

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economy and Growth Select Committee

16 September 2021

TITLE:	Review and Renewal of Torr Vale Mill Memorandum of Understanding
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Greenhalgh - Deputy Leader & Executive Councillor for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure
CONTACT OFFICER:	Joanna Bagnall, Sarah Porru - Senior Regeneration Officer, Head of Regeneration
WARDS INVOLVED:	New Mills East and West

Appendices Attached

Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix 2: Previous MoU (November 2018 - November 2020)

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with regeneration of Torr Vale Mill, New Mills and seeks approval to renew the Memorandum of Understanding first entered into in 2018 with Derbyshire County Council (DCC), Historic England (HE), Torr Vale Mill Preservation Trust (TVMPT) and Torr Vale Mills Limited (TVML) as the owner of Torr Vale Mill.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Economy and Growth Select Committee recommend the Executive approves High Peak Borough Council re-enters an updated Memorandum of Understanding with Derbyshire County Council, Historic England, Torr Vale Mill Preservation Trust and Torr Vale Mills Limited to help facilitate collaborative work towards a shared development plan for specified areas of the Mill..

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Torr Vale Mill, New Mills, is a Grade II* listed building which has been included on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The Council has been

working with the other parties to the MoU (HE, TVMPT, DCC and the owners) for a number of years to secure the building complex's repair and future use.

- 3.2 By Individual Executive Decision dated 17 July 2018, the Council approved entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with project partners to record the parties' mutual understanding and objectives regarding the development of Torr Vale Mill.
- 3.3 The Mou was signed on 26th November 2018 and expired on 26th November 2020. The delay in seeking to renew the document is due to interruption in project meetings resulting from the pandemic.
- 3.4 In order to support continued partnership working, the project partners are seeking to renew the MoU. A number of small amendments have been made to the 2018 document and these are detailed at paragraphs 7.12 – 7.17 of this report.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Entering into an MoU with project partners to guide collaborative working to help bring Torr Vale Mill back into full use contributes to the following aims of the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023:
 - Aim 2: A responsive, smart, finally resilient and forward thinking Council.
 - Aim 3: Protect and create jobs by supporting economic growth, development and regeneration.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 **Option A:** To approve the Council signing the renewed Memorandum of Understanding. **This option is recommended.**
- 5.2 By renewing the Memorandum of Understanding, the Council is reaffirming its commitment to work with partners to identify a viable future use for specified areas of Torr Vale Mill, enabling a return of the building complex to full use.
- 5.3 **Option B:** To resolve to withdraw from the project partnership. **This option is not recommended.**
- 5.4 By not resigning the updated Memnorandum of Understanding, the Council would be signalling a lack of intent with respect to support for the redevelopment of Torr Vale Mill and a withdrawal from the project partnership.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Not relevant to the recommendations of this report.

6.2 Workforce

Not relevant to the recommendations of this report. A member of the Regeneration Service attends monthly meetings of the MOU Group.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

Not relevant to the recommendations of this report.

6.4 Financial Considerations

It is not envisaged that the Council will contribute financially to any study for Torr Vale Mill that arises from work undertaken under the MoU.

6.5 Legal

The Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted by the legal team at DCC.

6.6 Climate Change

Torr Vale Mill is a prominent and historically important building in the Torrs, New Mills and its appropriate redevelopment and restoration will significantly contribute to the local environment, including improvements to access for all.

6.7 Consultation

Not relevant to the recommendations of this report.

6.8 Risk Assessment

Risks are covered in the body of the report.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

**Web Links and
Background Papers**

Individual Executive Decision 17 July 2018- to enter into MoU

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7. Detail

- 7.1 Torr Vale Mill is included on the Secretary of State's statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and has a grade II* entry. It is also included on HE's Heritage at Risk Register with a Priority Category: F. Priority Categories range from A to F, with A equating to immediate risk of loss and F being at the lower end of the Priority Category scale, although still of serious concern.
- 7.2 Torr Vale Mill dates from 1790 and is a near-complete example of a multiphase integrated cotton spinning and weaving factory. The Mill retains extensive evidence for both water and steam-powered phases of manufacture, buildings which represent each stage of the development chronology of the site and examples of both fire-proof and conventional timber-floored construction. It is a compact site situated on a prominent bend of the River Goyt at the Torrs in New Mills. The site is overlooked from the higher ground of New Mills town centre and has a robust presence within the Torrs being situated opposite the Millennium Walkway.
- 7.3 Vehicular access to the site is via Torrvalle Road which is an un-adopted public highway to the south of the site and runs into Wirksmoor Road. The roads are fronted by 19th and early 20th century gritstone terraced properties. These roads connect to Albion Road (A6015) which connects, within 600 metres at its southern end, to the A6.
- 7.4 The redevelopment / regeneration of the Torr Vale Mill site has been a longstanding objective of both Derbyshire County Council and HPBC.
- 7.5 The site has seen significant improvement in the last few years. The owner runs a manufacturing business on one floor of the main block. Office space and an events venue have been created on other floors, alongside a small bar / restaurant. A former workshop range has been converted to holiday accommodation. An Historic England grant was awarded for the repair of the main mill building roof and this work was undertaken last year.
- 7.6 Notwithstanding this, the site still has a number of difficulties. These include access to the upper floors of the mill complex and ensuring unimpeded vehicle access to the site. The Heritage Lottery Fund has indicated that it would be willing to fund a feasibility study for the Torr Vale Mill site prompting the entering into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018.
- 7.7 An MoU for Torr Vale Mill (attached as Appendix Two) was agreed for a period of two years, running from November 2018 to November 2020. The purpose of the MoU was to ensure that the Council, DCC and Historic England were engaged alongside the building owner and the Torr Vale Mill Preservation Trust with the procurement and running of an appropriate feasibility study / market appraisal to assess viable options for the use of specified areas of the mill building, principally the upper floor of the main mill.
- 7.8 Since the signing of the MoU, the parties have met regularly to progress

preparation of an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to meet the costs of an appraisal of options for new community uses to help bring the whole site back into full and active use.

- 7.9 Options for community use will need to be compatible with existing uses on the site and, ideally, complement the public facing uses (the events space and holiday cottages). In order to meet NLHF requirements, it is necessary for an application to include improved public access and interpretation of the site's history and heritage. Accordingly, the first steps have been taken to improve community engagement with options development.
- 7.10 A consultation event was held on 3rd October 2020 to invite residents of Torrvalle Road to give their views on proposals to improve vehicle access to the Mill. This event is being followed up by a display at the Mill during New Mills festival week (10th – 26th September 2021), accompanied by a questionnaire seeking views about potential community uses for the available space at the Mill. This options survey is being hosted on the website of Torr Vale Mill Preservation Trust:
<https://torrvalemillpreservationtrust.org.uk/>
- 7.11 As part of the ongoing work to bring Torr Vale Mill back into full use, the parties would like to update and re-enter into the Memorandum of Understanding. An updated draft has been prepared – attached as Appendix One to this report. A small number of changes have been made to the 2018 MoU and these are listed below:
- 7.12 The appendices to the MoU have been updated and references to them have been updated accordingly in the definition of “The study area” on page 1 of the 2021 MoU.

2018 MoU		2021 MoU	
Appendix A	Site plan and location of former building F	Appendix A	Site plan
Appendix B	Key to colour coding; Plans of each level	Appendix B	Building F site location
		Appendix C	Schematic showing where new uses can be considered
		Appendix D	Supporting plans

- 7.13 Definition of “The study area” (page 1): A new sentence has been added as follows: “These are areas for which the Landowner has no current plans but would be prepared to consider alternative uses if this would result in a preferable mix of uses across The Site as a whole.”
- 7.14 The definition of “The Extended Study Area” (page 1) has been deleted and added to the definition of “The Study Area” as described above.
- 7.15 There is a new definition for “Established Areas” (page 1). Additional text as follows: “means areas of the building or site which have established uses or

development plans identified by the owner and are not to be altered. These areas are shaded red on the attached plans.”

- 7.16 There is an amended 3b (page 3). Deletion of text as follows: “...to forego those development plans already in place within the extended study area”
- 7.17 There is a new 5e: “Encourage New Mills Town Council (NMTC) to enter this MoU to assist the objectives of the Partnership. Any agreement with NMTC will be included by means of an addendum to this MoU to which all current members shall agree upon.”