

**To:** City Executive Board  
**Date:** 20 June 2017  
**Report of:** Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Services  
**Title of Report:** Barton Neighbourhood Centre Improvements

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report</b>	To request project approval for improvements to Barton Neighbourhood Centre
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Executive Board Members:</b>	Cllr Dee Sinclair, Board Member for Culture and Communities; and Cllr Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Strong, Active Communities Effective, Efficient Council
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Community Centre Strategy, Barton and Northway Regeneration Strategy
<b>Recommendations:</b> That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Grant project approval</b> for the scheme as outlined in the report.</li> <li>2. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Service to proceed with these works within current budget allocations.</li> </ol>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk Register</li> <li>2. Equalities Impact Assessment</li> <li>3. Proposed Floor Plan</li> </ol>	

## **Background**

1. To facilitate the integration of the new Barton estate with the existing Barton estate, one of the Council's three priority areas, members agreed a £3.7m regeneration budget at Council in February 2016 to be funded from the HRA Capital Programme over the next 4 years.
2. Extensive consultation has taken place with residents and other stakeholders to understand their aspirations for the existing estate and inform the regeneration programme. Improvements to the existing Neighbourhood Centre featured as a high priority.
3. The Barton Neighbourhood Centre has evolved in a rather piecemeal way and it is confusing for new customers to know where to go when they arrive as there is no reception area, clear directional signage or clarity about what is available. Equally, whilst the building fabric is in reasonable condition, many of the finishes are looking very tired. In order to make the Centre more vibrant, welcoming and user friendly it is important that any future development addresses these issues.
4. The Centre currently houses a GP surgery and there are S106 monies to enable expansion to help accommodate the residents from the new Barton Park development. The works on the GP surgery are due to commence in 2017 and will create considerable upheaval. To avoid inconveniencing residents and users of the Centre twice and to maximise the impact of the overall investment it is proposed that the works on the GP Surgery and residual areas of the Neighbourhood Centre are coordinated and brought together.
5. The proposed investment in the Barton Neighbourhood Centre meets the prioritisation criteria set out in the Council's Community Centre Strategy, i.e. it is in a priority area, and the investment facilitates the strategic objectives of; reducing health inequalities, improving skills and bringing communities together. There is also an active Community Association.
6. Additionally the Council's Priority Area Plan for Barton specifies the effective integration of the existing Barton estate with the new Barton Park as one of its objectives. Improving the Neighbourhood Centre so it has a broader appeal is an effective and long term way to help achieve this.
7. The centre undoubtedly has potential to increase its usage, especially from new and emerging communities and work is ongoing with the Community Association to facilitate this.

## **Improvement Proposals**

8. In addition to the works to expand the existing GP Surgery the proposed improvements to the Neighbourhood Centre to address the issues set out above include the following:
  - Modernising the Sports Hall
  - Upgrading lighting
  - New Entrance and Foyer to make it brighter and more welcoming
  - Internal Signage
  - Refurbishment of Toilets, Fixtures and Fittings

- 9. Drawings to show the new footprint and internal layout are attached at Appendix 3.
- 10. Key stakeholders have been consulted on the proposals and expectation is high.

**Financial Issues**

- 11. The total cost of the proposed scheme including the works to the surgery is £950,000. An amount of £370,000 will be funded from Section 106 developer contributions, £150,000 from the Barton Regeneration Budget within the HRA Capital Programme with the balance of £430,000 being funded from the Community Centre Improvement Budget within the General Fund Capital Programme.
- 12. Whilst the Council could proceed with those parts of the scheme just funded by SIO6 and regeneration budget funding: the GP surgery, sports hall and entrance, this would result in a sub-optimal scheme.

**Legal issues**

- 13. Barton is fortunate to have an active Community Association who effectively manages the Neighbourhood Centre. The Association have a license to operate the centre and are in talks with the Council to implement a 25 year lease (outside of the Landlord and Tenant Act).
- 14. The new lease needs to be developed in a way that enables the Association to obtain external funding.

**Level of Risk**

- 15. See risk register at Appendix 1

**Equalities Impact**

- 16. See assessment at Appendix 2

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Ian Brooke</b>
Job title	Head of Community Services
Service area or department	Community Services
Telephone	01865 25 2705
e-mail	<a href="mailto:ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk">ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk</a>

**Background Papers:** None

This page is intentionally left blank