

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 16th September 2015

Culture

1. Case for Culture & Tees Valley City of Culture Bid

Middlesbrough Council has played an active role in the development of the North East of England's Case for Culture (C4C). C4C sets out the region's long-term cultural ambition, setting out how its combined cultural offer should develop over the next 15 years. Its ambition is centred on five principle aspirations:

- **Participation & Reach** – a 'culture for all' ethos, ensuring the benefits of arts and heritage are felt by everyone, and providing scope for all of society to be involved;
- **Children & Young People** – developing opportunities and broadening access to culture for our young people, with a focus on creative learning;
- **Talent and Progression** - creating an environment that attracts and retains the best of cultural and creative talent, providing career opportunities and growing a diverse workforce;
- **Economic Value** – recognising the economic benefits of culture to the region, and harnessing this potential to support economic growth, job creation, and attract visitors to the region; and
- **Creating a Vibrant and Distinctive Region with a Excellent Quality of Life** – celebrating the North East's cultural identity, making the region a distinctive and attractive place to live, and creating the right conditions for innovations and inward investment.

Despite cuts to arts funding and less money spent per head in the North East than in London, C4C offers an optimistic and ambitious vision of culture in our region, and how it can progress, while stressing what the region already has to offer.

Middlesbrough Council has, alongside the other Tees Valley Local Authorities, Tees Valley Unlimited, Arts Council England, and others, announced their intention to launch a bid for UK City of Culture in 2025.

The bid, which, if successful will coincide with the bicentenary of the world's first passenger railway which ran between Darlington and Stockton, stresses the Tees Valley region's ambition to build on our strength as a cultural and festival hub. It will also support the Tees Valley's ability to attract tourists, support creating businesses, and have huge long-term social and economic implications.

Both C4C and the City of Culture bid reflect our ambition to be recognised as a cultural powerhouse, while showing the importance of culture in generating economic and social benefits across Middlesbrough and the region.

2. Mima

Mima will launch its new Localism exhibition on 10th October, an ambitious project telling the story of art in Middlesbrough from 1829 to the present day. An ethos of public participation is at the centre of this project, with members of the public being invited to help construct the narrative in a number of workshops, growing the show and adding an encyclopaedic family tree of creativity on Teesside that includes Christopher Dresser, bridges, and the Boosbeck Industries.

The Autumn programme will include a retrospective of the Yorkshire-born artist Margaret Harrison, and 'Drawing' - a series of events celebrating the role and importance of drawing in not only in the arts, but also in medicine, science and engineering.

Outside of this, Mima is submitting a bid to the National Arts Partnership fund to become a host venue for part of the national Arts Council collection, and a capital bid to the Arts Council to improve the layout and usage of the ground floor public entrance area of the gallery. I met with Alistair Hudson on the 18th August and was impressed by his vision for Mima – a vision that encompasses community usage and world-class art. We are keen to work together in a joined-up approach to deliver culture across Middlesbrough.

The tender for the new operator of Mima café has been awarded to the Waiting Room restaurant from Eaglescliffe, who will be taking over in the next few weeks.

3. Middlesbrough Town Hall

Following the award of £3.7m in HLF funding for the restoration of the Town Hall, work continues on the pre-construction phase of the project with the project team currently identifying the most appropriate procurement route for the project that will minimise the risk of cost and time over-runs. The design team is currently preparing fully costed plans prior to going out for procurement, providing more cost certainty from returned tenders. It is anticipated that procurement of the construction contractors will commence in December 2015, with a view to starting development in May 2016.

Work is currently underway in the preparation of a funding bid to the Arts Council's Small Scale Capital Fund for around £500,000, which will support the enhancement of the performance aspects of the building and the visitor offer from the venue. The bid will be submitted in early October, and is likely that the result will be announced in February 2016.

4. Middlesbrough Town Hall Classical Programme

We recognise that 'culture' comes in many forms, and are pleased to announce that Arts Council England has confirmed a grant for £58,000 towards the staging of 2015/2016 Classical Concert Series, which consists of international, and UK orchestral performances, including Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra in October and the Prague Symphony Orchestra in November.

Due to capital works, the final performances will take place at Middlesbrough Theatre, and chamber music series will be performed in number of locations, including outside of the building.

Continuing the theme of community engagement, the Arts Council England grant enables a range of learning and engagement activities, and a family performance by the Halle.

5. Pantomime 2015

Casting has been confirmed for this years' pantomime, Cinderella, with Eastenders' Cheryl Fergison (famous for playing Heather Trott) taking the role of the Fairy Godmother, and local actors Scott Gallagher and Katie Lowe playing Buttons and Cinderella respectively.

Always a popular event, advance sales are performing well with sales and reservations up on the same time last year.

6. Events

A number of diverse events will be taking place in the coming months including the Town Meal of 12 September and Discover Middlesbrough in October. The latter's launch, 'Don't Be Afraid of the Dark, is on 16 October, and is in its second year. The event is designed to promote and alternative night-time economy, and features lots of night-time activities in the Town Centre, including tours by torchlight, films and light installations.

7. Dancemiddlesbrough

Arts Development are working in partnership with the Central Library to programme dance in the Reference Library. This features a performance by Jolene English which has been inspired by the poetry of Sylvia Plath. The company will also be working with Ormesby School on an artist's residency.

8. Wi-Fi in Middlesbrough Libraries

As part of the BT and Barclays Wi-Fi in our community scheme, Central and Acklam Libraries now have free Wi-Fi access for customers. The service volunteered to participate in a partnership scheme which saw Wi-Fi installed free of charge for two years, enabling the library service to provide communities with free Wi-Fi and hands on digital support to help people embrace the digital revolution.

Barclays Eagles support team visited the libraries to run free sessions for customers to enable them to make better use of their own personal devices such as laptops, tablets and mobile phones. Sessions at Acklam Libraries were fully booked within a day of the announcement of the free training. In addition; Middlesbrough Library Service will be applying for newly released funding from the Arts Council to pay for the installation of Wi-Fi in libraries currently without Wi-Fi. If successful the remainder of libraries would see Wi-Fi installed by March 2016.

Leisure

9. Rainbow Leisure Centre

- **Squash Courts and Indoor Cycling Room refurbishments**

As part of our commitment to promote healthy and active lifestyles, we have seen improvements to Squash and Indoor Cycling offer at the Rainbow Centre. The work was carried out in June. Refurbishments included treatment of floors and playing walls (in the case of the Squash Courts), and has received positive feedback from users. Participation has also seen an increase.

- **Children with Disabilities Fun Day**

MBC's Children with Disabilities had their annual family fun day at the Rainbow Leisure centre on 23rd July, which once again proved to be a very successful event. Hundreds of children and their families attended the day participating in a range of activities such as soft play, bouncy castles, arts and crafts and other games.

10. Learn to Swim with Active Middlesbrough

Active Middlesbrough is enjoying a significant success with their 'Learn to Swim' programmes including the Marine Team Swimming Lessons and Schools' Swimming Programme.

- **Marine Team Swimming Lessons**

Currently over 1400 swimmers from the age of 6 months to adults participate in the Active Middlesbrough branded Marine Team Swimming Lessons at either the Rainbow Leisure Centre or The Neptune swimming pools. The Marine Team Swimming Lessons follow the current Amateur Swimming Association national teaching plan criteria that caters for those that simply want to learn to swim to those that can develop into competitive swimming.

- **School Swimming Programme**

Active Middlesbrough School Swimming Programme is proving to be a huge success. Currently 46 Middlesbrough Primary Schools attend the Rainbow Leisure Centre and Neptune swimming pools.

The Programme's objectives are to achieve the national curriculum targets of children being able to swim 25 metres by key stage 2 as well as developing important life skills such as water safety. The programme format of schools attending all their sessions in 2 week blocks is proving a success in increasing the percentage of children achieving 25 metres.

Sport

11. Middlesbrough Sports Village

In the three months since the opening of Middlesbrough Sports Village, the state of the art facility has hosted more than 30 events for schools, colleges and clubs, including MS Society 24 Hour Duathlon Charity Event, and the Tees Valley Sports Finals. Schools from as far as Hambledon have used the facility for their annual Sports

Days. It has proved to be a massive hit with sports enthusiasts of all levels, including elite sportsmen and women.

So far, Middlesbrough Sports Village has had more than 34,000 casual visits including 5,500 football, 19,000 gym visits, more than 3,500 casual track users and more than 6,000 children using the Fun Village. Active Middlesbrough has also seen a surge in Active Memberships with more than 800 new people signing up at the MSV alone, many taking advantage of Active Friends and Family Memberships.

Work on the 400mm Athletics Track polymeric surface sealant begun on July 20 and was completed 4 days ahead of schedule on 3rd August. Additional upgrades and maintenance were carried out on the steeple chase, water jump and the long jump run-up boards to ensure all athletics facilities meet IAAF specifications. This work was brought forward from September in order to be completed ahead of the Northern Athletics U15 & U17's Championships which took place on 15th and 16th August with great feedback from the event participants and organisers.

12. Velodrome at Middlesbrough Sports Village

Middlesbrough Sports Village is soon to be enhanced even further with the addition of the £1.6m 250m velodrome funded in partnership between Middlesbrough Council and British Cycling.

The velodrome, which is due to open early September, will complement the existing 1km Cycle Circuit and Prissick Skate Plaza, and in so doing will establish Middlesbrough Sports Village as a cycling centre of excellence with regional significance.

As a specialist facility, access to the velodrome will be made available to those accessing programmes under the direct tutelage of British Cycling level 2 velodrome qualified coaches. Discussion with cycling clubs and partners are already underway to establish these sessions.

However we are working on a Sports Development Programme to increase cycling across Middlesbrough at all levels. To further support access to the velodrome, Middlesbrough Sports Village, in partnership with Middlesbrough Public Health and British Cycling, will recruit a 'Go Ride' coach. The 'Go Ride' coach will deliver outreach programmes in schools and community groups then direct interest generated back to sessions delivered at the velodrome by the 'Go Ride' coach and local clubs. To assist in the delivery of these sessions and to make them as accessible as possible to all in Middlesbrough, a pool of velodrome specific cycles, shoes and helmets will be purchased.

The velodrome will also be a centre for track cycle racing that will attract racers to Middlesbrough from across the country. This along with the other work outlined will contribute to firmly establishing Middlesbrough as a centre of cycling excellence and provide those living in Middlesbrough with every opportunity to participate in cycling.

13. Taylor Wimpey Tees Pride 10k Run and Mima 3k fun run

An event that goes from strength to strength, the Taylor Wimpey Tees Pride 10k run, and Mima 3k fun run, will take place on 6 September. The application deadline was

extended by a week so as to accommodate for the interest in the event. It is the 11th anniversary of this event, and a fantastic atmosphere is guaranteed.