

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 5 December 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Developing a resilient future for Oldway

When does the decision need to be implemented? Implementation to follow decision.

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Chris Lewis, Cabinet Member for Place Services & Economic Growth, chris.lewis@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: Alan Denby, Director of Pride in Place, alan.denby@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the outcome of the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported 'Developing resilient future for Oldway' project. The project was supported in 2022 and committed to the development of a masterplan for Oldway Mansion and its grounds.
- 1.2 Oldway Mansion continues to be a valued heritage site for Paignton and the wider area. The completed project provides a masterplan and supporting reports which identify and celebrate the local, regional, and international significance of aspects of the Mansion. The masterplan has been consulted on widely with extensive work by the project team to provide opportunities for the community to shape the recommendations. The submitted masterplan provides the Council with a robust platform to address the conservation challenges at the site and renew Oldway as an important asset.
- 1.3 This report provides an overview of the masterplan, some of the current repair and maintenance issues at the site and makes recommendations in respect of the potential solution for Oldway.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The reason for the proposal is to ensure that Oldway Mansion and the grounds (Oldway) support renewed pride in place in Paignton and across Torbay and the site contributes to

Torbay's economic growth. Oldway has a rich heritage and an equally rich potential to support heritage, culture and leisure opportunities for Torbay's residents and visitors.

- 2.2 Following Torbay Council's success, with the Oldway Trust and supported by the Friends of Oldway and the Oldway Gardens Group in securing National Lottery Heritage Funding (NLHF), the 'Developing a resilient future for Oldway' project ("the project") has allowed for longer term options to be explored with a Master Plan and conservation management strategy for the Mansion and estate. Over the past 18 months the Council has worked, through the project team, to deliver a range of outcomes resulting in a masterplan that helps to identify a resilient and sustainable future for Oldway. This position could not have been reached without the support of the NLHF nor without the work already undertaken by the community. The resilience project is an essential first step to restore Oldway and give it a new lease of life.
- 2.3 The recent consultation undertaken through the project has affirmed the importance of the site to those who use it along with the wider community of Paignton and Torbay. In addition, the designation of Torbay as a Heritage Place and the development by Torbay's Place Leadership Board of the Torbay Story has also elevated the importance of Torbay's heritage for the place's future. Conclusion of this project comes at a time when Torbay is increasingly focused on how its rich cultural and heritage opportunities can contribute to better outcomes for the community.
- 2.4 To that end the project has submitted a masterplan with an accompanying suite of appendices which set out the extent of the conservation deficit at the site, and the necessary actions to not only safeguard the Mansion and ground, but to help the site contribute to Torbay's renaissance.
- 2.5 The masterplan proposes a vision for "A community-focused health, wellbeing and creative hub within the historic setting of Oldway." Underneath this headline vision the masterplan sets out that Oldway will be a place;
 - To celebrate heritage
 - For communities to come together
 - For creativity and discovery
 - To connect with nature
 - To be active and relax.

The key features of the masterplan are;

- Restoration of the mansion, outbuildings and grounds dealing with the conservation deficit
- Restoration of the gardens with improved access for active engagement
- Sensitive retrofit of the buildings to reduce running costs
- Returning an enhanced registry service to Oldway

- Active family use of the Rotunda
- Improved car parking and reduced traffic around the Mansion
- An attractive forecourt to create new gathering and event space
- High quality apartments on the top floors

- 2.6 The masterplan sets out a compelling case for the Council to begin the task of assembling the funding and progressing what will be a complex project. The masterplan sets out that the anticipated cost to deliver the recommendations it contains, is a forecast cost of £54 million.
- 2.7 The masterplan was not asked to provide a funding strategy to accompany its recommendations, therefore if the recommendations of this report are accepted, an early task will be to determine the funding strategy however it is likely that the Council will want to use its current designations i.e. as a Levelling Up Partnership location, and as a Heritage Place, to explore the potential for co funding from Government.
- 2.8 The consultation carried out for the project identifies a clear desire from the public for the existing gardens and outdoor areas to remain accessible to the public and for a better, deeper celebration of the sites rich heritage. Overall, there is an understanding that the site needs to generate enough income to ensure its future upkeep and to minimise costs to the Council. To do that, this report argues that there is a need for external funding and partnering opportunities to be fully pursued so that the site does not present future costs to the Council. This will require acceptance of some form of private or exclusive use of areas, for instance the upper floors of the Mansion and potentially parts of restored outbuildings, to provide income generating opportunities for the site.
- 2.9 The vision and options set out above were arrived at based on a review of the previous work carried out by DCA, an external consultancy, in 2018, alongside assessment of whether there are opportunities for the Council to take occupation as an office again, creative workspaces, other commercial functions, an exhibition or gallery space or for commercial offices. These options have been largely discounted, the Council's accommodation strategy does not provide for moving staff into other facilities away from the Town Hall and Torhill House. There is insufficient demand for creative workspace at the scale that makes this a viable proposition.
- 2.10 Over the summer there have been informal approaches to the Council from private sector partners, interested to understand the potential for the site and the Council's intentions. It would be sensible to more publicly and formally call for potentially interested parties to come forward to understand what opportunities exist for partnering which may help address some of the cost challenges.
- 2.11 The work set out above is currently assessed at a forecast cost of £54M. This includes allowances for contingencies, risk and inflation (based on BCIS indices). This cost has been developed by the project team through their cost consultants Ravenslade and Coreus who have assessed the conservation deficit, renovation and grounds costs to arrive at this

forecast. It has not been tested with contractors and should not be seen as a definitive figure. It also assumes that the work will be delivered in phases over a period of a decade. On that basis the estimated cost is broken down as follows;

- Phase 1 Restoration £13M
- Phase 2 Rotunda £4M
- Phase 3 Mansion & Garden restoration £35M
- Phase 4 Parking & landscaping £2M

- 2.12 There is also an urgent need for commitment of circa £1M, assessed by TDA's review of the works and aligned to the condition survey carried out through the resilience project to Oldway for works to put in place preventative measures to avoid further degradation of the structure over the coming two winters.
- 2.13 Overall, therefore these are hugely significant costs for any organisation to have to identify and fund. It will not be possible for the Council, acting alone, to resolve the conservation deficit at Oldway and provide a resilient future for the site. There will be a need to work with public and private sector partners to bring in co-investment alongside the Council. The Masterplan suggests that there is potential income of £400-600k per annum. This would support borrowing of around £7M based on a twenty-five year borrowing term on current Public Works Loan Board rates. This level of borrowing is not sufficient to be able to deliver the masterplan and makes clear the full extent of the challenge to deliver the aspirations of the masterplan.
- 2.14 Recognising the importance of the project, and that historically it has been delivered by an external consultant, this report also proposed an alternative way forward for delivery, with the Director of Pride in Place as the initial senior responsible officer (SRO) but with the Divisional Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure becoming the SRO and leading a project board which would include;
- Principal Heritage Officer
 - Project Manager
 - Divisional Director for Finance
 - Capital Programme Manager
- 2.15 The project board, following the acceptance of the master plan, will be responsible for the project initiation process. This will result in Oldway being an approved project on the Council's capital programme and will include development of a strategic outline case for the project to help the development of funding bids.
- 2.16 The project board will, in common with all project boards, report monthly to the Capital and Growth Board. It will also make reports to the Oldway Mansion & Grounds Working Party to maintain the connections with community partners and providing the opportunity to ask questions of the project and to Overview & Scrutiny Board, through their review of the capital programme.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the Cabinet receives the “Developing a resilient future for Oldway” masterplan and its supporting reports and expresses its thanks for the work of the Oldway Mansion and Grounds Working Party and the project team led by Katherine Findlay in the production of the masterplan.
2. That the Director of Pride in Place identifies and prepare bids for external grants, to address the conservation deficit at Oldway Mansion and its grounds.
3. That the Director of Pride Place seek expressions of interest from investors and occupiers, to work with the Council to ascertain the extent to which the vision of the “Developing a resilient future for Oldway” masterplan can be achieved.
4. That the Director of Pride in Place in consultation with the Director of Finance and Cabinet members for Place Development & Economic Growth and Cabinet member for Housing, Finance and Corporate Services identifies funding for an initial programme of repair and maintenance.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Developing a resilient future for Oldway – masterplan.

Background Documents

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The masterplan sets out the scale of the project and recommends key actions to be taken to restore and refurbish Oldway's buildings and gardens and provide a mix of new uses. It draws on a series of key reports that have been undertaken by the project team and are included in the appendices.
- 1.2 The work was carried out as part of 'Developing a Resilient Future for Oldway'. A project funded by the National Lottery Heritage fund (NLHF) and Torbay Council to explore long term options for the whole Oldway estate. Between July 2022 – October 2023, a project team made up of specialist contractors worked with stakeholders and the public to understand the heritage and community value of Oldway, assess the site's condition, and develop a deliverable plan for its restoration and sustainable future use.
- 1.3 The project has given us a much better understanding of the condition of the buildings and gardens, their historical significance and their meaning to local people. The work has identified elements of the site that are of international importance.
- 1.4 The Mansion and other buildings are deteriorating rapidly, because of various factors over the time the Council has vacated the site. Access to the house and other buildings is currently restricted for safety reasons and they need significant investment to repair and reinstate their historic features.
- 1.5 A recent survey of the buildings identified urgent problems, including substantial decay to the roofs, cracking to the Mansion colonnade and rainwater getting into the internal structures. The gardens also need investment to restore their historic detail and planting. As well as the need to repair damage, there are complex challenges to ensure sustainable future uses, including where to locate parking and what interventions are needed to make the Mansion and other buildings energy efficient.
- 1.6 There are both physical and financial challenges, notwithstanding there is a compelling case for investing in Oldway. It has the potential to be a jewel in Torbay's crown, offering a unique heritage destination to tourists and contributing positively to the town's economy. Renewing the asset would be in line with the objectives of the destination management plan, cultural and heritage strategies. Key features of the scheme set out in this masterplan are:
 - *Restored gardens with improved access for active enjoyment*
 - *Enhanced Registry service offering weddings in the restored grand function rooms and garden*
 - *New catering offer and space for heritage and culture on the Mansion ground floor*
 - *High quality apartments on the top floors supporting the long-term upkeep of the site*

- *Active family use for the Rotunda*
- *Improved car parking and reduced traffic around the Mansion*
- *Attractive forecourt to create new gathering and event space*
- *Sensitive retrofit of the buildings to reduce running costs and carbon footprint*

- 1.7 During this project hundreds of local people engaged and gave their views about Oldway and the majority told us that it is important to them. The findings of the stakeholder engagement and public consultation programme, show that there overwhelming support for restoring Oldway, preserving its history and heritage, and giving it new life for future generations.
- 1.8 If Torbay Council adopts the recommendations of this report, the restoration will need to be carried out in phases and could take around 10 years to complete. Early estimates indicate that the total cost to repair, restore and fit out the buildings for new use and restore the gardens, will be in the order of a forecast cost of £54 million. If this is not prioritised, further deterioration is likely to mean that the financial cost of saving Oldway cannot be met.

2. Options under consideration

Option A – Do nothing

- 2.1 A do-nothing option will see the status quo persist with progress towards the vision and objectives set out in 2.4 above limited. There is a cost of doing nothing financially and reputationally. Doing nothing will see pressure on the repair and maintenance budget continue to grow as the site degrades, this is likely to have a short-term financial impact. It is also likely that do nothing would have an impact on the NLHF's willingness to support the Council at other sites. The recent designation of Oldway by Historic England as an at-risk site emphasises the challenges of the site and the importance of the site beyond Torbay.

Option B – Accept the masterplan

- 2.2 The following section "Financial Opportunities and Implications" and paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11 of the main report highlight the financial constraints that successful implementation of the masterplan must overcome. It is likely that the Council will need to phase works over the medium to long term to assemble the required funding to be able to deliver the repairs and renovation of the Mansion and grounds. However, this is only acceptable option if the benefits are to be realised.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 The estimated cost of restoration and conversion of the Mansion and grounds is a forecast cost of £54M. Delivery of the masterplan will be a long-term endeavour and will require

investment from the Council and partners in the public and private sectors. The Council will be required to co-invest alongside other funders and will need to identify appropriate sources of funding accordingly.

- 3.2 There is a cost of doing nothing financially and reputationally. Doing nothing will see pressure on the repair and maintenance budget continue to grow as the site degrades, this is likely to have a short-term financial impact. It is also likely that do nothing would have an impact on the NLHF's willingness to support the Council at other sites.
- 3.3 Opportunities will come from the potential funding that will be open to the Council to deliver the vision and from activities that will be enabled by the works.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Should a private partner be identified there will be a requirement for a lease to be drafted and agreed. Indicative terms that the Council will consider will need to be developed linked to the call for proposals referenced in 6.1 below.
- 4.2 The Council will need to consult its insurers throughout the process to ensure that its insurance cover reflects the changing risks as the project develops.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 Engagement with stakeholders and the community has been an essential part of the development of the masterplan. Previous engagement included consultation during the development of the Torbay Heritage Strategy; in which Oldway was identified as the top priority for action to protect and reuse, scoring almost double the points of the second highest scoring heritage asset, the Pavilion in Torquay.
- 5.2 In 2018 DCA consultants undertook a series of discussions with local groups and the community to inform the development of a recommendation for the site to be a mixed portfolio of uses with continued public access to the grounds and significant spaces (summarised in more detail in the options appraisal below).
- 5.3 To inform the vision and masterplan the project team engaged with stakeholders to inform understanding of the site and the community's priorities, and to shape the development of the draft vision and masterplan options.
- 5.4 In addition to a public consultation which included events, a project website and online questionnaire stakeholders including Friends of Oldway, Oldway Gardens Group, the bowling clubs, Torbay Civic Society and other groups were engaged.

- 5.5 The consultation resulted in over 1800 responses to the final survey demonstrating the deep connection with the site for people in Torbay. There was overwhelming support for restoring Oldway Mansion and gardens and preserving its history and heritage. There was also strong support for the emerging vision and proposals presented for Oldway's future, and many people voiced their concern that the building should not be allowed to deteriorate further.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 To take forward the recommendations of this report, it is likely that a call for proposals will be issued seeking responses from potential private sector partners to work with the Council. Officers will follow the Council's Financial Regulations and Contracts Procedures in respect to ensure that the Council is compliant with the Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012 in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Procurement Team.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 No direct implications from the recommendations, the Council will seek to support the objectives of the Climate Emergency Action Plan in delivering the recommendations set out in this report.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 The key risk in the short term if the recommendations are not taken forward is reputational harm to the Council. This would be a risk from the community based on the historic deterioration in the condition of the site and the lack of progress hitherto in identifying a clear way forward for the site. The identification of the site as on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register is a further indication of this risk.
- 8.2 In taking forward the recommendations securing the finances to allow this project to progress will be a challenge and as such presents a risk to delivery. The masterplan itself is part of the mitigation to this risk.
- 8.3 There are 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.

8.4 In line with the Council's programme and project management approach a full risk register will be compiled for this project.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people			No discernible impact anticipated.
People with caring Responsibilities			No discernible impact anticipated.
People with a disability			No discernible impact anticipated.
Women or men			No discernible impact anticipated.
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No discernible impact anticipated.
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No discernible impact anticipated.
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No discernible impact anticipated.
People who are transgendered			No discernible impact anticipated.
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No discernible impact anticipated.
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No discernible impact anticipated.
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			No discernible impact anticipated.
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general			No discernible impact anticipated.

health of the population of Torbay)			
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None