

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>Report of:</b>	Director of Regeneration and Housing – Richard Horniman Director of Environment, Communities and Culture – Geoff Field
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<b>Relevant Executive Member:</b>	Executive Member for Development – Cllr Theo Furness Executive Member for Neighbourhoods – Cllr Ian Blades
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<b>Submitted to:</b>	Executive
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<b>Date:</b>	4 February 2026
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<b>Title:</b>	Neighbourhood Hubs Investment
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<b>Report for:</b>	Decision
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<b>Status:</b>	Public
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<b>Council Plan priority:</b>	Safe and resilient communities
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<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Why:</b>	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £250,000 and have a significant impact in two or more wards

<b>Subject to call in?</b>	Yes
<b>Why:</b>	Non-Urgent

<b>Proposed decision(s)</b>
It is recommended that Executive:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approves the specification of works outlined for the enhancement of the North, South, East and West Neighbourhood Hubs;</li> <li>b) notes the phased development and delivery of works to ensure that continuity of Community services are prioritised;</li> <li>c) approves that any of the £5m resource allocation which is not used on the redevelopment of the Neighbourhood Hubs, be vired towards neighbourhood assets and open spaces; and,</li> <li>d) delegates any construction contract, design, scope and budget adjustments to the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Director of Environment and Community Services – insofar as they are compliant with financial and contract procedure rules.</li> </ol>

## **Executive summary**

This report sets out how the Council intends to significantly invest in its Neighbourhood Hub buildings in the North, South, East and West of the town.

The hubs will play a key role in the delivery of Neighbourhood Working, the approach that was approved by Executive in April 2026.

That report allocated £5m of Transformation Programme capital funding to upgrade the hubs and invest in other community spaces. The investment will provide improved access to services and facilities for people all around the town. More staff will be based locally and each of the hubs will offer tailored support to the community on issues specific to their area.

The upgrades to the buildings will also allow them to be used for a wider range of activities, with examples including family events and sport.

This report sets out the plans for each hub and outlines the timelines for the projects, subject to Executive approval.

## 1. Purpose of this report and its contribution to the achievement of the Council Plan ambitions

1.1 Middlesbrough Council recognises that, in order to provide high quality and modern services within an affordable budget, it needs to transform into an organisation that works with the community to achieve its aims and objectives and as such the elected Mayor of Middlesbrough has set out his 'Recover, Reset and Deliver' transformation programme. The Neighbourhood Model is part of this transformation programme and it aims to ensure that partners (both internal across Council departments and external partners) work together, doing things 'with' communities and not 'to' them and to understand what people really want and need in order to thrive in their lives.

1.2 The vision for Neighbourhoods is 'to make Middlesbrough a cleaner, safer, stronger, and healthier place to live through proactive, intelligence-led partnership work and by building community resilience, doing things 'with' communities and not 'to' them.' This vision is routed in the 2024 – 27 Council Plan which sets out the Mayor's vision and ambition for the town.

1.3 The Neighbourhood Model seeks to achieve a joined-up system change centred on a recognition that we need to reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations, voluntary sector, the private sector, residents, and businesses to achieve change by developing collaborative approaches that address the underlying causes of community problems. The model aims to strengthen community resilience with a focus on prevention, building social capital, and making better connections across the community.

1.4 To enable this consolidated response, Neighbourhood Hubs require investment to ensure that the facilities are resident-focussed, fit-for-purpose and provides the amenity required to host a range of partnership organisations.

Our ambitions	Summary of how this report will support delivery of these ambitions and the underpinning aims
<b>A successful and ambitious town</b>	The Neighbourhood Team will form collaborative partnerships and community empowerment, working within existing networks while cultivating new connections. It will include an enhanced, integrated community capacity and development function, recognising the importance of building community resilience and strengthening social cohesion.
<b>A healthy Place</b>	The Neighbourhood Model seeks to achieve a joined-up system change centred on a recognition that we need to reconfigure relationships between statutory organisations, voluntary sector, the private sector, residents, and businesses to achieve change by developing collaborative approaches that address the underlying causes of community problems. The model aims to strengthen community resilience with a focus on prevention, building social capital, and making better connections across the community.
<b>Safe and resilient communities</b>	These teams will establish joined-up access to services, build community capacity, and support self-help initiatives, with a strong emphasis on early intervention and prevention. Using

	data and insights will enable proactive identification of those households that need help early, such as those struggling with debt or domestic violence.
<b>Delivering best value</b>	The aim of early intervention / neighbourhood models is to connect communities with support and services which directly address the local issues faced. This approach avoids issues escalating, which saves public services money and provides better outcomes for people. The work of the Neighbourhood Model can accelerate this, by reinforcing the support that is available within community settings.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that Executive:

- a) approves the specification of works outlined for the enhancement of the North, South, East and West Neighbourhood Hubs;
- b) notes the phased development and delivery of works to ensure that continuity of Community services are prioritised;
- c) approves that any of the £5m resource allocation which is not used on the redevelopment of the Neighbourhood Hubs, be vired towards neighbourhood assets and open spaces; and,
- d) delegates any construction contract, design, scope and budget adjustments to the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Director of Environment and Community Services – insofar as they are compliant with financial and contract procedure rules.

## **3. Rationale for the recommended decision(s)**

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Working is a key transformational strategy. The approach, over the medium-term, aims to increase efficiency and reduce demand pressure.
- 3.2 Neighbourhood Working will provide better outcomes for the residents of Middlesbrough.
- 3.3 Neighbourhood Working will become the operational model that addresses the entrenched challenges within the neighbourhoods of Middlesbrough.

## **4. Background and relevant information**

- 4.1 The approved Neighbourhoods Model Executive report of 30 April 2025 set out Council's approach to Neighbourhood Working. As part of this report, £5m of Transformation Programme capital was allocated to support the upgrade and enhancement of the Council's community infrastructure by way of investment in each of the Council's North, South, East and West Neighbourhood Hubs; along with some ancillary investment in some community spaces.
- 4.2 Buildings are to be adapted to be mindful of the following design principles and functional criteria:
  - a) Each hub should be open and accessible;

- b) Each building should have community amenity for events, family facilities or sports etc;
- c) Residents should have access to 'self-serve' equipment for Council services;
- d) Hubs should include open access IT equipment;
- e) Hubs should present notices and information for residents;
- f) Hubs should be safe and secure;
- g) Hubs spaces should be adaptable and able to host multiple uses; and,
- h) Hubs should be clearly signposted and presented.

4.3 Since this time, Council teams have developed renovation specifications to enable the enhancement of the Neighbourhood Hubs and select community assets. This exercise has provided specifications for each area, to ensure that the existing, major Neighbourhood Hubs can be adapted to the intended use of the Neighbourhood Model.

4.4 With the core principles embedded on each site, the following bespoke adaptations will be delivered on each site:

**4.5 South Hub (Hemlington)**

- i. Expansion of space into the main hub
- ii. Decant and relocation of existing unit tenant
- iii. Refurb and preparation of new unit for tenant
- iv. New signage
- v. Reception configuration
- vi. Creation of up to 3 interview rooms
- vii. Additional workspace for agency partners
- viii. Decoration refresh
- ix. Access and frontage.

**4.6 North Hub (Newport)**

- i. Space rationalisation exercise
- ii. Roof repairs
- iii. Reception reconfiguration
- iv. Heating and cooling
- v. Creation of additional agency / partner space within existing footprint
- vi. Decoration refresh
- vii. Signage and access
- viii. Bathrooms and toilets

**4.7 East Hub (Berwick Hills)**

- i. Modifications required to the entrance lobby area, ideally to accommodate a client telephone, PC's for client use, and space for bucket chairs, open plan adaptations.
- ii. Free access to the main entrance doors
- iii. Access control will be provided to the staff / agency areas
- iv. Small meeting room and 1:1 room, both to have glazed screen / partitions
- v. Large meeting room to have the facilities for video conferencing
- vi. TV / monitor locations – reception, gym room, staff welfare room

- vii. Caretakers room to have a COSH cupboards
- viii. One room to accommodate the Police and Criminal Intelligence Act (PACE) equipment
- ix. Clinic room
- x. CCTV is to be linked
- xi. Air con will be provided in the IT Hub room
- xii. New external signage

#### **4.8 West Hub (Grove Hill)**

- i. Space rationalisation exercise
- ii. Assessment of whether extension build is required
- iii. Community / event space (subject to rationalisation exercise)
- iv. Roof repairs
- v. Reception reconfiguration
- vi. Heating and cooling
- vii. Creation of additional agency / partner space within existing footprint
- viii. Decoration refresh
- ix. Signage and access
- x. Bathrooms and toilets

#### **Ancillary Management Issues**

4.9 It should be noted that the proposed enhancements to the Neighbourhood Hubs will necessitate some consequential works and upgrades. When delivering adaptation works which require approval and oversight with the most current Building Regulations standards, this often means that other, existing, building amenities must be adapted at the same time, to secure Building Regulations compliance. Although some of the works would be considered relatively 'light-touch', they may also trigger upgrades in building features such as power supplies; fire alarms and suppression; heating, cooling and ventilation; building accessibility; and, the provision of sanitary services. This cost will be borne by the project budgets, as expenditure would not be required in the absence of the plans for enhancement.

4.10 Some of the project proposals create revenue expenses and opportunity costs in relation to the management of corporate assets. Examples include:

- i. The expansion of the South Hub into an adjacent unit may mean that there will be an additional unit in the Viewley Centre which cannot now be let for commercial income, and the Council will bear the increased utility costs and business rates relating to the expanded Neighbourhood Hub. This new revenue burden should be acknowledged in budgets and income targets.
- ii. New additions / extensions to any premises would likely attract increased utility expanses and business rates valuations for the affected property.

4.11 In enhancing the Neighbourhood Hubs contractors will require a controlled and safe environment. As such, it will be impossible to avoid periods where the occupants and services will need to have restricted access or alternative provision. Similarly, it is important to recognise service continuity during the renovation periods, as it would be disruptive to have all four major Neighbourhood Hubs offline at the same time.

4.12 Plans for works will include phasing and decant arrangements. At the current moment the plan is to progress the South and East Neighbourhood Hubs works first. Allowing for more design refinement and planning / procurement processes, the North and West Hubs will follow sequentially.

4.13 To allow for valid procurement processes, planning applications and design refinement, the following estimated timescales have been produced. The timescales are caveated by appropriate approvals and contracts being in place, along with a manageable plan to keep the services operational through construction and have no more than two of the four hubs being out of commission and any one time:

North Hub	Oct-26	Apr-27	spec prepared	26 wks
South Hub	May-26	Sep-26	spec prepared	14 wks
East Hub	Aug-26	Jan-27	spec prepared	20 wks
West Hub	Late 2026	Late 2027	Late 2026 start – detailed spec pending	26 – 52 Weeks

## 5. Ward Member Engagement if relevant and appropriate

5.1 Ward Members are involved in the production and delivery of Neighbourhood Action Partnerships (NAPs) which underpin the Neighbourhood Model.

5.2 Respective Neighbourhood Managers will keep Ward Members informed of timescales, alternative arrangements and progress throughout the investment works.

## 6. Other potential alternative(s) and why these have not been recommended

6.1 A range of options and requirements have been considered with the occupant services and Neighbourhood Managers. The service has informed the scope and requirements of the specifications set out.

## 7. Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Topic	Impact
Financial (including procurement and Social Value)	<p>This report addresses the Capital allocation of up to £5m from the Transformation Programme, within the Council's current Capital Programme; as set out in the Neighbourhoods Model Executive report of 30 April 2025.</p> <p>Invariably, there will be revenue impacts arising from the enhancement and expansion of Neighbourhood Hubs and community assets. This will include additional utility and rates costs, operational revenue implications and the opportunity cost of revenue income foregone as commercial spaces are diverted to corporate uses.</p>

	<p>At present the exact revenue impact cannot be fully quantified, however they are not anticipated to be of significant value. Wherever possible, the additional costs will be absorbed within pre-existing budgets, however, where services budgets cannot bear these costs, representation will be made to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>The withdrawal of a commercial unit from its full income potential places does create a tangible loss of income potential. The income target for the Valuation and Estates service must be adjusted accordingly, as this proposal diminishes the income potential of the commercial estate. Therefore the adjustment for the lost income will be addressed in future MTFP updates.</p>
Legal	The procurement of the construction works will require legal contracting and documentation.
Risk	<p>Programme timescales and cost estimates have been derived from normalised assumptions of site conditions, no abnormal conditions and standard contractor mobilisation timescales.</p> <p>Site progress will be closely monitored to ensure that any risks and issues will be identified early, with any appropriate mitigations escalated as early as possible, to minimise unanticipated cost and disruption.</p>
Human Rights, Public Sector Equality Duty and Community Cohesion	There are no human rights implications. Neighbourhood Working will aid community cohesion through working closely with residents within neighbourhoods.
Reducing Poverty	Neighbourhood working increases access to critical Council support and services. Investment in these areas can increase the propensity of residents to access skills, education and support services, which all serve to increase economic activity and reduce poverty.
Climate Change / Environmental	As part of the Neighbourhood's work, environmental education activity will be an integrated aspect. This will help the council to fulfil its climate change objectives.
Children and Young People Cared for by	A key part of Neighbourhood Working is to support children and young people. Through integrated partnership working

the Authority and Care Leavers	this workstream will both provide a better community, with lower levels of crime and antisocial behaviour in which young people can thrive but also have greater focus on resolving complex cases involving young people and children.
Data Protection	There are no data protection issues. Joint information sharing protocols are in place with partner organisations.

### **Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)**

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Final designs and planning application	Sam Gilmore	31 March 2026
Commission / Procure Contract works	Sam Gilmore	31 May 2026
First hub refurbishment complete	Sam Gilmore	30 September 2026

### **Appendices**

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### **Background papers**

Body	Report title	Date
Executive	Neighbourhoods Model	30 April 2025

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