

Executive Member Report to Council 4th September 2019

DECISIONS

Executive Meeting 27th August 2019

1. Long Term Lease and Disposal of the Gresham Housing site to Thirteen Housing Group. The proposed development of 179 new Band A homes will potentially generate over £235k per year from council Tax and a New Homes Bonus payment of over £940k to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.
2. The Council is seeking to enter into a Strategic Partnership with Thirteen Housing Group and North Star Housing Group, so that the parties can work together in a cohesive way to bring sites forward primarily in urban locations but potentially throughout the town to facilitate its housing development programme.

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3. Strategic Plan 2018-22 Progress at Quarter 1
4. The Council is reporting a predicted overspend of £336,000 on its 2019/20 revenue budget at the end of Quarter One, due principally to continued pressures in Children's Care. Strong action will continue to be taken during 2019/20 to mitigate these ongoing spending pressures.
5. During Quarter One an assurance exercise was carried out on planned savings for 2019/20, and it was identified that £2.475m of these savings would not now be achieved during this financial year.
6. In order to mitigate the effects of these and other delayed savings, additional savings proposals totalling £2.771m, have been developed for approval by the Executive for delivery during 2019/20.

STRATEGIC

7. It has now been confirmed that we will be only be given a one year Government Spending Review. The Council will still continue to develop its Medium Term Financial Plan and budget for 20/21 but will need to make assumptions about future levels of funding.

PERFORMANCE

Employee Engagement Workshops

8. Employee Engagement Workshops have been taking place across all services to find out how well 'Our Values' are embedded and to look for ways in which we could improve this further. Over 1100 employees have attended the sessions and those unable to attend will be receiving an electronic version from their manager to complete. On completion analysis will be carried out on the results and feedback given to the Leadership Management Team and directorates. This will identify where things are working well and areas which may need additional support.
9. A series of short sessions have been launched to help upskill our managers. Masterclasses are now available on Decision Making (Political Context), Project Management, Risk Management, Budgeting/Finance, Public Consultation and HR/Staff Portal and will be running from mid-September.

Projects - GIS

10. In Jan 2019 Middlesbrough embarked on a project to update and modernise its legacy Geographical Information System (GIS) solutions with a 'best in class' solution called ArchGIS supplied by ESRI. ESRI will transform the current Services, improving customer service while at the same time automate as many of the business functions as possible. GIS enables users to view, edit and analyse data and integrates a variety of data and helps identify patterns and relationships, enabling users to make smart decisions. GIS is a critical system used by Planning, Highways, Environment as well as the Performance team.
11. The GIS project has now moved into the Implementation Stage. The infrastructure that will host the new ESRI ArcGIS system has been built and tested in readiness for the ESRI consultants who are booked to be on site at MBC in August & September 2019. The next steps involve building the ArcGIS solution on the new infrastructure, migrate data to the new solution, undertake testing and training before go-live phase 1 on 24/10/19. ICT Services are committed to posting regular updates on the progress of the GIS implementation on the dedicated intranet page. <https://intranet.middlesbrough.gov.uk/geographical-information-systems>

Projects – Slido

12. The implementation of Slido is now complete with over half of Service Area champions are now trained. In brief - Slido is an audience interaction tool for meetings, events and conferences and allows us to share ideas / views / thoughts with our internal Middlesbrough council employees.
13. Slido is simple to set up and you can access Slido using a phone, laptop or tablet. Participants join the conversation / presentation by the presenter giving participants an access code. All Service Areas have a champion(s) who set up and run the presentations. Data gathered using Slido can then be analysed and used to implement improvements and realise efficiencies which in turn benefit our employees and citizens.

Applications – Newham Grange Farm

14. The Applications team has recently completed the development of an online solution for the Newham Grange Farm at Coulby Newham. The solution enables the public to purchase advance tickets for the farm and allows the Marketing team to promote the farm and its facilities and to advertise special offers and events. The development has resulted in savings by providing efficiencies for Council staff and has also greatly improved the customer experience.

Applications – Review of Existing systems

15. The Applications team are currently undertaking a review of the Councils Application portfolio to make sure the applications are still fit for purpose and are being fully utilised. The review will identify areas for potential rationalisation and consolidation that could result in a reduction in ICT maintenance and support costs. Consolidation minimises licence costs, infrastructure requirements, data replication between applications and reduces functional redundancy.
16. One of the key areas to be reviewed is the Council's current CRM (Customer Relationship Manager) solution and supporting back office systems. The aim of the review is to identify areas where further web-based customer self-service facilities could be developed using e-forms and transaction middleware and where the use of workflow functionality could provide business efficiencies through the automation and/or streamlining of processes.

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