

PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL

Date:	Monday 26th January, 2026
Time:	1.30 pm
Venue:	Mandela Room

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Fire Evacuation Procedure

In the event the fire alarm sounds attendees will be advised to evacuate the building via the nearest fire exit and assemble at the Bottle of Notes opposite MIMA.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest.

4. Minutes - Place Scrutiny Panel - 22 December 2025 3 - 8

5. Annual Updates - Community Safety Partnership and Prevent and Channel 9 - 26

The Head of Neighbourhoods and the Community Safety Partnership Officer will be in attendance to provide the Panel with Statutory updates on:

- Community Safety Partnership
- Prevent and Channel

Recommendation: That Members note the information provided.

6. Draft Final Report - Barriers to Regeneration 27 - 38

Recommendation: That the Panel considers the content of the draft Final Report and agrees recommendations for inclusion in the report.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

16 February 2026 at 1.30pm.

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

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Friday 16 January 2026

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors D Branson (Chair), T Livingstone (Vice-Chair), B Hubbard, A Romaine, D Coupe, J Ewan, D Jackson, J Kabuye and T Mohan

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Joanne McNally 01642 728329/Tabitha Frankland 01642 726241, 01642 728329/01642 726241, joanne_mcnally@middlesbrough.gov.uk; tabitha_frankland@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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 A 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 in 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 everyday 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

25/41

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 services 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 woman 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 became 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

Place Scrutiny Panel 26/01/26

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Community Safety Partnership (CSP) annual update

Agenda Item 5



CSP Overview / Responsibilities

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory partnership made up of key 'Responsible Authorities' who have equal responsibility for reducing crime and antisocial behaviour under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (As amended by the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2014 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017)

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The Responsible Authorities include Police, Local Authority, Fire and Rescue Authority, Health, Probation and the Youth Justice Service. They work in collaboration with other statutory / voluntary services and local people to reduce crime and make people feel safer by dealing with issues such as antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, re-offending and serious violence.

Community Safety Partnership

Middlesbrough Community Safety Partnership continues to meet every 3 months and partners discuss key strategic issues relating to community safety.

The CSP Plan is set every 2 years and it is due for review this year. This will be completed with new priorities by end of December 2026.

This process will be informed by a strategic intelligence assessment that will review data from a range of sources looking at patterns and trends of crime and ASB and will include details relating to geographic locations and hotspots.

Current Community Safety Plan and the Priorities 2024-26



Priority 1 - Feel Safe

Reducing crime and antisocial behaviour (Inc. environmental crime)

Improving community cohesion and resilience

Delivering the prevent agenda

Priority 2 – Be Safe

Improve mental health

Reduce exploitation

Reduce substance misuse

Reduce domestic violence

Tackling serious violence

Priority 3 – Stay Safe

Working with communities (doing 'with' not 'to')

Improving environmental cleanliness

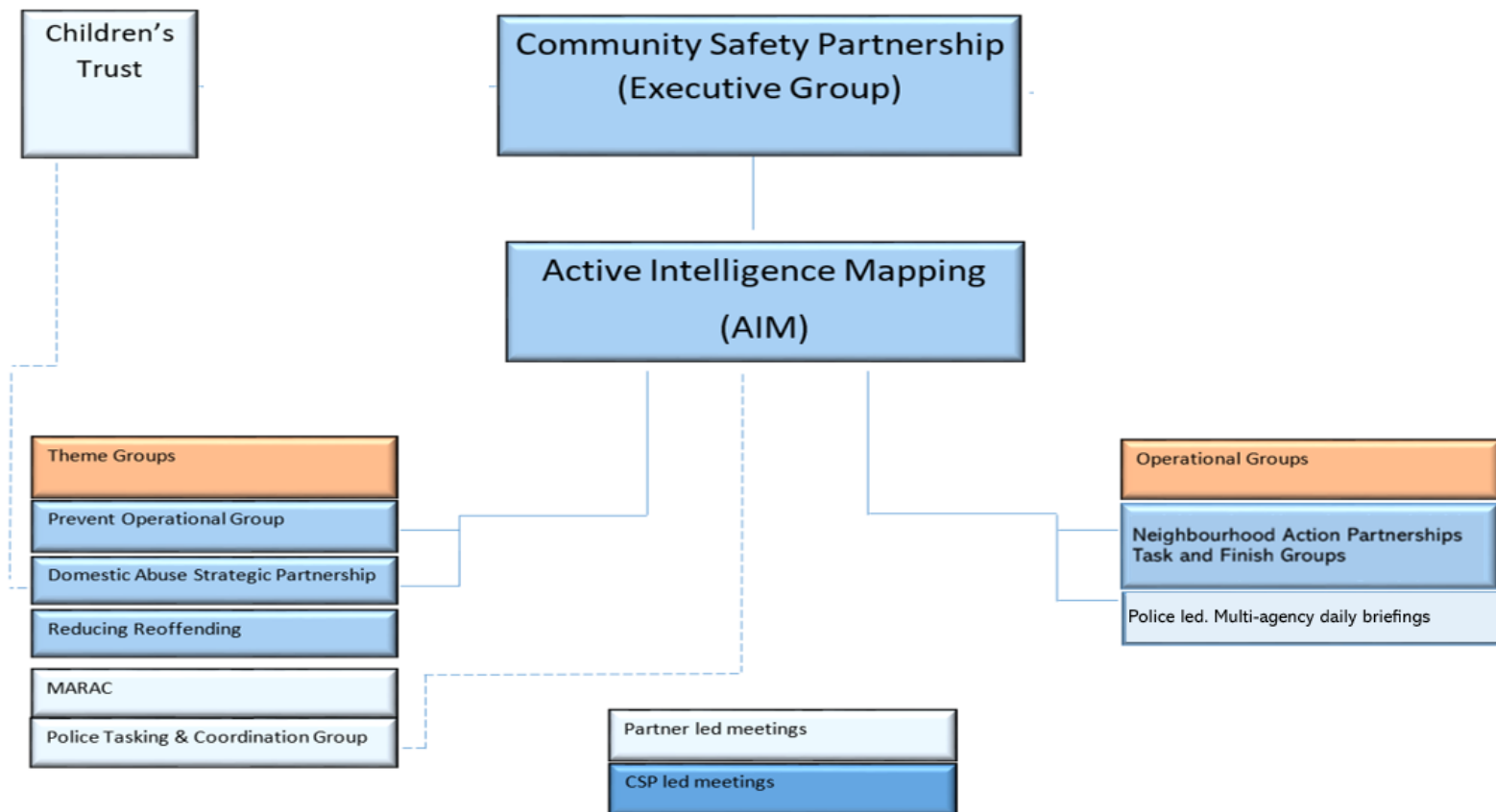
Addressing underlying community issues



Delivery Plan

- A detailed delivery plan sets out what each of the partner agencies will do to achieve the objectives identified under each of those the 3 priorities.
- The CSP has a number of subgroups that support the delivery of its statutory functions

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Prevent Update

Prevent & CHANNEL

Prevent is a part of the UK's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. Prevent helps to protect society from terrorism by supporting people who are at risk of radicalisation and offering them appropriate interventions.

Radicalisation means someone is being encouraged to develop extreme views or beliefs in support of terrorist groups and activities. There are many different types of radicalisation and Prevent deals with all of them.

If someone is at risk of radicalisation, they should be referred to Prevent's support programme, Channel. Channel is confidential and voluntary, and offers support including:

- mentoring
- mental health support such as counselling
- education or career development support
- online safety training for parents/carers



Local Authority Response

- Middlesbrough Operational Prevent Group –multi agency group leading on action plans which seek to reduce risk by increasing communities' resilience and awareness
Provision of training and awareness raising through engagement approaches
- Promotion of the safeguarding nature of Prevent and reinforcing the referral pathway

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**PREVENT
RADICALISATION**

Did you know these key facts about Prevent?

Prevent isn't
a **punishment**

Getting support through Prevent won't go on someone's criminal record – it's about connecting them to the support they need to get their lives back on track.

Get help if you're worried about someone being radicalised, visit [GOV.UK/PREVENT](https://www.gov.uk/prevent)

Middlesbrough Operation Group

- Middlesbrough Operational group is a multi agency group combining local authority departments including YJ, children's social care, adult social care and external organisations including local educational establishments working together to deliver a partnership approach of Prevent

The group develop and lead on action plans each year designed to promote risk awareness to professionals and others who support/care for those vulnerable in our communities whilst promoting the safeguarding nature of Prevent.

The work of the operational Prevent group is overseen by:

- Ofsted
- Community Safety Partnership
- Peer observation
- Home Office Annual Prevent Audit
- Regional Contest Board
- Elected Members Scrutiny Panel

Recent Sample Actions

- Hosted a successful professional's event in Partnership with Community Security Trust in May on the Incel Subculture
- Promotion of the Act early campaign and new Home Office Prevent promotional products and updated eLearning packages internally and to external partners/stakeholders
- Support third sector providing referral pathways, home office eLearning and team briefings on prevent and promotional material for Act early and IREPORTit
- Several mini projects delivered throughout the year to build community resilience including to promote healthy relationships, increase online safety, support young people with additional needs online and promote engagement and education in democracy

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Recent Sample Actions

Regular Prevent article contribution to the Protect and Prepare Newsletter to the business sector

Supporting School designated safeguarding leads in respect to Prevent and other safeguarding concerns through awareness raising

Annual Xmas digital resilience campaigns

Numerous Prevent awareness sessions for professionals to enhance awareness and reinforce referral pathway

Projects to assist with raising professionals' awareness of self initiated terrorism – signs to spot and Protect themed advice to increase resilience against such threat



Training & Support

The Prevent lead provides training and support to internal departments on their statutory duty, commissioned services and the third sector on a variety of aspects including:

- Delivery of face-to-face training and guidance
- Advice on appropriateness of referrals
- Support on embedding processes for Prevent/Channel
- Provision and support of delivery of Home office e learning products relating to both Prevent and Channel

Training and Support

The Prevent lead supports all schools in Middlesbrough providing:

- Prevent Awareness training (minimum 1 DSL per school)
- Provision of all suitable and relevant products for Prevent and associated products such as Digital resilience products to increase young person's safety and media literacy online
- Provision of guidance for schools related to safeguarding concerns regarding Prevent provided in partnership by the DFES
- Promotion and Access to available virtual Prevent Awareness sessions and guidance for school governors and trustees provided by the DFES Regional Prevent Advisor
- Advice and guidance to schools in partnership with MBC safeguarding lead & DFES Regional Prevent lead to schools on Prevent related issues



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susceptible to harmful narratives which seek to radicalise young people into terrorism. Some factors can make some children more susceptible than others.

Radicalisation can take place online, or face to face by someone they know or by contact with extremist groups. Sometimes curiosity can lead children or teenagers to seek out the groups themselves, or research information they feel supports their views.

Radicalisers will seek to undermine the authority and support of parents and carers to try and isolate the young person away from their support networks to continue the radicalisation process.

- Are they becoming increasingly isolated from family and friends?
- Does it sound like they are talking from a script?
- Are they becoming intolerant of other people's views?
- Are they secretive about who they are meeting in person or connecting with online?
- Are they unwilling to engage with you about their views?

To learn more visit:

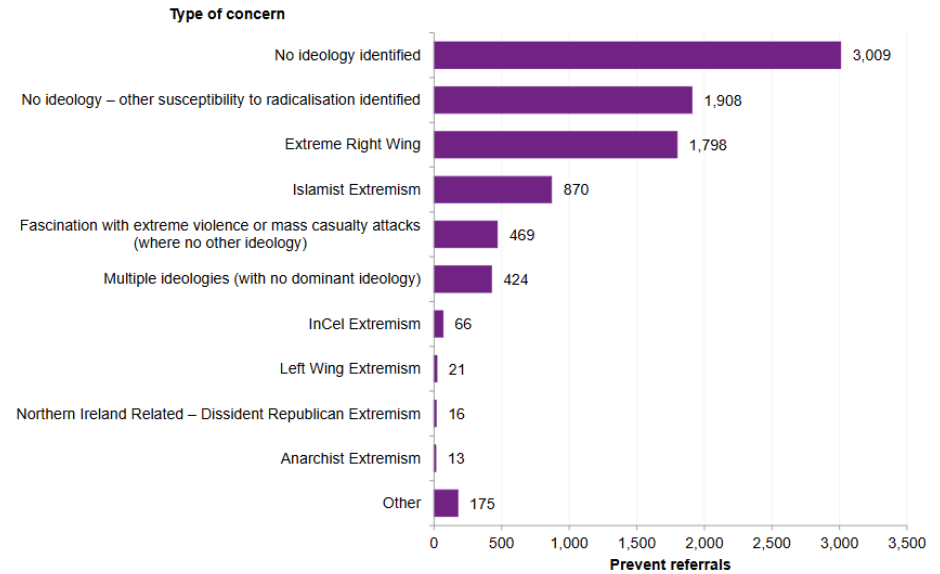


National Figures-Prevent

In the year ending 31 March 2025, there were 8,517 individuals referred to Prevent, with a total of 8,778 referrals made. This represents a 27% increase compared with the previous year (6,922) and is the highest number of referrals recorded in a single year since the data series began in April 2015.

Extreme Right-Wing concerns accounted for 21% (1,798) of referrals, higher than those related to 'Islamist Extremism' (10%; 870); compared with the previous year, the proportion of referrals for 'Extreme Right-Wing' concerns increased (up from 19%; 1,314 of 6,921), while the proportion for 'Islamist Extremism' decreased (down from 13%; 913 of 6,921)

Figure 9: Prevent referrals by type of concern, year ending March 2025



Source: [Home Office, Individuals referred to and supported through the Prevent Programme, England and Wales, April 2024 to March 2025, Table 6](#)

CHANNEL

- Channel across Cleveland is a bespoke provision as our regional figures are low in comparison to other areas.
- The Channel panel is a safeguarding meeting of multi-disciplinary professionals whom all work towards assisting the individual at risk build their resilience against the radicalising narrative whilst addressing any susceptibilities or vulnerabilities they may have
- Channel operates on a consensual basis and consent must be sought from the individual
- The type of support available through Channel is wide-ranging, and can include help with education or careers advice, dealing with mental or emotional health issues, or digital safety training for parents; it all depends on the individual's needs.

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National Figures- Channel

The majority of referrals that went on to be adopted as a Channel case were for 'Extreme Right-Wing concerns' (612 out of 1464 (total specified); 42%); while 226 (15%) were for concerns related to 'Islamist Extremism'.

Referrals with ERW concerns that were discussed at a Channel panel had the highest rate of adoption (34%; 612 of 1,798), followed by 'InCel Extremism' (32%; 21 of 66), 'Left Wing Extremism' (29%; 6 of 21), 'Fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks (where no other ideology)' (27%; 126 of 469) and IE (26%; 226 of 870). The lowest adoption rate was for referrals with 'Northern Ireland Related – Dissident Republican Extremism' (6%; 1 of 16).

The proportion of Prevent referrals that were adopted as a Channel case has seen a large increase in the latest year ending March 2025, up by 10 percentage points (change from 7% to 17%) compared to the previous year

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/individuals-referred-to-prevent-to-march-2025/individuals-referred-to-and-supported-through-the-prevent-programme-april-2024-to-march-2025> Sampled 26/11/25

CHANNEL

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Final Report of the Place Scrutiny Panel
BARRIERS TO REGENERATION

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THE AIM OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

1. The aim of the review was to identify the barriers to regeneration in Middlesbrough and investigate how more businesses can be attracted to the town.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

2. The terms of reference, for the scrutiny panel's review, are as follows:
 - A) To establish what the Barriers to Regeneration are in Middlesbrough
 - B) To identify good practice from other local authorities in relation to attracting businesses to the area
 - C) To investigate what measures are in place to make people feel safer in our town centre and neighbourhoods
 - D) To gain an understanding of current legislation available to local authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The mainstay of UK high streets for much of the 20th century, retail is now in structural decline. The growth of e-commerce means councils and communities are now nursing an increasing number of vacant shops in town centres.
4. Around one in seven shops and one in five shopping centres units are now empty. Some town centres are now caught in a vicious cycle of boarded-up shops, declining attractiveness and falling footfall.
5. Already under pressure from online sales, the pandemic triggered a wave of retailer insolvencies in 2020. Some retailers like M&S and Next decided to relocate to out-of-town retail parks. Rents and service charges on retail parks are generally lower than in town centres. Internal store layouts are typically more efficient, while easy car parking and often longer opening hours add to the retail park appeal for shoppers. Higher energy costs and interest rates are squeezing households and businesses alike.
6. Although all towns across the UK have been affected by the decline in high street shopping, poorer towns have generally been hit harder than more prosperous towns. While there are exceptions to the rule, in general more deprived towns have a higher proportion of empty shops than relatively prosperous towns. One obvious explanation for this relationship is that people in more affluent towns have more disposable income.
7. An economic assessment on Middlesbrough had been carried out in 2017/18¹ it was recognised in the assessment that Middlesbrough needed to shift its focus away from a 'need based' retail model toward a 'want based' experience economy.
8. The assessment identified that Middlesbrough should prioritise; leisure, culture, events and unique offerings that cannot be replicated online.

¹ [Middlesbrough Town Centre Economic Assessment 2017/18 – Report to Middlesbrough Council](#)

9. Additional recommendations from the assessment included, increase use of transport links and improve signage, investment in public realm and safety and strategies to reduce vacancies through alternative uses.
10. A further economic assessment on Middlesbrough was carried out in 2025 which focused on Middlesbrough's current position including emerging trends and how Middlesbrough was responding to those.
11. Key points summarised from the initial findings of the latest assessment included:
12. **Commercial Change:** Total commercial premises in the town centre had decreased, primarily due to a substantial reduction in retail units. Retail now accounted for a smaller share of total space, reflecting diversification into hospitality, leisure, and office uses.
13. **Vacancy and Performance:** Vacancy rates had fallen to around 14.6%, slightly below the national town centre average (14%) and outperforming comparable centres in the Northeast (17%).
14. **Demographic and Residential Growth:** Middlesbrough's population had grown from 140,600 (2018) to 148,285 (2022), driven by increased student numbers, infrastructure investment, and inward migration. The population was more diverse, younger, and increasingly skilled, presenting opportunities to broaden the visitor and consumer base.
15. **Transport and Accessibility:** Public transport use had recovered strongly post-pandemic. Rail passenger numbers had risen above 2018 levels, supported by a £35m station redevelopment. Car parking use had declined, indicating a gradual modal shift toward sustainable transport, although bus travel in Middlesbrough was down by 56.6% in 2023 when compared with 2011 levels.² Middlesbrough needs a transport system that is up to date and fit for purpose.
16. **Crime and Safety:** Crime and ASB had reduced significantly despite staying above national and regional averages, with total recorded crimes down nearly 7% in 2024/25 and ASB incidents halved since 2019. Collaborative policing and place-based initiatives had improved perceptions of safety and confidence.
17. **Spending and Economic Activity:** Transaction volumes were up despite lower average spend per transaction, suggesting broader engagement with a more varied town centre offer. Retail leakage remained high (44%), particularly to Teesside Park, underlining the need for continued place enhancement and loyalty retention.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE:

Term of Reference A - To establish what the Barriers to Regeneration are in Middlesbrough.

18. In relation to global economic conditions, the UK was currently in a difficult period and a lot of investment decisions are on hold. Middlesbrough was affected by the uncertainty due to a lot of companies and investments being based in other countries or London. During times of buoyant activity Middlesbrough benefited but was equally impacted when economic conditions were not so good.

² Friends of the Earth [Transport Map 2023-10](#) & data [bustrip-trends-by-authority_0.xlsx](#)

19. The market for office accommodation had not only been impacted by global economic conditions but also by the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of people hybrid-working had increased, and this had reduced the requirement for office space. Although this was changing again, and companies were now looking at bigger floorspace, they were not at the size required pre-Covid-19.
20. Retail is in decline and in the two years before the pandemic there was approximately 1 million square feet of floor space in Middlesbrough which needed to be reduced by one third. Post-pandemic, at least half of that space needed to be removed. Not all this retail space is owned by Middlesbrough Council, there are four shopping malls in the town centre. If all the current retail could be moved into one place, the town centre would be thriving.
21. In terms of the political arena, the Middlesbrough Development Corporation (MDC) is also operating within Middlesbrough and charged with achieving regeneration. Due to the change in Government in 2024 there has been some confusion around the MDC and how the proposed asset transfer from Middlesbrough Council would take place. Senior staff have now been appointed to the MDC and Middlesbrough Council staff will be working with them.
22. Middlesbrough has grown up into an area that has performed a city centre function for the wider Tees Valley. However, the city centre function has evolved due to the decline of its role as the primary hub for retail and office work, driven by changes in technology, consumer habits and post-pandemic working arrangements. The problem is getting more and more acute as time goes on. If Middlesbrough was to be built from scratch the town centre would need to be a third or a quarter of the size that it was currently.
23. The key issues for Middlesbrough are the perception of ASB and crime impacting on regeneration objectives and decreased footfall exacerbated by poor transport links.
24. The issue of ASB was identified frequently by potential investors in Middlesbrough, highlighting issues with how the town centre is perceived.
25. Due to the lack of natural footfall in the town centre ASB is more visible. Even though there are crime statistics to evidence that Middlesbrough is no less safe than other town, there are often day drinkers and drug users visible in Centre Square where the Council owns premium accommodation.
26. Middlesbrough Council carried out a consultation of local stakeholders³ between December 2024 and February 2025 whereby a simple questionnaire had been sent to stakeholders and partners asking them to highlight areas of critical importance to their organisation and how Middlesbrough could collectively work towards addressing those issues and boost Middlesbrough's economic prospects.
27. The five top challenges that were identified from the consultation⁴ were:
- ASB and crime
 - Empty Properties in specific areas
 - Reduced funding from central government
 - Poor perception of the town

³ [Middlesbrough Council Regeneration Strategy Questionnaire](#)

⁴ [Middlesbrough Council Regeneration Strategy Consultation Responses February 2025](#)

- Footfall and working patterns

28. In addition, the Stakeholders identified that the following changes needed to be made to improve Middlesbrough:

- Safer environment – additional lighting, policing and street security
- Improve the physical environment
- High profile and consistent policing
- Animation and events are key to rejuvenating the town centre, people need a reason to come into town
- Diversity – repurpose vacant units and blight sites

29. Stakeholders felt that Middlesbrough need to collectively concentrate investment or apply for funding to:

- Make the town centre feel safe and increase police and security presence
- Focus attractions and events in the town centre
- Rebalance/diversify Middlesbrough's economy
- Improve the physical environment

Term of Reference B – To identify good practice from other local authorities in relation to attracting businesses to the area

30. Town centre decline is a national issue and local authorities across the country are undergoing regeneration projects to adapt to the changing face of retail and the pressures that town centres face.

31. Media⁵⁶ showing examples of successful regeneration in Grimsby and Barnsley had been shared with the Panel as they are both northern industrial towns, that shared some similarities with Middlesbrough.

32. Grimsby regeneration focused on safety and reducing ASB and crime in the town centre. Safer Streets 5 is an initiative run by North East Lincolnshire Council and its partners to reduce crime and ASB and Safer Streets Ambassadors had been implemented to assist the vulnerable and people in need of assistance. Crime had reduced by more than 10 percent over the last 12 months in Grimsby Town Centre.

33. A community-focused initiative dedicated to enhancing the local environment, fostering community engagement and addressing societal changes had also been implemented in Grimsby. Grimsby in Bloom had relandscaped Grimsby's Riverhead Square development after a refit and was currently leading the Victoria Street Project which aimed to introduce a variety of new planters filled with colourful flowers, shrubs, and greenery, creating a more welcoming and visually appealing environment for shoppers and visitors.

34. Barnsley's regeneration focused on their Glassworks redevelopment that connects retail, culture, leisure, learning and health. The development will include a state-of-the-art library,

⁵ [The transformation of Barnsley town centre](#) Youtube Video

⁶ [GRIMSBY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION | The story so far...](#) Youtube Video

flagship NHS diagnostic centre and rolling programme of immersive free events embracing arts, crafts, sport, food and music.

35. Stockton Borough Council (SBC) is currently undertaking a large-scale initiative to regenerate Stockton town centre and surrounding areas. Much like Middlesbrough, SBC has 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. The Council has created a more compact retail core with most shops now being located in Wellington Square and the northern part of the High Street.
36. The layout of the town centre is also no longer in keeping with SBC's vision and the river, once heavily industrial in the 1960s when the shopping centre was first built, has since been cleaned up. An urban riverside park is now being developed which will connect the waterfront and High Street.
37. A key focus for SBC is the organisation of events held in the town centre to drive footfall and SBC has installed anchor points and a power supply in the High Street to support this. The Globe Theatre, originally built in 1935, has been majorly refurbished and reopened as a live venue in 2021 maintaining its cultural heritage while adapting to modern times. An evolved version of Stockton market also continues to take place twice a week maintaining its role in local identity and community gathering.
38. Diversification is also important to SBC when transforming the town centre. A former two-storey retail unit has been transformed into repurposed retail units for smaller businesses on the ground floor and an employment training hub on the first floor which has supported 1750 people into work since it opened in 2021. An NHS Community Diagnostic Centre has been built on the High Street, bringing health provision back to the town centre and creating an accessible site for residents. The re-establishment of the residential market is also a priority for SBC with the contemporary trend of 'city centre living' becoming increasingly popular. These type of additions serve their own important purpose but also help to improve town centre footfall.
39. The Globe Theatre, originally built in 1935 is also key to drawing visitors to Stockton town centre. The theatre has been majorly refurbished and reopened as a live venue in 2021 maintaining its cultural heritage while adapting to modern times. The town also benefits from two smaller venues The Arc and Georgian Theatre. Middlesbrough's main entertainment venue is the Town Hall which could potentially be enhanced to offer a more user-friendly experience and serve as a dual-purpose space, functioning as a tourist information centre as it currently only opens three days a week plus show nights. Middlesbrough Theatre also provides a more intimate entertainment venue but is located slightly further outside the town centre.

Term of Reference C – To investigate what measures are in place to make people feel safer in our town centre and neighbourhoods

40. Middlesbrough Council has Neighbourhood Safety Teams based within each of its localities (North, East, South and West).

41. The Neighbourhood Safety Team works with other Council services, Police, other statutory organisations, the voluntary sector, community groups and individuals to prevent and reduce crime and ASB including:

- Vandalism, graffiti, and deliberate damage to property or vehicles
- Groups of teenagers hanging around on streets
- Fly tipping or littering
- Drug use and dealing
- Drunk or rowdy behaviour
- Chaotic families
- Begging/rough sleeping

42. The Neighbourhood Safety Teams approach to ASB includes both support and enforcement.

The support offered includes:

- Work with youth service providers and the Youth Justice Service to offer diversionary activities
- Outreach work with the Rough Sleeper Team
- Outreach work with Treatment Services
- Outreach in the Nighttime Economy

43. Enforcement that can be carried out by the Neighbourhood Safety Teams includes:

- Issue warnings
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's)
- Community Protection Warning and Notices
- Civil Injunctions
- Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO)

44. Prior to the end of 2023, Middlesbrough Council had taken a Civil Injunction approach to ASB but were now using Community Protection Notices (CPN) to tackle it. Where an individual's behaviours were persistent and having a detrimental effect on the area, a warning could be issued. If individuals do not engage with the support offered this can be followed by a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). If behaviour did not improve a Criminal Behaviour Order could be issued which made the ASB an arrestable offence.

45. Requests for license reviews on commercial premises can also be requested by the Neighbourhood Safety Team if it is felt a business is operating inappropriately. – it would be great to have out of premises drinking areas where people can sit outside but this would need to be controlled.

46. The Neighbourhood Safety Team liaise with other local authorities to identify individuals causing ASB in particular begging who may move from one area to another. Whilst people begging in the town centre could be banned, they could then move elsewhere.

47. These individuals could be issued with a CBO within the CBO there would be an exclusion zone, where the begging was most prolific, and a second condition would be imposed that they could not beg in England and Wales. So, wherever that person chose to go and beg would qualify as a breach of the CBO and they could be arrested. Rather than push the

problem onto another area, the CBO would attempt to address the behaviour. A record of CBOs are held by the Police.

48. During the period June 2024 to April 2025 the following enforcement outcomes had taken place.

- 14 Criminal Behaviour Orders - active, Council led 9, Police led 5
- 22 Criminal Protection Notices – active
- 52 Community Protection Warnings (CPW) – active
- 5 First warnings to young people
- 3 Second warnings to young people
- 44 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) – The Council has taken a zero approach within the Town Centre
- 8 ABC breaches
- 1 Civil Injunction
- 1 Youth Criminal Behaviour Order
- 2 Licence Reviews on commercial premises

49. A vital part of the Neighbourhood Safety Team is the Neighbourhood Safety Wardens service. As of November 2025, Middlesbrough Council has 35 Street Wardens and 3 vacancies.

50. Neighbourhood Safety Wardens provide a reassuring presence to residents and help to build confidence in neighbourhoods.

51. The role of the Neighbourhood Safety Wardens is varied. They carry out a wide range of roles which can include:

- Responding to and reporting ASB incidents
- Reporting crime to the police
- Issuing FPN's for litter, graffitiing and dog fouling
- Supporting older and vulnerable people in the community
- Helping the homeless
- Getting involved in neighbourhood activities, visiting schools, attending community and resident meetings

52. Middlesbrough Council is implementing Safe Walking Routes to popular visitor attractions in the town centre. The routes will benefit from increased lighting, better signage, shrubbery removal and additional CCTV.

53. A Night-Time Economy Pilot Project is being funded by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioners Cleveland Unit for Reducing Violence (CURV) until March 2026. This includes the introduction of Street Marshals that will provide an authoritative and trustworthy presence from 8pm until 4am on Fridays and Saturdays (increasing over the festive period and Bank Holidays). Night-time economy clinic pilot sessions are also beginning in January 2026 which will provide an outreach treatment service for the homeless and beggars located at the Depaul Centre.

54. Multiple other resources are in place as part of the Night-Time Economy Pilot Project:

- Safe Haven – mobile service & physical centre on Albert Road
- Boro Angels – a group of volunteers working in Middlesbrough Town Centre helping the vulnerable every Saturday night from 10pm until 2am
- CCTV
- Police
- Door staff

55. CURV also funded other invaluable initiatives:

- Bleed kits
- Apex Radios – for doorstaff
- NTE safety campaign
- Anti-spiking materials
- Promotion of Ask Angela
- eLearning platform for staff in licensed premises

56. The Creative Factory is also carrying out several placemaking projects in the town centre to transform public spaces. ‘Most Creative Train Station’ and ‘We Shall Be’ are not just about creating new artworks but also about taking action to improve how Middlesbrough looks and feels.

57. The Creative Factory’s first Community Action Day brought people together to refresh the Historic Quarter. Volunteers filled bags of rubbish, cleaned and weeded planters in Exchange Square, and worked alongside Middlesbrough Council, STACK and TransPennine Express, to clean and repaint public spaces. These collective efforts transformed how the area looked and reminded everyone that Middlesbrough is a place worth taking pride in.

58. Small, practical changes like these raise the standards of Middlesbrough’s public spaces and completely shift how people experience Middlesbrough as soon as they arrive. Although they do not directly enhance safety levels, they contribute to a more welcoming town centre environment and people may be less likely to vandalise or litter where an area is well kept.

Term of Reference D - To gain an understanding of current legislation available to local authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour

59. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) encompasses criminal and nuisance behaviour that causes distress to others. Typical examples include: noisy neighbours, vandalism, graffiti, public drunkenness, littering, fly tipping and street drug dealing.

60. Parts 1-4 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014⁷ sets out six anti-social behaviour enforcement powers. These powers (summarised in the table below) are a consolidation of nineteen that existed prior to the 2014 Act.

⁷ [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#)

	Power	Effect	Relevant Authority	Sanction on Breach
People	ASB Civil Injunctions	Individuals aged 10 or over conducting ASB can be issued with an ASB Injunction which prohibits them from certain activities and/or requires them to attend rehabilitative activities	Police and Local Authorities	A 'contempt of court' punishable with up to 2 years in prison
	Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO)	Individuals with a criminal conviction can have a CBO attached to their sentence if they have behaved anti-socially. CBOs can place prohibitions or requirements on an offender designed to address their anti-social behaviour	The courts (upon application from the prosecution)	Criminal offence punishable by up to five years in prison (if tried at a Crown Court)
	Community Protection Notices	Adults or businesses responsible for environmental issues which have diminished the 'quality of life of those in the locality' can be required to remedy the problem	Police and Local Authorities	Criminal offence punishable by Fixed Penalty Notice. Remedial action.
Place	Public Space Protection Orders	Specific activities can be prohibited in a designated area.	Local authorities (in consultation with the police)	Criminal offence punishable by Fixed Penalty Notice
	Dispersal Powers	Individuals (aged ten or older) conducting anti-social behaviour in a public space can be directed to leave that specified area for up to 48 hours. Their property can be confiscated if they are using it to conduct ASB	Police	Criminal offence punishable by up to 3 months in prison.

CONCLUSIONS

61. Trying to regenerate town centres by building more retail space is now a broken model. The solution must be to improve the mix of uses in town centres bringing footfall, life and vitality back. Empty shops, department stores and even shopping centres can be replaced with green spaces, medical centres, offices, workshops, colleges and housing to help create a pleasant and welcoming environment for visitors and residents.
62. Regeneration is a major challenge. With the right investment, town centres can be simultaneously reinvigorated and made more resilient over the long-term.
63. Antisocial Behaviour is one of the main reasons investors are reluctant to invest in the town, they want to be assured that their staff are safe coming to work. Residents of the town are also reluctant to venture into the town centre as they do not feel safe.

64. The key to tackling ASB is through prevention. When the town hosted bigger events, it was easier to make areas feel safe as they are flooded with people and Police.

65. The Council's priority is to reduce the visible impact of the problem in the first instance. Prevention is very important but the resources to do that are not always available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

66. Based on the findings of the scrutiny review, the Place Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive that the Council should:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

67. The Place Scrutiny Panel would like to thank the following for their assistance with its work:

Richard Horniman	Director of Regeneration
Hugh McShane	Neighbourhood Officer
Stephen Wright	Neighbourhood Safety Officer
Sam Gilmore	Head of Growth
Michelle Shelton	Town Centre Manager
Matthew Gibbons	Development Manager – Locus
Lee Walker	Chief Executive Officer – Locus
Gaye Kirby	Head of Culture
Anna Byrne	Director – Creative Factory
Chris Renahan	Assistant Director – Inclusive Growth & Development – Stockton on Tees Borough Council
Judith Hedgley	Head of Public Protection
Adam Parkinson	Neighbourhood Manager
Fiona Helyer	Principal Public Protection Officer

ACRONYMS

68. A-Z listing of common acronyms used in the report:

ABC's	Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
CBO	Criminal Behaviour Orders
CPN	Community Protection Notice
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notice
MDC	Middlesbrough Development Corporation
PSPO	Public Space Protection Order
SBC	Stockton on Tees Borough Council

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- Reports/presentations to, and minutes of, the Place Scrutiny Panel meetings held on 29 April 2025, 30 June 2025, 29 September 2025, 27 October 2025, 6 November 2025, 22 December 2025.

COUNCILLOR DAVID BRANSON CHAIR OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL

Place Scrutiny Panel Membership: Councillors D Branson (Chair), T Livingstone (Vice Chair), J Ewan, D Jackson, T Mohan, J Kabuye, A Romaine, D Coupe and B Hubbard

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