

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Executive member for Development

DATE OF MEETING: 10 September 2025

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

COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES

Place & People

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update

1.1 Town Centre Plan

A board of senior institutional stakeholders has been established to shape a new vision for Middlesbrough Town Centre and its economy. Police, educational institutions, businesses, the voluntary sector, the Mayoral Development Corporation and health providers have agreed to work together to develop a common vision and plan which every Middlesbrough stakeholder can get behind, and deliver.

Work is underway to assess the most critical barriers to growth and progress. From there a strategic action plan will be codesigned and codelivered to deliver a transformational vision for Middlesbrough in to the 2030s. This work will culminate with published plans and strategies in 2026.

1.2 Housing Numbers

To create a range of housing options for new and existing residents of Middlesbrough, targets for the 2025/26 financial year have been set at 450 new units. As of July 2025, 180 new units have been completed in the year and this is slightly ahead of schedule for the year.

1.3 HMO Article 4 Direction – 6 months on

Following the decision of Executive in December 2023, the Council made a non-immediate Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development rights to convert houses to small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) – i.e. those for 3-6 occupants. This now means that all developments for HMOs in the area covered by Middlesbrough Council (the Middlesbrough Council area except the Middlesbrough Development Corporation area) now require a planning application for consideration by the Council. The provisions of the Article 4 Direction came into effect on 8th February 2025.

Immediately prior to the Article 4 coming into effect, we received 17 applications for 'Certificates of Lawful Uses' to provide formal confirmation that existing HMOs were recognised and recorded as such. There have been a further 18 applications submitted since 8th February seeking formal clarification for established HMOs via the Certificate of Lawfulness process. To date 11 of these have been approved and 7 are pending consideration.

A further 7 applications have been submitted for new HMOs. Of these, 3 have been refused on concerns over the nature of provision, including lack of outdoor amenity space, room sizes and adequate provision of rooms beyond the most basic provision. The further 4 remain pending decision. There have also been 2 appeal decisions for HMO applications, one appeal has been dismissed and one appeal has been allowed.

The Local Planning Authority will continue to expect a good level of accommodation for HMOs and will continue to refuse unacceptable, poor quality provision, whilst taking into account the outcome of appeal decisions. This position will be further enhanced through the emerging Local Plan Policy, which will provide a stronger basis upon which to base decision making and seek higher quality provisions.

1.4 Southlands Community Facility

The Southlands development is on site and is progressing to the scheduled construction programme. The development remains scheduled to complete in Spring 2026 and will be operated by Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation.

1.5 Captain Cook Square

Roxy Cinema completed construction and opened for public use in July 2025.

The boutique cinema is competitively priced and offers novel services such as private screenings, retro films, mainstream titles and gaming events.

The new facility has been well received by the public and has brought added value to the leisure transformation at Captain Cook Square.

1.6 District Centre Improvement Grants

A grants programme will be launched in September 2025, to enhance and uplift the shopping areas in our residential communities.

As part of the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund, traders will be able to apply for grant funding to support facelift and improvements of the shopping districts in our local estates. Individual applications are welcomed along with consortium bids from retailers within a common precinct.

Demand is anticipated to be high so traders are advised to watch for updates through Council media channels and on the Council website.

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

2.1 Nunthorpe Community Centre – Next Steps (Approved 26 Jul 2025)

On 16th July 2025, a report was approved by Executive to progress the construction of the New Nunthorpe Community facility, along with agreement of the lease terms with preferred operator, Nunthorpe Parish Council.

Planning permission has been secured and tenders complete. The site contractors will commence in the coming weeks and will complete in spring 2026.

Providing a new centre has been a long-standing ambition for the Council and the Nunthorpe community, providing a much-needed space for local people of all ages to come together and take part in a range of educational, healthy and social activities.

The new building will include multi-purpose rooms, a kitchen, toilets, office space and parking and could play host to adult education classes, family support sessions, youth groups, music activities and even be available for events like children's parties.

The centre will also work closely with the nearby medical practice and offer activities to promote health and wellbeing, as well as nature sessions with schools in partnership with the local Greenways project.

3. THE TIME AHEAD

Upcoming Executive Reports in the Forward Plan:

3.1 Nunthorpe Grange Design Guide Update

An updated design guide for development for the Nunthorpe Grange site was also adopted in July 2025. This key document sets out the design standards for new housing developments coming forward including landscaping and community amenity.

In developing the guidance document, the council has demonstrated good practices in genuine and meaningful engagement with the local community and stakeholders. The document will hold weight as the current planning application for housing in the area is finally determined at a forthcoming Planning and Development Committee.

3.2 Capital Investment in Council Buildings

A report is scheduled to come to Executive to discuss the condition of the corporate estate and operational assets. This report will highlight any major maintenance matters which are a risk to the corporate estate and the investment priorities which the Council needs to consider over the Medium Term Financial Plan period.

This report is a critical step in ensuring that major operational assets are appropriately surveyed and that investment is prioritised to any interventions which are required for the longevity of the buildings, along with the welfare and safety for the residents and staff who occupy the buildings. This ensures that service delivery can be optimised across the estate, with the minimal disruption to critical services and civic amenity.

Commercial Property – Irrecoverable Debt Cancelled - This was about historical debts accumulated through Captain Cook Square, Cleveland Centre and TEESAMP. Now to be taken off the FWP and issued as a Council-wide debt report via Director of Finance.

3.3 Development of Middlehaven

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3.4 Investment in Homelessness

The Council are working closely with a social investor on a proposal for investment in purchasing and refurbishing empty properties. The proposal would see the social investor co-ordinate activities with a range of housing providers to bring properties back into use and broaden the range of the Council's options for temporary accommodation. As the proposals will require significant investment (through external grant funding) significant due diligence is currently being undertaken before it is brought forward for a formal decision.

3.5 Local Plan Examination Modifications – Delegated Authority

The Local Plan is due to be submitted to the Secretary of State in September 2025, following which it will be subject to Independent Examination. In order to ensure the efficient running of the Examination, and to provide the best opportunity for it to be found sound – and therefore adopted – a report is being taken to Council to confirm that the Planning Inspector should be asked to recommend modifications, where necessary, and for delegated authority to be given to the Director of Regeneration to agree proposed modifications so they can be subject to public consultation. Modifications are a normal part of the process and any final changes to the plan will need to be included in the Inspector's Report before being brought back to the Council for adoption.