



**Elected Mayor and
Executive Member Reports
and additional Executive
decision information**

Council Meeting: 17 January 2024



INTRODUCTION

This document contains the Elected Mayor and Executive Member reports relevant to the Council meeting to be held on **17 January 2024**.

The booklet, in addition to containing details of Executive Member activities covering the period following the last Council meeting (section 1), also details those Executive decisions taken since the last booklet was published (section 2) together with those decisions planned to be taken from dispatch of this booklet up until the date of the Council meeting (section 3) and those decisions planned to be taken following the Council meeting (section 4).

The table at section 2 contains details of decisions taken by individual Executive Members, the full Executive, Executive Sub-Committees and Joint Archives Committee. The public reports that were considered are also available through the Modern Gov system.

The tables at section 3 and 4 contain details of the decisions to be taken by individual Executive Members, the full Executive, Executive Sub-Committees and Joint Archives Committee. Further details on key decisions that are to be taken can also be found on the Modern Gov Forward Plan.

The Elected Mayor and Executive Member reports and the additional decision-making information will hopefully assist Members when considering any questions they may have for Executive Members at Council, which can be asked within accordance of the Council's procedure rules.

Details of those decisions to be taken, as outlined in Section 3 and 4, may sometimes be subject to change (e.g., dates of meetings may alter). Members are therefore advised to check with the Democratic Services should they have an interest in specific issues.

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THE MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

COUNCIL MEETING: 17 JANUARY 2024

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SECTION 2 – Table of Executive decisions taken and that have been through the Call-In period, since the last booklet, published on 17 October 2023.

SECTION 3 – Table of Executive decisions planned to be taken from dispatch of this booklet up until the date of the Council meeting.

SECTION 4 – Table of Executive decisions planned to be taken following the Council meeting.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: MAYOR CHRIS COOKE

DATE OF MEETING: 17 January 2024

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: Ensuring equality of outcomes across wards, with a focus on health inequalities.

Public Health South Tees Strategy:

1. The Public Health Strategy is committed to preventing poor health, improving the health and wellbeing and tackling health inequality across the South Tees. The health of residents in the South Tees is generally below the England average with the levels of deprivation, individuals face a contributing factor. The strategy comprises of five programmes: creating environments for healthy food and physical activity, protecting health, preventing ill-health, reducing vulnerability at a population level and promoting positive mental health and emotional resilience.
2. Each programme is comprised of a comprehensive set of objectives and associated activities underpinned, by an expected time frame for delivery. By way of example, for the Emotional Health and Resilience programme incorporates a focus to prevent suicide and self harm. Activities related to this, will include management of Early Alert Process for suspected suicides and to provide timely postvention to those bereaved by suicide. This is very much a focus that is needed which was confirmed upon the visit that I undertook at the Headlight Project (as featured in my November Executive Member Report), where the devastating suicide rates within the North East were highlighted.
3. The strategy is bold, innovative and provides a vision for the much needed change to the health and wellbeing of Middlesbrough residents.

HIGHLIGHTS

Woodside dementia and wellbeing hub

4. The Woodside dementia and wellbeing hub supports people living with mild to moderate dementia, and their carers.
5. I visited the hub during the annual Christmas party where I met and talked to staff, service users and their respective carers. The hub has become incredibly important, in enabling individuals with dementia to be involved in stimulating activities and



provides a social outlet and community. Families who have relatives at differing stages of dementia utilise the hub to talk to other affected families as a way of supporting each other and providing candid advice.

6. I met with Margaret McGee (as pictured on the right) who made a significant donation, in memory of her late husband who attended the hub. The funds have created a new quiet room which I officially opened alongside Margaret. This quiet room provides, a tranquil safe space for individuals and families to reflect and de-stress.
7. During my visit, I had the pleasure of meeting the staff at the hub. Their passion, warmth and rapport with service users radiated through. The staff organise frequent raffles to funds the purchase of tea, coffee and biscuits so that the service remains free and accessible to all. They invite and welcome any donations and support people can offer.



In Out Of The Cold Event

8. On 18 December 2023, the Town Hall Crypt hosted the In Out Of The Cold Event. The event is co-ordinated by Accessing Change Together in Middlesbrough and aims to support those who are homeless or facing hardship. A diverse range of organisations were at the event including My Sisters Place, Depaul and The STAGES Academy.
9. Attendees were provided with a hot meal, access to winter clothes and toiletries along with, access to free podiatry and hairdressers services. Live music from local singer George Bailey and the Recovery Choir provided a welcoming and festive atmosphere.
10. The event also provided an invaluable opportunity, for organisations and groups to reach out to individuals that may otherwise, be isolated from the support available to them. I want to thank the dedicated staff, organisations and volunteers for making the event such a success.



EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

20 December 2023: Selective Landlord Licensing

11. Selective Landlord Licensing (SLL) are introduced to improve the private rented sector, so that the conditions that people live in are elevated. North Ormesby and Newport (divided into Newport 1 and Newport 2) were selected due to their low housing demand and the persistent anti-social behaviour, attributed to tenants (and/or visitors) of rented properties.
12. The SLL scheme in Newport 1 has seen significant improvements including:
 - (i) House prices increasing in value
 - (ii) A reduction in empty properties

- (iii) An increase in private rented properties subject to a housing standards inspection
- (iv) Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour through low, medium and high interventions
- (v) Reduction in personal and nuisance antisocial behaviour incidents

13. The scheme in Newport 1 is due to cease on 12 June 2024 however, the delivery of the scheme was hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic and there remains scope for further improvements. In light of this, the Executive have extended the scheme for a further five years to maximise the benefits to the Newport Community.

20 December 2023: South Tees Changing Futures Programme

14. South Tees Changing Futures supports adults enduring multiple disadvantages in both Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland Council. Middlesbrough Council was successful in its bid to funding bodies which will allow South Tees Changing Future Programme to be extended for a further year. The successful bid will allow additional activities and capacity to support vulnerable people through:

- (i) Improving wider recovery support
- (ii) Supporting women who have experienced/or are at risk of exploitation.
- (iii) Improving housing support

15. The funding will have a direct positive impact on some of the most vulnerable and complex individuals in Middlesbrough.

20 December 2023: Council Plan 2024- 2027

16. The Executive endorsed the Council Plan that contains the strategic aims, ambitious and outcomes which is subject to agreement from full Council. One of the aims is to create “A Healthy Place” through prioritising health inequalities, improving our environment, protecting inclusivity and reducing poverty. There will be an emphasis on our Family Hub model, Public Health Strategy, Green Strategy and respective partners to improve health outcomes in Middlesbrough.

17. There will be a range of metrics used to assess whether the aims are being met. These include tracking the engagement in our Family Hub service, closing the life expectancy gap between Middlesbrough and the national average and increasing the percentage of those considered as “active”. The Council Plan sets out a clear roadmap that centres health and wellbeing as a priority for Middlesbrough Council.

NAME: Mayor Chris Cooke

DATE: 17/01/2024

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EDUCATION AND CULTURE

DATE OF MEETING 17 January 2024

1. 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

- Improve outcomes for children and young people
- Support Cultural assets and events

Education:

- Supporting schools to improve the attendance of all children, particularly those who are most vulnerable.
- Increasing the number of SEND CYP in mainstream settings.
- Improve early years parenting support and the home learning experience to support children's learning, development, and school readiness.
- Reduce the number of children and young people who are suspended or excluded.

Culture:

- Encouragement of grass roots participation
- Increase income generation events at the town hall
- consolidate Museum offer

HIGHLIGHTS

EDUCATION

2. The council received an Outstanding report from Ofsted on SEND provision. This is a fantastic result for everyone in the council and a testament to the partnership who have worked extremely hard to make this result possible. Thank you.
3. The council has since received a letter from Minister for Children, Families and Wellbeing, David Johnson MP. The Minister has asked for effective ways we can share our best practice with other local area leaders, the Department and NHS England.
4. Inspectors found that:

“The local area partnership’s special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed”.

5. The report highlighted three areas for improvement, which includes:
 - Continuing to implement our strategy to reduce suspensions.
 - Strengthening the systems and processes for identification of children and young people’s needs within the learning disability pathway.
 - Continuing to strengthen the quality of EHC Plans and timeliness when issuing EHC Plans after annual reviews.
6. These improvements are taking place, as is an update on our local area partnership SEND Strategic Plan and exclusion rates.
7. Schools and teachers are the bedrock of our communities, and we will continue to support them in the best way possible to remove any barriers to learning that our children may face.
8. I had the pleasure of visiting several schools just before Christmas. Sunnyside Academy in Coulby Newham invited me for their Christmas sing-along, and I was incredibly impressed with the way the school was run. Kindness, caring and sensitivity (as well as fun) was shown throughout the school from the Headteacher, and right the way down to the students themselves. The inclusion of all children in the school was an inspiration and I’d like to thank the head teacher, staff, students and the Unison Convener for inviting me.
9. Linthorpe Primary also kindly invited me to visit their Christmas Extravaganza and it was an absolute delight to participate in the songs and see the choir and students so confident in their performances. I would also like to thank the school’s sustainability squad for their continued work in making the school environmentally friendly. The work they are doing with their teachers will make a huge difference to the school.
10. Trinity Catholic College also held their Christmas performance which was incredibly professional. The standard in the performing arts exhibited was amazing and the students and teachers did a phenomenal job.
11. I look forward to visiting our other amazing schools in 2024.

Culture

12. The Dorman Museum Lego Exhibition (Brick by Brick) did extremely well and welcomed 4182 paying visitors in to the exhibition which brought an additional £13,173 of revenue in to the council.

13. The Town Hall is exploring additional income generation. Some of this has already started with the portable Town Hall Bar
14. In the run up to and over Christmas the events team organised and helped organise the Christmas Light Switch On, Nightfall at Stewart Park, Orange Pip Christmas (which got moved to 30 December due to weather conditions on the original date).
15. In 2024 we are looking forward to welcoming RunThrough to Middlesbrough.
16. RunThrough, with support from Middlesbrough council are bringing a Half Marathon and Junior race to Middlesbrough in March this year. I am delighted to welcome them and look forward to this being a regular event alongside the already established 5 and 10K runs.
17. The Dorman Museum also won the award for Best Arts and Education Partnership at the North East Culture Awards 2023 for the British Museum in Your Classroom project. They have done phenomenally well and absolutely deserved to win.
18. Middlesbrough Theatre hosted an incredibly successful panto, Cinderella, which has received great reviews from audiences and critics alike. The theatre team under David Lindsey do an amazing job.
19. The work of Teesside Archives featured in The National Archives' *Year in Archives* review with a special case study on the Tees Works project. You can find the article using the following link [Case studies - Archives sector \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/casestudies/archivessector) then clicking on the 'Trust' tab.
20. Work is also progressing with the Planning Team to write a culture policy to include within the new Local Plan, the ambitions of the Middlesbrough Cultural Partnership Creative Vision (2023-2033) including the identification of focal areas across the town for cultural activity and participation.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: CHILDREN'S SERVICES – COUNCILLOR, ZAFAR UDDIN

DATE OF MEETING: 17.01.2024

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 AND UPDATES:

We will show Middlesbrough's children that they matter and work to make our town safe and welcoming and to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

➤ **Early Help:**

1. The Early Help Service 'Stronger Families' provides support to families in Middlesbrough who have reached a threshold whereby the family are experiencing multiple and complex issues. The Family Practitioners work with the whole family to create a Family Plan and using a strength-based approach set goals with the family to improve outcomes. Early Help also involves other services and partners, who can provide help and support to the family to prevent problems from escalating to statutory intervention.
2. Children, young people and families are allocated daily into the Early Help Service from our Multi Agency Childrens Hub and are contacted within 3 days of allocation. This timely response ensures that families engage with Early Help at the time when they need support most and children are seen on a regular basis, so that our work is focussed on the voice of children. The Early Help Service remains stable in terms of staffing and all teams are performing well overall, so children benefit from consistent and strong relationships with their Family Practitioners.
3. The proportion of children supported under Early Help has increased over the last 12-month in Middlesbrough. During December 2023 over 100 children have been identified to step down from statutory intervention to the Stronger Families service.

➤ **Multi-Agency Children's Hub (MACH) and Assessment:**

4. Within the MACH and Assessments Service we have appointed the new permanent Head of Service, Nicki Saunders. We are currently reviewing the demand in the front door services and an Improvement Consultant, Brian Relph, has started in post who will lead on an establishment review for Childrens Social Care. Regular audits are taking place in the Assessments Service and a referral clinic will commence in January 2024 focussing on the contacts received by the MACH.

Monthly MACH Strategic Board meetings are held with key partners to support, improve and develop multi-agency working.

5. The Assessments Team have continued to some changes in staffing. There is currently a recruitment drive to recruit more permanent members of staff to replace the current reliance on agency staff. There continues to be a focus on improving performance and practice, with regular support, supervision and management oversight.

➤ **Safeguarding & Care Planning/Children with Disabilities:**

6. We have recently appointed a temporary Head of Service in this service area, and a new permanent Head of Service is due to start in post in January 2024. Several case audits have been undertaken and as a result, a number of children have been identified to step down to Stronger Families. Safeguarding continues to be busy with a high number of care proceedings which are due to conclude between now and February 2024.
7. We have recently held our first Private Fostering Panel to consider children who are subject to private fostering arrangements. We are currently updating our Private Fostering Statement, which we plan to promote to raise awareness of private fostering. Training will also be delivered, with some champions developed in the teams who will be the 'go-to' for advice and guidance where Private Fostering Arrangements are in place.

➤ **Fostering Services:**

8. By the end of December 2023, we are on track to have approved 14 new fostering households with a further 3 to be approved by February 2024. Our new resource worker is getting excellent feedback from children and carers on the work she is doing with them. We aim to combine fostering and residential training to give more opportunities to staff and carers, as well as introducing trauma-informed support.

➤ **Children Looked After (CLA):**

9. Staffing recruitment and retention continues to be a significant challenge within the Children Looked After service. We have recently appointed two permanent social workers and there remains a strong focus on recruiting to this area, as there are a high number of vacancies within the service. We have recently appointed a temporary Head of Service across CLA, Pathway and Leaving care. We do have some performance issues within the CLA service however this will remain a key focus for improvement. An Improvement Consultant commenced in December 2023 to review all high-cost placements.

➤ **Residential, Supported Accommodation, Resource and Care Leavers:**

10. One of our children's homes has had an Assurance Inspection and we are awaiting the publication of the report. Several Independent Visitor reports have been received recently which provide positive feedback. Residential staff continue to work hard to keep young people within our community. A recruitment campaign is under way to

increase staffing at one home so that more young people can be supported in Middlesbrough.

THE TIME AHEAD

Review of high-cost external placements:

11. Middlesbrough Council Children's services are currently undertaking regular reviews of our external residential and fostering placements, with a view to reducing high-cost placements and bringing back children and young people nearer to their homes, families and friends and meet their best potentials by utilising local residential placements, foster carers and connected person's foster families.

SHiFT Proposal:

12. I would like to mention that the Council Children's Services are looking to work with a charity organisation SHiFT in Partnership. 'SHiFT exists to break the destructive cycle of children and young people caught up in, or at risk of crime. We seek to transform policy and practice in how young people in these circumstances are seen and supported'.

Executive:

13. The Executive has recently met, and:

- Approved the proposal for the partnership with SHiFT and the opportunity this presents to offer intensive multidisciplinary support for the most vulnerable children caught in a cycle of crime and exploitation in the area.
- Authorised receipt of grant funding to the Council from SHiFT sourced from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities totalling £600,000 over three years. Funding will be received on signature of a Partnership Agreement with SHiFT, the timeline for which is March/April 2024.
- Approved match investment from the Council to enable the creation of the new SHiFT Practice totalling £556,347 over three years. This will be approval in principle for inclusion in the 2024/25 to 2026/27 MTFP and to be funded as a transformation initiative from Flexible Use of Capital Receipts. The initiative will be included in the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts strategy which will be tabled for Council approval in February 2024

14. Finally, I continued to liaise with our Virtual School Team, Children with Disabilities, Fostering Team, and Adoption Tees Valley (ATV) sharing and discussing relevant issues as and when needed.

NAME: Cllr Zafar Uddin

DATE: 17.01.2024.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY SAFETY – CLLR JANET THOMPSON

DATE OF MEETING: 17 January 2024

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

HIGHLIGHTS

Christmas events at Hubs and Libraries

1. Throughout the month of December Hub and Library staff have delivered a host of activities linked to Christmas and the festive season, engaging hundreds of the town's residents.

Cause Hamper appeal

2. Hub and Libraries staff worked with Cause Foundation after the charity needed a base in Middlesbrough to collate and make up Christmas Hampers as part of their annual appeal. Working with the Foundation over this period has led them to taking up more permanent space within MyPlace.



MyPlace

3. Residents of Brownlea care home visited the Christmas Dementia Café on Friday 15th December. It was lovely with lots of Christmas treats and songs. Two of their residents also gave an impromptu performance.
4. On Thursday 14th December service users enjoyed a Pantomime when the cast of Jack & the Beanstalk visited. Over seventy people attended the performance.

5. MyPlace also hosted its first ever wedding reception booking in December with more interest and bookings being taken for the New Year.

Thorntree Hub

6. Some of the fantastic Christmas activities at Thorntree have included Christmas Craft sessions, a children's party with Santa giving every child a gift and a surprise visit from the Grinch!

7. Tesco also helped with donations toward gifts, positively impacting 18 local families.

Acklam Library

8. On the 14th December the first of Acklam's Christmas parties was for the Rhyme Time babies and toddlers. This included a visit by Santa in their lovely grotto and a cake topper workshop.



9. There was also a host of activity at our other sites across the town including a wreath making session at Marton Library and star making at the Hemlington Christmas Fayre.



Library Update

Aspen

10. The new Community Hub & Library website, funded through our successful bid to LibraryOn, was successfully launched on the 15th of November 2023. This has been well received by our customers. Our entire stock is appearing side-by-side for the first time online, and we expect this to be both physical and digital.

11. During 2024, we plan to promote many of the benefits of Aspen to our customers to highlight the features of the system, demonstrating additional functionality beyond the catalogue. We are using the latest version of Aspen which provides us with a wealth of additional features that will assist us to further develop this modern fit-for-purpose website.
12. The new site will become the digital gateway to our services and showcase what Stronger Communities offers to partners and the public.
13. Key emphasis will be on our:
 - Accessible Services (e.g. housebound deliveries, eMagazines, eBooks and eAudio)
 - Venue & Room hire
 - Digital Services (e.g. Driving Theory Test online)
 - Local & Family History services (e.g. Reference Library & Ancestry Online)
 - Programme of Community Activities, Health support plus Advice services across our venues.
 - Literary programmes and promotion of reading for leisure.



Central Library Refurbishment

14. Central Library closed for major refurbishment works on Monday 4th December.
15. Alternate arrangements have been made for access to library services, during the closure, for example a click and collect service, operating from the Town Hall, drop off facilities for returned books at the Town Hall and Mima and a new library facility at Newport, and North Ormesby Library opening an extra day during the week, further details below. The service is currently looking at how limited access may be provided to Reference Materials.
16. Where possible furniture will be reused and offered to other sites, for example a large seating unit, will be re-sited at Newport Hub, and the live tree will have a new home at Hemlington Hub.

'Click & Collect' at the Town Hall

17. From the 8th of January 2024 you can order items over the phone to be picked up at the Town Hall. Our staff will put together a selection of books and let you know when they are ready for collection. You can also order items by emailing us your

requests or reserving books directly through our website:
libraries.middlesbrough.gov.uk

18. From January 15th 2024, there will be a new small library offer in Newport plus extended opening hours in North Ormesby from the 5th January.

Operational Community Safety

19. The Neighbourhood Safety Wardens issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to motorists who break the rules. The Council enforces waiting and loading restrictions to:

- Improve road safety
- Reduce congestion
- Support the local economy
- Improve access to public transport
- Reduce commuter parking in residential areas
- Improve accessibility for people with disabilities

20. To support the work of the wardens we have a team of 6 dedicated Neighbourhood Safety Officers who take positive action against perpetrators and adopt a problem-solving approach to tackle issues that present within their ward areas.

21. During the reporting period the Neighbourhood Safety Officers had to investigate approximately 80 incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and community related problems which included supporting 21 victims across the borough. The team have progressed several actions against ASB perpetrators and some examples of this work can be seen in the good news stories below. We are currently managing more than 170 perpetrators within Middlesbrough. In the reporting period the team have carried out in excess of 650 positive actions within communities. We are now in the process of using community protection notices to take positive action against individuals who blight our communities. We have made over 40 referrals with intelligence to Police and into support services which include adults and children's social care for vulnerable people. The Neighbourhood Safety Service in the reporting period have dealt with 1075 service requests. The leading category for the service area for this month were reports of fly-tipping and waste related matters at 478 service requests which is a decrease of 7.4% when compared to October 2023. ASB at 207 service requests which is a decrease of 12.6% when compared to October 2023.

22. We dealt with 166 requests relating to untaxed and abandoned vehicles, which resulted in 10 vehicles being seized. We also responded to 52 requests relating to stray dogs/animal related issues. During November we also utilised PSPO powers on 4 occasions for breaches of the order, with one fixed penalty notice being issued.

23. The Environmental Wardens have issued a total of 7 fixed penalty notices in the month of November for environmental related offences. The team have also issued a total of 30 legal Notices for an array of Environmental and ASB offences. We also

have 10 legal files for environmental and ASB related offences with our legal services team for prosecution.

24. Please see below table showing total service requests undertaken by the Neighbourhood Safety Team for the month of November 2023. The table shows category type of incident/ report and each ward area.

Ward	ASB Issues	Stray Dogs	PSPO	Fly Tipping/ Enviro Reports	Vehicle Related Issues	Criminal Related issues	Proactive hotspot Patrols	Previous Month	Total	Difference From October 23
Central	90	6	4	68	37	9	53	297	267	-30
Newport	31	8	0	84	24	2	7	146	156	+10
Park	10	7	0	40	12	1	13	72	83	+11
Coulby Newham	2	1	0	14	3	0	0	32	20	-12
Stainton & Thornton	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	3	0
Hemlington	13	3	0	24	0	3	8	37	51	+14
Marton East	7	0	0	2	1	0	0	18	10	-8
Marton West	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	2	7	+5
Nunthorpe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0
North Ormesby	4	3	0	38	2	1	1	74	49	-25
Berwick Hills and Pallister	14	2	0	49	22	1	4	73	92	+19
Brambles and Thorntree	3	3	0	35	7	2	4	62	54	-8
Park End & Beckfield	3	4	0	33	6	0	5	69	51	-18
Acklam	1	0	0	5	4	0	1	8	11	+3
Ayresome	5	1	0	11	3	0	3	26	23	-3
Kader	0	1	0	2	3	0	1	5	7	+2
Ladgate	3	1	0	21	2	0	1	26	28	+2
Linthorpe	2	3	0	12	20	0	2	30	39	+9

Longlands and Beechwood	10	7	0	24	7	3	26	45	77	+32
Trimdon	5	1	0	3	4	0	0	10	13	+3

25. The service also assisted with 25 criminal offences that had been committed in the town centre with the bulk of these matters being drug dealing, shoplifting and the identification of 3 individuals committing burglaries and a knife attack. We also undertook 128 ASB tasking's across the town (see below table for ward breakdown).

East Middlesbrough

26. The following actions have been taken by the Neighbourhood Safety team over recent weeks in the Park End/Beckfield & Brambles Farm/Thorntree wards:

- Youth throwing missiles at vehicles on the Greenway – ABC issued
- Youth throwing fireworks at Vaughan Shops – ABC issued – Police interview conducted and outcome pending
- Youths causing nuisance on Elkington Walk and at Vaughan shops – 1 ABC, 2x ABC breach warnings, 2x initial warnings, 1x Second warning
- Youth identified throwing firework towards Police – ABC breach issued
- Youths identified setting a fire on Cargo Fleet Lane – 2x Initial warnings and 2x Second Warnings (referred to immediate justice)
- Youth identified targeting family on Siddington Walk – ABC issued
- Youths targeting family on Marshall Avenue – 1x initial warning, 1x second warning (referred to immediate justice), 3x ABC breach warnings
- Youth throwing missile at window on Elkington Walk – ABC issued (referred to YOS Turnaround)

27. A number of referrals have also been submitted to early help in relation to the above youths. A number of youths have also been identified as being subject to CCE in the Netherfield's ward and as such officers have submitted safer referrals and attended meetings with Childrens Services and Police in an attempt to safeguard the youths involved.

28. Officers were able to identify a 'drugs run' along the back path leading from Brambles Farm, through Netherfields and into Spencerbeck which is being used by dealers using off-road motorbikes. Officers have carried out site visits and secured funding to block access points and deter further use of the back path, which will in turn make the dealers more visible to police.

29. In addition, on Friday 17th November 2023 officers took part in operation endurance with Police, during which a problematic motorbike was seized.

West Middlesbrough

30. Our Team have been working with Thirteen Housing and Social Care colleagues to resolve issues of Crime & ASB on Darnton Drive, Easterside. We had two vulnerable adults living in a Thirteen Property who were inviting other drug users into the property, this was affecting the neighbours in the street. We gained entry to the

property and found another male sleeping on the sofa. This male had been stabbed in the property a few nights prior to our visit. The property was very messy and unkempt and it was found that the electric meter had been bypassed. The Police were informed of this criminal incident.

31. Social Services found the two vulnerable tenants temporary accommodation out of the area and Thirteen electricians made the house safe. The property was then subsequently secured. Community Safety and Thirteen Officers have since completed a door knock in the surrounding area and all of the residents visited explained that the area is now quiet, and they thanked all agencies on resolving the issue and for taking care of the males.
32. A member of our Neighbourhood Safety Team witnessed youths buying illegal fireworks from the boot of a car on CCTV. Two of the males from the group were identified and home visits were made and warnings given. The vehicles VRN was passed onto both Trading Standards and Cleveland Police to make their investigations. This reduced the firework nuisance in the Trimdon Ave shops area.



33. Poor, dangerous parking on Roman road has resulted in a repeat offender being served with a community protection warning. Additional parking patrols have been carried out with x5 penalty charge notices, 12 warnings and an additional 2 community protection warnings being issued.

34. Our team have identified and located a male responsible for crime in Linthorpe. The male has since been arrested and charged.
35. Joint patrols with the PSCO and wardens resulted in warnings and PCN'S being issued for poor parking at both Linthorpe primary schools.
36. Proactive patrols and monitors in Belle Vue have resulted in a persistent beggar who sits outside Tesco on Marton Road being served a community protection warning for his behaviour.
37. Police Intelligence logs have been submitted in relation to drug dealing activity in and around Belle Vue shops, we have captured images of these individuals and named them all for Police partners.
38. Two males attending addresses in Grove Hill have also been seen in other locations and this information was fed back to Police. During Police patrols they have since arrested the two males and recovered 144 rocks of crack cocaine.
39. During a walkabout with Police, Thirteen and a Ward Councillor, officers have located a potential cannabis farm within Grove Hill.

40. After receiving Warden reports and speaking to the Senior Warden we have submitted Police Intelligence in relation to Nitrous Oxide cannisters being used in a car park within the Saltersgill area.

North

41. Since April 2023 until October 2023, we have seen a significant improvement in Fixed Penalty Notices being issued and paid. In May we received payment for an FPN issued to a male who was urinating within the TS1 area.

42. In addition, we have had an FPN paid for a male who was witnessed urinating near the Town Hall, we served notice for a littering offence which has a bigger fine which has since been paid. We now have an additional two prosecution files complete for non-payment of fines and an additional fine issued to a male urinating.

Cohesion and Migration update

43. An inter-cultural Christmas party recently took place at Newport Community Hub. Around 75 families and children attended, including families part of Afghan resettlement, families part of the various Ukraine visa-routes, a family of newly granted refugees, and several asylum seeking mothers and babies. The event was catered by Mannequin Café, a local Polish restaurant, which was enjoyed by everybody. Children had the opportunity to make their own baubles and mini-wreaths to take home with them. Support was provided by two members of the team, as well as two volunteers, including the Princes' Trust.



44. Work has commenced on a Welcome Orientation Partnership with Teesside University. This will take place early in the New Year and will provide newly arrived international students with information on various key areas of living in Middlesbrough. This includes environment, recycling, enforcement, health, education, and community engagement activities.

Afghan

45. The first bi-monthly weekend drop in for Afghan families has now taken place. These events will be themed and the first theme was employment. A representative from Triage, who deliver the Refugee Employment Programme, attended to discuss possibilities to improve employment prospects.

Ukrainians

46. Confirmation has been received that an employment and housing project for Ukrainians will be delivered by Investing in People and Cultures. This is funded through the tariff received under Homes for Ukraine and is due to commence in the new year.

47. The weekly ESOL class continues and is now taking place at the International Centre. This is well-attended and participants have benefited greatly from it.

48. The team also attended an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion day at MacMillan Academy, where they showcased traditional Ukrainian items and shared recipes with people who attended. These recipes will form part of a wider inter-cultural cookbook.

Safer Streets CCTV update

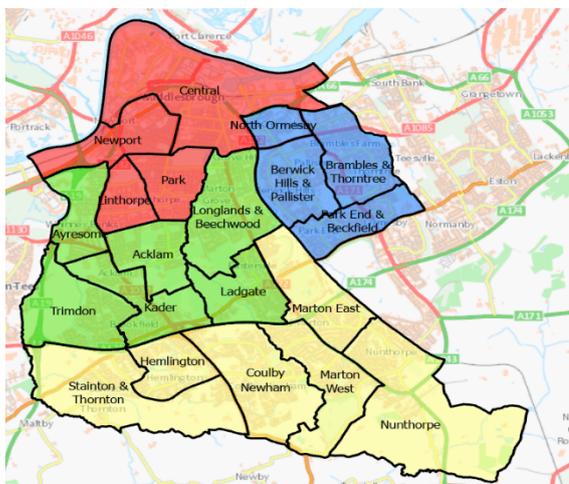
49. Installation of CCTV - Thirteen Housing are also part funding this. 11 additional CCTV cameras will be installed in various hotspot locations.

Communications campaign - 5 separate campaigns will be held to tackle the following;

- Town centre safety – the newly appointed Safer Streets Officer will lead on this. The focus will be around begging and providing feedback to the business community
- Environmental leaflets will be produced in conjunction with skip drives. Leaflets will be produced in various languages where required
- Landlord training re environmental/refuse disposal - mainly focussed within the private rented sector in Central Ward
- Motorbike nuisance with Crimestoppers focusing on encouraging people to report bike storage locations. Residents can report anonymously where bikes are being stored
- Motorbike campaign in the run up to Christmas. Encouraging parents not to buy bikes/quads/e-scooters (completed)

Neighbourhood Action Partnerships (“NAPS”)

50. The first NAP meeting for each of the locations (North, South, East and West) have now been held, with North and East taking place on 16th November, and South and West taking place on 15th December.



North = Red, West = Green, East = Blue, South = Yellow.

51. These meetings were well attended, bringing together elected members from across the Town and representatives from a variety of agencies such as the Police, Thirteen Housing, Cleveland Fire Brigade and various teams from within the Council

(Public Protection, Community Safety and Area Care). The NAPs are designed to allow members and agencies to communicate about the most pressing issues around crime, ASB, environmental crime and deliberate fire-setting. Agencies will provide members with information and data showing where these issues have been most concentrated across their own NAP area and will provide updates regarding what action the agencies are taking individually and jointly in order to address these concentrated “hotspots”. Members are invited to bring issues of concern within their own Ward to the NAP for consideration and multi-agency discussion, the aim being to look at the most serious and problematic issues and bring agencies together to resolve these as quickly and efficiently as possible. Issues discussed at the first NAPs included environmental crime such as fly-tipping and incorrect disposal of waste, repeat shoplifting and high-level ASB perpetrated by youth gangs. The NAPs will continue to meet on a bi-monthly basis, with the next North and East NAPs due to meet in mid-January and the next South and West NAPs due to meet in mid-February.

Locality Working

North

52. Locality officers are working with a group of residents to establish a Newport Residents Action plan. The plan is currently in draft with a follow up meeting scheduled for the New Year, this work will enable us to place residents’ priorities at the heart of what we do.

South

53. Joint operations linked to environmental crime with Thirteen Housing and Cleveland Fire have taken place in the Hemlington area.

54. The Community Payback team from the Probation service and HMP Kirkclevington have joint worked with officers to offer Environmental improvement in the area, teams have been litter picking and cutting back bushes in and around the Viewley Centre. This joint working will continue into 2024.

East

55. Property services staff continue to prepare MICC building for use by the East Locality team. Health and Safety staff revisited the site on the 18th December and are hopeful it will be operational in the New Year.

56. In the interim operational and strategic groups are established to joint work on issues and projects.

West

57. Locality staff are now based within West Middlesbrough Childrens Centre and are hosting a number of partners.

58. Initial links with community organisations and resident’s groups is taking place.

Operation Autumnus

59. Agencies are used to seeing a significant increase in crime and ASB towards the end of October and over the Halloween and Bonfire Night period. This is addressed via a multi-agency action plan and operation called “Operation Autumnus”.

Autumnus brings together a wide array of Council teams (Community Safety, Trading Standards, Area Care and Public Protection) working alongside partner agencies including the Police, Fire Brigade and youth services such as LINX, Youth Focus North-East and The Junction. This year’s plan involved a number of actions including enhanced numbers of Police and PCSOs patrolling “hotspot areas” over the period in question, Wardens doing the same and additional resources being deployed into the Council’s CCTV control room to provide enhanced coverage during the relevant period. Youth providers organised positive activities for young people in a number of wards across the town, and specifically on Bonfire Night the Council and Thirteen Housing operated a number of additional Area Care vehicles.

60. This year’s plan and the hard work of all of the agencies and personnel involved in delivering it made a big difference to the outcomes over the October/Bonfire Night period. As can be seen in the table below, this October saw a significant reduction in the number of crimes reported across the town during the month. This continues a trend that can be seen going back over the last several years, with over 500 fewer crimes recorded in October 2023 when compared to October 2017.

Year	Police Recorded Crime/ASB across Middlesbrough for whole of October
2017	3056
2018	3060
2019	2945
2020	2780
2021	2932
2022	2885
2023	2537

61. Bonfire night showed a similar outcome, with the period 4th to 6th November 2023 having a 25% reduction in the number of deliberate fires dealt with by the Fire Brigade when compared to the same period in 2022 and a 31% reduction when compared to that period in 2019 (comparisons are often made to 2019 as being the last “pre-Covid” year for comparison).

Cllr Janet Thompson
17 January 2024

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR PETER GAVIGAN

DATE OF MEETING: 17 January 2024

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

1. I am currently working on policy proposals for the short, medium and long term.
We will continue to 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.

HIGHLIGHTS

2. I had a meeting with Councillor Hurst to try to progress a longstanding tree issue. I had a site visit to Green Lane Primary in Acklam at the request of Councillor Livingstone to try to address parking issues at the start and end of the school day. Councillor Dean also attended. I also had a site visit to Acklam Whin Primary in Kader with councillors Cooper and McCabe to try to address similar issues. Officers attended on all these occasions, and I'd like to thank them all for their input.
3. In my last report, I omitted to mention a visit to the Cumbria Waste Management plant in South Bank; this was both interesting and instructive.

THE TIME AHEAD

4. Highways Infrastructure
5. Traffic Signals/UTMC
6. Traffic Signal Junction upgrades 2023/24:
 - Marton Rd / Aldi (programmed in for completion in March 2024)
 - Borough Abingdon Rd (Programmed in for completion in January 2024)
 - Marton Rd / Corporation Rd (Programmed in for completion in March 2024)
7. Pedestrian crossing upgrades 2023/24:
 - Ormesby Rd / Balmoral Rd (Programmed for completion February 2024)
 - Low Lane Shetland Close (Programmed for completion in March 2023)
 - Boro / Emerald St (Programmed for completion in March 2024).

Traffic Management

Major Scheme - Stainton Way / Cypress Road.

8. Works to improve road safety at the Stainton Way / Cypress Road junction by the installation of new traffic signals with pedestrian and cycle crossings, are now substantially complete.
9. The redundant access to the Brunton Arms pub, along with the slip lane coming off Stainton Way onto Cypress Road have both been removed, to help reduce vehicle speed.
10. The new traffic signals have been activated, so that residents can use the crossing points safely, with remaining works to be completed early in the New Year.
11. As part of the scheme the junction has also been fully resurfaced.

Ladgate Lane – 30mph speed limit.

12. New speed activated signs are now in place to reinforce the reduced speed limit of 30mph along the full length of Ladgate Lane.

Highways

13. Verge replacement and footway improvement works programmes have been developed and we are well underway with implementation of the programme for 2023/24.

Transporter Bridge

14. The Transporter Bridge structural assessment is ongoing and the Stage 1 analysis is currently underway. Monthly progress meetings are taking place with the engineering consultants Atkins.

A66 Column 20B

15. A66 Station Viaduct - Column 20B - Contractor Volker Laser have constructed their site compound and works are underway to replace the column head and bearing and repair the beams around the future Stack development.

Other A66 Work

16. A66 Newport Interchange Bridges: Bridge deck waterproofing and resurfacing of the whole bridge deck to tie in with other planned resurfacing on A66 Eastbound has been completed.
17. Concrete testing has been carried out on Hartington Interchange Bridges. The report is currently being evaluated and repairs will be carried out in 2024.

Bridges and Structures

18. Resurfacing and re-waterproofing of the bridge deck have been completed on Borough Road Flyover. Further works, to replace the bridge joints and carry out localised hydro demolition and concrete repairs, will be commencing in 2024.

19. We are in the process of completing the tender documents for repairs to A174 Marton Interchange Overbridge. This includes replacing the bridge deck waterproofing and resurfacing, concrete repairs to the abutments, and the installation of suicide prevention parapets. Contracts are with our legal dept.
20. We are also arranging further principal and general bridge inspections through a tender process via NEPO. We will be carrying out Principal Inspections to 18 structures and general inspections to a further 169 structures. Contracts have been awarded.
21. Longlands Road overbridge will be the subject of a full structural and principal inspection. It is expected that extensive repairs, or even full replacement, will be required. A design phase will follow the assessments with major works planned for 2024/25. Structural inspection and assessment contracts have been awarded.
22. We are awaiting confirmation of prices from Networks Rail's main Contractor to commence works to repair, and install suicide prevention parapets, to Linby Bridge.

Carriageways

23. The first 2 stages of the 2023-24 classified and unclassified roads resurfacing programme have been completed with 80% of the planned carriageway resurfacing programme now carried out. Acklam Road/Marton Road to be completed by March 2024.

Flood Management

24. Following on from the 2nd survey and the provision of data such as gritting routes, flood risk areas etc we continue to develop the Gully Smart Software. We are looking to implement the risk-based approach analysis in respect to gully cleaning over the next 3 months. Currently work is being undertaken to deal with those Gullies identified as being 75% - 100% full of silt. We continue to work proactively on flood risk management through joint working with the EA and NWL. This work, along with drainage surveys is increasing our knowledge of the network and improving the long-term planning and maintenance of gullies.

Street Lighting

25. 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 170 defective columns with the remainder to be completed before March 2024.

Area Care

26. Typically, December and January are the quietest time of the year for Area Care, however, we are working through the following tasks.
 - Autumn/winter shrub & hedge pruning
 - Bonfire removal if ground conditions allow.

27. Area Care have been working in collaboration with the Rotary Club to plant a further 84 trees along the riverside.
28. Area Care are now using the new mechanical sweepers in West and North that were purchased in November.
29. The Council's Road Safety Team has met with Cleveland Police to devise an education campaign around School Gate Traffic Issues. They are primarily the regular issues faced by the School Crossing Patrols and include:
 - 1: Drivers failing to stop.
 - 2: Issues around visibility (due to inconsiderate parking on zigzags and double yellows).
30. The Council's Enforcement Team will be working in partnership to address and reduce these issues. Regular press releases and social media posts highlighting issues will be issued and promoted across the social media channels.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: FINANCE & GOVERNANCE – COUNCILLOR NICKY WALKER

DATE OF MEETING: 17 January 2024

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 ensure that we place communities at the heart of what we do, continue to deliver value for money and enhance the reputation of Middlesbrough.*

Update:

1. I continue to have weekly briefings with each of the two directors relevant to my portfolio as well as frequent additional meetings and contact with them and other officers as appropriate.
2. On 20 December 2023 I attended Overview and Scrutiny Board to give an update on my portfolio and also attended the two all member briefings which took place on 12 December 2023 on the Budget Setting Process and 21 December 2023 on the Budget Proposals.

HIGHLIGHTS

Members' Enquiries Process Update

3. There continues to be some understandable frustration around the current processes for dealing with members enquiries and in relation to the lack of regular updates received.
4. In the short-medium term and in advance of any new system being implemented there is not a simple solution which would enable responses to individual enquiries / requests as and when they've been actioned, due to the lack of single system in place to manage and log requests.
5. In reality, instead of one single joined up system there are a number of other processes including spreadsheets, paper lists, job request that are running in the background which make it such a burdensome – and almost impossible -

task for staff to coordinate, keep on top of and to provide the updates that members expect, and indeed should ideally be receiving.

6. I am pleased to be able to report that members will shortly be invited to demonstrations of the potential new solutions for the Member Enquiries Process. Dates currently are being considered are at the end of January and early February but are being cross-referenced with any potential committee date clashes.
7. In the interim I am looking at further potential solutions which may provide some more meaningful responses to members, until a new system is brought in which will be more fit for purpose.

Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints Policy.

8. On 21 December 2023 I approved the Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious Complaints Policy 2023 – 2026, which sets out the Council's approach to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees.
9. Post COVID the council has noted an increase in abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints aimed at both officers and members.
10. The policy applies to all staff or residents who may contact them. It also applies to Councillors in their activity in relation to staff and in addition the protections that can be put in place for Councillors who are experiencing abusive, persistent and /or vexatious levels of contact from residents.
11. The policy utilises the definitions set out by the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure best practice is implemented throughout the Council.
12. At the meeting it was also recognised the importance of the right for the public and Members to pose challenging questions and confirmed there was high threshold before the policy would be applied.

Public Budget Consultation Events

13. At the time of writing, Mayor Chris Cooke and I are leading on public events in four areas of the town w/c 08 January 2024:
 - **Monday 8 January** - 6pm - Newport Community Hub (St Pauls Road, TS1 5NQ).
 - **Tuesday 9 January** - 6pm - Acklam Community Hub and Library (Acklam Road, TS5 7AB).
 - **Wednesday 10 January** - 6pm - Hemlington Community Hub and Library (Crosscliff, TS8 9JJ).
 - **Thursday 11 January** - 6:30pm - North Ormesby Community Hub and Library (Derwent Street, TS3 6JB).

Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)

Reminder of Financial Position 31.03.23

14. As highlighted in my earlier reports to Council the financial position inherited on 31.03.23 was unsustainable, briefly:

- There was a balanced budget set in February 2023 but the independent review from Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the report of the then section 151 Officer raised concerns about deliverability of savings (particularly around Children's Services) and levels of reserves.
- It had been identified that as at May 2023, the Council was not on track to deliver within budget for 2023/24.
- External auditors have highlighted significant overspends against both 2022/23 and 2023/24 budgets emerged in first half of financial year.
- Annual expenditure currently exceeds income by approximately 10%
- There is a projected overspend at October 2023 £7.4million (reduced from Quarter 1 of £11.5million and Quarter 2 of £8.5million)

15. In terms of Reserves:

- Usable earmarked reserves had been drawn on to fund budget pressures and overspends which had reduced these reserves by 75% from 31.03.2019 to 31.03.23.
- Total Usable Revenue Reserves had depleted to a critically low level of £14.8million
- The projected overspend on the 2023/24 budget were projected at the end of Quarter 2 to reduce these reserves further to £6.3million, this has been revised further following figures for November and the forecast now stands at £7.8million at year end 31.03.24.
- Reserves can only be used once.
- The External Auditor has also raised statutory recommendations in relation to the critically low level of council reserves which weaken its financial resilience which undermine its ability to cope with unforeseen pressures, and indeed fund its financial recovery.

16. The External Auditor has also required the Council to take action within the current year to reduce expenditure to protect those reserves and to review its service delivery models and implement plans for transformation to improve them. The Auditor also required the identification of the funding source for transformation, which in the absence of available revenue reserves, is out of necessity, capital receipts realised from the disposal of assets.

17. It is important to stress that the one-off use of reserves and provisions to fund ongoing expenditure without a robust plan to achieve a balanced budget over the medium term and a plan to rebuild reserves from the currently critical low position, is not financially prudent nor financially sustainable.

Updated Financial Position December 2023

18. All Members were invited to two briefings which took place on 12 December 2023 on the Budget Setting Process and 21 December 2023 on the Budget Proposals. These briefings included detail information on the background to the budget, our current financial position and the budget gap remaining. However, at that time the impact on Middlesbrough of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) announced on 18 December 2023 was still unclear.
19. On 20 December 2023, I jointly presented along with the Mayor, a report to the Executive, which comprised of an update in relation to progress made in developing the 2024/25 Budget and MTFP for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27, as well as budget proposals for consultation.
20. The report identified that despite substantial work undertaken by the Leadership Management Team, the Elected Mayor and the Executive to identify savings and income growth proposals sufficient to balance the 2024/25 budget, a shortfall of £6.279m remained for 2024/25. It also reported further gaps of £1.596m for 2025/26 and £0.305m for 2026/27, equivalent to a cumulative budget gap of £8.180m.
21. The draft savings and income growth proposals that are currently subject to consultation, total £14.083m in 2024/25 which is equivalent to 11% of the 2023/24 net budget of £126.354m and is of significant scale and challenge for Middlesbrough Council. These savings rise to by a further £5.083m in 2025/26 and £1.967m in 2026/27, therefore presenting a cumulative savings plan of £21.088m by the end of 2026/27.
22. It is proposed to levy a total Council Tax increase of 4.99%, comprising 2% on the Adult Social Care Precept and 2.99% on the general Council Tax, in line with limits set nationally by central government. It is possible for the Council to seek authorisation from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to waive the referendum limit to levy a higher Council Tax as part of its application for Exceptional Financial Support, but this course of action is **not** proposed.
23. Further work is continuing in relation to the budget development process and financial recovery plan including:
- Assessment of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement
 - Due diligence to assure the robustness and deliverability of budget proposals
 - Assessment of the adequacy of reserves
 - Assessment of risks and uncertainty of cost and demand pressures facing the Council

- Scoping and development of the Transformation Programme, its themes and projects and associated business cases.
- Development of asset disposal plans and a profiled pipeline of capital receipts that will be the primary funding stream for investment in the Transformation Programme.

24. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) was announced on 18 December 2023 and runs to the 15 January 2024. The Final LGFS will be announced in early February 2024 and the final funding position will be known at that point.

25. This Provisional Settlement is broadly in line with the Council's MTFP assumptions and is not expected to change substantially upon receipt of the Final LGFS. As anticipated, the £6.3m budget gap remains to be addressed by the Council in order to set a legally balanced budget for 2024/25.

26. Members will be aware that the Council is required to set a legally balanced budget for 2024/25 by the statutory deadline of 11 March 2024. This is the responsibility of all Council Members.

Professional Opinion of Section 151 Officer

27. A report which will be presented for consideration to the Executive on 17 January 2024 requesting the Executive approve that an application for Exceptional Financial Support be made by the interim Chief Executive and Interim Director of Finance (s151 Officer) to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in order to finance forecast budget deficits and enable a balanced budget to be set for 2024/25 as required by statute. Council approval would be required for the outcome of that application which would be included in the budget setting report for 2024/25 in February 2024.

28. This report includes the following:

29. *It is the professional opinion of the s151 Officer, that in order to set a legally balanced and robust budget whilst maintaining adequate revenue reserves for 2024/25, the Council must:*

- *apply for and receive approval of Exceptional Financial Support from Central Government comprising elements:*
 - *meet the budget gap for 2024/25*
 - *manage the financial implications of savings programme delivery risk*
 - *temporarily support the funding of investment in transformation pending the realisation of capital receipts from the asset disposal programme*
 - *temporarily support the funding of the statutory element of redundancy costs pending the realisation of capital receipts from the asset disposal programme*
- *approve and deliver budget proposals to the values set out in the Executive report of 20 December 2023*

- *increase Council Tax by the maximum 4.99% as proposed in the Executive report of 20 December 2023*
30. *In the event that these conditions are not met, then the s151 Officer will be required to issue a s114 Notice under s114(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as the Council would be unable to set a legally balanced budget.*
31. *This action will only be taken as a last resort and is likely to have a significant adverse impact upon the Council's ability to maintain delivery of a range of non-statutory services in the short term whilst a plan to achieve a balanced budget is considered by the Council. This course of action also increases the likelihood of an escalation of government intervention, which will result in increased expenditure for the Council.*
32. *Based upon the budget development work undertaken to date, it is considered to be highly unlikely that it will be possible to identify and deliver robust and sustainable saving proposals to close the £6.3m budget gap without implementing a large-scale transformation programme of the type being developed currently to run over the medium term. This will take time and substantial investment in the necessary skills, experience and technology required to deliver lasting service improvement and cost reduction.*
33. *It is considered that Exceptional Financial support will be necessary to enable the Council's financial recovery either at this stage that would avoid a s114 Notice, or at a later stage in a s114 scenario.*
34. I share the opinion of the Interim Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) regarding the need to apply for Exceptional Financial Support and she has my full support.
35. Earlier in the financial year there was a real risk, as I reported to members in my first report to Council that the overspends associated with the 2023/24 budget would exhaust what remains of the usable reserves, and that would have in itself required the issuing of a Section 114 notice. Due to the progress made during this financial year, that appears to be much less of a risk, but the scale of the financial challenges inherited which cannot be resolved in one financial year does mean that short term support through EFS is needed to balance the budget for 2024/25 whilst we implement plans to work towards financial recovery.
36. EFS has appeared to be inevitable for many months, unless there had been a substantial increase in the amount of support to address the increased pressures facing local authorities under the recent Local Government Finance Settlement. A pro-active approach has been adopted with officers being in regular discussions with DLUHC regarding this matter.
37. EFS is now needed to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 and also deliver service transformation and cost reduction at the scale required to secure

financial sustainability in the medium to long term. Importantly it would also serve to avoid the more severe consequences of a section 114 notice.

The EFS application

38. EFS will take the form of a capitalisation direction that enables the Council to treat revenue expenditure as capital and to borrow and repay this amount at a premium rate over Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) borrowing over a period of up to 20 years. It is a one-off solution in order to finance the capitalisation of revenue expenditure in a particular year to provide breathing space for the Council to implement plans to recover its financial position. It is not a grant and is not free money.

39. Approval of EFS will be dependent upon the Council being able to demonstrate a plan to deliver its financial recovery and will be subject to a number of conditions that will be determined by the Secretary of State.

Section 114 Notice-Implications

40. If the Council is unable to agree and set a legally balanced budget then the s151 Officer is required by law to issue a s114 Notice under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1988. Section 114 (3) which states that:

“The chief finance officer of a relevant authority shall make a report under this section if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure”.

41. Councillors would have 21 days from the issue of a Section 114 notice to discuss the implications at a Full Council meeting. The Council would then need to agree how it will produce a plan to balance the budget.

42. The issue of s114 notice means that:

- no new expenditure is permitted, with the exception of that funding statutory services, including safeguarding vulnerable people, at minimum level
- existing commitments and contracts will continue to be honoured.
- Council officers must therefore carry out their duties in line with contractual obligations and to acceptable standards, while being aware of the financial situation.
- Any spending that is not essential or which can be postponed should not take place and essential spend will be monitored.

43. In a s114 emergency protocol, the s151 Officer would require expenditure on ‘non-statutory’ or ‘non-essential’ services and functions to stop and statutory functions to be delivered at the minimum level to achieve the £6.3m budget saving required until longer term financially sustainable solutions can be developed and implemented. Inevitably, such plans would require service

transformation and redesign of the type currently being designed and developed. In the meantime, this would result in extreme adverse consequences for the delivery of non-statutory functions.

44. Officers have provided a high-level estimate of the net budget value of services delivering primarily non statutory/ non-essential functions to provide an indication of the service areas likely to be stopped and or reduced to achieve the required saving under a s114 emergency protocol. These include Economic Development, School Crossing Patrols, Cultural and Entertainment Activities, Leisure Services, Marketing, Neighbourhood Safety and Street Wardens, Area Care, Parks Management, Environmental Protection, Adult Social Care Day Care, Education Psychologists. The total net budget for these areas in 2023/24 is £9m. In addition, there will be some elements of support services which are not yet quantified. This illustrates the scale of adverse impact that is likely as a result of a s114 Notice being issued to achieve further reduction in expenditure of £6.3m.

Risk of Government Intervention

45. Based upon the experiences of other local authorities that are assessed as financially unsustainable, this could result in various levels of escalation, for example:
- Requiring that the voluntary Independent Improvement and Assurance Board moves to a mandatory basis
 - Requiring that the advisory nature of the Board moves to a statutory basis enabling the Board to issue statutory recommendations and direct the Council's actions.
 - The risk of the appointment of independent commissioners further down the line to intervene in the leadership and management of the Council. This could also involve suspension of democratic processes.
46. The Council would be required to meet the additional costs of increased improvement board activity aligned to its increased role. If Commissioners were appointed, the Council would be required to meet the cost of each Commissioner from its own resources.
47. It is important to note that in the case of all local authorities who have issued a s114 and have been subject to Commissioners, the costs of recovery are met by the local authority and have required varying levels of EFS to be negotiated between DLUHC and Commissioners.
48. Therefore, Exceptional Financial Support will be necessary to support the Council to achieve a balanced budget for 2024/25 and achieve its financial recovery plan irrespective of whether that is done now, or at some future point after a s114 Notice is issued, should the EFS application not be made now
49. A s114 Notice would result in additional unnecessary cost to the authority, delays to progress in recovering the Council's financial position which are critically dependent upon implementing a Transformation Programme and likely to result in an escalation of Government Intervention in the Council's

strategic management and decision making, with a dilution of control and influence for Council Members.

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR THEO FURNESS

DATE OF MEETING: 17 January 2024

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

Executive Decisions made

Article 4 Direction on HMOs

1. The introduction of an Article 4 Direction to enable the Council to control the location and quality of new HMOs in Middlesbrough (except in the area covered by the Middlesbrough Development Corporation).
2. A house in multiple occupation (HMO) was defined as being a property occupied by at least three people who were not from one household (such as a family) but share facilities such as a bathroom and kitchen. Such properties were commonly known as house shares or bedsits.
3. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (the 'GPDO') makes provision for granting planning permission for certain classes of development without the requirement for a planning application to be made.
4. Under the GPDO, a change of use from a house (which was in planning use class C3) to a large HMO of 7 or more people (which did not fall into any of the planning use classes) required planning permission. However, change of use from a house to a small HMO of between three and six people (which was in planning use class C4), was classed a permitted development and did not require planning permission. This meant that the Council could not currently exercise any planning control over small HMOs.
5. Since 1 October 2018 all HMOs of five or more people had also been subject to mandatory licensing. Licenses were valid for five years and properties were subject to an inspection during this period. If the Council received complaints regarding a property this will prompt a further inspection and enforcement action may be taken.

Middlesbrough Development Company

6. The purpose of the report was to update Executive on the progress made in relation to the closure of the Middlesbrough Development Company and the revised timetable for the Members Voluntary Liquidation. The report also fulfilled the commitment to provide a quarterly report on the Company's operation, in line with the requirements of the Partly and Wholly Owned Council Companies policy and supporting minimum standards.

7. In September 2023 Executive were advised that the process to close the Middlesbrough Development Company was underway, and the process and timetable for this to happen were set out. The Middlesbrough Development Company Closure report set out that although all project activity had ceased, there were several contractual issues that would require further work, and upon completion of these Members Voluntary Liquidation would be undertaken to close down the company. The timetable set out concluded with the company closing hopefully by the end of March.
8. The proposed process and timetable for the closure of the company was consistent with the actions identified against recommendations by the Council's external auditors in the Section 25 report presented to Council on 24th November 2023.

Nunthorpe Grange Land Disposal

9. The report sought Executive approval for the disposal of Nunthorpe Grange, which was allocated in the Housing Local Plan (2014), in accordance with the Council's adopted Asset Disposal Process, and to inform Executive of the next steps to take this site to market.

10. The report detailed that the site was allocated in the 2014 Local Plan, and Nunthorpe Grange was circa 24.29ha of green field land and was in three separate ownerships, with Middlesbrough Council owning approximately 15.64ha and the remainder privately owned.

11. Appendix 1 of the report showed the site ownership which comprised:

- land coloured red owned by Middlesbrough Council which totalled 15.64ha;
- Lady Harrison's Field/The Polo Field (land coloured yellow) owned by Sir Colin Harrison & Family Trust 3.06ha; and,
- Land at Field House (coloured blue) owned by Persimmon Homes 5.59ha.



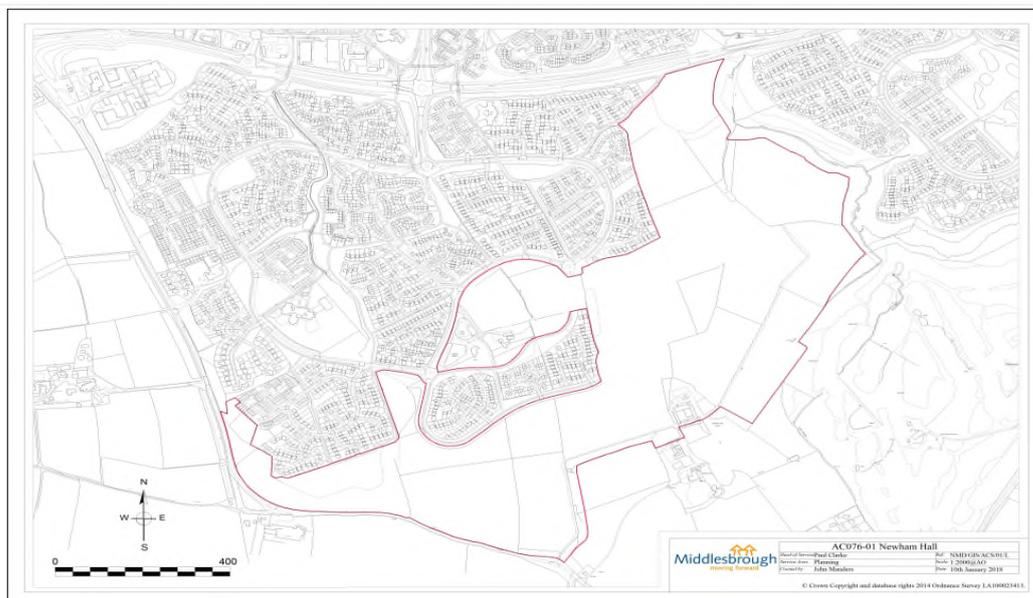
12. The site was located south and east of existing residential developments. To the west and south were areas of open countryside. The site was bounded by the Guisborough Road (A171) to the north, by railway lines to the east, to the south by the (A1043) and to the west by the Stokesley Road.

13. A Member stated Nunthorpe had seen significant development without the requisite infrastructure for such development. As such, residents were dissatisfied with the situation. The Executive Member for Regeneration thanked the Member for their comments and appreciated their resident's position. It was commented the Council's financial position meant the recommendations contained in the report were necessary.

Newham Hall Land

- approve the approach of Middlesbrough Council acting as the master developer for the Newham Hall site - being financially responsible for bringing the site forward for phased disposal and marketing without external intervention or support from Homes England;
- approve the use of the awarded Levelling Up Fund 2 (LUF2) and Towns Fund grants, Strategic Highways Section 106 (S106) Funding, other developer contributions and pre-existing Council capital funding of £4.129m dedicated to Housing Growth or other projects already contained within the current capital programme to unlock and derisk the Newham Hall housing site;

Although the land has not been marketed for sale, Middlesbrough Council has received two speculative offers for the land in the last three years. More recently, the Council



received a Joint Venture proposition from Homes England and entered into an Exclusivity Agreement with them for the period December 2022 - September 2023.

Following assessment of these offers and insights from market research this report seeks approval for Middlesbrough Council to:

- progress with the disposal and marketing of the land independently rather than sell to a third-party developer through a Joint Venture with Homes England and
- to utilise LUF2, Towns Fund grant, Strategic Highways and S106 monies, other developer contributions and Council capital programme resources to undertake site derisking to ensure best consideration for the site at the point of sale.

The disposal of the land is recommended to meet the Council's requirements to generate capital receipts, increase annually recurring revenue streams and, as the value of the individual site exceeds £250,000 it is a key decision.

14. Newest opening in the Square – The Wired Lobby, launched on 1st Dec with formal opening following 4th Dec. Various competition events are planned, in the coming months, with further opportunities with local education providers planned in the coming year.

15. LevelX trading well, having revised their pricing strategy recently to become more accessible to all, and other social and gaming events planned.



16. Unit3a (The Oven) – work commenced in November 2023, with many of the preparatory works now complete, aiming for a Spring 2024 opening, currently on track.

17. International burger chain committed to former Thomas the Baker unit, legals to be signed – unit has been stripped out with a start on site proposed end of Jan 2024.

18. Regional family entertainment provider currently in advanced negotiations, and in the legal process for the former Wilko unit. Subject to legals, a Summer 2024 opening is proposed.

19. Exec report (20th Dec) approved for additional funding for Cap Cook Square (via TVCA) subject to business case approval (tbc) which would allow new cinema proposal, proposed for a Summer 2024 opening. Detailed feasibility, tenders and legals and complete, was on hold pending financial approval.

Local Plan Update

20. Local Plan Public consultation will run from the beginning of February to Mid March. I have also opened my diary to have meetings with all Councillors prior the public consultation and hopefully have these all completed before the public consultation starts.

Asset review update

21. We have received interest in several industrial properties following the initial publicity around the Asset Review. These properties are now being prepared for sale (including Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park), with updated valuations and sales particulars being developed. As the intention is for the asset sales to be done in phases across a three-year period, these assets are likely to represent the majority of those marketed for sale at this point. The market interest generated; the receipts received will inform the future phasing for the remainder.

