

Tavistock THI Report of Consultations

- a) Summary of responses at Exhibition/Launch event 29/30th November
- b) Summary of results of Market Street/King Street Area; Options Questionnaire
- c) LDA Design Summary of consultations
- d) Summary of TCS consultation responses
- e) Conclusions

This document merely combines the overall responses to the various consultation processes which have taken place since September 2013 until 17th January 2014 in respect of the Tavistock THI Scheme Stage 2 Bid.

a) Summary of responses at Exhibition/Launch Event 29th/30th November 2013

The Launch event took place in the Pannier Market between 3 and 8 pm on Friday 29th November and from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday 30th

The event was advertised through a Press Release and featured in the locals papers and radio, including front page coverage in the Tavistock Times

There was a constant stream of visitors to the exhibition throughout the 2 days - representing over 150 consultees.

Most were very positive about the idea of investing in the town centre through a THI scheme and understood why we are promoting such a scheme.

There were few people who were interested in the detail of the Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan, but most were happy to study that in their own time though the internet, in order to answer the relevant sections of the Questionnaire.

No one suggested any further amendments to the CA Boundary.

Most agreed with the focus of the THI scheme and in particular investing in new roofs for the Pannier Market and Butcher's Hall. There was also a lot of interest in renovating and bringing the Guildhall and 1 Church Lane (Foulston's) back into use.

Most of the interest was in the proposals for the Public Realm following the recent front page article and letters in the Tavistock Times.

Nearly everyone seemed to be in favour of the suggested improvements around the Pannier Market

A majority were in favour of the flexible space use and minimal landscaping at Bank Square, (retaining most of the car parking most of the time).

A significant minority were interested in the idea of a Rain Garden, but were concerned about the maintenance implications and loss of car parking.

A majority were in favour of the resurfacing and closure or partial closure of Market Street. However, there were some notable concerns expressed about traffic implications for such a closure and in particular how it might affect the junction of Pym Street with Drake Road.

The majority of those who visited the exhibition wished to see the car parking retained in front of the Guildhall. Of these most were happy to return to the levels of public parking which existed when the police were in occupation and acknowledged the environmental benefits and ease of access that would result from re-organising the parking.

Most were in favour of improving the setting of the war memorial and removal of the trees next to the memorial. Most wanted to see the pavement in front of the Guildhall widened and the car parking laid out in a safer and more compliant fashion.

A significant minority were in favour of removing cars entirely from this location to achieve maximum heritage and amenity benefit, although a number of those wished to keep the disabled spaces.

There was also support for the idea of moving the war memorial to Bank Square, as suggested by Simon Dell, but an equal number were opposed to that idea.

b) Summary of results of Market Street/King Street Area; Business/Traders Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed by hand to businesses in the King Street/ market Street/West Street area. 25 responses were returned

Q1 Bank Square

Option 1; None were in favour of the Rain Garden proposal

Option 2; 15 were in favour of the flexible use space

10 said they wanted neither of the above

Comments: 9 specifically mentioned that they didn't want to see any loss of parking

Q2 Market Street

9 were in favour of the closure or partial closure of Market Street

13 were against this proposal

3 were undecided

c) LDA Design Summary of consultations

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder, technical and public consultation has been integral in all stages of developing the Public Realm Strategy and Action Plan for Tavistock. This consultation builds on the consultation carried out as part of the Stage 1 Townscape Heritage Initiative bid and the previous Conservation Area Management Plan work. Great care has been taken to ensure all those with an interest are involved in all stages and share the ownership of the findings of the strategy and action plan. The strategy has been co-ordinated with the work being carried out for the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan review and submission for the HLF bid. As well as a number of press releases to the Tavistock Times Gazette, specific consultation has included the following:

2.2 ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS AND TOWN CENTRE WALKABOUTS

A number of focused meetings and site walks were held throughout September 2013 to enable specific and technical knowledge to be shared. The purpose of the sessions was to introduce the project and then understand the specific strengths, weaknesses, issues and opportunities of the public realm in Tavistock in the context of the early Public Realm Strategy work. The topic areas that were covered are listed below:

☞ ☞ Heritage and Conservation ☞ ☞ Town Events and Town Centre Management ☞ ☞ Traffic and Safety ☞ ☞ Car parking ☞ ☞ Planning ☞ ☞ Landscape, Trees and Open Space ☞ ☞ The Local Economy

2.3 PUBLIC REALM WORKSHOP 01

The aim of the Public Realm Workshop was to explain the purpose of the Public Realm Strategy and how public realm projects could greatly improve the town centre environment. Attendees were encouraged to provide their views on existing issues and opportunities that relate to the public realm in Tavistock with the intention of using their observations as part of the design brief for projects. The workshop was held on 25th September 2013 and targeted members of the local community and key stakeholders with an open invitation advertised in the local press. The session began with an update on the progress of the THI bid and presentation on how public realm influences our experience and perception of a town with specific examples from other towns provided to focus discussion. The attendees were then asked to summarise the defining characteristics of Tavistock's public realm, how it could be improved and specific strengths and weaknesses relating to priority project areas. In order to do this attendees were split into groups and undertook a site visit of the THI study area before feeding their thoughts back to the rest of the group. The workshop was well attended and the exercise simulated discussion covering a wide range issues for each of the spaces. The issues raised are summarised alongside the design teams own observations in section 3.0 under strengths and weaknesses. There is a list of attendees and 'verbatim' record of feedback contained in the appendices. A questionnaire was made available at this stage of the project for members of the public who were unable to attend the workshop. The key issues raised in the questionnaires are summarised in section 3 under strengths and weaknesses. The completed questionnaires are contained in the appendices for reference.

2.4 PUBLIC REALM WORKSHOP 02

A second workshop was held on 6th November 2013 and progressed the consultation from the first workshop, giving attendees an opportunity to review the emerging vision and emerging design work for priority projects. Invitations were sent out to attendees of the first workshop as well as an open invitation

which was published in the local press. The session began with a summary of the findings of the first workshop (as a recap and for the benefit of individuals unable to attend the first workshop), followed by a presentation of the emerging vision and design options for Guildhall car park, Bank Square, Market Street and the area around the Pannier Market. Attendees were then asked to break into groups to appraise the options and initial design work undertaken. Feedback was provided by each group's spokesperson. There was overall support for the vision and the aspirations of the public realm design. Specific feedback was provided on the different design options which are included as a 'verbatim' record in the Appendices. There was varied feedback with regard to how far the different design options should go in terms of transformation, for example with regard to removal or partial removal of car parking. This feedback has been considered alongside feedback received via public exhibition, questionnaires, deliverability and compliance with THI funding to inform a list of preferred projects which is contained with the summary of this report.

2.5 PUBLIC EXHIBITION

A public exhibition was held over two days in the Pannier Market, from Friday 29th November (to coincide with Dickensian Evening), until Saturday 30th November. The event was to present the vision for the public realm and designs for the THI priority projects. The exhibition also signified the start of a six week consultation on revisions to Tavistock's Character Appraisal and Management Plan. The exhibition was well attended with over 150 consultees. Overall there was a positive response from the exhibition, a summary of the responses and the issues raised is provided in the appendices of this report. The feedback generated has been integral in developing the preferred options.

2.6 TRADERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Given the potential impact of proposals to Bank Square and Market Street a specific questionnaire was provided to businesses operating in the area ahead of any formal consideration of the options. Again, the feedback provided (as described in more detail in the appendices) has influenced the development and selection of the preferred scheme designs.

d) Summary of The Conservation Studio Questionnaire consultation responses

This featured in a series of Press releases, was featured in local papers, radio, including front page articles in the Tavistock Times. It was available on the Borough and Town council's websites with all the associated documents. The questionnaires were available at the launch event on 29/30th November and after that at the Public Library until 17th January.

26 replies were received

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

Q5: Which buildings in the THI area would you most like to see repaired and/or in use?

13x said the Guildhall and Police Station

7x Butchers Hall/Auction Rooms

4x Pannier Market

4x 1 Church Lane (Foulston's)

+ others

Q6: Views on the Public Realm improvement around the Pannier Market

Comments:

Include a glass roof as part of scheme

Provide riverside access

Problems with cobbles and stalls/tents

Remove yellow lines throughout the town

Leave alone/waste of money

Q7: Views on Bank Square/Market Street proposals (please see separate responses to questionnaire of businesses in the King Street/Market Street area)

Comments:

Wide range of comments, including those in support of the various options, those in support of more planting/trees, those who opposed the loss of parking, those opposed to the closure of Market Street,

No consensus of views

Q8: Views on options for improving Guildhall Square

5x were in favour of removing car parking

4x were in favour of keeping the parking

4x wanted to move the War Memorial

2 wanted to see no change

Others wanted to see more planting/greenspace; didn't want to move the War Memorial; and keep the disabled parking

No consensus of views

Q9: Any other concerns?

Comments included: loss of the TIC; traffic issues, need for improved signage, better maintenance, no play and display and two felt the consultation was poorly publicised.

e)Conclusions

- **There is overall widespread support for the THI scheme**
- **Virtually all those consulted were in favour of keeping the Conservation Area (CA) boundary as it is**
- **Most agreed with the assessment of features that make Tavistock special**
- **Most agreed the key issues affecting the CA**
- **A majority agreed with the recommendations of the Management Plan**
- **Most agreed with the focus of the THI works**
- **Although the comments through the TCS questionnaire regarding the public realm works around the Pannier Market were negative, most people visiting the exhibition were in favour of the proposals**
- **Most people visiting the exhibition, answering both the traders and TCS questionnaire were in favour of a flexible use of Bank Square, but retaining the car parking**
- **Most visiting the exhibition were in favour of the re-surfacing of Market Street, but there was opposition, in particular from traders in that area and residents in Pym Street, to the road closure proposal**
- **A majority wanted to see improvements to the area in front of the Guildhall, including the space around the War Memorial, but most people wanted to see as much car parking as possible retained in this location.**

Robert Plumb/January 2014