

## **Appendix 4: Delivery of a targeted public realm improvement at Victoria Street / Torbay Road, Paignton**

### **1. Proposal and Introduction**

- 1.1 On April 6 2017 the Council agreed a Transformation Strategy for Torbay's Town Centres, as an appendix to the 2013 – 2018 Economic Strategy, and the principles for delivery of that strategy. One element of that strategy included the delivery of targeted investment in improved public realm, at seven key junctions / nodes on high streets. This appendix presents the outline business case to the Council for investment in the first of those public realm improvements, at Victoria Street / Torbay Road, Paignton, and seeks support for delivery of these improvements. The combination of public realm improvements and building improvements, as delivered through the Building Improvement Grant, will have a significant impact on the nature, appearance and perceptions of Torbay's town centres.
- 1.2 Members should also note that public realm improvement schemes are being prepared for Torquay Town Centre, with the proposal for Castle Circus completed and design work on Fleet St / Cary Parade about to commence. The full business cases for those schemes will be considered by senior officers, in consultation with the Town Centres Regeneration Programme Board, as set out in recommendation 3.6 of the main report.
- 1.3 Public space, and improvements to it, is a key element of each town centre. It is the 'glue' that connects different parts of each town. High quality public realm is extremely important to the function and success of each town, to successful regeneration, to perceptions of the quality of town centres and is a key factor in securing further investment in town centres. Investment in public realm improvements is as important as investment in delivery of other regeneration projects and should be considered as an integral part of the regeneration programme.
- 1.4 The proposed public realm improvements in Paignton will support the work to restore and reuse Paignton Picture House; will support the delivery of a new civic hub around the library, bus and rail stations (including rail station refurbishment); will support the vitality of Victoria Street and Torbay Road, including the businesses that rely on that vitality; and will support investment in other regeneration projects, including Crossways and Victoria Centre.
- 1.5 Investment by the Council in public realm improvements will help secure significant socio-economic and environmental benefits to town centres. The Council will be aware of this, given the investment some years ago by the Council in public realm improvements around Torquay Harbour which resulted in increased investment, property values, jobs and visitor numbers.
- 1.6 The emphasis, for public realm improvements, is on the creation of shared space. This is space shared by a range of different users – public transport, cars, cyclists, pedestrians. Shared space has worked well, and continues to work well, in towns and cities across the country – helping to deliver regeneration and economic recovery. This approach will provide greater accessibility to and legibility of

Torquay and Paignton. It will increase footfall, spend and time spent by people in Torquay and Paignton town centres. This approach fits well with delivery of the Great Places work in Torbay.

- 1.7 The proposal is for the Council to invest up to £3m in two initial public realm improvement projects, one for Victoria Street / Torbay Road, Paignton and one scheme for Torquay, enabling implementation of those projects by end 2018. The cost of this work will be covered by the Town Centres Regeneration Programme fund plus £100,000 from existing Section 106 monies and from any remaining underspend from the Torre to Torquay Town Centre Traffic Reversal project. The £166,000 per annum required to repay borrowing of £2.9m is to be funded by income from student accommodation at Upton Place, in accordance with the resolution of the Council in May 2017 (see item 26 of minutes for Council meeting dated 10 May 2017). Income from student accommodation at Upton Place is capable of covering these costs.
- 1.8 Council support for the outline business case will allow:
  - Detailed design work to be commissioned;
  - Necessary traffic orders to be put in place (although this may be unnecessary);
  - A tender process to be undertaken, with a contractor appointed as a result of that, and
  - A start on site in around 9 months, for Castle Circus, and around 12 months for Victoria Street / Torbay Road, Paignton.
- 1.9 The Victoria Street / Torbay Road proposal is capable of phased implementation, with each phase capable of acting as the end of the project should the Council wish to pause or stop at that point. Sketch proposals are included as Appendix 4b of this appendix. These proposals have been the subject of specialised consultancy advice and engagement with key organisations. They are considered capable of implementation, with further detailed design work needed to ensure the best scheme is delivered within time and budget.

## **2. Reasons for Proposal**

- 2.1 The proposal is in accordance with the Council's Policy Framework including the Corporate Plan, Economic Strategy and the Transformation Strategy for Torbay's Town Centres. The proposal will help transform Torquay and Paignton's town centres, as part of a wider place making agenda, which includes change and growth in Torbay.
- 2.2 The proposal will help deliver the Local Plan, Town Centre Masterplans (as adopted Supplementary Planning Documents), the emerging Destination Management Plan and the Great Places project.
- 2.3 The proposal will generate additional footfall and spend in the town centres, with the knock on benefit of attracting further investment.

2.4 The proposal will improve the attractiveness of the town centres and will reduce anti-social behaviour, helping to draw in and retain additional visitors.

## Appendices

Appendix 4a: Concept sketch drawings of public realm improvements at Victoria Street / Torbay Road, Paignton.

<b>Section 1: Background Information</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>What is the proposal / issue?</b></p> <p>1.1 Parts of Torquay and Paignton Town Centres are looking tired and unattractive. They are in need of investment and improvement, to build confidence in town centres, help draw in further investment and to improve perceptions of the town centres.</p> <p>1.2 Consequently the Council has approved the principle of targeted investment in improved public realm, at seven key junctions / nodes on high streets, as part of its Transformation Strategy for Torbay's Town Centres.</p> <p>1.3 There is a need for pace in the delivery of town centre regeneration and, specifically, in the pace of delivery of public realm improvements as it is known (e.g. from soft market testing of town centre regeneration programme proposals; from consultation responses to the proposed Destination Management Plan; from community engagement) that such improvements will lead to further confidence and investment.</p> <p>1.4 Improvements to public realm, around Victoria St / Torbay Rd, Paignton, and at either Castle Circus or Fleet Street / Cary Parade are considered priorities by the Town Centre Regeneration Programme Board, especially given their 'gateway' status in respect of both town centres.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>What is the current situation?</b></p> <p>2.1 The Council has approved (April 2017) a Transformation Strategy for Torbay's Town Centres. This proposal, for public realm improvements in Torquay and Paignton, forms part of that strategy.</p> <p>2.2 Whilst a significant amount of work has been done, via the Town Centre Regeneration Programme Board, to design and test proposed public realm improvements, further detailed design work and engagement (with key organisations) is needed over the next two months to ensure improvements that meet the needs of all users, can be delivered quickly and delivered within budget.</p> <p>2.3 The junction of Victoria Street and Torbay Road, Paignton, which includes the level crossing, is a key connection or node between</p>

	<p>Torbay Road / Seafront and the town centre (Victoria Street on through to Winner Street). Historical images show the sharing of space in this area, by vehicles and pedestrians and show that quality public realm helps to reveal the quality of buildings surrounding the area.</p> <p>2.4 At present the area provides a poor sense of place and a lack of legibility of the town centre / seafront. For example, visitors arriving by train have no clear understanding of their precise location, or the whereabouts of the sea front or the town centre. There is not a good connection, especially for pedestrians, between Victoria Street and Torbay Road – with pedestrians required to cross roads containing fast flowing traffic. Much of the space around this area is under-utilised and cluttered. The proposed improvements seek far better use of space, to re-establish shared space and to provide a much better sense of place.</p> <p>2.5 Castle Circus and Fleet St / Cary Parade are two of the main ‘gateways’ into the High Street, for vehicles and pedestrians. Schemes are being worked up that reflect that status and set a high standard for other public realm improvements.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p>3.1 The ‘do nothing’ option has been considered, but this would not change the perceptions of the town centres, would not encourage investment and would not resolve the issues outlined in this appendix.</p> <p>3.2 The ‘do everything’ option (i.e. all seven public realm improvements) has been considered. This would require significant upfront investment, estimated at £8m, by the Council and well ahead of agreed land transactions on other town centre regeneration programme projects. Whilst that would have significant beneficial impacts, it is not considered that the resources (funding streams, people) are in place to deliver that scale of change at the pace required.</p> <p>3.3 In addition, Phase 2 regeneration projects are likely to have an impact on and be able to deliver enhanced public realm to the upper and central parts of Torquay High Street over the next few years. So it is considered prudent to focus on the ‘gateway’ projects, subject to funding being available.</p> <p>3.4 The phased approach to the delivery of public realm improvement projects allows the Council to take a very light touch approach if it wants to. The design work to date allows for flexibility in delivery. For example, the Council could agree to stop or pause work after Phase 1 (essentially de-cluttering work), assess the impact, and then move to the next Phase if required. In Paignton, for example, the proposals allow for land owned by Network Rail (including the taxi ranks outside the train station) to be included or excluded, whilst still providing a solution that will benefit the town centre.</p>

<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan 2015-19?</b></p> <p>4.1 Town Centre Regeneration supports the ambition of creating a Prosperous and Healthy Torbay with the creation of vibrant and attractive town centres identified as a specific action in the Delivery Plan for “Working towards a more prosperous Torbay”.</p> <p>4.2 The proposed delivery of public realm improvements accords with the Council’s Strategy for Transformation of Town Centres.</p> <p>4.3 The proposal will help deliver the Local Plan, the Economic Strategy, the Culture Strategy (including Great Place work), the Local Transport Plan, the adopted town centre masterplans and Healthy Torbay SPD, emerging Neighbourhood Plans and the emerging Destination Management Plan.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</b></p> <p>5.1 The proposal will affect a range of different users of the town centres.</p> <p>5.2 The advice of experienced highway and landscape consultants has been commissioned to inform design work to date.</p> <p>5.3 The projects have been, and continue to be, informed by engagement with highways designers, urban designers, landscape architects, the police architectural liaison officer (Designing out Crime), British Transport Police (Crime Reduction Advisor), Disability Support Torbay and Coalition of Disabled People South Devon. Similar projects, such as Frodsham Street, West Cheshire, have also informed the project to date. The Frodsham Street project was supported by the West Cheshire Access Group, a group with various disabilities including partial sighted and blind members.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>How will you propose to consult?</b></p> <p>6.1 The proposal for this site is included within the Council’s Strategy for Transformation of Town Centres. The Strategy flows from the adopted Town Centre Masterplans for Torquay and Paignton, and the concept plan produced by the community for Brixham Town Centre. There has been a huge amount of community and business engagement on all those plans.</p> <p>6.2 There will be engagement with a range of council services and partners, on more detailed design work as it progresses over the next few months, subject to Council support.</p> <p>6.3 If the proposals require formal traffic orders, these will be advertised in the usual way. If the project is approved further detailed design work will be required. Further engagement with local access groups will occur as part of that design process.</p>

6.4 Meetings are planned and will be undertaken with Council tenants, community partnership representatives, business groups and other parties, in order to engage them in the design and delivery process for town centre regeneration projects.

## Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

### 7. What are the financial and legal implications?

7.1 This project is to be funded by the Town Centres Regeneration Programme fund. Income from student accommodation can cover the borrowing costs and the borrowing costs for the refurbishment of Lower Union Lane Multi-Storey Car Park (see Appendix 3). However, it is intended to implement the public realm improvements ahead of the receipt of income from student accommodation at Upton Place, which places a financial pressure on the Council for 2 – 3 years.

7.2 The direct socio-economic and environmental impacts of public realm improvements, such as proposed, are difficult to gauge. This was recognised in a publication by Oxford Brookes University and Trowers & Hamlins in 2016 (Highly Valued, Hard to Value). Based on an assessment of a large range of projects the publication showed that a cautious valuation of regeneration, as a whole, produced a benefit-cost ratio of 2.3 (every £1 of expenditure = £2.30 benefit). As a subset of regeneration, public realm improvements tend to deliver a benefit-cost ratio of 0.9.

#### 7.3 Economic Impacts

7.3.1 Assessment of the Torbay Waterfront development and public realm work, around Torquay Harbour, in 2006, showed that investment by the Council resulted in:

- A 21% increase in private sector investment (around £3.2m) and around £2.73m in the purchase of buildings;
- A 45% increase (around £2m) in planned investment by businesses

7.3.2 Investment by the Council in public realm around Torquay Harbour was predicted to generate 80 FTE jobs, 75 FTE safeguarded jobs and £9,500,000 private finance. Analysis by consultants showed that these outputs would be delivered in 2008. It is worth noting that delivery of the Torquay Waterfront development (hotel, apartments and restaurants) will represent a £35m investment – significantly outweighing the £9.5m predicted.

7.3.3 Investment in a similar scheme in Bromley town centre has been assessed as providing the following benefits:

- A better perception of the area

- More confidence, with 80% of businesses being confident of improved performance, 58% attributing this to the £6.8M investment.
- Increased customer / visitor satisfaction
- 86 additional jobs
- An additional £4.1M generated by 119 businesses
- Increased customer satisfaction (from 88% - 90%)
- Reduced property vacancy rates
- Significantly increased footfall in targeted investment areas
- An improved and stronger leisure offer - more licences, outdoor seating, more diversity
- Increased demand for commercial space
- Increased investment as a result of improved confidence

7.3.4 A publicised assessment (The Pedestrian Pound) of economic impacts across a wider set of public realm projects revealed:

- **Business performance:** Footfall and trading up by 40%; retail sales up by 30%; 25% increase in footfall, in Coventry and Bristol.
- **Urban renewal:** Public investment leads to increased employment (evidence shows increased by 300% in Temple Bar District, Dublin); Increase in visitors (300% increase in North Terrace, Trafalgar Sq); Increase in property prices; Higher employment densities where there are public realm improvements (as people want to be located in those places); Raised self-esteem of residents, improved investor confidence; Public realm improvements give better access to services for those people without a car.

#### 7.4 Social Impacts

7.4.1 There has already been very positive feedback, from a range of access and public safety groups, to the proposals for public realm improvements in Torquay and Paignton. These include police architectural liaison officer (Designing out Crime), British Transport Police (Crime Reduction Advisor), Disability Support Torbay and Coalition of Disabled People South Devon.

7.4.2 In response to a site visit to completed public realm improvements at Frodsham Street, Chester, the West Cheshire Access Group (which represents people with a range of disabilities, said in summary:

- Shared Space: removal of all standard curbs between areas which traffic are allowed to use and areas reserved for use by pedestrians. People can, if they wish, walk down the middle of the street; traffic is obliged to drive slowly and carefully ; or pedestrians can stick to the pedestrian-only space at each side of the street.
- The two big plus points:
  1. the area reserved for pedestrians has been completely cleared of all obstacles: this is “incredibly liberating”. Frodsham

	<p>Street used to be full of street furniture and obstructions in all sorts of random places.</p> <p>2. there is a high degree of colour contrast between the street surface where traffic can run, the corduroy strip itself and the area reserved for use by pedestrians.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very sceptical before site visit . However, having now experienced this, “when are you going to do the same to all the other streets in Chester.” Can’t see any disadvantages to it.</li> <li>• Guide dog, had no problem navigating down the pedestrian reserved area and, even if he had wandered over the corduroy strip, handler could easily detect this and correct him.</li> <li>• A lot of positive benefits for visually impaired people. The final result is a massive improvement to Frodsham street , as a totally blind pedestrian.</li> </ul> <p>7.4.3 Public realm improvements can dramatically reduce anti-social behaviour and other public spaces, in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The materials palette can help to create a real sense of quality and distinctiveness for the site. This helps to strengthen the character of the site and encourages the public to feel a sense of ownership over the space.</li> <li>• Lighting can be a deterrent to anti-social behaviour in the evening/night-time, and is fundamental in creating welcoming and safe routes through the site for the public, especially later at night.</li> <li>• An enhanced and civilized environment generally makes people feel safer and behave in a more responsible and respectful way.</li> <li>• <i>“The natural policing that occurred as a result of the higher level of activity has played a major part in discouraging crime and drug abuse there.” (pg 21. Decent parks? Decent Behaviour?, CABE)</i></li> <li>• There is evidence that investing in the design and care of high quality public places is more effective in tackling anti-social behaviour than the blanket use of tough security measures” (pg 3. Decent parks? Decent Behaviour?, CABE)</li> </ul> <p>7.5 <u>Legal Implications</u></p> <p>7.5.1 The TDA, acting on the Council’s behalf, will ensure all proper procurement and legal requirements are followed in appointing consultants and contractors, including local labour supply, apprenticeships etc.</p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>What are the risks?</b></p> <p>8.1 A full risk register will be produced as part of the project management process, if the Council supports the recommendations in this report.</p> <p>8.2 There are risks to businesses associated with delivery of these projects. There will be some disruption caused as a result of works to the highway. There will be publicity about the work to help avoid disruption.</p>

	<p>8.3 There are risks to people as a result of the delivery and operation of shared space. All necessary steps will be taken to ensure the all highway users remain safe during the delivery and operation of shared space in these locations.</p> <p>8.4 There are risks to utility services during delivery of the work. This will be mitigated by careful survey and design work.</p> <p>8.5 There are risks of cost overruns in delivering the work. Responsibility for cost overrun is likely to be assigned to the contractor</p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

## Equality Impacts

10	<b>Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups</b>			
		<b>Positive Impact</b>	<b>Negative Impact &amp; Mitigating Actions</b>	<b>Neutral Impact</b>
	Older or younger people	The economic and social benefits of town centre regeneration are significant and well evidenced such that it is envisaged that there will be a positive benefit for all residents and all those with protected characteristics. This proposal is likely to support investment that will have particular benefits for younger people and people with a disability.		
	People with caring Responsibilities	As above		
	People with a disability	As above		
	Women or men	As above		

People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	As above		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	As above		
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	As above		
People who are transgendered	As above		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	As above		
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	As above		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	As above		

	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Town centre regeneration will improve the economy of Torbay. Economic prosperity helps create healthier communities and by supporting regeneration projects we will be able to improve health inequalities which currently exist across Torbay. This project will have health, safety and wellbeing benefits to the people that use it.		
14	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Town centre regeneration will take account of proposals which are being put forward in relation to integrated transport and other regeneration projects and capital investments to ensure that a coherent approach is taken to creating a prosperous and healthy Torbay. This project will encourage and support investment in Torbay.		
15	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Town centre regeneration will take account of issues which positively impact of reducing the amount of crime and disorder therefore making our town centres safer and more attractive places for residents, workers and businesses.		

