

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Resources
DATE	29th April 2014
REPORT TITLE	Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan Review
REPORT OF	Head of Planning, Economy and Community
WARDS AFFECTED	Tavistock Wards

Summary of report:

The report sets out the process involved in reviewing the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as part of the development of a Stage 2 bid for Tavistock under the Heritage Lottery's Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). It recommends approval of the documents for future planning purposes subject to any comments members may wish to make

Financial implications:

The Borough Council contributed up to £6,000 towards the development phase (Stage 2) of the Tavistock Townscape Heritage (THI) bidding process. The cost of engaging consultants to review these documents has been met from these Stage 2 funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. agrees the revised version of the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal should be used as a background document to inform the Conservation Area Management Plan;
2. adopts the reviewed version of the Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan to be used as part of the Council's evidence to inform future plan making and the determination of relevant planning applications; and,
3. agrees that any inconsequential changes considered necessary to the documents are delegated to the Head of Planning, Economy and Community in consultation with the Chairman of Resources Committee.

Officer contact:

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Borough Council endorsed and set aside the necessary match funding to support the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Scheme Stage 1 bid in October 2012 (RC 20 – 2012/13). In March 2013 the Tavistock Town Council received a Stage 1 approval from the Heritage Lottery (HLF) and since then they have been working in partnership with the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership (TTHP) to develop a Stage 2 bid.
- 1.2 Part of the requirements of the Heritage Lottery, in order to make a successful Stage 2 bid, is to have an up to date Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan in place. Members will recall that they approved the original version of the documents in 2010 (FP&H 21 of 09/10). Hence, those documents were due for review.
- 1.3 As part of the Stage 2 process funds were set aside to carry out this review and the consultants, The Conservation Studio (TCS), were appointed by the Town Council to lead on that part of the bidding process.
- 1.4 The report below outlines their approach and methodology, including extensive public consultation. Copies of the revised plans are available on the Borough Council website at <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/2760/Local-Priorities> and hard copies are available in the Member's room or on request. The action plan is attached at Annex B. Member's are asked to consider these documents and if appropriate, adopt them for future planning purposes.

2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The Tavistock Townscape Heritage Partnership (TTHP) has guided the THI bidding process throughout the current round. The Partnership includes both officer and member representation from all the three local authorities, including the Borough Council. They endorsed a light touch approach to the review of these documents. As a consequence the first drafts showed minimal changes, largely reporting changes that have taken place since 2009 (e.g. the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework, proposals to make Tavistock a key centre within the WHS and associated studies). The Key Centre studies were reported and endorsed by the Community Services Committee in March this year.
- 2.2 Revised versions of these documents were circulated initially to officers and members of the TTHP and then to wider public consultation. The launch event for the public consultation was attended by over 150 people in the Pannier Market over the Dickensian evening week-end in November. The exhibition was then transferred to the Library until 17th January and was available, with all the supporting documents, on both the Borough and Town Council websites, until that date, when the consultation period finished.
- 2.3 There were 26 written responses and these can be summarised as follows in respect of the Appraisal and Management plan review:-

Summary of replies:

Q1: Do you agree with the current Conservation Area Boundary – would you like to see any further areas added?

16 agreed; 2 disagreed and 8 either did not answer this question or replied Don't Know.
One person suggested combining the Tavistock Conservation Area with the Whitchurch CA boundaries

Q2: Do you agree with the assessment of the features that make Tavistock special?

18 agreed; 2 disagreed and 6 either did not answer this question or replied Don't Know

Q3: Do you agree with the key issues affecting the Conservation Area as set out in the Character Appraisal? Are there any particular issues which you would like to add?

14 agreed; 3 disagreed and 9 either did not answer this question or replied Don't Know

Suggestions;

*More trees fewer pigeons at Betsy Grimbal's Tower
Keep emphasis on historic buildings rather than traffic management
Merge Town and Borough Councils
Tesco decision has serious implications for viability
Danger of over-zealous approach
Sceptical about town centre manager idea*

Q4: Do you agree with the recommendations for action in the Management Plan which is based on these issues?

12 agreed; 4 disagreed and 10 either did not answer this question or replied Don't Know

Comments;

*Spend less on appraisals/more on buildings
Avoid use of imported stone
Bank Square parking is vital
Redevelop eyesore rest room
Improve parks management
Better maintenance
Little change since the last version
Retain parking/avoid maintenance costs*

2.4 Following these replies the consultants have re-drafted the documents and now offer them for Members consideration and comment.

2.5 Than main changes are as follows:-

- Updates regarding National Planning Guidance
- Reporting the key centre studies and proposals to establish Tavistock as a key centre in the WHS
- Updates regarding current Conservation staffing levels

- Review of measures, such as the use of Article 4 Directions and design Guides
- Removal of references to Heritage Champions and Town Centre Manager appointments
- Reference to the THI proposals and specifically The Public Realm Strategy

2.6. The Action Plan, which forms part of the Management Plan, is attached at Annex B for detailed consideration. Overall the Management Plan has been simplified compared to the original plan, taking into account progress which has been made.

2.7. No further change to the CA Boundary is proposed.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Local Planning Authority has a duty to review and update its designations under Section 69 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act 1990.

3.2 There are no other specific legal implications for the Borough Council relating to the adoption of these documents.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Borough Council contributed up to £6,000 towards the development phase (Stage 2) of the Tavistock Townscape Heritage (THI) bidding process. The cost of engaging consultants to review these documents has been met from the Stage 2 funds.

4.2. If and when specific proposals, as outlined in the Action Plan, need to be brought forward for implementation, further reports will be submitted to the appropriate committee for Members consideration.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The risk management implications are as set out in Annex A below

6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate priorities engaged:	Environment, Economy and Community Life
Statutory powers:	Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011
Considerations of equality and human rights:	N/A
Biodiversity considerations:	These are considered as part of the management plan review
Sustainability considerations:	These are considered as part of the management plan review and the separate sustainability analysis completed by Cornwall Council

Crime and disorder implications:	N/A
Background papers:	Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal; July 2009 Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan; July 2009 Report to Future Planning and Housing Committee 8 th March 2010 Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal review; February 2014 Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan review; February 2014
Appendices attached:	Annex A – Strategic Risks Template Annex B – Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal Review Feb 2014 Annex C – Tavistock Conservation Area Management Plan Review Feb 2014

ANNEX A

No	Risk Title	Risk/Opportunity Description	Inherent risk status			Mitigating & Management actions	Ownership	
			Impact of negative outcome	Chance of negative outcome	Risk score and direction of travel			
1	Reputational risk	Inability to demonstrate that the agreed plans are up to date and have been through full and proper public consultation	3	2	6	↔	Report of consultation is available on request. This has been extensive as outlined in the attached report.	Head of PEC
2	Legal risk	Potential challenge to the validity of these documents	3	2	6	↔	The review of the documents enables the issues to be tested and documents to be updated, including public consultation over a 7 week period, which is in line with best practice.	Head of PEC
3	Financial risk	This relates to the lack of an agreed and up to date strategic context for making planning decisions and submitting the Stage 2 THI bid.	3	2	6	↔	The existence of up to date and tested Appraisal and Management Plan documents will enable more informed decisions and provides the necessary documentation and policy measures to support a THI programme in Tavistock.	Head of PEC

STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Score 20-25: very high; 12-19: high; 8-12; medium; <8: low

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔

ANNEX B ACTION PLAN			
IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (6 TO 18 MONTHS)			
Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Cost (£)
Adopt CA Character Appraisal review	WDBC and TTC	Spring 2014	Nil
Adopt CA Management Plan review	WDBC and TTC	Spring 2014	Nil
Publish a WHS Key Centre Interpretation Strategy	WDBC	Spring 2014	Nil
Adopt the THI Public Realm Strategy	TTC and WDBC	Spring 2014	Nil
Consider commissioning a Design Guide for Tavistock	WDBC	2015	If appropriate, would be commissioned in 2016

MEDIUM TERMS PROJECTS (18 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS)			
Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Cost (£)
Consider appropriateness of Shopfronts leaflet and other householder guidance	WDBC	18-24 months	About £1,500 per A4 leaflet plus printing costs
New use for the Guildhall	WDBC	18-24 months	Capital costs of approximately £1.5m
Establish a Tavistock Historic Buildings Trust	WDBC	18-24 months	Officer time plus set up costs of around £5,000
Pannier Market enhancements	TTC and DCC	18-24 months	THI
Guildhall Square enhancements	TTC and DCC	18-24 months	THI
Consider an Article 4 Direction	WDBC	18-36 months	Consultants' fee about £5,000 plus photographic survey £1,500; plus officer time
Building at Risk survey for whole Borough	WDBC	18-36 months	Consultants' fee about £10,000 to £15,000
Acquire a Bedford Cottage and renovate as an exemplar of good historic building practice	WDBC working with TTC and new H B Trust	18-36 months	Officer time, plus input of Trust - funding potential includes the Architectural Heritage Fund

Review Local and Statutory Listing	Tavistock and District Local History Society and others	18-36 months	Volunteers and some officer time
Bank Square and Market Street enhancements	WDBC and DCC	Medium to Long term	Possible inclusion in the THI scheme
Prepare Conservation Management Plan for Town Council owned properties in Tavistock	Tavistock Town Council	24-36 months	£10-15,000 consultants' fee or in-house
New car parks and Park and Ride	WDBC, TTC and DCC	Long term	Unknown
Consider traffic management and pedestrian priority schemes	WDBC and DCC	Long term	Unknown
Underground overhead wires etc	WDBC, TTC and DCC, in partnership with Statutory Undertakers	Longer term	Could be a phased programme spending (say) £25,000 pa for 3 years as an initial project
Extend historic plaques scheme	Tavistock Town Council	36-60 months	£2,000 initial spend
Repairs to Still House, Betsy Grimal's Tower, and abbey cloisters in St Eustachius Churchyard	WDBC, TTC and English Heritage	36-60 months	Allow £120,000
Work to Dolvin Road Cemetery	Tavistock Town Council	36-60 months	Allow £5,000 over five years
Consider joining the Historic Towns Forum (HTF)	WDBC and TTC	Not applicable	Annual subscription of around £750
Consider an updated Design Guide for the Bedford Cottages	WDBC	2016	£6 - 10,000