

EXECUTIVE

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| Date: Tuesday 13th July, 2021 |
| Time: 1.00 pm |
| Venue: Council Chamber |

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes - Executive - 28 June 2021 3 - 4

DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

4. Community Safety Plan 2020-2022 5 - 38

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

5. Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 - 2037 39 - 178

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

6. Final Report of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel - Community Cohesion and Integration - Service Response 179 - 206

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

7. ECS Installation of Town Wide Lighting Scheme 207 - 210
8. Middlesbrough Council Long-Term Financial Sustainability 211 - 266
9. Land at St David's Way - Proposed Freehold Disposal [PART A] 267 - 276
10. Any other urgent items which in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered.
11. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider passing a Resolution Pursuant to Section

100A(4) Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that if present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

12. **EXEMPT - Land at St David's Way - Proposed Freehold Disposal [PART B]** 277 - 286
3

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Monday 5 July 2021

MEMBERSHIP

A Preston (The Mayor) (Chair) and Councillors B Cooper, S Hill, E Polano and M Smiles

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Chris Lunn / Georgina Moore, 01642 729742 / 01642 729711, chris_lunn@middlesbrough.gov.uk / georgina_moore@middlesbrough.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Monday 28 June 2021.

PRESENT: Mayor A Preston (Chair) and Councillors B Cooper, S Hill, E Polano and M Smiles.

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillor M Saunders.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R Arundale, D Coupe, C Dodds, C Hobson, J Hobson and J McTigue; M Bailey, J Maunder and A Metcalfe.

OFFICERS: S Bonner, G Field, A. Glover, R Horniman, C Lunn, T Parkinson, A Perriman, E Scollay and I Wright.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: There were no apologies for absence.

21/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

21/23 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 15 JUNE 2021**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 15 June 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

21/24 **ADOPTION OF STAINSBY COUNTRY PARK AND MASTERPLAN**

A discussion took place regarding the masterplan and specifically the spine road.

The Mayor wished to place on record that the Executive Members were not opposed to the masterplan in its entirety – it was the inclusion of the spine road within it which caused concern.

The Executive Members were minded to abstain from voting in respect of the report.

Following legal advice and further discussion with regards to the masterplan, the Mayor decided to adjourn the meeting until further information could be provided.

ORDERED

1. That the information provided be noted; and
2. That the meeting be adjourned until further information could be brought forward.

This page is intentionally left blank

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Report of: | Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities - Councillor Mieka Smiles Director of Environment and Community Services - Geoff Field |
|-------------------|--|

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Submitted to: | Executive - 13 July 2021 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Subject: | Community Safety Plan 2020-2022 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|

Summary

| |
|---|
| Proposed decision(s) |
| That Executive notes and agrees the annually revised delivery plan that aims to deliver on the priorities within the Community Safety Plan 2020-2022 as agreed by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). |

| Report for: | Key decision: | Confidential: | Is the report urgent? ¹ |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Decision | Yes (impacts on 2 or more wards) | No | No |

| Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan | | |
|--|---|---|
| Business Imperatives | Physical Regeneration | Social Regeneration |
| The CSP Plan will provide an opportunity to improve service delivery by strengthening a collaborative approach to addressing crime, environmental crime and anti-social behaviour across the town. | The plan will align with the physical regeneration prospectus and support its delivery. The plan also provides a focus on joint working with key partners to improve locality working within our communities. | The plan significantly contributes to our social regeneration strategy. |

| |
|-------------------------|
| Ward(s) affected |
| All Wards |

1. What is the purpose of this report?

This report summarises the priorities within Middlesbrough's Community Safety Plan 2020-22 (Appendix 1) and sets out the delivery plan at Appendix 2. The report requests Executive note and agree its contents.

2. Why does this report require a Member decision?

Executive approval is required due to the fact that the plan impacts on all wards across the town.

3. Report Background

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places statutory obligations on Local Authorities and the Police to work together with Health Authorities and other relevant agencies to prevent crime and disorder.

Section 97 of the Police Reform Act 2002 amended the above Act and included the Fire Service and Primary Care Trusts (now Clinical Commissioning Groups) as responsible authorities. Further reforms now include Probation Services as a responsible authority as well as the Environment Agency and Registered Social Landlords as 'participatory bodies within a Community Safety Partnership.

This legislation requires the Partnership to produce a plan detailing how it intends to tackle crime and disorder and develop strategies to tackle short, medium and long term priorities.

Middlesbrough's latest Community Safety Plan will run for 2 years until the end of March 2022 and this report is an annual review of this plan and its subsequent delivery plan.

During 2019/2020 the Community Safety Partnership held a series of multi-agency workshops. The group identified three overarching priorities; Perceptions and feeling safe, Tackling the Root Causes and Locality Working (including the town centre)

Priority 1 - Perceptions and Feeling Safe

Objectives

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (Inc. environmental crime)
- Improving community cohesion and resilience
- Delivering the prevent agenda

Priority 2 - Tackling the Root Causes

Adverse Experiences

Objectives

- Improve mental health
- Reduce child exploitation (Including. sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and county lines related exploitation.
- Reduce substance misuse
- Reduce domestic violence

Priority 3 - Locality working, including the Town Centre

Reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations and the community. Encouraging and supporting a collaborative approach and building capacity within the community.

Objectives

- Working with communities (doing 'with' not 'to')
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Protecting Children from harm and exploitation whilst in the town centre and night time economy
- Addressing underlying community issues
- Reducing Violence, business crime and acquisitive crime
- Reducing re-offending
- Reduce Begging

4. What decision(s) are being asked for?

That Executive approves the annually revised delivery plan that aims to deliver on the priorities within the Community Safety Plan 2020-2022 as agreed by the Community Safety Partnership.

5. Why is this being recommended?

It is a statutory requirement for the Local Authority's Community Safety Partnership to develop and produce a Community Safety Plan under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act.

The key objectives set out in the plan are based upon assessment of crime and disorder issues across the town and reflect the views of the community and our partners.

6. Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Implementing the recommendations for this report will result in:

- i) All partners will aim to deliver an outstanding service to the public and give a better deal for victims and witnesses
- ii) A partners will strive to increase the uptake of early identification and intervention programmes
- iii) Create a safe town centre environment to live, work and visit

7. Legal

In accordance with s.5 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Council is identified as a Responsible Authority for the purposes of the Act and therefore have responsibility for the strategies and functions relevant to it in accordance with the Act.

8. Financial

No additional resources are required to deliver this plan.

9. Policy Framework

Approval of the plan will not affect any part of the Council's Policy Framework.

10. Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed in due course.

11. Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

A delivery implementation plan will be developed to ensure that the recommended decisions are implemented, including key milestones.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Community Safety Plan 2020-22

Appendix 2 - Delivery Plan

13. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Contact: Marion Walker, Head of Stronger Communities

Email: Marion_Walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Appendix 1 - Middlesbrough Community Safety Plan 2020

Foreword by Councillor Mieka Smiles

I am very pleased to present Middlesbrough Council's Community Safety Plan 2020. The Local Authority has a statutory requirement under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act to develop and deliver a Partnership Plan which contains community safety priorities based on the current evidence base across the communities of Middlesbrough.

Mission Statement '*...working with communities and other public services to improve the lives of our residents; Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour head on*' Andy Preston - Mayor

Middlesbrough's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) bring together the responsible authorities of Police, Local Authority, Fire and Rescue, Health and Probation to work in collaboration with other statutory and voluntary services and local people to reduce crime and make people feel safer by dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, deliver the Prevent duty (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) and ensure specific obligations such as public engagement and delivery of an action plan are met.

The priorities and key objectives set out in this plan are based upon an assessment of crime and disorder issues across the Borough and reflect the views of the community on matters that are important to them to collectively implement and deliver initiatives that will help all areas of Middlesbrough become a safe place to live, work and visit.

Priority 1—Perceptions and Feeling Safe

Objectives

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (Inc. environmental crime)
- Improving community cohesion and resilience
- Delivering the prevent agenda

Priority 2 - Tackling the Root Causes

Adverse Experiences

Objectives

- Improve mental health
- Reduce child exploitation (Inc. CSE)
- Reduce substance misuse
- Reduce domestic violence

Priority 3 - Locality Working, Inc. Town Centre

Reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations and the community. Encouraging and supporting a collaborative approach and building capacity within the community.

Objectives

- Working with communities (doing 'with' not 'to')
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Protecting Children from harm and exploitation
- Addressing underlying community issues
- Reducing Violence, business crime and acquisitive crime

- Reducing re-offending
- Reduce Begging

About Middlesbrough

Our people are warm, friendly and extremely proud of their town, its industrial heritage and location close to the natural beauty of surrounding countryside and stunning North East coast. With a vibrant leisure and cultural scene, Middlesbrough likes to work hard and play hard. Middlesbrough is an evolving town, perfectly positioned in the heart of the Tees Valley. In addition to our population of 139,500 we attract over 700,000 regular visitors from the surrounding areas of Tees Valley, North Yorkshire and County Durham who shop, work and enjoy the leisure attractions Middlesbrough has to offer.

Significant changes in the population demographics of Middlesbrough since the 2001 Census highlight an increasingly diverse and ageing population in the town.

- 20.58% of Middlesbrough's resident population are Children and Young People aged 0 to 15 years
- 63.56% are 'working age' between 16 and 64 years
- 15.90% are 'older people' aged over 65 years
- 50% of people live in areas ranked among 10% most deprived in England
- We have twice the national average rate of treatment for opiate misuse
- North Ormesby ward is now ranked the second most deprived ward nationally
- Cleveland has the second highest rate of Domestic Violence in the country; Middlesbrough has the highest rate of reported Domestic Violence in Cleveland.
- Middlesbrough is the second most ethnically diverse local authority in the north east, behind Newcastle upon Tyne.
 - 88.18% of Middlesbrough's resident population were classed as White
 - 7.78% were classed as Asian/Asian British
 - 1.71% of the population were identified as Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
 - 1.25% of the population were identified as Black/Africa/Caribbean/Black British
 - 1.08% of the population were identified as Other Ethnic Group
 - 8.2% of Middlesbrough's total population were born outside of the UK as at the 2011 census

Overview of crime and ASB levels across Middlesbrough

Overall crime is double the national average with 21,613 recorded crimes in 2018/19 and with the 3rd highest rate of violent crime in England.

Anti-social behaviour is more than 3 x the national average at 10,619 however we saw a reduction of just under 25% from 2017/18.

On an average day in Middlesbrough:

- There are 10 incidents of Domestic Abuse
- There are 9 incidents of Criminal Damage or Arson

In an average month:

- There are 1,800 criminal offences
- 17 drug or alcohol related hospital admissions

In an average year:

- There are 8039 violent crimes against a person
- We receive 6553 reports of theft and handling stolen goods
- 1315 fire incidents recorded
- 5008 Environmental issues reported to the Local Authority

Community Safety Partnership Vision

“...We will tackle crime and anti-social behaviour head on, working with our partners to establish a stronger and more visible presence in the town centre and in local communities, tackling the harm caused by drugs and imposing tougher penalties on persistent offenders to ensure local people feel safer” Andy Preston – Mayor

How our plan fits into other local and regional plans

Cleveland Police & Crime Plan 20/21: Working collaboratively enables us to co-ordinate resources more effectively and undertake regional work where beneficial.

- **A better deal for victims and witnesses** - Crime can have a devastating impact on someone’s life. It is crucially important that victims are given swift and effective help and support to cope, and that their needs are identified and met.
- **Tackling re-offending** - The cycle of re-offending needs to be broken and persistent behaviour addressed.
- **Working together to make Cleveland safer** - I have always been a strong advocate for partnership working, I believe no single agency is able to do this alone.

Middlesbrough Community Safety Partners actively support the development and implementation of a range of PCC initiatives including;

- Tees Wide Safe Places Scheme providing a place of refuge for vulnerable adults in the community
- Cleveland 3rd Party Hate Crime Reporting Process enabling victims to share information and access help
- VCAS supporting vulnerable victims of crime and ASB
- Restorative Cleveland ensuring victims have access to restorative justice
- Modern Day Slavery helping to identify and protect victims
- Operation Encompass enabling school staff to support children who experience domestic abuse at home
- County Lines Identifying and protecting children exploited for drug trafficking
- Cleveland Divert an alternative way to engage first time and low level offenders
- ECINS An innovative cloud based information sharing database enhancing partnership working
- Strategic Approach to Sex Working improving the safety of sex workers and quality of life in communities
- Targeted Youth Outreach engaging young people at risk of ASB or crime

Middlesbrough Mayor’s Priorities: Each of the Community Safety priorities directly link to

one of the three over-arching Middlesbrough Mayoral priorities;

- **People** – working with communities and other public services to improve the lives of our residents—Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour head on
- **Place** – Securing improvements in Middlesbrough’s housing, infrastructure and attractiveness, improving the town’s reputation, creating opportunities for local people and improving our finances—Making Middlesbrough look and feel amazing
- **Business** – promoting investment in Middlesbrough’s economy and making sure we work together effectively as possible to support our ambitions for people and place—Creating a positive perception of our town on a national basis

Children’s Young People’s Plan: Building on a strengths based model. Working ‘with’ families rather than delivering services ‘to’ them and linking the two Imperatives:

- **Focussing on early intervention and prevention**...prevention is key to improving outcomes later in life (and is more cost effective) All services have a role in improving health outcomes for children and families
- **Ensure that all agencies work together** to protect and safeguard children, with a particular focus on key vulnerable groups and risk issues for Middlesbrough, such as substance misuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation and missing from home or care

Health and Wellbeing Plan:

- Tackle the social causes of poor health
- Ensure children and young people have the best health and wellbeing
- Reduce preventable ill-health and early deaths

Our approach

Building on our partnership approach to working in Middlesbrough we will continue to be creative and develop new ways of working, employing the Active Intelligence Mapping (AIM) model providing an opportunity to improve service delivery by strengthening a collaborative approach to addressing crime, environmental crime and anti-social behaviour across the town and ensuring greater accountability to the public

Achievements over past 2 years

- Reducing Serious Youth Violence - partnership work with young people - Knife Angel
- Selective Licensing successes in North Ormesby rolling out in Newport
- Town Centre Teams
- Locality Working pilots in Newport and North Ormesby
- Middlesbrough White Ribbon Partnership
- Heroin Assisted Treatment

Our Priorities: identified via Public Consultation and Partner Engagement

Priority 1—Perceptions and Feeling Safe

Objectives

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (Inc. environmental crime)
- Improving community cohesion and resilience

- Delivering the prevent agenda

All partners will aim to deliver an outstanding service to the public and give a better deal for victims and witnesses

Areas of focus

- Develop a strategy to divert young people away from child criminal exploitation and county lines
- Reduce arson and personal fire risk
- Respond to issues in a timely manner, identify perpetrators and bring to justice.
- Implement social prescribing
- Coordinated care planning with key partners
- Restorative Justice – focus on victims.

Priority 2 - Tackling the Root Causes

Adverse Experiences

Objectives

- Improve mental health
- Reduce substance misuse
- Reduce domestic violence

All partners will strive to increase the uptake of early identification and intervention programmes

Areas of focus

- Strengthen families to reduce the number of children becoming looked after
- Reduce mental health and substance misuse related crime and ASB by early identification of mental health issues.
- Create safer homes across Middlesbrough by identifying those vulnerable to risks
- Identifying vulnerability and put safeguarding measures in place
- Reducing offending behaviour and increase access to support services
- Deliver the right care at the right place at the right time with a co-ordinated trauma informed care planning approach
- Increase the number of families we work with at an Early Intervention threshold, for which the ACE's features in the household

Priority 3 - Locality Working, Inc. Town Centre

Reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations and the community. Encouraging and supporting a collaborative approach and building capacity within the community.

Objectives

- Working with communities (doing 'with' not 'to')
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Addressing underlying community issues
- Reducing Violence, business crime and acquisitive crime

- Reducing re-offending
- Reduce Begging

Create a safe town centre environment to live, work and visit

Areas of Focus

- Locality Working Pilot in Newport and North Ormesby
- Dedicated multi-agency town centre team
- Cleveland divert - reduce further victimisation, reduce reoffending, reduce demand on services
- Increasing safety within the town centre.
- Reduce deliberate fires with education
- Deliver selective landlord licensing (SLL) scheme in Newport and North Ormesby.

Delivering the plan

Delivery will be via an Action Plan developed through the Community Safety Partnership which will set out what each of the partner agencies will do to achieve the objectives identified under the 3 priorities

A key action of the Partnership is to co-ordinate delivery, bring partners together and identify resources and skills in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The action plan will be built around a robust outcome-based performance management framework to review and monitor progress. The plan will be reviewed and refreshed annually.

Community Safety Delivery Plan 2020-2022 – Revised May 2021

The actions within this plan will be the responsibility of Middlesbrough's Community Safety Partnership

Strategic Objectives

Priority 1 - Perceptions and Feeling Safe

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour (Inc. environmental crime)
- Improving community cohesion and resilience
- Delivering the prevent agenda

Priority 2 - Tackling the Root Causes

Adverse Experiences and Team Around The Individual

- Improve mental health
- Reduce child exploitation (Including. sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and county lines related exploitation.)
- Reduce substance misuse
- Reduce domestic violence

Priority 3 - Locality Working, Inc. Town Centre

Reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations and the community. Encouraging and supporting a collaborative approach and building capacity within the community.

- Working with communities (doing 'with' not 'to')
- Improving environmental cleanliness
- Protecting children from harm and exploitation whilst in the town centre and the night time economy
- Addressing underlying community issues
- Reducing Violence, business crime and acquisitive crime
- Reducing re-offending
- Reduce Begging

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Organisation |
|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|--------------------------|
| Reducing crime, ASB & environmental crime | Introduction of AIM to refocus work of Community safety analyst. Ensuring that we develop regular trend analysis looking into the emergence of crime, ASB, Enviro Crime (inc fly-tipping) and deliberate fires by ward. | Completed This also compliments Cleveland Police Task & Coordination Group. | | | | | MBC |
| | Monthly reporting of crime stats via performance management framework. | Need to include overall crime/ASB to demonstrate how we compare against the rest of Cleveland | | | | | MBC/ Cleveland Police |
| | Cleveland Fire Brigade to lead on developing and delivering multi-agency plans to reduce all types of fires within our communities. | Now feed into AIM and report on sharing heat maps that result in action plans | | | | | Cleveland Fire |
| | Development of performance management framework to include warnings, FPN's, PSPO breaches, fly-tipping prosecutions, CBO's, Injunctions, use of CCTV & police accreditation powers | Power BI dashboard in place however the data will be improved once the new CIVICA system is in place In the process of introducing All on Mobile which is an application through CIVICA. As part of this programme of works it will come with a performance management dashboard that gives a clear overview of all service requests and actions taken by the Neighbourhood Safety Service. This is currently in the process of being created and installed. | | | | | MBC |
| | Review CCTV arrangements in Middlesbrough and ensure a fit for purpose, cost effective service. | A full review of costs relating to additional CCTV cameras and infrastructure has been undertaken to ensure that we are getting value for money relating to the products we are installing. We have significantly reduced the cost of purchases for additional cameras through consultation with several local providers. Also in the process of exploring changing the front end system that manages all of the cameras as it is dated and in urgent need of an upgrade. This is as a result of the rapid pace in which our CCTV network is growing. | | | | | MBC |
| | Increase the no. of CCTV cameras across the borough with the aim of detecting more incidents and providing evidence. | We have significantly increased the amount of cameras on our network and there are further plans to increase cameras right across the borough. | | | | | MBC |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|------------------|
| | Introduce the use of CPN's (Community Protection Notices) in order to reduce enviro crime. | The introduction of Community Protection Notices is now up and running. DM working with Wayne Flowers in public protection and we have developed the warning template, the full notice and drawn up the fixed penalty notice for breach of the notice. The fine has been set at £100 reduced to £80 if paid within 7 days. Training is scheduled for all teams that will be using this tool/ piece of legislation. The notices will be in use from May 2021. | | | | MBC |
| | Introduce Flying Squad - increase fly tipping with evidence/prosecutions/enforcement | The flying squad is now up and running. We have four vehicles that have now been liveried up with local authority branding and the team are working well. | | | | MBC |
| | Introduction of AIM | Multi agency information sharing at a strategic level to identify and respond to growing trends and issues relating to crime, ASB, env crime and fires | | | | MBC |
| | Regular information sharing of crime & ASB issues | Cleveland Police Chair daily partnership meetings whereby we discuss 24 hour crime & ASB reports throughout Middlesbrough. Partners include' Thirteen, MBC, SLL, Fire, YOS, Crime Prevention & other internal Cleveland Police depts. Staff are deployed around threat, risk & harm according | | | | Cleveland Police |
| | Cleveland Police to provide monthly updates on crime & ASB | To highlight what actions have been taken within the community via key updates of Neighbourhood Policing Strategy around engagement, problem solving & targeted activity. This information is shared with key stakeholders & elected members. | | | | Cleveland Police |
| | Formalise partnership problem solving approach | Ch Insp has developed/chairs monthly problem solving meetings which identifies repeat victims, repeat locations, hotspots & crime trends. Partners are jointly responsible for contributing/reviewing. | | | | Cleveland Police |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|---|--|--|----|----|----|----|--------------|
| Improving community cohesion and resilience | Rebuilding interfaith network and encouraging wider engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed on monthly meetings and request a particular faith to talk about their practices at each meeting. Identify and make contact with other faith organisations across Middlesbrough. Potential for Interfaith to cover a wider geographical area, in which case other LAs will need to be represented | | | | | MBC |
| | Working with disadvantaged and otherwise excluded communities | Focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BAME Travellers Show people Asylum seekers Refugees EU/EEA Migrants | | | | | MBC |
| | Middlesbrough Multi-Agency Meeting | Meetings scheduled for 2021 Opportunity to share updates from and ask questions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home Office LAASLO Mears DWP VCS | | | | | MBC |
| | Supporting locality working teams around cohesion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in online events to engage the community Encouraging volunteering Building an understanding of English language provision Develop translated messaging to widen reach and inform the whole community regarding Council and partner functions | | | | | MBC |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|-----|
| | Collating data on migrant communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining LAASLO data with regards to asylum seekers/refugees Identifying available data around EU Settlement Scheme and migrant communities Supporting ONS and using subsequent data to build a clearer picture of the communities | | | | MBC |
| | Covid-19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring uptake of vaccine in low uptake communities Looking at communication of Covid messages within communities Ensuring new communities are registered with GP Identifying impact on mental health in socially and economically disadvantaged communities | | | | MBC |
| | Volunteering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging socially and economically disadvantaged communities to take up volunteering opportunities Identifying existing volunteering opportunities and signposting to them Develop Locality specific volunteering groups. Develop a local offer of volunteering opportunities (ward specific – Across Middlesbrough) | | | | MBC |
| | Community connectors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and working with community connectors and community organisations involved with the wider communities | | | | MBC |
| | City of Sanctuary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with members and local connectors to encourage Middlesbrough to be awarded Borough of Sanctuary Status | | | | MBC |
| | Participation in democracy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging people (inc. new and emerging communities) to take part in democracy and influence decisions impacting their area Encouraging young people (inc. new and emerging communities) in new and emerging communities to take part in the Youth Council | | | | MBC |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|------------------|
| | Improving economic activity | <p>Working with partners (NEMP/DWP/VCS/Adult Education/Uni and Collage) to improve economic activity in communities (inc. new and emerging communities) looking at issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language • Transferable skills • Existing qualifications • Employment opportunities • ABC – Any job, Better job, Career job • Linked to Improve Economic Outcome Locality Action Plan | | | | MBC |
| | Building on feelings of cohesion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying how people feel about their area • Community conversations to determine what people would like to see • Encouraging transient communities to make Middlesbrough their home • Celebrating particular events (Holocaust Memorial Day, Refugee Week, International Migrants Day, etc...) • All currently taking place through Locality in Newport/North Ormesby. • 6 monthly community survey taking place within Locality areas. | | | | MBC |
| | Myth busting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying most common falsehoods around migration • Supporting new and emerging and settled communities to address those falsehoods in creative manners • Working with the wider community to identify and respond to issues that impact on community cohesion | | | | MBC |
| | Cleveland Police to develop wider community engagement | <p>Cleveland Police now have a community engagement strategy which drives engagement internally & externally via Neighbourhood Policing and Community Safety Team. Dedicated staff include school liaison, mental health, early interventions, problem solving and missing from home co-ordination. N/Hood Teams have supported & engaged with locality working which is still under development with covid restrictions easing.</p> | | | | Cleveland Police |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| | Develop responses to hate crime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleveland Police Community Safety Team are currently analysing Cleveland's response to the reporting and investigation of hate crimes. • Also working with dedicated hate crime CPS lawyer to develop guidance on policy • LA response to Hate Crime | | | | | Cleveland Police/ MBC |
| | Set up a stop search scrutiny panel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sgt has commenced a stop search scrutiny panel within Teesside University to help understand the community response to the use of stop and search legislation | | | | | Cleveland Police |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|-------------------------------|--|---|----|----|----|----|--------------|
| Delivering the prevent agenda | Ensure that MBC's duty to have due regard around counter terrorism is exercised. | Ongoing - recent activities include education risk assessment, risk assessment of CTLP, Scrutiny desktop and scrutiny presentation. Ongoing circulation and promotion of training products. Active action plans to address risks | | | | | MBC |
| | Coordinate a PREVENT Communities Tees Valley Approach | Commenced - Group will feed into silver and co-ordinate shared community engagement approaches through the 4 L/A's. Middlesbrough lead for Year 1. A quarterly report will be submitted by the chair to Silver and quarterly reports included on the CSP update of Actions. | | | | | MBC |
| | Ensure recommendations from the annual CTLP are implemented in Middlesbrough in the form of Plans through the Bronze operational group | 5 plans in operation-AS providing updates of Bronze to silver by attendance and written report | | | | | MBC |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|-----------------------|---|--|----|----|----|----|--------------------|
| Improve mental health | Ensuring Homeless leads are supported by IOM and Mental health services | Homeless lead involved in writing of a joint protocol for homeless young people aged 16/17 | | | | | MBC |
| | Re-establishing links between NHS mental health providers, Homeless Team & Stronger Communities | Pathway developed which aims to support professionals to understand the resources, processes and referral pathways when working with individuals who have mental health needs and are homeless. | | | | | MBC |
| | Supporting of the harder to reach communities regarding mental health and accessing services (particularly those whom may come under the remit of community safety when unwell) and those whom may identify and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the impact of Covid on mental health of hard to reach communities Combating stigma around mental health in migrant communities | | | | | MBC /Public Health |
| | Development and promotion of Third sector campaigns to promote mental wellbeing and support available across Middlesbrough to those hard to reach communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking into multi-agency meeting and interfaith network | | | | | MBC |
| | Reintroduce the Police intelligence process for those within the NHS Mental Health Service around the threat/risk and harm process | Product updated with new intelligence form ready for circulation. Meeting held with Adult Acute Mental Health Team to look at adapting the process. Awaiting approval from NHS data protection. Approved by Cleveland Police for linking personal information of safeguarding via Niche system. LD process approved and circulated 22/10/2020. | | | | | MBC |
| | Consider linking MEAM work to CSP | MEAM is all about system change for adults with multiple disadvantages and could fit into the action plan in terms of embedding the MEAM approach and considering system barriers. | | | | | MBC |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|----------------------|
| | Cleveland Police to consider closer working arrangements & partnership with mental health care providers and examine possibility of joint front line working | Looking at employing full time FTE to support front line officers | | | | | Cleveland Police |
| | Middlesbrough Neighbourhood Policing to support Middlesbrough Football Club in the delivery of the Kicks Programme | Dedicated N/Hood Officers & PCSO's are now attending multiple kicks sessions to improve the relationships with children within our local communities LA links via recommissioned youth outreach service for young people | | | | | Cleveland Police/MBC |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|---|---|--|----|----|----|----|---|
| Reduce child exploitation (Including: sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and county lines related exploitation) | Ensuring continued commitment to protecting Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked (VEMT), children through the multi-agency Tees Strategic VEMT, the VEMT Practitioner Group (VPG), and the Risk Management Group (RMG) | <p>Membership of the VEMT Practitioner and Risk Management Groups has been in existence for a number of years and has now been re-aligned to the different structure</p> <p>The Head of Service from Community Safety needs to be a member of the Tees Strategic VEMT to ensure strategic links and strong links between the Tees VEMT plan and this CSP. (Membership is currently being arranged)</p> | | | | | Risk and Resilience Manager |
| | Strengthening the wider multi-agency support for vulnerable adolescents in Middlesbrough is identified as a key priority in the strategic improvement plan. | Project established with a Project Board due to meet in July 2021 | | | | | Head of Service Partnerships, Children's services |
| | Ensure continued support to young adolescents who are being exploited or at risk of exploitation | <p>The following services are already supporting vulnerable adolescents and the commissioned services need to continue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnardos, Prevention and intervention contract • Operation Stay Safe • Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation (MFC Foundation) targeted intervention / Premiership funding • 'Awayout' transition project (commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner) <p>The MFC Foundation is currently funded by a joint bid by MFC Foundation and Children's services. However, this is extremely effective and funding may need to be found after the funding ends in October 2022</p> | | | | | <p>Risk and Resilience Manager</p> <p>Police and crime Commissioner</p> |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | <p><u>Information and intelligence sharing:</u> Further enhance multi-agency information sharing in respect of child exploitation and missing children, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date and dynamic flags on all relevant agency records to identify children open to the VEMT and the RMG • Increased use of the existing Partnership Information Sharing form and to ensure any for VEMT issues are shared in the VEMT and RMG meetings • Ensure the Youth Offending Service have an effective response with young people at risk of serious violent crime and exploitation. | <p>Systems in some areas have been in place for a number of years and have been expanded more recently to other agencies such as community safety department</p> <p>Systems to monitor / multi-agency audit are needed to ensure compliance to GDPR</p> <p>The form exists but increased use for exploitation and child safeguarding needs to increase in focus and systems need to be introduced to measure volumes and quality of intelligence</p> <p>All YOS managers are trained in trauma informed practice The YOS will work in partnership with statutory partners to develop interventions with young people at risk of exploitation or serious violence</p> | | | | | <p>Risk and Resilience Manager in consultation with safeguarding leads in each organisation</p> <p>Business Manager STSCP</p> <p>Head of Service Partnerships, Children's services</p> |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| | <p><u>Workforce Development</u> Ensure all appropriate staff undertake the existing multi-agency training in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding children • identifying exploitation (including county lines), • VEMT and RMG processes • children missing from home and care <p>Ensure all staff know when and how to submit 'safer referrals' to children's services, where there are concerns</p> | <p>Training is offered through the South Tees Safeguarding Children's Partnership (STSCP), and through the Children's services Risk and Resilience Team</p> | | | | <p>Risk and Resilience Manager in consultation with safeguarding leads in each organisation</p> |
| | <p>Using analytical data from the strategic and operational VEMT processes to direct a coordinated range of Contextual Safeguarding tactics aimed at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding children who may be using transport links because they are being exploited or trafficked • disrupting known and suspected perpetrators of child exploitation, • disrupting premises (inching Licensed premises), and locations where information and intelligence suggest they are exploitation hotspots. | <p>The police have developed and circulated a 'Problem Profile' which has been shared within Middlesbrough CSP partners.</p> <p>Continue to support the Police South Tees Tasking and Coordinating Group and police led MARSOC approach to tackling Organised Crime Groups (OCG), including those who exploit children. The approach is focussed through a '4P plan' (Prepare, Protect, Prevent, Pursue)</p> <p>The Children's services Risk and Resilience Manager, the Community Safety Operational Manager, the Trading Standards operational lead are all core members of the groups.</p> <p>The 'responsible Authorities Group' and the 'Joint Crime and Alcohol Group' need to re-strengthen the intelligence and support disruption activity in the night time economy, as and when it reopens after COVID.</p> <p>'Operation stay safe' (a multi-agency patrol aimed at safeguarding children), needs to be re-introduced following 16 months of inactivity due to COVID. First operation is planned for 9th July 2021.</p> <p>All agencies need to support targeted patrols through increased information sharing about geographic areas and premises where children may be being exploited</p> | | | | <p>Risk and Resilience Manager in consultation with safeguarding leads in each organisation</p> |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|-------------------|
| Reduce the harm caused by substance use | Ensuring continued commitment to multi-agency working through our high risk escalation panel, the Team Around the Individual Panel (TATI) and to reducing child exploitation agenda through the VEMT and Risk Management Groups and in the review of services to Vulnerable adolescents project. | The purpose of TATI is to share information and develop collective risk management plans for our highest risk adults in Middlesbrough. In Q1 RM refreshed the attendance list, currently have good buy in. Need to link TATI to the CSP – | | | | | MBC |
| | Ensure the priorities for the CSP are reflected in the work carried out by substance use support services | New model of delivery commenced on 1 st April 2021 with an in-house delivery team that cover substance use, homelessness and welfare rights. Specialist services are commissioned as part of this new way of working | | | | | MBC/Public Health |
| | Teeswide DRD post to monitor trends and alerts in drug use | Funding has been secured to make the post permanent and a prevention strategy has been developed that includes close working links with Cleveland Police to identify changing patterns of use across the town, including links to Child Criminal Ex This needs to link in to identifying trends | | | | | |
| | The Hospital Intervention Liaison Team (HILT) has recommenced in James Cook working with people admitted due to drug or alcohol use | The team has additional posts due to start as part of ADDER and will help facilitate better hospital to community pathways for treatment and information sharing. There is also ongoing work with James Cook looking specifically at assaults on staff | | | | | |
| | Drug litter is an issue in the town, with hotspots identified where it is a particular problem | The provision of needle bins has recently been increased in pharmacies and a new postal exchange service has started, with processes in place for collecting used equipment. Local hostels have also been provided with clinical waste bins. We are looking at the feasibility of having bins installed in hot spot areas to reduce the chances of used needles being left in the street. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|----------------------|
| | Funded through Project Adder (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement, Recovery), a new government initiative is being introduced in Middlesbrough aimed at changing lives through prevention, intervention and treatment. The YOS Substance Misuse worker will focus on the Diversion element offering early intervention and support to divert young people away from substance misuse. | YOS Substance misuse worker appointed 8.4.21. Funding in place until March 2023. This is a brand new project therefore a set of priorities will need to be set, along with performance indicators and referral pathways. | | | | | MBC/YOS |
| | Project Adder to Fund a dedicated Chief Inspector | To deliver on the 3 objectives looking at treatment, diversion & enforcement. Police to work with YOS & Public Health to have a focussed approach around the 3 objectives. | | | | | Cleveland Police/YOS |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|--------------------------|---|---|----|----|----|----|--------------|
| Reduce domestic violence | Understand Domestic Abuse within Middlesbrough and ensure service provision matches need. | A DA Needs Assessment has been commissioned to commence in May until August 2021 to consider commissioning intentions re MHCLG new Burden funding re DA Bill – DASP overseeing this work | | | | | MBC |
| | Ensure Middlesbrough has a coordinated approach to Sexual Violence. | Middlesbrough commissions Sexual Violence Counselling service which aligns with OPCC ISVA service. DA and SV lead participates in Sexual violence commissioners forum – developing sexual exploitation and sex work strategy as part of MEAM approach – system change project | | | | | MBC |
| | Deliver the CSP vision for reducing domestic abuse via DASP | Strategy is due to be revised on completion of needs assessment with clear performance indicators to measure effectiveness of DASP and strategy in reducing domestic abuse and violence | | | | | MBC |
| | Deliver on recommendations of previous DHR's via introduction of DHR steering group (reg monitoring progress against DHR recommendations) | Completed | | | | | MBC |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|-----|
| | Commission any new DHRs and ensure appropriate resources allocated to support the process | No new DHRs to be commissioned at this time DHR 1, 2 and 4 published DHR 3 ongoing DHR 6 ongoing DHR-5 ongoing | | | | | MBC |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|-----|

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|--|--|---|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| Working with communities (doing "with" not "to") | YOS to work with identified victims of Youth Crime | YOS Restorative Justice workers contact identified victims of Youth Crime, this can involve face to face meetings with young people or young people delivering reparation in local communities. | | | | | MBC |
| | People Feel Safe Action Plan | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group. | | | | | MBC |
| | Improve Economic Outcomes Action Plan. | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group | | | | | MBC |
| | Better Outcomes for Children Action Plan' | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group | | | | | MBC |
| | Healthier Population Action Plan. | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group. | | | | | MBC |
| | Cleveland Police to improve community engagement to understand what communities want | Cleveland Police are currently developing a community engagement working group which is driving engagement on a ward level. Local elected members and key individuals to identify ward priorities and ward pledges to reflect "you say, we did". | | | | | Cleveland Police |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|----|----|----|----|--------------|
| Improving environmental cleanliness | Improved Environmental Standards and Physical Appearance Action Plan. | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group | | | | | MBC |
| | Town Wide and Town Centre Cleanliness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Wide - Weekly litter picking in lower footfall areas • Cleansing of touch points in town centre (Covid) • Town Centre dual use bins emptied multiple times daily in pedestrian areas • Town wide - Dual use bins emptied as per programmed works schedules. • Road sweepers daily (pedestrian areas and roads in town centre) • Street Scrubber twice annually in town centre • Town wide - Road sweepers as per programmed work schedules. • Town wide - alleys cleaned weekly as part of programmed work schedules • Needles – Removed within 2 Hours • Dead Animals – Removed within 24 Hours • Fly Tipping – Removed within 72 Hours • Broken Glass – Removed from public highways within 24 hours • Dog Fouling – Removed from public highways within 24 hours • Litter Bin Request – these are monitored over 4 weeks period to determine if a bin is required | | | | | MBC |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|-----|
| | Town Wide and Town Centre Cleanliness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Alley Cleansing arrangements so that alley cleansing team and Refuse Crews work in collaboration to ensure the weekly cleanse of all Alleys in the Central, Linthorpe (Part), Newport, North Ormesby, Park (Part) Wards. • Review Refuse Collection methods in alleys to ensure that they are fit for purpose. • Mechanically Sweep all accessible Alleys monthly • Trial new reverse lidded bins and locking posts to prevent bag slashing in alleys • Work in collaboration with the Locality Working Groups to improve the Environmental issues within the Town. | | | | | MBC |
| | Community Volunteering / Project involvement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with volunteers to remove arising's. • Supplying equipment (where possible) to volunteers to aid with their projects • Encouraging communities to take up volunteering • Opportunities (information already in local newsletters, social media etc). • Identifying existing volunteering groups and signposting new volunteers to them Signpost to Middlesbrough Council website to become a volunteer | | | | | MBC |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| Address underlying community issues | Developing support plans to address community issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community conversations to identify issues and propose solutions Working with locality teams and wider community | | | | | MBC |
| | Improved Customer Experience Action Plan | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group | | | | | MBC |
| | Increase Community Capacity and Increase Perception Of Community Cohesion Action Plan. | Action plan developed. PMF indicators and progression tracked through Pentana Risk. Regular community engagement monitored through Locality group and specific working group | | | | | MBC |
| | Cleveland Police community engagements team to continue to monitor community tensions and feedback regarding national trends and political movements. | Current procedure includes daily monitoring of intelligence and information which may identify underlying community issues. The information is reviewed and if necessary community impact assessments are completed & shared with partners. | | | | | Cleveland Police |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----------------------|
| Reducing violence, business crime and acquisitive crime | Introduce multi-agency town centre team utilising IGF Funding | This is operational and working well. We have two dedicated full time Police Officers working closely with the Neighbourhood Safety Warden Service and the dedicated NSO within the town centre. In addition to this we have a dedicated police Sargent and PCSO giving a team of four representatives from Cleveland Police. A working group has been set up that takes place monthly with all partners and has representation from the business community attending these monthly meetings. | | | | | MBC/Cleveland Police |
| | Development and operation of a multi - agency group for the town centre to support businesses with acquisitive crime/commercial crime | This element is being picked up within the town centre meeting. Within the meeting the group discuss the data which includes known perpetrators, hot spots and a full breakdown on crime. In the morning police briefings the town centre is discussed and direct tasking are allocated to the business crime prevention officer for any issues that are prevalent. | | | | | MBC |
| | Introduce Community Impact Statement for retail crime | Completed | | | | | MBC |
| | Engagement with both the North East Retail Crime and Middlesbrough Retail Crime Partnership | Engage & liaise with business owners to work on preventative measures to reduce the level of crime within the business community. Target repeat offenders with appropriate use of civil orders and criminal orders. | | | | | Cleveland Police |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|----------------------|---|--|----|----|----|----|----------------------|
| Reducing reoffending | Develop an understanding cybercrime, malicious communications and national crime recording variables and create a partnership plan to deal with each category. | Plans considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious communications Knife Crime Reducing violence inpatient and community mental health Serious violence is a priority for YOS in 21/22 - YOS strategic plan | | | | | MBC/YOS |
| | Increase safeguarding of vulnerable people re organised crime by developing a suitable promotional package to deliver to professionals around preventing serious & organised crime exploitation (overlapping into county lines/VEMT/OCGs) for increased intelligence building | Completed and ready for CSP approval/launch. CSO has worked with police communities to create a young person's version for pilot with northern college of Arts whom have agreed to pilot with students | | | | | MBC |
| | RR group to work in partnership with town centre team to adopt an operation boost approach to enforcement of HCCO to reduce retail related crime offenders utilising enforcement & support | Week of action plan drafted. Need to liaise with Police, Town Centre Team, IOM and MRCP. | | | | | MBC/Cleveland Police |
| | RR group to lead on the development of a retail victim impact statement for the retail sector for Middlesbrough | Completed awaiting response from HMCS | | | | | MBC |
| | RR group to strengthen pathways between custody/HMP/CRC/ Probation services for early triggers and intelligence sharing for the mental health welfare of those involved. | Work ongoing | | | | | MBC |
| | RR to develop a generic police intelligence product for roll out across the LA and partners to increase community based intelligence to police to improve community safety | Police intel product approved by Police Intell Hub. Require buy in from other Council Dept's. | | | | | MBC |

| Objective | Action | Update/ Comments | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Lead Officer |
|----------------|--|--|----|----|----|----|------------------|
| Reduce begging | Develop approach to tackle begging within the town centre | <p>A full review of action taken against beggars has been undertaken, which included the use of PSPO powers, Civil Injunctions and Criminal Behaviour Orders.</p> <p>A report is going to be produced relating to all begging related activity and a perpetrator database created for all identified nominal involved in this activity.</p> <p>The action to be taken against beggars focuses on three strands; shelter, support then enforcement. This will be led by the NSO for where the offending behaviour is occurring. We will be reviewing all identified perpetrators and establishing if they have a shelter/ place to live, put support in place to address any additional needs around, benefits, substance misuse, mental health or any other identified needs. When this has been completed we will be taking enforcement action for those who continue to beg and cause harassment alarm and distress to the public and businesses.</p> <p>We will also be utilising community protection notice warnings, full notices and fines where evidence is present to meet the test for utilising this power.</p> | | | | | MBC |
| | Cleveland Police to support L/A colleagues with their approach to tackle begging within the town centre. | Dedicated town centre officers who are working in partnership with community safety to target town centre offenders proportionally. | | | | | Cleveland Police |

This page is intentionally left blank

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Report of: | Executive Member for Regeneration - Councillor Eric Polano Director of Regeneration - Richard Horniman |
|-------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Submitted to: | Executive - 13 July 2021 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Subject: | Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 - 2037 |
|-----------------|--|

Summary

| |
|---|
| Proposed decision(s) |
| That Executive adopts the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037. |

| Report for: | Key decision: | Confidential: | Is the report urgent? |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Decision | Yes | No | No |

| Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan | | |
|--|---|---|
| People | Place | Business |
| The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy assists with the delivery of the Mayor’s Priority of ‘Ensuring our town is an absolute leader on environmental issues’. | The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy assists with the delivery of the Mayor’s Priorities of ‘Protecting our Green Spaces’ and ‘Making Middlesbrough look and feel amazing’. | The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy assists with the delivery of the Mayor’s Priority of ‘ <i>Creating positive perceptions of our town on a national basis</i> ’. |

| |
|-------------------------|
| Ward(s) affected |
| All Wards |

What is the purpose of this report?

1. To adopt the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 (GBIS).

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The GBIS will support the delivery of the Council’s Green Strategy. It is designed to identify and prioritise the actions required to strengthen Middlesbrough’s network of green and blue infrastructure up until 2037, and will be a key evidence document in

the preparation of the Local Plan. The GBIS will become a material planning consideration in the determination of future planning applications. Adopting the GBIS will affect more than two wards, meaning it is a key decision. As such, it falls within the remit of the Executive.

Report Background

3. In March 2020, the Council appointed Land Use Consultants to prepare a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy covering the period 2021 – 2037 in support of the Local Plan review. Its purpose is to inform the development of policy and to help shape development opportunities, whilst respecting environmental designations and protection areas. It will provide a robust and credible evidence base upon which the Local Plan can be prepared, in line with national planning policy and guidance.
4. Middlesbrough is a geographically constrained borough, with a significant proportion of its area having already been urbanised through development. As the Council continues to deliver development to meet its economic and housing needs and ambitions, the supply of greenfield land around the periphery of the urban area will inevitably continue to diminish. Within this context, it is becoming increasingly important that green infrastructure within the urban core (including provision as part of new housing developments) is of a sufficiently quantity, quality and accessibility to meet the needs of our growing population.
5. The GBIS will be used by the Council to help shape the future of the borough, to ensure that new and existing communities live in quality places, accessible to green and blue infrastructure. It will help us frame our response to emerging issues, including achieving biodiversity net gain and climate change prevention/mitigation.
6. The GBIS takes into consideration, and builds upon, existing strategies and studies, including:
 - Strategic Plan for Middlesbrough
 - Open Space Needs Assessment
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
 - Landscape Assessment
 - Green Wedges Study
 - Playing Pitch Strategy
 - Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Assessment of Sites
 - New ecology designations (SPA/SSSI)
 - Masterplans and other relevant briefs
 - Rights of Way Improvement Plan
 - Public Rights of Way and Sustainable Drainage Systems standards documents
 - Middlesbrough Council's One Planet Living agenda
7. In preparing the GBIS, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders, including Councillors, were consulted and invited to take part in stakeholder workshops. Due to the lockdown associated with the COVID pandemic, it was necessary to undertake these consultation activities virtually, using a new and innovative online consultation portal. Whilst this was not our original intention, it worked extremely well and we received a significant amount of positive feedback. The outcomes of the engagement have been taken into consideration in finalising the GBIS.

8. The key aspects of the Strategy are set out below:

- A Vision to 2037 - Middlesbrough will be the greenest town in Tees Valley, and one where regeneration is firmly led by the 'green and blue' rather than the 'grey'; and
- A series of six GBI Themes (that formed the basis for the earlier consultation with key stakeholder) with key issues and emerging opportunities for each:
 - Theme 1: Regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place'
 - Theme 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Theme 3: Reconnecting Communities with Nature
 - Theme 4: A Resilient Landscape
 - Theme 5: The Blue Network and Waterfronts
 - Theme 6: Walking and Cycling

9. The GBIS is accompanied with an action plan, which identifies a series of 15 Objectives from the baseline review and key stakeholder consultation:

- **Objective 1.1:** To enable the GBI network to underpin Middlesbrough's ambitious regeneration schemes, 'urban living' agenda and the revival of the Borough's high streets and local centres.
- **Objective 1.2:** To ensure that an enhanced GBI network both 'frames' and connects Middlesbrough's historic environment, and helps to boost the local visitor economy.
- **Objective 2.1:** To provide a diverse, expansive and well-connected ecological network as a foundation for the Borough's Nature Recovery Network and to enable greater resilience to the effects of climate change.
- **Objective 2.2:** To provide clear context for the delivery of locally appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in new development.
- **Objective 3.1:** To help narrow the gap between the health and wellbeing of Middlesbrough residents and the rest of the UK through the provision and maintenance of a strong, connected and truly accessible green and open space network.
- **Objective 3.2:** To support and enhance the efforts of numerous local community groups working on GBI initiatives.
- **Objective 3.3:** To unlock land for community scale food-growing initiatives, in order to support community cohesion, tackle physical and mental health challenges and to nurture 'locally grown' approaches to food provision.
- **Objective 4.1:** To boost the resilience of Middlesbrough's landscape to the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and increasing temperatures.
- **Objective 4.2:** To enable Middlesbrough's landscape to play a key part in mitigating against the effects of climate change by expanding the Borough's 'carbon sink'.
- **Objective 4.3:** To increase tree canopy cover across the Borough in line with national targets.
- **Objective 5.1:** To improve the relationship between the town and the River Tees by mending links between urban areas waterfronts, while respecting the integrity of sensitive habitats.
- **Objective 5.2:** To maximise the potential of Middlesbrough's Beck Valleys as green corridors and high quality multifunctional GBI assets.
- **Objective 5.3:** To shift perceptions of the role that sitting water can play in Middlesbrough's landscape when pursuing nature-based and Sustainable

Drainage System (SuDS) solutions to long-term flood risk management across a variety of green and blue spaces.

- **Objective 6.1:** To support the Borough's 'modal shift' ambitions toward active travel by creating attractive walking and cycling routes, and better connecting the town's network of greenways.
- **Objective 6.2:** To integrate 'urban greening' features fully into active travel infrastructure schemes and the design of future streets.

10. In addition, the Action Plan identifies 12 Priority Opportunities:

- **Laying the foundations for a Nature Recovery Network**
 - Filling the strategic 'gaps' in the Borough's biodiversity network through habitat creation and restoration, with an emphasis on key focus areas and corridors.
- **A Green-Blue grid for Middlehaven**
 - A 'framework' of green and blue infrastructure that guides the development of the Greater Middlehaven area, based on key assets, opportunities and heritage assets.
- **Station Gateway and Middlesbrough 'low line'**
 - Creating a 'green corridor' through the regenerated station quarter to help combat existing 'severance' between Middlehaven and the town centre, boosting walking and cycling as well as local business resilience.
- **Supporting a re-imagined Town Centre**
 - Providing urban greening features in the town centre which support a 'place-based' approach to high street revival, by reshaping spaces to encourage people to linger rather than simply pass through.
- **The 15-minute town: enabling walking and cycling**
 - The creation of greenways and 'linear parks' to link key green spaces + the 'greening' of key walking and cycling routes to support a modal shift away from the private car.
- **Blue corridors: enhancing the Beck Valleys**
 - Restoration of the Beck Valleys as multi-functional recreational, educational and biodiversity assets.
- **Expanding the urban tree network**
 - Expansion of woodland cover in order to meet local and national targets, and to provide multiple GBI benefits and combat climate change.
- **Edible townscapes**
 - Identifying and transforming under-used areas of land for urban growing and requiring integration of food growing space into new development.
- **Rethinking urban grassland**
 - Rethinking of mowing regimes to encourage 'rewilding' of road verges and areas of amenity grassland to create pollinator trails.
- **Network of multi-functional SuDS**
 - Setting higher benchmarks for SuDS to combat flood risk while serving as multi-functional GBI assets.
- **Low-traffic neighbourhoods**
 - Reclaiming and 'greening' the streetscape in urban neighbourhoods using modal filters.

- **Green schools**

- Making use of school grounds for SuDS, urban growing, tree planting and urban meadows, enabling the GBI network to be used as an educational resource.

11. Since the GBIS was commissioned, the Council has progressed with its Green Strategy. The GBIS will be used to inform the land-use and spatial aspects of the Green Strategy.

Next Steps

12. The GBIS has been finalised, taking into account all of the comments received during the stakeholder consultations and workshops. The final version of the GBIS has two parts, which are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.

13. Following its adoption, the GBIS will be used: as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan; as a material consideration in the determination of any future planning applications; to inform the Green Strategy; and to support relevant projects.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

14. That Executive adopts the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037.

Why is this being recommended?

15. The GBIS sets out the key land-use and spatial priorities and opportunities to help deliver the Council's Green Strategy, and ensure that there is sufficient green and blue infrastructure, of the right types, to support the needs of existing and future residents. It will provide the evidence base to support the emerging Local Plan and will become a material consideration in future planning applications.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

16. **Not to adopt the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037.** This will mean that the Council will not have a clear strategy for delivering the land-use and spatial aspects of its Green Strategy. It will be more challenging to deliver green and blue infrastructure, of the right quality, to support future needs.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

17. There are no statutory requirements relating to the preparation of documents such as the GBIS.

18. Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the legislation and latest Government guidance on undertaking public consultations in view of Covid-19.

19. Once adopted, the GBIS will become part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Financial

20. The costs associated with the preparation of the GBIS have been met from established departmental budgets.

Policy Framework

21. The GBIS will support preparation and delivery of the Local Plan, which is part of the Council's Policy Framework.
22. The adoption of the GBIS will not alter the Policy Framework.

Equality and Diversity

23. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 has been subject to an initial Impact Assessment (IA), which accompanies this report (see Appendix 2). This identifies that a full IA is not necessary.

Risk

24. The following risks are considered to be affected by this report:

| Risk No | Risk Description | Impact of Report |
|----------------|---|--|
| O1-005 | If poor economic growth occurs, then this will reduce public and private sector investment in the town, including town centre retail, housing development and business. | The GBI network will underpin the Council's ambitious regenerations schemes in relation to urban living and the revival of the high street. The GBIS is a key evidence document in the preparation for the new Local Plan. It looks to provide urban green features in the town centre which will support high street revival by encouraging people to linger rather than pass through. The proposal will have a positive impact on this risk. |
| O1-052 | Substantial areas of the town have high residential voids/low sales values and high population churn, effectively creating market failure resulting in significant social consequences which in turn have implications for Council resources and service delivery. Such an approach is unsustainable and will result in the need for significant market invention at great cost to the Council. | The GBIS will become part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, will be considered in any future planning applications, and will inform the Green Strategy and relevant projects. The review of the Local Plan will create a positive planning framework for areas so this will have a positive impact on this risk. |
| O1-048 | That the capacity of the rail station isn't increased to allow for all current and future services arriving and departing | The GBI will promote a green corridor through the regenerated station quarter. It will also enhance and connect Middlesbrough's historic environment which |

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| | from Middlesbrough including the new direct London service from 2021. | should help to boost the local visitor economy and therefore it will have a positive impact on this risk. |
| O8-055 | If the Council doesn't respond effectively and efficiently to legislative changes it could be in breach of statutory duties in relation to service delivery and fail to make the most of opportunities. | Consultation on the GBIS has been undertaken in accordance with the legislation and latest Government guidance on undertaking public consultations so this will have a positive impact on this risk. |

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

25. Once adopted, the GBIS will become part of the evidence base for the Local Plan, and be a material planning considerations in the determination of any future planning applications.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 Part 1: Setting the Scene.
- Appendix 2 – Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 Part 2: Action Plan.
- Appendix 3 – Initial Impact Assessment of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037.

This page is intentionally left blank

Middlesbrough Council

Middlesbrough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2037

Part 1: Setting the Scene



Document control

| Version | Date | Status | Prepared | Approved |
|---------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|----------|
| 1.0. | October 2020 | Draft Part 1 Report | LW, MC, SS, EB | TJ |
| 1.1 | February 2021 | Final Draft Part 1 Report | LW, MC, SS, EB | TJ |
| 1.2 | April 2021 | Final Part 1 Report | LW, MC, SS, EB | TJ |

Project

Middlesbrough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Client

Middlesbrough Council

LUC Project Number

11038

Project Team

The Strategy has been prepared by a team led by LUC of planners, ecologists and landscape architects.

All comments and contributions to the development of the study are gratefully acknowledged.

LUC project team

Mark Cooke
Lucy Wallwork
Sofie Swindlehurst
Emily Beedham

Date

April 2021

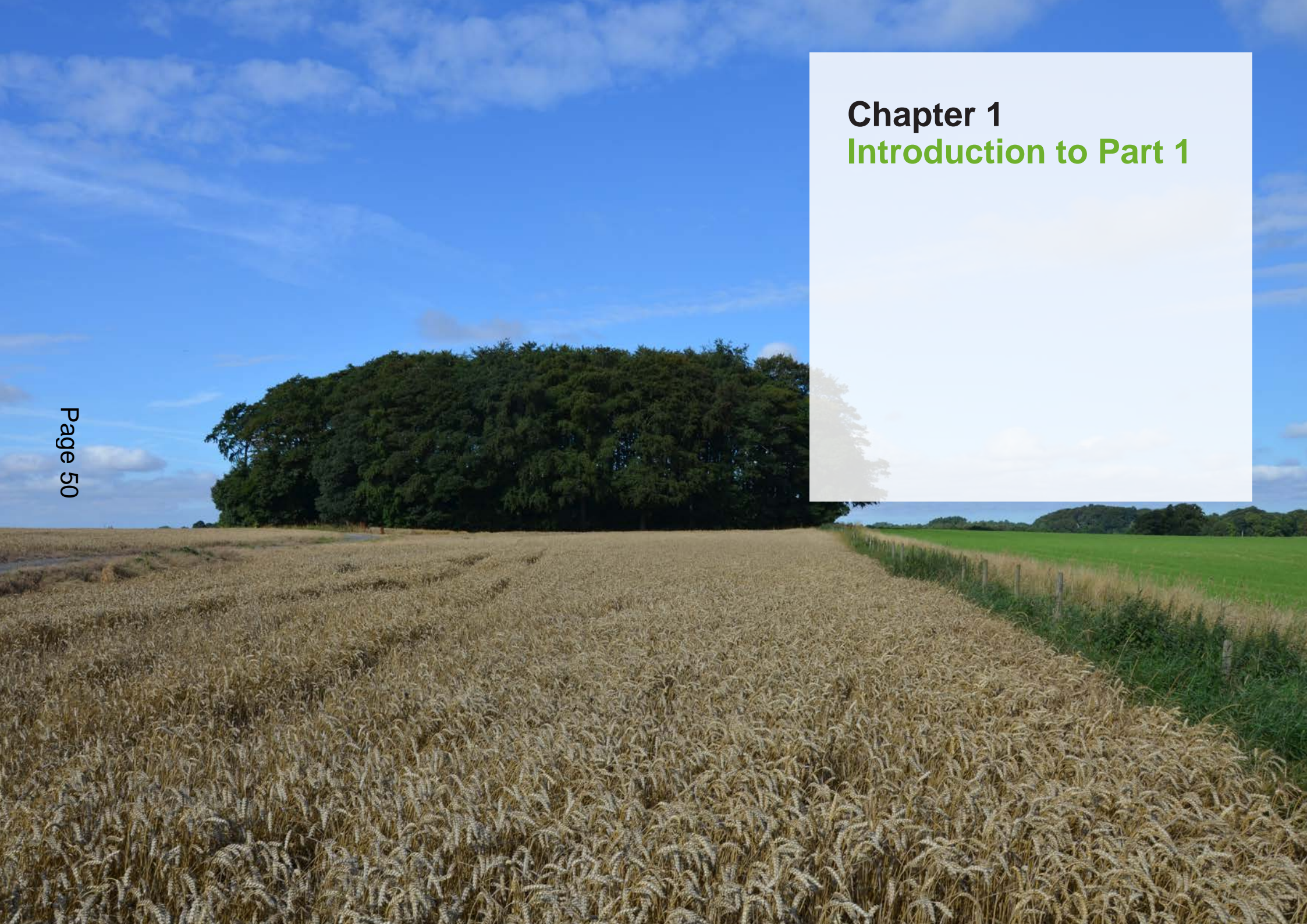
Note

This document and its contents have been prepared by LUC for Middlesbrough Council.

LUC assume no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

Contents

| | | | |
|--|----|---|----|
| Chapter 1 Introduction | 4 | Chapter 7 Theme 5: The Blue Network and Waterfronts | 42 |
| Chapter 2 The Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI Network | 9 | Chapter 8 Theme 6: Walking and Cycling | 47 |
| Chapter 3 Theme 1: Regeneration, Heritage and 'Sense of Place' | 11 | Appendix A Policy Review | 53 |
| Chapter 4 Theme 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity | 19 | Appendix B Record of Stakeholder Consultation | 61 |
| Chapter 5 Theme 3: Reconnecting Communities with Nature | 26 | Appendix C Output of Stakeholder Workshops | 63 |
| Chapter 6 Theme 4: A Resilient Landscape | 37 | | |



Chapter 1
Introduction to Part 1

Chapter 1

Introduction to Part 1

This Strategy is designed to identify and prioritise the actions required to strengthen Middlesbrough’s network of green and blue features up until 2037, at all scales. It provides a Vision of a robust network, providing a broad range of functions – from play and recreation, to biodiverse habitats and flood resilience.

Page 51

1.1 ‘Green and blue infrastructure’ (or GBI) is an essential component of healthy, thriving communities and ecosystems. Working on behalf of Middlesbrough Council, and in consultation with key stakeholders, LUC was commissioned to prepare a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the Borough. This new strategy identifies opportunities across the Borough to protect and enhance GBI, helping to guide the investment and delivery of GBI and its associated benefits, to support the Council’s new Local Plan. The Strategy is split into two parts:

- **Part 1** ‘sets the scene’ by providing a baseline analysis;
- **Part 2** outlines an Action Plan of Priority Opportunities and delivery mechanisms.

What is Green and Blue Infrastructure?

1.2 Green and blue infrastructure (or GBI) is a term used to describe the network of natural and semi-natural features within and between our villages, towns and cities.

1.3 GBI includes parks and open space but is not limited to the open space network. It captures features at all scales, from river catchments to planters and rain gardens within urban streetscapes.

1.4 The concept has become prevalent across the UK government’s policy agenda and among a variety of other actors, including developers and transport authorities. It has been promoted through the 2018 publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP). As the Landscape Institute has urged, “*it has never been more necessary to invest in green infrastructure*”.



An illustration of the multiple functions (or benefits) which GBI can provide.

1.5 GBI is characterised by its 'network' status and by its 'multi-functionality', which ranges from providing and connecting habitats for wildlife, to providing the open space and recreational assets that communities require in order to help tackle multiple health and wellbeing issues.

The Policy Context for Green and Blue Infrastructure

1.6 The 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP), published in 2018, sets out the Government's support for habitat creation, multi-functional sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs), and natural spaces close to where people live and work. It represents an important shift in thinking towards long term positive action to improve people's lives and the environment. It views the planning system as a key mechanism for delivering upon its ambitions. The first action of the 25 Year Environment Plan seeks to embed an 'environmental net gain' principle into development:

"We want to establish strategic, flexible and locally tailored approaches that recognise the relationship between the quality of the environment and development. That will enable us to achieve measurable improvements for the environment – 'environmental net gains' – while ensuring economic growth and reducing costs, complexity and delays for developers."

1.7 It goes on to state that the Government wants:

"to expand the net gain approaches used for biodiversity to include wider natural capital benefits, such as flood protection, recreation and improved water and air quality. They will enable local planning authorities to target environmental enhancements that are needed most in their areas and give flexibility to developers in providing them."

1.8 The emerging landmark Environment Bill sets out to

place the ambitions of the 25YEP on statutory footing, by creating a new governance framework for the environment, to ensure a '*cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation*' as the UK leaves the EU.

1.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explicitly addresses the need for GBI networks, stating that strategic policies in plans should set out an overall strategy that makes sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of green infrastructure (Paragraph 20). It also requires that planning policies should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, including through the provision of 'safe and accessible green infrastructure' (Paragraph 91) and should plan positively for the provision of shared spaces and community facilities, including open space (Paragraph 92). Regarding new development, the NPPF requires that it be planned in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change, particularly in vulnerable areas, and states that risks can be managed through the planning of green infrastructure (Paragraph 150).

1.10 Paragraph 171 of the NPPF also requires that a strategic approach is used to ensure that, within a plan area, networks of habitats and green infrastructure are maintained, and that planning is undertaken for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

1.11 The full policy context which informed this Strategy (on a national, regional and local scale) is provided in **Appendix A**.

Middlesbrough today: a Landscape Narrative

1.12 Middlesbrough is a town in the north east of England with a population of around 140,000 and is the principal centre of the Tees Valley conurbation. It lies roughly half way between the major cities of Newcastle and Leeds, as well as on the borders of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park.

1.13 The Borough is predominantly urban in character, with only around 30% of the land in agricultural use. Once a thriving steel town, the Borough has suffered population decline since the 1960s. However today, a number of regeneration initiatives provide the opportunity to create sustainable communities, and the successful and expanding University of Teesside and Middlesbrough's colleges contribute to the town's economic prosperity.

1.14 In terms of its landscape context, Middlesbrough is located on the alluvial plain to the south of the River Tees. At the beginning of the 19th century was a small farm of only 25 people, however today much of the underlying landform is masked by urban development.

1.15 Over the years Middlesbrough's landscape has been influenced significantly by industrial development, given the significant growth experienced in the 19th century and into the 20th century. Since iron was discovered near Eston in 1850 and was used to satisfy demand for the expansion of the railway, Middlesbrough became known as the 'iron town' and the Tees as the 'steel river'. This GBI Strategy now offers the opportunity to continue, and accelerate, the process of 'greening the grey', to help the GBI network become a pivotal part of Middlesbrough's identity in the 21st century.

1.16 Because the Borough is predominantly urban, those areas of green space which Middlesbrough does have must work harder. Expansive areas of open space are largely limited to the narrow belt of farmland in the south of the borough. However, the Beck Valleys - flowing northward to the River Tees – provide an important function as green and blue 'fingers' reaching into urbanised areas and linking them with the open countryside to the south. There is also much scope to weave smaller-scale GBI assets through the built-up areas and to further enhance Middlesbrough's park space.

1.17 Looking to the future, Middlesbrough Council has

adopted the principles of *One Planet Living* into the way it plans and delivers its services and was accredited as a One Planet Living Region by international charity BioRegional in 2011. *One Planet Living* is a sustainability framework created by BioRegional in 2002 and comprising of ten simple principles with detailed goals and guidance. Middlesbrough's involvement was built on the recognition that if everyone lived like the average Middlesbrough or UK resident currently does, we would need three planets to sustain our lifestyles. The framework responds to this by seeking to create a more sustainable community which lives within the planet's available resources. As such, there is now an ambition that sustainability considerations underpin all aspects of development in Middlesbrough.

How does this Strategy support Middlesbrough's Local Plan?

1.18 The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy serves as part of the evidence base underpinning Middlesbrough's Emerging Local Plan.

1.19 Together with Middlesbrough's emerging Green Strategy, this Strategy should also form the basis of expectations and priorities for GBI investment across the Borough. As such, it should be used by:

- The Development Management Team, particularly to guide negotiations with developers over delivery of both on site and off site GBI and to maximise the potential of development to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain where possible.
- The Council Green Spaces team, in informing the management of areas of open space under their control.
- Local community groups, to help co-ordinate initiatives such as neighbourhood-scale projects, urban farming initiatives and Beck Valley improvements.

- Residents and local businesses, to understand the principles and benefits of GBI and how the Council will be delivering improvements in the GBI network across Middlesbrough.

Approach

1.20 The steps taken to develop this Strategy are outlined in **Figure 1.1**.

1.21 The Strategy is structured around a series of six 'themes', that relate to the multiple functions which GBI assets provide. Climate Change has been identified in this Strategy as a fundamental cross-cutting theme which affects and influences the various functions which the GBI network delivers. The six GBI themes, which provide the 'backbone' for this Strategy, are outlined in **Figure 1.2**.

1.22 However, like the regional Tees Valley GI Strategy, this Strategy places greater emphasis on the importance of multi-functional corridors - by identifying not only discrete themes but focusses on the linkages between assets across various themes and how they work together to create green corridors.

1.23 The Strategy is also focussed around a Vision. This was developed during the **Part 2** process, after being 'tested' through consultation. However it is included within Part 1 also (Chapter 2), given its importance in guiding all proposed actions taking place under this Strategy.

Stakeholder Consultation

1.24 In order to provide a successful framework for action, the GBI Strategy must accurately reflect local priorities and challenges. The delivery of GBI enhancements in Middlesbrough will also be the responsibility of a wide range of partners beyond the Planning department, and extends to Middlesbrough's strong network of community groups.

1.25 As such, consultation with key stakeholders sits at the heart of this Strategy. Due to restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic during the course of the development of this Strategy, the consultation process took place remotely

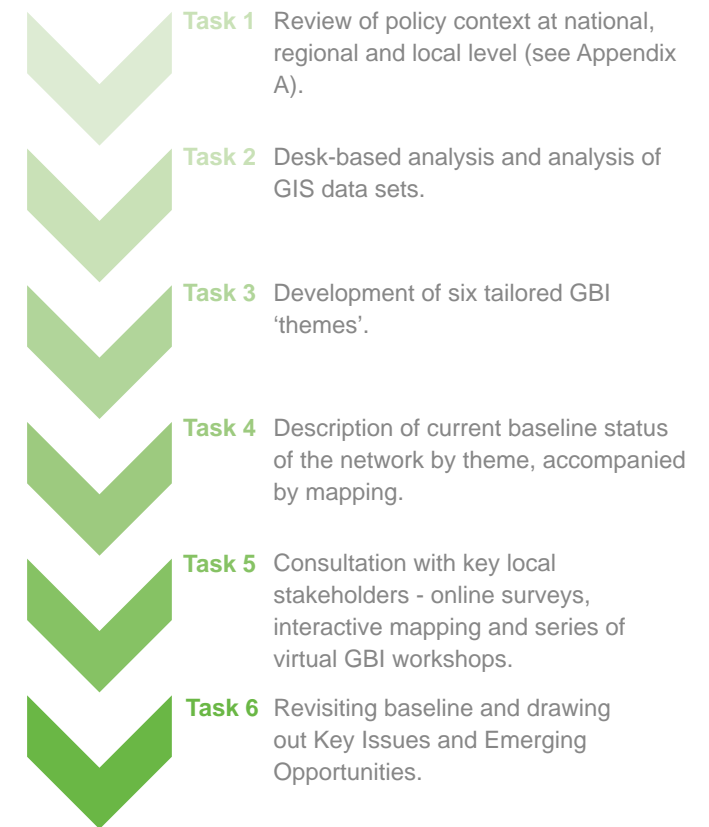


Figure 1.1 Key tasks undertaken for Part 1 of the GBI Strategy

and consisted of the stages set out below. A range of selected local stakeholders with a role in the Borough's GBI Network were invited to take part:

1. An online survey, consisting of a set of questions identifying strengths and weaknesses in the network, and opportunities for improvement.
2. An interactive map identifying assets within the GBI network, providing stakeholders with the opportunity to leave comments.
3. A series of more targeted virtual Technical Workshops, with one workshop carried out for each GBI Theme.

1.26 The results of these workshops were used as a key input into the process of identifying Priority Opportunities for the network, which are outlined in **Part 2** of the Strategy.

1.27 The consultation process was also used to 'test' the proposed Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI Network, ensuring that it reflects a wide range of views and aspirations for the future of Middlesbrough in 2037.

Pages 54

in **Part 2** (the Action Plan). This Vision is translated into, and accompanied by, a series of theme-specific Objectives - these Objectives are identified in **Part 2** and will guide actions for the GBI network based on identified assets and challenges to be addressed. The Vision was tested and refined during stakeholder consultation.

1.29 Flowing from this Vision, the remainder of Part 1 of this strategy will set out the baseline for Middlesbrough's Green and Blue Infrastructure network and is structured through a series of six 'themes':

- Regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place'
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Reconnecting communities with nature
- A resilient landscape
- The blue network and waterfronts
- Walking and cycling

1.30 An overview of each 'Theme' finishes with a Summary of Key Issues and a set of Emerging Opportunities.

1.31 A series of Appendices to Part 1 are provided to give further detail on the following parts of the Strategy process:

Appendix A: Policies reviewed as part of drafting the Strategy.

Appendix B: A record of stakeholder consultation carried out for the Strategy.

Appendix C: A 'snapshot' of the virtual whiteboards used to capture discussion during stakeholder workshops carried out as part of the Strategy.

1.32 The separate **Part 2** (Action Plan) document consists of a series of profiles for each identified Priority Opportunity, and identifies how each responds to the Emerging Opportunities identified within this **Part 1** report.

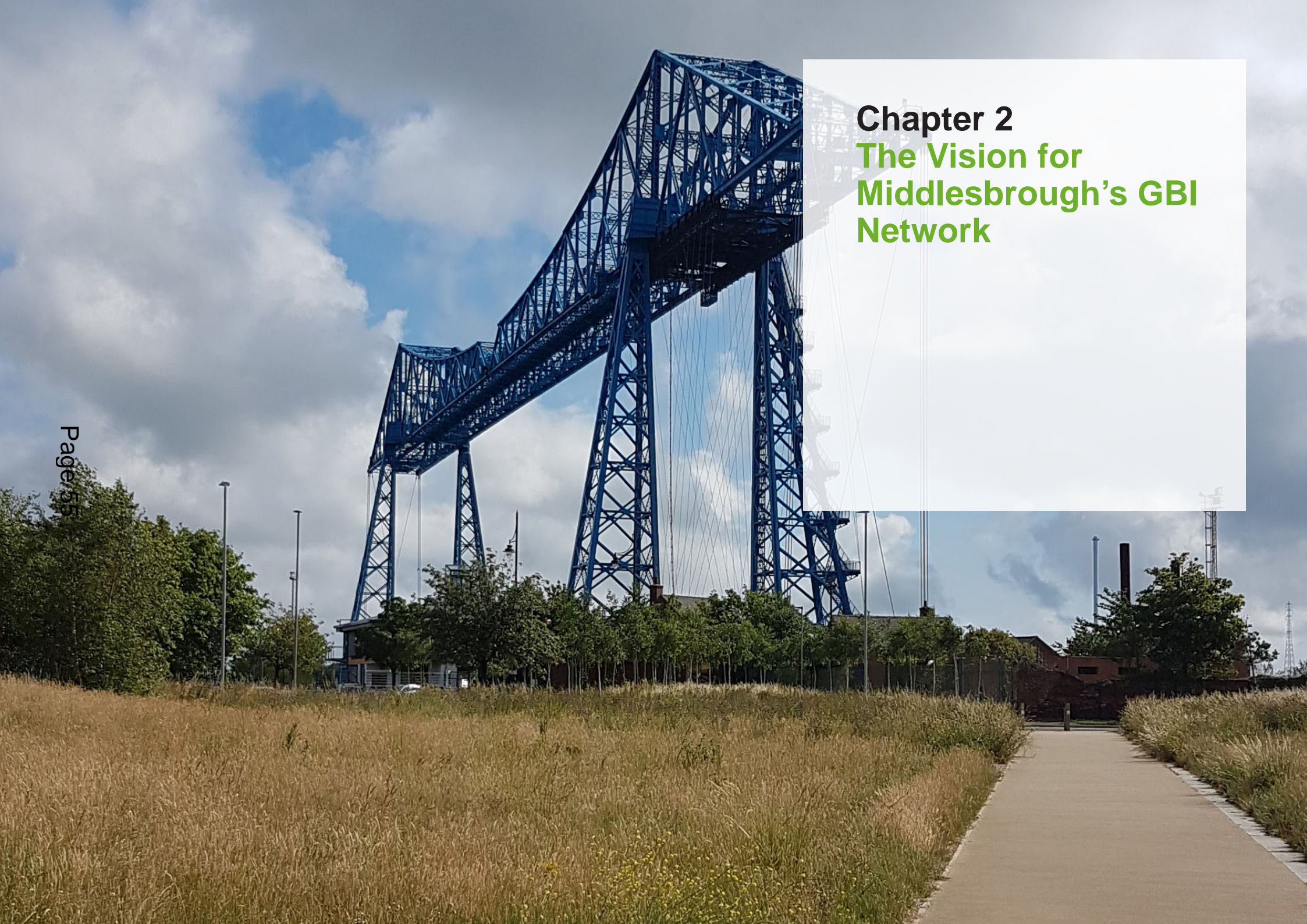
1.33 **Part 2** of the Strategy also contains a Chapter detailing various mechanisms for delivering the Priority Opportunities, including proposed partners, funding and delivery mechanisms.

How the remainder of this Strategy is structured

1.28 The Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI network is set out in **Chapter 2** and guides the opportunities identified



Figure 1.2: The six GBI 'themes' used for this Strategy.



Chapter 2 The Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI Network

By 2037 Middlesbrough will be the greenest town in Tees Valley, and one where regeneration is firmly led by the 'green and blue' rather than the 'grey'. The green and blue infrastructure network will be anchored by the town's rich industrial and pre-industrial heritage assets, linked together by a mosaic of green spaces at all scales, that helps people reconnect with the natural environment on their doorstep and which tackles the root of health inequalities.

Green routes will make walking and cycling the natural way to travel around the town, and will help to reclaim and green the town's streets as a public space for gathering with neighbours, and for children to play and travel to school safely.

Middlesbrough will also lead the way regionally as a resilient urban landscape with significantly boosted tree cover, and which is reshaped to make a meaningful contribution to tackling climate change and bio-diversity challenges. It will be a town where urban wildlife can thrive by creating bigger, better and more joined up habitats.

Finally, local communities and their efforts will sit at the heart of efforts to shape the network, from school children to volunteer groups and local businesses. By joining up these efforts, change will go beyond isolated projects to create an integrated, landscape-scale regeneration of Middlesbrough's natural environment.



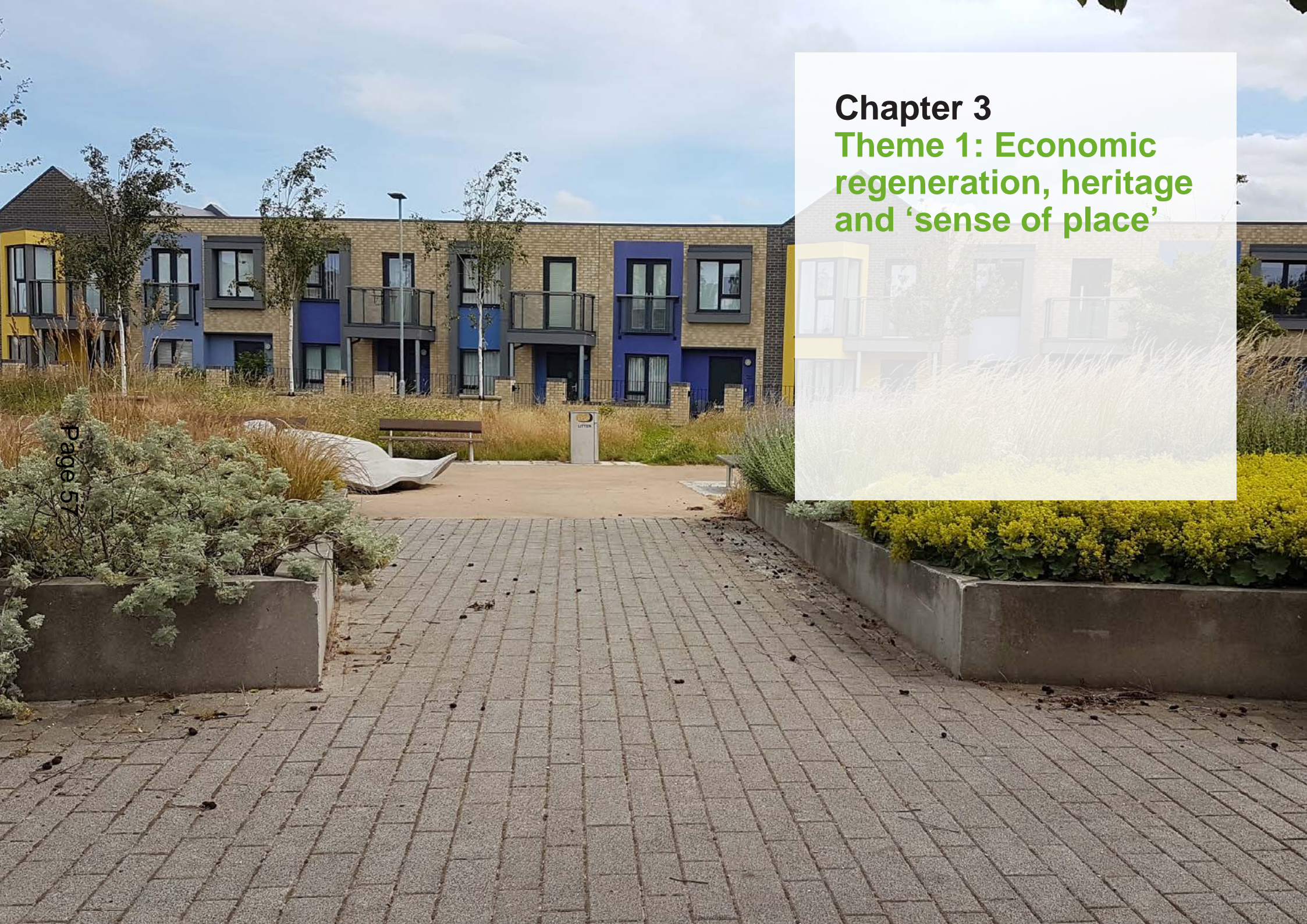
Housing set against Middlehaven Urban Park.



View down the Ormesby Beck green corridor.



Landscape within the Borough's swathe of southern farmland.



Chapter 3
**Theme 1: Economic
regeneration, heritage
and 'sense of place'**



Chapter 3

Theme 1: Economic regeneration, heritage and ‘sense of place’

Middlesbrough has made significant steps in recent years to transform from a town with a legacy of ‘grey’ industry to one where the ‘green’ is now celebrated. Urban greening initiatives will be key in underpinning the next stage of regeneration and economic recovery, providing a setting for the town’s heritage, creating ‘sense of place’ and turning around the stigma attached to some areas of the Borough. The green and blue network must be maximised to shape new ‘gateways’, to create greater resilience to climate change, and deliver the kind of liveable neighbourhoods that will attract people to live and work in Middlesbrough.

Regeneration and urban living in Middlesbrough

1.34 Middlesbrough’s growth as a town was driven by the 19th century Industrial Revolution, with major sources of employment in the iron and steel, shipbuilding, heavy engineering and petrochemical business on the bank of the River Tees and surrounding areas. However the decline of traditional industries in the late 20th century had a major impact on the town, leaving a rich heritage but also a legacy of deprivation, particularly in the east and north of the borough. The UK’s Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) now highlights several of the borough’s wards as being among the most deprived in the country – notably around Middlehaven and other areas along the River Tees corridor, with further concentrations of deprivation around Hemlington and Coulby Newham, as highlighted later in Figure 5.1 (Chapter 5). It has also left a landscape heavily modified by human activity along the Tees (see Theme 4). However recent investments in the decontamination of the Middlehaven area, Middlehaven’s linear park and the redevelopment of Centre Square provide stepping stones towards a different future for the Tees Corridor.

1.35 At a regional level, one of the foremost challenges facing the wider region is the need to reduce economic and social disparities between the North East and other regions. The Strategic Plan for Middlesbrough (2020-2023) echoes this ambition at a more local level, seeking to reverse years of decline by tackling challenges head on, transforming the town centre and reasserting Middlesbrough as a thriving town at the heart of the Tees Valley.

1.36 The current vision for Middlesbrough’s regeneration is set out in the towns Regeneration DPD (2009). However, as

Middlesbrough continues the process of redefining itself as the economic heart of the Tees Valley, the GBI network must be part of that reworked narrative, as it is recognised that an enhanced environment will be central to reaching this vision and in forging a new identity for the town.

“We must continue to invest in place to ensure that we continue to attract and retain the businesses and people we need”

- Tees Valley Strategy Economic Plan, 2016-2026)

1.37 A key challenge will be creating attractive places underpinned by a flourishing environment, and which offer a quality of life that encourages people to stay in Middlesbrough and help to create a shared ‘sense of place’.

“There is need for joined up thinking to maximise Middlehaven’s potential, with walking and cycling prioritised”

- Stakeholder comment

Supporting regeneration

1.38 In order to set the scene for regeneration and renewal areas in the town, the Investment Priorities highlighted in the Middlesbrough Investment Prospectus (2017) are illustrated in **Figure 3.1** and described in **Box 3.1**.

1.39 A GBI-led approach to development and regeneration recognises the need for a holistic approach to the planning and design of new development to meet commercial and public objectives, while also delivering resilient landscapes.¹

¹ Landscape Institute (2013), ‘Green Infrastructure: An integrated approach to land use’, Position Statement.

Box 3.1: Investment priorities in Middlesbrough

- **Greater Middlehaven:** a major mixed-use educational, leisure, sport and entertainment destination centred on the brownfield site at the former dockland and surrounding area framed by the River Tees and reaching into Middlesbrough town centre. Home to both Middlesbrough Football Club and the 'Boho Zone' (designed as a new digital and creative business hub). The master plan for this area is structured around a bold blue/green concept which introduces the use of structural landscaping and water features as the environmental context for regeneration.
- **Centre Square:** the city region's premier office location and cultural/leisure hub, centred on the refurbished Town Hall and surrounding areas.
- **Teesside Media & Innovation Village:** a restructuring of Middlesbrough's centre to create an iconic regional destination for media, digital, creativity, learning and leisure. Located to the west of the town centre and incorporating the former bus station site.
- Various residential-led regeneration schemes in areas of historically high deprivation, including Gresham and Grove Hill.
- **Railway Station and Historic Quarter:** a strategic transport gateway and iconic feature which is part of Middlesbrough's historic heart (St Hilda's) and connects the town centre to the Greater Middlehaven regeneration zone. The station is due to launch a direct rail link to London in 2020 and holds strong potential as a 'gateway' to the town on arrival.
- **University Quarter:** home to Teesside University, with plans for a new student village, a key centre for the evening economy and the focus of public realm improvements. The Quarter lies adjacent to the Gresham regeneration area.

Figure 3.1: Regeneration and placemaking priorities in the north of Middlesbrough

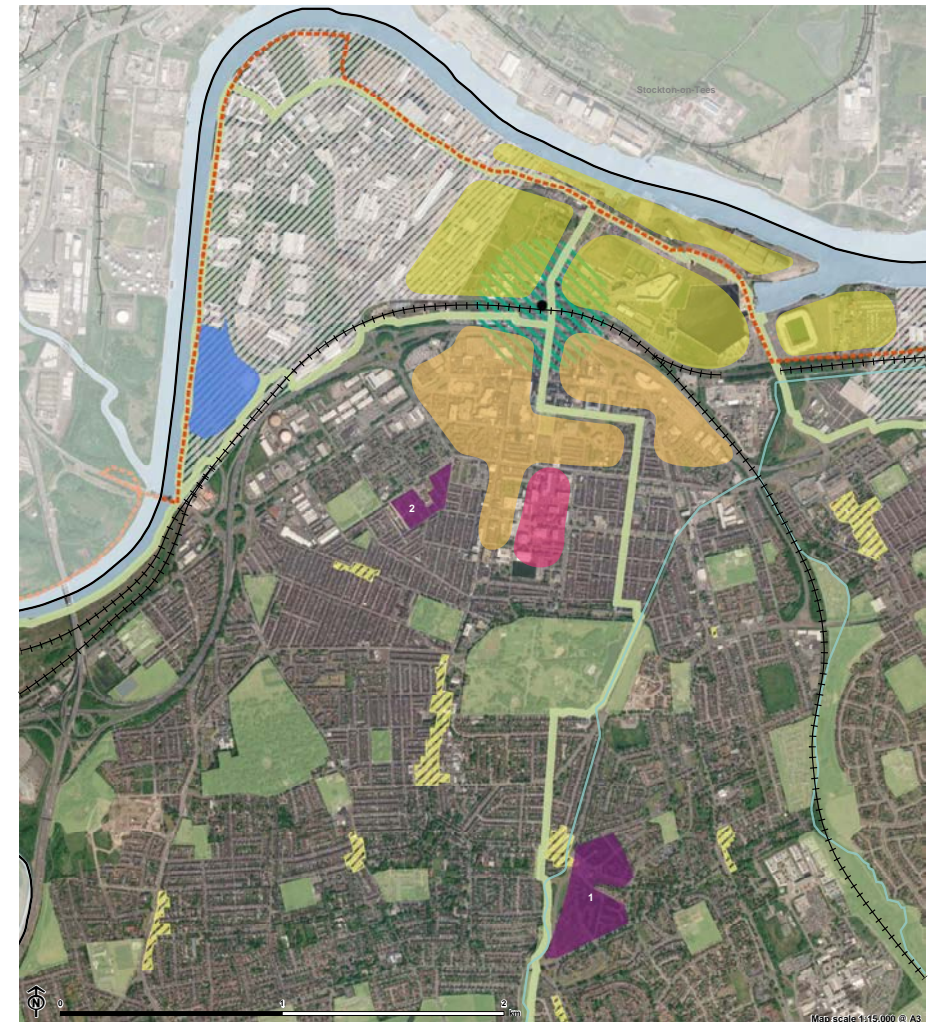
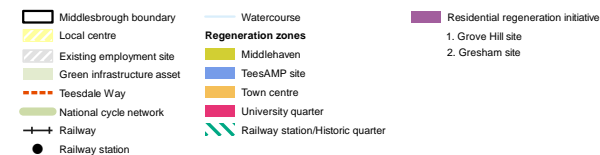


Figure 3.1: Regeneration and placemaking priorities in the north of Middlesbrough



1.40 Continuing Middlesbrough's transformation will require not only hard infrastructure investment, but also the re-establishment of positive perceptions of the town among local people, incoming visitors and businesses, who can all play an important role in the town's revival. The regeneration agenda must not only change the physical landscape but also foster a revived sense of civic pride among local people. A GBI-led regeneration agenda offers the opportunity to pursue a more people-focussed transformation of the borough.

"People have bad perceptions of Middlesbrough. I will lead a campaign to make sure the towns strengths and successes are acknowledged. We will transform how people view our town"

- Mayor's comment in the Middlesbrough Strategic Plan (2020-23)

Indeed, the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy *"revolves around achieving closer links between environment improvement and the major development projects proposed in the Tees Valley"* and requires that the GBI network provides an enhanced environmental context for new development and regeneration schemes.

1.42 Particularly over the last decade, the Climate Emergency has forced us to rethink the role of landscape in regeneration. In particular, it has led us to re-evaluate what 'urban' looks like when we are regenerating zones such as Middlesbrough's emerging 'digital clusters'. New urban areas need to be re-imagined for the 21st century and much of this will involve 'softening' landscapes with GBI and encouraging buildings to engage more meaningfully with their natural surroundings, even within the most urbanised areas. This should begin with a design process which 'uncovers' and values the underlying landscapes wherever possible.

Making the business case for the GBI network

1.43 While a flourishing natural environment arguably has

Box 3.1: Mechanisms by which GBI supports economic investment

Providing a vital infrastructural basis for population growth: GBI should form a vital part of the overall urban functioning infrastructure system that successful, growing cities need, just as 'hard' transport and utilities infrastructure does.

Raising property values: While value calculations draw on complex evaluations of social, economic and ecological influences, academic research has illustrated that urban green space can have a significant impact on local housing and commercial markets, where it produces more attractive and functional landscapes. This is particularly relevant in the light of ongoing depressed property values in Middlesbrough.

Boosting resilience to extreme weather events: Particularly given flooding events affecting the Tees Valley in 2013 and 2016 (see Theme 5), the economic costs of future flooding events, as the impacts of climate change are felt, are likely to be significant. The Environment Agency estimated the total economic cost of the UK's 2015-16 winter floods at £1.6 billion, and there is a growing realisation that environments susceptible to flooding are less desirable places to live.

Attracting people and families: Middlesbrough's development strategy rests on encouraging people to

re-populate urban areas, in order to support brownfield regeneration initiatives and attract and retain 'home grown' talent. This will require a strong green space network that supports a high quality of life, particularly for young families. Population projections for Middlesbrough from 2018- 2043 highlight a decline in all age groups under 70 under current scenarios and highlight the ongoing challenge of 'urban flight' (see Theme 3).

Boosting retail revenues on local high streets: The GBI 'audits' being carried out by Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in various town centres in London and elsewhere point to the role of GBI in helping to reverse the crisis faced by local high streets, particularly in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis of 2020. GBI will play a central role in the 're-imagining' of town centre spaces that act not only as retail zones but as vibrant meeting spaces and attractive, walkable community assets. The creation of a 'sense of place' in which people want to linger, spending more time and money, will be vital in the recovery and transformation of high streets. This will allow the town to build on the platform of success in districts such as Middlesbrough's developing 'independent quarter' around Baker Street, the strength of which rests in large part on its 'placemaking' value.

intrinsic value, which makes it difficult to place a monetary value on, the UK's 2011 National Ecosystem Assessment estimated that the UK's landscape delivered a minimum of £2 billion per year to the country's economy through social and economic benefits, and ecosystem services.

1.44 As the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy highlights, *"GI can clearly play a major role in improving*

economic success".

1.45 While over Middlesbrough's early history, investment was firmly driven by the prioritisation of 'grey' infrastructure – with chemical plants and factories lining the banks of the Tees – the challenges of the 21st century demand that investment is now focussed on delivery of the 'green' infrastructure. Ongoing investments such as the Tees AMP

advanced manufacturing park are part of this agenda. However, the GBI network must ensure that it plays a vital role in efforts to meet these 21st century challenges.

1.46 Emerging research points to a number of ways in which GBI investment can support economic investment in the context of Middlesbrough, which are further detailed in **Box 3.1**.

1.47 In particular, Middlesbrough town centre has struggled in recent years from competition from out-of-town centres, falling footfall and, most recently, by the additional impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Middlesbrough Strategic Plan (2020-23) notes that “*our once fantastic town centre has been allowed to decay and become a pale shadow of its former self*”. This has brought to the fore the need to rethink the role of the town centre, and how the public realm and wider environment might be rethought to support that role. There is an important role for the GBI network to play in enabling this high street revival process.

Supporting Middlesbrough’s historic environment

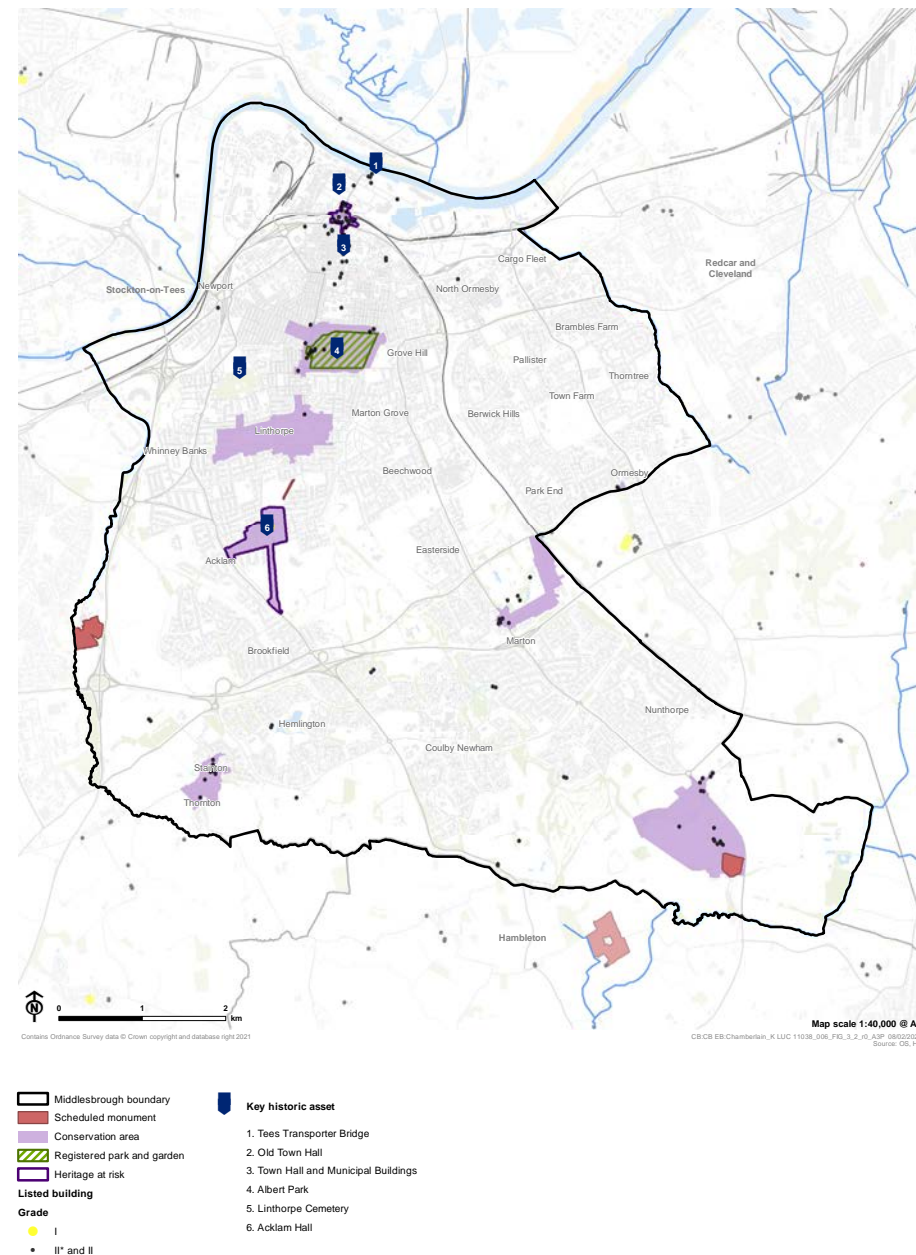
1.48 The Borough’s *One Planet Living* framework places the Borough’s heritage at the heart of its vision of a sustainable future, seeking to increase awareness of, and participation in, Middlesbrough’s culture, local heritage and identity.

1.49 Middlesbrough has been described as the ‘oldest new town’ in the country, thanks to its rapid growth in the late 19th century on the back of the iron and steel industries. As a result, many of the town’s heritage assets are linked to the town’s industrial history.

1.50 The Borough contains eight Conservation Areas and over 120 listed buildings, as shown in **Figure 3.2**. Acklam Hall – lying within the ‘Green Heart’ Green Wedge – is Grade I listed, and Albert Park is recognised as a Registered Park and Garden due to its historic interest. However, the key landmark feature of Middlesbrough is arguably the Tees Transporter Bridge, which opened in 1911 and now lies on the edge of the Greater Middlehaven regeneration zone in the northern edge of the Borough. The bridge not only serves as a heritage asset but (when operational) provides a route to the Saltholme Nature Reserve on the northern side of the River Tees.

1.51 However, both Acklam Hall Conservation Area and the town’s

Figure 3.2: Middlesbrough’s Historic Environment and Key Heritage Assets



Historic Quarter are currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register – with the former being highlighted through stakeholder consultation for this Strategy. The stakeholder consultation process carried out for this Strategy also revealed a perception that existing heritage assets are being overlooked due to lack of attention to their setting.

1.52 Part of Middlesbrough's regeneration trajectory will entail the uncovering and re-valuation of the Borough's historic environment assets, helping to establish a sense of distinctiveness and a tangible link with local history. The GBI network plays a central role in this, by providing the setting for heritage assets and creating connections between them and other parts of the Borough. As the Tees Valley GI Strategy highlights, "*many historic features are important in providing normal recreation and enjoyment of open space.*"

1.53 Work is already being done to strengthen the role of heritage assets in the town through the High Streets Heritage Action Zones programme. This work is focussing on reinvigorating the Historic Quarter with its handsome Victorian buildings and includes a significant amount of public realm improvements. Efforts to improve the town centre GBI network should align with work already being done through this programme. Concerns were raised by stakeholders around a need to link heritage assets more effectively (such as Acklam Hall and Ormesby Hall, industrial features such as the Transporter Bridge and the riverside walk) into green space development.

1.54 Middlesbrough's historic environment goes beyond buildings, and touches on the history of the landscape itself. The GBI strategy offers the opportunity to better understand historical land use patterns against a backdrop of a landscape heavily influenced by human activity, and where appropriate to start to 'uncover' natural landscapes and preserve them as part of the network. This might, for example, inform interventions around the historically industrialised Tees River Corridor, and the continued enhancement of the Beck Valleys (see **Theme 5**). However, it can also seek to incorporate

features that give a nod to the Borough's industrial heritage. This helps to reinforce local identity, rather than erode it, when managing change. Preserving these landscapes requires equal levels of attention to that of preserving listed buildings.

Middlesbrough's street tree network

1.55 Trees in urban areas play a number of roles, including removing harmful greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, improving air quality, regenerating soil, providing shelter to wildlife, providing shade during summer and warm temperatures (regulating the urban heat island effect) and enhancing the streetscape. They can also provide visual focus to an area and support high quality, navigable and inspiring urban design and streetscapes.

1.56 Tree cover across the borough is generally low at 11.8% of total land area. There are aspirations within the Council to increase cover to 16%, bringing it more in line with national targets. In late 2019 Middlesbrough Council secured funding from the Urban Tree Challenge (UTC) to plant 1,200 trees across the town, from street trees to community woodlands. This forms part of a wider agenda to plant 10,000 trees across Middlesbrough. These trees are to be targeted in some of the Borough's most deprived wards, including: Newport Park, North Ormesby, Brambles & Thorntree, Berwick Hills & Pallister, and Longlands & Beechwood.

Supporting the visitor economy

1.57 New green spaces or semi-natural spaces can make an important positive contribution to the visitor economy.

1.58 An estimated 10 million visitors visit Middlesbrough each year.² This includes both tourists and business travellers. There is an ambition to grow this, with the Middlesbrough Town Centre Strategy (2019-2023) recommending the launch of a destination marketing campaign. Green routes,



▲ Regenerated public realm around Centre Square.



▲ Murals bring alive Middlesbrough's burgeoning 'independent quarter'.



▲ Acklam Hall, and the Avenue of Trees that create its setting, are key heritage assets in the GBI network. LUC | 016

connections and 'gateways' will form a key part of this offer, in transforming perceptions of Middlesbrough as somewhere to both visit and invest.

1.59 The Riverside Stadium – within the Middlehaven regeneration zone – is a key destination for the Visitor Economy, and forms a key destination within that zone, as well as an important node on various strategic active travel routes, notably the Teesdale Way. Nearby, the Tees Transporter Bridge, as an iconic symbol of the region's engineering heritage, is a draw for tourists and will benefit from any 'green corridors' connecting it with the Station Area and other sites to the north.

1.60 Within the town centre area, the ambitious refurbishment of Middlesbrough Town Hall has provided a premium event space. However, this needs better support from a more inspiring and better-connected wider public realm that reaches beyond the site itself and connects more seamlessly to the regenerated Station as a 'green gateway'.

Growing new jobs: GBI and employment

1.61 The GBI network also has the potential to directly create jobs itself. There are several areas where this can be the case:

- Ecological restoration work;
- Wastewater management;
- Tree planting;
- Forestry and woodland conservation; and
- Horticulture.

1.62 In particular, the UK government's ambitious targets for woodland creation across the country and the local policies which reflect those ambitions, will require skill building in woodland management. It will also present an opening for using land for tree nurseries which can supply planting efforts with local tree stock (which is currently largely imported).

Summary of Key Issues

- Development which has taken place at Middlehaven to date incorporates some valuable areas of landscape and public realm, however, it is currently disjointed and needs to maximise the GBI network and key green routes.
- Middlesbrough's town centre has struggled in recent years as a result of competition from out-of-town centres and, most recently, by the dramatic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The GBI network has a key role to play in ongoing and future efforts to revive the high street and will require collaboration between various actors in both the public and private sectors to support its shifting role.
- Middlesbrough's historic environment, both industrial and otherwise, sits at the heart of the borough's vision for a more sustainable future, and provides an important sense of local identity as well as supporting the visitor economy. However, some of these assets are at risk and there is a sense that they are currently overlooked within the network.
- Tree canopy cover in Middlesbrough's urbanised townscape is low, and street trees will be an important part of the response.
- There is a current perception that heritage assets and key destinations (such as the Riverside Stadium and Tees Transporter Bridge) have great potential to support the Borough's visitor economy but are currently poorly linked together.

Emerging Opportunities

- **RG1:** The GBI network has a key role to play in the next phase of Middlesbrough's regeneration, building on existing interventions within Middlehaven and the town centre to create an ambitious landscape-led regeneration agenda.
- **RG2:** A GBI-led town centre revival, whereby the integration of green and blue features into the public realm helps create a vibrant multi-purpose town centre, to boost 'liveability' and stem urban flight among young people.
- **RG3:** Better integration of historic environment assets into the GBI network to boost accessibility, as well as to draw on precedent from elsewhere to integrate their features into wider 'greener' landscapes.
- **RG4:** Expansion of urban tree canopy cover in order to enhance the public realm, provide attractive places to live and work, and provide functions such as flood resilience and urban cooling.
- **RG5:** Expansion and enhancement of key 'green corridors' and enhanced wayfinding, in order to better link key assets and destinations, and to support the Borough's visitor economy.
- **RG6:** There is an opportunity for investments in the GBI network to create jobs, including in forestry and woodland and in ecological restoration work.



Chapter 4
Theme 2: Biodiversity
and Geodiversity



Chapter 4 Theme 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Middlesbrough is a landscape heavily modified by human activity, and today the landscape presents a unique mosaic ranging from industrial and residential areas to valuable wildlife habitats, particularly along the River Tees Corridor and Beck Valleys. Against the backdrop of a global biodiversity crisis, actions taken under this Strategy should focus on both protecting existing habitats and linking them together to form the basis for a Nature Recovery Network.

A network-led approach

1.63 A network-led approach to understanding the character, distribution and condition of our ecological assets underpins our ability to develop a vision for its recovery. This vision is one of thriving wildlife, which is resilient to the pressures of climate change, and which reflects local character whilst knitting into the wider regional network.

1.64 Key drivers include the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) 2018, which calls for a national Nature Recovery Network as “an expanding and increasingly-connected network of wildlife-rich habitat”, with Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) designed to deliver this at the sub-regional scale. The ambitions of the 25YEP include the creation or restoration of 500,000ha of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site networks by way of supporting “thriving plants & wildlife”. In broad terms, this would roughly translate into the creation of an additional 113 hectares of habitat within Middlesbrough.

1.65 The UK's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) aspires for planning authorities, neighbourhood planning bodies and other partners to “work collaboratively with other partners to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local priorities and evidence”. It states that together “they need to consider the opportunities that individual development proposals may provide to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and contribute to habitat connectivity in the wider area including as part of the Nature Recovery Network”, as described in the 25YEP.

1.66 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also states that ‘planning policies and decisions should “contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...

minimising impacts on and providing measurable net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.”

1.67 This GBI Strategy has an important role in identifying the opportunities to strengthen the nature network, ensuring optimal value for biodiversity and the ecosystem services this provides.

1.68 The ecological character of Middlesbrough is principally driven by the River Tees Corridor and the tributary Beck Valleys landscape areas. Both were identified within the wider Tees Valley network in 2017 (see **Figure 4.1**). Two broad opportunity areas were identified within the borough – in the industrialised north within the meander of the Tees, and in the rural southeast toward Langbaugh Ridge.

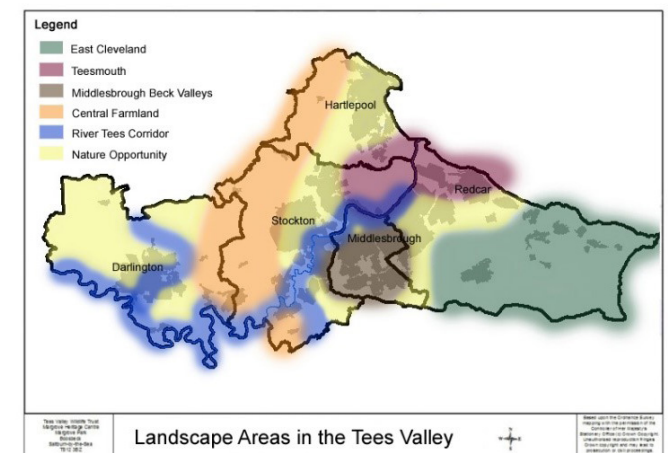


Figure 4.1: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within Middlesbrough as part of the wider Tees Valley network (from Tees Valley Nature Partnership)

1.69 Within the national Natural England nature recovery network mapping shown in **Figure 4.3**:

- Both the Tees corridor north of the A66 and the ancient woodland corridor of Stainsby Beck in the west, are mapped as Network Enhancement Zone 2, indicating land which immediately joins existing habitat patches where habitat creation is likely to help reduce the impacts of fragmentation.
- Extensive stretches of Network Enhancement Zone 1 (unlikely to be suitable for habitat recreation but where other types of land management or GBI interventions may help reduce the effects of fragmentation) extend through the southern belt at Stainton/Thornton in the southwest and through Nunthorpe in the southeast.
- Data on the potential for woodland connections highlights a number of linear areas (largely along the Beck Valleys), which would address habitat fragmentation as well as helping to address flood risk. This is considered further under **Theme 5**.

1.70 Key to the local Nature Recovery Network will be the need to bring habitats into areas which are currently deficient – principally in Middlesbrough these areas include those of the built environment but also those of intensively managed agriculture on the fringes.

Middlesbrough’s existing network of designated sites

1.71 Given its heavily urbanised nature, Middlesbrough has a relatively sparse coverage of sites designated for conservation. However, whilst some may be of local nature conservation value, their value may be elevated owing to the scarcity of local coverage. Connections to sites beyond the Borough’s boundaries are important to consider as part of this Strategy.

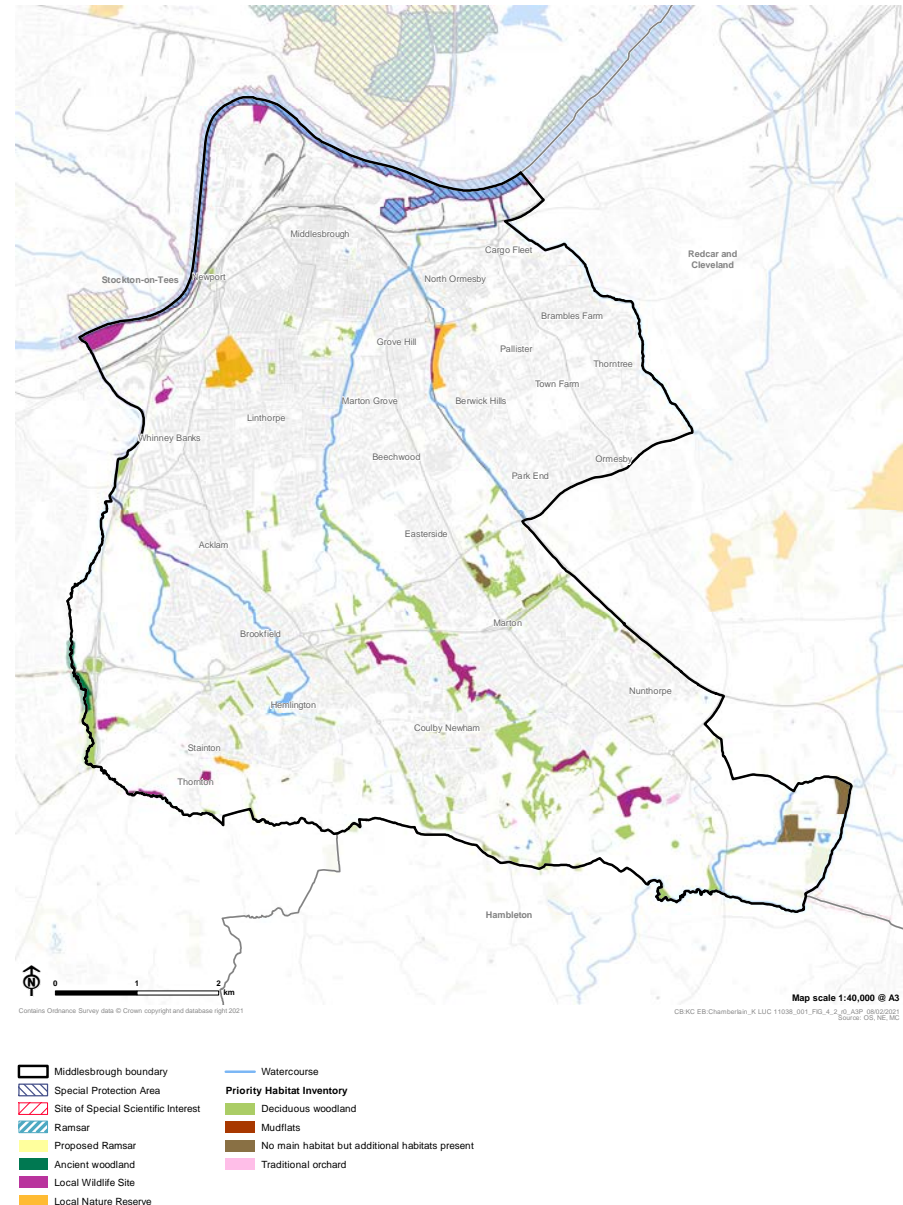
1.72 As shown in **Figure 4.2**, the River Tees, which flows along the northern boundary, is internationally recognised as a wetland, and for the bird assemblage it supports throughout the year. At the south eastern extent, Middlesbrough abuts the Langbaugh Ridge SSSI, identified as being of national geological importance. This is separated from the town by open farmland interspersed with copses and becks.

1.73 Within the Borough, there are nineteen designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and three Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), also shown on **Figure 4.2**. These form an important part of the wider network that supports the internationally designated sites along the Tees Estuary. The majority lie along the Tees but those more widespread include:

- Linthorpe Cemetery LNR and Berwick Hills LNR within the urban heartland, and;
- Stainton Quarry LNR on the southern rural fringe.

1.74 There are no geological designations (such as Local Geological Sites) within the Borough, however features alongside Stainsby Beck lie

Figure 4.2: Biodiversity assets in and around Middlesbrough



on the boundary with neighbouring Stockton Borough.¹

1.75 In 2018/19 the Council reported to DEFRA that 72% of Local Wildlife Sites were under positive management.

River Tees Corridor

1.76 The River Tees Corridor is an important route for community and migrating fauna and home to locally important habitats and species. The river is likely to be an important fly-way for birds, so this is where the greatest ecological returns are likely to be gained.

1.77 The whole of the River Tees along the north borough boundary forms a strategic wildlife corridor, part of the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SSSI, SPA and Ramsar designation which extends out to the coast and north, inland, to wetland habitats within the adjoining Stockton-on-Tees local authority area. The designation was extended in 2020 and forms part of a connected ecological network within the boroughs of Hartlepool, Stockton and Redcar & Cleveland, highlighting the need for cross-boundary cooperation in its enhancement.

“Intertidal habitats are really important. The Tees has been modified over 100 years and much of this habitat has gone. There are opportunities to expand this habitat.”... “The River Tees used to be dead through Middlesbrough. It has improved massively since then and there is scope for more improvement in the long term.”

- Stakeholder comments.

1.78 With the 2020 extension, the Tees Estuary became a single, landscape-scale designation of nearly 3,000 hectares, to support its contribution to the ‘blue belt’ of marine protected areas around England. The protections cover areas of sand dune, saltmarsh, mudflat, grassland, lagoons and estuarial waters, along with the qualifying species they support. As such, it has been described as “one of England’s most

*surprising areas for wildlife”.*²

1.79 There is one sizeable relic of saltmarsh along the old route of the River Tees adjacent to the A19. Stretches of intertidal mudflats are present along the length of the River Tees within the borough boundaries, and there is one site for open mosaic habitat on previously developed land at Maze Park on the southern bank of the River Tees, lying in the west of the Borough.

1.80 The designated habitats in large part depend upon water quality. Middlesbrough Council has a duty to have regard to the Northumbrian River Basin Management Plan and to ensure the protection and improvement in quality of the water environment. This is also in accordance with the overall objective of the Water Framework Directive to achieve “good ecological status” in all water bodies (including surface, ground and coastal waters) and not allow any deterioration from their current status. The water quality of our rivers is now recognised to be a national priority.

1.81 The coastline in the wider area is influenced by dynamic processes of sediment movement. Protection of intertidal habitats through managed realignment has been suggested in previous studies. Opportunities to reinstate and extend intertidal habitats must be considered alongside the Council’s long-term planning for hard and soft flood defences and for silt management.

1.82 The 2007 North East Wetland Feasibility Study³ noted that important wetlands had been subject to significant historical decline through land drainage and development pressures. The Study recognises the role of wetland habitats and soil processes in cycling materials in the aquatic environment and helping to remediate poor water quality. The Study identifies a number of priority areas for wetland restoration taking into account superficial geology, soil, flood, etc, which in Middlesbrough are largely concentrated along the Beck Valleys and on the Borough’s western boundary.



▲ The Tees Corridor viewed from the Teesdale Way.



▲ The Beck Valleys: Marton West Beck North



▲ The Southern Farmland: Stainton Vale.

¹ Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (2018) LWS and LNR in Middlesbrough, references two geological features which fall within the boundary of Stainsby Wood LWS, although these do not form part of the site description.

² Natural England (May 2019), ‘Press release: Estuary wildlife of the River Tees gets increased protection’ [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/estuary-wildlife-of-the-river-tees-gets-increased-protection>

³ Environment Agency & RSPB, 2007.

The Beck Valleys and Southern Farmland Swathe

1.83 Aside from the international importance of the River Tees Corridor, most of the priority habitats and species are located within the Beck Valleys, often in mosaics of different habitats, as shown in **Figure 4.2**. The Becks act as green corridors, providing links from the rural hinterland into the urban area, flowing northwards into the River Tees.

1.84 This mosaic of habitats takes in woodland, wood pasture, meadow and species-rich grasslands. Ancient and semi-natural woodland is present in Stainsby Wood on the slopes of Stainsby Beck along the western borough boundary. Broadleaved mixed woodland is present along Marton West Beck at Fairy Dell, on the steep valley sides of Newham Beck, at Grey Towers Park (formerly Poole Hospital), and in Thornnton Wood south of Hemlington. The quality of woodland is known to be varied, which should be reflected in site-specific recommendations for positive management and the extent of public access, such as Ormesby Beck which in select stretches is subject to excess disturbance. Some steeper valleys, for example, are more species-rich and may best be served by maintaining low levels of disturbance.

1.85 Lowland meadow is present within the complex of Bluebell Beck, although not necessarily managed to optimise biodiversity. Other neutral grasslands that are species-rich are found scattered along the Beck valleys. Reed bed is surprisingly uncommonly recorded; only within the Berwick Hills and Ormesby Beck Complex.

1.86 Outside of the beck valleys, woodland is relatively sparse. Planting opportunities are widespread – ranging from school fields to residential areas. Woodlands planted in the 1990s (including plantation woodland in the beck valleys) are now well-established and would benefit from detailed review to prescribe management, such as creation of glades, selective thinning, further expanding species diversity (to protect against new pests and diseases such as ash die-back) and the delineation of recreational access (to maintain understory structure and groundcover).

1.87 A good number of remnants of both traditional orchards and priority ponds are found scattered across the farmland in the south of the borough. The orchards vary in size and condition and are now maintained mainly for domestic use. The ponds are home to common toad, great crested newt (found in the south west of the borough) and water vole (hotspots for water vole on Marton West Beck, Ormesby Beck and Middlebeck). Otters have been recorded on all becks south of the River Tees around Middlesbrough. The dingy skipper and grayling butterflies are also found in the urban grassland at Maze Park.

Habitat connectivity and the capacity for growth

1.88 Rather than ‘islands of biodiversity’, sites across and beyond the Borough boundaries should be thought of as an ‘ecological network’. To be effective, this network should be “*bigger, better and more joined up*”.⁴ This is important not only to support thriving wildlife now, as aspired to in the 25YEP, but to accommodate an ecological network resilient to climate change. This requires diverse and connected habitats to support the redistribution of species and changing assemblages in response to an increasingly extreme and fluctuating climate.

1.89 Natural England highlights the need to link green corridors in urban areas such as Middlesbrough to form a strategic green infrastructure network, and to address habitat fragmentation. **Figure 4.3** shows that areas of Priority Habitat within Middlesbrough are particularly sparse and isolated currently in the more urbanised north of the borough, despite the presence of extensive areas of important habitat and green space just beyond the Borough boundaries - south toward the North York Moors, north toward Hartlepool, and east toward the coastal areas.

1.90 The Tees Valley GI Strategy (Principal Benefit B3) seeks to maintain and enhance biodiversity and help to reverse

habitat fragmentation by improving the links between sites, as well as helping to cope with the effects of climate change through the creation of new and/or compensatory habitats.

1.91 The emergence of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as part of the Draft Environment Bill offers the opportunity for securing biodiversity enhancements as part of future development, helping to contribute to a Nature Recovery Network. The requirement for 10% BNG and legacy for 30 years management, is stipulated in the Draft Bill is anticipated to become mandatory in late 2022. The network approach to support thriving wildlife, together with the need to deliver BNG alongside development, will be a vital component of the GBI Strategy.

1.92 Local policy regarding BNG should recognise the value of intertidal habitats. Acknowledging the difficulty in creating these locally distinct habitats, and potentially allowing these to score highly, should not only safeguard their protection but incentivise strategic enhancement of the network.

“Scrub land often gets removed for something that is considered to be ‘better’.”

- Stakeholder comment.

Permeability – of people and places

1.93 The issue of habitat fragmentation and isolation is greatest within the dense urban areas of Middlesbrough. This restricted permeability applies not only to wildlife within the built environment, but to local residents able to benefit from access to nature. The latest draft of the evolving BNG standard requires a social component to the valuation of biodiversity.⁵ This is of particular relevance to Middlesbrough in assessing current and future social need for a proposed development and applies to both terrestrial and freshwater habitats.

⁴ The Lawton Review (2010), commissioned by the government as an independent review of the country’s wildlife sites, and which continues to underpin the approach to the design and delivery of nature networks today.

⁵ Draft BS8683: ‘Process for Designing & Implementing BNG’.

Support for urban pollinators

1.94 The UK's National Pollinator Strategy (2014) highlights the importance of the country's pollinators in underpinning our wider ecosystems and describes their decline in numbers and diversity in recent years. It asks for the public, landowners, voluntary groups, businesses and local authorities to do their part to help halt the decline. Note that encouragement for pollinators is to support, not detract from, the pressing needs to address declining floristic diversity in grasslands across the borough.

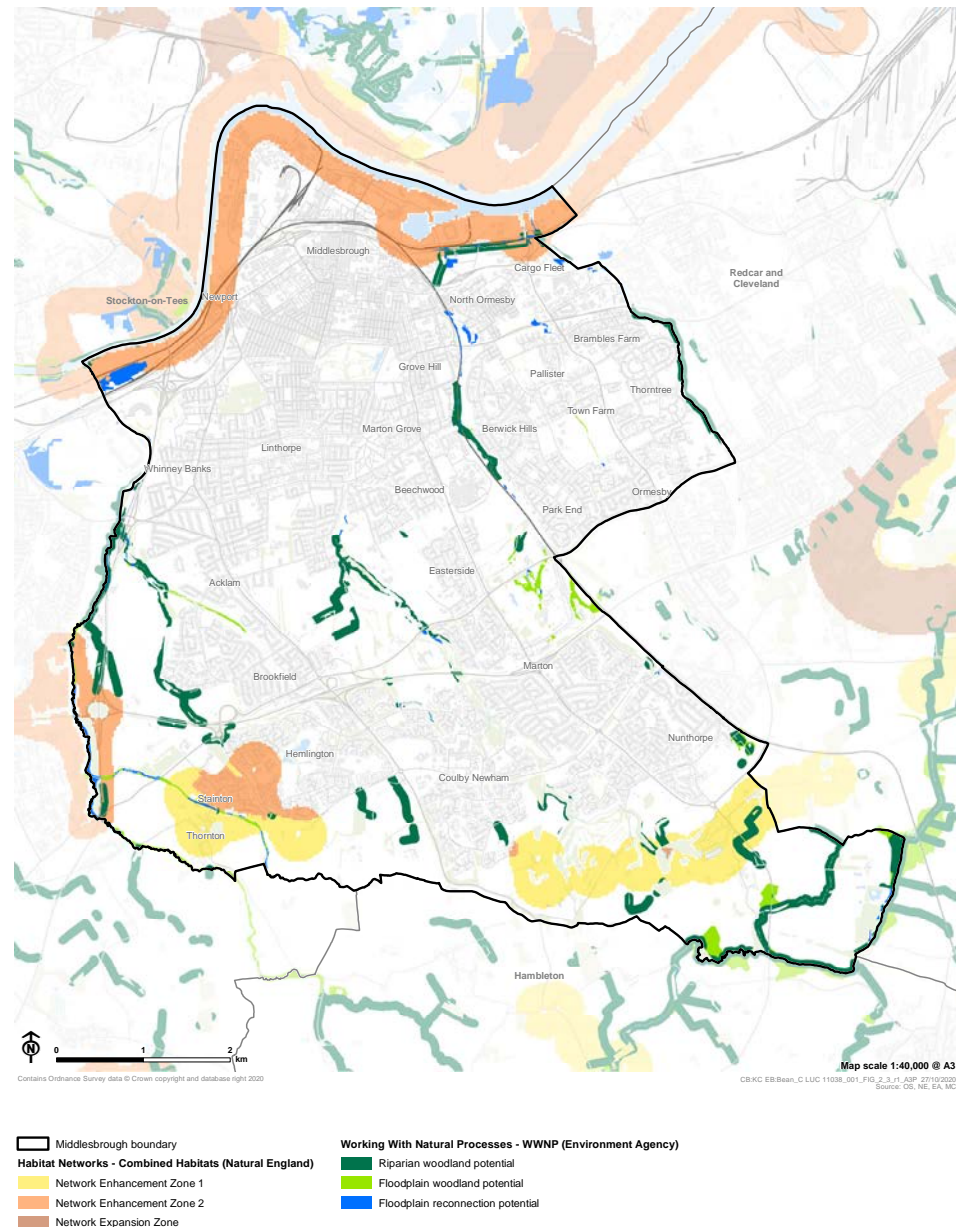
1.95 The 2014 Strategy seeks to achieve “more, bigger, better, joined-up, diverse and high-quality flower-rich habitats (including nesting places and shelter) supporting our pollinators across the country.” Lower intensity management to encourage structural and species diversity is also integral to encouraging pollinators. This corresponds to the term ‘messiness’ in current guidance for developing nature networks.⁶ Recognising that this ‘rewilding’ approach means green spaces (particularly grassland and scrub) will look different throughout the seasons, requires support through education and engagement with local communities – urban or agricultural – to foster ownership.

“Education is key - areas of bramble and overgrown look unsightly for people but are great habitats. Notices explaining that areas are left for wildlife should be put up. Scrub land is really important; mosaics of habitat are key.”

- Stakeholder comment

1.96 Given the highly urbanised nature of Middlesbrough, it will be important to identify parts of the townscape where pollinator habitats and corridors can be woven into the urban realm - to link between existing sites, such as the herb-rich, calcareous grassland at Teessaurus Park, and to support wider ecosystems. These corridors should, where possible, provide links to the cross-boundary Buglife B-lines.⁷ Positive management to benefit flora and pollinators has been carried out in cemeteries (such as Linthorpe) as well as roadside habitats (including the A19 and Parkway) across Middlesbrough in recent years, targeting various species or conservation objectives. In partnership with the

Figure 4.3: Ecological connection opportunities in Middlesbrough



⁶ Natural England (2020) Research Report: Nature Networks Evidence Handbook. NERR081. 'Messiness' is referred to as one of the 'rules of thumb'

⁷ Buglife (n.d), Our Work: B-Lines [Online] Available at: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>

Council, Thirteen Housing Group is delivering a programme of over 35,000m² wildflower grassland through collaboration in providing equipment, raw materials and resourcing. Provision of 10,000 fruit trees is also in progress to complement the Borough-wide tree planting programme led by Groundwork.

“The highest profile green spaces are road verges and shared green spaces. These should be given a high priority - to celebrate cultural heritage and as clear signal of the town’s future green agenda.”

- Stakeholder comment.

“There is an issue of the ‘short back and sides’ cut. Acceptance could be improved with more public/councillor education. Education is key - untidiness is reported and then addressed by the council.”

- Stakeholder comment.

Summary of Key Issues

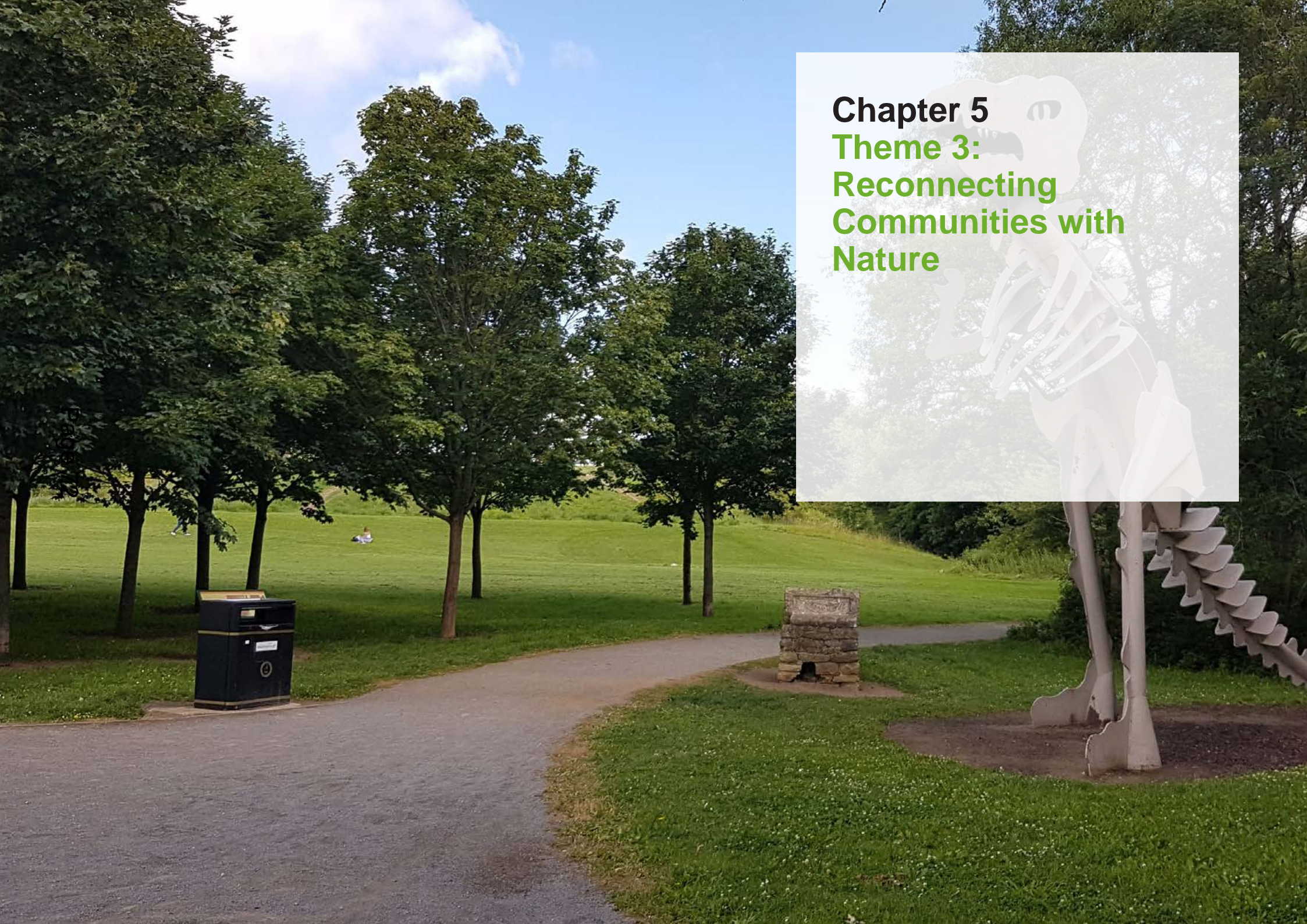
- The Tees Valley River Corridor has been industrialised and modified in the past but is still home to many important and vulnerable habitat types. The protections cover areas of sand dune, saltmarsh, mudflat, grassland, lagoons and estuarial waters, along with the populations they support.
- The Beck Valleys provide a focus for the Borough's priority habitats and species, and form important green corridors integrating urban and rural areas.
- Across the north of the Borough, the built environment dominates, leaving a relatively impoverished ecological resource. The nature, extent and connectivity of ecological features present is typically limited, so the ecosystem function is inherently restricted to some degree.
- In the south east of the Borough, semi-natural habitats are more extensive, however expansion and connectivity, both within and outside the Borough, are still required.
- Creating connections between isolated patches of biodiversity will support the Nature Recovery Network to provide greater resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Our national decline in pollinators requires action from Local Authorities in providing well-connected and high-quality pollinator habitats through both the urbanised and intensively farmed landscapes within Middlesbrough.

- The delivery of local off site Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in a geographically constrained borough will be challenging at larger scales. Key consideration should be given to the strategic delivery of net gain through the intertidal reach and associated wetland habitats, and to the increasingly intensively farmed southern rural belt.
- Educational resources play an important role in gaining acceptance of changes to the landscape to improve habitat value.

Emerging Opportunities

- **BD1:** Protection and restoration of important habitats in the Tees River Corridor, linking into the regeneration of Middlehaven. Supporting peripheral areas include tributary watercourses and wetland which may offer opportunity for habitat creation associated with soft engineering for flood defence.¹
- **BD2:** Restoration of the Beck Valleys as green corridors with more robust supporting habitat for target species in the Borough, along with interpretation resources to enhance understanding of importance.
- **BD3:** Better integration of 'stepping stone' habitats as part of the roll out of urban greening. Opportunities remain in the regeneration of residential areas such as Gresham and Grove Hill, and in association with biodiverse brownfield sites, particularly where this serves to span transport corridors. This might include planting of street trees in association with traffic calming measures, urban SuDS, as well as retro fitting green architecture (walls, roofs and screens).
- **BD4:** Identification and understanding of key 'gaps' in habitat corridors, to inform the Nature Recovery Network, including across Borough boundaries. For example, the need to relate to farm owners and managers across the southern belt, which transitions out toward the wider rural landscape.
- **BD5:** Re-invigorating the drive to redefine how areas of urban grassland and scrub (including roadside verges and parkland) are managed to provide greater resources and connectivity for pollinators and other fauna.

¹ Note that such opportunities need to be led by discussion with the Council flood defence team to coordinate efforts between habitat creation or designation and the long-term planning of hard and soft flood defences.

A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, a paved path curves from the bottom left towards the center. To the left of the path is a black trash can. In the middle ground, a stone fire pit sits on a small patch of ground. To the right, a large, white, stylized dinosaur skeleton sculpture stands on a circular base. The background features a lush green lawn, several tall trees, and a blue sky with light clouds. A person is visible sitting on the grass in the distance.

Chapter 5
Theme 3:
Reconnecting
Communities with
Nature



Chapter 5

Theme 3: Reconnecting Communities with Nature

The success of Middlesbrough's vision for the future relies not only on inward investment, but also on creating 'liveable neighbourhoods'. This will bring a focus on the need for access to high quality green spaces of various types within urban areas, to support health and wellbeing. In the 21st century, this will mean responding to the need for a reconnection with nature from an early age – including where our food comes from – and for rebuilding pride in place and creating an open space network that serves all generations and communities.

1.97 Middlesbrough's ambitious physical and economic regeneration aims are outlined under **Theme 1**. However, it is vital that there is a robust, people-focused approach to social regeneration which is built on an agenda of transformational placemaking.

1.98 One of key aims of the wider Tees Valley GI Strategy revolves around the links between green infrastructure and 'liveability', which it describes as "essentially about creating places where people choose to live and work", attracting people as well as business.

1.99 The GBI network should also underpin the health and wellbeing of those already living in the Borough, particularly given the acute challenges that Middlesbrough faces in health and wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing – narrowing the gap

1.100 There is a notable gap between the health level of Middlesbrough residents and the national average, as well as a gap between certain neighbourhoods within Middlesbrough.

1.101 This is a crucial challenge for the GBI network to address, given that emerging research is finding an increasingly robust link between environmental quality and public health, and which identifies poverty as a health risk.¹ Particularly in areas of high deprivation, the green and blue network can play a vital role in regulating the core 'environmental stressors' that disproportionately fall on the poorest communities in the UK.

"We will work with communities to improve local health and wellbeing, focusing in particular on tackling obesity, poor mental health and substance misuse."

- Middlesbrough Strategic Plan (2020-2023)

Physical health

1.102 On the Health Deprivation and Disability sub-domain of the UK's Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019), Middlesbrough is ranked as the 6th most deprived local authority in the country.. This deprivation is mirrored in the health of residents. From 2016-18 life expectancy at birth in Middlesbrough stood at 75.3 for males (against a national average of 79.3) and 80 for women (against an average of 82.9). For males, this figure has actually been in decline since 2011-2012.²

1.103 As can be seen from **Figure 5.1**, socio-economic deprivation in Middlesbrough is concentrated in the north and east of the Borough, where the existing green and open space network is also at its weakest.

1.104 In terms of physical activity, Middlesbrough's Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) identifies that 27.3% of residents aged 16+ are inactive, slightly above the national level (25.6%). In particular, it highlights spatial 'hotspots' of inactivity in North Ormesby, Berwick Hills and Coulby Newham.

1.105 One priority in tackling poor health is to increase opportunities for exercise and encourage more active lifestyles. There are some existing resources available in Middlesbrough to encourage walking for health, including

¹ Centric Lab (2020), 'Covid-19 and Biological Inequality; a London Data Study'. [Online] Available: <https://www.thecentriclab.com/covid-19-poverty-a-london-data-study>

² ONS (2019), 'Life expectancy (LE) at birth and age 65 by sex, UK, 2001 to 2003 to 2016 to 2018'.

a Heritage and Health Trail at Linthorpe cemetery and a pack of Health Walks provided by the Council.

“The opportunities to benefit from spending time in the natural environment are currently not open to everyone, which can contribute to health and other inequalities”

- Natural England.³

Mental health

1.106 A 2018 report by Public Health England reasserts that protecting and improving our mental health is as important as protecting and improving our physical health.⁴ There is also a growing body of evidence finding strong links between access to nature and both our physical and mental wellbeing, particularly in largely urbanised societies like that of the UK.⁵

1.107 The PHE report highlights some challenges which apply in particular to the north east, including: the mental health of pregnant women and new mothers; vulnerabilities among children; and higher levels of substance misuse and self-harm than average. It calls for a *“more integrated approach to population health, tackling the determinants of poor physical and mental health.”*

1.108 Most recently, the global Covid-19 crisis beginning in 2020 highlighted the importance of both access to nature and resilient communities in overcoming challenging times.

3 Natural England (2017), ‘Good practice in social prescribing for mental health: the role of nature-based interventions’.

4 PHE (2018) ‘State of the North East 2018: Public Mental Health and Wellbeing’.

5 White et al (2019), ‘Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing’, *Nature Journal: Scientific Reports*, 9.

Communities have turned to natural spaces and the open space network to exercise, for solace and for stress relief, particularly where private open space is limited. Open space and nature’s importance as a restorative influence has become starker than ever.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has given us a real emphasis on how to value and use outdoor spaces, for example for park walks or a book club held outside. The drive is coming from the community.”

- Stakeholder comment

1.109 The existing ‘ExtraLife’ initiative, managed by Middlesbrough Council, supports the promotion of health and wellbeing within various organisations, and is an important platform for future activity.

Air quality

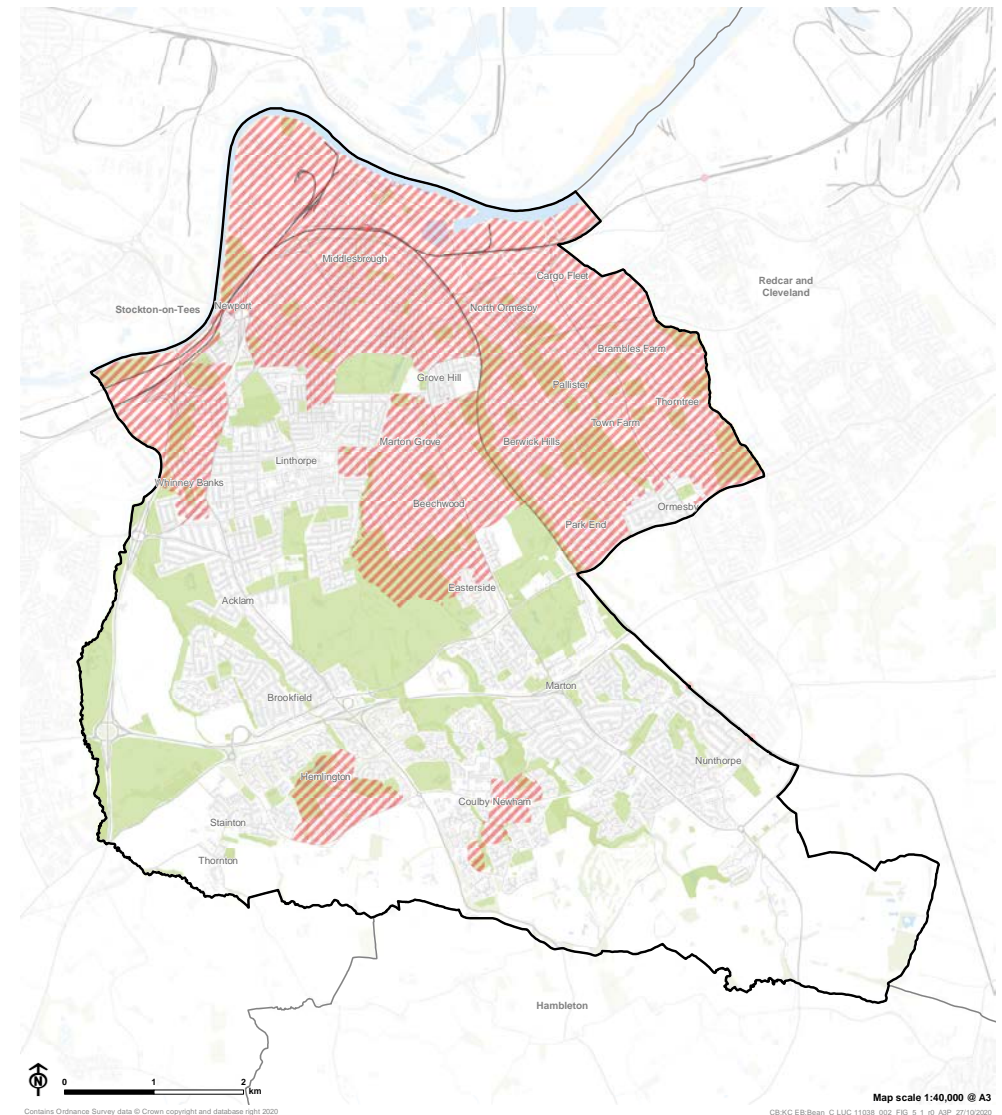
1.110 Evidence from Public Health England (PHE) has highlighted poor air quality as the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, which also highlights interventions such as active travel routes and well-designed urban greening schemes as key ways to mitigate the impact.⁶ Historically, poor air quality was a legacy of Middlesbrough’s industrial activity. However, today the key source of air pollution is traffic related.

1.111 There are no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) currently in Middlesbrough and PM¹⁰ concentrations do not currently exceed legal limits for the UK or EU.⁷

6 Public Health England (2019), Review of interventions to improve outdoor air quality and public health. -

7 Current limits for PM¹⁰ (particulate matter) in the UK are an annual mean of 40µg/m³. See: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/Air_Quality_Objectives_Update.pdf

Figure 5.1: Deprivation patterns in Middlesbrough



Middlesbrough boundary
 Green infrastructure asset
 0-10% most deprived (IMD)

However **Figure 5.3** highlights a number of air pollution ‘hotspots’ across the Borough, largely concentrated around:

- The A19 and A66 road networks in the west of the Borough (and to a lesser extent the A172 in the south);
- The denser north of the Borough, surrounding the town centre and residential/industrial areas such as North Ormesby.

The state of Middlesbrough’s green space network

Overview

1.112 The health and wellbeing of communities is underpinned by the green space network they have access to and whether there are any barriers in place to accessing that network. All communities should be able to gain easy access to areas of green space on their doorstep.

1.113 Middlesbrough benefits from some highly valued and successful green spaces – particularly the Borough’s historic Parks and Gardens and the Beck Valleys, which act as linear green spaces. However, given the urbanised nature of the landscape within the Borough’s boundaries, there is a need to maximise benefits from existing green spaces. In particular, **Figure 5.1** illustrates the fragmented nature of the GBI network running northwest to southeast and the lack of connectivity linking the southeast to the northeast.

1.114 The Borough’s 2017 Open Space Needs Assessment highlights some areas of decline in the quality of green spaces since 2012, with the exception of parks and public gardens (such as Albert Park and Stewart Park) and the Beck Valleys. The quality deficit is largely found in the ‘in between’ spaces which are generally amenity and natural green spaces, play areas and youth activity areas.

1.115 The Middlesbrough Open Space Needs Assessment (2017) highlights that there is a total of 998 hectares of Open Space in the Borough, of which 77% is publicly accessible. This network of spaces is shown in **Figure 5.2**, where the

varying condition of those spaces is also highlighted. One of the key considerations of Middlesbrough’s green space network is not necessarily the quantitative provision but the quality and condition of those green spaces. While a number of parks are in good condition and highly valued by the local community, the Open Space Needs Assessment shows that some areas of green space are currently under-valued, poor in quality and in many cases used for fly-tipping and a focus of anti-social behaviour.

1.116 More specifically, the assessment indicates that whilst more formal parks and gardens are kept in good condition and highly valued, there is an urgent need for greater attention to the more dispersed areas of amenity green space which are woven into the urban fabric of the town, supporting the Parks and Gardens as part of the wider network.

“We have a legacy of ‘landscape planting’ that is not performing for wellbeing.”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.117 The Housing Local Plan (2014) outlines a planned network of multi-functional green space and inter-connecting links. These are illustrated on **Figure 5.2** and broadly consist of:

- The Green Wedges (including Middlesbrough’s ‘green lung’ dividing the east and west of the borough);
- A series of high-quality public parks in urban areas (including Stewart Park, Albert Park);
- The Beck Valleys;
- The River Tees Frontage (including the Teesdale Way walking route and series of parks including Teessaurus Park and Maze Park); and
- The “country park” to be delivered around the Stainsby development on the borough’s western boundary.



▲ Lake area within Albert Park, a highly valued formal green space

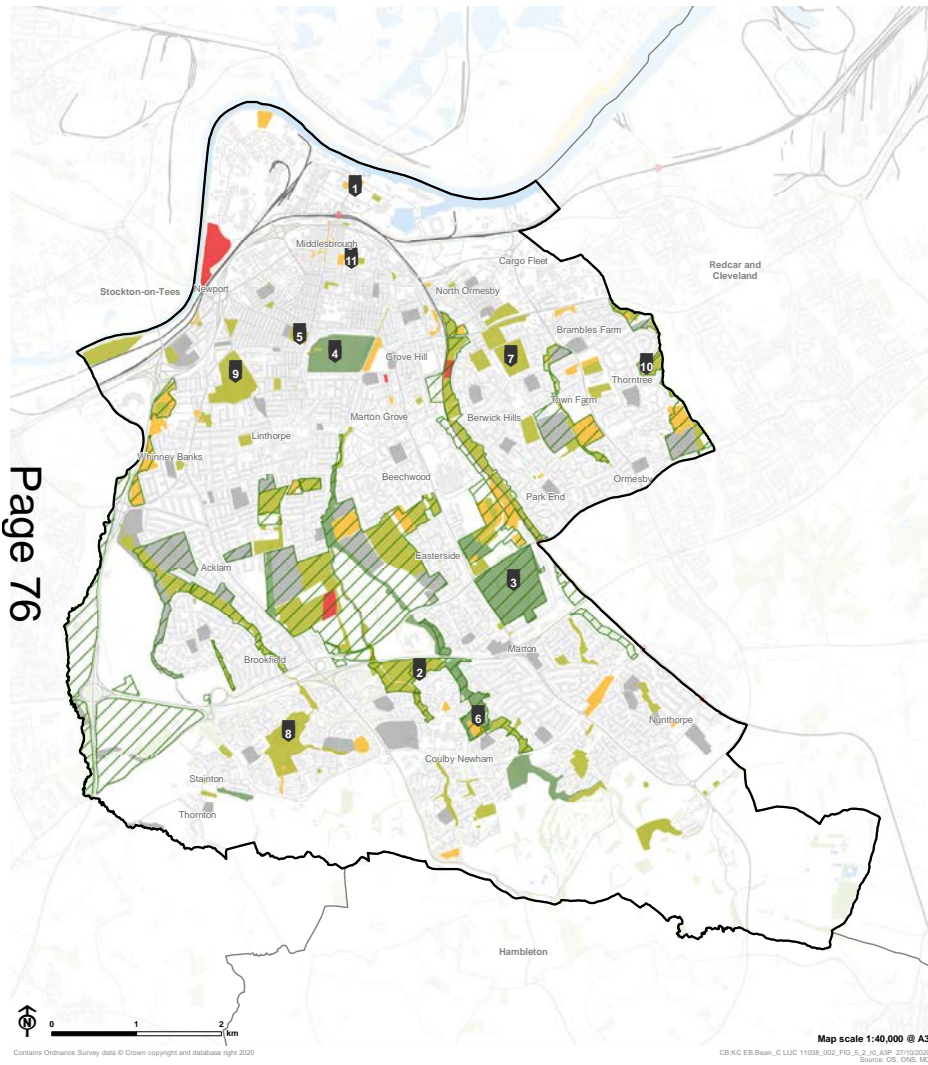


▲ Hemlington Lake in the south of the Borough provides a recreational resource, but there is room for enhancement.



▲ Entrance to Middlehaven Urban Park - an example of high quality green space within an urbanised area.

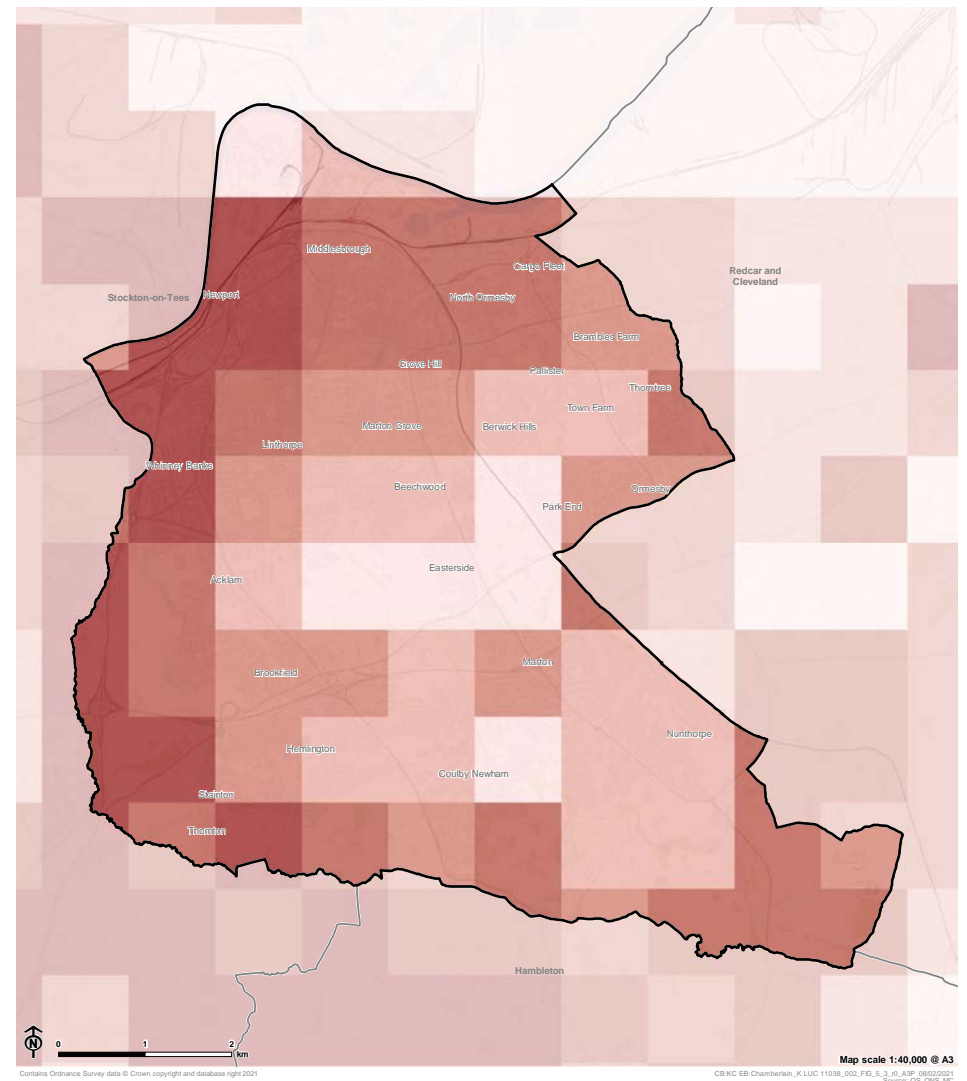
Figure 5.2: Middlesbrough's green space network and condition



Page 76

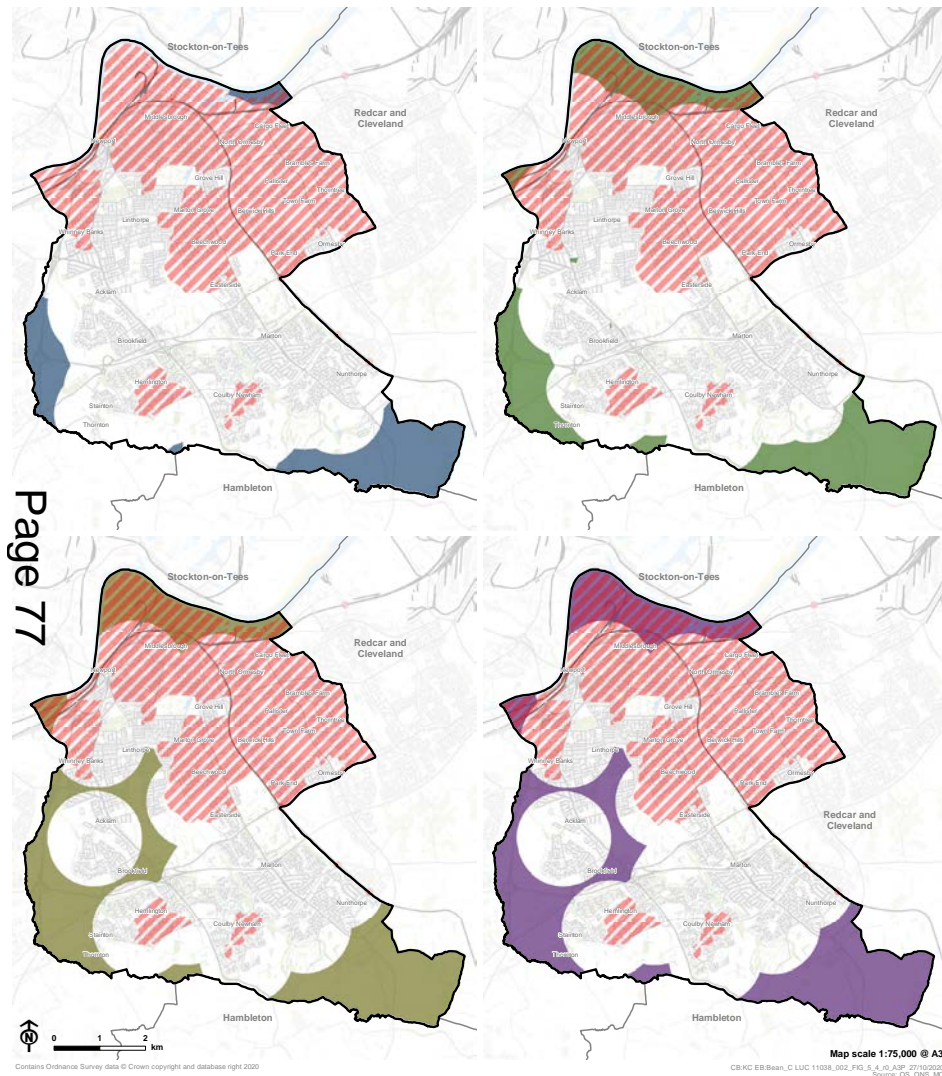
- Middlesbrough boundary
- Green wedge
- Condition of green space**
 - 1. Exceptional
 - 2. Very good / Excellent
 - 3. Fair / Good
 - 4. Poor / Very poor
 - No data
- Key public spaces**
 - 1. Middlehaven Urban Park
 - 2. Newham Grange Farm
 - 3. Stewart Park
 - 4. Albert Park
 - 5. Ayresome Gardens
 - 6. Fairy Dell Nature Reserve
 - 7. Pallister Park
 - 8. Hemlington Lake
 - 9. Linthorpe Cemetery
 - 10. Thorntree Park
 - 11. Centre Square

Figure 5.3: Air pollution hotspots in Middlesbrough



- Middlesbrough boundary
- Air Quality PM10 (ug/m³ gravimetric)**
 - 10.3 - 11.4 (low PM10 = better air quality)
 - 11.4 - 11.8
 - 11.8 - 12.2
 - 12.2 - 12.9
 - 12.9 - 14.9 (high PM10 = poorer air quality)

Figure 5.4: Deprivation and access to green space in Middlesbrough



Page 77

- Middlesbrough boundary
- 0-10% most deprived (MD)
- Areas of inaccessibility to green spaces**
- Parks and public gardens deficit
- Amenity and natural green space deficit
- Play areas deficit
- Youth activity deficit

Green wedges

- 1.118** Middlesbrough contains a network of designated Green Wedges, which act as ‘green fingers’ reaching from the countryside into urban areas, providing recreational space.
- 1.119** The Green Wedges Assessments (2017-18) highlights in particular the ‘Green Heart’ wedge as an interconnected network of open space in the centre of the built-up area, and as an important part of the ‘green link network’ running along Bluebell Beck. **Figure 5.3** illustrates the impact this space has on managing local levels of air pollution.
- 1.120** These areas may be important target locations for the delivery of community woodlands and an associated range of sustainable leisure opportunities for urban dwellers and tourists, including environmental education.

Provision by type of open space

- 1.121** **Table 5.1** outlines the quantitative provision of the major types of open space in Middlesbrough.
- 1.122** **Box 5.1** on the following pages gives a brief overview and assessment of the major



A bench in the Fairy Dell nature reserve not only provides an opportunity to rest for less mobile members of the community, but also an opportunity for public art.

types of green space present in Middlesbrough.

The complex barriers to accessing green space in Middlesbrough

1.123 While accessibility mapping is important, the distance from one’s home is only one way of assessing opportunities for what is known as ‘nature exposure’. True accessibility involves a complex set of interrelated factors, which Natural England seeks to address through its ‘Outdoors for All programme’.

“The green spaces are there, but the question is the quality and how comfortable people feel”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.124 Evidence suggests that opportunities to benefits from spending time in the natural environment are currently not open to everyone, which can contribute to health and other inequalities. Surveys have highlighted significantly lower engagement among BAME groups, the ‘urban deprived’ population and unskilled workers and the long-term unemployed. The first two of these groups held the least positive views toward the natural environment. Barriers highlighted included:

- Being too busy at work or home.
- Limited access to cars and expense of travel.
- Poor health.⁸

1.125 In areas such as Middlesbrough, with high levels of socio-economic deprivation, this further highlights the need for high quality green space within walking distance and creating habits of engagement in nature from an early age, potentially with the collaboration of local schools.

1.126 Existing studies consistently highlight concerns over abuse of public spaces and problems of anti-social

behaviour in public spaces and the green space network. In Middlesbrough, the Landscape and Heritage Assessment (2016) also highlights several areas of the network which appear to be vulnerable to anti-social behaviour, representing a key barrier to access. This concern was echoed by key stakeholders consulted. However, despite these challenges, it does not naturally follow that the response should be to remodel without features – such as seating, shade or other amenities – which might attract disruption. Despite ‘fear factors’, the methods to counter the problem do not necessarily have to result in sterile, alienating places, but instead might benefit from greater public involvement in design and planning of spaces.⁹

“The Beck Valleys are well used, however there is some misuse such as littering and motorbikes... I would like to see beck clean ups led by communities... help them to understand it so they protect it.”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.127 In order to encourage use of the town’s GBI network, the positive promotion of the network among a diverse range of communities, and through various channels, will be crucial.

A ‘whole community’ approach

1.128 There is an identified need in Middlesbrough to improve health and social inclusion and to offer opportunities for all to take part in exercise outdoors, particularly those from low income families. However, a key part of this challenge will be ensuring that the green space network, and the GBI network more generally, caters to all age and socio-economic groups and their diverse needs.

1. Space for young children

1.129 The *One Planet Living* framework includes as a ‘priority action’ initiatives to improve the emotional resilience of children and young people, in part through improving access

to ‘positive activities’. This Strategy argues that opportunities for nature-based, self-led play have a central part in achieving these objectives.

1.130 A further opportunity will be through strengthening the role of schools in providing opportunities to engage with the natural environment.

2. ‘Teenspace’

1.131 Around 12% of Middlesbrough’s population are currently between the ages of 10-19 (slightly higher than the national average).

1.132 While many of the challenges faced by young people in Middlesbrough are mirrored throughout the country, the levels of deprivation in Middlesbrough make these challenges more

| Space type | Target provision (per person) | Performance against target (2017) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Parks and Public Gardens | 13.5 sqm/capital | -0.5 sqm/capital |
| Amenity and natural green space | 29.91 sqm/capita | -4.91 sqm/capita |
| Youth activity areas | 351.0 sqm/1,000 | -51 sqm/capita |
| Allotments | 19.7 allotments/1,000 | -5.7 allotments/1,000 |
| Play areas | 0.34 sqm/capita | N/A |

Table 5.1: Open space provision by typology in Middlesbrough (from 2017 OSN assessment)

⁸ Natural England (2012), ‘Monitor of engagement with the natural environment survey (2009-12)’, [Online] Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4646400?category=6502695238107136>

⁹ Project for Public Spaces (December 2007), ‘Safety and security in public space’ [Online] Available at: <https://www.pps.org/article/safetysecurity>

Box 5.1: Types of open spaces in the Borough



Flagship spaces: Parks, gardens and civic green spaces

The Borough's Open Spaces assessment found 34 parks and gardens of varying sizes and quality, with 7 awarded Green Flag status for 2020. The majority of spaces are considered to be of high quality and good value.

Urban parks like Albert Park and Stewart Park are highly valued assets. Both are municipal parks of the late 19th century and have been identified as key nodes within Middlesbrough's GBI network

Runners in Stewart Park



Wilder spaces: semi-natural green spaces

The provision of natural and semi-natural green spaces within urban areas are important as a supplement to more formal parks and as an opportunity for communities to experience wildlife and natural environments 'on their own doorstep'.

The Beck Valleys are an important part of this network, with 14 becks across the Borough. They are considered to offer good/excellent value, but only fair/good quality.

In addition, there are three Local Nature Reserves (LNR): Berwick Hills, Linthorpe Cemetery and Stainton Quarry. These sites are considered to be of high quality and high value.

Footpaths along Middlesbrough's Beck Valley network.



'On your doorstep' spaces: amenity green spaces

There are 32 amenity spaces in the Borough, the majority of which are within a 750m catchment area of residential areas. The majority are considered excellent or very good for quality and value.

However the Borough's Open Space assessment found that these more dispersed areas of amenity green space require greater attention as part of the network, supporting the role of the more prominent Parks and Gardens, such as Albert Park and Stewart Park, in providing space for recreation closer to home.

Landscaped amenity space within the University Quarter



Space for play

There are a total of 27 play areas in the Borough, however the Open Spaces Assessment notes that the quality and value of them are declining over time. Building on emerging evidence of the value of self-led, nature-based play opportunities, there is also potential to 'rethink' play provision to conceive of play areas as multifunctional GBI assets. This would require a new, more ambitious approach to play provision, that goes beyond minimum standards, looks beyond the boundaries of the playground itself, and helps to increase children's' understanding of nature through play, as advocated by Play England.

Similar declines in quality and value is identified for sports and recreation centres, and various types of sport pitches.

◀ Logs near Hemlington Lake provide opportunities for natural play.



Cemeteries and crematoriums

Cemeteries and crematoriums are a distinctive typology of green space which are valued as places for quiet reflection, as green spaces, for their wildlife interest and for their heritage value.

There are a total of 12 sites across the Borough, the majority of which are considered to be in very good or excellent and improving quality.

◀ Linthorpe Cemetery has been listed as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) since 2003 and has great value for its recreational, biodiversity and heritage functions.

difficult to address.

1.133 Research has shown that, while teenagers have great need for access to natural landscapes (at a time when they are actively establishing their values, attitudes and behaviours), they are often actively excluded from those places through design, policy and society's ambivalence toward them. Open spaces designed specifically for teens are uncommon. Addressing the challenge of teen-centric design is likely to revolve around engagement as an alternative to the inclusion/exclusion framework.¹⁰

3. Young people and young families: supporting the 'urban living' agenda

1.134 There is a desire to focus more of future home-building in the central areas of the Borough as part of an 'urban living' agenda, in order to safeguard green space in the south. However, it has been recognised that the current green space offer for people wishing to live in the centre of Middlesbrough is limited, and does not fulfil the needs of younger, aspirational people. This also detracts from the ability to attract inward investment, particularly around central regeneration zones such as Middlehaven and the University

Quarter.

1.135 In order to meaningfully encourage young people and families to choose to settle in central Middlesbrough, there will need to be a significant and ambitious push to weave GBI assets into a revived town centre (and surroundings), which will underpin the 'liveability' of these neighbourhoods. This is considered further through **Theme 1**.

4. Adapting for those growing older

1.136 The most recent population projections for Middlesbrough predict an overall population decline of

¹⁰ Burssoni, M et al (2018), 'Teens in public spaces and natural landscapes: Issues of access and design', in Handbook of Adolescent Development Research and its Impact on Global Policy (Chapter 18). Oxford University Press.

just over 1% by 2043. However, that stability in population masks a dramatic shift in the demographic makeup of Middlesbrough's residents, with an 86% rise in those aged over 90, and significant growth in all those over 70.

"We need evenly spaced benches on these routes where older people can take a rest, particularly in the south of the Borough."

- Stakeholder comment.

1.137 Evidence from Natural England illustrates that those aged 65 and over are less likely to visit green spaces than the rest of the population, despite enjoyment in doing so, largely because of physical disabilities. They are also less likely to have access to a car.¹¹

1.138 These shifts must be catered for in how the Borough provides green spaces and networks for local communities. Further evidence from Natural England identifies particular barriers to accessing green space for those suffering from dementia – including cost of access, risk aversion and lack of awareness of needs.¹²

Building on the strength of communities

1.139 The GBI network can be a significant source of opportunity for community cohesion, and the Tees Valley GI Strategy urges "*opportunities for greater community involvement*". Where people take an active part in their community, they can raise community value and 'buy in', improve safety and provide reassurance, with the community then better able to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. As such, GBI assets tend to be at their most successful where local communities are engaged in their design, implementation and management from the outset. Middlesbrough's *One Planet Living* framework

Community groups are frequently involved in enhancing and maintaining the GBI network. Here, a group gathers following apple picking at the orchards within the Nature's World site. Photo source: Friends of Nature's World.



seeks to increase the involvement of residents in the local environment, in part by supporting the Green Spaces Community Forum and in the development of future schemes.

1.140 The stakeholder consultation process carried out for this Strategy highlighted the strength and breadth of community groups contributing to expanding and maintaining the GBI network, as well as a desire for a greater joining up of the "patchwork of groups" through improved communication of projects and a healthier working relationship with the authorities. It was felt that a greater level of trust and autonomy to "*get on with it*" would be a positive. It was also highlighted that the less affluent areas of town have relatively little input into green strategies.

"Could these things be done on a bigger scale? More joined up efforts for funding and sharing of knowledge?"... "when funding finishes, agencies walk away. We need to build resilience into the community to keep going."

- Stakeholder comments.

1.141 Against a backdrop of pressure on public resources and funding, councils and other organisations can draw on community resources, where appropriate, to 'multiply' the impacts of limited resources. Local communities will play an increasingly important role in the delivery of GBI projects.

¹¹ Natural England (2012), 'Monitor of engagement with the natural environment survey (2009-12)', [Online] Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4646400?category=6502695238107136>

¹² Natural England (2013), 'Greening Dementia: A literature review of the benefits and barriers facing individuals living with dementia in accessing the natural environment and local greenspace.'

Summary of Key Issues

- Middlesbrough suffers from high levels of health deprivation compared to the national average, and disparities in life expectancy and health measures across the Borough largely mirror patterns of socio-economic deprivation.
- Middlesbrough's place in the national 'mental health crisis' calls for a more integrated approach to tackling the determinants, particularly among low-income families, and the GBI network has an important and positive role to play based on emerging research.
- High levels of traffic-related air pollution from the transport network represent a threat to health and wellbeing, particularly at localised 'hotspots' which are largely concentrated around major road infrastructure.
- Middlesbrough is heavily urbanised and as such must maximise the benefits from each area of green space. Historic loss of green space to development has left gaps in the town's 'green lung'.
- While there is relatively strong provision of public parks and gardens per capita in Middlesbrough, there are shortfalls in the provision per capita of amenity and natural green space, youth activity areas and allotments, when considered against local benchmarks.
- Most parts of the Borough lie within acceptable distance of the various types of green space. However, deficits are concentrated around Greater Middlehaven which will need to be addressed as the area becomes more residential in character.
- The condition of green spaces across the Borough

varies significantly. While public parks and gardens are in relatively good condition, quality is often poor and in decline at local amenity spaces, play areas and youth activity areas. Fly-tipping has been highlighted as a local problem.

- There are complex barriers to accessing the green space network in Middlesbrough, which go beyond mere distance from home and means of transport.
- There is a need for the green space network to be thoughtfully designed to cater for the diverse needs of Middlesbrough residents at all 'life stages', including children, teenagers, and the elderly (particularly given projections of an ageing population).

Emerging Opportunities

- **RC1:** Enhancement, expansion and improved connectivity of the town's green space network as a physical/mental health and wellbeing resource.
- **RC2:** Expansion of 'urban greening' features to combat air pollution, including street trees, hedging and other features.
- **RC3:** Creation and expansion of attractive 'green routes' through the town in order to reduce dependence on the private car, enable active travel modes and combat localised air pollution.
- **RC4:** Experiments in 'social' and 'green' prescribing can be built upon, and greater partnership with public health authorities would help to form a more integrated approach to addressing health challenges through the GBI network.
- **RC5:** Green space and/or urban greening features provided as an integral part of Middlehaven regeneration plans, as well as other residential areas such as Gresham. This will improve the 'liveability' of these areas and support the 'Urban Living' agenda.
- **RC6:** Making use of local communities in co-designing and managing the GBI network in order to boost 'community ownership'. Concerns over safety and anti-social behaviour within the GBI network should, wherever possible, be addressed through engagement and inclusion rather than alienation.
- **RC7:** Careful and collaborative design of green spaces and corridors to ensure they are age-friendly and cater for the varying needs of different generations.



Chapter 6

Theme 4: A Resilient Landscape



Chapter 6 Theme 4: A Resilient Landscape

Middlesbrough is a predominantly urban landscape, and one which, like many, has been heavily influenced by human activity. However, the 'green lungs' and becks which weave through the urban form are essential to its character. The urgencies of climate change action will require the landscape to play a central role in shaping the future sustainable development of Middlesbrough.

Thinking on a landscape scale

1.142 GBI is an integrated approach to land use. As such it is not characterised by a series of discrete interventions, but rather as a landscape-scale and joined up 'rethinking' of the future of an area.

1.143 GBI will play a vital role in unlocking the potential of Middlesbrough's landscape and to strengthen its ability to respond to various demands on it – from recreational pressure, climate change and protecting vulnerable habitats, to boosting economic growth.

1.144 One of the Principal Benefits (B2) of the Tees Valley GI Strategy is concerned with "*promoting a sense of community and place*" and another (B5) is about improving opportunities to recreate or rehabilitate landscapes, open spaces and historic sites damaged or lost through development or other changes.

1.145 However, as well as providing setting and character to the town of Middlesbrough, the quality of the landscape is fundamental to the town's resilience, particularly to the impacts of the climate emergency.

Landscape character

1.146 Middlesbrough falls entirely within the Tees Lowland's Character area outlined by Natural England and is characterised by:

- A broad low lying plain of undulating farmland with the meandering River Tees flowing through the heart, and low woodland cover. This provides the blue and green context for this Strategy.

- A contrast between quiet rural areas with extensive urban and industrial development concentrated along the lower reaches of the River Tees.

1.147 On a more localised scale, two of the five character areas outlined by the Tees Valley Nature Partnership also fall within the Borough, both of which can be seen on **Figure 6.1**:

- The Middlesbrough Beck Valleys – a mosaic of habitats that is home to most of the priority habitats and species. There are some remnants of traditional orchards and ponds, which provide important habitats, scattered across the farmland in the south.
- The River Tees Corridor – stretching out east-west along the river and characterised by a dramatic industrial skyline but also expansive intertidal mudflats, sand dunes and salt marshes.

1.148 Open space within Middlesbrough's boundaries is limited to a southern fringe of agricultural land and a series of 'green wedges', parks and open spaces within the urban area. The Green Wedges are landscape features with a role in integrating open space into more urbanised parts of the Borough (see **Theme 3**).

1.149 The North York Moors National Park lies roughly 1km to the south east of the boundaries at its closest point and is an important factor in the Borough's wider context.

The role of Middlesbrough's landscape in the context of the climate emergency

1.150 As discussed in Middlesbrough's Climate Change Community Action Plan (2010-2020), the Borough's role in

combating climate change will rest in part on behavioural change and using technological advances to decarbonise industry. However, there is now an increasing amount of attention being paid to how our landscapes can be better shaped and managed to play an important role in adapting to climate change.

1.151 Actions to address the climate emergency tend to fall into one of two categories – mitigation and adaptation. The implications of each of these for Middlesbrough’s landscape is outlined below.

Mitigating against climate change through carbon sequestration

1.152 Just as industry is facing up to the challenge of decarbonising its operations, so can the landscape of the Tees Valley be reconfigured to help provide natural solutions to the climate emergency. Middlesbrough’s emerging Green Strategy (2020) aims for net carbon neutrality by 2030 and for the town of Middlesbrough to be net carbon neutral by 2040.

1.153 It is also important to note that Middlesbrough is a pilot area for a Natural Capital Accounting study being undertaken by the Tees Valley Nature Partnership. This study is designed to provide baseline data on the region’s nature and the associated costs and benefits it brings.

“Tees Valley is a net exporter of carbon – the natural balance needs to be addressed.”

- Stakeholder comment

1.154 It is now widely understood that any ‘net zero’ target will require a huge increase in tree planting (amongst other measures) across the UK, in order to ‘draw down’ carbon from the atmosphere in an attempt to reach a point where ‘capture’ is greater than ‘release’ over the same period. The Committee for Climate Change (CCC) has recommended an objective of increasing UK forestry cover from 13% to at least 17% by 2050 by planting around 30,000 hectares of woodland per year.¹

1.155 Currently tree cover across the Council area stands at 11.8%, which means that cover is just below the English average of 13% and significantly below CCC targets. The tree cover which does currently exist is largely concentrated along the Beck Valleys and within parks and managed estates, as shown in **Figure 6.1**, with particularly sparse coverage in the north of the Borough.

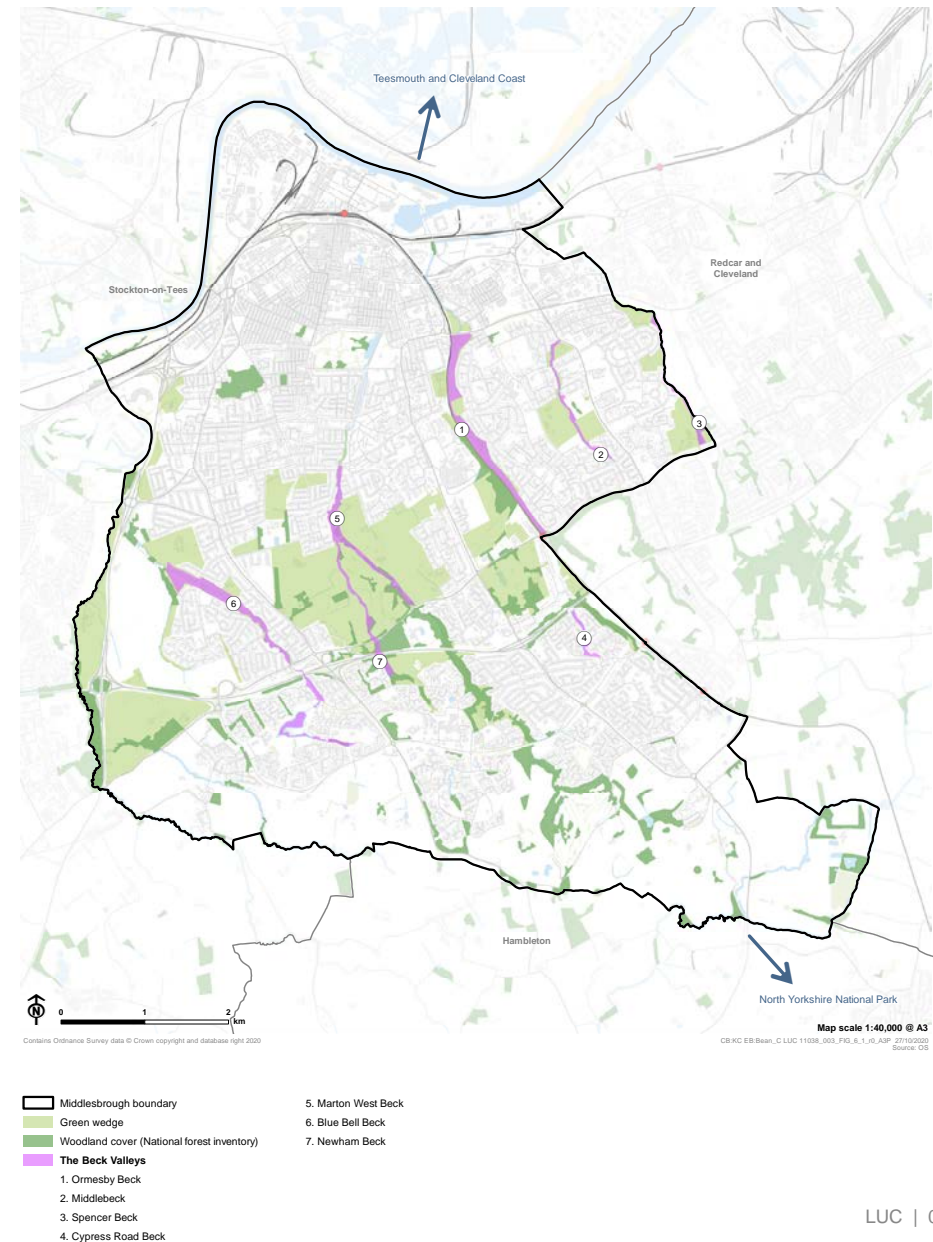
“Middlesbrough has only 11% canopy cover. Increasing this will ensure joined-up GI for the benefit of flora and fauna, but also residents will derive the benefits.”

- The Woodland Trust.

1.156 Large-scale tree planting will, as such, be central to building the Borough’s ‘carbon sink’. In order to achieve the Borough’s target of 16% tree cover, a total of 227.8 hectares (roughly 335 football pitches) will need to be planted.

1.157 However, it is important that any woodland expansion and/or large scale street tree planting within Middlesbrough is targeted to link up with broader initiatives beyond

Figure 6.1: Landscape features and woodland cover in Middlesbrough



¹ CCC (2020), ‘Land use: Policies for a Net Zero UK’ [Online] Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/land-use-policies-for-a-net-zero-uk/>

Middlesbrough's boundaries, in order to help build a 'mosaic' of connected woodlands across the region, as is called for by the Tees Valley GI Strategy. This will also help to achieve the nature recovery goals outlined under **Theme 2**. This may involve exploring the re-launch of a community forest, as a revival of the Tees Forest initiative which has now lapsed.

1.158 An expansion of urban tree cover is already underway as part of the Urban Tree Challenge (UTC) funding granted to the town, an initiative described in more detail under **Theme 1**.

"All developments should have to have tree lined roads as part of planning permission."

- Stakeholder comment.

1.159 It is important that any new woodland in the Borough is managed to produce multiple benefits. This might include recreation (see **Theme 3**), biodiversity (see **Theme 2**) and, where possible, for the production of high-quality timber that can lock up carbon. Fruiting trees can also be a valuable community resource for food growing – as evidenced by the Middlesbrough 'Patchwork Orchard' project run by Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC).

1.160 Diversity of planting will be important for resilience, given that the Climate Change Action Plan for the Tees Valley identifies increased numbers of pests as a climate change-related threat to the region.

1.161 Importantly, despite the policy attention to trees, carbon sequestration opportunities are not limited to woodland cover. Other land uses – notably peatland, coastal margins, river floodplains and healthy soils – are central to the UK's carbon sink. In Middlesbrough in particular, the mudflats and salt marshes along the River Tees Corridor can act as important 'carbon sinks' if restored, as can the Borough's Beck Valleys. This is because a diversity of plants and animals are associated with river corridors and the terrestrial zones they connect with act as an important carbon store. As such, any opportunities to reconnect the river to its

floodplain can be important in building this store.

Boosting the landscape's resilience to climate change

1.162 The Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy outlines the need for the wider landscape around Middlesbrough to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The major risks for Middlesbrough are:

- **Increased flood risk:** As a result of more frequent extreme weather events, combined with an increase in impermeable surfaces in urbanised areas. The low-lying nature of much of the Tees Valley makes it susceptible to rising sea levels and flooding. Outlined in greater detail under **Theme 5**.
- **The 'Urban Heat Island' effect:** As an urbanised Borough, Middlesbrough is vulnerable to this effect, whereby surfaces such as bitumen in roads and building materials can accumulate and store heat during the day and later release it, warming the local environment. This has significant implications for public health and exacerbation of air pollution. Measures to temper the effect range include: street tree expansion for shade; expanding natural surfaces through delivery of more green and blue spaces, green roofs, green walls and other urban greening features; re-painting surfaces with white paint to reflect more light.
- **Dealing with 'water stress':** Water shortages are likely to be one of the key environmental challenges in the UK and globally over the period of this Strategy. While Middlesbrough is not one of the most seriously stressed regions (in a 2013 study, the Northumbrian Water Company Area was identified as being at Moderate Stress),² there needs to be greater attention paid to how water moves through the landscape. See **Theme 5** for more detail.

² Environment Agency (2013), Water stressed areas – final classification [Online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244333/water-stressed-classification-2013.pdf



▲ Trees and complex vegetation around the A19 road.



▲ The River Tees corridor is an important part of Middlesbrough's 'carbon sink'



▲ Urban tree planting provides visual interest as well as shade to combat the 'urban heat island' effect.

“We need a mosaic of green walls and roof top gardens, like those at Teesside University.”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.163 Where possible, nature-based solutions for all these challenges should always be explored, alongside engineered solutions where necessary. For example, while engineered flood defences are sometimes appropriate, ‘upstream’ solutions can be more effective in the long term. This could include, for example, bolstering riparian woodland along the banks of the River Tees which can significantly increase resilience to flooding.

Boosting the landscape’s resilience social and economic change

1.164 Aside from resilience to climate change, it is also important that Middlesbrough’s landscape and townscape provides resilience to social change and economic change. This includes a consideration of how the GBI network can help bolster a Borough against an economic downturn, for example through GBI interventions to support local high streets.

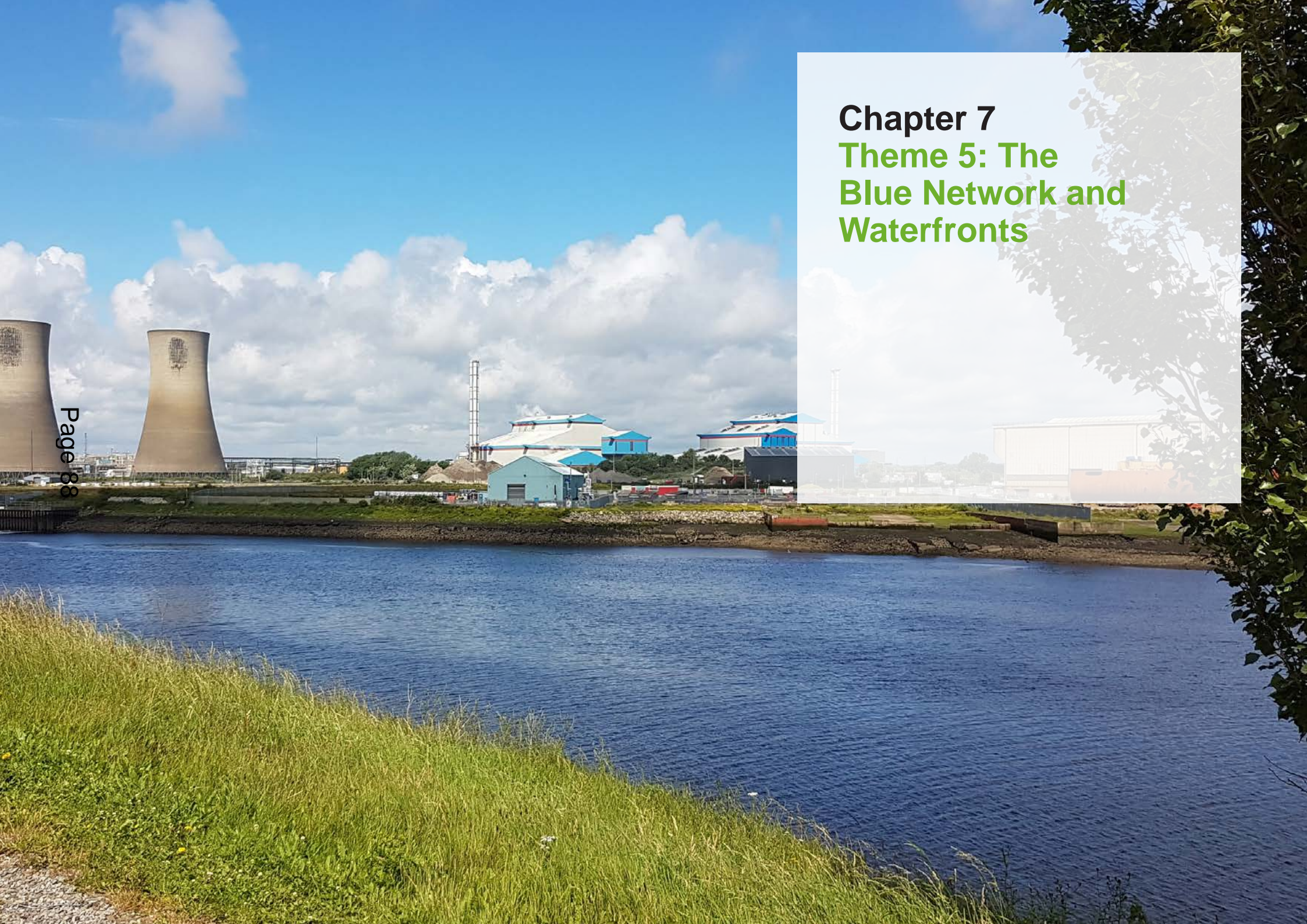
1.165 The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 has highlighted the importance of green spaces, and future planning of the GBI network should take account of this form of resilience also.

Summary of Key Issues

- Alongside behavioural change and decarbonisation of industry, Middlesbrough’s landscape has a crucial role to play in both mitigating against climate change and adapting to its effects. The Borough’s various landscape areas should be shaped with this in mind.
- Middlesbrough’s tree cover is slightly below national average and required to increase by over 40% in order to build the Borough’s ‘carbon sink’ and meet national targets set by the Committee for Climate Change (CCC).
- New woodland areas following expansion should be managed for multiple benefits, including carbon sequestration, recreation, biodiversity and, where appropriate, sustainable timber production.
- The threat of increased pests as a result of climate change are likely to be an obstacle to woodland expansion.
- Carbon sequestration opportunities are not limited to woodland expansion, and restoration activities on the River Tees corridor can play an important role in bolstering carbon stores.
- Middlesbrough is likely to experience increased climate-change related flooding and nature-based solutions should be prioritised wherever possible, with further detail provided under Theme 5.
- As an urbanised area, Middlesbrough will need to adapt its urbanised landscape to deal with the impacts of the Urban Heat Island effect.

Emerging Opportunities

- **RL1:** Expansion of woodland network, and improved management of existing trees, in order to meet national targets.
- **RL2:** Improved management and restoration of waterways to maximise carbon storage potential, in addition to biodiversity benefits.
- **RL3:** Promotion of nature-based solutions to risk of flooding, including high quality multi-functional SuDS installations. In order to deal with future water stresses, there will need to be a shift in perception regarding the way that water is stored in, and moved through, the Borough’s landscape, with more detail provided under Theme 5.
- **RL4:** Expansion of the street tree network and integration of other ‘urban greening features in order to provide urban cooling in the most urbanised areas.



Chapter 7
Theme 5: The
Blue Network and
Waterfronts



Chapter 7

Theme 5: The Blue Network and Waterfronts

The River Tees and the becks form the ‘spines’ of Middlesbrough’s blue network. Making the most of these ‘blue corridors’ will require a reconfiguration of how we think about water in the landscape, celebrating it rather than pushing it out of sight down drains. Storing water in the landscape can provide multiple benefits including creation of valuable habitats, recreational opportunities and nature-based flood risk management.

Middlesbrough’s blue corridors

1.166 The wider landscape in which Middlesbrough sits is dominated by the River Tees, its Estuary and the main tributaries, which forms Middlesbrough’s northern boundary. The stretch of the Tees which runs through Middlesbrough is tidal and passes through a largely urban and industrialised landscape. The Beck Valleys, running south-north, also form an important back bone for the Borough’s GBI network.

1.167 In many ways the River Tees has provided the framework for the growth of Middlesbrough and the town’s landscape character over the years. Indeed the ‘father of Middlesbrough’ Joseph Pease developed ‘Port Darlington’ (now Middlesbrough) on the banks of the Tees specifically to use this blue corridor to supply labour to the new coal port.

1.168 Today the Tees has again become a key catalyst for regeneration in the wider region, with efforts to improve access to the river corridor and help restore it following historic periods of industrial degradation, supporting sustainable forms of leisure, living and travel. The health of these waterways stood out as both a key point of concern, and a highly valued part of the Borough’s network, during stakeholder consultation carried out for this Strategy

“Local rivers and waterways are an asset, for numerous reasons - health, wellbeing and recreation, as well as traditional uses.”

- Stakeholder comment.

Flood risk

1.169 Middlesbrough’s northern boundary is historically low lying, forming part of the natural fluvial and tidal floodplain of

the Tees. The banks of the Tees have been artificially raised over the years to provide flood protection to the adjacent low-lying areas, but the bank levels are not consistent and therefore the standard of flood protection is currently variable. In addition, the effects of climate change and sea level rise will degrade this degree of protection with time.

1.170 Most recently, Middlesbrough has suffered damage to homes and infrastructure during severe flooding events in 2013 and 2016 in particular. The major areas of current flood risk are illustrated in **Figure 7.1** and are concentrated in the north of Middlesbrough and around the Tees Estuary, particularly where Ormesby Beck meets the Tees, and with further areas of risk along the Beck Valleys and in residential areas of Pallister. Flooding in these areas is exacerbated by high tides and the series of urban tributaries that drain into the Estuary. This allows for a mixture of fluvial flooding (along the tributaries) and tidal (in the north).

1.171 Surface water flooding can also contribute to Middlesbrough’s overall flood burden, highlighting the importance of maximising permeable surfaces through the use of SuDS and other mechanisms.

Rethinking the flood plain – taking a multi-functional approach to managing flood risk

1.172 Healthy floodplains have a key role to play in reducing the negative impacts of flooding, however these floodplains have been widely degraded nationally through the pressures of human development. Urban and agricultural development, together with structural flood protection, has disconnected rivers from their floodplains.

1.173 The opportunity for the GBI network lies in the fact that, well as mitigating against the impact of flooding, rethinking floodplain management can also achieve important positive environmental benefits, which should be maximised.

1.174 There is an opportunity to pursue a more ecosystem-based approach to the management of floodplains in Middlesbrough, an approach supported by the government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP). The potential biodiversity dividends of this approach in Middlesbrough are discussed in more detail under **Theme 2**.

"The River Tees has a vast number of tributaries and becks that you can't see. Natural areas that can be allowed to flood would offer great benefit."

- Stakeholder comment.

1.175 With multi-functionality in mind, the Tees Valley GI Strategy highlights that flood defence schemes should be used, where appropriate, to provide recreational opportunities, to help to create green space and enhance habitats. This might take the form of:

- Wetland creation through provision of flood storage capacity.
- Additional conservation and recreation benefits as part of flood defences.
- Potential for removal of flood defences in certain circumstances to reconnect rivers to their floodplains through re-establishing natural systems.
- Creation of compensatory habitat in response to rising sea levels.

- Naturalisation of modified river channels.

1.176 The Port Clarence and Greatham South Flood Alleviation Scheme, completed in 2018, is a good local example of a scheme that can both protect homes from flooding and simultaneously create almost 50 hectares of new intertidal habitat for local wildlife which flood at heavy tide. As such it forms an important precedent for the expansion of this approach.

"There are opportunities to daylight buried becks and gills."

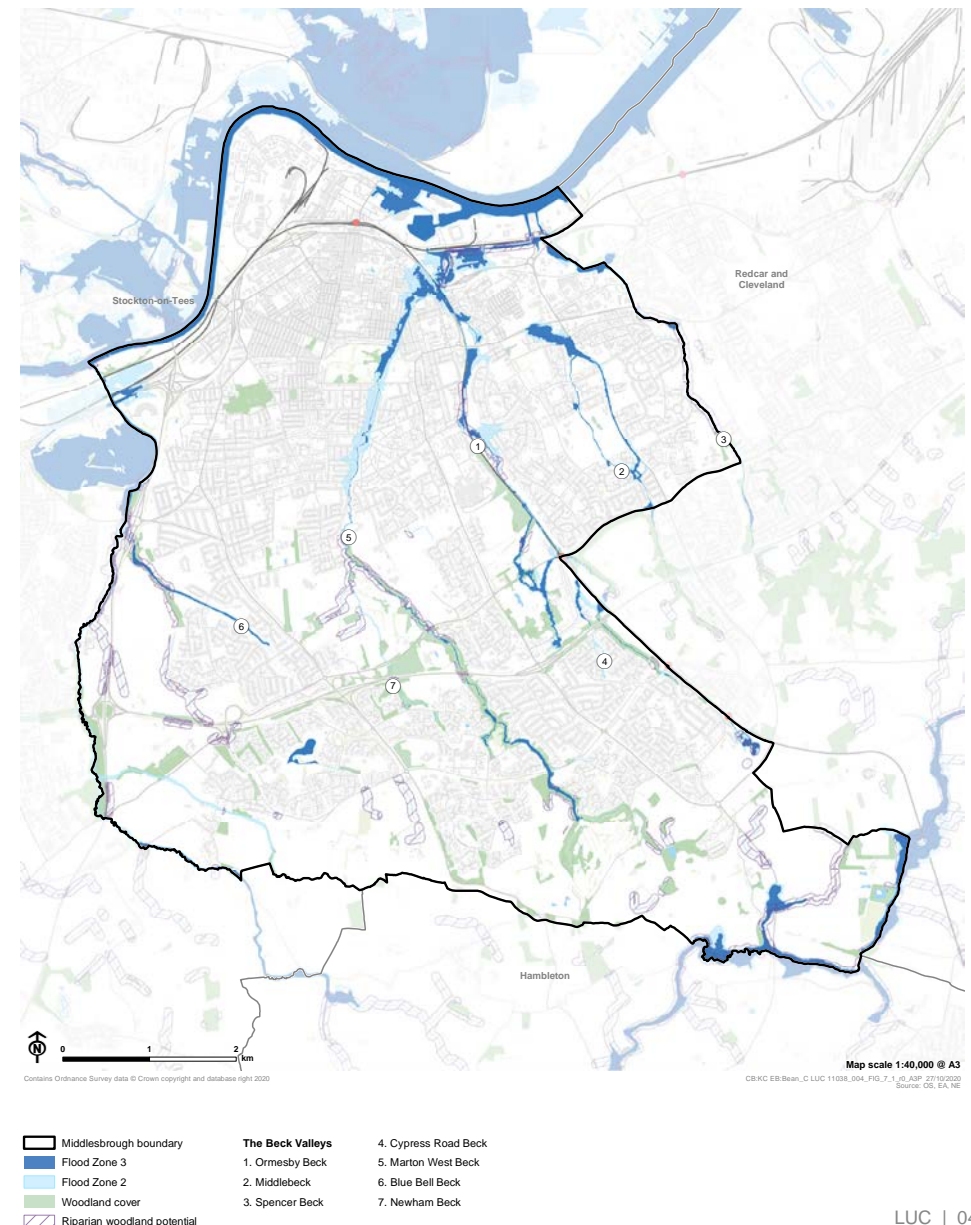
- Stakeholder comment.

Sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) systems

1.177 As a predominantly urban area, Middlesbrough is dominated by impermeable surfaces as part of its townscape. As such, SuDS can be a valuable way to address the risk of surface water flooding by adapting non-permeable surfaces to better 'hold' water in the urban landscape. SuDs should be seen as part of that 'multi-functional' green infrastructure network, delivering multiple amenity, landscape and biodiversity benefits.

1.178 SuDS features form an important part of 'urban greening' measures as part of future development (also discussed under **Theme 1**). The Tees Valley Authorities Local Standards for Sustainable Drainage (2017) provide an important set of locally tailored guidelines and planting regimes which should form the starting point for designing SuDS into new development or retrofitting.

Figure 7.1: Waterways and flood risk in Middlesbrough



“SuDS should not be restricted to areas of potential flooding but all new development – we need to mitigate surface water flooding.” ... “Surface water flooding is a big issue as a result of the clay soil.”

- Stakeholder comments.

1.179 Box 7.1 outlines some of the forms which SuDS can take. However, consultation with key local stakeholders revealed significant concerns that those SuDS installations which have been installed to date in the Borough are disappointing and lack multi-functionality, with some potentially causing damage to existing habitats. There is a desire for a higher benchmark for SuDS schemes in Middlesbrough to avoid conflict in uses and aid in the delivery of multifunctional benefits.

“SuDS developments could be made a lot more interesting at little cost – not rectangles of bland greenness with no marginal vegetation.”

- Stakeholder comment.

“Green SuDS provide far more benefit than simple ‘end of pipe’ solutions”

- Stakeholder comment.

Educational opportunities

1.180 There is a significant educational opportunity which should be integrated into Middlesbrough’s Flood Risk Management Strategy, which is built on the need to shift public perceptions of water. This entails a shift in understanding from water as a ‘problem’ to be flushed away, to a greater acceptance of water as a vital part of our landscape, including urban landscapes. Introducing water into our everyday lives and environments can be delivered through interventions such as rain gardens, ponds and other sustainable urban drainage assets.

“Introduction of mapping or interpretation would help improve education and awareness.”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.181 For example, the Borough’s *One Planet Living* framework encourages working with schools as part of its ‘Sustainable Water’ pillar, in order to promote the use of improved natural habitats in beck valleys for teaching and awareness raising of the species present in these locations. In addition, this Strategy proposes that these landscapes, and sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) interventions are used to help to educate school children, among others, in how water moves through a landscape and how nature-based solutions to water management can work to manage those flows and enhance local ecosystems.

“There are lots of opportunities for small scale interventions, introducing small ponds in schools for instance.”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.182 These opportunities also have a strong role in the Borough’s biodiversity strategy (see **Theme 2**).

“Turning back” toward the waterfront

1.183 As is the case with many towns and cities where industrial development has historically sprawled along waterways, Middlesbrough has long ‘turned away’ from its waterfronts. Today, regeneration opportunities in the north of the Borough provide a valuable opportunity to ‘turn back toward’ its waterfront, providing a closer association between urban areas and natural systems. It also opens up opportunities for leisure use on the River Tees - including boating, sailing, canoeing and angling, in line with an improved water environment.

1.184 If achieved sympathetically, by balancing the needs of nature with high quality design through an ‘urban living’ approach, it will be possible to create a thriving built

Box 7.1: Options for SuDS features



▲ A SuDS installation included as part of Middlesbrough’s recent Grey Towers Village development.

Green roofs: designed to intercept and retain precipitation, reducing the volume of runoff.

‘Soakaways’: holes dug into the ground and filled with coarse stone, rubble or other material, allowing water to filter through.

Filter strips: gently sloping, vegetated strips of land that allows for slow conveyance and infiltration of water from upstream development.

Bioretention areas and rain gardens: small depressions in the ground acting as infiltration points for surface water, and can be planted up with appropriate vegetation.

Permeable pavements: providing a surface suitable for pedestrian/vehicular traffic, while allowing rainwater to infiltrate through the surface and into underlying layers.

Detention basins: landscape features which provide habitat creation when wet and leisure uses when dry.

Ponds: Runoff is detained and treated in the pool.

Wetlands: shallow ponds and marshy areas, covered in aquatic vegetation, able to detain flows for an extended period as well as provide significant ecological benefits.

environment that celebrates and enhances the River Tees waterfront.

1.185 This direction is supported by the Tees Valley GI Strategy and is taken up further under **Theme 1** (integrating GBI into regeneration zones) and **Theme 6** (opening up and enhancing walking and cycling routes along the banks of the Tees and Beck Valleys).

*“The riverside area needs some environmental enhancement with trees and green spaces provided.”...
“big barriers turn people away from the water.”*

- Stakeholder comment.


1.186 Local stakeholders are of the view that currently, recreational disturbance of habitats is relatively low along the Tees Corridor (given that to a large degree the river is accessible). However caution should be exercised with any opening up of the waterfront, as it would need to be mindful of the impact on areas of biodiversity value.

Summary of Key Issues

- The River Tees and other waterways lie at the heart of Middlesbrough's landscape character, however currently the town does not maximise the full potential of its waterfront location for recreational purposes.
- The low-lying nature of the Tees Valley landscape makes it particularly susceptible to impacts of flooding, which will be exacerbated by the impacts of climate change.
- Middlesbrough is at risk of both tidal flooding (along the River Tees corridor) and fluvial flooding (along the Beck Valleys), and the large extent of impermeable surfaces within the townscape.
- Caution should be exercised with any 'opening up' of Middlesbrough's waterfront, to ensure no detrimental impacts on habitats.

Emerging Opportunities

- **BN1:** The River Tees Corridor should form the framework for future multi-functional development of the GBI network and should support regeneration plans. The Borough's regeneration agenda should be guided by a process of 'turning back' toward the waterfront – both along the Tees River Corridor and the Beck Valleys – helping to repair broken connections, while remaining mindful of the potential conflict between recreational and biodiversity functions.
- **BN2:** Alongside engineered solutions, strategies to reduce flood risk should take maximum advantage of opportunities to implement nature-based solutions to create healthy and multi-functional floodplains which not only mitigate against flooding but provide co-benefits for recreation and biodiversity.
- **BN3:** Expansion and promotion of SuDs features at all scales should be encouraged – including large installations on vacant land and 'micro' features such as linear rail gardens installed along cycle paths to combat flood risk. Retrofitting of existing under-performing SuDS should also be sought.



Chapter 8
**Theme 6: Walking
and Cycling**



Chapter 8 Theme 6: Walking and Cycling

As a compact town, Middlesbrough lends itself to walkability. However, there is currently heavy dependence on the private car. Improvements to the town's public realm will complement investment in 'hard' infrastructure and help to encourage residents and visitors to move in new ways. A well-connected series of 'green corridors' will also enable this shift.

Connections in Middlesbrough

1.187 It is thought that Middlesbrough's name originally comes from its position halfway between Christian centres of Durham and Whitby, highlighting the Borough's role as a place of connection and a meeting of routes.

1.188 However, the Borough today remains largely car-dominated and active travel routes are too often fragmented and unattractive. As Middlesbrough grew, and its boundaries expanded south of the railway line, the old town (St Hilda's) became isolated between the railway and the river. There are opportunities to address these various instances of fragmentation in a number of ways through this Strategy. In turn, this has the potential to provide a number of important benefits for health and wellbeing (see **Theme 3** for further detail).

"This [walking and cycling] needs framing as a public health issue."

- Stakeholder comment.

Walking and cycling opportunities

1.189 Open space has the ability to provide not only recreational destinations but also movement corridors which can encourage pedestrians and cyclists to move around the town in different ways.

1.190 Sustainable Transport is one of the pillars of Middlesbrough's *One Planet Living* framework, and the Integrated Transport Strategy sets 'modal share' targets for 2028 which include 10% of journeys to be undertaken by walking and cycling, an increase of 2% per year, with

pedestrians at the top of the 'transport hierarchy'. While Middlesbrough's compact urban form provides a strong basis for this, creating a landscape that encourages safe and enjoyable walking and cycling will require significant change. While 'grey' infrastructural upgrades are beyond the scope of this Strategy, the GBI network has an important role in 'greening' those routes which encourage modal shift.

"All future infrastructure and road improvements should include areas to add street trees or green spaces."

- Stakeholder comment.

1.191 The Public Right of Way (PROW) network provides the backbone of efforts to boost both 'A to B' (between destinations) walking and recreational walking. The PROW system is strong in some areas and neglected in others.

1.192 Within Middlesbrough's wider Public Rights of Way (PROW) network, there are a number of key routes that might form the prioritised framework for upgrades, as shown in **Figure 8.1** These include:

- The Teesdale Way (running along most of the length of the River Tees).
- The Cleveland Way (National Trail).
- The Tees Link (linking the above routes, in part along Spencer Beck).

1.193 Further, the English Coastal Path – designed to be the longest continuous coastal walking route in the world once completed – is a National Trail and runs through Middlesbrough, creating a valuable connection between urban areas and coastal assets to the east. This is a

significant asset, which allows greater access for Middlesbrough residents to access natural features nearby by walking and cycling, as well as passing by key heritage features such as the Tees Transporter Bridge.

1.194 Two routes of the National Cycle Network run through the Borough – Route 65 from north to south, and Route 1 from east to west and linking to the coast. The majority of the routes are off-road, and they integrate with the Beck Valleys and the town’s ‘green lung’, as well as with the Tees Waterfront.

“The Teesdale Way, England Coast Path and 8 Bridges Way should be further promoted, and their networks developed.”

Stakeholder comment.

Page 95
Overview

Green corridors

1.195 Green corridors are multifunctional linear spaces that act not only as active travel and recreational routes, but also have an important role in providing linear connecting habitats for wildlife. They can also play complementary roles in reducing flood risk by holding water, and by cooling urban areas.

1.196 Green corridors in Middlesbrough are largely anchored by narrow north-south valleys, which provide links between urban areas and the surrounding countryside. However the Tees Valley GI Strategy highlights opportunities for better east-west links and further connections to Ormesby Hall, Stainsby Beck and the National Park.

1.197 Any more detailed plans within

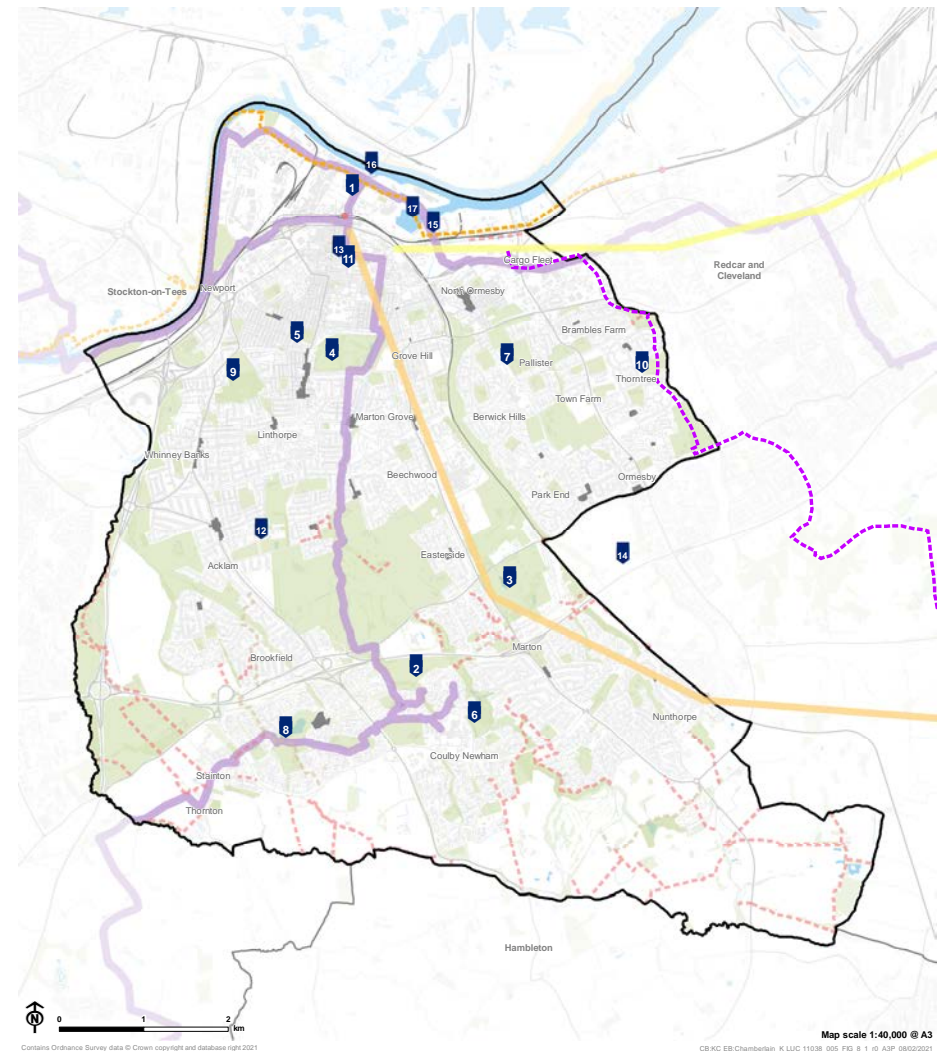
Middlesbrough must take into account the wider context of the Tees Valley and align with key strategic routes. The Tees Valley GI Strategy highlights two broad corridors to focus attention on, as indicated on **Figure 8.1**:

- **Strategic Route 13: Greater Middlehaven - Middlesbrough town centre - South Bank - Greater Eston – Redcar:** A corridor linking key regeneration areas across the region.
- **Strategic Route 14: Greater Middlehaven - Middlesbrough town centre – Marton - Nunthorpe - Guisborough:** This joins up a complex network of open spaces, beck valleys, cycle/footpaths, parks, playing fields etc. It leads outwards from Middlesbrough town centre, through the town’s “green lung” and joins up with long distance footpaths.

1.198 Building on these key routes, the Integrated Transport Strategy seeks to boost active travel through the delivery of a series of Walking and Cycling ‘Super Routes’, which will act as the ‘main arteries’ running through Middlesbrough, connecting into adjacent routes to the wider Tees Valley. These will be wide, traffic-free routes, will be well maintained, lit and served by CCTV. They will be complimented by a series of ‘Superstops’, at prominent public transport hubs.

1.199 The Beck valleys provide an important framework for these green corridors and can provide multiple benefits including recreational routes, active travel corridors, flood alleviation and habitat corridors. These Valleys are described in more detail in **Box 8.1**, based on Middlesbrough’s Landscape and Heritage Assessment (2016).

Figure 8.1: Walking and cycling network in Middlesbrough



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Middlesbrough boundary ■ Local and neighbourhood centres ■ Green infrastructure asset ■ National Cycle Network Key walking route <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Teesdale Way — Tees Link | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Tees Valley Strategic Route 13 — Tees Valley Strategic Route 14 Public Right of Way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Footpath — Bridleway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key destinations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Middlehaven Urban Park 2. Newham Grange Farm 3. Stewart Park 4. Albert Park 5. Ayresome Gardens 6. Fairy Dell Nature Reserve 7. Pallister Park 8. Hemlington Lake 9. Linthorpe Cemetery 10. Thorntree Park 11. Centre Square 12. Acklam Hall 13. Middlesbrough Town Hall 14. Ormesby Hall 15. Riverside Stadium 16. Tees Transporter Bridge 17. Temenos and Middlesbrough Dock |
|---|---|---|

Linking together key destinations

1.200 When prioritising resources for green corridors and active travel provision, there must be a focus on routes which link key destinations and attract significant activity. In these areas it will be important to achieve a modal shift to walking and cycling, including as part of multi-modal journeys which combine public transport and active travel. Walking and cycling should be both seamless and effortless ways of moving around, both within the Borough and linking beyond its boundaries.

“There are good green spaces but there needs to be more connectivity.”

- Stakeholder comment.

“In the centre there is the cemetery, Albert Park and Grosesome Gardens. However, these green spaces are so standalone and the network is not visible.”

- Stakeholder comment.

1.201 Certain destinations lie at the heart of Middlesbrough’s regeneration ambitions, notably among them the Riverside Stadium, Teesside University, Middlehaven and the train station and more formal parks such as Albert Park. These destinations are shown on **Figure 8.1**. The success with which these destinations sit as key ‘nodes’ within the GBI network and active travel routes will be crucial as to how well the network performs.

1.202 Both the master plans for the regenerating Station Area and the Middlesbrough City Centre Strategy (2019-2023) highlight the need for improved wayfinding facilities within the town centre which signpost both residents and visitors to key destinations and ‘gateways’. While some wayfinding facilities are provided, these are inconsistent across the town centre and wider Borough.

Connecting the GBI network with public transport hubs

1.203 Middlesbrough is seen as a Strategic Public

Box 8.1: Key Green Corridors in Middlesbrough

Green corridors in Middlesbrough and elsewhere can provide links within the wider ‘active travel’ network as off-road routes. However they cannot act as a replacement for high-quality on-road routes which can be safely used year-round, including in the dark. These routes do, however, provide important recreational resources which serve the wellbeing of communities, as ‘softer’ and slower corridors for movement that allow for connection with nature.

Marton West Beck Corridor

Middlesbrough’s Landscape and Heritage Assessment (LHA) highlights that this continuous ribbon of green space, woodland and NCN route presents a valued resource in the built-up area and a key GBI linkage between the inner urban area to the ‘green heart’ centred on the golf course. However, there are some sections where the poor condition means the route is only accessible to able walkers.

Middle Beck Corridor

The LHA describes this route as well used and having the advantage of being highly permeable with adjacent housing, with fingers of green space reaching into neighbouring estates. However, the corridor’s biodiversity value is limited, made up of largely amenity grassland areas and occasional trees, with limited tranquillity or sense of place.

Spencer Beck Corridor

This is the easternmost beck and forms the Borough boundary and part of a Green Wedge. The LHA notes that there is a continuous footpath and cycleway along the Beck, which carries the Tees Link long distance route, but notes some signs of anti-social use.

Other becks

Ormesby & Blue Bell Becks also provide key ‘green links’ through the Borough.



▲ An existing off-road walking and cycling route in Middlesbrough.



▲ Entrances to walking and cycling routes can act as barriers to wheelchair users than others when not thoughtfully designed.



▲ An example of some limited pedestrian-friendly enhancements to the town centre public realm.

Transport Interchange, with a focus on its railway station. **Theme 1** gives further information about existing plans to regenerate the quarter surrounding Middlesbrough train station, and the opportunities for ‘urban greening’ which it represents.

1.204 However, the redevelopment of the station represents an important opportunity not only to ‘create a sense of arrival’ but also to mend links between the station and key destinations to both the north and south.

1.205 The planned introduction of a direct rail service to London in 2021 will be a ‘step change’ for the station and has potential to be a catalyst for the regeneration of the station and surrounding area. The existing site is a key interchange and public realm focus, however there is currently significant severance created by road infrastructure and a poor pedestrian environment. The station lies at the intersection of a number of key movement corridors connecting key destinations and GBI assets, as shown in **Figure 8.1**. In particular, the station is the key ‘node’ where the Middlehaven regeneration area and the town centre meet. Master planning for the station area found that the visitor arrival experience by rail is poor and that there is limited wayfinding to other key destinations.

1.206 It is important that high quality green ‘links’ are developed between the regenerated station area and the key strategic routes outlined above – notably with the Teesdale Way to the north, toward highly valued Albert Park to the south and linking to the various Beck Valley corridors.

Popular destinations beyond Middlesbrough’s boundaries

1.207 Given the highly urbanised nature of Middlesbrough, and how tightly the Borough’s boundary is drawn around the urban edge, there is a particular need to establish ‘green connections’ to assets lying outside the Boundary. Links to the following should be taken into account:

- The Eston Hills and North Yorkshire Moors to the south.

- To the Saltholme Nature Reserve to the north (across the Tees Transporter Bridge).
- To the heritage coastline and coastal nature reserves to the east.

1.208 The ‘Strategic Routes’ taken from the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy and illustrated in **Figure 8.1** highlight these important cross-boundary connections.

“We need to improve connections along the river to Redcar.”

- Stakeholder comment.

Transforming the ‘school run’

1.209 The Tees Valley Climate Change Action Plan (2010) notes that it is vital that the region supports people in making healthier and more sustainable travel choices, ‘locking in’ low carbon healthy lifestyles by providing suitable incentives such as safe cycle routes to school.

1.210 As elsewhere, in Middlesbrough the school run is a key source of private car use, with the associated carbon emissions and air pollution which comes with it. The Borough’s *One Planet Living* Framework sets a target of reducing the number of children travelling to school by car from 25% (2010) to 20%. Middlesbrough’s Sustainable Travel Strategy also highlights the importance of promoting walking and cycling on the school run – both through ‘Safer Routes to School’ schemes and infrastructural measures which compliment ‘softer’ measures such as promotion and training.

1.211 Some regeneration schemes within Middlesbrough also include pedestrian-priority zones around the local schools that will serve the new neighbourhood, notably plans for the new neighbourhood at Grove Hill.

“The strategy should also be underpinned by links to education with schools and colleges in the area. We need to get children excited about it.”



▲ Existing wayfinding in Middlesbrough is inconsistent and could be improved by a high quality Wayfinding Strategy.



▲ The Teesdale Way is an important strategic route linking Middlesbrough with surrounding regions and key destinations such as the Tees Transporter Bridge.

- Stakeholder comment.

Access for all

1.212 One concern which was voiced strongly during consultation with stakeholders was the need for the walking and cycling network to be truly accessible to all - including wheelchair users and those with lower mobility. Sometimes where barriers are used to block motorbike users from using off-road routes, it can lead to those routes becoming inaccessible to parts of the community.

1.213 It is important that the Borough has an ambition when planning the future GBI network of making all routes 'accessible to all' through thoughtful use of barriers and adequate surfacing along all key routes.

▼ The existing entrance to a school in a residential area of Middlesbrough, which could be improved by giving over more space to walking and cycling to school.



Summary of Key Issues

- Middlesbrough is currently car-dominant and there is a need to support objectives for a modal shift toward walking and cycling.
- There is a need for better east-west links and further connections to Ormesby Hall, Stainsby Beck and the North York Moors National Park.
- While there are valuable strategic walking routes connecting Middlesbrough with surrounding areas – including parts of the national Coastal Path - walking and cycling connections within the Borough, between key public transport 'nodes' and important destinations, are currently often weak.
- Wayfinding provision is currently poor and requires work to better navigate between key 'gateways', destinations and GBI assets, as well as better signposting to strategic walking routes from 'points of arrival'.
- 25% of children currently travel to school by car, which is a significant source of traffic and air pollution and this discourages walking and cycling at a young age.
- Routes are not always accessible to all users, with some barriers in place blocking access to wheel chair users.

Emerging Opportunities

- **WC1:** The creation or enhancement of 'green corridors' along the Beck Valleys to give a boost to walking and cycling uptake in the Borough.
- **WC2:** Identification and greening of 'key routes' linking important destinations, including a focus on east-west links.
- **WC3:** The regeneration of Middlesbrough Station, and plans for a direct line to London, provide an opportunity to create a 'node' at the heart of several green walking and cycling routes, both to destinations within Middlesbrough (including Teesside University and the Riverside Stadium) and beyond (including the coast, the North York Moors National Park and the Saltholme Nature Reserve to the north).
- **WC4:** Improved and more consistent wayfinding across the entire Borough, integrated into the various regeneration agendas in the town.
- **WC5:** Opportunities to 'green the school run', including implementing small-scale and incidental nature-based play interventions, to bring excitement and educational opportunities to green corridors serving schools.

Appendix A
Policy Review

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|---|--|--|
| National | | |
| 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) | Sets out the Government's support for habitat creation, multi-functional sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDs), and natural spaces close to where people live and work. It represents an important shift in thinking towards long term positive action to improve people's lives and the environment. It views the planning system as a key mechanism for delivering upon its ambitions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sets the foundation for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), to be implemented through the Environment Bill. |
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) | Sets the government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England, which apply to the preparation for local and neighbourhood plans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explicitly addresses the need for GBI networks, stating that strategic policies in plans should set out an overall strategy that makes sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of green infrastructure (Paragraph 20). See Introduction for more detail. |
| Regional | | |
| Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy (2008-2021) | <p>Provides the GI context for the sub-region and sets out a regional vision for multifunctional open spaces that will enhance the quality of the area.</p> <p>Outlines a vision, six aims, a number of benefits and key principles, all of which provide context for other plans, strategies and programmes within the Tees Valley.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proposes a network of GI corridors that link GI resources with strategic priorities (major development schemes such as Middlehaven, housing market renewal areas and areas of new housing and business development). The concept revolves around achieving closer links between environment improvement and the major development projects proposed in the Tees Valley. ■ Key challenge is centred on 'liveability' - creating attractive places and environment and offer a quality of life that encourages people to stay. ■ Emphasises the importance of partnership working. |
| Green Blue Heart Plan (2007) | <p>Produced by the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiatives (SMI) and sets the goal of creating a new city-region within the Tees Valley by enabling a transformation in the urban structure. Designed to turn around current perceptions of the region.</p> <p>Many of the proposals set out in this Plan were hampered by the ensuring global financial crisis from 2008 onwards.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The Plan sees the River Tees Corridor as part of the solution rather than the problem. ■ Defines a portfolio of mutually beneficial projects which include several which form part of a potential GBI network in Middlesbrough, including Maze Park (on the banks of the River Tees in the west of the Borough). ■ Plan seeks to turn derelict sites from a problem into an opportunity. |
| North York Moors National Park Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (2019) | Sets out planning policies in the nearby North York Moors National Park, to be used to help decide planning applications in the future. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Its proximity means that the National Park is a major attraction for residents in Middlesbrough. Improving links with the Park, whether this is through better footpath and cycle networks or enhanced wildlife corridors will be beneficial and will help to strengthen the green infrastructure network. |

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|--|---|---|
| Local Plan and borough-wide policy documents | | |
| Existing Middlesbrough Core Strategy (2008) | The policies in this Core Strategy will be superseded by those in the emerging Local Plan, for which this GBI Strategy serves as an evidence base. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spatial objectives sought to increase biodiversity and expand the green network. Policy CS20 was a dedicated GI policy, which stated that the council will work with partners to ensure the successful creation of an integrated network of GI. |
| Middlesbrough Housing Local Plan (2014) | Replaced the housing elements of the existing Local Development Framework, outlining the context and vision for future development within the town up to 2029. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy CS20 relates the green space network at a strategic level in Middlesbrough outlining the key open spaces, including 'beck valleys', the 'River Tees frontage', the 'green blue heart' and the Borough's Green Wedges. |
| Middlesbrough Council's One Planet Action Plan (2017 – 2025) | The One Planet Living approach was adopted by Middlesbrough Council in 2009 and provides a model to deliver a programme of environmental sustainability across the town. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middlesbrough Council recognises that without a sustained change, Earth will be unable to support the existing population and satisfy resource demands. Middlesbrough Council aims to tackle each of the 10 principles of One Planet Living to ensure that sustainability is embedded into the delivery of the wider vision for Middlesbrough. Several of the principles are relevant to the GBI network and the services it provides, including ' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two priority actions are: 1) putting allotments into self-management; and 2) supporting Volunteers and Friends Groups in the management and development of green spaces. |
| 'Green Strategy' (emerging) | Currently a work in progress, the Strategy looks at broad range of issues, including transport, biodiversity, waste, energy etc. Will set out an ambitious 10 year vision to develop a Green agenda to rise to the challenge of climate change and support and improve biodiversity within Middlesbrough. | <p>The three broad aims of the Strategy are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make Middlesbrough Council net carbon neutral by 2030 To ensure Middlesbrough as a town net carbon neutral by 2040. Middlesbrough to be a lead authority on Environmental Issues. |
| Grove Hill Supplementary Planning Document (March 2010) | Represents an Area Regeneration Framework (ARF) for the neighbourhood of Grove Hill, setting out a strong vision and spatial planning framework to kick start the regeneration activities. Can also serve as supporting evidence for the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of property if required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grove Hill is a neighbourhood in decline and the stigma around the area needs to be reversed. The Eastbourne Road shops are under performing and their redevelopment/environmental improvements represents an opportunity as a key gateway to the neighbourhood and nodal point. |

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|--|---|---|
| Cross-cutting theme: Climate Change | | |
| Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy (2010) | The strategy represents the 'coming together' of the five Tees Valley local authorities and their partners with a single aim and vision to tackle climate change. Seeks to provide a sound base to embed the Low Carbon transition within the economic regeneration of the Tees Valley. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promotes the implementation of the Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy to help us deal with the impacts of climate change, for example by increasing trees in urban areas, to provide shade and absorb carbon emissions. ■ Investing in resilient infrastructure, including GI, will reduce the socio-economic and environmental costs of dealing with climate change related events such as floods and heat waves in the future. This could be through new water bodies to cope with increased storm water run-off and the principles of sustainable drainage system etc. |
| Middlesbrough's Climate Change Community Action Plan (2010-2020) | The Action Plan builds on the success of Middlesbrough's Climate Change Partnership, a group of local organisations and individuals from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors that have come together since 2004 to identify how Middlesbrough can reduce GHG emissions whilst preparing for the impacts of a changing climate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acknowledges that there needs to be greater emphasis on adapting Middlesbrough to climate change. ■ Tackling climate change and making Middlesbrough a healthy town are intrinsically linked goals. ■ Highlights the importance of education and communication in order to gain the support of the people of Middlesbrough. This includes educational projects including the Eco Schools Award scheme, supported since 2004. ■ The regional GI Strategy is seen as key to climate change adaptation. |
| Theme 1: Economic regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place' | | |
| Strategic Plan for Middlesbrough (2020 – 2023) | Sets out how the Mayor's agenda will be supported and delivered, following the election of a new Mayor in 2019. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Priorities regarding 'place' have been included, one of which is regarding building more town centre homes – and protecting our green spaces. |
| Middlesbrough City Centre Strategy (2019 – 2023) | Set out a vision and set of Priorities for a city centre that lies at the heart of the area's economic ambition, creating confidence for investment and growth. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Highlights the importance of a vibrant city centre and visitor destination which presents Middlesbrough as an attractive place to work, live and invest. ■ Promotes the 'urban living' agenda and emphasises high quality public realm in various target areas, and investment in key gateways. ■ Supports the delivery of the Rail Station master plan and Historic Quarter, emphasising the need for new signage to aid navigation in the city centre. |

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|--|--|--|
| Middlesbrough LDF – Regeneration Development Plan Document (2009) | <p>Identifies specific sites proposed for development and principal regeneration sites, including Greater Middlehaven.</p> <p>This document was produced prior to the 2008-9 financial crisis, and as a result much of what was proposed in the Greater Middlehaven regeneration area was not built out (other than the Community in a Cube building). The framework was followed by a 2012 Development Framework, which sought to set out a more flexible framework for regeneration in the Greater Middlehaven zone.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises the importance of integrating green spaces that arise from development with the existing network of GI and utilising features such as the River Tees as a focal point within development proposals. |
| Middlesbrough's Urban Design SPD | Provides guidance for all development across Middlesbrough on urban design which includes green and open space, SuDS etc | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights that Urban Design is 'not solely a visual concern' but also has important economic, social and environmental consequences. Green roofs, ponds and wetlands are recognised as a part of SuDS which should be implemented throughout the region. Highlights that all development must help to create 'sustainable communities' and encourage the formation of inclusive places. Trees play an important part in 'softening' the streetscape, creating visual focus and adding wildlife and colour to urban areas, but must create long term sustainable planting |
| Middlesbrough Station Action Plan (2017) | Commissioned by Middlesbrough Council to outline the future development of the station and surrounding area, given a renewal and a refresh | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new concourse and entrance on Bridge Street will help to provide a greater 'sense of arrival' and greater connectivity for pedestrians to both the Middlehaven area and to the town centre. Need for improved wayfinding for those arriving at the station. |
| Theme 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity | | |
| Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves in Middlesbrough (2018) | Prepared for Middlesbrough Council by the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust as a review of natural conservation sites in the Borough (with a focus on Local Sites, which are designated by the Council) and to support the emerging Local Plan. | N/A. |
| North East Wetland Feasibility Study (2007) | The North East Wetland Feasibility Study identifies areas in North East England that have the potential for wetland restoration or creation. The study identifies a number of priority areas for wetland restoration. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetlands are a form of GI that should be capitalised upon and should form part of the GI and BI networks across the region, which would be supported by this study. Constraints on wetland potential include urban areas, railways, and landfill and waste sites. The majority of identified potential areas lie to the north of Middlesbrough's boundary, across the River Tees, however some less extensive north-south blue corridors along the Borough's beckes were highlighted. |

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|--|--|---|
| Theme 2: Reconnecting communities with nature | | |
| Open Space Needs Assessment (2017) | <p>Provides an overview of the Borough's open space inventory, as well as an assessment of quality and value of each typology of space.</p> <p>Open space assessments take stock of the existing situation which can be used to outline considerable opportunities for expanding and enhancing the GI network.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Of around 998 ha of open space in Middlesbrough, 77% is publicly accessible and the dominant typologies are: parks and public gardens; schools; and the Beck Valleys. Golf courses also make up a significant proportion (2 courses). ■ Assessments of quality showed declines in quality at a large number of sites across the Borough. |
| Middlesbrough Council Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) | Provides a clear evidence base and set of recommendation for future outdoor sports facility development across the Borough, including an analysis of supply and demand. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Notes that areas with high levels of deprivation will typically have lower levels of health, standard of living or car ownership, which all contribute to a lower overall level of participation. ■ Identifies relatively low levels of physical activity among Middlesbrough residents, with spatial 'hotspots' of inactivity in the northern half of the Borough. ■ Planning obligations under Section 106 should be used to ensure local playing pitch infrastructure is invested in, to meet the growing need. ■ Proposes to mitigate any losses through the development of multi-sport hub sites. |
| Stainsby Draft Masterplan (2018) | Set out the vision and illustrative masterplan for the Stainsby development, a significant development allocated on the western extent of the Borough. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The vision for Stainsby includes a network of footpaths and cycleways cross the site linking the new green spaces and connecting into existing paths and spaces. ■ A Country Park will be linked to and throughout the housing areas by green corridors. |
| Air Quality Annual Status Report (2019) | Produced under the requirements of the Environment Act 1995, since 2000, to provide an update on the status of air quality across Middlesbrough. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is no need to declare any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Middlesbrough and the Council strives to improve air quality despite economic limitations. ■ Traffic pollution is an issue along busy commuter roads (the A66, A174 and A19 trunk roads), however fortunately housing along these routes are low rise and set back, allowing dispersal. ■ Tackling poor air quality from traffic sources is one of the Council's highest priorities. ■ Two locations were highlighted as being in need of extra measures to reduce nitrogen dioxide levels: 1) along the A66 from the Marton Road junction to the Hartington junction; and 2) from the Cannon Park interchange to the junction of the A66 with the A19. ■ The main challenge of introducing measures to reduce pollution on the road network, including the A66, is the economic cost, not only to Middlesbrough but the wider Tees Valley. |

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|---|--|--|
| Theme 4: A Resilient Landscape | | |
| Landscape and Heritage Assessment (2016) | <p>Assessment of the landscape and historic environment value of selected areas of the Borough, to inform development planning and management decisions. Includes a site-specific review of land to the south of Newnham Hall.</p> <p>Four themes are discussed throughout the assessment: landscape, visual amenity, historic environment and green infrastructure. Each of these themes were used to assess 33 individual parcels of land.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The provision of open space within the boundary of Middlesbrough Council is limited to a southern fringe of agricultural land, and a series of green wedges, parks and open spaces within the urban area. ■ The 33 parcels assessed form important assets within the GBI network, and opportunities are identified for each one, including potential to boost biodiversity value or better link to the rest of the network. |
| Green Wedges Assessment 2017-2018 | <p>An assessment was conducted looking at: boundary information; separation and openness; amenity value; natural environment value; historic environment value and flood risk. Conclusions were then made on whether the green wedge could be improved or whether it should remain the same.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Green wedges comprise the open areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside and built up areas, prevent the coalescence (merging) of adjacent places and can also provide recreational opportunities, a great asset to the GI network. ■ 23 Green Wedges were recommended for amendment, and 14 identified as making a valuable contribution to the area. ■ Some areas of Green Wedge we recommended by the Review for removal as they no longer meet the definition in the policy, however in many cases it was recommended that the Open Space designation remain. ■ The 'Green Heart' Wedge is an interconnected network of open space in the centre of the built-up area. It forms a key part of the 'greenlink network' running along Blue Bell Beck. |
| Theme 5: The Blue Network and Waterfronts | | |
| Tees Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009) | <p>CFMPs help to understand the scale and extent of flooding now and in the future, and set policies for managing flood risk within the catchment. They inform planning and decision making by key stakeholders.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ GI could be a method of building resilience which could be through new water bodies to cope with increased storm water run-off and the principles of sustainable drainage system etc. ■ Policy Option 5 addresses the high risk of flooding within the Eastern sub-area by factoring in the increasing flood risk over time due to climate change and future development. |
| Tees Valley Authorities Local Standards for Sustainable Drainage (2017) | <p>Produced by a working group from the Tees Valley local authorities and forms local standards which strongly promote the use of SuDS, helping to reduce surface water runoff and mitigate flood risk. Intended for use by architects, engineers, planners and developers in the preparation of new schemes.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes design standards and examples of how urban design can be implemented. ■ GI is recognised as an essential element to ensuring SuDS is successful. SuDS should be a part of the 'multi-functional' GI network, delivering multiple amenity, landscape and biodiversity benefits, alongside their primary function to deliver sustainable water management. |

| Plan/Strategy | Purpose | Key issues for GBI Strategy |
|--|--|--|
| Middlesbrough Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2018) | Prepared as an update to the 2013 assessment and required by MBC to initiate the sequential risk-based approach to the allocation of land for development and to identify whether the Exception Test is likely to be necessary. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Notes that GI assessments as part of the Council's policy baseline. Also, it states that alongside GI should be the implementation of SuDS, specifically within potential development sites. ■ GI should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities and should be provided as an integral part of all new development, alongside other infrastructure such as utilities and transport networks. ■ Developers should be required to set part of their site aside for surface water management, to contribute to flood risk management in the wider area and supplement green infrastructure networks. |
| Middlesbrough Local Flood Risk Management Strategy | Sets out primary objectives and actions which will reduce the risk of flooding, one of which is to take a sustainable and holistic approach to flood management, seeking to deliver wider environmental and social benefits, climate change mitigation and improvements under the Water Framework Directive. This aim promotes the concept of water cycle management and blue corridors/green infrastructure in master planning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ With regard to new developments in vulnerable areas, care should be taken to ensure risks can be suitability managed through adaptation and green infrastructure. |
| Theme 6: Walking and Cycling | | |
| Middlesbrough Integrated Transport Strategy (2018-28) | Seeks to balance the competing demands placed upon the transport network and create a network which is an integral part of the 'package' that attracts prospective investors. This is designed not only to provide ease of access within the authority boundary but a gateway to the rest of the Tees Valley, bringing the centres closer together. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A hierarchy of highway users (with pedestrians and cyclists at the top) will be at the heart of everything the Highways Authority does. ■ Promoting and incentivising sustainable travel will reduce dependence on the private car and will include measures to achieve modal shift. ■ Sets targets for modal share by each mode. |
| Middlesbrough Sustainable Travel Strategy | Produced in response to changing legislation in the field of school transport, this Strategy sets out how the Council will encourage travel planning across the Borough to meet the travel needs of those travelling to and from educational institutions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promotes sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions. ■ Requires that all schools have an authorised Travel Plan within the lifetime of the Strategy and seeks to reduce the level of car use on the school run. ■ Promotes suite of 'soft' measures, including promotion and training, and the need to boost sustainable trips through a campaign of awareness and education. ■ Highlights links with the 'Healthy Schools' agenda. ■ Requires at least three 'Safer Routes to School' schemes throughout the life of the Strategy. ■ Middlesbrough will work to reduce by 20% the volume of traffic arriving at the school gate. |

Appendix B

Record of Stakeholder Consultation

Organisations participating in virtual workshops

Middlesbrough Council
Tees Valley Combined Authority
Historic England
Groundwork
Tees Valley Nature Partnership
Linthorpe Parish Council
MAPP/Our Greenways
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Natural England
Thirteen Housing Group
Green Stuff Middlesbrough
Marton West Neighbourhood Forum
Middlesbrough Environment City
Sport England

Organisations responding to online survey

The Woodland Trust
The Forestry Commission (Yorkshire and North East Area Team)
NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group
Historic England
Stand With Orme: Protecting Ormesby Beck Valley
Stainton and Thornton Neighbourhood Plan Group
OurGreenways and MAPP
Friends of Nature's World
Friends of Fairy Dell
Friends of Linthorpe Cemetery and Nature Reserve
Youth Focus North East
The Friends of Stainton and Thornton Green Spaces
HoggyStockton Rescue
Greenstuff Middlesbrough
Marton West Neighbourhood Forum
Middlesbrough Environment City
Middlesbrough Council (Transport and Infrastructure)
4 x local Councillors

Organisations responding by e-mail

Hartlepool Council
Stockton Council
Friends of Nature's World
Forestry Commission
Groundwork
Historic England
Environment Agency

Appendix C

Output of Stakeholder Workshops

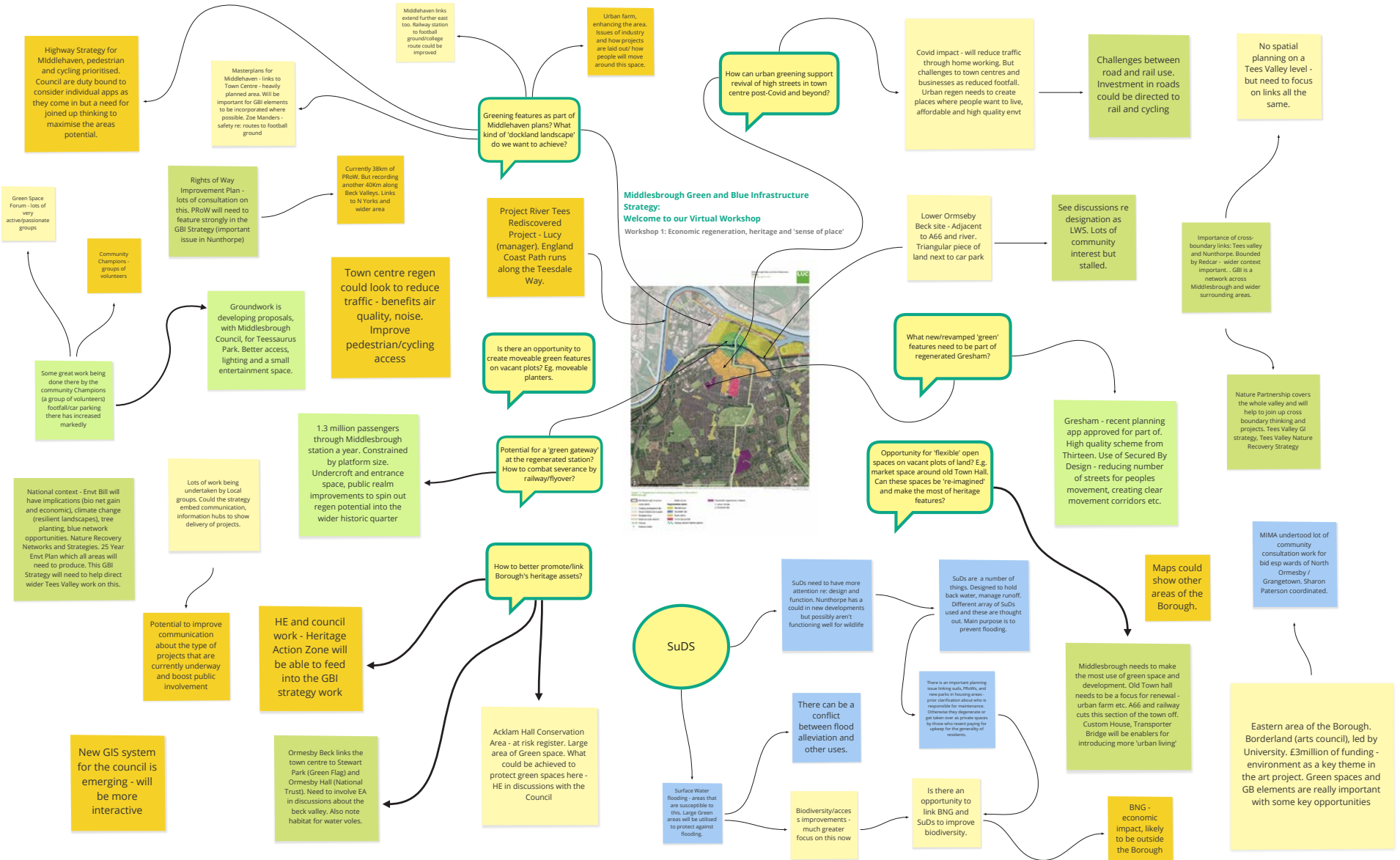
1.214 As part of the consultation process carried out for this Strategy, a series of six virtual workshops were held online, using video conferencing software. A selected group of stakeholder were invited based on their role in Middlesbrough's GBI Network, and each workshop focussed on a separate GBI 'theme'.

1.215 During the workshop, discussion points were captured by one of the facilitators on an online 'whiteboard', alongside a baseline map to guide the discussion.

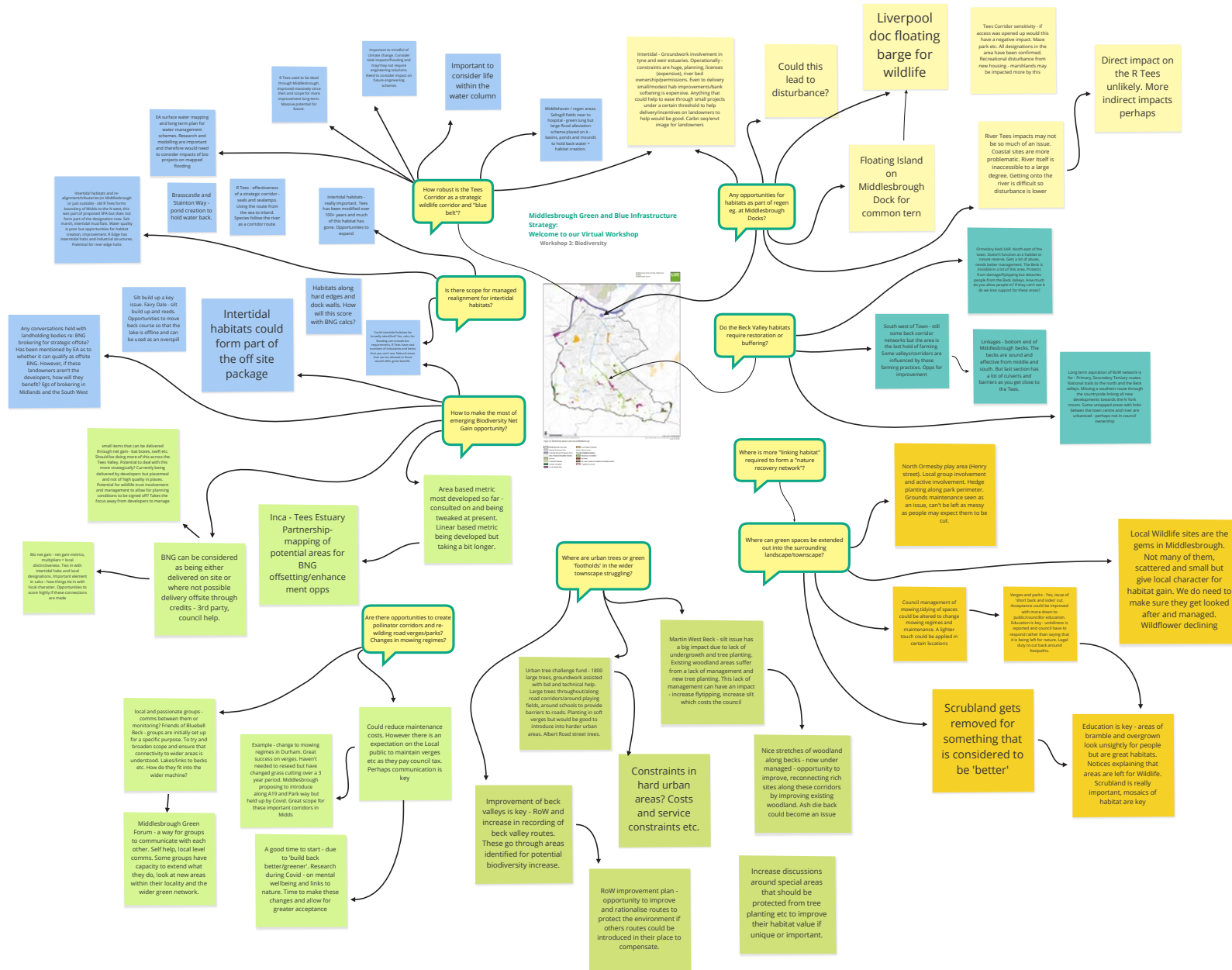
1.216 This Appendix contains 'snapshots' of those whiteboards with discussion points raised by stakeholders during the workshops. Following the workshops, these comments were combined with the policy review and mapping data as a basis for the Priority Opportunities identified in Part 2 of the GBI Strategy.

Workshop 1: Regeneration, Heritage and 'Sense of Place'

Page 111



Workshop 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity



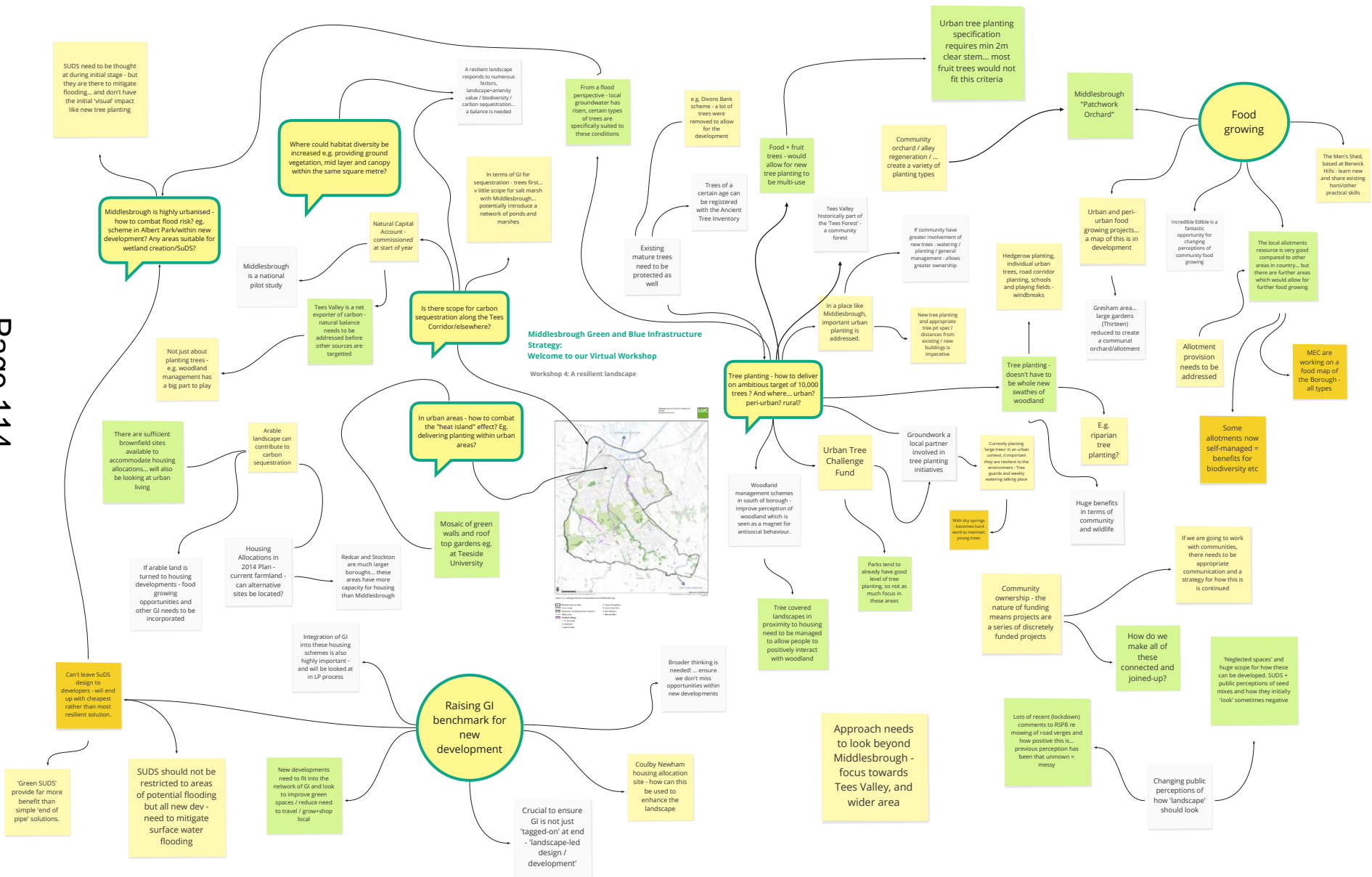
Workshop 3: Reconnecting Communities with Nature



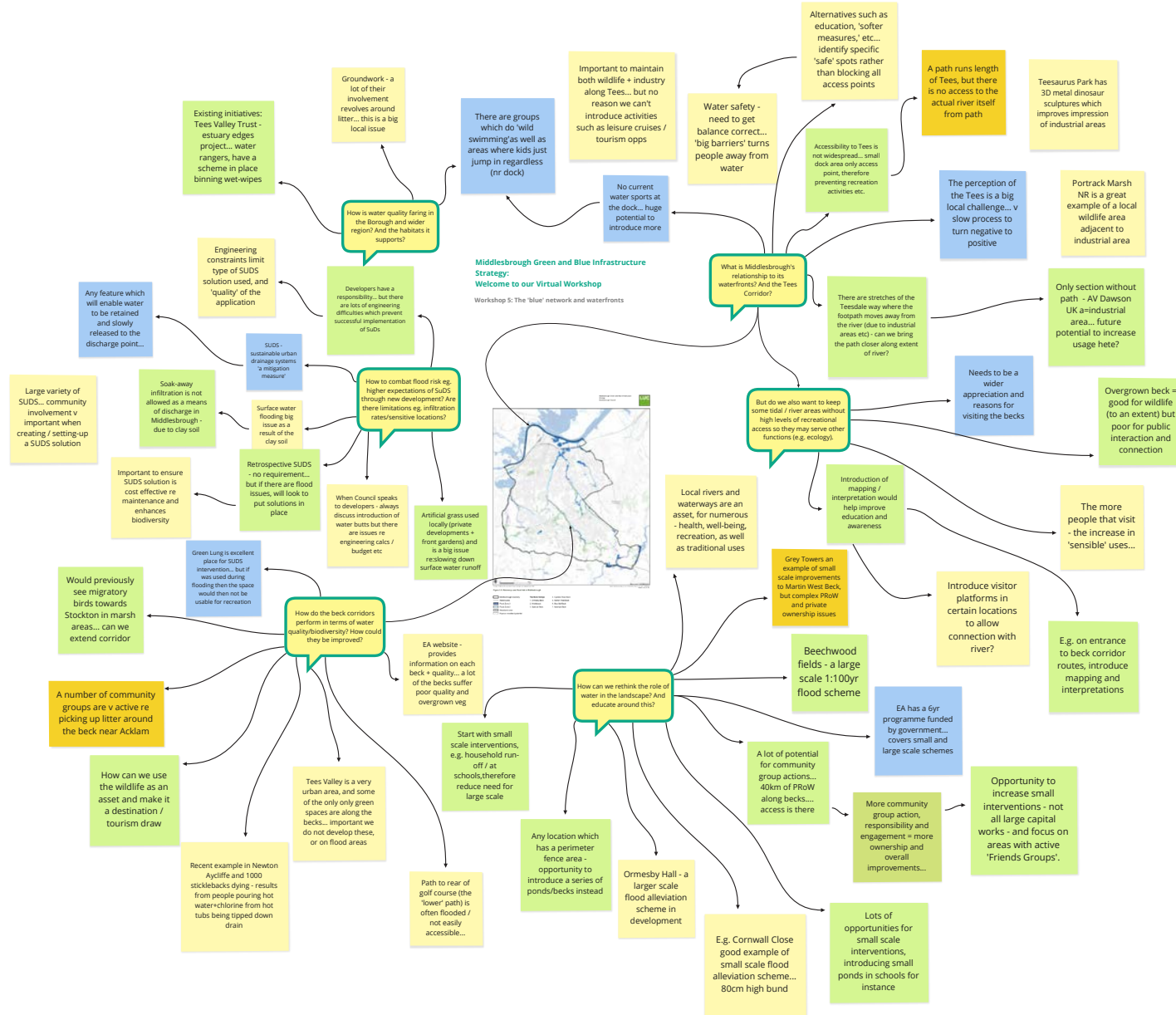
Page 113

Workshop 4: A Resilient Landscape

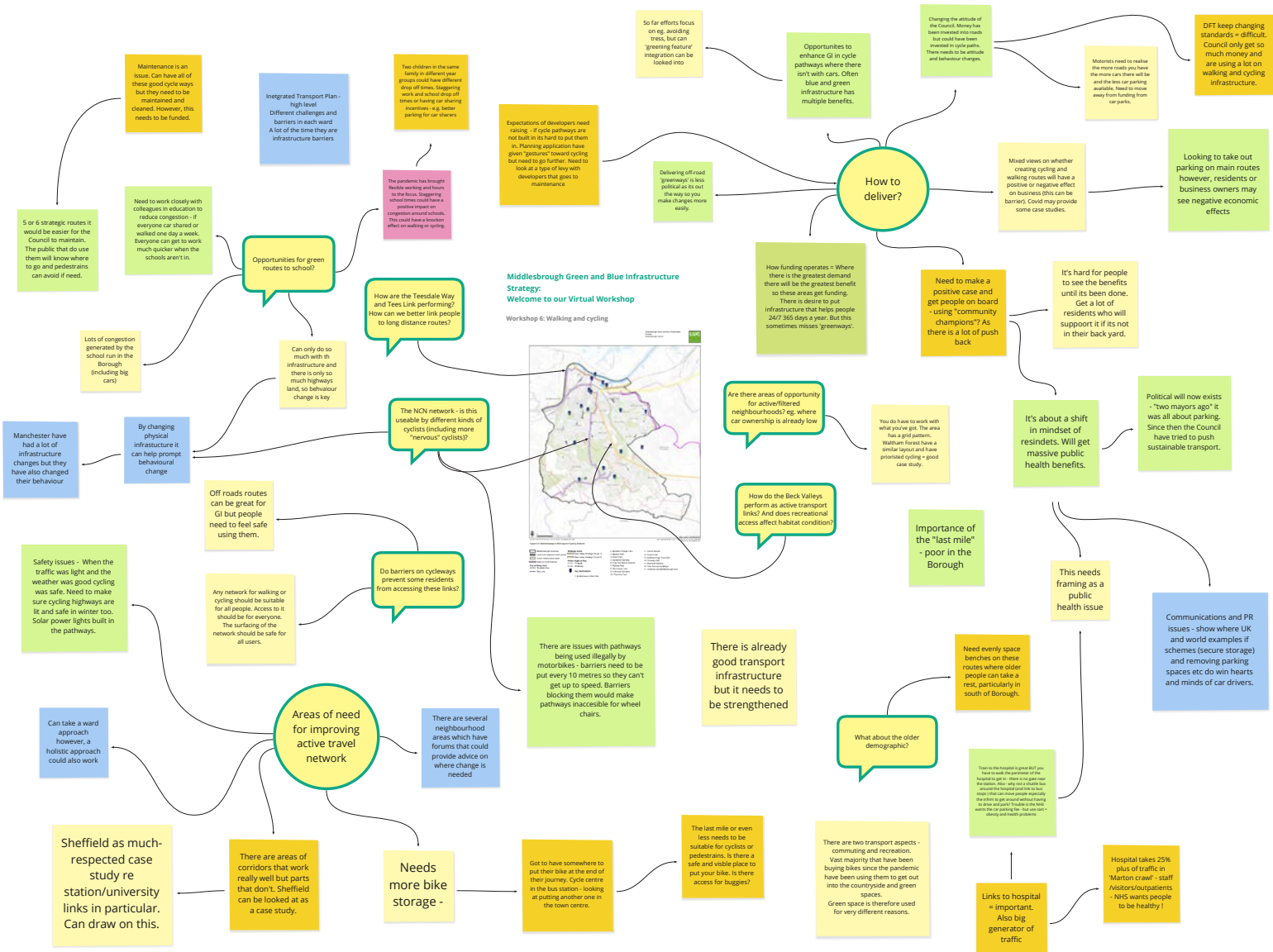
Page 114



Workshop 5: The Blue Network and Waterfronts



Workshop 6: Walking and Cycling



Middlesbrough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2037

Part Two: Action Plan

Page 1



Document control

| Version | Date | Status | Prepared | Approved |
|---------|---------------|---------------------------|------------|----------|
| 1.0 | October 2020 | Draft Part 2 Report | LW, MC, EB | TJ |
| 1.1 | February 2021 | Final Draft Part 2 Report | LW, MC, EB | TJ |
| 1.2 | April 2021 | Final Part 2 Report | LW, MC, EB | TJ |

Page 118

Project

Middlesbrough GBI Strategy

Client

Middlesbrough Council

LUC Project Number

11038

Project Team

The Green and Blue Infrastructure strategy has been prepared by a team at LUC.

All comments and contributions to the development of the study are gratefully acknowledged.

LUC project team

Mark Cooke

Lucy Wallwork

Sofie Swindlehurst

Emily Beedham

Date

April 2021

Note

This document and its contents have been prepared by LUC for Middlesbrough Council and is intended solely for use in relation to the GBI project.

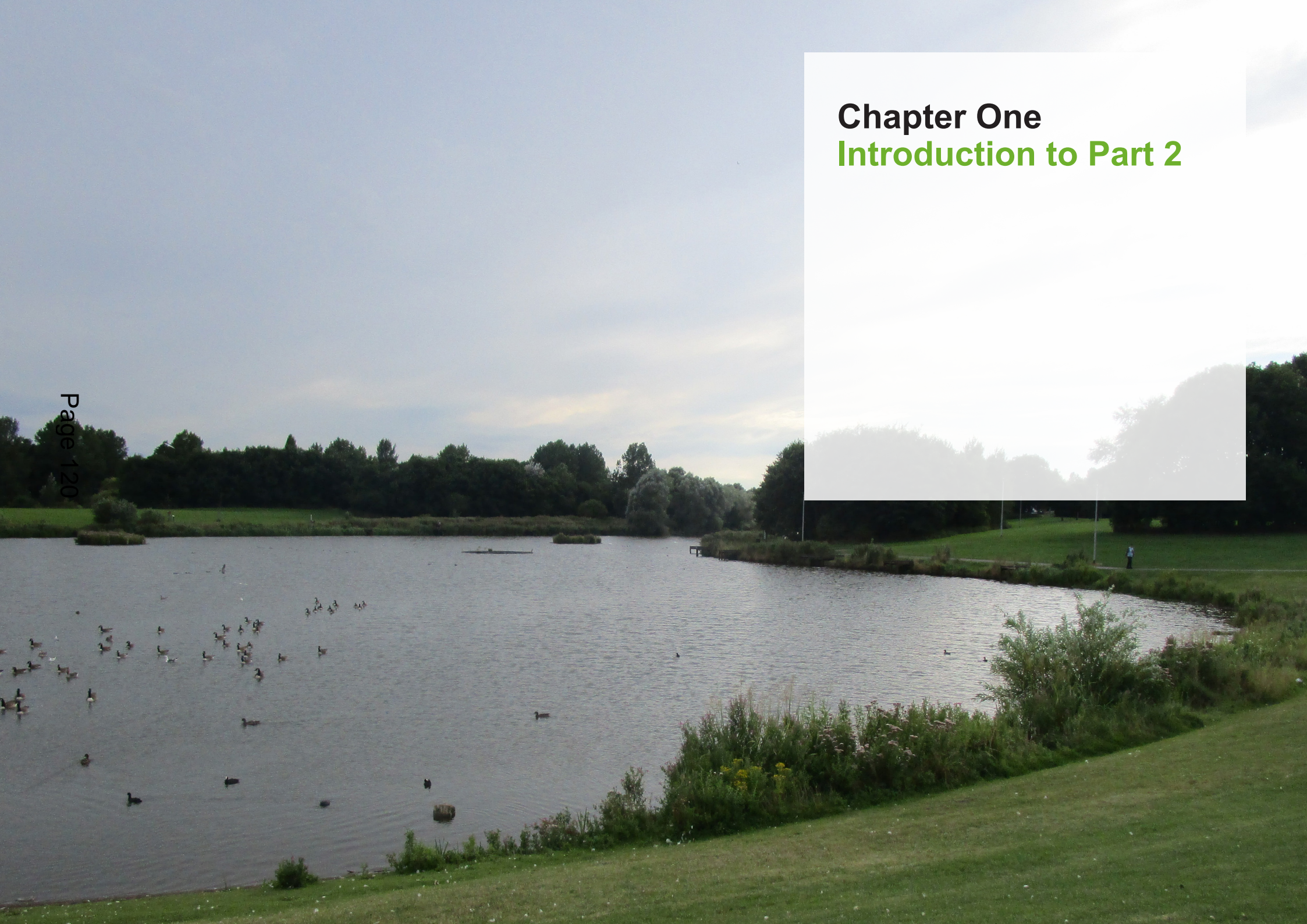
LUC assume no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

Contents

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----|---|----|
| Chapter 1 Introduction to Part 2 | 5 | Chapter 3 Priority Opportunity Profiles | | Chapter 4 Catalysts for Action | 42 |
| | | 1 Laying the Foundations for the Nature Recovery Network | 14 | | |
| | | 2 A Blue-Green Grid for Middlehaven | 16 | | |
| | | 3 Station Gateway and Middlesbrough 'Low Line' | 20 | | |
| Chapter 2 The Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI Network | 7 | 4 Supporting a Re-imagined Town Centre | 22 | Chapter 5 A GBI 'check list' for new development | 46 |
| | | 5 The 15 Minute Town: Enabling Walking and Cycling | 25 | | |
| | | 6 Blue Corridors: Enhancing the Beck Valleys | 28 | | |
| | | 7 Expanding the Urban Tree Network | 30 | | |
| | | 8 Edible Townscapes | 32 | | |
| | | 9 Rethinking Urban Grassland | 34 | | |
| | | 10 Network of Multifunctional SuDS | 36 | Chapter 6 Delivering the GBI network | 49 |
| | | 11 Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods | 38 | | |
| | | 12 Green Schools | 40 | | |
| | | | | Appendix A Linking the Priority Opportunities to the Evidence Base | 54 |

Chapter One

Introduction to Part 2



Chapter 1

Introduction to Part 2

Part 2 of the Strategy provides an Action Plan that responds to the priorities for Middlesbrough’s GBI network identified through Part 1 of the Strategy. This takes the form of a series of Priority Opportunities for the network, along with suggestions for potential delivery mechanisms to make them a reality.

Page 121

The ‘spine’ of this Strategy, as outlined in Part One, are the following GBI Themes identified for Middlesbrough, which are:

- Regeneration, heritage and ‘sense of place’
- Biodiversity and geodiversity
- Reconnecting communities with nature
- A resilient landscape
- The blue network and waterfronts
- Walking and cycling


These 6 themes also provide the basis for the identification of Priority Opportunities for the network, as set out in this Action Plan.

This Part Two (Action Plan) consists of the following sections:

- The Vision for Middlesbrough’s GBI network from 2020-2037, as tested through consultation with stakeholders.
- An overview of the Priority Opportunities mapped against the identified Objectives for each of the 6 GBI themes used in the Strategy.
- A Profile of each of the 12 Priority Opportunities, including suggested delivery partners and mechanisms.
- An overview of the two ‘catalysts for action’ to provide the focus for the delivery of the network.
- A chapter providing further guidance on how to ‘embed’ GBI into Middlesbrough’s emerging Local Plan.
- Further guidance on the various delivery mechanisms available to explore for the delivery of GBI enhancements.
- A simple GBI ‘checklist’ for developers and planners, framed as a set of questions to be asked of each new development in the Borough.



Figure 1.1 Key tasks undertaken for Part 2 of the GBI Strategy



Chapter Two The Vision for Middlesbrough's Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

Chapter 2 The Vision for Middlesbrough’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

All Priority Opportunities presented in Part 2 of the Strategy flow from an over-arching vision for the network in 2037. This common Vision will draw on local aspirations to help to direct actions across the Borough toward a shared goal.

The Vision presented in this Chapter draws on the baseline analysis and policy review from Part 1 of the Strategy, and was tested and amended through the online consultation process with selected local stakeholders.

The Vision is accompanied by a series of 15 Objectives also presented in this Chapter, which are sub-divided by theme and used to inform the Priority Opportunities details in the remainder of **Part 2**. The Objectives were identified based on the aspirations set out in the policy review and baseline analysis (set out in **Part 1**), as well as the outputs of the stakeholder consultation process. They ‘nest’ under the over-arching Vision for the network, providing more detail on ambitions up until 2037.

To illustrate how each Priority Opportunities presented here responds to these objectives, **Chapter 3** also provides a table mapping each of the Priority Opportunities to the various Objectives which it fulfils.



Figure 2.1: Process for identifying Priority Opportunities and delivering projects.

Figure 2.2: The over-arching Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI Strategy

“By 2037 Middlesbrough will be the greenest town in Tees Valley, and one where regeneration is firmly led by the ‘green and blue’ rather than the ‘grey’. The green and blue infrastructure network will be anchored by the town’s rich industrial and pre-industrial heritage assets, linked together by a mosaic of green spaces at all scales, that helps people reconnect with the natural environment on their doorstep and which tackles the root of health inequalities.

Green routes will make walking and cycling the natural way to travel around the town, and will help to reclaim and green the town’s streets as a public space for gathering with neighbours, and for children to play and travel to school safely.

Middlesbrough will also lead the way regionally as a resilient urban landscape with significantly boosted tree cover, and which is reshaped to make a meaningful contribution to tackling climate change and biodiversity challenges. It will be a town where urban wildlife can thrive by creating bigger, better and more joined up habitats.

Finally, local communities and their efforts will sit at the heart of efforts to shape the network, from school children to volunteer groups and local businesses. By joining up these efforts, change will go beyond isolated projects to create an integrated, landscape-scale regeneration of Middlesbrough’s natural environment.”

Middlesbrough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy: Part 2

Middlesbrough Council



Housing set against Middlehaven Urban Park.



View down the Ormesby Beck green corridor.



Landscape within the Borough's swathe of southern farmland.

Figure 2.3: Objectives identified for the GBI Strategy, which 'nest' under the Vision



Theme 1: Regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place'

Objective 1.1: To enable the GBI network to underpin Middlesbrough's ambitious regeneration schemes, 'urban living' agenda and the revival of the Borough's high streets and local centres.

Objective 1.2: To ensure that an enhanced GBI network both 'frames' and connects Middlesbrough's historic environment, and helps to boost the local visitor economy.



Theme 3: Reconnecting communities with nature

Objective 3.1: To help narrow the gap between the health and wellbeing of Middlesbrough residents and the rest of the UK through the provision and maintenance of a strong, connected and truly accessible green and open space network.

Objective 3.2: To support and enhance the efforts of numerous local community groups working on GBI initiatives.

Objective 3.3: To unlock land for community scale food growing initiatives, in order to support community cohesion, tackle physical and mental health challenges and to nurture 'locally grown' approaches to food provision.



Theme 5: The blue network and waterfronts

Objective 5.1: To improve the relationship between the town and the River Tees by mending links between urban areas waterfronts, while respecting the integrity of sensitive habitats.

Objective 5.2: To maximise the potential of Middlesbrough's Beck Valleys as green corridors and high quality multifunctional GBI assets.

Objective 5.3: To shift perceptions of the role that sitting water can play in Middlesbrough's landscape when pursuing nature-based and SuDS solutions to long-term flood risk management across a variety of green and blue spaces.



Theme 2: Biodiversity and geodiversity

Objective 2.1: To provide a diverse, expansive and well-connected ecological network as a foundation for the Borough's Nature Recovery Network and to enable greater resilience to the effects of, climate change.

Objective 2.2: To provide clear context for the delivery of locally-appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in new development.



Theme 4: A resilient landscape

Objective 4.1: To boost the resilience of Middlesbrough's landscape to the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and increasing temperatures.

Objective 4.2: To enable Middlesbrough's landscape to play a key part in mitigating against the effects of climate change by expanding the Borough's 'carbon sink'.

Objective 4.3: To increase tree canopy cover across the Borough in line with national targets.



Theme 6: Walking and cycling

Objective 6.1: To support the Borough's 'modal shift' ambitions toward active travel by creating attractive walking and cycling routes, and better connecting the town's network of greenways.

Objective 6.2: To integrate 'urban greening' features fully into active travel infrastructure schemes and the design of future streets.



Chapter Three
Priority Opportunity
Profiles

Chapter 3

Priority Opportunity Profiles

Each profile in this Chapter explores the priorities identified under each GBI theme from Part One - along with feedback from local stakeholders - and works them into multi-functional projects. Each profile also considers how the project might be delivered by a range of partners as a next step.

Twelve distinct Priority Opportunities have been identified, based on the baseline analysis carried out in **Part 1** and the outputs of the stakeholder consultation process. They are:

1. Laying the foundations for a Nature Recovery Network.
2. A green-blue grid for Middlehaven.
3. Station gateway and Middlesbrough 'low line'.
4. Supporting a re-imagined town centre.
5. The 15-minute town: enabling walking and cycling.
6. Blue corridors: enhancing the Beck Valleys.
7. Building an urban tree network.
8. Edible townscapes.
9. Rethinking urban grassland.
10. Network of multi-functional SuDS.
11. Green schools.
12. Low-traffic neighbourhoods.

For each Priority Opportunity detailed in this Chapter, information is provided on:

- The nature of the opportunity
- Its contribution to the range of GBI functions
- Best practice from elsewhere that may inform delivery options
- Potential challenges and risks
- Potential delivery partners, mechanisms and stakeholders
- Indicative delivery time-scales and potential costs.

The Priority Opportunities were identified through an internal workshop, where the key messages of the baseline analysis, mapping and stakeholder consultation were brought together to produce a 'long list' of opportunities. These were then mapped against each GBI theme, and a set of Priority

Opportunities identified which prioritise those opportunities which were the most multi-functional and responded to the most pressing needs identified during the process of developing the Strategy. The Profiles themselves also include a series of icons indicating which of the six GBI themes each responds to.

Figure 3.1 and **Table 3.1** provide a reminder of the Objectives identified for the Strategy and illustrate how each Priority Opportunity responds to those Objectives.

Appendix A provides further illustration of the links between the evidence base and the Priority Opportunities by mapping each one against the 'Emerging Opportunities identified within **Part 1** of the Strategy.

It should be noted that all opportunities outlined are indicative – the ability of each opportunity to deliver the number of functions highlighted is dependent on effective planning, siting and design. The Strategy seeks to identify a range of projects at different levels of ambition. However, given the urgencies of the combined climate-biodiversity-health crises facing the UK, the Strategy calls for an ambitious approach to building a truly transformed GBI network.

This Chapter is designed to provide support for the prioritisation of projects for delivery as funding becomes available or opportunities arise. It can also act as an initial reference point for further detailed feasibility and master planning work. The lists may also be used to help direct developer contributions to key off-site projects or to inform on-site master planning. However, it is acknowledged that not all opportunities will be immediately deliverable in the short term, particularly given the shifting (and somewhat unpredictable) policy landscape which is likely to affect GBI projects in future.

Figure 3.1: GBI Objectives organised by theme.

Objective 1.1: To enable the GBI network to underpin Middlesbrough's ambitious regeneration schemes, 'urban living' agenda and the revival of the Borough's high streets and local centres.

Objective 1.2: To ensure that an enhanced GBI network both 'frames' and connects Middlesbrough's historic environment, and helps to boost the local visitor economy.

Objective 2.1: To provide a diverse, expansive and well-connected ecological network as a foundation for the Borough's Nature Recovery Network and to enable greater resilience to the effects of, climate change.

Objective 2.2: To provide clear context for the delivery of locally-appropriate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in new development.

Objective 3.1: To help narrow the gap between the health and wellbeing of Middlesbrough residents and the rest of the UK through the provision and maintenance of a strong, connected and truly accessible green and open space network.

Objective 3.2: To support and enhance the efforts of numerous local community groups working on GBI initiatives.

Objective 3.3: To unlock land for community scale food growing initiatives, in order to support community cohesion, tackle physical and mental health challenges and to nurture 'locally grown' approaches to food provision.

Objective 4.1: To boost the resilience of Middlesbrough's landscape to the impacts of climate change, including flood risk and increasing temperatures.

Objective 4.2: To enable Middlesbrough's landscape to play a key part in mitigating against the effects of climate change by expanding the Borough's 'carbon sink'.

Objective 4.3: To increase tree canopy cover across the Borough in line with national targets.

Objective 5.1: To improve the relationship between the town and the River Tees by mending links between urban areas waterfronts, while respecting the integrity of sensitive habitats.

Objective 5.2: To maximise the potential of Middlesbrough's Beck Valleys as green corridors and high quality multifunctional GBI assets.

Objective 5.3: To shift perceptions of the role that sitting water can play in Middlesbrough's landscape when pursuing nature-based and SuDS solutions to long-term flood risk management across a variety of green and blue spaces.

Objective 6.1: To support the Borough's 'modal shift' ambitions toward active travel by creating attractive walking and cycling routes, and better connecting the town's network of greenways.

Objective 6.2: To integrate 'urban greening' features fully into active travel infrastructure schemes and the design of future streets.



Regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place'.



A resilient landscape



Biodiversity and geodiversity



The blue network and waterfronts



Reconnecting communities with nature



Walking and cycling

Vision for Middlesbrough's GBI Network

Page 128

Table 3.1: Priority Opportunities (POs) mapped against the Objectives of the Strategy

| Theme | Regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place' | | Biodiversity and geodiversity | | Reconnecting communities with nature | | | A resilient landscape | | | Blue network and waterfronts | | | Walking and cycling | | Climate change benefits |
|---|---|-----|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------|-----|-----|------------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| | 1.1 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 6.1 | 6.2 | |
| PO1: Laying the foundations for a Nature Recovery Network | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO2: A green-blue grid for Middlehaven | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Moderate |
| PO3: Station gateway and Middlesbrough 'low line' | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Moderate |
| PO4: Supporting a re-imagined town centre | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Moderate |
| PO5: The 15-minute town: enabling walking and cycling | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO6: Blue corridors: enhancing the beck valleys | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO7: Building an urban tree network | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO8: Edible townscapes | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Moderate-Significant |
| PO9: Rethinking urban grassland | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO10: Network of multi-functional SuDs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO11: Low-traffic neighbourhoods | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |
| PO12: Green schools | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Significant |

Priority Opportunity 1

Laying the foundations for a Nature Recovery Network



Key aim: Filling the strategic 'gaps' in the Borough's biodiversity network through habitat creation and restoration, with an emphasis on key focus areas and corridors.

Area of focus: Borough-wide.

Key delivery risks: Delays in landmark legislation requiring Biodiversity Net Gain; fragmented land ownership and permissions.

Mitigation: Require localised net gain through local planning process.

Potential partners: Tees Valley Nature Partnership/ Wildlife Trust; local community groups; developers and housing associations.

Potential funding mechanisms: Developer contributions/ Biodiversity Net Gain; grant funding for restoration of habitats.

Next steps: Promoting use of habitat networks and GBI Strategy priorities as part of negotiations over regeneration schemes and in early conversations on new development proposals.

The opportunity

In Middlesbrough, as elsewhere, the reality of dramatic biodiversity decline has resulted in a renewed focus on restoring networks of habitats, primarily through local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) at the sub-regional scale.

Nature Recovery Networks (e) are described by the Wildlife Trust as a:

“Joined-up system of places important for wild plants and animals, on land and at sea. It allows plants, animals, seeds, nutrients and water to move from place to place and enables the natural world to adapt to change. It provides plants and animals with places to live, feed and breed.”

It is well accepted that nature reserves alone are not enough to help wildlife recover. Instead, we need to reconnect fragmented sites – stitching back together the natural fabric of wild land and encouraging our green spaces to be richer and more resilient to the changing climate. This will require thinking on a landscape-scale across the Borough and beyond its boundaries.

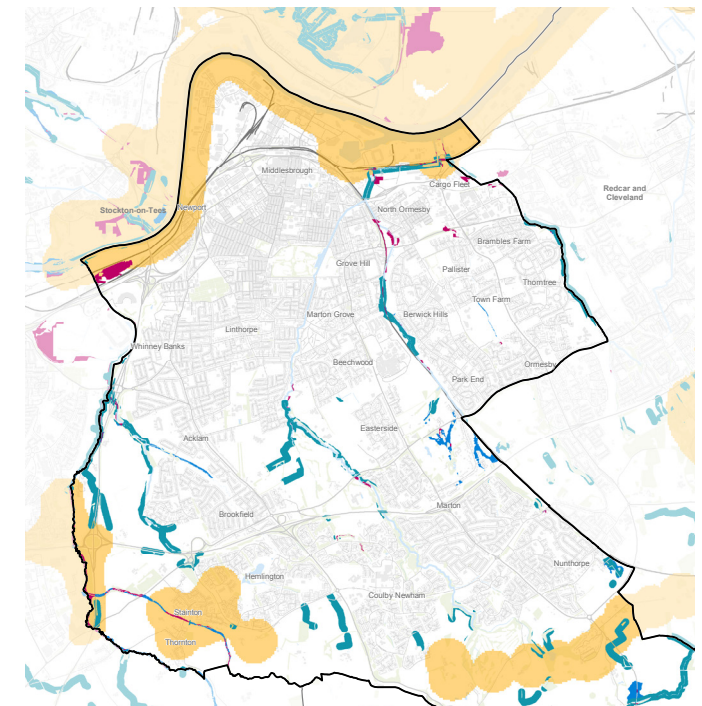
With the emerging landmark Environment Bill, the UK government is set to introduce new duties to support more effective spatial planning for nature through the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs). Creation of these strategies will be led by the Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and will include a statement of biodiversity priorities for the area covered by the strategy and a local habitat map that identifies opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity.

This GBI Strategy aims to be cross-compatible with these emerging Strategies, and actions taken forward should support them. As such, this first Priority Opportunity provides a 'keystone' for the remainder of Opportunities outlined in Part 2, and should inform all other interventions in the network and any new development coming forward.

The implementation of new agricultural schemes (ELMS)

will be an important step in achieving this on arable and pastoral land, however in more urban environments such as Middlesbrough, the delivery of areas of habitat network through the contributions of new development (in particular, using the new tool of 'biodiversity net gain') will be crucial. In the urban context, this might mean allowing road verges to rewild, installing green roofs, planting more street trees for shade, or encouraging wilder private gardens.

The Tees Valley Nature Partnership and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust will be key partners in this Opportunity, particularly given the importance of linking the local nature recovery network into wider networks across the region. As outlined in **Part 1** of the Strategy, enhancements must focus on the following key areas.



▲ A map from Part One of the Strategy highlighting potential for greater connectivity within the Borough's biodiversity network.

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



1. River Tees Corridor

This will focus on the expansion of intertidal habitats along the Tees, to improve its function as a strategic wildlife corridor. This restoration work should form an integral part of the redevelopment of the Middlehaven regeneration area (see **Priority Opportunity 2**). The extension of intertidal habitats also provides an opportunity to align with flood resilience objectives (see **Priority Opportunity 10**).

2. Beck Valleys

As home to many of the Borough's priority habitats and species, the Becks form crucial corridors connecting the Tees Corridor and Middlesbrough's rural hinterland to the south. Site-specific recommendations will be required, but may include extension of reed beds, sensitive management of grasslands and positive management of woodland areas - in some places this will require maintaining low levels of disturbance (See **Priority Opportunity 6**).

3. Urban Greening (including associated grasslands and woodlands)

As highlighted in Part 1, 'stepping stone' habitats are a vital complement to the designated site network. Particularly in Middlesbrough's urban context, it is vital that a mosaic of greening features is integrated into future development and regeneration schemes (see **Priority Opportunities 2, 3, 5, 7 and 9**, as well as the 'GBI check list' for new development in **Chapter 5**).

4. Southern Farmland

The limited amount of open space within Middlesbrough's boundaries lies to the south of the town. Much of the enhancement here is likely to come via environment land management schemes (ELMS) as part of post-Brexit agricultural policy, in order to provide greater habitat connectivity via hedgerows, field margins etc.



▲ A 'bug hotel' in Fairy Dell is an example of how micro-features can both build the nature network and inform.

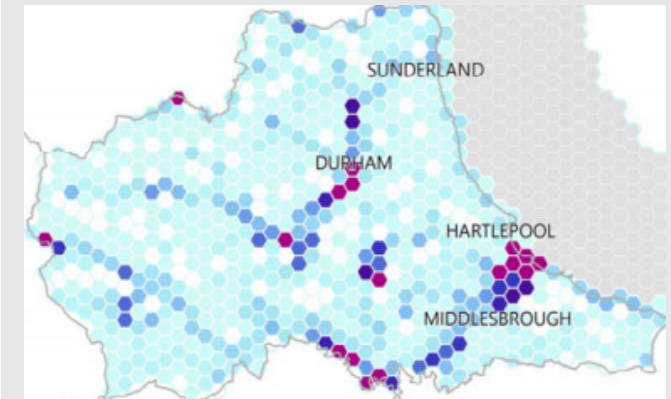


▲ Hemlington Lake, in the south of the Borough.



▲ Ormesby Beck - The Beck Valleys are crucial links in the Borough's nature network.

Spotlight: Tees Valley Natural Capital Atlas



Understanding the state of our natural environment is the essential first step to improving it. Natural England's series of regional Natural Capital atlases provide an "off the shelf" natural capital evidence base for each county or city region. They use national indicators to measure the quantity, quality and location of ecosystems, and the flow of ecosystem services from them.

The mapping goes beyond biodiversity alone to take into account themes such as cultural services and climate regulation. However it is a useful tool for helping to understand where the 'gaps' in the network are which need to be filled. This offers the opportunity to better align investment and management resources with natural environment priorities.

The Tees Valley Atlas is 'a cut' of the national atlas, using indicators and data sets at a finer resolution. It is designed to understand the state of the natural capital in the Tees Valley region. It will help to identify actions and target areas that could enhance the number of benefits, and help to weigh up trade-offs in the benefits provided.

The maps can be supplemented with locally held data, which will be at a higher resolution, much of which has been used in the development of this GBI Strategy.

Priority Opportunity 2

A Green-Blue Grid for Middlehaven



Key Aim: A 'framework' of green and blue infrastructure that guides the development of the Greater Middlehaven area, based on key assets, opportunities and heritage assets.

Area of focus: Greater Middlehaven.

Key delivery risks: Challenge of reversing stigma around the area; funding, local buy-in.

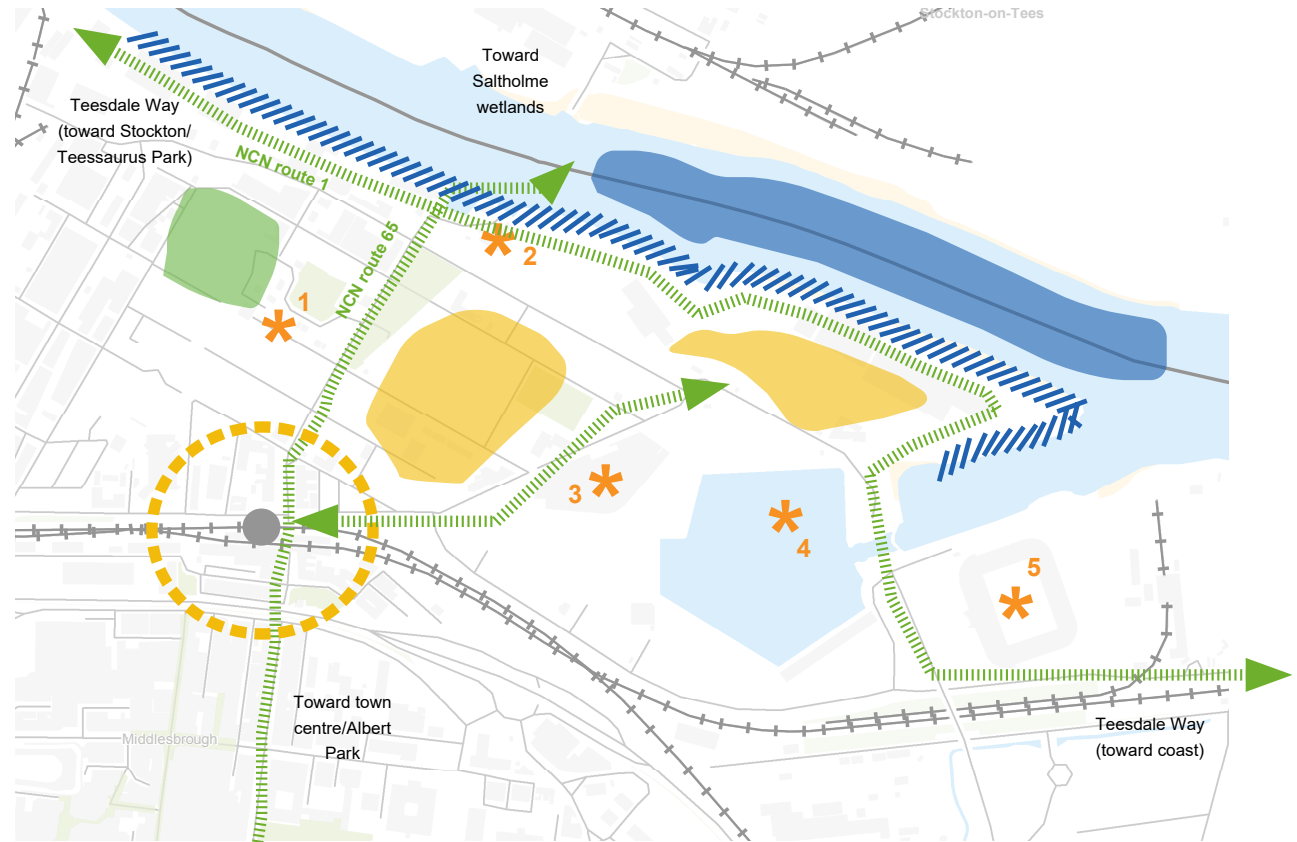
Mitigation: Provision of high quality green space and green corridors; creation of focal points/activities to draw movement into Middlehaven.

Potential partners: Housing Associations; Developer community; Middlesbrough Environment City; urban farming community; local businesses; Wildlife Trust.

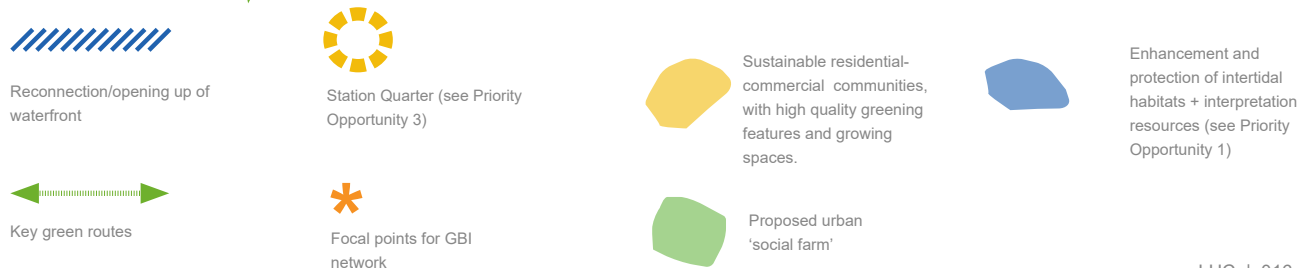
Potential funding mechanisms: Heritage grant funding (e.g., Transforming Towns fund; developer contributions; Government grant funding; private investment).

Next steps: More detailed master planning of Middlehaven area; negotiation with developers; community engagement.

▼ A proposed network of key focal points and green routes to focus priorities in the development of Middlehaven.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020



Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



The opportunity

The Greater Middlehaven area is a significant area of opportunity for the future of Middlesbrough. Given the pressures and priorities highlighted in Part One of this Strategy (and the priorities laid down in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan), this is also an area where the future regeneration agenda must be one led by the 'green and blue' rather than simply by the building footprints. Based on the evidence presented in this Strategy, and consultation with key stakeholders, key priorities for this area should be the following:

- Re-connection with the waterfront.
- Expansion and enhancement of habitats.
- A network of 'green routes' throughout Middlehaven, and linking to both the town centre and riverside routes, which enable walking and cycling to be the natural 'mode of choice'.
- Maximising the potential of Middlehaven's heritage assets, as well as iconic destinations such as the Riverside Stadium.



▲ A vision of how the derelict Town Hall could be re-envisaged as a market place, community hub and growing space, in order to create a focal point to draw visitors toward Middlehaven.

Part One
Emergency
CS
There are a number of examples across the UK of dockland regeneration schemes, however in the context of a Climate Emergency, regeneration will need to take a different 'starting point' in order to meet 21st century challenges.

As outlined in Part One of this Strategy, the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 has demonstrated the need for green space and 'wild' areas to be prioritised within urban areas, for the use of residents of various generations. This must be delivered alongside new development coming forward within Middlehaven, and should focus on a number of key focal points:

Key focal point 1: The old Town Hall

The currently derelict Old Town Hall is identified as a highly valuable but under-used 'anchor point' for the future of Middlehaven. This Strategy does not propose a specific use for a restored Town Hall, but proposes that it is resurrected as a community-centred space surrounded by high quality public realm with a focus on the natural environment and food growing (see also **Priority Opportunity 8**). Re-creating a Hub here would also look back to the local heritage of the historic centre of St Hilda's, which was centred on a market square.

Charitable trust *Power to Change* sets out the idea that "communities themselves can revitalise their own high streets", highlighting the need to trust and empower communities to take on more ownership of property and have greater influence over where they live, as an alternative to an outdated model dominated by mass retail alone. This heritage asset proves an opportunity to explore this model as part of the future of Middlehaven.¹ Case Study 2 provides helpful inspiration for how this idea might be further developed, and partnership with existing local food/craft businesses should also be pursued.

Key focal point 2: The waterfront and Tees Transporter Bridge

The Tees Corridor waterfront is Middlehaven's greatest asset, but also one which needs careful consideration (see **Priority Opportunity 1**) due to the vulnerable habitats it is home to. As noted in Part One, Middlesbrough has historically turned its back on its waterfront, and the regeneration agenda

is a valuable opportunity to "turn back" toward the Tees Corridor. This can create a sought-after setting for residential development, however can also deliver high quality public realm for wider residents and the visitor economy. The upgrading of the Teesdale Way - with viewing platforms and interpretation resources to understand natural habitats and local heritage - will be an important feature. Riverside parks, heritage and nature trails and board walks can all be considered to create a successful waterside corridor.

The waterfront opportunity area also opens up the potential to explore further enlivening Middlehaven with leisure uses on the River Tees.

There are strong opportunities here not only for public amenity but for a truly multi-functional GBI corridor. In particular, opportunities to reinstate and extend intertidal habitats must be considered alongside the Council's long-term planning for hard and soft flood defences and for silt management.

¹ https://www.powertochange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PCT_3619_High_Street_Pamphlet_FINAL_LR.pdf

Key focal point 3-5: The Docks/Riverside Stadium/ Middlesbrough College

Middlesbrough Docks - surrounded by Middlesbrough College, the Temenos sculpture and the Riverside Stadium - are a key focal point within Middlehaven. They are also an area with high potential for further greening of the public realm. In particular, there is an opportunity for enhancement of habitats within the docks (see **Case Study 1**), accompanied by educational/interpretation resources to help visitors better understand the context of local ecosystems and the surrounding SPA/SAC. The enhancement of this area had strong support from stakeholder consulted as part of this Strategy.

High quality development with integrated urban greening and growing space

Particularly given the renewed emphasis on access to green space discussed above - and the heightened flood risk along the Tees Corridor - it is vital that high standards of multi-functional urban greening are delivered as part of Middlehaven. See the 'GBI Checklist' for new development in **Chapter 5** for further guidance. All opportunities should also be taken to incorporate urban growing space (see **Priority Opportunity 8**).

Key green routes

It is equally important that these focal points are knitted together by a series of green routes and linear parks, where walking and cycling are the natural mode of choice (see also **Priority Opportunity 5**). Two particular routes to be noted are:

■ **Waterfront walking and cycling routes**

Waterfront public realm should be safeguarded to allow for recreational access. While care should be taken to ensure vulnerable habitats are not unduly impacted, this route (the Teesdale Way) is a key corridor and should be a focus of movement in Middlehaven. Interpretation resources will help

residents and visitors under the role of the Tees Corridor as a natural feature and how its ecosystems function.

■ **Links through to Station Quarter and town centre**

Strong 'green routes' and linear parks must link the regenerated station area (see **Priority Opportunity 3**) with key destinations within Middlehaven and south toward the town centre. The route leading from the station to Middlesbrough College (the 'Great Walk') is already a promising example of how movement can be invited down a high quality pedestrian corridor, along with nods to local heritage that help to provide a sense of place. Given the space, these routes can act as 'linear parks' which can strengthen and link the local green space network.

Delivering a greener Middlehaven

Much of the enhancement of Middlehaven will be delivered through developer contributions, phased as development comes forward (see **Chapters 5 and 6**). However there are also opportunities to pursue grant funding to help 'kick start' future phases of regeneration - including heritage-related funding to help bring the Town Hall back into use. Given a renewed emphasis on the national policy agenda for town centre revival, there may be funding opportunities at a national level, which should use these principles as a starting point to elaborate a more fine-grained vision for the various focal areas and corridors.

▼ Precedent images showing riverside regeneration initiatives.



Riverside housing and boardwalk at the Claypits waterfront regeneration in Glasgow.



Waterfront residential uses, walkways and reed beds at Rochester Riverside.

Case Study 1: Bristol Floating Dock and Reed Beds



The reed beds within Bristol's floating docks, with walkway.

As a result of harbourside regeneration, Bristol's dock sides have been transformed from a declining industrial area into a popular place to live, serving as a catalyst for city-centre living trends. Key to its success was the integration of environmental features, the provision of waterside walkways and urban greening features.

In particular, the regeneration provides a unique floating reed bed in the heart of Bristol city centre, created as part of the harbourside development at Canon's Marsh. The location was chosen to provide links to the past - when the area (fronting an old gasworks) was populated with self-seeded colonising trees and shrubs, as well as some reeds, along the water line. As such, the design is intended to reflect the original ecosystem.

The reeds are planted within a prefabricated floating raft module that is tied together on site and is highly resistant to storm and flood damage. The reed beds are truly multi-functional GBI assets, as their role was expanded to serve as part of a SuDS system for one of the buildings. They also provide nesting sites for birds, and ensure that runoff from nearby buildings is clear when it enters the harbour, and create an attractive soft edge to the Floating Harbour. The beds are highly popular for recreation and walkers making use of the waterfront. The harbour provides inspiration for how Middlesbrough might enhance the 'blue' assets within Middlehaven.

Case Study 2: Frome Cheese and Grain Market



The restored market hall in Frome because a focal point in the town's wider regeneration agenda, and is managed by the community

The market town of Frome in Somerset has gained a reputation as an somewhere which reversed a sense of decline through thoughtful community-led regeneration, which has resulted in a substantially improved 'sense of place'. At the heart of this regeneration agenda was the re-use of heritage assets such as the 'Cheese and Grain' building. The Cheese and Grain was converted from a former market hall with the support of the town council, and is run as a not-for-profit, member-owned social enterprise. Its aim is to promote and boost Frome's social, cultural and economic list.

In this sense, it offers an interesting model for the use of Middlesbrough's old town hall for community use and as a 'focal' point in the wider regeneration of Middlehaven. In the case of the Cheese and Grain, the building is used as a music and cultural venue, as well as a cafe.

Perhaps the most innovative feature of Frome's approach to this initiative was the role of local governance, with an emphasis on community decision-making and a town council which took risks on substantial loans (including the low-interest Public Works Fund) to bring land and buildings into community use.

Priority Opportunity 3

Station gateway and Middlesbrough 'low line'



Key Aim: Creating a 'green corridor' through the regenerated station quarter to help combat existing 'severance' between Middlehaven and the town centre, boosting walking and cycling as well as local business resilience.

Area of focus: Station quarter and surrounding areas.

Key delivery risks: Securing the cooperation of local businesses; partnership working with town centre agenda; opposition to vehicle reduction in central areas.

Mitigation: Close communication with all stakeholders and participative design.

Potential partners: Local businesses; town centre regeneration team; local artists and community groups; Teesside University; Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA).

Potential funding mechanisms: Grant funding for town centre recovery.

Next steps: Participative visioning exercise to gauge priorities of local stakeholders; discussions with town centre regeneration team to communicate the importance of this green corridor.

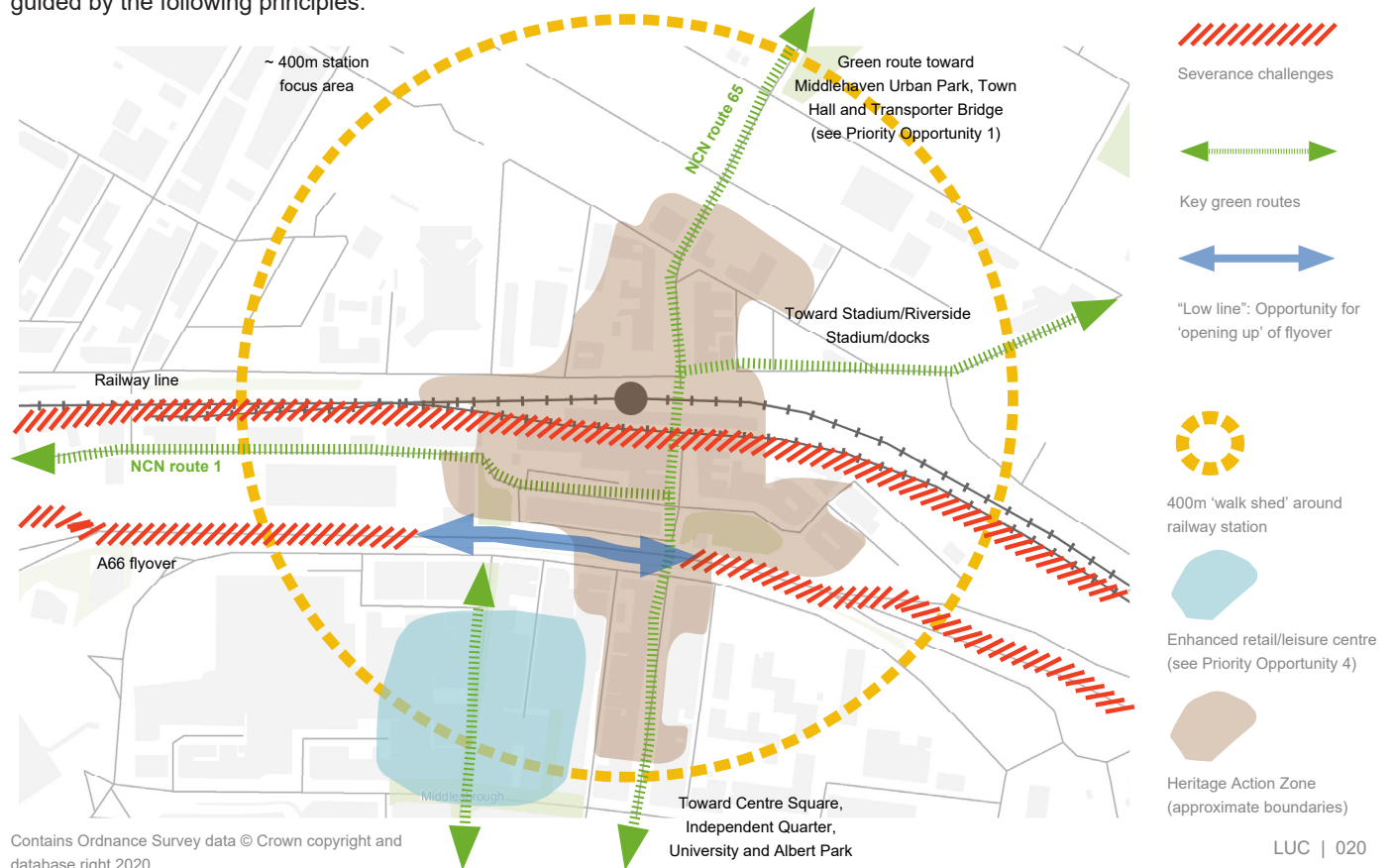
The opportunity

Part 1 of this Strategy highlighted the issue of a poor 'sense of arrival' for those arriving by train into Middlesbrough. In particular, the sense of severance created by the railway and motorway flyover within the station quarter.

This Opportunity recognises the work being done on the 'Station Quarter' as part of the redevelopment of Middlesbrough station (to take advantage of enhanced train services launching through Middlesbrough) and seeks to ensure that this vision is integrated into the wider GBI network of both the town centre to the south and a regenerated Middlehaven to the north. Actions in this area should be guided by the following principles:

- Creating a green 'walkable zone' with reduced car dominance for those arriving by train, which eases connections between key destinations in the surrounding area.
- Enhanced wayfinding to key destinations and walking routes.
- Use of urban greening within the station 'gateway' to improve 'sense of arrival', as well as to provide shade and 'stepping stone' habitats.
- Combating the severance created by the A66 flyover by

▼ A map from Part One of the Strategy highlighting potential for greater connectivity within the Borough's biodiversity network.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



exploring options to progressively 'open up' the area under the flyover - to create high quality public realm and play space, and boost local business as part of the high street recovery agenda.

The 'low line': Combating severance and creating space to meet and play

The future success of Middlesbrough town centre will depend to a large extent upon the seamless integration between the town centre and a regenerated Middlehaven (see **Priority Opportunity 2**). While the urban greening initiatives proposed for the station area will go a long way to creating a stronger 'gateway' to the town, a bolder vision will require an exploration of the partial 'opening up' of the areas underneath the A66 flyover (between Brunswick St and Wilson St). This offers the opportunity to create a more permeable public realm and a green walkable corridor between Middlehaven, the station and the town centre area. Further investigation and consultation will be required to determine the most appropriate use for this space, however a flagship area of public realm and play space should be considered - ideally providing for space for young people, who have been identified as under-provided for in Middlesbrough (see Glasgow case study). This space is also likely to be a valuable location for local hospitality businesses, sheltered outdoor seating and parklets, and would also provide a valuable opportunity for public art and murals - with the option of engaging local artists to enhance the sense of place and references to local heritage.

This corridor should be part of the focus of efforts to reconfigure the town centre (see **Priority Opportunity 4**) to support high street recovery, and a projected shift toward leisure uses, just as we regularly find railway arches across the UK re-purposed to provide distinctive public realm.

This bold vision could be explored progressively by creating partial permeability along the flyover corridor, and in close consultation with the local business community.

Case Study: High Line (New York)



The New York high line is an iconic example of green infrastructure.

While Middlesbrough itself does not have any disused raised railway lines to make use of, the High Line in New York is an example of the city redeveloping its older infrastructure into public space. As such, it provides lessons for how Middlesbrough might rethink the space underneath the A66 flyover.

The HighLine project is closely related to PlanNYC, a programme introduced in 2007 as a comprehensive agenda covering storm water management, green infrastructure, air quality and carbon emissions.

Saved from demolition by neighborhood residents and the City of New York, the High Line opened in 2009 as a hybrid public space where visitors experience nature, art, and design. It provides biodiversity benefits as a habitat and pollinator corridor, as well as serving as a strong asset for the city's visitor economy. It also has strong community involvement, given that it is operated by Friends of the High Line in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (see Catalyst 2 in **Chapter 4** of this Strategy).

The project in New York has provided the inspiration behind UK-based projects such as the Camden Highline in London.

Case Study: Sheaf Square (Sheffield)



Image source: Academy of Urbanism

Sheaf Square is an example of a heavily used cross-city route connecting the city, residential suburbs, the tram network and the planned Sheaf Valley Park GBI feature. Prior to its redesign, it was a heavily trafficked area providing a poor 'sense of arrival' and contributing to negative impressions of the city. It has since become a highly valued public space, where people can both move from one transport mode to another and also meet, sit and talk. As such, it provides inspiration for how Middlesbrough's Station Quarter could be re-imagined as a new hub of movement connecting Middlehaven and the town centre.

Sheaf Square also provides an example of how local heritage can be used as an anchor for re-imagining these 'gateways' - the design references the geology, landscape, history, and the Pennine setting - the birth place of the steel industry.

The previous access via the subway has been replaced by an at-grade route, to encourage walking and cycling, as part of the wider 'Gold Route' - which links a series of public spaces throughout the city. It is also carefully integrated into a wider landscape plan, which seeks to reshape green spaces behind the station into the Sheaf Valley Park.

The long-term management of the area is aided by 'City Ambassadors', employed directly by Sheffield Council which help police it along with other areas of the Gold Route.

Priority Opportunity 4

Supporting a re-imagined town centre



Key Aim: Providing urban greening features in the town centre which support a 'place-based' approach to high street revival, by reshaping spaces to encourage people to linger rather than simply pass through.

Area of focus: Middlesbrough town centre

Key delivery risks: Getting local business on board and cooperating; availability of funding to kick-start transformation; obstacles caused by underground infrastructure; competing land uses.

Mitigation: Strong communication with local businesses; providing flexible spaces; thoughtful design processes.

Potential partners: Local businesses/BID, National Government funding.

Potential funding mechanisms: Government grants e.g.. Future High Streets fund.

Next steps: Promotion of Green Infrastructure Strategy and priorities among those working on town centre regeneration, to ensure agendas are fully aligned.

The opportunity

Even prior to the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, local high streets have been struggling to maintain vibrancy, faced with a shift to online shopping and competition from out-of-town shopping centres such as Teesside Park. Concerns over the over-provision of retail within Middlesbrough's town centre pre-dates the Covid-19 pandemic, however this event has brought the future role of the high street into sharp focus. The pandemic is helping to shape new thinking on the primary function of the high street, on the role and function of spaces and the conditions required to allow them to thrive as a social environment.

As such, across the UK there is an increasing recognition that reviving high streets in their traditional, retail-dominant form

is not likely to be an option, and instead town centres need to be re-imagined. However this is a case where a challenge can be re-framed as an opportunity - to build more resilient town centres and communities, which is likely to involve a shift to a greater diversity of uses (and users), including community spaces, leisure and hospitality uses. High streets are therefore increasing focus on improving the *experience* they offer as a place to dwell, shop and meet friends. Often, however, the high street environment fails to serve as such a destination. A stronger GBI network has a vital role to play in creating a new generation of walkable, attractive hubs to support a new role for the high street, as well as helping to reconfigure outdoor

▼ An illustration of how Middlesbrough's retail-oriented town centre could benefit from a greener public realm, providing space for play, rest and supporting local business .

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



space. It will also play a key role in enabling businesses to re-open for business as part of the longer term Covid-19 recovery.

The kind of ‘urban greening’ features which can contribute to a re-imagined town centre go far beyond street trees alone. Indeed, a diverse ‘mosaic’ of urban greening features is the most effective in providing a broad range of GBI functions, including flood resilience, recreation and biodiversity:

- Areas of urban meadow in under-used spaces.
 - Rain gardens (usually more appropriate when designed in at an early stage)
 - High quality incidental natural play areas, to encourage families into the city centre.
 - Green walking and cycling routes.
- Street trees - ideally with sustainable urban drainage function integrated into tree pits.
- ‘Parklets’ (including the conversion of parking spaces for this use)
- Pollinator bus stops (see **Case Study**)

There is strong potential in Middlesbrough for urban greening to support a new vision of the town centre as a residential/leisure hub, rather than only a retail hub. This would allow high streets to once again perform their (often now diminished) historic role as a ‘place’ and as a social and commercial hub, rather than just somewhere to pass through.

In this way, this Opportunity links strongly to **Priority Opportunity 2 (A Blue-Green Grid for Middlehaven)** and **Priority Opportunity 3 (Station Gateway and ‘low line’)**, which together form an interconnected suite of interventions to draw people back into the town centre.

Much of the success of these efforts will rest on the ability to limit vehicles from parts of the town centre, creating a more pedestrian-friendly public realm. This reallocation of space also allows for more space to be provided to local hospitality businesses in the form of outdoor seating (see images to the

right).

Delivering a greener town centre

As can be seen from the case studies presented below, partnership working will be crucial to the success of a greening strategy. The following principles will be key to delivering a greener town centre:

- Close working between the town centre regeneration teams and the environmental team, guided by the principles and challenges laid down in this Strategy.
- Engagement with local businesses.
- Making use of temporary pilot measures where appropriate (temporary pedestrianisation, moveable planters and seating etc.), in order to ‘live test’ interventions and judge impact on how people use the public realm of the town centre.

Supporting Middlesbrough’s urban living’ agenda

The aspirations for an ‘urban living’ agenda in Middlesbrough’s town centre - and the building of a town centre community - will require close attention to the GBI network required to support that agenda.

As was highlighted during consultation for this Strategy, the ‘lockdown’ experience of the Covid-19 pandemic only emphasised the importance of access to green space and natural features to both mental and physical wellbeing. See also **Priority Opportunity 3**.

▼ Precedent images indicating examples of town centre greening initiatives.



A parklet installed outside a historic pub in Salford as part of an urban greening initiative.



Example of seating with greenery provided within a retail setting



Natural play may find a place in a re-imagined town centre, helping to draw in young families.



Example of a street in Manchester city centre closed to vehicles to support local cafes and restaurants.



An example of SuDs tree pits, with pavement mark-up illustrating their function.

Case Study 1: URBAN GreenUP (Liverpool)



Source: Mersey Forest

Liverpool city centre, like Middlesbrough, is compact in nature. As such, the city recognised that it needed to think differently about how to integrate green features into its cityscape.

The GreenUp project is a five-year project, using around £3.5 million of European funding to 're-nature urbanisation' in the back of the city's declaration of a climate emergency. It was also based on a recognition that green spaces in the city centre can improve mental and physical health and improve air quality, as well as providing a boost to the local business community and for the visitor economy, focussed on regeneration 'hot spots' such as the Baltic Triangle.

The project took a partner-based approach, with partners including Liverpool City Council, The Mersey Forest, Liverpool BID Company and the University of Liverpool.

The project is designed to retrofit a number of 'green corridors' throughout the city, and key features delivered through the project included:

- A 50-metre 'living wall' on the face of a major shopping centre, visible to pedestrians.
- Rain gardens and sustainable drainage systems.
- Improved pedestrian and cycle routes.
- The re-use of derelict spaces for 'nature based solutions' to climate change.

Case Study 2: Pollinator bus stops in Utrecht



A bus stop in Utrecht fitted with a pollinator-friendly green roof.

The pioneering 'pollinator bus stops' in the Dutch city of Utrecht have set a precedent for how green features and 'stepping stone' habitats can be woven into the urban fabric, by re-purposing even the smallest of under-used spaces. This proves that 'greening the city' does not require the identification of large tracts of green space, but can have a significant impact.

In order to combat a decline in the bee population, Utrecht Council worked with Clear Channel to transform 300 bus stops into bee sanctuaries by installing grass and wildflowers on the roof to encourage pollination. The sedum roofs require little water and maintenance and features energy-efficient LED lights powered by windmills, and bamboo benches.

This approach requires working closely with transport operators, and opens up valuable opportunities for working with local communities and businesses - for example, by offering the opportunity to "sponsor a green bus stop".

Priority Opportunity 5

Supporting the 15 minute town: enabling walking and cycling



Key Aim: The creation of greenways and 'linear parks' to link key green spaces + the 'greening' of key walking and cycling routes to support a modal shift away from the private car.

Area of focus: Borough-wide, but focussed on major arteries.

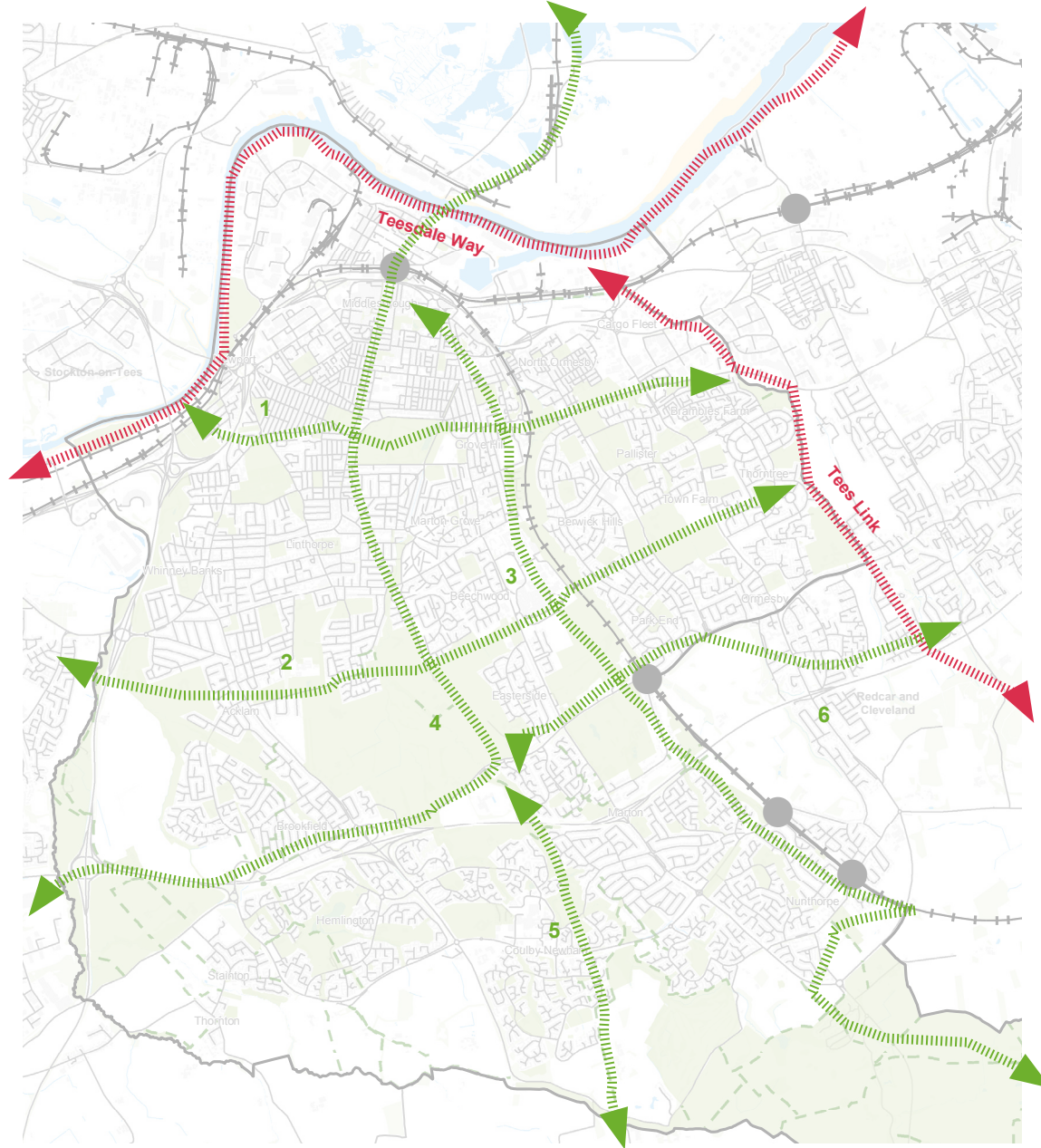
Key delivery risks: Community opposition to modal shift ambitions; lack of cooperation between departments.

Mitigation: Close consultation with local communities; partnership-based approaches to planning of infrastructure.

Potential partners: Transport planning authorities and regeneration teams; Sustrans; Living Streets; Wildlife Trust; Middlesbrough Environment City.

Potential funding mechanisms: Government funding e.g.. Transforming Cities Fund; developer contributions in some cases.

Next steps: Engagement of transportation department with the priorities and greening options laid down in this profile.



Indicative map highlighting potential key routes and connections for greenways/linear parks connecting GBI assets.



Existing Strategic Routes



Additional indicative key corridors to focus upgrades to network:

1. East-west via Albert Park and Linthorpe Cemetery
2. East-west via the 'Green Heart and Acklam Hall.
3. Ormesby Beck and wider corridor.
4. Marton West Beck and wider corridor, linking across the Tees in the north to Saltholme.
5. Link to southern farmland via Coulbey Newham
6. East-West via Stewart Park and Ormesby Hall.

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



The opportunity

The concept of the '15 minute' city or town aims to ensure that daily urban necessities are within a 15-minute reach on foot or by bike. While much of this focus is on the mixing of uses within local centres, it also relies on safe and attractive active travel routes and a significantly reduced reliance on the private car, particularly over short journeys. The concept has become an important part of the call to 'build back better' from crisis and to help to achieve the government's Net Zero targets.

As a compact city, Middlesbrough has strong potential for 'walkability', with many journeys possible by walking or by bike, if appropriate infrastructure is in place. While the 'hard' infrastructure of cycle lanes, parking policy and reconfiguring road layouts is largely within the scope of transport planners, the GBI network has an important role to play in supporting the '15 minute city' in two principle ways: 1) creating/enhancing green corridors and linear parks away from the road network; and 2) ensuring that greening features are integrated wherever possible to enhance the function of on-road cycle lanes and walking routes.

1. Greenways and linear parks to link together green spaces

The baseline analysis indicated that, while Middlesbrough benefits from some highly valued green spaces, they are frequently poorly connected for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, there has been significant enhancement to the public realm at the entrance to Albert Park, however beyond this there is much room for improvement in connections to nearby destinations such as the town centre and Linthorpe Cemetery.

While walking and cycling infrastructure must be upgraded across the Borough, the creation of greenways and 'linear parks' focusses attention on a limited number of key routes. Many of these might use existing green corridors (notably Middlesbrough's Beck Valleys - see **Priority Opportunity 6**). However it is vital that a strategic planning approach is taken to ensure that these greenways act as a network, linking key assets within the GBI network like 'beads on a necklace' (see Case Study). The existing network of Strategic Routes in the town can form a starting point, and a consistent wayfinding strategy should also be developed across the network, providing distance markers to key destinations and heritage

features.

2. Integration of urban greening features into new walking and cycling infrastructure

The UK government's 'Gear Change'¹ walking and cycling policy is likely to lead to increased promotion of, and funding for, the transformation of active travel infrastructure in the UK, in order to achieve net zero goals and combat the obesity crisis. The design and installation of new routes, and the reconfiguring of road layouts, provides a valuable opportunity to integrate greening features into new routes.

The greening features in question should respond to local priorities and challenges. Given the challenges outlined in Middlesbrough in Part 1, the following features should be encouraged:

- Linear rain gardens (to tackle both flood risk and biodiversity decline).
- Areas of urban meadow (for pollinators and as 'stepping stone' habitats).
- Street trees (for shade).

In order to achieve this, the GBI strategy should be adopted beyond the planning department and green spaces teams, but should also be a key resource for transport planners, to ensure that cycle lanes delivered act as multi-functional GBI assets.



Existing routes such as the Teesdale Way can form the 'backbone' of an expanded network of greenways



An example of high quality wayfinding marker along a greenway



An example of wildflower planting integrated into new cycle infrastructure.

1 DfT (2020), 'Gear Change': a bold vision for cycling and walking.

Case Study: Connswater Community Greenway (Belfast)



Image source: Connswater Community Greenway

The Connswater Community Greenway is an example of a strategic, regeneration-focussed approach to creating car-free green corridors with multiple functions. Completed in 2017, the project has created a 9km linear park, with 6km of cycles paths, green spaces, bridges, crossings and heritage trails. It follows the course of the Connswater, Black and Loop rivers, connecting open and green spaces, and also linking residents to leisure facilities, businesses, shopping centres, schools and colleges. It has also become a key asset for the visitor economy, as a 'living landmark' for Belfast.

The greenways is a true example of a multi-functional green corridor. It was developed by local regeneration organisation the EastSide Partnership and delivered by Belfast City Council. It was funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities and Department for Infrastructure. An £11 million flood alleviation scheme incorporated into the project has helped to reduce flooding to 1,700 properties, with the involvement of Northern Ireland's Rivers Agency.

Rather than standalone flood alleviation schemes and urban regeneration programmes, the two here have been combined. Community engagement was also a key part of the process, with local residents naming the new bridges installed via a public nomination process.

Case Study: Connecting Leicester (Mill Lane project)



An existing road was turned into a new linear park at the heart of Leicester De Montfort University

The Mill Lane project in Leicester City Centre involves transforming an existing road into a new linear park within De Montfort University and forms part of the city's 'Connecting Leicester' initiative. The initiative involves creating a thriving city centre that takes away the barriers to pedestrian movement and greatly improves the connections between key places within the city.

The linear park replaces an existing highway area of approximately 7,000m² and includes one of the largest areas of rain gardens in the UK. Key design principles included:

- Managing surface water with the creation of rain gardens.
- Crushing and recycling existing hardstanding on site for use in rain gardens as a drainage material.
- Successful delivery through close working relationship between the university and the city council, the design team and contractor.
- Managing cyclists by creating a meandering linked series of spaces.
- Creating a series of flexible spaces that can accommodate a large and varied annual events programme.

Priority Opportunity 6

Blue corridors: enhancing the Beck Valleys



Key Aim: Restoration of the Beck Valleys as multi-functional recreational, educational and biodiversity assets.

Area of focus: All Beck Valleys, with 'pilot' beck to be identified as a model for restoration.

Key delivery risks: Resolution of any fragmented land ownership along the Becks; anti-social behaviour and vandalism; conflict between recreational uses and sensitive habitats.

Mitigation: Partnership working from the outset between different agencies and bodies; encouraging meaningful community co-design and ownership; ecologist input into design and diversion of routes where appropriate.

Potential partners: Environment Agency; Tees Valley Wildlife Trust; Northumbrian Water; local community groups and volunteers; local schools.

Potential funding mechanisms: Environment Agency grants; DEFRA funding; contributions from nearby development.

Next steps: In-depth feasibility study for one identified Beck and 'visioning' exercise with local communities.

The opportunity

As **Part 1** of this Strategy makes clear, the Beck Valleys form part of the 'spine' of Middlesbrough's GBI network, providing important green corridors through heavily urbanised areas, and providing many of the Borough's most important and sensitive areas of habitat. However, in recent years there has been a lack of investment and in some areas they have attracted anti-social behaviour. The renewed ambition laid out in the government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) calls for a more ambitious approach to corridors such as these.

As such, this Opportunity seeks to focus resources on restoring these as high quality 'green corridors' in order to provide multiple functions. While important initiatives have been taken forward along the becks - with valuable contributions by community groups - the interconnected nature of the GBI network requires a strategic approach to be taken that works on a larger scale. This may take the form of selecting one Beck Corridor as a 'pilot', which can serve as a model for similar schemes along the other becks.

While the details of restoration schemes would have to be individually tailored and informed by local expertise, the overall principle should be the restoration of natural processes wherever possible, and the following will be key considerations.

1. Biodiversity

The Beck Valleys act as important linear habitat areas, including for the protected water vole. While it is important to draw more people along the waterside pathways, it is equally important to balance the recreational function with biodiversity concerns, by enhancing areas of riparian habitat (in close consultation with the Wildlife Trust and others) and considering diverting visitors away from the most sensitive sites.

2. Flood risk

Part 1 of this Strategy also highlights the significant concerns over flood risk in Middlesbrough, and its likely exacerbation over the life of the Strategy as a result of climate change. This requires a re-thinking of the landscape and how water moves

▼ Middlesbrough's Ormesby Beck corridor



Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



through it, to create a more resilient landscape.

River restoration contributes to flood risk management by supporting the natural capacity of rivers to retain water, reducing the likelihood of high water levels, and simultaneously improving the natural functions of the river.

3. Access and interpretation

The becks offer the opportunity for direct access to a rich natural environment for local residents on their doorsteps. There was also a strong feeling among local groups consulted for this Strategy that natural features such as the Beck Valleys have strong educational potential, in order to help local communities understand the role these features play in addressing key challenges such as biodiversity decline, increasing flood risk and climate change. This could be achieved by providing interpretation boards which help visitors understand the role of the becks in managing flood risk, and providing better understanding of the habitats they provide. This interpretation of the environment will help overcome the challenge that, while an 'overgrown' beck can provide dividends for biodiversity, it can be challenging for the public to accept.

The approach in general responds to the goals set out in the 25 Year Plan to safeguard our natural environment, be sensitive to its heritage, and increase action to improve the environment from all sectors.

4. Addressing anti-social behaviour

The most effective way of addressing anti-social behaviour is through a combination of greater community involvement and ownership, and creating a busy corridor of movement with assets that draw a wide range of people to the corridor and create natural surveillance.

There are innovative ways to achieve this. A project on the River Mersey in Greater Manchester recently saw a 'cycle-friendly' cafe in a shipping container along the river bank, creating a sense of community and encouraging use of the recreational corridor (see image).



Example of viewing platform and waterside path at remodelled Claypits Park in Glasgow.



New 'cycle cafe' in a shipping container drawing visitors along the banks of the River Mersey.



Example of seating incorporating heritage/nature interpretation along Salford's restored Bridgewater Canal.

Case Study: River Alt restoration/Alt Meadows (Merseyside)



Photo source: Mersey Forest

The River Alt restoration was an ambitious programme to de-culvert and realign the River Alt, in the process creating a new urban park (Alt Meadows) in Liverpool. The restoration initiative will improve water quality, reduce flood risk and create new wildlife habitats in the heart of the city - all key drivers for Middlesbrough's own GBI network. Tree planting was also an important part of the scheme, which involved local schools and community volunteering as part of Mersey Forest's 'Big Tree Plant' initiative.

As a multi-functional GBI initiative, objectives of the project included:

- The creation of new, meandering water channels with margins and banks.
- Increased flora and fauna range along the river corridor.
- Enhancement of linear, waterside green space.
- Creation of educational and recreational opportunities for the community.

The project is an example of public and voluntary sector partnership. It was funded through the Environment Agency's Catchment Restoration Fund grant, with additional funds from Liverpool City Council. It was also supported by local health and wellbeing charity the Cass Foundation and in partnership with Mersey Forest.

Priority Opportunity 7

Expanding the urban tree network



Key Aim: Expansion of woodland cover in order to meet local and national targets, and to provide multiple GBI benefits and combat climate change.

Area of focus: Borough-wide.

Key delivery risks: Poor management of newly planted trees failing to deliver long-term benefits.

Mitigation: Focus on the 'right tree in the right place' and provision of long-term management arrangements in place.

Potential partners: Woodland Trust; Forestry Commission; housing association/private developers; local schools; community groups; the Land Trust; large land owning institutions, including utility companies; the Orchard Project; Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC).

Potential funding mechanisms: National government tree planting funding; Woodland Trust grants/resources; agri-environment schemes (ELMS).

Next steps: Analysis of constraints to identify suitable areas for woodland planting; consider launching initiative e.g.. 'a tree for every resident/pupil'.

The opportunity

As Part 1 of this Strategy makes clear, the UK's 'net zero' targets will require a significant increase in tree planting across the country, with the Committee for Climate Change (CCC) recommending an increase in forestry cover from 13% to at least 17% by 2050. However, currently tree cover across Middlesbrough stands at 11.8%, and will require significant expansion to meet targets.

1. Urban tree planting

Due to the urban character of Middlesbrough and a general lack of space for large-scale tree planting, it will be essential that tree planting initiatives make best use of the space available through better use of existing green spaces and through extensive street tree planting.

Tree planting has numerous benefits within densely populated urban environments - bringing both shelter and beauty. Functions include: improving local air quality; reducing heat island effects through providing shade and cooling mechanisms; increasing wildlife habitat and movement corridors; managing surface water drainage; providing visual amenity and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Middlesbrough Council have recently been active in tree planting throughout the town. The Urban Tree Challenge (UTC) Fund provided for the planting of 1,800 large trees across the Borough. Charity Groundwork and Thirteen Housing Group have been key partners for the Council in delivering planting projects. However there is potential to increase tree planting further in street and park settings.

Areas to focus urban planting may include

- Alongside major roads to combat air quality;
- On verges where appropriate (in combination with **Priority Opportunity 9**);
- Along beck corridors (see **Priority Opportunity 6**) and;
- Key active travel routes (See **Priority Opportunity 5**);
- Within school grounds (see **Priority Opportunity 11**);

and

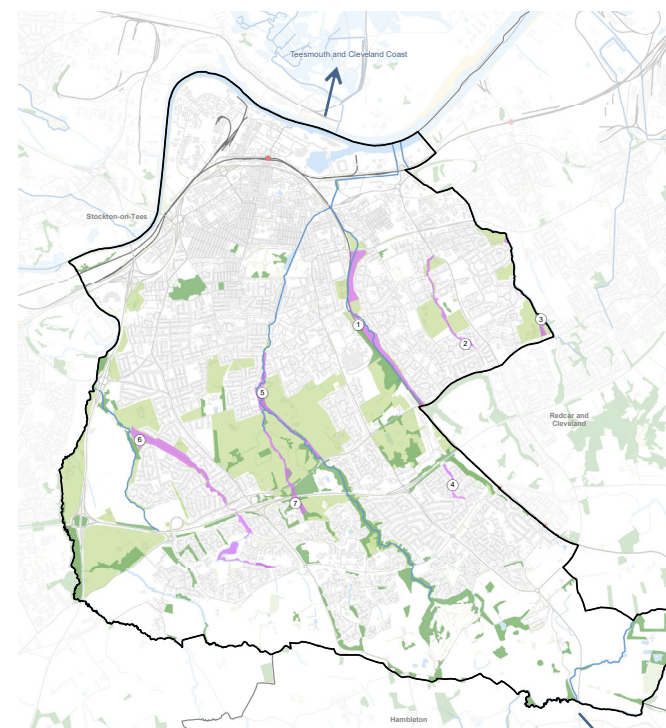
- As part of 'low-traffic neighbourhoods' (see **Priority Opportunity 12**).

2. Expansion of natural woodland areas

Within less urban landscapes such as the southern fringes of Middlesbrough, woodlands are also vitally important in restoring fragmented habitat networks, increasing flood resilience and helping to restore water quality. Forestry can also create new jobs and sustainable timber.

Along the Beck Valleys, there are further opportunities to positively manage and expand wooded areas as part of the

▼ A map from Part One of the Strategy highlighting existing woodland cover in Middlesbrough.



Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



mosaic of habitats, which also include wood pasture, meadow and species-rich grasslands.

There should be a clear focus on the buffering and expansion of:

- The edges of ancient and semi-natural woodland at Stainsby Wood (mapped as Network Enhancement Zone 2 in Part 1 of this Strategy);
- The mixed woodland along Marton West Beck at Fairy Dell;
- The steep valley sides of Newham Beck and in Thornton

This would strengthen these areas and restore links between areas that have become separated. The quality of woodland in Middlesbrough is known to be varied, which should be reflected in site-specific recommendations for positive management and control of access to limit disturbance. The siting of new trees is an important consideration and must ensure that increased tree cover does not get prioritised to the detriment of other valued habitats.

There is further opportunity to prioritise riparian woodland creation to deliver additional benefits such as flood alleviation and restoration of water ways along the beck corridors. The Environment Agency 'Working with Natural Processes project data' should be used to help identify 'floodplain re-connectivity potential' and 'floodplain woodland potential'.

Existing wooded areas would benefit from detailed review to prescribe positive woodland management, such as creation of glades, selective thinning, further expanding species diversity (to protect against new pests and diseases such as ash die-back) or delineation of recreational access (to maintain understory structure and groundcover).

Within farmed landscapes, the most promising opportunities for woodland expansion will likely come from agri-environment schemes in response to a changing agricultural policy context at the national level. This will take the form of Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).

Case Study: Leeds Urban Orchard project



Middlesbrough's Nature's World site also provides fruit trees which are looked after by the community, a model which could be replicated elsewhere, as part of a more ambitious strategy such as in Leeds. Image source: Friends of Nature's World

Orchards are one way of both expanding tree cover and providing multiple functions within the GBI network - in particular, they can help contribute to the 'edible townscape' referenced under **Priority Opportunity 8**.

The Leeds Urban Orchard is part of national charity Orchard Project, which aims to "bring orchards into the heart of urban communities". Its goal is to ensure that every household in the UK's towns and cities be within walking distance of a productive, well cared-for, community-run orchard. Their model involves providing expert advice and training community groups in orchard management skills for long-term sustainability and they only plant orchards if there is a genuine community desire to have one.

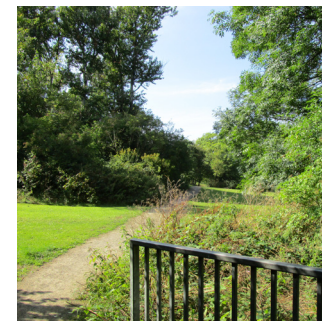
In Leeds, there are now orchards in 50 locations, and the project plans to expand further. In doing so, they hope to strengthen communities, improve wellbeing and build resilience. The harvesting period provides an opportunity for community events and for volunteers and local children to get involved with the process in a way that provides opportunities for community bonding and awareness-raising about local food systems.

Middlesbrough Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy: Part 2

Middlesbrough Council



▲ At Middlesbrough's Avenue of Trees, mature trees provide the landscape setting for one of the Borough's foremost heritage assets.



▲ Much of Middlesbrough's existing tree cover is concentrated on the Beck Valleys, including Bluebell Beck.



▲ Mature trees provide shade and visual interest on one of Middlesbrough's existing cycle routes.



▲ The more rural southern fringe of Middlesbrough (here, around Nunthorpe Hall) is home to farmed landscapes with potential for expansion of existing woodland, and new planting through agri-environment schemes.

Priority Opportunity 8

Edible Townscapes



Key Aim: Identifying and transforming under-used areas of land for urban growing and requiring integration of food growing space into new development.

Area of focus: Borough-wide.

Key delivery risks: Availability of suitable land; buy-in from developers.

Mitigation: Working with key land owning partners and making expectations clear for proposed new development.

Potential partners: Middlesbrough Environment City; Middlesbrough Food Partnership; Incredible Edible; Barefoot Kitchen CIC; Green Spaces team; developers and housing associations.

Potential funding mechanisms: Developer contributions; National Lottery Climate Action Fund; public health-related grant opportunities.

Next steps: Audit of Council-owned land to identify under-used land with potential for growing; cooperation with partners on food map; consider dedicated Planning Advice Note on food growing.

The opportunity

Opportunities for food growing are an increasingly important component of the GBI network, particularly in a Borough like Middlesbrough facing severe health and wellbeing challenges, (as highlighted in Part 1 of this Strategy). In the Borough there are 900 allotment plots available across 11 sites, which does not meet the standard set for the Borough. However, in order to achieve diversity of participation, provision for food growing should go beyond traditional allotments.

The Covid-19 crisis in 2020 drew further attention to the value of local food - a YouGov poll in 2020 suggested that 42% of people said the crisis had made them value food more,¹ part of a broader sense that the pandemic may bring about significant changes in our relationship with food, family and the environment.

A renewed emphasis on food can be central to the 'culture of sustainability' Middlesbrough is seeking to develop, particularly when targeted at school-age children.

From the Council point of view, planning for a sustainable food system meets many strategic objectives. As highlighted in Part 1 of this Strategy renewed emphasis on food can be central to the 'culture of sustainability' Middlesbrough is seeking to develop, particularly when targeted at school-age children. Indeed, the Borough's *One Planet Living* framework includes support for an Urban Farming programme and the promotion of land use for growing,

Middlesbrough benefits from a legacy of food growing projects on which to build, and benefits from the presence of Middlesbrough Food Partnership as a key actor within the town on food-related issues. In 2006-2007 the Middlesbrough Urban Farming project attracted wide attention for transforming parts of the urban landscape into a 'living lab for how urban agriculture'. However it is vital that future strategies go beyond isolated initiatives and are backed up

by sustainable partnerships between various actors, including enabling the work of community groups (see **Catalyst 1**). Local organisations provide a platform to enable more food growing opportunities. A partnership announced between Middlesbrough Council and a local community group in 2020 to develop an Urban Hub & Social Farm as part of future plans for Middlehaven is an example of how food growing can be aligned with a renewed regeneration agenda for Middlehaven (see **Priority Opportunity 2**).

Consultation carried out for this Strategy also revealed strong support for more growing space in Middlesbrough, in spaces of

▼ Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC) already works with community groups on urban growing projects in Middlesbrough.



▼ Vertical growing in tight spaces. Source: Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC)



¹ RSA (April 2020), 'Brits see cleaner air, stronger social bonds and changing food habits amid lockdown', [Online] Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/about-us/media/2019/brits-see-cleaner-air-stronger-social-bonds-and-changing-food-habits-amid-lockdown>

Page 148

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



all scales - with the view that growing more food within public spaces can make urban agriculture more 'visible' and improve education strategies. This in turn can help to achieve the shift in mindset and understanding of food systems required to achieve the goals set out in the UK's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Scaling up urban growing: finding space to grow

Non-profit group *Sustain* sets out a number of ways in which planning policies can support urban food growing, by:

- Providing space for growing food within new developments.
- Including edible plants and trees in planting schemes in new developments;
- Encouraging local groups to start a community food growing space;
- Protecting open space under threat from a proposed development;
- Using land for food growing on a temporary basis e.g. pending its redevelopment.²

Sustain highlights that both local authorities and Registered Providers of housing (RPs) have an important role to play here because of the large amounts of land - including much open space - that they own and manage. Land surrounding local schools is also a valuable opportunity to find growing space (dealt with under **Priority Opportunity 11**). However private developers also have a role to play (see **Case Study 2**).

Growing space can come in all shapes and sizes - from micro-scale 'pocket allotments' in 'forgotten' spaces, to larger community spaces. Given the surge in demand for growing spaces evident over 2020, this also provides an opportunity for developers to improve the social and environmental attractiveness of development, serving as a major marketing feature.

Further guidance

Sustain has an online toolkit available for both community groups and local authorities to fully understand the role of the planning system in creating more sustainable food systems, and how to play a proactive role in using policies to guide the assessment of planning applications.

Case Study 1: Platt Fields Market Garden, Manchester



Entrance to the community garden, which makes use of a disused bowling green.

This Platt Fields Community Garden has been up and running since 2017 in a suburb of South Manchester and is managed by social enterprise Manchester Urban Diggers (MUD). It makes use of a disused bowling green owned by Manchester Council within Platt Fields Park and is a successful example of community-supported agriculture (CSA). Goals include improving soil quality and biodiversity across the city region, and community health benefits through social and therapeutic horticulture.

The garden runs a vegetable box scheme, employs hundred of volunteers and welcomes visitors to the site on Saturday morning when fresh produce is on sale. As such, it acts as important community hub and market with strong 'placemaking' value (see **Priority Opportunity 2** in this Strategy).

MUD also works in collaboration with Greater Manchester NHS Foundation Trust to provide mini kitchen garden kits to those in isolation across the city suffering with poor mental health. MUD hope to replicate the experience at other sites around the city.

Case Study 2: 'Edible landscaping' at One Brighton



Creative integration of growing terraces into higher density housing. Source: Fielden Clegg Bradley Architects.

One Brighton is a 172-apartment mixed-use development completed in 2010, which set out to be one of the most sustainable urban communities in Europe and is the first One Planet community to reach completion. Given there was no room available at ground level for growing space, rooftop mini-allotments and balconies with integrated planters suitable for growing food were provided as 'edible landscaping'. Each mini-allotment has its own tool box built into it and the organic waste from gardening is composted in the building's macerator, which also processes kitchen waste from the apartments - the resulting compost is then used on the allotments.

The 28 mini-allotments are rented out to residents who manage their own individual plots, but the space brings residents together around a common interest and helps build a sense of community.

This was backed up by Brighton and Hove Planning Advice Note 06 (Food Growing and Development) from 2011, specifying the need to "recognise, safeguard and encourage the role of allotments & garden plots within developments", and sets a goal of at least 0.23ha of allotment provision to be provided per 1,000 residents, with a maximum of 15 minutes walking time. The aim is to weave food growing into the fabric of development sites and the urban environment.

² Sustain (n.d), 'Transform food planning in your area' [Online] Available at: <https://www.sustainweb.org/planning/>

Priority Opportunity 9

Rethinking urban grassland



Key Aim: Rethinking of mowing regimes to encourage 'rewilding' of road verges and areas of amenity grassland to create pollinator trails.

Area of focus: Borough-wide

Key delivery risks: Safety and access concerns; challenge of public perception of "unkempt" areas.

Mitigation: Careful negotiation with Highway Authorities; interpretation boards to explain purpose to public.

Potential partners: Wildlife Trust; local businesses; housing associations and private developers; Plantlife UK; Highways Agency; Teesside University.

Potential funding mechanisms: Altered mowing regimes (generating cost savings); National Lottery Heritage Fund; local business sponsorship; delivery via new development.

Next steps: Identification of suitable roadside verge areas; training on reduced cutting regimes and how to plant/manage; design of public communication strategy/signage.

The opportunity

It is estimated that 97% of the UK's meadows have been destroyed since the 1930s. The positive use of road verges and parks can play a vital role in replicating these important habitats. Concerns over safety and access, budget constraints and a desire for 'neatness' has minimised the habitat diversity within road verges and parks.

Some of the most visible green spaces within Middlesbrough are the road verges and shared green spaces, which should be made a priority in terms of celebrating and promoting the town's cultural heritage, and setting a clear signal about the town's future green agenda. These areas have the potential to act as vital 'biodiversity corridors' for wildlife movement and seed dispersal once restored as grassland habitat or wildflower meadow. Restoring their wildlife function responds to the decline in biodiversity and habitat fragmentation identified within Part 1 of this Strategy and would also help to reduce surface water runoff – aiding in the creation of more resilient landscapes. There is also an opportunity to draw on local natural heritage by investigating using seeds from local Ancient (species-rich) Grasslands.

Given the highly urbanised nature of Middlesbrough, it will be important to identify parts of the townscape where pollinator habitats and corridors can be woven into the urban realm to link between existing sites - such as the herb-rich, calcareous grassland at Teessaurus Park - to support wider ecosystems. These corridors should, where possible, provide links to the cross-boundary Buglife "B-lines".

Positive management has been undertaken in recent years to improve the appearance of Middlesbrough's green spaces (such as planting in Albert Park, wilder areas in Linthorpe Cemetery and along Stanton Way). Partnership working between the Council and Thirteen housing group is also set to deliver 35,000m² of wildflower. However there are still extensive areas of closely mown grassland within parkland and along existing road verges. An increase in meadow and

wildflower coverage is advised in particular along transport and river/beck corridors (see **Priority Opportunity 6**), through existing and newly created parks, through urban greening initiatives (see **Priority Opportunities, 2, 4 and 11**) and within agricultural areas to the south of the Borough.

However, communication and understanding (both across the Council and the public) of the benefits that re-wilding can bring, and training of council officers, will be vital to the success of this project.

In 2019, on the back of the government's National Pollinator Strategy, the organisation Plantlife produced a set of best

Existing close-mown amenity grassland at Hemlington Lake provides a clear opportunity for wildflower introduction.



Potential for 'rewilding' of roadside verge along main road in Middlesbrough



Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



practice guidelines for managing grassland road verges, based on the overall principle of 'cut less, cut later' and can serve as useful guidelines.¹

Delivering pollinator corridors in Middlesbrough

Wildflower ground preparation will require a coordinated and thorough action plan. Wildflower meadows require nutrient poor soil to thrive and so the existing topsoil and sward will need to be stripped from the verge. Opportunities for the collection and use of cuttings will need to be considered further but elsewhere this has been treated as a resource to fuel anaerobic digesters - an opportunity with multiple benefits which can be explored in Middlesbrough.

Maintenance costs will likely be lower than existing, however seed would need to be purchased or seeds/green hay sourced from local species-rich grasslands (where possible). The organisation Buglife UK estimates that the wildflower seed costs approximately £100 per kilogram. The development of an annual maintenance programme would be required to allow desirable British native wildflower species to flourish and reduce the vigour of more rampant species.

Careful negotiations are required with the Highways Authority to ensure that safety and access standards are maintained by leaving 'visibility splays' at forward bends to roundabouts and at junctions/ensuring that vehicle sight lines are maintained.

While the 'rewilding' of grassland is gaining increasing acceptance on the back of successful initiatives by other local authorities (see Case Study), there will be a need to carefully communicate changes to the public, in order to avoid perceptions that areas are not being neglected. It is also likely that training will be required for appropriate Council officers on the new management regimes, and valuable 'lessons learned' can be sought from other local authorities which have implemented their own programmes.

Finally, delivery of areas of 'urban meadow' should be sought through new development - both from housing associations and private developers. See 'GBI checklist' for developers in **Chapter 5**.



▲ Example of wildflower integrated into regeneration of housing association property by Peabody (London)



Example of small wildflower area integrated into the transport network, along with seating and planters. ▲



▲ Croydon Council signage explaining wildflower area

Case Study: Hartlepool wildflower meadows



In 2014 Hartlepool Borough Council launched its first wildflower verge along the A689 running in and out of the town. Since then, the scheme has been extended due to its popularity, when the seasonally changing colour brought by the flowers became a "talking point" in the town.

The scheme was designed to make the best use of limited Council resources as it can deliver savings on maintenance costs by reducing the expense of intensive mowing. The goals were four-fold:

- to attempt to reduce maintenance costs;
- to deliver environmental improvements;
- to create a visitor attraction; and
- to create a "feel good" factor.

The wildflowers also provide an attractive and successful setting for some of Hartlepool's waterfront heritage assets along Maritime Avenue.

The local authority of Rotherham has also gained a name for its experiments with 'rewilding' of mown areas - it also succeeded in engaging local businesses following the success of their new regimes, with a local shopping centre providing funding to re-seed wildflower areas.

¹ Plantlife (2019), 'Managing grassland road verges: A best practice guide' .[Online] at: <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/publications/road-verge-management-guide>

Priority Opportunity 10

Network of multifunctional SuDS



Key Aim: Setting higher benchmarks for SuDS to combat flood risk while serving as multi-functional GBI assets.

Area of focus: Borough-wide, but targeted at areas mapped as higher flood risk (see Part 1).

Key delivery risks: Health and safety concerns; poor public perception of SuDS as a potential deterrent to developers; conflict between drainage and biodiversity.

Mitigation: Creating positive public perceptions of SuDS by improving aesthetics, communicating successfully around perceived health and safety risks, and educational strategies; design features such as reduced slopes/use of marginal vegetation as natural barriers.

Potential partners: Private developers and housing associations; local schools; Environment Agency; Wildlife Trust.

Potential funding mechanisms: Environment Agency/ government grants; developer contributions; grant funding for school-based projects.

Next steps: Inclusion of robust SuDS policy within Local Plan requiring multiple functions based on best practice.

The opportunity

Historically in the UK we have treated rainwater as waste, and engineered our towns and cities to quickly channel water into traditional drains. However, particularly in areas of high flood risk such as Middlesbrough, and as a result of more erratic weather patterns, those drains have become overloaded. A GBI-led approach to SuDS calls for planners to embrace water management as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

Flood risk was found to be a considerable concern among local stakeholders in Middlesbrough and is likely to be exacerbated by the impacts of the climate crisis. However, there is strong potential in Middlesbrough for dealing simultaneously with multiple environmental challenges through SuDS. As in the rest of the UK, much wetland habitat in the Borough and wider Tees Corridor region has been lost, and multi-functional SuDS offer an opportunity to create further wetland habitat to help to address biodiversity decline.

However the stakeholder consultation carried out for this Strategy highlighted disappointment in the varying quality of SuDS features delivered to date in Middlesbrough, which were seen as failing to take advantage of opportunities for habitat creation facilities and broader amenity value.

“They are too smoothly excavated and finished, which prevent important micro-niches required to maximise biodiversity gains.... we need to look at the use of water plants of local genetic origin and an array of species appropriate to the area”

- Stakeholder comment.

One of the primary barriers to the delivery of high quality SuDS is the potential for poor public perceptions, frequently due to a lack of understanding of them as a feature. Research by the *Susdrain* partnership outlines - based on public perception surveys - the following recommendations for SuDS features:

- ponds should be made as ‘natural’ in appearance as possible;

- Marginal vegetation is important and should include natives species;
- Shore slopes should be gentle;
- Nature barriers should be introduced to help manage perceived safety risks;
- Deep water warning signs should be used.
- Benches should be introduced, and picnic tables, walkways and play areas considered;
- Wildlife, including fish, should be encouraged to colonise the system and its marginal areas.¹

Delivering SuDS via regeneration schemes

Middlesbrough offers a range of opportunities to integrate SuDS features at all scales into the urban landscape. However given the challenges that can arise when retrospectively fitting SuDS features, the opportunity to ‘design in’ SuDS at an early stage of regeneration schemes should be exploited (see Case Study 1). This is particularly the case within the Middlehaven regeneration zone, which is located in an area of high flood risk (see **Priority Opportunity 2**).

However, in other areas SuDS may be appropriate to retrofit, if more complicated, such as in the town centre (see **Priority Opportunity 4**) and as part of enhanced Beck Valley green corridors (see **Priority Opportunity 6**).

The provision of interpretation boards in all cases will be key in encouraging greater public perception and to boost public awareness of the multi-functional role of sustainable drainage features.

Delivering SuDS via new development

Where new developments are proposed, the ability to effectively drain the site is very important and should be a concern for both the planner and the developer. From the developer’s perspective, effective drainage is essential in order to deliver maximum value from investment as

¹ Susdrain (n.d), ‘An Assessment of the Social Impacts of SUDS in the UK [Online] Available at: https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/evidence/HRW_social_impact_summary.pdf

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



the inability to gain flood insurance on normal terms can significantly affect property values. Further, SuDS features can be a cheaper form of provision than hard engineering solutions. It is vital that early conversations with developers set clear expectations for the integration of SuDS features, particularly in areas at high flood risk, and that all actors understand the need to provide multiple functions. Conversations at this early stage, rather than as a later design detail, are important because the layout of a site can have a substantial impact on the ability to deliver SuDS cost-effectively and manage extreme events in the developed area.

Research by organisation *Susdrain* notes that, while poor public perception of SuDS may be a deterrent for developers providing them at sites, positive attitudes toward SuDS can attract house buyers and raise property values. This is one reason why the educational value of SuDS landscapes is so important - promoting interaction between communities and their local environment and aligning with Middlesbrough's *One Planet Living* principles. *Susdrain*'s research found a general lack of public awareness of the role of SuDS, and recommends the following features in order to drive educational benefits:

- Pre-purchase information on local drainage and SuDS proposals should be provided to householders.
- Educational campaigns should be set up for local community groups.
- Interpretation boards should be introduced around SuDS.²

A robust SuDS policy as part of the Local Plan will be crucial in setting clear expectations of how they should be integrated into new development.

2 *Susdrain* (n.d), 'An Assessment of the Social Impacts of SUDS in the UK [Online] Available at: https://www.susdrain.org/files/resources/evidence/HRW_social_impact_summary.pdf

Case Study 1: 'Grey to Green' regeneration (Sheffield)



Image source: Sheffield City Region.

Sheffield, like Middlesbrough, lies in an area of high flood risk, which is anticipated to become more severe. 'Grey to Green' is a key strategic component in the regeneration of the city centre, and in linking together various parts of the city while providing a range of GBI functions. As such, it provides important lessons in particular for the regeneration of Middlesbrough's Middlehaven area (see **Priority Opportunity 2**).

The public realm is designed to function as a SuDS feature, a gathering space, a sculpture and an active travel corridor - as well as providing a distinctive 'sense of place' to attract both residents and businesses. What makes this approach distinctive is that the SuDS was a primary organising factor in the regeneration rather than an 'add on' and that the scheme celebrates the function of water.

SuDS principles were used to manage surface water, with it being captured, treated at source, controlled and conveyed on or near the surface, allowing the water to form part of the landscape. Runoff is collected via flush kerbs into a series of swales, which are planted with diverse planting, providing seasonal interest as well as opportunities for wildlife.

Much of the design was based on consultation responses and concerns of local business and residents regarding the poor quality of environment and lack of social space. Close working with Highways helped to address fears over the design approach. It was funded by the Sheffield City Region Investment Fund.

Case Study 2: Grey Towers Village (Middlesbrough)



The Grey Towers housing development in Nunthorpe is focused around a central wetland with reed beds instead of a conventional 'village green'.

The Grey Towers housing development in Nunthorpe, built by David Wilson Homes, provides a reference point for how multi-functional SuDS can sit at the heart of new development within Middlesbrough. Aside from flood resilience, the SuDS pond also incorporates seating and provides an interpretation board as a guide to local tree species used within the development.

The scheme serves as an example of the multiple functions which SuDS can provide when expectations are made clear, and these expectations should apply across the Borough area. Developers need to consider site drainage early in the development process, and certainly no later than the stage of land acquisition, since drainage can affect land value. Designers should consult responsible bodies at an early stage before submission of the planning application, which greatly assists planners in reaching their decisions.

Priority Opportunity 11

Low-traffic neighbourhoods



Key Aim: Reclaiming and 'greening' the streetscape in urban neighbourhoods using modal filters.

Area of focus: Pilot in Gresham, followed by roll-out to other neighbourhoods and promoted in new development schemes.

Key delivery risks: Community opposition to low-traffic neighbourhoods can pose obstacles.

Mitigation: Communication will be central to success, - plans should be made in close collaboration with local communities / temporary pilot projects can also be a valuable tool to gain acceptance.

Potential partners: Housing associations; private housing developers; grant makers.

Potential funding mechanisms: Through new development; active travel grants from central government.

Next steps: Prioritisation of sites for pilot and engagement with community members.

The opportunity

Over the course of the 20th century, our streets have been transformed from multi-functional spaces where neighbours can interact, children can play and multiple users can safely use, into single-use 'corridors' designed primarily around making space for the private car.

Recent street design innovations - known by terms such as low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), 'filtered neighbourhoods' or 'play streets' - are an attempt to reclaim the residential streetscape for a range of community users. This also provides a

valuable opportunity for integrating green infrastructure elements to improve the public realm, and to provide a broad range of GBI 'functions'. Ultimately the goal is not to eliminate cars but to treat them as 'guests' in the street.

This is often achieved by what are known as 'modal filters' - measures which allow the passage of some modes of transport but not others, commonly used to allow walking, cycling and perhaps emergency vehicles to pass through, but stopping other types of motor traffic. As such, cars are not blocked from entering the street but are unable to



An example of how signage can create positive messaging around 'play streets'

How an existing modal filter in Gresham could be enhanced



Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



Page 154

use it as a 'rat run'. It is common for planters to be used as temporary filters (see image). Once made permanent, these filters can then become good homes for GBI features such as trees, rain gardens and seating, which can be integrated into the new urban form.

These filtered schemes are given explicit promotion as part of the UK government's 2020 *Gear Change Strategy*,¹ which encourages the 'humble bollard' as 'perhaps the single most important tool to promote cycling', with the benefit of being both relatively inexpensive and effective.

Piloting LTNs in Gresham

Middlesbrough's Gresham neighbourhood has been identified as a location with the potential to pilot this design approach - given ongoing regeneration schemes, relatively low car ownership, and higher than average levels of socio-economic deprivation. Recent development proposals for the area have placed emphasis on creating clear movement corridors, and provide a strong foundation on which to build. However, designation of these LTNs should be made only following a street analysis process, including an assessment of traffic patterns, car ownership and other factors, and only following engagement with the local community.

Key considerations

There are valuable opportunities for co-design with local communities when piloting LTNs, offering the community the ability to decide which GBI features are most appropriate and ensuring greater community ownership over the new assets. In Gresham, this could include the involvement of existing groups such as Streets Ahead for Information.

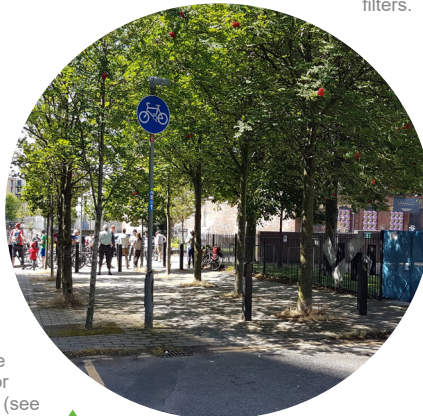
Further, by using signage indicating that the street is 'open' to walkers and cyclists (as an alternative to traditional 'road closed' signs) can be a powerful tool to re-frame the debate.



Planters can be an inexpensive way to create temporary filters for pilot schemes.



Once more permanent, areas of urban meadow can be integrated into modal filters.



Modal filters can be appropriate sites for street tree planting (see **Priority Opportunity 7**)

Best practice: Waltham Forest Mini-Holland



The Waltham Forest 'mini-Holland' scheme in London began in 2014 with £30 million of funding from the Mayor of London funding pot and made use of systems to make certain streets access-only for motor vehicles while maintaining through-routes for bikes, as well as 'blended junctions' for pedestrians on side streets. It was designed to align with a new wave of segregated 'cycle super highways'.

Strong objections in the early months included demonstrations outside the town hall and a failed judicial review attempt - highlighting the need for careful management of community engagement.

However, a report in 2018 on the impacts of the scheme found that, one year on, people living in the area were walking and cycling for 41 minutes a week more than those living in comparable areas, which held across demographic and socio-economic groups. The Mini Holland remains a work in progress and is not due to finish until 2021.

Similar schemes are being planned across Greater Manchester - including the Levenshulme and Urmston Active Neighbourhoods.

1 DfT (2020), 'Gear Change': a bold vision for cycling and walking.

Priority Opportunity 12

Green schools



Key Aim: Making use of school grounds for SuDS, urban growing, tree planting and urban meadows, enabling the GBI network to be used as an educational resource.

Area of focus: School grounds across the Borough.

Key delivery risks: Health and Safety concerns within schools.

Mitigation: Thoughtful co-design with schools, based on best practice and lessons learned elsewhere.

Potential partners: Local schools and education authorities; Environment Agency; Wildlife Trust; Middlesbrough Environment City; Trees for Cities.

Potential funding mechanisms: Woodland Trust grants; Charitable foundation grants e.g. Greggs Foundation, Big Lottery Fund

Next steps: Engagement with local schools to identify series of 'pilot schools', targeting those in particular in areas of high health deprivation (see **Part 1** of this Strategy)..

The opportunity

It was highlighted during consultation for this Strategy that, in an urbanised Borough such as Middlesbrough, school grounds represent a valuable opportunity to integrate GBI features.

However not only do school grounds present areas of land which provide suitable physical space for SuDS, urban growing, tree planting or wildflowers - but they also offer the opportunity to engage young people in better understanding how the GBI network around them functions, and to help to build a closer connection with the natural environment from an early age. Author Nicholas Louv has identified the phenomena of 'nature deficit disorder' as a key feature characterising Western societies. While not a recognised medical condition, it refers to the increasing lack of engagement with nature in the UK. This tends to begin in childhood (which means that schools play a vital role in reversing this) and as a result, as adults we lack an understanding of the importance of nature to human society, which hinders our ability to build a resilient GBI network.

A report by the National Trust finds that today, fewer than a quarter of children regularly use their local 'patch of nature', compared to over half of adults when they were children. This has a 'knock-on effect' on societal problems such as the 'modern epidemic' of obesity. This puts even greater pressure on the role of schools and the 'outdoor classroom'.

Middlesbrough's *One Planet Living* Action Plan places great emphasis on using educational opportunities to 'create a new culture of sustainability' in order to tackle threats such as climate change and the biodiversity crisis. Education is central in creating a shift in attitudes that help us to combat climate change. Research suggests that 'experiential' education, including that in 'garden classrooms' or other green spaces, can make an important contribution to climate literacy, foster

motivation toward the environment and help to improve chances of combating climate change among the next generations.

Projects like the Middlesbrough's Borderlands community-centric arts project included the environment as a key theme with this in mind. However, an integrated approach to building the GBI Network provides the opportunity to make such temporary experiments more permanent by bringing the 'outdoor classroom' directly into school grounds and combating challenges such as localised flood risk simultaneously.

There are a number of features which are likely to be appropriate for school grounds, however the suitability of each school should be considered individually. Possibilities to explore include:



Urban growing opportunities (see **Priority Opportunity 8**)



Sustainable urban drainage features (see **Priority Opportunity 8**)



Areas of urban meadow and wildflower (see **Priority Opportunity 9**)



Tree planting in school grounds (see **Priority Opportunity 11**)

Delivery time scale



Indicative cost



Delivering outdoor classrooms

Achieving these ambitions will require a partnership approach that sees educational authorities and local schools becoming key partners in the delivery and promotion of Middlesbrough's GBI network.

The 'Food Growing Schools: London Partnership', for example, brings together partners including a range of charities and trusts including Garden Organic (lead organisation), Capital Growth, the Soil Association, the Royal Horticultural Association, School Food Matters and Trees for Cities.

The initiative might begin small with a pilot programme, but in the longer term would become more resilient by building a network of 'green schools' working closely with teachers and sharing experiences locally to help plan lessons around the new resources. As projects grow, school gardens can also be used to bring in parents, carers and other members of the community to help maintain the resource, creating a true community asset.

Case study 1: Edible Playgrounds (UK-wide)



A newly created Edible Playground in Birmingham. Source: Trees for Cities.

Edible Playgrounds is a programme from UK Charity Trees for Cities. They transform school grounds into outdoor teaching gardens that inspire hands-on learning and get children excited about growing and eating healthy food. As a result, they seek to improve health and wellbeing, open up access to nature, and provide a fun outdoor learning environment that supports cross-curriculum teaching. There is some evidence that these experiences also lead to more sustainable behaviours in the long term.

Since it was launched, the charity has worked across 12 towns and cities across the UK and the most common subjects taught in the outdoor classrooms are: maths; science; art; and English. In particular, those participating found that the Edible Playgrounds helped working with children with special educational needs or challenging behaviour. It also found that 50% of schools embedded the use of the Edible Playground into their curriculum.

The programme also provides an online set of food growing resources for schools, including curriculum guides and lesson plans to support teaching through food growing.

Case study 2: SuDS for schools (London)



A SuDS installation and outdoor classroom at a school in London. Source: WWT

The 'SuDS for Schools' program run by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) seeks to find a sustainable solution that uses nature to prevent overloaded drains, flooded homes and polluted rivers.

The program built SuDS in ten schools in a North London catchment found to be at risk from surface water flooding. The installations mimic the functions of natural wetlands to reduce localised flooding, creating green and blue space and improving water quality in streams. However, they also became places where students played and learned outdoors. As a result, the schools became hubs for reconnecting the local people with their stream - the Pymmes Brook.

Co-design, delivery and management with local stakeholders was essential in creating a sustainable legacy and secure the future of the SuDS. Not only did the project reduce peak flows in the Brook and reduce pollution, but also increased biodiversity in school grounds.

A similar programme would be appropriate that focuses on reconnecting young people with Middlesbrough's Becks network. The WWT has a guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems available online that could aid initial planning stages of projects.

Chapter Four Catalysts for Action



Chapter 4

Catalysts for Action

A successful Green and Blue Infrastructure network goes beyond planning 'hard' measures such as new landscaping or planting. Through consultation undertaken for this study, it was clear that success will not be possible without the implementation of soft measures required to aid in the delivery of the ambitious Priority Opportunities identified in Chapter 3.

1.1 What came through very strongly in consultation carried out for this Strategy was that success will not be possible without the 'softer' measures that provide the glue that enables the ambitious Priority Opportunities laid out in **Chapter 3** to be successfully delivered.

1.2 There are two areas in particular which are highlighted in this Strategy which require particular attention, as further detailed below. Both require a partnership-based approach to achieving change within the GBI network:

- Green Prescribing
- Enabling Community Action.

Catalyst #1

Green Prescribing

1.3 Green space has been shown to have significant benefits to both physical and mental health, as well as societal benefits. However, once a GBI asset has been delivered, there is no guarantee that it will be used by a wide range of community members. As detailed in Part 1 of this Strategy, true accessibility involves a complex set of interrelated factors.

1.4 'Green prescribing' is a core aspect of 'social prescribing' (the referral of patients to local non-clinical services available in the community), but one which makes use of nature-based interventions for a variety of long-term conditions. As a part of what has been described as the 'Natural Health Service', these practices can play an important role in linking NHS patients with sources of support within the wider community through the voluntary and community sector. These non-medical interventions can operate alongside existing treatments to improve health and wellbeing, as highlighted by Natural England.

"The Strategy should link and exploit employment, health and wellbeing benefits of positive GBI."
(Stakeholder comment)

1.5 The nature, health and wellbeing sector provides an increasing number of nature-based interventions, comprising

- Nature-based health promotion services – providing informal opportunities for people to engage with nature in their community (for example through community gardening projects); and
- Green care services for individuals using contexts such as conservation or horticultural therapy projects and care farms. These interventions are also often a cost-effective use of NHS resources and lead to a

more effective use of GP time leading to a cost saving benefit for the NHS.

1.6 Middlesbrough Council have already experimented with a programme of 'exercise referral' by local GPs, and the *One Planet Living* framework looks to expand these. Middlesbrough's Voluntary and Community Sector (MVDA) have also trialled approaches.

1.7 However, there has been a renewed emphasis on social prescribing nationally, regional and locally since the announcement from NHS England in its long-term plan to provide 100% funding for a Social Prescriber in every Primary Care Network across the country, with a target of at least 900,000 people referred to social prescribing by 2023/24.¹ As a result, these link workers are becoming an integral part of the multi-disciplinary teams in primary care networks (PCNs).

1.8 This approach underlines the crucial point that delivering a resilient and successful GBI Network does not lie only in the hands of one actor, but requires a collaborative 'place-based' approach that builds bridges with those actors not traditionally involved in the planning and maintenance of green space - in this case, the public health sector. Research from the *Centre for Sustainable Healthcare* has found that, while GPs understand the benefits of exercise, there are barriers to prescribing it. As a result, it is vital that there is engagement with this GBI Strategy from public health colleagues and that new partnerships are formed. This might initially involve a pilot programme and will benefit from the close involvement of local community groups and charities (see Case Study).

¹ NHS England (2019), 'The NHS Long Term Plan'.

Case study: MyPlace (Lancashire)



A runner exercising in Middlesbrough's Albert Park

A 3-year research project by Leeds Beckett University¹ analysed the impact of the Lancashire Wildlife Trust's MyPlace scheme, which specialises in eco-therapy and is run in partnership with Lancashire Care NHS Foundation. It works in green spaces to empower people and their communities to connect with local environments in order to learn new skills, build resilience, meet new people and improve their physical health and mental wellbeing. Some projects are targeted at particular age groups e.g. young people aged 11-19.

Some of the activities involved include:

- Wildlife walks
- Bushcraft
- Gardening projects
- Practical conservation
- Mindful environments

Researchers found that people participating in outdoor nature conservation activities felt significantly better, both emotionally and physically, as a result. They needed, for example, fewer visits to GPs or felt more able to get back into work.

¹ Leeds Beckett University (2019), 'Social Return on Investment analysis of the health and wellbeing impact of Wildlife Trust programmes [Online] Available at: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/SROI%20Report%20FINAL%20-%20DIGITAL.pdf>

Catalyst #2

Enabling community action

1.9 One message which emerged strongly from the stakeholder consultation carried out for this Strategy is the strength of local community groups helping to build, maintain and act as stewards of important GBI assets in Middlesbrough. Particularly given limited public resources, it will be vital to make best possible use of these community resources in order to achieve a 'multiplier effect' for public funds.

1.10 In addition, the engagement of community groups can create a powerful sense of community stewardship over assets within the GBI network. This is crucial in beginning to address the challenges highlighted in Part 1 of this Strategy with anti-social behaviour on the network, as well as to ensure long term resilience.

1.11 Based on feedback from local community groups, some important steps should guide activities:

1. Coordination of activities

1.12 A clear message from stakeholder consultation was that, while there is a good deal of activity happening at the community level - there was little sharing of experience or horizontal collaboration. A more proactive coordinating role to engage with groups through the Green Spaces Forum and other forums would help in bringing together and supporting community groups, as well as helping to make their work visible in order to help attract volunteers and participants (see Catalyst 1).

2. Safeguarding community green assets

1.13 Where the local community has invested heavily into a green and blue asset and where that asset has brought the community together around a common purpose, this asset should be safeguarded, given the value it represents, unless there are exceptional reasons that indicate otherwise. Wherever possible and appropriate, these assets should be integrated into any new development schemes.

3. Availability of small grants

1.14 Small-scale actions such as the transformation and greening of Middlesbrough's 'back alleys' may be small but can cumulatively have a significant impact on the strength and resilience of the GBI network. They are often reliant on small grant funding being easily available to community groups.

1.15 It is important that the Council's grant programmes for the community sector is maintained, well promoted and support is provided. Given the urgency of need for environmental progress, health and wellbeing, there could be a 'fast track' process available to projects if it can be shown they respond to the priorities within this GBI Strategy.

4. Community co-design of new GBI assets and regenerated areas

1.16 All of the Priority Opportunities identified by this Strategy should provide as much space as possible for participatory design and community co-design, given that is local communities who are often best placed to understand what will and what will not work in their local area.

5. Devolving power to community groups

1.17 A more ambitious approach, which has been trialled elsewhere as an alternative funding mechanism for GBI assets, is a model whereby part of the responsibility for the long-term management of parks and green spaces can be transferred to 'Friends of' groups and enabling charities - whereby they can provide day to day management in lieu of rent for use of facilities. The NESTA 'Rethinking Parks' project has been an incubator for such fresh thinking on the future stewardship of parks and other GBI assets, in the face of longer term threats to their viability.¹ The project provides a useful set of resources and case studies of governance experiments carried out elsewhere.



A Middlesbrough 'back alley' transformed through community project. Source: Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC).



Children at the Nature's World community project. Source: Friends of Nature's Word



Participatory design should engage a range of community members.

1.18 Another example of such thinking can be seen in the 'Nowhere Gardens' project - where a local community enterprise took part in an experiment which set up a neighbourhood citizens' panel to make decisions on where to spend money on local GBI, as well as maintaining a budget to support community-led projects.²

"There is an opportunity to increase small interventions - not all large capital works - and focus on areas with active Friends Groups" (Stakeholder comment)

² NESTA (2020), 'News from Nowhere Gardens' [Online] Available at: <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/news-nowhere-gardens/the-citizens-panel/>

¹ <https://www.nesta.org.uk/project/rethinking-parks/>



Chapter Five A GBI 'check list' for new development

Chapter 5

A 'GBI checklist' for new development

This 'GBI check list' is designed to provide a simple way to guide early discussions regarding both residential and employment-led development schemes in Middlesbrough. This will help to ensure that scheme design aligns with the evidence base and priorities set out in this GBI Strategy. It should complement other policy tools such as emerging Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and SuDS policies.



An example of a scheme design integrating a mosaic of urban greening features, opportunities for natural play and resources for pollinators as part of the public realm.

1 | Strengthening the nature recovery network

Has the development taken into account its position as part of the habitat network mapped as part of Priority Opportunity 1 of this Strategy? And does the design include features which respond to filling ‘gaps’ in this network?

2 | Links to the walking and cycling network

Is the development designed to make walking and cycling the ‘mode of choice’ in line with national policy? Do routes through the development provide easy access to green corridors? Does the development illustrate full integration of Sport England’s ‘Active Design’ principles?

3 | Biodiversity ‘micro features’

Are ‘hedgehog highways’, swift boxes, bat boxes and similar features provided at new development, unless there is a well justified reason not to?

4 | SuDs

Where SuDS are required, are they designed To: serve as attractive recreational features? Respond to the wider landscape? Provide additional habitats for wildlife? Is educational material provided to users? Do they meet the Tees Valley Authorities Local Standards for Sustainable Drainage (2017)?

5 | Amenity grass land

Have all opportunities been considered to create wildflower planting or other areas of richer habitats within areas of amenity grassland provided, rather than mono-functional landscaping?

6 | Natural surveillance

Are green spaces overlooked by adjacent properties and busy public spaces?

7 | Growing space

Has community growing space been provided at residential sites unless there is a well justified reason that this is not possible?

8 | School Routes

Do routes through the development link into local walking and cycling paths to local primary schools serving the development? Will residents be discouraged from using the private car for the school run?

9 | Safe streets

Have all opportunities been taken to incorporate filtered roads, ‘home zones’ and ‘low traffic neighbourhoods’, in line with Sustrans guidance. Have GBI features (such as parklets, street trees, seating and rain gardens) been integrated into the layout?

10 | Play

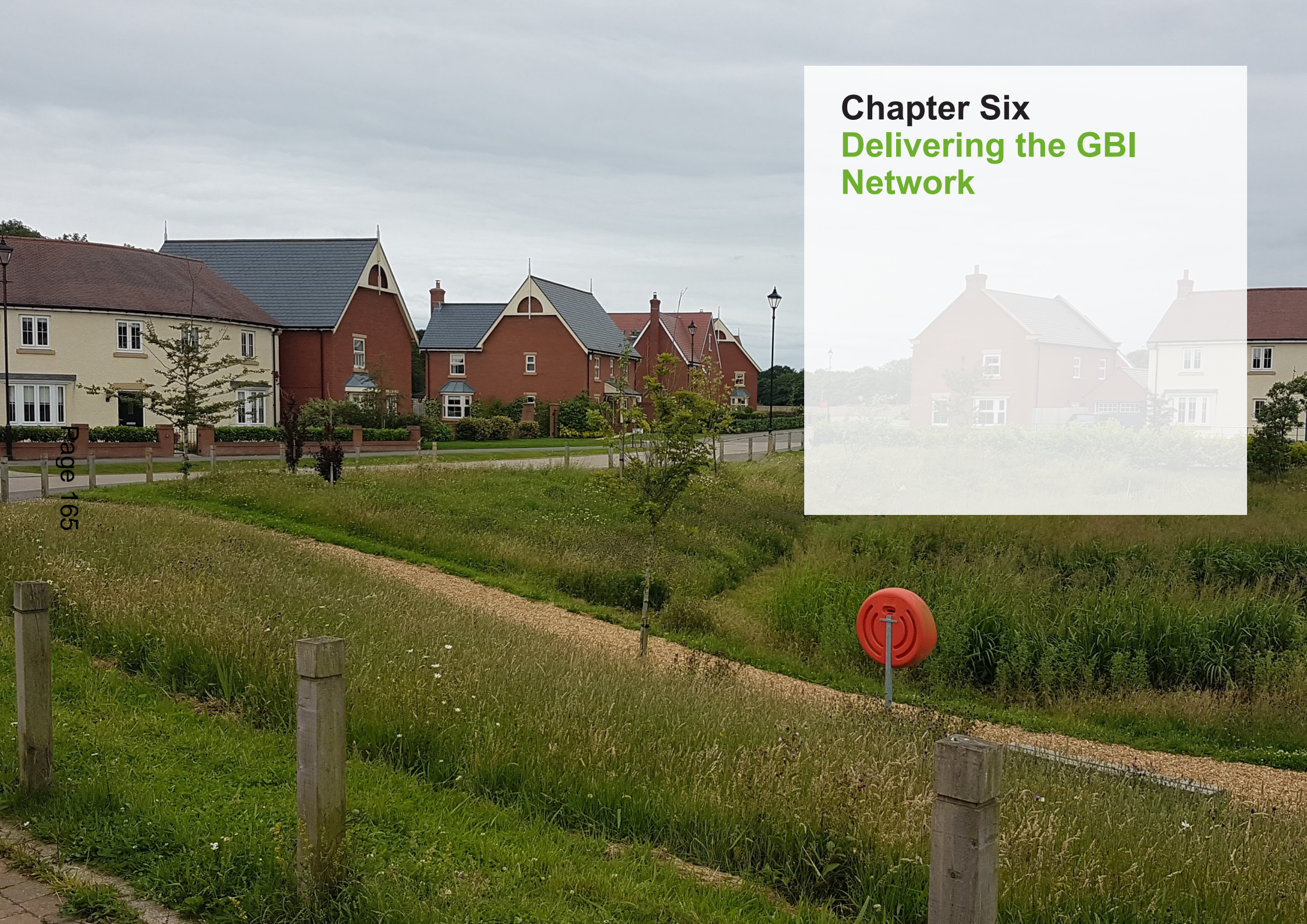
Are play spaces designed to be multifunctional GBI assets and to allow for self-led independent play, based on best practice? And are play areas available within walking distance?

11 | Long term stewardship

Are adequate procedures and funding in place for GBI features to be managed sustainably over the next 20-30 years?

Chapter Six

Delivering the GBI Network



Chapter 6

Delivering the GBI Network

The NPPF (2019) and legislative context provides strong support for enhancing Green and Blue Infrastructure because of the wide range of benefits it affords.

Local Plans should give further expression to this by setting an overarching vision of GBI delivery during the Plan period. This section sets out a series of recommendations on how to ‘embed’ GBI in these replacement Local Plan policies, followed by outlining a series of delivery mechanisms which can be used to enhance the network.

Recommendations for embedding GBI in the Middlesbrough Local Plan

1.19 Planning policy can play a critical role in the delivery of GBI, by setting clear expectations for it as part of long-term development plans. Middlesbrough Council has a duty to act on climate change, generate employment, maintain healthy functioning ecosystems, maximise physical and mental well-being, and protect and promote cultural and heritage assets. The GBI Priority Opportunities identified in this Strategy will help achieve these aims.

1.20 However, despite the recognised multiple benefits of GBI, it can often be difficult to deliver policy expectations due to competing policy priorities. As such, GBI is often treated as a lower tier requirement at the application stage, particularly in Section 106 negotiations. There is potential to strengthen the Council’s GBI policy approach in the emerging Local Plan Review that will allocate sites for housing and employment uses, designate sites for environmental protection and contain policies to guide and manage development up to 2037.

1.21 When designing a set of replacement policies, it is important to ensure that GBI is fully embedded within the Local Plan rather than dealt with through an isolated policy alone. An updated dedicated GBI policy should be accompanied by a Local Plan structure which ‘mainstreams’ GBI by weaving references throughout various policy areas. This will allow it to move outside any policy ‘silos’ and support (and be supported by) other agendas, including health, economic and social policy areas. It is recommended that replacement policies are tested through the ‘Mainstreaming GBI’ toolkit developed by the Nature Environment Research Council (NERC), an assessment process based on a content analysis of Plan wording¹.

1.22 In accordance with the tool, two principles should guide replacement policies, focussing on providing both breadth and depth of policy coverage:

1.23 Functional coverage i.e. the extent to which GBI is covered across all other chapters, including the introduction and vision for the Plan; and,

1.24 Strength of policy wording i.e. the phrasing used to articulate the treatment of GBI.

1.25 The toolkit also includes a set of ‘exemplar GBI policies’ which can guide those developed for Middlesbrough, both for a ‘primary GBI policy’ and for supporting policies and stewardship requirements. There is strong emphasis within the toolkit on more explicit recognition of the value of ‘place-making’ as a uniting concept for GBI.

1.26 The team which developed the tool recommend that scoring is undertaken independently by two assessors and then compared and that both forward planning and development management staff are involved.

1.27 It is recommended that the Council considers supporting these replacement policies by preparing a Supplementary Planning Document to provide guidance on addressing GBI needs and what will be expected to be delivered through development. In addition to setting out and providing detail on the expectations for the Borough, the SPD would also provide the opportunity to summarise design considerations and standards for GBI (including open spaces and play space), providing examples and precedents where appropriate.

¹ See Scott and Hislop (2019), ‘What does good GBI policy look like? Town and Country Planning, 88(5) [Online] Available at: <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=a70fd808-eee1-4b50-bb9d-805e5c017d26>

Securing GBI via the planning process

1.28 Mechanisms 1-2 detailed in the following pages discuss the primary mechanisms for securing GBI enhancements via the planning process, as new development comes forward in Middlesbrough over the Plan period. This currently largely relies on Section 106 agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy (not currently used by Middlesbrough Council). However, the emerging requirement for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through the forthcoming Environment Bill is set to provide an important investment mechanism for delivering GBI going forward, and it will be important for Local Authorities to adequately prepare for its impact.

1.29 As highlighted below, the Priority Opportunities outlined in this Strategy should be used by Development Management officers in their early discussions with developers and ultimately in the determination of applications. As such, these considerations would be treated as a material consideration in planning decisions, adding weight to the GBI opportunities and increasing the potential for their delivery. The additional 'GBI checklist' provided in **Chapter 5** is a further tool that provides a series of simple questions to guide early conversations with developers.

1.30 It is vitally important that the question of how a new development or regeneration scheme responds to the GBI network and the priorities of this Strategy is discussed at the earliest design stages. This will allow for GBI to be 'designed in' at an early stage, which proves far more cost effective for developers than applying requirements to a scheme at the later stages of design.

Securing GBI outside the planning process

1.31 It is also important to recognise that not all enhancements to the GBI network will be delivered via the planning process, despite innovations such as Biodiversity Net Gain.

1.32 While not exhaustive, **Mechanisms 3-6** detailed in the following pages provide an indication of some of the sources which should be pursued in order to create and maintain Middlesbrough's GBI network. This will require partnership working and a level of engagement with the GBI Strategy that goes beyond the boundaries of the planning department and includes bodies such as public health authorities, community groups, utility companies and local businesses.

"Development holds the biggest opportunity for improvements, but needs to be harnessed"

- Stakeholder comment.

Mechanism 1: Developer Contributions

There are two major existing mechanisms by which financial contributions to GBI can be secured from new proposed development through the planning process: S106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Section 106 Agreements

Section 106 agreements are a tool which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms, which would not otherwise be acceptable. There are three legal tests which must be met before S106 payments can be collected against a particular requirement. It:

- must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- must be directly related to the development; and,
- must be reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

The limitation of Section 106 in the past had been that contributions could not be pooled (beyond 5 developments) to invest in a strategic site. However, the Government lifted this restriction in 2019. This means that S106 can now be used to enhance or promote the wider GBI network, and could fund Borough-wide opportunities.

In negotiations over S106 it is particularly important, given concerns raised during consultation for this Strategy, that GBI assets provided are 'future proofed' i.e. that adequate provision is made for their management and maintenance, including the responsibility for these activities and their funding.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Community Infrastructure Levy was introduced through the Planning Act (2008) as a levy payable by developers towards the cost of local and sub-regional infrastructure to support development. This does not need to be directly related to the proposed development.

Middlesbrough Council does not currently implement

CIL. If CIL were to be implemented, it is important that key GBI priority projects are included within an accompanying Infrastructure Funding Statement.

'Designing in' GBI features early

Early conversations with developers are crucial to allow GBI features to be 'designed in' at an early stage rather than retrofitted later, which generally incurs greater expense. This also provides valuable certainty to the developer. GBI within development must be well designed, multi-functional and managed, rather than mono-functional landscaping. The simple 'GBI check list' provided in **Chapter 5** is a tool that may help structure early conversations. .

Another valuable tool, which goes into greater detail, are the *Building With Nature* standard is used in early discussions with Development Management teams and in the assessment of applications - the standard seeks to raise the standard of GBI over time and improve the quality of GBI coming through the development pipeline. However, when articulating expectations of development, it is important not to be overly prescriptive as this may leave insufficient flexibility to account for local circumstances and lead to poor design choices. The key focus should be outcomes for the GBI network.

The GBI Strategy and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

The purpose of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) is to act as a 'living' document that sets out a schedule of infrastructural projects required to underpin the growth outlined in the Local Plan. This schedule then helps to direct developer contributions to priority areas. As such, it is important that the schedule for Middlesbrough meaningfully incorporates the Priority Opportunities set out in this document. In this way, the IDP can help to 'translate' the evidenced need outlined in the Strategy to a project-level schedule, and will link particular projects to strategic sites once identified through the Local Plan process.

Mechanism 2: Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain is "*an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a measurably better state than before.*" It has the potential to be a powerful investment mechanism for delivering enhancements to the GBI network as new development comes forward. It will also provide increased certainty to developers.

BNG is already part of the NPPF (Paragraphs 170, 174 and 175) however there is no specific percentage gain required. The forthcoming Environment Bill (in draft form at the time of writing) is set to include a requirement for all development of land to deliver a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain. Compared to previous approaches, the quantitative targets (using a net gain 'calculator' or metric) are likely to focus attention at early design stages. This helps to mathematically hold new development to account and to have value as an iterative design tool, that helps both developers and planners understand how to provide for richer and more ecologically diverse landscaping, often through relatively simple changes to the landscape palette.

Due to the BNG 'hierarchy', the emphasis is likely to be on retaining and enhancing biodiversity within the boundary of the development site. However it is likely that off-site contributions will have to be made in some cases, raising the prospect of channelling resources to strategic GBI priorities across the Borough. The delivery off site BNG in a geographically constrained Borough will be challenging at larger scales, so key consideration should be given to the strategic delivery of net gain through the intertidal reach and associated wetland habitats, and to the increasingly intensively farmed southern rural belt.

Once the Environment Bill gains Royal Assent, BNG requirements are expected to come into effect over a two-year transition period. However it is important for Local Authorities to begin preparing for mandatory BNG, to leverage net gain through the NPPF, and to consider including local policies within their own plans.

Mechanism 3: Structural Investment Funds for GBI

Particularly in the UK regions outside London, much funding for larger-scale GBI initiatives in recent decades has come from European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds. However, this funding will no longer be available from 2021 and an adequate replacement for this funding will need to be sought within the UK's post-Brexit policy context.

The UK has announced the creation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in order to serve a similar role. However, at the time of writing there are few details available regarding its scale, design and implementation. Nevertheless, in the longer term funds such as this offer the potential to support larger scale, more 'transformational' GBI initiatives than those which can be funded via developer contributions - such as those proposed for the Beck Valleys and Middlehaven regeneration zone.

Mechanism 4: Changes to 'business as usual'

It is important to bear in mind that not all GBI enhancements require expensive capital investment. **Priority Opportunity 9** (Rethinking Urban Grassland) is an example of an initiative which requires a change in normal practices - in this case, mowing regimes in green spaces - which offers the potential to in fact generate savings in maintenance budgets over the longer term. This emphasises the importance of changing mindsets and public perceptions, 'seeding' an awareness of GBI across departments and working with partners beyond the boundaries of the Council planning department to strengthen the GBI network. This would also assist the Council in meeting climate change targets.

Mechanism 5: Alternative Financing Options

Traditionally, most public green spaces have been managed by Local Authorities, and has drawn on a relatively limited suite of investment models - from public sector provision, to public sector grants, private developer investment and community-level action. However, due to resourcing constraints in the public sector, there has been a recent (flurry) in experimentation around 'alternative financing options' for delivering GBI.

The NESTA 'Rethinking Parks' project is a valuable source of case studies on options which may be appropriate in Middlesbrough, and for delivering some of the Priority Opportunities within this Strategy.

The experiments vary widely. However the following are some alternative approaches which have been piloted elsewhere and promoted by NESTA and others:

- Leasing of parks and allotments to a charitable trust (Newcastle Parks Trust).
- Using parks for renewable energy generation in the form of ground source heat pumps (Powering Parks, Scotland).
- Assisting Friends Groups to take on more formal management responsibilities for green spaces (Everton Park, Liverpool).
- Use of social prescribing in parks to tackle health inequalities and issuing of community shares (Par Track, Cornwall).
- Engaging local businesses in supporting parks as part of a commitment to the local community (Walsall Connecting Green Spaces).
- Using parks and maintenance programmes to help build skills in the local community (ParkWork, Bristol).
- Installation of SuDS in a school in exchange for a reduction in chargeable surface area from water company (Moorland Junior School SuDS, Sale).

The matching of the most appropriate option to each GBI opportunity must be done on a case-by-case basis, however these pilot programmes offer valuable inspiration and lessons learned for alternative ways to think about building the GBI network.

The Greater Manchester Natural Capital Investment Plan (NCIP) is another promising model for re-thinking how GBI features are delivered using a broader range of models.

Mechanism 6: Grant Funding

As Local Authority budgets have been reduced over recent years, funds for the maintenance of the green space network and other GBI assets has become increasingly reliant on grant funding. This type of funding is likely to continue to be important for Middlesbrough's GBI network.

Funding will be dependent on the type of scheme, its origins and functions, and in some cases particular grant sources are indicated within the Priority Opportunity profiles.

Applications for grant funding from bodies such as the National Lottery, landfill funds and other grants should make full use of the evidence and priorities laid out in this GBI Strategy in order to establish a robust case for investment.

Appendix A

Linking the Priority Opportunities to the Evidence Base

Page 170

Appendix A

Linking the Priority Opportunities to the Evidence Base

The Priority Opportunities presented in Part 2 of this Strategy build upon the evidence base detailed in the Part 1 document.

This Appendix provides a clear indication of how the two parts of the Strategy relate to each other.

1.33 Part 1 of this Strategy outlined the evidence base relating to each of the six GBI themes identified. For each theme, a series of Key Issues were identified, which in turn led to the identification of a series of Emerging Opportunities. These Key Issues and Emerging Opportunities were also informed by the output of the stakeholder consultation process carried out using an online survey, interactive mapping and series of virtual stakeholder workshops, as detailed in **Part 1**.

1.34 The following pages provide a summary of those Emerging Opportunities, organised by theme. **Table A.1** maps these Emerging Opportunities against each Priority Opportunity presented in **Chapter 3**.

1.35 This serves to make clear the link between the identification of issues to be addressed (within **Part 1** of the Strategy) and the identification of Priority Opportunities which respond to these (within **Part 2** of the Strategy). As such, it provides an 'audit trail' for the proposals made by the GBI Strategy, rooting them in the baseline evidence.

‘Emerging Opportunities (from Part 1 of Strategy)

Theme 1: Regeneration, heritage and ‘sense of place’

- **RG1:** The GBI network has a key role to play in the next phase of Middlesbrough’s regeneration, building on existing interventions within Middlehaven and the town centre to create an ambitious landscape-led regeneration agenda.
- **RG2:** A GBI-led town centre revival, whereby the integration of green and blue features into the public realm helps create a vibrant multi-purpose town centre, to boost ‘liveability’ and stem urban flight among young people.
- **RG3:** Better integration of historic environment assets into the GBI network to boost accessibility, as well as to draw on precedent from elsewhere to integrate their features into wider ‘greener’ landscapes.
- **RG4:** Expansion of urban tree canopy cover in order to enhance the public realm, provide attractive places to live and work, and provide functions such as flood resilience and urban cooling.
- **RG5:** Expansion and enhancement of key ‘green corridors’ and enhanced wayfinding, in order to better link key assets and destinations, and to support the Borough’s visitor economy.
- **RG6:** There is an opportunity for investments in the GBI network to create jobs, including in forestry and woodland and in ecological restoration work.

Theme 2: Biodiversity and geodiversity

- **BD1:** Protection and restoration of important habitats in the Tees River Corridor, linking into the regeneration of Middlehaven. Supporting peripheral areas include tributary watercourses and wetland which may offer opportunity for habitat creation associated with soft engineering for flood defence.
- **BD2:** Restoration of the Beck Valleys as green corridors with more robust supporting habitat for target species in the Borough, along with interpretation resources to enhance understanding of importance.
- **BD3:** Better integration of ‘stepping stone’ habitats as part of the roll out of urban greening. Opportunities remain in the regeneration of residential areas such as Gresham and Grove Hill, and in association with biodiverse brownfield sites, particularly where this serves to span transport corridors. This might include planting of street trees in association with traffic calming measures, urban SuDS, as well as retro fitting green architecture (walls, roofs and screens).
- **BD4:** Identification and understanding of key ‘gaps’ in habitat corridors, to inform the Nature Recovery Network, including across Borough boundaries. For example, the need to relate to farm owners and managers across the southern belt, which transitions out toward the wider rural landscape.
- **BD5:** Re-invigorating the drive to redefine how areas of urban grassland and scrub (including roadside verges and parkland) are managed to provide greater resources and connectivity for pollinators and other fauna.

Theme 3: Reconnecting communities with nature

- **RC1:** Enhancement, expansion and improved connectivity of the town’s green space network as a physical/mental health and wellbeing resource.
- **RC2:** Expansion of ‘urban greening’ features to combat air pollution, including street trees, hedging and other features.
- **RC3:** Creation and expansion of attractive ‘green routes’ through the town in order to reduce dependence on the private car, enable active travel modes and combat localised air pollution.
- **RC4:** Experiments in ‘social’ and ‘green’ prescribing can be built upon, and greater partnership with public health authorities would help to form a more integrated approach to addressing health challenges through the GBI network.
- **RC5:** Green space and/or urban greening features provided as an integral part of Middlehaven regeneration plans, as well as other residential areas such as Gresham. This will improve the ‘liveability’ of these areas and support the ‘Urban Living’ agenda.
- **RC6:** Making use of local communities in co-designing and managing the GBI network in order to boost ‘community ownership’. Concerns over safety and anti-social behaviour within the GBI network should, wherever possible, be addressed through engagement and inclusion rather than alienation.
- **RC7:** Careful and collaborative design of green spaces and corridors to ensure they are age-friendly and cater for the varying needs of different generations.

Theme 4: A resilient landscape

- **RL1:** Expansion of woodland network, and improved management of existing trees, in order to meet national targets.
- **RL2:** Improved management and restoration of waterways to maximise carbon storage potential, in addition to biodiversity benefits.
- **RL3:** Promotion of nature-based solutions to risk of flooding, including high quality multi-functional SuDS installations. In order to deal with future water stresses, there will need to be a shift in perception regarding the way that water is stored in, and moved through, the Borough's landscape, with more detail provided under Theme 5.
- **RL4:** Expansion of the street tree network and integration of other 'urban greening features in order to provide urban cooling in the most urbanised areas.

Theme 5: The blue network and waterfronts

- **BN1:** The River Tees Corridor should form the framework for future multi-functional development of the GBI network and should support regeneration plans. The Borough's regeneration agenda should be guided by a process of 'turning back' toward the waterfront – both along the Tees River Corridor and the Beck Valleys – helping to repair broken connections, while remaining mindful of the potential conflict between recreational and biodiversity functions.
- **BN2:** Alongside engineered solutions, strategies to reduce flood risk should take maximum advantage of opportunities to implement nature-based solutions to create healthy and multi-functional floodplains which not only mitigate against flooding but provide co-benefits for recreation and biodiversity.
- **BN3:** Expansion and promotion of SuDs features at all scales should be encouraged – including large installations on vacant land and 'micro' features such as linear rail gardens installed along cycle paths to combat

Theme 6: Walking and cycling

- **WC1:** The creation or enhancement of 'green corridors' along the Beck Valleys to give a boost to walking and cycling uptake in the Borough.
- **WC2:** Identification and greening of 'key routes' linking important destinations, including a focus on east-west links.
- **WC3:** The regeneration of Middlesbrough Station, and plans for a direct line to London, provide an opportunity to create a 'node' at the heart of several green walking and cycling routes, both to destinations within Middlesbrough (including Teesside University and the Riverside Stadium) and beyond (including the coast, the North York Moors National Park and the Saltholme Nature Reserve to the north).
- **WC4:** Improved and more consistent wayfinding across the entire Borough, integrated into the various regeneration agendas in the town.
- **WC5:** Opportunities to 'green the school run', including implementing small-scale and incidental nature-based play interventions, to bring excitement and educational opportunities to green corridors serving schools.

Table A1: Priority Opportunities mapped against the 'Emerging Opportunities' identified in Part 1 of the Strategy.

| Theme | Regeneration, heritage and 'sense of place' | Biodiversity and geodiversity | Reconnecting communities with nature | A resilient landscape | Blue network and waterfronts | Walking and cycling |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Link to 'Emerging Opportunities from Part 1 of the Strategy' | | | | | | |
| 1. Laying the foundations for a Nature Recovery Network | RG6 | BD1, BD2, BD3, BD4 | | RL1, RL3 | | WC2 |
| 2. A green-blue grid for Middlehaven | RG1, RG3, RG4, RG5 | BD1 | RC1, RC2, RC3, RC5 | RL1, RL2, RL3, RL4 | BN1, BN2 | WC2, WC3 |
| 3. Station gateway and Middlesbrough 'low line' | RG1, RG2, RG3, RG4, RG5 | | RC2, RC7 | RL4 | | WC3 |
| 4. Supporting a re-imagined town centre | RG1, RG2, RG4, RG5 | | RC2, RC5, RC7 | RL1, RL4 | | |
| 5. The 15-minute town: enabling walking and cycling | RG1, RG4, RG5 | BD3 | RC1, RC3, RC5, RC7 | RL1, RL4 | | WC1, WC2, WC4, WC5 |
| 6. Blue corridors: enhancing the beck valleys | RG5, RG6 | BD2 | RC1, RC3 | RL1, RL2, RL3 | BN1, BN2 | WC1 |
| 7. Building an urban tree network | RG1, RG4, RG6 | BD3 | RC2, RC5 | RL1, RL4 | | |
| 8. Edible townscapes | | BD3 | RC1, RC6 | | | |
| 9. Rethinking urban grassland | RG3, RG5 | BD5 | RC5 | | | |
| 10. Network of multi-functional SuDs | RG6 | | RC5 | RL2, RL3 | BN2, BN3 | |
| 11. Green schools | RG4 | BD3 | RC1, RC2, RC6 | RL1, RL3 | BN3 | |
| 12. Low-traffic neighbourhoods | RG4 | BD3 | RC1, RC2, RC3, RC5 | RL1, RL4 | | WC5 |

Appendix 3 – Initial Impact Assessment of the Stainsby Country Park and Masterplan

Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Subject of assessment: | Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 - 2037 | | | |
| Coverage: | Crosscutting | | | |
| This is a decision relating to: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Function |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure | <input type="checkbox"/> Programme | <input type="checkbox"/> Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Review |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) | | |
| It is a: | New approach: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Revision of an existing approach: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| It is driven by: | Legislation: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local or corporate requirements: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Description: | <p>Key aims, objectives and activities To assess the impact of proceeding with the adoption of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 - 2037.</p> <p>Statutory drivers The Council must prepare Local Plans and associated planning documents, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach The established local plan is reliant upon certain policies saved from the old local plan, originally adopted in 1999. The emerging local plan will be reliant on an up to date evidence base. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 will provide a sound basis upon which to prepare policies relating to green and blue infrastructure, and will set out a new strategic approach for maximising the benefits to our communities.</p> <p>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) The key stakeholders are: the Council; Local Community; and Private Landowners.</p> | | | |

| | Intended outcomes. | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----------|---|
| | To seek the adoption of the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 - 2037. | | | |
| Live date: | The Executive will consider Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 on 13 th July 2021. | | | |
| Lifespan: | Until the replaced by a future strategy. | | | |
| Date of next review: | Not applicable | | | |
| Screening questions | Response | | | Evidence |
| | No | Yes | Uncertain | |
| Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The Council is required to be prepare a local plan for the area based on an up to date evidence base. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 has been prepared by expert consultants, in consultation with key stakeholders. The emerging local plan will be prepared in accordance with the legislation, national policy and local consultation standards, and will provide opportunities for all sectors of the community to be involved. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individual human rights. |
| Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?* | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The Council is required to be prepare a local plan for the area based on an up to date evidence base. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 has been prepared by expert consultants, in consultation with key stakeholders. The emerging local plan will be prepared in accordance with the legislation, national policy and local consultation standards, and will provide opportunities for all sectors of the community to be involved. In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on different groups or individuals in terms of equality. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Community cohesion</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*</p> | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | <p>The Council is required to be prepare a local plan for the area based on an up to date evidence base. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2021 – 2037 has been prepared by expert consultants, in consultation with key stakeholders. The emerging local plan will be prepared in accordance with the legislation, national policy and local consultation standards, and will provide opportunities for all sectors of the community to be involved.</p> <p>In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town.</p> |
|---|---|---|---|--|

Next steps:

- If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed.
- If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| Assessment completed by: | Alex Conti | Head of Service: | Paul Clarke |
| Date: | 21/06/21 | Date: | |

This page is intentionally left blank

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL |  |
|------------------------------|--|

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Report of: | Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities - Councillor Mieka Smiles Director of Environment and Community Services - Geoff Field, |
|-------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Submitted to: | Executive - 13 July 2021 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Subject: | Final Report of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel - Community Cohesion - Service Response |
|-----------------|---|

| | |
|--|--|
| Proposed decision(s) | |
| That the Executive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notes the content of the Scrutiny Report and the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel (attached as appendix A) b. Approves the Service Response - Action Plan (attached as appendix B) | |

| Report for: | Key decision: | Confidential: | Is the report urgent? |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Decision | No | No | No |

| Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Business Imperatives | Physical Regeneration | Social Regeneration |
| | | |

| Ward(s) affected |
|-------------------------|
| All |

What is the purpose of this report?

2. This report provides an overview of Culture and Communities Scrutiny into the Councils Community Cohesion approach and the service response – Action Plan to address the recommendations within the report.

3. Why does this report require a member decision?

3.1 This report covers the approach across the whole of Middlesbrough and therefore requires a member decision.

4. Report Background

4.1 Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee aimed to examine community cohesion in Middlesbrough and what work was being undertaken by the Council and its partners to support and develop this.

4.2 The report focused specifically on the following:

- Making Middlesbrough look and feel amazing
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour head on
- Ensuring Middlesbrough has the very best schools
- People - We will work with local communities to redevelop Middlesbrough's disadvantaged estates, and introduce locality working with our partners, placing services at the heart of communities.
- Place - We will make Middlesbrough look and feel amazing, working closely with local communities to make sure that our roads, streets and open spaces are well-designed, clean and safe, and revitalising unused buildings and heritage assets.
- Business - We will create positive perceptions of our town on a national basis, improving our reputation, and attracting new investment, visitors and residents.

4.3 The terms of reference are set out in section 4 of the report

4.4 Conclusion is at section 113 of the report and

4.5 Recommendations are set out at section 121 as per below:

- That the Council develop a Community Cohesion Strategy for Middlesbrough that:
 - Ensures all aspects of community cohesion work is co-ordinated and monitored.
 - Informs the Council's existing social regeneration agenda and is monitored through existing performance reporting processes.
 - Is in place by the end of 2022/23.
- Given recent staffing changes, as well as the discontinuation of funding for key projects after 2021 and the uncertainty brought about the Covid-19 pandemic, the

Council should look to ensure the current Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager is sufficiently supported via a robust staffing structure beyond 2021.

- That the Executive consider including Middlesbrough in the Refugee Resettlement Scheme.
- To assess progress against its objectives, the Panel should receive an update on the progress of Place Based Working no later than November 2021.

4.6 Action plan addressing the recommendations is attached as Appendix B

5. What decisions are being asked for?

That the Executive

- a. Notes the content of the Scrutiny Report and approves the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel (attached as appendix A)
- b. Approves the Service Response – Action Plan (attached as appendix B)

6. Why is this being recommended?

- 6.1 So that the Council can respond to the findings of the Scrutiny Report and its Recommendations

7. Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

- 7.1 The Council will be able to respond to the recommendations proposed by Scrutiny in a systematic and measured way

8. Legal

- 8.1 Legal advice has been sought through the development of the consultation and the recommendations in this report comply with statutory guidelines.

9. Financial

- 9.1 None

10. Policy framework

- 10.1 This report will not impact on the Policy Framework

11. Equality and diversity

- 11.1 Following the approval a equality impact assessment will be completed to assess the impact of any measures on the community.

12. Risk

- 12.1 failure to implement the recommendations may have an impact on community cohesion and we will miss opportunities to improve the service.

13. Actions to be taken to implement the decision

- 13.1 Delivery of action plan as set out in Appendix B

Appendices

Appendix A – Culture and Communities Scrutiny Report

Appendix B – Service Response – Action Plan

Contact: Marion Walker
Role: Head of Stronger Communities
Email: marion_walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT OF THE CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL – COMMUNITY COHESION AND INTEGRATION

CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Aims of the investigation | Page 2 |
| Mayor's Vision | Page 2 |
| Council's Core Objectives | Page 2 |
| Terms of Reference | Page 2 |
| Background Information | Page 3 |
| Term of Reference A | Page 4 |
| Term of Reference B | Page 9 |
| Term of Reference C | Page 12 |
| Term of Reference D | Page 17 |
| Conclusions | Page 18 |
| Recommendations | Page 18 |
| Acknowledgements | Page 19 |
| Background Papers | Page 19 |
| Acronyms | Page 20 |

AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. The aim of the investigation was to examine community cohesion in Middlesbrough and what work was being undertaken by the Council and its partners to support and develop this.

MAYOR'S VISION

2. The scrutiny of this topic fits within the following priorities of the Mayor's Vision:
 - Making Middlesbrough look and feel amazing.
 - Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour head on
 - Ensuring Middlesbrough has the very best schools

COUNCIL'S THREE CORE OBJECTIVES

3. The scrutiny of this topic aligns with the Council's three core objectives as detailed in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023¹:
 - People - We will work with local communities to redevelop Middlesbrough's disadvantaged estates, and introduce locality working with our partners, placing services at the heart of communities.
 - Place - We will make Middlesbrough look and feel amazing, working closely with local communities to make sure that our roads, streets and open spaces are well-designed, clean and safe, and revitalising unused buildings and heritage assets.
 - Business - We will create positive perceptions of our town on a national basis, improving our reputation, and attracting new investment, visitors and residents.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

4. The terms of reference for the scrutiny panel's investigation were as follows:
 - A) To examine the factors affecting community cohesion.
 - B) To determine how community cohesion is measured in Middlesbrough and to receive relevant statistical information.
 - C) To examine the work that the Local Authority and its partners are undertaking to promote community cohesion and integration.
 - D) To identify best practice and evidence-based approaches to build and strengthen cohesive communities.

¹ Middlesbrough Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2023

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. Community Cohesion can have different meanings depending on the context in which it is placed. However, for the purposes of this review, the Community Cohesion agenda was largely shaped following the so called “North Town Riots” in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001. Caused, largely, by racial tensions a national report, led by Ted Cante, found people were living parallel and polarised lives. It found residents from White and Asian communities essentially lived in separate communities. The report contained 67 recommendations covering a variety of factors that needed to be addressed to reinforce social cohesion.²
6. Following this, the LGA issued *Guidance on Community Cohesion*, containing the following definition of Community Cohesion:
 - There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities The diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and valued;
 - Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
 - Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.³
7. While the impact of the Cante report’s recommendations are debated, Middlesbrough has taken those principles and built upon them.
8. In order to support a cohesive community, Middlesbrough defines itself as a place where everyone:
 - Lives in cohesive communities, feels safe and are protected from harm;
 - Gets on well with each other;
 - Is proud of where they live;
 - Is active in their communities and engaged in local democracy and;
 - Has access to high quality, joined up services which safeguard our most vulnerable.
9. To help deliver this, the Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme was introduced in 2003 to “pioneer community cohesion programmes in their geographical areas”.⁴ As one of 14 Councils to be a “Pathfinder”, Middlesbrough received funding to assist with this programme.
10. Funding for the Pathfinder Programme focused on work with diverse communities, schools and wider partners both from public and voluntary sectors with results stating,

“no serious racial tensions, but a range of issues associated with deep-seated and extensive deprivation, with 70 per cent of the town’s population living in deprived wards. The exception to a generally harmonious racial situation is the harassment and humiliation that appears to be a common experience for asylum seekers.”⁵

² Ratcliffe, P. (2012). 'Community cohesion': reflections on a flawed paradigm. *Critical Social Policy*, 32(2), p3 pp. 262-281.

³ LGA, 'Community Cohesion – an action guide' 2002 p7

⁴ Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme – The first six months (Home Office & Vantagepoint Management Consultants) 2003, p1

⁵ Blackman *et al*, “A Better Place to Live: Social and Community Cohesion in Middlesbrough” (Social Futures Institute – Teesside University), 2004, p5

11. The report also noted that most of the Council's projects that aimed to address social cohesion met their objectives.
12. Overall the report found that "the main lesson learned from Middlesbrough's Community Cohesion Pathfinder is that face-to-face contact between groups of people who rarely meet is the best way of breaking down cultural barriers."⁶
13. Following the Pathfinder initiative, the Council set up the Middlesbrough Cohesion Partnership (the Partnership), led by the then Mayor, Ray Mallon, representing a range of stakeholders from Health, faith, disability, LGBT and age related groups as well as the Police and Teesside University. While the Partnership was initially very successful, there was an increased perception the Partnership was the responsibility of the Council. Following the austerity agenda and resulting Council restructures, ongoing support for the Partnership became untenable and it was dissolved.

TERM OF REFERENCE A
TO EXAMINE THE FACTORS AFFECTING COMMUNITY COHESION

14. There are a myriad of factors that affect community cohesion including economic, demographic and ethnographic factors. However, by examining the work carried out by the Council in pursuance of the community cohesion agenda the factors affecting community cohesion can be extrapolated, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (RAAS)

15. One of the first initiatives to address community cohesion has been Middlesbrough's approach to resettlement of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (RAAS) since 2004.
16. The Panel had previously expressed their concern about the welfare of Asylum seekers in the Town and how it could challenge the seemingly unequal distribution of Asylum seekers in Middlesbrough.
17. Middlesbrough Council help to support Asylum seekers via the North East Migration Partnership and the Local Authority Asylum Seeker Liaison Officer Project (LAASLO). Although the number of Asylum seekers in Middlesbrough is small with 580 (or 4 in every 1,000 of the population as of December 2019), this does make up 13.5% of the Asylum seeker community in the North East.
18. Nevertheless, while a small proportion of the population, they remain vulnerable, having distinct characteristics and support needs.
19. At the commencement of national asylum dispersal in 2000/2001 the Council had employed a dedicated Asylum and Refugee Support Team. Initially, it was the Council's responsibility to house people classed as RAAS, for which it received funds accordingly. However, from 2012 this role was contracted to the private sector; with Jomast (and latterly Mears Housing) being sub-contractors of the national contractor, G4S.
20. Central Government initially provided 'enabling' funding for wider integration and support for RAAS directly to local Councils. This was changed when a number of Strategic Migration

⁶ Ibid, p7

Groups (SMG) were established across England and Wales. SMG acted as forums for local authorities, statutory agencies and the voluntary sector could discuss how migration in all of its forms impacted the regions. Initially hosted by Newcastle City Council, Middlesbrough Council began hosting the migration group in 2015 following a petition to the Home Office in light of increased numbers RAAS being located in the Town.

21. Coupled with this process, the Council also acknowledged there was significant barriers in engaging with the Town's faith groups and began working with the Middlesbrough Inter-faith network, established to represent all faiths across Middlesbrough.
22. Having an ethos that touched on issues surrounding poverty, social isolation and mental health, the Network was awarded £20,000 for community groups to submit bids for. Unfortunately, the Council's ability to maintain its current levels of commitment to the Network is under review owing to its time intensive nature.
23. The Council has also developed new teams and mechanisms to build on existing work including:
 - Ethnic Minority Achievement Team (EMAT)
 - North East Strategic Partnership (NEMP)
 - Controlling Migration Fund (CMF)
 - Stronger Communities Middlesbrough (SCM)

EMAT

24. Middlesbrough's EMAT is based in Newport HUB and comprises a range of professionals. It works within schools to assist students who have English as Another Language (EAL) and to promote educational attainment of BAME students. The EMAT also assist students from Traveller communities, whether that be from within school or via Virtual School.

North East Migration Partnership (NEMP) – discussed in detail at Terms of Reference C

25. NEMP is hosted by Middlesbrough and acts as a link between Councils across the North East and the Home Office. Within NEMP there are thematic sub-groups, including the Regional Chief Executives sub group, VCS group, and the North East Directors of Public Health network. NEMP have also established local inter agency-groups.
26. The Council's former Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager Chaired the Middlesbrough Multi-Agency Migration sub-group. This was an opportunity for those on an operational level working with RAAS to discuss and resolve local issues and concerns. Any unresolvable issues at the local level is escalated to a Regional level and, potentially, Government.
27. The group meets four times a year with representatives including the Home Office, Mears Housing and other key partners from both voluntary and public sectors.

Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) Programme

28. The Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) was launched in November 2016, to help local authorities mitigate the impacts of migration on communities in their area. Comprising two elements, and lasting between 2016 and 2020, Councils could bid for money from a fund totalling £100 million, as well as being able to draw on £40 million of Home Office Immigration Enforcement staff time.⁷

29. Successful bids were submitted, for which three projects securing funds in Middlesbrough, all of which were independently evaluated by the University of Birmingham;

- *Data mapping (discussed in detail in Terms of Reference B)*. Due to a lack of contemporary, and reliable, statistical data about Middlesbrough's population the Council commissioned Teesside University to collate all publicly available data in regards to the Town's communities. As a result, a report and a toolkit have been produced with training on relevant data collection to be delivered to key Council staff as well as external partners, including the voluntary sector.
- *Education* - working within schools had seen changes within student profiles. This included recruiting teaching assistants, delivering language support as well working with partners. The Education project aimed to address challenges of accommodating increases in International New Arrival children. The project played a significant role in bringing communities together, as well as developing a sustainable programme that Middlesbrough schools can use should they experience resource and integration-related challenges.

Schools within the project's remit were predominantly within Newport and North Ormesby wards, with those schools delivering training to other schools on mitigating and managing the impact/ of similar pressures.

- *Stronger Communities Middlesbrough (SCM)* - looking at cohesion and integration and working within 3 priority wards (Thorntree & Brambles Farm, North Ormesby and Newport) across Middlesbrough (see below).

Stronger Communities Middlesbrough (SCM)

30. One of the more significant community projects borne from the Controlling Migration Fund was Stronger Communities Middlesbrough (SCM). SCM aimed to support residents, facilitate a process of integration and foster an environment that residents could live in with shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. SCM's work focussed on three priority Wards; North Ormesby; Newport and Thorntree and Brambles Farm.

31. While all three wards shared similar challenges socio-economically, residents in Thorntree and Brambles Farm expressed concern about levels of immigration in Middlesbrough.

32. The SCM team consisted of one full time and two part time members of staff. The project was awarded £300,000 over two years, largely for staff salaries (including £10,000 to internal finance department) the £60,000 grant program, and related activities.

⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government "Controlling Migration Fund Prospectus" 2018 p4

33. SCM's work encompassed three key "strands" of activity:

1. Improving community cohesion and integration;
2. Improving tension monitoring and conflict resolution practices across Middlesbrough;
3. Welcome new communities to Middlesbrough.

34. Within these "strands" the following thematic actions had been carried out:

Community Cohesion and Integration

- Engaged with communities and organisations;
- Worked in partnership with local services, internal and external agencies;
- Hosted seven community conversations;
- Delivered four funding workshops;
- Launched Middlesbrough City of Kindness event;
- Identified residents for Advisory groups in each ward;
- Organised a number of events and workshops including; Newport HUB Islamic Diversity Centre community lunch (to break down the myths about Muslims);
- NUR fitness celebration event;
- International Women's day 2019 and;
- Supported residents with small grants to deliver culture cooking together and creative song writing/ poetry workshops.

35. These events have been key to breaking down barriers and improving resident's understanding of different faiths.

36. The above actions led to some important successes:

- Community conversations that focused on supporting unity and providing a safe space for local residents to discuss their experiences;
- The Middlesbrough City of Kindness event, launched in November 2018 with the strapline, *Our Communities Our Middlesbrough* and #kindboro. Local businesses donated refreshments and the event which brought together residents and key partners from the three priority wards, with participants signing pledges including random acts of kindness;
- A number of Funding Workshops were held designed to give residents the confidence and knowledge to apply for funding worth £60,000;
- Youth Talent Show (funded via SCM grant) used music and culture to engage young people across Middlesbrough.

37. One of the Council's principle aims was to improve the way in which community tensions and issues were identified, recorded and responded to. To this end a robust multi-agency response was required which would place residents at the heart of tackling hate crime, as well as supporting vulnerable communities. To affectively monitor community tensions, a monitoring action plan has been created that captures any issues identified by the Council or its partners. In response to the Covid pandemic a communications plan was also implemented as some communities felt they were being forgotten. Communications are

tailored to different audiences to ensure relevant information is sent to the relevant community.

38. To assist with this process several initiatives were undertaken including:

- Undertaking a review of internal Community Tension Monitoring processes;
- Developing a new Middlesbrough Council online reporting mechanism;
- Developing e-learning packages for all staff and;
- Commissioning an external facilitator who delivered two workshops for front line practitioners and for youth workers across the town.

Welcoming New Migrants to Middlesbrough

39. Consultation with residents and relevant interest groups was carried out in order to undertake important initiatives to welcome new migrants to Middlesbrough.

40. For example, Orientation Workshops have been developed which have identified and supported 17 volunteer translators speaking 25 different languages to provide assistance to new migrants. Work has been carried out in priority Wards – Central and Newport specifically - with partnerships formed with Cleveland Police and volunteer translators as well as councillors, Community Safety Officers, PSCO's, Street Wardens and other key partners being invited to each session.

41. To date 16 orientation sessions have been delivered, engaging over 400 residents who spoke more than 25 languages. The sessions also helped to recruit 17 volunteer translators with 10 volunteers having completed levels one and two Translators' Accreditation Courses. A Volunteer Policy has been devised to that will support volunteers from newer communities.

42. Importantly, the Council has been identified as exercising good practice by regional partners in this regard.

43. Support and advice has also been provided to new migrants on a range of different matters, including registering with a GP/dentist, how to appropriately access emergency services and how to be a good neighbour. The Police have also delivered sessions on UK laws including knife crime, prostitution, equality, inclusion and hate crime. Each session included a number of key stakeholders including Ward Councillors, Street Wardens, PCSO, Community Safety Officers and MP's Case Workers.

Volunteers

44. As with all community activities, volunteers are a key resource with volunteering being promoted within different communities. Volunteers have been encouraged to gain translation/ accreditation qualifications which has seen an increase in volunteer numbers, particularly from RAAS communities. As such, 22 RAAS volunteers now work with various teams across the Council as well volunteer guidelines being adopted by key partners across South Tees to recruit volunteers from diverse communities.

45. In recognition of their work, three SCM volunteers were nominated for Middlesbrough Civic Champions awards. The SCM team also won Middlesbrough Council's Team of the year in 2019 as well as the Community Safety award at the Tees Valley BME Achievement Awards 2019.

46. SCM has now moved into Phase two CMF, which will focus on working with priority school communities:

- Abingdon (primary);
- Sacred Heart (primary);
- North Ormesby (primary);
- Ayresome (primary);
- Breckon Hill (primary);
- Unity City Academy (secondary) and;
- Outwood Acklam (secondary).

47. When working with schools the SCM team will develop orientation packs for International New Arrivals and deliver training for key community connectors on where to report problems as well as establish and support Advisory Groups

48. As described above, project funding expired in September 2020, therefore the activities above are designed to be sustainable to ensure community cohesion work can be maintained with limited Council support.

TERM OF REFERENCE B

TO DETERMINE HOW COMMUNITY COHESION IS MEASURED IN MIDDLESBROUGH AND TO RECEIVE RELEVANT STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

49. To understand Middlesbrough's demographic position the Panel requested information relating to a data mapping project undertaken as part of the Controlling Migration fund (CMF). Carried out by Teesside University, its aim was to better understand Middlesbrough's cultural makeup, the scale and impact of recent demographic changes, any associated challenges this brought, and to act as an evidence base to secure additional funding from Government.

50. Teesside University worked with partners including Cleveland Police, Public Health, the Voluntary and Community Sector, local schools and all Council departments to map all known data across those organisations. As well as providing a demographic overview, the exercise also helped determine the demand on services and how organisations can best respond to these demands.

51. The data mapping exercise has been recognised as best practice by MHCLG (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) as well as subsequent work on creating a data mapping toolkit. MHCLG were keen to share this learning nationally with other local authorities experiencing similar demographic changes.

52. It is recognised that since the last census of 2011 there has been significant demographic changes within the Town particularly regarding increases of migrants and international arrivals.

Middlesbrough's International Population

53. The Data Mapping exercise found that Middlesbrough's non-UK born and non-UK populations had increased from 8% in 2011 to 11% in 2019. This increase included:

- Economic migrants
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- International students

Potential Challenges found by Data Mapping

54. From the data mapping exercise, three key factors were identified:

- Socio-economics: migrants mainly reside in areas already experiencing multiple pressures e.g. significant levels of anti-social behaviour, higher levels of domestic abuse, unemployment and crime within the settled community, which contribute to increases of hate crime reports (with international new arrivals predominantly falling victim to hate crime).
- Views about community change: there have been tensions in terms of public space, environmental issues and cultural differences. There are some far-right views in the Town and within the community there were pockets of community tensions between International New arrivals and the settled community.
- Housing: Low cost private housing was commonly identified as a 'pull' factor to central areas; Middlesbrough's response to the Integrated Communities Green paper, outlined that asylum seekers were generally placed by the Home Office in areas of cheap housing.

55. Middlesbrough's settled population is declining, potentially having serious implications for Council funding levels. Indeed, more UK-born young people leave Middlesbrough owing to a lack of prospects, however an increase in International New Arrivals appears to help to keep population levels stable.

56. Increasing numbers of non-UK born children has proven challenging for schools already at or above admission capacity. It is difficult to plan school intake, however the EMAT (Ethnic Minority Achievement Team) try to ensure every international arrival family registers with them, allowing them to determine what services are required and to forecast school intake numbers.

57. In terms of school admissions and education; the Panel learned there are particular challenges with supporting and accommodating the Roma/Traveller community. For example, family may have an extended absence of leave/ move away without informing the school. However, a school place must be kept open for 28 days, adding further pressures. Whilst the percentage of Travellers was very small across Middlesbrough, the above factors nevertheless cause significant pressures on teaching staff and school place availability.

58. Generally Council services face pressures as a result of demographic change, particularly around housing and environmental services due to language barriers and different cultural and social practices. For example, in the 2011 census, 1.6% of international arrivals were unable to speak English with 78 main languages spoken across the town. It was also found

that there was an inappropriate use of services, such as attending A & E for general health conditions (as this would be the norm in their home country).

59. From the data mapping exercise an area of concern for the Panel was the identification of mental health issues. Due to the limited amount of intermediate level mental health services available, including specialist support, this could lead to additional problems for community cohesion and integration.

Opportunities

60. Whilst the Council has no control over where international arrivals are placed, the new local housing provider contracted by the Home Office (Mears Housing) is working with the Council and listening to concerns over distribution spread and numbers.

61. Whilst there were tensions reported in some communities, the Panel were advised that Middlesbrough had always been built on migration and had generally always been seen as a welcoming Town.

62. The data also revealed positive contributions from migration. For example, an increase in skilled workers arriving in the UK and international students bringing qualifications in tech (forging links to BOHO) as well as facilitating a growing level of cultural acceptance. Migration also helped to plug skill gaps, with a large number of International New Arrivals providing vital roles in the NHS, for example.

63. Statistics also showed that by the time International New Arrival children leave key stage four, there are out performing settled children and contributing to increased educational attainment in schools. Evidence suggests that non UK-born children are also more engaged in education, have a more culturally tolerant outlook and, town wide, their educational attainment is higher. Schools have also seen positive outcomes in terms of increased global awareness with UK born children benefitting from learning different languages (some schools have over 30 languages).

64. It was indicated that situations creating service pressures can be tackled via improved orientation of new arrivals into the Town as well improved cohesion work to increase cultural understanding and acceptance between communities.

65. The Panel learned of the benefits from better community data, including:

- Accurate and up to date demographic information available for managers. From this, managers can implement SMART plans for services and allocate resources that are more reactive to service users.
- Better targeting of services and special measures into 'hotspot' areas - there is now a move towards locality based working to identify what the challenges are within a specific area. This issue is discussed as part of Terms of Reference D below.
- Provides accurate, robust, evidence for funding/ grant applications through identification of service demand.

66. With specific grant funding ceasing after 2020, Government has advised that a degree of self-sustainability is required for projects to continue beyond 2020. To achieve this several plans

have been put in place for Schools to provide training to other schools on addressing capacity and integration challenges as well as the Council delivering roadshows with key partners on how data mapping can present the key findings.

67. The data mapping exercise helped to identify tangible themes that could be enacted to improve outcomes related to community cohesion. These included:

- An improvement to local data collection through coordinated and consistent approaches across council departments and with public sector partners.
- Develop a dashboard of data sources, training and tools and undertake regular analysis and reporting including the development a 'best practice' toolkit.
- That the Council and partners incorporate international migration as a theme in strategic needs assessments and continue to deliver orientation programmes and community based cohesion work (via Stronger Communities Middlesbrough).

TERM OF REFERENCE C

TO EXAMINE THE WORK THAT THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AND ITS PARTNERS ARE UNDERTAKING TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY COHESION AND INTEGRATION

68. Partnership working is crucial to developing community cohesion. To this end, the Panel received information relating to how the Council and its partners undertake work to achieve further cohesion and integration.

Cleveland Police

69. The lead for Community Cohesion based operations is the Chief Inspector for Community Engagement. Within his remit were the following departments:

- Community engagement team;
- Crime prevention;
- Early Intervention Officers;
- Hate crime investigation;
- Mental Health Liaison and;
- Offender management team.

70. Cleveland Police acknowledges that, in terms of community policing, it had lost touch with a number of its communities in recent years. While there were a number of factors associated with this breakdown, the most significant was attributed to the removal of Neighbourhood Policing.

71. Recently Neighbourhood Officers had been redeployed to Response Teams to cope with increased demand. However, this had largely removed the presence of officers in communities, resulting in a lack of confidence in the police amongst some communities. This was coupled with a lack of on-the-ground intelligence about community issues.

72. Such conclusions were supported by the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report that identified Cleveland Police did not sufficiently engage with, or listen to, local communities. In response, the recently appointed Chief Constable has promised to introduce a number of initiatives, including the reintroduction of Neighbourhood

Officers. Whilst exact details have not been finalised, the intention was to reintroduce Neighbourhood Officers from April 2020 with the hope of deploying one Neighbourhood Officer per Ward, based centrally or within Coulby Newham. As a result of the Covid Pandemic this process had not been fully completed, but the intention remains.

73. Importantly, the reintroduction of Neighbourhood Officers would be in addition to existing PSCO provision, and further complimented by the increase in Neighbourhood Wardens, following successful funding bids to the Tees Valley Combined Authority. The increase in Neighbourhood Safety presence would not be confined to a select number of areas, but would be adopted on a town-wide basis.
74. A further method to develop community was the introduction of the Community Engagement Team, consisting of five uniformed officers and two Community and Diversity Officers. The team's primary aim is to reach out to every community in Middlesbrough, and the wider Cleveland Force area, to build better relationships, learn about community dynamics, and address any concerns, needs and demands.
75. The Police would work closely with local Councillors, the Council's Community Safety Teams and neighbouring Councils to achieve the best results. It was also hoped the Safer Community Partnership would be rejuvenated, thereby providing a platform to discuss issues within the community with all key partner agencies.
76. Coupled with these initiatives, Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) would also be refreshed, which were required for each Police Force across the UK. The IAGs acted as a sounding board for the Police and Police and Crime Commissioner to consider best approaches to issues raised, such as racist graffiti in an area, hate crime and so on.
77. Communication is an essential part to reporting crime and anti-social behaviour. It was found that some members of the community may not feel comfortable calling the police, but making contact through social media sometimes removed that inhibition. Consequently, the Police have placed increased emphasis on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.
78. In order to understand community concerns and remove barriers, Cleveland Police's Community and Diversity Officer (a civilian role), works closely with the community/ voluntary sector passing on referrals from partner agencies, where a home visit is required. Initially, the role was focussed on the refugee and asylum seeker community, but now broadened its remit to include all strands of diversity issues. Results from home visits and wider conversations have been positive, with a specialist officer assigned to investigate a case if appropriate.
79. Importantly, the Engagement Team is extremely supportive of all communities and wants to ensure all voices are heard and feel valued. To this end they work to ensure communities know who the key contacts are both within Neighbourhood Policing, PCSO provision, and the wider Police Force.
80. The Police and Crime Commissioner's Office also plays an important role in building community relationships that help to secure community cohesion. For example the Police and Crime Commissioner's Consultation and Engagement Officer ensures all communities are engaged across the Cleveland Force area.
81. The Police and Crime Commissioner is passionate about ensuring all voices are heard and operates a '*Your Force, Your Voice*' initiative. Part of this initiatives is to target specific 'hard

to hear' groups, who may otherwise be underrepresented such as refugees and asylum seekers, (through the Regional Refugee Forum) and the LGB&T community, (through Hart Gables).

82. As part of the mechanisms to build community relationships the Police, and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, are held to account by several scrutiny processes, including a Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel. Use of the stop and search function, arguably, impacts upon some sectors of the community disproportionately, including young people and the BAME community. For this reason, Cleveland Police has a Young Person's Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel and a BAME Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel.
83. Previously the Government announced that Stop and Search was being overused, which led to a sharp decline in its use. Work is ongoing within Cleveland Police to increase the targeted use of stop and search. Frontline officers have undergone training on the correct use of this function, as it needs to be used under the correct circumstances, be lawful and proportional.
84. The Panel also heard that the OPCC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager leads on the *Everyone Matters* programme, which is carried out by a relatively new team consisting of five Officers, two Managers and three Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officers.
85. The team adopts a change management approach around Cleveland's people, partners and communities. *Everyone Matters* was introduced by the Police and Crime Commissioner, but has been reconfigured and developed since the recommendations made by HMIC. Best practice guidance from the National Chiefs Council outlines the importance of having good data on our communities, including geo-demographic information which can be used to create community profiles.
86. While increased community police presence was critical to improve community cohesion, it would take time to achieve but future updates would be provided as requested.

North East Migration Partnership (NEMP)

87. In an effort to coordinate migration issues, Migration Partnerships exist in every English Region, with Scotland and Northern Ireland having national partnerships. The North East Migration Partnership (NEMP) was formed in January 2015 as a result of the rising Asylum Seeker numbers in the Region. NEMP has Lead Officers and Members for each Local Authority with Middlesbrough's being the Director of Environment and Commercial Services and the Executive Member for Culture and Communities and Education respectively. Middlesbrough Council currently hosts the NEMP.
88. Together with Local Authorities, Police, Department of Work and Pensions and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations NEMP, acts as a strategic board, works as a critical friend of the Home Office, producing light touch reports, mid-year and end-of-year report as well as regular review calls. The Panel were advised that there are six staff members within NEMP who are fully funded by the Home Office. Governed and monitored by the Home Office, NEMP had recently been granted three year indicative funding (subject to review).
89. NEMP coordinates all Refugee and Asylum Seeker (RAAS) programmes and acts as a single point of contact to improve data, information and communication around RAAS issues as well as inform policy and guidance.

90. Statistically, as of September 2019, Middlesbrough had 595 asylum seekers. Regionally, the numbers of Asylum seekers in the North East has remained the same for the last two years, whereas the numbers nationality have increased.

91. NEMP also delivered key projects which encourage community cohesion, which include;

Middlesbrough Welcome and Orientation Pilot

92. Delivered in partnership with Middlesbrough and Cleveland Police, the pilot used volunteer interpreters to work with International New Arrivals around what was acceptable when accessing emergency services in the UK. Work illustrating how to best access emergency services identified some health concerns of those seeking asylum, whereby large numbers of asylum seekers had poor dental health with many suffering from mental health issues. Importantly, however, Middlesbrough had facilities in place to help deal with such concerns including a dedicated asylum seeker doctor's surgery which was complemented by the arrivals clinic in Stockton.

93. The pilot had been so successful that NEMP applied for funding through the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) and were awarded £150,000 to develop a regional induction programme. This would have specific modules on health, parenting, and positive relationships and about the local area.

94. The programme would also look at developing a digital induction. A Refugee and Asylum Seeker Orientation Task and Finish group had also been created and the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Consultation Group had been created for service user input. NEMP were also working with the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to make the sessions sustainable, and training community interpreters.

Employment Routeways

95. Formed in conjunction with the DWP and the VSC, the project was used by the DWP and Local Authorities to help prepare people for employment by providing ESOL classes to ensure standards of English were employment ready. Work is continuing on the development of a dedicated website to map all services for refugees and asylum seekers. This will allow service users to search for activities and resources, such as ESOL classes and social activities, in their local area and beyond. Induction and welcome sessions would be available on-line with videos and interactive exercises.

Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)

96. Also known as the Syrian Resettlement Scheme, the VPRS was introduced by the Home Office to assist resettle 20,000 vulnerable persons from the Middle East and North Africa by March 2020. The North East have assisted 8% or 2,000 refugees under the VPRS. Scotland have the biggest percentage of VPRS within the UK at 16%, and the East Midlands with the smallest percentage of VPRS within the UK at 4%.

97. The VPRS is a voluntary scheme with Local Authorities given the choice whether they wish to participate. The programme is fully funded and allows local authorities to develop systems and support, with most North East Councils taking part. A breakdown of the number of refugees per Council Area are as follows:

- Newcastle- 500
- Gateshead- 400
- Redcar and Cleveland- 250-300
- Hartlepool- 180- 200

98. Although the programme was funded, there would nevertheless be challenges going forward, especially as those being resettled were likely to be the most vulnerable and therefore could add additional pressures to Local Authority services, at least initially. In addition while Local Authorities determine how many families to take per year, they tend to be extended families and soon grow once they settle.

99. The Panel noted that Middlesbrough was currently not part of the scheme but it was likely a paper would be submitted to Executive in the near future and fully supported the work of the VPRS.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

100. Largely, UASC arrive into Local Authority Care through Government schemes such as the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), Dubs or National Transfer Scheme.

101. Local Authorities are provided with funding for every looked after UASC at a rate of £798 per week up to age 17, and £200 per week for care leavers age 18 and over. The Department for Education publishes annual statistics on the number of UASC looked after by Local Authorities in England with the latest data accurate as at 31st March 2019. The latest statistics outlined that the total number of UASC in England increased by 11% to 5,070, representing around 6% of all children looked after.

102. Key facts from the project were:

- Most UASC are male (90%) and are aged 16 and over (85%);
- The top regions in England to host UASC were: London (34%), South East (19%), East of England (11%) and West Midlands (10%);
- The North East has the lowest number of UASC in England with a total of 40 and represents less than 1% of the total;
- In this region only Redcar and Cleveland (10 UASC), Newcastle (9 UASC) and Hartlepool (7 UASC) have more than 5 UASC and participate in the scheme.

103. It was noted that Middlesbrough does not currently participate in UASC, and that there were no definite plans to do so in the near future.

Public Health

104. Working jointly between Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland, Public Health South Tees primary aim is to improve Health and Wellbeing, it operates an asset based approach, working directly with communities, learning about their health needs and tailoring public health services accordingly.

105. Through the *Making Every Contact Count* (MECC) initiative, tangible results can be achieved

even through small interactions by directing people to smoking cessation, drug and alcohol services or general signposting. The MECC initiative also contributed to five ways of wellbeing in which information collected when interacting with Public Health connects them with local communities, volunteering and learning new skills. Development of a website was underway to help target specific communities to specific services.

TERM OF REFERENCE D

TO IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICE AND EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN COHESIVE COMMUNITIES.

106. To build on the initiatives and join arrangements identified above, the Council have instigated a policy of Placed Based Working. Its intention is the creation of a “joined up system...to address the underlying causes of community problems”⁸. It is hoped to empower local communities to take charge of their own future.
107. Using Wigan Council’s *Deal for the Future* initiative as an example of best practice, Place Based Working, or Locality Working, involves the co-location of several statutory services out of the Town Centre and into the relevant locality. In Middlesbrough’s case, this includes services such as Community Safety, Area Care, Education, Asylum Support, Libraries and Hubs, Adult and Children Social Care (including Mental Health Support) Early Help and Youth Offending. Dependent on community need, co-location may also include Housing providers, Police and Fire Services as well as commissioned services such as drug and alcohol support and homelessness support.
108. In putting communities at the heart of Council activity, a Place Based approach allows links to be made with other community based initiatives such as Empower.
109. The Council’s Head of Stronger Communities advised the Panel that two pilot areas had been identified. Identification of those pilot areas followed a significant baseline data mapping exercise using a number of quantitative and qualitative methods. Ongoing analysis was being carried out to further understand what assets communities had, including physical (such as Schools and Churches) and people (such as community activists). By doing this it is hoped that services can be effectively targeted and residents can fully engage in their wider communities.
110. The Wards identified as pilot areas following the exercise were Newport and North Ormesby as both appeared to experience significant problems relating to racially motivated crimes; anti-social behaviour; female victims of violent crime and alcohol and substance misuse. The pilot is currently in the first year of its two year lifespan.
111. Implementation of Locality Working was scheduled to take place over three phases; Phase 1 -Enforcement and Environment (whereby workers from those Services would be co-located); Phase 2 - Individual and Family Support (whereby Looked After Children and Asylum Support services would be co-located depending on community need) and Phase 3 - Partnership Involvement (whereby key partners will be engaged). Due to the ongoing Covid situation, the overall implementation of Locality Working has slipped, but progress has been made. For example, Phase 1 has now been completed with staff now located in their respective Hubs. Coupled with this, Data Modelling and Resource Allocation has taken place in preparation for

⁸ Middlesbrough Council Executive report, 8 October 2019, p2

Phases 2 and 3.

112. The success of Locality Working will be measured via a number of metrics, which will inform wider Council strategies. Some of those metrics will be a perception survey issued six months apart with a view to it becoming annual. It will ask residents about their perceptions to influence decisions; community cohesion and confidence levels in the Council and its partners to tackle local issues. This will be complemented with information relating to recorded rates of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour as well as health indicators such as the percentage of pregnant women smoking at the time of delivery.

CONCLUSIONS

113. The scrutiny panel reached the following conclusions in respect of its investigation:

114. The Council's community cohesion related initiatives have adhered to the principles of the Cattle Report, attempting to break down barriers that are based, largely, on cultural differences.

115. The Council has done well to secure significant project funding from the Controlling Migration Fund, but it must now focus on making those projects self-sustaining.

116. It is critical that the Council, and its partners, have access to reliable, accurate and up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data. This enables services to be direct service using SMART principles.

117. Communities should not be seen, or treated, as passive recipients of Council services. Instead, they should be empowered to have more input into decision making and service delivery are in their respective localities.

118. Middlesbrough's demographics have changed considerably over 10 years. This has presented significant challenges for services across the Council. However, this change has also presented opportunities that the Council is trying to capitalise on.

119. The reintroduction of Neighbourhood Policing and an increase in Street Warden provision will be critical in understanding community tensions and need.

120. Effective partnership working is paramount for community cohesion initiatives to be effective. Place Based Working will help to coordinate and facilitate this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

121. That the Council develop a Community Cohesion Strategy for Middlesbrough that:

- Ensures all aspects of community cohesion work is co-ordinated and monitored.
- Informs the Council's existing social regeneration agenda and is monitored through existing performance reporting processes.
- Is in place by the end of 2022/23.

122. Given recent staffing changes, as well as the discontinuation of funding for key projects after 2021 and the uncertainty brought about the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council should look to ensure the current Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager is sufficiently supported via a robust staffing structure beyond 2021.
123. That the Executive consider including Middlesbrough in the Refugee Resettlement Scheme.
124. To assess progress against its objectives, the Panel should receive an update on the progress of Place Based Working no later than November 2021.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel would like to thank the following for their assistance with its work:

- Corrigan Katherine
(Community and Diversity Officer - Cleveland Police)
- Cowie, Scott
(Chief Inspector - Cleveland Police)
- Field, Geoff
(Director of Environment and Commercial Services – Middlesbrough Council)
- Khan, Shada
(Former Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager – Middlesbrough Council)
- Mearns, Nicola
(Partnerships and Communication Manager – Middlesbrough Council)
- Salkeld, Jenni
(Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- Walker, Marion
(Head of Stronger Communities – Middlesbrough Council)
- Wilson, Sarah
(Officer for Consultation & Engagement - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Blackman. T, Chapman T et al “A Better Place to Live: Social and Community Cohesion in Middlesbrough” Social Futures Institute, Teesside University, 2004.
- Department for Communities and Local Government, “Neighbourhood Management – Beyond the Pathfinders” 2008.
- Devanney, C., Lloyd, A., Wattis, L. and Bell, V. (2019) International Migration Data Toolkit: A resource for understanding international migration at the local level.
- Home Office and Vantagepoint Management Consultants Ltd, “Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme – the first six months” 2003.
- Local Government Association, “community cohesion – an action guide”, 2004.

- Middlesbrough Council – Executive Report “Place Based Approach – Pilot in Newport and North Ormesby Wards” 8 October 2019.
- Middlesbrough Council – Executive Report “Update Locality Working – Pilot in Newport and North Ormesby Wards” 18 February 2020
- Middlesbrough Council – Executive Report “Revised Delivery Plan for Locality Working following Covid-19” 14 July 2020.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, “Controlling Migration Fund Prospectus” 2018.
- Ratcliffe, P. (2012). 'Community cohesion': reflections on a flawed paradigm. *Critical Social Policy*, 32(2), pp. 262-281.

ACRONYMS

BAME - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CMF - Controlling Migration Fund
DWP - Department of Work and Pensions
EMAT - Ethnic Minority Achievement Team
HMIC - Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary
IAG - Independent Advisory Groups
LAASLO - Local Authority Asylum Seeker Liaison Officer Project
LGA - Local Government Association
LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MECC - Making Every Contact Count
MHCLG - Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NEMP - North East Strategic Partnership
OPCC - Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
PCSO - Police Community Support Officer
RAAS - Refugee and Asylum Seekers
SCM - Stronger Communities Middlesbrough
SMG - Strategic Migration Groups
SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely
UASC - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
VPRS - Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

COUNCILLOR C MCINTYRE - CHAIR OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

The membership of the scrutiny panel is as follows:

Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel 2020-2021

Councillors C McIntyre (Chair), L Lewis, (Vice-Chair), R Arundale, C Dodds, J Goodchild, L Mason, J Rostron, M Saunders, J Thompson.

Contact Officer:

Scott Bonner
Democratic Services

Telephone: 01642 729708 (direct line)
Email: scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

**CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
COMMUNITY COHESION – ACTION PLAN**

| SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION | PROPOSED ACTION | POST TITLE | BUDGET COST | TIMESCALE |
|--|---|--|--------------------|---|
| <p>1. That the Council develop a Community Cohesion Strategy for Middlesbrough that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures all aspects of community cohesion work is co-ordinated and monitored. • Informs the Council’s existing social regeneration agenda and is monitored through existing performance reporting processes. • Is in place by the end of 2022/23. | <p>Communities approach – an Executive report will be produced.</p> <p>Community Engagement Plan – this will be commenced in September 2021 Start to develop engagement</p> <p>Finish engagement on development and write strategy/approach</p> <p>Revised strategy in place</p> | <p>Head of Stronger Communities</p> <p>Head of Strategy, Information & Governance</p> <p>Head of Stronger Communities</p> <p>Head of Stronger Communities</p> <p>Head of Stronger Communities</p> | | <p>December 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p> <p>November 2021</p> <p>December 2022</p> <p>March 2023</p> |
| <p>2. Given recent staffing changes, as well as the discontinuation of funding for key projects after 2021 and the uncertainty brought about the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council should look to ensure the current Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager is sufficiently supported via a robust staffing structure beyond 2021.</p> | <p>Look for external funding for community support staff</p> <p>Discuss options relating to internal funding across directorates</p> | <p>Strategic Cohesion & Migration Manager/ Strategic Community Safety Manager</p> | | <p>Start 1/1/21 to March 2023 – review annually</p> <p>December</p> |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------|
| | | Head of Stronger Communities/ Director of Environment + Commercial Services | | 2021 |
| 3. That the Executive consider including Middlesbrough in the Refugee Resettlement Scheme. | Executive report will be produced and submitted for consideration. | North East Migration Partnership Manager/ Strategic Cohesion and Migration Manager | | November 2021 |
| 4. To assess progress against its objectives, the Panel should receive an update on the progress of Locality Working no later than November 2021. | Update to scrutiny on locality working will be presented at regular intervals commencing November 2021. | Head of Stronger Communities/Locality Managers | | November 2021 |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Report of: | Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance - Councillor Barrie Cooper Director Environment and Community Services - Geoff Field |
|-------------------|--|

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Submitted to: | Executive - 13 July 2021 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Subject: | ECS Installation of Town Wide Lighting Scheme |
|-----------------|---|

Summary

| Proposed decision(s) |
|--|
| It is recommended that Executive: Approves capital funding for the delivery of this Strategic Priority “ Installation of a Town wide lighting scheme highlighting key buildings and landmarks to improve the physical appearance of the town” |

| Report for: | Key decision: | Confidential: | Is the report urgent? ¹ |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|
| This report seeks an Executive decision to approve capital expenditure. | Yes - over the financial threshold and more than 2 wards will be affected. | This report is not confidential. | For the purposes of the call-in procedure, this report is not urgent. |

| Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan | | |
|--|--|--|
| People | Place | Business |
| This initiative will contribute to making people feel more positive about Middlesbrough. | Capital investment to key buildings and landmarks will enhanced the appearance of these buildings and the wider Town centre offer. | Capital investment in these assets will contribute to supporting business in the town. |

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

| |
|--|
| Ward(s) affected |
| Investment in these assets will be of benefit to all Wards throughout Middlesbrough. |

What is the purpose of this report?

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of the Strategic Priority TOC 04 and request capital funding to enable delivery.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The decision requires Executive approval due to the amount of capital funding being requested.

Report Background

3. Further to the successful outcome relating to a number of buildings and key landmarks have external lighting installed during 2020/21 a Strategic Priority was agreed to undertake a further programme of works during 2021/22. This includes.
 - Town Hall / Municipal (North) – installation of ground lights
 - Bell Structure in town centre – ground & spot lights
 - Dock Clock Tower – installation of new lighting
 - Additional Schemes to be agreed

What decision(s) are being asked for?

4. It is recommended that the Executive approves the requested £200,000 funding to allow the Strategic Priority to be actioned.

Why is this being recommended?

5. To ensure that the agreed Strategic Priority is delivered within the stated timeline.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

6. As this is an agreed Strategic Priority no other decision is recommended.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

7. The impact of approving the report will result in ensuring the Strategic Priority is delivered.

Legal

8. Any legal requirements associated with the planning and delivery of works will be managed through the Council's policies and procedures.

Financial

9. An allocation of £200,000.00 in requested.

Policy Framework

10. The Approval of the recommendations will not affect any part of the Council's Policy Framework.

Equality and Diversity

11. There will be no negative, differential impact on diverse groups and communities associated with this report.

Risk

12. If the funding is not approved, then a Strategic Priority will not be delivered.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

13. To deliver the programme of works the Service area will work in collaboration with other services to review internal project arrangements, carry out the necessary tender/procurement exercise, allocate appropriate financial resource, and manage the works programme.

Appendices

14. There are no appendices for this report.

Background papers

15. There are no background papers to this report.

Contact: David Jamison

Email: david_jamison@middlesbrough.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Report of: | Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance - Councillor Barrie Cooper Director of Finance - Ian Wright |
|-------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Submitted to: | Executive - 13 July 2021 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Subject: | Middlesbrough Council Long-Term Financial Sustainability |
|-----------------|--|

Summary

Proposed decision(s)

- That the Executive notes the contents of the report.
- That the Executive notes the key points of the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) and the initial self-assessment of compliance with the Code, the associated actions arising to ensure full compliance, and the next steps.
- That Executive notes the results of the analysis of the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021.

| Report for: | Key decision: | Confidential: | Is the report urgent? |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Information & Discussion | No | No | No |

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan

| People | Place | Business |
|---|-------|----------|
| Compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code will contribute to sound decision making. This will support the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), enabling Members to monitor progress against the Strategic Plan in a timely manner to ensure resources are allocated in line with the strategic priorities of the Council. | | |

Ward(s) affected

No direct impact on any wards.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. To inform the Executive of the publication of the new CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) which was applicable in shadow form during 2020/21 with the first full year of compliance being 2021/22.
2. To present to the Executive an initial self-assessment that has been undertaken of the Council's assessed level of compliance compared to the Standards contained within the CIPFA Financial Management Code and the associated actions arising to ensure full compliance (Appendix 1).
3. To provide Executive with the results of the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021 and a comparison and analysis with other local authorities (Appendix 2).

Why does this report require a Member decision?

4. The report is for information and discussion.
5. The CIPFA Financial Management Code does however have implications for Members, in particular the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee, due to its responsibility corporately for governance related issues. It also has a specific role in considering the findings of the external auditor in relation to the expected inclusion in the Statement of Accounts; and then approving those audited accounts for publication each year.

Report Background

6. The tightening fiscal landscape has placed the finances of local authorities under intense pressure. While organisations have done much to transform services, shape delivery and streamline costs, for these approaches to be successful it is crucial to have good financial management embedded as part of the organisation, including the need for long-term financial sustainability. Good financial management is an essential element of good governance and longer-term service planning, which are critical in ensuring that local service provision is sustainable.

The CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code)

Executive Summary

7. Local government finance in the UK has been governed by primary legislation, regulation and professional standards as supported by regulation. The general financial management of a local authority, however, was not supported by a professional code or any best practice requirements.
8. This situation changed when, in December 2019, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) published its Financial Management code (FM Code) to provide guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. It has been produced to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability through a set of standards of financial management that the Council can assess and report to stakeholders.

9. The standards have different practical applications according to the size and different circumstances of individual authorities and their use locally should reflect this. The principle of proportionality applies to the FM Code and reflects a non-prescriptive approach to how each standard is met.
10. The COVID-19 crisis has seen local authorities placed under extreme pressure to respond to the needs of their communities by providing services and support to an unprecedented extent. Understanding these pressures, the CIPFA Financial Management and Governance Panel has considered these new requirements against workload, reprioritisation and resource issues facing local authority staff. It has concluded that while the first full year of compliance with the FM Code can remain as the 2021/2022 financial year, it can do so within a more flexible framework where a proportionate approach is encouraged. In practice this is likely to mean that adherence to some parts of the FM Code will demonstrate a direction of travel as opposed to specific outcomes.

Background to the FM Code

11. In response to recent concerns (even before COVID-19) around the financial resilience of Councils, CIPFA has introduced a new FM Code as part of a package of measures that it is putting in place. These measures have been driven by the exceptional financial circumstances faced by local authorities, having revealed concerns about fundamental weaknesses in financial management. In particular, there have been a small number of high-profile failures across local government which threaten stakeholders confidence in the sector as a whole.
12. The CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) is designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. For the first time the FM Code sets out the expected standards of financial management for local authorities.
13. CIPFA acknowledges the additional extraordinary burdens being faced by local authorities due to COVID-19 and has reflected on the extent to which it is appropriate to introduce a new FM Code at the current time. In February 2021 they provided clarification on compliance with the code to reflect COVID-19 pressures. This stated:

Much of the existing Code requirements are based on statutory responsibilities, the timescales for which CIPFA is not able to influence. The Code does, however, allow for both flexibility and a proportionate approach:

“The manner in which compliance with the FM Code is demonstrated will be proportionate to the circumstances of each local authority.”

and that:

“Financial management standards are to be guided by proportionality.”

CIPFA concluded that while the first full year of compliance can remain as 2021/2022, it can do so within a more flexible framework where a proportionate

approach is encouraged. In practice this is likely to mean that adherence to some parts of the FM Code will demonstrate a direction of travel.

Principles of the FM code

14. The FM Code focuses on value for money, governance and financial management styles, financial resilience and financial sustainability. The FM Code identifies the risks to financial sustainability and introduces an overarching framework of assurance which builds on existing financial management good practice.
15. The FM Code has been designed on a principles-based approach which include the CIPFA *Statement of Principles of Good Financial Management*. These six principles have been developed by CIPFA in collaboration with senior leaders and practitioners within local government. These principles are the benchmarks against which all financial management practices should be judged. These will assist in determining whether, in applying standards of financial management, a local authority is financially sustainable.
16. The six principles of good financial management are:
 - **Organisational leadership** – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisational culture.
 - **Accountability** –financial management is based on medium-term financial planning, which drives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
 - **Transparency** - Financial management is undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported with appropriate frequency, with evidence of periodic officer action and elected member decision making.
 - **Professional standards** - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
 - **Assurance** - Sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management and include political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
 - **Long-term sustainability** - The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.
17. In turn the FM Code is structured around 7 areas of focus:
 - The Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer and Leadership Team
 - Governance and Financial Management Style
 - Long to Medium-Term Financial Management

- The Annual Budget
- Stakeholder Engagement and Business Plans
- Monitoring Financial Performance
- External Financial Reporting

Each of these areas is supported by a set of guidance standards against which Councils should be assessed. CIPFA's expectation is that authorities will have to comply with all the financial management standards if they are to demonstrate compliance with the FM Code and to meet its statutory responsibility for sound financial administration and fiduciary duties to taxpayers, customers and lenders.

18. Although the FM Code does not have legislative backing, it applies to all local authorities, including police, fire, combined and other authorities and is considered as best practice. The FM Code recognises that some organisations have different structures, legislative frameworks and internal management practices. Where compliance with this code is not possible adherence to the principles is appropriate.
19. The Council's external auditors (Ernst & Young) will from 2021/22 have regard to the FM Code and will be looking to ensure that the Council is meeting the FM Code as part of its value for money assessment. Furthermore, CIPFA guidance issued in February 2021 stated that the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21 should include the overall conclusion of the assessment of the organisation's compliance with the principles of the FM Code. Where there are outstanding matters or areas for improvement, these should be included in the action plan.
20. Each local authority must demonstrate that the requirements of the FM Code are being satisfied. However, the FM Code is not expected to be considered in isolation though and accompanying tools (such as the Council's Constitution and the Financial Procedure Rules) will form part of the collective suite of evidence to demonstrate sound decision making and a holistic view is taken across the organisation.
21. Demonstrating this compliance with the FM Code is a collective responsibility of elected members, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and their professional colleagues in the leadership team. It is for all the senior management team plus finance staff to work with elected members in ensuring compliance with the FM Code and so demonstrate the standard of financial management to be expected of a local authority. In doing this the statutory role of the section 151 officer will not just be recognised but also supported to achieve the combination of leadership roles essential for good quality financial management.
22. As a first step towards ensuring that the Council meets the FM Code in 2021/22, the Chief Finance Officer has produced a draft Initial Self-Assessment against the FM Code, as attached at Appendix 1. The Self-Assessment will be continually reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis, to ensure standards are maintained and any actions are implemented.

23. The Initial Self-Assessment has been undertaken using a RAG rating approach as set out below :

| RAG Rating | Progress Report |
|-------------------|--|
| HIGH | Full Compliance is being demonstrated |
| MEDIUM | Minor to moderate improvements are required to demonstrate full compliance |
| LOW | Moderate to significant improvements are required to demonstrate full compliance |

24. The completion of this Initial Self-Assessment has identified a range of further actions required which are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 1:

| Standard | Action Required | Responsible Officer | Timescale |
|-----------------|--|--|------------------|
| A | To continue to implement the Ofsted Improvement Plan in order to remove the qualified VFM opinion. | Executive Director of Children's Services | 31/3/24 |
| B | Recruit to the vacant Chief Accountant post with a suitably qualified and experienced person, or if not possible to appoint to post then review across Finance to ensure that the appropriate skills are in place. | Head of Finance and Investments | 30/9/21 |
| B | Continue to offer finance staff training opportunities, and encourage them to undertake professional accountancy qualifications. | Head of Financial Planning & Support / Head of Finance and Investments | Ongoing |
| B | Continue with the current trainee accountant / accounting technician programme. | Head of Financial Planning & Support / Head of Finance and Investments | Ongoing |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---------|
| B | Develop a plan and pathways to improve succession planning, and to address the age demographic of finance staff. | Director of Finance | 31/3/22 |
| B | Future vacant Finance Business Partner posts will target qualified accountant applicants. | Head of Financial Planning & Support | Ongoing |
| E | Continue to seek service improvement in provision of finance services by reviewing all tasks undertaken and systems used, and making improvements where required. | Head of Financial Planning & Support / Head of Finance and Investments | Ongoing |
| E | Strengthen the project management approach to ensure early involvement for finance, in project management business cases as part of the approval process, in order to ensure value for money. | Project Management Office / Director of Finance | 31/3/22 |
| E | Improve accountability of budgets by all budget managers and take corrective action where required. | Director of Finance / Leadership Management Team | 31/3/22 |
| F | Potential development of Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to include specific reference to scenario testing. | Director of Finance/ Head of Financial Planning & Support | 31/3/22 |
| F | Key partners should be reviewed to ensure they maintain the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration and corporate governance that apply throughout the Authority and they contribute to the achievement of the Authority's objectives. | Director of Finance / Director of Legal and Governance | 31/3/22 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|----------|
| G | Development of longer term financial planning when greater certainty around future funding for local government is received. | Director of Finance/ Head of Financial Planning & Support | TBD |
| H | Assess any implications arising from any changes in the CIPFA Prudential Code of Capital Finance for Local Authorities (once consultation has been completed) – this is dependent on the final publication. | Head of Finance and Investments | TBD |
| H | Full review of condition of built assets to be completed and funding sought from MTFP and Investment Strategy where required. | Director of Environment and Community Services | 31/10/21 |
| M | Ensure option appraisal process makes reference to the IFAC/PAIB principles. | Director of Finance | 31/3/22 |
| M | Develop a consistent process for undertaking and documenting option appraisals. | Director of Finance | 31/3/22 |
| O | Consider if other major balance sheet items can be visible in the quarterly budget monitoring reports. | Head of Financial Planning & Support / Head of Finance and Investments | 31/3/22 |

CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021

Background

25. CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index is a comparative analytical tool designed to provide councils with a clear understanding on their position in terms of financial risk and their ability to respond to financial pressures.
26. It was developed by CIPFA as they understand that local authorities are feeling the financial pressure as the demand for services is becoming greater, with higher costs and delivery charges impacting on budgets. Local authorities are also facing higher levels of scrutiny over their decision-making amid an increasingly complex

delivery landscape. At the heart of this decision making has to be a clear understanding of possible areas of financial risk.

27. The CIPFA Financial Resilience Index may be used by Chief Finance Officers to support good financial management, providing a common understanding within a council of their financial position, the challenges faced and also help to support discussion, as well as constructive debate, using consistent information from a range of measures.
28. The Index is made up of set of 12 separate but linked indicators (derived from publicly available information – generally financial returns made by local authorities to central government), which can be used to compare against similar authorities across a range of factors.
29. The Index shows a council's position on a range of measures associated with financial risk. The selection of indicators has been informed by extensive financial resilience work undertaken by CIPFA over the past five years, public consultation and technical stakeholder engagement.
30. There is no single overall indicator of financial risk and therefore no overall comparison exists in the Index, therefore the Index instead highlights areas where additional scrutiny should take place in order to provide additional assurance. This additional scrutiny should be accompanied by a narrative to place the indicator into context. It should also be noted that some indicators are subjective, however they still provide a good feel to the medium to long term situation.
31. While the impact of COVID-19 resulted in a delay to the publication of the current Index, it is still able to provide a comprehensive pre-COVID baseline, illustrating the financial resilience of authorities as they entered the pandemic.

Key Points from analysis of the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index

32. An analysis of the various indicators has been made by comparing Middlesbrough Council's results for each indicator against its CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours (a group of local authorities with similar characteristics to Middlesbrough Council) and the North East 12 Neighbours. This is shown in Appendix 2.
33. The key points of this analysis are as follows :
 - Middlesbrough's size and demographics will always leave the town vulnerable to financial shocks, therefore maximum mitigation is essential
 - Expenditure needs to be carefully controlled (Children's Social Care is the major risk here)
 - Council Tax Base needs to grow and have higher average values
 - Middlesbrough has a generally low level of reserves on the balance sheet compared to its nearest neighbours and the other North East local authorities. This is for a number of reasons:
 - Middlesbrough has used reserves to smooth savings proposals in previous years
 - Middlesbrough's unallocated Reserves (General Reserve) is relatively healthy but we have a very low level of Earmarked Reserves kept for a specific purpose

- Middlesbrough tends to make recurring provision within the budget rather than hold money on the balance sheet which does not show on these graphs
 - In the medium-term our level of reserves needs to be protected as a minimum and ideally grown to an appropriate and planned level
 - The Council is not over borrowed, although this needs to be monitored carefully.
34. In comparing Middlesbrough Council's position with other local authorities the following points should be noted about Middlesbrough Council's structural position :
- A very high proportion of Middlesbrough Council's budget is spent on Social Care, especially Children's Social Care
 - Middlesbrough Council has a very low Council Tax Base and the lowest in the North East
 - Fees and charges and Business Rates income are relatively low. This however protects Middlesbrough Council from large shocks such as Covid-19 pandemic
 - Middlesbrough Council is highly dependent on funding that is at the discretion of Central Government on an annual basis – this leaves Middlesbrough vulnerable because it is outside of our control and can change at short notice

What decision(s) are being asked for?

35. That the Executive notes the contents of the report.
36. That the Executive notes the key points of the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) and the initial self-assessment of compliance with the Code, the associated actions arising to ensure full compliance, and the next steps.
37. That the Executive notes the results of the analysis of the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021.

Why is this being recommended?

38. To contribute to ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the Council.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

39. Not applicable.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

40. Although the report does not contain any recommendations, the expectation is that the compliance to the CIPFA Financial Management Code will need to become part of auditing requirements; internal and external. As a result, the update is mainly for information at this stage with Members to monitor the position and any actions and legislative requirements that may arise.

Legal

41. It is CIPFA's intention that the Financial Management Code will have the same scope as the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, which promotes the financial sustainability of local authority capital expenditure and associated borrowing and is deemed by the sector as best practice. Therefore, although it does not have legislative backing, compliance is considered to be mandatory for all local authorities.
42. In addition to its alignment with the Prudential Code the FM Code also has links to the Treasury Management in the Public Sector Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Note and the annual Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. In this way, the CIPFA Codes support the Chief Finance Officer's statutory role.

Financial

43. The Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) has the Statutory Responsibility for the financial administration of the Council under the Local Government Act 1972. This includes appropriate measures in relation to financial management. Therefore, the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) has the Statutory Responsibility (supported by the Corporate Leadership Team and Elected Members) for ensuring compliance with the FM Code.

Policy Framework

44. There are no implications at this stage for the policy framework of the Council.

Equality and Diversity

45. There are no equality and diversity issues as part of this report.

Risk

46. If compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code is not demonstrated, the Council's financial sustainability could be brought into question, which in turn could result in a negative impact on its reputation with stakeholders.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

47. That this report is submitted to the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee for consideration.
48. Executive and Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee will receive regular reports on progress towards achieving full compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management Code, including progress on the actions identified from the Initial Self-Assessment where appropriate. An annual report will be taken to Full Council alongside the Statement of Accounts in late Autumn each year, commencing in 2022, following the first full financial year of compliance.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: CIPFA Financial Management Code: Initial self-assessment of compliance
- Appendix 2 : CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021 analysis

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Contact: Andrew Humble, Head of Financial Planning & Support

Email: andrew_humble@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Appendix 1: CIPFA Financial Management Code: Initial self-assessment of compliance

| | CIPFA Financial Management Code Standards | Level of compliance (H/M/L) | Evidenced compliance | Further action(s) required |
|---|--|-----------------------------|---|--|
| | Section 1 – Responsibilities of the chief financial officer and leadership team | | | |
| A | <p>The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the authority provide value for money (VFM).</p> <p>This includes the following main components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority has a clear and consistent understanding of what value for money means to it and its leadership team. • There are suitable mechanisms in place to promote value for money at a corporate level and at the level of individual services. • The authority is able to demonstrate the action that it has taken to promote value for money and what it has achieved. | M | <p>The Council has clear accountability and arrangements to deliver value for money.</p> <p>The Council received a qualified value for money opinion in respect of the provision of Children’s Social Care services from the Council’s external auditors for 2019/20 and potentially will receive one for 2020/21. This was due to the “inadequate” Ofsted inspection result received in January 2020. External Audit however noted that except for the provision of Children’s Social Care services, External Audit had no concerns about the Council’s arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.</p> <p>The Annual Governance Statement focuses on all aspects of governance, but critically on processes around VFM in service provision</p> | To continue to implement the Ofsted Improvement Plan in order to remove the qualified VFM opinion. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>The MTFP delivers a robust financial plan through a rigorous budget setting process. One of the key objectives of the MTFP is to provide cost effective services, which demonstrate value for money.</p> <p>The performance framework includes, regular monitoring of the Council's Strategic Plan projects to ensure that the key aims of the council are progressed to budget, timescales, and outcomes.</p> <p>The quarterly budget and performance monitoring reports to Executive provides regular VFM updates.</p> <p>VFM is a key part of any business case submitted and all decision-making groups take decisions with a focus on VFM</p> <p>Communication of VFM to customers and staff through a variety of channels.</p> <p>Delivering excellent customer service, which is a key component of VFM.</p> <p>The Council has a strong record of identifying and delivering efficiency savings with clarity about any impacts on services. Annual savings of over</p> | |
|--|--|--|---|--|

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | £100m have been delivered since 2010. | |
| B: | The authority complies with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (2016). | | | |
| B1 | The Chief Finance Officer in a local authority is a key member of the leadership team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the authority's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest. | H | The Director of Finance is a key member of the corporate Leadership Management Team of the Council and is involved in developing and implementing strategy. | |
| B2 | The Chief Finance Officer in a local authority must be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer-term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered and aligned with the authority's overall financial strategy. | H | <p>All material decisions that require the approval of senior officers or Members must have first been considered by the Director of Finance.</p> <p>All Council and Executive reports are discussed in advance and agree by the corporate Leadership Management Team.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer leads on the Council's MTFP and ensures that all risks are considered and detailed as part of the MTFP, in conjunction with the other members of the senior leadership team (Executive Members and corporate Leadership Management Team).</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|
| B3 | <p>The Chief Finance Officer in a local authority must lead the promotion and delivery by the whole authority of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently, and effectively. The Chief Finance Officer should regularly review the skillsets of elected members and all officers with budget/financial management responsibility and ensure appropriate support is provided.</p> | H | <p>Good financial management is promoted throughout the Authority through regular communication.</p> <p>All managers with budgetary responsibility receive training and regular one-to-one meetings with a member of the Finance team.</p> <p>Regular briefings on financial matters are held with Elected Members, with any new Elected Members receiving additional support.</p> | |
| B4 | <p>The Chief Finance Officer must lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose The Chief Finance Officer should regularly review the skillsets of all finance staff with senior budget/financial management responsibility and ensure ongoing appropriate support is provided. The ratio of qualified staff as a proportion of total finance staff ensures that the finance function has the necessary financial competence.</p> | M | <p>The Finance function is adequately resourced with experienced staff, a large number of whom have been with the Council for a number of years.</p> <p>There is however a key post of Chief Accountant that is currently vacant and has been vacant for over a year despite several attempts to appoint to the post. The duties of the post are currently being covered by existing staff and the post is currently being re-advertised. If it is still not possible to appoint a suitably qualified and experienced person then a review across the whole of Finance will be required to ensure that the duties of the post are covered on a long-term basis.</p> | <p>Recruit to the vacant Chief Accountant post with a suitably qualified and experienced person, or if not possible to appoint to post then conduct review across Finance to ensure that the appropriate skills are in place.</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| | | | <p>A number of the team are either qualified or actively studying for an accountancy qualification, with a number of staff in training posts currently studying for accountancy qualifications that are fully paid for by the Council.</p> <p>There is however a fairly low ratio of fully qualified accountants at a senior level (Finance Business Partner) with only two of the five Finance Business Partners being qualified, however the remaining possessing a large number of years of experience in local government finance.</p> <p>The age profile of Finance staff is on the high side and this is a potential area of concern in the future.</p> <p>A number of Finance staff have completed the CIPFA Finance Business Partner qualification.</p> <p>All officers undertake continuing professional development as required by their accounting bodies.</p> | <p>Continue to offer finance staff training opportunities, and encourage them to undertake professional accountancy qualifications.</p> <p>Continue with the current trainee accountant / accounting technician programme.</p> <p>Develop a plan and pathways to improve succession planning, and to address the age demographic of finance staff.</p> <p>Future vacant Finance Business Partner posts will target qualified accountant applicants.</p> |
|--|--|--|---|---|

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|
| | | | External specialist expertise, i.e. treasury management advisors, are also used by the Council. | |
| B5 | The Chief Finance Officer must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced. The Chief Finance Officer must be able to demonstrate adherence to professional CPD requirements on an annual basis. | H | The Director of Finance is CIPFA qualified with significant experience of local government finance. CPD is demonstrated as part of their CIPFA membership obligations. | |
| B6 | The Chief Finance Officer should promote the highest standards of ethical behaviour in the conduct of financial management. Professionally qualified staff should evidence an ongoing commitment to the principles of objectivity, integrity professional behaviour, professional competence, dues care and confidentiality. | H | Professionally qualified staff are required to adhere to the ethical standards of their professional bodies and that of the Council. | |
| B7 | To enable financially informed decision making: The Chief Finance Officer should be able to provide the leadership team with sound advice on the key principles of local government finance; and The Chief Finance Officer should be able to demonstrate a sound system which ensures the authority has access to high standards of technical financial advice. | H | <p>The Director of Finance is an integral part of the Council's corporate Leadership Management Team and provides sound advice as part of this role.</p> <p>The authority also has access to specialist technical advice through external contacts to discuss national issues.</p> <p>The Director of Finance is also part of North East Director of Resources group and Tees Valley Director of</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | Resources groups to share best practice. | |
| B8 | The chief finance officer should report explicitly on the affordability and risk associated with the capital strategy and where appropriate have access to specialised advice to enable them to reach their conclusions. | H | The affordability and risk of the Council's capital investment strategy is an integral part of the Council's annual Budget Report, quarterly budget monitoring reports, MTFP, and Strategic Plan. External specialist expertise, i.e. treasury management advisors, are also used by the Council where required. | |
| B9 | The chief finance officer must establish the reporting and monitoring processes, and integrate the treasury management indicators into the overall financial planning process. | H | There is an established process for reporting and monitoring of treasury management indicators. Treasury management indicators are approved alongside the budget each year. | |
| | Section 2 – Governance and financial management style | | | |
| C | The leadership team demonstrates in its actions and behaviours responsibility for governance and internal control. | | | |
| C1 | The leadership team espouses the Nolan principles. | H | The leadership exhibit the Nolan principles of public life. | |
| C2 | The authority has a clear framework for governance and internal control | H | There are Financial and Contract Procedure Rules which are subject to | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>a full review on a regular basis, these go to Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee and then Full Council for approval. These are clear about the respective authorisation limits for authorisation of contracts and the subsequent commitment/incurrence of expenditure.</p> <p>The Council's Affairs and Audit Committee, as part of its Terms of Reference, considers all aspects of audit activity both internal and external audit, and keeps under review the Councils arrangements for Corporate Governance and proposes from time to time necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.</p> <p>There is a Code of Conduct for Members, which is overseen by the Standards Committee.</p> <p>The authority has in place a clear framework for governance and internal controls through its Code of Corporate Governance.</p> | |
| C3 | The leadership team has established effective arrangements for assurance, internal audit and internal accountability. | H | There are effective arrangements for assurance, internal audit and internal accountability. Any areas of concern raised through those arrangements are managed robustly and transparently. | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | Internal controls are tested annually as part of the work of Internal Audit. The work of internal audit is governed by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and relevant professional standards. These include the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), CIPFA guidance on the application of those standards in Local Government and the CIPFA Statement on the role of the Head of Internal Audit. | |
| C4 | The leadership team espouses high standards of governance and internal control. | H | The leadership team espouses high standards of governance and internal control and communicates these clearly to all staff. | |
| C5 | The leadership team nurtures a culture of effective governance and robust internal control across the authority. | H | There is a culture of effective governance and robust internal control. Internal audit is used to bring focus to any areas of concern and to ensure that standards remain high. | |
| D: | The authority applies the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016). | | | |
| D1 | The authority maintains an effective audit committee. | H | The Authority has a Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee that meets at least 11 times annually. The Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee, as part of its Terms of Reference | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deals with any matter which is not an Executive function, and has not been delegated to any other committee of the Council • Monitors the progress and performance of internal audit • Ensures co-ordination between internal and external auditors • Keeps under review the Council's arrangements for Corporate Governance and proposes from time to time necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice | |
| D2 | The audit committee receives and monitors the implementation of internal and external audit recommendations. When threats to the financial sustainability of the authority are identified by auditors the audit committee should ensure that the recommendations are communicated to the leadership team and that the committee are informed of the effectiveness of the leadership team's response. | H | An update on the progress of recommendations arising from audit reports is a standing agenda item for the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee. All audit reports and recommendations are considered by the relevant management. All recommendations and progress against actions are monitored by the Council's Leadership Management Team. | |
| D3 | The authority has a PSIAS conformant internal audit function. | H | There is a strong independent internal audit function provided by Veritau Tees Valley Limited, which produces reporting and recommendations | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|
| | | | across all functions. The internal audit function compliant with PSIAS. | |
| E: | The financial management style of the authority supports financial sustainability | | | |
| E1 | The organisation has an effective framework of financial accountability that is clearly understood and applied throughout, from the political leaders, elected members to directors, finance officers and front line service managers. | H | Financial Regulations and Instructions provide a clear and understandable framework for accountability. They set out financial responsibilities for Directors, Head of Services, Budget Managers, and all employees of the Council and all Elected Members. | |
| E2 | Finance teams and the organisation they support are actively committed to continuous improvement focused on efficient and effective delivery and organisational performance. | M | <p>Finance operate a CIPFA Finance Business Partner model, directly working with services. This enables service provision to be tailored to the needs of services with changes being made as required.</p> <p>Finance teams seek continuous service improvement, examining new methods of working to provide more efficient and effective service delivery. There is still some work to do around removing some tasks undertaken which take longer than required, and produce little or no added value.</p> | Continue to seek service improvement in provision of finance services by reviewing all tasks undertaken and systems used, and making improvements where required. |
| E3 | Enabling transformation: the finance team have input into strategic and operational plans taking into account proactive risk | M | While Finance have input into strategic and operational plans, this is not necessarily always at an early | Strengthen the project management approach to ensure early |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | management, clear strategic directions and focus-based outcomes. | | enough stage to fully support and enable transformation. This is especially the case with projects. | involvement for finance, in project management business cases as part of the approval process, in order to ensure value for money. |
| E4 | Managers understand they are responsible for delivering services cost effectively and are held accountable for doing so. Financial literacy is diffused throughout the organisation so that decision takers understand and manage the financial implications of their decisions. | M | <p>Budgets and financial approval limits are clearly delegated to budget managers. Meetings are held regularly with budget managers to ensure implications of decisions are understood and that managers are responsible for those decisions.</p> <p>Directors are held accountable for their Directorate budgets. There is however not full accountability by all budget managers for the budgets they hold and for over/underspends on the budgets they are responsible for. This is particularly an issue where external factors exist, such as increased demand for services.</p> | Improve accountability of budgets by all budget managers and take corrective action where required. |
| E5 | The financial management of the authority has been critically evaluated. | H | <p>Internal Audit reviews the core financial controls on an annual basis and has also undertaken an audit of financial planning, budget monitoring and forecasting.</p> <p>External Audit also review this as part of the annual audit of the Council's accounts.</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | |
| | Section 3 – Long to medium-term financial management | | | |
| F: | The authority has carried out a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment | | | |
| F1 | Financial resilience is tested against best and worst case scenarios which cover a wide range of financial demographic and social challenges. | M | <p>Financial resilience is tested and modelled against various scenarios when reviewing the Council's MTFP, capital strategy and treasury management strategy.</p> <p>Whilst in the MTFP there are some illustrative figures about how changes in key assumptions about inflation, interest rates etc. would impact on the budget, but these do not cover all key variables or the longer-term impact. The text provided with the MTFP in the Budget Report sets out more detail on the key variables and the impact of changes in the underlying budget assumptions.</p> | Potential development of MTFP to include specific reference to scenario testing. |
| F2 | The authority uses independent objective quantitative measures to assess the risks to its financial sustainability. | H | <p>Key objective measures are used to assess financial stability and risks.</p> <p>The authority benchmarks itself against regional and comparable authorities using the latest CIPFA Financial Resilience Index. Paragraphs 25 to 34 and Appendix 2 of this report on the results of the analysis of this.</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | |
| F3 | Decision making by the authority demonstrates a sound understanding of the risks associated with its strategic business partners. | M | Key partners are evaluated before entry into formal arrangements. | Key partners should be reviewed to ensure they maintain the same high standards of conduct with regard to financial administration and corporate governance that apply throughout the Authority and they contribute to the achievement of the Authority's objectives. |
| G | The authority understands its prospects for financial sustainability in the longer term and has reported this clearly to members. | M | <p>The Council produces a Strategic Plan, MTFP and Investment Strategy that cover a 3-year period. These include range of assumptions for economic factors and service related factors.</p> <p>The current high levels of uncertainty around future funding for local government, and the legacy impacts of COVID-19, make producing a meaningful long-term plan very challenging. This risk to financial planning is clearly set out in the MTFP and has been communicated to the Leadership Team and Members.</p> <p>The MTFP also includes a risk assessment of the key financial risks the Council faces over the 3-year</p> | Development of longer term financial planning when greater certainty around future funding for local government is received. |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|---|
| | | | <p>period. The risks modelled include the level of inflation, pay inflation, service demand pressures, housing growth and the effect on council tax base, business rates income, government funding changes, and a range of capital implications.</p> <p>The MTFP also examines the adequacy of reserves to deal with the risks identified.</p> <p>The Council has a robust approach to risk management with Strategic and Directorate Risk Registers, with clear lines of escalation, supported by specific project and programme risk registers.</p> | |
| H: | The authority complies with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. | | | |
| H1 | The authority is aware of its obligations under the Prudential Code. The authority has prepared a suitable capital strategy. The authority has a set of prudential indicators in line with the Prudential Code. The authority has suitable mechanisms for monitoring its performance against the prudential indicators that it has set. | H | The Council is aware of its obligations under the Prudential Code and has assessed itself as compliant with those obligations. Like the Financial Management Code, there are many areas of compliance where the guidance allows for the Council to decide what an appropriate fit is; and there is not a single way to be compliant. | Assess any implications arising from any changes in the CIPFA Prudential Code of Capital Finance for Local Authorities (once consultation has been completed) – this is dependent on the final publication. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | <p>An annual Capital Strategy (Prudential Indicators, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision) report is produced each year as part of the Budget Report to Council. The Council in producing a detailed and easy to follow Capital Strategy supplemented by further information and training provided to Members invested considerable time.</p> <p>The Council has a 3 year Capital Strategy and within that prudential indicators are set in line with the Code. The Capital Strategy sets out the high level plans, with individual decisions made about investments or capital schemes through separate reports to members.</p> <p>Individual financial modelling of capital schemes covers a longer-term frame, typically over the asset life and is factored into investment decisions.</p> <p>There are effective mechanisms in place to monitor performance against the Code, with quarterly updates on capital expenditure, prudential indicators and treasury management activity reported to Executive as part of the regular quarterly budget monitoring process and regular</p> | |
|--|--|--|---|--|

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>reporting to the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee.</p> <p>The Council works closely with its Treasury Management advisers Arlingclose to ensure that it complies.</p> | |
| H2 | <p>The authority has an asset management plan that reviews the condition, sufficiency and suitability of assets in the light of business needs, and ambitions of the Medium - Long Term Financial Strategy. The plan should evidence rigorous assessment of asset portfolio in relation to service delivery.</p> | M | <p>A condition survey is carried out on a regular basis by internal and external consultants, which provides a total cost and prioritisation to inform the Capital Strategy and MTFP.</p> <p>There has been an acknowledged issue with the condition and maintenance of some of the Council's built assets, e.g. Transporter Bridge. A full review is currently taking place of the condition of these assets and funding will be sought from the Council's MTFP and Investment Strategy.</p> | <p>Full review of condition of built assets to be completed and funding sought from MTFP and Investment Strategy where required.</p> |
| H3 | <p>The authority maintains processes to ensure that information about key assets and liabilities in its balance sheet is a sound and current platform for management action.</p> | H | <p>The Capital Strategy forms an essential part of the authority's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. A report on prudential indicators included in the annual Capital Strategy report.</p> | |
| I: | <p>The authority has a rolling multi-year medium-term financial plan consistent with sustainable service plans.</p> | | | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|--|
| I1 | The authority has in place an agreed medium term financial plan | H | <p>The Council has in place an agreed 3-year MTFP that is formally set annually as part of the annual Budget report. This plan is consistent with the capital strategy and refreshed annually to reflect relevant strategic priorities, commitments, service demand pressures, underlying assumptions, and emergent issues and to agree future savings targets. This ensures that the Council always has a 3-year budget, allowing for sufficient time to time to plan and deliver any required savings.</p> <p>The MTFP is regularly reviewed throughout the year with reports being taken to Executive and Council where there are material changes required to the MTFP.</p> | |
| I2 | The Medium Term Financial Plan should make reference to other organisational plans (e.g. workforce planning) and performance measures to demonstrate an alignment between service and financial planning. | H | <p>Cost drivers and demand are considered within each Directorate and used to form the basis of pressures identified and mitigations/savings put forward to the MTFP. The MTFP includes the best assessment of each Directorate of what their demand pressures will be.</p> <p>Each Directorate has an annual service plan. These service plans are driven by the Council's Strategic Plan</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|
| | | | and the MTFP in terms of the delivery of key projects but also into the MTFP in relation to specific savings programme required to be delivered. | |
| I3 | The authority has benchmarked the performance of its services against appropriate comparators. | H | The Council uses the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index and other benchmarking services to consider performance on a regular basis. | |
| I4 | To inform the Leadership Team's decisions the authority has a single document tracking progress in the delivery of planned savings over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan. | H | <p>Updates on progress in the delivery of savings is included within the quarterly budget monitoring report, and in updates of the MTFP provided to Executive and Council.</p> <p>Any savings determined to be unachievable on an ongoing basis are removed from the MTFP and replaced with alternative savings.</p> | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 14 | <p>The authority publishes its plans for the use of reserves over the over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The level of reserves at 31st March in any one year should not be fall below the level previously agreed. The authority should demonstrate adherence to the most recent guidance on reserves from CIPFA's Local Authority Accounting Panel.</p> | H | <p>The adequacy of the level of financial reserves levels is reviewed at least annually as part of the Budget Report to Council, with the minimum level of General Fund Reserve being set each year. This is based on an assessment of financial risks against criteria set out by CIPFA and the extent to which specific provisions are available to meet known and expected liabilities.</p> <p>As part of the Budget Report the Council publishes its plans for the use of reserves over the over the period of the MTFP.</p> <p>Reserve levels are monitored throughout the year via the quarterly budget monitoring.</p> | |
| Section 4 – The annual budget | | | | |
| J | <p>The authority complies with its statutory obligations in respect of the budget setting process.</p> <p>This includes that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority has set a balanced budget for the current year. • The authority is likely to be able to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming year. • The authority is aware of the circumstances under which it should issue a Section 114 notice and how it would go about doing so. | H | <p>The Council understands its obligation in respect of the budget-setting process and the budget was approved by Council by the required deadlines.</p> <p>The Council has set a balanced budget for the current year (2021/22), and 2022/23, and is currently developing a balanced budget for 2023/24. The Council's MTFP process is designed to deliver a full three-year balanced budget each year.</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|--|
| | | | The Council is aware of the circumstances under which it should issue a section 114 notice and how it would go about doing so. This includes latest guidance issued by CIPFA in light of COVID-19. | |
| K: | The budget report includes a statement by the chief finance officer on the robustness of the estimates and a statement of the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. | H | The budget report includes a statement by the Director of Finance (S151 Officer) on the robustness of the estimates and a statement on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. | |
| | Section 5 – Stakeholder engagement and business plans | | | |
| L | The authority has engaged where appropriate with key stakeholders in developing its long-term financial strategy, medium-term financial plan and annual budget. | H | <p>Significant engagement is made with public and stakeholders on an annual basis on the Council’s budget and Strategic Plan.</p> <p>This is undertaken as part of an “annual conversation, called “Let’s Talk”, with local communities and the Council’s stakeholders on the direction of travel and future plans (including spending plans), an approach which will in future years be embedded within the Council’s emerging locality working approach.</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>The “Let’s Talk” annual conversation built on the success of the 2020/21 budget consultation, although traditional face to face engagement was severely constrained by the Covid-19 pandemic. The consultation had a clear brand identity and was promoted across social media and other channels, gathering both quantitative and qualitative information that will provide both real insight for the Council and real influence for respondents. The aim was to encourage people to take part in the annual budget consultation and the consultation on future strategic priorities of the organisation.</p> | |
| M: | <p>The authority uses an appropriate documented option appraisal methodology to demonstrate the value for money of its decisions; and financial analysis.</p> | | | |
| M1 | <p>The authority has a documented option appraisal complies with the guidance set out in the IFAC/PAIB publication Project and Investment Appraisal for Sustainable Value Creation: Principles in Project and Investment Appraisal.</p> | M | <p>Option appraisal complies with the principles, but this is not formally documented.</p> <p>The Council does not currently have a consistent process for undertaking and documenting option appraisals. These are undertaken on a case-by-case basis, influenced by the scale of investment and also the requirements of external funders. For all projects</p> | <p>Ensure option appraisal process makes reference to the IFAC/PAIB principles.</p> <p>Develop a consistent process for undertaking and documenting option appraisals.</p> |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>these covers as a minimum the 3-year MTFP period and for larger scale investment these are usually based on a whole life cycle basis.</p> <p>In considering a number of development projects, the Council also undertakes a development appraisal from a commercial developer perspective to assess overall scheme viability, as well as financial modelling from a Council perspective.</p> | |
| M2 | The authority's approach to option appraisal includes appropriate techniques for the qualitative and quantitative assessment of options. | H | These contain both quantitative evaluation of costs and benefits and qualitative evaluation of fit to service objectives and outcomes for residents/service users. | |
| M3 | The authority's approach to option appraisal includes suitable mechanisms to address risk and uncertainty | H | Option appraisal includes an evaluation of risk and uncertainty and the extent that this can be mitigated for given options. | |
| M4 | The authority reports the results of option appraisals in a clear, robust and informative manner that gives clear recommendations and outlines the risk associated with any preferred option(s). | H | Reports for decision set out the outcomes of these business case/option appraisals with clear recommendations and risk. Risks from agreed options are then managed through the corporate risk management approach. | |
| M5 | The accounting treatment of material decisions is considered and demonstrated | H | The accounting treatment and impact is determined at the time of the decision. | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|--|
| | as part of the formal option appraisal process. | | | |
| | Section 6 – Monitoring financial performance | | | |
| N: | The leadership team takes action using reports, enabling it to identify and correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability. | | | |
| N1 | The authority provides the leadership team with an appropriate suite of reports that allow it to identify and to correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability. The reports cover both forward- and backward looking information in respect of financial and operational performance. | H | <p>Quarterly financial monitoring reports are provided to Directorate Management Teams, Leadership Management Team, and the Executive, which identify significant variances and corrective actions being taken. The reports cover the position to date and the forecast for the remainder of the financial year. It also includes progress against savings targets and planned use of/contributions to earmarked reserves.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting is also provided in respect of the Council's basket of key operational performance indicators.</p> | |
| N2 | The reports are provided to the leadership team in a timely manner and in a suitable format. | H | Reporting to officers is periodically approximately one month after the quarter end with reporting to Members usually in the following two weeks, which creates a time lag. | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|
| | | | Financial information, forecasts are available on a more regular basis and accessible by budget managers, this would highlight significant variances earlier. Services will compile performance information on a more regular basis and where relevant highlight the impacts of these. | |
| N3 | The leadership team is happy with the reports that it receives and with its ability to use these reports to take appropriate action. | | <p>The leadership team are happy with the reports it receives and with its ability to use these reports to take appropriate action.</p> <p>The reports are also reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The format of the reports and information contained within the reports is amended following suggestions from officers and Elected Members to make improvements to the reports.</p> | |
| N4 | Timely time financial and performance information is available to managers via the appropriate systems. The systems are engineered to provide relevant data at a sufficiently accurate level. The organisation ensures that information is appropriately tailored and streamlined to avoid the risk of 'data overload'. | H | Managers are able to access financial information on demand via the Council's Business World financial management system. Reports have been developed with budget holders to provide them with the correct level of information. | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|
| N5 | <p>All Financial monitoring reports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the budget holder responsible for the information presented • Accruals based financial information • Include the approved budget against which monitoring is taking place. • A forecast for the remainder of the budget period, • Service performance information and - is shown, for instance by reconciliations, to be consistent with the aggregate position for the authority. | H | Financial reports include all of the required financial information. | |
| N6 | <p>Financial monitoring reports for high risk budgets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised by the leadership team of the organisation on (as a minimum) monthly basis. <p>Financial monitoring reports for steady state/low risk budgets are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received by budget holders on a monthly basis • Received (in aggregate) by the leadership team on a regular basis (in aggregate) by the leadership team. | H | <p>High cost/risk budgets are reviewed on a monthly basis. These are reviewed by leadership team, for example by a Children's Care High Cost Workshop.</p> <p>Less volatile and lower cost budgets employ self-service by budget managers using the Council's Business World financial management system, supported by finance where required.</p> | |
| N7 | The authority has arrangements which allow annual service budgets to be recalibrated in response to unforeseen developments. | H | In-year budget virements can be approved by the Director of Finance when less than £150K. Virements over £150K are approved by Executive at the quarterly budget monitoring process. | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| N8 | There are appropriate arrangements in place for reporting and managing the financial performance of each of the organisation's delivery partnerships and collaborative arrangements. | H | There are appropriate arrangements in place for reporting and managing the financial performance of each of the Council's delivery partnerships and collaborative arrangements | |
| O: | The leadership team monitors the elements of its balance sheet which pose a significant risk to its financial sustainability. | | | |
| O1 | The authority has identified the elements of its balance sheet that are most critical to its financial sustainability. | H | The Council has historically considered its reserves position, investments and borrowing, and debt levels as most critical to its financial sustainability. | |
| O2 | The authority has put in place suitable mechanisms to monitor the risk associated with these critical elements of its balance sheet. | H | <p>Mechanisms are in place to monitor all of these critical elements of the balance sheet.</p> <p>The monitoring of reserves is outlined below.</p> <p>Borrowing and investments and Treasury Management are monitored and reported as part as the quarterly budget monitoring process, and by regular reporting to the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee.</p> <p>Debt levels are not specifically included in the quarterly budget monitoring reports, however</p> | |

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|
| | | | provisions for bad debts are reviewed on a quarterly basis. Also levels of Council Tax, Business Rates debts are monitored and reported as part of the monthly performance monitoring. | |
| O3 | The authority reports unplanned use of its reserves to the leadership team in a timely manner | H | Forecast use/contribution of/to reserves is reported on a quarterly basis to the Leadership Management Team, and the Executive as part of the quarterly budget monitoring report. This highlights any changes to planned use/contribution to balances as well as movements in budgeted contributions to/from earmarked reserves. This then feeds into any MTFP refresh, along with intelligence about key risks. | |
| O4 | Management accounts include either a full balance sheet or an appropriate level of balance sheet information to meet business needs and evidence of monitoring of material items. | M | Reporting is currently only made on the critical elements of the balance sheet. Other assets and liabilities are not routinely reported on. It should be reviewed whether other major balance sheet items can be made more visible in quarterly budget monitoring reports. | Consider if other major balance sheet items can be visible in the quarterly budget monitoring reports. |
| O5 | Cash flow is managed through application of Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (CIPFA, 2017). | H | Robust and comprehensive treasury management processes, mitigating risk, adhering to the Treasury management guidance required. | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|--|
| | | | Prudential Code requirements are adhered to in order to provide the risk management of treasury activity. | |
| | Section 7 – External financial reporting | | | |
| P: | <p>The chief finance officer has personal responsibility for ensuring that the statutory accounts provided to the local authority comply with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>This includes the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority’s leadership team is aware of the CFO’s responsibilities in terms of the preparation of the annual financial statements. • The authority’s CFO is aware of their responsibilities in terms of the preparation of the annual financial statements. • These responsibilities are included in the CFO’s role description, personal objectives and other relevant performance management mechanisms. • The authority’s financial statements have hitherto been prepared on time and in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. | H | <p>The authority’s leadership team and the CFO are aware of the CFO’s responsibilities in terms of the preparation of the annual financial statements.</p> <p>These responsibilities form part of the CFO’s role description and personal objectives.</p> <p>The authority’s financial statements have been prepared on time and in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, and have been consistently given an unqualified opinion by external auditors.</p> <p>The annual accounts are reviewed and signed by the Director of Finance.</p> <p>The accounts are presented in a format for users to understand the Council’s financial performance, position, and cash flows.</p> | |

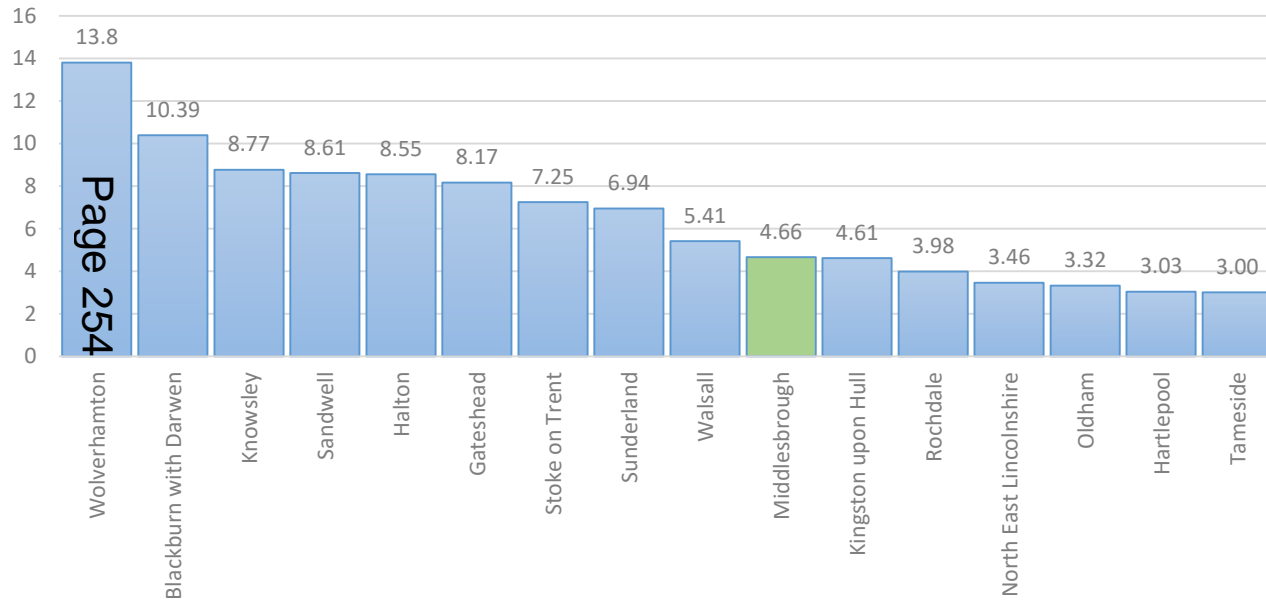
| | | | | |
|----|---|---|--|--|
| Q | The presentation of the final outturn figures and variations from budget allow the leadership team to make strategic financial decisions. | | | |
| Q1 | The authority's leadership team is provided with a suitable suite of reports on the authority's financial outturn and on significant variations from budget. The information in these reports is presented effectively. | H | <p>The presentation of the final outturn position to the Corporate Management Team and Executive compares the outturn to the revised budget and explains the reasons for any key variances from budget. The report sets out the impact of these variances on general balances and earmarked reserves and makes proposals for further contributions to/or from these.</p> <p>The report also sets out the impact of key variances on the MTFP/future years budgets and any mitigating action being taken.</p> | |
| Q2 | These reports are focused on information that is of interest and relevance to the leadership team. | H | These reports focus on material issues, which require action or awareness from the leadership team and therefore are appropriately focused. | |
| Q3 | The leadership team feels that the reports support it in making strategic financial decisions. | H | <p>The leadership team agreed that the reports support it in making strategic financial decisions.</p> <p>The reports are also reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> | |

Appendix 2 :CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021 analysis

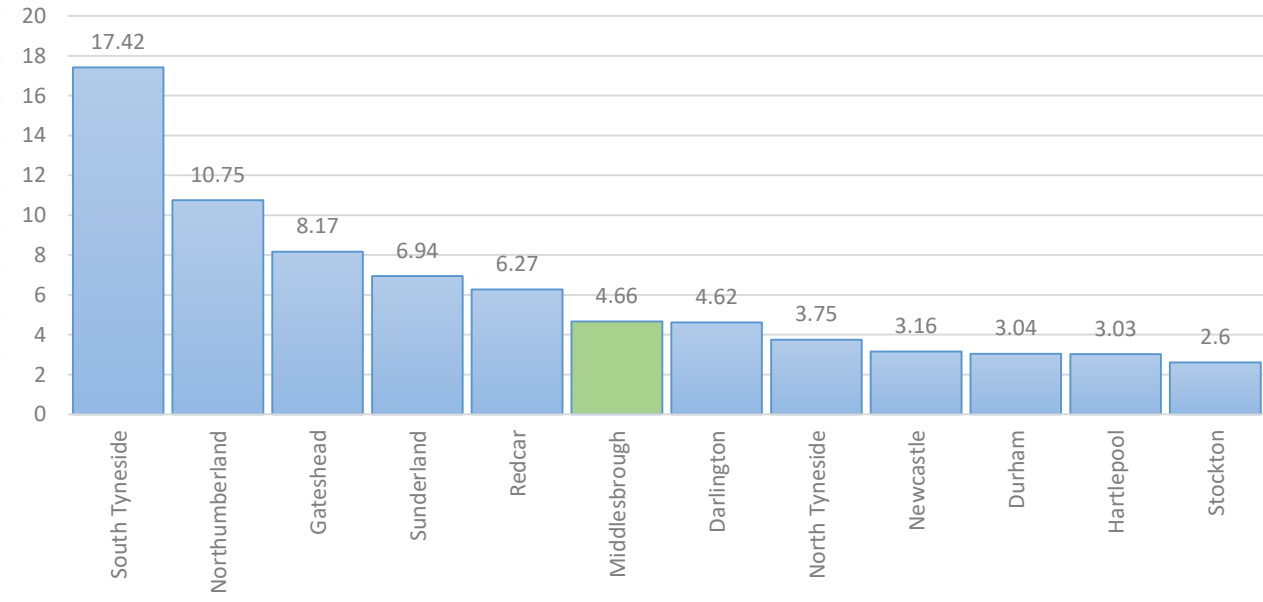
Interest Payable/ Net Revenue Expenditure ratio %

Ratio of Interest Payable and Net Revenue Expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



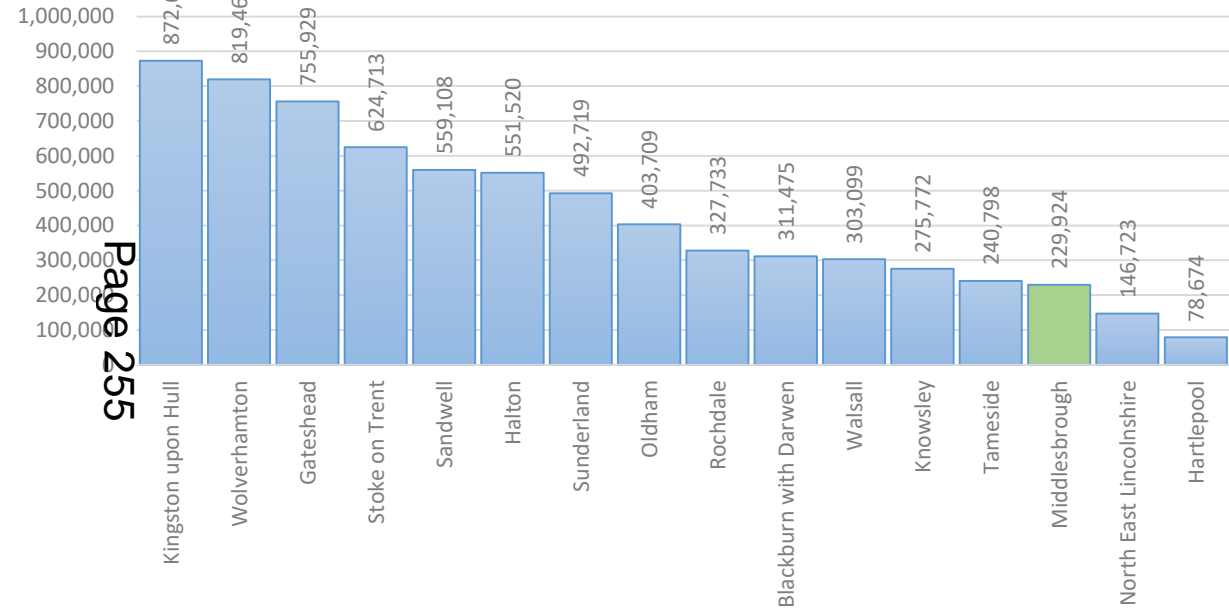
North East 12 Neighbours



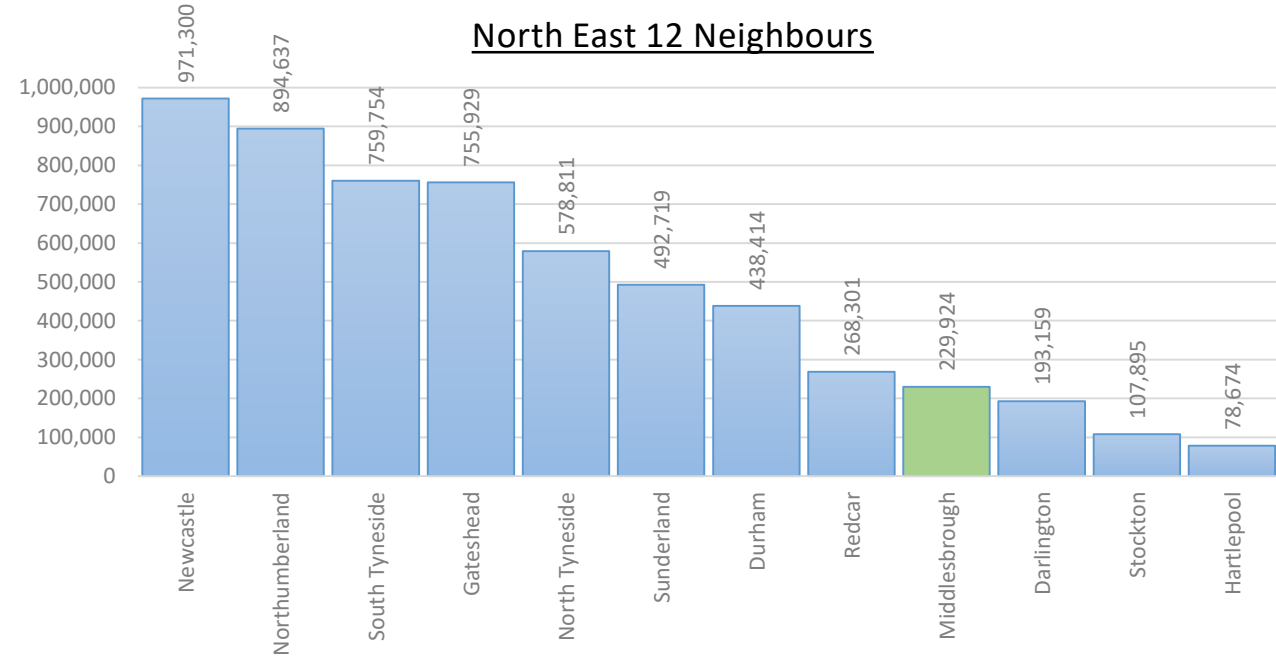
Gross External Debt £000

Compares gross external debt held by the council

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



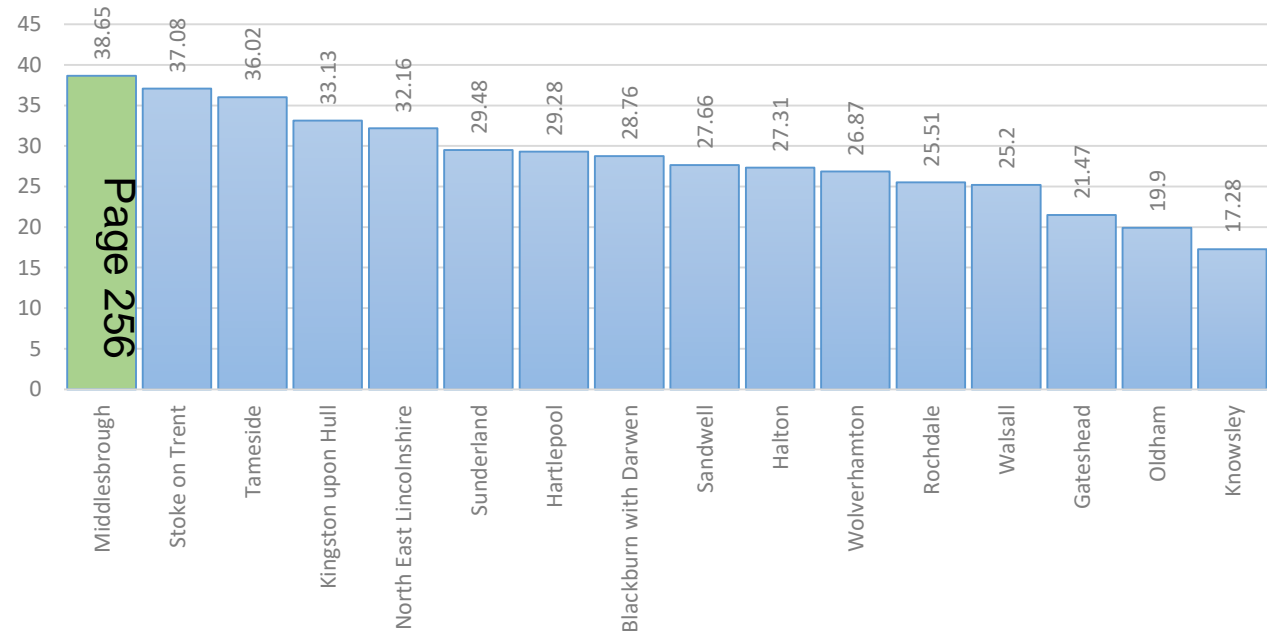
North East 12 Neighbours



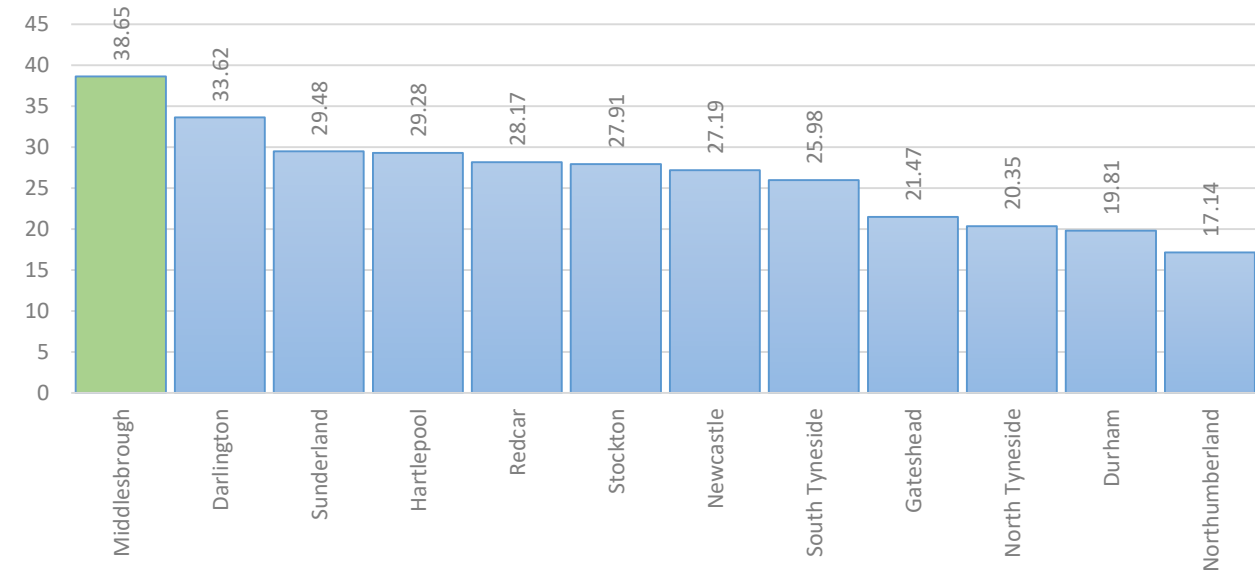
Childrens social care ratio %

Spending on children's social care to net revenue expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



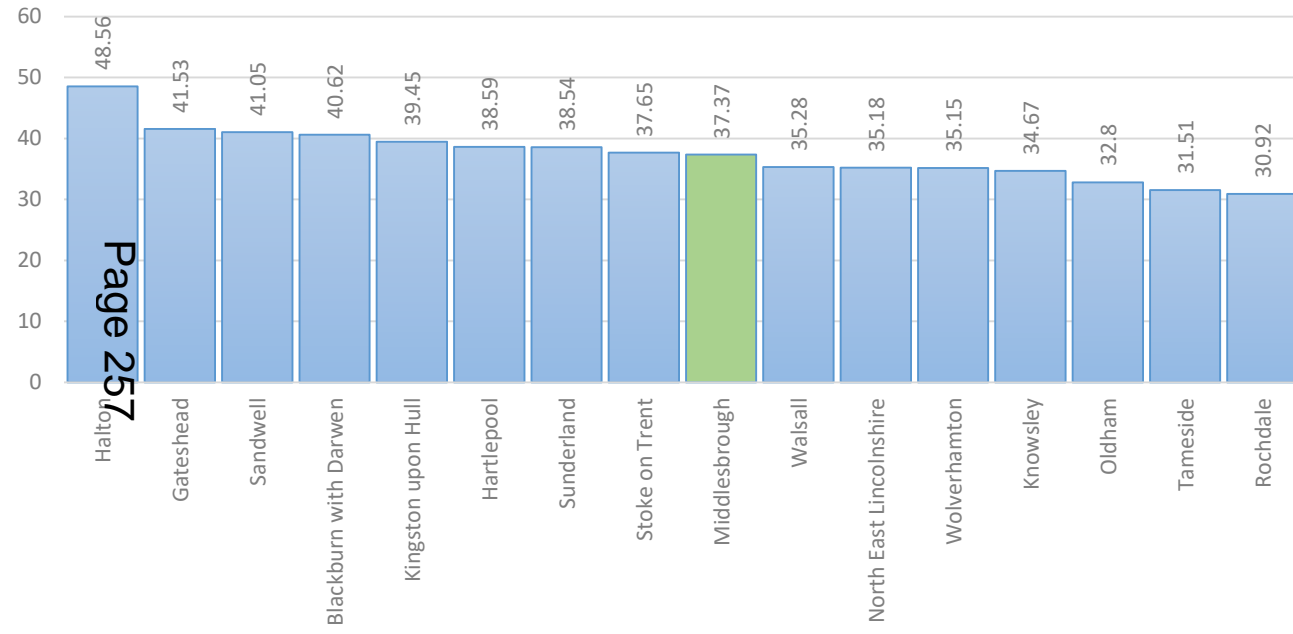
North East 12 Neighbours



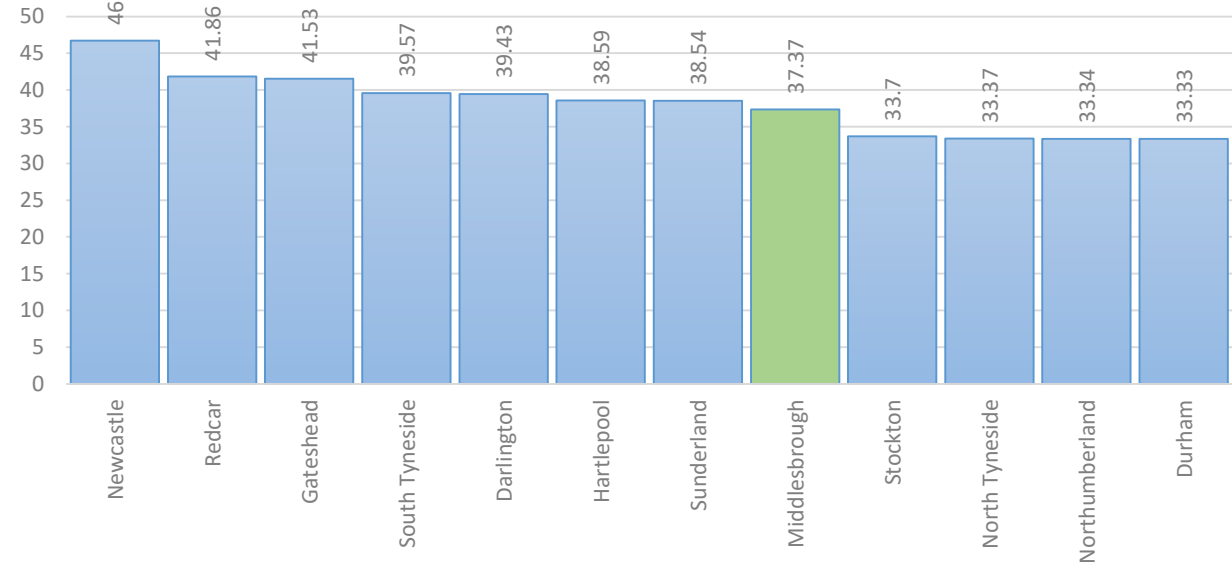
Adults social care ratio %

Spending on adult social care to net revenue expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



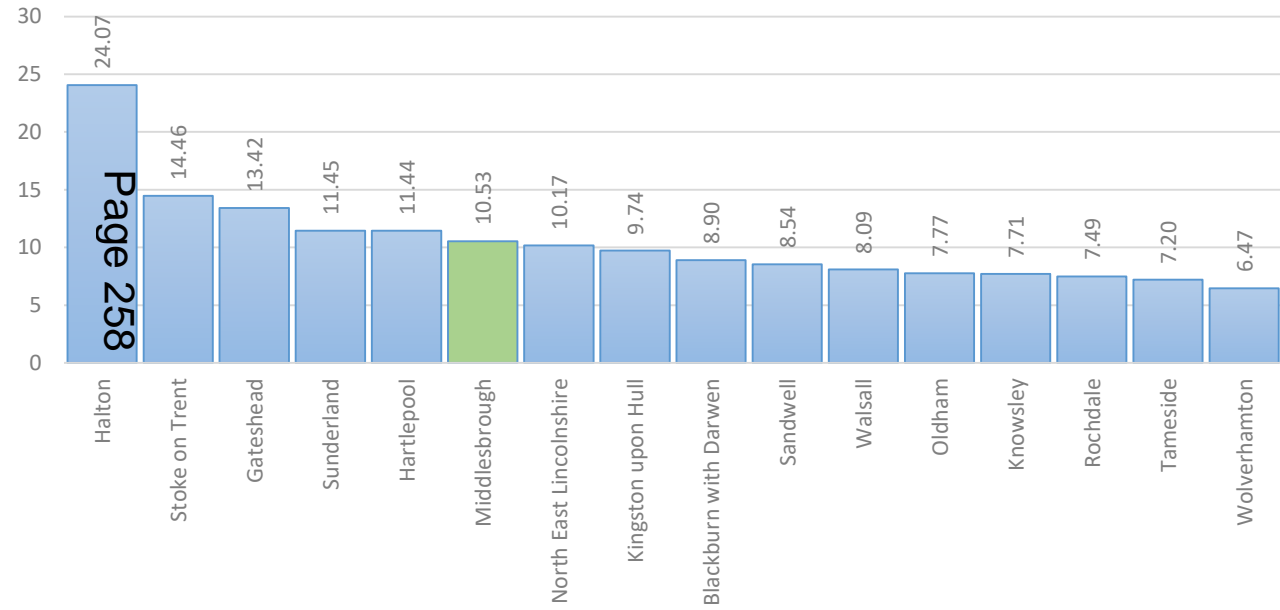
North East 12 Neighbours



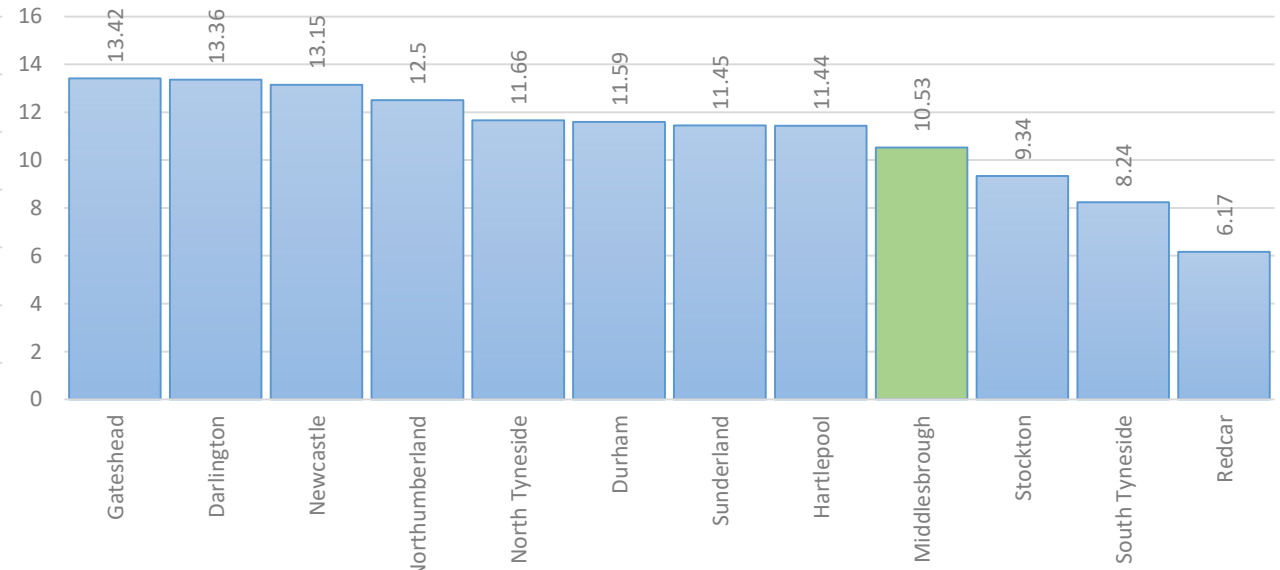
Fees & Charges to Service Expenditure Ratio %

Proportion of fees and charges against the council's total service expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



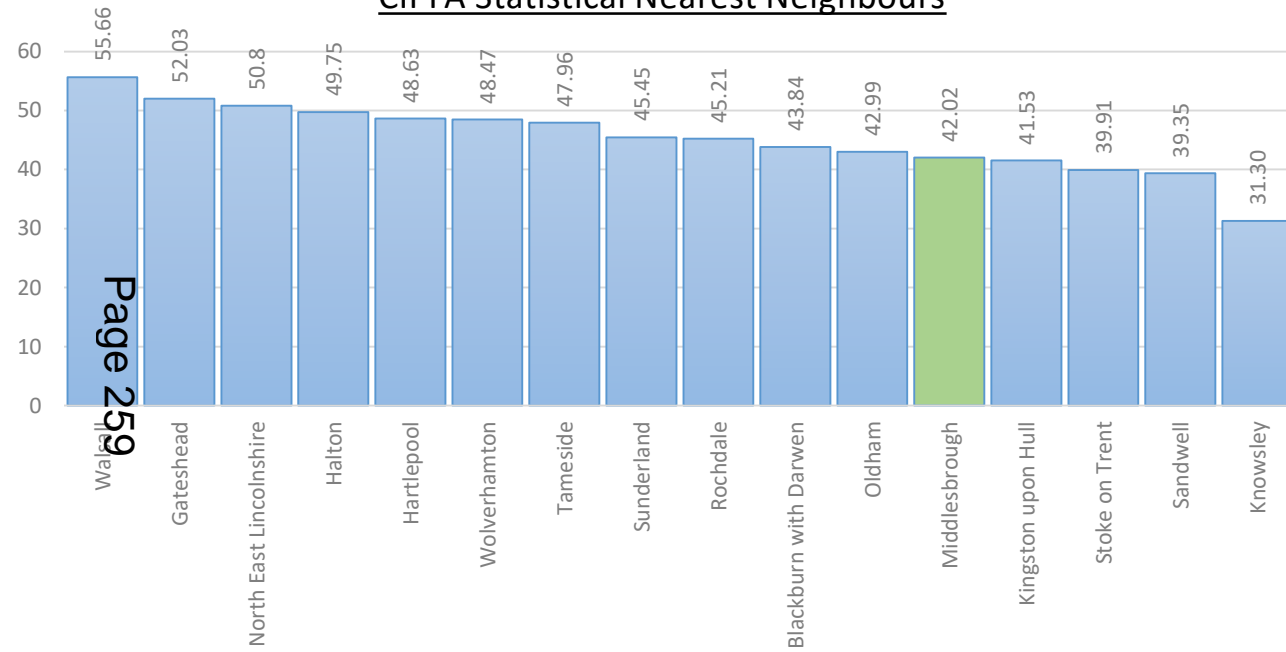
North East 12 Neighbours



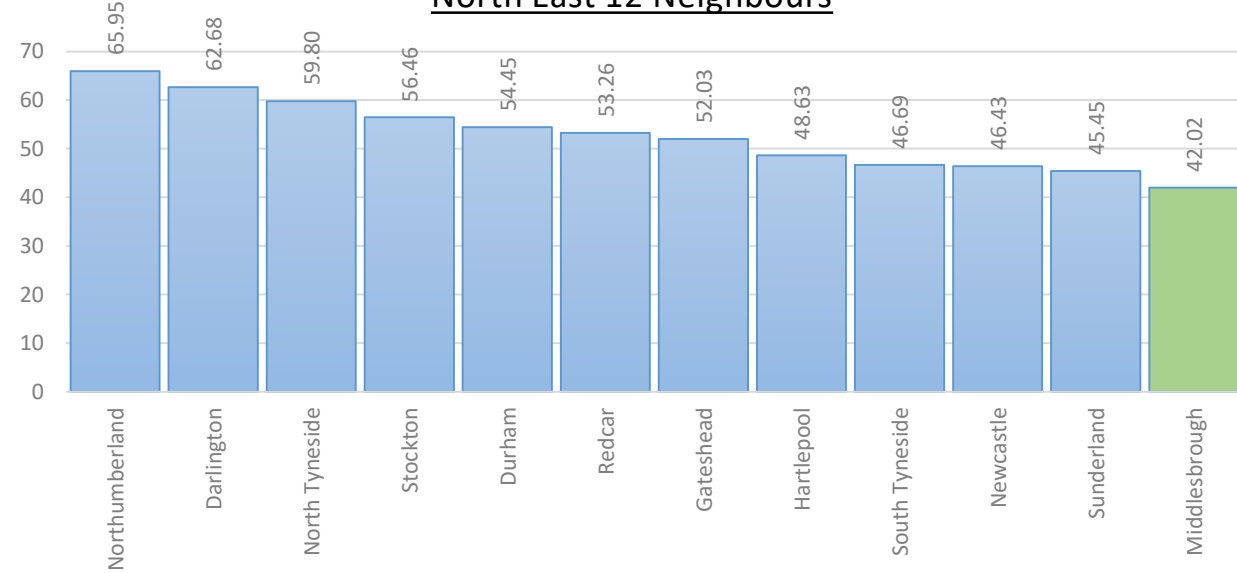
Council Tax Requirement / Net Revenue Expenditure %

Ratio of council tax as a proportion of net expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



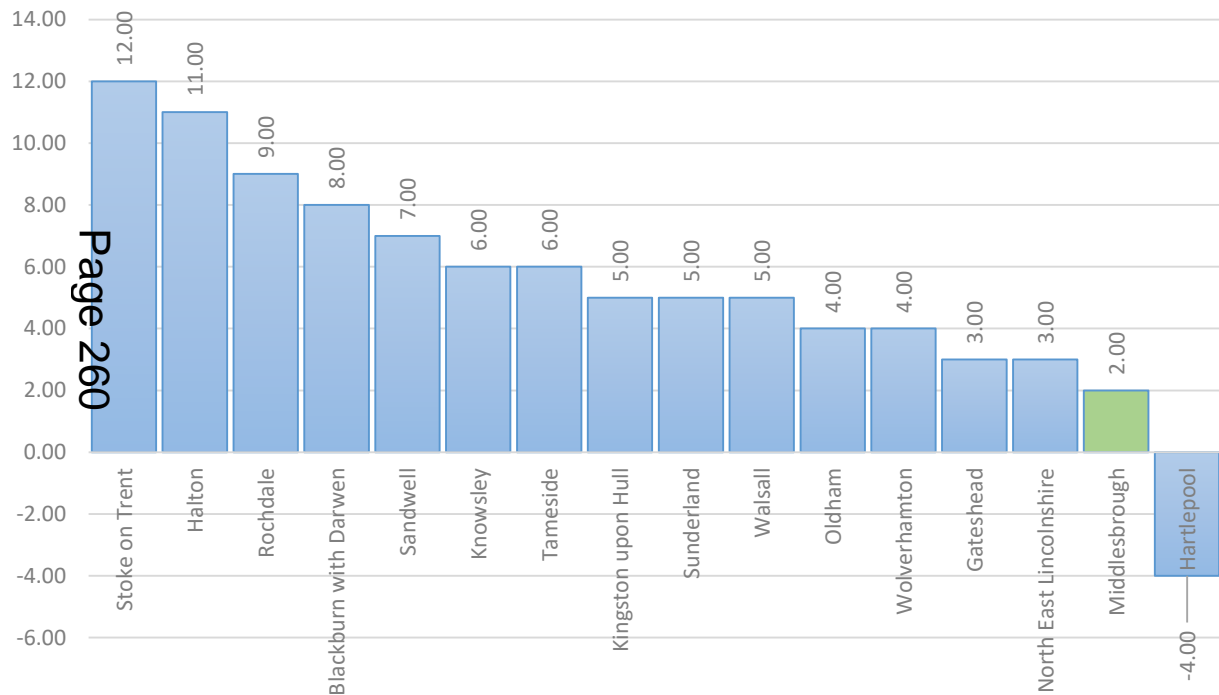
North East 12 Neighbours



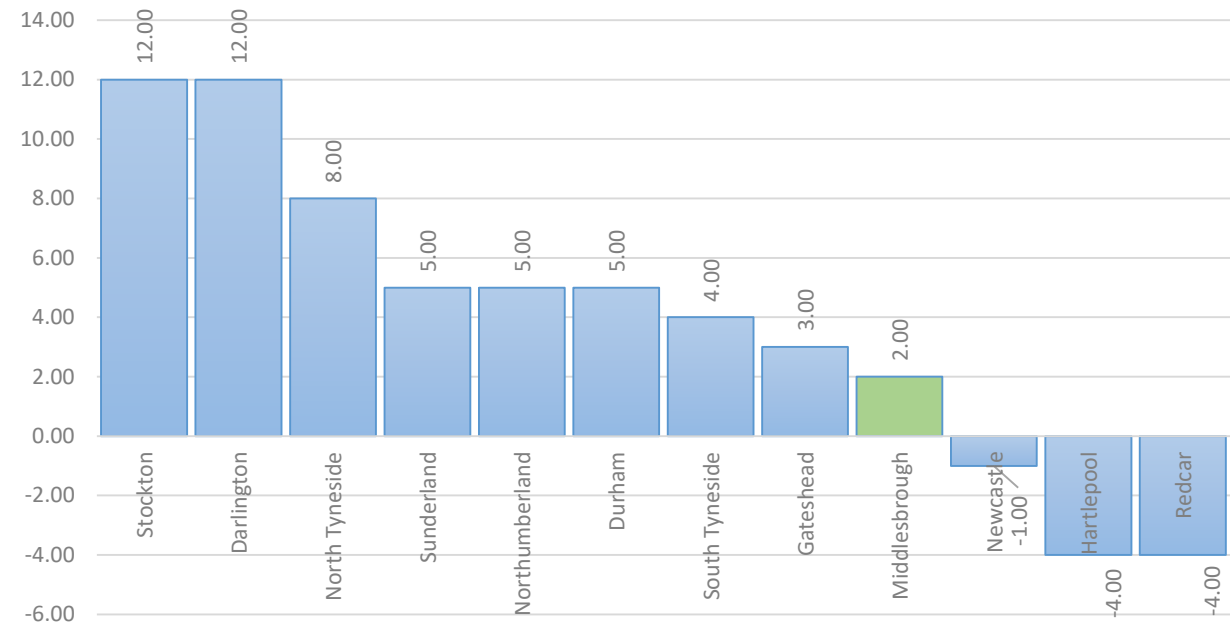
Growth Above Baseline %

Difference between the baseline funding level and retained rates income, over the baseline funding level

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



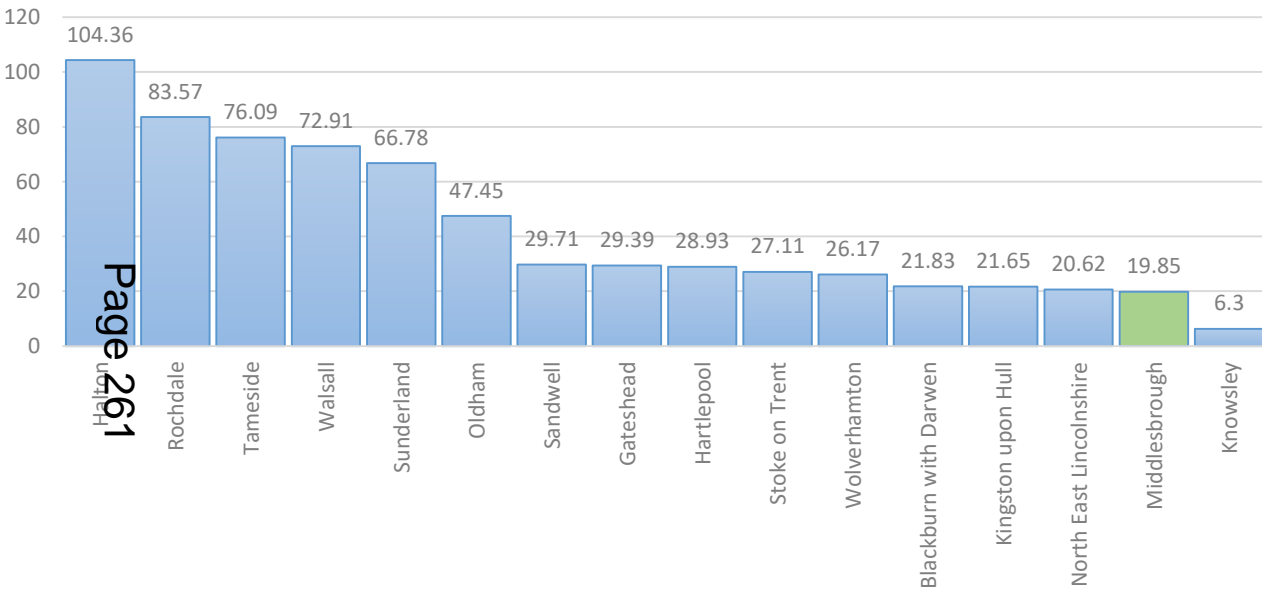
North East 12 Neighbours



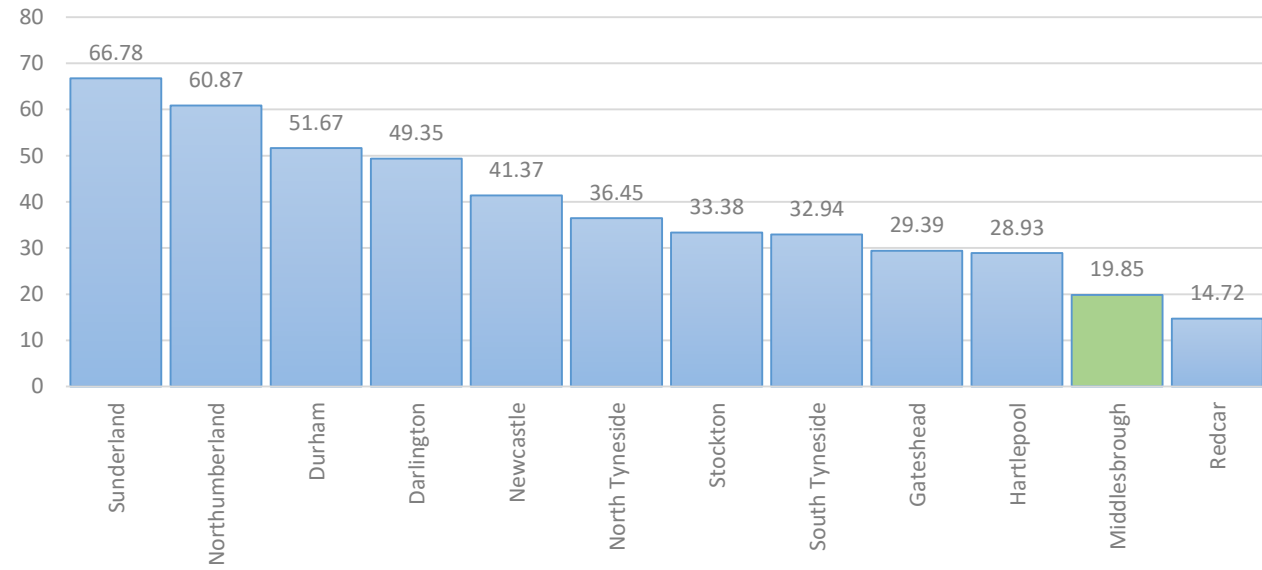
Level of reserves %

Ratio of current level of reserves (total useable excluding public health & schools) to the council's net revenue expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



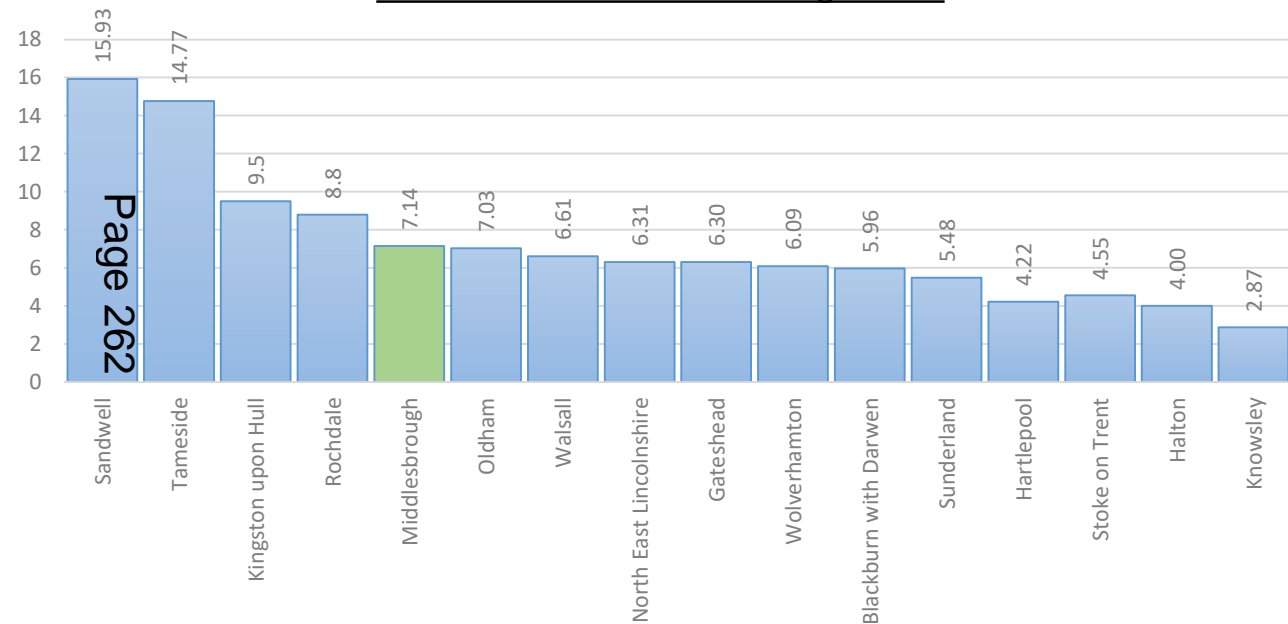
North East 12 Neighbours



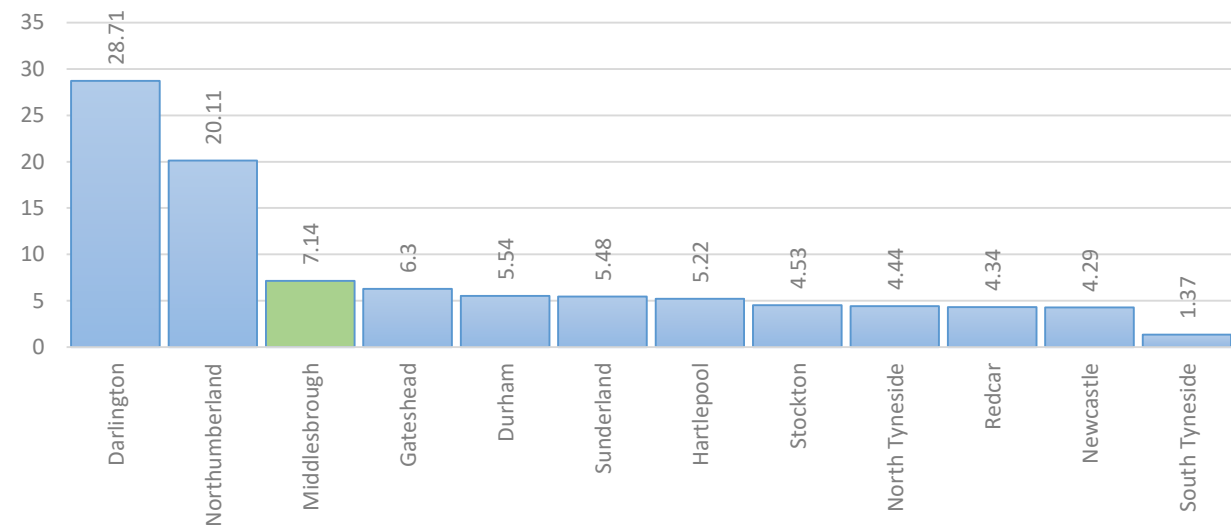
Unallocated Reserves %

Ratio of unallocated reserves to net revenue expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



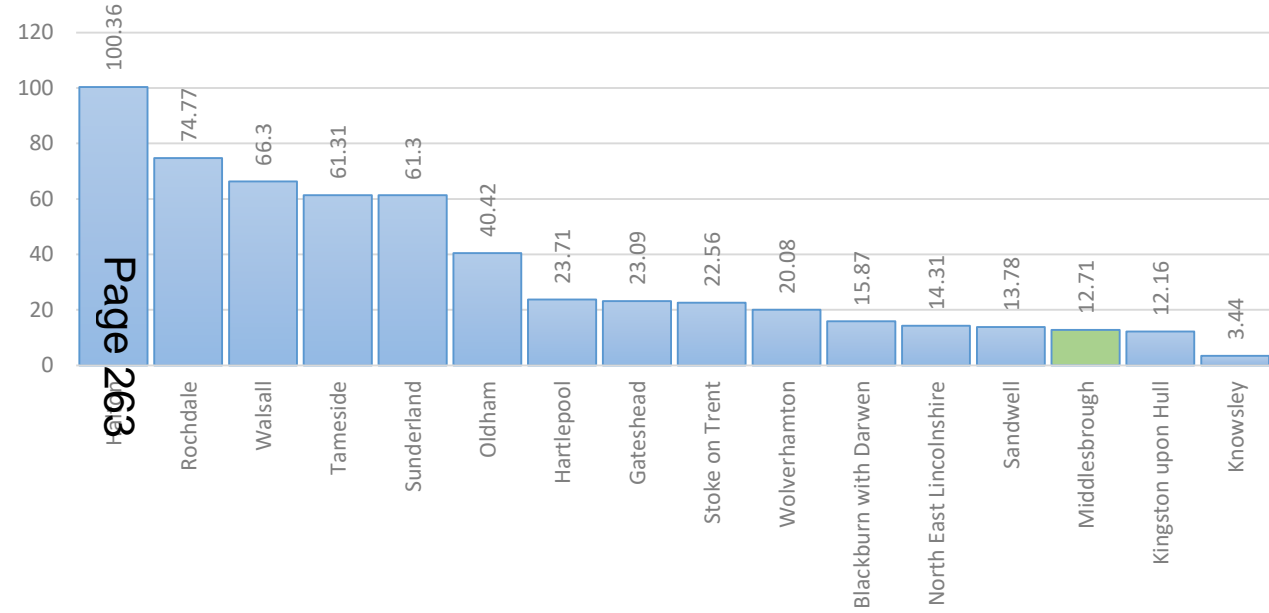
North East 12 Neighbours



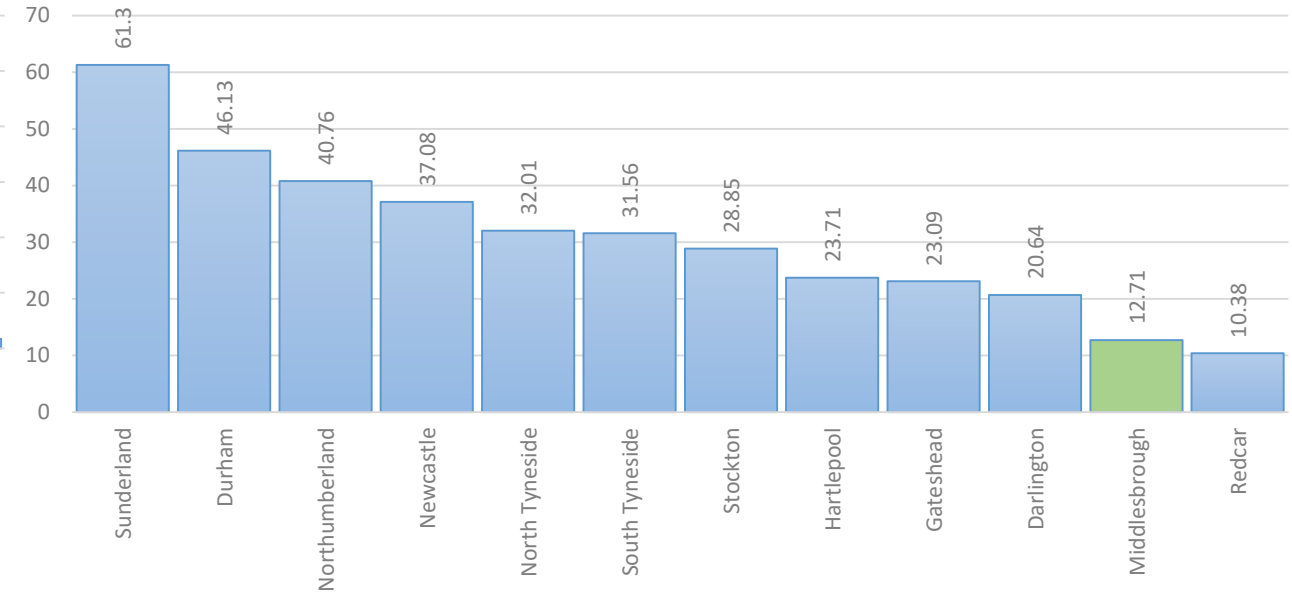
Earmarked Reserves %

Ratio of earmarked reserves (excluding public health and schools) to net revenue expenditure

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



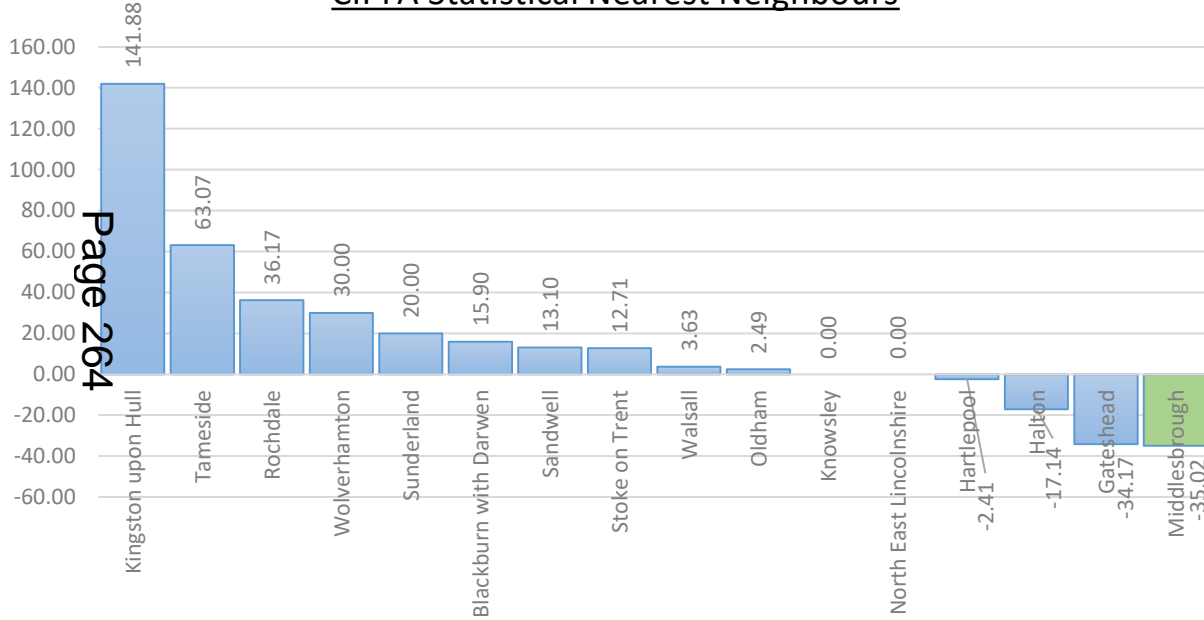
North East 12 Neighbours



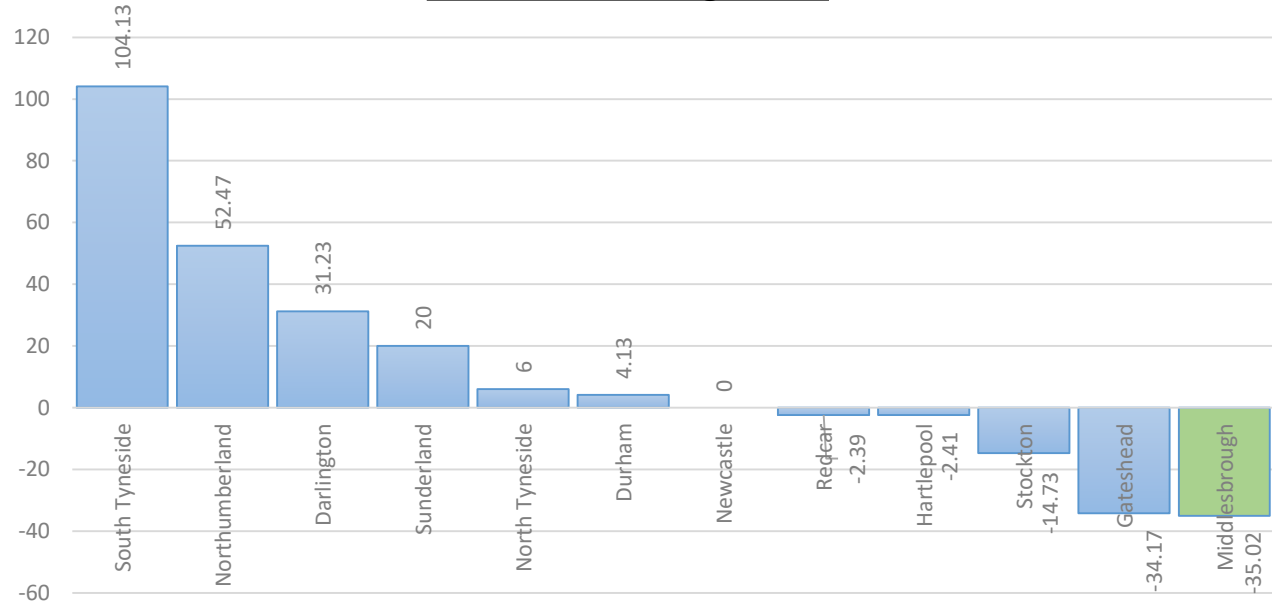
Changes in Unallocated Reserves %

Average percentage change in unallocated reserves over the past three years

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



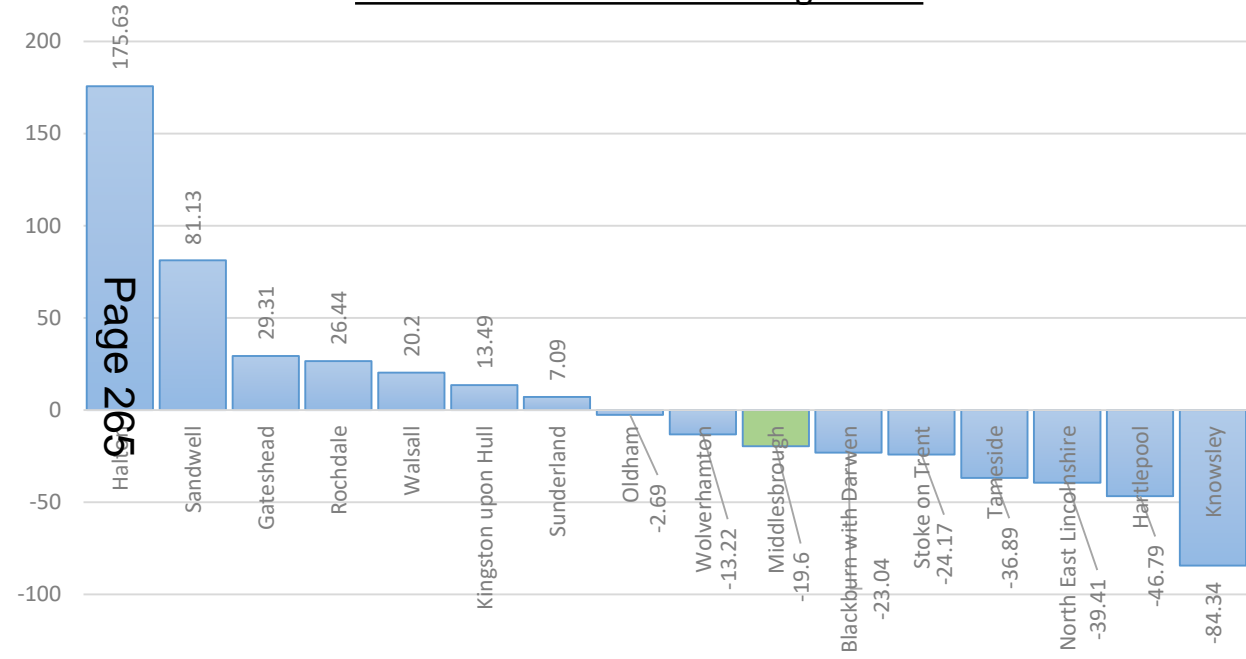
North East 12 Neighbours



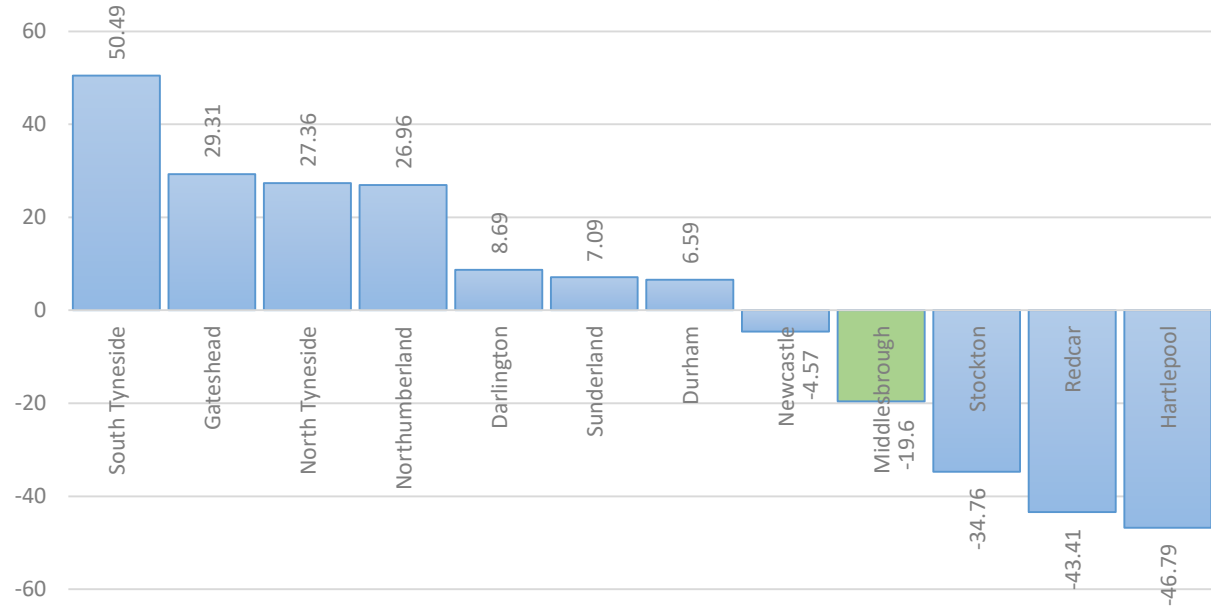
Change in Earmarked Reserves %

Average percentage change in earmarked reserves over the past three years

CIPFA Statistical Nearest Neighbours



North East 12 Neighbours



This page is intentionally left blank

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Report of: | Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance - Councillor Barrie Cooper Director of Finance - Ian Wright |
| Submitted to: | Executive - 13 July 2021 |
| Subject: | Land at St David's Way - Disposal [Part A] |

Summary

| |
|--|
| Proposed decision(s) |
| The following is asked of the Executive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) that the information contained in Part A of the report be noted; and b) that the decision be taken once all the financial or exempt information contained in Part B of the report has been considered. |

| Report for: | Key decision: | Confidential: | Is the report urgent?¹ |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Decision to dispose of land | Yes - exceeds the £150,000 threshold. | No | No. |

| Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan | | |
|--|---|---|
| People | Place | Business |
| The development of housing as proposed will contribute towards Middlesbrough's Housing Growth Programme and increase the quality and quantity of homes available to residents within the Borough | The development of the subject parcel of land will generate significant inward investment and bring a vacant and underused Council asset into far more positive future use. | The proposal to dispose of the subject parcel of land will generate a significant capital receipt for the Council and help underpin its Medium Term Financial Plan. |

| |
|-------------------------|
| Ward(s) affected |
| Kader & Acklam |

What is the purpose of this report?

1. The purpose of the report is to consider the proposal to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in land at St David's Way.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The proposal relates to the disposal of an asset deemed to be surplus at a value in excess of the £150,000 threshold.

Report Background

3. The subject parcel of land currently forms part of a much larger, and now defunct, secondary school site, held in two equal halves by the Council and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough.
4. Shown edged on the plan attached as Appendix A of this report, the subject parcel of land held by the Council measures @ 7.51 Acres [3.04 Hectares] – the adjoining parcel held by the RC Diocese measures @ 7.32 Acres [2.96 Hectares] and is attached at Appendix B of this report.
5. The land held in Council ownership comprises former playing fields that previously served the now cleared school, and which as well as being overgrown through lack of use, currently sit vacant, not being held by the Council for any identified operational purpose. Irregular in shape, the site comprises an open and vacant area of land, generally flat, and with established boundary tree and hedgerow cover.
6. It is proposed that access to the subject parcel of land will be taken via the existing highways arrangement at St David's Way, with this roadway being brought up to adoptable standard through the planning process.
7. An Asset Disposal Business Case confirming the status of the subject land as surplus to operational Council requirements is attached as Appendix D to Part B of this report.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

8. That following is asked of the Executive:
 - a) that the information contained in Part A of the report be noted; and
 - b) that the decision be taken once all the financial or exempt information contained in Part B of the report has been considered.

Why is this being recommended?

9. In order to meet the Council's requirements to generate capital receipts, increase annually recurring revenue streams and to bring the subject parcel of land into a far more beneficial use in the future.
10. In order to support the delivery of housing numbers on sites identified by the Council for residential development purposes within the Local Plan Framework.

11. The disposal of the subject parcel of land as proposed supports delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

Re-use for operational purposes

12. No Council operational service requirement has been identified.

Other uses

13. Although the site is capable of being used for other purposes, the future use of the site for residential development, as being proposed by the Buyer, is preferred.

Do nothing

14. The property would remain in its present state.
15. Whilst the subject land would be retained for potential Council use in the future, the liability and responsibility for maintaining and holding the property would remain with the Council in the interim.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

16. No specific legal issues have been created as a result of the proposal.
17. The property would be disposed of freehold with vacant possession in accordance with standing disposal protocol and the formal Memorandum of Understanding signed by the respective parties as landowners on 12th December 2011.

Financial

18. The Council would receive a capital receipt plus fees without the need to incur any further marketing costs.
19. The disposal of the site would remove the Council's liability for any future maintenance costs while it remains unused.

The Mayor's Vision For Middlesbrough

20. The decision aligns to the Mayor's priorities around people, place & business by working in conjunction with third party organisations and individuals, such as the Buyer, to deliver both physical and social regeneration.

Policy Framework

21. The proposals do not require any change to the Council's existing policy framework.

Ward

22. The property is situated in the Kader & Acklam Wards and the respective Ward Members have been consulted.
23. Members will be further consulted on any subsequent proposal made as part of the normal planning process.

Equality and Diversity

24. A Level 1 (Initial Screening) Impact Assessment (IA) accompanies this report attached at Appendix C.
25. The impact assessment identified that the proposal would have a positive impact on the local community and would not represent a concern to equal rights, disability discrimination or the impingement of human rights.
26. The Council's development control planning process would also serve to ensure that any future use proposed would be appropriate for the local area.

Risk

27. The Council must satisfy the requirements of the Secretary of State in disposing of the subject parcel of land.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

28. Subject to Executive Committee approval, the Council moves to proceed with the disposal of the subject property as detailed in Part B of this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Site Plan – Land at St David's Way [Middlesbrough Council]
Appendix B – Site Plan – Land at St David's Way [RC Diocese of Middlesbrough]
Appendix C – Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

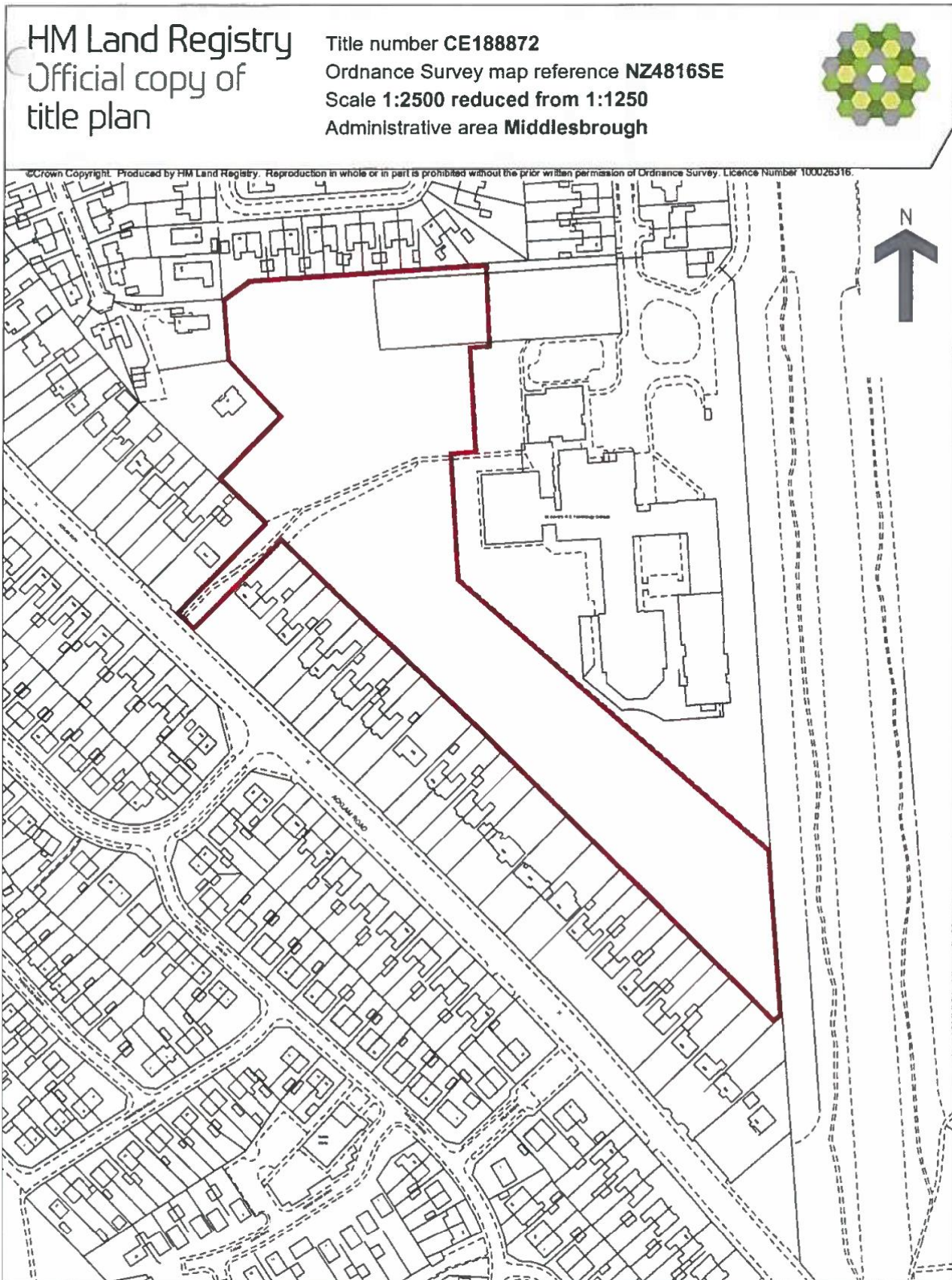
Background papers

No further reports were used in the preparation of this report:

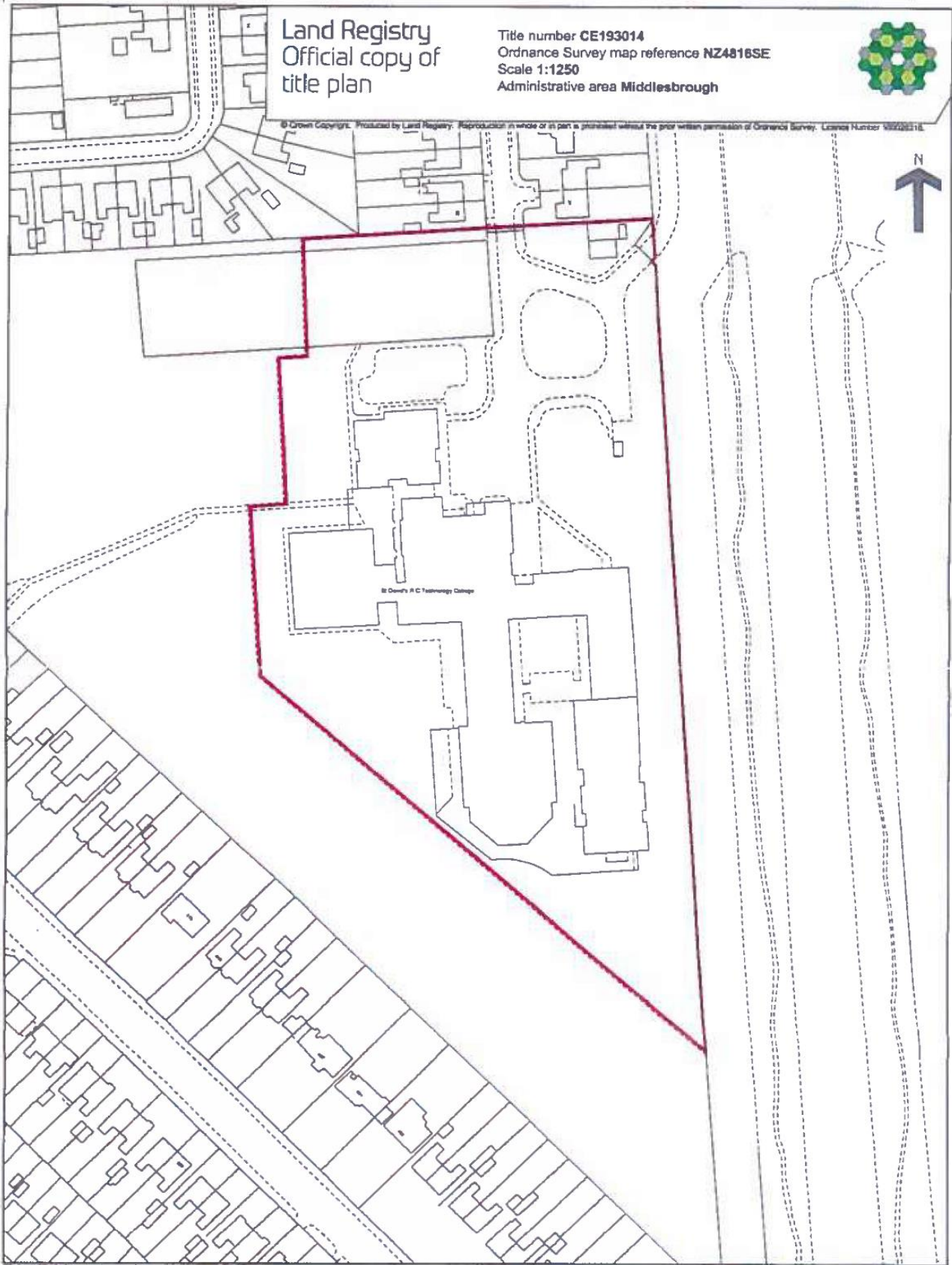
| Body | Report title | Date |
|-------------|---------------------|-------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A |

Contact: David Velemir, Valuation & Estates Manager
Email: david_velemir@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Site Plan - Land at St David's Way [Middlesbrough Council Land Ownership]



Site Plan - Land at St David's Way [RC Diocese Land Ownership]



This official copy issued on 11 January 2007 shows the state of this title plan on 11 January 2007 at 15:30:45. It is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original (s.67 Land Registration Act 2002).
 This title plan shows the general position, not the exact line, of the boundaries. It may be subject to distortions in scale. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground. See Land Registry Public Guide 7 - Title Plans.
 This title is dealt with by Land Registry, Durham (Southfield) Office.

Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Subject of assessment: | Disposal of the Council's freehold interest in land at the former St David's RC School, St David's Way, Acklam Middlesbrough TS5 7EY | | | |
| Coverage: | Service specific | | | |
| This is a decision relating to: | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Function |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure | <input type="checkbox"/> Programme | <input type="checkbox"/> Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Review |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) Asset management | | |
| It is a: | New approach: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Revision of an existing approach: | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| It is driven by: | Legislation: | <input type="checkbox"/> | Local or corporate requirements: | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Description: | <p>Key aims, objectives and activities To assess the impact of the proposal to dispose of Council property deemed to be surplus to operational requirements.</p> <p>Statutory drivers (set out exact reference) The Local Government Act 1972 Section 123, as amended by the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 Section 118 Schedule 23 Part V.</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach There are no Council staff, or services that will be affected by the disposal proposed. Future use will be for the purposes of redevelopment as a place of worship.</p> <p>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) The Council, buyer and the local community.</p> <p>Intended outcomes The proposed disposal of the subject site would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate a significant capital receipt for the Council; • create new jobs within the borough; • remove the Council's liability for future holding costs, responsibility for, and maintenance of the land, and • help stimulate further development in the local area, and bring the subject site back into a more positive future use. | | | |
| Live date: | Tuesday 13 th July 2021 | | | |
| Lifespan: | Not applicable. | | | |
| Date of next review: | Not applicable. | | | |

| Screening questions | Response | | | Evidence |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| | No | Yes | Uncertain | |
| <p>Human Rights</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>It is considered that the disposal of the subject property will not impact negatively on individual human rights. The proposal represents a significant and positive enhancement for both the locality and the wider area, far outweighing the transfer of the land from the Council's Estate holding. This assessment has been made taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fact that the property is vacant, and that no Council staff or services will be affected by the disposal as proposed; the new jobs that future re-use of the property will create, and the potential for this proposal to stimulate further economic development within the borough. |
| <p>Equality</p> <p>Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <p>The Council has a duty to consider the impact of the proposed decision on relevant protected characteristics, to ensure it has due regard to the public sector equality duty. Therefore, in the process of taking decisions, the duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>Consideration of this duty has shaped the proposals.</p> <p>The site is vacant and fulfils no specific function, purpose or service. In accordance with this position, access to and delivery of Council services will not be affected by the proposed disposal.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on a group, or individuals, because they hold a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes engagement to date with relevant Council departmental teams and the proposed purchaser, together with analysis of the terms and conditions that will be incorporated within the proposed sale.</p> |

*Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Community cohesion Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*</p> | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | <p>There are no concerns that the proposal could have an adverse impact on community cohesion.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this impact assessment includes the potential for bringing this property back into a far more beneficial future use than that being provided under the current ownership and management arrangement.</p> |
| <p>The Mayor's Vision For Middlesbrough Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for Middlesbrough?*</p> | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | <p>The proposed disposal aligns with the Mayor's priorities around people, place & business by working in conjunction with third party organisations and individuals, such as the Buyer, to deliver both physical and social regeneration.</p> |
| <p>Organisational management / Change Programme Could the decision impact negatively on organisational management or the transformation of the Council's services as set out in its Change Programme?*</p> | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | <p>No tangible relationship between the disposal of the property and the organisational management of the Council, or the transformation of its services (as set out in its Change programme), have been identified.</p> |
| <p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed. ➤ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed. | | | | |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Assessment completed by: | David Velemir | Head of Service: | Louise Grabham |
| Date: | 14/05/2021 | Date: | 14/05/2021 |

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank