

COPY COUNCIL MINUTE OF 25th JULY, 2017**74. TAVISTOCK GUILDHALL GATEWAY CENTRE PROJECT**

The Council considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer in connection with the above (Appendix 3) including review of a prospective 'Round 2' grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Attention was further drawn, amongst others, to the significance of changes in projected capital and revenue costs (increased) to the Council, the role of/extent of progress in the formation of Tavistock Heritage Trust (THT) and the potential impact of related liabilities including affordability and risk. In particular:

- a loan in the order of £350,000 would be required to meet additional capital costs;
- substantial on-going revenue adjustments would be needed to meet the cost of servicing the loan and also the considerably increased projected annual revenue costs vis a vis those anticipated at the time of the 'Round 1' application;
- there was a necessary view to be taken regarding the resilience of THT as anchor partner with associated risks to the sustainability of Council funding streams should it be necessary for it to fund the associated underwriting commitments, either in part or in full.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made to a range of issues including:

- a) The circulation of a wide range of background papers associated with the proposal previously to enable Members to evaluate same – including Business Plan, Management and Maintenance Plan, Activity, Interpretation and Learning Plans, links to the Planning Application, etc;
- b) The potential that the project represented the single most significant financial commitment that was likely to be made by the Council for the foreseeable future, together with the long term (20 year) contractual obligations to Heritage Lottery Fund;
- c) The nature of the changes in costs, a lack of clarity regarding the appointment and intentions of the new (to be appointed) members of Tavistock Heritage Trust Board and potential impact upon local levels of taxation (Precept);
- d) The disappointing level of Member involvement at a recently held informal Meeting to provide opportunity to discuss the detail of the scheme with the consultants;
- e) The reliance of the project operating model upon a large pool of volunteers;
- f) The application of the principle of collective responsibility to all Council decisions;

- g) The extent to which there was/was not a public appetite for a scheme of this type;
- h) Benefits which could accrue from the promotion of visitor footfall;
- i) The involvement of Council/Councillors over a long period of time during the development of the project;
- j) The potential benefits associated with providing a "Gateway" to the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site;
- k) The role of the Town Council in underwriting the revenue costs of the premises (including THT and Gateway Centre);
- l) The possibility/likelihood that Government might impose a "cap" upon the Precept that could be raised by larger town/parish and councils with associated impact on future availability of funding;
- m) The extent of the commitment in connection with Grant monies (20 years) – notwithstanding that the Council could potentially repay the HLF grant monies should it wish to/need to seek early termination;
- n) Recognition that a decision made at this time would not be final and, if to progress the scheme, would need to be revisited with a view on how/if to proceed in light of any Heritage Lottery Fund permission to start requirements, the status of Tavistock Heritage Trust and a further informed assessment of scheme costs/benefits

Arising from consideration of the foregoing it was:

RESOLVED THAT

- a) the Council
 - i. Subject to (ii) below:-
 - Agree and endorse the emerging Business Plan and supporting information as a basis for submission to Heritage Lottery Fund;
 - Approve the submission of a Round 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund consistent with the information brought before Council (including the possibility the Partnership Agreement previously referred to might be required to take the form of a lease)
 - ii. Identify a series of targets for Tavistock Heritage Trust to meet prior to the decision of Heritage Lottery Fund in December 2017, and to any subsequent decision by Council to let the scheme, by way of assurance regarding resilience and sustainability. Same to include:-
 - The completion by the Trust of the "Resilient Heritage", "Trust Health Checker" and sharing of the results with the Town Council;

- Providing to the Town Council a copy of its Funding Strategy and Funded Work Programme;
- Securing actual/fully committed income from new sources excluding the Town Council (and monies already promised) of £10,000 or more;
- Providing to the Council a copy of its Volunteer Recruitment Strategy;
- Providing to the Council a report indicating the number and nature of expressions of interest from volunteers;
- Having a new Board in place and operating for a sufficient period of time (not less than 3 months) prior to any grant of permission to start.

b) In the event that a Heritage Lottery Fund Round 2 pass be subsequently received by the Council (anticipated December, 2017) it then re-assess the Project on an evidence based assessment including against the following tests, namely whether it is then assured:-

- i) that scheme costs would not exceed that projected in the "mid-case" scenario and such was acceptable to Council;
- ii) that Tavistock Heritage Trust represented a strong and resilient delivery partner both then and for the future;
- iii) that the scheme itself was affordable, desirable and deliverable;
- iv) that Council would be able to sustain the increased costs and would reduce/tailor other organisational goals accordingly both then and in the future.

c) Council then determine how/if to proceed in light of same and any conditions applied by the Heritage Lottery Fund.