

<b>MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL</b>	
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<b>Report of:</b>	Mark Adams - Joint Director of Public Health, South Tees
<b>Relevant Executive Member:</b>	Cllr Jan Ryles - Executive Member for Public Health
<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive
<b>Date:</b>	10 June 2026
<b>Title:</b>	Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel: Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity.
<b>Report for:</b>	Decision
<b>Status:</b>	Public
<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	A healthy place
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Why:</b>	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
<b>Subject to call in?</b>	Yes
<b>Why:</b>	Non-Urgent Report

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>	
That Executive:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notes the report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel into Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity and the accompanying recommendations; and</li> <li>2. Approves the Action Plan prepared by the service areas in response to the recommendations.</li> </ol>	

<b>Executive summary</b>
<p>Childhood obesity remains one of Middlesbrough's most significant and persistent public health challenges, contributing to preventable disease, reduced quality of life and widening health inequalities.</p> <p>The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel examined the scale of the issue locally and created a report and recommendations setting out its intention to help address the problem. The aim of Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel is to:</p>

- Establish an understanding of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including current prevalence rates, trends over time, variation by ward or demographic group and links to deprivation, ethnicity, and other social determinants.
- Identify the key aspects of healthy placemaking and assess current and planned activity within Middlesbrough, such as public health, planning, transport and environment matters.
- Examine how partnership working contributes to the current reduction of childhood obesity and identify how this could be further developed by considering areas of best practice.
- Explore how healthy placemaking can be embedded more effectively into local council policies and strategies.

This report provides background and contextual information to support the Council's decision making regarding the recommendations identified by the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel.

## 1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Executive of the recent health scrutiny review entitled 'Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity' and to set out the action plan developed by the service in response to the recommendations made by the panel.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions, and the underpinning aims
<b>A healthy Place</b>	Delivers the ambition to help residents live longer, healthier lives by focusing on prevention, tackling childhood obesity and inequalities in deprived communities, improving local environments to support healthier choices, and aligning with priorities on early intervention, community engagement, and reducing the impact of poverty on health.
<b>A successful and ambitious town</b>	Promotes inclusive growth by enhancing active travel connectivity to education, employment and town centres, embedding health in sustainable planning, and improving school engagement to support attainment and life chances.
<b>Safe and resilient communities</b>	Supports independence and wellbeing through healthier environments and increased physical activity, while strengthening community resilience and fostering engagement through school, family and place-based approaches that build local ownership and cohesion.
<b>Delivering best value</b>	Embeds whole-council responsibility for health through strong governance, leadership and performance monitoring, using data and evidence to drive efficient, cost-effective decision making.

## 2. Recommendations

### 2.1 That the Executive

- Notes the report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel into Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity and the accompanying recommendations; and
- Approves the Action Plan prepared by the service areas in response to the recommendations.

### **3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)**

- 3.1 The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel: Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity resulted in a series of recommendations requiring formal consideration. In response, a comprehensive Action Plan has been developed, outlining proposed measures that now require Executive approval to proceed.
- 3.2 The recommendations of this report are underpinned by the strategic imperative to address the significant and persistent challenge of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, which has some of the highest prevalence rates regionally and nationally and is strongly linked to deprivation, placing children at increased risk of poorer physical and mental health, reduced life chances and widening inequalities. These measures aim to strengthen whole-system leadership, reduce health inequalities and embed healthy placemaking principles across council policies, services and environments.

### **4. Background and relevant information**

- 4.1 In 2025, the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel initiated a review into Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity. Accordingly, the Panel established the following Terms of Reference:
- Establish an understanding of childhood obesity in Middlesbrough, including current prevalence rates, trends over time, variation by ward or demographic group and links to deprivation, ethnicity, and other social determinants.
  - Identify the key aspects of healthy placemaking and assess current and planned activity within Middlesbrough, such as public health, planning, transport and environment matters.
  - Examine how partnership working contributes to the current reduction of childhood obesity and identify how this could be further developed by considering areas of best practice.
  - Explore how healthy placemaking can be embedded more effectively into local council policies and strategies.
- 4.2 The review was informed by cross-service collaboration, drawing on data, evidence and expertise from officers within Public Health, Transport and Infrastructure, Planning and You've Got This – Sport England Place Partnership. This multidisciplinary approach enabled a deeper, system-wide understanding of the complex factors that influence childhood obesity and healthy placemaking. By combining insights on environments, behaviours, deprivation, planning decisions, transport systems and cultural norms, the review was able to build a comprehensive picture of how these interconnected determinants shape health outcomes in Middlesbrough.
- 4.3 The review culminated a series of recommendations aimed to embed a long-term, whole system approach to reducing childhood obesity by strengthening leadership,

aligning council policies, improving cross department collaboration and creating healthier environments across Middlesbrough.

- 4.4 The findings and draft recommendations were considered, endorsed and referred to the Executive by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at a meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026.
- 4.5 The recommendations were subject to detailed review by relevant service areas. This process informed the development of a robust Action Plan, see Appendix 2, which sets out a coordinated response and provides a framework for implementation, subject to Executive approval.

**5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate**

- 5.1 Ward Members have not yet been formally engaged or invited to review the responses set out in the Action Plan. Engagement with Ward Members will be important as implementation progresses, as their close understanding of neighbourhood level priorities, local environments and the living experiences of children and families can help ensure that actions to address childhood obesity and support healthy placemaking remain grounded in the needs of Middlesbrough’s diverse communities.

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

- 6.1 **Take no action (i.e. not implementing Scrutiny’s recommendations).**  
This option would involve maintaining the current position and not progressing the recommendations made through the Scrutiny process. This alternative is not recommended, as it would risk missed opportunities for improvement, limit the Council’s ability to strengthen public health outcomes, and reduce confidence in the effectiveness of Scrutiny as a mechanism for challenge and improvement.

**7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)**

The recommended actions are expected to deliver a more coordinated, long-term and whole-system approach to reducing childhood obesity in Middlesbrough.

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There are no financial implications expected as many of the recommended actions build on existing programmes, service-level agreements and statutory responsibilities already embedded across Public Health, Planning, and Transport.
Procurement	No negative procurement impacts expected. The recommendations strengthen the Council’s approach to procurement by ensuring that future commissioning, contracts and partnership arrangements are more closely aligned with the Healthy Weight Declaration and wider public health priorities. The review highlighted the need for consistent governance in relation to Unhealthy Commodity

	Industries (UCIs), emphasising that procurement decisions such as sponsorships, grants or supplier relationships should avoid inadvertently supporting industries associated with poor health outcomes and obesity.
Legal	The report and actions do not have any immediate legal impacts. All actions will be delivered in accordance with existing statutory duties and regulatory frameworks.
Risk	The report and actions do not create any additional risks for the Council.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	The decision is consistent with the Council's duties under the Human Rights Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Childhood obesity in Middlesbrough is strongly associated with deprivation, with the highest prevalence concentrated in the most disadvantaged wards, meaning inaction would risk perpetuating existing health inequalities and disproportionately affecting children from marginalised communities. By promoting more inclusive, safer and health supportive neighbourhoods, the Action Plan also contributes positively to community cohesion, helping to address inequities in the built environment and ensuring that all children and families regardless of socioeconomic background can benefit from improved health, wellbeing and life chances.
Reducing Poverty	Agreeing the Action Plan is expected to have a positive impact on reducing poverty by addressing the strong link between childhood obesity and deprivation in Middlesbrough. By improving access to healthier environments, strengthening school-based food and activity programmes, and targeting support towards the wards with the highest need, the Action Plan helps tackle the structural barriers faced by children and families in disadvantaged areas.
Climate Change / Environmental	Agreeing the Action Plan is expected to have a positive environmental impact by supporting healthier, more sustainable neighbourhoods through measures that promote active travel, improve access to green spaces, and strengthen healthy placemaking principles
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Agreeing the Action Plan is expected to have a positive impact on children and young people cared for by the authority and for care leavers, as these groups are more likely to experience health inequalities and face barriers to accessing healthy food, physical activity and supportive environments. By strengthening healthy placemaking, improving access to active travel routes, and enhancing programmes delivered through schools and community settings, the Action Plan contributes to creating healthier,

	safer and more inclusive environments that support the wellbeing and long-term life chances of cared for children, young people and care leavers.
Data Protection	There are no data protection impacts anticipated.

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

The Action Plan responding to the recommendations from the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel can be found in Appendix 2. Progress will be monitored through established governance mechanisms to ensure alignment with strategic objectives and accountability for outcomes.

**Appendices**

1	Final Report of Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel: Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity.
2	Healthy Placemaking with a Focus on Childhood Obesity- Action Plan

**Background papers**

Body	Report title	Date
n/a		

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