

MAYOR'S REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: 15 October 2025

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on areas of activity across the town.

COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES

The details outlined in this report support delivery of the Council's strategic priorities:

- **A successful and ambitious town** – Maximising economic growth, employment and prosperity in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable way
- **A healthy place** – Helping our residents to live longer, healthier lives
- **Safe and resilient communities** – Creating a safer environment where residents can live more independent lives
- **Delivering best value** – Changing how we operate, to deliver affordable and cost-effective outcomes for residents and businesses

Update:

- We've continued to make strong progress in delivering on our commitment to "get the basics right" - investing in clean neighbourhoods, supporting young people, and improving community safety.
- We've launched new funding schemes, refurbished key assets, and introduced practical, visible services that respond directly to what residents have told us they want.
- Our focus remains on delivering improvements that are felt in every street, park and community, and doing the simple things well, consistently.

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

1.1 Community Caretakers Launched

1.1.1 We've introduced a brand-new team of 16 Community Caretakers - four in each of our neighbourhood areas - to deliver visible improvements across the town. This is the first time in over 15 years that we've seen this level of investment in practical, on-the-ground services. The caretakers are already making a difference: from graffiti removal and fence repairs to weeding and repainting, they're helping restore pride in our communities. Their early work includes a full refurbishment of Pallister Park's play area and a joint clean-up of Park End skate park with young people from the Junction Foundation.



1.2 Neighbourhood Safety Wardens Commended

- 1.2.1 **Bravery in Action:** Our Neighbourhood Safety Wardens have been rightly praised for their bravery after confronting a knife-wielding individual in the town centre. Their quick thinking and professionalism helped protect the public and led to the individual being restrained until police arrived. These officers are a credit to the town and play a vital role in keeping Middlesbrough safe.

1.3 Recovery Month

- 1.3.1 **Raising Awareness and Promoting Hope:** September marked Recovery Month in Middlesbrough, with events and campaigns celebrating the strength of individuals and families overcoming addiction and mental health challenges. I was proud to plant a memorial tree in Albert Park alongside members of the recovery community, and to see our Town Hall lit in purple to mark the occasion. The message is clear: recovery is possible, and support is available.



2. THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

2.1 Clean Neighbourhoods and Community Safety

- 2.1.1 **Communal Bin Upgrade Programme:** Since August 2024, over 500 new steel-lidded communal bins have been installed, with all bins in North Ormesby now replaced. A further 270 bins will be rolled out in Newport, Central and Park wards. This investment supports cleaner back alleys and encourages responsible waste disposal and recycling.
- 2.1.2 **Back Alley Clean-Up:** A major clean-up of an overgrown alley between Burlam Road and Linthorpe Cemetery has restored access and improved the local

environment. The Area Care team removed ivy roots, trimmed trees, and cleared vegetation, with the work completed sensitively to avoid damage to boundary walls.

- 2.1.3 New CCTV Installation:** A rapid deployment CCTV camera has been installed on Burlam Road following concerns about drug-related activity near Linthorpe Cemetery. The camera is actively monitored by our CCTV control room and is already showing positive results. This is a direct response to residents' concerns and part of our wider commitment to community safety.



2.2 Supporting Young People

- 2.2.1 Youth Group Seed Funding Scheme:** We've launched a new seed funding scheme to support emerging youth groups and resident-led initiatives working with young people aged 8–16. Grants of up to £250 are available for small-scale projects that promote learning, wellbeing, community cohesion, and aspiration. This scheme removes barriers for grassroots groups and reflects our commitment to investing in young people and empowering communities. As of this report's publication, applications are now closed – I look forward to seeing some of the fantastic groups that will benefit from this scheme.

2.3 Recycling Innovation

- 2.3.1 Reverse Vending Machine Trial:** A pilot scheme has begun at the Community Grocery eco shop in Linthorpe, featuring a reverse vending machine that rewards residents with vouchers for recycling eligible cans and bottles. Inspired by a similar initiative I saw in Finland, this is the first of its kind led by a UK local authority. If successful, we'll expand the scheme to other locations across the town — helping residents recycle more and save money.



2.4 Holiday Activities and Food Programme – Long-Term Funding Secured

- 2.4.1 The Government has announced a £600 million funding package for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme over the next three financial years. Middlesbrough's own scheme, Bring It On Boro, has been recognised nationally as one of the top ten in England for its reach and impact.
- 2.4.2 This summer, the programme offered 27,000 places across 50 providers, with activities ranging from gymnastics and football to swimming and cheerleading. I've also extended the programme into half-term holidays using Council funding, ensuring even more children benefit year-round.
- 2.4.3 A multi-year settlement gives us the certainty to plan ahead, strengthen partnerships and continue delivering high-quality, enriching experiences for children and families across Middlesbrough.

2.5 Multibank – Two-Year Funding Commitment

- 2.5.1 Last year, we made an initial £25,000 investment into the Tees Valley Multibank - a new initiative based in Middlesbrough that helps families with essentials like clothing, hygiene products, bedding and school uniforms. It was clear from the outset that this was a project making a real difference.
- 2.5.2 That's why we've now committed a further £60,000 over two years from the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund to support its continued growth. Run by The Junction, the Multibank works with major retailers like Amazon to redistribute surplus goods to those who need them most, and it's already helping thousands of families across the Tees Valley.
- 2.5.3 This isn't just about funding, it's about dignity, hope, and making sure no one goes without the basics. I'm proud that Middlesbrough is leading the way, and I want to thank everyone involved for the compassion and hard work they bring to this vital service.

2.6 £40m Regeneration Funding for East Middlesbrough

- 2.6.1 East Middlesbrough is set to benefit from two major long-term investments totalling £40 million.
- 2.6.2 Park End will receive £20 million through the Government's Pride in Place programme - a guaranteed £2 million per year for the next decade. Residents will lead the way in deciding how the money is spent, supported by a new community board made up of local people, Councillors and community groups.
- 2.6.3 Separately, this summer Thorntree was named in the Spending Review as one of 20 trailblazer neighbourhoods nationally, also receiving up to £20 million over ten years. This funding will support community-led regeneration and provide early support to prepare for further investment.
- 2.6.4 These announcements represent a huge opportunity for our communities. For too long, areas like Park End and Thorntree haven't had the investment they deserve.

Now, we have unlocked the resources to match the strength and spirit of local people and deliver real change to help these communities thrive.

2.7 Corporate Peer Challenge – Follow-Up Visit & Continuous Improvement Plan

- 2.7.1 In January, we invited the Local Government Association to carry out a Corporate Peer Challenge - a key moment in our improvement journey. Their report recognised the progress we've made, particularly in pulling back from the financial precipice in 2024, but it also made clear that we're not out of the woods yet.
- 2.7.2 The peer team highlighted the need to build capacity, strengthen governance, improve recruitment and retention, and reset our transformation programme to deliver long-term financial sustainability. They also recognised the strong working relationship between myself and our new Chief Executive, Erik Scollay, and the optimism that's beginning to grow across the organisation.
- 2.7.3 We've responded with a Continuous Improvement Plan, and we're reporting progress quarterly to Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Board. In November, members of the original peer team will return to review our progress and help us stay on track.
- 2.7.4 This isn't just about recovery, it's about delivering better outcomes for the people of Middlesbrough. We're committed to building a council that's resilient, outward-facing, and focused on making a real difference.

2.8 Fair Funding Review – Fighting for Middlesbrough

- 2.8.1 I've continued to engage directly with ministers on the Fair Funding Review, making the case for a funding system that recognises the scale of the challenges we face in Middlesbrough and the impact of years of underfunding under the austerity agenda.
- 2.8.2 The previous government acknowledged the broken funding model and the need for change, but failed to deliver it. I've made clear to the new ministerial team that areas like ours, with high levels of deprivation and historically low tax bases, must be prioritised in any new settlement.
- 2.8.3 With a reshuffled team now in place, I'm continuing to advocate for a fairer, simpler funding system that targets money where it's most needed, and ensures Councils like ours can deliver high quality services which our residents rely on.

2.9 Performance Improvements

- 2.9.1 As part of the work to improve how we measure projects and performance, we now have a more in-depth way of tracking the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund. Given the scope of the fund and the many fantastic projects it supports, I'm more than happy to share the full breakdown with members should they wish.

Youth Group Seed Funding: Milestone Plan		Responsible	Start	End	Individual RAG	RAG by metric
REF	£0.100m supporting the growth, development, and long-term sustainability of smaller youth providers across Middlesbrough					
YSF 01.01	Agree grant criteria	Sharon Barker	Aug-25	Aug-25		
YSF 01.02	Set up new cost centre	Josh Heathcock	Aug-25	Aug-25		
YSF 01.03	Grant applications to be submitted	Sharon Barker	Sep-25	Sep-25		
YSF 01.04	Grant panel to review applications (15 October)	Sharon Barker	Oct-25	Oct-25		
YSF 01.05	Contract exchange with successful applicants	Sharon Barker	Oct-25	Nov-25		
YSF 01.06	Grants awarded	Sharon Barker	Nov-25	Nov-25		

