

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report To:** Executive – 30 May 2012

**Subject:** Abraham Moss Centre Redevelopment

**Report Of:** Chief Executive  
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)  
City Treasurer

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**Summary**

To seek the Executive's approval to progress investment proposals at the Abraham Moss Centre. These include; the expansion of Abraham Moss so that it offers a 2-Form-Entry (2FE) primary provision, relocation of the library within the leisure centre with a dedicated access, and a range of structural and cosmetic improvements that will improve the appearance, layout and access to the site and reinforce Abraham Moss Centre's role as a community hub with an emphasis on education and skills.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Note and approve the proposals for the strategy for investment in the AMC.
2. Approve the proposed funding of the £8.88m capital investment from existing resources within the Capital Programme and the virement of £2m from the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

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**Wards Affected:**

Crumpsall and Cheetham

<b>Community Strategy Spine</b>	<b>Summary of the contribution to the strategy</b>
Performance of the economy of the region and sub region	Investment in the AMC will contribute to the economic and social development of this area of the City and beyond.
Reaching full potential in education and employment	AMC will make a positive contribution in terms of assisting local people to gain the necessary skills to access employment opportunities which are being created across the City

Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect	Improved education and leisure facilities will contribute to the sustainability of local neighbourhoods by better preparing local people for further education, training or employment opportunities and encouraging healthy lifestyles.
Neighbourhoods of Choice	AMC has an important role to play in the local area and continued investment in the area's social, economic, education and community infrastructure is required to improve perceptions of the area and better meet the needs of the local community.

**Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:**

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

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#### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The primary school will be independent of the centre and the revenue cost for operating the primary school will be met through resources allocated through the Manchester Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS) calculation.

A revenue business plan which estimates the overall costs of running the site has been developed and estimated costs are offset from potential income achieved at full occupancy. Therefore there is an expectation that there will be no revenue cost implications on the centre post the development. The business plan will continue to be reviewed and tested as the final design and site use are developed to ensure its accuracy and viability.

#### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The total estimated capital costs for Abraham Moss Centre works is £12.7m; however the current proposed scheme which excludes the development of lettable space until a later date is £8.88m. The scheme is proposed to be funded from £5.0m Basic Needs grant and £1.88m from the Asset Management Programme budget and £2.0m re-allocation from savings achieved on the Building Schools for the Future programme. Any further scheme developments will be considered in the future subject to a business case.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

1. Abraham Moss Brief
2. Abraham Moss Space Allocation Feasibility Study March 2012
2. Abraham Moss Business Case March 2012

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Abraham Moss Centre (AMC) is a multi-service/user site comprising 19 hectares of land in North Manchester and managed by the City Council's Corporate Property Team. The Centre is located within the Crumpsall ward but provides the main community and education hub for both the residents of Crumpsall and Cheetham. The Centre provides for a number of core tenants including the Abraham Moss High School (AMHS), leisure centre, a district library and a 230-person theatre complex with dressing rooms and storage. The Centre also currently hosts a variety of other tenants which are mainly in the public, voluntary and community sectors, delivering community, education and training provision.
- 1.2 The Centre and its surrounding areas have also seen a number of important developments over recent years, including major capital investment into AMHS through the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, a new metrolink stop opposite the Centre and plans for new housing developments. There is now an opportunity to better use the current facilities both to meet the needs of existing tenants and attract new occupiers to enhance the role of the Centre and protect the existing investment in the site.
- 1.3 There is an identified and demonstrable need to create additional primary provision in the M8 postcode of Crumpsall and Cheetham. This need arises from the growth in primary age children presenting for admission. Four local primary schools have already been expanded in response to this and all the extra places created so far have been taken. Further capacity is now needed which cannot be accommodated through additional expansions.

The intention is therefore to provide a primary school offer on the AMC site. An expansion of Abraham Moss High School so that it offers a 2FE primary school provision would create 60 extra Reception places, 420 throughout. It has also been noted that, such is the demand for places, that it is necessary to create a minimum of 66 new reception places in Crumpsall from September 2012, just to maintain the current position.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Abraham Moss Centre has been operational for over 35 years and its current management arrangements mean that the costs of running the site have largely been met by service level charges applied to tenants. However, it has become clear that the Centre is in need of modernisation if it is to continue to provide high quality educational and community facilities over the long term. Whilst the structure itself is sound, the appearance of these CLASP buildings are poor and no longer meet the requirements of a service hub of the 21st century in terms of building condition, site security, accessibility, general visibility and appearance. In addition to this there is a need for a variety of fire safety works. As a consequence the quality of the visitor experience is detrimentally affected and this impacts negatively on usage levels. Given the amount of recent investment in the High School and Tram Station, together

with the planned works to improve the public realm, now is a good time to refresh the strategic direction and long term plan for the centre. Although the Centre has effective onsite management, it has suffered from a lack of clear strategic direction which has had a detrimental effect on the longer term planning for the site.

- 2.2 North Manchester remains, as well as having some successful areas, a region with low income neighbourhoods and high levels of deprivation. As a consequence, Centres such as Abraham Moss have an important role to play in the local area and continued investment in the area's social, economic, education and community infrastructure is required to meet existing needs, improve perceptions of the area and, the prospects of the future generations. The AMC's focus on education, training and community provision means that it can make a positive contribution in terms of assisting local people to gain the necessary skills to access employment opportunities which are being created across the City.
- 2.3 A review of the evidence base has revealed that the site is already an important resource for the local community although the potential exists to make better use of the Centre, attract a range of new tenants, increase footfall and maximise the benefit for the local area. The AMC has a major role to play in the regeneration and development of the local area and in addressing some of the continued social and economic challenges in North Manchester.

### **3.0 Redevelopment Proposals**

- 3.1 Given the critical demand for primary school places and the need to enhance the role of the Centre as a community hub to ensure its longer term viability, officers have established the feasibility of expanding educational offer for Abraham Moss to provide a 2FE primary school within the centre. This will address the continued rising demand for primary places in the locality, and will also allow for the creation of a 5-16 through school, which will improve the education offer and help address issues around transition from year 6 to year 7 and also provide a unique opportunity for primary school pupils to access the state of the art facilities within the new AMHS. Due to the imperative of meeting the demand for primary school places this year, the primary school will be delivered in two stages with 2 reception classes (60 places) being available from September 2012 and the remainder of the primary school ready for September 2013.
- 3.2 The school will be located on the ground floor of the existing AMC main building. Historically the theatre has been a shared resource across the site including serving normally as the AMHS assembly hall. Under the proposed reconfiguration the theatre will be part of the school during school hours but the intention is to ensure the theatre will continue to be available for community use outside of school hours. The location of the school on the ground floor will require the rationalisation of the space currently allocated to existing tenants. Officers have produced a decant strategy for the site that provides the necessary accommodation for the school but also allows complimentary uses to be located together. This will include relocating the

library in the leisure centre with its own dedicated ground floor entrance. Further work is to be undertaken to assess the demand for post 16 provision from this site, and to understand the type of provision that would be necessary to meet this demand.

- 3.3 All commercial uses will be located together and the management offices will be given a more prominent location on the site, thus creating a clearer main entrance into the building. The creation of up to 4 retail units as part of the public realm works will also provide opportunities for additional rental income.
- 3.4 The decant strategy will require a level of internal fit out works and have been viewed as an opportunity to combine these with the fire safety works and undertake some essential backlog maintenance works and some visual cosmetic works that will improve the image and appearance of the building, that will complement the new AMHS, and the new metrolink station at the southern end of the site.

#### 4.0 Financial Implications

##### 4.1 Capital Costs

The capital costs for the reconfiguration of the site; have been developed by the City Council this shows a total cost of £12.7m for the delivery of the overall development and the cost of current scheme is £8.88m, as set out in the table below.

The scheme is proposed to be funded from a Department for Education Basic needs grant to the value of £5.0m and £1.88m from the Asset Management Programme budget and £2.0m re-allocation of MCC resources from savings achieved in the BSF programme.

<b>Abraham Moss Redevelopment</b>	
<b>Component</b>	<b>Cost £ m</b>
Health and Safety Works	£0.775m
Primary school & associated relocations	£3.500m
Associated relocations costs linked to primary school	£2.413m
Centre Enhancements	£1.591m
Library	£0.448m
Retail Lets	£0.154m
<b>Reduced Scheme</b>	<b>£8.881m</b>
Vacant Space for Future Development	£3.816m
<b>Full Scheme</b>	<b>£12.697m</b>

## **5.0 Management and Governance Arrangements**

- 5.1 The landlord of the Abraham Moss Centre is Manchester City Council with the function carried out by Corporate Property (CP) who are contracted to provide accommodation to a series of tenants through Service Level Agreements (SLA), leases or licences. Policy and procedure for Abraham Moss is set by Corporate Property senior management and is passed down to the Centre Manager to deliver.
- 5.2 All the costs of running the site are apportioned, by area, and are recharged to tenants via a service level charge (SLC) The SLC currently reflects the exact costs of the management of the site. There is no sinking fund providing for future development costs or capital costs. The SLC includes at least Gas, Electric, Water, repair & maintenance, Rates and security, it also covers site management but no Corporate Property management charge.
- 5.3 In order to achieve the vision and objectives for the site it is necessary to review the current management and governance arrangements. This will include a more structured approach to tenant charging, maximising opportunities to attract new tenants and making greater use of the site. The management arrangements will need to ensure that income is maximised in order to fund any future improvements to the centre.

## **6.0 Conclusion and next steps**

- 6.1 In order to ensure that the City Council can meet its duty to provide school places for residents within the M8 postcode, delivery of a primary school within the AMC site is required. It is critical that this facility is available to meet this demand this Year and to achieve this the first phase, being the delivery of 60 reception places, must be achieved by September 2012.
- 6.2 The Primary school will be a catalyst for wider investment in the site which will ensure its longer term future and allow opportunities for income generation through commercial lettings.
- 6.3 Approval of the proposals by the Executive will provide the opportunity to improve the Abraham Moss Centre for all its tenants and attract additional use through the :
- Refurbishment of commercial areas to allow tenants to decant
  - Creation of a new library within the leisure facility with a separate ground floor entrance
  - Creation of a new management suite with a more prominent frontage
  - Completion of public realm and creation of 4 retail units for let
  - Production of a brief to look at demand for post 16 provision from this site
  - Establish management and governance arrangements for the site
- 6.4 The ability to deliver the redevelopment of AMC will make a major contribution to the regeneration objectives for North Manchester. The improved community facility and new primary school offer, combined with other initiatives such as

Cheetham District Centre, new housing provision and improved transport infrastructure will help address some of the social and economic challenges experienced in the Crumpsall and Cheetham areas over the longer term.

## **7.0 Contributing to the Community Strategy**

### **(a) Performance of the economy of the region and sub region**

- 7.1 Investment in the AMC will contribute to the economic and social development of this area of the City and beyond.

### **(b) Reaching full potential in education and employment**

- 7.2 Investment in AMC will ensure its focus will remain on education, training and community provision, thus making a positive contribution to assisting local people to gain the necessary skills to access employment opportunities that are being created across the City.

### **(c) Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect**

- 7.3 Improved education and leisure facilities will contribute to the sustainability of local neighbourhoods by better preparing local people for further education, training or employment opportunities and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

### **(d) Neighbourhoods of Choice**

- 7.4 AMC has an important role to play in the local area and continued investment in the area's social, economic, education and community infrastructure is required to improve perceptions of the area and better meet the needs of the local community.

## **8. Key Policies and Considerations**

### **(a) Equal Opportunities**

- 8.1 The availability of primary school places will ensure that local residents will have access to provision that the City Council has a statutory duty to provide. In addition to this the investment in the wider site will ensure that the necessary education, training and leisure facilities are available to help local residents progress on the pathways to employment and training and accessing the economic opportunities across the city.

### **(b) Risk Management**

- 8.2 The project team as produced and maintains a detailed risk register that identifies actions being taken to reduce the likelihood and impact of the risks identified. This is reviewed regularly by the project manager and issues escalated through the project governance structures as required.

**(c) Legal Considerations**

- 8.3 Legal Services will deal with all necessary contracts and legal agreements on behalf of the City Council