

# Torbay Economic Strategy

2017 - 2022





# Mayoral Foreword

A healthy and prosperous Torbay is at the core of my manifesto as Elected Mayor of Torbay.

Regeneration and revitalisation of our town centres is a critical part of continual improvement to Torbay's economy. The Council's Transformation Strategy for Torbay's Town Centres, which was agreed in April 2017, provides clarity, certainty and confidence for business, investors and the community.

We are a place with great economic potential. This is evident with the major investments and delivery in key infrastructure such as the opening of the £110M South Devon Highway, securing over £8M for the delivery of the Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre to support the growth of hi-tech industries, major foreign direct and indigenous investment in our hotel and leisure stock along with new inward investment such as Graphic Controls at White Rock Business Park. Our unemployment remains at its lowest levels for over 34 years, the provision of business support continues to help our businesses to develop and grow, and the delivery of the South Devon Jobs Fair continues to help create new jobs and provide local people with employment opportunities.

The revised Economic Strategy sets out a clear plan for improving productivity, raising employment, increasing training and apprenticeship opportunities, and addressing worklessness and deprivation, to ensure the long term sustainable growth of Torbay's economy.

Looking ahead there is a pipeline of exciting projects such as a new multimillion pound Business Park at Claylands Cross and early developments in the first phase of town centre regeneration. Our commitment and investment in these projects is testament to our determination to create a vibrant and prosperous place for everyone to live and work.

Gordon Oliver  
Elected Mayor of Torbay





## Vision

*'An unrivalled quality of life in one of the UK's most beautiful destinations; where connectivity, culture, and ambition are growing fast, creating opportunities for everyone who lives, works and enjoys being here'*

Torbay will build on its strengths to deliver economic growth, tackle inequality and create change in the area that benefits everyone who lives here. Central to this vision is to ensure Torbay is:

- A great place to do business
- A great place to thrive
- A vibrant community

This Economic Strategy plays a key role in helping Torbay achieve its vision. We will enhance the strengths in the Bay and capitalise on the opportunities whilst addressing some of the key challenges facing our coastal economy.

The objectives set out in the strategy are to:

1. Deliver a successful town centre regeneration programme
2. Continue to create an environment in which businesses and jobs can grow
3. Accelerate the development of employment space, geared to business needs
4. Raise skills levels and broaden the skills base within the workforce

This five year strategy will drive sustainable growth centred on our people, our businesses and our infrastructure. We will work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders from private, public and voluntary sectors to ensure our businesses and our people flourish.



# About Torbay

## OUR PLACE

- Torbay covers an area of over 24 square miles, located in South Devon, known as the 'English Riviera'.
- It comprises of over 20 beaches and secluded coves along 22 miles of coastline located around the east-facing natural harbour of Tor Bay.
- One of the country's top 10 visitor destinations, welcoming over 4.5 million visitors every year.
- In 2007, Torbay was endorsed by UNESCO as a Global Geopark in recognition of our rich geological, historical and cultural heritage.
- Torbay has a strong reputation at the heart of England's Seafood Coast.
- Torbay is developing a transformational £130M Town Centre Regeneration Programme across Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.
- National and international markets can easily be reached; Exeter Airport in 30 mins, Bristol Airport in 1 hr 30 mins, Plymouth Port in 1 hr and London Paddington in 2 hrs 30 mins.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

- Torbay is made up of the 3 towns of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.
- It has a population of 133,373 – the second largest urban area within the Heart of the South West.
- Torbay's population is projected to grow around 9.6% over the next 20 years.
- Torbay has one of the highest proportions of over 65's in the South West – accounting for around 25.7% of Torbay's total population.
- Torbay has a primary retail catchment of around 256,000 people within a 15 mile radius providing annual spend of over £250M on comparison and core convenience goods.



## ECONOMY

- A strong entrepreneurial culture.
- Torbay is home to multi-national blue chip companies, within the area's growing photonics and electronics cluster – which are internationally recognised for their specialisms and capabilities in world leading R&D and innovation.
- Torbay's economy grew out of fishing and agriculture. Today, the fishing industry remains strong with Brixham landing the highest value catch of any English port.
- Strong tourism and hospitality sector, recognised as the leading UK seaside resort attracting over 4.5M visitors a year with an annual visitor spend of over £435M.

## EDUCATION

- Home to a number of leading international language schools.
- Home of South Devon College – recognised as an outstanding educational establishment and national award winning institute for employer engagement.
- Outstanding educational provision with the choice of a top 100 performing state school, three grammar schools, independent institutes and community colleges.
- The percentage of the working population with NVQ levels 2 and 3 in Torbay are above the national and regional averages.

## OUR HISTORY

- Earliest traces of settlements in Torbay date back to the Palaeolithic times. There is also evidence that Roman Soldiers visited Kents Cavern.
- During the 19th Century, Torbay came to prominence as a popular seaside resort attracting well-heeled Victorian visitors.
- It is well known that Agatha Christie lived in Torbay, but other famous residents include Peter Cook, Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Rudyard Kipling.
- In 1948 Torbay hosted the Olympic sailing events.

## OUR CULTURE

- Valued local heritage assets, some with national and international significance including; Torre Abbey, Oldway Mansion, Lupton House, Cockington Court, and Shoalstone Lido.
- Home to Agatha Christie, the renowned English crime novelist, short storywriter and playwright.
- Home to Europe's oldest surviving purpose-built cinema – Paignton Picturehouse.
- Designated a UNESCO Geopark.
- Traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design at Cockington Craft Centre.
- More visitor attractions than any other seaside resort in the UK.





## Our Journey So Far

Torbay has and continues to face a number of structural economic challenges. Our economy is dominated by sectors renowned for low paid, seasonal employment, such as tourism and hospitality and health and social care. However, a number of key transformational projects have been delivered achieving significant outcomes including:

- Completion of the new £110 million South Devon Highway infrastructure work
- Securing more than £8 million of funding for the development of the Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre
- Helping more than 2,000 people back into work
- Creating and safeguarding around 250 local jobs through the Torbay Growth Fund
- Delivering four successful jobs fairs
- Engaging more than 1,900 local students with industry
- Advising and supporting more than 1,200 businesses
- Delivering a number of award winning business support programmes
- Supporting more than 350 people to set up their own business



# Torbay has a lot to offer...

## STRENGTHS

<b>Strong entrepreneurial culture</b>	<b>Active and supportive business community</b>	<b>Good connectivity and access to markets</b>
Attractive location	Outstanding educational establishments	A leading electronics and photonics cluster
<b>Strong fishing sector</b>	<b>High value manufacturing base</b>	<b>Improving skills levels, particularly at NVQ levels 2 and 3</b>
Active voluntary and community sector	Officially England's leading seaside resort	UNESCO Global Geopark status



## OPPORTUNITIES

<b>Town Centre Regeneration</b>	<b>Growing cultural offer</b>	<b>Strong investment in educational facilities</b>
Development of an Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre, as a centre of excellence	Significant local investment programme	Working with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership to build our relationship with Government
<b>Increasing demand from local expanding businesses</b>	<b>The Apprenticeship Levy</b>	<b>International Trade to open up new markets</b>





# Our Future Projects

## TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

The Council has agreed a ten year strategy for the transformation of Torbay’s town centres. The first phase of this transformation, over the next three years, will see development of a range of Council owned assets and delivery of a number of public realm improvements.

This phase 1 activity will, where possible, be funded by the Council to bring pace, as well as scale, to town centre regeneration. Phase 1 delivery, which includes the projects outlined below, has a development value of around £130M, will generate greater investor confidence and will improve town centre performance:

### **Upton Place – behind the Town Hall, Torquay**

Located close to the High Street, provides an opportunity for a range of developments.

The Council’s preferred solution is student accommodation, which will bring significant benefits to the town centre as well as supporting the delivery of other projects.

### **Paignton Harbour**

The scheme will enhance the harbour’s character, ensure it becomes more of a destination and will help fund other town centre regeneration projects.

### **Harbour View - between The Terrace and Museum Road, Torquay**

This site, with views across Torbay, may accommodate commercial and / or residential development.

### **Lower Union Lane and linkage to Union Street, Torquay**

Refurbishment of Lower Union Lane Multi Storey Car Park will improve visitor experience and will support the regeneration of the upper end of Union Street, encouraging business relocation, new homes and growth.







## EPIC

### Paignton Civic Hub – Bus/Rail Stations

Redevelopment of land around Paignton Library, the bus and rail stations will bring a new civic heart to Paignton. It will include a repositioned bus station, refurbished rail station, new commercial and residential space. This new space, plus high quality public realm, will boost town centre performance and give a much clearer identity to this part of town.

### Victoria Centre, Paignton

This site, located just off the High Street, provides a range of development opportunities, including residential, retail and commercial space. This will bring more footfall and spend in the town centre.

### Brixham Town Centre

Located right in the heart of town, close to the harbour and the High Street, this site will accommodate a hotel, retail, housing, new public space, improved car parking and a range of other facilities.

### Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre (EPIC), White Rock Business Park, Paignton

An £8M project comprising of a 3,800m<sup>2</sup> state of the art hi-tech facility designed to support innovation in the electronics and photonics industries. The development will act as a regional centre of excellence for the sector, providing dedicated lab, cleanroom, office and meeting space.

## CLAYLANDS BUSINESS PARK

### Claylands Business Park, Brixham Road

Claylands Cross, just off Brixham Road in Paignton, is a seven acre brownfield development site.

Planning permission has been secured for the development for a new Business Park comprising of over 10,200m<sup>2</sup> of high quality employment space, suitable for growing manufacturers, warehouse and distribution operations. The site will act as a hub to support the growth of local expanding companies, and accommodate new inward investment.





## SOUTH DEVON HI-TECH AND DIGITAL SKILLS CENTRE

South Devon College's Hi-Tech and Digital Skills Centre will be a state of the art £17M facility located on White Rock Business Park, next to the College's main campus.

It will provide individuals with the skills that employers need to support their growth in a range of important local hi-tech businesses such as; electronics, lasers, fibre optics, satellite and communications, aerospace, marine, medical and data analysis of 'Big Data'.



## TORBAY BUSINESS CENTRE, PHASE 2

Potential £2M development to complement the existing Torbay Business Centre at Lymington Road. Proposals are being explored for around 1,200m<sup>2</sup> of new employment space to support business growth.



## TORQUAY GATEWAY

Situated on the edge of Torquay next to the South Devon Highway, Torquay Gateway is a strategic employment site which offers the opportunity for expansion of the existing Edginswell Business Park, which provides high quality office space.





# The Strategy

Central to this Strategy is to support an unrivalled quality of life in one of the UK's most beautiful destinations; where connectivity, culture and ambition are growing fast, creating opportunities for everyone who lives, works and enjoys being here. Torbay will build on its strengths to deliver economic growth, tackle inequality and create change in the area that benefits everyone who lives here. Central to this vision is to ensure Torbay is:

- A great place to do business
- A great place to thrive
- A vibrant community

This Strategy sets out the opportunities and actions for raising productivity and setting in place the foundations for long term sustainable economic growth.

In common with other coastal resorts, despite a strong entrepreneurial culture demonstrated by a high start-up rate, we see a higher than average number of business failures after 3 years. This points to a need for additional business support to help businesses overcome the different challenges they face as they grow.

Like many areas, Torbay has a blend of affluent and deprived areas. To really effect inclusive growth, this Strategy will play its part targeting support to areas that need it the most. This will complement other Council interventions designed to improve the economic and social welfare of our residents in most need.

Successful regeneration of Torbay's town centres along with developing new housing is crucial to improving the overall economic performance of Torbay's economy, and in driving future investment and development in Torbay.

The success of our schools and colleges lead many onto further education, often outside of Torbay, with few returning until later in life. This outward migration of young people is further exacerbated by an ageing workforce.



Demand for 'good quality' employment space of the right type and size remains strong in Torbay. However, the lack of new commercial space being developed continues to be a barrier to attracting new inward investment and limits the growth of Torbay's successful and aspirational businesses.

Even with Torbay being one of the largest urban areas in the South West, its coastal geography significantly shapes the economy. The tourism and hospitality sector remains important to the local economy and delivery of the Destination Management Plan will support the growth and development of the sector.

Productivity levels in Torbay remain amongst some of the lowest in the country, mainly due to the high levels of low paid employment in the tourism and health/social care industries, along with a relatively small workforce compared to the population.

We recognise that there are increasing opportunities in Torbay, and across the South West, to access higher learning and associated employment opportunities. We are committed to developing a robust education / employment pathway to maximise those opportunities for our young people. Within this, care leavers and children in our care will be a particular priority.

Every effort will be made to secure external funding and the Council will prioritise all bids for grant funding which supports delivery of the actions and outcomes envisaged in this strategy. This is expected to include Coastal Communities Fund, any remaining European funding and its proposed replacement, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Where additional Council funding is required, it will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Council.





## Our Objectives

The Strategy forms part of the Council's policy framework alongside others set out below. The Strategy will also support the Council in fulfilling its role as corporate parent ensuring that opportunities for vulnerable young people and others in the community are embraced. Improving Torbay's long term economic prosperity will reinforce a number of Torbay Council's other key actions including:

- *Working towards a more prosperous Torbay*
- *Promoting healthy lifestyles across Torbay*
- *Ensuring Torbay remains an attractive and safe place to live and visit*
- *Protecting and supporting vulnerable adults*
- *Protecting all children and giving them the best start in life*

## Torbay Council Corporate Plan

Torbay  
Local  
Transport  
Plan

Torbay  
Local  
Plan

Torbay  
Housing  
Strategy

Tor Bay  
Harbour-  
Port  
Masterplan

Torbay Economic Strategy

Town Centres  
Regeneration  
Programme

Destination  
Management  
Plan

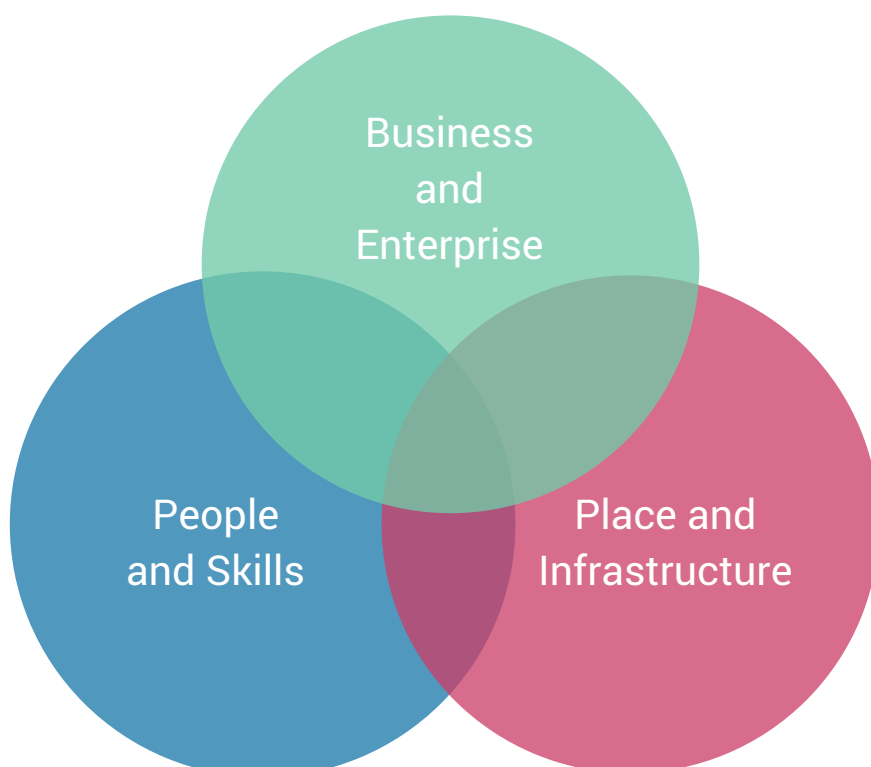
Torbay  
Culture  
Strategy



With a clear action plan focussing on growing the economy and creating new jobs, the Strategy draws upon Torbay's strengths and opportunities to:

- 1. Deliver a successful town centre regeneration programme*
- 2. Continue to create an environment in which businesses and jobs can grow*
- 3. Accelerate the development of employment space geared to business needs*
- 4. Raise skills levels and broaden the skills base within the workforce*

The Strategy focuses on three core themes. These reflect the need to support business, create full time jobs and raise wages, grow the economy, improve productivity, and provide the best opportunities for care leavers, along with ensuring that Torbay remains a great place to live, work and visit.





# How we will get there

## THEME 1 - People and Skills

1. Support South Devon College's growth into higher education opportunities offering more educational opportunities for our young people and our workforce
2. Further develop the MADE pilot project to expand engagement between business and schools and explore extending the project into other core/growth sectors, specifically in construction, tourism and other sectors subject to funding being secured
3. Commission Ready For Work training schemes in construction, care, hospitality and hi-tech sectors helping those furthest from the labour market to become employment ready. This will be targeted towards our deprived wards and our care leavers.
4. Implement construction skills and local apprenticeship/employment agreements with contractors (as well as local supply chain opportunities) through planning recommendations on new public construction contracts e.g. Town Centres Regeneration Programme
5. Organise a minimum of one Jobs Fair a year to help match young people, unemployed and under employed with current vacancies
6. Work with schools and other partners to expand the provision of information advice and guidance to young adults through the Torbay Works Programme
7. Help businesses to make the best use of the Apprenticeship Levy, and use National Apprenticeship Week as a signature event to bring together employers, schools and education providers and young people
8. Prioritise our looked after children and care leavers within the activities under the people and skills theme



## THEME 2 - Business and Enterprise

1. Develop the business case for new space to support growing businesses
2. Deliver a business start up programme which is aligned and supplements the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) and other start up programmes. This will be targeted at those most in need including care leavers and unemployed
3. Develop a business growth programme focusing on mid to long term business planning in order to stimulate growth and increase business survival rates in key sectors including retail and tourism
4. Develop a Business Accelerator programme to support the expansion of businesses with high growth potential, particularly in the hi-tech sector and as part of the Electronic and Photonics Innovation Centre project
5. Work with partners (LEP wide) to develop an International Trade Programme to help businesses across Torbay to access new markets and explore trade opportunities in key sectors such as food and drink, manufacturing, tourism and hi-tech industries
6. Deliver the Destination Management Plan, to grow the visitor economy and develop a Business Development Programme to support growth of the tourism businesses
7. Deliver an Aftercare programme to support Torbay's strategically important companies in order to safeguard create new jobs and secure additional investment
8. Review and refresh the Inward Investment Strategy





9. Conduct a quarterly business survey to measure business performance and outlook, and to better understand the challenges facing local businesses

10. Grow and develop Torbay's electronics and photonics cluster, through the Torbay Hi-tech Forum and development of the Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre

### **THEME 3 - Place and Infrastructure**

1. Deliver Torbay's Town Centre Regeneration Programme (Upton Place, Harbour View; Lower Union Lane, Paignton Harbour site, Paignton Civic Hub; and Brixham Town Centre Car Park site) and work in particular with the private sector to develop Crossways Shopping Centre

2. To support the development of Oxen Cove as a hub for fishing and aquaculture

3. Work to identify sites and partners to develop quality accommodation in line with the Destination Management Plan

4. Work with the Peninsula Rail Task Force to ensure South West rail resilience and mainline trains services into Torbay, including the development of a new station at Edginswell

5. Recognise the importance of all forms of transport connectivity and encourage development of a private sector scheme for a helipad to service Torbay



# Delivery of the Economic Strategy

## RESOURCES

This strategy has been produced by TDA on behalf of Torbay Council. Delivery of the strategy will require resources and investment in both revenue and capital costs. While every effort will be made to secure external funding it is clear that in the post Brexit environment there remain questions over the scope, nature and delivery mechanisms for growth funding for instance the proposed UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Where additional Council funding is required, it will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Council.

Delivery of the strategy will principally be through TDA, with support from Torbay Council and key private sector and third sector partners. Some projects may also be commissioned to ensure the most appropriate and effective delivery.

Every effort will be made to secure external funding and the Council will prioritise all bids for grant funding which supports delivery of the actions and outcomes envisaged in this strategy. Where additional Council funding is required, it will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Council.

## OUTPUTS

As a minimum, the Strategy will deliver:



Create over 2,000 new jobs



Provide business support to 650 businesses



Engage with over 2000 students



Enable or create over 335,000 square feet of new employment space to meet known and forecast demand



Help over 100 businesses to start up



Assist 300 unemployed people into work



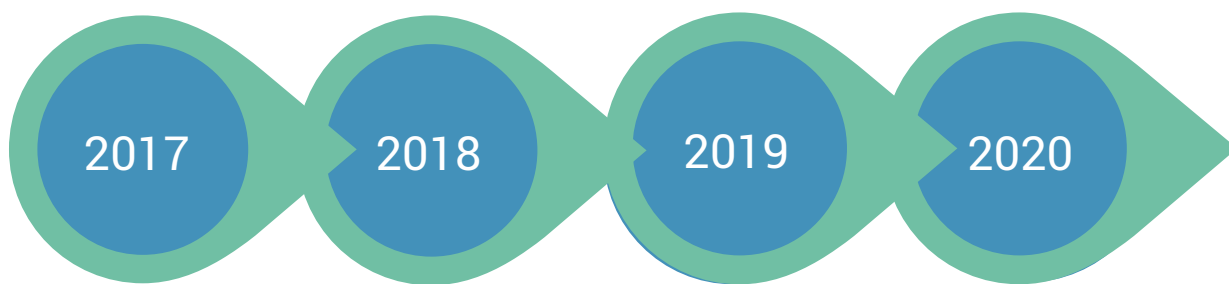
# Programme

This strategy will be delivered over a five year period. A significant amount of activity will begin within the first two years including:

- MADE *Qtr 3 2018*
- Ready for Work training scheme *Qtr 2 2018*
- Business start up and growth programmes *Qtr 1 2018*
- International Trade Programme *Qtr 2 2018*
- Destination Management Plan *Qtr 2 2018*

The Strategy will be regularly assessed to ensure progress is made to deliver economic growth in Torbay.

Capital projects we expect to be delivered are set out below:



**Electronics and Photonics Innovation Centre**  
  
**Torbay Business Park, Phase 6 (Graphic Controls)**  
  
**Torwood Street**

**Claylands Business Park**  
  
**South Devon Hi-Tech and Digital Skills Centre**  
  
**Upton Place**  
  
**Paignton Harbour Pavilion**

**Victoria Centre**  
  
**Torbay Business Centre, Phase 2**  
  
**Oxen Cove**  
  
**Torquay Gateway**  
  
**Harbour View**

**Paignton Civic Hub**  
  
**Brixham Town Centre Car Park**