

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 7th September 2016

1. Planning and Development

The following major planning applications have been approved by the Planning and Development Committee:

- medical facility and associated works at Acklam Hall;
- residential development of 51 new homes at the site of the former Middlesbrough Teaching and Learning Centre, Cargo Fleet Lane as phase 2 of Gleeson Homes.

Major applications being processed and awaiting Committee decision are:

- The extension to the south of the Parkway Shopping Centre at Coulby Newham to create five additional units;
- reserved Matters for 26 houses at land at Grey Towers Farm (Phase 2a);
- a Health and Well-being Hub over four floors of the Dundas House development, off the Dundas Arcade shopping area;
- Snow Centre development at land to the south of Scotts Road;
- new vehicular bridge across Middlehaven Dock; and,
- outline application for residential development comprising 97 houses and 40 apartments at the Acklam Iron and Steel Works Club, Park Road South.

2. Acklam Green Update

Planning Committee approved an application from Gleeson Homes that will see 304 new homes built at Acklam Green over the next ten years. Gleeson will complete the acquisition of the site in the near future and it is their intention to start on site as soon as possible. As part of their commitment to local communities, successfully adopted in other areas, Gleeson will run a competition to access funding from a "Community Chest" to assist good causes."

3. Marton West Neighbourhood Plan

Marton West Neighbourhood Forum submitted its draft Marton West Neighbourhood Plan, to the Council for examination in November 2015. The examination into the draft plan took place in April 2016, and was undertaken by an independent examiner. The examiner's report was issued at the beginning of May 2016 and recommended that the draft Plan should proceed to referendum, subject to some minor amendments being made. It is anticipated that this referendum will be held in October 2016. If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote 'yes' then the Plan will be brought into force and form part of the planning framework in Marton West.

4. Highways and Infrastructure Progress

Strong progress has been made by the department toward improving the Council's Highway asset. So far, the following improvements have been made:

- Surface improvements on 18 carriageways, totalling over 20,000 square metres. Some of the major carriageways covered include Acklam Road, B1365 (Hemlington Hall Road to Bluebell Roundabout), Seamer Road (including cats eyes) upgrades to the surfacing and ducting works at signalised junctions;

- over 500 metres of footways have had surface defects repaired to date at 7 pre-identified locations;
- 28 highway verge scheme improvements have been completed, making improvements to green areas, collapsed kerbs, improved and created parking bays and installation of drop kerbs for improved mobility access;
- 2364 street lighting column heads have been upgraded to LED efficient light bulbs. This helps to improve energy efficiency, and reduce energy costs to the Council.

A consultancy report from Arups report has been returned following traffic modelling analysis, highlighting highway improvements required in order to mitigate the impact of additional housing growth in South Middlesbrough. Work is underway to progress the detailed design and costing for improvements at Stainton Way/Dixons Bank junction (Southern Cross junction), with intention to break ground in early 2017/18.

5. Town Rider Bus Service

Funding to continue the delivery of the popular Town Rider Service was awarded as part of an Access Fund bid. Middlesbrough, along with the other Tees Valley authorities successfully gained financial support to continue sustainable transport initiatives linked to accessing employment opportunities within the area. The Town Rider service (in partnership with Middlesbrough College) provides a service around Riverside Park in the AM and PM peaks, providing a transport for people looking to access work in the area.

6. Road Safety Initiatives

During July, over 1,000 Year 6 children attended the annual 'Crucial Crew' road safety event. The event aims to equip children in transition year from Primary to Secondary school with the skills and knowledge to travel actively and safely. This has been important in mitigating accident levels in children within this age bracket.

Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO) have now been identified at 12 Middlesbrough Primary schools. The JSRO's are identified pupils at the school, who take on responsibility to ensure that road safety is high on the agenda for the school, their fellow pupils and the local community. The JSRO's have been instrumental in organising campaigns such as campaigning on school gate parking issues, be safe be seen awareness, 5 minute walking zones and safe cycling initiatives. Work to recruit additional schools continues.

Middlesbrough is also a long established partner organisation of Road Safety Great Britain. The regional body works with all 12 North East Local Authorities, and has been receiving excellent media coverage for its's regional work so far this year surrounding motorbikes and scooters, young drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and children as specific target groups.

7. Healthy High Streets

Business in the Community's Healthy High Streets programme aims to increase footfall by 10%, reduce the number of vacant properties by 20% and stimulate the creation of new jobs in 100 towns over three years. The programme first launched in June 2014 and is backed by some of the UK's biggest high street brands - Boots UK, EE, Exterion Media, Greggs, Marks & Spencer and Santander and new partner Wilko.

Middlesbrough is one of 33 new High Streets selected for the programme across the UK today, bringing the total number of participating High Streets to the programme target of 100 towns. It will receive a bespoke package of support, including access to skills and expertise, and dedicated High Street Champions from supporting businesses who will work together with the local partnership team, local authority and relevant local partners to devise an action plan to address the specific challenges facing the town. The impact results for the three-year programme will be announced in July 2017. Over the last year of the programme, it has brought support and resources worth £17 million** from its corporate partners into 67 UK high streets.

** The value of investment over the last year is £17 million, made up of investment in property upgrades in Healthy High Street towns, the cost of High Street Champions time across the 67 towns and senior management support from across the partner businesses.

8. Tees Valley Superfast Broadband Rollout

Phase 1 is now complete, with 8 of the 9 identified cabinets in the area have been upgraded. The Council is now in the process of analysing the data to obtain a clearer picture of the streets/postcode areas that now have access to superfast broadband, should they wish to utilise it. Once this data has been received, it should be able to help inform communities via members and community partnerships to help stimulate demand.

9. Middlesbrough Jobs Fair

Middlesbrough Council held a summer jobs fair on Wednesday 13th July 2016, at Middlesbrough College.

The event was held in partnership with Middlesbrough College, DWP, MTLC and the NCS. The fair featured approx. 450 jobs and a range of providers offering volunteering, training and apprenticeship opportunities. The Tees Valley Youth Employment Initiative was also launched at this event. Approximately 2000 individuals attended. We are currently collating feedback and tracking applicants, however in the interim we have had some excellent feedback from companies as well as attendees; for example Tesco has already fulfilled the 40 jobs they were advertising across the region.

10. Job Seeker Claimants

The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the Tees Valley has fallen by 580 claimants from 13,709 in May 2016 to 13,129 in June 2016 with the rate falling from 3.3% to 3.1%.

Nationally, numbers claiming JSA also decreased from 562,365 in May 2016 to 540,939 in June 2016, however the rate remained the same at 1.4%.

Over the last year the number of people claiming JSA has fallen by 701 claimants – with the rate falling from 3.3% in June 2015 to 3.1% in June 2016.

Middlesbrough has the highest rate of people claiming JSA in the Tees Valley at 4%, with Hartlepool and Redcar and Cleveland second at 3.4%. Darlington has the lowest rate of people claiming JSA at 2.5%, followed by Stockton-on-Tees at 2.6%.

11. Economic Snapshot

Key headlines:

- New Bar/Eaterie 'Dovecot' due to open in August in the former Walmsley Suite unit on Linthorpe Road
- Holiday Inn Extension underway
- Dundas Market is reintroducing its enterprise initiative. The initiative gives fledgling businesses a chance to get up and running, in a low risk environment - low-cost retail space in a central town centre location from £60 a week on a 6-month agreement.