

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Councillor L Young, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board and Charlotte Benjamin, Director of Legal and Corporate (Monitoring Officer)
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Submitted to:	Council
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Date:	9 September 2026	
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Title:	Scrutiny Progress Report
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Report for:	Information
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Status:	Public
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Council Plan priority:	Delivering Best Value
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Proposed decision(s)
That Council note the report.

Executive summary
To update the position in respect of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board and scrutiny panels. The current position regarding progress made by the Board and each of the panels is set out below.

1. Purpose

- To update the position in respect of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Board and scrutiny panels.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council note the report.

3. Background and relevant information:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of Council, the Overview and Scrutiny Board has met on 7 July and 29 July.

- 3.2 At its meeting of the 7 July, it considered the Final Report of the Children's Scrutiny Panel regarding Out of Area Specialist Provision. The Board heard the Panel's intention was to understand why the Council used out of area specialist provision from a special educational needs and complex social care perspective. The Board approved the report and referred its recommendations to Executive.
- 3.3 The Board also approved the amended Terms of Reference for its review into how the Council engages with Faith and Belief groups in Middlesbrough.
- 3.4 The 2025–2026 year-end performance and financial information was presented to Members who were advised this was the last time separate reports on these subjects would be submitted as, going forward, a combined report would be produced.
- 3.5 At its meeting on 29 July the Mayor, Executive Member for Finance, Chief Executive, Director of Legal and Corporate Services, Director of Finance and Head of the Chief Executive's Office were in attendance to provide their respective service overviews. Members received operational overviews for Legal and Corporate Services, the Chief Executive's Office and Finance. Members were advised of the opportunities and challenges within those areas and advised of subjects that may be suitable for scrutiny attention which included the Crisis Resilience Fund and Marketing and Communications in the Council.
- 3.6 The Board also approved its work programme for the 2026-27 municipal year and agreed to the Chair's proposal that all the suggested topics be accepted and that work with Democratic Services to create schedule of works. The Board also approved the overall Scrutiny Work Programme for 2026-27.
- 3.7 The Board also considered the Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel into Violence Against Women and Girls. The Panel heard that the issue was a significant and complex issue. It spanned domestic abuse, sexual violence, misogyny and harmful attitudes. The Board approved the report and referred its recommendations to Executive.
- 3.8 Members were also advised of the Council financial prudential indicators report which had been considered at Executive on 8 July. The Board was advised about the Council's borrowing position and the costs involved.
- 3.9 The next meeting of OSB will be held on 16 September where it will receive a portfolio update from the Executive Member for Development, the projected performance and financial outturn for quarter one 2026/2027 and information relating to the Board's short review into Marketing and Communications in the Council.

Scrutiny Panel Updates

- 3.10 The updated position in respect of the work of each of the Council's scrutiny panels is shown below.

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel

- 3.11 The Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel met on 21 July 2026 and considered updates on Artificial Intelligence utilisation plans in Adult Social Care and Digital Inclusion in Adult Social Care.
- 3.12 Members considered a report on shortlisted scrutiny investigation topics for the 2026/2027 municipal year and agreed to undertake reviews on Barriers to Immunisation Uptake and Neighbourhood Health Management. It was further agreed that the review of Barriers to Immunisation Uptake would be the Panel's first scrutiny investigation.
- 3.13 The Panel considered the draft final report arising from its review, 'Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG): How to Tackle It' and agreed the final report for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- 3.14 The Panel's next scheduled meeting will take place on 29 September 2026, at which Members will commence the review of Barriers to Immunisation Uptake, with representatives from Public Health providing an overview presentation. Members have also requested an update from Adult Social Care on support available to Unpaid Carers.

Children's Scrutiny Panel

- 3.15 The Children's Scrutiny Panel met on 27 July 2026. The Corporate Director of Children's Services provided an overview of the services provided within the Children's Services Directorate and set out the key priorities, areas of focus, and challenges for the year ahead.
- 3.16 The Panel also considered setting its work programme for the 2026/27 Municipal Year. A report submitted by Democratic Services set out a number of topic suggestions received in response to the annual scrutiny consultation exercise with Members, Officers and members of the public. It also contained areas for potential consideration as part of an 'horizon scanning' exercise provided during scrutiny member workshops.
- 3.17 Following consideration of the report, and consideration of the Corporate Director's presentation, Members agreed the following for inclusion in its work programme:-
 - 1. Tackling Child Poverty in Schools – Full Review topic.
 - 2. Ofsted Full Service Inspection – Improvement Plan – to monitor at each meeting.
 - 3. SEND reforms – Impact in Middlesbrough – to receive regular updates.
 - 4. STSCB – Annual Report – Statutory annual update.
- 3.18 The Panel's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 21 September 2026 at 4.30pm when it will receive an introduction to its new scrutiny topic, 'Tackling Child Poverty in Schools'; an update on the Ofsted findings from its full inspection of Children's Services and associated improvement plan; and an update on the impact of SEND reforms in Middlesbrough.

Place Scrutiny Panel

- 3.19 At the Place Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 6 July 2026, the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing was in attendance to present an overview of the Regeneration and Housing directorate. Members received information on the service areas within the Directorate, including the functions and responsibilities of each area and were informed of the key priorities, opportunities and challenges anticipated for the year ahead.
- 3.20 The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Housing then provided an overview on matters relating to the Environment, Communities and Culture directorate in absence of the Corporate Director of Environment, Communities and Culture.
- 3.21 A report of the Democratic Services Officer was also presented to the Panel, the purpose of which was to assist Members of the Panel to consider and agree its work programme for the 2026-2027 Municipal Year. Following discussion, Panel Members agreed the following topics for review and inclusion in its work programme:
1. Middlesbrough's Bicentenary (ongoing review)
 2. The Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme/Licensing of Private Rented Properties (formal title to be agreed)
 3. Fly-tipping
 4. Future Plans for Transforming the Town Centre
- 3.22 The Place Scrutiny Panel also met on 28 July 2026 to receive further evidence as part of its review of Middlesbrough's Bicentenary celebrations. Representatives from Barnsley Civic and the Director of Community, Environment and Culture at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council attended the meeting and shared their experiences of planning and delivering comparable milestone celebrations within their respective areas. Members received information on good practice, lessons learned and key considerations, including approaches that had proven less effective and should be avoided.
- 3.23 The Panel's next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 14 September 2026. The Panel will commence the review of The Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme/Licensing of Private Rented Properties, with the Head of Public Protection providing an overview of the topic. The Head of Marketing and Communications will also attend to present further evidence in support of the Panel's review of Middlesbrough's Bicentenary celebrations. In addition, the Operational Community Safety Manager will provide an overview of Fly-tipping to assist the Panel in determining the scope and direction of any future scrutiny work in this area.

Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

- 3.25 Responsibility for the administration of the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee transferred to Middlesbrough Council for the 2026/2027 municipal year.
- 3.26 At its first meeting on 2 June 2026, Members received updates on the Delivery of Neonatal Care across the North East and North Cumbria Region, the University Hospitals Tees NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account for 2025/2026, Planned Workforce Reductions at University Hospitals Tees NHS Foundation Trust, and the

review of Adult Eating Disorder Services being undertaken by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. Members also considered and noted the Committee's draft Work Programme for 2026/2027.

- 3.27 The Committee met again on 23 July 2026 and received presentations regarding Accessing Specialist Community Perinatal Mental Health Services and the University Hospitals Tees NHS Foundation Trust Case for Change and Strategy.

Scrutiny Reports Submitted to Executive

- 3.28 The following reports have been reported to Executive since the last update to Council:

- OSB Task and Finish Group Final Report (Community Cohesion) (8 April 2026)
- Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Panel - Healthy Placemaking with a focus on Childhood Obesity (10 June 2026)
- Final Report of the Place Scrutiny Panel - Barriers to Regeneration (10 June 2026)

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

- 4.1 That an update on the work of the scrutiny function is not provided to full Council. This would not comply with the requirements for updates on the scrutiny function, to be reported to full Council.

5. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including Social Value)	There are no financial implications or impact on any budgets or the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) arising from the content of this report.
Procurement	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function.
Legal	The Constitution requires regular updates on the scrutiny function, to be submitted to full Council.
Risk	Failure to adhere to Local Code of Corporate Governance and deliver governance improvements outlined in the Annual Governance Statement. If updates on the work of the scrutiny function were not provided to Council, this would not be in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.

Reducing Poverty	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Climate Change / Environmental	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Children and Young People Cared for by the Authority and Care Leavers	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.
Data Protection	Not applicable as this is a report to update Council on the work of the scrutiny function and does not change any policy.

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

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline

Appendices

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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

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