

<b>NAME OF COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> April 2014</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>Tavistock Public Realm Strategy</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Head of Planning, Economy and Community</b>
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	<b>Tavistock Wards</b>

**Summary of report:**

The report sets out the context and process for the development of a Public Realm Strategy for Tavistock. It outlines recent consultations and sets out the overall Strategy and proposals to bring forward improvements to public spaces included in the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Scheme. It asks members to adopt the Strategy for future planning policy purposes.

**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 employing consultants to develop the Strategy has been met from the Stage 2 funds.

Any further expense, in terms of progressing improvement works, if appropriate, will be referred to the appropriate council committee in due course.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:-

1. Members approve the Tavistock Public Realm Strategy to be used as part of the Council's evidence base to inform future plan making and the determination of relevant planning applications; and,
2. Officers are requested to submit any specific proposals in respect of the Borough Council's property interests to the appropriate committee in due course.

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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 Full Council on 18<sup>th</sup> February this year endorsed that bid and delegated the final sign-off to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader. Members also agreed to bring forward proposals for improvements to Bank Square, as part of the THI scheme, should there be sufficient funds available and on further consideration during the delivery phase, members still wish to pursue such a scheme.
- 1.3 Part of the development of the Stage 2 bid required local partners to develop a Public Realm Strategy for Tavistock, which would inform the development of proposals relating to improvements to key public spaces in the THI area. These included the Pannier Market surrounds, the car park in front of the Guildhall (both owned by the Town Council), the highway at Market Street (owned by Devon County) and Bank Square – owned by the Borough Council.
- 1.4 The report below outlines the process for developing and consulting on the Strategy and how the various public realm improvements have been considered thus far.
- 1.5 Copies of the Strategy are available in the member's room and on the council's website at <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/article/2760/Local-Priorities>.

## **2. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 2.1 LDA Design from Exeter was appointed by the Town Council to prepare the Public Realm Strategy. The main purpose of preparing such a document was to guide the design, implementation, management and maintenance of the public realm in Tavistock. This would then be used as context for the development of options and eventually proposals for projects to be included in the THI scheme. It would also be there to inform the development of planning policy and consideration of any future development proposals.
- 2.2 During the process of developing the strategy the consultants met with and “walked through” issues with key agencies, including the borough council. They also engaged with a wider audience through workshops, the THI exhibition and various questionnaires. This is reported in full in the Strategy document Section 2. The options for the treatment of the THI public spaces generated considerable debate within the local community and featured regularly on the front page and letters column of the local newspaper, as well as local radio. Consultation continued through December into January, before the strategy document was finally drafted.

- 2.3 The Strategy gives advice and guidelines on legibility, paving, street furniture, planting and develops a vision which is summarised below:-
- PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY SETTING FOR TAVISTOCK'S IMPRESSIVE HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT
  - CREATE STREETS AND SPACES THAT BALANCE THE NEEDS OF PEDESTRIANS & VEHICLES
  - SIMPLIFY THE RANGE OF PAVING MATERIALS & FURNITURE TO REFLECT THE UNIQUE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF TAVISTOCK
  - REMOVE UN-NECESSARY STREET CLUTTER & REDUCE VISUAL INTRUSION OF REMAINING FURNITURE
  - USE HIGH QUALITY, ROBUST & TIMELESS MATERIALS
  - ESTABLISH/REINFORCE THE ROLE AND IDENTITY OF KEY TOWN CENTRE STREETS AND SPACES
  - IMPROVE THE IMPRESSION OF TAVISTOCK AT TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS
  - ENSURE STREETS & SPACES ARE FLEXIBLE; CAPABLE OF HOSTING MARKETS & LARGE EVENTS AS WELL AS EVERYDAY USE
  - ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT THROUGH LIGHTING
  - PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW TREES AND PLANTING
- 2.4 It then goes on to provide advice and guidance across these range of issues before considering solutions/options for the improvement of the key public spaces within the THI area. Finally it summarises its recommendations for the treatment of these spaces, acknowledging that they may not all be capable of being implemented within the scope of the THI scheme.
- 2.5 The priority projects are as follows:-
- Pannier Market – Implementation of the full range of works
  - Guildhall Car Park – Option 1B: retain car parking - 21 space variant. Following consultation it is suggested that the proposed low hedge to the boundary of the space is removed from the design response due to limited support for this element of the work
  - Bank Square Option 2A/B - Flexible hard space capable of retaining parking or hosting events
  - Market Street – Proposed pedestrianisation. There was a degree of support for this project, at this stage it is suggested the potential benefits make the project worthy of further consideration
- 2.6. Members are not asked, within the context of adopting this strategy, to make any commitments in respect of these projects. That is for each authority which is responsible for those spaces to consider and if appropriate bring forward proposals either within or beyond the THI scheme delivery phase.
- 2.7 Full Council considered the proposals in respect of Bank Square at its February meeting, as reported above.

2.8 Members are now asked to endorse the strategy in its broadest terms, subject to any specific comments members may have.

### **3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 Under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence to do anything an individual can do subject to any statutory restrictions.

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

### **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 employing consultants to develop the Public Realm Strategy was met from the Stage 2 funds.

4.2 Any further expense, in terms of progressing improvement works, if appropriate, will be referred to the appropriate council committee in due course.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 The risk management implications are as set out in the schedule below

### **6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

<b>Corporate priorities engaged:</b>	Environment, Economy and Community Life
<b>Statutory powers:</b>	Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011
<b>Considerations of equality and human rights:</b>	N/A
<b>Biodiversity considerations:</b>	These are considered as part of the development of the strategy
<b>Sustainability considerations:</b>	These are considered as part of the development of the strategy
<b>Crime and disorder implications:</b>	N/A
<b>Background papers:</b>	Report to Resources Committee 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2012 Report to Full Council, February 18 <sup>th</sup> 2014
<b>Appendices attached:</b>	Annex A; Strategic Risk Assessment

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 strategy is appropriate and has been through full public consultation	3	2	6	↔	Ensure the documents are made available in both electronic and paper forms on the council website and on request. Further press releases to draw attention to the publication of the Strategy and meeting to discuss any implication with developers or other agencies/authorities involved in improvement proposals for the public realm in Tavistock.	Head of PEC
2	Risk to THI bid process	Inability to justify where proposals included in the THI bid have come from.	3	2	6	↓	A thorough consultation process including workshops and public exhibitions was carried out in accordance with HLF bidding requirements	Head of PEC
3	Financial risk	This relates to the lack of an agreed and up to date strategic context for making funding bids to the HLF and other potential funders.	3	3	9	↔	The existence of an up to date and tested Strategy will enable more effective bids to be submitted and hence the wider activities of the plan will be able to be supported	Head of PEC

### ANNEX A; STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT

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

Direction of travel symbols ↓ ↑ ↔