

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015

### 1. Planning and Development

Planning and Development Committee approved the following planning applications on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015:

- Care home at the rear of The Gables Public House (corner of Stainton Way / Hemlington Road);
- residential development outline on the Land off Hemlington Lane (opposite the Blue Bell Hotel);
- the residential development for two semi-detached houses and four mews-style houses at the rear of 16-18 Cambridge Road (the land next to the Bishop's House);
- a four storey block for 48 student bedrooms at the rear of 214/216 Marton Road;
- the completion of the development at the former Art College site (corner of Burlam Road and Roman Road) by converting the upper floors to 6 flats and 10 new houses within the grounds; and,
- The design details for Persimmon Homes 375 dwellings on the site of the Police HQ on Ladgate Lane.

Elsewhere, the start of the new academic year sees the successful completion of the STEM building which is open for student use at Middlesbrough College.

### 2. Housing Completions

In the five months from 1 April 2015 to 31 August 2015 there have been 256 housing completions, of which 44% were detached properties. If this build rate of 51 dwellings per month were to be maintained over the remaining seven months of 2015/16 this would result in over 600 dwellings being built. The build rate for the first five months of 2015/16 is 30% higher than in the same period last year.

The sites with the highest level of completions are Beechfield Court (65 dwellings), Stainsby Hall Park (36), Rose Cottage Farm (19), Beckview (19), Kingsbrook Wood (18) and Rose Cottage Farm (18).

### 3. Empty Homes

Over the last two years, the Council has invested £1.75m to refurbish empty properties across the town and predominantly in the town centre:-

House 2 Home Grants – through this scheme 120 privately-owned properties will be brought back into use, of which:

- 11 homes have been made available as social housing for the next five years;
- £620k has been invested in match incentive grants, leveraging in £1.1m of private investment and refurbishing 88 homes up to the Government's social housing standard; and,
- a new programme of £5k match incentive grants will be rolled out over the next three months, bringing a further 20 properties back into use.

Affordable Housing Programme – the Council has invested £340k of Government funding to bring back into use 10 Council-owned homes in Gresham Phase 2b as social housing. A further 10 Council-owned properties in Gresham Phase 2b will be brought back into use over the next six months using £160k of Government funding and £260k of Council resources. The scheme is being delivered in house by the Housing Team, Design Services and Property Services.

By the end of the current financial year the Housing Team will have brought back into use 140 empty homes. This will boost the New Homes Bonus calculation, adding to the profile of new builds and offsetting demolition schemes. In isolation, the 140 properties added to the New Homes Bonus Calculation would be worth c. £840k over the next six years.

#### **4. Transporter Bridge Opening Event**

The formal opening event of the Transporter Bridge is proposed to take place on 14<sup>th</sup> October. The event replaces the initial 'Launch Event' which was cancelled earlier this year owing to the ongoing works. The formal event will be of a smaller scale than the initial planned event, reflecting a celebration, as members of the public have already had the opportunity to visit the upper walkway in the lift whilst a number of test events and organised visits have taken place. The event celebrates the achievements of the Tees Transporter Bridge Visitor Experience Project, providing an important opportunity to profile and mark the enhancement of the Bridge and associated heritage.

It is anticipated the Visitor Experience (inclusive of lift) will be in operation prior to 14<sup>th</sup> October. A schools event will take place on a future date as a showcase involving those children initially invited.

#### **5. Capital Programme Update**

Highways Surfacing Partners, Tarmac/ Le Farge, have almost completed delivery of the carriageway element of the Highway Maintenance programme, with 44 schemes out of 52 completed to date. Just over 7,000 tonnes of material have been laid in resurfacing 57, 429 m<sup>2</sup> of roads at a cost of £824, 466.

Highway maintenance and verge and footway improvements have so far been achieved in Thorntree, North Ormesby, Berwick Hills and Riverside Park. Further areas with completed verge and footway improvements are Marton, Nunthorpe and Beechwood and Longlands.

The 2015/16 full programme of carriageway works is on target to be completed by the middle of November 2015. The area based approach to carriageway resurfacing has allowed efficiencies to be made and the full cost savings will be calculated when all works are complete and presented at the end of Quarter 3. Savings will be reinvested into the surfacing programme to undertake additional schemes and complete emergency works.

The Council's Streetscene Services have been carrying out the verge and footway elements of the programme and completed 15 out of 44 verge schemes at a cost of £171,456 and 22 out of 73 footway schemes at a cost of £201,938. The remaining schemes have all been planned and programmed for completion by the end of the financial year.

The Councils Street Lighting Partner Galliford Try are also making good progress with the two year LED lighting replacement scheme. To date 2127 of the old lighting units

have been replaced with new energy efficient LED's in Gresham, Whinney Banks, Hemlington and Linthorpe and are on target to achieve the projected savings in energy use and carbon emissions.

## **6. Middlesbrough Business Headlines**

- Baxter Personnel has opened a new office in Boho 6 (Crown House) and has immediate plans to recruit approximately 120 positions for a key contract they have secured.
- Contemporary restaurant 'Oven' is due to open in October on the ground floor of the newly refurbished Central Point Business Centre.
- The new 60 seater Turkish restaurant The Istanbul Grill has opened in the prominent Grade II listed building on the junction of Borough/Grange Road.
- Middlesbrough property developer which specialises in commercial and residential real estate Jomast features in the latest list of the fastest 50 growing companies in the region compiled by law firm Ward Hadaway in association with The Journal.

## **7. Middlesbrough Means Business**

Middlesbrough Means Business is the brand and communication channel in which the Council communicates with the local business community. This year, Middlesbrough Means Business will be running;

- **Business Breakfast Exchange**  
Networking aimed at Middlesbrough businesses with open invite to wider NE business community. The events are based in Middlesbrough town centre to showcase what the town has to offer as well as an opportunity to support business growth and engage with the business community.
- **Bite Size Business Training Workshops**  
Four events will be held over this year. Our last event on 17 September was attended by over 70 attendees, the spotlight speakers were Mayor David Budd and Steven Foster: Divisional Director of Redefine BDL responsible for the Holiday Inn Express development. The event was extremely well received and highlighted the public/private sector partnership to bring investment into the town.
- **Middlesbrough Means Business Website & Social Media**  
We have an active website, Facebook and twitter feed for Middlesbrough Means Business which aims to keep business informed about local developments, inward investment, opportunities, events and initiatives that may support their growth and keep them engaged with the local authority.