



Middlesbrough  
Development  
Corporation

# Middlesbrough Development Corporation Board

**Date:** Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> January at 1:00pm

**Venue:** Mandela Room, Middlesbrough Town Hall, Albert Road, Middlesbrough,  
TS1 2QJ

## **Membership:**

Tony Parkinson (**Independent Chair**)

Mayor Chris Cooke (Middlesbrough Mayor) (**Vice Chair**)

Paul Bell (Independent member)

Tony Grainge (Independent member)

Riaz Hameed (Independent member)

Father Glyn Holland (Independent member)

Martin Raby (Independent member)

Matt Storey (Independent member)

## **Associate Membership:**

Tom Bryant (Chief Executive, TVCA)

Erik Scollay (Chief Executive, Middlesbrough Council)



Anything is possible

**AGENDA**

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> To receive any apologies for absence.
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> To receive any declarations of interest.
3.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2025.
4.	<b>MDC Strategic Priorities &amp; Membership Review</b> To receive and consider a report from the Chair presenting an update on the MDC Strategic Priorities and Membership Review.
5.	<b>Gresham Options Update</b> To receive a report from the Chief Operating Officer presenting an update on the Gresham development.
6.	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b> Thursday, 26 March 2026 – 2pm

**Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting**

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please contact:  
[tvagovernance@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk](mailto:tvagovernance@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk)

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## Middlesbrough Development Corporation Declaration of Interests Procedure

1. The purpose of this note is to provide advice and guidance to all members of the Development Corporation Board and Audit & Risk Committee on the procedure for declaring interests. The procedure is set out in full in the Development Corporation's Constitution under the "Code of Conduct for Members" (Appendix 2).

### Personal Interests

2. The Code of Conduct sets out in full, the principles on the general conduct of members in their capacity at the Development Corporation. As a general principle, members should act impartially and should not use their position at the Development Corporation to further their personal or private interests.
3. There are two types of personal interests covered by the Constitution:
  - a. "disclosable pecuniary interests". In general, a disclosable pecuniary interest will involve any financial interests, such as paid employment or membership of a body, interests in contracts, or ownership of land or shares. Members have a pecuniary interest in a matter where there is a reasonable likelihood or expectation that the business to be considered will affect your well-being or financial position, or the well-being or financial position of the following persons:
    - i. a member of your family;
    - ii. any person with whom you have a close association;
    - iii. in relation to a) and b) above, their employer, any firm in which they are a partner, or a company of which they are a director;
    - iv. any person or body in whom persons described in a) and b) above have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
    - v. any body as described in paragraph 3 b) i) and ii) below.
  - b. Any other personal interests. You have a personal interest in any business of the Development Corporation where it relates to or is likely to affect:
    - i. any body of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management) and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Development Corporation;
    - ii. any body which:
      - exercises functions of a public nature;
      - is directed to charitable purposes;

- one of whose principle purposes includes influencing public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member (or in a position of general control or management).

### **Declarations of interest relating to the Councils' commercial role**

4. Financial relationships between the Development Corporation and individual councils do not in themselves create a conflict of interest for Council Leaders who are also Development Corporation Board members. Nor is it a conflict of interest if the Development Corporation supports activities within a council boundary. Nevertheless, there are specific circumstances where the Board may consider entering into direct contractual arrangements with a council, for example in relation to a particular commercial investment project, or in which that council is a co-funder. In these circumstances a non-pecuniary declaration of interest should be made by the Council Leader or their substitute.

### **Procedures for Declaring Interests**

5. In line with the Code of Conduct, members are required to adhere to the following procedures for declaring interests:

### **Register of Interests**

6. Each member is required to complete a register of interests form with their personal interests, within 28 days of their appointment to the Development Corporation. If no declaration is received from elected members within 28 days the matter may be referred to the Head of Paid Service of your local authority and Leader of the political group you represent on your council for action. If a Declaration is not submitted within an appropriate timescale you may be prevented from attending committee meetings. Details of any personal interests registered will be published on the Development Corporation's website, with the full register available at the Development Corporation's offices for public inspection. The form will be updated on an annual basis but it is the responsibility of each member to notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes to the register throughout the year. Notification of a change must be made to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of becoming aware of that change.

## Declaration of Interests at Meetings

7. The Development Corporation will include a standing item at the start of each statutory meeting for declaration of interests. Where members are aware that any of their personal interests are relevant to an item of business being considered at a meeting they are attending, they must declare that interest either during the standing item on the agenda, at the start of the consideration of the item of business, or when the interest becomes apparent, if later.
8. Where members consider that their interest could be considered by the public as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the members' judgement then they may not participate in any discussion and voting on the matter at the meeting, but may attend the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the business, before it is discussed and voted upon.
9. If the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest (as summarised in paragraph 3a) then the member must leave the meeting room during discussion and voting on the item of business, but may make representations, give evidence and answer questions before leaving the meeting room. Failure to comply with the requirements in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests is a criminal offence.

## Sensitive Information

10. Members can seek the advice of the monitoring officer if they consider that the disclosure of their personal interests contains sensitive information.

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## MIDDLESBROUGH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD

Thursday, 18 December 2025 at 1:00pm

Mandela Room, Middlesbrough Town Hall, Albert Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2QJ

*(These minutes are in draft form until approved at the next Board meeting and are therefore subject to amendments.)*

<b><u>ATTENDEES</u></b>	
<b><u>Members</u></b>	
Tony Parkinson (Chair)	Independent Member (Chair)
Mayor Chris Cooke	Middlesbrough Mayor (Elected Member of Middlesbrough Council)
Martin Raby	Independent Member
Riaz Hameed	Independent Member
<b><u>Associate Members</u></b>	
Tom Bryant	Associate Member
Erik Scollay	Associate Member
<b><u>Officers in Attendance</u></b>	
Beverley Bearne	MDC Chief Operating Officer
Shaun Nattrass	Group Legal Manager
Jo Moore (Teams)	Interim Group Director of Finance & Resources
Laura Metcalfe	Development Corporation Manager, TVCA
Eleanor Thomas	Governance Officer, TVCA
Justine Matchett	Lichfields
<b><u>Others in Attendance</u></b>	
Neil McMillan	iMpeC
Leigh Cresswell	iMpeC
<b><u>Apologies</u></b>	
Matt Storey	Independent Member
Tony Grainge	Independent Member
Paul Bell	Independent Member
Glyn Holland	Independent Member
Jodie Townsend	Interim Group Chief Legal Officer/Monitoring Officer

MDC 14/2025	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>  The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the Middlesbrough Development Corporation (MDC) Board meeting.  The Chair raised that Stephanie Spensley's name was incorrectly on the agenda as a member.  Apologies for absence were submitted as detailed above.
MDC 15/2025	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  Mayor Chris Cooke declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to being a member of Middlesbrough Council.  Riaz Hameed declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to owning property in the MDC area.
MDC 16/2025	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> The minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 5 September 2025 were <b>approved</b> as a correct record.
MDC 17/2025	<b>Update from the Chair and Chief Operating Officer</b>  The Board received a presentation and a verbal update from the Chair and the Chief Operating Officer of Middlesbrough Development Corporation on key matters in relation to Middlesbrough Development Corporation since the last meeting.  Key details are outlined as below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Chair outlined that since the last Board meeting, there have been key areas of work, such as focusing on resetting the MDC Priorities, the MDC Board structure and the operating principles of the Board. Town centre security and the general environment.</li><li>- It was noted that the current masterplan, 'Supercharging Development in Middlesbrough' which was launched in April 2023 will be redeveloped. There are a broad range of priorities in the plan which makes it difficult to see what the MDC is trying to achieve. Therefore, the Chair has agreed there will be four short-term priorities that will form the basis of the MDC work over the next 18 months.</li><li>- Priority 1 is to improve Town Centre safety and environment and there is £1.3m revenue to contribute towards this. This will include</li></ul>

the introduction of the 'Town Guards'. This proposal will deal with crime and anti-social behaviour within the Town Centre. It was suggested that although crime has reduced over the last 3 years, a perception still remains which prevents people from wanting to come back into the town, which is a critical issue in terms of attracting investment and protecting existing businesses. Aligned to this, there will be an expansion of CCTV, an introduction of a small grants scheme for town centre businesses to improve localised anti-social behaviour, improved pedestrian routes and wayfaring improvements.

- Priority 2 is Gresham, and there is an agenda item to discuss this further.
- Priority 3 is the investment zone funding of £13m capital which was notionally allocated to both the House of Fraser and Marks & Spenser building. It was noted that it's important to be clear on what has been developed and whether it is something that the Board would support or whether the Board would want to seek to get that money un-ring fenced for those areas but still allocated to the MDC.
- Priority 4 is to improve the retail offer, which will consist of developing a masterplan for future uses and for existing shopping centres (Cleveland Centre, Hill Street Centre and Dundas). It was highlighted that there is too much empty retail space within the MDC, and there needs to be a plan to seek to address that. The Board will work together to discuss what the process will be.
- The Chair stated that the MDC Board will operate within the Operating principles, which are as follows; provide strategic civic leadership, be performance-driven, be focused on our priorities, make commercially sound decisions, unlock investment within the MDC boundary, ensure good governance and engage and communicate widely. It was noted that the MDC Chief Operating Officer will produce a plan for how each of these will be progressed, and then the Board will be accountable for making sure the plan is being progressed.
- It was discussed that a new draft Board structure to deliver the operating principles has been agreed with the Tees Valley Mayor, which will be brought back to the Board in January, once constitutional changes arising out of wider TVCA Governance improvements have been considered.

Questions and comments were invited from the Board:

- Mayor Cooke queried whether the £1.3m had been transferred to the MDC. It was clarified that the money has not yet been transferred, but there has been £1.3m allocated and it will be subject to business cases submitted to TVCA.

- Mayor Cooke raised concerns around the £1.3m. It was noted that he doesn't feel comfortable with the current process and added that the Town Guards were promised by Christmas and so far, there has been no other proposals. He explained that there should be a level of agreement at TVCA Cabinet about where the £1.3m goes and what it is spent on. In response, the TVCA Chief Executive explained that at the March 2024 TVCA Cabinet Meeting, Cabinet accepted the investment zone programme, which included £1.3m for Hartlepool and Middlesbrough to improve perception of safety and anti-social behaviour. The £1.3m would be subject to the TVCA assurance process, which means that a business case would need to be submitted and go back to TVCA Cabinet for approval.
- Mayor Cooke raised concerns around a proposal or business case to be worked up for the expansion of CCTV which would impact Middlesbrough Council staffing without them being able to take account of that on future years revenue. It was stated that he did not understand how they will hit approval gateways or making sure that everyone is brought together to make the right proposals, as it is difficult to see building good relationships at the moment and was eager for this to change. In response, the Chair outlined that as MDC representatives they have engaged with officers at Middlesbrough Council who put a proposal to the MDC to increase CCTV resources for a period of 3 years.
- Mayor Cooke explained that because conversations have ceased around the CCTV resources being expanded, he has put it into the council's Medium-Term Financial Plan, meaning that the council resources are paying for it. The Chair noted that he was not aware of this. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that this would be taken away as an action.
- The Chair clarified with the Board that there was an initial proposal from Middlesbrough Council and through discussions between Middlesbrough Council officers and himself that was amended. That proposal was provided to the Board in December, and that proposal has been discussed with the police, but those discussions have not yet been concluded. The only element of the proposal which required further discussions and negotiations was the form the security presence would take and whether that would be PCSO or a private security firm and until that is concluded the business case can't be put together.
- Erik Scollay queried whether the operating principles are new or pre-existing and queried whether the MDC providing strategic civic leadership is the job of the Local Authority and the MDC provides strategic leadership around a range of forms and development, and it was a broad statement. In response, the Chair advised that it can be elongated to say around the responsibilities that the MDC has.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mayor Cooke suggested that a 'collaboration of partnerships' could feature on the MDC Operating Principles. The Chair agreed that he was happy to add that.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Board <u>noted</u> the Chair and Chief Operating Officers update.</p>
<p>MDC 18/2025</p>	<p><b>Quarter 2 Forecast of Revenue 2025/26 &amp; 2025/29 Capital Programme Budget and Programme Update</b></p> <p>Jo Moore, Interim Group Finance Director of Finance &amp; Resources provided Board members with an overview of the report. It was noted that there is a slight deterioration in the forecasts from Q1, and the Board is asked to approve the reprofiling of funds that were originally allocated for next year to cover up the overspend.</p> <p>It was stated that in terms of the Capital Monitoring for Q1 when the Gresham project was going to continue there was a forecast to overspend next year for about £600,000. However, now the scheme has been paused and if no further capital expenditure is required for the Gresham project, the revised figures would indicate additional funding would no longer be required.</p> <p>Questions and comments were invited from the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Martin Raby raised concerns around the adequacy and resources for next year. It was noted that the original tender of allocation from TVCA for revenue is now down to less than a million and therefore balancing the budget this year by borrowing from next year could cause a problem. He queried whether there will be a problem next year and whether the resources for the MDC are going to be adequate. In response, Jo Moore advised that for next year they are confident they will be able to set the revenue budget, but the question mark is what the MDC will need as there is only a small underspent on capital projects. It was outlined that it is more the ask of what to do with the Gresham project and how to take it forward in terms of investment.</li> <li>- Martin Raby queried whether there is confidence that budget setting is robust and that the 2026/2027 budget will be adequate and sufficient. The Chair advised that he is confident that what has been produced is much more robust than previously and is keen for the MDC to feed into the budget setting process far earlier than what was done this year, to ensure the same level of confidence for 2027/2028.</li> <li>- Riaz Hameed queried that, depending on what happens with Gresham project, would the £1.3m credits come back to the MDC if</li> </ul>

	<p>the scheme doesn't get ahead. In response, the MDC Chief Operating Officer advised that no, the credits were purchased and it is not possible to get a refund back on them. However, there has been an agreement with the company which the credits were purchased from, and these credits can be untitled on any site within the MDC area, and these credits have been banked.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mayor Cooke asked about the revenue impact of abortive costs, which is noted on paragraph 30 of the report, and whether there is a figure attached to that. It was also queried whether it was right that the MDC does not have a general fund of reserves. In response, Jo Moore advised there will be further discussions in January. It was noted that MDC is grant funded, meaning that there aren't reserves in the same way as there are at a local authority. She added that ordinarily the Board would set a minimum level of reserves, but the main issue at the moment is the ongoing sustainability of the MDC and what it will need going forward. It was agreed that there needs to be a wider conversation and whether the TVCA Cabinet has a financial obligation to support the MDC should it need it.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>NOTED</b> the Q2 forecast revenue outturn of an overspend of £0.227m for 2025/26.</li> <li>ii. <b>APPROVED</b> the reprofiling of £0.227m from future years' revenue allocation;</li> <li>iii. <b>NOTED</b> that, if approved, there will be £0.937m of revenue allocation remaining from the TVCA £10m grant;</li> <li>iv. <b>NOTED</b> the Q2 Capital Outturn Forecast of an overspend of £1.907m for 2025/26;</li> <li>v. <b>APPROVED</b> the reprofiling of funds on the capital programme of £1.907m from 2026/27 to 2025/26 to address the overspend noted above.</li> <li>vi. <b>NOTED</b> that, if approved, the revised capital programme would indicate additional funding would no longer be required to accommodate the forecasted capital activity in 2026/27.</li> </ul>
<p>MDC 19/2025</p>	<p><b>Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2025/26</b></p> <p>Jo Moore, Interim Group Finance Director of Finance &amp; Resources provided Board members with an overview of the report.</p> <p>Questions and comments were invited from the Board; none were received.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Board:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>NOTED</b> mid-year performance against the treasury management and prudential indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Corporation in March 2025.</li> <li>ii. <b>NOTED</b> that none of the prudential indicators or approved limits have been or, are forecast to be, breached in 2025/26.</li> </ul>
<p>MDC 20/2025</p>	<p><b>Planning update</b></p> <p>The Board was provided with an updated position on planning service delivery and the status of planning applications.</p> <p>Justine Matchett informed Board members that since the report was circulated a further six applications had been determined, five new applications had been submitted, and six applications are ready for Head of Planning sign off. It was outlined that there are twenty live applications under determination. All the appeals which were shown on the report have been determined and they were all dismissed by the inspector. There is one new enforcement case. It was also noted that they have issued the first temporary stop notice which was in relation to an authorised work on a listed building on Linthrope Road where Welsh slate had been stripped from a listed building.</p> <p>Justine Matchett informed the Board that she has compiled statistics for the number of applications that have been determined in the lifetime of the Development Corporation which she thought the Board would find useful. It was noted that a total of 297 separate cases has been handled, of these 206 were applications. 12 of those were majors which is cases where there are applications of 10 or more dwellings. There have been 80 pre-app inquiries and dealt with 11 enforcement matters. She advised that of the 206 applications that have been received there have only been 9 applications refused, which is low compared to nationally standards. Out of those 9, 8 have been appealed and all have been successful in defending.</p> <p>It was also noted that for every application there is a statutory period in which required to determine an application, which is 8 weeks for a minor application and 13 weeks for a major application. So far there are only 4 applications which have been determined outside the agreed statutory period. All the remainder have either been determined within the 8- or 13-weeks statutory period or have had agreed extensions of time with the applicant. At least 50% of cases have needed an extension of time, but that is due to most applications having problems and it's either determined it quickly which will lead to an immediate refusal or work with the developer to seek changes and submit additional information which ultimately leads to be able to approve them.</p>

	<p>The Chair advised this was very useful and thanked Justine Matchett for the update.</p> <p>Questions and comments were invited from the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Riaz Hameed asked what the status is for the article 4, and was advised by Justine Matchett that it is out for consultation and has been advertised. She confirmed that they did a nonimmediate article 4 in which it gets published and wait for 12 months and after the 12 months provided the Board is happy with it, it will come into force.</li></ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Board <b>noted</b> the updated position of planning service delivery, and the status of planning applications submitted for consideration.</p>
MDC 21/2025	<p><b>Delegated and Urgent Decisions</b></p> <p>The Board received a report which detailed Delegated and Urgent Decisions taken since the last Board meeting on 5 September 2025.</p> <p>Questions and comments were invited from the Board; none were received.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. <b>NOTED:</b> the Delegated Decisions detailed in Paragraphs 2 and <b>Appendices 1a, 1b and 1c;</b> and</li><li>ii. <b>NOTED:</b> the Urgent Decisions detailed in Paragraph 4 and <b>Appendix 2.</b></li></ul>
MDC 22/2025	<p><b>Gresham Update</b></p> <p>Beverly Bearne, MDC Chief Operating Officer provided Board members with an overview of the report and noted that this report follows the decision taken by officers to consider the opportunity to reposition the Gresham scheme.</p> <p>She advised that the development partners, iMpeC are in attendance at the meeting and recommended that they provide the Board with details and context of work that has happened.</p> <p>Neil McMillan, iMpeC, informed Board members that the official task for them was to revise the regeneration solution for the Gresham site and it was identified that the site could play a major role in helping the town retract and retain talent. In doing so by providing a new choice of</p>

accommodation for the town. It was outlined that they have spent a lot of time engaging with local businesses and residents to help shape the solution and ultimately that then lead to the Gresham scheme.

Through the engagement with local businesses and the public, the number one issue that was heard was the sense of safety and security of people in the town, to the point where some people who work on certain streets don't leave work on their own as they do not feel safe. Therefore, it was reiterated that the work the Board is doing to work on solutions for how this might be addressed or improved would be well received in the town.

It was noted that the main challenge that they are facing and have faced is the funding to begin the scheme. It was explained that they have been through a period this year with a very volatile investment market that results in substantial pricing fluctuations which then has an impact on the viability of the project and the delay in it starting.

It was outlined that the focus now is around securing an affordable funding solution for the scheme and ensuring to stay true to those objectives and visions which were set out and agreed by Board members.

Beverley Bearne, the MDC Chief Operating officer informed Board members that following a recent meeting with Homes England work is ongoing to develop the strategic place partnership which is an agreement between Homes England and TVCA to generate a list of priority sites for investment in housing across the region. It was highlighted that she is ensuring that the Gresham features on that pipeline scheme.

Questions and comments were invited from the Board:

- Mayor Cooke queried that appendix 4 is confidential but part of that appendix forms the decision making and parts of it is referenced in the wider report. He explained that he understands that elements of it being exempted but can't understand why the whole of the document is exempt. In response, The Chair recognised this point and advised this will be picked up and changed going forward with the reshaping of reports.
- Riaz Hameed queried whether the developers (iMpeC) were currently reworking the original scheme. In response, Neil McMillan advised that the focus is now on the funding solution, with one avenue being Homes England. He confirmed that the focus is to deliver the scheme that is planned, but they are open to amendments and if that's what is needed in order to fit the parameters of the funding to unlock it

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mayor Cooke stated that appendix 1 refers to a Board meeting in December 2024 which he had not attended but has read through the minutes of the meeting and noted that he was concerned by the recommended option being the most risk laden out of all options available. He added that there were medium risk options which were not prioritised and the reason for the lack of prioritisation was speed of completion of the project. It was noted that in future, he wanted to see the priority as risk and viability, rather than speed. In response, the MDC Chief Operating Officer agreed that she absolutely accepted the comments and hoped that the approach taken recently and going forward is more viable.</li> <li>- The Chair advised that he is keen for more time to be spent discussing plans informally prior to meetings, rather than having to try and absorb a load of information in a single meeting.</li> <li>- Mayor Cooke requested whether there was a chance that paragraph 30 is enacted, and that the proposals would be brought back to the Board as that would involve the financial viability of the Development Corporation.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <b>NOTED</b> the updates detailed within the report;</li> <li>ii. <b>AGREED</b> to reassess the options for the Gresham development to bring forward a viable scheme.</li> <li>iii. <b>DELEGATEED</b> authority to the Chief Executive, Interim Group Director of &amp; Finance and Resources and the Interim Monitoring Officer to undertake and complete the necessary contractual steps and requirements to pause the scheme as set out in paragraph 17b of the report; and</li> <li>iv. <b>AGREED</b> for officers to work with developer partners to explore potential alternative options to deliver its aspirations for redevelopment of the site within the scope of the existing financial envelope previously approved by MDC Board detailed in Appendix 1 of this report, as set out in paragraph 17c of the report.</li> </ul>
<p>MDC 23/2025</p>	<p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Thursday, 26th March 2026 at 2pm.</p>

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# MIDDLESBROUGH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MDC) STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND BOARD MEMBERSHIP REVIEW REPORT

## SUMMARY

The Middlesbrough MDC Masterplan, “Supercharging development in Middlesbrough”, was launched in April 2023. Much of its content and ambition remain valid today but there is a need to simplify the document and review the ambitions set out within it.

Aligned to this and a review of the MDC Constitution, there is a need to review both the structure and membership of the MDC Board to ensure that it drives the delivery of the Mayoral ambition and the constituent projects that will enable this.

The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the updated priorities, short-term deliverables and the amendments to the Board as discussed at the Board meeting in December 2025 and subsequently agreed with the Tees Valley Mayor.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Middlesbrough Development Corporation Board:

- i. **AGREE** the updated strategic priorities and short-term deliverables.
- ii. **AGREE** the proposed Board operating principles.
- iii. **NOTE** the process for review of MDC Board membership.

## DETAIL



1. MDC is seeking to undertake a strategic shift in focus of its objectives, moving away from broad regeneration themes to operational priorities supported by governance reform, detailed timescales and investment frameworks.
2. The review will enable a stronger emphasis on internal capacity, stakeholder alignment and clearly defined short-term deliverables with progress reporting as part of annual strategy refreshes.
3. The original masterplan objectives are listed below:
  - a. "Creating clean and safe streets" directly aligns. Accessibility supported through new housing, open spaces, and transport improvements embedded across objectives. "Delivering 1,500 quality town-centre homes" + "Delivering 4,000 new and high-quality jobs" explicitly support this.
  - b. "Enabling a contemporary and diverse retail and leisure experience" focuses on improving retail.
  - c. "Becoming a vibrant and exciting place for arts and culture" supports this, as do leisure aspects under "contemporary and diverse retail and leisure experience."
  - d. "Providing access to world-class educational opportunities" precisely aligns.
4. Table 1 below sets out the proposed new priorities that were discussed at the Board meeting in December 2025 and have been approved by the Tees Valley Mayor, along with key delivery actions.

Table 1

New Priority	Key Delivery Actions
<p>1. Improve Town Centre Safety &amp; Environment</p>	<p>Working alongside TVCA Officers and within TVCA's Assurance Framework: Introduction of "Town Guards" Expansion of CCTV Introduction of small grants scheme for town centre businesses – to improve localised ASB issues and empty shop frontages Improved pedestrian routes Wayfaring improvements Town centre travel</p>
<p>2. Deliver Gresham</p>	<p>Devise potential new scheme Determination of Developers for all/each Commence development</p>
<p>3. Investment Zone Funding (£13m)</p>	<p>Working alongside TVCA Officers and within TVCA's Assurance Framework undertake a review of current funding allocations for House Of Fraser and Marks &amp; Spencer buildings Design bidding process for alternative schemes with unutilised funding Design and run bidding process for IZ compliant proposals Run bidding process</p>
<p>4. Improve the retail offer</p>	<p>Develop masterplan for future uses for existing shopping centres (Cleveland Centre, Hill Street Centre and Dundas) Further actions determined following agreement of masterplan</p>

## REVIEW OF MDC BOARD MEMBERSHIP

5. It is proposed to review the membership of the board to ensure alignment of skills and experience to deliver the new priorities. Changes to Board membership will be reflected in the Constitution (process)
6. It is proposed to introduce the following Guiding Principles, which will dictate how the Board will go about delivering its priorities:

- I. Provide STRATEGIC leadership in MDC-related matters
- II. Be PERFORMANCE - DRIVEN
- III. Be FOCUSSED on our PRIORITIES
- IV. Make COMMERCIALY SOUND decisions
- V. Unlock INVESTMENT within the MDC boundary
- VI. Ensure GOOD GOVERNANCE
- VII. ENGAGE and COMMUNICATE widely
- VIII. COLLABORATE and work in PARTNERSHIP with other stakeholders and the public.

7. If the Board is to adopt the Priorities and Guiding Principles outlined, it is proposed that the following roles form a new iteration of the Board.

**Organisational Representation – voting (3)**

MDC (Chair)  
Middlesbrough Council (Mayor)  
Cleveland Police (PCC)

**Independent Representation – voting (7)**

Strategic Community representative  
Strategic Retail representative  
Strategic Leisure representative  
Strategic Education representative  
Strategic Arts/Culture representative  
Strategic Marketing and Comms representative  
Strategic Commercial/Business representative(s)

**Supporting Roles**

MDC (COO)  
Finance – TVCA CFO (will change if Statutory role arrangements change)  
Legal – TVCA MO (will change if Statutory Officer arrangements change)  
Governance – Chair of MDC Audit Committee

**Associate Roles**

Tees Valley Combined Authority (Chief Executive)  
Middlesbrough Council (Chief Executive)

8. Board members will be assessed against the existing skills matrix, attached at Appendix 1.
9. The role of Associate Members will also be reviewed and brought in line to reflect the position within TVCA.
10. Where appropriate, recommendations will be made to the Mayor for the appointment of new board members and then referred to Cabinet for approval.
11. A proposed timeline for new member recruitment is set out as follows:
  - Board pack issued by early February 2026 inviting applications (CV and covering letter) through appropriate social media channels.
  - Applications submitted by early March 2026
  - “Interviews”/Assessment by end-March 2026
  - New Board members appointed April 2026.

## REVIEW OF MDC PLANNING BOARD MEMBERSHIP AND FUNCTION

12. The MDC Planning Board plays a critical role in delivering timely and robust planning decisions that underpin regeneration and investment. However, to maximise investor confidence and ensure governance best practice, it is essential that the Planning Board operates with clear independence from the MDC Board, while maintaining democratic accountability. Strengthening this independence will help streamline decision-making, reduce potential conflicts of interest, and reinforce transparency. This review supports MDC’s commitment to providing a planning function that is efficient, cost-effective, and aligned with its strategic objectives for growth.
13. The Middlesbrough Development Corporation (MDC) is committed to delivering a planning function that accelerates decision-making and provides value for money, while safeguarding democratic accountability. To achieve these objectives, MDC intends to review the membership and remit of its Planning Board to strengthen its independence from the MDC Board and ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.
14. Officers will undertake an **options appraisal** to identify the most effective governance model for the Planning Board. The appraisal will assess options against key criteria, including independence, efficiency, value for money, investor confidence, and democratic accountability. Options will include:
  - Retaining the current structure.
  - Enhancing independence through revised membership.
  - Establishing a separate governance framework for planning decisions.
  - A hybrid model balancing oversight and independence.

Each option will be evaluated for legal compliance, governance integrity, and alignment with MDC objectives.

15. Officers will prepare a report setting out the appraisal findings and a recommended option that will be informed by stakeholder engagement, including consultation with TVCA, the local authority and relevant statutory bodies.
16. The recommended option will be considered by the MDC Executive Team, followed by formal approval by the MDC Board.
17. Where required, agreement will be sought from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and other statutory bodies.
18. Following approval, an implementation plan will be developed, setting out timelines, resource implications, and a communication strategy to ensure transparency and stakeholder confidence.

## SHORT-TERM DELIVERABLES

19. Three priority projects are proposed for development and delivery between now and March 2027, focusing resources on high-impact, time-bound projects set out below. Proposals for interventions to be funded through Investment Zones will be undertaken with officers from TVCA and in compliance with TVCA assurance processes.

### Street security and safe routes

- a. Introduction of "Town Guards" (April 2026)
- b. Expansion of CCTV (April 2026)
- c. Introduction of small grants scheme for town centre businesses - resolve ASB issues and empty shop frontages (April 2026)
- d. Safer pedestrian routes (MBC-led)
- e. Wayfaring improvements (MBC-led)
- f. Confirmation of IZ funding will be subject to MDC submitting a compelling business case for investment through TVCA's assurance framework.

### Gresham

- g. Devise new scheme with preferred option appraisal presented and recommended option proposed and approved by the Board (April 2026)

- h. Determination of Developers and delivery mechanism for all/each (Summer 2026)

**Investment Zone funding (M&S and HoF)**

- i. De-ringfence funding allocation for HOF/M&S as part of TVCA review of IZ capital
- j. Design bidding process for alternative schemes in collaboration with TVCA Officers and subject to TVCA Assurance processes.
- k. Run bidding process (March 2026)
- l. Confirmation of IZ funding will be subject to MDC submitting a compelling business case for investment through TVCA's assurance framework.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 20. Costs to implement the recommendations can be delivered within existing MDC budget allocations in the current and future financial years. Projects that are developed to utilise TVCA Investment Zone programme will be conditional on the outcome of the capital review being undertaken and approved by Cabinet later 2026,
- 21. Development of a streamlined strategy document by March 2026 will align priorities with available funding and introduce annual review to adjust spending plans based on performance and funding availability.
- 22. There will be active engagement with Government departments and private sector partners for co-investment in regeneration projects.
- 23. It is not anticipated that additional staff would be required to deliver the short-term priorities or board and governance review.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 24. The proposed amendments to MDC's Board and priorities can be implemented lawfully within the powers conferred by the Middlesbrough Development Corporation (Establishment) Order 2023 and the Middlesbrough Development Corporation (Functions) Order 2023, read with the Localism Act 2011 as modified for TVCA, and subject to MDC Board approval and through the TVCA constitutional processes where

applicable. Subject to the Board approving the changes to the composition of the Board, the Constitution will be updated and brought to the next MDC Board for approval.

25. All procurements commenced on or after 24 February 2025 must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and associated transparency requirements; pre-commencement procurements continue under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
26. Any public financial support to catalyse investment must be assessed under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, with publication on the subsidy database where applicable. Engagement activity will comply with UK GDPR/DPA 2018. Decisions will be taken having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Best Value Duty, with appropriate documentation retained for audit and scrutiny

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

27. This report is categorised as low to medium risk.
28. A review of MDC's risk register is scheduled for completion in January 2026. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION**

29. The subject of this report is a matter for the MDC's Board consideration only therefore no additional consultation and communication has been undertaken.
30. If recommendations are approved the revised priorities and board membership review will be implemented.

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

31. This report does not impact on groups of people with protected characteristics.

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Middlesbrough Development Corporation  
Anonymised Skills Matrix – Middlesbrough Development Corporation

Board Member	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4	Member 5	Member 6	Member 7	Member 8	Member 9
<b>Expertise/Skill/Experience</b>									
Legal/Governance			✓						✓
Regulatory/Audit/Public policy						✓	✓		✓
Financial/Accounting						✓	✓		
Comms, marketing and PR	✓	✓							
CEO/Senior exec/leader of significant operations	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commercial/Investment	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Regeneration				✓	✓				
Science/Engineering/Technology						✓			



Middlesbrough  
Development  
Corporation

Net Zero									
Creative/Culture/Tourism		✓					✓	✓	
Business, Employment and Skills	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
Transport/Infrastructure									
Voluntary/Third Sector			✓		✓				✓



Anything is possible

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## GRESHAM UPDATE

### SUMMARY

In December 2025, the Board were provided a further update on the viability challenges facing the existing scheme and agreed for officers to work with development partners to explore potential alternative options to deliver its aspirations for the redevelopment of the site, within the scope of the existing financial envelope previously approved by MDC Board.

This report provides an update on the Gresham scheme, outlining the role of our developer partners TPPL and iMpeC, our collaboration with Homes England and Avison Young, and the next steps for Board engagement. The aim is to progress towards agreeing a preferred development option by Spring 2026.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Middlesbrough Development Corporation Board:

- i. NOTES the progress to date
- ii. ENDORSE the review of 6 options to be developed through technical work and stakeholder input, with Board workshops planned for March and April 2026. The completed review of options will be brought to Board for consideration and to determine a preferred scheme.
- iii. CONFIRM availability for workshops in February and March

### DETAIL

1. In December 2025, the Board received a full update from officers and the development partner outlining the outcome of due diligence undertaken on the

proposed financing and structure of the scheme, the urgent decision taken by officers since the last Board meeting, and the proposed next steps.

2. The Board agreed to reassess the options for the Gresham development to bring forward a viable scheme. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, Interim Group Director of Finance and Resources and the Interim Monitoring Officer to undertake and complete the necessary contractual steps and requirements to pause the scheme and agreed for officers to work with development partners to explore potential alternative options to deliver its aspirations for redevelopment of the site, within the scope of the existing financial envelope previously approved by the MDC Board.
3. The Gresham scheme is a key regeneration project within MDC's strategic plan, focused on delivering high-quality housing and revitalising the area to support economic growth and community wellbeing. Previous Board discussions have confirmed the ambition for a mixed-use development that aligns with MDC's objectives for sustainability, design excellence, and market viability.

#### **DEVELOPER PARTNER: TPPL & IMPEC**

4. TPPL and iMpeC have been appointed as our development partner for the Gresham scheme. Their responsibilities include:
  - Masterplanning and Design Development: Producing concept designs and layouts for the site.
  - Viability Assessment: Ensuring proposals are financially sustainable.
  - Stakeholder Engagement: Working with MDC, Homes England, and local stakeholders to refine proposals.
  - Delivery Strategy: Outlining phasing, procurement, and construction timelines.
  - iMpeC is currently preparing initial design options and will present these for discussion during the upcoming Board workshops.
  - Following handover of the site from Wates, iMpeC are also taking over responsibility for day-to-day site management, including legal duties like CDM, on behalf of the MDC team.

#### **COLLABORATION WITH HOMES ENGLAND**

5. Officers have been working closely with Homes England through the development of the Strategic Place Partnership and, alongside Middlesbrough Council, have identified

Gresham as a priority housing site. This recognition strengthens the case for investment and accelerates delivery opportunities.

6. Homes England's support includes:
  - Funding and Investment: Exploring opportunities for grant funding and infrastructure support.
  - Technical Expertise: Advising on housing standards and delivery models.
  - Land Assembly: Assisting with site acquisition where required.
7. This partnership ensures that the Gresham scheme aligns with national housing priorities and benefits from Homes England's resources and expertise.

## ENGAGEMENT WITH AVISON YOUNG

8. Avison Young has been jointly commissioned by MDC and Homes England to undertake a strategic review of the Gresham scheme over an 8–10 week period. Working alongside MDC officers and iMpeC, the scope of their work includes:

### Review of Current Position

- Assess MDC's commercial position.
- Summarise the baseline scheme (hotel, student accommodation, Build-to-Rent housing) and identify key deliverability challenges.

### Viability and Market-Led Analysis

- Evaluate how the scheme could pivot to improve deliverability, including potential changes to the development mix.
- Consider adjacency of other developments and alignment with MDC and Homes England's wider housing priorities.

### Options Development

- Identify options available to MDC (and potentially Homes England) to progress the scheme.
- Set out relative benefits and drawbacks of each option compared to the current position.
- Provide indicative next steps, timelines, and costs for progressing through 2026.

### Output and Timeline

- Deliver a short-form report summarising findings, options, and recommendations, supported by evidence and analysis.

- Mobilisation commenced in December 2025, with core analysis through January–February 2026 and reporting by late February/early March.
9. This strategic review will provide MDC with a clear understanding of viable pathways for the Gresham scheme and inform the Board’s decision-making process.
  10. A co-ordination plan attached at appendix 1 provides an overview of how MDC officers will ensure alignment between MDC’s internal options development and Avison Young’s strategic review, avoiding duplication and maximizing value for decision-making.

## OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

11. The Board is asked to endorse the options review outlined below. This has been a collaborative process between MDC Officer, developer partner and Avison Young. Options will be developed through technical work and stakeholder input, with Board workshops planned for March and April 2026. The completed review of options will be brought to Board for consideration and to determine a preferred scheme.

### Option 1 – Deliver the existing planning permission

**Objective:** To progress the scheme broadly as consented, retaining its original scale and ambition while recognising that legislative changes, increased build costs and macro funding conditions have materially impacted viability challenges. Options for additional funding from Homes England and private sector partners will be explored in order to support delivery.

**Risks:** High dependency on securing significant funding; viability impacted by increased build costs.

**Benefits:** Retains original scale and ambition; aligns with existing planning consent.

### Option 2 – Reduce scale within Phase 1 (height-led revision)

**Objective:** To improve affordability and deliverability by amending Phase 1 planning permission to reduce building heights below BSA thresholds, thereby lowering construction complexity, programme risk, and overall development cost and adapt the scheme to align with Homes England funding parameters and cost benchmarks.

**Risks:** Reduces overall density and regeneration impact; may limit long-term economic activation.

**Benefits:** Improves affordability and deliverability; reduces construction complexity and programme risk.

### Option 3 – Reconsider the masterplan in its totality

**Objective:** Support early activation and place-making while delivering much needed new homes with a choice of types and tenures, pivoting the scheme towards predominantly two- and three-storey housing (as proven in the locality by Thirteen Group).

The aim would be to reduce unit numbers to materially lower build costs and risk, while maintaining the goal of providing housing attractive to young professionals and other co-living models, including student whilst opening up potential for single family housing Build to Rent products. Private sector funding would be explored first, with Homes England support, if required, to unlock delivery.

**Risks:** Reduces overall density and regeneration impact; may limit long-term economic activation; requires re-planning and potential delay in delivery.

**Benefits:** Materially lowers build costs and risk; improves affordability and deliverability; reduces construction complexity and programme risk. Provides housing choice attractive to young professionals.

### Option 4 – Hotel-led delivery using MDC borrowing

**Objective:** To support early activation and placemaking by delivering a hotel element (either as consented or a smaller variant) using MDC borrowing capability and/or private sector funding, thereby enhancing economic growth and visitor accommodation.

Two potential approaches:

- Delivery of a hotel broadly in line with the existing planning permission.
- A smaller variant hotel of approximately 120–150 beds.

**Risks:** Where MDC develops directly using borrowing, it may require MDC to hold for several years prior to an exit following stabilisation of occupancy. This could potentially be below cost; hotel market conditions may affect viability.

**Benefits:** Supports early activation and placemaking; delivers much-needed hotel beds to boost economic growth.

#### Option 5 – Remove hotel and student accommodation

**Objective:** Support early activation and place-making by removing higher-risk elements (hotel and PBSA) and delivering lower-cost residential housing. Its aim is risk reduction, cost control and straightforward housing delivery with potential for forward funding while delivering much needed new homes and a choice of tenures.

**Risks:** Removes mixed-use vibrancy; limits economic activation and diversification of the site.

**Benefits:** Focuses on lower-risk, lower-cost residential delivery; aligns with proven housing models.

#### Option 6 – Market the Site to Private and Registered Providers

**Objective:** Changing the delivery model. Instead of MDC leading or heavily funding the scheme, the site is offered to the market through a competitive process to attract private developers or registered providers who will deliver in line with MDC objectives. Its aim is leveraging external capital and innovation while reducing MDC's direct delivery risk.

- Take the site to the market through a structured procurement process, inviting proposals from private developers and registered providers.
- The brief would be aligned with MDC's regeneration objectives, including high-quality design, housing mix, and integration of economic activation elements.

**Risks:** Market appetite may be influenced by current economic conditions; requires clear governance and evaluation framework to ensure MDC objectives are not diluted.

**Benefits:** Brings market innovation and private capital; reduces MDC's direct delivery risk; potentially accelerates delivery by engaging experienced partners.

**BOARD ENGAGEMENT**

12. To ensure Board input and alignment, we will schedule workshops in March and April. These sessions will:
- Review the development options.
  - Discuss financial and delivery implications.
  - Gather feedback to shape the preferred option.
  - The goal is to agree a preferred option by the end of March 2026.
13. This report recommends that the Board:
- i. **NOTES** the progress to date
  - ii. **ENDORSE** the review of 6 options to be developed through technical work and stakeholder input, with Board workshops planned for March and April 2026. The completed review of options will be brought to Board for consideration and to determine a preferred scheme.
  - iii. **CONFIRM** availability for workshops in March and April.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

14. Homes England have agreed to meet the costs of the Avison Young Strategic Review with no contribution required from MDC.
15. The review may identify options requiring additional financial support, such as:
- a. Gap Funding: Previously identified as necessary for the original scheme to achieve viability.
  - b. Infrastructure Investment: Dependent on Homes England's involvement and funding streams.
  - c. Future Design and Planning Costs: Following selection of a preferred option, further expenditure will be required for detailed design, planning applications and enabling works.
16. While the strategic review aims to identify deliverable options, some scenarios may involve MDC committing further resources or leveraging Homes England funding to unlock viability.

17. Officers continue to explore funding avenues. Local Authorities and the Development Corporations were invited by TVCA to submit an Expression of Interest for an extension round of Brownfield Housing Funding to the sum of £5,076,799. An EOI was submitted on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026 for the full amount, to allow the site to be extended, to further enhance the impact and increase the benefits of the project. If shortlisted, a business case will be provided for appraisal.
18. A detailed financial assessment will accompany the preferred option recommendation in late spring 2026.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19. Legal advice for the scheme is managed by TVCA's in-house legal team, specialist advice will be sought from external legal specialists on an ad hoc basis as and when this is required.
20. MDC entered into a Development Management Agreement (DMA) with Tarras Park Properties Limited (TPPL) on 19 July 2024, appointing TPPL as development partner for the Gresham development project. MDC remains bound by the terms of this agreement until it is varied or terminated. As such:
  - Any changes to the development approach or structure must comply with the DMA.
  - Legal advice will be required to assess implications of any proposed variations or termination.
  - The strategic review by Avison Young may identify options that necessitate legal input, particularly regarding contractual obligations and governance.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

21. This report is classified as medium risk, reflecting the current position and acknowledging that risks are actively managed and mitigated. Key areas under close observation include:
  - Financial exposure
  - Legal compliance
  - Operational continuity
  - Reputational impact



22. Existing governance frameworks and operational controls are considered robust. A comprehensive risk assessment specific to the Gresham site has been developed and will be reviewed regularly to ensure emerging risks are addressed promptly.

## **CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION**

23. The subject of this report is a matter for the MDC Board therefore no additional consultation and communication has been undertaken

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

24. This report does not impact on groups of people with protected characteristics.

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## Coordination Plan for Gresham Scheme – MDC & Avison Young

### Purpose

To ensure alignment between MDC's internal options development and Avison Young's strategic review, avoiding duplication and maximizing value for decision-making.

### Governance & Oversight

- Lead: MDC COO (with Homes England liaison).
- Coordination Group: MDC officers, Avison Young team, Impec.
- Frequency: Weekly check-ins; monthly progress reviews.

### Scope Alignment

- Avison Young: Strategic review of JV agreement, market-led viability analysis, high-level options.
  - MDC/IMpeC: Detailed masterplans, viability appraisals, funding pathways.
- Action: Map deliverables to avoid overlap and ensure complementary outputs.

### Shared Deliverables

- Combined Options Matrix: Merge Avison Young's strategic options with MDC's six options.
- Integrated Timeline: Avison Young report by late Feb/early March; MDC outputs by end of April.

### Data Sharing

- Share MDC options document and funding assumptions with Avison Young.
- Receive Avison Young's baseline analysis and market intelligence.
- Platform: Secure shared workspace (Teams or SharePoint).

### Decision-Making Framework

- Board Briefing: Avison Young report informs strategic direction in March; MDC appraisal supports final decision in April.
- Evaluation Criteria: Alignment with MDC objectives, deliverability, funding certainty, market appetite.

### Risk Mitigation

- Duplication Risk: Clear task allocation and shared timeline.
- Market Uncertainty: Use Avison Young insights to validate MDC assumptions.
- Funding Dependencies: Joint engagement with Homes England.

## Next Steps

- Mobilise coordination group immediately.
- Share initial documents and assumptions by mid-January.
- Schedule first joint review meeting before end of January.

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