

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 9 July 2025.

PRESENT: Councillors J Banks, (Chair), J Kabuye (Vice-Chair), I Blades, D Branson, E Clynch, C Cooke - Elected Mayor, J Cooke, C Cooper, D Coupe, J Ewan, T Furness, P Gavigan, TA Grainge, L Henman, S Hill, B Hubbard, L Hurst, N Hussain, D Jackson, D Jones, T Livingstone, L Mason, D McCabe, M McClintock, J McTigue, T Mohan, I Morrish, J Nicholson, M Nugent, J Rostron, J Ryles, M Saunders, M Smiles, Z Uddin, N Walker, G Wilson, J Young and L Young

OFFICERS: S Bonner, B Carr, A. Glover, R Horniman, S Lightwing, E Scollay, K Whitmore, R Williams and A Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Davison, L Lewis, J McConnell, J Platt, S Platt, A Romaine, P Storey, J Thompson and S Tranter

25/15 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

25/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Name of Member	Type of Interest	Nature of Business
Councillor McClintock	Non pecuniary	Agenda Item 9 – Report of Executive Member for Development – Councillor is a Governor at Middlesbrough College

25/17 **MINUTES - COUNCIL - 21 MAY 2025**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 May 2025 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/18 **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no Announcements or Communications for this meeting.

25/19 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY).**

There were no valid questions submitted from members of the public, within the required timescale for this meeting.

25/20 **TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY (TVCA) UPDATE**

The Best Value Notice for the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) was in progress and Middlesbrough Council had been thanked publicly several times for the support provided. Work was also progressing on the Middlesbrough Development Corporation (MDC) and the Chairpersons had recently changed. The Mayor understood that there had been a Call-in with regard to the Chair positions.

With regard to the Gresham site, the TVCA was waiting for the optimum time to strike a financial deal. It was anticipated that this would be in September 2025. Other projects were continuing and it was hoped with the new Chair in place, good progress would be made.

Responding to a request for an update on the Linthorpe Road Cycle Lane, the Mayor informed the Council that the removal of the cycle lane was a Middlesbrough Council project. A start date for the project was expected to be confirmed shortly, for end of July/beginning of August, subject to approval by Procurement.

25/21

MAYOR'S STATEMENT AND REPORT

The 10 by 10 scheme had been launched in 5 Middlesbrough Primary Schools with the aim of expanding it to more. The scheme would provide children between the ages of 0 to 10, with 10 opportunities to learn about the Town and take part in activities.

The Middlesbrough Priorities Fund had recently provided funding for the Holidays Are Fun (HAF) Programme which had provided support to families during half term and also numerous other projects.

The Mayor's main concern recently had been the Fair Funding Review and the consultation had now commenced. The Fair Funding Review as it currently stood would be a net benefit to Middlesbrough and it was vital to ensure that there was no reduction in the level of funding following the consultation period. The Mayor agreed to bring an update to Council once the full data had been received so that an agreed stance, in the best interests of the Town, could be put forward to the Consultation.

Responding to a question in relation to council tax owed on empty properties, the Mayor explained that one of the biggest problems facing the Council was that social landlords owned a great number of properties that were not being utilised. Approximately 80 houses were now in Council ownership that had been refurbished and rented out. A partnership project was in development which aimed to release more housing stock. As part of the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund, a new post of Financial Investigator would be created, with the aim of recouping money owed through council tax, business rates or other charges. Another issue was Airbnb and holiday lets which were currently not included in either council tax banding or business rates – so in effect the Council was losing out on that potential income. It was anticipated that this issue would be addressed through new legislation.

A Councillor spoke in support of the 10 by 10 scheme and the Mayor agreed that it was important to continue to invest in young people. The Executive had a specific remit in respect of grants for schools. Schools in Middlesbrough often struggled with such issues as provision of transport for students to events. The Council aimed to remove some of those barriers and enable schools to work better with their students. The Mayor extended an invitation to all Councillors to visit schools to see for themselves some of the positive work that was taking place.

In relation to a pledge to increase the amount of accommodation available for single people, the Mayor stated that the majority of the 80 properties mentioned previously were within that category. The intention was that more properties would come into Council ownership through the partnership project rather than go to private landlords.

25/22

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS

Questions in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Children's Services.

Councillor Saunders and Councillor Clynch on foster carers and recruitment.

The Executive Member agreed that the availability of foster care places within Middlesbrough needed to increase and a target of 170 places had been set for this year. Reducing the number of children and young people in care was also a key aim. Recruitment was taking place and there had been some excellent work promoting foster caring as an extremely valuable and rewarding opportunity. The Executive Member shared some recent successful examples of the use of social media as recruitment tool and the support available for anyone interested in becoming a carer.

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Development.

Councillor McClintock on the Local Plan and the Nunthorpe Grange Masterplan.

The Executive Member offered an apology that an updated Masterplan had not yet been published. The planning application referred to by Councillor McClintock would be considered in the usual way by the Planning and Development Committee.

The Mayor invited Councillor McClintock to meet with him, the Executive Member for Development and the Director of Regeneration after the Council meeting for further discussion.

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability.

Councillor Livingstone on Flood Management.

The Executive Member confirmed that the Highways Service had undertaken a review of the Gulley Cleansing Programme to prioritise those areas that were most affected by build-up of vegetation and silt. Following the review a two-year cycle was in place to visit those areas at least once a year and the states twice per year. Those areas most affected by flooding would be visited more frequently.

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Finance.

Councillor Morrish on £2.816 million budget savings not delivered.

The Executive Member reminded Council that at the time of budget setting it was highlighted that making savings would be very challenging and it was right to set challenging targets. The Council had to seek exceptional financial support from the Government and £3.5 million was included for potential undelivered savings. The savings had not been forgotten and were expected to be achieved in the current budget as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). It was clarified that in relation to those savings that had not been delivered, it was that they were not able to be delivered within the timescale of last year's budget, rather than they would not be delivered at all. 78% of savings were delivered, and in some areas such as Green Waste income they were over-delivered. The main areas where savings targets were not delivered were Adults and Children's Services. The Executive Member also reminded Councillor Morrish of his offer to congratulate officers if the budget was delivered and to buy them a drink.

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods.

Councillor Morrish on plans for the south of the town.

The Executive Member confirmed that he had attended a meeting of Nunthorpe Parish Council but unfortunately was unable to attend the last South NAP meeting due to diary clash. The Executive Member stated that he would be pleased to attend any relevant meetings across the town and his focus was not solely on Hemlington. The Executive Member had been working with the Police in relation to the problem of off-road bike nuisance. The Executive Member also confirmed that he would be working closely with the neighbourhood teams and Councillors to resolve ward issues such as fly-tipping and illegal parking.

Question in relation to the report of the Executive Member for Development.

Councillor Saunders on empty shops and shop closures in the town centre.

The Executive Member agreed that it was a sad state of affairs that in Middlesbrough and towns across the country more shops were closing. The current trend was towards online shopping or shopping in cities and out of town retail parks. Whilst the retail space in Middlesbrough had halved, office space had doubled, and the Council continue to try and attract new investors. The Executive Member listed some of the businesses that had opened in the Captain Cook Square since it came under Council ownership including Bazaar, Level X and Fun Shack. Investment in the train station and the surrounding area including Stack was also highlighted.

Question in relation to the report of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability.

Councillor Wilson on solar powered lighting.

The Executive Member explained that whilst consideration had been given to the potential savings from solar power and the positive impact for the environment, other considerations

included high initial costs, risk of equipment theft due to its value, and the impact of other environmental factors such as snow, dust and moisture, which could affect the equipment. The Executive Member agreed that he would look into the option of a trial as suggested by Councillor Wilson.

Question in relation to the report of the Executive Member for Finance.

Councillor Kabuye on key factors for the budget underspend in the previous financial year.

The Executive Member stated that the underspend was due to good financial planning. There had been a rigorous monitoring process which was under-pinned by Member-led budget clinics. The change in culture had been important to address the Best Value Notice and the financial issues that the Council had been facing. Councillors and Officers had supported the process, and the Executive Member thanked everyone involved. As previously highlighted, there was still a challenge to deliver savings this year and the first quarter budget clinics were scheduled for next week. Whilst there was still pressure in some service areas, additional funding had been made for area care and also the Priorities Fund.

Questions for the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability.

Councillor Hubbard and Councillor L Young on food waste collection.

The Executive Member clarified that each household would be provided with a small indoor food collection caddy as well as a larger 23 litre caddy. The food waste would be processed at anaerobic digestion plant where it would be converted to produce biogas which could be used to produce electricity, heat or fuel.

The Executive Member welcomed the increase in area care operatives and pest control provision. This was the first major investment into environmental services for over a decade. These improvements would not have been possible without the improved government settlement and sound financial management.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS:

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Development.

Councillor McClintock on why the updated Nunthorpe Masterplan had not been made available.

The Executive Member agreed to organise a meeting with the Councillor and relevant Officers to provide an update.

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Development.

Councillor Saunders on the office space and the area around the train station.

The Executive Member for Development stated that work was ongoing to improve the area around the train station. It was acknowledged that the public realm could be improved. Church House was being renovated and converted into apartments. Gurney House, Vancouver House, Dundas House and CNE were all owned by private developers and did not meet modern standards for office accommodation in their current state. The Council continued to try and work with private developers and the MDC to redevelop empty buildings to bring them back into use. It was hoped that the Church House re-development could be the catalyst for similar projects.

Question in relation to the Report of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability

Councillor Wilson on solar powered street lighting trials.

The Executive Member reiterated that the service area was actively looking at solar power for street lighting.

25/23 **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the current position regarding progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the individual Scrutiny Panels.

Members' attention was drawn to two Final Reports that would be considered at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board as follows: Children Missing Education (People Scrutiny Panel), and Empty Properties (Place Scrutiny Panel).

The Chair of Place Scrutiny Panel was invited to update the Council on the Crustacean Deaths Working Group's final report following the investigation into the mass crustacean die-off along the north-east coast, which had been recently published.

The Chair invited Members to ask questions and to note the report.

ORDERED that the report was noted.

25/24 **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

25/25 **MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

There were no Members' Questions submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

25/26 **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

ORDERED that Motion Nos. 175 and 176 were **DEFERRED** for consideration at a future Council meeting.

25/27 **NOTICE OF URGENT MOTIONS (IF ANY)**

There were no Notice of Urgent Motions submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

25/28 **EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Mayor presented a report to inform Members of changes to his Executive Scheme of Delegation.

As required by the Constitution, details of the revised Executive Scheme of Delegation were attached at Appendix A to the submitted report for inclusion in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

ORDERED that the amendments to the Executive Scheme of Delegation were noted.

25/29 **APPROVAL FOR CONSULTATION ON THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY 2026-2029**

A joint report of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and the Director of Environment and Community Services was presented to seek Council approval for consultation to be undertaken on the Draft Statement of Gambling Policy 2026-2029.

The Council was required to have a three-year policy statement setting out the principles that it proposed to apply in exercising its functions under the Gambling Act 2005 ("the Act") (s349). In preparing its Statement of Gambling Policy, the Council was required to consult the Police and persons who represented the interests of those carried on gambling businesses and those who were likely to be affected by gambling activities in its area. After the period of consultation of 8 weeks the outcome would be reported to Council for a decision whether to approve the final version of the Statement of Gambling Policy 2026–2029.

The Statement of Gambling Policy was required to be in place as soon as practicable to ensure compliance and to assess applications and other processes under the Act.

The Statement of Gambling Policy also contained the policy and principles in relation to the application process and issuing of a large casino licence. Under the Act, only 8 large casino premises licences were permitted in England. Middlesbrough was one of the authorities awarded the ability to issue a large casino licence by Order (The Gambling (Geographical Distribution of Large and Small Casino Premises Licences) Order 2008).

Under the Act, the Council was able to hold a competition for a large casino premises licence to determine which application would provide the greatest benefit to Middlesbrough. In 2012 following a competition, a provisional statement was awarded to Gurney Casinos Ltd. However, the proposed casino was not developed and a large casino premises licence had not been granted.

The implications of the recommendation had been considered by the appropriate Council Officers and were set out in the main body of the report.

ORDERED that Council approved that consultation be undertaken on the draft Statement of Gambling Policy 2026–2029 with Cleveland Police and persons who officers considered represented the interests of those carrying out gambling businesses and those likely to be affected by gambling activities in the area.

25/30 **UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS**

The Director of Legal and Governance Services submitted a report which provided an update with regard to two urgent decisions that had been taken under the urgency rules since last reported to Council on 27 November 2024.

ORDERED that the report be noted.

25/31 **REVISED POLITICAL BALANCE**

A report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services (Monitoring Officer) was presented to seek approval for the revised allocation of places on committees and sub committees for the Municipal Year 2025-2026 in accordance with the current political balance of the Council. Following the Annual Meeting on 21 May 2025, there had been a change in group membership and the political balance of the Council therefore needed to be revised. The rules, duties, and principles outlined in the report to the Annual Meeting remained applicable.

ORDERED as follows that Council approved:

1. the revised allocation of seats on Committees that are subject to the rules relating to political balance as follows:

Labour - 69 places
Conservative - 11 places
Middlesbrough Independent Councillors Association (MICA) - 29 places
Liberal Democrat - 6 places
Marton East Independent Group (MEIG) - 6 places
Unallocated - 11 places

2. that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to fill the unallocated seats as indicated in paragraph 4.4 of the report and make any necessary further adjustments to remove or replace Members where directed by the relevant Group or Member.

3. that nominations for the vacant places be sought and, where necessary voted upon.

4. that any committee established prior to the next review be appointed on the basis of the places shown in Appendix 1, Table 3, attached to the submitted report.

5. the following appointments were approved:

Licensing Committee – Councillor J Platt
Overview and Scrutiny Board – Councillor J Platt
Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel – Councillor S Platt
Children's Scrutiny Panel – Councillor S Platt

VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2025-2026

A report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services (Monitoring Officer) was presented to seek Members' approval for nominations of appointment to vacant positions on Committees, Scrutiny Panels and Outside Bodies, due to vacancies that were not filled at the Annual Council meeting and resignations from Committees.

The report included a list of current vacancies on various Committees and Outside Bodies and nominations were put forward at the meeting by individual members.

ORDERED that the following appointments, allocated in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, be approved by Council:

CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Vice Chair – Councillor Coupe appointed

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

Vice Chair – Councillor Jackson appointed

LICENSING COMMITTEE

1 vacancy – Councillor Grainge appointed

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

1 vacancy – Councillor J Young appointed

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1 vacancy – Councillor Saunders appointed

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY STEERING GROUP

4 vacancies – Councillor McCabe appointed

3 vacancies remain

WORKS COUNCIL

2 vacancies – Councillors Saunders and Wilson appointed

YOU MATTER TO US – CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

2 vacancies – no nominations

HARTLEPOOL POWER STATION LOCAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

1 vacancy – no nominations

NORTH EAST REGIONAL JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 vacancy – no nominations

STAYING PUT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1 vacancy – no nominations

TENNIS WORLD

2 vacancies – no nominations