

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL
EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 10 June 2026.

PRESENT: Mayor C Cooke (Chair) and Councillors I Blades, T Furness, P Gavigan, L Henman, J Rostron, J Ryles, P Storey and N Walker

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors L Young (Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board, D Branson (Chair of Place Scrutiny Board) and J Kabuye (Chair of Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: D.Hodgson (Local Democracy Reporting Service)

OFFICERS: S Bonner, M Brown, M Adams, G Field, R Horniman, A Humble, R Musicka, E Scollay and A Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

26/1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

26/2 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 13 MAY 2026**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 13 May 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

26/3 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

None.

26/4 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

None.

26/5 **QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS (IF ANY)**

None.

26/6 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY OR COUNCIL (IF ANY)**

None.

26/7 **FINAL REPORT OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL - HEALTHY PLACEMAKING WITH A FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the scrutiny report was to present the findings of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel following its review of *Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity*. The Service Action Plan was developed in response to the Panel's recommendations.

The Panel's recommendations were:

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- A. The Council should strengthen visible leadership on healthy weight by ensuring LMT members sponsor and champion Healthy Weight Declaration commitments. A written progress update should be provided to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel within 12 months.
- B. The Council should build on the existing Public Health Service Level Agreements to formalise shared responsibility across all departments, ensuring health and equity considerations are applied in all decision making. A progress update should be provided to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel within 6 months.
- C. A review of the implementation of the Council's Advertising Policy should be undertaken to ensure it aligns with the emerging national restrictions on the promotion of unhealthy products, a progress update should be provided to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel within 12 months.
- D. A cross-departmental Steering Group should be established, supported by the Leadership Management Team, to review how the Council currently interacts with Unhealthy Commodity Industries (UCIs) through contracts, grants, sponsorships etc. The Steering Group should undertake a 12-month audit and provide guidance to ensure consistent decision-making aligns with public health aims. Progress should be reported back to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel by April 2027.
- E. Public Health and Children's Services should work jointly to increase the number of Middlesbrough schools participating in the Eat Well Schools Award, with a particular focus on schools located in the wards with the highest childhood obesity prevalence. A progress update should be reported back to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel by April 2027.
- F. The Council should continue to invest in safe, well-connected walking and cycling infrastructure, with a focus on improving access, safety and connectivity between homes, schools, green spaces and local amenities, particularly in more deprived areas. Progress should be aligned with existing transport programmes and reported to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel within 12 months.
- G. Transport and Infrastructure should support school-led development of Active Travel to School Action Plans, identifying a small number of priority schools using relevant indicators (e.g. obesity prevalence, school gate congestion and existing active travel rates). As part of this work, the service should engage directly with all parts of the school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors, to understand the key barriers to walking and cycling. The findings should then be used to shape tailored interventions for each school and progress reported back to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel within 12 months.
- H. Opportunities should be sought to extend the Creating Active Schools model to enable more schools in Middlesbrough to develop their own whole school programmes to increasing physical activity, working alongside the Eat well Schools programme to improve food quality and choices, particularly around schools with high levels of obesity and deprivation. Relevant indicators should be used to measure progress, such as activity monitors, and the findings reported back to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel in 12 months.
- I. The Council should maintain and, for as long as necessary, future-proof the strategic Creating Active and Healthy Spaces Lead role and the companion operational role of Healthy Placemaking Officer. It should also pilot the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) ahead of adoption of the Local Plan. The Local Plan will require that HIAs are prepared for all residential developments of 100 or more dwellings, with other major developments screened on a case-by-case basis to determine whether an HIA is

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required. Going forward, outcomes should be monitored annually through KPIs, with the first summary report, produced during this transitional period, presented within 12 months to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel.

- J. Regular assurance should be provided to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel by reporting on a six-monthly basis, the number and location of hot food takeaways in the town. This should include new applications, refusals, closures, retrospective planning applications and related enforcement.
- K. The Council should continue to advocate to Government, for increased support to reduce child poverty in Middlesbrough, recognising its significant impact on childhood obesity and wider health inequalities.

The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel advised Executive that childhood obesity remained a significant and persistent public health challenge within Middlesbrough, contributing to poorer health outcomes, reduced quality of life and widening inequalities.

Executive were also advised that healthy placemaking was everyone's responsibility and should be embedded in everything the Council did. There was not a single solution but some foundations for this were already in place including provisions for hot food takeaways as part of planning considerations and the signing of the healthy weight declaration.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a detailed review during 2025, examining prevalence rates, contributing factors such as deprivation and environment, and the role of partnership working in addressing the issue.

Members heard that the review had adopted a whole-system approach, incorporating input from Public Health, Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, and partners including the You've Got This – Sport England Place Partnership.

It was noted that the findings and recommendations had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 18 March 2026 and subsequently referred to Executive for consideration.

Members noted that an Action Plan had been developed in response to the recommendations. The Action Plan, detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, provided a framework for implementation and aimed to deliver a coordinated, long-term approach to improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities.

In response to a query about educational input to the review, it was clarified this was largely due to availability. The Mayor offered to attend the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel to provide updates on initiatives that could contribute to the issue, such as the Council's School Catering offer. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel welcomed this offer.

An Executive Member commented that the eat well school awards could also contribute to this issue.

The Executive Member for Public Health provided the service response and advised Executive that all the Panel's recommendations were welcomed and that there was a need for strong leadership on this matter. There was also a need to embed health into everyday decision making and to make sure health inequalities were captured as part of key decisions.

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The Council was working to bring all services together in this regard, with the introduction of the healthy advertising policy cited as an example.

An Executive Member commented that it would be difficult to address childhood obesity in isolation without tackling deprivation as well.

Executive acknowledged that the proposed approach aligned with the Council Plan priorities, particularly the ambition to create a healthier place, support inclusive growth, strengthen communities and ensure best value through evidence-based decision making.

OPTIONS

Executive considered taking no action, which would have involved not implementing the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations and maintaining the current position. This option was not supported, as it risked missing opportunities to improve public health outcomes, limited progress in addressing childhood obesity, and reduced confidence in the effectiveness of the Scrutiny process as a mechanism for challenge and improvement.

ORDERED that the Executive:

1. Note the report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel on *Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity* and its accompanying recommendations; and
2. Approve the Action Plan prepared by the relevant service areas in response to those recommendations.

REASONS

It was a requirement that Executive formally considered the Scrutiny Panel's report and confirmed the service area's response to the accompanying plan.

26/8

FINAL REPORT OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL - BARRIERS TO REGENERATION

The Place Scrutiny Panel submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the scrutiny report was to present the findings of the Place Scrutiny Panel following its review into Barriers to Regeneration in Middlesbrough, together with an Action Plan developed in response to the Panel's recommendations.

The Panel's recommendations were:

- A. Carry out a survey of college and university students, to gain feedback to see if people who had come from different places across the country and now studied in Middlesbrough could suggest ways of improving Middlesbrough, from their own life experiences from where they were born.
- B. Elected Members and Officers to actively promote and talk up the town - many positive things are happening in Middlesbrough but they are often overlooked and overshadowed by the negative. This could be achieved through a positive marketing campaign and press releases.
- C. Support and deliver more town centre events with a strong emphasis on cultural activity to drive footfall and encourage people that live local and further afield to travel into the town centre.
- D. Redevelop Linthorpe Road to create a more compact retail centre to naturally increase footfall. The increased activity could make the town centre feel more vibrant and safer.
- E. Increase the number of Neighbourhood Safety Wardens to provide a reassuring presence and help to build confidence in the town centre.
- F. Work in partnership with businesses to ensure compliance with street-drinking regulations and discourage related activity around their premises.

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- G. Increase green spaces and create a new attraction in the town centre, such as a winter garden, which could entice visitors to travel into the town centre and provide significant health (mental & physical), environmental (cleaner air, less heat, better drainage), social (community building, recreation), and economic (higher property values, tourism, jobs) benefits.
- H. Work in collaboration with Tees Valley Combined Authority to improve transport links into the town centre and outer areas of Middlesbrough to ensure key points of interest are easily accessible. This could be achieved by introducing a park-and-ride facility and improving bus services.
- I. Increase Middlesbrough Town Hall/Box Office opening times to improve accessibility and user satisfaction and potentially function as a dual-purpose information hub.
- J. Strengthen our relationship with Middlesbrough Development Corporation (MDC) further and work together towards the common goal.
- K. Apply for an extension to funding from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioners Cleveland Unit for Reducing Violence (CURV) or seek alternative funding for the Night-Time Economy Pilot Project, which is currently due to end in March 2026.

Executive was advised that the Place Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a review during 2025 to examine barriers to regeneration across Middlesbrough, including issues relating to economic growth, town centre vitality, safety and partnership working.

The Chair of the Place Scrutiny Panel advised Executive that the review had explored a range of themes, including attracting businesses, improving perceptions of safety, enhancing the town centre offer, strengthening partnerships, and identifying good practice from other local authorities.

Executive heard the review and used comparators including Barnsley, Stockton and Grimsby and that urban regeneration had been an issue for some time. Town Centre development had also proven to be challenging for several reasons including transport links austerity. While young people were economic drivers, they were spending less time in town centres and as such not spending as much money. The Chair of the Panel also commented that retail could not be relied on and the ability to attract people to the town centre was made difficult considering working from home policies. An important consideration was the perception of crime in the town centre which made less appealing.

Members were informed that the Panel had developed a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the identified barriers. These included proposals to improve engagement with students, promote the town more positively, increase cultural events, enhance safety provision, improve transport connectivity, and develop the town centre environment, including additional green spaces and attractions.

An Executive Member thanked the Panel for emphasising the need for a strong cultural component in regeneration initiatives.

A discussion took place during which it was commented that Executive Member attendance at scrutiny was important to ensure transparency and effective challenge.

The Executive Member for Development provided a service response to the recommendations and stated that while many of the recommendations were already in progress they were all welcomed.

The Mayor stated that culture was an important feature of regeneration projects and provided comparatively higher visibility than other established sectors for attracting people to the town centre.

The Executive heard that the recommendations would help inform forthcoming strategic work, including the development of a Place Strategy, Town Centre Strategy and Investment Prospectus, expected later in 2026.

Members noted that the proposals aligned with the Council Plan priorities, particularly in supporting a successful and ambitious town, improving environmental outcomes, enhancing community safety and strengthening governance arrangements.

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It was further noted that the actions would largely be delivered within existing resources and budgets, with no immediate impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, although some longer-term proposals such as town centre redevelopment and new attractions may require future investment and further reports.

OPTIONS

Executive considered the option of taking no action. This was not supported, as the Panel's recommendations provided a clear and deliverable direction for the service and represented an opportunity to address identified barriers to regeneration.

Executive also considered the option of delivering all recommendations in full. This was not supported, as some proposals would be difficult to deliver or offer limited benefit, and therefore each recommendation had been individually assessed and incorporated into the Action Plan where appropriate.

ORDERED that the Executive:

1. Note the report of the Place Scrutiny Panel into *Barriers to Regeneration* and its accompanying recommendations; and
2. Approve the Action Plan prepared by the service in response to those recommendations.

REASONS

It was a requirement that Executive formally considered the Scrutiny Panel's report and confirmed the service area's response to the accompanying plan.

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REPORTS FROM MEMBER BODIES WHICH ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE

None.

26/10

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE YEAR-END 2025/26

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to present an overview of corporate performance at Year-End 2025/26, including progress against Executive actions, delivery of the Council Plan 2024–27, the Strategic Risk Register, programme and project management, and wider compliance measures.

Executive was advised that the report formed part of its responsibility for corporate strategic performance and provided assurance on delivery against the Council Plan priorities and associated workplans.

Members noted that overall performance against the five corporate performance disciplines showed that one area had achieved the expected standard, while others remained below the 90% target. It was highlighted that performance in relation to Council Plan workplan delivery was above the expected threshold, with 93% of initiatives on track.

Executive heard that delivery of Executive actions had improved over the year, increasing to 85% at Year-End, although still below the expected standard. Several actions had been delayed or amended due to factors such as contractor delays, legal processes, funding pressures and the need to align with wider strategic developments.

It was reported that performance against Council Plan outcome measures remained below expectations, with 25% of measures achieving target. Members were advised that this reflected, in part, limitations in the indicators used, including reliance on data outside of the Council's direct control and time lags in data availability.

Members noted that two risks had been removed following changes to the Council's approach to partnership working and transformation.

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Executive considered the position regarding programme and project management, noting that 78% of projects were on track, below the expected standard. It was highlighted that several projects were under review following the transition from a formal transformation programme to a continuous improvement approach.

In relation to wider compliance measures, Members noted mixed performance, including delays in responding to statutory information requests and complaints, partly due to increasing complexity and demand, including the impact of AI-generated requests.

The Executive acknowledged that the report supported effective governance, performance oversight and risk management, and that no significant financial, legal or data protection implications arose directly from the recommendations.

There were no questions or comments from Executive.

OPTIONS

Executive considered the option of not operating a performance management framework. This was not supported, as such an approach would place the Council at risk of failing to meet its statutory Best Value duty.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. Approve the proposed changes to Executive actions as detailed at Appendix 1.
2. Approve the proposed changes to the Council Plan 2024–27 supporting workplan actions as detailed at Appendix 3.

AGREED that Executive:

3. Note the delivery status of the Council Plan 2024–27 supporting workplan as detailed at Appendix 2.
4. Note the progress and position of the corporate performance disciplines.
5. Note that, following agreement of the refreshed Council Plan 2026–29, activities in the work plan would be embedded within Directorate Plans once developed.
6. Note the Strategic Risk Register as detailed at Appendix 4.

REASONS

The decisions were taken to enable the Executive to effectively discharge its performance management responsibilities, in line with the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.

26/11

DIGITAL STRATEGY 2026-2030

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of the Digital Strategy 2026–2030, which set out the Council's strategic framework for digital, data and technology and established a clear, corporate approach to maintaining secure, resilient and well-governed digital services.

Executive was advised that the proposed Digital Strategy recognised the increasing reliance on digital systems across all Council services and the need to ensure that these systems were secure, consistent and sustainable.

Members noted that the strategy provided a structured, evidence-led approach focused on strengthening digital foundations, improving governance, reducing duplication and enabling more efficient ways of working across the organisation.

It was highlighted that the strategy was built around four core themes: secure and modern foundations; simpler processes and safe automation; workforce digital and security capability; and digital platforms, customer experience and inclusion.

The Executive heard that approval of the strategy would establish a single, coordinated digital direction for the Council, replacing fragmented or service-led approaches and ensuring alignment with corporate priorities and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Members were informed that delivery of the strategy would be managed through existing governance arrangements, including the Technical Design Authority, ensuring that digital decisions were subject to appropriate scrutiny, standards and oversight.

The Executive noted that the strategy would operate alongside the Council's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, ensuring that any future adoption of AI and emerging technologies would be appropriately governed, proportionate and ethical.

It was further noted that the strategy did not commit the Council to additional expenditure at this stage, with any future investment subject to existing approval processes and business case development.

Executive acknowledged that the strategy aligned with statutory requirements, including data protection, accessibility and transparency obligations, and would support improved service delivery, risk management and value for money.

The Mayor drew Executive's attention to references of the Technical Design Authority in the report. He stated this body would enable the Council to be more effective in delivering digital solutions.

OPTIONS

The Executive considered the option of continuing without a formal Digital Strategy. This was not supported, as it would likely result in ongoing fragmentation, duplication, inconsistent service delivery and increased operational and cyber risk.

Executive also considered the option of pursuing large-scale digital transformation at pace. This was not supported, due to the significant financial, operational and delivery risks, as well as the potential for disruption to critical services.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. Approve the adoption of the Digital Strategy 2026–2030 as the Council's strategic framework for digital, data and technology.
2. Approve delegation to the Head of Service responsible for ICT and Digital to make minor updates to the Digital Strategy to ensure it remains current and aligned with organisational priorities.

AGREED that Executive:

3. Note that delivery of the strategy would be managed through existing governance arrangements, including the Technical Design Authority, and aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and corporate prioritisation processes.
4. Note that the Digital Strategy operated alongside the Council's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, which provided the governance framework for future use of AI and emerging digital capabilities.

REASONS

The adoption of a Digital Strategy was necessary to ensure that the Council's use of digital, data and technology was secure, consistent and aligned with organisational priorities. The Council's digital environment had developed over time and as such it remained varied across systems, processes and data. This created duplication, inconsistency and increased operational risk. Without a clear and agreed strategic framework, these issues were likely to impact service delivery, governance and value for money.

BEREAVEMENT STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

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The purpose of the report was to seek approval of the Bereavement Services Strategy, which set out the Council's long-term framework for delivering compassionate, inclusive and sustainable bereavement services across Middlesbrough.

The Executive was advised that the strategy established a clear vision for delivering high-quality, culturally sensitive and environmentally responsible bereavement services, while addressing key challenges such as ageing cremation equipment, limited burial capacity and the need to improve accessibility.

Executive was advised that approval of the Bereavement Services Strategy was required to ensure the Council continued to meet its statutory responsibilities in relation to burial, cremation and the management of cemeteries under relevant legislation (including the Burial Act 1853–1906, Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, Cremation Acts and associated regulations).

Members noted that the proposed approach included a unified leadership model, investment in cremator replacement, improvements to cemetery infrastructure and aesthetics, and the introduction of more flexible service provision, including enhanced accessibility for residents.

It was highlighted that the strategy also embedded environmental sustainability, including the adoption of low-emission cremation practices and exploration of more sustainable operational options.

The Executive heard that the strategy aligned with the Council Plan priorities, particularly in supporting safe and resilient communities, promoting a healthy place and ensuring best value through improved governance and financial sustainability.

Members were informed that the strategy had been developed in response to statutory responsibilities relating to burial and cremation services, as well as national guidance, infrastructure assessments, and feedback from service users.

The Executive noted that adoption of the strategy would support long-term service improvement, including maintaining dignity and compassion in service delivery, strengthening relationships with stakeholders such as funeral directors and faith groups, and ensuring capacity to meet future demand.

It was further noted that while some proposals may have financial implications, these would be subject to future feasibility studies and decision-making processes, with procurement and legal compliance maintained throughout.

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability drew Executive's attention to the fact the decision did not have a direct cost implication for the Council.

The Mayor queried when a decision on new cremators would be submitted to Executive. It was clarified this was being developed and would be brought to Executive in the near future.

OPTIONS

The Executive considered the option of maintaining the existing service model, equipment and structures. This was not supported, as it would not have future proofed the service, would have risked non-compliance with regulatory requirements and would have limited the Council's ability to meet the needs and expectations of residents.

ORDERED that Executive approve the Bereavement Services Strategy as the framework for delivering compassionate, inclusive and sustainable bereavement services for Middlesbrough.

REASONS

Bereavement Services were a critical function of Middlesbrough Council, reflecting its commitment to dignity and compassion during times of loss. The submitted decisions aligned with the council plan and supported its ambitions of safe and resilient communities as well as a healthy place and delivering best value by improving service accessibility, governance and environmental sustainability.

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The submitted decisions would have also seen the adoption of low emission cremation practices and sustainable long-term plans for Middlesbrough's cemeteries and explored the service's opening times and flexibility in relation to cremations and burials.

The strategy included pricing reviews, efficiency measures and long-term investment planning as well as strengthening relationships with funeral directors, faith groups and residents to rebuild trust and improve overall satisfaction.

26/13

2025/26 REVENUE & CAPITAL YEAR END OUTTURN

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to present the Council's final Revenue and Capital Year-End Outturn position for 2025/26, including the overall financial performance, budget virements, updates to the Capital Programme and the impact on reserves and financial resilience.

The Executive was advised that the report formed part of its responsibility for financial management, governance and control, and that it enabled oversight of the Council's financial position at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

Members noted that the final revenue outturn position was an overspend of £1.793m after the use of central contingencies and other corporate resources.

It was highlighted that this represented a significant improvement from earlier forecasts in the year and demonstrated strengthened financial management and oversight.

The Executive heard that the overspend would be met from the Savings Delivery Risk Reserve and that, despite the overspend, the Council's overall financial resilience had improved. Usable unrestricted reserves had increased from £21.654m to £25.941m during the year with the Executive Member for Finance drawing Executive's attention to the graph on page 22 of the report.

Members were informed that the outturn position continued to be driven largely by demand-led pressures, particularly within Children's Social Care, which reported a significant overspend due to high-cost placements and workforce pressures. Adult Social Care also reported pressures associated with demand for complex care.

The Executive noted that these pressures had been partially offset by underspends within central budgets and other service areas, alongside the application of corporate contingencies and one-off funding.

It was reported that delivery of budget savings remained a key issue, with several savings not fully achieved during the year. These had been reviewed through the Medium-Term Financial Plan and either removed, reprofiled, or incorporated into future budgets.

Members considered the Capital Programme outturn, noting that total expenditure for 2025/26 was £56.477m against a revised budget of £89.508m, resulting in an underspend primarily due to slippage in project delivery. It was noted that funding remained in place and would be reprofiled into future years.

The Executive was also advised of the position regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant, noting a cumulative deficit of £29.317m and the ongoing national arrangements and local actions in place to manage this pressure.

Members acknowledged that the Medium-Term Financial Plan continued to face challenges, including demand-led pressures, inflation, income volatility and workforce issues, and that robust governance, financial discipline and delivery of savings would remain essential going forward.

The Executive Member commented that there was a need to maintain spending controls in areas that were demand-led, such as Children's Services.

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The Mayor drew Executive's attention to Appendix 5 and the Capital Programme. The Mayor stated that the additional Capital funds needed to be re-invested in areas that needed it, such as Middlesbrough Theatre.

OPTIONS

The Executive considered the option of not approving the proposed revenue and capital budget virements or not formally noting the outturn position. This was not supported, as it would limit the Executive's ability to effectively manage and control the Council's financial position, weaken governance arrangements and reduce transparency and accountability.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. Approve budget virements over £250,000 within the revenue budget as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. Approve budget virements over £250,000 within the Capital Programme detailed in paragraph 4.93 of the report.
3. Approve the inclusion of new schemes and additions to existing schemes to the Capital Programme totalling £1.057m for 2025/26, which were all externally funded to either new or existing schemes which were detailed in Appendix 5 of the report. This would increase the approved 2025/26 Capital Programme budget to £89.508m.

AGREED that Executive:

1. Note the Council's year-end financial outturn for the financial year 2025/26, with the final revenue outturn position being £1.793m overspend at year-end after the use of central contingencies and other budgets.
2. Note that this sum was to be met from the Savings Delivery Risk reserve of £2.000m, put aside to manage uncertainty in this area.
3. Note the improved year-end position in relation to reserves in those usable unrestricted reserves had increased from £21.654m to £25.941m, an increase of £4.287m demonstrating that the overall financial position of the Council had again improved this year.
4. Note that provision was made in the 2026/27 budget for service demand pressures and re-basing of budgets (including for reduced income levels and legislative requirements) which addressed some of the key areas which contributed to the overspend in 2025/26.

REASONS

To enable the effective management of finances, in line with the Councils Local Code of Corporate Governance, the Scheme of Delegation and financial regulations.

26/14

CRISIS RESILIENCE FUND

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) delivery plan for 2026/27 and to obtain delegated authority to amend the allocation of funding within the plan to ensure it remained responsive to local needs.

Executive was advised that the Crisis and Resilience Fund had been introduced by Government following the 2025 Spending Review to replace the Household Support Fund and elements of Discretionary Housing Payments, providing a more structured approach to crisis support and long-term financial resilience. The submitted decision also included support for veterans and those eligible for Holiday Activities and Food Programme. Members were advised that the Crisis Resilience Fund should be viewed as part of the Welfare Strategy and not in isolation.

Members noted that Middlesbrough Council had been allocated £3,999,285 for 2026/27, with indicative funding for future years, and that a delivery plan was required to be submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions.

Executive heard that the Fund was designed to support low-income households experiencing financial shocks, while also investing in activities that improved financial resilience and reduced the likelihood of future crises.

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It was reported that the delivery plan included a range of measures, including direct crisis payments, housing-related support, resilience services such as debt and budgeting advice, and community coordination aimed at strengthening local support networks.

Members were informed that the scheme adopted a person-centred approach, incorporating both proactive payments to vulnerable groups and an application-based system to ensure support could be targeted according to individual circumstances.

The Executive noted that the approach also provided transitional arrangements for residents previously supported through the Household Support Fund, to avoid a sudden withdrawal of assistance and potential financial hardship.

It was highlighted that the scheme would be delivered in partnership with internal services and external organisations, ensuring alignment with existing Council support mechanisms and avoiding duplication of provision.

Members acknowledged that the Fund would be fully financed through Government funding, with administration costs met from the allocation, and that the scheme would contribute to the Council's priorities in reducing poverty, supporting vulnerable residents and improving community resilience.

The Executive Member for Finance commented that not all Councils had adopted the same approach as Middlesbrough and that the proposed decision would also assist those in work but who just missed out on benefits.

The Mayor confirmed that applications to the Crisis Resilience Fund would be open at the end of June 2026. The Mayor also commented that the proposed decision was well thought out and introduced a golden thread for an extra level of care to residents. As such, residents would have more assurance the Council could support them in times of need.

Members commented that the Crisis Resilience Fund appeared to be one of the most comprehensive in the country.

Executive expressed its thanks to all officers involved in the creation of the Crisis Resilience Fund.

OPTIONS

The Executive considered the option of not approving the delivery plan. This was not supported, as without an approved scheme the Council would be unable to utilise the allocated funding to support vulnerable residents and meet Government requirements.

The option of outsourcing delivery of the scheme was also considered but not recommended, as the Council was best placed to deliver the majority of the scheme due to its access to data, integration with existing support services and established relationships with residents and partners.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. Approve the Crisis and Resilience Fund delivery plan for 2026/27.
2. Approve delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to adjust funding allocations within the plan as required.

REASONS

The decisions were taken to enable the Council to access and distribute Government funding effectively, comply with national requirements, support vulnerable residents experiencing financial hardship, and promote long-term financial resilience within the community.

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None.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was/ were published unless the decision(s) become subject to the call in procedures