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Site of the Riviera International Conference Centre

Market Brief



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Introduction

The area comprising the Riviera International Conference Centre and its surrounding land offers a unique prospect for an innovative redevelopment opportunity in central Torquay that supports the future prosperity of the town and provides community and social benefits to residents and visitors. The site is owned by the Council and this project provides a fantastic opportunity to improve upon the current leisure and conference centre offer through the potential provision of a high-quality hotel, conference, leisure and mixed-use development.

Initial expressions of interest are invited for the potential redevelopment of the whole site through a single developer proposal to include the redevelopment, relocation and rationalisation of the current leisure and conference offer; with potential for complementary hotel/ residential and retail development, suitable parking and access arrangements and appropriate public realm improvements as part of the scheme.

This Market Brief is intended to inform expressions of interest (EOI) enabling the selection of preferred bidders to take part in a competitive dialogue approach to develop options for a vibrant, viable and creative redevelopment of this attractive part of Torbay. The process will lead to an invitation to submit a proposal with the successful bidder being invited to work with the Council to deliver the redevelopment of the site as strategic development partner, based upon their expertise, experience and financial resource.

The Council is not seeking detailed designs and financial bids at this selection stage. Prospective development partners will be invited to formally register their interest through the Council's e-tendering portal www.supplyingthesouthwest.org.uk in accordance with the guidance set out in Part 1 Information of the tender documents.

The brief for this stage is not intended to be a planning or design brief and is intentionally seeking not to constrain imaginative and creative options being brought forward to maximise the opportunities presented. Proposals will however be expected to demonstrate the regard given to the character and heritage of the town, including its surrounding green spaces and the iconic Torre Abbey which sits adjacent.

It is expected that design and the use of materials will be of high quality and sympathetic to the surrounding built form. More information in relation to relevant planning policies is available on the Council's website and more detailed guidance on planning considerations will be provided through the competitive dialogue stage by an advisory team set up to give planning support to the project.

Key Success Factors

In considering the opportunity, developers are advised to take note of, what the Council consider are, the most desirable key success factors for the project. Please note that it is not necessary to achieve all of these to be successful. It is intended to give you a broad list of the potential outcomes and it is for you to determine which ones will enable a successful and sustainable redevelopment.

- **Improve capacity** to hold larger conferences and/or events (including music and exhibitions)
- Provide **hotel** accommodation for tourists/business
- Create a venue that does not require a Council subsidy and is **sustainable** going forward
- Create an enhanced **Tourist Attraction** and a **family-friendly environment**
- Make best use of grounds with **improved access** from beach to facilities and Torre Abbey
- Build a dynamic **all-weather leisure facility, to include swimming pool(s) and flexible outdoor events space**
- Improve development appeal by supporting **residential element**
- Improve services in **health and well-being** such as a spa and improved gym
- Make full use of **views and landscape** and explore UNESCO Global Geopark linkages
- Enhance the links to **local culture, produce, art and history**
- Consider **high quality retail and hospitality** options to increase attraction, footfall and income
- **Increase employment** opportunities in Torbay

Torbay and the English Riviera

Torbay is primarily served by the A380 road from Exeter and the recent £110m investment in the South Devon Highway has significantly reduced travel times locally and regionally. The alternative coastal route through Teignmouth via the A379 passes through Torquay and Paignton and then goes on to Dartmouth. The A385 road also goes inland to Totnes and links to the A38 from which Plymouth and Exeter are easily accessible.

Torbay is served by three rail stations on the National Rail network, all operated by First Great Western. Torre railway station is inland on the road from Torquay to Newton Abbot whilst Torquay railway station is close to Abbey Sands on the seaside and only a 10 minute walk short walk from the RICC. Paignton railway station serves the town and seaside resort and is a terminus of the mainline from Exeter. Further infrastructure investment will see further improvement to town centres as well as to increasing telecom links, broadband speed and capacity.

The English Riviera may be most famous for its micro climate that has contributed to its award-winning beaches, stunning natural environment and iconic palm trees but it has much more to offer with more attractions than any other resort in the UK and it is also a UNESCO Global Geopark. With its busy harbour and international marina, Torquay has been ranked in the top 10 for TripAdvisor's Traveller's Choice Awards for each of the last two years, reflecting its appeal.



Torbay has a population of c.130,000, which is anticipated to increase to c.150,000 by 2030, with much of the increase expected to be in Torquay. The population increases significantly during the holiday periods and further information and statistics are provided below.

Torquay offers a busy, year-round programme of top shows at the Princess Theatre, plus a huge choice of festivals and events, and the opportunity to engage with sea life at Living Coasts and the nationally recognised Paignton Zoo. Visitors can watch major sailing events from waterfront eateries or from a choice of world-class restaurants, or enjoy Torquay's vibrant nightlife, which includes a variety of pubs, bars, cocktail venues and clubs. Torquay's retail offer also features a wide range of recognised national brands and a selection of specialist shops.

Torquay, with RICC as its central conference facility, is an appealing conference destination to events and conference organisers. The town has been ranked amongst the top 25 UK destinations by event organisers in both 2015 and 2016, in British Meetings & Events Industry Survey (BMEIS) data.

The results of the Council's 2016 visitor survey confirm that the English Riviera continues to be a popular South West seaside destination and is highly thought of by its current visitors. The summary points of the survey show:

- The resort has a strong and loyal market attracting 97% of visitors from the UK and has an 87% repeat visitor rate;
- Resort promoters have significantly increased, reaching a high recommendation score of 70%, (increasing from 42% in 2012/13);
- The English Riviera attracts affluent visitors, with 54% of ABC1's recorded in the 2016 visitor survey (ABC1 is a term referring to a social economic group as identified in the ACORN classification <https://acorn.caci.co.uk>);
- 62% of visitors look for a 'traditional seaside experience' and is the main reason for visiting; and
- The area has a strong family market, seeing an increase in the proportion of families visiting (predominately during the peak summer months and main school holiday periods).



In 2015, the English Riviera attracted 4.6 million visitor trips, spending £436 million in the resort whilst employing 20% of the local population. In terms of total nights, this has been calculated at 4.6 million of which circa 4 million are from domestic visitors. In addition, the official English Riviera 2015 data has detailed that the average length of nights stayed is circa 6 nights (5.896).

The breakdown consisted of:

Indicator	Trips	Spend (£m)
Domestic Trips	1,084,000	274.40
Overseas Trips	95,600	36.30
Day Trips	3,389,000	125.30
Total	4,568,600	436.00

Development Opportunity

The Opportunity

An opportunity to invest in a prominent town centre site to complement existing retail and tourism offering in the town, which enjoys footfall from residents and visitors to Torbay.

The site offers potential for retail, leisure, conference, office, residential and hotel accommodation opportunities.

The Council's Vision

Torbay's Local Plan sets out five interconnected aspirations for the Bay:

- Secure economic recovery and success;
- Achieve a better connected, accessible Torbay and essential infrastructure
- Protect and enhance a superb environment;
- Create more sustainable communities and better places;
- Respond to climate change.

Economic recovery and success is closely linked to the quality of the environment. We know how important the environment is for tourism and we know businesses are more productive when employees have access to green spaces and activity.

'Torbay has significant strengths, including its status as a successful resort, high levels of business start-ups, some outstanding education provision and an increasingly active and engaged business community. These strengths justify optimism in Torbay's ability to exploit the opportunities that lie before us.'

Torbay Economic Strategy 2017-2022

We are committed to improving and further strengthening the English Riviera's national and international position and have recently set out a new Destination Management Plan to guide its actions to 2021. With prime investment sites, Torbay continues to bring forward ambitious, high quality new developments and is continually seeking partners to deliver transformational schemes. A successful outcome would see an increase in domestic and international visitors, an increase in visitor spend and further development of the town and the Torbay area.

More information on the ongoing investment in Torbay is available at

https://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/8645/160276_investment_brochure_print-ready_low-res.pdf
and <http://www.investintorbay.com/>.

Site Characteristics

The site is located on the northern side of Torbay Road, Torbay approximately 0.5km from the Town Centre and within a short walk of Torquay’s mainline station. The site comprises the Riviera International Conference Centre, its car park and adjacent tennis courts but has the capacity to extend into Abbey Park. The area is set in pleasant open parkland and gardens with provision made for tennis, golf and bowling. The land faces southward towards the sea, creating a welcoming environment for leisure visitors and a fantastic backdrop for conference events.

The site is bounded to the west by The King’s Drive. Chestnut Avenue runs along the top of the site and includes private housing, and the TLH Leisure Resort comprising four hotels and apartments. In between the Riviera International Conference Centre and Belgrave Road on the eastern side, a further series of medium size hotels are located.

Appendices to the market brief include a tree survey and a topographical survey which provide greater detail of the site environment. The site levels rise steeply from the sea to the top of the site and also the drop into the car park at Chestnut Avenue is quite steep. There are a number of mature trees within the site and areas of denser planting. Formal footpaths pass through the parkland and provide access to the Torre Abbey museum and conference facilities and to the outdoor recreational facilities. The core site comprises a total area of approximately 2.57 Ha/6.36 acres.

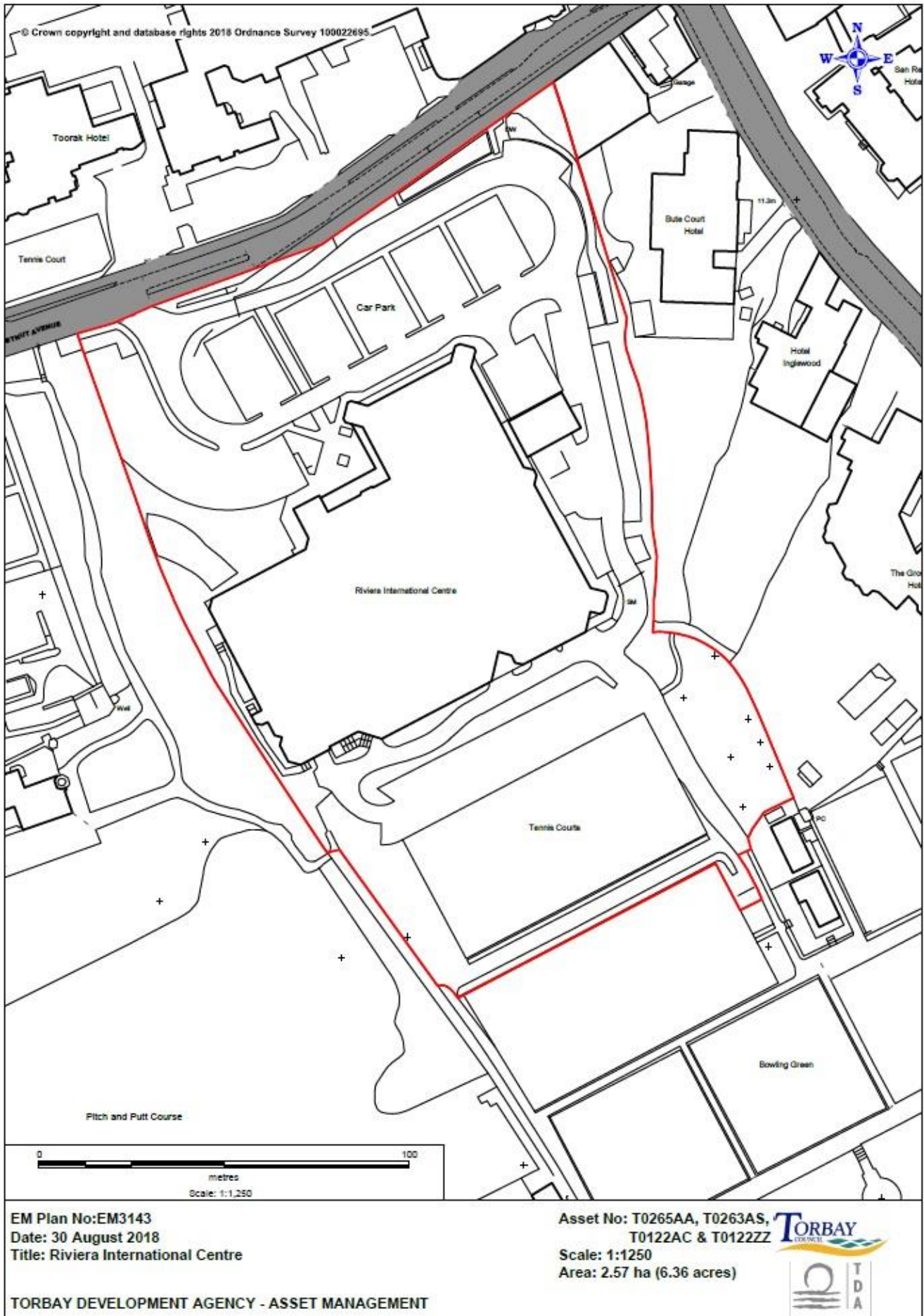
Figure 1 Aerial Plan of the Site



Figure 2 Aerial Site plan



Figure 3 B&W Site plan



Relevant Local and National Planning Policy

The Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 “A Landscape for Success” was adopted in December 2015. It establishes the local planning framework for development, together with relevant adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Development will also need to have regard to national, regional and county level planning policies and guidance. The following policies and local advice will need to be considered:

Relevant National Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (updated July 2018)

Relevant Regional Policies

Note that the list provided below is neither necessarily exhaustive nor sufficiently circumscribed at this stage but intends to capture the policies which are expected to be relevant and in scope in relation to potential development proposals.

Torbay Local Plan Relevant Adopted Policies

Details of the Local Plan can be found here: <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/6836/lp-2012to2030.pdf>

Please see Appendix 1 for further information.

Torquay Neighbourhood Plan

There is an emerging Neighbourhood Plan which has been produced for the Torquay area. The plan is at an advanced stage in that it has been through an Independent Examination and therefore can be afforded some weight. The plan is awaiting a decision from the Council in September 2018 as to whether the plan will be taken forward to a referendum and, if so, in what form. The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan (as submitted) and the Independent Examiner’s Report can be viewed on the Council’s website. Updates will also be placed on these pages in due course.

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/torquay-np/>

Other Relevant Plans and Strategies

UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans

Torbay Economic Strategy

English Riviera Destination Management Plan

Developer Provision/Contributions

Please see Appendix 1 for further information.

Design Principles

The key development objective is to provide regeneration of the location to deliver a sustainable future for the site as well as a strengthened tourism destination offer. The redevelopment will augment the role of this area in Central Torquay enabling it to play a vital part in Torbay's economy and quality of life.

Hotel and Conference, retail and leisure: Practical, and imaginative proposals that will bring forward significant tourism and leisure development such as a hotel are viewed as key parts of any offer together with an enhanced sporting and swim offer within the site. Proposals will need to clearly identify how existing uses of the site can be accommodated within the re development, including the costs of any rebuild or re-locations. The scheme may include provision for an anchor hotel with a complementary, residential/retail offer to enhance the attraction of Torbay. These are desirable elements but alternative proposals will be considered.

Car Parking: Car parking should be appropriate for the uses proposed and a parking strategy will need to be incorporated within the overall design proposal.

Public Realm: It would be beneficial if any scheme incorporated appropriate improvements to the public realm as part of the development and be creative in the use of space through the site.

Heritage Assets: Torre Abbey has been classified as an Ancient Scheduled Monument and as a heritage asset with archaeological interest. The Council's spatial planning department has advised that any development plans will require a sympathetic approach to Torre Abbey. Developers should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal the significance of the Torre Abbey. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) shall be treated favourably. It is envisaged that there are opportunities, through sensitive and considered design, to better facilitate positive connections with Torre Abbey in urban design terms and also including pedestrian permeability, etc.

The Council will consider the use of its statutory powers to facilitate any additional land required to deliver regeneration of the site subject to appropriate indemnity agreements and any scheme being policy compliant. However, schemes that solely rely on the use of such powers may not be considered acceptable to be taken forward in this process.

Developers are minded to note the following overarching principles for design:

Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed information of the following design principles.

Transportation Issues

Torbay Road is the main distributor route serving Torbay, the eastern settlements around the town and connecting Hollicombe, Paignton and Brixham via the A3022 to the west. It is dual carriageway and the primary vehicular access to the site is achieved through arterial routes north, east and west of the site.

A Transport Assessment will need to be submitted with any future planning application, to demonstrate the impact of any changes to the highway network.

Pedestrian and cycle accesses (facilitating active travel) will be required throughout the site. A travel plan for the development should indicate how sustainable modes of travel will be actively encouraged through the design and operation of the development. All routes should be convenient, fit for purpose, attractive, safe and comfortable in their quality and width. The site offers an opportunity to maximize pedestrian access onto an existing footpath network.

Flooding and Drainage

The Environment Agency have designated Torbay as a critical drainage area and as such have provided guidance on the requirements for design. These will be enforced by the LLFA.

This site is located within Flood Zone 1 and there are no known culverts or underwater rivers located within the site with the primary flood risk being encroachment of the sea and rises in the water table. As a critical drainage area, the only restrictions for development would be how surface water run-off would be dealt with. Any surface water run-off from any development (new or brownfield sites) must comply with the requirements of the critical drainage area and the Council's SuDS guide.

Design, Materials and External Appearance

Detailed design is where the identity and quality of a place is defined. This site provides the perfect opportunity for good design in terms of building function, layout and impact on public realm. The environmental requirements should be reflected in the form, scale and elevations to provide high quality, innovative and unambiguously 21st century solutions. In terms of height the existing RICC facility is a relatively tall building and therefore there is the potential for proposals with some significant height however a considerably higher structure would be unlikely to be welcomed.

Components of the street scene including signage, lighting, walls and railings and seating shall be considered with the overall design and layout of the development. Litter and dog bins shall be designed as part of the whole scheme and shall contribute towards the layout and design of the street furniture. Lighting will be a key element that will ultimately contribute towards the creation of a quality development with security as an integral part. The emphasis should be on good detail, thoughtful design and high quality that add to the overall quality of the public realm. It should create distinctiveness and stimulate a commitment from all to the future maintenance of the site to high standards.

The development should safeguard the living conditions of the neighbouring communities and play a key role to creating and sustaining the conditions which provide for healthy communities. Attention is drawn to the Council's Local Plan Policy SS12 and to the Council's Healthy Torbay SPD.

The development should seek to include focal points. Elsewhere throughout the developable area opportunities to green the urban environment, primarily within the curtilage should be seized.

Building Density

The overall density of the development will be determined by the need for retention of distinctive landscape features such as the Torre Abbey and constraints imposed through levels and the presence of neighbouring development. This will require innovative design and a layout that takes account of the site's constraints whilst acknowledging the need to satisfy the Council's guidance relating to Conservation and the historic environment (SS10).

This is of particular importance in terms of the relationship between existing historic site of Torre Abbey and any proposed new dwellings, as detailed in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document, 'C5 'Urban Landscape Protection Areas' and ULP No.29 Torre Abbey Meadow and Sports Ground. The Council may relax standards to some degree within the scheme to promote innovative design but protecting and enhancing the appeal of the existing amenities will be paramount.

Housing

The Council consider that there is potential to introduce penthouse flats or an element of housing if it is considered to be enabling development as part of the wider scheme. Developers considering this aspect in their design should refer to Adopted policy SS12 and SPD H1 as well as through observation of the guidance contained within SPD DE2 Building for Life.

Green Infrastructure

The site enjoys a privileged location. An element of onsite public open space should be maintained in accordance with Adopted Policy SS9 Green Infrastructure. In considering major planning applications the Council, will seek long term land management practices to retain or restore landscapes, greenspaces, dark corridors and amenity open spaces, integrating biodiversity and green infrastructure objectives including improved public access.

If development impacts adversely on diversity, geodiversity or countryside management, developer contributions and mitigation measures will be required to improve management or enhancement of the natural environment with the goal of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

The protection of existing landscape, wildlife and ecological features are fundamental to the success of this development. The site contains a number of mature trees and other landscape features and landscaping proposals should be designed to enhance the potential for nature conservation and habitat development.

Noise

The site lies adjacent to a number of existing hotels and residential properties. In particular TLH, Marquis and John Burton Race Hotel and Restaurant properties are in close proximity. The main entrance to the conference centre and the car park area would all be adjacent to the boundary and it will be important to carefully consider the potential impact of noise emissions in this area. This could involve a formal assessment of noise emissions by a reputable acoustic consultant and/or careful consideration of the site layout to provide an adequate separation distance.

Demolition/Construction Activities

On such a potentially large development, it will be necessary to attach conditions relating to the minimisation of noise and dust, working hours, waste disposal, control of bonfires etc. Careful consideration should also be given to the removal and disposal of any asbestos within existing buildings.

In addition, measures will also need to be taken to avoid surface water run off onto neighbouring land and property.

Contamination

The Council are unaware of any known contaminated land issues within the RICC site.

Sustainable Development

As both site owner and Local Planning Authority, the Council, intends to promote sustainable development and would encourage consideration of an exemplar development for others to follow. Assistance will be given to help with the identification and application of potential grant funding.

Building Control

The Council's Building Control service has detailed knowledge of managing and supervising developments within Torbay. Early contact is suggested.

National and Local Planning Permission Requirements

The Council wish to see high quality development that clearly benefits the Bay, to be built as soon after planning permission as possible. Details of the national and local information needed to support developments within Torbay can be found here:

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/media/3056/planning-list.pdf>

Development Constraints

The Council is aware of existing Covenants over the land and further engagement will be required with those covenant holders to ensure there is minimal disruption to any development project. It would be the Council's intention to facilitate this further engagement.

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The Selection Process



At this selection stage, we are seeking a better understanding of the potential appeal of the site and undertaking discussions with short listed developers at the Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage of the process. This will enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage.

The Council is seeking to identify a strategic development partner to bring forward new development on the Council's land, the selection of which will begin with interested parties completing a selection questionnaire (Further details are available within the Procurement guidance). The Council is not seeking detailed designs or financial proposals at this stage.

The Council will use the SQ process to shortlist the parties to go forward to the ITT stage, which will be run using a negotiated procedure to develop options to meet the Council's requirements. The key stages and indicative timetable are set out below. Following the selection of the preferred developer the Council intend to move forward with the successful party and negotiate a development agreement for the disposal of a head lease on the site, the period for which will be subject to further negotiations on the terms of the financial proposal and management arrangements for the site to deliver an acceptable scheme that meets the Council's requirements.

The Council are not currently considering financially underwriting the developers' risk or adopting any development risk beyond the ground rent provisions. This position could change depending on the offer proposed.

The development agreement would normally make provision for the payment of the Council's professional and legal fees.

Procurement Timelines

The timetable for the process is shown below is indicative and may be subject to change at the Council's discretion dependent on the solutions proposed:

Indicative Timetable

Procurement Stage	Dates
Prepare Draft Market Brief	July 2018
Draft Market Brief to Review – MEG, O&S Council	August – September 2018
Council Decision	September 2018
Award Consultant to support Developer Procurement Exercise	September 2018
Sent Call for Competition	October 2018
Market Brief and Stage One Tender Documents Published	October 2018
Stage One Tender Submission	November 2018
Stage One Evaluation Period	November 2018
Stage One Outcome Notification	November 2018
Stage Two Tender Documents Published	November 2018
Site Visits	November/December 2018
Stage Two Initial Tender Submission	December 2018/January 2019
Stage Two Evaluation of Initial Submissions	January 2019
Stage Three Feedback and Negotiation Meetings	January 2019
Stage Four Final Tender Documents Published	February 2019
Stage Four Final Submission	February 2019
Stage Four Evaluation of Final Tender Submissions and Committee	March 2019
Council Approval of Preferred Developer Status	April 2019
Award of Preferred Developer Status	April 2019
Masterplan Development	April 2019 onwards

Draft Heads of Terms (subject to contract)

The site is offered on the following basis, subject to Council approval:

- Transfer of title on the basis of a negotiable term of the lease from 25 years up to a maximum period of 125 years and;
- A reviewable ground rent (reviewable every five years) or alternatively by way of a premium at Lease commencement upon satisfactory completion of the development. Such premium to be measured as a statutory requirement as the Council has to achieve best value in any disposal;
- Subject to an Agreement for Development and Lease entered into by the successful developer which will detail the contractual agreement with the Council until completion of the development;
- The developer obtaining full planning permission including any other statutory approvals to permit the proposed development;
- The developer to meet a timeframe for planning and build completion with Title to be transferred on completion;
- A deposit of £10,000 refundable only in the event of refusal of planning permission

This Market Brief is intended to provide information on the nature of the site. Anything contained herein is to be treated accordingly and is not construed a representation on the part of Torbay Council or its agents. All matters contained in this Market Brief are Subject to Contract.

The Council or its advisors will not be liable for any costs incurred by third parties resulting from the preparation of the expression of interest, attendance at any selection panel or meetings with the Council and its officers. The preparation and submission of an expression of interest and subsequent costs associated with the delivery of any scheme are all based on an individuals' at-risk basis and should be considered within the overall costs to be borne by the development. The Council reserves the right to stop the process at its absolute discretion at any point.

Viewing of this exciting opportunity is recommended and the site is publicly and readily accessible.

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Appendices

- 1 Further details of Planning policies and Design principles
- 2 Tree survey – to follow
- 3 Topographical survey – to follow