

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Councillor L Young, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board and Charlotte Benjamin, Director of Legal and Governance Services (Monitoring Officer)
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Relevant Executive Member:	The Mayor
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Submitted to:	Council
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Date:	15 October 2025
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Title:	Scrutiny Progress Report
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Report for:	Information
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Status:	Public
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Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
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Key decision:	No
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Why:	Report is for information only
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Subject to call in?:	Not applicable
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Why:	Not Applicable Council Report for information only
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Proposed decision(s)
That Council note the report.

Executive summary
To update the position in respect of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board and scrutiny panels. The current position regarding progress made by the Board and each of the panels is set out below.

1. **Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions**
 - 1.1 To update the position in respect of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board and scrutiny panels.

1.2

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
A successful and ambitious town	By responding effectively and efficiently to constitutional requirements the Council will maintain effective and robust governance arrangements. Robust governance arrangements will allow for effective decisions which inform all the Council's ambitions.
A healthy Place	
Safe and resilient communities	
Delivering best value	

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Council note the report.

3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

3.1 The Constitution requires the Council to be provided with an update with regard to the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

4. Background and relevant information:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 17 September 2025.

4.2 The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture was in attendance and provided an update on her portfolio. The presentation focussed on three areas: Culture, Education and Partnerships and Other Areas. The Deputy Mayor updated Members on recent events, priorities and future challenges.

4.3 A copy of the Executive Forward Work Programme had been circulated to the Board. The Chair expressed the view that although the Executive Forward Plan was fuller but it should contain more decisions than were currently being listed. It was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would write to the Council's Leadership Management Team to express this view.

4.4 The Panel also considered and approved Terms of Reference for the Board's scrutiny review into "Poverty, its impact, and efforts to tackle it".

4.5 The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board is scheduled for 22 October 2025, when the Executive Member for Children's Services will be in attendance. There will also be an update from the Middlesbrough Development Corporation.

5. Scrutiny Panel Updates

- 5.1 The updated position in respect of the work of each of the Council's scrutiny panels is shown below.

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel

- 5.2 The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel last met on 8 September 2025. The panel considered the following items as part of its agenda:

- Communications with South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Health Determinants Research Collaboration
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) September Update
- Scrutiny Topic Overview – 'Healthy Placemaking Across the Life Course with A Focus on Children and Young People'
- Overview and Scrutiny Board Update

The Vice Chair provided a verbal update on his role with the South Tees NHS Foundation Trust's Council of Governors, including recent Board engagement and the upcoming Annual General Meeting. The Panel discussed ongoing communication with the Trust following its Draft Quality Account presentation in May 2005. It was agreed that Democratic Services would explore scheduling a special meeting early in the New Year to consider NHS matters, with informal liaison also to be considered with the Integrated Care Board and South Tees Trust.

The Panel received a presentation from Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) South Tees on fostering positive research culture within local authority. Key priorities, funding, and community impact were outlined through case studies. It was confirmed that resident engagement is supported via charity networks, local projects, and elected members.

The Panel received a quarterly update on the CQC Improvement Plan. Following a 2024 inspection, Adult Social Care was rated 'Requires Improvement'. Progress was reported across key areas, supported by 36 projects and an Improvement Board. A 10-Year Vision Strategy is being developed with Healthwatch. Updates included a new leadership in housing, improved multi-disciplinary working, workforce recruitment, and trials of 'Magic Notes' to streamline case recording.

Public Health and Sport England presented on childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, highlighting above-average rates, especially in deprived wards. A whole system approach was emphasised, with local initiatives including:

- Healthy weight declaration
- Planning toolkit for health impact
- Advertising restrictions
- Breastfeeding campaign
- Holiday activities and healthy food
- Active schools programme
- Eat well standards in education settings

Members were asked to consider draft terms of reference for the review.

The Chair provided an update from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 30 July 2025. Key items noted:

- Continuous Improvement Plan update
- 2025/26 Scrutiny Work Planning
- Pre-Decision Scrutiny Protocol
- Final Reports: Children Missing in Education and Empty Properties

The next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel is scheduled for 20 October 2025. The Panel will receive presentations from Planning and Transport and Infrastructure on how the built and planned environment influences childhood obesity in Middlesbrough.

Children's Scrutiny Panel

5.3 The Children's Scrutiny Panel last met on 15 September 2025.

5.4 At the 15 September meeting the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services, Interim Director of Education & Partnerships and Head of Inclusion, Assessment & Review were all in attendance to provide Members with an overview of Out of Area Specialist Provision. It was explained that work had been done to reduce the amount of children accessing Out of Area placements and Middlesbrough performed well in this aspect compared to its national and regional counterparts but due to uplifted fees and costs from independent providers, the financial impact of reducing reliance was not always fully realised. Information on the following was provided to the Panel:

- Reasons for Out of Area Specialist Provision
- Characteristics of children in out of area specialist education provision
- The cost of other local authority specialist provision The cost of independent provision – day placements
- Residential Education Placements
- Performance data and statistics – Independent Specialist Education Provision
- Quality
- Next Steps

5.5 Officers answered questions from the Panel and it was suggested that the Panel would look to agree the Terms of Reference at the next meeting which would focus on several of the topics discussed in the meeting, including:

- What had worked well in the past – good practice
- Upcoming government SEND reforms and the potential impacts of these
- Middlesbrough's SEND Workforce Strategy and the impact of this

5.6 The Chair provided an update from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 30 July 2025.

5.7 During the AOB agenda item, it was requested that the following reports be recirculated to Members of the Panel, which has since been done:

- The 'Final Report of the Place Scrutiny Panel – Home to School Transport', which was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 9 April 2025, and which will next be considered by the Executive on 8 October 2025.
- The 'Management of the Dedicated Schools Grant Risk Within the Strategic Risk Register' report, which will be considered by the Audit Committee on 25 September 2025.

5.8 The Panel's next meeting was scheduled for 27 October 2025 at 4:30 pm.

5.9 **Place Scrutiny Panel**

5.10 A meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel took place on 29 September 2025.

5.11 At the 29 September meeting the Head of Growth and Town Centre Manager were in attendance to provide Members with an overview of the Barriers to Regeneration in Middlesbrough Town Centre, with a focus on Anti-Social Behaviour. The Panel noted the information provided and a discussion took place regarding potential ways in which the barriers could be overcome. The draft Terms of Reference were presented and it was agreed that the focus on anti-social behaviour would be omitted from ToR 1 & 2 to widen the scope of the scrutiny investigation and the Terms of Reference were agreed as follows:

Terms of Reference:

- 1) To establish what the barriers to regeneration are
- 2) To identify good practice from other local authorities in relation to attracting businesses to the area.
- 3) To investigate what measures are in place to make people feel safer in our town centre and neighbourhoods
- 4) To gain an understanding of current legislation available to local authorities to tackle antisocial behaviour

5.12 The next meeting of the Place Scrutiny Panel is scheduled to take place on Monday 27 October 2025 and the Panel has invited a representative from Locus to attend the meeting and present the latest findings of their Economic Assessment of Middlesbrough.

Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

5.13 The Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee last met on 2 October 2025 to consider the following items:

- Suicide Prevention - Public Health Update.
- Community Mental Health Transformation - Tees, Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.
- Vaping/Nitrous Oxide - Public Health Update.

- Winter Plan Update - North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.
- Work Programme 2025/26.

Scrutiny Reports Submitted to Executive

5.14 Two Final Reports are due to be submitted to Executive on 8 October 2025 as follows:

- Final Report of the People Scrutiny Panel – Children Missing Education.
- Final Report of the Place Scrutiny Panel – Home to School Transport Service.

6. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate.

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

7.1 That an update on the work of the scrutiny function is not provided to full Council. This would not comply with the requirements for updates on the scrutiny function, to be reported to full Council.

8. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	There are no financial implications or impact on any budgets or the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) arising from the content of this report.
Legal	The Constitution requires regular updates on the scrutiny function, to be submitted to full Council.
Risk	Failure to adhere to Local Code of Corporate Governance and deliver governance improvements outlined in the Annual Governance Statement. If updates on the work of the scrutiny function were not provided to Council, this would not be in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	Not applicable as this a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Climate Change / Environmental	Not applicable as this a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Not applicable as this a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Data Protection	Not applicable as this a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

Appendices

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2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

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