

<b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
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<b>Report of:</b>	Councillor L Young, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board and Charlotte Benjamin, Director of Legal and Governance Services (Monitoring Officer)
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<b>Relevant Executive Member:</b>	The Mayor
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Council
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<b>Date:</b>	1 April 2026
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<b>Title:</b>	Scrutiny Progress Report
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<b>Report for:</b>	Information
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<b>Status:</b>	Public
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<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	Delivering Best Value
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<b>Key decision:</b>	No
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<b>Why:</b>	Report is for information only
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<b>Subject to call in?:</b>	Not applicable
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<b>Why:</b>	Not Applicable                      Council Report for information only
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<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
That Council note the report.

<b>Executive summary</b>
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
<b>A successful and ambitious town</b>	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.
<b>A healthy Place</b>	
<b>Safe and resilient communities</b>	
<b>Delivering best value</b>	

**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 25 February and 18 March, respectively, since the last update to Council.

4.2 During the 25 February meeting the Board received a portfolio update from the Executive Member for Development. During his update the Executive Member advised Members about projects that were underway including the Old Town Hall, the Nunthorpe Community Centre and Outwood Riverside Academy. An update was also provided about future development at the Middlehaven area and that a broad mix of housing would be available on the site when it was completed.

4.3 The Executive Member responded to questions about how the Council could best engage with external stakeholders regarding regeneration projects. Members were advised this was as ongoing piece of work as it linked with lessons learned following the LGA Peer Challenge. Members were also encouraged to hear that footfall in Captain Cook Square was high and that STACK had recently renewed its lease.

4.4 The Board also received an update from the Chief Executive in relation to its short review into the Council's approach to poverty. As part of that update Members were advised that the Council viewed poverty through several lenses and it was important that those lenses be refined so the Council had a consistent approach. Members were also advised that how the Council approached, and defined, poverty was a political choice.

4.5 At its meeting on 18 March, the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability was in attendance to provide an update on his portfolio. As part of his update the

Executive Member responded to questions from Members about the delivery of the waste management arrangement, bereavement services, alley cleansing, the Transporter Bridge and the appointment of a Becks Team.

- 4.6 Members were also advised that a scrutiny survey was due to be published seeking Members' views on the scrutiny function and all Members were encouraged to complete it. The Board was also reminded that requests for scrutiny topics were being sought for the 2026-27 municipal year.
- 4.7 At its next meeting, scheduled for 7 April, the Board will receive an update from both the Mayor and the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, as well as considering an update on the Council's improvement journey and a short report into the Board's review into Poverty and how the Council approaches it.

## **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 met on 23 February 2026 and considered evidence relating to its ongoing scrutiny review of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
- 5.3 The Panel received a presentation from a representative of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) on the perpetrator strategy and prevention work, including approaches to early intervention, behaviour change programmes, and multi-agency case management
- 5.4 The Panel also received a presentation from the Council's Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead on the White Ribbon accreditation process.
- 5.5 The final draft report on 'Healthy Placemaking with a focus on Childhood Obesity' was approved and agreed to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 18 March 2026.
- 5.6 The Panel will continue its scrutiny work on VAWG at its next meeting on 13 April 2026, which is scheduled to include further evidence, alongside consideration of the Director of Public Health Annual Report (2025/26) and the quarterly update on the CQC Improvement Plan.

### **Children's Scrutiny Panel**

- 5.7 The Children's Scrutiny Panel met on 9 March 2026. The Corporate Director of Children's Services and the Head of SEN and Vulnerable Learners were in attendance to provide updates on the Ofsted Focused Visit to the Front Door of Children's Services, progress against recommendations from a previous review and emerging national policy and legislative changes.

- 5.8 Key findings from the Ofsted Focussed Visit highlighted improved management oversight and alignment with the Council's self-assessment, alongside areas for improvement including consistency in decision making, application of thresholds and the quality of audits. These were being addressed through the Children's Services Improvement Plan.
- 5.9 The Panel received an update on its previous review of Children Missing Education, including progress against recommendations and the establishment of a Working Group to explore issues such as pupil transience.
- 5.10 Further evidence was also considered in relation to the Panel's review of Out of Area Specialist Provision, with Members reviewing comparative data and discussing local provision and placement trends.
- 5.11 A brief update was provided on forthcoming SEND reforms, with further detail to be reported once additional information is available.
- 5.12 The Panel's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 20 April 2026 at 4.30pm when it will receive the final report on Out of Area Specialist Provision for consideration.

### **Place Scrutiny Panel**

- 5.13 At the Place Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 26 January 2026, the Head of Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Partnership Officer were in attendance to give the annual update on the Community Safety Partnership and Prevent and Channel. Members were particularly interested in broadening their knowledge of the Prevent strategy and it was agreed that a bespoke Prevent learning course would be reoffered to Members of the Place Scrutiny Panel. This training took place on 10 March 2026 and was well received.
- 5.14 The Place Scrutiny Panel met on 16 February 2026 and received the statutory annual update from the Public Rights of Way Officer on Flood Risk Management. Members were advised of the various ways flooding could occur in Middlesbrough and the measures in place to mitigate those risks. The Environment Agency's 'Medium Term Plan' was also discussed which sets out a rolling programme of schemes funded through Government allocations. A list of potential and completed scheme areas in Middlesbrough was presented to the Panel.
- 5.15 The Governance and Information Manager was also in attendance on 16 February and provided an annual update on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA). RIPA was the legislation governing the use of surveillance techniques by public authorities and the varying roles, responsibilities and authorisation needed within the Council to comply were presented to the Panel.
- 5.15 Recommendations and final amendments to the Draft Final Report on Barriers to Regeneration were discussed during both the January and February meetings and it was agreed that final approval would be delegated to the Chair once the agreed final

amendments had been incorporated. The Final Report was presented and approved at the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 18 March 2026.

5.16 The Panel's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 30 March 2026 at 1.30pm.

### **Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee**

5.17 The Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee met on 12 March 2026 and considered the following agenda items;

- North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account for 2025/26.
- Tees Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust Urgent Care Mental Health Crisis Update.
- Tees Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust - Quality Account for 2025/26.

5.18 Members were advised that meetings of the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2026/27 will be administered by Middlesbrough Council.

### **Scrutiny Reports Submitted to Executive**

5.19 No scrutiny reports have been submitted to Executive since the last Overview and Scrutiny Board update to Council on 14 January 2026.

### **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)**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Financial (including 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.
Procurement	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function.
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 is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Reducing Poverty	Not applicable as this is 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 is 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 is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Data Protection	Not applicable as this is 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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**Background papers**

Body	Report title	Date

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