

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Friday 15th March 2019

1. Middlesbrough Bus Station – Red Box Project

The fight against period poverty is being taken on at Middlesbrough Bus Station where the Red Box Project has been welcomed.

An appeal has been launched at Teesside's premier transport hub for visitors to donate sanitary products in specially sited red bins at each entrance.

Over the course of a lifetime it is estimated sanitary products cost more than £5,000 with women spending around £13 every month and despite being essential – the items are still taxed, a charge which has become known as the 'Tampon Tax'.

The Red Box Project is a community-based, not-for-profit initiative, which aims to support young people throughout their periods by providing red boxes filled with free period products to local schools.



This is another important initiative and demonstrates the dedication of the staff at the Bus Station to support its users. This sits alongside the bus station being a Dementia Friendly Space and having for the third year running received a Safer Bus Station award.

2. Parks

Parks and open spaces are clearly an important part of Middlesbrough's community life and the service continues to develop and support their use by citizens of the town. The service continues to support the seven green flag spaces across the town. The Council has also agreed to invest in the replacement of play equipment across its open spaces. This month has seen further activity in the use and development of these important spaces.

3. Newham Grange Leisure Farm

February has seen lots of activity at Newham Grange Farm. Building work continues to transform an existing building into a new Welcome Centre which will incorporate the new farm shop and the café is being vastly expanded to allow for more seating. It will also have a new lift and toilets and a great new soft play area.

Plans are currently being developed to improve and expand the car park and drainage improvement works are taking place around the site. New stables and shelters have been built for the horses and donkeys and new fencing is being put up around the farm. Some more play equipment will shortly be arriving which is farm-themed. Children will be able to climb a large cat, cow, pig and hare!

The decision to include a new Changing Places toilet as part of the current renovation works has been very well received, with some feedback including the following:

"This is amazing! My son has additional needs and I either have to take him to a baby change facility or I have to sit on a dirty floor and lay him down on the floor to change him. It's not the best experience and distresses my son as well as making me more stressed, and sometimes limits our days out. I hope more places make changes like this."

The farm continues to attract lots of visitors and December saw a huge increase in visitor numbers of 2,906% compared to December 2017 and January had an increase of 220% in visitors compared with January 2018. February 2019 has witnessed 7266 visitors compared to 1523 who visited the farm last year at this time.

Planning has now begun to ensure that the farm has first class education and cultural spaces that supports people's understanding of preindustrial history of the area, farming and environmental issues.



4. Albert Park

The Dogs Trust Community Event took place on Monday, 4th March 2019 which was a free event where resident's dogs could receive a basic health check, micro-chipping or receive general advice for their dog.

Activities took place throughout the February half-term including Xplorer Trails, birdfeeder making, swan boats and roller skating.

The Sea Cadets continued to be active in the park throughout January/February carrying out camouflage, concealment and section formation training on the field and within the wooded areas.

In conjunction with Area Care, Winter work continued throughout the park with focus on pruning the shrubbery in time for Spring.

5. Stewart Park

The Inter School Cross Country Competition was held in the park in January where conditions were perfect for the selection process to represent Middlesbrough.

Stuart Park is looking forward to another busy spring and summer. The Friends of Stewart Park are set to re-start works for the forthcoming Party in the Park to be held this summer.

Progress is ongoing in order to support the BBC Big Weekend event which is to be held in the park in May.

6. Breckon Hill Primary School – Extension Works

Following the successful project carried out during summer 2018 for the school, we now have a request from Education to provide an extension for additional classrooms and associated works at the same school site.

Asset Management and Design Services have once again provided a full service from feasibility, detailed design including electrical and mechanical, tendered the project and will project manage the works on site through to completion.

The project briefly comprises of areas of extension to the existing building with associated facilities to increase teaching space for children from the central Middlesbrough areas.

The scheme aims to achieve this by:

- Constructing a three classroom extension with associated toilet / cloaks accommodation, resource spaces and storage, attached to the existing school building
- The construction of a small extension to the production kitchen with full remodelling and refurbishment to provide additional work and servery areas to facilitate the production and delivery of additional meals for the extra children accommodated by the new classrooms extension
- Provision and installation of new boundary fencing to part of the school site, aiming to
- secure the more vulnerable site elevations and reduce / eliminate unwanted site access out of school hours

7. Capital Works at Teesside Crematorium

The refurbishment of St Hilda's Chapel was completed on 21st January with the installation of new seating in the chapel and waiting areas. The refurbishment has been well received by visitors.

This will complete the investment of over £700k by the council in Bereavement services, which has seen the refurbishment of St Hilda's along with the erection of waiting canopy for those waiting outside for a service to begin, the refurbishment of the Chapel of Remembrance and the improvement to the grounds of the cemeteries.

Funding of £412K has been approved to develop additional burial areas within Acklam Cemetery. It is anticipated that work will be complete by the end of this year and will significantly improve drainage on the site.

The service was pleased to receive a Gold Standard award from the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management in its 2018 Assessment Process for Cremation and a Silver Standard award for in its 2018 Assessment Process for Burials.

The additional investment and service improvements have all assisted the Bereavement team to ensure that a first class service is provided. Something that was recognised by Association of Public Sector Excellence when Bereavement services was shortlisted for "Best Performer in Cemetery and Crematorium Services."



8. Environment Issues

Environment Services continue to work hard to ensure that Middlesbrough is a clean and safe place. As part of the approach to the services work the service is introducing a new nationally recognised inspection system. It's called LAMS for short and stands for Local Area Management System. The system allows the service to gain more detailed information around a range of environmental issues and allows standards to be gauged against a nationally benchmarked criteria. This will allow the service to gain better information and develop a more streamlined approach to the deployment of its resources. It should lead to a more efficient service that is increasingly focused on local needs.

Area Care Teams carried out winter maintenance tasks throughout the town centre during January and February which involved gritting the footpaths to ensure they were safe for pedestrians to use.

The felling of seven Willow trees took place on the A66 embankment on 27th January 2019 which was necessary due to the trees being linked to serious structural problems with a property on Ayresome Green Lane. All works were carried out in line with Middlesbrough Councils Tree Policy.

In accordance with the Councils Tree Policy, the planned felling of 14 Cherry trees took place on Fawcett Avenue and several adjoining roads in Stainton due to fungal infection.

Due to anti-social behaviour involving the use of motorcycles, prevention signage was erected in various locations throughout South and West Middlesbrough during week ending 15th February 2019 to help deter further anti-social activity.

9. Captain Cook Primary School

For a number of years, vehicle parking issues have occurred along the footway opposite Captain Cook Primary School with vehicles often parked fully on the footway, obstructing the path for pedestrians and blocking driveways. The Police, along with local residents and staff from the School, have challenged parents by educating them on parking laws and giving advice on places to appropriately park vehicles, but unfortunately parents are continuing to block the footway. The Council's Parking Enforcement team have also undertaken additional patrols in the area recently, to enforce the double yellow line restrictions. In an attempt to resolve/improve the situation, The Council, School, local Councillors, Police and local residents have been meeting to robustly discuss a long-term solution to this issue. As a potential measure to resolve the parking issues, the Council was asked (and agreed) to trial the use of large wooden planters, positioned along the footway outside affected properties. Use of these planters would be monitored over a trial period of 6 months to assess their effectiveness for all users of the highway and footway.

All affected residents were written to outlining the proposal, and asked to contact us by Friday 15th February 2019 with any objections/queries. Following a positive consultation, the planters will be procured & sited along the footpath. Furthermore, the pupils, Area Care and local residents will plant an array of plants and assist with their upkeep and condition.

10. Enforcement

A resident has been found guilty of fly tipping following an incident on Beechwood field and fined a total of £825.18 which breaks down as £300 fine, £490.18 in costs and a victim surcharge of £35.00.

Middlesbrough Council will receive £1000 compensation for the tree that was felled on Linthorpe Road in October. Following a successful conviction a man was found guilty at Middlesbrough Magistrates court and ordered to pay the fine.

11. Waste Services

The Back Alley Cleansing Team have seen an increase in bag slashing in Newport and Central Ward Alleys. Despite this they have managed to keep on top of the situation and maintain the alleys on a weekly basis. The amount of bulky household items such as mattresses and white goods continue to be dumped in alleyways. Whilst further enforcement and education work will take place to engage with residents. We strongly encourage residents to take advantage of the council's bulky waste service. The Recycling & Waste Services provide a subsidised bulky household collection service for these items at costs from £10. This service can be booked through the Councils Website (<https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/bulky-item-collection>).

12. Waste Strategy

The Council along with the other four Tees Valley Authorities has adopted the new Tees Valley Waste Strategy. The Strategy describes how the Tees Valley will deal with waste disposal up to 2035.

Whilst it looks to be a distant date, the authority is looking at how to dispose of its waste then the present contract to dispose of Waste at the Haverton Hill Energy from Waste plant comes to an end in 2025. Middlesbrough Council, alongside other Tees Valley Council's held a Market Awareness where the Councils provided potentially interested parties with information about the future waste management disposal arrangements for the Tees Valley and obtained their feedback. The event offered an outline description of the proposed waste disposal project and provided the opportunity for interested parties to speak to representatives from the five Tees Valley Councils and discuss the project.

To reduce the Councils carbon footprint and meet Middlesbrough Councils One Planet Living initiative, the Recycling & Waste Services Department have ordered three new electric bin lifts. The current bin lifts are conventional hydraulic bin lifts which rely on power from the vehicle engine to operate. The new lifts are operated from the vehicle battery and it is expected that this will be an average fuel saving of around 9%. There are other benefits to electric bin lifts such as a reduction in noise pollution which is beneficial to the health and safety of the Staff and also will cause less nuisance to residents. The bin lifts are due for delivery in April.

Reducing plastic waste

The Service is also supporting the reduction of single use plastics across Middlesbrough Council. It has worked with the events team and catering to phase out their use. New waste disposal processes across Middlesbrough Council's buildings are also taking place in order to ensure recycling rates increase.

Councillor Denise Rooney

Executive Member for Environment and Commercial Services