

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 24th January 2018

1. Interim Policy on Conversions of Residential Properties

Over recent years, there have been a significant number of developments involving the sub-division and conversion of family housing into smaller living units. Whilst these smaller units can meet specific housing needs, they can often result in negative impacts including: very small living spaces; increases in the number of waste bins with no additional space to accommodate them; and impacts on highways arising from the associated increase in vehicles and insufficient parking space to accommodate them. There can be wider local amenity issues (such as noise) on neighbouring properties, particularly where development affects relatively modern properties. In circumstances where lots of family housing has been converted to smaller units, there can reach a point where the established character of an area unacceptably changes, significantly impacting those residents who remain in family housing.

In order to address this – and in response to elected members and communities who have raised conversions as an issue – we have prepared an Interim Policy on the Conversion of Residential Properties, which the Executive approved on 19th December 2017. The Interim Policy sets out detailed criteria against which future planning applications can be considered, and will help provide greater control over such developments. The Interim Policy will be subject to public consultation between January 15th and February 12th, following which it will be finalised and adopted by the Council. It will also be used as a basis for a formal policy in the revised Local Plan. In the meantime, it will be used as a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

2. Brownfield Register

The Council has prepared and published Part 1 of its Brownfield Land Register, as required by the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. The register identifies all previously developed sites in the borough that are potentially suitable for housing development, providing they are capable of delivering at least 5 dwellings. The Brownfield Land Register is hosted on the Council's website at: <https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/planning-and-housing/planning/planning-policy/brownfield-land-register>

The next stage is to consider whether any of the sites should be included in Part 2 of the Register, whereby a new type of planning permission, known as 'Permission in Principle', can automatically be granted. Further assessment work is ongoing to determine which sites may be suitable for inclusion on Part 2, and to understand the potential impacts of doing so.

3. Tees Valley Combined Authority Approves Next Stage for Strategic Highway Improvements

The Tees Valley Combined Authority's Cabinet has given the green light to progress the business cases for two major projects that will transform the road network in the Tees Valley.

At its meeting in December, the Combined Authority agreed on the approach for the further development of business cases for the New Tees Crossing and the Northern Link Road in Darlington. These proposals have been submitted to the Department for Transport, together with a bid for up to £4 million of central government funding to meet the cost of the next stage of development work for each scheme. The Combined Authority will contribute up to £1 million towards the cost of this work.

The New Tees Crossing will tackle congestion and slow journey times on the A19 Tees Viaduct, which currently carries around 112,000 vehicles per day. The Combined Authority's preferred option is a new crossing running parallel to the existing viaduct, connecting directly to the A19/A66 Stockton Road Interchange to the south and the A19/A1046 Portrack Interchange to the north. The new crossing will cater primarily for local traffic, with longer distance traffic using the existing Viaduct.

A second option, based on a new crossing running parallel to Newport Bridge, will not be taken forward. This follows detailed traffic modelling work, which highlighted major operational issues during both the morning and the evening peak periods.

In November 2017, the government announced that a £59m transport fund has been devolved to the Tees Valley Combined Authority to radically improve transport across our region. The Tees Valley's allocation is based on an equal division per head of population. The Combined Authority will work closely with all local authorities and transport providers to maximise the investment and ensure real change is made to the transport system. Further details will be released as to have stakeholders can access the funds for specific schemes and projects.

A delegation from the Council, including Mayor Dave Budd organised and attended a meeting in London with the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Roads, Local Transport and Devolution, Jesse Norman to discuss both the towns strategic transport needs and aspirations to support further growth and development in the town and wider region.

4. School Crossing Patrollers' Long Service Celebrated

The Council's school crossing patrollers have been honoured for their long service.

A celebration event was held at Middlesbrough Town Hall in December to recognise the dedication and professionalism of the town's 26 'lollipop' men and women. Two members of the team have been serving their communities for over 30 years, whilst 21 have been with the Authority for at least five years. In total, the school crossing patrollers have amassed 285 years of service between them.

5. Launch of 'Lets Go Tees Valley' Brand and Logo

In conjunction with our Tees Valley partners and the Tees Valley Combined Authority, a new sustainable transport brand and logo has been developed and is now being launched.

From April 2018, 'Local Motion' will be known as 'Let's Go Tees Valley'. This change recognises the fact that the Local Motion brand had stronger ties with Darlington than the wider Tees Valley sub-region. The launch plan will include some PR activity followed by a programme of events, either by having a presence at large community events or by organising specific activities led by the Connect Tees Valley project team. We will be working with the Combined Authority and the Council's marketing team to promote the new brand and logo.

The Let's Go Tees Valley brand will engage with people across the sub-region in order to encourage walking, cycling, using the bus, train and any form of transport that helps to create a greener, healthier community.