

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 14th October 2015

Culture

1. Association of North East Councils (ANEC) and Ruhr Regional Foundation (RVR) Creative exChange, 20th-22nd September

Between 20th – 22nd September, I was part of the ANEC cultural exchange delegation, which included Councillors from Newcastle, Sunderland and Northumberland, Arts Council representatives, Teesside University, and others, to the Ruhr Region.

The exchange included tours of Creative and Urban Quarters in Gelsenkirchen and Lohberg, a workshop, and a conference in Essen. The Creative and Urban Quarters are sites to behold. A lot of work and planning has gone into turning old sites of industry and mining into centres of cultural and business enterprise. One such site, *Nordsternpark*, has been turned into an area of business, culture, recreation and events. Original features such as the pithead have been retained, and incorporated into the design of buildings. I couldn't help see similarities between this and our work in the area stretching from Middlehaven to the University – our very own Creative and Urban Quarter.

In our workshops we discussed areas of European collaboration. The Ruhr region and our region have a lot of similarities in terms of growing our respective digital and creative industries. Our first step will be to audit our respective cultural events and engagements, as a way of building up partnerships. We also hope to 'talent swap', and promote cooperation between our respective creative experts. The issue of European funding was also brought up a number of times, and we hope to work together in order to tap into these funding streams. One thing is clear: to leave the EU would have a significant negative impact on our chances of attracting this kind of funding.

In Essen we visited the *Unperfekthaus*, a performance and arts venue – a venue that reminded me of our own House of Blah Blah, and met the North-Rhine Westphalia State Minister for Culture.

My visit ended with a tour of Oberhausen's Gasometer, a site of industry turned exhibition space. We discussed the potential of sharing exhibitions in the future, and I would like to see their work exhibited across Middlesbrough. The visit ended with an official meeting with Oberhausen's Head of Culture to discuss future collaboration between our towns. It is hoped that our partners in Oberhausen will be able to visit Middlesbrough in the near future, so we can show them what we are doing here and discuss future collaboration.

2. Middlesbrough Council and Arts Council collaboration

- Town Hall Capital bid

It is Middlesbrough Council's ambition that our Town Hall becomes *the* venue for high quality performances, and community use. With this in mind, I am pleased to announce that Middlesbrough Council has received approval from Arts Council England (ACE) to apply for a small-scale capital bid of up to £500,000 to support the ongoing Town Hall project.

The scheme prioritises projects that help support artistic excellence and financial sustainability of arts organisations, and our bid is being developed to support a full refurbishment of the stage, technical equipment, and provision of new bars and catering facilities. These are important works that will help ensure the Town Hall reaches its full potential as a centre for both the arts and the community. The grant will be submitted by 8th October, and the outcome will be known by February 2016.

- **Classical programming grant**

We have also received a grant of £58,282 to support the development and delivery 2015/2016's Classical Music Programme. To promote classical music and increase its reach across our community, concerts will be held across Middlesbrough, including the theatre, the Chamber and even the Reference Library.

Community engagement is a key theme in this programme, and I am pleased to confirm that our already established learning and engagement programme in schools will continue. Children will be introduced to classical music. Primary schools will be able to take part in music-making lessons, composition and performance activities. The grant will also be used to nurture our local talent and will see local musicians being supported through performance, networking, mentoring, and masterclass opportunities.

3. Townscape Heritage

The Middlesbrough Historic Quarter was designated a Conservation Area in 1989. It centres around our Grade II listed Railway Station, and extends north towards the Middlehaven regeneration area and south towards Middlesbrough Town Centre. A predominantly commercial area, this Quarter also forms a key transport corridor and pedestrian route. It also forms a key heritage trail from the Town Hall to the Transporter Bridge. In many cases, the Historic Quarter is a visitor's first impression of Middlesbrough.

However the area has suffered a decline in fortunes. To tackle this, a phase one Townscape Heritage lottery bid was submitted in August 2015, and is complemented by Network Rail and other investment. Our ambition is to develop an attractive, vibrant and interesting place where people want to work, live, visit and invest.

We will achieve this by funding repair and enhancement works to buildings and public realm, with the aim to encourage business confidence while also engaging with residents to learn new skills and delve into their heritage.

An initial assessment by the Council's Conservation Officer has identified a number of buildings and public realm improvements. Townscape Heritage funding is extremely competitive, and whilst the minimum partnership funding required is 5-10%, the HLF

would normally expect a minimum contribution of 20% to the project. The overall project is circa £1.5m, and the Council's match is £300,000 (plus officer time).

A site visit has been arranged for 12th October, and the outcome of phase one will be determined on 18th January 2016. If successful, the Council will have 12 months to develop and submit the stage 2 bid.

4. Celebrating Middlesbrough

- **Discover Middlesbrough**

Our annual 16-day festival which celebrates Middlesbrough, its people, its heritage and its future, kicks off with the Don't Be Afraid of the Dark Festival on 16th October. The aim is to open up events to more people from Middlesbrough and further afield than ever before.

Middlesbrough Sports Village will be showcased, with a free 'smile mile' taking place – allowing people of all abilities to use the new running track. A big, free event at the Cycle Circuit will also take place – a first for Discover Middlesbrough.

A big art weekend takes place Saturday 24th October, including Middlesbrough's – and the region's - first ever Art Run. This has been organised by Mima and will lap many of our open art studios.

History talks and walks will take place, including a Middlesbrough Hidden Women Trail, charting the progress of inspirational women such as Middlesbrough's first (and currently, only) women MP, Ellen Wilkinson.

Discover Middlesbrough has lots to offer, and plenty of opportunities to explore and discover what is great about Middlesbrough.

- **Don't be Afraid of the Dark**

Our ambition is to support an alternative night time economy that moves away the club culture, and the Events Team has developed a night time light and culture festival unique to the Tees Valley. Don't Be Afraid of the Dark is a great initiative to support our cultural and creative sector, and animate the Town Centre.

This is a collaborative event between the Central Library, The Empire, the Town Hall and Town Centre cultural venues. The event, which takes place 16th October, will be a 7 hour extravaganza of light installations, torch lit tours, exhibitions, films, origami and shadow puppetry workshops. Trips to the top of the Transporter Bridge will also take place to witness the glow of Teesside.

The event has also partnered with Spectrum to provide an alternative event to the traditional Middlesbrough Community Pride.

- **Mima's Localism exhibition**

Alongside Discover Middlesbrough, our town's heritage is being celebrated in 'Localism', an exhibition being held at Mima. 'Localism', a collaborative project involving the Middlesbrough community, starts on 10th October. This is an ambitious

project telling the story of art in Middlesbrough from 1829 to the present day, and celebrates local artists and art industries.

5. Battle of Britain Parade, 75th Anniversary

I attended the Battle of Britain parade on 13th September. The event was attended by veterans, servicemen and women, cadets from across all services, Councillors and other dignitaries. Our Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Ron Arundale, represented Middlesbrough Council at the event and laid the Council's wreath at the Cenotaph.

6. North Ormesby Minstrels

The North Ormesby Minstrels, now in its 37th year, performed its annual show this September at the Trinity Centre. This year's show was *Cabaret* – a favourite of mine – and I was pleased to be able attend. The show was sold out every night.

It was a fantastic show, and credit is due to everybody involved in the performance. Hard work clearly paid off, and I pleased to see the North Ormesby Minstrels go from strength to strength. I'm looking forward to the next show.

While our town centre and theatre clearly form the crux of Middlesbrough's cultural activity, it is important to remember that culture can be found across all parts of our town. The North Ormesby Minstrels is but one example of resident-led cultural activity, and something we as Councillors should support and promote.

7. Christmas Lights/Reindeer Parade

Preparations for Middlesbrough's Christmas event are underway. The Christmas Lights Switch-On and Reindeer Parade & Community Carnival take place on Sunday 29th November. The main sponsor is the Cleveland Centre, and Heart Radio North East will host, with help from local band Cattle and Cane – who will perform live. A fairground and market are set to take place. Stewarded locations with limited capacities are available along the parade route so families with additional needs can enjoy the day.

Leisure and Sport

8. Velodrome opening and Cycling Development Programme

As part of one of the region's flagship sports complexes, the new £1.6m Olympic-size Velodrome opened on Friday 18th September.

As part of Middlesbrough Council's increased cycling offer, the velodrome sits next to the existing 1km Cycle Circuit. The 250km track will be predominantly used by cycling clubs, and it is hoped will emerge as a major venue for cyclist training and tournaments of all levels.

Use of the velodrome is dependent on track cycling accreditation, and sessions must be supervised by a British Cycling Level 2 track specific coach. A specialist fixed wheel track bike and helmets must be used. The track will be available for hire by clubs and organisations. Active Middlesbrough are also working with British Cycling to produce a cycling development programme, allowing people to engage with cycling at all levels and give them the potential to progress their skills.

Active Card holders have the opportunity to use the velodrome for £3.75 and £2.40 for adults and juniors respectively, while non-Active Card holders will pay £4.40 and £3.00. We're providing an interim programme of coach-supervised sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays (6-8pm) and Wednesdays (12-1pm).

The velodrome, our cycling facilities and development programme provide Middlesbrough with the perfect opportunity to become a home for local, regional and national cycling.

9. First International Middlesbrough Futsal Camp

August saw the first ever International Futsal Summer Camp at Middlesbrough Sports Village. I'm pleased to announce that it was a huge success, and saw co-founder and futsal coach Victor Gonzalez and other guests come over to Middlesbrough from Barcelona.

The two-week training camp attracted 40 children and was led by chair and first English UEFA A futsal coach, Damon Shaw.

Middlesbrough Sports Village is fast becoming the home to local clubs and sports, including Middlesbrough Futsal Club, who run training groups for all age groups on Tuesdays and during summer holidays. The first team kick off the FA Super League season in September. Entry to all games is free.

10. Tees Pride 10k 2015

Our 11th annual Tees Pride 10k and 3k Fun Run on 6th September have met with very positive feedback. This year saw 2542 entries for 10k and 816 for the 3k Fun Run.

The finish times for the different categories were as follows:

- Men's Wheelchair 10k, Simon Lawson, 21:33
- Women's Wheelchair 10k, Megan Dawson – Farrell, 29:04
- Men's 10k, Tadele Geremew Mulugeta, 30:36
- Women's 10k, Alyson Dixon, 32:17

Alyson Dixon's performance in winning the 10k was the best performance, male or female; we have ever had in the 11 years of the Tees pride 10k. Alyson's performance has moved her to 2nd in the UK rankings 2015 for 10k. The other female places were awarded to Justina Heslop 2nd in 33:56 and Rosie Smith 3rd in 34:07 with all the top 3 being international athletes.

Middlesbrough Mandale's U17 athlete Nathan Baker ran a remarkable 32.08 to finish 5th and rank him as the fastest U17 in the country over 10k.

The Fun Run saw the boys' event won by England schools international and Middlesbrough Mandale athlete Josh Cowperthwaite. Josh was followed home in 2nd by James Summers, also of Middlesbrough Mandale and Elias Bentiba from New Marske in 3rd. The girls' event was won by 10 year old Erin Keeler – Clarke from Durham City Harriers, 2nd place went to Emma Harte from Darlington Harriers whilst 9 year old Gabrielle Hall crossed the line in 3rd.

A number of Middlesbrough Labour Group took part in the Fun Run, including myself. Councillor Denise Rooney was our star performer, with the rest of us taking a more leisurely pace! The whole event had a great atmosphere, and excellently compered by Ali Brownlee. The organisers should be commended for the hard work they put in to make this event a continuing success.

11. Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre Season Tickets

Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Centre has seen an increase in season ticket sales across all categories, equating to an increase in sales of around 5% as opposed to last year. This follows on from a number of development works completed on the course, and a summer of good weather.