

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Theo Furness - Executive Member for Development

DATE OF MEETING: 14 January 2026

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

Update:

1. Executive Decisions

- Cemetery Provision – Middlesbrough – 3rd December 2025

2. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

Town Centre Updates

2.1 Efforts to secure and enhance retailers in Middlesbrough Town Centre has progressed with news that Boots and B&M stores will return to Middlesbrough in 2026. The retail economy remains fragile across the entire UK but Middlesbrough is still favoured across the Tees Valley as a high street location. Council representation continues to work with major retailers and property owners to develop plans to consolidate, enhance and renew the Town Centre.

2.2 To follow the success of the Livewell Centre relocation to the Cleveland Centre – works for a new Skills and Employment Hub, to host the Community Learning services will complete in early 2026. The hub will provide a modern, well-equipped and welcoming learning environment which will provide Middlesbrough residents with key employability skills, along with a job brokerage service to connect applicants and local businesses with job opportunities and recruitment campaigns.

Stack over 1 year old

2.3 STACK Middlesbrough celebrates a hugely successful first year in the Rail and Historic Quarter. 250,000 visitors came to STACK in it's Maiden year which has exceeded all expectations. Crucially, STACK has created 50 jobs, added 300,000 to footfall in the area and provided a draw to enliven the nighttime economy of Middlesbrough. The addition of STACK to the nighttime economy is not a zero sum game. It has been

proved not to draw custom from existing businesses, rather it has drawn a new demographic of visitors to Middlesbrough, for the benefit of all of our hospitality companies. This can be further demonstrated by the nearby expansion of Honky Tonk and the recent opening of 'Prohibition' – a new, over 35s cocktail lounge.

Historic quarter progress and train station development

2.4 Council teams continue to press for the early opening of the business units which were restored as part of the Rail Station's recent reconfiguration and enhancement works. It is understood that Tees Valley Combined Authority have taken the operational headlease for these spaces and is working to bring creative and commercial uses to these spaces. Council officers will support and assist the early occupation of these units in attempt to bring the unsightly hoardings down at the earliest opportunity.

Centre Square Christmas Light Switch On

2.5 The Christmas Lights Switch On took place on Sunday 23 November on Centre Square, with partner sponsor Everyone Active, and saw a welcome return of the much-loved Christmas parade involving school and community groups and a number of performers. A stage programme also featured local groups, alongside professional acts, plus visitors were able to enjoy several light installations as part of Shine On Boro (including a giant sleeping cat on the Library Green), visit Santa in his grotto and take part in a variety of Christmas-themed workshops. This year's event had a peak audience of 8,000 for the switch on moment, with more people visiting across the day.

Captain Cooks square update

2.6 Roxy cinema is the latest opening at Captain Cook Square – support is being provided as the business continues to build it's customer base. Roxy cinema will be part of the Holiday Activities programme for the Christmas holidays. Funshack are also participating and plans are being developed for Level X's inclusion in the February half-term. It is a priority of the development, not only to provide entertainment and leisure for visitors and residents, but to ensure that such opportunities are accessible to as many people as possible.

Old Town Hall

2.7 Construction works will commence on the redevelopment of Middlesbrough's Old Town Hall, in January 2026. The 12 month programme will see the heritage asset developed into a business space within the Boho Zone. A modern market place extension will contrast the old and the new, highlighting Middlesbrough's early industrial expansion, and it will be a key feature of Middlesbrough's Bicentenary in 2028.

Middlehaven

2.8 November's Executive meeting approved a collaboration between Middlesbrough Council and leading housing and place developers - Capital & Centric – work will now commence on the Masterplanning and viability appraisals of a major housing-led, mixed-use development in the Middlehaven area. This critical preparatory work will provide all technical pre-development work, public consultation, planning permissions and viability assessments to present an investment proposition for the Middlehaven area. Capital & Centric have great experience in this area and are uniquely

characterised by long term operational involvement (post development) as well as boasting excellent partnership relationships with Homes England and institutional finance providers. The predevelopment programme will conclude in approximately 18 months, following detailed analysis, planning and surveys.

Out of the Centre Updates

Southlands

2.9 Construction of the new Community and Sports facility at the Southlands Site continues without major issue. Construction will complete in the spring of 2026 and Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation will be supported in their relocation to the site.

Nunthorpe Community centre

2.10 Construction of the new Community centre continues, with the framework largely complete. Construction will complete in the spring / summer of 2026 with occupation of the managing organisation following shortly after a period of internal fit out.

Newham Hall Development

2.11 The access road for Newham Hall housing site will be complete in April 2026. This, along with the major power supply order being brought to site, will enable the phased marketing and development of the site from late 2026.

Nunthorpe Grange

2.12 The development of Nunthorpe Grange is in the planning process. A decision is anticipated in early 2026.

Cemetery expansion

2.13 Investment in Middlesbrough's burial plots aims to deliver up to 1,258 spaces. With the planning policy requirement to address Biodiversity Net Gain, 22 spaces have been sacrificed, so 1,236 will be the total. Contractors will be on site early in the new financial year and all precautions will be taken to ensure that existing plots, and ongoing burials, will not be prejudiced.

3 THE TIME AHEAD

Update:

Upcoming Executive Reports

- Investment in Temporary Accommodation – 21st January 2026
- Building Control Fees – 21st January 2026