

**Councillor Barrie Cooper**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL  
Wednesday 7 July 2021**

**DECISIONS**

1. Executive/Delegated decisions made since last Council –

The Middlesbrough Council Green Strategy has been approved.

The Middlesbrough Council Tree Policy 2021 has been approved.

2. The following papers went to Executive on 13<sup>th</sup> April:

Tender Pipeline Approval 2021/22.

Community Benefit from Asset Disposal.

Community Asset Transfers.

The following papers went to Executive on 15<sup>th</sup> June:

Strategic Plan 2020-23 Progress at Year End 2020-21.

Revenue and Capital Budget – Year End Outturn Position 2020/21

**STRATEGIC**

3. Street works: discussions are ongoing with City Fibre to manage the planned 38 month project to install a fibre to home network across Middlesbrough as part of a works programme to create a third national fibre network. The national scope of the project is to connect 8m premises, which is 30% of UK households with investment planned at £4bn. Middlesbrough is included in the 3rd wave of the project with major works planned to start in May 2021 with the plan to provide fibre connectivity to 83,000 homes.
4. Traffic Signals/UTMC - The new UTMC and UTC system development is progressing well with Siemens carrying out the works to have the new system in place soon. TCF funding is available to expand our UTMC assets across the Tees Valley, with the UTMC manager currently working with Fore Consulting to develop an asset plan for hardware type and location (VMS, CCTV, ANPR, Air Quality, Traffic Counting, Weather monitoring etc.)
5. Highways Projects –the planned highways team are underway with the 2020/21 works programme and are working towards having the entire scheme works complete prior to April 2022. We are currently out

to tender for the carriageway resurfacing programme of works and expect to appoint a main contractor within the next 4 weeks, with all of the planned carriageway surfacing works being completed prior to April 2022.

## **PERFORMANCE**

6. Progress against Strategic Plan and Directorate priorities.
7. Progress against approved savings plans.
8. Key activity states (need to be determined) e.g., Children Looked after, Residential care placements, reablement hours, Inward Investment enquiries, etc.

## **INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION**

9. The 'Keep Boro Tidy' is our brand new campaign for Middlesbrough residents, businesses, and community groups. We are asking Middlesbrough residents to get involved with litter-picks and/or spruce up small parts of public spaces. The campaign commenced on 28th May to coincide with the start of the 'Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean 2021' event (from 28 May to 13 June), and will continue on an ongoing basis. Additionally a number of planned Litter Picks are being arranged for the Middlesbrough Parks.
10. Media engagements.
11. Consultation updates.
12. Waste Services have undertaken a number of alley deep cleans across North Ormesby. This has involved removing all the waste, bulky items, mechanically sweeping the alleys and carrying Pest Control inspections of the alleys. Following this, colleagues in the Environmental Enforcement, Locality Working and Neighbourhood Safety have carried out inspections and door knocking to engage with residents.
13. The Urban meadow preparation and sowing of over 42,000m<sup>2</sup> is complete and will start to yield floral displays within the next 6 weeks. The floral displays should last throughout the summer months.
14. The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCFF) Tree planting scheme is now complete resulting in the planting of 1200 trees throughout various sites over the last 20 months.

## **ICT**

15. A review is underway of the Council's current website which will include the CMS (Content Management System), UX (user experience), UI (user interface). The review will also encompass requirements from service areas for the website and how they see their customers interacting with them. A detailed engagement plan and communication plan will be developed with the aim of gathering the views from all service areas and the Council's customers (citizens, businesses, visitors). There is an interdependency of the website with the MyMiddlesbrough Portal and this will also be included in the review.

16. ICT Services have now commenced the migration to the Microsoft 365 cloud based service. The project will deliver more resilient communication services combined with familiar office tools currently in use by ICT users across the Council. The project will also deliver Teams, a new platform that will improve collaboration, messaging, presence services and video conferencing for all users. The migration of email has already commenced and in July the deployment of Teams will begin.
17. ICT is constantly looking to update and improve the security posture of the Council. Ransomware threats are becoming more numerous and ever more complex and ICT must endeavour to mitigate these risks where possible. Our Architecture Team have recently introduced Geo-location blocking. As the name suggests, our systems are now activity blocking internet traffic from other countries know to harbour malicious threat actors or state sponsored terrorists. This new feature will be developed further over time and applied to more countries to match these emerging threats.

## **Human Resources**

18. Plans are under way to develop longer-term future ways of working. Both employees and managers were surveyed to gather information on their experiences of working at home including the impact on productivity, relationships and wellbeing.
19. Car Lease Schemes are a popular employee benefit supporting recruitment and retention. The Council is introducing a scheme based on 100% electric vehicles which complements the council's wider Green agenda whilst offering employees a lower cost alternative to buying an electric vehicle through salary sacrifice. Using salary sacrifice can provide savings on tax, national insurance and pension contributions for both the employee and the employer. Employees will be provided with comprehensive information on the potential impact for them before they sign up to the scheme. An implementation plan is being developed with a view to a scheme going live in the coming months.
20. The Staff Survey on appraisals results showed an overwhelming preference to move away from a one off annual event and greater use regular meetings to set objectives and monitor performance. Resources are now available including guidance, templates and an e-Learning module to supplement the ongoing process.

## **Commissioning and Procurement**

21. The Commissioning Team are now back visiting services and proactively working with care homes undertaking audits and working with the homes to ensure service quality and compliance remains a key focus alongside monitoring compliance with infection prevention and control management. All visits are undertaken having due regard to Covid 19 risk factors and staff ensure they undertake a covid test prior to visiting any services. Experience to date has been our presence and support to services has been welcomed.
22. Staff continue to operate the PPE distribution hub, offering PPE to numerous services and individuals including carers, childcare providers, education, domestic violence support services, homeless provision etc. The distribution hub is currently based at Captain Cooks square but will shortly be re-locating to allow for the planned regeneration of the square. The team is currently working on the re-location plans.
23. In support of the Children's directorate to drive forward and see the impact of the improvement journey in Children's Services there is at present still a requirement to secure external placements, the commissioning team source the external placements. The team continue to work in close partnership with the operational service to find those placements, however, weekly costs remain a challenge in a very limited and market led sector. In order to bring some challenge and transparency into this market we commissioning CareCubed which is an electronic system which will allow us to

## **Democratic Services**

work with suppliers in order to breakdown the weekly fee in detail and provide evidence of value for money being achieved including outcome delivery for the children and young people. This is an exciting opportunity and we are currently in dialogue with Sunderland Council/Together for Children to do this in collaboration. Whilst fee reductions may be a bi product of this work the main aim is to strengthen our negotiating position and have evidence that outcomes are being achieves and fee rates are value for money.