



Transforming Middlesbrough's Town Centre

A post-Covid strategy

Intro

Creating a thriving town centre in a post-Covid-19 world

Middlesbrough Council first launched its town centre strategy in 2019, outlining the steps it would take to revitalise central Middlesbrough and make it a destination of choice for local people and tourists. Since then, the Covid-19 pandemic has completely changed the way that we live, learn, work and meet. This revised strategy has taken these changes into account, to make sure our town centre can survive and thrive well into the future.

Where we were, pre-Covid:

- A retail-dominant town centre, which is a risk with the rise of online shopping
- A town centre strategy that focused on retaining retail as the main offer, but increasing other elements like office space and leisure
- A Future High Streets Fund bid, to reduce reliance on retail and increase the number of leisure businesses
- A Towns Fund bid to strengthen central Middlesbrough through increase urban living

Where we are, post-Covid:

- The 'death of the traditional high street' is speeding up nation-wide – we need to make bold changes to keep the town centre relevant
- Retail could potentially shrink by 50% over the next five years – we need to provide other reasons for people to visit
- Our society is changing – the decisions we take now need to reflect future realities
- A Towns Fund bid to strengthen central Middlesbrough through increase urban living

The town centre will once again become the centre of the town. The centre of activity and excitement, where people visit because they **want** to, not just because they **need** to.



We're making the town centre a destination through:

Living: creating a housing offer and lifestyle that people want to be part of.

Learning: enhancing our already fantastic education offer to bring more students to Middlesbrough.

Working: attracting businesses and creating jobs.

Health and Wellbeing: providing the facilities people need to have a great quality of life.

Civic: bringing together public services in central areas

Culture and Leisure: creating experiences and spaces for people to enjoy.

Retail: maintaining a strong retail offer, in the right place.



Cros-cutting themes



Four major themes will underpin all of this work:



Delivering excellent transport and connectivity.



Having a 'smart city' approach, using digital technology to enhance visitor experience.



Moving from 'grey to green', to create sustainable spaces that everyone can enjoy.



Making sure that everyone who visits feels welcome and safe.

Living

'Where we'll be'

The town centre will come alive and people will want to be part of it. They'll choose to move into the centre of town for the cosmopolitan lifestyle, the high quality housing offer and the proximity to major amenities, job options and learning providers.

We'll get there by:

- Bringing modern and attractive, yet affordable, living to central Middlesbrough
- Providing the infrastructure and public amenities that new residents will need
- Making central Middlesbrough a safe and welcoming place to live



Working

Where we'll be:

Businesses will flock to the centre of Middlesbrough, attracted by excellent accommodation and infrastructure, high speed digital connectivity and proximity to town centre amenities. More businesses will lead to more jobs, increasing the number of people travelling in each day.

We'll get there by:

- Providing the best business accommodation available (both new build and conversion)
- Creating the full range of spaces required to create a thriving business ecosystem
- Positioning high levels of skilled employment in central Middlesbrough



Learning

Where we'll be:

Middlesbrough will be known for its education offer. Thousands of students will flock to the town centre each day, attending Teesside University, Middlesbrough College, Northern School of Arts and community education services.

We'll get there by:

- Encouraging collaboration between educational institutions
- Attracting training providers and services to central Middlesbrough
- Delivering council, community and specialist training services in central areas

Health & Wellbeing



Where we'll be:

Central Middlesbrough will be a 'one-stop-shop' for health and wellbeing, where people can easily access the support they need. As well as providing services people **need**, we will offer what people **want**, such as yoga studios, gyms and cosmetic beauty businesses.

We'll get there by:

- Supporting health and wellbeing businesses to move into the town centre
- Designing spaces that support healthy and active lifestyles
- Making physical activity and 'active travel' a key part of the new urban lifestyle



CIVIC

Where we'll be:

Public services will be centrally located. It will be easier for them to work together, which will enhance customer service as well as saving on costs. The central hub will complement neighbourhood locations, improving access to services.

We'll get there by:

- Retaining the central location of current services
- Encouraging third sector (i.e. not-for-profit) organisations to co-locate and collaborate
- Proactively pursuing government relocations

Culture & Leisure

Where we'll be:

The town centre will be a hive of cultural activity, with an exciting events programme that will appeal to residents and tourists alike. As well as enjoying major events and entertainment, people will have the opportunity to participate through various activities and performances.

We'll get there by:

- Developing a major leisure and events offer that appeals to local people and tourists
- Growing a cluster of cultural and arts organisations, where artists and performers can collaborate and create
- Creating event spaces and infrastructure



Retail

Where we'll be:

Retailers will thrive with the injection of new footfall and the creation of an all-day economy. This will provide confidence to invest in their premises and sustain valuable employment for the long term.

We'll get there by:

- Proactively manage a clear reduction of retail in unsustainable locations
- Work in partnership with viable retail locations to improve the customer experience
- Connect independent businesses with the support they need to innovate in a changing climate



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