

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 30th March 2016

Culture

1. Middlesbrough Town Hall

The Town Hall's final event before its temporary closure will take place on 9 April, and will be a 'Closing Party' hosted by the Wildcats of Kilkenny. A number of 'last Chance Tours' have been taking place over the month of March, giving people the opportunity to look behind the scenes of the Town Hall before it closes. Restoration and refurbishment will then commence. The procurement process for the main contractors is nearing its final stages with procurement scoring to be completed by the end of March.

We were pleased to announce that Middlesbrough Council was successful in its application for £500k Arts Council England capital funding, which will support the renewal of the performance facilities within the building not covered by the Heritage Lottery Fund grant. A total of £4.2m external funding has now been secured to deliver the scheme, including a rebuild of the main hall stage, purchase of demountable staging and technical equipment, and seating for the Courtroom to enable it to be used as a third performance space. The Arts Council England grant is a welcome addition to the project, and reflects the confidence of outside bodies such as the Arts Council England, in Middlesbrough Council's plans for the development of its Town Hall.

2. Tour de Yorkshire Update - #enjoytheride

Middlesbrough has been gripped by Tour de Yorkshire fever, and the excitement around the event from residents, community groups and businesses has been immense. Yellow and blue bikes have appeared around the town, as starting gun for the upcoming Tour de Yorkshire celebrations.

This is a unique opportunity and one we are keen to maximise. Businesses, community groups and other organisations have been engaged, and we are hoping everyone will get involved in any way they can. The Council have presented at a number of business shows and events to promote the range of sponsorship packages designed to encourage businesses to get involved with the Tour de Yorkshire main event and the Enjoy the Ride festival. Packages are rated 'Gold', 'Silver', 'Bronze' and 'Enjoy the Ride 100 Club' for those smaller businesses who want to get involved. Interest has been received from a number of packages with Hill St Centre and several businesses taking up the 100 club option. A second roadshow took place on Wednesday 16th March to promote the confirmed route and activities to both residents and businesses. Key enhancements along Albert Road/Borough Road to improve the route have now been highlighted and will be addressed with the building owners and retailers over the next month. Regular publicity around the event is scheduled and the sporting activities/festival events are in the final planning stages.

Community Groups have been encouraged to get involved through the Tees Valley Community Foundation Grants Scheme, the deadline for submissions has now passed and awards will be announced shortly. A lot of community interest has been generated, and we hope to see many groups get involved during the weekend. 'Line the Route' – a land art completion – is another way for businesses, landowners and other groups to get involved.

We are promoting this event through our own 'Enjoy the Ride' brand (#enjoytheride) across social media and promotional material. We really hope residents and visitors do enjoy the ride that is the Tour de Yorkshire, and are planning a number of events across to coincide with the main attraction. The weekend will have performances from Community Groups on a big stage in the town centre, with a host of other activities to encourage families to join in, followed by a carnival in the afternoon on Sunday. Bank Holiday Monday will host an all-day Criterion in the town centre which will see all ages of amateur cyclists following part of the Tour de Yorkshire Stage 3.

The Tour de Yorkshire is a massive coup for Middlesbrough. An event such as this allows us to showcase the best Middlesbrough has to offer on an international scale, to attract visitors and potential investors, to engage with communities and residents, and to promote cycling and active lifestyles. It is my hope that this could lead to an annual legacy event.

3. Museums

The Captain Cook Birthplace Museum reopened for the summer season on 22nd March, in time for the Easter school holidays. This year there will be two temporary exhibitions, the popular Pacific Predators returns for a second year and will be joined by an interactive discovery area themed around Indigenous Australians and the Australian collections in the downstairs galleries.

'The Story of Children's Television', a nostalgic look at children's television from 1946 to the present day, joins 'Pirates, Pants and Wellyphants' at the Dorman Museum from 12 March, and runs until 12 June.

4. Mima

The Centre for Social making, a display based around objects from the Middlesbrough Collection with an emphasis on ceramics and contemporary jewellery, has been launched by mima. The project is designed to encourage local artists and communities to use the space, explore creative practice and use the collection as a tool for learning. The displays will be developed throughout the project, with space to feature projects and work devised by participants. The Middlesbrough Collection is owned by Middlesbrough Council and managed by mima.

The Waiting Room have now taken over the mima café space and started to make initial changes to the layout and décor. Initial feedback has been very positive.

5. Orange Pip Market

The Orange Pip Market is an exciting addition to the renovated Bedford Street, and we are pleased to announce that Middlesbrough Council was successful with an application to Arts Council's Grants for the Arts scheme to support two public / street art commissions as part of the wider Orange Pip programme.

We have picked the best in continental and farmers' markets, and street stall festivals, to be hosted at the Orange Pip Market, and shoppers can expect treats such as vintage style tea and cakes from Lotti's Voluptuous Delights, artisan scotch eggs from The Clucking Pig and Elodie Raclette serving up the traditional melted cheese and potato dish from the Savoie region of the Alps.

The Orange Pip Market is a fantastic new opportunity for Middlesbrough, and a great addition to our emerging independent quarter. Orange Pip opens on Saturday 28 May and will run every last Saturday, midday to 7pm.

Leisure and Sport

6. Mobilisation Update

Mobilisation of the Sport and Leisure service is underway with transfer to SLM due on April 1st 2016.

SLM have hosted a number of welcome meetings with staff, briefing on the trust and the plans for the development work due to take place within the venues following the transfer. In addition this was a chance for staff members to put questions and queries to their soon to be employers with representatives of Unions on hand to offer advice where requested.

The move to Leisure Trust will see the Council save £1.23m, but it also guarantees wider investment worth £2m across all of our leisure services to ensure they retain a good quality standard. While it is possible we could have retained these facilities 'in-house', we could not guarantee this level of investment. Moreover, this contract will also see 6.88 FTE jobs created and added to the existing staff, and a recruitment of a minimum of 10 apprentices by April 2017. SLM are also committed to ensuring 75% of its staff are from the Middlesbrough area.

7. Southlands Update

Active Middlesbrough (the Councils Sports and Leisure Service) is due to cease operation of Southlands as a Leisure Centre when the staff and services move to Everyone Active on 1st April 2016. However the centre will remain open as a Community facility until at least August enabling community groups including Wilton Male Voice Choir, PORA Bingo, Bowls, Middlesbrough Boccia and Friday Night Disability group to continue to use the facility.

In advance of August, the Council will be carrying out an option appraisal exercise which will determine the long-term future of the whole of the Southlands building not just the community side.

8. Digital Milestones on Social Media

Over the past 14 months Active Middlesbrough's digital presence has grown dramatically on both the Facebook and Twitter social media platforms. In January 2015 Active Middlesbrough ran one platform, Facebook with a total following on the page of around 1,800 people and hadn't explored the Twitter platform.

Now Active Middlesbrough's Facebook following has more than doubled having recently broken 5,000 and still going strong. The platform has proven to be a great tool for

communicating with customers, with the Service receiving messages, feedback and questions on a daily basis from current and prospective customers.

In addition Active Middlesbrough has started to set milestones on other social media platforms experiencing particular success with Twitter where Middlesbrough Sports Village's page has recently broken 1,000 followers.

9. Gym Memberships

This month Active Middlesbrough introduced sales co-ordinator roles using existing staff into its venues to maximise sales opportunities with a focus on improving sales income and customer relations. This new sales culture should also help with the transition to Everyone Active on April 1st 2016.

To date Active Middlesbrough Memberships stand at 4095, which has already exceeded the initial target set at 4000 by the end of the financial year in April. Historically after the initial influx of memberships following the New Year period now would be the time when membership sales would begin to slow, however during the current period the figures are still well above what were initially predicted particularly at Middlesbrough Sports Village.