Middlesbrough moving forward | **Legal and Corporate Services**

EXECUTIVE

Date:	**Wednesday 10th June, 2026**
Time:	**5.00 pm**
Venue:	**Mandela Room (Municipal Buildings)**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

   To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

   To receive any declaration of interests.

3. Minutes - Executive - 13 May 2026 — 5 - 14

   To receive the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. Announcements from the Mayor

   To receive any announcements from the Mayor.

5. Questions from Members of the Public (if any)

   To receive questions from members of the public.

6. Questions from elected Members (if any)

   To receive questions from elected Members.

7. Matters referred from Scrutiny or Council (if any)

   To consider reports of Overview and Scrutiny Board following the Call-In process or Council following the Budget setting process.

REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD OR SCRUTINY PANEL

THE MAYOR

EXECUTIVE MEMBER - ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER - FINANCE

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

Charlotte Benjamin
Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Tuesday 2 June 2026

MEMBERSHIP

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

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Scott Bonner, 01642 729708, scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 13 May 2026.

PRESENT: Councillors P Storey (Chair) I Blades, P Gavigan, J Ryles, and N Walker

OFFICERS: M Adams, A Bates, C Benjamin, S Bonner, M Brown, H Dalby, L Grabham, R Horniman and J Savage

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Mayor C Cooke and Councillors T Furness, L Henman and J Rostron

25/138 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

25/139 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 8 APRIL 2026**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 8 April 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/140 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE SUB COMMITTEE FOR PROPERTY - 8 APRIL 2026**

The Minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee for Property meeting held on 8 April 2026 were submitted and approved as a true record.

25/141 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

None.

25/142 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

None.

25/143 **QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS (IF ANY)**

None.

25/144 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY OR COUNCIL (IF ANY)**

None.

25/145 **REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD OR A SCRUTINY PANEL (IF ANY)**

None.

25/146 **REPORTS FROM MEMBER BODIES WHICH ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE**

None.

CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules 4.8.4 (d) the Chair proposed a motion without notice, which was seconded and agreed, to change the order of business. The motion proposed that Agenda Item 12, Foster with North East and Regional Care Collaborative, be heard next. It was agreed that the order of business for the remainder of the meeting be items 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

25/147 **FOSTER WITH NORTH EAST AND REGIONAL CARE COLLABORATIVE**

The Executive Member for Children's Services submitted a report for Executive consideration, which was presented by the Deputy Mayor and Corporate Director for Children's Services in the Executive Member's absence.

The purpose of the report sought Executive approval for the Council to take part in the expansion of Foster with North East and Regional Care Cooperative (FwNE) into a Regional Fostering Hub. This was in line with the Department for Education (DfE) expansion programme. Members were advised this would have built on the FwNE pathfinder that had been in operation since 2023, which all North East Councils were part of. This also required a move to an 'End-to-End' model encompassing all aspects of the Fostering process.

It was noted that Children's Social Care had been operating in a very challenging context in recent years, particularly with sufficiency of places for children in care being constrained by a dysfunctional market model. These issues had been well documented through the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, led by Josh McAllister and reported in May 2022, and a report by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published in March 2022.

Financially there was a 'burning platform', driving change nationally, with approximately £9bn being spent on supporting children in care. Such costs were rapidly out pacing budgets which was creating significant risks to the financial sustainability of Councils. An external review commissioned in 2024 showed the region spent £540m on children in care placements in 2023-24 with around £300m of that on residential placements. It was also estimated that just over 30% of children in residential placements could have been placed in foster care if sufficiency challenges had been addressed.

In the North East the regional fostering hub (FwNE) was the first national fostering hub Pathfinder. Established in 2023 it was hosted by Together for Children. This had enabled substantial learning in the region as well as attracting investment. For example, the hub had benefited from approximately £2m of DfE monies. An evaluation of FwNE had been commissioned in 2025 and recommendations from that review had been integrated into the proposal to expand the model in line with national requirements.

The recommendations of the McAllister Review were being taken forward as part of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill which was at its final stage in Parliament. The McAllister review recommended the development of Regional Care Co-operatives (RCCs) and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill would have given the Secretary of State powers to direct regions to establish RCCs, taking on a range of duties for commissioning of fostering and residential care.

Josh MacAlister, author of the independent review of children's social care had become a Labour MP and, in September 2025, was appointed as Children's Minister. He had the national political leadership to implement the recommendations arising from the review in 2022 which had seen an acceleration in the national roll out of both RCC's and Fostering Hubs.

The DfE had established a 'pathfinder' programme for RCCs in 2024 and, following Expressions, two successful regions, Greater Manchester and the South East, went live with their RCC's in 2025. The pathfinders had tested different governance models, shared commissioning approaches, provider engagement, regional collaboration on data and insights and moving away from reactive approaches to commissioning to a more proactive planned approach across the regional footprint.

Members discussed the possibility that, should Middlesbrough join the cooperative, it would get equal voting rights as other authorities. It was clarified this would be the case and that any discussions around this matter would involve relevant statutory officers, such the Monitoring and Section 151 Officers, to ensure robust governance and financial processes were adhered to.

A Member queried what the primary advantage of joining the collaborative was. It was clarified there was a crisis in recruiting foster carers nationally and regionally, and the collaborative provided an opportunity to share resources with neighbouring authorities to address that crisis.

It was also commented that, given the financial pressures placed on children's services nationally, and the fact that placing children foster placements was a more cost effective than placing them in residential placements, there would be potential financial benefits to participating in the collaborative.

OPTIONS

The Council had considered retaining the status quo and had been advised by the DfE that it was an expectation all local authorities participated in the regional developments outlined above. Adopting a status quo approach could have led to regulatory challenge by the DfE and Ofsted and would have had additional financial implications for the Council.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. **APPROVES the Council's entry into an agreement to be part of the expanded North East Fostering Hub in line with national policy and guidance.**
2. **APPROVES the allocation of resources (financial and workforce) as required by the regional model set out in the report.**
3. **APPROVES the Council's support to a North East Regional bid to become a 'Wave 2' Regional Care Co-operative national pathfinder and support the submission of a bid to the Department for Education by 22nd May 2026.**
4. **DELEGATES authority to the Corporate Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services to take all necessary steps to implement the recommendations in line with National Policy.**

REASONS

Foster carers provided high quality care for some of Middlesbrough's most vulnerable children and as such the Council highly value the part they play in making a difference to children's lives.

Its ambition was to be able to offer more children and young people high quality family-based care provided by its foster carers. It was also important that the Council were able to maintain lifelong connections for Middlesbrough's children with siblings, extended families and their wider community. Enhancing the Council's recruitment and retention of foster carers to reverse the decline in numbers seen in recent years was essential to achieving that.

There was also a financial imperative due to rapidly escalating costs driven by a dysfunctional market model within the care system. This had led to costs, escalating well in advance of budgets, creating substantial pressure and sustainability risks for Councils across the region and nationally. A different approach was needed and the developments detailed in the report gave the Council an opportunity to completely redesign this critical service area with an enhanced regional approach that was still embedded in the locality.

The 12 North East Directors of Children's Services had, within the scope for this activity, agreed to support this programme. There was also a national expectation to deliver the 'End-to-End' expansion. On a national and regional level, recruiting enough foster carers for the number of children requiring care remained a challenge and this approach had been designed to reduce the challenges faced. The costs associated with using external fostering providers and children's homes could be high. As such, it was hoped this would see a reduction.

25/148 **CHANGING FUTURES PHASE 2 FUNDING**

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive consideration and was presented by the Deputy Mayor and Director of Public (South Tees) in the Mayor's abesnce.

The purpose of the report sought approval to accept external grant funding that would enable the extension of the Changing Futures programme for a further three years from April 2026 to March 2029.

Members were advised that Changing Futures was a programme that had ran across South Tees since 2021 following a successful bid to the National Lottery and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG) programme. South Tees was one of 15 local partnerships that had built strong evidence on how areas could provide a more effective response through flexible, coordinated support that worked with the whole person and drove lasting changes in how services worked together on multiple disadvantages.

It was noted the programme directly supported people experiencing multiple disadvantage (combinations of homelessness and rough sleeping, substance misuse, mental ill health, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system) and aimed to develop strong partnerships and understanding of system change required to better support people to lead more fulfilling lives.

One of the core principles of the programme was to work in partnership across local services, and the voluntary and community sectors, building strong cross-sector partnerships at a strategic and operational level. As such the Council needed to consider itself as the host and partner in the programme, rather than key decision-maker.

Members heard the MHCLG had announced phase two of the Changing Futures programme, with 18 areas of the country sharing over £50m to help the most deprived upper-tier local authority areas in England. This represented a new phase of the cross-government public service reform programme. Led by MHCLG, it would improve outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantages.

Middlesbrough had been selected as a Changing Futures phase 2 area and would receive a total of £3,114,939 - £1.038M each year over the next three years (2026/27 to 2028/29).

The targeted areas had been identified as high need, based on the ranking of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Middlesbrough had been chosen as a target area as they were second in the IMD ranking. However, Redcar and Cleveland had not been chosen as its IMD ranking of 29th was outside the chosen areas. South Tees was not considered as a composite as MHCLG only looked at individual Council footprints.

Members heard this approach was part of Government's move from bidding processes to an allocation process. Government consultation identified there was widespread frustration with the intensity and resources required for the bidding processes.
There were questions from Members.

OPTIONS

Do nothing and do not accept the funding. This would deny Middlesbrough the opportunity for investment in the continuity of existing Changing Futures projects and improvement into services for some of the area's most complex and vulnerable residents.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. **APPROVE the acceptance of external grant funding of £3,114,939 that would enable the extension of the Changing Futures programme in Middlesbrough for a further three years from April 2026 to March 2029.**
2. **APPROVE the principles and terms of the Memorandum of Understanding.**
3. **DELEGATE to the Director of Public Health the authority to approve expenditure in accordance with the Changing Futures Delivery Plan, as directed by the Changing Futures Board, for the funding period April 2026 - March 2029.**

REASONS

Accepting the funding would not only help those with multiple disadvantages, continued involvement in the Changing Futures programme would also give Middlesbrough a further opportunity for ongoing learning through the programme to improve its approaches across the partnership, build the reputation of the Council with key Government departments and increase the likelihood of further funding and support.

One of the core principles of the programme was to work in partnership across local services and the voluntary and community sector, building strong cross-sector partnerships at a strategic and operational level. As such the Council should consider itself as the host and partner in the programme, rather than key decision-maker. Delegating the allocation of monies and management of procurement processes to the Director of Public Health on behalf of the Middlesbrough Changing Futures Board supported the development of a true partnership approach which was an essential element of this programme.

25/149 **EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP FUND - SECTION 13A (1) (A) POLICY CHANGE**

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report for Executive consideration. The purpose of the report sought Executive approval to change the, recently confirmed, Exceptional Hardship Fund policy. This would enable the Council to ensure recipients of Council Tax Reduction were not adversely affected by an increase in income following the removal of the two-child restriction which had previously applied within Universal Credit.

Members were advised that under Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes had to be approved by 11 March each year. The requirement to publish a draft scheme and provide for consultation on changes to an existing scheme had to be in advance of that date.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in her Budget on 26 November 2025 that the government would be removing the two-child limit in the child element of Universal Credit from April 2026 and estimated that the measure would lift 450,000 children out of poverty.

It was noted that the announcement was too late for councils to undertake the necessary preparatory work to design and consult on a scheme taking the change into account and then to obtain scheme approval by the 11 March 2026 deadline.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had been approached for data on those claimants who were likely to be affected by the change. However, it had responded to the effect that nothing was to be provided.

As such, it was difficult to predict with any accuracy the numbers and potential cost involved, as the Council was reliant on receiving DWP electronic notifications. Those notifications were expected during May and June 2026 as individual claimant Universal Credit entitlements were recalculated.

Existing data suggested that more than 1,000 claimants would be affected, and the impact in each instance would vary according to other factors in individual assessments. The effect this would have, in terms of the reduction in the rate of support to be provided by the CTR scheme, could be substantial particularly for larger families.

For each additional child, for which the child element will be awarded in Universal Credit, the income provided for would increase by £303.94 per month, or £70.14 per week.

Most claimants would be receiving CTR at a rate of 90% before the increase took effect, with 72%, 36%, 24% and none, all being possible entitlement rates afterwards. The current scheme bands prescribed income ranges as shown in the table detailed in the report.

Members were advised that the proposal in the report was to negate the effect of a lower rate of CTR by reducing a claimant's council tax liability to the value of CTR lost by crediting an equivalent amount under the Exceptional Hardship Fund - Section 13A (1) (a) Policy. The Exceptional Hardship Fund - Section 13A (1) (a) Policy provided for application-based reductions to council tax bills in exceptional circumstances, usually where a CTR award has been made.

A Member queried if the changes detailed in the report would have any cost implications for the Council. It was clarified that residents eligible for this benefit would not see any changes to their Council Tax liability. It was also clarified that where the Council needed to reimburse partners, such as the Fire Authority, there were contingency budgets for this and would therefore have no detrimental impact on the Council's finances.

Members discussed, and agreed, that the work carried out on this initiative was a worthwhile endeavour. It was also commented that other Councils were keeping a watching brief on this issue while Middlesbrough had already taken action.

The Chair expressed her thanks to both officers and the Executive Member for Finance for their work on this initiative.

OPTIONS

The Council could have taken no action to provide additional support, which would have meant more council tax revenue would become payable due to the reduction in individual CTR claimants' entitlements.

Those claimants would have borne the cost of the larger council tax bills and met it from the additional income the government had announced would be received through Universal Credit.

The perception could have been the Council was not serious about reducing poverty, particularly for families with children, and was taking financial advantage from the changed circumstances.

It was possible that a sum at a lesser rate than the full amount lost in CTR could have been awarded from the Exceptional Hardship Fund, but an additional level of complexity would be introduced for which a substantial amount of work might have been required to understand the range of consequences that would result and to then implement. The interplay between the CTR scheme income ranges and associated CTR award rates created the possibility that some households could have increased amount of council tax to pay if the full amount were not credited.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. **APPROVES a time-limited change (2026/27 financial year only) to the Exceptional Hardship Fund - Section 13A (1) (a) policy which was approved at Executive on 4 February 2026.**

   Members were advised that this change would extend eligibility to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claimants on the basis of their increased income from Universal Credit due to the removal of the two-child restriction, to enable individual council tax bills to remain unaffected, with automatic awards to be made.

REASONS

The decision to extend eligibility was required if the Council's intention was to ensure that there was no detriment to claimants of CTR who would otherwise benefit from additional household income to be made available by Government through Universal Credit due to the removal of the two-child restriction which had previously generally applied.

The cost of extending eligibility under the Exceptional Hardship Fund - Section 13A (1) (a) Policy was offset, to a substantial extent, by increased council tax revenue because the value of CTR awards for the claimants affected would be reduced. The impact from increased household income would commonly be a lower rate of individual entitlement under the CTR scheme.

Avoiding the requirement for individual applications would reduce the administrative effort required in arranging for them to be made and decided. A standard approach that enabled individual council tax bills to remain unaffected should have reduced the level of contact with the Resident and Business Support Service from affected claimants and avoided the need for more than one council tax bill to be issued associated with the income change.

25/150 **ENFORCEMENT POLICIES**

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods submitted a report for Executive consideration. The purpose of the report sought approval of three new policies relating to the general and regulatory functions delivered by Public Protection, Neighbourhoods and Environmental Enforcement functions. The new policies would enable the Council to satisfy its statutory obligations in line with the provisions of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 and the Regulators Code made under it as well as the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and associated housing legislation.

In terms of the private rented sector housing enforcement policy, the Renters' Rights Act 2026 represented a fundamental shift in the regulation of the private rented housing sector. Tenants would see stronger protections, including the replacement of assured shorthold tenancies with periodic assured tenancies, improved rights and better security of tenure, and greater protection from unlawful interference from landlords or their agents.

The Renters' Rights Act 2026 placed a statutory duty on local housing authorities to enforce landlord and rented accommodation legislation, altering the balance between informal action and formal enforcement. Where breaches in legislation were identified, the Council needed to actively consider enforcement action to meet this duty, rather than defaulting to advice or informal resolution in the first instance.

Consequently, the Regulators' Code was not to be relied upon to justify informal action as the starting point for compliance under the Renters' Rights Act 2025. This explained the need for a separate Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2026-2031 which did not rely on the principles set out in the Regulators' Code.

Historically, enforcement of private rented sector legislation had varied significantly between local housing authorities, with markedly different enforcement outcomes. This inconsistency risked undermining confidence in the regulatory system, created uncertainty for landlords operating across multiple areas and increased the likelihood of challenge to enforcement decisions. This also resulted in discrepancies to the level of tenant protections.

To address those concerns, the Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers (ACEHO) developed a suite of national model policies, including a Civil Penalty Policy. The policies aimed to promote greater consistency, transparency and robustness in local authority enforcement approaches, whilst allowing for appropriate local discretion, where appropriate. The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2026-2031 and The Civil Penalties Policy 2026-2031 were aligned with this nationally recognised framework, strengthening the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties under the Renters' Rights Act 2026.

The implementation of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 required a coordinated and timely update to the Civil Penalties Policy and the previous Public Protection Enforcement Policy. Failure to update the policies risked inconsistency in enforcement decisions and activities, increasing exposure to challenge, as well as an inability to demonstrate the Council was meeting its statutory duties to enforce landlord legislation under section 107 of the Renters' Rights Act 2025.

Regarding the Civil Penalties Policy, there was a current Civil Penalty Policy which had been developed prior to the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act 2025. This policy had been revised to reflect the suite of new offences and amendments to the penalty and evidential thresholds used when calculating the level of civil penalty, and to new statutory guidance.

Civil penalties offered a faster, less resource-intensive enforcement route compared to the time-consuming process of criminal prosecution, which placed a burden on the court system. This allowed regulatory bodies to deal with more cases effectively and quickly

The statutory guidance on civil penalties, under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation, informed Councils' that civil penalties were available as an alternative to criminal prosecution for relevant landlord and rented accommodation. It also advised there was no expectation that Councils needed to take informal steps to address breaches or offences under the Renters Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation. The guide included starting points which Councils needed to refer to for setting civil penalties, based on the seriousness of the offending.

The Council had the power to impose a civil penalty of up to £40,000, with a level of civil penalty imposed decided on a case-by-case basis in line with the Civil Penalties Policy. The policy set out the level of civil penalty in each case where it has been determined to issue a civil penalty as an appropriate enforcement option.

The Council, through the policy, had to determine the level of penalty after having taken into consideration factors specific to the offending, including aggravating and mitigating factors, and financial considerations. In setting a final civil penalty amount, the Council needed to take account of any information supplied by the offender about their financial circumstances which would usually include all gains from rental income. It was recognised that in areas where rents were lower, or higher, than the national average, the Council could apply a general adjustment via its civil penalties policy and issue a penalty that was proportionate to the local rental market. This adjustment needed to maintain a level of civil penalty in order that the offender did not financially benefit from their offending behaviour and that the level of fine was relevant to the impact of the offending on tenants and the Council.

The legislation stated that any income received from civil penalties was retained by the Council and used to further the Council's statutory functions in relation to its enforcement activities covering the private rented sector. Adopting the polices referred to in the report would ensure the Council could continue to effectively deliver regulatory functions and use appropriate enforcement sanctions.

Thanks were expressed to all those involved in the development of the policies and there were questions from Members.

OPTIONS

Not to approve the new policies. This would have meant an increased risk of a legal challenge against enforcement decisions action, particularly in respect of the new / amended enforcement functions and powers.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. **APPROVES the General Enforcement Policy 2026-2031**
2. **APPROVES the Public Protection Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2026-2031.**
3. **APPROVES the Public Protection Civil Penalties Policy 2026-2031 (under the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation)**
4. **APPROVES a further report be brought to provide an update on the demands and the resource costs of delivering the Renters' Rights Act 2025.**
5. **DELEGATES authority to the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing to make minor changes to the above policies in response to changes to governance guidance or legislation.**

REASONS

To ensure the Council had an approved framework for delivering Public Protection, Neighbourhoods and Environmental Enforcement regulatory functions.

To ensure the Council satisfied its obligations under the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006, and the Regulators Code made under it, the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and associated housing legislation.

To avoid or mitigate the risk of inconsistent enforcement, legal challenge to decisions and reduced ability to demonstrate compliance with statutory guidance and best practice.

Delegation to the Director of Regeneration and Housing to make minor changes to policies ensured that changes to new legislation and guidance were accounted for and policies could be applied effectively without need for full Executive approval.

To inform Executive about the additional demands of the Renters' Rights Act and the impact on staffing resources and costs.

25/151 **DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2026**

The Executive Member for Public Health submitted a report for Executive consideration. The purpose of the report was to set out the Director of Public Health's (DPH) strategic focus on Ill Health Prevention, provide senior leaders and elected members with an overview of the key prevention challenges and opportunities across South Tees, strengthen collective responsibility for prevention across the Council, and promote consistent, system wide collaboration with partners, supporting a shared approach to improving outcomes.

The Director of Public Health identified several recommendations as part of his annual report which included achieving the 5% smoking prevalence ambition by 2030 and a continued investment in the South Tees system wide smoking cessation infrastructure, improving the early identification of harmful drinking and develop a targeted prevention and harm-reduction campaign for South Tees and to embed the Healthy Weight Declaration into core South Tees policy and governance so that creating healthier environments became a shared, system wide responsibility across all departments and partners.

A Member commented that individuals that died early were oftentimes the most difficult to reach and offer support to. It was asked what plans were in place to address this. It was clarified that there was a shared post between Public Health and James Cook University Hospital. This post was responsible for drafting the annual health inequalities report which had led to an increased awareness of this issue. It was conceded, however, that while a large amount of work was being undertaken in this area, it was a difficult issue and more work was required.

Members commented that there was a need to reach out to those in need of services rather than increasing appointment times and it was commented work had been undertaken on this matter, with the example of the Stop Smoking Campaign cited as an example.

In response to a question about joint working arrangements between Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils, it was commented that there were continued efforts to align the work of Public Health and Adult Social Care and their respective teams.

It was asked if the work of Public Health could be delivered via the Neighbourhood model. It was clarified there was a need to understand what buildings were available and which were most suitable for Public Health teams to operate from.

The Chair proposed that an update on the work contained in the DPH Annual Report be brought back to Executive within six months. Following a vote, this was agreed by Executive.

OPTIONS

No alternative options were submitted with the report as the DPH Annual Report was a statutory requirement and was for information only. It was not subject to amendment or approval.

ORDERED that Executive:

1. **Receive an update on work contained with the DPH annual report within six months.**

AGREED that Executive:

1. **NOTE the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2026.**
2. **NOTE the Council's shared responsibility in preventing ill health which was dependent on joint working across the Council and with its partners. This included the service level agreements (SLAs) between Public Health and Directorates to promote and support working together effectively.**

REASONS

The report provided insight into local health needs and current work programmes. Its content ensured Executive was informed of the key issues and priorities for preventing ill health.

Noting the recommendations strengthened the Council's shared, system-wide commitment to preventing ill health and supported a co-ordinated action across Public Health, the wider Council and with partners to improve outcomes for residents.

25/152 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

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.

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	Middlesbrough moving forward

Report of:	Mark Adams - Joint Director of Public Health, South Tees

Relevant Executive Member:	Cllr Jan Ryles - Executive Member for Public Health

Submitted to:	Executive

Date:	10 June 2026

Title:	Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel: Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity.

Report for:	Decision

Status:	Public

Council Plan priority:	A healthy place

Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards

Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive:

1. Notes the report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel into Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity and the accompanying recommendations; and

2. Approves the Action Plan prepared by the service areas in response to the recommendations.

Executive summary

Childhood obesity remains one of Middlesbrough's most significant and persistent public health challenges, contributing to preventable disease, reduced quality of life and widening health inequalities.

The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel examined the scale of the issue locally and created a report and recommendations setting out its intention to help address the problem. The aim of Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel is to:

- Establish an understanding of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including current prevalence rates, trends over time, variation by ward or demographic group and links to deprivation, ethnicity, and other social determinants.

- Identify the key aspects of healthy placemaking and assess current and planned activity within Middlesbrough, such as public health, planning, transport and environment matters.

- Examine how partnership working contributes to the current reduction of childhood obesity and identify how this could be further developed by considering areas of best practice.

- Explore how healthy placemaking can be embedded more effectively into local council policies and strategies.

This report provides background and contextual information to support the Council's decision making regarding the recommendations identified by the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Executive of the recent health scrutiny review entitled 'Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity' and to set out the action plan developed by the service in response to the recommendations made by the panel.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions, and the underpinning aims
A healthy Place	Delivers the ambition to help residents live longer, healthier lives by focusing on prevention, tackling childhood obesity and inequalities in deprived communities, improving local environments to support healthier choices, and aligning with priorities on early intervention, community engagement, and reducing the impact of poverty on health.
A successful and ambitious town	Promotes inclusive growth by enhancing active travel connectivity to education, employment and town centres, embedding health in sustainable planning, and improving school engagement to support attainment and life chances.
Safe and resilient communities	Supports independence and wellbeing through healthier environments and increased physical activity, while strengthening community resilience and fostering engagement through school, family and place-based approaches that build local ownership and cohesion.
Delivering best value	Embeds whole-council responsibility for health through strong governance, leadership and performance monitoring, using data and evidence to drive efficient, cost-effective decision making.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive

- Notes the report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel into Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity and the accompanying recommendations; and
- Approves the Action Plan prepared by the service areas in response to the recommendations.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel: Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity resulted in a series of recommendations requiring formal consideration. In response, a comprehensive Action Plan has been developed, outlining proposed measures that now require Executive approval to proceed.

3.2 The recommendations of this report are underpinned by the strategic imperative to address the significant and persistent challenge of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, which has some of the highest prevalence rates regionally and nationally and is strongly linked to deprivation, placing children at increased risk of poorer physical and mental health, reduced life chances and widening inequalities. These measures aim to strengthen whole-system leadership, reduce health inequalities and embed healthy placemaking principles across council policies, services and environments.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 In 2025, the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel initiated a review into Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity. Accordingly, the Panel established the following Terms of Reference:

- Establish an understanding of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including current prevalence rates, trends over time, variation by ward or demographic group and links to deprivation, ethnicity, and other social determinants.

- Identify the key aspects of healthy placemaking and assess current and planned activity within Middlesbrough, such as public health, planning, transport and environment matters.

- Examine how partnership working contributes to the current reduction of childhood obesity and identify how this could be further developed by considering areas of best practice.

- Explore how healthy placemaking can be embedded more effectively into local council policies and strategies.

4.2 The review was informed by cross-service collaboration, drawing on data, evidence and expertise from officers within Public Health, Transport and Infrastructure, Planning and You’ve Got This – Sport England Place Partnership. This multidisciplinary approach enabled a deeper, system-wide understanding of the complex factors that influence childhood obesity and healthy placemaking. By combining insights on environments, behaviours, deprivation, planning decisions, transport systems and cultural norms, the review was able to build a comprehensive picture of how these interconnected determinants shape health outcomes in Middlesbrough.

4.3 The review culminated a series of recommendations aimed to embed a long-term, whole system approach to reducing childhood obesity by strengthening leadership, aligning council policies, improving cross department collaboration and creating healthier environments across Middlesbrough.

4.4 The findings and draft recommendations were considered, endorsed and referred to the Executive by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at a meeting on 18th March 2026.

4.5 The recommendations were subject to detailed review by relevant service areas. This process informed the development of a robust Action Plan, see Appendix 2, which sets out a coordinated response and provides a framework for implementation, subject to Executive approval.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Ward Members have not yet been formally engaged or invited to review the responses set out in the Action Plan. Engagement with Ward Members will be important as implementation progresses, as their close understanding of neighbourhood level priorities, local environments and the living experiences of children and families can help ensure that actions to address childhood obesity and support healthy placemaking remain grounded in the needs of Middlesbrough's diverse communities.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 **Take no action (i.e. not implementing Scrutiny's recommendations).**
This option would involve maintaining the current position and not progressing the recommendations made through the Scrutiny process. This alternative is not recommended, as it would risk missed opportunities for improvement, limit the Council's ability to strengthen public health outcomes, and reduce confidence in the effectiveness of Scrutiny as a mechanism for challenge and improvement.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

The recommended actions are expected to deliver a more coordinated, long-term and whole-system approach to reducing childhood obesity in Middlesbrough.

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There are no financial implications expected as many of the recommended actions build on existing programmes, service-level agreements and statutory responsibilities already embedded across Public Health, Planning, and Transport.
Procurement	No negative procurement impacts expected. The recommendations strengthen the Council's approach to procurement by ensuring that future commissioning, contracts and partnership arrangements are more closely aligned with the Healthy Weight Declaration and wider public health priorities. The review highlighted the need for consistent governance in relation to Unhealthy Commodity

	Industries (UCIs), emphasising that procurement decisions such as sponsorships, grants or supplier relationships should avoid inadvertently supporting industries associated with poor health outcomes and obesity.
Legal	The report and actions do not have any immediate legal impacts. All actions will be delivered in accordance with existing statutory duties and regulatory frameworks.
Risk	The report and actions do not create any additional risks for the Council.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	The decision is consistent with the Council's duties under the Human Rights Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Childhood obesity in Middlesbrough is strongly associated with deprivation, with the highest prevalence concentrated in the most disadvantaged wards, meaning inaction would risk perpetuating existing health inequalities and disproportionately affecting children from marginalised communities. By promoting more inclusive, safer and health supportive neighbourhoods, the Action Plan also contributes positively to community cohesion, helping to address inequities in the built environment and ensuring that all children and families regardless of socioeconomic background can benefit from improved health, wellbeing and life chances.
Reducing Poverty	Agreeing the Action Plan is expected to have a positive impact on reducing poverty by addressing the strong link between childhood obesity and deprivation in Middlesbrough. By improving access to healthier environments, strengthening school-based food and activity programmes, and targeting support towards the wards with the highest need, the Action Plan helps tackle the structural barriers faced by children and families in disadvantaged areas.
Climate Change / Environmental	Agreeing the Action Plan is expected to have a positive environmental impact by supporting healthier, more sustainable neighbourhoods through measures that promote active travel, improve access to green spaces, and strengthen healthy placemaking principles
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Agreeing the Action Plan is expected to have a positive impact on children and young people cared for by the authority and for care leavers, as these groups are more likely to experience health inequalities and face barriers to accessing healthy food, physical activity and supportive environments. By strengthening healthy placemaking, improving access to active travel routes, and enhancing programmes delivered through schools and community settings, the Action Plan contributes to creating healthier,

	safer and more inclusive environments that support the wellbeing and long-term life chances of cared for children, young people and care leavers.
Data Protection	There are no data protection impacts anticipated.

7.1 **Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)**

The Action Plan responding to the recommendations from the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel can be found in Appendix 2. Progress will be monitored through established governance mechanisms to ensure alignment with strategic objectives and accountability for outcomes.

Appendices

1	Final Report of Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel: Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity.
2	Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity- Action Plan

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
n/a		

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel

HEALTHY PLACEMAKING WITH A FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

CONTENTS

THE AIMS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

1. The aims of the review are to:

- Understand the current issues and prevalence of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including local trends and variations.
- Examine the role of healthy placemaking in creating environments that support healthier food choices, active lifestyles and overall wellbeing.
- Identify evidence-based recommendations on how healthy placemaking and partnership working can be embedded more effectively into local policy, strategy and delivery.

2. The review also aims to assist the Local Authority in achieving the following priorities from the Council Plan 2024-2027:

- **A Healthy Place -** Improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities.
- **A Healthy Place -** Promote inclusivity for all.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

3. The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Panel's review, are as follows:

A. Establish an understanding of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including current prevalence rates, trends over time, variation by ward or demographic group and links to deprivation, ethnicity, and other social determinants.

B. Identify the key aspects of healthy placemaking and assess current and planned activity within Middlesbrough, such as public health, planning, transport and environment matters.

C. Examine how partnership working contributes to the current reduction of childhood obesity and identify how this could be further developed by considering areas of best practice.

D. Explore how healthy placemaking can be embedded more effectively into local council policies and strategies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Childhood obesity remains one of the most significant public health challenges in England, contributing to preventable disease, reduced quality of life and widening health inequalities. National surveillance shows that excess weight in childhood has remained persistently high. The Health Survey for England 2022 reported that around one in seven children (15%) aged 2-15 were living with obesity (Health Survey for England 2022, Part 2 – NHS England). This national pattern is reflected locally. Middlesbrough consistently records prevalence rates above both the North East and England averages and obesity remains more concentrated in the town's more deprived wards.

5. According to the NHS, "the term obese describes a person who has excess body fat", which can lead to a range of health problems such as type 2 diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure (NHS, 2024). Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to remain so into adulthood, increasing their risk of developing long-term health conditions and experiencing poorer mental

wellbeing. The causes of obesity are complex and influenced not only by individual behaviours but also by wider social, economic and environmental factors. The financial impact is also significant: the NHS spends around £6.5 billion per year on treating obesity-related ill health across all age groups in England. In response, national bodies continue to introduce targeted services designed to support children, young people and families to achieve a healthier weight and improve their health.

6. Recognising the multifaceted nature of obesity, national guidance such as Public Health England's Whole Systems Approach to Obesity (2019) emphasises the need for a coordinated approach to achieving a healthy weight, one that brings together planning, transport, education, public health and community partners to support environments that enable and encourage healthier lifestyles. Central to this is the concept of healthy placemaking, described by the World Health Organisation as 'health setting'. When talking about healthy placemaking, the World Health Organisation describes the term as "the place or social context in which people engage in daily activities in which environmental, organisational and personal factors interact to affect health and wellbeing"

7. This review examines how healthy placemaking principles can be embedded more effectively across Middlesbrough's local policies, planning processes and partnership arrangements. Tackling childhood obesity requires a coordinated, system-wide approach that brings together the built environment, transport and infrastructure, public health programmes and engagement with schools and communities. Local Authorities play a crucial role in shaping the conditions that support healthy weight, for example through integrating health considerations into planning and regeneration schemes, designing neighbourhoods that encourage walking and cycling, promoting active travel routes to schools and influencing local food environments and through partnership working and policy. Middlesbrough Council already undertakes a range of initiatives in these areas, but there is an ongoing need to strengthen how these efforts connect and complement one another. This review therefore aims to identify opportunities to enhance integration and embed healthy placemaking principles across all aspects of local policy, helping to create environments where children can lead healthier, more active lives.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE:

Term of Reference A - Establish an understanding of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including current prevalence rates, trends over time, variation by ward or demographic group and links to deprivation, ethnicity, and other social determinants

8. The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) records the height and weight of children in Reception (ages 4-5) and Year 6 (aged 10-11), in order to monitor patterns of overweight and obesity across England. Unlike adult measures, childhood Body Mass Index (BMI) classifications are based on age and sex specific growth references, which allow each child's measurement to be compared with expected population norms (A simple guide to classifying body mass index in Children, June 2011).

9. At the 8 September 2025 Panel meeting, Members received an overview of Middlesbrough's most recent NCMP data (2023/24). The figures show that 13.8% of Reception-age children in Middlesbrough were living with obesity or severe obesity, compared with 10.8% in the North East and 9.6% nationally. By Year 6, prevalence rose to 25.6%, slightly above the North East average of 24.5% and notably higher than the England rate of 22.1%.

10. Adult obesity levels in Middlesbrough remain significantly above national levels. In 2023/24, 71.4% of adults were overweight or obese, compared with 64.5% across England.

Indicator	Middlesbrough Value	North East Value	England Value	England Worst
Overweight (including obesity) prevalence in adults, (using adjusted self-reported height and weight) (18+ yrs)	71.4%	70.4%	64.5%	77.2%
Obesity prevalence in adults, (using adjusted self-reported height and weight) (18+ yrs)	35.3%	32.5%	26.5%	38.8%

Department of Health and Social Care – Public Health Profiles – Obesity, Health and Nutrition

Links to Deprivation

11. National data shows a strong socioeconomic gradient: obesity among Reception-aged children in the most deprived areas of England (12.9%) is more than double that in the least deprived areas (6.0%). Among Year 6 pupils, the gap widens further, 29.2% compared with 13.0% in the least deprived areas (NHS England, 2024)

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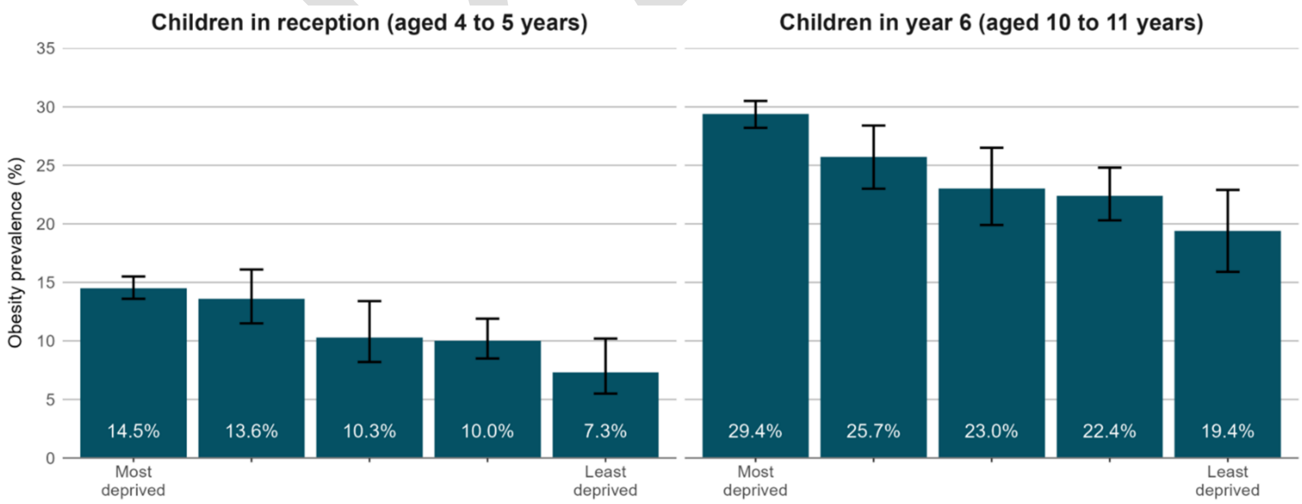
12. The pattern in Middlesbrough mirrors this national trend.
    - Reception: 14.5% of children in the most deprived wards were classed as obese, compared with 7.3% in the least deprived wards.
    - Year 6: 29.4% in the most deprived wards, compared with 19.4% in the least deprived wards.



<u>**Ward Level Variation and Deprivation**</u>

13. To explore this inequality in more depth, Members received ward-level NCMP data (combined 2021/22-2023/24) presented at the 8 September 2025 Panel meeting. The data, which is illustrated in the bar charts below, shows obesity prevalence among Reception and Year 6 pupils across Middlesbrough's wards, alongside their respective deprivation quintiles.

14. The charts clearly demonstrate that the highest levels of childhood obesity are concentrated in wards within the most deprived quintile (quintile 1), while the lowest rates are consistently found in the least deprived areas (quintile 5).

Reception (Ages 4-5)

15. Obesity levels in Reception vary considerably by ward. Some of the highest rates are seen in the most deprived areas including, North Ormesby (35.3%), Berwick Hills and Pallister (31.5%) and Brambles and Thorntree (31.1%). In contrast, quintile 5 wards such as Nunthorpe (16.9%) and Marton West (20.4%) report far lower rates. This illustrates that inequalities in healthy weight are already evident by school entry age.

Year 6 (Ages 10-11)

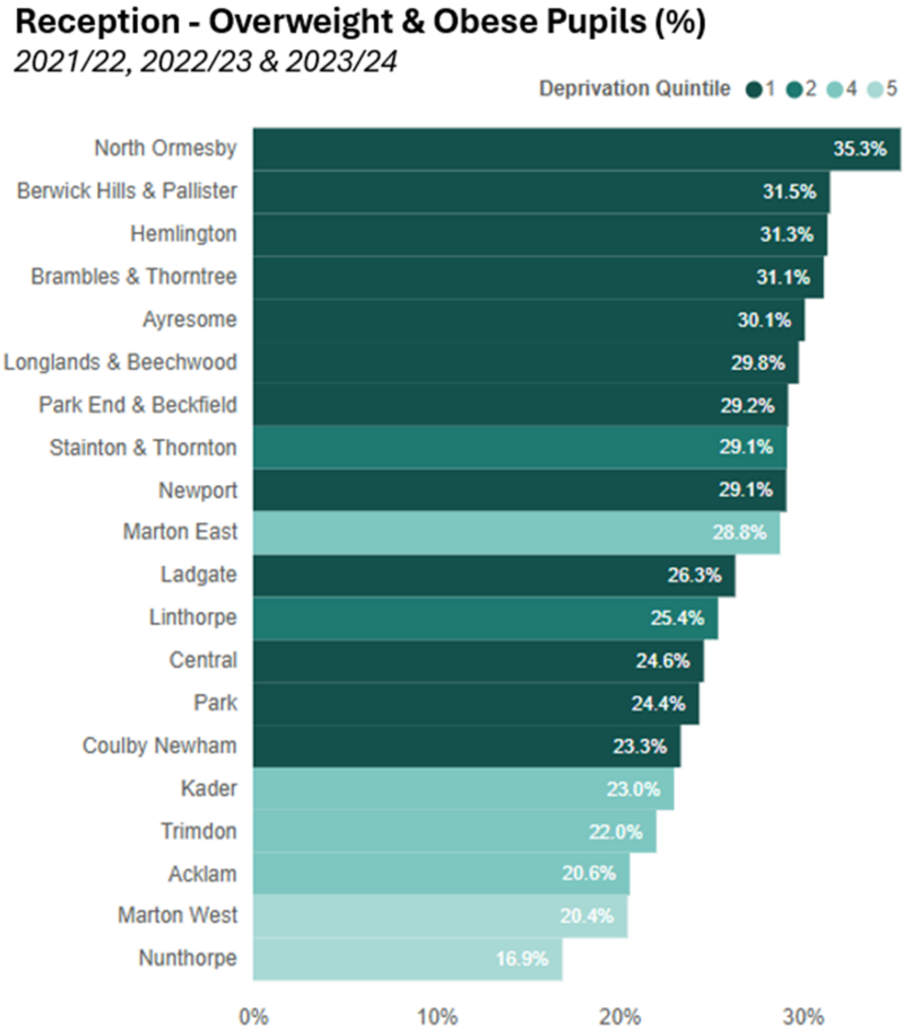
16. By Year 6, the gap widens further. All quintile 1 wards record obesity levels above 40%, with the highest observed in Ayresome (48.4%), Brambles and Thorntree (47.6%) and Longlands and Beechwood (47.0%). The only exception within quintile 1 is North Ormesby (36.3%), identified by Members as an outlier.

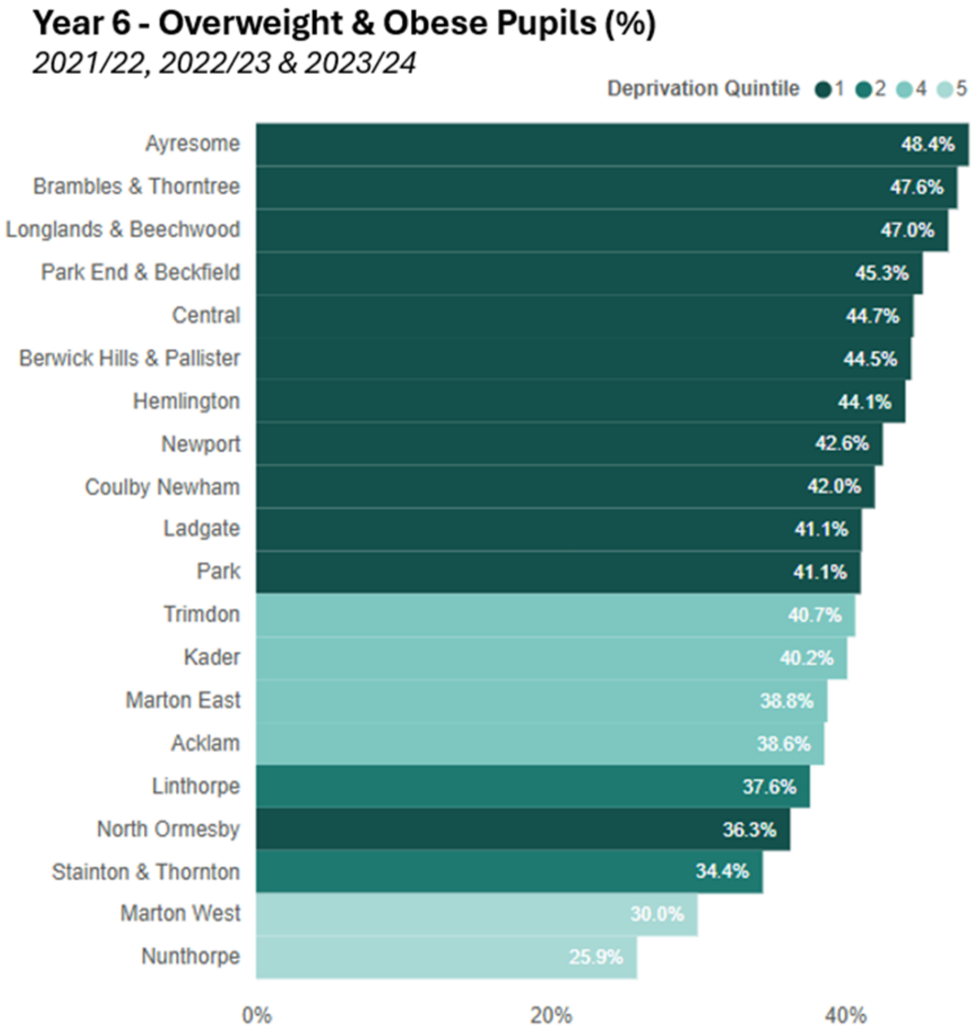
17. Following further discussion with officers, members noted that North Ormesby's lower-than-expected Year 6 obesity prevalence, when compared with its Reception figures, may be influenced by changes in the ward's population composition rather than reflecting a true cohort trend. Officers highlighted that North Ormesby has a greater migrant population than neighbouring wards - 75.8% of residents are UK-born (compared with 95.4% in Brambles and Thorntree), despite both wards having almost identical proportions of children aged 5–9 (8.1% and 8.2% respectively). This suggests that the composition of the group measured at Year 6 is unlikely to be the same as the cohort measured at Reception.

18. Members also recognised that part of the observed pattern may be an artefact of data collection processes, including coverage and participation differences at ward level. Overall, the discussion reinforced the importance of interpreting ward-level obesity data with an understanding of local demographic change, population churn and possible measurement effects.

19. At the opposite end of the scale, quintile 5 wards again show the lowest prevalence: Nunthorpe (25.9%) and Marton West (30.0%).

20. The ward-level data reinforces the strong relationship between deprivation and childhood obesity in Middlesbrough. The fact that differences are evident from Reception and become more pronounced by Year 6, indicates that inequalities accumulate through childhood. The accompanying bar charts provide a visual representation of these patterns and clearly demonstrate the extent of variation across Middlesbrough's communities.

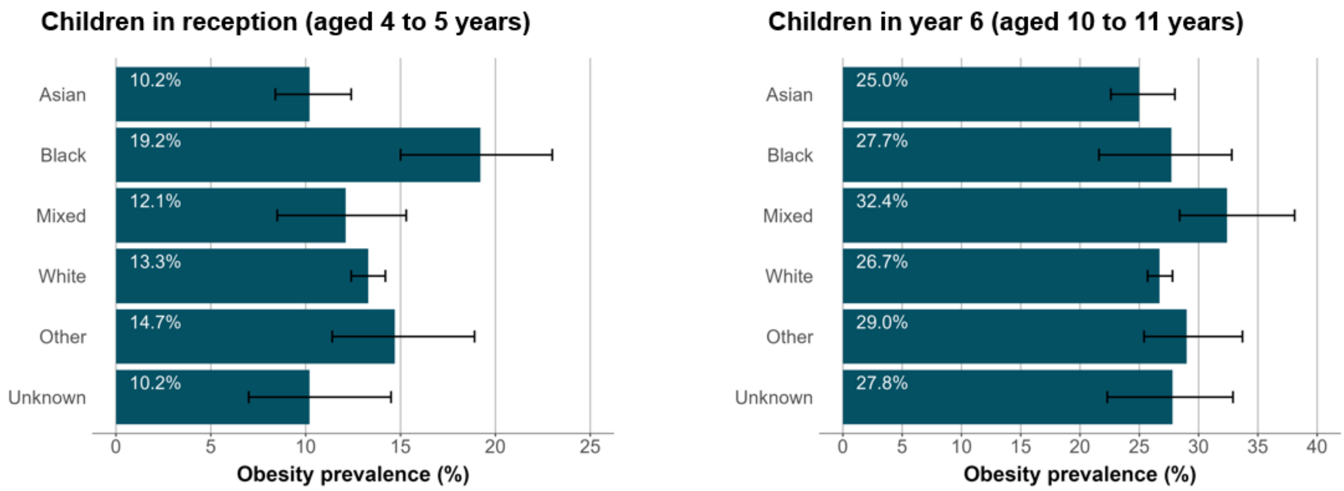




NCMP annual report for England, NHS England Digital

Obesity Prevalence by Ethnic Group in Middlesbrough

21. The National Child Measurement Programme data also highlights variation in obesity prevalence between different ethnic groups. The following charts illustrate the percentage of children living with obesity in Middlesbrough by ethnic group, for both Reception and Year 6.



NCMP 2024/25 Data

22. During the course of the review, the most recent NCMP results for 2024/25 were published on 4 November 2025. These figures show a slight increase in prevalence compared with the previous year. In Middlesbrough:
    - 14.3% of Reception-age were classed as obese (up from 13.8% in 2023/24)
    - 25.9% of Year 6 children classed as obese (up from 25.6% in 2023/24)

23. Although these changes are small, the overall pattern remains consistent with previous years and Middlesbrough is placed among the highest prevalence rates nationally.

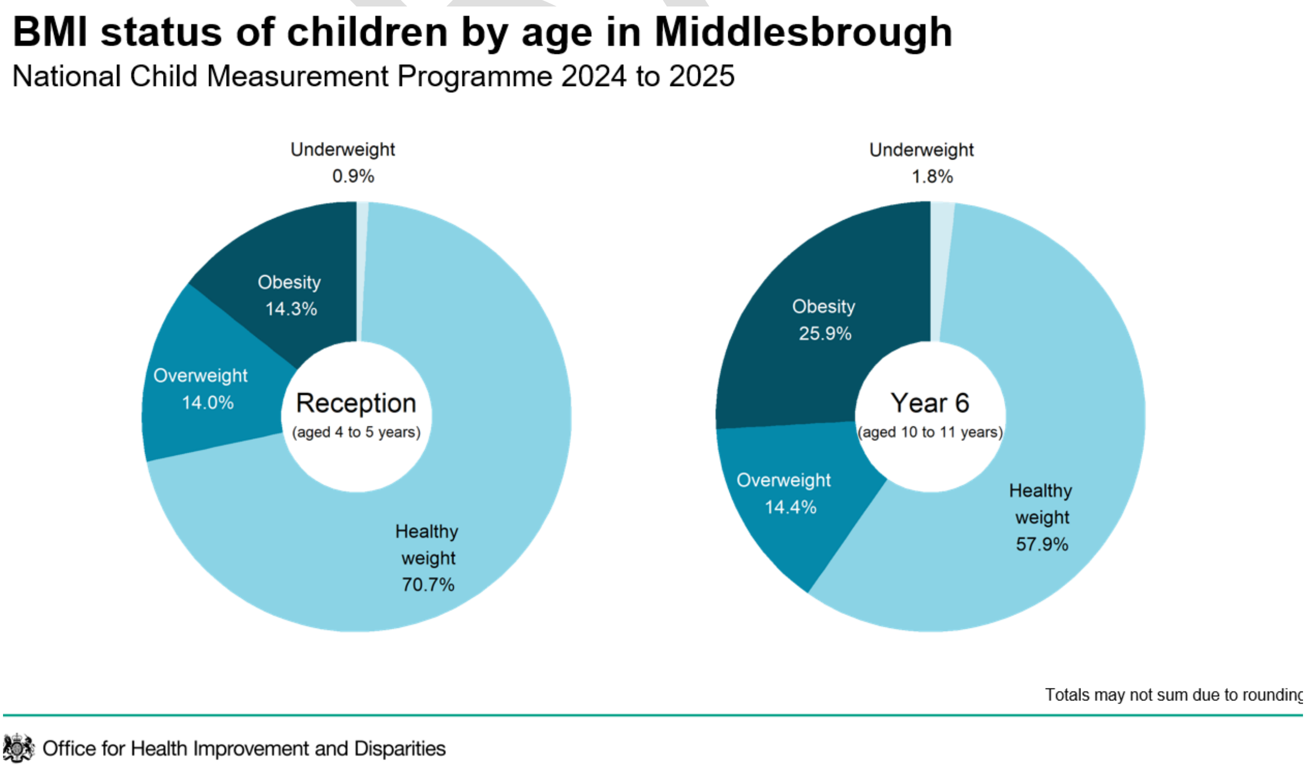


Table One – 2024/25 Obesity Prevalence

Indicator	Middlesbrough Value	England Value
Single year prevalence data for children in reception, age 4 to 5 years 2024/25		
Reception prevalence of underweight	0.9%	1.1%
Reception prevalence of healthy weight	70.7%	75.4%
Reception prevalence of overweight	14.0%	13.0%
Reception prevalence of overweight (including obesity)	28.4%	23.5%
Reception prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)	14.3%	10.5%
Reception prevalence of severe obesity	4.5%	2.9%
Single year prevalence data for children in year 6, age 10 to 11 years		
Year 6 prevalence of underweight	1.0%	1.6%
Year 6 prevalence of healthy weight	57.9%	62.2%
Year 6 prevalence of overweight	14.4%	13.9%
Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity)	40.3%	36.2%
Year 6 prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)	25.9%	22.2%
Year 6 prevalence of severe obesity	8.4%	5.6%
Five-year prevalence for local authority inequalities data 2020/21-2024/25		
Reception prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity), 5 years data combined	13.6%	9.8%
Year 6 prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity), 5 years data combined	27.2%	22.3%

Department of Health and Social Care – Public Health Profiles – Obesity, Health and Nutrition

Obesity, physical activity and nutrition - Data | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care

24. This evidence demonstrates that childhood obesity in Middlesbrough emerges early in life and is strongly associated with deprivation. This provides the context for the Panel's subsequent consideration of healthy placemaking, partnership working and system-wide prevention approaches.

Term of Reference B – Identify the key aspects of healthy placemaking and assess current and planned activity within Middlesbrough, such as public health, planning, transport and environment matters.

25. Healthy placemaking brings together the physical environment, local policy and service delivery to create places that support and enable healthier behaviours as part of everyday life. It recognises that health outcomes are shaped not only by individual choice, but also by wider factors such as urban design, transport systems and food environments. As part of this review, the Panel considered how healthy placemaking principles are currently embedded across key

Council functions, including public health, planning and transport and infrastructure. Each of these areas are considered below.

Public Health

26. In February 2024, Middlesbrough Council adopted the Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) in recognition of the scale and complexity of obesity and the need for a coordinated, long-term response. The Declaration represents a town-wide commitment to supporting residents to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, with Public Health providing strategic leadership and coordination across the Council and wider system, underpinned by collaboration across Council departments and with external partners.

27. Officers advised the Panel that the HWD contains sixteen core commitments, designed to embed healthy weight considerations across policy development, decision-making and service delivery. These commitments are grouped under four overarching themes: strategic and system leadership; commercial determinants; health-promoting environments and organisational and cultural change. Taken together, the commitments provide a practical framework through which Public Health can influence multiple Council functions and partner organisations, addressing the wider environmental, social and economic factors that influence diet, physical activity and health outcomes.

28. Members were advised that the HWD supports a whole-system approach, recognising that progress in reducing obesity rates is gradual and that sustained action is required over time. Public Health officers emphasised the importance of maintaining confidence in the direction of travel, even where measurable population-level change may not be immediately apparent, particularly given the strong association between obesity and deprivation.

29. In addition to the HWD, the Panel heard about a range of public health activity supporting healthy placemaking and influencing the local environment in which people live, work and learn. This included work to support the implementation of government advertising restrictions, collaboration with the Council's marketing and communications teams to ensure appropriate messaging across Council websites, and initiatives such as the Eat Well Awards, breastfeeding promotion campaigns and Holiday Activity and Food programmes (HAF). These activities were presented as complementary to policy and planning interventions, reinforcing healthier choices across the life course.

Planning

30. The Panel received evidence from the Strategic Policy Manager (Planning) and the Creating Active and Healthy Spaces Lead (Public Health South Tees) on the role of the planning system in shaping healthier environments.

31. At the outset of the discussion, Members were introduced to the role of the hybrid public health-planning post 'Creating Active and Healthy Spaces Lead', and its importance in delivering healthier places. Officers explained that the role acts as a bridge between public health and planning, supporting a shared understanding of how the built environment influences long-term health outcomes. Members were advised that national evidence recognises that while healthcare services are vital, the places in which people live, work and move can have a greater long-term impact on health, particularly in addressing inequalities.

32. Officers highlighted the value of hybrid roles is reflected in national policy, including the NHS 10-Year Plan and the revised National Planning Policy Framework, which emphasise the need to embed health considerations into decision-making about place. Hybrid posts support planners and public health professionals to work to a common language and shared objectives, improving the use of health evidence in Local Plans, planning applications and design reviews.

33. Members heard that, in practice, these hybrid roles help to strengthen the planning process by embedding health and equity considerations at the earliest stages of development, rather than treating them as a ‘tick-box’ requirement. The roles support more robust and consistent use of Health Impact Assessments, provide clearer health guidance to developers, and to improve engagement with communities and elected Members. This helps to ensure local priorities inform placemaking decisions and supports the delivery of greener, heathier and more equitable environments.

34. Members were provided with an overview of national policy legislation, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated design and practice guidance. Officers highlighted specific NPPF paragraphs (including paragraphs 96(c) 97, 103 and 109 (e) and (f) which place clear emphasis on creating healthy, safe, inclusive and accessible places.

35. Members were informed that Middlesbrough’s Local Plan, which is presently under examination, integrates health considerations throughout its policies. This alignment supports the Council Plan priority of creating a healthy place and links closely with the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, particularly in relation to promoting wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

Health Impact Assessments (HIAs)

36. A key feature of Middlesbrough’s approach is the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) within the planning process. Officers advised that only around 30% of planning authorities nationally routinely use HIAs and that Middlesbrough’s approach represents good practice.

37. HIAs are used as a practical tool to assess the potential health and wellbeing impacts of major developments, informing decisions on design, layout and access. Examples include encouraging the development of usable green space, supporting opportunities for food growing and ensuring proximity to key amenities such as supermarkets within an 800-metre walking distance.

38. To illustrate how healthy placemaking principles are applied in practice, Members were provided with an example of the newly developed Stainsby residential estate, which was highlighted as an example of good practice in creating a healthier community through design.

39. Members noted that the Stainsby development demonstrates how the built environment can actively support healthier behaviours, particularly through the provision of connected and accessible walking routes, green corridors and safe links between homes, open space and local amenities. The masterplanning approach prioritised permeability, legibility and active travel, helping to make walking a realistic and attractive option for everyday journeys.

40. The Panel also noted that health considerations had been embedded at the design stage, including access to open green space, opportunities for informal physical activity and food and nutrition considerations, as reflected through the use of Health Impact Assessment principles. Members welcomed this as an early example of how early collaboration between planning, public health and developers can result in environments that support long-term wellbeing and contribute to the creation of a sustainable, healthy place.

Hot Food Takeaway Policy

41. Members received further evidence on the Council’s approach to managing the concentration and location of hot food takeaways.

42. Middlesbrough Council formally adopted the Interim Hot Food Takeaway (HFT) Policy in July 2019, with an amended version adopted in March 2020. The policy applies to hot food takeaways (A5 use class) and sets thresholds to limit over-concentration, protect primary

shopping frontages and restrict new takeaways within a 400-metre walking distance of secondary schools. Hot food takeaways are also not permitted outside of defined centres.

43. Members were advised that since the introduction of the policy, the number of applications has reduced and refusal rates have increased, suggesting a deterrent effect:
    - August 2015 – July 2019: 26 applications, 5 refused (19%)
    - August 2019 – July 2023: 18 applications, 10 refused (55%)

44. Officers explained that while existing outlets remain, the policy provides a robust framework for resisting new proposals in sensitive locations and supports wider healthy placemaking objectives. Progress is monitored through planning performance data, benchmarking against national good practice and ongoing assessment of planning decisions.

Transport and Infrastructure

45. The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Transport and Infrastructure and the Principal Planning Transport Officer on how transport policy, infrastructure investment and education programmes contribute to healthy placemaking. This included data on travel modes, travel to school patterns, road safety and an overview of key strategies and investment programmes aimed at supporting active and sustainable travel.

46. Members noted that Middlesbrough experienced high levels of childhood obesity and physical inactivity, despite low levels of car ownership with 33.1% of households having no car or van and short averages distances between home and school. Officers advised that 46% of children currently walk to school, with this figure having declined in recent years. This prompted concern among Members, particularly given the role that walking to school plays in supporting physical daily activity and reducing congestion at school gates.

47. Following the meeting, Members requested further information on vehicle ownership, broken down by ward. Census 2021 data, presented in the table below, shows that car ownership levels do not directly correlate with obesity prevalence. In fact, wards with higher obesity levels generally recorded lower levels of vehicle ownership, reflecting wider patterns of deprivation rather than transport access alone.

Ward	% households without cars/vans
Marton West	9.7
Nunthorpe/Marton East	10.1
Trimdon	12.6
Kader	15.1
Linthorpe	21
Coulby	24
Stainton/Hemlington	26.7
Easterside	31.9
Linthorpe East	32.1
Newport	33.5
Park	36.6
Berwick Hills	43.8
Beechwood	45.2
Thorntree	47
North Ormesby and Brambles	55
Central	55.8
Ayresome	62.4

48. Members discussed that while lower car ownership may result in higher levels of walking for everyday journeys such as travel to school, higher levels of car ownership, often associated with greater household income, may also enable access to a wider range of opportunities that support more active lifestyles. This includes the ability to travel to organised sports, leisure centres, swimming pools and green spaces as well as the financial capacity to afford sports clubs, classes and gym memberships. Members noted that these factors are less accessible to families experiencing deprivation and that this further reinforced the complexity of the issue and the influence of broader social and economic determinants of health.

49. While recognising that patterns of travel are influenced by a range of wider factors, the Panel noted that the Council already delivers a comprehensive programme of education and infrastructure initiatives to encourage safer and more active travel to school. These included Balancability training (74 places), Bikeability provision for Year 3 (1057 places) and Year 5/6 pupils (1,529 places) alongside school assemblies, Dr Bike/Fix-It sessions, guided rides and the installation of secure cycle parking. Officers emphasised that achieving a sustained shift away from car use at the school gate would require behavioural change, supported by clear communication and increased parental confidence, particularly around addressing perceptions around journey distance and safety.

50. Members also discussed the role of cycling infrastructure, including dedicated cycling lanes, in supporting active travel. Officers acknowledged that high-quality, well-connected infrastructure is an important enabling factor for cycling but emphasised that infrastructure alone insufficient to drive sustained behaviour change. Evidence presented to the Panel highlighted that perceptions of safety, confidence, convenience and cultural norms all strongly influence whether residents choose to cycle. Members therefore noted that cycle infrastructure is most effective when delivered as part of a joined-up approach, alongside education, engagement and supportive local environments.

51. The Panel acknowledged that improving active travel uptake is a long-term endeavour and forms a key component of a whole-system approach to healthy placemaking.

Term of Reference C – Examine how partnership working contributes to the current reduction of childhood obesity and identify how this could be further developed by considering areas of best practice.

52. Reducing childhood obesity was consistently described to the Panel as a complex, long-term challenge that cannot be addressed by any single organisation or service in isolation. Evidence presented throughout the review highlighted the importance of partnership working at local, regional and national levels to influence the wider determinants of health, including physical activity, food environments and education.

Cross-Council Partnership Working

53. Public Health officers explained that partnership working is embedded not only through collaboration with external organisations, but also through influencing decision-making across Middlesbrough Council. Public health expertise is integrated within core Council functions through Service Level Agreements (SLAs), enabling health considerations to be incorporated at the earliest stages of policy development, service planning and delivery.

54. This includes close collaboration with Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, Children's Services and Education, supporting a joined-up approach to healthy placemaking, active travel, food environments and school-based initiatives. Members heard that this internal partnership working is particularly important where decisions taken in one service area may have significant downstream impacts on health outcomes.

55. Strengthening cross-departmental working was identified as central to embedding a whole-system approach, ensuring that responsibility for reducing childhood obesity is shared and that health considerations are consistently reflected in Council decision-making.

Unhealthy Commodity Industries (UCIs)

56. The Panel was informed about Unhealthy Commodity Industries (UCIs), defined as profit-driven commercial sectors whose products are associated with significant adverse health outcomes. Examples discussed included tobacco, alcohol, gambling, certain food and beverage products and fossil fuels.

57. Officers explained that the products and practices of these industries are linked to a range of non-communicable diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, poor mental health and overweight and obesity. Members were advised that non-communicable diseases account for a significant proportion of deaths and ill-health nationally and contribute to widening health inequalities.

58. Members heard that UCIs often influence behaviour through targeted advertising, marketing strategies and approaches that shift responsibility onto individuals rather than addressing wider commercial and environmental drivers of health. Examples relevant to local government were highlighted, including industry-funded training opportunities, sponsorship arrangements and grants to voluntary and community organisations.

59. Officers emphasised that addressing these influences requires coordinated partnership working across Council departments, supported by clear governance arrangements. This was considered important to ensure a consistent, transparent approach to engagement with UCIs and to support decision-making that aligns with public health priorities and the Healthy Weight Declaration.

External Partnerships and Programme Delivery

60. The Panel's meetings considered a range of external partnerships that support healthy behaviours among children and young people.

You've Got This (Sport England)

61. At the meeting on 8 September 2025, Members heard from a representative of You've Got This (Sport England), who outlined the purpose, scope and delivery of the programme. You've Got This is a Sport England-supported Local Delivery Pilot, one of a small number of place-based partnerships across England designed to explore innovative ways of increasing physical activity levels at a population scale and making "active lives a way of life". The programme was established in 2018 and focusses on addressing physical inactivity not simply as an individual behaviour change issue, but as a systemic challenge requiring insight-led, whole systems action across partners and communities. Locally it operates through wide partnership involving public health, local authorities, community organisations and sport providers to create activities, gather insight and support residents to become and stay more active.

62. Members were advised that the programme has a particular emphasis on insight and learning, identifying barriers to activity and testing approaches that work in a local context. Evidence highlighted the value of national partners working alongside local services and schools to deliver consistent messaging and accessible opportunities for participation.

Bring It On Boro – Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

63. Members also received detailed evidence on Bring It On Boro, Middlesbrough's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, delivered during 2024/25 for children and young people eligible for benefit-related free school meals and other vulnerable groups. Members reviewed the annual report 2024/2025 which outlined the scale and structure of delivery across the three

main holiday periods (Easter, Summer and Christmas) and demonstrated strong partnership working between Council, voluntary and community organisations and external providers.

64. The HAF programme aims to provide free, accessible activities alongside healthy food, promoting positive holiday experiences while addressing food insecurity, inactivity and social isolation. Its objectives include encouraging children to eat healthily, be physically active, take part in engaging and enriching activities, improve knowledge of health and nutrition, and enhance resilience, wellbeing and social connections.

65. Evidence presented to the Panel highlighted key outcomes from 2024/25, including:
    - The equivalent of six weeks of face-to-face provision across Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.
    - Activities delivered during the programme that combine healthy meals with sport, creative experiences and opportunities for social engagement, reinforcing both physical and emotional wellbeing.

66. Members noted that delivery was aligned with national HAF standards which require provision to include a combination of healthy food, physical activity and enriching experiences, supporting children to maintain positive routines and connections outside of the school environment.

67. Members acknowledged that the HAF programme contributes to broader healthy placemaking by:
    - Providing structured opportunities for physical activity during school holidays, reinforcing daily activity habits.
    - Supporting social inclusion and wellbeing, particularly for families facing socioeconomic barriers.
    - Strengthening local partnerships, as delivery relies on community organisations, schools and voluntary groups working together to reach eligible children.

68. The programme was recognised as an example of how partnership working, blending national funding streams with local delivery expertise and community networks, can provide meaningful health-related outcomes in the short term while contributing to longer-term ambitions to reduce inequalities and foster healthier lifestyles.

<u>Schools and Early Years Partnerships</u>

69. Members discussed the importance of schools and early years settings as key partners in addressing childhood obesity. Evidence was provided on initiatives including the Eat Well Schools Award, which is available to all primary, secondary and special schools, both maintained and academies.

70. The Eat Well Schools Award is available to all schools in Middlesbrough. To achieve the award, schools are expected to serve healthy food and teach children about healthy and sustainable food. Achieving the award evidences that schools:
    - provide meals which meet the government's school food standards (which is a legal requirement for schools)
    - teach children about the importance of healthy eating
    - support children to make healthy choices
    - support and promote breastfeeding
    - contribute to the changes needed to promote healthy weight and prevent obesity in the area

71. Members expressed interest in the role of schools in shaping food environments and healthy behaviours and noted the importance of continued engagement between Public Health,

education services and school leadership to promote consistent standards and share good practice.

72. The Panel also heard about wider initiatives such as Creating Active Schools, a programme piloted in Bradford, which supports schools to embed physical activity across the whole school day, including within lessons, playtimes, travel to and from school and wider school culture. The programme focuses on long-term behaviour change, supporting schools to create environments where being active becomes a normal and inclusive part of everyday life rather than an additional activity. Members noted the relevance of this approach for Middlesbrough, particularly in areas of higher deprivation where opportunities for physical activity outside of school may be more limited and recognised the potential value of learning from this best practice to inform future local delivery.

<u>Behaviour Change and Cultural Factors</u>

73. Throughout the review, Members emphasised that improving childhood obesity outcomes requires more than infrastructure and programme delivery alone. Officers highlighted the importance of addressing behavioural, cultural, social and environmental factors that influence everyday choices.

74. Members heard examples of long-term, system-wide approaches, including the London Borough of Waltham Forest, where sustained investment in active travel infrastructure combined with strong community engagement had successfully increased walking and cycling levels. Officers advised that such change takes time, persistence and confidence that interventions are having an impact, even where results may not be immediately visible.

75. The Panel recognised that partnership working is essential to tackling childhood obesity and that there are no quick or simple solutions. Members acknowledged that progress requires long-term commitment, shared responsibility and alignment across organisations, sectors and communities.

76. The evidence reinforced the importance of coordinated governance, whole-system thinking and sustained collaboration to support meaningful and lasting change

<u>Term of Reference D – Explore how healthy placemaking can be embedded more effectively into local council policies and strategies</u>

77. Throughout the review, the Panel consistently heard that tackling childhood obesity through healthy placemaking requires sustained leadership, clear governance and a whole-system approach embedded across Council policy, strategy and decision-making. Members recognised that there are no quick wins, and that meaningful change will take time, particularly in a context of high deprivation and widening health inequalities.

78. The Panel noted positively that Public Health is already embedded within core Council functions through Service Level Agreements (SLAs), enabling health considerations to inform policy development, commissioning and operational decision-making at an early stage. This approach was viewed as a strong foundation for embedding healthy placemaking more consistently across the organisation. Members agreed that further strengthening and formalising these arrangements would support a shared responsibility for health outcomes across departments, including Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, Education and Children's Services.

79. Evidence presented to the Panel highlighted the added value of specialist hybrid roles, such as the Creating Active and Healthy Spaces Lead, in bridging public health and planning functions. Members were particularly impressed by how this role supports the integration of

health evidence into spatial planning, the use of Health Impact Assessments and the consistent application of healthy placemaking principles. The Panel recognised the importance of maintaining and future-proofing this role, with clear links to wider Council teams, to ensure continuity, influence and accountability over the long term.

80. The Panel also considered how the Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) provides a clear, evidence-based framework to support embedding healthy placemaking across Council activity. Members welcomed the HWD as a mechanism for driving leadership, aligning policies and influencing organisational culture, and noted the importance of using it as a living framework rather than a standalone commitment. The Panel agreed that ongoing senior leadership ownership and regular monitoring of progress against the Declaration's commitments would be essential to sustaining momentum and delivering long-term impact.

81. In exploring how healthy placemaking could be strengthened further, Members discussed the influence of Unhealthy Commodity Industries (UCIs) and the importance of a coordinated, transparent approach to engagement with commercial partners. Building on existing cross-Council working and SLAs, the Panel identified an opportunity to use these established governance structures to support a consistent approach to UCIs, ensuring that decisions relating to procurement, sponsorship, grants and partnerships align with public health priorities and the Council's wider commitment to reducing health inequalities.

82. Members were clear that healthy placemaking should not be interpreted solely as the delivery of physical infrastructure, such as cycle routes or highways schemes. While the built environment plays a critical role, evidence presented to the Panel demonstrated that health outcomes are also shaped by behavioural, social, cultural and economic factors, including parental confidence, perceptions of safety, food environments and, critically, levels of deprivation. The Panel noted that Middlesbrough's high levels of childhood obesity cannot be separated from the wider context of poverty and inequality, and that healthy placemaking must therefore address both place-based and socio-economic influences.

83. The Panel recognised that the Council does not have direct control over all factors affecting healthy weight, including national policy decisions, commercial behaviours and wider funding constraints facing local government. Members were clear that the focus of this review, and the recommendations arising from it, relate to areas within the Council's influence, including policy alignment, planning decisions, commissioning, partnership working and the effective use of existing resources. In this context, healthy placemaking was viewed as a long-term, cumulative endeavour, requiring sustained commitment and organisational alignment rather than short-term or isolated interventions.

CONCLUSIONS

84. Based on the evidence provided throughout the investigation, the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel concluded that:
    - Childhood obesity remains a significant public health challenge in Middlesbrough, with 2024/25 NCMP data showing that 14.3% of Reception children and 25.9% of Year 6 children are living with obesity.
    - There is a strong and persistent relationship between childhood obesity and deprivation in Middlesbrough, with the highest prevalence rates overwhelmingly concentrated in wards within the most deprived quintiles. The Panel agreed that, without addressing the wider determinants of health and adopting a whole-system approach, progress is likely to remain uneven.
    - Healthy placemaking has an important role to play in tackling childhood obesity, particularly through shaping the built environment, food environments and opportunities for physical activity. The Panel noted positively that health considerations are increasingly being embedded into planning, transport and policy decision-making.

- Officers demonstrated strong commitment to this agenda, and the Panel was particularly encouraged by the development of the Creating Active and Healthy Spaces Lead role, recognising it as a promising model for sustained cross-departmental collaboration and leadership.

85. The Panel acknowledged that there are no ‘quick wins’ in addressing childhood obesity; meaningful change will require sustained leadership, partnership working and a long-term commitment before measurable improvements are seen. However, the Panel agreed that laying the foundations now—through coordinated, place-based action—will support long-term progress and help create the conditions for healthier futures for Middlesbrough’s children and families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

86. The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive that:

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 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

87. The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel would like to thank the following for their assistance with its work:

Joanna Bielby, Public Health Advanced Practitioner, Middlesbrough Council
Alex Conti, Strategic Policy Manager, Middlesbrough Council
Lindsay Cook, Health Improvement Manager, Middlesbrough Council
Craig Cowley, Head of Transport and Infrastructure, Middlesbrough Council
Dr Mark Fishpool, Programme Manager, You've Got This – Sport England
Laura More, Health Improvement Specialist, Middlesbrough Council
Chris Orr, Principal Transport Planning Officer, Middlesbrough Council
Dr David McAleavey, Creating Active and Heathy Spaces Lead, Middlesbrough Council

ACRONYMS

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

BMI	Body Mass Index
FSM	Free School Meals
HAF	Holiday Activities and Food
HIA	Health Impact Assessment
HFT	Hot Food Takeaway
HWD	Healthy Weight Declaration

NCMP	National Child Measurement Programme
NHS	National Health Service
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
SLA	Service Level Agreement
UCI	Unhealthy Commodity Industry

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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Department of Health and Social Care (2023), Healthy Weight Declaration, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-weight-declaration

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2023), National Planning Policy Framework, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework–2

Health Survey for England (2022), Part 2 https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england/2022-part-2

Middlesbrough Council (2020), Interim Hot Food Takeaway Policy, https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy

Middlesbrough Council (2024/25), Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme – Annual Report, https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/media/4n1edrcu/haf-annual-report-2024-2025.pdf

Middlesbrough Council, Eat Well Schools Award Guide (2025-2026) https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/media/yqsin54c/eat-well-schools-award-guide.pdf

Middlesbrough Council (2025), Middlesbrough Local Plan (Adopted March 2025), https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy

Middlesbrough Council (2025) Middlesbrough Local Plan Examination
Local Plan examination | Middlesbrough Council

NHS England 10 Year Plan (2025) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) (2024), National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP): England, https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-child-measurement-programme

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Public Health England (2019), Health Impact Assessment in Spatial Planning, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-impact-assessment-in-spatial-planning

Public Health England's Whole Systems Approach to Obesity (2019), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-systems-approach-to-obesity

Sport England (2023), You've Got This – Local Delivery Pilot Programme, https://www.sportengland.org

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel - reports/presentations to, and minutes of, meetings held on 8 September 2025, 20 October 2025 and 1 December 2025
Browse meetings - Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel | Middlesbrough Council

COUNCILLOR JOHN KABUYE
CHAIR OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel Membership: Councillors J Kabuye (Chair), D Coupe (Vice-Chair), J Banks, D Branson, D Jackson T Mohan, S Platt and Z Uddin.

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ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL
HEALTHY PLACEMAKING WITH A FOCUS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY - ACTION PLAN

(EXECUTIVE DATE : 6 MAY 2026)

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	POST TITLE	BUDGET COST	TIMESCALE
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.	• Update paper to be presented at LMT outlining Healthy Weight Declaration progress since adoption. • Map HWD commitments to LMT members. • Define roles and expectations of LMT sponsors and champions. • Embed a reporting framework that monitors LMT leadership activity, tracks progress against Healthy Weight Declaration commitments, and measures impact on Public Health priorities, aligned to relevant Departmental SLAs.	Advanced Public Health Practitioner	N/A	September 2026
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.	• Strengthen cross-departmental collaboration through reviewing and enhancing existing Public Health Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to agree actions for improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities across all departments.	Health Improvement Manager	N/A	July 2026
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	• Mapping of all advertising assets on council estate to identify location, contract type and date for renewal.	Health Improvement Specialist		May 2026

progress update should be provided to the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel within 12 months.	• Engagement with relevant departments (i.e. procurement & legal) to ensure inclusion of policy in future contracts. • Baseline data collection of current advertising.			June 2026 July 2026
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.	• Establish a cross-directorate steering group with LMT support • Co-develop audit tools and supporting e-learning • Deliver the audit and review findings • Develop and disseminate decision-making guidance	Health Improvement Specialist		May 2026 July 2026 January 2027 March 27
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.	• Identify lead from Children's Services. • Map schools located in the wards with the highest childhood obesity • Prevalence. • Engage with lead from Children's services to develop a plan for increasing engagement.	Public Health Practitioner		May 2026 May 2026 September 2026
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,	Work on this recommendation remains ongoing:	Principal Transport Planning Officer		Summer 2026

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.	• Local Implementation Plan - middlesbrough-local-implementation-plan-may21.pdf • The Highway Infrastructure Delivery Plan Highway infrastructure delivery plan - 2024-2040 • Integrated Transport Strategy - Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy 2024-2038 • Updating the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan (led by the TVCA and due in the coming 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.	• Engage five identified priority schools in a co-design process, working with stakeholders to develop tailored intervention strategies per school and identify funding opportunities to support delivery. • Establish formal links with identified school leads responsible for the development of each site's Active Travel to School Action Plan, to support ongoing co-design and implementation.	Principal Transport Planning Officer; Transport Planning Officers; Creating Active and Healthy Places Lead; Healthy Places Planning Officer.		April 2026 September 2026
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	• Continue to support the Tees Valley Active Schools approach with Sport England until 2028, with the ambition of creating a self-sustaining model by March 2028.	Creating Active Lives Strategic Lead	Funding until March 2028.	March 2028

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.	• Develop a peer to peer approach with schools to aid expansion and sustainability. • Trial an approach with secondary schools and utilise the learning to develop a suitable model at secondary level.			
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 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.	• Secure and sustain the future of these roles by aligning them to stable funding arrangements, strengthening their integration across directorates to maximise influence on key decisions, and demonstrating their value through ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and impact reporting. • HPPO to lead the piloting phase of the HIA process. • HPPO to evaluate the submitted HIAs, monitor the delivery of the pilot programme, and prepare a report for the ASC and Health Scrutiny Panel at the 12-month point. • Once the Local Plan is adopted, this process will be formalised into the Council's AMR.	Health Improvement Manager Healthy Places Planning Officer Senior Planning Officer		Sept 2027 Ongoing Spring 2027 Subject to the adoption of the Local Plan.

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.	HFT and FFO number and location data is now part of the Council's new ArcGIS data asset The HPPO will maintain the asset created during this Scrutiny process and report to the Committee as recommended: *ASC_Health_Scrutiny_Healthy_Placemaking_HFT_Submission*	Healthy Places Planning Officer		Updated ad hoc
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.	• Work with regional partners (e.g. North East Combined Authority, neighbouring councils) and national bodies (e.g. LGA, ADPH) to present a unified and stronger case to Government where relevant. • Contribute to national consultations and inquiries, ensuring Middlesbrough's challenges and priorities are reflected in policy development. • Where possible position Middlesbrough as a testbed for national initiatives and targeted investment aimed at reducing child poverty and improving health outcomes	Cross Council		March 2027

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	Middlesbrough moving forward

Report of:	Corporate Director for Regeneration and Housing - Richard Horniman
Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Development - Cllr Theo Furness
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	10 June 2026
Title:	Final Report of the Place Scrutiny Panel – Barriers to Regeneration
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	A successful and ambitious town
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive:

- NOTES the report of the Place Scrutiny Panel into Barriers to Regeneration and the accompanying recommendations; and
- APPROVES the action plan prepared by the service in response to the recommendations.

Executive summary

The Place Scrutiny Panel has undertaken a review into the topic of ‘Barriers to Regeneration in Middlesbrough’. The review concluded with a range of recommendations being proposed that have been included in a corresponding action plan showing the service response.

The Council will be bringing forward transformative plans in September as part of the development of a Place Strategy, Town Centre Strategy and Investment Prospectus, and the recommendations will also be used to influence the direction of those proposals.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Executive of the recent scrutiny review entitled 'Barriers to Regeneration' and to set out the action plan developed by the service in response to the recommendations made by the panel.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	Removing barriers to regeneration would enable greater success in attracting and growing businesses to increase employment opportunities
A healthy Place	Removing barriers to regeneration would enable greater success in protecting and improving our environment and reducing poverty
Safe and resilient communities	Removing barriers to regeneration would enable greater success in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
Delivering best value	Removing barriers to regeneration would enable greater success in ensuring robust and effective corporate governance in relation to partner regeneration organisations

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive:

- NOTES the report of the Place Scrutiny Panel into Barriers to Regeneration and the accompanying recommendations; and,
- APPROVES the action plan prepared by the service in response to the recommendations.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The Place Scrutiny Panel has proposed a series of recommendations for removing barriers to regeneration. These have been considered by the service and where appropriate, actions have been proposed to address them. Approving the identified action plan would enable the Place Scrutiny Panel's recommendations to be taken forward in a comprehensive manner.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 In summer 2025 the Place Scrutiny Panel commenced a review entitled 'Barriers to Regeneration' using the following terms of reference:

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

4.2 The Panel considered evidence across a range of area and determined a series of recommendations that comprised the following:

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.

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.

4.3 A copy of the review report is included as Appendix I.

4.4 Following the review, the Regeneration Directorate considered the recommendations and how these could best be delivered. An action plan has been prepared to outline the proposed response. This has been included as Appendix II.

4.5 The Council will be bringing forward transformative plans in September as part of the development of a Place Strategy, Town Centre Strategy and Investment Prospectus, and the recommendations will also be used to influence the direction of those proposals.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 The Place Scrutiny Panel comprises ward members, but no specific member consultation has been undertaken regarding the action plan.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

Do nothing

6.1 The recommendations made by the panel provide clear direction to the service, and the majority are deliverable without incurring additional resources. There is no reason why the service cannot implement the majority of the recommendations.

Deliver all recommendations

6.2 Some of the recommendations would be difficult to deliver and would only provide limited benefit (such as extending the opening of the Town Hall Box Office) so each recommendation has received individual consideration.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	As outlined in the action plan, all actions are funded from existing budgets where Council resources are referenced and there is no impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Actions which reference external funding are subject to confirmation of this funding and a further report will be brought to Executive when required. Recommendations relating to redevelopment plans for the town centre and increased green spaces would require significant funding and will be addressed in a further report to Executive in the future.
Procurement	No work is being procured directly as a result of the action plan. Individual projects may require procurement further down the line, and this may be subject to further Executive approvals.

Legal	There are no additional legal commitments contained within the action plan. Individual projects may require legal input further down the line, but this would be subject to additional Executive approvals.
Risk	The Council's risk profile is not affected by this report. Some of the recommendations could lead to additional financial risk, but these would be subject to further Executive reports before such risk was incurred.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	Although the actions do not directly impact upon these, the overall benefit of removing barriers to regeneration would potentially increase cohesion.
Reducing Poverty	Although the actions do not directly impact upon these, the overall benefit of removing barriers to regeneration would potentially reduce poverty.
Climate Change / Environmental	There is no direct impact from the proposed actions.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Although the actions do not directly impact upon young people, the overall benefit of removing barriers to regeneration would potentially increase opportunities, in line with the stated direction of making the town the best place for young people.
Data Protection	There is no direct impact from the proposed actions.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Deliver the Barriers to Regeneration Action plan	Corporate Director for Regeneration and Housing	30th September 2026

Appendices

1	Place Scrutiny Panel – Barriers to Regeneration Final Report
2	Barriers to Regeneration – Service Response Action Plan
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Richard Horniman, Corporate Director for Regeneration and Housing
Email: richard_horniman@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Final Report of the Place Scrutiny Panel

BARRIERS TO REGENERATION

CONTENTS

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 2017/18[1] 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.

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[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. park & ride, improving bus service. (Roseberry parkway)

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 21 external local stakeholders[3] 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 consultation[4] 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. Media[5][6] 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.

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

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 2014[7] 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 tired 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:

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.

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.

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
CURV	Cleveland Unit for Reducing Violence
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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PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL
BARRIERS TO REGENERATION

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	POST TITLE	BUDGET COST	TIMESCALE
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.	As part of the development of a Place Strategy for Middlesbrough detailed engagement is being undertaken in March/April/May with young people (including those at the College and University) regarding how to improve the town.	Head of Growth and Assets	£40,000 from existing budgets	By 31st May 2026
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.	As part of the place strategy work a marketing campaign will be launched to promote the town, focussing on the opportunities around Middlehaven and the Town Centre	Head of Growth and Assets	Included within above figure	By 30th September 2026
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.	An increased programme of town centre events has been agreed within 2026/27 budget that will help promote the town and attract additional visitors	Head of Culture	£200,000 from existing budgets	Completed
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	Transformative redevelopment plans for the town centre will be brought to Executive, including plans for changes to Linthorpe Road. This will form a key part of the Place Strategy.	Corporate Director for Regeneration and Housing	Nil at this stage, but project costs could be	By 30th September 2026

			significant	
E) Increase the number of Neighbourhood Safety Wardens to provide a reassuring presence and help to build confidence in the town centre.	Plans for an increased physical presence are being developed between MBC, TVCA and Cleveland Police that will be brought to Executive	Head of Growth	£1.3m from TVCA	30th September 2026
F) Work in partnership with businesses to ensure compliance with street-drinking regulations and discourage related activity around their premises.	Focus on adherence to pavement café licenses over the summer, alongside responding to existing complaints to ensure the best possible experience in public spaces	Head of Public Protection	Using Existing Resources	30th September 2026
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.	An increase in green spaces will be factored into the redevelopment plans that will be brought to Executive, as the future use of the town centre will be enhanced by better public spaces	Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing	Nil (although delivery costs would be significant)	30th September 2026
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.	Transformative proposals for new transport infrastructure in the town centre will be brought forward by TVCA under the current CRSTS programme	-	£30m from CRSTS settlement	Not within Council control
I) Increase Middlesbrough Town Hall/Box Office opening times to improve accessibility and user satisfaction and	There are no plans or resources to increase opening times at this point in time. The Town Hall will be closed for a	-	-	-

potentially function as a dual-purpose information hub.	significant period in 2027 for major roof repairs, and its hours of operation and customer service arrangements will be reviewed during that period to provide the best possible offer to the public.			
J) Strengthen our relationship with Middlesbrough Development Corporation (MDC) further and work together towards the common goal.	The future existence of the MDC is currently being reviewed by TVCA	-	-	-
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.	Extension to funding to be requested, and alternative sources sought.	Head of Public Protection	Nil	30th September 2026

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	Middlesbrough moving forward

Report of:	Chief Executive - Erik Scollay
Relevant Executive Member:	The Mayor - Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	10 June 2026
Title:	Corporate Performance Year-End 2025/26
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	All
Key decision:	No
Why:	Decision does not reach the threshold to be a key decision
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive:

- **APPROVES** proposed changes to the Executive actions, detailed at Appendix 1
- **NOTES** delivery status of the Council Plan 2024-27 supporting workplan, detailed at Appendix 2
- **APPROVES** the proposed changes to the Council Plan 2024-27 supporting workplan actions, detailed at Appendix 3
- **NOTES** the progress and position of the corporate performance disciplines
- **NOTES** that following agreement of the refreshed Council Plan 2026-29, activities in the work plan will be embedded within Directorate Plans, once developed
- **NOTES** the Strategic Risk Register, at Appendix 4.

Executive summary

This report advises the Executive of progress against corporate performance at Year-End 2025/26, providing the necessary information to enable the Executive to discharge its performance management responsibilities against the following performance disciplines:

- Actions pertaining to decisions approved via Executive reports
- Delivery of the Council Plan 2024-27 and associated outcome measures

• Strategic Risk Register performance • Programme and Project management performance • Transformation progress and performance, and • Other matters of compliance.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 This report advises the Executive of corporate performance at Year-End 2025/26, and where appropriate seeks approval of any changes, where these lie within the authority of the Executive. The primary purpose of the report is to set out how effectively the Council is delivering activity against each of the current Council Plan priorities, aims and underpinning workplan activities.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	13 Council Plan Workplan initiatives are supporting delivery of the Council Plan's ambitions and aims to achieve a successful and ambitious town which are reported within this report.
A healthy place	22 Council Plan Workplan initiatives are supporting delivery of the Council Plan's ambitions and aims to achieve a healthy place which are reported within this report.
Safe and resilient communities	8 Council Plan Workplan initiatives are supporting delivery of the Council Plan's ambitions and aims to achieve safe and resilient communities across Middlesbrough which are reported within this report.
Delivering Best Value	13 Council Plan Workplan initiatives are supporting delivery of the Council Plan's ambitions and aims to achieve safe and resilient communities across Middlesbrough which are reported within this report.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive:

- **APPROVES** proposed changes to the Executive actions, detailed at Appendix 1
- **NOTES** delivery status of the Council Plan 2024-27 supporting workplan, detailed at Appendix 2
- **APPROVES** the proposed changes to the Council Plan 2024-27 supporting workplan actions, detailed at Appendix 3
- **NOTES** the progress and position of the corporate performance disciplines
- **NOTES** that following agreement of the refreshed Council Plan 2026-29, activities in the work plan will be embedded within Directorate Plans, once developed
- **NOTES** the Strategic Risk Register, at Appendix 4.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 To enable the effective management of performance and risk in line with the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation gives the Executive collective responsibility for corporate strategic performance, together with associated action.

4.2 This report provides the necessary information to enable the Executive to discharge its performance management responsibilities, setting out progress against priority performance disciplines and other key associated items, together with actions to be taken to address any issues identified.

4.3 The projected financial outturn for 2025/26 is currently presented separately to this meeting of the Executive. During 2026/27 steps will be taken to deliver integrated reporting. This report is the last report that will assess progress against the 2024-2027 Council Plan, future reports will assess progress against the refreshed outcomes as set out in the 2026-2029 Council Plan which were agreed at Executive in March 2026.

Overall progress at Year-End 2025/26

4.4 The Council's performance overall at Year-End 2025/26 saw progress towards expected performance standards, as set out in the Council's risk appetite, achieved in one of the five corporate performance disciplines.

Performance discipline	Q4 2025/26	Q3 2025/26	Q2 2025/26	Q1 2025/26	Expected standard	Standard achieved	Trend
Executive actions	**85% (106/125)**	**73% (94/129)**	**75% (60/80)**	**69% (50/72)**	90%	No	↑
Council Plan 2024-27 outcome measures	**25% (10/40)**	**33% (13/40)**	**25% (10/40)**	**20% (8/40)**	90%	No	↓
Council Plan workplan	**93% (52/56)**	**93% (52/56)**	**97% (54/56)**	**88% (44/56)**	90%	Yes	↔
Strategic Risk Register	**71%**	**88%**	**95%**	**93%**	90%	No	↓
Programme and Project Management	**78% (31/40)**	**81% (33/41)**	**79% (34/43)**	**100% (17/17)**	90%	No	↓

4.5 It should be noted that performance against Programme and Project Management at Year-End 2025/26, is against all programmes and projects within the overarching portfolio.

4.6 It should be noted that performance against Council Plan outcomes for Year-End 2025/26 is measured by tracking progress against baseline key performance indicators, as outlined in the Council Plan 2024-27 and its associated workplan.

Progress in delivering Executive actions

4.7 Actions agreed by the Executive to deliver approved decisions are tracked by LMT each month. If, following Executive approval, any action is found to be no longer feasible, appropriate, or cannot be delivered within the approved timescales, this report will be used to advise the Executive of such, and to seek approval of alternative actions or amended timescales.

4.8 At Year-End 2025/26, 106 of 125 live actions (85%) were reported as being on target to be delivered by the agreed timescales; an increase from the 73% reported at Quarter Three 2025/26, though continuing to remain below the 90% expected standard of achievement of actions.

4.9 There are 14 proposed amendments to Executive actions presented for approval at Year-End 2025/26, which are detailed at Appendix 1. It is assumed that the remainder of Executive actions will be achieved within originally approved timescales.

4.10 Of the 14 proposed amendments detailed in Appendix 1, the reasons for the proposed amendments are as follows:

- The *Middlehaven Housing* report has an action relating to completing concept designs and site investigations, delayed from 31/03/2026 to 30/06/2026 due to a delay in the appointment of the contractor.
- The *Tees Valley Investment Zone* Memorandum of Understanding report has an action relating to Signature of the MoU and transmission to TVCA, delayed from 30/11/2025 to 30/09/2026 due to a delay in TVCA responding to the drafted MoU.
- The *Proposed Changes to the Veritau Structure* report has an action relating to the winding up of Veritau Tees Valley Limited, delayed from 30/09/2025 to 30/06/2026 due to legal process.
- The *Breast Feeding Boroughs Declaration* report has two actions relating to implementation of the Breast Feeding Boroughs Declaration, reprofiled from 31/03/2025 to 31/12/2027 to ensure they fit into a wider strategic approach that will be articulated in a new Breastfeeding Strategy and action plan.
- The *Newham Hall – Disposal Options Update* report has an action relating to the Planning application of the road, delayed from 30/04/2025 to 31/08/2026 due to Bio Diversity Net Gain and phasing plan requirement.
- The *Recovery Solutions Delivery Model* report has three actions relating to securing formal approval for the central site from TEWV, allocating funding and site development and communicating changes to service users and stakeholders, delayed from 31/01/2026 to 31/03/2027 due to costs exceeding the approved revenue budgets.
- The *Nunthorpe Community Centre – Next Steps* report has two actions relating to lease agreement and construction, delayed from 31/03/2026 to 30/09/2026 due to drainage works issue.
- The *Neighbourhood Hubs Investment* report has an action relating to final designs and planning application, delayed from 31/03/2026 to 31/10/2026 due to awaiting the outcome of a subsequent Executive report that was approved 4th February 2026.

- The *Middlesbrough College Investment* report has two actions relating to amend agreement for lease with Middlesbrough College and securing planning permission for the extension, delayed from 30/09/2026 and 31/01/2026 to 30/06/2026 due to a delay in the legal process.

Progress in delivering the Council Plan 2024-27

4.11 The Council Plan is the Council's overarching business plan for the medium-term and sets out the priorities of the Elected Mayor of Middlesbrough and the ambitions for our communities and the ways in which we seek to achieve them.

4.12 The Leadership Team collaborated with the Mayor and the Executive to develop and shape the Mayor's priorities for the town, to inform the Council Plan 2024-27 which was in place during Quarter Four.

4.13 The Council Plan articulates the four priorities of the Mayor and outlines the approach that will be taken to addressing those priorities:

Mayor's Priority	Description
A successful and ambitious town	Maximising economic growth, employment, and prosperity, in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable way.
A healthy place	Helping our residents to live longer and healthier lives, improving life chances and opportunities to thrive.
Safe and resilient communities	Creating a safer environment, where residents can live more independent lives.
Delivering Best Value	Changing how we operate, to deliver the best outcomes for residents and businesses.

4.14 The underpinning initiatives and workplans which enable effective delivery of the Council Plan 2024-27 ambitions and measures of success, which were monitored at Year-End 2025/26 were those set by Executive in November 2024.

4.15 On 11 March 2026, Executive approved a report that set out the refresh of the Council Plan 2026-29, and how the Council will measure success, following previous agreement of the outcomes agreed by Executive in December 2025.

4.16 The Quarter One Outturn report for 2026/27 will set out progress against the refreshed plan and where appropriate, the remaining 2024-27 initiatives that have not yet been fully delivered will either be subsumed into the new workplan, transferred to Directorate plans or closed where they are no longer required.

Council Plan 2024-27: outcomes

4.17 Progress of delivery of the Council Plan 2024-27 was monitored via detailed milestone plans which supported each initiative under the four priorities and link to success measures determining the impact upon:

- the types of businesses being established in Middlesbrough, to ensure that we attract those which will give residents access to well-paid and rewarding careers,

- healthy life expectancy of residents of Middlesbrough, who currently experience ill-health much earlier than wealthy areas across the UK,
- community safety, as part of our plans to reduce crime and make residents and communities feel safer,
- progress against the Council's governance improvement journey, to provide assurance to members of the public and our partners that the services we are providing are value for money.

4.18 Performance management and monitoring of the Council Plan adhered to the corporate programme and project management framework that was in place during 2026/27.

4.19 Performance overall against the Council Plan 2024-27 outcome measures at Year-End 2025/26, were reported as 10 of 40 (25%), against the 90% performance standard, detailed in the table below:

Outcome Status	Q4 2025/26	Q3 2025/26	Q2 2025/26	Q1 2025/26	Expected standard	Standard achieved	Trend
Number (%age) GREEN	9/40 (23%)	10/40 (25%)	8/40 (20%)	8/40 (20%)	90%	No	↓
Number (%age) AMBER	1/40 (2%)	3/40 (8%)	2/40 (5%)	0/40 (0%)	N/A	N/A	↓
Number (%age) RED	30/40 (75%)	27/40 (68%)	30/40 (75%)	32/40 (80%)	N/A	N/A	↑

4.20 It should be noted that trends fluctuate throughout the year, influenced by a range of factors such as seasonal variations and a time lag in published data sets being updated. A key learning point from the review of the Council Plan KPIs undertaken in 2026 was that many of the measures being tracked were not within the Council's control to deliver and reflected the wider society, as well as having significant lags in data publication with some measures being around two years old. This learning has been taken forward and reflected in the revised Council Plan outcomes, activity and KPIs that will be tracked in 2026/27.

4.21 Outcome measures for the refreshed Council Plan 2026-29 are currently being developed in collaboration with services, to understand and evidence the impactful work that we as an authority have influence over in shaping and affecting and will be reported in Quarter One 2026/27.

Council Plan 2024-27: workplan

4.22 At Year-End 2025/26, performance against the Council Plan workplan was above the corporate standard of 90%, with 93% of all initiatives on target to be achieved in full, within approved timescales, with further detail provided at Appendix 2.

Status	Q4 2025/26	Q3 2025/26	Q2 2025/26	Q1 2025/26	Expected standard	Standard achieved	Trend
COMPLETED	**54% (30/56)**	54% (30/56)	50% (28/56)	36% (20/56)	90%	Yes	↔
GREEN	**39% (21/56)**	39% (21/56)	46% (26/56)	50% (28/56)			
AMBER	**0% (0/56)**	0% (0/56)	0% (0/56)	0% (0/56)	n/a	n/a	↔
RED	**7% (4/56)**	7% (4/56)	4% (2/56)	14% (8/56)	n/a	n/a	↔

4.23 There were four Council Plan initiatives reporting as off-track at Year-End 2025/26, summarised below:

- An initiative relating to *'Increase pathways offer for homeless households that embody choice; safety and dignity and provide routes into sustainable, long-term accommodation,'* delayed from 31/03/2026 to 30/09/2026 due to a delay in the development and approval of a Homeless Strategy.
- An initiative relating to *'Transform Middlesbrough's approach to delivery of learning through the implementation of the Council's Education and Skills Strategy*, delayed from 31/03/2026 to 31/03/2027 due to a delay in the 2026 Schools White Paper *'Every child Achieving and Thriving'* which requires additional time to understand its impact on the strategy.
- An initiative relating to *'Implement new delivery model for Procurement and Contract Management across Council Services'* delayed from 31/03/2026 to 31/03/2027 due to insufficient resources to progress at this time.
- An initiative relating to *'Improve the range of health and employment related services offered to the public through successful delivery of the Levelling Up Partnership funds,'* delayed from 31/03/2026 to 31/03/2027 due to the identification of an alternative location for the Live Well Centre East which will require additional revenue and Executive approval.

4.24 There are four proposed amendments to Council Plan workplan actions for approval at Year-End 2025/26 as detailed at Appendix 3. All ongoing actions have been reviewed against the refreshed Outcomes agreed in December 2025 and will either be carried forward into the 2026–29 Council Plan workplan or, where appropriate, into Directorate Plans alongside new priority actions.

4.25 During 2025/26, a further 18 Council Plan 2024-27 workplan initiatives were fully achieved. Key successes include:

- *Improve health literacy through the delivery of a Healthy Start model for prevention of ill-health in schools*, which was successfully piloted in two schools and included the development of a school health forum.
- *Increase the effectiveness of prevention through the development of more signposting and a consistent strengths-based approach to the promotion of independence at the 'front door' of ASC*, which included the delivery of strengths based assessment training for practitioners and review of assessment tool in LAS.
- *Develop research architecture and attract funding to support the development of our local understanding of key issues affecting health inequalities*, which included the

launch of the Health Detriments research collaboration, launch of pilot programmes for Local Authority colleagues to unlock research potential, development of a shared values statement and framework for approach and the use of research within Local Authorities and the recruitment of 20 community based research associates.

- *Work with partners to ensure safe and effective systems and processes are in place for the protection of victims of domestic abuse and their children* , which included the development of a 'key questions' document (approved by DASP) and needs assessment to inform a new strategy and the roll out of a training programme to Children and Adults Social Care services.
- *Introduce a neighbourhood working model to ensure Council services are more /closely aligned to community needs,* which resulted in the implementation of a new neighbourhood staffing structure, split into North, South, East and West of the town to ensure full geographical coverage and the development of multi-agency action plans for each neighbourhood, aligned to community needs.
- *Roll out the extended childcare entitlement to increase the number of children from 9months+, that have access to Early Years provision,* which resulted in the creation of an additional 564 childcare places.

Strategic Risk Register (SRR)

4.26 The Strategic Risk Register (SRR) sets out the key risks which, if they occurred, could stop the Council achieving its objectives as set out in the Council Plan.

4.27 The Register also sets out control measures in place to reduce the impact and / or likelihood of a risk occurring, as well as further planned actions to manage the risk. Risks in the SRR are identified and managed by the Council's LMT in line with the Risk and Opportunity Management Policy, agreed by Executive in 2023. Progress in managing these risks is reported to the LMT monthly, with a full review of the SRR conducted on a quarterly basis.

4.28 The more volatile the risk, the more closely it must be monitored and managed. Managers are responsible for identifying and recording the countermeasures / actions required to address risks and opportunities and maintaining those details within the Council's risk management solution. Countermeasures to risk will include actions to terminate, transfer, treat or tolerate the risk. Actions in relation to opportunity will include exploitation (fully or partially) or avoidance.

4.29 The SRR contains 13 risks at Year-End 2025/26. Risks within the SRR are scored three times, using the following table: the first score assesses the likelihood and impact of the risk occurring without any control measures in place; the second assesses the impact of the control measures currently in place; and the third sets a target for the management of the risk.

Likelihood (Probability)						
Almost Certain >80%	5	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	High (25)	High (35)
Likely 51% - 80%	4	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (20)	High (28)
Possible 21% - 50%	3	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (15)	High (21)
Unlikely 6- 20%	2	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (10)	High (14)
Rare <6%	1	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (5)	Medium (7)
		1	2	3	5	7
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
		Impact				

4.30 In Quarter Four two strategic risks were removed from the strategic risk register, as outlined below:

- **SR-11 - Failure to have strategic partnership working** - If the Council does not work with its partners to establish a strategic approach to partnership working based on principles of timely and meaningful collaboration, co-design and with common purpose to inspire and build a team beyond the council that are galvanised to deliver for the town, it is unlikely to achieve delivery of the Council plan ambitions and outcomes for our residents will not improve. –

  Following the LGA Peer Review, this risk has been reclassified from a Strategic Risk to a Directorate-level risk and will be managed within the Chief Executive's Department Risk Register.

- **SR-13** - **Failure to deliver transformation successfully** - If the Council fails to transform its service delivery model to a model that can deliver outcomes for residents at a reduced cost base, then the Council's financial position will become untenable and may result in the issuing of a S114 Notice.

  Following the Executive's decision to move from a Transformation Programme to a Continuous Improvement approach, this risk has been removed from the Strategic Risk Register to reflect the revised delivery model.

Directorate Risk Registers

4.31 The SRR has a supporting suite of Directorate Risk Registers. The Council's Leadership Management Team agrees escalations and de-escalations of risk. In addition, Directorate management teams review their risks monthly. This and other measures ensure the Council has a grip on its risk management approach.

4.32 Below is a summary position of actions taken at Directorate level during Quarter Four 2025/26, to manage risks:

Directorate Risk Register	Chief Executive's Department	Regeneration and Housing	Adult Social Care and Health	Public Health	Children's Services	Environment, Community and Culture	Finance	Legal and Corporate Services
New Risks	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
New Actions	0	0	0	0	0	2	14	7
Completed Actions	3	0	1	0	5	2	8	3
New Assessments	24	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Deactivated Risks	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0

Progress in delivering Programmes and Projects

4.33 During 2025/26, the Council maintained a portfolio of corporate and transformation programmes and projects in support of achievement of the Council's strategic priorities. In Quarter Four the decision was taken to cease the transformation programme and transition into business as usual (BAU) arrangements with a focus on Continuous improvement.

4.34 This report reflects the position of all projects at Year-End 2025/26. At Year-End 2025/26, 78% of all projects were on-track to deliver against project time, cost, scope, and benefits, which is below the expected combined standard of 90%.

Status	Q4 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q1 2025/26 position	Expected standard	Standard achieved	Trend
GREEN	**68% (27/40)**	64% (27/41)	70% (30/43)	100% (17/17)	90%	No	↓
AMBER	**10% (4/40)**	17% (6/41)	9% (4/43)	0% (0/17)			
RED	**23% (9/40)**	19% (8/41)	21% (9/43)	0% (0/17)	N/A	N/A	↑

4.35 Eight of the nine projects RAG rated Red have associated financial savings. Following the Council's improved financial position and change in approach, these projects are now under review and if the expected benefits can no longer be achieved the project will be formally closed as part of the closure plan for the current transformation programme

4.36 Directorates will be required to identify alternative savings proposals, to be delivered either through the initiation of new projects or embedded into the forthcoming business-as-usual performance and financial management integrated arrangements.

4.37 The remaining project RAG rated Red is associated with the implementation of SharePoint, delayed due to the volume of data to be transferred and awaiting a change control with revised timescales for completion.

4.38 Four projects RAG rated as Amber are in the close and review stage of the project lifecycle, with closure reports expected to be submitted in the next reporting period.

Project gateway approvals

4.39 Project gateway approvals are required throughout the life of a project to ensure appropriate and robust assurance and challenge has been applied to the scoping, planning, development and delivery of the necessary project documentation and delivery plans, which are monitored through the recently introduced Directorate and Corporate Performance Boards.

4.40 Delegated decision-making powers relating to proposed changes to the approved time, scope, cost and benefit of individual programmes and projects are in place, enabling those that are off-track to be brought back within agreed tolerances, as set out in the Programme and Project Management Framework (PPMF). This is with the exception of any key changes or urgent decisions that require Executive approval, which require an additional report.

4.41 In Quarter Four 2025/26, there were 8 project gateway approvals as summarised below:

Directorate / Programme	Project name	Gateway type	Approved
Environment, Communities and Culture	Civica CX	Change Control	Jan
Regeneration	Newham Hall	Change Control	
Legal & Corporate Services	SharePoint	Change Control	
Environment, Communities and Culture	Increase in Education and Enforcement around Recycling	Change Control	Feb
	Fleet Services Review	Closure Report	
	ECC Systems Process Review	Project Brief	
Environment, Communities and Culture	Plot Box	Closure Report	Mar
	Residential Pest Control Service	Project Brief	

Progress in other corporate performance matters

Status	Q4 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q1 2025/26 position	Expected standard	Standard achieved	Trend
P 1 / 2 audit actions in time	**82%**	**82%**	**78%**	**73%**	90%	No	↔
FOI / EIR responded to <20 days	**69%**	**74%**	**61%**	**68%**	90%	No	↓
% live SARs overdue	**42% (14 of 33)**	**19%**	**20%**	**16%**	90%	No	↑
Information security incidents	**32**	**45**	**30**	**27**	N/A	N/A	↓
Incidents reported to the ICO	**0**	**2**	**0**	**1**	N/A	N/A	↓
% complaints closed in time	**67%**	**71%**	**74%**	**80%**	90%	Yes	↓

4.42 In addition to the above performance and risk issues, the Leadership Management Team now review a range of other performance measures on a quarterly basis, including compliance with agreed actions from internal audits, responsiveness to statutory information requests, information security incidents and complaints.

4.43 At Year-end 2025/26, the key points of note in matters of compliance, are:

- Of the eleven priority two actions due within the quarter, two actions arising from the Anti-Social Behaviour Management audit within the Environment, Communities and Culture Directorate were not completed within the expected timescales. Although both actions were ultimately completed, this occurred later than anticipated due to staff illness within the Neighbourhoods Department.
- There again has been a small reduction is compliance with statutory timescales for FOI and EIR requests. Ongoing capacity pressures across services remain. A new system will be launched in Quarter One 2026/7 that should improve timeliness and quality of responses. There have been a number of delays to the launch as the small central team have had to balance system development alongside maintenance of the current system.
- Compliance with statutory timescales for Subject Access Requests (SARs) continues to be impacted by a small number of particularly complex cases. The overall number of SARs has also increased in this quarter.
  The ongoing complexity across compliance areas, including SARs, is also emerging as a result of the growing use of AI which is driving both volume and complexity of initial requests, as well as increasing the volume of Council responses which are challenged. This has been acknowledged in May 2026 by the Information Commissioner's Office who has issued guidance to local authorities on the management of AI driven statutory information requests. Following this guidance we have strengthened the detail on the website for requestors ensuring that there is a clear message for those using AI and how that could affect the outcome of their requests under FOI,EIR,SAR and Complaints.

- Compliance for Complaints has slightly declined, again some of this can be attributed to increasing complexity in particularly due to the increased use of AI when submitting complaints and challenging responses.
- to improve the quality and consistency of responses for members of the public the central team are reviewing and developing quality standards checklists for service areas to reduce the number of escalations to Stage 2 or the Ombudsman.
- There will be particular focus on embedding early resolution across services areas before formal complaints escalate to reduce formal complaint volumes and improve the speed of resolution.
- Governance and accountability will be strengthened making complaint handling a leadership priority with clear ownership of improvement actions reported.
- We continue to provide transparency for the Public through publication of our compliance with annual reporting.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 The Council is required to operate a performance management framework in order to ensure delivery of its Best Value duty; to not do so would place the Council at risk of failing in its statutory responsibility in this regard.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There are no direct financial or social value implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.
Procurement	The report seeks approval to extend an action to Implement new delivery model for Procurement and Contract Management across Council services due to lack of resources. While this is delayed, the Council's approach to procurement will remain legally compliant. There will be a review undertaken in 2026/7 to revise the approach to this to ensure the Council is able to take a proactive approach to the management of its key corporate contracts. There are no other direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.
Legal	There are no legal impacts of the proposed decisions or recommendations, and they are consistent with and will promote the achievement of the Council's legal duty to achieve Best Value.
Risk	The proposed recommendations are key to and consistent with supporting delivery of the Council's strategic priorities and risks, as set out in the Council Plan.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty	The ambitions of the Council Plan set out how the Council will improve outcomes for all its residents and highlight

and Community Cohesion	where additional activity is required to address inequalities in outcomes that exist across groups and individuals. This approach was impact assessed as part of the development of the 2024-2027 Council Plan, which found that the plan would have a positive impact by addressing inequalities.
Reducing Poverty	The ambitions of the Council Plan set out how the Council will work with partners to support our residents out of poverty and improve community resilience to prevent people falling into poverty. Meeting this challenge is central to all of the ambitions within the Council Plan.
Climate Change / Environmental	The ambitions of the Council Plan set out how the Council will protect and improve our environment, as part of the "A healthy place" priority which focuses on improving levels of recycling, protecting and improving parks and open spaces, and improving environment standards of the town. There are no direct impacts on this theme as a result of this and performance to date is reflected in Appendix 2: Council Plan workplan; progress at Quarter Two 2025/26. Where impact on climate change and environment is considered as part of wider programmes, projects or Executive reports, these will be referenced within the detail of the report.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The ambitions of the Council Plan set out how the Council will respond and react to Children and Young People cared for by the authority and care leavers, across the " A successful and ambitious town" , "A healthy place," and "Safe and Resilient Communities" priorities. There are no direct impacts on this theme as a result of this and performance to date is reflected in Appendix 2: Council Plan workplan; progress at Year-End 2025/26. Where impact on Children and Young People cared for by the authority and care leavers is considered as part of wider programmes, projects or Executive reports, these will be referenced within the detail of the report.
Data Protection	Whenever the Council delivers activities and uses data to assess impact, it takes the necessary steps to ensure it complies with the requirements of GDPR in any use of personal data that is undertaken within that work.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Performance management feeder systems to be updated according to approval from Executive.	J Chapman	30/06/2026

Appendices

1	Executive actions proposed amendments at Year-End 2025/26
2	Council Plan workplan progress at Year-End 2025/26
3	Council Plan Workplan; proposed amendments at Year-End 2025/26
4	Strategic Risk register progress at Year-End 2025/26

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Council	The Council Plan 2024-27	08/03/2024
Council	Approach to Transformation of Middlesbrough Council	27/03/2024
Council	Transformation of Middlesbrough Council	24/04/2024
Executive	Quarter One 2024/25 Corporate Performance Report	04/09/2024
Executive	Quarter Two 2024/25 Corporate Performance Report	04/12/2024
Executive	Quarter Three 2024/25 Corporate Performance Report	05/03/2025
Executive	Middlesbrough Priorities Fund	30/04/2025
Executive	Middlesbrough Priorities Fund	16/07/2025
Executive	Quarter Four and Year End 2024/25 Corporate Performance Report	11/06/2025
Executive	Quarter One 2025/26 Corporate Performance Report	03/09/2025
Executive	Quarter Two 2025/26 Corporate Performance Report	03/12/2025
Executive	Council Plan 2026-29	11/03/2026
Executive	Quarter Three 2025/26 Corporate Performance Report	11/03/2026

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Appendix 1: Executive actions proposed amendments at Year-End 2025/26

Executive of	Report	Action	Owner	Original Due date	Current Due Date	Proposed Revised Due Date
12/11/2025	Middlehaven Housing	Complete concept designs and site investigations	REG	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	30/06/2026
12/11/2025	Tees Valley Investment Zone Memorandum of Understanding	Signature of the MoU and transmission to TVCA	FIN	30/11/2025	30/11/2025	30/09/2026
16/07/2025	Proposed Changes to the Veritau Structure	Resolution to wind up Veritau Tees Valley Limited (VTV), including payment of dividend to the Council.	FIN	30/09/2025	31/03/2026	30/06/2026
19/07/2023	Breast Feeding Boroughs Declaration	Implementation of the Breast Feeding Boroughs Declaration by the Infant Feeding Steering group over the next 12 months, leading to a full Breast Feeding Boroughs status by April 2024.	PH	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/12/2027
19/07/2023	Breast Feeding Boroughs Declaration	Executive agrees for South Tees to be Breast Feeding Borough status.	PH	31/03/2025	31/03/2026	31/12/2027
14/02/2024	Newham Hall – Disposal Options Update	Hybrid Planning Application will be submitted for the road and the housing	REG	30/04/2025	31/03/2026	31/08/2026
08/10/2025	Recovery Solutions Delivery Model	Secure formal approval for the central site from TEWV and complete lease documentation	PH	30/11/2025	30/11/2025	31/03/2027
08/10/2025	Recovery Solutions Delivery Model	Allocate funding and complete site development.	PH	31/01/2026	31/01/2026	31/03/2027
08/10/2025	Recovery Solutions Delivery Model	Communicate changes to service users and stakeholders.	PH	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	31/03/2027
16/07/2025	Nunthorpe Community Centre – Next Steps	Lease Agreed	LCS	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	30/09/2026
16/07/2025	Nunthorpe Community Centre – Next Steps	Complete Construction	REG	30/04/2026	30/04/2026	30/06/2026
04/02/2026	Neighbourhood Hubs Investment	Final designs and planning application	REG	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	31/10/2026
11/06/2025	Middlesbrough College Investment	College to secure planning permission for extension	Middlesbrough College	31/01/2026	31/01/2026	Request to close as no MBC action
11/06/2025	Middlesbrough College Investment	Amend agreement for lease with Middlesbrough College	REG	30/09/2025	31/01/2026	30/06/2026

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Appendix 2: Council Plan workplan progress at Year-End 2025/26

We will attract and grow businesses to increase employment opportunities	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Implementation of an Economic Growth Strategy and Masterplan for the town, articulating both the aspirations of the Council and key partners and the key future investment priorities.	G	G	G	G
Expand the towns cultural offer through creation of a Cultural Masterplan, alongside exploration of external investment to ensure long term sustainability.	G	G	G	G
Increase the local economic impact of new job creation in key sectors.	R	G	G	R
Improve the range of health and employment related services offered to the public through successful delivery of the Levelling Up Partnership funds.	G	G	G	R

We will improve attainment in education and skills	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Transform Middlesbrough's approach to delivery of learning through implementation of the Council's Education and Skills Strategy.	G	G	G	R
Improve outcomes through delivery of the Priority Education Area action plan at key stages 1, 2 and 4.	C	C	C	C
Increase parental understanding of the importance of literacy for under 5's through a programme of learning	G	C	C	C
Improve life chances by increasing children's and young people's access to high quality education through delivery of the Learning and Education Strategy.	G	C	C	C
Develop and deliver a programme of qualifications and learning to support people into / back into employment through Middlesbrough Community Learning.	G	G	G	C

We will ensure housing provision meets local demands	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Develop and progress a new Local Plan for Middlesbrough which balances growth aspirations with the longer-term needs of the Middlesbrough community.	G	G	R	G
Continue to grow housing sites and opportunities in Middlesbrough, to enable the development of 450 units of new housing per year.	G	G	G	G
Establish a strategic leadership role for the provision of housing to ensure that the provision aligns with needs.	C	C	C	C
Increase pathways offer for homeless households that embody choice; safety and dignity and provide routes into sustainable, long-term accommodation.	R	G	G	R

We will improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Boost recruitment and retention of practitioners through delivery of the childcare expansion in Early Years	C	C	C	C
Roll-out the extended childcare entitlement to increased number of children from 9months+, who have access to Early Years provision	C	C	C	C
Increase outcomes for under 5's through successful delivery of the Best Start Pathway.	G	C	C	C

Develop research architecture and attract funding, to support development of our local understanding of key issues affecting health inequalities.	G	G	R	C
Reduce health inequalities caused by excess weight, through implementation of the core Healthy Weight Declaration commitments.	C	C	C	C
Improve wellbeing in Middlesbrough through embedding a 'health in all' policies approach in all planning and transport decision-making.	G	C	C	C
Improve health literacy through delivery of a Healthy Start pilot model for prevention of ill-health in schools.	R	G	G	C
Reduce inequalities through improvements to cancer screening programmes uptake	G	G	G	C
Improve prevention services delivered in primary and secondary care to increase uptake	G	G	G	C

We will protect and improve our environment	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Increase the levels of recycling in Middlesbrough from 30% to 38%.	G	G	G	G
Protect and improve our parks and open spaces through retention of Green Flag Status	G	G	G	G
Improve environmental standards of the town, through increased levels of environmental enforcement.	C	C	C	C

We will promote inclusivity for all	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Strengthen our approach to supporting dementia friendly communities programme through increasing voluntary and community sector capacity	C	C	C	C
Prevent and / or delay the need for formal service provision through improved access to reliable and timely advice and information, to support independent and healthy living	R	G	R	G
Develop and implement a pilot approach to housing and support, for inclusion health groups ensure this is reflected in the Supported Housing Strategy	C	C	C	C

We will reduce poverty	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Relaunch Welfare Strategy to support Middlesbrough's vulnerable residents who need financial assistance, advice and support	C	C	C	C

We will provide support for adults to be independent for longer	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Increase the effectiveness of prevention through the development of more signposting and a consistent strengths-based approach to the promotion of independence at the "front door" of Adult Social Care	R	G	G	C
Increase the amount of reablement provided to reduce the need for on-going care	G	C	C	C
Develop an enhanced range of accommodation and support options for adults with a learning disability to promote independence and reduce the reliance on residential care provision	G	G	G	C

Reduce the need for on-going care through the expanded use of the Connect Service, assistive technology and digital solutions	G	C	C	C
Re-locate and expand our specialist autism Day Care service	G	C	C	C
Develop a Community Capacity Building Strategy with focus on social capital and community wealth building	G	R	C	C

We will Improve transport and digital connectivity	**Q1 2025/26 position**	**Q2 2025/26 position**	**Q3 2025/26 position**	**Q4 2025/26 position**
Implementation of a transformed customer model to achieve improved customer access, outcomes and savings	G	G	G	C
Improve public highways and infrastructure to support connectivity across Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley	G	G	G	G

We will promote new ideas and community initiatives	**Q1 2025/26 position**	**Q2 2025/26 position**	**Q3 2025/26 position**	**Q4 2025/26 position**
Introduce a neighbourhood working model to ensure Council services are more closely aligned to community needs	C	C	C	C

We will reduce crime and antisocial behaviour	**Q1 2025/26 position**	**Q2 2025/26 position**	**Q3 2025/26 position**	**Q4 2025/26 position**
Reduce Crime and Anti-Social behaviours across Middlesbrough through the continued working with the Community Safety Partnership	G	C	C	C
Improve the safety and health of the public and the environments in which they live and work through review of public protection policies and interventions	G	G	G	C
Implement a multidisciplinary approach (SHIFT) to increase prevention opportunities through early intervention	C	C	C	C
Work with partners to ensure safe and effective systems and processes are in place for the protection of victims of domestic abuse and their children	R	G	C	C

We will ensure robust and effective corporate governance	**Q1 2025/26 position**	**Q2 2025/26 position**	**Q3 2025/26 position**	**Q4 2025/26 position**
Implement and embed a Member Development Strategy and Programme to extend learning and development opportunities	G	G	G	G
Develop and implement approach to achieve organisational change through implementation of transformation portfolio of programme and projects and associated governance structure	C	C	C	C
Refresh the Information Strategy to ensure legal compliance in regard to information governance	C	C	C	C

We will set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability	Q1 2025/26 position	Q2 2025/26 position	Q3 2025/26 position	Q4 2025/26 position
Increase internal residential capacity through the purchase of suitable properties	G	G	G	C
Improve recruitment and retention of social worker related posts through more targeted and effective marketing	G	C	C	C
Maximise grant opportunities to support service delivery	C	C	C	C
Implementation of a People Strategy to underpin the Council's cultural transformation ambitions and financial stability	C	C	C	C
Increase sales and maximise rental income of the Council's asset portfolio to ensure financial sustainability and promote economic growth	G	G	G	G
Remodel the Council's Planning Service to reflect increasing demand and complexity, address recruitment and retention difficulties, and deliver improved customer service	G	C	C	C
Implement new delivery model for Procurement and Contract Management across Council services	R	G	R	R
Increase level of grant income to support development of new service delivery initiatives	R	R	G	C
Retender pensions administration service, to ensure value for money for fund and scheme members	C	C	C	C
Implementation and review effectiveness of demand and cost modelling forecast, for high-spend areas to feed into MTFP assumptions	C	C	C	C
Review of Children's and Young People placements, including processes and procedures to ensure robust decision-making and allocation	C	C	C	C

Key:	
C	Complete
G	On-track
A	Some slippage
R	High risk of deliverability

Appendix 3: Council Plan Workplan; proposed amendments at Year-End 2025/26

Initiative	Owner	Original Due Date	Current Due Date	Reason for (R) / Impact (I) of delay	Proposed Due Date
CP-ASC-02 Increase pathways offer for homeless households that embody choice; safety and dignity and provide routes into sustainable, long-term accommodation	ASC	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	(R) Delay in the development and approval of a Homeless Strategy. (I) No impact other than timescales.	30/09/2026
CP-E&P-01 Transform Middlesbrough's approach to delivery of learning through the implementation of the Council's Education and Skills Strategy	CS	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	(R) Delay in the 2026 Schools White Paper 'Every child Achieving and Thriving' which requires additional time to understand its impact on the strategy. (I) No impact other than timescales.	31/03/2027
CP-FIN-07 Implement new delivery model for Procurement and Contract Management across Council services	FIN	31/12/2025	31/03/2026	(R) Delayed due to insufficient resources to progress at this time. (I) None other than timescales.	31/03/2027
CP-R&H-09 Improve the range of health and employment related services offered to the public through successful delivery of the Levelling Up Partnership funds	REG	31/03/2026	31/03/2026	(R): Delay due to the identification of an alternative location for the Live Well Centre East which will require additional revenue and Executive approval. (I): None other than timescales.	31/03/2027

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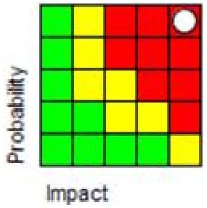
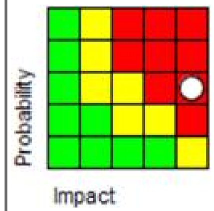
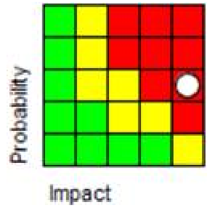
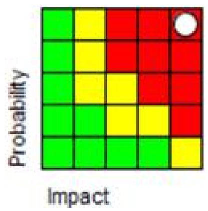
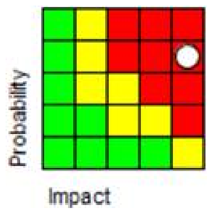
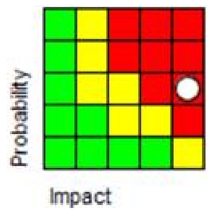
Appendix 4: Strategic Risk register progress at Quarter Four 2025/26

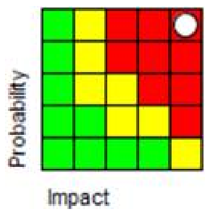
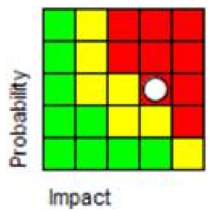
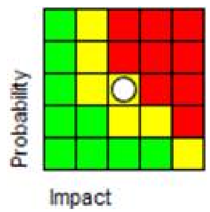
Code	Risk Description		Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Managed By
SR-01	Failure to Maintain a balanced budget and MTFP	**Failure to set a legal and balanced annual budget and to maintain a sustainable Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** The Council is required to set a legally balanced revenue budget by 11 March in advance of each forthcoming financial year. Failure to achieve this objective will require the s151 Officer to issue a statutory s114 Notice to the Council. The Council has a Best Value duty to set and maintain a sustainable and balanced Medium Term Financial Plan including maintenance of its reserves position to demonstrate financial resilience to be able to respond to unforeseen and complex financial challenges presented by the wider economic environment.	 35	 21	 21	Director of Finance

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
• Responsibility and Accountability for Financial Management reinforced by budget clinics. • Monthly budget monitoring, forecasting, and tracking of savings delivery by Directors with accountability to the CEX through LMT and development and delivery of financial recovery plans to control within approved budget • Monthly budget clinics chaired by Director of Finance for all Directorates (subject to review by Director of Finance) to enable development of insight, understanding and wider collaboration of colleagues in order to address significant financial risks. • Timely briefing of Mayor and Executive Members on significant financial challenges with agreement for action.	Failure of the Recover, Reset, Deliver Transformation Portfolio to identify further savings	Chief Executive	✔	Director of Finance; Chief Executive	31-Mar-2026

• Quarterly member led budget clinics chaired by the Executive Member for Finance to engage Executive Members. • Monthly monitoring of income budgets, council tax and business rates collection rates and debt levels. • Update MTFP regularly ahead of Council Planning and annual budget setting process. • Further development of budget management Power BI dashboard over Business World financial management system in order to improve accessibility of financial information for Directors, Heads of Service and Budget Manager. • Implementation and expansion of purchase to pay compliance dashboards for use by Directors, Heads of Service and Budget Managers to drive increase in compliant procurement in relation to retrospective ordering, on vs off contract spend and use of purchase cards. • Corporate and Strategic Capital boards to monitor capital expenditure and develop future capital plans.					

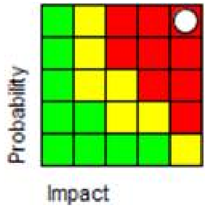
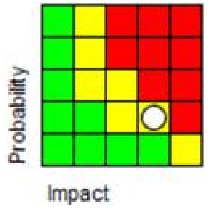
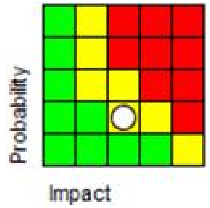
Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-02	Volatility in the demand, complexity and cost of children's social care.	The risk that **demand and cost of and children's social care** continues to escalate on the scale experienced in 2024/25, is the single biggest risk to the Councils financial viability. More financially sustainable solutions for meeting social care needs of children need to be secured with urgency to ensure delivery within the approved budget for 2025/26.		35		28		21	Director of Children's Care; Director of Children's Services; Chief Executive

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer	Director	Target Date
Children's input • Weekly activity data through Chat reports/ data • Weekly financial monitoring with Finance Business Partner • Placement review has taken place to manage costs associated with young people. • MOU surrounding agency costs as a region was implemented in April 2025. • Recruitment and retention strategy reviewed to increase permanent staff within the local authority. • Spending controls in place as per scheme of delegation. • Monthly Member and Officer meetings. • Director Children's Care reviewing placements to ensure VFM. • Future proofing for savings for Children's Services to ensure effective financial planning.			Director of Children's Care; Director of Children's Services; Director of Education and Partnerships	

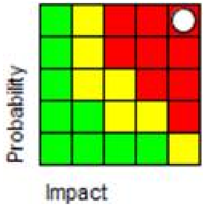
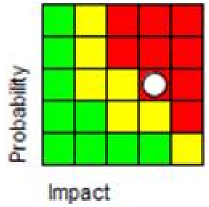
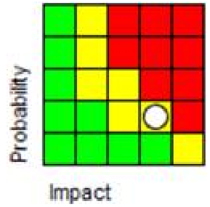
Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-03	Volatility in the demand and cost of adult's social care	The potential for underlying **demand and cost pressures to arise in adult social care** presents a significant risk to the Council's overall financial viability and measures must be put in place to manage within approved budget.		35		15		9	Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
Local Government settlement Budget Management process Contract management processes Savings programme in place	Develop a demand model, which monitors performance across activity demand and unit costing, to understand 'current state.'	Director of Adult Social Care and Health; Dee Evans; Victoria Holmes		Director of Adult Social Care and Health; Adult Social Care and Public	31-Mar-2026

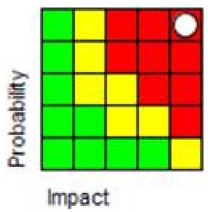
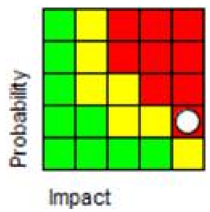
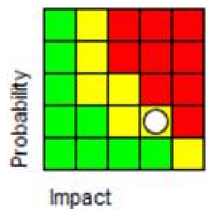
Demand model in place Monthly demand reported to DMT - activity not just finance	Develop a forecast model, which uses the ‘current state’ model, to predict activity demand and financials across Adults Social Care in the next 1/2/5 years.	Dee Evans; Victoria Holmes		Health Senior Managers ; Chief Executive	31-Mar-2026

Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-04	Unlawful decision by the Council	If the Council took a decision that was unlawful then there is a risk of legal challenge or regulatory action that could damage its reputation and its financial position.		35		10		6	Director of Legal and Corporate Services

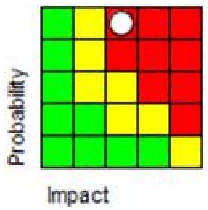
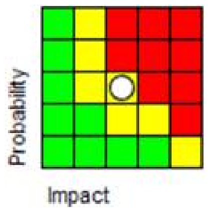
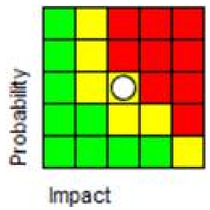
Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
• Council constitution and supporting policy framework • Corporate policies and procedures • Compliance checks across key areas including HSE, Risk etc, covering the corporate governance framework • Standard report formats • Statutory officer posts to oversee governance • Annual Governance Statement assessment process • Internal and external audit processes • Refreshed whistleblowing policy • Report development process • Regular review of the Council Constitution. • Corporate training provided for all officers. • Scheme of sub delegation implemented. • Governance lawyer in post to support the Councils lawful decision making.	deliver the Continuous Improvement Plan quarterly updates to Executive from October 2025.	Ann-Marie Johnstone		Director of Legal and Corporate Services; Chief Executive	31-Oct-2026
	Deliver the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25	Ann-Marie Johnstone			28-Feb-2026

<table>
<tr><th>Code</th><th colspan="2">Risk Description</th><th colspan="2">Original Score</th><th colspan="2">Current Score</th><th colspan="2">Target Score</th><th>Managed By</th></tr>
<tr><td>SR-05</td><td>Serious accident or death occurred as a result of failure to comply with Health and Safety legislation and regulations</td><td>If a serious accident or death occurred as a result of failure to comply with Health and Safety legislation and regulations then this could result in financial and reputational damage and individual prosecutions of staff.</td><td></td><td>35</td><td></td><td>15</td><td></td><td>10</td><td>Chief Executive</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Current Mitigation</th><th colspan="2">Future Mitigation</th><th colspan="2">Responsible Officer</th><th colspan="2">Director</th><th>Target Date</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Comprehensive suite of Health and Safety policies and procedures.
Mandatory and complimentary Health and Safety training for all Council staff.
Dedicated HSE Advisor team
Incident investigation system (My Compliance) to learn from incidents.
HSE intranet page with important HSE information
Audit schedule
Service area audit schedule
HSE steering group
Fire Management System implemented across Council premises.</td><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">Director of Legal and Corporate Services; Director of Regeneration and Housing; Chief Executive</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Code	Risk Description	Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Managed By

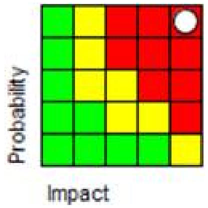
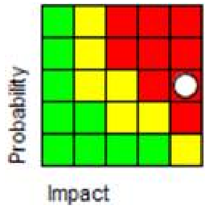
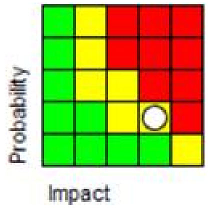
SR-08	Failure to ensure an approach to cyber security that meets good practice standards as set out by the National Cyber Security Centre and other bodies	If the Council **fails to ensure a sound approach to cyber security** (technology, processes and awareness), then this could result in a cyber-attack which disrupts service delivery, increases risks to service users and incurs significant financial costs to respond to and recover from an attack.		35		14		10	Director of Legal and Corporate Services; Nigel Eden; John O'Leary; Lynsey Zipfell
Current Mitigation			**Future Mitigation**		**Responsible Officer**		**Director**		**Target Date**
• Annual Information and Communications Technology (ICT) health checks are conducted, including both internal and external penetration testing. • Compliance is maintained with Public Services Network (PSN) and Payment Card Industry (PCI) standards). • Internal vulnerability scanning is performed whenever new systems are introduced. • Strong defensive systems are in place, including network firewalls, web content filtering, and endpoint protection solutions. • A rigorous sixty-day cycle is followed for applying software patches and performing system maintenance. • Security testing is completed and continuously repeated to ensure ongoing protection. • Recommendations from health checks are reviewed and implemented as appropriate. • The organisation is an active member of the North East Warning, Advice and Reporting Point (WARP) and the Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CiSP). • Protective Domain Name System (DNS) services are utilised to prevent access to malicious websites.			Commission an external ICT security GAP analysis		Nigel Eden		Director of Legal and Corporate Services; Chief Executive		17-Apr-2026

• A robust data backup strategy is in place, including offline tape backups to support full recovery in the event of data loss. • A Cyber Incident Response (CIR) partner is contracted to provide expert support in the event of a security breach. • Infrastructure inspections are carried out every quarter to minimise the risk of disruption to service delivery. • Comprehensive overview to benchmark our current security position. • Purchase of Cloudflare to enhance the security of the local authority against Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks.					

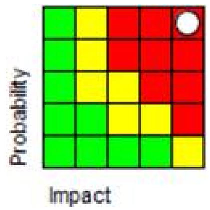
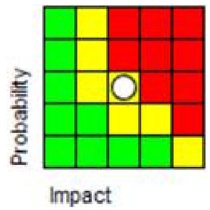
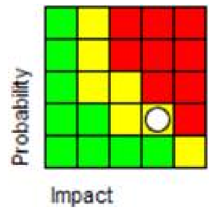
Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-09	Corporate Governance arrangement not fit for purpose	If the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements are not fit for purpose, and timely and effective corrective action is not taken, this may lead to adverse findings by the Council's external auditors, including the issue of a Public Interest Report. This could result in significant reputational damage and/or formal government intervention, including the direction of Council spending and the removal or limitation of powers from officers and Members.		15		9		9	Director of Legal and Corporate Services; Ann-Marie Johnstone
Current Mitigation			**Future Mitigation**		**Responsible Officer**		**Director**		**Target Date**
External reports commissioned on Corporate governance and findings reflected within a Corporate Governance Improvement Plan			Put in place a strategic Partnerships Strategy.		Chief Executive				30-Jun-2026

Improvement Board in place Detailed improvement plan in place that has delivered a range of changes to corporate governance processes Annual Governance Statement process and supporting action plan. Draft AGSs in place for both 2024/25 and 2025/26 Regular reports to Audit Committee on aspects of corporate governance to provide assurance	Community Engagement strategy and approach to be developed	Marion Walker		Director of Legal and Corporate Services; Chief Executive	30-Jul-2026
	Ensure the Company is fully liquidated during 2025/26.	Justin Weston			09-Dec-2025
	Review of the Internal Audit function	Director of Finance			30-Apr-2026
	Continue to implement a scheme of sub-delegations where appropriate to further improve governance around officer delegated decisions.	Director of Legal and Corporate Services			31-Jan-2026
	A robust officer scheme of delegations and sub-delegations is required to ensure effective, appropriate and timely taking of decisions that can be taken by officers. (20/21 action). This will be addressed following the review of the constitution in 2024.	Director of Legal and Corporate Services			31-Jan-2026
	Continually review the Community Engagement policy to ensure it aligns with the wider needs of the organisation that will emerge from the Transformation Programme.	Marion Walker			28-Feb-2026
	A clear Asset Acquisition Policy reflecting these requirements is integrated into the Corporate Landlord Model framework that will be considered by Executive.	David Velemir			17-Mar-2026
	Refresh the Performance Management Policy and the supporting Performance Management Framework to embed a 'golden thread' of Performance Management from	Director of Legal and Corporate Services			30-Apr-2026

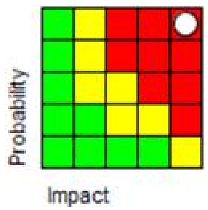
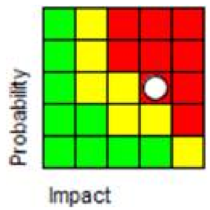
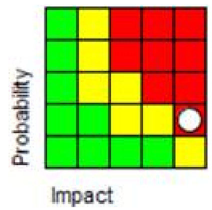
	the Council Plan down to departmental level.				

Code	Risk Description		Original Score	Current Score	Target Score	Managed By
SR-12	Failure to deliver quality practice within children's safeguarding services	If the Council **fails to deliver quality practice within children's safeguarding** services then this may result in further government intervention, serious harm to individuals and loss of financial control.	 35	 21	 10	Director of Children's Care; Director of Children's Services

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
• Implemented Children's services improvement plan • Monthly performance monitoring boards in place • Review to be undertaken of Children's Care • Monthly audit activity and reports undertaken to consider the quality of practice. • Implementation of children's improvement board. • Commitment to SHiFT, to improve quality and management of practice. • Ongoing monitoring via OFSTED with a focused visit due the fiscal year. • OFSTED future inspections to continue. • Internal audit to review working practices.				Director of Children's Care; Director of Children's Services; Chief Executive	

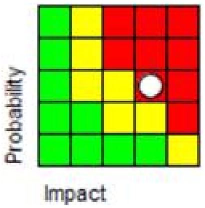
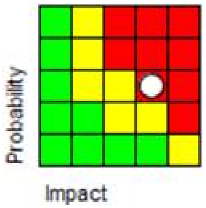
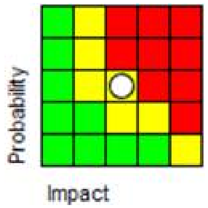
Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-14	Failure to ensure effective governance of the Middlesbrough Development Corporation	If the Middlesbrough Development Corporation fails to reflect the relevant findings from the review of Teesworks governance in its structures, then there is a risk that it could fails to ensure value for money or good governance in its decision making, which will have an adverse impact on the economic vitality of the Town Centre.		35		9		10	Director of Regeneration and Housing

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
• Teesworks report and commitment from TVCA to reflect findings in the governance arrangements of the MDC • Council representatives on the MDC Board - Mayor • Monthly meetings arranged with the CEX MDC (Bev Bearne) with Director Regeneration. • Collaboration of Regenerations Director via LMT, TVCA and MDC setting out Council's priorities and concerns. • Effective communication between key stakeholders. • Direct risks which could impact on the local authority will be escalated to LMT				Director of Regeneration and Housing; Chief Executive	

Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-15	Threats to Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience	If Communities feel disconnected and that they do not live in a safe and resilient environment that promotes the best outcomes for citizens of the town. This could lead to local flashpoints which would be damaging to community relations, the reputation and image of a multi-cultural Middlesbrough.		35		15		14	Director of Environment, Community and Culture; Marion Walker

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
Internal Controls (Current Mitigations in place): • Community tension monitoring undertaken. • Community engagement undertaken. • Neighbourhood safety liaison in place. • Prevent operational group risk plans in place • Liaison with policing partners to verify validity of possible demonstrations. • Initial credibility verification through visual audits using CCTV operations and open sources. • Gatekeeping protocols with marketing and communications for potentially controversial communications • Ongoing promotion of education around disinformation and building of media literacy by partners within the local authority and via social media • Monthly meetings held with senior leadership. • Gold and Silver recovery group meetings with senior leadership teams across the organisation and partners. • Action plan developed by silver group to be reported to gold with escalations. • Community safety partnership reconstituted to provide greater strategic oversight.	Repair relationships and engagement between local communities where they have broken down following serious conflict and flashpoint incidents.	Marion Walker		Director of Environment, Community and Culture; Chief Executive	31-Aug-2026
	Deliver the Community Cohesion Strategy	Marion Walker			03-Aug-2026

• MBC have secured £600k to be spent in response to community tensions as a further control. • BELONG employed to support delivery of the community cohesion strategy.					

Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-16	Removal of the statutory override preventing the Designated School Grant (DSG) deficit from being met from general fund resources.	If the statutory override issued by central government expires as planned on 31 March 2026, without providing a national solution to the current shortfall in funding compared to demand and cost of high needs provision, this will mean that the High Needs Funding Deficit will be required to be met from the Council's general fund resources. Based upon the current projection of the DSG high needs deficit compared to the level of revenue reserves, this will result in the Council's reserves being exhausted and the Council's s151 Officer potentially being required to issue a s114 Notice. This is likely to be the case for the majority of local authorities nationally.		15		15		9	Director of Education and Partnerships; Emma Cowley

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
p. Lobbying Government to resolve the funding issue and provide a long term solution to the DSG deficit issue	Lobbying Government to resolve the funding issue and provide a long	Director of Finance	✔		31-Mar-2026

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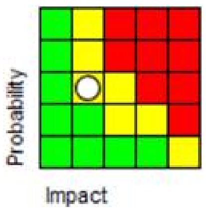
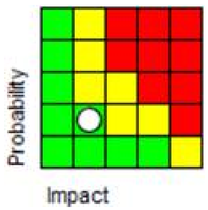
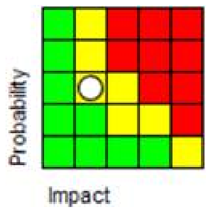
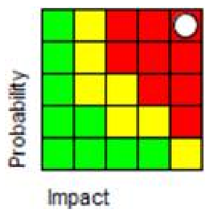
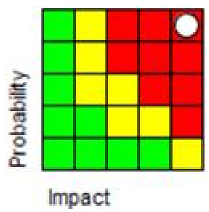
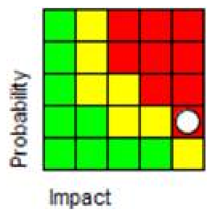
. Delivering DBV (Delivering Better Value) action plan. . Liaising with DofE regularly . Working with schools and settings to continuously review the funding models.	term solution to the DSG deficit issue				
	Ongoing monitoring of the HNF budget	Director of Education and Partnerships			31-Mar-2026
	Work with schools and settings to reduce the number of children and young people who are excluded.	Director of Education and Partnerships		Director of Children's Services; Director of Education and Partnerships	31-Mar-2026
	Promote greater inclusion within mainstream settings.	Director of Education and Partnerships			31-Mar-2026
	Reduce the number of children and young people in out of area provision.	Director of Education and Partnerships			31-Mar-2026

Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-17	Funding for key external projects led by TVCA or MDC	If there is a funding gap for key projects led by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) and its Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) that results in a risk of delays, disruption, or failure to deliver on key regeneration sites in the town centre. This could negatively affect economic growth, community development, and investor confidence in the region.		6		4		6	Director of Regeneration and Housing

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
- Tees Valley Investment Strategy. - Monthly meeting with CEX of MDC to discuss project developments.	Working with TVCA/MDC to develop a realistic delivery plan against essential projects.	Richard Horniman		Director of Regeneration and Housing; Directors	30-Apr-2026

- Collaboration of Regenerations Director via LMT, TVCA and MDC setting out Council's priorities and concerns. - Effective communication between key stakeholders. - Direct risks which could impact on the local authority will be escalated to LMT. - Mayor Middlesbrough Council is a board member of the TVCA and MDC with the CEX present as observer. - Scrutiny committee for the TVCA of which Middlesbrough Council have Councillor representation.					

Code	Risk Description		Original Score		Current Score		Target Score		Managed By
SR-18	Ineffective governance of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)	The governance arrangements of the Combined Authority (CA) are not fit for purpose, creating barriers to effective collaboration with the Council and adversely impacting the Council's ability to achieve its ambitions for the town. This misalignment could hinder regional development, compromise strategic initiatives, impact financially on the Council and damage stakeholder confidence.		35		35		14	Chief Executive

Current Mitigation	Future Mitigation	Responsible Officer		Director	Target Date
• LGA improvement panel with independent oversight and planned publication of improvement panel reports to increase public scrutiny and transparency	Review the reports of the improvement panel as they are published to identify actions that Middlesbrough Council can take to support the TVCA to improve governance and relationships	Chief Executive		Directors; Chief Executive	31-Oct-2026

• Improvement plan (TVCA). • Best Value Inspection Notice issued April 25 resulting in increased government oversight. • Key officer relationships between Monitoring Officers and Directors of Finance • Interim appointments for the Director of Finance and Monitoring Officer roles • Reset discussions undertaken with the new Chief Executive	Regular provision of advice to Middlesbrough Council representatives who sit on various TVCA bodies to ensure they are able to deliver their roles in full and with regard to good governance	Director of Legal and Corporate Services			10-Oct-2026

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	Middlesbrough moving forward

Report of:	Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services - Charlotte Benjamin
Relevant Executive Member:	The Mayor - Chris Cooke
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	10 June 2026
Title:	Digital Strategy 2026–2030
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive:

- APPROVES the adoption of the Digital Strategy 2026–2030 as the Council's strategic framework for digital, data and technology.
- DELEGATES authority to the Director responsible for ICT and Digital to make minor updates to the Digital Strategy to ensure it remains current and aligned with organisational priorities.
- NOTES that delivery of the Digital Strategy will be managed through existing governance arrangements, including the Technical Design Authority (TDA), and aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and corporate prioritisation processes.
- NOTES that the Digital Strategy operates alongside the Council's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, which provides the governance framework for any future use of AI and emerging digital capabilities.

Executive summary
This report presents Middlesbrough Council's Digital Strategy 2026–2030, which sets out a clear and proportionate approach to maintaining secure, resilient and well-governed digital services that support effective public service delivery. This report is presented for Executive decision as it sets out a corporate strategy for digital and technology across all Council services. The strategy establishes the Council's overall direction and governance framework. The proposed decision is a Key Decision due to its corporate impact on service delivery and customer experience across the Council. The strategy recognises the increasing reliance on digital technology across all Council services and the need to ensure that systems, data and processes are reliable, secure and sustainable. It provides a structured framework for strengthening digital foundations, improving consistency, reducing complexity and enabling staff to work effectively and safely. Approval of the strategy is required to establish a clear, corporate approach to digital, data and technology. Without an agreed strategy, there is a risk of continued system fragmentation, inconsistent service delivery, increased cyber and operational risk, and reduced value for money from digital investment. The recommended approach focuses on practical, evidence-led improvement rather than large-scale transformation, prioritising stability, governance and affordability. This is considered the most appropriate option as it reflects the Council's current position, reduces risk and supports sustainable, incremental progress. An alternative option of pursuing large-scale transformation at pace has not been recommended due to the associated financial, operational and delivery risks. The strategy aligns with national expectations for cyber security, accessibility and information governance, while supporting the ambitions of the Council Plan. It is structured around four core themes: • Secure & Modern Foundations • Simpler Processes & Safe Automation • Workforce Digital and Security Capability • Digital Platform, Customer Experience and Inclusion The strategy operates alongside the Council's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, which provides the governance framework for any future use of emerging digital capabilities. The Digital Strategy itself does not mandate the use of AI but ensures that any future adoption is controlled, ethical and proportionately governed. Approval of this strategy provides Members, officers, residents and partners with a clear and consistent digital direction, ensuring that digital investment is managed responsibly, securely and in line with corporate priorities. The financial, legal, risk and equality implications of the recommended decision have been considered by the appropriate officers and are set out in the main body of this report.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Digital Strategy 2026–2030, which sets the Council's strategic direction for digital, data and technology over the next four years.

1.2 The strategy provides a framework for maintaining secure, resilient and well-governed digital services, ensuring that technology supports effective service delivery, improves consistency and enables the Council to operate efficiently and sustainably.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	A strong digital strategy will enable more efficient, data-informed, and connected services that drive economic growth, enhance resident experiences, and support innovation across all areas of delivery.
A healthy place	The strategy will support a healthy place by enabling accessible, preventative, and responsive services—using data, technology, and connectivity to improve wellbeing, reduce inequalities, and help residents live healthier, more independent lives.
Safe and resilient communities	This strategy enables proactive, data-led decision making, strengthening partnership working, and enhancing the council's ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from risks and challenges.
Delivering best value	The strategy supports best value by reducing system duplication, improving governance and standardisation, and enabling more efficient ways of working. It ensures that digital investment is controlled, evidence-led and aligned to financial planning, delivering sustainable improvements in service efficiency and performance.

2. Recommendations

That Executive:

2.1 APPROVES the adoption of the Digital Strategy 2026–2030 as the Council's strategic framework for digital, data and technology.

2.2 APPROVES that the Head of Service responsible for ICT and Digital has delegated authority to make minor updates to the Digital Strategy to ensure it remains current and aligned with organisational priorities.

2.3 NOTES that delivery of the Digital Strategy will be managed through existing governance arrangements, including the Technical Design Authority (TDA), and aligned to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and corporate prioritisation processes.

2.4 NOTES that the Digital Strategy operates alongside the Council's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy, which provides the governance framework for any future use of AI and emerging digital capabilities.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The adoption of a Digital Strategy is necessary to ensure that the Council's use of digital, data and technology is secure, consistent and aligned with organisational priorities. The Council's current digital environment has developed over time and remains varied across systems, processes and data, creating duplication, inconsistency and increased operational and risk. Without a clear and agreed strategic framework, these issues are likely to impacting service delivery, governance and value for money.

3.2 The recommended decision is to approve the Digital Strategy 2026–2030, which provides a proportionate and controlled framework for digital improvement. The strategy focuses on strengthening core technology foundations, improving governance, and increasing standardisation across systems and processes. It enables incremental, evidence-led change and ensures that digital, data and technology are coordinated and aligned to corporate priorities.

3.3 A key component of the recommended approach is the use of established governance arrangements, including the Technical Design Authority (TDA). The TDA provides a formal mechanism to ensure that all digital and technology decisions are subject to appropriate scrutiny, adhere to agreed standards and architectures, and align with the strategic direction set out in the Digital Strategy. This reduces the risk of further system fragmentation, supports interoperability, and ensures that investment decisions deliver value for money and long-term sustainability. The use of the TDA also strengthens accountability, transparency and consistency in decision making across the organisation.

3.4 Alternative options, such as pursuing large-scale digital transformation at pace, have been considered but are not recommended due to the associated financial, operational and delivery risks. These approaches would require significant upfront investment, introduce greater complexity, and increase the risk of disruption to critical services without guaranteed outcomes.

3.5 The recommended approach is legally compliant and aligned with statutory requirements relating to data protection, security, accessibility and transparency. It is financially prudent, as it does not commit the Council to specific new expenditure at this stage and ensures that any future investment is subject to established governance, including TDA oversight and corporate approval processes.

3.6 Overall, the adoption of the Digital Strategy, supported by clear governance through the Technical Design Authority, provides a balanced and deliverable approach. It enables the Council to improve system reliability, reduce duplication, strengthen governance and deliver more consistent services, while managing risk and ensuring that digital investment remains aligned to organisational priorities and financial sustainability.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The Digital Strategy 2026–2030 sets out the Council's approach to maintaining a secure, modern and well-governed digital environment. The decision to adopt the strategy is required to ensure that digital, data and technology are used consistently and effectively to support the delivery of the Council Plan and wider corporate priorities.

4.2 The recommended decision represents a new strategic framework, replacing the need for a fragmented or service-led approach to digital delivery. It establishes a single, corporate direction for how digital investment, systems and processes will be governed, prioritised and delivered across the organisation.

4.3 The strategy has been developed through assessment of the Council's current digital environment, including systems, processes and data, alongside engagement with the ICT and Digital Management Team and alignment with corporate governance and assurance arrangements. It reflects key drivers including:

- the need to improve digital resilience
- reducing duplication and complexity across the technology estate
- improving data quality and integration
- supporting more efficient and consistent service delivery
- alignment to national expectations for digital, accessibility and information governance
- improving consistency in digital platforms and services to support a more joined-up resident experience across the Council

4.4 The strategy aligns with the Council Plan and supports delivery of wider corporate strategies, including customer experience, information governance, data management and organisational improvement. It provides a structured framework to ensure digital activity is prioritised and delivered in line with corporate priorities and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

4.5 The strategy has been developed by ICT based on assessment of the Council's current digital environment and alignment with corporate governance requirements, national guidance and organisational priorities. Formal engagement with service areas will form part of the ongoing delivery and implementation of the strategy.

4.6 Delivery of the strategy will be managed through existing governance arrangements, ensuring that all digital decisions are evidence-led, aligned to agreed standards and subject to appropriate assurance.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 The Digital Strategy 2026–2030 is a corporate strategy that applies across the whole organisation and does not relate to specific wards or geographically defined services.

5.2 As such, targeted Ward Member engagement has not been undertaken. All Elected Members, including non-Executive Members, will have the opportunity to consider, question and challenge the strategy through the Council's established governance, scrutiny and decision-making processes.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 The primary alternative option would be to continue operating without a formal Digital Strategy, allowing digital activity and investment to be determined at a service or operational level. This approach has not been recommended as it would likely result in continued inconsistency across systems and services, increased duplication and reduced oversight of digital investment, leading to poorer value for money and increased operational and cyber risk.

6.2 A further alternative would be to pursue large-scale digital transformation at pace through significant system replacement or programme-led change. This option has also not been recommended as it would require substantial financial investment, introduce greater delivery complexity and increase the risk of disruption to critical services. It would also present challenges in aligning with current organisational capacity and priorities.

6.3 The recommended approach, set out in the Digital Strategy 2026–2030, provides a more proportionate and controlled alternative. It focuses on incremental, evidence-led improvement, strengthening governance, improving consistency in systems and processes, and delivering sustainable benefits over time while managing risk.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	The Digital Strategy 2026–2030 does not seek any additional funding at this stage. Delivery will be managed through existing budgets and prioritisation processes. Any future investment will be subject to separate business cases and approvals. If additional funding is required in the future, a bid will be made to the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The strategy supports best value by reducing duplication, improving system efficiency and strengthening governance of digital investment, delivering longer-term financial and social value.
Procurement	The strategy will require all digital and technology procurement activity to align with corporate governance processes, including ICT oversight and the Technical Design Authority (TDA). It will strengthen procurement by promoting standardisation of systems and reducing duplication, for example through consistent platform approaches across services. All procurement activity will comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Constitution and relevant

	procurement legislation, ensuring transparency, value for money and appropriate contract management.
Legal	The strategy supports compliance with all relevant legislation, including UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Equality Act 2010. It ensures that digital services are implemented lawfully, with appropriate governance, transparency and accountability.
Risk	Approval of the strategy will reduce risk by improving governance, strengthening oversight of digital systems and reducing duplication and complexity. It supports mitigation of operational and strategic risks associated with fragmented systems and inconsistent practices, contributing positively to the Council's corporate risk management arrangements.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	An initial assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required at this stage, as the Digital Strategy sets a high-level framework and does not directly introduce service changes. The strategy supports the Public Sector Equality Duty by promoting accessible, consistent and inclusive digital services. Equality considerations will be reviewed for individual initiatives delivered under the strategy, and EIAs will be completed where required.
Reducing Poverty	The strategy supports social and economic wellbeing by making it easier for residents to access and engage with Council services through more consistent, accessible and user-friendly digital routes. By reducing variation across services and creating more joined-up service journeys, residents will experience a clearer and more consistent approach when interacting with the Council, helping them access information and support more quickly and effectively.
Climate Change / Environmental	The strategy supports the Council's climate ambitions by promoting more efficient and sustainable use of digital technology, contributing to wider organisational commitments to carbon reduction and environmental sustainability.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The strategy aims to improve digital services, accessibility and consistency to positively support all users.
Data Protection	The strategy involves the ongoing use and management of data through digital systems. All activity delivered under the strategy will be subject to appropriate data protection controls, including Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) where required. Advice will be sought from the Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance with legislation and to safeguard data.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

Publish the approved Digital Strategy and communicate its purpose, scope and expectations to all service areas.	Head of ICT and Digital Deputy Head of ICT and Digital ICT Management	July 2026
Implement governance oversight through the Technical Design Authority (TDA), ensuring all digital proposals are reviewed and aligned to strategy and standards.	Head of ICT and Digital ICT Management Team Leadership Management Team	June 2026
Work with services to identify and prioritise key digital improvement opportunities, focusing on consistency, standardisation and enhanced resident experience.	ICT Management Team and Service Management Teams	Ongoing June 2026
Establish a structured engagement approach with service areas, including identifying appropriate digital champions or contacts to support prioritisation, coordination and effective use of ICT and digital resources.	Head of ICT and Digital Deputy Head of ICT and Digital /	September 2026

Appendices

1	Digital Strategy 2026–2030

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Lynsey Zipfell
Email: lynsey_zipfell@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Digital Strategy 2026 - 2030

Title	Digital Strategy 2026 - 2030	
Creator	Author(s)	Head of ICT and Digital, Lynsey Zipfell
	Approved by	
	Department	Corporate and Legal Services
	Service area	ICT
	Head of Service	Lynsey Zipfell
	Director	Charlotte Benjamin
Date	Created	January 2026
	Submitted	TBC
	Approved	TBC
	Updating Frequency	4 years
Status	Version: Draft V0.1	
Contributor(s)	ICT and Digital Management Team	
Subject	Information	
Type	Strategy	
Coverage	Middlesbrough Council	
Language	English	

Document Control

Version	Date	Revision History	Reviser
0.1	20260327	Draft new strategy	Lynsey Zipfell

Distribution List

Version	Date	Name/Service area	Action

Contact:	Lynsey_Zipfell@Middlesbrough.gov.uk

DRAFT

Digital Strategy 2026 - 2030

Foreword

Digital technology is central to how Middlesbrough Council delivers services and supports our communities. To meet rising expectations and maintain reliable services, we must ensure our digital systems remain secure, modern and accessible.

This Digital Strategy sets out our direction for the coming years. It supports the ambitions of the Council Plan 2026–29 building a successful and ambitious town, improving wellbeing, strengthening resilient communities and delivering best value for residents. It provides a clear framework for maintaining a stable digital environment, improving processes and ensuring services are easy to use and available when people need them.

Our approach is practical and sustainable. We will prioritise improvements that offer the greatest benefit, support consistent service delivery and help our workforce operate effectively. By continuing to improve our systems, processes and digital capability, we will ensure the Council remains equipped to meet future needs and opportunities.

We are committed to providing secure, accessible and user-friendly digital services that residents can trust, and this strategy is an important part of achieving that.

Erik Scollay
Chief Executive

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Contents

Executive Summary

The Digital Strategy 2026–2030 sets out Middlesbrough Council's updated approach to modernising its technology, infrastructure and digital services. It provides a clear and focused framework for maintaining secure, resilient and well-governed systems that support reliable services and long-term sustainability.

The strategy reflects national expectations for cyber security and the need for modern, consistent and accessible digital services. It ensures that investment in technology continues to deliver safe operations, value for money and effective services for residents and businesses.

Our vision is to create a digitally confident organisation supported by modern systems, efficient processes and a capable workforce. By simplifying and standardising our digital environment, the Council will improve productivity and provide user-friendly, accessible services for all residents.

The strategy is built around four themes:

1. Secure & Modern Foundations – maintaining a reliable, resilient and standardised technology estate.
2. Simpler Processes & Safe Automation – improving processes and applying automation responsibly where it adds value.
3. Workforce Digital and Security Capability – ensuring staff have the skills and confidence to work effectively and securely.
4. Digital Platform, Customer Experience and Inclusion – improving the consistency, accessibility and usability of digital services.

This strategy provides a clear, forward-looking approach to digital improvement that supports high-quality services and maintains public trust.

1. Introduction

The Digital Strategy 2026–2030 is an updated strategy that sets out Middlesbrough Council's approach to maintaining a secure, modern and well-governed digital environment. It reflects the increasing importance of resilient infrastructure, clear governance and accessible digital services in supporting effective public service delivery.

The strategy is shaped by key responsibilities, including national expectations for cyber security, requirements for reliable and consistent systems, and the need to provide services that are accessible, transparent and offer value for money. These drivers ensure the Council continues to operate safely, efficiently and in line with good practice.

This strategy supports the ambitions of the Council Plan 2026–29, a successful and ambitious town, a healthy place, safe and resilient communities and delivering best value by ensuring the Council has the technology, systems and capabilities needed to deliver consistent, dependable and accessible services.

The strategy has been developed through assessment of the Council's current digital environment, input from services, alignment with national guidance and engagement with corporate governance and assurance groups. It provides a clear basis for future decision-making, prioritisation and investment.

2. Our Vision

Our vision is to:

> Create a digitally confident organisation where secure, modern technology, high-quality data and efficient processes enable staff to deliver consistent, accessible and high-quality services that residents trust.

We will achieve this by maintaining a simplified, secure and well-governed technology environment supported by good-quality data, streamlined processes and a capable workforce. A strong digital foundation will allow staff to focus on value-adding activity and ensure residents receive timely, reliable and easy-to-use services.

This Digital Strategy will enable better outcomes, improved productivity and more sustainable ways of working. Its success will be evidenced by a simpler and more consistent resident experience, with fewer repeat contacts and greater trust in council services.

Digital inclusion and accessibility will be integral to everything we deliver, ensuring services remain usable, consistent and equitable for all residents, regardless of their circumstances or preferred contact channel.

Our vision also includes developing the organisation's capability to adopt improved systems and enhanced automation safely, responsibly and only where there is clear evidence of benefit.

3. Purpose of this Strategy

This Digital Strategy sets the Council's direction for the use of digital, data and technology from 2026–2030. It provides a clear framework for how the organisation will modernise safely, responsibly and sustainably, ensuring that digital improvement supports the Council Plan, strengthens service delivery and maintains public trust.

The strategy establishes the priorities, standards, governance expectations and roles needed to maintain a secure, coherent and well-managed digital environment. It sets out how digital decisions will be made, how investment will be prioritised and how the organisation will work collectively to simplify systems, improve consistency and enhance efficiency across services.

An operational delivery plan will sit alongside this strategy. While the strategy sets long-term direction, the delivery plan will outline specific actions, timelines and dependencies, allowing activity to remain flexible and responsive to organisational needs and capacity.

This strategy aligns with the Council Plan and wider corporate policies covering customer experience, information governance, security, data management and organisational improvement. Its purpose is to provide clear digital direction—simplifying systems, supporting resilient infrastructure, improving consistency and building digital capability to ensure services are accessible and efficient. While supported by the Council's AI Policy, the strategy focuses primarily on delivering the core digital aims set out in this document. Any future consideration of emerging technologies will be managed through established assurance frameworks.

Delivery of this strategy depends on improving system consistency, integration and data readiness across priority areas, ensuring that any future digital, automation or platform enhancements operate reliably, securely and in line with agreed standards.

4. Current Position

Middlesbrough Council has committed to improving its digital foundations and recognises the importance of secure, modern and well-governed technology. While progress has been made, the current digital environment remains complex and varied, creating challenges in consistency, sustainability and efficiency. Addressing these areas provides a significant opportunity to improve reliability, strengthen security and deliver more accessible services for residents.

4.1. Technology Estate

The Council's technology estate has developed over many years, resulting in a mixture of modern cloud platforms, legacy systems and locally procured solutions. This variation leads to duplication and inconsistent integration. Although visibility is improving, continued consolidation and standardisation are needed to reduce complexity, increase sustainability and support a coherent technology environment.

4.2. Processes and Automation

Some services have redesigned processes and introduced early automation, but many workflows still rely on manual tasks and workarounds. Automation delivers value where used, but opportunities remain to streamline service delivery, reduce avoidable effort and improve reliability through clearer process design and well-governed adoption of digital tools.

Data quality varies across systems, creating challenges for integration, automation and contact reduction. Improving data readiness is a key dependency for future digital improvements.

4.3. Workforce Digital and Security Capability

Digital confidence and capability are not yet consistent across the workforce. Leaders and staff require stronger digital and security skills to make full use of modern tools and support new ways of working. Building capability across the organisation is essential to improving productivity and resilience.

4.4. Customer Experience and Inclusion

Residents experience different levels of quality across digital services. While some online journeys work well, others are fragmented or require repeat contact. Many residents also continue to rely on non-digital channels. A more consistent, joined-up and accessible digital platform is needed to support reliable, inclusive and user-centred services.

4.5. Governance and Assurance

ICT has established governance for technology, architecture and assurance, but this is not always applied consistently. Late engagement can lead to duplicated systems, unnecessary complexity and weaker integration. Contract management also varies across services. Stronger governance, clearer ownership and consistent standards are key to maintaining a secure, modern and sustainable technology environment.

Together, these challenges demonstrate the need for a clear, long-term digital direction that strengthens foundations, reduces complexity and enables safe, sustainable modernisation across the organisation.

5. Security, Information Governance and Strategic Alignment

Security and information governance underpin this strategy. The Council will continue to operate transparently and in full compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to protect systems, information and essential services. A secure and well-managed digital environment is fundamental to maintaining public trust and ensuring services remain reliable and accessible.

This strategy aligns with the Council Plan and wider corporate policies covering customer experience, information governance, data management, security and organisational improvement. This alignment ensures a consistent, joined-up approach where technology, processes and governance work together to support organisational priorities.

Digital improvements delivered through this strategy including the use of modern platforms, workflow, automation and integration will contribute to a more resilient operating environment. Enhancements will be implemented in a way that protects personal information, supports safe service delivery and ensures clear accountability.

Where appropriate, the Council will draw on national guidance and sector best practice to inform decision-making, reduce duplication and ensure a proportionate, evidence-based approach. Digital investment will continue to follow established financial governance, ensuring affordability, value for money and alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Digital decisions will be documented through established governance routes to ensure clarity, accountability and auditability.

5.1. Digital Principles

The strategy is underpinned by a set of principles that guide digital decision-making across the organisation. These include secure-by-design, lawful and ethical use of technology, evidence-led prioritisation, service-centred design, inclusivity, value for money and continuous improvement.

Standardisation is a key principle. Reducing local variation in systems, processes and data structures supports resilience, reduces cost and enables a sustainable, coherent technology environment.

This Digital Strategy works alongside the Customer Strategy and Information Strategy. While those strategies set out how the Council manages information and engages with residents, this strategy focuses on the technology, capability and governance required to enable and support that work.

5.2. Data Quality as a Critical Dependency

High-quality data is essential for secure integration, consistent service processes, reliable automation and effective digital services. The Council will maintain minimum data standards and ensure clear ownership and stewardship across services.

Data quality improvements will be prioritised where they unlock service benefits, such as reducing avoidable contact, improving processing times and increasing system reliability. Data used for analytics must comply with the Council's Data Management Policy to ensure accuracy, security and consistent handling of information.

5.3. AI Governance

The Council's AI Policy sets the requirements for any future use of emerging digital capabilities, ensuring proposals are transparent, ethical and proportionately governed. The (TDA) will only approve proposals that meet these standards and demonstrate clear data quality, process clarity and integration readiness.

6. Residents

Residents are central to this Digital Strategy, and our approach is focused on improving how people access and experience Council services. Digital will be used to make interactions simpler, quicker and more reliable, supporting residents to get the help or information they need with confidence.
For many residents, digital is the primary way they interact with the Council. Digital services will therefore be intuitive, consistent and easy to use, supported by clear and accessible communication.

We recognise that not all residents are able or choose to use digital services. Telephone and face-to-face routes will remain available and effective, ensuring choice is maintained and no one is excluded.

Trust and confidence will be strengthened through the responsible use of technology, robust cyber security, and clear information about how data is handled and protected. Resident feedback, accessibility needs and local insight will inform ongoing improvements to ensure services continue to meet the needs of our communities.

7. Technology Governance & the Technical Design Authority (TDA)

Strong governance is essential to maintaining a secure, efficient and sustainable technology environment. The Technical Design Authority (TDA) provides the central mechanism for assuring digital and technology decisions, ensuring they align with organisational needs and preventing disconnected or duplicative systems.

Standardisation is a core part of the TDA's remit. By aligning systems, integrations and design patterns to shared standards, the Council reduces complexity, duplication and long-term cost. Standardisation will be applied proportionately, ensuring solutions remain aligned with the Council's strategic architecture.

Local customisation, unsupported solutions and shadow IT will not be permitted where they introduce risk, inconsistency or unnecessary complexity, unless explicitly approved by the TDA.

The TDA ensures:

- coordinated review of proposals to prevent duplication
- consistent use of shared standards and design pattern
- strong security and information governance
- evidence-based investment decisions
- effective lifecycle management to reduce legacy risk
- data readiness for proposals requiring integration
- compliance with the Council's AI Policy for any emerging digital capabilities

This governance structure supports a disciplined, forward-looking approach to digital improvement and ensures that technology decisions remain consistent with service needs, organisational priorities and financial sustainability.

8. Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

These strategic objectives set the long-term direction for digital improvement and provide a framework for prioritisation and investment across the organisation. They are deliberately framed at an enterprise level, focusing on outcomes rather than specific projects, to ensure flexibility, affordability and effective governance over the life of the strategy.

Digital improvements are structured around four strategic objectives that collectively support secure, consistent and efficient services delivered through continuous improvement.

- To simplify the Council’s technology estate, reducing risk, cost and complexity while improving resilience and sustainability
- To improve efficiency, consistency and service reliability by redesigning processes and applying automation in a controlled, evidence led manner
- To build a confident, capable and security aware workforce that can adopt, sustain and continuously improve digital ways of working.
- To ensure digital services are designed and delivered in line with Digital by Design, informed by user insight, accessibility standards and evidence, ensuring services are intuitive, inclusive and continuously improved over time.

Achieving these objectives is dependent on data quality being sufficient to support secure integration, automation and improved digital systems.

The following section sets out the priorities for each of these objectives and expected detailed outcomes.

Theme 1: Secure & Modern Foundations

Objective: To simplify the Council's technology estate, reducing risk, cost and complexity while improving resilience and sustainability.

Priorities

- Maintain a single authoritative register of systems.
- Reduce duplication, consolidating products to improve efficiency.
- Strengthen standardisation across platforms, integrations, data structures and design patterns.
- Use secure, cloud first and standards-based platforms wherever appropriate.
- Improve integrations and architectural consistency across all services.
- Proactively manage system lifecycles to reduce legacy risk.
- Strengthen ICT governance through documented processes, change control, architectural assurance and security oversight.
- Ensure ICT ownership of major system contracts and mandatory ICT oversight of digital procurements, with clear joint contract management arrangements.
- Migrate priority datasets into Microsoft Fabric as a secure, scalable analytical platform to improve data availability and consistency.

Expected Outcomes

- Lower cost and reduced technical complexity.
- Improved reliability, stability and resilience of critical systems.
- Stronger security posture supported by consistent governance and change control.
- Reduced support burden and clearer lifecycle management.
- Better supplier performance and organisational assurance through ICT led contract oversight.
- A more consistent, seamless experience for staff and residents.
- Increased assurance that digital services and suppliers are secure, compliant and well-governed.
- Improved data availability and consistency through Microsoft Fabric as the central analytics platform.

Theme 2: Simpler Processes & Safe Automation

Objective: To improve efficiency, consistency and service reliability by redesigning processes and applying automation in a controlled, evidence led manner.

Priorities

- Redesign processes collaboratively with services to remove unnecessary steps, manual workarounds and duplication.
- Introduce automation only where processes have been simplified, standardised and are operationally ready.
- Expand automation and workflow capabilities where evidence demonstrates clear operational benefit.
- Use emerging digital capabilities safely and responsibly, aligned with governance and organisational risk.
- Create reusable workflow, form and integration components to reduce duplication and accelerate delivery.
- Embed transparent impact measurement to inform prioritisation, investment and continuous improvement.

Expected Outcomes

- Faster, more reliable and more consistent service delivery processes.
- Reduced manual effort, fewer workarounds and lower operational friction across services.
- Safe, well governed adoption of automation and digital capabilities.
- Clearer evidence of benefit, enabling improved return on investment and better prioritisation of future change.
- More predictable, scalable and sustainable processes that reduce demand failure, avoidable contact and repeat customer requests.
- Policy compliant use of emerging digital capabilities, monitored and reviewed through established governance.

Theme 3: Workforce Digital, Data and Security Capability

Objective: To build a confident, capable and security aware workforce that can adopt, sustain and continuously improve digital ways of working.

Priorities

- Strengthen baseline digital skills to support effective use of core tools and platforms.
- Build digital confidence among leaders so they can champion change and maximise the value of digital investment.
- Provide targeted training, guidance and practical support to embed consistent digital, data and security practices across the organisation.
- Develop internal ICT and digital capability to reduce dependency on external suppliers and strengthen organisational resilience.
- Embed continuous improvement approaches within services to support sustained adoption, reduce rework and drive ongoing optimisation.
- Strengthen security awareness and behaviours to ensure all staff understand their role in protecting information, systems and residents' data.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased workforce confidence and competence in using digital tools, data and secure working practices.
- Improved productivity, consistency and quality of work across services.
- Greater leadership ownership and advocacy of digital change.
- Reduced reliance on external suppliers through strengthened internal capability and knowledge transfer.
- A more resilient, digitally ready and security aware organisation able to adapt to ongoing change.
- A workforce confident in identifying opportunities for digital improvement and capable of adopting new tools safely and effectively.

Theme 4: Digital Platform, Customer Experience and Inclusion

Objective: To design and deliver intuitive, inclusive and continuously improving digital services, guided by Digital by Design principles, user insight, accessibility standards and evidence.

Priorities

- Develop a modular, standardised digital platform that supports end-to-end service journeys.
- Strengthen accessibility, usability and design consistency across all online services to meet recognised standards and support all residents.
- Ensure appropriate non-digital access routes remain available and effective for those who cannot or prefer not to use digital channels.
- Improve customer insight, analytics and feedback loops to guide prioritisation and service redesign.
- Review opportunities for enhanced digital systems within a wider integrated ecosystem.
- Introduce emerging digital capabilities through small, evidence led pilots aligned to governance and organisational risk appetite.
- Standardise digital components, design patterns and user journeys to reduce variation and improve quality.

Expected Outcomes

- A more coherent, seamless and joined up customer experience across all channels.
- Increased appropriate use of digital self-service through simpler, more intuitive journeys.
- Improved accessibility and inclusion for all residents.
- Greater service consistency and reliability through standardised design patterns.
- Better organisational decision-making supported by stronger customer insight and analytics.
- Transparent and accessible use of emerging digital capabilities, with assisted and non-digital routes maintained for those who need them.

9. Utilising Technology

Technology acts as a core enabler of modern public services. ICT is responsible for providing secure, reliable and future-ready platforms, tools and technical standards that support the organisation to operate effectively. Services remain responsible for the data they hold, the processes they operate and the decisions they make, while ICT provides the digital foundations, governance and assurance that enable those services to function safely and efficiently.

All digital solutions must align to a coherent ICT architecture to ensure consistency, interoperability and long-term sustainability across the Council's technology estate.

This model ensures clarity of ownership and accountability, reduces duplication and risk, and supports sustainable digital improvement across the organisation.

9.1. Modern, Flexible and Consistent Digital Working

Modern working practices depend on reliable, structured and well-managed digital tools. ICT will provide and maintain the collaboration platforms, devices and technical standards required for effective use. Services remain accountable for how information is used, maintained and organised within those tools, ensuring consistency and compliance.

9.2. A Secure and Well-Governed Digital Environment

ICT is responsible for the technical controls, security configuration, identity management, devices and platforms that protect the organisation. Services remain responsible for the appropriate use of data, operational decision-making and compliance with policies and governance frameworks. This clear division ensures technology risk is managed centrally while operational data is managed within services.

9.3. Automation, Workflow and Streamlined Processes

ICT provides the automation tools, workflow platforms and integration capabilities that allow processes to be digitised and streamlined. Services are responsible for defining their processes, agreeing business rules and validating outputs. This partnership approach ensures that automation supports redesigned processes. Delivery models will be determined on a case-by-case basis in line with corporate governance arrangements.

9.4. Improving Customer Experience and Transparency

ICT enables the digital platform, online journeys, integrations and data flows that support a coherent customer experience. Services retain ownership of content, business logic and operational decisions, ensuring accuracy and relevance while ICT ensures the digital layer is modern, consistent and well supported.

9.5. Building Workforce Digital Confidence and Capability

ICT provides the tools, standards, guidance and support that enable staff to work digitally and safely. Services are responsible for embedding these ways of working within their teams, supporting adoption, addressing resistance to change and participating in skills development.

This shared approach ensures digital improvement is sustained through continuous learning and service ownership, with responsibility embedded across the organisation rather than centralised within ICT.

9.6. Reducing Complexity and System Duplication

The Council will reduce complexity and duplication by standardising platforms, consolidating systems, and managing technology lifecycles proactively. ICT leads the strategic direction, governance and architecture to ensure the estate remains secure, coherent and sustainable. Services play a critical role by aligning local practices to corporate standards, retiring redundant systems, and engaging early on any new digital needs.

This shared approach lowers cost, reduces risk and strengthens resilience across the organisation.

9.7. AI Roles & Responsibilities

ICT is responsible for:

- Enterprise architecture and standards setting and assuring the design principles, patterns and data structures that keep the estate coherent.
- Technology governance and assurance approving all digital/system procurements; enforcing change control, security and integration standards.
- Lifecycle and rationalisation consolidating products, managing end of life, and planning sustainable replacements.
- Platforms and core services operating and evolving shared platforms, identity, devices and integrations.
- Strategic contracts owning and managing all major system contracts, supplier performance and technical/commercial risk.
- Maintaining the AI Policy as a governance framework for emerging digital capabilities, coordinating information governance/security assurance and confirming monitoring arrangements prior to go-live.

Services are responsible for:

- Early engagement involving ICT at the outset of any system change, procurement or process redesign.
- Business ownership defining service outcomes, requirements and process rules; leading adoption and benefits realisation.
- Operational use and data ensuring data quality and consistent use of systems within their service areas.
- Standards alignment adhering to corporate architecture, security and design standards.
- Ensuring any use of emerging digital capabilities is governed responsibly, with clear business rules, transparency and proportional oversight.

Procurement is responsible for:

- Compliant, value driven sourcing — structuring procurements and contracts with clear SLAs/KPIs, protections and exit provisions.
- Supplier governance support, partnering with ICT and services on performance reviews and commercial changes.
- Ensuring AI related procurements include policy conformance, transparency obligations, testing/evaluation rights, audit access, data portability and exit provisions.

Shared commitments

ICT, services and Procurement will ensure that all digital investments:

- follow agreed governance and assurance
- are architecturally and security aligned
- have clear ownership and measurable benefits
- retire duplication as new capabilities are adopted; and
- no deployment of advanced or automated capabilities proceeds without proportionate assurance, monitoring and governance.

ICT will approve all digital procurements, own and manage all major system contracts, and work jointly with services and Commercial/Procurement to deliver secure, standardised and value for money technology.

10. Delivery Approach & Roadmap

Delivery is based on continuous improvement, with manageable enhancements prioritised by evidence, impact and capacity. Delivery and investment decisions will be aligned with the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and financial governance processes to ensure affordability, value for money and long-term sustainability. The strategy focuses on achievable steps that strengthen foundations and enable informed future decisions.

This strategy reflects national digital policy direction, including principles set out in government digital and data strategies, while remaining grounded in local priorities, governance and capacity.

10.1. Principles for Delivery

Middlesbrough Council will deliver digital change in a way that strengthens public value, safeguards residents and builds organisational resilience. These principles apply across the whole Council and its partnerships, setting clear expectations for how technology is designed, selected and operated.
In practice, this means ICT applies a consistent and transparent approach to digital change, including:

1. Clear definition of need
   ICT works with services to understand the problem to be solved, statutory requirements, essential outcomes and operational constraints, ensuring decisions are driven by *needs*, not preferences.

2. Review of the current position
   Existing processes, data quality, system dependencies and operational readiness are assessed to identify constraints, risks and improvement opportunities.

3. Development and assessment of options
   ICT identifies viable options and evaluates each collaboratively with services against:
   - ability to meet essential service requirements
   - operational impact and readiness
   - benefits, risks and cost
   - interoperability and alignment with standards
   - accessibility, security and information governance
   - sustainability, support and lifecycle considerations

4. Collaborative decision-making
   ICT will not impose technology that prevents or undermines the delivery of core functions. Decisions are made jointly with services, informed by evidence, feasibility and organisational standards.

5. Transparent governance and assurance
   Agreed decisions are recorded through established governance and TDA processes, ensuring traceability, accountability and organisational assurance.

This approach ensures that technology choices address service needs, not organisational preference, and that decisions are transparent, explainable and aligned to governance, security and operational assurance standards.

Strategic Commitments

Digital decisions will follow a consistent approach:

- Council Plan led: Digital investment will enable Council Plan outcomes and statutory duties.
- Security and trust by design: Security, privacy and accessibility embedded from the outset.
- Needs before solutions: Business need and outcomes defined before selecting technology.
- One Council architecture: Solutions must align with enterprise architecture for interoperability and reuse.

- Standardise and simplify: Reduce duplication, cost and technical debt by standardising before customising.
- Process first, then tech: Processes redesigned where needed to ensure technology delivers maximum value.
- Evidence and transparency: Decisions based on transparent appraisal and recorded for assurance.
- Safe adoption of emerging tech: New capabilities used responsibly, proportionately and with accountability.
- Joint ownership: ICT, services and Procurement share responsibility for outcomes; early ICT engagement is mandatory.
- Value and sustainability: Prioritise whole life value, resilience and planned exit to avoid lock-in and legacy risk.
- Assurance: No solution will be approved or imposed where it would prevent delivery of statutory or operational functions.

10.2. Monitoring Progress and Benefits

Progress will be monitored using a balanced set of measures, including service performance, system resilience, security assurance, reduction in duplication and customer experience. Benefits will be tracked proportionately to ensure digital improvements deliver measurable organisational value.

Monitoring will include data quality readiness, platform stability, workforce capability, process reliability and customer insight. Improvements will be tracked through theme level KPIs and reviewed through established digital and corporate governance arrangements. Progress will be reported to Executive and Audit Committee as required.

Theme 1: KPI - Secure & Modern Foundations

- Reduction in system duplication and legacy risk
- Platform stability, resilience and availability
- Cyber and information assurance outcomes
- Lifecycle visibility and control
- Moving priority datasets into Microsoft Fabric as a secure, scalable analytical platform, enabling consistent data models, reliable reporting and improved data availability.

KPI	Description	Target
System Rationalisation Progress	Completion of a Council-wide systems amnesty to establish a full and authoritative baseline of all systems, including system count, cost, usage, technical status and ownership.	Baseline established by 2026
	Reduction in overlapping or duplicative systems to simplify the estate, measured by changes in system count and/or system cost compared to the established baseline.	Directional reduction from baseline following audit.
Estate Simplification	Reduction in the number of different tools used across the Council, supporting standardisation and reduced complexity.	Baseline established in 2026
Platform Stability	Availability and uptime of systems supporting critical services.	≥ 98.5%
Security Posture Improvement	Progress against cyber security controls, audits and assurance recommendations.	Year on year improvement
Lifecycle Visibility	Percentage of systems with documented lifecycle status (including	80% by 2028

	support arrangements, dependencies and planned exit where applicable).	
M365 Adoption Improvement	Increased use of approved, standardised Microsoft tools and reduction in unapproved or shadow systems.	Baseline established 2026; improvement tracked annually
Data Ownership Coverage	Percentage of priority systems with a named Information Asset Owner and documented data ownership.	95% by 2027
Data Migration to Fabric	Percentage of priority datasets migrated into Microsoft Fabric as the Council’s central analytical platform, subject to data quality readiness and contractual constraints.	Baseline 2026 → progress tracked annually (subject to contract notice periods and data extract readiness)

Theme 2: KPI - Simpler Processes & Safe Automation

- Evidence of process simplification and reduced manual effort
- Reliability and consistency of automated workflows
- Assurance outcomes for emerging digital capabilities aligned to policy
- Demonstrated benefits realised from automation initiatives

KPI	Description	Target
Processes Redesigned	Percentage of priority processes redesigned and simplified before automation or system enhancement, based on an agreed corporate definition of "priority process".	Baseline established 2026; up to 50% by 2030
Manual Effort Reduction	Reduction in manual steps within redesigned processes, measured post-redesign and verified with services.	Directional improvement evidenced per process.
Automation Reliability	Percentage of automated tasks and workflows operating without manual intervention, excluding planned controls and assurance checkpoints.	≥ 80%
Governance Compliance	Compliance with agreed governance, assurance and policy requirements for automation and emerging digital capabilities.	100% compliance
Pilot Success Rate	Number of automation or digital improvement pilots demonstrating measurable benefit against agreed success criteria.	2–3 by 2029
Process Benefit Realisation	Evidence of time, cost and/or customer experience improvements delivered through process redesign and automation.	Reported annually through benefits reporting

Theme 3: KPI - Workforce Digital, Data and Security Capability

- Workforce digital confidence and adoption
- Completion of relevant training and guidance
- Strength of security behaviours and compliance
- Reduced dependency on external suppliers

KPI	Description	Target
Digital Confidence Improvement	Improvement in staff readiness and confidence to adopt redesigned processes and enhanced digital tools, measured through agreed workforce readiness indicators.	Baseline established 2026; improvement tracked annually
Digital Skills Training Completion	Percentage of workforce completing core digital training, including Microsoft 365 and security awareness.	80% workforce; 100% leadership
Security Behaviour Maturity	Improvement in security behaviours measured through phishing simulations, policy compliance and incident reporting.	Baseline 2026; year-on-year improvement
Adoption of Standardised Tools	Reduction in reliance on ad hoc tools, spreadsheet-driven workarounds and non-standard solutions where approved platforms are available.	Baseline established 2026; improvement tracked annually
Reduction in External Dependency	Evidence of increased internal capability and reduced reliance on external consultants.	Directional reduction reported annually
Digital Literacy Training Completion	Workforce understanding of safe, ethical and policy-compliant use of digital and emerging technologies.	80% workforce; 100% leadership
System Adoption Readiness	Organisational readiness to adopt new systems or redesigned processes, including skills, capacity and change readiness.	Baseline established 2026; improvement year on year

Theme 4: KPI - Digital Platform, Customer Experience and Inclusion

- Accessibility and inclusion outcomes
- Levels of appropriate digital self-service
- Reduction in avoidable or repeat contact
- Improved resident confidence and trust through clearer communication, greater transparency and more reliable digital services

KPI	Description	Target
Digital Self Service Uptake	Percentage of transactions completed through digital channels where digital is the appropriate route, informed by service design and user need.	Baseline established 2026; up to 40% by 2030
Repeat Contact Reduction	Reduction in the proportion of residents needing multiple contacts to resolve the same issue across priority services.	Directional reduction evidenced in priority services
Customer Effort Score	Measure of how easy it is for residents to complete digital journeys, using agreed customer experience metrics.	Baseline established 2026; improvement tracked annually
Accessibility Compliance	Proportion of new or significantly redesigned digital services meeting accessibility standards.	95% for new services
Feedback Integration	Percentage of digital customer feedback reviewed and acted upon within agreed timescales.	75%
Transparency & Trust Indicator	Resident confidence in using Council digital services, including clarity, reliability and understanding of how data is used.	Year-on-year improvement
Programme Alignment	Planning, sequencing and delivery between digital initiatives and the Customer Strategy.	Year-on-year improvement

These measures will be reviewed through existing digital and corporate board governance arrangements, in line with the Council's governance arrangements, and reported to Committee as appropriate to support assurance and oversight.

10.3. Security, Risk and Assurance

All digital initiatives will be subject to proportionate cyber security assessment, information governance assurance and ongoing risk monitoring throughout their lifecycle. Where artificial intelligence or advanced automation is proposed, enhanced safeguards may be applied in accordance with the Council's governance frameworks. Emerging technologies will be adopted only where risks are understood, mitigated and managed appropriately, and where clear ownership, accountability and oversight are in place.

10.4. Roadmap Overview

The roadmap reflects a continuous improvement approach, with activity sequenced to maximise value, manage change and reduce risk. Across all phases, emphasis will be placed on demonstrating benefit, supporting adoption, addressing resistance to change and learning from delivery to inform subsequent decisions.

Progression through roadmap phases will depend on organisational readiness, data maturity, service capacity and evidence of benefit achieved during earlier activity.

Dependencies and Assumptions

Successful delivery of this strategy depends on:

- Sustainable funding
- Services participation in redesign and governance
- Compliance with TDA and architecture standards
- Ongoing cyber and information security investment
- Workforce participation in digital and security training
- Organisational commitment to simplification and standardisation.

- Data quality readiness and priority integrations (standards defined, ownership agreed, cleansing approach resourced).
- Council Plan and Strategies alignment to sequence quality improvements ahead of digital deployments.

Delivery will be planned and sequenced realistically, based on the capacity of both ICT and services, ensuring activity is achievable and sustainable.

10.5. Measures of Success

This Digital Strategy will support the Council to deliver incremental enhancements that build on existing strengths and make our digital environment more consistent, resilient and secure.

Success will include:

- A simplified and sustainable technology estate, achieved through incremental improvements and better use of existing platforms.
- Reduced system duplication and clearer ownership, delivered through strengthened governance and standardisation.
- A more mature and effectively managed automation pipeline, expanding automation where it adds value without increasing complexity.
- Reduced legacy and technical risk, achieved by gradually modernising systems and improving resilience over time.
- More consistent, accessible and joined up digital journeys, refined through small, iterative enhancements that improve users' experience.

Phase 1 – Foundations and Understanding (2026–2027)

Building clarity, confidence and early value

- Completing and maintaining a single authoritative register of systems to improve transparency and control.
- Improving customer communication and transparency using existing digital channels.
- Identifying service pain points and delivering small, visible improvements to demonstrate early value.
- Introducing early automation and workflow improvements in low-risk, high-volume areas.
- Strengthening data quality, ownership and consistency across services.
- Applying low-risk advanced automation where evidence demonstrates clear benefit.
- Supporting staff through change by providing guidance, engagement and reassurance to reduce resistance and build confidence.
- Begin preparing priority datasets for onboarding into Microsoft Fabric, including data quality assessment and ownership, and establish an upskilling plan for specialist teams and end users to ensure they can effectively adopt and exploit the platform’s capabilities.
- Scale policy compliant emerging digital capabilities, expand monitoring and model review cycles aligned to risk.
- Focus - early value, learning, confidence building and evidence generation.

Phase 2 – Targeted High Impact Enhancements (2027–2028)

Scaling what works and embedding new ways of working

- Expanding automation in high-value areas where benefits and service impact have been demonstrated.
- Enhancing or implementing new digital platform capabilities.
- Scaling automation and emerging digital capabilities where adoption is strong and value is proven.
- Reducing dependency on legacy systems where risks, dependencies and service impacts have been mitigated.
- Embedding continuous improvement practices within services to support sustained adoption and reduce rework.
- Focus – embedding change, managing resistance, and maximising return on earlier investment.
- Migrate high value datasets to Fabric to support automation and improved data enabled insight

Phase 3 – Strategic Options and Scaled Improvement (2028–2030)

Making informed, longer-term decisions based on evidence and readiness

- Progressing future digital platform improvements where organisational readiness is sufficient data quality, process clarity and integration requirements are sufficiently mature.
- Retiring legacy systems where sustainable alternatives are in place and organisational readiness is high.
- Enhancing end-to-end digital journeys across priority services, informed by customer insight and operational evidence.
- Strengthening cross-service working and organisational standardisation where this delivers clear value.
- Focus - strategic decision-making, maturity-led investment and long-term value.
- Establish Fabric as the central data platform underpinning customer insight, data enabled automated processes and advanced analytics.

Progress across all phases will be reviewed regularly to ensure activity continues to deliver value, support adoption and align with organisational capacity and priorities.

11. Strategic Alignment

This Digital Strategy is aligned with the Council Plan, Information Strategy, Artificial Intelligence Policy and Governance Policy, cyber security, Information Governance Framework, Customer Strategy and risk management frameworks, equality and workforce priorities, and financial planning processes. This ensures digital improvement is coherent, governed and integrated into the Council's wider strategic and operational landscape.

The strategy also aligns with national digital, cyber and accessibility expectations, supporting assurance against government frameworks and sector guidance

This strategy is explicitly underpinned by the Council's approved AI Policy, ensuring all AI use is ethical, transparent, human centred and aligned with our security, privacy and equality obligations.

12. Conclusion

This strategy sets a clear, realistic and responsible direction for the Council's use of digital, data and technology over the coming years. It balances ambition with responsibility, ensuring modernisation supports essential services, public trust and long-term sustainability. By strengthening foundations, improving processes, building capability and adopting emerging technologies carefully and responsibly, Middlesbrough Council can make steady, meaningful progress within available resources while continuing to deliver high quality services for its communities.

13. Glossary

Term	Definition
Architecture (Technology Architecture)	The structure, standards and design principles that determine how systems, platforms and data work together across the organisation. Supports coherence, security and sustainability.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Used in governance contexts as part of the Council's oversight of emerging digital capabilities. References within this strategy do not represent a commitment to deploy AI technologies.
AI Policy	The Council's approved policy that defines the safe, ethical and transparent use of AI, including procurement expectations, human oversight and proportionate assurance.
Automation	Using digital tools to perform routine or repetitive tasks automatically, reducing manual effort and improving accuracy.
Change Control	A formal process for assessing, approving and recording technical changes to ensure they are secure, controlled and do not introduce risk.
Cloud First	A principle that prioritises secure, modern cloud-based platforms where appropriate, supporting resilience, scalability and sustainability.
Contract Management (Strategic Systems)	The coordinated management of supplier contracts for major or business-critical systems. ICT leads technical oversight; services lead on outcomes; Commercial ensures commercial compliance.
Cyber Security Posture	The organisation's overall protection against cyber threats, including technology controls, governance arrangements and workforce behaviours.
Data Governance	The policies, processes and roles that ensure data is accurate, secure, well managed and used consistently across the organisation.
Data Quality	The accuracy, completeness, validity, timeliness and uniqueness of data required to support reliable integration, automation and decision-making.
Digital Confidence	The capability staff and leaders need to use digital tools effectively and support digital change.
Digital Inclusion	Ensuring all residents can access and use services regardless of skills, technology access or personal circumstances.

Term	Definition
Digital Platform	Shared systems, tools and components used to deliver consistent, scalable and integrated digital services.
Digital Self-Service	Online services that allow residents to complete transactions without contacting the Council directly, where appropriate.
Digital Strategy	The Council’s long-term direction for digital, data and technology, setting priorities, governance and intended outcomes.
Human in the Loop	A control approach ensuring a trained person reviews, validates or can override automated or AI-supported outputs before decisions with material impact are acted upon.
Integration	Technology that enables systems to exchange data automatically, reducing duplication and manual effort.
Interoperability	The ability of systems to work together and share data reliably and securely.
Lifecycle Management	Managing systems from procurement through to retirement, ensuring they remain secure, supported and fit for purpose.
Microsoft Fabric	The Council’s secure, cloud-based data and analytics platform used to consolidate data, improve consistency, enable reporting and support automation and advanced analytics.
Platform	A foundational system, such as workflow or case management, used across multiple services to deliver digital processes.
Process Redesign	Improving how work is carried out to remove inefficiency and prepare processes for digital or automated solutions.
Security First Design	Ensuring cyber security, data protection and compliance requirements are built into digital initiatives from the outset.
Service-Centred Design	Designing services based on user needs, insight and operational context rather than technology preference.
Standardisation	Reducing variation by using shared systems, processes, data structures and components.
Supplier Governance	Oversight of supplier performance, risk and contract obligations to ensure quality, compliance and value for money.
System Register (Authoritative Register)	A single, accurate record of all digital systems used across the Council, supporting governance, assurance and lifecycle planning.

Term	Definition
Technical Design Authority (TDA)	The Council's digital governance body responsible for assuring technology decisions, ensuring alignment with architecture, security, information governance and strategic direction.
Technical Debt	The future cost or risk created when systems diverge from agreed standards or best practice.
Workflow	A digital sequence of tasks and rules used to support automation and streamlined service delivery.

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	

Report of:	Corporate Director Environment, Communities and Culture – Geoff Field
Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Environment - Cllr Peter Gavigan
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	10 June 2026
Title:	Bereavement Strategy
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Safe and resilient communities
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive:

- Approves the Bereavement strategy as the framework for delivering a compassionate, inclusive and sustainable bereavement services for Middlesbrough.

Executive summary

This report seeks approval for the Bereavement Services Strategy, which sets out Middlesbrough Council's vision for delivering high-quality, culturally sensitive, and environmentally responsible bereavement services. The strategy addresses key challenges, including ageing cremation equipment, limited burial space, and exploring additional working options within the service.

The recommended approach introduces a unified leadership model, investment in cremator replacement, improved cemetery aesthetics, and enhanced service accessibility (including weekend appointments). It also embeds environmental sustainability through low-emission cremation practices.

Alternative options, such as maintaining the status quo, were considered but rejected due to risks of non-compliance, reputational damage, and inability to meet community needs. The implications of the recommendations have been assessed by relevant officers and are detailed in this report.

This strategy requires executive approval as per 10.20.1 (b) of the constitution which requires all key decision not otherwise delegated by the Mayor to be taken by executive.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The Bereavement Services Strategy sets out Middlesbrough Council's long-term approach to delivering compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable bereavement services that meet the needs of residents now and in the future. It establishes a clear direction for addressing key challenges, including ageing infrastructure, limited burial capacity, and the need to improve service quality and accessibility, while also embedding environmental responsibility. Executive approval is required due to the strategy's significance in shaping service delivery, committing financial investment, and managing reputational, operational, and regulatory risks. Endorsement at this level ensures that the proposed approach is aligned with corporate priorities, appropriately resourced, and supported across the organisation to enable effective implementation

Contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions:

1.2 Safe and Resilient Communities: Provides dignified, accessible bereavement services, enforces cemetery regulations, and promotes community engagement.

1.3 A Healthy Place: Addresses emotional wellbeing, promotes inclusivity, and aligns with environmental goals through sustainable practices.

1.4 Delivering Best Value: Introduces robust governance, compliance with national standards, and a financially sustainable model.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	- Investment within the bereavement infrastructure; create more business engagement with Funeral directors, stonemasons and suppliers. - The service to introduce clear roles and responsibilities, the strategy supports staff development within bereavement services. - Land use planning for cemeteries, ensuring use of council owned land
A healthy Place	Aims within this ambition are to: - The strategy ensures equitable access to bereavement services regardless of background, religion, or income, addressing emotional wellbeing and social inclusion during times of loss. - Environment sustainability throughout this bereavement strategy plays a strong part, the strategy explains actions such as improving creation practices and exploring all options for fuels for the cremators.

	- This strategy openly commits to culturally sensitive and inclusive services, ensuring dignity and respect for all communities.
Safe and resilient communities	Aims within this ambition are to: - Improve the service by enhancing the cemeteries and cremation records digitally. - The strategy encourages community engagement, consultation and the development of memorial designs fostering pride and innovation into our cemeteries. - Enforcing cemetery regulations and addressing issues with unauthorised memorabilia and unsafe memorials, the strategy contributes to a safer public space.
Delivering best value	Aims within this ambition are to: - This strategy introduces clear leadership and accountability, and compliance with notational standards, improving governance throughout bereavement services.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Executive:

- Approves the Bereavement strategy as the framework for delivering compassionate, inclusive and sustainable bereavement services for Middlesbrough.

3 Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 Bereavement Services are a critical function of Middlesbrough Council, reflecting its commitment to dignity and compassion during times of loss.

The rationale for the recommended decision is:

- Alignment with the council plan, the strategy supports the ambitions of safe and resilient communities, a healthy place and delivering best value by improving service accessibility, governance and environmental sustainability.
- Adoption of low emission cremation practices and sustainable long-term plans for our cemeteries.
- Exploring the services opening times and being open to flexible options in relation to cremations and burials.
- The strategy includes pricing reviews, efficiency measures and long-term investment planning.
- Strengthening relationships with funeral directors, faith groups and residents will rebuild trust and improve overall satisfaction.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The approval of the Bereavement Services Strategy is required to ensure the Council continues 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).

4.2 In addition to legislative compliance, the Strategy provides a clear long-term framework to:

- Maintain and improve safe, dignified and sustainable bereavement services.
- Ensure sufficient provision to meet future demand and demographic change, including burial capacity and cremation services.
- Support delivery of the Council's strategic priorities, particularly those relating to:
  - supporting residents at vulnerable moments
  - improving environmental sustainability (e.g. emissions, land use, biodiversity)
  - financial sustainability and cost recovery
  - community wellbeing and inclusive services.

4.3 The Strategy also responds to national policy developments, sector guidance, and increased public expectations around choice, cultural sensitivity, and environmental impact.

4.4 The development of the Bereavement Services Strategy has been informed by a range of evidence, technical inputs and strategic considerations, including:

- Condition surveys and assessments of existing cemetery and crematorium infrastructure
- Capacity modelling for burial space and cremation demand
- Environmental and regulatory compliance requirements (including emissions standards where relevant)
- Benchmarking against national standards and comparable local authorities
- National guidance and best practice from professional bodies
- Current and projected service costs and income
- Long-term sustainability of the service, including maintenance liabilities
- Capital investment requirement
- Customer feedback and complaints
- Service usage trends and demographic changes
- Equality and accessibility considerations.

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Specific engagement with Executive Member for Environment.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 The other alternatives are to continue with the current equipment, service options and service structures which would not be assist in future proofing the service for the reasons noted.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	Investment in the cremators and site improvements. There are potential financial implications from the ambitions within the strategy that are currently subject to feasibility studies. As these are completed, they will be taken through the appropriate decision-making processes to consider the financial impact.
Procurement	Any procurement activity that arises from the Bereavement Strategy and subsequent feasibility studies will be supported by the Procurement Team ensuring compliance with the Council's Constitution and/or Procurement Act 2023. This report will provide the key decision approval in the event that any procurement is in excess of £250k.
Legal	The strategy will ensure that the Council continues 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. It also ensures ongoing compliance with the DEFRA, FBCA, BRAMM industry standards.
Risk	The adoption of a Bereavement Strategy will positively impact on a number of risks by reducing the likelihood of the Council failing to meet its legal obligations in relation to the service and the functions it delivers, in particular it will reduce the risk of liability through enforcement of memorial safety and cemetery regulations.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	The Strategy will ensure that the Council continues to deliver services that are inclusive and culturally sensitive to all communities. An impact assessment has been completed which found that the report would have no disproportionate negative impacts on groups or individuals because they hold one or more protected characteristics.
Reducing Poverty	Bereavement can place a significant and immediate financial burden on families, particularly those already experiencing financial hardship. The Strategy contributes positively by: • Promoting transparent and fair fees and charges, enabling residents to make informed and affordable choices

	• Supporting the availability of lower-cost funeral options, where appropriate • Ensuring access to public health funerals in cases where no alternative arrangements can be made • Improving information and signposting to financial support mechanisms, such as the Government's Funeral Expenses Payment.
Climate Change / Environmental	Adoption of low emission cremators and sustainable options and services will positively impact on the Council's Climate change and environmental ambitions.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The Bereavement Services Strategy is expected to have a positive impact on children and young people cared for by the authority, and care leavers, who may experience bereavement without strong family support networks. The strategy promotes compassionate, accessible services and improved customer care, helping to ensure that vulnerable individuals are treated with sensitivity during times of grief. No negative impacts have been identified, and ongoing collaboration with children's services will help ensure appropriate support is in place when needed.
Data Protection	The Bereavement Services Strategy is a high-level strategic document and does not introduce new systems or processes involving the collection or processing of personal data. As such, the adoption of the Strategy has no direct or immediate data protection implications. Any actions arising from the Strategy such as service redesign, introduction of new digital systems, changes to record management, or enhanced data sharing with partners (e.g. funeral directors), will be subject to appropriate data protection controls.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Establish a management structure	Head of Environment Services / Bereavement Services Manager	July 2026
Cremator replacement plan	Bereavement Services Manager	March 2027
Cemetery expansion planning	Head of Environment and Head of Economic Growth	Ongoing
Explore additional service options	Bereavement Services Manager	July 2026
Pricing review	Bereavement Services Manager	Annually

Appendices

1	Bereavement Services Strategy
2	Cemetery and Crematorium Regulations
3	Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Katie Bargewell, Head of Environment Services
Email: Katie_bargewell@middlesbrough.gov.uk

	Bereavement Service Strategy

Title				
Creator	Author(s)	Katie Bargewell – Head of Environment		
	Approved by	LMT		
	Department	Bereavement Services		
	Service area	Environment Services		
	Head of Service	Katie Bargewell – Head of Environment		
	Director	Corporate Director Environment, Communities and Culture – Geoff Field		
Date	Created	01 January 2026		
	Submitted	18 May 2026		
	Approved	?		
	Updating Frequency	3 years		
Status	Version: 0.1			
Contributor(s)	Katie Bargewell (Head of Environment), Gary Welch (Risk and H&S Manager),			
Subject	Bereavement Services Strategy			
Type	Strategy			
	Vital Record		EIR	x
Coverage	Middlesbrough Council			
Language	English			

Document Control

Version	Date	Revision History	Reviser
0.1		First draft	
0.2			
0.3			
1.0		First approved version	

Distribution List

Version	Date	Name/Service area	Action
1.0		Bereavement Services and ECS	
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			

Contact:	Katie_Bargewell@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Foreword

Bereavement is a deeply personal and often challenging experience, and it is our responsibility as a Council to ensure that our services offer compassion, dignity, and respect to every individual and family we serve. Middlesbrough's Bereavement Services play a vital role in supporting our community through moments of loss, and this strategy sets out a clear and ambitious vision for how we will enhance and future-proof these services.

We recognise that our cemeteries and crematorium are not only places of remembrance but also reflections of the values we uphold integrity, care, and community. This strategy outlines the steps we will take to improve infrastructure, strengthen service delivery, and ensure compliance with national standards, while remaining sensitive to the diverse cultural and emotional needs of our residents.

Through investment, innovation, and collaboration, we aim to create a bereavement service that is responsive, sustainable, and worthy of the trust placed in us. Whether through expanding access, improving environmental practices, or fostering stronger relationships with families and stakeholders, our goal is to deliver a service that truly honours those we have lost and supports those who grieve.

We are committed to continuous improvement and welcome feedback from our community as we move forward together.

Executive Summary

This Bereavement Services Strategy sets out Middlesbrough Council's vision for delivering compassionate, inclusive, and sustainable bereavement services that meet the evolving needs of our community. Recognising the emotional significance of crematoria and cemeteries, the strategy outlines a comprehensive plan to improve service delivery, infrastructure, and environmental performance.

The strategy highlights a number of critical challenges, including ageing cremation equipment, limited burial capacity, and inconsistencies in how services are managed. To address this, it sets out a move towards a unified leadership structure, alongside targeted investment in facilities and strengthened operational practices. Together, these changes aim to deliver a more coordinated, sustainable service that ensures all residents receive respectful and dignified provision.

Immediate priorities reviewing the service workforce to ensure that it is future proofed, improving site aesthetics, and introducing weekend services. Medium and long-term actions focus on cemetery development, cremator replacement, and community engagement. The strategy also addresses compliance with national legislation and industry standards, with a strong emphasis on health and safety, environmental responsibility, and financial sustainability.

Performance will be monitored through annual reviews, stakeholder feedback, and service metrics such as market share, client satisfaction, and staff wellbeing. This strategy reflects the Council's commitment to delivering high-quality bereavement services that honour the deceased and support the living.

1. Introduction

1.1 Bereavement Services are among the most sensitive and emotionally significant functions provided by Middlesbrough Council. They represent not only a practical necessity but also a reflection of the Council's commitment to dignity, compassion, and respect for all residents during times of loss.

1.2 This strategy has been developed in response to growing challenges within the service, including ageing infrastructure, limited burial space, inconsistent management arrangements, and evolving community expectations. It aligns with the Council's core values, Passion, Integrity, Creativity, Collaboration, and Focus and supports wider corporate priorities such as environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

1.3 The strategy outlines a clear roadmap for improving service delivery, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring compliance with legislative and industry standards. It also recognises the importance of cultural sensitivity, equitable access, and environmental responsibility in shaping a modern bereavement service.

1.4 By setting out short, medium, and long-term actions, this strategy aims to future-proof Bereavement Services, restore public confidence, and ensure that Middlesbrough remains a place where families can honour their loved ones with dignity and care.

2. Legislative, Regulatory and Governance Framework

2.1 To ensure that the Bereavement Services strategy aligns to the Council Plan, the following four ambitions underpin our aims.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	**Attract and grow businesses to increase employment opportunities** The strategy promotes investment in bereavement infrastructure (e.g., cremators, memorial gardens), which may stimulate local business engagement—especially with funeral directors, stonemasons, and suppliers—supporting job creation and economic activity. **Improve attainment in education and skills** By professionalising the service and introducing clearer roles and responsibilities, the strategy supports staff development, training, and upskilling within bereavement services. **Ensure housing provision meets local demand** While not directly linked to housing, the strategy's land-use planning for cemeteries complements broader spatial planning efforts, ensuring sustainable use of council owned land.
A healthy Place	**Improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities** The strategy ensures equitable access to bereavement services regardless of background, religion, or income, addressing emotional wellbeing and social inclusion during times of loss.

	Protect and improve our environment Environmental sustainability is a core theme, with actions such as improving cremation practices, exploring electric/hybrid cremators, and promoting granite-free memorials. **Promote inclusivity for all** The strategy explicitly commits to culturally sensitive and inclusive services, ensuring dignity and respect for all communities. **Reduce poverty** By introducing graduated pricing and reviewing funeral costs, the strategy aims to reduce funeral poverty and ensure affordability for all residents.
Safe and resilient communities	**Support adults to be independent for longer** Bereavement services indirectly support emotional resilience and independence by offering dignified, accessible services that help families navigate loss. **Improve transport and digital connectivity** While not a primary focus, improved service coordination and stakeholder engagement (e.g., with funeral directors) may enhance logistical planning and digital record-keeping. **Promote new ideas and community initiatives** The strategy encourages community engagement, consultation, and the development of Middlesbrough specific memorial designs, fostering civic pride and innovation. **Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour** By enforcing cemetery regulations and addressing issues like unauthorised memorabilia and unsafe memorials, the strategy contributes to safer public spaces.
Delivering best value	**Ensure robust and effective corporate governance** The strategy introduces clearer leadership, accountability, and compliance with national standards, improving governance across bereavement services. **Set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan** Financial sustainability is addressed through cost-efficiency measures, pricing reviews, and long-term planning for infrastructure investment, helping restore resilience and value for money.

3. Vision and Strategic Aims

3.1 Vision Statement

To deliver a compassionate, inclusive, and environmentally responsible bereavement service that honours the dignity of every individual, supports families through loss, and reflects Middlesbrough Council's commitment to excellence, sustainability, and community wellbeing.

4. Strategic Aims

4.1 The strategic aims set out the long-term direction for Bereavement Services and provides a clear framework for delivering a modern, compassionate and sustainable service.

4.2 These aims are designed to respond to current challenges, anticipate future demand and ensure that the service continues to operate with dignity within an efficient process and financial resilience.

4.3 The aims reflect the core priorities identified through service reviews, stakeholder engagement and organisational objectives, focusing on improving the quality and accessibility of bereavement services, strengthening operational infrastructure and promoting environmental responsibility.

4.4 This strategic direction will guide decision-making, investment, and service development over the coming years to ensure Bereavement Services remains responsive to the client and service user needs while upholding the highest professional and ethical standards.

4.5 **The Strategic aims are:**

Enhance Service Quality and Accessibility

- Provide respectful, culturally sensitive services that meet the diverse needs of our community.
- Explore extended service hours, which may include weekends.
- Introduce extended service options such as memorial days, advent services and open days.

Strengthen Infrastructure and Operational Resilience

- Replace ageing cremation equipment with compliant, energy-efficient models.
- Address burial space shortages through strategic land planning and development.
- Improve site aesthetics and maintenance to enhance public perception.

Promote Environmental Sustainability

- Adopt practices to monitor fuel usage and maximise fuel efficiency that reduce emissions.
- Explore sustainable memorial options and reduce reliance on granite.
- Align with Middlesbrough's Green Strategy and environmental goals.

Ensure Financial Viability and Value for Money

- Review pricing structures and payment options to address funeral poverty and ensure affordability.
- Improve operational efficiency and reduce unnecessary expenditure.
- Develop a sustainable revenue model through better land and service management.
- Explore service enhancements opportunities and implement competitive pricing structures to regain market share.

Foster Community Engagement and Trust

- Strengthen relationships with funeral partners including funeral directors, stonemasons, celebrants/clergy and service users.
- Promote transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in service delivery.
- Introduce a wider service offer centred on bereavement service support i.e. memorial days, reflections sessions and advent services.
- Encourage public involvement in service design and memorial garden development.

Embed Strong Governance and Compliance

- Align with national legislation and industry standards (e.g., LACO 1977, FBCA/ICCM, NAMM/BRAMM, Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, Cremation Regulations 2008).
- Enforce cemetery regulations including the management of private graves to improve the visual appearance of cemeteries and reduce risk and liability.
- Establish clear roles, responsibilities, and leadership within the service.

5. Current Position

5.1 **Service Overview**

Bereavement Services encompasses both cremation and burial provision, delivered across several teams. As an emotionally significant public service, it represents a visible expression of the Council’s values and commitment to dignity and compassion. However, the service is currently experiencing a range of operational, financial and reputational pressures that require strategic attention and investment.

5.2 **Cremation Services**

The crematorium operates three cremators. An additional two cremators are on site but are no longer compliant with current environmental regulations and therefore not currently operational. A feasibility study is currently underway to determine the most viable options for securing the operational resilience and regulatory compliance necessary for the future business needs.

Environmental compliance is governed by the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and relevant ICCM/FBCA guidance. Pending regulatory changes will require the abatement of 100% of cremations from November 2027, adding further urgency to the need for modernised equipment and infrastructure.

In addition to equipment issues, the crematorium buildings require refurbishment, the internal layout and building flow need review to better support service delivery and client movement, reception areas are insufficient for current demand, and the range of memorial options available to families remains limited.

5.3 **Burial Services**

Burial provision is under significant pressure. Acklam Cemetery has less than one year of burial capacity remaining, placing it in a critical position. Work is underway to extend Thorntree Cemetery, and this new provision is expected to offer approximately five years of additional burial space. Demand for same day and weekend burials, particularly for faith groups requiring immediate or time sensitive interment, creates further operational strain on staff and resources.

Cemetery regulations are not consistently enforced, leading to the increase of unauthorised items on lawn graves and the installation of non-compliant memorials. These issues negatively affect the appearance of cemetery grounds, diminish the quality of the visitor experience, and increase both public safety risks and the Council’s liability.

5.4 **Operational Challenges**

Operationally, the service would benefit from a restructure to ensure priorities are aligned and efficiencies are maximised. Although the service is financially stable, reviewing current processes and areas of higher expenditure would support stronger financial oversight and improved value for money.

5.6 **Public Perception**
Public confidence in Bereavement Services has weakened, and the service is not currently the preferred choice for many residents or Funeral Directors. This has contributed to a loss of market share to neighbouring providers. Rebuilding trust, improving the reliability and responsiveness of services and enhancing the overall customer experience are therefore essential to restoring the service’s reputation.

6. Strategic Objectives

6.1 The issues outlined highlight the scale and urgency of the challenges facing Bereavement Services. Ageing infrastructure, limited burial capacity, compliance pressures, management arrangement is spread across teams and declining public confidence demonstrate that the service must adapt to meet both present or future demands. However, these pressures present an opportunity for transformation, to modernise facilities, strengthen operational resilience and improve the client/customer experience and re-establish the service as a trusted service provider and the preferred choice for the bereavement care within the region.

In responding to the Strategic Aims, the following objectives set out a clear plan to address the service challenges whilst ensuring that Bereavement Services operate with efficiency, sustainability and financial stability.

6.2 **Deliver Compassionate and Inclusive Services**

Bereavement Services will ensure that all interactions are respectful, culturally sensitive and accessible to every resident, with a strong customer-centred approach embedded across all teams.

6.3 **Modernise Infrastructure and Equipment**

The service will replace outdated cremators, upgrade digital tribute systems and enhance the physical environment across all cemetery and crematorium sites to reflect a high standard of care and dignity.

6.4 **Expand Accessibility and Flexibility**

Weekend provision may be explored, alternative funeral service formats and options, and a wider range of burial options will be explored to provide families with genuine choice and support the changing community needs.

6.4 **Strengthen Governance and Accountability**

A unified management model, with clearly defined responsibilities across all areas of the service, to provide clarity, consistency and improved operational oversight.

6.6 **Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

Energy-monitoring systems, improved fuel efficiency and sustainable memorial options will be prioritised to reduce emissions and support Middlesbrough Councils Green Strategy.

6.7 **Improve Financial Efficiency and Value for Money**

Pricing structures and payment options will be reviewed regularly with a view to affordability and reducing funeral poverty within the financial constraints the Council operates in. Operational efficiencies will be sought where possible to improve financial efficiency and value for money.

6.8 **Enhance Community Engagement and Trust**

The service will encourage stronger relationships with funeral partners and service users, involve residents in service development and improve the service offer to regain market share.

6.9 **Secure Long-Term Service Viability**

Future burial capacity will be planned through cemetery development, supported by working groups assessing long-term risks and investment requirements.

7. Implementation

7.1 The successful delivery of this strategy relies on a clear and coordinated approach to implementation. The actions set out in this section translate the strategic objectives into practical steps that will strengthen leadership, modernise infrastructure, improve service quality and rebuild trust with the community. They provide a structured programme of work that addresses immediate priorities while laying the foundations for long-term resilience, compliance and financial sustainability.

7.2 Implementation will be supported by strengthened governance arrangements, cross service collaboration and ongoing engagement with staff, key partners and service users. By aligning operational improvements with the service's strategic direction, Bereavement Services will be better equipped to meet the needs of bereaved families, staff, respond to future demand and uphold the highest standards of dignity, care and professionalism.

Implementation Theme	Key Action
Leadership and Governance	• Review service delivery and unify management of cremation, burial and administrative functions. • Define clear roles and responsibilities across all teams. • Establish a strategic working group to oversee implementation and monitor progress.
Infrastructure and Equipment	• Undertake a technical and financial assessment of cremator replacement options, including electric or hybrid models. • Deliver site improvement projects e.g. Signage upgrades, pond refurbishment, enhanced cleaning regimes, client facilities. • Plan and secure land for cemetery expansion at priority sites (Acklam, Linthorpe, Thorntree).

Service Delivery Enhancements	• Explore the introduction of Saturday morning funeral services, Sunday Memorial Days and open days, and increase memorial appointment availability. • Review cremation procedures to reduce emissions and support efficiency. • Restructure pricing models to address funeral poverty and improve affordability. • Introduce enhanced competitively priced service options including direct cremations, simple services and cremated remains graves to offer greater choice, recoup market share.
Environmental Sustainability	• Adopt low-emission cremation practices aligned with Middlesbrough's Green Strategy. • Explore granite free and environmentally conscious memorial options. • Enforce cemetery regulations to manage unauthorised grave enhancements and non-compliant memorials
Community Engagement	• Strengthen partnerships with funeral directors, stonemasons, celebrants and service users. • Conduct consultation exercises to involve the public in service design and memorial garden development • Promote Middlesbrough themed memorials that reflect local identity.
Compliance and Safety	• Enforce NAMM/BRAMM standards for headstones and memorials installations and amendments • Update and consistently apply the Memorial arrangements/procedure and Cemetery Regulations • Conduct routine memorial safety inspections and implement a structured, risk-based testing programme across all cemetery sites • Manage public perception through sensitive communication with families, clear signage on works in progress, and proactive engagement when memorials are found to be unsafe or require temporary support or laying-down • As part of a restructure ensure that there is a position that has the responsibility to oversee compliance and stakeholder relationships.

8. Monitoring and Review

8.1 Ongoing monitoring and regular review are essential to ensure that the Bereavement Services Strategy remains effective, compliant and responsive to the needs of the community. As legislation, operational demands and public expectations evolve, the service must be able to adapt, demonstrate accountability and evidence continuous improvement.

8.2 The framework through which progress will be assessed is outlined below. By applying a structured approach to evaluation and review, Bereavement Services will maintain a focus on quality, safety and community confidence throughout.

8.3 An annual review will assess the effectiveness of key policies, while a comprehensive strategic review will take place every three years. Additional interim reviews may be carried out when prompted by legislative changes, emerging operational risks or feedback from service users.

8.4 The Bereavement Services Manager will coordinate the review process, working closely with Environmental Services, the Strategic Planning Team, Finance & Commercial Services and the Area Care Team to ensure a multidisciplinary perspective. Findings will be reported to the Head of Environment Services and to the appropriate Council Audit Committees, with outcomes also shared with external stakeholders such as funeral directors, community representatives and members of the public where appropriate.

8.5 Initial evaluations will draw on a range of measures including APSE audits, client satisfaction results, compliance with national standards, peer reviews, staff wellbeing indicators, community engagement activity and environmental performance metrics. Continuous improvement will be embedded by actively seeking feedback and sharing lessons learned across teams to encourage innovation and enhance service delivery.

9. Evaluation

9.1 To understand the impact of the Bereavement Services Strategy and ensure that planned improvements translate into meaningful outcomes, a structured evaluation framework will be used. This framework focuses on measuring performance, engagement, environmental outcomes, financial sustainability and compliance with statutory requirements.

9.2 **Service Performance**

Evaluation will consider changes in market share to determine whether more residents are choosing Middlesbrough's Bereavement Services over alternative providers.

Client satisfaction will be assessed through analysis of complaints, compliments and wider feedback trends.

Service responsiveness will also be explored, including uptake on new initiatives such as weekend services and direct cremation options.

9.3 **Community Engagement**

The effectiveness of engagement activities will be measured through the levels of public participation in consultation exercises and interest in Middlesbrough specific memorial designs.

Relationships with key stakeholders, funeral directors, stonemasons and community groups, will also be evaluated to assess the strength and consistency of partnership working.

9.4 **Environmental Impact**

Environmental evaluation will focus on emissions reduction, including monitoring the effectiveness of cremator upgrades and the “Holding Over” procedure.

“Holding Over” is a temporary storage of a coffin at the crematorium until the scheduled cremation can take place, procedure is followed in relation to communication, if this was to occur.

Adoption of sustainable memorial choices and improvements in environmentally conscious site maintenance will also form key indicators.

9.5 **Financial Sustainability**

Financial analysis will examine cost efficiency, progress in reducing overspend and revenue trends across services.

Affordability and accessibility will be evaluated by measuring the impact of pricing reforms designed to address funeral poverty.

9.6 **Compliance and Safety**

Compliance with ICCM/FBCA guidance, NAMM/BRAMM standards, the Cremation Regulations 2008, Environmental Permitting Regulations 2006 and LACO 1977 will be monitored.

Risk management indicators will include incidents arising from memorial safety issues or breaches of cemetery regulations.

10. Strategic Delivery Overview

10.1 Our Bereavement Services strategy reflects our commitment to providing compassionate, respectful, and professional support to families during times of loss. We aim to ensure that cremation and burial services are delivered with dignity, sensitivity, and efficiency, while empowering staff and embedding best practices.

10.2 We will deliver this strategy by focusing on five key themes of activity:

- Acting Together – Working collaboratively with families, funeral directors, faith groups, and partners to provide seamless and supportive bereavement care.
- Supporting Families – Addressing the emotional and practical needs of bereaved families, ensuring clear communication and guidance throughout cremation, burial and memorial arrangements.
- Managing Services – Maintaining high standards in the management of cemeteries, crematoria, and memorial services, ensuring compliance and continuous improvement.
- Keeping Pace with Change – Responding to evolving cultural, legal, and technological developments in bereavement services, including digital memorial options and environmentally sustainable practices.
- Sharing Our Success – Promoting the benefits of a compassionate and professional bereavement service to build trust and confidence within our community.

10.3 A series of actions have been identified that, when delivered, will achieve our vision for Bereavement Services. Refer to appendix 1.

10.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to inform the development of the Bereavement Services Strategy and to ensure that the needs of all communities are appropriately considered.

The assessment recognised that bereavement services are particularly sensitive for individuals with protected characteristics, especially in relation to religion or belief, age, disability, and cultural requirements. The strategy is expected to have an overall positive impact by improving the quality and accessibility of services, including investment in modern cremator technology, enhancements to cemetery environments, and a stronger focus on inclusive service delivery. Consideration has been given to ensuring cremation and burial practices remain respectful of different faith and cultural needs, while improvements to site layout and facilities will support better access for elderly and disabled users. No significant negative impacts have been identified; however, mitigating actions have been built into the strategy, including ongoing engagement with communities, reviewing accessibility, and ensuring clear and sensitive communication.

The outcomes of the EIA have directly shaped the proposals and will continue to be monitored throughout implementation.

Appendix 1

2026 to 2027					
Objective	**What success looks like**	**Actions to be taken**	**Responsible person**	**Target date**	**Status *(Complete/incomplete)***
Explore additional services or changes to the current offering within Bereavement	• Offering of directs at a competitive rate. • Offer personalisation areas on lawn section graves • Extend services to include memorial and open day	Explore the feasibility of carrying out additional services, staff consultation, gathering data and test the market (if applicable)	Bereavement Services Manager	August 2026	
Improve crematorium services and facilities	• New Cremators to improve service delivery against demand. • Compliance with DEFRA Process Guidance PG52/23 by 2027 & ICCM and DEFRA Codes of Operational Practices	Complete a feasibility study of the cremators condition and understand the requirements for upgrades.	Regeneration - Asset Management, Bereavement Services Manager, Head of Environment	September 2026	
		Options appraisal for the cremators exploring replacement or refurbishment options. Any procurement activity that arises from the feasibility studies will be supported by the Procurement Team ensuring compliance with the Council's Constitution and/or Procurement Act 2023. This report will provide the key decision approval in the event that any procurement is in excess of £250k.	Regeneration - Asset Management, Bereavement Services Manager, Head of Environment	December 2026	
		Installation Plan agreed for the installation/refurbishment of cremator equipment	Regeneration - Asset Management, Bereavement	March 2027	

		ensuring service continuity and minimal service disruption	Services Manager, Head of Environment		
		Develop a training strategy for all staff, updating relevant policies, procedures and safe systems of work to enable staff to conduct the work in a compliant, safe and effective manner.	Bereavement Services Manager	March 2027	
Improve burial Capacity throughout Middlesbrough	• Sufficient capacity to meet the demand of Middlesbrough Residents. • Maintained and respectful areas for Middlesbrough Residents to mourn. • Improved burial space at Acklam, Thorntree and Linthorpe	Identify cemeteries capacity	Bereavement Services Manager, Head of Environment	Annual review	
		Explore new sites for the long-term plan.	Bereavement Services Manager, Head of Environment and Head of Economic Growth and infrastructure	Annual review	
		Model burial trends against mortality projections to inform on future demand	Bereavement Services Manager	Annual review	
		Communication in relation to burial preferences and future requirements	Bereavement Services Manager, Head of Environment and Head of Economic Growth and infrastructure	Annual review	

The following actions will be carried out in the expected years as noted below; these will be delivered in line with all relevant compliance and legislation:

2027 to 2028					
Objective	**What success looks like**	**Actions to be taken**	**Responsible person**	**Target date**	**Status *(Complete/incomplete)***
Policies & procedures that are "fit for purpose" and reflect the risk profile of the council	Set of policies and procedures that are fit for purpose and subject to periodic review	Review the register of polices/ procedures to ensure they are relevant and fit for purpose.	Bereavement Services Manager and Head of Environment	2027 – Review Annually	
	Monitoring performance against arrangements and procedure to identify trends and training needs.	KPIs agreed and reported to MBC chief executive and corporate steering group.	Bereavement Services Manager	2027 – Review Annually	
	Periodic internal audit of all Bereavement Services policies and procedures	Audit all policies and procedures and track amendments	Bereavement Services Manager	2027 – Review Annually	
	Delivery of Bereavement Strategy	Head of Environment to ensure delivery against the KPIs identified strategic plan and where appropriate consult with staff.	Head of Environment	2026 – Review Annually	
Cremator Replacement Strategy	Assessment of the cremators against regulatory requirements completed	Assess cremator conditions and remaining lifespan	Head of Economic Growth and Infrastructure, Bereavement Services Manager and Head of Environment	2026 – Review Annually	
	Completed options appraisal for the current cremators	Explore replacement or refurbishment options	Bereavement Services Manager, Head of	2026 – Review Annually	

			Economic Growth and Infrastructure		
	Refurbishment or Installation Plan agreed	Draft installation schedule, ensuring service continuity and minimal service disruption	Bereavement Services Manager, Head of Economic Growth and Infrastructure	Project review April 2027	
	Staff Training / Risk Assessments completed, and review periods agreed.	Schedule operator training on new machines incl. refresher training and certification.	Bereavement Services Manager	2027 – Review Annually or post incident.	
Burial Capacity	Cemeteries capacity confirmed	Audit burial capacity at each site and section.	Bereavement Services Manager	Quarterly review	
	New burial sites for the long-term plan confirmed	Work with Planning and regeneration to explore sites for potential use of burial sites	Regeneration, Head of Economic Growth and Infrastructure and Head of Environment Services	Quarterly review	
	Communication in relation to burial preferences and future requirements	Draft comms plan for communicating updates with our funeral partners, customers and service users including all faith groups	Bereavement Services Manager	Quarterly review	Appendix 1
Service Improvements	Site specific improvements identified and agreed.	Upgrade the aesthetics, signs and cleaning regime.	Bereavement Services Manager	Quarterly review	
	Stakeholder engagement	Strengthen relationships with Funeral Partners	Bereavement Services Manager	Continuous delivery	
	Service accessibility – Increase the offering of services	Explore options for Saturday services	Bereavement Services Manager	Continuous delivery	
	Compliance and Safety	Enforce the regulations for memorials and update headstone arrangements	Bereavement Services Manager	Annual Review	Appendix 1
	Pricing Review	Review pricing for services.	Bereavement Services Manager	Annual Review	

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CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM REGULATIONS (2026)

PROVIDING SAFE, DIGNIFIED AND WELL-MANAGED BEREAVEMENT SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY

MIDDLESBROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

AUTHORITY AND SCOPE OF THE REGULATIONS

These Regulations are issued by Middlesbrough Council to support the proper management, regulation and care of the Council's cemeteries and Crematorium. They are made under the powers set out in Regulation 3(1) of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, and other relevant legislation.

All previous Regulations issued by the Council for this purpose are now revoked.

These Regulations explain the principles and standards that Middlesbrough Council will apply when managing, regulating and providing services across Teesside Crematorium and Acklam, Linthorpe, North Ormesby, St Joseph's and Thorntree Cemeteries

INTRODUCTION

Cemeteries and crematoria play a vital role in supporting bereaved families and reflect the values of our community. The legal framework governing burial and cremation services has evolved since its introduction in the 1850s, when national standards sought to ensure safe, consistent and respectful practices within bereavement.

Middlesbrough Council is proud to provide safe, respectful and well-maintained cemeteries for our local communities and is committed to providing burial and cremation services that are professional, compassionate, and accessible for all. Families have clear choices when arranging a funeral, and our facilities aim to offer a safe, dignified and welcoming environment for all.

Our priority is to provide the best possible service to families at one of the most difficult times in their lives. We are committed to working closely with bereaved families and our professional partners to create an experience that is respectful, supportive and delivered with dignity. These regulations set out a clear framework that helps us all understand what is required to keep our cemeteries and crematorium operating safely, smoothly and consistently. By outlining these expectations openly, we aim to build shared understanding, avoid unnecessary distress, and ensure that together we can offer a caring, well-managed and responsive service for every family we support.

Middlesbrough council welcomes all visitors to our Cemeteries and Crematorium. We ask that everyone respects the peace and dignity of these facilities, as well as other users and we thank you in advance of your considerations.

1. USING OUR CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM

1.1. Middlesbrough's cemeteries and Teesside Crematorium are shared spaces for remembrance, reflection and respect, visited daily by bereaved families, funeral professionals, contractors and members of the public. To protect the dignity of these environments and ensure they remain safe, well-maintained and accessible for all, certain standards of behaviour, care and responsibility must be observed.

1.2. The following sections outline the expectations for everyone who enters our cemeteries or crematorium grounds. These include general conduct, visitor safety, vehicle access, wildlife protection, grave ownership responsibilities, and the rules governing memorials and burial areas. These standards help us maintain respectful surroundings and ensure the smooth and safe operation of all services provided by the Council

2. CEMETERY CONDUCT

General Conduct

2.1. Cemeteries exist for the burial and commemoration of loved ones. Burials, interments and all associated activity must be authorised by the Bereavement Services Manager or their nominated representative.

2.2. Cemeteries are open to the public during daylight hours. The Council may alter opening times, restrict access, or close a cemetery at any time if necessary.

2.3. Visitors may only enter the cemetery during published opening hours. No one may enter or remain in the cemetery when it is closed unless authorised by the Council.

2.4. Visitors must use the designated entrance and exit gates when entering or leaving the cemetery.

2.5. Children under 12 must be always supervised by a responsible adult aged 18 or over.

2.6. Cemetery roads and footpaths are for cemetery visitors only. They must not be used as shortcuts, public routes, or for transporting goods unrelated to cemetery purposes.

2.7. Standing, sitting, climbing, or leaning on any gravestone, memorial, monument, railing, gate, wall, fence, or building is strictly prohibited.

2.8. Visitors must always behave respectfully. Disorderly behaviour, including but not limited to shouting, offensive language, gambling, playing games or sports, vandalism, intoxication, or nuisance behaviour, is not permitted.

2.9. No person may gather in a group of more than three where their behaviour causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress.

2.10. No person may be in possession of alcohol in sealed or unsealed containers or Class A, B, or C drugs within the cemetery or crematorium grounds

2.11. Lighting or attempting to light any fire, or BBQ's is strictly prohibited.

2.12. Metal detecting, digging, foraging, or searching for items is not permitted.

2.13. Playing amplified music or loud audio is not permitted unless it forms part of an authorised funeral.

2.14. Threatening, abusive, or obstructive behaviour towards staff or visitors is not tolerated. Staff must be able to carry out their duties without interference.

2.15. Cemetery staff are not permitted to accept gratuities.

2.16. Buildings, trees, plants or structures must not be altered, decorated or personalised by the public.

2.17. Where a memorial, or memorial item of any description including but not limited to trees, benches, tables, vaults, plaques, and vases is deemed dangerous, immediate action will be taken by the Council to remove or make safe.

2.18. Concerns or requests relating to cemetery or crematorium grounds should be reported to: bereavementservices@middlesbrough.gov.uk.

Photography, Filming and Advertising

2.19. Photography or recording of funeral processions, graves or memorials is not allowed without prior consent from the Council's authorised officers. Bereavement Services may refuse requests if appropriate.

2.20. Drones or other unmanned aerial devices may not be flown in or over the cemetery without written Council authorisation

2.21. Filming or recording of cemetery staff is not permitted without written authorisation.

2.22. Advertising, distribution of flyers, business cards or promotional material is prohibited without written permission.

Vehicles and Traffic Management

2.23. Only vehicles with authorised cemetery purposes may enter the grounds.

2.24. Vehicles must use designated roads only and comply with all signage. The 10mph speed limit must be observed unless otherwise stated.

2.25. Vehicles and any unauthorised bicycles or scooters must not enter grassed areas, verges or pedestrian walkways.

2.26. Unauthorised vehicles are not permitted in St Joseph's Cemetery or North Ormesby Cemetery at any time.

2.27. ATVs, quad bikes, e-scooters, recreational bicycles and similar equipment are not permitted anywhere within the cemetery grounds.

2.28. Drivers and cyclists must always give priority to pedestrians.

Dogs, Animals and Wildlife

2.29. Dogs must be kept on a lead and must always remain on the main pathways.

2.30. Dog fouling must be cleaned up immediately. Offences are enforceable under the Public Spaces Protection Order (2020) and may result in a fine or prosecution.

2.31. Horses are only permitted as part of a funeral cortege and must leave the cemetery immediately after the service has concluded.

2.32. Feeding wildlife is not permitted.

2.33. Installing habitats, such as bird boxes or feeders, is only allowed with prior approval. *(Exceptions apply solely within Linthorpe Cemetery & Nature Reserve and require joint approval from Bereavement Services, the Wildlife Trust, and Friends of Linthorpe Cemetery)*

2.34. Generally, wildlife must not be disturbed.

Litter and Waste Management

2.35. Any unauthorised items planted or placed within the cemetery grounds will be removed without notice. Any associated costs or charges will be passed to the grave owner.

2.36. All litter and waste must be disposed of in the bins provided. Incidents of littering or fly-tipping will not be tolerated and may lead to a fixed penalty notice or prosecution.

2.37. All contractors must remove their own waste from site. Contractor waste must not be placed in bins intended for general litter or dog waste.

3. CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

3.1. All horticultural works, maintenance and landscaping within cemeteries are carried out only by Middlesbrough Council.

3.2. Cemeteries and grounds are maintained as part of a maintenance schedule that incorporates all of the borough maintenance requirements any requests or concerns regarding the Cemetery or Crematorium Garden of Remembrance should be raised via email to bereavementservices@middlesbrough.gov.uk

4. EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL

4.1. A ‘purchased grave’ refers to the purchase of the Exclusive Rights of Burial for a grave space or cremated remains grave or vault, and not the purchase of the land itself, which remains the property of Middlesbrough Council.

4.2. Middlesbrough Council no longer allows the pre-purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial (EROB) or reserved grave spaces within its Cemeteries.

4.3. The purchase of the Exclusive Rights of Burial at need in any grave space shall be for a period not exceeding 100 years in accordance with article 10(4) of The Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977.
When the ERoB has expired families are given the opportunity to extend the lease period.

4.4. The purchase of the Exclusive Rights of Burial provides the purchaser with the right to say who can be buried in the grave and the right to apply to install a memorial stone.

4.5. In selecting any grave space for purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial, the wishes of the purchaser shall be met as far as possible, but selection shall be subject to the approval of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate, whose decision shall be final.

4.6. Purchases of Exclusive Rights of Burial shall be provided with a Deed of Grant, the details of which shall be entered in a Register maintained by the Council. The Council will not hold the original Deed of Grant.

4.7. Exclusive Rights of Burial in Purchased Ground may be assigned to another person by deed or bequeathed by will. Any person, other than the original purchaser, who claims rights to ownership of the Exclusive Rights of Burial, but who is unable to produce a deed of assignment, grant of probate in respect of any Will as evidence of transfer, must provide a statutory declaration with all relevant evidence as may be necessary to satisfy the Council of the validity of their sole or joint claim.

4.8. The council will not become involved in any disputes regarding the allocation of burial rights. This must be resolved between parties before an application is made. Only where the Council is satisfied on the validity of the claim, will the transfer of ownership be made and record the transfer of ownership made in the Register, subject to payment of the prescribed fee.

4.9. Owners of an Exclusive Rights of Burial must keep the Council informed of their current address in order that the Register may be updated, as necessary. In all cases, burials in purchased ground, the application for interment must be made by, or with, the authority of the purchaser or owner of the Exclusive Rights of Burial at the time of application, signifying their consent to the burial.

4.10. If the owner of the Exclusive Rights of Burial is deceased, they retain the right of interment within the grave

4.11. If the grave owner is previously deceased a Transfer of Ownership is required before an interment can take place.

4.12. In the event of the Council being unable to confirm grave ownership or not being satisfied with any explanation given as to why the original purchasers consent has not been obtained, it may refuse any burial in the grave without redress or recompense, and its decision shall be final.

4.13. Unpurchased graves are available for the burial of people who do not wish or are not able to purchase the Exclusive Rights of Burial at the time of making the funeral arrangements. Memorial Stones are not permitted on unpurchased graves.

4.14. The charge for an interment in any un-purchased grave does not include any right or privilege other than a right of burial in a grave selected by the Council. There is no right to erect a memorial.

5. GRAVE OWNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Personal memorial items may only be placed on the headstone border or on authorised foundation slabs within the individual grave space, except in designated traditional sections where kerb sets are permitted following formal approval.

5.2. Items placed on or around memorials are left at the owner's risk. The Council accepts no liability for loss or damage.

5.3. Cut flowers and wreaths are permitted within the grave space but must not extend beyond the allocated grave width of 5ft.

5.4. Items, including fences, unauthorised kerbs, solar lights, glass, porcelain tributes, wind chimes, pebbles, aggregates, trees, bird baths or tables, and similar adornments, are not permitted and will be removed without notice.

Other prohibited items include:

- Banners, balloons, bunting, flags
- Wind chimes
- Mannequins, scarecrows or similar figures
- Alcohol containers
- Artificial lighting, including battery-powered or solar devices
- Electronic, musical or audible devices or toys
- Garden furniture, water features, benches, planters
- Animal habitats or feeders
- Trellises, pergolas, gazebos
- Artificial turf, gravel or edging
- Canvas prints, sculptures
- Horticultural items that impede access or maintenance
- Any item that exceeds the allocated grave space
- Any item deemed inappropriate, unsafe, excessive, or detrimental to maintenance, appearance or tranquillity of the cemetery

5.5. Trees, shrubs, plants or hedges must not be planted on graves or within the grounds. Unauthorised planting will be removed without notice.
Exceptions apply only in designated woodland/meadowland burial areas and only by Council planting.

6. ENFORCEMENT

6.1. The Council reserves the right to exclude or remove any person who breaches these Regulations.

6.2. All activity within cemeteries must comply with the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 and all relevant legislation.

7. TYPES OF GRAVES

7.1. Consecrated And Un-Consecrated

7.1.1. When many cemeteries were originally established in the late 19th century, sections of land were formally blessed by the Church of England, meaning those areas were consecrated before burials took place.

7.1.2. Today, we recognise that residents come from a wide range of faiths and beliefs. To support this, cemetery sections within Middlesbrough's cemeteries are intentionally left unconsecrated so that burials can take place in non-denominational ground. Where families prefer, individual blessings can take place at the graveside, allowing personal faith traditions to be observed without the need for consecrated ground.

7.1.3. A limited number of graves within consecrated sections may also be available; should this be of interest, please contact Bereavement Services for further information

7.2. Lawn Graves

7.2.1. A lawn grave is a burial plot located within a maintained grassed area of the cemetery. Lawn sections are designed to ensure cemeteries remain safe, accessible, dignified and easy to maintain. Families purchasing graves in lawn sections do so on the understanding that the grave must remain fully lawned, with personalisation restricted to the headstone border only.

7.2.2. Personalised items are permitted within headstone borders only or directly in front of the memorial. Items must not extend onto the lawned area. Flower vases must be an integral part of the memorial.

7.2.3. The Council reserves the right to remove any item that interferes with grass cutting, creates a hazard, or disrupts the uniform lawn design.

7.2.4. Memorial stones installed on lawn graves must not exceed the dimensions set out in the Memorial Specification; see Appendix 1

7.2.5. Funeral flowers may remain for up to 6 weeks, or until they deteriorate.

7.2.6. Christmas wreaths and anniversary or birthday flowers must be placed within the headstone border

7.3. Traditional Graves

7.3.1. A traditional grave is a burial plot located in a section of the cemetery where a grave enclosure or a kerb set are permitted around the grave.

Traditional graves allow families the opportunity to personalise the grave space, within the kerb set, and therefore manage the maintenance of the grave area.

Maintenance within the kerb set is entirely the responsibility of the holder of the Exclusive Rights of Burial Deeds who must keep the grave in a tidy condition

7.3.2. All items must be contained within the kerb set and comply with the regulations on prohibited items – See Section ##

7.3.3. Items placed within an approved kerb set are permitted at the owner's risk

7.3.4. Items placed outside the kerb set or extending beyond the allocated grave space will be removed without notice to support safe access, maintenance and the appearance of the cemetery.

7.3.5. Memorial stones and kerb sets installed on traditional cemetery sections must not exceed the dimensions set out in the Memorial Specification; see Appendix 1

7.3.6. Memorial or kerbs sets outside these measurements will not be approved or permitted.

7.4. Children and Baby Graves

7.4.1. Dedicated children's burial areas are provided within Acklam and Thorntree cemeteries.

7.4.2. Families are encouraged to discuss available options with Bereavement Services to ensure their needs are met.

7.4.3. Baby sections are allocated for the burial of children under 2 years of age.

7.4.4. The purchase of infant graves and the right to erect a monument is without charge

7.4.5. Baby section graves are allocated at 4ft x 3ft and can accommodate a coffin of 3ftx 2ft maximum. Coffins larger than this will be allocated a grave on an adult lawn section

7.4.6. Burials of adults are not permitted in baby graves, nor is the burial of their cremated remains

7.4.7. Children under the age of 18 years are buried in main cemetery sections in a single grave at a depth of 5ft.

7.4.8. The purchase of a children graves and the right to erect a monument is without charge

7.4.9. Full size graves may be purchased for any child/infant interment in the main area of the cemetery where, upon purchase of the Exclusive Rights of Burial, the use of the same grave for one or two adults at some time in the future or their cremated remains is therefore available.

7.4.10 The cost of the child interment is without charge however the purchase of the grave is subject to the standard fee.

7.4.11 Memorial stones installed on children section graves must not exceed the dimensions set out in the Memorial Specification; see Appendix 1

7.5. Woodland Plots

7.5.1. Woodland plots are designed to offer a more environmentally friendly option for burial and are currently available at Acklam and Linthorpe Cemeteries.

7.5.2. Each plot allows up to 2 interments and a memorial tree.

7.5.3. Families choosing a woodland plot do so on the understanding that the area is maintained as a natural landscape, no memorials or decorations may be added, and the memorial tree is planted and maintained by Bereavement Services only.
The grave will not have the appearance of a traditional cemetery plot

7.6. Meadowland Graves

7.6.1. Meadowland graves offer a natural, eco-friendly burial option similar to woodland plots. The area is planted with meadow flowers and grasses to support biodiversity and enhance the natural landscape.

Meadowland plots follow the same principles as woodland plots with no permanent memorials permitted; no personal items may be placed on or around the grave. Nothing may be attached to or placed near the meadow planting.

Any items left will be removed without notice.

7.6.2. Coffins and caskets must be made from **natural, biodegradable** materials

7.7. Cremated Remains Graves

7.7.1. A cremated remains grave is a smaller burial plot designed specifically for the interment of ashes. These plots are located within dedicated cremated remains sections of Acklam and Thorntree cemetery.

7.7.2. Cremated remains graves accommodate up to two sets of ashes, interred within a designated space in accordance with cemetery regulations. Each plot is marked with an approved memorial tablet or small headstone, and all items placed on or around the plot must comply with the regulations governing memorials and prohibited items

7.7.3. Up to six sets of cremated remains may also be interred in a full-size adult grave once the grave has reached full capacity for coffins.

7.7.4. Within an adult grave space, cremated remains will be placed sequentially at the top, middle and base of the grave until the grave is complete.

7.7.5. No further cremated remains may be interred in the grave once full, except for the scattering of ashes.

7.7.6. Cremated remains may also be interred in main grave space at 7ft or 5ft depending on the last record of interment. Cremated remains placed in a main grave space will occupy an interment space and as such adult burials will not be possible at that level. 2 sets of cremated remains may be interred at each level, at the head and the foot of the grave space, sequentially.

Cremated remains interments within a main grave space will be charged as a full adult interment fee, as detailed in the published fees and charges. A record of the precise location of each set of ashes will be taken and held in the register.

7.7.7. Cremated remains must not be scattered or interred into a grave space without permission from the Bereavement Services Manager or suitable delegate.

7.8. **Above-Ground Cremated Remains Vaults (Sanctums)**

7.8.1. A sanctum vault is a small, above-ground chamber designed specifically to hold cremated remains. It contains individual sealed compartments where ashes are placed inside purpose-made urns or caskets

7.8.2. Above-ground vaults can accommodate:
One casket up to **12" x 10" x 8"**, or **Two smaller caskets** up to **5" x 11" x 8"** each

7.8.3. Only cut flowers in the built-in vase are permitted. Any additional items will be removed without notice.

7.8.4. The purchase of a sanctum vault includes the vault housing, plaque, and inscription. Please note that only plaques supplied by Middlesbrough Council are permitted for use.

8. PLANS AND REGISTERS

8.1. Plans showing the grave spaces and their respective classes and divisions shall be kept at the Council Offices and shall be available to inspection free of charge upon request.
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8.2. Registers of all burials shall be kept at the Council Offices where they shall be available for inspection during office hours upon request, free of charge. Extracts or certificates may obtain upon payment of the fee prescribed by the Council from time to time.

9. BURIAL MANAGEMENT

9.1. Our approach to burial and grave management is guided by a commitment to supporting families with clarity, dignity and respect at every stage of the process. We recognise that choosing a grave and arranging a burial is an important and personal decision, and we aim to work sensitively with families to accommodate their wishes wherever possible.

9.2. These regulations outline the practical requirements that ensure burials are carried out safely, lawfully and in a way that protects the long-term integrity of our cemeteries. By providing a clear and consistent framework, we help families, funeral directors and our staff understand what is required for a smooth, well-managed and responsive service. Our goal is to balance individual choice with the responsibility to maintain orderly, safe and sustainable cemetery grounds for the whole community.

9.3. The Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate shall determine the position of every unpurchased grave space. The wishes of the purchaser will be always taken into consideration, however the final decision on the location of any purchased grave will be determined by the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate, who's decision is final.

9.4. Should no specific request be received, the next available grave space will be allocated.

9.5. Only coffins made of wood, or such other material no less perishable in nature are permitted without prior authorisation from the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

9.6. All coffins must bear a nameplate on the deceased on the lid.

9.7. Applications for interment must be made at least 3 working days before the time of interment. Applications must be made to the Bereavement Services Offices during hours or electronically via the Council's website www.middlesbrough.gov.uk

9.8. All information in applications for interment must be true and complete to the best of the applicant's knowledge and belief. A fee is payable by the Responsible Person in accordance with the Council's table of fees and charges as published.

9.9. The Council may not always be able to accommodate the requested interment time but will endeavour to provide services at a suitable time to meet the families wishes.

9.10. Internments on Sundays and bank or public holidays are not permitted. Interments on a Saturday can be permitted upon request.

9.11. The time specified for a funeral is the time the procession must arrive at the Cemetery and must be strictly observed.

9.12. In the event of a funeral arriving late at the Cemetery the funeral must wait until directed by the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate until it is convenient to proceed.

9.13. If it becomes necessary to postpone a funeral or to alter the date or hour for an internment to take place, the Responsible Person must ensure that the Council Offices are informed before 9.00am on the original date set for the funeral.
A cancellation or administration fee may apply as published in the fees and charges.

9.14. Interments may take place with or without a religious service. It is the responsibility of the party arranging the funeral to make the necessary arrangements for the attendance of a minister or any other appropriate person to officiate at the interment.

9.15. Where a burial is expected to attract a large attendance (exceeding 50 persons), the Responsible Person must notify the Bereavement Services Manager, or their appointed delegate, at least one clear working day prior to the date of the funeral so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

9.16. The health and safety of the attending funeral cortege is the responsibility of the Funeral Director, who should undertake an individual assessment of risk prior to the burial.

9.17. Musicians are not permitted to play within the Cemetery except with the prior permission of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

9.18. The removal of a coffin lid or sides from any coffin is not permitted at any interment within the Cemetery.

9.19. Not more than the 1 adult or 2 children, each under the age of ten years, shall be buried in any Unpurchased Ground on the same day unless the bodies are those of members of the same family.

9.20. Graves are subject to ground settlement which can occur for up to 12 months after interment. Graves will be inspected and topped up on a 6-weekly cycle for 6 months following the date of interment. memorial installations are not recommended for 12 months following interment and not permitted until a period of not less than 6 months following interment.

9.21. Following the completion of settlement of the land, the grave will be finished with topsoil and seeded and cut throughout the growing season.

9.22. No refunds will be made to any purchases whose grave has limited capacity owing to the existence of rock or other obstructions found.

9.23. The request for a particular orientation of your burial will be considered where possible.

9.24. The Notice of Interment, Disposal Certificates or any other items sent by post or electronically via email to the Council shall be at the responsibility of the sender. The council shall not be responsible for any loss or delay.

9.25. It is the responsibility of the Owner(s) of the Exclusive Rights of Burial to arrange for the removal of any Memorial Stone to facilitate any subsequent interment within the purchased Burial Plot and to meet the costs for its removal and replacement.

9.26. The time allocated for the service should be 60 minutes in duration. The office must be notified at the time of submitting burial paperwork if more time is required.

9.27. The funeral director or any person having charge of any service, is responsible for the provision of sufficient bearers to safely convey the coffin from the hearse to the graveside and lower into the grave in a safe and dignified manner.

9.28. No interment of any kind is permitted without the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

9.29. Cremated remains maybe interred into within main grave spaces subject to available space – See cremated remains section 7.7.

9.30. Cremated remains must not be interred in a grave space without permission from the Bereavement Service Manager or appropriate delegate and signed authorisation from the Exclusive Rights of Burial.

9.31. Severe or adverse weather conditions may affect the safe operation of burials, cremation services, and access to the cemetery grounds. In circumstances where snow, ice, high winds, flooding, or other extreme weather presents a risk to the safety of visitors, funeral corteges, or staff, the Council reserves the right to amend, delay, or suspend services.

9.32. Where possible, Bereavement Services will inform the Funeral Director or Responsible Person of any disruption at the earliest opportunity and arrange an alternative time or date for the service. In the event of flooding or ground instability, specific graves or sections of the cemetery may be temporarily inaccessible until conditions allow for safe use. The Council's decision regarding the suitability and safety of burial or operational activity during adverse weather is final.

10. EXHUMATIONS

10.1. It is not lawful to remove or disturb a body or the cremated remains of a body without a proper Licence from the Ministry of Justice, Faculty or Coroner's Warrant.

10.2. Applications for Exhumations will be considered on an individual basis but are subject to the statutory regulations in place at the time of the application.

10.3. Fees will be discussed in advance and are subject to full cost recovery

11. GRAVE MANAGEMENT

11.1. The management of private graves is an essential part of ensuring that burial areas are maintained safely, respectfully, and in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. This section sets out the responsibilities of grave owners, the procedures governing the use and maintenance of private graves, and the standards that must be upheld to preserve the dignity of the cemetery environment.

11.2. Except for a permitted memorial stone or permitted enclosed grave kerb set, no other articles, objects, edging, fencing, gravel, stones, artificial grass, or other objects are permitted on grave spaces.
The Council will remove from a grave any unauthorised articles in accordance with these regulations and stored for collection by the grave owner.

11.3. Every purchased grave and vault, memorial stone, monument, or memorial must be kept in good order and repair at the expense of the owner, who is required to notify the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate of any change of address from time to time.

11.4. Only one of the following may be placed upon a grave:
• Ornamental vase (for flowers only) not exceeding 12” (30cm) in height.
• Metal name indicator not exceeding 12” x 4” (30 x10cm).

11.5. Where a flower vase is incorporated in any memorial stone in a Lawn Section no other vase is allowed on the grave

11.6. Flowers and wreaths may be placed on the grave on the day of the funeral and may be removed by cemetery staff 6 weeks after the funeral or earlier if they start to decay. Christmas wreaths placed on graves will be removed by the 1st week in February. Please place all rubbish or waste from flowers in the bins provided.

11.7. All brick graves and vaults should be no more than 15” (38cm) below the surface of the ground. The enclosing of vaults and grave spaces is subject to the permission of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate and is subject to compliance with any guidance issued by the Council in respect of grave enclosures.

11.8. All brick and stonework for graves or vaults and all foundation work and removals shall be executed under the authority of and to the satisfaction of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

11.9. As part of our Burial procedure, it may be necessary at times to place soil onto neighbouring graves. In doing so all due care and attention will be taken to protect any memorials or items. Sufficient boarding or soil box container will be placed on the neighbouring grave, to ensure soil is not stacked directly onto a grave.

12. MEMORIAL STONES

12.1. Headstones can only be placed on plots where the Exclusive Rights of Burial (ERoB) has been purchased and remain the property of and responsibility of the owner of the ERoB.

12.2. Memorial installations are not recommended for 12 months following interment, and not permitted until a period of not less than 6 months following interment

12.3. Memorial Headstones must be installed by a Council approved and NAMM/BRAMM registered Memorial Mason, and are subject to application, regulations and standards

12.4. Memorial stones will only be permitted subject to prior application to the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate by the owner of the Exclusive Rights of Burial for that grave, in which a fee is payable in accordance with the Council's table of fees and charges and the subsequent issue by the Council of a permit of work.

12.5. Memorial stones may only display the name of individuals interred within the grave space.
Names or reference to other individuals may be included on stones by reference to the relationship only.

12.6. No foundation shall be inserted in, nor any memorial stone be allowed to be fixed on any grave except with the written authority of the owner of the Exclusive Rights of Burial for that grave. No lettering or cleaning will be permitted without authority of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

12.7. The position of memorial stones shall be subject to the approval of the Council, and the foundations shall be executed to the satisfaction of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

12.8. No inscription shall be placed upon any memorial stone without written consent of the Council by application.

12.9. Except with the prior written consent of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate, no memorial stone shall be altered or interfered with after it has been installed in the Cemetery. Nor shall any additional or altered inscription or lettering be placed, made, or cut, or shall any cleaning down or renovating, painting or cutting of inscriptions, painting of railings or any other work be carried out without prior written consent from the Bereavement Services Manager or delegate.

12.10. All installations and fixings must be in accordance with the BS8415 and NAMM/BRAMM Code of Working Practice.

12.11. Free standing memorial vases are only permissible where they are positioned within an authorised grave enclosure or within the boundaries of a memorial stone footprint.

12.12. Where permitted, the removal and re-fixing of memorial stones shall be executed to the satisfaction of the Council. The Council reserves the right to reverse, re-fix, move, "line up" or place any memorial stone in the Cemetery in such a position as they may require.

12.13. All memorial stones admitted into the Cemetery or permitted to be installed in the cemetery are done so at the sole risk of the owner and the Council shall not be held responsible for any destruction, damage or breakage which may occur to the same, however caused. For this reason, we strongly recommend that memorial is insured against theft and damage.

12.14. The Council reserve the right to exclude from the Cemetery any memorial stone not installed to a required standard, or which would, in the Council's opinion, disfigure the Cemetery.

12.15. If any memorial stone or inscription or lettering be erected, placed, made, or cut contrary to these Regulations, the Council shall be at liberty to remove and dispose of the same as they think fit.

12.16. All memorial stones must comply with BS8415 and NAMM/BRAMM Code of Working Practice. Memorial stones that do not so comply with BS8415 and the NAMM/BRAMM Code of Working Practice and the Councils ‘Memorial Specification Document’ included at appendix 1, will not be permitted or will require removal or amendment.

12.17. All memorial stones shall be of natural stone. No Bath, Caen, artificial or other soft stone shall be allowed in the construction of any memorial stone, and the Council reserves the right to reject or remove any stone which they consider unsuitable or unable to bear continued exposure to weather. No metal, acrylic or plastic stones or enclosures are permitted, and the Council reserves the right to reject or remove any stone which they consider unsuitable.

12.18. Specification of the materials to be used for the proposed memorial stone together with a copy of the intended inscription, shall be submitted to the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate upon the Memorial Specification Application for approval.

12.19. No memorial stone will be admitted, nor any inscription applied, or any work in connection with such permitted in the Cemetery without the approval.

12.20. All memorial stones shall be finished before they are admitted to the Cemetery and no work of any kind, beyond that of fixing and installation, shall be allowed within the Cemetery, except in respect of an inscription which cannot be made prior to the installation of the monument.

12.21. Every memorial stone must be marked on the side of the base with the number and section letter of the grave over which it is to be placed. The mason’s name only, shall also be cut into the side of the base with letters not exceeding 1” (2.5cm) in height.

12.22. All vehicles conveying memorial stones into the cemetery must proceed by a main surfaced route to the nearest point to where work is to be undertaken. Parking on grassed areas is not permitted under any circumstances. All reasonable steps must be taken to avoid damage to grassed areas when moving memorial stones to the place where they are to be fixed and any directions given by the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate for protecting the grass and walks shall be complied with.

12.23. Unless the written consent of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate is first obtained, all work must be undertaken in the Cemetery between the hours of 8.00am and 4pm Mondays to Friday.

12.24. No work will be permitted on weekends or bank or public holidays. To ensure that required standards of work are achieved and to avoid unnecessary damage to grassed areas, memorial stones shall not be fixed in unsuitable weather nor whilst the ground is in an unfit state.

12.25. Only BRAMM/NAMM accredited businesses may conduct memorial works within the cemetery and no fixing work shall take place without a licensed fixer being present. Where memorial works cannot comply within the NAMM/BRAMM Code of Working Practice, or where it is unclear whether the NAMM/BRAMM Code of Working Practice applies, the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate shall determine the standard to be applied.

12.26. The Council reserves the right to use its discretion in the application of the NAMM/BRAMM Code of Working Practice in specific cases. Unauthorised memorials or grave enclosures will be removed without notice.

12.27. Unauthorised memorials or grave enclosures will be removed without notice

12.28. Any repair, construction, installation or maintenance work requires prior authorisation and a permit from the Council. Unauthorised work will be removed and costs recharged to the grave owner or installer.

12.29. Applications must be made in writing to the Council for the re-erection or amendment of any memorial

13. MEMORIAL SAFETY

13.1. Memorial safety is a fundamental aspect of maintaining a secure and respectful cemetery environment. All memorials, regardless of type or age, must be installed, inspected, and maintained to ensure they do not pose a risk to visitors, staff, or the surrounding graves. This section outlines the standards, responsibilities, and procedures that apply to the upkeep and safety of memorials, helping to safeguard both public safety and the dignity of the cemetery.

13.2. It is entirely the Exclusive Rights of Burial deed holder's responsibility to ensure that memorials are kept in good repair and at their expense.

13.3. Where a memorial is deemed dangerous, immediate action will be taken by the Council.

13.4. The Councils will check the safety of memorials every 5 years, or more frequently where a hazard or risk is identified.

13.5. Depending on the level of risk, temporary action may be required to prevent injury to staff and cemetery visitors.

13.6. Where contact with the owners is not possible, a public notice displayed in the cemetery and in the local newspapers will be displayed, highlighting the required works.

13.7. Once repairs have been identified, if the owners do not make the necessary repairs within six months after the issue of the notice, the council may pocket the memorial, make is safe or remove the memorial entirely. It is entirely the owner's responsibility to ensure that memorials are kept in good order and repair and at their own expense.

13.8. The Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate shall make reasonable efforts to communicate with the owner in writing to give notice when repairs are needed.

13.9. If repairs to any memorial stone are not made by the owner within one months after the issue of such notice, the Council shall be at liberty to remove the memorial stone.

14. TEESSIDE CREMATORIUM

14.1. The crematorium operates in accordance with all statutory requirements and recognised industry standards to ensure that every cremation is carried out with dignity, respect, and professionalism. This section outlines the procedures, responsibilities, and operational practices that govern the use of the crematorium, ensuring a consistent, safe, and considerate service for bereaved families and funeral professionals. It also sets out expectations to support the smooth coordination of cremation arrangements and the respectful management of the crematorium environment.

14.2. The Crematorium is guided by the principles given by the ICCM and FBCA codes of Crematorium Practice and their suggested best working practices

14.3. Teesside Crematorium offers three levels of cremation service to meet the varying needs of families and funeral arrangers: Direct, Simple, and Full services.

14.4. A *Direct Cremation* is an unattended cremation carried out without mourners present and without a service in the chapel.

14.5. A *Simple Service* provides a brief, 10-minute attended service without seating; this consists solely of an observed presentation of the coffin onto the catafalque, with no formal ceremony, readings, or music arrangements.

14.6. A *Full Service* provides the standard chapel booking, allowing families a complete service within the allocated time, including readings, music, tributes, and other elements arranged through their Funeral Director.

All services must be booked in advance through Bereavement Services and must be conducted within the allotted time.

14.7. The funeral director shall observe the regulations of the crematorium authority

14.8. Services must be strictly concluded within the allotted time. Services over running the allotted service time will be subject to a charge.

14.9. There are two service halls at Teesside Crematorium, St Bede's and St Hilda's.

St Bede's has the capacity of 120 guests seated.
St Hilda's has the capacity of 80 guests seated.

14.10. Additional capacity for 30 guests in both halls is allocated outside of the main hall waiting areas, where a television is playing the live feed of the service.

14.11. In circumstances where more than 100 guests are anticipated, an additional slot should be booked to allow adequate time for entrance and exit of the chapel within the given service time and to provide a better service for Families.

14.12. Bookings for a cremation must be made to the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate at the Bereavement Services Offices during office hours, or electronically via the Council's website www.middlesbrough.gov.uk at least two working days before the required date of cremation.

14.13. Information provided within applications for cremation must be true and complete to the best of the applicant's knowledge and belief and where the application is not accompanied by the relevant fee, the Responsible Person must agree to payment upon receipt of the relevant invoice in accordance with the Council's terms of payment.

14.14. Applications for Cremation together with the relevant Certificate of Registration of the death or, where an inquest has been held, the Coroner's Warrant or, in the case of a still-born child, the Certificate of Registration given in pursuance of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926, must be provided to the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate not later than two working days before the date of the cremation.

14.15. The time specified for a cremation service is that at which the funeral service is due to take place at the Crematorium and such time must be strictly observed. In the event of a funeral arriving late at the Crematorium the funeral must await direction by the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

14.16. If it becomes necessary to postpone a cremation service or to alter the date or hour for a cremation to take place, the Responsible Person must ensure that notification of the postponement or alteration is given to the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate at the Bereavement Services Offices before 8.30am on the original date set for the cremation. A cancellation fee may be applied.

14.17. The funeral director is responsible for the provision of sufficient bearers to convey the coffin from the hearse to the catafalque at the crematorium.

14.18. Coffins for cremation larger than 32" x 7' x 21" must be booked by appointment and are accepted by authorisation of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate only.

14.19. Coffins larger than the stipulated size may be rejected prior to the cremation service.

14.20. Coffins for cremations shall be made of readily combustible wood. Hard woods, being difficult to burn, are undesirable. All coffins should meet the FFMA (or equivalent) standard and must be suitable for cremation

15. SCATTERING OF CREMATED REMAINS

15.1. Cremated remains will be available for collection in a cremated remains box unless a specific vessel has been requested and provided by the Funeral Director.

15.2. Cremated remains not collected within 28 days will be scattered within the grounds of the crematorium, the location of which are recorded.

15.3. Cremated remains will be released to a representative of the requisite Funeral Directorship only, or to the cremation applicant upon prior written request.

15.4. Ashes to be scattered on behalf of the family will be dispersed within the crematorium grounds upon the discretion of the Bereavement Services Manager or appointed delegate.

15.5. Families wishing to observe the scattering may book an appointment with Bereavement Services and pay an administration fee.

15.6. Cremated remains can be collected 48 hours after the cremation, however, should the family wish to collect cremated remains earlier, subject to various terms and conditions arrangements can be made upon request. 24 hours written notice of intention to collect is required.

16. FLORAL TRIBUTES

16.1. Following a service at Sunderland Crematorium, funeral flowers will be transported from the location of the service to the Garden of Remembrance and laid for viewing at the corresponding day or taken to the grave for laying on the site of interment.

16.2. Flowers may be removed by the family or the Funeral Director on the day of service or the following day, but all other flowers will remain in the resting location until the removal.

16.3. Floral tributes laid at the Crematorium will be discarded on Mondays and Thursdays. Funeral flowers from services on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays are removed on a Monday morning, whilst Thursday, Friday and Saturday flowers are removed on a Thursday morning.

16.4. Funeral flowers placed on a grave remain in location for up to 6 weeks or until such a time as the flowers are in significant deterioration, at which point such will be removed and disposed of appropriately.

17. MEMORIAL FLOWERS

17.1. Floral tributes may be left within the internal Remembrance Garden or the main Garden of Remembrance on the anniversary of the death of a loved one

17.2. Floral tributes must be fresh cut flowers only. Potted plants or flowers, artificial or silk flowers or plants are not permitted and will be removed without notice.

17.3. Floral tributes may be moved to other locations within the ground of the Crematorium, as necessary.

17.4. A single hand tied, or bouquet of cut flowers only is permitted to the base of memorial trees.

17.5. Other items are not permitted and may be removed without notice. No items of any description are permitted on memorial benches to retain the function as a public seat.

17.6. A single Christmas wreath is permitted on memorial items. Wreaths may be placed throughout December, should be removed by 31st January, and disposed of appropriately.

17.7. Wreaths remaining in place beyond this date, will be removed by Bereavement Services and disposed of. All floral tributes showing signs of deterioration may be removed sooner.

18. MEMORIALISATION

18.1. Several items are available for sponsorship in memory of a loved one. Individual terms and conditions of sponsorship are available for each memorial item. Please refer to the relevant terms and conditions for each item. The Council reserves the right to end a sponsorship term or withdraw memorial items where the terms and conditions are not adhered.

18.2. Memorial products may only be placed in predetermined locations. New locations or products will not be considered purely for the purposes of memorial sponsorship.

18.3. The Council reserves the right to reject any application for memorial sponsorship.

18.4. Cremated remains may not be buried, placed, or otherwise interred in or around memorial products, except in graves purchased for this purpose.

18.5. Memorial products, excluding memorial stones on private graves, are not provided as a permanent marker of the position of scattered cremated remains.

19. MEMORIAL BENCHES

19.1. Only memorial benches supplied and leased via Middlesbrough Council can be installed within our cemeteries.

19.2. All requests are subject to approval by Bereavement services. Considerations must be made regarding access, appropriate location and the impact on the surrounding areas. Additional requirements such as foundation base for securing the memorial may apply and will be subject to additional fees. The regulations regarding prohibited items etc. will also apply to benches. Please see the memorial bench sales agreement and leaflet for more information.

19.3. Middlesbrough Council Reserves the right to remove memorial benches without notification if they are considered unauthorised, non-compliant, obstructing access to essential service needs and maintenance

20. CREMATORIUM MEMORIALS

20.1. Only Memorials provided by Middlesbrough Council can be permitted in the designated memorial areas, such as sanctum vaults, memorial plaques, vase & tablet and others that do not form part of a grave.

20.2. Memorials not purchased via Middlesbrough Council can be removed **without notification**.

20.3. Flowers, floral displays and items of personalisation can only be placed in the dedicated memorial vase area only. Items placed outside these areas, or prohibited items can be removed without notification and disposed of.

20.4. Books of Remembrance are stored in a location deemed suitable by Middlesbrough Council. Items must not be placed on the display cabinets.

20.5. Flowers can be placed in public vases within the grounds and the Chapel of Remembrance and are removed as appropriate during maintenance routines.

20.6. Middlesbrough Council reserves the right to maintain the Memorial areas as deemed appropriate, and in line with wider authority maintenance schedules, routines, and is subject to resource.

21. FEES AND CHARGES

21.1. All fees and charges are reviewed annually.

CONTACT US

Bereavement Services

The Bereavement Services office is located at the entrance to Teesside Crematorium.

The office manages all cemetery and crematorium administration for the borough, including general enquiries, bookings and maintenance of official records.

The office is open for enquiries Monday to Thursday, 9:00am to 3:30pm, and Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm. Our address is:

Bereavement Services
Cemeteries and Crematorium Office
Teesside Crematorium
Acklam Road
Middlesbrough
TS5 7HD

Telephone: 01642 817725
Email: bereavementservices@middlesbrough.gov.uk

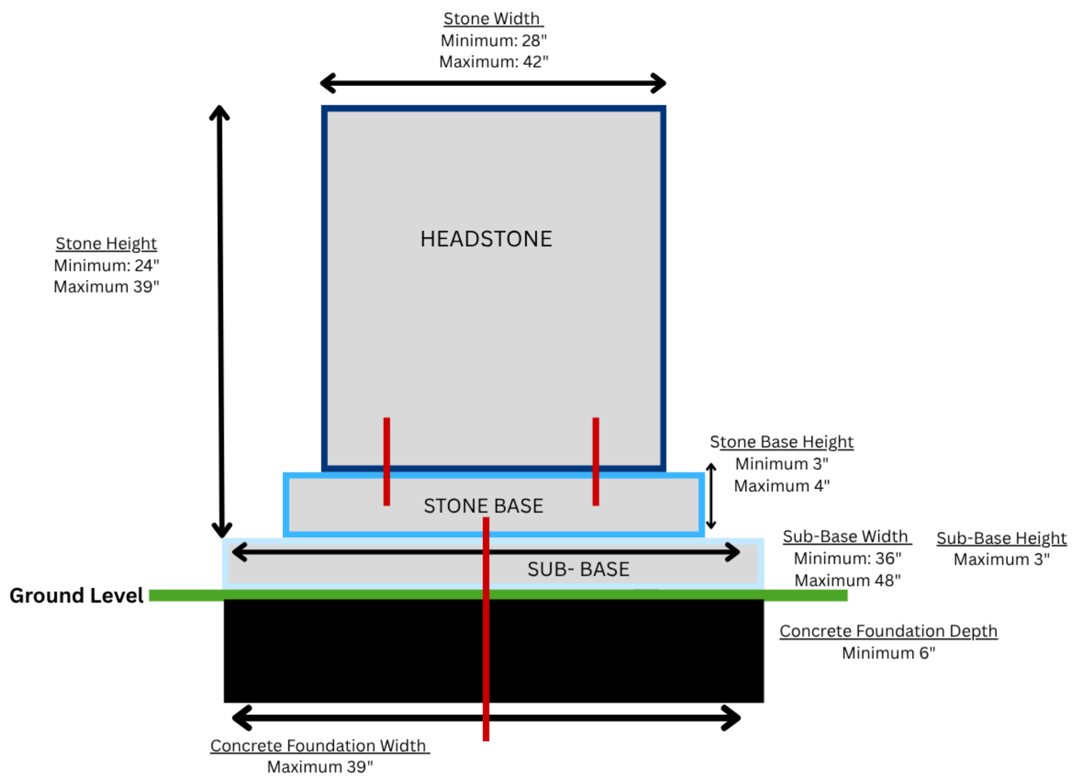
Further information, including cemetery locations, fees, guidance and online resources, is available on the Council’s website:
www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/bereavement

APPENDIX 1

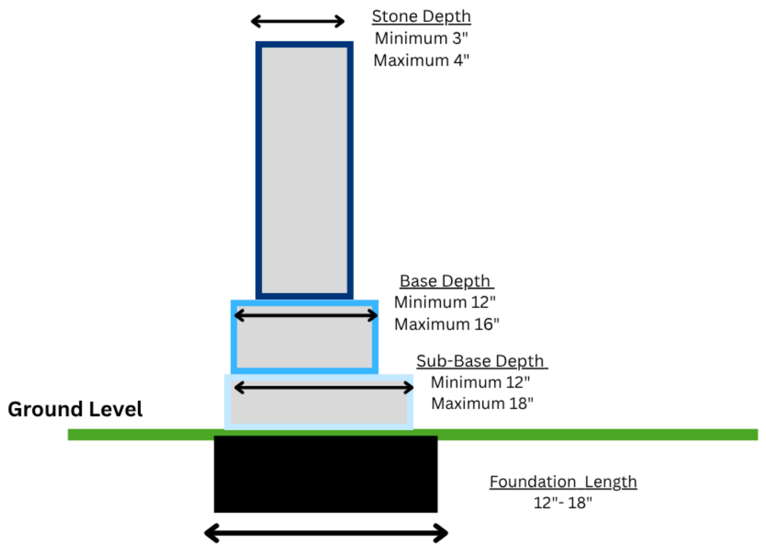
Memorial Stone Specification

Traditional Graves

Front View



Side View



Stone Dimensions

Stone
Height: 24" - 39"
Width: 28" - 42"
Depth: 3" - 4"

Stone Base
Height: 3" - 4"
Width: 36" - 48"
Depth: 12" - 16"

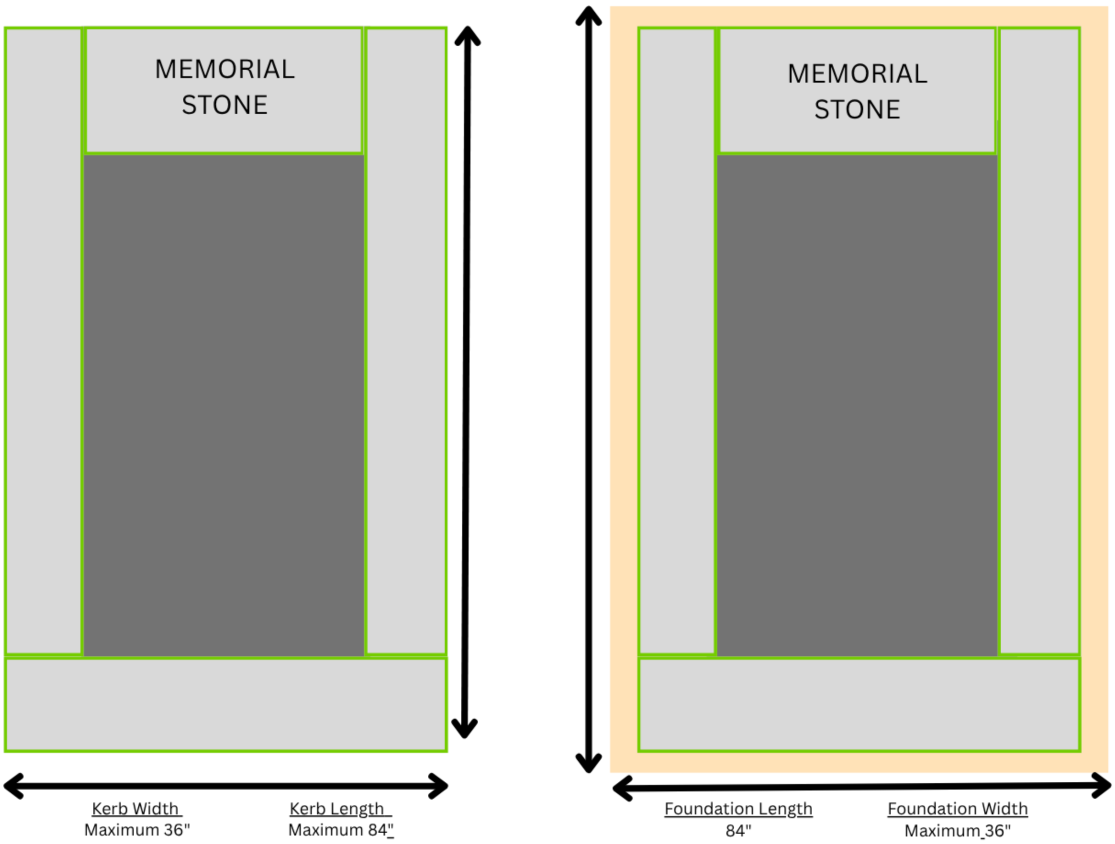
Sub-Base
Height: Up to 3"
Width: 36" - 48"
Depth: 12" - 18"

Foundation
Height 6"
Width: Up to 3"
Length: Up to 88"

Memorial & Kerb Set Specification

Traditional Graves

Birds Eye View



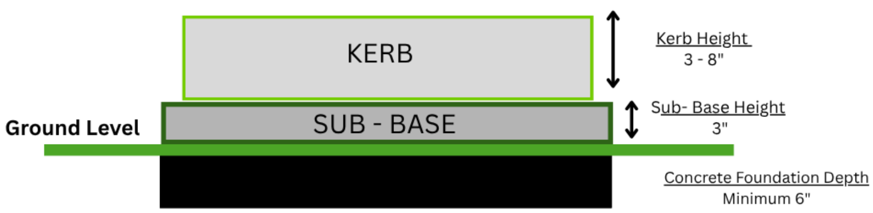
Kerb Set Dimensions

Kerb
Height: 3"-8"
Width: 47" - 48"
Length: 83" - 84"

Sub Base
Height: 3"
Width: 47" - 48"
Depth: 12" - 18"

Foundations
Width: 39"
Length 88"

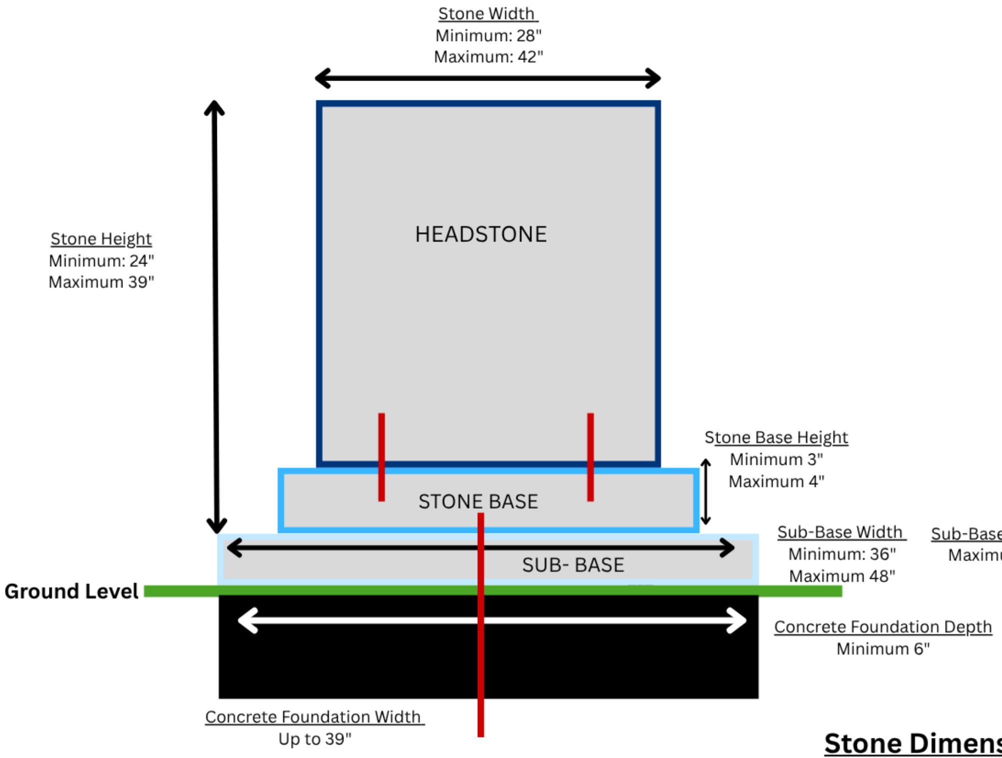
Side view



Memorial Stone Specification

Lawned Graves

Front View



Stone Dimensions

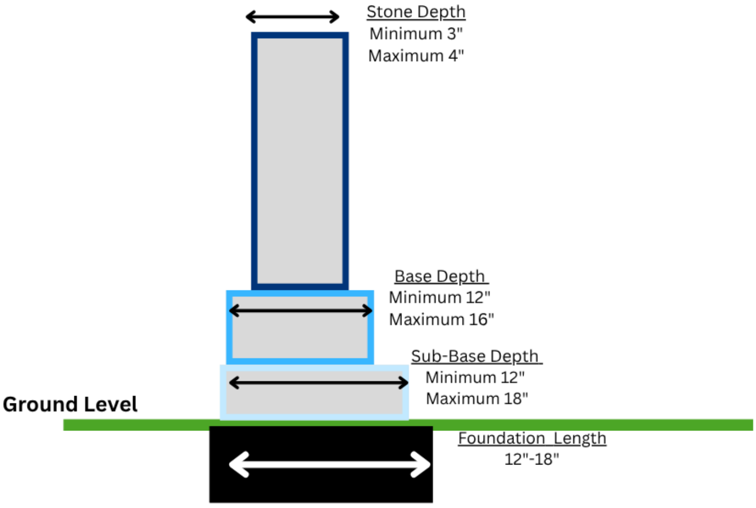
Stone
Height: 24" - 39"
Width: 28" - 42"
Depth: 3" - 4"

Stone Base
Height: 3" - 4"
Width: 36" - 48"
Depth: 12" - 16"

Sub-Base
Height: Up to 3"
Width: 36" - 48"
Depth: 12" - 18"

Foundation
Height 6"
Width: Up to 3"
Length: Up to 88"

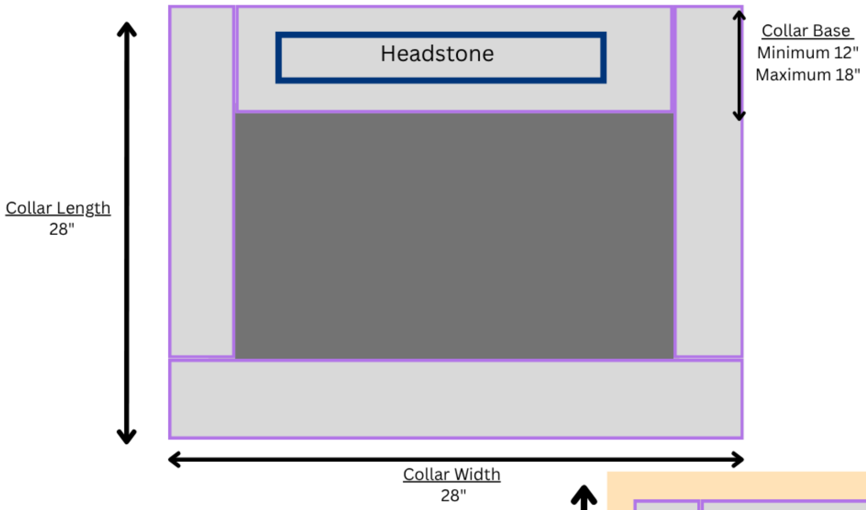
Side View

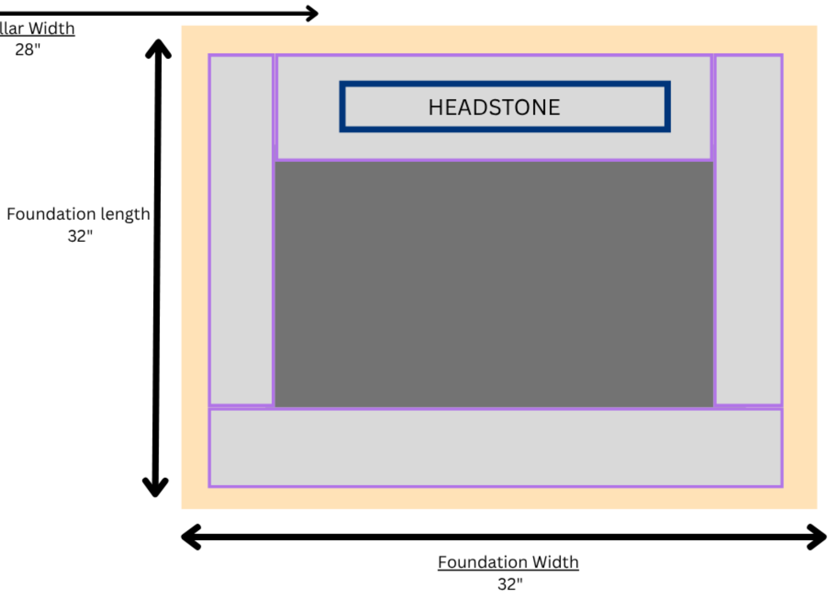


Collar Specifications

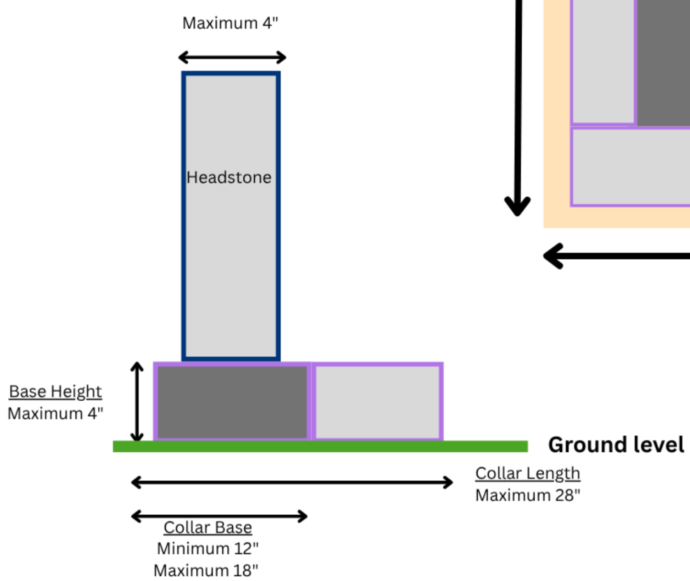
Lawned Graves

Birds Eye View





Side View



Collar Dimensions

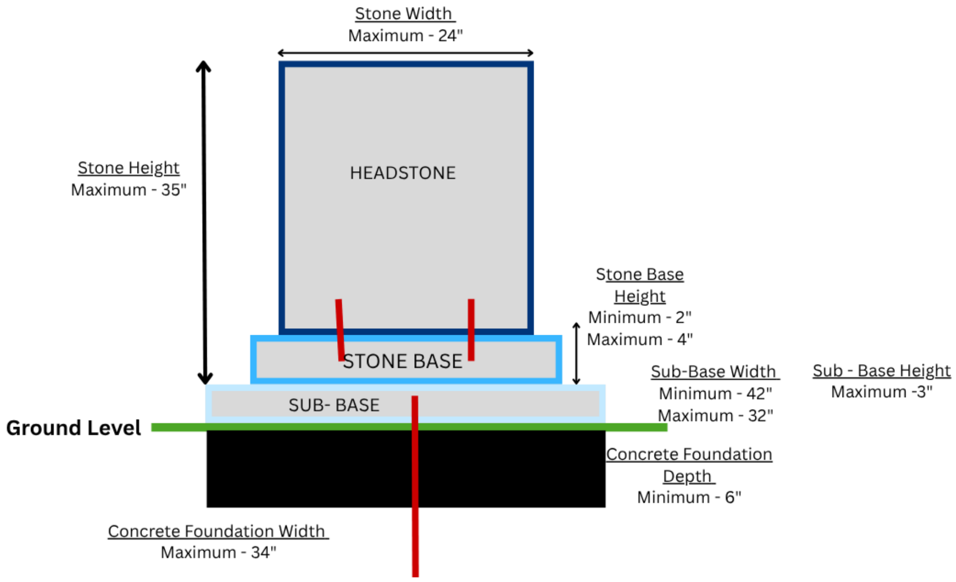
Collar:
Collar Length: Up to 28"
Collar Width: Up to 28"

Base Dimensions:
Base Height: Up to 4"
Stone Base: 12" - 18"

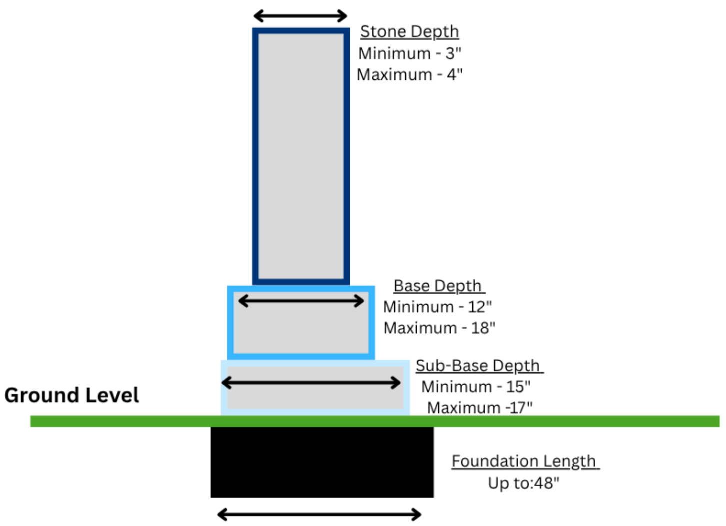
Foundations
Length: 32"
Width:32"

Infant/Child Memorial Stones

Front View



Side View



Stone Dimensions

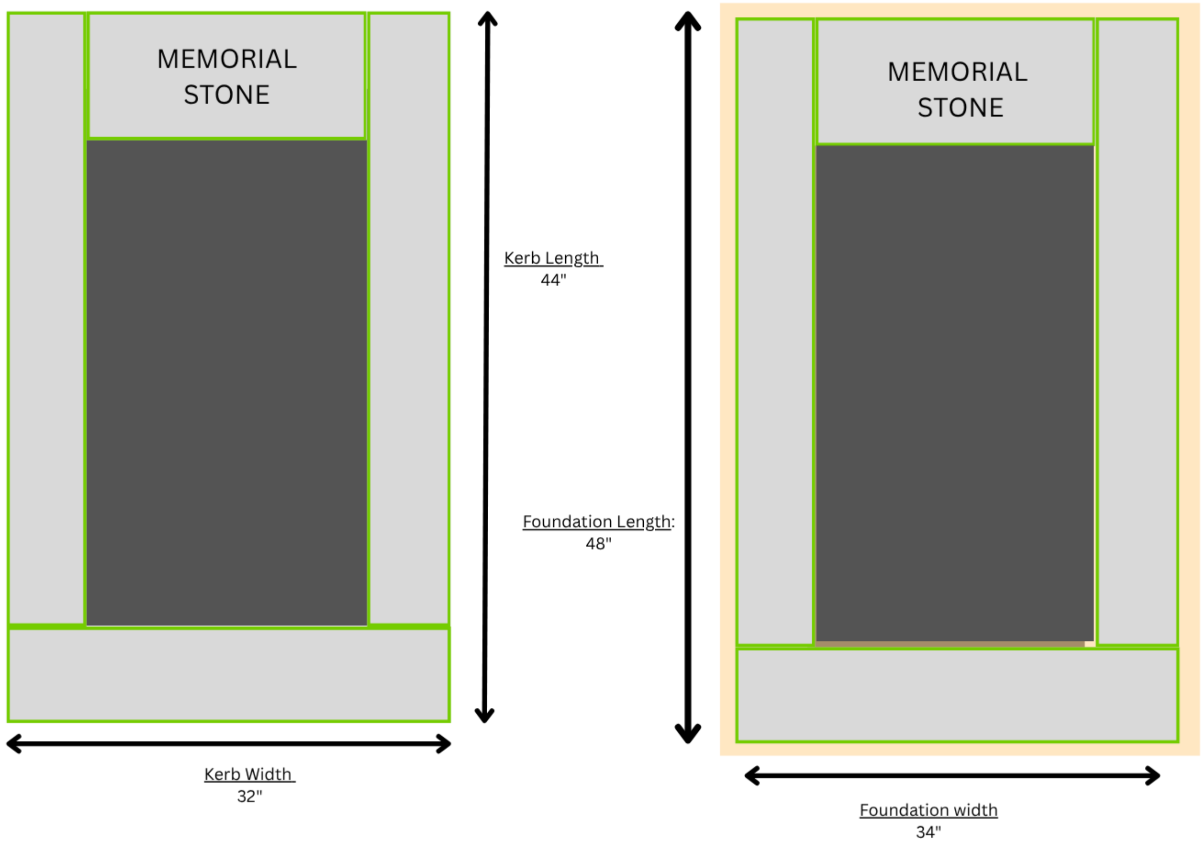
Stone
Height: 35"
Width 2.0"
Depth 3" - 4"

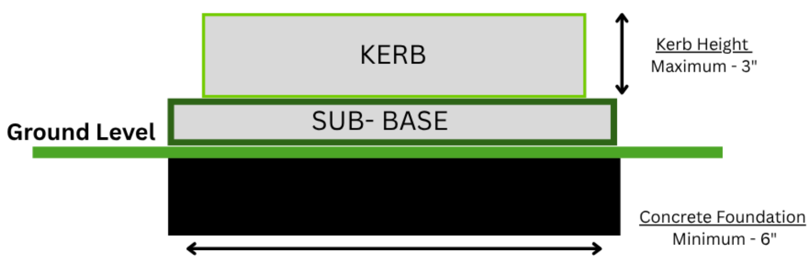
Base
Height: 2" - 4"
Width 32" - 42"
Depth 12" - 18"

Sub-Base
Height: 3"
Width: 32" - 42"
Depth 12" - 18"

Foundations
Width 34"
Length 48"
Depth: 6"

Infant/Children Kerb Set Specification





Kerb Set Dimensions

Kerb
Height: Up to 3"
Width: 2'11" - 3'0"
Length: 3'11" - 4'0"

Sub Base
Height 3"
Width 32" - 42"
Depth: 6"

Foundations
Width: 34"
Length: 48"

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Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment **Appendix 3**

Subject of assessment:	Bereavement strategy			
Coverage:	Service-specific.			
This is a decision relating to:	☒ **Strategy**	☐ **Policy**	☐ **Service**	☐ **Function**
	☐ **Process/procedure**	☐ **Programme**	☐ **Project**	☐ **Review**
	☐ **Organisational change**	☐ **Other (please state)**		
It is a:	**New approach:**	☒	**Revision of an existing approach:**	☐
It is driven by:	**Legislation:**	☒	**Local or corporate requirements:**	☒

Description:	Insert short description, using the following as sub-headings:
	• Key aims, objectives and activities
	  • Enhancing service quality, accessibility and cultural sensitivity
	  • Strengthening infrastructure and operational resilience, including replacement of cremation equipment and addressing burial capacity pressures
	  • Promoting environmental sustainability through reduced emissions and sustainable memorial options
	  • Ensuring financial sustainability and affordability, including addressing funeral poverty
	  • Improving governance, leadership and compliance with national standards
	  • Rebuilding public confidence and strengthening stakeholder relationships
	• Statutory drivers (set out exact reference)
	  • Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2006
	  • Cremation Regulations 2008
	  • Environmental Protection Act 1990
	  • Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order (LACO) 1977
	  • ICCM / FBCA guidance and codes of practice
	  • NAMM / BRAMM standards for memorial safety and installation
	• Differences from any previous approach
	  • Moving to a unified leadership structure
	  • Addressing longstanding infrastructure issues (e.g. non-compliant cremators, limited burial space)
	  • Introducing new service options (e.g. weekend services, expanded memorial offerings)
	  • Strengthening environmental sustainability commitments
	  • Embedding structured performance monitoring and evaluation
	  • Focusing on affordability and reducing funeral poverty
	  • Increasing community engagement and co-design of services
	• Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate)
	Staff
	Environment services and wider council teams
	Elected members and senior leaders
	Funeral Director
	Stonemasons
	Faith Leaders
	• Intended outcomes.
	  • Improved quality, dignity and accessibility of bereavement services
	  • Increased customer satisfaction and restored public confidence
	  • Sustainable and compliant cremation and burial provision
	  • Sufficient burial capacity for current and future demand
	  • Reduced environmental impact and improved site standards
	  • Greater financial sustainability and affordability
	  • Stronger partnerships and community engagement
	  • A resilient, modernised and future-proof bereavement service

Live date:	2026
Lifespan:	3 Year Period 2026-2029
Date of next review:	Annual reviews – within 3 years (2029)

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	☒	☐	☐	There are no identified adverse impacts on individual human rights arising from the Bereavement Services Strategy. The strategy is designed to enhance dignity, respect and equitable access to bereavement services for all residents, ensuring that individuals are treated with compassion during times of loss. The proposals focus on improving service quality, accessibility (including extended service provision), cultural sensitivity and environmental standards, all of which support individuals' rights to dignity, respect and non-discrimination. Evidence used to inform this assessment includes analysis of current service provision, stakeholder engagement, and consideration of diverse community needs. There are no elements within the strategy that restrict access to services or disproportionately disadvantage any group in a way that would infringe on rights protected under UK legislation, including the Human Rights Act 1998.

* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance for details on the issues covered by each of theses broad questions prior to completion.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*	☒	☐	☐	There are no identified adverse differential impacts on individuals or groups with protected characteristics arising from the Bereavement Services Strategy. The strategy has been developed to promote inclusivity, equitable access and cultural sensitivity across all bereavement services, ensuring that the needs of diverse communities are recognised and supported. Key elements of the strategy actively support equality by: • Ensuring services are accessible regardless of background, religion or income • Promoting culturally sensitive practices, including accommodating faith-based burial requirements and service preferences • Introducing extended service provision (including weekends) to better meet diverse community needs • Reviewing pricing structures to improve affordability and address funeral poverty, supporting economically disadvantaged groups The strategy aligns with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act by seeking to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups Evidence used to inform this assessment includes service reviews, stakeholder engagement, and consideration of community demographics and needs. The proposals are intended to reduce inequalities in access to bereavement services rather than create them, and no groups are expected to be disproportionately negatively impacted.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
Community cohesion Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable. There are no identified negative impacts on community cohesion arising from the Bereavement Services Strategy. The strategy is designed to strengthen relationships across communities by promoting inclusive, culturally sensitive bereavement services that recognise and respect the diverse needs of Middlesbrough's population.
Armed Forces Could the decision impact negatively on those who are currently members of the armed forces of former members in the areas of Council delivered healthcare, compulsory education and housing policies?*	☒	☐	☐	There are no identified negative impacts on current or former members of the armed forces arising from the Bereavement Services Strategy. The strategy relates specifically to bereavement service provision (cremation, burial and memorial services) and does not directly impact on Council-delivered healthcare, education or housing policies. The strategy promotes equitable and inclusive access to services for all residents, including veterans and serving personnel and their families, ensuring dignity, respect and cultural sensitivity in bereavement provision.
Care leavers Could the decision impact negatively on those who are care experienced?*	☒	☐	☐	There are no identified negative impacts on individuals who are care experienced arising from the Bereavement Services Strategy. The strategy is focused on improving the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of bereavement services for all residents, including vulnerable groups.
Reducing Poverty Could the decision impact negatively on the Council's ambitions to reduce poverty in the town?	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable. There are no identified negative impacts on the Council's ambitions to reduce poverty arising from the Bereavement Services Strategy. Instead, the strategy includes specific measures intended to support affordability and reduce financial pressures associated with bereavement.

Screening questions	Response	Evidence
Next steps: ➲ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed. ➲ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.		

Assessment completed by:	Katie Bargewell	**Head of Service:**	Katie Bargewell
Date:	13.05.2026	**Date:**	13.05.2026

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	Middlesbrough moving forward

Report of:	Corporate Director of Finance (s151 Officer) - Andrew Humble

Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Finance - Cllr. Nicky Walker

Submitted to:	Executive

Date:	10 June 2026

Title:	2025/26 Revenue & Capital Year End Outturn

Report for:	Decision

Status:	Public

Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value

Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £250,000 and have a significant impact in two or more wards

Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That the Executive:

- **Approves** budget virements over £250,000 within the revenue budget (Appendix 1)
- **Approves** budget virements over £250,000 within the Capital Programme (paragraph 4.93)
- **Approves** the inclusion of new schemes and additions to existing schemes to the Capital Programme totalling £1.057m for 2025/26, which are all externally funded to either new or existing schemes (detailed in Appendix 5). Subject to approval this will increase the approved 2025/26 Capital Programme budget to £89.508m
- **Notes** 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.
- **Notes** that this sum is to be met from the Savings Delivery Risk reserve of £2.000m, put aside to manage uncertainty in this area.
- **Notes** the improved year-end position in relation to reserves in that usable unrestricted reserves have increased from £21.654m to £25.941m, an increase of £4.287m demonstrating that the overall financial position of the Council has again improved this year.

- **Notes** 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 address some of the key areas which contributed to the overspend in 2025/26.

Executive summary

This report sets out the Council's final Revenue and Capital Year End Outturn position for 2025/26, together with the associated impact on reserves and the overall financial standing of the Council. It enables the Executive to discharge its responsibilities for financial management, governance and control, including approval of budget virements, updates to the Capital Programme, and noting the overall financial performance for the year.

The report, enables the Executive to discharge its financial management responsibilities by setting out the following position at Quarter Four (31st March 2026):

- General Fund Revenue Budget Outturn
- virements
- statement of the Council's reserves and provisions
- Capital Programme Outturn
- statement of the level of debt owed to and to be recovered by the Council
- actions that have been taken and are planned to be taken in order to address the issued identified

The final revenue outturn position is an overspend of £1.793m after the application of corporate contingencies and other central resources. Whilst this represents a pressure against the approved budget, it reflects a significant improvement from earlier forecasts in the year, with the Quarter One forecast overspend of £4.482m reduced through robust financial management, delivery of mitigations and strong corporate oversight.

It is important to stress however this sum is to be met from the Savings Delivery Risk reserve of £2.000m, put aside to manage uncertainty in this area, and that overall, the position in relation to reserves has improved.

It is also important to note that the reported overspend for 2025/26 is not directly comparable to some previous years positions where overspends resulted in the depletion of reserves. The outturn reflects a planned and managed approach to financial risk whereby corporate contingencies, the Savings Delivery Risk Reserve, and other centrally held resources have been applied to support service pressures arising during the year.

This approach is consistent with strengthened financial governance arrangements and has enabled the Council to manage in year volatility while protecting and rebuilding financial resilience. As a result, despite the reported overspend, the Council has increased its usable unrestricted reserves from £21.654m to £25.941m, an increase of £4.287m demonstrating that the overall financial position has improved.

Whilst this is an improved reserves position the Council continues to work towards a target of a minimum of £35.000m usable reserves position as set out by the Section 151 Officer in the Financial Reserves Policy approved at Council on 18 February 2026.

The main highlights of the report are:

- the 2025/26 revenue budget year end outturn is an overspend of **£1.793m**, **1.2%** of the overall 2025/26 budget of £143.304m. In line with the financial strategy, this was after the planned use of central contingencies and other budgets totalling **£6.546m**. The overspend of £1.889m will be funded from the Savings Delivery Reserve set aside for this purpose. The final outturn is shown in Table 1 in paragraph 4.15.
- 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 address some of the key areas which contributed to the overspend in 2025/26.
- the overall outturn position continues to be driven by demand-led and statutory service pressures, most notably within **Children's Social Care, which reported a £7.455m overspend due to high-cost placements, workforce pressure and reliance on agency staff**.
- Adult Social Care also reported an outturn position of **£1.272m overspend reflecting ongoing demand for complex care**, partially offset by income and staff savings.
- other service areas reported a mix of overspend and underspends, with underspend in Corporate and Central budgets (including contingency, capital financing and use of one-off funds) making a significant contribution to offsetting Directorate pressures.
- the final revenue outturn position includes **£7.731m of net savings currently earmarked as undeliverable in 2025/26 as shown in Table 2 and Appendix 2**. In line with the approach adopted in setting the 2026/27 budget, these savings have been reviewed through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and have either been removed where no longer achievable, reprofiled to reflect more realistic delivery timescales, incorporated into the 2026/27 base budget. Any remaining savings will be monitored and reviewed throughout 2026/27 as part of the standard budget monitoring process.
- the 2025/26 budgets and use of central Corporate Contingency budget and Change Fund (paragraphs 4.69 and 4.70 and Table 3).
- the position demonstrates that while financial control has improved, there remain structural financial challenges, particularly in demand-led services, which will continue into 2026/27 and beyond.
- overall, the 2025/26 revenue outturn demonstrates that the Council is now managing financial pressures in a controlled and planned way, while continuing to rebuild reserves and strengthen resilience, in contrast to previous years where overspends were associated with the depletion of reserves.
- the **final in year deficit of £7.104m for 2025/26 on the Dedicated School Grant, increasing the cumulative deficit to £29.317m on 31 March 2026** (Table 5). The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) continues to be subject to a statutory override, requiring deficits to be held separately from the General Fund. The Government has confirmed that this override will now be extended to 31 March 2028, aligning with the transition to a reformed SEND system. In addition, local authorities will be

eligible for a High Needs Stability Grant covering up to 90% of the DSG deficit accrued to March 2026, subject to approval of a Local SEND reform Plan by the Department of Education. The DSG recovery actions and risk to the Council's financial resilience are detailed in Appendix 4.

- the **addition of £1.057m for new schemes and additions to existing schemes (externally funded) to the Capital Programme in 2025/26** creating a revised budget of £89.508m for 2025/26 (paragraphs 4.91 to 4.96 and Appendix 5).
- the **2025/26 final Capital Programme outturn is £56.477m**, representing an underspend of £32.972m (37%) against the revised budget of £89.508m budget (Table 6).
- this underspend is primarily due to slippage in project delivery, with £32.052m reprofiled into future years and contributions, alongside capital receipts and borrowing (Appendix 6).
- that £5.659m of qualifying revenue expenditure is to be funded from Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUoCR) for Transformation in 2025/26 in accordance with the FUoCR strategy for 2025/26 approved by Council on 26 March 2025 (paragraph 4.96 to 4.100 and Appendix 8)
- the level of Debtors as at 31 March 2026 (paragraph 4.106 to 4.107 and Table 9)

The recommendations are required to ensure compliance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Procedure Rules, particularly in relation to approval of significant virements and capital programme changes. The report enables the Executive to formally note and scrutinise the year-end financial position, and maintain effective governance, transparency and accountability for the management of public funds.

Approving the recommended actions ensures that the Council maintains robust financial control and governance arrangements. Budget changes accurately reflect service delivery and financial performance during the year. It ensures the Capital Programme remains aligned to funding and delivery timelines. It will also enable the Council to continue to strengthen financial resilience and support delivery of the MTFP.

The alternative option would be not to approve the budget virements or capital programme amendments, or not to formally note the outturn position. This would limit the Executive's ability to effectively manage and control the Council's financial position, weaken governance arrangements and reduce transparency in financial reporting.

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 The report discharges the responsibilities of the Executive to manage and control the revenue budget, capital programme, and overall balance sheet position of the Council.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	This report covers both the revenue and capital programme of the Council and as a result it supports all the ambitions within the Council Plan.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	The proposed recommendations are consistent with and will promote the achievement of the Council's general legal duty to achieve Best Value in accordance with Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended by s137 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007). The report provides assurance that the Council has effective corporate governance arrangements in place, and that the Council is attempting to manage its finances within the budget approved by Council for 2025/26 and ensures that the Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability is not impacted.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive

- **Approves** budget virements over £250,000 within the revenue budget (Appendix 1)
- **Approves** budget virements over £250,000 within the Capital Programme (paragraph 4.93)
- **Approves** the inclusion of new schemes and additions to existing schemes to the Capital Programme totalling £1.057m for 2025/26, which are all externally funded to either new or existing schemes (detailed in Appendix 5). Subject to approval this will increase the approved 2025/26 Capital Programme budget to £89.508m
- **Notes** 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.
- **Notes** that this sum is to be met from the Savings Delivery Risk reserve of £2.000m, put aside to manage uncertainty in this area.
- **Notes** the improved year-end position in relation to reserves in that usable unrestricted reserves have increased from £21.654m to £25.941m, an increase of £4.287m demonstrating that the overall financial position of the Council has again improved this year.
- **Notes** 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 address some of the key areas which contributed to the overspend in 2025/26.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

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

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation gives the Executive collective responsibility for corporate strategic performance and financial management, monitoring and control. Standing Orders and Financial Procedures require the Executive's approval for major virements between revenue budgets, and in-year changes to the Council's Capital Programme within approved Council resources within the approved policy framework.

4.2 This report enables the Executive to discharge its financial management responsibilities by setting out the Council's 2025/26 year-end financial position.

4.3 Financial Procedure Rules 12.6.45 and 12.6.132 of the Council constitution requires the Executive's approval of revenue and capital programme budget virements over £250,000.

4.4 Financial Procedure Rule 12.6.91 requires approval by the Executive of the write off of debt over financial thresholds set out in 12.6.132, there are none for the purpose of the final 2025/26 outturn report.

4.5 The outturn position within this final outturn report as at 31 March 2026 has been prepared using the following key assumptions:

- all known staffing costs and changes have been reflected within the final outturn position.
- the agreed pay award of 3.2% for local government officers for 2025/26 has been fully incorporated.
- income and expenditure positions have been finalised in conjunction with budget holders, based on actual activity and accruals where appropriate.
- the outturn position reflects actual service deliver arrangements and financial performance for the year, providing a robust and prudent basis for reporting the final position.

Revenue Outturn 2025/26

4.6 The 2025/26 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29, and Council Tax report to Council on 19 February 2025 set out the future financial position of the Council.

4.7 As part of that report a net revenue budget for 2025/26 of £143.304m was approved by Full Council. Within the report the Director of Finance and Transformation (S151 Officer) issued his Section 25 Report to Council Members which set out the basis upon which the revenue budget was considered to be robust and the basis upon which reserves were considered adequate

4.8 While the Council has achieved significant improvement in its financial position compared to that at the start of the 2024/25 financial year, supported by a significantly improved 2026/27 financial settlement relative to previous years, there remains an ongoing need to maintain strong financial discipline. The 2025/26 outturn demonstrates the importance of delivering approved savings in full and maintaining robust governance and financial control arrangements.

4.9 The outturn position reflects the extent to which expenditure has been managed within the approved 2025/26 budget, including the appropriate utilisation of approved contingencies. These measures have contributed to supporting delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), stabilising the Council's financial position and beginning to rebuild financial resilience. Budgetary control measures previously set out in the 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Outturn report to Executive on 11 June 2025, have continued to be implemented throughout 2025/26 and have underpinned the overall financial outturn.

4.10 Building on the improved financial position at outturn compared to previous years, the Council is well placed to implement a more integrated Performance and Financial Management Policy. This establishes a clear framework to ensure that performance, finance and risk are managed in a joined-up, transparent way, supporting stronger alignment between resources, service delivery and strategic priorities. The Policy promotes clear accountability, evidence-based decision making and regular, transparent reporting, enabling early identification of issues and effective corrective action. Its implementation, alongside a robust Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), will further strengthen governance, support delivery of strategic objectives and enhance value for money for residents.

4.11 As shown at the bottom of Table 1, the 2025/26 final revenue outturn position at the year-end is an overspend of £1.793m (1.2%) against the approved budget of £143.304m across Directorates and Central Budgets, an increase of £0.118m since the Quarter Three forecasted outturn. The final outturn position should be viewed in the context of the Councils financial management approach, which incorporates the planned use of corporate contingency budgets, savings delivery risk provisions, and other central resources to manage uncertainty. The application of £6.546m of central contingencies and other budgets was built into the financial strategy, meaning the reported overspend represents the residual position after planned mitigation has been applied, rather than an unmanaged financial pressure. Financial controls and actions that were put in place have helped to mitigate further overspends and continue to play a critical role in reducing financial pressures across Directorates, reducing the initial Quarter One forecast overspend of £4.482m. It therefore remains essential that Directors maintain tight financial control going into 2026/27 of their financial positions.

4.12 As part of the 2025/26 budget, £4.367m of one-off funding was allocated to the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund. £1.392m has been spent by 31 March 2026, with the remaining £2.975m used to reduce the outturn position, as shown in Table 1 below. Funding for many of the schemes has been incorporated within the growth built into the 2026/27 budget where continuation of these services is considered a Council Plan priority.

4.13 One of the main factors in the increase for Quarter Three to the final outturn is the continued and sustained demand within Children's Care. This reflects both the volume and complexity of cases, particularly the ongoing reliance on high-cost external residential placements and continued pressures in staffing, including the reliance on agency workers. While the Children's Services Prevention Grant of £2.123m has been applied to the Directorate's final outturn position (having previously been held within Central Budgets), underlying pressures have continued to increase. Excluding this technical adjustment, the net increase since Quarter Three is £1.337m, the majority of which relates to staffing costs and placement pressures. This is consistent with the position reported throughout 2025/26, where Children's Social Care has represented the most significant area of financial pressure driven by demand-led and statutory services.

4.14 The demand led pressures in Children's Care are structural in nature and are expected to persist into 2026/27 and across the Medium-Term Financial Plan. This is recognised with the approved 2026/27 budget, which included additional recurring funding to reflect forecast demand, however, there remains significant financial risk if demand and complexity continue to exceed assumptions. The Section 25 statement highlights Children's Social Care as a key area of ongoing financial risk due to the high levels of demand, complexity of need, and the cost of placements. It is therefore essential that Directors maintain tight financial control, strengthen demand management, and continue to deliver and embed financial recovery and continuous improvement to mitigate these pressures and ensure financial sustainability.

4.15 A summary of the main variances for each Directorate is included in paragraphs 4.22 to 4.68. Table 1 below also includes a split of the final outturn between non-delivery of required budget savings (detailed on paragraphs 4.16 to 4.21 and Appendix 2) and other variances. Table 1 below reflect the changes made as part of the Senior Management review from effective from 1 January 2026.

Table 1 - Summary of Net Revenue Budget Outturn 2025/26

Directorate	Original Budget Full Year £m	Current Full Year Budget £m	Outturn £m	Outturn Variance £m	Movement from Quarter Three £m	MEMO FORECAST Savings Delivery Variance £m	MEMO FORECAST Other variances £m
				Adv /(Fav)	Adv /(Fav)	Adv /(Fav)	Adv /(Fav)
Adult Social Care	55.192	56.283	57.555	1.272	(0.211)	0.018	1.254
Public Health	0.086	(0.326)	(0.722)	(0.396)	(0.396)	0.000	(0.396)
Children's Social Care	57.120	57.791	65.246	7.455	(0.786)	3.833	3.622
Education & Partnerships	6.445	6.712	7.060	0.348	(0.117)	0.345	0.003
Regeneration & Housing	3.500	3.991	3.606	(0.385)	(0.500)	0.375	(0.760)
Environment, Communities & Culture	19.042	20.598	21.706	1.108	(0.082)	0.393	0.715
Legal & Corprate Services	10.750	10.494	10.208	(0.286)	(0.054)	0.000	(0.286)
Finance	5.832	5.880	5.031	(0.849)	0.309	0.000	(0.849)
Chief Executive's Office	1.556	1.929	1.849	(0.080)	(0.015)	0.000	(0.080)
Total Directorates	**159.523**	**163.352**	**171.539**	**8.187**	**(1.852)**	**4.964**	**3.223**
Central Budgets	(22.765)	(26.594)	(26.442)	0.152	2.472	2.767	(2.615)
Use of central contingencies.							
Savings Delivery Risk	2.000	2.000	0.000	(2.000)	*0.000*	0.000	(2.000)
Inflation & Growth	0.206	0.206	0.000	(0.206)	*0.000*	0.000	(0.206)
Corporate Contingency	0.890	0.890	0.000	(0.890)	*(0.373)*	0.000	(0.890)
Middlesbrough Priorities Fund	2.975	2.975	0.000	(2.975)	*(0.129)*	0.000	(2.975)
Pay & Prices Contingency	0.475	0.475	0.000	(0.475)	*0.000*	0.000	(0.475)
Total Central Budgets	**(16.219)**	**(20.048)**	**(26.442)**	**(6.394)**	**1.970**	**2.767**	**(9.161)**
Total	**143.304**	**143.304**	**145.097**	**1.793**	**0.118**	**7.731**	**(5.938)**

Budget Savings Delivery

4.16 The budget for 2025/26 is predicated on the delivery of £11.626m in savings, comprising £6.786m of new savings and £4.840m of savings previously approved in 2024/25. The revised new savings figure reflects the proposed removal of £0.250m, which has been formally taken out of the Council's budget as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process. In the interim, a temporary virement has been approved, and the removal of these savings will be funded from the Corporate Contingency budget in 2025/26, as shown in Table 3.

4.17 In addition to these new budget savings required there was also a total of £2.291m of previous savings which were not fully achieved during 2024/25 and are remaining to be achieved in 2025/26. This makes a total of £13.917m of savings which are required to be achieved in 2025/26.

4.18 Table 2 provides a summary of delivery performance against savings required in 2025/26, with further detail included in Appendix 2. All savings continue to be subject to robust monitoring through Budget Clinics with Directorates and are reported through this process.

4.19 In line with the approach taken in setting the 2026/27 budget, savings assessed as not deliverable in 2025/26 have been reviewed and addressed through the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This has included the removal of unachievable savings, the reprofiling of delivery timelines where operational or demand constraints delayed implementation, and the incorporation of any residual impact into the 2026/27 budget position. This has required the underlying budget position to be aligned accordingly, particularly with demand-led services, where the interaction between costs pressures and original saving assumptions has increased the sensitivity of budgets to changes in demand and activity levels.

4.20 As a result, there is a continued focus in strengthening core operational practice, improving demand management, and ensuring services are delivered as efficiently as possible within approved resource levels. This includes embedding good financial management, improving planning and forecasting, and ensuring that resources are targeted effectively to meet service needs. Savings liked to ongoing service improvement activity continue to be overseen through Integrated Performance and Budget Clinics to ensure alignment between service delivery and financial performance.

4.21 Any savings not fully delivered in 2025/26 will continue to be managed as part of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). At the start of 2026/27, all remaining savings will be subject to review to determine the most appropriate route to delivery, including whether they can be achieved through revised approaches, replacement savings, or longer-term continuous improvement activity. Where savings are no longer considered deliverable in their original form, this will be addressed through the established governance process as part of the ongoing development of the MTFP, ensuring that the Council maintains a balanced and sustainable financial position over the medium term.

Table 2 - Savings Programme Assurance Summary for 2025/26 by Directorate

Directorate	2025/26 Budgeted Savings Target £m	2025/26 Savings Achieved £m	202526 Savings (over) / under achieved £m
Adult Social Care	(2.733)	(2.715)	0.018
Children's Social Care	(4.112)	(0.279)	3.833
Education & Partnerships	(0.359)	(0.014)	0.345
Regeneration & Housing	(1.394)	(1.019)	0.375
Environment, Communities & Culture	(1.790)	(1.397)	0.393
Legal & Corporate Services	(0.367)	(0.367)	-
Finance	(0.395)	(0.395)	-
Central	(2.767)	-	2.767
	(13.917)	**(6.186)**	**7.731**

Directorate Main Variances

4.22 The explanations for Directorate major variances and key underlying drivers are summarised below. These reflect the position at year end following detailed review through the Council's governance arrangements, including Member-led Budget Clinics and wider corporate oversight processes.

4.23 Throughout 2025/26, the Council has continued to develop its financial management arrangements through enhanced monitoring, governance and Member oversight, building the foundations for the implementation of the Performance and Financial Management Policy and supporting Framework from 2026/27. These arrangements have focused on improving the integration of financial performance with service delivery and risk, ensuring that emerging issues are identified and addressed through structured governance processes. This includes regular budget monitoring, Directorate oversight, and Member engagement through Budget Clinics. The introduction of the Policy and Framework from 2026/27 will formalise and further embed this integrated approach, providing a consistent cycle of planning, monitoring, review and improvement across all Directorates, with clearer accountability and more systematic alignment between performance, finance and risk.

4.24 This approach ensures that Directorate financial performance is considered alongside operational delivery, demand and risk, enabling a clearer understanding of the drivers of variance at outturn. Through robust planning, monitoring and review processes, Directors are required to maintain a clear line of sight between service activity, performance outcomes and available resources, ensuring that budgets are managed within approved limits wherever possible. In doing so, there is a continued focus on embedding consistent operational practice, improving forecasting and planning, and ensuring that resources are deployed as effectively as possible to meet service need with the approved budget.

4.25 A range of core financial controls are in place across all Directorates and form part of the Council's business as usual arrangements. These include regular budget monitoring and forecasting, Director level review meetings, Member and office clinic processes, procurement oversight, and robust scrutiny of high-cost demand-led activity. Consistent application of these controls, supported by clear accountability and appropriate challenge, remains essential to maintaining financial discipline, improving forecast accuracy and ensuring value for money.

4.26 Proposed revenue budget virements above £250,000 require Executive approval, and those proposed following final outturn are set out at Appendix 1 for consideration and approval.

Adult Social Care: Final Outturn position £1.272m

Adult Social Care	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**56.283**	**57.555**	**1.272**

4.27 The final outturn position for the Adult Social Care Directorate is a net overspend of £1.272m, which represents an improvement of £0.211m compared to the position forecast at Quarter Three. The final position reflects a combination of continued demand-led pressures, offset by staff savings, additional income and the maximisation of capital and health funding. The main components of the outturn position are set out below.

- Purchasing – Growth: £2.204m
  The final outturn position for Purchasing Growth, is an overspend of £2.204m, an increase of £0.023m compared to Quarter Three. This reflects ongoing demand for high-cost care services, particularly residential care, alongside the complexity of individual care packages. The position includes the benefit of additional health income in respect of some care packages; however, demand and market pressures continue to drive costs growth within this area.

- Purchasing – Residential: (£0.422m)
  The Purchasing Residential budget reports a final underspend of (£0.422m), compared to an underspend of (£0.546m) forecast at Quarter Three. The underspend continues to reflect recovery of overpayments relating to out of area placements, primarily arising from delayed notifications following service users' deaths. While recovery activity has remained effective, the reduction in the underspend reflects changes to service user contributions.

- Other Variances, inc. Prevention, Provider & Support Services: (£0.510)
  The combined outturn position across Prevention, Provider & Support Services and staffing-related variances reflects a mix of ongoing pressures and mitigating factors. Staff savings of approximately (£0.478m) have been delivered in excess of the corporate vacancy target, helping to offset pressures elsewhere in the Directorate. In addition, the outturn benefits from the maximisation of capital

resources relating to TCES equipment and Staying Put arrangements (£0.226m), additional health income associated with the day care services (£0.098m).

4.28 Executive approved the reprovisioning of Levick Court on 12 November 2025, establishing a partnership with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust (TEWV) to support a financially sustainable service model through joint commissioning and integrated clinic provision. Levick Court was successfully launched in February 2026. A full financial appraisal and staffing model has been developed to ensure that the agreed block contract value supports operational delivery. By year end, the service has achieved £0.293m of the £0.311m identified savings needed to deliver a service which is sustainable and economically viable, with the remaining balance to be delivered in 2026/27 as the service reaches full operational maturity. The model also provides scope for additional commissioned activity, subject to demand, including where health partners require access beyond the initial allocation of eight beds.

4.29 The final outturn position also reflects a significant increase in the provision for bad and doubtful debts. Following detailed year-end analysis, the bad debt provision has increased by approximately £0.546m, reflecting cases where service users are deceased with no residual estate, or where recovery is considered unlikely due to persistent non-payment.

Public Health: Final Outturn position (£0.396m)

Public Health	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**(0.326)**	**(0.722)**	**(0.396)**

4.30 At final outturn, Public Health budgets reported an underspend of (£0.607m), which in accordance with grant conditions will be transferred to the Public Health reserve, resulting in a break-even position on the ringfenced Public Health grant. This reflects effective management of grant funded activity within the conditions of the grant. Following this transfer, the Public Health reserve will increase from £1.686m at 31 March 2025 to £2.293m at 31 March 2026, with plans in place for the reserve to be utilised on eligible public health related activity in future years in line with grant requirements

4.31 In addition, there is an underspend of (£0.396m) within the Council funded areas of the Directorate. This position is mainly attributable to the 2025/26 management fee due from the Council's leisure services provider (SLM) under the contract which had not been budgeted for. The management fee due has not yet been paid by SLM and the outturn has been made on a prudent basis to reflect this fact and ensuring that the outturn position reflects a cautious and realistic assessment at year end.

Children's Social Care: Final Outturn position £7.455m

Children's Care	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	57.791	65.246	7.455

4.32 At final outturn, Children's Services reports a net overspend of £7.455m after the application of the Children's Services Prevention Grant of £2.123m, which had previously been held within Central Budgets. This represents an increase of £1.337m compared to the Quarter Three position and reflects continued demand led pressures and workforce costs, particularly within Children Looked After, Assessment and Safeguarding services. The key drivers of the overspend remain consistent with those reported throughout the year.

4.33 During 2025/26, £2.229m of Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUoCR) was applied to support Children's Services activity, including initiatives such as Edge of Care and Modernising Fostering. This funding has supported service delivery and practice development during the year, however underlying costs of agency staffing, particularly within statutory frontline services remains the principal driver of the year-end overspend.

4.34 Children's Social Care has implemented a range of mitigating actions to manage in-year pressures, particularly those arising from high-cost placements and workforce costs. These include strengthened placement scrutiny through Director-led panels, maximising use of internal and block residential provision, and targeted work to step down children from residential to fostering placements. Controls over high-cost placements have been enhanced, alongside tighter management of agency staffing and development of a recruitment and retention strategy. Going into 2026/27, demand management initiatives such as reunification and edge of care programmes will begin to reduce reliance on residential care. Financially, the service has utilised flexible use of capital receipts to support service improvements and is benefiting from the Children's Services Prevention Grant, helping to mitigate the overall forecast pressure.

4.35 The main components of the final outturn position are summarised below

- External Residential Placements: £5.151m
  The overspend on external residential placements has reduced from £5.619m at Quarter Three to £5.151m at outturn. While placement numbers have remained broadly stable, costs continue to be driven by the complexity of need and reliance on high-costs specialist provision. This remains a structural pressure within the service and is recognised within the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the Section 25 statement as a key area of financial risk.
- Fostering, Adoption and Internal Placements: (£0.927m)
  Fostering and Adoption now report an underspend of (£0.927m), a significant improvement from the Quarter Three position. This reflects, in part, the reversal of over accrued costs from 2024/25 that did not materialise, alongside a more considered approach for forecasting and accruals in 2025/26. While this has improved the outturn position, internal fostering capacity remains constrained and continues to limit the ability to reduce reliance on external placements.
- Assessment and Safeguarding: £3.281m

Assessment and Safeguarding represent the largest increase in pressure since Quarter Three, rising from £1.771m to £3.281m in outturn. This is primarily driven by continued reliance on agency staff to manage demand, vacancies and workforce instability with statutory frontline services

- Staffing and Workforce Pressures
  Across the Directorate, ongoing workforce pressures particularly within Children Looked After and Assessment and Safeguarding, continue to drive higher than budgeted staffing costs. The reliance on agency staff has been necessary to maintain statutory service delivery but presents a significant affordability risk into future years. As highlighted, within the 2026/27 Budget Report and the Section 25 statement, the priority for 2026/27 is to stabilise the staffing structure, reduce agency reliance, and embed permanent capacity within approved budgets to improve both financial sustainability and service resilience.

Education & Partnerships: Final Outturn position £0.348m

Education & Partnerships	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**6.712**	**7.060**	**0.348**

4.36 At final outturn, Education & Partnerships reports a net overspend of £0.348m, a reduction of (£0.117m) compared to the Quarter Three forecast. The position remains largely unchanged in nature and continues to relate to pressures within the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU), which provides home to school transport for children and transport for vulnerable adults.

4.37 The overspend primarily reflects previously agreed savings that were not fully delivered within 2025/26, largely due to demand and operational constraints within the service. These savings remain a focus for 2026/27, with the service expected either to deliver the agreed savings within a more realistic timeframe or to assess and develop alternative saving options where required. This approach aligns with the assumptions set out within the 2026/27 budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan, ensuring that the ongoing costs of the service is addressed in a sustainable way.

Regeneration & Housing: Final Outturn position (£0.385m)

Regeneration & Housing	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**3.991**	**3.606**	**(0.385)**

4.38 At final outturn, the Regeneration & Housing Directorate reports a net underspend of (£0.385m), compared to a forecast overspend of £0.115m at Quarter Three. This movement reflects a combination of approved budget virements since Quarter Three and a significant one-off income item recognised at year end.

4.39 During the latter part of the year, budget virements relating to Public Protection and Street Lighting were approved, transferring budgets from Environment, Community & Cultural Services into Regeneration & Housing. These virements improved the Directorates overall position by £0.239m which is included in the final year-end position. In addition, the outturn benefits from a settlement payment received in relation to the early surrender of a commercial lease, resulting in a one-off improvement in 2025/26. While this settlement has generated a favourable outturn in 2025/26, it should be noted that this is will cause a short-term income pressure in 2026/27 until the vacated unit is brought back into use. The Council is currently in the process of securing a new tenant under a long-term lease, which will mitigate the longer-term impact and restore income levels thereafter.

4.40 Strategic Commercial Properties have faced significant challenges throughout the year. Boho Buildings report a final year end income shortfall of £0.545m. Currently, only 20% of the buildings are occupied, resulting in lost rental income and increased building related costs to the Council. A sector expert in managed accommodation has been appointed and, from December 2025, has been actively seeking tenancies.

4.41 The major tenant at Centre Square 1 renewed their lease agreement but reduced the space occupied, resulting in additional vacant space and a year-end financial pressure of £0.087m. The surrender of the lease referred to in paragraph 4.38 has resulted in a year-end saving of £0.390m in relation to Centre Square 2. The Council continues to actively seek alternative tenancies for the remaining vacant space.

4.42 The final outturn position for the Cleveland Centre and Captain Cook Square shopping centres is a combined financial pressure of £0.214m, reflecting income levels below budget. This represents an improvement compared to Quarter Three, when a shortfall of £0.405m was reported. These pressures have been partially offset by the Investment Property Contingency, with £0.419m fully utilised in 2025/26

4.43 The improved outturn position reflects prudent in-year financial management alongside proactive management of the Council's commercial assets. However, as highlighted within the Medium-Term Financial Plan, income from strategic commercial properties remains sensitive to market conditions and tenancy changes and will continue to be monitored closely.

Environment, Communities & Culture: Final Outturn position £1.108m

Environment , Communities & Culture	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**20.598**	**21.706**	**1.108**

4.44 At Quarter Three, Environment, Communities and Culture (ECC) reported a forecast overspend of £0.912m. Following approval of budget virements between Environment, Communities & Culture and Regeneration & Housing in relation to Public Protection and Street Lighting, this position has been restated to £1.108m. At final outturn, the Directorate reports an overspend of £1.108m, representing a small improvement against the underlying restated position. The principal drivers of the final position are set out below.

4.45 Bereavement Services: £0.321m - The overspend within Bereavement Services reflects the continuing reduced demand for cremations and the associated impact on income, alongside cost pressures with the service. While operational efficiencies have been implemented and some costs have been capitalised where appropriate, income levels remain sensitive to competition from neighbouring facilities. This pressure has been recognised as ongoing, and additional budget provision has been included in the 2026/27 budget to mitigate the risk going forward.

4.46 School Meals Catering: £0.274m - The Catering Service overspend continues to be driven by rising food costs combined with the decision not to increase school meal prices to support families. The underlying pressure with catering services has been addressed through additional budget provision in the 2026/27 budget.

4.47 Fleet Services: £0.202m - Fleet service reports an overspend of £0.202m at outturn, reflecting ongoing recruitment and retention challenges and increased costs of vehicle parts. In the latter part of the financial year fitters have been recruited which reflects a stabilisation within staffing levels and reduced reliance on external repairs. However, cost pressures within the fleet services remain structural, and additional budget provision has been included with the 2026/27 budget to support the ongoing costs of service delivery.

4.48 During the latter part of the year, budget virements relating to Public Protection and Street Lighting were approved, transferring budget from Environment, Community & Cultural Services into Regeneration & Housing. These virements increased the Directorate’s overall position by £0.239m, with the associated budget savings now reflected within Regeneration & Housings’ final year-end position.

4.49 The remaining variance of £0.311m largely relates to unachieved savings of £0.393m, where increased service demand, growth pressures and a health and safety issue have required the Corporate Director of Environment, Communities and Culture to delay the planned staffing restructure.

4.50 In line with the 2026/27 budget and the Section 25 statement, these unachieved savings will be reviewed in the first quarter of 2026/27 to ensure they remain relevant and deliverable. Where necessary, the service will identify alternative, sustainable options to address the underlying budget requirement through the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

4.51 Overall, the Directorate’s position reflects a combination of demand-led income pressures, cost inflation and service specific operational challenges. As set out in the 2026/27 Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Plan, additional recurring budget provision has been included to address these pressures and support the sustainable delivery of services in future years.

Legal & Corporate Services: Final Outturn position (£0.286m)

Legal & Corporate Services	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**10.494**	**10.208**	**(0.286)**

4.52 At final outturn, Legal & Corporate Services reports an underspend of (£0.286m), an improvement from the (£0.232m) underspend reported at Quarter Three. The improved position primarily reflects ongoing vacancies with ICT Services, which have continued beyond those assumed earlier in the year.

4.53 The underspend within ICT Services of (£0.254m) arises largely from a number of vacancies held pending structural and leadership arrangements. These staffing gaps have resulted in salary savings being realised at outturn.

4.54 During the year, responsibility for Strategy, Information and Governance transferred to the Chief Executives Office, along with a small underspend of (£0.065m) reported at Quarter Three. This transfer has not resulted in any material change to the overall outturn position for Legal & Corporate Services.

Finance: Final Outturn position (£0.849m)

Finance	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**5.880**	**5.031**	**(0.849)**

4.55 At final outturn, the Directorate reports an underspend of (£0.849m), compared to an underspend of (£1.158m) forecast at Quarter Three, representing a movement of £0.309m. The main drivers of the outturn position are set out below.

4.56 Financial Planning & Business Partnering reports a year end position of a (£0.604m) underspend. The underspend reflects MTFP growth approved at the 2025/26 budget setting that was not fully utilised during the year, as the associated staffing review and restructure were not implemented until late in the financial year. The restructure has now been completed, with recruitment underway and a number of key roles appointed to. Remaining vacancies are expected to be filled during 2026/27.

4.57 Corporate Finance reports a year end overspend of £0.201m. The overspend reflects additional costs associated with bank charges and cash collection activities, which have exceeded budgeted levels.

4.58 Resident and Business Support, reports a year end position of a (£0.427m) underspend. The final underspend reflects a combination of staff savings, additional grant income. Compared to Quarter Three, the underspend has reduced from (£0.588m) to (£0.427m), primarily due to an additional £0.245m bad debt provision recognised at year end following a more detailed assessment of collectability.

4.59 Resident and Business Support: Housing Benefit Subsidy is reporting a final year end position of a £0.111m overspend. The final position reflects a slight improvement from the £0.166m pressure reported earlier in the year, following the final Year End Subsidy claim submission.

4.60 Strategic Commissioning and Procurement is reporting a final year end underspend of (£0.130m). The underspend reflects staffing related savings, including vacant posts and reduced working hours. In addition, an improvement since Quarter Three reflects additional income received through the Supplier Incentive Scheme, contributing to the final outturn position.

Chief Executives Office: Final Outturn position (£0.080m)

Chief Executive's Office	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**1.929**	**1.849**	**(0.080)**

4.61 The underspend primarily reflects staffing variances that have arisen following approved budget movements between Directorates. In particular, as a result of service changes arising from the Senior Management Review since Quarter Three, responsibility for Strategy, Information and Governance transferred from Legal & Corporate Services to the Chief Executive's Office, along with the associated budget. Following this transfer, the outturn position reflects the combined budgets, with staffing vacancies contributing to the reported underspend. Without this budget virement, the position for the Chief Executive's Office would have been broadly in line with the approved budget at year end.

Central Budgets: Final Outturn position (£6.394m)

Central Budgets	Full Year Budget £m	Full Year Forecast £m	Forecast Over / (Under) spend £m
Revenue Outturn	**(20.048)**	**(26.442)**	**(6.394)**

4.62 The main components of the final outturn position for Central Budgets are set out below. These budgets include a number of corporate provisions and contingency allocations, and as such the position can vary between reporting periods as assumptions are updated and final allocations are confirmed.

4.63 A £0.444m pressure on the General Fund, primarily reflecting an income shortfall from the Levy Account Surplus, which the government confirmed in February would not be distributed in 2025/26 and an adjustment to business rates income in relation to Renewable Energy payments, including some prior years, which affect the General Fund.

4.64 A (£1.496m) underspend on Capital Financing, representing an increase from the (£1.000m) underspend reported at Quarter Three. This reflects lower than anticipated borrowing costs due to slippage within the capital programme and a reduced requirement for borrowing linked to Exceptional Financial Support (EFS).

4.65 A (£0.730m) underspend on the Change Fund, consistent with Quarter Three, as the planned contribution to the reserve in 2025/26 was no longer required due to the use of Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUoCR) to fund transformation and redundancy costs.

4.66 A £2.767m pressure relating to unachieved corporate savings, which remains consistent with the Quarter Three position in overall value but has been substantively addressed through the 2026/27 budget setting process. This includes:

- £0.244m linked to the Senior Management Review,
- £1.519m relating to Procurement and Contract Reviews, and
- £1.004m relating to Collection Fund savings.

The majority of these savings have now been removed or reprofiled, with only £0.819m remaining to be delivered in 2026/27. In line with the Council's financial strategy, these will be reviewed early in 2026/27 to ensure they remain realistic and deliverable, with alternative options identified where required.

4.67 In addition, there is a (£0.465m) improvement of centrally held grants, reflecting the final confirmation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding, which is higher than originally estimated at the time of budget setting. A (£0.449m) underspend on External Audit Fees, reflecting updated accrual requirements following revised information received during the year.

4.68 The following corporate provisions have supported the improved outturn position throughout the financial year and are detailed in Table 1.

- A (£0.890m) underspend on Corporate Contingency, an improvement from the (£0.517m) forecast at Quarter Three, reflecting lower calls on contingency funding during the final quarter. The use of the Corporate Contingency budget in 2025/26 is detailed in Table 3 below.
- Utilisation of the £2.000m Savings Delivery Risk Budget, applied to support the overall financial position against unachieved savings, consistent with the Council's financial strategy.
- A (£0.681m) underspend on Pay and Prices and other inflation budgets, reflecting lower than anticipated cost pressures during the year.
- A (£2.975m) underspend of the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund where unapplied funding has been applied to offset Directorate pressures and support the overall outturn position.

4.69 Overall, the Central Budgets position has made a significant positive contribution to the final outturn, offsetting pressures within demand-led Directorates and supporting delivery of the Council's financial strategy. While some of these improvements are driven by one-off or timing factors, the position demonstrates the importance of maintaining robust corporate contingency and financial planning arrangements.

Contingency Budget and Change Fund

Table 3 – Use of Corporate Contingency and Change Fund in year

	Corporate Contingency £m	Change Fund Reserve £m
Starting Budget 2025/26	1.327	2.766
Temporary budget virement to ECS to cover unachieved Residents Parking Permit charges saving	(0.250)	-
Contributions 2025/26 *(Planned contribution of £0.730m in 2025/26 no longer required due to use of Flexible Capital Receipts Funding for transformational expenditure)*	-	-
Available for use	**1.077**	**2.766**
Approved projects supported in year		
Middlesbrough Independent Improvement Advisory Board costs 2024/25 - residual costs falling into 2025/26	(0.009)	-
Employers Pension Contribution Rate Review costs	(0.003)	-
Interim Finance consultant - Infrastructure, assets and leasing	(0.002)	-
Financial improvement - Interim finance lead - accounts closure and audit, financial reporting, systems, and control	(0.007)	-
Armed Forces Day Council contribution	(0.001)	-
LCS Staff Review costs	(0.153)	-
Community Grants - VE Day Celebrations	(0.012)	-
Total used in year	**(0.187)**	**-**
BALANCE OF CONTINGENCY UNUSED IN 2025/26	**0.890**	
CLOSING BALANCE ON CHANGE FUND RESERVE AT 31/03/26		**2.766**

4.70 At Quarter Three, it was forecast that £0.517m of unused Contingency Funding would be available for use against the overall Council outturn position. The final balance on the unused element of the Contingency budget has increased to £0.890m. The change is largely due to the change to the profile of the Council contribution to the Turner Prize, which was planned to be funded in 2025/26, but will now not be required until 2026/27.

4.71 There have been no calls on the Change Fund during 2025/26 because of the use of Flexible Use of Capital Receipts for transformational expenditure. For the same reason, the budgeted contribution of £0.730m planned for 2025/26 was not required, this still leaves the balance on the Change Fund Reserve at the end of 2025/26 at £2.766m.

Council Reserves and Provisions

4.72 Table 4 summarises the Council's General Fund reserves and provisions showing the movement between 31 March 2025 and that currently forecast at 31 March 2026, with full details included in Appendix 3. It shows that the Council has forecast usable unrestricted revenue reserves on 31 March 2026 of £25.941m made up of £11.100m General Fund reserves and £14.841m Unrestricted Usable Earmarked reserves. (highlighted yellow)

Table 4 – Summary of General Fund Balance, Reserves, and Provisions

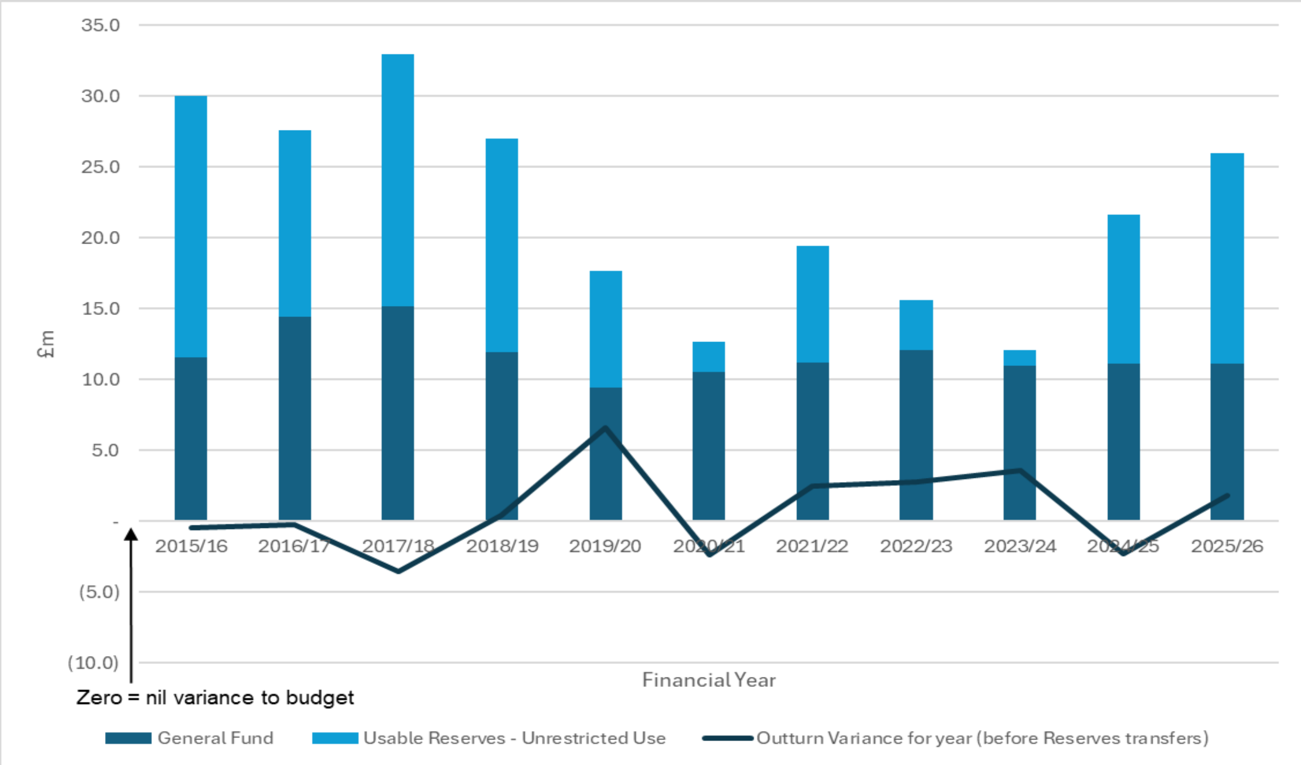
	Opening Balance 01/04/25 £m	Use in Year £m	Additional Budgeted Contributions £m	Transfers from / (to) General Fund £m	Transfers between Reserves £m	Balance at year-end £m	Outturn variance transferred to Reserves (from) / to General Fund £m	Closing Balance at 31/03/26 £m
GENERAL FUND RESERVE	**11.100**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**11.100**	**-**	**11.100**
USABLE EARMARKED RESERVES								
Restricted Use	2.689	(0.013)	-	0.871	-	**3.547**	-	**3.547**
Unrestricted Use	10.554	-	5.888	0.192	-	**16.634**	(1.793)	**14.841**
	13.244	(0.013)	5.888	1.063	-	**20.182**	(1.793)	**18.389**
UNUSABLE EARMARKED RESER	(16.813)	(7.782)	-	-	-	**(24.595)**	-	**(24.595)**
SCHOOL BALANCES	3.050	0.987	-	-	-	**4.037**	-	**4.037**
PROVISIONS	3.814	0.484	-	-	-	**4.298**	-	**4.298**
	14.395	**(6.324)**	**5.888**	**1.063**	**-**	**15.022**	**(1.793)**	**13.229**

NOTE

The year-end balances may be subject to further change due to further technical adjustments which may be required as part of the closure of the Council's accounts. These will be mainly relating to the closure of the Collection Fund accounts, DSG, school balances, and Insurance Fund. There may also be potential changes required as part of the external audit of the Council's accounts. The final year-end balances will be reported in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2025/26, and in the final outturn report for the financial year.

Figure 1 below shows the trajectory of Middlesbrough's unrestricted usable reserves from 2015/16 through to 2025/26 year-end forecast closing balance against the reported outturn position per year.

Figure 1 - Middlesbrough Council - Unrestricted Reserves Balances from closing balance 2015/16 through to year-end forecast closing balance 2025/26 and reported outturn variance per year

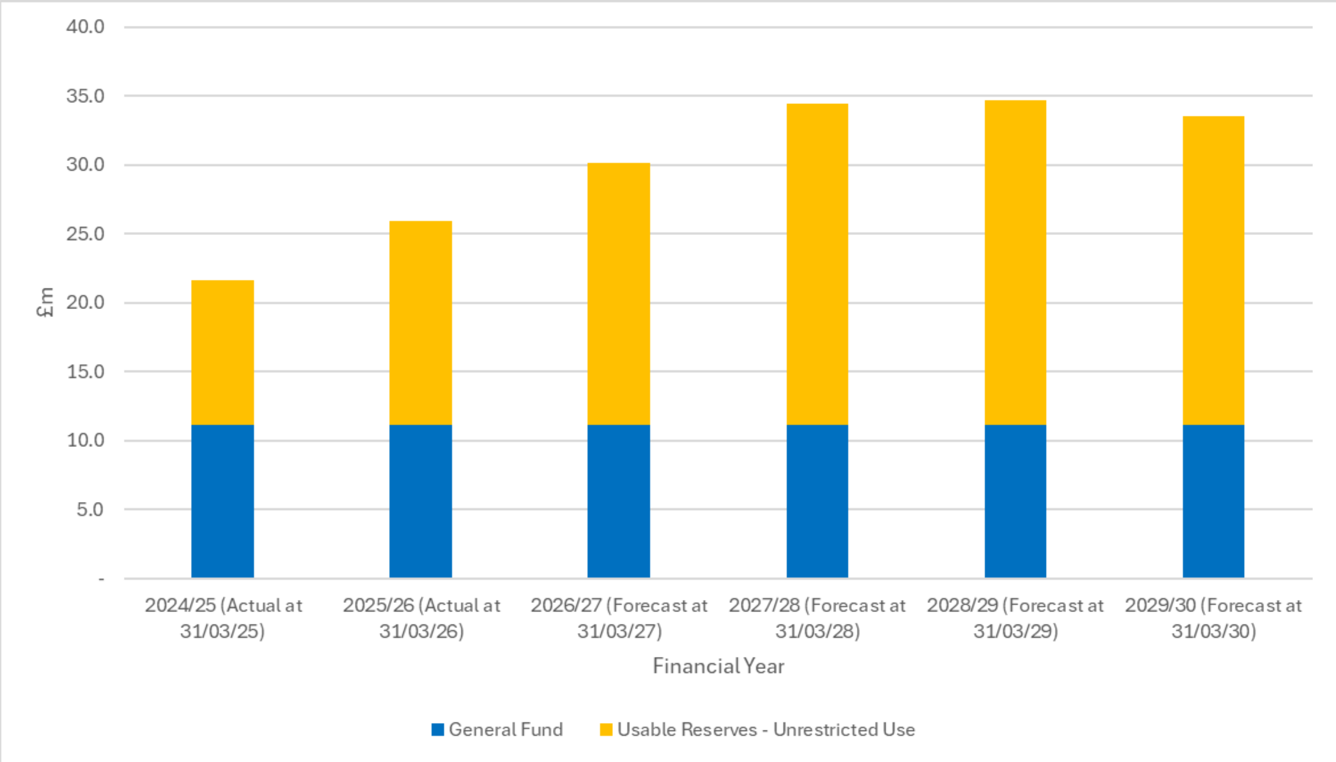


4.73 The strength of reserves illustrated in Figure 1, shows a clear positive trajectory in unrestricted balances in recent years, despite continued in-year service pressure. This reflects the Councils strategy of rebuilding resilience through disciplined financial management and the planned use of contingencies and planned resources rather than reactive use of reserves.

4.74 The Council must continue to rebuild its unrestricted revenue reserves over the period of the MTFP in order to strengthen the Council's financial resilience and to provide sufficient resilience to support the management of risks in the delivery of the revenue budget over the current MTFP period. Reserves will increase in future years due to planned contributions to reserves as set out in the Reserves Policy in the 2026/27 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2029/30, and Council Tax report to Council on 18 February 2026.

4.75 Figure 2 below shows the projected unrestricted usable reserves through to the end of 2029/30 after planned contributions; however, this will depend on any unplanned drawdowns of reserves.

Figure 2 - Forecast Unrestricted Usable Reserves from closing balance 2024/25 through to closing balance 2029/30 (following planned contributions and drawdowns)



Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

4.76 Local authorities receive a ring-fenced grant from central government each year, which can only be used to fund education, this is referred to as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and is accounted for separately from the main Revenue Budget. The DSG comprises a number of funding blocks:

- Schools Block
- Central Schools Services Block
- High Needs Block
- Early Years Block

4.77 Table 5 below summarises the final outturn position for the DSG budget. This shows an in-year overspend on the High Needs Block of £9.072m, partially offset by an underspend on the Early Years Block of (£1.968m), resulting in a net in-year overspend of £7.104m. The cumulative DSG deficit at 31 March 2026 is £29.317m.

Table 5 - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) after recoupment and deductions

	2025/26 Actual Income	2025/26 Actual Expenditure	2025/26 Year End Outturn	Balance as at 31/03/2025	Forecast Cumulative DSG Deficit as at 31/03/2026
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Early years	25.741	23.774	(1.967)	(0.749)	(2.716)
Schools Block	13.277	13.277	0.000	(0.490)	(0.490)
High Needs	33.159	42.230	9.071	23.515	32.586
Central school services block	1.136	1.136	0.000	(0.063)	(0.063)
TOTAL	73.313	80.417	7.104	22.213	29.317

*The income figure inckudes the 0.5% transfer from schools block to High Needs Block agreed at School Management Forum January 2025

4.78 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) continues to be subject to a statutory override, requiring deficits to be held separately from the General Fund. The Government has confirmed that this override will now be extended to 31 March 2028, aligning with the transition to a reformed SEND system. In addition, local authorities will be eligible for a High Needs Stability Grant covering up to 90% of the DSG deficit accrued to March 2026, subject to approval of a Local SEND reform Plan by the Department of Education. The remaining 10% has been provided for within the reserves in the Medium-Term Financial Plan approved by Council in February 2026.

4.79 Middlesbrough Council is well advanced in developing a comprehensive and robust plan, working closely with partners to set out a sustainable approach to managing demand, improving outcomes and stabilising the High Needs Block. While the DSG deficit remains a significant financial pressure and is forecast to continue in the short term, these national reforms, alongside local delivery of the SEND Reform Plan, provide a clearer pathway towards long-term sustainability.

4.80 While national developments, including the extension of the statutory override and the introduction of the High Needs Stability Grant, provide a more structured pathway for managing DSG deficits, there remains a significant degree of financial risk. The current DSG deficit of £29.317m at 31 March 2026 exceeds the Council’s usable revenue reserves of £25.941m and is forecast to continue to grow over the medium term. Although the Council is progressing a robust SEND Reform Plan to support longer-term sustainability, the financial position remains dependent on the successful delivery of these reforms and continued Government support.

4.81 Further details of the DSG budget and the management actions being taken alongside the delivery of the SEND Reform Plan programme are provided in Appendix 4.

4.82 The DSG risk is included in the Council’s Strategic Risk Register and is reflected in the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26

Medium Term Financial Plan issues

4.83 The 2026/27 budget incorporated additional resources to support known demand pressures, however, underlying financial challenges remain. Whilst the year-end position demonstrates that a significant proportion of in-year pressures have been mitigated, the Council continues to face structural and demand-led pressures, particularly in statutory services. Since the budget was set, there has also been increased economic uncertainty, with continued inflationary pressures and global instability potentially increasing costs beyond original assumptions

4.84 The Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27, published on 9 February 2026, provided additional funding which strengthened the Council's financial position, and provided support for service led demand and enabled budget growth to be provided in a number of areas. This additional funding, alongside improved financial governance, has contributed to an improved level of financial resilience compared to previous years.

4.85 Despite this, the final outturn confirms that a number of in-year pressures persist, most notably within Children's Social Care. This continues to be a significant area of concern, driven by increasing demand, complexity of need, reliance on agency staffing, and a high cost of external residential placements. These pressures have been sustained over a number of years and represent a structural financial challenge, requiring continued intervention, demand management, and service transformation to ensure long-term sustainability.

4.86 The outturn position also reflects ongoing inflationary pressures, service demand volatility and uncertainty in income streams. Whilst the 2026/27 budget has been set on a balanced basis and is considered deliverable, this is dependent on strict adherence to financial discipline, including effective cost control, delivery of all approved savings, and robust in-year monitoring. Directors are required to manage expenditure within approved budgets without exception, as failure to do so would place additional pressure on already low reserve levels and undermine the Council's financial resilience.

4.87 Looking ahead to 2027/28 and beyond, a number of risks require continued monitoring. These include:

- Sustained demand and cost pressures in Children's and Adults Social Care
- Continued reliance on agency staffing and challenges in maintaining sufficient permanent workforce capacity
- Delivery risk associated with existing savings programmes
- Income volatility across commercial and fee-generating services
- The financial impact of planned capital activity, including the temporary closure of the Town Hall
- Ongoing pressures in areas such as waste disposal, homelessness and transport
- The continuing uncertainty surrounding Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits and future SEND reform

Although provision has been made within the MTFP for demand pressures and risk, the scale and persistence of these issues mean that further mitigating actions may be required as part of future financial planning cycles.

4.88 The next review of the MTFP will take place in September 2026, with an interim update presented in July 2026 as part of the Budget Development approach and Timetable report. A full refresh of the MTFP will be presented to Executive in September 2026 as part of the 2027/28 Budget and MTFP 2027/28 to 2030/32 Update report, ensuring the Council continues to respond to emerging financial risks and uncertainties.

4.89 The Council will continue to utilise its Transformational Programme and continuous improvement approach to identify and deliver efficiencies, modernise service delivery and strengthen financial sustainability. This includes improving demand management, service redesign and ensuring both financial and non-financial benefits are realised from transformational activity.

4.90 A range of strengthened budgetary control and governance measures will continue to be embedded across the organisation, including:

- Monthly budget monitoring supported by Finance Business Partners
- Quarterly Directorate budget review meetings and regular engagement at Directorate Management Team meetings.
- Quarterly integrated budget and performance clinics chaired by the Section 151 Officer.
- Quarterly Member-led budget clinics, with monthly oversight for Children's Services
- Targeted service reviews in areas of significant financial pressure
- Ongoing vacancy management and strict controls on agency recruitment
- Enhanced controls over non-essential expenditure
- Continued development of Business World and Power BI reporting to improve financial visibility
- Improved data quality and financial processes through training and system enhancements
- Strengthened procurement compliance
- Enhanced governance arrangements for the capital programme

These measures support a strengthened financial management culture across the Council and are critical to maintaining budgetary control and rebuilding financial resilience.

4.91 Overall, the approach to financial management reflects a continued focus on robust governance, improved forecasting, strengthened financial controls and delivery of planned savings, alongside the need to embed sustainable financial practices across all services.

4.92 Key risks impacting the MTFP remain centred on:

- Demand-led pressures, particularly in Children's and Adult Social Care
- Delivery of existing savings commitments
- Inflation and economic uncertainty impacting costs and income
- Risk associated with DSG deficits and future funding arrangements for SEND

- Income volatility and commercial risks
- Waste disposal and environmental cost pressures

<u>2025/26 Capital Programme Outturn</u>

4.93 On 19 February 2025 Council approved a Capital Programme for 2025/26 of £74.798m (the original 2025/26 capital budget). This was revised to £82.571m as approved by Executive within the 2024/25 Revenue and Capital Outturn report of 11 June 2025 to take account of 2024/25 programme slippage and some new externally funded schemes. Accounting for additional programme slippage and new externally funded schemes, the budget was revised to £87.575m at Quarter One and subsequently to £88.094m at Quarter Two and again to £88.451m from an additional £0.357m in Quarter Three to add new externally funded schemes / additional external funding to existing schemes.

4.94 The budget has been further revised at Quarter Four by the addition of a total of £1.057m of new externally funded schemes / additional external funding to existing schemes. The total additional funding of £1.057m has increased the capital programme for 2025/26 to £ 89.508m as at Quarter Four. Details of all the additional funding and the schemes to which it is attributed to are provided at Appendix 5.

4.95 The final outturn at 31 March 2026 is expenditure of £56.477m, an underspend of £26.094m (31%) against the original budget adjusted for 2024/25 slippage, £31.974m (36%) against the Quarter Three 2025/26 revised budget, and £33.031m (37%) against the final 2025/26 budget.

4.96 The £56.477m of expenditure was funded by:
- £32.153m (57%) grants and external funding / contributions
- £11.659m (21%) capital receipts
- £12.665m (22%) borrowing

Table 6 – summary of capital programme approved budget, revised budget, final outturn and variance

Table 6 - Summary of Capital Programme approved budget, revised budget and actual year end outturn and variance for 2025/26

Directorate	2025/26 Capital Programme Budget (as approved by Council 19/2/25)	2025/26 Revised Capital Programme Budget (as per Executive report 11/6/25)	2025/26 Revised Capital Programme Budget (as at Quarter Two)	2025/26 Revised Capital Programme (as at Quarter Three)	2025/26 Revised Capital Programme (as at Quarter Four)	2025/26 Year-end Actual Outturn	2025/26 Year-end Outturn Variance	2025/26 Year-end Outturn Variance against Revised Budget at Quarter Four	MEMO Explanation of Year-End Forecast Outturn Variance	
									Slippage	Underspend
	£m	£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Regeneration	32.716	32.617	34.170	34.450	**34.450**	**24.953**	(9.497)	-27.57%	(9.497)	-
Environment and Community	20.198	24.774	26.628	26.657	**27.553**	**15.452**	(12.101)	-43.92%	(11.439)	(0.662)
Public Health	0.779	0.971	1.042	1.042	**1.034**	**0.933**	(0.101)	-9.77%	-	(0.101)
Education and Partnerships	7.553	10.241	12.176	12.264	**12.264**	**2.822**	(9.442)	-76.99%	(9.246)	(0.196)
Children's Care	0.550	0.711	0.821	0.821	**0.791**	**0.522**	(0.269)	-34.01%	(0.269)	-
Adult Social Care	3.701	3.925	3.925	3.925	**4.124**	**3.698**	(0.426)	-10.33%	(0.406)	(0.020)
Legal and Governance Services	1.610	1.629	1.629	1.979	**1.979**	**2.367**	0.388	19.61%	0.388	-
Finance	0.191	0.203	0.203	0.203	**0.203**	**0.071**	(0.132)	-65.02%	(0.132)	-
Transformation Programme	7.500	7.500	7.500	7.110	**7.110**	**5.659**	(1.451)	-20.41%	(1.451)	-
Total	**74.798**	**82.571**	**88.094**	**88.451**	**89.508**	**56.477**	**(33.031)**	**-36.90%**	**(32.052)**	**(0.979)**

4.97 Capital slippage results from a delay in delivery of projects compared to the planned delivery. Whilst expenditure remains within the approved project budget, this results in an in-year underspend which is required to be carried forward to future financial years. This is called slippage. The confirmed amount of slippage from 2025/26 of £32.052m is reprofiled and carried forward to financial years 2026/27 to 2029/30 to reflect revisions to the expected delivery and expenditure timescales. £8.752m of the stated £32.052m slippage has been identified following reviews of the status of the projects within the capital programme during Quarter Four. Details of capital slippage for 2025/26 as at Quarter Four are shown in Appendix 6.

Transformation

4.98 The Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2028/29 and Capital Strategy 2025/26 (Appendix 6) of the 2025/26 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Council Tax setting report approved by Council on 19 February 2025 noted the inclusion of transformation and redundancy expenditure totalling a maximum of £7.500m which can be capitalised under the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy (FUoCR) in 2025/26 (as part of the planned £26.700m Transformation Programme from 2024/25 to 2028/29), and the annual Flexible Use of Capital Receipts (FUoCR) Strategy for 2025/26 approved by Council on 26 March 2025 confirmed this and provided further details.

4.99 In addition to the two schemes totalling £9.500m as detailed in the Quarter Three report, a further scheme that was previously within the Transformation element of the Capital Programme as stated in Appendix 7 has been moved to the respective Directorate that will manage the schemes:

- £0.350m Demonstration Home for adaptation within Adult Social Care

4.100 The scheme will be funded through the £26.700m of capital receipts allocated to the Transformational Programme. The impact of this is that the funds available for revenue funding through the FUoCR strategy will reduce to £16.850m. Of the £16.850m allocation £4.447m was spent in 2024/25 and £5.659m has been spent in 2025/26 leaving £6.744m for 2026/27 onwards as depicted in Appendix 7.

4.101 Full details of the Transformation expenditure funded through FuoCR in 2025/26 are provided in Appendix 8, along with links to savings. Expenditure relating to Transformation will be reviewed on a regular basis and updates will be provided to Executive and Council where appropriate.

4.102 Table 7 summarises, and Appendix 7 details updated year-end outturn expenditure for 2025/26 and forecast expenditure for the period 2026/27 to 2029/230 split over the various schemes and the proposed funding.

Table 7 - Summary of Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2029/30

	Forecast Expenditure					
Directorate	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**
Regeneration & Housing	24.953	39.860	39.171	19.208	8.370	131.562
Environment, Communities and Culture	15.452	26.344	6.808	8.306	11.808	68.718
Public Health	0.933	0.001	-	-	-	0.934
Education and Partnerships	2.822	12.822	0.132	0.078	-	15.854
Children's Social Care	0.522	0.269	-	-	-	0.791
Adult Social Care	3.698	2.434	1.050	1.120	1.120	9.422
Legal and Corporate Services	2.367	4.484	3.685	2.185	2.185	14.906
Finance	0.071	0.334	0.187	-	-	0.592
Transformation	5.659	5.272	1.472	-	-	12.403
						-
Total Expenditure	**56.477**	**91.820**	**52.505**	**30.897**	**23.483**	**255.182**

	Forecast Expenditure					
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**
Funded By	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Borrowing	12.602	30.860	22.038	11.475	9.605	86.580
Leases	0.063	0.150	0.087	-	-	0.300
Capital Receipts	6.000	11.960	16.060	14.231	12.878	61.129
Flexible Use of Capital Receipts	5.659	5.272	1.472	-	-	12.403
Grants	26.858	37.106	6.933	1.078	1.000	72.975
Contributions	5.295	6.472	5.915	4.113	-	21.795
						-
Total FUNDING	**56.477**	**91.820**	**52.505**	**30.897**	**23.483**	**255.182**

Treasury Management – Borrowing & Prudential Indicators

4.103 The Council's investment and borrowing activity is managed in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) which is a key element of the MTFP alongside the annual revenue budget and capital programme which are approved by Council annually before the start of the financial year, with the latest Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 approved by Council on 18 February 2026.

4.104 Treasury Management activity is governed by the Prudential Indicators which are set within the TMS. The Council uses external expert Treasury advisors (Arlingclose) to inform the development of its strategy and operational in year decisions. A Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Outturn 2025/26 report will be taken to Executive in July 2026.

Collection Fund - Council Tax and Business Rates income

4.105 Income received from Council Tax and Business Rates (NNDR) is a major source of revenue income for the Council and funds around 62% of its annual expenditure in delivering all Council services. It is accounted for within the Collection Fund and operates under the Government regulations, separately to the Council's general fund. Due to the prescribed mechanisms for operating the Collection Fund, the financial impact of any 2025/26 income collection variances from the estimated forecast done at Quarter Three (which is used in setting the Council Tax for 2026/27) do not immediately affect the General Fund position. By illustration, the impact of any final surplus or deficit variance on the Collection Fund for 2025/26 is fed into the development of the 2027/28 budget and MTFP process and any cost/benefit does not impact the 2026/27 financial year directly. Table 11 below shows the Collection Fund position for 2025/26.

Table 11 – Collection Fund 2025/26 outturn position

COLLECTION FUND BALANCE	**Council Tax (£m)**	**Business Rates (£m)**	**Total (£m)**
Balance brought forward at 1 April 2025	(4.908)	1.728	(3.180)
Contribution for Previous Years Surplus / (Deficit)	3.934	(0.468)	3.466
Deficit / (Surplus) for the year	(2.231)	0.758	(1.473)
Balance carried forward at 31 March 2026	**(3.205)**	**2.018**	**(1.187)**
Allocated to:	83.4%	49%	
Middlesbrough Council (precepting share)	(2.673)	0.989	(1.684)
Amount incorporated in budget for 2026/27	2.547	(0.459)	2.088
Additional deficit to factor into 2027/28 budget	**(0.126)**	**0.530**	**0.404**

4.106 The 2026/27 MTFP presented to Council in February 2026 included the estimated effect of Council Tax and Business Rates income. In the context of the current economic climate and the Cost-of-Living Crisis, there is an ongoing risk to the levels of collection of these taxes which may result adversely upon collection rates. The actual in-year collection rates for 2025/26 were 92.9% for Council Tax and 95.5% for Business Rates. Overall collection rates remain respectable and presents as a surplus on the collection fund as precepted amounts have been prudently set lower than actual collection rates (particularly on council tax). Over a period (circa. 10 years) Council Tax collection rates (pre-welfare reform) were around 98.7% and post welfare reform are circa 97.6%, with business rates hovering around 97.7%.

4.107 The position on business rates has been more challenging in recent years and is now showing a deficit balance carried forward of more than £2.0m. This reflects the difficulty in growing and retaining businesses in the local area in recent times.

4.108 Any combined net deficit in the table above affecting the 2027/28 budget process, will be managed using unrestricted usable reserves as part of the MTFP.

Debt Recovery Performance

4.109 A key workstream within the plans to recover the Council's financial position is the renewed focus upon recovering monies owed to the Council from the following sources.

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Sundry (general) debt
- Housing Benefit Overpayments

4.110 The Council's approach to improving debt recovery performance whilst maintaining appropriate support to residents and businesses who are entitled to available help, advice and support, was detailed in Appendix 11 of the Quarter Three 2024/25 report. Progress has been included in quarterly monitoring reports throughout 2025/26 with the position at year-end 2025/26 (31 March 2026) shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12 – Debt Collection Performance 2025/26

Category of Collectable Debt	Balance at 1/4/25 (£m)	Movement in-year (£m)	Balance at 31/3/26 (£m)
Council Tax	40.683	2.936	43.619
Business Rates	8.508	(1.118)	7.390
Sundry Debt	8.905	(1.563)	7.342
Housing Benefits Overpayments	5.358	(0.446)	4.912
Total	**63.454**	**(0.191)**	**63.263**

Note that the figures for Council Tax and Business Rates are Middlesbrough's share of the Collection Fund debt (Council Tax 83% and Business Rates 49%).

A separate report will be presented to Executive later in 2026/27, for approval, writing off a number of such debts, detailing the debtor involved, date raised, amount involved, recovery action taken to date, and the reason why this debt cannot be collected

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Not applicable

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 The alternative would be not to approve the revenue budget virements over £250,000 and the changes to the Council's capital programme, and to not report the Council's final outturn position for the financial year 2025/26. This would not enable the Executive to discharge their responsibilities to manage and control the revenue budget, capital programme and overall balance sheet position of the Council.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	This report sets out the implications associated with the financial performance of the Council in managing its revenue, grant and capital resources for the financial year 2025/26 and the financial implications are incorporated throughout. The report should be read in conjunction with the 2026/27 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, and Council Tax setting, report presented to Council on 18 February 2026 and with the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2025/26 report presented to Executive on 3 December 2025, to fully understand the financial position of the Council.
Procurement	The are no direct impacts on procurement
Legal	The proposed recommendations are consistent with and will promote the achievement of the Council's general legal duty to achieve Best Value in accordance with Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended by s137 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).
Risk	In line with the Council's Risk Management Policy, the corporate Strategic Risk Register will be reported to this Executive as part of the Corporate Performance 2025/26 Outturn report.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	The complete overall impact assessment included in Appendix 3 of the 2025/26 budget report to Council on 19 February 2025, along with all the individual impact assessments found that there was a justified adverse impact from these proposals in order to ensure the Council is able to maintain a balanced budget and continue to meet its statutory obligations.
Reducing Poverty	The proposed recommendations in this report do not directly impact on Reducing Poverty.
Climate Change / Environmental	The proposed recommendations in this report do not directly impact on Climate Change/Environmental issues.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The proposed recommendations in this report do not directly impact on Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers.
Data Protection	The proposed recommendations in this report do not directly impact on Data Protection issues.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Subject to approval by Executive revenue budget virements detailed in Appendix 1 to be actioned.	Head of Financial Planning & Business Partnering	30/06/2026
Subject to approval by Executive, amendments to the capital programme for 2025/26 to be actioned.	Head of Financial Planning & Business Partnering	30/06/2026

Appendices

1	Appendix 1 – Proposed revenue budget virements above £250,000 at Quarter Four 2025/26
2	Appendix 2 – Details of savings classified as unachievable in 2025/26
3	Appendix 3 – Reverses & Provisions for Q4 2025/26
4	Appendix 4 – Dedicated Schools Grant
5	Appendix 5 – Capital New Funding and Virement at Q4
6	Appendix 6 – Details of Capital Slippage at Q4
7	Appendix 7 – Revised Capital Forecast to 2029-30
8	Appendix 8 – Transformation Expenditure Funded Through FUoCR 2025/26

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Executive	2025/26 Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29, and Council Tax setting	5/2/25
Council	2025/26 Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29, and Council Tax setting	19/2/25
Council	Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 report	19/2/25
Council	Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2025/26	26/3/25
Executive	2024/25 Outturn Report	11/6/25
Executive	Revenue and Capital Budget – Forecast Year-end Outturn position at Quarter One 2025/26	3/9/25
Executive	Revenue and Capital Budget – Forecast Year-end Outturn position at Quarter Two 2025/26	3/12/25
Executive	Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2025/26	3/12/25

Executive	Prudential Indicators 2026/27 to 2029/20 and Treasury Management Annual Strategy Report 2026/27	4/02/26
Executive	2026/27 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, and Council tax setting	4/02/26
Executive	Revenue and Capital Budget – Forecast Year-end Outturn position at Quarter Three 2025/26	4/02/26
Council	2026/27 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, and Council Tax setting	18/02/26
Council	Prudential Indicators 2026/27 to 2029/30 and Treasury Management Annual Strategy Report 2026/27	18/02/26

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Appendix 1 : Proposed revenue budget virements above £250,000 at Quarter Four 2025/26
(under Financial Procedure Rules 12.6.45 and 12.6.132)

Proposed Virement Request	Regeneration & Housing	Environment, Communities & Culture	Public Health	Education & Partnerships	Children's Care	Adult Social Care	Legal & Corporate Services	Chief Executive	Finance	Central Budgets
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Permanent										
Temporary										
Centralisation of Insurance budgets - Strategic Finance									(0.036)	
Centralisation of Insurance budgets	(0.005)	(0.757)		(0.029)	(0.260)	(0.072)	-		1.159	
Allocation of budgets to match expenditure on Middlesbrough Priorities	0.629	0.142	0.195	0.072	0.062	0.052	-	-	0.099	(1.251)
Total Virement	**0.624**	**(0.615)**	**0.195**	**0.043**	**(0.198)**	**(0.020)**	**-**	**-**	**1.222**	**(1.251)**
									Total:	**-**

Virement Request	Regeneration £m	Environment and Community Services £m	Public Health £m	Education & Partnerships £m	Children's Care £m	Adult Social Care £m	Legal & Governance Services £m	Chief Executive £m	Finance £m	Central Budgets £m
OVER £250k FOR APPROVAL BY EXECUTIVE										
Permanent										
Temporary										
Centralisation of Insurance budgets - Strategic Finance									(0.036)	
Centralisation of Insurance budgets	(0.005)	(0.757)		(0.029)	(0.260)	(0.072)	-		1.159	
Allocation of budgets to match expenditure on	0.629	0.142	0.195	0.072	0.062	0.052	-	-	0.099	(1.251)
Total Virement	**0.624**	**(0.615)**	**0.195**	**0.043**	**(0.198)**	**(0.020)**	**-**	**-**	**1.222**	**(1.251)**
									Total:	**-**
UNDER £250k - NOT REQUIRING EXECUTIVE APPROVAL										
Permanent										
Temporary										
Total Virement	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
									Total:	**-**
OVERALL TOTAL	**0.624**	**(0.615)**	**0.195**	**0.043**	**(0.198)**	**(0.020)**	**-**	**-**	**1.222**	**(1.251)**
									Total:	**-**

Appendix 2 - Detail of savings currently classified as unachievable in 2025/26

Year Saving Initiative Introduce	Saving Reference	Saving Detail	Unachieved savings at Quarter Four £m	Reason for underachievement
Adult Social Care				
2024/25	ASC11	Re-provision use of Levick Court	**0.018**	Negotiations with Health have concluded and the report to re-provision the service was approved 12th November 2025. Levick Court was successfully launched in February 2026. The service has achieved £0.293m of the £0.311m savings target and is on track to achieve the remaining £0.018m of saving in 2026/27
			0.018	
Children's Care				
2024/25	CS04 - in year	Reduction in agency costs	**0.380**	This saving was brought forward from 2024/25 unachieved savings. Controls have been introduced, however, ongoing service demand and workforce challenges have limited reductions in agency use.
2024/25	CS07 - in year	Introduce Supplier Incentive Scheme across Children's Care	**0.031**	This saving was brought forward from 2024/25 unachieved savings. To date, there has been minimal take up of early payments. (The full year effect of early payments required to achieve this savings would need to be £6.2m).
2025/26	CC01 24-25	Review of all Children's Care staffing	**0.500**	Unachieved due to demand increases in service areas identified as savings by consultant analysis and report/proposal
2025/26	CC01	Modernising Foster Care	**1.518**	While initiatives to increase fostering provision and reduce residential placements are in progress, demand and placememt complexity have continued to drive increased use of residential care in-year
2025/26	CC05	Maximising Grants across Children's Services	**0.604**	Bid writer post has left. Currently awaiting outcome of two bids and any impact if successful on 2025-26 financial position.
2025/26	CC04	Introduce Edge of Care Team	**0.800**	Reduction in numbers has not yet materialised, and placements into residential care are currently increasing rather than decreasing.
			3.833	
Education & Partnerships				
2025/26	EDC02	Deliver passenger assistance training internally	**0.037**	The majority of the budgeted savings are unachieved to date in 2025/26. Plans for achievement or replacement savings to be reprofiled to reflect more realistic delivery timescales, incorporated into the 2026/27 base budget.
2025/26	EDC03	Increase transport capacity	**0.084**	
2025/26	EDC04	Management Review	**0.044**	
2025/26	EDC05	Recharge Discretionary Home to School Transport Services	**0.078**	
2025/26	EDC07	Travel Training	**0.102**	
			0.345	
Regeneration & Housing				
2024/25	REG03	Review and implementation of alternative operating models for Captain Cook Birthplace Museum	**0.075**	It was assumed that the service would receive an annual contribution of (£0.150m) to keep the museum open, however following negotiations, only half of this will be received.
2024/25	REG07	Investing in better coordination of the way the Council provides housing to reduce the overall spend on emergency, temporary and short term accommodation for people	**0.300**	Whilst there are actions being undertaken which will address costs, the nature of the budgets which sit within other directorates and the increase in homeless cases will only result in cost reduction rather than budget savings. This saving will be replaced permanently by an alternative saving.
			0.375	
Environment, Communities and Culture				
2024/25	ECS05	Integrate Environment Services and Supporting Communities functions and create a Neighbourhood Management approach	**0.111**	Due to service growth, it has not been possible to achieve the full £0.287m saving, as in order to meet service demands, staffing numbers could not be reduced further. A saving of £0.195m was achieved in 2024/25.
2024/25	ECS08	Resident Parking Permits charge	**-**	Temporary Virement to Contingency for 2025/26. These savings have been reviewed through the Medium-Term Financial Plan and have been removed.
2025/26	ECS13	Management Review	**0.282**	It is expected that the original saving will need to be re-configured due to growth and new service demands. It is now expected to commence in 2026/27.
			0.393	
Central				
2023/24	CEN02	Senior Management Review	**0.244**	The Senior Management Review was completed and implemented in January 2026, with the resulting financial assumptions reviewed and incorporated into the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan.
2024/25	FIN02	Review of Single Person Discount and Student Exemption for Council Tax	**0.264**	Saving will be realised in Collection Fund, not General Fund
2024/25	FIN03	Collection of Council Tax (Old Debt)	**0.110**	Saving will be realised in Collection Fund, not General Fund
2024/25	FIN04	Collection of Council Tax (Charging Orders)	**0.504**	Saving will be realised in Collection Fund, not General Fund
2024/25	FIN05	Collection of Business Rates	**0.126**	Saving will be realised in Collection Fund, not General Fund
2025/26	FIN13	Procurement Contract Management (Council wide)	**1.519**	Double count of saving FIN07 from 24/25 budget setting. In addition savings achieved to date have been in respect of Capital Contracts and therefore unable to allocate against the revenue savings target for 25/26. These savings have been reviewed through the Medium-Term Financial Plan and have been reduced
			2.767	
TOTAL SAVINGS CURRENTLY CLASSIFIED AS UNACHIEVABLE IN 2025/26			**7.731**	

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Appendix 3 - Detail of Forecast Reserves and Provisions movements in 2025/26

	Opening Balance 01/04/25	Use in Year	Additional Budgeted Contributions	Transfers from / (to) General Fund	Transfers between Reserves	Balance at year-end (BEFORE ANY ADJUSTMENTS FOR OUTTURN VARIANCE)	Outturn variance transferred to Reserves (from) / to General Fund	Closing Balance at 31/03/26 (AFTER ADJUSTMENTS FOR OUTTURN VARIANCE)
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
GENERAL FUND RESERVE	**11.100**					**11.100**		**11.100**
USABLE EARMARKED RESERVES								
Restricted Use								
Public Health	1.686			0.607		**2.293**		**2.293**
Insurance Fund	0.013	(0.013)				**0.000**		**0.000**
Better Care Fund	0.897			0.284		**1.181**		**1.181**
Marton Library S106	0.025					**0.025**		**0.025**
Housing Rental Sinking Fund	0.068			(0.020)		**0.048**		**0.048**
	2.689	(0.013)	-	0.871	-	3.547	-	**3.547**
Unrestricted Use								
Financial Resilience Reserve	6.711		2.836		1.000	**10.547**		**10.547**
Legacy Accounts Reserve	1.000				(1.000)	**-**		**-**
Savings Delivery Risk Reserve	-		3.052			**3.052**	(1.793)	**1.259**
Change Fund	2.766		-			**2.766**		**2.766**
Middlesbrough Priorities Fund	-			0.141		**0.141**		**0.141**
Elections Costs	0.077			0.051		**0.128**		**0.128**
	10.554	-	5.888	0.192	-	16.634	(1.793)	**14.841**
	13.244	**(0.013)**	**5.888**	**1.063**	**-**	**20.182**	**(1.793)**	**18.389**
UNUSABLE EARMARKED RESERVES								
Revenue Grants Unapplied (Technical Reserve)	5.400	(0.678)				**4.722**		**4.722**
Collection Fund Balance (Technical Reserve)						**-**		**-**
Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account	(22.213)	(7.104)				**(29.317)**		**(29.317)**
	(16.813)	**(7.782)**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**(24.595)**	**-**	**(24.595)**
SCHOOL BALANCES	**3.050**	0.987				4.037		4.037
PROVISIONS								
Business Rates Appeals	1.041	1.083				**2.124**		**2.124**
Insurance	2.606	(0.599)				**2.007**		**2.007**
Other	0.167					**0.167**		**0.167**
	3.814	**0.484**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**4.298**	**-**	**4.298**
	14.395	**(6.324)**	**5.888**	**1.063**	**-**	**15.022**	**(1.793)**	**13.229**

NOTE

The year-end balances may be subject to further change due to further technical adjustments which may be required as part of the closure of the Council's accounts. These will be mainly relating to the closure of the Collection Fund accounts, DSG, school balances, and Insurance Fund. There may also be potential changes required as part of the external audit of the Council's accounts. The final year-end balances will be reported in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2025/26, and in the final outturn report for the financial year.

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Appendix 4

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant provided by central government to local authorities to fund education and is accounted for separately from the Council's General Fund. The DSG comprises four main funding blocks:

- Schools Block
- Central Schools Services Block
- High Needs Block
- Early Years Block

The High Needs Block supports provision for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including those requiring Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), specialist placements and alternative provision.

Context and National Framework

Local authorities with DSG deficits are required to demonstrate active management of High Needs spending and long-term plans to restore sustainability. Historically, this has been supported through programmes such as Delivering Best Value (DBV), which Middlesbrough participated in up to Summer 2025.

The DBV programme provided a strong evidence base and highlighted that improving inclusion within mainstream education is critical to managing demand and reducing reliance on high-cost specialist provision. This learning has directly informed the Council's forward approach.

Since Quarter Three, the national framework has evolved significantly. The Government has introduced Local SEND Reform Plan as the primary mechanism for delivering system-wide improvement, alongside confirmation of a High Needs Stability Grant, which will cover up to 90% of DSG High Needs deficits accumulated to March 2026, subject to plan approval.

The Council approach is underpinned by its Local SEND Reform Plan, which sets out a comprehensive and evidence-based programme of system transformation to improve outcomes, reduce demand for high-cost provision and deliver a financially sustainable High Needs Block.

Middlesbrough Council is well advanced in developing its Local Send Reform Plan, working closely with schools, health partners and wider stakeholders. The Plan will set out a sustainable approach to:

- Increasing inclusion within mainstream settings
- Strengthening early intervention
- Improving joint commissioning with health partners
- Reducing reliance in high-cost placements
- Stabilising the High Needs Block over the medium term

Demand and Cost Pressures

The DSG position continues to be driven by increasing demand, complexity of need, and market pressure, consistent with the national position.

Key demand pressures include:

- Continued growth in EHCP's, increasing from 1,669 in 2022 to over 2,040 in 2025, with further increases forecast
- Rising demand for specialist and alternative provision, including increasing numbers of pupils requiring high-cost placements
- Growth in permanent exclusions and alternative provision placements
- Increased complexity of need, resulting in higher cost packages and specialist interventions

The Local SEND Reform Plan identifies that these pressures are closely linked to inconsistent levels of inclusion across mainstream settings, leading to a higher reliance on statutory processes and specialist provision.

These demand pressures also have a wider financial impact, particularly on home to school transport costs, which are funded from the Councils core budget.

Ongoing work to Manage Pressures and Improve Services

A range of operational and strategic actions are being undertaken to manage the High Needs Block and support system improvements.

These actions form part of, and are being further developed through, the Council's Local SEND Reform Plan, ensuring alignment with national policy and long-term sustainability.

Key areas of focus include:

- Strengthening inclusion in mainstream education
- Review of EHCPs
- Improved commissioning and sufficiency planning
- Partnership working with Health
- Development of a revised resource allocation system
- Reduction in exclusion and improved reintegration
- Enhanced governance and financial oversight

These actions are embedded with key reform workstreams, including delivery of an Experts at Hand model, development of a co-produced Universal Offer, and expansion of local inclusion bases, all of which are designed to reduce pressure on high-cost specialist provision.

Financial Position and Outlook

The High Needs Block continues to experience significant financial pressures, resulting in an ongoing DSG deficit.

The Local SEND Reform Plan includes clear outcome measures, including reductions in out-of-area placements, stabilisation of EHCP demand and increased inclusion within mainstream settings, which will underpin improvements in financial sustainability over the medium term

While national reforms provide a more structured financial framework, the position remains dependent on:

- Successful approval and delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan
- The pace at which inclusion and early intervention reduce demand growth
- Continued Government support

Risk and Assurance

The DSG deficit remains a significant financial risk to the Council.

The Local SEND Reform Plan recognises that there remains a risk that, if the Plan is not approved or does not deliver the intended outcomes at pace, the Council may not secure access to the High Needs Stability Grant or achieve the anticipated financial improvements, which would increase pressure on the overall financial position.

The risk is actively managed through inclusion on the Strategic Risk Register, strong governance arrangements, alignment with the Medium-Term Financial Plan and delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan.

Summary

The DSG reflects system-wide demand and structural pressures.

Middlesbrough Council has established a strong evidence base through DBV, implemented a range of targeted management actions and developed a comprehensive Local SEND Reform Plan.

The Local SEND Reform Plan provides a clear delivery framework, including measurable outcomes and phased implementation, which supports both improved outcomes for children and young people and the transition towards a financially sustainable High Needs System.

While financial pressures will continue in the short term, the combination of national reform, local delivery and strengthened system leadership provides a foundation for long-term sustainability.

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Appendix 5 : Capital Programme Quarter Four 2025/26 - new externally funded schemes / additional external funding to existing schemes, additions to Council funded schemes, and virements between schemes

Directorate	Scheme	Total Value 2025/26	Total Value Future Years	Reason	Change To Capital Programme	External Funding	Council Funding
		£m	£m		£m	£m	£m
New Externally Funded Schemes / Additional External Funding To Existing Schemes							
Environment, Communities & Culture	CRSTS - Additional Highway Maintenance Funding	0.593	0.459	Additional Government Funding	1.052	1.052	-
	Transporter Bridge	0.060	-	Additional Contributions	0.060	0.060	-
	Food Waste	0.243	-	Additional Funding Provided by DEFRA	0.243	0.243	-
	Total Environment, Communities & Culture	**0.896**	**0.459**		**1.355**	**1.355**	**-**
Adult Social Care	Disabled Facilities Grant	0.198	-	Additional Government Funding	0.198	0.198	-
	Home Loan Repayments	0.001	-	Additional loan repayment	0.001	0.001	-
	Total Adult Social Care	**0.199**	**0.000**		**0.199**	**0.199**	**-**
Regeneration & Housing	Town Fund Nunthorpe Community Hub	-	0.033	Additional Government Funding	0.033	0.033	-
	Towns Fund - East Middlesbrough Community Hub	-	0.699	Additional Government Funding	0.699	0.699	-
	Town Hall Roof	0.000	2.595	Additional Arts Council England Funding	2.595	2.595	-
	Total Regeneration & Housing	**0.000**	**3.327**		**3.327**	**3.327**	**0.000**
Education & Partnerships							
	Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)	-	0.082	All schools provisional allocation 2026-27 from the DfE	0.082	0.082	-
	School Condition Allocation (SCA)	-	0.617	All schools provisional allocation 2026-27 from the DfE	0.617	0.617	-
	High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNCPA)	-	1.608	All schools provisional allocation 2026-27 from the DfE	1.608	1.608	-
	School Contributions	-	0.118	Various school contributions to Capital Programme	0.118	0.118	-
	Total Education & Partnerships	**0.000**	**2.425**		**2.425**	**2.425**	**0.000**
Children's Care	Gleneagles	-0.030	0.000	To remove underspend from Capital Programme	-0.030	-0.030	0.000
	Total Children's Care	**-0.030**	**0.000**		**-0.030**	**-0.030**	**0.000**
Public Health	Live Well	-0.008	0.000	To remove underspend from Capital Programme	-0.008	-0.008	0.000
	Total Public Health	**-0.008**	**0.000**		**-0.008**	**-0.008**	**0.000**
	TOTAL ALL DIRECTORATES	**1.057**	**6.211**		**7.268**	**7.268**	**-**

Virements Requiring Executive Approval

Environment, Communities & Culture	Regulatory ICT system	(0.466)	(0.356)	Transfer between Directorates of the Regulatory ICT System Programme, with a small change to the reprofiling of expenditure.	(0.822)	-	(0.822)
Regeneration	Regulatory ICT system	0.407	0.415		0.822	-	0.822
Regeneration	Town Hall Roof	(1.400)		The award of £2.595m from Arts Council England for the Town Hall roof refurbishment has released Council capital funding previously allocated within the Capital Programme. It is proposed that £1.400m of this funding be reallocated to support capital works at Middlesbrough Theatre. These works will focus on improving accessibility for disabled users, extending the bar area, and undertaking other enhancements to improve the overall suitability of the venue for future	(1.400)	-	(1.400)
Regeneration	Middlesbrough Theatre Improvements	1.400			1.400	-	1.400
	TOTAL	**(0.059)**	**0.059**		**-**	**-**	**-**

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Appendix 6 : Capital Programme Quarter Four 2025/26 – Details of capital slippage

APPENDIX 6

Capital slippage is a way of reprofiling capital budgets between financial years to match forecast timing of expenditure, whilst staying within the approved project budget.
The following details the slippage during Quarter Four. Details of slippage at Quarter 1 of £8.228m, £11.867m at Quarter 2 and £3.205m at Quarter 3 were shown in Appendix 6 of the respective budget monitoring reports. These added together with the £8.752m for Quarter 4 total the £32.052m total slippage for 2025/26.

Directorate	Scheme	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	Funding Source	Slippage Explanation
Regeneration	Levelling Up Partnership	(0.302)	0.302				Grant	There is an underspend within two projects falling within the Levelling Up Partnership capital programme. The funds have been reprofiled to 2026/27, to be reallocated to other projects.
Regeneration	Levelling up Fund - South Middlesbrough Accessibility	(0.390)	0.390				Grant	Delays in contractor invoicing have meant payments in 2025/26 were lower than originally forecast, as such the funds have been reprofiled to 2026/27.
Regeneration	Middlesbrough College Investment	(1.600)	1.600				Borrowing	The lease agreement has not yet been completed due to the status of the legal process.
Regeneration	Asset Review Accommodation Works	0.261	(0.261)				Borrowing	Additional expenditure was required to bring Letitia Street up to operational standard, following part of the Community Learning service relocating from Lingfield Farm.
Regeneration	Cultural Development Fund - Enhancements to Central Library	(0.302)	0.302				Grant	Challenges in setting up the power supply to The Auxiliary have led to expenditure being reprofiled to 2026/27.
Regeneration	Small Scale Slippage Across The Directorate	0.670	(0.508)	(0.122)		(0.040)		
	Regeneration and Housing Total	**(1.663)**	**1.825**	**(0.122)**	**-**	**(0.040)**		
Environment, Communities & Culture	Purchase of new vehicles	(1.302)	1.302				Contributions	There is high national demand for new refuse vehicles under the Government Simpler Recycling Initiative, resulting in longer lead times for delivery of vehicles resulting in the funding being reprofiled to 2026/27.
Environment, Communities & Culture	Food Waste Collection	(0.905)	0.905				Grant	There is high national demand for new food waste refuse vehicles under the Government Simpler Recycling Initiative, resulting in longer lead times for delivery of vehicles resulting in the funding being reprofiled to 2026/27.
Environment, Communities & Culture	DLUHC Levelling Up Neighbourhood Safety	(0.615)	0.615				Grant	The funding was re-directed to other projects following a review of priorities and the outcome of feasibility studies.
Environment, Communities & Culture	Simpler Recycling	(0.786)	0.786				Contributions	There is high national demand for new food waste refuse vehicles and paper receptacles under the Government Simpler Recycling Initiative, resulting in longer lead times for delivery of vehicles resulting in the funding being reprofiled to 2026/27.
Environment, Communities & Culture	LTP - Ormesby Beck Cycleway Phase 1	(0.187)	0.187				Grant	The time required to finalise contracts has resulted in this funding being reprofiled into 2026/27.
Environment, Communities & Culture	LTP - Hollygurst Avenue / Homewood Avenue Bus Stop Improvements	(0.149)	0.149				Grant	The time required to finalise contracts has resulted in this funding being reprofiled into 2026/27.
Environment, Communities & Culture	Small Scale Slippage Across The Directorate	(0.662)	0.662					
	Environment, Communities & Culture Total	**(4.606)**	**4.606**	**-**	**-**	**-**		
Education & Partnerships	Block Budgets - High Needs Provision Capital Allocation	(0.409)	0.409				Grant	Balance of block funding not utilised in 25-26 to be allocated in 26-27
Education & Partnerships	Block Budgets - Others minor	(0.619)	0.619				Grant	Balance of block funding not utilised in 25-26 to be allocated in 26-27
Education & Partnerships	St Bernadettes expansion scheme	(0.250)	0.250				Contributions	Contribution through S106 allocation not utilised in 25-26
Education & Partnerships	Unity City Academy Bulge scheme	(0.130)	0.130				Contributions	Scheme planned to start in 25-26 now slipped to 26-27
Education & Partnerships	SEN Small Capital Grants Schemes	(0.125)	0.125				Grant	Only £42k needed from the £167 budget required in 25-26
Education & Partnerships	Small Scale Slippage Across The Directorate	(0.411)	0.411				Grant	Schemes not completed in 25-26 due to complete in 26-27
	Education & Partnerships Total	**(1.944)**	**1.944**	**-**	**-**	**-**		
Adult Social Care	Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act- Top ups	(0.087)	0.087				Council Wide	Assessments have been affected due to staff turnover in addition there has been limited contractor availability.
Adult Social Care	Disabled Facilities Grant	(0.247)	0.247				Grant	Additional grant received on 22 February 2026, resulting in limited time for effective planning and full utilisation before the financial year end.
Adult Social Care	Telecare Fall's equipment in Care Homes	(0.017)	0.017				Better Care Fund	
	Adult Social Care Total	**(0.351)**	**0.351**	**-**	**-**	**-**		
Finance	Capitalisation of Property Finance Lease Arrangements	(0.087)		0.087			Borrowing	There was an underspend as only £63k of the £150k budget required in 25-26, with the remainder reprofiled into future years to offset future years costs.
Finance	Business World Upgrade	(0.028)	0.028				Borrowing	
Finance	Former Partnership Investment (ICT Infrastructure Revenues & Benefits	(0.008)	(0.092)	0.100			Borrowing	50% paid upfront remaining £8k due in May.
	Finance Total	**(0.123)**	**(0.064)**	**0.187**	**-**	**-**		
Legal & Corporate Services	Essential Refresh & Licensing	0.239	(0.239)				Borrowing	To support incoming new starters and device refresh requirements, additional laptops and equipment were procured early to secure discounts offered by the Council's supplier.
	Legal and Corporate Services Total	**0.239**	**(0.239)**	**-**	**-**	**-**		
Children's Social Care	House Purchase & Adaptations	(0.269)	0.269					
	Children's Social Care Total	**(0.269)**	**0.269**	**-**	**-**	**-**		
	Small Scale Slippage Across The Directorate	(0.035)	0.035	-	-	-		
	Transformation Total	**(0.035)**	**0.035**	**-**	**-**	**-**		
	TOTAL	**(8.752)**	**8.727**	**0.065**	**-**	**(0.040)**		

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Appendix 7 : Revised Capital Programme Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	TOTAL		
Regeneration & Housing	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Town Centre related projects	0.066	0.010	-	-	-	0.076	0.076	-
Middlehaven related projects	0.926	-	-	-	-	0.926	0.926	-
Housing Growth	0.056	0.152	0.446	-	-	0.654	0.654	-
Newham Hall	1.503	4.893	6.836	-	-	13.232	4.094	9.138
BOHO X	0.207	0.211	-	-	-	0.418	0.042	0.376
Indigenous Growth Fund - Captain Cook Square	1.045	0.737	1.200	-	-	2.982	-	2.982
Pride in Place Impact Fund	0.025	1.475	-	-	-	1.500	-	1.500
Towns Fund	1.592	9.398	0.928	-	-	11.918	1.125	10.793
Towns Fund - East Middlesbrough Community Hub	3.597	1.961	-	-	-	5.558	1.940	3.618
Acquisition of Town Centre Properties	-	-	1.000	-	-	1.000	1.000	-
Acquisition of The Crown	0.018	-	-	-	-	0.018	0.018	
Acquisition of Whorlton Road Industrial Estate	-	2.615	-	-	-	2.615	2.615	
Levelling Up Partnership	4.923	2.526	1.641	-	-	9.090	0.081	9.009
Middlesbrough Development Company	0.104	-	-	-	-	0.104	0.104	
Capitalisation Of Major Schemes Salaries	0.530	0.530	0.530	0.530	0.530	2.650	2.650	-
Capitalisation of Planning Services Surveys	0.201	-	-	-	-	0.201	0.201	-
Affordable Housing Via Section 106	-	-	3.855	2.361	-	6.216	0.302	5.914
Highways Infrastructure Development Section 106	-	-	2.474	1.752	-	4.226	0.142	4.084
Levelling Up Fund - South Middlesbrough Accessibility	3.177	1.293	-	-	-	4.470		4.470
Middlesbrough College Investment	-	1.600	-	-	-	1.600	1.600	
Derisking Sites	0.200	0.232	0.429	1.300	0.500	2.661	2.661	-
Tackling Homelessness	-	0.500	0.500	-	-	1.000	1.000	
Property Services Building Investment	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	1.700	1.700	-
Property Asset Investment Programme	1.722	2.030	2.000	2.000	2.000	9.752	9.752	
Town Hall Roof	0.002	0.098	7.451	5.000	5.000	17.551	14.756	2.795
Municipal Buildings Refurbishment	0.227	0.030	0.891	-	-	1.148	1.148	
Resolution House	0.206	-	0.276	-	-	0.482	0.482	-
Cleveland Centre	0.816	0.158	-	-	-	0.974	0.974	-
Cemetery Provision	0.298	2.367	-	-	-	2.665	2.665	-
Neptune Centre Roof Repairs And Wall Cladding	-	-	1.800	-	-	1.800	1.800	-
Asset Review - Accommodation Works	0.461	0.539	2.174	-	-	3.174	3.174	-
Fountain Court Solar Panels	0.156	-	-	-	-	0.156	0.030	0.126
Neighbourhood Hubs Investment	0.056	2.944	2.000	-	-	5.000	5.000	-
Repair And Refurbishment Of The Council Depot Facility	-	0.500	1.400	4.100		6.000	6.000	-

Appendix 7 : Revised Capital Programme Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

Repairs To Broadcasting House	0.003	1.497	-	-	-	1.500	1.500	-
Investment / Commercial Properties - Occupancy And Compliance	-	0.500	1.000	0.500	-	2.000	2.000	
Investment in Parks	-	0.007	-	-	-	0.007	0.007	
Cultural Development Fund - Enhancements to Central Library & Partner Orga	2.007	0.302	-	-	-	2.309	0.090	2.219
New Museum at Stewart Park	0.050	-	-	-	-	0.050	0.005	0.045
Dorman Museum Roof And Window Replacement	-	-	-	1.325	-	1.325	1.325	
Cremator Feasibility Works	0.032	-	-	-	-	0.032	0.032	
Regulatory ICT System	0.407	0.415	-	-	-	0.822	0.822	
Total Regeneration & Housing	**24.953**	**39.860**	**39.171**	**19.208**	**8.370**	**131.562**	**74.493**	**57.069**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council	External
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	TOTAL	Funding	Funding
Environment, Communities and Culture	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Purchase of New Vehicles	2.056	4.531	1.200	1.600	1.200	10.587	10.587	-
Capitalisation of Wheeled Bin Replacement	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.500	0.500	-
Capitalisation of Street Furniture / Dog Fouling & Litter Bins	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.275	0.275	-
Capitalisation of Highways Maintenance	0.575	0.575	0.575	0.575	0.575	2.875	2.875	-
City Regional Sustainable Transport Scheme - Highways Maintenance	3.488	3.898	-	-	-	7.386	-	7.386
City Regional Sustainable Transport Scheme - Incentive Funding	0.839	1.907	-	-	-	2.746	-	2.746
Street Lighting-Maintenance	0.585	0.468	0.468	0.468	0.468	2.457	2.457	-
Urban Traffic Management Control 1	0.013	0.020	-	-	-	0.033	-	0.033
Flood Prevention	-	0.090	-	-	-	0.090	-	0.090
Section 106 Ormesby Beck	-	0.015	-	-	-	0.015	-	0.015
Bridges & Structures	0.612	3.893	3.650	4.798	-	12.953	12.953	-
Transporter Bridge	0.060	-	-	-	-	0.060		0.060
Newport Bridge	0.837	0.540	-	-	-	1.377	1.377	-
CCTV	0.007	0.003	-	-	-	0.010	0.010	-
Towns Fund Initiatives	-	0.016	-	-	-	0.016		0.016
Highways Infrastructure	0.475	0.696	0.200	-	-	1.371	1.371	-
Libraries Improvement Fund	0.031	-	-	-	-	0.031	-	0.031
Urban Traffic Management Control 2	0.273	0.116	-	-	-	0.389	-	0.389
Traffic Signals Non Tees Valley Combined Authority	0.343	0.173	-	-	-	0.516	0.516	-
Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant	1.430	0.466	-	-	-	1.896	-	1.896
Fusion	0.207	0.165	-	-	-	0.372	-	0.372
Food Waste Collection	0.414	0.905	-	-	-	1.319	-	1.319
Street Lighting Column Replacement	0.311	0.253	-	-	-	0.564	0.564	-
Levelling Up Partnership - Neighbourhood Safety	0.300	0.615	-	-	-	0.915	-	0.915

Appendix 7 : Revised Capital Programme Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

Section 106 Marton West Beck	-	0.094	-	-	-	0.094	-	0.094
Community Recovery Fund	0.030	0.003	-	-	-	0.033	-	0.033
Parks Playzones	0.119	0.006	-	-	-	0.125	-	0.125
Members Small Schemes	0.004	0.274	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.458	0.458	-
Linthorpe Road Cycleway Removal	1.172	0.997	-	-	-	2.169	-	2.169
Carriageway Resurfacing Programme	0.212	0.662	-	-	-	0.874	0.874	-
Footways Repairs Programme	0.036	0.564	-	-	-	0.600	0.600	-
Section 106 Stewart Park	0.019	0.013	-	-	-	0.032	-	0.032
Simpler Recycling	0.729	0.786	-	-	-	1.515	1.515	-
Bereavement Services Plotbox System	0.065	-	-	-	-	0.065	0.065	-
Extension of Fleet Workshop	0.055	1.345	-	-	-	1.400	1.400	-
Replace or Repair Longlands Overbridge	-	0.100	0.300	0.450	9.150	10.000	10.000	-
Town Hall and Theatre Equipment Renewal	-	1.500	-	-	-	1.500	1.500	-
Replacement and Improvement to Equipment in Play Areas	-	0.500	0.200	0.200	0.200	1.100	1.100	-
Total Environment, Communities and Culture	**15.452**	**26.344**	**6.808**	**8.306**	**11.808**	**68.718**	**50.997**	**17.721**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council	External
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**	**Funding**	**Funding**
Public Health	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Swimming Pool Support Fund	0.181	0.001	-	-	-	0.182	-	0.182
Middlesbrough Sports Village Full Size 3g Pitch Repair	0.509	-	-	-	-	0.509	0.507	0.002
Neptune Leisure Centre Boiler Replacement	0.172	-	-	-	-	0.172	0.172	-
Leisure Trust Investment - Equipment	0.071	-	-	-	-	0.071	0.071	-
Total Public Health	**0.933**	**0.001**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0.934**	**0.750**	**0.184**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council	External
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**	**Funding**	**Funding**
Education and Partnerships	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Block Budget - Family Hubs	-	0.075	0.077	0.078	-	0.230	-	0.230
Block Budget - Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) - All Schools	-	0.155	-	-	-	0.155	-	0.155
Block Budget - School Condition Allocation (SCA)	-	0.541	-	-	-	0.541	-	0.541
Block Budget - Basic Need	-	2.271	-	-	-	2.271	-	2.271
Block Budget - High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNCPA)	-	3.699	-	-	-	3.699	-	3.699
S106 - Lowgill	-	0.535	-	-	-	0.535	-	0.535
Contingency Funding Reserve	-	0.105	-	-	-	0.105	-	0.105

Appendix 7 : Revised Capital Programme Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

Building Condition Improvements - Primary School	0.274	0.104	-	-	-	0.378	0.001	0.377
Building Condition Improvements - Special Schools	0.006	0.330	0.030	-	-	0.366	-	0.366
School led Capital schemes - all maintained schools	0.010	0.677	0.025	-	-	0.712	(0.045)	0.757
Sufficiency Schemes - Primary	-	0.500	-	-	-	0.500	-	0.500
Sufficiency Schemes - Secondary	0.985	2.517	-	-	-	3.502	0.196	3.306
Sufficiency Schemes - SEND and Alternative Education	1.234	1.015	-	-	-	2.249	-	2.249
SEN Small Capital Grant Schemes	0.127	0.171	-	-	-	0.298	-	0.298
Family Hubs and Early Years	0.065	-	-	-	-	0.065	-	0.065
Capitalisation of Salary Costs	0.121	0.127	-	-	-	0.248	-	0.248
Total Education and Partnerships	**2.822**	**12.822**	**0.132**	**0.078**	**-**	**15.854**	**0.152**	**15.702**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**		
Children's Social Care	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Marton Road Commissioned Partnership	0.131	-	-	-	-	0.131	-	0.131
House Purchase and Adaptations (Permanence) Hilton Drive	0.391	0.269	-	-	-	0.660	0.550	0.110
Total Children's Social Care	**0.522**	**0.269**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0.791**	**0.550**	**0.241**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**		
Adult Social Care	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act - All schemes	0.926	1.078	1.000	1.070	1.070	5.144	4.969	0.175
Disabled Facilities Grant - All schemes	2.700	0.868	-	-	-	3.568	-	3.568
Capitalisation of Staying Put Salaries	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.250	0.250	-
Home Loans Partnership (Formerly 5 Lamps)	0.004	0.071	-	-	-	0.075	-	0.075
Small Schemes	0.018	0.367	-	-	-	0.385	0.350	0.035
Total Adult Social Care	**3.698**	**2.434**	**1.050**	**1.120**	**1.120**	**9.422**	**5.569**	**3.853**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**		
Legal and Corporate Services	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Desktop Strategy / Device Refresh	0.465	-	-	-	-	0.465	0.465	-
Enterprise Agreements	0.908	-	-	-	-	0.908	0.908	-

Appendix 7 : Revised Capital Programme Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

IT Refresh - Network Refresh	0.199	-	-	-	-	0.199	0.199	-
IT Refresh - Lights On	0.254	-	-	-	-	0.254	0.254	-
ICT Essential Refresh & Licensing	0.367	1.447	2.185	2.185	2.185	8.369	8.369	-
ICT Transformational Capital Expenditure	-	3.000	1.500	-	-	4.500	4.500	
SharePoint	0.110	-	-	-	-	0.110	0.110	-
HR Recruitment	0.024	-	-	-	-	0.024	0.024	-
IKEN	0.040	-	-	-	-	0.040	0.040	-
HR Pay	-	0.037	-	-	-	0.037	0.037	
Total Legal and Corporate Services	**2.367**	**4.484**	**3.685**	**2.185**	**2.185**	**14.906**	**14.906**	**-**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**		
Finance	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Former Partnership Investment (ICT Infrastructure Revenues & Benefits)	0.008	0.156	0.100	-	-	0.264	0.264	-
Business World Upgrade	-	0.028	-	-	-	0.028	0.028	-
Capitalisation of Property Finance Lease Arrangements	0.063	0.150	0.087	-	-	0.300	0.300	-
Total Finance	**0.071**	**0.334**	**0.187**	**-**	**-**	**0.592**	**0.592**	**-**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**		
Transformation Programme	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Transformation / Subject Matter Expertise	4.994	3.501	0.172	-	-	8.667	8.667	-
Neighbourhood	0.404	1.071	0.671	-	-	2.146	2.146	-
Redundancy	0.261	0.200	-	-	-	0.461	0.461	-
Contingency	-	0.500	0.629	-	-	1.129	1.129	-
Total Transformation	**5.659**	**5.272**	**1.472**	**-**	**-**	**12.403**	**12.403**	**-**

	Forecast Expenditure						Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**		
ALL DIRECTORATES	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Total ALL DIRECTORATES	**56.477**	**91.820**	**52.505**	**30.897**	**23.483**	**255.182**	**160.412**	**94.770**

Appendix 7 : Revised Capital Programme Forecasts 2025/26 to 2028/29

	Forecast Expenditure							Council Funding	External Funding
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	TOTAL			
FUNDED BY:	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**		**£m**	**£m**
Borrowing	12.602	30.860	22.038	11.475	9.605	86.580		86.580	-
Leases	0.063	0.150	0.087	-	-	0.300		0.300	
Capital Receipts	6.000	11.960	16.060	14.231	12.878	61.129		61.129	-
Flexible Use of Capital Receipts	5.659	5.272	1.472	-	-	12.403		12.403	-
Grants	26.858	37.106	6.933	1.078	1.000	72.975		-	72.975
Contributions	5.295	6.472	5.915	4.113	-	21.795		-	21.795
						-			
Total FUNDING	**56.477**	**91.820**	**52.505**	**30.897**	**23.483**	**255.182**		**160.412**	**94.770**

Table 7 - Summary of Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2029/30

	Forecast Expenditure					
Directorate	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**
Regeneration & Housing	24.953	39.860	39.171	19.208	8.370	131.562
Environment, Communities and Culture	15.452	26.344	6.808	8.306	11.808	68.718
Public Health	0.933	0.001	-	-	-	0.934
Education and Partnerships	2.822	12.822	0.132	0.078	-	15.854
Children's Social Care	0.522	0.269	-	-	-	0.791
Adult Social Care	3.698	2.434	1.050	1.120	1.120	9.422
Legal and Corporate Services	2.367	4.484	3.685	2.185	2.185	14.906
Finance	0.071	0.334	0.187	-	-	0.592
Transformation	5.659	5.272	1.472	-	-	12.403
						-
Total Expenditure	**56.477**	**91.820**	**52.505**	**30.897**	**23.483**	**255.182**

	Forecast Expenditure					
	2025/26	**2026/27**	**2027/28**	**2028/29**	**2029/30**	**TOTAL**
Funded By	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**	**£m**
Borrowing	12.602	30.860	22.038	11.475	9.605	86.580
Leases	0.063	0.150	0.087	-	-	0.300
Capital Receipts	6.000	11.960	16.060	14.231	12.878	61.129
Flexible Use of Capital Receipts	5.659	5.272	1.472	-	-	12.403
Grants	26.858	37.106	6.933	1.078	1.000	72.975
Contributions	5.295	6.472	5.915	4.113	-	21.795
						-
Total FUNDING	**56.477**	**91.820**	**52.505**	**30.897**	**23.483**	**255.182**

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Appendix 8 : Capital Programme Outturn 2025/26 – Details of Transformation Expenditure Funded Through Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

Directorate / Theme	Thematic Programme and focus of investment	FUoCR Expense Type	Savings Reference	FUoCR Criteria	2025/26 Actuals £m
Adult Social Care					
Adult Social Care	Transformation Programme Lead & Co-ordinator	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.179
Adult Social Care	Business Analyst	Transformation	ASC12	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.018
Adult Social Care	Lived Experience Group to support decision making	Subject Matter Expertise	N/A	Service Improvement	0.016
Adult Social Care	Service Manager	Subject Matter Expertise	ASC12	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement / Demand Mgmt.	0.070
Adult Social Care	Social Worker / Occupational Therapist	Transformation	ASC08-13	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement / Demand Mgmt.	0.310
Adult Social Care	Backfill for social workers covering 3C model innovation sites	Transformation	ASC12	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement / Demand Mgmt.	0.129
Adult Social Care	Assistive Technology Reviewing Officer	Transformation	ASC12	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement / Demand Mgmt.	0.024
Adult Social Care	Homelessness Specialist and Expenses	Subject Matter Expertise	ASC02	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.069
Adult Social Care	Togetherall (24/7 Mental Health support)	Subject Matter Expertise	N/A	Demand Mgmt.	0.015
Adult Social Care	Magic Notes (transcription tool) Rollout	Transformation	N/A	Service Improvement	0.040
Adult Social Care	Strengthen Social Worker Management Support - to promote prevention	Transformation	N/A	Demand Mgmt.	0.041
Adult Social Care	Independent Supported Living Reviews Phase 2	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement / Demand Mgmt.	0.080
Total Adult Social Care Transformation investment					**0.991**
Children's Services					
Children's Care	Dedicated Programme Support (across all Children's Services initiatives)	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.192
Children's Care	Review of Placements (including Processes and Procedures)	Subject Matter Expertise	CC02	Savings / Demand Management	0.020
Children's Care	Improvement of Residential Capacity	Transformation	CC03	Savings / Service Improvement	0.168
Children's Care	Workforce Development	Transformation	CC04	Savings	0.101
Children's Care	Children's Charity - SHiFT 3 year Contract commitment	Transformation	CC06	Savings / Service Improvement	0.165
Children's Care	Special Guardianship Order Payment Review	Transformation	CC07	Savings / Income Growth	0.043
Children's Care	Edge of Care Team	Transformation	CC10	Savings / Demand Management	0.093
Children's Care	Modernising Fostering	Transformation	CC08	Savings / Service Improvement	0.369
Children's Care	Dedicated Programme Support (across all Children's initiatives) 6 months	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.113
Children's Care	Business Change	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Service Improvement	0.448
Children's Care	Referral & Assessment Team	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Service Improvement	0.517
Education & Partnerships	High Needs Resource Allocation System (RAS)	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.220
Total Children's Services Transformation investment					**2.449**
Environment, Culture & Communities					
Place	Garden Waste Customer Services	Transformation	ECS02	Income Growth / Saving	0.056
Place	Permiserve Bin Stickers	Transformation	ECS02	Income Growth / Saving	0.031
Place	3 Environment Sustainability Managers (Exec report 30/4/25)	Transformation	N/A	Enabling/Savings	0.078
Neighbourhoods	8 Community Development Workers	Transformation	N/A	Enabling/Service Improvement	0.142
Neighbourhoods	8 Neighbourhood Navigators	Transformation	N/A	Enabling/Service Improvement	0.173
Neighbourhoods	1 Community Safety Co-ordinator	Transformation	N/A	Enabling/Service Improvement	0.019
Neighbourhoods	4 Neighbourhood Link Workers	Transformation	N/A	Enabling/Service Improvement	0.070
Total Environment, Culture & Communities Transformation investment					**0.569**
Legal & Corporate Services					
Target Operating Model	Artificial Intelligence Discovery	Subject Matter Expertise	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement / Demand Mgmt.	0.034
Target Operating Model	ICT Head of Service / ICT Digital Transformation Lead	Transformation	N/A	Enabling / Service Improvement	0.042
Target Operating Model	Desktop Engineer	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.016
Target Operating Model	Extension of ICT PM and Infrastructure Resources	Subject Matter Expertise	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.116
Communications	Marketing and Digital Communications	Transformation	N/A	Savings / Enabling / Service Improvement	0.062
Enabling	Programme Management Office Business Partners and Support Officer	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.103
Enabling	Strategic Transformation Partner	Subject Matter Expertise	N/A	Enabling	0.028
Total Legal & Corporate Services Transformation investment					**0.401**
Finance					

Appendix 8 : Capital Programme Outturn 2025/26 – Details of Transformation Expenditure Funded Through Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

Directorate / Theme	Thematic Programme and focus of investment	FUoCR Expense Type	Savings Reference	FUoCR Criteria	2025/26 Actuals £m
Customer	Programme Lead & Manager	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.097
Customer	Internal Workstream Managers and Leads	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.106
Customer	Business Analyst Project Support	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.043
Customer	Project Support	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.040
Target Operating Model	Collection of Housing Benefit Overpayments	Subject Matter Expertise	FIN01	Income Growth / Savings	0.035
Target Operating Model	Council Tax Reviews	Subject Matter Expertise	FIN02	Income Growth / Savings / Service Improvement	0.073
Target Operating Model	Collection of Council Tax & Debt - Aged Debt Recovery & Charging Orders	Subject Matter Expertise	FIN03/04/05	Income Growth / Savings	0.172
Target Operating Model	Collection of Business Rates	Subject Matter Expertise	FIN05	Income Growth / Savings	0.035
Target Operating Model	Centralisation of Grants Admin & Maximisation of Grant Income Opportunities	Transformation	FIN10	Income Growth / Savings	0.046
Target Operating Model	Bid Writing	Subject Matter Expertise	FIN10	Income Growth	0.038
Target Operating Model	Contract Review Support	Subject Matter Expertise	N/A	Income Growth / Savings / Service Improvement	0.040
Enabling	Transformation Programme Finance Lead	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.046
Enabling	Finance Business Partner - Children's Transformation Finance Lead	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.050
Enabling	Specialist Financial Assessor /Advisor - Adults	Transformation	ASC15	Enabling	0.045
Total Finance Transformation investment					**0.866**
Regeneration & Housing					
Regeneration & Housing	Beam - Move On Accommodation And Spend	Transformation	N/A	Enabling	0.122
Total Regeneration & Housing Transformation investment					**0.122**
Redundancy					
Redundancy	Redundancies	Redundancies	N/A	Savings	0.261
Total Redundancy Transformation Investment					**0.261**
Total All Transformation Investment 2025/26					**5.659**

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	Middlesbrough moving forward

Report of:	Corporate Director of Finance (S151 Officer) – Andrew Humble

Relevant Executive Member:	Executive Member for Finance – Nicky Walker

Submitted to:	Executive

Date:	10 June 2026

Title:	Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026/27

Report for:	Decision

Status:	Public

Council Plan priority:	A healthy place

Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £250,000

Subject to call in?	Yes
Why:	Non-Urgent Report

Proposed decision(s)

That Executive:

- **Approves** the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) delivery plan for 2026/27 which will be delivered between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027 with expenditure as set out in Table 1 (paragraph 4.19).

- **Delegates** authority to the S.151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to adjust the allocation of funding between different elements within the plan.

Executive summary

The 2025 Spending Review introduced a Government initiative to reform crisis support through a new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), with initial guidance released to Local Authorities (LA's) in January 2026. Household Support Fund (HSF) grant which has been providing short term funding to LA's since 6 October 2021 and Discretionary Housing

Payments funding also previously managed by the Council have both ceased with the introduction of CRF.

We have given considerable thought to the implications of HSF ending and have provided transitional arrangements in certain circumstances for residents from HSF to CRF.

CRF funding has been provided as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement with allocations for Middlesbrough Council in this and the next two years:

- 2026/27 - £3,999,285 (confirmed)
- 2027/28 - £4m (indicated by Central Government, to be confirmed 2027)
- 2028/29 - £3.9m (indicated by Central Government, to be confirmed 2028)

The Council is required to submit a delivery plan for 2026/27 to the Department for Work and Pensions by 1st July 2026 following approval by the Council's Section 151 Officer and Executive.

The delivery plan should propose to spend the full allocation in year, although funding can be carried forward between financial years. Funding from 2026/27 can be carried forward to 2027/28 and from 2027/28 to 2028/29 – all funding must be spent by 31 March 2029.

The guidance provided by Central Government states that Crisis support is targeted to residents who have a low household income and who have encountered a financial shock. The Fund is also intended to support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crises in the long term, reducing crisis need.

The initial allocations planned within the Council's proposed scheme are outlined in Table 1 (paragraph 4.19).

1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 To seek approval for the CRF scheme for the 2026/27 financial year.

1.2 In addition to seek delegated authority for the Corporate Director of Finance (S.151 Officer) in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to adjust the allocation of funding between different elements within the plan.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	*Government funding provided through the scheme will flow through into the local economy.*
A healthy Place	*An approach to delivering crisis support that recognises the varied circumstances that individuals may experience before during and after a crisis. The intention of the scheme is to identify and address underlying needs rather than just crisis.*

	Providing a route to enabling households to become more financial resilient. *To meet the objectives of the fund, we will work with partners to support our residents out of crisis and improve their and the community's resilience.*
Safe and resilient communities	*Supporting individual residents to become more financially resilient through extended working arrangements with partnering/third party organisations and so contribute to community resilience.*
Delivering best value	*Funding is provided by Central Government and so provision of the scheme has no consequences for the Council's financial position.*

2. Recommendations

That Executive:

- **Approves** The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) delivery plan for 2026/27 which will be delivered between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027 with expenditure as set out in Table 1 (paragraph 4.19).

- **Delegates** authority to the S.151 Officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance to adjust the allocation of funding between different elements within the plan.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The decision is required as Government have announced funding for the CRF as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement across a three-year period.

3.2 The Council need to confirm an approach and submit an approved delivery plan for year 1 (2026/27) to the DWP by 1 July 2026.

3.3 Delegated authority to approve the reallocation of funding between different elements within the Council's delivery plan will ensure available funds are committed in line with local need, and Government guidance.

4. Background and relevant information

4.1 In June 2025 the government confirmed that the HSF would end on the 31 March 2026. They also announced a new fund, the CRF would be set up from 1 April 2026. The CRF was officially launched in March 2026 with updated Government guidance provided on the aims and objectives.

4.2 Funding for CRF schemes is provided through the Local Government Finance Settlement and has been confirmed for three years.

4.3 Each Local Authority is required to prepare a local scheme to determine how its funding will be used. The amount allocated to Middlesbrough for the 2026/27 financial year is £3,999,285.

4.4 The fund incorporates Housing Payments which replace Discretionary Housing Payments which ended on 31 March 2026. £398k is the minimum stipulated spend the Council can allocate to Housing Payments for the 2026/27 year, with an additional £68k ringfenced to cover the cost of administering Housing Payments.

4.5 The CRF differs from the HSF in many ways with it aims to:

- support low-income households who encounter a financial shock
- support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience, allowing residents to better deal with crises in the future, reducing crisis need
- take a cash-first approach
- have a person centred, needs based approach taking a holistic view of the household's circumstances
- support a no wrong door approach
- application based support rather than pro-active payments

4.6 Government guidance requires LA's to clearly advertise the scheme to residents including publication on the Council website.

4.7 The value of individual awards is to be determined by LA's in accordance with the guidance.

4.8 The CRF has four components:

- **Crisis Payment** – providing support to those in crisis
- **Housing Payment** – providing financial support towards housing needs (based on the DHP guidance for year 1)
- **Resilience Services** – funding for services delivered by LA's or external providers to improve financial resilience
- **Community Coordination** – investment in activities that connect and enhance local support landscape

4.9 Central Government have introduced a cash-first approach when making Crisis payments, but this does not mean cash only. Awards will be made using cash (via multiple methods including bank payments or Paypoint), vouchers or physical goods.

4.10 When reporting management information to the DWP, as activity can cross over more than a single component, it is up to the Local Authority to determine which component the activity is reported under.

4.11 The crisis and housing components must remain open to applications via at least two methods e.g. over the phone or on-line, continuously throughout the year.

4.12 In addition to the Council's own delivery of resilience activity, expressions will be sought from external organisations who can provide options that contribute to delivering the CRF objectives. This will focus on debt advice, budgeting support and measures to improve overall financial stability. Alongside this the Council will be seeking expressions to support the development of referral pathways as part of the community coordination component.

4.13 Applications and referrals will be tracked and paid through a new system which has been specifically designed to deliver the CRF solution, this will be implemented in readiness for the administration of the Fund.

4.14 As the scheme is transitioning to individual application-based support, additional resource is essential to deliver the scheme requirements. The cost of the resource will be funded through the scheme.

4.15 Year 1 has been designed to allow a period of transition from the cost-of-living support provided through the HSF to CRF provision, as some residents may have become reliant on regular support that the Council has been providing and to remove this altogether could present a financial shock. Consequently, a large proportion of the funding has been assigned to crisis support, though it is anticipated that crisis expenditure will be less in year 2 and increased more toward improving resilience.

4.16 Engagement has taken place with other directorates to ascertain what support is in place in each area so that work is not duplicated, the scheme is intended to create additionality to existing schemes, avoid any overlap and duplication in funding whilst enhancing current delivery, linking up solutions across directorates/services to support residents effectively and ensure services are aligned

4.17 The scheme design takes account of existing provision offered through the Resident and Business Support – Family Resilience Fund (FRF) and Local Welfare Provision (LWP). Table 1 at paragraph 4.19 shows how funding streams will be used to complement each other.

4.18 Where appropriate, applications will be reviewed with a person-centred approach, seeking to understand the wider context of each applicant's situation. This will enable immediate financial support and tailored interventions to promote longer term resilience.

4.19 The proposed scheme activities within the Council's delivery plan are set out in Table 1 below. Planned expenditure is £3.599m (excluding £0.400m administration costs – also refer to paragraph 4.24).

Table 1 Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026/27

Activity	Component	CRF	FRF	LWP
Pro-active payments to the following: Families in receipt of means tested FSM £70 per child Pensioners in receipt of CTR £50 per household	Crisis	£805k £175k		

Singles / Couples in receipt of UC (no children) £50 per household		£90k		
Application to support the pro-active payments: Families (in receipt of UC or means tested FSM) Pensioners (in receipt of CTR) Singles / Couples (in receipt of UC)	Crisis	£175k £25k £25k		
Enhanced CTR support for those families impacted by the two-child benefit change	Crisis		£100k	
Crisis applications – current policy	Crisis			£50k
Crisis applications – extension of current policy to support those in receipt of UC or Pension Credit	Crisis	£200k		
Crisis applications – to support those in work who meet the low-income threshold	Crisis	£150k		
Terminally ill support	Crisis	£200k		
Temporary accommodation move on support	Crisis	£75k		
Domestic Abuse move on support	Crisis	£150k		
NRPF (inc. school uniform)	Crisis	£60k		
School uniform grants	Crisis	£60k	£59k	
Community Support Funding Extension to current scheme	Crisis	£150k		£100k
Third party support Funds to be bid for (as per 4.12)	Resilience	£382k		
HAF additional funding to: Support places for children not in receipt of FSM in core periods Extend the provision of HAF outside of core periods	Resilience	£250k		
Additional Welfare resources	Resilience	£91k		
Community: Funds to be bid for (as per 4.12)	Community	£138k		
Housing Payments minimum stipulated spend	Housing	£398k		
		£3.599m	**£159k**	**£150k**

*UC Universal Credit *HB Housing Benefit * CTR Council Tax Reduction * FSM Free School meals

4.20 The low-income threshold for the purpose of crisis applications referred to above is set out below:

	Maximum annual gross earnings
Single person household	£25,000
Couple household	£35,000
Single person with 1 child	£35,000
Single person with 2 children	£40,000
Single person with 3 or more children	£45,000
Couple with 1 child	£45,000
Couple with 2 children	£55,000
Couple with 3 or more children	£65,000

4.21 Each of the crisis activity items listed above are open to all residents to apply for and consequently a resident might receive more than one award from the scheme. For example, a resident applying for terminal illness support could also still qualify for a crisis or housing payment by making a further application. Applications for awards will be assessed on the individual circumstances presented.

4.22 No awards will be given where an applicant has £6,000 or more in savings or capital. An applicant needs to be a resident of Middlesbrough or have a current commitment from the Council to support them.

4.23 In line with the guidance, the Council is able to recover administration costs to deliver the scheme, and these have been calculated at £400k. This equates to 10% of the annual Fund allocation.

4.24 Within the administration costs, in order to support the delivery of auto enrolment for Free School Meals for children, an amount has been allowed to cover the administration necessary in ensuring that pupil premium is maximised for all schools so that the corresponding benefit is gained by its pupils.

4.25 The Council will also undertake a campaign for Veterans; ensuring that appropriate benefits are in pay, referrals pathways to other programmes such as HAF (for households with children), and crisis referrals into the Crisis and Resilience Fund and the Councils wider Welfare Strategy.

4.26 The delivery plan anticipates spending the full allocation of £3,999,285. If funds from year 1 are not spent as planned, they can and will be carried over into year 2.

4.27 The scheme has been designed to be as inclusive as possible, providing support throughout the year to all age ranges, working household within the low-income threshold and persons without recourse to public funds who are still in need and eligible. Some packages such as for the terminally ill will also make available resilience services irrespective of the financial threshold.

4.28 The delivery plan proposed complements existing Council Policies and Strategies including The Welfare Strategy, Corporate Food Poverty Policy, Welfare Support Policy for those in Financial Crisis, Corporate Debt Management, Vulnerability Policy, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Exceptional Hardship Fund - Section 13A (1) (a) Policy.

4.29 The scheme will be subject to periodic reviews to allow alterations to be made should the scheme requirements need to change to keep pace with events and demand.

4.30 Appropriate counter fraud measures will be applied to minimise risk in accordance with the Council’s policies and procedures [Counter fraud | Middlesbrough Council]

5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Member engagement has occurred with the Executive Member of Finance.

6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 If the plan is not approved and without a suitable scheme with sufficient defined criteria approved by the Council’s Executive, the funds cannot be used by the Council to benefit vulnerable residents and low-income households.

6.2 The Council can choose to outsource the delivery in part or in whole. Where the Council are best placed to deliver because of the connections with other schemes, access to data and detailed information on individual circumstances it is recommended the Council retain the delivery of the scheme. The Council will be inviting applications for grant funding (para 4.12) where delivery would be best placed externally.

6.3 Funding could be distributed differently between activities identified or across different activities. The plan presented has taken account of the government guidance, experience gained through HSF and engagement with all directorates within the Council to ensure maximum reach to those in need of support.

7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	Central Government has allocated the Council £3,999,285 from the CRF as outlined in the Executive summary. With an approved delivery plan the Council can distribute funds between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027 to support the town's most vulnerable and low-income households. The Council must use Government guidance to design a local scheme and will not exceed the allocated funding available. The Council will retain £400k to administer the scheme therefore there will be no direct cost to the Council.
Procurement	The grant allocation to third parties / residents using this grant allocation falls outside of procurement and therefore there are no procurement issues for this element. The purchase of a system mentioned in 4.13 of the report will be procured in line with the Procurement Act 2023 if it applies and the Council's Constitution to ensure procurement compliance. Where grants are to be provided for third party organisations to deliver support these will be made through the grants team (Procurement, Contract Management & Children's Commissioning) and compliant with the Council's policies and procedures, ensuring that our grants register is accurate in line with statutory transparency requirements.
Legal	The introduction of the CRF will ensure alignment with Government guidance issued following the 2025 Spending Review. All expenditure under the scheme will be undertaken in accordance with applicable legal and procurement requirements.
Risk	The scheme supports the delivery of the Council's strategic priority 'A Healthy Place' to reduce poverty as set out in the Council Plan 2024-2027. Council Plan | Middlesbrough Council.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty	There are no disproportionate adverse impacts on any group or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equity law.

and Community Cohesion	An impact assessment has been carried out and is attached to this report. All personal data processing associated with the Crisis and Resilience Fund will comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. A Data Protection Impact Assessment will be completed, and appropriate data sharing agreements will be established with delivery partners. Records generated through the scheme will be managed in accordance with the Council's records management policy, including defined retention and disposal schedules.
Reducing Poverty	Through the provision of financial awards and referrals to resilience services, the scheme supports residents in achieving greater financial stability, contributing to the reduction of poverty. The scheme has been designed around existing initiatives and provides support from children through to pensioners and includes those both in and out of work.
Climate Change / Environmental	There are no disproportionate adverse impacts on the aspirations of the Council to achieve net zero, net carbon neutral or be the lead authority on environmental issues.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	The CRF plan does not differentiate based on applicant background and therefore has no adverse impact on children and young people cared for by the Authority for Care Leavers.
Data Protection	The collation and use of personal data will be managed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection policy and the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Privacy Notice [Privacy notice - Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction | Middlesbrough Council]

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Implementation and publication of the plan	Janette Savage	Immediately following approval
Advise DWP of the formal agreement of the delivery plan	Janette Savage	By 1 July 2026
Periodic review of the scheme, including 2026/27 and future years	Janette Savage	31 March 2027

Appendices

1	Delivery plan for DWP

2	Impact Assessment

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Department for Work and Pensions	The Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for local authorities in England (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029)	13 January 2026
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	UK Poverty 2026: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK	27 January 2026
Department for Work and Pensions	Our Children, Our Future: Tackling Child Poverty	13 March 2026

Contact: Janette Savage (Head of Customer Services, Resident and Business Support)
Email: Janette_Savage@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Guidance for completing the Delivery Plan for Crisis and Resilience fund

Before completing this template, please refer to the '**MI (Combined) Reporting Requirements**' document.

Please ensure you complete the following tabs:

1 - Governance

2 - Planned Activity and Spend

The delivery plan should cover the anticipated value of grants for vulnerable households for the duration of the reporting year (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027).

You need to return the delivery plan by 1 July 2026

When submitting your delivery plan to DWP; please attach and name the excel spreadsheet as follows -

Filename: CRFYR1DP_RRRRR_MMYY (where RRRRR is your LA ONS short code and date of return is in MMYY format) for example Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority's June 2026 return would be labelled
CRFYR1DP_E1401_0626 xlsx.

Send the completed delivery plan, **including the name of your LA in the subject line** to the DWP to:

lawelfare.pdt@dwp.gov.uk
For example Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority's email subject line would be
Brighton and Hove CRF YR 1 Delivery Plan

Your delivery plan must be signed off by your Section 151 Officer / Chief Finance Officer. Please ask them to complete Table 3 to provide assurance on the correctness of the anticipated spend. We also require you to copy your Section 151 Officer / CFO into your return email when submitting your delivery plan to DWP.

Reasonable administration costs are funded as part of the grant.

Traffic Light Guidance System

The Traffic Light Guidance System is used throughout the delivery plan to help inform the user and the Cabinet Member of any outstanding required inputs.

The green circle with a white tick indicates that the adjacent table is compliant:

The red circle with a white cross indicates that the adjacent table is non-compliant:

CRF Delivery Plan - Governance

Department for Work & Pensions

1) LA details

Local authority	ONS Short Code	LA Type	Has the return been completed in full?
Middlesbrough	E0702	Unitary Authority	

Notes
To complete the Governance tab, please ensure to:
a) choose your Local Authority name in Table 1
b) enter the return date in Table 2 (dd/mm/yyyy)
c) complete all cells in Tables 3 and 4

All blue cells are to be completed by Local Authorities. All grey cells with autofill.
A summary and explanation of the traffic light system is included below and in the guidance tab. It details how the system is applied throughout the template.

When a green circle with a white tick appears next to Tables 1 to 4, the tables are compliant.

When a green circle with a white tick appears in Table 1 'Has the return been completed in full?', the delivery plan is compliant and ready for submission.

2) Reporting period

Reporting period	Report type	Return date (dd/mm/yyyy)
01/04/2026- 31/03/2027	Delivery Plan	

3) Section 151 Officer sign off

I have reviewed the financial procedures in place and I am satisfied that they are robust enough to protect public funds and that the total anticipated Grant spend by the Grant Recipient in this template is exclusively for the purposes set out in the Grant Determination Letter between the Grant Recipient and the Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Governemnt in respect of the delivery of the Crisis and Resilience Fund:

Section 151 Officer signature (please type)	Section 151 Officer's email
	Andrew_Humble@middlesbrough.gov.uk

4) Governance

Cabinet Member (name)	Cabinet Member's email	Has the Cabinet Member approved this plan? (dropdown)	Is the Section 151 Officer/CFO copied into the return email?
Nicky Walker	Nicky_Walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk		

5) Totals

Anticipated spend for crisis scheme (£)	Anticipated housing payment costs (£)	Anticipated resilience building investments (£)	Anticipated community coordination costs (£)	Anticipated admin costs (£)	Total anticipated spend (£)	Total CRF Allocation (£)	Anticipated spend as % of allocation
£ 2,370,000.00	£ 398,209.00	£ 693,592.00	£ 137,750.98	£ 399,732.00	£ 3,999,283.98	£ 3,999,285.26	100.0%

Traffic Light Guidance System

The traffic light guidance system is used throughout this workbook to help inform the user, Cabinet Member and Section 151 officer of any outstanding required inputs. The icons can be found next to each table.

The green circle with a white tick indicates that the adjacent table is compliant:

The red circle with a white cross indicates that the adjacent table is non-compliant:

For DWP use only:	
Governance	
Planned activity and spend	

End

01/04/2023 - 30/06/2023
01/04/2023 - 30/09/2023
01/04/2023 - 31/12/2023
01/04/2023 - 31/03/2024

CRF Delivery Plan - Anticipated spend

Notes
Please input numerical values in full (e.g. 120,000.00) to enable us to process the return. Please ensure that any spend figures you provide are presented to 2 decimal places, if this is not followed your Delivery Plan will be returned for completion. All blue cells are to be completed by Local Authorities. All grey cells with autofill.

The traffic light system will help you ensure the template is completed in full. For the return to be compliant, all traffic lights must be green with a white tick.

If there is no anticipated spend to report, in order to enable the green light with white tick next to each table, the cells should still be completed with 0 (zero as a numerical value rather than typing out 'NIL', for example). This will help us process the return promptly for you.
Your total anticipated spend must not exceed your allocation amount. Anticipated spend and acitvity should relate to the duration of the reporting year (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027). The total of anticipated spend reported must be less than or equal to your allocation.

'Has the planned activity and spend tab been completed correctly?' - the traffic light will turn green with a white tick once Tables 6 and 7 are compliant

6) Anticipated spend split by CRF Strand (£) (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027)

Anticipated spend for crisis scheme (£)	Anticipated housing payment costs (£)	Anticipated resilience building investments (£)	Anticipated community coordination costs (£)	Anticipated admin costs (£)
£ 2,370,000.00	£ 398,209.00	£ 693,592.00	£ 137,750.98	£ 399,732.00

Traffic light check
Has the planned activity and spend tab been completed correctly?

7) Planned activity for each CRF strand (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029)

Planned activity for crisis scheme (include applications methods, how accessibility is being ensured, eligbility requirements, and how the crisis scheme will refer into resilience services).

We have planned a tranche of 'transitional payments' providing a final payment to support residents with the transition from the Household Support Fund to the Crisis and Resilience Fund and to prevent creating a financial shock to households who have come to expect pro-active support.
Transitional payments will be predominantly automated, using information already held. Where this is not possible residents will be able to apply.

Planned activity for housing payments (include how you intend to manage to transition from Discretionary Housing Payments to CRF between 2026 and 2029).

Criteria: In receipt of Universal Credit Housing Element or Housing Benefit
In year one we will continue to deliver the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments in line with the existing policy. This includes support for shortfalls in rent, support with moving costs, rent in advance / deposits or rent arrears (subject to income and expenditure verification). Nb. All information has been updated to reflect the name change of Housing Payments.
Strengthening links with the housing teams will allow a full view of the applicant's status, identifying other support available such as the homelessness prevention grant and ensuring a holistic approach to housing need. We will also link Housing Payment applications to the resilience strand of the scheme.
We will gain more understanding from analysis of activity in year one to support with ongoing discussions around how Housing Payments will evolve with the scheme in years two and three. Transition discussions to include:

Planned activity for resilience strand - Reduced experiences of material deprivation (include services being provided / support and expected outcomes). In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

We aim to tackle root cause and provide tailored interventions to promote longer term resilience. This may include, but isn't limited to:
•Budgeting advice
•Household income maximisation
•Debt advice
•Employability support
•End to end support to ensure resident is fully engaged with service
And will be considered in-line with all resilience strands as outlined below.

Planned activity for resilience strand - Reduced need for emergency food parcels (include services being provided / support and expected outcomes). In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

This section reflects the initial emphasis outlined in the above strand.
To support residents with reduced need for emergency food parcels we plan to:
•Look at awarding on a cash first approach
•Ensuring all applicants receive that tailored resilience support referred to previously
•Build on our relationship with the foodbanks to ensure we are capturing residents who were not referred through the council, to engage them into our resilience services
•Start building better links with Middlesbrough Community Grocery to support residents to migrate from foodbanks to an affordable food shop, with the support of resilience services

Planned activity for resilience strand - Increased access to appropriate and qualty advice services. In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

This section reflects the initial emphasis outlined in the first resilience strand.
To support residents with increased access to quality advice services we plan to:
•Increase our own internal services, including Welfare Rights and Welfare Support teams
•Work more closely with internal services i.e. employability hub, neighbourhood navigators
•Clear referral paths into the Citizens Advice
•Clear referral paths into Cleveland Housing Advice Centre (CHAC)
•Funds available for VCSE to apply for funding to support the aim of Crisis and Resilience

Planned activity for resilience strand - Increased savings (include services being provided / support and expected outcomes). In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

This section reflects the initial emphasis outlined in the first resilience strand.
To support residents with increased savings we plan to:
•Consider the above-mentioned resilience support initially to ensure they are making ends meet - budgeting advice, debt advice, household income maximisation and employability support
•Consider how global inflation will affect residents' ability to cover all costs and build this in with resilience
•Once a resident has been supported with the above, consider whether they are in a position to incorporate savings into their budget
•Work closely with South Tees Community Bank

Planned activity for resilience strand - Reduction in debt, especially priority debt (include services being provided / support and expected outcomes). In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

This section reflects the initial emphasis outlined in the first resilience strand.
To support residents with reducing their debt, especially priority debt we plan to:
•Ensure the initial steps are done to support with income and budgeting
•Refer to CHAC, a specialist debt advice team
•Monitor the outcomes of that referral and ensure engagement with the service was fulfilled

Planned activity for resilience strand - Maximisation of individuals' incomes (include services being provided / support and expected outcomes). In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

This section reflects the initial emphasis outlined in the first resilience strand.
To support residents with maximisation of individuals' income we plan to:
•Increase the resource within our Welfare Rights team, this means we can work with more residents to ensure we are maximising their household income where they are entitled to benefits
•Work closely with the employability hub, building clear referral pathways and outcome monitoring
•Fund Actes to provide a work club and monitor the outcomes closely
•Refer to CHAC to ensure specialist debt advise is given, which could potentially increase the amount of income they are left with each month

Planned activity for resilience strand - Decreased need for Crisis Payments and Housing Payments (include services being provided / support and expected outcomes). In particular, please detail how spend in this area will support CRF's outcomes:

This section reflects the initial emphasis outlined in the first resilience strand.
To support residents with decreasing their need for Crisis and Housing Payments we plan to:
•Look at case working, which will entail a further contact point with the resident following a period of support for an update on their circumstances
•Ensure residents are engaging with the support services they have been referred to
•Potentially limit further awards if resilience services have not been engaged with

Planned activity for community coordination strand (please detail how the spend will support CRF's outcomes:
Bolstering community level support
•Increased referral of crisis support applicants to appropriate services.
•Decreased crisis support applications.

This section will also reflect the initial emphasis outlined in the first resilience strand, as we aim to consider this with all applications.
Year one will entail building relationships with the community and understand how we can compliment each other in delivering the Crisis and Resilience Fund to our residents.
In year one we will:
•Work with Actes to deliver a work club
•Open bidding for VCSE's to apply for funding to support the delivery of Crisis and Resilience Fund

Planned admin spend - please detail what the anticipated admin spend will cover, including any evaluation costs.

Anticipated spend will cover:
•Additional resource for tasks such as scheme management, system support and gathering management information, administration of applications, processing awards etc
•Free school meal auto-enrolment support
•New system to manage applications and referrals
•Postage
•Transaction fees (increased costs with cash first options)

Further information - please refer to guidance document for questions to respond to using this field

Funding is available from 1 April 2026, however, the local scheme will launch in June/July 2026 following a period of detailed planning and successful progression through the full executive approval process to ensure strong governance and delivery readiness.

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Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment **Appendix 3**

Subject of assessment:	Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026/27			
Coverage:	Crosscutting			
This is a decision relating to:	☐ **Strategy**	☐ **Policy**	☐ **Service**	☐ **Function**
	☐ **Process/procedure**	☒ **Programme**	☐ **Project**	☐ **Review**
	☐ **Organisational change**	☐ **Other (please state)**		
It is a:	**New approach:**	☒	**Revision of an existing approach:**	☐
It is driven by:	**Legislation:**	☒	**Local or corporate requirements:**	☐

Description:	**Key aims, objectives and activities** To assess the impact of proceeding with the adoption of the proposed Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). **Statutory drivers** The Council is required to adopt a new scheme as part of the Crisis and Resilience Fund provided by Central Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27. The fund is being provided to: • Provide crisis support targeted to residents who have a low income and have encountered a financial shock • Support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crises A delivery plan must be returned to the DWP by 1 July 2026. **Differences from any previous approach** The Government is now providing CRF to Local Authorities (LA's) to support residents. Prior to this the Council received Household Support Fund (HSF) grant which has been providing short term funding to LA's since October 2021 and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) funding, both of which have ended. CRF differs from HSF in many ways and aims to: • support low-income households who encounter a financial shock • support activity that builds individual and community financial resilience, allowing residents to better deal with crises in the future, reducing crisis need • takes a cash-first approach • have a person centred, needs based approach taking a holistic view of the household's circumstances • support a no wrong door approach • application based support rather than pro-active payments **Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate)** Key stakeholders: Council and local residents. **Intended outcomes.** To seek approval for the delivery plan required by the DWP in line with Central Government criteria. That delegated authority is provided to the Corporate Director of Finance to adjust the allocation of funding between different elements within the plan, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance.
Live date:	22 June 2026

Lifespan:	Funding has been provided for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. The initial plan is for year one - 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027.
Date of next review:	March 2027

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	☒	☐	☐	The CRF is a Central Government scheme designed to provide crisis support to vulnerable households with a low income and experiencing a financial shock. With the introduction of CRF, HSF and DHP funding has ceased, with opportunity to make crisis awards and housing payments within the CRF scheme. The proposed CRF plan provides additional support to existing Council provision as well as new opportunities to support where gaps have been identified. Based on this no resident will be adversely affected with the introduction of the scheme. Support will be provided through a combination of direct automated awards and application-based claims. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of human rights.
Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*	☒	☐	☐	The CRF is a Central Government scheme designed to provide crisis support to vulnerable households with a low income and experiencing a financial shock. With the introduction of CRF, HSF and DHP funding has ceased, with opportunity to make crisis awards and housing payments within the CRF scheme. The proposed CRF plan provides additional support to existing Council provision as well as new opportunities to support where gaps have been identified. Based on this no resident will be adversely affected with the introduction of the scheme. Support will be provided through a combination of direct automated awards and application-based claims. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of equality.

* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance for details on the issues covered by each of theses broad questions prior to completion.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
Community cohesion Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*	☒	☐	☐	The CRF is a Central Government scheme designed to provide crisis support to vulnerable households with a low income and experiencing a financial shock. With the introduction of CRF, HSF and DHP funding has ceased, with opportunity to make crisis awards and housing payments within the CRF scheme. The proposed CRF plan provides additional support to existing Council provision as well as new opportunities to support where gaps have been identified. Based on this no resident will be adversely affected with the introduction of the scheme. Support will be provided through a combination of direct automated awards and application-based claims. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of community cohesion.
Armed Forces Could the decision impact negatively on those who are currently members of the armed forces of former members in the areas of Council delivered healthcare, compulsory education and housing policies?*	☒	☐	☐	The CRF is a Central Government scheme designed to provide crisis support to vulnerable households with a low income and experiencing a financial shock. With the introduction of CRF, HSF and DHP funding has ceased, with opportunity to make crisis awards and housing payments within the CRF scheme. The proposed CRF plan provides additional support to existing Council provision as well as new opportunities to support where gaps have been identified. Based on this no resident will be adversely affected with the introduction of the scheme. Support will be provided through a combination of direct automated awards and application-based claims. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of armed forces.
Care leavers Could the decision impact negatively on those who are care experienced?*	☒	☐	☐	The CRF is a Central Government scheme designed to provide crisis support to vulnerable households with a low income and experiencing a financial shock. With the introduction of CRF, HSF and DHP funding has ceased, with opportunity to make crisis awards and housing payments within the CRF scheme. The proposed CRF plan provides additional support to existing Council provision as well as new opportunities to support where gaps have been identified. Based on this no resident will be adversely affected with the introduction of the scheme. Support will be provided through a combination of direct automated awards and application-based claims. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of care leavers.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
Reducing Poverty Could the decision impact negatively on the Council's ambitions to reduce poverty in the town?	☒	☐	☐	The CRF is a Central Government scheme designed to provide crisis support to vulnerable households with a low income and experiencing a financial shock. With the introduction of CRF, HSF and DHP funding has ceased, with opportunity to make crisis awards and housing payments within the CRF scheme. The proposed CRF plan provides additional support to existing Council provision as well as new opportunities to support where gaps have been identified. Based on this no resident will be adversely affected with the introduction of the scheme. Support will be provided through a combination of direct automated awards and application-based claims. In light of the above, it is considered that the plan supports the Council's ambition to reduce poverty in the town.

Next steps:

- If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed.
- If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.

Assessment completed by:	Kellie Appleyard	**Head of Service:**	Janette Savage
Date:	12.05.2026	**Date:**	12.05.2026

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