

Councillor Eric Polano

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL
Wednesday 24th November 2021**

DECISIONS

1. Middlesbrough Council Local Implementation Plan (LIP) - Consultation findings and adoption

Under the devolved powers of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), there is a requirement that each Local Authority within the region produces a LIP, in line with the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) produced by TVCA.

The LIP provides the local context and content as to how the local Highway Authority (Middlesbrough Council) will deliver local transport priorities and initiatives to ensure delivery of the overarching objectives of the STP.

Middlesbrough's draft Local Implementation Plan has been consulted upon and responses have been used to validate and compose the document. Any comments or concerns have been addressed or mitigated by the document and it will be recommended for approval in its drafted form.

The LIP is scheduled for Executive consideration on 7th December 2021. Subject to approval, the LIP will provide a core policy document for transport infrastructure across Middlesbrough.

STRATEGIC

2. High Street Task Force – Unlocking Your Place Potential

Middlesbrough has been selected as one of C.100 local authority areas to receive specialist advice and support on transforming the High Street Economy.

The support provides a diagnosis of the major barrier to transformation, based on an assessment of the area's need and capacity and the Institute of Place Management's 4Rs of Regeneration: Repositioning; Reinventing; Rebranding and Restructuring.

Middlesbrough Council held the first inception visit on 2 November 2021. This visit is the first step in the provision of direct support. It allows the allocated specialist to learn more about the issues the town is facing in order to recommend further subsequent bespoke support that can help to address this challenge. This service brings a Task Force-funded national Expert on place management to the town.

The support provided through 'Unlocking your Place Potential' will assist the Middlesbrough to develop Expressions of Interest for external funding opportunities as well as validating the strategic approach taken locally. Later rounds of the Future High Street Fund, if appropriate. The visit also recommends additional Expert products from the High Street Task Force, if relevant.

3. Selective Landlord Licensing - Ormesby dwelling closed

A house in the North Ormesby Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme area has been boarded up after the Council was granted a Closure Order under antisocial behaviour laws. The property on Cadogan Street was linked to suspected drug dealing, 19-hour-plus doorstep booze benders, flashing and violence – all just yards from a primary school.

The Council's application at Teesside Magistrates Court included evidence of anti-social behaviour from large groups of adults and young people. Reports made to the Council described bottles and windows being smashed, footballs being fired at cars and other properties, cannabis smoking, alcohol being drunk from 5am until past midnight and playing of loud music. Incidents of lewd behaviour, climbing of drainpipes, running along window awnings and clambering across chimney breasts were also described. Some visitors to the address had also been overheard talking about having guns and getting drugs. The closure order will prevent the property, which is close to St Alphonsus Primary School, being occupied for up to three months.

PERFORMANCE

4. Boho X – Ground Breaking

Mayor Andy Preston held the official ground breaking ceremony at Boho X on 19th October 2021. Supported by contractor Galliford Try and development management partner BCEGI, the event symbolises the progress of the construction of C. 60,000 sq.ft. of new office space for the digital sector.

Boho X is on target to be completed by late 2022.

5. Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Recovery Grants

Following full and compliant, spend of the ARG allocation Middlesbrough has been rewarded with an additional top up allocation of £670, 635. As such a new grant programme is now live.

The new allocation is designed to focus on economic recovery whilst mindful of the need for ongoing emergency support to businesses. As a finite resource funds must be strategically managed; demand will clearly outstrip grant funding available. It is prudent therefore to support those businesses with significant overheads that need further support to stabilize, to enable their return to pre pandemic capacity levels, rather than those that are in chronic distress and struggling to survive in today's marketplace.

It is proposed that start-up enterprises locating into new premises across all sectors will benefit, as well as consumer /professional /business to business (b2b) services such as car finishing, specialist repair, professional business services, engineering/manufacturing.

Businesses will be able to utilise the grant to carry out improvements to their business, cover fixed overheads, and manage operational change and improvement. Simple eligibility criteria and conditions will allow businesses to access fair and proportionate grant awards based on Rateable Value (RV) or Rental Values of £5K to £20K per grant. The programme is anticipated number of businesses supported 100 – 120.

6. Future High Street Fund (FHSF) – Business Support Covid Grants programme

As part of Middlesbrough's £14.1m Future High Streets Fund programme, £250,000 was allocated to the immediate support of town centre businesses needing to make adaptations to increase their resilience and recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic.

27 businesses received grants up to £10,000 and the programme was oversubscribed. Those not fortunate to receive financial support from this programme have been referred (where eligible) to the Additional Recovery Grant (ARG) recovery programme (cited above).

This grant has been vital to help kick-start businesses back to effective trading and, when business investment is factored in, represents over £500k of new investment in Middlesbrough's high street economy.

7. Road Safety Tyre Checks

During October Council Road Safety staff supported Cleveland Road Safety Partnership during a week long campaign to highlight Tyre Safety Week. October is National Tyre Safety Month and half term gave a great opportunity for staff to engage with the public at locations such as Parkway Shopping Centre/Hartlepool Tesco Extra/Teesside Park using the campaign message 'What's stopping you?'

Regular tyre safety checks reduce the risks of a tyre related incident, but one-in-five drivers have never checked the tread on their tyres, which shockingly rises to one-in-three among young drivers. The partnership staff gave away hundreds of free tyre pressure gauges and tyre Tread Checkers along with leaflets to help drivers understand the importance of regular tyre checks.

8. Project EDWARD

Cleveland's Strategic Road Safety Partnership visited colleges throughout the area to deliver road safety advice to students during Freshers' Week in September.

The partnership comprises Cleveland Police, the police and crime commissioner for Cleveland, Cleveland Fire Brigade, National Highways (previously Highways England) and the four local authorities in the Cleveland area.

Its efforts to engage with students was also timed to coincide with Project EDWARD – the annual UK wide road safety campaign backed by government, emergency services, highways agencies, road safety organisations and businesses.

Project EDWARD aimed to provide a platform to showcase some of the best work being done around the UK to promote the five pillars of the 'Safe System' approach:

- Safe vehicles
- Safe road use
- Safe speed
- Safe roads and roadsides
- Post-crash care

Students were asked to sign the Project EDWARD pledge and confirm they are willing to play their part in creating a road environment that is free from death or serious injury.

Students who did make the pledge were invited to don 60s attire and jump aboard the Project EDWARD campervan for a photo.

