



CHIEF OFFICER IN CONSULTATION WITH COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DELEGATED POWERS REPORT

Title	Finchley Square Project
Report of	Deputy Chief Executive in the consultation with Chairman of the Housing and Growth Committee
Wards	Finchley Church End West Finchley
Status	Public with accompanying exempt appendix
Enclosures	Exempt Appendix 1: Finchley Square Business Plan (contains exempt information which is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information.)
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Summary

The decision taken within this report is to approve the Business Case and spend of £550,000 assigned from the Town Centres Capital Budget in 2018, to deliver the Finchley Square project, as identified within the Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy 2017.

Decisions

1. That the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing and Growth Committee gives permission to proceed with the expenditure of £550,000 funding previously allocated to deliver the proposed project Finchley Square, (as set out in Appendix 1: Business Case).

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 In September 2017, the Assets, Regeneration and Growth (now Housing and Growth) Committee (the “**Committee**”) adopted the Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy (the “**Strategy**”). The Strategy was developed in close collaboration with the community and set out a vision and approach to improve the health of the Town Centre.
- 1.2 In September 2018, the Committee approved expenditure of £550,000 from the Town Centres Capital Budget to deliver physical and environmental improvements, as identified in the Strategy.
- 1.3 The Committee agreed to delegate the development and approval of a Business Case for the Finchley Central Town Centre Project to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing and Growth Committee.
- 1.4 Following a review of projects identified, we have developed a Business Case to deliver the Finchley Square project. The project will see the refurbishment of public realm/highways within the town centre. Key objectives are to:
 - Create a new centre for the community, through undertaking public realm and environmental works to improve the experience and social environment for visitors to the town centre;
 - Develop a Public Realm Charter for the Town Centre to provide a framework which, once adopted, will identify a distinct character for the town centre and help coordinate any future public realm works; and
 - Co-develop the project with the community with the intention of establishing a new Town Team within the town centre, a community-led annual events programme and a new market with an offer that is sustainable, healthy and accessible to all.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Finchley Central (also known as Finchley Church End) Town Centre is one of Barnet’s seven main town centres, as set out in the Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy. As with high streets up and down the country, in recent years the area has been in decline, with retailers facing a range of challenges.
- 2.2 The Council adopted 2017 Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy (Appendix 2), identified the Finchley Square project as key to addressing the community’s concerns about the centre lacking a sense of place and the limited provision of places to dwell and meet on

the high street. The Strategy identified the site proposed for the Finchley Square project due to its widened pavement and central location.

- 2.3 In line with the Council's Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy and new Growth Strategy, this project seeks to create new trading space within the town centre, with a focus on providing low-cost and low-risk opportunities for SMEs and entrepreneurs to pilot new ideas on the high street.
- 2.4 In line with the new Growth Strategy this project aims to create a new Town Team and develop their agency to promote and celebrate the characteristics of the borough's town centres.
- 2.5 In line with the new Growth strategy this project will also result in a Finchley Central Public Realm Charter that will act as the design code for the scheme and any future public realm projects across the town centre. This will help to coordinate services across the council; and ensure that there is a unique set of design principles to develop a coherent Finchley Central Town Centre identity that champions the delivery of healthy and active streets.

1. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 The Council could choose to do nothing, and not consider ways of enabling the revitalisation of the public realm in Finchley Central. This is not recommended as it would result in the further decline of the town centre, affecting residents, businesses and visitors, and would also result in a missed opportunity to deliver exemplar public realm improvements in our Town Centres.
- 1.2 There is also a reputational risk to the Council in doing nothing as members of the local community who were consulted on development of the Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy have a reasonable expectation that the Council will seek to deliver it.

2. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1 The Council will proceed to procure a multi-disciplinary consultant team to support development of the Finchley Square project. The Finchley Square Business Plan (appendix 1) sets out the consultant fees budgeted for project delivery.
- 2.2 Initially the council will appoint the multi-disciplinary design team to develop a concept design with associated detailed budget for the Finchley Square, so that the Council is better positioned to secure any additional resources required to deliver the project. It should be noted that officers have submitted an application to the GLA's Good Growth Fund for match funding to deliver the project.
- 2.3 The Council will appoint a Town Centre Project Officer to oversee project delivery.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

3.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 3.1.1 Barnet's approach to supporting the local economy to grow, is outlined in Entrepreneurial

Barnet. It identifies Finchley Central/Church End as a main town centre.

3.1.2 Within Entrepreneurial Barnet, the Town Centre offer specifically outlines the Council's commitment to providing additional support to actively market and promote opportunities to developers when dealing with main Town Centres.

3.1.3 Entrepreneurial Barnet directly supports delivery of the Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, particularly the goals of promoting responsible growth within the borough; encouraging development and success; and revitalising communities whilst protecting what residents love about the borough.

3.1.4 This project will deliver on the Council's three focused outcomes: a pleasant, well maintained borough that we protect and invest; our residents live happy, healthy, independent lives with the most vulnerable protected; and safe and strong communities where people get along well.

3.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

3.2.1 The adoption of the recommendations will result in additional staffing resource. This will consist of a Town Centre Project Officer and a Sustainable Business Engagement Officer. These will be fixed-term appointments with costs being fully recovered from the project budget.

3.2.2 The adoption of these recommendations will require the Council to procure a multi-disciplinary design consultant team to bring the technical expertise to develop the Finchley Square project from feasibility design through to completion. One of the roles, to be included within the multi-disciplinary team appointed, will be a quantity surveyor who will maintain a detailed cost plan to assure value for money is achieved.

3.3 Social Value

3.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to consider how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

3.3.2 Social benefits will principally be secured through opportunities to improve the public realm and utilising the design process of this space as an opportunity to convene the community and develop their agency through supporting the establishment of a Town Team and leading the development of a Finchley Central Community Events programme.

3.4 Legal and Constitutional References

3.4.1 All proposals emerging from this report must be considered in terms of the Council's legal powers and obligations, including its overarching statutory duties such as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

3.4.2 The Council's Constitution, Article 7.5, Responsibility for Functions, states that the Housing and Regeneration Committee is responsible for the regeneration strategy and overseeing major regeneration schemes.

3.4.3 The Assets and Growth Committee on the 17 September 2018 delegated the development and approval of a business case for the Finchley Central Town Centre Project to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee. This DPR complies with that delegation.

3.4.4 The procurement of the consultants will be undertaken as a mini-competition off a fully OJEU compliant Framework (the GLA Architecture, Design and Urbanism Panel); which resulted from a competitive tender process.

3.5 Risk Management

3.5.1 The Council has prepared and will maintain a risk register for the project.

3.5.2 There is a risk that satisfactory planning permission may not be obtained. The Council is developing this project in collaboration with internal teams, including Planning, to ensure the project is developed in alignment with current policy.

3.5.3 A further risk is that there will be resistance to any proposed development by local community members and others. This project directly builds on priorities already identified through community consultation and the Council has allowed for further substantial community engagement throughout the project.

3.6 Equalities and Diversity

3.6.1 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision-making of the Council.

3.6.2 Decision-makers should have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties, and are not duties to secure a particular outcome.

3.6.3 It is important that the decision-maker has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the Public Sector Equality Duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) Tackle prejudice, and
- b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

3.6.4 The proposed project will have positive benefits for the community and will give improved access to the facilities in the area.

3.7 **Corporate Parenting**

5.7.1 Town centre facilities benefit all residents, and opportunities to work in partnership with different service areas will be explored throughout the project.

3.8 **Consultation and Engagement**

3.8.1 In 2017 Barnet developed the Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy. During the Strategy's development the Council undertook on-street engagement with businesses, local community groups and residents to inform the works and projects proposed within the Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy. The Finchley Square project was identified as a key project in the strategy, that addresses a number of issues raised by the community during the consultation.

3.8.2 The proposed plan to develop this project has placed community engagement at its core and all ongoing engagement in relation to this project will be delivered in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 The designation of Finchley Central as a main town centre was made using data on scale, population size, and growth potential. All subsequent support for the town centre – including supporting the development of this proposal – has been made on this basis.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee, 17 September 2018, Town Centre Capital projects and update on Finchley Central Housing Infrastructure Fund project

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s48469/Town%20Centre%20Capital%20projects%20and%20update%20on%20Finchley%20Central%20Housing%20Infrastructure%20Fund%20project.pdf>

6.2 Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/delivering-barnet-old/entrepreneurial-barnet>

6.3 Finchley Central Town Centre Strategy

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43517/Appendix%20%20%20Finchley%20Central%20Town%20Centre%20Strategy.pdf>

Chairman:
Has been consulted

Signed



Date 18 December 2019

Chief Officer:
Decision maker having taken into account the views of the Chairman

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Shaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a long, sweeping tail.

Date 18 December 2019

