

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

### **Economic Development and Business Growth**

#### **1. Boho / Digital Middlesbrough and Historic Quarter Enterprise Zone**

Earlier this year Middlesbrough was named as one of the leading digital clusters in the country. We understand that our digital sector is hugely important to Middlesbrough in terms of job creation and economic growth, and are keen to support this sectors' continued growth.

The high occupancy rates and financial performance of the Boho facilities have presented an opportunity for the cluster to self-finance a key role to reinvigorate cluster engagement and support for our incumbent digital businesses.

The new Digital Middlesbrough Manager role will be solely charged with championing and developing Middlesbrough's Digital Cluster with a view to:

1. Re-embed collaboration between businesses;
2. grow the number of businesses in our domestic cluster;
3. identify strategic accommodation opportunities;
4. ensure that the pipeline of new business flows freely and has a healthy churn – from graduation to incubation – to stable maturity;
5. work closely with the Digital City initiative (as led by Teesside University) to secure a strategic voice for Middlesbrough's interests; and,
6. further establish Middlesbrough as an inward investment opportunity for large digital companies.

To further support the incumbent cluster, over the coming year the Boho facilities will also self-finance a number of accommodation enhancements, including a wholesale upgrade of the IT infrastructure.

In addition to this, Middlesbrough's Historic Quarter Enterprise Zone was launched at the end of July, to support of the booming digital and creative business sector. The enterprise zone straddles the heart of the city centre and offers business rates relief for qualifying businesses, for up to £55,000 a year of rates relief over five years.

Centred on the thriving Boho digital cluster, this unique offer – the only city-centre Enterprise Zone in the Tees Valley – includes newly refurbished Grade A office space, buildings with considerable architectural and historical merit and a prime central location near the rail station and leisure area.

The scheme has been designed to attract new businesses to Middlesbrough and support of those businesses seeking larger premises. The incentive contributes to the viability of new investment as the Historic Quarter boasts heritage buildings, of high architectural merit, which create additional expense as they are sympathetically brought back into modern use.

## **2. Tees Valley Business Compass**

A local growth hub helping ambitious businesses realise their growth potential, the Tees Valley Business Compass offers a wide range of practical services, from local business information, assessing growth options, through to unlocking finance and funding streams.

The Business Compass is the consolidated business support service for the Tees Valley. Allied with the work of specialist Council officers, the service offers a wraparound service from start-ups, funding support and advanced growth.

Middlesbrough Council is determined to engage as many businesses as possible to make best use of this service and appropriate frontline council staff will be informed of the work of Business Compass to maximise referral routes.

## **3. Local business success – ‘On A Roll’ expansion**

Local sandwich manufacturer On a Roll continues to expand its ambitions and invest in Middlesbrough.

We're keen to support local businesses in any way possible, and are working with partners such as DWP / JobCentrePlus, Teesside University and Community Learning Services, to meet On A Roll's ever-growing staffing demands, and support expansion requirements. Furthermore, we are working with prospective employees in providing advice and CV preparation support.

With the recent announcement of the closure of Adelie foods, the Economic Working group was deployed and is making real progress in moving the majority of displaced employees back into alternative employment in as short a period as possible.

## **Infrastructure**

### **4. Local Growth Fund – improving sustainable transport**

Middlesbrough has been identified for Local Growth Fund money, to enable improvements to sustainable transport accessibility. This will support access to employment, and linking new housing developments with retail / leisure opportunities and additional areas of economic development across the town and wider Tees Valley. In this financial year, allocations have been identified to provide cycleway improvements along Ladgate Lane, and the Acklam Road / Newport road corridor improvements.

Detailed design work is complete, and is supporting the due diligence submissions to the Combined Authority for approval. The total allocation once approved will see £1.12m worth of improvements along these key transport corridors, supporting sustainable transport choices by creating designated infrastructure. The improvements are due to be complete by March 2018.

### **5. Strategic Transport developments – Dock Bridge**

Work has commenced on the dock bridge site - a project is designed to improve accessibility and connectivity with Middlehaven and further open up its economic potential, and is closely linked with the proposed snow centre development.

This replaces the existing footbridge with a vehicular bascule bridge. This follows from the recent planning permission approval, and gaining a license from the Marine Management Organisation to undertake works within the tidal stretch of the River Tees.

The footbridge is currently closed for use pending its removal whilst the construction site is mobilised. The works are anticipated to last for 12 months.

## **Housing development and major planning applications**

### **6. Station Street Student accommodation.**

A proposal for (340 units) within a single block located on the site of the existing Halfords and commercial garage opposite the Zetland Car Park. The scheme is proposed by a private developer.

The application is ongoing and has been revised to:

1. improve the internal layout (removing sleeping accommodation from the ground floor away from plant / street level);
2. the nature of the provision (to include break out shared communal seating areas); and
3. the elevations and materials (to include relief of the roof line and a green wall).

### **7. College Road Housing Site**

Gleeson Homes have applied for 106 homes on the site. The application is currently under consideration and is still in the initial consultation period although some issues have been raised including the internal layout and provision of parking. Following the consultation period the developer has requested a meeting to discuss the comments and any necessary changes. It is indicated that there would be a pedestrian access out onto Cargo Fleet Lane but vehicular access only via College Road. A small number of objections have been received from existing residents these relate to: loss of privacy; flooding; contamination; inadequate access; and, increase in traffic and congestion.

### **8. Stainsby Hall Farm**

Story Homes and Miller Homes have applied for 399 dwellings. The application has been approved by Members at the Planning and Development Committee, subject to a Section 106 agreement. The s106 is in the final stages of completion and it is envisaged that the decision will be issued this week. The s106 Agreement will make provision for Affordable Housing, works to provide a country park, education and sports provisions.

### **9. The Wave, Douglas Street.**

Application for 105 student bed scheme is likely to start on site imminently following a minor change to the scheme relating to the basement parking arrangements previously approved. The Council has been working with the owners to try and prevent trespass on the site.

### **10. Hemlington Grange**

Since April the main focus on site has been the construction of the main spine road which provides access to both Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon's scheme alongside being required to provide the Gas, Electric and Water services. Sales have gone very well at Taylor Wimpey's site 'Elderwood Park at Wellberry' with 15 reservations over the first 6 weeks since opening. Taylor Wimpey had a very busy opening weekend which took place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July, two reservations were taken at the opening event itself. Currently sales are being achieved from the Sales Centre alone. They are expecting another surge of interest when the Show homes themselves open for customers to view. The show home opening will take place on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Meanwhile Persimmon have begun the construction of show homes and other plots.