

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 September 2019
Subject:	Healings Mill
Report of:	Head of Development Services
Corporate Lead:	Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Built Environment
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

Healings Mill is an important piece of the fabric of Tewkesbury Town Centre. The Council has made its aspirations to see the Mill and its environs redeveloped clear and has been in regular contact with the agent regarding progress. The site clearly has a number of challenges regarding any development including flood risk, the cost of redevelopment, its heritage status and the proximity to environmental designations. Notwithstanding these constraints, efforts have been made over the years to engage with the interested parties to seek to develop a suitable strategy for developing the Mill. The Council's role is facilitative and supportive in this regard due to the fact that the Mill is privately owned. Furthermore, the Council has ensured an effective planning strategy for the site set out in the Tewkesbury Town Supplementary Planning Document and the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the update on progress being made to secure a suitable development scheme for the Mill and to note that any further reports will be submitted should there be any significant developments of which Members need to be advised.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a report in order to understand the progress being made.

Resource Implications:

None as a direct result of this report.

Legal Implications:

None as a direct result of this report.

Risk Management Implications:

None as a direct result of this report.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Future update reports will be provided should there be any significant developments of which Members need to be advised.

Environmental Implications:

None as a direct result of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Healings Mill is an important piece of the fabric of Tewkesbury Town Centre. The Council has made its aspirations to see the Mill and its environs redeveloped clear and continues to do so. It has recently adopted a Tewkesbury Town Supplementary Planning Document which sets out the basic parameters of the site and has outlined the aspirations for the site in the recently approved pre-submission version of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan. It remains, however, that the site has a number of challenges regarding its development including flood risk, conservation implications and proximity to environmental designations. Previous reports have set out that efforts have been made over the years to engage with the interested parties to seek to develop a suitable strategy for developing the Mill. The Council's role is facilitative in this regard due to the fact that the Mill is privately owned. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that a regular report be presented to the Committee following previous discussions regarding the site and the fact that many of the issues arising which are barriers to its redevelopment are out of the control of the Council. Similarly, the Committee was keen to consider the facilitative and enabling role the Council plays in regenerating this site. An update report was last provided to the Committee in March 2019.
- 1.2** The Council has set out its aspirations to see the Mill and its environs regenerated in both the pre submission Tewkesbury Borough Plan and the adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Tewkesbury Town Centre. The SPD builds upon the aspiration in the Tewkesbury Town Masterplan which was adopted by the Council in 2012 in terms of setting out the broad visions and regeneration objectives for the Town. This SPD document does not seek to be prescriptive but to act as an aid to interested parties to help facilitate the site's development and to encourage discussion with the Local Planning Authority at an early date, whilst setting out some key parameters. The Council considers that Healings Mill could play a crucial part in the Town Centre regeneration and has a fundamental role in improving the vitality and viability of the Town Centre. Its waterside location offers the potential to bring about environmental benefits, enhance the physical and built environment and bring activity to that part of the town and to make the area a destination. Works undertaken as part of the consideration of options for the Spring Gardens site has also highlighted the important regenerative benefits within the wider context of the site.
- 1.3** The site lies entirely within a Conservation Area and Historic England has recently listed part of the building which now has Grade II Listed Building status. The Council had no direct role or influence in the listing process as it was largely a technical assessment; however, Officers have continued to engage with Historic England to seek assurances that it will not prejudice the future viable use of the site. Since the listing has been confirmed, Officers have met with Historic England alongside the owners of the site to consider opportunities given the heritage extra protection it is now afforded. This discussion focused on the deliverability and viability of any scheme with the retention of the entirety of the listed buildings. Officers understand that work is ongoing by the owners to consider the structural stability and viability of conversion of the buildings on site.

2.0 PROGRESS UPDATE

2.1 Progress on Planning Strategy

2.1.1 Officers have had a number of meetings/discussions with the agents working on behalf of the owners of Healings Mill. Early discussions have demonstrated that a strategy for the planning framework and the delivery of a scheme to regenerate the Mill appear to be viable. These discussions remain confidential at the current time. Whilst plans and discussions are indicative only at this stage, Officers will continue to push for a scheme that would be beneficial to the wider town centre.

2.1.2 Planning strategy is important to ensure a degree of control over the key elements of the development and maximise the potential for positive regeneration of the Town Centre.

2.2 Progress on Discussions with External Agencies

2.2.1 The previous report to the Committee highlighted that, in addition to setting out the Council's aspirations, it is equally important to ensure that the development can meet the aspirations and requirements of other agencies, most notably the Environment Agency as parts of the site are known to flood. Similarly, discussions and site visits with Historic England have sought to ascertain the key parameters in relation to the heritage aspects of the site. Both agencies continue to be involved in discussions.

2.3 Funding Strategy

2.3.1 The Government recently announced grant funding opportunities available to local authorities to revitalise high streets. This presents an opportunity for the Council to bid to access funding to help bring about improvements to the Town Centre. This could include the Healings Mill site redevelopment alongside other key elements of the Town. The Council submitted a bid for High Street Funding in March, which included reference to the regeneration opportunities and the positive benefits that redeveloping Healings Mill could bring to the town. Unfortunately, this bid was unsuccessful. Only a handful of bids were successful, many of which were for very run-down town centres in the north of England. The Council has, however, submitted a further bid for High Street Heritage Funding and is hopeful that this will be successful. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be informed of the outcome once known. As part of the preparation for this bid, Officers instigated a discussion with Historic England around the opportunity for funding at the Mill.

3.0 LOOKING FORWARD AND THE COUNCIL'S ROLE

3.1 Members were advised in the previous report that the Council has no direct control over the timeframe for any potential redevelopment opportunities, rather it is an enabler and, through mechanisms of working with partners, is seeking to expedite a development proposal. Nevertheless, through effective engagement on planning, conservation and funding, Officers are confident that the opportunities at the site can be realised.

3.2 The Council will continue to do everything in its power to see a suitable redevelopment scheme come forward and continue to lobby partners and key stakeholders as part of this process. The successful completion of the Tewkesbury Town Centre SPD and Tewkesbury Borough Plan, both of which include direct reference to Healings Mill, should be seen as a major step forward in securing planning policy reflecting the desire and regeneration potential of this site.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 None as a direct result of this report; however, any planning application submitted will be subject to the usual consultation processes.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 Joint Core Strategy Submission Document www.gct-ics.org/
Pre submission Tewkesbury Borough Plan
Supplementary Planning Document on Tewkesbury Town Centre

7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

7.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance – Updated July 2018 <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

8.1 None as a direct result of this report.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

9.1 None as a direct result of this report however the regeneration plans for the site will aim to provide a sustainable development opportunity for the site.

10.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

10.1 None as a direct result of this report.

11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

11.1 None.

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: None