

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

|               |                                           |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date:</b>  | <b>Wednesday 29th July, 2026</b>          |
| <b>Time:</b>  | <b>4.30 pm</b>                            |
| <b>Venue:</b> | <b>Mandela Room (Municipal Buildings)</b> |

## AGENDA

### 1. **Welcome, Fire Evacuation and Recording of Meetings**

*In the event the fire alarm sounds for more than 10 seconds attendees will be advised to evacuate the building via the nearest fire exit and assemble at the Bottle of Notes opposite MIMA.*

*Members of the public have the right to film, record or photograph public meetings. If you intend to do so, please advise the Chair of this intention. You may be asked to stop filming, photographing or recording a meeting if the Chair feels that the activity is disrupting the meeting.*

### 2. **Apologies for Absence**

*To receive any apologies for absence.*

### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

*Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:*

*(1) the type of interest concerned:*

- *Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or*
- *Non-Pecuniary Interest (including personal or prejudicial interest)*

*(2) the nature of the interest concerned.*

*If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.*

4. **Minutes - Overview and Scrutiny Board - 7 July 2026** 7 - 12
- To receive the minutes of the previous meeting.*
5. **Executive Forward Work Programme** 13 - 26
- To note.*
- Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider the Executive Forward Work Programme and to seek further information if appropriate.*
- 5.1 Forward Plan Actions Progress
- To note.*
6. **Scrutiny Chairs Update**
- To note.*
- Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider updates from the Chairs of the following Scrutiny Panels:*
- Adult Social Care and Health  
Children's  
Place*
7. **Service Overview Presentation** 27 - 46
- To note.*
- Services overviews will be delivered by the Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services, the Corporate Director for Finance and the Head of the Chief Executive's Office.*
8. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2026/2027** 47 - 54
- For decision.*
- For OSB to consider and agree its work programme for the 2026/2027 municipal year.*
9. **Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme 2026-2027** 55 - 60
- For decision.*

*The Board will be presented with the proposed scrutiny work programme for 2026-2027.*

10. **Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel - Violence Against Women and Girls** 61 - 86

*For decision.*

*The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel will present the Panel's draft final report.*

11. **Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Outturn - 2025/26** 87 - 106

*For discussion.*

*The Director of Finance and the Head of Finance and Investments will be in attendance to discuss the prudential indicators report that was considered at Executive on 8 July 2026.*

12. **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 21 July 2026

#### MEMBERSHIP

Councillors L Young (Chair), T Mohan (Vice-Chair), D Branson, E Clynch, D Coupe, J Ewan, J Kabuye, L Lewis, J McTigue, I Morrish, J Rush, M Saunders, Z Uddin, G Wilson, J Young, C Cooke - Elected Mayor and N Walker

#### **Assistance in accessing information**

The documents referred to on this agenda may be downloaded from the Council's Website: [Committee structure](#) | [Middlesbrough Council](#)

**Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information, such as alternative formats, please contact Scott Bonner/ Tanya Harrison, 01642 729708/ 01642 728411, [scott\\_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk)/[tanya\\_harrison@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:tanya_harrison@middlesbrough.gov.uk)**



## INFORMATION ABOUT MIDDLESBROUGH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### Venue Accessibility

All Committee Rooms are located on the first floor of Municipal Buildings (Town Hall). There is restricted disabled access to the first floor via a lift.

There is no on-site parking at Municipal Buildings. A map of town centre parking is attached below. A full map of town centre parking can be found on the Council's website: [Middlesbrough town centre parking plan - October 2025](#)



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This document was classified as: OFFICIAL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on Tuesday 7 July 2026.

**PRESENT:** Councillors L Young (Chair), T Mohan (Vice-Chair), E Clynch, J Ewan, J Kabuye, L Lewis, I Morrish, J Rush, M Saunders, Z Uddin, G Wilson and J Young

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

**OFFICERS:** S Bonner, T Harrison, A Humble, A Johnstone and E Scollay

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors D Branson, D Coupe and J McTigue

### 26/91 **WELCOME, FIRE EVACUATION AND RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and described the fire evacuation procedure.

The Chair also welcomed T. Harrison to the meeting and advised she would also be providing support to the Board as a Democratic Services Officer.

The Chair proposed to defer items nine and 10, namely the service overview of Legal and Corporate Services and the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2026/27.

The Board was advised the deferral was necessary to allow the Mayor to be present during those items.

**ORDERED** that agenda items nine and 10 be deferred to OSB's meeting of 29 July 2026.

### 26/92 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### 26/93 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 15 APRIL 2026**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 15 April 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### 26/94 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair presented the Executive Forward Plan as detailed at Appendix one of the report and invited questions from Members. A Member queried whether, going forward, the Executive Forward Work Programme could identify which items had been decided and which items had yet to be decided.

The Democratic Services Officer agreed to review the report in time for the next meeting of OSB.

**ORDERED** that the Executive Forward Plan be reviewed to include item decision status.

### 26/95 **FORWARD PLAN ACTIONS PROGRESS**

The Democratic Services Officer advised Members that a service response relating to the Corporate Food Poverty Policy had been emailed to the Board.

The Board was also advised that, in relation to a query about Commercial Waste Collection, this would not be explored until the implementation of the domestic waste processes.

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In relation to a query about a reduction in prices for green waste, the service area had advised this was scheduled to be considered by Executive in the near future.

**NOTED.**

26/96

**SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE**

The Chair invited each Scrutiny Panel Chair to provide their Chair's update.

The Chair of OSB presented the Place Scrutiny Panel's update. At the Panel's last meeting the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing presented an overview of the Regeneration and Housing directorate along with an overview of the Environment, Communities and Culture directorate. As part of its discussions around its 2026/27 work programme, the Panel was advised to select two topics. One topic addressed housing issues, with a focus on Selective Landlord Licensing and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's), with the other topic looking at future plans for transforming the town centre. It was also agreed that a short review into fly tipping would be undertaken. The Panel agreed to continue its review into Middlesbrough's plans for its bicentenary.

The Chair of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel advised Members that the Panel's first meeting had taken place on 23 June. At that meeting an overview had been provided by representatives from the North East and Cumbria Integrated Care Board as well as from Adult Social Care and Public Health services. The Panel agreed to undertake one review from a Public Health remit and one from an Adult Social Care remit. Several topics were shortlisted, and further information had been requested to enable the work programme to be decided. At its next meeting on 21 July the Panel planned to agree its work programme and consider its draft final report into Violence Against Women and Girls. It would also receive information relating to how Adult Social Care was utilising Artificial Intelligence.

The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel advised Members the initial meeting of the Panel had been delayed due to the recent Ofsted inspection. It was confirmed that the Council expected to have sight of the inspection report on 21 July.

**NOTED**

26/97

**FINAL REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL - OUT OF AREA SPECIALIST PROVISION**

The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel was invited to present the Panel's Final Report into Out of Area Specialist Provision.

The Board was advised the investigation sought to understand why the Council used out of area specialist provision both from a special educational needs (SEND) and complex needs social care perspective.

The Chair stated the report had derived several conclusions, which included the Panel's satisfaction there were sound processes in place where out of area provision was required and that Middlesbrough had the lowest use of independent special schools in the Tees Valley.

The recommendations contained in the report were outlined for the Panel:

- a) That the Panel be provided with regular updates (every six months) on Children's Residential Placements using key performance indicators to benchmark and monitor improvements in reducing the use of out of area provision – including distance of placement from home, length of time in placement, cost of placement and the long-term solution plans together with targets to achieve this.
- b) That the revised SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2026-2030, which should align with the Government's SEND reforms, be presented to a future meeting of the Children's Scrutiny Panel, within the 2026/27 Municipal Year, setting out how this would impact on Middlesbrough.
- c) That Children's Services introduced a structured Workforce Development Programme across Children's Social Care Teams, aligned to the SEND and inclusion model, and that this be presented to a future meeting of the Children's Scrutiny Panel within the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

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- d) That the Panel be provided with an update, within the next six months, on the Regional Care Co-operative pilots, setting out how this would shape Middlesbrough's transitional arrangements to a Regional Care Co-operative.
- e) That, in the shorter term, Children's Services continued to develop a regionalised approach, working with relevant partners in the region, to attract new foster carers and enhance training opportunities for new and current carers to improve local sufficiency, and that the Children's Scrutiny Panel be provided with an update on activity within the next six months.

The Chair thanked all those who participated in the review and invited questions from the Board.

A question was raised about why Middlesbrough had a higher percentage of children with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) (6%) than the national average (5.3%). It was clarified the Panel had not explored this issue and it was agreed that a response from the service area would be sought.

A Member queried what action was being taken to bring down the number of children classed as looked after. It was, again, clarified that the Panel did not explore this issue as part of its review and that the service area would be approached for a response.

Following a query about the nature of EHCP's the Chair of the Panel clarified they were issued to pupils who required additional support than that available through Special Educational Needs support. It was also clarified there was an assessment process that needed to be followed to issue an EHCP.

A Member drew the Board's attention to page 44, paragraph 37, of the report and references to 84 children looked after outside Middlesbrough. The Member queried what the total cost was for placing children outside of the area and whether the Council had an open budget for this activity. The Director of Finance clarified budgets in this area were not broken down for out of area placements. The Chief Executive further clarified that processes in place to understand young people's position in the care system were as sophisticated as they could be and that there were times the Council had no option but to take a young person into the care system. It was also clarified that while budgets for this area had growth built into them this was not unlimited. Instead, budgets were set which included forecasting between three to five years. Budgeting for care was made more complicated if external providers were required. It was stated the most effective way to reduce some care costs was to change the provider-based market. The Chief Executive stated that the introduction of the Regional Care Co-Operative was a benefit in this regard.

It was also queried whether Artificial Intelligence tools were used to predict young people's entry into the care system. It was clarified that demand modelling was used rather than Artificial Intelligence tools. It was also noted the Council's Data Team had received training on the relevant data modelling tools used for this purpose.

The Chair of OSB asked whether the Panel had received sufficient input from relevant Executive Members and Senior Management. The Chair of the Children's Scrutiny Panel commented that officers had provided a great deal of information and that the Panel would always welcome further input from Executive Members.

**ORDERED** that:

1. Children's Services be approached for a response to the query regarding Middlesbrough having a higher percentage of children requiring an EHCP than the national average.
2. Children's Services be approached for a response to the query in relation to what actions were being taken to reduce the number of children looked after in Middlesbrough.
3. That the recommendations contained in the Final Report be endorsed and referred to Executive.

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The Chair advised Members that the Terms of Reference for the Board's short review into the role of Faith and Belief groups in civic life had been agreed by OSB at its meeting on 15 April 2026.

However, following discussions with Democratic Services, the Terms of Reference had been refined to ensure the review was focussed and addressed the issue of how Council services engaged with Faith and Belief groups in Middlesbrough.

The revised Terms of Reference were submitted to the Board:

1. To understand how faith and belief groups interact with Council services, partnerships, and community cohesion.
2. To examine how Middlesbrough Council considers religion or belief in decision-making and service delivery, including governance and engagement.
3. To identify strengths, gaps, and risks in current approaches, including issues of inclusion, fairness, safeguarding, and any barriers faced by different faith and belief communities in engaging with the Council.

**AGREED** that the revised Terms of Reference for the Board's short review into Council engagement with Faith and Belief Groups be accepted.

26/99 **SERVICE OVERVIEW PRESENTATION**

DEFERRED.

26/100 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2026/2027**

DEFERRED

26/101 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE YEAR-END 2025/26**

The Chair invited the Head of the Chief Executive's Office to present the report.

The Board heard the report had been considered by Executive at its meeting on 10th June 2026. The report set out how effectively the Council was delivering activity against each of the current Council Plan priorities and its underpinning work plan activities.

Members were also advised the report would be the last in its current format. Going forward, performance information and financial information would be presented in a single report.

The report contained four appendices which included proposed amendments to Executive actions at year end 2025-2026, Council Plan Workplan progress at year end 2025/26 and the Strategic Risk Register progress at year end 2025/26.

The appendices were summarised for the Board and questions were invited.

A Member drew the Board's attention to p127 of the agenda pack (appendix 1 – Executive Action proposed amendments at year-end 2025/26). In relation to the entry entitled "disposal options for Newham Hall", it was queried if there was any further information on this matter.

It was clarified that queries on this matter should be directed to the relevant service area.

**ORDERED** that:

1. The relevant service area be approached for further information regarding the disposal of Newham Hall action referenced in appendix 1 of the report.
2. That the information presented be noted.

26/102 **2025/26 REVENUE & CAPITAL YEAR END OUTTURN**

The Chair invited the Director of Finance to present the report.

Members were advised quarterly update reports were always considered by Executive prior to being submitted to OSB. There had been minor updates in the intervening period between

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Executive and OSB, which did not have any substantive impact on the report, its conclusions or decisions.

The report submitted to OSB had been considered and approved by Executive on 10 June 2026. The report had shown an overspend of £1.793million after the application of contingencies and that reserves had improved. While overspent, the position was a significant improvement on the 2025/26 quarter one forecast of an overspend of £4.5 million.

The reported overspend was largely attributed to demand led services, notably children's social care, which had experienced an overspend of £7.45 million. However, there had been underspending in central budgets.

The dedicated schools grant showed a cumulative deficit of £29million following an in-year deficit of £7.1million. While 90% of the Dedicated Schools Grant commitment was provided by government, the Council had budgeted for 10%.

Members were also advised of an underspend in the Capital programme of approximately £30m and that work was being carried out to prevent further slippage in this area.

The Director of Finance invited questions from the Board.

A Member queried how much the Council owed in loans. It was clarified that information would be contained in the Statement of Accounts and the Treasury Management report which was due to be considered by Executive on 8 July 2026. Overall, the Council was not overborrowing. It was agreed that the Director of Finance would bring the Treasury Management report to the next meeting of OSB to provide answers to the question posed.

The Member further queried how much the Council was spending on interest associated with Council loans. It was clarified that approximately £13 million had been budgeted for capital costs. For 2025/26 the Council was spending approximately 8% against this budget and the Director of Finance stated this would not go above 10%. It was also commented this was a large budget that needed effective management.

The Chief Executive stated that, while the numbers being discussed were large, there were established prudential indicators, scrutinised by CIPFA, which dictated sensible levels of borrowing. It was stated that Middlesbrough was comparatively comfortable in this regard as other authorities had run into difficulty with external agencies.

A conversation took place during which comments were made that the Council needed to maintain its payments on borrowing.

A Member drew the Board's attention to page three of appendix seven (Revised Capital Programme Forecasts) and the entry relating to Section 106 Marton West Beck. It was agreed that the Director of Finance would provide the Member with detailed costs on the project.

A question was posed about the costs to the Council following changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations which allowed elected Members to join the pension scheme. It was clarified this was difficult to quantify as it was unknown how many Members had joined the scheme.

When this figure was known the cost to the Council would be more accurate. However, it was commented that the cost to the Council would be minimal and was not a concern for the Council financially.

**ORDERED that**

1. The Director of Finance present the Treasury Management Report to the next meeting of OSB on 29 July 2026 to address questions of Council borrowing.
2. The Director of Finance provide detailed costs associated with the entry Section 106 Marton West Beck in Appendix seven (Revised Capital Programme).
3. That the information presented be noted.

None.

|                              |                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b> |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Report of:</b>                 | Chief Executive – Erik Scollay |
| <b>Relevant Executive Member:</b> | Not applicable                 |
| <b>Submitted to:</b>              | Overview and Scrutiny Board    |
| <b>Date:</b>                      | 29 July 2026                   |
| <b>Title:</b>                     | Executive Forward Plan         |
| <b>Report for:</b>                | Discussion                     |
| <b>Status:</b>                    | Public                         |
| <b>Council Plan priority:</b>     | Delivering Best Value          |
| <b>Key decision:</b>              | Not applicable                 |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Not applicable                 |
| <b>Subject to call in?</b>        | Not applicable                 |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Not applicable                 |

|                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Proposed decision(s)</b>                                                                                                    |
| It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider and Notes the content of the Executive Forward Work Programme. |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Executive summary</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>OSB has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny and, if appropriate, it can either undertake the work itself or delegate to individual Scrutiny Panels.</p> <p>One of the main duties of OSB is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive and decide whether value can be added by Scrutiny considering the matter in advance of any decision being made.</p> <p>This would not negate a Non-Executive Member's ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.</p> |

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

1.1 To make OSB aware of items on the Executive Forward Work Programme.

| Our ambitions                   | Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A successful and ambitious town | All aims and ambitions will be contained in individual decisions.                             |
| A healthy Place                 |                                                                                               |
| Safe and resilient communities  |                                                                                               |
| Delivering best value           |                                                                                               |

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board

- Consider and note the content of the Executive Forward Work Programme.

## 3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 OSB has delegated powers to manage the work of Scrutiny and, if appropriate, it can either undertake the work itself or delegate to individual Scrutiny Panels.

3.2 One of the main duties of OSB is to hold the Executive to account by considering the forthcoming decisions of the Executive and decide whether value can be added by Scrutiny considering the matter in advance of any decision being made.

3.3 This would not negate a Non-Executive Member's ability to call-in a decision after it has been made.

## 4. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

4.1 Not applicable

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

5.1 No other options are submitted as part of the report.

## 6. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

| Topic                                              | Impact                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial (including procurement and Social Value) | Relevant Impact will be detailed in individual decisions. |
| Legal                                              |                                                           |
| Risk                                               |                                                           |

|                                                                       |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion      |  |
| Reducing Poverty                                                      |  |
| Climate Change / Environmental                                        |  |
| Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers |  |
| Data Protection                                                       |  |

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

| Action                                                                                                    | Responsible Officer | Deadline           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Implement any decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Board with regard to the Executive Forward Work Plan. | Relevant Officer    | As directed by OSB |

### Appendices

|   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Executive Forward Work Plan |
| 2 |                             |
| 3 |                             |

### Background papers

| Body | Report title | Date |
|------|--------------|------|
|      |              |      |

**Contact:** Scott Bonner/ Tanya Harrison  
**Email:** [scott\\_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/](mailto:scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/)  
[tanya\\_harrison@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:tanya_harrison@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

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## Executive Forward Plan - 1 April 2026 to 31 May 2027

FOR THE PERIOD 21 JULY 2026 TO 31 MAY 2027

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward       | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                       | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy        | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | To be<br>decided?    | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                   |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Mayor               |                                                                                                                                          |                                               |                         |              |                     |                      |                                                                                               |
| I026097                 | Risk and Opportunity Management Policy Triennial refresh of the Council's risk and opportunities management policy and its risk appetite | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Healthy Place to Live |              | Public              | <b>To be decided</b> | 1) The Mayor<br><i>Ann-Marie Johnstone</i> <i>Ann-Marie_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>    |
| I027083<br>All<br>Wards | Service Response: OSB Short Review of the Council's Approach to Poverty                                                                  | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       |                         |              | Public              | <b>To be decided</b> | 1) The Mayor<br><i>Erik Scollay, Chief Executive</i> <i>erik_scollay@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward    | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                                                                                         | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy        | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | To set out the service response to the recommendations within the short review of the Council's approach to poverty                                                                                        |                                               |                         |              |                     |                         |                                                                                            |
| I027206<br>All Wards | 2025 Middlesbrough Resident Survey<br>The report sets out the findings from the 2025 Resident Survey, highlights movement since the survey was last completed in 2023 and sets out the planned next steps. | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | Delivering Best Value   |              | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor<br><i>Victoria Holmes</i><br><i>Victoria_Holmes@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>      |
| I027216              | Partnerships Strategy<br>To set a strategic framework that will shape how the Council will work with Partners to deliver an agreed vision for the town                                                     | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Healthy Place to Live |              | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor<br><i>Ann-Marie Johnstone</i> <i>Ann-Marie_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward                             | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                                     | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy                   | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                               | and their shared<br>legal obligations                                                                                                                  |                                               |                                    |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Executive Member - Adult Social Care</b>   |                                                                                                                                                        |                                               |                                    |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| I027204<br>All<br>Wards                       | Scrutiny Response<br>to Violence against<br>Women & Girls<br>To approve<br>overview report and<br>action plan                                          | Executive<br>7 Oct 2026                       | Safe and Resilient<br>Communities  | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 3) Executive Member for Adult<br>Social Care<br><i>Ruth Musicka</i><br><i>ruth_musicka@middlesbrough</i><br><i>.gov.uk</i> , <i>Claire Moore</i><br><i>claire_moore@middlesbrough</i><br><i>.gov.uk</i> |
| I026403<br>All<br>Wards                       | Homeless Needs<br>Assessment and<br>Strategy<br>To approve the<br>homeless needs<br>assessment,<br>strategy and<br>proposed<br>commissioning<br>model. | Executive<br>11 Nov 2026                      | A Successful and<br>Ambitious Town | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 3) Executive Member for Adult<br>Social Care<br><i>Martin Picken</i><br><i>martin_picken@middlesbrough</i><br><i>.gov.uk</i>                                                                            |
| <b>Executive Member - Children's Services</b> |                                                                                                                                                        |                                               |                                    |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| I025506<br>All<br>Wards                       | Special<br>Guardianship Order<br>Policy                                                                                                                | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Healthy Place to<br>Live         | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 4) Executive Member for<br>Children's Services, 7)<br>Executive Member for Finance                                                                                                                      |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward                                          | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy                | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                            | To approve the proposed Special Guardianship Policy                                                                                                                                                                              |                                               |                                 |              |                     |                         | <i>Annabel Bates, Exec Director Children's Services<br/>Annabel_bates@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>                                                                                    |
| <b>Executive Member - Development</b>                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                               |                                 |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| I025817                                                    | Commercial Waste Collection and Disposal<br>For Exec to approve the requirement for commercial waste collections and disposal from council buildings to be contracted out.<br><br>No ward affected as this is internal buildings | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Successful and Ambitious Town | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 5) Executive Member for Development<br><i>Katie Bargewell<br/>Katie_Bargewell@middlesbrough.gov.uk, Sam Gilmore, Head of Economic Growth<br/>Sam_Gilmore@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> |
| <b>Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                               |                                 |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| I027203<br>All Wards                                       | Cremator Refurbishment Programme<br>To seek approval for the refurbishment and upgrade of cremator                                                                                                                               | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | Safe and Resilient Communities  | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 6) Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability<br><i>Katie Bargewell<br/>Katie_Bargewell@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>                                                         |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward                 | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                                                                                   | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy                | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   | equipment and infrastructure to ensure continued compliance with environmental legislation, maintain service resilience, improve operational efficiency, and extend the asset life of the cremators. |                                               |                                 |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1026406<br>Coulby<br>Newham       | Stainton Way Highway improvements<br>To consider the infrastructure improvement proposals at the junctions of Dalby Way and Kings Academy on Stainton Way                                            | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Successful and Ambitious Town | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 6) Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability<br><i>Craig Cowley</i><br><i>craig_cowley@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> , <i>Chris Orr</i><br><i>Chris_Orr@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> |
| <b>Executive Member - Finance</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                               |                                 |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1026244<br>All<br>Wards           | Quarter One 2026/7 Integrated Performance and Finance Forecast year end Outturn                                                                                                                      | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Healthy Place to Live         | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive Member for Finance<br><i>Andrew Humble, Director - Finance and Transformation</i><br><i>andrew_humble@middlesbrou</i>                                      |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward       | Subject / Decision                                                                           | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy               | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         | Decision                                                                                     |                                               |                                |              |                     |                         | <i>gh.gov.uk, Erik Scollay, Chief Executive<br/>erik_scollay@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>                                                               |
| I026249<br>All<br>Wards | 2027/28 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2027/28 to 2030/31 Update Decision      | Executive<br>7 Oct 2026                       | Delivering Best Value          | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive Member for Finance<br><i>Andrew Humble, Director - Finance and Transformation<br/>andrew_humble@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> |
| I027030<br>All<br>Wards | Welfare Strategy To approve the proposed amends to the Welfare Strategy.                     | Executive<br>7 Oct 2026                       | Safe and Resilient Communities | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 7) Executive Member for Finance<br><i>Janette Savage, Head of Resident and Business Support<br/>Janette_Savage@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>             |
| I026174<br>All<br>Wards | Procurement Strategy 2027 - 2030 To present the updated Procurement Strategy for 2027 - 2030 | Executive<br>11 Nov 2026                      | Delivering Best Value          |              | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 7) Executive Member for Finance<br><i>Claire Walker<br/>claire_walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>                                                      |
| I026245                 | Quarter Two 2026/7 Integrated                                                                | Executive<br>9 Dec 2026                       | A Healthy Place to Live        | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive Member for Finance                                                                                                       |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward       | Subject / Decision                                                                                        | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy           | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All<br>Wards            | Performance and<br>Finance Forecast<br>year end Outturn<br>Decision                                       |                                               |                            |              |                     |                         | <i>Andrew Humble, Director -<br/>Finance and Transformation<br/>andrew_humble@middlesbrou<br/>gh.gov.uk, Erik Scollay, Chief<br/>Executive<br/>erik_scollay@middlesbrough.g<br/>ov.uk</i>                                                     |
| I026264<br>All<br>Wards | 2027/28 Draft<br>Budget and Medium<br>Term Financial Plan<br>(MTFP) 2027/28 to<br>2030/31<br>Decision.    | Executive<br>9 Dec 2026                       | Delivering Best Value      | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive<br>Member for Finance<br><i>Andrew Humble, Director -<br/>Finance and Transformation<br/>andrew_humble@middlesbrou<br/>gh.gov.uk</i>                                                                               |
| I026246<br>All<br>Wards | Quarter Three<br>2026/7 Integrated<br>Performance and<br>Finance Forecast<br>year end Outturn<br>Decision | Executive<br>3 Feb 2027                       | A Healthy Place to<br>Live | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive<br>Member for Finance<br><i>Andrew Humble, Director -<br/>Finance and Transformation<br/>andrew_humble@middlesbrou<br/>gh.gov.uk, Erik Scollay, Chief<br/>Executive<br/>erik_scollay@middlesbrough.g<br/>ov.uk</i> |
| I026265<br>All<br>Wards | 2027/28 Budget and<br>Medium Term<br>Financial Plan<br>(MTFP) 2027/28 to<br>2030/31                       | Executive<br>3 Feb 2027                       | Delivering Best Value      | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive<br>Member for Finance<br><i>Andrew Humble, Director -<br/>Finance and Transformation<br/>andrew_humble@middlesbrou<br/>gh.gov.uk</i>                                                                               |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward                        | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                           | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy               | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | Decision.                                                                                                                                    |                                               |                                |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| I025612<br>All<br>Wards                  | Corporate Food Poverty Policy<br>To approve the Corporate Food Poverty policy                                                                | Executive<br>17 Mar 2027                      | A Healthy Place to Live        | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 7) Executive Member for Finance<br><i>Janette Savage, Head of Resident and Business Support</i><br><i>Janette_Savage@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>                                                                                        |
| I026247<br>All<br>Wards                  | Quarter Four 2026/27 Integrated Performance and Finance Year end Outturn Decision                                                            | Executive<br>14 Apr 2027                      | A Healthy Place to Live        | KEY          | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 1) The Mayor, 7) Executive Member for Finance<br><i>Andrew Humble, Director - Finance and Transformation</i><br><i>andrew_humble@middlesbrough.gov.uk, Erik Scollay, Chief Executive</i><br><i>erik_scollay@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i> |
| <b>Executive Member - Neighbourhoods</b> |                                                                                                                                              |                                               |                                |              |                     |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| I025535<br>All<br>Wards                  | Update on implementing the Neighbourhoods Model<br>This report is for information and is intended to provide an update on the progress being | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | Safe and Resilient Communities |              | Public              | <b>To be decided</b>    | 8) Executive Member for Neighbourhoods<br><i>Marion Walker, Head of Stronger Communities</i><br><i>marion_walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>                                                                                            |

| Ref No.<br>/ Ward                       | Subject / Decision                                                                                                                                                    | Decision<br>Maker and<br>Decision Due<br>Date | Council Strategy           | Key /<br>PFP | Likely<br>Exemption                        | Background<br>documents | Member /<br>Officer Contact                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                         | made on the<br>neighbourhood<br>plans which is part<br>of the<br>neighbourhood<br>model.                                                                              |                                               |                            |              |                                            |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Executive Member - Public Health</b> |                                                                                                                                                                       |                                               |                            |              |                                            |                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1026243<br>All<br>Wards                 | Park House<br>Accommodation<br>Executive approval<br>for the business<br>case associated<br>with locating Public<br>Health Services and<br>temporary<br>accommodation | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       |                            | KEY          | Public                                     | <b>To be decided</b>    | 9) Executive Member for<br>Public Health<br><i>Sam Gilmore, Head of<br/>Economic Growth<br/>Sam_Gilmore@middlesbrough<br/>.gov.uk, Kerry Melling<br/>kerry_melling@middlesbrough<br/>.gov.uk</i> |
| 1027205<br>All<br>Wards                 | Substance Use<br>Services - Delivery<br>Model<br>Exec decision on<br>proposed new<br>delivery model                                                                   | Executive<br>2 Sep 2026                       | A Healthy Place to<br>Live | KEY          | Fully exempt<br><i>to be<br/>confirmed</i> | <b>To be decided</b>    | 9) Executive Member for<br>Public Health<br><i>Jonathan Bowden<br/>Jonathan_Bowden@middlesbr<br/>ough.gov.uk</i>                                                                                 |

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# Chief Executive's Department

## Overview and Scrutiny Board 7 July 2026

Erik Scollay and Ann-Marie Johnstone



# CEX Department

Chief Executive: Erik Scollay

Head of Chief Executive's Department: Ann-Marie Johnstone

Functions:

- Performance (data, analytics, corporate performance, corporate strategy and policy, continuous improvement)
- Compliance (corporate governance, health and safety, risk, statutory information requests e.g. FOI, complaints, business continuity, information governance)
- Data Protection Officer
- Chief Executive's Office

# Priorities 2026/2027

Our core priority in 2026/7 is embedding a high-performing, insight-led Council:

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- Implement integrated performance, finance and risk management
- Re-establish Directorate planning framework (golden thread)
- Deliver Information Strategy & improve data quality
- Embed Continuous Improvement culture and capacity
- Revise the Programme and Project Management Framework to align with the refreshed policy
- Strengthen governance, compliance and assurance frameworks

# 2026/7 activities

- Corporate Performance and Financial Management:
  - Integrated Performance & Financial Management framework rollout
  - Creating and embedding Directorate Plans.
- Organisational improvement:
  - Establish Continuous Improvement Team
  - Continuous Improvement policy and early reviews
- Data & insight:
  - Information Strategy - delivery
  - Data quality improvements and Business Intelligence development.
- Governance & compliance:
  - Governance & Assurance Policy implementation
  - Programme and Project Management Framework refresh
  - GDPR audit programme rollout
  - Refreshing the approach to Risk Management.

# Challenges

## **Demand and complexity pressures**

- Rising complexity of FOI/SARs (AI-driven requests)
- Increased data protection and complaints workload

## **Embedding organisational change**

- Moving from siloed transformation → integrated continuous improvement approach at the heart of everything we do
- Strengthening the link from Council Plan → services → appraisals

## **Data and information governance**

- Data quality and accessibility inconsistencies
- Legacy records, storage challenges and records management improvements

## **Delivering measurable outcomes**

- Need to shift focus from outputs → outcomes and impact

# Corporate Performance Measures

- *Council Plan / Corporate KPIs*
  - Continuous Improvement Plan delivery (100% target)
  - Budget performance (within approved budget)
  - Income delivery (~100% target)
- *The Key Department KPIs (2026/27)*

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|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Customer</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ≥90% statutory requests (FOI/EIR/SAR) on time</li> <li>- ≤5% upheld complaints (ICO/LGSCO)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Business</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% service plans completed</li> <li>- Integrated reporting implemented (Q1)</li> <li>- ≥90% project compliance (PPM)</li> <li>- ≥95% Health and Safety audits/inspections completed on time</li> <li>- ≥95% RIDDOR compliance</li> <li>- 100% BC plans current and tested</li> </ul> |
| <b>People</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ≥95% GDPR training completion</li> <li>- Continuous Improvement capacity established</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Finance</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Balanced budget delivery</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

# Questions?

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# Legal and Corporate Services

## Overview and Scrutiny Board

7 July 2026

Charlotte Benjamin



# Directorate

| Area                         | Role               | Name / Status      |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Directorate                  | Corporate Director | Charlotte Benjamin |
| Legal Services               | Head of Service    | Ann-Marie Wilson   |
| Democratic Services          | Head of Service    | Vacant post        |
| Human Resources              | Head of Service    | Nicola Finnegan    |
| Marketing and Communications | Head of Service    | Andrew Glover      |
| ICT and Digital              | Head of Service    | Lynsey Zipfell     |



# Focus

- Governance
- Legal compliance
- Workforce
- Technology and Digital
- Marketing and Communications



# Priorities 2026/27

- Maintain lawful decision-making
- Provide legal support across the organisation
- Deliver People Strategy
- Deliver Digital Strategy
- Maintain governance frameworks
- Deliver emerging communications strategy



# Activity 2026/27

- Legal and governance support
- Committee and decision-making processes
- Preparation for May 2027 elections
- Workforce planning roll out
- Progressing digital overview and key system improvements
- Communicating Council Plan priorities



# Challenges

- Responding to and preparing for emerging legislative and regulatory changes
- Increased demand
- Complex casework
- Financial pressures
- Recruitment in some specialist legal roles



# Risks We Manage

- Failure to respond effectively to legislative change
- Cyber security
- Unlawful decisions
- Workforce capacity
- Member and officer alignment



# Proposed Performance Measures to Track Effectiveness and Contribution to Council Plan

- Customer      timeliness and accessibility
- Business      governance compliance
- People          turnover, engagement and satisfaction
- Finance        budget management



# Finance Challenges

- Workforce costs
- ICT and cyber costs
- Legal demand



# Key Messages

- Supports the effective operation of the Council
- Ensures lawful decision-making
- Governance compliance
- Workforce support
- Digital capability



# Questions



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|                              |                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b> |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                   |                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report of:</b>                 | Democratic Services                                                        |
| <b>Relevant Executive Member:</b> | Not Applicable                                                             |
| <b>Submitted to:</b>              | Overview and Scrutiny Board                                                |
| <b>Date:</b>                      | 29 July 2026                                                               |
| <b>Title:</b>                     | Setting the Work Programme 2026-2027, for the Overview and Scrutiny Board. |
| <b>Report for:</b>                | Decision                                                                   |
| <b>Status:</b>                    | Public                                                                     |
| <b>Council Plan priority:</b>     | Delivering Best Value                                                      |
| <b>Key decision:</b>              | Not applicable                                                             |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Not applicable                                                             |
| <b>Subject to call in?</b>        | Not applicable                                                             |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Not applicable                                                             |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Proposed decision(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| That the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider and agree its work programme for the 2026/2027 municipal year. Once agreed, the work programme will be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Board, for approval. |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Executive summary</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider its work programme for the 2026/2027 municipal year.</p> <p>The primary function of a Scrutiny Panel is to influence the policies and decisions of the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services. It does this by gathering evidence on issues that affect local residents and making informed recommendations based on its findings.</p> <p>Work programmes provide structure to the activity of the scrutiny panel and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work. The Panel is asked to select two Scrutiny</p> |

Investigation Topics and note the standard agenda items for updates throughout the municipal year.

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to ensure that topics agreed for inclusion:

- Affect a group of people living within the Middlesbrough area.
- Relate to a service, event, or issue in which the Council has an influence.
- Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or Scrutiny Panels have considered during the last 12 months.
- Do not relate to an individual service complaint.
- Do not replate matters dealt with by another Council Committee unless the issue deals with procedure.

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

1.1 Managing an effective work programme is essential to the success of scrutiny panels, as it assists with planning and managing the workload, focussing on the Council's ambitions and aims to assist with maximising impact on the Council's performance and outcomes for residents.

1.2 Scrutiny ensures that the decisions taken by the Council and its partners are appropriate. It creates an open, transparent way for members to shape, question, evaluate and challenge policies, decisions, and performance.

1.3 Scrutiny investigations are usually carried out over the course of several meetings, which consider information from relevant sources and examine current policies and practices. At the end of the exercise, a report is prepared which summarises the scrutiny panel's findings and puts forward recommendations.

1.4 The purpose of the report is to agree a work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Board, ensuring Scrutiny Investigation Topics and standard updates support the delivery of the ambitions of the Middlesbrough Council Plan 2024-27:

| <b>Our ambitions</b>                   | <b>Aims</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A successful and ambitious town</b> | <i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>attract and grow businesses to increase employment opportunities.</i></li> <li>- <i>Improve attainment in education and skills.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ensure housing provision meets local demand</i></li> </ul>                      |
| <b>A healthy Place</b>                 | <i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities.</i></li> <li>- <i>protect and improve our environment.</i></li> <li>- <i>promote inclusivity for all.</i></li> <li>- <i>reduce poverty</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Safe and resilient communities</b>  | <i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>support adults to be independent for longer.</i></li> <li>- <i>improve transport and digital connectivity.</i></li> <li>- <i>promote new ideas and community initiatives.</i></li> </ul>                                          |

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                              | - <i>reduce crime and anti-social behaviour</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Delivering best value</b> | <i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>ensure robust and effective corporate governance.</i></li> <li>- <i>set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability</i></li> </ul> |

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board agrees a Work Programme, for approval by Overview and Scrutiny Board by;

1. Noting the standard updates / presentations that will be scheduled throughout the municipal year.
2. Selecting two Scrutiny Investigation Topics, taking into consideration the suggestions from stakeholders and additional suggestions from panel members.

## 3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 Under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities have a responsibility of community leadership and a power to secure the effective promotion of community well-being. Therefore, in addition to the scrutiny panel's generally recognised powers (of holding the Executive to account, reviewing service provision, developing policy, considering budget plans and performance and financial monitoring), panels also have the power to consider any matters which are not the responsibility of the Council, but which affect the local authority or the inhabitants of its area. For example, nationally, local authorities have undertaken scrutiny work on issues such as post-office closures, rural bus services, policing matters and flood defence schemes.

## 4. Background and relevant information

4.1 Middlesbrough Council now operates three Scrutiny Panels for 2026/2027 in addition to its Overview and Scrutiny Board:

- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel
- Children's Services Scrutiny Panel
- Place Scrutiny Panel

4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Board are empowered to undertake review topics in the same way as Scrutiny Panels if they choose. For the 2026/27 municipal year OSB will continue to lead on pre-decision scrutiny by scrutinising the Forward Work Programme more thoroughly and by inviting Executive Members to meetings it will exercise its Overview Function.

4.3 Topics considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board in 2025/2026 are listed below for Member's information.

### **Scrutiny Investigation Topics**

| Completed                                                        | Ongoing                        | Not Started |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| (Task & Finish) Community Cohesion Council's Approach to Poverty | Faith and Belief in Civic Life | NA          |

### **Updates / Presentations**

| OSB Remit: |
|------------|
| NA         |
|            |
|            |
|            |

4.4 At the start of every Municipal Year, Scrutiny Panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year. The Panel is asked to select topics for at least two Scrutiny Investigations and to note the standard updates that will be scheduled as part of the Work Programme.

4.5 As part of the process for establishing the panel's work programme, Democratic Services gather information and views from several sources. Following an annual consultation exercise which ran between 4 March 2026 and 8 May 2026, several topics were suggested which are listed in Appendix 1. Context and rationale for the suggestions have been detailed where this was provided. Members are advised that the list is not exhaustive and that additional topics can be added and considered at the scrutiny panel meeting.

4.6 When considering topics for the work programme, Members need to consider the following to prioritise issues where scrutiny can make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development:

- Does the issue affect a majority of the population of Middlesbrough or specific area?
- Is the issue strategic and significant
- Will the scrutiny activity add value to the Council's overall performance?
- Is it likely to lead to effective outcomes?
- Will it be duplicating some other work?
- Is it an issue of concern to partners and others?
- Is it an issue of community concern?
- Are there adequate resources to do the activity well?
- Is the scrutiny activity timely?

4.7 In addition to the selected Scrutiny Investigation Topics, Panel Members are asked to note the following standard agenda items which will be scheduled for updates, throughout the municipal year:

|    | Update                                                            |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Executive Member Portfolio Updates (scheduled)                    |
| 2  | The Council's Approach to Poverty (to be scheduled)               |
| 3  | Community Cohesion (to be scheduled)                              |
| 4. | Quarterly Performance and Financial Information (to be scheduled) |

## 5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

Ward Members were invited to submit topic suggestions as part of the consultation.

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

No other alternatives are put forward as part of the report.

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

| Topic                                                                 | Impact                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial (including procurement and Social Value)                    | Details of Financial impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.                                                             |
| Legal                                                                 | Details of Legal impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.                                                                 |
| Risk                                                                  | Details of Risk impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.                                                                  |
| Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion      | Details of Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.      |
| Reducing Poverty                                                      | Details of Reducing Poverty impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.                                                      |
| Climate Change / Environmental                                        | Details of Climate Change / Environmental impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.                                        |
| Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers | Details of Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review. |
| Data Protection                                                       | Details of Data Protection impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review.                                                       |

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

| Action                                                                  | Responsible Officer         | Deadline     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Approved recommendations to be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Board | Democratic Services Officer | 29 July 2026 |

## Appendices

|   |                                             |
|---|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Suggested OSB Scrutiny Topics for 2026/2027 |
|---|---------------------------------------------|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |

## Background papers

| Body | Report title | Date |
|------|--------------|------|
|      |              |      |

**Contact:** Scott Bonner

**Email:** [scott\\_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/](mailto:scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/)

## Appendix 1 – Suggested Scrutiny Topics for 2026/2027

| Ref | Suggested Scrutiny Investigation Topic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Source  | Council Plan 2026-2029, Ambition and Aim                                                                                                                 |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | <p><b>The implementation of the Council's Digital Strategy</b><br/> <b>Digital Strategy 2026–2030, sets out the Council's strategic framework for digital, data and technology and established a clear, corporate approach to maintaining secure, resilient and well-governed digital services.</b></p> <p>IT is a cornerstone of Council business and is rooted in every Council function. Many of the Council's continuous improvement projects are dependent on having effective technical solutions in place.</p> <p>Ensuring that the Council has a digital strategy that can support the continuous improvement agenda is essential.</p> | Officer | <p><b>Delivering best value</b><br/> <i>Changing how we operate, to deliver affordable and cost-effective outcomes for residents and businesses.</i></p> |
| 2   | <p><b>Changes to Corporate Support Functions</b></p> <p>To ensure the Council can adequately deliver its corporate governance commitments, the Council is reviewing how it supports this function, especially around strategic planning and performance management.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Officer | <p><b>Delivering best value</b><br/> <i>Changing how we operate, to deliver affordable and cost-effective outcomes for residents and businesses.</i></p> |
| 3   | <p><b>Marketing and Communications</b></p> <p>The Council's communications and marketing processes are under review. How effectively does the Council communicate its successes.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Officer | <p><b>Delivering best value</b><br/> <i>Changing how we operate, to deliver affordable and cost-effective outcomes for residents and businesses.</i></p> |

| Ref | Suggested Scrutiny Investigation Topic                                                                                                                               | Source        | Council Plan 2026-2029, Ambition and Aim                                                                                                        |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4   | <b>Organisational values</b><br><br>To what extent are the Council's Values embedded and is there scope to enhance the way they are presented and how they are used. | Officer       | <b>Delivering best value</b><br><i>Changing how we operate, to deliver affordable and cost-effective outcomes for residents and businesses.</i> |
|     | <b>Suggested Scrutiny Update</b>                                                                                                                                     | <b>Source</b> | <b>Council Plan 2026-2029, Ambition and Aim</b>                                                                                                 |
| 5   | <b>Community Empowerment Bill</b>                                                                                                                                    | Officer       | <b>Safe and resilient communities</b><br><br><i>Creating a safer environment where residents can live more independent lives.</i>               |
| 6   | <b>National Police Reform/ Abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners</b>                                                                                           | Officer       | <b>Safe and resilient communities</b><br><br><i>Creating a safer environment where residents can live more independent lives.</i>               |

|                              |                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b> |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                   |                                               |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report of:</b>                 | Democratic Services                           |
| <b>Relevant Executive Member:</b> | Not Applicable                                |
| <b>Submitted to:</b>              | Overview and Scrutiny Board                   |
| <b>Date:</b>                      | 29 July 2026                                  |
| <b>Title:</b>                     | Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme 2026/2027 |
| <b>Report for:</b>                | Decision                                      |
| <b>Status:</b>                    | Public                                        |
| <b>Council Plan priority:</b>     | Delivering Best Value                         |
| <b>Key decision:</b>              | Not applicable                                |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Not applicable                                |
| <b>Subject to call in?</b>        | Not applicable                                |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Not applicable                                |

|                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Proposed decision(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                |
| That the Overview and Scrutiny Board approves the inclusion of the topics listed in the report topics put forward by the Adult Social Care & Health, Children's and Place Scrutiny Panels. |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Executive summary</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p>Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to consider and agree individual Panel work programmes for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.</p> <p>When considering the work programme, the Board is asked to ensure that topics agreed for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affect a group of people living within the Middlesbrough area.</li> <li>• Relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.</li> <li>• Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or the scrutiny panels have considered during the last 12 months.</li> <li>• Do not relate to an individual service complaint.</li> <li>• Do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.</li> </ul> |

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

1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Overview and Scrutiny Board to determine the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2026/2027 ensuring Scrutiny Investigation Topics and standard updates support the delivery of the ambitions of the Middlesbrough Council Plan 2026-29:

| <b>Our ambitions</b>                   | <b>Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A successful and ambitious town</b> | <p><i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will grow businesses and employment opportunities within the town</li> <li>- We will close attainment gaps and work with education providers to increase the number of students who achieve their expected grades</li> <li>- We will ensure housing supply meets local demand</li> <li>- Transport connectivity will improve</li> </ul>                                                       |
| <b>A healthy Place</b>                 | <p><i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People will live healthier lives for longer, and health inequalities will be reduced</li> <li>- The look and feel of the physical space in Middlesbrough will improve</li> <li>- We will be closer to our communities and involve them in decision making</li> <li>- We will reduce and alleviate the impact of poverty to improve lives and life chances for people in Middlesbrough</li> </ul> |
| <b>Safe and resilient communities</b>  | <p><i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All adults will be supported through strength-based practice to live the lives they choose</li> <li>- We will support digital inclusion</li> <li>- We will continue to work with voluntary and community groups and individuals to improve the resilience of our communities</li> <li>- Residents will feel safer</li> </ul>                                                                     |
| <b>Delivering best value</b>           | <p><i>Aims within this ambition are to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will be a well-run Council that provides Value for Money Services</li> <li>- We will set a balanced budget and medium-term financial plan</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board approves the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2026-2027 by agreeing individual Scrutiny Work Plans detailed in this report.

## 3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Board is required to consider and approve the Scrutiny Work Programme for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

#### **4. Background and relevant information**

At the start of every Municipal Year, scrutiny panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year. Work programmes are useful as they provide some structure to a scrutiny panel's activity and allow for the effective planning and preparation of work. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather information/views from a number of sources. The topics agreed by each Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2026/2027 are listed below for the Board's approval.

##### **Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel**

###### In Depth Reviews

- Barriers to Immunisation Uptake
- Neighbourhood Health Management

###### Updates:

- Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) - Annual Report
- Director of Public Health, Annual Report
- Updates from the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee
- University Hospitals Tees NHS Foundation Trust - Draft Quality Account

##### **Children's Services Scrutiny Panel**

The Children's Scrutiny Panel will be meeting on 27 July where it will decide its work topics. An update will be provided to OSB at its meeting on 29 July.

###### In Depth Reviews

###### Updates:

##### **Place Scrutiny Panel**

###### In Depth Reviews

- The Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme/Licensing of Private Rented Properties (Panel wanted to merge two of the suggested topics so formal title to be agreed as Chair & Vice-Chair want to cover a slightly wider scope than just the schemes specifically & the SLL has been reviewed previously)
- Future Plans for Transforming the Town Centre
- Fly-tipping (short review may be more suitable dependant on what comes out of the overview scheduled for September's meeting)

Updates:

- Flood Risk Management
- RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers) (Annual update)
- Community Safety Partnership (Annual update)
- Prevent and Channel (Annual update)

**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 No other options were put forward as part of the report.

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

| Topic                                                                 | Impact                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial (including procurement and Social Value)                    | Details of impact (if any) will be dependent on recommendations made as part of a chosen review. |
| Legal                                                                 |                                                                                                  |
| Risk                                                                  |                                                                                                  |
| Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion      |                                                                                                  |
| Reducing Poverty                                                      |                                                                                                  |
| Climate Change / Environmental                                        |                                                                                                  |
| Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers |                                                                                                  |
| Data Protection                                                       |                                                                                                  |

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

| Action | Responsible Officer | Deadline |
|--------|---------------------|----------|
|        |                     |          |

**Appendices**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |

**Background papers**

| Body | Report title | Date |
|------|--------------|------|
|      |              |      |

**Contact: Scott Bonner/ Tanya Harrison**  
**Email: [scott\\_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk)/**  
**[tanya\\_harrison@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:tanya_harrison@middlesbrough.gov.uk)**

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# Scrutiny Review

Violence Against Women and Girls  
(VAWG): How to Tackle It

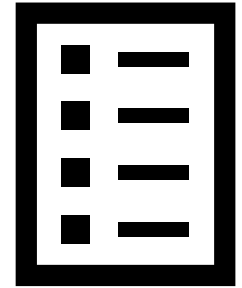
**Democratic Services**



**Adult Social Care and  
Health Scrutiny –  
21/07/2026**

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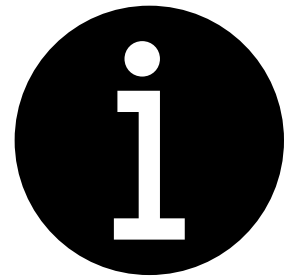
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# COMMITTEE INFORMATION



**Chair**  
Cllr L. Young

**V Chair**  
Cllr T.

Overview and Scrutiny Board

Adult Social Care & Health

**Chair**  
Cllr J. Kabuye

**V. Chair**  
Cllr David Coupe

Children's

**Chair**  
Cllr E. Clynch

**V. Chair**  
Cllr Z. Uddin

Place

**Chair**  
Cllr D. Branson

**V. Chair**  
Cllr D. Jackson

## Democratic Services Support:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board: Scott Bonner & Joanne Dixon/ Tanya Harrison
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee: Claire Jones and Sue Lightwing
- Children's Scrutiny Committee: Joanne McNally
- Place Scrutiny Committee: Tabitha Frankland and Rachael Johansson

# AIMS OF THE REVIEW



1. The aims of the review are to:
  - Understand the extent and nature of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Middlesbrough, including relevant national and local data and trends.
  - Examine the role of Middlesbrough Council in preventing VAWG, including how services contribute to early intervention, particularly in relation to children and young people.
  - Consider how the Council provides strategic leadership in tackling VAWG, including alignment with the national VAWG strategy and opportunities to strengthen coordination and oversight.
  - Identify how the Council can support long-term cultural change across the area, including challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours and progressing initiatives such as the White Ribbon accreditation.
  
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.
  - **Safe and Resilient Communities** - Reducing crime and antisocial behaviour

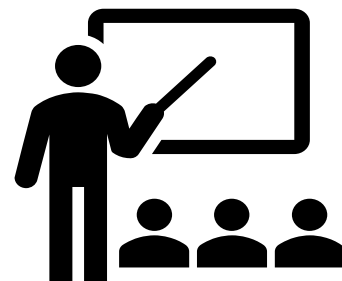
# TERMS OF REFERENCE



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

- Term of Reference A – To understand the extent and nature of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Middlesbrough, including analysis of available data, trends, and comparison with regional and national positions, and to consider the underlying causes and contributing factors.
- Term of Reference B – To examine current approaches to prevention and early intervention, including work with young people, education settings, and community-based initiatives aimed at addressing attitudes, behaviours, and cultural norms linked to VAWG.
- Term of Reference C – To consider the Council's strategic response to VAWG, including alignment with national policy, and to explore opportunities to strengthen leadership, coordination, and long-term cultural change (including initiatives such as White Ribbon accreditation).

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION



4. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is widely recognised as a significant and complex societal issue, encompassing a range of harmful behaviours rooted in gender inequality. The Government's *Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls* (December 2025) describes Violence Against Women and Girls as:
5. *"A range of behaviours that disproportionately affect women and girls and are underpinned by misogyny, harmful gender norms and unequal power dynamics. It includes domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and harassment, coercive and controlling behaviour, exploitation and so-called honour-based abuse."*
6. This definition reflects the broad and interconnected nature of VAWG, recognising that such behaviours can emerge early in life, are reinforced across families, communities, institutions and online spaces, and may escalate over time if left unchallenged. It highlights the need for a coordinated, whole-system response focused on prevention, early intervention and long-term cultural change, alongside effective responses when harm occurs.
7. While domestic abuse represents a significant proportion of Violence Against Women and Girls, the VAWG framework also encompasses a wider range of harms, including sexual violence, stalking, harassment and misogyny, requiring a broader preventative and cultural response.
8. Within a local context, evidence presented to the Panel identified that Middlesbrough, and the wider Cleveland area, continues to experience disproportionately high levels of VAWG-related offences when compared with regional and national averages. This reinforces the importance of a strong local response, including visible leadership, coordinated partnership working and a sustained focus on prevention to address the underlying causes of harm.
9. In this context, the Panel agreed to focus its review on the role of prevention and education, with a particular emphasis on children and young people. Members recognised the importance of inclusive education for all, while placing a specific focus on boys and young men, given evidence about patterns of perpetration. While much existing activity focuses on responding to domestic abuse and supporting victims, the Panel sought to concentrate its review on prevention, education and long-term cultural change, particularly in areas where the Council can influence, provide leadership and drive system-wide change. Members were also keen to explore how the Council can demonstrate leadership in this area, including through initiatives such as White Ribbon accreditation.
10. The Panel further recognised that Middlesbrough's high levels of deprivation, health inequality and safeguarding pressures create additional complexity and reinforce the importance of early intervention, prevention and coordinated partnership working. The review therefore considered how early intervention could contribute to challenging

harmful attitudes, supporting healthy relationships and reducing the risk of future harm, alongside the Council's role in influencing and coordinating this agenda at a local level.

# SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE



**Term of Reference A - To understand the extent and nature of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Middlesbrough, including analysis of available data, trends, and comparison with regional and national positions, and to consider the underlying causes and contributing factors.**

11. Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is widely recognised as a pervasive and systemic issue, encompassing a range of abusive behaviours that are disproportionately perpetrated by men against women and girls. These behaviours include domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and harassment, coercive and controlling behaviour, exploitation and so-called honour-based abuse. Evidence presented to the Panel highlighted that VAWG is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality and is rooted in wider social, cultural and structural factors, including misogyny, harmful gender norms and socioeconomic inequality.

## **National Context**

12. At a national level, the scale of Violence Against Women and Girls remains substantial. National evidence highlights the significant human impact of VAWG. Data referenced in the Government's national VAWG strategy indicates that one in eight women in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking in the year ending March 2025. In the year ending June 2025, almost 200 rapes were recorded by the police each day, noting that sexual offences are widely under-reported. National data also indicates that more than 150 women are killed each year in England and Wales as a result of violence.
13. In the year ending March 2024 the national crime survey estimated 2.3 million adults experienced domestic abuse, of whom 1.6 million were women. In the same period, 851,062 domestic-abuse-related crimes were recorded by police, accounting for 15.8% of all recorded crime. Survey data indicates that approximately one in twenty people experienced domestic abuse in the previous year, with women significantly more likely to experience repeated, prolonged and severe abuse, including sexual violence and coercive control.
14. The Panel also noted the wider impact on children. National estimates suggest that around 20% of children have lived with an adult perpetrating domestic abuse, reinforcing the view that VAWG should be understood as a whole-family and intergenerational issue, rather than an isolated criminal justice matter. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) published an Evidence and Insights Pack detailing a 47% rise in proven sexual offenses by children. The board attributes this surge not only to shifting behaviors but also to improved reporting, better police detection, and algorithmic exposure to online misogyny.
15. In relation to other forms of VAWG, national police data recorded 2,905 offences relating to so-called honour-based abuse, 84 female genital mutilation (FGM) offences, and 172 forced marriage offences in the year ending March 2024. While numerically smaller than domestic abuse, Members acknowledged that such crimes are significantly

under-reported and often associated with heightened barriers to disclosure, help-seeking and access to support.

### **Cleveland Position**

16. Evidence presented to the Panel demonstrated that the Cleveland Police force area experiences significantly higher levels of VAWG-related crime than national averages. In total, 20,355 domestic-abuse-related incidents and crimes were recorded in Cleveland, the highest number of any police force area in the country. Despite this scale of demand, only 9% of recorded domestic abuse crimes resulted in a charge or summons, with 62% of cases closed due to evidential difficulties where the victim did not support further action.
17. Members were particularly concerned by data relating to repeat victimisation. 41% of cases discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) were repeat cases, placing Cleveland as the fourth highest force area in England for repeat domestic abuse. This was viewed as indicative of ongoing risk, complex victim needs and limitations within the criminal justice system's ability to provide sustained protection.
18. Cleveland also records lower arrest rates per 100 domestic abuse crimes (37 arrests) compared with the national average (44 arrests), reinforcing concerns about enforcement, perpetrator accountability and victim confidence in the justice process.
19. Sexual violence data further highlighted regional pressures. Cleveland has the highest rate of sexual offences per 1,000 population of all North East police forces. In 2024/25, Cleveland Police recorded 8,689 stalking and harassment offences, of which 42% were domestic-abuse-related, again the highest proportion nationally.

### **Middlesbrough Position**

20. Local data indicates that Middlesbrough experiences particularly acute levels of VAWG when compared with both regional and statistical peers. The rate of sexual offences in Middlesbrough was 5.3 per 1,000 population, compared with a North East local authority average of 3.9 per 1,000, and 4.2 per 1,000 among authorities within the same deprivation decile. This reinforces concerns that VAWG in Middlesbrough is not only high, but significantly exceeds levels expected even when deprivation is taken into account.
21. Local service data for 2024 further illustrates the scale and complexity of demand:
  - 417 MARAC referrals, of which 137 were repeat cases
  - 1,127 children identified as known to services and at risk due to domestic abuse
  - 3,177 referrals to specialist domestic abuse services via My Sister's Place, resulting in 3,290 episodes of IDVA support
  - 350 referrals for safe accommodation, with 625 women and children supported
  - 609 referrals to sexual violence counselling services
22. Members noted the high prevalence of additional vulnerabilities among survivors accessing services, including mental health needs, homelessness and suicide risk, reinforcing the interconnected nature of VAWG with wider health and social inequalities.
23. While recorded police incidents of forced marriage and FGM within Middlesbrough were reported as zero in the latest period, Members recognised that this is unlikely to reflect true prevalence and may instead indicate barriers to reporting, particularly among minoritised and migrant communities.

### **Trends and Emerging Issues**

24. Trend data presented by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner indicated that, while overall recorded VAWG offences decreased by 8.16% in the 12 months to September 2025, the overall picture remains mixed. Domestic-abuse-related VAWG offences fell by 4.47%, while sexual-violence-related offences increased by 16.22%, indicating a change in the pattern and composition of recorded harm rather than an overall reduction in risk.
25. The Panel also heard that applications under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) increased by 12%, reflecting growing public awareness and demand for preventative safeguarding measures.

### **Perpetration and Age Profile**

26. National evidence indicates that harmful and abusive behaviours can begin at a relatively young age. Data referenced in the Government's national Violence Against Women and Girls strategy indicates that 39% of 13- to 17-year-olds who have been in a relationship in the past year experienced emotional or physical abuse. Members recognised that such experiences highlight the early emergence of unhealthy and abusive relationship dynamics, which can shape attitudes and behaviours in later life if left unchallenged.
27. Analysis of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Crime Survey for England and Wales, published within the *Nature of Crime: Violence* dataset, shows that young people and young adults account for a significant proportion of domestic abuse perpetrators.
28. According to ONS Table 8f (Offender characteristics in incidents of domestic violence), individuals aged under 25 have consistently represented around a quarter to one third of identified domestic abuse perpetrators in recent survey years. In the latest available data (year ending March 2024), people aged under 25 accounted for over one third of perpetrators in domestic abuse incidents where the victim was able to identify the offender's age. Within this, children under the age of 16 were identified as perpetrators in a small but notable proportion of incidents, fluctuating year-on-year but reaching around one fifth of cases in the most recent survey period.
29. The ONS advises that these figures should be interpreted with caution due to sample size variability. However, the data provides important contextual evidence that domestic abuse is not confined to adulthood, and that abusive and controlling behaviours can emerge during adolescence and early adulthood. The presence of under-16 perpetrators includes a range of scenarios, such as abusive behaviour within young intimate relationships and abuse occurring within wider family or household contexts.
30. While this data is national rather than local, it reinforces the case for early intervention, education and healthy-relationships work, particularly with young people and young men, to prevent harmful behaviours becoming entrenched and escalating into the high-risk domestic abuse cases seen later in life.

### **Underlying Causes and Contributing Factors**

31. Throughout the evidence, Members consistently heard that violence against women and girls cannot be understood solely through crime data. Presentations emphasised the role of misogyny, sexism and harmful gender norms in creating a climate in which abuse is tolerated or minimised. Individual acts of sexism were described as contributing to wider cultures of intimidation and fear, which in turn normalise violence against women and girls.
32. Economic hardship, housing insecurity and deprivation were identified as key contextual factors in Middlesbrough, increasing vulnerability and limiting survivors' ability to escape abuse. Members also noted emerging challenges, including online abuse, younger

people experiencing or perpetrating intimate partner abuse, and low engagement with perpetrator programmes, which were viewed as critical barriers to long-term prevention.

33. Evidence to the Panel also highlighted the importance of challenging common myths about violence and sexual offending, including misconceptions about the identity of perpetrators. Such myths were identified as minimising abuse, discouraging reporting and undermining effective prevention and education.
34. Members recognised that these influences, combined with wider societal pressures, highlight the importance of early, preventative work to promote healthy relationships, challenge harmful attitudes and support long-term cultural change.
35. The Panel concluded that violence against women and girls in Middlesbrough is widespread, persistent and deeply rooted in wider social and cultural inequalities. While enforcement and victim support remain essential, the evidence demonstrates that long-term reduction in harm cannot be achieved through criminal justice responses alone.
36. Members agreed that tackling violence against women and girls requires a sustained focus on prevention, education and cultural change, beginning early in the life course and addressing the attitudes, behaviours and social norms that enable abuse to occur. This includes challenging misogyny, harmful gender norms and myths that normalise or minimise violence, as well as promoting healthy, respectful relationships for children and young people.
37. The Panel emphasised that preventing violence against women and girls is everyone's business and requires a whole-Council and whole-system approach. Members recognised the Council's role as a civic leader, with influence beyond direct service delivery, including through education, workforce culture, partnerships, commissioning and visible leadership within communities.
38. Members concluded that the Council is well placed to strengthen its strategic response by improving coordination across departments, working collaboratively with partners, and embedding prevention and culture change consistently across the organisation. Clear leadership, shared ownership and joined-up working were identified as critical to ensuring that efforts to prevent violence against women and girls are effective, sustainable and aligned with national priorities.

**Term of Reference B – To examine current approaches to prevention and early intervention, including work with young people, education settings, and community-based initiatives aimed at addressing attitudes, behaviours, and cultural norms linked to VAWG.**

**Prevention and Early Intervention**

39. Evidence presented to the Panel emphasised that prevention and early intervention are critical to reducing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) in the longer term. Members consistently heard that effective prevention requires early action to challenge harmful attitudes, behaviours and social norms before abuse becomes normalised or escalates into high-risk situations.
40. The Panel recognised that prevention activity relating to VAWG takes place across a range of settings, including education, community services and partnership-led initiatives, and involves both universal and targeted approaches. Members also

acknowledged that increased awareness and education may lead to higher levels of disclosure and reporting in the short term, which should be understood as a positive indicator of improved understanding and confidence to seek support, rather than an increase in prevalence.

### **Education-Based Prevention and Healthy Relationships**

41. Evidence provided to the Panel confirmed that Middlesbrough Council currently fund a domestic abuse specialist service to deliver education-based prevention activity is delivered within schools and colleges in Middlesbrough, focusing on promoting healthy relationships, consent, respect and equality, and challenging harmful gender norms linked to VAWG.
42. At the time of reporting, preventative education sessions had been delivered in 29 of 49 primary schools, reaching 3,605 pupils, and in 6 of the 8 secondary schools approached, reaching 2,173 pupils. This evidence demonstrates that prevention activity is taking place across a significant proportion of education settings, while also highlighting variation in engagement and coverage.
43. Members were advised that responsibility for curriculum delivery sits with individual schools and academy trusts. The Council's role was therefore described as one of support, partnership working and safeguarding influence, rather than direct control over curriculum content. Members recognised that while many schools are receptive to this work, curriculum pressures and competing demands can limit the capacity for consistent delivery.
44. Members emphasised that education-based prevention activity must be inclusive of girls and young women as well as boys and young men. While engaging men and boys was recognised as critical to preventing perpetration and challenging harmful attitudes, the Panel agreed that girls and young women also require education to support healthy relationships, recognise abusive behaviours, build confidence to challenge harm and understand where to access support.

### **Early Help, Safeguarding and Work with Young Men and Boys**

45. Evidence provided by Children's Services highlighted the role of safeguarding and Early Help pathways in identifying and responding to concerns relating to VAWG involving children and young people. Members were advised that schools and partner agencies refer concerns into the Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH), where referrals are screened to determine whether statutory thresholds are met.
46. Where thresholds are met, families are allocated for a Children's Social Care assessment. Where thresholds are not met but complex needs are identified, families are allocated to the Stronger Families service. Members heard that Stronger Families casework is relationship-based and multi-agency, and that where concerns relating to VAWG emerge among boys and young men, staff work collaboratively with specialist services, including My Sister's Place and ARCH, while maintaining oversight through Stronger Families.
47. Children's Services also advised that Stronger Families undertake educative work with families and young people alongside referrals to specialist provision where appropriate. Barnardo's was identified as offering a service that Stronger Families can refer into, with funding typically supported through primary care.

### **Planned Work and Emerging Practice**

48. Children's Services highlighted emerging evidence linking unresolved parental conflict and strained family relationships to the development of child-to-parent aggression (CPA)

and other harmful behaviours, including those associated with VAWG. Members heard that CPA remains under-recognised and can sit across the boundaries of parenting support, adolescent behaviour, mental health and safeguarding.

49. Members were advised that Stronger Families has secured Department for Work and Pensions funding to commission Amity to develop a programme building on existing Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) investment. The programme aims to:
- strengthen workforce understanding of child-to-parent aggression within family relationships;
  - improve confidence in recognising and responding to these dynamics;
  - support more consistent and effective responses across services; and
  - develop sustainable, long-term workforce capability.
50. The Panel recognised that this planned work aligns with prevention and early-intervention principles by addressing harmful behaviours before escalation and supporting coordinated responses across the system.

### **Engagement with Schools and Safeguarding Leads**

51. Children's Services confirmed ongoing engagement with schools through Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) network meetings, which are used to promote awareness of VAWG, including White Ribbon, and to understand emerging themes identified by schools.
52. Members heard that this engagement also provides an opportunity to explore what support schools require in relation to prevention activity, including whether schools would benefit more from access to specialist providers for one-off healthy-relationships sessions, or from teacher training to embed good practice more consistently within Relationships, Sex and Health Education.
53. Members were advised that all schools and voluntary and community sector organisations were offered RPC training and awareness sessions, with 41 voluntary and community sector services and 17 schools participating. Moving forward, the proposed child-to-parent aggression programme will also be offered to schools, voluntary and community sector partners and the Children's Services workforce.

### **National Curriculum Changes and Readiness**

54. Statutory changes to the Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum are to take effect from September 2026. The updated framework places significant emphasis on safeguarding, challenging misogyny, online safety, and the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
55. The National VAWG Strategy identifies education at the core of the government's cross-departmental strategy to prevent abuse before it starts. Backed by curriculum funding, teachers will receive training to confidently address sensitive issues like consent, coercion, and gender stereotyping and will be supported in integrating respect, empathy, and positive relationship teachings across all aspects of school life. Schools will be legally required to update their RSHE curriculum and written policies in line with the new requirements.
56. Members noted that Children's Services will continue to use school network meetings to monitor emerging issues relating to VAWG and to understand the impact of curriculum changes as they are implemented.

### **Strategic Role of Children's Services and Public Health**

57. Through evidence provided by Children's Services, Members became aware of the role of the Healthy Child Programme for young people aged 11–19 as part of the local approach to supporting prevention, early intervention and health and wellbeing for adolescents, with extended provision up to age 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities and care leavers.
58. Members noted that responsibility for delivery of the Healthy Child Programme sits with Public Health South Tees, with Children's Services contributing to and aligning with this offer where prevention and early-intervention activity intersects with safeguarding, Early Help and family support pathways.
59. Following a review in 2024, Members were advised that the programme is expected to move towards a bespoke, skills-based, non-clinical model to better address emerging health and wellbeing needs, including emotional health and relationships advice, delivered through universal and targeted interventions across youth settings. While the Panel recognised that a range of relevant activity is underway across Public Health, Children's Services and partners, Members noted that there is currently limited strategic oversight bringing this activity together within a single, coordinated Violence Against Women and Girls prevention framework.
60. Members were advised that, once finalised, the revised Healthy Child Programme will be incorporated within the Family Help Strategy and Action Plan, which may provide an opportunity to strengthen alignment between Public Health, Children's Services and wider partnership activity in support of prevention and early intervention.

**Term of Reference C – To consider the Council's strategic response to VAWG, including alignment with national policy, and to explore opportunities to strengthen leadership, coordination, and long-term cultural change (including initiatives such as White Ribbon accreditation).**

**National Policy Context**

61. Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a stated priority of the UK Government. In December 2025, the Government published *Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls*, which sets out the national approach to preventing and responding to VAWG.
62. The national strategy sets out the Government's ambition to halve violence against women and girls within a decade, recognising that this can only be achieved through sustained prevention, early intervention and long-term cultural change, alongside criminal justice responses.
63. The national strategy is organised around four key strands:
  - prioritising prevention, including education on respectful and healthy relationships
  - supporting victims, through improved access to specialist services
  - pursuing perpetrators, strengthening criminal justice responses and accountability
  - strengthening systems, ensuring agencies work together effectively
64. The Panel noted that Pillar 1 of the national strategy, "Prevention and Early Intervention", places a clear emphasis on stopping violence and abuse before it starts, including breaking intergenerational cycles of abuse, protecting children and young people, disrupting harmful attitudes and preventing the escalation of abusive behaviours. Members recognised that this focus closely aligns with the Panel's own emphasis on

education, early intervention and long-term cultural change as the most effective means of reducing violence against women and girls.

65. A central emphasis of the strategy is that long-term reduction in VAWG cannot be achieved through criminal justice responses alone. Instead, it requires sustained cultural and behavioural change, early intervention and prevention, particularly among children and young people. The Government has also highlighted the importance of engaging men and boys in addressing VAWG, recognising that challenging misogyny, harmful gender norms and sexism is critical to preventing violence before it occurs.
66. The Panel recognised that the national strategy's cross-government approach implies an expectation of equivalent cross-Council leadership at local level, with Violence Against Women and Girls treated as a shared strategic priority rather than the responsibility of a single service or partnership.

### **Local Strategic Context and Existing Arrangements**

67. The Panel recognised that Middlesbrough Council has a well-established Domestic Abuse Strategy (2025–2028), which provides a strong statutory foundation for protecting victims-survivors, commissioning specialist services and meeting duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Members noted the breadth of activity delivered through the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership, including prevention activity, workforce training, safeguarding arrangements and alignment with the Tees-wide Tackling Perpetration Strategy.
68. The Panel also noted that a number of other local authorities have developed dedicated Violence Against Women and Girls strategies or prevention frameworks to complement statutory domestic abuse arrangements, particularly to strengthen leadership on prevention, culture change and system coordination. Examples include authorities such as Bristol City Council, Nottingham City Council, Lewisham Council and Camden Council, which have adopted VAWG-specific approaches alongside domestic abuse strategies. Members recognised that these examples demonstrate how a clearer focus on prevention and cultural change can be embedded within local governance arrangements.
69. However, the Panel identified that the statutory focus of the Domestic Abuse Strategy does not fully encompass the wider Violence Against Women and Girls agenda, particularly in relation to sexual violence, misogyny, online harms, education-based prevention, workforce culture and broader societal attitudes. Members therefore concluded that a dedicated VAWG Prevention Framework would complement existing domestic abuse arrangements by providing clearer strategic oversight of prevention, cultural change and partnership coordination across the wider system.
70. The Panel further agreed that such a framework would require corporate ownership, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of VAWG, and should be led through the Council with clear alignment across children's services, adult services, public health, community safety and wider partners, rather than being located within a single service area.

### **White Ribbon and Organisational Culture Change**

71. The Panel considered the role of White Ribbon as a mechanism for supporting long-term cultural change and engaging men and boys in the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls. White Ribbon is an international campaign focused on preventing male violence against women by encouraging individuals and organisations to challenge harmful attitudes, behaviours and social norms that underpin abuse.
72. White Ribbon accreditation for organisations requires a clear commitment to:

- senior leadership ownership
- a time-limited action plan
- workforce engagement and awareness
- measurable objectives to support sustained culture change

73. Members noted that Middlesbrough Council had previously held White Ribbon accreditation, which had lapsed due to capacity constraints. The Panel recognised that renewed accreditation would provide an opportunity to embed prevention and equality principles more systematically across the organisation, supported by clearer governance and accountability.
74. The Panel was provided with information on how other local authorities and statutory partners are using White Ribbon to demonstrate organisational leadership on VAWG. Members noted that, at the time of the review, 45 local authorities nationally held White Ribbon accreditation, with no councils in Teesside or the wider North East currently accredited.
75. In addition, Members were advised of a recent report to the Cleveland Fire Authority, which demonstrated how alignment with White Ribbon can support visible leadership, workforce culture change and accountability. The Panel agreed that these examples provide a useful benchmark for strengthening a coordinated local response.
76. Members also noted local precedent for engaging high-profile role models, including sports figures, to promote White Ribbon messages, recognising the value of visible leadership in reinforcing cultural change.

### **Workforce Capability and Organisational Leadership**

77. The Panel also considered the role of the Council's workforce in supporting the prevention of and response to Violence Against Women and Girls. Members discussed the importance of mandatory training for professionals across both children's and adults' services, noting that staff in a wide range of roles may encounter individuals affected by VAWG, even where this is not their primary function.
78. The Panel recognised that consistent training and awareness across the organisation is a key element of strategic leadership, helping to ensure shared understanding, early identification of risk and trauma-informed responses. Members agreed that workforce capability should be viewed as part of the Council's wider organisational commitment to tackling VAWG, rather than solely as a matter for specialist teams.

### **Partnership Working, Data and System Coordination**

79. The Panel heard evidence regarding the availability and use of data to support strategic oversight of Violence Against Women and Girls. Members were advised that a dedicated analyst was now in post within the Council and was supporting work on domestic abuse data and insight. However, it was noted that access to relevant partner data, including from Cleveland Police, was not yet fully in place. Members agreed that improved data-sharing arrangements would support a stronger understanding of local trends, demand and outcomes, and enable more effective prevention, planning and performance oversight.
80. The Panel also considered the role of commissioning in supporting a coordinated response to Violence Against Women and Girls. Members noted that commissioning decisions relating to victim support, prevention and early-intervention activity are currently taken across multiple organisations, including the Council, the Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and health partners. Evidence presented to the

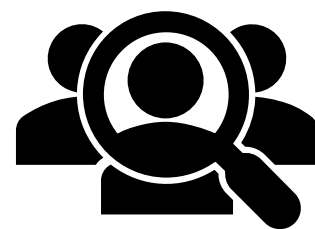
Panel highlighted that this has resulted in a complex commissioning landscape, with different funding streams, priorities and timescales operating alongside one another.

81. Members agreed that stronger alignment of commissioning activity, informed by shared data and a common understanding of need and outcomes, would support more effective prevention and reduce fragmentation across the system. The Panel recognised that a joint approach to commissioning would be consistent with the duty to collaborate set out in the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024, and could strengthen strategic oversight, coordination and accountability in responding to Violence Against Women and Girls.
82. The Panel considered the Council's wider role in working with partners to address Violence Against Women and Girls, including the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cleveland Police and the wider criminal justice system. Members heard evidence of partnership working through arrangements such as the Local Criminal Justice Board and the Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy.
83. While Members welcomed this partnership activity, the Panel identified ongoing challenges in relation to coordination, data-sharing and alignment of priorities across agencies. Members agreed that clearer strategic oversight at a local level would support more effective partnership working and ensure that prevention, victim support, perpetrator accountability and cultural change are addressed as part of a single, coherent system.

#### **Strategic Gaps and System Impact**

84. Across the evidence, the Panel identified a number of strategic gaps that limit the effectiveness of the current response to VAWG. These included limited clarity of ownership for prevention activity within Children's Services, variable influence over education settings, gaps in data relating to prevention and early intervention, and the absence of a single strategic overview bringing together activity across the system.
85. Members also noted the wider system impact of prevention activity, including increased referrals into safeguarding and support services as awareness improves. The Panel emphasised that such increases should be anticipated and planned for as part of a preventative approach, rather than viewed as a failure of intervention. Ongoing demand pressures and funding constraints were recognised as significant risks to sustainability, reinforcing the need for strong leadership, coordination and long-term planning

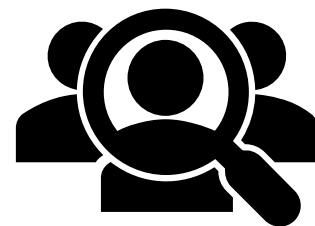
# CONCLUSIONS



86. Based on the evidence provided throughout the investigation, the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel concluded that:

- Violence Against Women and Girls remains widespread in Middlesbrough, with levels of domestic abuse, sexual violence and repeat victimisation significantly higher than regional and national averages.
- The impact of VAWG extends beyond individual victims to children, families and communities, reinforcing the need for whole-system responses.
- Harmful attitudes and behaviours can emerge during adolescence and early adulthood, strengthening the case for early intervention, education and work with young people and young men.
- Middlesbrough benefits from a strong statutory Domestic Abuse Strategy; however, this does not fully address the wider VAWG agenda, particularly in relation to prevention, culture change and societal attitudes.
- A range of prevention and early-intervention activity is underway, but coverage and consistency are uneven, particularly across education settings.
- Stronger strategic leadership, clearer coordination and corporate ownership are required to embed prevention and cultural change across the local system.
- Workforce capability and organisational culture are critical to effective prevention and early identification of abuse.
- Initiatives such as White Ribbon provide a valuable mechanism to support long-term culture change if underpinned by clear governance and accountability.

# RECOMMENDATIONS



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

- A. That the Council develops and agrees a Middlesbrough Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Prevention Framework, by March 2027, informed by the Government's national Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and complementing the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy. The Framework should set out existing prevention and early intervention activity, identify gaps, and clearly define partnership roles and responsibilities.
- B. That a cross-directorate steering group is established to provide oversight of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) prevention activity, ensuring strategic leadership, coordination and accountability across services and partner organisations, including alignment with the proposed 11–19 Health and Wellbeing Service. A progress update should be provided to the Panel in 6 months time.
- C. That the Council demonstrates organisational leadership in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls by implementing mandatory online training for all Council employees and elected Members by December 2026, aimed at improving awareness of VAWG, helping staff to recognise signs of abuse affecting service users or colleagues, and ensuring staff understand how to respond appropriately and access support pathways.
- D. That the Council works with key partners, including the Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Integrated Care Board, to establish a joint commissioning approach for Violence Against Women and Girls, ensuring that commissioning decisions are informed by shared data, evidence of need and agreed outcomes. An update should be provided to the Panel within 12 months.
- E. That the Council progresses White Ribbon accreditation, supported by a time-limited action plan with clear objectives, milestones and performance measures, enabling progress to be monitored and reported to Members.
- F. That, as part of progressing White Ribbon accreditation, the Council explores opportunities to engage visible local ambassadors and role models, including civic leaders, sports figures and community representatives, to support awareness-raising in the community and reinforce positive messages around respect, equality and the prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls. An update should be provided to the Panel in 6 months' time.
- G. That, in advance of the revised statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance, the Council works with schools and education partners to better understand existing VAWG prevention activity, identify gaps in provision and explore

opportunities to strengthen consistent delivery of healthy relationships and prevention education across Middlesbrough. An update should be provided to the Panel in 6 month's time

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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

- Annabel Bates, Corporate Director of Children's Services
- Caroline Cannon, Interim Director of Education, Middlesbrough Council
- Louise Grabham, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health
- Claire Moore, Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead, Middlesbrough Council
- Lucy Price, Domestic Abuse Coordinator, Middlesbrough Council
- Tracey Brittain, Partnership and Delivery Manager, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

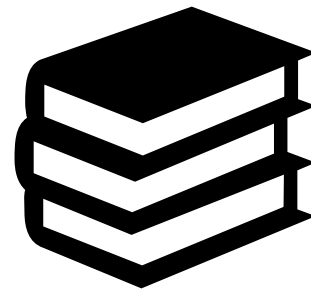
# ACRONYMS



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

- ASC Adult Social Care
- CPA Child-to-Parent Aggression
- CSEW Crime Survey for England and Wales
- DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead
- DWP Department for Work and Pensions
- FGM Female Genital Mutilation
- IDVA Independent Domestic Violence Advocate
- ICB Integrated Care Board
- MACH Multi-Agency Children's Hub
- MARAC Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
- ONS Office for National Statistics
- OPCC Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
- PCC Police and Crime Commissioner
- RPC Reducing Parental Conflict
- RSHE Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- VAWG Violence Against Women and Girls

# BACKGROUND



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

- Cleveland Fire Authority, report on responding to the national Violence Against Women and Girls strategy and White Ribbon commitment
- Cleveland Police – recorded crime and performance data
- Department for Education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance (updated 2026)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls (December 2025), UK Government
- Healthy Child Programme (11–19), NHS / Public Health England
- Home Office, Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law)
- Middlesbrough Council (2025–2028), Middlesbrough Preventing Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Middlesbrough Council, Family Help Strategy and Action Plan
- My Sister's Place – service data and evidence submitted to the Panel
- Office for National Statistics (ONS), Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimesurveyforenglandandwalescsewtableindex>
- Office for National Statistics (ONS), Nature of Crime Tables: Violence (including offender age profile) <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/natureofcrimetableviolence>
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland – data, reports and presentations provided to the Panel
- Tees-wide Tackling Domestic Abuse Perpetration Strategy (2025–2035)
- Victims and Prisoners Act 2024
- White Ribbon UK – Local Authority Accreditation Framework <https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk>
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel – reports/presentations to, and minutes of, meetings held during the review period January 2026 – April 2026

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|                              |                                                                                    |
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| <b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b> |  |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                   |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report of:</b>                 | Corporate Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Andrew Humble          |
| <b>Relevant Executive Member:</b> | Executive Member for Finance, Cllr Nicky Walker                      |
| <b>Submitted to:</b>              | Overview and Scrutiny Board                                          |
| <b>Date:</b>                      | 29 July 2026                                                         |
| <b>Title:</b>                     | Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Outturn Report – 2025/26 |
| <b>Report for:</b>                | Discussion                                                           |
| <b>Status:</b>                    | Public                                                               |
| <b>Council Plan priority:</b>     | Delivering Best Value                                                |
| <b>Key decision:</b>              | Not applicable                                                       |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Report is for information only                                       |
| <b>Subject to call in?</b>        | Not applicable                                                       |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Non-Executive Report                                                 |

|                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Proposed decision(s)</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the contents of the report.</li> <li>• Provide comments to the Executive as appropriate</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Executive summary</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>The report advised Executive that, Middlesbrough Council, like most local authorities, borrows money to fund its capital programme and manage short term cashflow, but not to support its revenue budget. The Council operates within a robust Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicator framework, required by legislation and CIPFA guidance, to ensure borrowing and investment activities are affordable, sustainable, prudent, and properly managed. These arrangements help the Council balance value for money, risk management, and the protection of invested funds.</p> <p>The 2025/26 year-end position shows that all treasury management and prudential indicators were met, with borrowing requirements lower than planned due to delays in capital projects. At 31 March 2026, the Council's total debt stood at £280.6m, with the</p> |

Council remaining "under-borrowed" by £27.2m through the use of internal cash balances rather than additional external borrowing, reducing costs and supporting the revenue budget. All investments were made in line with approved creditworthiness criteria, and the net annual cost of financing debt was £12.0m, representing 8.3% of the Council's net revenue budget.

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

1.1 To inform Overview and Scrutiny Board of the Council's performance at year-end 2025/26.

| <b>Our ambitions</b>                   | <b>Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims</b> |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A successful and ambitious town</b> | The aims and ambitions of the report were detailed in the appended Executive report.                 |
| <b>A healthy Place</b>                 |                                                                                                      |
| <b>Safe and resilient communities</b>  |                                                                                                      |
| <b>Delivering best value</b>           |                                                                                                      |

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board

- Note the contents of the report.
- Provide comments back to the Executive as appropriate

## **3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)**

3.1 To advise Scrutiny on the Council's prudential indicators and treasury management for the year 2025/2026

## **4. Background and relevant information**

4.1 Relevant background and other information are contained in the Executive report at Appendix 1a.

## **5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate**

5.1 Ward Member engagement is detailed in the appended Executive report.

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

6.1 Other potential alternatives are detailed in the appended Executive report.

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

| <b>Topic</b> | <b>Impact</b> |
|--------------|---------------|
|--------------|---------------|

|                                                                       |                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial (including procurement and Social Value)                    | The impacts of the report are detailed in the appended Executive report. |
| Legal                                                                 |                                                                          |
| Risk                                                                  |                                                                          |
| Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion      |                                                                          |
| Reducing Poverty                                                      |                                                                          |
| Climate Change / Environmental                                        |                                                                          |
| Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers |                                                                          |
| Data Protection                                                       |                                                                          |

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

| Action | Responsible Officer | Deadline |
|--------|---------------------|----------|
| N/A    |                     |          |

### Appendices

|   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Executive Report and Appendices |
|---|---------------------------------|

### Background papers

| Body | Report title | Date |
|------|--------------|------|
|      |              |      |

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**Email:** [justin\\_weston@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:justin_weston@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

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**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**

|                                   |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report of:</b>                 | Corporate Director of Finance (S151 Officer), Andrew Humble          |
| <b>Relevant Executive Member:</b> | Executive Member for Finance, Cllr Nicky Walker                      |
| <b>Submitted to:</b>              | Executive                                                            |
| <b>Date:</b>                      | 8 July 2026                                                          |
| <b>Title:</b>                     | Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Outturn Report – 2025/26 |
| <b>Report for:</b>                | Information                                                          |
| <b>Status:</b>                    | Public                                                               |
| <b>Council Plan priority:</b>     | Delivering Best Value                                                |
| <b>Key decision:</b>              | No                                                                   |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Report is for information only                                       |
| <b>Subject to call in?</b>        | No                                                                   |
| <b>Why:</b>                       | Report is for information only                                       |

**Proposed decision(s)**

That the Executive:

- Note the Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 as the Council's year-end position in relation to capital finance activities and overall indebtedness. (Tables 1- 5)
- Note the performance of the treasury management function against the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26. (Para 4.33 – 4.38)

**Executive summary**

Similar to the majority of other local authorities Middlesbrough Council borrows money in order to finance its capital programme and also at times to fund its day to day cashflow. It does not borrow money to fund its revenue budget. The Council is not an outlier compared to other local authorities in terms of the level of total debt it has.

The Council is required to approve annually a Treasury Management Strategy and a set of Prudential Indicators, which self-regulate the level of capital financing activities of the Council and the affordability of the capital programme. These need to be set on an

annual basis to comply with the Local Government Act 2003 and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Codes of Practice on Capital Finance and Treasury Management.

The Treasury Management Strategy is important from both a financial and governance perspective, as it sets the framework within which the council manages its borrowing and investments, how it delivers these services, and how it controls the risks attached to related decisions. It also sets out the parameters and criteria that govern the day-to-day cashflow management activity and how these impact on the medium to long term financial planning. These include achieving value for money from any borrowing undertaken, managing risk, and protecting any resources that have been invested.

The Prudential Indicators are an integral part of the CIPFA Capital Finance Code and demonstrate whether the capital programme is affordable, sustainable, and prudent.

The report sets out the year-end outturn results for the 2025/26 financial year against the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council on 19 February 2025 and gives an analysis of the results achieved. The following is a summary of the key points of the report:

- No prudential or treasury management indicators agreed as part of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 were breached during the financial year.
- The amount of borrowing required during the year was lower than planned at £12.665m as against £17.085m in the original budget for the year due to slippage on capital schemes into future years.
- The Council's need to borrow, or Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is £307.810m on 31 March 2026.
- The Council is 'under borrowed' by £27.221m or 8.8% at the financial year end. This means that it is using its internal cash balances rather than borrowing externally for some of its capital assets.
- The Council's total external debt is therefore £280.589m (£307.810m CFR less £27.221m) on 31 March 2026. This is in line with the practice adopted by most other local authorities and avoids the cost of carrying of any unnecessary external debt against the overall cashflow need for the Council and makes savings against the revenue budget.
- All cash investments have been made in line with the Council's credit worthiness criteria, generally with either central government or other local authorities.
- The net annual revenue cost of financing the Council's current and historic debt, less income from its historic commercial investments and on cash balances is £11.954m or 8.3% of the net revenue budget for 2025/26.

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

1.1 This report provides important information regarding the regulation and management of the Council's borrowing, investments, and cash-flow for the 2025/26 financial year. It is a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures under the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, and by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003, to produce an annual review that covers the treasury activity and compares the performance against the original Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 approved by the Council on 19 February 2025. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's revenue and capital outturn report for 2025/26 presented to Executive on 10 June 2026, both of which have a significant impact on treasury arrangements.

1.2 The report also provides the Prudential Indicators results for 2025/26 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Capital Finance, which is best practice in terms of governance in this area.

| Our ambitions                          | Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A successful and ambitious town</b> | The annual Treasury Management Strategy underpins both the revenue budget and capital programme for the Council for each financial year; by ensuring it has sufficient liquidity in place for all services to operate. As a result, it supports all the ambitions within the Council Plan.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>A healthy Place</b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Safe and resilient communities</b>  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Delivering best value</b>           | In addition to the above, the Treasury Management Strategy contributes to delivering best value for the Council by ensuring that a framework for good governance is in place for all borrowing and investment decisions made. This means that borrowing is taken over periods that are consistent with the life of any capital assets purchased, and that appropriate provision is made in the annual revenue budget and medium-term financial plan for the associated capital financing costs. That the risks of any borrowing or debt refinancing undertaken are supported by fit for purpose business cases. Also, any investment decisions on cash balances are made with reference to the implications of security, liquidity and yield in relation to the principal sums invested. |

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Executive:

- Note the Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 as the Council's year-end position in relation to capital finance activities and overall indebtedness. (Tables 1- 5)
- Note the performance of the treasury management function against the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26. (Para 4.33 – 4.38)

### **3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)**

3.1 The recommendations above will fulfil the following for the local authority:

- Compliance with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance for local authorities.
- Compliance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code for local authorities.
- Compliance with the Local Government Act 2003 Section 1 in relation to borrowing.

### **4. Background and relevant information**

4.1 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26 (including Prudential Indicators) was approved at the annual budget setting meeting on 19 February 2025. The Council both borrows and invests substantial sums of money to provide liquidity for its revenue and capital plans, and is therefore exposed to various financial risks, including the potential loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Treasury Management Strategy each year.

4.2 The Council is a net borrower overall. The borrowing required to fund its capital programme is significantly higher than its normal cash balances that are available for investment purposes. As a result, the timing of capital financing decisions has a significant impact on the overall treasury strategy within the Council and how risk is managed.

4.3 The structure of this report to assess performance against the 2025/26 approved treasury strategy is as follows:

- Capital expenditure and financing for 2025/26.
- The Council's overall borrowing need.
- Prudential Indicators and any compliance issues.
- Treasury position on 31 March 2026.
- The economic background for the 2025/26 financial year.
- A summary of the Treasury Management Strategy approved for 2025/26.
- Treasury Management activity and compliance during 2025/26.

#### **Capital Expenditure and Financing 2025/26**

4.4 The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long term assets, which can be financed as follows:

- immediately during the year of incurring the expenditure, through capital receipts, capital grants, contributions, or from revenue resources.
- if insufficient financing is available, prudential borrowing can be used to spread these costs over future financial years.

4.5 Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address this borrowing need, either through borrowing from external bodies – predominantly the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb), other banks and financial institutions, or by utilising temporary cash resources within the Council (internal borrowing). The wider treasury activities also include

managing the day-to-day cash flow position, its previous borrowing activities, and the investment of surplus funds from cash balances that are not required immediately. These activities are structured to manage risk foremost and then optimise performance where appropriate.

- 4.6 Capital Expenditure forms one of the prudential indicators that are used to regulate treasury activity. Table 1 shows total capital expenditure and how this was financed, compared with what was expected to be spent and how this would have been financed. Further information on the capital variances at directorate level can be found in the 2025/26 revenue and capital outturn report, but this predominantly relates to capital schemes that have not yet been delivered or grants received in advance of need.

**Table 1: Capital expenditure and financing in £ millions**

|                                          | 2024/25<br>actual | 2025/26<br>original<br>budget | 2025/26<br>actual | 2025/26<br>Variance<br>to original<br>budget | 2026/27<br>original<br>budget | 2027/28<br>original<br>budget | 2028/29<br>original<br>budget | 2029/30<br>original<br>budget |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Prudential Borrowing                     | 11.572            | 16.935                        | 12.602            | (4.333)                                      | 30.860                        | 22.038                        | 11.475                        | 9.605                         |
| Borrowing due to leasing                 | 0.771             | 0.150                         | 0.063             | (0.087)                                      | 0.150                         | 0.087                         | -                             | -                             |
| EFS Capital Receipts                     | 2.443             | -                             | -                 | -                                            | -                             | -                             | -                             | -                             |
| Capital Receipts for Investment Strategy | 6.000             | 6.000                         | 6.000             | -                                            | 11.960                        | 16.060                        | 14.231                        | 12.878                        |
| Flexible Use of Capital Receipts         | 4.447             | 7.500                         | 5.659             | (1.841)                                      | 5.272                         | 1.472                         | -                             | -                             |
| Grants                                   | 31.693            | 43.230                        | 26.858            | (16.372)                                     | 37.106                        | 6.933                         | 1.078                         | 1.000                         |
| Contributions                            | 0.237             | 0.983                         | 5.295             | 4.312                                        | 6.472                         | 5.915                         | 4.113                         | -                             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>57.163</b>     | <b>74.798</b>                 | <b>56.477</b>     | <b>(18.321)</b>                              | <b>91.820</b>                 | <b>52.505</b>                 | <b>30.897</b>                 | <b>23.483</b>                 |

### The Council's overall borrowing requirement

- 4.7 The Council's underlying need to borrow is called the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR results from the capital activity of the Council and resources used to pay for the capital expenditure over time. It represents 2025/26 and prior years' net capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue, capital receipts or other external resources and therefore must be met from borrowing.
- 4.8 The CFR will normally be a combination of external borrowing (from third parties in the form of loan arrangements) or from internal borrowing (from the council's own unapplied revenue and capital resources). External borrowing incurs both principal and interest costs as part of the Council's capital financing budget. Internal borrowing is from the Council's own cash resources and has an opportunity cost in that the cash is spent on capital activities, rather than invested.

- 4.9 Part of the Council's treasury role is to meet the funding requirements for this borrowing need. Depending on the funding requirements of the capital programme, the treasury team organises the Council's cash position to ensure that sufficient cash is available to meet the capital plans and cash flow requirements. This may be sourced through borrowing from external bodies (such as the government, through the Public Loans Works Board (PWLb), or the money markets).
- 4.10 The Council's underlying borrowing need (CFR) is not allowed to rise indefinitely. Statutory guidance is in place to ensure that capital expenditure is broadly charged to revenue over the life of the asset. The Council is required to make an annual revenue charge, called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), to reduce the CFR. This is effectively a principal loan repayment of the long-term borrowing need from the revenue budget.
- 4.11 The Council's capital financing requirement (CFR) for the year is shown in Table 2 and represents a key prudential indicator for the Council. The CFR outturn for 2025/26 is £307.810m which is £4.573m lower than forecast at Quarter 3 due to a decrease in the borrowing requirement for the year, due to slippage on the capital programme.

**Table 2: change in the Capital Financing Requirement 2025/26 - in £ millions**

|                                                |  |                |
|------------------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| <b>Opening CFR at 1 April 2025</b>             |  | <b>300.041</b> |
| Add: Capital expenditure financed by borrowing |  | 12.665         |
| Less: Minimum Revenue Provision                |  | (4.896)        |
| Less: Other adjustments                        |  | (0.000)        |
| <b>Closing CFR at 31 March 2026</b>            |  | <b>307.810</b> |
|                                                |  |                |
| <b>Forecast CFR at Q3 2025/26</b>              |  | <b>312.383</b> |

#### Treasury Position for 2025/26

- 4.12 Whilst the measure of the Council's underlying need to borrow is the CFR, the Corporate Director of Finance can manage the Council's actual borrowing position by:
- borrowing to the CFR level; or
  - choosing to utilise some temporary cash flows instead of borrowing ("under borrowing").
- 4.13 Most local authorities have a degree of under borrowing within their CFR at present. This tends to be in the range of 10% - 15% of the total CFR. This means that external debt is lower than the need to borrow and other resources available have been used to bridge the gap. This strategy has been common within local government as part of an approach to generating revenue savings, in relation to annual capital financing costs, by deferring external borrowing to a later point in time driven by cash flow needs.

4.14 The Council's treasury management debt and investment position is organised by the corporate finance team to ensure that there is adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments, and to manage risks within all treasury management activities. Procedures and controls to achieve these objectives are well established both through member reporting and through officer activity detailed in the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

4.15 A summary of outstanding balances is shown below.

**Table 3 – summary of borrowing and investments**

| <i>Treasury Position</i>       | 2024/25<br>Principal<br>(£m) | Average<br>Rate<br>(%) | 2025/26<br>Principal<br>(£m) | Average<br>Rate<br>% |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) | 225.604                      | 3.76                   | 246.092                      | 3.88                 |
| Banks                          | 13.000                       | 6.83                   | 13.000                       | 6.83                 |
| Other loans                    | 14.838                       | 3.82                   | 21.497                       | 3.91                 |
| <b>Total Debt</b>              | <b>253.442</b>               | <b>3.92</b>            | <b>280.589</b>               | <b>4.02</b>          |
| Cash Investments               | (21.555)                     | 4.45                   | (9.053)                      | 3.86                 |
| <b>Net Debt</b>                | <b>231.887</b>               |                        | <b>271.536</b>               |                      |

4.16 Just under 88% of the Council's total debt is with central government via the PWLB on 31 March 2026. These loans vary in length from between 5 – 45 years and in essence match the lives of the capital assets they are financing. Most of the bank debt was taken out in the early 2000's when interest rates were higher, but these options were more attractive than borrowing from central government at the time. Due to the terms and conditions on these loans, there is no option to refinance them in the short term.

4.17 The other loans represent short-term borrowing from other local authorities. At times the Council will need cash liquidity to finance its revenue and capital commitments but interest rates for long term borrowing are not in line with the overall treasury strategy. In these cases, it is better value to finance this cash need over short periods of time, normally 1-3 months, even if interest rates are higher at that point. This allows the Council time to monitor market rates on long term debt for temporary reductions in rates caused by fluctuations in economic data and government policy.

4.18 Cash investments are temporary surpluses in liquidity that are either invested with central government via the Debt Management Office or with other local authorities with a cash need. Approximately £1.100m in interest was earned during 2025/26 on these balances.

4.19 The Council's total debt outstanding on 31st March 2026 was £280.589m. The Council's revised CFR position was estimated to be £312.383m at Quarter 3. However, the actual out turn position was £307.810m. When comparing this to our actual borrowing, this meant that the Council was "under borrowed" by £27.221m or 8.8%.

4.20 This "under borrowed" amount was financed by internal borrowing from cash balances which means that the amount that could have been invested externally was reduced to cover this. The reduced under borrowed position has the dual effect of reducing revenue costs incurred by the General Fund budget because borrowing costs are generally greater than investment returns. It also reduces counterparty risk by reducing our exposure to the inherent risks that exist in commercial banks and other financial institutions.

4.21 **Gross Borrowing and the CFR** – in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year (2024/25) plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2025/26) and next two financial years (to 2027/28). This essentially means that the Council is not borrowing to support revenue expenditure. This indicator allows the Council some flexibility to borrow in advance of its immediate capital needs, if required. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator as debt levels continue to be lower than needed.

**Table 4 – Gross Borrowing to Capital Financing Requirement comparison in millions**

|                               | 2024/25<br>Actual | 2025/26<br>Original<br>Budget | 2025/26<br>Actual | 2026/27<br>Budget | 2027/28<br>Budget | 2028/29<br>Budget | 2029/30<br>Budget |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Gross External Borrowing      | 253.442           | 292.388                       | 280.589           | 326.028           | 347.623           | 350.651           | 351.233           |
| Capital Financing Requirement | 300.041           | 310.197                       | 307.810           | 333.755           | 350.350           | 355.651           | 358.733           |
| <b>(Under)/Over borrowing</b> | <b>(46.599)</b>   | <b>(17.809)</b>               | <b>(27.221)</b>   | <b>(7.727)</b>    | <b>(2.727)</b>    | <b>(5.000)</b>    | <b>(7.500)</b>    |
| % of CFR                      | 15.5              | 5.7                           | 8.8               | 2.3               | 0.8               | 1.4               | 2.1               |

4.22 **The Authorised Limit** – The Authorised Limit is the "Affordable Borrowing Limit" required by section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council does not have power to borrow above this level.

4.23 **The Operational Boundary** – The Operational Boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the Boundary are both acceptable, subject to the Authorised Limit not being breached.

- 4.24 **Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue expenditure** - This identifies the trend in the revenue cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) as a proportion of the Council's net revenue budget. The actual for this indicator has risen from the previous year due to an increase in the Capital Financing costs outturn.

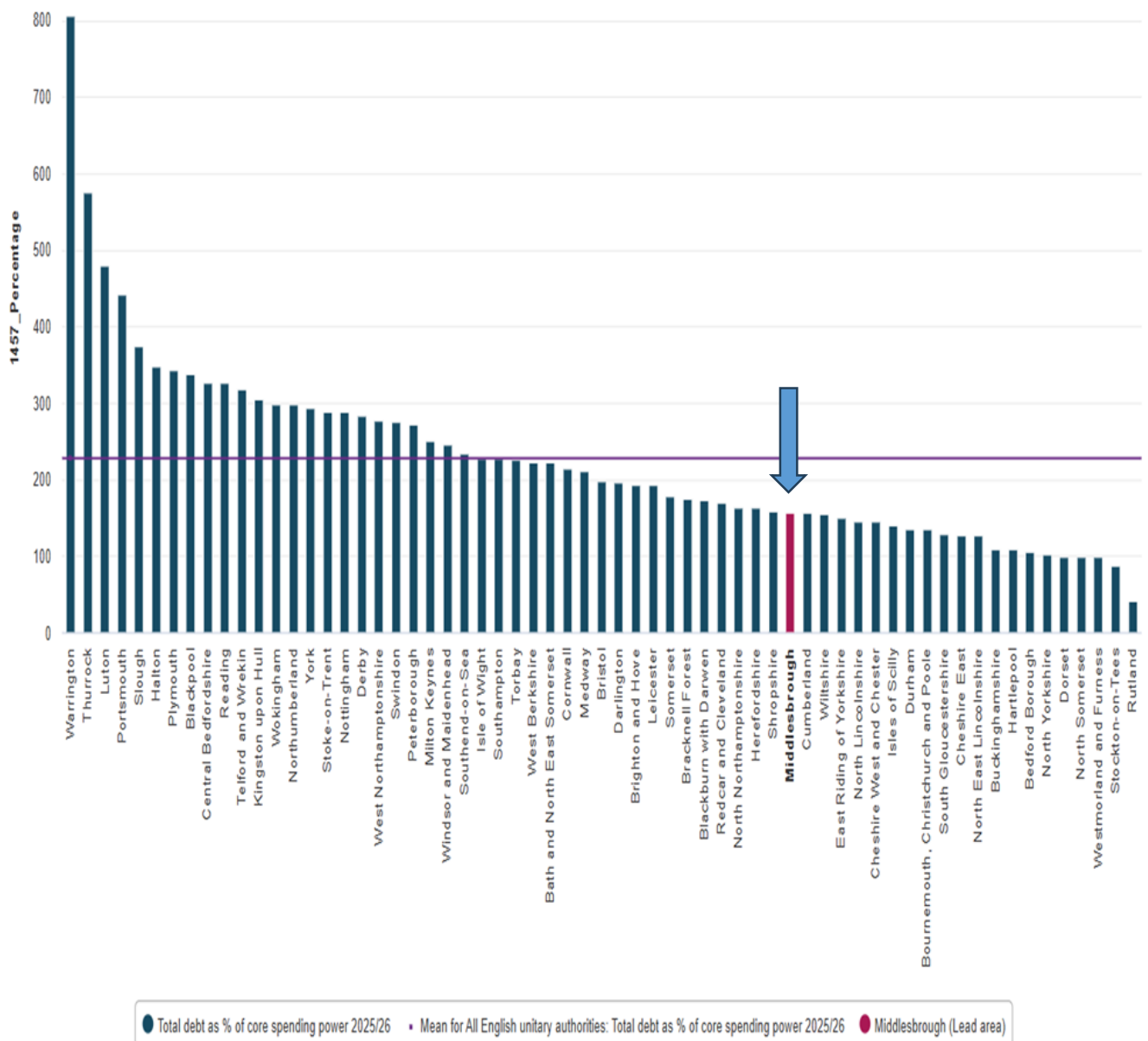
**Table 5 – Key Prudential Indicators Summary**

|                                                 | <b>2024/25<br/>actual</b> | <b>2025/26<br/>actual</b> | <b>2026/27<br/>forecast</b> | <b>2027/28<br/>forecast</b> | <b>2028/29<br/>forecast</b> | <b>2029/30<br/>forecast</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Authorised Limit (£m)                           | 318.000                   | <b>331.000</b>            | 354.000                     | 371.000                     | 376.000                     | 379.000                     |
| Operational Boundary (£m)                       | 308.000                   | <b>321.000</b>            | 344.000                     | 361.000                     | 366.000                     | 369.000                     |
| Capital Financing Requirement (£m)              | 300.041                   | <b>307.810</b>            | 333.755                     | 350.350                     | 355.651                     | 358.733                     |
| Current forecast - capital financing costs (£m) | 11.405                    | <b>11.954</b>             | 14.151                      | 16.022                      | 16.769                      | 17.396                      |
| Net Revenue Budget (£m)                         | 143.190                   | <b>143.304</b>            | 200.840                     | 225.265                     | 241.231                     | 250.017                     |
| Proportion of net revenue budget (%)            | 8.0%                      | <b>8.3%</b>               | 7.0%                        | 7.1%                        | 7.0%                        | 7.0%                        |

- 4.25 Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and its financing, the revenue budget implications of this expenditure incurred in the next few years could extend for up to some 50 years into the future.
- 4.26 The figures in the table above have remained at lower levels when debt for the Council has been increasing. Members should be aware that this is because of the various capital investments in commercial property made by the Council over the last few years for regeneration purposes. This results in around £2.6m of income per year off setting the total capital financing cost by the end of the 2026/27 financial year.
- 4.27 Whilst the Council is not an outlier in terms of its level of total debt (see Graph 1 below), it was previously reaching the limit of its revenue affordability on borrowing to fund its future capital investment. Changes to the 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement and how the net revenue budget have been calculated have changed significantly with the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and the figures prior to this are not exactly comparable with those going forward. This is because the net budget of local authorities has increased substantially from 2026/27 due to the consolidation of a range of grants “rolling” into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) provided to local authorities.

4.28 The Council will need to review what the affordability threshold will be in this context and if the 10% best practice amount previously recommended by CIPFA is still relevant. Capital investment is important for the ongoing Council plan ambitions, however, there continues to be a need to be prudent, sustainable and affordable in its financial plans. The Corporate Director of Finance's view is that the Council will still benefit from prioritising its capital investment decisions over the medium and longer term and should secure its financing through third party funds such as contributions and grants and capital receipts from the sale of assets to minimise future borrowing.

**Graph 1- Total debt as a percentage of core spending power (2025/26) for All English unitary authorities**



Source:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

## Economic Background 2025/26

4.29 A summary of the general economic conditions that have prevailed throughout 2025/26, provided by Arlingclose the Council's treasury management advisors, is attached at Appendix 1 for Members information.

## Summary of the Treasury Management Strategy agreed for 2025/26

4.30 Treasury Management is defined as 'the management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risk'. The main risks that affect a local authority include credit risk, interest rate risk, liquidity risk and refinancing risk.

4.31 The borrowing approach outlined in the treasury strategy was to achieve the optimum value for money for the revenue budget by a combination of long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) when interest rates reached a trigger rate of below 4.75% and the maturity term of the new borrowing fitted in with the Council's current debt portfolio. If these conditions did not exist when cash balances fell below £10.000m, then short term borrowing would be considered for the minimum period possible, given that interest rates were expected to rise over the period. Additionally short-term borrowing would be capped at a maximum of 20% of the total of the Council's gross external debt balance.

4.32 The approach to investing cash balances is to follow the relevant government and CIPFA guidance in prioritising and protecting the principal sums involved by only investing with institutions on the Council's approved lending list. This factor is paramount and more important than the higher interest rates that could be achieved on riskier and illiquid investments with longer duration terms. Only 10% of total investments could be deposited for periods over one financial year given the higher levels of risk associated with these products.

## Treasury Management activity during 2025/26

4.33 During the financial year, the Council maintained an under-borrowed position. This meant that the capital borrowing need (the CFR), was not fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow was used as an interim measure. This strategy was prudent as investment returns were low and minimising counterparty risk on placing investments also needed to be considered.

4.34 All borrowing and investment activity undertaken during the financial year were in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy agreed for the financial year.

4.35 A total of £50.000m of new external borrowing was undertaken during 2025/26. £45.000m of this was long term from the Public Works Loan Board with £5.000m of short-term borrowing from another local authority. This was offset by the repayment of £7.500m of maturing debt and £15.353m of annuity loan repayments. The total level of external debt for the Council rose by £27.147m during 2025/26. All borrowing decisions were authorised in line with the treasury management policy and via consultation with external advisers.

4.36 Investments were made with either central government or other local authorities on an almost daily basis to ensure that the Council's overall liquidity position was protected. All principal sums invested have been repaid on time by each counterparty. The total interest earned on these temporary cash balances for 2025/26 was £1.083m and helped to balance the overall net capital financing budget.

4.37 The Councils Treasury Management function has complied with all the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, which limit the levels of risk associated with its treasury management activities. The adoption and implementation of both the Prudential Code and the code of Practice for Treasury Management mean both that its capital expenditure is prudent, affordable and sustainable and its treasury practices demonstrate a low-risk approach.

4.38 Officers of the Council are aware of the risks of passive management of the treasury portfolio and, with the support of Arlingclose, the Council's advisers, have proactively managed the debt and investments portfolio over the financial year.

## **5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate**

5.1 Not relevant to this report as it relates to corporate financial management issues.

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

6.1 Not relevant as the report is for information only.

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

| <b>Topic</b>                       | <b>Impact</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Financial (including Social Value) | <p>All relevant financial implications are outlined within the body of this report and the supporting Appendix 1. The capital programme and financing being recommended in the budget report continued to remain affordable within the approved Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and revenue budget parameters throughout the financial year.</p> <p>The Council needs to manage and prioritise its future capital investment and associated funding strategies more strictly over the term of the MTFP to maintain revenue cost of capital investment within affordable and prudent parameters. The Prudential and Treasury Management indicators and processes remain robust and within prudent limits over the term of the MTFP.</p> <p>Tables 3 to 5 outlines the key debt metrics, and the capital financing costs as a % of the net revenue budget over the MTFP period.</p> |
| Procurement                        | There are no direct impacts on procurement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legal                                                                 | There are no direct legal implications of this report. All activity on capital financing, investments and borrowing is under current local authority powers under either the local government act 2003 or the capital finance and accounting regulations.                                                                           |
| Risk                                                                  | Any risk related issues are set out within the report. Risk management is an integral part of the Council's treasury management strategy, and these are considered as part of business-as-usual activities and are set out in more detail within the Treasury Management Practices document maintained by the central finance team. |
| Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion      | There are no applicable issues to consider within this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Reducing Poverty                                                      | There are no applicable issues to consider within this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Climate Change / Environmental                                        | There are no applicable issues to consider within this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers | There are no applicable issues to consider within this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Data Protection                                                       | There are no applicable issues to consider within this report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

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

| Action         | Responsible Officer | Deadline |
|----------------|---------------------|----------|
| Not Applicable |                     |          |

### **Appendices**

|   |                                                                            |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Economic Background – 2025/26 financial year (Arlingclose Ltd. March 2026) |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### **Background papers**

| Body      | Report title                                                                                    | Date             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Council   | 2025/26 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan, Council Tax Setting and Treasury Management | 19 February 2025 |
| Executive | Treasury Management Mid-Year Review – 2025/26                                                   | 3 December 2025  |
| Executive | 2025/26 Revenue and Capital Budget Outturn                                                      | 10 June 2026     |

**Contact:** Justin Weston, Head of Corporate Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)

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**Appendix 1****Economic Background – 2025/26 Financial Year**

The financial year was largely dominated by two periods of significant uncertainty and volatility. The first being the US trade tariff ‘Liberation Day’ in April 2025 and the second was the US/Israel war with Iran at the end of February 2026.

After the initial fallout from US trade tariffs, the following months saw some improvements as equity markets made gains and bond yields eased modestly. However, in the UK this trend in bond yields reversed somewhat as an uncertain economic outlook together with concerns around the government’s fiscal position and autumn Budget saw ‘term premia’ rise as investors demanded a higher return for holding gilts.

The Budget itself was more muted than had been expected. Despite a weak economic outlook, this helped UK markets perform better with gilt yields trending downwards, inflation easing, and expectations for cuts in Bank of England (BoE) Bank Rate increasing.

The end of February 2026 saw the start of the war between US/Israel and Iran. The conflict caused oil and other commodity prices to rise sharply as the shipping lanes in the region became effectively closed, restricting global oil supply. At the end of the period, the economic outlook remained highly uncertain in terms of its impact on inflation as well as countries’ fiscal and monetary policy conditions around the globe.

Prior to the start of the war, headline UK consumer price inflation (CPI) inflation had generally been trending downwards, albeit the 3% in February 2026 was unchanged from January. Core CPI also stayed put at 3.1%. Inflation was expected to fall further over the coming months to the BoE’s 2% target, but the war changed this. Inflation is now expected to rise again, but how quickly and by how much depends on the duration of the war and how long commodity prices are elevated.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported the UK economy expanded by 0.1% in Q4 2025. This followed previous modest gains of 0.2% in Q2 and by 0.1% in Q3. Of the subsequent monthly figures, the ONS estimated that GDP showed no growth in January 2026. As this is from before the war started the impact on growth will not be seen formally in the data for a couple more months.

While the most recent labour market figures were slightly better than expected, the general trend has been one of persistent weakness. In the three months to January 2026, the unemployment rate rose to 5.2% (from 5.1%), while the employment rate held at 75.1%. Despite inflation being expected to rise in the coming months, labour market conditions remain loose and so any upward pressure on wages from general inflation is likely to be tempered by the weaker labour market environment.

After cutting Bank Rate to 3.75% in December 2025, the BoE’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to hold rates in February 2026 and then unanimously to do so again in March. Until the war started, financial markets were expecting Bank Rate to be cut to 3.5% at the March meeting. However, the conflict in the Middle East quickly changed this. The MPC noted the risks to both inflation and growth and indicated they could move

rates either up or down depending on the conditions. Financial markets quickly responded to this by pricing in rate hikes.

Following the March MPC meeting, Arlingclose, the Council's treasury adviser, revised its central interest rate view and now predicts Bank Rate will be held at 3.75%. However, the conflict makes the outlook for rates highly uncertain. In the short-term the risks are to the upside with the chance of higher Bank Rate should the MPC decide it wishes to quickly quash potential second-round effects from higher inflation. Further out, if Bank Rate is hiked quickly, the pace and magnitude of subsequent cuts could take it far lower than was previously anticipated as policymakers add significant stimulus to a much weaker economic growth outlook.

The US Federal Reserve had been cutting rates over the period, reducing Fed Funds Rate target range by 0.25% at its December meeting to 3.50%-3.75%. At the three subsequent meetings, the rate was held at the same range. Policymakers noted that while inflation was elevated, economic activity had been expanding but the war with Iran made the path of monetary policy highly uncertain. Despite this, the Fed still suggested that further rate cuts were likely in 2026 and 2027.

The European Central Bank (ECB) has kept its key interest rates on hold since June 2025, maintaining the deposit rate at 2.0% and main refinancing rate at 2.15%. At its March 2026 meeting, the ECB noted the war in the Middle East had significantly increased uncertainty, creating upside risks for inflation and downside risks for growth, leading it to revise up its forecasts accordingly.

Financial markets: After declining sharply early in the financial year following the announcement of US tariffs, sentiment in financial markets had improved but equity and bond markets remained volatile throughout. However, the latter part of the period was dominated by the US/Israel war with Iran, which saw equity markets fall sharply, and bond yields rise as concerns over the inflationary impact from sharply higher oil and other commodity prices outweighed the flight-to-quality into government bonds often seen in conflicts.

Equity markets had been registering gains after the declines during the April sell-off, but the war reversed this, and markets saw another sharp drawdown. Both the FTSE 100 and 250 fell by around 10% over the month from the start of the conflict to the end of the financial year.

The period saw significant volatility in gilt yields. The 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield started the year at 4.65% and ended at 4.86%. However, over this time the 10-year yield hit a low of 4.23% and a high of 4.95% in the space of a month. It was a similar picture for the 20-year gilt which started at 5.18% and ended at 5.45% with a low and high of 4.92% and 5.55% respectively. The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.01% over the 12 months to 31st March.

Credit review: Arlingclose maintained its recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on most of the banks on its counterparty list at 6 months. The other banks remain on 100 days.

After spiking in April 2025 following the US trade tariff announcements, UK credit default swap (CDS) prices had trended down before picking up modestly in October and November. After declining again in December and into the new calendar year, they rose sharply once again when the war in the Middle East started. They were still elevated at the end of the period, but prices for all banks on Arlingclose's counterparty list remained within limits deemed satisfactory for maintaining credit advice at current durations.

Financial market volatility is expected to remain, and CDS levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Council's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

Arlingclose Ltd  
March 2026