

Oldway – Summary report for Working Group

Background & intended benefits

Working with the community and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), the Council has developed and adopted "Developing a resilient future for Oldway" as a masterplan for the effective restoration of the Mansion and Grounds. The masterplan identifies three phases of work to bring economic life back to the site and to ensure its sustainable future for the benefit of Torbay. The Council intends to seek co-investment from National Lottery Heritage Fund to allow for Phase 1 works to include the Rotunda. Delivery of Phase 1 will allow for private sector partners to be introduced to the site building the foundation for future investment.

Local economy

The area surrounding Oldway includes some of the most deprived communities in South West England. There is clear evidence that the reuse of heritage assets can be a source of regional regeneration and competitive advantage, acting as a compelling pull factor for firms relocating to an area.

The restoration and reuse of Oldway has the potential to create jobs through employment on the site itself, through boosting demand in the tourism and wedding sectors and through generally improving the attractiveness of Paignton, as a place for business.

Heritage Works, a 2017 toolkit researched by Deloitte concludes:

‘There is a strong economic case for regenerating historic buildings. The benefits relate not only to the individual building, but also to the wider area and community... The impact of successful schemes is felt beyond the boundaries of the heritage asset itself and can boost the economy of the whole area’.

Health and wellbeing

Oldway provides a freely accessible historic park that has the potential to bring a range of health and wellbeing benefits to local residents.

Torbay has significant health vulnerabilities, with wards bordering Oldway particularly affected. In Roundham with Hyde, women live on average for 3.4 years less than in England as a whole, while the figure for men is 5.5 years.

Issues of particular concern include obesity, mental ill health, suicide and self-harm. 1 in 3 Torbay residents is expected to be over 65 by the middle of the next decade.

Research by the UK government and universities has found that access to green space has a profoundly positive impact on health and wellbeing and reduces demand on health services.

Heritage sites have also been shown to provide healing spaces and activities for people living with particular conditions, such as dementia and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The population of the four wards that surround Oldway is approximately 35,200, with the vast majority living within a 20-minute walk (1600m) of the site. Largely thanks to the garden and tearoom volunteers, residents already enjoy use of the grounds for contact with nature, play, socialising and exercise.

There is potential to extend Oldway's health and wellbeing benefits to many more people by creating a high quality, welcoming environment and expanding the range of activities available.

Pride in Place

Oldway is very important to many local people. In 2020, residents were asked which heritage site in the Bay should be prioritised for action. Oldway was by far the most highly rated. In 2023, the public survey for this masterplan received the largest response to a Torbay Council consultation in recent years. Heritage sites are known to support social cohesion, provide opportunities for collective activity and enhance quality of life. Research consistently demonstrates that people have deep emotional connections to historic places and that restoring them increases pride in local areas.

The relationship between Oldway and local primary schools presents a valuable opportunity to extend this pride to younger generations. In 2018, Historic England found that learning about local heritage significantly improved pupils' sense of place and belonging.

The consultation concluded that there is overwhelming support for the restoration of Oldway as both a historic site and a community asset. The responses underline its centrality to local people's ideas of what makes the area special.

Anticipated Milestones

- Q4 2023/24 initial repairs to begin
- Q4 23/24 scoping of phase 1 works
- Q4 23/24 expressions of interest to be sought for future operators and occupiers
- Q4 23/24 procurement strategy to be confirmed
- Q4 23/24 agree funding strategy with NLHF
- Q1 24/25 design and tender details
- Q1 24/25 procurement begins for contractor
- Q2 24/25 anticipated start on site for phase 1

Key risks

The key risk in the short term is reputational harm to the Council from non-delivery, this to be mitigated through the funding and procurement strategies.

Based on the identification of the site as on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register there is a risk of further reputational harm. This to be mitigated through close liaison with stakeholders.

Securing the finances to deliver Phase 1 is a medium possibility and high impact. The masterplan itself is part of the mitigation to this risk, Torbay's designation as a Heritage Place and NLHF support for the masterplan alongside engagement with NLHF are the mitigations.

Availability of contractor resource is a programme level risk for Torbay. Identification of a range of procurement options and confirmation of the procurement strategy is an ongoing mitigation as set out in the milestone column.

Ongoing management risks that are associated with the site with its condition requiring ongoing oversight to manage it within available resources. The condition of the interior and exterior of the building requires regular intervention particularly to prevent unauthorised access to the site which creates health and safety and security risks. Bringing the site back into sustainable use will

address this. These repair and maintenance costs are also a risk given the overall budget currently available for repair and maintenance across the Council's property estate.

Developing a resilient future masterplan phasing

PHASE 1 – £13M* & ** First Stage stabilization works
ROTUNDA – £4M (Subject to funding from other source)
PHASE 2 – £35M* Residential
PHASE 3 – £2M
TOTAL – £54M

Anticipated Outcomes

- Enhanced visitor economy.
- Extend the tourist year
- Major authentic attractions
- Increased pride in place.
- Improved sense of community
- Construction jobs created