

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL
COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 15 July 2026.

PRESENT: Councillors J Banks (Chair), J Kabuye (Vice-Chair), I Blades, D Branson, P Gavigan, E Clynych, C Cooke - Elected Mayor, J Cooke, C Cooper, D Coupe, J Ewan, T Furness, TA Grainge, L Henman, N Hussain, D Jackson, L Lewis, T Mohan, I Morrish, J Nicholson, M Nugent, A Romaine, J Rostron, J Rush, J Ryles, M Saunders, M Smiles, P Storey, S Tranter, Z Uddin, N Walker, G Wilson and L Young

OFFICERS: C Benjamin, S Bonner, G Field, A Glover, T Harrison, S Lightwing, H McGaw, R Williams and K Whitmore

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Davison, S Hill, B Hubbard, L Hurst, D Jones, L Mason, D McCabe, J McConnell, J McTigue, J Platt, S Platt, J Thompson and J Young

26/16 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure.

26/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

26/18 **MINUTES - COUNCIL - 20 MAY 2026**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 May 2026 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

26/19 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair referred to the recent death of Ann Widdecombe in distressing circumstances. All present stood and observed one minute's silence in memory of the former MP and MEP.

26/20 **MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor moved his report as written.

Questions in relation to the Mayor's Report

Councillor L Young on Development at Middlehaven

The Mayor stated that there would be a decision on the Middlesbrough Development Corporation at the end of the month. The development at Middlehaven illustrated that if the Council went into partnership with Developers such as Carbon Centric, there was much that could be achieved. The scheme would be broken down into three main sections: residential, educational and waterfront. The current focus was on the residential development and there would be an opportunity for Councillors to view the detail of the other phases of the development and get involved in the coming months, with Ward Councillors being prioritised. This development was taking place in tandem with the Old Town Hall development and the building of the new school.

Councillor Clynych on 10 by 10 Programme

The Mayor invited more businesses to be involved in the 10 by 10 Programme by emailing 10x10@middlesbrough.gov.uk The Mayor welcomed all businesses, whether small, medium or large to get in touch to enable a wide variety of activities and opportunities to be offered throughout the town. In respect of the child enrichment guarantee, the Mayor stated that he was humbled to say that there had already been enquiries in respect of the terminal illness support package that was available. Families would now be able to access extra holiday activities through that support.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATES*Question in relation to the update of the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education – Councillor Storey*

Councillor L Young on the National Literacy Trust (NLT)

The Deputy Mayor explained that this initiative was part of the early years pathway with the Family Hubs, in partnership with the NLT Middlesbrough and The Book Trust. It began in the first year of a child's life and was linked to children's earliest memories of books, stories, songs and rhymes. The pathway supported families by gifting books at key contact points. Books were gifted at intervals from 16-18 weeks gestation at the midwife appointment up to the age of 27 months.

The NLT Middlesbrough deserved a huge thank you for being a trail blazer in gifting books to the neonatal ward at James Cook Hospital. It could be an incredibly stressful and upsetting time for families and these books helped build bonds when holding your baby wasn't possible.

Books were also gifted to children with hearing and sight impairments between 0-4 years, tailored to their needs, to schools through EYFS, KS1, KS2, Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and through events and festivals and partnerships with Mima.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Children's Services - Councillor Henman

Councillor Saunders on Early Help

The Executive Member stated that early help was really important in terms of ensuring children got the best outcomes and reducing the number of children who needed additional interventions or to go into residential settings. In line with the Government's Family First Programme, Children's Services were working hard to control budgets and achieve better outcomes. Over the last twelve months only 4.7% of open cases escalated into children being taken into care. This year's budget was more realistic and the Executive Member sat on both the Children's Improvement Board and Budget Clinics. Ensuring high quality, consistent practice, early on would ensure the budget was where it needed to be.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness

Councillor Saunders on Pride of Place Board

The Executive Member explained that the two co-chairpersons selected for the Pride of Place Board were local stakeholders with links to Everyone Active and the Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation. The Executive Member added that he was not involved in their selection. Councillors and local MPs would also be involved in the initiative which would bring targeted investment to one of the most deprived areas of Middlesbrough.

The Mayor added that the Government had not yet made a decision on the boundaries of the Board but that co-Chairs had to be appointed to progress the initiative. An interview and selection process had taken place and very few eligible residents had applied. There would be a further recruitment exercise to appoint at least six residents to the Board and the Mayor was keen to work with Councillors to promote this as widely as possible.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability - Councillor Gavigan

Councillor Ewan on road improvements

The Executive Member agreed that the condition of roads and pavements in Middlesbrough did deteriorate for more than a decade, principally due to underfunding from Central Government. A record £7.3 billion multi-year investment programme had been introduced by the current Government to help Middlesbrough and other local authorities tackle the backlog of repairs and potholes. In January 2026, Middlesbrough was one of only 16 local authorities from a total of 154, to receive a prestigious green rating in respect of road repairs.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Finance – Councillor Walker

Councillor Ewan on Reserves

The Executive Member explained that the level of reserves in relation to the Council's financial recovery were crucial. Referring back to when Middlesbrough Council received exceptional financial support, the Council's reserves at that time had been depleted by overspends. This year the Council had been able to invest further in reserves and services as well as keeping the Council Tax increase down. The Council had turned around the depletion of reserves and would continue to build on them.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Neighbourhoods - Councillor Blades

Councillor Clynych on anti-social behaviour

The Executive Member explained that there had been "Weeks Of Action" across the town which had produced faster responses to anti-social behaviour with more visible foot and vehicle patrols. There had been strong joint working between Council teams, Police, social and private landlords and this had delivered a clear reduction in anti-social behaviour. The number of evictions, house closures, Criminal Behaviour Orders, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Community Protection Notices issued had increased. This focussed neighbourhood approach worked and this model would be applied where required to drive down anti-social behaviour and restore public confidence.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Children's Services - Councillor Henman

Councillor Uddin on residential homes

The Executive Member agreed that the Council was in a really good position with all of its seven residential children's home rated good or outstanding by OFSTED. This represented a huge change from a few years ago and one that all those involved should be really proud of. Residential homes had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, which had included the views of the staff and the young people's experiences. The great work of the staff in supporting young people through key moments in their lives was highlighted such as bereavement. One former resident had invited all the staff to their wedding. This demonstrated the impact staff in the residential homes had giving young people a safe and stable place to live. The new Head of Residential and Supported Accommodation was now in post and plans were in place to keep the service performing well, expand it and make sure more young people could benefit from it.

Question in relation to the update of Executive Member for Development - Councillor Furness

Councillor Clynych on the new Southlands Community and Sports Facility

The Executive Member for Development stated that the opening of the new Southlands Community and Sports facility was fantastic news. The Executive Member recalled when he was elected in 2019 when it was agreed that the new Southlands Centre would be built, however it had not happened. In 2023, when the Executive Member was re-elected it was a prime ambition of the administration to achieve this aim. Middlesbrough Football Club's Community Foundation had been engaged to help deliver the project and along with plans for Pride of Place in East Middlesbrough, the potential for that area would be game-changing and hopefully inspire a new generation. The Executive Member invited all Councillors who wished to, to have a tour of the new facility.

Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability – Councillor Gavigan

Councillor Uddin on the new pest control service

The Executive Member replied that the Council's new pest control service became operational on 6 July 2026 and was already providing residents with a dedicated and responsive service for pest related issues. Since the service launched, the Council had received 142 requests for pest

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control. There had been 101 requests regarding rats, 12 regarding mice, 3 regarding cockroaches, 7 regarding bed bugs and 19 regarding wasps. Wasp control was a chargeable service and this would benefit the Council. These figures indicated the demand and the importance of having a responsive and accessible service available to residents which helped prevent and protect public health and address issues promptly within local communities.

Question in relation to the update of the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability – Councillor Gavigan

Councillor Ewan on the new food waste collection service

The Executive Member acknowledged that there had been some teething troubles with the new food waste recycling service, although this was to be expected with any new large-scale initiative. The following information was provided for context: during the first two weeks of the service, residents had already helped divert 75 tonnes of food waste from general waste collections. Participation levels had been extremely encouraging, demonstrating strong commitment from residents to recycle more and reduce waste. Similarly, the response to the new paper and cardboard recycling collection had also been excellent. Collection crews were reporting high levels of participation with vast majority of residents placing materials in the correct bins. This positive engagement was helping to improve recycling quality and maximise the environmental and financial benefits of the new service.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

The following question for the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability had been submitted by a Member of the Public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.8.15:

Middlesbrough has committed to ambitious environmental targets, including biodiversity restoration, expanded tree and meadow planting, and progress toward the 2029/2039 net-zero goals. Given the scale of these commitments and the capacity challenges faced by councils nationally, would the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability be open to exploring a collaboration model where independent organisations — working alongside Teesside University students — can help design, deliver, and monitor blue-green infrastructure projects that accelerate progress toward these targets?

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability explained that the Council remained committed to the targets referenced in the question. The Executive Member agreed that the targets were challenging and the Council did not have unlimited resources. For these reasons, and others, it was wise to acknowledge the resources and expertise of third parties. The Executive Member stated that he would happily endorse the Council collaborating with Teesside University and other independent organisations who could help accelerate progress towards the targets referred to in the question.

The following question for the Mayor had been submitted by a Member of the Public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.8.15:

What safeguards and audit trails does the Council have in place within its incident reporting systems to ensure that health and safety records cannot be deleted or altered after they have been submitted and can you confirm if the Council has identified any instances in the last 5 years where health and safety incident reports were deleted or removed from the official reporting system before their legal retention period expired?

The Mayor stated that it was important to highlight the difference between removal from a system into a different system and also the retention period. All incidents were recorded within the Council's health and safety management system. Once submitted, records could not be deleted or removed by general users. System permissions restricted this function to a single authorised role ensuring appropriate oversight and control. Where removal from the live reporting system was required, this was only undertaken in exceptional justified circumstances, for example; duplicate entries, incorrect classifications, errors, or where it was subsequently determined that an incident did not fall within the health and safety criteria. In any of those cases, a clear rationale for removal was documented, the original incident was recorded and retained and transferred to the Council's corporate records management system which was currently in Sharepoint, previously Objective. The record was then retained in accordance with the Council's retention policy, which was a minimum of five years. The original reporter was

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notified of the actions and the reasons for this via email. The record of the action was maintained and provided a transparent audit trail throughout. This approach ensured that no incident was permanently deleted and that all records remained available for review, audit, legal purpose or viewing, should it become a matter of inquiry through internal audit or otherwise. The Council's retention policy for health and safety records was informed by statutory requirements and limitations under UK law and corporate records management policy, which had been refreshed recently. Over the past five years, a total of fifteen records had been removed from the live system. The reasons for removal included duplicate entries, false allegations or incidents subject to independent investigation and cases that were subsequently deemed not to be health and safety. All the above information from the record had been retained outside the live system and was most likely within Sharepoint or one of the other systems and would remain accessible in line with the records management and legal retention requirements. There had been no instances in the last five years where incident records had been deleted without retention or removed inappropriately prior to the expiry of the required retention period by the current Risk and Health and Safety Manager. The Council maintained appropriate controls and processes to ensure transparency, accountability and the integrity of health and safety records. When the Council's approach to health and safety was last subject to an internal audit in 2024, it was given substantial assurance with no actions for recommendation.

The following question for the Mayor had been submitted by a Member of the Public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.8.15:

Can you confirm when the Council's Whistleblowing Policy was last reviewed to ensure it aligns with the latest best practices for protecting those who speak up in the public interest and what specific mental health and legal support mechanisms does the Council provide to whistleblowers during and after an investigation to prevent victimisation or 'detriment' as defined under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998?

The Mayor stated that it was not appropriate for him to be personally involved in whistleblowing incidents. The Council had a Whistleblowing Policy which the Mayor encouraged people to follow if they felt something had gone wrong or needed to be changed. The Whistleblowing Policy was subject to review by Veritau, the Council's Internal Auditor, every three years. The policy was currently under review by Veritau. The review would take into account recent changes to the Employment Rights Act to ensure the Policy was up to date. One of the key changes to the Act was that sexual harassment was now a qualifying disclosure under whistleblowing law. The Council did not provide legal support to any whistleblower. However, if employees were Trade Union Members, they were encouraged to seek support from their Trade Union. Whistleblowers often wanted to remain anonymous, which made it difficult to target individuals with support. The Mayor encouraged anyone who felt comfortable to do so, to request extra support and provided reassurance that there were support mechanisms in place including mental health first aid, employer assistance programmes, a 24 hour helpline and access to face to face counselling.

26/23 **PETITIONS (IF ANY)**

No valid petitions had been submitted for this meeting.

26/24 **REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) presented a report, the purpose of which was to provide an update on the current position regarding progress made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the individual Scrutiny Panels.

OSB and the scrutiny panels were in the process of agreeing topics for the work programme for the current year.

The Chair thanked those Councillors who had attended the Scrutiny Workshops held in June 2026.

The Chair highlighted the changes to the OSB meeting structure for this Municipal Year to align with the Council Plan. It was anticipated this would allow OSB more time scrutinise additional topics throughout the year.

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The Chair invited Members to note the report.

ORDERED that the report was noted.

26/25 **UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS (IF ANY)**

No urgent decisions had been taken since the last Council meeting.

26/26 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS ON NOTICE (IF ANY)**

No Members' Questions on Notice had been submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

26/27 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE (IF ANY)**

Consideration was given to Motion No. 182 moved by Councillor L Young and seconded by Councillor Ewan of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules Nos, 4.28-4.34 as follows:

"Planning reform - 'track record' test for developers

This Council notes that:

1. The quality, pace and completion of development directly affects residents' quality of life.
2. Communities here and across the country are blighted by stalled or abandoned schemes and long-term derelict 'blight sites', often where developers have secured permission but failed to build out.
3. Under current planning law there is no clear, statutory 'track record' test for developers, and councils have limited ability to take full account of an applicant's track record of delivery and compliance.

This Council believes that:

4. A developer's track record - including any pattern of uncompleted developments or creation of blight sites - should be a material consideration when determining planning applications.
5. Councils should have explicit powers to require transparency over ownership and company structures, and to refuse, condition or phase permissions where there is evidence of repeated failure to deliver or serious non-compliance.

This Council therefore resolves to:

6. Write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government to call on the UK Government to reform planning law and policy, including the Town and Country Planning Act and the National Planning Policy Framework, to:

- Introduce a statutory 'track record' test for developers;
- Make a clear track record of uncompleted developments and blight sites a material planning consideration; and
- Strengthen councils' powers to secure completion, remediation and timely delivery of sites.

7. Write to:

- Both Members of Parliament representing Middlesbrough; and
- The Local Government Association, setting out the Council's position and seeking support for these reforms."

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Councillor Morrish declared a non-pecuniary interest – his daughter worked for a national housebuilder.

Councillors L Young and Ewan spoke in support of the motion.

The Chair invited Members to speak to the motion.

Councillors Morrish and Coupe spoke in support of the motion.

On a vote being taken the motion was unanimously CARRIED.

With the consent of the Chair, consideration was given to an amended Motion No. 183 moved by Councillor Morrish and seconded by Councillor Saunders of which notice had been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules Nos, 4.28-4.34 as follows:

“Improving the Handling of Member’s Code of Conduct Complaints procedure:

- Public confidence in the standards regime depends upon complaints being handled fairly, transparently and within reasonable timescales.
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman expect councils to determine complaints within a reasonable period, and Middlesbrough Council has consistently failed to meet those expectations.
- Unlike many local authorities, Middlesbrough Council has no clear timetable governing the completion of Members’ Code of Conduct complaints, leading to unnecessary delays and reduced confidence in the standards process.
- The Monitoring Officer has access to commissioned resources, including Independent Persons and external legal advisers, and therefore delays attributable to those parties should not be treated as exceptional circumstances.

This Council believes that:

- Members and the public are entitled to a complaints process that is timely, transparent and accountable.
- Delays undermine confidence in the standards framework and the Council’s commitment to good governance.
- Introducing clear performance standards and democratic oversight of lengthy investigations will improve efficiency and public trust.

Council therefore resolves that:

1. A target of 20 weeks shall apply to the completion of all Members’ Code of Conduct complaints from the date the complaint is received to the conclusion of the matter.
2. Any delays to this timescale will be reported in as much detail as is appropriate to the standards committee.
3. The only exception to this target timescale shall be where delays arise from external statutory bodies outside the Council’s control, such as the police or other law enforcement agencies.
4. Time taken by individuals or organisations commissioned, instructed or engaged by the Council—including Independent Persons, external solicitors or any other advisers—shall count within the 20 weeks period, as these resources are under the authority’s control.
5. The Monitoring Officer is instructed to prepare and implement a formal Code of Conduct Complaints Timetable and Procedure incorporating these requirements and to report regularly to Council on compliance with the agreed standards. Council further believes that adopting a clear timetable comparable to that used by many other local authorities

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will strengthen governance, improve accountability, drive greater efficiency within the standards process and restore confidence amongst councillors and the public that complaints will be dealt with promptly and fairly.

Councillor Morrish spoke in support of the motion.

The Chair invited Members to speak to the motion.

The Mayor spoke in support of the motion.

On a vote being taken the motion was unanimously CARRIED.

26/28 **URGENT MOTIONS ON NOTICE (IF ANY)**

No Urgent Motions on Notice had been submitted within the specified deadlines for this meeting.

26/29 **ADOPTION OF THE COULBY NEWHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2024 – 2039**

The Executive Member for Development presented a report of the Director of Regeneration to request Council to adopt the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2039.

The Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Plan had been prepared by the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Forum and, following the Independent Examination, had recently been subject to a referendum in accordance with legislation.

Following the outcome of the referendum, the Council was required to formally adopt the Plan which would form part of the statutory development plan for the area.

ORDERED that the Coulby Newham Neighbourhood Plan 2024-2039 was adopted by Council.

26/30 **VACANCIES ON COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES 2026-2027**

A report of the Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer), was presented to seek Members' approval for nominations of appointment to vacant positions on Committees, Scrutiny Panels and Outside Bodies, due to vacancies that were not filled at the Annual Council Meeting and resignations from Committees.

The report included a list of current vacancies on various Committees and Outside Bodies and nominations were put forward at the meeting by individual members.

ORDERED that the following appointments, allocated in accordance with the wishes of the political groups, were approved by Council:

Audit Committee - Councillor Uddin
Constitution and Members Development Committee - Councillor Walker
Place Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Thompson
Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency – Councillor Blades

26/31 **RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENT FOR INDEPENDENT PERSONS**

A report of the Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer) was presented to seek approval for a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for the cross-authority use of each Council's appointed Independent Persons (IPs) in the event of their own IPs' unavailability.

The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) placed the Council under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct for elected and co-opted members. The Act required that the Council had Code of Conduct Complaint Arrangements (the Arrangements) in place to handle complaints relating to allegations of breaches of the Council's adopted Members Code of Conduct (The Code).

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Under Section 28(7) of the Act, the Council was required to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views were to be sought in relation to complaints before making a decision on an allegation of a breach of the Code.

Middlesbrough Council had appointed two independent Persons. Having a small pool of IPs to rely on created a vulnerability in the event of unexpected conflicts of interest, IP absences or limits of IP capacity. A reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland was considered necessary to ensure that the Council still had access to an alternative IP.

When a Council required an IP's advice but the one(s) appointed was unavailable, a cost neutral reciprocal arrangement allowed each Council to quickly borrow a fully trained IP to ensure continued adherence with the Act, enabling compliance with the Council's existing Code of Conduct Arrangements and providing resilience in the administration of Code of Conduct complaints by reducing any delay in their handling.

It was a requirement of the Act that Full Council formally approved the appointment of IPs. Approval by Full Council of the appointment of IPs, duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Localism Act 2011, as substitute IPs for Middlesbrough Council under a reciprocal arrangement, was sufficient for the purposes of the Act.

ORDERED as follows that Council approved:

- entering into a reciprocal arrangement with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council for the cross-authority use of appointed Independent Persons (IPs).
- the appointment of the designated Independent Persons duly appointed by Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council under the Localism Act 2011 to act as substitute Independent Persons for Middlesbrough Council, subject to conflict of interest checks.

26/32

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING - RESOLUTION

A report of the Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer) was presented to seek Council approval, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.8.5 (ii) to agree a resolution to call an Extraordinary meeting of Council for the purpose of granting the Freedom of the Borough to Mr Dave Budd.

ORDERED as follows that Council approved that:

- an Extraordinary meeting of the Council for the purposes of granting the Freedom of the Borough to Mr Dave Budd would be convened.
- the date of the Extraordinary meeting would be determined with the approval of the Chair of Council.

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AMENDMENTS TO COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2026-2027

A report of the Corporate Director of Legal and Corporate Services (Monitoring Officer) was presented to seek Council approval to an amended date for the next Annual Council Meeting and to note an amended date for the Children's Scrutiny Panel.

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 20 May 2026, Council approved a timetable of meeting dates for the Municipal Year 2026-2027, for Council, Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Board, Scrutiny Panels, and working groups. Subsequent to the Annual Meeting, two changes to the previously agreed timetable had been proposed.

Since that meeting it had been identified that the original date agreed for the Annual Council Meeting in 2027 had been scheduled for a Thursday rather than the usual Wednesday and the original date agreed for the second March meeting of Children's Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled on a Bank Holiday.

ORDERED as follows that:

Council approved:

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- The next Annual Council meeting date would be held on 26 May 2027.

Council noted:

- Children's Scrutiny Panel would be held on 30 March 2027 rather than Easter Monday.