

Eric Polano

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 22nd September 2021

DECISIONS

1. Clear Channel Bus Shelter Provision

The Executive Member for Regeneration has approved a five-year extension of the current cleansing and maintenance contract for bus shelters and advertising panels across Middlesbrough. The decision will shortly be published and the contract will see the current high levels of cleansing and maintenance programme maintained, with an increase in advertising revenue and also the agreement to install new advertising panels in strategic locations across the town throughout the life of the contract. This contract delivers an income for the Council and provides maintenance for the bus shelter network.

The contract term will continue the pro-active working relationship with the current provider and also look at the current location of all stops, with a view to relocate, add or remove stops accordingly in line with the bus network across the town and in line with future new developments; to help grow bus patronage over the next five year period.

STRATEGIC

2. Middlesbrough Council submitted two bids to the Government's Levelling Up Fund, in line with the two Parliamentary constituencies within Middlesbrough's area. The first bid outlined aims to purchase and reconfigure commercial property in central Middlesbrough. The second bid, a cross-boundary partnership with Redcar and Cleveland, aims to improve accessibility to employment, housing and local community infrastructure across South Middlesbrough and East Cleveland.

On a Tees Valley level, a bid was also submitted to deliver structural improvements and resilience to a significant stretch of the A66, including the stretch within Middlesbrough's borders.

The Levelling Up Fund is a **competitive fund**, with resource distributed to places across the UK on the basis of successful project business case and national selection. Results of the bidding process are expected in the Autumn.

PERFORMANCE

3. Highway Safety

The new zebra crossing on The Avenue in Linthorpe was completed on Friday 27th August. The new crossing, together with the 20 mph speed limit introduced on The Avenue and Eastbourne Road last week, aims to improve pedestrian safety in the vicinity of St. Edward's RC Primary School. Works to construct the new toucan crossing on Stainton Way are underway, and are due for completion by mid-September. Once complete, the new crossing will provide a safer route to school for students living in Hemlington Grange and attending The King's Academy in Coulby Newham.

4. Road Safety Education

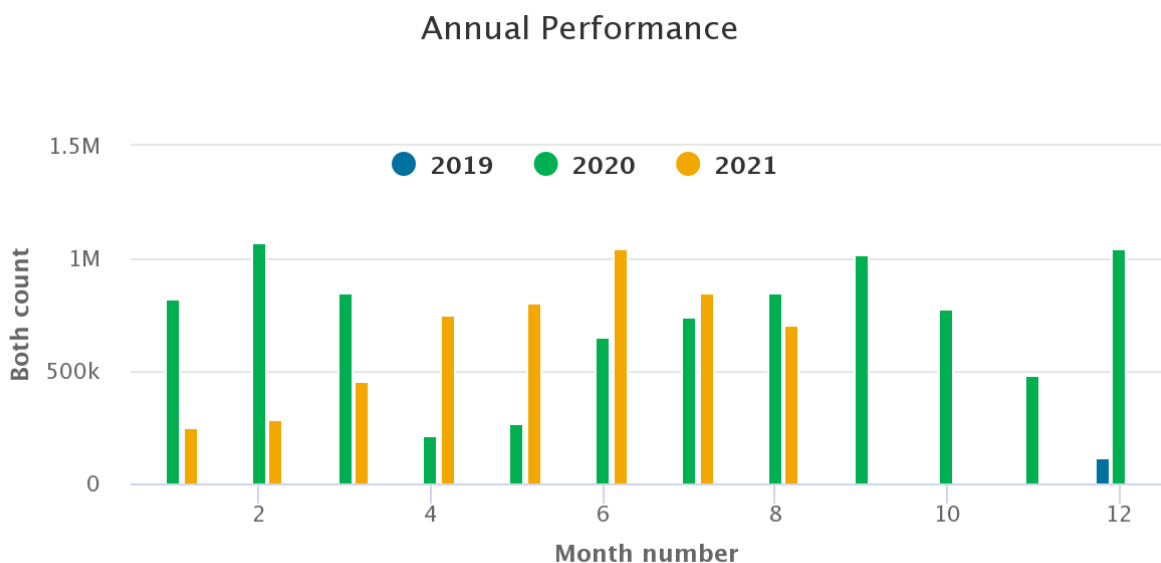
The Road Safety team have attended a number of road safety events in recent weeks, including an Older Road Users' event at Arcadia Garden Centre, a 'Doctor Bike' cycle safety event at the James Cook University Hospital and a 'Pop Up' road safety event at Teessaurus Park.

Preparations are also well under way for a Cleveland Strategic Road Safety Partnership 'Project EDWARD' event to be held at Middlesbrough Fire Station on Tuesday 14th September. Project EDWARD (Every Day Without A Road Death) is an annual UK-wide road safety campaign backed by central government, the emergency services, Highways England, Local Highway Authorities, road safety organisations and British businesses. The Campaign promotes an evidence-led, 'safe system' approach, the long-term objective of which is a road traffic system free from death and serious injury.

5. Town Centre Footfall

The latest figures show that the total Town Centre footfall count for the month of July 2021 was 850,871. This represented an 86% increase on March 2021 (456,706), which was the last full calendar month before the phased easing of Covid-19 restrictions commenced.

These figures for July 2021 also indicate that footfall in Middlesbrough Town Centre is currently operating at 80% of Pre-Covid 19 levels. This is based on figures for the month of February 2020.



6. Boho 8 First Tenant

NorthLink Digital has successfully moved into the first unit of the Boho 8 development. The company has a strong, and growing presence in Middlesbrough's digital cluster and has committed to Middlesbrough for its plan to double headcount in the next year.

NorthLink, who will be more than doubling their office space and headcount through this move. NorthLink's business model sees them bring high value software development projects from London to be delivered in Middlesbrough. This move represents a justification to the development of Boho 8, and also cements an early-stage business that is growing at a rapid pace within the Boho Zone.

Boho 8 is c.10,000 sqft of premium office space to expand Middlesbrough's digital cluster. Over four units, NorthLink Digital has taken the first, a further two are contractually secured and the final unit is under discussion with interested parties, which will see the development at 90% occupancy within the 6 months since formal handover.

Boho 8 has also been nominated for Constructing Excellence North East awards for Offsite Project of the Year. The awards will be held in October. As one of Middlesbrough Council's first modular construction products, we have demonstrated that exceptional levels of quality can be achieved and this will provide a benchmark for other modern methods of construction.

7. TeesAMP Occupancy and Partner Investment

Largely let during the Covid pandemic, TeesAMP has been a huge success story for Middlesbrough's employment market. The site of 180,000 sqft is now 85% let and only one unit remains available.

Interest in the site has been exceptional and the quality of tenant businesses has delivered the ambition for highly-skilled and highly-paid, employment being grown and retained in the area.

Teesside University will commence on site shortly with supporting the ongoing drive for clean energy and sustainability, the NZIIC is the latest development at the expanding Net Zero Innovation Hub, spearheaded by Teesside University and based on the Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park (TeesAMP) in Middlesbrough. The Net Zero Innovation Hub brings together expert insight, resources and partnerships to grow net zero capabilities and opportunities, placing the region at the forefront of the clean energy agenda and helping to create hundreds more clean energy jobs.

8. Tees Tech Awards 2021

The Tees Tech Awards 2021 took place in early August, shining a spotlight on the Tees Valley's digital tech sector. As the epicentre of this sector in Tees Valley, it was fantastic to see so many Middlesbrough-based businesses shortlisted for the awards, with 6 out of 11 winners currently residing in the town's Digital Enterprise Zone. The awards have gained both local and national recognition, and further bolster the ambition for Middlesbrough to become a nationally recognised digital tech hotspot.

9. Towns Fund

To date the Town Deal Board have approved seven business cases totalling £8,525,000; from the programmed budget of £21.9m.

Knowledge Economy	£1,175,000
Boho Residential	£2,000,000
Historic Buildings	£1,000,000
Cargo Fleet Nature Reserve	£100,000
Community Hubs	£1,250,000
Ward Initiatives	£1,000,000
Centre Square Development	£2,000,000

Work is now taking place to submit paperwork to the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to draw down the funding and commence the works timetabled in each business case.

Business cases for the remaining package of Urban Living projects and some of the Enterprise Infrastructure elements will be finalised and presented to the Town Deal Board in November 2021.

10. FHSF

Project delivery has now commenced, with the distribution of Covid recovery grants to a number of businesses within the FHSF area.

Work is also in the final planning stages to begin the physical improvements to Captain Cook Square Shopping Centre and make some of the vacant units suitable for key leisure tenants.

Lane 7 has now completed its lease of the former TJ Hughes unit and will commence fit out works as soon as possible. The new facility aims to open as close to Christmas as possible.

11. Towns Fund – Ward Initiatives

The project aims to engage with communities in each of the 20 wards in Middlesbrough to design and deliver investment in local improvements.

Stakeholders were initially engaged via a questionnaire that went out on all Middlesbrough Council social media channels. This questionnaire was designed by the Council's communication team (with support from the Data team) and endorsed by the Town Deal Board. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather opinion on how the £1m could be spent, it included open questions for the use of the money and whether the community would prefer equally distributed funding or fewer, larger schemes.

Following recommendations from the Town Deal board meeting of 30 July 2021, further consultation is taking place with a survey to ward members. Members will be encouraged to seek as much public / community council input as possible, and refer to the issues highlighted by the ward profiles, to ensure the best possible use of the Towns Fund resource.

In the absence of any projects being returned by ward members, the Executive have expressed a preference for the enhancement of parks and play areas across Middlesbrough. The deadline for project proposals is 5p.m. on Friday 24th September 2021.