

PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 30 June 2025.

PRESENT: Councillors D Branson (Chair), T Livingstone (Vice-Chair), D Coupe, J Ewan, D Jackson, J Kabuye and T Mohan

OFFICERS: G Field, R Horniman, S Lightwing and J McNally

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were submitted on behalf of Councillor L Lewis

25/1 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

25/2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

25/3 **MINUTES - PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL - 29 APRIL 2025**

The minutes of the Place Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 29 April 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/4 **OVERVIEW OF SERVICE AREAS**

The Director of Regeneration and the Director of Environment and Community Services, were in attendance at the meeting and provided the Panel with an overview of the services provided across their respective Directorates, highlighting priorities and challenges for the next year.

The Director of Environment stated that the Directorate is committed to deliver services and policies that meet the Council's strategic vision.

The Council's vision for Middlesbrough is 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 Environment and Community Services Directorate consisted of five elements:

- Environment Services
- Highways and Infrastructure
- Neighborhood
- Public Protection
- North East Migration Partnership

The Environment Services department was responsible for:

- Waste Disposal (responsible for day to day management of waste disposal contract for Cleveland authorities)
- Waste collection
- Open space Management
- Newham Grange Leisure Farm
- Parks management
- Bereavement Services
- School catering
- School cleaning
- Green agenda
- Pest control

The Director stated that food waste collection would be taking effect shortly which is a Government initiative across all local authorities and not specific to Middlesbrough.

A Member asked a question on the poor rates of recycling in Middlesbrough, the Director advised that Waste Education Officers were to be employed to assist in increasing the rates of recycling across the town. It was suggested that the Waste Policy could be reviewed to include “no more side waste”. The Director stated that more education was needed and that the Council need to provide all facilities to recycle to make recycling as easy as possible.

The Member requested that the Director provide ward specific data on recycling rates.

The Neighbourhood Services department was responsible for:

- Community Safety Partnership
- Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy
- Prevent and Contest responsibilities
- Neighbourhood Management
- Community development
- CCTV
- Street Wardens
- Environment Enforcement
- Libraries
- Community Hubs
- Area Care
- Tree Management

The Director advised that the Neighbourhood Management model was working well, organisations were working collaboratively and building relationships with the local communities.

A Member asked whether the Director had explored the use of AI CCTV the Director explained that there was a need to be cautious around AI due to legislation.

The Highways and Infrastructure department was responsible for:

- Strategic highways
- Highways repair and maintenance
- Responsibility for bridges and structures
- Flood management
- Emergency highways management
- Rights of way management
- Integrated transport management (Children & Adults)
- Car parking (strategy)
- Street lighting
- Traffic signal management for Cleveland Authorities
- Management of Urban Transport System
- Highway laboratory for Cleveland

The Director explained that the department was also responsible for Fleet Management which included:

- Management of Council's Operator License
- Fleet Strategy
- Fleet Maintenance
- Fleet hire

Members heard that the directorate was also responsible for the North East Migration Partnership and was the lead in the region for asylum and migration. The authority does not make decisions on the numbers, purchasing or procuring properties this was down to Central Government. The department is working closely with Central Government on the asylum dispersal system and other asylum schemes that effect the UK and the North East.

A Member suggested that it would be beneficial for an all Member Briefing to be held to detail the work of the North East Migration Service.

The Public Protection department was responsible for:

- Trading Standards
- Environmental Health
- Food Standards
- Taxi Licensing
- Gambling Policy
- Licensing Policy
- Selective Landlord Licensing
- Noise control
- Air Quality
- Metrology Labs

Members were advised of the following priorities for the directorate:

- Support and enhance the Council's Transformation Program by introducing and developing neighbourhood working
- Community Safety Plan and Partnership implementation to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Increase cleanliness and the town and its physical environment
- Develop and implement the Green Strategy
- Tender for main waste disposal for post 2025/26
- Reduce environmental crime
- Reduce crime and antisocial behaviour
- Maintain a robust approach with regard to Trading Standards and Public Protection issues
- Deliver significant capital project in highways.

The Regeneration Directorate consisted of five elements:

- Growth and Assets - Economic development, town centre, capital projects, design services, asset management, commercial property
- Housing - Housing growth, housing supply
- Culture - Venues, museums, archives, events, sector development
- Community Learning - Apprenticeships, Learning for Inclusion, ESOL
- Marketing and Comms – External comms and internal comms

The Marketing and Communications Team was also included within the Directorate, but the Head of Service reported directly to the Chief Executive.

The priorities for the Regeneration Directorate were as follows:

- Transforming the Town Centre
- Development of a new community at Middlehaven
- Rebalancing the role as a landlord
- Addressing Council accommodation issues
- Accelerating housing growth
- Aligning housing demands and housing supply
- Commercialising cultural venues
- Revamping the museum offer
- Growing the role of events

The Director of Regeneration advised Members of current projects within the Regeneration Directorate which included:

- Central Library
- Old Town Hall
- Southlands
- Newham Hall
- Hemlington Grange
- Hemlington Grange South
- Hemlington Grange West

- Hemlington North
- Former St David's School Site
- Nunthorpe Community Centre

The key challenges currently for the Regeneration Directorate were:

- Town Centre ASB
- Mayoral Development Corporation
- Difficult office market
- Retail decline
- Empty properties
- Construction costs v property values
- Nutrient neutrality and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Dwindling resources – capital & revenue
- Commercialising cultural venues
- Aging property portfolio with increasing risks

It was advised that the biggest issue for Middlesbrough in terms of regeneration currently was anti-social behaviour (ASB). Tenants in corporate and commercial buildings were raising this as a barrier to investment, with companies saying they would leave or not invest in Middlesbrough as a result of ASB. In relation to ASB there were a number of businesses or organisations, particularly based around Centre Square who were suffering. They were working together to combine their security resources to make a more effective team.

Another issue was the cost of construction was disproportionately higher than the value of buildings once they were completed. As a result, commercial and private developers would not invest without gap funding from the public sector.

Nutrient Neutrality was another issue which was slowing down house building.

Members asked questions in relation to ASB, a greener town centre, decline in retail and café culture and the Director provided answers accordingly.

The Chair thanked the Director of Environment and Community Services and the Director of Regeneration for their presentations.

AGREED that the information provided was received and noted.

25/5 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel was scheduled for Thursday 17 July 2025 at 4.30 pm.

25/6 **MEETING DATES 2025/2026**

A discussion took place regarding the future dates for the Place Scrutiny Panel, Members agreed to hold the meetings on a Monday at 1.30pm. It was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would circulate a list of potential dates to Panel Members.

25/7 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

None.