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## PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 16 February 2026.

**PRESENT:** Councillors D Branson (Chair), B Hubbard, A Romaine, D Coupe, J Ewan, J Kabuye and T Mohan

**OFFICERS:** J McNally, T Frankland, S Muir-Williams and L Hamer

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor D Jackson

### 25/53 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

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

### 25/54 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### 25/55 **MINUTES - PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL - 26 JANUARY 2026**

A minor amendment was suggested to the submitted minutes of the Place Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 26 January 2026, it was agreed that this would be actioned and the minutes were approved as a correct record.

### 25/56 **ANNUAL UPDATE - FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Public Rights of Way Officer provided the annual update on flood risk management. Flood risk was a combination of the probability (likelihood or chance), of an event happening and the consequences (impact), if it occurred.

The Middlesbrough drainage system was extensive and complex in nature comprising open and culverted watercourses and a surface water/combined sewerage system. Flooding could come from a variety of sources including surface water run off, ordinary watercourses, surcharging sewers and from road gullies. Surface water flooding occurred when intense rainfall, often of short duration, was unable to permeate into the ground or enter drainage systems quickly enough, resulting in ponding or overland flows. It can cause considerable problems in urban areas. During periods of heavy rainfall standing water may accumulate even if the road gullies were in good working order. Some gullies could not drain the water away fast enough and therefore would surcharge during periods of intense rain fall. These intense periods of rain fall often did not last for long and once over, the gully would usually drain away the water without needing any attention.

The Environment Agency updated their long-term flood risk information, as part of the National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA2) at the end of January 2025 with further map updates during 2025. An initial assessment of the new maps covering Middlesbrough appeared to show an increase in the extent of flooding. A desktop assessment of the new maps was being undertaken to identify those areas which may be a risk of flooding and require further investigation or modelling.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) gave an overview of areas that may be susceptible to flooding. It provided a comprehensive overview of all flood sources (river, surface water, groundwater, etc) across Middlesbrough, now and in the future, including the impact of climate change. The SFRA was a two-level process used by the planning authority to assess flood risk from all sources.

- Level 1 – provides a high-level overview to apply the Sequential Test
- Level 2 – offers detailed, site-specific assessments if development is necessary in high-risk areas, incorporating climate change impacts, flood depths and velocity

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The Strategic Studies highlighted and prioritised the areas of greatest risk from combined flooding within each of the catchment areas. Middlesbrough was covered by several catchment areas. Each area would have a Stage 1 and Stage 2 study undertaken. Stage 1 focused on the collection, collation, analysis and prioritisation of information to identify areas of High Risk from Flooding Stage 2 focused on identifying opportunities within the top 3 or 4 High Risk areas to reduce or prevent flooding. The Public Rights of Way Officer advised the Panel that next time he would provide a map that showed the areas of greatest risk from combined flooding in Middlesbrough next time he attended the meeting.

The Environment Agency 'Medium term plan' was a rolling list of schemes which were refreshed yearly and were funded from Government funding allocation. The funding process was going through a review / change and so currently the programme was only over 2 years and the current funding runs from 26/27 – 27/28 Following a recent refresh of the EA's Medium Term Plan. The following potential scheme areas were included:

- Shevington Grove, Marton 24/25 (105 Properties)
- Connaught Road, Nunthorpe 27/28 (27 properties)
- Gresham Road, Newport 27/28 (40 properties)
- NIDP Study - Thornfield Road 26/27 assessment

The Public Rights of Way Officer advised on the following schemes that had been completed in recent years:

- Saltersgill / Beechwood fields Scheme was completed in 2021 and better protects around 306 properties.
- Marton West Beck Scheme was completed in 2022 and better protect 500 properties.
- Ormesby Beck Restoration Scheme was completed in 2022/2023
- Cornwall Close was completed in 2024 and better protects around 5 properties.

**AGREED** as follows that:

1. The information provided was received and noted.
2. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment be circulated to Members.

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## **ANNUAL UPDATE - RIPA (REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS)**

The Governance and Information Manager was in attendance to provide the Annual Update on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA).

RIPA was the law governing the use of surveillance techniques by public authorities, including local authorities. RIPA required that when public authorities needed to use covert techniques to obtain private information about someone, they only should do so if surveillance was necessary, proportionate, and compatible with human rights. Typically, this related to suspected criminal activity that was likely to result in a custodial sentence of six months or more. Middlesbrough Council would not undertake any activity defined with RIPA without prior authorisation in the legally prescribed form.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) had overall responsibility for overt and covert surveillance, including:

- creation, communication and review of this policy;
- appointing the CCTV Single Point of Contact;
- appointing the Coordinating Officer (Auditor) for covert surveillance;
- ensuring the availability of appropriate authorisers for covert surveillance;
- raising corporate awareness of the policy and proper surveillance practices;
- assessing corporate compliance with this policy;
- providing professional guidance on all matters relating to surveillance;
- engagement with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner and the IPCO;
- and overseeing the implementation of any post-inspection action plans recommended or approved by the IPCO.

Directors and Heads of Service had a general responsibility to ensure compliance with operations as detailed in the Surveillance Policy, this included taking reasonable steps to protect

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health & safety including any necessary risk assessments. There were a number of key roles in the process of approving and monitoring applications for both overt and covert surveillance. Depending on whether the surveillance was 'overt' or 'covert' would depend on the level of authorisation.

There were several key roles involved in the approval and oversight of both overt and covert surveillance activities. The level of authorisation required depended on the type of surveillance being undertaken. The presentation outlined these roles, which included the CCTV Single Point of Contact (SPoC), the Co-ordinating Officer (Auditor), Authorising Officers, and the Designated Person.

The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) was overseen by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner (Sir Brian Leveson) and created under the IPA to provide independent oversight and authorisation of the use of investigatory powers by intelligence agencies, police forces and other public authorities. It was agreed with the IPCO following their last inspection in 2020 that we continued to maintain an overarching Surveillance Policy which covered CCTV and RIPA. The IPCO conducted risk-based reviews of the application of RIPA powers. The Council completed submission of its compliance in January 2026.

An annual Surveillance Report and Policy were produced to report on the surveillance activity of the Council ensuring that it complied with its strategic priorities and statutory obligations, that they were lawful and that due regard to human rights and to data protection was given. The Council always looked to methods to gather information that did not require covert surveillance to be undertaken, in order to minimise the use of surveillance powers. This meant that activity remained low.

A Member queried whether CCTV could be used to catch and prosecute commercial fly-tippers, an issue that was prevalent in some areas of the town and discussion ensued about the strict thresholds and legal frameworks that local authorities must adhere to. Members requested a list of the key thresholds/requirements that must be met to authorise the use of covert surveillance.

**AGREED** as follows that:

1. The information provided was received and noted.
2. A list of the key thresholds/requirements that must be met to authorise local authority use of covert surveillance be circulated to Members.

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#### **DRAFT FINAL REPORT - BARRIERS TO REGENERATION**

A copy of the Draft Final Report on Barriers to Regeneration had been circulated with the agenda. Members discussed the information provided and some minor amendments were suggested

**AGREED** as follows that:

1. Final amendments discussed in the meeting would be made to the report with final approval delegated to the Chair of the Panel.
2. The final report would be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

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#### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update on agenda items discussed at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 28 January 2026.

- Scrutiny Chairs Update
- Executive Forward Work Programme
- Forward Plan Actions Progress
- Executive Member Update - Public Health
- Final Report of the OSB Task and Finish Group - Community Cohesion
- Artificial Intelligence – Update

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#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

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The next meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel was scheduled for 30 March 2026 at 1.30pm.

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

None.