

# MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

## HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

### Setting the Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme 2023/24

11 September 2023

#### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To invite the Health Scrutiny Panel to consider its work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

#### BACKGROUND

2. At the start of every municipal year, scrutiny panels discuss the topics that they would like to review during the coming year.
3. 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.
4. 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.

#### Topic carried over from 2022/23

##### Dental Health and the Impact of Covid-19

5. At the previous meetings of the Health Scrutiny Panel, which were held on 11 October and 13 December 2022, the scrutiny panel received:
  - documents published by HealthWatch, reporting on the public's experiences of accessing and using NHS dental services; and
  - a presentation delivered by representatives from NHS England and the Local Dental Network on the pressures and challenges faced by dental care services, including the impact of Covid-19.
6. At its forthcoming meetings in October and November, it is hoped the Health Scrutiny Panel will be able to conclude its evidence gathering in respect of this topic by receiving:
  - An Overview of Experiences of Dental Care Services in Middlesbrough  
Representatives from HealthWatch South Tees presenting:
    - information on the local population's views and experiences of accessing and using NHS dental services; and

- details of the impacts of Covid-19 on members of the public being able to see a local dentist for both regular check-ups and emergency treatments.
- An Overview of Oral Health  
The Director of Public Health presenting:
  - an overview of Public Health’s responsibilities in respect of oral health;
  - statistical data and information in respect of oral health in Middlesbrough and the impact of Covid-19; and
  - details of any future developments and innovative practice that plan to improve the oral health of Middlesbrough’s population.
- The Views of Dental Professionals  
Dentists providing their views on the impact and future implications of Covid-19 on dentistry, access to dental care and oral health.

### Topical issues

Topic	Details
<p><b>Access to GPs</b></p>	<p>In May 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care published a press release entitled ‘<i>New plan to make it easier for patients to see their GP</i>’. The article reported that action would be taken to make it easier for patients to contact their GP and end the 8am rush.</p> <p>Practices across England will also be given £240 million this year to embrace the latest technology, replacing old analogue phones with modern systems so patients never get engaged tones and easy-to-use online tools to ensure patients get the care they need as soon as possible.</p> <p>The Government will provide primary care networks and GP practices with the funding and support required to make the changes, including through integrated care boards.</p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plan-to-make-it-easier-for-patients-to-see-their-gp">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plan-to-make-it-easier-for-patients-to-see-their-gp</a></p>
<p><b>Avoidable deaths and preventable mortality</b></p>	<p>In June 2023, a study was published by the Kings Fund entitled ‘<i>How does the NHS compare to the health care systems of other countries?</i>’. The study reported that people in the UK are less likely to survive treatable conditions, such as breast cancer and stroke, than those in other rich nations.</p> <p><a href="https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/How_NHS_compare_2023.pdf">https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-06/How_NHS_compare_2023.pdf</a></p> <p><u>Middlesbrough’s Data</u></p> <p>At the Health Scrutiny Panel’s last meeting, which was held on 10 July 2023, the following was reported by the Director of Public Health:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middlesbrough’s males had the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest life expectancy in England and females the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest.</li> <li>• Middlesbrough’s females had the highest rate of preventable mortality in 2018 to 2020 with 205.4 deaths per 100,000.</li> <li>• Middlesbrough had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of under 75 mortality from causes considered preventable.</li> <li>• Middlesbrough had the 4<sup>th</sup> highest incidence for under 75 mortality for cancer in England.</li> <li>• Screening uptake for breast, cervical and bowel cancer was significantly lower than the England average.</li> <li>• Smoking remained the leading cause of preventable death in the UK and local prevalence was 17.2%, which was higher than the England average of 13.9% and had led to Middlesbrough having a higher rate for smoking attributed mortality.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual health services</b></p>	<p>In June 2023, the Local Government Association (LGA) published a document entitled ‘Sexual health: How councils are driving innovation through partnership working’.</p> <p>Sexual health services are the third highest area of public health spending after drug and alcohol treatment and 0 to 5 services.</p> <p>More than £500m a year is spent on testing, treatment, contraception and health promotion and advice.</p> <p>Like other areas of public health, sexual health services have had to cope with cuts to their budgets. Between 2015-16 and 2020-21 spending fell by nearly 17 per cent as councils saw the public health grant from government cut.</p> <p>But as a demand-led service it has not been possible for services just to do less. The numbers coming forward for consultations have increased by a third since 2013 - with the sharpest rises seen in the most recent years, partly driven by a jump in STIs. So services have had to adapt and change.</p> <p><i><a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/sexual-health-how-councils-are-driving-innovation-through-partnership-working">https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/sexual-health-how-councils-are-driving-innovation-through-partnership-working</a></i></p> <p><u>Middlesbrough’s Data</u></p> <p>At the Health Scrutiny Panel’s last meeting, which was held on 10 July 2023, the following was reported by the Director of Public Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middlesbrough has the highest the rate of Syphilis in the North East (higher than the England average) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of Gonorrhoea.</li> <li>• Middlesbrough has the highest rate of unintended pregnancies in England.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Obesity</b></p>	<p>In July 2020, the Department of Health and Social Care published a policy paper entitled ‘Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live</p>

	<p>healthier lives’.</p> <p>The paper stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling obesity is one of the greatest long-term health challenges this country faces.</li> <li>• Around two-thirds of adults are above a healthy weight, and of these, half are living with obesity.</li> <li>• There are 1 in 3 children leaving primary school who are already overweight or living with obesity with 1 in 5 living with obesity.</li> <li>• Obesity prevalence is highest amongst the most deprived groups in society.</li> <li>• Children in the most deprived parts of the country are more than twice as likely to be obese as their peers living in the richest areas. This is sowing the seeds of adult diseases and health inequalities in early childhood.</li> <li>• Obesity is associated with reduced life expectancy. It is a risk factor for a range of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, at least 12 kinds of cancer, liver and respiratory disease, and obesity can impact on mental health.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives</a></p> <p><u>Middlesbrough's Data</u></p> <p>Recently, the Local Government Association (LGA) published a report providing an overview of health and wellbeing in Middlesbrough looking at both outcomes and wider determinants.</p> <p>The report stated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70.7% of adults in Middlesbrough are reported as obese or overweight (2021/22). This compares to 63.8% for England as a whole.</li> <li>• 26.7% of children aged 4-5 years and 44.6% of children aged 10-11 whose weight was recorded were reported as obese or overweight. This compares with 22.25% of children aged 4-5 years and 37.76% of children aged 10-11 for England as a whole.</li> </ul> <p><a href="https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/lga-research-report-an-overview-of-health-and-wellbeing-in-your-area-1?mod-area=E06000002&amp;mod-group=AllUnitaryLainCountry_England&amp;mod-type=namedComparisonGroup&amp;mod-groupType=namedComparisonGroup">https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/lga-research-report-an-overview-of-health-and-wellbeing-in-your-area-1?mod-area=E06000002&amp;mod-group=AllUnitaryLainCountry_England&amp;mod-type=namedComparisonGroup&amp;mod-groupType=namedComparisonGroup</a></p>
<p><b>Vaccination uptake</b></p>	<p>In May 2022, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published guidance entitled ‘Vaccine uptake in the general population’.</p> <p>The guideline aims to increase the uptake of all vaccines provided on the NHS routine UK immunisation schedule by everyone who is eligible. It supports the aims of the NHS Long Term Plan, which includes actions to</p>

	<p>improve immunisation coverage by GPs (including the changes to vaccinations and immunisations detailed in the 2021/2022 and 2022/23 GP contracts) and support a narrowing of health inequalities.</p> <p><a href="https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng218/resources/vaccine-uptake-in-the-general-population-pdf-66143781919429">https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng218/resources/vaccine-uptake-in-the-general-population-pdf-66143781919429</a></p> <p><u>Middlesbrough's Data</u></p> <p>At the Health Scrutiny Panel's last meeting, which was held on 10 July 2023, the following was reported by the Director of Public Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In terms of 0-5 vaccines, 5 out of 13 vaccines in Middlesbrough are below the outbreak threshold.</li> <li>• In terms of adolescent vaccines, these are now below the 35% threshold, which significantly increases the risk of a local Diphtheria, Polio and Meningitis outbreak.</li> </ul>
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## Suggestions

7. The following suggestions have been received:

Topic	Reasons for Suggestion
<b>Women's health</b>	<p>Such a wide range of experiences have been encountered for those seeking support for perimenopause and menopause from their GPs.</p> <p><i>Suggestion received from the HealthWatch South Tees Project Lead.</i></p>
<b>Dentists</b>	<p>HealthWatch is still receiving phone calls about the lack of appointments available.</p> <p><i>Suggestion received from the HealthWatch South Tees Project Lead.</i></p>
<b>GPs</b>	<p>Access to appointments is difficult for those experiencing health inequalities.</p> <p><i>Suggestion received from the HealthWatch South Tees Project Lead.</i></p>
<b>Secondary care</b>	<p>Communication with patients is still not standardised.</p> <p>Forget-me-not cards are still not used enough or acknowledged for patients with dementia. Communications need to inform staff of their needs, likes, dislikes etc.</p> <p><i>Suggestion received from the HealthWatch South Tees Project Lead.</i></p>

8. It should be noted that the suggested topics outlined above are exactly that, 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 will add value to the Local Authority's work.
9. 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.
10. 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

11. Members are asked 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**

12. The scrutiny panel is asked to consider and agree its work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.
13. 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; and
  - do not relate to matters dealt with by another Council committee, unless the issue deals with procedure.
14. 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.

15. 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**

16. That, by utilising the Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid (see Appendix 1), the scrutiny panel identifies two topics it would like to include in its work programme for 2023/24, for consideration/approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

17. Throughout the report, reference is made to information published by the Department of Health and Social Care, the Local Government Association (LGA), the King's Fund and the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

### **Contact Officer**

Georgina Moore  
Democratic Services Officer  
Legal and Governance Services  
Tel: 01642 729711  
Email: Georgina\_moore@middlesbrough.gov.uk