

TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT & LICENSING COMMITTEE

22nd JUNE 2021

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Pursuant to the recent decision of Council (Minute No. 19 refers) to provide opportunity to determine the operating framework and essential arrangements of governance and assurance by which Tavistock Town Council might proceed with a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish of Tavistock.

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 Strategic Plan 2017-21.

C. LEGAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

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

Insofar as risk management is concerned 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, adequately 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:

- Financial/opportunity costs arising from supporting/administering the Neighbourhood Planning Process;
- Extent of organisational, Member and community/stakeholder contribution to the Neighbourhood Planning Process;

over the Plan preparation period. They are dependent, in part, upon the depth and breadth of prospective plan scope. Also the resources required for periodic ongoing update and review. As indicated in the report, one of the strands of early work suggested is the compensating development of robust project plan and budget arrangements.

Note: the costs of the Regulation 16 publicity and consultation on the draft NDP, also the examination and referendum fall to the Local Planning Authority (LPA). Limited grant funding is available from Government.

E. ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The environmental issues associated with a Neighbourhood Development Plan are necessarily contingent upon the content and scope of the plan on adoption. However, it is reasonable to anticipate that any plan adopted would seek to contribute toward the sustainable use and development of the built and natural environment of the town, enhance resilience and reflect the views of the community/ stakeholders contributing to its production.

F. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

The content of this report is derived from the decisions of Council previously. It follows consultation with designated Members and extensive discussions with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) lead officer for Neighbourhood Planning who has also reviewed main report content.

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

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee adopt those recommendations as set out below (sections 6 & 8 refer) as constituting the governance and assurance framework reserved for determination by Council and applicable to the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Tavistock.

1. REPORT FORMAT

1.1 To assist the reader this report is formatted into the following sections:

- a) Background – a brief precis of the present position;
- b) Introduction – setting out some core neighbourhood planning requirements;
- c) Resources – providing a brief overview of key resources available to assist;
- d) Governance and Assurance Outline – a summary of arrangements appropriate to agree at this early stage;

- e) Governance & Assurance – the applicable arrangements as recommended;
- f) Summary of responses from the LPA;
- g) Designation issues;
- h) Conclusion.

1.2 Whilst the report does include references to other reports it is intended to be read with due regard to the evolution of thinking around Neighbourhood Planning by the Council over recent years. The Committee will also be mindful it has delegated powers in identified matters (see below).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council has for some time (July 2013) been considering the possibility of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the Town.

2.2 Subsequently, in 2017 the Town Council as 'qualifying body' submitted, and West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) – the Local Planning Authority (LPA) approved, a proposal for the designation of the Parish of Tavistock as the area for a NDP (but see section 8 below).

2.3 Subsequently on 26th April, 2021 Council considered a report (link to Council report)

[file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/Agenda%20Item%208%20-%20Policy%20%20Priorities%20Report%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/Agenda%20Item%208%20-%20Policy%20%20Priorities%20Report%20(1).pdf) (pages 5-9

refer) and subsequently (1st June, 2021), on the recommendation of this Committee, Council determined as follows:-

- i. Tavistock Town Council proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the whole of the Tavistock Town Council area, as set out in the Designation Notice issued by West Devon Borough Council in September 2017;*
- ii. The Clerk prepare an initiation report for the Neighbourhood Plan to be reported to the Development Management & Licensing Committee on June 22nd 2021, covering, but not limited to the following:*
 - a. Terms of Reference for a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group including governance arrangements and the appointment*

- arrangements for the initial members of the Group*
- b. An overview of the plan making process, including public consultation and working arrangements with other local authorities.*
- c. Arrangements for financing the Plan preparation, including grant applications and budget allocations from the Town Council and (if appropriate) partners and arrangements for oversight of capital and revenue income and expenditure.*
- iii. the Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, identify up to 4 Members with whom the Clerk can consult in the preparation of the report (para 2 refers);*
- iv. authority be delegated to the Development Management and Licensing Committee, at its Meeting on 22nd June 2021, to agree the mobilisation arrangements for a Neighbourhood Development Plan as set out above (all Councillors being invited to attend).*

2.4 This report is therefore prepared pursuant to the above (but see section 8 below regarding 'designation' matters).

3. INTRODUCTION

The Basic conditions

3.1 In order to be successful and become planning policy a Neighbourhood Development Plan must pass an examination to show compliance with the five basic conditions set out in the Planning Policy Guidance on Neighbourhood Planning, namely: -

- Having regard to national policies and advice.....it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan;*
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;*
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan.....*
- Compatibility with EU obligations;*
- The prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and the prescribed matters have been complied with...*

- 3.2 These then are the essential characteristics which the outputs of a NDP must exhibit and the primary purpose of the 'examination' stage of a NDP (see below) is to assess compliance against these conditions.

Outline of Process

- 3.3 Turning next to process the stages of preparing a NDP can be very broadly (as described by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government) broken down into the following main constituents:

- a) Designation of an Area (*first undertaken by TTC in 2017*);
- b) Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan;
- c) Appropriate arrangements for consulting on and publicising the plan;
- d) Submission to the LPA;
- e) Examination
- f) Referendum

- 3.4 To flesh that out somewhat the perspective from the Campaign to Protect Rural England and NALC identifies the following steps to preparing a NDP (the information in *italics* indicates links to a mandatory sustainability check):

1. Getting started;
2. Identifying the issues (*such as key economic, social & environmental*);
Develop the sustainability framework objectives and criteria
3. Develop vision and objectives (*identifying key National Planning Policy Framework & Local Plan policy objectives*);
4. Generate Options (*appraise the options using the sustainability framework*)
5. Draft the NDP (*appraise the draft policies using the sustainability framework*)
6. Consultation and Submission (*prepare the sustainability appraisal report*)
7. Independent Examination
8. Referendum and adoption.

- 3.5 Where a NDP is developed the LPA is under a statutory duty to 'give such advice or assistance to qualifying bodies as, in all the circumstances, they consider appropriate for the purpose of, or in connection with, facilitating the making of proposals for neighbourhood development plans...' This is further supplemented by the LPA's Statement of Community Involvement (p21 refers) (link to WDBC Statement of

Community Involvement)

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/StatementOfCommunityInvolvement2020.pdf>

- 3.6 The Town Council is the designated 'qualifying body' responsible for determining whether to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan and, where it does, various aspects of &/or arrangements for the process.
- 3.7 In a parished area only the Parish/Town Council can undertake this role. In view of the decisions already made it therefore follows that the current stage for the Town Council is where, as the statutorily designated qualifying body, it develops proposals '(advised or assisted by the Local Planning Authority)' to:
- 'gather baseline information and evidence;
 - engage and consult those living and working in the neighbourhood area and those with an interest in or affected by the proposals (e.g. service providers);
 - talk to land owners and the development industry;
 - identify and assess options;
 - determine whether a plan or an order is likely to have significant environmental effect;
 - start to prepare proposals documents e.g. basic conditions statement'

4. RESOURCES

- 4.1 There are a wide range of resources available to promoters of NDP's. Some of the better known are provided by Locality (link to Locality website) <https://locality.org.uk/services-tools/neighbourhood-planning/> and Government (link to Government guidance) https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2?mc_cid=e09f0934ad&mc_eid=c5e5a6ab4a.
- 4.2 There are also resources available, amongst others, from the Local Government Association Planning Advisory Service, the NALC Good Councillor Guide to Neighbourhood Planning and the Campaign for Rural England 'How to Shape where you live – a guide to neighbourhood planning'.
- 4.3 Whilst acknowledging the wide range of resources available this report focusses on a manageable number of key resources with particular merit which were acceptable both to the consultee group of Members and the LPA. As such it is proposed that these

be adopted as the primary information base on which to proceed. Accordingly, it draws principally upon the:

- Locality 'Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap' (LRM) (link to 'roadmap') <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/create-neighbourhood-plan-step-by-step-roadmap-guide/> in terms of overall approach; and
- detailed guidance notes and templates/tools included the Cornwall Council (CCP) Neighbourhood Planning website (link to Cornwall Council website resources) <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/neighbourhood-planning/> .

4.4 Furthermore, following discussion with Mr Besford-Foster (whose presentation to Council on the topic two years ago was well received) it also references the Liskeard Neighbourhood Plan website as a good practice example of a public facing resource for a NDP (link to Liskeard NDP website) <https://www.planliskeard.co.uk/> (note this is in relation to the helpfulness of the site as opposed to representing an endorsement of, or evaluation of content).

4.5 The reason for drawing on these particular resources in preference to others is that Locality are the Government designated portal for grants and provide a range of support to the process. The Cornwall Council (CC) toolkit represents a resource West Devon/South Hams do not have, is substantially up to date and derived from a review of best practice nationally. It thereby provides the most current, extensive and co-ordinated schedule of neighbourhood planning guide notes and templates yet identified. These resources are without prejudice to and complimentary of the duty of the LPA to assist.

4.6 For Members looking for examples of NDP's there are many and varied available on a web search. However, two that might be of particular interest are Thame (an early plan still frequently referred to as a good practice example – link to Thame NDP) <https://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/5343-Thame-Plan-post-Exam-prn-110313-lo-res.pdf> and Thurlestone (a predominantly rural area but a thorough and well formatted plan – link to Thurlestone NDP)

5. GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE - BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Committee will be mindful, from previous reports, of the emphasis placed upon community involvement, consultation and engagement in the NDP process. Consequently, there is a balance to be struck between on the one hand:
- arrangements to provide a meaningful level of autonomy to those volunteering their time, knowledge and skills on developing a draft NDP; on the other:
 - providing assurance to the Council as qualifying body (and ratepayer) that the process is rigorous legally/technically compliant and the outputs acceptable.
- 5.2 Enabling these is the purpose of this report. To achieve that there are certain critical areas and arrangements which it is appropriate for the Council to determine by way of setting an approved operating framework within which volunteer activity can occur. Accompanying those there is necessary recognition that, whilst there are what may loosely be called standard 'stages' in Neighbourhood Planning, there are considerable areas of uncertainty at the outset contingent on how a plan may develop.
- 5.3 That is because the content, breadth and depth (scope) of the Plan, the extent of volunteer vs procured support and the pace at which the Plan is developed etc can all impact upon cost, duration, the need for supplementary appraisals and other requirements. By the nature of the developmental process these require more (and community team based) work to properly assess their impact.
- 5.4 Consequently, the following section (6) of this report moves on to address the areas where, by being prescriptive, the Council can in practice grant significant operating autonomy to the NDP team. In so doing the approach has been to adapt the already proven methodology deployed by the Council in successfully delivering major projects. A methodology articulated, in particular, upon clarity of requirements in connection with:
- i) Agreed Key Resources (addressed above);
 - ii) Project Organogram & Reporting Arrangements – the role and relationships of Council with the other organs of &/or stakeholders in the project;
 - iii) The Steering Group (in effect the NDP delivery team) constitution/Terms of Reference

- iv) The Project Manager
- v) The Project Plan (ie the process to be adopted as opposed to the operating detail - affording opportunity for progress monitoring and review) and duration, risk register and Policies in due course;
- vi) Consultation and Engagement arrangements (a critical feature of NDP planning);
- vii) The Budget and related operating arrangements:
 - financial controls/assurance,
 - procurement of support services and funding arrangements (to maintain the normal safeguards/assurance in the spend of public monies);
- viii) Arrangements to support Volunteers.

5.5 By being prescriptive in these areas the Council is then able to afford discretion for the production of the detailed project plan, budget, consultation/ engagement strategy etc by the Steering Group.

6. GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

6.1 Pursuant to the above this section proceeds to afford Council, through the DM&L Committee, the opportunity to agree the operating framework for the NDP Steering Group. The format is to:

- provide a brief outline of the position regarding those arrangements set out in para 5.4; accompanied by
- a recommendation as to how the Council can appropriately proceed;
- where applicable, any commentary on the evolution of thinking arising from Member engagement.

6.2 In so doing it acknowledges that the Steering Group may identify other/better ways of operating and/or over the plan period circumstances may change with the consent of Council.

6.3 Turning then to the key governance arrangements discussed:

PROJECT ORGANOGRAM & REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

6.4 As indicated earlier a NDP is a predominantly community led activity using public monies under the auspices of the Council. It is therefore important that an appropriate balance is struck between flexibility to develop the plan itself and maintaining probity and conformity with organisational/financial

imperatives. The attached organogram (Appendix 1) sets out the recommended approach giving flexibility to the Steering Group to develop the NDP with oversight by the Council. In summary it shows:

- i) The Steering Group (SG) as the 'engine' of the process with autonomy to set up thematic or other sub-groups and lead on the NDP process; which then reports when necessary to the Development Management and Licensing Committee and Council, with:
- ii) Steering Group Minutes being reported as a standing item to Council.

RECOMMENDATION that the NDP reporting process shown in the appended organogram be adopted.

Note - the organogram reflects the majority of consultee Member comment but not consensus. The early draft showed two reporting lines – one for planning policies via DM&L Committee, the other for project progress/budget/governance via the Budget & Policy Committee.

STEERING GROUP

6.5 A Steering Group (SG) is the typical lead forum for developing a NDP and it leads, co-ordinates and facilitates the development of the NDP. It thereby enables broader community participation accompanied by greater flexibility and less onerous obligations than traditional Council decision making structures. This approach also enables membership and operation to be a matter of local choice. Working from a submission by a Member a draft proposed terms of reference is appended.

RECOMMENDATION – that:

- a) The Council agree and adopt the draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 2 refers) for the Tavistock NDP SG as set out;
- b) In order to progress matters (such as making recommendations on the appointment of Members to the Steering Group) and to take matters forward, 4 Councillors (not less than one of whom to be a serving Member of the DM&L Committee) be appointed to the Steering Group; plus the appointment of 3 'organisational' representatives, as outlined be progressed as a matter of priority;

- c) The Steering Group then proceed with key early work including appointment of the Project Manager and initial consultation (including preparation/distribution of the initial questionnaire and early consultation arrangements);
- d) Following which it undertakes an open recruitment exercise to appoint members of the community with suitable skills and knowledge to the remaining vacant Steering Group places.

Note the Terms of Reference reflect changes arising from the development of specific volunteer arrangements (see below) and areas introduced following consultation such as freedom of information and training). There was also discussion during the Member consultation process regarding whether the County and a Borough Councillor should automatically have places and associated benefits/drawbacks. In summary the majority view was that co-opted membership provided access and flexibility equivalent to full membership, whilst being less onerous or likely to present conflicts of interest in their own authorities. The appendix has also been amended to reflect the replacement of the Chair of DM&L on the Steering Group with a nominated Member of that Committee.

PROJECT PLAN

- 6.6 A fit for purpose project plan is a necessary part of effective project planning, identifying core stages, critical path/dependencies and providing a meaningful measure to monitor actual as against projected progress. In the case of a NDP, which is in effect a work programme of multiple projects, it can also help ensure coordination of activities and oversight.
- 6.7 Locality provide a widely respected Neighbourhood Planning Tool (link to Locality website) <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/project-planning-tool/> , there is also a Cornwall Council template, either of which could provide an appropriate basis for the project plan for the Tavistock NDP alongside routine progress reporting. An example 'populated' project plan can be viewed at (link to Liskeard project plan) <https://www.planliskeard.co.uk/project-plan/>.
- 6.8 However, as previously referred to whilst the statutory stages of the process do not change the type of plan being developed, size

of settlement, areas of plan focus and resource available etc will materially affect the content of a project plan.

6.9 Preparation of an early version, and the discipline it brings, therefore represents a core initial task for the Steering Group notwithstanding acknowledgement that such documents are necessarily organic and will develop more fully over time.

6.10 It is also acknowledged that the appointment of a Project Manager (or equivalent – see above) to facilitate set up and operating arrangements, including at least to the initial consultation stage, is an important resource for the SG and professional safeguard for the Council.

RECOMMENDATION that

- a) The Steering Group adopt either the 'Neighbourhood Planning Project Planner' tool provided by Locality or the Cornwall Project Planning tool (whichever is adopted hereafter being referred to as the project plan) as a baseline framework document for the development of a detailed project plan for the Tavistock NDP;
- b) The Tavistock NDP Steering Group be authorised, within that framework, to develop in more detail the various stages of the process including estimated timeline to completion;
- c) The project plan (including a risk register) and an associated progress report (including progress against timeline and spend against budget) and the consultation & engagement strategy (see below) be submitted to the Council, via the DM&L Committee for review, not less than twice in each calendar year.

Note – one of the areas that consultee members were keen to explore was the extent to which a NDP could be developed on a digital basis.

BUDGET

6.11 Because the scope of the Plan has not yet been identified and this, together with associated procured support services, represents a key driver of costs, it is not yet possible to predict the costs of a NDP with accuracy. However, by way of articulating how a cost base might develop there is a very helpful cost guidance note available at ([link to Cornwall Council cost guidance note](#))

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/11ghpvzp/cost-of-developing-a-neighbourhood-plan.pdf> which addresses both standard and non-standard cost bases.

6.12 More generally Government information suggests a typical cost range is £20,000-£86,000 for a NDP. By way of context the upper quartile of that cost range is reasonably consistent with the spend understood to have been incurred by equivalent size settlements in the South Hams.

6.13 It is however evident that, for the reasons outlined, setting a meaningful project budget at this stage would necessarily be misleading. For example, the Cornwall Council toolkit identifies non statutory assessments could incur costs in the region of:

- *Retail Impact assessment: £3,000 to £7,000*
- *Equalities Impact assessment: £Nil to £2,000*
- *Community safety assessment: £2,000 to £5,000*
- *Flood risk assessment £2,000 to £5,000*
- *Environmental Impact Assessment: up to £75,000*
- *Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA/ SA): £10,000-£30,000*
- *Habitats Regulations Assessment (statutory – where required) typically: £15,000*

6.14 It should also be noted that Government grants are available from Locality consisting primarily of a basic grant of up to £10,000 and a potential (subject to eligibility) additional grant of up to £8,000 (link to grant information on the Locality website) <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/grant-funding/#additionalgrant> . It is not proposed that the basic grant be applied for at this stage because there is a requirement it be deployed in the financial year in which the drawdown occurs. It would therefore be prudent to align any application to the start of a financial year on the recommendation of the Steering Group.

6.15 Consequently, and depending on project scope some, none or all (the latter being most unlikely) of the above may be required and the budget will need to be adjusted accordingly. The LPA have been asked to provide a (without prejudice) indication of which of the above (subject to plan scope) might be required. Also which surveys/appraisals have been recently undertaken by

the LPA and could be made available to the Neighbourhood Plan team without cost (see next section).

6.16 The budget will also need to reflect the extent to which support services can be sourced pro bono from the community or need to be procured from the market place as well as the associated factors previously referred to such as project duration and activity.

RECOMMENDATION that – that in the circumstances:

- a) As recommended by Locality an early discussion be undertaken by the Steering Group with the Local Planning Authority to discuss and review existing planning policy, clarify that proposed plan objectives can be met through the planning system, including to identify the circumstances in which non-statutory assessments could be required (and information available) and hence inform the prospective budget
- b) Having undertaken the above the Steering Group identify and recommend a realistic indicative costed (whole project and year by year) budget for consideration by the Budget & Policy Committee and Council prior to the Autumn Budget Setting Round.
- c) In the meantime, and by way of seed funding, the Council allocate a sum of £9,500 from the localism budget toward the cost of
 - i. initial consultation/engagement with the public and stakeholder groups £1,500
 - ii. the engagement of an independent facilitator holding professional indemnity insurance to assist with set up arrangements, establishment of the steering group, deliver initial consultation/engagement activities, and implement operating arrangements (estimating up to 10 days' consultancy) £3,500;
 - iii. £1,000 to provide a Council laptop with appropriate software (including for virtual meetings, also Survey Monkey subscription active for those times when consultations are to be held) for use solely in connection with the preparation of the NDP;

- iv. £3,000 for the establishment and operation over the development period of a simple information bearing website;
 - v. Miscellaneous expenses/contingency £500.
- d) Where appropriate the Town Council meet reasonable requests to make Council premises available for the conduct of meetings and consultation events in connection with the development of the NDP where so doing can defray related costs.
- e) All expenses, procurement of goods and services etc in connection with the development of a NDP be undertaken in accordance with the applicable Council financial/contract regulations and procedures;
- f) Members of the Steering Group, when appointed, be listed as volunteers in respect of Council insurance for activities undertaken on behalf of and authorised by the Council.

Note – volunteer expenses are addressed under the Volunteer Agreement and Volunteer Policy section. The other (albeit future cost) factor to be mindful of is that for periodic review of the NDP (as opposed to ongoing monitoring) it has been suggested to anticipate review costs in the order of 70% that of the original plan making process.

CONSULTATION & COMMUNICATION

6.17 Consultation and engagement is a core contributor to a successful NDP and the development of a fit for purpose communication/consultation/engagement strategy is an early priority for the Steering Group flowing from the project plan (see project plan section above).

6.18 The Cornwall Council website provides helpful information in the form of a bespoke Neighbourhood Planning consultation and engagement toolkit (link to Cornwall Council toolkit) <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/ypbbnej0/consultation-engagement-toolkit.pdf> which also addresses preparation of the consultation statement. It also contains a Neighbourhood Planning communication and engagement strategy note and draft template initial questionnaire which are worthy of application.

RECOMMENDATION that the foregoing form a basis for NDP communication, consultation and engagement.

Note – Member consultation suggests the latter template - 'initial questionnaire' will likely need to be developed as it is perhaps more targeted at an exercise for a smaller settlement.

VOLUNTEER ARRANGEMENTS

6.19 Because the Steering Group is primarily comprised of volunteers from the community, it is appropriate that arrangements are put in place to recognise and respect their role – such as insurance. It is therefore:

RECOMMENDATION that the appended Volunteer Policy (Appendix 3), Volunteer Agreement (Appendix 4) and associated allowance/expenses scheme information (Appendix 5-6) be adopted in connection with the delivery of the NDP.

ENGAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

6.20 As indicated above, Town Council procedures apply to the procurement of goods and services. However, it is also acknowledged that professional services – such as (but not limited to) the Project Manager role have particular requirements if factors such as transparency, equality of opportunity and contractual rigour are to be maintained.

6.21 For a NDP there are, in addition to its own arrangements, bespoke resources that the Council will expect the Steering Group to be guided by to provide such assurance, more specifically the guide at (link to Locality guidance on commissioning consultants)
<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/commission-consultants-work-neighbourhood-plan/>

RECOMMENDATION that in the procurement/engagement of consultancy services/similar and supplemental to normal financial procedures the Steering Group follow the Locality guidance and templates listed above.

7. SUMMARY OF LPA RESPONSES

- 7.1 In response to questions the Local Planning Authority have advised in summary, on a preliminary basis:
- a) Support from the LPA is less template/tool based than 'hands on', it recommends the Locality 'roadmap'
 - b) Funding will be in the form of grants or Town Council contributions;
 - c) Screening as to whether particular assessments may or may not be needed is undertaken by the LPA. However, if the Plan should seek to allocate new development sites then new assessments will be required.
 - d) Some information prepared to support the Joint Local Plan may be sufficiently current to be used in the NDP process;
 - e) The LPA broadly considers policies in section 5(a)-(e) JLP to be strategic (i.e. requiring conformity from a NDP); those in section 6 to not be strategic but take the view any deviation from them will require full justification.
 - f) It is satisfied with the content of this report;
 - g) Is conducting an initial meeting with designated Members on 16th June.

8. PLAN AREA DESIGNATION

- 8.1 As referred to above, the designation of the Tavistock NDP area took place in 2017. However, arising from recent discussions with the LPA it has been drawn to the Council's attention that the approval by the LPA is not valid in its entirety.
- 8.2 That is because a small area of the Parish, primarily in proximity to Harford Bridge, in fact falls within area of (and hence the planning regime of) the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA) (appended plan refers Appendix 7).
- 8.3 This does not prevent the actions listed above from being undertaken but clearly does require prompt redress. The two options available are:
- a) Modify the request previously made to WDBC to exclude the incorrect area;
 - b) Resubmit an application for designation to both WDBC and DNPA in order to secure coverage of the whole Parish.
- 8.4 In the interests of clarity these are procedural matters, consequently there is no known risk that either could fail. However, prompt application will assist in preventing delays as the project progresses. The majority view of those consulted on the matter remained for full designation, consequently it is:

RECOMMENDATION that Tavistock Town Council resubmit an application for designation of a Neighbourhood Plan Area to both WDBC and DNPA (in respect of those areas falling within their respective boundaries) so as to secure coverage of the whole of the Parish of Tavistock.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The foregoing sections set out the underlying or core arrangements that the Council needs to put in place to ensure probity. As such (unless otherwise stated) they may only be varied from with the consent of the Council.

- 9.2 However, by implementing and safeguarding these arrangements the Council affords the Steering Group, on behalf of both Council and Community, significant autonomy to develop and deliver the plan process.

TOWN CLERK

DM&L COMMITTEE

JUNE 2021