

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive Member for Young Adults and Democratic Engagement

DATE OF MEETING: 18 January 2023

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity within my portfolio including performance against strategic priorities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priority 1: To increase levels of Youth Engagement across the town on a wide range of issues and ensure that ideas and concerns raised by young people are at the forefront of everything that we do as a Council.

Update: Work continues to engage with young people across the town. I have begun visiting schools throughout Middlesbrough, discussing a wide variety of topics depending on the respective age of the children/ young people. For younger students, much of the discussion has centered around the importance of participating within school council and the importance of following ambitions/ aspirations. For some of the older students discussions have mostly focused on some key issues locally and nationally such as the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on education.

When considering young people's priorities in the town currently, there appears to be a correlation with the current national trend. The environment and mental health consistently feature as some of the greatest concerns for young people. This is further echoed in discussions with our MYPs (Members of Youth Parliament) who have also identified similar concerns.

The Council continues to move towards making Middlesbrough Council a Carbon Neutral organisation by 2029 and making Middlesbrough as a town net Carbon Neutral 10 years later. If members wish to know more about how this will be done, I would encourage them to peruse our Green Strategy. Poor Mental health is an issue which has only been on the increase in recent years and nationally we need to do more. At a local level, the Council remains committed to directing residents towards appropriate resources and further guidance can be found on our website.

DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES

Directorate Priority 1: To consider how we might boost political and democratic participation across the town by ensuring residents have the opportunity to take part in consultations and are aware of them. In addition, the Council is consistently encouraging residents to register to vote and consider standing in elections themselves.

Update: The current budget proposals went out for public consultation on November 30th 2022 and will continue for a Seven week period to ensure all members of the public have the opportunity to comment on the current proposals. A summary regarding the level of response and nature of suggestions will be provided in the next full Council report. I would like to encourage all members to inform residents of this process and be sure to put forward their own thoughts and ideas as soon as possible- the more input we have on the budget the better.

Regarding the recent annual canvass undertaken by the Council the following data is now available:

Total Properties Canvassed: 60732
Properties receiving a personal visit: 13606
Total households reporting a change: 7180
Total electors added: 5716
Total electors deleted: 6805

This data shows the importance of our annual canvass. It enables us as a local authority to update our register and confirm who is living at a given property. It also provides us with the opportunity to get people placed onto the electoral register so they are eligible to vote.

Members have recently received an update regarding the Elections Act and some notable upcoming changes. If members of the public wish for a more extensive update then please contact myself or our electoral services department. The key point to note however is that Voter ID will now be required at all future elections and a national campaign was launched on Monday 9th January to raise awareness of this fact. We as an authority will also be launching a variety of campaigns targeting local residents and stakeholders in the coming months.

HIGHLIGHTS

I recently had the pleasure of visiting several of our Community Learning hubs which offer a range of fantastic services. Lingfield Choosing Pathways is aimed at 16-19 year olds and helps provide a wide variety of qualifications and skills ranging from Maths and English qualifications to employability, personal and social development. Our Multi Media exchange enables adults to gain vital skills necessary to succeed in the world of work. It was truly brilliant to meet so many Council staff who genuinely care for those they teach. They are helping to make such a huge difference to both the lives of the individuals who are taking part and to Middlesbrough as a town.

THE TIME AHEAD

Moving forward, my intention is to continue actively engaging with young people across the town by visiting schools and colleges and ensuring the thoughts and concerns of our young people are directly considered in all decisions the Council makes. Young people fundamentally have just as much a stake in the success of our town and wider area as anyone, and sadly too often their ideas are not given the consideration they deserve.

In addition to this the Council will begin to develop a range of initiatives to help mitigate some of the challenges which will invariably arise due to changes in national legislation surrounding upcoming elections. We as members also have a role to play in this and we need to actively start promoting these changes through our social media forums and when canvassing.

As a final note, members may also be aware that there is an upcoming information session for prospective Councillor Candidates on Wednesday 25th January. This should be a hugely beneficial session for anyone wishing to become a Councillor and potentially considering standing in the upcoming May election. It would be appreciated if members could help relay this information to residents.

NAME Luke Mason
DATE 10/01/23