

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Eric Polano

**DATE OF MEETING:** 29 March 2022

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:** *Consider Potential for Boho Digital Expansion (Boho X)*

**Update:** The works undertaken by Northern Power Grid that have delayed the completion of Boho X have now been concluded. As the power supply to the building is now in place, the final fitting and testing of the internal systems is underway, as is the final stages of the internal and external works required to hand the building over to the future tenant. The building is scheduled for practical completion on May 16<sup>th</sup>, upon which the tenant will commence their own internal fit out.

**Strategic Priority:** *Open Three Entertainment Facilities Within Captain Cook Square*

**Update:** The long awaited opening of anchor tenant Level X went ahead recently. The new operation provides 70,000 sq ft of entertainment space including Virtual Golf, Karting, VR, Bowling, Arcade, Pool, darts, gaming, bar and restaurant. The opening on 23<sup>rd</sup> February marks the start of the area's transformation into a magnet for visitors of all ages.

**Strategic Priority:** *Protect and Celebrate Heritage Through Marketing and Comms Strategies And Complete Planned Work To The Captain Cook Pub*

**Update:** Following a successful restoration of the historic fabric of the listed building, the Captain Cook Pub is now ready to enter the market to seek expressions of interest for a freehold sale. The historic building has been on the market since 27<sup>th</sup> February and information is available on the Council website. Interested parties will be assessed on the offer price and an appreciation of how the proposed use would be of benefit to the wider aspirations of the Boho Zone, and develop a new residential community at Middlehaven. Potential uses could include, office space, bar / bistro, serviced accommodation or cultural facility. Following a period of analysis of offers, the Executive will be engaged to decide on their preferred disposal option.

## DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES

**Directorate Priority:** *Commence Programme of Investment in Middlesbrough Rail Station and the Area Around It*

**Update:** Planning permission has been granted for the development of a new leisure venue under the A66, on the site of the former Slam Nightclub. The Stack venue will open in Spring/Summer upon the completion of maintenance work to the columns supporting the A66. Stack operate a number of venues around the country using shipping containers to provide a variety of street food, music and entertainment. Proposals to integrate the development into the newly improved public realm at Exchange Square have been agreed with Historic England.

**Directorate Priority:** *Deliver Middlesbrough's Towns Fund Programme (Centre Square 6)*

**Update:** The third of the new state-of-the-art office facilities has reached practical completion in preparation for its new tenants. Centre Square 6, on the former Melrose House site, adds over 40,000 sq ft of Grade A office accommodation to Middlesbrough's professional services market. Already having the benefit of a lease from insurance giant Axa, the site will host up to 400 jobs in central Middlesbrough – supporting businesses and securing jobs for local residents. The £12m facility has been funded by Tees Valley Combined Authority with a critical £2m intervention from Middlesbrough's Towns Fund / Town Investment Plan. A short period for fit out will be followed by Axa's occupation in summer 2023.

**Directorate Priority:** *Deliver Middlesbrough's Future High Street Fund Programme (Church House)*

**Update:** Funding agreements have now been signed for the redevelopment of Church House and Albert Road properties for residential uses. As part of Middlesbrough's Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Programme. The project will transform a key property which dominates Middlesbrough's skyline and provide new and appealing accommodation for more people to live and work in central Middlesbrough. The £11m plus investment will create around 100 new apartments and be a welcome addition to the stylish Baker and Bedford Street area and a revitalised Albert Road. Final preparations are being made over the next few months with a construction programme targeting a 12 months conversion from summer 2023 to summer 2024.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Treasury Round Table Discussion:** The Economic Growth Service hosted a round table discussion with Treasury colleagues on 10<sup>th</sup> February. This event marked the start of an increasingly close and inclusive relationship with Whitehall Departments and the Treasury Campus at Darlington. The event was an opportunity for the Treasury to engage with the Local Authority and key business leaders from Middlesbrough's retail, hospitality, leisure and associated supply chains. Businesses and Council Officers outlined the key challenges facing the sector and considered a number of factors which would better support the business ecosystem. Treasury colleagues will take this detailed information and feed it into the processes to develop future policies and interventions.

Additional target sectors, and their specific challenges, will be considered in future sessions.

### **Rio Cantina**

In another vote of confidence for Middlesbrough's Café Culture, Rio Brazilian Steakhouse, on Albert Road, is seeking permission to extend its premises licence to include the vacant (former Permanent House) unit next door. The owners plan to open up a new coffee shop called Rio Cantina that will serve drinks, breakfasts and lunches. If Licensing approval is secured, work should start in May on the expansion with the new venue opening in mid-July.

<b>THE TIME AHEAD</b>
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**Changing Places Toilets:** Funding has been secured and designs finalised for a Changing Places Toilet facility to be installed in the Cleveland Centre. This follows successful installations in Albert Park and North Ormesby Resource Centre. Having additional and accessible facilities in the Town Centre are a key consideration for visitors and this will ensure that there is a clean and inclusive facility, for all. The final design will seek approval in Q1 of 23/24 and will be delivered over summer 2023.

Eric Polano  
March 2023