

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

Wednesday 25th November 2015

1. Planning and Development

Planning and Development Committee completed the consideration and approval of all of the planning applications on the plots for sale at De Brus Park at the meeting on 6th October. All of the planning permissions are now in place for the development of the five detached, high-quality houses and the construction of the first unit is expected to commence in the next month.

Similarly, Middlesbrough College was also prepared for the start of the academic year. The STEM building and its approaches was completed in time for the new intake of students and it reinforced the impressive appearance of the college on the Middlehaven skyline.

The application by Taylor Wimpey for 172 houses on the land west of Strait Lane, Stainton has been submitted and will be considered at a future meeting of the Planning and Development Committee.

2. New House Building/New Homes Bonus

In the first six months of 2015/16 there were 351 new dwellings completed and 35 empty homes were brought into use. Of the new homes 38% were detached and 60% were of 3 or more bedrooms. Assuming an average Council Tax Band C for the new dwellings and Band A for the empty homes, the results for the first six months would equate to a New Homes Bonus of almost £500k per year (a total of almost £3m over six years). The dwellings could also generate over £550k of Council Tax (including charges for Cleveland Fire Authority and Cleveland Police & Crime Commissioner).

3. The Curve

The development of the University's new Curve building and the Campus Heart public realm scheme has reached practical completion. The impact of the development has inspired the University to expand the scope of works to include a new 'living wall' and large LED screen in the public area. Local bars and businesses along Southfield Road have managed the disruption well and can appreciate the long term benefits of the completed scheme. This positive relationship has been enhanced, in no small part, by the excellent relationships and communications developed by the contractors. The scheme will now apply for nominations for a range of design and public realm awards.

Councillors recently visited the building and were very impressed. The Council and University continue to work together to progress emerging ideas and initiatives.

4. Rising Star Award

Middlesbrough has been awarded a Rising Star award in the Great British High Street Competition. The Great British High Street Competition 2015 sponsored by Boots, Costa, Post Office, Marks and Spencer and Tesco, is now in its second year and is one of a number of initiatives to help champion high streets as the cornerstones of the community. The Rising Star award recognises the towns who have become 'Rising Stars' and are working together to rejuvenate their high streets.

5. Town Centre News

The Hill St South Mall renovation programme continues with a new Jack & Jones store which opened on 23rd November. The store will take up a prominent location in the former Masham pub. Jack & Jones is a high quality, contemporary young men's fashion retailer, producing original, premium and vintage ranges. The chain is one of Europe's leading producers of menswear with more than 1000 stores in 38 countries.

There are also plans for a new low cost gym in the town centre. 360 Gym has negotiated a 6 year lease on the former JJB Sports unit in Captain Cook Square creating 20-30 jobs. Economic Growth officers are currently working with the gym to identify parking options. Terms will hopefully be agreed by mid-November with an opening date of Feb 2016.

6. MGT Teesside

MGT Teesside has now appointed Abengoa and Toshiba as its preferred bidder to construct a 299MWe Combined Heat and Power biomass plant in Wilton, discussions are also taking place regarding a presence in Middlesbrough. The engineering, construction and design of the project will be led by Spanish power and environmental technologies group Abengoa, and Japanese industrial company Toshiba. The Circulating Fluidized Bed boiler plant for the project will be supplied by local company, Amec Foster Wheeler. The project represents a total investment of at least £650 million and the creation of around 835 jobs for the area during construction. Registration for local workers and contractors are now being sought.

7. The Oven

£500,000 has been invested in a flagship restaurant in Middlesbrough town centre. The Oven, located on Linthorpe Road opened its doors in October. The restaurant offers Michelin-star-style French and English food at affordable prices and has created 35 jobs.

8. Gresham Demolitions

The Council has appointed C.L Prosser & Co Ltd to carry out further demolitions in the Gresham clearance area. The properties that are currently in the process of being demolished are shown as follows:-

Addresses	No. of properties
Amber Street (8 – 22 even, 31 – 39 odd numbers)	13
Borough Road (7 – 11, 15 – 23 odd numbers)	8
Diamond Road (36 – 38 even numbers)	2
Emerald Street (3 – 27, 35 – 39 odd, 10 – 32 even numbers)	28
Garnet Street (20 – 22, 52 – 64 even numbers)	9
Manor Street (27 – 29 odd numbers)	2
Pearl Street (3 – 23, 31 – 39 odd, 4 – 36 even numbers)	33
Ruby Street (2 – 4, 34 – 42 even, 23 – 41 odd numbers)	17
Union Street (1 – 5, 13 – 27, 13 – 41 odd numbers)	13
Walpole Street (37 – 49 odd numbers)	7
Warren Street (5 – 21 odd numbers)	9
Waverley Street (25 – 31 odd numbers)	4
Windsor Street (2 – 20 even numbers)	10
TOTAL	155

9. Amber Street Temporary Car Park

The Amber Street temporary Car Park is to be extended from the current 24 spaces to 92 due to increased demand. The additional spaces will support the growth of the University and business on Linthorpe Road. The new car parking will initially be made available on a Christmas promotion as short stay and free for two hours (no return in three hours), which is consistent with the existing regime operating on the Jewel Streets. By the end of February 2016, it is proposed the Council commence charging in line with other on-street short stay car parking provision.

Directional signage will be erected on Linthorpe Road and it is proposed that the car park itself will have signage with three areas of equal weighting for business sponsorship. Linthorpe Road businesses between Borough Road and Southfield/Princes Road will be written to, inviting sponsorship on a first come, first served basis.

10. SSI

The recent closure of SSI has had a direct effect on hundreds of Middlesbrough Residents and companies. Middlesbrough Council has worked closely with partners to provide support to both residents and companies.

Residents

- Middlesbrough Council has a dedicated link on the website which shows the support available to Middlesbrough residents. The link is updated regularly (at least once a week) and circulated through the council's social media networks.
- Former SSI workers are advised to meet with the job centre and subsequently the National Careers Service (NCS) to access the rapid response funding. There are approximately 450 former workers resident in Middlesbrough.
- Middlesbrough residents are also advised to speak with Training Angels (based at Berwick Hill Community Centre) to access free training including CSCS cards and site safety passports. (Maths and English refreshers are also part of this training).
- Middlesbrough Council has also partnered with Middlesbrough College to offer Middlesbrough residents access to additional training through the college. £10K has been committed from the council to ensure former workers from Middlesbrough can access a wide range of training suitable to move them into work as soon as possible. There is a limit approx. of £250 per person but no other restrictions, however each request is dealt with individually and the college are being very flexible in complementing the support provided by the Council.
- Middlesbrough residents continue to be encouraged to speak with the Redcar & Cleveland resource hub as well as access the council's existing support mechanisms to receive advice on benefits, welfare and counselling.

Supply Chain

- From a list of 850 suppliers to SSI, 58 are located in Middlesbrough. The companies have been identified and contacted via the Economic Growth team and Tees Valley Unlimited. Many companies affected have already made redundancies as a direct result of the SSI closure. Companies are encouraged to make a claim for money they are owed through the Official Receiver and we are advising companies of the local support they can access.
- From the £80m government package, there is currently a £7.3m package secured by TVU to support and relocate all the former SSI apprentices and provide additional support to companies in the form of retraining. All the information is on Tees Valley Unlimited website and we have circulated direct to our business networks and through Middlesbrough Means Business.

- The Economic Growth team are fielding any direct enquiries from residents and business.
- The council is guided by the SSI taskforce and the SSI Comms strategy.

Job Fair

- A job fair has already taken place in Redcar and Cleveland and we are aware that DWP are planning a second job fair in Middlesbrough. Middlesbrough Council and the College have offered full support and a venue if it is required.