

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

### **1. Tackling Fuel Poverty – ECO Flex Scheme**

Middlesbrough Council has become the first council in the North East to adopt regulations to allow it to set criteria for who is eligible for energy saving improvement measures. Energy companies can access a national pot of money to carry out energy efficiency improvements, but require local authorities to produce a criteria guideline to enable them to do so.

Under the proposals those who would be eligible to apply for energy saving assistance from their energy supplier would be:

- Anyone who lives in a ward classed as ‘deprived’, regardless of their own situation. These wards are Coulby Newham, Ladgate, Park, Ayresome, Hemlington, Park End & Beckfield, Longlands & Beechwood, Newport, Central, Berwick Hills & Pallister, Brambles & Thorntree and North Ormesby.
- Anyone with a household income of less than £21,000 and not in receipt of other related benefits.
- Those who have a referral from a health practitioner.

This policy has been developed with the intention of trying to make as many people as possible across Middlesbrough eligible for reductions in their fuel bill – and tackle fuel poverty and the associated problems that arise from it.

### **2. Pybus Building update**

After being made aware by local ward councillors, Middlesbrough Council’s planning enforcement officers stepped in to halt unauthorised work to the Tesco on Roman Road. Tesco have now been requested to restore a piece of local heritage removed from a Middlesbrough property without planning permission.

The Tesco store is situated in the old Pybus building on Roman Road, which is protected by the Linthorpe Conservation Area. A balustrade on the east wing of the building had been taken down, and other work had been carried out on two bay windows and a chimney. The ‘P’ from the Pybus Bros sign is also missing.

A delegation from Middlesbrough Council including planning officers has since met with officials from Tesco and their contractors, and the Council has made its position to Tesco very clear that heritage elements of the building should remain intact and be repaired to preserve the character of the area. It is our understanding that they are currently looking at their options to put this right and we hope to see the frontage and balustrade back to how it should be very soon.

### **3. New School Crossing Patrol recruits**

It was a pleasure to meet up with Middlesbrough Council's latest School Crossing Patrol recruits a few weeks ago. Courtney and Dylan staff the Ingram Road / Westerdale Road junction, and the Green Lane / CCAD crossing, respectively. At 20 and 19 years old, they also happen to be our youngest School Crossing Patrol team members.

Both posts have been unstaffed for some time, and feedback from parents and children has been positive.

### **4. Housing Development Event**

An event is being held at Middlesbrough Football Club on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to promote the opportunities for housing development in Middlesbrough. The event will showcase the sites available in the town, and give direction as to the type of development being sought to support the town's population, and growth aspirations. The event is aimed at Private and Public sector developers, land owners and consultants, with a particular focus on attracting a wider range of house builders than are currently active in the area. Staff from Homes England will be presenting their funding opportunities to potential applicants, and undertaking workshop activities to encourage more local developers with small sites to come forward.

There will also be a focus on promoting sites with existing planning permissions for student accommodation that are not likely to come forward as originally planned, to assess the potential for utilising them for the development of affordable homes. Staff from the Housing, Planning and Highways teams will be on hand to provide advice and guidance on specific sites coming forward for housing in the current Local Plan.

### **5. TWI Member Visit**

Dr Chris Beck hosted a member visit to the TWI facility at the TeesAMP site on 13 February 2018.

Members were informed of the breadth of advanced scientific processes and services conducted on site, and how those services and skills support the wider advanced manufacturing, engineering and process economy both locally and across the globe.

The visit was emblematic of how the Tees Valley economy has evolved over the years. Having built the world with iron and steel, our role has now shifted to, the equally important and influential role of, providing the skills, technologies and processes; on which the modern world relies.

Council services will continue to work with education partners to coordinate training and education programmes which can serve to match local talent to meet these highly-skilled roles.

### **6. Supporting local business growth**

- Training to Support Business Growth

Training is being made available to all Council staff who have regular interactions with businesses to ensure that the wider support offer provided through mechanisms like the Tees Valley Business Compass can be promoted to those needing help. The Tees Valley Business Compass is the local growth hub delivered by BE Group on behalf of Tees Valley Combined Authority. It helps ambitious businesses realise their growth potential by offering access to a range of practical services, from local business information, assessing growth options through to unlocking finance and funding streams. As businesses have many different interactions with the Council, often either because they are wanting to grow, or are experiencing trading difficulties, the training will provide front facing officers with the basic knowledge about the support that may be available to assist them.

- Middlesbrough Business Breakfast Exchange

The latest Business Breakfast Exchange held at the STEM Centre of Middlesbrough College has provided local businesses with a valuable insight into the future of the rail station, and the risks posed by cyber crime. Businesses heard about the recently launched proposals for improving the rail station and the future improvements in connectivity – including the direct London trains due to commence in 2020. Businesses also heard from cyber security experts within region’s Police forces on how easy it is for criminals to access software that tests for vulnerabilities in the websites and payment systems of thousands of companies, identifying those that can be manipulated for either disruption or financial gain. Support was offered by the Police to test the systems of local companies to identify those vulnerabilities to enable proactive action to be taken to secure them.

- BAME Business Meeting

Asian Business Connexions are hosting an event on 27<sup>th</sup> March at the Coulby Newham Army Reserve Centre to promote business initiatives and raise aspirations in the area. The ABC network supports the Asian and wider business community to “connect, support and promote member companies across the North East”. The event also provides an opportunity to highlight the great opportunities available through the Royal Logistic Corps for everyone, whether that is by becoming a reservist, volunteering or the Cadet Apprenticeship Pathway. Speakers from Teesside University, Middlesbrough Council and Tees Valley Combined Authority will also be in attendance.

## **7. Planning Updates**

### Bishopton Road

An application for 92 residential houses was agreed at Planning Committee on 9th March 2018. No significant issues have been raised and the proposed layout is considered acceptable. The scheme includes a number of bungalows and fronts some of the properties out onto both of the existing main roads providing a greening affect along these road corridors.

### Former Abattoir site, Cargo Fleet Lane

An application for an industrial unit on land that formed part of the former abattoir site is under consideration. Officers had concerns with the arrangement of the building and its

appearance, but these issues are considered to be addressed following amendments being received. The application will be determined under delegated powers.

#### Proposed Anaerobic Digester Plant, Riverside Park Road

An application has been received for the development of an anaerobic digester (AD) plant facility on land at the northern end of the TAMP site. The development covers a site area of 1.4 hectares. The AD plant will produce methane gas that will be fed into the gas grid. In simple terms, organic material (food waste, manure, slurry, silage) will be put into a round tank with a roof over it and is then fermented within the sealed vessel to produce the methane gas. This gas can be used to drive engines to generate power, burned or processed into bottles. The development also includes a small combined heat and power plant (CHP) unit to produce electricity to run the plant. The proposed development comprises a number of structures, including a number of large tanks used for the processing of material, delivery / unloading buildings, other plant /apparatus and a flare stack. It is likely that further developments of this nature come forward, as the area increases its capability around renewable energy and 'waste to energy' production.