

Tuesday, 14 April 2026

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

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

**Wednesday, 22 April 2026**

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 (Chair)

Councillor Cowell

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar

Councillor Fellows

Councillor Foster

Councillor Law

Councillor Nicolaou

Councillor Spacagna (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Stevens

Councillor Tolchard

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## **A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay**

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**, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR**

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

## 1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.

## 2. 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.)

## 3. Urgent Items

To consider any other items that the Chair decides are urgent.

## 4. Social Mobility in Torbay

To explore opportunities around social mobility in Torbay.

(Pages 3 - 174)

**Meeting:** Overview and Scrutiny

**Date:** 22 April 2026

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Social Mobility in Torbay

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** NA

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Councillor Hayley Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities & Councillor Chris Lewis, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Planning & Place Development

**Director Contact Details:** Lincoln Sargeant, Director of Public Health  
[Lincoln.Sargeant@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Lincoln.Sargeant@torbay.gov.uk); Alan Denby, Director of Pride in Place  
[Alan.Denby@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Alan.Denby@torbay.gov.uk)

## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 This report focuses on the dynamics of poverty and social mobility in Torbay providing an overview of context and current initiatives, and exploring some of the potential local levers that can drive change.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.2 The proposals in this report help us to deliver our vision of a healthy, happy, and prosperous Torbay by exploring the local opportunities to promote positive social mobility for children and young people in Torbay.
- 2.3 Social mobility is a broad concept that occurs when a person experiences different life outcomes from their parents, for example in income, occupation, housing, education or wealth. The Social Mobility Commission is an independent advisory non-departmental public body and identified 3 key drivers of social mobility. These are:
- Conditions of childhood – poverty, parental education & parental occupation
  - Labour market opportunities for young people
  - Innovation and growth – broadband, R&D expenditure, postgraduate education.
- 2.4 As a coastal local authority, Torbay faces many challenges and is ranked as the most deprived upper-tier local authority in the South West with approximately 27% of population classified as living in areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

- 2.5 Torbay’s Community and Corporate Plan and the local Economic Growth Strategy outline the approach to strengthening the economy and improving the conditions for social mobility. Since 2022, Torbay has received over £2.3 million of funding through the Government’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to invest in local priorities.

### 3 Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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- 3.1 Members are asked to consider, as Social Prosperity Funding comes to an end in March 2026, how we promote and sustain social mobility in Torbay through:

- securing the legacy of these projects; and
- exploiting current and future initiatives and investment opportunities, including through the Turning the Tide, Connect to Work, Coastal Navigators and other related programmes.

### 4 Appendices

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Appendix 1: Social Mobility Commission. State of the Nation 2025. [State of the Nation 2025 – The evolving story of social mobility in the UK](#)

Appendix 2: South-West Social Mobility Commission. Turning the Tide – SWSMC Annual Report 2024. [Turning-the-Tide-SWSMC-Annual-Report-2024-1.pdf](#)

Appendices 3 and 4: Shared Prosperity Fund evaluation reports:

Appendix 5: Shared Prosperity Fund evaluation video: [final ext edit ukspf.mp4](#)

## Supporting Information

### 5 Introduction

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- 5.1 As a coastal local authority, Torbay faces many challenges and is ranked as the most deprived upper-tier local authority in the South West with approximately 27% of population classified as living in areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived in England.
- 5.2 Torbay’s Community and Corporate Plan and the local Economic Growth Strategy outline the approach to strengthening the economy and improving the conditions for social mobility.
- 5.3 Since 2022, Torbay has received over £2.3 million of funding through the Government’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to invest in local priorities. As this funding comes to an

end in March 2026, we need to consider how we secure the legacy of these projects and exploit current and future initiatives and investment opportunities.

- 5.4 Torbay has had a *Turning the Tide on Poverty* programme in place since before the pandemic. This paper describes how the programme has evolved and what are the current targets for tackling poverty and driving social mobility in the Bay.

## 6 Torbay's UK Shared Prosperity Fund

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### Background

- 6.1 Since 2022, Torbay has received over £2.3 million of UKSPF funding the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to invest in local priorities. Government's overarching ambition of the fund was to build pride in place and increase life chances across all parts of the United Kingdom. As a central pillar of the previous government's Levelling Up agenda, it replaced EU structural funds with a more flexible, locally led approach.
- 6.2 In comparison with other Local Authority areas, and given the considerable level of need, Torbay's UKSPF allocation was modest (£11 per head 2022-2025).
- 6.3 Considering the breadth of challenges facing Torbay, an investment plan was created to develop a catalogue of 14 projects, focussing on Communities, Business and Skills. The investment plan was aligned to Torbay's Community and Corporate Plan and the local Economic Growth Strategy, which ensured all projects were responding to the Council's priorities and overarching strategy for Torbay.
- 6.4 The programme is coming to an end (March 2026) and there are no plans for government to replace this funding. As a result, this directly impacts upon delivery of Council's Business Plan.

### Outcomes and Impact - Original programme (2022-2025)

- 6.5 In 2022, Torbay received a £1.76 million UKSPF allocation. 14 projects were commissioned across 10 partners to deliver across 12-24 months. Key deliverables included:
- 229 volunteering opportunities created
  - Over 400 households supported with energy efficiency and fuel poverty, resulting in savings over £400,000
  - Over 500 businesses support to start and grow
  - Over 50 grants administered to businesses to grow, innovate and decarbonise
  - Over 90 businesses supported to become more sustainable through decarbonisation plans
  - Created over 65 new jobs
  - Safeguarded over 100 jobs
  - Created 28 new businesses
  - Supported over 350 economically inactive people (16-64) move closer to employment, training or education
  - Supported over 180 people back into work, training or education
  - Supported 140 participants already employed in key sectors to upskill

- 6.6 Additional social value outcomes have been derived across all projects, although these are difficult to measure officially (due to a lack of an effective tool to calculate). However, social outcomes that have been achieved and that can be demonstrated through sentiment surveys include increased confidence, increased financial comfort, decreased stress and anxiety, improved mental and physical health, improved access to healthcare, increased life expectancy, reduced inequality, improved aspirations.
- 6.7 Furthermore, the UKSPF programme was over 99% spent in full, which is an excellent achievement across 14 projects.

### **Outcomes and Impact - 12 month extension programme (2025-2026)**

- 6.8 UKSPF was extended nationally for an additional 12 months at a reduced rate. Torbay received just over £616,000 for this period, which supported seven of the original projects to continue at a reduced rate.
- 6.9 Whilst this phase of UKSPF is not yet complete, the programme is expected to achieve:
- Over 400 households supported with energy efficiency and fuel poverty
  - Over 250 tonnes of carbon emissions saved
  - Over 45 Jobs safeguarded
  - Over 30 jobs created
  - Over 10 new businesses created
  - Over 100 new volunteering opportunities created
  - Over 150 participants gaining a new skills or qualification

## **7 Torbay *Turning the Tide on Poverty* programme**

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- 7.1 Torbay Council's Turning the Tide programme was modelled on the Marmot principles first set out in Fair Society, Healthy Lives in 2008 Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) - IHE ([instituteofhealthequity.org](http://instituteofhealthequity.org)). The programme is chaired by Torbay Council's Director of Public Health and has input from cross-Council departments as well as partners across the health, care and voluntary sectors in Torbay. In 2022/23 the programme evolved to respond to the cost of living challenges facing local families and communities, placing a stronger focus on the drivers of poverty and ill-health including food, fuel, employment, skills and economic stability.
- 7.2 Additional members were coopted to the programme in 2024-25, and following a review, the aim of the programme was reconfirmed as **'breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting social mobility in Torbay'**.
- 7.3 The priority group for especial focus during 2025/26 was identified as **young people and families**, where interventions are both critical and timely in terms of influencing future life chances and having a positive impact on successive generations.

7.4 The table below is the Turning the Tide action planning framework. This covers the target populations, settings, activities, levers and measures, from which actions are built up.

<b>Vision</b>	<b>Breaking the cycle - promoting social mobility in Torbay</b>									
<b>We want to...</b>	Promote aspiration		Support young people out of benefits		Support people out of ill health into work			Build resilience		
<b>We will work with...</b>	Education		Businesses		Anchors			Communities & places		
<b>Areas of activity</b>	Training – indivs & employers	Coaching & mentoring	Role models & peer support	Explore non-traditional jobs & roles	Disability confident employer	Transport (home/work/educ/health/social)	Apprenticeships	Health support & coaching	Housing support pathways	
<b>Target groups for extra help</b>	Care experienced	Carers	Homeless single males	Health conditions & disabilities	Neurodiverse; PWLD; SMI	Neighbourhoods	People in Youth Justice pathways	NEETs		
<b>Settings</b>	Schools & Colleges	Family Hubs		Business forums & networks		Community groups & venues	NHS, GP practices			
<b>Mechanisms, Enablers, Levers</b>	Connect to Work	Shared Prosperity Fund		DfE 16-19 funding	Workwell		Make it an LCP priority	Combined Authority (Adult Skills & Educ Fund; Transport; Housing)		
<b>Measures</b>	Short term	Work & skills (NEETs, DWP stats re work & health)		Longer term	Deprivation, economic, health & disability		People & community	Wellbeing; resilience; connections		

7.5 Action areas identified so far cover:

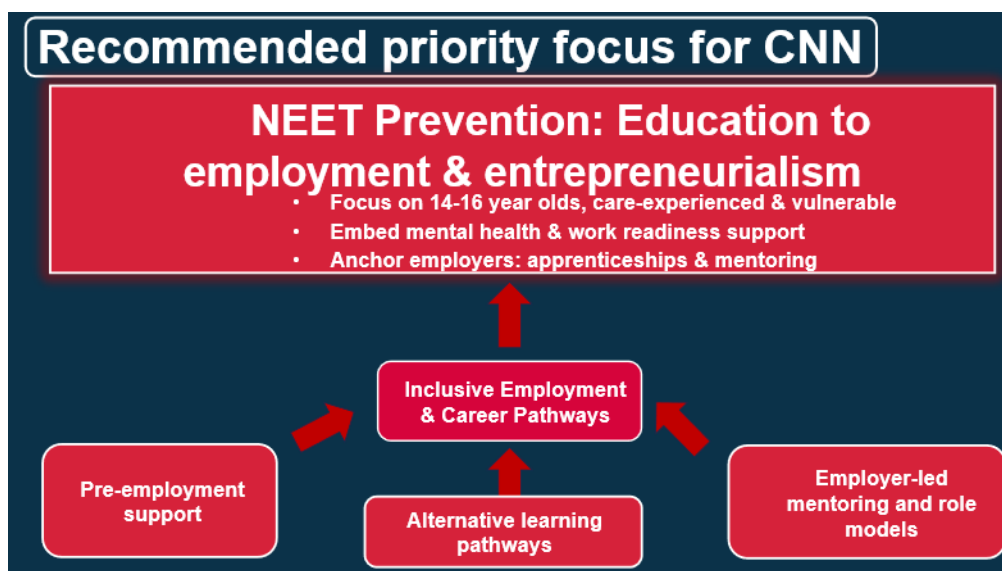
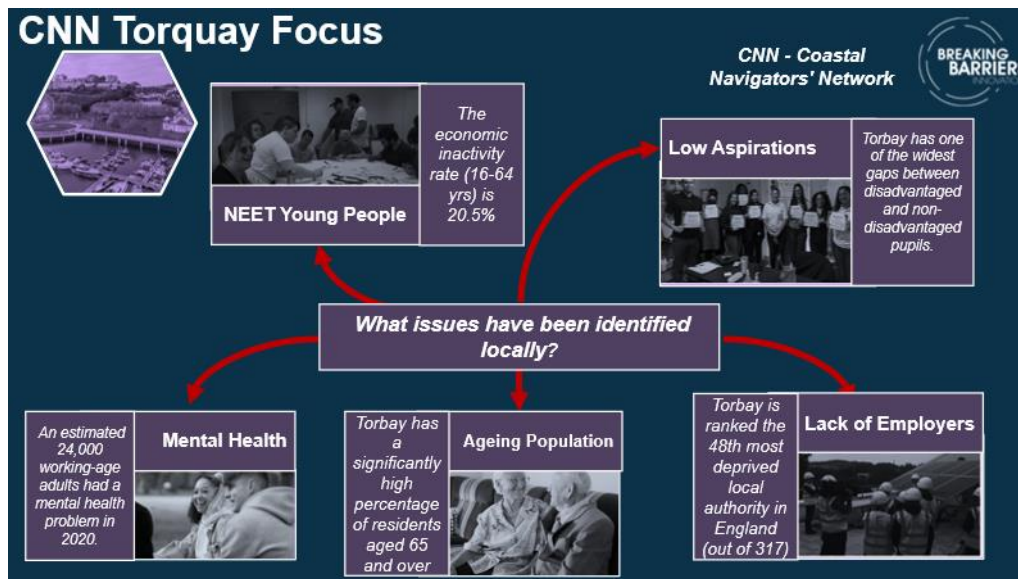
- Supporting people (back) into work, including from long term ill-health
- Reducing the risk of care experienced young people experiencing poverty, with budgeting advice and practical support
- Promoting disability confident employers
- Development and implementation of the Coastal Navigators' Network priority programme for children and young people pre NEET.

7.6 Actions are continually being refined and other action areas identified. It is important that the Turning the Tide programme focuses on those areas where action is not already happening elsewhere, and our combined efforts can have most impact.

## 8 Coastal Navigators' Network programme

8.1 The Coastal Navigators' Network (CNN) was co-founded by coastal ICBs and NHS England to tackle shared challenges, drive innovation, and ensure coastal communities are not left behind in national priorities. This was a direct response to the 2021 Chief Medical Officer's report, which highlighted the need for a national approach to coastal health, recognising that 19% of the population live in coastal areas, many of whom face the most entrenched health inequalities. There are now 55 coastal communities in the network. Torbay joined in July 2025. The Director of Public Health is the programme SRO.

8.2 Torbay hosted an inception work on 5 November where the vision for our programme was developed. Our target is NEET prevention, with a main focus on young people 14-16. The slides below give a high level summary.



## 9 Options under consideration

9.1 Options for securing the legacy of existing programmes and ensuring a continued focus on promoting social mobility in Torbay will be discussed during the session.

## 10 Financial Opportunities and Implications

10.1 Financial opportunities and implications are described in relation to each of the programmes above. An area for consideration is how we consolidate and sustain the benefits of programmes, such as the Shared Prosperity Fund, where national funding is coming to an end.

## 11 Legal Implications

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11.1 None identified.

## 12 Engagement and Consultation

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12.1 Engagement is taken forward separately for each individual project or programme.

## 13 Procurement Implications

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13.1 None identified.

## 14 Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

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14.1 Many of the projects involve working with the assets of our blue and green space within Torbay.

## 15 Associated Risks

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15.1 Risks are outlined in the paper, including the need to look at opportunities to secure the legacy of the Shared Prosperity Fund projects and build sustainable routes to social mobility for local young people and our wider communities.

## 16 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18% of Torbay residents are aged under 18 years old.</li> <li>55% of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</li> <li>27% of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>Young people are an especial area of focus.</p>	Not applicable	
Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay.</li> <li>5,185 of these carers provided 50 hours or more of care.</li> </ul>	Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage, including carers.	Not applicable	
Care experienced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As of January 2026, there were 277 former care experienced young people aged 18-24 in Torbay.</li> </ul>	Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.	Not applicable	

		Care experienced young people are an especial area of focus.		
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the 2021 Census, 23.9% 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.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>The support into work programmes include a focus on people unable to work through illness or disability.</p>	Not applicable	
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	
Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between 2013 and 2024, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 56.0 per 1,000) than the Southwest (53.4) and broadly in line with England (56.3).</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the period 2022 to 2024, rates in Torbay (44.6) have been significantly below England (50.0).</li> </ul>			
Race	<p>In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.6% as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh</li> <li>0.3% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African</li> <li>1.5% as being of Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups</li> <li>96.1% as White</li> <li>0.4% described their ethnicity another way.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	
Religion and belief	<p>The 2021 Census showed that the residents in Torbay identify their religion and/or belief as the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>48.5% are Christian</li> <li>0.4% are Buddhist</li> <li>0.2% are Hindu</li> <li>0.6% are Muslim</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than 0.1% are Sikh</li> <li>• 0.1% are Jewish</li> <li>• 0.7% have another religion</li> <li>• 43.2% have no religion</li> <li>• 6.3% did not answer</li> </ul>			
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 51.3% of Torbay's population are female.</li> <li>• 48.7% of Torbay's population are male.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	
Sexual orientation	<p>In the 2021 Census, residents described their sexuality as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 89% as Straight or Heterosexual</li> <li>• 1.7% as Gay or Lesbian</li> <li>• 1.1% as Bisexual</li> <li>• 0.1% as Pansexual</li> <li>• 0.1% described their sexuality another way</li> <li>• 7.4% of people didn't answer the question</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	
Armed Forces Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces.</li> <li>• In Torbay, 5.9% of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>No differential impact anticipated.</p>	Not applicable	
<b>Additional considerations</b>				

Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Torbay is ranked as the 39th most deprived upper tier local authority in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>These are target areas for the programme.</p>	Not applicable	
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the five-year period 2020 to 2024, data shows there is a 6-year life expectancy gap between males who live in Torbay's least and most deprived areas and, a 3-year gap for females.</li> </ul>	<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>These are anticipated benefits of the programme.</p>	Not applicable	
Human Rights impacts		<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p>	Not applicable	
Child Friendly		<p>Shared Prosperity and Turning the Tide programmes are designed to support groups who experience greater disadvantage.</p> <p>Young people are an area of focus.</p>	Not applicable	

## 17 Cumulative Council Impact

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17.1 None identified. Activities described within these programmes should have positive cross Council impact.

## 18 Cumulative Community Impacts

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18.1 None identified, impacts should be positive.

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**Year 2 Evaluation of the Torbay UKSPF  
Programme - Final Report  
Buckman Associates Ltd**



Buckman|Associates|Ltd



**TORBAY COUNCIL**



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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

This report provides an evaluation of the Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme as it embarks on its final year of delivery. Torbay received £1.76m (excluding Multiply) which it allocated to 14 projects across three priorities. The evaluation covers the nine projects under the ‘communities and place’ and ‘business and enterprise’ themes. The projects covered under the ‘people and skills’ theme were not in scope as they commenced delivery in year 3. The evaluation included a mixture of desk-based research, interviews with project managers, interviews with Torbay Council staff and an on-line business survey.

### Key findings - Programme Delivery

The programme is on-track to achieve its expenditure targets, despite the underspend in 2022/23 which reflected Government delays in approving the investment plan. This is a significant achievement and the Council’s expenditure profile means that it met requirements to receive 100% of its final year payment in advance. Similarly, the programme is on track to meet capital expenditure targets, despite internal challenges regarding how ‘capital’ is defined. However, the time spent by staff in administering the programme is likely to significantly exceed the 4% management fee that the authority can reclaim from Government and by the end of the programme actual costs incurred could be closer to 20%. As this is unlikely to be acceptable nationally or locally, Torbay Council may wish to explore ways in which they could deliver the programme with less resources in the future. This might include delivering fewer projects and using alternative models of contracting.

In terms of output performance, the programme is expected to achieve or exceed most of its outputs by the end of the programme, with a small number of exceptions. However, outcome performance at the time of the evaluation was more mixed. To some extent this is to be expected at this point in the programme, as projects are still delivering and many of the outcomes have a time lag associated with them. However, there are a small number of outcomes which may not be achieved by programme closure. It is understood that a key focus of programme management activity during Year 3 will be on supporting the projects to understand and gather the necessary evidence to capture these outcomes by project closure.

### Key findings - Project level benefits

The table below outlines the main tangible and intangible benefits from the communities and place projects.

Project	Main Tangible benefits	Intangible benefits
<b>Improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refurbished changing rooms at Armada park</li><li>• Modular facilities for multiple sports at Torre Valley Park</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More women and young people playing sport</li><li>• More people moving, with physical, health and social benefits</li><li>• Improved attractiveness of area</li></ul>
<b>Incredible Earth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Watcombe beach re-opened</li><li>• Improvements to garden’s at Parkfield House</li><li>• Greening of Melville</li><li>• CCTV camera installed in Westerlands Valley</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Numerous community groups and volunteers engaged in projects to improve their area</li><li>• Mental and physical health benefits for participants and wider community</li><li>• Improved community cohesion</li></ul>
<b>Energy Saving Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 166 households supported to save on average £590</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carbon savings</li><li>• Health and social benefits</li></ul>

And the table below overleaf outlines the main tangible and intangible benefits associated with the business and enterprise projects.

Project	Main Tangible benefits	Intangible benefits
<b>Meet English Riviera</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 conferences/ events secured with an estimated value of £2.9m</li> <li>14 venues supported to access business market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to extend the tourism season and attract new high value market segment</li> <li>Supports the Local Visitor Economy Partnership and English Riviera Destination Management Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 new visitor experiences have been created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved partnership working within the English Riviera Geopark</li> <li>Raised the profile of the Geopark</li> <li>Inspired development of wider 'experiences'</li> <li>Contributed to the English Riviera Geopark securing £250,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Growing Torbay's Social Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 businesses reporting tangible benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported growth of social enterprise sector and operation of Parkfield House as a hub</li> <li>Supports the Community Wealth Building concept</li> </ul>
<b>Impact Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>76% of businesses reported at least one benefit, including engagement with new markets, developing new products and services and adopting new technologies</li> <li>Net GVA impact of £0.93m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants learnt new ways to manage their business and innovation processes which have improved long-term growth prospects</li> <li>Delivered community hackathons</li> </ul>
<b>Start-up Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>86% of businesses reported at least one benefit</li> <li>At least 11 businesses started, and 12 jobs created</li> <li>Net GVA impact of £0.664m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported entrepreneurs from under-represented groups</li> </ul>
<b>Make it Net Zero Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified potential carbon savings of 4.7ktCO<sub>2</sub>e or 8.7% of industrial and commercial emissions in the Bay</li> <li>12 jobs created and 34 safeguarded linked to cost savings</li> <li>Net GVA impact of £2.94m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping businesses to 'get started' on their decarbonisation journey</li> </ul>

These benefits represent an impressive achievement for a programme that has been operational for less than 18 months and still has 6 months less to deliver. The project has also demonstrated a broader collective impact in terms of providing businesses with a locally relevant business support ecosystem, with effective cross-referral systems between projects.

### Key findings - Value for Money (VFM)

At a programme level, the Torbay UKSPF programme has delivered a substantial programme of activities for a relatively modest sum. Taking each of the value for money measures in turn:

- Economy** was achieved through the use of competitive procurement processes and small budgets meant that providers were economical in their approach. However, many also reported that projects went over budget and these costs were borne by providers. Whilst in the short term this improves public sector VFM, in the longer term it is not sustainable for providers and could be damaging to Torbay's 'support landscape'.
- In terms of **efficiency**, the programme delivered a wide range of indicators for relatively low unit costs. For instance, the average cost of supporting a business at the time of the evaluation was £2,878, which compares favourably to national benchmarks (for low intensity business support) of between £2,500 to

£4,700. Similarly, the average cost of creating a job was £22,473 which compares to a national benchmark of £26,000. Furthermore, these unit costs should improve if the programme achieves its intended outcomes.

- In terms of **effectiveness** the programme has made progress towards several of its strategic outcomes – particularly business start-ups and growth. However, the programme has struggled to engage with businesses in Torbay’s hi-tech sector and manufacturing sectors, where the opportunities for innovation led growth and decarbonisation may have been higher. Without engaging with representatives from these sectors it is difficult to know the reasons for this, but providers have indicated that this issue may have represented a combination of:
  - High output targets, which meant that providers could not adopt a targeted approach
  - The wrong offer, which meant that businesses in the target groups were not attracted to the projects.

An assessment of the Return on Investment for the Business and Enterprise theme at the time of the evaluation found the return on investment was 7.95, i.e. **every £1 invested has generated a return of £7.95, which demonstrates excellent value for money**. Again, this should improve as the outcomes accrue in the final year of delivery.

## Key findings - Programme Management

In terms of the **programme planning function**, the evaluation found that the investment plan aligned well with Torbay’s Economic Growth Strategy and provided an opportunity to support its implementation. However, because Torbay received a lower than anticipated allocation (given its historically low economic performance and deprivation levels) plans needed to be scaled back. As a result, the allocation may have been ‘spread too thinly’ across the various interventions.

In terms of detailed planning, the evaluation found that the financial profiling exercise at intervention level resulted in some delivery and cash-flow challenges for partners. Similarly, there were some logical inconsistencies in the approach to output/outcome forecasting at an intervention level, which resulted in some examples of ‘impossible to deliver’ outputs and outcomes. At a strategic level, ambitious output targets may not have fully aligned with the ambitions for each intervention and the development and scrutiny of intervention level logic models may have helped to reduce these inconsistencies.

In terms of **commissioning**, the evaluation found that:

- The programme mobilised quickly, which was a significant achievement
- The programme utilised a procurement mechanism to commission most projects, which some found to be onerous. In the future Torbay could mitigate this by:
  - Building the capacity of local providers to respond
  - Adopting more streamlined processes for smaller value contracts
  - Utilising a grant funding mechanism.

In terms of **contract management**, the evaluation found that the programme management team were very supportive and helpful in their approach and communications were timely and constructive. The programme also successfully nurtured a collaborative culture, with strong levels of cross-referral between projects, which is a significant achievement and helps to make the ‘sum greater than the parts’.

However, projects found financial and output reporting onerous and disproportionate to the size of the funding, in particular the need to evidence expenditure for 100% of cost items. It was not clear why this approach had been taken, given that all the providers were procured using commercial contracts (rather than grants). This is very unusual for procurement routes, where contractors are entitled to make a profit or retain a surplus and payment is normally based on invoices submitted. For future programmes, Torbay

Council may wish to consider the implications of the different commissioning routes at each point in the project life cycle before deciding on the best approach. It would then be able to provide potential bidders/applicants with a clear understanding of requirements from the outset as well as providing capacity building workshops.

## Summary of Recommendations

### For the final year of delivery

- Both the programme team and individual projects should focus on maximising the delivery of outputs and outcomes
- Torbay Council should start to consider options for how it might extend the programme for another year, given recent calls by the LGA for Government to do this

### For future programmes

Torbay Council should:

- Look at ways to streamline the number of projects to ensure projects have a sufficient critical mass and administration costs are proportionate to the level of funding
- Prepare and scrutinise project level logic models to ensure project targets are realistic and achievable within the context of the proposed activities. This exercise should also look to focus outputs/outcomes on the most relevant/important for each project to minimise the administrative burden of collection
- Explore the option of bringing together and integrating business support. This could involve having a 'core service' provided by Start-up Torbay and wider 'offers' supplied by specialised providers. These wider offers could be sourced via a procurement model in response to demand
- Explore a broader grant scheme that could sit alongside the wider support available
- Undertake an assessment of the potential routes for distributing funding (grants, in-house, procurement) and consider the advantages/disadvantages of each route at each stage of the project life cycle. Within the context of the route chosen for each project, there are also opportunities to improve processes by:
  - Introducing capacity building workshops for local organisations who may want to bid/tender
  - Providing clarity on reporting requirements at the bid stage.

Alongside this, Government should:

- Ensure growth funding cycles are allocated on a 6-8 year basis to allow:
  - The development of robust and deliverable plans at programme and project level
  - Projects to have sufficient time to mobilise, embed activity and achieve long term outcomes
- Provide detailed guidance in terms of the output/outcome evidence required
- Provide detailed guidance on the evidence/reporting/audit requirements for local authorities.

## Section One: Introduction

This report provides an evaluation of the Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme as it embarks on its final year of delivery. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund was officially launched in April 2022 as a successor to the EU Structural Funds and a central plank of the former Government’s levelling up agenda. All areas of the UK received an allocation from the Fund via a formula<sup>1</sup> and Torbay received £1.76m (excluding £613,959 specifically allocated to Multiply to support adult numeracy). Unlike former EU Structural Funds, Local Authorities were given responsibility for developing an investment plan and delivering the fund in their areas (including assessing and approving applications, processing payments and day to day monitoring). To support this, Local Authorities were able to use up to 4% of their allocation to administer the fund.

### 1.1 Investment priorities

In developing their investment plans, Local Authorities were expected to allocate their funding across three national priorities (communities and place, supporting local business and people and skills) and select from a list of nationally determined interventions, outputs and outcome indicators based on their local needs. In Torbay, funding was allocated as follows:

1. Communities and place - £187,323 (11%)
2. Business and enterprise - £809,602 (46%)
3. People and skills – 767,118 (43%)

As people and skills projects had only recently commenced delivery, they were excluded from this evaluation. The logic models for the communities and place and business and enterprise are shown in Appendix 1. The logic models illustrate the link between the situation in Torbay and the intended interventions, outputs and outcomes for each investment theme. Figure 1 provides details of the supported interventions under themes 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Supported projects

Intervention	Delivery Partner	Budget	Timeframe
<b>Communities and Places</b>			
1. Local Sports facilities, tournaments, teams, and leagues.	Torbay Council	£45,723	2023-2024
2. Creation of and improvements to local green spaces.	Groundwork South	£41,600	2023-2024
3. Impactful volunteering and or / social action projects			
4. Community measures to reduce cost of living, improve resource efficiency.	Exeter Community Energy (ECOE)	£75,000	2023-2025
<b>Business and Enterprise</b>			
5. Bid for and host international business events and conferences.	Meet Devon	£27,080	2023-2024
6. Development and promotion of the visitor economy.	English Riviera BID Company	£21,700	2023-2025
7. Growing the social local economy.	Local Spark	£41,600	2023-2025
8. Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems &	Studio Zao	£351,462	2023-2025
9. R&D Grants			
10. Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems.	Torbay Council	£113,999	2023-2025
11. Supporting businesses in becoming carbon neutral	SWMAS	£273,760	2023-2025

It should be noted that projects two and three were delivered as linked projects as were projects eight and nine.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-allocations-methodology/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-allocations-methodology-note>

## 1.2 Evaluation objectives

The core objectives of this evaluation were to:

- Measure the impact of each UKSPF project in Torbay
- Assess and learn from project delivery to refine projects advancing into third year delivery
- Assess value for money
- Provide recommendations for future commissioning should UK SPF (or similar) run again in Torbay.

With a particular focus on:

- Has each project delivered actual and meaningful economic growth, particularly in respect of the funding amount received?
- Based on what has been achieved thus far, how should outputs and outcomes be amended for future programmes to reflect need and demand, as well as achieve tangible economic growth in Torbay?
- Have these projects provided value for money in respect of the outcomes delivered?
- Could outcomes be achieved for less funding, and if so, what is the recommendation for this?
- For those projects that are administering and awarding grants to businesses as part of their project, have these grants been effective in achieving the desired relevant project outcomes IE. Innovation, growth, carbon savings etc. and have the grant amounts been enough to achieve tangible and significant impact?
- Is 4% of the total award enough to adequately cover internal resources for up to three years? If no, what would the recommendation be based on evidence, timesheets, inflation etc.?

## 1.2 Method

The methodology was designed to allow for the evaluation at both the project and programme level and therefore included:

- A desk-based review of key programme and project level documents to provide relevant context as well as evidence to support the evaluation findings
- Interviews with project managers to gain insights into the effectiveness of project and programme delivery and impact
- Interviews with Torbay Council staff (x3)
- An online business survey to explore business satisfaction with the support received as well as early evidence of impact. The survey link was sent to all businesses that had participated in projects 7 to 11 at the time of the evaluation and the survey remained in the field from the 30<sup>th</sup> of July to the 28<sup>th</sup> of August. A total of 114 responses were received, broken down as follows:
  - Start-up Torbay = 51 responses
  - Impact Torbay = 29 responses
  - Make it Net Zero Torbay = 22
  - Growing the Torbay Social Economy = 12 responses

Given the budgetary constraints it was not possible to conduct a full evaluation of all eleven in scope interventions and therefore a proportional approach to project level evaluation was undertaken, which is illustrated below.

Figure 2: Approach to project level evaluation

Interventions	Desk review	Impact and VFM	PM Interview	Participant survey
1. Local Sports facilities, tournaments, teams, and leagues	High level	Qualitative	Yes	No
2. Creation of and improvements to local green spaces.	High level	Qualitative	Yes	No
3. Impactful volunteering and or / social action projects				
4. Community measures to reduce cost of living, improve resource efficiency	High level	Qualitative	Yes	No
5. Bid for and host international business events and conferences	High level	Qualitative	Yes	No
6. Development and promotion of the visitor economy	High level	Qualitative	Yes	No
7. Growing the social local economy	More detailed	Quantitative	Yes	Yes
8. Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems	More detailed	Quantitative	Yes	Yes
9. R&D Grants				
10. Strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems	More detailed	Quantitative	Yes	Yes
11. Supporting businesses in becoming carbon neutral	More detailed	Quantitative	Yes	Yes

## 1.3 Measuring economic impact, additionality and value for money

### 1.3.1 Measuring Impact

The impact arising from each project was assessed in the first instance from the monitoring data collected and evidenced by each project. If appropriate this was supplemented by data collected from the evaluation fieldwork.

### 1.3.2 Measuring additionality

Additionality refers to the extent to which the benefits achieved are ‘additional’ to the benefits that would have been achieved in the absence of support. This is a complex concept because cause and effect are inevitably difficult to disentangle, particularly where a business may have multiple interactions with different support providers. This study has attempted to quantify the additionality of impact for the following four projects only:

- Intervention 7: Growing the social local economy
- Interventions 8 and 9: Impact Torbay
- Intervention 10: Start-up Torbay
- Intervention 11: Make it Net Zero Torbay

This included adjustments with respect to the following additionality factors:

- Deadweight
- Displacement
- Leakage
- Multiplier effects

The approach taken to assessing each of these factors is detailed below.

### Deadweight

Deadweight is the outcome that would have happened anyway (for example, would the business have achieved the same benefits without the project). The business survey asked respondents if in the absence of the project that the benefits they achieved would have:

1. Not have occurred at all
2. Probably have occurred but over a longer time frame
3. Probably have occurred but to a lesser extent
4. Probably have occurred over a longer time frame and a lesser extent
5. Probably have occurred anyway (to the same scale and timeframe)
6. Don't know

Each of these options were then assigned a 'percentage' deadweight (as per Figure 3 below), which was multiplied by the proportion selecting each response in order to produce a weighted average deadweight for each project.

Figure 3: Assumptions Underpinning Deadweight

Option	% Deadweight	Rationale/Assumptions
1	0%	Respondents indicated that they would not have taken the actions without support
2	50%	Respondents indicated that the actions would have occurred, but more slowly. The deadweight assumption is that without support it would have taken beneficiaries twice as long to deliver actions
3	50%	Respondents indicated that actions would have been scaled back without support. The deadweight assumption is that the actions would be reduced by half
4	25%	Respondents indicated that actions would have been scaled back AND taken longer. Therefore, the deadweight assumption is 25%
5	100%	Respondents indicated they would have taken the actions anyway
6	75%	Respondents did not know - therefore it has been assumed that 75% is deadweight

### Displacement

Displacement is the extent to which the project has caused market share to be taken from elsewhere in the programme area (for example, growth in a supported business, disadvantages another business in Torbay).

Product displacement is usually measured using the following formula:

$$\% \text{ of additional sales generated going to region } \times \% \text{ of firm's competition based in region}$$

The business survey asked respondents to estimate their proportion of sales to customers in Torbay and their proportion of competitors in the Bay which were used in the above equation to produce a displacement adjustment for each project.

### Leakage

Leakage is the proportion of outputs/outcomes that benefit those outside the target area of the intervention. To understand potential leakage, the business survey asked respondents if they had any sites outside of Torbay which have benefited from the project. The proportion indicating 'yes' to this question was used to produce a leakage adjustment for each project.

### Multiplier effects

Multipliers quantify the further economic activity (e.g. jobs, expenditure or income) stimulated by the direct benefits of an intervention. It is not possible to through a business survey to estimate multiplier effects as this requires a rigorous analysis of supply chain impacts. Research conducted by the former Department for

Business Innovation and Skills in 2009 would suggest that for sub-regional projects with a focus on supporting individual enterprises, a reasonable multiplier would be 1.20.<sup>2</sup>

### *Net additionality*

Net additionality is then calculated for each project on the basis of the following equation:

$$(1-\text{deadweight}) * (1-\text{leakage}) * (1 - \text{displacement}) * \text{multiplier effects} = \text{net additionality adjustment.}$$

### 1.3.3 Value for money

Value for money is considered from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The qualitative analysis considers the following research questions:

- Economy – to what extent were costs minimised?
- Efficiency – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?
- Effectiveness – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?

The qualitative assessment has been undertaken for each project.

A quantitative assessment was also undertaken, where it has been possible to put a monetary value on the impacts achieved so far. This takes the form of a 'return on investment' calculation which compares benefits, with costs after adjusting for discounting. Discounting is a technique used to compare costs and benefits occurring over different periods of time on a consistent basis. Discounting in appraisal of social value is based on the concept of time preference – that generally people prefer to receive goods and services now rather than later. As per HM Treasury Green Book Guidance<sup>3</sup> for the development of business cases, the costs and benefits have been discounted at the Social Time Preference Rate of 3.5%.

## 1.4 Overview of the Report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Section Two – evaluates the individual projects that are in scope
- Section Three – reports on expenditure as well as outputs and outcomes to date and programme level value for money
- Section Four – reviews the effectiveness of programme management processes
- Section Five – provides conclusions and recommendations

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<sup>2</sup> BIS Occasional Paper No. 1. Research to improve the assessment of additionality, October 2009.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government/the-green-book-2020>

## Section Two: Project Performance

This section provides a high-level evaluation of the 11 interventions (delivered as nine projects). For each project it includes:

- A profile and description of each project
- Progress at the time of the evaluation (including financial, outputs and outcomes)
- A review of what has worked well/less well
- Beneficiary perspectives (if material has been collected by the delivery partner or the project was included in the business survey)
- Emerging impacts
- Emerging value for money
- Learning and opportunities for future delivery.

### 2.1 Improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley North

#### 2.1.1 Project profile

Project Name		Improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley North	
Investment Theme	Communities and Place		
Intervention	Local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues (E3)		
Total UKSPF funding	£45,723	Match funding	£350,000
Project start date	End of August 2023	Project end date	March 2025
Current status	Ongoing	Lead organisation	Torbay Council
<b>Description</b>			
<p>The project involved utilising UKSPF to improve sports facilities and amenities in Torbay for local sports teams to enjoy. These facilities include Armada Park and Torre Valley North.</p> <p>Armada Park improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of refurbishment to current changing pavilion for football</li> <li>• The refurbishment has been designed to fulfil FA requirements to allow a safe environment for local football clubs to grow and encourage female and youth users</li> </ul> <p>Torre Valley North</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering new modular facilities for Athletics, Cricket and Rugby</li> <li>• The modular unit has been designed to encompass the needs of the differing sports clubs to maximise usage.</li> </ul>			

#### 2.1.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

At the time of the evaluation, the Armada Park facility had recently been completed (9<sup>th</sup> August), following an 8-month build. Figure 4 overleaf shows photographs taken during the build.

At Torre Valley, the works on the unit were progressing. The modular unit had been ordered and delivery is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2024.

Figure 4: Armada Park Facilities

Exterior



Toilets



Showers



Figure 4 below shows the project’s financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that UKSPF expenditure was front loaded to ensure it was spent in 23/24, with match funding used to pay for subsequent expenditure.

However, as neither facility was complete by June 2024 none of the outputs had been achieved at that point. The outputs relating to Armada Park should be achieved in the next quarter and those for Torre Valley North should be achieved by the end of March 2025.

Figure 5: Financial, output and outcome performance – Improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley North

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£45,723	£45,723	£45,723
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of facilities supported/created	2	0	0
No. of tournaments/teams/leagues supported	5	0	0
<b>Outcomes</b>			
No. of people reporting an improved perception of new facilities/amenities	100	0	0
Increase in the number of users of facilities	100	0	0

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.1.3 What has worked well/less well

Both projects more complex than originally anticipated. At Armada Park, the costings received were considerably higher than the original budget (due to inflation) and additional funding needed to be secured through S106, the Torbay Council Capital and Growth Board and the Football Foundation.

In Torre Valley, complications arose because the sub-structure, drainage and infrastructure was not co-ordinated with the modular unit, which caused some delays. Additional design meetings and tests were required to find a resolution, particularly to the surface water drainage.

Delays were also caused by the difficulty in securing a timely grid connection.

### 2.1.4 Beneficiary perspectives

It was beyond the scope of this evaluation study to obtain beneficiary perspectives in relation to this project. However, it is understood that Torbay Council will be distributing a survey to users of the facilities once they have been opened.

### 2.1.5 Emerging impacts

As neither project was complete at the time of the evaluation it was not possible to assess user impacts. However, at a strategic level, the project is expected to support Torbay’s playing pitch strategy as well as the local football facilities plan (produced by Devon FA) by improving changing facilities. Ultimately, once the facilities are open, the Council anticipates that it will help to ‘get more people moving’, which will have health benefits. It is also hoped that the provision of changing facilities will enable the football team at Armada Park to attract youth and women’s teams. Similarly, the facilities at Torre Valley north are expected to enable the rugby, cricket and athletics clubs to retain members (which has been an issue since the previous changing room were demolished after COVID) as well as attract new members. However, it is too early to quantify the number of new participants in sport.

Research commissioned by Sports England found that increased participation can deliver social value by<sup>4</sup>:

- Improving physical and mental health
- Improving mental well-being (e.g. life satisfaction)
- Delivering individual development (e.g. educational attainment and salary)
- Delivering social and community development.

These facilities also play a vital role in helping to make Torbay an attractive place for young people and families to live and increasing pride in place.

### 2.1.6 Emerging value for money

Figure 6 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 6: Qualitative value for money assessment – Armada Park and Torre Valley

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	The project minimised costs through the procurement process by seeking three quotes from suppliers. Whilst prices were higher than expected changes in the design were not possible. Instead, additional funding was obtained.
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	The project may have been able to deliver facilities at a lower cost by looking at alternative designs, although this may have resulted in a reduction in quality or utility.
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Unknown – outcomes have yet to be achieved.

### 2.1.7 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering capital projects, there are two main learning points arising from this project:

- **Accuracy of costing/consideration of inflation** – The project was only able to proceed because additional funding was identified. Torbay Council may wish to reflect on its processes for costing capital builds to ensure they consider inflation as well as other risks (including optimism bias); and
- **Securing dates for electrical connections to the national grid** – As this can take time to arrange, it is important to secure dates for connection as soon as possible to avoid delays.

In terms of opportunities for future delivery, it is understood that there are many opportunities for similar projects which would support Torbay’s Playing Pitch Strategy as well as secure match funding from sports organisations (e.g. the Football foundation).

<sup>4</sup> Social Return on Investment of Sport and Physical Activity in England, Sheffield Hallam University,

## 2.2 Incredible Earth

### 2.2.1 Project profile

<b>Project Name</b>	Incredible Earth		
<b>Investment Theme</b>	Communities and Place		
<b>Intervention</b>	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces. E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.		
<b>Total UKSPF funding</b>	£41,600	<b>Match funding</b>	Yes
<b>Project start date</b>	Apr 2023	<b>Project end date</b>	March 2024 (E9) March 2025 (E10)
<b>Current status</b>	Complete	<b>Lead organisation</b>	Groundwork South
<b>Description</b>			
<p>The project involved utilising UKSPF to work with communities across Torbay, supporting those who would like to improve their local green spaces and make them fantastic assets and resources for all to enjoy.</p> <p>The project linked together two interventions (E3 and E9). E3 included making improvements to sites at Westerland Valley, Parkfield House and Watcombe Beach and an entirely new green space was created at a disused car park in Melville, Torquay. And E9 aimed to work with 90 volunteers to help deliver the project and champion community involvement.</p>			

### 2.2.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

The project involved working with community groups and local residents to co-design and deliver improvements to Westerlands Valley, Watcombe Beach, Parkfield House and Melville, as detailed below:

#### *Westerlands Valley*

- What was planned?** Westerlands Valley is a 35-acre open space owned and operated by Torbay Council, which had been underused by local residents and been the target for anti-social behaviour. Groundwork South had been working to improve the site for several years, based at the Great Parks Community Centre at the entrance to Westerland Valley. A park backs onto this community Centre which was underused due to the lack of features and persistent vandalism. A new space had been cleared behind the park by SWISCO, which presented an opportunity to become a community asset in the future, but the lack of CCTV covering the park meant that concerns remained about anti-social behaviour. The project was therefore to work collaboratively with the community centre volunteers to select and install CCTV cameras and work with the Friends of Westerlands Valley Group to engage new volunteers and involve them in clearing paths, installing signs and improving accessibility to the site.
- What was delivered?** The CCTV camera was installed in July 2023 but vandalised soon afterwards. This was fixed within a couple of weeks and anti-vandal paint applied, with no subsequent vandalism. Students from South Devon College were engaged in designing social action and work experiences sessions at the site (litter picks, and opportunities to study the flora, fauna, waterways, habitats and bio-diversity of the site). A community artist delivered some sessions with young people with a view to painting the shelter in the park, the actual painting was not able to take place due to concerns raised by SWISCO about the future of the shelter.

### *Parkfield House*

- **What was planned?** Parkfield House is a grade-II listed building currently managed by People's Parkfield Community Interest Company for the benefit of the community. The large grounds included an overgrown walled garden, pond and wooded area. The project included plans to:
  - Work with a Devon-based wood carving designer to develop a bridge and dipping platform for the pond
  - Create a nature trail in the woodland for leisure and educational purposes
  - Engage local asylum seekers, local residents, school groups and young people.
- **What was delivered?** The project utilised contractors to dig out silt from the pond and drainage ditches and build a dipping platform. This was supported by community involvement including:
  - Volunteer time from asylum seekers
  - Development of an open-to-all gardening club on Wednesdays
  - Development of a 'friends of group' for the grounds
  - Creation of a sanctuary corner next to the stables by Combe Pafford school.

### *Watcombe Beach*

- **What was planned?** Watcombe Beach was closed in the Winter of 2020 after heavy rains disrupted the surface water drainage systems surrounding the Beach and damaged the steps. Groundwork South were engaged from October 2021 to develop appropriate nature-based solutions, which started in 2022 with work on drainage interventions. The project was therefore to work with the local community to:
  - Carry out remedial works on drainage and excess water flow
  - Build and create safe access to the beach

Once completed, the project aimed to work with the Save Watcombe Beach Group and local primary schools to undertake litter picks and a re-opening day to engage and inform.

- **What was delivered?** – The capital works were carried out in July 2023 and the beach re-opened. This resulted in national news coverage and positive feedback from the community. The Save Watcombe Beach group were engaged to begin fundraising for further work. After reports of a seal giving birth to pups in the cover, a 'save the seals' banner was designed by Groundwork South and attached to railings.

### *Melville Street*

- **What was planned?** – Groundwork South started working with the Melville community in January 2022 in partnership with the Melville Residents Association to address fly tipping and anti-social disorder. Work was done to improve the appearance and function of the area by creating a community grow space and a large sea-themed mural to add colour to the street scape in conjunction with volunteers. The project was to continue the community led approach to make Melville a better place to live with the creation of window boxes and a wooden trellis to screen the bin area in the car par with climbing plants to create greenery. The community was to be involved in building the boxes, trellis and planting
- **What was delivered?** – As well as installing a pergola and planters through a community day, the project also worked with the community to clean and restore the mural and develop a historic art trail to create 'a journey through the streets'. Local artists were commissioned to tender for this piece of work and Groundwork South organised a committee of residents to make the final selection. Commissioned works were installed later in 2024.

Figure 7 below shows the project’s financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024, which, as the project completed in March 2024, represented the final position. This shows that the project spent 99% of its budget allocation and either met or exceeded most of its output targets. The only target not to have been achieved was the number of organisations receiving grants, and this was due to a decision by Groundwork South to buy the necessary equipment to support organisations directly, rather than issuing separate grants.

In terms of outcomes, the project has met or exceeded most of its targets, except for the target for the perception of improvement of facilities, which Groundwork South have found difficult to measure. This related to the complexity of conducting ‘before and after’ surveys in a statistically robust way in a relatively short period of time.

Figure 7: Financial, output and outcome performance – Incredible Earth

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£41,600		£41,071
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of neighbourhood improvement plans	4	4	4
Amount of green/blue space created or improved (m2)	100	100	110
No. of organisations receiving financial support other than grants	5	5	7
No. of organisations receiving grants	4	4	0
No. of local events/activities supported	5	5	13
No. of volunteering opportunities supported	90	90	229
No. of projects	2	2	11
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Increased footfall (No.)	24	24	69
No. of people reporting improved experience/accessibility	24	24	21
Improved perception of facilities	40	40	20
Improved engagement numbers	90	90	229
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	90	90	229

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.2.3 What has worked well/less well

The project was thought to be effective because the four interventions built on previous community development activities which had been conducted by Groundwork South. This meant that each intervention:

- Had an established need
- Had existing community support
- Was clearly defined and ‘shovel ready’

These foundations made it possible to deliver community interventions in the relatively short time frame set out for these projects. It would not have been possible to deliver projects that were not ‘shovel ready’ or conduct community engagement activity to identify potential projects in this timeframe.

As such, these interventions were thought to provide a vital role in ‘finishing’ wider projects that had become ‘stuck’. They were therefore able to **capitalise on pre-existing partnerships** with a range of different organisations in the Bay, such as Torbay Parks and open spaces, coastguard, community groups etc. In addition, the ability to **galvanise volunteers** to support the implementation of the interventions was considered invaluable and key to achieving a lasting legacy.

The **provision of capital and revenue funding was also thought to be advantageous**, enabling money for equipment and materials as well as staff time. However, it was suggested that integrating the funding into one 'bid opportunity' would have been more attractive to the market. This is because the separation of capital and revenue presented a risk to potential bidders (in the event that they secured one project, but not the other, which may which may have rendered the projects undeliverable).

However, despite the success in driving forward the four community projects, Groundwork South found the monitoring and reporting requirements challenging due to:

- The requirement to provide audit level evidence to support 100% of financial claims
- Changing requirements in relation to outcome definitions
- The challenges associated with collecting before and after data in relation to 'perceptions'
- Changes in Groundwork South personnel working in Torbay
- The costs associated with providing project administration

#### 2.2.4 Beneficiary perspectives

It was beyond the scope of this evaluation study to obtain beneficiary perspectives in relation to this project.

#### 2.2.5 Emerging impacts

Whilst Groundwork South have found it difficult to gather data in relation to community perceptions of each project, the interventions are thought to have made a tangible difference in all four communities and address a genuine need. Taking each in turn:

- **Watcombe Beach** – the funding allowed the Beach to be re-opened and used by both the community and visitors alike. Alongside the capital work, the project has empowered the 'Friends of Watcombe Beach' to look after the Beach and consider further improvements – helping them to transition from an 'activist' role to a 'custodian' role. Similarly, local schools are now using the Beach and conducting beach cleans
- **Parkfield House** – the funding has complemented wider plans to re-develop Parkfield House as a community space by enabling progress to be made on the grounds. The work has helped to make the grounds more welcoming and accessible, as well as improving the biodiversity in the pond. A range of community groups now utilise the raised beds to support community learning activities.
- **Melville** – the project has helped the resident's association complete the initial phases of work and Groundwork South are continuing to engage with the community to develop Phase 3.
- **Westerlands Valley** – while the project did not deliver the full ambition planned, it has contributed to the wider use of the valley by the community, where works have helped to change the way people are using the space.

As one stakeholder put it:

**“the funding has been used to get things done”**

#### 2.2.6 Emerging value for money

Figure 8 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 8: Qualitative value for money – Incredible Earth

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	The project team worked creatively to deliver the projects within a relatively tight budget. Key to delivering this project economically was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of volunteers wherever possible (including corporate volunteers)</li> <li>• The use of staff with creative skills, rather than contractors wherever possible</li> <li>• Use of robust procurement to systems to achieve VFM from contractors</li> <li>• Working closely with wider partners and securing match funding</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	Most outputs were delivered efficiently, however a last-minute decision by SWISCo to cancel work on the shelter at Westerlands Valley after costs had been incurred meant that some expenditure was wasted.
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	The spending has achieved positive outcomes in all four communities

### 2.2.7 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering community projects, there are three main learning points arising from this project:

- If projects need to be delivered within a short window, it is more effective to support existing ‘shovel ready’ projects that already have community support
- Including capital and revenue elements enables delivery organisations to fund staff who can support community involvement and volunteering. However, this would be better integrated under one bid opportunity to reduce risks to bidding organisations
- Supporting community involvement through volunteering is essential to achieving a long-term legacy

In terms of opportunities for future delivery, it is understood that there are likely to be further opportunities to add value to these community initiatives.

## 2.3 Energy Saving Torbay

### 2.3.1 Project profile

Project Name		Energy Saving Torbay	
<b>Investment Theme</b>	Communities and Place		
<b>Intervention</b>	E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.		
<b>Total UKSPF funding</b>	£75,000	Match funding	Approx £50,000
<b>Project start date</b>	April 2023	Project end date	March 2025
<b>Current status</b>	Ongoing	Lead organisation	Exeter Community Energy (ECO)
<b>Description</b>			
<p>Energy Saving Torbay aims to help residents save money and stay warm in their homes by offering free practical energy advice and support. Its approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drop-in Clinics</b> - running regular drop-in clinics across Torbay where residents can receive a wide range of support such as help applying for benefits and grants, energy tariff checks, help to switch energy suppliers as well as energy and water saving tips</li> <li>• <b>Frontline worker engagement</b> – training sessions for front line workers (e.g. council staff, citizens advice, NHS etc) to help them understand the offer and support referrals</li> <li>• <b>Home visits</b> – residents who have a household income of under £31,000 or those in receipt of benefits, can sign up for a free home visit. A trained home energy adviser will assess their home, install free energy-saving measures such as fixing LED light bulbs and providing draught providers, and provide bespoke advice for them and their property on how to save money and conserve energy.</li> </ul>			

### 2.3.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

As of the end of June 2024, the project had:

- Engaged with 3,001 households at drop-in clinics at job centres and libraries
- Ran training session for 353 front line workers
- Supported 284 telephone enquiries, providing householders with 1:2:1 advice
- Provided 51 home visits.

Figure 9 overleaf shows the project's financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that expenditure was lower than expected as the service was able to offer residents home visits under the LEAP programme<sup>5</sup>, which included a more comprehensive package of measures. This underspend has been re-allocated to allow the fund to support measures not covered in other schemes.

Outputs and outcomes are currently ahead of profile, in particular the number of people reached. This is due to the fact that the project received fewer referrals from front line workers than expected, which meant that the team had to undertake a much more significant programme of outreach.

<sup>5</sup> <https://applyforleap.org.uk/>

Figure 9: Financial, output and outcome performance – Energy Saving Torbay

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£75,000		£23,696
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of households supported to take energy efficiency measures	200	135	166
No. of people reached	450	318	3,636
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures (no. of households)	200	135	166

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.3.3 What has worked well/less well

In terms of the project delivery, several aspects of this project have worked particularly well, including:

- **Utilising complementary funding** – the team have been able to utilise UKSPF funding in a flexible way alongside other sources of funding (such as LEAP, British Gas Energy Fund) to maximise the number of clients that could be supported and the benefits that could be achieved.
- **Taking a holistic approach** – By visiting clients in their home, the team have been able to work with clients in a holistic way to identify ‘the most important thing today for this person’, which may mean contacting the Council to deal with other problems with the property or contacting the energy supplier to deal with an issue on the account, or helping the person to obtain the benefits that they are entitled to. This holistic and flexible approach has helped to maximise the social benefits.

However, the project has faced two challenges:

1. **Torbay Council’s strict definition of capital** - which only relates to expenditure on capital assets owned by the Council, has made it difficult for ECOE to claim for capital expenditure in people’s homes. As a consequence, the programme management team have had to find an alternative way to pay ECOE by issuing a grant for the capital element;
2. **The training for front line workers did not generate the expected level of referrals** - the team is not clear why this was the case, as the training package had been used successfully before in other places. This meant that ECOE had to put more effort into direct outreach than expected. However, the programme manager has been working closely with ECOE to improve referrals from Torbay Council services.

Despite the referral challenge, the team have successfully built relationships with a range of community partners by attending various strategic networking events such as the vulnerable customer network meeting, the UKSPF People and Skills engagement partner event and the Torbay Climate Partnership. The following comments<sup>6</sup> highlight the positive relationships established:

*“Torbay Communities have been privileged to work with the ECOE team to help local residents of Torbay, to be more empowered to address the cost of living crisis. Their friendly team have attended many local Community engagement events, presenting key information which can help people save on their energy bills, as well as conducting face-to-face meetings with vulnerable individuals”*

Ceri Silk - Town Centre Community Builder - Torbay Communities

<sup>6</sup> From existing case studies

*“It was our pleasure to have you in our energy saving surgery. Your presentation was so informative and practical and the interaction between you and our attendees was so appreciated. We look forward to working with you in the coming future”.*

Annie Fung - Community Development Worker - Chinese Wellbeing Society.

### 2.3.4 Beneficiary perspectives

The project team collects data on the types of beneficiaries supported. Figure 10 shows the distribution by tenure, compared with the proportion of households in each group in Torbay. This shows that the project is more likely to support people in rented accommodation than homeowners, which reflects the higher level of need amongst this group.

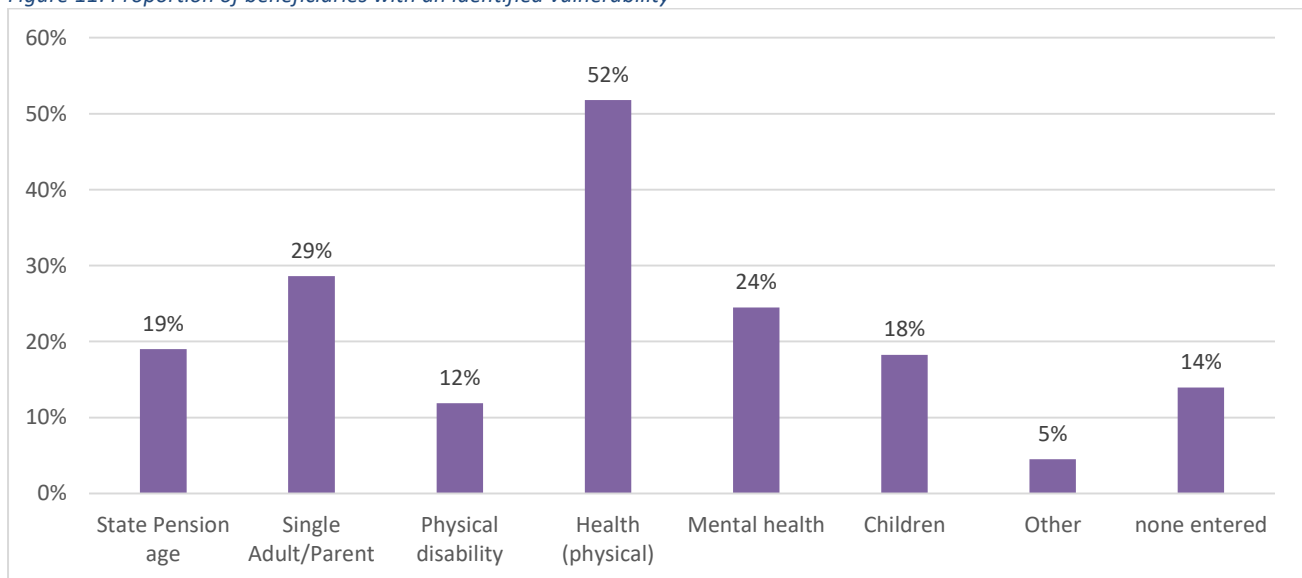
Figure 10: Distribution of beneficiaries by tenure

	Proportion of beneficiaries	% of households in Torbay
Home-owners	43%	64%
Private rental	32%	26%
Social housing	24%	8%
Shared ownership	1%	1%

Source: Exeter Community Energy and Census 2001

Figure 11 shows that the project supported households with a range of different vulnerabilities (some with more than one). Only 14% of beneficiaries had no vulnerabilities identified.

Figure 11: Proportion of beneficiaries with an identified vulnerability



Source: Exeter Community Energy and Census 2001. Note: Beneficiaries can have more than one vulnerability identified.

Whilst it was not possible to directly engage with end beneficiaries as part of this evaluation, the following case studies have been prepared by the project which illustrate how the project has been able to help people.

### **Case Study: Family with young children, multiple health problems and in fuel debt – Paignton**

Problem: High energy bills, cold home, draughts, damp and condensation.

Context: Client has been suffering from various medical issues which has lowered their income significantly. Her husband therefore can only work part time and care for her. Their location has a leaking asbestos roof on their outhouse connected to the house. Trees has overgrown the area including the asbestos roof and guttering and shaded the entire sunlight exposure thus making it impossible for the house to dry efficiently. In the winter period, this causes extreme mould growth and dampness which is hard to heat with the Gas Central Heating which is unaffordable and unsustainable.

Solution: A home visit to assess the problems and refer resident for ECOE's inhouse benefits advisor support.

Results:

- Energy Advice: Discussion on tariffs and how to manage payments
- Easy measures installed: radiator reflective panels
- Behaviour change: Turn down thermostat by 1degree. Use fully loaded washing machine and use eco setting at 30degrees.
- Kettle-boil what you need.
- Onward referrals: Referral to inhouse benefits Advisor.
- Hazard referral relating to mould in property

Total value of support £9,426 from benefits assessment and energy savings

*“I genuinely can't believe how much better off we are going to be, especially this winter. Thank you. I wish we had have done this sooner! Last year was a very difficult winter for us! It's a relief to know that we can get by now without panicking as the colder nights draw in. Also, for my mental health, a massive burden has been lifted of stress. I can't thank you enough!”*

### **Case Study: Male Pensioner with multiple complex needs following a stroke. In receipt of the state pension and PIP**

Problem: The boiler had stopped working approx. 4 weeks ago and he had no hot water. Concerned about his finances and ability to pay for care and upkeep of his home.

The Solution: A home visit was arranged to provide a 1-2-1 wholistic energy and money saving advice service.

Results:

- White goods: A new energy efficient boiler was installed.
- Easy measures installed: energy efficient light bulbs, Standby plug and under door draught excluders.
- Energy Advice: Price cap and tariff discussion and Smart Meter advice given.
- Behaviour change: Agreed to wash clothes at 30 degrees, turn off electricals when not in use, Kettle - boil what is needed. Wash up in bowl not under the hot tap.
- Advice and help to understanding and setting the timer and controls.
- Registered client onto the Priority service Register for vulnerable customers

Total energy savings and value of support: £3,339.00

### 2.3.5 Emerging impacts

As of the end of June 2024, a total of 166 householders committed to taking energy saving measures and 40 were referred for large measures. The estimated savings were equivalent to **£201,175** or £589.96 per household. This is based on the first year of energy savings only, which is likely to underestimate the impact. Furthermore, the estimated savings from clients supported to date may increase as additional measures are implemented.

In addition, the team believes that there are **significant health and social benefits** arising from:

- The reduction in anxiety and stress, particularly for people who find it difficult to engage with energy suppliers
- Helping people in crisis with fuel vouchers (funded through complementary schemes)
- Keeping people warm (including through the provision of heated blankets)

These health and social benefits have not been quantified.

### 2.3.6 Emerging value for money

Figure 12 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 12: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Energy Saving Torbay

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	The project was procured via a competitive process and costs have all been accounted for
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	Efficiency could have been improved with better referral rates from Torbay Council and other agencies. Poor referral rates meant that the team needed to spend more resources on outreach activities.
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Section 2.3.5 demonstrates that the project achieved its intended outcomes and these were maximised by the delivery partner utilising UKSPF funding alongside other funding sources to deliver the best package of benefits for participants

Whilst a formal Return on Investment has not been calculated for this project, it is clear that estimated savings of at least £201,175 to date exceed the £75,000 investment and therefore likely to represent very good value to money.

### 2.3.7 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering energy saving projects in the domestic sector, there are several learning points from the delivery to date:

- Frontline workers provide an important referral route, however, the training programme for frontlines workers was less effective in Torbay than in other places where ECOE operates. The ECOE and Torbay Council teams may wish to reflect on the reasons for this and consider what changes may be required for future programmes
- There is demand from householders for energy efficiency advice and that the approach adopted (a mixture of telephone and face to face advice) by Exeter Community Energy can yield significant impacts
- The use of funding in a flexible way alongside other complementary funding sources has helped the project deliver maximum benefits to households

More broadly, at a programme management level, the team have also learnt that capital funding for projects outside of Torbay Council's estate is easier to defray via grant mechanisms.

In terms of opportunities for future delivery, ECOE have identified the need to set up a drop-in Centre within the Bay, where residents can drop-in to get energy saving advice. This would potentially consolidate their presence in the Bay and help them to be able to continue supporting vulnerable households.

## 2.4 Meet English Riviera

### 2.4.1 Project profile

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Meet English Riviera</b>		
<b>Investment Theme</b>	Business and Enterprise		
<b>Intervention</b>	E25: Bid for and host international business events and conferences		
<b>Total UKSPF funding</b>	£27,080	Match funding	
<b>Project start date</b>	April 2023	Project end date	March 2024
<b>Current status</b>	Complete	Lead organisation	Meet Devon
<b>Description</b>			
<b>Description</b>			
Meet English Riviera (a sub-brand of Meet Devon) is the main conference and convention bureau for the English Riviera and beyond. The key focus of their intervention was to promote Torbay, the English Riviera, as an international destination for any business, conference or event. The intervention also supported the delivery of the English Riviera Destination Management Plan to attract new business and conference visitors. Meet English Riviera offered a free service to support meeting planners / conference organisers in finding the perfect venue to hold their event, whether a large convention or a small board meeting, an incentive group or corporate celebration.			

### 2.4.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

During project delivery which ended in March 2024, Meet Devon:

- Engaged and visited relevant businesses across the Bay and signed up 30 as venues and suppliers to Meet English Riviera on the Meet Devon website
- Attended key trade events to raise the profile and visibility of Torbay. Those events included The Meeting Show (July 2023) IBTM in Barcelona NOV 2023) Two Association Congresses, International Convex, the Meet England US Sales Mission and other smaller events linked to the MIA
- Attended the Meeting Industry Association Board meetings in London and Meet England quarterly meetings
- Followed up on appointments and leads from all these events
- Developed a website and SEO strategy (ongoing) which has generated day-to-day enquiries
- Hosted 11 site visits to the English Riviera for key meeting planners
- Developed plans to integrate their CRM system both within their business and on a channel to sit on the English Riviera BID company official tourism site. Grant funding opportunities have been identified to support this
- Utilised support from Make it Net Zero Torbay to get an ECOsmart accreditation for Meet Devon (a leading certification system for hotels, meeting venues, short stay apartments and pubs with meeting rooms to demonstrate their commitment to environmental sustainability). Since achieving their accreditation, they have promoted the benefits to partners to encourage them to take part in the project.

Figure 13 below shows the project's financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that the project has met its spending target in full and delivered more events and supported more businesses than expected. Whilst the increase in visitor numbers has not yet been claimed, this target is expected to be exceeded when confirmed bookings take place.

Figure 13: Financial, output and outcome performance – Meet English Riviera

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£27,080	£27,080	£27,080
<b>Outputs</b>			
Events/participatory programmes delivered	3	3	5
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Increase in visitor numbers	250	250	0
Number of supported businesses	10	10	14

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.4.3 What has worked well/less well

Evidence from Visit Britain shows that the conference/events market is a globally significant high value market segment, which has the potential to extend the tourism season. Whilst this market was hit by the pandemic, the latest figures show it is recovering and there is renewed interest in coastal locations such as Torbay.<sup>7</sup> However, the sector has not been actively promoted within Torbay since before the pandemic.

The use of funding to cover the costs (but not staff time) of attending key industry events has proven to be very effective as demonstrated by the number of bookings and enquiries received (see section 2.4.5). The team have maximised the impact of these events by:

- Attending as part of wider Visit England stand
- Securing contributions from partners
- Pre-planning meetings at the trade shows by identifying and contacting target delegates in advance.

These events have both raised the profile of the area within the target market and generated significant leads. As one stakeholder expressed:

*“This has enabled the English Riviera to compete ‘on a level playing field’ with key competitor destinations such as Bournemouth or Liverpool”*

In addition, the membership of Meet Devon Directors on the Board of Meet England and the Meeting Industries Association has also helped to raise the profile of the area.

However, the project has not been without challenges. The most significant have been:

- **Its short duration** – the business events market has a relatively long lead time. Buyers are looking for venues for events in 2-3 years’ time, therefore outputs are unlikely to be observed within a 1-year window. This also has implications for Meet Devon as an organisation, whose business model is commission based. As a result, the business is not able to sustain the level of promotional activity beyond the life of the project, which may mean the momentum generated by a 1-year project cannot be sustained;
- **Market failure** – Private sector partners (e.g. hotels, conference organisations) are often reluctant to sponsor a trade stand because the returns are not guaranteed or may not be seen immediately. Similarly, partners often have unrealistic expectations in terms of the speed of returns;
- **Partner engagement** – Partners are often slow in providing quotes, replying to requests for information or signing up to support an event. This means that opportunities are sometimes lost. Similarly, partners have been slow to engage with support activities (such as events to help partners sign up to EcoSmart); and

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.visitbritain.org/research-insights/business-events-research>

- **Administration** – Meet Devon require a CRM system to help them process enquiries more efficiently. They have developed a specification for this, which would allow integration with the Visit Devon website and are currently seeking further funding to support this.

#### 2.4.4 Beneficiary perspectives

It was beyond the scope of this evaluation study to obtain beneficiary perspectives in relation to this project.

#### 2.4.5 Emerging impacts

The latest data from Meet Devon show that the project **has secured a total of 20 events**, which have a potential value of **£2.9m to Torbay**. The value to the bay is calculated using a national Multiplier which has been created by Visit Britain / The Business Visits & Events Partnership. This is equivalent to £139 for day delegates and £277 for night delegates. Their latest figures were created in 2018 (new research is underway). With price increases as they currently are, Meet Devon have added 3% year on year to create a figure for 2023. This has the potential to increase further as pipeline bookings become confirmed.

In addition, the project has also supported **several strategic outcomes**. For instance, by providing this function, Meet Devon has helped Visit Devon to meet the conditions required<sup>8</sup> to become a **Local Visitor Economy Partnership**. LVEPs are part of a new national vision for England’s tourism management landscape and will lead, market and manage their destinations in their geography. Up to 40 LVEPs will be created across England and they will work closely with Visit England and receive ongoing support from a team of five new Regional Development leads. Furthermore, the project directly aligns with the **English Riviera Destination Management Plan** which aims to target business tourism and events as a core target market and a Priority for development.

#### 2.4.6 Emerging value for money

Figure 14 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 14: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Meet English Riviera

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	Meet Devon adopted an economical approach to the management of costs by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking economical travel and subsistence options</li> <li>• Attending conferences as part of the Visit Britain stand, which helped to share the costs across multiple destinations</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	More events were attended than expected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economical approach to costs</li> <li>• The use of private sector match funding to complement UKSPF and enabling more events to be supported</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Whilst the project had not formally recorded an increase in visitor numbers in its monitoring figures, emerging impacts suggest that the project has secured a pipeline of events that should exceed the original outcome targets

Whilst a formal Return on Investment has not been calculated for this project, it is clear that forecast gross impact of £2.9m is likely to exceed the £27,080 investment, even after considering additionality. Overall, the project could be considered to have offered **excellent value for money**.

<sup>8</sup> Which included activity to support business tourism

### 2.4.7 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering projects to support business tourism, there are several learning points from delivery to date:

- Whilst the project exceeded its targets for signing up businesses, securing their active participation in activities has been harder than anticipated. This may highlight the need for a different approach in the future, or further work to help partners understand the nature of the opportunity
- Representing the area at key industry events can yield significant conference and event bookings for the Bay, with an associated economic impact (although this can have a long lead time)
- As a project designed to 'pump prime' a new market which is known for its long lead time, it may have been more sustainable to spread the support over a longer time period to enable the business to be able to maintain the momentum achieved in year one.

In terms of opportunities for future delivery, there continues to be a need/opportunity for representation from Torbay to attend national and international events to promote the Bay to the business events market (building on the success of the project).

## 2.5 Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences

### 2.5.1 Project profile

Project Name			
Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences			
Investment Theme	Business and Enterprise		
Intervention	E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.		
Total UKSPF funding	£21,700	Match funding	£0
Project start date	March 2023	Project end date	March 2025
Current status	Ongoing	Lead organisation	English Riviera BID Company (ERBIDCo)
<b>Description</b>			
<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>As not-for-profit company, the English Riviera BID Company is responsible for marketing the English Riviera as a leading UK resort.</p> <p>The 'Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences' project aims to attract more visitors to Torbay by developing and delivering a new programme of UNESCO Geopark Discovery experiences. This includes walking trails and new unique experiences that will enhance Torbay's offer to visitors and residents, particularly in the shoulder season.</p> <p>It should be noted that the project was to provide a promotion and marketing platform for the experiences, but delivery of the experiences themselves would be the responsibility of the Geopark partners to ensure the brand identities of the partners were not undermined.</p>			

### 2.5.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

The first year of the project involved:

- Devising a plan to engage with partners and determine how the project would be sustainable
- Engaging a co-ordinator to work with partners to develop experiences
- Forming a small group of motivated partners and organisations
- Identifying and developing potential experiences for testing over Geopark Festival Week around the themes of:
  - Ocean experiences
  - Wildlife and wild experiences
  - Rock connection (geological experiences)
  - Accessible experiences

This included working closely with partners and developing a template for partners to use.

- Development of a toolkit for existing activity providers to communicate Geopark in everyday activities consisting of fun facts, infographics and supporting information
- Delivery of experiences over the Geopark Festival week and subsequent feedback and review
- Further development and refinement of 8 viable experience offers
- Promoting the 8 experiences on the geopark and English riviera websites.

In the final year of the project, the team will be:

- Developing a promotional film, marketing toolkit and creative assets to support the wider promotion of the experiences
- Bringing together geopark partners in another meeting to discuss the project and how the opportunity can be taken forward.

The experiences developed include:

- Sunset Yoga with Nicola Bianca
- Coasteering Grand Tour with Rock Solid
- Agatha Christie’s Extraordinary Life with English Riviera Walking Tours
- Coastal Kayak Adventure with Sea Kayak Torbay
- Healthy Selfie Geopark Journeys (three accessible trails around the seafront areas of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham aimed at getting people out in the fresh air)
- Get on the water with Reach Outdoors
- Heritage Sailing Experience with Pilgrim Heritage.

Figure 15 below shows the project’s financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that the project is on track to meet its expenditure target and there is good progress towards its output targets, except for the creation or improvement of assets. The definition for this output relates to work on buildings or sites. Therefore, it is unclear how this project would be able to achieve this target, given it does not have capital funding. Conversely, it has achieved a strong performance for the number of people reached and this represents the product information being placed on the English Riviera website.

However, the economic outcomes in terms of jobs created and safeguarded were perhaps too ambitious and are unlikely to be met. The main reason for this is that it that the new experiences are, by and large, being delivered by existing staff or owners of businesses. It is possible, that as demand for these new experiences grows, the participating businesses may take on new staff or improve their profitability. In terms of visitor outcomes, it is possible that these will be met by project closure as visitors continue to participate in the new experiences.

Figure 15: Expenditure, outputs and outcome performance – Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£21,700		£9,868
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of businesses receiving non-financial support	5	2	3
No. of tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved	3	1	0
No. of people reached	50,000	20,000	100,000
No of local events or activities support	9	6	2
<b>Outcomes</b>			
No. of jobs created	3	0	0
No. of jobs safeguarded	8	0	0
Increased footfall (number)	200	105	130
Increased visitors (No.)	100	25	30
Increase in visitor spending (£)	£2,000	£1,000	0
Improved perception of attractions (no. of people reporting good or very good)	50	10	0

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.5.3 What has worked well/less well

The project provided an opportunity to work with businesses and entrepreneurs to develop new experiences aligned with the UNESCO Geopark opportunity, which had not been done before. Key factors in the success of this project include:

- **Bringing together a range of partners to explore and discuss ideas** – which has had the added benefit of increasing networking and collaboration amongst the Geopark partners
- **Employing a co-ordinator** to support partners to develop and test their proposals and then support them to establish them as a permanent offer
- **Developing templates** for partners to use in the development and marketing of their proposals
- **Focusing on quality** and ensuring that the new experiences aligned with Geopark’s sustainability standards and did not threaten the UNESCO status. Therefore, the team:
  - Put in place new Governance arrangements including a code of conduct that partners must adhere to be able to use the ‘Geopark Discovery Experience’ logo
  - Required businesses/individuals who wanted to host an experience to become a member of the Geopark
  - Carefully considered proposals and rejected any that might threaten UNESCO status (e.g. jet ski trips to look at seals).

However, the process has not been without its challenges, which have included:

- **Developing simple accessible messaging about the geology** – a key challenge here was the need to balance the expectations of different Geopark partners with the accessibility of messaging, with some partners expecting to see more detailed scientific content
- **Keeping Geopark core partners engaged** – early messaging that the project was about the creation of ‘new experiences’ made existing partners feel that the project did not relate to them, which was not the case
- **Engaging with existing tour operators** - to integrate key facts about the Geopark into their existing services (e.g. on wildlife tours etc.). Key challenges here related to a) a reluctance of staff/operators to change their existing ‘script’ which they may have been using successfully for a long time; b) the use of seasonal staff. The project responded to this by providing a set of very accessible ‘fun facts’ that could be used by staff
- **The financial profile** - which required expenditure to be incurred on an unusual basis, with expenditure in year 1, no expenditure in year 2 and the majority of expenditure in year 3. This put some cash flow pressures on the delivery partner.

### 2.5.4 Beneficiary perspectives

It was beyond the scope of this evaluation study to obtain beneficiary perspectives in relation to this project.

### 2.5.5 Emerging impacts

It is **too early to assess the economic impact** in terms visitor spending and the associated GVA and jobs. However, there is a logical route for jobs to be created directly (by the experience providers) and indirectly (by attracting new or higher spending visitors to the Bay). Furthermore, the project is expected to inspire the development of new Geopark experiences in the future and there is evidence that it **has inspired the development of wider cultural experiences** beyond the Geopark (e.g. Behind the scenes at the Princess Theatre and Vinyard Safaris).

The project has had a **broader strategic impact** in terms of contributing to the English Riviera Destination Management Plan. The development of new experiences has the potential to contribute to two of the plan’s overall priorities:

- **Markets, positioning and branding** - attracting new and existing visitor markets and an improved reputation and profile for the destination
- **Destination development** - new product investment and development of the existing offer.

The project also directly supports the UNESCO Global GeoPark Destination Management Theme, which is one of four growth priorities intended to enable the Bay to reach a broader range of higher spending market segments. The DMP highlights that these changes take time to deliver and are part of a ‘long game’ if the destination is to emerge stronger from the pandemic.

The project team highlighted that the project has helped **to raise the profile of the English Riviera Geopark** across businesses and stakeholders and catalysed wider conversations about how the UNESCO status can be promoted and utilised to promote the destination. As a result, the project has stimulated and inspired greater networking and collaboration amongst Geopark partners. In the words of the project team:

*“The Geopark is a sleeping giant and this project is helping to ignite the fire”*

As a result of this awakening process, English Riviera Geopark has been able to secure £250,000 from the Heritage Lottery Heritage Places Strategic Initiative to ensure a resilient future for the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark. The UKSPF project was thought to have helped catalyse this funding, which has significant potential to take forward the development of the Geopark concept.

### 2.5.6 Emerging value for money

Figure 16 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 16: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Meet English Riviera

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	Given the relatively small budget, the team adopted a careful approach to the management of costs and some costs (such as staff time) were not charged to the project.
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	The project has achieved multiple outputs for a relatively modest budget
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Whilst the project may not achieve all of its formal outcomes by March 2025, it has achieved significant strategic impacts which should drive outcomes in the longer term. In addition, it has helped to leverage further investment in the English Riviera Geopark via the Heritage Lottery fund.

### 2.5.7 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering projects to support destination development, there are several learning points from delivery to date:

- **Group settings and networking events** provided a useful way to stimulate ideas as well as supporting wider conversation and collaboration (which has had strategic benefits). However, there may be learning from the ‘Hackathon’ model deployed by other projects (e.g. Impact Torbay and Growing the Torbay Social Economy) that could be utilised in the future
- **Dedicated resource** in the form of a co-ordinator to work alongside providers and develop templates etc. was essential to the development of new experiences
- As experiences needed to align with and support the UNESCO designation, taking the time to **put in place quality control measures** was an important part of the process and should be factored into similar projects in the future

- In developing 'the new', the project inadvertently disengaged existing providers, this is an important learning point for future projects

In terms of opportunities for future delivery, ERIBCo have identified the need to:

- Educate and train the >1,000 ERBID levy payers about the Geopark, explaining how they can:
  - Refer to it in their website/literature without contravening UNESCO rules
  - Tell the Geopark Story
  - Develop further products/services aligned with the Geopark opportunity
- Support every hotel provider to incorporate suitable Geopark messaging on their websites with relevant content, film and images.

## 2.6 Growing Torbay's Social Economy

### 2.6.1 Project profile

Project Name			
Growing Torbay's Social Economy (GTSE)			
Investment Theme	Business and Enterprise		
Intervention	E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.		
Total UKSPF funding	£41,600	Match funding	£0
Project start date	End of May 2023	Project end date	March 2025
Current status	Ongoing	Lead organisation	Local Spark
Description			
<p>Local Spark works with community members to start up and support businesses for good, build networks of social enterprises and non-profit organisations, and engage large anchor institutions to unlock their transformative potential.</p> <p>The 'Growing the Torbay Social Economy' project aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop the Torbay Social Enterprise Network (TSEN)</b> – which was launched in 2019 and built a membership to 70 during lockdown. This involved work to understand member needs, delivering a programme of learning and support, attracting new members and deepening relationships with wider stakeholder organisations</li> <li>• <b>Deliver SE mentoring and support</b> – through events, meetings, learning and support programmes, mentoring and support through partners</li> <li>• <b>Developing the Entrepreneurial Pipeline</b> – attracting and developing early-stage entrepreneurs through 'open space' partnership events, two- day 'hackathon events', community of dragon events and development of a social economy hub at People's Parkfield.</li> </ul> <p>The project was designed to utilise Parkfield House, which was taken over by People's Parkfield CIC in April 2023 with the aim of creating a community resource including a social economy hub and co-working space. Local Spark are key partners in this venture and whilst costs associated with bringing Parkfield House back into use were not part of the UKSPF project, the GTSE project aimed to utilise the space and provided funding to cover the launch event for the social economy hub and for one of the desks to be earmarked for pre-start social entrepreneurs to use for free.</p>			

### 2.6.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

At the time of the evaluation, the project had delivered a range of activities under each of the project aims.

- **Developing the TSEN** – under this strand delivery has included:
  - Development of infrastructure and systems to support the network (including website, mail systems, invoicing and fees strategy) to reduce admin time
  - Re-establishment of monthly network meet-ups
  - Collaborative activities with Devon Social Enterprise Networks to develop joint opportunities
  - Engagement with local strategic initiatives such as the Community Wealth Building Board and Local Motion
- **Delivering SE mentoring and support** – under this strand activity has included:
  - One to one support for a small number of new/existing social enterprises
  - Events and networking opportunities such as:
    - The social economy hub launch
    - International women's day
    - Co-work and talk (circular economy)
    - Co-work and talk (alternative sources of finances)
    - Communicating with impact

- Foolproof your finances
    - Dream bigger
  - Development of a Project Management training and Development programme to be delivered in the autumn of 2024
  - Make it Net Zero workshop for the VCSE sector (in partnership with Make it Net Zero)
- **Entrepreneurial Pipeline** – activities under this strand followed a three-stage sequential approach
  1. Bringing together a group and give them opportunities to think about what sort of social businesses would be useful for the Bay
  2. A hackathon – where 5-6 people with really early-stage ideas are supported by a wider group to think through ideas
  3. Local entrepreneurs Forum and Community of Dragons – where pre-start and early stage entrepreneurs pitch to achieve offers of support

Figure 17 below shows the project’s financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows the project has underspent slightly in the first year, but this has been re-profiled for the final 12 months. It also shows that the project has already achieved its output targets, which is an excellent achievement. However, it is behind profile with respect to outcomes. Whilst the job created target is expected to be achieved, the project has found it difficult to count and evidence the jobs safeguarded target. Equally, the team are not expecting to be able to fully achieve the targets for new businesses created and businesses engaged in new markets. Reasons for this underperformance include:

- The time lag between the support being provided and the outcomes being achieved
- The unrealistic nature of the targets. The outcomes should flow from the outputs i.e. it would be reasonable to expect that the number of new businesses created is a proportion of the number of entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready. Instead, the project is expected to create more businesses than entrepreneurs supported.

Figure 17: Expenditure, output and outcome performance – Growing Torbay’s Social Economy

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£41,600		£25,295
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of businesses receiving non-financial support	30	13	32
No. of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready	10	6	15
<b>Outcomes</b>			
No. of jobs created	4	1	0
No. of jobs safeguarded	7	3	0
No. of new businesses created	15	8	1
No. of businesses engaged in new markets	4	3	2

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.6.3 What has worked well/less well

The project aimed to deliver a very broad portfolio of activities for a relatively small amount of money and under-estimated the time that would be required to deliver the project. Therefore, the time that staff spent working on the project, was not always funded, particularly the time dedicated to project administration and monitoring. At the same time as delivering the project, the team at Local Spark were in the final stages of opening up Parkfield House which placed considerable demands in staff capacity. Had staff time been accurately costed, it would have been possible for Local Spark to back-fill staff time. This is potentially a

learning point for Local Spark. Despite these capacity constraints, the project continued to deliver across all three workstreams, albeit with mixed results:

- **Developing TSEN** – the development of the network has reportedly been hampered by wider capacity and financial constraints facing the VCSE sector which mean existing organisations have not had the time to participate in a formal mentoring programme. Similarly, many organisations have indicated that their financial situation means that they are not able to be able to pay for membership
- **Mentoring and support** – Both one to one and one to many sessions have been successful
- **Developing the pipeline** – the first year demonstrated that each of the different components of the pipeline could contribute to the development of new social enterprises. However, it also showed that there needed to be more time between the hackathon and the Local Entrepreneurs Forum to allow potential entrepreneurs time to work on their ideas between each of these stages. Therefore, in the final year of delivery these events will be spaced out more effectively.

The project also found that:

- Parkfield House, which opened at the end of August 2023, is starting to fulfil its role as a Social Enterprise Hub and is providing opportunities for collaboration
- Collaborations with other UKSPF projects have been successful (e.g. Make it Net Zero for the VCSE sector)
- There continues to be market opportunities for people to develop social enterprises in Torbay, in particular in response to the climate emergency (e.g. retrofit, local food production etc.).

## 2.6.4 Beneficiary perspectives

### The business survey

This evaluation study rolled out a business survey to the four projects that aimed to work directly with businesses and entrepreneurs. Providers were asked to send out the survey (which was designed to be used across all four projects) to their participants in August 2024. Local Spark sent the survey to 63 participants and 12 responded. The profile of respondents is set out in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18: Profile of businesses participating in the Growing the Torbay Social Economy Business Survey

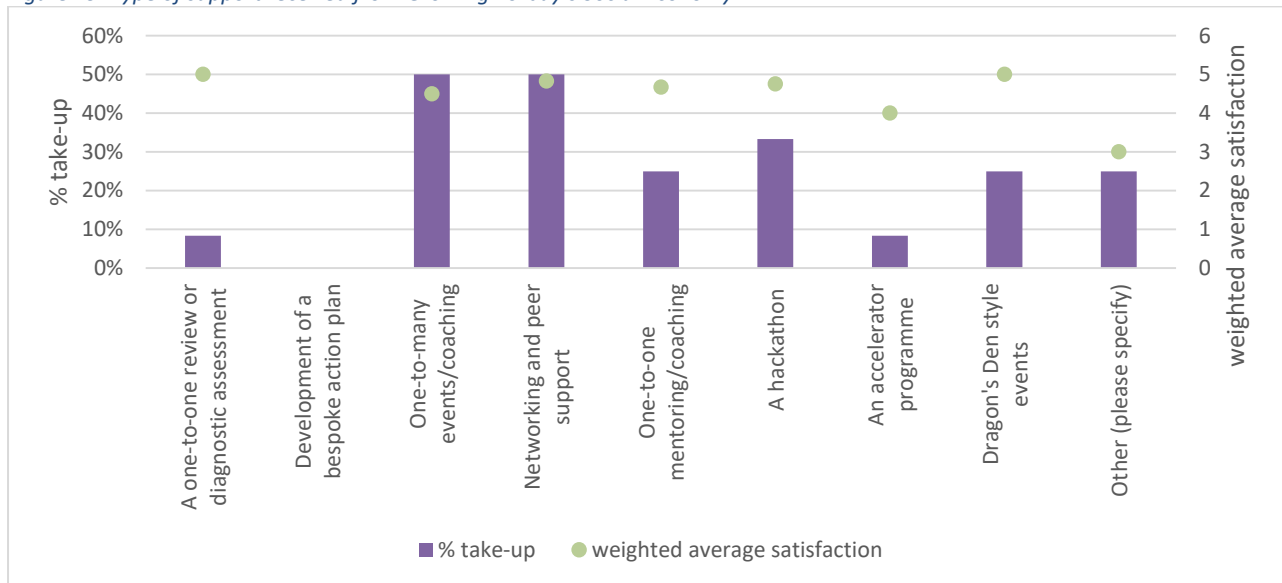
Business Size (FTE)	Sector	Social Purpose organisations?
0 – 9 = 83%	Photonics/micro-electronics = 0%	Yes = 67%
10 – 49 = 17%	Tourism = 9%	No = 33%
50 – 249 = 0%	Fishing = 0%	N = 12
N= 12	Creative Industries = 45%	
	Maritime = 0%	
	Medical and healthcare = 0%	
	Other = 64%	

Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, N = 13. It should be noted that businesses were able to select more than one sector category and therefore results may sum to greater than 100%

### Satisfaction with the support

The business survey asked respondents to firstly identify the type of support that they received and then their satisfaction with it on a scale of one to five, where 1 is very dissatisfied. Figure 19 shows the % take-up and the weighted average satisfaction score for each activity.

Figure 19: Type of support received from Growing Torbay's Social Economy



Source: Torbay UKSPF Growing the Torbay Social Economy Business Survey, n = 12

This shows that half of the respondents recalled participating in one-to many events/coaching or networking and peer support activities. The majority of participants were very satisfied with these activities, with average satisfaction scores exceeding 4.75 out of five.

Respondents were also asked what they liked best and what they thought could be improved with the support. Figure 20 overleaf summarises the key findings with some examples of quotes received.

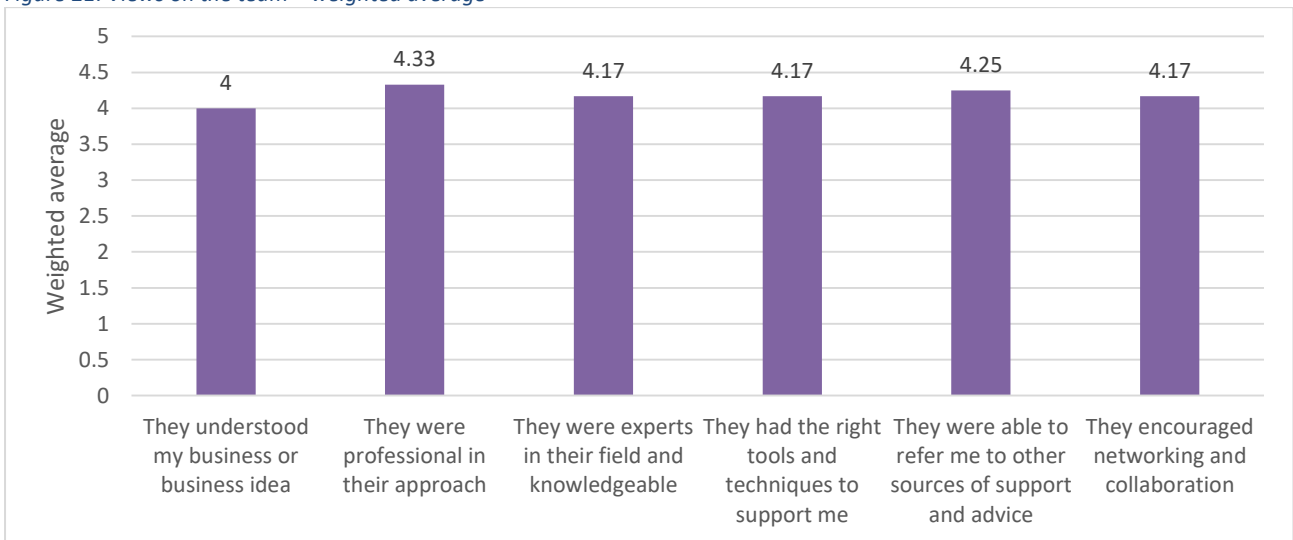
Figure 20: What respondents liked about the support and what could be improved

What respondents liked best about the support?	What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to network and meet like-minded people</li> <li>• Personalised support</li> <li>• Positivity of coaches</li> <li>• Partnership working to benefit the area</li> </ul> <p><b>Illustrative quotes:</b></p> <p><i>“I enjoyed every aspect of this programme. To meet other businesses from Torbay and hearing their experience and challenges”</i></p> <p><i>“The one-to-one with [my coach] was encouraging, which led to attending a local event. It is a very interesting network of like-minded people; the discussion element of the meeting was insightful with people I would not have had the privilege to have met”</i></p> <p><i>“We really appreciated the ways that Local Spark took the time to get to know us and offer us tailored support based upon our needs”</i></p> <p><i>“[the coaches] are amazingly supportive of local business and the community”</i></p> <p><i>“The bringing together of potential SMEs, advisors, established organisations, and new forms of businesses in a spirit of partnership for the benefit of the Bay”</i></p>	<p>Whilst several respondents could not identify areas for improvement, some comments highlighted the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clearer about the offer and what is available</li> <li>• Provide virtual event options</li> <li>• Provide marketing training</li> <li>• Promote Local Spark and the sector</li> <li>• Be clearer about what the intended outcome of activities</li> </ul> <p><b>Illustrative quotes:</b></p> <p><i>“There was never any follow up. Or information about what could or is offered. As a new business startup in Torbay, I could have used the help and resources”</i></p> <p><i>“I would like to do more marketing training with different aspects of the discipline. So the improvement please is MORE!”</i></p> <p><i>“Visibility about its existence and the work and values of those involved”</i></p> <p><i>“Only to widen the net to encourage embryonic ideas; to challenge set ideas about what a business is”</i></p> <p><i>“It was confusing and not obvious how the work we were doing was going to fit in”</i></p>

Source: Torbay UKSPF Growing the Torbay Social Economy Business Survey, n = 12

The survey also explored respondent’s views about the experience and capabilities of the team that supported them. Figure 21 shows the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with a series of statements about the team. This is expressed as a weighted average, where 5 equals completely agree and 1 completely disagree. This shows that there was a high level of agreement that the GTSE team were professional in their approach with a score of 4.33, but other attributes were not scored as highly.

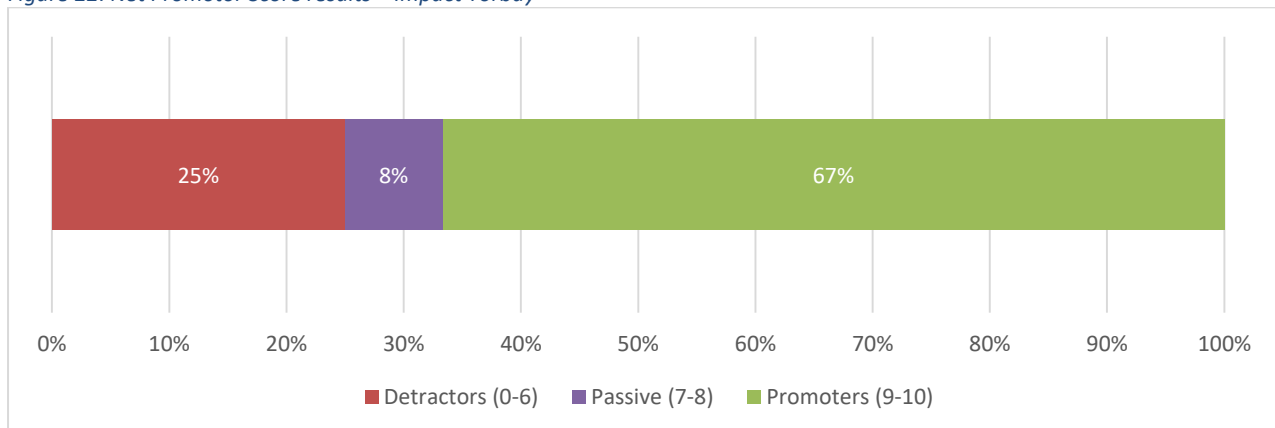
Figure 21: Views on the team – weighted average



Source: Torbay UKSPF Growing the Torbay Social Economy Business Survey, n = 12

Finally, the survey asked participants how likely they would be to recommend the project to a friend or colleague on a scale of 0-10. The results show that 58% respondents gave a score of 10, 8% a score of 9, 8% a score of 8, 8% a score of 6, 8% a score of 1 and 8% a score of 0. The Net Promoter Score methodology works by assigning those people that score 9 or 10 to the category of ‘promoters,’ those that score 7-8 to the category of ‘passives’ and those that score 6 or under to the category of ‘detractors’ as illustrated in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22: Net Promoter Score results – Impact Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Growing the Torbay Social Economy Business Survey, n = 12

The Net Promoter Score is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors (i.e. ignoring the passives) which gives a possible range of +100% to -100%. Growing the Torbay Social Economy achieved a **Net Promoter Score of 41.67, which is a positive score.**

### 2.6.5 Emerging impacts

Figure 17 above shows that as of the end of June 2024, the project had officially recorded:

- 1 business created
- 2 businesses engaged in new markets

Analysis of the business survey data (which represents a sample of participants) suggests that the impact may be higher with 7 respondents reporting tangible benefits. These included:

- One business launched a CIC and was better prepared to develop funding applications
- One respondent had been able to identify their business opportunity
- One respondent had launched a new product, which was now on sale
- Three respondents found that the networking had opened up new markets/opportunities for them (such as new collaborators and new clients), enabling them to diversify their business and make it more resilient.

Given the range of different types of benefits recorded and the lack of jobs created to date, it has not been possible to estimate the economic impact in GVA terms.

Businesses were also asked how they expected support from GTSE to benefit their business in the medium to long term. Whilst this question was intended to gain an understanding of future benefits, most respondents mentioned the anticipated benefits associated with continued access to the service. The most frequently mentioned benefits related to being part of a community and opportunities to network, as the following comments illustrate:

*“Being part of a network of support with opportunities to grow and develop helps us to sustain our work and look to the future”*

*The networking and support are invaluable, as the brainstorming for a wider economic impact highlighted some of the local needs was enlightening. It is a platform to share thoughts and ideas - a very positive space to participate as I move forward"*

### Strategic outcomes

As well as delivering outcomes for participants, the project has contributed to the **development of the social enterprise ecosystem in the Bay** by:

- Stimulating the growth of the social economy to respond to socio-economic needs in the Bay as part of the Community Wealth Building agenda
- Supporting the operation of Parkfield House as Social Enterprise Hub and co-working space – which should provide an on-going legacy
- Supporting existing social enterprises to be more resilient (although this outcome has not been as strong as hoped)
- Supporting Local Spark to work in partnership with Devon Social Enterprise Networks to explore wider opportunities and contribute to other strategic initiatives in Torbay (e.g. Local Motion).

### 2.6.6 Additionality and net impacts

Additionality refers to the extent to which the benefits achieved are ‘additional’ to the benefits that would have been achieved in the absence of support. This is a complex concept because cause and effect are inevitably difficult to disentangle, particularly where a business may have multiple interactions with different support providers. Section 1.3.2 details the methods utilised to assess additionality for each project and Figure 23 details the resulting adjustments, which show that the project has a net additionality of 46%. However, as it was not possible to quantify the gross impact, it is not possible to quantify the net impact.

Figure 23: Additionality adjustments – Growing Torbay’s Social Economy

Factor	Adjustments
Deadweight	37%
Displacement	26%
Leakage	17%
Multiplier effects	1.2
Net additionality	46%

Source: Torbay UKSPF Growing the Torbay Social Economy Business Survey, n = 12

### 2.6.7 Emerging value for money

Figure 24 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 24: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Energy Saving Torbay

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	Local Spark attempted to deliver a very ambitious programme for a very modest budget and therefore attempted to minimise costs throughout the programme.
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	The average cost of supporting a business/entrepreneur at the end of June 2024 was £538 per participant. This is lower than the national benchmarks (£2,500 to £4,700 per business assist) set out by Regeneris in the guidance they produced to support the 2014-2020 ERDF programme <sup>9</sup> . However, this may reflect the fact that ERDF output requirements were for businesses to receive at least 12 hours support.
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Whilst the project has yet to record significant outcomes, it has demonstrated a model to support the creation of new social enterprise in Torbay.

<sup>9</sup> England ERDF Programme 2014-2020: Output unit costs and definitions. Regeneris Consulting, December 2013

On balance, given the relatively small budget, the project could be considered to offer reasonable value for money at this time. This assessment would improve if the project was able to record additional economic outcomes.

### 5.6.8 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering support to grow the social enterprise sector, there are several learning points from delivery to date:

- Whilst existing social enterprises are under considerable pressure and would benefit from support to help them become more resilient, there has **not been an appetite for a formal mentoring programme**
- Participants did however, **value one to one support on an informal basis** and **networking opportunities**
- The **pipeline development model appears to have generated a lot of interest** and support and could provide a useful tool to support the development of the social economy in Torbay

In terms of future delivery, if budgets continue to be constrained, a more focused approach, with fewer delivery strands may be more appropriate and enable activity to be delivered within budget. Alternatively, Torbay Council could explore an alternative delivery model, where specialist provision (such as that for social enterprises) is sub-contracted through a larger project, therefore minimising the project administration overheads, which are disproportionately felt by smaller projects.

## 2.7 Impact Torbay

### 2.7.1 Project profile

Project Name		Impact Torbay	
<b>Investment Theme</b>	Business and Enterprise		
<b>Intervention</b>	E20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services. E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.		
<b>Total UKSPF funding</b>	£351,462	Match funding	£0
<b>Project start date</b>	April 2023	Project end date	March 2025
<b>Current status</b>	Ongoing	Lead organisation	Studio Zao
<b>Description</b>			
<p>Delivered by innovation consultancy Studio Zao, Impact Torbay is a business support and growth project aimed at helping businesses and entrepreneurs create new commercial opportunities through innovation.</p> <p>The programme provides a hands-on and practical environment where participants can develop real, impact-making propositions to implement for growth. Participating businesses will also be supported to access research and development grants that can help their businesses to thrive and expand.</p> <p>Businesses can sign up to either/or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 1-day ‘hackathon’: a collaborative workshop covering the fundamental principles of innovation. The intensive day will include rapid sprint exercises to define a business idea and make a quick plan to validate it as well as guest speakers from Torbay’s local clusters and relevant sectors helping bring “innovation” to life</li> <li>• A 7-week (part-time) growth accelerator programme: small teams from different businesses will be guided through a structured programme that includes in-person, immersive workshops to collaboratively work through the propositions they are taking forward. Participating businesses will also be provided with a dedicated Solution Coach who will offer expertise in growth and innovation, guiding them through defining their business problem, ideating solutions, conducting in-market validation and building a compelling business case. They’ll also help businesses develop a plan for their next steps, support connections to domain experts and give them the tools to support them through their journey.</li> </ul> <p>Businesses that are currently enrolled in or have previously completed the accelerator programme can also apply for a grant of up to £10,000 to help them experiment, validate and launch their innovation propositions.</p>			

### 2.7.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

At the time of the evaluation, the project had:

- Delivered four Hackathons
- Delivered four accelerator programmes supporting 53 businesses:
  - The Hi-Tech sector (with teams from 4 businesses running from Jul-Sept 2023)
  - Mixed sectors (with teams from 11 businesses running from Oct – Dec 2023)
  - Mixed sectors (with teams from 20 businesses)
  - Mixed sectors (with teams from 18 businesses running from May – June 2024)
- Delivered one community hackathon:
  - Stand Up Paddle Boarding – where 30 local stakeholders from government, watersports and hospitality met to discuss how they can best collaborate to ‘Make Torbay the Paddleboarding Capital of the UK’. The workshop involved the development and pitching of five proposals amongst groups, each of which were shared with the cohort

after the session and encouraged to take forward via the Accelerator programme. A further community hackathon is planned for the creative sector in the autumn of 2024.

- Awarded grants to 7 businesses.

Figure 25 below shows the project’s financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that the project is broadly on track in relation to expenditure and is ahead of schedule with respect to output completion.

Outcome performance however is more variable. The project is starting to accumulate outputs that could be described as ‘intermediate outputs’ i.e. they relate to the immediate actions that businesses are likely to take having received support i.e. adopting new technologies or introducing new products and services. Others (such as job creation) are longer term in nature, and it is questionable whether this target is realistic, given that it requires businesses to create permanent jobs. Given the project’s activities are designed to help businesses to take an experimental approach to developing new products and services, many businesses often want to progress more slowly with job creation, potentially starting with temporary staff or interns in the first instance. Given the relatively short delivery period, this target may not be met.

Similarly, the target to safeguard 54 jobs, does not align well with project activities. To achieve this outcome, participants must have jobs that are at risk of being lost within 6 months before support was provided. Whilst a small number of businesses may be in this position, the support on offer is not necessarily what these businesses need.

Finally, the number of R&D active businesses is unlikely to be met, because the definition requires the businesses to be engaged in ‘scientific and technological development’. Whilst it was originally intended that this support would be targeted at Torbay’s hi-tech sector, participants have come from a much broader range of sectors, who are unlikely to be conducting this sort of innovation activity.

Figure 25: Financial, output and outcome performance – Impact Torbay

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£351,462		£243,030
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of businesses receiving grants	10	3	7
No. of businesses receiving non-financial support	150	60	72
<b>Outcomes</b>			
Increased amount of investment £	£250k	£100k	£0
No. of enterprises adopting new or improved products or services	12	4	1
No. of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	12	4	2
No. of R&D active businesses	12	4	0
Jobs created	21	9	0
Jobs safeguarded	54	17	0
No. of new businesses created	12	4	2
No. of businesses introducing new products to the firm	12	4	1
No. of businesses with improved productivity	54	17	12
No. of businesses engaged in new markets	16	4	2

### 2.7.3 What has worked well/less well

As a relatively new approach to business support, the Impact Torbay project was aiming to test a new approach to increasing levels of innovation in Torbay’s existing businesses as well as supporting innovative

start-ups. The project team found that **the delivery approach worked and provided an effective ‘support journey’ for businesses**, enabling them to participate in a Hackathon to explore their idea in the first instance, before progressing onto an accelerator for more in-depth support over a longer time period, which also provided opportunities for collaboration across the groups. The offer also included one to one support, which provided opportunities for participants to be able to ‘bounce ideas’ off a coach.

The grant funding, for participants that had completed the accelerator, was also thought to be provide a useful mechanism to support businesses to ‘run experiments’ to test the ideas explored in the accelerator process. Linking the grant programme to participation in the accelerator was thought to be more effective than running an ‘open’ grant programme, as this approach provided an opportunity for the team to influence the application to ensure it met the criteria and delivered impact.

*“The process meant that businesses could do more with the money because they are doing the right things with it – this would not have happened without their involvement in the accelerator”*

However, the downside of this approach, is that it may have attracted some businesses to the programme for the wrong reasons.

The **community hackathons were also thought to have been a successful experiment** which have the potential to leave a lasting legacy beyond the life of the project. The fact that Studio Zao were not from the area may have also been an advantage in facilitating these sessions, as they could be an honest broker.

The project also complemented other UKSPF provision with several participants starting their journey with the Start-Up programme before progressing onto Impact Torbay for more intensive support. Equally, the project also referred some enquiries back to the Start-up programme or Make it Net Zero where appropriate. This collaborative relationship was facilitated by Torbay Council through partner meetings etc.

However, a key challenge for the project was meeting expectations that it would be principally targeted at high growth potential, larger businesses. Whilst the first accelerator, which was based at EPIC, reached this audience, the project quickly adopted a more generic approach. This reflected the broader nature of demand (and referral routes from the start-up project) and was also thought to be necessary to meet the project’s targets. The grant offer (originally up to £10k) was also thought to be more aligned to the needs of micro’s and start-ups, rather than established high growth businesses, as very few of the larger more established businesses expressed an interest in the grant scheme.

#### 2.7.4 Beneficiary perspectives

##### *The business survey*

This evaluation study rolled out a business survey to the four projects that aimed to work directly with businesses and entrepreneurs. Providers were asked to send out the survey (which was designed to be used across all four projects) to their participants in August 2024. Studio Zao sent the survey to 110 participants and 29 responded. The profile of respondents is set out in Figure 26 below.

Figure 26: Profile of businesses participating in the Impact Torbay Business Survey

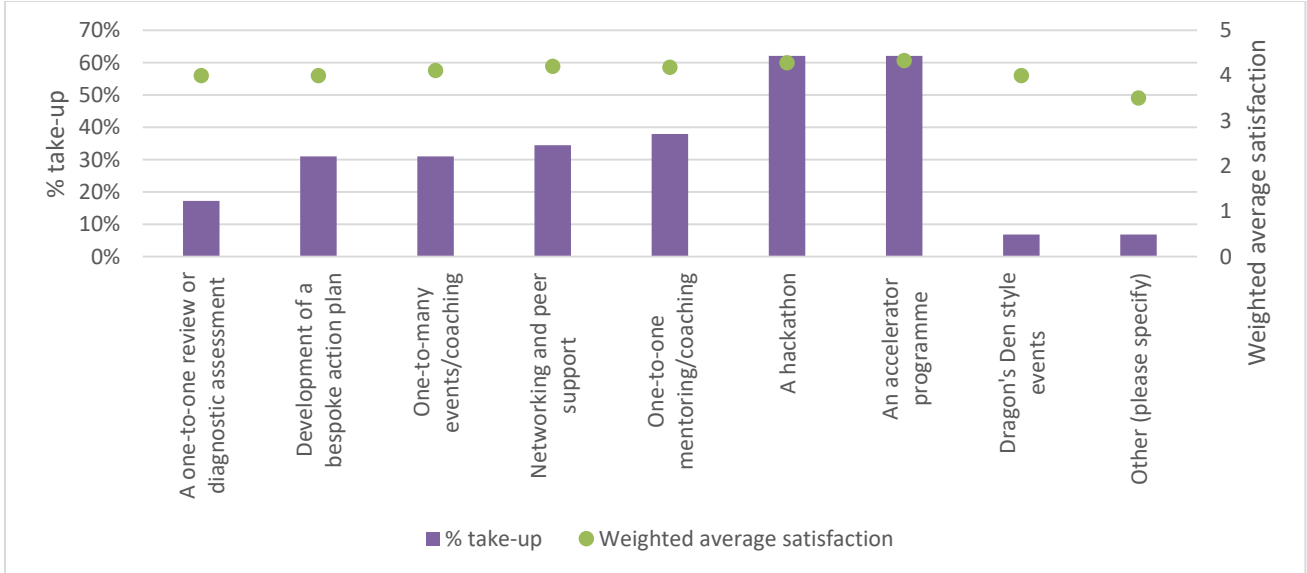
Business Size (FTE)	Sector	Social Purpose organisations?
0 – 9 = 86%	Photonics/micro-electronics = 7%	Yes = 29%
10 – 49 = 11%	Tourism = 19%	No = 71%
50 – 249 = 4%	Fishing = 0%	N = 28
N= 28	Creative Industries = 48%	
	Maritime = 0%	
	Medical and healthcare = 11%	
	Other = 33%	
	N = 27	

Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey

### Satisfaction with the support

The business survey asked respondents to firstly identify the type of support that they received and then their satisfaction with it on a scale of one to five, where 1 is very dissatisfied. Figure 27 shows the % take-up and the weighted average satisfaction score for each activity.

Figure 27: Type of support received from Impact Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 29

This shows that over 60% of respondents recalled participating in a hackathon or an accelerator programme, which is unsurprising given that these were the primary delivery mechanism for the Impact Torbay project. The majority of participants were satisfied with these activities, with average satisfaction scores exceeding four out of five.

Businesses were also asked what they liked best and what they thought could be improved with the support. Figure 28 overleaf summarises the key findings with some examples of quotes received.

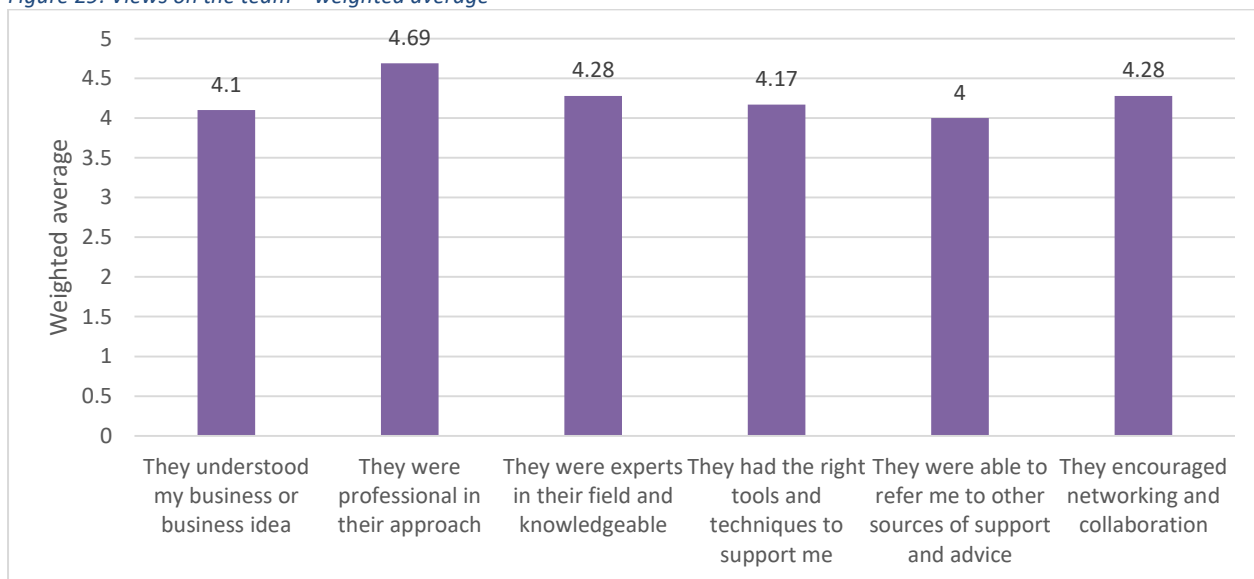
Figure 28: What respondents liked about the support and what could be improved

What respondents liked best about the support?	What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The support techniques used</li> <li>• Professional, knowledgeable coaching and interest in ideas</li> <li>• New ideas, energy and external perspectives</li> </ul> <p><b>Illustrative quotes:</b></p> <p><i>“Overall, they made sense of 'business' by breaking down models, giving relatable examples and explaining the jargon. The in-person and 1:1 meets meant I felt valued”</i></p> <p><i>“Their explanation of how to validate a business idea was very useful”</i></p> <p><i>“The overall process between groups and 1:1 worked really well”</i></p> <p><i>“A friendly, approachable and knowledgeable team made the courses easy to engage with and follow. I felt it was a well-structured course, with an accountable route of learning. The availability of ongoing support has been incredibly useful for me, and with the continuation of this as I launch my business going forward”</i></p> <p><i>“The whole team listened to my idea and facilitated the evening expertly despite the strong personalities in the room”</i></p> <p><i>“Relevant content, professionally delivered, 'always on'”</i></p> <p><i>“Very informative without being too much for people who don't have a huge amount of business knowledge”</i></p> <p><i>“The bringing together of local businesses and pooling of ideas and energy”</i></p> <p><i>“It gave us an outsider view of our plans and helped us spot areas that needed greater consideration”</i></p>	<p>Whilst several respondents could not identify areas for improvement, some made suggestions for improvements in relation to course delivery including greater depth, clearer instructions and final presentations to conclude activities.</p> <p>It was also suggested that additional on-going, continuation support would be beneficial. Finally, some suggested that the course content was not necessarily a good fit for all the attendees and greater ‘pre-vetting’ would have been beneficial.</p> <p><b>Illustrative quotes:</b></p> <p><i>“There is nothing specifically about the course that I feel could be ultimately improved. My only note would be that I would have enjoyed more learning time at the courses and would have been happy to have spent more time focusing on in depth topics. Or more days in total covering more related subjects &amp; topics”</i></p> <p><i>“The table discussions seemed a bit vague as to what we were doing but I was impressed that the organisers were going round checking on things”</i></p> <p><i>“Better facilitation. Lack of interaction from event organisers allowed individuals to dominate discussion with pet topics rather than the intended items. It was also very disappointing to hear from multiple attendees, outdated and at times misogynistic viewpoints being expressed”</i></p> <p><i>“Given the breadth of businesses involved, Studio Zao had to deliver generic content - perhaps I could have benefited from more manufacturing centric advice?”</i></p> <p><i>“Some found the teaching wasn't directly applicable to their local brick and mortar business and weren't able to apply the strategies in their business”</i></p>

Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 28

The survey also explored participants views about the experience and capabilities of the team that supported them. Figure 29 shows the extent to which participants agreed/disagreed with a series of statements about the team. This is expressed as a weighted average, where 5 equals completely agree and 1 completely disagree. This shows that there was a very high level of agreement that the Impact Torbay team were professional in their approach with a score of 4.69, but other attributes were not scored as highly.

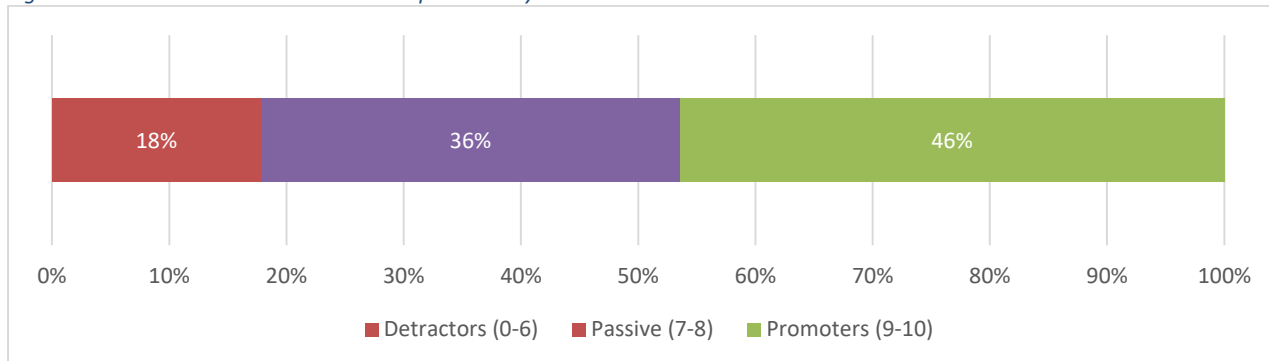
Figure 29: Views on the team – weighted average



Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 29

Finally, the survey asked participants how likely they would be to recommend the project to a friend or colleague on a scale of 0-10. The results show that 32% respondents gave a score of 10, 14% a score of 9, 25% a score of 8, 11% a score of 7, 7% a score of 6, 4% a score of 5, 4% a score of 3 and 4% a score of 1. The Net Promoter Score methodology works by assigning those people that score 9 or 10 to the category of ‘promoters,’ those that score 7-8 to the category of ‘passives’ and those that score 6 or under to the category of ‘detractors’ as illustrated in Figure 30 below.

Figure 30: Net Promoter Score results – Impact Torbay



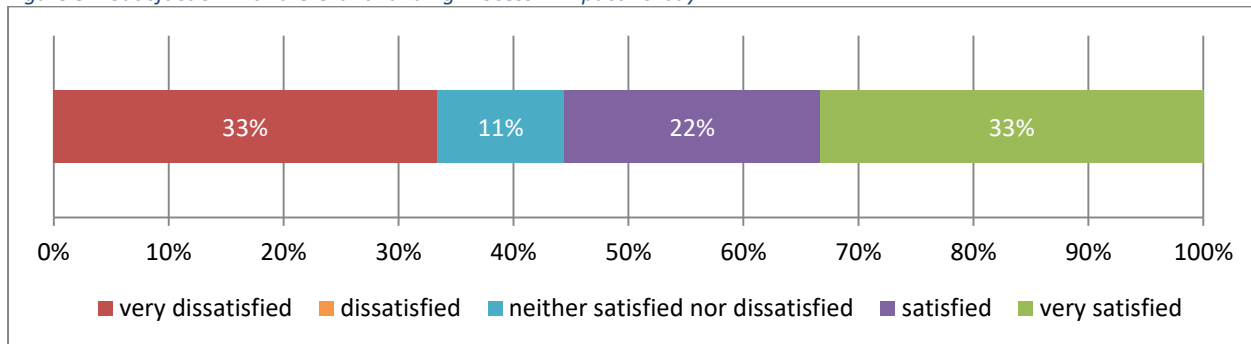
Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 28

The Net Promoter Score is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors (i.e. ignoring the passives) which gives a possible range of +100% to -100%. **Impact Torbay achieved a Net Promoter Score of 28.57.**

### Grant scheme

Nine of the 29 respondents indicated that they had received a grant through Impact Torbay. Of these, five were either satisfied or very satisfied with the grant funding process and one was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Conversely, three indicated that they were very dissatisfied. These results are illustrated in Figure 31 overleaf.

Figure 31: Satisfaction with the Grant Funding Process – Impact Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 9

When asked for the reasons for their answer, satisfied respondents highlighted that they felt that the process was straightforward and they had received support as the comments below illustrate:

*“It was straightforward and lots of support throughout”*

*“I received the funding needed and Studio Zao supported me through that process”*

*“Clear, simple process with a quick response!”*

Conversely, some of the dissatisfied respondents felt that the process was convoluted, slow and lacked transparency, as the comments below expressed:

*You made the grant process a farce. The application was supposed to take four weeks for a yes or no answer, but it turned out to take almost four months. Instead of the decision being made by Impact Torbay, it was given to others unknown to us to make the final decision. The excuse that we needed people to finish the course before the grant was offered again wasn’t a requisite for the grant application.*

*There was no stipulation regarding this in your initial application process or in the guidance on the application form itself. This made the process very unprofessional and a farce. Due to this unprofessionalism, it discouraged me from applying for the Net Zero grant.*

*“In-council communications were convoluted and slow. Slowing down projects and start dates”*

These dissatisfied comments may reflect the fact that the grant funding process was being developed during delivery and that it took some time to get this right. However, given the short delivery window it is difficult to see how this could have been avoided. One business (who did not receive a grant) commented that the funding award was too small to make any real difference to their business.

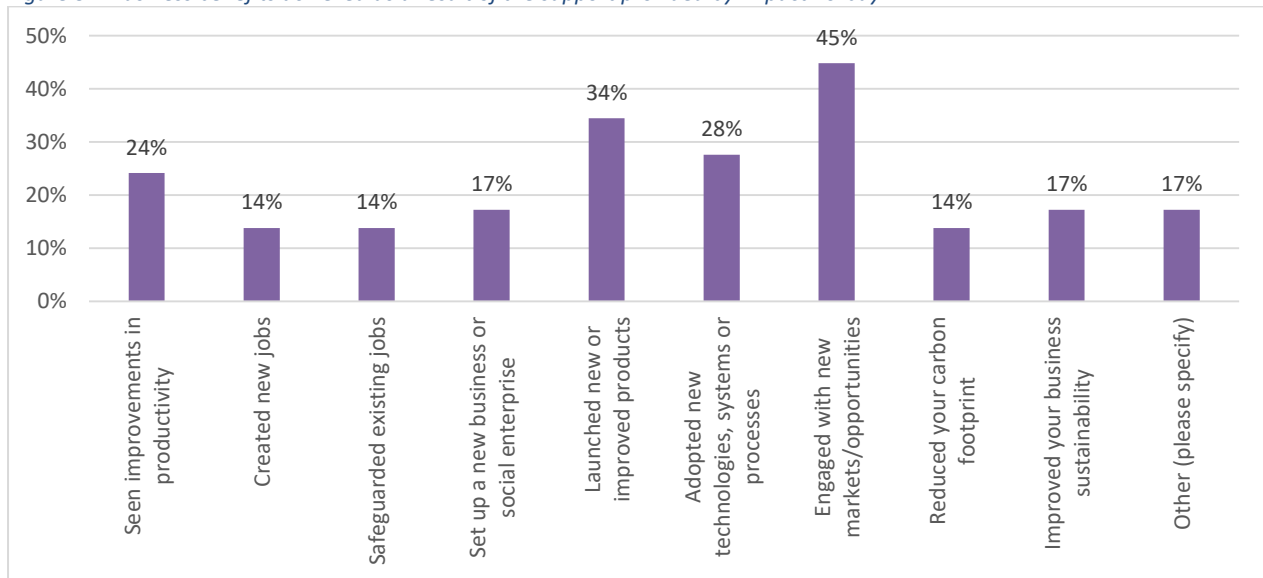
### 2.7.5 Emerging impacts

Figure 25 above shows that as of the end of June 2024, the project had officially recorded:

- 1 business adopting new or improved products or services
- 2 businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes
- 2 new businesses created
- 1 business introducing new products to the firm
- 12 businesses with improved productivity
- 2 businesses engaged in new markets

Analysis of the business survey data (which represents a sample of participants) suggests that the impact may be higher with 76% of respondents reporting at least one business benefit. Figure 32 below shows the proportion of respondents that have achieved each type of benefit. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution as the results have not been validated in terms of the UKSPF output monitoring requirements.

Figure 32: Business benefits achieved as a result of the support provided by Impact Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 29

Survey respondents were also asked to ‘tell us more’ about the impacts that they achieved. 21 businesses provided more information, which highlights that:

- Some have achieved **improvements in productivity** through streamlining systems and processes, ‘smarter working’ and use of new equipment. One business highlighted that the business planning process has helped them learn where to focus their attention for the best results
- **5.5FTE jobs have been created** amongst these businesses and one respondent indicated that if they are able to secure the investment needed to start their business, they anticipate creating 100’s of jobs
- There is some evidence that **jobs have been safeguarded** by businesses increasing their sales, as one respondent put it:

*“Sales of the new product have secured our three shift model”*

- Five respondents indicated that they were either in the process of setting up a **new business** or had done so already
- Ten respondents indicated that they had already or were in the process of **launching new or improved products**, either as part of an entirely new business or to diversify their existing business. One business highlighted that they had improved a current product through better market research and that this would not have happened without support. Similarly, another highlighted how the support helped them to rule out their first idea and look for an alternative which is a valuable outcome
- Similarly, eight respondents highlighted how the support has helped them to **adopt new technologies, systems and processes** within their business. For some, this involved purchase of new equipment through the grant programme, for others it was as simple as using ‘google forms’ to gather information. Importantly, several highlighted that they had used **processes learnt during the project to do this** as the following comments illustrate:

*“Across the entirety of our business. The accelerator gave us the opportunity to pause, reflect and refine our business approach”*

*“I learnt about new processes for accountability, strategy and research which I have implemented (and will continue to throughout the different phases of this project)”*

*“I have integrated the process of validating a new business, product, or service into my workflow”*

- Eleven businesses described how they have engaged with **new markets/opportunities** as a result of the support. Some highlighted that these opportunities arose from the group work (including the SUP Community hackathon), but others indicated that the wider support helped them to identify and engage with wider markets, include online sales. One indicated that they have **expanded sales into Europe** and in due course the USA
- Three businesses indicated that the support had helped them to reduce the **carbon footprint** of their existing business through actions such as reducing car use, use of recycled materials and producing products in house. One highlighted that they would be using renewable energy in their business when it starts
- Five businesses indicated that the supported had improved their **business sustainability** either in financial or environmental terms
- One business highlighted the benefits in terms of pitching for investment.

*“It gave us the opportunity to put together an important proposal which we can take and present to potential investors. IMPACT helped us improve our pitch and thus improve our chances”*

The findings above illustrate that, as well as achieving tangible outcomes such as new products launched and jobs created, participants have learned **new processes for managing their business and innovating in a more strategic way**, which can bring long term benefits.

Putting a financial value on this varied list of benefits is difficult. The survey data found that 5.5 jobs were created within the sample of 29 businesses. Scaling this up to the whole population of 80 businesses that had been supported by the end of June 2024, would suggest that there **were approximately 15 jobs created**.

This is equivalent to **£0.532m GVA per year** on the basis that GVA per filled job in Torbay was £35,474 in 2021<sup>10</sup>. However, this is likely to underestimate the impact, as it has not been possible to quantify, in GVA terms, the wider benefits reported above.

Businesses were also asked how they expected support from Impact Torbay to benefit their business in the medium to long term. This question was interpreted in two ways. Some businesses reflected that the support has improved their long-term prospects by **changing the way businesses are managed and putting in place the foundations for growth**, as the comments below illustrate:

*“It has set us on a track that probably would have taken years to get to. The ongoing coaching/mentoring and accessibility to it will help us grow and expand into the future”*

*“We are starting to see results from the support, but expect to see a high gain in business in the next 6-12 months”*

*“It has fast forwarded the growth of my business from 3-5 years”*

*“Our business needed to diversify and grow to reach more people, the support has given us a good boost to encourage us to 'get on with it”*

*“It's going to be positive and we hope allow our business to grow further, enabling us to take on further employees and keep things growing”*

*“It's the medium to long term where the results will really be found from this programme as it's great for putting in the foundations to build and grow from”*

*“Has helped put strategies in place so should safeguard making any further mistakes”*

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<sup>10</sup> ONS sub-regional productivity, June 2023

*“Workshops and grant funding have given impetus to our first 'own product' launch - am hopeful we can repeat the process again soon!”*

Conversely a small number of respondents indicated that they do not expect it to benefit them in the future, as the following comments illustrate:

*“I don't believe I have benefited significantly from the Torbay UKSPF program apart from receiving the grant. Prior to joining this program, I had already mapped out the growth of my business and had the necessary knowledge and information outlined in my business plan. I did not acquire any new insights or information through this program to advance my business journey. Had I not received the grant from you, I would have pursued funding through Innovate UK. However, given the opportunity and the need to grow, I chose to apply through your program”*

This comment potentially highlights the downside of linking the grant programme to support. However, a small number of respondents highlighted the potential benefits of being able to access the service in the longer term, as the following comment illustrates:

*“I feel it will benefit me long term to have the support from a professional body such as this, when regarding the technicalities of certain business aspects, that may not be at my strongest knowledge. Having a company like this to assist with advice when the investment and works commence will be invaluable to the longevity, professionalism and understanding of all the processes entailed going forward with the project”*

### Strategic outcomes

Whilst the Impact Torbay project, was primarily focused on delivery, it has nonetheless achieved some strategic outcomes in relation to the use of the community hackathon concept. Whilst it is too early to assess the benefit from work to develop a SUP (Stand-up Paddleboard) Hub, there is optimism that the work done by the project will catalyse wider activity as the following comment illustrates:

*“I feel like this really has legs and we are going from strength to strength now with dedicated council support, and promotion across a wide group of engaged stakeholders. This will become a CIC shortly, to start applying for grants and crowdfunding”*

### 2.7.6 Additionality and net impacts

Additionality refers to the extent to which the benefits achieved are ‘additional’ to the benefits that would have been achieved in the absence of support. This is a complex concept because cause and effect are inevitably difficult to disentangle, particularly where a business may have multiple interactions with different support providers. Section 1.3.2 details the methods utilised to assess additionality for each project and Figure 33 details the resulting adjustments, which show that the project has a net additionality of 58%.

Figure 33: Additionality adjustments – Growing Torbay’s Social Economy

Factor	Adjustments
Deadweight	38%
Displacement	16%
Leakage	7%
Multiplier effects	1.2
Net additionality	58%

Source: Torbay UKSPF Impact Torbay Business Survey, n = 29

Applying the net additionality to the gross impacts identified earlier, produces a net impact of £0.3086m GVA per year or 9 net additional jobs. Assuming that these benefits persist for 3 years<sup>11</sup>, the total benefits

<sup>11</sup> Additionality Guide: Fourth Addition, Homes and Communities Agency. 2014

(undiscounted) equate to £0.93m. However, it is important to note that this is a very conservative assessment, as it has not been possible to quantify the full range of business benefits.

### 2.7.7 Emerging value for money

Value for money has been assessed in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

#### Qualitative

Figure 34 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 34: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Impact Torbay

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	Stakeholders expressed some concern that as Studio Zao were based in London, a significant proportion of the project costs were allocated to travel and accommodation. This cost could have been avoided if a local contractor had been selected, but no local providers bid. The contract was openly procured and Studio Zao were selected because they offered the best combination of price/quality, according to the criteria set out in that process.
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	The average cost of supporting a business/entrepreneur at the end of June 2024 was £3,076 per participant. Whilst this is higher than some of the other projects, the cost reflects the fact that the businesses received more intensive support. When compared with national benchmarks, the unit costs are within the range (£2,500 to £4,700 per business assist) set out by Regeneris in the guidance they produced to support the 2014-2020 ERDF programme <sup>12</sup>
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Section 2.7.5 demonstrates that the project is making progress in achieving tangible business outcomes. However, these might have been higher if it had been able to more effectively target high growth potential businesses.

#### Quantitative

As highlighted in section 1.3.3, the costs and benefits need to be profiled over time and discounted at compound rate of 3.5% in order to calculate a Return on Investment. Table 35 shows that, with discounted costs of £282,030 and discounted net economic benefits of £852,787, **the benefit cost ratio is 3.02, which demonstrates excellent value for money.**

Figure 35: Return on Investment – Impact Torbay

ROI Element	Value
Undiscounted costs	£243,030
Discounted costs	£282,030
Undiscounted net economic benefits	£925,800
Discounted net economic benefits	£852,787
Return on Investment	3.02

### 2.7.8 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering support to high growth potential businesses in Torbay, there are several learning points from delivery to date:

- The delivery model, with a combination of hackathons, accelerator programmes and one to one support, is an effective approach which is helping some participants to change the way they run their business

<sup>12</sup> England ERDF Programme 2014-2020: Output unit costs and definitions. Regeneris Consulting, December 2013

- However, this approach is not necessarily suitable for all and there is some evidence that it may not be supporting the right businesses. This is due to a combination of factors:
  - The availability of the grant fund, which is linked to participation in the accelerator and is the only business grant fund available in the Bay. Further there is some evidence that the size of grant available is insufficient to attract larger, higher growth potential businesses
  - The strong referral mechanism from the start-up programme (which is open to all and particularly focused on micro businesses, self-employment)
  - Relatively high targets given Torbay's business base (which does not have a large number of hi-tech, high growth businesses).

In terms of future delivery, the project has **demonstrated the value of a more intensive 'accelerator' type approach**. However, the Council may want to consider how this fits into the wider business support landscape and the type of business it wishes to target with this support. One option might be to integrate this sort of provision into a more holistic support package where businesses are provided with a mixture of generic support and other 'offers' depending on their need. A grant programme could sit amongst the offers available and provide a mixture of grants for start-up, innovation, growth and low carbon, depending on the needs of the business and the support accessed. This would discourage businesses from participating in inappropriate schemes just to access a grant.

Depending on the procurement process to implement such a model, Torbay Council could consider conducting soft market engagement activities to identify a wider range of potential suppliers, who may be able to deliver the service from a more local base and therefore reduce the travel and subsistence costs. Equally, if these do not exist, it could maybe work with a provider like Studio Zao to consider how activities could be profiled more efficiently.

## 2.8 Start-up Torbay

### 2.8.1 Project profile

<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Start-up Torbay</b>		
<b>Investment Theme</b>	Business and Enterprise		
<b>Intervention</b>	E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.		
<b>Total UKSPF funding</b>	£113,999	<b>Match funding</b>	£0
<b>Project start date</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023	<b>Project end date</b>	March 2025
<b>Current status</b>	Ongoing	<b>Lead organisation</b>	Torbay Council
<b>Description</b>			
Start-up Torbay aims to provide continued support to Torbay’s entrepreneurial spirit and give people the confidence, skills and practical advice they need to start a business.			
Interventions include workshops, webinars and one-to-one meetings for pre-starts, new starts and growth ready businesses and the programme is open to anyone in Torbay who is looking to start a business. In addition, any Torbay-based business or individual looking to growth their enterprise is also eligible to apply.			

### 2.8.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

At the time of the evaluation, the project had:

- Delivered a six 4/5 week start-up programmes to 42 participants (weekly workshops over 4 weeks covering business planning, marketing, financial planning and promotional activities)
- Delivered monthly small business coffee clubs (friendly and informal networking to connect Torbay businesses)
- Delivered a series of specialist workshops including:
  - Accountancy and tax delivered by Twigger business solutions
  - Accountancy for start-ups
  - Accountancy for existing businesses
  - 2 x 3hr start-up sessions for South Devon College students studying Yoga and Massage
  - A start-up day for Ukranian Refugees
  - Developing your personal skills for business delivered by Riviera Business Advisory
  - Digital Marketing delivered by Big Wave Marketing
  - B&B success
  - Business strategy delivered by Impact Coaching
  - International Women’s Day
  - Digital Torbay Networking – to encourage collaboration and generate links between digital businesses within the Bay
- Delivered one-to-one advice to participants.

Figure 36 below shows the project’s financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that expenditure is on track and outputs and outcomes are ahead of schedule.

Figure 36: Financial, output and outcome performance – Start-up Torbay

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£113,999		£62,438
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready	80	55	88
No. of businesses supported	130	85	104
<b>Outcomes</b>			
No. of new businesses started	15	9	11
No. of jobs created	20	11	12

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.8.3 What has worked well/less well

Overall, the project is thought to be working well by providing a range of different ways for people to engage, depending on their needs. The four-week start-up programmes receives positive feedback from attendees and provides a useful way of stimulating collaboration. However, it has been suggested that the programme **is too short and an 8-week programme could be more effective**. However, capacity currently limits this. Equally, one-off workshops and coffee clubs are also thought to provide a friendly and inclusive environment for networking – particularly for people who are new to business or who may suffer from ‘imposter syndrome’, which often includes women and ethnic minorities which tend to be under-represented in business. The project’s flexible approach to delivery means that the project manager has been able to respond to demand and opportunities as they arise.

As well as group sessions, the project manager also provides clients with 1:1 support. Again, this is valued by beneficiaries, but demand for these can put pressure on capacity, particularly as the project manager has many clients that enjoy a longer-term mentoring relationship. Whilst this is valued by participants, it nonetheless puts pressure on capacity.

Key factors in the project success have been:

- **Sign-ups and referrals** – as the project manager is embedded in the business community with established referral routes from multiple organisations, resources did not need to be allocated to building these relationships
- **Friendly and inclusive** – the informal, friendly and jargon free approach is felt to be an important factor in encouraging engagement, particularly from more marginalised communities
- **Collaboration** – the project has been able to refer people onto other UKSPF programmes, in particular Impact Torbay which can offer a deeper level of support for innovative propositions

However, one potential challenge has been the expectation that the project would target higher growth potential businesses rather than sole traders or freelancers. In practice, the majority of demand has come from these individuals, where there is significant need for advice and support.

### 2.8.4 Beneficiary perspectives

This evaluation study rolled out a business survey to the four projects that aimed to work directly with businesses and entrepreneurs. Providers were asked to send out the survey (which was designed to be used across all four projects) to their participants in August 2024. Torbay Council sent the survey to 261 participants and 51 responded. The profile of respondents is set out in Figure 37.

Figure 37: Profile of businesses participating in the Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey

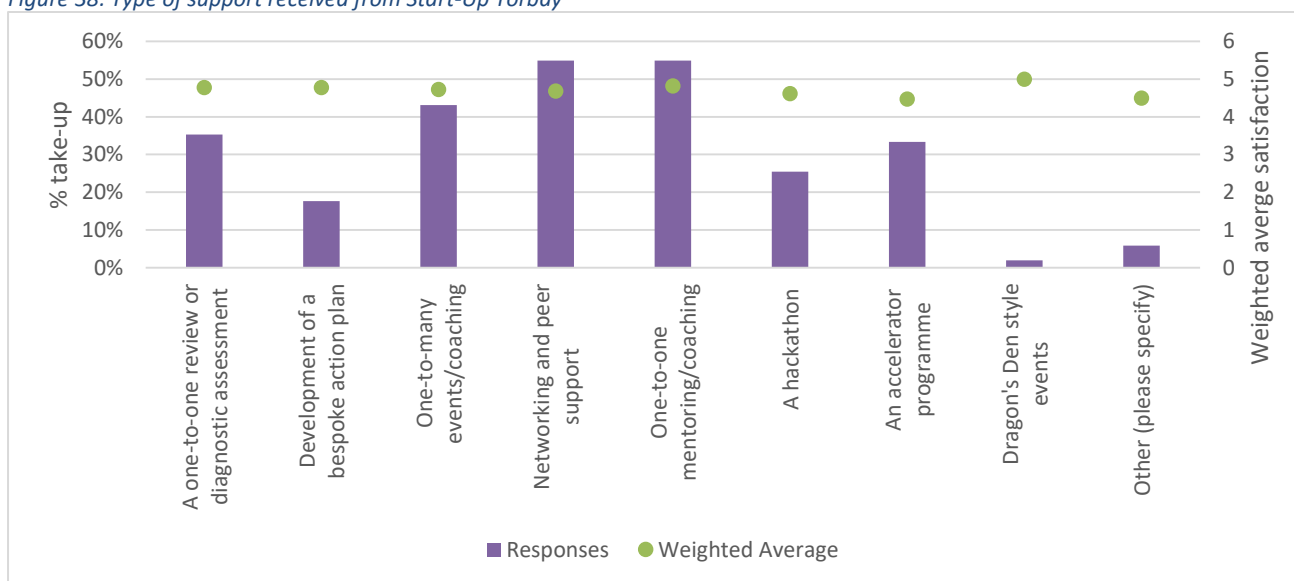
Business Size (FTE)	Sector	Social Purpose organisations?
0 – 9 = 91%	Photonics/micro-electronics = 2%	Yes = 41%
10 – 49 = 9%	Tourism = 12%	No = 59%
50 – 249 = 0%	Fishing = 0%	
	Creative Industries = 48%	
	Maritime = 2%	
	Medical and healthcare = 21%	
	Other = 52%	

Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey, n = 22

### Satisfaction with the support

The business survey asked respondents to firstly identify the type of support that they received and then their satisfaction with it on a scale of one to five, where 1 is very dissatisfied. Figure 38 shows the % take-up and the weighted average satisfaction score for each activity.

Figure 38: Type of support received from Start-Up Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-Up Torbay Business Survey, n = 51

This shows that approximately half of respondents recalled receiving networking and peers support or one to one mentoring/coaching. The majority of participants were very satisfied with these activities, with average satisfaction scores exceeding 4.5 out of five. A small proportion recalled participating in activities that were not delivered as part of the Start-up Torbay programme, such as a hackathon, accelerator programmes or Dragon’s Den style events. This most likely reflects the participants involvement in other UKSPF projects.

Businesses were also asked what they liked best and what they thought could be improved with the support. Figure 39 overleaf summarises the key findings with some examples of quotes received.

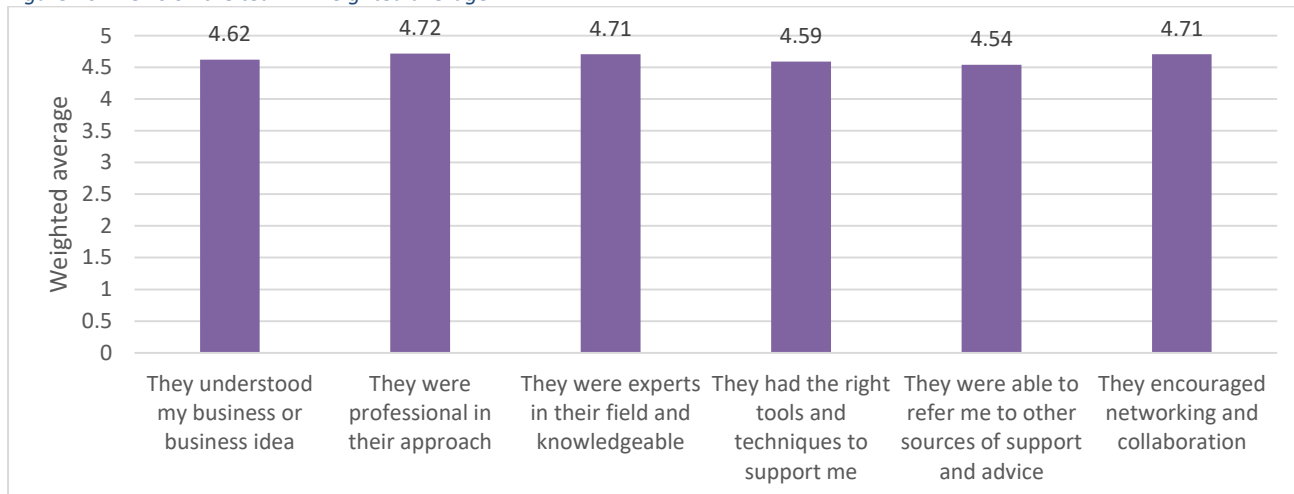
Figure 39: What respondents liked about the support and what could be improved -Start-up Torbay

What respondents liked best about the support?	What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of information/advice</li> <li>• Opportunities to network and learn from others</li> <li>• Ease of access (including that it was free)</li> <li>• The friendly, informal approach</li> <li>• Personalised support</li> <li>• The encouragement and confidence building provided by the coach</li> <li>• Knowledge and expertise of the coach</li> </ul>	<p>Whilst many respondents could not identify any improvements, a range of suggestions were nonetheless made including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better promotion of the service</li> <li>• More frequent events, more coaches with greater capacity to provide one-to-one advice</li> <li>• Tailoring courses to different audiences at different levels</li> <li>• Providing hand-outs</li> <li>• More intensive support to write a business plan</li> <li>• Linking coaching to financial support</li> </ul>
Illustrative quotes	
<p><i>“All the information was interesting, useful and important. I received an answer and help for any question”</i></p> <p><i>“I’ve really enjoyed taking part in each event I’ve attended. I’m quite nervous and new to this and I’ve always been made to feel very welcome and gradually gaining confidence networking. I will be taking part in further events &amp; workshops definitely”</i></p> <p><i>“The accessibility of someone to help”</i></p> <p><i>“Very helpful advice, friendly and welcoming. Plus it’s free!”</i></p> <p><i>“[the coach] goes above and beyond to provide personalised support both during group discussion and during 1 - 2 - 1 mentoring”</i></p> <p><i>“Personalised, diligent support and encouragement”</i></p> <p><i>“Felt that [the coach] took the time to get to know me and my business personally. Very encouraging and an excellent sounding ear. Very refreshing that I didn't feel like I was a number or like I was being 'sold to'”</i></p> <p><i>“[the coach] was really knowledgeable and gave real life business examples”</i></p>	<p><i>“More info available online about what is offered - it's a good scheme and needs to be shouted about”</i></p> <p><i>“More workshops, more 1-1 opportunities for business workshops”</i></p> <p><i>“Start-up sessions would be better if they were geared towards different types of business - but then they couldn't run so frequently I guess”</i></p> <p><i>“I found the business startup training a bit low level”</i></p> <p><i>“Perhaps try and aim courses specific to more mature businesses who are in a different position than single self-employed businesses. Make them more interactive”</i></p> <p><i>“We needed to spend more time on PL accounting or even bring our laptops to fill in forms for better understanding due to different learning styles”</i></p> <p><i>“Help you create a business plan for the UK market from scratch to get a grant and start your own business”</i></p> <p><i>“I think there needs to be a link up between business support and financial support that can be offered by the council - especially for start ups”</i></p>

Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey, n = 22

The survey also explored participants views about the experience and capabilities of the team that supported them. Figure 40 shows the extent to which participants agreed/disagreed with a series of statements about the team. This is expressed as a weighted average, where 5 equals completely agree and 1 completely disagree. This shows that there was a high level of agreement across all six attributes with average scores greater than 4.5.

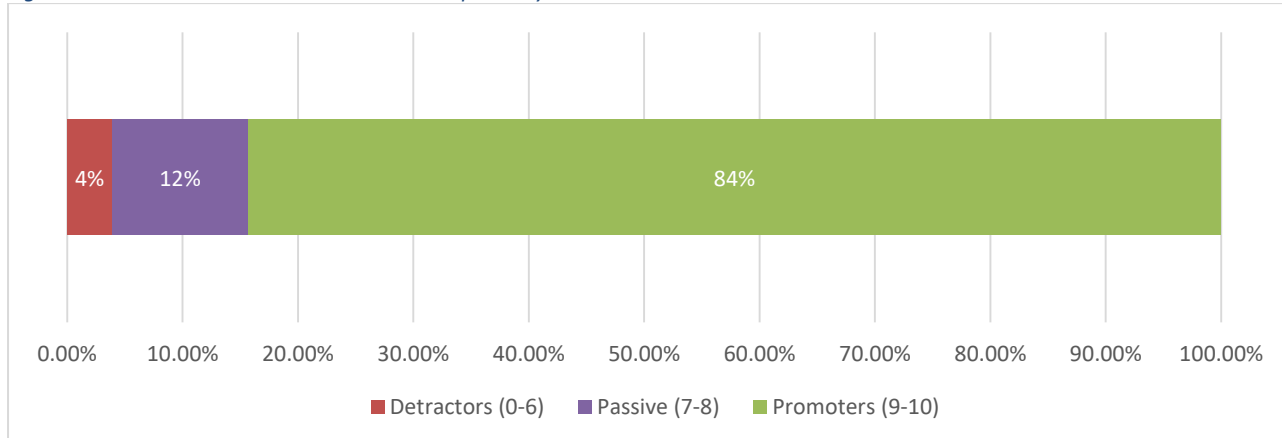
Figure 40: Views on the team – weighted average



Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey, n = 51

Finally, the survey asked participants how likely they would be to recommend the project to a friend or colleague on a scale of 0-10. The results show that 80% respondents gave a score of 10, 4% a score of 9, 8% a score of 8, 4% a score of 7, 2% a score of 5 and 2% a score of 1. The Net Promoter Score methodology works by assigning those people that score 9 or 10 to the category of ‘promoters,’ those that score 7-8 to the category of ‘passives’ and those that score 6 or under to the category of ‘detractors’ as illustrated in Figure 41 below. The Net Promoter Score is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors (i.e. ignoring the passives) which gives a possible range of +100% to -100%. **Start-up Torbay achieved a Net Promoter Score of 80.39, which is an excellent result.**

Figure 41: Net Promoter Score results – Start-up Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey, n = 51

### Case Study: Claire Jo Harmer, Cabbage Tree Studio

Before Claire took the leap into self-employment, a local business founder encouraged her to get in touch with Start Up Torbay. At the time, Claire was still working, and juggling art on an ad hoc basis. Apprehensive about starting out, Claire was relieved and delighted to find the Start Up programme was welcoming, encouraging and supportive and full of helpful and relevant guidance.

This help inspired confidence in Claire and the weekly sessions propelled her into tackling her business. The practical guidance made navigating the early stages of starting a small business achievable. Claire has now founded CABBAGE TREE STUDIO CIC and is launching workshops at Cockington Court from May 2024.

Claire has engaged with multiple workshops and has found support from the business community. Claire has also reached out to Torbay Communities and Local Spark for information and guidance regarding starting up a CIC and opportunities available.

Claire is currently taking her business to the next level through the UKSPF funded IMPACT TORBAY Accelerator programme and has recently been awarded Torbay Local Heritage Grant funding to deliver an art project 'Picturesque Torbay' locally.

*"The advice and support through Start Up Torbay, has been the catapult I needed to help shift my small business from an idea to an exciting and ambitious reality"*

Claire Jo Harmer Cabbage Tree Studio

### 2.8.5 Emerging impacts

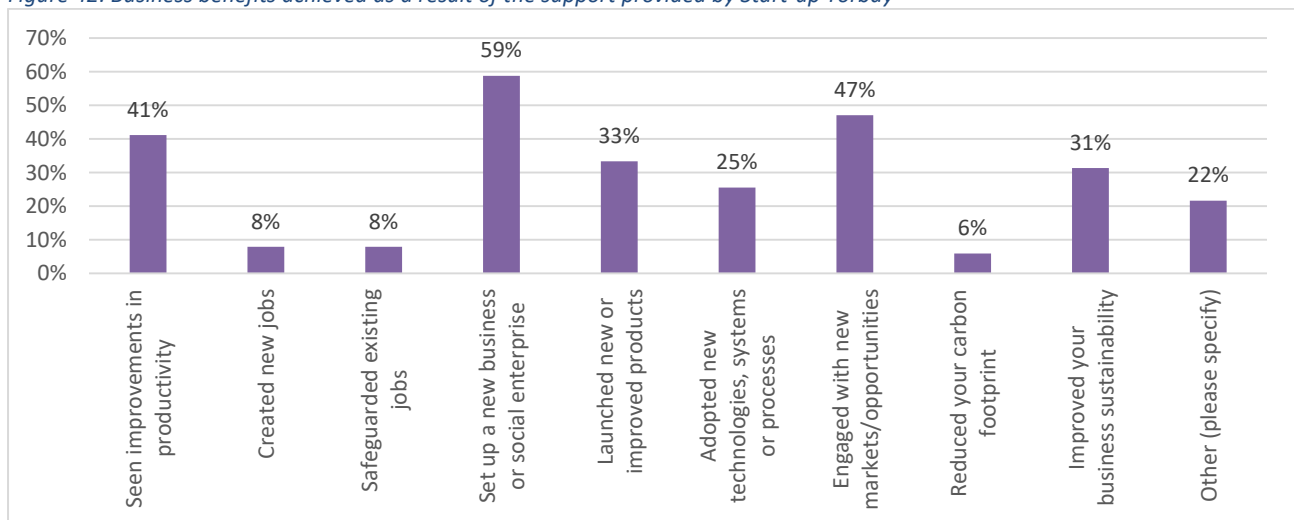
Figure 36 above shows that as of the end of June 2024, the project had officially recorded:

- 11 businesses started
- 12 new jobs created.

Analysis of the business survey data (which represents a sample of participants) suggests that the impact may be higher with 86% of respondents reporting at least one business benefit.

Figure 42 below shows the proportion of respondents that have achieved each type of benefit. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution as the results have not been validated in terms of the UKSPF output monitoring requirements.

Figure 42: Business benefits achieved as a result of the support provided by Start-up Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey, n = 51

Survey respondents were also asked to ‘tell us more’ about the impacts that they achieved. 29 businesses provided more information, which highlights that:

- Businesses felt that they had **improved their productivity** in a wide variety of ways including:
  - Through the development of a more focused/strategic business plan
  - Streamlining business processes and systems
  - Use of AI
  - Improved marketing (and resulting sales)
- **Jobs have been created** from the launch of a new service, the use of sub-contractors as well as direct employment
- At least 2 jobs have been **safeguarded**
- 20 respondents indicated that they were either in the process of **setting up a new business** or social enterprise or had already done so. As the following comments illustrate:

*“I set up my business with the help and advice of [my coach]. Her expertise allowed me to take my business from an idea to a functioning business in around 3 months”*

*“I’m close to opening a small retail business which without the support from start-up & Kim I may not have had the confidence to do so”*

*“I was very much in the contemplation stage toying with the idea of setting up a business of my own when I attended the Start-up course. But with the information, knowledge and support of the staff delivering the course I was inspired and informed to be able to set up and register my first business”*

*“Set up a new social enterprise in Torbay”*

- Several businesses highlighted how the support has helped them to **launch new products**, either as part of a new or existing business
- A small number of businesses highlighted how they were introduced to **digital technologies** such as spreadsheets, CRM systems and digital marketing solutions
- Participants highlighted how they had **engaged with new market through** either:
  - Increasing local sales, collaborations and supply chains as a result of networking activities
  - Launching services to new market segments following advice
- A small number highlighted how they had reduced their **carbon footprint** by participating in ‘Make it Net Zero’ as well as being encouraged to consider their wider sustainability

Putting a financial value on this varied list of benefits is difficult. As the survey findings do not provide any insight into the number of jobs created, the economic impact is derived from the project monitoring data which shows that 12 jobs had been created by the end of June 2024. This is equivalent to **£0.426m GVA per year** on the basis that GVA per filled job in Torbay was £35,474 in 2021<sup>13</sup>. However, this is likely to underestimate the impact, as it has not been possible to quantify, in GVA terms, the wider benefits reported above.

Businesses were also asked how they expected support from Start-up Torbay to benefit their business in the medium to long term. This question was interpreted in two ways. Some businesses reflected that the support has improved their long-term prospects as the comments below illustrate:

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<sup>13</sup> ONS sub-regional productivity, June 2023

*“With the knowledge provided by Start-up Torbay, I feel able to look to the future even if my business isn't doing as well as I wanted now. [the coach] has given me the tools to be able to think outside of the box and think of long term instead of just now”*

*“A much better foundation and much stronger networks which will continue to develop as we grow”*

*“The expert advice is truly invaluable and I feel I would not have been able to access this by myself. The confidence and belief in myself will also be invaluable to my business in order to attain my goals of expansion”*

*“Funding and support received will help me run a pilot of a new service to then provide evidence for further funding or service being subsidised”*

*“At the very least the programme has improved the prospect of my business remaining viable”*

*“I expect my business to continue to grow steadily, along with my ideas! I hope I will be able to use [the coach] as a sounding board in the medium to long term as I think it's the regular checking in that makes me feel most supported”*

However, other respondents highlighted the potential benefits of being able to access the service in the longer term, as the following comments illustrate:

*“Significantly. It has been the constant in a season of great upheaval and change. Having people that now know us as a support is incredibly essential for growth. They also know what we do and connect us in with others of the opportunities arise. Essential for mid/long term growth locally”*

*“I am aware I can return to request further 1:1 support which I intend to make use of as my business progresses in its first years of trading. I am now connected with the Start Up Torbay network and alumni which means that I'm first to know about upcoming events and opportunities linked to Start Up Torbay”*

*“In exactly the same way hopefully. Asking, listening and responding to my needs to sustain my CIC within the bay. Their support is integral to the success of my social enterprise”*

*“The expert advice is truly invaluable and I feel I would not have been able to access this by myself. The confidence and belief in myself will also be invaluable to my business in order to attain my goals of expansion”*

*“It already has helped massively and will continue as I go to more events”*

## 2.8.6 Additionality and net impacts

Additionality refers to the extent to which the benefits achieved are ‘additional’ to the benefits that would have been achieved in the absence of support. This is a complex concept because cause and effect are inevitably difficult to disentangle, particularly where a business may have multiple interactions with different support providers. Section 1.3.2 details the methods utilised to assess additionality for each project and Figure 43 details the resulting adjustments, which show that the project has a net additionality of 52%.

Figure 43: Additionality adjustments – Start-up Torbay

Factor	Adjustments
Deadweight	35%
Displacement	31%
Leakage	4%
Multiplier effects	1.2
Net additionality	52%

Source: Torbay UKSPF Start-up Torbay Business Survey, n = 41

Applying the net additionality to the gross impacts identified earlier, produces a net impact of **£0.221m GVA per year** or 6.25 net additional jobs. Assuming that these benefits persist for 3 years<sup>14</sup>, the total benefits (undiscounted) equate to £0.664m. However, it is important to note that this is a very conservative assessment, as it has not been possible to quantify the full range of business benefits.

### 2.8.7 Emerging value for money

Value for money has been assessed in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

#### Qualitative

Figure 44 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

Figure 44: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Start-up Torbay

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	The project had a modest budget and costs were minimised by reducing travel costs and time associated with travel within the Bay
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	The average cost of supporting a business/entrepreneur at the end of June 2024 was £325 per participant. This is lower than the national benchmarks (£2,500 to £4,700 per business assist) set out by Regeneris in the guidance they produced to support the 2014-2020 ERDF programme <sup>15</sup> . However, this may reflect the fact that ERDF output requirements were for businesses to receive at least 12 hours support.
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Section 2.8.5 demonstrates that the project is making progress in achieving tangible business outcomes.

#### Quantitative

As highlighted in section 1.3.3, the costs and benefits need to be profiled over time and discounted at compound rate of 3.5% in order to calculate a Return on Investment. Figure 45 shows that, with discounted costs of £61,947 and discounted net economic benefits of £611,702, **the benefit cost ratio is 9.87, which demonstrates excellent value for money.**

Figure 45: Return on Investment – Start-up Torbay

ROI Element	Value
Undiscounted costs	£62,437
Discounted costs	£61,947
Undiscounted net economic benefits	£664,073
Discounted net economic benefits	£611,702
Return on Investment	9.87

### 2.8.8 Learning

In terms of delivering support to start-up and growing businesses in Torbay, there are several learning points from delivery to date:

- **The service is highly valued by beneficiaries** and there is evidence that it is delivering tangible benefits, particularly to start-up businesses
- Its friendly and informal approach means services and networking opportunities are popular amongst entrepreneurs from **under-represented groups**, which brings additional inclusion benefits

<sup>14</sup> Additionality Guide: Fourth Addition, Homes and Communities Agency. 2014

<sup>15</sup> England ERDF Programme 2014-2020: Output unit costs and definitions. Regeneris Consulting, December 2013

- The service also provides an important **sign-posting role**, linking up businesses to other UKSPF projects
- However, with **just one advisor, the service is limited**. Expanding the service would allow:
  - The start-up course to be extended to 8 weeks or tailored to different audiences
  - Provision of additional one-to-one opportunities
  - Greater outreach across the 3 towns in the Bay
- Equally, the team may want to consider how demand for on-going support is managed, to ensure the service is able to on-board new clients

In terms of future delivery, the Council may want to consider how this service could be expanded to form a business support 'hub', which as well as providing its current services, could commission and refer businesses to a wider network of specialist support and administer a grant scheme that aligns with the various services.

## 2.9 Make it Net Zero Torbay

### 2.9.1 Project Profile

<b>Project Name</b>	Make it Net Zero Torbay		
<b>Investment Theme</b>	Business and Enterprise		
<b>Intervention</b>	E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving natural environments		
<b>Total UKSPF funding</b>	£273,760	Match funding	£124,000
<b>Project start date</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2023	Project end date	March 2025
<b>Current status</b>	Ongoing	Lead organisation	SWMAS
<b>Description</b>	<p>This project included two linked elements. In year 1, the project aimed to support 96 companies with a <b>free carbon footprint assessment</b>. This was to include an initial business review and diagnostic, carbon foot-print calculation, development of improvement plans and strategic advice to identify clean growth opportunities. This was to be supported with a <b>capital grants programme</b> (running into year 2) that would offer 40 businesses capital grant funding of approximately £2,600 to implement their decarbonisation plans. This was to be matched at a 50% intervention rate.</p>		

### 2.9.2 Progress at the time of the evaluation

The project concluded the initial carbon foot-printing phase at the end of March 2024. This included:

- A series of 6 net zero workshops, 2 each in Torquay, Brixham and Paignton which ran from Sept -Dec 2023. A total of 31 businesses attended these sessions
- Follow-up of non-attendees to offer them an alternative workshop or one-to-one meeting with a net zero specialist to complete a decarbonisation plan
- An additional workshop for the VCSE sector delivered in partnership with Local Spark and supporting the Growing the Torbay's Social Economy project.

Through either the workshops or one-to-one support, 81 businesses were supported to complete a decarbonisation plan in the form of a workbook.

In the second year, the project was able to offer capital grants to businesses and at the time of the evaluation had processed 19 grant applications of which 12 projects had been completed and therefore paid.

Figure 46 shows the project's financial, output and outcome performance at the end of Q1 2024. This shows that the project is broadly on track in relation to expenditure, although spend in the final year of the project is dependent on the grant scheme. As discussed in the next section, **the short time frame for the grant programme presents a challenge** because the process can be time-consuming especially if the measures being installed with the grant require planning permission or have a long order time. In addition, the fact that the project could not offer grants until the final year may be affecting take-up, as it was not possible to secure grant applications from participants in the first year. Therefore, whilst the project is expecting to be able to achieve its target for the number of businesses receiving non-financial advice, it may not be able to achieve the target for the number of businesses receiving grants. It has therefore been agreed that the project can offer slightly larger grants (with corresponding greater impacts) in order to ensure the capital is spent.

The project is ahead of schedule for outcome achievement and the team have highlighted that jobs are being created and safeguarded by helping businesses to reduce their costs which allows them to take on someone to support another part of the business.

Figure 46: Financial, output and outcome performance – Make it Net Zero Torbay

Indicator	Overall target	Target by June 2024	Achievement by June 2024
<b>Expenditure</b>			
UKSPF Expenditure £	£273,760		£171,647
<b>Outputs</b>			
No. of businesses receiving non-financial support	96	96	82
No. of businesses receiving grants	40	17	12
No. of decarbonisation plans developed	96	96	81
<b>Outcomes</b>			
No. of jobs created	30	0	12
No. of jobs safeguarded	40	10	34
No. of businesses adopting new to firm processes/technologies	20	5	9

Source: Torbay UKSPF Q1 2024/25 monitoring report

### 2.9.3 What has worked well/less well

Overall, the project is thought to be working well and **helping businesses to understand their carbon impact** and how they might start their decarbonisation journey. Despite initial concerns about achieving the target, the project has successfully reached over 80 businesses. Support from the various Torbay networks (i.e. Torbay Business Centre, the Chamber of Commerce and EPIC) and referrals from other UKSPF projects have been an important factor in this and the project has supported collaborative working.

The project utilised a simple spreadsheet workbook template to develop a decarbonisation plan for each business. This included:

- Company information
- Existing progress towards net zero
- Baseline data (including turnover, employment, floorspace, energy use and transport)
- A carbon calculator – which works out total emissions
- A decarbonisation plan – including actions and their potential carbon savings.

It was originally envisaged that prior to the workshops or one-to-ones, each client would provide the initial information about their business and their current progress towards net zero. However, early feedback indicated that **some smaller businesses struggled to provide this initial data**. Therefore, the team modified their approach to spend additional time with businesses at that stage, taking their energy bills and other data and completing the initial workbook so that they were ready to take the next steps. This is a learning point for delivery amongst this group.

Similarly, it was originally anticipated that the workbooks would be completed as part of a workshop session on a one-to-many basis. However, **attendance at the workshops was lower than anticipated**, with high levels of dropouts. The team responded to this by offering clients additional workshop dates or one-to-one visits. Whilst workshop sessions provided a useful networking opportunity, **one-to-ones allowed the advisor to visit the business premises which often allowed them to identify other potential carbon reduction opportunities** (e.g. seals on refrigerators etc.). Again, this highlights another learning opportunity for maximising impact.

However, the biggest delivery challenge related to way that the project was set up, with revenue funding for advice in year 2023/24 and capital funding for grants in 2024/25. This separation presented several challenges:

- **Time to purchase/install measures** – some decarbonisation measures took time to deliver/install as they required planning permission, technical advice or had a long lead time from a manufacturer.

Restricting grant availability to the final year of the programme therefore made it harder to support measures with a long lead time

- **Loss of momentum** – the wait between developing a decarbonisation plan and being able to apply for a grant may have resulted in some businesses deciding not to proceed with measures or apply for a grant
- **Resourcing** – Revenue funding was required to support the cost of administering the grant programme and providing applicants with a decarbonisation plan if they did not already have one (to ensure the grant represented an effective use of funds); and
- **Ability to work with partners** – Some partners (e.g. EPIC) identified opportunities to work with the team to deliver workshops in the second year, which presented a challenge for the team to deliver given the limited revenue available in year 2.

Both the Council and SWMAS have responded to this challenge with pragmatism and flexibility. The Council on its part was able to offer some (limited) flexibility by allowing a small amount of capital spend in the final quarter of 2023/24 and a small amount of revenue in 2024/25. Equally, SWMAS are continuing to support revenue delivery in 2024/25 using their own resources to ensure targets are met.

Despite the challenge above, the grant element of the project is thought to be working effectively. The process currently involves the following stages:

1. Business completes application form (including quotes)
2. A SWMAS panel appraises and scores the applications
3. The applicant is provided an offer or feedback (if unsuccessful)
4. The applicant is invited to procure the goods or services
5. Once payment has been made and the work completed, the applicant completes a claim to reclaim 50% of the cost – this includes evidence of expenditure and photos
6. SWMAS then pays the applicant and reclaims the cost from UKSPF in the next claim.

The Business survey provided some insight into beneficiary perspectives on this process. Eight of the 22 respondents to the Make it Net Zero Business Survey indicated that they had received a grant through Make it Net Zero Torbay and all but one of these were either satisfied or very satisfied with the grant funding process. Whilst one indicated that they were very dissatisfied with the grant funding process their comment indicated that the issues had been taken care of. When asked to comment, there were a mixture of positive and negative comments. Positively, several respondents highlighted the patience and the assistance of the team in supporting the process as the following comment illustrates:

*“Their assistance in every step of the process made it simple and achieved the final result of the grant”*

But equally, there were some more negative comments about the length of time and effort involved and payment as the following comments illustrate:

*“The process took quite a lot of time for the money involved”*

*“Although we had the work done in July which we paid for we will not receive the grant until the end of September”*

Finally, one respondent, who did not receive a grant, misunderstood the match funding requirements (thinking that they must spend £6,000 regardless of the value of the interventions) and therefore felt misled by the project. This may highlight a need to clarify communications in this regard. Another also expressed an interest in applying for a further grant but was unclear whether or not this would be permissible.

It was suggested that this process could be streamlined by:

- Providing businesses with support to complete the form as part of the decarbonisation plan process

- Empowering advisors to offer grants for a pre-determined list of measures at an agreed rate if certain conditions are met. This would cut out the need for a selection panel for these measures. This approach could be used alongside a more traditional panel for non-standard grants.

## 2.9.4 Beneficiary perspectives

### Types of business supported

Data from SWMAS shows that 21 of the 82 businesses were in the manufacturing sector and the rest were from other sectors, with a significant proportion from the hospitality and retail sector. This was not unexpected as the support was intended to cover all sectors.

### The business survey

This evaluation study rolled out a business survey to the four projects that aimed to work directly with businesses and entrepreneurs. Providers were asked to send out the survey (which was designed to be used across all four projects) to their participants in August 2024. SWMAS sent the survey to 81 participants and 22 responded. The profile of respondents is set out in Figure 47 below.

Figure 47: Profile of businesses participating in the Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey

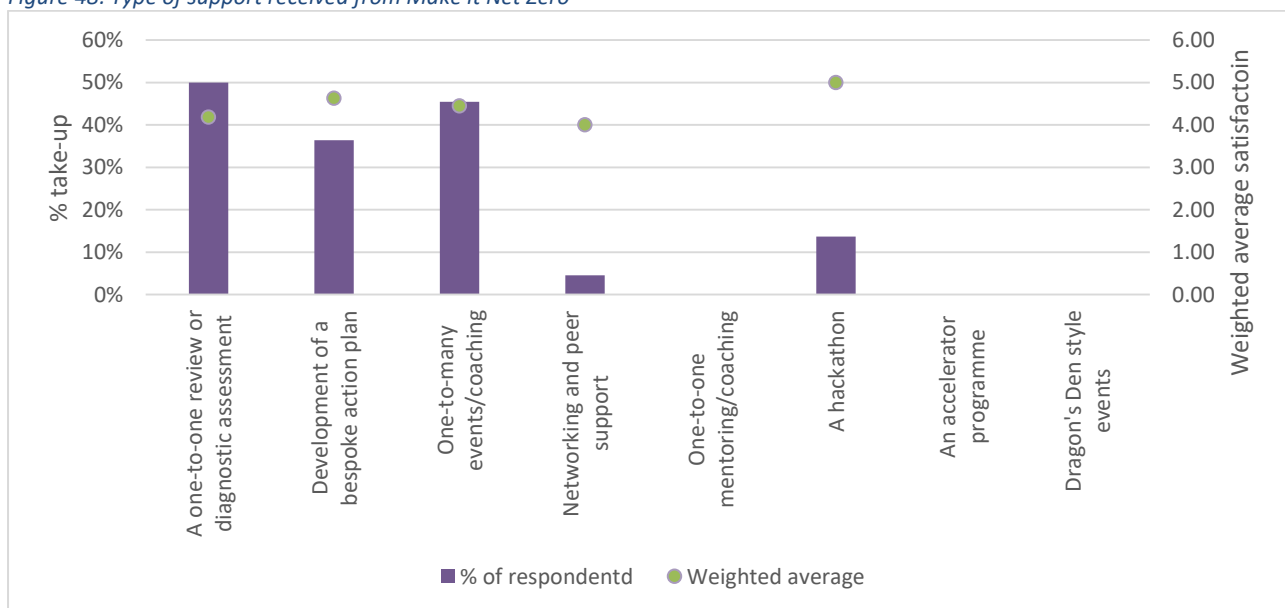
Business Size (FTE)	Sector	Social Purpose organisations?
0 – 9 = 62%	Photonics/micro-electronics = 5%	Yes = 24%
10 – 49 = 24%	Tourism = 50%	No = 76%
50 – 249 = 14%	Fishing = 0%	
	Creative Industries = 10%	
	Maritime = 5%	
	Medical and healthcare = 15%	
	Other = 40%	

Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey, n = 22. It should be noted that businesses were able to select more than one sector category and therefore results may sum to greater than 100%

### Satisfaction with the support

The business survey asked respondents to firstly identify the type of support that they received and then their satisfaction with it on a scale of one to five, where 1 is very dissatisfied. Figure 48 shows the % take-up and the weighted average satisfaction score for each activity.

Figure 48: Type of support received from Make it Net Zero



Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey, n = 22

This shows that approximately half of respondents recalled receiving a one-to-one review or one to many events/coaching. The majority of participants were very satisfied with these activities, with average satisfaction scores exceeding 4.5 out of five. A small proportion recalled participating in a hackathon and gave this a very high satisfaction score. However, as the Make it Net Zero project did not deliver hackathons these scores most likely reflect participant’s involvement in other UKSPF projects.

Businesses were also asked what they liked best and what they thought could be improved with the support. Figure 49 below summarises the key findings with some examples of quotes received.

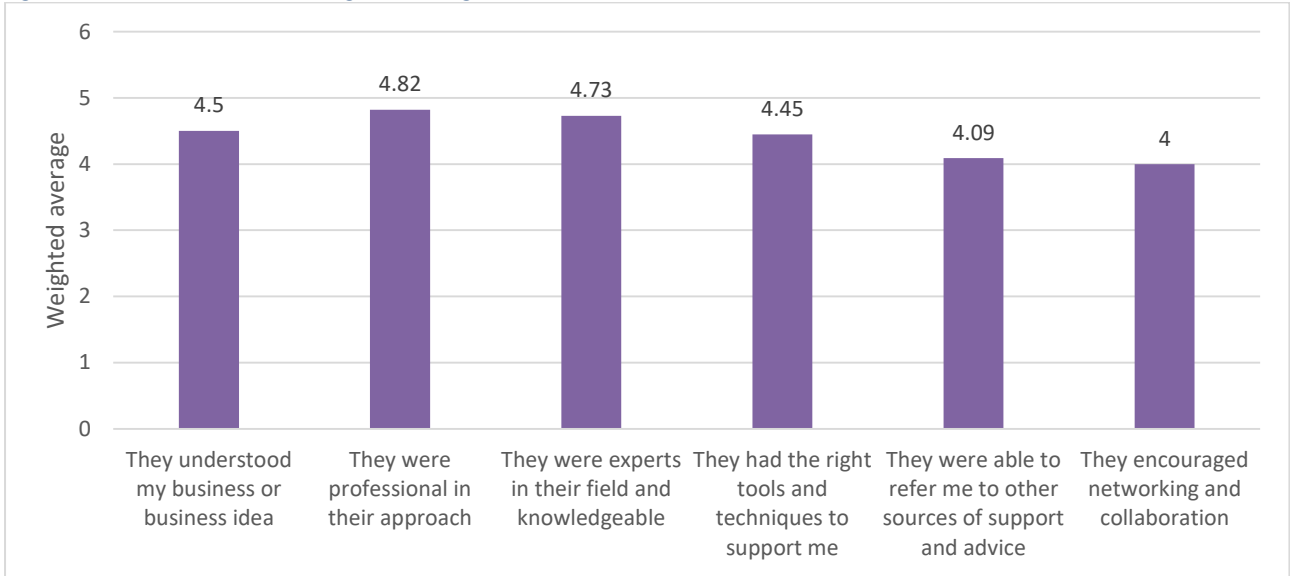
Figure 49: What respondents liked about the support and what could be improved

What respondents liked best about the support?	What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It helped them understand how they could manage their carbon footprint</li> <li>• It was delivered by knowledgeable staff</li> <li>• Discussions were tailored to their business</li> <li>• It was practical/accessible</li> </ul>	<p>Whilst almost half the respondents could not identify any improvements, several indicated that they would have liked more to have had opportunities for continued support/follow-up or more depth advice. One respondent felt that some more real-life examples would have been useful and another suggested more Torbay specific content and practical advice for securing the necessary consents for installing measures.</p>
Illustrative quotes	
<p><i>“Had gone thinking it would all be difficult to achieve to discover that some small manageable changes could reduce our carbon footprint”</i></p> <p><i>“Very informative and learnt a lot about how to measure our carbon footprint plus what grants and opportunities were available to our business”</i></p> <p><i>“The people delivering it were very knowledgeable and good at relating potential to day to day reality”</i></p> <p><i>“Could be tailored to my business even though mine was different sector to theirs”</i></p> <p><i>“That they came in and talked us through the process of benchmarking our carbon foot print”</i></p> <p><i>“It was very practical”</i></p>	<p><i>“Clear options to progress to covering scope 3 emissions”</i></p> <p><i>“Continued support for sustainable local businesses”</i></p> <p><i>“More real life examples of how to reduce our carbon footprint “</i></p> <p><i>“Very little Torbay-specific content or advice concerning for instance: seasonal business, old buildings, wider context such as Torbay EV charge roll-out, limitations of conservation area status or guide to any requirements for local planning consent or Electricity provider consent before installation of big electricity usage. Too much emphasis in the tool on whether the electricity contract is green or not - the same electrons flow through the same wires for the whole UK. Including “Water” was a distraction and should be optional except for big water users”</i></p>

Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey, n = 22

The survey also explored participants views about the experience and capabilities of the team that supported them. Figure 50 shows the extent to which participants agreed/disagreed with a series of statements about the team. This is expressed as a weighted average, where 5 equals completely agree and 1 completely disagree. This shows that there was a high level of agreement that the Make it Net Zero team were professional in their approach and were experts in their field and knowledgeable. However, slightly lower scores were achieved in relation to referring to other sources of support/advice and the encouragement of networking and collaboration. The latter may reflect the fact that some participants did not participate in group activities.

Figure 50: Views on the team – weighted average

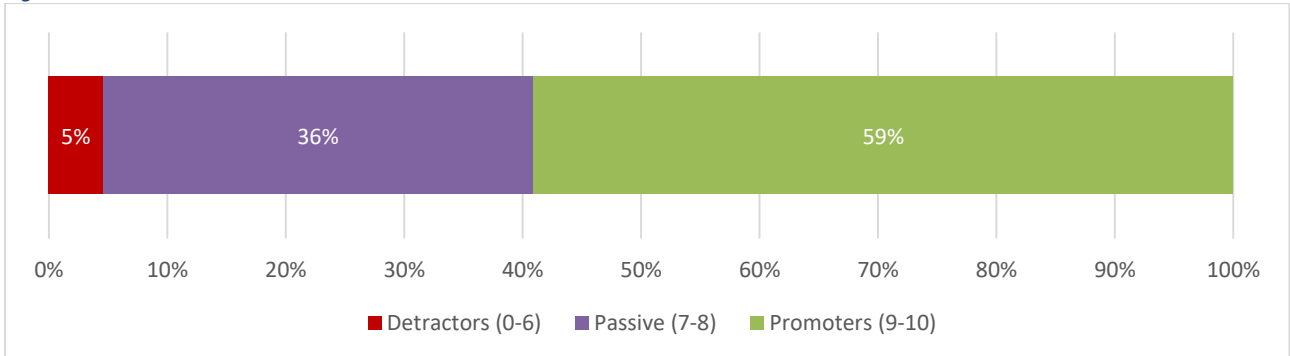


Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey, n = 22

Finally, the survey asked participants how likely they would be to recommend the project to a friend or colleague on a scale of 0-10. The results show that 50% respondents gave a score of 10, 9% a score of 9, 18% a score of 8, 18% a score of 7 and 5% a score of 1. The Net Promoter Score methodology works by assigning those people that score 9 or 10 to the category of ‘promoters,’ those that score 7-8 to the category of ‘passives’ and those that score 6 or under to the category of ‘detractors’ as illustrated in Figure 51 below.

The Net Promoter Score is the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors (i.e. ignoring the passives) which gives a possible range of +100% to -100%. **Make it Net Zero achieved a Net Promoter Score of 54.55, which is an excellent result.**

Figure 51: Net Promoter Score results – Make it Net Zero



Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey, n = 22

### Case Study – Beverley Holidays

Originally set up in 1959, Beverley Holidays is a family run holiday park based in Paignton, Torbay. The business found out about the Make it Net Zero Programme at a local business event. Beverley Holidays participated in group workshops and 1:1 sessions to create a comprehensive decarbonisation plan with SWMAS’s support. SWMAS also helped them connect with specialised companies focused on decarbonisation planning. These introductions have bolstered Beverley’s green strategy and have enabled them to efficiently monitor and manage energy usage in the long term. Beverley Holidays have been able to effect change quickly and easily. For example, with the upcoming installation of new lighting systems and pool covers, they are expecting to achieve a 67% reduction in annual energy consumption. This investment not only aligns with sustainability goals but also promises ongoing cost savings. The carbon savings delivered from the decarbonisation plan alone total over 704 tonnes.

*“Our partnership with SWMAS has proven invaluable, as their experts’ provided insights into our carbon footprint and offered effective strategies for reducing energy consumption. Through an informative workshop and personalised consultation, Beverley Holidays has gained clarity on the most impactful green measures to adopt”.*

Michael Raddon Head of Finance Beverley Holidays

### 2.9.5 Emerging impacts

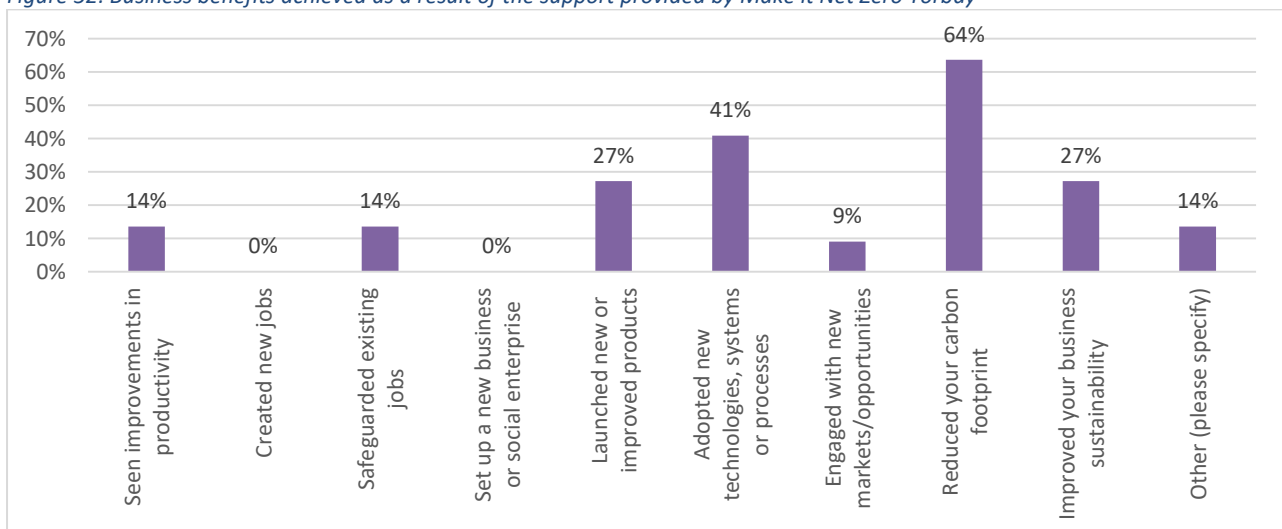
Figure 46 above shows that as of the end of June 2024, the project had officially recorded:

- 12 jobs created
- 34 jobs safeguarded
- 9 businesses adopting new to the firm processes/technologies

Analysis of the business survey data (which represents a sample of participants) suggests that the impact may be higher with 82% of respondents reporting at least one business benefit.

Figure 52 below shows the proportion of respondents that have achieved each type of benefit. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution as the results have not been validated in terms of the UKSPF output monitoring requirements.

Figure 52: Business benefits achieved as a result of the support provided by Make it Net Zero Torbay



Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero Business Survey, n = 22

Survey respondents were also asked to ‘tell us more’ about the impacts that they achieved. 18 businesses provided more information, which highlighted that:

- The main benefit relates to the reduction in carbon footprint, which businesses have achieved by:
  - Improving their understanding of impact
  - Changing electricity supplier
  - Implementing renewable electricity/heat schemes
  - Using scrap material in a new product
  - Localising supply chains
  - Using of hybrid and electric vehicles
  - Installing energy saving measures
- Some businesses highlighted that these had wider business benefits including:
  - Cost savings, which have a direct bearing on productivity, competitiveness and employment
  - The development of new products and services (e.g. circular designs or low carbon services)
  - More resilient/local supply chains
  - Improved market attractiveness/competitiveness

Putting a financial value on this varied list of benefits is difficult. However, as the survey findings do not provide any insight into the number of jobs created/safeguarded, the economic impact is derived from the project monitoring data which shows that 12 jobs had been created and 34 safeguarded by the by the end of June 2024. **This is equivalent to £1.6m GVA per year** on the basis that GVA per filled job in Torbay was £35,474 in 2021<sup>16</sup>.

Businesses were also asked how they expected support from Make it Net Zero to benefit their business in the medium to long term. Whilst some respondents could not see opportunities for further improvements, others highlighted that the support has enabled them to think about their next steps and how they might get to net zero more quickly, as the following comments illustrate:

*“We can now start to think about other things that we can do to have an even greater impact”*

*“This has opened doors for future opportunities for us to be in control of our products and add to our product portfolio with a UK supplier enabling us to keep ahead of the market”*

Others highlighted the ongoing benefits from work already undertaken in terms of cost reduction and market positioning:

*“Our carbon footprint will reduce which will in turn reduce our energy costs, and make us more attractive to customers who are aware of our effects on the environment”*

*“Reduces our costs and carbon footprint on an ongoing basis”*

*“Improve sustainability and profitability/viability. All our costs have been going up and bringing energy costs down is critical to staying afloat”*

### **Carbon Impacts**

Through the process of developing decarbonisation plans, an estimate of the potential carbon savings was produced. This was estimated to be equivalent to 4.7ktCO<sub>2</sub>e to the end of June 2024. For context, total emissions in Torbay in 2021 were 409ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, with 53.7ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, coming from the industrial and commercial sectors. Therefore, this represents almost 8.7% of industrial and commercial emissions. However, some care needs to be taken when interpreting this figure for the following reasons:

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<sup>16</sup> ONS sub-regional productivity, June 2023

- It represents the potential savings if businesses complete the measures identified in the decarbonisation plan successfully. Therefore, if businesses do not take the agreed actions, the savings will not accrue. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to validate if these savings had been made
- The figures represent a ‘total saving’ over a given period of time, which has been identified by the business – in some instances they are annual savings, in others they are total savings over 10-20 years.

Whilst this is a significant achievement, stakeholders highlighted that the environmental benefits and cost savings may have been greater **if the programme had been targeted at businesses in the bay with the highest carbon emissions** and provided them with intensive support and grants to decarbonise, rather than providing generic support across all sectors.

### 2.9.6 Additionality and net impacts

Additionality refers to the extent to which the benefits achieved are ‘additional’ to the benefits that would have been achieved in the absence of support. This is a complex concept because cause and effect are inevitably difficult to disentangle, particularly where a business may have multiple interactions with different support providers. Section 1.3.2 details the methods utilised to assess additionality for each project and Figure 53 details the resulting adjustments, which show that the project has a net additionality of 60%.

Figure 53: Additionality adjustments – Growing Torbay’s Social Economy

Factor	Adjustments
Deadweight	39%
Displacement	14%
Leakage	5%
Multiplier effects	1.2
Net additionality	60%

Source: Torbay UKSPF Make it Net Zero, n = 18

Applying the net additionality to the gross economic impacts identified earlier, produces a net impact of **£0.979m GVA per year** or 27.5 net jobs created or safeguarded. Assuming that these benefits persist for 3 years<sup>17</sup>, the total benefits (undiscounted) equate to **£2.94m**. However, it is important to note that this is a conservative assessment, as it has not been possible to quantify the full range of business benefits including the carbon savings.

### 2.9.8 Emerging value for money

Value for money has been assessed in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

#### Qualitative

Figure 54 shows the results of the qualitative value for money assessment of the project.

<sup>17</sup> Additionality Guide: Fourth Addition, Homes and Communities Agency. 2014

Figure 54: Qualitative Value for money assessment – Start-up Torbay

Value for money measures	Qualitative assessment
<b>Economy</b> – to what extent were costs minimised?	The project attempted to deliver impacts through group sessions, which are usually more economical, but these were unsuccessful and therefore a mixture of group and one to one sessions were used instead.
<b>Efficiency</b> – were outputs delivered efficiently? Could the same outputs have been delivered for a lower cost?	The average cost of supporting a business at the end of June 2024 was £2,093 per participant (including the grant element). This is lower than the national benchmarks (£2,500 to £4,700 per business assist) set out by Regeneris in the guidance they produced to support the 2014-2020 ERDF programme <sup>18</sup> . However, this may reflect the fact that ERDF output requirements were for businesses to receive at least 12 hours support.
<b>Effectiveness</b> – did the spending achieve the projects outcomes?	Section 2.9.5 demonstrates that the project is making good progress in achieving tangible business outcomes. However, these might have been higher had the project been targeted at those businesses with the highest carbon emissions and energy costs.

### Quantitative

As highlighted in section 1.3.3, the costs and benefits need to be profiled over time and discounted at compound rate of 3.5% in order to calculate a Return on Investment. Table 55 shows that, with discounted costs of £170,703 and discounted net economic benefits of £2,803,731, **the benefit cost ratio is 16.42, which demonstrates excellent value for money.**

Figure 55: Return on Investment – Start-up Torbay

ROI Element	Value
Undiscounted costs	£171,647
Discounted costs	£170,703
Undiscounted net economic benefits	£2,937,246
Discounted net economic benefits	£2,803,731
Return on Investment	16.42

### 2.9.9 Learning and opportunities for future delivery

In terms of delivering support to decarbonise businesses in Torbay, there are several learning points from delivery to date:

- **The service is valued by participants** and is delivering tangible benefits that go beyond carbon savings. Helping businesses to reduce their energy costs **helps them to create and safeguard jobs**
- **One to one delivery appears to be more successful** than group-based sessions and allow the advisor the opportunity to visit the business and provide bespoke recommendations
- **Capital grants relating to energy efficiency measures can take time to implement**, therefore delivery over a longer time period would allow more time to deliver the grant element
- **Delivery capital grants alongside revenue** support is easier than staggering the two funding streams

In terms of future delivery, there is likely to be a continued need to help businesses decarbonise their operations. Torbay Council may wish to **consider the merits of a more focused approach**, targeting sectors with the highest carbon footprints (e.g. manufacturing). There are valid reasons for both approaches. On the one hand, a targeted approach may yield more significant carbon savings. But on the other hand, the need for support to understand the importance of decarbonisation and the business benefits may be greater in the wider economy. The Council may want to seek further input from stakeholders on this.

<sup>18</sup> England ERDF Programme 2014-2020: Output unit costs and definitions. Regeneris Consulting, December 2013

## Section 3: Programme delivery

This section provides a review of performance to date in terms of meeting expenditure, outputs and outcome targets. It also explores wider impacts and programme level value for money.

### 3.1 Financial performance

#### 3.1.1 Expenditure

Figure 56 below shows expenditure against profile across the three investment priorities. This shows that:

- There was a significant underspend in 2022/23 reflecting a delay in Government assessing and approving the investment plan
- The people and skills investment theme was not profiled to start until 24/25 as per the national requirement
- The programme is on track to achieve its expenditure targets by the end of March 2025
- At the end of year 2, the programme had spent 92% of its year 1 and 2 profiled expenditure. This meant that it met Government's requirements to receive 100% of its year 3 payment in advance.

Figure 56: Expenditure relative to profile by investment priority

	Total allocation	Profiled 22/23	Spent 22/23	Profiled 23/24	Spent 23/24	Profiled 24/25	Spend to date 24/25	Total spend to date	%
<b>Community and Place</b>	£162,323	£54,923	£8,180	£65,950	£95,461	£41,450	£6,800	£110,441	68%
<b>Business and Enterprise</b>	£829,601	£134,160	£1,622	£362,216	£462,955	£333,225	£74,781	£539,358	65%
<b>People and Skills</b>	£701,556	£0	£0	£0	£0	£701,556	£120,876	£120,876	17%
<b>Management and admin fee</b>	£70,563	£25,000	£14,112	£10,888	£10,888	£45,563	£0	£25,000	35%
<b>Total</b>	£1,764,043	£214,083	£23,914	£618,335	£569,304	£1,170,825	£202,457	£795,675	45%

Source: Torbay UKSPF programme monitoring data

#### 3.1.2 Capital/revenue

Figure 57 shows the capital and revenue expenditure compared with its profile over the programme period. The government required that at least 10% of the allocation must be spent on capital rising to 20% by year 3. Figure 57 below shows that the Torbay programme exceeded this requirement with capital expenditure equivalent to 23.5% of the total allocation. The figure also shows that capital expenditure is broadly on track, despite a slight change in how capital was defined when the programme moved from delivery under TDA to delivery under Torbay Council (which only recognises capital as expenditure on assets owned by the Council).

Figure 57: Capital and Revenue Expenditure

	Total allocation	Profiled 22/23	Spent 22/23	Profiled 23/24 <sup>19</sup>	Spent 23/24	Profiled 24/25	Spend to date 24/25	Total spend to date	%
<b>Capital</b>	£415,585	£44,523	£8,180	£175,405	£144,914	£262,491	£50,264	£203,357	49%
<b>Revenue</b>	£1,348,458	£169,560	£15,734	£442,930	£424,390	£908,334	£152,194	£592,318	44%

Source: Torbay UKSPF programme monitoring data

<sup>19</sup> Following re-profile to accommodate underspend in 22/23

However, learning from those projects which had a capital element (see section 2) highlighted the importance of:

- Profiling capital alongside revenue so that grant programmes and other capital elements can be supported with revenue resources
- Commissioning projects that are intended to be delivered using a mixture of capital and revenue at the same time using an integrated call, to minimise the risk to providers of securing revenue without capital or vice versa.

### 3.1.3 Management fee

Local Authorities were permitted to use up to 4% of their allocation to undertake the necessary fund administration. This is equivalent to £70,561 across the three years. Timesheet evidence for the staff working on the programme in 23/24 shows that in 23/24 alone staff spent 2,545 hours on the programme, equivalent to costs of £115,504 (based on TDA's former hourly charge rates). If these costs are representative of years 1 and 3, then the real cost of administering the programme may be closer to £345,000 or nearly 5 times the allocation available from Government. This is equivalent to 20% of the total funding allocation. Whilst there is an argument that areas with a smaller funding allocation should be allowed to use a greater proportion of funding to cover administration costs given that it is harder to achieve economies of scale, admin fees of 20% are unlikely to be considered acceptable locally or nationally. Therefore, for future programmes, Torbay Council may want to explore ways of delivering the programme with less resources. This might include:

- **Fewer projects** – the staff time required to support a project is not necessarily proportionate to its size and in some cases has been inversely proportional as smaller projects. For instance, when projects are led by less experienced organisations they have have required more support than larger projects in completing claims and project monitoring
- **Alternative models of contracting** – sections 4.2 and 4.3 highlight that the procurement and claims processes used by the Council have been labour intensive for both the projects and the programme team. As discussed in section 4.2 and 4.3 alternative approaches may offer a more streamlined approach.

## 3.2 Output performance

Figure 58 overleaf shows the output performance for the community and place priority projects. This shows the majority of targets had already been achieved or exceeded at the time of the evaluation. The exceptions to this were:

- **The number of organisations receiving grants** – which was to be delivered by the Incredible Earth project. This output is no longer expected to be achieved because the delivery partner concluded that it would be more efficient for them to purchase the necessary materials on behalf of community groups, rather than issuing a grant to the groups directly
- **The number of facilities supported/created and the number of tournaments/teams/leagues supported** – these outputs are expected to be delivered by the project to improve Armada Park and Torre Valley which are on track to deliver these by March 2025.

Figure 58: Output performance – Community and Place – end of June 2024

Output	Total target	Target to June '24	Actuals	% achievement relative to June 2024
No. of neighbourhood improvements	4	4	4	100%
Amount of green / blue space created or improved (m2)	100m2	100m2	110m2	110%
No. of organisations receiving financial support other than grants	5	5	7	140%
No. of organisations receiving grants	4	4	0	0%
No. of local events / activities supported	5	5	13	260%
No. of volunteering opportunities supported	90	90	229	254%
No. of projects	2	2	11	550%
Number of facilities supported / created	2	0	0	-
Number of tournaments / teams / leagues supported (numerical value)	6	0	0	-
No. of households supported to take energy efficiency measures	200	135	166	123%
No. of people reached	450	320	3,636	1136%

Source: Torbay UKSPF programme monitoring data

Figure 59 overleaf shows the output performance for the business and enterprise priority projects. This shows the performance against the profiled position at the time of the evaluation was, for most outputs, on track. The exceptions to this were:

- **The number of tourism, cultural or heritage assets created or improved** – this output relates to the creation of buildings or sites and was expected to be delivered by the Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences. It is not clear how this project’s activities are expected to deliver this, as it does not have capital funding and none of the proposed experiences involve the development of new buildings or sites.
- **Number of local events or activities supported** – which was to be delivered by the Geopark Discovery Trails and experiences project and is currently at 33% of the expected position for this stage in the programme. Given the activities proposed for the remainder of this project, it is unlikely that this output will be achieved by project closure.
- **Number of businesses achieving grants** – which was to be delivered by Impact Torbay and Make it net Zero and is currently at 95% of the expected position for this stage in the programme. However, as both of these projects have encountered some challenges distributing grants, this output target may not be achieved in full.
- **Number of decarbonisation plans** – which was to be delivered by Make it Net Zero and is currently at 85% of the expected position for this stage in the programme. Whilst this output is still being delivered when businesses apply for a grant, the lack of revenue funding in the final year for this project means that the final target may not be achieved in full by project closure.

Figure 59: Output performance – Business and Enterprise – end of June 2024

Output	Total target	To date Target (30 June 24)	Actuals	% achievement relative to June 2024
No. of businesses receiving non-financial support	281	171	187	109%
No. of tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved	3	1	0	0%
No. of people reached	50,000	20,000	100,000	500%
No. of local events or activities supported	9	6	2	33%
No. of businesses receiving grants	50	20	19	95%
No. of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready	90	61	103	169%
No. of businesses supported	130	85	104	122%
Events / participatory programmes delivered	3	2	5	250%
No. of decarbonisation plans developed	96	96	82	85%

Source: Torbay UKSPF programme monitoring data

### 3.3 Outcome performance

Figure 60 overleaf shows the outcome performance for the Community and Place projects at the end of June 2024. This shows a mixed picture, with some outcomes having already exceeded the total target and others behind the expected position at this point in the programme. The former included 229 people supported by the Incredible Earth project to become more engaged in their communities through volunteering (thus meeting two outcome targets), which is an excellent result. Equally, the Energy Saving Torbay project is ahead of profile in terms of the number of households supported to take up energy efficiency measures.

However, the remaining outcomes, which all relate to the number of users of facilities and their perceptions of them are lower than expected. In part this relates to the improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley, which are yet to open. Assuming these facilities open as planned and user surveys are launched, these outcomes should be achieved.

Figure 60: Outcome performance – Community and Place – end of June 2024

Outcome	Total target	To date Target (30 June 24)	Actuals	% achievement relative to June 2024
Improved engagement numbers (numerical value)	90	90	229	254%
Improved perceived / experienced accessibility (number of people reporting positively)	24	24	21	88%
Volunteering numbers as a result of support	90	90	229	254%
Improved perception of new facilities / Amenities (number of people reporting good or very good)	140	40	20	50%
Increase users of facilities / amenities (numerical value of users)	100	0	0	-
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures (no. of households)	200	135	166	123%

Source: Torbay UKSPF programme monitoring data

Figure 61 shows the outcome performance for the Business and Enterprise projects at the end of June 2024. Again, this shows a mixed picture, which is to be expected at this point in the programme, as projects are still delivering and many of these outcomes have a time lag between delivery of the activity and the business outcome being achieved.

Progress in relation to jobs created and jobs safeguarded is currently ahead of profile, but this appears to be driven by the very strong performance by the Make it Net Zero project, which concluded its revenue-based activities in year 2. The other projects contributing to this indicator have expressed some reservations about

achieving these targets, given the time lag associated with job creation and the challenges associated with supporting businesses that have jobs at risk. Therefore, these targets may not be achieved in full by March 2025.

Outcomes relating to the visitor economy are behind profile at the current time but could be achievable if appropriate monitoring is undertaken by the relevant projects. Similarly, whilst steady progress is being made in relation to wider business growth outcomes, no progress has been made against the investment target and R&D active businesses. Taking each in turn:

- **Increased business investment** – concerns have been expressed about the requirement for this to cover tangible items such as buildings, machinery, fixtures and fittings. It is possible that the match funding linked to the Impact Torbay grant scheme could contribute to this outcome and this should be checked with MHCLG
- **No. of R&D active businesses** – this definition requires the businesses to be engaged in ‘scientific and technological development’. Whilst it was originally intended that the Impact Torbay support would be targeted at Torbay’s hi-tech sector, participants have come from a much broader range of sectors, who are unlikely to be conducting this sort of innovation activity. Therefore, there is a risk that this outcome will prove difficult to achieve.

It is understood that a key focus of programme management activity during Year 3 will be on supporting the projects to understand and gather the necessary evidence to capture these outcomes by project closure.

Figure 61: Outcome performance – Business and Enterprise – end of June 2024

Outcome	Total target	To date Target (30 June 24)	Actuals	% achievement relative to June 2024
Jobs created	78	21	24	114%
Jobs safeguarded	105	13	34	262%
Increased footfall (number)	224	124	199	160%
Increased visitor numbers (number)	350	25	30	120%
Increase in visitor spending (£)	£2,000	£1,000	0	0%
Improved perception of attractions (no. of people reporting good or very good)	50	10	0	0%
Increased amount of investment (£)	£250,000	£100,000	0	0%
No. of enterprises adopting new or improved products or services	12	8	2	25%
No. of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	32	9	11	122%
No. of R&D active businesses	12	4	0	0%
No. of new businesses created	42	19	14	74%
No. of businesses with improved productivity	54	17	12	71%
No. of businesses engaged in new markets	20	5	4	80%
Number of businesses supported	10	10	14	140%

Source: Torbay UKSPF programme monitoring data

### 3.4 Wider impacts

Section 2 demonstrates that each of the nine projects are delivering a range of tangible and in-tangible benefits to businesses and the wider community, which align with the aspirations set out in Torbay’s Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2030. These are summarised in figure 62 and 63 below and overleaf.

Figure 62: Main tangible and intangible benefits – Community and Place

Project	Main Tangible benefits	Intangible benefits
<b>Improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbished changing rooms at Armada park</li> <li>• Modular facilities for multiple sports at Torre Valley Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More women and young people playing sport</li> <li>• More people moving, with physical, health and social benefits</li> <li>• Improved attractiveness of area</li> </ul>
<b>Incredible Earth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watcombe beach re-opened</li> <li>• Improvements to garden's at Parkfield House</li> <li>• Greening of Melville</li> <li>• CCTV camera installed in Westerlands Valley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous community groups and volunteers engaged in projects to improve their area</li> <li>• Mental and physical health benefits for participants and wider community</li> <li>• Improved community cohesion</li> </ul>
<b>Energy Saving Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 166 households supported to save on average £590</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon savings</li> <li>• Health and social benefits</li> </ul>

Figure 63: Main tangible and intangible benefits – Business and Enterprise

Project	Main Tangible benefits	Intangible benefits
<b>Meet English Riviera</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 conferences/ events secured with an estimated value of £2.9m</li> <li>• 14 venues supported to access business market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to extend the tourism season and attract new high value market segment</li> <li>• Supports the Local Visitor Economy Partnership and English Riviera Destination Management Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 new visitor experiences have been created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved partnership working within the Geopark</li> <li>• Raised the profile of the Geopark</li> <li>• Inspired development of wider 'experiences'</li> <li>• Contributed to the Geopark securing £250,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund</li> </ul>
<b>Growing Torbay's Social Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 businesses reporting tangible benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported growth of social enterprise sector and operation of Parkfield House as a hub</li> <li>• Supports the Community Wealth Building concept</li> </ul>
<b>Impact Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76% of businesses reported at least one benefit, including engagement with new markets, developing new products and services and adopting new technologies</li> <li>• Net GVA impact of £0.93m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants learnt new ways to manage their business and innovation processes which have improved long-term growth prospects</li> <li>• Delivered community hackathons</li> </ul>
<b>Start-up Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 86% of businesses reported at least one benefit</li> <li>• At least 11 businesses started and 12 jobs created</li> <li>• Net GVA impact of £0.664m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported entrepreneurs from under-represented groups</li> </ul>
<b>Make it Net Zero Torbay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified potential carbon savings of 4.7ktCO<sub>2</sub>e or 8.7% of industrial and commercial emissions in the Bay</li> <li>• 12 jobs created and 34 safeguarded linked to cost savings</li> <li>• Net GVA impact of £2.94m</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping businesses to 'get started' on their decarbonisation journey</li> </ul>

This is an impressive achievement for a programme that has been operational for less than 18 months and still has 6 months left to deliver.

In addition to the project level impacts, the programme has also demonstrated a broader ‘collective impact’ in terms of providing businesses with a **locally relevant business support ecosystem**, with effective **cross-referral systems between projects**. Whilst this system was very effective within Torbay, there is little evidence of projects cross referring or collaborating with other sources of advice at a wider geography, which may have been a missed opportunity.

### 3.5 Value for money

At a programme level, the Torbay UKSPF programme has delivered a substantial programme of activities for a relatively modest sum. Taking each of the VFM measures in turn:

- **Economy** – At a programme level, economy was achieved through the procurement of the various projects. The majority of these projects were delivered on very tight budgets and therefore delivery providers were economical in their approach. However, many also reported that despite their efforts to deliver within the budget envelope, projects went over budget and these costs were borne by delivery partners. Whilst in the short term this improves public sector VFM, in the longer term it is not sustainable for providers, especially voluntary and community sector organisations and could ultimately damage the ‘support landscape’. The one exception to this might have been the Impact Torbay project which was delivered by a provider based in London and therefore a significant proportion of the budget needed to be spent on travel and subsistence. However, as no local providers tendered for this contract, it is difficult to see how this could have been done differently, except perhaps re-profiling activities to minimise the number of trips.
- **Efficiency** – The programme has delivered a wide range of indicators for relatively low unit costs, compared with ERDF benchmarks. For instance, business support expenditure to date has supported 187 businesses at a unit cost of £2,878 and created 24 jobs at a unit cost of £22,473. Furthermore, these unit costs should improve if the programme achieves its intended outcomes. These unit costs compare favourably with national benchmarks developed for the 2014-2020 ERDF programme by Regeneris which estimated that a low intensity business assist should cost in the range of £2,500 to £4,700 (not adjusted for inflation). Similarly, the Regeneris report provided a benchmark of £26,000 per gross job created. However, in broader terms, efficiency in terms of project and programme management might have been improved with:
  - **Fewer projects** – which would have reduced the administrative burden for both the programme management team and delivery partners
  - **Streamlining project delivery** – some of the most effective projects had relatively simple delivery models and concentrated on delivering a one or two things well.
- **Effectiveness** – the programme has made progress towards several of its strategic outcomes – particularly business start-ups and growth. However, the programme has struggled to engage with businesses in Torbay’s hi-tech sector and manufacturing sectors, where the opportunities for innovation led growth and decarbonisation may have been higher. Without engaging with representatives from these sectors it is difficult to know the reasons for this, but providers have indicated that this issue may have represented a combination of:
  - High output targets, which meant that providers could not adopt a targeted approach
  - The wrong offer, which meant that businesses in the target groups were not attracted to the projects.

Figure 55 below sets out the Return on Investment for the Business and Enterprise priority. This is based on the quantified net benefits arising from Make it Net Zero Torbay, Start-up Torbay and Impact Torbay. As highlighted in section 1.3.3, the costs and benefits need to be profiled over time and discounted at compound rate of 3.5% in order to calculate a Return on Investment. Figure 64 shows that, with discounted

costs of £536,741 and discounted net economic benefits of £4,268,220, **the benefit cost ratio is 7.95, which demonstrates excellent value for money.**

*Figure 64: Return on Investment – Business and Enterprise priority*

ROI Element	Value
Undiscounted costs	£539,358
Discounted costs	£536,741
Undiscounted net economic benefits	£4,527,119
Discounted net economic benefits	£4,268,220
Return on Investment	7.95

## Section 4: A review of programme management

This section provides a review of the wider programme management functions provided by Torbay Council, namely:

- Programme planning and allocating funding
- Commissioning projects
- Contract management.

### 4.1 Programme planning and allocating funding

As outlined in the introduction, Local Authorities were given responsibility for developing an investment plan within the parameters outlined in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Prospectus<sup>20</sup>. The prospectus outlined:

- The allocation for each area (including a requirement for capital expenditure)
- The types of interventions that could be delivered under each priority
- The output and outcome indicators which could be used to measure performance in relation to each intervention

Stakeholders reflected that the investment plan aligned well with Torbay's Economic Growth Strategy and provided an opportunity to support its implementation. However, the allocation was lower than the Council and partners expected given Torbay's historically low economic performance and deprivation levels. This meant that provisional plans needed to be scaled back and therefore, the allocation for each intervention was lower than previously expected. Reflecting on this decision, partners were of the view that the allocation may have been 'spread too thinly' across the various interventions and the evaluator would concur with this assessment.

The investment plan also set out how the allocation (including capital and revenue split) for each intervention would be distributed over the three-year period (with the exception of the employment and skills priority which could only be delivered in year 3). Whilst stakeholders reported that this profiling exercise was broadly effective, it did result in some challenges at the project delivery level. For instance:

- As detailed in 2.9.3 the distribution of revenue and capital for the Make it Net Zero project created some delivery challenges
- As detailed in 2.5.3 the distribution of revenue for the Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences (with no funding allocated to year two of a three year programme) created cash flow challenges for the delivery partner.

The investment plan also required the Council to commit to outputs and outcomes they wanted to achieve for each type of intervention. Whilst the evaluation recognises that forecasting outputs and outcomes is notoriously difficult, the evaluation has also identified several logical inconsistencies in the approach. For instance:

- As detailed in 2.6.2 the Growing Torbay's Social Economy Project is expected to start more businesses than the number of entrepreneurs it is expected to support
- As detailed in 2.5.2 the Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences is expected to deliver new buildings/sites without a capital allocation.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

Equally, at a more strategic level, some of the output targets may not have fully aligned with the stated ambitions for the intervention. For instance, the Impact Torbay project was expected to target hi-tech, hi growth potential businesses, but the target for the number of businesses to be supported was not consistent with a more targeted approach. Similarly, its outcome target to safeguard 54 jobs is not necessarily consistent with an intervention intended to support greater innovation led growth and scaling.

Ideally, if time and resources permitted these inconsistencies might have been avoided by developing intervention level logic models and subjecting them to wider scrutiny.

## 4.2 Commissioning

Stakeholders reflected that the programme mobilised relatively quickly and launched the procurement exercises for the community and place and business and enterprise priorities relatively quickly after the investment plan was approved. This enabled several projects to start delivery in year 1, which was a significant achievement.

Under UKSPF, local authorities could utilise a combination of competitions for grant funding (the default approach), procurement, commissioning or delivery of some activity through in-house teams. Torbay decided to use a combination of procurement and in-house delivery, with the majority of projects commissioned through the procurement route.

Several providers reflected that the procurement process was onerous, particularly for smaller, voluntary and community organisations who did not necessarily have extensive experience of completing procurement paperwork. To mitigate this challenge in the future, Torbay Council could:

- **Build capacity of local providers** – by providing procurement/bid writing workshops for interested suppliers or linking up to organisations that provide this type of support
- **Adopt a more streamlined process for smaller value contracts** – for projects of a value of between £10,001 and £50,000, Torbay Council’s procurement rules only require a “request for tender”, which requires a minimum of three pre-selected suppliers to be invited to bid.
- **Utilise a grant funding mechanism** – instead of pursuing the procurement route, the Council could explore the use of a grant funding mechanism instead. An example of this process can be found at Dorset Council <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/communities-groups-and-organisations-grants>

## 4.3 Contract management

Stakeholders reflected that the contract management function worked well, especially after the current programme manager was appointed. Stakeholders highlighted that the contract manager management accountant were **very supportive and helpful** in their approach as the following comments illustrate:

*“the programme manager was always there if you had a query”*

*“they would go to the ends of the earth to help you”*

Equally, communications from the programme manager to delivery partners were thought to be **timely and constructive** and the programme manager adopted a **flexible and pragmatic approach** to working with projects to overcome delivery challenges, as the following comment illustrates:

*“the team were really open to us being flexible, adaptable and customer led”*

Nearly all delivery partners highlighted that the programme has **successfully nurtured a collaborative culture** between the various projects, with partners regularly cross-referring people to other projects if they believed the participant could benefit. This was facilitated by the programme team hosting regular partnership meetings to help providers get to know each other and the services offered. This is an example of good practice. In addition, the programme manager was also described as being very proactive in helping

projects to engage with wider services run by the Council and other organisations when necessary. However, there appeared to be limited evidence of collaborative working outside the Torbay area.

*“the programme manager has been very proactive in helping us to engage with wider services”*

However, nearly all delivery partners expressed some concerns about the financial and output reporting requirements, which were described by some as being **onerous and disproportionate** to the size of the funding. This was particularly the case for some of the smaller projects and reflected the fact that the administration to provide the required evidence to support financial claims may be just as time consuming for smaller project as it is for larger projects. Several delivery partners highlighted that the procurement process did not set out what the expectations would be in this regard, which meant that the administration costs had not been factored into their budgets and therefore needed to be funded from organisational reserves or staff completing the work in their own time.

*“If we had known what the financial reporting requirements were going to be at bidding stage, we would have structured our bid differently to minimise this workload”*

This therefore presented a particular challenge and risk for smaller VCSE organisations. Some delivery partners highlighted that the requirements exceeded their previous experience of delivering ERDF contracts, in particular the requirement that a full audit trail should be provided for 100% of expenditure items, rather than a sample (as was reportedly the case for ERDF). Torbay Council, for its part, adopted this low-risk approach because unlike ERDF programmes, government had not provided Local Authorities with guidance in this regard. Providers also highlighted that the team worked hard to support them with their claims as the following comment illustrates:

*“the team went out of their way to be helpful, but the process was just not thought through”*

However, it is not clear why, given that the delivery providers were all procured using commercial contracts (rather than grants), that they are being asked to document proof of expenditure and be paid on this basis. This is very unusual for procurement routes, where contractors are entitled to make a profit or retain a surplus and payment is normally based on invoices submitted. However, it is recommended that the Council confirms this position with MHCLG, in case there are UKSPF requirements that need to be considered.

If, in the future, Torbay Council continues to utilise procurement as a commissioning route, it should ensure its payment processes align with this approach. Alternatively, if it decides to utilise grant funding routes it should consider:

- **Raising awareness before and during the ‘call’ process** – As well as ensuring these requirements are clearly articulated in grant documents, the Council could draw particular attention to these requirements in any Q&A sessions run to support the process. Similarly, prior to the procurement process itself, the Council could deliver training sessions for organisations looking to bid
- **Reducing the number of small projects** – to ensure that projects are of a sufficient size to support the necessary administrative resources
- **Adopting a different approach to risk** – whereby providers are asked to provide evidence for a random sample of cost items, rather than 100%.

As well as monitoring expenditure, providers were also expected to report on progress against outputs and outcomes. Whilst this was less controversial, some providers also found this challenging, particularly those that had not worked in this environment before. A particular challenge for providers was interpreting the definitions<sup>21</sup>, which did not provide any detail of the evidence that would be required to support the claim.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-outputs-and-outcomes-definitions-2>

## Section 5: Conclusions and recommendations

This evaluation shows that Torbay Council has delivered a successful programme of activities using its UKSPF allocation. The programme has supported a wide range of projects, which have achieved an impressive range of both community and business benefits. Key tangible benefits to date include:

- Parks, sports facilities and community places have been improved
- Some of Torbay's most vulnerable households have been supported to save energy and money
- The tourism sector has been supported to extend the season and attract higher value market segments
- New businesses have been supported to start and grow
- Existing businesses have been supported to innovate, improve productivity, reduce their environmental impact and grow

More broadly, the programme aligned with Torbay's Economic Growth Strategy and whilst some projects were able to lever in additional match funding, others helped to catalyse subsequent investment (such as Heritage Lottery funding). The programme also successfully cultivated a local business support ecosystem, with a strong culture of collaboration and mutual support, which provides a foundation for future programmes.

Whilst it has not been possible to quantify the economic benefits of the whole programme, the business and enterprise theme has demonstrated a return on investment of £7.95 i.e every £1 spent has generated £7.95 in benefits. This is likely to be an under-estimate as the projects are ongoing.

### 5.1 Recommendations for the final year of delivery

Whilst the evaluation has highlighted learning points for each project and some opportunities to refine delivery as the programme draws to a close, there are few opportunities to fundamentally change the way projects are being delivered. Therefore, the focus for every project in the final 6 months of delivery should be to maximise delivery of outputs and outcomes. This will mean:

- Developing a clear understanding of output and outcome definitions if not understood already
- Regularly following up with participants to track any outcomes achieved, even if they are no longer actively participating in the project.

Furthermore, Torbay Council should start to consider options for how it might extend the programme for another year, given recent calls by the LGA for Government to do this to avoid a cliff-edge in 2025<sup>22</sup>. A one-year extension could provide an opportunity to pilot an extended 'Start-up Torbay' project as described in 2.8.8.

### 5.2 Recommendations for future programmes

Whilst the programme has achieved excellent results, the funding may have been spread 'too thinly' across too many projects. As a result, the administration costs (at both project and programme level) have been disproportionate.

#### Torbay Council Recommendation 1:

In future programmes, Torbay Council should look at ways to streamline the number of projects to ensure project's have a sufficient critical mass and administration costs are proportionate to the level of funding.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/adjournment-debate-uk-shared-prosperity-fund-9-september-2024>

The programme also aimed to deliver a wide range and volume of outputs and outcomes and is on track to achieve the majority of these. Again, this is a significant achievement. However, some of the targets may have been overly ambitious within the context of:

- **The time available for delivery** – by the time projects got started in late 2022/23, most had less than 2 years to deliver. Some outcomes (such as jobs created) can often have a significant time lag
- **The proposed target audience** – some projects were expected to target quite narrow audiences (e.g. the hi-tech sector), but had relatively high targets
- **The proposed activities** – a small number of projects had targets that were technically impossible to deliver with the proposed activities (e.g. targets to improve tourism assets with no capital funding) and similarly, few projects were delivering activities targeted at businesses with staff who were at risk of redundancy, yet most projects were expected to deliver significant numbers of jobs safeguarded
- **The range of targets** – some projects had a large number of outputs/outcomes on which to report which added to the administrative burden.

#### Torbay Council Recommendation 2:

In future programmes, Torbay Council should prepare and scrutinise project level logic models to ensure project targets are realistic and achievable within the context of the proposed activities. It should also look to focus outputs/outcomes on the most relevant/important for each project to minimise the administrative burden.

Delivery partners also found the lack of guidance in relation to the evidencing requirements difficult.

#### Government Recommendation 1

In future programmes, Government should:

- Ensure growth funding cycles are allocated on a 6-8 year basis to allow:
  - The development of robust and deliverable plans at programme and project level
  - Projects to have sufficient time to mobilise, embed activity and achieve long term outcomes
- Provide detailed guidance in terms of the output/outcome evidence required
- Provide detailed guidance on the evidence/reporting/audit requirements for local authorities

In terms of its business support delivery. The evaluation found high levels of satisfaction, as well as emerging evidence of impact across all four projects delivering business support. Importantly, it also demonstrated the value of more intensive ‘accelerator’ style support in terms of encouraging participants to think differently about how they manage their businesses. Likewise, it also exposed the importance of the Start-up Torbay project in providing a route into the wider projects for many businesses. As a project delivered using in-house resources, there may be an opportunity in future programmes to look at an **integrated model of business support** where businesses are provided with a mixture of generic support (as per Start-up Torbay) and other ‘offers’ depending on need. These could include a series of workshops for aspiring social entrepreneurs or a rolling programme of hackathons/accelerators, which could be procured as services by the Start-up Torbay team. This would reduce the number of projects and associated administrative burden as well as provide flexibility to respond to changing economic circumstances.

### Torbay Council Recommendation 3

In future programmes, Torbay Council could explore the option of bringing together and integrating business support. This could involve having a 'core service' provided by Start-up Torbay and wider 'offers' supplied by specialised providers. These could be sourced via a procurement model in response to demand.

The programme included two grant schemes with mixed results. The Impact Torbay project required businesses to participate in its accelerator programme in order to be considered for a grant. Whilst it is good practice for grant schemes to be linked to participation in business support and this brings benefits, it also potentially means that some people are attracted to the support for the wrong reasons. The proposal for an integrated business support offer could also include a slightly wider grant programme, that could sit alongside the wider specialist offers available and provide a range of grants to suit different purposes (e.g. small grants for start-ups, larger grants for transformational projects, capital grants for decarbonisation etc.).

### Torbay Council Recommendation 4

In future programmes, Torbay Council could explore a broader grant scheme that could sit alongside the wider support available

The evaluation found that the programme was mobilised quickly, and the team ensured that expenditure targets were met, which is a significant achievement. Similarly, the programme team were held in high regard by delivery partners and stakeholders for their professionalism, open communications and supportive approach.

Under UKSPF, local authorities could utilise a combination of competitions for grant funding (the default approach), procurement, commissioning or delivery of some activity through in-house teams. Torbay decided to use a combination of procurement and in-house delivery, with the majority of projects commissioned through the procurement route. However, the process for managing claims, then appeared to follow the grant funding model, with projects required to submit evidence of expenditure, rather than invoices. Nearly all delivery partners found the claims process burdensome and supporting providers to provide the right evidence took a lot more staff time than expected. It is not clear why projects were asked to provide evidence of expenditure as this is not consistent with a procurement route, where contractors are entitled to make for profit or surplus.

### Torbay Council Recommendation 5

In future programmes, Torbay Council should undertake an assessment of the potential routes for distributing funding (grants, in-house, procurement) and consider the advantages/disadvantages of each route at each stage of the project life-cycle. Within the context of the route chosen for each project, there are also opportunities to improve processes by:

- Introducing capacity building workshops for local organisations who may want to bid/tender
- Providing clarity on reporting requirements at the bid stage

# Appendix 1: Logic Models for Investment Themes 1 and 2

Figure 65: Logic Model - Communities and Place

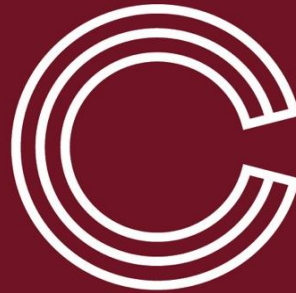
Torbay Context	Strategic Objectives	Interventions	Project	Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An urbanised area across three towns, but with challenges more often associated with cities</li> <li>Lower than average wages and household incomes</li> <li>Coastal disconnection</li> <li>Town centre decline</li> <li>In most deprived 20% of all local authorities</li> <li>24/89 small areas in most deprived 20%</li> <li>Higher than average proportion of children in poverty</li> </ul> <p>Large private rented sector, with poor quality accommodation, leading to health and wellbeing issues</p> <p>Higher than average bankruptcy rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant cost of living pressures</li> <li>Poor health outcomes</li> <li>One of the most vulnerable coastal areas</li> </ul>	<p>To strengthen Torbay's social fabric and foster a sense of local pride and belonging, through investments in activities that enhance physical, cultural and social ties and amenities, such as community infrastructure and local green space, and community led projects.</p> <p>To build resilient and safe neighbourhoods through investment in quality places that people want to live, play and learn in, through targeted improvements to the built environment and innovative approaches to crime prevention.</p>	<p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p>	Incredible Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 neighbourhood improvements undertaken</li> <li>100m2 of new green/blue space created</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10% increase in footfall</li> <li>10% increase in improved perception of facilities/amenities</li> <li>50% increase in users of facilities</li> </ul>
		<p>E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.</p>	Incredible Earth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 organisations receiving financial support other than grants</li> <li>4 organisations receiving grants</li> <li>5 local events/activities supported</li> <li>90 volunteering opportunities supported</li> <li>2 projects delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20% increase in engagement users</li> <li>90 volunteering activities/events/incidents</li> </ul>
		<p>E10: Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together.</p>	Improvements to Armada Park and Torre Valley North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 facilities supported/created</li> <li>15% increase in participation in sports and recreational activities at facilities that have benefitted from funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20% improved perception of new facilities/amenities</li> <li>15% increase in use of facilities/amenities</li> </ul>
		<p>E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.</p>	Energy Saving Torbay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>200 households supported to take energy efficiency measures</li> <li>450 people reached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5% increased take-up of energy efficiency measures</li> </ul>

Figure 66: Logic Model – Business and Enterprise

Torbay Context	Strategic Objectives	Interventions	Projects	Outputs	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A narrow industrial base with heavy sectoral reliance on traditional part-time low paid industries</li> <li>• High reliance on visitors and seasonal trading</li> <li>• High prevalence of lifestyle businesses trading below VAT threshold, which do not engage with business support</li> <li>• High prevalence of businesses with poor resilience and adaptability</li> <li>• Increasing proportion of micro businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create jobs and boost community cohesion, through investments that build on existing industries, and range from support for start-up businesses to visible improvements to local businesses, in particular hi tech, high growth businesses.</li> <li>• To promote networking and collaboration, through interventions that bring together businesses and partners within and across sectors to share knowledge, expertise and resources, and stimulate innovation and growth.</li> <li>• To increase private sector investment in growth enhancing activities, through targeted support for small and medium sized businesses to undertake new-to-firm innovation, adopt productivity- enhancing, energy efficient and low carbon technologies and techniques, and start or grow exports.</li> </ul>	<p>E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.</p>	<p>Geopark Discovery Trails and Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 businesses receiving non-financial support</li> <li>• 3 tourism, culture or heritage asset improved</li> <li>• 40,000 people reached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 jobs created</li> <li>• 8 jobs safeguarded</li> <li>• 25% increase in footfall</li> <li>• 15% increase in visitor numbers</li> <li>• 2% increase in visitor spend</li> <li>• 5% increase in perception of attraction</li> </ul>
		<p>E20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services.</p>	<p>Impact Torbay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 businesses receiving grant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £200,000 of increased investment</li> <li>• 9 businesses introducing new products to the firm</li> <li>• 5 businesses adopting new technologies/processes to the firm</li> <li>• 9 R&amp;D active businesses</li> <li>• 7 businesses adopting new or improved products or services</li> </ul>
		<p>E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.</p>	<p>Impact Torbay And Start-up Torbay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150 businesses receiving non-financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 jobs created</li> <li>• 50 jobs safeguarded</li> <li>• 40 new businesses created</li> <li>• 10 businesses introducing new products to the firm</li> <li>• 50 businesses with improved productivity</li> <li>• 15 businesses engaging in new markets</li> </ul>
		<p>E25: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences that support wider local growth sectors.</p>	<p>Meet English Riviera</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 business receiving grant</li> <li>• 3 events/participatory programmes delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 jobs created</li> <li>• 20% increase in number of businesses supported</li> <li>• Additional £40,000 of investment</li> </ul>
		<p>E26: Support for growing the local social economy, including</p>	<p>Growing Torbay's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 businesses receiving non-financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 jobs created</li> <li>• 7 jobs safeguarded</li> </ul>

<p>community businesses, cooperatives and social enterprises.</p>	<p>Social Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 potential entrepreneurs helped to become business ready</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 new businesses created</li> <li>• 4 businesses engaged in new markets</li> </ul>
<p>E29: Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy. Taking a whole systems approach to invest in infrastructure to deliver effective decarbonisation across energy, buildings and transport and beyond, in line with our legally binding climate target. Maximising existing or emerging local strengths in low carbon technologies, goods and services to take advantage of the growing global opportunity.</p>	<p>Make it Net Zero Torbay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96 businesses receiving non-financial support</li> <li>• 40 businesses receiving grants</li> <li>• 96 decarbonisation plans developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 jobs created</li> <li>• 40 jobs safeguarded</li> <li>• 20 new businesses created</li> <li>• 20 businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes</li> </ul>

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**chimeraconsulting**

Research and evaluation specialists

**Evaluation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund  
“People and Skills” Programme**



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# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

### Torbay UKSPF

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Torbay Council was allocated £1,764,043 of funding from the Government’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme with a three-year Investment Plan delivering against three main themes: Communities, Business and Skills. Just over £700,000 was allocated for the “People and Skills” element in 2024/25 (with some resources extended into 2025/26), enabling five projects to be delivered. These targeted a range of needs: people needing intensive, bespoke packages of support to help them become more job ready, including people who are economically inactive; young people including NEETs, requiring alternative provision to engage in positive learning and development activities; people needing support to develop their digital skills to engage in job search and find work; and for employer-focused skills development, courses and training provision. Combined, these five projects aimed to support 885 individuals.

### Evaluation

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This evaluation sought to review progress made to date, to understand what aspects of the programme had worked well, where there had been challenges, and an assessment on issues such as value for money, delivery timeframes and impacts. A quantifiable assessment of progress made against targets (up to the end of December 2024) drew upon Quarter 3 progress reports and monitoring data. Qualitative evaluation work entailed one-to-one interviews with project leads across two days of fieldwork in Torbay, in January 2025. The Business and Communities strands of the UKSPF programme were subject to an evaluation in summer/autumn 2024.

### Findings

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**1: Progress – targets and timescales:** There has been some good progress made by many of the projects, since mobilisation in April 2024. For example, on output measures: young people engaged with key worker support and socially excluded young people accessing support; people engaged in life skills; socially excluded people aged 25 or more accessing support; people engaged in job search; and workers gaining green skills and some other sector-specific skills. However, there are some targets which require significant progress to be made in the final quarter, or may not be achieved within the 12-month timeframe, which has been a challenging parameter. Some key features of success have included: the provision of person-centred support and advice services in welcoming environments; the opportunity to

mix with others and develop confidence by reducing isolation; and the acquisition of new skills and access to new / improved career opportunities.

**2: Impacts:** Projects are delivering some significant positive changes for people who engaged in support. There have been some people at points of crisis in their life, needing help and advice to help stabilise their position before being able to move forward on their employment journey. Many project participants have been leading quite isolated lives and have benefited from engaging in support with others. They have seen improvements to their self-confidence, self-esteem and have developed a more positive outlook overall. Improvements to financial situations, better digital skills to make use of IT and access services and apply for jobs, and for some, moving into employment, have all been positive outcomes. More work is required to help align skills and training provision with the needs of local employers in key local sectors. Employers in some sectors may need more support to incentivise the release of staff for training and skills development. In general, more efforts are required on employer engagement activity.

**3: Value for money:** Overall, the basic unit costs across the five projects, is broadly in line with other comparable projects and schemes. In some cases, it has shown better value for money than comparable. Projects providing more intensive and personalised support, to help people with more complex challenges and barriers to engaging in work, need more resources and more time to achieve positive outcomes. For many, the journey towards and into employment will take some time to achieve and will require more of a “hand holding” approach with, inevitably, a higher unit costs than “high volume / quick fix” type services.

## Recommendations

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The People and Skills programme has aimed to achieve a lot within a short timeframe. Recommendations include future support that:

- Targets young people on the margins of society including NEETs with an increased range of skills opportunities
- Provides greater efforts to support the economically inactive into work
- Delivers a “Pre-Employment” support package for adults in need of more personalised and in-depth level of assistance;
- Provides greater access to informal digital skills support
- Provides a more employer-led range of sector and workplace skills to meet clearly defined opportunities and develops a more consolidated approach to employer engagement.

The first three of these would benefit from some engagement with health and education related stakeholders to add value to “Economic Development” led funding opportunities.

# 1/ Introduction

## 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Torbay Shared Prosperity Fund

Torbay Council was allocated £1,764,043 of funding from the Government’s UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme, as part of the Government’s Levelling Up agenda, with a three-year Investment Plan delivering against three main themes: Communities, Business and Skills. UKSPF is the Government programme, providing a follow-on to the closure of access to EU Structural Funds, with investment for business support, regeneration and to boost employment and skills opportunities, with Local Authorities as managing agents. The overall ambition of the Torbay UKSPF programme is “to increase people’s life chances and create a Torbay where people are proud to live, work and visit”.

Theme	Allocation	Indicative % split	Number of projects supported
Community and Place	£162,323	9%	4
Business and Enterprise	£829,601	47%	6
People and Skills	£701,556	40%	5
Management and admin fee	£70,563	4%	N/A

## 1.2 Evaluation scope and objectives

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### Commissioning

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This evaluation was commissioned by Torbay Council to evaluate the “People and Skills” component of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme. The “Community and Place” and “Business and Enterprise” strands were the subject of an evaluation in summer/autumn 2024, as these had commenced in the 2023-2024 financial year, whereas the People and Skills projects had only launched in April 2024. At the time of this evaluation, projects were entering into their 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of a one year funding agreement.

The consultancy brief was issued on 3 December 2024, and our proposal (submitted on 13 December) was approved on 17 December with an online Inception Meeting held on 19 December.

### Objectives of the evaluation

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The core objectives of this evaluation of the UKSPF projects were to:

- Measure the impact of each People and Skills project in Torbay
- Assess value for money
- Provide recommendations for future commissioning should UKSPF (or similar) run again in Torbay. Particularly, we (Torbay Council) are interested in:
  - Based on what has been achieved thus far, how should outputs and outcomes be amended for future programmes to reflect need and demand, as well as achieve tangible impact in Torbay?
  - Have these projects provided value for money in respect of the outcomes delivered?
  - Could outcomes be achieved for less funding, and if so, what is the recommendation for this?

At the Inception Meeting, the Client emphasised some of its key ambitions for the evaluation:

- To assess value for money, aspects of innovation and additionality
- To consider if resources are being “spread too thinly”
- To clarify if the timescales are sufficient to deliver sufficient impact, and more widely
- To provide a steer on how future resources for this agenda could be effectively deployed, to help inform future decision making.

## 1.3 Methodology

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Our methodology included quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches.

A desk based quantitative review has drawn upon the projects' quarterly progress reports, including the latest that account for achievement up to the end of December 2024.

Our qualitative review work involved a programme of "in person" consultations with each project lead over a two-day period, 14-15 January 2025. We wanted to visit each project on site to get a clearer insight into their work and how they deliver services and activities.

Our lines of enquiry for consultations were grouped into:

- Description of the project and what needs it was addressing
- Progress on implementation and any challenges experienced
- Identification of impacts made
- Targets and value for money / resources
- Management and administration
- Areas for improvement and future needs.

Ideally we would have liked to interview a sample of project participants, but the parameters of the evaluation did not allow for this. However, we drew upon some feedback from participants made available by project leads.

## 1.4 Report Format

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This report includes:

- **Section 1: Introduction** – SPF introduction, evaluation objectives and methodology
- **Section 2: Project Performance Reviews** – a quantitative and qualitative assessment of each of the five "People and Skills" projects
- **Section 3: Good Practice** – lessons learned from the evaluation of other employability projects and key features of success
- **Section 4: Conclusions and Recommendations** – key conclusions and considerations for the future for employability and skills support in Torbay.

# 2/ Project Performance Reviews

## 2: Project Performance Reviews

### 2: PROJECT PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

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#### Introduction

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This section includes a review of each of the five projects supported by Torbay's UKSPF People and Skills programme, informed by Quarter 3 progress reports and interviews held with each project. The review includes commentary on:

- A summary description of each project, its objectives and resources
- Progress towards achieving targets for outputs and outcomes, as of early January 2025 (the time of the consultations)
- Perspectives from project leads
- Beneficiary feedback where this has been made available
- Features of success and impacts
- Value for money
- Future delivery considerations.

#### Note on quantifiable evidence

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The figures and graphs contained within this section draw upon the project monitoring data for outputs and outcomes achieved by the end of Quarter 3 (i.e. by the end of December 2024) compared to agreed targets. The variance is, in effect, what remains to be achieved over the final quarter (January to March 2025) to meet targets.

We gathered an indication as to how realistic this would be for some of the projects, during consultation meetings but for targets overall rather than for every output or outcome measure. In addition, from reviewing Quarter 3 progress reports. The full picture on achievements will only become clear once the final (Quarter 4) progress reports are completed, which is outside of the timeframe for this evaluation.

In general, project leads were all working on delivery to try and meet all targets, but some may be a challenge to achieve. Particularly where individual participant needs have been more challenging to resolve within the timescales available and where the needs or circumstances of key employers has changed.



## 2.1 SOUND FUTURES

### Project Summary

Project Name	Sound Futures
Lead Partner(s)	Sound Communities CIC
UK SPF LOT	Lot 2, E33: NEET Support Programme
UK SPF Funding	£100,000
Timescale	12 months (2024-25)

Sound Communities CIC, established in 2011, specialises in reaching out to marginalised young people and helping them engage in digital media and creative activities (radio, music, creative media production) to build self-confidence, raise aspiration, develop skills and improve their mental wellbeing. With significant experience of working within the NEET sector in Torbay, Sound Communities CIC was well placed to lead on this project.

Aligning closely to its vision of supporting vulnerable young people and helping them develop their employability skills, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment provided resource for an expanded and new service offer, with a dedicated Senior Progressions Lead to deliver a package of group-based and one-to-one support.

The “Sound Futures” project has a target of engaging and supporting 50 young people with three cohorts (two groups in each cohort) run quarterly. Young people engaging with the project have had access to a programme of six project-based group sessions (co-designed by young people) with a typical weekly session lasting four hours. In addition, eight one-to-one mentoring sessions have been made available for each participant.

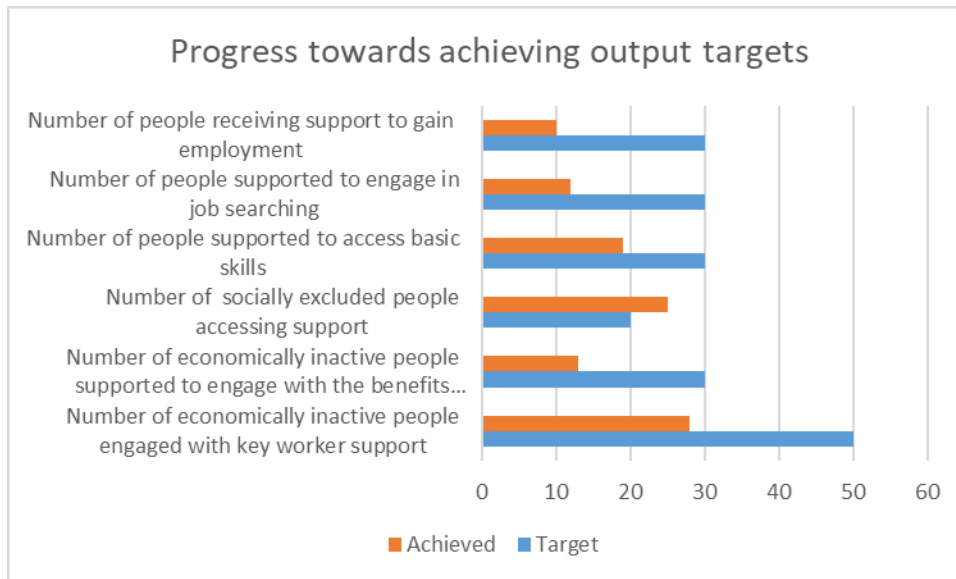
Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Progress

**Table 1: Sound Futures – outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outputs	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of economically inactive people engaged with key worker support	50	28	-22	56%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system	30	13	-17	43%
Number of socially excluded people accessing support	20	25	5	125%
Number of people supported to access basic skills	30	19	-11	63%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching	30	12	-18	40%
Number of people receiving support to gain employment	30	10	-20	33%

**Figure 1: Sound Futures – outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



The project has made excellent progress engaging with socially excluded young people for them to access support, with the target of 20 having already been exceeded. It also appears to be progressing well regarding its basic skills target.

Sound Communities reports it is likely to fall short on two output targets. One is the number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system with some reasons cited as young people reticent to discuss personal financial affairs, or reliant on parents to manage benefits on their behalf. The other is the number gaining employment. Whilst there have been some successes, the shortfall will reflect the fact that many of the participants are at an earlier stage in the “employment pipeline”, needing more fundamental help on basic needs and time to change some attitudes.

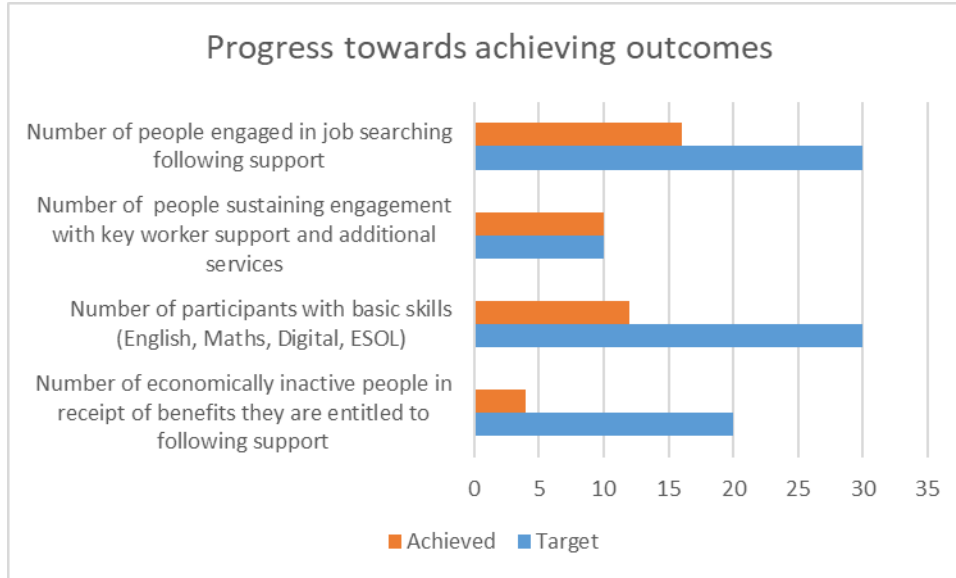
It is hoped that the project meets other output targets.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

**Table 2: Sound Futures – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outcomes	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of economically inactive people in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	20	4	-16	20%
Number of participants with basic skills (English, Maths, Digital, ESOL)	30	12	-18	40%
Number of people sustaining engagement with key worker support and additional services	10	10	0	100%
Number of people engaged in job searching following support	30	16	-14	53%

**Figure 2: Sound Futures – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



Regarding outcomes, the project has met or is on target to meet the number of people sustaining engagement with Key Worker support and additional services, and an outcome measure not originally included, the number of people referred by partners onto upskill courses.

Sound Communities reports it is likely to fall short on two outcome targets. One is the number of economically inactive people in receipt of benefits they were entitled to, and people engaged in job searching. These are linked to the respective output measures on benefits and employment mentioned before.

It is hoped that the project meets its target for participants attaining basic skills.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Perspectives

Feedback from Sound Communities was positive. The Sound Futures project has enabled the organisation to engage with more young people often experiencing traumatic and chaotic lives and additional acute problems. Typically, these range from caring needs, SEN (Special Education Needs) and complex mental health issues to those experiencing homelessness and drugs misuse. Several are neurodiverse. The project, like the wider Sound Communities provision, has engaged young people who need support in an environment very different from school or college-type formal learning environments. This cohort will include young people who disengaged from the more formal education systems and from most other available support structures.

By taking time to build trust and providing a focus on activities that align with their interests (the production of music, radio and creative media) and stimulate their desire to learn, this has led to them feeling more empowered. The project format has had a positive role in providing them with some routine and regularity of contact.

Young people have accessed the project through a number of referral channels, including self-referral, having seen details on social media, through local community groups and sometimes from family recommendations. *“Lots of mums find us on Facebook”*. The Council’s Care Experience and SEN teams have been “very good” for referrals. Very little has come through Job Centres or the College, although the Project Officer has made contact with the Job Centre. Some young people come through this route, but this has only materialised when he has been physically present there.

The project has also enabled Sound Communities to make greater efforts to reach out to wider stakeholders and the business community to promote their work and build partnership links. The wider business community is likely to take a longer timeframe to purposefully engage with a project like this (and the general cohort of young people that SC supports). Some businesses are more open to recruiting from this cohort, but a bigger challenge, and this is not just a Torbay issue, is convincing more employers to look more widely when considering their “candidate pool” and take time to work with those providing support to young people who need more assistance in becoming “work ready”.

In terms of engagement and retention, we were informed that every one of the young people that attended the first session, stayed through to the end of the programme.

*“Most are so far away from being work ready it’s a massive ask [to get them into work] but reducing social isolation can be a major achievement”*

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

*“We pick up on a lot of systematic failures – people who had or need support but have fallen out of the system”*

*“The root cause is that we are dealing with young people who are not having their support needs met”*

### Beneficiary feedback

The project has been collecting feedback from participants throughout and some of the comments made by young people accessing support through “Sound Futures” includes:

*“Sound Communities staff made me feel comfortable and that I’m not a burden”*

*“[I am] hoping to come back to work on my own music and potentially help other young people”*

*“[It has] helped me get out of the house”*

*“I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and I have made some lifelong friends, developed my skills and can’t wait to see what next year will hold”*

### Features of success and impacts

The cohort includes young people with quite pronounced challenges. Autism is prevalent and half the participants say they have acute mental health issues and their personal stories speak of suicidality, self-harming and anxiety disorders (OCD and Agoraphobia etc.).

Many, if not all, lead quite socially isolated lives in the real world, and getting them to engage in a supported activity in the first place is a good initial result. With attendance being voluntary, it is highly encouraging that the retention rate has been 100% and young people are clearly enjoying and benefiting from the support available.

Also, being able to mix with other young people and develop friendships and associations are positive impacts, which in turn can build self-confidence. At Sound Communities they have access to technology, young and experienced practitioners, industry professionals and links to national organisations.

Building trust is vital to the success of the work, with young people who have become very disaffected with “the system” and, perhaps, other support services they might have engaged with.

The programme of support, the style of delivery and person-led approach with friendly and encouraging staff to help them, plays a big part in the success of the scheme and Sound Communities’ work overall.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Some of the key successes of this project include:

- Some routine and focus to those with often chaotic lives
- A reason for them to “get out of the house” and engage in positive activities
- Opportunities to acquire and develop new skills
- An environment within which young people have been welcomed
- An environment which has helped nurture new friendships
- Guidance and information on how their interests and skills can be turned into paid work.

### Value for money

Through the project, young people accessed between 32 and 40 hours of “contact time”. At a unit cost of £2,000 per young person participating, this project’s value for money is on a par with some other NEET focused projects.

For example, from evaluating seven of the National Lottery funded “Talent Match” programmes which targeted support to 18-24 year olds who were NEET, unit costs (cost per person engaged) averaged £3,170, although support was often for a longer timeframe and involved more partner organisations in the package of person-centred employability support. For the two YEI (Youth Employment Initiatives) Chimera Consulting evaluated, with over 36,000 young people engaged, unit costs were £3,000, however for Torbay’s Ready For Work project, albeit not specific to young people, unit costs were £1,500 for a coaching-based / short-term model of support.

Even if the project achieved a total of 35 young people engaged by the end of March 2025, that would represent a basic unit cost of £2,857 which is reasonable and still better value for money in comparison to programmes like Talent Match.

### Future delivery considerations

A future emphasis for a project like this could include more support for helping young creatives progress into self-employment and increasing access to more connections with the local business community. More support for progression into work or self-employment, and gaining some stability in the workplace, would be a helpful focus for any future iteration of a project like this.

Results don’t come quickly, as it takes time to build trust, and to make more meaningful progress in helping young people get themselves onto a more positive footing.

Although positive impacts are being made within the UKSPF’s funding timeframe, Sound Communities reports that it would like to work with participants over a timeframe of up to 12 months ideally. Other

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

projects and programmes designed to support young people with similar issues and challenges tend to have been funded to enable a support package to be delivered over a year, or up to 18 months in some cases.

The project's ability to support NEETs (of which we were informed there are at least 1,500 in Torbay) is only really limited by physical space (to deliver) and staff capacity, so more young people could benefit from a support model such as this from Sound Communities.

Consideration could be given to widening the skills and activity "hooks" available at Sound Communities, as not every young person will be interested in creative media. The expertise and current offer suits many young people and there has been no lack of demand, but there may be other activities that could draw interest from a wider pool of young people.



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# **DIGITAL SKILLS**

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## 2.2 DIGITAL SKILLS (focusing on digital exclusion)

### Project Summary

Project Name	Digital Skills
<b>Lead Partner(s)</b>	Turning Heads CIC in partnership with Maker Arts CIC
<b>UK SPF LOT</b>	Lot 4, E41: Funding support for local digital skills
<b>UK SPF Funding</b>	£50,000
<b>Timescale</b>	12 months (2024-25)

This project has been led by Turning Heads CIC working in partnership with Maker Arts CIC. Turning Heads was established in 2018 with a focus on helping people with disabilities, learning difficulties and those experiencing isolation by providing a range of activities, opportunities and learning experiences. Its Skills Centre facility in Torquay provides day service activities including arts and crafts, woodworking, cookery, computer training and more. It has also recently opened a community café and has plans for expanding its asset base and service provision.

Maker Arts CIC, based in Paignton, was established more recently, providing an arts-based learning environment as alternative provision for young people in care, with Special Educational Needs, and those more generally struggling to engage with mainstream educational provision. Working in partnership, the two organisations have provided a four-week digital skills programme to help local people gain or improve their digital skills to help them further their career choices and general employability, as well as supporting adults who might be “digitally excluded”. Sessions at Turning Heads have been provided twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, whereby participants can make use of computer equipment in the ICT space or bring their own equipment (phone, tablet, laptop) and learn how to make use of them. Personal coaching and development support has been made available to them. Maker Arts has delivered sessions from Paignton.

The need for digital skills is becoming more prominent for everyone, for instance in accessing services and information, as well as for most employment roles and in applying for jobs. A lack of digital skills or a lack of confidence in using some of the most basic technology and applications can be a real barrier to searching and applying for, then securing work and one that this project has sought to address.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Each year, Lloyds Bank is commissioned by the Department for Education to run an annual Consumer Digital Index, and this was last published in 2023. This found that 7.5 million people, or 18% of UK adults, lacked the essential digital skills that are needed for the workplace.

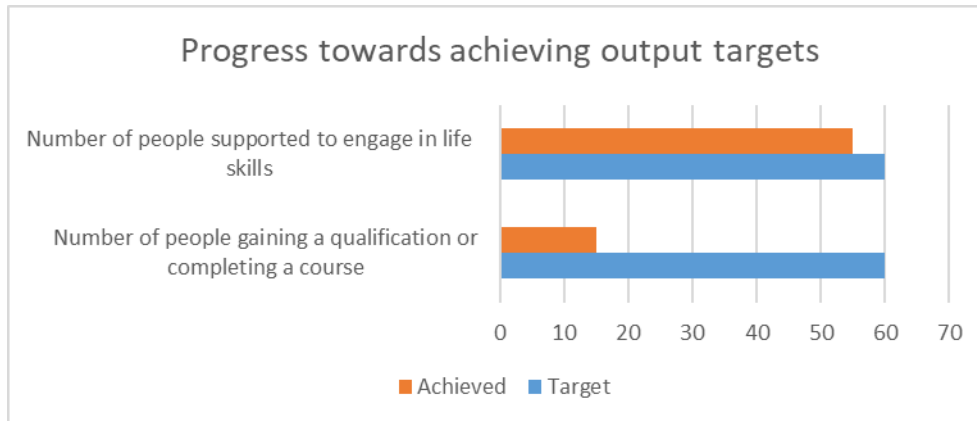
It also found that 46% of businesses have struggled to recruit for roles requiring hard data skills, that the supply of graduates with specialist data skills from universities is limited and that half of all workers surveyed had not received any data skills training in the previous two years. The estimate cost of the “digital skills gap”, to the UK economy, is estimated to be £63 billion per annum.

### Progress

**Table 3: Digital Skills – outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outputs	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course	60	15	-45	25%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills	60	55	-5	92%

**Figure 3: Digital Skills – outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



The project is making excellent progress on its target to help people engage with life skills, with 92% of its target achieved by the end of the third quarter. It is significantly behind target on the output measure of helping people gain a qualification or complete a course. This is a reflection of the nature of the IT training, with sessions being flexible and based on a “drop-in” approach rather than formal course. Demand for life skills is more in demand by users than achieving an AQA award.

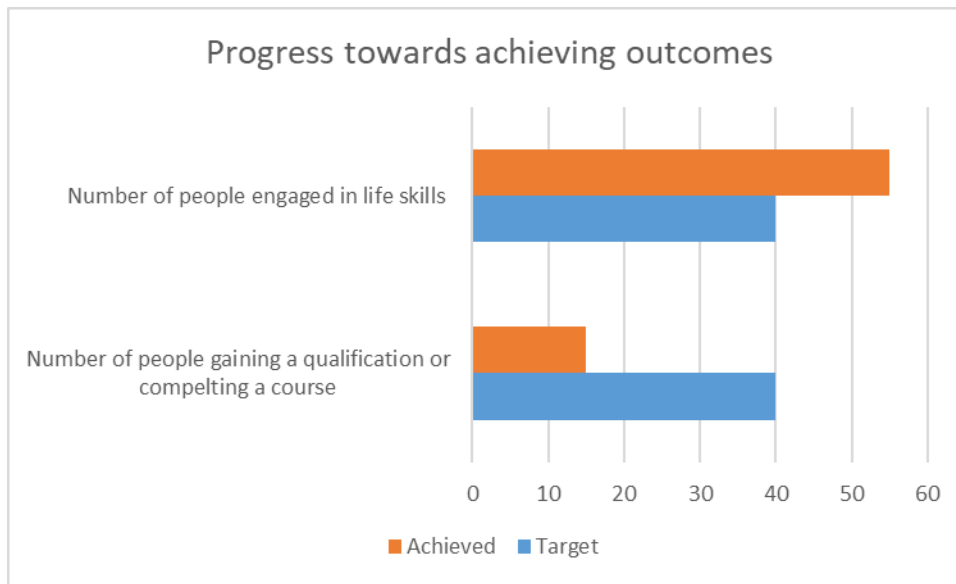
**Note:** “Life Skills” is defined as additional support which improves confidence, resilience or motivation around the process of job searching and may include basic skills (English and Maths), digital skills, communication skills, presentation skills and activities which reduce social isolation or encourage appropriate employment related behaviours.

Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

**Table 4: Digital Skills – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outcomes	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course	40	15	-25	38%
Number of people engaged in life skills	40	55	15	138%

**Figure 4: Digital Skills – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



As reflected in the progress on outputs, the project is making excellent progress on its target to help people engage with life skills and has exceeded its outcome target. On people achieving qualification, outcomes achieved by the end of December are reported as 38% of target.

This tends to align with the previous comment on outputs, that the drop-in nature of IT / digital skills support lends itself more to people gaining confidence in using IT for their own needs and is less suited to AQA awards.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Perspectives

Feedback from the two organisations was very positive about the support they were delivering and the impact it was making. For those who struggle with digital literacy, even creating an email account and sending an email, or developing a CV to then send on to a prospective employer, are skills sets they don't have. The Digital Skills project has been invaluable to them. It was noted that it had taken time to build up awareness of the project, but they have utilised social media, information sent to other agencies, posters at Job Centres, libraries and at events. DWP has also been a good referral partner to the project helped by Turning Heads and its links with the DWP's Access To Work programme, which helps people with a physical or mental health condition or disability get into or stay in work.

The project has engaged with people across a wide range of ages, with a real mix of needs and capabilities. Many have needed help with job search but moreover, building their confidence in using IT.

With group based and one-to-one support, the project also changed some of its approach to delivery, in response to user feedback, with the project investing in an online functional skills programme that clients can log on to, follow a bespoke programme, and work at their own pace and look to improve their skills. Prior to this, the project used an AQA awards, with some tailoring but it did not really cater for the variety of clients that they were seeing. The money from the UKSPF enabled Turning Heads to invest in this.

*“There are a lot of people who cannot use things like Indeed (jobs website) or upload CVs and covering letters”*

*“I think this (SPF Programme) has failed to identify and rectify some of the endemic problems in the workforce of Torbay. Only a very small fraction [of resources] have been directed at digital skills but it is a huge issue locally, especially for the 55+ age group”*

### Beneficiary feedback

Client feedback for both Turning Heads and Maker Arts was reported to be very encouraging and clients have welcomed the opportunity to learn new (or develop their existing), essential skills. Friendly community environments with supportive staff who have taken time to provide one to one advice as part of the sessions, have been a feature of success. One client simply commented on the support as:

*“It has been life changing”*

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Features of success and impacts

The project's success lies in its ability to engage with and work with people in very supportive community settings, in the quality and helpfulness of staff and in providing flexibility to users allowing them to work at a pace they can cope with and raise individual queries too.

The issue of digital literacy, particularly (but not exclusively) amongst older age groups is a significant one, and one that acts as a barrier for people searching and applying for employment opportunities. A lack of skills and/or confidence in using IT is also a barrier for people simply wanting to engage more widely, as so many aspects of our lives (access to information and services) are increasingly requiring a level of digital competence.

### Value for money

The project received the smallest grant award from the UKSPF People and Skills programme, at £50,000.

Based on project targets, that represents a unit cost of £833 per person engaged and achieving a qualification or completing a course.

Bearing in mind the project's need to provide support in small group and one-to-one settings, this project's costs appear to be very reasonable. There are some digital skills courses available at no charge, funded by the UK Government, but these have two drawbacks for the cohort targeted by this project:

- The need to be quite confident and competent in basic digital skills to use an online format of training, and
- The benefit of a project like Torbay's Digital Skills is the personalised "show and tell" nature of delivery. Many people prefer small group scenarios to large classroom-based learning environments, flexible enough that they can develop skills and knowledge at a pace they can cope with, and make use of IT equipment for specific tasks they need help with (creating an email account, developing a CV, online job-search, making use of "apps", and applying for jobs).

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### **Future delivery considerations**

Whilst the outturn figures for the number of people achieving a qualification / completing a course, will need to be revisited at the end of the project's funding period, there is a demand for helping people improve their digital skills. There will be an ongoing need to help provide digital skills support, especially for older cohorts of working age, and the benefits of friendly, community-based, small group and one-to-one work is an approach that we suggest is built upon.

As is the case for the other projects, the short-term lifespan of the funding agreement (12 months) presents some challenges. Getting the project through the stage of approval to "going live" with efforts to promote and market the service, can lead to slow initial delivery and take-up. Combined with contract end dates looming large not long after organisations are operating at efficient capacity.

Another issue for smaller organisations is cashflow. With payments being retrospective, Turning Heads needed to make use of reserves to "front load" and cover costs, and provide Maker Arts with a cashflow solution.

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# Focus Forward

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- Not in work
- Age: 25 - 64
- Live in Torbay

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## 2.3 FOCUS FORWARD

### Project Summary

Project Name	Focus Forward
Lead Partner(s)	Eat That Frog CIC in partnership with I Can Do That CIC
UK SPF LOT	Lot 1, E33: Employment support for economically inactive  Lot 2, E33: NEET support programme
UK SPF Funding	£242,837
Timescale	12 months (2024-25)

Additional funding secured:

- £61,000 Torbay Council Economic Development budget
- £91,000 Torquay Towns Deal

Focus Forward is a project led by Eat That Frog working in partnership with I Can Do That. Both CICs have a long track record, dating back to 2011, of supporting some of the most vulnerable people in Torbay. They specialise in advice and support on debt, benefits, housing, employment, training and other issues to help people overcome barriers to lead more fulfilling lives. The two CICs have different specialisms, hence by bringing their joint expertise together as a partnership, this has enabled local residents, aged 25-64, to access an array of services and support through the Focus Forward project to move towards and into employment.

The project offers intensive one-to-one support to help identify and overcome barriers to progression to employment, with a focus upon wellbeing, mental and physical health, finance, debt and skills. This is combined with access to group-based opportunities, for some. The project’s approach involves an engagement stage to set expectations and help mentors get to know the individual; an initial assessment looking at literacy, numeracy and digital skills capabilities, and identify the person’s main needs (health, finance/housing or employability skills). Then working to a personalised “Self-Development Plan”, supporting each individual to take a series of steps to help them progress on their own employability journey.

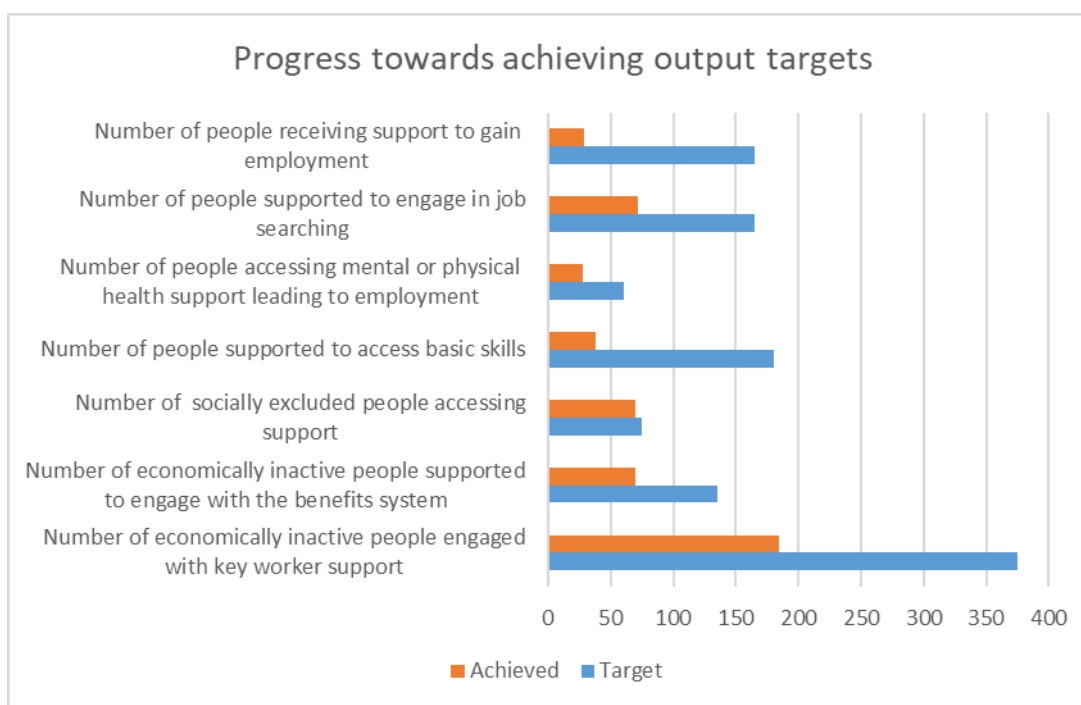
## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Progress

**Table 5: Focus Forward – outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outputs	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of economically inactive people engaged with key worker support	375	184	-191	49%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system	135	70	-65	52%
Number of socially excluded people accessing support	75	70	-5	93%
Number of people supported to access basic skills	180	38	-142	21%
Number of people accessing mental or physical health support leading to employment	60	28	-32	47%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching	165	72	-93	44%
Number of people receiving support to gain employment	165	29	-136	18%

**Figure 5: Focus Forward – outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



By the end of Quarter 3, there has been some good progress recorded for the socially excluded accessing support, with 93% of the target achieved. Several other output measures were circa half achieved (job search, economically inactive engaging with the benefits system and with key worker support and people accessing health support).

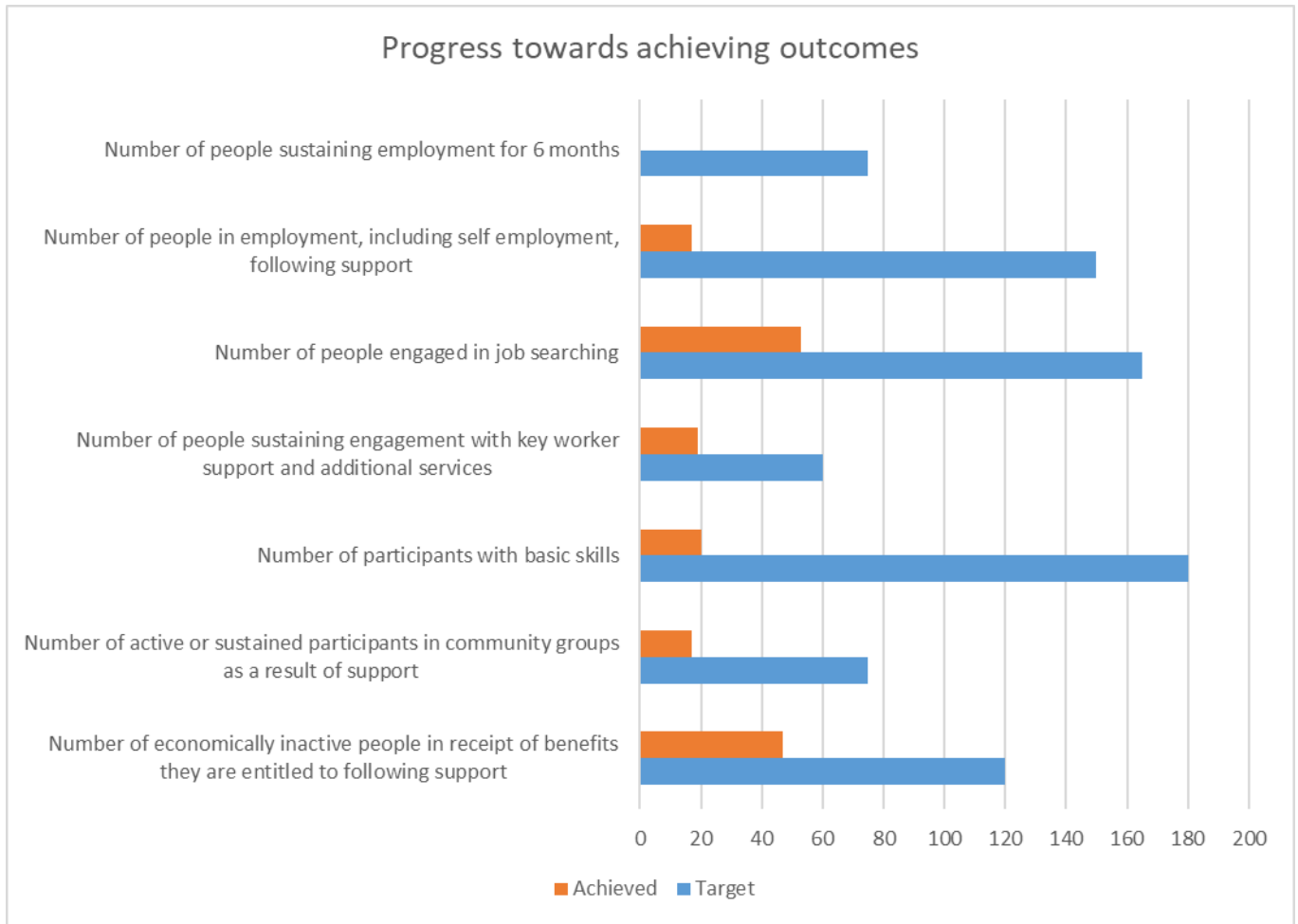
Two output measures appear to be some way behind on their projected targets: the number receiving support to gain employment (18% of target) and those accessing basic skills provision (21% of target). Some of the reasons for this are set out on the next page, as commentary on outcomes.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

**Table 6: Focus Forward – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outcomes	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of economically inactive people in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support	120	47	-73	39%
Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support	75	17	-58	23%
Number of participants with basic skills	180	20	-160	11%
Number of people sustaining engagement with key worker support and additional services	60	19	-41	32%
Number of people engaged in job searching	165	53	-112	32%
Number of people in employment, including self employment, following support	150	17	-133	11%
Number of people sustaining employment for 6 months	75	0	-75	0%

**Figure 6: Focus Forward – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



Regarding outcomes, the project has exceeded its target for people engaged in life skills but has some way to go to meet its outcome target for those achieving a qualification or completing a course. The project has reported that basic skills and job search outputs have picked up over Quarter 3. However, the complex needs and barriers of the participants tends to require longer and sustained support to help them move forward. Many are in a position of “crisis” (typically housing and/or debt and finance related) when

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

they first engage with the project. The staff and mentors play a key role in helping them stabilise and then later focus more on progression to employment. For those in financial difficulties, helping them maximise the benefits they are entitled to and tackling debts tends to be the first order of priority work. They will not be able to readily focus on the job search process until some fundamental stability is in place. Another barrier for progressing into work for those that move onto a Debt Relief Order (DRO) which is an alternative to bankruptcy for those with little by way of assets and on low income. A DRO effectively clears people's debts as long as their disposable income remains under £75 a month for 12 months. Taking up a job within that time would likely lead to the disposable income threshold being breached and the individuals would be back to square one. Therefore, they may opt to wait 12 months before actively seeking to find employment.

As is the case for the Sound Futures and Digital Skills projects, it is likely that benefits accrued from the funded phase of the project, will not fully materialise until some time after. It can be hard to predict the "average" time any single participant may need support for. Some may need two months, others more than the six months the project allows for.

### Perspectives

Feedback from the two organisations was positive about the opportunity Torbay's UK SPF had given them to develop this scheme.

The two CICs already had brand recognition and an awareness amongst key partners and the community. This project has benefited from referrals from the NHS, Social Prescribers, wider stakeholders and a few through Job Centres (DWP) where the project has had a weekly presence. Also, a high street/shop-front presence visible to the community, and pro-active marketing campaigns led to a number of self-referrals. Many people have engaged with the project having seen social media materials and the Council's Torbay Community Helpline which has provided a rich source of enquiries, with calls triaged and where appropriate, referred to I Can Do That.

*"The barriers people are facing are more pronounced than we expected, so it will take longer to achieve targets"*

*"Many are not mentally well enough to move forward when we first engage with them"*

*"If you're in a crisis point you don't want to change anything unless it looks better for you and sometimes moving into work does not look better for some people"*

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Beneficiary feedback

A couple of quotes from staff on the impact this has had on participants illustrates some of the impact on individuals:

*“It’s been a revelation for people – mental clarity and a way forward they couldn’t see that before as they didn’t have anyone to help unpick that for them to put it all in its place”*

*“We have had people break down in tears out of relief because they have someone helping them”*

### Features of success and impacts

Like other projects, the calibre, friendliness and supportive nature of staff plays a key role in the success of the project.

Neutral “community” settings and access to one-to-one mentoring are key, as is trust in the support staff, with participants divulging private information about their circumstances.

The person-centred nature of support, with tailored personalised plans setting out steps for people to take, is critical to the success of helping people make progress.

It was reported they had a good relationship with Torbay Council and the project had enabled them to provide services more flexibly. Experience of dealing with funding programmes such as the European Social Fund and using the “YETI” project monitoring software have enabled Eat That Frog and I Can Do That to manage the administrative issues and demands well.

The project has undertaken some “spot purchasing” of specialist services to supplement in house expertise where required, such as talking therapies provided by Devon Clinic CIC.

The impact of the project on the lives and outlook of participants is typically profound. Many will not have known what help was available to them and how issues which can be overwhelming, can be dealt with professionally with the right help, advice and support.

By stabilising and turning around the lives of many Torbay residents, the project is delivering significant impacts that should lead to people leading a more positive life, with a better outlook and improved mental health. In turn, this helps people gain more control over the lives and provides a more positive and sustainable way forward.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Value for money

Taking the overall UKSPF grant figure, and two of the main indicators to develop a basic unit cost, we see that the average cost of engaging an economically inactive resident onto the project is £648 (target of 375 people, with total UKSPF investment of £242,837.)

This is quite a low cost figure bearing in mind the level of support available over a period of up to six months and we believe represents good value for money.

The target of 165 people receiving support to gain employment equates to a unit cost of £1,471 per person moving into employment. Whilst it is looking unlikely that target figure will be achieved, this compares favourably to the £2,000 to £4,000 unit cost has been a typical range for employability projects we have evaluated whose target beneficiaries had very similar issues to those presented to Focus Forward (based on the cost per person engaged on a supported employment programme).

### Future delivery considerations

The project leads mentioned that Torbay needs more basic skills provision for local people. Whilst some is available in an online format, many of their clients prefer “in person” training and support. Furthermore, some of the available basic skills training is not accredited so employers tend not to recognise this. An improvement suggested would be to provide more outreach (“in the community”) basic skills training opportunities.

The flexibility to provide some longer-term support for some participants would also be welcomed, and an opportunity to take into account outcomes (such as people moving into employment) that may only be realised post-funding timeframe.

Another area for improvement would be seeking to develop a stronger pipeline of referrals from Job Centres, although this is a challenge for people who are economically inactive as they are typically not engaging with Job Centres.



## 2.4 GREEN SKILLS

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### Project Summary

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Project Name	Focus Forward
Lead Partner(s)	South Devon College
UK SPF LOT	Lot 3, E39: Green Skills
UK SPF Funding	£100,000
Timescale	12 months (2024-25)

The Green Skills project, led and delivered by South Devon College Forward has aimed to provide technical skills and knowledge-based training to help equip the construction sector with a workforce more enabled to make effective use of green technologies.

UKSPF provided the College with the opportunity and flexibility to work collaboratively with local employers, to co-design course material to meet their specific needs and in line with current and projected opportunities and, more widely, to help Torbay transition to a lower carbon energy future.

It is reported that there are some 1,500 construction workers locally but the pipeline of housing and regeneration projects over the next 10 years will require an estimated 4,500 construction workers. With an ageing workforce, the sector also needs to recruit younger talent to replace them. This clearly is a major opportunity for job creation but will require the requisite skillsets to take advantage of this demand.

The course offered flexible workshops (part-time, full-time or over multiple days) focusing upon skills for: Solar PV; Solar Thermal; Air source heat pumps; Ground source heat pumps; and installation of EV charging points.

Over recent years, the College has, with the benefit of a range of external project funding, made significant capital investment into the green construction sector, a strategic investment that fully underpins the proposed “Torbay Green Skills” programme and links to the Green Energy Centre due to open in April 2025. The project, with “short/sharp employer-informed” interventions, added value to apprenticeship programmes.

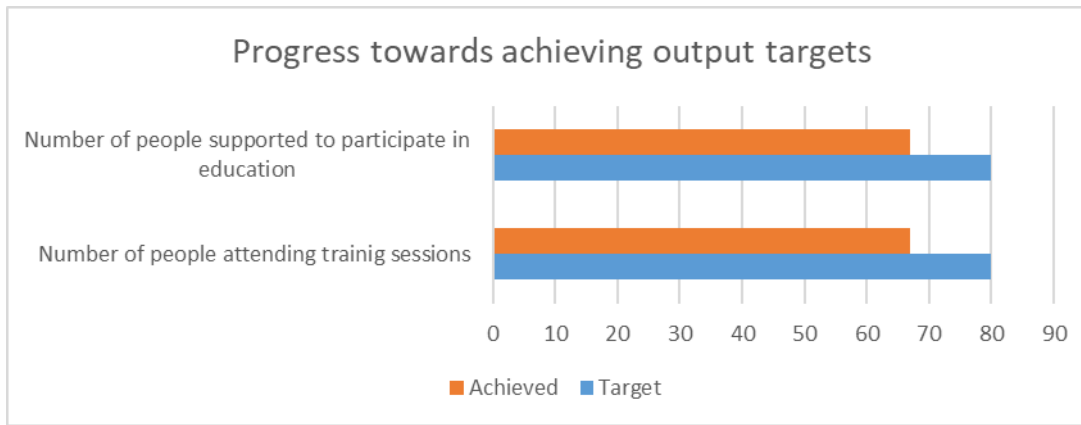
Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Progress

Table 7: Green Skills - outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)

Outputs	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of people attending training sessions	80	67	-13	84%
Number of people supported to participate in education	80	67	-13	84%

Figure 7: Green Skills - outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)



By the end of Quarter 3, there has been very strong progress toward achieving output targets.

67 people have engaged with the scheme and accessed training and participated in education. This is 84% of the overall project’s targets. Based on original quarterly forecasts, the College is ahead of its projections.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, for the construction sector, 91% of participants have been male with 9% female, although all but one has been in the 16-49 age group.

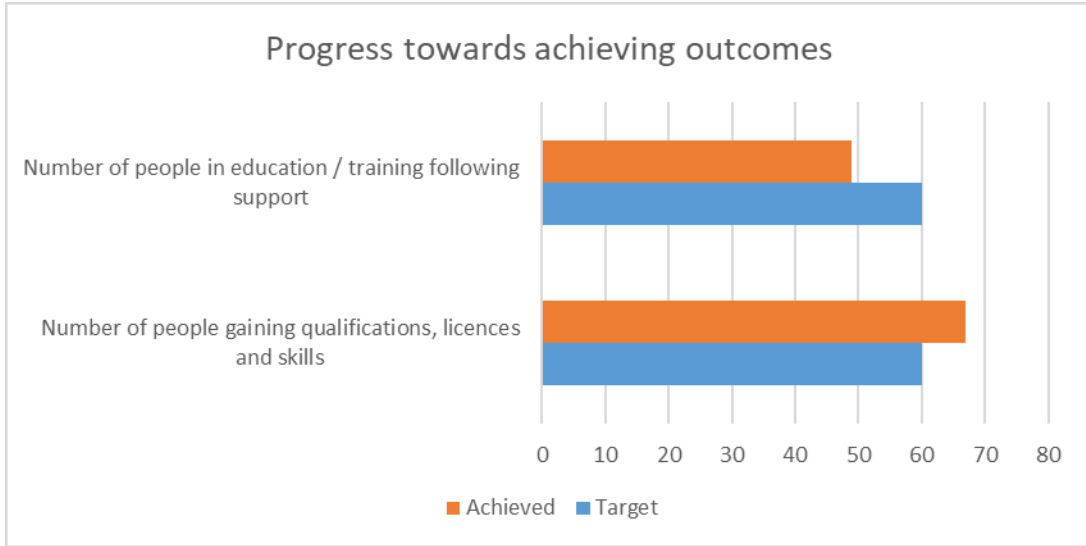
The progress report highlights that recruitment has been successful, with strong interested in and demand for the programme.

Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

**Table 8: Green Skills – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outcomes	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills	60	67	7	112%
Number of people in education / training following support	60	49	-11	82%

**Figure 8: Green Skills – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



Regarding outcomes, the project has already exceeded its target for people gaining qualifications, licenses and skills. It would appear that all 67 participants have achieved this outcome, compared to the planned target of 60 out of the target of 80 participants enrolled.

Furthermore, the number of participants progressing to further training is robust and is ahead of schedule, suggesting that the project is helping to support ongoing professional development.

**Perspectives**

Feedback from South Devon College staff was positive about this project, highlighting the strong demand and performance. Also, engagement with employers had been quite straightforward and construction employers were relatively clear on current and future skill requirements regarding environmental issues and opportunities.

*“The green curriculum is very nascent and we add value to apprenticeships”*

*“There is a big demand and employers seem to like the programme we deliver”*

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Features of success and impacts

This project has been developed as a response to a real and growing needs with good opportunities to upskill some local people to take advantage of existing vacancies and new jobs.

Success features are that it has involved employers in helping develop appropriate course content, benefited from strong demand, provided flexibility in its delivery and has attracted some younger people. The College also has a strength in its links with the business community and employers more generally.

### Value for money

At an average cost per head of £1,250, the UKSPF investment appears to be reasonable value for money taking into account how these skills will help local employers take advantage of growing opportunities and benefits to the wider local economy.

One comparator we are aware of, New City Trade Skills courses are priced at:

- Level 3 Air source heat pump, Level 3 (3 days for £650): the Heat Pump Systems Installer training course is designed for qualified plumbers, heating engineers, oil engineers or gas engineers who wish to install Heat Pump Systems.
- EV charging point installers course (3 days for £445): a qualification to install domestic electric vehicle charger units. It includes how to design an installation, inspect, test, commission and maintain installations. We have seen some courses costing up to £1,900.
- Solar Photovoltaics and electrical energy storage systems package (5 days at £900). £600 to £700 appears to be a typical range from others we have discovered online.

### Future delivery considerations

One challenge for the College in planning and delivering short-term funded projects, is that its curriculum plans are set in place many months before each academic year (in January for September starts). Being able to integrate shorter-term funding opportunities can take time to arrange, for example, planning for use of facilities and securing the availability of tutors. Longer term funding agreements with longer “lead-in” times would be preferred.

The College reported that an area of relative weakness has been in its ability to engage with people who are economically inactive, and their links into communities at a grassroots level. There is an opportunity to link the community-led organisations, that tend to have key strengths in engaging this cohort, with the College in addressing some skills needs for people who are economically inactive. Although take-up of provision may be more successful in “community-based” environments.



## 2.5 SECTOR PATHWAYS

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### Project Summary

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Project Name	Focus Forward
Lead Partner(s)	South Devon College
UK SPF LOT	Lot 5, E37: Sector Pathways – Skills Support Programme
UK SPF Funding	£208,719
Timescale	24 months (2024-26)

Additional investment was secured from the Torquay Towns Fund programme and Torbay Council to enhance this two-year project.

The Sector Pathways project, led and delivered by South Devon College aimed to provide a programme of skills development support for employees in economically strategic priority sectors in Torbay, tailored to business needs.

Priority sectors included:

- Microelectronics and Photonics
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Fisheries
- Construction
- Medical and Healthcare
- Creative and Digital

The approach aimed at leveraging the College’s existing relationships with employers to co-design and deliver a programme of training to specifically meet local sector needs - to deliver the qualifications, licences and skills in demand from local employers and equip employees with the very skills needed by their employers. An additional benefit of this approach was to safeguard jobs in the sector.

A common theme across all sectors was the need to attract young people to the jobs of tomorrow. Part of the engagement and co-design activity this project proposed to develop school engagement activities and then work the Devon Careers Hubs to link employers with Torbay secondary schools to develop this pipeline of the future workforce.

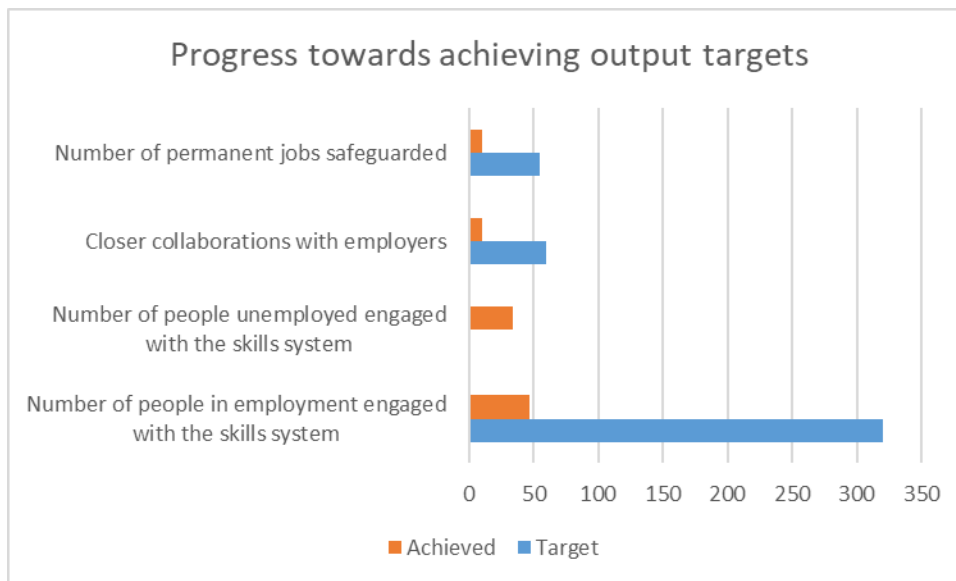
Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Progress

Table 9: Sector Pathways - outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)

Outputs	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of people in employment engaged with the skills system	320	47	-273	15%
Number of people unemployed engaged with the skills system	0	34	34	
Closer collaborations with employers	60	10	-50	17%
Number of permanent jobs safeguarded	55	10	-45	18%

Figure 9: Sector Pathways - outputs targets and achievements (at end of Q3)



By the end of Quarter 3, progress toward achieving output targets has been a challenge. A total of 81 people have participated in the skills programme. The project’s Quarter 3 progress report says the College remains confident that the remaining targets will be met, but there is some significant delivery required over the remaining timeframe (to March 2026) to achieve this.

Some of the reasons cited for output delivery being behind schedule, include:

- Health and Social Care: significant slippage in participant engagement in the sector due to problems of ill health (Covid, ‘flu and other illnesses). Also, seasonal pressures led to employers being more reluctant to release staff, but there has been a recent improvement in numbers of participants
- Fisheries: the Fisheries Sector Pathways plan has been problematic in that the focus was to be on fish processing training but a change in ownership of the business led to curtailment of the partnership with the College with training less of a priority for the new operators.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

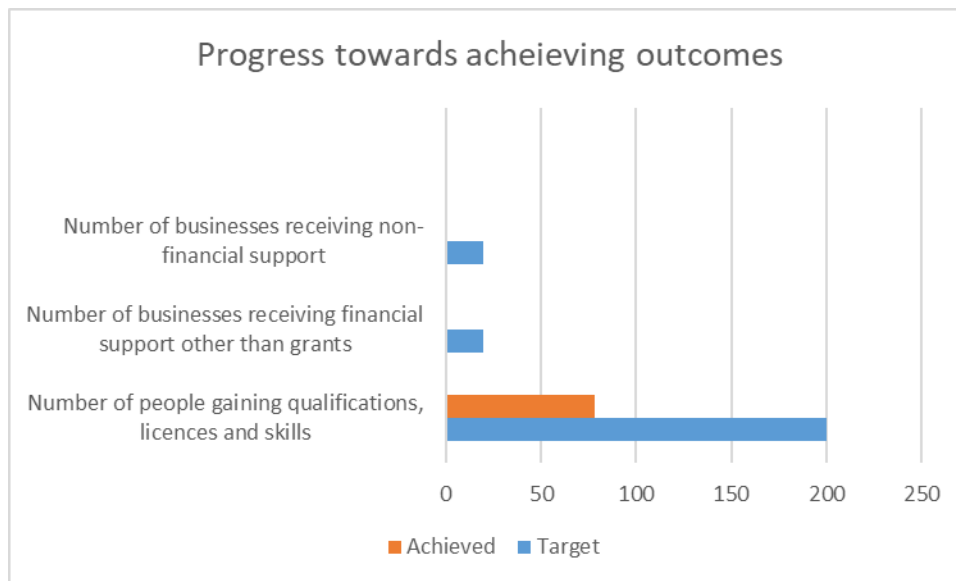
The progress report also says demand has been steady with “strong interest and demand for four out of the six pathways”. Construction and photonics are two sectors where take-up has been strong.

36% of participants were female and 86% aged 16-49.

**Table 10: Sector Pathways – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**

Outcomes	Target	Achieved	Variance	% of target
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills	200	78	-122	39%
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants	20	0	-20	0%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support	20	0	-20	0%

**Figure 10: Sector Pathways – outcome targets and achievements (at end of Q3)**



As is the case for output delivery, there is some way to go before targeted outcome are achieved.

### Perspectives

South Devon College reported this project had resulted in a mixture of successes and challenges. The successes have been with some hospitality sector courses and masterclasses (including cheffing and barista skills) and a demand for niche management training. Aspiring Managers, Coaching and Team Leading skills development have also been in demand. Positive feedback has been provided on training in Creative and Digital, Construction and Microelectronics and Photonics sectors.

Challenges have been with the Fisheries sector, as mentioned although the College is engaged in discussions with the sector to identify other needs that could be addressed, such as team leadership, mentoring and coaching.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Furthermore, for some sectors heavily reliant on zero-hours contract staff, it is a challenge to get staff training time covered as they get paid for working time only. Also, some employers are less willing to release staff (notably in the hospitality and social care sectors) for skills training as they are more reliant on staff being present in the workplace at all contracted times.

*“It is refreshing that tourism and hospitality is now included as a key sector”*

*“90% of employers we talk to want enthusiastic, driven individuals with some element of learning they can teach”*

*“There is a definite changing attitude towards work by young people, especially since Covid. They are less willing to take on “mundane” roles and put in the hard graft to work themselves up a career ladder. They also have less linear career pathways, often leading to them taking a number of jobs over their career pathways”*

*“We need to do more to promote careers available locally. At jobs fairs, trade fairs and events, parents and other stakeholders don’t seem to be aware of the high tech cluster we have in Torbay or the well paid jobs available”*

*“A trick was missed in excluding non-employees as we could have done more with people who are economically inactive”*

### Features of success and impacts

Successes have been realised where some sector specific skills and management/ leadership support has been required. This work is making an impact in helping safeguard jobs and enabling people to progress in their careers.

### Value for money

If targets are met, the unit costs equate to £650 per person engaged in skills development and approximately £1,000 per person gaining a qualification or licence. Without a reasonable comparator it is hard to judge value for money, but unit costs are below the Green Skills project.

### Future delivery considerations

Again, accommodating short-term funding opportunities not aligned to typical academic year plans can be take some time to arrange and longer-term funding agreements with longer “lead-in” times would be preferred.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

There are concerns that progress has been slow overall, with some sectors proving to be more challenging than others.

It is also unclear on any delineation between targets attributable to each of the key sectors and the level of “additionality” achieved by skills development activities over and above mainstream skill provision. Further review work could help clarify this, but for the purposes of this evaluation, some recommendations are made for future investment in sector skills work.

Whilst relationship between employability and skills service providers was reported to have improved over the last five years, it was said that they “all end up chasing the same pots of money” so there is a desire to respond to opportunities which plays to organisations’ respective strengths. With the numbers and issue of economic inactivity growing (nationally as well as locally), some thought is required by Torbay Council and partners to address this more strategically, with specialist partners working more collaboratively to offer a more wide-ranging menu of support.

# 3/ Good Practice

## 3: Good Practice

### 3.1 Introduction

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There are some lessons learned from evaluating other employability projects and programmes that may be of interest to Torbay Council. This draws from a wealth of review work of “supported employment” schemes (designed to meet the need of people with a multitude of challenges and barriers from engaging in work) and targeted youth employability initiatives.

In recent years, Chimera Consulting has evaluated 24 employability programmes that supported over 62,000 people with investment totalling £155 million. Those evaluations included interviews with:

- 225 young people (in person)
- 360 young people (surveyed)
- 232 people aged 25+ (in person)
- 267 people aged 25+ (surveyed)
- 173 strategic level representatives
- 379 delivery staff
- 124 employers.

These included programmes across the East and West Midlands, Middlesbrough, Kent, East Sussex, Essex, Berkshire, and East Anglia, including seven “Talent Match” programmes targeting 16-24 year olds (funded entirely by the National Lottery Charities Board); four building Better Opportunities programmes (funded by European Social Fund and the National Lottery Charities Board); and two YEI (Youth Employment Initiatives) funded by ESF and DWP; together with Community Renewal Fund (UKSPF precursor) and the UK Government’s City Deal.

Group-based and one-to-one, in depth, consultations across those programmes provided a rich source of information and feedback highlighting what features of employability support programmes had worked well, and reasons why.

Section 3.2 sets out some of those key features of success, specifically for programmes that targeted people with major challenges and leading quite socially isolated lifestyles, and often considered far from being “job ready”.

## 3.2 Lessons learned from other projects

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### Issues faced:

Many people faced barriers to finding or securing work, and many were not even in pro-actively looking for work. However, all needed some form of help and the majority were leading quite isolated lives and were low on self-esteem and self-confidence.

Young people were often NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training), reported bad experiences of formal education. Bullying, isolation, loneliness, friends in online communities rather than real life, mental health struggles, depression and anxiety were common. Most led quite chaotic lives with little routine and a lack of social interaction with people of a similar age.

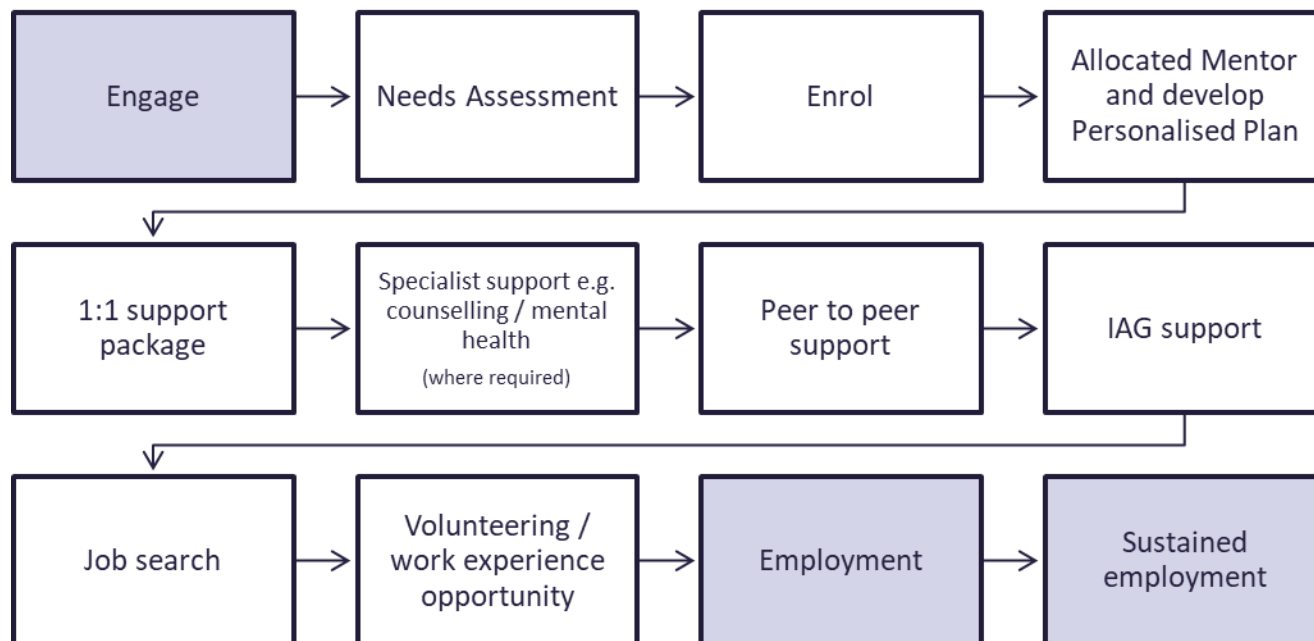
Older people tended to experience challenges such as a lack of digital skills or confidence in using IT, a lack of a support network, unemployment after a long period of time in the same job (job security), some with drugs/alcohol misuse issues, debts and financial worries, loneliness, physical and mental health challenges and more. Above all, low levels of self confidence and a lack of engagement with wider society and “touch points” with organisations / services that could support them were commonplace.

### Programme support:

Typical support models were often led by or heavily involved local voluntary and community sector organisations, and adopted service delivery models that included:

- The provision of a team of mentors (or coaches / advocates) to provide a consistent point of contact and support throughout the participant’s journey
- A support period of typically between 12 and 18 months
- Access to most / all forms of specialist support required to help meet individuals’ needs
- User panels / forums to help influence and become involved in programme delivery and oversight, plus provide opportunities for peer-to-peer support
- Job search and interview technique advice
- Support and advice on personal care issues (personal hygiene, appearance etc.)
- Access to volunteering, work placements, employer open days
- Support in securing employment and for the employers too.

**A typical employment pathway**



**Features of success:**

Note that the majority of these programmes were forged in partnerships, with a lead managing agent and engagement with other organisations. The main “success factors” observed have been distilled into a form of a “how to guide”. They include:

**1: Set up – Partnership Team**

- Invite key stakeholders from VCS, public and commercial sectors
- Think about a small strategic core and wider delivery team
- Agree objectives, ethos and obtain commitment
- Active team building
- Play to respective organisational strengths / complementarity

**2: Programme design – involvement of users (more relevant for youth based support)**

- User input into programme design
- Involve some in service commissioning
- Create user panel and / or network of advocates
- Allow for an ongoing feedback mechanism
- Good marketing campaign to raise awareness

**3: Allocated Mentor (probably the most important feature of success)**

- It takes time to build rapport, trust and nurture relationship with participants
- Consistent point of contact on the journey to employment – essential
- Hand holding / guide and provision of assurance and encouragement
- Flexibility to varying needs and emergencies
- Understand some people will need more time than others

**4: Person centred support and personalised action plan**

- Sit down and listen to them in a place they feel comfortable to meet
- Get to know the person – their issues, challenges, hopes, ambitions
- Provide realistic advice
- Develop a personalised action plan

**5: Address the basics**

- Build self-esteem and self confidence
- Encourage group activity to help address social isolation
- Fix the fundamentals and points of crisis (debts, housing, substance misuse) to get them to a place where they are more minded to focus on job search and progression
- Deep seated habits, attitudes and behaviours take time to change

**6: Full service offer**

- Range of partners to provide full service package
- Framework or spot purchasing to address specific gaps
- Full cost recovery principles
- Clear referral routes between partners
- Good communication
- Links to non-active partners for wider referral opportunities
- Well resourced

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### 7: Employer engagement

- Pro-active relationships building – especially locally owned businesses
- Seek a wide range of opportunities to encourage exposure to different workplaces and environments
- Work with “the willing” in the business community, but develop relationships with others to advocate providing opportunities for people who have had more challenges than “ideal candidates”
- Support employers with transition of new recruits into the workplace (in-work support)

### 8: Marketing – Spread The Message

- Promotional event and campaign pre-launch
- Use of social media and traditional media
- Reach out to all organisations that have exposure to potential beneficiaries
- Use case studies to promote the programmes.

# 4/ Conclusions and Recommendations

## 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

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Reflecting on the overall evaluation research findings, we believe that the Torbay UKSPF People and Skills programme is delivering a number of successes.

It is a challenge to give an entirely full assessment of progress as the true outturn results will not be known until April 2025, so we are making a judgement on what we know at Quarter 3 and drawing upon feedback from consultations with each of the five projects.

The People and Skills projects that have been funded through UKSPF funding have covered a wide agenda and range of issues regarding the skills and employability issues for some Torbay residents. Also, in meeting some business needs with skills development support, although there have been some challenges to this, as noted in the Sector Pathways review, for example: issues of employers being reticent to release staff for training, a change in ownership and priorities (for the Fisheries sector support), and some lack of clarity on specific business skills needs.

Some commented that they thought the UKSPF programme as a whole has tried to do too much with the limited amount of resource available, and this issue was flagged up in the UKSPF Evaluation report (Buckland Associates Ltd.) from autumn 2024.

It presents a challenge to Torbay Council as to where best to focus resources, as the nature of the local economy and labour market provides a wide-ranging spectrum of needs and issues to address.

For illustration, the local economy has several businesses requiring high level skills and the Council, understandably, would want to see these businesses succeed and flourish within the Torbay area, and recruit more people from the local talent pool. There are skills needs whereby targeted interventions can play an important role in nurturing these businesses and opportunities for jobs and economic growth. However, Torbay also has a large proportion of its workforce engaged in lower paid occupations and a reliance on sectors such as tourism and hospitality, which still form a central part of the local economy.

**Note:** key features of the local economy and labour market are set out on Pages 58-59. From this and from feedback gathered during the consultations for this evaluation study, it provides some context as to where future “employability and skills” related funding could be best targeted.

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We also believe some of the UKSPF funded projects, whilst delivering some excellent work, are “scratching the surface” of what could be achieved. For example, the needs around support for developing digital literacy and skills, basic skills and the more intensive support required to help people experiencing real challenges in their lives are much larger than UKSPF can address within a 12-month programme on current resource levels.

Economic inactivity rates are high, as they are across the country. Almost 4,000 people who are “economically inactive” are reported as wanting to work. With a sharper focus on this cohort, there may be more even more who, if provided with the right support and encouragement, could contribute the local economy.

### Summary:

Below are the main conclusions from the review and evaluation process, grouped into key issues:

**1/ Meeting local needs:** The UKSPF People and Skills projects are addressing some of the main barriers preventing local people engaging with the local labour market. They are also addressing some of the skills gaps that employers need to help them flourish and are in turn, supporting the development of the local economy. Whilst acknowledging these projects are not being delivered in isolation, and form part of a wider portfolio of labour market supply activity across Torbay, they have demonstrated that demands for some of these services are more widespread.

The UKSPF investment is supporting the employment and skills agenda, helping address three broad categories of need:

- **Pre-employment support** – more intensive and personalised packages of support to help address barriers to become more “job ready”. Many of these people are in a state of “crisis” (housing, debt, health-related issues) and need help to stabilise their position before they are ready to move forward with searching for and securing employment.
- **Helping the economically inactive into work**, by assisting those who want and can move into employment with some tailored advice and support and access to developing basic and digital skills.
- **Skills development for employees** to help career progression, increase pay, and meet employers’ skills needs.

Linked with the adjacent business support Torbay UKSPF programme, the People and Skills projects have played an important role in progressing positive outcomes.

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**2/ Project awareness:** All delivery partners have an established track record and have raised awareness of their UKSPF projects using a mix of promotional materials, social media campaigns, and utilising contacts. Referrals came from a number of sources, although it was noted that some projects struggled to achieve many referrals from Job Centres.

**3/ Project management and administration:** Feedback from project leads was consistently positive with regard to their relationship with Torbay Council and the level of support and contact they had enjoyed from inception stage through to ongoing delivery. Those that had prior experience of other funding regimes (such as European Social Fund) already had good monitoring and admin systems in place and found UKSPF requirements to be more commensurate and manageable. Retrospective grant drawdown is more of a challenge for smaller organisations with respect to their cashflow position and an issue to consider for future funding packages.

**4/ Targets and timeframe:** Quarter 3 progress reports show that a number of output and outcome targets may appear to be too much of a challenge to achieve by the end of March 2025. There has been good progress on a number of targets, however one of the main challenges has been the short timeframe for project delivery. A 12-month funding agreement is very limiting for a new project to mobilise, to be promoted, to recruit or deploy staff and then implement the package of services and activities.

It may be that some of the targets set were too ambitious but a more informed view on this requires the full outturn figures to be analysed in April.

**5/ Impacts and features of success:** The UKSPF investments have made quite life-changing impacts for many people. This has ranged from people being able to confidently use computers to search and apply for jobs online for the first time; people with severe mental health challenges getting support and seeing their self-confidence grow and outlook become much more positive; people in financial difficulties getting help to manage their situation and engage with support to move them towards and into work; and for people in work developing their skills to progress up the career ladder or acquire new skillsets

Features of success have included:

- the provision of person-centred support and advice services in welcoming environments;
- the opportunity to mix with others and develop confidence by reducing isolation;
- the acquisition of new skills and access to new opportunities.

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One essential feature is the personality and character of the frontline support staff who engage with project participants. A friendly, sympathetic and professional approach has been especially important for people who have been leading quite isolated lives and who have had a multitude of barriers and challenges requiring attention.

**6/ Value for money:** Across the projects, based upon targets, value for money has been reasonable. Skills development costs can range dramatically depending on the hours of learning time that tutors are required for.

Support for individuals with more challenging needs, NEETs and people who are far from being “job ready” require more intensive and complex support, so unit costs tend to be higher. Other projects that have delivered support, typically for a 12 to 18 month period depending on their needs and ability to make progress, have cost in the range of £1,900 to £10,000 per participant although the latter figure was a special case and outlier. Most have been in the range of £2,000 to £3,000 per person engaged, and £2,500 has been an average unit cost from 24 employability projects we have evaluated. These have all had strong VCS sector involvement and, often, project leadership.

For young people, £6,600 has been an average unit cost per person successfully progressed into employment.

**7/ Employer engagement:** This is rather piecemeal and could be enhanced. South Devon College and its Business Solutions Team have a series of contacts with employers, as do some of the other UKSPF People and Skills partners, but there is an opportunity to do more to link “supply side” support packages through to work opportunities with more defined pathways into employment. Moreover, for those moving into employment, some resource to help facilitate and ensure they “settle” into their role, supporting both the participant and the employer, would be positive. Aiding this transition phase has been vital in some other employability schemes, rather than assuming once someone “exits” a support programme because they secured a job, that there is no longer a need for the project to keep a track of their needs.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

### Headline notes on the local economy and labour market

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Drawing upon information from the latest NOMIS labour market profile, Torbay Council's "Turning the tide on poverty – data" report, and the Council's Economic Strategy (Evidence Base 2022), some of the headline figures and trends, with comparisons to averages for Great Britain, are:

#### Population and qualifications:

- Working age: recent decrease from 57.3% to 56.8% (GB = 62.9%)
- For people with no qualifications, for Level 1 and Level 2, Torbay outperforms GB averages
- At Level 3 (equivalent of A Levels) and Level 4 (Higher Education certificate level and apprenticeship, first year degree and above) Torbay is behind national averages. At Level 3, Torbay is 61.2% compared to 67.8% nationally. At Level 4, Torbay is 35% compared to 47.3% nationally
- 4.4% of 16-17 year olds are NEET (GB = 5.5%).

#### Economic Inactivity:

- Almost a quarter (23.1%) of 16-64 year olds are economically inactive (GB= 21.6%)
- 43% of these are inactive due to being "long term sick" (GB = 28.2%), far higher than the national average
- 22.4% (or 3,900 Torbay residents of working age) say they want a job.

#### Key occupational groups and earnings:

- Occupations where more people work in Torbay compared to national averages:
  - Accommodation and food service activities, 16.3% (GB = 8%)
  - Human health and social work, 26.5% (GB = 13.9%)
  - Wholesale and retail trade / repair of vehicles, 14.3% (GB = 13.7%)
  - Education, 9.2% (GB = 8.6%)
  - Arts, entertainment and recreation, 3.1% (GB = 2.6%)
- Key commercial sectors include tourism and hospitality, retail, construction, fishing and processing, photonics and micro-electronics, and increasingly, digital and creative industries.
- Part-time jobs account for approximately 4 in every 10 jobs locally compared to 3 in 10 nationally
- Full time jobs account for 6 in 10 employee jobs locally, whereas almost 7 in 10 jobs nationally are full-time
- Earnings for full-time workers are 83% of national average.

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### **Businesses and Gross Value Added:**

- GVA output per head of £17,233 (in 2022) – lower than Devon, South West regional and GB national averages
- Growth in micro-enterprises and strong presence of micro and small enterprises in Torbay
- Slight increase in medium and large enterprises over the last 5 years
- 45 fast growing business employing 2,680 people, mainly in manufacturing and engineering, and other business and professional services for businesses, mostly linked to eHealth and preventive care sectors.

### **Deprivation:**

- Torbay ranks 38<sup>th</sup> most deprived community (at local authority level) out of 151 in England.

## 4.2 Recommendations

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### Introduction:

Taking into account the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the following recommendations are intended as key consideration points to help guide future “employability and skills” programmes in Torbay. In broad terms, there are a range of needs across the “employment support spectrum” that the UKSPF People and Skills programme has targeted:

- People with more pronounced challenges and barriers who are quite a long way from being “job ready”. This includes support for young people with alternative provision, and for people who are aged 25 and over
- People who are of working age, economically inactive, but could work given the right support
- People who are in work seeking to develop their skills, to help progress their careers, and to help meet employers’ needs where there are generic and sector specific skills required to help them develop further.

### Targeting:

#### Recommendation 1: Pre-Employment support for adults (25+) and economically inactive

Adults who are out of work, experiencing points of crisis and often major barriers to being in a position of job readiness, would benefit from a personalised and intensive package of support. Torbay has benefited from some strong expertise in this field and the VCSE sector typically provides flexibility and the capabilities to assist people with these issues and are well placed to engage at a local community level. This approach can also include support for people who are economically inactive by providing the right advice, incentives and support to help them take advantage of some employment opportunities

#### Recommendation 2: Support for young people

For young people who are NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training), who have special educational needs and/or who are quite socially isolated, some form of alternative support provision can be beneficial. There are several young people leading relatively chaotic lives without much of a routine. A more tailored mentor-based support system is needed to help them re-engage in positive activities and lead more fulfilling lives. There has been some excellent work in Torbay to help address these needs and more could be done. This should be more closely linked to a programme of raising awareness of local career opportunities and more defined pathways to employment opportunities.

**Recommendation 3: Digital literacy and basic skills**

There is a strong demand for more support to help with digital literacy, especially for the older working age cohort. Delivering this in welcoming, community-based learning environments is an opportunity that could be developed and rolled out more widely across Torbay. There is also a request for more community based basic skills learning provision.

**Recommendation 4: Digital literacy and basic skills**

There is a strong demand for more support to help with digital literacy, especially for the older working age cohort. Delivering this in welcoming, community-based learning environments is an opportunity that could be developed and rolled out more widely across Torbay. There is also a request for more community based basic skills learning provision.

**Recommendation 5: Workplace skills**

For workers looking to progress their careers, there is some demand for development of management and leadership skills. Not only does this help the individual move into more senior positions and earn more, but also helps the employer with a better equipped workforce and opens up opportunities for others to move into the workplace into the vacated job roles.

**Process:**

**Recommendation 6: Longer delivery timescales**

Adults who are out of work, experiencing points of crisis and often major barriers to being in a position of job readiness, would benefit from a personalised and intensive package of support. Torbay has benefited from some strong expertise in this field and the VCSE sector typically provides flexibility and the capabilities to assist people with these issues and are well placed to engage at a local community level. This approach can also include support for people who are economically inactive by providing the right advice, incentives and support to help them take advantage of some employment opportunities.

**Recommendation 7: Employer engagement**

An effective employability model for Torbay would benefit from deeper relationship with employers, to identify real work opportunities and routes into the workplace for local people supported through the “supply side” packages listed above. There are some good links in place, but more work is needed to widen and develop good relationships with local employers. Support to help people transition into work (to help the individual and the employer) with an “in-work” mentor or advocate to provide assistance.

**Recommendation 8: Partnership**

The employability and skills needs of Torbay cannot be addressed solely by the Economic Development resources available to Torbay Council. It was clear from reviewing the projects supporting people with major barriers (Focus Forward, Sound Futures and Digital Skills) that many participants have wider health and education related issues. Their needs, together with the support and funding available, cuts across a variety of service areas (housing, health, education, social services and more) and a cross-partner response to the addressing these issues would be useful.

Furthermore, DWP through its Job Centres and array of service provision, plays a key role in this agenda. It is recommended that a high level summit meeting is convened involving senior leadership across the relevant Torbay Council services together with DWP and NHS to discuss an appropriate strategy to address the employability agenda for the longer term.

## Evaluation of Torbay UK Shared Prosperity Fund People and Skills Programme

Finally, it is worth noting that there are models that have been adopted elsewhere that merit some consideration. The social impact investment model is one whereby local partners collaborate to devise solutions to address an issue, set clearly defined outcomes to be delivered, and work with a Commissioner-Investor model to procure and finance the support package. The risk sits with the investor if outcomes are not achieved, but there may be philanthropic investor opportunities that can be harnessed alongside Torbay Council and other public sources of ongoing investment.

See more details:

[Welcome to our 2024 Impact Report | Better Society Capital](#)



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