



## **MIDDLESBROUGH ENVIRONMENT CITY**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FACT SHEET**

Middlesbrough Environment City was established in 1992 through national competition. It was registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee in June 1997 and received Charitable status in June 1998.

Middlesbrough is one of four Environment Cities in the UK. The aim of the Environment City initiative is to demonstrate ways of managing cities and large towns in ways that are more environmentally sustainable, improving the quality of people's lives without harming the environment. The Environment Cities pursue this aim by forming partnerships, and Middlesbrough Environment City works closely with Middlesbrough Council, local businesses, voluntary sector groups and local communities to create a more sustainable town.

The objects of Middlesbrough Environment City are to:

- advance the education of the public and to promote public involvement in all matters concerning environmental sustainability
- preserve, protect and enhance the environment within Middlesbrough

MEC, with its partners, undertakes a range of practical, demonstration and awareness-raising projects each year. Current and recent activities include:

- Coordinating a programme of Urban Farming in Middlesbrough, including planning the annual Town Meal, working with community groups on growing projects and delivering training in growing skills;
- Working with Middlesbrough Council to deliver community engagement linked to Middlesbrough's Climate Change Community Action Plan;
- Running the Middlesbrough Cycle Centre, which provides a secure cycle storage facility for commuters and visitors, and running safe cycling and cycle maintenance training events with schools, community and youth groups;
- Running energy saving projects, including schemes to encourage vulnerable residents to take up energy efficiency measures;
- Developing and undertaking new projects and initiatives that link health and environmental sustainability;
- Education work with local schools and community groups;
- Working with other partners on the restoration of heritage sites in the town including Linthorpe cemetery and the graves of the ironmasters Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan.

Middlesbrough Council has adopted a One Planet Living Framework approach to delivering sustainability in the town. Middlesbrough Environment City is a partner in the OPL Programme and has a particular role in terms of community engagement in the One Planet Living process.

## Summary of One Planet Middlesbrough: Creating Sustainable Communities Programme

In September 2012 a partnership led by Middlesbrough Environment City was awarded just under £1 million from the Big Lottery Fund, Communities Living Sustainably Programme to deliver a community engagement programme in Middlesbrough aimed at “creating a sustainable One Planet Town, improving quality of life and addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges by engaging greater number of residents in actions that promote sustainable living and behaviours.”

The programme outcomes are:

- Communities are better prepared for environmental challenges and longer term environmental change and understand the improvements they can make to live more sustainably.
- Vulnerable people affected by the impacts of climate change are able to make greener choices to help improve their quality of life.
- Communities maximise the use of their assets and resources to create new economic opportunities and live more sustainably by, for example, using the skills and knowledge of individuals within their community to create green social enterprise and jobs
- Communities have a greater understanding of and more opportunities to use natural resources more efficiently

The specific outcomes for Middlesbrough are:

- Residents have changed their behaviour by adopting greener lifestyle choices, thereby improving quality of life.
- Residents are warmer in their homes, with reduced consumption of carbon-based fuels.
- Residents are producing less waste and reusing or recycling more of the waste produced.
- Residents are more able to make sustainable travel choices.
- Residents are adopting a low carbon diet leading to healthier lifestyle.
- Businesses are more able to take actions to tackle the effects of climate change.

There are a number of formal and informal partners working together to deliver the programme.

**Middlesbrough Environment City** is the lead organisation with a Programme Manager and a team of Community Enablers working with project partners delivering a programme of training and other support activities. This is building capacity amongst residents and community groups, as well as front line staff to enable them to work with their constituent groups to build addressing climate change and sustainable living into their activities and decision making processes.

There are a number of partners who are receiving funding from the programme to deliver projects. A summary of the projects and delivery partners is shown below:

- Working with specific groups through projects with **Volunteering Matters, Staying Put Agency, Middlesbrough Mind** and **Shopmobility**.
- Improving community engagement through projects with **Groundwork North East, Tees Valley Arts** and **Actes**.
- Greening businesses and developing new business models with **Groundwork North East, Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens** and **Community Ventures Ltd**.
- Running demonstration projects with **Middlesbrough Council's Safe and Active Travel Team, Actes** and the **Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens**.

Middlesbrough Environment City are also delivering marketing, promotional and communication campaigns, including social media, to engage groups and individuals in activities that promote sustainable living.

An evaluation of the Programme will be carried out by **Teesside University** who will be liaising with partners offering expertise, advice and support with the evaluation of the project and evaluation plans.

The programme is for five years with 2015 being year three. Project delivery is concentrated predominantly over the first three years.