

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Date: Wednesday 19th March, 2025
Time: 4.30 pm
Venue: Mandela Room (Municipal Buildings)

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Fire Evacuation

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

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

4. Minutes - Overview and Scrutiny Board - 12 February 2025 3 - 8

5. Executive Member Update - Neighbourhoods

6. Scrutiny Structures 2024/2025 - Evaluation 9 - 20

7. LGA Peer Review and CQC Inspection Update

The Mayor will be in attendance to provide an update on the CQC inspection of Adult Social Care and the 2025 Local Government Association Peer review.

8. Executive Forward Work Programme 21 - 32

8.1 Forward Plan Actions Progress

- i) Transfer of land and assets owned by the Council at Gresham over to the Middlesbrough Development Corporation.
- ii) Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Prevention Strategy 2024 – 2029

9. TVCA Scrutiny Update

10. Scrutiny Chairs Update

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

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Tuesday 11 March 2025

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors I Blades (Chair), J Kabuye (Vice-Chair), J Banks, D Branson, E Clynch, D Coupe, J Ewan, B Hubbard, L Lewis, M McClintock, I Morrish, M Saunders, Z Uddin and G Wilson

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Scott Bonner/ Joanne Dixon, 01642 729708/ 01642 729713, scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/ joanne_dixon@middlesbrough.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on Wednesday 12 February 2025.

PRESENT: Councillors I Blades (Chair), J Kabuye (Vice-Chair), J Banks, D Branson, E Clynch, D Coupe, J Ewan, L Lewis, I Morrish, M Saunders, Z Uddin and G Wilson

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors P Gavigan

OFFICERS: S Bonner, J Dixon and G Field

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors B Hubbard and M McClintock

24/63 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

24/64 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed those present and advised that as there were no scheduled tests, should the fire alarm sound, attendees should evacuate the building via the nearest fire exit and assemble at the Bottle of Notes opposite MIMA.

24/65 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 22 JANUARY 2025**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22 January 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the word 'million' being added after the figure £3.485 on page four.

24/66 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE - ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Councillor Gavigan, Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability, was in attendance at the meeting, accompanied by G Field, Director of Environment and Community Services, to provide the Board with an overview of his portfolio in relation to Environment and Sustainability.

The Executive Member stated that Environment and Community Services strived to deliver services that met the Council's Strategic Vision 'For Middlesbrough to be a thriving, healthier, safer and more ambitious place where people want to live, work, invest, and visit. We will support our residents to live fulfilling lives, to ensure that our communities thrive'.

The two key areas within the portfolio of the Executive Member were:-

- Environment Services
- Highways and Infrastructure

Matters of significance for each of the two key areas were highlighted as follows:-

Environment Services

Waste and Recycling

A new green waste subscription service was launched last year and the Board heard that registration for the service for 2025/26 had now opened. In just over two days, 3,018 households had renewed their subscriptions and there had been 191 new subscribers to the service. In addition, 76 households had taken up payment plans which meant they could stagger the payment of the £40 annual charge.

Members were informed that forthcoming changes to waste and recycling services included:-

- Separate collection of paper and cardboard recycling. From April 2026, all Councils would

be required to comply with Government Legislation (Simpler Recycling) to make separate collections of paper and cardboard from other recycling streams at the kerbside. Middlesbrough currently operated a co-mingled kerbside collection which meant that all recycling streams (paper, cardboard, plastic, tin and glass) were collected together from a single bin, without the need for pre-separation by residents. The new legislation would mean that paper and cardboard would need to be collected from a separate receptacle to other recyclable materials. As a consequence, households would need to be supplied with a new collection receptacle. The potential options included a large canvass sack or small wheeled bin. The preferred option would be to provide an additional small, wheeled bin, however, appropriate consultation would take place in due course.

- Food waste collections. Also from April 2026, Councils in England would be required to undertake weekly collections of household food waste. Households would be provided with a small collection 'caddie' to be kept inside, together with a larger outside bin, into which the contents of the caddie would be placed for weekly collection.

A discussion ensued and the following issues were raised:-

- Members expressed reservations regarding the collection of food waste particularly in relation to keeping the food caddie indoors and whether this would cause odours and also whether the outside containers would attract vermin. It was explained that the caddies were small, sealed containers and that some Council departments had been trialling them and had found no issues. Compostable liners for the caddies would be provided. In terms of attracting vermin, Members were reassured that the outdoor containers were sealed units and that it would be no different to people currently disposing of food waste in their residual waste bins except that it would be collected weekly.
- In response to a query regarding the cost to the Council, it was confirmed that the Government would provide funding to implement food waste collections so there should be no additional cost to the Council.
- A Board Member wished to place on record, thanks to Environment Services for their efforts in cleaning up the town and queried what the cost difference would be in providing an additional small bin versus a large canvass bag for the paper and card recycling. The Director responded that he would obtain the figures for the Board. In terms of preference, he highlighted that a bin would be the preferred option as no manual handling was required with a bin and other benefits included keeping the contents contained.
- A Member expressed concern that residents could potentially need to store five bins and this could cause difficulties in terms of space to store them and lead to unsightliness. The Director advised that the Council had no choice in relation to implementing the separate collection of paper and card and food waste and that the containerised bins should help to keep areas tidy. The outdoor food waste container was a relatively small, sealed unit and would be collected weekly by a specialist vehicle.
- The Executive Member stated that he understood the concerns expressed by Members but felt that the advantage of separate food waste collections was that it would be collected weekly. As well as being a legal necessity, it would also support the Council's green agenda and this would contribute towards increasing recycling across the town and improve sustainability. From a cost perspective, it was significantly cheaper to dispose of recyclable waste than residual waste.
- A Member queried whether the food waste collections would include disposal of pet food waste. The Director advised that he would investigate and respond on this issue.
- In response to a query regarding the disposal method of food waste, it was confirmed that this would be done at a bio-digestion facility which created energy from the waste.
- A query was raised regarding how residents might differentiate between food waste and garden waste, for example, home grown vegetables that were no longer needed. The Director advised that there would be a programme of education and advice provided to residents when the food waste collection scheme was rolled out.

- It was queried whether there would be any increased costs to the Council in terms of an increase in collections particularly weekly collections of food waste. Members were advised that there would be no additional costs to the Council in terms of food waste collections as EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) money had been allocated to the budget in the sum of £3.37 million this year, however, the Council would incur costs in relation to separate paper and cardboard collections. In response to a follow-up question, the Director informed that Middlesbrough sent very little waste to landfill and that residual waste was directed to the Energy from Waste Plant, however, this was a significantly higher cost in terms of disposal compared with disposing of recyclable waste. In addition, the Government planned to introduce a deposit return scheme for glass which was likely to result in a reduction in glass collected from the kerbside at some point in the future.
- It was queried whether residents with limited space who are currently on bagged collections would be provided with different coloured bags for paper and card collections. The Director advised that this was something that would need to be examined and decided upon.
- Members expressed concern regarding the expected increase in refuse vehicles to fulfil the additional collections and it was queried whether recycling collections could potentially be reduced. In response, Members were advised that a complex calculation needed to be undertaken which would take into account the carbon footprint of disposal and how this was offset by recycling the items.
- A Member expressed concern for residents living in areas with alleyways and limited space for additional containers. The Director advised that the Council would continue to provide front of house collections and would enable food waste collections to take place.
- Further concern was raised regarding contamination and bins being left outside in the street. The Director stated he was aware of the issue and that some areas had much higher levels of contamination than others largely as a result of some individuals choosing not to recycle or use the bins provided correctly. Some areas had contamination rates of more than 50% and this needed to be addressed through education and awareness. The main issue was general waste being placed in with recycling and if the bins were used correctly, contamination should not be a problem.
- It was queried whether consideration had been given to using a stacking bin system, similar to that used in Canada. The Director responded that weekly food waste collections would be mandatory and that there would be little benefit in using a stacking system.

Area Care

The Board was advised that there were plans to introduce real Christmas tree collections and bonfire removals for 2025/26, with details of how this would operate to be communicated nearer the time.

Subject to approval of the budget by Full Council, it was proposed to increase spending within Area Care to:-

- Increase pest control
- Increase grass cutting
- Eliminate backlog of tree maintenance
- Increase litter picking
- Increase wider care for infrastructure around areas

The above measures would include an increase in grass cutting from 10 to 13 cuts per year and weekly pest control measures in alleyways plus a quarterly regime in public areas.

During the course of discussion on the above, the following issues were raised:-

- Reference was made to the continuing discrepancies between Middlesbrough Council grass cutting and housing association grass cutting and it was queried whether the Council and housing association could work together to try to improve the situation. The Director confirmed that the Council would continue to work with them and try to negotiate

cutting at the same time wherever possible.

- A Member of the Board welcomed any increase in litter picking and wished to place on record his recognition to the Boro Champions for the excellent work they did within the community to collect litter. The Director also thanked the Boro Champions and wished to encourage communities to get involved by caring for their areas.
- A Member questioned whether increased provision of the above services would result in recruitment of additional staff and, if so, whether they would be seasonal. The Director confirmed that a combination of seasonal and year-round staff would be required.
- A Board Member referred to frequent requests from residents for additional litter bins, as many public litter bins filled up quickly, and asked whether it would be possible for additional bins to be sited and also whether separate dog waste bins were still used. The Director advised additional litter bins could be provided should the Council choose to make additional money available from the Council's budget. In relation to separate dog waste bins, these were no longer provided and all waste should be placed in the general waste bins.
- A Member expressed concern in relation to significant increases in the cost of commercial pest control and felt this might result in businesses desisting from using pest control companies due to the increased cost, in turn resulting in an increase in the rat population. In response, Members were advised that pest control was incumbent on businesses and that the Council carried out inspections.
- In response to a question as to whether pest control services would be provided free of charge, it was clarified that the Council would not be providing pest control to residents, and that the reference was in relation to the Council's own spaces.
- A Member stated that rats were prolific in the town centre, particularly due to high volumes of fly-tipping in the alleyways and felt that pest control in these areas should be prioritised over grass cutting. It was acknowledged that when weekly alley cleaning had to be cut, the problem had worsened, however, it was hoped that additional resources would see a return of fortnightly alleyway cleansing which should improve the situation.
- A Member welcomed the proposed increases to services and wished to acknowledge the hard work of the department in sustaining services whilst under significant financial pressures and reduced resources.
- In response to a question as to whether the Council had sufficient Environmental Street Wardens, it was stated that it would always be good to increase enforcement activity.

Highway Services

The Executive Member advised that Board that an increase in funding would see an increase in reactive maintenance, footpath maintenance and a reduction in potholes.

Significant work would be undertaken on structures and bridges to ensure safety and work would begin on the removal of Linthorpe Road cycle lane.

Work was underway to determine the amount of additional funding that would be allocated for the above, however, it would be in excess of £900,000 provided from the Department of Transport, via the TVCA.

The following issues were raised during discussion:-

- In response to a question regarding the removal of Linthorpe Road cycle lane, it was confirmed that this would be funded by the TVCA but that the Council would remove it. There would need to be a formal tender process, taking around three months, followed by a removal scheme which would take around six months.
- In response to a query, the Director advised Members that a list of road resurfacing schemes was available to view on the Council website.

- In response to a query regarding requests for footpath repairs and the cost of grass verge removals in the TS3 area it was stated that the cost of verge replacements was in the millions and was accounted for in the budget. In terms of footpath repairs, any notifications needed to be fed into the Highways Section and an inspection would be carried out .
- Concerns were expressed in relation to parking issues in the older housing estates, such as TS3 area, where homes had been built before high car ownership and now posed issues such as emergency service vehicles not being able to gain access through various streets due to parked cars. It was acknowledged that this was an issue and that the Executive was keen to develop neighbourhood plans taking such issues into account. These types of issues needed to be fed into that work and would require a multi-agency response.
- A Member raised the issue of repairs/replacement of wooden structures that had deteriorated over time, including fencing, in areas such as Fairy Dell and whether it would be possible for them to be repaired also queried whether additional bus shelters could be looked at in out of town centre areas, where additional housing had been built. The Director advised that such requests could be fed into the Highways and Transport Team.
- A Member queried whether the Members' Small Scheme Allowance would be brought back into use. The Director confirmed that he no longer had responsibility for this and the Democratic Services Officer agreed to make enquiries.
- A Member queried whether there was any update on the new incinerator facility. The Board was advised that this was currently subject to a procurement process and it was hoped that, if successful, the facility would be built and start receiving waste in 2029.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member and Director of Environment and Community Services for their attendance and the information provided.

AGREED as follows:-

1. That the information provided be noted.
2. That a response be provided to the Board as to whether pet food waste could be included in the food waste collections.
3. That information be provided to the Board regarding the cost difference between providing an additional bin versus canvas bag for paper and card collections.
4. That confirmation be sought and provided in relation to the current position regarding the Members' Small Scheme Allocations.

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EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced the item for the Board's consideration. A copy of the Work Programme was attached at Appendix A and Members were asked to raise any issues they had in relation to any of the items listed.

A Member made reference to the item named 'Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Prevention Strategy 2024 – 2029' and queried whether the terminology being used was appropriate. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to feed the comment back to the service area.

A Member queried whether the item 'Transfer of Land and Assets at Gresham to Middlesbrough Development Corporation' was on hold or proceeding. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to make enquiries.

AGREED that the report be noted and that the Democratic Services Officer follow up with regard to:-

1. The terminology used in the item 'Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper

Prevention Strategy’.

2. Request an update regarding the current position on the item ‘Transfer of Land and Assets at Gresham to Middlesbrough Development Corporation’.

24/68 **FORWARD PLAN ACTIONS PROGRESS**

There were no outstanding actions.

NOTED

24/69 **SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE**

Place Scrutiny Panel

The Chair of the Place Scrutiny Panel updated the Board that the Panel had met on 27 January 2025 and had received annual updates on Flood Risk Management and RIPA. The Task and Finish Group on Home to School Transport was in the process of drafting a Final Report on the topic. The Task and Finish Group on Empty Properties had circulated evidence to the wider Panel and was awaiting response and further guidance on next steps.

People Scrutiny Panel

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Panel advised that the Panel had not met since the last meeting of OSB but was due to meet on Monday, 17 February, when it would receive further evidence in relation to its scrutiny topic of ‘Children Missing from Education’. The Panel would also consider terms of reference for its new scrutiny topic of ‘Homelessness’.

Overview and Scrutiny Board – Task and Finish Group: Community Cohesion

Councillor Kabuye updated Members that the Group was due to meet with the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner next week and would then start putting together all of the evidence gathered.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

24/70 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

There were no other urgent items to be considered.

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Director of Legal and Governance Services
Relevant Executive Member:	Not Applicable
Submitted to:	Overview and Scrutiny Board
Date:	19 March 2025
Title:	Scrutiny Structures 2024/2025 – Evaluation
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	No
Why:	Not applicable
Subject to call in?:	No
Why:	Non-Executive decision.

Executive summary

On 7 May 2024, the Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed to implement a new scrutiny model. In accordance with what was agreed by the Board, this report provides an evaluation of the new scrutiny arrangements for the 2024-25 Municipal Year.

Following consideration of the new arrangements and feedback from Members, the Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to note the findings and consider approving one of the proposed recommendations for implementation for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

It is considered that the proposed recommendations are realistic alternatives to the current scrutiny structure that will enable the continued delivery of an effective scrutiny function.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the Overview and Scrutiny Board's approval of one of the proposed recommendations in respect of the scrutiny arrangements for the 2025-26 Municipal Year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board approves one of the following options for implementation for the 2025-26 Municipal Year:-

1. No Change to the current structure:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Place Scrutiny Panel (covering Environment and Regeneration).
- People Scrutiny Panel (covering Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Health).

2. Establish an additional Scrutiny Panel with the following configuration:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Place Scrutiny Panel (covering Environment and Regeneration).
- People Scrutiny Panel (covering Adult Social Care and Children's Services).
- Health Scrutiny Panel.

3. Establish an additional Scrutiny Panel with the following configuration:

- Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- Place Scrutiny Panel (covering Environment and Regeneration).
- Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel.
- Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.

- 2.2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board could reject the above recommendations and propose its own scrutiny structure having had due regard to the recommendations above.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

- 3.1 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Terms of Reference, the Board has delegated power to appoint and disband Scrutiny Panels as it sees fit.
- 3.2 Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed that an evaluation of the new scrutiny arrangements for the 2024-25 municipal year would be undertaken and presented to the Board by April 2025.

4. Background and relevant information

- 4.1 On 7 May 2024, a report setting out proposals for a new scrutiny model was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The report set out the rationale for the proposed changes which included the need to ensure the scrutiny function continued to deliver

an effective service for Middlesbrough’s residents, despite challenging operational considerations.

- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed a revised scrutiny structure, reducing its thematic scrutiny panels from five to two. A result of reducing the panels in this way provided an enhancement of existing scrutiny support. A secondary, but interlinked benefit of this reconfiguration was an easing on pressure for reporting Officers and improved resilience within the Democratic Services Team.
- 4.3 The previous scrutiny model in Middlesbrough consisted of an Overview and Scrutiny Board and five thematic scrutiny panels (Adult Social Care and Services, Children’s Services, Environment, Health, Regeneration). Due to the nature of the thematic panels, there were several areas of overlap including demands on reporting officers’ time and resources to support the panels as effectively as possible.
- 4.4 The new model, implemented in May 2024, consists of an Overview and Scrutiny Board and two thematic scrutiny panels – People and Place. Whilst it is acknowledged that the remit of both panels is broad and varied, each is supported by two Democratic Services Officers (DSOs) with the aim of providing improved, and consistent, support to the panels without a reduction in the frequency of panel meetings.
- 4.5 To compensate for the reduction in panels, the number of places available on each panel was increased to ensure non-Executive Members continued to have the opportunity to be involved in scrutiny.
- 4.6 The Board subsequently agreed the following:-
- a) That the proposed scrutiny structure and model be implemented in the 2024-25 municipal year.
 - b) That, in April 2025, an evaluation be undertaken to review the scrutiny arrangements to evidence the impact of the new structure and model, identify tangible results, diagnose any problems and prescribe any solutions.
 - c) That the findings of the full evaluation be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.
- 4.7 The table below sets out the current structure in terms of membership places and support from Democratic Services.

Panel Name	Number of Places	Democratic Services Support
Overview & Scrutiny Board	15 places (currently one vacancy)	1.5 DSO support
Place Scrutiny Panel	13 places (currently one vacancy)	2 DSO support
People Scrutiny Panel	13 places (currently one vacancy)	2 DSO support

- 4.8 As part of the new arrangements, it was agreed that an evaluation of the first year be undertaken and reported to OSB by April 2025.

- 4.9 During 2023-2024 two final reports were submitted to OSB compared to five final reports in 2022-2023. However, there had been changes to the panels, with the two previous Children's Services Panels (Social Care and Learning) amalgamating into a single Panel and the Culture and Communities Panel disbanding with other panels picking up its remit.
- 4.10 To put this into context, in 2022, there was one full time DSO working exclusively on Health Scrutiny and this post was deleted in December of that year. One full time DSO from the existing team then took on this role, with other DSOs in the team absorbing the non-scrutiny elements of this post in addition to their existing workloads.
- 4.11 During the current year, one final report has been submitted to OSB and three are currently in draft form and it is anticipated that they will be submitted by the end of the current Municipal Year.
- 4.12 Development – Whilst scrutiny specific training has not been delivered this year, there have been development opportunities for Members that are applicable to scrutiny, such as training on questioning and listening skills. Members were also offered the opportunity to complete a Personal Development Plan and Skills Audit to identify any specific training needs. The new scrutiny arrangements have provided an opportunity for Task and Finish groups to be established, and this has highlighted an additional training need that will be addressed in the forthcoming year.
- 4.13 Where additional scrutiny training is required, this will need to be considered as part of the Member Development Programme going forward.

Analysis

- 4.14 To analyse the current scrutiny arrangements, a comparator between the Municipal Years 2023/24 (five panels) and 2024/2025 (two panels) has been carried out. The analysis has focused on reviews, updates and task and finish groups taking place within scrutiny panels. As timings for final scrutiny reports considered by Executive can be affected by outside factors, these have not been considered as they do not accurately reflect scrutiny activity.
- 4.15 There are some general observations, and tangible results, when comparing scrutiny activity between 2023/24 and 2024/2025. These include: -
- All statutory updates, required to be submitted to the relevant scrutiny panels, have been achieved - with a total of six statutory updates being submitted, compared with five the previous year.
 - In total, three full scrutiny reviews have taken place with each topic currently having a draft final report in development, and two further scrutiny topic investigations having commenced. A further final report was finalised by the Place Scrutiny Panel at the start of the year, carried over from the former Environment Scrutiny Panel, and was approved by OSB in October 2024. This compares with a total of two final reports being submitted to OSB and Executive the previous year. Therefore, the number of completed reviews and final reports has increased from the previous year.

- No meetings have been cancelled this year, compared with a total of five cancelled meetings in the year 2023/24.
- There has been an increase in the pre-decision element of scrutiny. It is noted by Democratic Services that a protocol for pre-decision scrutiny is required and this is in development.
- The establishment of three Task and Finish Groups has also increased productivity of scrutiny, however, it is recognised that some form of formal guidance and training needs to be drawn up for implementation in the new Municipal Year.
- Having two DSOs to support each panel has increased resilience within the team and ensured continuity of support for the panels.
- Work Programming has not been affected, other than Overview and Scrutiny Board having oversight of a single work programme for all panels.
- Scrutiny Panel meetings have largely continued as on a 'single issue' or topic basis.
- Concurrent reviews have been undertaken in the Place Panel which has been possible due to support provided by two DSOs. It is also worth noting that such arrangements are at the discretion of the Chair and Members of that Panel as to how it wishes to operate.
- A new initiative in 2024-25 has been quarterly meetings between the Democratic Services Team and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the three Scrutiny Panels. These meetings provide an opportunity for discussion on strategic scrutiny matters, including an evaluation against the statutory scrutiny guidance (as provided by the CfGS) and resolving any emerging scrutiny issues.
- Since the beginning of the 2024-25 Municipal Year, the three-weekly Democratic Services' Team Meetings include scrutiny as a standing item on every agenda for any discussion that may be required.

4.16 In terms of scrutiny outcomes, the following scrutiny activity has taken place within the respective panels:-

4.17 Place Scrutiny Panel

Reviews – The Panel has undertaken two scrutiny investigations concurrently - 'Empty Properties' and 'Home to School Transport'. Final reports are currently being drafted in respect of each topic and it is hoped that they will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for approval by the Municipal Year end.

Task and Finish Groups – The Panel established two separate Task and Finish Groups to assist with the above reviews. Each Group was made up of four Members of the Scrutiny Panel and undertook additional work outside of the formal panel meetings to carry out research and gather relevant evidence, which was fed back at formal panel meetings.

By the end of February 2025, all statutory updates had been provided to the Place Scrutiny Panel:-

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

The Panel is due to commence its third scrutiny review of the year in March 2025.

4.24 People Scrutiny Panel

Reviews – The Panel is in the process of drafting a final report in relation to its scrutiny investigation on ‘Children Missing from Education’ and has commenced a review of ‘Homelessness’.

Task and Finish Groups – The Panel did not establish any task and finish groups.

The Scrutiny Panel also considered the Quality Account 2023/24 for South Tees NHS Foundation Trust and the Quality Account 2023/24 for Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and the Tees Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2024-2029.

By the end of December 2024 all statutory updates had been provided to the Panel:-

- South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2023/24.
- Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2023/24.

4.25 Overview and Scrutiny Board

Reviews – At the start of the year, the Board agreed not to undertake any topical reviews, unless there were any emerging or urgent issues that the Board wished to scrutinise.

A schedule of Executive Member attendance at the Board was drawn up at the start of the year and an Executive Member has attended each meeting to provide the Board with an overview of their portfolio, aspirations, priorities and challenges. These sessions have prompted robust discussion and questions, with additional requests for information which were followed up and subsequently distributed to Members via Democratic Services.

Task and Finish Groups – The Board established a Task and Finish Group to investigate ‘Community Cohesion’. The Group, made up of three Board Members, has gathered information from relevant officers and met with a local MP and Police and Crime Commissioner. The Task and Finish Group is currently drafting a report for consideration by the Board.

Pre-decision scrutiny – Whilst the Executive Forward Work Programme has always been a regular item on the OSB agenda, as part of emphasising the pre-decision scrutiny process, there has been greater focus on the content of the Work Programme at each meeting and Members were encouraged to request further information as they felt appropriate.

During the course of the year, the Board requested further information in relation to the following items:-

- Management and Maintenance of Development Land/Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation.
- Community Safety Enforcement Powers – Withdrawal of Neighbourhood Warden Police Accreditation Powers.

- Municipal Buildings Roof Repairs.
- Cemetery provision.

Detailed information was obtained from the relevant officers, and provided to the Board, via Democratic Services.

The Board has also made requests for additional information prompted by the Executive Member presentations.

Generally, DSOs have noted an increase in requests for information from Members which they have responded to.

The Board also received updates in relation to:-

- Consultation on the Review of Electoral Arrangements in Middlesbrough - Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).
- Corporate Performance Quarter One.
- Revenue and Capital Budget Projected Outturn Quarter One 2024/25.
- Overview from Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA).
- Corporate Performance Quarter Two.
- Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring and Forecast Outturn Quarter Two 2024/25.
- 2025/26 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29.
- Levick Court

The Board also held a Call-In meeting in relation to Disposal of Land at Nunthorpe Grange.

Workshops and written feedback

- 4.18 Two workshops were held inviting all Members and Leadership Team to provide feedback on the new arrangements. Members who were unable to attend were invited to provide written/verbal feedback to the team.
- 4.19 Seven Members attended the workshop on 27 February 2025 and eight Members attended on 4 March 2025, in addition to the Mayor and senior officers.
- 4.20 Written feedback was received from four Members, two of whom also attended the workshops.
- 4.21 A summary of the feedback received can be found in Appendix A. The general headings related to the following areas:-
- Number of panels.
 - Size and remit of panels.
 - Aligning scrutiny panels with the Council Plan priorities.
 - Recognition of the importance of the scrutiny function with appropriate resourcing.
 - The workload of Democratic Services could limit scrutiny and further resources were required.
 - Update on progress against the work programme.

- Suggested greater involvement from Panel Members in agenda setting for the next/future meetings, guided by the terms of reference for the current topic.
- The role of the Chair in encouraging and involving Members in the work of the panel.
- Members identified a training need around involvement in Task and Finish Groups and increased administrative support.
- Suggestion of site visits.
- Meeting days and timings.
- Evening meetings.
- Need to ensure that each scrutiny panel was held on a different day of the week.
- Pre-decision scrutiny.
- Focus for Executive Member attendance at Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- The role of scrutiny in policy development.
- A mechanism to undertake 'ad-hoc' scrutiny investigations on certain issues.
- Communication between Executive and Scrutiny.
- Councillor time commitments to Scrutiny.

4.22 Some Members have expressed concern regarding days/times of meetings as a barrier to attendance. Whilst this has been noted by Democratic Services, it is ultimately for Members to decide their preference. Traditionally, meetings are set following the Council's Annual General Meeting, in consultation with appointed Chairs.

4.23 Potential alternatives to this could be considered by Members, if they so wished. For example, specific dates and times for each scrutiny panel could be determined prior to nominations for the Annual General Meeting, or holding a 'scrutiny week', as operated in some local authorities, in which all the panel meetings are held in one week of the month, with each panel meeting on a different day.

4.24 Having considered the findings of the evaluation of the first year of the new scrutiny arrangements, both quantitative and qualitative data suggests that the People Panel's remit is too large (as it covers two directorates and external health care providers) and that not all themes within its remit have been covered sufficiently.

4.25 In recognition that the remit of the People Scrutiny Panel is too large, it is proposed that this is split to create two separate Panels – either by grouping Adult Social Care and Children's Services together and having a separate Health Scrutiny Panel or splitting the Panel to group Adult Social Care with Health (to be more reflective of the Service Directorates) and a separate Children's Services Scrutiny Panel. This will help to ensure that each area receives sufficient focus when determining the work programme.

4.26 In terms of place allocations; both Recommendations two and three above propose that Overview and Scrutiny Board remains a 15-place panel, with each of the three thematic scrutiny panels having nine places each. The rationale for this is that the current People and Place Scrutiny Panels have a total of 26 places available and a reduction to nine places across three panels is the closest equivalent - offering a total of 27 places. This will provide sufficient opportunity for any Non-Executive Member wishing to join a scrutiny panel.

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

- 5.1 A possible alternative to the proposals set out in the recommendations would be to establish more thematic scrutiny panels than those recommended. While there are numerous potential options this has not been recommended. A greater increase in the number of panels than recommended above, may have a detrimental impact on the level of support that can currently be provided by Democratic Services.
- 5.2 A further suggestion was to align scrutiny panels with the Council Plan priorities. This has not been proposed as a possible recommendation as the Council Plan will be refreshed in 2027 when there will be a potential for the priorities to change, in turn requiring further changes to the scrutiny panels. However, it is recognised that more thought should be given as to how the Council Plan priorities are addressed during development of the Work Programme, with a greater focus on how each investigation links to the priorities.

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

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	Any increases in the numbers of Scrutiny Panels will entitle Chairs of those new panels to a Special Responsibility Allowance at a rate of £5,595 each. Any identified training for Scrutiny Members will be considered as part of the Member Development Programme budget.
Legal	The recommended scrutiny model is inclusive of the statutory Scrutiny Panels therefore there are no legal implications.
Risk	The suggested remodelling of the Scrutiny Panels will ensure that communities are at the heart of what we do and that we continue to deliver value for money and enhance the reputation of Middlesbrough.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	There are no issues relating to Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion.
Climate Change / Environmental	There are no issues relating to Climate Change or the Environment.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	There are no issues relating to Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers.
Data Protection	There are no Data Protection issues

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

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Once the model is approved by Overview and Scrutiny Board, the new panels will be constituted	Ann-Marie Wilson Head of Legal Services	21 May 2025

by Council at the Annual Meeting 2025.		
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Appendices

1	Member Comments from Scrutiny Workshops
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Ann-Marie Wilson, Head of Legal Services

Email: annmarie_wilson@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Evaluation of New Scrutiny Structure – 2024-25 - Member Feedback from Scrutiny Workshops.

- Number of panels – Some Members commented that they would like to see a return to five thematic panels in addition to OSB, stating they believed scrutiny to be more effective with this structure.
- Size and remit of panels – Whilst one Member, commented that the remit of the People Panel was too wide and that a separate Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel should be established, another commented that they felt the current structure had worked well and particularly valued the support of two Democratic Services Officers and expressed concern that should additional panels be created, this could significantly dilute support time available from Democratic Services. A further comment was received expressing concern regarding the remit of People Panel covering the two highest-spending areas of the council – Adult Social Care and Children’s Services, however, further concerns were expressed regarding potential issues with Member attendance should the Scrutiny Panel be split in two.
- A further suggestion was to align scrutiny panels with the Council Plan priorities.
- Recognition of the importance of the scrutiny function with appropriate resourcing.
- The workload of Democratic Services could limit scrutiny and further resources were required.
- Update on progress against the work programme – Members suggested that regular updates on how current topics were progressing against the work programme should be provided during Scrutiny Panel meetings.
- Suggested greater involvement from Panel Members in agenda setting for the next/future meetings, guided by the terms of reference for the current topic.
- The role of the Chair in encouraging and involving Members in the work of the panel.
- Members identified a training need around involvement in Task and Finish Groups and increased admin support. A Member also commented that it would be useful to identify expectations of tasks to be undertaken by Members and Officers (eg who does what).
- Suggestion of site visits.
- Meeting days and timings – This provided a mixed response. Some Members expressed a preference for meetings to be held earlier in the day (up to a 3.30pm start time), whilst others indicated a preference for 4.00/4.30pm start times.

Appendix 1

Evaluation of New Scrutiny Structure – 2024-25 - Member Feedback from Scrutiny Workshops.

- Regarding evening meetings, some Members/Officers may rely on using public transport which can make attendance more difficult at evening meetings.
- Late meetings can also impact on officers having to make alternative/additional arrangements outside of normal working hours so a balance was needed between Members' preferences and available resources.
- Member attendance – feedback was received from a Member that they had concerns regarding meeting attendance by Members and highlighted that there were many variables as to why Members may not be able to attend scrutiny meetings, particularly for those that were in full time employment.
- Need to ensure that each scrutiny panel was held on a different day of the week.
- Pre-decision scrutiny – a suggestion was made regarding increased oversight of the Executive Forward Work Programme and continued engagement with Executive.
- Strengthening communication between Executive and Scrutiny. A Member suggested that it would be useful to discover proposals being made by Executive in areas which scrutiny is interested in at an early stage in order to make a potential contribution and to ensure scrutiny input is valued.
- In relation to Executive Member attendance at OSB, it was suggested that due to Members having limited time in which to present to the Board, it may be useful for areas of focus/potential questions to be submitted to the Executive Member in advance of the meeting.
- To examine how the role of scrutiny in policy development can be increased, ensuring the relevant scrutiny panels are made aware of long term/future issues as early as possible and that scrutiny can add value. This could include improving communication between Chairs/Vice Chairs and the Service Directors.
- Ensure there is a mechanism to undertake 'ad-hoc' scrutiny investigations on certain issues.
- Reference was made to the recent Care Quality Commission report, stating that staff felt more scrutiny was needed.
- Suggestion to examine whether there is scope for a Members to undertake individual research, in their own time, and submit it to a scrutiny panel or to OSB.

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



Report of:	Chief Executive
Relevant Executive Member:	Not applicable
Submitted to:	Overview and Scrutiny Board
Date:	19 March 2025
Title:	Executive Forward Work Programme
Report for:	Discussion
Status:	Public
Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
Key decision:	Not applicable
Why:	Not applicable
Subject to call in?:	Not applicable
Why:	Not applicable

Proposed decision(s)

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider the content of the Executive Forward Work Programme.

Executive summary

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.

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.

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

1. Purpose

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

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider 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.

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

5.1 Not applicable.

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

6.1 Financial (including procurement and Social Value)

Not applicable

6.2 Legal

Not applicable

6.3 Risk

Not applicable

6.4 Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion

Not applicable

6.5 Climate Change / Environmental

Not applicable

6.6 Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers

Not applicable

6.7 Data Protection

Not applicable

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	Relevant Officer	As directed by OSB

Executive Forward Work Plan.		
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Appendices

A	Forward Work Plan
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
NA		

Contact: Scott Bonner/ Joanne Dixon

Email: scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk/joanne_dixon@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

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Appendix A



Forward Plan 1 September 2024 - 31 May 2025

FOR THE PERIOD 10 MARCH 2025 TO 31 MAY 2025

Ref No. / Ward	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
1022587 All Wards	Out of Hours Registrars Offer To update on a minor change to the policy	Executive Member - The Mayor 25 Mar 2025	Delivering Best Value	KEY	Public		1) The Mayor <i>Ann-Marie Wilson</i> <i>annmarie_wilson@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
1022424 All Wards	Neighbourhoods Model	Executive 2 Apr 2025	Safe and Resilient Communities	KEY	Public		1) The Mayor <i>Geoff Field</i> <i>geoff_field@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
1022674	Impact Assessment Policy The purpose is to conduct an interim review to propose inclusion of an additional grouping	Executive Member - The Mayor 2 Apr 2025	A Healthy Place to Live		Public		1) The Mayor <i>Ann-Marie Johnstone</i> <i>Ann-Marie_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Ward document was classified as:	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
1022586	First Annual Review of the Social Value Charter To provide an update to Executive on the first year of implementation of the charter	Executive 30 Apr 2025	A Healthy Place to Live		Public		1) The Mayor <i>Ann-Marie Johnstone</i> <i>Ann-Marie_Johnstone@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
Deputy Mayor and Executive Member - Education and Culture							
Executive Member - Adult Social Care and Public Health							
1021995 All Wards	Director of Public Health Annual Report Directors of Public Health have a statutory requirement to write an annual independent report on the health of their population. The report is to raise awareness and understanding	Executive 2 Apr 2025			Public		3) Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health <i>Mark Adams, Director of Public Health - South Tees</i> <i>mark_adams@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Ward document was classified as:	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
OFFICIAL	of local health issues, highlight areas of specific concern, and make recommendations for change						
I022435 All Wards	Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeper Prevention Strategy 2024 – 2029 To inform Executive of the updates to previous strategy	Executive 30 Apr 2025	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		3) Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health <i>Rachel Jenkins</i> <i>rachel_jenkins@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
Executive Member - Children's Services							
I022397 All Wards	Internal Residential Future Delivery Model To update Executive on the internal residential future delivery model	Executive 30 Apr 2025	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Public		4) Executive Member for Children's Services <i>Joe Tynan</i> <i>joe_tynan@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
I022398 All Wards	EXEMPT: Hollylodge Future Delivery Model To update Executive on Hollylodge future delivery model	Executive 30 Apr 2025	A Healthy Place to Live	KEY	Fully exempt		4) Executive Member for Children's Services <i>Joe Tynan</i> <i>joe_tynan@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Ward document was classified as: Newport OFFICIAL	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
1022484	The Disposal of Land and Assets at Gresham to Middlesbrough Development Corporation To consider the transfer of land and assets owned by the Council at Gresham over to the Middlesbrough Development Corporation to facilitate a significant mixed use scheme	Executive Sub-Committee for Property 2 Apr 2025	A Successful and Ambitious Town	KEY	Public		5) Executive Member for Development <i>Richard Horniman, Director of Regeneration</i> <i>Richard_Horniman@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>
Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability							
1022499 Acklam	Glendale Road / Tollesby Road Traffic Calming Middlesbrough Council are proposing to introduce a traffic calming scheme, extending to Glendale Road, Tollesby Road and Rievaulx Drive. Survey results	Executive Member Environment and Sustainability 11 Mar 2025	Safe and Resilient Communities		Public		6) Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability <i>Jack Lowery</i> <i>jack_lowery@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Ward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: OFFICIAL	showed high levels of speeding and through traffic in the area. This scheme would reduce these levels, improving the safety of the network for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in the area. The purpose of the report is to detail the results of the public consultation exercise carried out for the proposed scheme and to seek Executive Member approval for the scheme to proceed to the implementation stage.						
I022500 Coulby Newham ; Marton West	Gunnergate Lane Traffic Calming Middlesbrough Council are proposing to introduce a traffic calming scheme covering the length	Executive Member Environment and Sustainability 11 Mar 2025	Safe and Resilient Communities		Public		6) Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability <i>Jack Lowery</i> <i>jack_lowery@middlesbrough.gov.uk</i>

Ref No. Ward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: OFFICIAL	of Gunnergate Lane. Survey results showed high levels of speeding (up to 84% travelling above the 20mph speed limit) and through traffic (a third of all traffic) in the area. This scheme would reduce these levels, improving the safety of the network for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in the area. The purpose of the report is to detail the results of the public consultation exercise and traffic regulation order carried out for the proposed scheme and to seek Executive Member approval for the scheme to proceed to the implementation stage.						

Ref No. Ward document was	Subject / Decision	Decision Maker and Decision Due Date	Council Strategy	Key / PFP	Likely Exemption	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
classified as: Executive Member - Finance							
OFFICIAL 1022317 All Wards	Interim Funding Agreement Policy To agree the formal charging arrangements for residents requiring care but not able to enter into a deferred payment arrangement	Executive 30 Apr 2025	Delivering Best Value		Public		Councillor Nicky Walker, Executive Member for Finance <i>Martin barker</i> <i>martin_barker@middlesbroug</i> <i>h.gov.uk</i>
OFFICIAL Executive Member - Neighbourhoods							
1021795 All Wards	Community Recovery Fund To examine the background and impact of the social unrest and identify projects that can build on social cohesion	Executive 8 Jan 2025		KEY	Public		8) Executive Member for Neighbourhoods <i>Marion Walker, Head of</i> <i>Stronger Communities</i> <i>marion_walker@middlesbroug</i> <i>h.gov.uk</i>

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