

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Jan Ryles - Executive Member for Public Health

DATE OF MEETING: 15 July 2026

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES

A healthy place:

- *Improve life chances of our residents by responding to health inequalities*
- *Promote inclusivity for all*
- *Reduce poverty*

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

1.1 Creating Healthy Environments Programme

- 1.1.1 You've Got This (YGT) continues to support place-based whole system approaches to increasing physical activity at a population level. Tees Valley Active Schools is now operational in 15 Middlesbrough schools – with its particular focus on building capacity and capability of staff to embed moving more into and around the school day. YGT is contributing also to the Ageing Well Strategy, demonstrating a whole life course approach. They also presented on the role of being active in reducing falls at the Step Up and Rethink falls Conference organised by the University Hospital Tees.
- 1.1.2 Preparation to deliver the second northern region annual homeless football tournament is underway. The tournament, that will attract players from across the north of England, will take place on Thursday 3 September at Middlesbrough Football Foundation's Southlands facility. This tournament will be used to identify players to represent England at the 2026 Homeless World Cup taking place in Mexico.
- 1.1.3 Albert Park's newly refurbished tennis courts will officially reopen on Wednesday 1 July during the first week of Wimbledon. The new tennis courts will be operated by 'We Do Tennis' working in partnership with PHST and the LTA. The new courts will host a comprehensive package of tennis opportunities including free tennis, coached tennis, community programming and coach development opportunities as well as being open for casual pay and play.

- 1.1.4 Following work in North Ormesby Primary School and Brambles Farm Primary School to identify year 5 and 6 children that may potentially have gift or talent for sport and physical activity, Monday 20 July will see those identified take part in free gifted and talented sports day at Middlesbrough Sports Village. The day will introduce children, and their parents, to opportunities for the children to express their talents whilst seeking to raise their aspirations for their future participation in sport and physical activity.
- 1.1.5 Breastfeeding Boroughs declaration will continue to be supported by funding from the Family Hubs infant feeding workstream for another three years. Progress is continuing with signing up new venues as part of the Welcome to Breastfeed Scheme and Newcastle University are to be commissioned to conduct mapping research into infant feeding in Middlesbrough, which may help to identify any gaps in services, which funding will then be used to address.
- 1.1.6 Healthier Advertising policy was adopted by executive on 08 April. The policy includes advertising restrictions for health harming products including foods high in fat, sugar and salt, gambling, alcohol, tobacco related products, vaping and related products and breast milk substitute and applies to all advertising assets on the council estate, including bus shelters, lamppost and roundabout advertising.
- 1.1.7 Stamping out weight stigma training launched for all Public Health staff to increase awareness of weight stigma and share examples of best practice. The ambition is to roll out to all council staff.
- 1.1.8 MBC Awarded £155k grant from DEFRA to improve local authority food procurement and increase access to local, sustainable, healthy food. Public health jointly leading project with procurement team. Activity will include:
- Development of new Middlesbrough Food Charter & improvements to Good Food Middlesbrough website
 - Incentivise the Eat Well Awards
 - Improving food offer for looked after children's residential homes
 - Getting allotment surplus into Eco-shop network
 - Meet the producer & good food procurement event

1.2 Health Protection Programme

- 1.2.1 HIV Tees Care Pathway session completed in collaboration with national colleagues from UKHSA to support our action planning and next steps, reducing HIV and improving outcomes for those living with HIV.
- 1.2.2 HIV Prevention and Support Service Pilot is now operational (1/4/26), with weekly meetings at Live Well Centre. Already, the new service is producing positive engagement and outcomes, including improved pathways into treatment and care at James Cook.
- 1.2.3 Syphilis Action Plan session held at Live Well Centre to inform a targeted approach, including completion of the National Syphilis Response Plan Toolkit and STI Prioritisation Framework to reduce rates of syphilis and STI's across Teesside.

1.3 Immunisations – work continues across the subgroups:

- 1.3.1 The **childhood subgroup** has collaborated with Health Visiting colleagues across Tees Valley to gather insights from parents whose child is currently outstanding a vaccine at their mandatory visit, this will strengthen previous insights work which together will help determine local interventions.
- 1.3.2 The School Aged Immunisation Service (SAIS) have attended the Secondary Head Teachers meeting to present changes to the **teenage** parental consent process which will move to the national MAVIS (managing vaccines in school) system from September. SAIS has also shared data relating to the schools with lowest immunisation uptake, allowing Public Health to organise meetings with these schools to determine what action can be taken to increase parental engagement.
- 1.3.3 The ESOL subgroup has discovered that at one school there are 43 different languages spoken at home, while vaccine information is often available in 30+ languages only 19 of the HPV vaccine leaflet languages corresponded with the 43 spoken – highlighting the extent of language barriers on vaccine uptake locally.
- 1.3.4 **Cancer Screening** – the team continue to attend community events and services promoting the uptake of screening for breast, bowel, cervical, and lung cancer. The team work closely with the Northern Cancer Alliance and contribute to their strategic plan which focuses on improving early diagnosis, including that of rare cancers (pancreatic, liver, and oesophago-gastric) that have a significant impact on cancer burden.

1.4 III Health Prevention Programme

- 1.4.1 Public Health South Tees, in conjunction with MBC Regeneration and ICB have submitted an early stage bid for Gov/DHSC South Tees Neighbourhood health to encourage funding for Neighbourhood Health Centres to be created within Middlesbrough town.
- 1.4.2 Designs and discussions are still progressing between PHST and MBC Communities to have a presence in the new neighbourhood community centre in Berwick Hills, with the plan to deliver vital Public Health services in the heart of the community. Anticipated go-live is December 2026.
- 1.4.3 Final reports have been submitted to One Public Estate on the back of funding received for the initial phases of the Live Well move to Cleveland Centre. Data shows that whilst running costs have not been reduced, income generation and partnerships working has greatly improved with plans initiated to maintain and improve both outcomes.
- 1.4.4 An exciting relationship has been developed between PHST and STHFT weight management services for obese children and young people with the initiation of dance-exercise. Referral routes are now established, with movement and dance classes taking place to help children with weight issues, in informal, fun and friendly sessions.

- 1.4.5 Community delivery of NHS Health Checks by ELM GP Federation (alongside those delivered by GPs) resulted in 134 checks being completed in Middlesbrough over the last 10 months, with 69% of them being in residents from decile 1-3 (ie those most at risk of poor health). This work will continue into 26-27, with a focus on improving promotion and further uptake.
- 1.4.6 More partners are now trained in providing Blood Pressure checks in communities and appropriate lifestyle advice or signposting to GPs. This supports our wider approach to addressing cardiovascular health.
- 1.4.7 MBC were asked to present at the Regional MECC (Making Every Contact Count) annual Conference in Durham in June, in light of our approach to expanding our MECC trained network and incorporating MECC training into our SLAs with wider Council departments.
- 1.4.8 A development group has been established for the creation of the Ageing Well Strategy for Middlesbrough, made up of key stakeholders. Aim is to complete by March 2027.
- 1.4.9 Tees Valley Anchor Network Co-ordinator for South Tees (hosted by MBC) has now been appointed and has begun connecting with Network partners; designing branding and creating a Social Value charter for network partners to sign up to.
- 1.4.10 Free Colgate resources have been accepted for a second year running which will be used to support schools and nurseries to send home toothbrushing packs. This will support schools and nurseries to embed key oral health messages and to support toothbrushing at home. Further oral health funding is being utilised to support whole school brushing in schools (widening from Reception to Year 1 to all school year groups) within the schools with the highest dmft (decayed, missing, filled teeth) rates.

1.5 Vulnerabilities Programme

- 1.5.1 The NE Regional Reducing Gambling Harms Programme, which is hosted by Public Health South Tees (PHST), has secured additional funding. This enabled expansion of both the team's capacity and the workstreams being delivered, safeguarding delivery until March 2029, as a minimum. A new Advanced Practitioner, Craig Hodgson, has started in June as the senior leader of the team, as well as a new PH Officer to support the expanded programme.
- 1.5.2 PHST has continued to lead the National Reducing Stigma Pilot programme, on behalf of OHID and eight local authorities across the country. This first of its kind approach in Europe aims to measure the prevalence and impact of stigma on people affected by substance use issues. We have developed and rolled out an online Stigma Training Package to raise awareness of the issue and how to mitigate the impact amongst professionals across the country. This is supported by a range of powerful videos of people with lived experience telling their stories of how stigma has affected them. Middlesbrough achieved one of the highest rates on training completion of all areas, helped by working with OD colleagues to get it on the Middlesbrough Learns platform.

- 1.5.3 PHST Vulnerabilities Lead was invited to speak at the International Recovery Conference in early June. This was to share the benefits of directly commissioning our LERO (lived experience recovery organisation), Recovery Connections, and to share details of our innovative, local substance use model. The presentation was well received and there were many requests for further information about the local approach.
- 1.5.4 A bid for significant funding to support a unique approach to preventing drug-related deaths has been submitted to a health innovations research fund. If successful, this would result in a variety of datasets being combined with real time information to provide an enhanced understanding of risk. This has been developed by the Tees Preventing Drug Related Deaths Co-ordinator and support gathered from Tees PH colleagues and Teesside University.
- 1.5.5 The Changing Futures Phase 2 delivery programme is being developed and the first Board Meeting recently took place. Mayor Chris Cook is Chair and there has been positive engagement from partner agencies at the Board. There will continue to be a strong focus on frontline support and housing for people affected by multiple vulnerabilities has been agreed as the main theme to focus on. The full programme will be agreed in July and shared with local partners.

1.6 Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme

- 1.6.1 Mental Health Awareness Week was promoted in May, with a focus this year on 'Action'. The South Tees Wellbeing Network promoted a 'Just One Thing' personal wellbeing pledges campaign, inviting partners and communities to get involved. An online campaign network briefing was hosted to support organisation awareness and involvement.
- 1.6.2 A Tees Mental Health Training Hub contract has been awarded for a further 3 years following a Tees Authorities quotation exercise. The hub will provide a range of courses to increase mental health and suicide prevention knowledge and skills across a range of settings.
- 1.6.3 A programme of activities and events was delivered during Dementia Action Week in May, including a Lunch and Learn session for South Asian communities. Leads from the Mental Health Trust provided an overview of dementia diagnosis pathways and support available through memory clinic services and emphasised the importance of maintaining good brain health and reducing dementia risk factors. The vital role of dementia-friendly communities in supporting people affected by dementia was highlighted.
- 1.6.4 Activity demonstrated the value of targeted community engagement and partnership working in raising awareness, improving understanding and promoting earlier access to dementia support services.

1.7 Start Well

- 1.7.1 The Start Well board for Children and Young People's public health is agreeing milestones for the key projects and priorities for the year ahead. The programme board will be identifying priority areas and key activities for the wider council to

deliver on as part of a “Health in all family policies” approach working with Children’s services and other directorates in the council. The following major projects have been agreed for the year:

- **Best Start & School Readiness:** A new workstream had been set up to develop a Public Health approach to improve early childhood development and school readiness through strengthened Best Start pathways. The first group meeting was in June and the group will focus on school readiness pathways, obesity offer and training the early years teams in Public Health approaches
- **Healthy Schools:** Develop and deliver a unified offer that supports whole-school health, strengthens PSHE delivery, and reaches all school-age children, including consideration of those outside mainstream education
- **Teenage Pregnancy:** Reduce unintended teenage pregnancy rates and improve outcomes for young parents through targeted prevention and coordinated early intervention. The South Tees Teenage Pregnancy Partnerships is now meeting regularly, working through the framework and self-assessment audit tool
- **Childhood Poverty:** Reduce the impact of childhood poverty by acting as system leaders and improving access to supportive services and environments that mitigate health and wellbeing inequalities.

1.7.2 A whole school approach to Public Health is being developed by the “Healthy Schools” group. This will include work to:

- Create health promoting environments and relationships in school settings
- Develop a unified public health offer which is accessible to schools, young people and parents

1.7.3 The development of the 11-19 Young People’s service is on track with the first phase of consultation concluded and the service model in development with a system-wide steering group. The delivery model and staffing models will be agreed after discussion at Public Health DMT in July.

1.7.4 On 30 June, organisations from across the Tees Valley and nationally, including the Tees Valley Combined Authority, came together in Middlesbrough to commit to [“Tackling child poverty together across Tees Valley”](#). The North-East Child Poverty Commission and Close-Knit Families, supported by the Public Health team, led a day focused on agreeing shared strategic priorities and identifying next steps towards a co-ordinated and collaborative approach. The Public Health South Tees team is developing a child poverty profile for Middlesbrough and supporting the identification of local priorities for action.

1.8 Health Determinants Research Collaboration South Tees

1.8.1 We are delighted to announce our first draft Research Governance Framework is ready to test with Middlesbrough colleagues to obtain feedback and amend accordingly. This framework will provide a system to log research, ensure research is conducted in a robust manner and aligns to the values of Middlesbrough Council.

2 TIME AHEAD

Update:

Upcoming issues/things on the FWP/projects involved in:

- 2.1 Development of the Ageing Well Strategy and Neighbourhood Health Centre proposals.
- 2.2 Expansion of Healthy Schools, Young People's Services and oral health programmes.
- 2.3 Continued delivery of Changing Futures Phase 2 and regional gambling harms initiatives.
- 2.4 Implementation of the DEFRA-funded healthy and sustainable food programme.