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## COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 1 April 2026.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Banks, (Chair), J Kabuye (Vice-Chair), I Blades, D Branson, P Gavigan, E Clynych, C Cooke - Elected Mayor, J Cooke, C Cooper, D Coupe, D Davison, J Ewan, T Furness, L Henman, B Hubbard, N Hussain, D Jackson, L Lewis, L Mason, J McConnell, T Mohan, I Morrish, M Nugent, J Platt, A Romaine, J Rostron, J Rush, J Ryles, J Thompson, S Tranter, Z Uddin, N Walker, G Wilson, J Young and L Young

**OFFICERS:** C Benjamin, S Bonner, A Glover and S Lightwing

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** were submitted on behalf of Councillors T A Grainge, S Hill, L Hurst, D Jones, D McCabe, J McTigue, J Nicholson, S Platt, M Saunders, M Smiles and P Storey

### 25/108 WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

### 25/109 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

| Name of Member      | Type of Interest | Item/Nature of Business                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillor J Kabuye | Non-pecuniary    | Agenda Items 6 and 7 – Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme. Director of Unbuntu Multicultural Centre - a service provider for HAF. |

### 25/110 MINUTES - COUNCIL - 14 JANUARY 2026 AND 18 FEBRUARY 2026

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 14 January and 18 February 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### 25/111 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Announcements for this meeting.

### 25/112 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor moved his report as written.

#### *Questions in relation to the Mayor's Report*

Councillor Rush on how funding priorities are assessed

The Mayor explained that when funding was provided, the outcomes were expected to be in line with the Government's ambitions. Where funding was more flexible, for example when budgets were set, the Council tried to support those in greatest need wherever possible. Recognising that need came in many different forms, universal offers were in place across every ward. The Mayor highlighted recent investments in the Nunthorpe Ward which included a new Community Centre, road infrastructure improvements and youth provision. The Mayor extended an invitation to Councillor Rush to meet with him to further discuss the points raised.

Councillor Uddin in relation to Levick Court

The Mayor stated that Levick Court had been marked as a red saving on the budget for several months but in this case, outcomes had outweighed financial risks. Families across the region had faced closures of this type of respite provision. The re-opening of Levick Court had been a massive benefit both for existing and new residents. Respite offered an amazing opportunity

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for those who provided care to other family members. The Mayor also commented on the fantastic care provided by an ageing population of carers and that the Council should do whatever it could to continue to provide respite for them.

Councillor Morrish on City of Culture

The Mayor agreed with the Councillor's comments that the City of Culture nomination was hugely important for Middlesbrough and encourage all Councillors to support the bid. The Mayor also agreed with the Councillor's comments in respect of homelessness in the town and that the Council needed to ensure people were housed. Later this year the Council would be introducing a new Homelessness Strategy. Three new posts in the Homelessness Team had been recruited to recently including a Head of Social Care and Housing. Numbers of homeless people in Middlesbrough had been increasing since 2021 and this was a shocking sign of the times. The Mayor added that house building needed to continue and the Council needed to gain control of empty properties and renovate them to ensure that quality homes could be provided to support those people who were furthest away from the property market to gain their own tenancies. A briefing would be provided to all Members in respect of homelessness issues and demonstrate what actions were being taken to help those who needed housing. Responding to a suggestion of setting aside a secure area for rough sleepers, the Mayor explained that it was difficult to create specific sites since this could bring further issues such as encouraging people from other areas to move to the town. The key to addressing the issue was to identify problems earlier and ensure that adequate housing available for people identifying as homeless, rather than normalising people living in tents. In respect of cleaning up the environment, additional neighbourhood caretakers and a back alley cleansing team had been employed.

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## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATES**

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Children's Services – Councillor Henman*

Councillor Uddin on school attendance.

The Executive Member for Children's Services commented that 339 of Middlesbrough's school aged children in care had a school place. In terms of six who did not currently have a school place, there were a range of reasons, a couple of examples were provided which were: being placed out of area as a protection from criminal activity and moving to another local authority and awaiting a placement there. All children were currently accessing alternative forms of education and these were standard circumstances that the virtual school supported young people with.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness*

Councillor Rush on Nunthorpe Community Centre

The Executive Member for Development explained that the opening date for the Nunthorpe Community Centre had not been confirmed as yet. There had been some issues with the water connection which had delayed the opening. The Executive Member stated that he would inform the Councillor when he had a confirmed date.

Councillor Morrish on Nunthorpe Parish Council

This question was not permitted by the Chair since the topic did not appear within the Executive Member's Update.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability – Councillor Gavigan*

Councillor Rush on pedestrian crossings

Councillor Gavigan stated that he could not answer the question directly but that there were a number of new pedestrian crossings being installed during the next financial year. All requests

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were assessed against a matrix by a panel of officers and included an overall score based on multiple factors. Schemes were implemented when funding was secured. The Council had a limited budget to progress multiple requests for schemes and there were currently in excess of 100 schemes across the Borough on the list. In relation to the number of pedestrian crossings in Nunthorpe and the criteria for determining provision, the Executive Member invited Councillor Rush to email her question and he would provide a response, as he did not have that information to hand.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods – Councillor Blades*

Councillor Rush on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained that each of the four neighbourhood areas across the town focussed on issues such as ASB. The Executive Member suggested that the Councillor should contact the Neighbourhood Manager for the Nunthorpe area in relation to the complaints received from residents. In relation to youth provision, in conjunction with Middlesbrough Football Club, a bus had been fitted out as a roving youth club for the time being until further evidence was gathered in relation to what was required in terms of provision. It was important to try and go to where young people congregated in order to engage with them and ascertain what the most appropriate venues for youth provision were. Further information would be communicated to Ward Members.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness*

Councillor Rush on Development Across the Borough Section 106

The Executive Member for Development explained that the use of Section 106 money was determined by Officers in terms of infrastructure requirements around new developments. In terms of how and when Section 106 money was allocated, this was determined by the planning application system. The Executive Member also highlighted the Members' Small Scheme Allowance was available for Councillors to bid for improvements such as pedestrian crossings.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability – Councillor Gavigan*

Councillor Rush on Marton Shops Junction

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability stated that he was aware of an email exchange between Councillor Rush and the Head of Transport in respect of the issues raised in relation to the Marton Shops Junction and that he had nothing further to add.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods – Councillor Blades*

Councillor Morrish on CCTV Patrols

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods explained that 3 patrol vehicles had been off the road for servicing, repair or camera upgrades. The other 4 vehicles were not on the road on the particular day to which the Freedom of Information Request had been submitted by Councillor Morrish. The costs of hiring extra vehicles had increased due to the requirements of the number of additional staff now employed by the Council. The Executive Member stated that the Neighbourhood Caretakers were currently using hire vehicles and were being used to patrol all areas.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness*

Councillor Branson on Coulby Newham Infrastructure

The Executive Member for Development congratulated the Councillor and Officers on the successful Neighbourhood Plan. The masterplan for Newham Hall designated an area for a Community Centre. Whilst that did not guarantee that a Community Centre would be built, it

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was a priority for the current administration to ensure there was one in every area. It was likely that a shopping centre and a primary school would also be viable following the development of over 100 new houses Coulby Newham. Construction had started on the new road and roundabout.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability – Councillor Gavigan*

Councillor Morrish on Marton Interchange

The Executive Member was unable to comment on traffic surveys undertaken or whether the sliproad near the crossing would be re-opened. The Executive Member agreed to email a response to the Councillor.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness*

Councillor Morrish on Carbon Savings

The Executive Member confirmed that the rooftop solar energy system installed at Fountain Court would deliver carbon savings equivalent to the items in his report – planting trees, removing petrol use and avoiding coal burning as a whole. The new system cost £160K and had been part funded by the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Battery storage was included and this week there had been two days when there had been no electricity usage from the grid. Payback for the investment was anticipated between 6 and 7 years. It was hoped that similar technology could be rolled out across all Council buildings in future. Although there was an initial cost this would also help protect against future energy costs.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability – Councillor Gavigan*

Councillor Morrish on Waste Services

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability thanked Councillor Morrish for his comments on the roll out of the red top bins and food caddies. In relation to communication with the public, it was confirmed that the Council was three months away from the scheme coming into use in June and the roll out was on track. Closer to the start date, all available communication methods would be used to make sure residents were fully aware of the scheme. The Executive Member added that he looked forward to everyone playing their part in ensuring a greener, cleaner town with improved recycling rates.

*Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness*

Councillor Morrish on Restaurant

The Executive Member for Development added his congratulations to Umami, a new restaurant joining the culinary line up at Captain Cook Square, in 2026. The new restaurant was part of the plans for the town centre rather than the historic retail offer. People liked choice and venues clustered together – such as STACK, Level X and inflate space. The Council was looking at the town centre as a whole and developing a marketing package to encourage people to come and shop and eat. Middlesbrough was historically the centre of the Tees Valley but it now needed to be reimagined and the Executive Member encouraged all Councillors to back the plans. In relation to the impacts on employers of the national minimum wage, increased cost of living and business rates, the Executive Member stated that he thought the national minimum wage increase was a good thing and unfortunately, he did not have any power over business rates which were set by Government.

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#### **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

No valid questions had been submitted by members of the public, within the required timescale for this meeting.

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25/115 **PETITIONS (IF ANY)**

No valid petitions had been submitted for this meeting.

25/116 **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the current position regarding progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the individual Scrutiny Panels.

The Executive Members for Development and for Environment and Sustainability had attended the February and March meetings respectively and provided updates on their portfolios.

The next meeting of OSB would take place on 15 April 2026 and not 7 April as stated in the report.

The Chair of OSB reminded Members to submit suitable topics for consideration for next year's Work Programme and also to complete the Scrutiny Survey that had been circulated by Democratic Services by 13 April 2026.

25/117 **LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

The Chair of Audit Committee presented a report seeking Council approval to the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance (LCCG) provided a framework that enabled the Council to assess its governance arrangements against best practice and accordingly it was recommended that the LCCG was reviewed annually.

The report proposed a slight change to the content of the LCCG, to include information previously set out in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This reflected an addendum to the 2016 CIPFA guidance issued in 2025, which recommended that Councils did this to enable them to concentrate on the effectiveness of those arrangements within the Annual Governance Statement. The change had been to include information on systems in place to support governance. The change would enable the AGS to concentrate on an assessment of the effectiveness of internal controls, enabling the document to be shorter, easier to read and more focussed.

On a vote being taken, it was **ORDERED** that Council approved the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance.

25/118 **UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS (IF ANY)**

No urgent decisions had been taken since the last Council meeting.

25/119 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (IF ANY)**

No Members' Questions on Notice had been submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

25/120 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE (IF ANY)**

Consideration was given to Motion No. 180 moved by Councillor Rush and seconded by Councillor Morrish of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules Nos, 4.28-4.34 as follows:

"National Colour Coded Recycling Packaging System, to include accessible labelling such as Braille or raised tactile markings.

Many residents wish to recycle responsibly but often face confusion due to inconsistent and unclear packaging labels. This confusion can lead to recyclable materials being placed in general waste or non-recyclable materials contaminating recycling collections.

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Recycling instructions are frequently printed in very small text, making them difficult to read, particularly for blind and visually impaired residents, older residents, or those with reading difficulties. As a result, residents may unknowingly dispose of recyclable items incorrectly.

Both Government and local councils are encouraging residents to recycle more. This is reflected in the increasing number of recycling bins and collection streams now provided to households. If residents are being asked to recycle more, it is only reasonable that the information on packaging is clear, consistent and accessible. A clear and consistent national approach would make recycling easier for residents and help improve recycling rates. It would also support the UK's wider environmental objectives, including increasing recycling levels and reducing waste sent to landfill.

A simple colour coded system displayed clearly on packaging would allow residents to quickly identify how an item should be disposed of. Such a system could help residents recycle correctly, reduce contamination in recycling collections, and provide clearer guidance for households across the country.

I therefore request that, if this motion is passed, the Chair of Council writes to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs within 28 days of the decision, urging the UK Government to consider introducing a national traffic light style colour coded system on packaging to clearly indicate recyclability, alongside accessible labelling such as Braille or raised tactile markings.

This would help ensure recycling information is accessible to everyone and allow residents to independently identify how items should be disposed of. A clear colour coded, and tactile system would therefore promote greater inclusivity while supporting improved recycling outcomes.

The proposer of the motion will work with the Chair to include in the letter the benefits such a system would bring to residents, councils and national recycling targets."

Councillors Rush and Morrish spoke in support of the motion.

The Chair invited Members to speak to the motion.

In response to a query by Councillor Rush in respect of her efforts to secure a seconder for the motion, the Mayor explained that any requests to second a motion from opposition Members were agreed by the Labour Group rather than individual Labour Councillors. As such, sufficient notice would be required for the Labour Group to give such a matter consideration, which the Mayor indicated the Group would be happy to do.

On a vote being taken the motion was **CARRIED**.

Consideration was given to Motion No. 181 moved by Councillor Clynch and seconded by Councillor Gavigan of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules Nos, 4.28-4.34 as follows:

"Supporting scrapping of two-child benefit cap

This Council supports the decision of the Government to scrap the two-child benefit cap. It has been estimated that 2 million children across the country will see increases in their household income thanks to the decision to lift the cap. This will help tackle child poverty and meet the government's aim to give all children the best start in life.

We know child poverty affects children's physical and mental health, their educational attainment and future employment opportunities. In Middlesbrough, we have some of the highest levels of child poverty in the country. This includes in some wards where 6 out of 7 children are growing up in poverty.

Currently excellent work is being undertaken by Middlesbrough Council including: 10x10 programme, the HAF programme (Holiday Activities and Food programme) and other support under the Council's Welfare Strategy such as auto-enrolment of free school meals, the Household Support Fund and the amazing work of our Welfare Rights Team. The ending of the two-child cap will help to lift more children out of poverty and improve the lives of children across Middlesbrough.

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This Council commits itself to continuing to support families and tackle child poverty.

This Council therefore resolves to: Request that the Chair of the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Education and recommit ourselves to working together to improve the lives of all of Middlesbrough's young people."

Councillor Mason raised a point of order, citing Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 4.8.24 (a) that motions on notice would not be accepted as valid if CPR 4.8.7 (b) applied. Councillor Mason expressed the view that Motion 181 appeared to be an expression of opinion on a national policy matter and therefore CPR 4.8.7 (b) (vi) applied and that the motion should not be put to the meeting as it contained expressions of opinion.

The Chair adjourned proceedings for consideration of the point of order raised by Councillor Mason.

The meeting was reconvened and the Chair of Council stated that the main purpose of the motion was not to give opinion or a speech, instead the motion was a request for Full Council to restate its intent to support families and to tackle child poverty and also a request for the Chair of Council to recommit for Council's efforts to improve the lives of young people. The Chair declared that the motion was valid.

The Chair invited Members to speak to the motion.

Councillors Gavigan, Branson, Kabuye, Walker, L Young, Henman and The Mayor spoke in support of the motion.

Councillors Morrish, Coupe, Rush and Mason spoke against the motion.

Responding to a point of clarification raised by Councillor Morrish, the Chair confirmed that he had elected to take the advice of the Monitoring Officer on Council Procedure Rules.

Councillor Mason proposed an amendment to the motion as follows:

"We know child poverty effects children's physical and mental health, their educational attainment and future employment opportunities. In Middlesbrough, we have some of the highest levels of child poverty in the country. This includes in some wards where 6 out of 7 children are growing up in poverty.

Currently excellent work is being undertaken by Middlesbrough Council including: 10x10 programme, the HAF programme (Holiday Activities and Food programme) and other support under the Council's Welfare Strategy such as auto-enrolment of free school meals, the Household Support Fund and the amazing work of our Welfare Rights Team.

This Council commits itself to continuing to support families and tackle child poverty.

This Council therefore resolves to: Request that the Chair of the Council write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Education and recommit ourselves to working together to improve the lives of all of Middlesbrough's young people."

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Coupe.

The Chair invited Members to speak to the proposed amendment to the motion.

Councillor Clynych spoke against the proposed amendment to the motion.

On a vote being taken, the amendment was **LOST** and the debate returned to the substantive motion.

The Chair invited Members to speak to the substantive motion.

Councillor Clynych exercised his right of reply and spoke in support of the motion.

On a vote being taken, the motion was **CARRIED**.

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In respect of the time permitted for consideration of motions on notice at a Council meeting, and in accordance with CPR 4.8.26 (u), the remaining motion on notice, Motion 182, was deferred to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and would be dealt with at that meeting in the same order and before any other motions of which notice was given.

25/121 **URGENT MOTIONS ON NOTICE (IF ANY)**

No Urgent Motions on Notice had been submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.