

## Continuous Improvement Plan

Delivery of the Council's Continuous Improvement Plan has a clear relationship with the Best Value Duty. Delivery of actions will ensure it has a robust approach across all the seven themes that comprise the Best Value Duty:



This will ensure the Council is in a stronger position to deliver the four ambitions it has set out within the 2024 – 2027 Council Plan that Middlesbrough will:

- Be a successful and ambitious town
- Be a healthy place
- Have safe and resilient communities
- Deliver Best Value.

This plan encompasses the following strategic continuous improvement activity:

- The findings of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge team and the progress visit held in November 2025. It now also reflects the content of the follow up visit by some of the team, held in November 2025, where action will not be addressed by the content of this plan, other reports in this meeting or the 2026/7 budget setting process.
- Responses to the last report of the Middlesbrough Independent Improvement Advisory Board (MIIAB)
- recommendations from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- An action in response to the Care Quality Commission inspection of Adult Social Care services.

There are currently 49 actions within this plan. Of those 22 are marked as complete, although some still have ongoing commitments and may result in further actions being identified. Since this was last reported, 8 actions have been completed. Two new actions have been added since the Plan was last reported. Of the remaining ongoing actions, 5 that have been reprofiled.

Rec.	Council Plan Ambition	Best Value Theme	Recommendation	Action	Owner(s)	Target date for completion	June 2025 update	October 2025 update	January 2026 update
1	All	Partnerships and Community Engagement	(CPC) Develop in co-production with communities, residents, partners and businesses a long-term vision for the town that is inclusive, practical and deliverable. By looking outwards and harnessing untapped potential to deliver its vision, this will enable everyone to understand and contribute to delivering shared ambitions for the benefit of Middlesbrough and its communities.	The Council is in the process of reestablishing a town wide engagement mechanism for Partners which will be called a Town Board and will replicate the best parts of the defunct Local Strategic Partnership arrangements to ensure there is a regular meeting of key strategic public, private and VCS partners to set the strategic direction for the town and identify and deliver system wide change to improve outcomes for our residents. Once established, the first key task will be to co-produce a vision in a process that engages local communities and residents.	Chief Executive	Board to be established by June 2025 and a co-produced vision will be developed during 2025/26.	<b>Ongoing.</b> Draft Terms of Reference developed, and initial communications will be issued this month with a view to setting up the first meeting in June 2025 to be held in July 2025.	<b>Ongoing.</b> The Board, now known as the Place Leaders Partnership, has now agreed a work programme for its work. The Board has a series of workshop sessions planned between September and December 2025 to focus on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying top priorities for intervention in Middlesbrough's economy</li> <li>2. Evidence base including an updated economic assessment from Locus and strategic approach to communications</li> <li>3. How we can extract the best social value from our collective interventions.</li> </ul>	<b>Ongoing.</b> This emerging Partnership has continued to refine its approach and thinking on this topic. The workshops have been held and continue to be held. <p>A company has been identified to undertake youth engagement as part of steps to further develop a draft plan.</p> <p>The Council Plan report to Executive in March 2026 provides an update on the work of the Partnership and sets out the planned approach to development of the vision. This report, if agreed will give a democratic mandate for the work of the Council in this emerging partnership.</p>

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								The output of this work will be creation of a Town Plan and a vision for the town.	
2	All	Partnerships and Community Engagement	<p>(CPC) Redefine Middlesbrough's strategic approach to partnership working based on principles of timely and meaningful collaboration, co-design and with common purpose to inspire and build a team beyond the council that are galvanised to deliver for the town.</p> <p>This will strengthen delivery of Middlesbrough's place shaping ambitions, maximise use of collective resources, and help shift the focus from organisational recovery to delivery of improved outcomes for residents.</p>	The Council is committed to working with partners more effectively to co-produce a vision for the town, alongside a strategy, underpinned by agreed principles which will govern how we will work together to deliver improved outcomes for our residents. It is planned to use the reestablished Towns Board to co-produce an agreed strategic approach to partnership working.	Chief Executive	March 2026 – reprofiled to August 2026	See above.	<b>Ongoing.</b> The outcome of the workshops set out above will be used to then develop a collective, long-term vision for the town and a coproduced partnership vision and plan for the town.	<b>Ongoing and reprofiled.</b> It has been important to allow the Partnership to emerge and develop organically, in order to ensure that all Partners who are involved are assured it is a true partnership approach. As such, while conversations are ongoing to define what partnership working should look like, this action has been reprofiled to enable the proposed document to reflect that emerging thinking.
3	All	Partnerships and Community Engagement	(CPC) Develop and seek to strengthen relationships with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) and Tees Valley councils. This will maximise the potential for Middlesbrough and the wider Tees	Officers are continuing to engage with the TVCA officers to work positively with them and there are a range of officer working groups that are well established across the Tees Valley.	Mayor and Chief Executive	May 2025	<b>Complete.</b> Following publication of the LGA corporate peer challenge team report, the Chief Executive wrote to the Interim Chief Executive of TVCA to seek	Tees Valley Chief Executives continue to meet weekly with the TVCA and supporting statutory officers are also regularly meeting with their respective partners.	In November 2025, the Council had a Corporate Peer Challenge follow up visit by the Local Government Association. That report acknowledged the progress the Council has made to build stronger

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			Valley to realise the benefits from being at the forefront of devolution and drive economic development and growth which will be critical to all the council's ambitions.	The Council will seek formal engagement with the TVCA other Local Government members of the Combined Authority to outline a proposed revised engagement approach across matters of mutual interests to enable improved outcomes for residents and businesses in the Tees Valley			discussions. First sessions were held in May. The Council has also engaged with TVCA staff to provide support in response to the recent Best Value Inspection Notice and Section 24 statutory recommendations that have been issued to TVCA.  This is just the start of work and while this specific action is complete, further actions will be generated in due course to build on this.  Chief Executives have agreed their participation in recruitment of the development corporation chairs for other areas as part of steps to continue positive relationships.	TVCA is on an improvement journey which the Council is actively supporting it on.  There have been some key initial improvements. We will continue to work proactively with TVCA to build on this.	relationships with TVCA. The report praised the action to date.
4	All	Partnerships and Community Engagement	(CPC) Seek to resolve the hiatus with the Middlesbrough Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC)	The Council will seek formal discussions with TVCA and government on options to address the hiatus in the best interests of	Chief Executive	May 2025	<b>Complete</b> and ongoing.  TVCA have agreed to develop a document which will articulate	The TVCA Mayor has now appointed a Chief Operating Officer for the MDC. There is now a plan in place to manage the transfer of assets	Work on this is ongoing on this. The TVCA budget setting report for 2026/27 considered by Cabinet on 30 January 2026 has identified risks in relation future funding

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			<p>to achieve a shared plan for the town.</p> <p>This will unlock its potential as a powerful mechanism for effectively delivering economic development and growth and integrating the resources and assets of the council and TVCA.</p>	the residents of Middlesbrough.			<p>planned outcomes from the MDC and the timing of the Council and TVCA's contributions toward it.</p>	<p>into MDC which has resolved the hiatus.</p> <p>As part of the TVCA Best Value Notice governance review, the TVCA Mayor has now appointed an independent chairperson of the MDC, former Middlesbrough Council Chief Executive, Tony Parkinson.</p> <p>MDC is now a partner on the Place Leadership Partnership. Work is underway between the Council and the MDC to reassess existing development and delivery plans collaboratively.</p>	to cover the core costs of the MDC between 2026-28.
5	All	Culture	<p>(CPC) Develop and embed a comprehensive approach to strengthening equality, diversity, and inclusion, including:</p> <p>a. In organisational development, the workforce and democratic representation;</p> <p>b. Within strategy, policy, and service delivery; and</p>	We will raise the ambitions within the People Strategy and Member Development Strategy (expanding to include promotion of councillor roles to potential future councillors) to seize the opportunities that an improved approach to community engagement will	Head of HR and Head of Legal (People)	<p>People Strategy annual review (April 2025)</p> <p>Member Development Strategy annual review (To note, the last review determined that it should be moved from February 2026 to June 2026 to follow</p>	<p><b>Complete</b> and ongoing.</p> <p>Revised People Strategy considered and adopted by LMT in May. There is a detailed workplan in place which contains greater ambition and activity in relation to community engagement.</p>	<p>The Leadership team continue to receive regular reports setting out progress in delivery of the People Strategy and its impact on the workforce and the commitment to improve the way it reflects our local population. The Council is continuing to develop its organisational development offer which is now live and</p>	<p>A further update on the People Strategy was provided to LMT in December 2025, and the strategy will be reviewed in April 2026.</p> <p>The HR EDI Lead provided an update of activity to LMT in October 2025 including the expansion of staff networks to include a Neurodivergent Group and a Parent and Family Group.</p>

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			<p>c. Community engagement, ensuring it looks at this agenda strategically for Middlesborough as a whole, not only for the organisation and those elected or employed.</p> <p>This will ensure EDI is at the heart of everything it does, that the council is representative of the communities it serves and delivers better decision-making by harnessing different perspectives</p>	<p>bring as our residents increase their trust in the Council.</p>		<p>the municipal year.)</p>	<p>The Council now offers briefings to those who are considering standing for local election. This needs to be codified within the next review of the Member Development Strategy.</p>	<p>will be further developed. We have invested in the capacity of our HR and OD functions in order to ensure we can deliver our ambitions.</p> <p>As part of delivery of the Member Development Strategy, there is ongoing engagement, delivered through the Members Communications working group.</p> <p>Following a meeting of the Members and Officers Communication Working group in September, the Council will be establishing regular quarterly training sessions to drive a regular cycle of training opportunities as part of the suite of actions being delivered by the Member Development Strategy.</p>	<p>Ongoing delivery of the Management Development Programme focussed on the three C's - Collaboration, Communication and Change continues to build on improving workforce culture.</p> <p>On the Member Engagement Strategy, the Council acknowledges the ongoing challenges referenced in the latest peer team report, that highlight ongoing mixed levels of attendance at development events. It will continue to deploy a variety of engagement methods and considered this issue within the annual review of the Member Development Strategy.</p>
				<p>We will review the Council's report formats, policy and strategy templates to strengthen the way the Council</p>	<p>Head of Governance, Policy and Information</p>	<p>May 2025</p>	<p><b>Complete.</b></p> <p>Report formats were revised in April. Communications</p>		

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				assesses the impact of its activities on equality, diversity and inclusion.			<p>issued to report authors and all staff involved in the report development process. An Engagement session was held with Wider Leadership Management Team to outline the rationale for changes including improved consideration of impacts on EDI as well as improving the way reports demonstrate their impact on the four Council Plan ambitions.</p> <p>The Council has also reviewed its Impact Assessment Policy to capture impacts on poverty.</p>		
				Over the next 12 months the Council plans to increase community development capacity as part of the emerging Neighbourhoods Strategy which will include actions to also reset its	Director of Environment and Community Services	March 2026	Ongoing.	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> The Council has now put in place additional Community Engagement Staff to increase its capacity around this as well as employment of additional capacity to undertake public engagement in key</p>	<p><b>Complete.</b> Neighbourhoods model, agreed by Executive in April 2025, is now in delivery.</p> <p>A new follow up action has been added in January 2026 to capture the next steps</p>

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				<p>approach to community engagement to ensure it better understands and responds to the needs of its communities as well as reestablishing a proactive approach to decision making that focusses on coproduction where possible.</p>				<p>areas. In the first instance this has focussed on education around waste and recycling.</p> <p>We have commenced a programme of community conversations.</p> <p>The Council is also engaging with a national leader in community engagement to review its strategic, long-term approach, reviewing the current approach and making recommendations to further strengthen community engagement and cohesion work.</p> <p>Recent confirmation for two Middlesbrough Wards to be included in Pride in Place programme Phase 2 (formerly Neighbourhood Trailblazers will give an opportunity to put the new principles into practice during 2026 and into the following 10-year delivery phase.</p>	<p>which are to set out a Community Engagement Strategy.</p>

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				NEW** Bring forward a Community Engagement Strategy that will set out how the Council uses this increased capacity to systematically engage with its residents.		August 2026			<b>New action</b> identified in January 2026 following completion of the above.
6	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(CPC) Bring further rigour to financial planning and management to support savings delivery and financial resilience by:  a. Reviewing the MTFP assumptions and updating them on a quarterly basis, with clear plans for managing demand and delivering savings reported in monthly budget reports.  b. Supporting Executive Members to own and shape the financial position, within their portfolio areas and collectively, working with senior officers to challenge,	Effects on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) are going to be included within future quarterly budget outturn reports.  The Council already has a cycle of monthly budget reporting and agreement of actions in response to issues raised by this process. These are then formally reported to Members/ appropriate member decision making and engagement is undertaken. This is included within the quarterly outturn reports.	Section 151 Officer	To commence within the year-end report for 2024/25 (June 2025)	<b>Complete</b> and ongoing. Impacts on the MTFP are reflected within the year-end report being considered by Executive in June 2025. Going forward this will be expanded on in future reports.	Financial pressures have been a significant issue in 2025/26 to date and were reported in full in the Quarter One Budget outturn report and also in the September MTFP update to Executive.  As a result of this predicted overspend, all services with an overspend were required to develop financial recovery plans with a view to achieving a balanced budget overall in 2025/26. The output of this work will be reflected within the Quarter Two Budget Outturn report and will feed the update of the MTFP due in December.  The Section 151 Officer is considering all measures that could be taken	

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			<p>monitor and hold each other to account.</p> <p>c. Embed understanding and ownership of the financial position with budget holders to ensure the on-going delivery of transformation, savings and efficiencies.</p> <p>d. Ensuring that scrutiny and audit oversight is effective, transparent and supports understanding - beyond the council - with key partners and the public.</p> <p>e. Reviewing pay scales to support recruitment and retention of key staff, linked to workforce and succession planning, with a focus on both bringing in external, as well as nurturing internal, talent.</p>	<p>Executive role - Further training will be provided to Executive Members on financial management disciplines. The Council already has in place Executive involvement in the budget clinic cycle, attending on a quarterly basis for all areas except Children's Services where they attend monthly.</p>	Section 151 Officer	March 2026	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> Following identification of the Executive Members, a training programme is being developed in consultation with the lead member for finance with a draft training programme to be in place by July for delivery from September onwards.</p>	<p>should the above action not result in an improved budget position.</p> <p><b>In delivery.</b> The first training session was held in September to provide an overview of the Financial position of the Council for all members and training sessions have been held targeted at Executive Members on wider governance issues and communications good practice. The next phase needs to cover financial management good practice and disciplines to commence in late October. While this is still being scoped, the first training session has been set to be jointly delivered from a Member and Officer perspective and will cover the role of an Executive Member in the budget setting process.</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>
				Commence delivery of the Executive Member training programme in relation to finance.	Section 151 Officer	<p>July 2025</p> <p>Reprofiled to March 2026</p>	In development.	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> Executive Members will be asked to shape their training ask as part of their training session in late October.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> Treasury Management training being delivered in February. Action reprofiled to March 2026. Member feedback on further</p>

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									training needs is required to shape the content of a wider training programme.
				Regular monthly reports continue to be submitted to Leadership Team and Wider Leadership Management Team on the budget position. We have an ongoing training programme that we are committed to delivering to ensure we raise and maintain the financial skill sets of our budget holders. Additional support is targeted at new budget holders, on a risk-based approach, with the highest levels of support targeted at those managing the most volatile budgets.	Section 151 Officer	Monthly	<b>Ongoing.</b>	<b>Ongoing.</b> The Council's budget continues to be monitored on a monthly basis.	<b>Ongoing.</b> As the Council transitions into business-as-usual continuous improvement, this process will be refined in 2026/27.
				A proposal will be submitted to Audit Committee to recommend it completes a self-assessment against CIPFA Good Governance guidance in March. If agreed, it will be delivered during 2025/26.	Section 151 Officer	March 2025, with the review to be completed during 2025/26	<b>Complete</b> and ongoing. The review is underway and is being facilitated by an LGA regional advisory who is a former Section 151 Officer.	<b>Complete.</b> The outcome of this was agreed by Committee and reported to Full Council in October within the first Annual Report of the Committee.	<b>Complete.</b> Work is ongoing to implement an agreed development plan.

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							The outcome of that review will be agreed by committee and then reported within the first annual report from the Committee to full Council, anticipated to be delivered by September 2025.		
				Scrutiny - the Monitoring officer and S151 officer are working towards development of an integrated approach to reporting the quarterly outturn position to improve members understanding of the overall position of the Council financially and their understanding of the impact on delivery of Council plan priorities.	Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer  Reallocated to the Chief Executive from the Monitoring Officer following the Senior Management review	June 2025 onwards  Revised target April 2026	Discussions on how to ensure that integrated performance and finance reporting works effectively to demonstrate a narrative across the two disciplines and informs Council decision making is ongoing.  It is proposed that this initial target is reset to allow the Council time to reset its wider approach to Performance management, with a view to implementing a new approach from 2026/27.	<b>Ongoing.</b> The Council is in the process of completing recruitment to additional financial and performance posts that will support this outcome.	<b>Ongoing.</b> Since last reported, the Council has identified staff to enter key roles and is in the process of onboarding these staff.  There will be an integrated Performance and Budget Management Policy brought forward to Executive in April 2026 for agreement following collaborative working with finance and performance staff. The new cycle will be implemented to align with the refreshed Council Plan.
				The Town Board, once reestablished, will become the vehicle through	Chief Executive	June 2025	See previous.	<b>Complete.</b> The Town Board, now known as the Place Leaders Partnership, has now been	

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				which strategic discussions with our partners are held this will include sharing information about our spending power and priorities. The Board will be established during 2025.				established, it has agreed a work programme that is designed to enable it to create a shared vision for the town.	
				We are securing additional capacity within the HR team to be able to look at options around the Council's recruitment and retention of key staff as well as ongoing delivery of the People Strategy to ensure our staff have the skills and capabilities to be able to meet the needs of succession planning.	Head of HR	May 2025	<b>Complete.</b> Growth bid has been approved to provide this additional capacity. Additional action captured to track recruitment to the post.		
				Complete recruitment of the Pay and Reward Specialist to provide additional capacity to review the Council's approach on this matter.	Head of HR	September 2025		<b>Overdue.</b> Following failure to attract candidates, the post was reviewed and is currently being recruited to again. Should this also be unsuccessful, the organisation will be looking at all options to ensure it has capacity in this key area.	<b>Complete.</b> Post now in place.

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7	All	Use of Resources	<p>(CPC) Reframe Middlesbrough's approach to transformation, shifting from tactical savings during a crisis, to long term financial sustainability and continuous improvement to deliver better outcomes, by:</p> <p>a. Undertaking a cross-council reset and relaunch of its transformation priorities, alongside the council plan and council values, underpinned by strong leadership, a robust communications and engagement plan, and organisational development strategy.</p> <p>b. Creating a senior transformation officer role to lead, consolidate and prioritise the current programme, identify new</p>	<p>Following successful delivery of a programme of projects which have been primarily focussed on putting the council on a sound financial footing.</p> <p>The Council is currently pausing slightly to ensure the next phase of its approach to transformation of services, using a refined set of projects and programmes that has an increased focus on delivery of improved outcomes for our residents to support delivery of the council plan vision and underpinning ambitions, within a sustainable cost envelope.</p> <p>A report on the revised approach and the plans to put in place the capacity to deliver it successfully will be presented to Executive shortly.</p>	Chief Executive and Section 151 officer	April 2025	<p><b>Complete.</b> The Council has taken a reset report to Executive in April which has set out how it will amend delivery of the Council's approach to transformation. This includes plans to recruit a senior transformation officer.</p>		<p><b>Complete.</b> Following the refresh of the Council Plan and the transition to continuous improvement, the Council has transitioned away from the original transformation programme to an embedded approach to continuous improvement that will focus on identification and delivery of business change, where needed to improve outcomes for residents and businesses.</p>

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			<p>areas for transformation, track progress and delivery of desired outcomes, and drive the organisational change and buy-in required to deliver successful transformation.</p> <p>c. Reviewing capacity to deliver Middlesbrough's transformation ambitions, including within corporate services and supporting data and analysis and performance management, to ensure that all relevant services are adequately resourced to support transformation outcomes.</p>	<p>Complete recruitment of a Strategic Lead for Transformation.</p>	Chief Executive	<p>September 2025</p> <p>To be reprofiled.</p>	<p>New action added following completion of the initial commitment to reset the Council's approach to transformation</p>	<p><b>Overdue.</b> The Council had appointed a strategic lead who was due to commence working with the Council in October 2025. This person has unfortunately withdrawn from this process. Over the next quarter action will be taken to seek other candidates.</p>	<p><b>Action cancelled</b> and replaced with the Council's continuous improvement approach, embedded within the Council's revised approach to performance management.</p>
				<p>complete recruitment of a Continuous Improvement Team.</p>	Strategic Lead for Transformation	<p>October 2025</p> <p>To be reprofiled.</p> <p>Reprofiled to May 2026</p>	<p>New action added following completion of the initial commitment to reset the Council's approach to transformation</p>	<p><b>Overdue.</b> This action was delayed as a result of delays to the appointment of the Strategic Lead for Transformation. This is being reprofiled to be delivered by March 2026.</p> <p>The Council has created additional capacity within its senior leadership around the transformation themes of digital and housing, with two new Head of Service posts created and appointed to over the summer who are providing additional leadership capacity in those areas.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b></p>
8	Delivering Best Value	Continuous Improvement	(CPC) Establish a locally owned assurance and improvement	This Continuous Improvement Plan and the regular reporting of it to	Chief Executive	July 2025 onwards	<b>Ongoing.</b> This document forms part of the first	<b>Ongoing.</b> This is the second report that has been produced	<b>Ongoing.</b> This is the third report that has been produced.

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			<p>approach for Middlesbrough once the voluntary improvement Board steps down.</p> <p>This will help embed and sustain continuous improvement and support, providing oversight of the golden thread between the council's vision, corporate plan, performance and delivery of outcomes. By doing so, it will provide the council, its partners, and residents with assurance that the improvement journey is continuing at pace.</p>	<p>Executive and Scrutiny will ensure there is a locally owned assurance and improvement plan in place.</p>			<p>reports that will be submitted.</p>	<p>as part of this framework.</p>	
9	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	<p>(CPC) Review and strengthen Middlesbrough's internal audit arrangements and provision. This will ensure they are fit for purpose and adequately support its continuous improvement and assurance journey, with internal audit a key tool when deployed strategically in the delivery of high-</p>	<p>Commission an external review of the current arrangements for internal audit to provide assurance to the Council as to whether they remain fit for purpose or require adjustment to better support the Council's continuous improvement and assurance journey.</p>	Section 151 Officer	<p>Review to be commissioned by September 2025 for deliver in 2025/26.</p>	<p>An initial meeting has been held with Veritau to discuss the scope of this review and timescales.</p> <p>It is anticipated that a draft scope setting out required outcomes from an Internal Audit Service will be developed in consultation with Leadership Management</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> There are ongoing discussions with the Council's provider to review the approach and the outcome of this will be reported to Audit Committee in April 2026.</p> <p>In line with good practice, some initial changes have already been agreed. For example, it is good practice to change the lead auditor</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> On track to be considered by Audit Committee in April 2026 as per that committee's work programme.</p>

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			quality services, transformation and financial outcomes				Team by August 2025.	periodically. This will be implemented in 2025/26 by the provider.	
10	All	Governance	<p>(CPC) Review and strengthen Middlesbrough's overview &amp; scrutiny arrangements.</p> <p>This will ensure arrangements support robust and impactful scrutiny for the future, aligned with best practice.</p>	<p>A planned review is already underway to assess the impact and effectiveness of the current arrangements following 12 months of their implementation with a view to changing if needed. Guidance from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny will be used and members will be fully engaged in the review.</p> <p>In addition, a pre-scrutiny protocol will be developed to establish a collaborative working relationship between Executive and Scrutiny Councillors to enhance decision-making in the organisation.</p>	Monitoring Officer	May 2025	<p><b>Complete.</b> Review of scrutiny arrangements completed in December and the final report went to Overview and Scrutiny Board in April 2025. As a result of the review, scrutiny panels have been amended to increase panel capacity from 3 to 4 (including OSB).</p> <p>Pre-scrutiny protocol submitted to LMT in May 2025 prior to submission to OSB in July.</p>		
				NEW** Conduct a survey of scrutiny members to seek their views on the current approach to scrutiny to	Monitoring Officer	May 2026			Action put in place to assess the extent that the new arrangements are embedded and identify opportunities

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				assess the impact of the revised model.					for further improvement.
11	All	Governance	(CPC) Support councillors further in their roles through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Providing the Executive with administrative support and training for their roles;</li> <li>b. Addressing issues with Councillor Gateway system;</li> <li>c. Providing sufficient advanced notice for meetings, and at times that meet councillors' needs; and</li> <li>d. Promote and encourage good councillor conduct, including on digital platforms.</li> </ul>	We are securing additional democratic support capacity to support the Executive team administration their roles.	Monitoring Officer	September 2025	<b>Completed.</b> Agreed growth bid in place.		
				Complete recruitment to an additional Business Support Officer post to support the work of the Executive	Monitoring Officer	September 2025	<b>Completed in</b> June 2025.	<b>Completed.</b> The occupant is now in place for the new post.	
				The Council has reinstated the Gateway Project Board that oversaw development of the gateway. Deliver the Improvement action plan that has been developed by that Board. The Board includes Member representatives.	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	n/a	<b>Ongoing.</b> New action focussed on ensuring there is a mechanism to improve the user experience.	<b>Ongoing.</b> There is a group that is meeting regularly to understand this. Officers have recently met with the most frequent users of the system to improve their experience. At the same time there is focussed work ongoing to improve processes.
				Training for Executive Members to be developed	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	<b>Complete and ongoing.</b> The incoming Executive have been offered access to the LGA Executive member leadership training course as well as provision of an ongoing		

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							<p>training and development offer covering governance, communications, finance and</p> <p>This will continue to be tracked to ensure a good take up. It aligns with the governance and finance training also in delivery.</p>		
				We are securing additional capacity to support the quality of responses to Members and to manage feedback from Members to establish a continuous improvement approach to both the system and the outcomes members are seeking.	Monitoring Officer	September 2025	<b>Completed.</b> Agreed growth bid in place.		
				Complete recruitment to the additional support to support an improved Member Enquiries experience for Councillors	Monitoring Officer	September 2025	Ongoing.	<b>Complete.</b> The occupant is now in post.	
				Ongoing discussions will continue to be held with Members to	Monitoring Officer	May 2025 committee diary setting	<b>Complete.</b> In order to ensure this is member led, it has been		

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				<p>identify the issues with timings and options the Council could put in place to manage timings and support Members to attend.</p>		<p>by Council and ongoing</p>	<p>decided to book provisional dates for meetings of committees and then facilitate a committee-by-committee discussion on timing and frequency of meetings to meet Member needs. The Council will continue to seek feedback on this and refine the approach as necessary.</p>		
				<p>We have recently delivered further training to all Members on good conduct on social media and will regularly push out reminders on good practice on social media usage.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b>, social media posts continue to be a source of standards complaints.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing</b>. Standards training delivered in September for Councillors and Parish Councillors covered this as a topic. Unfortunately, there was a very low turnout for that training. Members are being urged to engage in the training that is being offered. Officers continue to look at the way training is delivered and timings to ensure they consider all options to improve Member engagement. Member feedback will be sought on an ongoing basis to</p>	<p><b>Complete and embedded</b>. The Council will maintain a regular cycle of analysing root causes of Member conduct and delivering preventative training. This is embedded within the work programme of the Council's Standards Committee.</p>

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								adjust the approach as necessary.	
12	All	Governance	<p>(CPC) Continue to improve member and officer relationships with clear understanding of the respective roles, responsibilities and promoting good behaviours.</p> <p>This will continue to strengthen Middlesbrough's governance guardrails, promote conduct in line with the Nolan Principles, and avoid the risks which in the past have arisen from Middlesbrough's Mayoral model.</p>	We are committed to an ongoing cycle of training and development of both officers and Members and will regularly take the temperature of the organisation through engagement and surveys to identify where more needs to be done.	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing regular surveys throughout the year	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> Staff temperature check survey went live in June 2025.</p> <p>Members were surveyed as part of the review of the Member Development Survey in February 2025. The next planned survey will be undertaken in September 2025 and will focus on Member and Officer relationships.</p> <p>The Statutory Officers meet with group leaders on a monthly basis.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> Since last reported, the Council has completed a further survey of its staff. This year's survey had a significant increase in respondents with 16% more of the workforce responding to the survey. As well as increased engagement, there was an increase in the positivity staff feel about working for the Council. Staff also felt more comfortable in expressing their opinions honestly. Most staff were also very clear how their work linked to the ambitions in the Council Plan.</p> <p>A temperature check survey of Members was launched in October and the outcome will be reported in the next update.</p>	<p><b>Ongoing.</b> The Council will maintain a regular cycle of analysing root causes of Member conduct complaints and delivering preventative training. This is embedded within the work programme of the Council's Standards Committee.</p> <p>A further survey will be completed in May 2026 of members – regular contact with surveys with Members will be embedded within the Member Development Strategy. The methodology of engagement will be varied to attempt to increase participation.</p>
13	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources, Service delivery and Continuous Improvement	(MIIAB) Develop a medium-term plan, as organisational capacity improves, to integrate finance and performance reporting within the	Following successful growth bids to put in place the capacity within Finance, action is being taken to secure additional	Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer	Staff will be recruited into post by September 2025.	<b>Ongoing.</b> Additional posts have now been job evaluated for the performance team and are	<b>Overdue.</b> Further recruitment underway within finance and performance to facilitate this. There have been some	<b>Complete.</b> Additional capacity is now secured; the Corporate Performance Manager will commence work during April 2026.

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			corporate governance framework.	capacity to reestablish a more embedded performance management process as well. Action will initially be taken to recruit additional capacity, with a view to first working together to strengthen performance management and reporting and then jointly developing an integrated approach to reporting to improve the Council's ability to demonstrate alignment of its resources with Council priorities and the relationship between resourcing and performance across its priority areas.			going through the VCF process.  Recruitment to the Deputy 151 officer post has been completed. This post will be necessary to shape the nature of the additional capacity within finance and complete recruitment. They will commence in post in late July 2025.	delays following two unsuccessful attempts to recruit to a Corporate Performance Manager post. The Council is exploring all options to address this.	Some further capacity planned to be recruited to during 2026/27 to support the Corporate Performance Manager.  Initial population of the finance structure is in place but will be subject to further development in 2026/27 as part of actions to move the Council toward achievement an improved star rating against the CIPFA financial good practice model.
14	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(MIAAB) Focus on long term financial resilience and:  a. tight control on 2025/26, b. develop a balanced position for the medium term, c. have a planned approach to	The Council has a robust budget management approach in place which it intends to maintain in 2025/26, including ongoing budget clinics, with Member involvement within them, as well as	Section 151 Officer	Quarterly throughout 2025/26  Proposed revised target of April 2026 onwards	Discussions on how to ensure that integrated performance and finance reporting works effectively to demonstrate a narrative across the two disciplines and informs Council	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Ongoing.</b> Work is ongoing to develop this model with an ambition to start its implementation, subject to member approval, from the end of Quarter One 2026/27.

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			<p>growth,</p> <p>d. do not fund ongoing expenditure from one off funding pots,</p> <p>e. focus on transformational opportunities.</p>	<p>monthly budget reporting to inform these processes.</p> <p>Regular liaison with Executive will be undertaken as part of the quarterly review of the effects of decisions and expenditure on the MTFP. This will include medium term planning for growth.</p> <p>Not funding ongoing expenditure from one off pots of funding is a principle that is already robustly applied to Council budget setting processes. For example the proposed governance of the Middlesbrough Priorities fund includes such a principle.</p>			<p>decision making is ongoing.</p> <p>It is proposed that this initial target is reset to allow the Council time to reset its wider approach to Performance management, with a view to implementing a new approach from 2026/27.</p>		
15	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(MIIAB) Be prudent with extra money: top up reserves (to a level higher than currently suggesting), invest in contingency.	This is another principle within the Council's budget setting process and there are a number of contingencies built into the budget	Section 151 Officer	n/a - Ongoing over the life of the Medium Term Financial Plan	<b>Ongoing.</b> The Year end outturn report on 11 June 2025, shows a positive direction of travel on reserves over the life of the MTFP.	<b>Ongoing.</b>	<b>Ongoing.</b> The 2026/27 proposed budget includes a substantial increase in reserves, with further increases planned over the medium term. Further detail on this is

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				<p>including a risk fund to manage risks around non-delivery of savings.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Plan includes plans to grow the reserves prudently while balancing against the level of demand arising from being a local authority in one of the country's most deprived areas.</p>			<p>On 31 March 2025, reserves were at £21.654m, compared to a target that was set during the section 24 action plan delivery of £18.1m by 31 March 2025.</p>		<p>set out in the Reserves Policy 26/27.</p>
16	All	All	(MIIAB) Build organisational capacity to strengthen resilience in finance, HR, OD and transformation to support delivery of your corporate plan priorities.	<p>The Council has already taken action to identify funding for growth in these areas and it will consider whether there are any further growth needs within its reset approach to transformation which will be considered by Executive in April 2025.</p>	Chief Executive	May 2025	<p><b>Complete and ongoing.</b> Finance growth bid is now secured and a service review will be undertaken to ensure it is utilised effectively once the new Deputy 151 Officer is in post from late July 2025. The review is expected to commence by November 2025.</p> <p>The Council has reset its approach to transformation and set aside significant capital receipts that can be drawn down as needed to</p>	<p>Review of Finance capacity is ongoing with additional capacity built into the structure which are currently out for recruitment. The Council is carefully building up its capacity in this area to ensure that it has a planned approach to onboarding this additional capacity to ensure it is able to make the maximum positive impact.</p>	

Rec.	Council Plan Ambition	Best Value Theme	Recommendation	Action	Owner(s)	Target date for completion	June 2025 update	October 2025 update	January 2026 update
							<p>fund support services as the Strategic Lead of Transformation drives the Council's approach to transformation and develops, in detail, the activities that will need to be taken. In April 2025, Executive agreed flexible use of Capital receipts to fund a strategic lead for Transformation and additional support capacity in the form of a continuous improvement team.</p> <p>Recruitment to these posts is expected to commence in July 2025.</p>		
17	All	Leadership	(MIIAB) Continue to focus on organisational development as an important part of your continuous improvement journey, with a particular focus on team development and embedding stable, permanent leadership	Executive and Leadership team development programme has been put in place and is resuming at pace, with external support and expertise. In addition, the Council is refreshing support for its wider	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	The Council's Organisational Development (OD) Team has developed a leadership and management training programme that spans from aspiring manager level through to Chief Executive.	<b>Ongoing.</b> The post has now been recruited to and a start date agreed for November 2025. Once this person is in post, the organisation will be moving at pace to launch its revised management support offer.	<b>Ongoing.</b> New Senior OD Business Partner appointed in November 2025, enabling to us to develop OD Projects in - Workforce Planning, Coaching & mentoring, Work Experience and Apprenticeships. All to be rolled out from

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			arrangements.	Managers, reestablishing a management training gateway, along with a wide range of programmes to develop skills and capacity. This is being overseen within the delivery of the People Strategy.			<p>The programme focusses on a core set of skills and behaviours to ensure they are embedded across the organisation.</p> <p>The Council is working to increase the capacity of its OD team and aims to complete recruitment to a vacant post within the team by September 2025.</p>	<p>A series of sessions are already in delivery with Leadership Management Team and Executive over the autumn.</p>	<p>February 2026 onwards.</p> <p>New Customer Excellence training programme to mobilise the new Customer Strategy and Charter is also in development and will be rolled out from March 2026 to the full workforce.</p> <p>We have also developed and introduced a new Staff and Management Development Programme to further develop knowledge and skills in Communication, Collaboration and Change. Successful pilot programme ran October – December 2025, delivery schedule agreed to offer this to the full workforce until March 2027.</p> <p>In addition, the OD Manager continues to work with LMT and Executive to build relationships and develop collective leadership behaviours and approaches, sessions ran in October and</p>

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									November 2025 will be continued this year.
18	All	All	(MIIAB) Complete and implement your communications strategy and use it as an effective tool to bring the council vision to life and to ensure that both the internal and external environment understands the outcomes the council is trying to achieve.	Once the Council has reset its approach to transformation, a draft Communications Strategy will be developed to ensure that there is a plan in place, owned by senior leaders, that ensures the Council is clearly communicating its vision, priorities and actions to ensure Members, Staff, the public and partners understand and engage with the outcomes the council is trying to achieve.	Chief Executive	Draft Strategy June 2025, to be reviewed on a quarterly basis by Leadership team.  Reprofiled to September 2025.  This will be reprofiled to June 2026.	In progress. The Communications team continues to prioritise topics that are linked to the Council Plan. The changes to the approach to transformation are still emerging. One key update is the briefings for staff held by the Chief Executive on the Council Plan, the organisation's values and transformation	<b>Ongoing.</b> This will be revisited as part of the refreshed approach to Transformation that will be led by the incoming Strategic Lead for Transformation. Once they have taken an initial view, this target date will be reprofiled to align with their work priorities.  The Council is continuing to review the effectiveness of its internal communications within business-as-usual processes.	<b>Ongoing.</b> As the original transformation programme evolves into one of continuous improvement, a communications plan will be developed to keep staff, partners and residents updated.
19	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(EFS) The council are mitigating this risk for 2024/25 through contingencies and EFS. There are also reserves though these are at a critically low level. From 2025/26 onwards, the council aims to deliver transformational savings but we consider there to be significant risk in this	The Council has put in place a savings delivery risk budget and has also increased the levels of reserves to manage this risk and is in the process of also resetting its approach to transformation. Regular monitoring of savings delivery will continue to	Section 151 Officer	September 2025	<b>Ongoing.</b> The Section 151 Officer has in place a regular monitoring and reporting cycle on delivery of savings and sets out this performance within the Quarterly budget outturn reports to Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Board.	<b>Ongoing.</b> This is being considered within the Financial Recovery Plans during Quarter Two.	<b>Complete.</b> The Council has delivered substantial savings during its transformation programme and is now in a position to be able to move into a Continuous Improvement cycle. It will continue to maintain a grip on savings identified, using that new cycle,

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			plan. We raise Recommendation 15 for the council to develop comprehensive mitigation plans for savings that have been designated as 'Amber' and 'Red' within the Transformation Programme, focusing on identifying barriers and implementing solutions to reduce risks. Ensuring these plans are regularly updated and integrated into the projects.	take place with mitigation being developed as appropriate.  <b>SMART action</b> – Any savings that are deemed to be undeliverable must be replaced with mitigation. Financial Regulations will be amended to set out clear expectations around this.			As of June 2025, no savings for 2025/26 have been identified as undeliverable. Performance by quarter will be reported in the Quarter One outturn report, due to be submitted to Executive in September 2025. Further actions as required will be developed following that.		
20	Delivering Best Value	Governance	(EFS) We raise Recommendation 3 encouraging the council to: a) consider the merits of appointing at least one independently, ideally two, co-opted independent members to its Audit Committee; b) ensure that the Audit Committee reports directly to Full Council and that this is documented within the Constitution; and c) include quarterly presentation of the Strategic Risk Register to the Audit Committee	Audit Committee to complete a self-assessment of its effectiveness with external independent support which will inform a develop plan for the committee.	Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer	September 2025	<b>Ongoing.</b> The self-assessment was already in train and was a commitment in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement. An independent LGA advisor is supporting the committee to complete this.	<b>Complete.</b> Audit Committee agreed the recommendations in principle and their formal response at its meeting in September 2025.	<b>Complete.</b> A development plan is in delivery and progress monitored by the Committee.
				Completion of the first annual report from Audit Committee to Full Council.		December 2025	<b>Ongoing.</b> The outcome of the self assessment will be reflected in the first annual report of the committee and will form a development plan	<b>Complete.</b> The first annual report of the Audit Committee was reported to the October 2025 meeting of Full Council.	

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							for the Committee.		
				The Risk Register is reported to the Audit Committee every 6 months and to Overview and Scrutiny Board every quarter.		N/a already in place every 6 months.	<b>Complete.</b>		
21	Delivering Best Value	Governance	(EFS) We raise Recommendation 4 encouraging the council to explore options for growing report writing skills at the lower levels of the organisation.	A revised report format will be considered by Leadership team in April, alongside recommendations to refresh report writing support.	Monitoring Officer	Complete	<b>Complete.</b> A new report format has been developed, and engagement has been undertaken to identify report writing needs.		
22	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(EFS) We have raised Recommendation 9 that the council should more clearly articulate its approach to mitigating treasury management risks in the Treasury Management Strategy. From our review we have not identified any significant risk that the council is exposed to but recommend a clearer articulation of the steps taken to mitigate these risks.	Improved TMS taken to Council in February 2025 but further work will be undertaken to strengthen this within a revised TMS half year update to be presented to Executive.	Section 151 Officer	October 2025  Reprofiled to December 2025 following identification of an error with the target date – the update should follow on from completion of the mid-year financial update being provided to Executive.	Ongoing.	<b>In progress.</b> This will be reported to the December meeting of Executive, following consideration of the Quarter Two Financial Outturn report at Executive.	<b>Complete.</b> Agreed by Executive in February 2026.
23a	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(EFS) We have raised Recommendation 11 that the council should progress	The Council has already commenced a soft market testing exercise with	Director of Regeneration	Completion of soft market testing by March 2025	Ongoing. Soft market testing complete. The initial stage has been completed	<b>Completed.</b> Soft market testing has been completed.	

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			external management arrangements for its remaining commercial properties in a timely manner.	Cushman and Wakefield to assess the extent of the commercial portfolio that could be outsourced. Once completed this will inform next steps with a realistic proposal for outsourcing based on market appetite.		Subject to findings, development of an appropriate approach to outsourcing will be undertaken during 2025/26 if the business case is supportive of that outcome.	to assess the appropriateness of arrangements to ensure it is assured that it has the correct management arrangements in place, which included consideration of external management.  The Council is currently continuing to review and refine its options appraisal in relation to this to ensure it has a sustainable medium term approach to commercial property management.		
23b				Follow up action: Go live with the new arrangements. Timing is subject to the internal approval processes of the appointed company	Director of Regeneration	April 2026 onwards	n/a	<b>Ongoing.</b> This is a new action agreed following completion of the soft market testing action above. An agreement has now been signed and is on track to go live before the target date.	<b>Complete.</b> Approval has been granted, and arrangements are now in place.

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24	Delivering Best Value	Use of Resources	(EFS) We have raised Recommendation 12 that the council should continue to review and consider the most prudent approach to calculating MRP whilst considering both short-term and long-term impacts on the revenue budget.	The Council will review the MRP methodology and consider the effects on the MTFP as part of the 2026/7 budget setting process.	Section 151 Officer	March 2026	<b>Ongoing.</b> This will be considered within the review of the MTFP as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process which will articulate the Council's considered approach, taking into account the costs of changes in approach, risks and the impact on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.	<b>Ongoing.</b> See the June 2025 update which sets out the approach that is underway.	<b>Ongoing.</b> To be reviewed following changes in government funding methodologies. The Council's approach is set out in the Treasury Management Strategy considered by Executive in February 2026.  This will be kept under review as part of the Council's strong oversight and management of its budget.
25	Delivering Best Value	Continuous Improvement	(EFS) We raise Recommendation 16 that the council should develop a comprehensive change management framework that includes clear objectives, key performance indicators, and a culture of continuous improvement. There should be integrated accountability structures that clearly define roles and responsibilities for transformation initiatives. We also raise Recommendation 17 for the council to	Develop and finalise a Change Management Framework  Not applicable as already actions in place to address this within the CIP	Section 151 Officer	December 2025	<b>Ongoing.</b> This will be picked up by the new Strategic Lead for Transformation to put in place a coherent approach to transformation that includes change management.	<b>Ongoing.</b> Will likely be refiled with a realistic target date by the incoming strategic lead for Transformation once appointed.	Action cancelled. Replaced by the Council's revised approach to business change and continuous improvement.

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			engage with stakeholders, including employees, residents, and partners, to build support for transformative initiatives and ensure alignment with broader community goals. The council should ensure all stakeholders are aligned with the transformation agenda through effective communication and engagement strategies.						
26	All	All	(EFS) The Council have put in place an improvement plan to address the recommendations within the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report on the Council's Adult Social Care services that was issued in February 2025.	Submit quarterly reports to Department of Health and Social Care following consideration of those items by the People Scrutiny Panel.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration	Ongoing from September 2025 on a quarterly basis (revised from May 2025)	<b>Ongoing.</b> The outcome of the inspection was reported to People Scrutiny Panel in March 2025 The first progress report is now due to go to the Committee in September 2025.	<b>Ongoing.</b> Quarterly update submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care on 21 August 2025, following consideration by the People Scrutiny Panel. The report outlines continued progress against the Adult Social Care Directorate Improvement Plan, aligned to CQC findings. Governance is in place via the Directorate Improvement Board chaired by the Director of Adult Social Care, with	<b>Complete.</b> The Adult Social Care Directorate Improvement Programme continues to progress well, with monthly monitoring through the Improvement Programme Board and quarterly reports submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care throughout 2025. These reports demonstrated sustained improvements against the CQC-related actions, leading DHSC to de-escalate the Council from formal

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								escalation routes to the Leadership Management Team (LMT). A process is currently underway with the Department of Health and Social Care, through Partners in Care and Health to assess whether government oversight can be reduced if they are comfortable with the Council's progress to date, direction of travel and pace of change which would be a very positive endorsement of the Council's approach.	monitoring. This reflects strong governance, a clear direction of travel, and confidence in Middlesbrough's ongoing delivery of the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan
27	Delivering Best Value	Continuous Improvement, Use of Resources and Leadership	(CQC) The CQC inspectors identified concerns that there was not much of a corporate view of adult social care performance data.	Refresh and reestablish a performance management cycle beyond the strategic level, to embed a 'golden thread' of Performance Management from the Council Plan down to departmental level.	Director of Legal and Governance Services – Transferred to Chief Executive following the Senior Management Review.	December 2025 – reprofiled to April 2026	<b>Ongoing.</b> A proposed way forward has been developed. A revised Performance Management Policy will be brought forward for Member decision in December 2025.	<b>Ongoing.</b>	<b>Ongoing.</b> This has been reprofiled slightly to allow the policy and supporting framework to reflect the transition from Transformation to Continuous Improvement that is set out in the Council Plan report at this Executive.

Source key:

CPC	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge January 2025 recommendations
MIIAB	Former Middlesbrough Independent Improvement Advisory Board recommendations
EFS	Exceptional Financial Support Grant Thornton review
CQC	Adult Social Care, Care Quality Commission inspection February 2025

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL