

Tuesday, 1 July 2025

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Board** will be held on

Wednesday, 9 July 2025

commencing at **5.30 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Banking Hall, Castle Circus entrance on the left corner of the Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Committee

Councillor Long (Chairman)

Councillor Cowell

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar

Councillor Fellows

Councillor Foster

Councillor Johns

Councillor Law

Councillor Spacagna (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Stevens

Councillor Tolchard

A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay

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Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk - www.torbay.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.
2. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 4 June 2025.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.
 - b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)
4. **Urgent Items**
To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.
5. **SWISCo Annual Report and Business Plan** (Pages 13 - 98)
To consider the SWISCo Annual Report and Business Plan and make recommendations to the Cabinet.
6. **Torbay Housing Delivery Plan Annual Review** (Pages 99 - 120)
To consider the annual review of the Torbay Housing Delivery Plan and make recommendations to the Cabinet.
7. **Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One** (Pages 121 - 128)
To receive an update on the Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One project and consider making recommendations to the Cabinet.

8. Local Government Reorganisation in Devon

(Pages 129 - 194)

To consider a report on Local Government Reorganisation in Devon and make recommendations to the Cabinet.

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Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

4 June 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Long (Chairman)

Councillors Douglas-Dunbar, Fellows, Foster, Johns, Law, Maddison, Spacagna (Vice-Chair), Stevens and Tolchard

(Also in attendance: Councillors Billings, Brook, Bye, Mandy Darling (virtually), Chris Lewis (virtually), David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas and Tyerman)

1. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Independent Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillor Maddison in place of Councillor Cowell for this meeting.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 7 May 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Performance Report - Quarter 4 2024-25 O&S

The Board considered the submitted Performance Report for Quarter 4 2024/2025 which provided an overview of the performance of the Council working towards the ambitions and priorities within the Community and Corporate Plan and the Council Business Plan. 125 performance indicators had been identified and 33 projects. The percentage of projects on target, completed or better than target had increased since Quarter 3.

The Board asked a number of questions in relation to the following:

- what was the reason for BP47 percentage of weed spraying schedule achieved during the period (quarterly) being worse than target and was there not an opportunity to spray the weeds after the good job the Team had done sweeping leaves off paths and roads;
- was there an update on the take up of MyBay since the report was prepared;
- BP26 number of concessionary bus journeys was down on target, with a reason that 2025/26 did not have part of Easter, this was due to the date that Easter fell on that year;

- what was the Minecraft Project and was it going to be delivered to other schools;
- what were the challenges and incentives to encourage employed people to take up training;
- when would we know if we have funding for the Family Hubs for 2026;
- rough sleepers were worse than target, what action was being taken to reduce this;
- BP04 percentage of contacts to Children's Services progressing to early help services in the period was much worse than target, what was being done to improve this;
- the Family Hubs have been really successful but the report refers to continuing to exit plan, how far had that progressed; and
- the target for the number of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and/or who were also care experienced accessing work experience, internship and apprenticeships had not yet been achieved, what was being done to support this.

The following responses were provided to Members' questions:

- BP47 for weed spraying was 100% on target for Quarter 4, but overall was 79% as it was taken over the whole year;
- approximately 2,280 residents had signed up to the discount card and the Director of Pride in Place was meeting with the Team next week to look at card set up and for the Team to increase the number of businesses currently signed up from 150. It was noted that there were also discussions on whether or not to have an additional sign up period around Christmas but were waiting feedback from residents;
- the Minecraft Project was part of the Build Torbay initiative running with the construction sector across Torbay to raise awareness of careers across the sector and had been held at Shiphay Academy. There were issues regarding capacity and resources to roll this out further, but the overall Build Torbay support had gone well;
- the lack of employed people taking up training was around a contractor and what they had in place for training for the community, this had been addressed in contract review meetings and was expected to improve moving forward. There was also a need to build some targets in for Build Torbay;
- Government funding was expected to be announced on 11 June 2025 as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, but it was not clear what level of detail would be included and if this would include funding specifically for the Family Hubs;
- there was an annual count of rough sleepers which took place across the country on the same day each year (Councillors were invited to take part in the count), this time it was 29 compared to 27 the previous year. The data showed that there were 111 different rough sleepers over the year which was roughly the same number for the last few years. The Council operates the severe weather emergency protocol (SWEP) and a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan was being developed in partnership with the voluntary sector looking at homeless prevention and would be coming through the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board for consideration;

- the BP04 target for contacts to Children’s Services had been set before there was a portal to separate out early years, it looks worse as people were going to Family Hubs instead of being referred through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Families can now refer direct to the Family Hubs and there was a need to realign the target to reflect the positive changes in the system and the portal;
- the Director of Children’s Services and Director of Public Health were working alongside the Family Hubs to ensure the services were delivered and looking at ways to continue to deliver the service, as the Government Funding was not known and they wanted to be able to continue to offer services through the Family Hubs; and
- the target for the number of young people with SEND and/or who were also care experienced accessing work experience, internship and apprenticeship would be extended if it was not achieved by 2026. The Director of Children’s Services was doing a lot of work looking at internships especially for young people with SEND, working with the Director of Adult and Community Services on how the Council could support and improve the numbers.

The Board noted the Performance Report for Quarter 4 2024/2025 and requested an all Members briefing to be arranged on the work of Build Torbay.

4. Budget Monitoring 2024/2025 Quarter 4 Outturn

The Board reviewed the submitted Budget Monitoring Outturn Report for 2024/2025 which set out the final position in respect of the Council’s Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2024/2025. The Report would be presented to the Cabinet meeting on 9 June 2025 and the Council meeting on 24 July 2025, which was recommended to approve the allocation of the surplus £0.351m Revenue Funding. The Board also considered options for the allocation of the surplus funding, including the following outlined by the Cabinet Members at the meeting:

	£m
Better resident communications – following feedback from residents at the Airshow who did not know what was going on around Torbay.	£0.050
To accelerate Adult Social Care Customer Management System (PARIS replacement) Project – this will address an issue with the software raised by the Local Government Association and would assist with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection.	£0.050
Supporting Voluntary and Community Sector Youth Provision - transitional arrangements pending procurement – this would provide youth activity for 11 years old plus children during the Summer holiday similar to that provided by the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) which supported younger children and aimed to reduce the numbers being referred to the Youth Justice Service.	£0.050
Events – this would add to the winter wonderland experience as part of the Bay of Lights to encourage footfall during the shoulder season.	£0.040

Operation Brighter Bay – this would provide a new weed ripper to deal with the build-up of weeds across Torbay, provide additional pavement cleaning and more line painting.	£0.100
Operation Town Centres - improving CCTV – this would allow trees to be pruned on a quarterly basis to ensure good sight for CCTV cameras in the Town Centre.	£0.040
Enterprise Fund – to help small businesses start up and move into shop units and improve shop fronts.	£0.050
Revenue and Benefits Further system transformation/digitisation – this would pay for new software to improve communications and reduce the waiting time for customers to have their enquiries resolved.	£0.090
Total	£0.470
Balance remaining/deficit	£0.114

Members discussed the above topics and suggested that an additional item should be included to help support community centres, many of which were in a poor state of repair, and it would be useful for them to understand what needed to be done to help them apply for available grant funding for repairs. It was noted that condition surveys had been carried out around 2022 and that they may need to be refreshed/reviewed to ensure that they were up to date as some community centres had received funding and had works done. An example was also given that a recent Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Panel had allocated money to a community centre in Torquay to provide kitchen facilities.

The Board asked questions in relation to the following:

- was there still expected to be high pressures in Adult Social Care and Children’s Services;
- what was the reason for the overspend in the Dedicated Schools Grant;
- what was the Children’s Section 17 £215k overspend reflective of;
- there was an overspend of £214k for Children’s Disabilities how was the Council going to deal with the demands for the next quarter;
- was there a trend in occupancy levels across the Councils investments and what was being done to manage this; and
- what was the reason for the underspend on the Highways budget.

The following responses were provided to Members’ questions:

- Adult Social Care and Children’s Services budgets continue to be volatile. There was some protection for Adult Social Care through the Integrated Care Agreement, with additional support put in last year for homelessness and temporary accommodation with sustainability plans put in place which had helped to manage numbers in these areas and resulted in a drop in spend. There had been additional funding put into Children’s Services for 2024/2025 but there had been a targeted reduction in spending for Home to School Transport which equated to a cash saving of circa £1m. The overall

- underspends were less than 1% of the annual budget for both Adult and Community Services and Children's Services which was a great outcome.
- The Council was in the early stages of the safety valve for the Dedicated Schools Grant overspend and had taken the quick actions and was now implementing an improvement plan with support from the Government. This linked to other work on recommissioning some specialist provision to ensure it meets the individual child's needs and reduces additional external costs.
 - The Children's Section 17 had been impacted due to the number of families classed as intentionally homeless resulting in 'children in need' and the new Children's Reforms would result in such cases no longer needing to come to Children's Services - instead working with the families and Housing Team to help find suitable accommodation which should reduce the spend next year.
 - Part of the mid-term financial planning would review placements for children with disabilities to understand the reasons for overspending and this work would be incorporated within the existing Director of Children's Services Financial Sustainability Plan.
 - The commercial properties generate £13m income per annum with at net £4.1m allocated to the Council's Revenue Budget. The annual income was top sliced to account for any fluctuations in occupancy levels which was regularly reviewed. Levels of occupancy have been good for the commercial properties but there had been a change in the market for office accommodation which was being closely monitored. There were regular monitoring meetings looking across the performance of all investment properties and other income generating Council owned assets. Part of the 2025/2026 budget proposals included a 5% reserve from the income generating assets within Torbay, similar to commercial properties, to help cover the cost of void properties. The Council needs to look at the investments over the next five years to see if Officers need to take a different approach taking into account the market and what the Council wants to do with the various assets it owns. It was known when the Council purchased Union Square that there would be voids due to the planned redevelopment of the site.
 - The underspend in Highways was due to receiving more income than expected from road closures, the planned work had been carried out.

Members noted the approach to the Capital Programme with the Capital and Growth Board meeting each month and publishing decisions on Capital Spend between each quarter in public Records of Decisions and then reporting through the quarterly monitoring reports to provide greater transparency and showing movements in green.

The Board welcomed the underspend in Adult Social Care and Children's Services, especially around the home to school transport and thanked the staff for their hard work in achieving this, whilst being assured that support was being provided to those who needed it.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the submitted Budget Monitoring 2024/2025 Quarter 4 Outturn Report;

2. that an additional key line of enquiry be added for the SWISCo Annual Report and Business Plan item due to be considered at the Board meeting on 9 July 2025, to include what has been delivered as part of the Brighter Bay initiative; and
3. that the Cabinet be recommended:
 - a. to allocate an appropriate amount of funding from the year-end surplus to update the condition surveys for community centres to help them with grant funding applications; and
 - b. to note that that the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the suggested items put forward by the Cabinet for the year-end surplus and welcomes further discussions at the Cabinet and Council meetings.

5. Update on Planning Service for the Future – Development Management

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor Brook, the Divisional Director of Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency, David Edmondson, and the Service Manager, Development Management, Jim Blackwell outlined the submitted report which provided an update on the Service Fit for the Future – Development Management Project and responded to questions. The Director of Pride in Place, Alan Denby, also attended the meeting and responded to questions.

Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- the performance report showed targets for major applications, minor applications and enforcements being below target, what action was needed to improve performance;
- was the number of applications received reducing;
- would the Board see more positive performance reports continuing;
- the last two Planning Committee meetings were cancelled was this because developers were not providing information quickly enough or detailed enough;
- the Heritage Strategy for 2021-2026 would soon be coming to an end, what impact has the Strategy had;
- when would the extra enforcement staff be in place; and
- what was the average planning enforcement fine and what proportion of enforcements related to developers rather than members of the public.

The following responses were provided to Members' questions:

- there were currently relatively low numbers of major applications which were showing as red as the Team relied on extensions of time due to the need for negotiations, amendments and re-consultation on applications and negotiations on legal agreements. The process has been changed focusing on pre-applications and working with a new Design Review Panel resulting in better quality applications being able to be approved first time by the Planning Committee rather than having to be deferred for further information or negotiation. The use of Power BI was enabling better quality data to be used across the Service.

- although the number of planning applications being received had reduced it did fluctuate. The amount of responsibility and complexity to the applicant and Officers had increased e.g. biodiversity net gain, which was why there was such a focus on the pre-application process, especially for larger developments;
- it was expected that performance on managing planning applications would continue to improve, for processing, validation and through use of pre-application and engagement processes;
- there was a good pipeline of applications coming forward for the Planning Committee but often through the consultation process issues were raised and need further work, applications were only taken to Committee when there was certainty over the application which reduces the chance of it getting deferred. Quarterly meetings were held with agents with focus on the importance of the flow of information and pre-application process and getting the pathways correct;
- the Heritage Strategy has enabled the Council to secure millions of pounds of additional funding e.g. £10m over ten years from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, £8m from levelling up for Oldway and £10m from the Town Deal and other programmes. The Council has developed positive working relationships with the Arts Council and Historic England;
- there has been a promotion within the current Enforcement Team, there was now two Senior Enforcement Officers and plans to appoint two new officers to support them, and an advertisement due out next week. It was delayed as the Team wanted to see how they progressed to assess the level of support needed. The target was to reduce the number of open cases to 450 by March 2026 depending on new cases. Officers used a themed based approach to look at numbers with additional resources, using the revised Enforcement Policy; and
- planning enforcement fines varied depending on the matters involved (a written response would be provided on the average fines and numbers of developers involved).

Members congratulated the Planning Team for all their hard work and welcomed the format of the Power BI reports but noted that the Council was not yet in a position to use Power BI for its quarterly performance reporting so this would continue to be done using existing software, and the performance indicators were being reviewed for the Planning Service to align with their new ways of working.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board note the report and understand the trajectory of the service;
2. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board endorse that:
 - a. Officers and Members continue to maintain an effective relationship with Members of the Planning Committee, particularly the Chairman of the Planning Committee;
 - b. there is a continued focus on performance management ensuring that Power BI data is monitored to inform continuous improvement;

- c. the aims of the Service Fit for the Future (SFFTF) project become business as usual; and
 - d. the Director of Pride in Place, with the Divisional Director Planning, Climate Emergency and Housing continues effective staff recruitment, development of existing colleagues and retention; and
3. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommends to all Councillors that they continue to work with developers and applicants in their area to encourage them to engage in the pre-application process.

Chairman

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 9 July 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: SWISCo Annual Report

When does the decision need to be implemented?

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Adam Billings, Cabinet member for Pride in Place and Parking, adam.billings@torbay.gov.uk

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

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report presents an annual review of the operation and performance of the Councils wholly owned and controlled company SWISCo.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1. The aim of the annual review is to provide the Council with assurance and confidence, both as client and sole shareholder, that SWISCo is operating in a safe and efficient manner, is delivering the services that it is commissioned to do so by the Council and is offering the Council value for money.
- 2.2. The services delivered by SWISCo form an important part of the Council's Corporate and Community Plan 2023 – 2042 priorities of Community and People, Pride in Place and Economic Growth.
- 2.3. The SWISCo Annual Report (Appendix 1) provides an overview of achievements and performance of the business against the Business Plan (Appendix 2)
- 2.4. The SWISCo Performance Dashboard (Appendix 3) is reported to the client on a monthly basis and quarterly to Board and Shareholder Panel. The Dashboard covers all key areas of performance which are agreed on an annual basis.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. It is proposed that Overview and Scrutiny note the report and the achievements of SWISCo over the last 12 months and makes any recommendations to Cabinet.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: SWISCo Annual Report

Appendix 2: SWISCo Business Plan

Appendix 3: SWISCo 24/25 Performance Dashboard

Appendix 4: SWISCo 24/25 Finance Report

5. Background Documents

Supporting Information

6. Introduction

- 6.1. Torbay Council established SWISCo in 2020 as a LATCo (Local Authority Owned Trading Company) following the end of TOR 2 which was a joint venture with Kier.
- 6.2. A review of governance and commissioning arrangements was undertaken in April 2024 and where possible in line with the capacity of the lead commissioner the recommendations have been included in the SWISCo Business Plan, Annual Review and ongoing liaison with the Client.

7. Options under consideration

- 7.1. Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Board and consideration of alternative options are welcomed.

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 8.1. The 24/25 financial performance of SWISCo and 25/26 agreed budget is provided in Appendix 4.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 In order to be compliant with the Teckal Principle under which it operates SWISCo must be wholly owned by the local authority and no less than 80% of turnover must come from the local authority. In 24/25 83.38 % of turnover was from Torbay Council.

10. Engagement and Consultation

- 10.1. The ongoing performance monitoring of SWISCo is undertaken via regular meetings (no less than monthly) between the Lead Commissioner (Divisional Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure) and the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place. Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken via the performance dashboard, based on agreed service levels and also through ongoing work programmes and project instructions.
- 10.2. The Board of Directors, (Director Pride in Place, Torbay Council, Director of Corporate Services, Torbay Council and Managing Director SWISCo) and the Shareholder Panel

(Leader and Deputy Leader of Torbay Council, Cabinet Member for Pride in Place and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance, Deputy Section 151 Officer and Lead Commissioner) meet quarterly to review, comment and agree on performance, value for money and work programmes.

- 10.3. The operation of SWISCo is subject to a detailed Audit programme, provided by Devon Audit Partnership which is reported annually to the Client, Board of Directors and the Shareholder Panel.

11. Procurement Implications

- 11.1. SWISCo as a Local Authority Trading Company operates under the Teckal Principle which provides an exception to the general requirement that public authorities must tender contracts through a competitive process. It allows a public authority to award a contract to a company it controls without following the standard procurement procedures
- 11.2. Following consultation and discussions with the client the commissioning agreement was extended by 5 years.

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 12.1. A key objective of the SWISCo Business Plan is to Limit the Environmental Impact of our Business with ambitions to promote the reduction of waste, consider alternative fuelled vehicles wherever possible and to reduce Carbon Emissions.

13. Associated Risks

- 13.1. As a result of the governance review a programme of risk management was established with SWISCo adopting the Council approach and holding and review Strategic, Corporate and Service risks. The Risk register is shared with the Lead Commissioner, Board of Directors and Shareholder Panel.

14. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	Positive Impact		
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	Positive Impact		
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by</p>	Positive Impact		

	a physical or mental health condition or illness.			
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	Positive Impact		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	Positive Impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	Positive Impact		

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	Positive Impact		
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	Positive Impact		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	Positive Impact		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	Positive Impact		
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay,	Positive Impact		

	5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		Positive Impact		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		Positive Impact		
Human Rights impacts		Positive Impact		
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	Positive Impact		

15. Cumulative Council Impact

15.1 None

16. Cumulative Community Impacts

16.1. None

SWISCo

A Torbay Council Company

Annual Report 2024/25





Foreword

The year 2024–2025 has seen the continued stabilization of SWISCO both as a business and also in the way in which it delivers services on behalf of Torbay Council. The business has grown in scale in terms of the number of staff, turnover and also the amount of services it delivers and the way in which it is considered reputationally by residents and staff.

There has been continued and significant investment in new and replacement vehicles, plant, infrastructure and digital operating systems which has led to greater efficiencies in operations, improvements in delivery and noticeable positive differences to the local environment.

Operation Brighter Bay saw a positive step change in the frequencies and range of services delivered by SWISCO to improve the local area and the establishment of the Enforcement Team has created the opportunity to influence and improve the behaviour of visitors and residents to complement the physical improvements made by our services.

The additional services now delivered by SWISCO and the ongoing focus of the Council have been included in the new Business Plan that was adopted by the Board of Directors and Shareholder Panel in 24/25. This new business plan puts a clear emphasis on further improvements, developments around efficiencies and effectiveness and will set out how the board and leadership team will provide clear direction in terms of delivering additional services with a view to the future.

2024/25 in numbers

- **7663** Repairs and interventions made to carriageways and footways – increased from 6386 in 23/24.
- Average time to evict unauthorised encampments **3** days.
- Over **25** Roads and Pavements inspected every day.
- **7** cuts to highway grass per year with cut frequency of **6** weeks and introduction of final mile routes cut every **2** weeks.
- Over **27kms** of refreshed or new line marking on highway network.
- Recycling rate increased by 0.5% to **40.6%**
- Over **30kms** of road and pavement weed ripped with new machinery.
- **11,400** Kerbside Garden Waste Collection subscriptions compared to 9000 in 23/24.
- **146,000** visits to the recycling centre.
- Over **400** Roads weed sprayed per month.
- **90%** of staff would recommend SWISCo as an employer to friends and family.

OBI - To recognise and deliver against all the particular needs of all the SWISCo customer groups and be regarded as the supplier of choice.

Recycling and Waste collections ran at a combined average of 96.7% on time (Recycling 96.1% and Waste 97.3%) throughout 24/25 with highs and lows being 99.5% and 93.3% (Christmas) respectively.

Whilst the early part of the year saw completion rates against scheduled services such as grass cutting, street sweeping and weed spraying below 100% target. This was primarily due to difficulties in recruitment to new roles created as a result of Brighter Bay, delay in delivery of equipment and also high spring rainfall. From June/July onwards delivery of these services was 100% on target.

The average response time for fly tipping incidents reported through the 'Report IT' app in 24/25 was under 24 hours and 91% of responses to service requests were closed within target. Service requests fell from 652 in 22/23 to 375 in 24/25 due to the consistency of service delivery and the prevention or proactive response to issues of concern such as fly tipping, overflowing bins or damaged street infrastructure.

Complaints and Member Enquiries are dealt with in line with Torbay Council Information Governance procedures and on average 66% and 82% respectively were closed within target timeframe. Performance regarding complaints has increased throughout the year with Q4 being 100% and 86% respectively.



OBI - To recognise and deliver against all the particular needs of all the SWISCo customer groups and be regarded as the supplier of choice.

Performance and work programmes are discussed weekly at SWISCo's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and shared on a monthly basis with Torbay Council ("the client") through a variety of forums. Performance dashboards are shared at Board and Shareholder level during quarterly meetings.

During 24/25 a programme of engagement was undertaken with all Friends Groups and resulted in the development and signing of a Volunteers Charter. The Charter sets out SWISCo's commitments to working with volunteer groups and also the safe ways of working that are expected from the groups. The programme was a great success, all relevant groups have signed up to the Charter and regular meetings take place between SWISCo Managers and Volunteer groups. This ran alongside regular attendance at Community Group meetings across the Bay by the MD as well as a number of community events.

Following an in-depth review the SWISCo website has been redesigned to be more user friendly, accessible and informative. Due to some issues around the programming and templates the final publication has been delayed but is planned for 25/26. Access to the 'Report IT' app has been unaffected, and on-line reports have increased considerably to over 3000 a month on average.





OB2 - To drive efficiency, innovation and best practice throughout our business to ensure best value for our customers.

SWISCo's reliance on leased fleet and machinery dropped dramatically during 24/25 with the purchase of 73 leased items saving the company in the region of £650k per year. There is currently an application for an additional parent loan with the Council for funding for a 6 year replacement strategy. Reliance on leased fleet is increasing presenting a performance and financial risk however if the additional parent loan is approved this will be manageable within the four-week target.

The Fleet and Garage IT system is active and working well in terms of Garage management by providing job cards and cost allocation and will be particularly useful as the amount of 3rd party MOTs increase. The IT supplier has been commissioned to further develop the fleet management system, and a new telematics system is under procurement.

Various external frameworks such as ESPO have been identified as compliant routes to supply chain, and work is ongoing with Council Commercial service team to action procurement targets. All staff involved in procurement have received face to face training on updated procurement regulations and procedures.





OB2 - To drive efficiency, innovation and best practice throughout our business to ensure best value for our customers.

The Financial Management system has been moved to FIMS and LOGI, budgets have been allocated to correct Service Managers and bespoke monitoring dashboard created on a service by service basis to allow accurate and targeted regular monitoring at team level. All Service Managers were involved in the budget setting process and the new approach to budget management is allowing real time access to monitor spend.

Finance updates are provided weekly at SLT and quarterly at SMT, Board and Shareholder Panel. Vacancy management is subject to a three way approval process, Head of Service, HR and Finance.

During 24/25 SWISCo engaged with a number of other suppliers and service providers including BANES and Somerset Council waste management providers, Royal Horticultural Society and Visits to various plant suppliers. On a national level SWISCo was represented at the Keep Britain Tidy and the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee National Conferences. On a local level SWISCo was represented at the Torbay Business Expo and also career events and job fairs at South Devon College.

The development of the new budget management and headcount systems are in line with ISO requirements and the performance monitoring processes are based around ISO compliant principles.



OB3 - To ensure a positive staff culture within the business

The average headline sickness and absence rate for 24/25 was 3.74% and 2.92% when excluding long term serious medical conditions. This is well below the national waste industry average of 4% and reflects the positive staff culture and also enhanced sickness management procedures put in place.

SWISCo will also require some short term agency staff and it is an important element of our recruitment strategy, however reliance on agency staff has dropped from a peak of 40% at the outset of SWISCo to 10.27% in 24/25, well below the target of 15%. This has been brought about as a result of a more stable workforce due to improvements in culture and therefore retention, but also by the structured approach to permanent contracts being offered after 12 weeks.

SWISCo has been very proactive in recruitment with the HR team attending a number of job fairs and career events, working with other Council departments and Government agencies to offer tailored long and short term work experience to schools, colleges and in particular opportunities for assisted placements for those with additional needs.

In-house Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) drivers Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) annual training is now delivered and all drivers are currently up-to-date with training requirements. This has not only ensured compliance but done so in the most efficient way with reduced external training costs and business disruption.



OB3 - To ensure a positive staff culture within the business

A new staff induction procedure and handbook has been rolled out to all new starters and also existing staff as a refresher. Induction procedures detail incident response, well being and training opportunities and provides a structured and welcoming introduction the business.

A cohort of Senior Managers will complete the level three apprenticeship programme in the coming months and all senior leaders have taken part in a bespoke management and leadership training programme to develop communication and performance management skills.

An all staff survey was carried out in 2024, 38% of staff took part and the results showed significant improvement from the survey carried out in 2022. There was an average increase of 20% in satisfied or above answers with 98% of the respondents feeling happy to recommend SWISCo as an employer to friends or family.

JCNC meetings with Unions, all staff briefings and staff forum meetings have taken place throughout the year and allowed staff across the business to feel informed, valued and listened to with some successes being the roll out of new PPE and waterproofs and changes in operating arrangements around welfare facilities and breaktimes.



OB3 - To ensure a positive staff culture within the business

The programme of Mental Health First Aiders has grown and there are now eleven trained and supported staff within the business offering support and guidance to colleagues, their names and contact details are heavily publicised, and it is a very well used provision, offering easily accessible and friendly support to those that need it. Backing up the in-house offer is a new outsourced specialist service, now provided by Red Poppy which is free to access for all staff.

Following feedback from staff, new welfare facilities have been created at Fleet Walk, Babbacombe Downs and Brixham. These purpose-built facilities provide warm and dry areas for break times and staff 1:1s and have reduced travel time to and from depots creating a more efficient and effective service.

Recognising the fact that much of our workforce have limited digital connectivity, all communications are available in alternative paper, poster or verbal format. Help is offered with access to digital systems and pay slips and holiday cards are offered in hard copy if requested.





OB4 - To ensure everyone goes home safely

SWISCo utilises the Council EVOTIX system to deliver our obligation to operate a Health and Safety Management system. There has been considerable in-house training for staff and managers on the use of the system to report hazards, near misses and incidents but as importantly how to analysis and close off open cases by documenting actions and mitigations. The system is available to all staff and hard copy access is provided for front line staff.

The core principle of Health and Safety Management is the prevention of incidents and at SWISCo we deliver this through Hazard and Near Miss reporting. Staff are reminded of the importance of this on a regular basis through team meetings, posters, stickers in vehicles and all staff briefings. QR codes are present in all vehicles and depots to provide instant digital access to the EVOTIX system and hard copy report forms are available throughout the business.

Senior Managers meet weekly in an incident review panel forum to discuss and review all EVOTIX cases from the preceding week. These meetings are chaired by the Health and Safety Manager or nominated deputy and are mandatory attendance for all Service and Team Managers. Learning and Mitigations are discussed and fed into the Risk Assessment Groups (RAG'S) which meet regularly so best practice can be rolled out across the whole business.



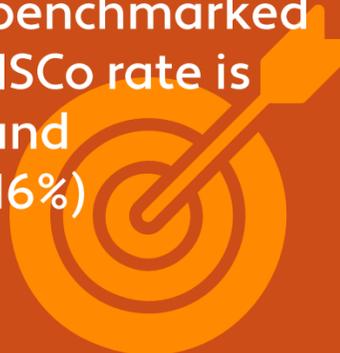


OB4 - To ensure everyone goes home safely

Health and Safety training is delivered in a tiered approach focus on general and service/task specific requirements where applicable. Tool box talks are delivered in-house and a programme of training, delivery and recording is currently being developed to ensure consistency across the business. Over 85% of our Team and Service Managers are qualified to National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) Certificate level and First Aid trained. First Aid training for Team Leaders is currently being rolled across all service areas.

A specialist in health surveillance for the operational workforce was procured this year to continue the delivery of the annual health surveillance programme for all staff in operational roles. This programme identifies those at greatest risk or with developing symptoms in areas such as hearing, sight impairment, muscular skeletal and exposure to vibration and recommends mitigations or preventative measures where required. The results of this testing and any subsequent actions is documented on EVOTIX and adaptations to working practices or conditions are made where required. A recent example of this was the roll out of Hand Arm Vibration monitoring equipment to all staff at risk of exposure. The system monitors tool and equipment usage, records exposure to vibration as a result in real time and is analysed weekly by the Team Manager and the Health and Safety Manager.

SWISCo's non-fatal injury and illness rate (average of 6.6% for 24/25) is benchmarked against national averages and trends to measure performance, the SWISCo rate is consistently below the national average for the waste industry (7.91%) and comparable to the national average for the construction industry of (6.16%)



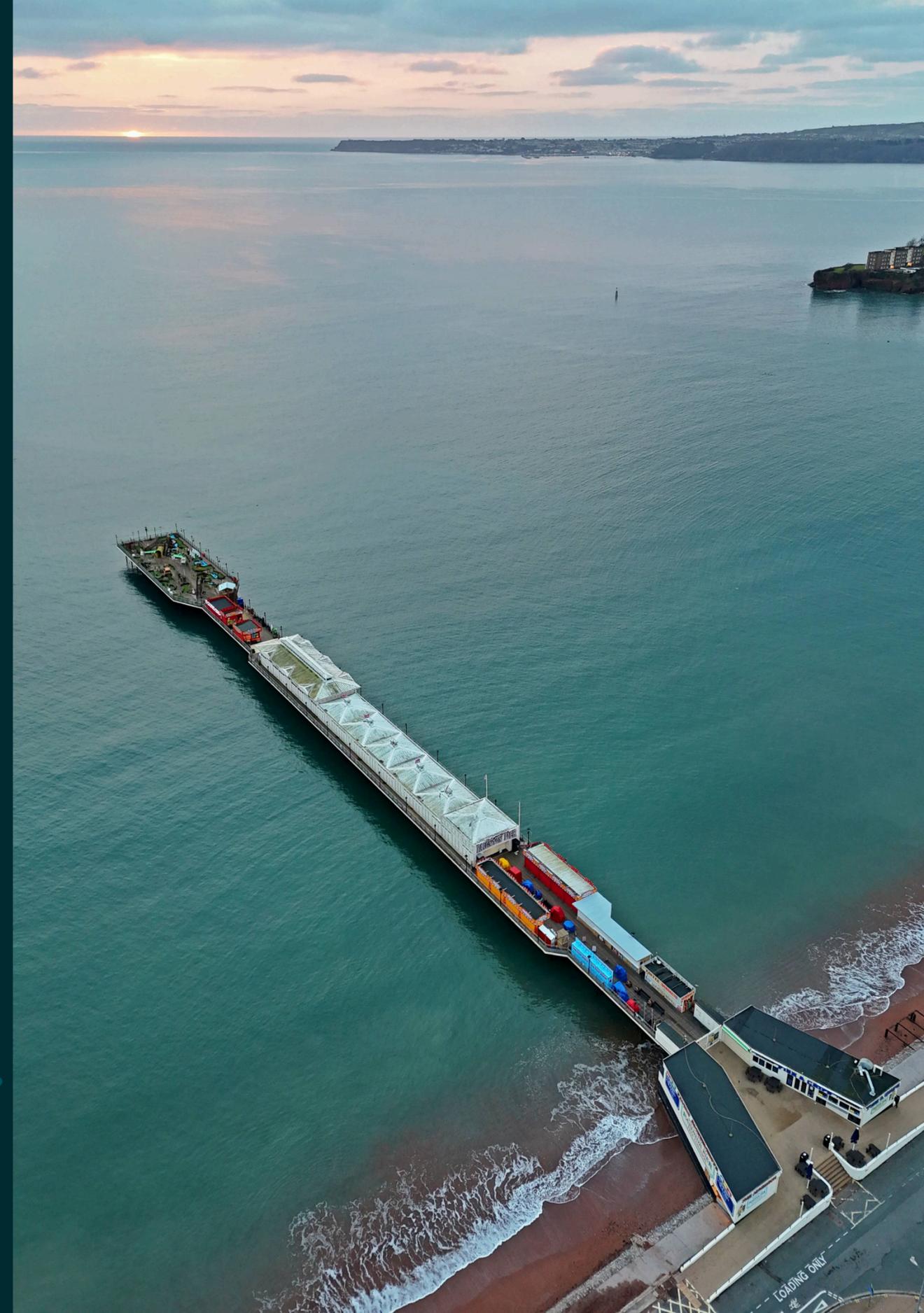
OB5 - To understand the influence that SWISCo has on the Torbay Story

SWISCo is now a Foster Friendly employer with a dedicated policy in place to ensure every accommodation is made in line with operational requirements. We were accredited with a Bronze Armed Forces Covenant in 2024 and now have a Armed Forces champion networking with ex-service personnel throughout the business.

During 24/25 SWISCo played host to a rolling programme of 8 Department of Work and Pension (DWP) 8 week assisted work placements, two long term specialist work placements from Coombe Pafford school and a number of day visits of groups of young people with significant learning and physical difficulties from Mayfield School.

Proceeds from the collection of Christmas trees was donated to Rowcroft Hospice and support was provided in terms of provision of green waste bins and waste collection for events to a number of community and volunteer organisations within Torbay.

SWISCo has now partnered with the local Community Payback team from the Ministry of Justice, the team are co located at Borough Road Depot and deploy across the Bay 5 days a week carrying out maintenance and improvement task with offenders on community service.



OB5 - To understand the influence that SWISCo has on the Torbay Story

SWISCo are working with colleagues in Adult Services to roll out a training programme for front line staff on how to identify and deal with safeguarding issues, and have delivered a number of co-production activities with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and the Community Safety team.

SWISCo is proud to have significantly contributed to a number of heritage and cultural initiatives over the last year including the redesign of Torre Abbey landscape and grounds through the Heritage Lottery project, the celebration of the 80 year anniversary of D Day through crest bed planting in Torquay and Paignton and the design and construction of the Rifles Garden in partnership and to celebrate the connection with the Rifles Regiment.

In 2024 thanks to the quality of service provided by SWISCo and the work of various local Friends Groups, Torquay and Preston won gold in the South West in Bloom competition and also particular national awards for the restoration and management of heritage parks and planting and as such were selected as the South West entrant for the 2025 national Britain in Bloom competition.





OB5 - To limit the environmental impact of our business

In 24/25 over 700 tonnes of seaweed were raked off local beaches all of which was recycled via composting and reused as high quality compost on flowerbeds, allotments and community gardens. The Commercial recycling rate increased considerably to 20.5%, and with the roll out of greater separation opportunities to local businesses as part of the Simpler Recycling legislation, will continue to increase in future years.

SWISCo have worked closely with the Environment Agency (EA) during 24/25 and have now assured compliance with permit conditions for all depots and sites including the Waste Transfer Station. There is still work to do regarding the Fire Prevention Plan and this will continue in liaison with the EA into 25/26. WSP have been commissioned as consultant design engineers for the new Waste Transfer Station and early stages of feasibility and options are continuing at pace. The new site will not only ensure compliance with all environmental permitting requirements it will also offer significant opportunities to further increase reuse and recycling rates.





OB5 - To limit the environmental impact of our business

Work continues regarding the baselining of the Carbon Footprint of the business, working closely with the Council Climate team SWISCo have ambitions regarding the installation of solar panels on the extensive areas of roof available to us. There is still considerable financial challenge in terms of running alternative fuel vehicles both in terms of charging capacity and fleet and garage facilities suitable to manage and maintain them. Plant and Equipment is now battery as standard wherever possible, new pedestrian sweepers and barrows are rechargeable electric and alternative fuel is actively considered and priced in every vehicle procurement.

SWISCo are proud to have led on, designed and procured a dynamic street lighting system which will allow systematic control of all highway lighting in Torbay making significant savings and reductions in terms of energy usage. SWISCo have now installed 20 Big Belly solar compacting bins in Torquay with plans to install a further 25 over the coming months. As well as reducing street clutter, preventing overflowing bins and using the graphics panels to promote the Torbay Story these units also self compact and as a result of reduced annual collections visits by 18,900. This not only makes the operation far more efficient it also saves significant journey miles and therefore carbon emission.



GRI - Expand the services delivered on behalf of the Council to maximise opportunities for efficiency

Discussions took place with the Shareholder Panel in February 2025 around the fork in the road which is the opportunity for SWISCo to expand commercial services to increase 3rd party income or expand the range of services provided on behalf of the Council. The Shareholder Panel provided the lens through which this should be viewed, namely the current local government reorganisation and the detailed plans which need to be provided to government by November 2025 and hence Swisco needed to demonstrate exemplar best practice, so our neighbours could benefit from the ability to use their service provision.

The client has confirmed that the key objective for SWISCo is to sustain its performance and where possible improve on that supporting the Council through the delivery of additional services where appropriate to do so. This means that the previous objective to expand commercial services is no longer a priority for the Council allowing the executive team to maintain focus on delivering for the residents and communities of Torbay.

The outcome of the discussion was that the objective should be to ensure there was a structure which protected Swisco through the LGR to reflect the benefit to the people of Torbay brought by the high quality services provided by SWISCo.



GRI - Expand the services delivered on behalf of the Council to maximise opportunities for efficiency

It was agreed that it was necessary for SWISCo to expand the range of services as follows:

- Identify the full breadth of place based services provided by neighbouring District Councils;
- Ensure that by November 2025 that Swisco provide on behalf of the Council all such services within Torbay to an exemplar standard; and
- Swisco have an understanding as to how it services could be scaled to cover a larger area in the context of the existing resources of our neighbours.

In light of this SWISCo has expanded the scale of operations by taking on the Harbour Security function and from July 2025 will be providing 24hr security provision at Brixham Harbour. SWISCo was able to deliver this service at a competitive rate compared to external providers and will work with the Harbour team to ensure the service is of the very highest quality and resilience, providing not only the required security but also added value harbour duties such as dock mastering and caretaking.

The additional 2025 Brighter Bay funding will allow SWISCo to expand the Street Cleansing service to also provide enhanced cleaning and repairs and maintenance to street and urban infrastructure to further improve the quality of the built environment in Torbay.





GR2 – Increase 3rd party income

Whilst there was a clear direction from the Shareholder Panel that priority should be given to GR1 - Expand the services delivered on behalf of the Council to maximise opportunities for efficiency, there was a small increase in overall 3rd party income of 2% to £3.26mil (including recyclable material sales and weighbridge income) and an organic growth in the commercial services offered to external customers during the year with turnover increasing by approx. 8% to £1.4mil. Commercial waste operations expanded in the later part of the year to take account of the unique position SWISCo is in locally to work with businesses to offer the separated collections they now require as a result of the 'Simpler Recycling' legislation.

The SWISCo MOT bay is now fully operational and as a result, in line with Department of Transport regulations, MOT's are being offered, on a low key basis to employees and external customers, creating direct income from the MOT fee but also secondary spend as a result of MOT failures being repaired. Whilst costs did increase at a higher rate than overall income, as a result of commercial activity and third party income SWISCo created a surplus of £904k in 24/25, from all external income sources. The surplus was rolled into delivering services for Torbay Council meaning that the residents and communities of the Bay benefited from nearly £1million of services at no cost to the Council.



2024/25 Highlights: Parks

To complement the improvements to the cutting schedule along Riveria Way the English Riveria Flower Bed saw three season planting for the first time, ensuring that it looked at its best for the Easter bank holidays.

The improvements brought about by Brighter Bay and the hard work of community and friends groups were recognised in the South West in Bloom results with Torquay and Paignton winning Gold awards and Torbay being nominated to represent the South West at the 2025 national finals. Torbay also won the Abbiss Cup and the Plantscape Coastal Trophy for the quality of design and management of the sea front gardens in Torquay.

Barrier planters and hanging baskets were re introduced to the Bay for the first time in many years. The displays created in Station Square and Torquay Rd looked sensational during the spring and summer and there will be more to come in 2025 including around the Strand, Brixham Harbour, Torwood Street and Fleet Walk.

SWISCo was proud to be able to show support for the Armed Forces with the delivery of the Rifles Garden and also planting to celebrate the 80th anniversary of D Day in Torquay and Paignton.

Throughout 2024 a series of workshops were held with the Friends Groups that do so much to benefit the parks and green spaces, the programme ended with the development of the Volunteer Charter which sets out how SWISCo will support the groups, what they can expect from SWISCo and how together we will work safely and in partnership to improve the natural environment in the Bay.





2024/25 Highlights: Street Cleansing

In 2024, thanks to the Brighter Bay initiative 2 new weed spraying quad bikes and a specialist weed ripper machine were purchased. These machines and their crews are now dedicated to delivering weed free pavement and kerb edges across the Bay. Due to years of neglect there is much work to do but by concentrating on the final mile routes as a priority and delivering a regular schedule around the whole highway network positive improvements can be seen across the Bay.

Solar compacting Big Belly bins have been introduced in Torquay and Paignton and more are planned for the coming year. These units hold 600 litres of waste rather than the normal 90 or 120 so require less visits to empty, do not overflow due to an automatic lock when full and proudly wear the Torbay Story graphics and logos.

SWISCo has increased the amount of year round Street Orderlies within our town centres and thanks to the Brighter Bay funding there is now a permanent year round orderly presence, working closely with the Harbour team in Brixham, backed up by additional seasonal staff in the summer. The orderlies are now equipped with pedestrian electric sweeper units, powered barrows with pressure washing equipment and have localised welfare facilities to improve efficiency and working conditions.

Working in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, SWISCo now host the local Community payback team. The team are co located with SWISCo and provide services around the Bay in conjunction with SWISCo 5 days per week. Recent success has seen many areas of woodland edge litter picked and the railings around Torquay Harbour repainted.

Looking ahead to 25/26 SWISCo will be deploying a Street Improvement Team to work alongside the Neighbourhood Enforcement and Street Cleansing Teams as well as the Community Safety Team from the Council and the local Police to identify and deliver improvements to street infrastructure and the built environment to further improve the appearance of the Bay.

2024/25 Highlights: Enforcement

After a difficult start due to recruitment and system issues the team have delivered against every reported unauthorised encampment with an average time on site before eviction of 3 days. Using the intelligence gained from this work the team are working closely with other services and partners to ensure vulnerable sites are secure as possible to prevent unauthorised entry.

The team work against a programme of Engage, Educate and Enforce and will patrol on foot an average of 128km across the Bay each week. During these patrols offenders will be engaged with and if applicable and a Fixed Penalty Notice for Enviro Crime will be issued. Engagement and Education is carried out with groups and individuals that the team meet with residents being encouraged to report Enviro Crime through the Abavus 'Report IT' app.

The team have worked closely with local Police, the Council Community Safety Team, the Beach team and also the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver target operations around Castle Circus, promenades and beaches, Berry Head and Hopes Nose. Fly Tipping has been a particular focus and around 25 FPN's have been issued per month following investigations to identify offenders.

Following process re design the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team will be working closely with the Council Community Safety Team to support and assist in the removal of tent encampments in 2025.



2024/25 Highlights: Highways

The Highway Inspection Manual was rewritten in 2024 to allow the Highways Inspectors greater flexibility and discretion when prioritising highway repairs and interventions. The new approach is risk based so ensures those defects that cause the greatest hazard, are generally more noticeable and effect the greatest number of road users are repaired first.

An additional team was added to the operational service and as a result the reported defects have been attended to more quickly and where ever possible done so using a right first time approach by patching rather than regulating. In order to fully develop this approach a mini planner has been purchased.

A number of major schemes were completed including Shiphay Lane reconstruction, Goodrington Rd major reconstruction and the refurbishment of the drainage system on the Ring Rd. The team worked closely with external contractors on a number of road and junction improvements and despite significant challenges were able to ensure the works took place with as little disruption to road users as possible.

A number of 20mph zones were designed and implemented during 24/25 covering access routes to schools and residential areas, working with closely with the Cabinet.

The surface dressing programme continued with works undertaken in 5 major residential areas in Preston and the America Lane resurfacing project was completed to provide over a mile of all-weather countryside cycling and walking route.

Thanks to the funding available as part of the Brighter Bay initiative over 17km of line marking was carried out by external contractors during overnight works covering the major routes arterial routes across the Bay. A further programme of large-scale line marking is planned for 2025 which will further improve the appearance and safety of the highway network. Alongside the unprecedented amount of work carried out by external contractors SWISCo recommissioned the in house line marking team and existing equipment and purchased a new purpose built line marking truck. The flexibility this offers to SWISCo can be deployed on an ad hoc basis to carry out reactive work, deliver Traffic Regulation Orders such as speed limits and parking restrictions and efficiently deliver small scale works in residential areas across the Bay.



2024/25 Highlights: Recycling & Waste

A Direct Debit option was introduced for the Kerbside Garden Waste service and along with additional and increase publicity took the total number of subscriptions to over 11,000 and a total tonnage collected of 4,550 compared to 2,800 in 23/24.

Further improvements took place to the IT operating system that schedules and manages all the kerbside collections, this resulted in improved performance around assisted collections, greater accessibility for residents to report issues and allowed SWISCo to further improve the efficiency of the collection service.

A programme of work was completed to identify and process map the introduction of separated recycling collections to all flats and HMO's in Torbay, covering over 6000 properties this piece of work will substantially increase opportunities for residents to recycle their household waste whilst further improving the recycling rate and increasing income from recyclable material sales.

Following the introduction of the 'Simpler Recycling' initiative by the Government in 2024 SWISCo have implemented a major initiative to offer business's in Torbay the opportunity to comply with the new legislation which requires them to split out all recyclable materials with particular focus on food waste. Looking ahead to 25/26 additional purpose built vehicles have been ordered to ensure that collection of separated business waste is as efficient as possible.

After a series of near misses around batteries igniting in vehicles and plant, SWISCo introduced battery bags for use by residents when presenting batteries for kerbside recycling. These bright pink bags are now well used and have helped to mitigate the safety risk posed by batteries and vapes in co-mingled recycling. The roll out of the bags was supported by a targeted marketing campaign, the quality of which was recognised by the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee awarding the scheme 'Best Communication Campaign of 2024' at the national awards.

The HWRC booking system continued to function well, ensuring residents did not have to queue to access to site and had an easy experience when on site. Over 146,000 visits were made and thanks to the introduction of paint recycling, black bag splitting and sorting and a partnership with a local homeless charity to reuse furniture a greater amount of waste was recycled than ever before.



SWISCo

A Torbay Council Company

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Business Plan 2024-2029



Agenda Item 5
Appendix 2



Executive Summary

From very challenging and difficult beginnings SWISCo has stabilised the core service it offers and regained a positive reputation with the residents, communities, partners and elected Members in Torbay.

Behind this renaissance in delivering effective and efficient statutory and discretionary Council services is a successful programme of staff reorganisation and engagement, the roll out of various digital operating systems, effective budgeting with ambitious savings targets, a fleet investment programme and the development of many innovative ways of working.

Recognising that the staff are the companies most important and expensive assets, effective, dynamic and visible leadership has been at the heart of the company's development. Ensuring that clear objectives are established, staff receive regular and appropriate performance management and feedback and above all feel valued and involved has been key to the success.

Looking ahead to the future in light of the success of the previous business plan it is clear that from these now firm and solid foundations, focused on customer service and value for money, there are significant opportunities for the business to grow to further increase the efficiencies and quality of service it provides for Torbay Council.

SWISCo has the capacity and structure to deliver not only more of the same but also to expand to be responsible for services currently delivered directly by Torbay Council. There are numerous economies of scale and efficiency that could be exploited by expanding SWISCo's remit by transferring responsibility for services that would fit into the operational and cultural envelope offered by SWISCo.

Whilst it is of paramount importance that Torbay Council remain our priority there is the potential to financially contribute to the services provided on their behalf via income generated by working for external customers in the local and regional area delivering services aligned to current expertise and infrastructure.

Our Journey 2021-2024

Torbay Council established SWISCo in 2020 as a LATCo (Local Authority Owned Trading Company) following the end of TOR 2 which was a joint venture with Kier.

The effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic, which had particularly serious implications on the continued operation of front-line services, and the national HGV driver shortage had particular impact on the early development of SWISCo as it dealt with the many serious challenges left over from the management and investment approach adopted by TOR 2.

The 2021 – 2024 business plan has seen the stabilisation of the Company and the roll out of several strategic projects focused on ensuring delivery of the agreed business plan. As per the aims of the business plan these have led to a noticeable improvement in the quality of services delivered by the company to the residents and communities of Torbay and a positive impact on the place



WR1

Increase recycling rate towards the 45% target and reduce disposal tonnages and costs.

35.6% - 20/21

37.9% - 22/23

41.7% - Q1 23/24

Residual household waste kg/Household reduced from 553 in 20/21 to 498 in 22/23

WR2

Gain the confidence of Torbay residents to work in partnership with SWISCo by providing a regular and consistent recycling and waste service.

On time collection rates:

60.1% - 20/21

86.0% - 22/23

98.0% + Q1 23/24

WR3

Identify from recycling service enhancements how we have positively contributed to Torbay Council's Climate objectives.

Vehicle telemetry data indicates a 5% reduction in idle time between 2020 and 2023

WR4

Show the efficiency of sorting materials in the right containers at the kerbside and recycling centres which have been promoted through a comprehensive education programme.

Over 400 interventions to date in 2023

38 significant events attended since 2020

HF1

Increase the level of planned highways works undertaken by SWISCo

By developing innovative routes to supply chain and bringing increased project management back in house SWISCo have delivered an increase of 15% in planned works .



HF2

Implement a strategy to upgrade and modernise the SWISCo fleet to support the business needs and to support Carbon reduction targets.

Phase 1 fleet review complete – leased vehicles purchased compliant with EURO 5 emissions.

Electric vehicles trialled and HGV versions deemed not suitable due to battery life and reduction in carrying capacity.

Electric alternative considered as standard in any procurement exercise.



HF3

Improve the coordination and management of highway works by the introduction of a dedicated streetworks team and the implementation of street works permit scheme.

Complete – budget on target



HF4

Deliver Torbay Councils Annual Highway Maintenance scheme in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy to provide a more effective and efficient service

Asset Management Strategy was revised in 2021 to reflect current budget availability and commissioning arrangements

Annual Programme has been delivered within available budget



PG1

Deliver an award winning service that promotes public value and biodiversity through the implementation of Park Management Plans in collaboration with Friends of Groups

Torquay, Brixham and Babbacombe – GOLD 2022 SW in Bloom

Torquay – Winner of Tesco Cup (runner up) – 2022 Britain in Bloom

6 Green flag awards in 2023



PG2

Deliver a stronger approach to community working by establishing at least ten Parks Friends Groups and over 3000 hours of Community Volunteer hours

6 new Friends of groups

12 new Focus Groups

In excess of 10,000 hours of volunteer hours



PG3

Deliver an inclusive Green Infrastructure strategy.

Tree and Woodland Strategy complete

Open Space Strategy complete in draft subject to changes in legislation due to introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain.



PG4

Deliver Torbay's Local Environmental Quality Action Plan

(50%) Increase in street cleansing resource.

Working against 'Right First Time' principle rather than monitored quality assessment.

Awaiting new Gov. Oflog policy guidance.



BC1

Achieve an Accreditation in Customer Service Excellence

Call abandoned rate dropped from 41% in 20/21 to 8.9% 22/23

Customer Call Centre now consolidated into central team



BC2

Achieve Accreditation for our Health and Safety and Environment Management Systems to ISO 45001, 45003 & 14001

Carried forward to next business plan



BC3

From Top to Bottom all staff will have a clear understanding of SWISCo's mission and be working to our values.

Establishment of staff forum meeting regularly with representatives from across the business

Development with staff of SWISCo core values and behaviours Regular all staff briefings

Staff Survey in 2022 revealed that 70% of staff are satisfied with SWISCo as an employer and appreciate the core values of the company.



BC4

We will increase our 3rd Party revenue by at least 30%

20/21 = £1.48m

22/23 = £3.3m (44%)





Alan Denby
Chairman

Director of Pride in Place
Torbay Council



Matthew Fairclough-Kay
Director

Director of Corporate Services
Torbay Council



Matthew Reeks
Director

Managing Director
SWISCo

Governance

SWISCo is a Private Limited Company incorporated on 18th September 2019 under the Companies Act 2006 with Torbay Council as the sole shareholder.

Under the terms of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the Board of Directors has responsibility for the supervision and management of the Company and its business.

The Managing Director of the company is accountable to the Board of Directors and also a senior representative from the Council acting in the client role to ensure performance against the Commissioning Agreement which forms the specification for the work the Company undertakes on behalf of the Council.

The governance oversight of the SWISCo is provided by the Shareholder Panel which operates at a high strategic level and is classified as a Shareholder Board in terms of its governance status.





Our Mission

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To Proudly Deliver Outstanding Services for our Customers



Our Values



The image features the SWISCo logo at the center, which includes the text "SWISCo" in a large, dark blue font with a green underline, and "A Torbay Council Company" in a smaller, dark blue font below it. Surrounding the logo is a word cloud of values in various colors (orange, green, blue) and orientations. The values include: SAFETY (orange), INNOVATION (orange), EFFICIENT (green), PROUD (orange, vertical), CELEBRATE SUCCESS (green, vertical), OPEN (blue), ONE TEAM (orange), THINK POSITIVELY (green), CLEAR GOALS (green), HONESTY (orange), MUTUAL RESPECT (green), and CLEAR OBJECTIVES (blue).

SAFETY
INNOVATION
EFFICIENT
PROUD
CELEBRATE SUCCESS
OPEN
ONE TEAM
THINK POSITIVELY
CLEAR GOALS
HONESTY
MUTUAL RESPECT
CLEAR OBJECTIVES

SWISCo
A Torbay Council Company

Key Objectives and Growth for 2024 - 2029

OB1

To recognise and deliver against the particular needs of all the SWISCo customer groups and be regarded as the supplier of choice



OB3

To ensure a positive staff culture within the business



OB5

To understand the influence that SWISCo has on the Torbay Story



GR1

Expand the services delivered on behalf of the Council to maximise opportunities for efficiency



OB2

To drive efficiency, innovation and best practice throughout our business to ensure best value for our customers



OB4

To ensure everyone goes home safely



OB6

To limit the environmental impact of our business



GR2

Increase 3rd party income in ways which do not conflict with Council services



OB1 - To recognise and deliver against the particular needs of all the SWISCo customer groups and be regarded as the supplier of choice.

SWISCo have a range of 'customers' from Elected Members, Council Officers in the client role, every resident/taxpayer in the Bay and our private commercial clients across the broad range of services we offer.

What will success look like:

- **Recognition of reliability of service delivery (and thus trust) as a key metric though-out the organisation .**
- **Communication with our customers in a form appropriate for their needs which also provides forward visibility of work programs and no surprises.**
- **Clear governance framework, regularly reviewed to provide oversight of service performance agreements with Torbay Council**
- **Regular monitoring of agreed work programmes provided to Council.**
- **Fully functioning regularly updated website**
- **Annual programme of multimedia marketing and engagement campaigns incl. schools**
- **To work in partnership with other Council depts and services to deliver the Torbay Way**



OB1

SS&S

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OB1A - Recognition of reliability of service delivery (and thus trust) as a key metric though-out the organisation .

Target/Key result: Waste and Recycling collections to be 98%+ on time.

Target/Key result: Operations as per the Commissioning Agreement to be 90%+ on schedule.

Target/Key result: Service and 'Report It' requests to be actioned within 48hrs

Target/Key result: Information Governance process's to be actioned and closed in line with Council targets

Target/Key result: Monthly meeting between MD and Client and Quarterly work programme meetings with HoS

Influences: Direct relationship between annual budget and level of service so clear priorities required from Council

Reporting: Quarterly to Board, Client and Shareholder Panel



OB1B - Communication with our customers in a form appropriate for their needs which also provides forward visibility of work programs and no surprises

Target/Key result: All capital and developmental works to have a specific communication and engagement plan agreed with Client.

Influences: Pre delivery timescales and resources

Reporting: Annually and as required prestige



OB1

SUCCESS

Page 58

OB1C - Clear governance framework, regularly reviewed to provide oversight of service performance agreements with Torbay Council

Target/Key result: Annual service performance agreements to be agreed with Council in conjunction with annual budget.

Influences: Direct relationship between annual budget and level of service so clear priorities required from Council

Reporting: Annually



OB1D - Regular monitoring of agreed work programmes provided to Council

Target/Key result: Operational Work programmes for key service areas to be provided to Council and monitored against expected performance in monthly dashboard.

Target/Key result: Strategic work programme to be reviewed by SWISCo SLT and shared with Client officer minimum of monthly

Influences: IT systems, Operational issues, Weather, other Council requirements

Reporting: Monthly to client officer and quarterly to Board and Client Panel



OB1

SUCCESS

Page 59

OB1E - Regular positive engagement with relevant community organisations and partnerships

Target/Key result: To formally meet all Friends Groups individually minimum of once per year to agree annual park plan.

Target/Key result: To attend four Community Partnership Chairs meetings per year.

Target/Key result: To attend a minimum of 10 community events per year.

Influences: Staff availability

Reporting: Annually



OB1F - Fully functioning regularly updated website.

Target/Key result: To recognise that the website is the hub of all customer and community interactions and engagement.

Target/Key result: Website updates to be live within 48 hours of request.

Target/Key result: REPORT IT function to be fully operational through SWISCo website.

Target/Key result: Work programmes for key service areas to be published and updated weekly

Influences: Ownership of editing rights, IT capacity

Reporting: Annually



OB1

SUCCESS

Page 60

OB1G - Annual programme of multimedia marketing and engagement campaigns

Target/Key result: To produce and deliver an annual marketing and engagement plan in conjunction with Council detailing a minimum of 4 key themes.

Target/Key result: To visit min. 10 schools per year

Target/Key result: To visit a min. 5 Community Partnerships per year.

Target/Key result: To post a min. 48 creative Social media posts per year..

Influences: Approval of programme by Council, Availability of Comms resource (Council and SWISCo)

Reporting: Annually



OB1H - To work in partnership with other Council depts and services to deliver the Torbay Way

Target/Key result: Waste and Recycling collections to be 98%+ on time.

Target/Key result: Operations as per the Commissioning Agreement to be 90%+ on schedule.

Target/Key result: Service and 'Report It' requests to be actioned within 48hrs

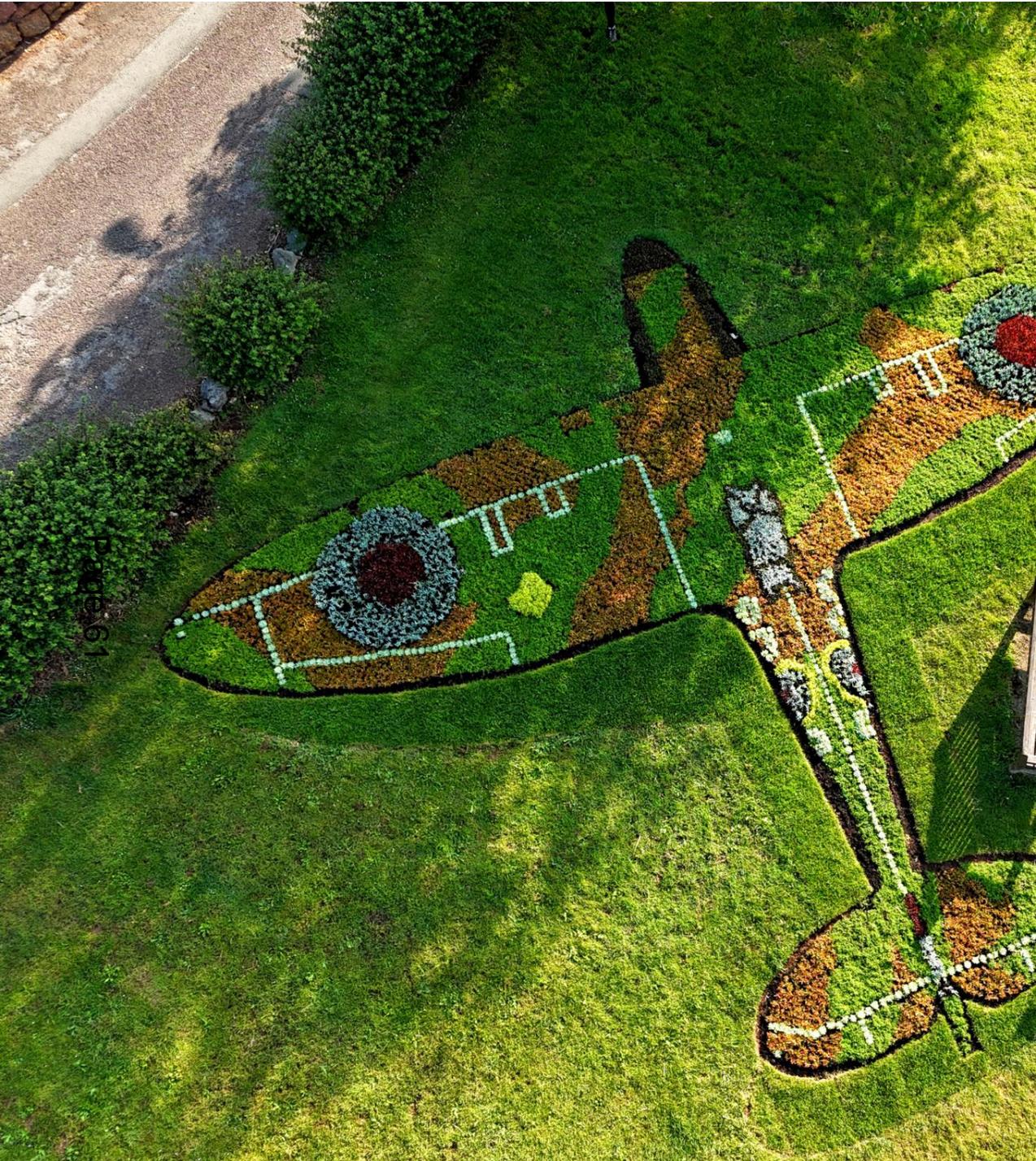
Target/Key result: Information Governance process's to be actioned and closed in line with Council targets

Target/Key result: Monthly meeting between MD and Client and Quarterly work programme meetings with HoS

Influences: Staff capacity, ownership and relevance of service requests, complaints and Member enquiries

Reporting: Annually





OB2 - To drive efficiency's innovation and best practice throughout our business to ensure best value for our customers.

Across all the services that SWISCo are involved in there is a constant and significant industry led drive for new techniques, equipment and technology. The challenges faced by SWISCo are by no means unique and we will strive to place ourselves to be aware and receptive of new ways of working. As a business we will understand the implications of the TECKAL principles in terms of the need to balance our aspirations to innovate with the constraints put upon us by our circumstance.

What will success look like:

- **Ongoing fleet and plant replacement programme**
- **Robust, dynamic and at pace procurement process's and pipeline plans.**
- **Regular financial monitoring to identify areas in need of process engineering.**
- **Workforce horizon planning and service redesign**
- **Engagement with industry leading providers and suppliers**
- **Work towards recognised standards in terms of relevant ISO awards**



OB2

SESSIONS

Page 62

OB2A - Ongoing investment and replacement programme

Target/Key Result: Vehicles are leased for a maximum of 4 weeks.

Target/Key Result: Vehicle and plant procurement is complete via framework in under two weeks

Target/Key Result: Fleet and Plant IT system to monitor spend and viability of vehicles and plant.

Influences: Procurement regulations, availability of finance to fund replacement

Reporting: Annually



OB2B - Ensure our supply chain is delivering best value to us

Target/Key Result: Robust and actionable service level agreements, contracts or specifications are in place.

Target/Key Result: Robust, dynamic and at pace procurement process's and plans to ensure value for money.

Target/Key Result: Annual procurement pipeline to be agreed with Council team.

Target/Key Result: Noncompliant spend to be formalised.

Target/Key Result: Frameworks to be established for regular spend e.g fleet.

Influences: Procurement regulations, availability of procurement team

Reporting: Annually



OB2

Success

Page 63

OB2C - Regular financial monitoring and analysis to identify areas in need of process engineering.

Target/Key Result: Monthly budget monitoring and analysis to identify areas of concern.

Target/Key Result: Areas of concern to be discussed at SWISCo SLT and Board.

Influences: Procurement regulations, availability of capital funding

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard to Board and Shareholder Panel



OB2D - Workforce horizon planning and service redesign

Target/Key Result: Create workforce horizon plan.

Target/Key Result: Vacancy requests to be approved by HoS following consultation with workforce plan

Influences: Availability of qualified/skilled staff.

Reporting: Annually



OB2

SUCCESS

Page 64

OB2E - Engagement with industry leading providers and suppliers

Target/Key Result: Minimum of three liaison visits with similar providers per year

Target/Key Result: Minimum of four national level engagements e.g conference, trade show per year

Influences: Staff availability

Reporting: Annually

SWISCo
SLT

OB2F - Work towards recognised standards in terms of relevant ISO standards

Target/Key Result: All work programmes and strategy work to be of a standard required by relevant ISO standards.

Target/Key Result: Minimum of one ISO accreditation to be achieved by 2029

Influences: Staff availability

Reporting: Annually

SWISCo
SLT

OB3 - To ensure a positive staff culture within the business.

The current workforce of around 360 makes SWISCo one of the biggest employers in the Bay. The workforce ranges from front line operational staff through to semi-professional and professional and technical office-based roles.

Our workforce is critical to the delivery of services and the success of our business, and we are justifiably proud of the actions we have taken thus far to increase the reputation locally of SWISCo as an employer and to stabilise and improve conditions for our workforce leading to much greater staff retention and easier recruitment.

What will success look like:

- **Reduced sickness and absence**
- **Reduce reliance on long term agency employees**
- **Enhance reputation leading to more effective recruitment and retention**
- **Regular training and development for all staff**
- **Staff feel valued and that they have a voice.**
- **Health and Wellbeing is a core element of our business.**
- **All staff are fully engaged in the principles and ambitions of our business and success is celebrated.**





OB3A - Reduced sickness and absence

Target/Key Result: Working days absence rate to be below 4% (national waste industry average)

Influences: Health of workforce, staff morale, HR IT system

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard to Board and Shareholder Panel



OB3B - Reduce reliance on long term agency employees.

Target/Key Result: Workforce to be maximum of 15% Agency staff (not including seasonal staff)

Target/Key Result: Agency staff to be offered temporary to permanent conversion after maximum of 12 weeks if appropriate.

Influences: HR capacity, Suitability of Agency staff for permanent employment, production of relevant documents and details by Agency staff during recruitment

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard to Board and Shareholder Panel





OB3C - Enhance reputation leading to more effective recruitment and retention

Target/Key Result: Staff turnover rate to be less than 40%

Target/Key Result: Vacancies to be filled within 4 weeks of advertisement.

Influences: HR capacity, Suitability of Agency staff for permanent employment, production of relevant documents and details by Agency staff during recruitment process.

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard to Board and Shareholder Panel



OB3D - Regular training and development for all staff

Target/Key Result: All staff to have received min. 3 toolbox talks per year. All HGV Drivers to have completed one CPC unit per year.

Influences: Resources to allow time to be taken out of BAU for training

Reporting: Annually





OB3E - Staff feel valued and that they have a voice.

Target/Key result: Staff Forum with representatives from all service areas to be held min. every two months.

Target/Key result: Annual staff survey and feedback of results and actions

Target/Key result: Hold twice yearly JCNC with Unions

Target/Key result: Minimum of three all staff briefings per year by Managing Director

Influences: staff willingness to take part. Resources to organise and impact on business

Reporting: Annually



OB3F - Health and Wellbeing is a core element of our business.

Target/Key result: There to be a minimum of 6 trained mental health first aiders and access to them is published to the workforce.

Target/Key result: Wellbeing support service to be available and all staff to be aware of how to access it.

Target/Key result: All staff on sick leave for more than 1 week are contacted by HR or Line Manager every week.

Influences: Resource for support service, willingness of staff to be trained as mental health first aiders.

Reporting: Annually





OB3G - To understand and cater for the literacy and IT capabilities of our staff

Target/Key result: To always provide alternative to IT option and offer additional help if required

Influences: Resources to organise and impact on business

Reporting: Annually





OB4 - To ensure everyone goes home safely

SWISCo operates in some of the most hazardous industries in the UK and as such our absolute duty and priority is the health and safety of our workforce. We will strive to embed a safe working culture in the DNA of our business and ensure all our staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and equipment to be safe and operate in a business that celebrates safe working practices above productivity and efficiency.

What will success look like:

- **Manage all Health and Safety with EVOTIX management system.**
- **All staff to receive regular, relevant, and recognised Health and Safety training.**
- **All staff to be aware of importance and means of Hazard Reporting**
- **Regularly review incidents to ensure adequate learning in the business and relevant preventative mitigation is put in place.**
- **Compliant programme of testing and monitoring.**
- **Regularly review risk assessments in forums to include all elements of the business.**
- **Monitor incident rates against national best practice and ensure SWISCo is below them.**





OB4A - Manage all Health and Safety with agreed management systems

Target/Key result: All staff to be aware of and connected to EVOTIX system.

Target/Key result: All Health and Safety information to be stored on EVOTIX.

Influences: Accessibility, Resources

Reporting: Annually



OB4B - All staff to receive regular, relevant, and recognised Health and Safety training

Target/Key result: All staff to attend minimum of 12 toolbox talks per year.

Target/Key result: Minimum of 50% of Service and Team Managers to be NEBOSH qualified.

Target/Key result: Minimum 10% of workforce to be first aid trained

Target/Key result: Minimum of 1 Mental Health First Aider per service area

Influences: Resources

Reporting: Annually





OB4C - All staff to be aware of importance and means of Hazard Reporting

Target/Key result: Hazard spotting to be promoted at least three times per year

Target/Key result: Hazard reports to increase month on month

Influences: Resources

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard to Board and Shareholder Panel



OB4D - Regularly review incidents to ensure adequate learning in the business and relevant preventative mitigation is put in place

Target/Key result: Incident review panel to be held weekly and attended by representatives from every service area.

Target/Key result: Actions to be recorded on EVOTIX and closed at following review panel

Influences: Resources

Reporting: Recorded in EVOTIX and raised at Board if required





OB4E - Compliant programme of testing and monitoring

Target/Key result: Annual programme of Health Surveillance for all staff with required follow up's and actions.

Target/Key result: All specialist plant and equipment to be tested as required

Target/Key result: Results of compliance programme to be recorded on EVOTIX

Influences: Resources, availability, cost and performance of external service providers

Reporting: Recorded in EVOTIX and reported annually



OB4F - Regularly review risk assessments in forums to include all elements of the business

Target/Key result: Minimum of 6 Risk Assessment Groups to meet minimum of 4 times per year to review relevant risk assessments.

Target/Key result: Results to be recorded on EVOTIX and shared with staff through toolbox talks.

Influences: Staff availability

Reporting: Recorded in EVOTIX and reported annually





OB4G - Monitor incident rates against national best practice and ensure SWISCo is below them

Target/Key result: Record and monitor SWISCo Health and Safety data from EVOTIX against comparable national averages.

Target/Key result: SWISCo to outperform comparable national averages

Influences: Resources

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard to Board and Shareholder Panel



OB5 - To understand the influence that SWISCo has on the Torbay Story

As a leading employer and manager of the place SWISCo has great influence and impact on the appearance, reputation, and success of Torbay. Our social values need to reflect and further those of the Council.

What would success look like:

- **Develop social values partnerships with local charities and business.**
- **Contribute to Torbay wide events and campaigns.**
- **Collaborate and engage with wider initiatives.**
- **Understand and promote social, cultural, natural and built heritage within the Bay.**





OB5A - Develop social values partnerships with local charities and business

Target/Key Result: Become accredited as a foster friendly employer.

Target/Key Result: Agree an Armed Forces Covenant

Target/Key Result: Offer a minimum of six assisted apprenticeships, care leaver placements or work experience placements per year.

Target/Key Result: Provide sponsorship to a minimum of three local charities or groups per year

Influences: Staff availability, viability of schemes

Reporting: Annually



OB5B - Contribute to Torbay wide events and campaigns.

Target/Key Result: Work with Client and external providers to provide relevant services to a minimum of four events per year.

Target/Key Result: Work with Client and external providers to deliver targeted street cleansing services when required.

Influences: Resources, communication

Reporting: Annually





OB5C - Collaborate and engage with wider initiatives

Target/Key Result: Minimum of two staff briefings per year to include update on the Torbay Story to ensure staff are aware of strategic developments and the role SWISCo plays.

Target/Key Result: Actively engage with partners and other Council teams to deliver a minimum of three co production opportunities per year.

Influences: Staff availability, availability of partners and opportunities.

Reporting: Annually



OB5D - Understand and promote social, cultural, natural and built heritage within the Bay.

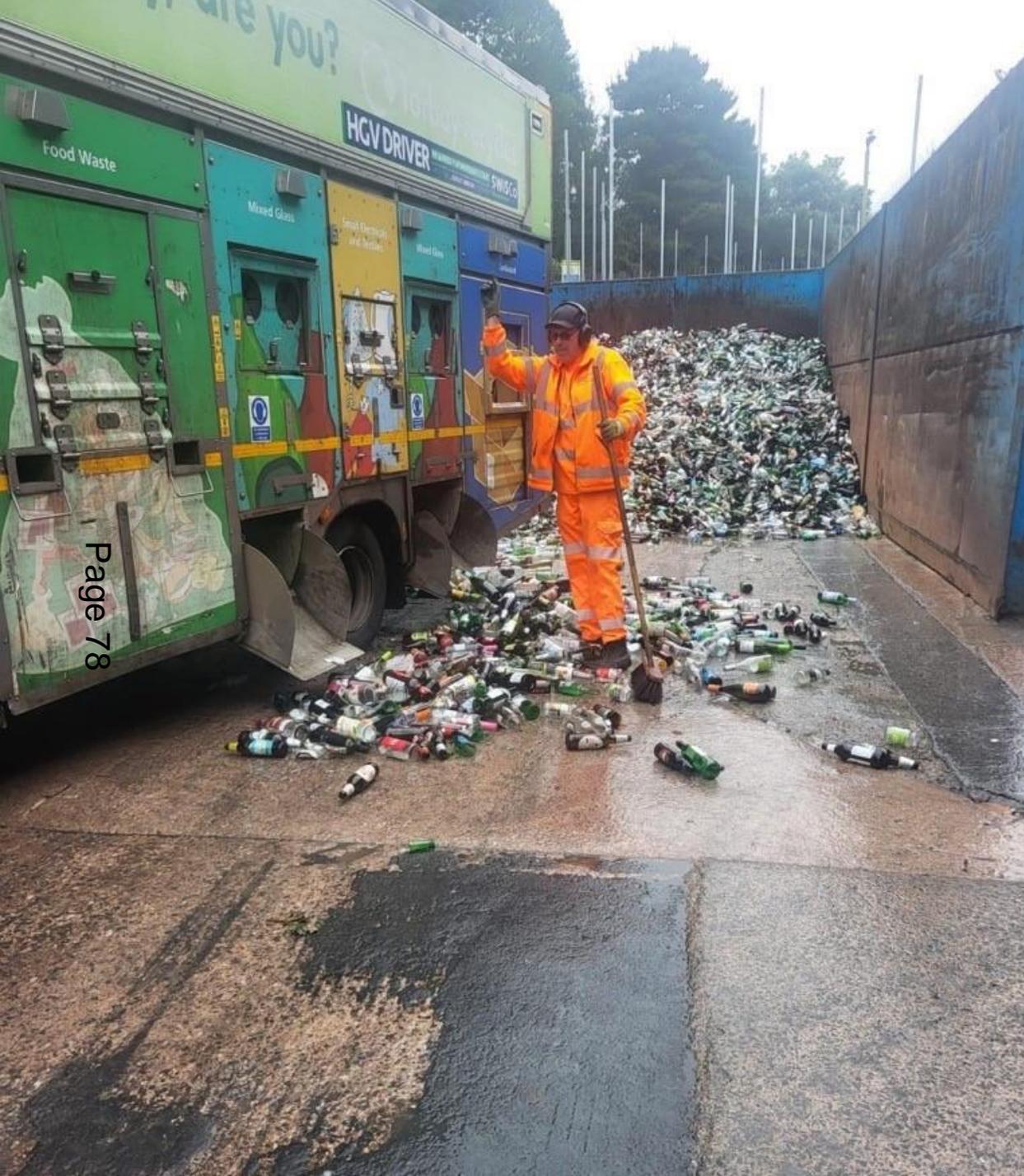
Target/Key Result: Engage and consult with relevant partners to ascertain heritage considerations in proposed strategic plans and works.

Target/Key Result: Deliver a minimum of three heritage improvements per year.

Influences: Staff availability, availability of partners and opportunities.

Reporting: Annually





OB6 - To limit the environmental impact of our business

The services that SWISCO delivers hold many opportunities for environmental benefit and gain. SWISCO be realistic in its ambitions to be carbon neutral and ensure that initiatives to do so are economically viable and will not negatively impact service delivery. We will maximise all opportunities to improve biodiversity and carbon sequestration and engage with residents to ensure a joined-up approach especially in terms of recycling.

What will success look like:

- **Promote reduction of waste and actively pursue initiatives to do so.**
- **Increased recycling rate in residential and commercial waste operations**
- **Manage all environmental permits and activities through Environmental Management System**
- **New Waste Transfer Station facility**
- **Record and reduce carbon emissions and review all business decisions considering carbon considerations.**
- **Alternative fuelled fleet wherever practically and economically viable**





OB6A - Promote reduction of SWISCo waste and actively pursue initiatives to do so

Target/Key Result: SWISCo generated Residual waste to be less than 150 tonnes per year

Influences: Staff behaviour, supply chain, turnover

Reporting: Quarterly to Board and Client Panel



OB6B - Increased recycling rate in commercial waste operations

Target/Key Result: Commercial recycling to be greater than 30%

Influences: Council waste strategy, funding and permission for engagement campaigns

Reporting: Quarterly in dashboard as part of waste data flow





OB6C - Manage all environmental permits and activities through Environmental Management System

Target/Key Result: Compliance with all relevant environmental permits

Target/Key Result: Creation of SWISCo wide Environmental Management System

Influences: Council funding, project management resource, planning, EA and SWW Approval

Reporting: Annually



OB6B - Staff are engaged and proactive in ways of reducing the Environmental impact of our business

Target/Key Result: Staff survey <70% overall happy with SWISCo

Target/Key Result: Continued participation in the Torbay Climate Partnership was set up (2021) to help coordinate and accelerate actions to help tackle climate change in Torbay. As part of a wider membership that includes public, private, community and voluntary, SWISCo provides an integral and important role in the climate change adaptation agenda

Influences: Greener Way for our Bay (a framework for reducing carbon emissions in Torbay)

Reporting: Annually





OB6E - New Waste Transfer Station facility

Target/Key Result: Capital and Growth programme to stay within timeline

Influences: Council funding, project management resource, planning permission, EA approval.

Reporting: Monthly through Capital and Growth Board. Quarterly to Board



OB6F - Record and reduce carbon emissions and review all business decisions in light of carbon considerations

Target/Key Result: To establish accurate carbon baseline to be completed by Dec 2024.

Target/Key Result: Using baseline data create a options for a realistic and costed pathway to carbon neutrality and annual targets to be completed by Dec 24 for approval and decision by Board and Shareholder Panel.

Target/Key Result: Implement pathway to carbon neutrality in line with Board and Shareholder Panel decision.

Influences: Staff resource, data availability, agreed data standard, funding

Reporting: Annually





OB6G - Alternative fuelled fleet wherever practically and economically viable

Target/Key Result: Alternative fuelled options are considered with every fleet and vehicle purchase and appropriate business case created and approved

Influences: Technology, practicality and cost

Reporting: Annually



GR1 - Expand the services delivered on behalf of the Council to maximise opportunities for efficiency

Operating as a LATCO with an increasing high reputation as an employer of choice recruitment to operational front line roles is potentially easier and cheaper than direct to Council. Combined with the existing management structure, range of services already delivered and digital operating systems there is potential for further Council services to be delivered by SWISCo. The recent shift of the Enviro Crime, Unauthorised Encampment and Dog Warden portfolio is an example of how performance, flexibility and co efficiency of services can be enhanced by the SWISCo operating model.

Front line operational staff make up a large element of the SWISCo workforce and as a result the culture and staff engagement and management style of the business is wholly focused on this cohort of staff.

There are now a variety of overlaps between services delivered by SWISCo and Torbay Council and as this increases so do the opportunities for efficiencies to be realised and processes streamlined through business operating systems already embedded in SWISCo and joined up working.

What would success look like:

- **SWISCo is considered in all future Council service reviews and redesigns.**
- **Business cases are developed in relation to services being delivered by SWISCo as required to access value, efficiencies and benefits.**



GR2 – Increase 3rd party income

SWISCo has many and varied opportunities to increase the amount of work undertaken for the private sector, these need to be balanced against their potential impact on the services delivered to the Council and wherever possible there should be a co benefit. SWISCo will clearly identify and manage the risks associated with commercial expansion and be realistic in its ambitions for growth considering TECKAL factors and primary function to the Council.

In order to prevent any negative impact on quality of services delivered on behalf of Torbay Council and make the expansion of commercial services a serious reality a clear delineation needs to be created between commercial and Council operations. This requires an appreciation that there is little opportunity for staff to occupy strategic or tactical roles in both the Council and commercial growth areas of work without detriment to one or the other caused by resource and time limitations. The current operating model focuses all the strategic capacity in the business to Council work.

As such it is intended that a unit be created within SWISCo to account for and deliver the commercial services of the business. Overheads will be calculated not as percentage of the overall turnover but as a business unit cost operating alongside the work carried out for Torbay Council. This will allow an accurate and real world appreciation of costs and transparency between the true cost of Council services and real net profit from commercial activities. It is also necessary to ring fence roles to commercial work to ensure an accurate account of available time and resource and true re-costing of the work of these roles against SWISCo as a whole.





GR2 – Increase 3rd party income

There is a direct link between the improved reputation of SWISCo in terms of the service delivered to residents and communities of Torbay and the success of commercial growth. There will be occasions when marketing for commercial work needs to be focused on the target market and it is anticipated there are opportunities for cross branding between the areas of work to amplify the co benefits of high levels of customer service and best value.

In order to allow competition with private service providers to be achievable there may be occasions where discussion needs to take place around the principles of the SWISCo as a LATCO sharing services, policies and operating principles with the Council.

What would success look like:

- **Create group accounting principles and process's which allow clear identification of costs, overheads and profits of commercial work**
- **Agree with shareholder that significant commercial growth requires ringfenced staff and investment**
- **Carry out detailed market analysis of opportunities and constraints for target services to allow creation of evidence-based growth plan and establish opportunities and associated risks.**
- **Increase marketing of SWISCo commercial services through other Council functions and services e.g planning and capital projects.**
- **Focus on integrated opportunities where clients require multiple commercial services offered by SWISCo e.g schools, academy's, industrial parks and developers**



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Final Mile and Prestige Routes - Grass Cutting & Sweeping

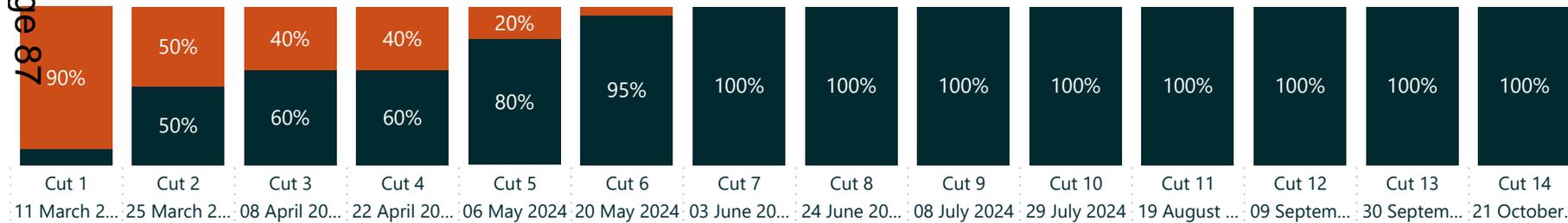
● Complete ● Not Required ● Staff Unavailable ● Too Wet ● Unservicable Machinery



14 Cuts per year (March - October)

Grass Cutting in Destination Parks

● Complete ● Not Required ● Staff Unavailable ● Too Wet ● Unservicable Machinery



14 cuts per year (March - October)

Highway Grass Verge Cutting

● Complete ● Not Required ● Staff Unavailable ● Too Wet ● Unservicable Machinery



5-7 cuts per year (March - October)

Grass Cutting in Residential Parks

● Complete ● Not Required ● Staff Unavailable ● Too Wet ● Unservicable Machinery



10 cuts per year (March - October)

Additional Planting, Beds and Decorative

Flower bed	Status
Torquay Crest Bed	On target
Torbay Park Paignton	On target
Roundham	On target
Paignton Town Green	On target
Paignton Creat Bed	On target
Hanging Baskets, Station Square	On target
Barrier Planters, Torquay Rd, Paignton (next to Tesco Express)	On target

Number of Vehicles/Caravans Removed

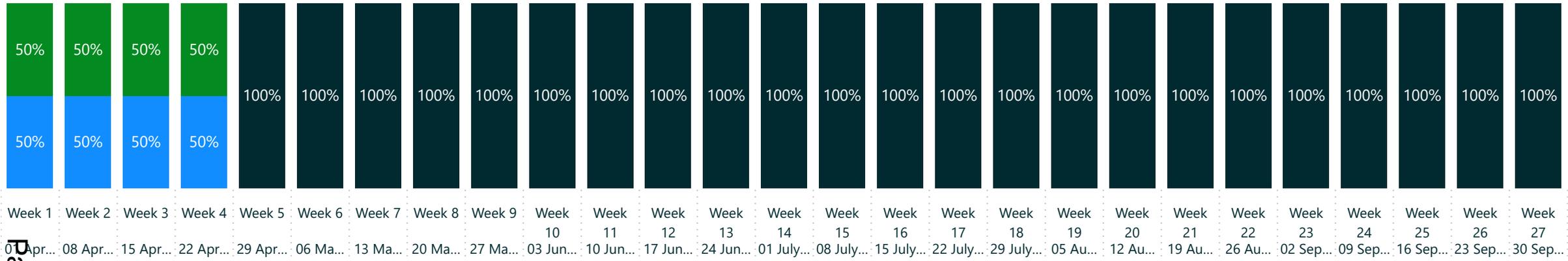
Town	Year	vehicles/caravans removed
Brixham	2024	14
Paignton	2024	14
Torquay	2024	14

Number of Encampments Removed

Town	Year	Encampments removed
Brixham	2024	1
Paignton	2024	13
Torquay	2024	10

Maxwind Pedestrian Brush in Brixham

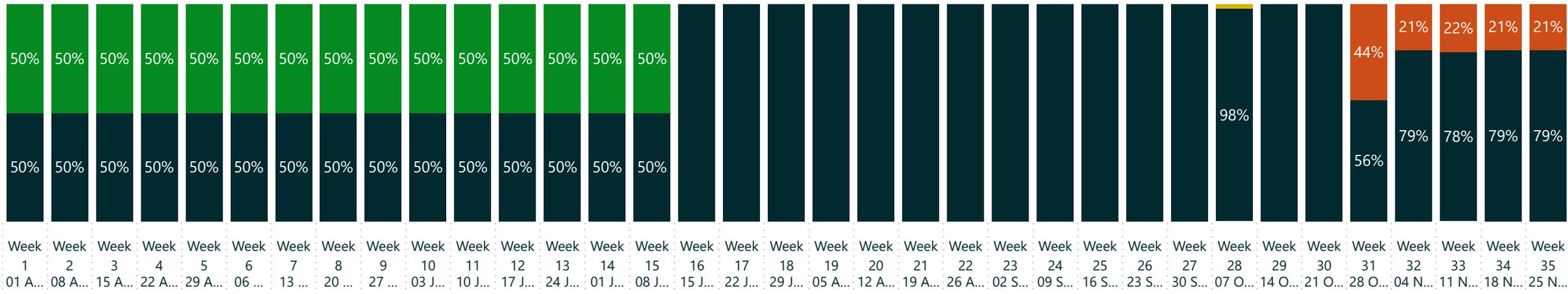
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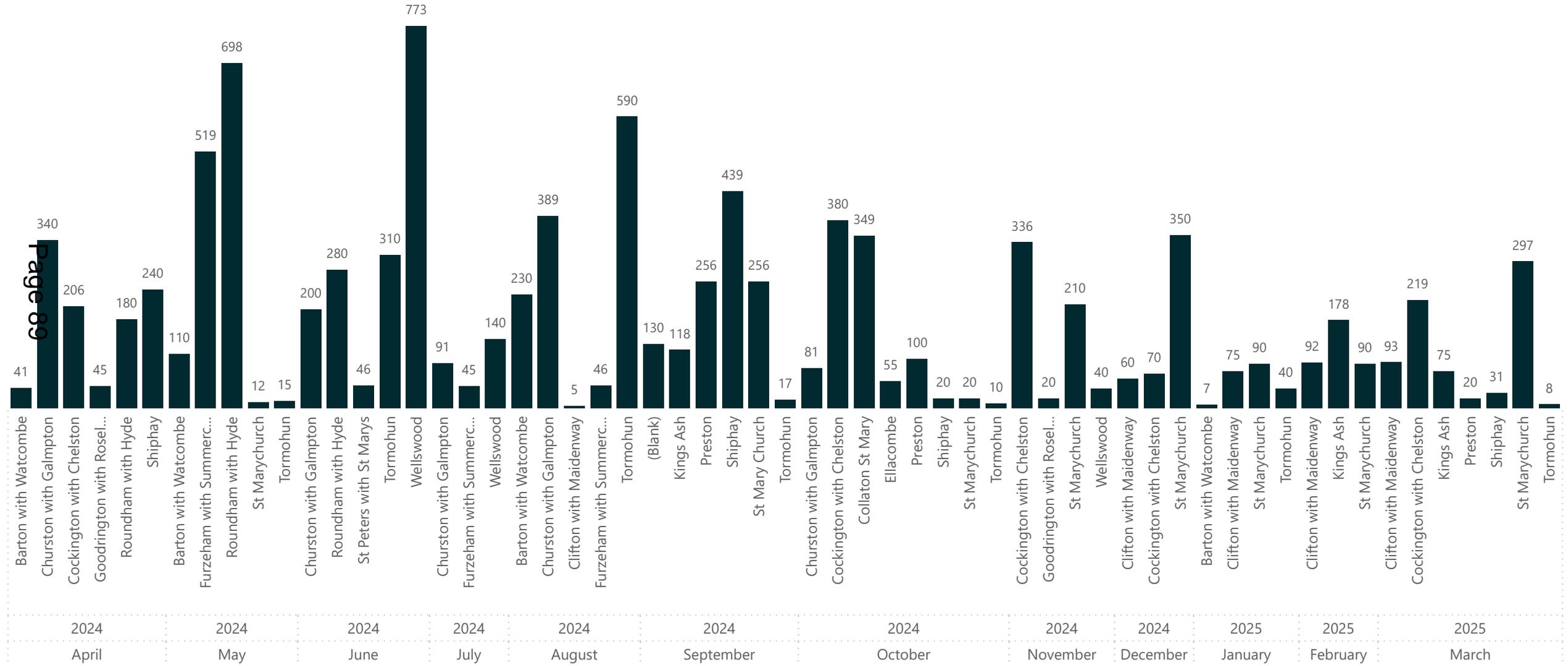
Page 88

Weed Spraying with Quad Bikes

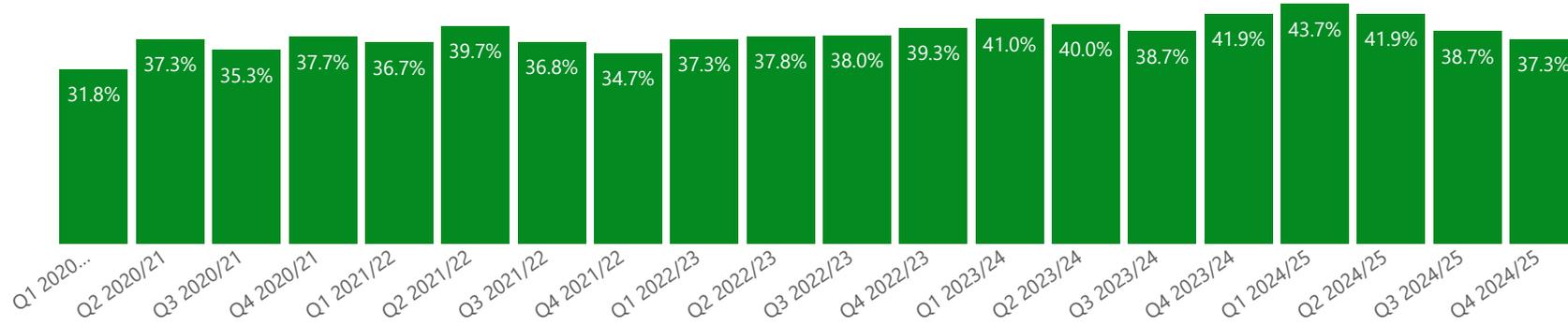
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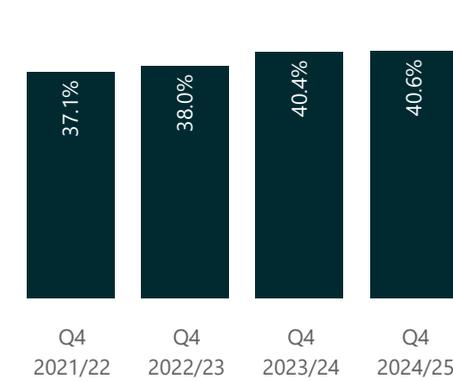
Line Marked Metres by Month and Ward



Quarterly Recycling Rate Q1 20/21 to Q3 24/25



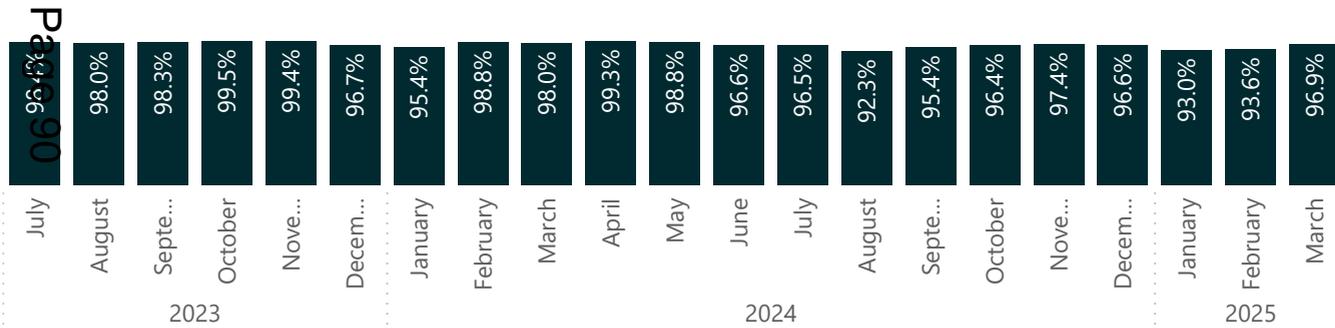
Year on Year Annual Recycling Rate



Commercial Contracts 2023 vs 2024 so far



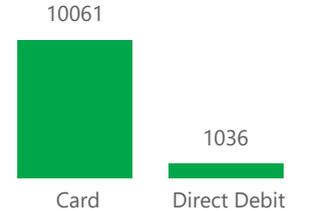
Percentage of On Time Recycling Collections



Garden Waste Subscriptions



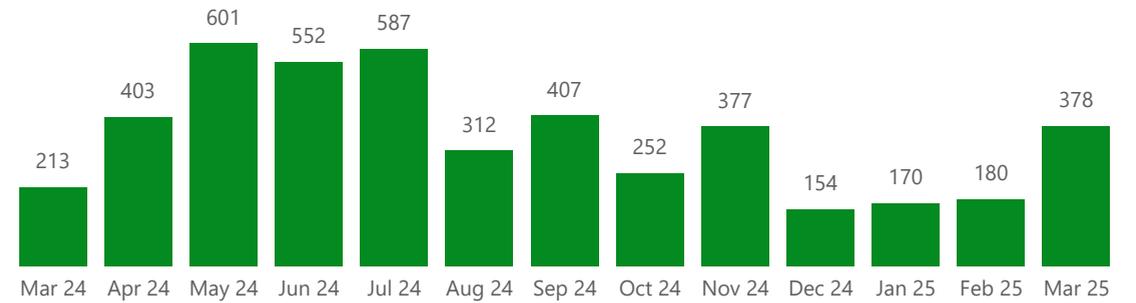
Subscriptions by Payment Method



Percentage of On Time Residual Collections

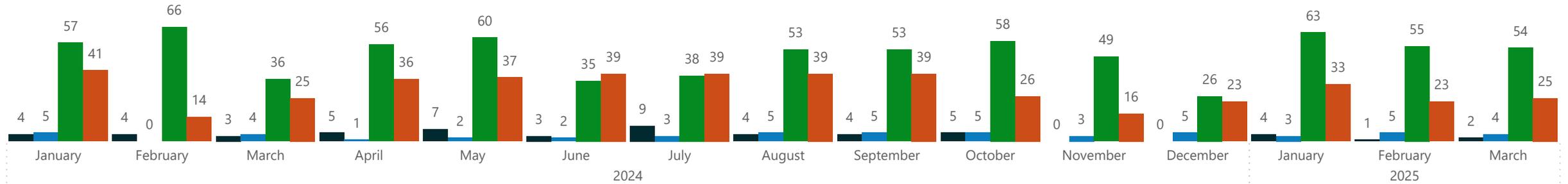


Tonnes of Garden Waste Kerbside Collected



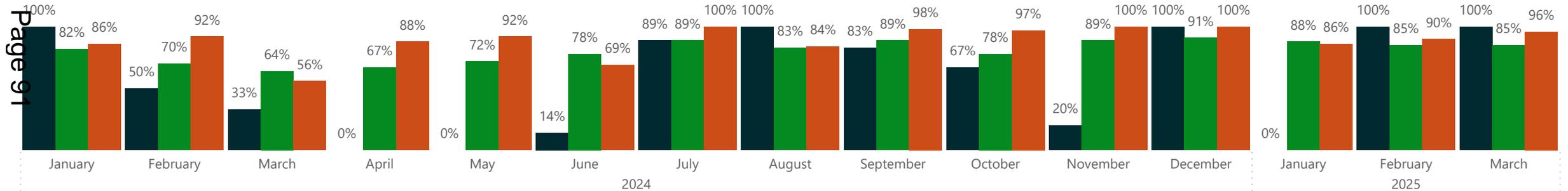
Monthly Cases received 2024/25

● Complaints ● Compliments ● Member Enq ● Service Req



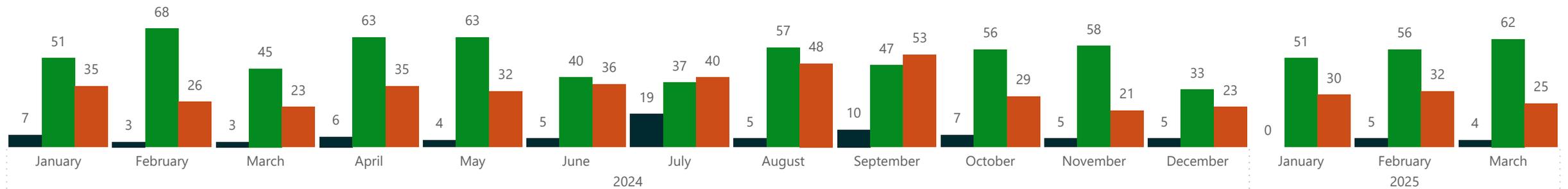
Monthly Cases closed with target 2024/25

● Corporate stage 1 ● Member enquiry ● Service request



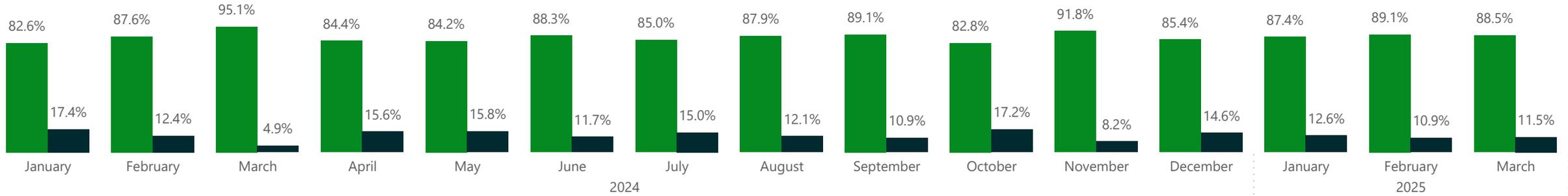
Monthly Cases closed within Month 2024/25

● Corporate Stage 1 Cases Closed ● Member enquiry Cases Closed ● Service Request Cases Closed



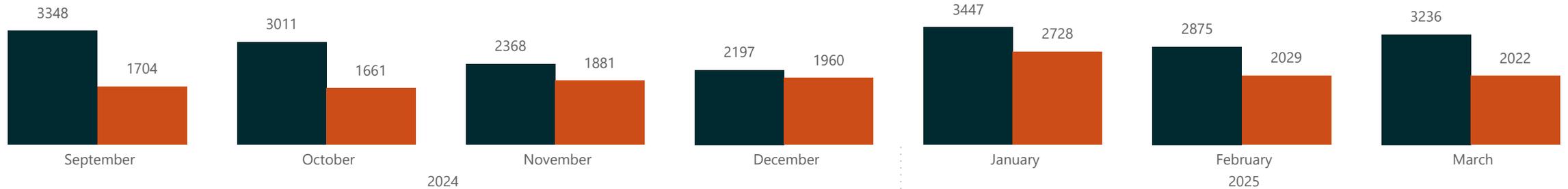
Connection % and Abandon % by Month

● Connection % ● Abandon %

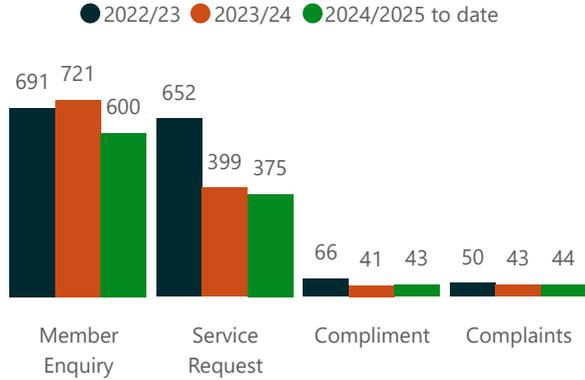


Service Req - Calls vs Online formS

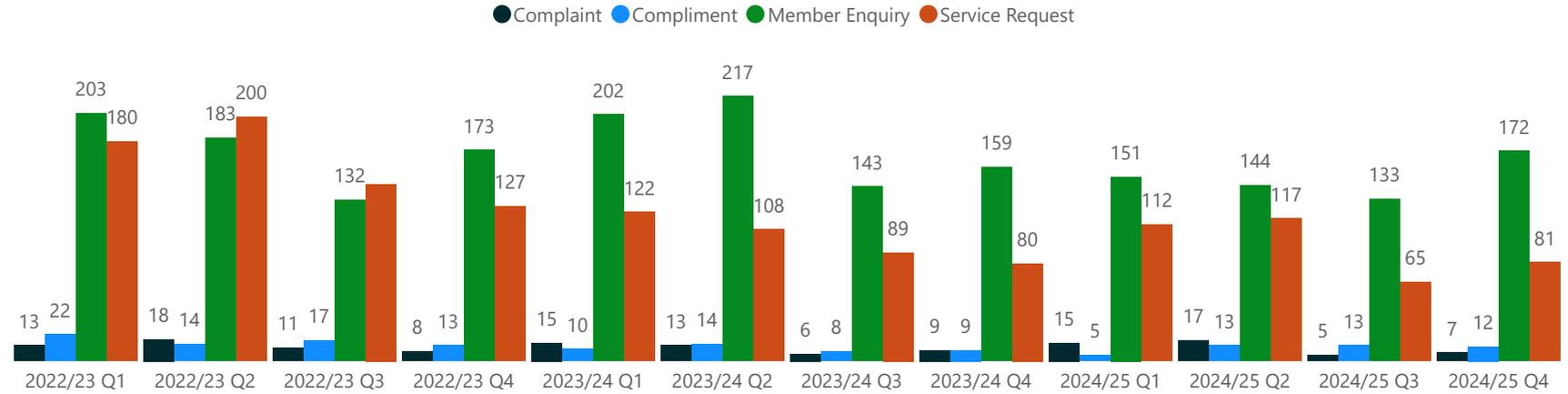
● Sum of Calls ● Online Service Req



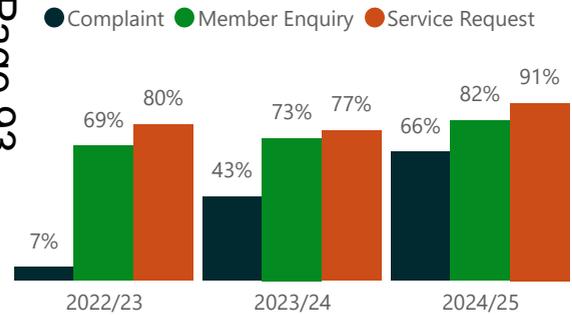
Cases Received



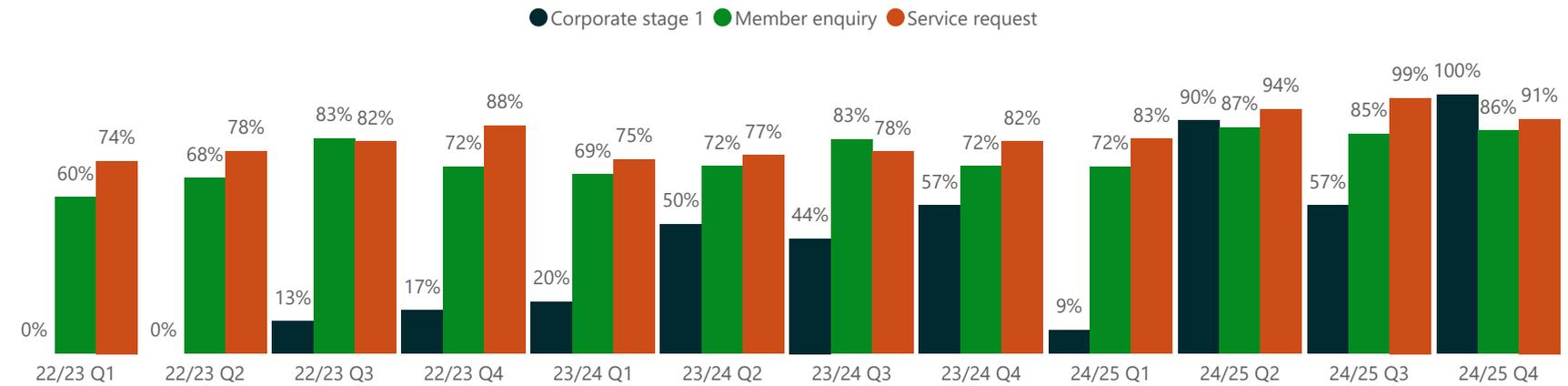
Quarterly Cases received



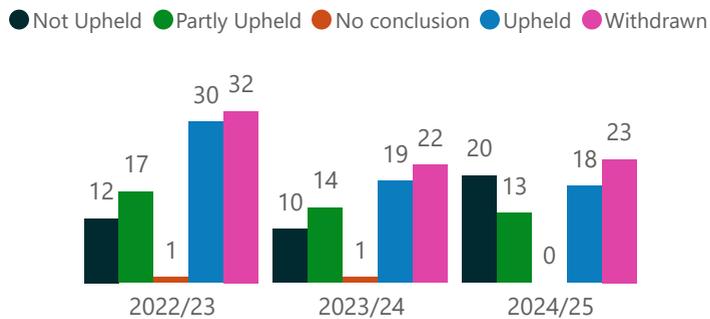
Cases closed with target



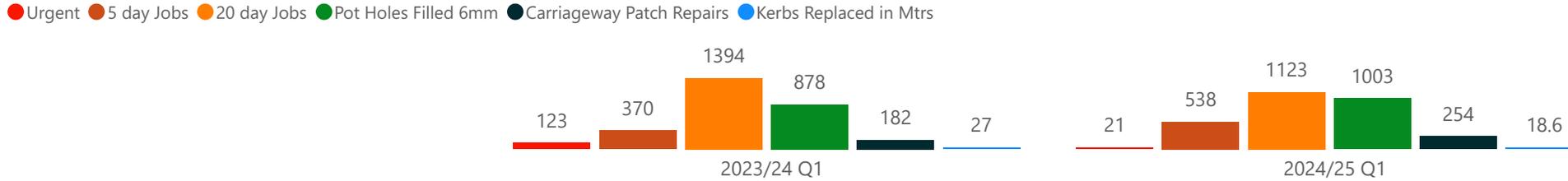
Quarterly Cases closed with target



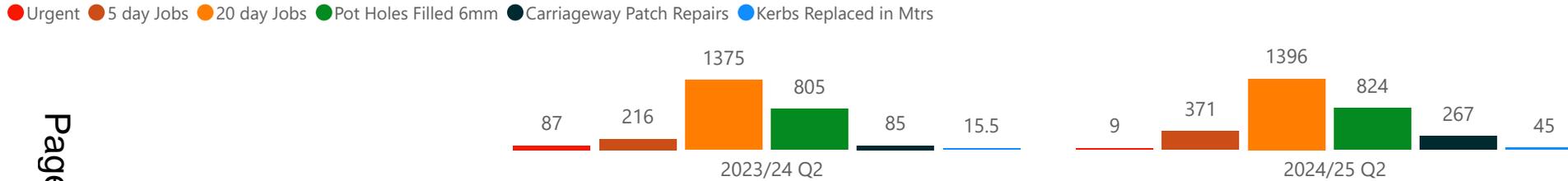
Stage 1 Complaint Outcomes



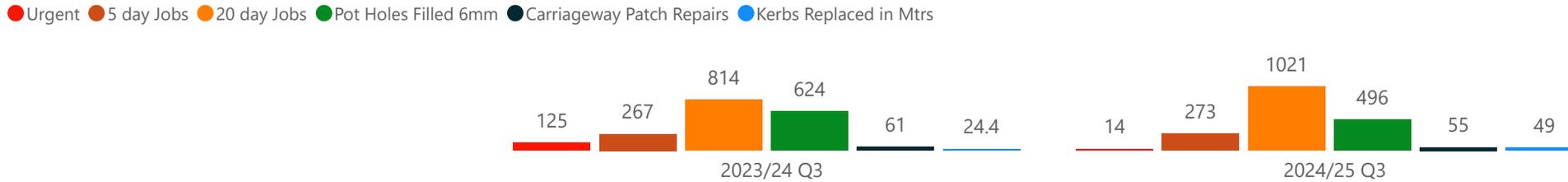
Highways Jobs Quarter 1 Comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25



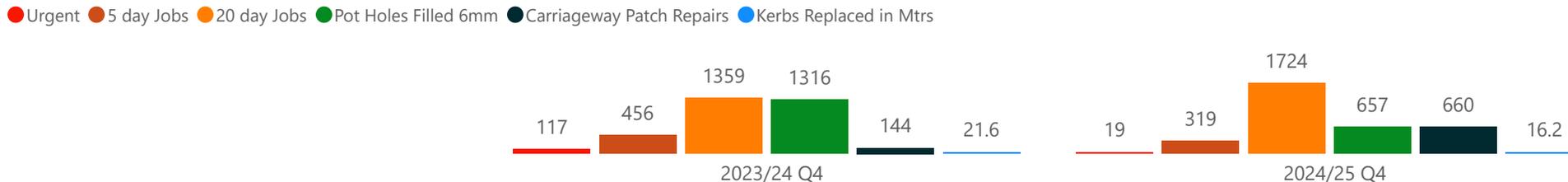
Highways Jobs Quarter 2 Comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25



Highways Jobs Quarter 3 Comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25



Highways Jobs Quarter 4 Comparison 2023/24 to 2024/25



SWISCo Annual Financial Report 2024 - 2025

Summary of Profit and Loss – Full Year 24/25

£000s	Year to date		Budget Variance (Ytd) Better/(Worse)	(ytd) Better / (Worse)	Reason for variance	
	Actual	Budget				
Revenue						
	Service Management Fee	16,653	16,543	110	1%	Additional Commissioning Fee (backpay related)
	Ordered Works	4,715	3,824	891	23%	Higher Highways and Streets instructions
	External Customers	2,156	2,608	-453	-17%	Lower Street Enforcement, Weighbridge revenue,
	Recycled Materials	1,103	1,162	-59	-5%	Lower recycling revenue
		24,627	24,138	489	2%	
Cost of Sales						
	Direct Payroll	10,811	11,123	312	3%	
	Agency Staff	1,576	1,559	-17	-1%	Vacant positions still being covered by Agency / small number of posts still unfilled.
	Total Staff costs	12,388	12,682	294	2%	
	Plant & Materials	5,150	4,537	-613	-14%	Higher vehicle hire / higher vehicle repairs / higher fuel / higher material disposals (wood/green)
	Sub-contractors	1,710	1,482	-228	-13%	Higher Sub Contract Lining Torbay Recharge, Lower Highways (Ordered), lower Streets (Ordered)
	Other	615	515	-100	-16%	Higher PPE costs / Lower Able Investigation costs / Lower instructions - Coast Path Grant
	Total	19,862	19,216	-646	-3%	
Gross Profit		4,765	4,922	-157	-3%	
Indirect Costs						
	Payroll & Staff Costs	1,157	1,196	39	3%	Lower staff costs
	Rent & Rates	518	530	12	2%	
	Utilities	427	368	-60	-14%	Higher utility costs
	Insurance	876	807	-69	-8%	Increased Premium
	Other (incl. IT/P&L on Asset Disposal)	562	514	-48	-9%	IT costs Relating to the IT Grant & purchases of IT Hardware/Software
	Central Recharge (TC)	532	531	-1	-0%	
		4,073	3,945	-127	-3%	
EBITDA						
	Depreciation	717	729	11	2%	
	Interest Payable	241	246	5	2%	
Net Pre-Tax Profit / (Loss)		-266	2	-268		<i>Loss against turnover = 1.08%</i>

2025/26 Budget

Cyclical Commissioning Fee

Agreement has been reached between Torbay Council and SWISCo that the Cyclical Commissioning fee for 2025/26 will be

	£000's
2024/25 Base Cyclical fee	16,543
Rebase of 2024/25 for 2024/25 Inflationary pay rise	110
2025/26 Uplift (3.5%)	575
Adjustment for NI Changes	350
EPR Administration	150
Additional Brighter Bays Funding	300
<hr/>	
Total 2025/26	18,028

Any additional pay increase costs beyond the 3.5% increase above will be met by Torbay Council rebasing the 2025/26 Commissioning fee

2025/26 Budget

SWISCO LIMITED			
Budget Summary 25-26			
P&L SUMMARY			
BUDGET			
	2024/25 Actuals (Feb 25 est)		Budget 25-26
Internal	(1,205)		(1,205)
Cyclical	(16,644)		(18,028)
Ordered	(4,655)		(4,365)
External	(3,292)		(3,718)
Total Revenue	(25,796)		(27,316)
Cost of Sales	21,891		22,642
Gross Margin	(3,905)		(4,673)
Overheads (Overheads Team only)	4,153		4,384
(Profit) / Loss before Finance	248		(289)
			0
Finance Charges (Bank charges & Misc Interest)	27		74
Parent Company Loan Interest	214		213
(Profit) / Loss after Finance	489		(2)
			0
COST OF SALES			0.00000
Labour	10,872		12,428
Agency	1,655		1,162
Total Labour	12,527		13,590
Plant	3,950		3,923
Materials	3,005		2,827
Sub-Contract	1,828		1,784
Other Costs	582		519
Total Cost of Sales	21,891		22,642
			0
Overheads			0.00000
Staff Costs - Payroll	918		1,166
Staff Costs - Other	236		180
Establishment (inc L&B/ Ex Torbay Vehicle Depn)	1,901		1,917
Office Costs	439		438
General (Includes (Profit)/Loss on Asset Disposal)	128		134
Central Recharge	530		549
Total Overheads	4,153		4,384

Proposed Capital Spending

Fleet replacement Strategy

Much of the current SWISCo fleet, inherited from TOR 2 is reaching or beyond end of life, is unreliable and causing SWISCo to incur unsustainable repair costs. These vehicles are also no longer fit for purpose and causing reputational damage to the business and the Council. There are ongoing discussions between SWISCo and Torbay Council regarding an extended parent loan facility in order to implement the proposed Fleet replacement strategy. The additional ongoing replacement of the fleet via parent loan facility is essential in order to allow SWISCo to operate a financially viable, fit for purpose, safe and reliable fleet. If the parent loan is agreed, details of the expected** year 1 fleet replacement strategy is shown in appendix 1 below.

** Vehicles and Plant will be replaced on a reactive basis dependant on breakdowns and condition assessment

Additional Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Funding

It has been agreed within the Torbay Council budget setting process that £900,000 of new, one off funding (Extended Producer Responsibility payment from DEFRA) will be allocated to SWISCo for the purchase of new vehicles in order to comply with new legislation and continue improving the recycling performance within Torbay. Details of this planned spend are shown in appendix 2 below.

Torbay Housing Delivery Plan

FIRST REVIEW

DELIVERING THE HOMES WE NEED

30 MAY 2025

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1. Context

Affordable housing delivery in Torbay is currently low. In the early 2000s, the Torbay area regularly delivered 100-180 new affordable homes per annum, with a peak year in 2013/14 of 273 new affordable homes¹. Since then, delivery has dropped, to the extent that average annual delivery over the last 4 years has been just 36 homes. This is due to:

- The geographic constraints of Torbay;
- Changes to the planning system under the Localism Act, making development in marginal areas generally less attractive to the sector;
- Limited opportunities for greenfield development, which generates the greatest proportion of new affordable housing;
- Our local brownfield affordable housing threshold, meaning schemes of <15 homes are not required to provide any affordable housing;
- RPs' limited financial capacity, resulting in decisions to direct remaining resources to more straightforward, or strategically important sites;
- Comparatively low values, compared to the rest of the sub-region; and,
- Greater profitability for investments closer to the Exeter 'hub' and Housing Market Area (for both developers and RPs).

Due to prevailing market conditions at present, the private sector is unlikely to be able to markedly increase the supply of open market sale or affordable homes in the short-medium term. Consequently, we expect housing need to remain stubbornly high, which risks escalating into an accommodation crisis affecting our whole community. This has potential to create knock-on effects on key local employers such as the NHS, that cannot attract or retain staff into key employment areas.

To address these issues, Torbay Council is making changes to its structure and creating a new emphasis on proactive intervention and strategic thinking. To that end, the Council has recently adopted its [Community and Corporate Plan](#), which sets out our key objectives in respect of housing delivery over the next two decades.

The most pertinent objectives from this are extracted below:

- *“There will be more good quality, affordable and permanent properties that people, including those who are vulnerable or care experienced, can call their homes”*
- *“We will work with landlords and developers to maximise the use of suitable housing stock, including social housing, and create decent accommodation across Torbay”.*
- *“In delivering our Housing Strategy, we will work to deliver a diverse choice of housing for our residents that meets every stage of life and lifestyle – homes that are safe, warm, fit for purpose and more environmentally friendly”*
- *“Where appropriate, we will consider proactive intervention in the housing market”*
- *“We will continue to protect homeless households and those threatened with homelessness, whilst putting an end to street sleeping.*
- *“We know that, to retain and attract the workforce that Torbay needs, we must have sufficient affordable housing...”*

¹ Live Table 1008C, MHCLG (2024) Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6679838a7cca63d35059c890/Live_Tables_1006-1008.ods. Last accessed 31 July 2024.

The Community and Corporate Plan is accompanied by our ambitious [Housing Strategy](#), which makes bold commitments to deliver or enable a range of new homes in The Bay, to support our communities, grow our economy, and help our workforce and key employers. Specifically, the Strategy commits us, to:

- Build affordable homes for rent;
- Build homes for low-cost ownership;
- Build and acquire innovative and specialist homes; and,
- Make the best use of our housing stock.

To that end, in December 2023 Torbay Council’s Cabinet resolved to request the creation of detailed delivery plans to set out how the Council will facilitate the acceleration of new affordable housing specifically to increase the provision of social and affordable rented homes. Torbay has resolved to prioritise the delivery of homes to meet specialist housing needs from client groups that may otherwise now typically be catered for in the affordable housing market and have the potential to cost the Council a considerable amount of revenue each year. As such, the council will focus its resources towards delivery of extra care housing, supported housing (for various client groups), temporary accommodation and to meeting the specialised needs of care-experienced young people.

The remainder of this paper sets out the mechanisms and interventions that will be employed by the Council to directly and indirectly increase our supply of affordable housing to rent, to meet the needs of our population.

2. Timescales and prioritisation

This plan will direct the Council’s housing delivery activities over the next five years, running from April 2024, to March 2029. It identifies and focuses the resources and support needed to achieve the Council’s housing ambitions over this period, whilst also taking account of wider emerging priorities, national trends and incentives.

Some projects will be more time and resource intensive than others; as such, projects have been split into two groups: Priority 1 (P1) projects are those expected to be deliverable within Years 1-3 of the Plan; Priority 2 (P2) projects are expected to deliver within years 4-5.

With the greatest number of delivery streams being in P1, it is necessary to further categorise each work stream within this group, depending on their urgency and importance. A further ranking of (a)-(c) has therefore been given to each project to reflect its significance. As the timescales are less defined for P2 projects, the goal for these projects is to facilitate promotion to P1 and the relevant sub-category of (a)-(c).

The category definitions used are as follows:

- P1(a) – Highest priority within the next 1-3 years; all resources to be directed to ensuring delivery.
- P1(b) – Medium priority within the next 1-3 years; additional resources to be re-directed to these projects as soon as they are available.
- P1(c) – Medium priority within the next 1-3 years; accepted that other schemes may take precedence.
- P2 – Long-term priority; for delivery by the end of Year 5.

The Council’s focus will be to provide support to those client groups whose needs are not met by market or social housing providers (such as Registered Providers). These groups include households requiring extra care housing, various forms of supported housing, Temporary Accommodation, or homes specifically for the care experienced cohort. Additionally, in attempt to create a new market for growth, the Council will also lead the creation of a housing product that will be attractive to young, working households, in local key industries.

3. Engagement and Review

This plan has been developed in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance, and with the support of the Director for Pride in Place and Divisional Directors. Engagement has also been undertaken with Group Leaders.

An annual review will be undertaken to ensure that projects and priorities remain appropriate for the coming 12 months. The review will not seek to re-write the plan but may update it where necessary in consideration of any relevant emerging local or national factors and influences. It may also consider additional projects to be added to the longlist and will review progress against expectations of those already defined. It will also provide an opportunity to identify whether additional resources are required in order to achieve the ambitions detailed. It also provides a space for an annual ‘refresh’ of the demand situation with two of our primary user services: Adult Social Care (in respect of specialist housing for older, disabled or otherwise vulnerable clients), and Children’s Services (relating to the need to provide accommodation for care-experienced young people, and children in the Council’s care).

The Annual Review will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing, supported by the Director for Pride in Place and Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery.

Anticipated review dates:

- **Review 1 – April 2025**
- Review 2 – April 2026
- Review 3 – April 2027
- Review 4 – April 2028

3.1. First Review commentary

Following the General Election in May 2024, the Government has made a number of interventions that directly impact upon the housing situation in Torbay. The most significant of these arguably being the revised housing delivery figures the LPA is required to meet through the Local Plan and on-the-ground delivery.

Torbay’s current Local Plan requires an average of 495 homes to be built per annum, whilst the average built in any year through the plan period so far totals 328. However, the updated Standard Method figure (excluding buffer) proposed by government for Torbay is now 940 homes per annum. This would be extremely challenging to achieve taking account of market conditions, the restrictive geography of Torbay, and limited number of greenfield sites that are considered suitable for development.

To support nationally higher housing delivery, the government has announced two increases to the current affordable homes programme delivered via Homes England. The purpose of this is to provide grant funding to help ramp-up delivery of social housing, which can make a valuable contribution to meeting higher housing targets. However, the funding announced to date has so far only provided a ‘top up’ and short extension to the existing programme; an announcement on the longer-term replacement grant programme post March 2028 is awaited following publication of the new programme after the Comprehensive Spending Review on 11 June 2025.

The evidence indicates that current market conditions are difficult: despite reductions in the Bank of England Base Rate, the cost of debt finance has not materially become cheaper; additionally, mortgage rates remain high, which stifle purchase interest and ability by working families to buy homes (this is particularly acute for first time buyers). As the whole housing economy is in effect, driven by new purchasers coming to the market, the impact of the national financial situation is that the newbuild sector remains relatively stagnant with little newbuild activity, presently. The knock-on impact of this is that s106-secured affordable homes are not provided, leading to a further economic decline and increase in demand for social housing tenures (and temporary accommodation). Furthermore, a decade of limited support to the Registered Provider sector to build homes directly (outside of s106) in Torbay means that we now have limited activity by this critical part of

the housing sector. This is demonstrated by the most recent data published by MHCLG for the 2023/24 financial year, which confirms that just 9 new affordable homes were provided in Torbay in that year. This also reduced our 5-year average delivery rate to just 31 homes per annum.

Torbay needs to deliver more homes on the right sites, to support the local population. Publication of this Plan in 2024 was the first step in agreeing how this could be achieved, within the framework of our agreed local priorities. Inevitably, there is a lag between agreeing new measures and seeing improvement in new supply (often referred to as the ‘accordion effect’) and it is therefore not unexpected that new supply will continue to be low before starting to improve following the interventions outlined herein. However, an even greater emphasis needs to be placed on driving new growth, of the right type and in the right locations, to kick-start the economy and stimulate a housing market that draws interest and investment from developers large and small, and particularly the Registered Provider sector to start building the homes we need.

A major step-forward has been taken in this regard in May 2025, through decisions taken by Cabinet and Council (with cross-party support), to create a new social housing delivery programme. This indicates that the Authority will step-in to address this market-failure and aim to directly provide an average of 75 homes per annum over the next five years. This has been supported by an uplift to the capital programme of £20.000m which is to be drawn-down subject to the production of viable business cases. The importance of this cannot be underestimated – the Council has not directly provided new social housing for 25-years. However, with limited RP-activity in respect of new social rented housing provision, it is accepted that the Council must intervene to build confidence in the local housing market, invest in the construction sector, and start to address some of the place-based issues in respect of poor quality housing, which is largely unaffordable to local households. This is a game-changing decision for Torbay; when combined with our other work in respect of the town centre regeneration sites’ programme, it will see the Council make financial interventions to ensure long-term success and sustainability in the Bay.

Through targeted delivery of specialist housing, we will also start to improve the situation in respect of providing good-quality housing with affordable care and support for our older population, as well as provide homes for vulnerable families and working households that are critical to our overall economic prosperity.

The remainder of this review considers the progress that has been made to date, on bringing some of these ambitions to life.

4. Opportunities for growth

The objective of this paper is to set out how the Council will deliver its stated priorities outlined in our adopted Community and Corporate Plan, Housing Strategy and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Furthermore, it will consider the interventions available to us to help drive the growth we need to deliver the homes required from the current and next Local Plan; it also starts to consider the additional opportunities for enhanced growth, as indicated are going to be important from the newly elected government.

The Council is committed to increasing the output of affordable homes in the right places, and for the client groups in most need. The three areas of delivery are set out below:

a) Housing Capital Schemes (Council-led delivery)

This section details the opportunities for the Council to directly intervene to increase housing output, on schemes at an advanced stage of business case development.

HCS1 - St. Kilda’s

This is the regeneration of the former St. Kilda’s residential care home, which will provide 23 new 1 and 2-bedroom homes for people 55+, all for social rent. The scheme is to encourage existing social housing tenants that currently occupying larger family homes elsewhere in The Bay to downsize, freeing up those properties for other families in need.

Responsibility for delivery rests with the Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery as Client and SRO. Cabinet and Council have approved a detailed business case, and a contract for construction to a regional construction firm has been let. A large allocation of grant funding from Homes England has also been secured to support the project's delivery.

Construction commenced on 17 June 2024, with completion anticipated in Spring 2026. Occupation will follow shortly thereafter, to local and eligible households.

Output – 23 new homes for social rent

Priority and Timescale – P1(a); due for completion within 1-3 years

- **First Review commentary**

Construction at St. Kilda's is progressing well after an initial delay arising from additional disconnection of utilities and the discovery of significant additional asbestos in the carcass of the former care home. However, these issues have been resolved; main construction is underway, and Homes England grant has been secured. The programme anticipates completion in July 2026, which is a few months behind the original assumption. Overall, though, the scheme is considered to be on track and progressing well.

Status – ON TRACK

HCS2 – Extra Care delivery

The Council has a stated need to deliver Extra Care Housing (ECH) for social rent to support older households, or households with limited current or future mobility. There are several options for this, and the Council will be working hard to establish which of the options at its disposal, is the best suited to meet the local need profile. Delivery of this product is a key component of the Council's partnership with the NHS in respect of delivering housing solutions for the Adult Social Care sector.

Such schemes are expected to be eligible for grant funding from Homes England. However, the current Affordable Homes Programme expires in March 2026 and schemes must be completable by this date to be eligible for a grant award. Homes England's advice is to continue to work-up projects over the next 18 months such that the moment a new programme is announced, grant bids can immediately be submitted for approval.

Whilst there is need for multiple projects, the Council will need to take a view about the quantum of such properties that it is able to deliver in the coming years, along with a consideration of the most suitable site(s) it has available.

Output – 70+ new extra care homes for social rent

Priority and Timescale – P1(a); due for completion within 1-3 years (subject to grant)

- **First Review commentary**

Considerable progress has been made in respect of the proposed redevelopment of the former Crossways Shopping Centre in Paignton. The previously unviable scheme has been redesigned to simplify construction and cut cost. The project team have significantly reduced the scale of the building but increased the number of units deliverable to 91. An additional priority of replacing the life-expired Hollacombe Day Care Centre within the ground floor of the new Extra Care scheme is also achievable, delivering on wider corporate objectives to provide better services to our residents. A revised planning application is due for submission in July 2025. Subject to planning and being able to secure a necessary quantum of grant funding from Homes England, the intention is to start on site in Spring 2026 with completion expected c.2-years later.

A second site at Torre Marine in Torquay is also being redesigned with an expectation that a similar scheme may be achievable here (without an adult day care centre). This

project is further behind Crossways, and a timetable for planning submission will be detailed in Review 2.

Status – ON TRACK

HCS3 - Accommodation Repurposing Project

Torbay Council has been allocated grant from DLUHC to pilot the purchase of former hotels for conversion into good quality social housing. The objective is to prove that a new model can be created such that seaside areas that have historically been popular tourism hotspots, can reverse the spiral of decline often found in such locations.

The project requires creation of a self-funding investment programme whereby Torbay Council: 1) acquires a hotel; 2) enables its conversion into social housing; and 3) disposes of the completed scheme to a Registered Provider. This would enable the Council to deliver an affordable housing scheme with very little recourse to its own capital; importantly, this means borrowing costs are avoided, which at present make many schemes unviable. Furthermore, selling schemes to RPs later (in agreed tranches) generates a capital receipt to replenish the initial pot for reinvestment into the next project (ad infinitum). The model requires the built homes to be provided as social rent, and so any Homes England grant secured would need to be transferred to the purchasing RP.

In addition to the grant award from government, the Council has committed to match-fund an allocation of its own capital. We also anticipate being successful with an additional bid for growth funding from the Devolution Deal to increase this pot further, meaning that the Council can create an overall investment portfolio to make a meaningful difference in the prevalence of poor-quality hotels in Torbay, whilst providing a major community benefit in respect of additional affordable housing for local people. If this additional funding bid is successful, a further programme funded business case will follow separately.

Whilst the default position is that the Council will sell schemes to an RP at completion, there are two possible scenarios that should be noted, depending upon housing market conditions at the time:

- 1) The Council is unable to find a Registered Provider to purchase completed units. In this situation the Council would either have to sell the units on the market and return all grant funding (at cost both financially and reputationally) or hold the stock for affordable housing with in-house/commissioned management arrangements (as with St. Kildas etc.). It would also be necessary to convert the funding strategy to long-term development finance to 'borrow against' the value of the completed project to enable the necessary subsequent sites to be developed.
- 2) A situation whereby the Council cannot immediately identify an RP to acquire the completed homes so holds them until there is sufficient stock to make a bulk sale of units more attractive. This would result in interim ownership of the assets. In this situation, grant would still be applied for and ultimately transfer to the RP (subsidising the Council's cost), and rental income would be generated to cover debt financing over the period of ownership. This is considered a more likely scenario than 1) above.

The intention is to make these homes attractive to the keyworker sector; albeit not reserved exclusively for this client group to ensure compliance with the Homes England Capital Funding Guide. The likelihood is that schemes will largely generate 1- and 2-bedroom flats. The first site has been identified and an offer accepted for the turnkey acquisition of up to 14 flats and a detailed financial appraisal is being presented to Capital & Growth Board in August 2024. If endorsed, it will proceed to Cabinet and Council to obtain the necessary delegations to proceed. Once secured, attention will move to the second and subsequent sites.

Priority and Timescale – P1(a); due for completion within 1-3 years (subject to grant)

- **First Review commentary**

A number of achievements have been made in respect of the Accommodation Repurposing Programme, since adoption of this Plan. We have:

- Exchanged contracts to deliver the first 14-homes for the programme at the former Brampton Court Hotel in Torquay.
- The Council has secured an allocation of grant to deliver the Brampton Court Hotel scheme as 100% social housing.
- A broadening of scope of the Accommodation Repurposing model has been agreed such that it will be used to describe any council-led social housing redevelopment of brownfield land, with a specific delivery stream within this being ‘Hotels to Homes’ to encompass former leisure accommodation.
- Acquired the former Seabury Hotel site in Torquay, which is currently being demolished in preparation for redevelopment. The site has a consent for 14 homes but could be varied make better use of the land available. The target is to submit a revised planning application in late winter 2025 for 100% social housing.
- Additional grant from the Devon and Torbay CCA has been secured to increase the level of social housing output achievable.
- A proposal has been adopted by Cabinet to provide a capital envelope of £20m to create a programme of delivery, aiming to work up to an average of 75 homes per annum over five years.

Status – ON TRACK / expanded programme

HCS4 - Rough Sleeper Assessment Centre, SWEP, and move-on accommodation

Housing Options have identified a need for additional specialist housing for local homeless and former homeless individuals. They also need good quality ‘move-on’ spaces to help the churn in the emergency housing stock. The proposal is to move towards a dispersed model, which reduces the concentration of accommodated clients in central Torquay whilst helping those on a path towards a settled lifestyle have some space, as part of their reintegration.

Additionally, the team have identified a need for a permanent, purpose-delivered Severe Weather Provision (SWEP) space to accommodate local rough sleepers that would otherwise be at risk of exposure to the elements. Currently, this is a complicated service to bring on stream every year and relies on the Council identifying a suitable large space at short notice, and utilising buildings not designed for short-term living.

A list of options is being created in respect of existing assets that could be repurposed for such use. If suitable site(s) can be identified, the proposal would be to create multi-occupation spaces with on-site management, support, and security. No capital has yet been approved for this project; should a suitable opportunity be identified, the SRO will develop a business case to justify capital investment. This is a statutory function and one that is becoming increasingly harder to fulfil, and at significant cost.

Output – c. 6 x move-on units, c.1 x shared flat and approx. 12 bedspaces for rough sleepers

Priority and Timescale – P1(b); due for completion within 1-3 years. REVISED TO P1(c).

- **First Review commentary**

Some progress has been made in respect of securing a SWEP space, with a solution in place for 2025-26 in a Council-owned facility in Torquay. Subject to review after the end of the first cold-weather season, this location could be used in future years, too.

The Council's approach to this issue has moved on since the HDP was drafted in 2024. As such, there is a need to pause work on providing a hostel and move-on accommodation until two matters have more clarity: the first is an understanding on the new funding regime for social housing (which will not be confirmed until at least after the next Comprehensive Spending Review, expected in June 2025), and secondly, until after a key discussion with Cabinet in late June. At the time of drafting, the direction of travel.

As a result, the proposal is to reclassify this project from priority P1(b) to P1(c); the main urgent issue in respect of SWEP space has been resolved (pending review for long-term suitability). The wider project remains an imperative for the authority; however, it is not currently possible to make progress on it until wider strategic and funding-related issues have been clarified.

Status – Completed / Deferred

HCS5 - Regeneration Partnership

Torbay Council has embarked upon a major programme to regenerate large areas of the town centres of Torquay and Paignton. A regeneration partnership has been created with Wilmott Dixon and Milligan; together the parties are making good progress at packaging up key sites ready for redevelopment.

The next steps are to finalise the schemes ready for planning submission; secure the capital required for delivery; and establish the delivery mechanisms for the built homes. The preferred way forward is to bring a Registered Provider partner on board to take the s106 obligated homes generated from the schemes, and secure Homes England grant for additionality on specific sites. Early discussion with RPs has generated a moderate level of interest. As the earlier phases of regeneration complete, focus will shift to secondary sites and consideration of what strategic land assembly might be possible to achieve wider growth.

Output – up to 555 homes, including target of 280 affordable tenures

Priority and Timescale – P2; due for completion within 2-5 years

- **First Review commentary**

Good progress has been made throughout 2024/25. The first site at Union Square in Torquay has been through public consultation and received a positive reception from the local community. The planning application has been submitted, and determination is anticipated by end of Summer 2025.

The Crossways scheme has progressed positively, with an increased number of units, simplified, smaller building area (including reduction in height) and improved delivery model. The revised application is due for submission by mid-July 2025, with determination expected before year-end.

Torre Marine has been deferred, whilst resources have been utilised to focus on progressing Crossways.

The Strand is progressing at pace and has been received positively by the public. The necessary land acquisitions and negotiations are nearly complete to assemble the full site.

Victoria Square is less advanced; however, work is now beginning to ramp up again, with the primary activity now considering what/how many health-related uses the site may be able to accommodate to support our partners in the NHS and improve the sustainability of the town centre.

Work to accelerate the Lower Union Lane site is not expected to commence at pace until the outcome of the Union Square application has been determined, and we have clarity on

available subsidy pots to help a) clear and prepare the site, and b) fund any affordable housing on the site.

Whilst individual projects are progressing at a speed appropriate for the individual locations, the other area of work for the authority is to identify appropriate funding resources to deliver the programme. Recognising that The Strand is purely commercial; that Crossways and Torre Marine will be 100% affordable housing; and that Union Square, Lower Union Lane and Victoria Square will comprise a range of tenures and uses, the funding solution needs to be specific to meet the needs of each site. Work is currently underway to identify the most appropriate source (and quantum) of funding necessary to facilitate successful delivery; this may include grant funding from Homes England or MHCLG, traditional debt financing or other innovative forms of investment finance.

Status – ON TRACK

b) New Specialist Housing (Council-led delivery)

The Council's general position is that Registered Providers should normally provide new affordable homes. There are some circumstances, however, where the Council agrees that it may be the most appropriate organisation to intervene to solve a specific issue; the sections below therefore identify those additional delivery themes that will be undertaken by the Council, which would lead to further direct construction of new housing for specialist client groups.

NSH1 - Strategic Asset Review

The Council is the freeholder of many land and property assets. The majority are in effective, long-term use; however, it is appropriate to consider whether there are options to generate disposal receipts or re-use the buildings for specialist client groups. NSH1 proposes a review of the Council's assets to understand what income generation and cost avoidance options the existing estate might support. Where appropriate, sites will be brought forward to meet the accommodation needs of one of the specialist categories identified at the start of this paper, using the most appropriate means to deliver homes on the specific site. This might include traditional or potentially Modern Methods of Construction (where appropriate). Where it is identified that the Council does not own a suitable asset, land acquisitions may be considered. Homes delivered will typically be provided for social rent, Temporary Accommodation, or move-on housing.

Where the Authority determines that an asset is no longer required, release to the market – or other public sector partners – may be considered to stimulate third-party delivery and generate a capital receipt.

Output – review of asset holdings to inform delivery pipeline

Priority and Timescale – P1(c); due for completion within 1-3 years

- **First Review commentary**

The Council has recently announced a restructure of the Place Directorate, following integration of the former Torbay Development Agency into the Council. The proposal – out to consultation as at the time of this First Review – is for the strategic landlord and asset management function to move from Place to the Finance Directorate; as such it has only been possible to make limited progress on this matter so far.

However, there are positive movements already, including the identification of 1-2 sites that have potential for redevelopment as part of the Council's growing self-delivered programme; and at least 1 site identified that would be suitable for release to a Registered Provider partner. Further work will take place on this objective in 2025/26.

Status - Deferred

NSH2 - TA Acquisition programme

The most effective option to address the current pressure on TA budgets is to acquire a small stock of new homes for direct allocation. This would reduce or prevent the use of non-commissioned B&Bs, which are both expensive and have limited options for the Council to recover cost; there are also tight restrictions in respect of the length of time that a household with children can reside in such insecure forms of emergency housing.

The proposal is to acquire a further small stock of additional homes to complement those acquired recently through the SimplyPhi Programme, to provide additional space for Housing Options. This will address the lack of provision from the open market for single person accessible accommodation, or other adapted properties to meet specific client need. There is also a requirement an additional requirement to accommodate local homeless families where a housing duty does not apply, but they become the responsibility of Children’s Services. This will be funded in part from the underspend from Phase 1, as well as making an additional capital ask to Council. These homes will be held specifically as Temporary Accommodation and not used as social housing.

The cost of ‘spot purchasing’ such accommodation is expensive and often unavailable, posing challenges to the sufficiency of supply. The saving of providing temporary accommodation by owning a 3-bed property, for example, compared to spot purchase is £16,800p.a. For a 1-bedroom self-contained homes, this is £3,000p.a.; for a 4-bed HMO (exc. Housing Benefit subsidy of 90% LHA). This includes all loan repayments, repairs and management etc.

Output – c.12 new homes for Temporary Accommodation

Priority and Timescale – 1b; due for completion within 1-3 years

- **First Review commentary**

The Council has recently successfully attracted an allocation of grant funding from MHCLG to acquire 4 newbuild units, of which 3 must be for temporary accommodation. Work is now underway to identify the most suitable locations to deliver these, with completion of acquisitions required by March 2026.

Proposals to deliver the remainder of this accommodation will follow in due course.

Status – ON TRACK

NSH3 - Off the Shelf Acquisitions

In addition to NSH3 above, it would be advantageous to acquire a further small stock of newbuild homes for use as social rented housing, as:

1. There would be a dedicated stock of council-owned homes, specifically to house families that find themselves stuck in insecure TA. This would free-up the TA property for another vulnerable household.
2. Such homes could be used to directly house families that would otherwise be accommodated in expensive TA, giving them a permanent home that they can afford and significantly improving outcomes for them. Due to a lack of move-on accommodation, TA provision is of significant risk of becoming blocked.
3. It would lead to a reduction in rent subsidy losses incurred between the actual cost of TA provision, and 90% of LHA rate, when used as temporary accommodation.
4. Where homes acquired are purchased for social rent, they can be part-funded by Homes England grant. With typical grant rates currently in excess of £100,000 per home, this means that the net

cost to the council is considerably lower than purchasing homes for TA, which is not eligible for grant funding.

The recommendation would be to acquire up to 10 newbuild homes per annum (based on latent/emerging need), substantially funded by Homes England grant. Such acquisitions would be limited to newbuild homes, with 10-year structural warranties and purchased on a turnkey basis (with almost no commercial risk). If funded by grant, Stamp Duty Land Tax relief can also be applied. This would be for specialist needs and is not intended to be for general social housing purposes.

With current TA costs averaging £420-£700 *per week* for a single person (significantly more for families), but with an ability to only claim back 90% of the LHA rate (equalling £90 *per week*), it will be straightforward to demonstrate that this capital investment will make a substantial improvement to the Council's revenue outturn position and reduce the financial risk to the Authority, as outlined in brief, above. This model is also welcomed by the development industry; bulk acquisitions are attractive as it helps keep supply chains operational and support continued investment.

This proposal is linked to the outcomes of NSH3 but is entirely separate; it is also complementary in so far as it provides space for churn in the system, providing better outcomes for families in need and getting families with children into settled homes more quickly. The same approach could also be used to acquire properties to meet the needs of care-experienced young people, that are often disenfranchised in the local housing market.

Output – 25-50 new homes for social rent

Priority and Timescale – P1(b); due for completion within 1-3 years

- **First Review commentary**

This is currently not being progressed but will be reconsidered at Second Review stage. As a result, the priority rating is proposed to change from P1(b) to P2.

Status – deferred until 2026/27

NSH4 - Surplus Partner Assets

RPs – in the current market – typically only consider developing sites that can provide 15+ new homes. Some RPs (notably Sanctuary; the Council's LSVT partner) own a number of under-used/dilapidated land assets in Torbay that have potential for residential redevelopment, but which are too small to meet this threshold.

There are options to make better use of these land assets: the Council could financially incentivise RPs (through direct grant provision) to work up packages of small sites, if/where there is a degree of partner interest. Where no interest exists, the Council could explore the (re-)acquisition any suitable small sites that has potential for meaningful re-use for a priority need/specialist housing cohort. A small, targeted pilot will be explored with Sanctuary (in the first instance) to test their appetite.

Following the recent LGA action plan, the wider public sector should put greater emphasis on releasing surplus assets to other parts of the public sector that can make better use of that resource to support a common goal and so opportunities to deliver positive housing outcomes on wider public sector assets will also be explored.

Output – 25 new affordable homes

Priority and Timescale – P1(c); due for completion within 1-3 years

NSH5 – Infill sites

In light of recent changes to housing targets by central government, the Council needs to look at ways to encourage growth on some small infill sites, too. With the focus of Council-delivered housing to be on brownfield sites, it is not anticipated that this will deliver a large number of homes; however, it is appropriate to include here, for completeness.

Two such sites have been identified to date, including “Site 1” - a small parcel of council-owned infill land that could be repurposed into social rented housing on a site too small for an RP, but which can help us meet a local need for disabled adapted accommodation to support Adult Social Care service.

“Site 2”, if approved, will see the Council acquire a land parcel from a valued partner, to help address the need for more housing for local people.

Output – 40 new affordable homes

Priority and Timescale – P1(c); due for completion within 2-4 years

- **First Review commentary**
Added at First Review stage

Status – New project

c) Delivery Through Partners

Cabinet’s ambition is to stimulate the market to deliver housing. Whilst current macro-economic pressures impact upon our short-term ability to enable this, there are options available to support partners to deliver more homes in the medium to long-term.

DTP1 - Strategic Land Assembly and Release

The Council will release surplus developable assets to the market. The objective will be to maximise capital receipts in conjunction with increasing the delivery rates of affordable homes. ‘Additionality’ (extra affordable homes delivered through Homes England grant) may also be secured where appropriate.

The Council may also consider – particularly where grant funding is available – acquiring brownfield land specifically for remediation or servicing, to enable wider growth by others. Such sites should generate receipts to at least cover the Council’s cost of investment and release. In extraordinary circumstances, the Council may need to make use of the full suite of statutory powers it has (including Compulsory Purchase). This may be considered where there is a demonstrable benefit for such an intervention.

Output – c.100-150 new homes

Priority and Timescale – P2; due for completion within 4-5 years

- **First Review commentary**
The only site identified for release so far, at Preston Down Road, is going through the sale/due diligence process at present. Current information suggests that the land transaction will take place in Summer 2025.

Work has not yet started on releasing further sites to the market.

Status – Underway; delayed

DTP2 - Proactive Enabling Service

The Local Authorities with the most successful sustained records of affordable housing delivery have dedicated teams of Housing Enabling officers, who specialise in the following activities:

- Proactive consultee to the Local Planning Authority, providing technical advice on residential development applications and viability, over (and close to) minimum affordable housing thresholds;
- Hands-on approach to unlocking stalled sites – maintaining clear, and robust data on available sites; with an objective to try match these with RPs/ socially-minded developers;
- Close working with Homes England to identify opportunities to meet national funding opportunities, and support RP scheme bids when submitted;
- Support CLT/CLH & Neighbourhood Plan groups with community-led housing proposals;
- Working with developers to secure early delivery of affordable homes;
- Proactive identification of opportunities for investment of off-site contributions;
- Undertaking detailed housing need surveys to better understand the local housing need profile;
- Community engagement to build awareness of need, and signposting opportunities for delivery;
- Identifying new funding streams and programmes to enable growth;
- Building a robust evidence base of supply, demand, opportunity, and partner capacity, to understand the balance of need and inform future Local Plans;
- Identify opportunities to make better use of schemes, or land;
- Develop robust housing policies to secure the maximum level of on/off-site affordable housing;
- Technical expertise, to provide place-leadership, locally, regionally and nationally.

Torbay Council has not had this resource for many years. The recruitment of a new Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery is an essential first step, but additional specialist resources will be necessary for the Council's ambitions to be realised, to work towards an incremental (and meaningful) increase in new supply.

The five-year average affordable housing output in Torbay is just 31 affordable homes per annum – this is extremely low. Enabling activities take time to come to fruition and rely on the willingness of partners: as such, there will be a lag before growth will be seen in annual performance. Nevertheless, if this plan is endorsed, the target will be to facilitate an uplift against the rolling average 5-year delivery figure. By the end of year 3, the first effects of a proactive strategy should start to be seen, so the Annual Reviews at the start of Years 4 and 5 will consider whether the figure should be rebased, taking account of current market conditions.

Output – 5% increase in rolling average 5-year affordable housing output, per annum

Priority and Timescale – P1(a); due for completion within 1-3 years

- **First Review commentary**

The Council has started recruiting a new Housing Delivery Team, which includes the first dedicated Housing Enabler for many years. New relationships are in their infancy, and it will take time for the new way of encouraging growth to generate a meaningful benefit; however, the early signs are positive with an approach from a new Registered Provider who is keen to start working in Torbay, if sufficient help can be provided to commence a small delivery pipeline.

It should also be noted that from this year (2025-26) the Council's first direct interventions will also start to show in the annual performance figures. Schemes at St. Kilda's, Brampton Court, Seabury and Crossways etc., will help to increase the annual 5-year supply rate, leading to a more sustainable Torbay.

Status – On track

The local YMCA have secured an allocation of grant from the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP) to deliver specialist supported housing in Torbay. YMCA are entirely responsible for the project's delivery; however, there is a supporting role for the Council in terms of assisting with site identification etc.

The approved bid requires YMCA to provide 32 supported accommodation units for young people at risk of homelessness, as part of a 4-stage pathway to independent living.

Output – 8-20 new affordable homes

Priority and Timescale – P1(a); due for completion within 1-3 years

- **First Review commentary**

YMCA have experienced some delays but are progressing with on-site works at their sites. We expect the first new homes to come on stream in the coming months.

Status – On track

DTP4 – Local Planning Policy review

Torbay has an adopted Local Plan, but a review is just being commenced to update policies to take account of the current national and local position. Through this work, it is imperative that we make the changes to policy necessary to make the planning system deliver more affordable housing for local people. This should not change the overall amount of growth in Torbay but should direct a greater proportion of it to provide the homes that local people need.

An example of such a change could be to consider bringing our affordable housing thresholds in the urban area back in line with the national policy position of seeking a contribution from schemes of 11-units or more (as opposed to the current 15-unit threshold).

- **First Review commentary**

Despite the change to headline numbers required and the announcement of Local Government Reorganisation, the Council is progressing as far as it is able with delivery of its new Local Plan.

In advance of this, however, a Chief Planning Officer Advice note has been published which clarifies some planning inconsistencies and helps increase the proportion of sites that can be targeted to deliver affordable housing.

Status – ON TRACK

6. Housing Management

The Council's position is currently that it does not want to become a long-term social landlord. The proposal instead is that the Council should make capital interventions to stimulate growth; get new schemes built and seek a partner(s) to take on the ownership and management at appropriate points. It is unlikely that the Council will be able to sell individual sites as/when construction complete, as this is not an attractive proposition for an incoming RP. It is more likely that the Council will be able to sell batches of homes to an RP over time. As a result, there is a likelihood that the Council will need to take interim or medium-term management responsibility after construction completion. For financial modelling purposes, officers will ensure schemes are viable for the Council's investment on both a notional 5-year deferred disposal, and a long-term development finance model, in the event that it's not possible to find an RP purchaser. Where long-term ownership is inevitable, officers will also consider opportunities to externalise management responsibility, paid for through rental income, to reduce the obligations on Torbay Council.

- **First Review commentary**
No update required at this Review.

7. Housing Delivery Resourcing Plan

This Housing Delivery Plan is ambitious, both in terms of the targets for council growth and the goal to increase output through partners. It will be impossible to achieve these ambitions without a specialist team to undertake the work required.

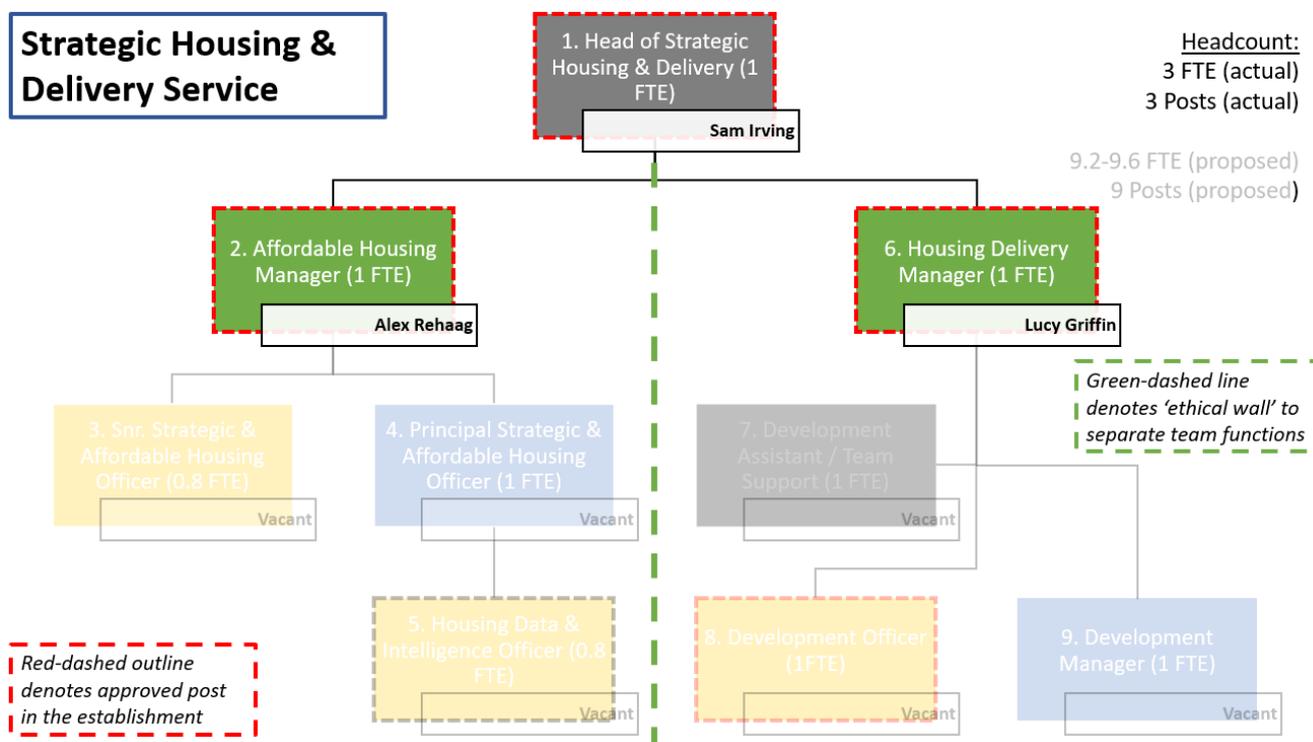
A multi-disciplinary team structure has been developed to reflect the different approaches needed. This includes:

- a dedicated ‘Enabling Team’, comprising officers committed to the activities outlined in the DTP section; this also ties with the recent Devon Housing Commission [report](#), which strongly recommends that housing enabling services should be ‘at the heart of Local Authorities’. Combined with;
- a skilled in-house Delivery Team to manage those direct capital interventions outlined in the HCS and NCH sections, above.

The teams need to work within a joint overall vision for growth, but the expertise required is quite different. It should also be noted that there is a critical need to separate the two functions by an ‘ethical wall’ through the Head of Service to prevent any conflict (or perceived conflict) of interest between the functions. This is because the Enabling Team will deal with regulatory issues supporting the LPA; whereas the Development Team deal with quasi-commercial activities requiring consideration by the LPA. A need for such separation is common and there are established models for how this can be managed effectively.

The proposed structure is outlined in [Figure 1](#) below:

Figure 1 – Strategic Housing structure



Updated May 2025

The structure above is considered the minimum size necessary to deliver the extent of growth outlined in this paper. Recruitment would be phased to ensure that staff only join as and when projects commence, and the additional capacity is required. If we can manage to deliver all the outcomes of this paper with a smaller number of staff resources, we will. Such a structure also offers excellent growth and promotion

opportunities for staff elsewhere within Torbay Council with relevant skills and expertise. It also gives us the capacity we need to take a leading role in the emerging CCA’s response to Housing, and the additional delivery that is likely to come forward as a result.

- **First review commentary**

The first two posts have been filled in the structure with the Affordable Housing Manager and Housing Delivery Officer now in post.

Support has now been given to commence recruitment of further posts in the structure, and it is anticipated that two further members of staff will be in place by the time of the Second Review.

8. Assurance

Due to the volume of housing projects in train and envisaged through this Delivery Plan, a new Housing Capital Programme (sub-)Board (HCPB) will be created. This will have operational oversight of all social housing delivery projects, with the appropriate expertise to provide honest, objective assurance to Capital & Growth Board. HCPB will be chaired by the Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery as the Council’s housing delivery specialist, supported by the delivery management personnel, external resources (where required), the capital programme manager, and representatives from finance, legal, PR and commercial services, as set out below.

Name	Title	Project Role / Area of Expertise
David Edmondson	Divisional Director – Planning, Housing & Climate Emergency	Chair
Sam Irving	Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery	Senior Responsible Officer (programme)
Neil Edwards	Interim Development Consultant	Development Manager
Lucy Griffin	Housing Delivery Manager	Development Manager
Lianne Hancock	Head of Housing Options	Housing need, lettings
Patrick Rafferty	Capital Programme Manager	Alignment with capital strategy and governance
Andrew Sherry	Head of Finance	Financial oversight and scrutiny
Tracey Field	Head of Commercial Services	Alignment with commercial strategy & CPRs
Ed Oldfield	Engagement and Comms Officer	PR (as required)
Cllr. Alan Tyerman	Cabinet member for Housing & Finance	Political alignment and oversight

Table 4 - Programme Board

HCPB’s principal role is to provide meaningful technical assurance and scrutiny of housing-related projects; to consider the role of subsidy (and the most appropriate form); relevant industry best-practice and benchmarking; and routes to delivery. Creation of this Board empowers its members to develop technical familiarity with social housing, increasing our corporate knowledge and delivery potential. Individual scheme officers will also be robustly challenged to explain the reasons for any out of tolerance slippage and the development of appropriate recovery plans.

HCPB will report up to Capital & Growth Board, such that there is always corporate oversight of how projects are moving forward. This reporting up process also allows for the escalation of matters that require a wider corporate decision. Monitoring and performance reporting will be facilitated through monthly highlight reports (per project), delivered to the Housing Capital Programme Board, summarised for C&GB.

- **First Review commentary**

Housing Capital Programme Board has been formed and is working well. The Board meet monthly and consider new schemes for onward endorsement to C&GB or Cabinet/Council as appropriate. They also consider the financial position of each scheme in the programme, and review risks/progress of the scheme against targets. The model of moving to a centralised single board structure for all relevant housing schemes is efficient and effective, with the model now being replicated for a Climate Change Programme Board, too.

Appendix 1 - Housing Delivery Plan Programme Monitor – FIRST REVIEW

Project Ref.	Scheme name	Description	Output	SRO / client	Project Lead	Project Start	Project Completion	Matters to be resolved	Operational resources required for delivery (and status)	Outstanding Risks (and likelihood)	Assurance	Priority
Housing Capital Schemes												
HCS1	St. Kilda's	Redevelopment of former care home to provide 23 no. units of social rented housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 no. units of social housing (14 x 1-bed (2-person) and 9 x 2-bedroom (3-person) flats, with management and communal spaces 	Sam Irving	Neil Edwards	SoS: June 2024	Completion: Spring 2026 July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of land to Torbay Council Resolution of Value Engineering exercise and change to contract cost structure Construction completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead – Torbay Council Delivery Manager (secured) Employer's Agent, Clerk of Works, and Principal Designer (secured) Construction partner (secured) TVH resources to expedite land transfer (secured) Housing management (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor insolvency (very unlikely) Construction delay on-site (possible) 	Housing Capital Programme Board	P1(a)
HCS2	Extra Care Delivery	Development of extra care housing for social rent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70+ units of social housing, with communal spaces, café, hobby spaces and facilities for visiting care staff 	Sam Irving	Neil Edwards	SoS: TBC Crossways – Spring 2027 Torre Marine - TBC	Completion: TBC Crossways – April 2029 Torre Marine - TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of most suitable site(s) Confirmation of funding capacity Completion of remaining design works Full cost appraisal Outline and Full Business Case approvals (HCPB/C&GB) Capital Award (Cabinet/Council) Extension of the current AHP/new AHP with eligible bid route Submission of Homes England bid Technical services contract Construction partner contract Discharge of planning conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead - Development Manager (secured) External technical PM specialist (secured) Employer's Agent, Clerk of Works, and Principal Designer (secured) Construction partner (REQUIRED) Housing management (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision about which site(s) to proceed with, for this specific product (possible) Delay on publication of new/extended Homes England programme (very likely) Schemes being unviable (likely) Increase in scheme costs (very likely) Failure to secure contractor within budget (possible) Contractor insolvency (unlikely) Homes England grant bid failure (unlikely) Construction delay (possible) Technical issues further affecting projected start on site (possible) 	Capital & Growth Board Housing Capital Programme Board	P1(a)
HCS3	Accommodation Repurposing Project	Acquisition and redevelopment of former holiday accommodation, to provide additional social housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially 18 flats for social rent (35-50 over 5 years), through conversion of hotels and leisure accommodation into new social housing 	Sam Irving	Caroline White Lucy Griffin	April 2024	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with Homes England grant conditions Identification of suitable sites Resolution of delivery model Agreement on procurement approach Identification of suitable construction methodology Exit strategy for schemes Development and endorsement of business case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead – Torbay Council Delivery Manager (secured) External commercial market intelligence (secured) Legal (secured) Procurement support (secured) Housing management (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schemes unviable (unlikely) Failure to get support for Strategic Business Case (unlikely) Failure to secure sufficient opportunities (very unlikely) Homes England grant bid failure (unlikely) Failure to secure construction partner within budget (possible) Contractor insolvency (unlikely) Construction delay (possible) 	Capital & Growth Board Housing Capital Programme Board	P1(a)
HCS4	Rough Sleeper Assessment Centre, SWEP, and move-on accommodation	Conversion of buildings into a multi-occupation supported housing scheme for homeless individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12+ bedspaces for rough sleepers A shared 2-bedroom move-on flat c.6 move-on independent flatlets management and recreation space 	Sam Irving (on behalf of Tara Harris)	Caroline White Lucy Griffin	July 2025 TBC	September 2026 TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reservation of the sites for this use Establishing suitable form of design, and mixed client group approach Capital model for delivery, utilising grant wherever possible Scheme viability Community opposition Political buy-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client - Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (on behalf of Divisional Director for Community & Customer Services (secured)) Development Manager (secured) Technical specialist – Head of Housing Needs (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political opposition (unlikely) Community objection (very likely) Planning refusal (unlikely) Inability to identify grant (possible) Securing a contractor / insolvency (possible) Quality of input from external technical specialists (unlikely) 	Capital & Growth Board Housing Capital Programme Board	P1(c)
HCS5	Regeneration Partnership	Strategic regeneration of key brownfield sites in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 555 new homes, including 280 affordable 	David Carter	David Carter (support)	November 2024	March 2028 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of planning applications for the various sites Agreement on funding strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Divisional Director Strategic Developments (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site unviability (very likely) Portfolio unviable (unlikely) 	Capital & Growth Board	P2

		town centre locations, to deliver mixed use residential and commercial opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive town centre regeneration Leveraging grant and investment Major growth to uplift areas experiencing deprivation 	(supported by Sam Irving)	ted by Sam Irving)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolving site capacity for individual schemes Reviewing unviable consents to make deliverable Investment partner for delivery (viability dependent) Application of grant funding Scale of investment and delivery capacity Site assembly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development Management & PM Team – Wilmott Dixon/Milligan (secured) Internal PM team – (secured) Legal advisors – (secured) Specialist affordable housing viability – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to secure planning consents (unlikely) Implementation delay (possible) Inability to secure viable model (unlikely) Partner lack of capacity (very unlikely) Market failure at POS (possible) Inability to assemble relevant parcels (very unlikely) Failure to secure construction partner within budget (possible) 	Regeneration Programme Board	
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New Specialist Housing

Page 19	NSH1	Strategic Asset Review	Comprehensive review of Council-owned assets to establish best use, including BAU use, repurposing for affordable housing or disposal to an RP partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A rationalised, efficient estate Pipeline of land and buildings to meet the needs of identified client groups A package of assets for disposal 	Alan Denby	Sam Irving / Paul Palmer	July 2024 TBC	November 2024 TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of assets from TVH/TDA Project leadership and client model with suitable parameters and brief A 'one council' approach to making best use of the asset base Formation of working group to be chaired by independent director Agreeing scope for review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Strategic/Divisional Director (REQUIRED) Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead - Strategic Head of Asset Management (REQUIRED) Delivery resources (REQUIRED) Heads of Service from other Directorates (REQUIRED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of corporate engagement and buy-in to the process (possible) Lack of agreement about the priority of the situation, and the need to focus resources in this way (possible) Lack of sites identified as suitable (unlikely) Lack of client capacity to work up projects on assets identified for redevelopment (possible) 	New Asset Review Board to be created	P1(c)
	NSH2	TA Acquisition Programme	Extension to the recently completed programme to provide further TA homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of additional 12 family homes, to bring the overall total up to 50 homes 	Tara Harris	Tara Harris	September 2024 March 2025	June 2025 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial model Business case and agreement on financial parameters Housing Management arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Divisional Director for Community & Customer Services (secured) Legal (secured) Housing management (REQUIRED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of proposal (possible) Securing a viable business model (unlikely) Lack of suitable opportunities (unlikely) 	Capital & Growth Board	P1(b)
	NSH3	Off the Shelf acquisitions	Turnkey acquisition of newbuild homes for social rent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-10 new homes per annum, Securing additional Homes England grant to reduce capital outlay 	Sam Irving	TBC Lucy Griffin	June 2024 TBC	June 2024 TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial model Business case and agreement on financial parameters Need profile Grant applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead – Torbay Council Delivery Manager (secured) Legal (secured) Housing management (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of proposal (possible) Securing grant funding (unlikely) Securing a viable business model (unlikely) Lack of suitable opportunities (possible) 	Capital & Growth Board Housing Capital Programme Board	P2
	NSH4	Surplus Partner Assets	Identification and redevelopment of underused assets to generate additional affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipated benefits are expected to be small; a notional target of 8-20 units is considered possible 	Sam Irving	Alex Rehaag	September 2024 TBC	March 2026 TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of suitable land assets Identification of willing partner Ability to identify a commercially advantageous way to support Planning strategy for contentious sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead – Affordable Housing Manager (secured) Adult Social Care specialist (REQUIRED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability of suitable sites, which can meet a local need (possible) Availability of suitable partner (possible) Planning (possible) Viable business case, requiring additional Council subsidy (likely) Lack of grant funding (unlikely) 	Capital & Growth Board Housing Capital Programme Board	P2
	NSH5	Infill sites	Development of small infill sites, to increase social housing delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically, 1-2 sites per annum, c.4-15 homes each. Best use of land Ability to meet need specialist housing 	Sam Irving	Lucy Griffin	April 2025	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of sites Business case and agreement on financial parameters Grant applications Land acquisitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) Lead – Torbay Council Delivery Manager (secured) Procurement support (secured) Housing management (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schemes unviable (unlikely) Business Case failure (unlikely) Lack of opportunity (very unlikely) Homes England grant bid failure (unlikely) Failure to secure construction partner within budget (possible) Contractor insolvency (unlikely) 	Capital & Growth Board Housing Capital Programme Board	P1(b)

Delivery Through Partners

DTP1	Strategic Land Assembly	Acquisition and release of key development land – serviced where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected to facilitate the delivery of c.100-150 new housing to assist the Local Plan 	David Carter	Sam Irving	September 2024	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds to assemble and de-risk land Identification of suitable opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client – Divisional Director – Strategic Development (REQUIRED) Lead – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement of the proposed model (unlikely) Lack of commercial interest (very unlikely) 	Capital & Growth Board	P2
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	and Release (SLAR)	necessary to accelerate delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation of brownfield land, with servicing/de-risking as required. 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition and Release Strategy development • Identification of public funding streams that could fund the projects or plot-specific servicing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torbay Council Delivery Manager (REQUIRED) • Commercial specialists (potentially Wilmott Dixon) (REQUIRED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to assemble relevant parcels (unlikely) • Market failure at the point of sale, affecting outturn GDVs and RLVs (possible) 		
DTP2	Proactive Enabling Service	Provision of specialist enabling service to drive growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% increase in rolling affordable housing output p.a. against rolling 5-year target 	Sam Irving	Sam Irving	April 2024	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of overall structure • Finalisation of recharge model • Job Descriptions for all roles • Recruitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client – Head of Strategic Housing & Delivery (secured) • HR support – HR Business Partner (REQUIRED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support (possible) • Inability to recruit, based on Torbay salary structure (likely) • Unsuccessful in retaining staff (unlikely) 	JE Panel	P1(a)
DTP3	SHAP	Provision of bespoke housing solutions for single homeless clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of projects to meet the DLUHC allocation, and provide new homes for the cohort 	YMCA	YMCA	April 2024	March 2025 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YMCA to identify suitable assets for acquisition and conversion • Creation of allocation policies to ensure homes are given to eligible persons in greatest need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None – Pastoral/oversight role only. To be led entirely by YMCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YMCA seek to acquire unsuitable assets for delivery (possible) • YMCA unable to secure suitable properties (unlikely) • YMCA unable to secure planning (likely) 	N/A	P1(a)
DTP4	Local Planning Policy review	Updating local policy to deliver more affordable housing through s106	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase of affordable housing (on-site and off-site) delivered through private development 	David Edmondson	David Pickhaver	June 2024	March 2025 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability testing • Review and adoption of formal policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client – Divisional Director for Planning, Housing & Climate Emergency (secured) • Lead – Principal Policy and Project Planner (secured) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan viability appraisal does not support the position determined (possible) • Lack of support from Members (unlikely) 	Cabinet	P1(c)

Summary as date of document adoption: Summary as date of First Review:

P1(a) projects = 5
P1(b) projects = 3
P1(c) projects = 2
P2 projects = 3
Total = 13 projects

P1(a) projects = 5
P1(b) projects = 2
P1(c) projects = 3
P2 projects = 4
Total = 14 projects

TorreAbbey

Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One

Update July 2025

Context

Following on from the successful Torre Abbey Restoration Project the Council, applied to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for a major grant to support the next phase of works. These works are required to provide Torre Abbey with a financially sustainable future and to further improve is the visibility and relevance of the Abbey to the local community. Currently Torre Abbey is a loss-making asset for Torbay Council, the project will provide the opportunities to turn this around to a breakeven point by ensuring the whole estate can contribute to income generation.

The Council wants to make the most of all of its assets and in recent years has made a coordinated effort to improve the condition of these assets with work underway at Oldway Mansion and Torquay Pavilion as well as support to the work of Paignton Picture House. Recognising the importance of these assets from a heritage and community perspective. Torbay's culture and heritage provides context for the wider regeneration work and in improving access and curating the site the connection for local people and visitors to these sites provides a range of benefits.

This project, known as Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One, is the first in a two-part project and Chapter Two will follow in succession. Chapter Two is likely to focus on the West Lawn, Carparking Provision, Lower Meadows and Woodland Walk.

When applying to NLHF's Major Grant Programme projects are broken down into two phases – the Development Phase and the Delivery Phase. This derisks the project from a funder and grantee perspective and internally this aligns with the Capital programme controls.

Following a successful Expression of Interest to the NLHF the Council applied for the Development Phase of Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One in November 2024. The successful outcome notified in March 2025. This means the NLHF has released funding for Torre Abbey to develop the project to the end of RIBA stage 3 and has committed to the full Chapter One project in principle. The Development Phase will last approximately 12 - 18 months at the end of which Torre Abbey will need to apply for the Delivery Phase of the project.

Project scope

Torre Abbey New Beginnings Chapter One will focus on the Spanish Barn and the former Pitch and Putt, South Lawn, and ground within 30 metres of the Spanish Barn to enable its use year-round, improve community access and conserve and repair the Grade 1 listed building.

Development Phase:

- Undertake relevant surveys.
- Obtain relevant permissions and consents including Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England.

- Recruit new staff roles – Client and Revenue Liaison Manager, Fundraiser and Stakeholder Engagement and Activity Plan Coordinator.
- Complete Art on Your Doorstep– a partnership exhibition with the National Gallery which is being funded by the National Gallery and NLHF as part of Chapter One engagement activity. This exciting, free to access, outdoor exhibition trail of iconic works reproduced from the National Gallery’s collection will run from Torquay Train Station to the Stand via Torre Abbey and the Upper Meadows. Running for 6 months from March 2026 it will have a programme of community and stakeholder engagement around it.
- Undertake stakeholder engagement.
- Develop Activity Plan.
- Communicate the aims of the project and acknowledge funding.
- Write and begin implementing fundraising strategy for Delivery Phase.
- Procure the Design Team.
- Technical design to RIBA3.
- Evaluation to inform Delivery Phase.

Delivery Phase:

- Conserve, repair and upgrade the Spanish Barn.
- Landscaping and interpretation of the former Pitch and Putt based on stakeholder engagement outcomes from the Development Phase.
- Create a new ancillary support building for the Spanish Barn and a new visitor welcome outside of the current pay barrier – to include a retail space.
- Develop community events and provision of wellbeing spaces.
- Deliver Activity Plan.
- Commission a Conservation Management Plan.
- Evaluation.

Project Objectives

- Conserve and repair the Spanish Barn to ensure its structurally sound.
- Upgrade the Spanish Barn infrastructure to allow for year-round use.
- Build a visitor welcome and retail area outside the pay barrier to encourage footfall inside the abbey and open retail to a wider market.
- Improve income generation potential to ensure Torre Abbey breaks even in 2030 and generates a 10% profit by 2032.
- Improve understanding of and accessibility to the whole site by 2030.
- Improve the well-being of the local community by providing free to access fitness facilities and access to a wider range of cultural and community events by 2029.
- Create a dedicated ongoing maintenance budget to ensure that Torbay Council can plan for cyclical maintenance and reduce reactive spend creating an overall funding spend. Note this is a contract requirement of the NLHF.
- Make the site up to 75% carbon neutral by 2030. In line with the Government’s requirement to cut the emissions of public buildings by 75% by 2037
- Manage the 100% of the site to a standard appropriate for the legal requirements of the Scheduled Monument designation by 2029.

Programme

Development Phase

Task	Start Date	End Date
Prepare Development Phase application	August 2024	November 2024

Submit Development Phase application	November 2024	
Decision re Development Phase application	March 2025	
Design team procurement & Appointment	April 2025	June 2025
Develop architectural and landscape designs to RIBA 3	April 2025	January 2026
Recruit Project team	May 2025	June 2025
Undertake Surveys including ecology, archaeology, topographical, geophysical, arboriculture, drainage, flood, ground investigations, and unexploded ordnances	July 2025	October 2025
Develop fund raising plan and secure additional match funding for Delivery Phase	July 2025	May 2026
Pre-application discussions with Historic England & Torbay Council Planning Department	August 2025	January 2026
Develop and deliver stakeholder engagement strategy in collaboration with the Torbay Council Comms team	August 2025	May 2026
Develop activity plan for Delivery Phase	December 2025	May 2026
Submit planning and Scheduled Monument consent applications	February 2026	
Art on Your Doorstep engagement exhibition	March 2026	September 2026
Receive relevant permissions and consents	May 2026	
Final report and evaluation to NLHF for Development Phase	June 2026	
Outline Business Case to Capital Growth Board for approval based on if funding bid successful	June 2026	
Prepare Delivery Phase application	April 2026	June 2026
Submit Delivery Phase application	June 2026	
Notification of success	October 2026	

Delivery Phase Action Plan

There is less detail available for this phase as it will be heavily informed by the Development Phase.

Task	Start Date	End Date
Confirmation of OBC from CGB once funding confirmed	October 2026	October 2026
Develop the project to RIBA 4	November 2026	January 2027
Stage 4 Cost plan and risk register	February 2027	February 2027
Delivery phase procurement for contractor(s)	February 2027	February 2027
Full business case to CGB	May 2027	May 2027
Delivery Phase works	June 2027	June 2028

Budget

Summary of Project Costs

Phase	Total Costs	Total contribution	Grant Request	Grant Percentage
Development	£561,352	£211,352	£350,000	62%
Delivery	£4,906,976	£1,000,000	£3,906,976	80%
Both phases	£5,468,328	£1,211,352	£4,256,976	78%

Contribution breakdown

Phase	Torbay Council Cash	Torbay Council in kind	NLHF Grant	Other fundraising including other grants and FOTA
Development	£186,352	£15,000	£350,000	£10,000
Delivery	£450,000	£25,000	£3,906,976	£550,000
Both phases	£636,352	£40,000	£4,256,976	£560,000

Risk register

Below there is a summary of the highest risks associated to Development Phase a full risk assessment can be made available on request.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Response	Date Identified	Owner	Current Status/ Mitigation/ Contingency	Date Last Updated	Status	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
5	Market failure to provide quotations in time delays programme.	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team / Contractor	Engage key suppliers early in design process. Key supply chain members identified early on through design process	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9
23	Shared access arrangements for Staff and Contractor proves problematic and disruptive to either or both parties	4	4	16	Reduce	01/11/2024	Torbay Council	To work closely with the operational team and plan through shared access routes. PD to provide H&S advice and articulate plans and constraints to the Contractor through the Pre Construction Information Pack (PCIP)	06/05/2025	Open	2	4	8

Risk No.	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Response	Date Identified	Owner	Current Status/ Mitigation/ Contingency	Date Last Updated	Status	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
34	The design progresses slowly delaying either the planning application/ decision or the tender documentation.	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team	Planning permission required to be split into two parts to divorce the chapel works due to the presence of bats. This would still be tendered as on project but phased commencement. TW to illustrate broad programme for ecology and planning for chapel works in 2023.	06/05/2025	Open	2	2	4
41	Funding not available/Conditions of funding not being met.	4	5	20	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team	Ensure funding is available prior to design progression at each gateway.	06/05/2025	Open	2	3	6
62	There may be a delay or onerous conditions imposed by planners on the project	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2024	Project Team	Works progressing in line with approval	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9

Below there is a summary of the highest risks associated to Delivery Phase a full risk assessment can be made available on request.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Response	Date Identified	Owner	Current Status/ Mitigation/ Contingency	Date Last Updated	Status	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
5	Market failure to provide quotations in time delays programme.	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2004	Project Team / Contractor	Engage key suppliers early in design process. Key supply chain members identified early on through design process	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9
13	May encounter unforeseen events (site contamination, archaeological, ecology, environmental, utility pipes/cables, other unexpected previous construction)	4	4	16	Reduce	01/11/2004	Project Team	Ensure all necessary surveys & reports are completed prior to tender package compilation to reduce risk of discovery of unknown underground items. Use the services of a structural engineer to ensure design works & advise on existing construction.	06/05/2025	Open	3	4	12
23	Shared access arrangements for Staff and Contractor proves problematic and disruptive to either or both parties	4	4	16	Reduce	01/11/2004	Torbay Council	To work closely with the operational team and plan through shared access routes. PD to provide H&S advice and articulate plans and constraints to the Contractor through the Pre Construction Information Pack (PCIP)	06/05/2025	Open	2	4	8

Risk No.	Risk Description	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Response	Date Identified	Owner	Current Status/ Mitigation/ Contingency	Date Last Updated	Status	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
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41	Funding not available/Conditions of funding not being met.	4	5	20	Avoid	01/11/2004	Project Team	Ensure funding is available prior to design progression at each gateway.	06/05/2025	Open	2	3	6
62	There may be a delay or onerous conditions imposed by planners on the project	4	4	16	Avoid	01/11/2004	Project Team	Works progressing in line with approval. Maintain close liaison with Development Management	06/05/2025	Open	3	3	9

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 9 July 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Local Government Reorganisation in Devon

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr David Thomas, Leader of the Council,
david.thomas@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: Anne-Marie Bond, Chief Executive, anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Torbay Council's progress towards developing a proposal for local government reorganisation in Devon, following the Secretary of State's invitation issued in February 2025.
- 1.2. The report asks that the Overview and Scrutiny Board use their meeting to give feedback on the options within the Council's interim plan which was submitted in March 2025, so as to enable this to be included within the overall options appraisal that has to be included within the final proposal.

2. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 2.1. That the Board provide feedback on the options within the Council's interim plan for local government reorganisation in Devon as part of the ongoing engagement ahead of developing a final proposal.

3. Appendix

Appendix 1: Interim Plan

Appendix 2: Project Initiation Document

Supporting Information

4. Introduction

- 4.1. The Government has invited all councils in Devon to work together to develop a proposal for local government reorganisation, whereby the current system of district and county councils is replaced by unitary councils. Whilst Torbay Council and Plymouth City Council

are already unitary councils, reorganisation would see the creation of unitary councils covering all of Devon.

- 4.2. The Government has said in its English Devolution White Paper that they want to create unitary councils that serve at least 500,000 people. However, they have recognised that there may be exceptions to this figure to make sure the new system works well for each area. Each decision will be made on a case-by-case basis. Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) has a population of around 1.2 million, meaning – based purely on the maths and the position set out in the White Paper - the most likely number is two or three unitary councils.
- 4.3. We are working to incredibly tight deadlines, with our proposal(s) needing to be submitted to the Government by 28 November 2025. In line with the Government's request we submitted our interim plan at the end of March 2025 (available online at: www.torbay.gov.uk/lgr) Interim plans were also submitted by Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Exeter City Council, and the district and borough councils (excluding Exeter City Council).
- 4.4. We have received feedback from the Government, who have made it clear that the submission of interim plans was not a decision-making point and that their feedback did not seek to approve or reject any option being considered. Within a detailed feedback letter, the Government's central message was to build on our initial work and ensure that the final proposal(s) address the criteria set down by the Government and are supported by data and evidence. The guidance criteria is available at: [Letter: Devon, Plymouth and Torbay - GOV.UK](#)
- 4.5. The Leader of the Council, together with the Members of Parliament representing Torbay, met with the Local Government Minister in June 2025. This meeting provided an opportunity to discuss how we are already a unitary authority and that we are delivering effective services to our residents whilst managing our finances well. The meeting did usefully confirm that there was no minimum size for unitary councils that had been set by Government and that reorganisation would be dependent upon what was right for each place. Therefore this is what we need to focus upon as our work progresses.

5. Progress Update

- 5.1. We have established a project team who are working to develop the proposal for submission in November 2025.
- 5.2. The team are making good progress against the project plan. A foundation of the work to be undertaken is a single set of data about council provided services across the County. Torbay have gained agreement across all Devon authorities to share the necessary data from every council that will underpin the various analysis required to meet the Government's proposal requirements. This data is now being compiled whilst concurrent analysis of available data is underway to ensure project milestones will be met.
- 5.3. The other fundamental component to reaching an agreed proposal is the engagement and consultation that must be undertaken to ensure the project is inclusive of our residents and stakeholders. Part of this process is engaging with Overview and Scrutiny, and it is

important for the views of the Board on the options included in our interim plan to be formally obtained. Further detail on engagement is included below.

5.4. To ensure good governance, the project is being run in accordance with accredited project management methodology (PRINCE 2). As such, a suite of project documentation has been created and will be maintained along with the workstreams required to deliver the final submission. These are all governed by the project board, which consists of both statutory officers, directors and specialist resources. The senior responsible officer is the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

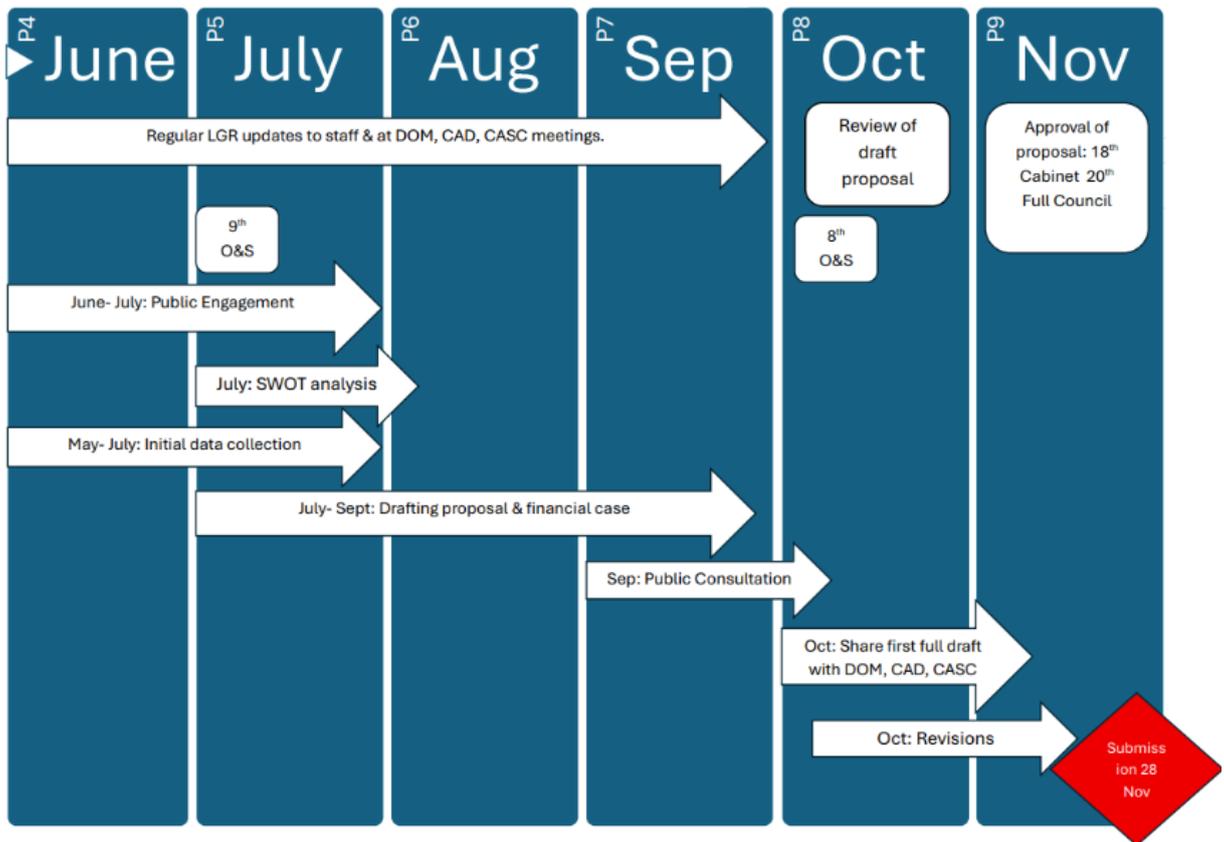
5.4.1. The top-level process we are following is set out by Government. This diagram shows recap to date from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, as well as the phase we are in now, where our proposal is due in November.



It is expected, post Government’s consultation, that the new arrangements for Devon will go live in April 2028.

5.4.2. Where any new authority is formed, a period of mobilisation will lead up to a vesting day where the legal status of a new authority comes into effect. This mobilisation period will need to ensure that the process is both safe and legal. This includes a shadow period, where any new authority’s senior team would be appointed so that roles and relationships could be established in the transition period. Indicative timelines from Government suggest that shadow unitary elections for Devon would happen as soon as possible in the period May-December 2027.

5.4.3. The diagram below shows that the project is currently in the analysis, data collection, engagement and drafting stages. This also depicts the gateways that the proposal will pass through prior to submission to Government.



6. Engagement

- 6.1. To help build the evidence base, and in line with the Government's criteria for preparing our final proposal, Torbay Council is currently undertaking engagement with residents and stakeholders. This engagement is based around the outcomes that the Government expects us to consider when deciding on the proposal(s) we put forward, in response their invitation.
- 6.2. The engagement includes raising awareness of local government reorganisation and its expected impacts on Torbay residents, businesses and wider stakeholders. Views are being sought via an online engagement questionnaire and as well as via conversations with stakeholder groups across all of Torbay. The aim is to help understand how residents and stakeholders believe the options under consideration will impact, both positive and negative.
- 6.3. The engagement will run through to the start of August 2025, with an opportunity for further consultation in the Autumn of 2025, once a draft proposal is prepared.
- 6.4. Following submission of the proposals from Devon and other 2-tier areas, Government will run a statutory consultation between January and April 2026, with decisions expected in May to August 2026 prior to a period of legislative preparations in the same year.

7. Options under consideration

7.1. In March 2025, we put together our interim plan, following engagement with stakeholders and the community via an engagement event attended by about 150 people. In the plan we set out three options, in order of preference:

- **Torbay Council remaining as it is,**
- A new unitary council covering Torbay, approximately half of South Hams and most of Teignbridge; and
- A new unitary council covering the areas of Torbay, South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon.

A fourth option for a single unitary Devon Council, either with or without Plymouth City Council was discounted at this stage.

7.2. As part of the engagement outlined above, the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are sought on:

- What are the strengths of each option?
- What are the weaknesses of each option?
- What are the opportunities associated with each option?
- What are the threats from each option?

8. Procurement Implications

8.1. Not applicable

9. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

9.1. In developing a proposal, consideration will be given to the impact, if any, on the environment and tackling climate change.

10. Associated Risks

10.1 The risk of not submitting a proposal is that other councils in Devon may submit proposals which impact upon Torbay. Therefore, it is imperative that Torbay Council puts forward its own proposal, sharing with the Government the potential impacts of local government reorganisation on Torbay.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

11.1 It is not possible to fully understand the equality implications at present. A completed equality impact assessment will be prepared alongside the final proposal.

12. Cumulative Council Impact

12.1 The Council has an ambitious programme of delivery already underway, alongside its “business as usual.” The resource implications of progressing the development of proposals for local government reorganisation will continue to be carefully managed.

13. Cumulative Community Impacts

13.1 To be confirmed at a later date in the proposal's development.

Interim plan for local government reorganisation impacting on Torbay

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Introduction

In responding to the Statutory Invitation to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government within Devon, Torbay Council is considering a range of options. This interim plan sets out our progress in developing proposals in line with the criteria and guidance provided by the Government.

The Leader of the Council has been working with the Leaders of all the other authorities in Devon to understand their positions. Members of the Shadow Cabinet have also been engaging with local authorities across Devon. Discussions have been held internally between the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet of Torbay Council, as well as with all other members of the Council, our strategic partners within our Place Leadership Board, our Members of Parliament, and with interested members of our community who attended a public engagement event held ahead of this interim plan being finalised.

Four options have been considered by councillors, our Place Leadership Board and were presented at the public engagement event. The opinion poll at the end of the event showed that respondents were not in favour of a single unitary authority covering all of Devon – a view widely shared by our councillors and stakeholders, and has therefore been discounted.

Progress towards the three options currently under consideration (as set out in the table below) is set out in this interim plan in order of preference.

	Torbay	Torbay and South Devon	Southern Devon	Median Unitary Authorities **
Population	139,300	292,000	430,000	266,460
% 65+	27%	tbc	28%	18.95%
Area (km ²)	62.88	885.8	2784.3	230.1
Council Tax Base 24/25	47,374	110,363 *	160,354	93,950
NNDR 24/25	£27.7m	tbc	£101.4m	£90.8m
GVA	£2,404m	£5,974m *	£15,741m	
% of population in IMD Decile 1	17.6%	8.4%	5.8%	13.3%
% of population in IMD Decile 1 and 2	28.1%	15.1%	10.4%	29.0%
% of population in IMD Decile 1, 2 and 3	49.0%	29.7%	20.5%	40.4%

* approximations

** unitaries and metropolitan boroughs

Once feedback is received from Government on the likely competing interim plans submitted by the Devon local authorities, a cohesive approach to developing final proposals (and the associated engagement) across the whole of Devon will need to be determined and implemented. This will enable us to show how the councils in Devon have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

In providing feedback, we would welcome confirmation that future multi-year financial settlements will include a long-term sustainable approach to the funding of adult social care, recognition of the demand for services (and increased costs of those services) in coastal unitary authorities, and the need to end “cliff-end” funding. Longer term reforms of local government finance are required to ensure the long-term viability of any local authority, whether they be existing or newly formed.

Option 1: Torbay Council

Size, boundaries and efficiencies

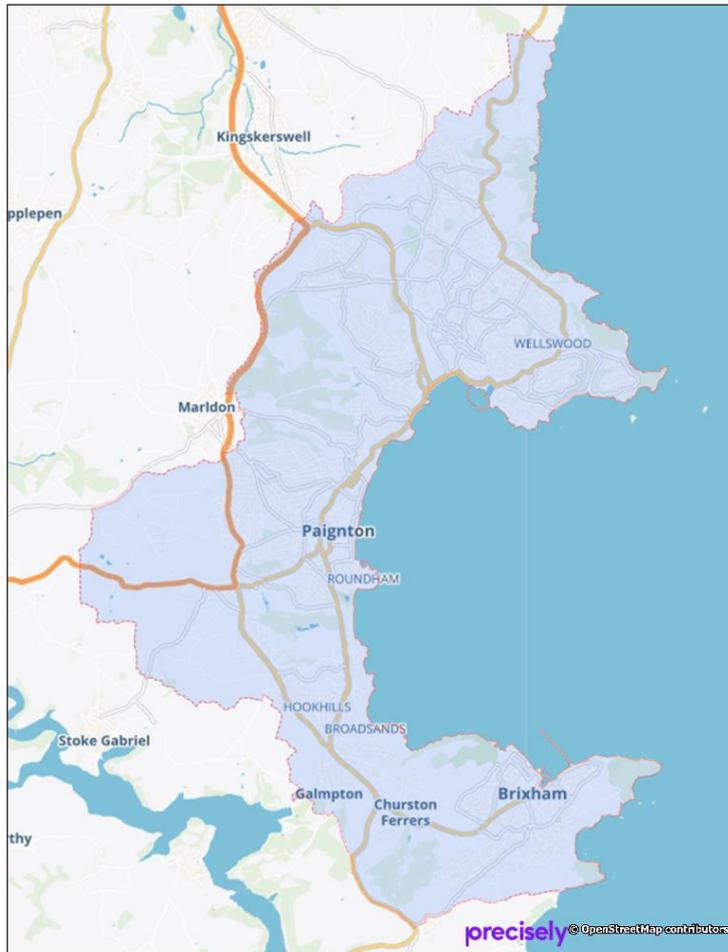
Torbay Council has been a unitary authority since 1998. It sits along the southern coast of Devon covering the three towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. It is the second largest conurbation in Devon with a population of 139,300. Annually, we have 3.8 million visitors, which increases our population significantly, and brings in £382 million of visitor spend.

Whilst we are a small unitary authority, we are highly successful. Our Children’s Services are rated by Ofsted as Good and our groundbreaking partnership with the NHS has been delivering joined up health and adult social care for almost 20 years. We operate Brixham Harbour which is the largest commercial fishing port in England, Wales and Northern Ireland when measured by value of catch landed.

Through careful financial management, Torbay Council is in a secure financial position. We have agreed the last four budgets with no significant changes to services. Not only that, we have been able to invest in our Children’s Services, adult social care and place-based services. Our Financial Sustainability Plans are helping to ensure that our high-cost budget items remain on track and that innovative solutions are explored and delivered – all to ensure that we provide the best outcomes within our financial envelope.

The creation and operation of our wholly-owned company, SWISCo, provides much improved services such as waste collection and management, recycling, street scene and parks, and is just one example how as a small, agile organisation we can make change happen quickly and positively for our communities.

In recognition of our success to date, we won the Most Improved Council Award at the LGC Awards in 2023.



	Torbay	Median Unitary Authorities *
Population	139,300	266,460
% 65+	27%	18.95%
Area (km ²)	62.88	230.1
Council Tax Base 24/25	47,374	93,950
NNDR 24/25	£27.7m	£90.8m
GVA	£2.404m	
% of population in IMD Decile 1	17.6%	13.3
% of population in IMD Decile 1 and 2	28.1%	29.0%
% of population in IMD Decile 1, 2 and 3	49.0%	40.4%

* unitaries and metropolitan boroughs

Our Community and Corporate Plan describes our mission of putting our residents at the heart of everything we do, how we will always ensure a strong grip on finances, working with our communities and partners to deliver a sustainable future. We will deliver quality services, improve our economy and protect and enhance our built and natural environments, so that we are all proud of our Bay.

We have significantly improved our Children's Services. By focussing on engaging our workforce and agreeing with them to adopt restorative practice, we have developed a recruitment and retention strategy, including a commitment to "grow your own" through the creation of our Learning Academy. Our success in recruiting newly qualified social workers as well as training and developing existing staff has achieved outstanding results with a current vacancy rate of only 13%. An engaged trained and focussed workforce has enabled real traction on improvement, culminating in being rated good across all judgement areas.

Our pioneering approach to integrated health and social care has a well-established track record of reducing staff shortages in the care sector and speeding up hospital discharges. Furthermore, for almost twenty years, the model has proved itself despite our ageing demographic and socioeconomic challenges. The recent LGA peer review report describes Torbay's Integrated Care Organisation (ICO) as "...a pathfinder and national leader, and there is much learning that can and should be shared from this experience." Our close relationship with the community and voluntary sector in Torbay, not least through the Community Helpline, is successfully diverting customers away from statutory services, with support, advice and guidance being provided within and across the community itself.

We have made considerable strides in our whole council transformation programme. Born out of advice received from the LGA to have a wider focus, the programme is built using learning from other local authorities and a systems approach – putting our communities, our residents and our customers at the heart of everything we do. Our operating model is built on the principle of consistency, rather than uniformity, to standardise and simplify our operations whilst increasing data sharing to deliver better services. We are consistently reviewing every service the council delivers with a firm focus on sustainable outcomes.

We are driving investment and making positive change, evidenced by the significant levels of investment from Government and the private sector. We have an ambitious capital programme with projects at varying stages of delivery – we are part of the Town Deal initiative, we have received Future High Streets funding and we are working with the Government in a Levelling Up Partnership. We have received Levelling Up Fund monies and are part of the recently formed Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority.

Barriers and challenges

Our recognition as the Most Improved Council was a result of making significant improvements over recent years. However, we recognise that we will always have a focus on improvement, and we have an approach in place to help ensure that we remain a sustainable council.

Having been rated as good for our Children's Services, we are now absolutely focussed on becoming outstanding and in February 2023 were awarded Registered Restorative Organisation status by the Restorative Justice Council, the first local authority within the UK to receive this award. If Torbay Council is subsumed within a larger unitary authority combining with a part of a

less highly performing neighbouring council area, whatever the boundaries, there is a real risk the performance of our Children's Services will be pulled backwards with devastating consequences for our children and young people.

In November 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a joint inspection of Torbay to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. As a result of the findings of this inspection, HM's Chief Inspector determined that a Written Statement of Action was required because of areas of weakness. With our partners we are delivering against the Written Statement of Action but are aware of the improvements that we still need to make so that children, young people and their parents/carers receive the services they need. At the time of writing, a further inspection of SEND services is being undertaken.

In addition, the Council has been working with the Schools' Forum over recent years to address the pressures on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Block. In February 2022, the Council was invited to take part in the Safety Valve intervention programme with the Department for Education (DfE). As part of the programme, we and our partners have produced, and achieved thus far, a deficit recovery plan that leads to a balanced High Needs Block by 2026/2027. The DfE have agreed to fund the cumulative deficit of up to £12.91 million as long as milestones are met during the process. To date we have received £6.193 million from the Department for Education towards the deficit.

As with our wider Children's Services, there is a risk that, as part of a larger unitary authority, the challenges currently being experienced by Devon County Council in relation to SEND, their High Needs Block and their response to the Safety Valve will have a hugely detrimental impact on the financial position of a new authority and, more importantly, the children and young people we serve.

Starting with the creation of Torbay NHS Care Trust, Torbay Council and the NHS have spent the last twenty years pioneering collaboration between health and adult social care leading to the establishment of the integrated care organisation (ICO) in October 2015.

A new five-year commitment to our joint working arrangements, through a new Section 75 agreement, was agreed by the Council and NHS partners, which will run until March 2030.

There is a very significant risk that changes to Torbay Council's boundaries would lead to the end of the integrated care organisation and that services that have been provided by the NHS for almost twenty years will need to be disaggregated from the NHS Trust and staff transferred to the local authority. Again, this would result in a hugely detrimental impact on the vulnerable adults who are supported by the Trust.

Housing delivery has been an ongoing challenge across Torbay in recent years despite the adoption of a Local Plan in 2015, dropping to 66% on the Housing Delivery Test 2023 measurement. Regeneration opportunities on brownfield land in our town centres and underutilised tourism assets are beginning to come forward, but these are hampered by viability issues. We have a national landscape designation and special areas of conservation covering the land and the sea around us, we well as the natural geography context of the bay and the challenging topography. We are focussed on bringing forward sustainable development

opportunities, particularly on brownfield sites, investing in regeneration opportunities to change the pendulum on delivery of those challenging sites. Our Local Plan Review is ongoing, and we are developing a good working relationship with Homes England.

Torbay's economy faces key challenges with an ageing workforce, skills gaps, migration of young people and high deprivation levels. However, Torbay also has a strong economy with traditional sectors such as tourism, construction, fishing and healthcare as well as those high-growth sectors including advanced manufacturing, photonics and micro-electronics, supported by the established Torbay Hi-Tech Cluster and the growing Torbay Creative Cluster. Although traditional sectors such as tourism are often lower paid, seasonal employment, they are essential in supporting growth and the wider economy. To ensure the resilience of Torbay's economy, focus needs to be on driving economic growth through supporting high-growth and traditional sectors, creating spaces and support for businesses to develop such as through employment space at Torbay Tech Park and our business support programmes. By leveraging Torbay's unique coastal setting to boost the economy and attract a strong workforce through improving education, training and affordability, Torbay can address the challenges of the economy into opportunities for growth.

Boundary and ward implications

If Torbay Council remained as it currently is, there would be no requirement to change boundaries and there would be no implications for wards within the area. The last review of Torbay's boundaries was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2018. The new arrangements came into effect at the May 2019 elections. There are currently 2852 electors per councillor.

Alignment with devolution ambitions

The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority was established on 5 February 2025. This was the initial step on the devolution journey with the two current upper tier authorities working with the district authorities to make Devon and Torbay better connected, more competitive, and more prosperous.

Torbay Council would continue to be a constituent council of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority and would continue its approach to working collaboratively with new unitary authority partners within the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority.

Torbay Council and Devon County Council have publicly stated their preferred position for a Mayoral Strategic Authority covering Devon and Cornwall. It is recognised that the national direction of travel is for there to be universal coverage of strategic authorities and a drive for these to be Mayoral. Given the benefits of a Mayoral Strategic Authority (as outlined in the English Devolution White Paper) to areas and residents, informal discussions about the potential to create such an authority across Cornwall and Devon have taken place although it has not been possible to finalise an agreement at this stage.

Should Cornwall Council not wish to join in a Mayoral Strategic Authority across the wider peninsula, the Leaders of Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council, and Torbay Council are working together to explore the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Devon. A Mayoral Strategic Authority promises to supercharge the region's ability to access greater powers and unlock additional funding for economic growth and infrastructure development, such as housing

and transport. By working together, the councils aim to ensure that Devon, Plymouth and Torbay are ready to seize this unique opportunity when the government calls for further submissions of interest.

Deeper and further devolution would bring further decision-making closer to the people of Devon and unlock unprecedented opportunities for growth and innovation.

Delivery governance and costs, plus future transformation opportunities

If Torbay Council remains as it currently is the significant costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team are avoided.

Our continuous improvement and transformation programme would continue and there would not be any negative impacts on crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness.

We already have Financial Sustainability Plans in place to improve the Council's finances and to make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.

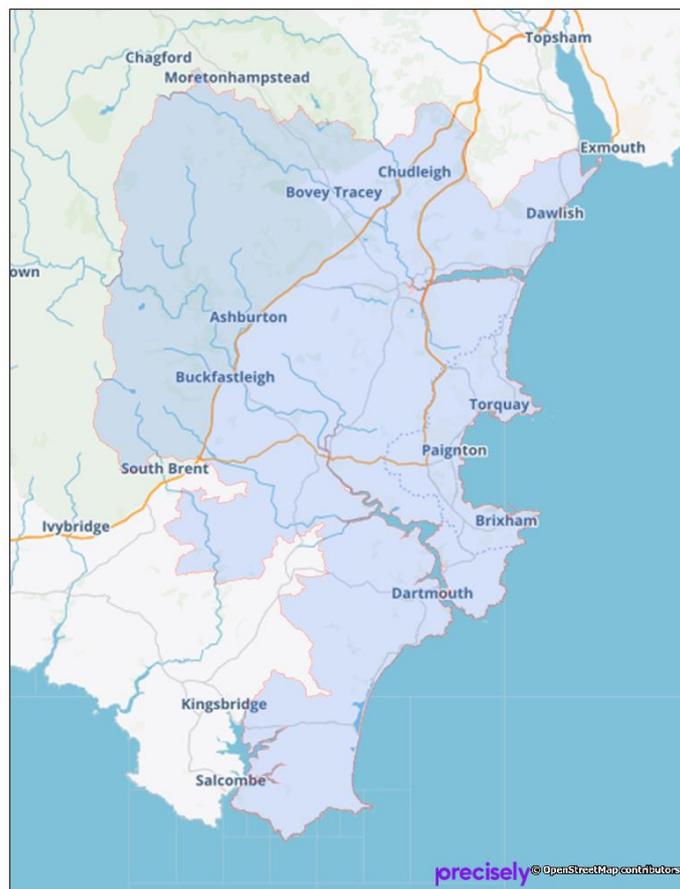
Retaining Torbay Council would enable it to fully focus on delivery our business-as-usual services and duties, including progressing quickly with ensuring we have an up-to-date Local Plan.

Option 2: Torbay and South Devon Council

Size, boundaries and efficiencies

A Torbay and South Devon Council, based around the catchment area of the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust and mirroring the South Local Care Partnership of NHS Devon would create a Council in which services were relatable to place.

Covering an area from Bovey Tracey to Dartmouth, Dawlish to Totnes and including Torbay and large areas of Dartmoor, it would serve a population of approximately 292,000 people. During the summer months, the population includes an additional 100,000 visitors at any one time. The new authority would also have increased room for growth, over and above Option 1.



	Torbay and South Devon	Median Unitary Authorities **
Population	292,000	266,460
% 65+	Tbc	18.95%
Area (km ²)	885.8	230.1
Council Tax Base 24/25	110,363 *	93,950
NNDR 24/25	tbc	£90.8m
GVA	£5,974m *	
% of population in IMD Decile 1	8.4%	13.3%
% of population in IMD Decile 1 and 2	15.1%	29.0%
% of population in IMD Decile 1, 2 and 3	29.7%	40.4%

* approximations

** unitaries and metropolitan boroughs

Building on a long and proud history of partnership working and focused around the anchor institutions of Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust and South Devon College, a new Torbay and South Devon Council would create a larger administrative entity. The area is bounded by Dartmoor National Park in the north and the South Devon National Landscape along our coast.

The new organisation would build on the strengths of our existing relationships, partnerships and networks. The NHS Trust was the first in England to integrate hospital and community care with social care. As a well-established integrated care organisation, the community sees at first-hand the positive impact that working together in partnership with other providers – giving everyone a brighter future.

The economy is characterised by world-leading businesses and an entrepreneurial spirit that adds resilience and diversity to the local economy. The area has an established marine, tourism and agricultural sector with expanding environmental digital innovation. This is exemplified by a strong fishing and photonics sector with potential to be a lead for clean growth technologies through working closely with education providers and businesses.

We are home to the highly regarded South Devon College which delivers a range of further education and degree level courses aligned to our marine, construction and green technology sectors. The College is at the centre of the community located with the main college campus in Paignton (Vantage Point) including Hi Tech & Digital Centre, the University Centre South Devon, the South West Energy Centre and South Devon Sports Centre. There are further campuses at Newton Abbot and Torquay (the Centre for Health & Care Professionals) and the Noss Marine Academy in Kingswear.

The Torbay and South Devon authority would be well connected by strategic road and rail networks, providing the critical arteries that support and sustain both the local and regional economy.

As an existing unitary authority, Torbay Council has a solid foundation on which to expand and form the basis for a new Torbay and South Devon Council. The LGA in its 2024 Corporate Peer Challenge recognised that the Council has demonstrated “drive, determination and delivery across a number of spheres” – further, the Council is a “good local and regional partner” and a “confident and influential organisation”.

Torbay’s pioneering approach to integrated health and social care has a well-established track record of reducing staff shortages in the care sector and speeding up hospital discharges. Furthermore, for almost twenty years, the model has proved itself despite Torbay’s ageing demographic and socioeconomic challenges. The recent LGA peer challenge report (adult social care preparation for assurance) describes Torbay’s Integrated Care Organisation (ICO) as “...a pathfinder and national leader, and there is much learning that can and should be shared from this experience.”

As described earlier, Torbay Council’s Children’s Services are rated as good and we are delivering against our SEND Written Statement of Action and our Safety Valve Agreement. Whilst the risks remain of performance declining within a larger unitary authority, these can be more easily mitigated on a smaller geography than a single unitary authority for the whole of Devon.

In many cases, other upper tier functions are already shared or joined up with the current county council - trading standards is delivered by the Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service; library services are delivered by Libraries Unlimited on behalf of Devon County Council and Torbay Council; and, across Devon, the majority of waste that isn't reduced, reused, recycled or composted is sent to one of two energy recovery facilities either in Exeter or Plymouth. Having developed a Joint Local Transport Plan with the county council in the past, the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority is now the Local Transport Authority.

An operating model built on the principle of consistency, rather than uniformity is scalable across the area and we will work to standardise and simplify our operations whilst increasing data sharing to deliver better public services. Shared customer service standards will ensure that our staff and customers have clear expectations.

The new authority would align its geography with the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust and the South Local Care Partnership of NHS Devon, as well as a significant part of the catchment area for South Devon College. We believe that Torbay's approach to integrated health and social care is part of the answer to the Government's challenge of reforming NHS and social care and would hope that appropriate support is available to expand the integration to cover the wider geography of a new unitary authority.

The new council would remain aligned to existing services delivered by Devon and Cornwall Police (with the boundaries being broadly in line with the South Devon policing area) and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue.

Barriers and challenges

The challenges described in Option 1 remain with this proposal although the potential for growth helps to outweigh them. However, the potential expansion of Plymouth City Council and Exeter City Council will have an impact on the levels of growth that can be achieved within this Option.

Within a largely rural county, the potential for economic and housing growth can be limited. In developing proposals for multiple unitary authorities, careful consideration will need to be given to the potential for economic and housing growth, which does not disadvantage the other unitary authorities.

We recognise that broadening Torbay Council's current boundaries may not result in a substantial change on delivery against housing targets as neighbouring areas suffer similar constraints to Torbay, however we will look to work closely with the Combined County Authority, and any Strategic Authority in due course, to plan for housing growth distributed appropriately across the area, providing the right developments, with the right housing type in the right locations.

In developing a full proposal, Torbay Council will give consideration to the criteria set out by the Minister in his letter of 5 February 2025. In order to do this, it is essential that the data held by Devon County Council on its upper tier functions is shared openly at the lowest possible level. This will help to ensure that the final proposals are based on accurate information about the needs of the populations and communities on the new authorities.

Boundary and ward implications

This Option would involve boundary changes as the area proposed covers approximately half of South Hams District Council and approximately 80% of Teignbridge District Council. In developing proposals, more detailed consideration will be given to the public service and financial sustainability justification for such boundary changes.

The initial view is that between 4500 and 5000 electors per councillor will ensure both effective democratic representation and governance arrangements that will balance the needs of the area with the guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. In 2023, Devon County Council had 10,432 electors per councillor.

This would mean that the number of councillors would be between 45 and 50 (compared to 57 currently in Plymouth City Council and 36 in Torbay Council).

Alignment with devolution ambitions

The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority was established on 5 February 2025. This was the initial step on the devolution journey with the two current upper tier authorities working with the district authorities to make Devon and Torbay better connected, more competitive, and more prosperous.

Following local government reorganisation in Devon, further consideration will need to be given to the make-up of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority to ensure representation from each new unitary authority whilst maintaining the approach to working collaboratively.

As stated in Option 1, there is a publicly stated preference for a Mayoral Strategic Authority covering Devon and Cornwall, or, where this is not possible, the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Devon.

Delivery governance and costs, plus future transformation opportunities

We believe that the indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team are expected to be circa £1,153,000 over a two-year period.

Although not yet developed, the wider implementation costs are likely to be higher than Option 3 given that there will be a need to be both a disaggregation and aggregation of district costs (as well as the disaggregation of county costs).

Option 3: Southern Devon Council

Size, boundaries and efficiencies

A Southern Devon Council bounded to the north by Dartmoor National Park and to the south by the coastal towns stretching from Salcombe in the west to Dawlish in the east is an area characterised by natural synergies.

The proposed Southern Devon authority would combine South Hams, West Devon, Teignbridge, and Torbay Council, creating a new administrative entity with a population of around 430,000 and importantly room for growth. This aligns with the English Devolution White Paper and aims to enhance service delivery without boundary changes, facilitating smooth transition.



	Southern Devon	Median Unitary Authorities *
Population	430,000	266,460
% 65+	28	18.95%
Area (km ²)	2748.3	230.1
Council Tax Base 24/25	160,354	93,950
NNDR 24/25	£101.4m	£90.8m
GVA	£15,741m	
% of population in IMD Decile 1	5.8%	13.3%
% of population in IMD Decile 1 and 2	10.4%	29.0%
% of population in IMD Decile 1, 2 and 3	20.5%	40.4%

* unitaries and metropolitan boroughs

The economy is diverse, with strengths in marine, tourism, agriculture, and environmental digital innovation. The region also has significant potential for clean growth technologies. Torbay's combination of established companies, specialised facilities like the Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre (EPIC), and a strong industry cluster makes it a prominent centre for photonics.

The new authority will benefit from strategic road and rail networks, supporting both local and regional economies. There are already plans to align concessionary bus travel within the context of an approved a Joint Local Transport Plan for Devon and Torbay.

Torbay's integrated health and social care model has been successful in reducing staff shortages and speeding up hospital discharges. We believe that Torbay's approach to integrated health and social care is part of the answer to the Government's challenge of reforming NHS and social care and would hope that appropriate support is available to expand the integration to cover the wider geography of a new unitary authority.

South Devon College offers a range of courses aligned with key sectors like marine, construction, and green technology. The new authority will leverage these educational resources to support economic growth.

The new authority will align with the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust and existing police and fire services. The council will align with both the West Devon and South Devon Local Care Partnerships, providing a platform to deliver stronger place-based interventions with NHS and health system partners. Overall, this alignment will enable improved person-centred care and deliver stronger place-based interventions.

The area has significant potential for clean growth, with initiatives in renewable energy and environmental innovation. The new authority will support the UK's ambition to become a clean energy superpower.

The proposals emphasise preserving the unique identities of the cities, towns, and villages in Southern Devon. The new authority has the potential to drive sustainable growth and improve the quality of life for residents.

The four councils have a history of collaboration in areas like building control, procurement, and emergency planning. The new authority will aim to further integrate services, delivering savings and efficiencies. Shared service models, like those between South Hams and West Devon, will be expanded. None of the four existing councils have Housing Revenue Accounts which simplifies operational synergies.

This interim plan forms part of a wider plan to be submitted by East Devon District Council, North Devon District Council, Mid Devon District Council, South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council, Torridge District Council and West Devon Borough Council. That wider interim plan is included at Appendix 1.

Barriers and challenges

Within a largely rural county the potential for economic and housing growth can be limited and needs targeted support to unlock its potential. That support is most effectively provided by authorities with a firm understanding of place and local connection to its businesses and

communities. We believe that a single Devon Unitary Authority is too large to deliver effective, efficient services whilst ensuring that services are connected to place. Therefore, in developing proposals for multiple unitary authorities, careful consideration will need to be given to the potential for economic and housing growth which does not disadvantage the other unitary authorities. The long history of working together will be continued as proposals are finalised by November 2025.

This interim plan is viable on the basis that existing boundaries are maintained, in line with the Government's approach that existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for proposals. It also provides a solution for the entirety of Devon.

Whilst we would hope that the Government would seek to extend the current integrated health and care arrangements, there is a significant risk that Torbay's current integrated arrangements would not continue as part of this option leading to increased costs and poorer outcomes. Our community networks, which do so much to prevent residents from needing statutory services, risk being diluted, in particular if there is a reduced sense of identification with the place. The impact of such a breakdown would lead to the loss of millions of pounds of added value.

In working together, it is essential that the data held by Devon County Council on its upper tier functions is shared openly at the lowest possible level. This will help to ensure that the final proposals are based on accurate information about the needs to the populations and communities on the new authorities.

The potential impact, or otherwise, on the delivery of National Park Authority functions will need to be considered.

Boundary and ward implications

The initial view is that between 4500 and 5000 electors per councillor will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of the area in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.

In North Yorkshire (the largest in England by area (8,053 km²)) the average number of electors per councillor was 5,374 when formed in 2023. Cornwall had a ratio of 4,994 registered electors per councillor.

Cumberland, another new unitary, has a ratio of 4,569 registered electors per councillor. In general terms County Councils have higher levels of electors per Councillor. The average number of registered electorate per councillor for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in 2023 was 4,852. Locally Devon County Council in 2023 had 10,432 electors per Councillor.

In line with the above, a total of 230 to 250 councillors across all of Devon would improve the democratic representation by over 50% (compared to the existing Devon County Council figures) and allow councillors to continue to undertake effective decision making, scrutinise decisions and provide effective community leadership.

Based on the number of electors the Southern Devon Council would have between 65 and 73 councillors (with the corresponding Exeter and Northern Devon Council having between 108 and

120, and Plymouth City Council remaining at 57). However, both proposed authorities include large rural areas that are characterised by dispersed populations. The analysis around democratic representation will continue to be refined to ensure that benchmarks for the geographical area being served are also considered.

Alignment with devolution ambitions

The proposal for two new unitary authorities alongside the retention of Plymouth City Council, directly supports the Government's wider devolution ambitions. The existing eight district, one county (Devon) and one unitary (Torbay) councils would form into the two new authorities providing local representation, accountability and an effective service delivery platform for the future 'strategic' mayoral combined authority.

The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA) was formally established on 5 February 2025 as part of the devolution deal for the area. The two proposed unitary authorities align to the same geography and can therefore work seamlessly to support the CCA.

Looking forward our preference is for a Mayoral Combined Authority serving the wider peninsular area including Plymouth and Cornwall. The proposed structure would again nest neatly within this wider geography with the MCA including voting representation from the four authorities. This would bring more equal voting representation per head of population than single large unitary with both proposed unitary authorities having a population that is more akin to the population current served by Cornwall Council (at circa 570,000 people).

Delivery governance and costs, plus future transformation opportunities

We believe that, from Torbay Council's perspective, the indicative costs of preparing proposals and standing up an implementation team are expected to be circa £1,153,000 over a two-year period.

Initial independent financial analysis has been commissioned and consideration given to the potential costs and benefits by using various financial benchmarks. Given the uncertainty around the savings that have been achieved in previous unitary rounds, we have sought to stress-test these savings and cost assumptions. A reasonable estimate for savings is between £3.0 million and £4.5 million per district giving a range between £24 million and £36 million per annum.

Discounted Option: Single Devon Council (with or without Plymouth)

With a population in excess of 1.25 million people distributed across 6,500 km², the geographic County of Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) is the fourth largest by area and 12th largest by population in England. Future changes to local governance structures and service delivery arrangements need to achieve the right balance of population size and economies of scale with the practicalities of the geography, culture, society and economy of Devon. Change should also reflect and enhance the communities that have developed under present boundaries whilst optimising efficiencies in service delivery.

Nationally, experience points to the fact that Devon is far too large to enable a single authority to be efficient and effective whilst retaining a sense of place and community. The largest existing

unitary authority by land area, North Yorkshire, has a population of 627,000 just over half of Devon's. Most unitary authorities are much smaller with populations between 100,000 and 300,000. The English Devolution White Paper sets a guiding principle for new councils of 500,000 but recognises that in certain scenarios this figure may not make sense for an area.

Whilst Torbay Council is the seventh smallest unitary in England, we have worked hard over many years to find sustainable, innovative solutions to the financial challenges that we have faced. The decisions which have been taken over recent years have meant that Torbay Council is not in the position of needing to identify substantial savings to balance its books.

Our Children's Services are good and our approach to integrated health and adult social care is recognised as a pathfinder. We are working effectively to stabilise the costs of temporary accommodation and to reduce homelessness. We are delivering against our Written Statement of Action for SEND and our Safety Valve agreement.

There is a significant risk that those most vulnerable in the Torbay community who rely on crucial services such as adult social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness will be negatively and disproportionately impacted if Torbay becomes part of a single Devon unitary council (with or without Plymouth).

Local engagement

Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024 and the subsequent receipt of the invitation to develop proposals for local government reorganisation on 5 February 2025, Leaders and Chief Executives across Devon have been in discussion about potential proposals. Discussions between all existing council leaders have been taking place. Whilst each council is submitting their initial plans, the development of proposals for local government reorganisation will need to be informed by a detailed evidence base that ensures that all relevant factors are taken into account.

Within Torbay, members of the Place Leadership Board, including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, South Devon College and the English Riviera Business Improvement District Company, have discussed the Government's invitation and the potential options for inclusion in this interim plan. In summary, whilst supporting the principle of Torbay's boundaries remaining the same, they were concerned that this would not meet the Government's population criteria, and that, in terms of growing and expanding, that Options 2 and 3 are viable. It was felt that Torbay offers very different services compared to other areas and this is a strength. Trusted relationships, knowledge and understanding are already in place.

Discussions have been held with both of Torbay's Members of Parliament.

A public community engagement event has been held on 11 March 2025 with around 150 people in attendance. Again, the requests within the Government's invitation were explained as where the options under consideration. An opinion poll at the end of the event provided results in the table on the following page:

Option	1st Choice	%	2nd Choice	%	Total	Total %
Torbay Council's boundaries remain the same	65	58%	10	10.6%	75	36.4%
A new unitary authority covering Torbay, approx. half of South Hams and most of Teignbridge (i.e. covering the South Local Care Partnership of the NHS)	16	14.2%	52	55.4%	68	33.0%
The 1:4:5 Option – a new unitary authority covering the areas of Torbay, South Hams, West Devon and Teignbridge, plus a new unitary authority in the east and north of Devon and Plymouth remaining as is (or with a slightly enlarged border)	20	18%	24	25.5%	44	21.4%
A single unitary authority covering all of Devon (either with or without Plymouth)	11	9.8%	8	8.5%	19	9.2%
Totals	112	100%	94	100%	206	100%

Once feedback is received from Government on the interim plans submitted by the Devon local authorities, a cohesive approach to engagement across the whole of Devon will need to be determined and implemented. This will enable us to show how the councils in Devon have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

We need to work across all existing local authorities across Devon to gather all of the necessary information in order to prepare an options appraisal for all councils to consider ahead of the deadline for the submission of final proposals at the end of November 2025.

Current working groups

There is a long history of local partners working together proactively and collaboratively. This spans a wide range of activity from community safety to joint planning and formal shared service delivery. We fully expect future arrangements to adopt this same ethos.

Depending upon feedback to initial interim plans, we would anticipate a single grouping including representation from all of the Councils in Devon to provide oversight of the development of final proposals through to November 2025. Whilst we cannot guarantee that this would necessarily mean that all partners necessarily align behind a single preferred option, it would nonetheless ensure that all proposals are explored consistently including utilising the same data sets.

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Project Initiation Document

Local Government Reorganisation programme- Tranche 2- single tier proposal

Version Control

Ver.	Date	Changed by	Change	Sections
1	13/06/25	Claire Berlyn	Document creation	
2	30/6/25	Matthew Fairclough- Kay/JP Hedge/Claire Berlyn	Review following feedback from the board	2, 7,8,9,11
3	01/07/25	Matthew Fairclough- Kay	Minor amends following review	2, 12

1. Purpose

This document defines the objective of the project and how it will be managed and how we will evaluate success.

2. Background

In December 2024 the Government published the English Devolution White Paper setting out its intention to create a single tier of local government (i.e. removing district and county councils and replacing with unitary councils). Reorganisation is also being considered for “those unitary councils where there is evidence of failure or where their size or boundaries may be hindering their ability to deliver sustainable and high-quality services for their residents”.

With the White Paper the Government has commenced an ambitious programme for local government reorganisation (LGR) in the UK. New unitary councils are expected to launch as shadow authorities in May 2027 with Vesting day in April 2028.

In February 2025 Torbay, along with all the councils in Devon, received a statutory invitation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to develop proposals for a single tier of local government for the county.

The statutory invitation set out 6 criteria that will provide the framework against which the Government will assess all proposals (included as Annex 5).

The invitation created a requirement for Torbay to create a LGR programme. Tranche 1 of the programme delivered interim plans outlining Torbay’s current thinking on LGR. This was completed in March 2025. Tranche 2 will deliver a detailed proposal for LGR in Devon. Dependent on how the Government’s decision impacts Torbay, a third tranche may be required to deliver a major transformation programme that would see Torbay become part of a new unitary authority.

2.1. Interim plans

Torbay’s interim plan submitted in March 2025 outlined three options in order of preference- 1) for Torbay Council to continue in its existing form and boundaries; (2) the creation of a Torbay and South Devon Council based on a catchment area that mirrors the South Local Care Partnership of NHS Devon (boarders including approximately 80% of Teignbridge DC and 50% of South Ham DC) and (3) a Southern Devon Authority (the 1-4-5 model) in which Torbay would combine with South Hams, West Devon and Teignbridge).

The Districts and Boroughs (excluding Exeter) submitted the 1-4-5 model- which set out a 3 unitary option for Devon comprised of: 1) a Southern Devon Authority (as above) 2) a Northern Devon Authority (combined East, Mid and North Devon along with Torridge and Exeter) and 3) for Plymouth to continue in its existing

form and boundaries.

Plymouth, Exeter, Devon CC and North Devon also submitted interim plans, making a total of 6 submissions from Devon's 11 Councils. A summary of the other Devon plans was provided in the Project Mandate.

2.2 MHCLG feedback on interim plans

MHCLG provided feedback on all the interim plans in a single letter on 15 May 2025. Headlines from this feedback include:

1. For final proposals, each council can submit a single proposal for which there must be a single option and geography, and for the area as a whole (i.e. plans must account for the whole of Devon not just their own area).
2. No option being considered was approved or rejected at this stage of the Government's process.
3. Final proposals should address the criteria and be supported by data and evidence. Proposals will be assessed against the criteria. Proposals should clearly set out how the data and evidence supports the outcomes claimed against each criteria, particularly around costs and efficiency savings.
4. A recommendation that all areas work together to develop a single set of assumptions and data set to underpin all proposals, and where this was not possible explicitly explain the where and why of differences.
5. Inclusion of an options appraisal was encouraged.
6. A reiteration that the 500,000 population target was a guiding principle not a hard target, the Government continues to acknowledge the need for flexibility around this, particularly given ambitions around devolution and housing growth. Proposals should include a clear rationale for their proposed approach whether above or below the population target.
7. Where disaggregation of services is being proposed, consideration should be given to impacts and risks in regards to crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND, homelessness and public safety.
8. A recommendation to outline how each option would interact with the CCA and best benefit the local community.
9. Boundary changes are possible but require a strong justification.
10. Potential impacts on the functions of the National Park Authority should be fully explained.
11. Further information about funding reforms should be available after the Spending Review in June, in the interim MHCLG is open to discussing assumptions further if it will assist with financial planning.
12. Joint working across new unitaries for the delivery of social care services is encouraged.
13. Proposals should consider how the different needs of rural, coastal and urban areas can be met and in particular set out the challenges faced by small cities and how these will be addressed.
14. Council tax harmonisation should be managed through the established flexible system in legislation.

15. Specific to Torbay- 'You have noted your concern that as part of a larger unitary authority, the challenges currently experienced by Devon County Council in relation to SEND will have a detrimental impact on children and young people in Torbay. In your final proposal(s) it would be helpful to see analysis, including potential benefits, risks and mitigations for the impact of local government reorganisation on SEND services.'

16. Further guidance on the level of information required around **efficiency savings**

- high level breakdowns for where any efficiency savings will be made, with clarity of assumptions on how estimates have been reached and the data sources used, including differences in assumptions between proposals
- how efficiency savings have been considered alongside a sense of place and local identity.
- information on the counterfactual against which efficiency savings are estimated, with values provided for current levels of spending
- a clear statement of what assumptions have been made, and if the impacts of inflation are taken into account
- a summary covering sources of uncertainty or risks with modelling, as well as predicted magnitude and impact of any unquantifiable costs or benefits
- quantified impacts, where possible, on service provision as well as wider impacts

17. Further guidance on the level of information required around **financial assessment**

- additional data and evidence to set out how your final proposal(s) would enable financially viable councils, including identifying which option best delivers value for money for council taxpayers
- further detail on potential finances of new unitaries, for example, funding, operational budgets, potential budget surpluses/shortfalls, total borrowing (General Fund), and debt servicing costs (interest and MRP); and what options may be available for rationalisation of potentially saleable assets
- clarity on the underlying assumptions underpinning any modelling e.g. assumptions of future funding, demographic growth and pressures, interest costs, Council Tax, savings earmarked in existing councils' MTFs
- financial sustainability both through the period to the creation of new unitary councils as well as afterwards

18. Further guidance on the level of information required around **service impacts**

- how each option would deliver high-quality and sustainable public services or efficiency saving opportunities
- what are the potential impacts of disaggregating services?
- what would the different options mean for local services provision, for example:
 - i. do different options have a different impact on SEND services and distribution of funding and sufficiency planning to ensure children can access appropriate support, and how will services be maintained?
 - ii. what is the impact on adults and children's care services? Is there a differential impact on the number of care users and infrastructure to support them among the different options?
 - iii. what partnership options have you considered for joint working across the new unitaries for the delivery of social care services?
 - iv. do different options have variable impacts as you transition to the new unitaries, and how will risks to safeguarding be managed?
 - v. do different options have variable impacts on schools, support and funding allocation, and sufficiency of places, and how will impacts on school be managed?
 - vi. what impact will there be on highway services across the area under the different approaches suggested?
 - vii. what are the implications for public health, including consideration of socio-demographic challenges and health inequalities within any new boundaries and their implications for current and future health service needs. What are the implications for how residents access services and service delivery for populations most at risk?

19. Further guidance on the level of information required around **transition costs**

- it would be helpful to provide more detailed analysis on expected transition and/or disaggregation costs and potential efficiencies of proposals. This could include clarity on methodology, assumptions, data used, what year these may apply and why these are appropriate
- detail on the potential service transformation opportunities and invest-to-save projects from

unitarisation across a range of services -e.g. consolidation of waste collection and disposal services, and whether different options provide different opportunities for back-office efficiency savings

- where it has not been possible to monetise or quantify impacts, you may wish to provide an estimated magnitude and likelihood of impact
- summarise any sources of risks, uncertainty and key dependencies related to the modelling and analysis
- detail on the estimated financial sustainability of proposed reorganisation and how debt could be managed locally

20. Encouraged to include the costs of standing up an implementation team.

Further MHCLG correspondence received 3 June advised:

1. An allocation of £383,326 has been made to Devon as a proposal development contribution with an expectation that this will be used to support collaborative working and information sharing between councils, particularly an 'effort to build a shared evidence base, including sharing non-public data.'
2. Reiteration that the 500,000 population target is a guiding principle, not a strict target
3. A steer that Neighbourhood area committees (NACs) offer the best model to maximise the structural efficiencies brought about by LGR. NACs will be preferred over new town and parish councils.
4. Where new town and parish councils are being considered they should be funded in a way that avoids further pressure on local authority finances and/or new burdens on the taxpayer.
5. Reiteration that LGA should not distract from BAU, particularly delivery of new Local Plans.

Following this letter the 11 Devon Authorities agreed to split the funding equally and for South Hams/West Devon to receive the funds and make payments to the other councils.

3. Objectives and Deliverables / Products Required

3.1 Objectives

The objective of Tranche 2 of the LGR programme is to deliver a full proposal for LGR in Torbay:

1. Following the clear preference expressed by Members and residents in the course of developing the interim plan, to develop a proposal for Torbay to remain in its current form and boundaries as a unitary authority, subject to further engagement and consultation.
2. Alongside this, as part of the necessary options appraisal, to work with other authorities in Devon regarding the options we submitted in March.

3.2 Deliverables

1. A data sharing agreement..
2. An Engagement and Communications plan for the Torbay project that can be shared as a basis for co-ordinated engagement.
3. Delivery of a public engagement and consultation programme for Torbay, feeding appropriately into other authorities' programmes.
4. Appropriate contributions to the shared data repository/set for a whole-of-Devon single data set.

5. Subject to further engagement and consultation, a full proposal for Torbay to remain in its current form and boundaries as a unitary authority.
6. Appropriate analysis and contributions to the 4's proposal for a Southern Devon Authority and the boarder 1-4-5 proposal it sits within.

The final decision for LGR in Devon rests with Government, this will determine any further deliverables.

4. Project Scope and Exclusions

4.1 Scope

LGR has the potential to impact on every council service, function and process.

The project necessarily has complex interfaces with what happens in the rest of the county and the Government has reiterated its guidance that proposals must cover whole areas. However, the tranche two project is focused on advocating for the best outcomes from LGR for Torbay, its residents, businesses, council staff and partners and other stakeholders.

In this context, it is within the project's gift to:

- To conduct analysis and present an evidence-based argument for the best LGR outcomes for Torbay against the Government's criteria using internally collected data, data shared by other organisations and other data in the public domain.
- Advocate for and work with other authorities towards the creation of a single data set to underpin all of Devon's final proposals to enable the Government to better and more fairly assess their merits.
- Participate in cross organisation and stakeholder meetings and forums as a mature partner and sensible broker.
- Conduct a robust engagement and consultation programme with transparency and according to the Gunning Principles.
- To advocate for and model a coordinated approach to engagement across authorities so we make the most of our time with senior public sector partners and deliver clear and consistent messaging.

4.2 Exclusions

- Is not within scope of the tranche 2 project to deliver a detailed end-to-end design for a new operating model for a new unitary authority. This would be a task for an implementation project. At the proposal stage, modelling for any efficiency savings, transformation costs and impacts on essential services need to be high-level and based on a well-defined set of assumptions.
- Consultation around mayoral devolution will be subject to a completely separate process
- LGR should not delay any existing plans or projects to update Torbay's local plan

- The Combined County Authority (CCA) is not within scope in terms of its current operation

5. Interfaces and Dependencies

5.1. Interfaces

- the outcome of the project may have implications for Torbay's Integrated Care Contract (expiring 2030) and complexities around this will need to be in the foreground of the engagement.
- the Invitation states that CCA timelines need to work for both devolution and LGR priorities. The shape and future of the CCA will need to be considered as proposals are developed.
- discussions around a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) may accelerate in the course of this project and may need to be considered.
- LGR will be an issue for the CQC inspection of Adult Social Care, future Ofsted inspection of Children's Services and outcome of the SEND inspection.
- as the project progresses, the value for money of current business transformation programmes (e.g. the Council Redesign Programme and PARIS replacement) may need review. Any new business change and transformation requirements, or major investments, should be assessed with LGR in view.

5.2 Dependencies

- A dedicated Comms Officer is needed to deliver Torbay's engagement and consultation workstream.
- We require data from Devon CC, particularly around essential services that would be aggregated/disaggregated in new unitary configurations (i.e., CS, ASC, SEND, homelessness, public safety).
- Our ability to deliver a coordinated engagement programme is dependent on other parties agreeing to same and proceeding cooperatively.

6. Constraints

1. Time. The November deadline and need for rigorous governance around decision making creates a very tight timeframe for tranche 2.
2. Time. The challenge and complexity of multiple organisations trying to align on tasks like data sharing and coordinated engagement while working at pace will be significant.
3. Resources. Senior officers will be leading and delivering LGR alongside BAU. Dedicated resource is limited to a full-time project manager and a comms officer.
4. Budget/Time. The Government has made some additional funding for LGR available and suggested it be used for the creation of a single data set. Authorities need to agree on the distribution and use of these funds in a short period of time.
5. Budget. Torbay does not have additional budget to increase resources on the project.
6. Buy-in. LGR is a complex issue moving at pace. Different Authorities hold different positions.

Communicating the range and complexity of issues to stakeholders is a complex task. Buy-in among Members may vary on Party lines. Buy-in from staff could be effected by the demands of BAU and uncertainty about the future of the organisation. Buy-in from the public could be effected by strong views about Torbay, or conversely, indifference or confusion around LGR particularly as it is happening at the same time as the devolution agenda. Buy-in from public sector partners could be effected by confusion over the number of options that are being discussed and uncoordinated engagement by different Authorities.

7. Assumptions

1. We will be able to recruit to the Comms officer position.
2. We will be able to get a data sharing agreement in place with the Districts.
3. We will be able to get a data sharing agreement in place with the County, Exeter and Plymouth.
4. The 2025 Leaders Agreement will facilitate decision making among Torbay Members.
5. That the Districts and Borough's Programme Manager will be able to set up appropriate controls and processes to progress the 1-4-5 proposal.
6. We will be able to build a strong financial case and narrative for Torbay remaining in its current form and boundaries.
7. The Devon Authorities will be able to create a single data set within the required timeframe and that this task will not stall progress on other workstreams.
8. That Torbay will have sufficient resource to engage with other authorities as necessary in support of its objectives.
9. That the 1-4-5 programme will follow a similar timeline and through a similar sequence of tasks as the Torbay project.

8. Initial Project Plan

May – Government feedback on interim plans

Initial engagement with internal Subject Matter Experts

Formation of 'the 4' project board

June - Steer to proceed with approach set out in this PID

Data sharing agreement in place

Proposal template development

Engagement programme commences

July - Drafting Torbay proposal begins

Data collection

Building financial case commences

August - Engagement programme concludes

Drafting Torbay proposal

September - Consultation period

Building financial case concludes

First final draft of Torbay proposal completed

October – Feedback on first draft and revisions

November - Statutory Officer and Council approval of Torbay proposal

28 November – All final proposals due for submission to Government

9. Project Cost (Budget) and Resources

Figures have been included here to provide an indication of the likely costs of LGR for Torbay for the 8 months of the tranche 2 project (March-November 2025). Only direct costs have been estimated, indirect costs have not been included. The estimate is very conservative. Actual costs are likely to be higher.

Estimated budgeted and in-kind costs- **£144,800**

Estimate of additional funding received for LGR – **£35,000**

9.1 Budgeted costs

£80,000 has been allocated to LGR for three years in the 2025/26 base budget. This will be used for salaries for the dedicated Project Manager and Comms Officer. An estimate of **£44,800** has been counted towards costs for tranche 2.

9.2 In kind costs.

Time contributions from:

1. Senior Officers – Anne-Marie Bond, Matthew Fairclough-Clay, Jon-Paul Hedge and Kate Spencer will deliver the project alongside BAU
2. Alan Denby, Amanda Barlow and Malcolm Coe will contribute as board members.
3. Tieneka Akers is managing internal comms. Other members of comms team will contribute to events and document design.
4. Staff from across the Council will be asked to contribute as Subject Matter Experts, providing, data, case studies and insights to inform the proposals or deliver ad-hoc pieces of work like arranging meetings or creating maps and charts.

Very conservatively, a figure of **£100k** has been put against non-dedicated officer time for tranche 2.

9.3 Additional funding

In June 2025 the Government announced a £383,326 allocation to Devon for LGR. It has been agreed that these funds will be equally distributed to the 11 Devon authorities. This amounts to £34,847 each. SHWD is managing payments.

9.4 Other Resources

Torbay has access to financial consultancy services from Pixel Financial Management. The contract for this is held by South Hams/West Devon, final costs are to be shared shortly.

We have contributed to DCCs work with CCN and Newton to develop analysis that would support us to understand local government reform in the context of People Services. This is intended to produce a modelling tool that would allow participant Councils to work through several different LGR scenarios so they could understand the implications of disaggregation/aggregation. The timeline for having access to a working tool is not currently clear.

10. Initial Business Case / Business Benefits

The project is required by statutory invitation and its product is a business case. As such, a business case at PID stage is not a requirement.

The White Paper sets out the theoretical benefits of creating larger unitary authorities. These will be tested through the process of assessing the options and developing full proposals.

11. Risk Log

A risk log has been in place since April 2025. Red rated risks as of 13 June 2025 are included here.

	Risk Description	Mitigation
1	The project has a hard deadline and is being delivered by Officers already at full capacity with BAU. Very little room for slippage. Tight turnaround at Programme Board level is going to be required. Assumption made that approvals will be fairly straightforward. Disagreement, complex issues and corrections may put our ability to deliver by 28 Nov at high risk.	Accept. Put in place strong PM controls.
2	Feedback on interim plans did not discount any option. There will be multiple plans from different authorities being submitted in November. Plans may compete to varying degrees. Torbay will continue to put forth the Torbay as is position as this is what our people have told us is the preferred option. If this is not the outcome for Torbay credibility with the public and stakeholders may be negatively impacted. (Replaces I4, R6,	Accept. Continue to advance options that are in Torbay's interests while supporting other feasible options, demonstrating to Government Torbay's position as a sensible partner and mature broker in the area.

	Risk Description	Mitigation
	R7)	
3	DCC's Inadequate Ofsted rating and how it may play into their LGR position. Their position may become that any option that disaggregates services would further destabilise Children's Services. This would impact on support for the 1-4-5 plan.	Accept.
4	Joining with other areas may have negative impacts on Torbay's balance sheet, quality of Children's Services and SEND provision and leading ASC/Health integration.	Accept. Needs to be foregrounded in the options appraisal.
5	ASC contract. There are a significant number of known unknowns, risks and opportunities around the future of the ICB and LGR. NHS reform adds an additional variable.	Monitor closely and foreground in engagement and consultation.
6	The time, cost and complexity of transitioning to a single finance system/s if organisations are merging. Risk of migrating data. Risks of additional costs of running multiple systems. Risk of not allocating sufficient time and resource to this crucial task or beginning it early enough.	For awareness- may become more relevant in Tranche 3. First task of mitigation would be a mapping exercise.
7	In other areas that have been through LGR some Authorities may have sold off their assets and spent reserves before vesting day undermining the financial assumptions of their business case.	For awareness- may become more relevant in Tranche 3. Having Terms of Reference or some agreement about behaviour between merging parties could be an important part of the success of any model. Further into the process of creating a new unitary the Government would issue a S24 Direction that places limits on what councils can spend on certain contracts and land disposals without previous approval but this may come in too late in the process to prevent significant impacts on a business case.
8	Exhausting stakeholder goodwill if we fail to develop coordinated engagement programmes with other Authorities.	Issue has been recognised among the CEX group. AMB part of discussions.
9	We have been unable to recruit a comms officer to a 6 month fixed term position. Limited internal capacity to cover. Issue will become more acute as time progresses.	Currently looking for candidates at other councils.
10	The work of the Four project may progress to a different plan and timeline than the Torbay proposal.	Accept. See how the Four group establishes itself over May/June
11	Any modelling of efficiency and transition costs will be based on an extensive set of assumptions. These need to be robust and realistic and achievable. There will be risks around different proposals using different assumption and producing data that's not comparable and there will be risks around assumptions being incorrect or disproved in the short term.	Accept. Manage by developing a comprehensive assumptions annex and promoting the important of shared assumptions with all partners.
12	Threat of Judicial Reviews. Risks increased by programme being emerging, that the work is being done at speed and level of resource available for the engagement and consultation piece. A review could stall a transition.	We need to manage both statutory duty and expectations around engagement and ensure that adequately engagement will all groups who feel they have a stake in the outcomes of LGR. This includes and goes beyond the protected characteristics. The equalities impact assessment needs to be robust and tailored.
13	Failure to reach cross party agreement with Members.	Working together agreement now in place. Political Engagement clearly scoped through the project's critical path.
14	Access to data and quality of data (disaggregation, accuracy) from Devon CC on upper tier functions. Includes big ticket items. Needs to be shared openly, ASAP, and at the lowest level possible.	Discussions about data sharing agreements have begun- monitor.

12. Project Organisation Structure

Project Board Membership		
Project Role	Name/Job Title	Responsibilities
Senior Responsible Owner	Anne-Marie Bond	Accountable for successful delivery and recognised as driving the change forward
Senior Users	Matthew Fairclough-Kay Jon-Paul Hedge Alan Denby Kate Spencer Malcolm Coe Amanda Barlow	Represents the individuals using the product or service
Senior Suppliers	Matthew Fairclough-Kay Jon-Paul Hedge Alan Denby Kate Spencer	Represents the interests of those who design, develop, procure and implement the products
Project Manager	Claire Berlyn	Oversees and manages a project
Project Support	NA	Supports with the administration of the project
Subject Matter Experts	Any council officer may be drawn on as an SME	Providing specialised knowledge on a topic and shares the insights with others
Communications lead	Kate Spencer	Overseeing the development and implementation of the engagement and consultation element.
Communications Officer	TBC	Drafting, leading and implementing the engagement and consultation plan.

The board is also representing Torbay on 'the 4' project board. The Governance structure for this collaboration between Torbay Council, South Hams District and West Devon Borough Councils and Teignbridge District council has been included as [Appendix 6](#).

Due to the breadth of impact of the project across Devon, authority chief executives meet on a regular basis to ensure oversight and drive collaboration.

13. RACI Matrix

[Included as Appendix 2](#)

14. Project Controls and Reporting

For the Torbay proposal:

- Stand-up board meetings 1 hour a week, 3 out of 4 weeks a month. To review open items, raise new items and for the PM to request steers. Core board members: A-M. Bond, M. Fairclough-Kay, J-P. Hedge, K. Spencer, A. Denby.
- Highlight report meetings 1 hour, 4th week of the month. A full highlight report is provided to the board. The core board is joined by the Legal and Finance statutory officers: A. Barlow, M. Coe.
- Weekly PM updates via email

1-4-5 proposal

- The 4 project (Torbay, South Hams/West Devon and Teignbridge DC) group have a weekly meeting with an agenda. A governance agreement and ToR are in place and an actions log has been set up (These controls are being managed by Torbay)
- As of June 2025 the wider group of the 8 Districts plus Torbay has yet to set up controls and reporting. Following Prince2, responsibility for this would sit with the Programme Manager.

For Torbay, overarching governance will be ensured through regular LGR items at DOM, Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Meetings. The final submissions to Government will be approved by the Full Council. The full sequence of higher governance meetings is mapped in the project plan and is determining the critical path.

15. Communication Plan

Included as Appendix 3

16. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Included as Appendix 5

More information on the EIA process can be accessed at <https://insight/information/equalities/equality-impact-assessments/>

17. Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

DPIA checklist submitted to the Information Governance team 12 June 2025

Outcome:

18. Climate Change Impact Assessment

Tranche 2 of the LGR project does not have potential environmental impacts.

However, the proposals that result from Tranche 2 may. For example, meeting the Government's ambitious targets for house building has environmental implications that will need assessment if the programme moves into a Tranche 3.

19. Health and Safety Policies

Tranche 2 of the project fits within the normal duties of the Officers delivering it, all of whom have read the relevant policies and completed the BAU training for their roles such as Use of Display Screen Equipment and DSE assessment and requesting home/hybrid working.

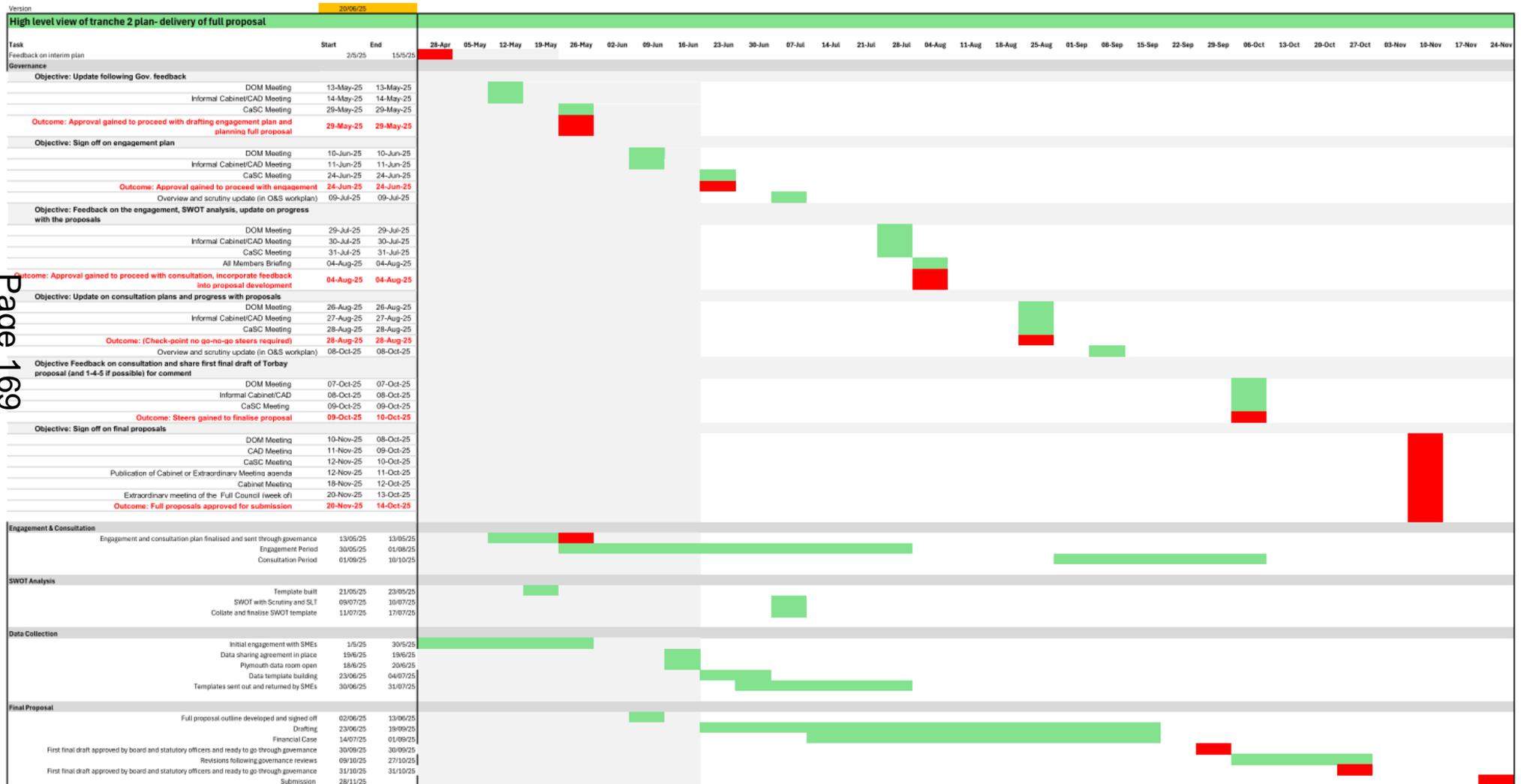
Some Officers may go out into the community to deliver engagement and consultation events. This will be done in accordance with Lone Working and other relevant policies.

As part of the corporate training programme, all staff are aware of how to report any health and safety near misses, incidents or concerns.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Project Plan

High level view of the plan as of 20 June 2025



Appendix 2 – RACI Matrix

Deliverables	Senior Responsible Owner	Project Manager	Support	Senior User(s)	Senior Supplier(s)	Work Package Lead(s)	Subject Matter Expert(s)
Project Deliverables							
Engagement and consultation strategy	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn		Kate Spencer (A)	Kate Spencer	Internal comms- Tieneka Akers (R)	
						Comms officer- TBC	
Data	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn		Jon-Paul Hedge (A)	Claire Berlyn	Demographic Maps and charts- Jon-Paul Hedge (A)	Public Health maps- Simon Baker (R)
							Cartographer- Beth Hill (R)
						Finance- Ian Rowsell/Malcom Coe (A)	Pixel (R)
						Economy/Housing (TBC)	Housing/ Planning/Environment David Edmondson (C)
							Housing needs/Homelessness- Mike Parker, Lianne Hancock, (C)
							Regeneration- David Carter (C)
							Economy- Carl Wyard (C)
						Service Reform- Matthew Fairclough-Kay (A)	Finance- Ian Rowsell/Malcom Coe (C, A) Pixel (R)
							CS- Nancy Meehan ASC- Anna Coles (C) PH- Lincoln Saregent (C)

Deliverables	Senior Responsible Owner	Project Manager	Support	Senior User(s)	Senior Supplier(s)	Work Package Lead(s)	Subject Matter Expert(s)
							Public Safety- David Parsons (C) Housing Quality- Rob Kelly (C) Waste, Roads, Place Services- David Carter (C)
						Transition costs- Matthew Fairclough-Kay (A)	Finance- Ian Rowsell/Malcom Coe (C, A) (R)
						Engagement & consultation- Kate Spencer (A)	
						Local Identity- TBC	
						Devolution (CAA)- (TBC)	
Full Proposal	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn		Anne-Marie Bond/Matthew Fairclough-Kay (A)	Kate Spencer/Jon-Paul Hedge (drafting support Claire Berlyn) (R)	As per data work packages	
Project Management Deliverables							
Project Mandate	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn (R)					
PID	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn (R)					
Risk Register	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn (R)					
Action Log	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn (R)					
Data Plan	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Claire Berlyn (R)		Jon-Paul Hedge			
Communications Plan	Anne-Marie Bond (A)	Kate Spencer (R)		Kate Spencer			

Appendix 3 – Communications and Engagement Plan

Local Government Reorganisation Communications and Engagement Plan

Version Control

Ver.	Date	Changed by	Change	Sections
1	12/2/25	Kate Spencer	Initial draft for comment	All
2	12/5/25	Kate Spencer/Claire Berlyn	Plan updated, building on the strategy for the second tranche of the project- the full proposal stage	Introduction Objectives Strategy Implementation

1. Introduction

In its English Devolution White Paper, the Government set out that it wants to “facilitate a programme of local government reorganisation for two-tier areas and for those unitary councils where there is evidence of failure or where their size or boundaries may be hindering their ability to deliver sustainable and high-quality services for their residents.”

Subsequently, the Government has invited Torbay Council, alongside Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and the district councils in Devon to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government across the area.

As required by the invitation, all the Devon authorities submitted interim plans on 21 March 2025. Full proposals are now due to be submitted by 28 November 2025.

In undertaking engagement and consultation in relation local government reorganisation the Council needs to ensure that it adheres to the Gunning Principles whereby consultation is only legitimate if:

1. **Proposals are still at a formative stage**

A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers.

2. **There is sufficient information to give ‘intelligent consideration’.**

The information provided must relate to the consultation and must be available, accessible, and easily interpretable for consultees to provide an informed response.

3. **There is adequate time for consideration and response.**

There must be sufficient opportunity for consultees to participate in the consultation. There is no set timeframe for consultation, despite the widely accepted twelve-week consultation period, as the length of time given for consultee to respond can vary depending on the subject and extent of impact of the consultation.

4. **‘Conscientious consideration’ must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.**

Decision-makers should be able to provide evidence that they took consultation responses into account

2. Objectives

The aim of the Engagement and Communication Plan is to ensure that engagement is undertaken to both inform the development of robust proposals and to build a shared understanding of the improvements we expect to deliver through reorganisation.

The objectives of this project are to:

- Share information about the Government’s invitation, the Council’s response and its progress towards a full proposal
- Build insight into what outcomes stakeholders, including residents and businesses, would most like to see from local government reorganisation (LGR)
- Understand the views of stakeholders on the best way to structure local government in our area, taking into account:

- Sensible economic areas and geographies which help increase housing supply and meet housing need
- The impacts on crucial services such as social care, children’s services, SEND and homelessness
- Issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance
- The need to enable strong community engagement and opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment

3. Audience

The following groups within Torbay will be targeted to provide feedback:

- Members of Parliament
- Local Partners and Stakeholders
 - Integrated Care Board
 - Police and Crime Commissioner
 - Fire and Rescue Authority
 - South Devon College
 - Voluntary and third sector
- Residents
- Members of the Council
 - Cabinet
 - Shadow Cabinet
 - All members of the Council
- Members of Staff
 - Directors
 - Senior Leadership Team
 - Senior Managers
 - All members of staff
- Trades Unions
- Businesses
- Members of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority

Consideration will also need to be given to how we engage with those same stakeholders within neighbouring district authorities. This will need to include Dartmoor National Park Authority and the universities.

4. Strategy

What is the messaging?

- The Government has asked all the Councils across Devon to work together to develop proposals for local government reorganisation. We are seeking to build empowered, simplified, resilient and sustainable local government which will increase value for money for council tax payers.
- We want to design and implement the best local government structures for efficient and high-quality public service delivery. We want to work collaboratively and proactively to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area.

- We are working to develop our proposals in accordance with the guidance issued by the Government. A final proposal will be submitted by 28 November 2025. Following submission, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution will consider any and all proposals before taking decisions on how to proceed.
- We will continue to deliver our business-as-usual services and duties which will remain unchanged until reorganisation is complete.
- The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority came into being on 5 February 2025. The transfer of Government decision-making powers and funding to the Combined County Authority will enable it to tackle local priorities, such as jobs and skills, housing and the environment. It will help the Government's drive to improve productivity and reduce regional disparities. Any new unitary authorities will need to continue to work together with business and education representatives to address priorities such as building more affordable homes, reducing homelessness, improving public transport, and increasing investment in zero-carbon hi-tech and marine jobs and skills.

What are we going to do?

We will deliver this plan via qualitative, targeted communications with key stakeholders, sectors and communities of interest, supported by quantitative communications to engage with broader public audiences and communities of place.

High level initial engagement was carried out ahead of submission of the interim plan in March 2025.

Discussions around potential proposals were held with:

- Leaders and Chief Executives across Devon
- Members of the Place Leadership Board, including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, South Devon College and the English Riviera Business Improvement District Company; and
- Both of Torbay's Members of Parliament

A public community engagement event was held on 11 March 2025 with around 150 people in attendance. Initial engagement provided a range of key messages that we included in our interim plan. These included: (From public sector and business stakeholders)

- Support for Torbay's boundaries remaining the same but concern this would not meet the Government's population criteria
- That options 2 and 3 (a Torbay and South Devon council and a Southern Devon council respectively) are broadly viable in terms of growth and expansion
- That Torbay offers very different services compared to other areas and this is a strength
- That trusted relationships, knowledge and understanding between the Council and its partners are already in place

(From the public event)

- The majority supported the option for Torbay Council to continue in its existing boundaries.

A thematic analysis of the questions people asked at the event further revealed the central issues that give us insight into what is important to residents around LRG:

- People are proud of Torbay as a place, and recognise the achievements of the Council
- An insistence that what makes Torbay unique should be taken into account. This ranges across existing investments in place continuing to benefit local people, visitors and tourism, Torbay as an urban centre in comparison to more rural parts of the county, and local challenges around poverty and housing
- Concern that Torbay should receive its fair share of any pot if there are changes in Local Government arrangements
- Concern about services, especially health care
- Concerned about changes to Council Tax.

For the second tranche of the programme, as we work towards a full proposal, we will hold a further round

of engagement around the options and a consultation on the preferred option. We will:

- Work with other authorities to plan a co-ordinated strategy to engage and consult with county-wide stakeholders so that demands on these partners are managed as well as enabling discussions to explore and understand the inter-relationships between potential future options in a consistent manner.
- Where possible, make use of existing forums and meetings to engage with stakeholders in Torbay

Given that stakeholders have expressed a clear preference for Torbay continuing in its existing boundaries, and that decision making on this ultimately sits with the Government, it will be important to clearly and transparently manage expectations with stakeholders. To this end, we recognise that conversations need to go beyond opinions on the different options and we will seek to orient engagement around three themes:

1. Outcomes from LGR
2. Local Identities
3. Civic Engagement

Each will provide indicators against which we can assess and compare any option. The first will help us to understand the outcomes people and partners would most like to see from LGR and provide us with preferred principles for the future shape of local government in Devon. The second will provide insight around how people build and inhabit their communities; going beyond the common measure of travel to work, we want to learn more about where people spend their time, spend their money, and invest their energy to build maps of local identity within and beyond the Bay. Finally, through the third theme of civic engagement we want share information about the emerging programme for LGR in Devon and build our understanding of the factors that may facilitate or inhibit community empowerment.

What channels will we use?

- **Attendance at, and holding of, meetings**

Face-to-face communication and engagement is important to allow for discussion on specific topics, ensuring that feedback is captured and used to demonstrate open, transparent democratic accountability.

- **E-newsletters**

The Council already has a range of newsletters with a significant subscriber base. These will be used to share information with residents and businesses across Torbay.

- **Website**

A dedicated page on the Council's website has been established which will host information about the development to proposals for local government reorganisation. This will be updated on a regular basis. We will be able to signpost stakeholders to the website for more detailed information.

- **Social media channels**

Our social media channels have a large number of subscribers/users. Specific templates for social media posts relating to local government reorganisation will be developed. Posts can signpost stakeholders to events and engagement activity as well as being a means to collect views.

- **Media releases**

At significant milestones through the development of proposals, media releases will be issued for onward sharing through online news outlets, newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. This will be supplemented by articles, interviews and quotes from the Leader of Torbay Council (such as Leaders Columns in local newspapers).

- **Internal engagement channels**

Existing internal engagement channels within Torbay Council will be used to ensure that all members of staff are aware of the key milestones in the development to proposals, to seek their input as well as providing reassurance about the impact or otherwise on their existing roles.

- **Direct communication**

A database of stakeholders will be created and, working on the principle of "networks of networks", direct communication to these stakeholders will help to ensure communications are shared with those not ordinarily engaged by Torbay Council.

5. Implementation

Preparation and submission of interim plan

When	Who	What
20 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps in relation to local government reorganisation Requirements from the Government Planned approach to developing proposals
25 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps in relation to local government reorganisation Requirements from the Government Planned approach to developing proposals
26 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite to All Councillor Briefing Outline explanation of 1:4:5 option ahead of Joint Statement Details of public engagement event
28 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Statement on 1:4:5 proposal issued
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff News update on current position
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torbay Champions Network One Torbay e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification of Public Engagement Event
4 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torbay Business Forum Breakfast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signposting to the Public Engagement Event
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Councillor Briefing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps in relation to local government reorganisation Requirements from the Government Planned approach to developing proposals
5 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torbay Leadership Place Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on emerging Interim Plan Direct 1-2-1 written feedback
11 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Engagement Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps in relation to local government reorganisation Requirements from the Government Planned approach to developing proposals Outline for further engagement
12-14 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of report for consideration by Cabinet on 18 March
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff News update on proposed interim plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torbay Champions Network One Torbay e-newsletter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signposting to proposed interim plan and meeting of the Cabinet
14 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents Engagement Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signposting to proposed interim plan Opportunity for members of the public to ask questions on the proposed interim plan
17 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLT Hot Topics (extended) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing for SLT members on the options within the interim plan Opportunity for staff to ask questions on the proposed interim plan Signposting of Ask Us Anything on 20 March
18 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of submission of interim plan
20 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask Us Anything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for staff to ask questions on the agreed interim plan
21 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member briefing Staff News Media release Letter to MPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of Interim Plan Creation of web pages for phase 2 engagement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Torbay article 	
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Preparation and submission of final proposal – further details to be added, including member and staff involvement

When	Who	What
31 May/1 June (Air Show)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents Engagement Event at English Riviera Air Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising of LGR Mapping of our communities and the connections Understanding of where people get their information
9 June – 20 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders Residents Staff Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes from LGR Local Identities Civic Engagement Specific details to be agreed
Mid June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Authority Engagement with Senior Partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police and Crime Commissioner Devon ICB FE/HE institutions Fire and Rescue Authority National Park Authorities Reps of the voluntary and third sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting to enable all the Councils to share feedback on interim plans and discuss implications
9 July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview and Scrutiny Board 	
End of July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Authority Engagement with Senior Partners (as above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting to enable all the Councils to share emerging options appraisal and feedback from engagement
1 September – 12 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders Residents Staff Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation of preferred option Specific details to be agreed Residents Satisfaction Survey taking place at this time as well
Sept/Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Authority Engagement with Senior Partners (as above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the Councils to meet stakeholders (grouped by sector) to discuss the impacts of the preferred option. To take place during the consultation period.
8 October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview and Scrutiny Board 	

6. Scoring / Evaluation

INPUTS (This is the work you do before or during the campaign planning)	OUTPUTS (What is delivered and audience reached)	OUTTAKES (responses to content – what qualitatives can be measured i.e. no. of consultations completed, no. of webpage hits, press coverage)	OUTCOMES (what is the result you want? How will you know the campaign has been a success?)
Communications planning	Facebook and Twitter posts	Reach on our corporate social media channels including Facebook and Twitter (shares, likes,	Views from engagement and consultation reflected within the final proposal
Insight	Press releases		

Audience segmentation	Internal communications messages	retweets).	Enhancing Torbay Council's reputation with people feeling their views have been heard.
Researching channels and opportunities	GovDelivery bulletins – One Torbay, Staff News etc	Conversion rate / click-throughs from our social media channels and e-newsletter through to corporate website.	Strengthening Torbay Council's links with local community groups.
Liaising with communications leads in partner organisations.	Events held	Feedback and sentiment from followers on our Facebook and Twitter channels.	
Graphic design for social media posts and other channels		Number of people engaged with	
Drafting content		Number of consultation questionnaires completed	

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment (completion of the EIA is mandatory)

The Council has a public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have ‘due regard’ to equality and to advancing equality of opportunity between those persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Act also seeks to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and promote cohesion. It is important that you carefully and thoroughly consider the different potential impacts that the decision being taken may have on people who share protected characteristics.

It is not enough to state that a proposal will affect everyone equally. There should be thorough consideration as to whether particular groups or individuals are more likely to be affected than others by the proposals and decision. Please complete the table below. If you consider there to be no positive or negative impacts state ‘there is no differential impact’.

The EIA has been completed for tranche 2 of the programme and therefore has only considered impacts around reaching a full proposal for LGR. If there is a tranche three project implementing organisational and service changes this will require its own assessment.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	LGR could affect the services provided to children, adults and older people. Everybody should have opportunities to share their views on potential changes. Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to achieve this.	Engagement and consultation activities delivered through different channels (media, venues, existing groups) to reach people of different ages.	Comms. June- September 2025.
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there	LGR could affect the services provided to carers	Engagement and	Comms.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	and the people they care for. Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.	consultation activities targeted at carers groups.	June- September 2025.
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	LGR could affect the services provided to people who identify as having a disability. Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.	Engagement and consultation activities targeted at disability groups. Providing different ways to participate (e.g., having a join online option for any in-person events). Holding in-person events at accessible venues. Online information meets our accessibility standards.	Comms. June- September 2025.
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	LGR could affect the services accessed by people who identify with this protected characteristic. Impacts could be felt directly in terms of changes to the services people use or more indirectly. For example, this group might be at risk of being disproportionately affected if the delivery of public safety services changed in Torbay.	Engagement and consultation activities targeted at advocacy and other groups.	Comms. June- September 2025.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
		Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	<p>LGR could affect the services accessed by people who are married or in civil partnership.</p> <p>Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.</p>	Engagement and consultation activities delivered through different channels (media, venues, existing groups) to give people different ways to participate.	Comms. June- September 2025.
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	<p>LGR could affect the services accessed by people experiencing pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.</p>	<p>Engagement and consultation activities delivered through different channels (media, venues, existing groups) to give people different ways to participate.</p> <p>Activities planned at child friendly venues and times (e.g., daytime at libraries).</p>	Comms. June- September 2025.
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority	Because of the correlations between race and higher levels of deprivation LGR may have disproportionate impacts on different groups of people under this category.	Engagement and consultation activities targeted at advocacy and other groups.	Comms. June- September 2025.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.		
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	Some people may be more vulnerable to discrimination based on their religion and beliefs. These groups could be impacted by things like changes to public safety services.	Engagement and consultation activities targeted at faith-based groups.	Comms. June- September 2025.
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	<p>Sex and other protected characteristics may combine to create some different or disproportionate impacts for different people. For example, people who identify as female and pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>The different roles males and females tend to take in society may pattern the potential impacts of LGR in some different ways. For example, females tend to take on the bulk of caregiving so could be more affected by changes around services for young people, older people and people with disabilities. Males are more likely to experience homelessness and would be more affected by changes to those services.</p> <p>Our engagement and consultation strategy should make efforts to cover full breadth of services that could be affected by LGR.</p>	Engagement and consultation activities delivered through different channels (media, venues, existing groups) to give people different ways to participate.	Comms. June- September 2025.
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those	LGR could affect the services accessed by	Engagement and	Comms.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Page 183 Armed Forces Community	in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	<p>people who identify with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Impacts could be felt directly in terms of changes to the services people use or more indirectly. For example, this group might be at risk of being disproportionately affected if the delivery of public safety services changed in Torbay.</p> <p>Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.</p>	consultation activities targeted at advocacy and other groups.	June- September 2025.
	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	<p>People who have been in the armed services may be at higher risk of experiencing homelessness or requiring mental health support. They could therefore be disproportionately impacted by changes to services brought about by LGR.</p> <p>Our engagement and consultation strategy may need to take additional steps to ensure this group has adequate opportunities to share their views on potential changes.</p>	Engagement and consultation activities targeted at advocacy and other groups.	Comms. June- September 2025.
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child	Overall, the risks of LGR are more likely to disproportionately affect	If Torbay becomes part of a wider area how the higher levels of need in Torbay are going to be	In tranche 2 this can be addressed in two ways:	Comms. June- September

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
poverty and deprivation)	more disadvantaged groups in Torbay because these groups will have higher levels of service use than other groups in the community.	<p>meet will be a critical issue in designing an operating model for a new unitary. This will range from how services are funded to the location of services and staffing numbers across different geographical areas.</p> <p>In a new organisation some of the non-statutory services Torbay currently provides may be defunded. This could include early intervention and prevention initiatives that are supporting the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Staff resource and physical offices may become more remote making services harder to access for some.</p> <p>Council presence in Town Centres could change increasing risks for all residents and visitors but particularly the most vulnerable.</p>	<p>For all groups we are planning early engagement with the Inclusion Partnership, both as a stakeholder for LGR and to help shape further engagement activities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring engagement and consultation reaches a wide audience so the views of those more likely to be negatively impacted by LGR are captured 2. Advocating for Torbay and it's most vulnerable residents in our proposals through consistently messaging the higher levels of need and Torbay's current strengths. 	<p>2025.</p> <p>Writing task and finish group June-November 2025.</p>
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Some options being considered may impact the Public Health grant for Torbay.	<p>Links between levels of deprivation and health outcomes.</p> <p>Less Public Health funding will disproportionately impact on groups already more vulnerable to poorer outcomes.</p>	<p>Inclusion of this issue in engagement and consultation comms.</p> <p>Advocating for LGR options that will deliver the best outcomes for Torbay residents.</p>	<p>Comms. June- September 2025.</p> <p>Writing task and finish group June-November 2025.</p>
Human Rights impacts				

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	Some LGR outcomes could potentially effect the delivery of services to children and young people and their current education options.	<p>Inclusion of this issue in engagement and consultation comms.</p> <p>Advocating for LGR options that will deliver the best outcomes for Torbay residents.</p>	<p>Comms. June- September 2025.</p> <p>Writing task and finish group June- November 2025.</p>

Appendix 5 - Guidance from the Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act') proposals may be for:

- Type A – a single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned
- Type B – a single tier of local authority covering an area that is currently a district, or two or more districts
- Type C – a single tier of local authority covering the whole of the county concerned, or one or more districts in the county; and one or more relevant adjoining areas
- Combined proposal – a proposal that consists of two or more Type B proposals, two or more Type C proposals, or one or more Type B proposals and one or more Type C proposals.

Criteria for unitary local government

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government.

- a) Proposals should be for sensible economic areas, with an appropriate tax base which does not create an undue advantage or disadvantage for one part of the area.
- b) Proposals should be for a sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs.
- c) Proposals should be supported by robust evidence and analysis and include an explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of estimated costs/benefits and local engagement.
- d) Proposals should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward for the whole of the area, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described.

2. Unitary local government must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.

- a) As a guiding principle, new councils should aim for a population of 500,000 or more.
- b) There may be certain scenarios in which this 500,000 figure does not make sense for

an area, including on devolution, and this rationale should be set out in a proposal.

c) Efficiencies should be identified to help improve councils' finances and make sure that council taxpayers are getting the best possible value for their money.

d) Proposals should set out how an area will seek to manage transition costs, including planning for future service transformation opportunities from existing budgets, including from the flexible use of capital receipts that can support authorities in taking forward transformation and invest-to-save projects.

e) For areas covering councils that are in Best Value intervention and/or in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support, proposals must additionally demonstrate how reorganisation may contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing and what area-specific arrangements may be necessary to make new structures viable.

f) In general, as with previous restructures, there is no proposal for council debt to be addressed centrally or written off as part of reorganisation. For areas where there are exceptional circumstances where there has been failure linked to capital practices, proposals should reflect the extent to which the implications of this can be managed locally, including as part of efficiencies possible through reorganisation.

3. Unitary structures must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.

a) Proposals should show how new structures will improve local government and service delivery, and should avoid unnecessary fragmentation of services.

b) Opportunities to deliver public service reform should be identified, including where they will lead to better value for money.

c) Consideration should be given to the impacts for crucial services such as social care, children's services, SEND and homelessness, and for wider public services including for public safety.

4. Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.

a) It is for councils to decide how best to engage locally in a meaningful and constructive

way and this engagement activity should be evidenced in your proposal.

b) Proposals should consider issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance.

c) Proposals should include evidence of local engagement, an explanation of the views that have been put forward and how concerns will be addressed.

5. New unitary structures must support devolution arrangements.

a) Proposals will need to consider and set out for areas where there is already a Combined Authority (CA) or a Combined County Authority (CCA) established or a decision has been taken by Government to work with the area to establish one, how that institution and its governance arrangements will need to change to continue to function effectively; and set out clearly (where applicable) whether this proposal is supported by the CA/CCA /Mayor.

b) Where no CA or CCA is already established or agreed then the proposal should set out how it will help unlock devolution.

c) Proposals should ensure there are sensible population size ratios between local authorities and any strategic authority, with timelines that work for both priorities.

6. New unitary structures should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

a) Proposals will need to explain plans to make sure that communities are engaged.

b) Where there are already arrangements in place it should be explained how these will enable strong community engagement.

Developing proposals for unitary local government

The following matters should be taken into account in formulating a proposal:

Boundary Changes

a) Existing district areas should be considered the building blocks for your proposals, but where there is a strong justification more complex boundary changes will be considered.

b) There will need to be a strong public services and financial sustainability related justification for any proposals that involve boundary changes, or that affect wider public services, such as fire and rescue authorities, due to the likely additional costs and complexities of implementation.

Engagement and consultation on reorganisation

a) We expect local leaders to work collaboratively and proactively, including by sharing information, to develop robust and sustainable unitary proposals that are in the best interests of the whole area to which this invitation is issued, rather than developing competing proposals.

b) For those areas where Commissioners have been appointed by the Secretary of State as part of the Best Value Intervention, their input will be important in the development of robust unitary proposals.

c) We also expect local leaders to engage their Members of Parliament, and to ensure there is wide engagement with local partners and stakeholders, residents, workforce and their representatives, and businesses on a proposal.

d) The engagement that is undertaken should both inform the development of robust proposals and should also build a shared understanding of the improvements you expect to deliver through reorganisation.

e) The views of other public sector providers will be crucial to understanding the best way to structure local government in your area. This will include the relevant Mayor (if you already have one), Integrated Care Board, Police (Fire) and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Authority, local Higher Education and Further Education providers, National Park Authorities, and the voluntary and third sector.

f) Once a proposal has been submitted it will be for the Government to decide on taking a proposal forward and to consult as required by statute. This will be a completely separate process to any consultation undertaken on mayoral devolution in an area, which will be undertaken in some areas early this year, in parallel with this invitation.

Appendix 6 – ‘The 4’ project Governance structure and TOR

LGR Southern Devon Authority (the Four) project

Governance structure & Draft TOR

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the governance structure which will oversee and control the project to create the full proposal for a Southern Devon Authority (henceforth **‘the Four’ project**). This will be a living document for the Four project and necessarily discusses the overall structure of the wider Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) programme, which includes a concurrent project for ‘the Five,’ which will lead the proposal for an Exeter & Northern Devon Authority.

Background

The Four project has been created by the interim plan for LGR in Devon *Finding the Balance, Building the Future (the 1-4-5 plan)* authored by the District Councils (excluding Exeter City Council) with Torbay Council.

The plan sets out a proposal for 3 unitary authorities in Devon: **a Southern Devon Authority** comprised of South Hams, West Devon, Teignbridge and Torbay; **a Northern Devon Authority** comprised of East, Mid and North Devon along with Torridge and Exeter; and for Plymouth to continue in its existing form and boundaries.

The 1-4-5 plan was submitted on 21 March 2025 and we are now working to submit a full proposal by 28 November 2025.

To achieve this, we require a programme with an appropriate governance structure.

A formal project management approach is required due to:

- the Government’s clear vision and ambitious timeline for simpler, more sustainable, local government structures, alongside a transfer of power out of Westminster through devolution
- to protect the quality of our existing services
- to set expectations for and achieve highly effective cross-organisation collaboration
- to identify and manage the resources that will be required to deliver a full appraisal of the preferred option for a Southern Devon Authority, and a full proposal for the whole area
- to plan for, resource and coordinate effective stakeholder engagement and consultation.

Programme structure

The programme will be comprised of two project teams:

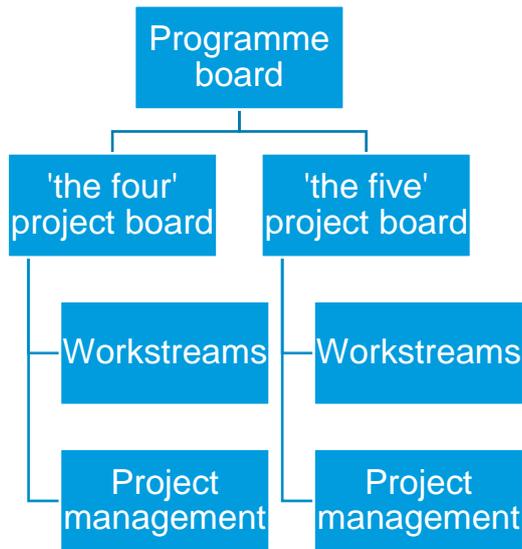
<p>‘the four’ Southern Devon Authority project</p> <p><u>Partners/Users:</u> South Hams DC West Devon BC Teignbridge DC Torbay Council</p>	<p>‘the five’ Exeter & Northern Devon Authority project</p> <p><u>Partners/Users:</u> East Devon DC Mid Devon DC North Devon DC Torridge DC</p>
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Assumptions:

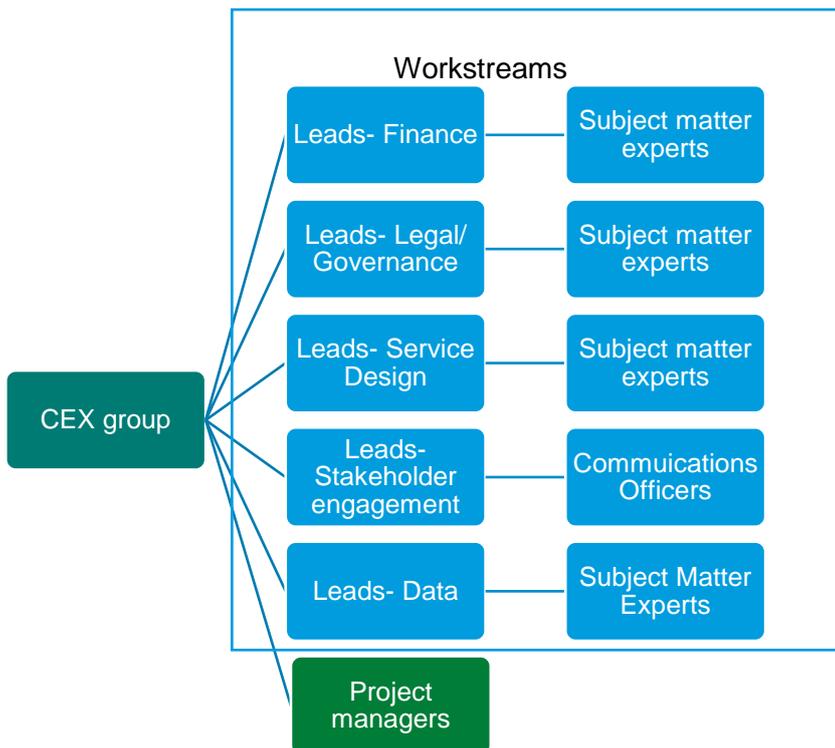
- Plymouth has not been included in the programme structure as the 1-4-5 plan assumes that their form and boundaries will remain unchanged and/or they will pursue their own plans for business case submission for an ‘expanded’ Plymouth.
- The Northern project will work to reengage Exeter City Council.

Governance Structure

Programme Structure



Project Structure for 'the Four'



Definitions

Programme board

Members: CEX groups from the Four and Five projects and the programme director.

Purpose: to provide overall leadership for the programme and to guide the overall cohesiveness of the work of the Four and Five into a final single proposal.

Assumptions:

- The CEX of each partner will hold responsibility for reporting to and approvals from their respective leaders.

Members: CEX group, workstream theme leads, workstream leads as required and project management.
 Purpose: to provide leadership, guiding the undertaking and completion of each workstream and directing the creation of the options papers and final proposal.

Assumptions:

- Each partner will provide a workstream lead for each workstream unless agreed otherwise.
- From within each group of workstream leads a workstream theme lead will be collectively agreed by the CEX group. Some workstreams (Finance and Service Design) will have joint theme leads.
- Workstream leads also stand as the senior user for their respective area/s.
- Workstream groups are responsible for organising their own meeting schedule where they will define and deliver their outputs.
- Workstream leads will use their weekly meetings to discuss and agree their outputs with the aim of resolving any differences and presenting a collective position to the Board.
- Within each partner organisation, workstream leads are likely to need to delegate a number of workpackages to local subject matter experts. Subject matter experts will feed outputs (i.e., data and analysis) back into the programme through their leads.
- The project manager will be a permanent member of the board. Unless they are theme leads, workstream leads will attend the board as required. Subject matter experts and other guests may be invited to the board as required.

Meeting Schedules

Programme board	TBC
Project board	Weekly
Workstreams	Weekly during scoping stage then frequency may be reviewed

Assumptions:

- The different workstreams may require working groups with various configurations at different stages of the programme. This may take advantage of existing cross-organisation meetings or require additional meetings.

Programme personnel

Programme board

Partner	CEX
South Hams DC /West Devon BC	Andy Bates
Teignbridge DC	Phil Shears
Torbay Council	Anne-Marie Bond
Torridge DC	Steve Hearse
Mid Devon DC	Stephen Walford
North Devon DC	Ken Miles
East Devon DC	Tracy Hendren

'The four' Project board personnel
(Theme leads indicated in bold)

Layer	Org.	Personnel
CEX group		
	TC	Anne-Marie Bond
	SHWD	Andy Bates
	TDC	Phil Shears
Workstream leads		
Finance	TDC	Gordon Bryant
	SHWD	Lisa Buckle
	TC	Malcolm Coe
Legal & governance	SHWD	Drew Powell
	TC	Matthew Fairclough-Kay
	TDC	Paul Woodhead
Service Design	SHWD	Steve Mullineaux
	TDC	Amanda Pujol
	TC	Matthew Fairclough-Kay
Stakeholder engagement	TC	Kate Spencer
	SHWD	Neil Hawke
	TDC	Julia Hulland
Data	TDC	Tom Pearce
	TC	Jon-Paul Hedge
	SHWD	Neil Hawke
Project management		
	TC	Claire Berlyn
	SHWD	Neil Hawke

Terms of Reference

Mission statement

To work for the very best outcome in Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for all of Devon's residents and visitors, for our businesses and public services, and for our natural environment. The members of the

Devon District and Torbay Council LRG programme will work together to share information, learning and resources to meet the Government’s ambitious timeline for LGR. We value collaboration and prioritise strong and productive working relationships both within the network and with other Devon authorities.

Remit and Conduct

We will work together to:

- Ensure that all input contributes positively to the discourse focusing solely on practical and insightful solutions
- Identify opportunities and challenges that emerge through the delivery of the LGR outputs
- Coordinate our internal and external communications around LGR
- Identify partnership opportunities with other councils to further collaborate and support each other
- Review and amend these ToRs periodically when applicable and appropriate

Member Responsibilities

- To act in the interests of our Councils and their residents
- To work together on the basis of honesty, openness and transparency
- To work together on the basis of no surprises
- To seek to achieve consensus through discussion
- To promote strong working relationships within and between member organisations
- To send apologies or appoint a substitute from your council if you are unable to attend meetings

Deliverables

The members will work together to deliver:

1. A programme plan to meet the Government timeline for the final proposal stage of LGR
2. a full appraisal of the preferred option for a Southern Devon Authority, and a full proposal for the whole area
3. Wide public and partner engagement and consultation on the option
4. A single final proposal for the whole area to be submitted to MHCLG by 28 November 2025

Governance Structure

The programme is ultimately accountable to the Leaders of the members’ respective councils. The programme will be controlled by a Programme board made up of the CEX from each member council. Beneath the programme board sits two project boards respectively delivering the Southern Devon Authority (the Four) and the Exeter & Northern Devon Authority (the Five) projects. The full governance structure is set out in the Governance Structure and Draft TOR template held by each project.

Update Log:

Version	Author	Date	Changes
V1	Claire Berlyn	30/4/25	Drafted for comment
V2		04/06/25	Approved by The Four Project Board