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## PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 30 March 2026.

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor I Morrish

**OFFICERS:** J McNally, T Frankland and G Kirby

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None

### 25/62 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made and the Fire Evacuation Procedure explained.

### 25/63 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### 25/64 **THE COUNCIL'S ROLE IN HOUSING OVERVIEW**

The Corporate Director of Regeneration was in attendance to provide the Place Scrutiny Panel with an overview of the Council's Role in Housing.

The panel were advised that the Council was a diverse organisation with housing cutting across several departments although there was no specific housing department. Members were advised that there had been a recent appointment to the role of Head of Strategic Housing which sat within the Regeneration Directorate.

Members heard that the Head of Strategic Housing would oversee a strategic framework to guide housing issues. The Councils Strategic Plan sat at the top of the Housing Strategic Framework along with the Local Plan detailing types of housing and where housing was needed. Members were advised that there were other strategies to cover all elements of housing including the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment and Supported Housing Strategy.

The Corporate Director of Regeneration advised Members that the Regeneration department did not cover physical development.

The Panel were informed that the Council owned a small amount of housing stock which had accumulated over the years, this included Newbridge Court, a block of apartments which had been handed over from Middlesbrough Development Company.

The Council was also responsible for managing standards within private rented sector through Landlord Licensing and the Renters Reform Act which sits within the Public Protection Department.

Adult Social Care oversees Homelessness and supporting clients with specific needs, the Head of Strategic Housing dealt with the supply and Children and Adult Social Care the demands for this service. Both directorates worked together on the Housing Demand Plan to set out what properties were needed to support residents.

A Member queried what powers the Council had in respect of empty properties. The Corporate Director of Regeneration advised that Councils had little to no power other than to raise the Council Tax premium. Debates took place every year about whether the premium should be increased but this in turn could increase the Council's uncollected debt as the landlords in question were not paying. Members were advised that when Anti-Social Behavior and

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environmental hazards started becoming an issue this was when the Council had more powers to enforce.

A Member stated that 1.5 million new homes were to be built as part of the Governments initiative. The Member asked how space and local demand would be determined it was advised that the Local Plan outlined the vision for housing development in Middlesbrough.

A Member raised the issue of homelessness in Middlesbrough particularly people living in tents which had gained recent media interest and what was the council doing to house people with addictions and ensuring they had access to appropriate services. It was advised that housing people with addictions would fall under Adult Social Cares remit to ensure they had the support that was needed. The Member requested that this be investigated further.

A Member asked for confirmation around what a Section 106 agreement was. It was advised that a Section 106 agreement was a legally binding contract between a developer and the Council to ensure appropriate infrastructure and services were in place for new developments. A Section 106 Agreement was a requirement for the developer to provide money to build or implement services.

A Member highlighted that when a developer begins building the Council needed to strategically plan and enforce everything that was needed to support the people moving into the new developments.

Members requested to investigate Section 106 Agreements further.

A discussion took place on town centre living and the need to have the right type of housing and facilities in place. The Panel requested to investigate this further.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director of Regeneration for his attendance.

The Panel agreed to:

Further investigate –

- Homelessness
- Section 106 Agreements
- Town Centre Living

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## **MIDDLESBROUGH'S BICENTENARY OVERVIEW**

The Head of Culture was in attendance to provide an overview to the Place Panel on the plans for Middlesbrough's Bicentenary in 2030.

Members were advised of an ambitious 5-year plan to transform Middlesbrough by scaling up cultural programming, maximising visibility and deepening reach into Middlesbrough communities towards a major celebration of Middlesbrough's industrial heritage and creative future for the Bicentenary year in 2030.

Members heard that the Turner Prize a major British contemporary award was taking place in Middlesbrough. An exhibition of the four short-listed artists would be held in MIMA from 25 September 2026 to March 2027, Members were advised that when Bradford hosted the Turner Prize attendance exceeded 80,000.

Outcomes to be achieved from hosting the Turner Prize include:

- Visitor footfall/number of overnight stays in the town centre increased.
- Visitor spend in Middlesbrough Town Centre increased.
- Further investment is leveraged for culture.
- Our young people and communities have access to culture and creativity, including opportunities to engage with the Turner Prize.
- Middlesbrough artists are platformed during 2026/27.
- Middlesbrough's position as a centre for creativity and culture is strengthened.
- People's perceptions of Middlesbrough locally, regionally and nationally improved.

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The Head of Culture talked about Pride in Place, transforming underused, vacant and visually blighted sites into attractive, usable and safe public spaces through high quality public art and creative interventions. Delivered through artist and community collaborations that celebrate Middlesbrough's creativity and heritage.

Opportunities were available to support and grow grassroots creativity, co-curate creative programmes and co-design creative approaches to address local priorities within communities in Thortree and Park End.

The Panel heard that Middlesbrough Football Club was celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> year, celebrations include:

- **Animation of last mile:** Public Art, performances, street furniture, wayfinding, supporter-engagement opportunities.
- **Anniversary game:** Events in the Town Centre and Stadium
- **Town Centre programme:** Exhibition at Dorman, civic event, involvement in cultural events programme, digital signage

Between 2026-2031 there were many key milestones in the run up to the Bicentenary in 2031:

**2026:** New Contemporaries, Turner Prize, MFC 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season, Orange Pip 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, new Storytelling Festival (National Year of Reading)

**2027:** MAW 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Middlesbrough Theatre 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Reopening of Old Town Hall (TBC)

**2028:** 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth of Captain Cook, Stewart Park Centenary.

**2029:** UK City of Culture – application in progress

**2030-31:** Middlesbrough Bicentenary, Teesside University Centenary, Middlesbrough Mela 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Reopening of restored Transporter Bridge (TBC)

The Head of Culture informed Members that Middlesbrough had been longlisted for UK City of Culture alongside 8 other places including Sheffield, Wrexham, Blackpool and Portsmouth.

Members heard that if successful a prize of £10 million to supercharge a transformation in growth by raising ambitions and putting culture and creativity at the heart of Middlesbrough's Place Strategy and aspirations for the future.

In 2030-31 several cultural programme events would take place including WOW Middlesbrough, major exhibitions, mass participation events, theming/scaling up of festivals, Homeless World Cup, opening of new cultural/digital assets and street parties.

Members were advised of an opportunity to create a Digital Heritage Museum of Middlesbrough which would bring together two museums and Teesside Archives offering permanent and touring exhibits.

Capital projects were also being undertaken including:

- Town Hall roof repair and equipment programme at Town Hall & Theatre (£6.1m).
- New recording studio complete at Town Hall.
- Access improvements complete at Town Hall & Theatre.

An extension to the Little Theatre was also being considered which Members agreed would be extremely beneficial.

A Member commented that this was a fantastic list of upcoming plans/events but highlighted that more communication was needed with residents/Councillors/wider public to talk up the town. The Head of Culture confirmed there will be a 'What's On' list on the Council website and a creative tourism office is being looked at.

Another Member commented that there are many famous people from Middlesbrough, their stories need to be told and we need to celebrate them. It was also noted that inspiration could be drawn from other northern towns and cities that had successfully transitioned from industrial centres into thriving cultural hubs.

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The Chair asked how can Councillors get involved and help. The Head of Culture responded that it would be useful to share what communities/wards want.

A Member queried if there was any funding available for local events, the Head of Culture confirmed that there would be some funding for events within local communities.

The Chair thanked the Head of Culture for her attendance.

The Place Panel agreed to:

- Note the information provided in the presentation
- Invite the Head of Culture to future meetings to provide updates to the Panel

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update on matters considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 18 March 2026.

Members were advised that the final report on Barriers to Regeneration would be submitted to the Executive on 10 June 2026.

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

The Chair encouraged Members of the Place Scrutiny Panel to complete the survey on Scrutiny Functions by 13 April 2026.

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**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

27 April 2026 at 1.30pm