

EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE TO COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Theo Furness - Executive Member for Development

DATE OF MEETING: 15 July 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

1. HIGHLIGHTS

Update:

1.1 Pride In Place

- 1.1.1** The Chairperson for each of the town's two Pride in Place areas have now been appointed and work is underway to appoint the remainder of the boards. Gary Hamilton and Charlotte Dinsdale have been appointed as joint co-chairs of the Thorntree and Park End partnerships.

1.2 Pride in Place Impact Fund

- 1.2.1** Concept designs for a complete remodelling of the space around Centre Square lake are now complete and have been approved by the Mayor and Andy McDonald. A landscape architect is currently being appointed to undertake the detailed design works required to remodel the area and enhance the Centre Square area. The project will transform the currently underused civic space through pond restoration, improved lighting and accessibility, public art, landscaping, seating, play and activity spaces, and wider public realm improvements. The scheme will create a safer, more welcoming destination and leave a lasting legacy for residents and visitors.

1.3 Captain Cook Square

- 1.3.1** Heads of terms have now been agreed for a new occupier at Captain Cook Square. Although there will still be work required to complete the lease, Unit 5 (the former e-sports unit) should be brought back into use in the autumn.

1.4 Employment and Skills Hub

- 1.4.1** The refurbishment of the Employment and Skills Hub in the Cleveland Centre is now complete with the service moving into the new facility in early July. Classroom based learning courses will commence in September, with the 3rd September earmarked as a potential date for the official opening / celebration.

1.5 Southlands Community and Sports Facility

- 1.5.1** Work on the construction of the new Southlands facility has been completed. Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation will relocate their headquarters to the Southlands and will operate the high-quality facility to deliver sports activity throughout the year, plus other education, employability, health and wellbeing, social inclusion, and associated activities.

1.6 Middlesbrough Old Town Hall

- 1.6.1** Work on the refurbishment of the Old Town Hall commenced in January 2026 and is progressing well. The project, which is part funded by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, will restore the Grade II Listed building and provide a natural extension to the Boho Campus by providing flexible incubation spaces for digital companies. In the last month, the scaffold has been erected to the clock tower and the steel frame for the new extension has been completed. Construction will complete in early 2027.

1.7 Investment Zone

- 1.7.1** The Council continues to work in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority and Teesside University to progress the Tees Valley Investment Zone (TVIZ). This is a transformative government-backed initiative focused on the digital and creative sectors. The first programme of support (Innovation Vouchers) was launched by the University in May 2026, and the Council's Economic Growth Team has appointed a Digital and Tech Economy Lead Officer to provide further support to the cluster and ecosystem. The lead officer will be in post from 20 July 2026.

1.8 Economic Growth Business Engagement

- 1.8.1** A new Business Sector Support Officer has been appointed and in post from 22 June 2026 as part of budget growth plans. A work programme has been produced to develop business sector databases, identify and attend suitable business events to improve visibility of the Council and identify businesses that would benefit from further engagement, signposting and support.

1.9 Place Strategy

- 1.9.1** Work is progressing on a new co-designed Place Strategy with the Place Leaders Partnership. The strategy will incorporate a refreshed town centre strategy and investment prospectus, underpinned by a vision of making Middlesbrough the best place for young people. More than 1,300 young people have participated in the research and engagement phase, with findings now published. These insights will form the basis of the strategy and future investment priorities. The Strategy is due to launch in September.

1.10 Making Middlesbrough Town Centre Safe for People and Business

- 1.10.1** The July Executive meeting will consider approval of a £1.3m investment by TVCA to establish a dedicated multi-agency team based within Middlesbrough Bus Station. The team will bring together Street Wardens, Police Constables, PCSOs and Navigator posts to provide a coordinated response to anti-social behaviour and crime, while also engaging with vulnerable individuals and signposting them to appropriate support services. The initiative aims to improve safety and confidence for residents, visitors and businesses and is expected to go live in September 2026.

1.11 Town Centre Wayfinding

- 1.11.1** A new town centre Wayfinding Strategy has been developed to improve navigation, accessibility and the overall visitor experience across Middlesbrough town centre. Following completion of the strategy, a specialist company has now been appointed to manufacture and install a new suite of wayfinding signage. Installation is scheduled to commence next month and will help residents and visitors better connect with key destinations, attractions and public spaces throughout the town centre.

1.12 Adult Skills Contracts – TVCA

- 1.12.1** The Community Learning Team have had three years of funding confirmed through TVCA, which represents an increase of £600,000 per annum for learning contract delivery in Middlesbrough. The team will deliver ESOL at all levels, Level 2 Maths and English, Entry and Level 1 IT, Level 2 Supporting Teaching Within Schools and a range of 'raising aspirations' courses. There will also be a stronger focus on bespoke employer led training for businesses to be delivered through the new Employment and Skills Hub. Delivery of two key employability programmes (Work Well and Connect to Work) has also commenced through Community Learning. The scale of delivery will increase significantly once recruitment to the ten delivery roles is complete.

1.13 Captain Cook Museum Café

- 1.13.1** Property Services are currently undertaking a small refurbishment of the café area which is programmed to be completed by the school summer holidays. The works being undertaken will deliver a more modern and accessible venue. Upgrades include;

- New Lighting
- New wall acoustic cladding
- New workshop
- Redecoration
- New non-slip flooring
- New furniture will also be provided

1.14 Homelessness Hub

- 1.14.1** The Council's Homelessness / Housing Solutions Team will soon be relocating from Middlesbrough House to Broadcasting House. The move will provide a permanent base for the service and will provide up to date facilities to meet the needs of service users. The work is programmed to completed 7th August.