

Councillor Eric Polano

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

DECISIONS

Linthorpe Road Cycleway Scheme

1. Linthorpe Road Cycleway scheme has reached final design, and is to be circulated to stakeholders to highlight the additions/alterations following the consultation exercise. This has seen the retention of Amber Street Car park, an additional nine car parking spaces on the corridor/ five newly created on Wilton Street, five marked disabled bays on side streets, an additional pair of bus stops, two additional informal crossing points, Granville Road junction safety/re-alignment improvements. Anticipating commencing construction in September 21, pending procurement of a suitable contractor to undertake the work.

Local Transport Plan Capital

2. LTP/Capital programme allocation has been submitted for approval to Executive on 13th July – this will gain approval to allocate £3m of funding from DfT/TVCA to address a number of maintenance and safety/access improvement schemes.

Stainton Way, Hemlington – Proposed Toucan Crossing

3. A new toucan crossing on Stainton Way was approved by the Executive Member for Regeneration at a Special Meeting held on 25th March. A toucan crossing is a traffic signal controlled facility that allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross busy roads safely.

The new crossing is being introduced in response to concerns raised by local residents, Ward Councillors and The Kings' Academy regarding pedestrian safety on the section of Stainton Way to the west of the B1365 Gables Roundabout, particularly at school start and finish times. The cost of the proposed scheme will be met from funding earmarked for the provision of sustainable transport links connecting the fast-growing Hemlington Grange development with the surrounding communities.

The crossing will be located approximately 60 metres to the west of the B1365 Hemlington Lane (Gables) Roundabout, and will provide a safe crossing facility for pedestrians and cyclists travelling between Hemlington Grange, Hemlington, The Kings' Academy and Coulby Newham. The crossing will also allow passengers to access the existing bus stops on either side of Stainton Way safely. Shared footpath/cycleways will be provided on each side of the crossing to link it to the existing pedestrian and cycle routes serving the surrounding area.

Public consultation on the scheme is currently underway, with a closing date for responses of 25th June. Subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise, it is proposed to construct the new crossing over the summer and to bring it into operation by the start of the new academic year in September.

STRATEGIC

Strategic Business Grants

4. Gold Briefing and Officer Delegation (original policy decision via Revenues and Benefits Exec Member)
Support Covid Recovery, People/Place/Business
Key activity - business support and recovery
Promotion through press channels/business networks

A Strategic Business Grant programme has been developed to utilise the remaining Additional Restrictions Funds which are designed to support Middlesbrough's business and local economy following the effects of the covid restrictions. £3.6m has been spent to date from the Additional Restriction Funds to support business from a range of sectors that were unable to access other support schemes. Eligible businesses included home-based businesses, sole traders, traders and supply chain.

The funds are time limited, with a newly imposed spend deadline of 30 June 2021 in place, therefore to maximize the funding for Middlesbrough's economy, the strategic grant scheme was carefully devised to support significant business growth in key sectors and key regeneration areas of the town. The scheme aims to create jobs, attract investment and support the priorities of the Council to strengthen the town's economy and went live on 27 May.

Strategic grants of upto £50K will enable the remaining funds of c£800K to be spent effectively and efficiently utilizing a strict criteria to fully maximize growth, jobs and investment potential. To date the 12 applications have been received with 7 approved.

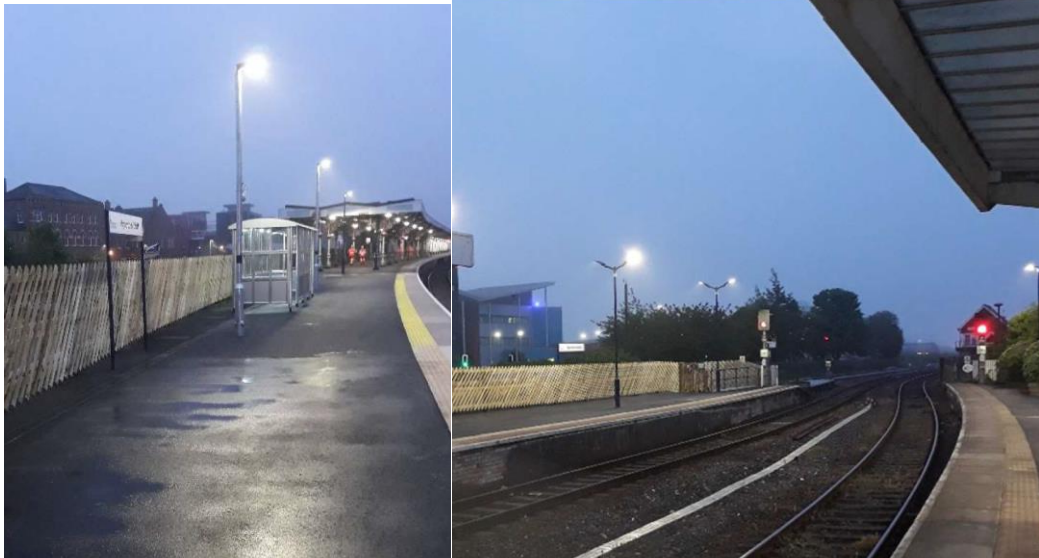
Once budget completion is achieved by the end of June this will trigger a further £670K for Middlesbrough to take us through to March 2022. This will continue to be utilized to support the business community with a new round of recovery grants aimed at all sectors including start ups.

Middlesbrough Rail Station

5. Work has just been completed on the long-awaited platform extension at Middlesbrough Rail Station. The Council has worked tirelessly in collaboration with TVCA, Network Rail and the DfT to realise this long-standing ambition. The extension to platform 2, enables the previously agreed direct London service to use the station from December 2021. The creation of the platform has enabled driver training to commence over the summer months.

The London service will enable more people to connect with both economic and leisure activities based in the capital and vice versa. It will open up greater inward investment opportunities for businesses based in the town, as well as to attract new businesses into Middlesbrough from outside of the region to due improved connectivity.

This is the first step in the wider Rail Station development, which will see development of the former undercroft space, located below the southern entrance; enabling the creation of a new gateway to the town centre, along with an improved public realm space on Zetland Road and customer waiting facilities at platform level within the Station concourse.



PERFORMANCE

Towns Fund

6. All documentation required by MHCLG was submitted on 24 May 2021. The subsequent process to access funding involves each project submitting a business case that is then approved by the Town Deal Board. A summary of this business case then goes to MHCLG to release the resource the project requires.

The first project to go through this process was the Knowledge Economy – Middlesbrough College Expansion project. The application was approved at the Town Deal Board on 21 May 2021. The Towns Fund resource will contribute to the £13m expansion of the college campus to cater for its growing student population and provide enhanced facilities.

Future High Street Fund

7. As with the Towns Fund, all documentation required by MHCLG has been submitted. Internally projects have been developed and project plans are in place to commence delivery as soon as the funder provides the final approval and details of how the resource will be drawn down.

Future High Street Grant Programme

8. A grant scheme to support viable town centre based businesses with their recovery plans following impact from Covid-19 restrictions will launch in June. The grant will aim to stimulate business growth and support Middlesbrough's FHSF outcomes.

Eligible sectors include hospitality, leisure, personal care, non - essential retail sectors. Business owners must be responsible for their commercial rates or significant rental value and provide evidence of either Rateable Value or Rental Agreement. Commercial property owners with vacant properties that can demonstrate ownership of the property and a grant will improve the viability of the unit to support the FHSF outcomes will also be considered.

A one off £10,000 grant is available to cover improvements such as:

- External property improvements
- redesign of internal/external space to accommodate Covid19 changes (relevant planning/licences must be evidenced)
- E-commerce upgrades
- Marketing materials/signage
- Updated systems e.g. Point of Sale/Booking systems
- New equipment/furniture

Town Centre Footfall Update

9. With the gradual lifting of government restrictions in recent months, increased levels of footfall have been welcomed across the Town Centre. Despite peaking in the first week of reopening, the week commencing 12th April, the Town Centre has sustained considerably healthy numbers in the weeks since, performing well against both regional and national wide data.

The week commencing 12th April, which brought the reopening of non-essential retail, saw footfall figures surge to almost pre-covid levels, reflecting consumer confidence and shoppers eager to return to their favourite Town Centre stores. Data showed a weekly footfall count of 243,540, which was at 95% of pre-covid levels. These figures also reflected a 204.1% increase on the previous week, outperforming regional (118.8%) and national (102.6%) averages. Additionally, these figures vastly exceeded those recorded in the first week of reopening after the first lockdown on the week commencing 15th June 2020, in which only 155,583 visits were recorded to the town centre.

As anticipated, the figures have decreased slightly in the weeks since, however healthy levels of footfall have been sustained throughout this period. The weeks since the reopening of non-essential retail and subsequent reopening of the hospitality sector have seen an weekly average of 210,568 visitors to the town centre, with most recent weekly figures (w/c 24th May) at 219,101.

Footfall Figures 2021 vrs Pre-covid

W/C 9 th March 2020 (Pre-Covid)	W/C 15 th June 2020	W/C 5 th April 2021	W/C 12 th April 2021	W/C 17 th May 2021	W/C 24 th May 2021
257,147	155,583	80,082	243,540	198,977	219,101

TeesAMP Update Phase 1 - 181,764 sq. ft. / 15 no. units

Occupancy

- 142,582 sq. ft. has been leased (78.5% of available space).
- Heads of Terms agreed or in advanced negotiations in respect of the 3 no. remaining units.
- Expectation is site will be fully tenanted August 2021.
- The 2017 Executive approved business case included an assessment by Cushman and Wakefield in respect of expected occupancy levels (as tabulated).
- Practical completion was June 2020; therefore at end of year 1, occupancy is 38.5% above realistic expectations and approximately 18 months ahead of target.
- Tenants include: Parallo Firth-Vickers Engineering, Cupral Ltd., Press-On Vinyl, Sulzer-Chemtech and Durata.
- Heads of Terms or leases pending: Flexitallic and Cupral Ltd. (second building).

	Optimistic	Realistic
On PC	25%	15%
End Yr 1	50%	40%
End Yr 2	90%	70%
End Yr 3	90%	90%

- Executive approval (23rd March 2021) for £745k plot sales to Cleveland Property Investments Ltd., securing:-
 - inward investment of c. £4m at Plot 23, creating 20-25 jobs within a specialist training centre; and
 - £5m+ of CPIL private capital for a further 11 light industrial units / 60,000 sq. ft. at 'AD Site'.

Income / Financial Performance

- £793k income per annum from secured tenants, after incentives (rent-free, fit-out contributions)
- £1m per annum anticipated when the remaining leases complete.
- Total capital input is £13.398m, borrowed over 35 years with 2% interest (£536k payable annually).
- Projecting £464k revenue surplus at full occupancy.

INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION

10. Middlesbrough Council Road Safety Staff have played a key role in developing recent Cleveland wide road safety campaigns aimed at encouraging motorcyclist safety and highlighting the issues around using second hand child car seats:

The Cleveland Road Safety Partnership got behind a national campaign aimed at improving road safety for motorcyclists.

Co-ordinated by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Think bike week launched on 23rd April and set out to highlight key safety messages, including the importance of bike maintenance and wearing the correct gear. Riders were encouraged to 'brush up' their riding skills at a time when many will be returning to riding after a significant break.

The partnership's ongoing aim is to raise awareness among both motorcyclists and drivers – with two key messages:

- Drivers: lookout for motorcyclists, especially at junctions
- Motorcyclists: manage your risk by reducing your speed and attend advanced training

Statistics show that motorcyclists are overrepresented in road traffic collisions and in Cleveland, there were five motorcyclist fatalities and 52 injuries during 2020. Andrew Corcoran, chair of Cleveland's Strategic Road Safety Partnership, said: "Despite accounting for only around 1% of traffic in Cleveland, motorcyclists account for 23% of fatalities on our local highway network. "In the last five years there have been 284 motorcyclists injured, including 12 killed and 140 seriously injured. The main reasons for motorcyclist collisions are 'failure to look' either from the motorcyclist or the other road user, and speed, in the fatal collisions."

The campaign received National recognition appearing on RSGB website: [Think Bike Week gets underway with local support \(roadsafetygb.org.uk\)](https://roadsafetygb.org.uk)

Ahead of Child Safety Week, Cleveland Strategic Road Safety Partnership is advising parents to think twice about buying a used car seat.

Cleveland Strategic Road Safety Partnership, says second-hand car seats could be putting children at risk. Andrew Corcoran, chair of the Cleveland Strategic Road Safety Partnership, said: "Your child's safety is paramount and it is important to be alert to the dangers posed by unsafe or poorly secured child seats and restraints. A previously damaged seat might not show visible signs leaving it weakened and unable to protect your child properly in the event of a crash. It could also have missing or worn parts that aren't visible."

For those for whom a second hand car seat is the only option, the advice from the partnership is to:

- Not buy anything that looks as if it may have been involved in an accident
- Check that nothing is missing – including the instructions
- Buy from family or friends because you'll know the history of the seat
- Seek professional advice on suitability and fitting from a trusted retailer
- Remember that safety standards are updated regularly and older seats may no longer be of the required standard

The partnership also advises that when parents dispose of damaged or old seats, to remove the seat covers and cut off the straps so they can't be reused.

This campaign also appeared on RSGB National website at: [Second-hand car seats 'putting children at risk' \(roadsafetygb.org.uk\)](https://roadsafetygb.org.uk)

