

EXECUTIVE

Date: Tuesday 11th January, 2022
Time: 1.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
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4. Digital Inclusion Strategy 9 - 32

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

5. Final Report of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel - Cultural Events in Middlesbrough: Their Impact and Future - Service Response 33 - 60
6. Final Report of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel - Middlesbrough Regeneration Post COVID-19 - Service Response 61 - 102

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

7. Corporate Crisis Policy 103 - 126
8. Elected Members Small Scheme Allocation 2021/22 127 - 130
9. Whorlton Road - Disposal [Part A] 131 - 140
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 - Whorlton Road - Disposal [Part B]**
3

141 - 148

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Monday 3 January 2022

MEMBERSHIP

Mayor A Preston (Chair) and Councillors B Cooper, TA Grainge, S Hill, L Mason, 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 Tuesday 7 December 2021.

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

OFFICERS: R Brown, G Field, A Hoy, T Parkinson, S Reynolds and I Wright

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor E Polano

21/78 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

21/79 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 9 November 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

21/80 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE UPDATE: QUARTER TWO 2021/22**

The Mayor and Lead Member for Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Chief Executive submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to advise the Executive of corporate performance at the end of Quarter Two 2021/22 and, where appropriate, seek approval of any changes.

The Council's performance overall at the end of Quarter Two had been largely positive, with expected performance standards as set out in the Council's risk appetite being achieved and further improving from the Quarter One reported position in the majority of areas.

In terms of progress in delivering Executive actions, at Quarter Two, 59 of 65 live actions (91%) were reported as on target to be delivered by the agreed timescales, down from the 98% reported at Quarter One, but remaining above the 90% standard of achievement of actions. Four proposed amendments for Executive approval were set out at Appendix 1.

The Strategic Plan for 2021-24, set out nine strategic priorities for the period that were supported by an associated set of outcome measures and a workplan, which planned to see delivery of sustained improvement, up to and beyond 2024.

In terms of outcomes, those were reported at paragraphs 12 to 16 of the submitted report. At the end of Quarter Two, six of 24 Strategic Plan outcomes were either improving or static against the Quarter One position, with three worsening.

In terms of workplan activity, that was reported at paragraphs 17 to 20. At the end of Quarter Two, performance against the Strategic Plan workplan was set out below paragraph 18, exceeding the corporate target of 90%. Whilst there had been no Red / off-track workplan initiatives at the end of Quarter Two, following review at Directorate Dashboard Performance Reviews, the two set out below paragraph 20 of the submitted report were identified as requiring revised dates in order to avoid future slippage.

Issues that impact on the risk profile of the Council were reflected within the Council's Strategic Risk Register (SRR), which was reviewed in the quarter in line with the Council's policy and was set out at Appendix 3. The total number of risks on the SRR reduced to 30 from 35 at Quarter One, comprising 19 high risks and 11 medium risks.

Directorates were accountable for a number of Directorate-specific actions each year to ensure ongoing compliance with legal duties and best practice and that business change was well managed. Directorate Priorities for 2021/22 were set out at Appendix 4. At the end of Quarter Two, 98% of Directorate Priorities were rated either Green or Amber (i.e. some milestone slippage but still expected to be delivered in-year), in line with the expected

standard of 90%. Performance in delivering mitigating actions associated with high or medium risks on Directorate Risk Registers was 94%, above the expected performance standard of 90%.

Progress in delivering programmes and projects was highlighted at paragraph 31 and progress in other corporate performance matters was detailed at paragraphs 32 and 33 of the submitted report.

ORDERED

- 1. That the proposed amendments to Executive actions, outlined at Appendix 1, be approved.**
- 2. That the progress in implementing the Strategic Plan 2021-24 at Quarter One 2021/22 (Appendix 2) be noted and the revised deadlines for the action at paragraph 20 be approved.**
- 3. That in light of the position outlined in the report, the Council's updated Strategic Risk Register at Appendix 3 be noted.**
- 4. That the progress in implementing 2021/22 Directorate priorities, set out at Appendix 4, be noted.**

REASON

To enable the effective management of performance and risk in line with the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.

21/81

ANNUAL UPDATE: STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

The Executive Member for Education and the Director for Education and Partnerships submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to provide information on the work of Middlesbrough's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Local authorities had a duty to establish a SACRE to advise them on matters relating to collective worship in community schools and on religious education. Religious education was a statutory part of the basic curriculum for all pupils.

In respect of Middlesbrough's SACRE, the submitted report included information on:

- the local picture (see paragraphs 6 to 10 of the submitted report);
- membership (see paragraph 11);
- funding (see paragraphs 12 and 13);
- key developments (see paragraphs 14 and 15);
- professional development (see paragraphs 16 and 17); and
- next steps/key areas of development (see paragraphs 18 and 26).

ORDERED

That the report, providing an update on progress within Middlesbrough, be noted.

21/82

VIRTUAL SCHOOL PEER REVIEW

The Executive Member for Education and the Director of Education and Partnerships submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to advise that Children's Services had commissioned a peer review, from the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH), as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement.

All local authorities were required to have a Virtual School Head in place. A Virtual School was the commonly used term for an individual or team employed by local authorities to support and champion the learning needs of looked after children (CLA) in schools.

A system of peer review had been developed by the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH) to help Virtual Schools improve and develop. The Council was keen to

regularly access such support to independently assess its position in relation to services provided to support children.

As part of regular engagement with the NAVSH, and in line with the Council's commitment to ensuring the sector-led improvement opportunities provided by the NAVSH were used to their full potential, Children's Services had requested the NAVSH to undertake a peer review of the Virtual School.

The NAVSH planned to assess the Council against four core themes, which were detailed at paragraph 5 of the submitted report.

OPTIONS

The Council could have chosen not to access the support and undertake an in-house review or commission external specialists to deliver the review. Those options were not recommended because it was healthy to seek external views from external peers, who were experienced in the running of Virtual Schools. Sourcing alternative specialists would have been a significant cost, while the cost for the NAVSH peer review was kept low to only cover the costs of those delivering the review.

ORDERED

That the proposed peer review be endorsed.

REASON

Utilising the NAVSH resource provided an opportunity to gather views from a range of experienced Virtual School Heads from local authorities in other parts of the country.

21/83

CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2022/23

The Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to set the council tax base for the financial year 2022/2023 by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2022.

The starting point for the calculation of the 2022/2023 tax base was the number of dwellings on the Valuation List, provided by the Government's Valuation Office. The figures were also adjusted for exempt dwellings and for dwellings subject to disabled reduction.

The number of chargeable dwellings in each band was further adjusted for discounts, exemptions, premiums and council tax support.

The resultant figure (line 1 of Appendix A) was the total equivalent number of dwellings which were then converted using ratios (in line 2) into the number of Band D equivalents (line 3), specified in the 1992 Act. For 2022/2023, the equivalent number of Band D properties was calculated at 36,467.7.

The council tax base was finally determined by multiplying the sum of the Band D equivalents by the Local Authority's estimated collection rate, which had been assumed at 96.6% for 2022/2023. That was the estimate of the percentage of the 2022/2023 Council Tax set which would be collected in total, and not the expected in year collection rate in 2022/2023. The rate used was re-considered each year and the rate of 96.6% used for 2022/2023 remained the same assumed collection rate as that which was used for 2021/2022, to reflect the continuing effects of Covid-19. The resulting council tax base for 2022/2023 for the whole of Middlesbrough (Appendix A) was 35,228, rounded to a whole number.

Since 2013/14, the Council's Housing Growth Strategy had delivered an increase in the council tax base of 5,057 Band D Equivalent properties, an increase of approximately 16.8%. The cumulative effect was approximately £9.1 million and reduced the need to make further annual savings within Council services by that amount.

The regulations also required a council tax base to be calculated for parishes, and similar calculations had been made for the parishes of Nunthorpe (Appendix B) and Stainton &

Thornton (Appendix C). The council tax bases for 2022/2023 were 2,168 and 1,240 respectively, rounded to whole numbers.

The billing authority was required to notify the major precepting authorities (Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner and Cleveland Fire Authority) of its council tax base within seven days of making the calculation, or no later than 31st January 2022.

OPTIONS

Not applicable, as the Council had no option but to calculate a council tax base as it was a statutory requirement.

ORDERED

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That the council tax base for 2022/2023, as 35,228, be endorsed.
3. That the 2,168 and 1,240, as the council tax bases for the parishes of Nunthorpe and Stainton & Thornton respectively for 2022/2023, be endorsed.
4. That the report be presented to Council on 22 December 2021, and that following approval the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Cleveland Fire Authority and the Parish Councils be notified of the 2022/2023 council tax base.

REASON

The recommendations were supported by the following reasons:

1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 required a billing authority to calculate its council tax base for each financial year.
2. The method of calculation was specified in the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, which required the calculation to be approved before 31 January in the year proceeding the relevant financial year.

21/84

CORPORATE DEBT WRITE OFF POLICY

The Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to provide information on a new policy that aimed to provide a corporate approach to the writing off of bad and irrecoverable debts in a fair and timely manner, whilst seeking to maximise the opportunity for collection thereby minimising the need for write off.

All service areas were required to follow the policy to allow the Council to operate a consistent approach to debt write off, whilst having due regard to the customer's ability to pay.

Whilst some parts of debt write off were governed by particular legislative requirements such as Council Tax, Business Rates, Adult Social Care Debt, etc, wherever possible the overall principle of debt write off should be efficient and effective, always giving consideration to the financial impact on the Council when debt was written off.

This policy planned to underpin any specific recovery strategies and would be applied across all directorates.

The new policy planned to also support cross directorate communication where a shared customer base existed. It was envisaged that the approach would work within Data Protection legislation, and should be considered at a corporate level to reduce multiple officer engagements across directorates with the same resident and/or business base.

The general principles adopted in the policy were detailed at paragraph 12 of the submitted report. The full Corporate Debt Write Off Policy was included at Appendix A.

ORDERED

1. That the Corporate Debt Write Off Policy be noted and endorsed.
2. That the policy be referred to full Council to amend the Budget Policy

Framework and the officer scheme of delegation.

- 3. That delegated authority be provided to the Section 151 Officer to approve any future modifications to the policy.**

REASON

The policy planned to allow Middlesbrough Council to provide a comprehensive framework for debt write off which was consistent across service areas / various types of debt. It also established a disciplined approach across the Council for the writing off of those debts that were recoverable.

21/85

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE - TRANSFER OF FREEHOLD

The Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report for the Executive's consideration. The purpose of the report was to present the proposal to transfer the Council's freehold interest of the International Centre to a community organisation.

In 2020, the Council had granted a license for a community interest company, The Other Perspective, to take occupation in the International Centre. Its location was central to assisting the organisation to serve the local community. The community interest company had also previously requested consideration for a community asset transfer of the building.

The International Centre itself was in a very poor state of repair. Currently, the community interest company could only occupy a small number of rooms due to the poor condition within the centre. The rooms in occupation were primarily the main downstairs hall and a small number of offices on the ground floor. The remaining majority of the property had significant issues with water ingress, damp, lack of reliable heating, broken windows, roof leaks, plaster damage amongst other concerns.

A business plan had been submitted by The Other Perspective outlining the initiatives to be delivered from the International Centre, those were supported by the Council and planned to strengthen the community development offer within the town. The initiatives included local participation, and incorporated a series of projects through social enterprise to support the development of employment opportunities, training and enterprise. In order to successfully deliver the vision, the International Centre was integral. It was therefore proposed that, rather than simply regenerate, the Council transfer its freehold interest to allow the community interest company to bid for funding to both regenerate and redevelop the asset to meet the needs of the proposals put forward.

An Asset Disposal Business Case, confirming the status of the subject property as surplus to operational Council requirements, was attached as Appendix B.

OPTIONS

Re-use for operational purposes

No Council operational service requirement had been identified. The Council would have required the asset for polling station purposes, however, it had been agreed that fell within the remit of community benefit and the building would be made available to the Council for that purpose.

Community Asset Transfer on 25 year lease

That remained a viable option, but not the desirable one. The Community Asset transfer on a long-term lease would not have offered the same attraction to external funders as the transfer of the freehold interest. Upon transfer of the freehold interest the Council would place a covenant on the property which would require that the asset may only be used for community use, which would prevent any further re-sale or redevelopment for profit. In addition, there would be a requirement that if funds were not secured within a three year period for the regeneration of the asset the organisation would be required to transfer it back to the Council.

Council Complete Repairs and look to offer Commercial let or sale

The Council would have needed to invest significant resources to bring the property to a lettable standard. The cost schedule for the required repairs was a minimum of £200k, which far exceeded the valuation of the asset. The Council could have marketed the property for sale, however, it was within a prominent part of town which offered significant value to the diverse local community. The Council was committed to locality and place based working, and offering the property on the open market in its current condition would not have fulfilled that commitment to the local communities or make best use of the asset.

Do nothing

The property would have remained in its present state, and would have continued to deteriorate. The Other Perspective could not have continued to occupy under licence in the building due to its deteriorating condition.

ORDERED

That the proposal to transfer the Council's freehold interest to a community group - The Other Perspective, who were currently occupying under license, be approved.

REASON

The Centre's size and facilities plus location provided an excellent opportunity for a range of cultural and community activities for a diverse range of stakeholders to improve health, wellbeing, learning and education.

Community organisations could bid for external funds for asset regeneration to support community activities, those had a higher rate of success if the organisation had the freehold interest in the property. The Council and MVDA planned to support the community organisation to bid for funding to regenerate the asset within a prominent part of the town to deliver against its business plan.

The proposal planned to ensure a community asset, which was currently underused, was brought back into use to support the local community. That would support key objectives of external grant funding:

- to save underused community assets;
- assist in developing community organisations and community businesses;
- empower local communities; and
- strengthen links at place based level - supporting locality working objectives.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) was published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures

Report of:	Councillor Eric Polano - Executive Member for Regeneration Richard Horniman - Director of Regeneration and Culture Councillor Barrie Cooper - Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance Ian Wright - Director of Finance
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Submitted to:	Executive - 11 January 2022
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Subject:	Digital Inclusion Strategy
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
That Executive adopts the Digital Inclusion Strategy.

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

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
The Digital Inclusion Strategy assists with the delivery of the Priorities of: ‘We will show Middlesbrough’s children that they matter and work to make our town safe and welcoming and to improve outcomes for all children and young people’; and: ‘We will work to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable’	The Digital Inclusion Strategy assists with the delivery of the Priority of: ‘We will ensure that we place communities at the heart of what we do, continue to deliver value for money and enhance the reputation of Middlesbrough.’	The Digital Inclusion Strategy assists with the delivery of the Priority of: ‘We will ensure the recovery of local communities, businesses and the Council’s operations from COVID-19, taking opportunities to build back better.’

Ward(s) affected
All Wards

What is the purpose of this report?

1. To adopt the Digital Inclusion Strategy (DIS).

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The DIS will support the delivery of the Council's Poverty Strategy and the Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024. It is designed to identify and prioritise the actions required to better unify and enhance current local authority and partner agency digital inclusion interventions, bridge remaining provision gaps and embed future inclusion actions into "business as usual" in order to bring Middlesbrough in line with national digital inclusion standards. Adopting the DIS 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. On 11 May 2021, the Executive approved the Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024 workplan and associated outcomes, including the action to "Create and deliver a strategy to increase digital inclusion for children, young people and adults across Middlesbrough" within the Vulnerability priority.
4. Since the outbreak of Covid-19, the scale and negative effect of digital exclusion has been exposed beyond previous understanding, impacting on quality of education, access to healthcare, employment and services, and ability to connect with loved ones. Ofcom research shows that 11% of the UK population still do not have access to the internet at home. In addition, there are those who do not have the appropriate device, quality of connection, or required skills in order to make use of the digital potential.
5. A lack of digital skills and access can have a huge negative impact on a person's life, leading to poorer health outcomes and a lower life expectancy, increased loneliness and social isolation, less access to jobs and education. It can mean paying more for essentials, financial exclusion and an increased risk of experiencing poverty. People who are digitally excluded also lack a voice and visibility in the modern world, as government services and democracy increasingly move online. It is those already at a disadvantage – through age, education, income, disability, or unemployment – who are most likely to be excluded, further widening the social inequality gap. Middlesbrough's high levels of multiple deprivation factors contribute to and are exacerbated by digital DISarity among residents. Within this context, it is becoming increasingly important that access to digital devices, connectivity, skills and services is sufficiently expanded and tailored to meet the needs of our population.
6. Many excellent individual short-term interventions and projects within the council and local partners tackling elements of the digital exclusion issue already exist, but until now these have not been coordinated within a single synchronised strategy or woven into the core priorities of interrelated long term service plans addressing associated vulnerabilities.
7. The DIS will be used by the Council to help shape the future of digital inclusion in the borough, to ensure that all our residents are supported to overcome digital barriers and maximise the social, health, education and economic benefits of enhanced digital access. The annually-reviewed action plan will enable us to target our leadership response, along with our key strategic partners, to emerging local needs, opportunities and priorities towards the ultimate aim of achieving parity with national digital inclusion standards.

8. The DIS takes into consideration, and builds upon, existing strategies and studies, including:
- Strategic Plan for Middlesbrough 2021 – 2024
 - Customer Strategy
 - Executive Digital Strategy 2018 - 2022 digitalising council services
 - MCM Learning and Education Strategy 2021 – 2024
 - Welfare and Financial Inclusion Strategy
 - Gigabit City broadband expansion programme
9. In preparing the DIS, a director-led steering group, statutory consultees and other key stakeholders, were consulted and invited to take part in stakeholder workshops. The outcomes of the engagement have been taken into consideration in finalising the DIS.
10. The key aspects of the DIS are set out below:
- The Vision - Middlesbrough will be brought in line with national digital inclusion standards
 - The Strategy – centred around the 5 digital inclusion Key Objectives, with issues and emerging opportunities for each:
 - **Objective 1:** Ensuring children and families are able to access digital learning and no pupil misses learning due to digital DISarity.
 - **Objective 2:** Ensuring job seekers are able to access digital skills and employability support.
 - **Objective 3:** Ensuring individuals (particularly elderly people) are able to engage with others to reduce isolation.
 - **Objective 4:** Ensuring local businesses are supported to trade digitally.
 - **Objective 5:** Ensuring town-wide connectivity plans support Middlesbrough’s digital ambitions.
11. The DIS is accompanied with an action plan, which identifies a series of 10 Practical Actions required to launch the coordinated digital inclusion programme and attain tangible improvement over the next 12 months against the Key Objectives:
- **Action 1.1:** Support schools to access and provide digital devices for all pupils, and develop use of digital and remote learning platforms
 - **Action 1.2:** Embed new Digital Entitlement offer - free government initiative aimed at those who do not have ICT skills up to Level 1 – into MCLS
 - **Action 2.1:** Develop business case for device “lending library” through libraries / hubs / MCLS
 - **Action 2.2:** Host Digital Event – promoting local digital businesses, employment opportunities and digital learning services
 - **Action 3.1:** Develop Independence Hub in Cavendish House including live device and software demonstrations, and creation of a digital skills buddying system (train the trainer / family member inclusion programmes)
 - **Action 3.2:** Create business case for a “safety net” scheme run through MCLS for all residents which offering basic ICT training on engaging with friends, family and essential public services
 - **Action 4.1:** Develop Middlesbrough Digital campaign to provide advice for local businesses, signposting for digitalization support and promotion of town’s digital cluster
 - **Action 4.2:** Explore the utilisation of open data more widely as per best practice in Sunderland and Leeds

- **Action 5.1:** Develop planning/procurement policies to influence developers to incorporate superfast/fibre broadband infrastructure into new housing/investment developments as a basic minimum requirement
 - **Action 5.2:** Work with CityFibre to ensure full roll out of new fibre infrastructure.
12. In addition, the Action Plan identifies 4 pledges with associated Strategic Actions to ensure the council provides the necessary local strategic leadership:
- **1: Embed Digital Inclusion into our core council business**
 - **1.1:** Include digital inclusion measure within Strategic Plan
 - **1.2:** Create internal “Digital Leads” working group, to review DIS, coordinate actions and ensure objectives and actions are incorporated into all future linked service plans and strategies
 - **2: Provide strategic local leadership to coordinate digital provision**
 - **2.1:** Coordinate DIS with South Tees Digital Group to address local provision gaps, monitor progress and prevent initiative overload
 - **2.2:** Synchronise DIS with Local Poverty Strategy
 - **3: Ensuring infrastructure provision**
 - **3.1:** Maintain Local Infrastructure Improvement Plan in partnership with TVCA
 - **3.2:** Apply for future capital grant funding streams to further advance infrastructure
 - **4: Improving signposting to and promotion of local digital assistance**
 - **4.1:** Create dedicated Digital Inclusion signposting page on council website and intranet
 - **4.2:** Improve training for all contact centre/resident and business support staff on available internal and external digital support

Next Steps

13. The DIS has been finalised, taking into account the contributions from the cross-directorate Steering Group, plus all of the comments received during the stakeholder consultations and workshops. The final version of the DIS has two parts, which are attached at Appendices 1 and 2.
14. Following its adoption, the DIS will be used: as part of the evidence base for the Strategic Plan; to inform the Poverty Strategy; and to support relevant local and regional digital projects.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

15. That Executive adopts the Digital Inclusion Strategy.

Why is this being recommended?

16. The DIS sets out the key digital inclusion priorities and opportunities to help deliver the Council’s Strategic Plan, and ensure that barriers in the way of maximising the social, health, education and economic benefits of enhanced digital access are reduced for existing and future residents.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

17. **Not to adopt the Digital Inclusion Strategy.** This will mean that the Council will not have a clear strategy for delivering a coordinated local action plan for reducing exclusion and maximising local digital access. It will be more challenging to deliver the digital

infrastructure, skills, devices, services and support, of the right quality, to support current and future needs.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

- 18. There are no statutory requirements relating to the preparation of documents such as the DIS.
- 19. Once adopted, the DIS will become part of the evidence base for the Strategic Plan, and a material consideration in the determination of strategies for the support of vulnerable residents, such as the Poverty Strategy.

Financial

- 20. The costs associated with the preparation of the DIS have been met from established departmental budgets. The costs associated with the 12 month Project Management of the coordination and governance of the Action Plan, supporting the transfer from recovery to adoption into ‘business as usual’, have been approved to be met through the Covid Recovery Grant.

Policy Framework

- 21. The DIS will support preparation and delivery of the Strategic Plan, which is part of the Council’s Policy Framework.
- 22. The adoption of the DIS will not alter the Policy Framework.

Equality and Diversity

- 23. The Digital Inclusion Strategy 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
R001	Substantial areas of the town and key groups of vulnerable residents experience significant digital exclusion compared to others, if this exclusion is not tackled in a systematic, targeted way through a cohesive plan these gaps are at risk of widening.	The vision of the DIS is to bring Middlesbrough in line with national digital inclusion standards, by enabling digital access for those residents who are currently excluded, and enhancing access for those who are currently unable to maximise their digital potential, thus reducing the risk of widening gaps.
R002	If existing digital inclusion schemes and interventions remain uncoordinated there is a risk of wasted resources through duplication of effort and lack of economies of scale, missed	The DIS, its incorporated Action Plan and associated governance working group of strategic digital lead officers from each directorate will underpin and coordinate the Council’s ambitious digital inclusion projects. This will ensure they operate harmoniously,

	opportunities to share best practice and ensure gaps in support provision are addressed.	offer best value and complement schemes offered by our local strategic partner organisations, thus reducing the risk of wasted resources and effort.
R003	Without a research-based strategic plan incorporating a detailed gap-analysis of need there is a risk of the Council committing to costly interventions that ultimately do not achieve an increase in digital inclusion.	The DIS has taken into account research on the key gaps in service provision and the local level of need for the key vulnerable groups. The priority objectives and action plan have been designed to address the areas of highest need, and be refreshed annually to respond to emerging local requirements, thus reducing the risk of ineffective costly interventions.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

25. Once adopted, the DIS will become part of the evidence base for the Strategic Plan, and performance against the objectives within the action plan will be monitored quarterly through the cross-service Digital Inclusion Governance Board.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Appendix 2 - Initial Impact Assessment of the Digital Inclusion Strategy

Background papers

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

Contact: Nicola Mearns, Strategic Business Manager, Resident and Business Support.
Email: Nicola_Mearns@middlesbrough.gov.uk.

Digital Inclusion Strategy

1.0 Vision

The ultimate aim of this plan is to better unify and enhance current local authority and partner agency digital inclusion interventions, bridge remaining provision gaps and embed future inclusion actions into “business as usual”, in accordance with the 2021-24 Strategic Plan workplan outcome to: *“Create and deliver a strategy to increase digital inclusion for children, young people and adults across Middlesbrough”*. The gold standard for where we want to get to is bringing Middlesbrough in line with national digital inclusion standards.

2.0 Background

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, the scale and negative effect of digital exclusion has been exposed beyond previous understanding, impacting on quality of education, access to healthcare, employment and services, and ability to connect with loved ones. Ofcom research shows that 11% of the UK population still do not have access to the internet at home. In addition, there are those who do not have the appropriate device, quality of connection, or required skills in order to make use of the digital potential.

A lack of digital skills and access can have a huge negative impact on a person’s life, leading to poorer health outcomes and a lower life expectancy, increased loneliness and social isolation, less access to jobs and education. It can mean paying more for essentials, financial exclusion and an increased risk of experiencing poverty. People who are digitally excluded also lack a voice and visibility in the modern world, as government services and democracy increasingly move online. It is those already at a disadvantage – through age, education, income, disability, or unemployment – who are most likely to be excluded, further widening the social inequality gap.

Middlesbrough’s high levels of multiple deprivation factors contribute to and are exacerbated by digital disparity among residents. Many individual short-term interventions and projects within the council and local partners tackling the issue exist, but these are not currently coordinated within a single synchronised strategy or built into cohesive long term service plans.

3.0 Digital Exclusion and Disparity Issues

There are many causes of digital inequality and exclusion, and poverty underpins several but is not the only factor. The 5 key barriers – of equal importance and impact - are:

- *Access to appropriate devices/hardware.* This could be smartphones, tablets, laptops and PCs. Each have their pros and cons depending on the type of need (eg smartphones are portable and good for reducing isolation, but less useful for completing schoolwork or applying for jobs/services).
- *Connectivity.* Access to the internet –through either WiFi infrastructure or 4G/5G mobile data. Access needs to be available, affordable and reliable and therefore each of these factors can provide barriers.
- *Digital skills and confidence.* Being able to use computers and the internet. For many, particularly vulnerable elderly people who have not grown up with devices this would require training and support. Confidence is also a key barrier for those who already possess devices/connectivity and basic skills but are failing to get the most out of digital opportunities such as access to services.
- *Online safety and security.* Fears and issues around scams, fraud, data security and personal safety deter many from utilising digital devices and the internet.
- *Accessibility.* Support services available online should be designed to be inclusive and user-friendly for all, including those dependent on assistive technology, and as compatible as possible with modern devices.

4.0 Key DISP Objectives

1. Ensuring children and families are able to access digital learning and no pupil misses learning due to digital disparity.
2. Ensuring job seekers are able to access digital skills and employability support.
3. Ensuring individuals (particularly elderly people) are able to engage with others to reduce isolation.
4. Ensuring local businesses are supported to trade digitally.
5. Ensuring town-wide connectivity plans support Middlesbrough’s digital ambitions.

5.0 Where we are now

5.1 Local Baseline compared to national

In order to work towards achieving parity with national digital inclusion standards it is important to understand current local levels and the gap with the national average. Several key data sources collect digital inclusion statistics:

Source	Statistic	UK Average	North East*	Variation
ONS Internet Users, 2020: (6.4.2021)	Recent Internet Users (used in last 3 months)	91.2%	88.6%	-2.6%
	Internet Used over 3 months ago	1.5%	2.8%	1.3%
	Never used internet	6.3%	8.2%	1.9%
Ofcom Technology Tracker 2020	Personally use a smartphone	87%	87%	0
	Households with any type of PC, laptop, netbook or tablet computer	77%	80%	3%
	Households with access to the internet at home(via any device, e.g. PC, mobile phone etc)	87%	87%	0
	Households with internet access but don't use	2%	2%	0
	Households without access at home	11%	11%	0
Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2021	Offline/no internet in the last three months (e.g. desktop, laptop, mobile or tablet)	95%	92%	-3%
	Very Low Digital Engagement	29%	32%	3%
	Confident using Internet	85%	83%	-2%
	Benefit claimants with very Low digital engagement.	34%	37%	3%
	Wouldn't have coped through pandemic without tech	53%	54%	1%
	Net increase in Internet usage through pandemic	55%	46%	-9%
	Digital skills have improved as a result of pandemic	29%	23%	-6%

**Although data localised to Middlesbrough is not currently available, TVCA are working to collect this information through a research collaboration with DCMS and IPPR on the digital divide in the North East. For anecdotal context, the 2020 Middlesbrough HelpBoro Covid Hub survey of 600 vulnerable residents identified 72% of them had no access to wifi at home.*

5.2 Middlesbrough Digital Provision Gap Analysis

There is a huge range of digital provision interventions and projects already taking place within the council and local partners in Middlesbrough to tackling exclusion (see Appendix A), but due to the breadth and complexity of the issue, and the lack of cohesive coordination many gaps in provision remain:

Theme	Key Gaps/issues
Education and Learning	<p><i>Disparity in support provision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices are provided to schools, not individual children, so some families with multiples are having to share, some schools have recalled devices after lockdown leaving a remote-learning gap for supplementary learning (inc homework), exclusions, sickness absence. • Different schools have adopted different digital learning platforms/apps. It is hard for LA services (particularly EMAT) to gain familiarity with them to provide additional support for families • Limited provision of devices/digital support for CASP, school leavers and care leavers • Funding for MCLS laptop loan scheme for learners who had limited access to technology is limited, prohibiting wider reach <p><i>Poverty</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many families have no/limited connectivity due to affordability <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of language barrier exacerbating digital skills gap – for pupils and their parents • Attainment gap exacerbated by parents without the digital skills to support their children’s remote learning • Middlesbrough has one of the lowest uptakes of GCSE IT nationally, creating a skills gap and local recruitment shortfall for digital sector
Employability support	<p><i>Equipment/device availability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current device loan offer available through libraries or MCLS and IT equipment used to provide jobseeker support and digital learning programmes at MCLS is outdated and in need of replacement • Central library PC provision reducing from 35 to 22 • Most adult residents own smartphones, but these are not ideal for applying for jobs/benefits online or creating CVs <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence from local digital businesses suggest students leaving college and university have gaps in their digital skills and are not work-ready

	<p><i>Accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70% of jobseekers coming through MCLS Adult Skills Programme had low/no English language proficiency, making teaching digital skills much more complex
Support for isolated and vulnerable adults	<p><i>Equipment/device availability</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devices offered by Hope Foundation/Furbdit are not the best solution for every vulnerable resident • ASC are developing Independence Hub in Cavendish House – would like to offer loan system for devices but do not currently have the capital <p><i>Accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in availability of digital accessibility equipment – eg screen readers/magnification devices/adaptions for learning disabilities <p><i>Skills, confidence and online safety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap in skills/support provision for very vulnerable elderly <p><i>Connectivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town’s asylum seeker/refugee properties have no wifi provision and this cohort have limited access to funds or ability to initiate contracts, yet are in desperate need of connectivity to process their asylum claims and access vital services.
Supporting businesses	<p><i>Accessibility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A huge amount of digital support is available through local and national agencies, but it is not promoted/signposted enough • Digital Business Strategy needs refreshing post-covid, plus a new gap analysis of support provision (Dan Watson/Sam Gilmore) <p><i>Skills</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence from local digital businesses suggest students leaving college and university have gaps in their digital skills and are not work-ready • Local digital businesses are struggling to recruit locally due to skills shortfall <p><i>Connectivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses and centres/properties are responsible for their own broadband infrastructure, if a company’s connection is too slow or unreliable, having a dedicated line laid is prohibitively expensive
Townwide Connectivity	<p><i>Connectivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Townwide broadband plan will take 3-5 years to complete. In the meantime some areas (particularly South West areas) have very little coverage, and most of the town has only one provider, leaving consumers without choice re. speeds/costs

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Council's role

The LGIU, in partnership with Carnegie UK Trust defines the role of councils: “tackling digital inclusion requires dedicated attention and resources, it also needs to be embedded across public services rather than treated as a standalone issue. Local authorities are perfectly placed to align ambitious digital strategies with delivery through knowledgeable local organisations who understand community needs. Local authorities can have a huge impact by ensuring that work to get people online is joined up across their area, and that resources and expertise are shared as effectively as possible.”¹

Middlesbrough Council pledges to provide strategic local leadership for reducing digital inclusion barriers by:

- Embedding Digital Inclusion within our core council business
- Providing strategic local leadership to coordinate digital provision
- Ensuring infrastructure provision
- Improving signposting to and promotion of digital assistance

6.2 Other key roles

The council will provide the necessary local strategic leadership on the Digital Inclusion agenda, however due to the complexity of the issues involved it will be vital to work harmoniously in coordination with our public partners, local businesses, schools, adult education providers, housing providers, charities and support agencies to ensure resources, best practice and skills are shared effectively. Partner agencies are currently providing a wealth of digital support provision (as outlined in Appendix A) and this Digital Inclusion Strategy aims to enhance and coordinate that provision going forward.

¹ <https://lgiu.org/12-steps-for-digital-inclusion>

8.0 Action Plan

This DISP is intended to be a “live” ongoing programme developed over time to be responsive to strategic priorities and local needs as they emerge. The current action plan contains the strategic and practical actions required to launch the coordinated digital inclusion programme and attain tangible improvement over the next 12 months. An annual review and refresh of the DISP will enable future actions to be developed to build upon the success of this plan and ensure continuous progress towards eradicating exclusion.

8.1 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN		
Pledge	Strategic Actions	Timescale
Embed Digital Inclusion into our core council business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include digital inclusion measure within Strategic Plan 2. Create internal “Digital Leads” working group, to review DISP, coordinate actions and ensure objectives and actions are incorporated into all future linked service plans and strategies 	Included in Strategic Plan by Jul 21 Group established by Jul 21, meeting quarterly (min)
Provide strategic local leadership to coordinate digital provision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinate DISP with South Tees Digital Group to address local provision gaps, monitor progress and prevent initiative overload 2. Synchronise DISP with Local Poverty Strategy 	DISP lead to join STDG by Oct 21 DISP Lead to contribute to LPS by Nov 21
Ensuring infrastructure provision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain Local Infrastructure Improvement Plan in partnership with TVCA 2. Apply for future capital grant funding streams to further advance infrastructure 	LIIP lead to join Digital Leads Group by Jul 21 Review of available and anticipated funding by Nov 21
Improving signposting to and promotion of local digital assistance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create dedicated Digital Inclusion signposting page on council website and intranet 2. Improve training for all contact centre/resident and business support staff on available internal and external digital support 	Pages available on website and intranet by Dec 21 Briefing available to all staff by Jan 22

8.2 PRACTICAL ACTION PLAN – NEW ACTIONS			
Objective 1: Ensuring children and families are able to access digital learning and no pupil misses learning due to digital disparity.			
Action	Barriers Addressed	LMT Owner	Timescale
Support schools to access and provide digital devices for all pupils, and develop use of digital and remote learning platforms	Devices	Rob Brown	Specific digital plan in place by Mar 22
Embed new Digital Entitlement offer - free government initiative aimed at those who do not have ICT skills up to Level 1 – into MCLS	Skills, Online Safety	Rob Brown	Offer promoted by Mar 22
Objective 2: Ensuring job seekers are able to access digital skills and employability support			
Action	Barriers Addressed	LMT Owner	Timescale
Develop business case for device “lending library” through libraries/hubs/MCLS	Devices	Geoff Field	Business case completed by Mar 22
Host Digital Event – promoting local digital businesses, employment opportunities and digital learning services	Skills	Richard Horniman	Event held by Sep 22
Objective 3: Ensuring individuals (particularly elderly people) are able to engage with others to reduce isolation			
Action	Barriers Addressed	Owner	Timescale
Develop Independence Hub in Cavendish House including live device and software demonstrations, and creation of a digital skills buddying system (train the trainer / family member inclusion programmes)	Skills; Accessibility; Online Safety	Erik Scollay	Nov 22
Create business case for a “safety net” scheme run through MCLS for all residents which offering basic ICT training on engaging with friends, family and essential public services	Skills; Accessibility; Online Safety	Rob Brown	Business case completed by Mar 22

Objective 4: Ensuring local businesses are supported to trade digitally

Action	Barriers Addressed	Owner	Timescale
Develop Middlesbrough Digital campaign to provide advice for local businesses, signposting for digitalization support and promotion of town’s digital cluster	Skills; Online Safety; Connectivity	Richard Horniman	Campaign launched by Mar 22
Explore the utilisation of open data more widely as per best practice in Sunderland and Leeds	Skills; Accessibility; Connectivity	Richard Horniman	Review undertaken by Mar 22

Objective 5: Ensuring town-wide connectivity plans support Middlesbrough’s digital ambitions

Action	Barriers Addressed	Owner	Timescale
Develop planning/procurement policies to influence developers to incorporate superfast/fibre broadband infrastructure into new housing/investment developments as a basic minimum requirement	Connectivity; Accessibility	Richard Horniman	Policy included within new Local Plan by April 2022
Work with CityFibre to ensure full roll out of new fibre infrastructure	Connectivity; Accessibility	Richard Horniman	Annual review held with City Fibre each April (22/23/24/25)

Previous/Current Digital Inclusion Activity – Council and Strategic Partners

Education and learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MBC Education Department administered £350,000 digital investment grant to provide 1422 devices (laptops, tablets, wifi dongles) to 39 schools to assist remote learning provision (Karen Smith, Head of Achievement, MBC) • Local schools have adopted digital learning platforms for the provision of remote learning (schools) • EMAT provide digital learning support to INA/EAL families (Georgina Chinaka, EMAT Manager, MBC) • Middlesbrough College have a Digital Board supporting digital inclusion and opportunities for young people, including coding clubs (Zoe Lewis, Middlesbrough College) • During the pandemic, a small amount of MCLS adult Skills funding was redistributed to set up a laptop loan scheme for adult learners who had limited access to technology. (Claire Kemp, MCLS) • MCLS provide face to face and online ICT courses, and online sessions have been created to upskill residents with online communication platforms, Google Meets, Zoom, Teams etc (Claire Kemp, MCLS) • Red Cross offer free digital sessions for learning to access emergency help, connect with others, and build confidence and coping skills. • Tees Philanthropic Foundation run a charity drive for new and used computer equipment for educational purposes • Teesside University run “Summer University” Digital courses
Employment Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free wifi, devices (135 PCs) and BYOD workspace provision in all council libraries and hubs. Pre-Covid the hubs ran basic IT Courses (Martin Harvey) • Council run Jobs Fair (including a dedicated digital quarter promoting locally available digital careers and vacancies, plus programmes for retraining jobseekers into digital roles) (Debbie Ingoldsby) • Routes to Work and 50 Futures Programme support unemployed residents with jobseeking skills including digital literacy • Teesside University run a “Summer University” of short, affordable digital courses

- Teesside University “Digital Skills for Growth” programme, supporting jobseekers and local businesses looking to upskill digitally. <https://www.tees.ac.uk/digitalskills>

Reducing Isolation.

- ASC/Staying Put Agency provide digital skills programme for vulnerable elderly residents, including basic foundations (email, social media shopping, banking, VFM, accessing services, healthcare access), plus upskilling and aftercare support. (Chris Thompson, MBC)
- ASC also provide pre-paid wifi dongles/inexpensive contract-free mifi routers included within care package offers
- Hope Foundation/Furbdit provide refurbished donated devices (Hope Foundation)
- Creation of online resource hub, including self-help guides and tutorial videos (Age UK and Hope Foundation)
- ASC developing Independence Hub in Cavendish House
- ASC provide a multitude of assistive technology – Telecare, Cradle Connect falls assistance, Telehealth (medication reminders)
- HelpBoro advice hub providing signposting to digital support for vulnerable residents (Stuart Green/Martin Barker, MBC)
- Digital health services for residents with learning disabilities (Graham Clarke, MBC)
- Good Things Foundation provide advice for accessing online services, support for digital poverty and signposting for free devices.

Business Support

- A huge amount of digital business support is available locally, through the council, national agencies, and business-to-business from the digital cluster. The council acts as an advice agency and signposter
- Middlesbrough Digital Business Plan providing advice for local businesses, signposting for digitalization support and promotion of town’s digital cluster (Dan Watson/Sam Gilmore, MBC)
- Dedicated support through partners to provide 1-1 guidance on developing ecommerce sites, overseas markets, online trading e.g through Dept of International Trade and several other partner organisations
- Digital transformation support webinars and workshops led by Boho/Digital City/TVCA plus other support agencies

- Dedicated 1-1 support around online marketing /social media for pre starts (with partner organisations e.g. Enterprise Made Simple)
- Capital Grants to support business growth and job creation (could include purchase new hardware/web design/ecommerce site) via Tees Valley Business
- 1 year “Business Recovery” role has just been recruited to, to increase capacity and support businesses with post-covid recovery.
- Enterprise Zone created and thriving in Middlesbrough
- Town Centre team providing dedication support and advice for central businesses (Tom Rhind/Michelle McPhee)
- Teesside University and Digital City provide digital upskilling for businesses
- TVCA Business Hub provides digital advisors, help financing capital purchases, digital promotion and online trading support
- Teesside University offer postgrads to local businesses needing transformation projects through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships programme

Town-wide connectivity

- Townwide “gigabit city” broadband extension in partnership with CityFibre, to ensure infrastructure upgrade, full broadband coverage, and provide choice of providers helping drive up connectivity speeds and offer competition of charges (Craig Cowley, Infrastructure Manager)
- Internal Digital Strategy for improved digitalization of council services (Katie Watkins)
- Council Website Digital Project aiming to provide better digital links to residents and how they engage with the LA (Mehmoona Ameen)
- Council website accessibility improvements (Ann-Marie Johnstone)

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Template for Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

Subject of assessment:	Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan			
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 Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Statutory drivers The Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide digital inclusion support, however due to the intrinsic link between lack of digital access and issues of multiple deprivation factors, the DISP will contribute towards the Council’s duties (among others) under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to “safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.”; plus Section 45 of the Health Service and Public Health Act 1968, to “make provision for the promotion of the welfare of old people.”</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach Current and previous digital inclusion schemes have operated in silos within Council directorates and partner agencies. The Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan will provide a sound basis of priority objectives upon which to prepare coordinated actions relating to addressing digital exclusion, 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 local strategic partners.</p> <p>Intended outcomes. To seek the adoption of the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan.</p>			
Live date:	The Executive will consider the Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan on 7th December 2021.			

Lifespan:	Until replaced by a future plan.
Date of next review:	November 2022

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*	☒	☐	☐	<p>The Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan has been prepared by a cross-directorate governance board of directors, in consultation with key stakeholders and digital experts. The emerging action 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 benefit from improved digital access.</p> <p>In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on individuals in terms of human rights.</p>
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?*	☒	☐	☐	<p>The Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan has been prepared by a cross-directorate governance board of directors, in consultation with key stakeholders and digital experts. The emerging action 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 benefit from improved digital access.</p> <p>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 Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*	☒	☐	☐	<p>The Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan has been prepared by a cross-directorate governance board of directors, in consultation with key stakeholders and digital experts. The emerging action 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 benefit from improved digital access.</p> <p>In light of the above, it is not considered that the report will have an adverse impact on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town.</p>

* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

Screening questions	Response	Evidence
<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:	Nicola Mearns	Head of Service:	Richard Horniman
Date:	26.10.21	Date:	26.10.21

Report of:	Councillor Stephen Hill - Executive Member for Culture and Communities Richard Horniman - Director of Regeneration and Culture
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Submitted to:	Executive - 11 January 2022
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Subject:	Final Report of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel - Cultural Events in Middlesbrough: Their Impact and Future - Service Response
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
That the Executive approves the attached Action Plan put together in response to the Scrutiny Panel recommendations.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? ¹
<i>Decision</i>	<i>No</i>	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
The report sets out how the Council aims to improve inclusion and diversity of cultural events across the Town.	Through digital delivery of events the profile of the town will be elevated to a broader geographical audience.	The report identifies opportunities for hospitality development linked with digital Esports events.

Ward(s) affected
All wards

What is the purpose of this report?

1. To provide an update and action plan that relates to the recommendations made by the Culture and Communities scrutiny Panel.

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. In line with the Council's constitution following approval of the "CULTURAL EVENTS" report by the Culture and communities Scrutiny Board on 15.11.2021 the recommendations of the scrutiny panel now need to be considered by the Executive.

Report Background

3. The Scrutiny panel has undertaken a review of outdoor events delivery in Middlesbrough and provided a range of recommendations that relate to how they would like to see the event program developed in future years.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

4. That the Executive approves the attached Action Plan put together in response to the Scrutiny Panel recommendations

Why is this being recommended?

5. It is a requirement that the Executive formally considers the Scrutiny Panel's report and confirms the service areas response to the Panel's accompanying action plan.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

6. Full details of what the Scrutiny Panel took into consideration when arriving at their recommendations are contained in the Scrutiny report (Appendix I).

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

7. The recommendations in the action plan will aim to maximise the impact of events and develop the program of activity delivered.

Legal

8. No legal implications.

Financial

9. The proposed actions do not at this stage create additional financial obligations, although some may lead to future requests for funding if they develop in a particular direction. These would be addressed at the time.

Policy Framework

10. No implications for the Council's Policy Framework have been identified.

Equality and Diversity

11. Equality and diversity issues would be considered as part of any future programme as and when any specific schemes/ projects are progressed. This would include Impact Assessments where required.

Risk

12. No specific risk are identified with these recommendations.
Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

Appendices

13. Appendix I – Final Report of the Culture and communities Scrutiny Panel – Cultural events

14. Appendix II – Action Plan with Service area comments.

Background papers

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

Contact: Leanne Littlewood

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT OF THE CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL CULTURAL EVENTS IN MIDDLESBROUGH: - THEIR IMPACT AND FUTURE

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AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. This investigation attempts to identify how cultural events delivered in Middlesbrough contribute to important strategic objectives and the well-being of Middlesbrough residents. In doing so it is hoped to show that rather than one-off set pieces, cultural events have the ability to provide long lasting impacts that cut across demographic barriers.

COUNCIL'S THREE INTERRELATED AIMS

1. The scrutiny of this topic aligns with the Council's three core objectives as detailed in the Strategic Plan 2021-2024¹:
2. People - Working with communities and other public services in Middlesbrough to improve the lives of local people.
3. Place - Securing improvements in Middlesbrough's housing, infrastructure and attractiveness, improving the town's reputation, creating opportunities for local people.
4. Business - Promoting investment in Middlesbrough's economy and making sure we work as effectively as possible to support our ambitions for People and Place.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The terms of reference for the scrutiny panel's investigation were as follows:
 - A. Using examples of best practice, learn how cultural events are delivered in Middlesbrough and how they contribute to wider social regeneration initiatives.
 - B. In light of Covid-19, explore different delivery formats to understand if future events can be sustainable in a post Covid-19 world.
 - C. To learn how Cultural Events can contribute to wider Economic Initiatives in Middlesbrough.

¹ Middlesbrough Council's Strategic Plan 2020-2023

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The impact of Cultural events have, arguably, never been more important. Not only do they create windows into how other people live, they provide almost unique mechanisms that allow people to celebrate and learn.
3. In the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic cultural events, and the creative industry generally, stand on the edge of a seeming precipice. While able to act as vehicles to re-introduce “normality” after a long period of disconnectedness and isolation, there may be an urgent need to examine if they can ever be held in the same way again.
4. The Cultural sector has been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, arguably more than most. The impact has been likened to a “Cultural Catastrophe”² by the Creative Industries Federation. While the full impact of the pandemic is still being felt, in mid - 2020 there were concerns that, nationally, up to 400,000 jobs could be lost with weekly revenue losses equalling £1.4 billion.
5. In response the Government announced a “Culture Recovery Fund”³ of £1.57 billion for the cultural sector to draw on for support. Split over three rounds, the fund has provided support to more than 5,000 organisations and sites across the country, protecting 75,000 jobs and supporting approximately 100,000 freelancers.⁴
6. It is in this context the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel wanted to examine both the impact of cultural events in Middlesbrough, and how they have been impacted both socially and economically. In doing so the Panel wanted to understand how cultural events could add value to the Council’s existing strategic priorities as well as enhance the Town’s wider cultural offer.
7. Before examining cultural events it would be prudent to identify what is meant by “culture.” While there are different ways of defining culture, for the purposes of this report “culture” can be seen as the cumulative experience of people and institutions developed over time. Indeed, the Culture White Paper published in 2016 stated that culture was,

“...the accumulated influence of creativity, the arts, museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage upon all our lives. When we talk about our ‘cultural sectors’, we are referring to an extraordinary network of individuals and organisations, that together preserve, reflect and promote who we are as a nation, in all our rich diversity.”⁵
8. Any discussion of “culture” runs the danger of appearing abstract and bearing little or no relevance to people’s everyday lives. As a corollary, cultural events also run the risk of being hidden behind more tangible council services, such as refuse collection or social care. However, the Panel was keen to highlight how cultural events remain pertinent in the current climate.

² [Press release: "Cultural catastrophe" - over 400,000 creative jobs could be lost... The Projected Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the UK Creative Industries report. | Creative Industries Federation](#)

³ More information about the Culture Recovery Fund can be found on the government’s website [Culture Recovery Fund - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ Arts council England, “Third round of Culture Recovery fund to secure future of thousands of organisations” [Third round of Culture Recovery fund to secure future of thousands of organisations | Arts Council England](#)

⁵ Department for Culture, Media & Sport “The Culture White Paper” p13 [The Culture White Paper \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

9. As definitions of “culture” can be imprecise, cultural events are equally difficult to easily describe. Generally time limited and with a culturally themed focus their scale can vary widely, encompassing a small number of participants or many thousands having specific or multi-faceted remits.
10. If both culture and cultural events are defined in the above terms it would be sufficient to say that cultural events, therefore, are the vehicles that deliver the message of an accumulated social experience.
11. Naturally, these definitions need to be viewed through the lens of Local Government which is a key institution helping deliver cultural events and continues to be one of its primary funders. As such Local Authorities are ideally placed to deliver cultural events that are attuned and relevant to their local communities.⁶ To help with cultural delivery Middlesbrough Council launched its Cultural Strategy in November 2018 with the intention of growing the Town’s Cultural offer.
12. There are many strands to the Cultural Strategy which aims to achieve financial resilience, contribute to a stronger economy and to transformation the perception of Middlesbrough.⁷ It aims to achieve this via different means, including the Place Brand and contributions to other strategies, such as the Social Regeneration Strategy⁸ and is monitored through the Council’s performance regime.
13. The Council delivers, funds and supports events on a set range of objectives, which had been agreed by Executive. Those objectives were;
 - Raising the profile of the area to make sure people know where Middlesbrough is and what it stands for;
 - Attracting higher footfall/ increase in dwell time with the intention of attracting people to places where events are being held. This would also, hopefully, see those visitors spending money in the town, such as hotel stays for the bigger events as well as restaurant bookings and public transport use. This would, overall, generate economic impact from having the event and;
 - Community engagement whereby events aimed to boost local pride and to bring communities together but importantly, this is not confined to smaller events as larger events can be about this as well.

It is with these objectives in mind that cultural events and their impact will be examined.

⁶ LGA “People, Culture and Place The role of culture in place making” p6

⁷ Middlesbrough Cultural Strategy p14

⁸ ibid p16

TERM OF REFERENCE A

USING EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE, UNDERSTAND HOW CULTURAL EVENTS ARE DELIVERED IN MIDDLESBROUGH AND HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER SOCIAL REGENERATION INITIATIVES.

14. Operationally, there is a sliding scale of how much the Council is involved in events with its role differing depending on the event. The budget for holding events stands at £68,000 with staffing equating to 1.5 FTE. As such, the Council's preferred approach is providing support to others holding events, rather than delivering events itself.
15. For external agents delivering events, Council support is provided from a technical, licensing and safety perspective and as such is a member of the Independent Safety Advisory Group along with the Fire Brigade and Police. This group ensures events are conducted in a safe manner.
16. The Council operated, supported, or played a role in a number of events that constituted its "standard" programme including;
 - MELA
 - Orange Pip Market
 - Discover Middlesbrough event;
 - Animex
 - Christmas events in the Town,
 - Armed Forces day
 - Nagar Kirton
 - 10k and 5k (in conjunction with Public Health)
17. Occasionally there were events that sat outside the normal events schedule, such as the Radio 1 Big Weekend. Such events required significant investment from the Council but also had a significant impact on the town as a whole.
18. The Council's events programme does not, and cannot, operate in a silo. As a matter of course, conversations take place sub-regionally about event planning to minimise clashes and duplication. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, approaches had also been made to the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) seeking investment for events in the coming years. The TVCA has a significant budget for cultural events with Darlington's railway heritage being an example of such investment.
19. It was the intention that the TVCA would focus on large scale strategic events, such as the Rugby World Cup, and leave smaller events to individual Councils.

The immediate effect of the Covid-19 pandemic

20. While it is too early to assess the full extent the pandemic has had on cultural event delivery, there have been early effects that continue to have an impact.

21. The Panel appreciates that the Executive Member for Culture and Communities was keen to improve the visibility of Middlesbrough through the events it holds. The Panel are also aware that prior to the pandemic several plans to achieve this were planned.
22. Unfortunately the pandemic halted most of those plans and has left several important challenges to holding events. One of these challenges was social distancing, which has meant large scale events had to be postponed for long periods, as venues could no longer accommodate the same number of visitors. Such issues were exacerbated by the so-called "bubble system".
23. Financially, the immediate impact of the pandemic is a mixed picture. Income generation has been affected, given that most income for events is from alcohol sales. However, as ticket costs are covered by the performer it was financially prudent not to hold events during this time.
24. Wider financial implications were, and are, being felt however. Prolonged retail closures meant there was little point in holding events that fed into retail areas as the added financial benefit for retailers would have been lost, especially for the food and beverage sector.
25. Prior to the pandemic event delivery also relied, to some extent, on financial support from various arts organisations. However, as these organisations' finances have also been adversely affected support for cultural events has been doubly impacted. Importantly, Council staff, whose jobs involved delivering events, were secured during these uncertain times, as they were re-allocated to other tasks.
26. Sponsors were also reluctant to provide sponsorship opportunities as there was increased risk that they would not recoup their sponsorship offer.
27. During the pandemic, there was a need to understand how events were going to be delivered without understanding the full extent of any restrictions. While many restrictions have been lifted, there is still a desire to hold events in as safe an environment as possible.
28. This uncertainty was coupled with not knowing how the public would feel about attending events. A great deal of research has taken place with the Council's customer base who, after the first wave, felt they would leave it a long time before returning to attend events, especially events with a relatively large audience.
29. When hosting events, the process for booking acts and paying for their performance or paying for space and stalls can be expensive, especially when factoring in promotion. The Council decided to take a cautious approach to holding events in order to mitigate potential abortive costs. So far, this had proven to be the prudent course of action.
30. For the financial year 2020/2021 events were largely cancelled, with only small events being held both within and outside the Town Hall that were socially distanced. Those events included Summer Sessions and outdoor Theatre performances of the Great Gatsby, Pride & Prejudice.
31. Specific, regularly programmed events, such as the Christmas programme had almost been a moving target during the pandemic. Plans explored if events could be taken out to the

public rather than held centrally. While restrictions are now easing, it is difficult to tell if they will remain so heading into the winter period.

Cultural events – Wider Impact

32. While it is recognised cultural events bring many benefits, their impact is sometimes difficult to measure precisely.
33. The main quantitative impact of events is financial, i.e. visitor spend and added value to other sectors such as hospitality. From a visitor perspective there are established methods using external companies such as Global Tourism Solutions⁹, that attempt to understand what impacts would be felt following an event. Using STEAM statistical models it,

“...quantifies the local economic impact of tourism, from both staying and day visitors, through analysis and use of a variety of inputs including visitor attraction numbers, tourist accommodation bedstock, events attendance, occupancy levels, accommodation tariffs, macroeconomic factors, visitor expenditure levels, transport use levels and tourism-specific economic multipliers.”¹⁰
34. Pre-Covid, this method shows, on average, spend per visitor to ticketed and un-ticketed events was £25 to the local economy. The TVCA will hopefully be repeating this exercise to further understand what impact Covid has had.
35. However, qualitative measures of impact are more difficult to obtain. For example, where an event’s aim is for the purpose of community cohesiveness, user surveys are the only vehicle used to measure this impact. While user experience surveys try to capture audience views, they are not carried out after every event as not all events are bookable or ticketed.
36. While more difficult to measure, research commissioned by Arts Council England in 2019 found 65% of people felt having a robust and effective arts and culture offer was good for their wellbeing. It also found that activities like events helped reinforce a sense of community and helped to entice and/ or retain residents within a given area.¹¹
37. Locally, to gauge the impact of cultural events collaboration is critical and involves both internal and external stakeholders, including the Town Centre Team, local businesses and schools. Indeed, in an effort to gather views wider than the Middlesbrough area, the TVCA is conducting a user survey across the Tees Valley to gather views about the 2021 *Mela*.
38. Generally, events provide opportunities to offer new skills for residents, especially through engagement work. Importantly, many events delivered in Middlesbrough were not one-off with most having sub-work programmes that further enhanced community engagement. Examples include the various activities associated with the *Mela* (discussed below). Such engagement also provides the opportunity for schools, communities and individuals to participate and, by extension, improve resident wellbeing.

⁹ [About Us | Tourism Research | UK | Global Tourism Solutions \(UK\) Ltd](#)

¹⁰ [STEAM model | Tourism Research | UK | Global Tourism Solutions \(UK\) Ltd](#)

¹¹ [A New Study Finds That People Who Attend Cultural Events Are Happier With Their Lives Than People Who Don't | Artnet News 2019](#)

39. Achieving, and maintaining, an event's impact is challenging even if the subject matter has local or even international appeal. For example, the Railway Heritage in Darlington and its associated events did not seem to appeal to a wider visitor base than its local boundaries. As such the Council does not intend to develop events around local interests, such as iron and steel, as their appeal is relatively limited and unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.
40. It is these impacts that should be borne in mind when considering the following descriptions of the Council's current events portfolio. As such, the Panel were keen understand how Middlesbrough could develop and foster cultural events for the longer term and realise these potential benefits.

Best Practice – Current Event Schedule

41. While there are subjects of historical significance to Middlesbrough, it is appreciated the town lacks a natural theme that could be sufficiently exploited, save for its iron steel heritage as described above. Instead, Middlesbrough continues, to excel at other events it can capitalise on; namely multi-cultural events, the main example of which is the *Mela*.
42. Regarded as one of the strongest of its kind outside Birmingham, the Middlesbrough *Mela* is a long established multi-cultural event that has received numerous accolades.
43. Being one of the first in the UK (after Nottingham and Bradford in 1988) Middlesbrough's *Mela* has been operating since 1990. While its 30th Anniversary celebrations were planned for the 2020 event, the pandemic prevented this.
44. The nature of the *Mela* had transformed from being a purely multi-cultural event to something that was targeted at the entire community and consistently receives positive feedback from visitors and vendors alike.
45. The Panel appreciates that, because of the pandemic, data relating to the *Mela*'s economic and social impact will not be consistent with previous years. Therefore information used to inform this report has been drawn from 2019 and 2020 datasets. However, such inconsistency has been useful in understanding how established events like the *Mela* are vulnerable to shocks, and how insulated they are to those shocks.
46. Ordinarily, the *Mela* receives audiences of between 30,000 – 50,000 people with over 100 crew members being involved. Naturally, an event of this size affects, and has an impact upon, dependent industries and helps to attract investment via sponsorship and funders.
47. Importantly, the *Mela* does not operate in isolation. Indeed, the *Mela* operates additional, associated, events that work with over 150 people from community groups on various commissions. These commissions worked with professional artists, musicians and choreographers over a three month period which contributed to the creative content of the *Mela* and for its associated, smaller events such as parades.
48. The *Mela* continues to make a positive impact on the economy both in terms of generating and attracting wealth. For example, the 2019 event saw 102 staff employed over the course of the festival. This included artists, community facilitators, project managers, performers and crew covering a total of 273 days of employment combined. The event continues to attract

loyal, repeat traders whilst continuing to grow and develop relationships with new ones (attracting 38% of new traders).

49. From a visitor perspective, average spend at the event was £14.77 and when setting this against average visitor numbers it is estimated the *Mela* generates approximately £440,000 of income. Interestingly, when surveyed, 52% of groups attending *Mela* lived in Middlesbrough with 31.4% living within the wider Tees Valley and 16.2% outside of the Tees Valley. Clearly, the attraction of the *Mela* was to Middlesbrough and its immediate neighbours.
50. Attracting wider audiences to the actual event and even raising its profile was a continuing area of work. As of 2020 the *Mela's* Facebook page had:
 - 3,850 page likes,
 - 94% of page fans are from the UK (with 51% from Middlesbrough with the majority from the Tees Valley).
 - 70 active followers from Pakistan, 24 from India, 12 from the USA, 6 in Brazil and even 1 in Mozambique.
 - Overall reach on Facebook for the festival reached 107,977
 - Total engagement reached 3,112
51. Significant work is being undertaken to market the *Mela* as widely as possible, as improvements to visitor numbers from outside Middlesbrough may not only help improve spend at the event, but also showcase Middlesbrough to other visitors - something that informs initiatives such as the Middlesbrough Place Brand.
52. Events like the *Mela* also offer crucial community connections and while these are “softer” impacts when compared to “harder” economic ones, there are as equally important. Smaller, but associated events help to combat social isolation and reach individuals in areas where this is unusual.
53. To effectively target communities the Council’s Events Team actively works alongside the Stronger Communities service to identify community groups that may benefit from cultural engagement. This could be communities with diverse demographics, or those that had not previously engaged with cultural events. This was especially true for those communities in eastern Middlesbrough.
54. External partners, including Cleveland Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner, also provide support and reinforce social and community cohesion. In order to maintain physical contact with the community a book has been created that included information for *Mela* related events, which was especially important for those without or limited access to online materials during the pandemic.

Best Practice - Christmas

55. The Council takes a more active role in the delivery of Christmas events, which can attract up to 20,000 visitors, such as the *The Magical Middlesbrough Parade*.

56. In a similar way to the *Mela*, the Council's Events Team work with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including those involved in the creative arts and Health and Safety to ensure event delivery was of a high quality and procedurally robust.
57. The Christmas markets are also a key feature of the Christmas events programme, which is largely delivered by an external provider with the fees generated used to invest in other events. Therefore, a suitable Christmas programme is required that supports retailers but would not cause visitors to gather in a central place. To this end, events like trails would be beneficial, but would also be dependent on the prevalence of Covid-19 during the winter period, and any mitigations introduced under either so-called Plan A or Plan B of the Government's Winter Plan.
58. The Orange Pip Market was another example of best practice cultural event delivered by the Council. Despite not being held in 2020 due to the pandemic, Orange Pip provided an opportunity for local trades to showcase their businesses and generate increased awareness of Middlesbrough's cultural and economic offer.
59. Clearly, the Council has a robust events programme that collectively brings both social and financial benefits. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that adaptation is paramount, and that exploration of alternative methods of delivery should be continuous.

TERM OF REFERENCE B

IN LIGHT OF COVID-19, EXPLORE DIFFERENT DELIVERY FORMATS TO UNDERSTAND IF FUTURE EVENTS CAN BE SUSTAINABLE IN A POST COVID-19 WORLD.

60. All organisations are susceptible to “shocks”, i.e. unknown events that can have detrimental impact on service delivery. These “shocks” can be short lived, but have long term effects. Ordinarily, Councils are assessed on their ability to withstand financial shocks, but the same principle can be applied to cultural events.
61. As described above; the covid pandemic revealed “shocks” that had not been considered before, and affected the very nature of how events are held and by extension how the local community is impacted.
62. The impact of Covid on the creative industries has been significant. It is estimated that, relative to the size of its Creative Industry Sector, the North East will suffer a 39% fall in Gross Value Added (GVA)¹² compared to 2019, the second highest affected region after Scotland as a whole.¹³
63. Holding events, whether they be physical or online, requires audiences to be happy to attend them. While social distancing restrictions are being relaxed nationally, there is still a need to be watchful of local covid rates and to consider residents’ feelings in this regard. The Events Team belonged to the Local Authority Events Organisers Group that benchmarked national trends and audience attitudes in this regard.
64. Research carried out by consultancy firm *Indigo* into audience attitude found that in May 2020 while 94% of respondents said they missed attending an event, only 19% said they would attend events simply because a venue re-opened, with three quarters stating they would feel safer with some form social distancing in place. During June and July 2020 66% of respondents said they would return to attending events provided some form of safety measure was in place.¹⁴
65. Moving forward events may need an element of Covid-19 compliance, but this would be dependent on the prevalence of Covid and any resulting restrictions. Socially distanced methods for holding events have already been used, including holding an outdoor theatre event during the summer of 2020. It was commented that this approach could be extended to other event types, with discussions to have an element of “drive through” events for the *Mela* in order to maintain social distancing.
66. Regardless, changes to event format in this context are limited to visitor restriction or reduction in scale, not examining different delivery methods. The Panel are conscious that this would not, and should not, be rushed as event delivery type can impact on an event’s financial viability and its community impact.

¹² Gross Value Added is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ [National Audience Research - After the Interval & Act 2 | Indigo \(indigo-ltd.com\)](#)

67. Interestingly, when gauging audience opinions toward online events, *Indigo* found 84% of respondents said they were interested in culture online, and more than half would pay for it.¹⁵
68. While technology enabling online events has been available for some time, doing so removes fundamental benefits events bring – such as social interaction and connectedness. Moving to online events does not simply require an internet connection. Instead, it requires input from the same creative industries that provide services for physical events. Sponsorship was still secured for those online events which meant financial support, albeit reduced, was still provided to the creative industry.
69. Moving to on-line event delivery has, to a point, proven to be successful. For example, a ticketed *Curious Arts* livestream event was held, whereby participants were asked to donate rather than pay an entry fee. The *Mela* had also moved to online, despite other *Mela* being cancelled, resulting in it being awarded the best online *Mela* in the UK in 2020.
70. Moving to on-line only events is not only unrealistic, but also unpalatable given the benefits events have for social interaction. However, remaining with physical only events may miss a key demographic and other potential benefits such as wider participation. As such, there needs to be way in which cultural events can synthesise the two.

Alternative event formats - eSports

71. Therefore, representatives from the British eSports Association (BEA) were invited to provide the Panel with information about eSports and what benefits events of this nature could bring. The BEA are a not-for-profit and had been in existence since 2016. One of their objectives is to promote eSports, foster British talent and raise awareness of the industry while illustrating the importance of eSports's potential cultural and commercial impacts. As part of this role the BEA acted as a sector specialist, although not a governing body, that advised a range of stakeholders such as parents, teachers and policy makers. The BEA was a member of different organisations including the Welsh Sports Association and the Creative Industries Federation.
72. ESports, or competitive computer gaming, was an example of cultural event that did not exist within the Council's established event portfolio. While eSports may not commonly be regarded as "cultural" events, the impact they have both socially and economically could potentially see them overtake more traditional events in terms of impact.
73. For both spectators and participants alike, the format of an eSports event encompasses both the physical and the virtual. For example, many eSports event are held in large venues and are broadcast both within the venue and wider via social media platforms (see image below).

¹⁵ Ibid



Figure 1.1 example of Redbull eSports event

74. Given the eSports sector was projected to have a global audience of approximately 645 million people by 2022 and a global revenue stream (not including video games) worth approximately \$950 million it has been seen as an irresistible force that could significantly enhance the Council's cultural offer.
75. Public access to eSports was arguably much easier than "traditional" events. For instance, because of social media platforms such as YouTube and Twitch viewers can observe or even participate in events individually or in large groups, similar to watching other sporting events. Indeed, it is argued that watching sporting events is an embedded part of our culture, allowing a shared experience that brought people together. ESports events were a continuation of this, albeit in a different format.
76. Many of the virtues of "traditional" events can be found in eSports, competitive video gaming was always human versus human, and often team versus team requiring a great deal of skill. As eSports was firmly a community based activity, videogames progressed to being an eSport when the gaming community decided to make it such.
77. Some video games were modern mind games, having rules, choice and consequences. Competitive gaming had various rewards including medals and cash prizes. Inclusivity played a key role in eSports; such as being gender neutral with just as many female participants as males globally.
78. ESports is a well-established phenomenon in the USA, Germany and South Korea and is recognised as an actual sport. However, this is not the case in the UK, but the eSports sector does have reporting channels to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

79. From an employability perspective; participation in eSports helps to reinforce life skills, or soft skills, such as communication, choice and consequence decisions, concentration and team work. Established career pathways were also forged with participation in eSports. For example, playing *Minecraft* and *Civilisation* can forge career paths into the intelligence services.¹⁶
80. Educationally, further education colleges are starting to introduce eSports courses to their curricula. The BEA had helped launched the British Esports Btech which explored how the industry worked from a content, creation and commercial perspective. The University of Staffordshire launched a Bachelor of Arts degree in eSports in 2018 with others following suit. Importantly, Teesside University launched its Master of Arts in eSports and Middlesbrough College also has an eSports component in some of its digital courses.¹⁷ ESports also contributed to important academic disciplines including computing, mathematics, engineering and the creatives industries.¹⁸
81. The Panel appreciates that by providing a wide range of eSports related academic qualifications their impact may be lessened, and employers in the digital sector may be more receptive to practical based experience. However, the Panel also recognise that academic degrees in eSports is not only about becoming a professional video gamer. Instead such qualifications examined wider aspects of eSports, such as how the digital industry worked and its business and commercial elements.
82. There are of course benefits and risks associated with eSports, and both should be considered carefully. It should also be borne in mind the Panel's investigation is associated with cultural events and not video gaming per se. As such any associated risks should be viewed through this lens. However, given the symbiosis between eSports and video gaming it would be remiss of the Panel not at least reference some those risks as well as benefits.
83. There is a perception that eSports participants are actually de-skilling. However, research has been carried out demonstrating that participation with video gaming enhanced certain skill sets such as spatial working, memory retention and verbal reasoning.¹⁹ It also contributed to improved mental health which was especially important during the Covid pandemic. This applied to both young and old people as older people playing video games had showed improved memory function which also assisted with dementia prevention.
84. With any event there are associated risks that need to be managed and eSports is not immune to this. High profile examples of risks include age appropriate games and exposure to inappropriate content for younger gamers. Ultimately, there will always be loopholes in systems designed to protect against such thing. However, games used in eSports were vetted and only appropriate games are used for competitions. Where events are held in physical locations more rigorous checks, including ID requirements, are carried out.
85. Another significant risk associated with eSports and video gaming more generally, was the perception of a sedentary lifestyle that discourages physical activity. Naturally, this could have negative health implications. It cannot be disputed that health risks exist with excessive video gaming. Like any other activity it is important to achieve a healthy balance

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ [Advice and information - British Esports Association](#)

between participation and non-participation. While in its infancy, technology was advancing to the point of wear-ability that allows participants to become physically involved in game-play. While mainstream use of this technology needs further development it could potentially be used during eSports events.

86. Like all cultural events social wellbeing is also a key consideration. In a similar vein to perceptions of video gamers leading sedentary lives, it is easy to draw parallels between video-gaming and negative cultural developments such as violent behaviours. While some studies show video-gaming can lead, in some cases, to aggressive behaviours studies from the American Psychology Association argue that “violence begets violence, not watching it on TV or play acting in a video game”²⁰ and that violence is exacerbated when there are underlying conditions. However, it is well documented that debates surrounding this have been going on for considerable time with no definitive conclusion.
87. Controls do exist that can achieve this balance, and while not infallible a degree of user responsibility should be expected, whether this be parental responsibility for younger participants or not.
88. There are, however, many social benefits that eSports related events could bring, including acting as an engine for social mobility, in the same way that professional football was based on talent. Video gaming generally is very diverse drawing on different groups in equal measure as well geographically equal and not concentrated in certain areas. Nevertheless, access to eSports does have its own obstacles, namely dependence on ownership of relevant technology, such as games consoles which could be expensive.
89. ESports as a cultural event has not fully taken hold within Local Authorities, but this is not due to a reluctance to hold them. Instead, the BEA has been more focussed on facilitating large scale championship tournaments. However, there is no reason why some kind of eSports event could not take place in Middlesbrough. For example, there would be no need for specific considerations required for it size, but having stable networks and the potential to stream the event to social media was important. While exact costs would be dependent on scale, such an event could be achieved at relatively low cost.

²⁰ Kotecha, S “Doctor claims video games 'don't lead to violence'” BBC News 6 October 2010 [Doctor claims video games 'don't lead to violence' - BBC News](#)

TERM OF REFERENCE C

HOW CULTURAL EVENTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO WIDER ECONOMIC INITIATIVES IN MIDDLESBROUGH.

90. The creative industries contributed £111.7bn to the UK's economy in 2018 (accounting for 5.8% of the UK GVA) and realising growth of 7.4% in the same period which was five times the rate of growth experienced by the entire UK economy.²¹ With such significant financial impacts it would be prudent for the Council to try and capitalise on that growth.
91. The extent of the economic benefits brought by cultural events will depend on scale. However, all events can see one, or all, of the following economic impacts;
- Tourism and Trade; whereby visitors can not only attend the event but also visit other attractions and spend money in other sectors by extension.
 - Infrastructure; (for larger events) potential improvements to venue or transport improvements
 - Image; possibly the most difficult to achieve events have the opportunity to improve a host area's image.²²
92. The task of measuring the economic impact of cultural events is not easy. Indeed, at the macro level it involves measuring,
- “...the total amount of additional money injected into a defined area, as a consequence of staging the event. Economic Impact studies seek to establish the net change in a host economy – in other words, money inflows and outflows within a defined geographical area measured to establish the resulting net outcome.”²³
93. Despite this challenge, the role the cultural bloc plays in wider economic initiatives and objectives should not be underestimated. Locally, a prime example of this was Middlesbrough's success in securing £14.1 million as part of the second round of the Future High Street Fund. By creating a synergy between regeneration developments and changing how cultural events are delivered could result in significant cultural and financial improvements.
94. As described in Terms of Reference A, the economic benefits of “traditional” cultural events such as the *Mela* and *Orange Pip* are understood whether that be from visitor spend, employability or supply chain perspectives.
95. If different event formats, such as eSports, are to be explored it would prudent to examine how they could inform economic initiatives and help drive financial development. There are several national and international examples of how eSports, and the digital industries actively contribute to local economies.
96. Internationally, eSports had been transformative in the Polish town Katowice. Traditionally, Katowice's economic base was mining, however after this faltered there was a desire to

²¹ “The projected economic impact of covid-19 on the uk creative industries” Oxford Economics (<https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/recent-releases/The-Projected-Economic-Impact-of-COVID-19-on-the-UK-Creative-Industries>)

²² Ibid

²³ “Economic Impacts” *The International Association of Event Hosts* <https://www.eventhosts.org/>

build alternatives with eSports largely filling the economic void. For example, from a single event (the *Intel Extreme Masters*) it is estimated that visitors spend on average 628PLN if they have accommodation, or 148PLN without.²⁴ In this example, the rate of spend per visitor should be considered rather than direct comparisons of spending power between the Polish zloty and Pound Sterling.

97. Catalonia in Spain is sometimes cited as the capital of European eSports, with a sector turnover of €430million, employing over 3,000 people, home to 145 digital companies and hold events attracting more than 20,000 spectators.²⁵
98. While not formally recognised “entities” as such, there are 12 digital clusters around the UK that ordinarily exist around colleges or university’s offering digital courses and digital industries growing around them. An example is Dundee in Scotland whose traditional industry had been Marmalade manufacture but now has a significant digital sector due to its University offering excellent digital courses. There was no specific requirement for digital clusters to be created, but given Teesside University and Middlesbrough College offer robust digital courses, there is no reason that Middlesbrough could not develop a digital cluster for the Tees Valley.
99. In a similar vein to the benefits brought about by traditional events, leisure venues associated with eSports have increased in number, such as eSports bars. The BEA also carried out extensive work in Sheffield contributing to the creation of the National Video Games Museum to understand how its creation would impact on have the local economy.
100. It is important to realise that Middlesbrough already has a framework that could help and support eSports, whether that be small scale cultural events or larger scale digital initiatives. For example, there are three leading video game companies based in Middlesbrough; *Radical Forge*, *Double Eleven* and *Soft Monkey* which employed approximately 200 people combined.
101. While eSports events would be relatively new to Middlesbrough, they would not be the first example of digital initiatives in the town. For example, the Animex Festival, hosted by Teesside University, which showcases the latest developments in computer game design and other digital initiatives has been long established.
102. Indeed, the Panel were encouraged to hear that plans to bring the Animex Festival to the Town Hall had been discussed and that moves to make the event town-wide rather than campus specific were quite advanced. As such the Panel was hopeful these plans would come to fruition as soon as possible. The Panel were also reassured that holding an eSports event in the Town Hall would not be a significant step.

CONCLUSIONS

102. Despite limited resources, the Council and its Events Team continue to provide a robust events programme that appeals to wide audience base and actively contributes to the

²⁴ [Katowice: A City in Poland Became the World Esports Capital \[Case Study\] \(prow.ly.com\)](#)

²⁵ [Discover the vibrant Mobile and Videogames Industry in Catalonia](#)

Council's strategic objectives, such as its aim, "to invest in our existing cultural assets, create new spaces and events and improve access to culture."²⁶

103. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that adaptability to changing circumstances should be key feature of any activity, and cultural events are not immune to this.
104. While evidence is limited, owing to methodological difficulties, evidence suggests that audiences for Middlesbrough cultural events tend to be drawn from within local boundaries.
105. Although difficult to quantify in certain regards, the impact of cultural events both socially and financially should not be underestimated. Their role in wider initiatives outside of their immediate remit is also important, as help to tangibly demonstrate economic vibrancy.
106. The benefits events have are crucial for people's wellbeing, now more than ever. There has been a prolonged period of social disconnectedness due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Cultural events are key vehicles that can be used to bring people together. The pandemic has forced exploration of events being delivered on-line in an effort to maintain social connectivity, a move that was sympathetic to audience opinion. However, on-line events will only partly remedy social connectedness.
107. Middlesbrough has continued to develop, and excel at, events that do not ordinarily sit with its "traditional" heritage base, namely the *Mela*.
108. Collaborative working is crucial both for the survival and development of cultural events. Without input from public sector organisations and private sector investment, Middlesbrough's cultural events programme would not be possible.
109. While social distancing measures are being relaxed, there may be a proportion of the Council's audience base that continues to feel apprehensive about returning to events without any form of Covid-19 secure practices.
110. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that continuing cultural event delivery in its "traditional" format may not be possible, or even appealing. However, it is appreciated that any moves to alter that format may require investment.
111. While the Covid-19 pandemic may have accelerated increased moves to an on-line presence, this may have been an inevitability regardless of the pandemic.
112. While not the only alternative cultural event format; eSports is a burgeoning industry that encompasses many of the benefits other cultural events bring such as social interaction (via physical spaces) and inclusivity (via on-line presence).
113. There may be a temptation to explore different event formats as a stop-gap measure to counter the impact of the Covid-Pandemic. However, alternative event formats such as eSports should not be seen as transient.

²⁶ Middlesbrough Council Strategic Plan 2021-24 p10

RECOMMENDATIONS

114. As a result of the information received, and based on the conclusions above, the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel's recommendations for consideration are as follows:
- 1) To enhance and strengthen community cohesion, cultural events traditionally held in the town centre should be delivered within communities where possible. Ideally this should take place with at least some elements of the Christmas 2021 celebrations.
 - 2) Given its growing cultural and financial significance the Council should work with relevant third parties, including charities and the private sector, to introduce eSports as a regular and high profile cultural event. Where possible this should relate to wider leisure initiatives the Council is currently involved in.
 - 3) Future leisure developments in the town centre should look to include opportunities for associated hospitality venues, such as an eSports business.
 - 4) In order to attract a wider audience; the Council should continue to work with Teesside University so that the Town Hall can be used as a venue for the Animex Festival, ideally for the event held in 2022.
 - 5) To attract audiences that sit outside Middlesbrough's local boundaries; the events team should explore how to exploit virtual event delivery by having an on-line component.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel would like to thank the following for their assistance with its work:

Andy Payne (Chair of BEA)
Alice Lehman (Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer for BEA)
Gary Tibbett (Education Manager BEA)
Richard Horniman (Director of Regeneration and Culture)
Sam Gilmore (Head of Development)
Lisa Bean (Middlesbrough Council Creative Programme Manager)
Naweed Hussain (Chair of the Mela Management Committee)

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- British ESports Association – <https://britishesports.org/>
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England makes the case for why smaller towns should amp up and promote their arts offerings.” Artnet News <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/study-on-art-and-a-sense-of-place-1634866>

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- Oxford Economics, “the projected economic impact of Covid-19 on the UK creative industries” July 2020
- UK Government “Culture Recovery Fund” <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/culture-recovery-board>

ACRONYMS

- BEA – British ESports Association
- TVCA – Tees Valley Combined Authority

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.

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CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

EVENTS – ACTION PLAN

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	POST TITLE	BUDGET COST	TIMESCALE
<p>a) To enhance and strengthen community cohesion, cultural events traditionally held in the town centre should be delivered within communities where possible. Ideally, this should take place with at least some elements of the Christmas 2021 celebrations.</p>	<p>The events team will work with organisers of The Middlesbrough Mela, Diwali, Eid, Armed forces Day, The Nagar Kirtan and Christmas to ensure that they grow to include an arm of out of town participation with their delivery program.</p>	<p>Deputy Head of Culture, Middlesbrough Council</p>	<p>No additional direct costs at this stage</p>	<p>Annual cycle of event planning</p>
<p>b) Given its growing cultural and financial significance, the Council should work with relevant third parties, including charities and the private sector, to introduce eSports as a regular and high profile cultural event. Where possible this should relate to wider leisure initiatives the Council is currently involved in.</p>	<p>Working with the Teesside University The events team propose to hold an ESports forum to develop knowledge and understanding of what the local need and interest in Esports is.</p> <p>The forums purpose will be to engage local businesses and organisations interested in developing ESports locally.</p> <p>An action plan will be developed in partnership with newly identified stakeholders which takes steps to imbed the activity locally</p>	<p>Deputy Head of Culture, Middlesbrough Council</p>	<p>No additional direct costs at this stage</p>	<p>January 2022</p>

<p>c) Future leisure developments in the town centre should look to include opportunities for associated hospitality venues, such as an eSports business</p>	<p>The Head of Culture will work with the Head of Economic Growth to maximise these opportunities on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>Head of Culture, Middlesbrough Council</p>	<p>No additional direct costs</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>d) In order to attract a wider audience; the Council should continue to work with Teesside University so that the Town Hall can be used as a venue for the Animex Festival, ideally for the event held in 2022.</p>	<p>The next Animex will take place 16 – 20th May 2022. Its program will be a hybrid of in person and digital delivery formats.</p> <p>A program of activity has been agreed between MTH and TU.</p>	<p>Deputy Head of Culture, Middlesbrough Council</p>	<p>No additional direct costs</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>e) To attract audiences that sit outside Middlesbrough’s local boundaries; the events team should explore how to exploit virtual event delivery by having an on-line component.</p>	<p>Local History Month and Discover Middlesbrough Festival will continue to have a dual delivery format.</p> <p>Facebook live will be utilised to stream elements of free and unticketed festivals.</p> <p>Content created specifically for digital delivery will be factored into cultural programming across the service including, Middlesbrough Town Hall, Middlesbrough Theatre, Middlesbrough Museums and Archives.</p>	<p>Deputy Head of Culture, Middlesbrough Council</p>	<p>No additional direct costs at this stage</p>	<p>Annual cycle of event planning</p>

Report of:	Richard Horniman, Director of Regeneration and Culture Cllr Eric Polano, Executive Member For Regeneration
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Submitted to:	Executive – 11 January 2022
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Subject:	Final Report of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel - Middlesbrough Regeneration Post COVID-19 - Service Response.
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)	
It is recommended that the Executive:	
a) approve the service response, and associated actions to the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.	

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
<i>Decision</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>No</i>

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
<i>The response to Covid 19 is driven by economic development opportunities which create and protect employment opportunities within Middlesbrough.</i>	<i>Key economic growth initiatives aim to transform Middlesbrough’s economy and diversify the economic base, making Middlesbrough a more attractive place to live, work and visit.</i>	<i>The service response will support Middlesbrough as an attractive place to invest, enabling good conditions to do business, with a strong pipeline of skills and talent.</i>

Ward(s) affected
The wards affected are townwide.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. This report seeks Executive approval of the services response and action plan relating to the recent final report of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – investigating Middlesbrough Regeneration post covid-19.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The proposal affects more than two wards and is therefore considered a key decision requiring approval by the Executive.
3. The Scrutiny Panel report includes recommendations, and arising actions, which require Executive consideration.

Background

4. During a number of sessions in 2021, the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel gathered information in relation to Middlesbrough Council's current plans for the regeneration of the town, as well as considering current and planned legislation and other initiatives which might impact on these plans.
5. These sessions explored major regeneration initiatives including:
 - a) Middlesbrough's programme for the Future High Streets Fund;
 - b) Middlesbrough's programme for the Towns Fund;
 - c) The Masterplan for Middlehaven;
 - d) Waltham Forest Council's Mini Holland and Liveable Neighbourhoods Programmes;
 - e) The Highways and Infrastructure Local Implementation Plan (LIP);
 - f) Broadband, Communications and CityFibre;
 - g) Housing Local Plan/Planning Reforms/Business and Planning Act 2020; and,
 - h) Business Support and Recovery during the Covid 19 Pandemic.
6. The Scrutiny Panel recommended seven actions for further consideration. They include:
 - A. Whenever opportunities arise, and in line with the hierarchy of need identified in the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), the Council should seek to ensure that it is easier, safer and more convenient to walk, cycle or use public transport, rather than travelling by car by:**
 - i. Providing additional cycle routes.**
 - ii. Implementing traffic free zones.**
 - iii. Working with public transport operators to increase local provision.**
 - iv. Reviewing existing road networks to identify particular instances of traffic congestion at peak times and address these through the LIP to encourage further economic growth.**

Service Response A:

7. The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) provides the framework for new and complementary highways improvements, particularly with respect to the hierarchy of need. Funding secured from Tees Valley Combined Authority has enabled plans for enhanced cycle routes along Linthorpe road corridor and this will be implemented during 2022. Similarly, Future High Streets Fund resources have been allocated to further improve and extend this type of amenity along Grange road and Albert road, linking in with major network improvements in Middlehaven and around the rail station.
8. The LIP provides a reference frameworks for housing developers and provides the key reference document for Middlesbrough Council when shaping its own capital allocations and seeking external funding support. Strategic routes are regularly reviewed across Middlesbrough and this includes how active travel and public transport networks can be regularly improved. The Local Plan review, and preparation of masterplans, provides an opportunity to ensure that such network improvements are incorporated and integrated within developments from the outset. As such they will become a key component in assessing development proposals and planning applications.
9. Lobbying will continue with public transport operators to ensure that Middlesbrough is well serviced and that a comprehensive service is delivered. However, public transport operators have complete autonomy when it comes to delivering routes and are unlikely to deliver non-economic services. Having said that, the Council controls an element of subsidy for certain purposes and this, along with robust data and demand indicators will be used to encourage public transport providers to invest in routes and services.

B. Whilst it is acknowledged that there have been a number of impacts on the approval and publication of Middlesbrough's revised Housing Local Plan due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scrutiny Panel asks the Executive to ensure that the revised Local Plan is adopted as soon as practicable and by no later than March 2022.

Service Response B:

10. The Local Plan review timetable has slipped as a consequence of a number of factors including having to deal with the consequences of Covid-19 in particular with regards to collecting evidence and undertaking engagement. This timetable is currently being reviewed and it is anticipated that a revised timetable will be published early 2022. The Local Plan has to go through a number of statutory stages in its preparation and adoption. Given these it is not possible for the Plan to be adopted by March 2022.
11. The adopted Local Plan remains a valid document that has considerable weight in the decision making process. This has been borne out by recent Appeal decisions published by the Planning Inspectorate. This provides an opportunity for officers to take a much fuller approach, and consideration, to tackling the impacts of Covid-19 upon the Town, its economy and its people in reviewing the current plan. This will enable a more robust and fit for purpose plan to be prepared.

C. In line with the Middlesbrough Council's ambition for the town to be net carbon neutral by 2039, use the Middlehaven developments as an opportunity to explore, promote and encourage the use of green renewable energy both with Developers and as a selling point for potential investors.

Service Response C:

12. Carbon Neutrality and climate change are anticipated to be of significant importance to the demographic of people who will be interested in urban living in Middlesbrough. Developments will be delivered to the highest achievable standard and in line with all extant planning and building control regulations. It is anticipated that green energy and efficiency will be of significant importance.
13. Towns Fund financial support for developments will be governed by expectations of the highest achievable design quality and environmental credentials. This will be a condition of financial support.

D. Consideration should be given to extending the Urban Pioneers Scheme, or encouraging similar developments, to provide more live/work accommodation in Middlesbrough, given the shift to increased home working during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Service Response D:

14. Live / work accommodation will be encouraged as part of residential development at Middlehaven. Schemes such as urban Pioneers have been difficult to progress with individuals as the knowledge and capacity for self-designing a property is often limited. However, modern urban living is likely to include a component of live .work.
15. The Boho area in particular seeks a campus feel with space for collaboration and coworking. The demand for commercial space remains strong, indeed it is thought that an element of work-from-home fatigue is developing, albeit working from home needs to remain a key option for future pandemic control.
16. The extent of live / work units in Middlehaven will, ultimately, be a function of market forces, albeit provision of office / workspace is a common feature in designs.

E. The Council should ensure that green spaces around the Middlehaven developments are regularly maintained and attractive to prospective new residents and businesses. One suggestion is that hard-standing surfaces or laybys are built into development masterplans rather having grassed verges. This could also save the Council expenditure on maintenance of and/or repair of more traditional grassed surfaces next to roadways.

Service Response E:

17. The developments at Middlehaven will be established with regard to green space and surroundings. Many of the developments are likely to be subject to funded management and maintenance regimes by way of service charges to businesses and, where appropriate, fees to tenants in shared accommodation.

18. The most appropriate design and maintenance treatments will be designed with respect to best practice and planning policies. Developers will be encouraged to meet high standards of design and functional maintenance for long term sustainability and affordability.

F. The Council could consider collaborating with the local community to encourage ownership and maintenance of public spaces (if appropriate) in Middlehaven to promote pride in the area.

Service Response F:

19. Where appropriate, it may be possible for certain property owners and groups to actively adopt certain areas for ownership and maintenance. In practice, however, this is likely to be limited to specific property owners acting on behalf of residents or registered social landlords such as Thirteen Group.

G. By working closely with Broadband Providers, the Council should seek to ensure that all areas of Middlesbrough can have access to superfast broadband by 2025 at the latest, and that residents and businesses are not disadvantaged by lack of provision given the increased reliance on digital technologies post-pandemic.

Service Response G:

20. Council officers will continue to liaise with providers and lobby for the best provision possible, for both businesses and residents. Provision of broadband is a private sector-led supply chain and there are no powers to demand specific levels of provision for a given area or service.
21. The service will work closely with Tees Valley Combined Authority and services providers such as CityFibre, to make a compelling case for comprehensive service coverage across all of Middlesbrough.

H. The Council should consider developing a multi-purpose venue in the town, which can accommodate entertainment. A venue which attracts the best entertainers in the world will encourage people from across the UK to visit the area, stay and spend, boosting the local economy. The Captain Cook Shopping Centre would be an ideal location for an eSports gaming venue as evidenced by the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel in a recent Final Report on Cultural Events.

Service Response H:

22. The Regeneration directorate sees significant value in leisure facilities, as a way of enhancing and diversifying the economic offer of central Middlesbrough; and this accords with the strategic plan objectives. Captain Cook Square is actively engaging an esports gaming venue, with announcements anticipated imminently.
23. Middlehaven also lends itself to a multi-purpose venue and the feasibility of such activity is being worked upon presently. Any leisure uses or multi-purpose venues in Middlehaven must be carefully balance as to add value and not to detract from the town centre offer, this includes maintaining the viability of assets including Captain Cook Square, Middlesbrough Theatre and the Town Hall venue. The

findings of a feasibility study would inform next steps in terms of progressing a business case proposal for development or external funding support.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

24. It is recommended that Executive:

- a) approve the service response, and associated actions to the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

Why is this being recommended?

25. The delivery of the objectives outlined by the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel are consistent with, and form part of the work programme for, the departmental objectives for Regeneration.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

26. The other potential decisions that have not been recommended include:

- a) Do nothing. This is not recommended, as much of the activity outlined by the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel is planned as part of established service delivery priorities.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

27. The Local Plan is subject to planning legislation and compliance with The Business and Planning Act 2020.

Financial

28. The actions outlined will not require additional resources above approved budgets or external funding settlements.

Policy Framework

29. The decisions recommended within this report align fully with the Council's policy framework.

Equality and Diversity

30. It is not anticipated that any groups with protected characteristics will be impacted upon negatively as a result of implementing the Scrutiny Panel Recommendations.

Risk

31. Any matters arising will be delivered in line with the Council's established risk management protocols. Appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure that all risks associated with the scheme are minimised.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

32. Council officers will deliver and monitor the actions as at appendix B

Appendices

33. Appendix A – Final report of the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – investigating Middlesbrough Regeneration post covid-19.

34. Appendix B – action plan

Background papers

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

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

FINAL REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL – MIDDLESBROUGH REGENERATION POST COVID-19

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AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. The aim of the investigation was to determine ways in which Middlesbrough Council can support the regeneration of the town physically, economically and socially, following the Covid-19 pandemic.

MAYOR'S PRIORITIES

2. The scrutiny of this topic fits within the following of the Mayor's Priorities:

Covid-19 Recovery: We will ensure the recovery of local communities, businesses and the Council's operations from COVID-19, taking opportunities to build back better.

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 2021-2024¹:
 - People - working with communities and other public services to improve the lives of our residents.
 - Place - securing improvements in Middlesbrough's housing, infrastructure and attractiveness, improving the town's reputation, creating opportunities for local people and improving our finances.
 - Business - promoting investment in Middlesbrough's economy and making sure we work as effectively as possible to support our ambitions for People and Place.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

4. The terms of reference for the scrutiny panel's review are:
 - A) To examine Middlesbrough Council's current proposals for the regeneration of the town including plans for retail, leisure, housing, urban living, education, enterprise, communication, transport and connectivity.
 - B) To investigate what resources will be required to implement proposed regeneration schemes and what contributions are available and/or required from Central Government, Middlesbrough Council, the private sector and other stakeholders.
 - C) To consider the role and engagement of local communities in shaping a sustainable future for Middlesbrough that will drive social and economic growth and improve the health and well-being of residents.

¹ Middlesbrough Council's Strategic Plan 2021-2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. In line with the terms of reference, the Scrutiny Panel gathered information in relation to Middlesbrough Council's current plans for the regeneration of the town, as well as considering current and planned legislation and other initiatives which might impact on these plans.

6. **Future High Streets Fund**

In late summer 2019 an opportunity arose for town centres that were suffering slow decline to apply to a competitive process from the Government. Middlesbrough submitted an initial expression of interest to the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). The programme nationally is worth £3.6 billion and includes the Towns Fund as a national programme. The FHSF is a discreet competitive process on its own. Approximately one hundred towns were invited to develop a business case on how their town centre can be transformed in light of changes in the sector, the increase in online purchasing, and changing uses in the town centre environment in general.

7. Since 2019, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the issues town centres are already facing. However, the general principle of the FHSF is to encourage towns to invest on a structural rather than cosmetic basis, in terms of how the purpose of the town centre will function in future. Whilst retail will always form a large component of what happens in town centres, it is under distress in terms of the costs of maintaining a physical presence in the town centre compared to online retailers.

8. The way consumers live and work in town centres has changed over the last twenty years and the rise of out-of-town shopping centres and commercial parks has slowly drained footfall away from the town centre. Consumers are now more engaged by an experience-led economy, where they can go out and shop, eat, and visit a cinema or see a theatre show as part of an all-day event.

9. Middlesbrough currently has major oversupply of retail space which is spread over four disparate owners, and is fragmented in its ownership across the town. A long-term consequence of over-supply, which leads to competitive rents, is that landlords and owners cannot invest further in their properties as they are not making sufficient income from tenants.

10. The proportionate floor space in terms of residential uses is quite low in the town centre area, and leisure uses are similarly under-represented. Notwithstanding the Covid-19 pandemic, there is still a strong appetite in the market and other community and commercial uses.

11. There is a national ambition to bring residential offers into town centres and planning regulations have been adopted to allow for ease of conversion of retail units. The focus is on bringing a new workforce with disposable income into the town centre environment. The average worker coming into the town centre spends approximately £20 per day.

12. Middlesbrough's bid is based on the Town Centre Strategy that was developed in 2018/19. Urban living in the town centre, curtilage, and immediate environs of the town centre forms a large part of the bid. This will drive in immediate footfall in terms of the residents and enliven the area, as well as providing an element of passive surveillance, which will reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in the long term.
13. The slow decline of the high street would have occurred over 5 to 10 years but the pandemic had changed that scenario. Distress in the retail market had accelerated and a faster response was required. Diversification was required to bring town centres into the centre of communities - as had been the case historically. Town centres originally emerged as a centre for people gathering, trading, doing business and social community functions.
14. There is a focus on converting some of the retail floor space into a leisure- dominated facility. In 2020, the Council purchased the Captain Cook Shopping Centre and the iconic House of Fraser building for the purpose of long-term intervention in the market, to enable the restriction of the supply of retail floor space, and to encourage a dedicated and focussed leisure hub at the centre of Middlesbrough, as a way to drive up footfall and sustain the existing retail environment.
15. A report submitted to Middlesbrough Council's Executive on 13 April 2021 highlighted: *"Since the announcement of the purchase of the Captain Cook Shopping Centre, the asset has been inundated with interest from many regional and national leisure operators. This has been extremely positive, particularly as interest has remained strong in the wake of COVID. The operators remain optimistic about underlying market conditions and have bought into Middlesbrough's vision. Many investors appreciate the opportunities available due to the FHSF and this further incentivises operators to relocate in the centre."*²
16. According to the report, dialogue has commenced with a number of operators, including proposals for:
 - Bowling alley with associated multi-use leisure attractions.
 - Boutique cinema.
 - Multi-leisure venue.
 - Small-medium scale Breweries.
 - Restaurants and eateries, with proposals to maximise outdoor space.
 - Hosting event(s) – temporary/seasonal usage for central square area.
17. On 21 January 2021, EDEI Scrutiny Panel members attended a presentation from the Chief Executive of the British Esports Association and the Chairman of the Advisory Board to the British Esports Association at a meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel. Esports is organised competitive video gaming and is projected to have a global audience of approximately 645 million people by 2022. Leisure venues associated

² Future High Streets Fund - Town Centre Property and Asset Management (PART A)
- Report to Middlesbrough Council Executive – 13 April 2021

with Esports, such as Esports Bars are continuing to increase in number and could be considered for Middlesbrough's leisure offer.

18. Some existing retailers have expressed interest in re-sizing or re-leasing in smaller units. With a higher than the national average vacancy rate across the town of approximately 18% in retail floor space, this approach will help to reduce the amount of vacancies in the town. This in turn will lead to a healthier environment, stabilise rents in the long term, and encourage owners to re-invest in their properties and ultimately halt the long-term decline of the town centre.
19. The most recent research by the British Retail Consortium (BRC)-Local Data Company Vacancy Monitor (LDC) found in late April that the UK's overall retail vacancy rate increased to 14.1% in the first quarter of 2021, marking a 1.9% rise from the same period last year. The vacancy rate was also up from the 13.7% recorded in the final quarter of 2020 and marks three consecutive years of increased retail vacancies.³
20. The FHSF programme also considers infrastructure: how cycle routes, bus super stops and Covid-19 network adaptations such as pavement widening, can be incorporated. Other measures include improved security and CCTV in car parks and along connecting routes and some modern automated features like the contactless car parking and pay on exit.
21. Since submitting the initial expression of interest, the effect of Covid-19 and the restrictions that have been placed on the leisure and hospitality trades has been reflected in the proposals. Sector specialists are confident that these markets will return as restrictions ease over time and the virus is controlled. There is a three-year timescale for delivery of the FHSF and the timing of a new leisure hub is not at odds with the cycle of the pandemic. People still want an experience-led economy and there is interest from service providers in the leisure sector to be part of this hub in the longer term. In general terms, Middlesbrough is well under-represented in hospitality and leisure as a proportion of its footfall and its demographic and scale. Ten percent of the town centre floor space is dedicated to leisure and those activities, and the industry norm is about 20% of a town centre.
22. Consideration is also being given as to how a range of community services, cultural events and amenities can be integrated into the high street environment. How vacant properties in the street scene can be animated to ensure people have visual stimulus and a pleasant experience, rather than just coming to an area to be transactional, or for work or retail.
23. The original programme has been adapted to look at direct intervention with businesses and existing retailers and any new retailers, for Covid-19 mitigation and preparedness. Businesses are keen to invest in the area but with the experience of Covid-19 and any future pandemic, there needs to be built-in resilience to ensure businesses are best

³ <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2021/05/how-a-rise-in-retail-vacancies-can-affect-the-uks-high-streets/>

structured and physically configured to be able to trade safely through any period of lockdown.

24. Footfall from the Centre Square Office lettings will be extremely well received in the town centre. The presence of the Northern School of Arts in the town centre and the expansion of Middlesbrough College and new developments in Middlehaven, will also assist in giving the future economy the best possible chance of succeeding.
25. The focus is on a relatively tight high street area, which is defined locally, and is around the Captain Cook Shopping Centre feeding into the Linthorpe Road area and then picking up the House of Fraser area, so the vast majority of investment will fall within that boundary. With the urban living agenda and the options there, there is a 300 to 400 metre radius which is the area of influence, at which those housing developments will drive footfall for the area.
26. Middlesbrough Council submitted a bid for £20.5m to the FHSF was awarded £14.1m. Following the final sign off from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and approval and endorsement from the Council's Executive on 27 May 2021, it is anticipated that delivery will commence early in the 2021/22 financial year. A breakdown of the funding for the proposed projects is as follows:
- Conversion of Captain Cook Square to a leisure hub £9,100,000.
 - Boho residential gap funding 2,500,000.
 - Residential gap funding £1,000,000.
 - Pavement widening and trading adaptations £500,000.
 - Safety, security and cashless town centre £300,000.
 - Covid-19 Grants £250,000.
 - Cycling infrastructure £250,000.
 - Events infrastructure £125,000.
 - Interactive cultural installations £70,352.
 - Centralising cultural assets £75,000.

27. **Towns Fund**

The Towns Fund was announced at approximately the same time as the Future High Streets Fund in 2019. The Towns Fund is a much broader and town-wide approach in terms of how local decision-making and the involvement of communities can influence investment in those areas that are of importance to the local economy and for local people. The Council submitted a bid for £25 million and has been awarded £21.9 million.

28. Principally Middlesbrough's eligibility is based on indices of multiple deprivation and the characteristics of its resident population. Equally, Middlesbrough still had to make a strong case encompassing some of the changes that were required in the local economy and bringing the local community into active participation in the design and engagement of some of the funding programmes.

29. There are five main themes in the Towns Fund: Transport and Connectivity, Urban Communities and Place-making, the Middlesbrough Experience, Building a Knowledge Economy and Enterprise Infrastructure.
- Transport and Connectivity - making sure that people could get to and from where they need to be within Middlesbrough.
 - Urban Communities - bringing urban and town centre areas together and making them into communities.
 - Middlesbrough Experience - making Middlesbrough the key destination in the Tees Valley.
 - Knowledge Economy - engaging with Teesside University, Middlesbrough College and other training providers and education institutions.
 - Enterprise Infrastructure - building meaningful and long-term employment and making a thriving commercial environment.
30. A Town Deal Board has been established and includes in its membership, both Middlesbrough MPs, the Tees Valley Mayor, the Mayor of Middlesbrough, the Vice Chancellor of Teesside University, the Chief Executive of Middlesbrough College and stakeholders, business leaders and partners from across Middlesbrough and the Tees Valley. The Board has agreed a Town Investment Plan which details how the economy will be reshaped, where investments will be targeted as a Local Authority, through third parties, and as Tees Valley investors, in order to achieve common aims by 2030.
31. The Towns Deal Board has several themed groups and is the decision making body to steer the investment of the Towns Deal funding and any other future private investment or funding. The minutes of all Board meetings are public and available online.
32. Allocation of the Towns Fund has been agreed by the Board as follows:
- Transport and Connectivity:
- No funding allocated.
- Urban Communities and Place Making:
- Boho Towers (100 residential units) £2,000,000.
 - Boho Village (circa 60 residential units) £500,000.
 - CIAC 2, Middlehaven Dockside (80 residential units) £1,000,000.
 - Middlehaven Dockside (south side) (200 residential units) £3,000,000.
 - Office Conversions (500 converted residential units) £1,875,000.
 - Shepherdson Way/Teardrop Site, Middlehaven (170 residential units) £2,500,000.
 - Wood Street Car Park (circa 200 apartments/potential hotel development) £3,000,000.

The Middlesbrough Experience:

- Cargo Fleet Nature Reserve £100,000.
- East Middlesbrough/Southlands Centre Community Hub/Nunthorpe Community Hub (development of new community facilities) £1,250,000. The funding was split £500,000 for the Southlands and £750,000 for Nunthorpe with other funding aligned to it.
- Ward Initiatives £1,000,000.

Building a Knowledge Economy:

- Middlesbrough College (expansion and creation of town centre presence) £1,175,000.

Enterprise Infrastructure:

- Old Town Hall/former Captain Cook Public House (renovation/restoration) £1,000,000.
- Centre Square (office development/residential) £2,000,000.
- Boho Campus – amphitheatre and plaza £750,000.
- Conversion Queens Square/former Kalinka's (office space) match funding: £750,000.
- Boho 8 £1,000,000 (advance settlement received in 2020). The advance settlement had to be spent by the end of the calendar year and the Boho Site was the only project ready to move forward.

33. The Towns Fund also focusses on the community and meeting community needs and a large part of the fund will be diverted to community uses and facilities. The Council is keen to encourage local decision-making and participatory budgeting. This will involve people at ward level, stakeholders, and community, addressing issues of immediate local importance, with a budget of up to £50,000 per ward.
34. Both programmes will be overseen by the Town Deal Board, to ensure that the Board has an understanding of both funding programmes since there is overlap in many of the projects. The business cases for the Towns Fund projects will be developed over the next twelve months and the Government has provided the opportunity to make adaptations in light of the covid-19 pandemic. Both Programmes rely on a large amount of public sector leverage, so some Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) projects, particularly in terms of the transport elements, have been aligned for that. Where gap funding is involved there will be some public sector involvement to complete projects and ensure a return for every public sector pound spent.
35. The programmes are based on public engagement and well established strategic priorities that have been developed over time. Both programmes will deliver until 2023/2024.
36. **Middlehaven Masterplan**

Following investment from the Homes England (HE) and Middlesbrough Council, clearance work has taken place at Middlehaven to provide a blank canvass for

development. There have been several masterplans for the area but none have come to fruition due to several factors including; the global recession, lack of funding, development values and much of the land being in different ownerships.

37. Almost £30 million has been secured through the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) for various projects and the Towns Fund project is focussed on Middlehaven. The Council has also secured £7.9 million from the Brownfield Housing Fund to spend on site preparation.
38. Market opportunities have changed with a shift to more urban living as well as increased interest in commercial development through the growth of the digital sector and others. As Middlesbrough College expands there is more interest in educational opportunities and the Outwood Riverside Academy, a 900 place school specialising in technology, is being built.
39. Middlehaven needs to be planned and developed in a coherent manner so that different schemes are not competing against each other and open space, public realm and transport infrastructure are complementary. The five brownfield housing sites that will take 634 units of housing require careful planning to ensure it is a coherent place to live, rather than five separate housing developments that bear no relation to each other. The dock bridge has opened the site up from the east and there is close proximity to the A19 and A66 corridors. Investment in the Rail Station and direct trains to London are also a good selling point. Middlehaven is close to the town centre and retail and leisure offer.
40. Boho 8 is 10,000 square feet of new modular commercial space for new companies, and demand for space is high. Bohouse North, which is Thirteen Group's second development, comprising 40 new live/work properties for digital and creative professionals, will be finished by May 2021. Site works have started on Boho Bright Ideas, a development of 60 homes for families and young professionals. A total of 60,000 square feet of Grade A commercial space for the digital sector is in the pipeline and Boho X will be on site in August 2021.
41. Funding is in place to restore the Old Town Hall and the Captain Cook Public House. Work has started on the public house and Officers are planning how the Old Town Hall can sit as the centrepiece of Middlehaven again. There are also proposals for an urban farm to the northwest of Middlehaven.
42. The draft masterplan for Middlehaven will be submitted to the Executive in summer 2021 for approval.
43. **Waltham Forest Council's Mini Holland and Liveable Neighbourhoods Programmes**

The reallocation of urban space has become one of Covid-19's most tangible effects on the built environment. Cities are being forced to innovate and the car is bearing the brunt.⁴

⁴ www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/12/liveable-streets-how-cities-are-prioritising-people-over-parking

Mini-Hollands and Liveable Streets or Neighbourhoods Schemes are aimed at transforming the look and feel of public spaces, making it easier, safer and more convenient to walk, cycle or use public transport, rather than travel by car.

44. As part of this investigation, the Scrutiny Panel received a presentation from the Programme Manager, Enjoy Waltham Forest. Waltham Forest is an outer London Borough in north east London. It is a diverse Borough from land use and geography, through to demographics. South of the Borough, towards inner London it is more dense, with a predominantly Victorian road network. To the north the Borough is a lot more suburban with less density of properties and increased green infrastructure.
45. In 2014, Waltham Forest had polluted residential streets, traffic congestions, lack of cycling facilities and green spaces, a poor walking environment and few places to sit and enjoy. Waltham Forest Council set out its objectives to address the issues as follows:
- Join up cycle routes into a network.
 - Rebalance streets to be safer for everyone.
 - Reach 10% of journeys by bike by 2020.
 - Create better public space and environment for everyone.
 - Make Waltham Forest better connected for everyone.
 - Demonstrate best practice – nationally and internationally if possible, by looking at what had worked on the continent and how that could be applied.
 - Attract growth into the area by enabling growth and regeneration and ensuring policies were car free and supported with the necessary transport infrastructure.
 - Support other Council objectives.
46. The Mayor of London introduced the Mini Holland funding programme in 2014. The programme included the introduction of cycle superhighways in London and the quiet network. A number of outer London boroughs that were traditionally car dependent areas, were awarded funding to transform infrastructure and encourage behaviour change. Waltham Forest Council was successful in obtaining funding from the Mini Holland programme, originally for 3 years but eventually for 5 years.
47. The vision for Waltham Forest Council's Mini Holland included:
- Lea Bridge Road – a street for everyone.
 - Four Walthamstow Village schemes.
 - Four Town Centre Schemes.
 - A network of high quality cycle routes.
 - Complementary measures.
 - Secure cycle parking.
48. Some of the key barriers as to why people did not walk and cycle include: way finding, cycle parking, training, road safety awareness and education. The scheme tried to invoke a step change in terms of how people would travel around the Borough. A core grid of high quality cycle routes was implemented on the primary or main road network and given the nature of traffic, they are separated from vehicles and pedestrians.

There are also some quieter routes, using lower volume residential streets and green spaces, to build a skeletal network so that people have a real choice.

49. Around the town centre there are some local area based schemes designed to make roads in these areas better for walking and cycling without putting in dedicated infrastructure. Not necessarily having formal segregated cycle lanes, or crossings but looking at traffic reduction measures and making areas more suitable for walking and cycling so that theoretically, local trips can be made without using a car. Schemes have also been implemented in the secondary town centres to make them more accessible and attractive and try to reduce the need for cars for these trips by joining up areas with cycle routes and public transport. At total of 50 small schemes have been implemented, working with the community to encourage ownership of the spaces created and involve the public in maintenance where appropriate.
50. The project also enables multi-modal journeys. Cycle parking is a major barrier to people both at work and at home. Secure cycle parking has been provided at all train stations so that people can cycle in for their daily commute. There is a £25 annual fee to access the cycle hubs and also secure parking hangars. Spaces for adapted bikes are also provided.
51. In terms of encouraging behaviour change, the following has been made available:
 - Cycle skills training and maintenance.
 - All ability Cycle Club.
 - School Travel Plans.
 - School Streets.
 - Community Walking and Cycling fund.
 - Zero Emissions Delivery (ZED) Service.
52. ZED is a fleet of electric bikes that run deliveries to businesses in the borough; both in the supply chain and providing goods to residents. ZED is now almost fully self-sustaining in terms of the operating finance.
53. Waltham Forest's Liveable Neighbourhoods programme was introduced in 2018 and work has started on several programmes, taking principles from the Mini Holland schemes. Delivery was just about to start when the Covid-19 Pandemic reached the UK which had impacted on the funding available from Transport for London (TfL). The Coppermill Scheme includes some large development areas in terms of sustainable new housing growth and interventions such as new crossings, cycle infrastructure, road closures to through traffic, walking improvements along some of the main roads, looking at the walking environment. It is an area based scheme with 40 or 50 interventions in it.

Key achievements include:

- More than 40km of segregated cycle lanes.
- 80 modal filters (road closures to through traffic).
- 160+ Copenhagen Crossings (continuous footways).
- 35 new formal crossings, 61 upgraded pedestrian/cycle crossings.

- 700 trees planted and 40 pocket parks/public spaces created.
 - 1,850 metres square of land returned back to the forest at Whipps Cross.
 - 540 cycle hangars.
 - Provided 7 station cycle hubs with 546 secure parking spaces. 4 more in construction.
 - Over 10000 school children and 7500 adults have received free cycle training.
 - 311 people have taken part in All Ability Cycling sessions.
 - Almost 4000 bikes have been serviced by Dr Bike.
 - 392 residents have utilised the Community Bike Loan scheme and 101 residents have utilised the Cargo Bike Loan Scheme.
54. A review of the first village scheme in the area shows a reduction in vehicle numbers and increases in walking and cycling. Most people are accepting of the measures although some want them reduced or removed altogether. A study by the University of Westminster finds that people living in Mini Holland areas were walking an extra 32 minutes and cycling an extra 9 minutes per week compared to the outer London average.
55. In the last six to nine months a study on the impact of low traffic neighbourhoods, changes in car ownership, road traffic, road traffic collisions, crime, emergency service response times has shown some change and positive outcomes. It is noted that this study took place during the Covid-19 pandemic.
56. Key arguments and reasons for opposition to the schemes include:
- Impact on emergency services.
 - Displacement – concerns over increased traffic, pollution and congestion on some roads..
 - Longer journey distances and times for those who needed to drive.
 - Only intended to benefit the few.
 - Community severance.
 - Impact on businesses.
 - Lack of consultation.
57. Strategies employed to overcome the challenges included:
- Strong political leadership and senior leadership team.
 - More data and research needed to myth bust/outline benefits.
 - Continually adapting and enhancing engagement approach.
 - Part of wider transport/behaviour change strategy to reduce traffic volume and impact.

58. **Local Implementation Plan**

The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) was formerly the local transport plan and sets out how the Council will implement its transport and infrastructure programme at a local level. The Tees Valley Combined Authority's (TVCA) Strategic Transport Plan has received formal approval and all five Tees Valley Local Authorities will be following that plan to ensure that their LIPs dovetail into the hierarchy of the wider TVCA Plan. The LIP is a

statutory requirement for all Highways Authorities to complete and contains the Council's transport ambitions, objectives and goals. It improves the changes of securing future funding from external sources including the Department for Transport (DfT) and the TVCA. The Council engages with stakeholders to shape its transport policy.

59. The TVCA's Strategic Transport Plan is an investment plan for different travel modes and how they help deliver the key outcomes for the region. The LIP does the same, but on a local level and the key drivers for Middlesbrough's Plan are:

- The Mayors Vision.
- Investment Prospectus.
- Housing Local Plan.
- Network Management Duty – to make sure a suitable transport network is delivered.
- Transport Asset Management Plan – to ensure assets are maintained with the funding available.
- Medium Term Financial Plan.

60. The key components of the LIP focus on:

- Reducing the number and severity of casualties on the Borough's highway network.
- Minimising congestion and managing traffic flow on the highway network.
- Improving highway network reliability and resilience.
- Improving local air quality.
- Removing transport as a barrier to accessing jobs, education and training, leisure and retail opportunities.
- Providing targeted interventions and measures to assist mode shift and allowing highway users to make informed travel choices.

61. A hierarchy of need has been identified to help with a change in behaviour or modal shift, to encourage people to use cars less. Improvements will be made to encourage more walking, cycling and use of public transport. Roads will be used in the best way possible to make improvements for freight and goods, which in turn will improve the local economy and help local businesses to succeed. It has been identified that building more roads is not sustainable as this will induce further demand. If road building continues people will use cars all the time and this will not help the aims and objectives of the Council in terms of the green agenda to be met. There is also a desire to get people as physically active as possible.

62. Traffic congestion is one of the major causes of economic decline, as the movement of people and goods is disrupted. Building more vehicular infrastructure for cars is not sustainable and only achievable at the expense of public space. This does not mean that vehicular improvements will stop, but ensure a more holistic approach was adopted for everyone. All schemes will consider highway users in a priority order to ensure that sustainability is ingrained in projects to ensure that the Council will:

- Meet sustainability targets.

- Meet road safety targets.
- Meet economic growth targets.
- Improve accessibility for all.
- Help behavioural change.

63. There are nine outcomes outlined in the LIP:

- Reduce the incidence of accidents.
- Minimise congestion and manage traffic flow.
- Improve network reliability and resilience.
- Increased public transport patronage.
- Ensuring that that the highway network was fit for purpose and there were no structural failures.
- Improved local air quality.
- More accessible transport network.
- Fewer people unemployed.
- More businesses registered in Middlesbrough.

64. The ambition is to use transport to try and offset some of the impacts of these agendas and the outcomes that the Council is trying to achieve. The outcomes of the LIP will be monitored over the short, medium and long term.

65. Following Executive approval, the LIP will follow a similar six week consultation process to the TVCA Strategic Transport Plan consultation. It will predominantly be online due to restrictions currently in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. A questionnaire is being developed which will be circulated to all statutory consultees, community councils and other regular channels of engagement. Copies of the LIP will be available in public buildings and there will be opportunities for people to call in or discuss via telephone. There is also potential to host drop in sessions if the pandemic restrictions allow. This will give people the opportunity to help shape transport policy. The results of the consultation will be presented to the Executive with recommendations and the final LIP will then be published.

66. **Communication – CityFibre**

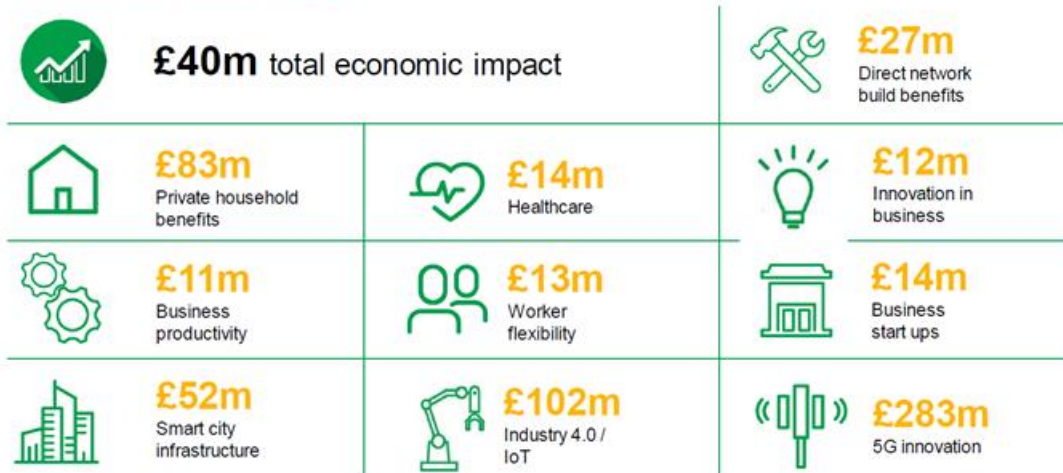
A previous review on Infrastructure Delivery undertaken by the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel in 2019, recognised that whilst provision of broadband is not the Council's responsibility, it impacts on many areas of residents' lives, providing economic and social benefits. UK internet use more than doubled in 2020, as people stayed at home and worked from home during the coronavirus pandemic. However, whilst the pandemic has driven the increase in internet usage it has also exposed the divide between people able to access fast connections and those who cannot.⁵

⁵ www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-55347001

67. CityFibre is a competitive fibre builder, building brand new networks across sixty plus cities in the UK. The overall investment for the project is £4 billion and aims to reach 8 million homes within five years, or approximately 30% of the UK. Connecting all UK homes is the core ambition for all of the telecommunications networks.
68. CityFibre has been in the telecommunications sector for ten years and developed an ambition to build fibre networks. CityFibre initially worked with Sky and TalkTalk on a test project in York and then acquired a larger footprint across the UK. Currently CityFibre is rolling out its network to 60 cities, including Middlesbrough. The company is also working with Government to understand how these city builds can be used as jump off points to connect broader rural infrastructure to fibre builds across the UK.
69. CityFibre builds brand new networks and their approach is to develop a well-planned network and install end-to-end fibre from exchanges to individual premises. As well as the opportunity to connect to every single premises or home, a well-planned network will also connect to all mobile sites, 5G, businesses or business parks, and any public sector sites across the town.
70. The investment in Middlesbrough is approximately £40 million. The initial target of 70 to 80 thousand homes has already been increased towards 90 thousand homes, with expansion beyond Middlesbrough's boundaries into Grangetown, South Bank and East Cleveland.
71. CityFibre has worked with a company called Regeneris, who provided data on the value of this long term investment to the town in terms of the impact on the economy in Middlesbrough over the next fifteen years.

Our 15 year impact on the economy in Middlesbrough

**GIGABIT
MIDDLESBROUGH**



Regeneris report: 'Economic Impact of full fibre infrastructure in 100 towns and cities 2018'

6

72. CityFibre will install full fibre, so by taking a network connection and working with one of their Internet Service Providers (ISPs), customers will receive speeds of up to 1000 mbps. It is a synchronous solution providing the ability to upload and download at similar speeds. One of the key differences to other networks is the quality of service and as more people come to rely on the digital structure this is vital.
73. Approximately 92% of homes in the UK with a superfast broadband connection, receive roughly 30 mbps upwards and through a hybrid solution, whereby the connection has fibre at some point, but also copper.
74. CityFibre's Middlesbrough build was due to launch in April 2021 and the first homes will be connected approximately 3 to 6 months later. The build programme will be completed mid-2024. The investment is solely from the private sector and no public sector funding is required.
75. CityFibre is keen to work with Middlesbrough Council as the amount of work being undertaken has implications for the town. CityFibre's build teams want to consider how they might co-invest in infrastructure and schedule the build around any capital works that the Council might be undertaking.
76. Middlesbrough will have two fibre exchanges: one at Sotheby Road, Skippers Lane Industrial Estate and one at Lytton Street, small industrial estate close to the Town Centre. This enables CityFibre to build the network more effectively because of the natural

⁶ The Economic Impact of Full Fibre Infrastructure in 100 UK Towns and Cities: A Report by Regeneris Consulting for CityFibre March 2018

boundary of the railway line from Nunthorpe all the way into the town centre. Having a fibre exchange on either side reduces the need for specialist engineering and costs. Two fibre exchanges will enable everyone in Middlesbrough to receive service and the area can be extended.

77. The fibre installation in a hybrid town such as Middlesbrough is generally 70% over ground and 30% underground, although this can change depending on the age profile of the specific location. Overhead installation is a much more effective and efficient deployment that minimises impact on the environment. The core network is always underground and water ingress has very little impact on optic fibre, whereas with copper it causes corrosion and electrolyte reaction very quickly. With regard to durability there is a vast improvement with fibre from copper.
78. Connectivity will be to approximately ninety two and a half thousand premises and about 900 km of fibre cable will be deployed. CityFibre has a diverse network and high level of resilience should there ever be a strike by a digging machine for example. The network can be fed in east and west directions and service can be restored quickly. A two flex model will be employed in Middlesbrough, giving better coverage and service for residents and a more acceptable level of challenge in terms of engineering.
79. Residents and Councillors will be kept up to date with what was happening in their area. Residents' communications began at the construction stage and carry on throughout the build. During Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, the usual door-knocking team cannot be deployed, therefore a leaflet will be delivered to all premises in the area. This is followed by a letter which explains any action residents need to take – such as moving cars off the street – and also provides a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section and details of the one line customer service telephone number.
80. Once on site, banners will be installed, to make residents aware that CityFibre are digging in the street. Wider community engagement includes local adverts and events, with information provided on how to pre-register on the website once the service is available.
81. Fibre Fans is CityFibre's school engagement project. As the construction process builds past schools in Middlesbrough, CityFibre will engage with them and provide free learning materials for curriculum subjects.
82. **Housing Local Plan/Planning Reforms/Business and Planning Act 2020**

Following the Local Elections in May 2019, and the subsequent changes in administration, the publication of the draft Middlesbrough Local Plan was formally withdrawn in July 2019. One of the key concerns was the impact on the Council's ability to stop developers dictating where house building would take place. The key test was whether Middlesbrough has a five year supply of land for house building and delivery. Middlesbrough still has around a seven year supply of housing land and the delivery test was also met. However, the Council needs to have a new Local Plan in place to enable it to tackle its priorities.

83. The following elements of the evidence on which the Local Plan is based have been reviewed:
- Retail/Town centre.
 - Housing Needs Study.
 - Gypsies/Travelling show people assessment.
 - Employment Land Review.
 - Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy.
 - Transport Study.
 - Playing Pitch Strategy.
84. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been a number of impacts on the timetable for publication of the revised Housing Local Plan, including engagement with communities, consultants and key stakeholders. A key area is the Employment Land Review as it is difficult to predict the employment sector going forward, what the priorities will be, or whether more people will be working at home. Similarly the retail study was produced prior to the impact of Covid-19, which has undoubtedly had a huge impact and created much uncertainty. There have been a number of national policy changes and uncertainty around planning reforms had an impact on how the Local Plan was taken forward. In addition, as part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) there have been changes to how housing numbers are calculated in terms of the Local Plan. It was anticipated that the revised Local Plan would be adopted by March 2022.
85. In relation to planning reforms, two key changes have been made in respect of Permitted Development Rights. For single storey dwellings there are now permitted development rights to add one storey; and for two storey dwellings and discrete blocks of flats, an additional two storeys could be added. There are a number of restrictions in place and prior approval from the Local Authority is required. Secondly, discreet offices and business buildings can be demolished and rebuilt as residential development or apartment blocks without the need for formal planning permission. Again, similar restrictions apply and they can be limited to a maximum size of property that replaces them. Design is another prior approval issue that can be taken into consideration.
86. The Government has also introduced new use classes under the Use Classes Order. Class E for commercial business and service uses and Class F for local community and learning. Class E is split into eleven categories and it is possible to limit a use to within those use classes. It is not yet clear what the permitted development rights will be changing between each. Currently the permitted development rights which were in existence before that new use class still apply. Hot food takeaways are classed as 'sui generis': meaning that any change of use from, or to, a hot food takeaway, will require planning permission and there are no associated permitted development rights. The importance of Class F, which is split into F1: learning and non-residential institutions and F2: local community, is that the provision of local facilities is key in developments. This provides a specific use class for such local facilities.
87. There are five key areas in the Planning Reform White Paper:

- Streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan-making stage, and replacing the entire corpus of plan-making law.
- Take a radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process, moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data.
- To bring a new focus on design and sustainability.
- Improve infrastructure delivery and ensure developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions.
- To ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of town and city centres.

88. Whilst the White Paper sets out the principles for reform, the detail with regard to how the proposals will be implemented has not yet been published.
89. The Business and Planning Act 2020 received Royal Assent on 22 July 2020 and includes a range of measures to support economic recovery and growth and help businesses adapt to new methods of working as the UK recovers from the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
90. Temporary changes have been introduced to highway licensing procedures and alcohol licensing laws to enable restaurants, bars and pubs to serve customers seated outdoors and allow operators to serve alcohol for consumption off the premises.
91. Temporary changes have also been made to the law relating to planning in England, as well as new, permanent provision for certain planning proceedings in England to be considered by means of more than one procedure. This will ensure that the planning system can continue to operate effectively and support the planning and safe construction of new development following the impact of Covid-19.⁷

92. **Business Support and Recovery**

Since the UK Government implemented the first national lockdown in March 2020 the Council's Revenues and Benefits team, Economic Growth/Regeneration and Finance Service, have collaborated to support Middlesbrough businesses. In addition to delivering regular day-to-day service, a range of additional initiatives and grant schemes have been designed and distributed to ensure support is provided speedily and effectively where it is most needed.

93. Information is disseminated through web and social media platforms and business networks to promote and guide businesses through the support available both via the Local Authority and the wider business support landscape. Support mechanisms initiated and promoted by Middlesbrough Council include:
- Buy Boro campaign: promotion of local supply and services.

⁷ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/16/pdfs/ukpgaen_20200016_en.pdf

- 1 to 1 business workshops – targeted to small/independent business to ‘plan it not panic’. The workshops cover managing cash flow, business planning, emergency procedures.
 - Comprehensive list of PPE suppliers prepared and promoted through the Council’s website.
 - Businesses linked directly to Teesside University Digital City to receive free support to improve website and ecommerce options.
 - Outdoor tables available to loan to retail/leisure/hospitality businesses and support to acquire an outdoor licence.
 - Town Centre cleaning stations, ambassadors to support high street shoppers and businesses.
 - Guidance and signposting via dedicated web pages and helplines for businesses to access full range of support.
94. A range of mandatory and discretionary government grant schemes were initiated to support local business. Local Authorities can determine the approach and design of the discretionary schemes to best support their respective local economies. Although this is challenging due to changing legislation combined with the perceptions of the business community on eligibility. Middlesbrough Council was the first Local Authority in the area to distribute an emergency Covid grant.
95. Middlesbrough’s emergency and discretionary business grant schemes seek to support businesses through the Covid pandemic and restrictions by:
- Providing direct grant support to businesses impacted by restrictions.
 - Supporting businesses that are unable to access other business support schemes.
 - Supporting home businesses and sole traders with fixed business costs.
 - Introducing business support measures to stimulate the local economy through key sectors and priority regeneration areas to facilitate long term job creation and investment.
96. Mandatory grants and discretionary funding is being used to full effect, with grants distributed in accordance with government guidance and discretionary elements tailored to target gap areas and provide the most strategic impact. In the first 6 months of the pandemic, over £25m was initially distributed in grants to support Middlesbrough businesses.
97. Local Restriction Support Grants (LRSG) were issued in November 2020, as restrictions and lockdowns became more prevalent. Alongside the LRSG a discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) was launched to address gaps. Both schemes are regularly reviewed and include several enhancements to the scheme to ensure that gaps in eligibility are addressed, targeted sector support is provided and business support measures are introduced to stimulate the local economy, create jobs, and provide rapid recovery.
98. Almost £16m was distributed through the LRSG schemes and this funding is utilised to provide emergency support to eligible businesses. In addition to those businesses that

had to close, there were others that are essential and required to stay open and trade, but are still impacted.

Local Restrictions Support Grant Distribution:ⁱ

Local Restrictions Support (LRSG) Grant ⁸	Purpose	Amount	No of payments
LRSB Closed	businesses required to close	£1,804,265.25	823
LRSB Closed (phase 2)	businesses required to close	£8,072,513.70	1557
LRSB Open	businesses impacted whilst requiring to stay open and trade.	£266,353.59	196
LRSB Sector specific	Specific sectors required to close since Mar 20 (e.g. nightclubs)	£17,525.98	6
Christmas Payment	Wet led pubs (e.g bars/pubs that serve drinks rather than food)	£53, 000	53
Restart	Support reopening of Retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care, accommodation, gyms	£5,741,304.22	794
Total		£15, 954, 962.74	3429

ⁱ Figures correct as at 9 July 2021

99. The ARG grant is awarded to Local Authorities based on population, to identify the gaps, look at the local economy and provide funding to businesses not covered by the other schemes. The Service identified businesses where the grant will make the most impact. The scheme was completed in July 2021, with approximately £4.1 million in grants issued. Home based businesses, supply chain, businesses in shared spaces have all benefitted. Middlesbrough Council collaborates with other local Councils to ensure a similar type of grants are being issued, although there is a particular element that just works for Middlesbrough. From the start of scheme in December it was reviewed every four weeks and enhanced five times over its lifetime, to make sure it includes the sectors that are impacted but still required to trade; such as manufacturing and engineering, as well as taxi drivers and driving instructors.

Additional Restrictions Grant Distribution:ⁱⁱ

Additional Restrictions Grant ⁹	Purpose	Amount	No of payments	Jobs to be created (3yrs)	Investment Commitment by Business
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⁸ Report to the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – 21 July 2021 – Covid Business Support and Recovery. Report Author: Debbie Ingoldsby, Strategic Business Manager

⁹ Report to the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – 21 July 2021 – Covid Business Support and Recovery. Report Author: Debbie Ingoldsby, Strategic Business Manager

Main	businesses unable to access other schemes e.g home based, supply chain, shared spaces, impacted sectors	£2,909,791.93	1654	n/a	n/a
Enhanced	Impacted sectors required to trade	£165,000	18	n/a	n/a
Strategic	create jobs and stimulate recovery and investment in priority sectors/ regeneration areas	£750,000	17	194 – 460 high value jobs in: Advanced/ manufacturing, Leisure, culture, digital, professional services	780K - £1.6m
Taxi Drivers	Specific sector support	£247,500	825	n/a	n/a
TOTAL		£4,072,291.93	2514	194 – 460	780K - £1.6m

ⁱⁱ Committed spend at 9 July 2021

100. £45m has been distributed by the Council in grants to support Middlesbrough businesses since March 2020. It is acknowledged that there may be some businesses that are unable to provide evidence that they are eligible for a particular grant. In addition, some businesses are eligible to support through government schemes such as the Furlough Scheme.
101. It is anticipated that a second phase of ARG funding will be triggered as soon as 100% of spend is reported. This will provide Middlesbrough Council with a further £670K to support business recovery through to March 2022. The aim is to focus the second phase of ARG funds to supporting new start-up businesses, as well as further grants to support businesses in their recovery.
102. A Business Recovery Officer has been appointed on a one year fixed term to offer additional support to businesses to enable them to access grants both from the Council and other sources.
103. Government guidance and rules on self-isolation are having an impact on retail, leisure and hospitality in particular. The Council consults public health regularly to ensure that all the latest information is available on the website. If certain sectors are severely impacted, potentially there will be opportunities for support in the next round of funding.

CONCLUSIONS

104. The scrutiny panel reached the following conclusions in respect of its investigation:

TERM OF REFERENCE A

To examine Middlesbrough Council’s current proposals for the regeneration of the town including plans for retail, leisure, housing, urban living, education, enterprise, communication, transport and connectivity.

The Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global event which has changed how people live, communicate, work and socialise. It is acknowledged that town centres in particular were already in decline and Middlesbrough is no different.

Initiatives including the Future High Streets Fund, Towns Fund, Middlehaven Masterplan, Local Implementation Plan, as well as CityFibre’s investment in superfast broadband infrastructure and many other projects, will enable Middlesbrough to ensure the recovery of local communities and businesses from Covid-19 in line with the Council’s Strategic Plan 2021-24 revised priorities.¹⁰

TERM OF REFERENCE B

To investigate what resources will be required to implement proposed regeneration schemes and what contributions are available and/or required from Central Government, Middlesbrough Council, the private sector and other stakeholders.

Middlesbrough Council has been awarded £14.1 million from the UK Government’s Future High Streets Fund, and £21.9 million from the Towns Fund. Both Programmes rely on a large amount of public sector leverage, and therefore some of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) projects, particularly in terms of the transport elements, have been aligned for that. Where gap funding is involved there will be some public sector involvement to complete projects and ensure a return for every public sector pound spent. The Council also secured £7.9 million from the Brownfield Housing Fund and almost £30 million from the Tees Valley Combined Authority for projects based at Middlehaven.

CityFibre’s investment in Middlesbrough is approximately £40 million, with the aim of bringing superfast broadband to approximately 80,000 homes. A breakdown showing the impact on Middlesbrough’s economy over the next fifteen years is included on page 16 of this report.

Since March 2020, £45m has been distributed by the Council in grants to support Middlesbrough businesses through the pandemic and assist them with recovery. The Council has also provided advice and a Business Recovery Officer has been appointed on a one year fixed term contract, financed by government covid funding.

TERM OF REFERENCE C

To consider the role and engagement of local communities in shaping a sustainable future for Middlesbrough that will drive social and economic growth and improve the

¹⁰ Middlesbrough Council Strategic Plan 2021-2024 – Revised Strategic Priorities – February 2021

health and well-being of residents.

There is an allocation of £1,000,000 from the Towns Fund for Ward Initiatives. Middlesbrough Council is keen to encourage local decision-making and participatory budgeting, with up to £50,000 per Ward allocated for community uses and facilities. This will involve consultation with Elected Members, local communities and other stakeholders, to address issues of immediate local importance.

There will be a six week consultation for the Local Implementation Plan (LIP) to enable residents to help shape transport policy. A questionnaire will be circulated to all statutory consultees, Community Councils and other regular consultees. Copies of the LIP will be available in public buildings, and, Covid-19 restrictions permitting, there will be drop in sessions and opportunities to contact Council Officers directly.

On 10 August 2021, Middlesbrough Council's Executive approved an Engagement Policy for 2021-2022, the principal aim of which was for *"the Council's service to take an 'asset-based' approach to engagement, working with Middlesbrough's people and its communities and the Council's partners to recognise strengths and from these increase independence and self-reliance over time"*.¹¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

105. Following the submitted evidence, and based on the conclusions above, the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel's recommendations for consideration by the Executive are as follows:
- A) Whenever opportunities arise, and in line with the hierarchy of need identified in the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), the Council should seek to ensure that it is easier, safer and more convenient to walk, cycle or use public transport, rather than travelling by car by:
- Providing additional cycle routes.
 - Implementing traffic free zones.
 - Working with public transport operators to increase local provision.
 - Reviewing existing road networks to identify particular instances of traffic congestion at peak times and address these through the LIP to encourage further economic growth.
- B) Whilst it is acknowledged that there have been a number of impacts on the approval and publication of Middlesbrough's revised Housing Local Plan due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scrutiny Panel asks the Executive to ensure that the revised Local Plan is adopted as soon as practicable and by no later than March 2022.

¹¹ Engagement Policy 2021-2022 – Report to Executive – 10 August 2021

- C) In line with the Middlesbrough Council's ambition for the town to be net carbon neutral by 2039, use the Middlehaven developments as an opportunity to explore, promote and encourage the use of green renewable energy both with Developers and as a selling point for potential investors.
- D) Consideration should be given to extending the Urban Pioneers Scheme, or encouraging similar developments, to provide more live/work accommodation in Middlesbrough, given the shift to increased home working during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- E) The Council should ensure that green spaces around the Middlehaven developments are regularly maintained and attractive to prospective new residents and businesses. One suggestion is that hard-standing surfaces or laybys are built into development masterplans rather having grassed verges. This could also save the Council expenditure on maintenance of and/or repair of more traditional grassed surfaces next to roadways.
- F) The Council could consider collaborating with the local community to encourage ownership and maintenance of public spaces (if appropriate) in Middlehaven to promote pride in the area.
- G) By working closely with Broadband Providers, the Council should seek to ensure that all areas of Middlesbrough can have access to superfast broadband by 2025 at the latest, and that residents and businesses are not disadvantaged by lack of provision given the increased reliance on digital technologies post-pandemic.
- H) The Council should consider developing a multi-purpose venue in the town, which can accommodate entertainment. A venue which attracts the best entertainers in the world will encourage people from across the UK to visit the area, stay and spend, boosting the local economy. The Captain Cook Shopping Centre would be an ideal location for an eSports gaming venue as evidenced by the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel in a recent Final Report on Cultural Events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

106. The Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel would like to thank the following for their assistance with its work:

Louise Antill, Programme Management Team Leader, Middlesbrough Council
 Stephanie Carter-Smith, City Manager – Tees Valley, CityFibre
 Paul Clarke, Head of Planning, Middlesbrough Council
 Craig Cowley, Transport and Infrastructure Manager, Middlesbrough Council
 Selina Deeney, Regional Marketing Manager, CityFibre
 Stephen Driscoll, Area Build Manager, CityFibre
 Steve Fletcher, Head of Development, Middlesbrough Council
 Sam Gilmore, Head of Economic Growth, Middlesbrough Council

Richard Horniman, Director of Regeneration, Middlesbrough Council
Debbie Ingoldsby, Strategic Business Manager, Regeneration
Jason Legget, City Manager – Tyneside and Wearside, CityFibre
Peter Millward, City Build Manager, CityFibre
Chris Orr, Infrastructure Programme Manager, Middlesbrough Council
Chris Proctor, Programme Manager, Enjoy Waltham Forest

107. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following sources were consulted or referred to in preparing this report:

- Middlesbrough Council's Strategic Plan 2021-2024
- Minutes of the meetings of the EDEI Scrutiny Panel held on 7 October and 18 November 2020, 20 January, 24 March, 21 April 2021 and 21 July 2021.
- Future High Streets Fund - Town Centre Property and Asset Management (PART A) - Report to Middlesbrough Council Executive – 13 April 2021
- <https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2021/05/how-a-rise-in-retail-vacancies-can-affect-the-uks-high-streets/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/12/liveable-streets-how-cities-are-prioritising-people-over-parking>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-55347001>
- Report to the Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel – 21 July 2021 – Covid Business Support and Recovery. Report Author: Debbie Ingoldsby, Strategic Business Manager
- The Economic Impact of Full Fibre Infrastructure in 100 UK Towns and Cities: A Report by Regeneris Consulting for CityFibre March 2018
- https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/16/pdfs/ukpgaen_20200016_en.pdf

108. **ACRONYMS**

A-Z listing of common acronyms used in the report:

ARG - Additional Restrictions Grant
BDC-LDC - British Retail Consortium-Local Data Company Vacancy Monitor
DfT – Department for Transport
FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions
FHSF – Future High Streets Fund
HE – Homes England
ISPs – Internet Service Providers
LRSG - Local Restriction Support Grants
LIP – Local Implementation Plan
MHCLG - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework
TVCA - Tees Valley Combined Authority
ZED - Zero Emissions Delivery

COUNCILLOR S WALKER

- CHAIR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

The membership of the scrutiny panel is as follows:

Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel 2020-2021

Councillors M Saunders (Chair), B Hubbard, (Vice-Chair), R Arundale, D Branson, D Coupe, T Furness, L Garvey, L Lewis, M Storey, S Walker

Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel 2021-2022

Councillors S Walker (Chair), R Arundale (Vice Chair), D Branson, D Coupe, T Furness, B Hubbard, T Mawston, M Saunders, M Storey

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**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL
MIDDLESBROUGH REGENERATION POST COVID-19 – ACTION PLAN**

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	POST TITLE	BUDGET COST	TIMESCALE
<p>1. Whenever opportunities arise, and in line with the hierarchy of need identified in the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), the Council should seek to ensure that it is easier, safer and more convenient to walk, cycle or use public transport, rather than travelling by car by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing additional cycle routes. • Implementing traffic free zones. • Working with public transport operators to increase local provision. • Reviewing existing road networks to identify particular instances of traffic congestion at peak times and address these through the LIP to encourage further economic growth. 	<p>The Local Implementation Plan (LIP) provides the framework for new and complementary highways improvements, particularly with respect to the hierarchy of need. Funding secured from Tees Valley Combined Authority has enabled plans for enhanced cycle routes along Linthorpe road corridor and this will be implemented during 2022. Similarly, Future High Streets Fund resources have been allocated to further improve and extend this type of amenity along Grange road and Albert road, linking in with major network improvements in Middlehaven and around the rail station.</p> <p>The LIP provides a reference frameworks for housing developers and provides the key reference document for Middlesbrough Council when shaping its own capital allocations and seeking external funding support. Strategic routes are regularly reviewed across Middlesbrough and this includes how active travel and public transport networks can be regularly improved.</p> <p>Lobbying will continue with public transport operators to ensure that Middlesbrough is well serviced and that a comprehensive service is delivered. However, public transport operators have complete autonomy when it comes to delivering routes and are unlikely to deliver non-economic services. Having said that, the</p>	<p align="center">Head of Economic Growth and Infrastructure</p>	<p align="center">Funded through TVCA and FHSF grants</p>	<p align="center">Linthorpe Road / Grange Road and Albert Road cycle corridor works complete in September 2022</p>

	Council controls an element of subsidy for certain purposes and this, along with robust data and demand indicators will be used to encourage public transport providers to invest in routes and services			
2. Whilst it is acknowledged that there have been a number of impacts on the approval and publication of Middlesbrough's revised Housing Local Plan due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scrutiny Panel asks the Executive to ensure that the revised Local Plan is adopted as soon as practicable and by no later than March 2022.	<p>The Local Plan review timetable has slipped as a consequence of a number of factors including having to deal with the consequences of Covid-19 in particular with regards to collecting evidence and undertaking engagement. This timetable is currently being reviewed and it is anticipated that a revised timetable will be published early 2022. The Local Plan has to go through a number of statutory stages in its preparation and adoption. Given these it is not possible for the Plan to be adopted by March 2022.</p> <p>The adopted Local Plan remains a valid document that has considerable weight in the decision making process. This has been borne out by recent Appeal decisions published by the Planning Inspectorate. This provides an opportunity for officers to take a much fuller approach, and consideration, to tackling the impacts of Covid-19 upon the Town, its economy and its people. This will enable a more robust and fit for purpose plan to be prepared.</p>	Head of Planning	N/A	Revised timetable for preparing the Local Plan to be agreed and published by March 2022
3. In line with the Middlesbrough Council's ambition for the town to be net carbon neutral by 2039, use the Middlehaven developments as an opportunity to explore, promote and encourage the use of green renewable energy both with Developers and as a selling point for potential investors.	<p>Carbon Neutrality and climate change are anticipated to be of significant importance to the demographic of people who will be interested in urban living in Middlesbrough. Developments will be delivered to the highest achievable standard and in line with all extant planning and building control regulations. It is anticipated that green energy and efficiency will be of significant importance.</p> <p>Towns Fund financial support for</p>	<p>Head Of Economic Growth and Infrastructure</p> <p>Head of Development</p>	N/A	Optimal criteria for Urban Living Investment will be delivered to the Town Deal Board by March 2022

	developments will be governed by expectations of the highest achievable design quality and environmental credentials. This will be a condition of financial support.			
4. Consideration should be given to extending the Urban Pioneers Scheme, or encouraging similar developments, to provide more live/work accommodation in Middlesbrough, given the shift to increased home working during the Covid-19 pandemic.	<p>Live / work accommodation will be encouraged as part of residential development at Middlehaven. Schemes such as urban Pioneers have been difficult to progress with individuals as the knowledge and capacity for self-designing a property is often limited. However, modern urban living is likely to include a component of live .work.</p> <p>The Boho area in particular seeks a campus feel with space for collaboration and coworking. The demand for commercial space remains strong, indeed it is thought that an element of work-from-home fatigue is developing, albeit working from home needs to remain a key option for future pandemic control.</p> <p>The extent of live / work units in Middlehaven will, ultimately, be a function of market forces, albeit provision of office / workspace is a common feature in designs.</p>	<p>Head Of Economic Growth and Infrastructure</p> <p>Head of Development</p>	N/A	<p>Optimal criteria for Urban Living Investment will be delivered to the Town Deal Board by March 2022</p>
5. The Council should ensure that green spaces around the Middlehaven developments are regularly maintained and attractive to prospective new residents and businesses. One suggestion is that hard-standing surfaces or laybys are built into development masterplans rather having grassed verges. This could also save the Council expenditure on maintenance of and/or	<p>The developments at Middlehaven will be established with regard to green space and surroundings. Many of the developments are likely to be subject to funded management and maintenance regimes by way of service charges to businesses and, where appropriate, fees to tenants in shared accommodation.</p> <p>The most appropriate design and maintenance treatments will be designed with respect to best practice and planning policies. Developers will be encouraged to meet high standards of design and functional</p>	<p>Head Of Economic Growth and Infrastructure</p> <p>Head of Development</p>	N/A	<p>Optimal criteria for Urban Living Investment will be delivered to the Town Deal Board by March 2022</p>

	repair of more traditional grassed surfaces next to roadways.	maintenance for long term sustainability and affordability.			
	6. The Council could consider collaborating with the local community to encourage ownership and maintenance of public spaces (if appropriate) in Middlehaven to promote pride in the area.	Where appropriate, it may be possible for certain property owners and groups to actively adopt certain areas for ownership and maintenance. In practice, however, this is likely to be limited to specific property owners acting on behalf of residents or registered social landlords such as Thirteen Group.	Head Of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Head of Development	N/A	Optimal criteria for Urban Living Investment will be delivered to the Town Deal Board by March 2022
	7. By working closely with Broadband Providers, the Council should seek to ensure that all areas of Middlesbrough can have access to superfast broadband by 2025 at the latest, and that residents and businesses are not disadvantaged by lack of provision given the increased reliance on digital technologies post-pandemic.	Council officers will continue to liaise with providers and lobby for the best provision possible, for both businesses and residents. Provision of broadband is a private sector-led supply chain and there are no powers to demand specific levels of provision for a given area or service. The service will work closely with Tees Valley Combined Authority and services providers such as CityFibre, to make a compelling case for comprehensive service coverage across all of Middlesbrough	Transport and Infrastructure Manager	N/A	Engagement with TVCA and providers by March 2022.
	8. The Council should consider developing a multi-purpose venue in the town, which can accommodate entertainment. A venue which attracts the best entertainers in the world will encourage people from across the UK to visit the area, stay and spend, boosting the local economy. The Captain Cook Shopping Centre would be an ideal location for an eSports gaming venue	The Regeneration directorate sees significant value in leisure facilities, as a way of enhancing and diversifying the economic offer of central Middlesbrough; and this accords with the strategic plan objectives. Captain Cook Square is actively engaging an esports gaming venue, with announcements anticipated imminently. Middlehaven also lends itself to a multi-purpose venue and the feasibility of such activity is being worked upon presently. Any leisure uses or multi-purpose venues in	Head Of Economic Growth and Infrastructure	N/A (Funded)	Feasibility report into leisure facilities in Middlehaven by March 2022

<p>as evidenced by the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel in a recent Final Report on Cultural Events.</p>	<p>Middlehaven must be carefully balance as to add value and not to detract from the town centre offer, this includes maintaining the viability of assets including Captain Cook Square, Middlesbrough Theatre and the Town Hall venue. The findings of a feasibility study would inform next steps in terms of progressing a business case proposal for development or external funding support.</p>			
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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

Report of:	Councillor Barrie Cooper - Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance Ian Wright - Director of Finance
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Submitted to:	Executive - 11 January 2022
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Subject:	Corporate Crisis Policy
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
That Executive approve the following : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Corporate Crisis Policy b) That delegated authority be provided to the Section 151 Officer to approve any future modifications to the policy.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?¹
Approval	Yes	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
<i>The purpose of this new policy is to provide a corporate approach to the definition of crisis, what is considered to be a suitable crisis following which access to the supporting mechanisms can be made, and also covers what is not a crisis. The policy also defines how any support payments will be made.</i>	NA	<i>To standardise the payment of crisis awards which will in turn improve the financial performance of the Council.</i>

Ward(s) affected
<i>All wards are affected by the decision to introduce a corporate crisis policy.</i>

What is the purpose of this report?

1. The purpose of this new policy is to provide a corporate approach to the definition of crisis, what is considered to be a suitable crisis following which access to the supporting mechanisms can be made, and also covers what is not a crisis. Whilst predominantly focussing on the term crisis, the policy also defines and provides for situations where a 'disaster' occurs. The policy also defines how any support payments will be made.
2. All service areas must follow this policy to allow the Council to operate a standardised and coordinated approach to crisis, which would include data sharing (where appropriate and legal to do so), and a 'price list' of support payments.
3. Every effort will be made to support residents who are in crisis. Service Areas will work together, where appropriate to do so, and also share data to make informed decisions about what support can be offered. The overall decision and distribution of funds falls within the remit of Resident and Business Support, in collaboration with other service areas.
4. This policy is designed to provide consistency, clarity and a payment framework when responding to residents who present themselves to the service when in need of emergency support, and will be applied across all directorates.

Why does this report require a Member decision?

5. The introduction of a Corporate Crisis policy is part of the Council's strategic direction, and as such requires executive approval.

Report Background

6. The Council has a statutory duty to make payments to Middlesbrough residents who are in crisis or hardship, or have experienced a disaster. The council also provides additional support to residents who fall within pre-defined situations.
7. The introduction of this policy is to ensure that support provided by the council is appropriate and reasonable, within a defined criteria, and will be subject to review on a regular basis.

Crisis Policy

8. The general principles of the policy are as follows:
 - To ensure a professional, consistent and timely approach to dealing with crisis and its associated support across all of the Council's functions,
 - Where Data Protection legislation allows, promote a coordinated approach towards sharing information internally and managing multiple awards connected to crisis across the whole of the Council,
 - To ensure that crisis is managed in accordance with legislative provisions and best practice,
 - Ensure that any steps taken to deal with crisis in line with the Council's corporate policies on surveillance and data protection, and to ensure compliance with RIPA and GDPR legislation.
9. Delivering the policy involves a number of processes which are explained within the document itself. They include:

- Ensuring a consistent approach
 - What circumstances are not considered to be a crisis?
 - Type of support that can be considered through crisis or a disaster
 - How payments will be made?
 - What needs are not covered?
10. The policy provides a definition of crisis and what is considered a disaster, and has certain criteria which must be met in order to receive support. The policies also outlines circumstances which are not considered to be a crisis.
11. Should a resident trigger support under crisis or disaster, the policy provides levels of support based on differing circumstances.
12. When a payment is triggered, awards will be made through electronic means rather than cash awards, with payment methods outlined in the policy.
13. Resident and Business Support's Community Support team will work collaboratively with all services to ensure residents who meet the requirements of the policy are signposted appropriately. .

What decision(s) are being asked for?

14. That Executive approve the Corporate Crisis Policy.
15. That delegated authority be provided to the Section 151 Officer to approve any future modifications to the policy.

Why is this being recommended?

16. This policy will allow Middlesbrough Council to provide a coordinated and fair approach to the definition of crisis and disaster, make support payments where they fit the Council's definition, and ensure any such payments are in line with expected expenditure to the situation which warranted the need for support.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

17. An impact assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix B. It found that there were no concerns that the policy could have a disproportionate impact on individuals or groups because they hold one or more protected characteristics.

Legal

18. The service will ensure that all data sharing between services when administering payments relating to the Crisis Policy, will fully comply with GDPR legislation, and in doing so, if there are any changes to the processing of awards, an update to the existing Data Protection Impact Assessment will be made and approved by the Data Protection officer.

Financial

19. The proposal is in line with current budget expectations, and is intended over time to reduce the amount of spend through a standardised framework and the removal for potential duplication of payment through different funding streams.

Policy Framework

20. The proposed policy will not vary the current policy framework.

Equality and Diversity

21. The corporate crisis policy should be read in conjunction with any equality and diversity policies.

Risk

22. This policy will impact positively on the following risks.

- 08-075 Reduction in Council Tax Collection;
- 08-102 Court Costs Income

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

23. That Executive approve the policy and associated recommendations.

- The Council will publish the policy on its website by 01 February 2022, subject to any call in process.

Appendices

- Corporate Crisis Policy - Appendix A
- Impact Assessment - Appendix B

Background papers

24. The background paper associated with this report is the corporate Debt Management policy.

Contact: **Janette Savage - Head of Resident & Business Support.**

Email: Janette_savage@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Corporate Crisis Policy

Live from: xx xxxxx 2021

Live until: xx xxxxx 2024



Title	Corporate Crisis Policy		
Creator	Author(s)	Mark Symmonds (Support Services Manager)	
	Approved by	Janette Savage / Martin Barker	
	Department	Resident and Business Support	
	Service area	Finance	
	Head of Service	Janette Savage	
	Director	Ian Wright	
Date	Created	20 August 2021	
	Submitted	Xx xxxx 2021	
	Approved	Xx xxxx 2021	
	Updating Frequency	3 years	
Status	Version: 0.4		
Contributor(s)	Head of Resident & Business Support,		
Subject	Crisis		
Type	Policy		
	Vital Record		EIR
Coverage	Middlesbrough Council		
Language	English		
Document Control			
Version	Date	Revision History	Reviser
0.1	20.08.21	First draft	M Symmonds / Martin Barker
0.2	02.09.21		Mark Symmonds, Emma Mchale / Kerrie Scraton / Ben Short / Maria Bache
0.3	21.09.21	Review of Draft	Janette Savage / M Symmonds
0.4	10.11.21	Review of draft	M Symmonds / Martin Barker
0.5			
0.6			
0.7			
0.8			
0.9			
Distribution List			
Version	Date	Name/Service area	Action
0.4			
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Summary

This policy forms part of the Council's Welfare Strategy which covers the Council's overall approach to the Welfare of Middlesbrough residents.

It sets out how the Council will support residents who are in a crisis situation, and gives guidance to staff about the specific types of support which are considered suitable and fund limits which can be offered.

Context

This policy is designed to complement and enhance the Council's social regeneration plans.

Purpose

The purpose of this new policy is to provide a corporate approach to the definition of crisis, what is considered to be a suitable crisis following which access to the supporting mechanisms can be made, and also covers what is not a crisis. The policy also defines how any support payments will be made.

This policy also supports the Corporate Debt Policy.

Every effort will be made to support residents who are in crisis. Service Areas will work together, where appropriate to do so, and also share data where appropriate to do so, to make informed decisions about what support can be offered. The overall decision and distribution of funds falls under Resident and Business services.

The policy will be reviewed as required to ensure processes remain fair and in line with legislation, best practices and local priorities.

The policy may be extended to include other forms of crisis situations experienced elsewhere within the council, but not specifically covered under the examples contained within this policy.

Objective

The Council's crisis policy has the following objectives:

- to promote a consistent and fair methodology to the council's approach to crisis, encouraging working together and the sharing of information,
- Enable those in crisis to access the funds and support they require,
- Provide a framework that sets the criteria for dealing with residents in crisis.

Outcome

The outcomes expected from this policy are:

- To ensure a quick, efficient and consistent process for residents in crisis, which leads to good decision making,
- Provide for consistency in the amount of awards both in terms of goods and funds,
- Standardise the procedures for considering crisis support requests,
- Avoid the use of subjective judgement and criteria when considering cases for crisis, by providing clear objective criteria and procedures
- Introduce effective performance management arrangements,
- Help focus resources on those who do fit the council's definition of crisis,
- Support the Council's other policies where those in crisis need follow up help.

Definitions

Crisis is defined as an urgent need for assistance as a consequence of an emergency, disaster, unforeseen circumstance or a pressing need that is significantly different to the pressures generally associated with managing a low income. It is also a situation(s) which poses an immediate risk to health or life and requires urgent intervention. Crisis support is intended to help with extreme and severe one-off situations. It is not intended to be a regular form of support.

Disaster is defined as an event of great or sudden misfortune such as major flooding, a gas explosion, chemical leak or house fire but not minor mishaps or damage.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees (both permanent and temporary), contractors and consultants of the Council who are given the authority to manage and collect debt and income which is owed to the Council, or will be due to be owed to the Council at a later date.

Legislative and regulatory framework

Key elements of the legislative and regulatory framework for debt management are set out below.

Local Government Acts 1992 (as amended)	Establishes requirements to manage the Council's financial affairs and the appointment of a section 151 officer.
Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992	Make provision for the administration and enforcement of Council Tax.

Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement)(Local Lists) Regulations 1989	Make provision for the collection and enforcement of non-domestic rates.
Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) Regulations 2020	Establishes a debt respite scheme and establishes a breathing space moratorium and a mental health crisis moratorium.
Traffic Management Act 2004	Provide for the enforcement of parking, loading and waiting restrictions and processing of penalty charge notices.
Transport Act 2000	Provide for the enforcement of bus lane contraventions.
Data Protection Act 2018	Controls the lawful passing of personal data from one part of the Council to another.
The Housing Benefit General Regulations 1987 and 1992	Sets out the legislation that governs the payment of Housing Benefit, including Housing Benefit overpayments and their associated recovery
Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992	The primary legislation for most benefits in the UK
Social Security Administration Act 1992	The primary legislation for most benefits in the UK
Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2013	Provides the legislation for the taking control of goods in the UK, including the use of enforcement agents
County Courts Act 1984,	Establishes a single county court and its jurisdiction
Civil Procedure Rules 1998	Establishes the rules of Civil Procedure used by various courts in the UK
Charging Orders Act 1979	An Act to make provision for imposing charges to secure payment of money due, or to become due, under judgments or orders of court; to provide for restraining and prohibiting dealings with, and the making of payments in respect of, certain securities; and for connected purposes.
Insolvency Act 1986	Consolidates enactments relating to company insolvency and winding up, and bankruptcy of individuals
Equality Act 2010.	Is an amalgamation of previous anti-discrimination laws. It is a law which protects from discrimination of unfair treatment on the basis of certain personal characteristics such as age
General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA2018)	The GDPR/DPA2018 place a duty on the Council to comply with the data

	<p>protection principles relating to processing of personal data:</p> <p>(1)(a) Lawfulness, fairness and transparency;</p> <p>(1)(b) Purpose limitation;</p> <p>(1)(c) Data minimisation;</p> <p>(1)(d) Accuracy;</p> <p>(1)(e) Storage limitation;</p> <p>(1)(f) Integrity and confidentiality (security);</p> <p>(2) Accountability (including the rights of data subjects).</p>
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000	<p>Under the FOIA, the Council has a duty to make information available to the public upon request, unless specific exemption(s) apply. It is also obliged to proactively and routinely publish information that has been frequently requested in the past in its Publication Scheme. Information requests frequently include requests for information held in emails.</p>
Local Government Acts 1972, 1985, 1988 and 1992, Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on Records Management (S46 Freedom of Information Act)	<p>Establishes requirements to manage records and information, and gives implied authority to share certain kinds of information with partners.</p>
Care Act 2014 and Statutory Guidance Annex D	<p>The Act by which the local authority is able to charge for social care support and the rules imposed on the local authority with regard to recovery of such debt.</p>
Family Law Act 1996	<p>An Act of Parliament governing divorce and marriage.</p>
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	<p>An Act to make provision in connection with the protection of children and vulnerable adults.</p>
Modern Slavery Act 2015	<p>An Act designed to combat modern slavery in the UK.</p>
Tribunal Courts and Enforcement Act 2007	<p>An act which makes provision for tribunals and inquiries, particularly relating to the enforcement of judgments and debts.</p>
Taking Control of Goods Regulations 2014	<p>Make provision for recovery of fees and disbursements from debtors to enforcement agents in relation to the procedure for taking control of goods.</p>
Landlord and Tenant Act 1954	
Land and Property Act 1925	

Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1986	Contractual obligations under lease agreements for the payment of rent and other property charges.
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)	Governs the use of covert surveillance by public bodies.
Children Act 1989 – Section 17	Social services have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area

Roles and responsibilities

Head of Service – Residents and Business Services	Overall responsibility for the delivery of the Resident and Business Support Service and the Policy Owner.
Other Heads of Service	Where appropriate, Heads of Service have responsibility for ensuring strategic compliance with the policy.
Service Delivery Manager / Strategic Business Managers / Support Services Manager.	Where appropriate, responsibility for overseeing day-to-day compliance with this policy and the standards set out within it by their staff and other personnel they manage or commission.
All staff, contractors, consultants, interns and any other interim or third parties	Responsible for compliance with this policy.
Data Protection Officer	Responsible for provision of advice and guidance to the Council on its obligations in relation to data protection.

Supporting policies, procedures and standards

The following policies, procedures and standards will be implemented across the Council to ensure that the Council's debts are managed effectively and securely.

Corporate Debt Management Policy	This provides a framework for the consistent management of all debt and income across the Council
Debt Write Off Policy	This provides a framework for the consistent management of uncollectable debts.
Welfare Strategy	This provides a framework (e.g. a number of policies – S13a, Crisis Support, Food poverty, etc.) for a joined up approach to a holistic welfare advice and support service for all relevant residents.

Data Protection Policy	This summarises the Data Protection Policy position of Middlesbrough Council and how it will comply with legislation, and associated codes of practice and official guidance in relation to the processing of personal data.
Records Retention Schedule	This defines how long different records should be retained to comply with legal, regulatory or other requirements and the proper arrangements for archiving and destruction.
Records Management Policy and supporting procedures	This provides a framework for ensuring that the Council's records are well kept and that the systems used to hold them are fit-for-purpose.
Information Security and Infrastructure Security Technical Policies	These set out policies and standards for the management and maintenance of the security of Council infrastructure and applications.
Vital Records Standards	This sets out how vital records will be identified and the steps to be taken to ensure their protection and preservation.
Vulnerability Policy	Intended for use by Middlesbrough Council employees when engaging with residents/customers where payment of a collectable debt is being considered.
Stop the Knock approach	A solution designed as a 'helping hand' to support customers who are experiencing difficulties in meeting payment obligations.

What is considered a crisis?

For those who have suffered a disaster or crisis as defined above, support will be provided if a Middlesbrough resident meets one or more of the following:

(a)

- where there has been an unexpected serious emergency or crisis, which includes COVID-19, and there is a significant risk of harm to the an adult or child if no assistance is given;
- where a vulnerable person in the community needs help with basic housing needs or food to prevent homelessness or hardship;
- where a resident requires emergency visits to hospital (i.e. to Accident and Emergency);
- If there has been a breakdown of the family unit (i.e. fleeing violence);
- If there has been major flooding, gas explosions or fire which affects the home (where insurance or utility companies are not liable);
- If families would suffer severe health and/or safety problems if remedial support were not provided;
- If a resident or child is a victim of any type of domestic abuse and they need help with things like moving away from an abuser;
- A grandparent or other relative who has taken over caring for a child, and are waiting on additional state benefits;
- Experiencing a gap in your normal income levels because of a redundancy or change in employment at work which means you have no money for food or utilities;
- If a crisis, such as illness, has affected your ability to manage day to day essential living expenses;
- Where an application is made for Crisis Support via a referral from Children's Services for a need affecting a child/care leaver, an award can be considered for any costs which the Community Support Officer feels would be appropriate to make an award in order to avoid a detrimental effect on the child/care leaver concerned;

- Where a family has a disabled child, an award can be considered for the cost of a specific piece of equipment essential to the child if this has been broken, damaged or stolen and the family have no access to other funds;
- Following the death of a parent, or a carer, or domestic violence incident, the provision of a telephone for a child with significant health issues

and

(b)

- Have a risk or perceived risk to the personal health and safety of themselves and/or a member of their household or those that that are placed in care within the household.

General principles

The general principles adopted in this policy are as follows:

- To ensure a professional, consistent and timely approach to dealing with crisis and its associated support across all of the Council's functions,
- Where Data Protection legislation allows, promote a coordinated approach towards sharing information internally and managing multiple awards connected to crisis across the whole of the Council,
- To ensure that crisis is managed in accordance with legislative provisions and best practice,
- Ensure that any steps taken to deal with crisis in line with the Council's corporate policies on surveillance and data protection, and to ensure compliance with RIPA and GDPR legislation.

Delivering the policy

The Council's Community Support team will work in conjunction with the Children's Services or any other service to take referrals for Crisis Support where a child or member of their household has an urgent need for assistance which, if not provided, would affect the wellbeing of the child/care leaver/resident.

Delivering the policy involves a number of processes which are explained in more detail below:

- Ensuring a consistent approach
- What circumstances are not considered to be a crisis?
- Type of support that can be considered through crisis or a disaster
- How payments will be made?
- What needs are not covered?

Ensuring a consistent approach

In line with this policy, the council will have a consistent approach across all directorates in responding to crisis. Regular training will be delivered on the policy in general and internal processes will be reviewed to ensure they fall in line with this policy.

What circumstances are not considered to be a crisis?

Please note that **awards will not be made** to cover the following:

- If help is likely to be available from other funds or schemes, including if you have access to a short term benefit advance via Universal Credit
- If you've lost your money, unless this is supported with a crime reference number.
- if you're not responsible for paying rent or Council Tax in your own right (for example, if you live with your parents, you're 'sofa-surfing', or you have no permanent address)
- if your benefit has been sanctioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) although we may be able to help with a referral to a local foodbank or similar organisation
- if you've spent your money before your next payment is due and is purely a budgeting issue
- if you can apply for other income which may be available to you straight away
- Where the claim is from a person who has been deemed as having no recourse to public funds (NRPF), unless the claim includes dependent children.

Type of support that can be considered through crisis or a disaster

The following are areas considered as suitable or eligible for support where a resident is experiencing a crisis or a disaster. This list is not exhaustive and alternative scenarios may be considered.

- Daily living expenses such as food, toiletries and fuel
- To meet the cost of repaying emergency credit on a gas or electric prepayment meter so the supply of fuel can be maintained or restored
- Emergency accommodation charges when homeless - board and lodging or hostel
- Emergency travel expenses where the applicant is stranded away from home in a disaster
- Rent in advance payable to secure fresh accommodation where the landlord is not a local authority (but only in circumstances where an award for a Community Support Grant has been awarded)
- Essential clothing for adults or children
- Meals or items deemed as essential through either children's services or the community support team, up to agreed levels

- White goods, furniture, bedding and household items.

How payments will be made

The Council will provide a wide range of support in line with current procurement guidelines. The pricing of support items will be at the discretion of the Council. Internal guidance will be provided on an annual basis.

The vast majority of awards will be made through electronic means (Paypoint, Love to Reward, BACS payments to suppliers / residents). No cash will be awarded. Routinely, payments will be made as follows:

- Pay-Point vouchers for food
- Pay-Point vouchers for gas and electricity
- Pay-Point vouchers for essential clothing
- Pay-Point vouchers for household linen and kitchenware
- Direct awards with specific retailers for household furniture and white goods to agreed levels
- Direct referrals to the local foodbank or similar organisations providing essential food and supplies

What needs are not covered

Even where a resident fulfils the definition of crisis or disaster, the following needs are not covered under this policy, albeit this list is not exhaustive, there may be other needs that are not covered.

- An educational or training need including clothing, meals and travel
- Expenses in connection with court (legal proceedings) such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses
- Removal or storage charges if you are being rehoused following a compulsory purchase order, a redevelopment or closing order, a compulsory exchange of tenancies, or under homelessness legislation
- Domestic assistance and respite care
- Any repair to council property and any repair to properties that are the responsibility of housing associations
- A medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service (needs under all of these headings can be provided free of charge by the National Health Service)
- Debts to government departments
- Investments
- Costs of purchasing, renting or installing a telephone and of any call charges
- Holidays
- Non-essential electrical goods.
- Any expense which the local authority has a statutory duty to meet
- costs of fuel consumption and any associated standing charges (except in an emergency/disaster)



- Housing costs, other than minor repairs and improvements
- Council tax, water charges or community water charges
- Daily living expenses, such as food and groceries, except in emergency/disaster situations

Monitoring and review arrangements

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy and its supporting procedures will be checked and monitored by the Head of Service and associated management team.

The policy for the first 12 months will be subject to quarterly review, followed by a full review every 3 years.



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Template for Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

Subject of assessment:	Corporate Crisis Policy			
Coverage:	Cross cutting			
This is a decision relating to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local or corporate requirements:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key aims, objectives and activities ○ The policy sets out how the Council will provide a framework for sets the criteria for dealing with residents in crisis, promoting a consistent and fair methodology to the council's approach to crisis, and encouraging working together and the sharing of information between supporting teams. It will also enable those in crisis to access the funds and support they require. ○ Statutory drivers (set out exact reference) ○ The Council has a statutory duty to make payments to Middlesbrough residents who are in crisis or hardship, or have experienced a disaster. The council also provides additional support to residents who fall within pre-defined situations. ○ There is no legal driver for Crisis support, but there is a responsibility to support those in need through specific Government funding or our responsibilities as a council to support vulnerable groups. ○ Differences from any previous approach ○ Previous solutions were inconsistent, and resulted duplication in payments and support and the omission of a payment framework led to differing amounts of support for similar circumstances. This will be rectified by the proposed policy ○ Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) ○ The key stakeholders include customers of council services, staff, local partners and national government. ○ Intended outcomes. ○ To ensure a quick, efficient and consistent process for residents in crisis, which leads to good decision making, ○ Provide for consistency in the amount of awards both in terms of goods and funds, ○ Standardise the procedures for considering crisis support requests, ○ Avoid the use of subjective judgement and criteria when considering cases for crisis, by providing clear objective criteria and procedures ○ Introduce effective performance management arrangements, ○ Help focus resources on those who do fit the council's definition of crisis, ○ Support the Council's other policies where those in crisis need follow up help. 			
Live date:	February 2022			
Lifespan:	3 years. This is the first iteration of the policy. It will be reviewed quarterly during the first year,			
Date of next review:	Full review is Feb 2025. An Informal review will take place in April 2022 (and quarterly until February 2023) to ensure it is operating as expected. If there are adverse findings that review will be formalised.			

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>This proposed policy is designed to ensure that the Council operates a more consistent and joined up approach to crisis and / or emergency support, and considers the resident needs as a whole through a centralised offering. This policy is also designed to provide a payment framework when responding to residents who present themselves to the service when in need and will be applied across all directorates. There are no concerns that the policy could infringe qualified or absolute human rights.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes analysis of the various circumstances of the resident, and current support provisions from various council services across the council, and engagement to date with senior officers who have been involved in the development of the policy and supporting detailed delivery plans.</p>

* Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
<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 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires that when exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to the need to:-</p> <ul 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>In having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity, the Council must consider, as part of a single equality duty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it; and encouraging people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation is low. <p>The proposed policy should provide consistency and efficiency in the council’s approach, whilst being mindful of a service user’s situation. Liaison between the various supporting services is in place so that where a wider support delivery is required, or signposting to other services, this can be put into place quite quickly. The Crisis policy also links into the Council’s overall Welfare Strategy and vulnerability policy, as well as the Council’s Corporate Debt Management policy which supports Social Inclusion and a customer’s ability to pay, should anyone presenting in crisis have any outstanding debt to the council.</p> <p>It is potentially relevant to all the protected characteristics. The aim of the policy is to address inequalities in outcomes experienced by residents / service users of the council when they are in crisis or require emergency support.</p> <p>This method of working is designed to understand the individual needs of the resident and ensure they get the support payments they are entitled to in a quick and easy manner. This will result in a more tailored service response, improving outcomes and the better identification of equality and fairness issues that may need to be addressed. There are no concerns that the policy could have a disproportionate adverse impact on individuals or groups because they hold one or more protected characteristics. The application of a case by case approach to crisis will support work to provide nuanced approaches.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes analysis of the various circumstances of the resident, and current support provisions from various council services across the council, and engagement to date with senior officers who have been involved in the development of the policy and supporting detailed delivery plans. It also links to the plan to combine all debt recovery, charging services, and payment of support across the council under one Service Head – Resident and Business Services.</p>

Screening questions	Response	Evidence			
<p>Community cohesion</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?*</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="background-color: #FFD700;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="background-color: #FFD700;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposed policy should provide a coordinated, joined up and consistent approach to crisis, and includes arrangements for a single service (Resident & Business Support) administering payments which will prevent inconsistencies across customers who access support.</p> <p>Where there may be any different needs because of a protected characteristic or geography, this joined up approach will help to develop follow up actions focussed on addressing those unequal impacts. There are no concerns that the policy could have an adverse impact on community cohesion.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes analysis of the various circumstances of the resident, and current support provisions from various council services across the council, and engagement to date with senior officers who have been involved in the development of the policy and supporting detailed delivery plans. It also links to the plan to combine all debt recovery, charging services, and payment of support across the council under one Service Head – Resident and Business Services.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<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:	Mark Symmonds	Head of Service:	Janette Savage		
Date:	12/11/2021	Date:	12/11/2021		

Report of:	Councillor Barrie Cooper - Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance Geoff Field - Director of Environment and Community Services
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Submitted to:	Executive - 11 January 2022
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Subject:	Elected Members Small Scheme Allocation 2021/22
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
That Executive approves the Elected Members Small Scheme allocation 2021/22

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?
Decision	Yes it affects more than two wards	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
The schemes are scored against the Council's three strategic aims. All the schemes contribute to improvements in the lives of local people.	The schemes are scored against the Council's three strategic aims. All the schemes will deliver improvements to Middlesbrough's infrastructure and improve community safety	The schemes are scored against the Council's three strategic aims and all contribute to improving community safety and enhancing the town's infrastructure which should impact positively on the economy.

Ward(s) affected
Linthorpe, Nunthorpe, Stainton & Thornton, Marton East, Newport, Hemlington, Ladgate, Park, Trimdon, Coulby Newham, Brambles Farm, Brambles and Thorntree, Central, Newport and Acklam wards.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. Executive considers the schemes set out in this report and either approves, declines or recommends alternative funding in respect of the Elected Members Small Scheme Allocation (EMSS).

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The proposed schemes affect more than two wards and are therefore considered a key decision requiring approval by Executive.

Report Background

3. Members have previously approved funding within the capital programme for the Elected Members Small Scheme (EMSS).
4. A total of 16 applications were received with a total value of £167,660 against a budget of £113,000.
5. Schemes are scored against the following criteria with a maximum of 80 points.

Strength of links with Council's Strategic Plan
Outputs, benefits, and social value
Savings payback achieved & value for money
Project risks

6. The scored applications schemes are as follows:-

Councillor	Ward	Scheme	£ EMSS	£ Match Funding	Points
Cllr Thompson	Brambles and Thorntree	CCTV installations	£ 10,000		48
Cllr Walker	Hemlington	Allotments Fencing	£ 9,552		48
Cllr Furness	Park	Road marking improvements	£ 15,000		48
Cllr Grainge	Ladgate	CCTV in Easterside	£ 7,500		48
Cllr Smiles	Nunthorpe	Traffic Calming, Clevegate	£ 15,000		43
Cllr Coupe	Stainton and Thornton	Traffic Calming, Stainton & Thornton	£ 15,000	£2,000	43
Cllr Hubbard	Park End and Beckfield	Traffic Calming Lindisfarne Road	£ 15,000	£6,000	43
Cllr Wilson	Brambles Farm	Chicanes – motorcycle traffic calming, Thorntree	£ 7,000		33
Cllrs Mawston, Davison	Marton East	Traffic Calming Speed activated signs	£ 6,000		33
Cllr Hellaoui	Newport	Seating area / art work – Carter Park / Ayresome Gardens Newport	£ 4,408		33
Cllr Storey	Linthorpe	CCTV and Kissing Gates, Acklam Road	£ 10,000		28
Cllr Dodds	Trimdon Park	Footpath improvements to Play Area	£ 15,000		28
Cllr Polano	Acklam	Play equipment toddlers play area	£ 15,000		28
Cllr Branson	Coulby Newham	Speed Indicator signs on Bonny Grove Way	£ 3,200		23
Cllr Lewis	Central	CCTV provision – Wilton Street / Linthorpe Road	£ 15,000		18
Cllr McCabe	Trimdon	CCTV at rear of Trimdon Avenue shops	£ 5,000		18
			£167,660	£8,000	

7. Not all the applications identify match funding. Where a contribution on match funding is required this has been agreed with the budget holder for the Local Transport Plan.
8. Not all the applications identify projected maintenance or running costs for future years. However respective service area budget holders have indicated that these costs are minimal and can be absorbed within existing budgets.
9. All applications relating to traffic calming will require further public consultation before they can be delivered.
10. All applications relating to CCTV will be subject to a more detailed technical assessment as part of the wider Community Safety Strategy.

What decision(s) are being asked for

11. That Executive approves the Elected Members Small Scheme allocation 2021/22
12. Subject to point 11, Executive agree option 4 from the table at point 23.

Why is this being recommended?

13. This option will allow for all approved schemes to be funded direct from the EMSS 2021-22 and 2022-23 allocation, negating the need for a further bidding round in April 2022 and allow for the Ward Initiatives scheme budget and PSPO & CCTV Provision budget to be utilised for other priorities.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

14. Members could agree to one of the other options at point 23. This is not recommended as they are a less effective use of resources.

Impact(s) of recommended decision

Legal

15. Successful schemes will be delivered by the appropriate services in accordance with any statutory requirements such as planning /building regulation approval.

Financial

16. All of the schemes have been evaluated by an officer scoring panel in respect of value for money and future potential maintenance cost implications.
17. As the total value of bids is greater than the budget, members are asked to consider the following financing options
18. If alternative funding was not approved then schemes to a maximum value of £54,660 could not be approved if the budget is to balance. Option 1
19. The Applications from Cllr Dodds, Polano, and Walker, which total £39,552 have been submitted to the Ward Initiatives scheme (WIS). If this funding is made available, the revised costs to the Members Small Schemes would be £128,108, which creates a short fall of £15,108. Option 2

20. A separate report relating to PSPO & CCTV Provision is being presented to Executive and if approved would allow the CCTV schemes noted in the following table to be funded.

Councillor	Ward	Scheme	
Cllr Thompson	Brambles and Thorntree	CCTV installations	£ 10,000
Cllr Grainge	Ladgate	CCTV in Easterside	£ 7,500
Cllr Storey	Linthorpe	CCTV and Kissing Gates, Acklam Road	£ 10,000
			£ 27,500

21. If option 1 and 2 are agreed, the net position for the ESMS allocation would be £12,392.
Option 3

22. If options 1 and 2 are not agreed, members could consider bring forward £54,660 funding from the 2022-23 budget allocation of £60,000 to allow all the 16 bids to be funded and then carry forward the remaining £5,340 balance into 2023-24, when a further £60,000 allocation will be available. This option would negate the need for a bidding round in 2022-23. Option 4

23. The following table provides a summary of the options

	Budget	Value of Bids	Funding from WIS	Funding from PSPO & CCTV	Total	+/-
Option 1	£ 113,000	£ 167,660	£ -	£ -	£ 167,660	-£ 54,660
Option 2	£ 113,000	£ 167,660	£ 39,552		£ 128,108	-£ 15,108
Option 3	£ 113,000	£ 167,660	£ 39,552	£ 27,500	£ 100,608	£ 12,392
Option 4	£ 167,660	£ 167,660	£ -	£ -	£ 167,660	£ -

Policy Framework

24. All of the schemes have been evaluated by a scoring panel in respect of the Council's strategic priorities.

Equality and Diversity

25. The proposed schemes are considered to have no adverse impacts on individuals or groups protected in UK equality law.

Risk

26. The schemes contribute to reducing the Council risk in respect of health outcomes, crime, and public safety.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

27. Officers will allocate the requisite funding to the appropriate service areas who will liaise with the appropriate councillors and keep them regularly updated on progress with respect to completing the schemes in 21/22 or carrying forward into 2022/23.

Background papers

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

Contact: David Jamison, Head of Property and Commercial Services.
Email: david_jamison@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Report of:	Councillor Barrie Cooper - Executive Member for Environment and Finance & Governance Ian Wright - Director of Finance
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Submitted to:	Executive - 11 January 2022
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Subject:	Whorlton Road - Disposal [Part A]
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
The 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.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? ¹
Decision	Yes - exceeds the £150,000 threshold.	No	No.

Contribution to delivery of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
The proposal to dispose of the property will help safeguard the future of the estate as a location for business activity and aid the creation of further employment opportunities within the Borough.	Disposing of this subject property will generate future investment and bring an underused Council asset in poor condition into a far more positive future use.	The proposal to dispose of the subject property will generate a capital receipt along with substantial savings for the Council.

Ward(s) affected
Central

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 Whorlton Road Industrial Estate.

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. Shown edged on the plan attached as Appendix A of this report, the subject property is situated on Whorlton Road and occupies a rectangular shaped site measuring @ 2.18 Acres [0.88 Ha] in a prominent position on Riverside Park.
4. Whorlton Road Industrial Estate is relatively modern in its appearance, comprising several terraced industrial units of steel frame construction with blockwork to the lower sections, sheet metal cladding to the upper walls and a half pitched roof.
5. Whilst the Council [MBC] is the freehold owner of Whorlton Road Industrial Estate, the property is subject to multiple leases and the Council currently also leases back the entire estate from Borough Properties.
6. In 1982 MBC entered into a 125 year headlease with Woodhead Construction Ltd, where MBC let vacant land to Woodhead Construction Ltd for the purposes of developing Whorlton Road Industrial Estate. Simultaneously, MBC also entered into an underlease with Woodhead Construction Ltd, agreeing to leaseback the completed development for a term of 35 years.
7. Borough Properties subsequently acquired these leases, and are now held on the headlease as a tenant, which has a term of 86 years remaining, and also on the underlease as the Landlord, due to expire in 2026. The underlease, which holds MBC as the tenant to Borough Properties was due to expire in 2017, but in 2008 the respective leases were varied, extending MBC's term as tenant up until January 1st 2026.
8. As well as the term being extending, other variations were made to the lease, which with the passage of time has considerably increased MBC's liability and will continue to do so up until the end of the lease term, in January 2026.
9. An Asset Disposal Business Case confirming the status of the subject property as surplus to operational Council requirements is attached as Appendix C to Part B of this report.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

10. The 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?

11. In order to meet the Council's requirements to generate capital receipts, increase annually recurring revenue streams, reduce future expenditure and liability, and to see the subject property regenerated in the future.
12. 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

13. No Council operational service requirement has been identified.

Other uses

14. Given the property's location and make up, no use other than light industrial would be suitable.

Do nothing

15. MBC would remain as a tenant under the existing terms, subject to the full obligations and associated costs of the Underlease until Jan 2026.
16. Following January 2026, MBC would not have the benefit of the asset until the Headlease comes to an end in January 2107.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

17. No specific legal issues have been created as a result of the proposal.
18. The property would be disposed of freehold, with MBC remaining as a tenant under more preferential lease terms until January 2026.

Financial

19. The Council would receive a capital receipt, plus substantial savings over the remaining term.

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 stimulate further economic development within the borough.

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 Central Ward 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 B.
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. If no action is taken MBC will be subject to increasing costs and liability until the lease terminates.

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

Appendix B – Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

Background papers

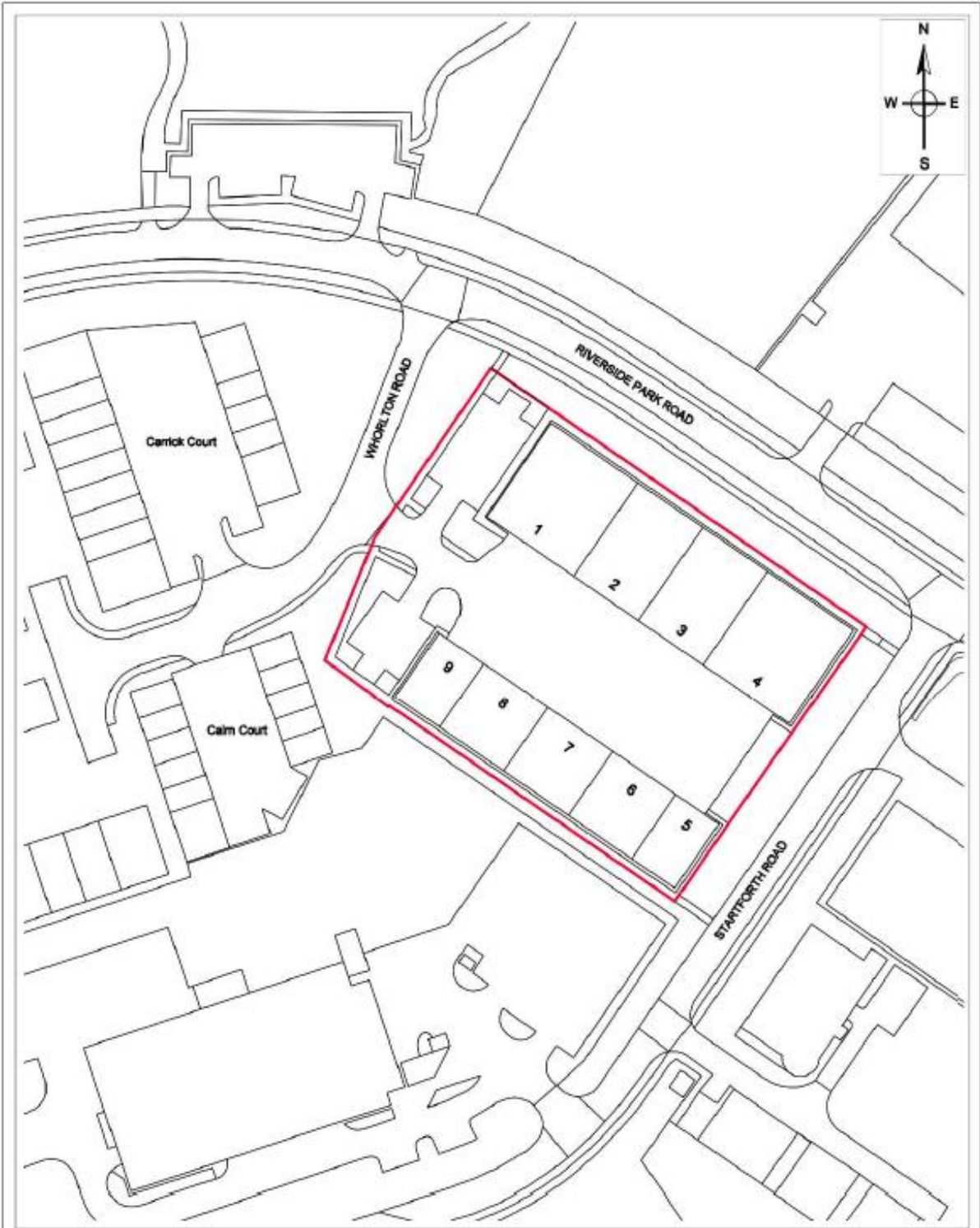
No further reports were used in the preparation of this report:

Body	Report title	Date
N/A	N/A	N/A

Contact: Jack Walton, Valuation & Estates.

Email: Jack_Walton@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Site Plan



TIM WAKE VALUATION & ESTATES

WHORLTON ROAD IND. ESTATE
RIVERSIDE PARK
MIDDLESBROUGH

Scale:	1:1250
Date:	11th NOVEMBER 15
Drawn:	JMS
Org No:	VAL 5687

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Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

Subject of assessment:	Disposal of the Council’s freehold interest in Whorlton Road Industrial Estate			
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 industrial/commercial use in accordance with the existing planning use classification of the property.</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 property 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 property, and • help stimulate further economic activity in the local area, and bring the subject property back into a more positive future use. 			

Live date:	Tuesday 07 th December 2021			
Lifespan:	Not applicable.			
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?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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 property from the Council's Estate holding. This assessment has been made taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

*Consult the Impact Assessment further guidance appendix for details on the issues covered by each of these broad questions prior to completion.

<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>	☒	☐	☐	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and (c) 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 property 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>
<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>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>Middlesbrough 2025 – Our Vision</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for Middlesbrough?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>The disposal will facilitate regeneration and contribute <i>positively</i> towards the Middlesbrough 2025 Vision – specifically in respect of Aim 2 ('a learning town, in which families and communities thrive), where one of the priorities is for more people to be working. This assessment has been made taking into account the new jobs that will be created in the Borough by bringing this property back into a far more beneficial future use.</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?*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
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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:	Jack Walton	Head of Service:	Louise Grabham
Date:	21/10/2021	Date:	21/10/2021

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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