TOTNES NEIGHBOURHOOD
MASTERPLANNING STUDY

STEAMER QUAY OPTIONS STUDY
FINAL REPORT

March 2017

Prepared for Totnes Neighbourhood Plan
Steering Group
INTRODUCTION
1.1 Background

Through the Department of Communities and Local Government, Neighbourhood Planning Programme, AECOM has been commissioned by Locality to help Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to undertake an analysis of the Steamer Quay site. In particular, the aim is to review its potential for redevelopment, in order to provide:

- Mixed use development;
- A more pleasant and vibrant river front;
- A river front that contributes toward the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Vision.

From the outset, a scope was agreed with the Group, that required AECOM to understand the initial desires expressed by the Group and test options for the site, demonstrating site capacity for a mix of housing and improved public realm on the river front.

1.2 About this report

Study process

The following steps were undertaken to produce this report:

- Site visit and briefing meeting with members of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and South Hams District Council, the landowner;
- Urban design analysis and review of the planning policies that any development will need to comply with;
- Options drawn up by specialist urban designers;
- Steering Group discussion and revised options to reflect feedback;
- Production of draft report;
- Comments from the steering group;
- Production of final report.

Report structure

Following an initial analysis of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Vision, the document presents a site constraints plan and a review of planning policies with which development must comply. A preferred option has been selected further to careful evaluation of multiple development options exploring various site densities and design approaches. A Future Land Use and heights plan have been produced in order to predict long term development opportunities. Finally, the report suggests next steps.
2.1 Emerging neighbourhood plan vision

The emerging Totnes neighbourhood plan has a draft vision and set of objectives. These are based on what makes the town so distinctive - the river, its landscape setting, its historic core, its employment opportunities and its cultural and environmental outlook – and the particular challenges that the town faces – unaffordability of housing, development pressure, congestion, access to everyday needs and educational facilities in need of improvement.

The draft vision is detailed and organised under three pillars: Environment, Community and Economy. The potential redevelopment of sites at Steamer Quay for mixed use would have a role to play in contributing to all of them. More specifically, each theme has a number of objectives, defined as the most important things the plan needs to do to deliver the vision. Any redevelopment of the Steamer Quay sites would be expected to meet the following objectives in particular:

**Environment**
- Support and extend Totnes’ pioneering approach to sustainable development and local resilience, reducing the environmental impacts of the town, including of energy generation and use, resource consumption, waste production, air and water pollution.
- Protect and, where possible, enhance the landscape setting of the town, and its valuable formal and informal open spaces, including the River Dart.
- Build on and protect the distinctive historic character of the town as a whole and its many significant buildings, streets, squares and the wider public realm, not only for their own sake, but also for their vital importance to the identity and heritage of the town as a whole.
- Ensure that the most sustainable use is made of land for development, and that the environmental impact of new development is minimised, and where possible positive.

**Community**
- Support the vitality and diversity of the Totnes community, by making sure that its needs are met and create new opportunities to build on the strengths of the community.
- Support and enhance the town’s important and distinctive cultural and service roles, and the way in which they combine (with retail premises) to create a place which is much more than just the sum of its physical attributes.
- Seek to ensure that new housing meets the widest possible needs of the local population, prioritising the provision of affordable homes for young people, families and the growing numbers of older people.

**Economy**
- Support and extend the strength, variety and distinctiveness which characterise the thriving local economy.
- Support and enhance the town’s strongly independent retail sector role as a visitor destination and the associated hospitality sector, and the way in which these spatially combine (with cultural and service facilities) to create a place which is much more than just its physical attributes.
- Specifically encourage and support ‘green’ and ‘ethical’ businesses as an existing strength of the town, and their local networks and clusters.
- Support the improvement of existing business space and the provision of a diversity of new business space to meet the needs of a growing local economy.

The Plan also has three cross-cutting themes with their related objectives:

**Transport & Movement**
- Support reducing the likelihood of travel through the location, nature and design of development, and also making best use of more sustainable modes, contributing to a more sustainable and effective local transport network for the town and its hinterland;
- Will prioritise walking and cycling as the preferred modes of transport within the town whilst ensuring that the needs of those unable to use these modes are met;
- Will also prioritise the use of public and community transport as alternative more sustainable modes of transport;
- Ensure that the use of existing car parking and provision of new car parking best supports both the local economy and the needs of residents and visitors, and the use of more sustainable modes and use of transport.

**Health & Wellbeing**
- Maintain and enhance the wellbeing of all residents, employees and visitors, recognising that this is already a distinctive positive feature of Totnes;
- Encourage and support measures to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic on the local environment, and on health, wellbeing and amenity.

**Community Led & Owned**
- Support community-led development and community asset ownership as locally important ways of achieving sustainable development;
- Support alternative economic models such as re-localisation, and social- and community-supported-enterprise as important dimensions of the local economy;
- Identify and promote sustainable neighbourhoods within the town so that communities can meet more of their needs within their local neighbourhood.

2.2 Planning policy

The Steamer Quay area was already a subject of the South Hams Local Plan Part B: Totnes Area (1996). In particular, the policy TP2 explored existing land uses and suggested guidelines for potential development of the site:

- Employment uses requiring a riverside location will be permitted including the existing employment users which cannot reasonably be relocated elsewhere in the area.
- “Development should incorporate the provision of public open space including public/pedestrian access along the river frontage extending back into the site and linked to the Bridgetown green corridor (Policy Area 8).”

The Council, which is also owner of the majority of the area, wanted to improve and revitalise the area through a sensitive approach, which reflected its open riverside character. Potential development of the site must also take in account no loss of the existing parking space provision.

The policies that any development will need to take into account are principally taken from the South Hams Local Development Framework. It involves a number documents adopted by South Hams District Council, including Core Strategies (2006), Affordable Housing DPD (2008), Development policies...
DPD (2008), Totnes site allocation (2011) and Open Space Supplementary Planning Document (2006). These documents contain policies to manage development in the District. For example, the options in the following pages comply with the following standards:

- All development will display high quality design which, in particular, respects and responds to the South Hams character in terms of its settlements and landscape.

- Be based on a good understanding of the context of the site, and contribute positively to its setting by enhancing the local character, taking account of the layout, scale, appearance, existing materials and built and natural features of the surrounding area;

- Development should provide priority to pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport, over the private car. This will be achieved, in part, through the creation of links between new development and existing pedestrian, cyclist and public transport networks;

2.3 Potential development sites

The Steamer Quay area is shown in figure 1.1. It includes a mix of uses, with employment, car parking and leisure (boating and caravanning) to the fore.

Much of the area could be suitable for renewal over a long period of time, but there are four sites which may be considered to have potential for development in the short/medium term because of their low intensity of use:

- The caravan site (A);
- The longer stay car park (B);
- The Totnes Boating Association site, including the Scout centre (C); and;
- The storage/parking space of the commercial unit D (D).

These are shown in figure 2.1, and are the focus of this report on the assumption that the existing uses can be satisfactorily relocated elsewhere in and around the town.
Dartmouth River And Rail Kiosk

Totnes Caravan Site

Steamer Quay Long Stay car park

Totnes Boating Association site

Totnes Scout Centre

Industrial units located alongside the river Dart and Dart-Totnes Rowing Club
2.4 Site analysis

Drawing on previous material provided on the site, a high-level site assessment has been undertaken, in order to highlight any constraints and opportunities to the potential development of the site.

Flooding is a significant constraint to development, with the majority of the study area within the flood risk zone 3. Although the planned flood defence work may reduce the risk of flooding, any future development will require further detailed study.

The site lies just outside the Totnes conservation area and there are no listed buildings within its boundaries. However, the site area is within the Totnes Area of Archaeological Potential, and any development should also take into account long views towards the river front.

There are few important and well-maintained trees within the study area, and the closest open space/play area is on Meadow Rd, which is not directly accessible from Steamer Quay. There is a very poor connection from the riverside to Bridgetown and from the latter to the town centre via the narrow bridge.

The study areas identified are currently in use, thus a potential redevelopment of them could only be delivered if alternative sites are found for the existing uses. Expansion of existing uses, such as the rowing club, might also be desirable.

Due to the high level of the analysis, further studies should be undertaken to identify any public utilities constraints and if any mitigation measures are required.
2.5 Surrounding heights

In order to provide sensible building heights for the development proposed on the Steamer Quay area, an analysis of surrounding existing heights has been undertaken.

The study area is largely characterised by 2-3 storeys residential properties, with a very small area of bungalows. Only the existing employment units and very few apartment buildings go over three storeys.

However, the new development adjoining the study area boundary and the mixed use development on the western side of the river Dart have buildings of 3, 4 and a few of 5 storeys.

Based on this analysis and the discussion with the Steering Group, the concept masterplan options propose a mix of the following development types:

- 1 to 2 storeys for 2-3 bed houses and
- 3, 4 and 5 storeys for high density mixed use development.

The southern part of the site is mainly large commercial buildings with extensive space given over to yards and surface car parks. The Council is a major landowner in this location which offers opportunities for a comprehensive approach to development. It should be noted that higher density options are the most likely to be economically viable once the costs relating to the existing uses, such as demolition and replacement, are taken into account.
2.6 Surrounding land uses

The riverside south of the bridge exhibits a range of land uses, although is steadily moving away from its employment/industrial bias towards housing and leisure.

Steamer Quay sits within this area of change and it has potential to make a greater contribution to the neighbourhood planning objectives, using the Dart as a catalyst.

The masterplan exercise has explored options for re-locating council-owned employment uses, that perhaps do not need to be located on a riverside site.
3.1 Development concept

On the basis of the constraints plan, the following development opportunities have been identified for the study area.

Assuming that alternative sites for the existing uses could be found, three main areas have been identified as suitable for mixed use: residential-led mixed use development.

In particular, the existing caravan site not only could not accommodate residential development, but could potentially provide a new car park/bus stop, reducing the vehicular circulation for the southern part of the area and bringing active use back to the waterfront.

Moreover, a pedestrian link alongside the southern boundary of the caravan site will improve the accessibility of the riverside from Bridgetown. This link, alongside with a potential pedestrian bridge through Vire Island could extend the Bridgetown green corridor (the “Chicken Run”) and also provide a better connection to the town centre.

Public realm improvements are proposed on the riverside corridor, providing a more dynamic, sustainable and welcoming environment for the community.

Options have been developed and discussed with the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and South Hams District Council. All four options aim to minimise environmental impacts and at the same time, preserve the local character and landscape, as clearly stated in the neighbourhood plan vision. These are presented below.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group may choose a preferred option that combines elements of different options.
3.2 Development Option 1 (fig. 3.2)

This option keeps the existing long stay parking, suggests a low density residential development on the caravan site, and a four to five storeys apartment building on site D. In total, this option provides 54 units, with a mix of 1-2-3 bed homes and 1-2 bed apartments (responding to identified housing need), at a density of 42 dwellings per hectare.

The ground floor of the apartment building, which consists of 336 sqm is allocated for commercial/leisure uses in order to re-activate the waterfront.

Public realm improvements are proposed alongside the river front, in order to provide a more pleasant and vibrant corridor for people to walk trough. A pedestrian link is also suggested between the Meadow play area and the riverfront in order to provide better connections with the eastern part of the town.

The overspill car park could potentially provide winter boat storage when the demand for parking is low, and a and a kiosk/ cafe for people walking in the Longmarsh open space.
### Land Use Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Land use proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Lower density residential development providing 36 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Existing use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Residential-led mixed use development alongside with related car park, providing 18 units and 336 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Residential development providing 28 units + car park, bus drop off and related facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Potential space for pedestrian link at Meadow Brook

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### Similar scheme examples
Development Option 2 (fig. 3.3)

This concept masterplan options proposes to relocate the existing long stay parking to the north part of the caravan site and provide a mix of town houses and higher density residential development.

The parking space provides 65 car spaces + 8 bus bays and a new ticket/toilet facility. As result, buses will only circulate on the northern part of Steamer Quay Road, reducing traffic and providing a more pedestrian friendly environment.

High density residential development, with heights between 4 and 5 storeys, (in accordance with development on the other side of the river), have been suggested alongside public realm improvements on the river front.

The scout centre and part of the caravan site have been allocated for residential development, possibly lower in density and providing a pedestrian connection to the river front for the eastern part of the town.

The overspill car park could potentially provide winter boat storage when the demand for parking is low, and a and a kiosk/ cafe for people walking in the Longmarsh open space.

Key
- Residential
- Frontages
- High density Residential (apartments building)
- Mixed use building
- Open Space
- Bridge to Vire Island
- Pedestrian link
- Public realm Improvements
- Main Road
- Access
- Car Parking/ Bus drop off
- Kiosk
- Potential area for boat storage during Winter
- Winter boat storage, car parking in summer
### Land Use Budget

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Residential development providing 28 units + car park, bus drop off and related facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Residential-led mixed use development alongside with related car park, providing 32 units and 672 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Residential-led mixed use development alongside with related car park, providing 20 units and 672 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Lower density residential development providing 36 units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Potential winter boat storage on the overspill car park**

**Similar scheme examples**
Development Option 3 (fig. 3.4)

This concept masterplan options proposes to relocate the existing long stay parking to the north part of the caravan site and provide a mix of town houses and higher density residential development.

The parking space provides 65 car spaces + 8 bus bays and a new ticket/toilet facility. As result, buses will only circulate on the northern part of Steamer Quay Road, reducing traffic an providing a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Mixed use development, with heights of maximum 3 storeys, (in accordance with development on the other side of the river), have been suggested, alongside public realm improvements on the river front.

These developments will offer a mixed use at the ground floor, possibly commercial/leisure uses in order to re-activate the waterfront.

The scout centre and part of the caravan site have been allocated for residential development, possibly lower in density and providing also a pedestrian connection to the river front for the eastern part of the town.

The overspill car park could potentially provide winter boat storage when the demand for parking is low, and a and a kiosk/café for people walking in the Longmarsh open space.
Land Use Budget

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<tbody>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Residential developement providing 28 units + car park, bus drop off and related facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Residential-led mixed use development alongside related car park, providing 16 units, 300 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront, and 690 sqm of amenity space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Residential-led mixed use development alongside related car park, providing 12 units and 500 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar scheme examples
Development Option 4 (fig. 3.5)

This concept masterplan option proposes to relocate the existing long stay parking to the north part of the caravan site and provide a mix of town houses and residential-led mixed use development.

The parking space provides 65 car spaces + 8 bus bays and a new ticket/toilet facility. As result, buses will only circulate on the northern part of Steamer Quay Road, reducing traffic and providing a more pedestrian friendly environment.

High density residential development, with heights between 3 and 4 storeys (only 4 units), have been suggested alongside public realm improvements on the river front.

The scout centre and part of the caravan site have been allocated for residential development, possibly lower in density and providing also a pedestrian connection to the river front for the eastern part of the town.

Site D has been suggested as potential boat storage expansion for the Rowing Club facility, in need of additional space all year around.

The overspill car park could potentially provide winter boat storage when the demand for parking is low, and a and a kiosk/ cafe’ for people walking in the Longmarsh open space.

Key
- Residential
- Frontages
- High density Residential (apartments building)
- Mixed use building
- Open Space
- Bridge to Vire Island
- Pedestrian link
- Public realm improvements
- Main Road
- Access
- Car Parking/ Bus drop off
- Kiosk
- Potential area for boat storage during Winter
### Land Use Budget

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<tr>
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<td>Residential development providing 28 units + car park, bus drop off and related facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Residential-led mixed use development alongside related car park, providing 20 units and 500 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Potential Rowing Club expansion and/or additional all year round boat storage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Potential expansion for the Rowing Club/boat storage

- Residential development providing 28 units + car park, bus drop off and related facilities.
- Residential-led mixed use development alongside related car park, providing 20 units and 500 sqm for commercial/leisure uses related to the waterfront.
- Potential Rowing Club expansion and/or additional all year round boat storage.

### Similar scheme examples
4.1 Public realm improvements

Further to the concept masterplan options, potential public realm improvements have been explored in order to provide a more dynamic, welcoming and accessible river front space.

Two main views have been selected and illustrated with sketches and relevant case studies examples. The aim is to provide an idea of what the place could look like and also give some indications for potential improvements.
4.2 Steamer Quay view 1

1. **Integrated Seating to Planters**
   Timber planters to compliment Timber kiosk, Play ship and Maritime location;

2. **Play Surfacing**
   Play surfacing to provide secure and comfortable play area for children;

3. **Improved Paving Surfaces**
   Multi coloured paving blocks across the square and road to define larger gateway space;

4. **Seating Benches**
   Timber Benches to provide more seating around the kiosk.

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**Existing view**

**Location plan**

**Images depicting ambience sought**

**Potential public realm improvements**
4.2 Steamer Quay view 2

1. **Steps**
   Improved Steps along the wooden platform, to be used for seating;

2. **Walkway and Cycle Track**
   Shared Walking & cycling track along the Riverfront;

3. **Pockets of planting**
   Pockets of planting placed randomly along the Riverfront;

4. **Building Entrance**
   Different paving material to define proposed building entrance area.

![Existing View](image1)

![Potential public realm improvements](image2)

![Location plan](image3)

![Images depicting ambience sought](image4)
5.1 Next steps

Built around the passion and ideas of the Totnes community, this document has presented potential high-level masterplan options for the Steamer Quay Area. It has been prepared to inform the neighbourhood planning process, and a key next step will be for the proposals to be included, as appropriate, in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Before this, the preferred option will need to be agreed with the South Hams District, owner of the majority of the sites within the study area, and with the existing occupiers. Discussions as part of this work have suggested that they would be interested in exploring the ideas in more detail. Moreover, if the relevant parties are in agreement with the broad principles of the redevelopment, then option should be explored for re-locating the existing caravan site and any boat storage space lost.

It may also be useful to prepare a more detailed masterplan and implementation strategy, which might include the following objectives:

• A comprehensive masterplan of the whole site, taking in account environmental, historic and economic constraints.
• A more detailed flood risk assessment in order to inform the design on possible uses and potential heights of the development.
• An integrated street and public realm strategy which explores in depth the potential opportunities an improvements which could be done on the site.
• A detailed landscaping strategy which includes play areas and innovative forms of public open space opening up to the riverfront.
• A relocation strategy for displaced users that is satisfactory to all parties.

The proposals can then be promoted through the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and reviewed in light of the relevant development policies.

5.2 Recommendations

Section 3 of this study provides an overarching development concept and a number of options that should be pursued further in discussion with: the Local Planning Authority; landowners; and other local stakeholders/delivery agencies. The design principles and development options can be transposed into statutory policy within a neighbourhood plan (or the forthcoming Joint Local Plan) or permitted development as part of a Neighbourhood Development Order(s). It is recommended that the Steering Group consider the merits of the following:

• Vision and objectives – the masterplanning study has drawn out a series of possible options for the future of the area. Where there is public support for some of the ideas contained herein, the Steering Group should consider weaving the outputs into the neighbourhood plan vision and objectives.
• Site specific allocations - focussed on the main opportunity sites and including associated policy related to land uses, quantum of development, configuration and design.
• General area-based policy - that makes explicit support for growth, high-level requirements of new development and desired improvements to the public realm could be a viable alternative to site allocations. Such a policy could include high-level design principles and broader criteria than site allocations.
• Thematic policy - such as a design-based policy addressing place making, urban design and local character (e.g. materials) and environmental policies related to the riverside location. The development options provide an indication of where landscaping and open space may be appropriate. Existing green space should be considered for the Local Green Space Designation where they are locally valued and can be incorporated into future redevelopment of the area.
• Infrastructure – to complement statutory policy it is good practice for the neighbourhood plan to consider implementation. Many neighbourhood plans include schedules of infrastructure (social/green/physical e.g. pedestrian bridge) and emerging community projects in a delivery chapter at the end of the plan. Public realm improvements listed in section 4 could be incorporated within the schedule (e.g. seating, planters, new paving, cycle ad pedestrian links etc.) Recognising these elements in this way could help to lever in funding in the future from external funding (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund, s106 planning obligations, ‘meaningful proportion’ of the Community Infrastructure Levy and transport works carried out by the Council.

In addition to the neighbourhood plan, the masterplanning study can be used to initiate discussions with the Local Planning Authority and help to influence live planning applications and the forthcoming Joint Local Plan.

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