

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 21st JANUARY 2025**

**BRIEFING NOTE
ABBEY REMAINS PROJECT**

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Council has been regularly briefed on progress relating to the Abbey Remains Restoration Project. The project scope has been considered and endorsed formally by Council previously and is identified as a committed live project in principle within the Commercial/Community Service Improvement Plan 2024/25 and updates are provided on progress within the Manager's Reports submitted to Full Council.
- 1.2 The Committee will be aware of the recent survey/stabilisation works carried out to Betsy Grimbal's Tower in 2024, funded by Historic England and Town Council, in-house and with a conservation contractor, relating to the removal of vegetation and soft capping/pointing repairs, followed by a review and updating of the previously commissioned condition survey dating back to 2017. In addition, a review of the condition survey for the Still House Tower was commissioned and funded by the Council in December 24.
- 1.3 Appended to the report are copies of the key scheme documents comprising:
 - a) Project Plan and Risk Register (Appendix 1);
 - b) Grant Application Form (Appendix 2);
 - c) Consultancy Services – Conservation Consultant, Conservation Contractor and Interpretation Consultant (Appendix 3);
 - d) Supplemental Information (Appendix 4).
- 1.4 Council will note the significant work carried out by the Abbey Remains Project Group, headed by Tavistock Heritage Trust, relating to discussions with both Historic England and NLHF leading to the drafting of the grant application and associated documents for the latter. Throughout this process the Council has been consulted and asked for input to ensure that any such

application meets the expectations of both partners (Council/ THT).

- 1.5 As you will note within the application, the overall project costs are in the region of £450,000, of which £368,600 is allocated to repairs/conservation works to Betsy Grimbal's Tower and Still House Tower, £10,000 to project support (if Council agree to be accountable body and administer project funds), and £32,800 for improving the interpretation within the Guildhall Gateway Centre.
- 1.6 The Committee will also be aware that a figure of £50,000 has been has been budgeted as potential match funding for 2025/26 financial year (yet to be ratified) within the Rolling Capital Programme. The NLHF submission being considered which incorporates the Council as applicant, for £200,000 would be submitted following/subject to endorsement of the application by Full Council on 4th February 2025. The partnership would then draft an application, in commonality with the attached, to apply to Historic England for funding up to £250,000. If all funding is approved and secured and the project remains on programme, then a full report will be brought before a future meeting of Council which, if the scheme is approved to proceed, means anticipated completion scheduled for end 2026.
- 1.7 Not included within these papers, but a requirement of the NLHF application, is a signed 'Partnership Agreement'. This will be drafted next week for submission to Full Council on 4th February 2025, in simple format around respective organisations roles and responsibilities, with a Scheduled Addendum to be attached with an understanding of any conditions of award and governance arrangements. The next steps relating to approvals are outlined as below for your consideration.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION

- 2.1 It is RECOMMENDED that the Budget & Policy Committee:
 - a) Endorse the content of the grant application to NLHF for £200,000 and associated supporting documents with a view for the Council to submit the application shortly after Full Council on 4th February 2025.

- b) Agree 'in principle' to a simple partnership agreement being drafted for Full Council on 4th February 2025, which, subject to approval, will be submitted in conjunction with 2.1 a).
 - c) Acknowledge and agree that the content of the future application to Historic England will align with the content of the application to NLHF, and therefore approve 'in principle, subject to commonality, the submission by the Council of a Grant Application for £250,000 to Historic England at the time the application is prepared, without requiring separate endorsement by Council at a later date.
 - d) That Council agrees to fulfil the role of accountable body for the project.
 - e) That, subject to the grant applications being successful, a full report be brought before a future meeting of Council to review and determine next steps including procurement, contractual, delivery and other matters.
 - f) That in liaison with THT the Town Clerk and General Manager, in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, be authorised to undertake such changes, corrections or other submissions of an administrative/non-substantive nature, as are consistent with the grant applications, and as may be necessary to expedite successful achievement of same.
- 2.2 It is worth noting that the recommendations as set out above do not incur any financial liability at this stage. No contract will be let and no expenditure will be incurred by the Council relating to the outlined project spend. On receipt of notification around success/or not of the said applications from NLHF and Historic England a Full Report will then be brought to the appropriate round of Council Meetings regarding next steps and related approvals.
- 2.3 The views of the Committee and Council are sought.

**GENERAL MANAGER
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
JANUARY 2025**