

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

**Joint Report of the Director Finance,  
Assets & Information Services & the  
Director Communities**

### **BETTER BARNSELY REGENERATION – THE BEACON BUSINESS CASE**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 This report provides the business case for investment to deliver The Beacon, a cornerstone of the Better Barnsley redevelopment, providing a modern library and public facility that will complement the new retail and leisure facilities in the town. The Beacon will be a significant asset, encouraging footfall in the town centre and supporting our aspiration to create a vibrant daytime and evening economy.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Cabinet approve The Beacon business case.**
- 2.2 **It is also recommended that Cabinet note the additional costs for the fit out of The Beacon which are over and above those costs previously approved for its development. These costs will need to be considered alongside other Capital proposals put forward as part of the ongoing 3 year planning process from 2017/18 to 2019/20. (This report is not seeking approval of these costs at this stage.)**

#### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1 The Council meeting on 6 February 2014 approved that the Council would work with key stakeholders to advance development proposals for Barnsley town centre, within a financial envelope of £35 million from the Medium Term Financial Strategy, to secure the revitalisation and enhancement of the town centre.
- 3.2 The Council meeting on the 3 December 2014 approved that the Better Barnsley Town Centre Prospectus be approved along with ring-fencing of a further £15 million of strategic reserves to provide sufficient financial capacity to deliver the required scheme.
- 3.3 This Cabinet meeting on the 27 January 2016 approved the appointment of the main contractor for the Better Barnsley project and that further reports setting out the business case for each key element should be brought back to Cabinet for consideration. These are:
- Library
  - Metropolitan Centre
  - Public Realm and town square
  - Car Parking

3.4 This is the first business case and sets out not only the plan for the delivery of the asset, but also how the Council will position itself in order to maximise the benefits from The Beacon.

#### **4. Consideration of alternative approaches**

4.1 This approach to deliver the Better Barnsley project was agreed by Cabinet after the previous scheme working in partnership with a private developer partner failed to raise sufficient funds to commence the project. The Council remains fully committed to the Better Barnsley Scheme including all of its previously approved individual elements. As such, whilst there are no alternative approaches being considered for the wider scheme, each of the separate work package business case will set out options for the Council to consider, where appropriate, for the delivery of those elements.

#### **5. Proposal and justification**

5.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the business case for The Beacon, which is a cornerstone of the Better Barnsley project. The asset will provide a modern library and public space that will complement the new retail and leisure facilities in the town. The Beacon will be a significant attraction, encouraging footfall in the town centre and supporting our aspiration to create a vibrant daytime and evening economy.

5.2 The Beacon will be designed to be:

- **Enjoyable:** exciting, easy to visit and use such that it expands the customer base.
- **Flexible:** adaptable to new users, new services and ways of doing things now and in the future.
- **Accessible:** all people are afforded the opportunity to access the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services, with equivalent ease of use.
- **Excellent:** has excellent products and services.
- **Prominent:** has a distinctive design in a prominent position at the head of the new town square that supports activities through until late to add to a vibrant night-time economy.
- **Ambient:** providing a healthy working, learning and cultural environment
- **Affordable:** built within the available resources.

5.3 The Beacon will be a contemporary building that enhances the townscape and enables the Council and its partners to provide modern services to all residents and visitors. The Beacon will increase the number of people using the library (from 262k per year in 2014/15 to 276k per year, with a 5% increase or 289k per year with a 10% increase) and, therefore, make a significant contribution to the footfall in the town centre, notably in the evening (4pm to 9pm).

- 5.4 Alongside the programme of activities and events run by the library service, the facility will provide spaces and opportunities for many partner organisations to promote their work and reach a wider range of people. There will be a strong focus on audience development in order to attract people who wouldn't traditionally use a library, particularly young people. Display and activity spaces will be used to showcase the best of creative Barnsley and promote tourism to support the visitor economy. Computers, Wi-Fi and multi-media equipment will support residents to increase their confidence with online services, in line with the government's Digital by Default agenda and BMBC's Customer Services Strategy. The 'high-tech' facilities will help to draw young people to the building.
- 5.5 In the late afternoon and evening light from The Beacon will flood out into the Town Square. The Beacon will be a destination in its own right which will drive footfall into the town centre. It will be one of the only buildings in the town centre open from early morning to late evening and will bridge the 4pm to 9pm gap between daytime and evening activities, supporting the evening economy by enabling more people to stay in town longer.
- 5.6 The design will accelerate the implementation of the Council's Channel Shift strategy by adopting almost entirely a "one to many" customer service operating model, moving away from the "one to one" appointment system, and driving customers to self-serve. The building will be staffed during core hours, e.g. 9am to 6pm and on Saturday mornings. The rest of the time an automated operating system will manage access, security, switching equipment on and off, heating, and lighting, enabling access from 8am – 9pm, 7 days a week.
- 5.7 Features include dynamic and constantly changing space, direct access from a café, free Wi-Fi, access to a range of ICT and Bring Your Own (BYO) facilities. The dominant feature is the demonstration space where fixed and pop up instructive sessions will be held. Flexible "pods" for semi-private customer appointments and discussions. This floor will also feature the only changing place facilities in the Town Centre, and an enclosed Sanctuary Space for those who need a quiet, peaceful place away from the busy Town Centre.
- 5.8 The Beacon will provide the replacement Library and go beyond this to be a multi-functional space that will be the indoor equivalent of the town square.
- 5.9 The Beacon will be fully accessible for all. From the initial stages, the project has engaged with equality and diversity staff in BMBC and a wide range of potential users. Public libraries, by their very nature and purpose, encourage use by all people. Some specific features of The Beacon that demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity include:
- Sanctuary - a safe, quiet and peaceful place for people, especially with autism, to go in a busy town and provides the opportunity to support people with dementia and their carers.
  - Changing Places adult changing room - fully accessible and a much needed facility in the town centre.
  - Special collections of books and other materials including, for example, the LGBT section, large print and audio books for visually impaired people.
  - Two lifts enabling access to all floors.

5.10 In summary, The Beacon will be a major destination in the town centre for anyone who needs information or to find support to:

- Access Council Services
- Facilitate learning at all stages in life
- Improve literacy and digital skills
- Engage with a range of organisations
- Recognised as an iconic landmark in the town centre.

### **Future work stages**

5.11 The design is complete to 'detailed design,' known as RIBA Stage 3. The programme for the remaining RIBA stages is as follows:

Stage 4:	Technical Design	23/05/2016 – 04/11/2016
Stage 5:	Construction	18/11/2016 – 11/01/2018
Stage 6:	Handover	13/01/2018 – 01/02/2018
Stage 7:	Public opening	03/02/2018

5.12 In parallel with the architectural and technical design work and the construction, the library and customer services staff will be developing their redesign of the service offer from the new building. This will involve:

- On-going engagement with current user groups and, critically, young people who are not users of the library but who are potential users.
- Workshops with partners to programme activities and events.
- Exploring the potential for ICT to further support efficient working practices and enhance the public services.
- Continue to build public support for the new facility.
- Continue to explore potential to attract external support for special features and programmes, e.g. with Arts Council England.

## **6. Implications for local people / service users**

6.1. The Beacon will be a facility for all Barnsley residents and for visitors to the town. Membership of the Library is free, enabling everyone to access computers, borrow books and participate in a wide range of free events and activities. (Special events and some services will have charges). Specific groups that will benefit, include:

- Families and young children - dedicated spaces for story times, school holiday activities, a buggy park and baby changing and feeding facilities will provide a welcoming place for families.
- People who are less confident in using IT and online services will have access to support - from informal taster sessions to more structured learning.
- Job seekers – will benefit from free access to IT and activities and events to support the move into employment e.g. job clubs, CV preparation, mock interviews.

- Young people will enjoy the lively atmosphere and the opportunities to use free wifi, a wide range of online resources and participate in programmes and activities
- Students and learners of all ages who need a place to study - initial discussions with Barnsley College suggest that they would encourage students to migrate to The Beacon once their own learning spaces are closed, particularly to take advantage of free wifi and the range of technology. Further linkages with the college are being explored.
- People who need access to Council services or help from other organisations.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The Financial Implications are shown in Appendix A attached to this report.
- 7.2 In January 2016, Cabinet received an update with regards the Better Barnsley scheme. This update provided a detailed breakdown of the resources (£50.078M) allocated to the project including a budget totalling £4.8M for the development of the Beacon (excluding the retail element of this development).
- 7.3 The current estimated development costs for the Beacon totals £4.9M. This exceeds the resources set aside by £0.1M. It is expected that these costs will be contained within the overall Better Barnsley scheme following completion of the Stage 3 cost estimates.
- 7.4 The above costs do however exclude the cost of furniture, fittings and ICT requirements for the new building. Current estimated costs for these elements total £0.486M.
- 7.5 Additional resources totalling £0.455M have been earmarked from capital monies allocated to the Communities Directorate. This leaves a small shortfall in funding of 0.031M. This shortfall will therefore need to be first call on the additional investment resources to be set aside as part of the Future Council 2020 plan currently being progressed.

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 None arising from this report.

## **9 Employee implications**

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

## **10. Communications implications**

- 10.1 A communication plan is in place for the Better Barnsley scheme. The project team are committed to undertaking exemplar public consultation on the redevelopment proposals for Barnsley town centre and have prepared a detailed communication and consultation plan with the aim to:
- Increase borough wide awareness of the town centre development plans
  - Develop and build positive relationships with Stakeholders

- Ensure that every stakeholder segment has the opportunity to inform the development plans
- Engage with and seek the views of the local community
- Gain credible, constructive input from the local community to shape aspects of the proposals
- Involve the local community to create opportunities to contribute to the regeneration of the town centre
- Inform and shape redevelopment proposals that will create a sustainable future for the town centre.

The communications and consultation plan is a living document which is regularly updated as each stage of the project progresses.

- 10.2 Press releases are issued as appropriate and information is provided to the public on the progress via social media and the Better Barnsley Newsletter.

## **11. Consultations**

- 11.1 A consultation process has been utilised to help the community and stakeholders shape the scheme and to generate an informed debate on the proposals. The involvement of the community and stakeholders is a critical part of the development process for Barnsley town centre. The consultation work on this scheme started in summer 2014 and will continue throughout the redevelopment of the town centre.

- 11.2 Key communication activities and events:

### **Better Barnsley Shop**

A dedicated 'drop in' shop for the project is situated in the centre of Barnsley. It displays all the plans and proposals for the redevelopment and provides the opportunity for members of the public to give feedback and ask questions. The shop is open 10am - 5pm Monday to Wednesday and Friday to Saturday. The Better Barnsley Ambassador is on hand to answer visitor's questions and pass on the latest information on the project. The shop also hosts a variety of events and acts as a consultation hub for BMBC and our partners. All the feedback from the drop in shop is collated by the project team to inform the development of the project.

### **Website**

There is a dedicated webpage for town centre development (Better Barnsley), with regularly updated information and links to the weekly newsletter. Opportunities for consultation are promoted here.

### **Newsletter**

A weekly electronic 'Better Barnsley' newsletter is published and the link to it shared with local media and council colleagues. The Newsletter has a circulation of 2000+ readers who are predominantly local residents and businesses. The newsletter provides an update on the progress of the project, the team involved and events and activities taking place in the town centre. Printed copies of the newsletter are displayed in the Better Barnsley shop.

## **Social media**

Regular updates and news items are shared via the council's Facebook and Twitter accounts. Any comments are shared with the development team. The project specific Twitter Page has over 2,000 followers; it is updated on a daily basis to keep people informed of the latest news about the project.

## **Targeted events**

Regular meetings, presentations and workshops have been held with the consultees and stakeholders. A series of town centre walkabouts have also taken place to give people the opportunity to discuss existing issues in the town centre and to gain a better understanding of the redevelopment proposals and how they integrate into the town. All the feedback from these targeted events is utilised by the project and design teams to inform the development of the project.

The public and stakeholder consultation undertaken to date has proved invaluable to the project delivery team. The feedback provided to date has helped to shape the details of this outline planning application. The scheme has been presented to the Barnsley Urban Design Review Advisory Panel. The feedback from the panel has also been incorporated into the development of the proposals at the outline application stage. The consultation has highlighted strong support for the project from both the local and wider community and from the various stakeholder groups.

In terms of informing the proposals:

- The feedback has highlighted strong support for the location of the new central library at the head of the public square.
- An overwhelmingly positive response has been received in relation to the creation of a large public square for events and to increase dwell time in the town centre. Improvements to public spaces have been very favourably received with requests to include a new water feature and increased planting and greenery.

The project and design teams will continue to consult with the community and stakeholders to ensure that views and issues where relevant and possible are taken on board and incorporated into the scheme evolution. It is considered that the consultation undertaken to date has played a valuable role in the preparation of the proposed scheme.

## **12. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework**

- 12.1 In our Corporate Plan we describe our high level of ambition and aspiration to do our very best to support Barnsley, its people, communities, partners and business to thrive and achieve. We also state that the residents, communities and customers of Barnsley are our number one priority and that we will create a thriving and vibrant economy where people will be able to achieve their potential. The redevelopment of the town centre embodies our vision, and the new central library will be one of the cornerstones of the redevelopment.

- 12.2 As we state in our plan, the need for quality services does not go away as our funding reduces. The new Central Library building will facilitate a step change in the way the Council delivers customer service, in addition to being a key destination in Barnsley's new town centre encouraging visitor footfall.
- 12.3 To become a Purple Flag accredited town we will have to report a consistent increase in footfall and decrease in crime within the night time economy. The increased prominence of The Beacon and activities through the 4pm to 9pm period will make a key contribution to creating a vibrant and eclectic night-time economy, combined with the new town square, high-quality eateries, multiplex cinema and cafes. The Beacon will recognise and send out a clear message that our night-time economy is open for business.

### **13. Tackling health inequalities**

- 13.1 No issues arising from this report.

### **14. Climate Change & Sustainable Energy Act 2006**

- 14.1 The Better Barnsley scheme has aspirations to respond positively to local and national sustainability requirements. Sustainability is embedded throughout the scheme and includes all aspects of sustainability including social and economic sustainability as well as environmental sustainability.
- 14.2 The high quality design will respond positively to the site and local environmental requirements. For example, care has been taken to create accessible routes across the town centre that will facilitate a modal shift, and in doing so generate footfall which will manifest itself in more vibrancy at the top of the proposed town square. The prominence aspect has many business benefits, but the building design has to consider the positioning of air intakes and exhausts from mechanical plant to avoid fumes or noise pollution.
- 14.3 The location of The Beacon is close to the Barnsley Interchange to maximise the opportunities for visitors to travel on public transport.
- 14.4 The Beacon will achieve a BREEAM very good rating and be designed to reduce carbon emissions to 15% below the requirements of Part L of the Building Regulations.

### **15. Risk Management issues**

- 15.1 A complete risk register for the Better Barnsley Projects is contained within Morgan Kai and is regularly updated and presented to Town Centre Board. The key risks relating to the Library project are:
- Failure to agree a design for the proposed new library.
  - Failure to ensure there is sufficient funding in place to deliver the project outcomes.
  - Failure to deliver the ICT requirements of the building due to a lack of capacity in Information services.



- Failure to obtain the appropriate approvals to progress the project (planning approvals, approvals from statutory undertakers including the Environment Agency in relation to Sough Dyke).
- Failure to maximise the future potential of the new library building.
- Failure to gain public support for the project in light of changes to the wider Libraries and community services offer across the borough.

15.2 The Town Centre Major Projects Officer and Corporate Risk Manager review the Risk Register monthly, and escalate project, design and construction risks as necessary to the Town Centre Board.

15.3 The overall risk to the Council in financial terms is considered to be acceptable and costs will be managed within the overall project budget for the key elements to be delivered by the Council.

## **16. Health, safety, and emergency resilience issues**

16.1 All health and safety matters in respect to the development will be addressed as part of the obligations placed upon the main works contractors.

## **17. Compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights**

17.1 No issues arising from this report.

## **18. Promoting equality, diversity, and social inclusion**

18.1 The Better Barnsley Delivery Team are working closely with the Equality and Diversity Team. We understand that anyone with disabilities can face all kinds of challenges using the town centre. The project team will incorporate feedback from consultation sessions with disability groups.

18.2 Engaging with disabled people in our consultative process demonstrates our commitment to and valuing of, the disabled visitor/customer/user. As well as gaining insight into the more universal access issues, involving disabled people will bring more site-specific knowledge to the auditing process.

## **19. Reduction of crime and disorder**

19.1 The Council is collaborating with the Police to address anti-social behavior across the town centre. Good, safe design principles will help and assist this work going forward.

## **20. Conservation of biodiversity**

20.1 Biodiversity issues are being addressed through the planning and design process.

## **21. Glossary**

21.1 Purple Flag - a town and city centre award – similar to the Blue Flag for beaches – which aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town and city centres between the hours of 18:00-06:00.

**22. List of appendices**

Appendix A – Financial Implications

Appendix B – The Beacon Business Case & Appendices

**23. Background papers**

23.1 Correspondence regarding this matter is held on the files in Asset Business Unit and NPS Barnsley Ltd (Procurement) – not available for inspection, contains exempt information.

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