

## THE EXECUTIVE

23 NOVEMBER 2004

### REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

<b>BARKING TOWN CENTRE – ADOPTION OF “BARKING CODE”</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>	
<p><i>This report regards a strategic issue concerning the spending of the Sustainable Communities funding in Barking, which falls within the remit of the Executive.</i></p> <p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) provided the Council with £2m of funding, from the Sustainable Communities Fund, for the improvement of all the spaces in Barking Town Centre, the public can expect to have physical access to-generically referred to as the public realm. The Barking Town Centre Partnership (BTCP) appointed an external consultant to advise on a range of materials to be used within the street and open space environment and test the approach in 4 schemes. The Executive is asked to agree the “Barking Code” and note the four pilot projects.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected</b> – Abbey, Gascoigne.</p> <p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <p>The Executive is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Agree ‘The Barking Code’, which sets out the selection of surface materials, construction details, street furniture etc. to establish a distinctive town centre; and</li><li>2. Note the proposed schemes</li></ol> <p><b>Reason</b></p>		
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#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Deputy Prime Minister launched the Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the future) on 5 February 2003. As part of this programme Barking and Dagenham was awarded £2.0m of funding to be spent between 2003/4 – 2005/6 for the improvement of the public realm in Barking town centre. This award was made subject to a full appraisal of the project, and evidence that the project is deliverable. The Council agreed to add £1.605m of match funding from the borough spending plan and Section 106 agreements to reach an overall budget of £3,605,000. (Sustainable Communities Fund – approved 9 March 2004).

## **2 The Barking Code**

- 2.1 The public realm consists of all the spaces everybody can expect to have physical access to within Barking town centre. This includes streets, squares, paths and parks with all associated features from plants to lighting, signs and street furniture. This is a social space where people meet and move about their daily business. It is an important extension to the amenities of the community and the subject of civic pride if looked after. This initiative has created the opportunity for the Council to embark on a significant improvement in the physical environment.
- 2.2 Following the Sustainable Communities award, consultants were appointed to develop the 'Barking Code'. Part of this commission involved developing concept designs for four pilot areas: the Broadway; St. Ann's to Town Square; London Rd; Abbey Rd.
- 2.3 The Barking Code is a selection of surface materials, construction details, street furniture etc. to establish a coordinated and distinctive town centre. This selection (see appendix 1) aims to reflect the different spatial characters achieving a unique urban environment, contributing to the government's liveability agenda and enabling the regeneration potential of the town centre to be fulfilled. It also promotes the design quality the council wishes to see from private investors. At the Board meeting the consultant will present a short explanation of the ideas promoted and illustrate the selected materials.

## **3 Phase 1 implementation**

- 3.1 Initial designs have been produced for the four pilot areas and currently the Broadway is being implemented.
- 3.2 The Broadway and surrounding area - The redevelopment of 'The Broadway', as an arts venue, has now been completed providing high quality arts facilities and accommodation for Barking College. Work to the public realm, is programmed to support the formal opening and use of this cultural development project.
- 3.3 St Ann's to Town Square - The walk from St Ann's to the Town Square: a pedestrian route in need of formalising and enhancement. Shortening the perceived distance will stimulate walking and achieve a safer crossing. The old and new housing will have a better connection with the town centre. The design proposes resurfacing, landscaping and additional lights and needs to be fully incorporated into both of these developments. Costs are estimated at £0.3 m. The scheme is programmed for the next financial year. However, The Town Square proposal and the proposal for Axe Street car park affect this project, and its implementation will be co-ordinated with these developments.
- 3.4 London Road - The construction of the Thames Gateway Transit (TGT -formerly East London Transit) through the town centre is scheduled to begin in the middle of 2006 with the operational phase expected about a year later. In order to facilitate this, parts of the market will need relocating. A feasible design is being produced for Transport for London (TfL) to implement as part of the TGT undertaking. The initial outlay incurred by the Council will be reclaimed from TfL. At present the scheme is

estimated at £0.6 m and includes realignment and resurfacing to adjust London Road to the new requirements.

3.5 Abbey Road – There are a number of proposals taking place along Abbey Road (South of Town Quay) and there is a need to substantially improve the public realm in this area. This will support the transformation of the river Roding and provide an improved pedestrian environment. This is estimated at £1.5 m and it is programmed for completion in the next financial year.

3.6 As a reflection of the Town Centre’s cultural regeneration and focus on heritage, diversity, mixed tenure and use, a public arts programme will be implemented alongside the hard and soft landscaping of the public realm. A range of opportunities for employing artists to create site specific and accessible work for the pilot areas is being undertaken in partnership with the Arts Service. The key theme of the Town Centre ‘Artscape’ will be in interpreting the town at a pedestrian level and creating an accessible interface between the main retail, housing and leisure areas. The scope is intended to include opportunities for lighting, signage, interpretation and small scale artworks that engage the community and represent the heritage and cultural values of the borough.

#### 4 Project Management

4.2 The progress of this project is closely monitored by the ODPM on spend and delivery by month, quarter and agreed milestones. The delivery programme is as follows:-

#### 4.3 Estimated schedule (table 1).

Year	Period	
2004/05	Quarter 2	Broadway area: start construction London Road: start detailed design Abbey Road: start detailed design
	Quarter 3	St Ann’s: start detailed design
	Quarter 4	Broadway area: construction complete Abbey Road: start construction
2005/06	Quarter 1	London Road: start construction
	Quarter 2	St Ann’s: start construction
	Quarter 3	St Ann’s: construction complete
2006/07	Quarter 1	London Road: construction complete
	Quarter 2	Abbey Road: construction complete

#### 5 Public Consultation

5.1 The consultation on the Barking Town Centre Interim Planning Guidance took place during the months July, August and September. This contained information and details on the thinking behind the Barking Code. A questionnaire was included.

5.2 The pilot schemes will need the commitment of existing stakeholders and therefore each proposal will be subject to its own public consultation process in line with the Borough’s Consultation Strategy (March 2003).

5.3 It should be noted that due to the completion of the Broadway Theatre renovation, the landscaping works have been brought forward. This is to reduce disturbance, is cost-effective and delivers a new look all-over. Advanced notice of the scheme was published in the ward's newssheet 'Forum Three' (Issue 7) and the final report made available for inspection at the municipal offices (127 Ripple Road).

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 The transformation and environmental improvements of the town centre associated with the proposed Barking Code are monitored and managed by the Department. Each of the four pilot phases is subject to appraisal by the Corporate Programme Management Office and takes into account maintenance and revenue implications of each scheme.

6.2 Agreed match funding sources to the ODPM Grant are found in S278 (Highways) and S106 (Planning) agreements. In addition further bids to secure the delivery of these projects are submitted to the Borough Spending Plan (outcome in November 2004). Other suitable opportunities for additional finance will be taken as appropriate (BSC Service Scorecard).

### 6.3 Table 2. Spend profile.

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>04 / 05</b>	<b>05 / 06</b>	<b>Sum</b>
ODPM (Sustainable Communities)	1.2 m	0.8 m	2.0 m
Transport for London (TGT)	-	0.6 m	0.6 m
Other (s106, s278, BSP etc)	-	1.0 m	1.0 m
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1.2 m</b>	<b>2.4 m</b>	<b>3.6 m</b>

## 7. Consultation

7.1 The following have been consulted in the preparation of this report:

The Regeneration Board – 26 October 2004  
Councillor Kallar – Lead Member for Regeneration  
David Waller – Interim Head of Regeneration Finance, Department of Finance  
Tracey McNulty – Head of Arts, Department of Education, Arts & Libraries

## Background Papers

None

## Attachments:

Appendix 1: Final document: the Barking Code