

## **COUNCILLOR ASHLEY WATERS**

### **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

#### **DECISIONS**

##### **LIP Consultation – Executive 16 February 2021**

1. Middlesbrough Council is mandated to produce a Local Implementation Plan (LIP), in line with the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) produced by Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA).

The LIP provides the local context and content as to how the local Highway Authority (Middlesbrough Council) will deliver local transport priorities and initiatives to ensure delivery of the overarching objectives of the STP. The LIP also includes both Mayoral and Strategic Plan objectives; identifying the proposals that will assist in achieving these objectives simultaneously.

The draft LIP has been prepared following the STP being approved, and Middlesbrough Council is keen to engage with the public and consult public opinion on its approach to ensuring that the area develops its transport network appropriately. This was approved by Executive and the public consultation exercise will commence presently. Finding will be incorporated into a refined LIP and brought back for Executive consideration

##### **TeesAMP Extension Contract variation 15 February 2021**

2. The lettings at TeesAMP have progressed ahead of business case assumptions. Some prospective tenants have required some site adaptations to accommodate their needs and it is deemed appropriate to extend the existing works contract to ensure continuity of warranties, indemnities and standards.

Delegated Authority has been awarded to expedite a variation to the Development Management Agreement (DMA) between Middlesbrough Council and development partner, to formally contract new sections (or phases of development) in respect of the Executive approved Plot 9 yard expansion and the power upgrade at Plots 5.

Costs of such work form part of the rental agreement / business case and are cost neutral.

## **Middlehaven Strategic Partner and Masterplanning - Executive 23 February 2021**

3. The different investments and developments emerging at Middlehaven have the opportunity to make a significant difference to the area, and to the economy, but need to be planned in a coherent way. There is a danger of different schemes competing with each other, infrastructure requirements falling between the boundaries of different schemes, and the phasing of activity working against what the wider market can accommodate.

There is therefore a need to have a clear, up to date strategic masterplan for developing Middlehaven, and for capitalising on the financial opportunities currently available. It is also necessary for the Council to work closely with the relevant development partner to be able to put the strategic masterplan into practice, and ensure that the available funding opportunities are not missed.

The Executive report sets out how the Council proposes to work in partnership with a strategic partner (BCEGI) to develop the masterplan for developing Middlehaven, develop the necessary site infrastructure, and move into the delivery phase on multiple projects. This will form a sound basis for the coherent and strategic development of Middlehaven with an experienced investment partner.

### **STRATEGIC**

4. Announced at the Budget announcement of 3 March 2021, Middlesbrough Council and Middlesbrough Town Deal Board has been successful in securing £21.9m of Government (Towns Fund) funding to deliver a package of interventions to regenerate Middlesbrough's economy and communities.

Funding will enable the investment in reshaping Middlesbrough's economy and community infrastructure. Investment priorities include:

- Development of residential and commercial floorspace at Middlehaven;
- Restoration and enhancement of community / heritage assets (Old Town Hall, Captain Cook Pub, Exchange Square, Central Library);
- Rebalancing office and residential space in the town centre;
- New community centres at Southlands and Nunthorpe;
- Allocations to each Ward for communities to design and deliver their own priorities for local improvements; and,
- Investment in the expansion of Middlesbrough College campus and services.

The next stage in the funding process includes:

- The Town Deal Board prioritising the funding programme to reflect the funding offer (£25m ask = £21.9m awarded);
- Agreeing the heads of terms for funding;
- Prioritising a shortlist of 'fast track' business cases; and,
- Building / detailing the business cases for strategic investment projects.

Funding will be deployed from the 2021/2022 financial year.

### **Future High Streets Fund\*\*\*\***

5. Middlesbrough Council was announced as securing a provisional funding offer of £14.1m on 26 December 2020. Since this time, the programme has been prioritised to reflect the

available funding award. Final business case documentation has been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the revised business case has been approved\*\*\*\*.

Work now commences to deliver the programme objectives which is largely based around the rebalancing and repurposing of the town centre economy to include a greater proportion of non-retail / leisure uses; as well as a significant investment in urban living.

Project elements include:

- Captain Cook Square Repurposing and Leisure Adaptations £9.1m
- Urban Living within the town centre £3.5m
- Town centre transport infrastructure £1.0m
- Culture and Events £0.25m
- Covid adaptation grants £0.25m

Delivery will commence in April 2021 and the bulk of the investment will be made during the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. This will aid Middlesbrough's recovery post covid; create new employment opportunities and revitalize our town centre economy – for the long term.

### **Post Covid - Recovery Programme**

6. Government resources have aided in direct grant support to businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. Resources have also been earmarked for how some additional government funding can be utilised to support Middlesbrough's business community to stabilise, recover and grow, when the pandemic restrictions are gradually eased.

Based on consultation with businesses, agencies such as the federation of small business (FSB) and the North east Chamber of Commerce. A recovery package is being designed which will offer businesses advice and guidance to reposition their business in a post covid world and, where business cases have compelling investment appraisals, the support package can deploy capital grant funding to enable businesses to invest in adaptations and growth capital.

The outline programme will be presented to Executive for consideration in the coming months, when there is a clear timetable for restrictions to be eased on a sustainable basis.

## **PERFORMANCE**

### **Commercial Lettings**

7. TeesAMP and Centre Square continue to buck the trend in terms of very positive lettings. The sites are likely to be nearing fully let by the end of 2021 and this is in advance of the anticipated business case occupation rates.

Fit out works are well advanced in Centre Square with tenant businesses scheduling occupation from March 2021.

### **Boho 8**

8. Works are nearing completion for the Boho 8 business accommodation facilities. Practical completion will be reached in late March 2021 and members will be offered an opportunity to visit the facilities, as covid restrictions allow.

The units have certainly has caught the interest of many new and growing businesses, with advanced lettings discussions in place to occupy the units as soon as is practicable.

## Road Safety

9. Middlesbrough Residents can now access a set of free road safety guides at: [www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/roadsafety](http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/roadsafety) . The guides cover a range of road safety topics from advice on child car seats/family cycling and older road users plus much more. As lockdowns come to an end it is important that we all remember that the roads/traffic levels will also get back to normal and the risks will increase so the guides can help remind us of how to manage those risks.
- The Road Safety Team have also prepared a 'Back to School – Road Safety Advice' information advice leaflet ready to send out to schools when pupils return on 8<sup>th</sup> March as children in particular have seen throughout lockdown examples of people walking in the roads and may need reminding to get back to good habits when near roads.

Depending on when this used, Ashley / Andy should have approved the new pedestrian crossing on Avenue, which was a result of ward member, Council and public collaboration and consultation. Let me know if you want something on that?

## Sustainable Transport – Rail Station

10. Work has now begun on the long-awaited platform extension at Middlesbrough Station, which will realise the ambition to deliver a direct London service for the residents of Middlesbrough; providing improved connectivity in and out of the region and access to additional inward investment opportunities. This will be the first stage of the major redevelopment programme, which will see a complete refurbishment of the former undercroft area. This will significantly uplift the public realm around the station, along with improving connectivity to and from Middlesbrough via a new gateway to the town.



## INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION

## **Linthorpe Road Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan – Consultation**

11. Middlesbrough Council is, through consultation, committed to develop a workable walking and cycling solution in Linthorpe Road which provides opportunity for more walkers and cyclists to enjoy central Middlesbrough, whilst investing in transformative changes to ensure the character of this vital and vibrant town centre area is protected and enhanced. All this, while further improving the local area, public health and wellbeing and improving safety for all road users.

The Council (in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority) has consulted widely in a conversation to explore the benefits, issues and concerns of stakeholders; in order to design a proposal of maximum benefit. This included writing to all directly impacted (front facing) businesses and residents within the scope of the proposal; along with other stakeholders. All were encouraged to submit a response to the survey. The consultation was live between 14/12/2020 and 29/1/2021, extended to 3/2/2021 allowing additional time for stakeholders to present their views. 439 responses were received in total.

These responses have been considered in detail and Executive will be presented the findings of the consultation, and take a decision on the adapted proposal, which provides mitigation to the issues raised.

### **EU Transition Business Support**

12. Middlesbrough Council officers have been supporting a small number of Middlesbrough businesses who have faced additional administrative burdens as a consequence of the EU transitional arrangements and Exports to the EU.

Council officers deployed specialist advice and made links with appropriate government departments to lobby and directly support businesses to maintain their export programmes.

Whilst the impact of EU withdrawal has created very specific issues for a handful of specialist companies, generic advice has not been in great demand. Businesses have committed a huge amount of time and expense in preparation and have taken direct action to minimise the transitional impact on their businesses. For this they should be applauded. Their hard work has minimised disruption and ensured that export trade continues as close to normality as possible.

Council officers continue to respond to support requirements of businesses and monitor the emerging issues; which are subsequently reported back to the appropriate government ministry, for urgent resolution.

### **Traffic Management - Church Lane / St Mary's Walk**

13. Following the removal of the experimental road closure on Church Lane in early January, the Council has arranged for additional speed surveys on both Church Lane and St. Mary's Walk and speed enforcement from the Police. The large scale Origin / Destination survey of the estate covering the six entry / exit points, to identify the actual levels of through traffic, has been organised for late March. The results of the survey

will be analysed and there will be further public consultation on options to address the traffic issues in the local area and which options are the most suitable way forward.