

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL
EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 11 March 2026.

PRESENT: Mayor C Cooke (Chair) and Councillors I Blades, P Gavigan, L Henman, J Rostron, P Storey and N Walker

OFFICERS: A Bates, S Bonner, L Grabham, R Horniman, A Humble and AM Wilson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors T Furness and J Ryles

25/108 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Mayor welcomed all those present and explained the fire evacuation procedure.

25/109 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

25/110 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 4 FEBRUARY 2026**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 4 February 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/111 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE SUB-COMMITTEE FOR PROPERTY - 4 FEBRUARY 2026**

The Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive Sub Committee for Property held on 4 February 2026 were submitted and accepted as a true record.

25/112 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

None.

25/113 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

None.

25/114 **QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS (IF ANY)**

None.

25/115 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY OR COUNCIL (IF ANY)**

None.

25/116 **REPORTS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD OR A SCRUTINY PANEL (IF ANY)**

None.

25/117 **REPORTS FROM MEMBER BODIES WHICH ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE**

None.

25/118 **COUNCIL PLAN 2026-29**

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive consideration, the purpose of which was to seek approval of the completed refresh of the council plan. The plan was appended at appendix one of the report.

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the Council Plan was the organisation's overarching medium-term business plan and was typically refreshed annually. This refresh followed a review of performance in the previous year and introduced an outcome-driven approach to demonstrating progress and impact, as agreed by Executive in December 2025.

The Council Plan was part of the council's policy framework and therefore required approval by full council, as set out in the Constitution. The budget and policy framework procedure rules allowed the Executive to draw up firm proposals for submission to full council where a new plan was proposed. Changes to outcomes could be approved by Executive.

The report proposed no changes to the vision or priorities; it reflected the revised outcomes agreed in December 2025 and updated the measures used to assess impact.

In 2024, the council established a time-limited transformation programme in response to significant financial pressures. The programme was reviewed in 2025 to ensure better alignment with the Council Plan. Its purpose was to stabilise the organisation, deliver agreed savings, improve outcomes for residents and maintain statutory service delivery during a period of financial constraint.

The programme had achieved many of its financial objectives, and the time was now right for the Council to move into the next phase. It was no longer proportionate or sustainable to operate transformation as a standalone initiative. The conditions that required exceptional programme governance had shifted, and improvement capability was now better embedded within day-to-day operations.

It was commented this would not be last report submitted to Executive on this matter. Executive would also be sighted on individual service plans related to the refreshed Council Plan.

It was also commented that specific references to culture would be made in future documents that referred to the Council Plan. It was discussed and, following a vote, was agreed that wording in the document would be amended to reflect how Middlesbrough works together to achieve its aims.

OPTIONS

Members could have chosen to not refresh the activity within the plan or the measures that assessed impact. This was not recommended because the Plan would not then have provided a blueprint against which the organisation could set its supporting plans, strategies and policies against with any confidence that the Plan reflects the priorities and needs of the town's residents.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. Approves the refreshed Council Plan which set out how the Council would measure success, following previous agreement of the outcomes in December 2025 by Executive.**
- 2. approves further minor amendments to the outcomes agreed by executive in December 2025 to create separate outcomes for digital and transport connectivity and minor, non-material changes to sentence structure to enhance readability and did not change the nature of the agreed outcomes.**
- 3. Approves the cessation of the Council's transformation programme and transition into a continuous improvement model.**
- 4. Approves the transition of the customer strategy and the Neighbourhoods model into business-as-usual delivery.**
- 5. Approves the Council's engagement in the place leader's partnership, its membership on that partnership.**
- 6. Endorses the planned development of a place strategy for the town, to be led by the place leader's partnership.**

REASONS

Refreshing the Council Plan enabled the Council to continue to plan over the medium term. Updating outcomes and measures of success ensured that the Council Plan

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reflected current progress against the council's vision and priorities. Under the local government act 1999, local authorities must legally deliver what was termed 'best value' in that a Council must be able to show that it had arrangements to secure continuous improvement in how it carried out its work. The proposals in the report set out how the council is embedding continuous improvement within its strategic planning.

25/119

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive consideration, the purpose of which was to set out progress in delivering the Continuous Improvement Plan.

in March 2025, full council considered the final reports of both the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge team and the Middlesbrough independent Improvement Advisory Board (MIAB).

Both of those reports were hugely positive, recognising the improvements the Council had made over the previous two years on its improvement journey. They also contained a series of recommendations, designed to ensure the Council maintained an outcome focussed commitment to the principles of its continuous improvement journey as it transitioned from a period of intervention. In November 2025, the LGA team returned to Middlesbrough and conducted a follow up visit. A copy of their report was attached at Appendix two of the report. The Continuous Improvement Plan of the Council had been updated to reflect this and their findings.

The Plan also continued to track delivery of actions arising from the external assurance review undertaken by Grant Thornton as part of the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) application. It also included an action arising from the Care Quality Commission inspection of adult social care services.

Appended to the report, was a copy of the Continuous Improvement Plan and its status as of January 2026. The Plan continued to evolve as actions were delivered and follow up actions were identified, where necessary.

A conversation took place about the inclusion of lessons and actions from the Improvement Plan into business-as-usual approaches. It was commented that any remaining actions from the Improvement Plan would likely be incorporated into documents such as the annual Governance Statement.

OPTIONS

The Council could have chosen to maintain multiple documents capturing continuous improvement activity; however, this would have been an inefficient approach and would have reduced Members' ability to see a comprehensive overview of the Council's ongoing activity in relation to continuous improvement.

ORDERED that Executive approves the updated Continuous Improvement Plan.

AGREED that Executive notes the progress made in delivering the commitments within the Continuous Improvement Plan.

REASONS

Having a Continuous Improvement Plan that captured all strategic continuous improvement activity provided Members and officers with a comprehensive overview of improvement activity within the organisation as part of a framework of assurance reports. The plan ensured the Council was tracking this type of activity within one document. Successful delivery of continual improvement activity would improve the Council's ability to deliver against its council plan ambitions.

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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2025/2026

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive consideration, the purpose of which was to advise Members of corporate performance at the end of Quarter Three 2025/2026, and where

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appropriate, sought approval of any changes, where these were within the authority of the Executive.

The Council's scheme of delegation gave the Executive collective responsibility for corporate strategic performance, together with associated actions.

The report provided the necessary information to enable the Executive to discharge its performance management responsibilities, setting out progress against priority performance disciplines and other key associated items, together with actions to be taken to address any issues identified.

The projected financial outturn at Quarter Three 2025/2026 was presented separately to this meeting of the Executive. Members were advised that during 2026/2027 steps would be taken to deliver integrated reporting on this subject.

The Council's overall performance at the end of Quarter Three 2025/26 saw progress towards expected performance standards, as set out in the Council's risk appetite, achieved in one of the five corporate performance disciplines.

Members noted that performance against programme and project management from Quarter Three 2025/26, was against all programmes and projects within the overarching portfolio.

Members also noted that performance against Council Plan outcomes for Quarter Three 2025/26 was measured by tracking progress against baseline key performance indicators, as outlined in the Council Plan 2024-27 and its associated workplan. It was expected that, over time, 90% of the outcome measures would be achieved.

OPTIONS

The Council was required to operate a performance management framework to ensure delivery of its best value duty. Not doing so would have placed the Council at risk of failing in its statutory responsibility in this regard.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. Approves proposed changes to the Executive actions, detailed at Appendix one of the report.**
- 2. Approves the proposed changes to the Council Plan 2024-27 and supporting workplan actions as detailed at Appendix three of the report.**

AGREED that Executive:

- 1. Notes the delivery status of the Council Plan 2024-27 and its supporting workplan, detailed at Appendix two of the report.**
- 2. Notes the progress and position of the corporate performance disciplines.**
- 3. Notes that following agreement of the refreshed council plan 2026-29, activities in the work plan be embedded within directorate plans, once developed.**
- 4. Notes the Strategic Risk Register appended at Appendix four of the report.**

REASONS

To enable the effective management of performance and risk in line with the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.

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TENDER PIPELINE 2026/27

The Executive Member for Finance submitted a report for Executive consideration seeking approval of Middlesbrough Council's tender pipeline for 2026/27. The report also sought agreement for a delegation of the contract award to the relevant Director who would update their Executive Member accordingly.

Members were advised that the report was not the Corporate Procurement Strategy. That strategy contained issues such as social value. A tender pipeline was used to provide the market

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with an understanding of the potential future open procurement activity the Council may undertake in the next 12-18 months.

The Procurement Act 2023 required the Council to formally publish tender pipeline notices for any procurement where the contract value was over £2million.

As there were limited contracts that would meet that criteria the Council would continue to publish open procurement opportunities on its own website.

The Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy 2024 - 2026 set out the strategic direction for the implementation of the contract procedure rules, which were the regulatory framework for all staff to follow in respect of purchasing goods, services and works regardless of value.

The strategy supported the aims and priorities of the Council. It set out how the Council would:

- Strive to make procurement easier for suppliers and the Council alike.
- Challenge and drive value for money from all procurement activity.
- Maximise innovation, sustainability, and collaboration in our procurement activities to support the Council's strategic objectives.
- Ensure social value and local return was at the heart of procurement opportunities.
- Continue to increase the visibility of our tender opportunities to the local and SME suppliers.
- Make the best use of local, sub-regional, regional and national collaborative arrangements where significant benefits for Middlesbrough could be evidenced.
- Within that corporate procurement strategy, a tender pipeline was used to provide the market with an understanding of the potential future open procurement activity the Council may have been undertaken in the next 12 months and increased the visibility of tender opportunities.
- The tender pipeline may have been of particular benefit to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and voluntary, community and social enterprises as it provided them time to plan for future work, ensuring a competitive and diverse market.

Middlesbrough Council's tender pipeline for 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2027 had been developed as part of the Council's governance processes.

To be transparent, the pipeline included all known procurement activity and not just contracts over the key decision threshold. As such, not all these opportunities will be publicly available as not all opportunities are available to the full market.

OPTIONS

Do nothing. This was not an option as it would not support strong governance or allow the Council to be compliant with the upcoming Procurement Act requirements to publish a tender pipeline.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. Approves the Middlesbrough Council tender pipeline for 2026/27.**
- 2. Approves delegation of the contract award to the relevant Director who will update their Executive Member**

AGREED that Executive:

- **Notes that any above threshold tender with a contract value over £2million would have a Tender Pipeline Notice published in line with Procurement Act 2023.**
- **Notes that any above threshold tender with a contract value below £2million will be published on the Council's website only.**
- **Notes that below threshold quotations, direct awards and framework call offs will not be published as they are closed competition opportunities.**

REASONS

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To continue to have strong governance arrangements in place for procurement activity carried out by the council and to be compliant with the Procurement Act 2023.

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ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

None.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was/ were published unless the decision(s) become subject to the call in procedures.