

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL

EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Wednesday 8 April 2026.

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

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors J Kabuye and L Young

OFFICERS: M Adams, A Bates, C Benjamin, S Bonner, H Dalby, G Field, L Grabham, A Glover, R Horniman, E Scollay and R Williams

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors J Ryles and P Storey

25/123 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all those present to the meeting and described the fire evacuation procedure.

25/124 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Name of Councillor	Nature of Interest	Agenda Item
Cllr Ian Blades	Non-Pecuniary	Agenda Item 12 - Ward Councillor
Cllr Nicky Walker	Non-Pecuniary	Agenda Item 12 - Works for MP for Middlesbrough

25/125 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 11 MARCH 2026**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 11 March 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

25/126 **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

None.

25/127 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)**

None.

25/128 **QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS (IF ANY)**

None.

25/129 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY OR COUNCIL (IF ANY)**

None.

25/130 **FINAL REPORT OF THE OSB TASK AND FINISH GROUP - COMMUNITY COHESION (SERVICE RESPONSE)**

An Overview and Scrutiny Board Task and Finish Group had submitted entitled Community Cohesion. A copy of the full report was attached. The Task and Finish Group had made twelve recommendations upon which a response was sought from the relevant service area.

The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were:

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1. To ensure Scrutiny contributes to Community Cohesion agenda: - Develop a Community Strategy as quickly as possible with quarterly progress updates brought to scrutiny.
2. A draft of the Community Strategy should be brought to Scrutiny as the earliest opportunity before it is finalised.
3. To mitigate the risk of future unrest: - An early warning system, such as a Community Cohesion dashboard, should be developed to alert the Council and relevant partners of community tensions.
4. To ensure a robust Community Cohesion offer: - that the Council embeds initiatives created because of Home Office funding as part of its business-as-usual operations. An update should be brought back to Scrutiny on this during the 2027/2028 budget setting process.
5. As part of the Council's approach to improved youth participation: - a specific plan be created that includes demonstrable, and quantifiable, actions to engage young people about the dangers of misinformation.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods submitted a service response to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report.

The lead Member of the Task and Finish Group introduced and presented the Scrutiny report and summarised the recommendations of the Panel.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods provided a response to the Scrutiny report and presented the Service Response.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhoods stated he welcomed the report and stated that some of the recommendations were already being addressed and, in some cases, were being built upon.

Members discussed the importance of community cohesion, and how the Council was actively working with local communities across the town to achieve effective community cohesion.

ORDERED that Executive

1. **Notes the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board Task and Finish Group into Community Cohesion and the accompanying recommendations; and**
2. **Approved the Action Plan prepared by the service in response to the recommendations.**

REASONS

It was a requirement that Executive formally considered the Scrutiny Panel's report and confirmed the service area's response to the accompanying plan.

25/131 REPORTS FROM MEMBER BODIES WHICH ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE

None.

25/132 PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROGRAMME AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY REVIEW

The Mayor submitted a report for Executive consideration presenting the proposed Performance and Financial Management Policy, the Programme and Project Management Policy, and the development plans for Directorate Business Plans. Members were informed that the Council Plan served as the organisation's overarching medium-term business plan and that the proposed policies were designed to strengthen the Council's ability to deliver its priorities within a proportionate and robust governance framework.

Members were advised that the Performance and Financial Management Policy set out how arrangements would be put in place to align directorate and workforce activities with the Council Plan, integrate performance, finance and risk into a single cycle, and provide a holistic view of organisational delivery. It was reported that the Policy aimed to embed a clear 'golden thread'

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from the Council Plan through Directorate Business Plans down to individual employee objectives, supporting evidence-based decision-making and earlier identification of pressures and opportunities.

In relation to Directorate Business Plans, Members noted that plans would be developed during 2026/27 and refreshed annually thereafter in line with the Council Plan cycle. The Plans would document each Directorate's key functions, past performance, priorities for the year ahead, key performance indicators and supporting strategies. Members heard that this approach would support transparency, strengthen accountability and promote a consistent standard across Directorates.

Members were further advised that the Programme and Project Management (PPM) Policy had been reviewed in line with the required three-year cycle. The revised Policy aligned with the Council's integrated performance, finance and risk framework and ensured that significant and complex change activity was supported by appropriate governance, including gateway processes and a project categorisation tool based on the Council's risk appetite. Low-risk, one-off tasks would continue to be managed as Business as Usual within Directorate Business Plans.

The report outlined the expected impacts of implementing both policies, including strengthened governance, improved ability to identify trends earlier, enhanced transparency, and positive contributions across the Strategic Risk Register, particularly in relation to maintaining a balanced budget and ensuring robust corporate governance. Members were informed that both policies had undergone Impact Assessments, which confirmed positive contributions to equalities, community cohesion, and climate-related reporting.

Members acknowledged that financial considerations were embedded throughout the PPM Policy, ensuring that programmes and projects were assessed for affordability, value for money and deliverability. It was noted that integrated performance and financial reporting was expected to begin from Quarter One 2026/27.

Members discussed the challenges in successfully aligning performance and financial information in this regard. It was noted that a balance needed to be achieved whereby both performance and finance information were aligned to produce quality outcomes for the Council.

It was also clarified that, with regard to the clinic process, Members would lead on this which would also give senior leaders an effective overview of progress.

OPTIONS

Members noted that the alternative option would have been to maintain separate approaches to performance and financial management or to retain existing project thresholds. It was considered that these approaches would limit the Council's ability to identify trends promptly and would not align with the principles of Best Value.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. Approved the Performance and Financial Management Policy;**
- 2. Approved the Programme and Project Management Policy; and**
- 3. Approved the Directorate Business Plan development plans as set out at paragraphs 4.4 to 4.8 of the report.**

AGREED that Executive:

- 1. Noted that implementation of the new integrated arrangements and the development of Directorate Business Plans during 2026/27 would support delivery of the Council Plan and strengthen organisational governance; and**
- 2. Noted that the revised PPM Policy and associated framework would ensure complex change activity was delivered effectively, consistently and in accordance with the Council's risk appetite.**

REASONS

The decisions supported the Council's commitment to continuous improvement and ensured that appropriate governance, accountability and transparency mechanisms

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were in place to maximise delivery of the Council Plan and demonstrate compliance with the Best Value Duty.

25/133

PRIDE IN PLACE PROGRAMME - THORNTREE, PARK END AND IMPACT FUND

The Executive Member for Development submitted a report for Executive consideration regarding the Pride in Place Programme allocations for Thorntree and Park End, and the Pride in Place – Impact Fund for central Middlesbrough. Members were informed that Middlesbrough had been awarded a combined £41.5m across the three programme areas.

Members were advised that Thorntree and Park End had each been allocated £20m over ten years under the main Pride in Place Programme. Each area would be required to establish an independent Neighbourhood Board, led by a locally appointed Chairperson, to identify priorities, consult with residents, and prepare a Neighbourhood Investment Plan for submission to Government by Winter 2026/27. Funding would commence in April 2027 following approval of each plan.

Members noted that the Council's role within the programme was limited to providing Accountable Body functions and secretariat support. The Executive heard that decision-making powers, including planning, design and prioritisation of investment, rested entirely with the Neighbourhood Boards. It was also reported that local MPs had a statutory role in the programme, including appointing Chairpersons and approving final Board membership. An open recruitment process for Board Chairs was underway, with expressions of interest due to close on 24 April 2026.

In addition to the main programme allocations, Members were informed that Middlesbrough had been awarded £1.5m from the Pride in Place – Impact Fund to support immediate improvements in central Middlesbrough. The Impact Fund would be delivered directly by the Council but required the consent of the constituency MP, Andy McDonald MP. Proposed interventions included improvements to Centre Square Pond, town centre clean-up activity and new public art installations.

The report highlighted that the programme was specifically targeted at areas identified as “doubly disadvantaged,” characterised by high deprivation and weak social infrastructure. Members acknowledged that the programme represented a significant opportunity to support long-term, community-led regeneration and to improve local engagement, service efficiency and neighbourhood resilience. The Executive also noted the resource implications for Council services, particularly during the early years of delivery, and the need for careful management of financial and legal oversight as the Accountable Body.

Clarification was provided regarding the area covered by the proposals which included three electoral wards and two parliamentary constituencies.

A discussion took place about Community Boards during which it was commented that if the process to appoint Chairs and other members to such Boards was too onerous it may deter community activists from applying. It was clarified that government guidance was available on the process of appointing members of the Community Boards and that the appointment process would be made as simple as possible.

OPTIONS

The alternative option would have been to decline Accountable Body status. Members noted that this would have jeopardised the £40m Pride in Place allocations for Thorntree and Park End, representing a substantial lost opportunity for these communities. This option was therefore not recommended.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. Approved the adoption of Accountable Body Status for the £20m Pride in Place Programme at Thorntree;**
- 2. Approved the adoption of Accountable Body Status for the £20m Pride in Place Programme at Park End;**

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3. **Approved the acceptance and allocation of the £1.5m Pride in Place – Impact Fund allocation for central Middlesbrough, subject to consent from Andy McDonald MP; and**
4. **Noted that the Council’s role was limited to that of Accountable Body and secretariat support.**

AGREED that Executive:

1. **Noted that all engagement activity, priority setting and development of the Neighbourhood Investment Plans would be solely determined by the Neighbourhood Boards for Thorntree and Park End;**
2. **Noted that officer resource requirements for administration and secretariat support would involve multiple Council services, including Growth & Assets, Neighbourhoods, Finance and Legal Services; and**
3. **Noted that any Neighbourhood Board decisions affecting Council land, assets, services or finances would be returned to Executive for consideration, with phased delivery used to maintain continuity of community services.**

REASONS

The decisions enabled Middlesbrough Council to unlock significant long-term investment for some of the town’s most disadvantaged communities, ensure robust governance and accountability in line with its duties as Accountable Body, and support the delivery of strong, resident-led neighbourhood plans focused on improving local pride, safety, wellbeing and community resilience.

25/134

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026/27

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability submitted a report for Executive consideration proposing the allocation of funding for the Transport and Infrastructure Capital Programme 2026/27 and seeking approval for associated delegations. Members were informed that the programme was fully grant-funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) via the Tees Valley Combined Authority and totalled £3.403m for the forthcoming financial year.

The Executive was advised that the purpose of the report had been to allocate funding to transport and infrastructure improvements across the Borough, including both highways maintenance and incentive-based new works. Members heard that the proposals would support the Council Plan priorities by improving accessibility, reducing congestion, enhancing safety, encouraging modal shift and ensuring long-term best value through investment in asset renewal.

Members noted that the £3.403m programme comprised £1.065m in Incentive Funding and £2.338m for Highways Maintenance, with schemes identified through the Council’s Future Year Scheme list and prioritised using a robust scoring matrix. Maintenance schemes were based on asset condition rating systems, applying a “worst-first” approach to ensure public safety and prolong asset life. The report stated that competitive grant awards were also incorporated where relevant.

The Executive was informed that the proposed delegation of authority would allow the Director of Environment, Community Culture to approve programme amendments and virements up to £0.250m, subject to consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Member for Environment where policy, service or strategic implications arose. Members heard that this would support prudent programme management, enabling timely adjustments to address unforeseen issues, funding changes or cost pressures.

Members acknowledged the wider benefits of the programme, including improvements to air quality, reduced traffic noise, greater accessibility for employment and education, and contributions to climate change objectives through investment in sustainable transport infrastructure. It was noted that the recommended approach also reduced the risk of rising highways claims associated with network deterioration and supported statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980.

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Members discussed the need for relevant Ward Members to be consulted before detailed design of schemes took place rather than at their commencement. It was stated that the decision before Executive was about the overall schemes not the detail of any one specific scheme.

The Mayor proposed an amendment to the report in that an additional action be added to provide a monthly report be made to the Executive Member responsible for Environment showing which schemes had been sent to relevant Ward Members.

Members were advised that the title of the Director of Environment and Community Services in the report should read Director of Environment, Community and Culture.

OPTIONS

Members noted that alternative options – including re-assessing the project proposals or taking no action – were not recommended. Reassessment would undermine the established prioritisation matrix and delay delivery, while taking no action would prevent timely allocation of funding and risk delivery failure.

ORDERED that Executive:

- 1. Approved the amendment to the report proposed by the Mayor.**
- 2. Approved the allocation of £3.403m in 2026/27 CRSTS Highways Maintenance and Incentive grant funding to schemes as detailed in Appendix 2; and**
- 3. Delegated authority for programme amendments and virements up to £0.250m to the Director of Environment, Community and Culture subject to consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Member for Environment where relevant.**

AGREED that Executive:

- 1. Noted the title of Director of Environment and Community Services should read Director of Environment, Community and Culture.**
- 2. Noted that the programme aligned with Council Plan ambitions, supporting accessibility, safety, economic growth, sustainable travel and long-term asset management; and**
- 3. Noted that individual Ward Members would be consulted on schemes within their localities as appropriate.**

REASONS

The decisions ensured the Council could prudently allocate funding received through CRSTS, fulfil its statutory duties as Highway Authority, support safe and expeditious movement on the transport network, and deliver infrastructure improvements aligned with corporate ambitions and best value principles.

25/135

RESIDENTIAL PEST CONTROL SERVICE

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability submitted a report for Executive consideration seeking approval to implement a new Residential Pest Control Service. Members were informed that the proposal aligned with the Council Plan priority of creating safe and resilient communities and would have a significant impact across all wards.

Members were advised that the purpose of the report had been to extend the Council's existing pest control capability to domestic settings, supporting residents by responding to infestations, preventing environmental health risks and improving overall housing conditions. The Executive heard that the service would utilise Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles, focusing on inspection, prevention, targeted treatment, and resident engagement to ensure effective, safe and environmentally responsible pest management.

Members noted that the service would provide free treatment for rats, mice, bedbugs and cockroaches, with other pest types treated on a chargeable basis. The service would be available to homeowners and private tenants, though not to social housing tenants, who already had pest arrangements through their landlords. It was reported that demand modelling had been benchmarked against other local authorities offering similar services.

The Executive was advised that £0.166m of permanent revenue growth had been included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan from 2026/27 to support staffing, training, materials and equipment. Members received clarification that no capital expenditure was required. The report also highlighted potential risks associated with demand levels and operational costs at service launch.

Members acknowledged that alternative options, such as appointing an external provider or not implementing the service, had been considered. It was noted that outsourcing could limit flexibility and reduce value for money, particularly given the uncertain level of demand, while doing nothing would fail to deliver important public health and community benefits. Retaining delivery in-house was therefore considered the most prudent option.

Members discussed the possibility of education programmes for the public to prevent food being discarded inappropriately leading to the attraction of pests. It was acknowledged that the introduction of food caddies may help with inappropriate food disposal.

OPTIONS

Members noted that the alternative options were to do nothing or to outsource delivery; however, neither was recommended, as both posed risks of reduced responsiveness, higher long-term costs, and diminished control and oversight of a service critical to public health.

ORDERED that Executive approved the implementation of a new Residential Pest Control Service.

AGREED that Executive:

- 1. Noted that the service would support the Council's ambitions for a healthy place, safe and resilient communities and best value through preventative action, reduced health risks and improved environmental conditions; and**
- 2. Noted that revenue growth requirements, staffing needs, legal responsibilities and operational risks had been fully assessed as part of the proposal.**

25/136

ENCOURAGING HEALTHIER ADVERTISING

The Executive Member for Public Health submitted a report for Executive consideration seeking approval for the implementation of a new Council advertising policy to restrict the promotion of health-harming products on Council-owned advertising assets. Members were informed that the proposal aligned with the Council Plan priority of creating a healthy place and would have a significant impact across multiple wards.

Members were advised that the policy aimed to reduce exposure to Unhealthy Commodity Industry (UCI) advertising, such as high-fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) foods, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, vaping, and high-cost short-term loans. It was reported that Middlesbrough continued to face severe public health challenges, including one of the highest childhood obesity rates in the country, with 39.8% of Year 6 children classified as overweight or obese, alongside 71.4% of adults living with overweight.

Members noted that with national HFSS television and online advertising restrictions introduced in January 2026, it was anticipated that advertising spend would shift towards outdoor marketing. Without local intervention, exposure to unhealthy food advertising on Council assets would likely increase. The Executive was advised that between October and December 2024, 26.4% of bus shelter advertisements in Middlesbrough promoted HFSS products.

The Executive heard that the proposed policy would prohibit UCI product advertising across all Council-controlled advertising spaces, including bus shelters, lampposts, roundabouts, social media channels, and printed publications. Evidence from Transport for London and other local authorities indicated minimal financial impact following implementation of similar policies, with most advertisers switching to compliant products and advertising revenues remaining stable.

Members were informed that the policy would operate on content-based restrictions rather than brand-based restrictions, enabling advertisers to promote healthier items within their product

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range. Targeted public health messages, such as smoking cessation or responsible drinking campaigns, would remain permitted. It was also noted that the Council's existing right to digital advertising time could be used to amplify positive health campaigns.

The Executive acknowledged the broader social benefits associated with the policy, including reduced environmental triggers for alcohol-related antisocial behaviour, support for healthier neighbourhood environments, and protection of vulnerable individuals disproportionately targeted by UCI advertising. Members were advised that adopting the policy reflected national momentum, with over 25 local authorities having already implemented similar approaches.

Members discussed the need for Council policy to align with recent changes to restrictions applied to television and radio and that the Council's approach had been adopted in different areas.

OPTIONS

Two alternative options had been considered but were not recommended. The first option, to do nothing, would have missed a significant opportunity to reduce exposure to harmful advertising and would have contradicted commitments made through the Healthy Weight Declaration and the Public Health Strategy. The second option, to implement an advertising policy without restrictions on Unhealthy Commodity Industry products, would have failed to deliver known public health benefits and would not have reflected best practice evidence from comparable councils.

ORDERED that Executive approved the implementation of a new advertising policy restricting the promotion of health-harming products on Council advertising assets.

AGREED that Executive:

1. Noted that the policy provided a clear, consistent framework for managing advertising and safeguarding public health, while ensuring legal compliance and protecting the Council's reputation;
2. Noted that the policy would support healthier environments, reduce exposure to harmful advertising, particularly among deprived communities and children, and align with national public health objectives; and
3. Noted that financial impact was expected to be minimal, supported by evidence from other local authorities, with current advertising income of approximately £83,000 per year unlikely to be significantly affected.

REASONS

The proposed policy provided a clear, consistent framework for acceptable advertising, ensuring compliance with legislation and safeguarding public health. It supported the Council's Healthy Weight Declaration and Public Health Strategy, contributing to ambitions for a healthier, more sustainable, and more equal Middlesbrough. Evidence from other local authorities and Transport for London showed minimal financial impact and significant health benefits, including reduced calorie intake and improved health outcomes. Whilst restricting advertising from health harming industries represented a clear path to improving the advertising environment in Middlesbrough, it was also important to consider how positive messages could be utilised to maximise uptake of services and activities that improved wellbeing.

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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.

