

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR PETER GAVIGAN

DATE OF MEETING: 18 September 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: *We will work closely with local communities to protect our green spaces and make sure that our roads, streets and open spaces are well-designed, clean and safe.*

Update: Green Strategy

1. We supported Thirteen Group's week of action in Pallister Park/Berwick Hills recently, by engaging with lots of residents giving advice on recycling and waste issues. We also attended Easterside Fun Day with our recycling roadshow, this event was extremely well attended, with Mayor Cook making a guest appearance.
2. We continue to work closely with Cumbria Waste to get involved in the waste sampling process for our dry recycling collections. This process gives us a real insight into the kind of waste contamination we are facing, during our domestic recycling collections operations, and the areas/wards we need to target.
3. We have some fantastic allotments sites which are all at their peak this time of year and are looking great. Unfortunately, some of the sites have plots that are not in use and very overgrown, our first task is to audit all the sites and attempt to get most of these plots back into use as soon as possible. This will reduce vermin issues, ASB and provide an income stream for the authority.
4. Most of you will be aware that our Environment Sustainability Manager, Simon Blenkinsop, has left the council. Following a lengthy recruitment process, we are delighted to announce that Sam Garside has been appointed into this role. Sam has a wealth of environmental knowledge, but more importantly has a great passion for everything Green & Blue. Sam's workload is extremely diverse & has an impact on all corners of the council and town, as we strive toward achieve carbon neutrality.

5. Work continues as part of the Green Strategy and some current initiatives taking place across the organisation include:
 - Exploring options for possible installation of solar PV panels on a Centre Square building.
 - Developing a Green/Blue Infrastructure checklist for new developments.
 - Delivering recycling roadshows across Middlesbrough and working with schools and community groups as part of the Waste and Recycling Education Awareness Programme to increase community awareness of recycling and associated environmental benefits.
 - Exploring options to maximise the You've Got This programme to increase physical activity for environmental and health benefits including implementation of the community cycling and allotment regeneration projects.
 - Working with Middlesbrough Environment City's 'Climate Action Middlesbrough' programme to identify actions we can take to support carbon reduction across local cultural organisations/venues.
 - Developing a long-term Food Strategy for the town in conjunction with key partner organisations.
 - Working with Tees Valley Combined Authority and Teesside University to promote opportunities through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support businesses to decarbonise.

Update: Transport and Infrastructure

6. The Council Road Safety team led a 3 day event, which was held within the Cleveland Centre, supported by Eden Mobility, Skinnergate Cycles, Sustrans and Middlesbrough Environment City. This was an opportunity for the public to engage the team, and the various safety issues discussed including:
 - The rules surrounding e-bikes
 - The current e-scooter trial
 - Bikeability/Pedestrian training opportunities which the council promotes
 - School crossing patrol information
 - Active Travel Hub promotion regarding the newly opened hub which is managed and operated by Sustrans on behalf of TVCA.

Update: Carriageways

7. The first stages of the 2023-24 programme were awarded following a NEPO tender process in May, Phases 2 and 3 have also been procured through NEPO with works starting in early July 2023 with 46% of the planned carriageway resurfacing programme now complete.

Update: Flood Management

8. We continue to develop the Gully Smart Software and have undertaken the 2nd survey (between 9/5/2023 – 7/6/2023) of 25,000 highway gullies which has identified the current silt level and condition of each gully.
9. This information along with other data such as gritting routes, flood risk areas etc will be analysed and enable a risk-based approach to be taken in respect to gully cleaning and in turn identify a proactive gully cleaning program. We continue to work proactively on flood risk management through joint working with the EA and NWL. Which along with drainage surveys is increasing our knowledge of the network and improving the long-term planning and maintenance of gullies.

Update: Street Lighting

10. We have started the column replacement programme following conclusion of the structural and electrical testing that was carried out last year- 257 columns are due to be replaced this financial year and we have so far replaced 94 defective columns with the remainder to be completed before March 2024.

Update: Installations

11. The Transport and & Infrastructure service also recently completed new / upgraded infrastructure installations to ensure that the Town's infrastructure is as up to date as possible, providing best value:
 1. Upgraded PUFFIN crossing at Stokesley Road / The Grove – this was delivered to upgrade existing crossing to ensure this is safe following infrastructure being at end of life.
 2. Keith Road / Holmwood toucan upgrade – existing crossing upgrade to ensure this is safe following infrastructure being at end of life.
 3. New Zebra crossing at Homerton Road to serve Pallister Park Primary school – the installation was complete following speed surveys and Councillor/Officer suggestion to allow safe crossing for children at this key location.
 4. New Toucan crossing at Low Lane / Municipal Golf course (NCN65) – works now on site, with anticipated completion in September. NCN65 is a major national cycle route. Previously, there was only a traffic island to assist cycles and pedestrians crossing the road. The island was not compliant with new regulations in terms of dimensions to accommodate a bicycle, so the new signals will provide a safe crossing opportunity using light control, eliminating the need for an island.

HIGHLIGHTS

5. I have visited Resolution House to meet key officers and had a tour of the site. This was both enjoyable and very informative.
6. I attend weekly Teams meetings with key officers to discuss contemporary issues and plan for the future.

7. I have attended a meeting with Middlesbrough Environment City and become better acquainted with the tremendous work that they do.
8. I attended a meeting with Tees Wildlife Trust which was very instructive.
9. We once again supported The Middlesbrough 10k run on Sunday 3rd September, by ensuring that the during/post cleansing is effective.

THE TIME AHEAD

Traffic Signals: Traffic Signal Junction upgrades 2023/24

10. Borough Road – Abingdon Road: Scheduled for October half term.

Pedestrian Crossing Upgrades:

11. Ormesby Road – Balmoral Road: Programmed for completion November 2023
Wilson Street – Sainsbury's: Programmed for completion November 2023.

Highways:

12. Verge works are complete on 5 of the 10 schemes planned for this financial year.
Footway works have been completed in 11 of the planned schemes.

Bridges and Structures – Transporter Bridge:

13. Transporter Bridge structural assessment ongoing. The Stage 1 analysis is already beginning to indicate several areas of overstress that are likely to need additional investigation. We are awaiting a revised scope of works from consultants Atkins.
14. A66 Station Viaduct - Column 20B - Contractor Volker Laser have started to construct their site compound and works are imminent to replace the column head and bearing and repair the beams in the area of the future Stack development.

A66 Column 20B:

15. Works have started on Borough Road Flyover which involves replacement of the bridge joints, resurfacing and re-waterproofing the bridge deck.
16. A66 Newport Interchange Bridges which involves repairing the bridge deck waterproofing and resurfacing of the whole bridge deck to tie in with other planned resurfacing on A66 Eastbound is scheduled to commence on Friday 8th September 2023.
17. We are in the process of completing the tender documents for repairs to: -
18. A174 Marton Interchange Overbridge which include replacing the bridge deck waterproofing and resurfacing, concrete repairs to the abutments and the

installation of suicide prevention parapets. We are also arranging further principal and general bridge inspections through a tender process via NEPO.

Outstanding Issues

Refuse and Recycling:

19. Some of our collection services have incurred some form of delays over the past couple of months. This is because of our Fleet Department struggling to recruit qualified mechanics. The greatest impact is on our Green waste collection service, whereby we have had to suspend the service for 1 week (Tues 29 Aug to Fri 1 Sept), to enable ourselves to catchup on the previous weeks collections. Following this, normal collections resumed the following week.
20. In early autumn, we are expecting delivery of a number of Refuse Collection Vehicles, which will greatly improve vehicle availability & reduce the pressures on both the collection service & our Fleet Department.

Area Care:

21. The second application of herbicide to Hard Surfaces is about to commence, however three of the four quads are currently in Fleet awaiting repair. We previously updated the Risk Assessment Action Register following an incident resulting in a quad operative being overturned in a failed vehicle theft attempt, this significant change was to have two or more quads working together (safety in numbers). As the incident has now been deemed an isolated event in which the perpetrators were identified and dealt with by the police we have reverted back to the old method of quad spraying which is one quad in each area. A personal safety toolbox talk along with handout information has been issued to all staff.
22. Grass cutting with the Ride on mowers is continuing, albeit at a slower rate due to machinery issues.
23. Preparations are underway for the start of the hedge cutting season after receiving the new tractor mounted flail unit. All relevant staff have received the appropriate training.

NAME: Cllr Peter Gavigan

DATE: 18 September 2023.