

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 PLACE TO CABINET ON 25 JULY 2018

GLASS WORKS PUBLIC REALM – PALETTE OF MATERIALS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the implementation of the Glass Works Public Realm which adheres to the underlying principles of the Public Spaces Strategy adopted by Cabinet on the 27 April 2011, but moves away from the prescriptive palette of materials established by the strategy for each street within the town centre.
- 1.2 The report seeks to clarify that the approval of a revised palette of materials for the Glass Works will set a precedent for any future public realm developments in the town centre. This should be managed through a revision of the Public Spaces Strategy to provide an updated policy document for future guidance.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the proposed palette of materials for the Glass Works Public Realm be approved for installation.**
- 2.2 **That the Public Spaces Strategy is revised and updated to reflect the changes to the palette of materials.**
- 2.3 **That members note there may be an increased burden on council resources covering the maintenance of trees, shrubs and the adopted highway, following completion of the scheme.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 In April 2011, Cabinet approved the Public Spaces Strategy as Council policy to guide the design, development and enhancement of high quality new public realm in the town centre.
- 3.2 The general aims of the strategy are:
 - To create user friendly, comfortable, clutter free and safe streets, spaces and gateways, moving towards a more pedestrian focused town centre.
 - To improve the legibility of Barnsley town centre by using high quality materials and furniture.
 - To celebrate Barnsley and make it distinctive.

- To create public spaces that lift the spirit, are easy to use, inspire people and provide great places for people.
- To provide quality spaces that attract potential investors and new visitors to the town, thereby helping underpin economic recovery.

- 3.3 The proposed Glass Works public realm has been designed to meet with these general aims of the strategy however it has moved away from the materials palette defined for each street as prescribed by the strategy.
- 3.4 The first scheme to implement the materials in the town centre was the Urban Centre Infrastructure scheme which saw the repaving Market Hill, Eastgate, Regent Street, Regent Street South and Eldon Street. The project highlighted certain issues, in that some of the materials have not performed as expected and present a burden from a maintenance perspective.
- 3.5. The Public Spaces Strategy is now 7 years old and has not been revisited since its original publication. There are now wider varieties of new paving products available which provide new opportunities for the enhancement of the public realm, particularly sustainable materials.
- 3.6 The Glass Works team have undertaken consultation with the public and local business on the proposals for the new Public Realm and this has been well received. The reshaped town centre now includes the Glass Works Square at the heart of the town, an area that did not exist when the Public Spaces Strategy was being developed.

4. PROPOSAL AND JUSTIFICATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the materials identified for the Glass Works public realm be agreed, to enable them to be incorporated into the scheme. The proposed materials are scheduled at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The scheme incorporates a range of paving materials and street furniture that are proposed are appropriate to each area and its usage. The higher quality materials are focused to public square, key gateway / nodal spaces as well as to features that may be found along the streets.
- 4.3 The design considers how certain spaces will be used and provides a robust surface whilst also providing interest along the street. Different paving textures can be used to mark edges of certain areas or delineate key routes. Kerbs and trims also help zone areas.
- 4.4 The proposed street furniture represents the palette within the Barnsley Town Centre Public Spaces Strategy, which includes seating, signage, bins, bollards, tree grilles and cycle parking. This will enable the scheme to align with the wider town centre and assists with ongoing maintenance. There will also be bespoke elements of street furniture to highlight particular areas or help with wider site issues.
- 4.5 The lifecycle cost of maintenance has been a consideration for the palette of materials, balanced with the aesthetic design requirements. Issues raised, following the Urban Centre Infrastructure project, have been reviewed and considered as part

of the design process and provide justification for moving away, in-part, from the specifications within the Public Spaces Strategy.

- 4.6 Approving the amended materials palette will set a new precedent for any future town centre developments, managed through a revision of the Public Spaces Strategy, to provide an updated policy document for future guidance.
- 4.7 All materials used in the amended palette will meet the required specifications for skid resistance for both pedestrians and vehicles and will be suitable for highway loading.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

- 5.1 To not improve the public realm would have a serious detrimental impact on the viability of the Glass Works project. The public realm creates the setting for the new town centre creating a vibrant, exciting scene.
- 5.2 The redesign of the Glass Works public realm to meet with the specific materials palette prescribed by the Public Spaces Strategy may cause a significant delay to the Glass Works Project. Significant cost increases would also be incurred from the additional professional fees required to redesign the scheme.
- 5.3 Retaining the existing palette would also further increase the maintenance burden on the Council through the use of products which have already proved problematic to maintain.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL PEOPLE/SERVICE USERS

- 6.1 The public space between buildings, and the routes that take people across and through the town centre, is one of the most important elements of a town: It is the place where people move and interact, and is a large determinant of their quality of life.
- 6.2 The Glass Works public realm will have a significantly positive impact for Barnsley residents. It will create a vibrant and modern town centre, which will retain and attract in more visitors. The development of a town square will provide an outdoor venue for small to medium sized outdoor events. It will retain the outdoor market in the streets to drive footfall and animate the town centre. In addition, the new town square will enhance the heart of the town for people to meet and dwell.
- 6.3 Before the development is complete, there will be disruption to local people and businesses during the next three years. The project team are working hard to minimise the disruption by ensuring that regular communications are provided to the public detailing any changes and providing progress updates.
- 6.4 Regular town centre walkabouts are held, particularly with vulnerable groups of service users who may find the disruption difficult to manage. These have proven very successful and have led to several mitigation measures being implemented to minimise the impact of the redevelopment works.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Service Director Finance (S151 Officer).
- 7.2 Total resources of £8.1M have been set aside for the full public realm works within the town centre as approved by Cabinet in November 2017 (Cab29.11.2017/13). The proposed palette of materials can be installed within this allocated resource
- 7.3 It is anticipated that current highway resources may be able to contain the ongoing maintenance of the public realm works in the adopted highway, for up to five years. Beyond this time, it is likely that there is risk of increased maintenance costs across the town centre and additional resources may be required on the basis that the construction of adopted highway has changed and may subsequently deteriorate differently to the current situation. Any implications regarding future financial resources will be reported to Cabinet in due course.

8. EMPLOYEE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Because of the proposed enhancements to the town centre, and those that may materialise in the future, it is feasible that there could be an opportunity for an increase in the number of claims against the Highway Authority to be made. Whilst in themselves, any claims will be dealt with as in the current, prescribed manner, it will still be necessary for the process to be followed. This could therefore see a similar increase on the burden on existing staff resources within the Highway Authority to defend these claims.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 None arising from this report.

10. CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None arising from this report.

11. COMMUNICATIONS IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 A communication plan is in place for the Glass Works 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.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 A consultation process has been utilised to help the community and stakeholders shape the public realm proposals 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 back in the summer 2014 and will continue throughout the redevelopment of the town centre.

12.2 Key communication activities and events:

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 'Glass Works' 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.

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 3,382 followers; it is updated on a regular 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 proposed 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. 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:

- 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.
- Other frequent concerns raised during consultation include issues with anti-social behaviour in the town centre and cleansing and maintenance issues.

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.

- 12.3 Specific public consultation sessions on the public realm concept design have been held in the Better Barnsley shop and in the markets. These sessions were supplemented with workshop sessions with a variety of town centre user groups particularly those with accessibility requirements. The outcome of the consultation has been very favourable, any issues or concerns have been logged and reviewed by the design team to enable amendments to be made to the design where appropriate.

13. THE CORPORATE PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

- 13.1 This proposal supports the Corporate Plan objectives of creating a 'thriving and vibrant economy' and creating 'strong and resilient communities'. We will achieve this through delivering the following outcomes as part of the wider Glass Works scheme:

- Develop a vibrant Town Centre
- Create more and better jobs and good business growth
- Strengthen our visitor economy
- Protecting the Borough for future generations

14. PROMOTING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- 14.1 The Town Centre 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.
- 14.2 Engaging with disabled people in our consultative process demonstrate 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.

15. TACKLING THE IMPACT OF POVERTY

15.1 Not applicable to this report.

16. TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

16.1 Landscapes have long been seen as places of delight and relaxation. Today, these associations are becoming more explicit: an increasingly strong evidence base demonstrates the positive effects that access to good-quality landscapes has on our health and wellbeing – and the negative effects when we don't. Much of the history of landscape architecture can be traced back to the need to create places that were beneficial for people's health and wellbeing.

16.2 The landscape design team are looking to achieve positive outcomes for people's health and wellbeing at all scales and all stages of development. By designing for the community, landscape architects understand how the aesthetic and functional qualities of a place can enhance quality of life. The following five principles from research undertaken by the Landscape Institute are believed to be essential to the creation of healthy places:

- Healthy places improve air, water and soil quality, incorporating measures that help us adapt to, and where possible mitigate, climate change
- Healthy places help overcome health inequalities and can promote healthy lifestyles
- Healthy places make people feel comfortable and at ease, increasing social interaction and reducing anti-social behaviour, isolation and stress
- Healthy places optimise opportunities for working, learning and development
- Healthy places are restorative, uplifting and healing for both physical and mental health conditions

16.3 The public realm improvements are being consciously planned and designed to promote social interaction. Attractive green spaces can also enhance property values and encourage tourism. A waymarked 'healthy mile' route will also be incorporated into the new public realm. All of these things benefit the socio-economic status of local populations and contribute to community cohesion and sustainable development, as well as benefitting wellbeing.

17. REDUCTION OF CRIME AND DISORDER

17.1 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.

18. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

18.1 There is a comprehensive risk register for the project which is reviewed and updated on a regular basis in consultation with the Corporate Risk Manager. Risks are reported on at regular board meetings.

18.2 Specific risks highlighted by Council as the Highway Authority will be reviewed and appropriate risk mitigations will be implemented. A safety audit will be undertaken

on every street by an independent body to ensure due consideration has been given during the design process.

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

19. HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESILIENCE ISSUES

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

20. COMPATIBILITY WITH THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- 20.1 No issues arising from this report.

21. CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

- 21.1 The opportunity to include new soft landscaping and planting of native species through the improvement of the public realm will encourage biodiversity in the town centre. Consultations have taken place with the Countryside & Biodiversity Officer to ensure that the proposals for the Glass Works public realm meet with

22. GLOSSARY

23. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Materials Palette Schedule

24. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Barnsley Town Centre Public Spaces Strategy

If you would like to inspect background papers for this report, please email governance@barnsley.gov.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made

Report author: Sarah McHale, Town Centre Major Projects Officer

Financial Implications/Consultation

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*(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer
where no financial implications)*