

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Mayor Chris Cooke

DATE OF MEETING: 26 November 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

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 continue to make progress on our commitment to recover, reset and deliver.
- Over recent weeks, we've advanced major regeneration plans, invested in youth opportunities, and strengthened support for vulnerable residents.
- Our transformation programme continues to move forward, with neighbourhood working entering the design stage and the LGA peer challenge providing valuable external insight.
- Alongside this, targeted funding through the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund and new national allocations are helping us tackle homelessness, improve community infrastructure and support local businesses.
- These actions reflect our focus on getting the basics right while building a stronger, fairer and more ambitious Middlesbrough.

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

1.1 Corporate Peer Challenge - Follow-Up Visit

- 1.1.1 We recently welcomed the Local Government Association (LGA) team back to Middlesbrough for a follow-up visit as part of our Corporate Peer Challenge. This follows their initial review earlier in the year and forms an important part of our continuous improvement journey.
- 1.1.2 The process was constructive and worthwhile, providing an opportunity to reflect on progress and identify areas for further development. It's good practice to open ourselves up to scrutiny, and this engagement demonstrates our commitment to transparency and improvement.
- 1.1.3 The peer team brings a wealth of experience from other councils across the country, offering valuable insights and practical advice that will help us strengthen governance, build capacity and deliver better outcomes for residents.
- 1.1.4 A full report from the LGA will be available shortly, and we will continue to share progress with Members as we implement the recommendations.

1.2 Middlesbrough Priorities Fund - Delivery Snapshot

- 1.2.1 We've continued to use the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund to make a real difference for families, businesses and communities across the town.
- 1.2.2 **Bring it on Boro Extended:** Our acclaimed Holiday Activities and Food programme ran during the October half term for the first time, thanks to a £250,000 investment from the Priorities Fund. This extension means children can now access free food and activities during Easter, summer, Christmas and half terms, supporting our Middlesbrough Childhood Guarantee to raise aspirations and break down barriers for young people.
- 1.2.3 **10 x 10 Example - Newport Primary Residential Experience:** As part of the 10 x 10 pilot funded through the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund, Year 4 pupils from Newport Primary School took part in a sleepover where they learned fire safety and camping skills - a fantastic residential experience that builds confidence and life skills. Residential is one of the ten life enriching experiences we want every child to access by age 10, regardless of their background.



- 1.2.4 **Shopfront Improvement Grants:** Applications have now closed for our £180,000 grant scheme to help improve the look and feel of small businesses in Middlesbrough. Grants of up to £5,000 will support eligible businesses in hospitality, leisure, personal care and non-essential retail sectors with improvements such as signage, lighting, doors and windows. A grant panel will

convene in the coming weeks to review the 75 applications received and allocate funding.

- 1.2.5 **Bollard Installation Completed:** A practical improvement funded through Ward Councillor Priorities has also been delivered, with five new bollards installed to improve safety and access:

- Two at the entrance of Rosedale Court
- Two at the Lytton Street end of Breckon Hill Road (park side)
- One on the Breckon Hill Road / Lytton Street corner

The installation was completed on 21 October 2025 and reflects our commitment to investing in neighbourhood safety and infrastructure

- 1.2.6 These projects show how the Middlesbrough Priorities Fund is being used to respond to local needs - from creating safe spaces for children and improving neighbourhoods to supporting independent businesses and boosting trade.

2. THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

2.1.1 **Middlehaven Regeneration**

Middlehaven is one of the most important regeneration sites in Middlesbrough, and I'm pleased to report a major step forward in delivering its potential.

- 2.1.2 The Executive has approved the appointment of Capital and Centric as our development partner for Middlehaven. This decision enables detailed design work up to RIBA Stage 4, funded by £3.6 million from the Towns Fund Urban Living and Placemaking allocation. This is a proportionate investment (around 1% of the anticipated gross development value) and a vital step towards securing external funding and starting construction.

2.1.3 Why this matters:

- Middlehaven could ultimately deliver around 3,400 homes, alongside high-quality public spaces and leisure facilities.
- The scheme will create vibrant, sustainable neighbourhoods that meet the needs of young professionals and families, supporting our growing digital sector and reversing population decline.
- Capital and Centric bring a proven track record of award-winning regeneration projects and will act not only as development partner but as an end user, ensuring long-term stewardship of the site.

2.1.4 What's next

- Concept design and site investigations will begin early next year, with planning submission targeted for September 2026.
- This work will allow procurement of a main contractor and open the door to significant external investment from Homes England and private partners.
- The Council will retain land ownership and control through a series of Gateway approvals, protecting our financial position.

- 2.1.5 Middlehaven is critical to our ambition for a successful and ambitious town. This is about creating a destination that complements our town centre, attracts talent, and delivers new communities for generations to come.

2.2 Neighbourhoods Model - Moving into Design Stage

- 2.2.1 We are now progressing to the design stage of the Neighbourhoods Model, which is a key part of the Council's transformation programme and our ambition for safe and resilient communities.

- 2.2.2 This stage focuses on identifying hub locations and assessing their potential impact within each of the four neighbourhood areas - North, South, East and West.
- 2.2.3 The hubs will act as bases for multi-agency teams and provide a local front door for residents, enabling joined-up support and early intervention.
- 2.2.4 The design process will consider how hubs can best serve local needs, strengthen community resilience, and deliver integrated services in partnership with organisations such as health, police, housing, and the voluntary sector.
- 2.2.5 This work builds on the success of the locality working pilot, which demonstrated significant improvements in community engagement, perceptions of safety, and early help outcomes.
- 2.2.6 Once designs are finalised, neighbourhood plans will be developed to tackle long-term issues such as housing, employment, health inequalities, and community safety.

2.3 Future Middlesbrough - A Vision for Young People

- 2.3.1 Work is progressing on Middlesbrough's new Place Strategy, which aims to make our town the UK's most creative place for young people to live, learn and realise their future.
- 2.3.2 The Place Leaders Partnership, which brings together key stakeholders including education providers, Cleveland Police, arts organisations, the NHS and major employers, is shaping this strategy to connect culture, business and community for shared prosperity.
- 2.3.3 The vision focuses on:
 - Providing young people with positive, multicultural and shareable experiences
 - Building a bold, future-focused offer anchored in Middlesbrough's digital, engineering and cultural strengths
 - Linking to our 2030 Bicentenary ambitions
- 2.3.4 Key principles include Create-in-Place, civic co-creation, low-cost high-impact initiatives, and storytelling as strategy.
- 2.3.5 Next steps will see the strategy finalised, game-changing projects identified, and public consultation launched as we build momentum towards Middlesbrough's Bicentenary celebrations.

2.4 Levick Court - Transforming Respite Care for Adults with Learning Disabilities

- 2.4.1 As part of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, Levick Court has been identified for re-provision to ensure a sustainable, high-quality respite service for adults with learning disabilities and their families.
- 2.4.2 The new model will deliver 8 health respite beds and 8 social care respite beds, in partnership with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV).
- 2.4.3 This integrated approach will provide clinical oversight and nursing input alongside social care support, reducing crisis situations for families and promoting independence.
- 2.4.4 The re-provision safeguards a vital local service, prevents out-of-area placements, and supports carers with essential breaks, contributing to safe and resilient communities and a healthy place.
- 2.4.5 Mobilisation of the new service is scheduled to begin in January 2026, following completion of the procurement process and staff transition arrangements.
- 2.4.6 This collaborative model also supports the Council's financial sustainability, delivering efficiencies and embedding social value through improved outcomes for residents.

2.5 £590,000 Secured to Tackle Homelessness

2.5.1 On World Homeless Day, Middlesbrough was confirmed as a recipient of £590,238 from the Government's £84 million national package to prevent and reduce homelessness.

2.5.2 The funding includes:

- Nearly £70 million for the Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant
- £11 million to support children experiencing homelessness
- £3 million for drug and alcohol treatment
- £200,000 for voluntary and frontline sector support

2.5.3 This investment will help the Council and partners provide vital support to those at risk of homelessness, strengthen prevention work, and save lives.

2.5.4 I met with the team at Depaul to share the news and discuss how this funding will make a real difference in Middlesbrough.

