

APPENDIX ONE

Setting the Scrutiny Work Programme – Shortlisted Scrutiny Investigation Topics

The following shortlisted topics are presented to assist Members in selecting one Public Health Scrutiny Investigation Topic and one Adult Social Care Scrutiny Investigation Topic for inclusion in the Panel's 2026–2027 Work Programme. The information is intended as a summary only and should not be regarded as an exhaustive assessment of each topic.

Public Health – Shortlisted Topics				
Shortlisted Topic	Why It Matters	Key Lines of Enquiry	Value of Scrutiny	Current Work and Previous Scrutiny
1. Barriers to Immunisation Uptake	Uptake of routine immunisations in Middlesbrough is below national targets in some groups, increasing the risk of vaccine-preventable disease and widening health inequalities. Improving coverage is critical to protecting vulnerable populations and reducing pressure on health services.	- What is the current local picture for immunisation uptake? -What are the key barriers to uptake? - Are there particular communities or groups with lower uptake? - How effective is current outreach, engagement and communication? - How well are partners (NHS, Public Health, community organisations) working together? - What more could be done locally to improve coverage?	Provides an opportunity to identify practical actions, to improve uptake, reduce inequalities and strengthen partnership working. Scrutiny could support more targeted, accessible and effective local interventions.	Public Health and NHS partners are delivering immunisation programmes and targeted initiatives to improve uptake, including outreach and engagement work. Performance monitoring is ongoing. No previous scrutiny investigations.
2. Smoking and Youth Vaping	Smoking remains a leading cause of	- What is the current local picture for smoking and youth	Offers an opportunity to review the effectiveness of	Public Health leads on tobacco control and

	preventable ill health and premature death, while youth vaping is an emerging concern, particularly among young people. Local prevalence contributes to health inequalities and long-term demand on health and care services.	vaping? - What are the key drivers of uptake, particularly among young people? - How effective are prevention, education and enforcement activities? - Are stop smoking services accessible and effective? - How are partners working together to address this issue? - What more can be done to reduce uptake and support quitting?	current prevention and enforcement approaches, particularly in relation to young people. Scrutiny could help strengthen local interventions, reduce health inequalities, and support improved long-term health outcomes.	smoking cessation services, alongside partnership work with schools, enforcement teams and NHS services. National and local initiatives are in place to reduce smoking rates and address youth vaping. No previous scrutiny investigations.
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Adult Social Care - Shortlisted Topics				
Shortlisted Topic	Why It Matters	Key Lines of Enquiry	Value of Scrutiny	Current Work and Previous Scrutiny
3. Loneliness and Social Isolation	Loneliness and social isolation can have a significant impact on physical and mental health, wellbeing and independence, particularly for older adults and vulnerable residents. It can increase demand on health and social care services and exacerbate existing	- How effectively are lonely or socially isolated adults identified? - What is the role of Adult Social Care, Public Health and wider partners in prevention and early intervention? - How accessible and effective are current support offers, including community and voluntary sector provision? - Are certain groups at higher	Scrutiny could help strengthen a preventative approach by identifying gaps in identification, referral pathways and support. It provides an opportunity to improve coordination across services and maximise the impact of community-based interventions.	The Council works with partners and the voluntary and community sector to support initiatives aimed at reducing loneliness and social isolation. A range of community-based services and preventative approaches are in place, with ongoing partnership working.

	inequalities. Addressing loneliness is therefore an important preventative agenda within Adult Social Care.	risk of loneliness or isolation? - How is the impact of interventions measured? - What more could be done to reduce loneliness and improve wellbeing?		A review “Reducing Loneliness and/or Social Isolation in Later Life” was undertaken by the ASC Scrutiny Panel and approved in 2018.
4. Neighbourhood Health Management	Neighbourhood-based approaches aim to improve outcomes by joining up health, social care and wider services around local populations. Effective neighbourhood health management can support prevention, reduce demand on acute services and help residents to remain independent for longer.	-What does neighbourhood health management mean in practice in Middlesbrough? - How effectively are Adult Social Care, health and community services working together at neighbourhood level? - How are residents identified and supported earlier to prevent escalation of need? - What outcomes are being achieved locally? - How is information shared and coordinated across partners? - What challenges or gaps exist in the current neighbourhood model?	Scrutiny could provide assurance on how effectively neighbourhood-based approaches are being implemented and whether they are delivering improved outcomes for residents. It offers an opportunity to examine integration, prevention and system working across Adult Social Care and health partners	Neighbourhood health management is being developed through partnership working with health and care partners, aligned to integrated care priorities. Local initiatives are underway to strengthen prevention, early intervention and joined-up support. No previous scrutiny investigations.
5. Unpaid Carers	Unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting vulnerable residents, often preventing or delaying the need for	-How effectively are unpaid carers identified in Middlesbrough?	Provides an opportunity to strengthen support for a key group underpinning the care system. Scrutiny could identify gaps in	The Council and partners provide a range of support to carers, including assessment, advice and commissioned services.

	formal care services. However, carers can experience significant impacts on their own health and wellbeing, and many remain unidentified or unsupported. Ensuring carers are recognised and able to access support is essential to sustaining the local care system.	- Are carers aware of, and able to access, available support and services? - What is the experience of carers in navigating support? - How are partners (health, social care, voluntary sector) working together to support carers? - Are there particular groups of carers who are less likely to be identified or supported? - What more can be done to improve outcomes for carers?	identification, access and coordination of support, helping to improve carers' wellbeing and sustain caring arrangements.	Work is ongoing to improve early identification, information and partnership working with the voluntary and community sector. A review on "Support for Older Carers" was scoped in 2020/21. However, following the agreement of the ToR, the review did not proceed due to a significant procurement exercise, meaning scrutiny was unlikely to add value at that time. Consequently, no scrutiny investigation was completed.
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