the Executive Forward Work Programme.

Executive summary

OSB has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny and, if appropriate, it can either undertake the work itself or delegate to individual Scrutiny Panels.

One of the main duties of OSB is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive and decide whether value can be added by Scrutiny considering the matter in advance of any decision being made.

This would not negate a Non-Executive Member's ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 To make OSB aware of items on the Executive Forward Work Programme.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	All aims and ambitions will be contained in individual decisions.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board

- Consider and note the content of the Executive Forward Work Programme.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 OSB has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny and, if appropriate, it can either undertake the work itself or delegate to individual Scrutiny Panels.

3.2 One of the main duties of OSB is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive and decide whether value can be added by Scrutiny considering the matter in advance of any decision being made.

3.3 This would not negate a Non-Executive Member's ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.

4. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

4.1 Not applicable

5. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

5.1 No other options are submitted as part of the report.

6. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	Relevant Impact will be detailed in individual decisions.
Legal	
Risk	

Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	
Reducing Poverty	
Climate Change / Environmental	
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	
Data Protection	

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Implement any decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with regard to the Executive Forward Work Plan.	Relevant Officer	As directed by OSB

Appendices

1	Executive Forward Work Plan
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Scott Bonner/ Sue Lightwing
Email: scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/
sue_lightwing@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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Executive Forward Plan - 1 April 2025 to 31 May 2026

FOR THE PERIOD 20 JANUARY 2026 TO 31 MAY 2026

Ref No. / Ward	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
The Mayor							
I024988 All Wards	Corporate Performance Q3 2025/2026 That Executive: • notes the progress and position of the corporate performance disciplines, including activity within the Transformation Portfolio	Executive 11 Mar 2026	A Healthy Place to Live		Public		1) The Mayor Joanne Chapman joanne_chapman@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Ref No. Ward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
1024986 as: All OFFICIAL Wards	2025 Middlesbrough Resident survey To summarise the findings from the 2025 Middlesbrough Community Survey, compare to the 2023 Survey and set out for the consideration of the Executive proposed actions in response	Executive 11 Mar 2026	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		1) The Mayor Victoria Holmes Victoria_Holmes@middlesbrough.gov.uk
1024711 8	Council Plan 2026/27-29: Workplan and Service Plans This report seeks the Executive's endorsement of the proposed revised Council Plan workplan for the period 2026-27.	Executive 11 Mar 2026	A Healthy Place to Live		Public		1) The Mayor Erik Scollay, Chief Executive erik_scollay@middlesbrough.gov.uk
Deputy Mayor and Executive Member - Education and Culture							
Executive Member - Adult Social Care							
1024972	Adult Social Care & Integration - Vision	Executive 21 Jan 2026	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		3) Executive Member for Adult Social Care

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
Classified All as Wards OFFICIAL	and Strategy 2025 - 2035 To set a 10 year vision and strategy for Adult Social Care which will provide relevant clarity and direction						<i>Louise Graham, Director - Adult Social Care louise_graham@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
Executive Member - Children's Services							
Executive Member - Development							
I023750 All Wards	Investment into Housing to Reduce Temporary Accommodation Costs Proposals for investment alongside a social investor to purchase properties to reduce the expenditure on temporary accommodation	Executive 21 Jan 2026	A Successful and Ambitious Town	KEY	Public		5) Executive Member for Development <i>Richard Horniman, Director - Regeneration Richard_Horniman@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
I024569 Berwick Hills and Pallister; Hemlingt	Neighbourhood Hubs Investment The purpose of this report is to seek Executive Approval for the headline	Executive 4 Feb 2026	Safe and Resilient Communities	KEY	Public		8) Executive Member for Neighbourhoods <i>Sam Gilmore, Head of Economic Growth Sam_Gilmore@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified On: as: Newport OFFICIAL	specifications for plans to adapt the four North, South, East and West Neighbourhood Hubs, as well as investment in the surrounding localities.						
I025151 Central	Town Centre Future Development To propose a formal legal partnership to assist in the future development of Middlesbrough Town Centre	Executive 4 Feb 2026	A Successful and Ambitious Town	KEY	Public		5) Executive Member for Development <i>Richard Horniman, Director - Regeneration</i> <i>Richard_Horniman@middlesbrou gh.gov.uk</i>
Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability							
I025152 All Wards	Bereavement Services Strategy To approve the bereavement strategy, which outlines the steps to improve the service	Executive 11 Mar 2026	Safe and Resilient Communities	KEY	Public		6) Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability <i>Katie Bargewell</i> <i>Katie_Bargewell@middlesbrou gh.gov.uk</i>
Executive Member - Finance							
I024278	Annual Treasury Management	Executive 4 Feb 2026	Delivering Best Value	KEY	Public		7) Executive Member for Finance

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: OFFICIAL	<p>Strategy and Prudential Indicators 2026/27 to 2029/30</p> <p>The report outlines the Council's prudential indicators for the financial years 2026/27 – 2029/30 regarding the affordability of the capital programme, and sets the framework and approves the limits within which the treasury management operations for this period will work. It fulfils key legislative and guidance requirements in this area and is an essential part of the annual budget setting process.</p>						<p>Justin Weston Justin_Weston@middlesbrough.gov.uk</p>
I024704 All Wards	Revenue and Capital Budget – Forecast Year-end Outturn position at	Executive 4 Feb 2026	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		<p>7) Executive Member for Finance Helen Dalby helen_dalby@middlesbrough.gov.uk</p>

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: OFFICIAL	Quarter Three 2025/26 The report advises the Executive of the Council's forecast year-end financial outturn position as at Quarter Three 2025/26						
I024703 All Wards	2026/27 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Finance Plan, and Council Tax Setting This report provides information and advice to the Executive in terms of the proposed budget for 2026/27, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2029/30, and the proposed Council Tax for 2026/27. It requests that Executive approves that several items are forwarded for approval by Full Council on 18	Executive 4 Feb 2026	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		1) The Mayor, 7) Executive Member for Finance <i>Andrew Humble, Director - Finance and Transformation</i> <i>andrew_humble@middlesbrou gh.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: OFFICIAL	February 2026. Council approval of the 2026/27 budget and proposed Council Tax is required by the statutory deadline of 11 March 2026.						
I024983 All Wards	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27 To seek approval for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27.	Executive 4 Feb 2026	A Successful and Ambitious Town	KEY	Public		7) Executive Member for Finance <i>Janette Savage, Head of Resident and Business Support</i> <i>Janette_Savage@middlesbrou gh.gov.uk</i>
I024781 All Wards	Exceptional Hardship Fund - Section 13A (1) (a) Policy This report seeks approval to amend the Council's Section 13A (1) (a) policy, under the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992 (as amended).	Executive 4 Feb 2026	Delivering Best Value		Public		7) Executive Member for Finance <i>Janette Savage, Head of Resident and Business Support</i> <i>Janette_Savage@middlesbrou gh.gov.uk</i>
I025190 All Wards	Updated Members Small Scheme Allocations	Executive Sub-	A Successful and Ambitious Town		Public		7) Executive Member for Finance

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: OFFICIAL	<p>That the Executive Sub-Committee for property approves the eligible Updated Members Small Scheme project allocations, following applications from Members, and assessment by Council Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APPROVES the updated allocation of funding to deliver the approved projects. 	Committee for Property 4 Feb 2026					<p><i>Chris Orr</i> <i>Chris_Orr@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i></p>
I024984 All Wards	<p>Tender Pipeline Report 2026/27 To seek Executive approval of the tender pipeline for 2026/27.</p>	Executive 11 Mar 2026	Delivering Best Value	KEY	Public		<p>7) Executive Member for Finance <i>Claire Walker</i> <i>claire_walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i></p>
I024705 All Wards	<p>2025/26 Revenue and Capital Year-end Outturn The report advises the Executive of the Council's year-end financial outturn position for 2025/26</p>	Executive 6 May 2026	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		<p>7) Executive Member for Finance <i>Andrew Humble, Director - Finance and Transformation</i> <i>andrew_humble@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i></p>

Ref No. Forward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
	classified Executive Member - Neighbourhoods as: OFFICIAL Executive Member - Public Health						
I024867 All Wards	Encouraging Healthier Advertising Propose implementation of new advertising policy	Executive 4 Feb 2026	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		9) Executive Member for Public Health <i>Lindsay Cook</i> <i>lindsay_cook@middlesbrough. gov.uk</i>

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
28 January 2026DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THE OSB TASK & FINISH
GROUP – COMMUNITY COHESION

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AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. At its meeting on 25 September 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Board established a three-Member Task and Finish Group (herein “the Group”) to examine the issue of ‘Community Cohesion’.
2. The aim of the investigation was to examine measures used to promote and strengthen community cohesion in Middlesbrough and identify whether any gaps existed. While the riots of 2024 prompted this review, the group want to stress that community cohesion remains a salient, constantly moving, issue. It should not be viewed through single issue events.
3. The Group are keen to stress that “community cohesion” is a broad subject, and addressing all its facets is not the purpose of this report. Instead, the review’s focus is relatively narrow and compares its findings with some of the recommendations contained in the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel report approved in July 2021.
4. As part of its evidence gathering process, the group held discussions with key partners including representatives from the Council, Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner and voluntary sector.

COUNCIL PLAN – VISION AND PRIORITIES

5. The scrutiny of this topic fits within the following vision and priorities of the Council Plan:-

- Safe and Resilient Communities – Creating a safer environment where residents can live more independent lives.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

6. The terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group’s investigation were as follows:-

- A) Identify what measures are in place to promote community cohesion and integration and assess the extent to which the measures implemented have been effective.
- B) Identify any gaps in measures to promote community cohesion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION/SETTING THE SCENE

Community Cohesion Definition

7. Community cohesion refers to the ability of diverse communities to function and thrive harmoniously, valuing diversity, promoting equal opportunities, and fostering positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. Community cohesion is important because a cohesive community is better equipped to address challenges, support each other, and work towards a shared future.
8. The Local Government Association (LGA) states that Councils, and Councillors, have a role to play in contributing to the community cohesion agenda. They can provide tools and resources to:
 - Offer a common vision and a sense of belonging for all
 - Positively value diversity
 - Provide equal opportunities to people from different backgrounds; and
 - Provide an environment where strong and positive relationships can be developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.¹
9. The LGA offers a range of tools that can support Community Cohesion, and the group encourage all Members to review those tools on the LGA's webpages.
10. The group recognises that Community Cohesion encompasses a range of factors ranging from socioeconomic activity to race and ethnicity. As such, the review has approached Community Cohesion quite broadly.

National Context

11. Following the murders of three young children attending a summer dance class in Southport significant civil disorder broke out in London, Hartlepool, Aldershot, Sunderland, Hull, Liverpool, Blackpool, Stoke-on-Trent, Rotherham, Tamworth, Middlesbrough and Plymouth between 31 July and 5 August 2024.
12. In the immediate aftermath, significant coverage was paid to reactions to the disorder and how local police forces dealt with the perpetrators.
13. This report does not explore external influences on community cohesion. The group stress that national, and international factors may have had an impact on community tensions that ultimately led to the riots in summer of 2024. These factors include societal frustrations associated with economic decline and loss of traditional economic

¹ Local Government Association "Community cohesion, inclusion and equality" <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/equalities-hub/community-cohesion-inclusion-and-equality>

engines, such as the closure of SSI Steel Works in Redcar. International considerations may include foreign powers attempting to influence social cohesion and democracy in the UK, as debated by MPs in Parliament on 11 December 2025.²

14. During its investigation the Group found there was some correlation between the number of recorded hate crimes and the community tensions that were witnessed in the summer of 2024. While high-level data has been included here it should be viewed as indicative rather than prescriptive. It should also be noted the way hate crimes are recorded by the police changed in 2024. As such, precise data comparison is difficult.
15. Hate crimes are a subset of notifiable offences recorded by the police (categories for hate crimes being race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identify). In the year ending March 2025, 3% of offences recorded by the police were identified as being hate crimes.
16. Nationally, in the year ending March 2025 there was a 2% increase in recorded hate crimes from the previous year. Within the hate crime category, there was an increase of 6% and 3% for race and religious reasons respectively, while other hate crime categories saw slight decreases over the same period.
17. This increase is reflected locally with 1,475 hate crimes relating to race and religion being reported in the Cleveland Police Area in 2024/2025. This was an increase of 316 (or 27%) on the previous year, the highest numerical increase of other northern police force areas.³

Table 1 – Reported hate crime statistics for 2024/2025.

Police Area	Population (Est.)	Reported Hate Crimes 2024/25 (2023/24)	% of Pop.	Numeric Change	% Change
Cleveland	570,000	1475 (1159)	0.26%	316	27%
Cumbria	500,000	559 (387)	0.11%	172	44%
Durham	640,000	744 (558)	0.12%	186	33%
N. Yorkshire	830,000	702 (693)	0.08%	9	1%
Northumbria	1,500,000	2875 (2681)	0.19%	194	7%

Local Context

18. Riots took place in Middlesbrough on 4 August 2024, causing approximately £750,000 of damage and led to more than 100 arrests⁴. The disorder took place in central

² Foreign Interference, Hansard, UK Parliament, [Foreign Interference - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

³ North police force areas are Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, North Yorks and Northumberland. The data used was extrapolated from government data at [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [More than 100 arrests as Cleveland Police continue hunt for suspects involved in violent disorder | Cleveland Police](#), <https://www.cleveland.police.uk/news/cleveland/news/2024/august/more-than-100-arrests-as-cleveland-police-continue-hunt-for-suspects-involved-in-violent-disorder/>

electoral wards, directly affected two wards, its impact prompted the Overview and Scrutiny Board to establish a Community Cohesion Task and Finish Group to look at the broad issues around Community Cohesion to understand if the disorder was symptomatic of a wider problem.

19. Middlesbrough prides itself on inclusivity and a welcoming approach. Its diverse socio-economic and demographic makeup mean supporting communities is a high priority.
20. Middlesbrough is ranked as the fifth most deprived local authority area in England as of 2019. As of 2025 it was included in local authority areas whose districts had the highest proportion of neighbourhoods that were the most deprived in England.⁵
21. Middlesbrough is the most ethnically diverse local authority area in the Tees Valley. According to the 2021 census, it has a British Minority Ethnic Population of 17.6%.
22. As a starting point, the Group considered the Scrutiny review into Community Cohesion of 2021 to understand if the issues and recommendations remained relevant and were being pursued.
23. The recommendations from that report were:
 - *That the Council develop a Community Cohesion Strategy for Middlesbrough that:*
 - *Ensures all aspects of community cohesion work is co-ordinated and monitored.*
 - *Informs the Council's existing social regeneration agenda and is monitored through existing performance reporting processes.*
 - *Is in place by the end of 2022/23.*
 - *Given recent staffing changes, as well as the discontinuation of funding for key projects after 2021 and the uncertainty brought about the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council should look to ensure the current Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager is sufficiently supported via a robust staffing structure beyond 2021.*
 - *That the Executive consider including Middlesbrough in the Refugee Resettlement Scheme.*
 - *To assess progress against its objectives, the Panel should receive an update on the progress of Place Based Working no later than November 2021.*

⁵ English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release, [English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025-statistical-release)

EVIDENCE GATHERED

Term of Reference A – Identify what measures are in place to promote community cohesion and integration.

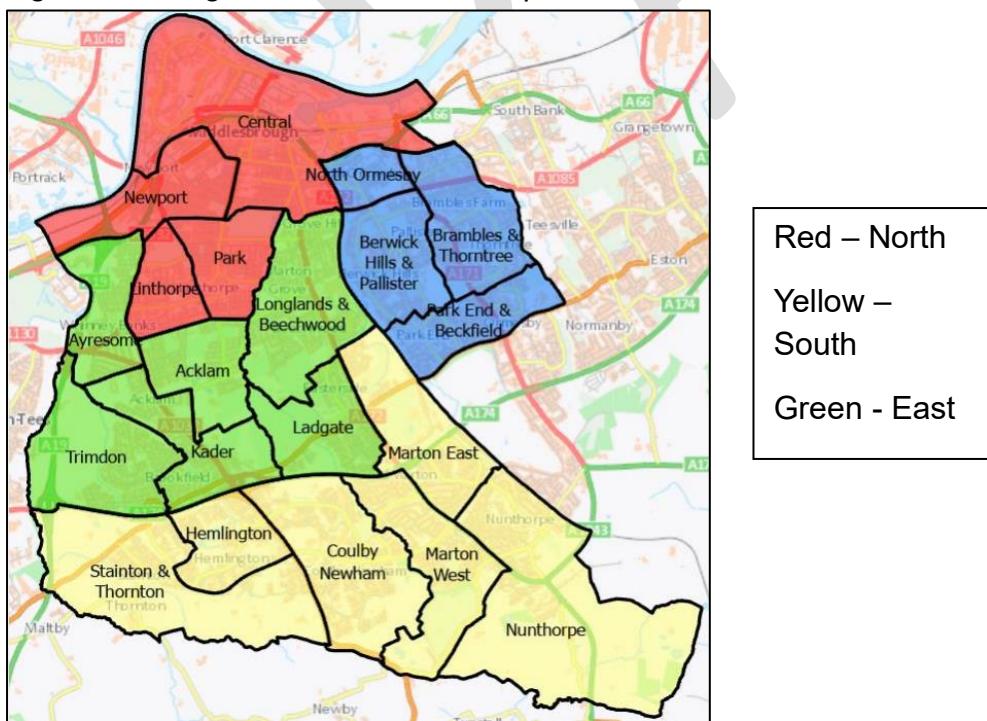
24. The group have separated this Term of Reference between the periods both before the riots, during the riots and after the riots.

Before the Riots

25. Community Cohesion has always been an important service within the Council and the group understands support for this service has always been provided nominally within the existing resources of the time. The riots of August 2024 provided a catalyst to expand those services.

26. For some time before the summer of 2024, the Council was aware it needed to enhance how it communicated with and supported Middlesbrough's communities. It had begun moving services from centralised locations to localities. Local area working, whereby key services are placed in the communities they serve had been piloted in 2023 with "Locality Working" and its successor "Neighbourhood Working" having been in place since early 2024. Neighbourhood working takes the form of Neighbourhood Hubs placed in the North (Newport Hub), South (Viewley Centre, Hemlington), East (LWE Berwick Hills) and West (Easterside Hub *Grove Hill Hub will replace it once it is redesigned) of the town.

Figure 1 – Neighbourhood Model Map



27. The need to engage with communities sits at the heart of this working model, and functions such as "Community Conversations", are a predominant feature. The group

recognises that the full aspirations of this model were not fully realised and embedded by the time of the riots in August 2024.

28. Prior to the riots, Community Cohesion work was undertaken within core budgets. From a staffing perspective each locality included a Community and Cohesion worker broken down in the following way (headcount):

- North – 2
- East – 2
- South – 1
- West – 1

29. The group found that while a Community Cohesion Strategy was not in place by the time of the riots, the Council's approach to the Community Cohesion agenda was not lacking.

30. For example, the Council's Executive approved the content and priorities set out in the 'Community Safety Action Plan 2024-2026'⁶ on 24 July 2024. which had been developed through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CSP Action Plan's Mission Statement is as follows:

“... working with partners in our Neighbourhoods to ensure our residents “feel safe, be safe and stay safe”. Middlesbrough’s Community Safety Partnership (CSP) brings together the responsible authorities of Police, Local Authority, Fire and Rescue, Health and Probation to work in collaboration with other statutory and voluntary services and local people to reduce crime and make people feel safer by dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, delivering the Prevent duty (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) and ensuring specific obligations such as public engagement and delivery of an action plan are met. The priorities and key objectives set out in this plan are based upon an assessment of crime and disorder issues across the Borough and reflect the views of the community on matters that are important to them to collectively implement and deliver initiatives that will help all areas of Middlesbrough become a safe place to live, work and visit.”

31. The CSP Action Plan sets out three headline priorities – each with a number of strands underneath – and is built around a robust outcome-based performance management framework in order to review and monitor progress:-

Priority 1 – Feel Safe (perceptions)

Objectives

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (Inc. environmental crime)
- Improving community cohesion and resilience

⁶ Middlesbrough Community Safety Plan 2024-26 [mgConvert2PDF.aspx](#)

- Delivering the prevent agenda

Priority 2 – Be Safe (reducing violence)

Objectives

- Improve mental health
- Reduce exploitation
- Reduce substance misuse
- Reduce domestic violence
- Tackling serious violence

Priority 3 – Stay Safe (Neighbourhoods)

Objectives

- Working with communities (doing ‘with’ not ‘to’)
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Addressing underlying community issues

The Riots

32. In Middlesbrough riots took place in the northern part of the town in areas with both relatively high levels of deprivation and BAME populations. The reasons behind why the riots broke out are well documented with differing viewpoints. This review does not attempt a root-cause analysis.
33. It is widely acknowledged that the riots took place in the immediate aftermath of the murder of three girls at a dance class in Southport on 29 July 2024. Following the tragedy, the false claim that the killer was a Muslim asylum seeker was spread on social media. This subsequently led to civil unrest at a Southport Mosque which turned to violence. Across the following week, there was unrest and disorder of some form across 27 towns and cities that targeted a wide range of places associated with asylum seekers and Muslim immigrants more generally. A particular focus was the hotels used by the UK Government to house asylum seekers, though mosques as well as streets and shops associated with racialised minorities were also targeted.⁷
34. From a Community Cohesion perspective, other factors may also have been at play. For example, the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) in its publication “*Understanding the 2024 UK riots*” acknowledges that, relatively speaking, “little about the dynamics and nature of these events” is known. It points out that, “Although the protesters included activists from the far-right, subsequent arrests show the participants often

⁷ Royal Geographical Society “Understanding the 2024 UK riots” [The Geographical Journal - Wiley Online Library](#)

had few or no clear political connections and included delinquents, relishing the mayhem, who had opportunistically decided to participate".⁸

35. Given the number of young people involved in the riots, the group found the Children's Commissioner's report "Children's involvement in the 2024 riots" of interest. It found that many young people who had actively taken part in the riots were not motivated by far-right rhetoric but feelings of animosity towards the police, curiosity and the prospect of excitement.⁹
36. Regardless of the reasons, the riots demonstrated that the Community Cohesion agenda needed to be a high priority for the Council.

Response the Riots

37. Following the riots, the need for a joined-up, multi-agency, response was universally recognised. The Council and its partners established a multi-agency recovery structure with 'Gold' and 'Silver' Recovery Groups to plan how to support residents and return to a state of normality.
38. The group greatly appreciate Cleveland Police's response to the riots and wanted to understand its position in a wider Community Cohesion context. The Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner stated that after the riots his top priority was to engage with affected communities and speak directly with them. He emphasised the need to "speak out together" and assure Middlesbrough's diverse communities the Police were there to support people not just enforce the law. The Police and Crime Commissioner also stated that a previously dormant group, the "Strategic Hate Crime Group" had been reinvigorated with the intention of bringing partners together to tackle hate crime.
39. Operationally, the Police response to the riots has been the subject of a parliamentary report by the Home Affairs Select Committee, published on 14 April 2025. The report states that an estimated additional 40,000 Police Officer shifts were required to deal with the unrest over a 10-day period which resulted in more than 1,500 arrests.
40. The key findings of the report fall into the following areas:-
 - Social media and disinformation
 - Police response
 - The criminal justice system
 - Two-tier policing

⁸ Royal Geographical Society "Understanding the 2024 UK riots" [The Geographical Journal - Wiley Online Library](#)

⁹ Children's Commissioner "Children's involvement in the 2024 riots" [Childrens-involvement-in-the-2024-Riots-Report.pdf](#) p9

41. Several conclusions and recommendations were made in the report¹⁰ and the group have not repeated them here.
42. From a Council perspective, on 8 January 2025, the Executive approved recommendations on spending a total of £655,000 provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), via the Communities Recovery Fund (CRF).
43. The constituents of the Gold Recovery Group include senior representatives from Middlesbrough Council, Thirteen Group, Cleveland Police, Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Teesside University, Tees Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust, Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency, Probation Service and Cleveland Fire Brigade. This group set the key objectives for Silver Group along with the three key areas of focus for grant funding:-
 - a) Engagement
 - b) Events within neighbourhoods
 - c) Youth Provision
44. Silver Group was tasked with developing key areas of work under each of the above grant funding focus areas.
45. The constituents of the Silver Group include representatives from the following organisations: Cleveland Police, Middlesbrough Council, Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner, BME Network, Thirteen Group, Fire Brigade, Teesside University, Local Resilience Forum, Mayors Office, Executive Member for Community Safety and the following voluntary and community organisations: MVDA, Streets Ahead, Amal Project, Investing in People and Cultures, Localmotion, Hindu Cultural Centre, Mosques, Caritas and Ubuntu.
46. Silver Group established the following multi-agency subgroups that have had an input into the proposals for spending the £655k grant funding. Each sub-group meets at least once a month and has developed an action plan which feeds directly into Silver Group:
 - Communications Group – partners monitor social media/press for arising issues, develop key messages to dispel disinformation and misinformation using trusted community voices to share messages. Developed a communications plan for emergency events and shared key details with community groups to advise their members.

¹⁰ House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee “Police Response to the 2024 Summer Disorder” published 14 April 2025. [Summer 2024 disorder](#)

- Young People and engagement – Develop a plan to engage with all young people in the community via schools, colleges, YJS, youth providers, NEET and VCS organisations, develop relationships and activities, challenge hate vocabulary and signpost to existing activities/newly developed activities.
- Community Conversations – To employ an experienced hate crime rhetoric specialist to assist in developing and delivering appropriate conversation rhetoric, tools and methods to engage with the community. Develop a process that feeds back on actions to be taken, where appropriate.
- Hate Crime and Community Tensions – Explore existing hate and community tension reporting process, further develop/publicise to ensure community awareness and access to report. Explore translation and reach out to vulnerable individuals/groups.
- Community Engagement and Participation – Map existing community offer, engage with community, identify gaps/needs, develop and deliver activities/events to further engage with wider community, building cohesion.
- Victims and Perpetrators – Ensure victims have access to support services, understand processes and expectations. Further develop restorative justice approach. Co-ordinate plan to manage release of those convicted of rioting. Produce a local film with real footage/audio from Middlesbrough riots to use as a tool within restorative justice approach.

47. It was agreed that a proportion of the funding would be distributed direct to community groups in the form of grants, to allow them to lead on activities.
48. The Community Riot Fund proposals are in line with the conditions of the grant. These grants support a range of projects that will help the town in respect of increasing its level of resilience and community cohesion.
49. The group heard that Silver Group provides the opportunity for each organisation to provide updates on recent activities, any issues arising (actioned as necessary), and to discuss upcoming events to be widely shared with partners. Silver Group also receives weekly feedback on Community events which, as at October 2024, include:-
 - Newport Community Fun Day
 - Middlesbrough Mela (well attended by all communities)
 - BME Network Event (focusing on resilience work, with more than 40 attendees)

50. As might be expected, there are numerous performance measures associated with the grant funding. A full list of these measures and performance against them can be

found at Appendix 1. There is also extensive feedback from projects and events initiated as a result of the Community Recovery Fund which can be found at Appendix 2.

51. A Hate Crime Awareness Week took place between 12-19 October 2024. Posters were distributed to community groups and agencies for display, and information regarding Third Party Reporting for hate crimes was provided at Teesside University's Freshers Week for all students and remained ongoing. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland is leading on the Strategic Hate Crime Group and the Hate Crime Operations Group raises key issues with Silver Group for awareness and actions.
52. Work had commenced, in conjunction with the Local Resilience Fund (LRF) to develop Newport Hub as a pilot Resilience hub for any emergency event. Membership was being developed, together with appropriate training, facilitated by Middlesbrough Council, and delivered by community members.
53. In December 2024, CURV (Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence), under the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, announced the launch of a small grants fund, 'RISE'¹¹, aimed at building community resilience.
54. CURV provided Catalyst Stockton and Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA) with £15,000 each to set up a small grants fund for the purpose of building community resilience as well as improve the perception, and fear of violent crime.
55. The MVDA will manage the funding on behalf of CURV's RISE programme in Middlesbrough and be provided with a management fee of 15% of the total grant. This adds a further £4,500 to the funding. The target area for this work is Newport Ward.
56. Suggestions on how RISE grant funds could be used included (but not exhaustive):
 - Increased provision for children and young people. This could include practical projects such as clearing/cleaning green spaces for children to play, or educational/awareness initiatives presenting risks of drugs and engagement in violent crime.
 - Focus on promoting healthier lifestyles for all.
 - Intergenerational community engagement – bringing residents together to create a stronger sense of community and safety.

¹¹ OPCC, CURV - [Small grants fund RISE launched to build community resilience - Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner](#)

57. Applicants needed to explain how their project would help reduce the impact of violent crime in the community and enhance the feeling of safety for residents, whilst improving community resilience and cohesion. All projects needed to capture baseline perceptions within the community then again following delivery of the project to measure impact.
58. Several other projects have, or are, in the process of being ran to support the community cohesion agenda. These include Deep Democracy Foundations course (Delivered Sept – Dec 2025) which delivered a valuable approach and provided tools to 30 frontline staff working with interpersonal, group, team, and community dynamics. Based on the foundation of Lewis Deep Democracy, this course provided the theoretical background and experiential learning opportunities needed for day-to-day work and personal environments. The course increased people's capacity to succeed in working in complex social systems by helping them understand relationship/group dynamics and by offering practical tools for working with differences in a group, making effective decisions and by increasing their conflict literacy to turn destructive conflict into creative tension.
59. The Community Bridgebuilders Project (Delivery January-March 2026) is a fresh initiative to increase the skills, competencies, and confidence of those wanting to build bridges in Middlesbrough, and to increase understanding across difference. It was identified that an area of significant work needed to be undertaken with frontline staff from statutory and voluntary organisations to increase their ability and confidence to have 'difficult' conversations with communities around sensitive issues.
60. The Educate & Unite: Schools Shaping the Future Supporting Schools in Middlesbrough (Delivery Jan-March 2026) project recognises that Middlesbrough's schools play a critical role in fostering understanding, combating hate, and rebuilding trust. Misinformation, socioeconomic inequalities, and unresolved tensions have fuelled division, making education a key tool for social cohesion. This project will equip students, educators, and community leaders with the tools to challenge misinformation, promote inclusivity, and create a sense of belonging. Working alongside key partners, including Middlesbrough Council, the BME Network, Nur Fitness, and the AMAL Project, it will ensure young people and local communities co-design elements of this programme.

Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership

61. While the Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership was created sometime before the riots, the Partnership's strategic role in assessing the changing landscape and threat was brought into sharper focus following the riots.
62. The Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership is a statutory body made up of key 'Responsible Authorities' with equal responsibility for reducing crime and anti-social

behaviour under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2014 and the Police and Crime Act 2017). The Responsible authorities work alongside voluntary services and local people to reduce crime and make people feel safer by dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, reoffending and serious violence.

63. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) undertakes various functions in order to deliver its statutory requirements. One of those functions is to produce a strategic intelligence assessment that informs a Community Safety Plan setting out the CSP's priorities and how they would be addressed. The Plan is reviewed every two years.
64. The Active Intelligence Mapping (AIM) Group monitors patterns and trends in multi-agency data informing deployment of partnership resources to address emerging issues monthly.
65. In addition, multi-agency thematic groups are in place, with task and finish groups established as and when required. These groups also link into the Neighbourhood Action Partnership meetings (NAP) with the operating areas being aligned to the neighbourhood working model. As described above, the Neighbourhood Model ensures communities are at the heart of everything the CSP does.

Community Activity since the riots

66. On 4 August 2025, a Community Showcase event organised by Council staff with help from volunteers and community organisations was held in Middlesbrough Town Hall. The event marked one year from the response to the riots in Middlesbrough where staff and Middlesbrough people joined together to clean up the town.
67. The Council had allocated funding received from the Government's Community Recovery Fund for a range of events, activities and grassroots organisations/projects and was designed to reduce the risk of further disorder in the future and rebuild trust and cohesion within the community.
68. Attendees at the event included volunteers who had worked to strengthen ties between different cultures and also families who had been targeted by rioters. The event showcased a range of musical performances and foods from various cultures and those organisations that had received funding presented their progress to date.

Term of Reference B – Identify where there are significant gaps in the provision of Community Cohesion measures

69. Rather than "gaps" in Community Cohesion support, it was found that prior to the riots the support could be described as nominal. The group stress they do not think that

support was inferior. However, the riots did demonstrate how the Council needed to be more pro-active in its approach. As such, the expansion of Community Cohesion related activities should be seen as filling any gaps that a pre-riot approach left.

70. When considering the findings of the 2021 scrutiny report, the group found that a dedicated Community Cohesion Strategy was not in place but had been recommended. However, in this period a 'Sustainable Community Strategy for Middlesbrough 2008-2023'¹² was in place and had been developed by the Middlesbrough Partnership (now Local Strategic Partnership). This provided a framework for partners to co-ordinate service development and delivery across the town which Community Cohesion activity could contribute to.
71. While the group is disappointed that a singular event, namely the riots, was the catalyst for the creation of the Community Cohesion Strategy, they are nevertheless encouraged to find that a Strategy is now being developed in conjunction with external stakeholders, namely Belong.
72. Belong are a cohesion and integration network who are "the UK's leading membership organisation on social cohesion, offering academic research, consultancy, training, networking, thought leadership and events for members across sectors in the UK." The strategy has completed the scoping stage and was now undergoing the co-production stage which is hoped to be completed by February 2026.
73. There has been staffing expansion to support Community Cohesion activities, such as the creation of Neighbourhood Navigators in localities. This role delivers intensive interventions that support individuals at the earliest opportunity. The role of the Neighbourhood navigator is to develop and deliver tailored programmes supporting adults and families with complex needs access mainstream and specialist services. Navigators will create bespoke programmes that engage individuals and families and improve outcomes, addressing short and long-term challenges. Applying a 'whatever it takes' attitude, and working with a range of stakeholders and partners, they will support individuals and families to engage at the earliest opportunity with services including, but not limited to, substance misuse, health, social care, education, training and employment services.
74. One of the key principles of the Neighbourhood Model is prevention and early intervention that helps to reduce escalations. The Navigators will work with partners and apply a 'whatever it takes' attitude to engage with and support people who need help as they present to the Neighbourhood teams.

¹² Sustainable Community Strategy for Middlesbrough 2008-2023 developed by the Middlesbrough Partnership : [Middlesbrough sustainable community strategy 2008-2023](#)

75. Neighbourhood Navigators will support individuals, adults and families with complex needs and deliver intensive interventions within a multi-agency environment to offer support at the earliest opportunity to prevent them from needing to use other services later. The Navigators will help to guide people through often complex systems and networks making it easier to access support and stay in touch with the right services first time.
76. The Neighbourhood Model also saw the appointment of eight Community Development Officers, four Neighbourhood Link Workers and 16 Neighbourhood Caretakers. All of these posts are based within each of the neighborhood areas.
77. It is important to stress that additional roles such as Neighbourhood Navigators complement existing roles based in the localities, such as Neighbourhood Safety Wardens, Neighbourhood Development Officers and Community Hub Officers. All of these roles contribute to the Community Cohesion agenda by facilitating, and engaging in, conversations with communities to ensure any tensions are identified and addressed before they become a problem.

CONCLUSIONS

74. Community Cohesion is a broad subject encompassing a multitude of issues. The remit of the Group was not to address any one issue but rather to examine the Council's position around the general Community Cohesion agenda.
75. A key component of the Community Cohesion agenda is communication and forging effective links between the Council and the communities it supports.
76. The Council's support of the Community Cohesion agenda seems to have received a boost because of the riots that occurred in August 2024.
77. There has been a noted increase in reported hate crime across the Cleveland Police area between 2012/13 to 2022/23 from 359 to 1,562. There was a further increase of 11% in the period 2024/2025 which was influenced by the riots of 2024.¹³
78. While the reasons for the riots are largely seen as the result of right-wing rhetoric following the deaths in Southport, it is important to note that other factors may have contributed to them.
79. The Council recognises the need to effectively communicate and support its communities through a Community Cohesion lens. However, prior to the riots this support did not always receive the attention it perhaps deserved. As such, the

¹³ [New Cleveland-wide hate crime awareness campaign launched by PCC - Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner](#)

resources allocated to supporting the Community Cohesion agenda could have been stronger in this period.

80. Many of the measures now in place to support Community Cohesion were reactive, specifically in response to the riots.
81. The establishment of the Gold and Silver Groups, as well as a multi-disciplinary approach to tackling hate crime and enhancing existing communications with communities is welcome, as are the various projects and initiatives created by those groups.
82. The effectiveness of those projects and initiatives is monitored, however, that monitoring is only recently becoming available due to the relatively limited time they have been in place.
83. The Council has supported events that promote community cohesion, namely the Mela and Diwali celebrations. However, before the riots there is limited evidence of any other largescale events of this nature. The group are aware that investment in cultural events forms part of the proposed budget for 2026/27 and it hopes that events promoting community cohesion will benefit from this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

84. Based on the evidence gathered, the Task and Finish Group submit the following recommendations:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

85. The Task and Finish Group would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the course of their investigation:-

- M Walker – Head of Neighbourhoods
- J Pearce – Neighbourhood Manager (South)
- J Mace – Strategic Cohesion & Migration Manager (South)
- M Storey – Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland
- A McDonald MP – MP for Middlesbrough & Thornaby East
- M Davies – Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA)

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – MHCLG CCRF returns Jan - June 2025
- Appendix 2 - MHCLG Community Recovery Fund (CRF) performance feedback November 2025

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following sources were consulted or referred to in preparing this report:

- Bonnett, A and Hopkins P, "Understanding the 2024 UK riots" The Geographical Journal, [The Geographical Journal - Wiley Online Library](#)
- Final Report of Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel + Service Area Action Plan to Exec 13 July 2021.
- Executive Report "Community Recovery Fund", 08 Jan 2025.
- Executive Report "Neighbourhoods Model, 30 April 2025.
- Guardian Newspaper, "Hatred of police not racism motivated children in English riots, report finds", [Hatred of police not racism motivated children in English riots, report finds | Young people | The Guardian](#)
- Home Office, Ted Cantle, 2001. "Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team"
- House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee "Police Response to the 2024 Summer Disorder" published 14 April 2025, <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/47476/documents/246718/default/>
- Middlesbrough Council "Togetherness and community at special Event marking one year since riot" [Togetherness and community at special event marking one year since riot | Middlesbrough Council](#)
- The Children's Commissioner "Children's Involvement in the 2024 riots" <https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2025/01/Childrens-involvement-in-the-2024-Riots-Report.pdf>

COUNCILLORS DAVID BRANSON, DAVID COUPE AND JOHN KABUYE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON BEHALF OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Overview and Scrutiny Board Membership: Councillors L Young (Chair), J Ewan (Vice-Chair), D Branson, E Lynch, D Coupe J Kabuye, L Lewis, T Mohan, I Morrish, J Platt, M Saunders, Z Uddin, G Wilson J Young.

Contact Officer:

Scott Bonner & Joanne Dixon
Democratic Services
Telephone: 01642 729708/ 729713

Email:scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/ joanne_dixon@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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Appendix 1 MHCLG CCRF performance returns Jan – June 2025 (July to Dec 2025 data available end Jan 2026)

- People supported through the projects have an improved sense of belonging to their local area. Target percentage 60.0 % Target date 30/06/2025 Actual percentage (cumulative) 50.0 %
- People supported through the project have an improved perception that in the local area people from different backgrounds can get on well together. Target percentage 65.0 % Target date 30/06/2025 Actual percentage (cumulative) 50.0 %
- People supported through the project have an improved trust in their fellow local residents. Target percentage 50.0 % Target date 30/06/2025 Actual percentage (cumulative) 30.0 %
- People supported through the project have an improved sense of belonging to their local area. Target percentage (Male) 45.0 % Actual percentage - Male (cumulative) 50.0 % Target percentage (Female) 55.0 % Actual percentage - Female (cumulative) 50.0 %
- People supported through the project have an improved perception that in the local area people from different backgrounds can get on well together: actual outcomes, by protected characteristics. Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin Target percentage (Male) 40.0 % Actual percentage - Male (cumulative) 30.0 % Target percentage (Female) 60.0 % Actual percentage - Female (cumulative) 70.0 %
- People supported through the project have an improved trust in their fellow local residents. Target percentage (Male) 35.0 % Actual percentage - Male (cumulative) 45.0 % Target percentage (Female) 65.0 % Actual percentage - Female (cumulative) 55.0%
- People supported through the project are engaged in community projects and activities that help to foster greater cohesion. Target total 160 Target date 30/06/2025 Actual total (cumulative) 128 Products and processes commissioned to build community capacity and raise awareness of community cohesion.
- People supported through the project are undertaking training to build community capacity and raise awareness of community cohesion. Target total 20 Target date 31/08/2025 Actual total (cumulative) 0 The training is yet to be delivered, this will be rolled out September 2025

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Appendix 2 – MHCLG Community Recovery Fund (CRF) performance feedback November 2025

How has the Council allocated and utilised the Community Recovery Fund? What specific projects or initiatives were developed as a result?

- Middlesbrough Council developed Gold (strategic) and Silver (operational) Groups to support the recovery from the riots. Silver group consisted of a range of key partners and community group representatives who were consulted on how they thought the CRF should be spent. Recommendations were made from Silver to Gold and a set of allocations agreed.
- £10k - Develop a self-sustaining Community led Forum, giving VCS groups a voice to inform statutory services community sentiments and ideas on community needs.
- £30k – Grant application process VCS led consortium to map existing assets to establish current community offer throughout Middlesbrough, identify unmet needs and gaps in delivery.
- £75k – Grant application process VCS groups to deliver joint engagement activities and events throughout Middlesbrough.
- £20k - Communications – Develop a process for statutory services to use 'trusted voices' within the VCS community to deliver regular clear joint messages to the wider community, promoting cohesion and working together narratives.
- £150k CRF (plus £55 CCRP) - Youth related assertive outreach and centre-based activities throughout Middlesbrough. Identify key areas of concern, and individuals, engage young people in the community, develop relationships and signpost young people to existing and new youth related activities. Work 121 with those most disengaged young people and existing initiatives to maximise resources.
- £80k - Council to employ Community Development focussed posts to work across all services and projects supporting LA/Police/VCS services ensuring a fully joined up approach is embedded, and identify and develop sustainability community opportunities.
- £30k - Support for grassroot community groups, identify informal groups provide support and resources to develop, advertise and become constituted. Develop Social Action projects - Fund for community members to develop projects to solve problems and improve their local community.
- £20k - Fund experienced specialist facilitators in Hate rhetoric to develop and deliver Community Conversations throughout Middlesbrough, linked to riots and Community Cohesion.
- £50k - Building resilience in vulnerable communities and members to develop confidence and improve engagement in wider community activities.

Appendix 2 – MHCLG Community Recovery Fund (CRF) performance feedback

November 2025

- £45k - Educational resources to be delivered in schools and colleges exploring and challenging ideas around Islamophobia, Antisemitism and Right-Wing narrative around migration.
- £40k - Invest in environmental equipment to improve aesthetics, related to broken window theory.
- £50k - Target Hardening reconnaissance and works to the physical environment, design out crime, increase lighting, open up areas.

Examples of events and projects

- A Primary School developed a 'We love Middlesbrough' Family Challenge in which families are challenged to consider all that is great about living in Middlesbrough and showcase in poster, video or presentation format.
- Umbrella Hugs - Through a series of workshops we introduced the young people of Middlesbrough to the heritage of their town, highlighting all the positive aspects of living in Middlesbrough. Giving them the tools to challenge many of the preconceived negatives surrounding our town.
- Curious Arts - Pride drop-in sessions in 5 secondary schools (LGBTQIA+).
- MELA Event: Celebrating food and culture, uniting diverse residents through real life stories.
- Adolescent Hercules - Host events with community engagement, focusing on Middlesbrough's history, migration, and culture, culminating in a published book.
- Middlesbrough Art Weekender - The project involved a 7-day festival with 15 workshops, bringing communities together through art, play, and food, while reflecting on Middlesbrough's shared migration history.
- Middlesbrough Football Club - Promote culture through music, food, and workshops, engaging diverse groups. To host an Eid party at MFC Stadium promoting diversity, inclusion, and tackling extremism through workshops and celebrations.
- Friends of Hemlington Library and Hub – Diverse community members to design, create and installation of a mosaic mural on Hemlington Library Hub's wall.
- Creative arts project - Pieces of Us, bringing together schools and community groups across Middlesbrough to explore identity and societal challenges through art and writing. Working alongside local artists, participants will engage in open discussions about identity, individuality, and community worth. through poetry and the creation of large, individual jigsaw Pieces, participants will express their thoughts and feelings. These Pieces will culminate in a

Appendix 2 – MHCLG Community Recovery Fund (CRF) performance feedback

November 2025

public exhibition where all the jigsaw Pieces connect, symbolizing unity and will be displayed in Neighbourhood Hubs throughout the town.

- Open Door North East - Host training events to increase cultural literacy, with a particular focus on employers (private, statutory and charitable) in the town to increase confidence in understanding and employing a diverse workforce. Promote diversity in the workforce and build confidence in hiring from diverse backgrounds.
- North East Opera - The project will involve a series of creative workshops across Middlesbrough, including taster sessions, community discussions, and collaborations with various groups such as inmates, students, and people in recovery. These workshops will focus on the history of migration and the cultural identity of Middlesbrough. The project will culminate in two final performances of "My Great Folk - We Are Middlesbrough" at the Town Hall, featuring a diverse group of participants. Key activities include planning and resourcing workshops, ensuring wide promotion, documenting progress, and gathering feedback to measure impact.

What key milestones or deliverables have been achieved within each funded project or initiative?

- Middlesbrough Mela objectives were to promote inclusive music education and community engagement- This was achieved with over 14000 people attending the 2-day festival. Feedback from attendees is available via short reels for social media on request.
- Middlesbrough Environment City hosted a Flavours of Middlesbrough event which brought together people from different cultures. Many of the people that attended had not eaten the diverse food available. This helped MEC reinforce a shared vision of change through the community along with educating residents on the cultural history of Middlesbrough through guest speakers, information boards and stalls.
- Pieces of us have created an art piece that will be split around different hubs in the area. This project worked with groups of all ages at 6 different locations in Middlesbrough to create 6 pieces of art. The pieces were used to discuss important themes with the groups such as We Are Middlesbrough, built from steel, resilient & recovering, loyalty & kindness, one of a kind. Attendees reported an improved sense of belonging to the local community.

What challenges or barriers have emerged during the implementation of these projects, and how have they been addressed?

- Getting a consensus on themes by the Silver Recovery attendees. This was overcome by reporting ideas from Silver to Gold Group to make executive decisions on funding themes and allocation.

Appendix 2 – MHCLG Community Recovery Fund (CRF) performance feedback

November 2025

- Concerns were raised by VCS organisations about fairness and transparency in funding allocation. We agreed on £195K to be made available to VCS groups by establishing a small grant process allowing all VCS organisations to apply for funding, all applications were assessed by a diverse panel including VCS representatives.
- A small number of VCS organisations complained that they were not aware of the funding opportunity, so we extended the application deadline by 10 days, ensuring equal opportunities for all.
- Some projects struggled to engage communities, these issues were raised at Silver Recovery group and through project monitoring. By collaboration and partnership working organisations were able to increase capacity and outreach to ensure wider engagement.

What impact have these projects had on local communities, particularly in terms of cohesion, resilience, and engagement?

- During a recent Silver Group meeting attendees were asked how well the funding had been distributed and the quality of the projects, all attendees agreed that the recovery process had been implemented well. However, when asked about the sentiment in the community had changed since the riots, they reported that it had not changed. We feel that more work needs to be done to maintain momentum and increase the impact of cohesion work in the community. We also feel that the displaying of Union Jack and England flags throughout Middlesbrough and the sentiment behind this has had a detrimental effect on progress.
- The feedback from project participants has been positive with lots of different communities interacting with each other for the first time. This has been seen in localised areas such as North Ormesby, Hemlington and wider across the town such as Middlesbrough MELA. These interactions have been welcomed by residents who attended the events with Middlesbrough MELA showing that 66% of people felt an improved sense of belonging in their area.
- We are building on this further with educational events to help schools strengthen resilience, challenge mis/dis/mal information, and build a greater sense of belonging for all pupils. The sessions are being delivered in January 2026 and are aimed at primary and secondary school colleagues and pupils.
- For community activators and VCS colleagues we are delivering Community Bridge Building training running throughout January and February 2026. The training sessions will teach participants how to communicate with people who have different perspectives, how to deal with difficult conversations and encourage positive changes in their own community, organisation or group.

What best practices or lessons learned have been identified through the delivery of these projects, and how might they inform future community cohesion work?

Appendix 2 – MHCLG Community Recovery Fund (CRF) performance feedback

November 2025

- We recognise that the CRF was a short-term initiative to support communities recover from the riots. However, many VCS organisations feel longer term funding is required to make sustainable change.
- Participants have suggested that events ran and promoted by community groups have a greater engagement and wider reach in the community.
- The newly implemented Neighbourhood model in Middlesbrough has supported the recovery process significantly by improving partnership working with VCS organisations and engagement with the wider community. This has enabled residents to become more involved in local decision making, codesign, develop and deliver activities that are relevant and meaningful for their needs, building resilience.

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Artificial Intelligence Policy

January 2026

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Lynsey Zipfell

ICT and Digital Services

Agenda Item 8

Artificial Intelligence – Why

- Emerging Technology with Rapid Growth in AI Use
- New Risks and Responsibilities
- Supporting Productivity and Service Improvement
- Ensuring Accountability and Transparency

Artificial Intelligence Policy

- Provides clear guidelines for how AI must be used safely, ethically, and responsibly across the Council.
- Ensures all AI use is lawful, fair, and transparent
- Keeps accountability with people, meaning officers, managers, and elected Members always remain responsible for final decisions.
- Requires the use of approved AI tools only, with all outputs always reviewed, checked, and validated by a human before being used.

Benefits and Impact

Benefits	Description
Safe AI Use	Clear rules help staff use AI confidently and responsibly.
Data Protection	Ensures secure handling of data.
Productivity	Encourages tools that save time and improve delivery.
Human Oversight	Keeps accountability with people.
Supplier Compliance	Requires vendors to meet security standards.
Consistency	Provides a unified approach across all Council services.

Next Steps

- Ongoing Monitoring of Emerging Technology
- Investigate tools on the market
- Rollout of Staff Training
- Governance Checks
- Engagement With New and Existing Suppliers

Questions



Artificial Intelligence Policy 2025 - 2028

Creator	Author(s)	Head of ICT and Digital					
	Approved by	Mayor Chris Cooke					
	Department	Legal and Governance Services					
	Service area	ICT and Digital Services					
Date	Created	November 2025					
	Submitted	December 2025					
	Approved	TBD					
	Updating Frequency	Annually, or sooner if changes to AI technologies, risks, or regulations arise					
Status	Final						
Contributor(s)	Head of ICT and Digital Head of Policy, Governance and Information Data Protection Officer Enterprise Architect Project Manager						
	Legislation	UK General Data Protection Regulation 2016 Data Protection Act 2018 Equality Act 2010					
Subject	ICT Applications						
Type	Policy						
	Vital Record	Yes	EIR	No			
Coverage	Cross-cutting						
Language	English						
Document Control							
Version	Date	Revision History		Reviser			
1.0	First policy						
Distribution List							
Version	Date	Name/Service Area	Action				
1.0	All staff						
Contact:	Head of ICT and Digital						



1. Purpose

This Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy provides a framework for the lawful, ethical, responsible, and effective use of AI technologies by Middlesbrough Council. It is a living document and as such the Head of ICT and Digital, following consultation with the Senior Information Risk Owner, will make minor amendments to the policy during the life of the policy to reflect emerging changes to technologies, risks, or regulations as they arise. Major required changes will be returned to Members for decision.

Key expectations are that:

- AI must never replace human accountability. All final decisions remain the responsibility of Council officers or elected Members. AI may provide analysis, summaries, however human review, judgement and decisions is required in every case.
- All staff who use AI tools will be required to undertake training on safe and responsible AI use, including data protection, prompt management, and how to review and challenge AI outputs.
- Software suppliers providing AI solutions must comply with this policy, assist the Council in completion of its Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), and provide assurances on ethical use, transparency, and data security.

This policy is designed to enable the effective and lawful use of AI to improve productivity while remaining fully compliant with ethical principles. It provides assurance to residents, staff, and businesses that their data will be handled ethically, safely, and transparently. The policy forms an element of the Council's Information Governance Policy Framework and supports delivery of the Digital Strategy vision.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, elected members, agency, volunteers working and commissioned services within Middlesbrough Council.
- All departments and services across the Council
- All AI systems used, develop, procured, pilot or deployed, including:
 - systems built or configured by the council.
 - systems purchase or licences from suppliers
 - systems being trailed or evaluated
 - AI features embedded within existing software platforms.

Device and Access Control

- All Council information systems, including AI tools, productivity platforms, applications, and data services must only be accessed on Council-issued and managed devices that meet corporate ICT security standards.
- The use of personal devices for Council systems is not permitted, unless formally authorised in writing by ICT Security and Information Governance.
- This requirement protects the security of Council data, ensures compliance with information governance obligations, and maintains accountability.
- All AI solutions and digital services, including associated data, must be accessed only through Council-approved environments and devices. Personal or unmanaged devices must not be used.

Permitted Use

AI may be used within Middlesbrough Council only when it supports lawful and ethical activity. Permitted uses include:

- Summarising information, generating draft reports or text, and assisting with communications.
- Supporting capturing content, processing requests, generating or logging routing queries.
- Productivity tasks such as document formatting, coding support, workflow automation or data classification.
- Analysing or processing datasets, documents or publicly available information to generate summaries, insights or comparisons in line with data protection legislation and Council policies.
- Use of AI tools that have been formally approved by the Council through Information Governance and the Technology Design Authority.
- All AI-generated outputs are to be reviewed, validation, and approval by a human officer before use.

Prohibited Use

AI must not be used where it creates increases risk to individuals, data, or the Council. Prohibited uses include:

- Processing or sharing personal, confidential, or sensitive data in any public or unapproved AI tool.
- Treating AI outputs as authoritative or factual without verification by a trained officer.
- Using AI for automated decision-making about individuals that produces legal, financial, or significant personal effects, unless:
 - authorised by Information Governance and the Technology Design Authority,
 - supported by a DPIA, and EIA and
 - includes meaningful human review and the right to challenge.
- Deploying AI in a way that removes or replaces final human judgement.

Human oversight

All AI systems must include meaningful human oversight:

- A trained officer must review, challenge, and approve outputs before they are acted upon.
- Responsibility for decisions always remains with the human, not the AI system.

Third-Party Suppliers

All third-party suppliers and partners providing AI solutions, systems, or services on behalf of Middlesbrough Council must comply with this policy and with relevant legislation. Requirements for Suppliers:

- Suppliers must provide evidence that their AI systems comply with authority policies.
- Suppliers must disclose how their AI systems work, including training data sources, safeguards against bias, accuracy limits, and processes for human oversight.
- Suppliers must support the Council in completing or updating a DPIA and EIA and, before any AI functionality is enabled or procured.
- All contracts must include clear requirements for lawful use, transparency, supplier accountability, and Authority rights to audit and monitor compliance.
- If a supplier introduces or activates AI functionality in an existing or new system, the functional system owner must consult Information Governance to review and update the DPIA and EIA before the feature is enabled or the system is purchased.

3. Definitions

Topic	Definition
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	AI is a way of using computers to attempt to replicate human intelligence
Agentive AI	Refers to artificial intelligence systems designed to perform tasks autonomously on behalf of users. These systems can make decisions, take actions, and complete tasks without needing constant human intervention. They are often used to automate repetitive tasks, manage complex processes, or provide personalised assistance.
Generative Artificial Intelligence	Generative AI (GenAI) mimics intelligence by generating new outputs based on its training data, often seen in AI chatbots, which recognizes patterns and makes predictions, creating content from user prompts.

Topic	Definition
Large Language models	The “Large language Model (LLM)” is a type of AI that uses deep learning techniques and large data bases to understand, summarise, generate and predict new content.
Machine Learning	The term Machine Learning emerged as a subfield of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that focuses on developing algorithms and techniques to enable computer systems to learn and improve from data without being explicitly programmed.
Natural Language Processing/ Conversational AI	These AI systems are designed to interact with humans through Natural Language Processing (NLP), a subfield of computer science and AI that enables computers to understand, interpret, and generate human language.
Predictive AI	This type of AI uses historical data to make predictions about future events. It's commonly used in areas like finance for stock market forecasting, weather prediction, and customer behaviour analysis.
Robotic Process Automation	Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a technology that uses software robots or "bots" to automate repetitive, rule-based tasks typically performed by humans, improving efficiency and accuracy in business processes.
AI Data Ethics	Systems will need to be developed ethically and clearly to ensure they address issues such as bias, discrimination, privacy and surveillance to avoid potential harm and maintain public trust.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a process to identify and minimise data protection risks in a project.
Data Quality	Data Quality refers to the accuracy, completeness, reliability, and relevance of data, ensuring it is fit for its intended use.
Microsoft Co-pilot	Microsoft Copilot is an AI assistant designed to enhance productivity by providing intelligent, context-aware support and solutions across various tasks and applications.
Training Data	Training data is the dataset used to teach an AI model to recognise patterns, make decisions, and generate outputs based on the examples it has learned from.

4. Legislative and regulatory framework

This policy will also ensure compliance with all applicable UK legislation and statutory guidance in relation to use of AI including:

Legislation	Summary
UK General Data Protection Regulation 2016, Data Protection Act 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025	Data protection legislation governs how personal data is processed, including by AI systems and provides statutory rights including the right to object to automated processing to challenge and prevent decisions made solely by automated systems that significantly affect them.
Equality Act 2010	Requires all AI systems to be fair and not discriminate against individuals based on protected characteristics.
Human Rights Act 1998	Protects fundamental rights and freedoms, including privacy and freedom of expression, which may be affected by AI use.
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004	Under the FOIA/EIR, the Council has a duty to make information available to the public upon request, unless specific exemption(s) apply. It is also obliged to proactively and routinely publish information that has been frequently requested in the past in its Publication Scheme.
Contract, Copyright, and Intellectual Property Law	Contract Law in the UK governs the formation and enforcement of agreements between parties, Copyright Law protects the rights of creators over their original works, and Intellectual Property Law encompasses various legal protections for inventions, designs, trademarks, and trade secrets.
Statutory and recommended guidance	Guidance provided by the Information Commissioner's Office, HM Government Departments, the Local Government Association, and the National Cyber Security Centre.

5. Practical Requirement for Staff

- All AI use must be reviewed against the above legislation and guidance.
- A DPIA and EIA must be completed before any AI system is deployed or feature is enabled.
- Information Governance must be consulted at an early stage to ensure compliance.

6. Artificial Intelligence Principles

Middlesbrough Council adopts the following principles to ensure that AI is used lawfully, ethically, and responsibly. These are based on Central Government and adapted for the authority context, these are:

- We know what AI is and what its limitations are
- We use AI lawfully, ethically and responsibly
- We know how to use AI securely
- We have meaningful human control at the right stage
- We understand how to manage the AI life cycle
- We use the right tool for the job
- We are open and collaborative
- We work with commercial colleagues from the start
- we have the skills and expertise needed to implement and use AI
- We use these principles alongside our organisation's policies and have the right assurance in place.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Mayor and Elected Members of the Council** are democratically accountable for the way in which Middlesbrough Council discharges its functions. Information Governance (including Artificial Intelligence) sits within the portfolio of the Mayor.
- **The Chief Executive** has a duty to manage the discharge of the Council's different functions, including its legal responsibilities for effective information rights management. Oversight of the Council's information governance arrangements sit within the remit of the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee.
- **The Head of ICT and Digital** will lead the Digital Strategy development and ensure planned use of AI within it adheres to this policy.
- **The Leadership Management Team and Directorate Management Teams** collectively and individually are the owners of the Council's 'information assets' and are responsible for the compliance of their services with legislation, associated codes of practice, guidance and this policy.
- **The Executive Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration** have been designated and registered by the Council as its 'Caldicott Guardians', the senior persons responsible for protecting the confidentiality of people's health and care information and making sure it is used properly.

- **The Head of Policy, Governance and Information** has been designated as the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner and they must foster a culture for protecting and using data, provide a focal point for managing information risks and incidents, and is concerned with the management of all information assets.
- **The Data Protection Officer's** role is to assist the Council to monitor internal compliance, inform and advise on data protection obligations, provide advice regarding Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs), and act as a contact point for data subjects and the supervisory authority.
- **Technical Design Authority Board** is responsible for providing technical governance across all ICT and Digital projects. It will review and approve technical designs to ensure alignment with the Council's ICT and Digital Strategy, Information Strategy security standards, and architectural principles. The Board acts as an escalation point for technical risks, validates compliance with policies, and ensures proposed solutions are cost-effective, sustainable, and interoperable with existing systems.
- **Information Strategy Group** is responsible for overseeing implementation of the Council's agreed Information Strategy.
- **All staff, volunteers, and third parties** handling personal data on behalf of the Council must comply with legislation, the Council's AI Policy, and follow procedures and training. When using AI, users remain accountable for decisions, must review AI-generated answers, intervene if necessary, and identify any content produced by Generative AI when documenting or sharing it.

8. Supporting Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following other policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Management policy
- Secure Working Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Public Information and Information Request Policy
- Equality Policy
- Impact Assessment Policy.

9. Procedure and Process

Middlesbrough Council will ensure that it maintains the required documentation, procedures, and processes in relation to its legal obligations and matters of good practice in relation to mitigation of risk including but not limited to:

Governance and Approval

- Technology Design Authority must review and approve all AI proposals.
- Functional system owners must consult Information Governance and update a DPIA before any AI functionality is purchased, enabled, or significantly changed.
- Significant AI projects must also be recorded in the AI Transparency Register and, where relevant, included in privacy notices and equality impact assessments.

Risk and Compliance

- Responsible procurement of AI, suppliers must demonstrate compliance.
- Appropriate training datasets.
- Business and decision-making process mapping.
- AI Transparency Register.
- Compliance audits (including contract monitoring).
- Fairness check assessments.
- Consultation with citizens and stakeholders.
- Performance monitoring.
- Privacy notices updated where AI is used.
- Data Protection Impact Assessments.
- Data protection by design and default.
- Equality Impact Assessments.
- Intellectual property and copyright compliance.
- Mandatory AI user training.

10. Monitoring and review arrangements

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Technical Design Authority within its oversight role.

This policy will be fully reviewed annually. The Head of ICT and Digital has the delegated authority to amend this policy to reflect emerging technologies and issues, following consultation with the Senior Information Risk Owner, Data Protection Officer and the Technical Design Authority.

11. Further Information

Additional guidance is available on [The Bridge](#), Services, ICT, Artificial Intelligence. For queries about this policy, please contact the Head of ICT and Digital or the Data Protection Officer.

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Charlotte Benjamin - Director of Legal and Governance Services
Relevant Executive Member:	Chris Cooke - Mayor
Submitted to:	Single Member Executive – The Mayor
Date:	18 December 2025
Title:	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2025 – 2028
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That the Mayor:

- **APPROVES** the adoption of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2025 – 28
- **APPROVES** that the Head of ICT and Digital has authority to make changes to the policy, following consultation with the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), to ensure the policy keeps pace with emerging AI technology, legislation, case law and guidance from government.

Executive summary

This report introduces Middlesbrough Council's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, developed to ensure the lawful, ethical, and responsible use of AI technologies across the organisation.

The policy recognises the growing role of AI in supporting public service delivery and outlines a clear framework to guide its use in a way that enhances productivity while safeguarding data, upholding transparency, and maintaining human accountability.

The policy sets out that AI must never replace human judgement. All decisions remain the responsibility of Council officers or elected Members, and AI may only be used to support, not replace, human decision-making. The policy also mandates training for all

staff using AI tools and sets clear expectations for suppliers providing AI-enabled systems.

The vision underpinning the policy is that AI will be used to support the Council's strategic priorities in a way that is ethical, secure, and transparent, giving assurance to residents, staff, and partners.

The policy is structured around the following key principles:

- Human accountability and oversight
- Safe and ethical use of AI tools
- Secure access and device control
- Clear boundaries for permitted and prohibited use
- Supplier compliance and transparency

This policy forms part of the Council's wider Information Governance and Digital Strategy framework. It will be reviewed at least annually by the Head of ICT and Digital, in conjunction with the Information Governance and Technology Design Authority Board, to ensure it remains current and responsive to emerging technologies and risks.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out a proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy for Middlesbrough Council. As AI technologies become increasingly embedded in public service delivery, it is essential that the Council adopts a clear and robust framework to guide their use.
- 1.2 This report outlines the rationale for adopting an AI Policy that ensures AI is used lawfully, ethically, and responsibly, in a way that supports the Council's strategic priorities and maintains public trust. The policy sets out the principles, expectations, and governance arrangements for the use of AI across the organisation.
- 1.3 The AI Policy contributes to the Council Plan ambitions by enabling the safe and effective use of AI to improve productivity, enhance service delivery, and support innovation, while ensuring that human accountability, data protection, and ethical standards remain central to all AI-related activity.
- 1.4 A Member decision is required, as the adoption of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy falls within the Executive Member for LGS, Mayor Chris Cooke remit to approve policies that govern the Council's use and management of digital technology.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	The AI Policy will support the Council to achieve its ambitions in these areas by promoting ethical and secure use of data and technology to improve services and protect residents.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	By embedding human decision making and clear

	governance, it supports innovation while ensuring compliance.
Delivering best value	The AI Policy will support digital transformation by enabling the Council to adopt AI tools that improve service efficiency, responsiveness, and innovation, ensuring services are better tailored to the needs of residents and businesses.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Mayor:

- **APPROVES** the adoption of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy 2025 – 28
- **APPROVES** that the Head of ICT and Digital has authority to make changes to the policy, following consultation with the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), to ensure the policy keeps pace with emerging AI technology, legislation, case law and guidance from government.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 Having a clear policy in place to guide the use of AI is essential for a modern, complex organisation. AI technologies present significant opportunities to improve productivity, streamline operations, and enhance service delivery. However, without appropriate governance, they also introduce risks related to data protection, ethics, and accountability. A decision from the Mayor is sought as the agenda item is within their portfolio.

3.2 This policy ensures that AI is used in a way that aligns with the Council's strategic priorities, supports innovation, and maintains compliance with legal and ethical standards. By embedding human decision making and clear governance, the policy provides a basis that enables the Council to adopt AI confidently and responsibly.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The AI Policy is aligned with the Council's existing Information Governance framework and wider digital ambitions.

4.2 The policy provides a framework to ensure that AI technologies are used lawfully, ethically, and effectively to support service delivery, innovation, and operational efficiency, while maintaining human oversight and accountability.

4.3 The AI Policy supports the Council's digital ambitions by enabling the safe and appropriate use of AI tools to enhance how services are delivered. It ensures that emerging technologies are adopted in a way that is secure and aligned with the Council's values and priorities.

4.4 An effective AI Policy will deliver the following benefits:

- Enable safe and responsible use of AI
- Ensure compliance with data protection, equality, and ethical standards
- Maintain human accountability in all decision-making processes

4.5 The AI Policy sets out:

- Responsible and appropriate use of AI across Council services
- How AI will be used appropriately within the Council
- Guidance on appropriate and ethical use of AI in Council operations
- Ensuring AI is used appropriately

4.6 The policy also outlines the Council's approach to due diligence when considering new AI tools. Where AI functionality is proposed, either as standalone solutions or embedded within third-party systems, ICT will work closely with the relevant service leads to assess the value, risks, and implications before implementation. This includes evaluating the purpose, data requirements, ethical considerations, and governance needs of the proposed AI functionality.

4.7 Following adoption, the policy will be overseen by the Head of ICT and Digital. The policy will be reviewed at least annually to reflect emerging technologies, risks, and best practice, with major changes referred to Members for approval.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable to this report.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 The Council could choose to operate without a formal AI Policy. However, in the context of increasing use of AI technologies across the public sector, the absence of a clear policy would present significant risks. These include inconsistent use of AI tools, potential non-compliance with data protection and ethical standards, and a lack of transparency or accountability in decision-making.

6.2 Setting out a clear and consistent approach to the use of AI provides a shared understanding across the organisation and with partners. It ensures that AI is used in a way that supports the Council's digital ambitions and helps deliver high-quality, ethical, and efficient services to residents and businesses in Middlesbrough.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	The implementation of the AI Policy may have financial implications over time, particularly as new AI tools are assessed, procured, or integrated into existing systems. Any associated costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis and only progressed if the costs can be met through pre-existing budgets or the appropriate approval has been obtained, after which they will be further progressed through the Council's standard decision-making and procurement processes to ensure value for money and alignment with social value principles.

Legal Data Protection	<p>This policy will ensure compliance with all applicable UK legislation and statutory guidance in relation to use of AI including:</p> <p>UK General Data Protection Regulation 2016 Data Protection Act 2018 Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 Equality Act 2010 Human Rights Act 1998 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 Environmental Information Regulations 2004 Contract, Copyright, and Intellectual Property Law Statutory and recommended guidance</p>
Risk	<p>Implementation of the policy will contribute positively to the management of Strategic Risk Register item SRR 13:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (SRR 13) If the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements are not fit for purpose and appropriate action is not taken to rectify this at pace, this could result, censure from the Council's auditors within a public interest report that would damage the Council's reputation and/or in government formal intervention including removal of powers from officers and members and direction of council spend. <p>The policy strengthens governance and accountability around the use of AI, reducing the risk of reputational damage or regulatory intervention.</p>
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	The policy supports the Council's ability to demonstrate compliance with its duties in these areas by requiring ethical use of AI, transparency in decision-making. The policy will positively impact on human rights and will ensure compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty by requiring the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) before an AI product is used that will process personal data. This will ensure that the Council does not introduce systems or processes that could impact unfairly on people or groups because they hold one or more protected characteristics.
Reducing Poverty	The policy enables better use of data and AI tools to support targeted service delivery and informed decision-making.
Climate Change / Environmental	
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	

8. Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Publication of the Strategy	Head of ICT and Digital	30 January 2026
Establish internal guidance and resources for staff on AI use	Head of ICT and Digital and Head of Information Governance	30 January 2026
Develop and roll out AI awareness and training sessions	Head of ICT and Digital	30 January 2026

9. Appendices

1	Artificial Intelligence Policy 2025 - 2028
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10. Background papers

Not applicable.

Contact: Lynsey Zipfell, Head of ICT and Digital

Email: Lynsey_Zipfell@middlesbrough.gov.uk