

	<p><b>Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee</b></p> <p><b>11 July 2016</b></p>
<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Locality Strategy</b></p>
<p><b>Report of</b></p>	<p>Director of Resources</p>
<p><b>Wards</b></p>	<p>All</p>
<p><b>Urgent</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Key</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Public</p>
<p><b>Enclosures</b></p>	<p>Appendix A: Locality Strategy Appendix B: Designs for moving Registry Office to Hendon Town Hall</p>
<p><b>Officer Contact Details</b></p>	<p>Jamie Masraff, Interim Commissioning Lead - Resources, London Borough of Barnet</p>
<p><b>Summary</b></p>	
<p>A Locality Strategy has been developed to ensure our staff are based in the most appropriate locations across the borough to allow them to work securely, safely and effectively, close to the residents they serve. This strategy has been developed in conjunction with the Office Accommodation Review Full Business Case to enable officers and members to decide where staff should be located, including within the proposed new offices in Colindale.</p>	

<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	
<p><b>1.</b></p>	<p>That the Committee acknowledges and notes the contents of the Locality Strategy;</p>
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p>That the Committee approves the preferred option for locality strategy, which is: the new Colindale offices being the principal base for officers, who will also use touchdown spaces across the borough, with a new Family Friendly hub to be developed in the east of the borough;</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p>That the Committee authorises Officers to search and identify a suitable location for the new Family Friendly hub in the east of the borough;</p>

<p><b>4. That the Committee approves the provision of face to face contact for homelessness and housing benefits transfers from Barnet House to Burnt Oak customer service centre;</b></p>
<p><b>5. That the Committee approves the use of small contained areas within Golders Green and North Finchley libraries to trial assessment and support hubs for adults social care clients to support the proposed new operating model for adults social care;</b></p>
<p><b>6. That the Committee approves the use of distinct parts of the ground floor customer access area in Colindale for meeting facilities for children &amp; families and for a Business Hub;</b></p>
<p><b>7. That the Committee approves the transfer of the Registry Office to Hendon Town Hall, and the designs as set out in Appendix B;</b></p>
<p><b>8. That the Committee authorises the procurement of an organisation(s) to establish Business Hubs that can provide touchdown office spaces in the newly freed up spaces within libraries and in the ground floor of the new Colindale Offices and agrees to delegate to the Director of Resources authority to enter a contract and lease (or other document permitting use of premises) for the same with such organisation(s).</b></p>

## **1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED**

### **1.1 Introduction and purpose**

- 1.1.1 The Council is committed to consolidate its office accommodation in order to reduce running costs; to provide modern, flexible accommodation that supports our staff; and to use its estate as a regeneration tool.
- 1.1.2 This commitment has already seen the substantial reduction in office accommodation within the NLBP Units and Barnet House, with the proposed move to new offices in Colindale (as set out in the Office Accommodation Review Full Business Case) representing a further significant consolidation.
- 1.1.3 Moving to new offices in Colindale will place a large proportion of the Council's staff in the heart of the Colindale regeneration area, close to many of the Council's residents and businesses that need our support the most.
- 1.1.4 While proposing this move to new offices in Colindale, the Council must also ensure all staff are based in the most suitable location across the borough to allow them to work securely, safely & effectively, close to the residents they serve. For many staff this is likely to be Colindale, because of its physical size and the facilities it provides, as well as its proximity to some of the borough's most deprived wards. For others, however, it may be more suitable for them to work from other locations.
- 1.1.5 The Locality Strategy has been developed to inform these decisions over where staff are best located to support our residents, be it in Colindale or other areas of the borough. The objectives of the strategy are to identify the most suitable places for staff to work from and, where appropriate, meet their customers, that:

- Are in suitable locations in our communities, within a short distance of the customers we serve
- Ensure that service requirements are met & staff preferences considered
- Align with agile/flexible working arrangements while we reduce the costs of our estate.

1.1.6 The Strategy has been developed through the following steps that took place from February to May 2016:

- A review of customer needs through mapping of demand 'hotspots'.
- A review of possible buildings to identify which could be used for additional staff to operate out of.
- A review of service preferences to identify those services that are best delivered from within communities, and not from central offices
- Assessment of different options, considering their ability to deliver the Locality Strategy objectives, as set out above, as well as the costs and changes involved.

## 1.2 **LBB's strategic objectives**

1.2.1 The Council's ambition is to move to a more 'agile working' organisation and it is committed to providing a more flexible working environment. The Locality Strategy supports this aim by providing suitable choices over where staff can work from in order to do their job securely, safely and effectively.

1.2.2 The Council's Customer Access Strategy, which was approved at Policy & Resources Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016 following public consultation, seeks to make online the default choice where appropriate and to meet our customers face to face only where this will more efficiently and effectively meet needs. The Locality Strategy supports this aim by proposing suitable face to face facilities only for those areas, such as adults and children's social care, where face to face contact will best meet the needs of our residents.

1.2.3 The Locality Strategy also supports the Council's proposals for the future delivery of adults social care, currently out for consultation, to address the growing demand for services while delivering substantial savings. In particular the strategy identifies some potential locations for the 'hubs' for assessments and reviews contained within the proposals.

1.2.4 The Locality Strategy supports the Council's Entrepreneurial Barnet approach to make Barnet the best place in London to be a small business by developing touchdown spaces that can be used by Barnet businesses and residents.

1.2.5 Finally the Locality Strategy supports the delivery of the Council's partnership vision to make Barnet the most Family Friendly borough by 2020. In particular it proposes appropriate facilities, space for co-location of services, and with the ability to provide services at times and in places that suit children and families.

## 1.3 Recommendations

1.3.1 The Locality Strategy demonstrates that the most suitable option is for the new Colindale offices to be the single, principal base for officers, with the provision of touchdown spaces across the borough which frontline staff can use, and a new Family Friendly hub in the east. This will include both an office base for our staff who work with children and families, and also suitable facilities for meeting with children and families. The touchdown spaces are proposed to be within new Business Hubs in four libraries (North Finchley & Golders Green, East Finchley & Chipping Barnet), Hendon Town Hall and the Colindale Independent Living Centre (ILC).

### **Touchdown space for mobile staff**

1.3.2 Newly freed up space within the four libraries will be rented to organisations that provide touchdown spaces open to all (not only Council staff) with any user paying a subscription to use this space.

### **Face to face provision for housing benefits and homelessness**

1.3.3 In order to enable the transfer of housing benefits and homelessness face to face contact from Barnet House, it is recommended that the Burnt Oak Customer Service Centre is re-configured to deliver this additional face to face contact. Analysis of the current Barnet House face to face contact and the space available within the Burnt Oak customer service centre has shown that this is feasible. Housing Benefits appointments will also take place in Golders Green and North Finchley Libraries in accordance with the Council's Customer Access Strategy, agreed at Policy & Resources Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

### **Assessment hubs for Adults**

1.3.4 Areas within new Independent Living Centre in Colindale, and Golders Green and North Finchley libraries will be used to trial assessment and support hubs for adults social care clients to support the proposed new operating model for adults social care.

### **Family Friendly Hubs**

1.3.5 In order to deliver suitable spaces for meeting children & families, it is proposed that two Family Friendly Hubs are developed, one within the ground floor of new Colindale building and another in the east of the borough in a site still to be identified. The Hub in the east will also contain space for children's social workers and other staff to work from.

### **Registry Office**

1.3.6 It is proposed to transfer the Barnet Registry Office from 182 Burnt Oak Broadway in Edgware to the Hendon Town Hall through reconfiguration of the space on the ground floor. Designs for this are included in Appendix B.

1.3.7 The current site occupied by the service is in poor condition and several options were considered for the relocation, including splitting the service. However, most of the other sites considered had longer lead in times to enable occupation and negotiation with existing tenants. Splitting the service would have resulted in increased costs.

- 1.3.8 The move to Hendon Town Hall will enable the council to conduct citizenship ceremonies in the council chamber and provide a better offer for weddings to be held at Hendon Town Hall.
- 1.3.9 Current occupants of HTH, custodians, governance services and members that hold surgeries in meetings rooms, have been considered and this proposal is not likely to have an adverse impact on them.
- 1.3.10 The proposed timeframe for carrying out these works, using terms contractors, is August 2016. This will ensure there is minimum impact or disruption to council meetings.

### **Business Hubs**

- 1.3.11 It is recommended that the remaining space within the customer access area on the ground floor on the Colindale offices is used as a Business Hub that will provide office space and tailored advice to support local businesses and entrepreneurs.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 2.1 The Strategy also considers three alternative options - two that propose greater use of multiple principal offices, and one further option proposing Colindale as the single principal office alongside a number of smaller buildings where staff would be permanently based from. The first two options are not recommended as they place considerable reliance on our existing central offices, and also only enable some specific groups of staff to work from within communities. The latter option is also not recommended due to the limitations with the possible buildings identified which would result in a split of services across a number of sites. In addition some of these possible locations involve the use of spaces made available within Library buildings which poses risks to the delivery of the rental income target attributed to these spaces.

## **3. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 3.1 If the recommendations are approved by the Committee, the next steps will be as follows:
- Commence search for organisations that specialise in establishing business hubs / providing touchdown office space as part of wider search for suitable tenants for space set aside for commercial / community rental in libraries;
  - Return to Assets, Regeneration & Growth Committee with the proposed terms of leases with organisations for the use of spaces within libraries;
  - Commence search for a suitable location for the Family Friendly hub in the east of the borough;

- Conduct feasibility study into reconfiguration of Burnt Oak Customer Service Centre;
- Pursue possible partner co-location opportunities, including for 0-25s and the Disabled Children Team in health settings, and for placing additional staff in other Council-owned buildings, such as Woodside Road Leaving Care Hub and Greentop Activities Centre;
- Commence use of space within new Colindale Independent Living Centre as a touch-down area, and of other touchdown areas as and when they become available;
- Commence works at Hendon Town Hall to accommodate Registry Office;
- Implement reconfiguration of the Burnt Oak Customer Service Centre.

#### **4. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

##### **4.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance**

4.1.1 This decision will support the Council's move to new offices in Colindale. This in turn contributes to the delivery of the Council's medium term financial challenge of achieving savings around £90m between 2015 and 2020, with around £6m of that being targeted through the existing estate, as well as the impetus the new development adds to the regeneration of the Colindale area.

4.1.2 The Council is further committed to providing staff and service users with office accommodation that provides a flexible working environment in line with modern working practices. This includes taking opportunities to improve community cohesion and cross-public sector integration. This decision supports these commitments, firstly by providing greater flexibility of where can work to do their job securely, safely and effectively, and also by enabling them to work closer to service users.

##### **4.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

4.2.1 Upfront investment is required to implement these recommendations – in particular to reconfigure the Burnt Oak Customer Service Centre and move Registrar's to HTH. These are envisaged to be in the region of £750k. This will be paid for from within the existing capital programme in the Asset Management budget.

4.2.2 This figure doesn't include the costs associated with the new Family Friendly Hub as no site has yet been identified for this building. However, the total cost for developing this should not exceed £2.5m which assumes no CIL/s106 contribution, the purchase of land, and similar costs per square metre as the new Colindale office.

4.2.3 It will also involve some additional operating costs to cover the fees for use of the touchdown spaces, for the ongoing running of the Family Friendly Hub,

and for the 0-25s and Disabled Children Tea to co-locate with partners in NHS offices. This is estimated to be in the region of £140k. The reduction in use of other central buildings, however, does open up the possibility of renting elements of this space to at least cover running costs. It is expected that this would more than compensate for the additional operating costs set out above.

### **4.3 Legal and Constitutional References**

4.3.1 The Council Constitution under Responsibility for Functions sets out the terms of reference for the Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee which includes:

- Develop strategies which maximise the financial opportunities of growth
- Asset Management – all matters relating to land and buildings owned, rented or proposed to be acquired or disposed of by the Council
- To approve any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee that is not reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources.
- Compliance with requirements of the Management of Asset, Property and Land Rules in the Council Constitution
- Compliance with the Contract Procedure Rules and Appendix 1 Table A in the Council Constitution.

### **4.4 Risk Management**

4.4.1 Key risks to the Locality Strategy are:

Implementation risks:

- Lack of suitable 'co-working' providers to rent out space within libraries
- Identifying a suitable, affordable site for the new Family Friendly hub in the east of the borough
- Lack of information available for non-LBB sites which are relied on for some teams (0-25s and Disabled Children's Team) and could offer further potential co-location opportunities that have not been identified thus far.

Business risks:

- Resistance to cultural changes as the smarter working and encouraged use of public transport initiatives are instigated
- Lack of changes to ways of working posing a strain on a single, principle office in Colindale.

4.4.2 All risks and issues will be managed in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Framework and Project Management Methodology and Toolkits. Assessments will be carried out as early as possible and will be monitored and reported to the Colindale & Smarter Working Board and, ultimately, to the Delivery Unit Board.

### **4.5 Equalities and Diversity**

4.5.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision-making of the Council. This requires elected Members to satisfy themselves

that equality considerations are integrated into day to day business and that all proposals have properly taken into consideration what impact, if any, there is on any protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place.

- 4.5.2 A single assessment has been carried out on the impact of these proposals, as well as the proposed move to new Colindale offices, on both staff and service users within the Equality Impact Assessments contained within appendices to the Office Accommodation Review FBC. These demonstrate that the proposals set out both in the Locality Strategy and the FBC are designed to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all Barnet's communities and its staff in relation to their access to the Civic Estate.

## **5. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 5.1 Customer Access Strategy submitted to P&R on 28 June 2016 –  
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s32725/Customer%20Access%20Strategy.pdf>