

PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 22 December 2025.

PRESENT: Councillors D Branson (Chair), D Coupe, J Ewan, D Jackson, J Kabuye and T Mohan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: C Renahan

OFFICERS: J McNally, T Frankland, J Hedgley, F Helyer and Parkinson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors B Hubbard, A Romaine and T Livingstone

25/37 WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

25/38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

25/39 MINUTES - PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL - 17 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the Place Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 17 November 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/40 BARRIERS TO REGENERATION - REGENERATION IN STOCKTON-ON-TEES

The Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth and Development from Stockton on Tees Borough Council (SBC) was in attendance and provided Members with an overview of the work that was being undertaken to regenerate areas of Stockton on Tees.

SBC was undertaking a large-scale initiative to regenerate Stockton town centre and surrounding areas. Much like Middlesbrough, SBC had identified that retail space in Stockton town centre was too vast and no longer sustainable in the modern landscape of online shopping and retail parks such as Teesside Park. The Council had created a more compact retail core by demolishing the Castlegate Shopping Centre with most retail shops now being located in Wellington Square and the northern part of the High Street.

Members heard that the layout of the town centre was no longer in keeping with SBC's vision and the river once heavily industrial in the 1960's when the shopping centre was first built, had since been cleaned up. An urban riverside park was now being developed which would connect the waterfront with the High Street.

Members were advised that the urban park would not generate any money, however SBC were trying to create an environment for growth and investment. The park would have an amphitheatre which would host events and animate the river.

A priority for SBC was the re-establishment of the residential market, with 'city centre living' becoming increasingly popular, incorporating cafes, gyms and riverside settings. Graduates were moving away from the area as they preferred 'city centre living' so by re-establishing the residential market it was hoped to retain graduates in the town.

A key focus for SBC was the organisation of events held in the town centre to drive footfall; Members were advised that SBC had installed anchor points and underground power supplies across the town to support events. It was advised that shared spaces including carparks in the town could double up as events spaces.

The Globe Theatre, originally built on 1935 was key to drawing visitors to the town. The theatre had been majorly refurbished and reopened as a live venue in 2021 maintaining its cultural heritage while adapting to modern times. The town also benefited from two smaller venues The Arc and Georgian Theatre.

Stockton town centre had benefited from a regular market since 1310, the market continued to take place twice a week, the market was a very important part of the town and history. As part of the regeneration, it was vital to make provision and space to continue the market. Members heard that the fountains on the High Street prevented the space from looking barren when the market was not on.

Members heard about the Stockton Flyer, situated behind the town hall, the Stockton Flyer was a fantastic automated mechanical sculpture that appeared every day at 1.03pm it rises from within the giant stone plinth that houses it, clanging, hooting, steaming and chuffing for a full 15 minutes, this sculpture draws crowds daily including visiting school children.

Diversification was also important to SBC when transforming the town centre. A former two-storey retail unit had been transformed into repurposed retail units for smaller businesses on the ground floor and an employment training hub on the first floor which had supported 1750 people into work since it opened in 2021.

Stockton town centre benefited from the Enterprise Arcade which enabled new small businesses to testbed their business ideas to ensure they did not fail before signing up to things like a lease. Successful businesses born from the Enterprise Centre included Drakes Bookshop and Wags and Whiskers.

An NHS Community Diagnostic Centre had been built on the High Street, bringing health provision back to the town centre and creating an accessible site for residents. A further health offer was also being looked at for the other end of the High Street.

These types of additions served their own important purpose but also helped to improve town centre footfall.

A Member queried if there was adequate parking within the town centre, it was confirmed that at present there was adequate parking this was kept under constant review via the Car Parking Strategy.

Members praised Stockton's work for its innovation and willingness to take bold action.

A Member queried how hearts and minds of residents could be won back once a poor reputation had been established.

The Assistant Director stated that the reputation was mostly about perception – crime etc was not reflected in statistics. Issues that are seen for example public drinking needed to be tackled and different ways of attracting footfall to make people see the town in a different light. It was stated that events were very important to give people different reasons to travel into the town. The residential aspect was also very important to change demographic of the town.

A Member asked when the events would begin to take place in the urban park, it was advised that the park would be opened from Spring 2026 the council was curating the space and working to understand what events could be held such as local offers including Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) and Bonfire Night fireworks.

It was queried what type of events are best on a per cost basis. Members heard that a Pretty Woman Flashmob had taken place on the High Street this was a free event which had been created by the Globe. An event had also taken place with Ashley Banjo – Big Town Dance, where he and his dance troupe Diversity aimed to unite the community by teaching the entire town a large street dance routine to boost local spirits, culminating in a huge public performance on the high street, 1000 people took part in this free event

AGREED as follows:

- That the information provided was received and noted

BARRIERS TO REGENERATION - MIDDLESBROUGH TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Representatives from the Middlesbrough Town Centre Strategic Partnership (MTCSP) were in attendance to provide the panel with information on the work that was being carried out in the town.

The MTCSP was made up of partners including Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, South Tees Public Health, Northeast Ambulance Service, Cipher Medical, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and various departments of Middlesbrough Council which included Licensing/Trading Standards, Housing, Children's Services, Alcohol Care Teams and Regeneration. Voluntary sector organisations such as Boro Angels, Women Street Watch and Safer Communities were also represented on the partnership.

The MTCSP also engaged with licensed premises, retail premises and other businesses through forums such as Pubwatch.

Members heard that the purpose of the MTCSP was to:

- Work together to share information/intelligence around Crime and Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) including alcohol related matters that impacted the daytime and night-time economy in a designated area of the town.
- To set short-term actions in line with the priorities identified.
- To tackle and reduce the impact of crime and ASB and the levels of harm caused to individuals, families, communities and businesses.
- Ensuring that all visitors can enjoy all aspects of Middlesbrough town centre safely and responsibly.

Members were advised that the MTCSP aimed to overcome some of the barriers in terms of the public's perception of Middlesbrough town centre, daytime or night-time, to identify the issues, making it a safer place and to support current businesses and further development.

The MTCSP partners worked together to deliver local and national strategies to improve safety in the daytime and night-time economy and strived to improve public perception of crime and disorder and ASB.

The aims and objectives of the MTCSP were:

- To improve public safety across the town centre and provide public reassurance and confidence.
- To promote resilience and growth for local hospitality, leisure and businesses including licensed premises ensuring that social and leisure activities could be enjoyed safely and responsibly whilst developing a balanced and diversified daytime and night-time economy.
- Maximising efficiencies in service delivery across all partners, exploring funding opportunities and providing oversight of any allocated funding.

The MTCSP will achieve this by:

- Sharing information between relevant partners to identify priority issues within the town centre.
- Developing and monitoring the delivery of partner actions.
- Monitor and refer community tension issues.
- Identify and develop engagement opportunities.
- Agree collaborative actions to achieve partnership objectives.
- Deploy relevant resources to address identified issues.

The MTCSP had developed a Problem Solving Plan for the daytime economy and a plan was being developed for the night-time economy. Members were advised that the timing for the daytime economy ran from 06.00-19.59 and the night-time economy from 20.00-05.59.

Multiple data sources were used to develop the daytime Problem Solving Plan to capture the daytime economy issues across the town centre including police recorded incidents of crime,

police recorded incidents of ASB, council service requests for issues on begging/homelessness and rough sleeping and service user/client level information to map out service demand for substance treatment. Referrals into the Youth Justice System were also considered.

Members were advised that three subgroups had recently been established to look at the reasons for begging/homelessness, retail theft/crime/intimidation and youth related crime and ASB. The subgroups will meet every two months to discuss the issues and put actions in place. The full MTCSP met on a monthly basis where it reviewed data and incidents from the previous month, identified the need for joint working and resources and escalated any multi-agency issues to the Community Safety Partnership.

The Panel received information on the Night-Time Economy (NTE) Pilot Project which had received Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV) funding from the OPCC. The funding had enabled Street Marshalls to be employed in the Town Centre on a Friday and Saturday night. The Street Marshalls operated until 4.00am and provided a visibility and presence in the town centre providing reassurance and support to visitors. The Street Marshalls also provided de-escalation to situations and support to vulnerable people working alongside other NTE partners.

The Middlesbrough night-time economy also benefited from other initiatives that had received funding from CURV and the OPCC including:

- Bleed kits
- Apex Radios for doorstaff
- NTE Safety Campaign
- Anti-spiking materials
- Promotion of Ask Angela
- E-learning platform for staff in licensed premises

Members were advised of other NTE resources operating in Middlesbrough which included:

- Safe Haven
- Boro Angels
- Women's StreetWatch
- Premises doorstaff
- Police
- CCTV

Members heard that Middlesbrough Safe Haven Service offered a place of safety for people who were intoxicated and/or vulnerable, providing clinical care as and when needed. The Safe Haven operated from Middlesbrough Bus Station but also offered a mobile service which was used to respond to incidents upon request from the Police, CCTV operators and licensed premises when time allowed.

The mobile service could respond and provide roadside clinical assessments to determine what action was required. This provided greater opportunities to complete roadside triage and would allow for the collection and transportation of service users to the Safe Haven Service.

The mobile service also provided greater opportunities for identifying potential vulnerability/safeguarding issues. During quieter periods within the building, the vehicle and designated staff carried out patrols in designated areas of the town centre, to monitor the night-time economy looking out for vulnerable individuals, taking appropriate action to assist in supporting those members of the public.

The Safe Haven Service had run a campaign "End Your Night Right" the campaign focused on four areas Medical, Consumption, Relationships and Contact. A large focus was on violence against women and children and online dating with a big push on the Ask Angela initiative whereby if a woman was on a date and felt vulnerable they can approach staff mainly in pubs and hospitality establishments and Ask for Angela this alerts staff that the person feels in a vulnerable position and they would assist them.

Members were advised that the next steps for the MTCSP were:

- Night-time Problem Solving Plan development
- Establish subgroups ways of working
- Reviewing the success of the NTE pilot initiative.
- Measure outcomes

A Member queried if there were enough people around the table at MTCSP meetings. It was advised that the current membership was sufficient for the time being but if an issue was identified the MTCSP would engage with other organisations if needed.

Clarification was sought regarding the working hours of Night-Time Marshalls. It was confirmed two nights a week (Monday & Friday) 8pm – 4am. The Street Marshalls were all SIA licensed and contracted by a company called Vis Tech. It was advised that the aim was to have the same 4 Marshalls on duty each time so they become known/aware of common issues. The Marshalls are supplied with bodycams and radios. They also provided cover across festive periods and Bank Holidays.

A Member commented that the route from Buxton Street carpark (popular car park) into town centre was not well lit, alley way, bins etc. It was felt that it was important for people to have a good first impression/feel safe when visiting the town. The Members queried whether there could be a part of the town cornered off, patrolled, secured, well lit. The Neighbourhood Manager advised they were looking into access to the town and making a plan to direct people to the best route to get to where they were going to.

Member queried whether anything was being done about selling too much alcohol to people already drunk.

It was confirmed lots of education was carried out around this with bar/venue staff but it was very hard to establish/prove on the night whether someone was too drunk when only serving for a moment. There was legislation to prevent this including fines

Another Member raised the issue of street drinking and queried whether any initiatives were in place to tackle this.

The team were very aware of this issue but it was very complex. People are often vulnerable with alcohol dependencies/addiction issues/begging, a drink can be taken away but they would go and buy another. The Council target premises that sell single/high % drinks and have taken away licenses for this reason. A condition can also be put on licenses to prevent the sale of single cans.

AGREED as follows:

- That the information provided was received and noted

25/42 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters considered at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 19 November and 18 December 2025.

- Scrutiny Chairs Update
- Executive Forward Work Programme
- Forward Plan Actions Update
- Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan

25/43 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel will take place on 26 January 2026 at 1.30pm.

25/44 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE
CONSIDERED.**

None