

EXECUTIVE

Date: Tuesday 24th January, 2023
Time: 1.00 pm
Venue: Mandela Room

AGENDA

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| 2. | Declarations of Interest | 7 - 8 |
| 3. | Minutes - Executive - 6 December 2022 | 9 - 14 |

DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

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EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

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| 10. | Site L (North) Coulby Newham – Disposal - PART A | 53 - 66 |
| 11. | Town Centre Property Purchase - PART A | 67 - 74 |

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

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| 12. | Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel - The Role of the VCS in Supporting Adult Social Care - Service Response | 75 - 102 |
| 13. | Any other urgent items which in the opinion of the Chair, may be considered. | |
| 14. | Exclusion of Press and Public | 103 - 104 |

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 items 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.

DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

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EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION

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| 17. | EXEMPT - Site L (North) Coulby Newham – Disposal - PART B | 123 - 130 |
| 18. | EXEMPT - Town Centre Property Purchase - PART B | 131 - 140 |

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Monday 16 January 2023

MEMBERSHIP

Mayor A Preston (Chair) Councillors B Cooper, D Coupe, TA Grainge, S Hill, L Mason, E Polano, M Smiles and S Walker

Assistance in accessing information

Should you have any queries on accessing the Agenda and associated information please contact Chris Lunn / Scott Bonner, 01642 729742 / 01642 729708, chris_lunn@middlesbrough.gov.uk / scott_bonner@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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EXECUTIVE

Date: 24 January 2023

Time: 1.00 p.m.

Venue: Mandela Room

MEMBER	IN ATTENDANCE
Mayor A Preston	
Councillor B Cooper	
Councillor D Coupe	
Councillor T Grainge	
Councillor S Hill	
Councillor L Mason	
Councillor E Polano	
Councillor M Smiles	
Councillor S Walker	

Present by invitation:

MEMBER	IN ATTENDANCE
Councillor M Saunders Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board	

Present as an observer: Members signatures only

NAME	IN ATTENDANCE (please tick)
OFFICER	IN ATTENDANCE (please tick)
M Adams	
C Benjamin	
R Brown	

S Myers	
G Field	
R Horniman	
T Parkinson	
S Reynolds	
E Scollay	
H Seechurn	

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	IN ATTENDANCE (please tick)

EXECUTIVE

Declarations of Interest

Date: 24 January 2023

Time: 1.00 p.m.

Venue: Mandela Room

MEMBER	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Mayor A Preston	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor B Cooper	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor D Coupe	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor T Grainge	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor S Hill	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor L Mason	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor E Polano	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor M Smiles	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
Councillor S Walker	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING
MEMBER	IN ATTENDANCE
Councillor M Saunders Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board	ANY DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE AT THE MEETING

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EXECUTIVE

A meeting of the Executive was held on Tuesday 6 December 2022.

PRESENT: Mayor A Preston (Chair) and Councillors TA Grainge, S Hill, L Mason, E Polano, M Smiles and S Walker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor J McTigue

OFFICERS: S Bonner, C Benjamin, G Field, R Horniman, A Pain, T Parkinson and E Scollay

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors B Cooper and D Coupe

22/59 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

22/60 **MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 8 NOVEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 8 November 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/61 **COST OF LIVING CRISIS**

The Mayor and the Chief Executive submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of activity to mitigate, as far as was reasonably possible within the Council's limited resources, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on residents, businesses and council employees.

This report outlined an overview of the cost-of-living crisis and the impact that this was having on the town, not only those residents living on the lowest incomes but working residents, employees, businesses and business owners.

The report set out the Council's response from a welfare perspective and provided an update on the work undertaken by the Council and its partners to tackle poverty and improve financial inclusion to date.

The report also highlighted the wider economic forces that were exacerbating this crisis.

It was also recognised that responding to the cost-of-living crisis as a town would require effective partnership working. Groups such as the Financial Inclusion Group would be ideally placed to support the Council, as they have similar objectives in so far as ensuring a targeted and appropriate response was provided to those most at risk of poverty.

OPTIONS

The Council could choose to continue to meet statutory obligations in relation to this work but not join up that work to ensure access to support was maximised and support routes simplified for the public, businesses and staff. This option was not recommended as it would miss an opportunity to reduce the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the town.

AGREED:- That Executive noted the report

REASONS

While the capacity and limited resources of the Council meant it would not be able to fully mitigate the town from the impact of this crisis, it must act decisively if it was to

protect as far as possible and ensure the town was as well placed as it could be, within those constraints, to weather those impacts and bounce back.

22/62

CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2023/24

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The report was part of the process to set the council tax base for the financial year 2023/24 by the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023.

The Council had a legal obligation to calculate a council tax base each financial year. The calculation of the council tax base was a part of the Council's budget strategy which formed part of the Council's Policy Framework, and as such must be agreed by Full Council.

The starting point for the calculation of the 2023/24 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 1) 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 2023/24, the equivalent number of Band D properties was calculated at 36,703.4.

OPTIONS

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

ORDERED That Executive:-

1. **Noted the contents of the report;**
2. **Endorsed the council tax base for 2023/24 as 35,749;**
3. **Endorsed 2,269 and 1,319 as the council tax bases for the parishes of Nunthorpe and Stainton & Thornton respectively for 2023/24;**
4. **Noted that the report was to be presented to Council on 11th January 2023, and that following approval the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Cleveland Fire Authority and the Parish Councils were notified of the 2023/24 council tax base**

REASONS

The recommendations are supported by the following reasons: -

- a) **The Local Government Finance Act 1992 required a billing authority to calculate its council tax base for each financial year.**
- b) **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 31st January in the year proceeding the relevant financial year.**

22/63

EXCHANGE HOUSE – DISPOSAL (PART A)

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The purpose of the report was to seek Executive approval to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in Exchange House.

Shown edged on the plan attached at Appendix 1 of the report, Exchange House was a vacant town centre building occupying a visually prominent location at Exchange Square, immediately adjacent to the A66 Trunk Road.

Comprising a Grade II listed brick-built commercial building with 4,553 Sqm [49,014 Sqft] of office accommodation set out over 5 storeys [with basement], the property sat in close proximity to both the town centre and the railway station on a rectangular shaped site measuring @ 0.36 Acres [0.146 Ha].

Incorporating a mix of flat & pitched roof arrangements, the property was constructed in two distinct phases and has been operated over time as two separate elements: firstly, as the former Chamber of Commerce [built @ 1890] and secondly, the Teesside Archives [built @ 1930].

The property was in poor overall condition, having become increasingly dilapidated and required significant refurbishment to bring it up to modern standards – so much so, that the Council did not consider it to be fit for the purpose of delivering operational service requirements.

OPTIONS

Re-use for operational purposes

No Council operational service requirement had been identified.

Other uses.

Although the property was capable of being used for other purposes, future use of the site for commercial purposes as proposed by the Buyer, was preferred.

Do nothing

The property would remain in its present dilapidated state.

Whilst the subject property would be retained for potential Council use in the future, the liability and responsibility for maintaining and holding the property would remain with the Council in the interim.

AGREED That Executive:-

- a) **note the information contained within Part A of the report; and**
- b) **take the decision to dispose of the subject property once all the financial or exempt information contained within Part B of the report had been considered.**

REASONS

Disposal, as proposed in the report, would generate a significant capital receipt, increase annually recurring revenue streams and also bring the subject property into far more beneficial use in the future.

Disposal of the property supported delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

22/64

RESIDENTIAL BLOCK CONTRACT - (PART A)

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Director for Children's Services submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

The report sought Executive's agreement to publish a VEAT notice notifying the market of the Council's intention to award a five year, with the option to extend for a further five years, block contract in respect of a new three bedded home opening in Middlesbrough.

Middlesbrough Council had 15 internal residential beds for children and young people offering across 4 homes:

- a. Firtree - 4 beds
- b. Willowtree - 2 beds
- c. Hollylodge - 4 beds

- d. Rosecroft - 5 beds (16+ with care needs)

Middlesbrough Council had a block contract with Cambian Care (TA CareTech) which meant the Council had a contract in place which secured nine beds across three homes at a set bed rate. The contract had been very successful and had been in place for a number of years, originally for four beds in one home in Middlesbrough but over time had expanded and now offered nine beds across one home in Middlesbrough, one in Hartlepool and one in Stockton.

Occupancy levels had generally been good and from April 2022 to September 2022 there had been eight young people accommodated which equated to an 89% occupancy rate.

OPTIONS

Do nothing

If the Council did nothing the current arrangements would continue meaning that spot purchase placements would continue to be sourced out of area at significant cost.

This option was not recommended.

Tender for a block contract

As the provider owned the property and had approached the Council with a block proposal a tender process was not possible.

A tender was an open process that gave all interested providers the opportunity to submit a bid to provide the service the Council wished to procure, on this occasion because the provider owned the property and the service it would be impossible for another provider bid.

This option would not be recommended.

AGREED That Executive:-

- a) **note the information contained within Part A of the report; and**
- b) **take the decision to award the block contract once all the financial or exempt information contained within Part B of the report had been considered.**

REASONS

The addition of three block residential beds assisted Middlesbrough Council in meeting its statutory responsibility in relation to sufficiency of placements to meet the needs of children and young people. This increase would mean that, overall, through internal and block resource Middlesbrough Council would have a bed capacity of 27.

Middlesbrough Council's external residential budget is significantly under pressure it is anticipated that funding for this block contract will be achieved from a reduction in spot purchase placements.

Whilst hard to evidence, there were other expected efficiencies from this block arrangement. For example, Social Workers not having to travel or be out of the office for a whole day or more; where young people were placed significantly further away, they could continue within their education setting; where health intervention was in place this would again allow continuation of appointment or service they were accessing and easier to support contact with family, which may have potentially resulted in reunification home.

22/65

ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance tabled an urgent report for Executive's consideration.

Executive heard the report was being tabled due to a change in Executive dates for January. The decision in respect of Minimum Revenue Provision could not reasonably be deferred given the Council's financial position. As such the matter needed to be considered at the 6 December meeting of Executive in order to be considered at Full Council on 18 January 2023.

The Capital Strategy was one of the main elements of the Council's budget approach, alongside the Revenue Budget and the Investment Strategy. Although some high-level metrics on progress were reported as part of the quarterly budget monitoring process, it was good practice to review this information in more detail at Quarter Two.

The report therefore reviewed the position on the Investment Strategy, any changes that had occurred during the year to date, plus any implications for affordability since the original budget was set in February 2022. In addition, the report reviewed the position on treasury management, including borrowing, investments, and debt repayment.

The second aspect of the report considered a change to the Council's current policy on Minimum Revenue Provision which may lead to some cost reduction. This would need consideration by Executive before submission to Council for approval.

OPTIONS

The other decision that could be made was to reject the proposal and remain with the existing MRP policy, charging £5.8m to the revenue budget for debt repayment in 2022/23. This would have meant that the revenue budget overspend would continue at a higher level than if the change in policy was approved, but more indebtedness would be redeemed this financial year.

ORDERED That Executive:-

- 1. Consider the current position on the capital strategy for 2022/23.**
- 2. Endorse the change being proposed on Minimum Revenue Provision and make any comments on this prior to submission to Full Council.**

REASONS

Members should have oversight of, and note, the progress to date against the key elements of the capital strategy and challenge any areas that vary from when the budget was set in February.

The proposed policy change harmonised the Council's policies in respect of debt repayment and ensured a smoothed profile which was more affordable from the current revenue budget.

22/66

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

ORDERED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that, if present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

22/67

EXEMPT - EXCHANGE HOUSE - DISPOSAL (PART B)

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and the Director of Finance submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

ORDERED

That the recommendations of the report be approved.

REASONS

The decision was supported by the following reason:

For reasons outlined in the report.

22/68

EXEMPT - RESIDENTIAL BLOCK CONTRACT (PART B)

The Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services and the Executive Director of Finance submitted a report for Executive's consideration.

ORDERED

That the recommendations of the report be approved.

REASONS

The decision was supported by the following reason:

For reasons outlined in the report.

The decision made for the *Capital Strategy Mid-Year 2022-2023 report* will come into force immediately as it was not subject to call-in procedures.

All other decisions 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.

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children’s Services Interim Executive Director of Children’s Services
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	24 January 2023
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Title:	Children’s Services Improvement Programme: Update Report
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Report for:	Information
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	Children and young people
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Key decision:	Not applicable
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Why:	Report is for information only
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	Not Applicable
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Executive summary	
<p>The most recent Ofsted monitoring visit (report published December 22) focused on older looked after children and the support offered to care leavers. The report was balanced and provided clarity on the areas we need to improve.</p> <p>We have already acted on some of the issues raised by inspectors and have added several further actions to the improvement plan.</p>	

Purpose

1. To brief members of the Executive on the progress made against the Children's Service Improvement Plan with particular reference to the findings of Middlesbrough's Ofsted Monitoring Visit in November 2022.

Background and relevant information

2. Since the last inspection, services for older children in care and care leavers has started to improve. Most older children who are approaching leaving care are supported to develop the necessary independence skills needed to live alone. Care leavers told inspectors that most of them had experienced a positive transition from care, including that they had been well supported by their social workers and their personal advisors.
3. However, for some children the transition planning has not been as effective as it should have been. As a result, a small number of care leavers described: feeling rushed when moving out of care and a small number this has resulted in them remaining CIC, post 18 due to a lack of planning & we've continued to support them in accommodation. Some young people said they needed more financial support to enable them to buy food and pay their energy bills. We have some plans in place to make sure the right level of support is in place.
4. We maintain contact with most children and care leavers on a regular basis, and care leavers make use of the dedicated social media messenger page to stay in touch. Independent advocates are offered to children and care leavers, and they have been actively involved in supporting them with their issues and concerns.
5. Pathway plans vary in quality. Most plans require tighter target setting/ Smarter focus. The better plans and assessments include the clear voice of the child and care leaver and are written to them. This means that children and care leavers are very clear about their rights and entitlements.
6. Contingency planning is mostly absent or entirely focused on the breakdown of living arrangement rather than a holistic view of the child and young person and their circumstances.
7. Those children and care leavers who benefit from the supported living accommodation and the bespoke children's home are well supported to prepare for independent living. Staff provide them with opportunities to develop life skills and promote resilience in preparation for living alone. It is clear that they have established trusting relationships with support staff who are attuned to their needs. It is a real positive that those children and care leavers who talked to inspectors, and who live in these homes, are all either in education or are in work.
8. Return home interviews after children have been missing are undertaken in a timely way and information from the child or care staff provides a helpful insight to understand risk. Children have appropriate safety plans and oversight from the vulnerable exploited missing and trafficked panel. Consequently, children had reduced their missing episodes as well as their risks in the community.

9. The pathways team do not always demonstrate sufficient curiosity and challenge about the care leaver’s holistic needs. Managers acknowledge this is an area for development. Some of the newer members of the team do not receive the frequency of supervision and type of support that they would benefit from to develop themselves and progress their understanding of the work.

While most personal advisors talk enthusiastically about their care leavers, and describe ‘stickability’ with them, this is not always translating into direct action which is promoting young people’s safeguarding and well-being. Risk for some care leavers is not always recognised in a timely.

Next Steps

- As a result of the monitoring visit, we have made the following changes to the improvement plan. A focused audit will take place in March 2023 to check on the progress of the changes.

<p>For some children the transition planning has not been as effective as it should have been. As a result, a small number of care leavers described: feeling rushed when moving out of care; not having sufficient understanding of their living costs; that they needed more financial support to enable them to buy food and pay their energy bills; and help with new deposits and bonds when their housing situation broke down.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot topics to be held in January 2023 on preparing for adulthood including budgeting, housing choices • Gather feedback from young people to understand the impact of their transition plan and how this could be improved from their perspective. (January 23) • Adults Social Care and Housing have agreed to start working with young people who require their support from the age of 17 years to support a seamless transition to adulthood • Review the support we offer to care leavers and look at other ways we can help with the cost of living/ food bills etc. (explore shared tenancies/friends living together etc.) (January 23)
<p>Most plans require tighter target setting.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer audit sessions are being completed with Team Managers, Social Workers, and Personal Advisor’s monthly to review and support the quality of Needs Assessments and Pathway Plans • Training led by the PSW jointly with Team Managers focusing on how to carry out a good quality Needs Assessment and Pathway Plan in January 2023 • Undertake an audit to review the quality of Needs Assessments and Pathway Plans in March 2023

<p>Contingency planning is mostly absent or entirely focused on the breakdown of living arrangement rather than a holistic view of the child and young person and their circumstances.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot topics session to be held focusing on contingency planning in January 2023. • Undertake an audit to review Pathway Plans to review to ensure contingency planning is effectively considered in March 2023.
<p>We have recently introduced a passport to independence. However, this is too soon to show impact on delivering a consistently robust preparation for independence for all children.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake evaluation of the success of the passport to independence in May 2023. • Undertake an audit to review consistent application of the passport to independence. • Gather feedback from young people in relation to their experience and usefulness of the passport to independence. • If required, make changes to the process to improve the passport to independence.
<p>The development of the sufficiency strategy, and the children's forecasting model which underpins this, has lacked the necessary pace to secure sufficiency of local internal placements for children in care.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish working group to focus on sufficiency and forecasting • Review current sufficiency strategy and action plan to ensure it is fit for purpose and make amendments informed by local data and intelligence.
<p>Care leavers who are in custody do not always receive a good enough service. This was also seen by inspectors on this visit.</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review joint working agreement in place with Youth Justice and Children's Care to ensure it is being applied consistently. (January 23) • Head of Service/ Service Manager to approach prisons with a view to strengthening relationships and creating some shares outcomes by January 2023. • Head of Service for Pathways to work with Head of Service for YOS to review processes in place with probation to ensure care experienced young people leaving custody, who are 18 years and above, are offered appropriate support by February 2023. • We are delivering targeted staff development including Awareness Raising on Care Leavers in Custody, Hot Topics (19th Dec) and wider staff training on Young People in Custody. • Principle Social Worker to develop Practice Standards for Children in Custody by February 2023. • We will re-audit this cohort of young people to evaluate the impact of these improvements in February 2023
<p>Care leavers benefit from the Middlesbrough care leaver offer including</p>	<p>Ofsted monitoring visit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a regional care leaver's offer to ensure consistent support is provided regardless

<p>council tax exemptions. However, council tax exemption is only applicable if care leavers live in Middlesbrough putting those who live away from their home area at a disadvantage. Additionally, some care leavers told inspectors that they were struggling with the cost of living.</p>		<p>of a young person's location within the region. Claire S to take to AD's group in February 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Manager for Care Leavers to explore ideas to offer more support to our care leavers around the cost of living, to commence in January 2023.
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Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

10. The action plan above sets out our response to the letter from Ofsted. The rationale being that we will need to demonstrate that we have taken action following the monitoring.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

11. There are no other potential decisions, we have been guided by Ofsted inspectors on the areas for improvement.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

12. There are no legal implications at this stage.

Strategic priorities and risks

13. The changes will be added to our existing improvement plan

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

14. NA

Financial

15. There are no financial implications at this stage. The plan will focus on improving practice within our current budget.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
To implement the action plan	Sue Myers/Claire Sowerby	March 2023

Appendices

1	
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Ofsted	Monitoring visit letter	December 10 2023

Contact: Sue Myers

Email: sue_myers@middlesbrough.gov.uk

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children’s Services Interim Executive Director of Children’s Care
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	24 January 2023
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Title:	In-House Fostering – PART A
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Report for:	Decision
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	Children and young people
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Key decision:	Yes
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Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	Not Applicable
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Executive summary	
<p>To provide information around the request to seek an investment for the in-house fostering service to retain carers and avoid continued requests for moves to Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA).</p>	

Purpose

1. To provide information to Executive in order to support the request for an agreement to invest in the in-house fostering service.

Background and relevant information

2. A primary aim of Middlesbrough Council's Sufficiency Strategy is to have well developed and targeted range of community support arrangements and high-quality placements within and around the Tees Valley area to care for our children and young people.
3. At present there are insufficient numbers of foster placements available either internally or externally to meet our needs and overall, our ambition is to grow our in-house fostering service; in line with our sufficiency ambition to have more children and young people placed in foster care and with a Middlesbrough Council foster carer. At present carers are leaving to move to IFA's and therefore this investment is required in order to stop this happening.
4. The sufficiency ambition for internal fostering growth and us being placement of choice is knowing that children and young people thrive in a family placement and given our current financial position and the continuing increasing costs of external placements that internal services are more sustainable for the Council to continue to deliver the best services to our children and young people.
5. Over the last year we have seen an increasing pressure in finding fostering matches and for some this has resulted in an ask for residential care, which has then made it harder to find residential matches for our complex needs children/young people and seen an increase in our use of unregulated provision at a significant cost.
6. Middlesbrough Council on 5th December 2022 had 510 Children Looked After (CLA) and of those 384 (75%) children/young people were accommodate and this was split as:
 - 53% - External (149 IFA, 7 Block Residential & 47 External Residential)
 - 47% - Internal (158 In-house Fostering & 23 Internal Residential)
7. As shown above the majority are being cared for in an external provision which is growing increasingly more expensive and matching is becoming challenging as the impact of reduced fostering capacity, increase in complex and challenging needs and cost of living pressures continue.
8. Increasing our own internal services is more important than ever not only to ensure we meet our statutory sufficiency duty but also to reduce the increasing costs associated with external residential placements, which are high in cost but low volume.

9. The in-house fostering service provides, or aspires to provide a range of different placement types as follows:

- Connected persons: A connected person is a relative, friend or other person connected with a child. Family and friends carers play a unique role in enabling children and young people to remain with people they know and trust if they cannot, for whatever reason, live with their parents.
- Short-term fostering: Some children initially live with short-term foster carers while decisions are made about their permanent futures, including reunification with their families.
- Long-term fostering: A child will become part of a family until they grow up. Not all children want to be adopted, especially older children or those who continue to have regular contact with relatives.
- Specialist fostering, which includes provision for specific 'remand' placements: Foster carers to support young people in care aged 10-18 years with particularly complex needs, some of whom may be in the youth justice system or disabled. This is a specialist role, and the foster carers need skills and experience of working with these groups to really make a difference and help them turn their lives around and reach their potential. We will also consider the efficacy of introducing a parent and baby foster care resource as a direct alternative to residential provision.
- Mockingbird: This is an innovative new way to support carers and is focused on a Hub Carer that then supports a number of foster carers as part of a satellite, which then becomes its own support network. The carers support each other and rely on the experience of the Hub carer, which can include offering respite where a placement is at risk of breakdown or listening and providing alternative options for dealing with issues. The satellite becomes a family and celebrates together such as birthdays, Christmas or other special events.

10. Middlesbrough Council on 5th December 2022 had 158 children and young people cared for with an internal foster carer and 149 with an independent foster carer and 11 active referrals including 2 sibling groups and ages of children and young people ranging from 3 to 16 years old.

11. Whilst the number placed internally is higher than external, the difference is only 9 (6%) children/young people and we have sadly seen an increase this year in requests for carers to move from in-house to an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) which not only reduces capacity in the service but costs significantly more, which in these times of financial pressures is not sustainable.

12. Since April 2022 we have had 7 foster carers request a transfer from in-house to an IFA, which can take time, so currently we have lost 3 carers and 4 carers are going through the process with 2 quite far on and 2 only recently requesting a move.

13. In total those 7 carers are caring for a total of 17 children/young people and at present 6 have moved meaning that there are 9 more children due to move which would potentially see external placements being higher than internal placements.
14. Whilst a more formal exit interview process is being implemented for the in-house service the Fostering Team Manager has confirmed that reasons being cited by carers leaving is the financial package offered by the Council compared to an IFA and in this current climate they cannot afford to stay with the in-house service.
15. Considering this year's numbers moving to an IFA and expected turnover we are predicting a future trajectory of fostering households leaving the in-house fostering service as 15 over a financial year. Using an average fostering household being registered for 2 placements that could mean over a financial year we will lose in the region of 30 placements.
16. The in-house service has a recruitment target of 25 and if the above trajectory is correct then there is little ability for the service to grow as any recruitment would mainly replace those leaving. Feedback from the in-house service is that the target is not being achieved and no full-time carers have been recruited this year, so overall capacity internally is simply decrease, meaning more IFA or residential placements being commissioned.
17. In line with current policy an in-house carer is only entitled to receive the band payment after a year's service and the payment is only made once regardless of how many children are placed.
18. We know that carers with an IFA generally do not have other forms of employment due to the financial offer they receive. This is not the same for in-house and some of our carers need other employment to be financially sustainable. A part of the invest to save this has been something we have recognised and if we were able to closer align our financial offer to the independent market then potentially carers could give up their other employment, which could mean a carer could take another child/young person, or training could be provided during the week as opposed to having to schedule things on a weekend due to carers not being available because they are at work.
19. It is not our stance that carers give up work, but it would be attractive to new carers and current carers if they had that option.
20. We know from feedback that one of the pulls to in-house fostering is the support offer as well as knowing they are working for a non-profit making organisation, so with that in mind we are also working with other areas of the Council in order understand if there are other benefits that would further support them financially as well and as this work develops formal approval will be sought.

Option 1 - Do Nothing

21. If we do nothing, then the in-house fostering service capacity may continue to decrease, more IFA or residential placements will be needed which will further increase costs to the Council and we would be failing in our sufficiency statutory responsibilities.

Option 2 - Agree the Invest to Save Proposal

22. A shift from IFA and residential to in-house fostering placements is our goal as this meets the need of our children and young people but would also be more financially sustainable for the Council, however, we must recognise that this will not happen if we are continuing to lose carers to IFAs.

23. This investment request is about stabilising the in-house service and the financial ask has been based on implementing the new fee structure for all active placements.

Option 3 – Public Private Partnership Future Fostering Arrangements

24. This option would mean that the Council undertakes a formal procurement to establish a public private partnership delivery model.

25. The procurement process would take a minimum of 18/24 months to conclude and would require dedicated resource and time for the development of the procurement documentation prior to going to market.

26. The likely outcome would be more expensive than growing the in-house fostering services and given how resource intensive this could be it would be better for the Council to try growing its own service before considering this option more seriously.

Option 4 – Tees Valley Public Sector Collaborative Fostering Service

27. This option would mean the amalgamation of the 5 Tees Valley Local Authority in-house fostering service to create a Tees Valley Fostering Agency as opposed to having 5 competing in-house services.

28. As with option 3 this would require significant resource as well as requiring formal approval from all 5 Local Authorities that this was an option they wished to consider.

29. This has been implemented already with the Tees Valley Adoption Agency so there is potential that this option would be supported.

30. As with option 3 it would be better for the Council to try and grow its own service before considering this option more seriously.

Funding

31. Please refer to the Part B report for the financial detail.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

32. That Executive be asked to:

- a) note the information contained within Part A of the report; and
- b) take the decision once all the financial or exempt information contained within Part B of the report has been considered.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

33. The Council is under significant budget pressure, particularly in children's services. One of the contributing factors is the high cost of external placements, including IFA and residential placements. The basis of this investment is to avoid more in-house carers requesting to move to an IFA which is significantly more expensive meaning further budgetary pressures for the Council.

34. If this investment is not supported then there is a potential for more carers to move to IFA's which not only means a loss of capacity but also a considerable increase in expenditure.

35. If the investment is approved then there is an expectation that this will see an increase in recruitment of in-house carers and whilst more funding will be needed to support this we anticipate being able to reduce reliance on the IFA market and transfer underspend from that budget to in-house fostering to cover this.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

36. We do nothing and remain with the current level of allowances then potentially more carers will move to an IFA increasing costs and reducing internal capacity further.

37. A public private partnership or Tees Valley Fostering service would take considerable resource and time to drive forward and it makes more sense for us to grow our own service initially before considering either of these options more seriously given the continued move of carers to IFAs and use of external residential placements.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

38. We have a statutory duty to provide accommodation to children and in house foster carers contribute to meeting that duty.

39. There are no legal implications in respect of the change in banding allowances.

Strategic priorities and risks

40. To meet our legal duty to provide sufficient number of placements for children and young people in our care.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

41. No protected Groups would be affected by this decision.

Financial

42. Please refer to the Part B report for the detail.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
To increase the allowances paid to Middlesbrough Council Foster carers	Paul Rudd	Immediately if agreed
Baseline the IFA placement numbers and report monthly for the next 12 months on the reduction.	Paul Rudd	March 2024

Appendices

1	None
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
None		

Contact: Paul Rudd/Claire Walker
Email: paul_rudd@middlesbrough.gov.uk
claire_walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children’s Services Director of Regeneration
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	24 January 2023
Title:	Middlesbrough Development Company
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Town Centre
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards, and involves a financial impact over £150,000.
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary
<p>The Council set up a trading company in 2018 called MHomes, with the aim of taking forward housing schemes in areas that commercial housebuilders would not develop. Although there has been a subsequent change in name (to the Middlesbrough Development Company) and a shift in focus (to progressing urban living) the company has successfully progressed a number of schemes. Since its inception, and change in focus, a number of good practice guides for local authority trading companies have been published – most recently by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The company’s governance arrangements have subsequently been reviewed and their ‘fit’ against the new guidelines assessed. Alongside this, a review has also considered whether the developments undertaken could be achieved in future without the need for a local authority trading company, to ascertain the long term need for the company. The review concluded that the work required to ensure the new guidelines are met by the company is significant, and that the outcomes pursued by the company could potentially be achieved in future through a range of different routes, without the mechanism of a separate company. As the company would not provide any benefit that could not be</p>

delivered through the Council, it would only exist as an additional overhead that limits the Council's overall value for money. As a result, it is proposed that the company ceases trading upon completion of its existing portfolio of development projects in April 2023.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to determine the long term future of the Middlesbrough Development Company, given future delivery expectations, and the wider context of best practice guidance published by Local Partnerships (a joint venture between the Local Government Association, HM Treasury and the Welsh Government), and new guidelines recently issued by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

Background and relevant information

History

2. Middlesbrough Development Company was established in 2018 under its previous name of MHome. The role of the company was to intervene in the housing market on sites that commercial developers wouldn't progress. The role of the company has however evolved since 2019 as the Council focused its activities more on facilitating urban living developments and taking control of eyesore sites and properties.
3. Since its establishment, Middlesbrough Development Company has successfully progressed the following:
 - a. development of Boho Village, 45 apartments and 16 houses at Middlehaven in partnership with Bright Ideas (due for completion March 2023);
 - b. development of 24 homes and four retail units at Newbridge Court on the site of the former Tollesby Shops (due for completion April 2023);
 - c. purchased eyesore sites at Evesham Road and Penistone Road to enable future development; and,
 - d. funded the redevelopment of eight empty properties in North Ormesby and Gresham in partnership with the Ethical Housing Association.
4. The company was always intended to be a facilitator of development and therefore has operated with only one employee (a Managing Director), buying in further expertise when required on issues such as marketing, accounting or legal support. This has proven to be sufficient to enable the above developments to be progressed.

Funding

5. The majority of funding for the company and its activities has been provided by Middlesbrough Council in the form of a loan, that was to be paid back upon the completion and sale of developments. To date the Council has provided funding of around £11.9 million and repayment of the loan element has only recently commenced as the first phase of the Boho Bright Ideas scheme has now been sold and occupied (a deal is in place to sell the remaining phases upon completion – ending the company's role in the development).

6. The funding provided for tackling eyesore sites and properties was provided to the company as a grant, and although some level of long term return is anticipated, it was intended to be reinvested in addressing further eyesore sites and properties.

Role

7. The activities pursued by the company have undoubtedly proven to be a success and have changed the landscape in both Middlehaven and at Tollesby. The way the schemes have ultimately been progressed, has however led to questions over whether these types of activities could in future be progressed directly by the Council, without the added risks and overheads inherent in operating a separate trading company.

Guidance

8. The company was originally set up against the context of other councils pursuing such activities, and a number of existing local authority housing companies were examined and used to guide the initial structure for the company. Since this time, local authority trading companies have come under greater scrutiny around the UK and in some instances have featured in investigations around financial impropriety. As a result, new guidance has been issued by CIPFA into the operation of local authority trading companies, which aligns them more to the controls in place within local government than the more flexible commercial world.

Review

9. As the existing set of projects undertaken by the Middlesbrough Development Company are coming to an end, it is an appropriate time to consider whether such a vehicle is required in the longer term. It is also an appropriate time to consider whether the publication of new guidance requires significant investment in the company to enable it to meet best practice.
10. A review has therefore been undertaken to ascertain:
 - a. do the future aspirations for the company require an external trading company structure, or could they be delivered in other ways?; and,
 - b. does the company meet the highest standards of good governance, and the expectations of the CIPFA guidelines?

Do the future aspirations for the company require an external trading company structure, or could they be delivered in other ways?

11. The role of the company has evolved over time and is focussed largely on two things – buying up eyesore properties for development by others and leading on developments that do not offer the commercial returns required by the market. The future direction of the company therefore reflects the current portfolio of projects.
12. Although the two capital projects undertaken by the company to date (Boho Village and Newbridge Court) have been successful in bringing forward the development of new homes, the methods used to do so have not been exclusively available to the private sector. They have both been undertaken through routes that the Council could have pursued, although the difference is the level of risk appetite inherent in any commercial development would have perhaps been viewed differently had they been presented as

purely Council led schemes. If the Council was prepared to directly undertake developments of this nature and accept the inherent commercial risks, then an external company structure would not be required to replicate them if a decision was made to pursue similar schemes in the future.

13. Although specific work on purchasing eyesore sites and properties has been undertaken by Middlesbrough Development Company in recent months, this supplements the ongoing work delivered within the Council to address such properties. If the type of work undertaken by Middlesbrough Development Company around eyesore sites and properties was to be pursued at any point in the future, it could be delivered through a number of different routes, including enhanced inhouse provision. A company structure would not however be essential to it being taken forward in future.
14. As the funding for development activity has all come through either loans direct from the Council, or through Homes England funding directly accessed by the Council, again it is difficult to conclude that a trading company structure is still a necessity to deliver the same types of activities in future, given the way the company's priorities have evolved since 2019.
15. The commercial experience and skills utilised through the Middlesbrough Development Company to stimulate projects, undertake negotiations and deliver activity has however clearly been beneficial. Local authority officers do not routinely carry this level of commercial expertise, but if required it would be available by procuring this on a case-by-case basis using commercial organisations to deliver specific projects.

Does the company meet the highest standards of good governance, and the expectations of the CIPFA guidelines?

16. As the activities of the company have turned from theoretical to actual, and the practicalities of taking and implementing board decisions have become more complex, a number of weaknesses have been identified in the board arrangements and the relationship with the Council that would need addressing. Veritau, the Council's internal auditors were asked to provide a view on the overall governance situation, and the improvements that would be required to meet the highest standards of good governance. Early conclusions from this work include:
 - a. the roles and responsibilities within the company are insufficiently defined for a local authority trading company, with potential conflicts of interest arising through lack of clarity and lack of separation. The role of the shareholder is particularly unclear; and,
 - b. some of the operational aspects of the company do not reflect local authority regulations, or frameworks – such as procurement, risk, performance management and project management.
17. The relationship with the company would also require further work from the Council's perspective, as there needs to be a suitable governance structure put in place within the Council structures to review performance, or provide the necessary oversight and accountability for it to function effectively. Specifically issues around Information Governance, Data Protection and other legal requirements are not governed by an appropriate agreement with the Council – which could cause unnecessary risks in the future. Additional work is also required to provide improved transparency around Value for Money and alignment of investments with Council priorities.

18. It is clear from the review that revising the arrangements to follow the higher standards of governance set out by Local Partnerships, and CIPFA in their recently published *Local Authority Owned Companies – A Good Practice Guide*, and to minimise any future risk to the Council would require a significant investment of time and money to achieve. The board of the company would need to be reshaped, the staffing structure bolstered, and the arrangements the Council employs to monitor and support it would need to change.
19. The key gaps identified in issues such as procurement and risk management would require additional staffing to be brought in to manage processes to the standard required by local authorities (and advocated by CIPFA), as would bolstering arrangements around performance management and project management. The current staffing/operation of the company is geared towards commercial expertise and would not therefore have the capacity or experience to adopt the policies and frameworks to align with the Council's approach. Recent examples of issues around Information Governance have highlighted this further, where the company needs to register with the Information Commissioner's Office independently from the Council.
20. It is therefore appropriate to consider whether making this investment to reshape the company arrangements represents value for money, and balances with the potential risk and reward.

Overall Balance of Risk and Opportunity

21. As the challenge of reshaping the company to meet recent guidelines is significant, and the risk of financial/reputational issues occurring in the interim is also significant, the benefits of retaining a trading company structure in the longer term would need to be significant to justify continuing in that direction. Given the ongoing aims of the company could potentially be achieved within the local authority if required, or through other contracting routes, it is recommended that the Council seeks to exit from the current arrangements.
22. If the trading company structure is not required in the longer term, then the appropriate steps should be taken to close down the company, exit from existing contractual commitments and ensure that any residual assets are placed into appropriate arrangements. The following actions are therefore proposed:
 - a. retain the company under current arrangements until the completion of the Boho Village and Newbridge Court schemes are completed (estimated to be March 2023). The remaining unsold assets within both schemes would either be sold off, or held directly by the Council to provide a capital or revenue return to pay back the original loan;
 - b. seek alternative arrangements for sites and properties already purchased through the eyesore sites/properties programme, to trigger investment and redevelopment;
 - c. cease trading through the company and dispose of any other minor assets (assumed to be negligible). This would also require ending the contract of the Managing Director, the company's only employee.

Winding up Middlesbrough Development Company

23. As the company is wholly owned by Middlesbrough Council, the board of the company comprises staff and elected members. Any decision to close down the company would therefore need to be enacted by the directors of the company in line with its Articles of Association, and the laws governing company registrations.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

24. That the Executive endorses the proposal to close down the Middlesbrough Development Company and put in place alternative arrangements within the Council to manage or dispose of any assets.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

25. The limited benefits of continuing to operate a trading company structure do not justify the investment required to reshape the company and minimise the short and long term risks to the Council given a separate company is not required to enable the Council's goals in this area to be achieved.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

26. Although the option to continue with the company does exist, it would require significant investment to meet the expectations of the recent guidance published by CIPFA which would impact financially on the ongoing business case for the company's viability. Adherence with the guidance would minimise the longer term risk to the Council, although some residual commercial risk would always remain.

27. The benefits of continuing with the company do not seem to justify the investment of time and money required to reshape and bolster the company, and it has therefore been concluded that the company will have run its natural course, once its current development portfolio is complete.

28. There is also an option to 'do nothing' and keep the company operating as it exists now. This would expose the Council to unnecessary risk in the longer term, which would be unacceptable given the conclusions of the above review, and the increased requirements of the recent CIPFA guidance.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

29. As the Middlesbrough Development Company has entered into numerous contracts for the developments at Middlehaven and Tollesby, it would be prudent for these to be reviewed by the Council's Legal Services Team to ensure the Council are not exposed to any ongoing liabilities. The contracts in place around recently purchased eyesore sites and properties would also need to be examined to ensure that the Council is complying with statutory requirements whilst alternative arrangements or disposal are sought. As the proposal seeks to wind the company up at the conclusion of its major projects, this assurance work whilst necessary, should be relatively straightforward.

30. The formal closure / winding up of the company will also need to be overseen by the Council to ensure that the directors of the company act in accordance with the agreed Articles of Association, and the relevant laws governing company registrations.

Strategic priorities and risks

31. Winding up the company would potentially impact a number of priorities set out in the Strategic Plan. Key priorities affected would include:

- a. establish the requirement for potential CPO of derelict buildings and problem sites;
- b. St Hilda's housing starts around Old Town Hall; and,
- c. commercial and residential development of west and south side Middlehaven sites.

32. As the Middlesbrough Development Company is only one of the routes by which the Council addresses these priorities, work towards them would still continue in the event of the recommendation being approved.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

33. Winding up the company would mitigate the existing identified risks around governance issues such as data protection. The impact of the company ceasing to exist would not however have any impact on issues around equality or human rights.

Financial

34. As the company is funded by loans from the Council that are subject to interest payments, there is an opportunity cost to winding up the company of around £60,000 per annum. Some borrowing costs could however also be reduced, as assets are sold and capital sums returned to the Council early. Neither sum has been factored into the current Medium Term Financial Plan, so the Council's projected financial position is not compromised.

35. The company has made a combined operating loss of £340,000 since 2018 prior to the first returns on commercial deals arriving recently. If the company was wound up this would be included alongside other project costs in the overall reconciliation. This figure may increase to reflect any abortive fees on projects currently in partial development, but these would be assessed/negotiated as part of the winding up process. There may also be some limited exit payments with regard to the termination of the contract for the Managing Director.

36. This operating loss would however be mitigated (and exceeded) by the future income the Council would directly receive through rent at Newbridge Court (Tollesby). At capacity the net rental income would be in excess of £100,000 per annum, although this figure is exclusive of any fees that may need to be paid to a management company should the Council choose to outsource this responsibility.

37. Existing financial arrangements between the Middlesbrough Development Company and Ethical Housing Association would be considered for either novation or cessation. There are no other financial implications to consider.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Agree contractual completion arrangements for existing Middlesbrough Development Company schemes	Director of Regeneration	End March 2023
Agree transition / cessation arrangements for assets and other contracts relating to Middlesbrough Development Company	Director of Regeneration	End March 2023
Wind up Middlesbrough Development Company	Director of Regeneration	End July 2023

Appendices

1	
2	
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
CIPFA	Local Authority Companies – A Good Practice Guide	31/05/22
Middlesbrough Council	Middlesbrough Development Company Business Plan Update	05/10/21
Local Partnerships	Local Authority Company Review Guidance	30/09/21
Middlesbrough Council	Middlesbrough Development Company – Empty Homes Partnership	07/09/21
Middlesbrough Council	Middlesbrough Development Company Finance	11/05/21
Middlesbrough Council	Middlesbrough Development Company Strategic Plan	01/09/20
Middlesbrough Council	Housing Delivery Vehicle New Direction	20/12/19
Middlesbrough Council	Housing Delivery Vehicle Preferred Delivery Model	18/12/18
Middlesbrough Council	Housing Delivery Vehicle	12/06/18

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion Director of Public Health
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	24 January 2023
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Title:	Re-procurement of a Bereavement and Suicide Postvention Support Service (South Tees)
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Report for:	Decision
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	Vulnerability
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Key decision:	Yes
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Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000 and have a significant impact in two or more wards
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	Not Applicable
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Executive summary

This purpose of this report is to seek approval for Middlesbrough Council to undertake re-procurement for a Bereavement and Suicide Postvention Support Service with a view to commence 1st April 2023 for a period of 3 years with an option to extend dependant on funding.

A Bereavement and Suicide Postvention Support Service has been commissioned through the public health grant since 2016. The current contract will expire 31st March 2023 with no remaining options to extend.

Retention of bereavement and postvention support provision is required to promote the emotional and mental wellbeing of bereaved people of all ages across our borough to enable them to understand their grief and cope with their loss. To support those bereaved or affected by suicide, to support recovery and to prevent adverse outcomes, including suicide and suicidal ideation and healthy recovery of the affected community

The demand for bereavement services and specific suicide postvention bereavement support continues to be consistently high and is a key area of action in the Preventing Suicide in England Strategy and the Tees Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan – “To provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide”

Relevant Officers from across Middlesbrough Council have considered and inputted into the paper.

Purpose

1. To seek approval for Middlesbrough to undertake re-procurement of a Bereavement and Suicide Postvention Support service across South Tees with a view to commence the new service on 1st April 2023 for a period of 3 years with optional extension of a further 2 years subject to funding.

Background and relevant information

2. Since April 2016, Cruse Bereavement Support Ltd has been the commissioned provider of Bereavement Services (specialist bereavement and suicide postvention support) to provide emotional and wellbeing support to people bereaved of all ages. The contract commissioned through the public health grant is due to expire 31st March 2023.
3. Bereavement support services promote the emotional and mental wellbeing of bereaved people of all ages to enable them to understand their grief and cope with their loss. Postvention describes interventions developed by, with, for people who have been bereaved or affected by suicide, to support recovery and to prevent adverse outcomes, including suicide and suicidal ideation and healthy recovery of the affected community
4. Research shows that bereavement by suicide is linked to a number of negative health and social outcomes. This includes depression and an increased risk of suicide and suicide attempts. The wide reaching impact of each suicide means that being bereaved or affected by suicide is not an uncommon experience. Estimates vary on how many people are affected by each suicide, ranging from six to 60 people. Support after suicide should be available to people throughout the deceased individual's social network, as well as to health professionals and others affected by the suicide.
5. Provision of timely information and support to those bereaved is a key preventative measure to improve resilience and minimising suicide contagion or the development of complicated grief reactions.
6. The demand for bereavement services and specific suicide postvention bereavement support continues to be consistently high and is a key area of action in the Preventing Suicide in England Strategy and the Tees Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan – "To provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide".
7. Local and nationally there has been an increase in excess deaths and Covid-19 related deaths, as well as complications that covid-19 restrictions brought to the grieving processes. This has caused an increase in demand for specialist bereavement support services, alongside increasing complexity in the difficulties faced by those who are grieving the loss of someone close to them.
8. The new contract will introduce an enhanced element of support to those bereaved where drugs and alcohol may have been a factor.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

9. That the Executive:
 - Approves for Middlesbrough to be part of a re-procurement of a South Tees Bereavement and Postvention Support Service with a view to commence the new

service on 1st April 2023 for a period of 3 years with 2 year optional extensions.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

10. Current contract with incumbent provider will end 31st March 2023 and there are no remaining options to extend. Request to re-procure and retain a bereavement and suicide postvention support offer for our local residents of all ages
11. A South Tees contract with shared specification and pathway referral ensures economies of scale and options for access to support.
12. The demand for bereavement services and specific suicide postvention bereavement support continues to be consistently high and is a key area of action in the Preventing Suicide in England Strategy and the Tees Suicide Prevention Implementation Plan – “To provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide”

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

13. See above.
14. Option of ‘do nothing’. We would not have a specialist bereavement service that can support local people of all ages and provides effective and timely support for those bereaved or affected by suicide.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

15. The legal processes, procurement processes and documentation used for the re-procurement will be that of the lead authority, Middlesbrough Council, and all commission partners agree to this.

Strategic priorities and risks

16. The key risks identified for the re-procurement of bereavement and postvention services across South Tees are:
 - Procurement strategy not agreed by all parties.
 - Lack of market interest, which may require negotiation with the incumbent provider
 - Re-procuring in a short timescale
17. The funding that Middlesbrough contribute to the South Tees Bereavement Support service is not enough to commission a bereavement and postvention service in isolation and this is a service area where the councils need to collaborate to benefit from economies of scale.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

18. Equality Impact Assessment not required as a universal service with equitable access for all who need it, therefore there is no specific equality/diversity implications.

Financial

19. Bereavement and suicide postvention support services will be funded through the ring fenced Public Health Grant for Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland. The maximum annual cost for South Tees Service is £69,160.00. The maximum value of contract for South Tees (5 years including 2 years optional extension) is £345,800.00

Middlesbrough Finance Business Partner

The proposal (assuming 5 years) consists of £175,800 from Middlesbrough and £170,000 from Redcar & Cleveland. I can confirm Middlesbrough Council has allocated £35,160 per annum from the Public Health Grant (5 x £35,160 = £175,800).

Accountant, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Redcar & Cleveland confirms approval of the proposal by the budget holder. £29,000 per year for 3 years has been allocated from the Public Health Grant from 1/4/2023 with the option for 2 years extension. The budget holder has confirmed their intention to fund the DARD project £5k per year from 1.4.2023 (for 3 years with the option to extend for 2 further years) from RCBC Public Health Earmarked Reserves.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Service specifications and all procurement documentation completed	Mark Adams	December 2022
Tees Valley Collaborative contract completed between participating authorities (Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland)	Mark Adams	January 2023
Procurement advertised via Procontract (open quotation)	Mark Adams	January 2023
Procurement evaluation process undertaken	Mark Adams	February 2023
Contract awarded and mobilisation commences	Mark Adams	March 2023
South Tees Bereavement and postvention Service commences	Mark Adams	1 st April 2023

Appendices

1	None
2	
3	

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration
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Submitted to:	Executive
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Date:	24 January 2023
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Title:	Teesside Ability Support Centre (TASC) Day Service Contract - Future Commissioning - PART A
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Report for:	Decision
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Status:	Public
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Strategic priority:	Vulnerability
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Key decision:	Yes
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Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000 and have a significant impact in two or more wards
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Urgent:	No
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Why:	Not Applicable
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Executive summary	
<p>This Part A report provides the background information around the decision sought in Part B seeking approval to enter into a new contract with a key provider of day opportunities until 31st March 2026 with the potential full term to 31st March 2030.</p> <p>The primary reason for this recommendation is to provide consistency of service to current attendees, whilst achieving a better financial agreement under a block contract rather than spot purchasing, in addition to providing financial assurance to a key provider.</p> <p>The Executive decision is required due to the financial commitment that arises by entering into a block contracting arrangement.</p>	

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the relevant information to the executive in order to seek approval, as per Part B of the report, of entry into a new contract with TASC for a period of 3 years to 31st March 2026 with the potential full term to 31st March 2030 under a block contract arrangement.

The report sets out the reasons for the recommendation and considers other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended.

Background and relevant information

2. Teesside Ability Support Centre (TASC) have had a contractual arrangement with the Council since 1984 under Cleveland County Council. Middlesbrough Council inherited the contract when Cleveland County Council disbanded in March 1996. The service offers Social Care day service placements (including transport) across two sites in Middlesbrough and the surrounding area for people with Physical and Learning Disabilities. The main building is situated on Acklam Road and a smaller satellite centre operate from Manor Hub at Coulby Newham.
3. TASC are one of the largest day services in Middlesbrough in terms of number of placements and are one of the few services who have available transport for Service Users to use to and from the service. Attendance is choice based, led by the service user, post Social Care needs assessment and is a popular service. Presently there are 111 Service Users accessing 333 sessions a week, this includes self-funding placements and from other Local Authorities. Over 50% of the Service Users currently attending the sites are funded by Middlesbrough Council resulting in the Council being their main source of income.
4. All day services were forced to close from March to September 2020 due to Covid 19. When services did reopen, all attendance was adversely affected as many Service Users were unable to attend as they were classed as extremely vulnerable and were subject to self-isolation during 2020/2021. Return to services was initially slow for the majority of day service providers, however, service recovery for TASC was better than most.

Current Service Delivery Model

5. Referrals to the Service will be made by the Council's Adult Social Care and Health Integration Department after Care Managers have completed assessments of Service User needs and prepared a Care Plan. Dependant on need, Service Users can attend between one and five days per week. There is no restriction based on complexity of needs or equipment. Personal care and support needs are met throughout the day, including during the journey to and from the centre by an escort who is employed by TASC.
6. Service Users are either collected from their home by TASC transport or arrive by private taxi or their own transport. Upon arrival Service Users can choose from a range of activities provided in and outside the centre. Lunch is provided from the on-site kitchen in the main building. For the satellite centre, lunch is currently prepared at the main building and transported to the site.

7. TASC do not provide 1:1 support for any Service Users at present. Currently there are 3 Middlesbrough funded Service Users per day who require additional 1:1 support and therefore bring a support worker from an external agency into the centre with them.
8. Staffing levels are monitored and amended in-line with the needs of the Service Users. The centres operate on a minimum of 9 staff at the main building and 3 staff in the satellite centre. Support staff also undertake driving and escorting duties for the minibuses provided by TASC. Staff are currently undertaking MIDAS training for drivers and PATS training for escorts. This training is Community Transport Association approved and best practice. The centres are closed for 10 days throughout the year, in addition to public holidays to enable staff to complete mandatory training and for staff meetings

Comparative Service Models

9. In terms of day service provision, assessed individuals can access 12 commissioned day services, 4 in-house day services and also utilise other non-commissioned day opportunities via Direct Payments. These services specialise in different areas to meet the needs of the Service Users with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, autism, and older people of Middlesbrough.
10. Day services for people with physical and/or learning disabilities are generally smaller groups, in either half day or full day sessions. Utilisation and fee rates for these primary support reasons can be compared in Part B of this report.

Service Quality

11. Quality monitoring of the service is completed on an annual basis by both Middlesbrough Council and the service itself. TASC continues to meet contractual requirements year on year and implement any recommendations highlighted through this process. The most recent quality review was positive and demonstrated that improvements have been made.

Current Day Rate

12. Middlesbrough Council reached an agreement with the Provider to establish the existing fee rates for 2022/2023 details of which can be found in Part B of this report.

Service Utilisation and Capacity

13. The service reports that it is difficult to calculate the daily capacity of the service because it depends on the needs of the users attending (wheelchairs, one to one support staff in attendance etc) and staffing levels.
14. Utilisation has been analysed against the 202 block placements from April to October 2022. The analysis indicated planned usage is at an average of 95%. The 5% unutilised sessions could easily be filled if 2 new people attend 5 days a week. This service cannot fill a placement if a member does not attend due to illness etc as that placement needs to remain open for the person to return. A robust review of placements was undertaken during the return to services post covid closures, and periodic attendance monitoring will highlight the needs for reassessment if a person has not attended for a sustained period.

15. Given the fact people choose to attend this service, it is building based, offers competitive rates and it provides an invaluable transport service we would look to pursue a direct award contract via a VEAT notice (Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency Notice). This would ensure the correct procurement procedures are followed to facilitate a future contract with this provider

Proposals moving forward

16. Direct award (via a VEAT notice) based on the current service model, covering the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2026 with an option to extend to 2030
- Based on the current service model of 202 sessions per week block contract and for transport elements to remain as a spot arrangement.
 - If capacity is reached further sessions would be on a spot basis at the agreed block sessional rate.
 - The rates in this option will be subject to any inflationary uplift set by the council for the term of the contract.
 - A block contract arrangement offers the provider financial resilience at a competitive rate to the Council.
 - Utilisation would continue to be monitored, and a clause included in the financial schedule that should utilisation levels drop, significantly for a consistent period of 6 months it would instigate a review of the block financial schedule.
 - Analysis shows that the service is well utilised.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

17. That the Executive:
- a. note information contained in Part A of the report; and
 - b. that once all the financial or exempt information contained in Part B of the report has been considered the Executive approves the entry into a new contact with TASC for a period of 3 years to 31st March 2026 with the potential full term to 31st March 2030 under a block contract arrangement

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

18. A block contract arrangement offers the provider financial resilience at a competitive rate to the Council. Utilisation would continue to be monitored, and a clause included in the financial schedule that should utilisation levels drop, significantly for a consistent period of 6 months it would instigate a review of the block financial schedule. Analysis shows that the service is well utilised

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

19. The alternative options are to either Direct Award to TASC (via a VEAT notice) on a spot purchase basis covering the period of 3 years to 31st March 2026 with the potential full term to 31st March 2030, or to do nothing and let the contract expire
20. Direct Award to TASC (via a VEAT notice) on a spot purchase basis covering the period of 3 years to 31st March 2026 with the potential full term to 31st March 2030 It is not

recommended as would lead to further increased budget pressures and a spot contract arrangement would not offer financial resilience to the provider.

21. If the Council were to let the contract expire there is no alternative provider that would be able to facilitate the service that TASC offer, it would leave vulnerable service users without much needed services, which could have a detrimental effect on themselves and their carers therefore it is not a viable option.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

22. There are no legal implications with either proposed option

Strategic priorities and risks

23. The proposed policy will contribute as follows to the Council’s strategic plan:

People	Place and Business
<i>We will work to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable.</i>	<i>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.</i>

24. The key risks identified for the re-commissioning of TASC are increased financial pressure if the contracting model was on a spot purchasing arrangement, which also does not give the provider financial resilience. On a risk balance analysis, the risk of not going ahead far outweigh the risks of challenge, particularly given the local/personal nature of the service.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

25. A universal service with fair access for all on the basis of need, therefore there is no specific equality/diversity implications. The proposal does not seek to change existing policy or the nature of the service provided, therefore an impact assessment is not required.

Financial

26. Both options have financial implications, considering the inflationary uplift for 2023/24, however option 1 is already factored into the current budget. The impact will be significant if option 2 is progressed, as identified in Part B of this report.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Develop and issue a VEAT notice, and progress with	Nadine Aston-Barras	1 st February 2023

issuing a contract to TASC if unchallenged		
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Appendices

1	
2	
3	

Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Contact: Nadine Aston-Barras

Email: nadine_aston-barras@middlesbrough.gov.uk

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



Report of:	Executive Member for Neighbourhood Safety Director of Environment and Community Services
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	24 January 2023
Title:	2022-24 Community Safety Plan
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Crime and anti-social behaviour
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places statutory obligations on Community Safety Partnerships to work together. This legislation also requires the Partnership to produce a three year plan detailing how it intends to tackle crime and disorder. This allows for the development of strategies to tackle short, medium and long term priorities.

This report proposes that we extend the current plan until 31st March 2024 to allow senior leaders time to review the priorities and produce a meaningful set of collective strategic objectives for the next 3 years.

Purpose

1. This report proposes that we extend the current community safety plan until 31st March 2024 to allow senior leaders time to review the priorities and produce a meaningful set of collective strategic objectives for the next 3 years.

Background and relevant information

2. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places statutory obligations on Local Authorities and the Police to work together with Health Authorities and other relevant agencies to prevent crime and disorder.
3. Section 97 of the Police Reform Act 2002 amended the above Act and included the Fire Service and Clinical Commissioning Groups (now Integrated Care Board) as responsible authorities. Further reforms now include Probation Services as a responsible authority as well as the Environment Agency and Registered Social Landlords as 'participatory bodies' within a Community Safety Partnership.
4. This legislation requires the Partnership to produce a plan detailing how it intends to tackle crime and disorder. This allows for the development of strategies to tackle short, medium and long term priorities.
5. The proposal is to extend the current Community Safety Plan so that it runs until the end of March 2024.
6. The next 12 months will provide senior leaders within the council and across partners agencies the time to fully consider the strategic priorities and ensure that meaningful objectives are set to tackle the issues across Middlesbrough.
7. The current priorities are:

Priority 1—Perceptions and Feeling Safe

Objectives

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

Priority 2 - Tackling the Root Causes

Adverse Experiences

Objectives

- Improve mental health
- Reduce Child Exploitation (including CSE)
- Reduce substance misuse
- Reduce domestic violence

Priority 3 - Locality Working, Inc. Town Centre

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

Objectives

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

In extending this plan the Community Safety Partnership recognise the changes in legislation relating to Serious Violence and will work with the PCC's office via Cleveland Unit for Reducing Serious Violence (CURV) to deliver on its statutory obligations. Progress will be monitored via the CSP.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

That the Executive:

- Executive approval is required due to the fact that the plan impacts on all wards across the town.
- That Executive approves the request to extend the current Community Safety Plan until March 2024.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

8. It is a statutory duty of the Community Safety Partnership to develop this plan.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

9. Not applicable

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

10. The CSP has a statutory duty to develop and produce a Community Safety Plan.

Strategic priorities and risks

11. There are no associated risks.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

12. No impact on protected characteristics.

Financial

13. No additional resources are required to deliver this plan.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Review delivery plan to include serious violence	Jane Hill	March 2023

Appendices

1	
2	

Background papers

No background papers		

Contact: Marion Walker
Email: marion_walker@middlesbrough.gov.uk

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Executive Member for Regeneration Director of Regeneration
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	24 January 2023
Title:	Site L (North) Coulby Newham – Disposal - PART A
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Physical environment
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary	
<p>The report seeks an Executive decision to dispose of the Council’s freehold interest in Site L (North) Coulby Newham.</p> <p>The proposal to dispose of the subject property accords with the Council’s requirements to generate capital receipts, increase annually recurring revenue streams and assist with the regeneration of the adjacent Parkway Centre.</p> <p>The decision being sought to dispose is a key decision with the value of the surplus asset exceeding the £150,000 threshold.</p>	

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Executive approval to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in Site L (North) Coulby Newham.

Background & relevant information

2. Shown edged on the plan attached at Appendix 1 of this report, Site L (North) is a vacant parcel of land occupying a visually prominent location adjacent the Parkway Centre in Coulby Newham.
3. The subject parcel of land comprises a vacant development site situated between Cropton Way, Newham Way and Dalby Way. Triangular in shape and with some tree cover to the eastern boundary adjacent Newham Way, the predominately grassed site is both open and level, measuring @ 1.15 Acres [0.465 Ha].
4. The site is located amongst mixed commercial, retail and leisure uses with a Tesco Supermarket Store situated immediately to the west, and the Parkway Medical Centre and Children's Day Nursery situated immediately to the south.
5. In accordance with the strategy objectives of the Council to secure capital receipt payments and generate recurring business rates revenue income streams from the disposal of surplus land and property assets, the site was declared surplus by the Council and programmed for disposal during the current financial year.
6. Following the receipt of an unsolicited approach from an interested third-party seeking to acquire the property to deliver a mixed commercial, retail and leisure development scheme, the Council released the property on to the market and invited offers for the freehold interest via an open and transparent informal tender competition.
7. An Asset Disposal Business Case confirming the status of Site L (North) as being surplus to operational service requirements is attached as Appendix 3 to Part B of this report.
8. The property is situated in the Coulby Newham Ward and the respective Ward Members have been consulted

What decision(s) are being recommended?

9. That Executive be asked to:
 - a) note the information contained within Part A of the report; and
 - b) take the decision to dispose of the subject property once all the financial or exempt information contained within Part B of the report has been considered.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

10. Disposal as proposed would generate a significant capital receipt, increase annually recurring revenue streams and also bring the subject property into far more beneficial use in the future.
11. Disposal of the property supports delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

Re-use for operational purposes

12. No Council operational service requirement has been identified.

Other uses

13. Although the property is capable of being used for other purposes, future use of the site for mixed commercial, retail and leisure purposes as proposed, is preferred.

Do nothing

14. The property would remain underutilised, with the Council not in a position to either receive a significant capital receipt, or generate any long term recurring business rates revenue income from the property going forward.

15. Whilst the subject property would be retained for potential Council use in the future, the liability and responsibility for maintaining and holding the property would remain with the Council in the interim.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

16. No specific legal issues have been created as a result of the proposal.

17. The subject property would be disposed of freehold with vacant possession in accordance with standing disposal protocol.

Strategic priorities and risks

18. The proposal does not require any change to the Council's existing policy framework.

19. The proposal to dispose of the property aligns with strategic objectives to facilitate third party funded regeneration of the Parkway Centre and contribute positively towards the vision for Middlesbrough – creating employment opportunities, driving enterprise and generating economic activity within the Borough.

20. Due to the impact of ongoing national economic and political issues on the local market, the likelihood of the Council being able to identify an alternate buyer prepared to proceed on similar terms, exchange contracts and complete the purchase in the same timeframe is questionable.

Human rights, equality and data protection

21. There will be no negative, differential impact on protected groups and communities.

22. A Level 1 (Initial Screening) Impact Assessment (IA) accompanies this report attached at Appendix 2. The impact assessment has identified that the proposal would have a positive impact on the local community and does not represent any concern to equal rights, disability discrimination or the impingement of individual human rights.

23. The Council's development control planning process would also serve to ensure that any future use proposed would be appropriate for the local area

24. The proposed decision does not involve the collation and use of personal data.

Financial

25. The Council would receive a capital receipt plus fees without the need to incur any further marketing costs.

26. The disposal of the subject property would remove the Council's liability for any future maintenance, security or other holding costs while it remains unused.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Subject to Executive approval, the Council moves to proceed with disposal of the property as detailed within Part B of this report.	Valuation & Estates Manager	February 2023

Appendices

1	Site Plan
2	Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

Background papers

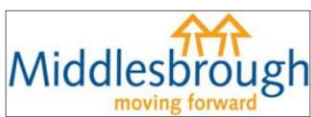
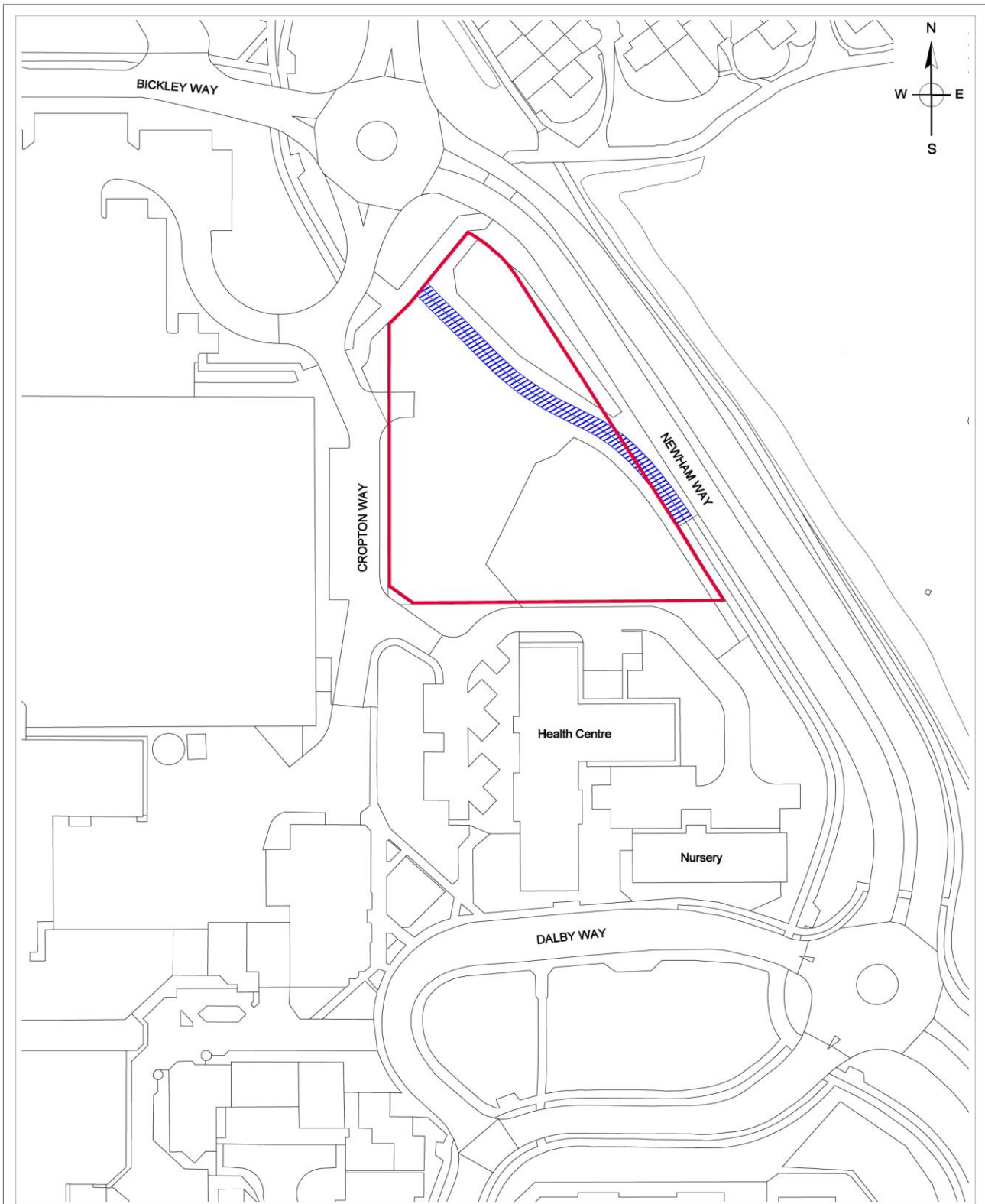
The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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

Contact: David Velemir, Valuation & Estates Manager

Email: david_velemir@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Site Plan



TIM WAKE VALUATION & ESTATES

SITE L
COULBY NEWHAM
MIDDLESBROUGH

Scale:	1:1250
Date:	8th SEPTEMBER 17
Drawn:	JMS
Drg No:	VAL 4983 H

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Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

Subject of assessment:	Disposal of the Council's freehold interest in Site L (North) Coulby Newham			
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 & Land Act 1980 Section 118 Schedule 23 Part V.</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach The subject property has been declared surplus and there are no Council staff, or services that will be affected by the disposal. Future use will be for the purposes of mixed commercial, retail & leisure 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, and 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 24 th January 2023			
Lifespan:	Not applicable.			
Date of next review:	Not applicable.			

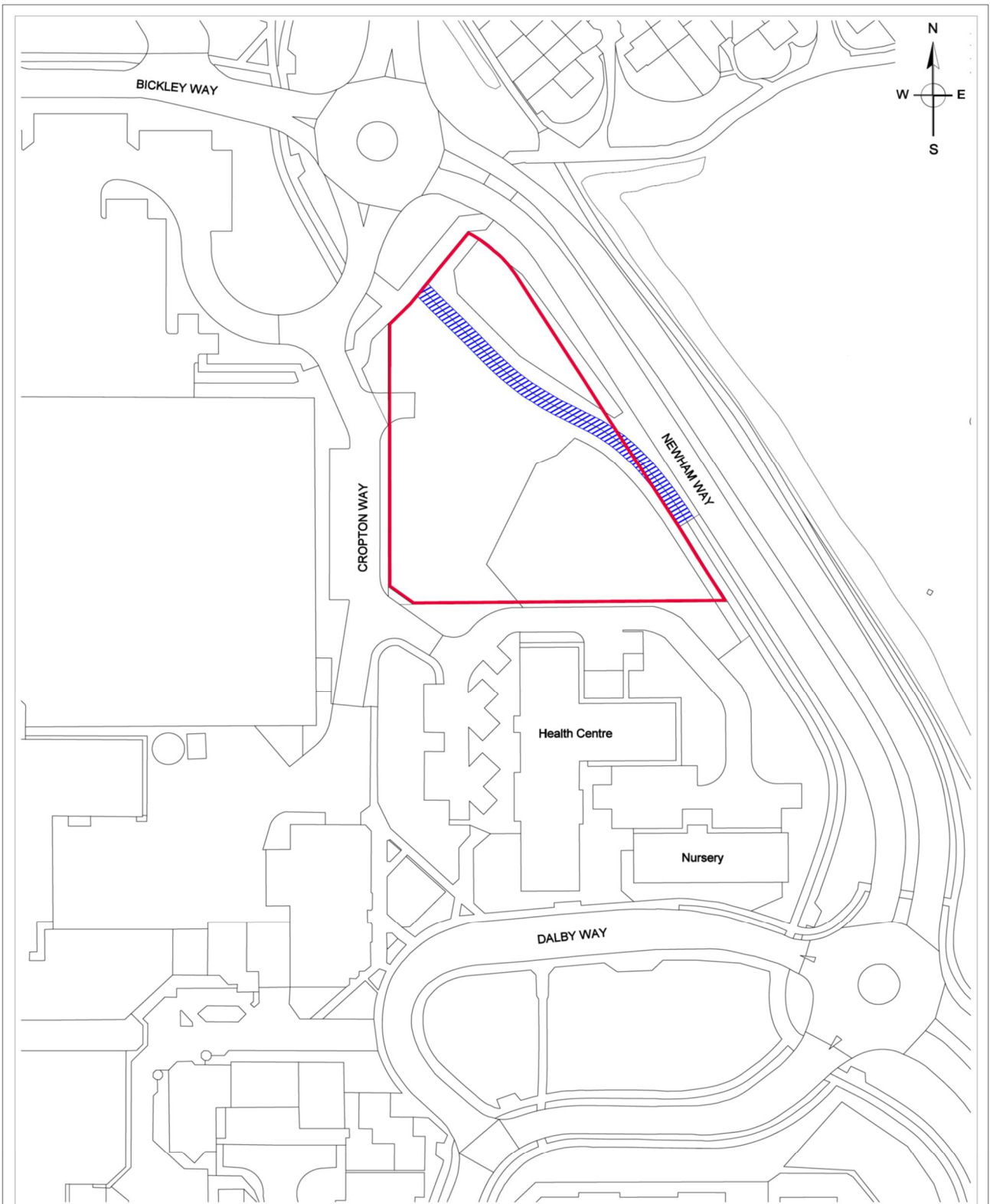
Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
<p>Human Rights</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>It is considered that the disposal of the subject property will not impact negatively on individual human rights. The proposal represents a significant and positive enhancement for both the locality and the wider area, far outweighing the transfer of the property from the Council's Estate holding. This assessment has been made taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fact that the property is surplus, and that no Council staff or services will be affected by the proposed disposal; the new jobs that future re-use of the property will create, and the potential of the proposal to stimulate further economic development within the borough.
<p>Equality</p> <p>Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Council has a duty to consider the impact of the proposed decision on relevant protected characteristics, to ensure it has due regard to the public sector equality duty. Therefore, in the process of taking decisions, the duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>Consideration of this duty has shaped the proposals.</p> <p>The property is surplus and fulfils no specific function, purpose or service. In accordance with this position, access to and delivery of Council services will not be affected by the proposed disposal.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on a group, or individuals, because they hold a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes engagement to date with relevant Council departmental teams and the proposed purchaser, together with analysis of the terms and conditions that will be incorporated within the proposed sale.</p>

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

<p>Community Cohesion</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>Sustainable Community Strategy Objectives</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for Middlesbrough?* Does this decision impact on the statutory duties associated with these key objectives?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>The proposed disposal will facilitate third party regeneration and contribute positively towards the vision for Middlesbrough – creating employment opportunities, driving enterprise and generating economic activity within the Borough.</p> <p>In consideration of these outcomes, the proposal does not impact negatively upon the Council's sustainable community strategy objectives.</p> <p>This assessment has been made taking into account the new jobs that will be created in the Borough by bringing the subject property back into a far more beneficial future use.</p>
<p>Organisational Management / Transformation</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on organisational management or the transformation of the Council's services as set out in its Transformation Programme?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>No tangible relationship between the disposal of the property and the organisational management of the Council, or the transformation of its services (as set out in its Transformation Programme), have been identified.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➡ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed. ➡ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed. 				

Assessment completed by:	David Velemir	Head of Service:	Richard Horniman
Date:	16/12/2022	Date:	16/12/2022

Site Plan



TIM WAKE VALUATION & ESTATES

SITE L
COULBY NEWHAM
MIDDLESBROUGH

Scale:	1:1250
Date:	8th SEPTEMBER 17
Drawn:	JMS
Drg No:	VAL 4983 H

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Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

Subject of assessment:	Disposal of the Council's freehold interest in Site L (North) Coulby Newham			
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 & Land Act 1980 Section 118 Schedule 23 Part V.</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach The subject property has been declared surplus and there are no Council staff, or services that will be affected by the disposal. Future use will be for the purposes of mixed commercial, retail & leisure 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, and 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 24 th January 2023			
Lifespan:	Not applicable.			
Date of next review:	Not applicable.			

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
<p>Human Rights</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>It is considered that the disposal of the subject property will not impact negatively on individual human rights. The proposal represents a significant and positive enhancement for both the locality and the wider area, far outweighing the transfer of the property from the Council's Estate holding. This assessment has been made taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fact that the property is surplus, and that no Council staff or services will be affected by the proposed disposal; the new jobs that future re-use of the property will create, and the potential of the proposal to stimulate further economic development within the borough.
<p>Equality</p> <p>Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Council has a duty to consider the impact of the proposed decision on relevant protected characteristics, to ensure it has due regard to the public sector equality duty. Therefore, in the process of taking decisions, the duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>Consideration of this duty has shaped the proposals.</p> <p>The property is surplus and fulfils no specific function, purpose or service. In accordance with this position, access to and delivery of Council services will not be affected by the proposed disposal.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on a group, or individuals, because they hold a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes engagement to date with relevant Council departmental teams and the proposed purchaser, together with analysis of the terms and conditions that will be incorporated within the proposed sale.</p>

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

<p>Community Cohesion</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>Sustainable Community Strategy Objectives</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for Middlesbrough?* Does this decision impact on the statutory duties associated with these key objectives?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>The proposed disposal will facilitate third party regeneration and contribute positively towards the vision for Middlesbrough – creating employment opportunities, driving enterprise and generating economic activity within the Borough.</p> <p>In consideration of these outcomes, the proposal does not impact negatively upon the Council's sustainable community strategy objectives.</p> <p>This assessment has been made taking into account the new jobs that will be created in the Borough by bringing the subject property back into a far more beneficial future use.</p>
<p>Organisational Management / Transformation</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on organisational management or the transformation of the Council's services as set out in its Transformation Programme?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>No tangible relationship between the disposal of the property and the organisational management of the Council, or the transformation of its services (as set out in its Transformation Programme), have been identified.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed. ➤ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed. 				

Assessment completed by:	David Velemir	Head of Service:	Richard Horniman
Date:	16/12/2022	Date:	16/12/2022

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Executive Member for Regeneration Director of Regeneration
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	24 January 2023
Title:	Town Centre Property Purchase - PART A
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Town centre
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary	
<p>The report seeks an Executive decision for Middlesbrough Council to acquire the freehold interest in a major town centre building of strategic significance.</p> <p>This report aims to acquire one of Middlesbrough’s most prominent and iconic buildings, which has suffered vacancy and decay in recent years.</p> <p>The immediate priority is to ensure the control, and protection, of the locally important asset. Once acquired, a business case will be developed to restore and convert the spaces to a commercially viable use, which could include a diverse range of uses including public, commercial, leisure and cultural spaces, as a critical part of the transformation of Middlesbrough’s town centre.</p> <p>The decision being sought to acquire is a key decision with the value of the surplus asset exceeding the £150,000 threshold.</p>	

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Executive approval for Middlesbrough Council to acquire the freehold interest in a major town centre building of strategic significance.

Background & relevant information

2. In recognising the fragilities of its high street, the Council commissioned an economic assessment of the retail and commercial areas within the Town Centre, to provide an evidence base on which to tailor a package of interventions. The process benchmarked Middlesbrough against national trends, highlighting deficiencies and areas of improvement. In parallel, an analysis of retail floor space trends was also carried out. This data has informed the development of specific priorities, actions and responsibilities, to be taken forward by all stakeholders.
3. The exercise highlighted that Middlesbrough has an oversupply of retail floor space, in proportion to the amount of commercial activity. Middlesbrough had a retail core vacancy rate of c19% on a base of 1.8m sqft of all available town centre floor space; this resulted in a buyers' market with tenants seeking competitive terms from multiple landlords therefore driving down rents.
4. Consequently, there is a requirement to make a fundamental change to rebalance the economic mix. Similarly, this leads to the necessity to focus upon the conversion and repurposing of surplus or unoccupied space to complementary economic uses, which will drive the footfall, animation and confidence in the area.
5. As a property with local merit, any adaptation works must be sensitively handled. This adds complexity and cost to the development options as the space is repurposed to modern town centre uses. In an already distressed property market, this adds an additional financial burden for the delivery of the project and severely limits commercial viability and, therefore, private sector ability to deliver.
6. The acquisition and redevelopment of this symbolic asset has strong links with Middlesbrough's Strategic Plan. An absolute end use has not yet been identified for this structure albeit the space lends itself to a number of uses. The asset is privately owned and, assuming owner compliance, a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process may be able to be avoided.
7. The building has a significant heritage deficit in respect of commercial restoration and this means that there is no reasonable prospect of it being brought back into commercial use, by the private sector, without significant public sector stimulation. Middlesbrough Council is in liaison with the current owner and are confident of completing the acquisition of the property in the current financial year.
8. Middlesbrough Council has not determined a final use for the space but opportunities are significant. Early consultation has identified preferred community uses for the building which range from indoor market place, educational spaces and cultural performance space. This project will involve intensive co-design and development with businesses, residents and other stakeholders. The respective business cases will be worked up for viability in the next phase of the project with the aim of securing a self-sustaining, publicly-accessible use, which will add value to the area and generate the

income required to sustain the property (and any future heritage / maintenance investments) in perpetuity.

9. As not to prejudice any future business case, or commercial interests through the acquisition process, the financial details and terms are set out in Part B of this report.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

10. That Executive be asked to:

- a) note the information contained within Part A of the report; and,
- b) take the decision to acquire the freehold interest in a major town centre building of strategic significance, once all the financial or exempt information contained within Part B of the report has been considered.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

11. The restoration and reuse of this key building will provide a hugely symbolic investment in Middlesbrough and reassurance that we will invest in our significant buildings to breathe new life into them.
12. In owning the asset, the Council can exert a level of control to support the development and restoration of the site, subject to the availability of external funding opportunities.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

13. The Council could choose not to acquire the property. As a property with local merits, any adaptation works must be sensitively handled. This adds complexity and cost to the development options as the space is repurposed to modern town centre uses. In an already distressed property market, this adds an additional financial burden for the delivery of the project and severely limits commercial viability and, therefore, private sector ability to deliver. It is therefore likely that the building would remain undeveloped without Council intervention.

Do nothing

14. The property would remain in its present dilapidated state.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

15. No specific legal issues have been created as a result of the proposal.
16. The subject property would be acquired under consultation with the Council's Legal Services and Valuation & Estates teams.

Strategic priorities and risks

17. The proposal does not require any change to the Council's existing policy framework.

18. The proposal contribute to the strategic aims for town centre regeneration and contribute positively towards the vision for Middlesbrough – creating employment opportunities, driving enterprise and generating economic activity within the Borough.

19. Due to the impact of ongoing national economic, political and health issues on the local property market, the likelihood of the Private Sector to secure an alternate buyer / development proposal is questionable.

Human rights, equality and data protection

20. There will be no negative, differential impact on protected groups and communities.

21. A Level 1 (Initial Screening) Impact Assessment (IA) accompanies this report attached at Appendix 1. The impact assessment has identified that the proposal would have a positive impact on the local community and does not represent any concern to equal rights, disability discrimination or the impingement of individual human rights.

22. The Council’s development control planning process would also serve to ensure that any future use proposed would be appropriate for the local area.

23. The proposed decision does not involve the collation and use of personal data.

Financial

24. The capital required to acquire this property is set out in Part B of this report.

25. The cost will include any associated fees and Stamp Duty Land Tax.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Subject to the grant of Executive approval, the Council moves to proceed with the acquisition of the property as detailed within Part B of this report.	Valuation & Estates Manager	February 2023

Appendices

1	Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment
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Background papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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

Impact Assessment Level 1 – Initial Screening Assessment

Subject of assessment:	Acquisition of the freehold interest in strategic town centre property			
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) Regeneration		
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 acquire property required by the Council for the purposes of regeneration.</p> <p>Statutory drivers (set out exact reference) The Local Government Act 1972 Section 123, as amended by the Local Government Planning & Land Act 1980 Section 118 Schedule 23 Part V.</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach The subject property has been vacant since 2015 and subject to significant decay and deterioration in the interim. As currently envisaged, future use will be for the purposes of community, commercial or leisure uses in accordance with acceptable planning uses of the property.</p> <p>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) The Council, seller and the local community.</p> <p>Intended outcomes The proposed acquisition of the subject property would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bring an iconic and prominent town centre building into the Council's care, control and protection, and provide the Council with the opportunity to bring the subject property back into a more positive future use. 			
Live date:	Tuesday 24 th January 2023			
Lifespan:	Not applicable.			
Date of next review:	Not applicable.			

Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
<p>Human Rights</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?*</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>It is considered that the acquisition 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 alternative of leaving the building vacant and leaving it to deteriorate further.</p> <p>This assessment has been made taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that no Council staff or services will be affected by the proposed acquisition; • the new jobs that future re-use of the property will create, and • the potential of the proposal to stimulate further economic development within the borough.
<p>Equality</p> <p>Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?*</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Council has a duty to consider the impact of the proposed decision on relevant protected characteristics, to ensure it has due regard to the public sector equality duty. Therefore, in the process of taking decisions, the duty requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>Consideration of this duty has shaped the proposals.</p> <p>The property is vacant and fulfils no specific function, purpose or service. In accordance with this position, access to and delivery of Council services will not be affected by the proposed disposal.</p> <p>It is considered that the proposal will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on a group, or individuals, because they hold a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Evidence used to inform this assessment includes engagement to date with relevant Council departmental teams and the proposed seller, together with analysis of the terms and conditions that will be incorporated within the proposed acquisition.</p>

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

<p>Community Cohesion</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>Sustainable Community Strategy Objectives</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on the achievement of the vision for Middlesbrough?* Does this decision impact on the statutory duties associated with these key objectives?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>The proposed acquisition will facilitate Council led regeneration and contribute positively towards the vision for Middlesbrough – creating employment opportunities, driving enterprise and generating economic activity within the Borough.</p> <p>In consideration of these outcomes, the proposal does not impact negatively upon the Council's sustainable community strategy objectives.</p> <p>This assessment has been made taking into account the new jobs that will be created in the Borough by bringing the subject property back into a far more beneficial future use.</p>
<p>Organisational Management / Transformation</p> <p>Could the decision impact negatively on organisational management or the transformation of the Council's services as set out in its Transformation Programme?*</p>	☒	☐	☐	<p>No tangible relationship between the acquisition of the property and the organisational management of the Council, or the transformation of its services (as set out in its Transformation Programme), have been identified.</p>
<p>Next steps:</p> <p>☐ If the answer to all of the above screening questions is No then the process is completed.</p> <p>☐ If the answer of any of the questions is Yes or Uncertain, then a Level 2 Full Impact Assessment must be completed.</p>				

Assessment completed by:	David Velemir	Head of Service:	Sam Gilmore
Date:	13/12/2022	Date:	13/12/2022

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL



Report of:	Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	24 January 2023
Title:	Final Report of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel - The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (with a focus on COVID-19 and Recovery) - Service Response
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Vulnerability
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary

That the Executive approves the attached Action Plan put together in response to the Scrutiny Panel recommendations. In line with the Council's constitution following approval of the councils Green Strategy the recommendations of the scrutiny panel and subsequent action plan now need to be considered by the Executive.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to consider recommendations by the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel in their report - The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (with a focus on COVID-19 and Recovery)

Background and relevant information

2. The Scrutiny panel met to consider to consider the role of the VCS in supporting Adult Social Care with a focus on COVID-19 and recovery from the pandemic; from this the attached recommendations were established.
3. The Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel report recommends to the Executive:
 - a) That exploratory work be undertaken to identify opportunities for more collaborative working between the Council and the VCS, particularly in relation to the availability of meeting space. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.
 - b) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration works with LMT to explore the most effective form of relationship management between the Council and the VCS. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.
 - c) That a link between the VCS and the Council's Emergency Planning Team be established to assist with policy/practice statement development. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

4. That the Executive approves the attached action plan developed from the Panel's recommendations.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

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

The recommendations in the action plan will assist in the delivery of the strategic plan priority to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable.

Other potential decision(s) 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 1).

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

7. There are no legal implications identified in exploring the further development of the Council's working relationship with the VCS.

Strategic priorities and risks

8. Developing the working relationship between the Council and the VCS is in support of the Council's strategic priority to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

9. Impact Assessments as required will be undertaken when key actions are identified in response to the recommendations.

Financial

10. There are no identified costs at this stage. If costs are identified as the work develops then progression of the work will be subject to suitable resources being identified.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
See Action Plan	Director of ASC&HI	End July 2023

Appendices

1	Scrutiny Panel Report
2	Action Plan - The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (with a focus on COVID-19 and Recovery)
3	

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

Contact: Erik Scollay, Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration

Email: erik_scollay@middlesbrough.gov.uk

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

**FINAL REPORT
ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS)
IN SUPPORTING ADULT SOCIAL CARE
(WITH A FOCUS ON COVID-19 AND RECOVERY)**

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THE AIM OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW

1. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic created a wealth of unprecedented challenge that has had a devastating impact on communities and societies across the world, and there have been many studies, reports and briefing papers by leading organisations examining this, such as those by Age UK (2022), NHS (2020), Office for National Statistics (2021) and others.

The purpose of this review was to ascertain the local impact by first examining the support provided by voluntary organisations to Adult Social Care in delivering services to local residents, and then exploring how COVID-19 has changed this. By understanding the different approaches undertaken to improve outcomes for service users in the wake of COVID-19, the panel was keen to consider how these could be further developed.

2. The review aimed to assist the Local Authority by contributing to the delivery of the following themes of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan:
 - 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; and
 - 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

3. The terms of reference for the review were as follows:
 - a) To understand the impact that COVID-19 has had on local communities, the Local Authority, VCS organisations and how services are delivered;
 - b) To examine how the Local Authority has worked with the VCS during the pandemic and how support has been provided; and
 - c) To explore effective strategies and projects to further develop support provision in a post-pandemic environment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adult Social Care and VCS Organisations in Middlesbrough

4. In a time of great change and uncertainty, as presented by COVID-19, Adult Social Care’s work did not stop. Moreover, there was an ever-increasing drive to focus on continued operational delivery to ensure that Middlesbrough’s essential services continued during a most difficult and demanding time. That said, however, the pandemic also created opportunities, and as the service now moves into the recovery phase, now is the time to reassess and consider how activities will be carried out in a post-pandemic world. Things are returning to state of ‘normality’, though exactly what this entails and the impacts it will have for the different sectors of society is yet to be determined. Coupled with wider current economic and social challenges, the cost of living crisis for example, it is clear that further challenge lays ahead.

5. Within Adult Social Care, there are a number of different themes of service delivery/operational activity that consist of in-house service provision and independent (commissioned) service provision. Some of the services within the VCS are commissioned by Adult Social Care, whereas other VCS organisations act entirely independently from the Council in the community.
6. In terms of those independent VCS organisations, although they are not directly commissioned by Adult Social Care, they provide a critical contribution to the resilience of the Council's services because they support the same communities that the Council seeks to support.
7. Traditionally, the Council has linked into the VCS through the Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA), but there are also other organisations that fall outside the umbrella of the MVDA.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

8. Information was provided to the panel at meetings held on 2 March 2022, 30 March 2022 and 7 September 2022.
9. In addition to the evidence that was provided at panel meetings, in order to ensure that VCS organisations were afforded the opportunity to contribute to the investigation, a survey was sent to all VCS organisations involved with the Council's Adult Social Care department. The survey attempted to capture opinions including support received from the Council; alternative sources of funding; and to what extent COVID-19 had impacted upon service delivery. Details of the questions comprising the survey are attached at **Appendix 1**.

Term of Reference A - To understand the impact that COVID-19 has had on local communities, the Local Authority, VCS organisations and how services are delivered

10. The panel notes that as the pandemic hit and communities were forced into lockdown, most VCS organisations found themselves suddenly unable to support vulnerable clients in their usual ways. Following the implementation of strict COVID-19 measures, in particular the removal of face-to-face contact, VCS organisations needed to reconsider their operational models. In addition to this, the usual sources of income, such as charitable donations, grant funding, income from charity shops and/or holding events, were also significantly affected, therefore VCS organisations needed to work differently.
11. Of the organisations that responded to the survey, 88% of them (22) were successfully able to continue in their work supporting Middlesbrough's communities, which demonstrates the resilience, flexibility and determination shown during this unprecedented time. The panel commends the work of all those involved in achieving this.
12. The panel heard that, during this process of reviewing service delivery methods, examples of traditional community support re-emerged, which included such activities as collecting shopping and prescriptions, and assisting neighbours. In addition, Volunteer Responders were set up to support the NHS and Social Care, with GoodSAM volunteers being provided access to an app to facilitate the support of vulnerable people in England. The panel welcomes this cross-sector partnership work and hopes that this support can continue, as it has been incredibly valuable for local communities.
13. The panel notes that, in respect of funding/financial support, the Council recognised the need to support the VCS organisations that were suddenly affected; Public Health commenced engagement work with the VCS via the government grants programme in order

to initiate support. The panel highlights that VCS organisations were encouraged to apply for grant funding on a partnership basis, which was particularly positive as it eradicated a sense of competition/division by bringing resources together and promoting joint working. Grant funding is considered in further detail under Term of Reference B.

Term of Reference B - To examine how the Local Authority has worked with the VCS during the pandemic and how support has been provided

14. There were a number of ways in which the Council worked with the VCS during the pandemic. For the purposes of this review, the panel focused upon grant funding; support in assisting vulnerable persons to access essential services; and COVID Awareness and Vaccination Programme (including the ‘Health Champions Network’ and the ‘COVID Champions Network’) matters.

Grant Funding

15. The Council has a ‘Grants to the Voluntary Sector’ budget which provides a number of core budget and funding amounts for a variety of programmes that vary in size.

16. In terms of core grants, which cover such operational costs as salaries and other overheads, the Council determines three recipients to receive these from the Voluntary Sector budget. The recipients are chosen every three years following a thorough application process.

17. The current recipients and the amounts of funding allocated are as follows:

Organisation	Total Allocation
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	£87,314 plus £46,000 = £133,314 (combination of two funding streams: VCS grant and Public Health funded grant)
Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA)	£41,314 plus £38,250 = £79,564 (combination of two funding streams: VCS grant and Public Health funded grant)
St. Mary’s Centre	£12,625

18. In addition to offering core funding, other grant funding programmes exist to enable VCS organisations to support activity for people in Middlesbrough (N.B. all applications must demonstrate how they link to the Mayor’s Vision). These include:

- **Community Grant Fund** - this offers grants of up to £1500 through two different funds: the Small Grants Fund and the Community Chest. The Small Grants Fund is for residents and small community groups who want to make a difference to their area (a bank account or constitution is not needed for applications to this fund; a recent example of this were applications/grant payments for Platinum Jubilee street parties). The Community Chest fund is for more established groups which have a constitution, and a bank account and policies are required to be in place;

- **Dementia-friendly and age-friendly activities grants** – funding is available to support activities which improve quality of life for Middlesbrough’s older residents;
- **Community Grant Fund** - Levelling Up Grant 2022 – funding is available for VCS groups to look at addressing Middlesbrough’s needs which tie in with the government’s Levelling Up agenda;
- **Development grants** – around £20,000 is available in grants to fund new or emerging projects;
- **Befriending** – in the current financial year (2022/23), £18,000 is available to fund one or two projects in Middlesbrough to support elderly residents to feel less lonely and isolated;
- **Community Fund** – Staying Included – Staying Included is a Council-run service aimed at helping vulnerable people find solutions to live independently at home and stay connected to their community. Grants of up to £2,500 are available to help build capacity within the VCS to support clients beyond the Staying Included support period;
- **Carers Community Fund** – available to community-based groups who want to support informal carers in their area. There are two programmes: the first is a small grant programme for grants of £20-£5,000; the second is a larger grant programme for applications of £5,000-£20,000; and
- **ESF community grants programme** – Middlesbrough Council, in partnership with the four Tees Valley Councils, has been awarded funding to support those who are furthest from the labour market to move. Jointly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), grants of between £10,000-£20,000 are available for individual projects.

19. In addition to delivering the grants programme itself, the Council and MVDA run an online search tool for Middlesbrough Communities. Training sessions in respect of this ‘FIND a Funder’ resource are regularly made available for VCS groups seeking grant funding.
20. There are strict processes in place for the allocation of funding, which are administered by staff in Adult Social Care. These include the development of criteria, due diligence and monitoring of use. The team also provides support by way of offering support and advice to VCS organisations in terms of project management.
21. In respect of Community Chest funding for more established groups, due diligence is carried out during the application process (e.g. a review of policies around safeguarding and DBS will be undertaken, and bank accounts and statements will be verified). No payments will be made if any concerns are raised.
22. Some financial institutions no longer offer community accounts, which in some cases may pose issues for obtaining relevant documentation (e.g. bank statements). Links have been forged with South Tees Community Bank who may be able to offer facilities to VCS organisations.
23. Only on rare occasions would a request be made for grant funding to be returned. For example, with regards to the Holiday Activities Fund (HAF), if a grant was paid upfront for a specific project to run over the summer holidays, and either that project did not run or not enough eligible children accessed it, the organisation would be asked to return it.
24. In comparison to previous years, the total amount of grant funding increased significantly during the pandemic. The amounts awarded were as follows:

Year	Total Amount Awarded
2018/19	£290,950
2019/20	£303,293
2020/21	£1,342,664
2021/22	£2,287,739
Current Projections:	
2022/23	£581,821 plus HAF allocation
2023/24	£195,000 plus HAF allocation

25. There were 664 grant applications processed in 2021/22, 532 of which were approved (80% success rate); due to over subscription, there was a significantly higher level of unsuccessful grants. A number of the successful programmes were delivered with a view of encouraging people to return to activities and support local communities.
26. In respect of the current projections, these figures are particularly fluid in nature. These figures may increase as government energy grants are received, and government grants may also be received to deal with the current cost of living crisis (social care grants, for example).
27. As grant funding budgets are fixed, any additional demand would adversely impact the distribution of grant funding. In terms of the cost of living crisis there are a myriad of issues at play, including the impact on businesses and the payment of business rates; the impact on Health and Social Care budgets; energy issues; and Council Tax collection. It is anticipated that some financial support (such as the government's energy support grant) will be received, though further details are currently awaited. The Council's Leadership Management Team continues to review this situation, and a Welfare Strategy has been produced to assist matters going forward.

COVID-19 Grant Funding

28. In addition to this Grants to the Voluntary Sector budget, additional grant funding was made available to VCS organisations during the pandemic.
29. Following receipt of the first round of government grant funding, Public Health considered how VCS organisations could be best supported. To begin, the first group of grants (Communications Grants) were awarded to facilitate Public Health's engagement with vulnerable people in communities, essentially around raising awareness of COVID-19 and keeping safe. The 'COVID Champions Network' was created through VCS organisations because they knew what messages would work best for their communities, and small grants were awarded for this work. The panel recognises the important role that the VCS played in conveying public health messages to local residents, particularly in respect of vulnerable individuals and 'hard to reach' groups.

30. The second group of grants to be awarded were VCS Sustainability Grants. The purpose of this funding was to support organisations that were losing their funding streams, or were experiencing reduced human resource levels because staff needed to self-isolate. The aim was to sustain those services whilst simultaneously offering them opportunity to consider how they could operate differently. This included, for example, virtual engagement with clients; doorstep deliveries; and purchasing laptops to maintain contact with vulnerable people. Those organisations involved in this joined the 'COVID Champions Network'.
31. One of the organisations to benefit from sustainability grant funding was Streets Ahead for Information, which provides a one-stop service for residents to receive advice and support. Since the start of the pandemic, Streets Ahead for Information has worked far closer with other VCS partners to help support residents' needs, which have become significantly more complex. The organisation utilised grant funding to assist with key projects to enable individuals to stay connected and to reduce loneliness and isolation. One project involved the provision of tablets to retain connection and access support (a similar project was undertaken by Recovery Connections whereby a limited number of tablets and telephones were procured following the receipt of grant funding). A further project involved the employment of an Outreach Officer to door knock and check on peoples' wellbeing. Following the announcement of the first national lockdown, some individuals took to their homes and had not re-emerged. Work is currently taking place to reintegrate these individuals back into local communities. In addition to this, work continues in supporting many residents in the Newport and Gresham areas of Middlesbrough who are not readily connected to digital services, whether that be by choice or through accessibility issues (such as in respect of broadband services).
32. The panel recognises that mental health has become a major issue because of isolation. The provision of sustainability grant funding was followed by the provision of Mental Health/Isolation Grants to those VCS organisations that provided applicable support, whether that be related to dementia, caring or older people.
33. The third group of grants to be provided concerned recovery work, with VCS Recovery Grants being awarded.
34. Public Health was especially keen for organisations, through the 'COVID Champions Network', to become more aware of what others were doing and provide opportunities for partnership working. When Mental Health/Isolation Grants and VCS Recovery Grants were being allocated, Public Health encouraged partnership working via the grant application forms by offering higher funding packages if partners demonstrated how they were going to work together and deliver services differently. It was felt that this had been a very positive spin-off of the grants process and the 'COVID Champions Network', as well from the pandemic overall.

Other Sources of Grants / Funding

35. In addition to funding from the Council, other sources of funding are available to VCS organisations. In order to ascertain whether alternative funding is being accessed, a survey was issued to VCS organisations which asked "*Does your organisation currently receive any grants/funding from other sources (e.g. National Lottery)?*". In response:
- 72% of respondents (18) indicated that they currently receive funding from other sources;
 - 24% of respondents (6) indicated that they do not receive funding from any source other than the Council; and

- 4% of respondents (1) indicated that they had previously received funding from other sources, but now only receive funding from the Council.

36. For those identifying other sources of grant funding, these included:

- The National Lottery (core funding in some cases);
- Social Centre and fundraising events;
- Contracts with educational establishments;
- Banks and Building Societies (e.g. Cooperative Bank and Darlington Building Society);
- Private businesses and individual monetary donations;
- BBC Children in Need;
- Premier League funding;
- Tees Valley Community Foundation;
- The Brelms Trust;
- Jack Brunton Trust;
- Big Lottery Awards for All;
- Postcode Neighbourhood Trust;
- Other Local Authorities (e.g. community partnerships and arts and culture commissions);
- Thirteen Group;
- Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner; and
- Henry Smith Foundation.

Support in assisting vulnerable persons to access essential services

37. In addition to understanding the role of grant funding, the panel wished to understand how VCS organisations provide support to vulnerable persons in accessing essential services.

38. The panel recognises the fundamental role that the VCS plays in supporting individuals to access health and wellbeing services (and preventing poor health), as well as social care services. Although some VCS may have a considerably higher profile in comparison to others, the panel notes the importance of recognising the value of all organisations.

39. Throughout the pandemic, VCS organisations and their volunteers were essential (and will continue to be both during the recovery phase and beyond). Individuals had volunteered to help in a number of ways, including as GoodSam Volunteers (also known as NHS Volunteer Responders); 'COVID Champions' to deliver messages in their communities; and helping to provide support at Public Health's COVID Community Clinics (undertaking queue management tasks and engaging with clients and promotional work). The panel recognises that volunteers have gone above and beyond, which has been positive for relations between the Council and the VCS.

40. During the initial lockdown period, VCS organisations were required to adapt quickly to an ever-changing and incredibly challenging time. The panel recognises the resilience and flexibility that this work required when adopting sudden new ways of working.

41. **Appendix 2** details the new/revised approaches to working that VCS organisations implemented during the pandemic, and the resource implications that came with those.

42. The biggest shift to new ways of working was to a virtual environment. However, the panel appreciates that technology is not always the most available or appropriate method for reaching out to all sectors of local communities, as sometimes accessibility and/or a

willingness or ability to embrace technological advances does offer restriction. Print publications, such as magazines and newsletters, delivered to households continue to act as main sources of connection/information. For example: Street Wise is a monthly newsletter and web information source, generally comprising 4-8 pages, that is produced by Streets Ahead for Information in collaboration with Middlesbrough Council and Cleveland Police. The newsletter, which informs about a wide range of issues in the Newport Ward, is delivered to circa. 3500 homes in the area. Language barriers can pose an issue at times and therefore the panel recognises the importance of organisations being able to work flexibly, and utilise all available resources effectively to reach all demographics of local communities.

43. When asked the question “*During the pandemic, was your organisation able to continue supporting local communities by adopting new ways of working (for example, moving from face-to-face to virtual meetings and telephone appointments)?*”:

- 88% (22) of respondents answered ‘yes’;
- 4% (1) of respondents answered ‘no’;
- 4% (1) of respondents advised that they were a new organisation established during the pandemic; and
- 4% (1) of respondents advised of a ‘yes’/‘no’ mix in that some projects could continue whereas others could not.

COVID Awareness and Vaccination Programme (including the Health Champions Network and the COVID Champions Network)

44. The panel recognises the fundamental role that the VCS sector played in helping to raise awareness of COVID-19 and the vaccination programme. One of the VCS’ key strengths is the ability to provide information and support to ‘hard to reach’ groups, and the panel commends all those involved for their efforts in communicating messages to the diverse demographics within Middlesbrough’s communities.

45. VCS organisations operate at a ‘grass roots’ level and it was important that Public Health were able to understand the issues facing local communities and communicate accordingly. Two-way communication was key and the assistance of the VCS in facilitating this process was invaluable. Moving forward, it is essential that this continues to ensure that emerging issues and barriers for communities are understood. The panel acknowledges the work that VCS organisations have carried out with ethnic communities, and the fundamental role that local religious leaders have played in conveying health messages. There are key individuals at a ‘grass roots’ level that need to be engaged with, and therefore the importance of maintaining these relationships and developing them going forward cannot be underestimated.

46. The panel recognises the importance of ensuring that VCS organisations were appropriately supported during the lockdown periods, and that this support continues as far as practically possible. As organisations at a ‘grass root’ level, these are fundamental to the support provided in local communities and it essential that these can continue to operate.

47. As an example of some of the communication methods used by VCS organisations to reach out to local communities, Streets Ahead for Information produced COVID-19 flyers to inform residents of such matters as current government guidance and regulations; vaccination advice; and reminders that support was available for other tasks, such as collecting prescriptions and running errands.

48. Prior to the pandemic, Public Health had intended to create a 'Health Champions Network', to consist of a cross-sector membership that would work together to develop communications and offers for local communities. As a positive of the pandemic, COVID-19 had helped to develop this because a 'COVID Champions Network' was created. The network consisted of approximately 80 Members, some of which were Council staff but the vast majority were VCS organisations or volunteers. It is hoped that, as COVID-19 has now entered a recovery phase, members of this network can be retained as generic 'Health Champions' within local communities, to help develop Public Health's outreach resource.
49. As members of the 'COVID-19 Champions Network', VCS organisations could approach one another for information/advice where required. Representatives of VCS organisations Streets Ahead for Information and Recovery Connections indicated to the panel that, as members, the network had brought VCS organisations together and encouraged them to share information and work together. This had been both useful and positive for opening up communications.
50. The 'COVID Champions Network', which had town-wide representation and a particularly strong BAME representation, had met on a fortnightly basis in the earlier stages of the pandemic, and then on a monthly basis thereafter. At the 2 March 2022 meeting, Members were advised that the group was, at that moment, meeting virtually every six weeks. All of the information distributed to the Champions was the latest, formal information available at the time of the respective communication. The importance of two-way interaction in building relationships had been recognised, and therefore officers from Public Health always responded to any requests for information submitted by champions. Similarly, if any messages needed to be amended or specified for different communities, this would be undertaken collaboratively. Volunteers and VCS organisations were offered training by Public Health England in relation to vaccine and COVID-19 conversations; all champions had completed this.
51. In December 2020, because previous grants had been provided and delivered well, Public Health had received further funding of £180,000, which was utilised to strengthen the approach with 'COVID Vaccine Champions'. The issue of COVID-19 vaccines had been difficult to address because there were some key areas/communities that were not engaging, and as restrictions were being lifted nationally, people were becoming more blasé about the need for vaccines. Therefore, more specific engagement work was undertaken to address this, with more VCS organisations joining the network.

Term of Reference C - To explore effective strategies and projects to further develop support provision in a post-pandemic environment

52. While there is a great deal of support available, Members were keen to understand how this could be further improved. To achieve this, the panel looked at several possible initiatives.
53. One of these initiatives concerned the role of Elected Members and the assistance that they can provide. For example, in terms of conveying messages to the various communities in Middlesbrough, the panel feels that the input of Members is crucial. The establishment of Members' training and briefing sessions in collaboration with VCS organisations/representatives, and invitations to community events, helps to facilitate contact at a 'grass roots' level and aid partnership working.
54. Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, there has been some positivity. For example, organisations have been required to rethink their operational models, including consideration of how services could be streamlined or delivered in a way that improves relations with their contacts. In addition, some projects have provided significant insight that

could form the basis of effective strategy that could be taken forward in the future. For example, in relation to men's mental health, one project identified men to be more responsive to telephone communication than in-person communication.

55. Partnership working has been actively encouraged throughout the pandemic period and VCS organisations have felt the benefit of this. Offering higher levels of grant funding for partner projects, for example, promoted relations well.
56. The panel feels that consideration now needs to be given towards how the VCS can be supported in the future to enable more robust services to be provided longer term.
57. The responses to the survey indicated that the majority of VCS organisations feel that they are supported by the Council, i.e. when asked "*In general, to what extent do you feel supported by the Council?*", the following responses were provided:
 - Very well - 44% (11 respondents);
 - Well - 24% (6 respondents);
 - Indifferent - 4% (1 respondent);
 - Not well - 20% (5 respondents);
 - Very poor - NIL; and
 - Not answered - 8% (2 respondents).
58. However, VCS organisations did provide several suggestions on how existing support could be improved. When asked the question "*In thinking about COVID recovery and the services your organisation delivers, is there anything you would want the Council to provide that is not being provided to you already?*", 56% of respondents (14) replied 'Yes' and 32% of respondents (8) replied 'No' (12% (3) did not answer). The following suggestions were made:
 - IT/digital support;
 - Having organisations link into a network with a service user system in place;
 - Superfast broadband in premises;
 - A steady funding stream and/or continued block funding;
 - Increased/continued level of grant funding (e.g. a longer term plan or commitment of 3 to 5 years);
 - Grant funding for training to upskill VCS organisations;
 - Grant funding to support the mental health of professionals (e.g. Social Workers, key workers and health professionals);
 - A dedicated full-time link person/officer within the Council to contact for practical support (this would facilitate partnership working between Middlesbrough Council and the VCS);
 - Improved links to avoid duplication of effort;
 - Ongoing support and partnership working;
 - Opportunities for family/carer engagement support;
 - Occasional access to transport to take elderly people out on day trips (presently relying on volunteers and their own cars but becoming more difficult as the groups grow in popularity);
 - Emergency planning to take into account provision of key services operating from Council-owned buildings, and what would happen to these in the event of office/building closure);
 - 'Service appropriate' premises with free parking for staff/volunteers or on a good bus route;

- Stationery service - could the Council offer VCS organisations/groups a cheaper rate through the bulk purchasing of stationery items, in particular printer paper?;
- Free parking for charity workers;
- Corporate volunteers (i.e. staff offered paid leave or days off to volunteer with a VCS organisation for one or two days per month; N.B. similar initiatives are currently being explored by the Council); and
- Available meeting space offered on either a free or reduced rate basis.

59. In relation to finance, some VCS organisations would have struggled to operate within the first three-to-six months of the pandemic if grant funding had not been provided, which is very concerning given the positive impact that they had. In moving forward, the panel feels that provision of support/knowledge around financial planning could be offered to VCS organisations to help strengthen their approach to be more business-like, and to maintain and develop sustainability. This will be particularly beneficial over the coming months as the cost of living crisis continues.

Welfare Rights and Support for Vulnerable Persons

60. With regards to Welfare Rights, the Financial Inclusion Group (FIG) (which consists of 40 partners across Middlesbrough) continues to undertake benefit campaign work.

61. In terms of a pre/post COVID-19 Welfare Rights service offering, a pre COVID-19 hub advice and benefit take up service was offered at fixed weekly advice sessions at some venues, and one-off sessions at a range of other venues. During COVID-19, these sessions moved to telephony only, which resulted in a significant reduction in the number of residents accessing the service. Sessions had re-opened following COVID-19 restrictions on an appointment only basis. During 2021, one off sessions had ceased due to increased risk of COVID-19 infections, and a reluctance of venues to open.

62. All those accessing the service receive a full interview including assistance with form completion, help to challenge adverse decisions, review benefit entitlement calculations, etc.

63. In terms of challenging decisions, the Welfare Rights Service is unique in that it is the only service in Middlesbrough that will provide assistance with appeals, for example to those individuals turned down for Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

64. The following table shows the number of successful appeals and values won for residents. For context, Members were advised that during the pandemic, the number of residents who had benefit removed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and the relevant requirements, were somewhat relaxed, which would account for the reduction in numbers:

Year	No. of Successful Appeals	Annual Amount Claimed (£)	Arrears Claimed (£)	Total Annual Amount Claimed from Appeals (£)
01/04/2022 - 31/10/2022	23	82,843.67	69,941.19	152,784.86
01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022	46	135,813.76	163,788.00	299,601.76
01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021	93	301,035.20	407,250.38	708,285.58

Year	No. of Successful Appeals	Annual Amount Claimed (£)	Arrears Claimed (£)	Total Annual Amount Claimed from Appeals (£)
01/04/2019 - 31/03/2020	80	222,739.52	271,764.56	494,504.08
01/04/2018 - 31/03/2019	98	285,765.07	213,790.04	499,555.11
01/04/2017 - 31/03/2018	98	332,521.81	185,620.17	518,141.98

65. As the service does not focus only on appeals work, the following additional figures were provided to the panel in order to illustrate the wider work carried out:

Year	No. of Recorded Outcomes	Annual Amount Claimed (£)	Arrears Claimed (£)	Total Annual Amount Claimed (£)
01/04/2022 - 31/10/2022	216	805,428.42	147,671.80	953,100.22
01/04/2021 - 31/03/2022	523	2,039,295.44	272,501.07	2,311,796.51
01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021	423	1,613,041.33	267,962.98	1,881,004.31
01/04/2019 - 31/03/2020	543	2,004,377.58	295,712.77	2,300,090.35
01/04/2018 - 31/03/2019	495	1,854,023.18	262,657.02	2,116,680.20
01/04/2017 - 31/03/2018	437	1,487,999.95	128,264.84	1,616,264.79

(N.B. These figures do not include the appeals figures shown at para.64 above, or the Estates figures shown at para. 66 below)

66. With regards to Estates work estimates, these were provided as follows:

Year	No. referrals	Estimated Annual Amount Gained (£)
2022	62	483,600.00
2021	52	405,600.00
2020	45	351,000.00
2019	284	2,215,200.00
2018	190	1,482,000.00
2017	173	1,349,400.00

67. The service currently provides weekly sessions at 11 different venues: Breckon Hill Community Hub; Contact Centre; Easterside Community Hub; Grove Hill; Hemlington Library; Hope Foundation; Live Well Centre; Newport; North Ormesby Hub; Streets Ahead for Information; and Thorntree.

68. Regarding the number of clients accessing the service during 2021/22, this equated to: Q1 – 188; Q2 – 303; Q3 – 274; and Q4 – 300. Those aged 60-plus composed the highest figure across all four quarters (53; 91; 87; 99), and more females than males had accessed the service. In response to this, work has been, and will continue to be, undertaken to support those of pensionable age. Work to date has included targeting the demographic in writing, with a physical letter to 5,500 residents (this resulted in a 50% return); digital solutions are not always the most appropriate for that particular age group. A budget of approximately £550,000 is available to provide support.
69. The Welfare Rights team became part of the Resident and Business Support department in December 2021, with review of all financial assistance, advice and support undertaken as part of the Welfare Strategy. As this service is now centralised, this offers opportunity to identify where duplication exists and can be removed, where appropriate to do so.
70. In relation to the cost of living and energy crises, work is currently taking place - such as 'stay warm' campaigns and other projects - to link in with these. In terms of the rise in the number of people struggling to pay domestic bills and the additional support that will be required, monies will be provided by way of the Household Support Fund.

CONCLUSIONS

71. Based on the evidence provided throughout the investigation, the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel concluded that:
- a) COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the Local Authority, VCS organisations and how services are delivered.
 - b) Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, support for VCS organisations from the Council, and vice-versa, has continued. The panel commends the valuable work undertaken by Middlesbrough's vibrant and diverse VCS sector, which undoubtedly enhances the support provided to residents.
 - c) From the perspective of the VCS, the majority of organisations would like to see additional support from the Council, though largely in the form of more stable financial assistance. Consideration will need to be given, however, as to how the grants allocation process may be affected by the Local Authority's wider financial position.
 - d) Although there has been significant challenge and change, COVID-19 has also provided remarkable opportunity. It is important that all organisations seek to consider their core make-up and operating models for the benefit of all stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

72. The Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:
- a) That exploratory work be undertaken to identify opportunities for more collaborative working between the Council and the VCS, particularly in relation to the availability of meeting space. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.
 - b) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration works with LMT to explore the most effective form of relationship management between the Council and the VCS. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.

- c) That a link between the VCS and the Council's Emergency Planning Team be established to assist with policy/practice statement development. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- M Barker - Strategic Business Manager, Middlesbrough Council;
- S Barker - Voluntary Sector Liaison and Grants Officer, Middlesbrough Council;
- M Blythe - The Bungalow Partnership;
- P Boynton - Teesside Hospice;
- N Brown - Coulby Newham Litter Pickers;
- J Bryson - Regional Services Manager, Recovery Connections;
- W Cai - Sunshine Project North East;
- L Farrow - Trinity Holistic Centre;
- N Gibany - Nite Light CIC;
- L Grabham - Head of Strategic Commissioning and Procurement, Middlesbrough Council;
- K Jackson - Public Health Practitioner, Middlesbrough Council;
- E Jeffries - Richmond Fellowship;
- N Jones - Nuvo Wellbeing;
- T Jones - Middlesbrough Sportability Club;
- S Kearney - The Hope Foundation;
- M Landers - Tees Valley Community Asset Preservation Trust;
- B Major - The Junction Foundation;
- K May - Operations Manager, Streets Ahead for Information;
- V McClean - Easterside Community Hub Crafts Group;
- N McGough - Teesside and District Society for the Blind;
- M McGrother - Element 1 CIC;
- L O'Brien - Carers Together;
- A Puri - Aapna Services;
- J Rock - Matrix Neurological;
- J Savage - Head of Resident and Business Support, Middlesbrough Council;
- E Scollay - Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration;
- P Shepherd - MFC Foundation;
- S Stevens - Senior's Friendship Group;
- R Tomlinson - Linx Youth Project;
- M Turley - Teesside Ability Support Centre; and
- H Whyman - MAIN.

ACRONYMS

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

- BAME - Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic;
- CAB - Citizen's Advice Bureau;
- CQC - Care Quality Commission;
- DWP - Department for Work and Pensions;
- ESF - European Social Fund;
- FIG - Financial Inclusion Group;

- HAF - Holiday Activities Fund;
- MVDA - Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency;
- PIP - Personal Independence Payment; and
- VCS - Voluntary and Community Sector.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- Reports to, and minutes of, the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel meetings held on 2 March 2022, 30 March 2022 and 7 September 2022.
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COUNCILLOR JIM PLATT
CHAIR OF THE ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

PANEL MEMBERSHIP

Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), D Davison, T Higgins, D Jones, G Purvis, D Rooney, R Sands and J Walker.

Contact Officer:

Chris Lunn
Democratic Services Officer
Legal and Governance Services
Telephone: 01642 729742 (direct line)
Email: chris_lunn@middlesbrough.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Survey questions sent to VCS organisations

Q1.	<p>Please provide a brief description of the services that your organisation currently provides:</p>
Q2.	<p>Please outline the type of support your organisation currently receives from the Council (including financial assistance and other resources):</p>
Q3.	<p>Does your organisation currently receive any grants / funding from other sources (e.g. National Lottery)?</p>
Q4a.	<p>During the pandemic, was your organisation able to continue supporting local communities by adopting new ways of working (for example, moving from face-to-face to virtual meetings and telephone appointments)?</p>
Q4b.	<p>If yes, please explain the new methods adopted and describe the resource implications:</p>
Q4c.	<p>What support did your organisation receive during the pandemic and from whom (e.g. Council, partner VCS organisations, etc.)?</p>
Q5.	<p>In thinking about Covid recovery and the services your organisation delivers, is there anything you would want the Council to provide that is not being provided to you already?</p>
Q6a.	<p>In general, to what extent do you feel supported by the Council?</p> <p>Please tick the appropriate box:</p> <p>Very well <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Well <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Indifferent <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Not Well <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Very poor <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Q6b.	<p>If 'Not Well' or 'Very Poor', please explain how this could be improved:</p>

Appendix 2: New / revised approaches to working implemented by VCS organisations during the pandemic and their resource implications.

Method Adopted	Resource Implication (where indicated)
<p>Shift to virtual support and use of technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual services: use of Zoom / MS Teams / Facetime, etc. for online meetings; teaching and physical exercise sessions; therapeutic sessions • Creative ways employed to manage activity – virtual performances from domestic settings to offering a staggered hybrid approach as ‘normality’ began to emerge • Creation of a YouTube channel • Delivery of community sessions for care home and disability organisations online • Development of private online Facebook groups so participants / service users could share updates and resources and ask questions to help boost their social wellbeing and connectivity during periods of isolation • Online 1:1 support to clients and professionals • Online campaign work • Use of mobile phones for calls and texts • Increased use of tablets to ‘stay connected’ • Website creation and increased use of social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to online training was very resource intense and staff had to work hard to create quality online learning materials • Cost implication for investing in new multimedia equipment and providing broadband to some homes • Training and additional supervision for staff / volunteers and also extended working hours (e.g. to accommodate out of hours sessions) • One VCS organisation reports that it took two weeks to pull together online group work • IT support – some residents required telephone training / support; support also provided in gardens / outdoor spaces • Classes and workshops updated on a monthly basis • Addressing client access digitally (addressed through grants) • Delivery of online therapeutic services was challenging as no one had ever delivered in this format, so national guidelines were few and far between (although safeguarding and guidance were established quickly) • Ongoing data access for clients is an ongoing pressure as grants have now been depleted • Cost implication for investing in devices, but grant funding did cover in most cases
<p>Shift to telephone support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone contact and development of Helplines (1:1 telephone support) / appointment service • Launch of new services, including ‘wellbeing call services’ (in addition to listening and offering support, the Council’s pandemic services were publicised, and referrals to other services made as appropriate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased training for staff • Increased resource planning around availability of team members for appointments / coordinating work whilst working from home
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially distanced ‘garden gate’ / outdoor visits and funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When staffing was low due to COVID, this could not always be done

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of outdoor community space for meetings, such as community allotments • Outdoor coffee mornings where participants made / brought their own refreshments • A community garden project was developed to encourage people to get more active through volunteering post lockdown • Provision of 'old school' support – e.g. collecting shopping and prescriptions, doorstep visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased costs associated with travel and use of private vehicles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working / membership of 'COVID Champions Network' • Establishment of a 'Community Connectors Group' – the purpose of this was to convey information across a particular patch / locality; the group operates on a recurring six-person contact basis, i.e. initial contact is made with six people, who then subsequently link to a further six people, who then subsequently link to a further six people and so on. The group continues to grow. 	<p>None identified</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of PPE equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to produce new risk assessments in line with government regulations / guidance to keep users safe • None to organisation as provided by Council / MVDA
<p>Establishment of delivery services for food and other goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery service – e.g. food (home cooked meals as well as packaged foods), craft and sensory equipment, sports equipment, workbooks and learning resources • Preparation of 'coffee morning in a bag' bags and delivery to elderly people in community once a month • Delivered 'goodie bags' of activities and equipment to keep people occupied and ensure information shared • Establishment of a food bank to collect and distribute food donations to vulnerable adults forced to self- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of vehicle(s) meant increased mileage, fuel costs and wear and tear • Not able to share craft equipment in a group setting, so available monies and small grant from Ageing Better was quickly used on purchasing items for delivery • Delivery of food packages – employees could not go shopping and deliver together so mainly left to one person • Increased costs – 'coffee morning in a bag' bags (treats, activities, home baking and a personal card) cost circa. £120-£150 per month (obtained Council grant)

<p>isolate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working to support meal distribution and delivery 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised letters / correspondence to reduce feelings of loneliness / isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time – longer to produce personalised letters than generic ones Increased postage costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of personalised workbooks Provision of a plastic box filled with games and other resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing and copying costs quadrupled Increased paper consumption Time to put the resources together Cost to purchase boxes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers and staff working from home / office closures One organisation closed the office for a three-week period, reopening with COVID restrictions in place. This being the case, it was the only centre open for face-to-face contact for a specific period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost to purchase mobile internet devices; PAYG SIM cards; Wi-Fi signal boosters; additional laptops and tablets Challenges around ensuring data compliance – needed to train / refresh staff on requirements Residents' needs becoming more complex The need to provide support placed stress and pressure on staff Some staff furloughed

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**THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS)
IN SUPPORTING ADULT SOCIAL CARE (WITH A FOCUS ON COVID-19 AND RECOVERY)
- ACTION PLAN**

24 JANUARY 2023

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	POST TITLE	BUDGET COST	TIMESCALE
a) That exploratory work be undertaken to identify opportunities for more collaborative working between the Council and the VCS, particularly in relation to the availability of meeting space. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.	This recommendation will be addressed as part of recommendation “b”.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration	None identified at this time.	End July 2023
b) That the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration works with LMT to explore the most effective form of relationship management between the Council and the VCS. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.	The Director of ASC&HI will programme an LMT discussion to re-affirm or further develop the Council’s approach to relationship management with the VCS then implement the outcome as required.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration	None identified at this time.	End July 2023
c) That a link between the VCS and the Council’s Emergency Planning Team be established to assist with policy/practice statement development. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.	The Director of ASC&HI will work with the Council’s lead for emergency planning to establish and implement a link with MVDA.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration	None identified at this time.	End June 2023

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EXECUTIVE 24 JANUARY 2023

EXEMPTION OF 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 ITEMS 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.

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

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