

BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

Report of the Executive Director of PLACE
and the Executive Director of COMMUNITIES

Principal Towns Investment Programme

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update Cabinet on the Principal Towns Investment Programme (Cab.11.1.2017/13) and seek approval for specific schemes and changes to the approval process.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **Cabinet approve the proposed changes to the Principal Towns Programme approval process (section 4 refers).**
- 2.2 **Cabinet approve the release of £0.258M from the £5M total allocation to fund the project management costs identified with the scheme (section 5 refers).**
- 2.3 **Cabinet approve the proposed shop front improvement scheme at a net cost of £0.8M, to cover all areas across the Principal Towns Programme (section 6 refers).**

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Since the Principal Towns Investment Programme was approved (Cab. 11.1.2017/13) the Commissioning Board has held two meetings to progress the scheme and officers have been working with elected members, local community groups and businesses to shape registration of interests for funding. At the first Commissioning board 16 registrations of interest were submitted and all areas have progressed to full business case development. It is expected that a number of areas will be submitting full business cases for funding at the January 2018 Commissioning Board. The Shop front proposal is the first approval to come through at a programme level. The recommendations above have been approved at the Commissioning Boards held on the 17th July 2017 and 28th September 2017.

4. Proposed Changes to the Principal Towns Programme Approval Process

- 4.1 In approving the Principal Towns Programme in January 2017, Cabinet agreed that further reports be brought forward on recommendations for funding allocations resulting from the commissioning process. A further assessment of the number of schemes that are likely to come forward for consideration

suggests that this is likely to lead to delays in the delivery process and congest the Cabinet agenda. It is therefore proposed that approval be given in line with the normal delegation arrangements, with the Cabinet Spokespersons for Place and Communities approving projects under £500,000 and proposals over this limit coming forward to Cabinet. Any approvals would be subject to the normal consultation with Elected Members under the Call-In arrangements, with Elected Members also consulted on the development of proposals in line with the agreed commissioning process.

5. Project Management Costs

- 5.1 In approving the Principal Towns Programme in January 2017, Cabinet agreed the recruitment of two Project Managers to work closely with the Ward Alliance and Communities directorate in working up proposals and delivering the approved plans. The salary and on-costs associated with these two posts amount to £86,000 per annum.

6. Proposed Implementation of the Shop Fronts Scheme

- 6.1 Following a review of the registration of interests submitted in July it was noted there was a common theme of Shop Front improvements and therefore it would be beneficial to adopt a programme delivery approach from an efficiency perspective. This approach would allow for early delivery in many of the areas and a consistent approach to shop front improvements across the programme and borough. The Commissioning Board discussed the three options for implementing a shop front scheme to cover all areas within the Principal Towns Scheme at the September meeting.

- 6.2 The options proposed were as follows:

1. Use Yortender to procure a scheme provider to undertake the physical works
2. Use Yortender to procure a list of providers that businesses use for the scheme
3. Businesses contract directly with suppliers and BMBC pay a grant to business

- 6.3 The Board's recommended approach is option 2, as this would allow the Council to maintain a degree of consistency across the towns / centres and to keep the supply local.

- 6.4 The proposal is for an all-encompassing scheme - regardless of the respective size of business or value of works - where individual businesses are invited to apply. Officers will work proactively with businesses in order to promote the scheme. Individual applications will be assessed on their own merits to ensure the scheme's objectives are met.

- 6.5 Whilst there is no lower limit to the scheme, the Board approved a maximum contribution from the Council of £4,000 per shop front, and an upper limit for the scheme of £800,000 (based on a total of 190 shop fronts), which represents

80% of the estimated cost. A minimum of 20% will be met through contributions from the individual businesses. It was suggested during the meeting that shops in receipt of Council funding had a sign put in their windows to publicise this.

- 6.6 Whilst the upgrades are expected to be delivered to similar specifications, option 2 would include working with NPS Barnsley on a pilot of 6 businesses to work through what is required in terms of assessment and design of the works and the different trades which will be most suited to do the work. Any NPS fees incurred will be contained within the individual shop front allocations.
- 6.7 The pilot will then inform the procurement activity required for the works included which can't be delivered by NPS Barnsley. This co-ordinated approach will ensure that the scheme is delivered professionally and made attractive to businesses to encourage them to participate in the scheme.
- 6.8 The outputs from this approach are:
- Number of shop fronts improved
 - Increased footfall within Principal Towns/Local centres
 - Business growth within Principal Towns/Local centres
 - Proportion of BMBC spend spent locally
- 6.9 This proposal is also likely to impact on the following corporate priorities:
- Thriving and vibrant economy
 - Strong and resilient communities
 - People volunteering and contributing towards stronger communities

7. Implications for Local People/Service Users

- 7.1 There are significant positive implications for residents of the impacted Principal Towns and Local Centres in the Principal Towns Programme. This proposal is likely to increase footfall and contribute to a vibrant economy in each of the areas.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Consultations on the financial implications have taken place with representatives of the Service Director - Finance (S151 Officer).
- 8.2 This scheme utilises funding set aside as part of the 2017-2020 Capital Programme, as identified in the Principal Towns Investment Programme report (Cab.11.1.2017/13).
- 8.3 The Council has set aside £258,000 to cover project management costs
- 8.4 The cost of the proposed shop front scheme totals £1,000,000, based on an overall contribution from the Council of £800,000 (based on a maximum of £4,000 per shop front - including NPS fees - and a 5% contingency). The

remaining £200,000 will be met through individual contributions from the respective businesses.

- 8.5 There is no time limit for the available funds to be spent.
- 8.6 Expenditure identified within this scheme will be managed within the resources available.
- 8.7 Contract management procedures will be in place and mechanisms followed so funding for the works isn't released until the works have been deemed satisfactory by BMBC and the shop owner.
- 8.8 The financial implications relating to this proposal are shown in Appendix A of this document.

9. Employee Implications

- 9.1 There are no immediate employee implications arising directly from this report.

10. Communications Implications

- 10.1 A communication plan has been delivered for the overall programme and officers are continuing to work closely with Communications to publicise the programme as and when appropriate. Officers will positively promote the shop front scheme as the first deliverable from the Principal Towns programme.

11. Promoting Equality & Diversity and Social Inclusion

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is currently being undertaken in order to inform the development of this scheme.
- 11.2 The EIA has focused on how this scheme can promote better access inclusion to the shops and communities involved for people from diverse communities, including disabled people and older people.
- 11.3 We know that access to some facilities and services is currently limited in the Principal Towns and Local Centres particularly for disabled people i.e. not all shops are wheelchair accessible and some shop front areas also have limited access. All major shop front alterations will need to be compliant with disability access provisions of building regulations, but intentions to improve access for disabled people will also be considered as part of the criteria for applicants.
- 11.4 Plans are also being put in place to encourage grant applicants to consider undergoing an assessment of their general accessibility in order to become part of the Disabled Go website and to participate in schemes such as Dementia Friendly, Breast Feeding Friendly and a Safe Places, to help promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

12. Consultations

- 12.1 Consultation has taken place internally with initial discussion with the relevant Elected Members in addition to initial consultation with local businesses in the relevant areas.

13. Risk Management Issues

- 13.1 The risks and the mitigation are listed below:

Risk	Mitigation
Consistency in quality of shop fronts	Officers will work with NPS on a pilot to scope the required works and trades to establish a robust specification for the works, and will tender for organisations to undertake the shop front improvements. This will ensure consistency in standards and savings through economies of scale.
Only a proportion of shops opt to progress the scheme (particularly after any design / feasibility costs are incurred)	Mitigated by proactively working with shops to promote the schemes; using improved shops as a point of reference to show what is possible.
Risk of collecting contributions	Options to mitigate this risk include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council and respective businesses making direct payments to the contracted organisations• The Council invoicing the respective businesses for their contributions up front; and make full payment to the contractor once works completed satisfactorily, or• The individual businesses incurring the cost up front and being reimbursed upon completion. <p>A decision will be made following completion of the pilot scheme.</p>

14. List of Appendices

Appendix A – Financial Implications

Officer Contact: Fiona O'Brien/Sian Stanhope **Telephone No:** 774506/ 774993
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