

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2022/2023

15 JUNE 2022

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year.

REVIEW OF 2021-2022

2. The topics considered by the Panel in 2021-2022 are listed below for Members' information:
 - Middlesbrough Regeneration Post-Covid 19 – Final Report approved by Executive on 11 January 2022.
 - Middlesbrough Council's Green Strategy – Final Report scheduled to be considered by Executive on 14 June 2022.

Updates

- Teesside Crematorium.
- Fly tipping and bulky waste collection service.
- Eyesore/empty/derelict commercial properties.
- Captain Cook Square Shopping Centre – Regeneration.
- Bus Services.

Ongoing Updates/Reviews

- Teesside Crematorium

In 2020 the Panel undertook a scrutiny review to examine any potential impacts of bereavement services offered by neighbouring local authorities on those provided by Middlesbrough Council at Teesside Crematorium.

At a meeting of the Executive on 19 January 2021, the Panel's Final Report on Teesside Crematorium was approved. Recommendation 1 was that a six-monthly update on income and any mitigation required should be provided to the Scrutiny Panel until further notice.

In line with that recommendation an update was provided to the Panel on 21 July 2021. A further six monthly update was requested in January 2022. However, the Operational Manager informed the Chair that there was little change since the previous report in terms of the financial position and the best time for accuracy of the financial position would be after the year end closed.

Therefore, a further update will be arranged during this year's Work Programme and the Panel may wish to consider whether further updates are required and if so, the frequency of those future updates.

- Waste Management/Waste Disposal Facility and City Fibre

The Panel was scheduled to receive updates on both of the above topics as part of the 2021-2022 Work Programme. Due to unforeseen circumstances, both updates had to be postponed and can be re-scheduled for this year's Work Programme, if the Panel wishes.

- Flood Risk Management

The last update to Panel was in January 2021.

BACKGROUND

3. At the start of every Municipal Year, scrutiny panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year.
4. 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.
5. As part of the process for establishing the work programme, support officers gather information/views from a number of sources. Below is a list of topics which are anticipated to be of particular interest to the scrutiny panel. Members are advised that the list of possible topics is not exhaustive and that additional topics can be added and considered at the scrutiny panel meeting.

Topical issues

Topic	Details
Middlesbrough Development Corporation	<p>In May 2022, Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen and Middlesbrough Mayor Andy Preston set out the plans for a Middlesbrough Development Corporation which would transform the town, make the streets safer and cleaner and go further, faster, in capitalising on the £106 million of investment being made in Middlesbrough.</p> <p>The body would focus on the town centre, Middlehaven and Zetland Historic Quarter and tie them together more closely, including crucial assets such as the Boho zone, Middlesbrough Station, the Northern School of Art, Centre Square, Teesside University and much more. It</p>

	<p>will come at no extra cost to the taxpayer, or have any impact on council tax rates. ¹</p>
<p>Nutrient Neutrality</p>	<p>Nutrient pollution is a big environmental issue for our water ecosystem. In freshwater habitats and estuaries, increased levels of nutrients (especially nitrogen and phosphorus) can speed up the growth of certain plants, impacting wildlife. This is called ‘eutrophication’ and it is damaging protected sites. As such, some sites are classified as being in ‘unfavourable condition’.</p> <p>The sources of nutrients generally include sewage treatment works, septic tanks, livestock, arable farming and industrial processes. Where sites are already in unfavourable (poor) condition, extra wastewater from new housing developments can make matters worse.</p> <p>By designing development alongside suitable mitigation measures, additional damage can often be avoided. This approach is called ‘nutrient neutrality’. It essentially allows developments to progress without impacting on the condition of the important wildlife and/or protected sites.</p> <p>The current advice associated with these areas is likely to cause significant delays to countless planning applications.</p> <p>The advice seeks to ensure that planning applications and plans affecting habitats sites in ‘unfavourable conditions’ should be carefully considered and mitigation should be secured to ensure there are no adverse effects in order to meet the requirements of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).</p> <p>In short development that is not nutrient neutral in these areas will not be supported.</p> <p>Natural England added Middlesbrough to the list of catchment areas in March 2022.²</p>
<p>Food Waste (2022 suggestion)</p>	<p>On 27 May 2021, the Council’s Executive approved the adoption of a Green Strategy and the Year One Action Plan. The Green Strategy is an overarching climate change and sustainability strategy that contains a number of themed action plans based upon the One Planet Living (OPL) framework and principles.</p> <p>One of the nine OPL themes is Zero Waste. It is suggested that the Panel may wish to investigate strategies for the reduction of food waste in Middlesbrough. By 2023 local authorities will be required to</p>

¹ <https://www.teesinvest.com/2022/05/16/new-middlesbrough-development-corporation-launched/>

² <https://planninghouse.co.uk/the-basics-of-nutrient-neutrality/>

	<p>collect food waste separately from all households, businesses and organisations.</p> <p>The UK throws away around 9.5 million tonnes of food waste in a single year – even though 8.4 million people in the UK are in food poverty.³</p>
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Suggestions

Suggestion	Details
Councillor Arundale	Tees Crossing (TVCA)
Councillor P Storey	How many trees have needed to be felled due to disease and how many have been replaced. How can a tree replacement programme be implemented?
Councillor J McTigue	Constant damage to grass verges by drivers, cost of repair being borne by the council. Grass verges now creeping over the pavement, nothing has been done to deal with that for years now.
Councillor J McTigue	Enforcement of planning conditions.
Member of the Public	Pot Holes
Member of the Public	Pavement Repairs
Strategic Plan Workplan 2022-24	<p>Climate Change: We will ensure our town acts to tackle climate change, promoting sustainable lifestyles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish six community growing areas (CCH 04) • Big community tree planting days (CCH 07)
Strategic Plan Workplan 2022-24	<p>Physical Environment: We will work closely with local communities to protect our green spaces and make sure that our roads, streets and open spaces are well-designed, clean and safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve identified play parks and spaces in line with our Towns Fund Recommendation (PEN 01) • Neighbourhood and town wide front garden competitions (PEN 05) • Vastly improve Thorntree and Pallister Parks in line with Towns Fund Recommendation (PEN 06)

³ <https://www.businesswaste.co.uk/food-waste-2022-the-facts/>

Updates

Teesside Crematorium	The Panel previously requested that a six-monthly update on income and any mitigation required, be provided until further notice.
Flood Risk Management	The Panel receives regular updates on Flood Risk Management.
Waste Management/ Waste Disposal Facility	The Panel previously requested an update on the new waste management/waste disposal facility for Middlesbrough.

6. It should be noted that the topics and updates outlined above are suggestions. The content of the scrutiny panel's work programme is entirely a decision for the panel to make. When considering the work programme, the panel is advised to select topics that are of interest to it, as well as topics that the panel feels by considering, could add value to the Local Authority's work.
7. In addition to undertaking the agreed work programme, scrutiny panels have also previously responded on an ad-hoc basis to emerging issues - such as considering relevant new legislation, guidance or Government consultation documents. This approach occasionally results in further topics being identified for investigation or review throughout the year.
8. On occasion ad-hoc scrutiny panels may also be established throughout the year to undertake additional investigations, for example to examine areas of work which overlap more than one scrutiny panel.
9. The scrutiny panel is also advised that, 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.

Scrutiny work plan prioritisation aid

10. Members may wish to use the aid attached at **Appendix 1** to prioritise issues where scrutiny can make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

11. The scrutiny panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.
12. When considering its work programme, 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 a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence.
 - Are not issues which the Overview and Scrutiny Board or the scrutiny panels have considered during the last 12 months.
 - Do not relate to an individual service complaint.
 - Do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council Committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.
13. It is suggested that the scrutiny panel has a mixture of working styles in its programme. This can include detailed and in-depth reviews, shorter topics, or one-off investigations.
14. Once the scrutiny panel has identified the areas of priority, support staff will draw those topics into a programme for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RECOMMENDATION

15. That the scrutiny panel identifies topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2022/23, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. Within the report, reference is made to:

The Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel's Final Report on Teesside Crematorium – Service Response and Action Plan, submitted to Executive on 19 January 2021.

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APPENDIX 1

