

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL**

**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & LICENSING COMMITTEE  
27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023**

**BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE  
28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT &  
REQUEST FOR FUNDING**

**A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide opportunity to review progress to date, and projected next steps, in connection with the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Tavistock, alongside consideration of future funding arrangements.

**B. CORPORATE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

The development of a fit for purpose Neighbourhood Development Plan potentially engages policies D1, D3, C1, EN1, EN6, EC1, EC2 and EC6 of the Tavistock Town Council's Strategic Plan 2017-2023.

**C. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Neighbourhood planning is a process originating from the Localism Act 2011 and thereby principally governed by the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and consequential regulations.

Insofar as risk management is concerned the potential risks include, but are not limited to, failure to: - follow required process, keep to budget, deliver to agreed timelines, adequately engage and/or reflect the views of the community, prepare viable policies, manage reputation, meet the requirements of the local planning authority/examination/local referendum.

**D. RESOURCE ISSUES**

The resource issues arising from this report relate principally to the achievability of the timeline proposed and, more particularly, funding arrangements anticipated to deliver the final document.

**E. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

The environmental issues associated with a Neighbourhood Development Plan are necessarily contingent upon the content and scope of the plan submitted for adoption. All members of Council were invited to a recent consultation

event where the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group (NDPSG) set out the scope and depth of topic areas under development.

## **F. COMMUNICATION ISSUES**

The content of this report is informed by the decisions of Council previously and in consultation with the Chairman of the Steering Group. The appendices received from the NDPSG outline progress to date, in particular consultations undertaken with stakeholders. Throughout there has been close liaison with the officer designated by the local planning authority to oversee/support the development of Neighbourhood Development Plans within the Borough.

More generally, the Neighbourhood Development Plan process itself requires significant consultation and engagement with the local community, stakeholders and public authorities. The nature and timing of some communications/engagement is a matter of local discretion, other components are prescribed within the regulations.

## **G. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee adopt those recommendations as set out in para 3.2 below in connection with funding arrangements for the next stages of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Tavistock.

### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In view of the financial implications associated with this report it is being submitted to the Budget & Policy Committee for recommendation to Council and, immediately prior to that, to the Development Management & Licensing Committee should it wish to make representations to Council via the Budget & Policy Committee.
- 1.2 For more information on the background to, and early financial and associated governments arrangements for the Neighbourhood Development Plan by the Council please refer to:
  - a. [file:///C:/Users/Town%20Clerk/Downloads/Agenda%20Item%2007%20-%20%20Report%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Town%20Clerk/Downloads/Agenda%20Item%2007%20-%20%20Report%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20(2).pdf) and the accompanying Minute:
  - b. [file:///C:/Users/Town%20Clerk/Downloads/DM&L%20Minutes%2022nd%20June%202021%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Town%20Clerk/Downloads/DM&L%20Minutes%2022nd%20June%202021%20(2).pdf)
- 1.3 An initial budget from Council resources was set, at that time, in the sum of £9,500 and allocated as set out in Minute No. 69 (relevant extract attached at Appendix 1). It should be noted that the Council funding arrangements from the Localism Budget Head are supplemented by drawdown of an additional grant from Locality in the sum of £9,999. This grant was drawn-down for the financial year 2022-23 and has been

partly expended. At year end (31<sup>st</sup> March), any remaining balance becomes automatically repayable to Locality. However, it is hoped that, as in recent years, Locality will afford the opportunity to grantees to recover any residual balance in the next financial year through reapplication.

## **2. CURRENT SITUATION**

- 2.1 **Project Plan** – a copy of the high-level Project Plan is attached at Appendix 2. It can be seen that progress against the start up and vision/objective stages of the plan are substantially complete. This means that, in broad terms, the initial consultation and evidence-based preparation stages have been undertaken, thereby enabling work to commence on the drafting of the plan itself and next steps.
- 2.2 If the plan continues to progress as to timetable it is anticipated that submission to the Local Planning Authority will occur in 12 months' time. That means allowing for necessary due diligence and statutory timeframes in relation to procedures such as a referendum, etc the Plan could be expected to be made in 2024.
- 2.3 **Budget** – a copy of a draft budget prepared by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group is attached at Appendix 3. The attention of the Committee is drawn, in particular, to projected (but not wholly confirmed) grant income. The decision is being brought to the Council at this time based on the need for the Steering Group to have clarity in advance of the new grant year (beginning April 2023) which will allow it to proceed with the application for grant funding or technical support from locality in order to keep to the project timeline. It also reflects that the original funding allocated by the Council is now partially expended and we are approaching the end of the Councils financial year, and the need to return unexpended Locality funds, alongside the substantial completion of the early stages of the project.
- 2.4 The Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group has indicated that it has a reasonable level of confidence that the overall expenditure indicated will (notwithstanding unforeseen factors) prove sufficient (£30,564). Likewise, the grant income head is premised upon the same availabilities and approach by Locality in 2023-24 as in previous years. Note - in addition to the £9,999 grant already in process a further grant of £8,000 is potentially available to specifically address matters associated with producing a design code.
- 2.5 In the circumstances the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group is requesting the Council meet the remaining costs of the Plan, to the maximum shown, less any grants received from Locality and prior

spend incurred. In particular this will facilitate an extension of the consultancy budget to enable the second stage of the project (to submission) to be undertaken. There remains a possibility, depending on if/how the Plan may be challenged at examination that an additional call upon professional resources may need to be made. NOTE – in practice nearly £6,000 has already been expended with a further £5,000 committed. Therefore the actual maximum prospective liability is in the region of £18,500 in the next financial year reducing (if all grants are available) to less than £10,000.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 Given the positive progress of the emerging Plan to date as reported by the NDPSG, and assuming that the Local Planning Authority does not require cost-heavy assessments (such as strategic environmental, habitat regulations, retail impact assessments etc) the proposed budget appears appropriate to address the activities listed.
  
- 3.2 In the circumstances it is recommended that Tavistock Town Council endorse the potential allocation of up to £18,971 from the Localism Budget 2023-24 toward Neighbourhood Development Plan costs, less any grants received, and subject to applications being made for those grants as listed subject to provider availability.

**CARL HEARN  
TOWN CLERK  
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
MARCH 2023**