

**Meeting:** Cabinet **Date:** 13 February 2024

**Wards affected:** All except Churston with Galmpton and Collaton St Mary

**Report Title:** Award of contract for subsidised bus services

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Cllr Adam Billings; Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Culture & Events and Parking; adam.billings@torbay.gov.uk

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

---

## 1. Purpose of Report

---

- 1.1 This report makes recommendation on the Bus Services which should be supported by the Council over the period April 2024 – March 2032 following the conclusion of a recent procurement exercise. The report confirms the work to date in considering the options and makes the recommendations on which services to support and associated budget requirements.
- 1.2 The current, temporary, contract for subsidised bus services across Torbay expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. A procurement exercise has been carried out for each of the currently supported bus services.
- 1.2 The outcome will be to provide a secure and stable bus network for residents and businesses of Torbay, as well as visitors to the area, that is accessible to all and increases the opportunities to travel, and choice of mode for how to travel.
- 1.3 This report makes a recommendation on the contract award for each service.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

---

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help to deliver the ambitions of Torbay, its residents to thrive, turning the tide on poverty and tackling inequalities; where the community will have high access to education, employment and other facilities. The proposals also help play our part in reducing carbon emissions.
- 2.2 Running a procurement process for the continued financial support of the bus services allows those in the community who are reliant upon them to avoid becoming isolated, but a competitive procurement exercise with a longer-term contract commitment also supports the opportunity for investment in those services with longer operating times, better vehicles, and addressing other priorities.
- 2.3 Since March 2020, the bus network in Torbay and nationally has seen a significant reduction in passenger numbers. In Torbay this was a drop from 7.7m journeys in 2018/19 to 2.7m in 2020/21. There has been some recent recovery at 74%, up to 5.7m in 2023/24, which is a little below the recovery rate nationally (78%) but above the South West average (73%). Bus services have been supported by Government directly, and with grants to councils during this period.
- 2.4 To maintain accessibility for residents to key destinations and facilities, support the economy and to avoid members of the community becoming isolated, the Council has financially supported a total of 10 services since March 2020 and continues to do so with agreements in place until March 2024. Any further continuation of the funding needs to be considered through a full and appropriate procurement process, ensuring the Council can achieve best value for money. There is no indication that any of the services have returned to commercial viability and indeed many were at risk before March 2020.
- 2.5 Government published the National Bus Strategy in 2020 (Bus Back Better) setting out a goal “to get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic. Then we want to increase patronage and raise buses’ mode share. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for far more people.” To achieve this the investment and longer-term commitment is needed.
- 2.6 Alongside the millions of journeys made by bus each year in Torbay, it is important to recognise that over 23% of households in Torbay do not have access to a private vehicle, that almost 24% of residents have a disability that can affect their ability to travel, and the population above 65 years (those entitled to a concessionary bus pass) is well above the national average. All these factors contribute to the opportunity to have a successful, growing, and effective public transport network, but also highlight the importance of retaining and enhancing the service that is provided.
- 2.7 Based on the Equality Impact Assessment contained within this report, it is clear that the removal of subsidised bus routes is likely to lead to reduced access to key services and adverse social and financial implications for several protected characteristic groups. In the Torbay context, removal of all subsidised bus routes, could lead to social isolation for older

persons young and people with disabilities in particular. Women and girls are also likely to be negatively impacted if routes were suspended. Given that a large proportion of Torbay's population fall into one or more of these protected characteristic groups, the impact is likely to be felt by a large percentage of Torbay's population.

### 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

---

1. That Cabinet include in their final budget proposals to Council an increase in the budget available by £70,000 per annum.
2. On that basis that (1) above is approved by Full Council, that the preferred supplier for each lot (1 to 9) be awarded a contract for the provision of bus services covered by those lots for a fixed term of 8 years beginning April 2024 (as set out at exempt appendix).
3. That the grant funding awarded to the Council for the Bus Service Improvement Plan is allocated to these contracts.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Exempt - Preferred Contractor and Tender Details

### **Background Documents**

- National Bus Strategy  
*[www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better)*
- Local Transport Plan  
*[www.torbay.gov.uk/local-transport-plan](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/local-transport-plan)*
- Enhanced Bus Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan  
*[www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/bus-network-improvements)*

### 1. Introduction

---

- 1.1 Local transport authorities have a statutory duty to secure the provision of appropriate services to meet public transport requirements. In practice this means that where it is socially necessary to have a bus service, but the bus operators will not run a bus commercially, local authorities step in and subsidise a bus service or part of a bus service. Transport Act 1985, Section 63(1)(a), explains that local transport authorities must: "... secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose." This principle applied to unitary authorities as Local Transport Authorities.
- 1.2 In order to support a decision about the continued funding of these services, an evidence report was commissioned to identify the need. It firstly identified that most passengers across all supported bus services throughout Torbay over a five-year period between 2016-2021 were concessionary travel card holders. The average percentage breakdown of concessionary passengers across all routes is 89%. This shows a high dependency on the services by the elderly and disabled persons within the community.
- 1.3 In part that domination can be explained by the service operation timings. Most of the routes operate between 9:30am and 4:00pm meaning that they are not well suited to supporting people to travel to work or schools and are there to serve the most socially necessary aspects. This means that there could be an additional market available to help grow the services if they were to operate extended hours of service.
- 1.4 The study analysed levels of accessibility to the three main town centres in Torbay: Torquay, Paignton and Brixham. It tested three scenarios based on current provision at the time, partial service withdrawal, and entire service withdrawal. The analysis demonstrated that Brixham would be most affected by both the 'Worst-case Scenario' and by the 'Intermediate Scenario' with Higher Brixham experiencing the biggest change in accessibility. Access to Paignton and Torquay town centres is largely unchanged in the 'Intermediate scenario' compared to the 'Base Scenario'.
- 1.5 Following on from this, a multi-criteria assessment (MCAF) of the current supported services in Torbay was developed to measure the need for them, taking account of cost to the Council, usage, accessibility and population affected by their withdrawal, with the value of each service ranked. This found that each service was necessary.
- 1.6 The MCAF found that Brixham town circular services 15 and 16 scored highest for overall value whilst services 61 (Livermead – St Lukes Road) and 65 (Torquay The Willows – Town Centre) scored lowest.

- 1.7 Since undertaking the study, although Torbay Council have not sought to fund direct replacements, some of the commercial services have been reduced either in frequency or routing.
- 1.8 The routes, generally, offer connections from the residential areas of Torbay into the Town Centres. That provides key links to facilities but also onward connections by other bus or rail services. Some also have specific connections to supermarkets and leisure facilities.
- 1.9 These services have been predominantly used by concessionary older and disabled persons, providing critical links to ensure accessibility for those communities served. The services have typically operated with minibuses that do not in every case have step free access and do not often support wheelchairs.
- 1.10 These accessibility points need to be addressed to ensure a fit for purpose and accessible to all bus network for those who need to rely on it and those who chose to travel by bus.

## 2. Options under consideration

---

- 2.1 There is a choice whether to support none, some, or all the existing supported services, and whether to seek to include a replacement to any lost service provision either with a like for like or new, alternative services.
- 2.2 The need has been highlighted for all the existing supported services.
- 2.3 Where parts of a route are altered or the frequency of the service is reduced, this will need further review.

## 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

---

- 3.1 There is an existing base budget of £150,000 for bus subsidy provision. This can be supplemented with one off grant funds and developer contributions.
- 3.2 This level of funding is insufficient to cover the costs of each contract, assuming that there is no additional Government funding to sustain these services.
- 3.3 The tender responses only required year 1 costs to be provided but with an expectation of subsidy reduction throughout the contract. It is expected that the cost of services will be reduced over the contract period, especially after year 2 or 3, as typically bus services take around this time to establish themselves and for any marketing and new investments to attract additional users. By attracting new passengers the income from ticket sales will offset the need for subsidy with an overarching aim being to reestablish a commercial bus network by the end of the contract period.
- 3.4 In order to meet the costs of the contract through to Autumn 2028, an increase in the base budget of £70,000 (to £220,000) will be necessary as well as a commitment to support any underspends to be held in reserve for future years. The need to hold funding in reserve is because of needing to spend grant funding and developer contributions as a priority.

- 3.5 The contracts will continue beyond Autumn 2028 but with expected year on year cost reductions, and an opportunity to review services where targeted improvements are not generating expected passenger growth, it is considered appropriate to reconsider the budget during 2027/28 to determine ongoing support.
- 3.6 As noted above, a high number of concessionary pass holders rely on the use of the supported services. This means that these services are somewhat equally dependent on the income from the Council as reimbursement for those journeys that are free at the point of use for the passenger. The Council will be required to reimburse the operators for any concessionary travel journeys in addition to the subsidy payments.
- 3.7 Whilst concessionary reimbursement should not be used as a subsidy for services, it is critical in the overall financial case and our position on reimbursement will affect ongoing subsidy costs.
- 3.8 Recently Government has announced £403k for Torbay in each of this and next financial years for Bus Service Improvements. This funding is for existing and future growth of services, delivered through the Enhanced Partnership and focussed on the aims of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 3.9 This funding is proposed to be used to offset additional budget costs for subsidised services for the first 2 years.
- 3.10 Another option is to invest in growth opportunities that will help to generate more passengers across the network and bring those supported services back to, or closer to, commercial viability. This could be fare offers, joint ticketing, or other further enhancing other existing services. There is also an opportunity to invest in infrastructure and vehicles, but this will be a small contribution towards those costs. The latest grant fund includes the following statement:

“The Authority may use the funding to target it on the actions that they – and local operators through their Enhanced Partnership (where relevant) – believe will deliver the best overall outcomes in growing long term patronage, revenues and thus maintaining service levels, whilst maintaining essential social and economic connectivity for local communities. In some places that may involve ensuring existing connections are maintained. Elsewhere it might be achieved through increasing the frequency on key corridors or the operating hours of some services whilst reducing others; or reducing fares or introducing new local concessions to open up new markets and revenue. The funding must be spent on bus measures.”

## 4. Legal Implications

---

- 4.1 Each of the services will have an 8-year contract in place, committing to deliver the service provision and enhancements set out in the tenders.
- 4.2 The contract length is appropriate to generate the investment and improvements to services that are needed to generate passenger growth and to recover and grow further the use of buses within Torbay.

- 4.3 The Council has a statutory duty to secure the provision of appropriate services to meet public transport requirements. In practice this is to address provision where it is socially necessary to have a bus service, but the bus operators will not run a bus commercially.

## 5. Engagement and Consultation

---

- 5.1 There was consultation carried in forming the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Bus Partnership, and specifically on-board existing supported services.
- 5.2 There has been no specific consultation or engagement on whether to award these contracts.

## 6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

---

- 6.1 These contracts have been procured via an open tender process, in line with the Council's Financial Regulations and Contracts procedures for the estimated level of spend. As the estimated value of these contract is above the Regulated Procurement Threshold, the procurement process was also compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Social Value was included within the tender, with offers focusing on additional local employment.
- 6.2 The table below sets out the proposed contracts:



	<b>Service Number</b>	<b>Service Route</b>	<b>Service Changes Proposed</b>
<b>Lot 1</b>	15 and 16	Brixham Town Centre – Summercourt Way – South Bay Holiday Park – Higher Ranscombe Road	Service provision to include earlier and later journeys and removing a mid-day break. There is also the addition of a Sunday service. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 2</b>	17a	Brixham Town Centre – Furzeham – Wall Park Road – Halfway House	Service provision to align to the Monday-Saturday 17 route and offering more journeys throughout the day.
<b>Lot 3</b>	25	Morrisons – Paignton Town Centre – Paignton Harbour – Youngs Park	Service provision includes a change to the route to introduce new stops on Esplanade Road (not served since closure of Torbay Road), Marine Drive, and Manor Road, connecting those communities to Paignton Town Centre, Clennon Valley, and Morrisons. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 4</b>	60	Paignton Town Centre – Shorton – Preston – Ocombe Farm	Service provision includes removal of the current mid-day break and moving to a regular service pattern. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 5</b>	61	Torquay Town Centre – St Lukes Road – Livermead	Route extended to Ocombe Farm, providing a connection from Torquay Town Centre and Harbourside. Service provision is shortened to operate 09:30-15:15, instead of 09:15-17:06, this reduces the number of journeys from seven

			to five. This service operates for 3 days a week as existing. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 6</b>	62	Torquay Harbour/Strand – Cockington – Chelston – Parkhill Road	Service provision includes earlier and later journeys and operate both Saturday's and Sunday's. The route is extended to serve Drake Avenue, Sherwell Valley Road, and Sherwell Rise South in Chelston, providing links that don't currently exist. A brand-new low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service. Note the service will no longer serve the rear of Cockington Court due to access restrictions. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 7</b>	64	Torquay Town Centre – Higher Lincombe Road – Middle Warberry Road – Lower Warberry Road	Service provision includes earlier and later journeys and removing a mid-day break. The service would also operate both Saturday's and Sunday's. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 8</b>	65	Torquay Town Centre – Babbacombe – St Marychurch – Hele – The Willows	Continuation of the existing service which operates 2 days a week. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.
<b>Lot 9</b>	108 and 109	Paignton Town Centre – Colley End Road – Great Parks – Foxhole	Service provision includes earlier and later journeys and removing a mid-day break. The service would also operate both Saturday's and Sunday's. A low floor, low emission, vehicle will be used on this service.

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

---

- 7.1 Bus services can help to address climate change, and specifically to reduce emissions, in two ways.
- 7.2 Supporting travel by bus, and other 'modal shifts', help to reduce carbon emissions, particularly those arising from the use of private vehicles often with single occupants. Transport is the second largest contributor to carbon emissions in Torbay and accounts for around a third. Whilst there are many aspects to this and lots of ways that need to come together to tackle it, supporting more people with a choice of how to travel, including by public transport, is one of those.
- 7.3 The other aspect is to reduce emissions from the buses, either with zero or low emission vehicles operating the routes. In this case the tender responses include commitments for reduced emission vehicles that will have a direct impact on tackling climate change across Torbay.
- 7.4 Not awarding the contracts or therefore operating the services, would have a negative consequence as journeys will return to private vehicles, which could cause an increase in emissions, and impact on traffic and parking capacity.

## 8. Associated Risks

---

- 8.1 If the contracts are not awarded, in February, the supported bus service network will cease (without alternative funding arrangements) after March 2024.
- 8.2 Without a full network, as considered within the evidence base, there is a risk of reduced accessibility and increased isolation within parts of the community, particularly amongst older and disabled persons.
- 8.3 There is a risk with the budget for future years, the calculations in years ahead are based on assumptions of inflation and passenger growth, alongside reimbursement rates for concessionary fares. There are a lot of factors that can change throughout the contract period and to mitigate the impacts, the contracts will be reviewed regularly both internally and with the contract providers.

## 9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

---

### Assessment Summary

Based on the below assessment, it is clear that the removal of all subsidised bus routes (Option 1) is likely to lead to reduced access to key services and adverse social and financial implications for several protected characteristic groups. In the Torbay context, removal of all subsidised bus routes, could lead to social isolation for older persons young and people with disabilities in particular. Women and girls are also likely to be negatively impacted if routes were suspended. Given that a large proportion of Torbay's population fall into one or more of these protected characteristic groups, the impact is likely to be felt by a large percentage of Torbay's population.

Whilst there is a lesser impact associated with Option 2, the removal of these services is likely to have an adverse impact on access to services, as well as social and financial impacts, if relied on by individuals with protected characteristics.

To understand these impacts further, analysis of the type of passenger regularly using or who is reliant on the subsidised services could be investigated. For example, understanding if a particular subsidised route is used by a large proportion of the elderly population, or pupils travelling to and from school, will help to understand the travel needs of these groups who would otherwise, if the services were discontinued, rely on private transport or transport funded by the Council. Similarly, if other groups who may not have access to a car, can no longer rely on the bus as an alternative mode of transport, this could have a social and financial implications for the individual, and could also impact Torbay's local economy.

With this in mind, it is therefore recommended that the savings associated with the removal of subsidised routes are weighed up with the wider economic and social impacts associated with poor access to public transport.

## Background

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will assess the following options regarding the future of Torbay's subsidised bus network:

- Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed
- Option 2: Only routes 61 and 65 are removed

Note that the recommendation made is that neither of these options are supported and, instead, all services are retained. These options were considered in order to reflect on the impact should an alternative decision be made.

Drawing on demographic data and accessibility outputs from Podaris modelling (an early-stage transport modelling tool, allowing users to import the local transport network, understand the impact of transport changes and identify any resulting accessibility issues) this EIA will assess the potential impact of the options above on each of the nine protected characteristic groups. Options 1 and 2 have been compared with Option 3: All subsidised routes are retained; the business-as-usual scenario and provides a baseline to assess the potential impact of change.

## Context

Since March 2020, the bus network in Torbay and nationally has seen a significant reduction in passenger numbers. In Torbay this was a drop from 7.7 million journeys in 2018/19 to 2.7 million in 2020/21. There has been some recent recovery at 74%, up to 5.7 million in 2023/24, which is a little below the recovery rate nationally (78%) but above the Southwest average (73%). Bus services have been supported by Government directly, and with grants to councils during this period.

As such, completing a procurement process for the continued financial support of the bus services allows those reliant upon them to avoid becoming isolated. A competitive procurement exercise with a longer-term contract commitment also supports the opportunity for investment in those services with longer operating times, better vehicles, and an improved network overall.

Alongside the millions of journeys made by bus each year in Torbay, it is important to recognise that over 23% of households in Torbay do not have access to a private vehicle, that almost 24% of residents have a disability that can affect their ability to travel, and the population above 65 years (those entitled to a concessionary bus pass) is well above the national average. All of these factors contribute to the opportunity to have a successful, growing, and effective public transport network, but also highlight the importance of retaining and enhancing the service that is provided.

Torbay Council currently supports all bus services within Torbay regarding concessionary fares at 2019/2020 rates due to the impacts of COVID-19. A total of 17 routes out of a total of 32 registered local bus services in Torbay also receive a subsidy, however for the purposes of this assessment, only the routes in

Table 1 have been assessed. This is because some of the other subsidised services are funded by other sources, only operate at specific times or are not within the scope of this report and contract award consideration.<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1 - Torbay supported bus services**

<b>Route No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Operator</b>
<b>15</b>	Brixham Town Service via Summercourt Way/Higher Ranscombe Road	Country Bus
<b>16</b>	Brixham Town Service via South Bay Holiday Park	Country Bus
<b>25</b>	Paignton Morrisons - Bus Station - Youngs Park, Goodrington	Torbay Buses
<b>60</b>	Paignton - Preston - Occombe Farm - Livermead	Torbay Buses
<b>62</b>	Torquay Meadfoot - Seafront - Cockington	Torbay Buses
<b>64</b>	Torquay Castle Circus - Middle Warberry Road	Torbay Buses
<b>108</b>	Paignton - Great Parks - Foxhole	Torbay Buses
<b>109</b>	Paignton - Great Parks - Foxhole	Torbay Buses
<b>61</b>	Brixham Town Service via Summercourt Way/Higher Ranscombe Road	TCDT
<b>65</b>	Paignton Morrisons - Bus Station - Youngs Park, Goodrington	TCDT

## Assessment Screening Tool

The following section provides evidence on each of the protected characteristic groups and inclusion groups, including demographic data, travel behaviour and patterns, and outputs from Podaris modelling. This evidence has then been used in the quality considerations section, to identify any potential impacts associated with the two options outlined above.

---

<sup>1</sup> This refers to bus service 17a which operates on Sunday's and Bank Holidays only.

## Age

When compared to the national and regional averages, Torbay has a higher-than-average population aged 65 years and over, and lower than average population of children and working-aged people. Between the last two censuses, the average age of the Torbay population increased by three years, from 46 to 49 years. Torbay has a higher average age than the Southwest in 2021 (44 years) and a higher average age than England (40 years)<sup>2</sup>. With these figures in mind, it is likely that a high proportion of Torbay's population will be reliant on buses as their primary mode of transport, particularly given that total concessionary journeys made up 32.7% of all local bus passenger journeys in England, in the financial year ending 2022<sup>3</sup>.

**Figures 1 and 2** show the percentage of the population over 65 years and under 18 years, with the subsidised bus routes overlaid, demonstrating the distribution of elderly and young in Torbay relative to the services.

There are currently 17 nursery schools and many private nurseries, 30 primary schools, 9 secondary schools and three special schools in Torbay. There are roughly 18,400 children attending Torbay's primary and secondary schools. Torbay Council currently spends in the region of £1.83m a year on home to school travel, with 900 children and young people receiving transport assistance to and from school<sup>4</sup>.

The Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust runs Torbay Hospital, as well as five community hospitals, stretching from Dawlish to Brixham. These include Totnes Community Hospital, Teignmouth Community Hospital, Newton Abbot Community Hospital, Dawlish Community Hospital and Brixham Community Hospital. These services are likely to be relied on by the elderly and young population of Torbay, more than the general population.

It is also important to acknowledge the intersectionality between age and disability. For example, approximately 16 million people in the UK, the equivalent of 24% of the population, had a disability in 2021/2022. The prevalence of disability rises with age: around 11% of children were disabled, compared with 45% of adults over State Pension age<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census\\_2021/report](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/sources/census_2021/report)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2022/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2022#:~:text=Total%20concessionary%20journeys%20\(elderly%20or,year%20ending%202020%20\(33.7%25\).](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2022/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2022#:~:text=Total%20concessionary%20journeys%20(elderly%20or,year%20ending%202020%20(33.7%25).)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/cs/school-transport-policies/sustainable-travel-strategy-for-schools/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9602/CBP-9602.pdf>

Figure 1: Percentage of Population over 65 years in Torbay

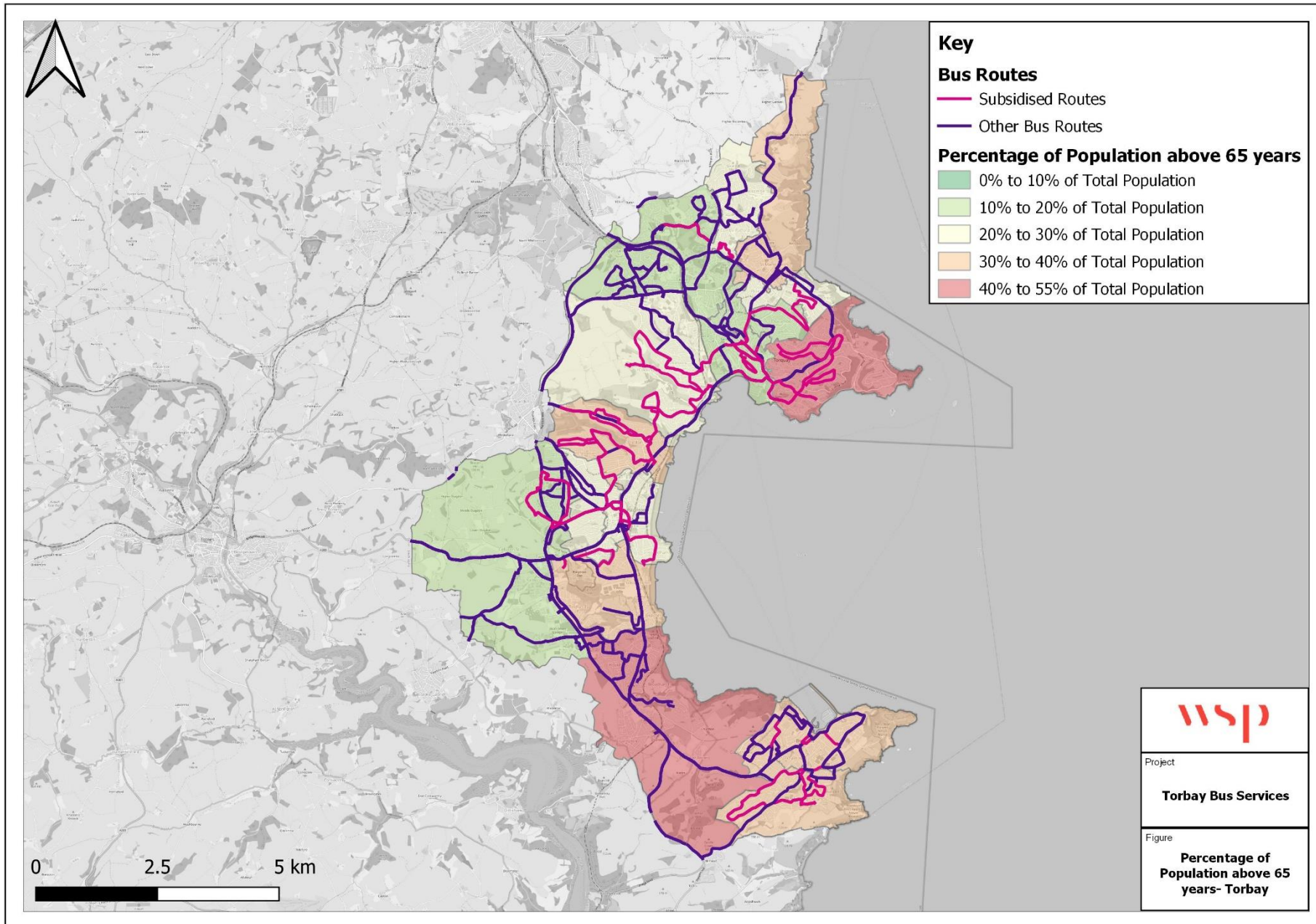
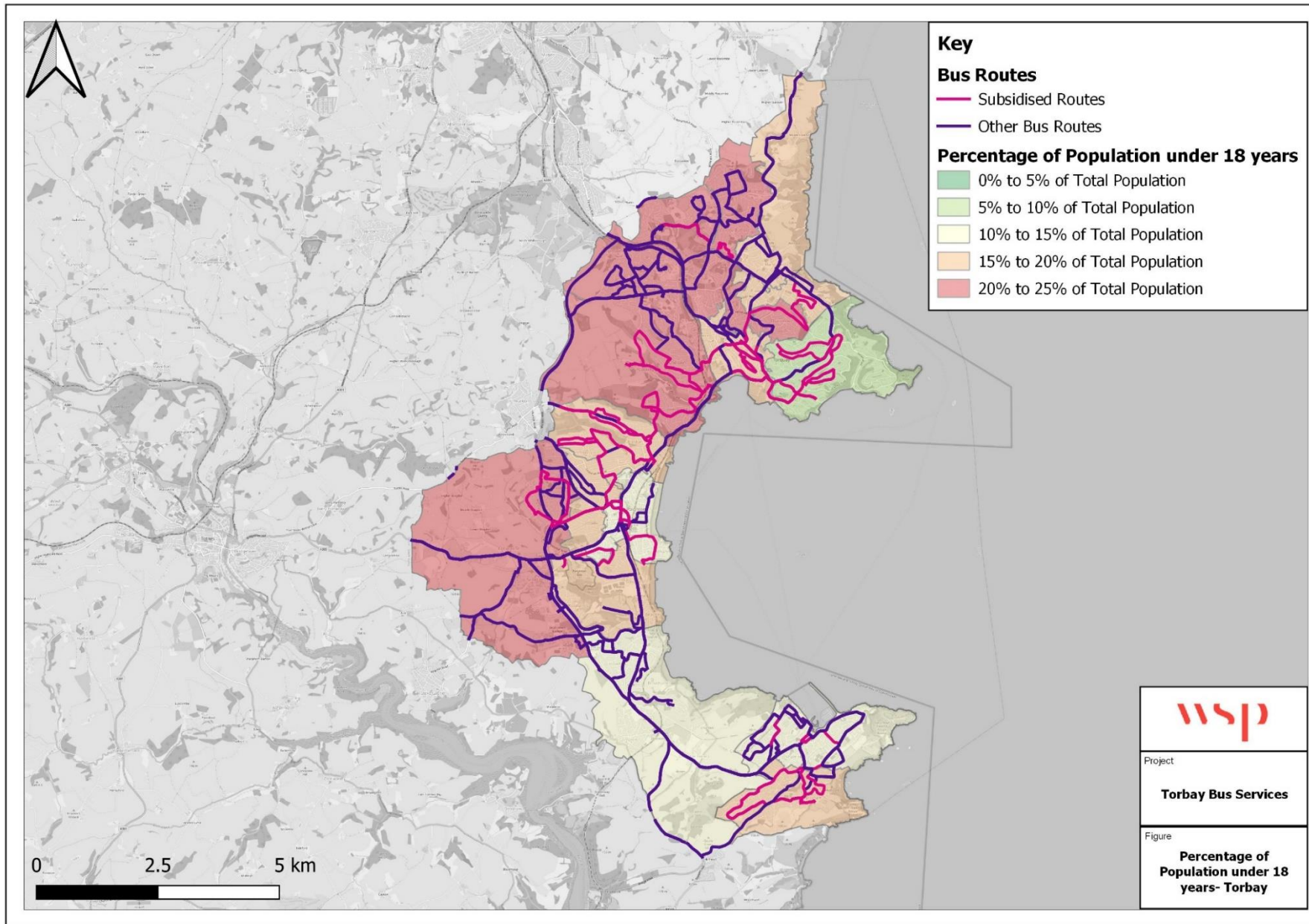




Figure 2: Percentage of Population under 18 years in Torbay



## Equality Considerations

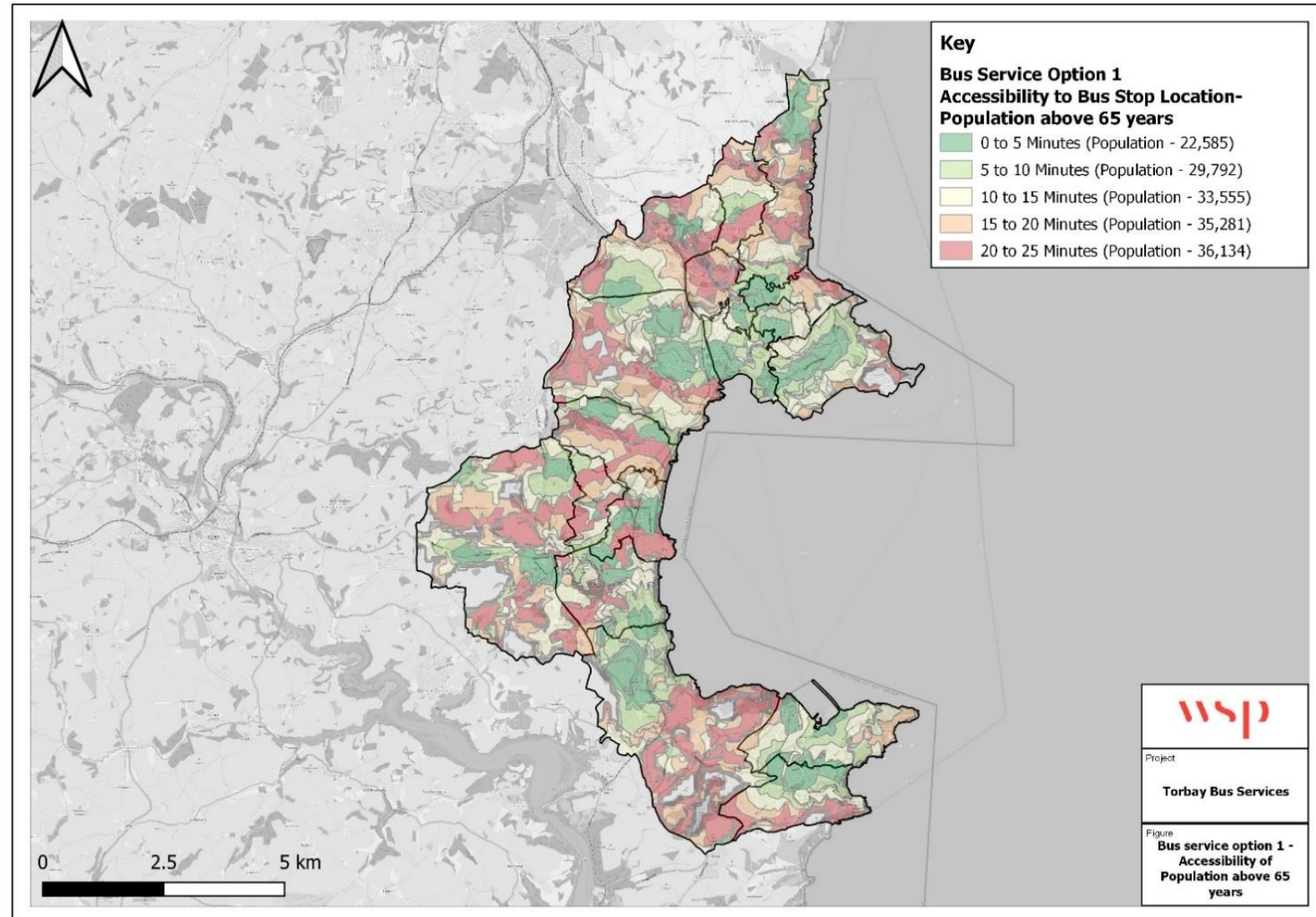
### Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed

As shown in **Figure 1**, a large proportion of Torquay (40-45%), which is served by subsidised routes, is above the age of 65. Similarly, between 30-40% of the population in the Brixham and Preston areas, are over the age of 65, areas which are also served by subsidised routes.

Although a smaller proportion of the population, between 20-30%, are over the age of 65 in the Chelston area (see **Figure 1**), there are fewer non-subsidised bus routes, therefore should all subsidised routes be removed, this could have a detrimental impact on public transport accessibility for the elderly living here.

**Figure 3** supports this, showing that the distance in minutes to a bus stop increases where the subsidised routes are removed.

**Figure 3: Option 1 - Bus Service Accessibility (Minutes) Population 65+**



**Table 2** below details the change in accessibility by population over 65 between Option 1 and Option 3 (all subsidised routes are retained), illustrating that if all subsidised routes are removed, in total 20% of the population in Torbay who are over 65 will no longer be within 5 minutes (14%) or 10 minutes of a bus stop (6%).

**Table 2: Population over 65 - Change in Access to Bus Stops (Minutes)**

	Option 1	Option 3	% Change	Equiv. Pop
0 to 5 Minutes	22585	26282	-14	3697
5 to 10 Minutes	29792	31608	-6	1816
10 to 15 Minutes	33555	34215	-2	660
15 to 20 Minutes	35281	35545	-1	264
20 to 25 Minutes	36134	36458	-1	324

It should be noted that the removal of subsidised routes has less of an impact on the elderly population who already live between 15-25 minutes from a bus stop. This is likely to reflect the distribution of the existing services and potentially more rural areas of Torbay. A similar trend can be seen for the population below 18 years as shown in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3: Population below 18 - Change in Access to Bus Stops (Minutes)**

	Option 1	Option 3	% Change	Equiv. Pop
0 to 5 Minutes	15679	17923	-13	2244
5 to 10 Minutes	20584	21568	-5	984
10 to 15 Minutes	22840	23308	-2	368
15 to 20 Minutes	23939	24055	0	115
20 to 25 Minutes	24601	24704	0	103

As shown in **Figure 2**, there is a smaller population of under 18's in Torquay, making up between 0-5% of the total population. Conversely, there is a higher proportion of under 18's in the Chelston (20-25%) and Brixham (15-20%) areas, both of which are served by subsidised routes. As outlined in their

Sustainable Travel Strategy for Schools<sup>6</sup>, Torbay Council wants to encourage an increase in pupils travelling by sustainable modes, including a 12% increase in bus passengers<sup>6</sup>.

Existing services do not start until after 9 am, meaning that they do not currently provide access to schools. However, new route proposals do increase the number of services that start before 9 am. Should the existing subsidised routes be removed, young people living in these areas may have few alternative transport options, including for travel from school.

Building on this, the Torbay Bus Assessment assessed all subsidised bus routes in Torbay for their Value for Money through a Multi Criteria Assessment Framework. The results from the assessment found that Brixham town circular services 15 and 16, both of which are subsidised, scored highest for overall value. In addition to this, route 15 serves Brixham Community Hospital and route 16 serves Compass House Medical Centre. Both routes serve Brixham Town Centre, as well as multiple schools in the area. Given the importance of these destinations to Torbay's young and elderly population, the removal of route 15 and 16 is likely to have a detrimental impact on their accessibility, which can lead to adverse social and financial impacts.

As outlined in the BSIP, bus services in the Torbay region are socially important due to the proportion of elderly residents and the topography of Torbay which creates challenges for the elderly and those with reduced mobility in accessing the commercial services on the waterfront, with much of the housing located up steep streets.

Building on this, although only 3.3% of Torbay residents travel to work via bus with the vast majority, 53.5%, travelling by car or van<sup>2</sup>, if the subsidised bus services were to be removed, those relying on these routes are likely to switch to private vehicle to access key services or not be able to gain access to work at all given the 23% of homes with no access to a private vehicle. This could add a reasonable number of trips to the Torbay network which could in turn lead to congestion and contribute to adverse air quality<sup>7</sup> and road safety impacts, issues which disproportionately impact the elderly and young.

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/cs/school-transport-policies/sustainable-travel-strategy-for-schools/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/blogpost/young-and-old-air-pollution-affects-most-vulnerable>

## Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed

Table 4 below details the change in accessibility by population over 65 between Option 2 and Option 3 (all subsidised routes are retained).

**Table 4: Population over 65 - Change in Access to Bus Stops (Minutes)**

	Option 2	Option 3	% Change	Equiv. Pop
0 to 5 Minutes	25382	26282	-3	900
5 to 10 Minutes	31580	31608	0	29
10 to 15 Minutes	34214	34215	0	1
15 to 20 Minutes	35544	35545	0	1
20 to 25 Minutes	36456	36458	0	2

The same analysis has been undertaken for the population under 18 shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Population under 18 - Change in Access to Bus Stops (Minutes)**

	Option 2	Option 3	% Change	Equiv. Pop
0 to 5 Minutes	16964	17923	-5	959
5 to 10 Minutes	21548	21568	0	20
10 to 15 Minutes	23208	23208	0	0
15 to 20 Minutes	24054	24055	0	0
20 to 25 Minutes	24704	24704	0	0

Figures 4 and 5 below show this change spatially.

Figure 4: Option 2: Bus Service Accessibility (Minutes) Population 65+

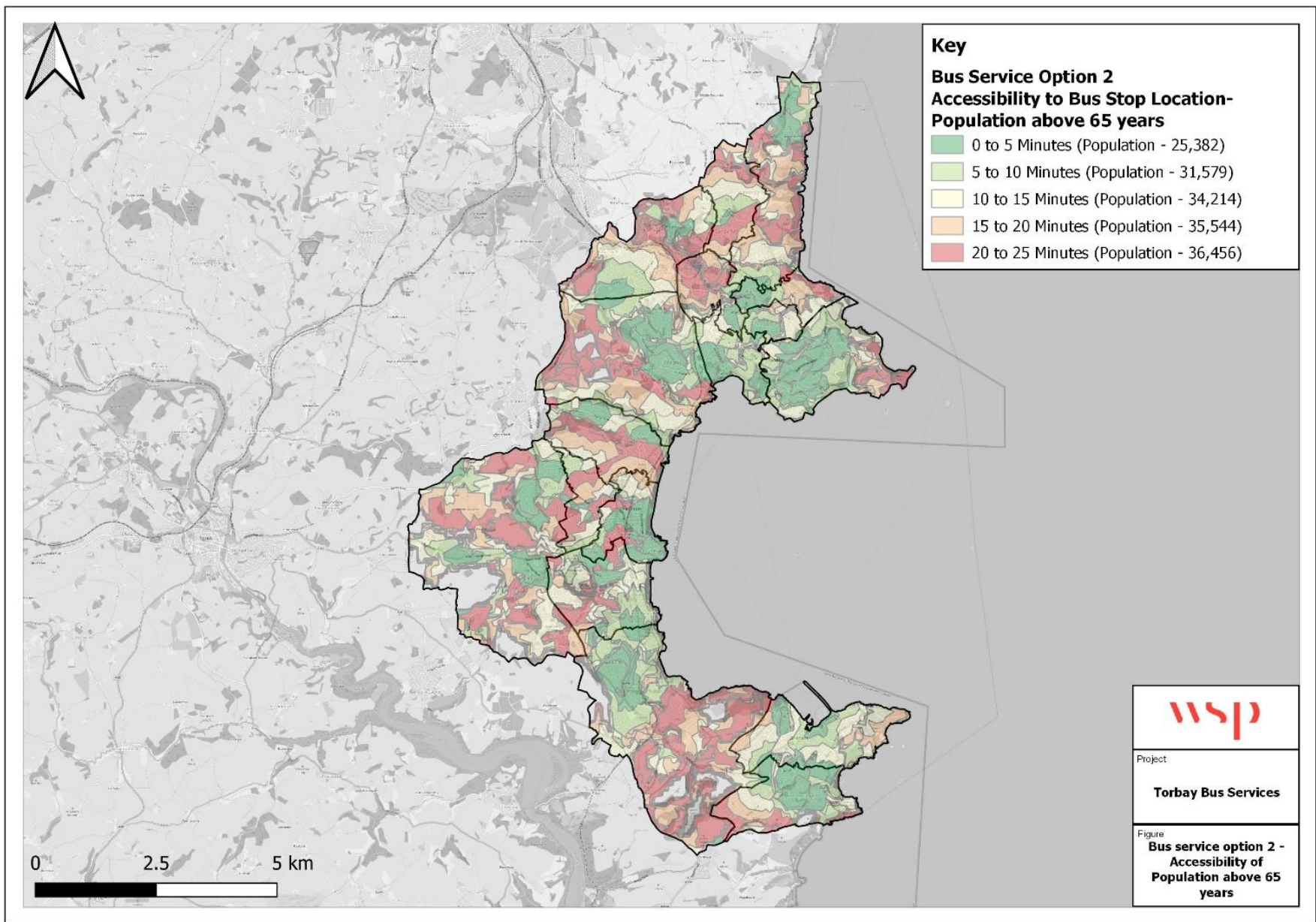
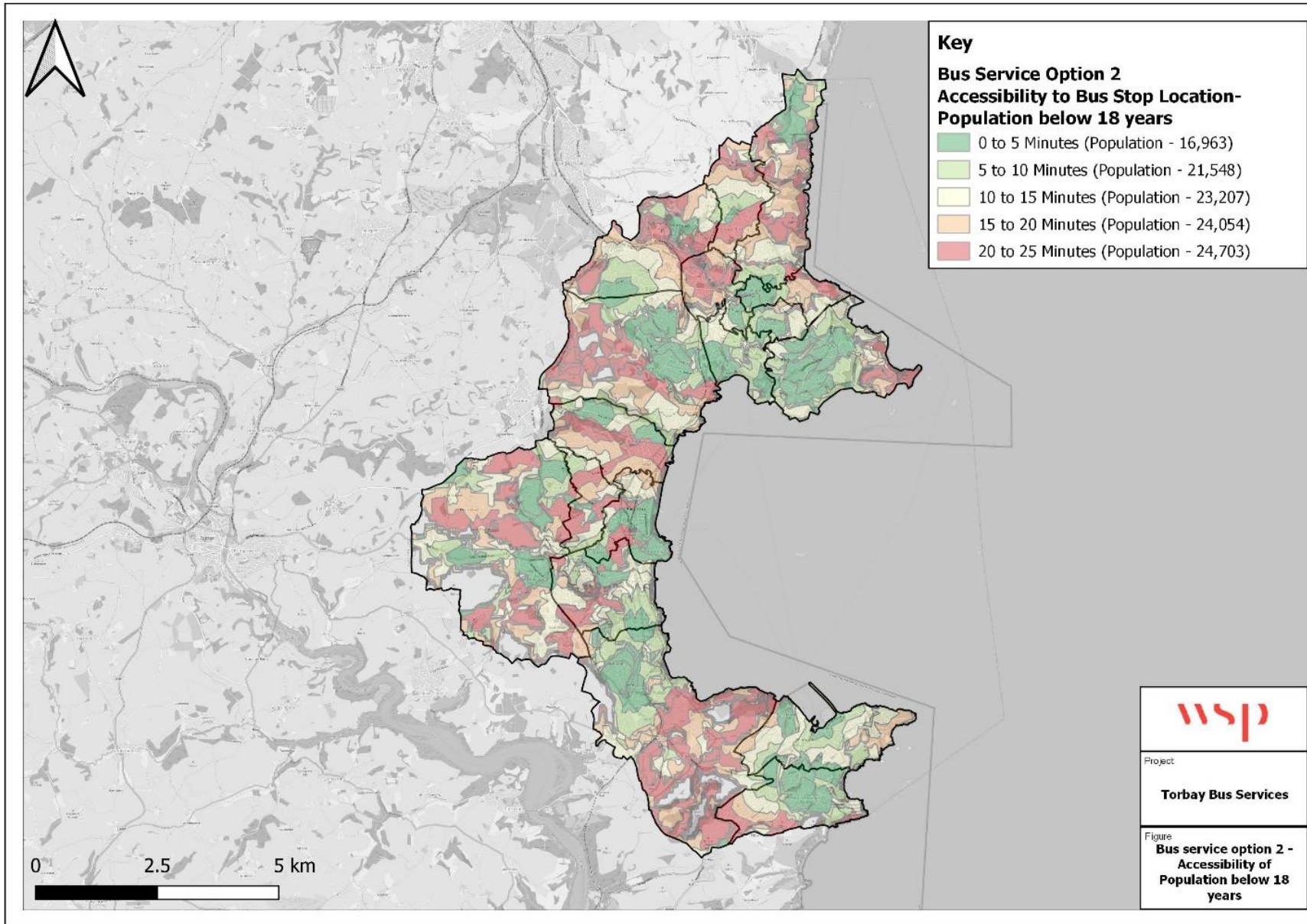


Figure 5: Option 2: Bus Service Accessibility (Minutes) Population 65+



Although the percentage change is minimal, both routes 61 and 65 serve several key locations. For route 61, this includes Abbey Road Health Centre as well as the Chelston Area, where there are fewer alternative bus routes available should this subsidised route be removed. The current three days a week and limited hours service pattern for Route 65 means that it is unlikely to be used by the young to travel to or from school. However Route 65 serves a number of key trip generators which the elderly are likely to require access at certain times, these include All Saints Church, United Reformed Church, Town Hall and Barton Health Centre.

## Disability

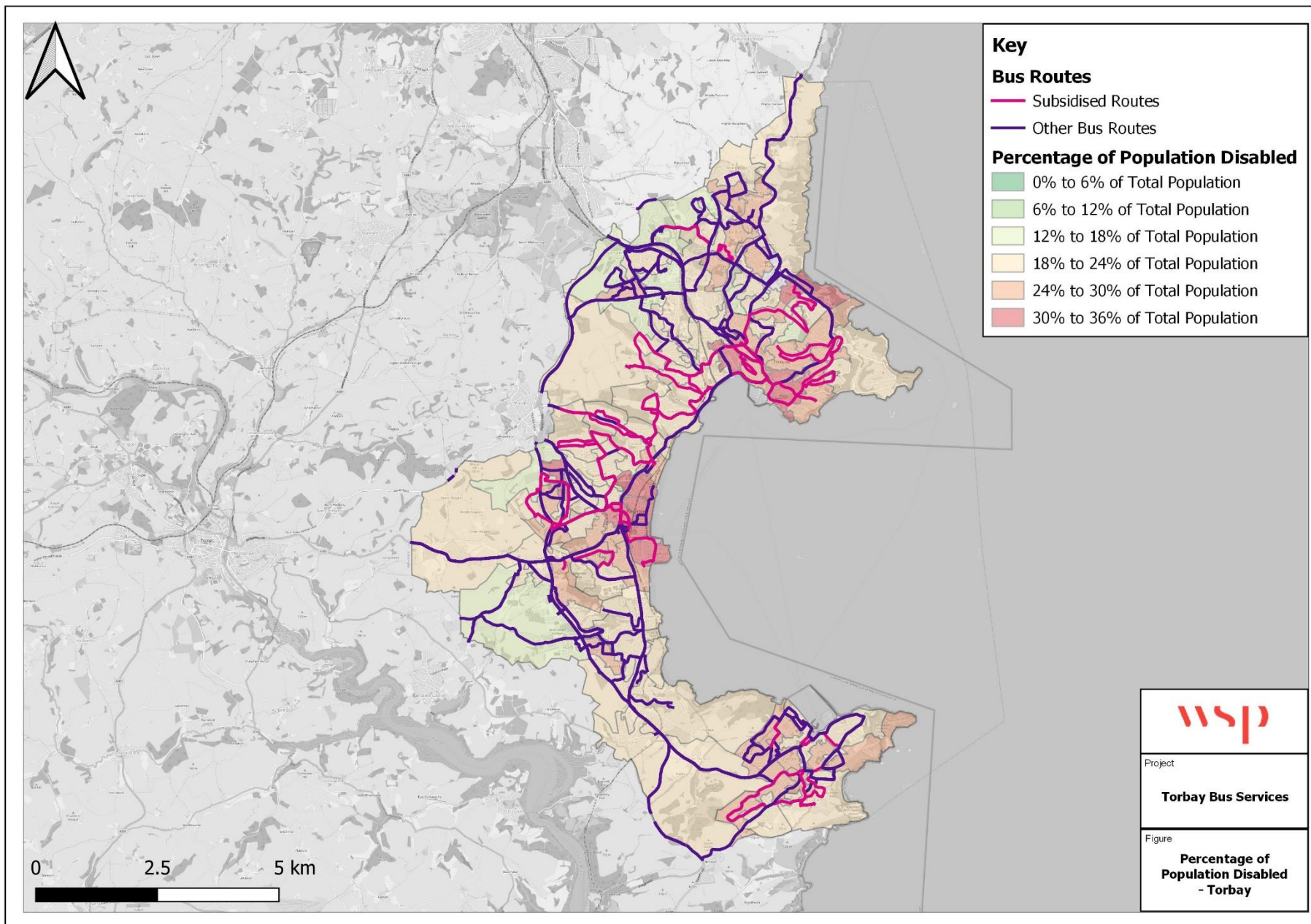
11.0% of Torbay residents are considered to be disabled under the Equality Act 2010 where their day-to-day activities are limited a lot. In addition to this, 12.9% of Torbay residents are considered to be disabled under the act with their day-to-day activities limited a little. 7.2% are not considered disabled under the Equality Act but may have a long term physical or mental health condition. The remaining 69.0% are not considered disabled and have no long term physical or mental health conditions<sup>2</sup>.

As mentioned above, the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust runs Torbay Hospital, as well as five community hospitals, stretching from Dawlish to Brixham. These hospitals, along with other local clinics and practices, are likely to be relied on by those with disabilities.

**Figure 6** below shows the percentage of the population considered disabled, with the subsidised bus routes overlaid, demonstrating the distribution of the residents with a disability in Torbay relative to the services.



Figure 6: Percentage of Population considered Disabled in Torbay



## Equality Considerations

### Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed

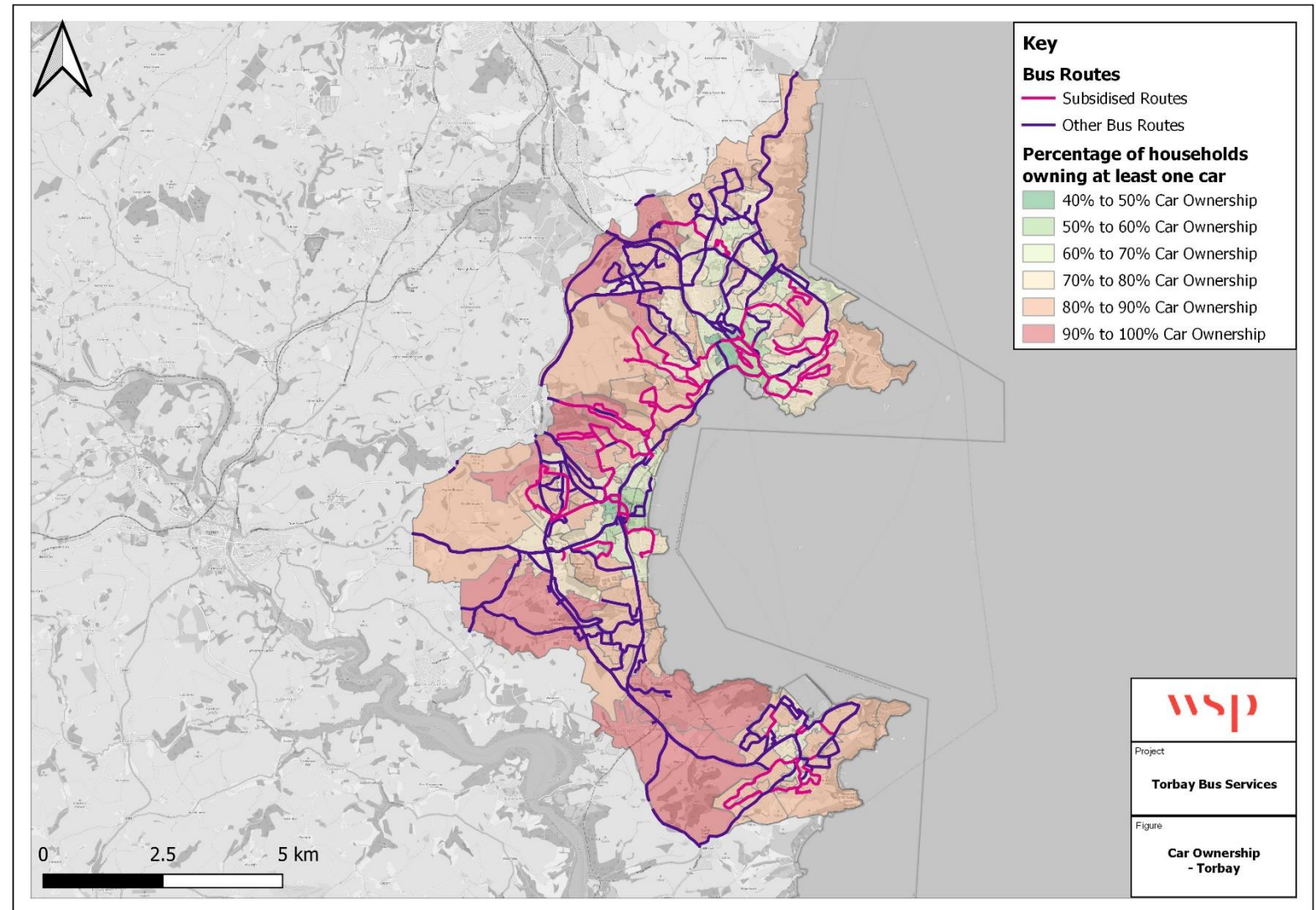
As outlined above, a large proportion of the population in Torbay, roughly 24%, have a disability which can affect their ability to travel. If all subsidised routes were to be removed, this is likely to have a detrimental impact on access for disabled residents to key destinations and facilities, including healthcare.

Looking more specifically at where disabled residents live relative to the subsidised bus services, Figure 6 shows that a high percentage of people living in the Torquay, Paignton and Roundham areas, as well as some parts of Brixham, are considered to have a disability. In Torquay and Paignton, this is as high as 30-36% of the total population.

Further to this, **Figure 7** illustrates that car ownership is a lot lower in some parts of Torquay and Paignton, relative to the rest of Torbay where ownership exceeds 80%. This suggests that for disabled residents living in areas where car ownership is

low and where there are subsidised routes, the removal of such routes could significantly impact transport choices for some disabled residents.

Figure 7: Car Ownership in Torbay



**Table 6** below details the change in accessibility for Torbay's disabled population between Option 1 and Option 3 (all subsidised routes are retained), illustrating that if all subsidised routes are removed, in total 15% of Torbay's disabled population will no longer be within 5 minutes (11%) or 10 minutes of a bus stop (4%). This in turn could have an adverse impact on those with disabilities, particularly physical disabilities, where mobility is already limited, and any additional distance could impact access to the bus services. For example, if further distance is required to access a bus stop and the pedestrian route is uphill, the quality of footways poor and there are little or no resting places along a route, this may cause anxiety for some residents with disabilities who find the additional distance difficult unachievable and uncomfortable to navigate. This may lead to them choosing not to travel at all.

**Table 6: Disabled Population - Change in Access to Bus Stops (Minutes)**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Equiv. Pop</b>
0 to 5 Minutes	29463	33172	-11	3709
5 to 10 Minutes	37359	38813	-4	1454
10 to 15 Minutes	46445	46728	-1	283
15 to 20 Minutes	50095	50163	0	68
20 to 25 Minutes	50401	50506	0	105

**Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

Table 7 below details the change in accessibility by disabled population between Option 2 and Option 3 (all subsidised routes are retained).

**Table 7: Disabled Population - Change in Access to Bus Stops (Minutes)**

	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Equiv. Pop</b>
0 to 5 Minutes	32238	33172	-3	934
5 to 10 Minutes	38794	38813	0	19
10 to 15 Minutes	46728	46728	0	0
15 to 20 Minutes	50162	50163	0	1
20 to 25 Minutes	50506	50506	0	0

The results from this analysis are similar to that of age, demonstrating that although the percentage change is minimal, both routes serve several key locations, which are likely to be used by disabled groups.

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

Of Torbay residents aged 16 years and over, 32.8% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021. Almost half of the Torbay population is either married or in a registered civil partnership (44.2%), according to the 2021 census, which is slightly above the national average<sup>2</sup>.

Across England, the percentage increased by 3.3 percentage points, from 34.6% to 37.9% between 2011 and 2021. These figures include same-sex marriages and opposite-sex civil partnerships in 2021, neither of which were legally recognised in England and Wales in 2011. Same-sex marriages have been legally recognised in England and Wales since 2014 and opposite-sex civil partnerships have been recognised since 2019.

## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

There is no clear evidence, data, or rationale that the removal of all subsidised routes would have a disproportionate effect on groups based on marriage of civil partnership.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

There is no clear evidence, data, or rationale that the removal of subsidised routes 61 and 65 would have a disproportionate effect on groups based on marriage of civil partnership.

## Pregnancy and Maternity

ONS Conception Statistics provides conception numbers for Torbay, recording 1,114 live births in the borough in 2021. This is 40 more than in the year before but the lowest number of births for all upper tier local authorities in the Southwest region<sup>2</sup>.

## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

Although there is no specific spatial data available for this protected characteristic, it should be noted that some pregnant women or women who have recently given birth, may rely on buses as a means of travel. This includes travel to hospital and clinic appointments. If these bus services are removed, this could impact access to these key services for this protected characteristic group if alternative transport options are not available.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

As above, some pregnant women or women who have recently given birth, may rely on routes 61 and 65 as their primary mode of travel and/or as a means to access key facilities. For route 61, this includes Abbey Road Health Centre as well as the Chelston Area, where there are fewer alternative bus routes available should this subsidised route be removed. Route 65 serves a number of key trip generators which pregnant women and those who have recently given birth may require access to, this includes Barton Health Centre and several schools.

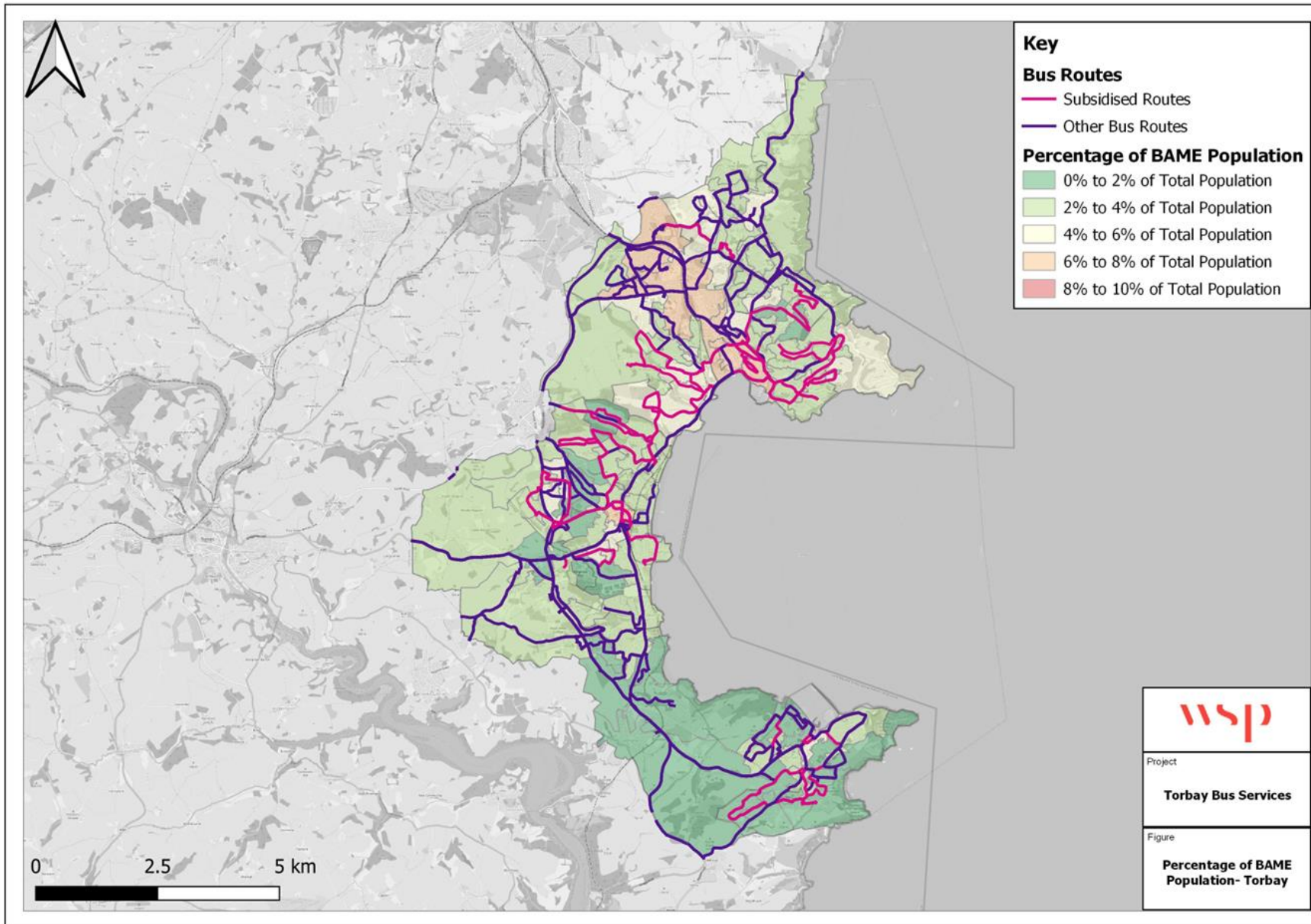
## Race

Census data from 2021 shows the percentages of the population who identify as a particular ethnicity. The ethnicity breakdown for Torbay is detailed below:

- > Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh - 1.6%
- > Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African - 0.3%
- > Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups - 1.5%
- > White - 96.1%
- > Other Ethnic Group - 0.4%

As illustrated above, most of Torbay's population, 96.1%, identify as ethnically White and either English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British. There has been a 1.4% increase in Torbay's ethnic minority population (including white ethnic groups) since the 2011 census<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 8: Percentage of BAME Population in Torbay



## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

As shown in **Figure 8**, the percentage of BAME groups living in the Torbay region is generally low, with less than 4% of the population in the majority of the region coming from a BAME group. There is however a small concentration of BAME groups living in the north of Torbay which is served predominantly by non-subsidised routes. This suggests that if all the subsidised routes are removed, there may be less of an impact on BAME groups, than other protected characteristic groups discussed above.

It should be acknowledged however that White people are consistently the most likely ethnic group to have a driving licence, and Black people the least likely. With this in mind, some of the BAME groups living in areas predominantly served by subsidised routes and who do not own a car, may experience accessibility issues if all subsidised routes are removed.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

Route 65 serves the Torquay area, where less than 2% of the population are from BAME groups. Route 61 serves the west of Torquay through to the Chelston area, where the BAME population is slightly higher at 6-8%, however alternative non-subsidised routes are available.

## Religion and Belief

Census 2021 data shows the percentages of the population who identify with a particular religion. The religion breakdown taken from Census 2021 for Torbay is detailed below:

- > Christian - 48.5%
- > Buddhist - 0.4%
- > Hindu - 0.2%
- > Jewish - 0.1%
- > Muslim - 0.6%
- > Sikh - 0.0%

43.2% of the population said they had no religion, with a further 0.7% selecting 'other religion' and 6.3% not providing an answer to this question<sup>2</sup>.

## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

Given that half of Torbay's population identifies with a religion, the removal of all subsidised routes could impact access to places of worship.

Although these trips are generally more infrequent (once or a couple times a week), some religious groups visit places of worship more regularly, particularly at certain times of the day, week and year when they will want to attend services, prayers and other religious gatherings and celebrations. Those from minority faiths including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism are likely to also be from ethnic minorities.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

Building on the above argument, the removal of routes 61 and 65 could impact access to places of worship for some religious groups, particularly because route 65 has designated stops at All Saints Church and United Reformed Church. It is also likely that these routes serve a number of other places of worship across the region.



## Sex

The Census 2021 reported that females comprised 51.3% of the population in Torbay, whereas males comprised 48.7%<sup>2</sup>. This is a similar split to the national average which shows males comprising 49% of the population and females 51%.

## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

The existing subsidised routes outlined in Table 1 run largely Monday to Saturday between the morning (earliest 8:15) and the early evening (latest 17:10). It should be noted that new service proposals include the offer of extended hours for some services. However, safety is a common concern for women when using public space and public transport. Findings from YouGov's Women's Safety Survey (2022)<sup>8</sup> reports that 66% of women surveyed said they always, often, or sometimes feel unsafe walking alone at night, compared to 39% of men. Further to this, 25% of women surveyed said they always, often, or sometimes feel unsafe walking alone in the daytime, compared to 10% of men.

Despite many of the existing services in Torbay stopping early evening, it is important to note that in the winter months, daylight hours are shorter, therefore women and girls are likely to be travelling to and from work and school, and for leisure trips, during the dark. If these subsidised routes were to be removed, this could impact women and girls' perception of safety when travelling, particularly on their own. This in turn, could lead to an overreliance on alternative modes such as taxis or being driven by a family member, friend, or partner. This has a direct effect on women and girls' autonomy over how, when and where they travel, and can also have financial implications if they become reliant on private hire vehicles. It should also be noted that women have less likely to have a driving licence, which again could impact their access to alternative modes<sup>9</sup>.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

Although routes 61 and 65 operate a more limited service<sup>10</sup>, their removal could also impact women and girls' perception of safety when travelling to and from work and school, and for leisure trips, and could again lead to an overreliance on alternative modes, which have social and financial implications.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2022/03/08/how-often-do-british-women-feel-unsafe-doing-day-d>

<sup>9</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef09d0da845100146323f7/nts-2022-factsheet.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> 61 route operates Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 9:15 and 16:15, and route 65, operates Tuesday and Thursday between 9:28 and 11:28

## Sexual Orientation

In Torbay, 89.5% of the population identify as straight or heterosexual, 1.7% of the population identify themselves as lesbian or gay, 1.1% say they are bisexual, and 0.1% describe themselves as pansexual<sup>2</sup>.

## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

There is no clear evidence, data, or rationale that the removal of all subsidised routes would have a disproportionate effect on groups based on sexual orientation.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

There is no clear evidence, data, or rationale that the removal of subsidised routes 61 and 65 would have a disproportionate effect on groups based on sexual orientation.

## Gender Reassignment

With regards to gender reassignment, census data from 2021 indicates that 0.4% of people aged 16 years and over in Torbay have a gender identify different from their sex registered at birth. This percentage is slightly higher to England as a whole at 0.25%, however within England, the region with the highest percentage who reported that their gender identify was different from their sex at birth was London at 0.91%<sup>2</sup>.

## Equality Considerations

### **Option 1: All subsidised routes are removed**

There is no clear evidence, data, or rationale that the removal of all subsidised routes would have a disproportionate effect on groups based on general reassignment.

### **Option 2: Only Routes 61 and 65 are removed**

There is no clear evidence, data, or rationale that the removal of subsidised routes 61 and 65 would have a disproportionate effect on groups based on gender reassignment.

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

---

10.1 None

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

---

11.1 None