

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL **7th January 2015**

MAJOR TOWN HALL PROJECT TO BE TAKEN FORWARD

A Major multi-million pound scheme to bring Middlesbrough Town Hall back to its full 19th Century glory has been given the green light to be taken forward.

Middlesbrough Council's Executive has approved plans to progress the project which will seek to turn the iconic Grade II* listed building into the region's premier cultural and heritage venue.

The plans include a high quality restoration to develop new public facilities and restore the original Victorian Carriage way, Courtroom, Cells and Fire Station for people to visit. A new Town Hall entrance with a glass atrium will be opened with a relocated box office and bar inside. A programme of heritage activities and interpretation about the fascinating history of the Town Hall and its significance in people's lives is planned.

Last year, the plans were awarded initial support* from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

As well as offering much wider access to visitors the plans will enable a greater understanding of the history of the building, and create a unique heritage attraction for the region as a whole.

Proposals include:

- Opening up hidden areas of the Town Hall for the public
- Restoring important heritage rooms and features
- Providing new state of the art public facilities
- Developing new activities and volunteering opportunities for residents to learn about the Town Hall heritage
- Revealing the full heritage significance of Middlesbrough Town Hall as an iconic physical representation of the town/wider Teesside area's historical and industrial heritage.

A 3D fly through of the proposals can be viewed on Middlesbrough Council's website from Thursday 11th December 2014. Plans will be on show at The Central Library from Thursday 11th December 2014 until the middle of January. There will be an opportunity to talk to the project team in the Crypt at the Town Hall on Wednesday 17th December 10am- 1pm and 5m to 8pm.

The Executive approval of the proposals means the Council have submitted a second round Heritage Lottery Fund application for £3.7m for the project to go ahead.

If successful the Council would contribute £4m giving the proposals a total budget of £7.7m.

Start of construction would be in January 2016 and the Town Hall would be closed for an anticipated 21 months.

During that time it is proposed to utilise alternative venues in the town such as mima, Middlesbrough Theatre, Centre Square, Middlesbrough Sports Village, Teesside University and Middlesbrough College.

ACKLAM HALL

The Acklam Hall Marketing Suite opened to the public on 15th November 2014. Taylor Wimpey is reporting strong interest in the site and has already accepted a pleasing number of secured deposits for some of the 56 housing units. The show home is practically complete and this should further galvanise interest in housing on the site.

The Hall repairs are progressing well with work largely moving indoors for the winter season. Specialist restorers are currently working on the magnificent ceiling plaster work; which is the principal reason for the Hall's Grade 1 Listing.

Acklam Hall Ltd report that work is largely to schedule and they anticipate that some form of patron / customer activity will commence in Autumn 2015.

A voluntary tour of the Hall and Grounds has been scheduled for Members of Middlesbrough Council who wish to inspect the site. The take up for this invitation has totalled 10 Council Members and is scheduled for Thursday 18th December 2014.

HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS

The construction programme is progressing well and is currently to schedule, opening July 2015.

Work continues to explore appropriate ground floor uses for the site. With this Economic Development officers are acting as 'quasi' agents for the developer to support the attraction of major food and beverage retailers.

As the main frontage of the building is an active work site, it is currently unfeasible to apply the desired signage and promotional banners. As such, permission is being sought to mount signage on the neighbouring Permanent House. Subject to design and formal approvals, temporary signage is being designed for display in the new year; incorporating the 'Middlesbrough is Changing Branding'.

The arrival of the New Year will coincide with a gradual ramping-up of promotional materials, recruitment and training. This phase will likely include some promotional opportunities with the Council's involvement.

A number of opportunities are emerging in terms of enabling development, improving connectivity and increasing patronage within centre square and the wider cultural quarter. This is being explored as a potential mechanism to harness the momentum of the Holiday Inn's opening to attract much more activity to the area.

SPORTS VILLAGE

The Council recently took possession of the first stage of the Sports Village. The new 400m Track and temporary changing/WC facilities are now in operation. Work progresses with the next phase which is the new access road and Hospital car park completing on the 16th January 2015. The remainder of the site is progressing well with the completion of the hub, all weather pitches and car parks due on the 10th April 2015. The Velodrome follows in June.

ICT

Work is progressing with key enterprise wide application installs. The Lotus Notes to Microsoft Outlook email transfer is progressing with completion due at the end of January. Temporary fix for webmail is due for completion next week with a full solution ready for early in the New Year. Agresso ERP continues to move on with build and training workshops taking place. Objective the Councils "information portal" goes live for the first users in Children's Services by early January, a phased delivery is programmed with Adult Social Care following. The Children's care solution is in test stage with this going live in May.