

Appendix 1 – Suggested Scrutiny Topics for 2025/2026

Ref	Suggested Scrutiny Investigation Topic	Source	Council Plan 2024-2027, Ambition and Aim
1	<p>The role of faith and belief in decision-making, civic life, and the work of Middlesbrough Council</p> <p>Middlesbrough is a town of diverse faiths and beliefs, including non-religious belief. Does the council understand what 'faith and belief' means? Are there gaps in understanding, in particular around non-religious beliefs and how these are given a voice in shaping policy making and community work. Are HR policies in the Council reflective of faith and belief of its staff? Are civic events - particularly in regards to Remembrance - geared toward one faith over others and none. Should we look to be more inclusive in these?</p>	Councillor	<p>Safe and resilient communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>promote new ideas and community initiatives</i> <p>Delivering best value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>ensure robust and effective corporate governance.</i>
2	<p>Poverty, its impact, and efforts to tackle it.</p> <p>We have some of the highest poverty rates in the country. The Executive is working on a poverty strategy and this work could complement that. I think this could be a cross-cutting scrutiny that is led by OSB but looked at in a series of sessions by individual scrutiny panels.</p>	Councillor	<p>A healthy Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities.</i> - <i>reduce poverty</i>
3	Cashless Council	Officer	<p>Delivering best value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>ensure robust and effective corporate governance.</i> - <i>set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability</i>

4	Transformation – expenditure transparency	Officer	Delivering best value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure robust and effective corporate governance. - set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability
5	Local Market This was about sharing with scrutiny how the Council tries to ensure that contracts are awarded to the local market. It would cover the quotations process, our reporting on local spend and why this can't always be the case due to procurement law. It would also be an opportunity for me to share the pilot we are doing with Nomia which is about digitalising procurement and getting local suppliers registered so we can have some really good data about our local market which may identify development opportunities or identify suppliers we were not aware of locally. As a small unitary local does mean Tees Valley as well so again this can be shared.	Officer	Delivering best value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure robust and effective corporate governance. - set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability
6	Customer – probably later in the year as it progresses.	Officer	Delivering best value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure robust and effective corporate governance.
7	Approach to emerging digital agenda (including AI); ambitions for embracing digital technology with residents and communities	Officer	Delivering best value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure robust and effective corporate governance. - set a balanced revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan to restore financial resilience and sustainability A healthy place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote inclusivity for all.

8	Recruitment from a candidate perspective: how easy is it to apply for a job with the council?	Officer	Delivering best value - ensure robust and effective corporate governance
10	Outward facing branding	Officer	Delivering best value - ensure robust and effective corporate governance
11	Development of a vision for the town	Officer	Delivering best value - ensure robust and effective corporate governance
12	Engagement with the development of any changes to the transformation themes	Officer	Delivering best value - ensure robust and effective corporate governance