

Monday, 6 December 2021

**CABINET**

A meeting of **Cabinet** will be held on

**Tuesday, 14 December 2021**

commencing at **5.30 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Meadfoot Room, Town Hall, Castle Circus,  
Torquay, TQ1 3DR

**Members of the Committee**

Councillor Steve Darling (Chairman)

Councillor Carter

Councillor Long

Councillor Cowell

Councillor Morey

Councillor Law

Councillor Stockman

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**Together Torbay will thrive**

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

Email: [governance.support@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:governance.support@torbay.gov.uk) - [www.torbay.gov.uk](http://www.torbay.gov.uk)

# CABINET AGENDA

1. **Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 November 2021.

(Pages 4 - 21)

3. **Disclosure of Interests**

(a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda.

**For reference:** Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda.

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

**(Please Note:** If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)

4. **Communications**

To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council.

5. **Urgent Items**

To consider any other items the Chairman decides are urgent.

6. **Matters for Consideration**

7. **Redevelopment of Former WCs - Corbyn Head and Preston (North)**

To consider a report that seeks to develop the former WC's at Corbyn Head and Preston (North), with investment from the Growth Fund to form café/restaurant premises with provision of community facilities.

(Pages 22 - 30)

8. **Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy** (Pages 31 - 83)  
To consider a report that seeks approval of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy.
9. **Introduction of Updated Transport Asset Management Policy and the publishing of related updated Highway Policies** (Pages 84 - 122)  
To consider a report that seeks approval of the Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Asset Management Strategy.
10. **Local Government Association and Local Partnerships: Review of Wholly Owned Companies 2021 - Torbay Economic Development Company Ltd (TDA): Report and Action Plan** (Pages 123 - 154)  
To consider a report that sets out the Local Government's Association (LGA) and Local Partnerships (LP) Report on their review of the Council's Wholly Owned Companies with a primary focus on the TDA.
11. **Foster Carers Member Champion - Annual Report 2021** (Pages 155 - 157)  
To consider the report of the Member Champion for Foster Carers.
12. **Climate Change Member Champion - Annual Report 2021** (Pages 158 - 162)  
To consider the report of the member Champion for Climate Change.
13. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on the Local Environmental Quality Outline Plan** (Pages 163 - 165)  
To consider the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on the Local Environmental Quality Outline Plan and formally respond to the recommendations contained within the submitted report.
14. **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on the Draft Asset Management Plan** (Pages 166 - 167)  
To consider the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on the draft Asset Management Plan and formally respond to the recommendations contained within the submitted report.

### **Meeting Attendance**

Torbay Council has taken the decision to continue operating in a Covid-19 secure manner in order to protect staff and visitors entering Council buildings and to help reduce the spread of Covid-19 in Torbay. This includes social distancing and other protective measures (e.g. wearing a face covering (unless exempt), signing in and using hand sanitiser). Our public meetings will continue to operate with social distancing measures in place and as such there are limited numbers that can access our meeting rooms. Also, to help prevent the spread of the virus, anyone attending meetings is asked to take Covid lateral flow test the evening before - if you have a positive test result, please follow the Government's guidelines and do not attend the meeting.

If you wish to attend a public meeting, please contact us to confirm arrangements for your attendance.

## **Minutes of the Cabinet**

**16 November 2021**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Steve Darling (Chairman)

Councillors Carter, Cowell, Law, Long, Morey and Stockman

(Also in attendance: Councillors Barnby, Brooks, Bye, Douglas-Dunbar, Foster,  
Chris Lewis and Loxton)

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### **270. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19 October 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **271. Communications**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services thanked those who had attended the meeting in fancy dress to raise funds for Children in Need and to all those who had made donations.

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture advised that the Council had been awarded government funding to assist residents on low incomes to benefit from free energy efficiency improvements to their homes, which in turn would also contribute in meeting Torbay's carbon neutral targets.

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing updated members on the Council's joint working with the Department for Work and Pensions on early help for those claiming Universal Credit and those facing redundancy.

### **272. Matters for Consideration**

The Cabinet considered the following matters, full details of which (including the Cabinet's decisions and recommendations to Council) are set out in the Record of Decisions appended to these Minutes.

### **273. Gambling Act 2005 - Licensing Statement of Principles 2022 to 2025**

### **274. Proposed Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23**

### **275. Temporary Accommodation - Procurement and Strategy**

**276. Budget Monitoring 2021/22 - Quarter 2 (April - September) Revenue Outturn Forecast & Capital Outturn Forecast**

The Cabinet noted the contents of the submitted report which provided a high level budget summary of the Council's revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2021/22. Full discussion on the report had taken place at the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 10 November 2021.

**277. Renewed listing of Parkfield as an Asset of Community Value**

**278. Torquay Town Deal – Business Case Assurance**

**279. Growth Fund allocation - Edginswell Development**

**280. Growth Fund investment to deliver five new business units at Lymington Road Coach Station**

**281. Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on the 'Impact on the Council of the increase in the Higher Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant'**

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Chairman

## Record of Decision

### Gambling Statement of Principles 2022-25

#### Decision Taker

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### Decision

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

That the Gambling Statement of Principles 2022 to 2025 be approved.

#### Reason for the Decision

The Licensing Authority is required to publish a statement and to review and re-publish the same, every three years, in order to meet its statutory requirement, as prescribed under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005.

#### Implementation

The recommendation of the Cabinet will be considered at the Council meeting on 9 December 2021.

#### Information

The Gambling Act 2005 requires Torbay Council, under its role as Licensing Authority, to review and publish a 'Statement of Principles' (the Gambling Policy), every three years. The Statement of Principles outlines the procedures that the Licensing Authority intends to follow in discharging its statutory responsibilities under the Act. The current Statement has been reviewed, with further changes made as a result of public consultation. The refreshed Statement is required to be published, on or before 30 January 2022.

At the meeting Councillor Carter proposed and Councillor Stockman seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously, as set out above.

#### Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

No other options were considered.

#### Is this a Key Decision?

Yes – Reference Number: I083607

#### Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

**Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 19 November 2021

## Record of Decision

### Proposed Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23

#### Decision Taker

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### Decision

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

1. that the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23 be approved;
2. that Council notes the scheme for 2022/2023 includes the standard annual uprating of the personal allowances and premiums. These values take into account the statutory inflationary increase in personal allowances used to calculate entitlement to Council Tax Support. These allowances represent a households basic living needs;
3. that Personal Allowances and Premiums, used to calculate Council Tax Support, are uprated from 1 April 2022 in line with the prescribed Pensioner scheme and national working-age benefits, which are both set by the Government; and
4. that the Chief Finance Officer be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, to make any further adjustments required to the Exceptional Hardship Policy and fund.

#### Reason for the Decision

The Council has a statutory duty to provide a local Council Tax Support Scheme for working-age households within its area. Pension age households are subject to statutory provisions determined on a national basis that must be incorporated within each authority's local scheme.

#### Implementation

The Cabinet's recommendations will be considered at the Council meeting on 9 December 2021.

#### Information

The Council has a statutory duty to provide a local Council Tax Support Scheme for working-age households within its area. Prior to the start of each financial year, the Council must consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with a replacement scheme. It must make any revision to its scheme, or apply any replacement scheme, no later than 11 March for the subsequent financial year.

The current scheme needs to be updated each year to take into account the inflationary increase in the personal allowances used to calculate entitlement to Council Tax Support - these allowances represent a households basic living needs. This will ensure the scheme is compliant with the Prescribed Requirements for all local schemes, determined by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and also aligned to national working-



age benefits, determined by the Department for Work and Pensions.

At the meeting Councillor Carter proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision**

It was the intention to introduce an income banded Council Tax Support scheme from April 2021. This was after the proposed implementation from April 2020 which was unfortunately paused due to delays in receiving the required software and the absence of the required reassurances that all system integration work and testing would be completed prior to our deadline for annual Council Tax billing.

With the onset of COVID 19 in early March 2020 and the fundamental impacts this had on the local economy, it was decided to not progress with plans to introduce a banded Council Tax support scheme for 2021/2022. This has been further paused due to the need to accurately model and forecast the impacts of introducing a new format of scheme.

**Is this a Key Decision?**

No

**Does the call-in procedure apply?**

No

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

**Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 19 November 2021

## Record of Decision

### Temporary Accommodation - Procurement and Strategy

#### Decision Taker

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### Decision

1. That authority be delegated to the Divisional Director of Community & Customer Services in consultation with the Director of Finance, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing and Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, to award contracts to successful bidders on the Temporary Accommodation Framework Procurement; and
2. that the Temporary Accommodation Action Plan be noted.

#### Reason for the Decision

The proposed procurement will enable the Council to gain stability on the sufficiency and costs associated with this statutory function.

#### Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 29 November 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

#### Information

The Council currently does not have any long term contracts for Temporary Accommodation Services and have been operating in the main on a spot purchase model.

The impact of not having significant contracts in place for these services have been:

- A decrease in availability of temporary accommodation - especially in the tourism sector due to increased demand (Covid Impact)
- Reduced control over associated spend due to significant fluctuations in market prices
- Lack of access to suitable temporary accommodation – particularly for larger families
- Poor contract compliance and management.

The procurement approach plans to secure a range of contracted and leased accommodation units through which the Council can provide good standard, appropriate temporary housing for those in need. It will also provide a framework for the Council to spot purchase additional units if required.

At the meeting Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Carter seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

## **Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision**

Alternative options were set out in the submitted report. The option being proposed is the preferred option as it enables the Council to undertake an open market procurement to secure the required number of units needed for the delivery of the Temporary Accommodation Service. The Council will also benefit from having a list of approved providers from which the Council can purchase additional units from on an 'as required' basis. This will also support any accommodation requirements as part of a response to an emergency incident.

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Does the call-in procedure apply?**

Yes

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

### **Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 19 November 2021

## Record of Decision

### Renewed listing of Parkfield as an Asset of Community Value

#### Decision Taker

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### Decision

That the application to re-list Parkfield, 38 Esplanade Road, Paignton in the Council's list of assets of community value (ACV), as previously listed on 30 September 2016, be approved.

#### Reason for the Decision

Following receipt of a community nomination for land to be listed as an ACV, a local authority must reach a decision whether or not to list nominated land within eight weeks of receiving the nomination.

#### Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 29 November 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

#### Information

Parkfield was listed as an Asset of Community Value ('ACV') on 30 September 2016. That listing expired on the 29 September 2021. An application to relist was received and must be determined in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.

The Equality Impact Assessment within the submitted report referred to the newly built Youth Centre on the Parkfield estate and not Parkfield House as set out in the application. Accordingly, the officer recommendation, as set out in the submitted report, was updated at the meeting to provide clarity of the relisting as previously approved in 2016. Councillor Carter proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion that was agreed by the Cabinet, as set out above.

#### Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

Having received a valid application, the only other option would be to refuse to list the asset as an Asset of Community Value. However, given the previous listing of the property and the continued uses, this option was discounted.

#### Is this a Key Decision?

No

#### Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

**Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 19 November 2021  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

## Record of Decision

### Torquay Town Deal - Business Case Assurance

#### Decision Taker

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### Decision

1. That the endorsement of the Torquay Town Board in respect of the business cases for the projects set out at Paragraph 1.2 of the submitted report be noted; and
2. that the business cases as set out in the Exempt Appendix 1 to the submitted report be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with any required amendments delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing and the Director of Finance.

#### Reason for the Decision

The proposals would enable delivery of Town Investment Plan projects from autumn of this year, which would demonstrate to the local community, investors and the Government the progress of the Town Deal. Submission of the business cases and the subsequent funding through the Town Deal provides investment which would create employment, attract additional investment and support residents in accessing support to help them gain work and deepen their skills in key sectors thereby in time contributing to a more resilient local economy.

#### Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 29 November 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

#### Information

In July 2020 the Council submitted a Town Investment Plan seeking funding to support the economic regeneration of Torquay from the Government's Town Deal programme, administered by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The Council was subsequently advised that the Investment Plan would be supported by £21.9 million of Town Deal grant subject to the submission of business cases. The first three business cases were submitted in July 2021 for Edginswell Rail Station, Harbour Public Realm and Stronger Futures projects.

Approval was sought to submit the five remaining business cases for projects which include;

- Strand (Debenhams)
- Pavilion
- Coastal Corridor Pinch Point
- Core area public realm
- Torquay Town Centre regeneration

to the renamed Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

At the meeting Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

### **Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision**

An alternative option would be not to submit the business cases, this option was discounted as the Towns Fund grant would not be released by the Government and the anticipated benefits from the schemes would not accrue. There would be significant disadvantages with this option which could include the loss of grant, lack of achievement of economic benefits and reputational harm with Government and local partners.

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Does the call-in procedure apply?**

Yes

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

### **Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 19 November 2021

## Record of Decision

### Growth Fund allocation - Edginswell Development

#### Decision Taker

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### Decision

1. That, subject to due diligence on legal and financial issues and the rent being in excess of the Council's loan repayments, the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Tourism, be authorised to negotiate and conclude lease and development terms with the incoming tenant and that the Council approve funding from the Growth Fund to fund the development at a sum not exceeding £6.5 million, of which £1.5 million is for the anticipated fit out costs that may or may not be required; and
2. that, subject to due diligence on legal and financial issues, the Chief Executive be authorised to finalise lease terms and enter into a lease that includes an option to purchase with the incoming tenant.

#### Reason for the Decision

To deliver economic growth through, targeted infrastructure investment and to meet the original objectives set out when the land was acquired in 2018.

#### Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 29 November 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

#### Information

In 2018 the Council acquired 6 acres of land at Edginswell, Torquay, with the intention of unlocking a prime employment site at the strategic Torquay Gateway, adjacent to the South Devon Highway.

The Council acting as landowner and developer wish to progress and enter into contracts to develop and lease a new production, research and design facility, with external parking and servicing on land at Edginswell Business Park, Orchard Way Torquay. The facility would provide circa 2,100 sq m space with the potential to bring 100 new jobs to Torbay, for an innovative and expanding company in the sector of research, training and production of energy based surgical systems.

At the meeting Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion which was unanimously approved by the Cabinet, as set out above.

#### Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

Alternative options for the site have been considered (including Leisure, Builders merchants,



speculative business units). However, having now progressed with the Wickes store proposal the Council had the benefit of approximately 2 new development plateaus that would be created by the enabling works.

**Is this a Key Decision?**

No

**Does the call-in procedure apply?**

Yes

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

**Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 19 November 2021

## Record of Decision

### **Economic Growth Fund investment to deliver five new business units at Lymington Road Coach Station.**

#### **Decision Taker**

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### **Decision**

1. To increase Torbay Council's prudential borrowing up to £1,367,369 from the Growth Fund to fund the development shortfall over and above the Getting Building Fund grant; and
2. to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Tourism and Housing, to approve the final project brief/specification for the public realm works and to allocate funds from existing revenue sources.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

The buildings are currently vacant and prone to vandalism with poor customer facilities for arriving visitors. Without investment the coach station environment would further decline generating void management costs and an increase in anti-social behaviour.

There was also a shortage of small business units in Torbay and the rental stream from the new units would service the loan required to support the Council's contribution.

#### **Implementation**

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 29 November 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

#### **Information**

On 15 December 2020, the Cabinet approved prudential borrowing of £1,367,369 from the Growth Fund to contribute towards the costs of building five new business units on the site of the former CCTV building and café, and to implement improvements to the public realm within the vicinity of the coach station and car park.

Following this decision market conditions have changed and a budget increase is required to address the inflation in build costs, the results of detailed site investigations, and to address feedback received from the Environment Agency, service departments, Torbay Council's planning department and engagement with Members and the community regarding improvements to the public realm.

At the meeting Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

**Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision**

The proposed development would see the demolition of some existing derelict buildings which had historically been hard to let and were beyond their economic life. An alternative option to the proposal was to enhance the existing structure and then continue to try and find a potential tenant.

**Is this a Key Decision?**

Yes – Reference Number: I085818

**Does the call-in procedure apply?**

Yes

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

**Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 19 November 2021  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

## Record of Decision

### **Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board - Impact on the Council of the increase in the Higher Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant**

#### **Decision Taker**

Cabinet on 16 November 2021

#### **Decision**

That the Cabinet's response to the Overview and Scrutiny Board - Impact on the Council of the increase in the Higher Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant be approved, as published.

#### **Reason for the Decision**

The Cabinet was required to respond to the findings of the review undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

#### **Implementation**

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 29 November 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

#### **Information**

The Cabinet received the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on the impact on the Council of the increase in the Higher Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. In accordance with section D7 of Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny as set out in the Constitution, the Cabinet was required to respond to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board within two months.

Subsequently the Cabinet prepared a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board which was proposed by Councillor Law and seconded by Councillor Cowell and agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

#### **Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision**

No alternative options were considered.

#### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

#### **Does the call-in procedure apply?**

Yes

**Declarations of interest** (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

**Published**

19 November 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 19 November 2021

**Meeting:** Cabinet **Date:** 14/12/2021

**Wards affected:** Cockington with Chelston, Tormohun, Preston

**Report Title:** Redevelopment of Former WCs – Corbyn Head & Preston

**When does the decision need to be implemented:** Immediately.

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Cllr Swithin Long, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Housing & Tourism. [Swithin.long@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Swithin.long@torbay.gov.uk) Cllr Darren Cowell, Cabinet Member for Finance. [Darren.cowell@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Darren.cowell@torbay.gov.uk)

**Director/Assistant Director Contact Details:** Liam Montgomery, Director of Asset Management, Investment & Housing. [Liam.montgomery@tda.uk.net](mailto:Liam.montgomery@tda.uk.net)

## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 To develop the former WC's at Corbyn Head and Preston (North), identified by the plans at appendix 1, with investment from the Growth Fund to form café/restaurant premises with provision of community facilities. The WC's are no longer fit for purposes and are closed.
- 1.2 The proposal is to agree a building specification, then enter into an Agreement for Lease with two different operators selected following a marketing exercise, who will take the development on in shell form on completion of a 25 year Lease and then fit out the premises to an agreed specification at their own expense.
- 1.3 The red line plan at appendix 1 is indicative at this stage and subject to minor alteration. Please note the green shaded area is the possible maximum extent of any external seating and again is only indicative at this stage and subject to alteration.
- 1.4 The intended outcome is to maximise the potential of currently unused assets by creating new quality business premises which will generate new jobs, promote inward investment and provide new leisure facilities for residents and visitors.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.

We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

We want Torbay to be the premier resort in the UK, with a vibrant arts and cultural offer for our residents and visitors to enjoy; where our built and natural environment is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate change emergency.

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver this ambition by enabling the redevelopment of two buildings that are currently redundant and impacting negatively on the surrounding environment. The proposal will create two thriving businesses and provide facilities for the public such as WCs.
- 2.2 Direct investment in these properties, rather than disposing of them by way of a lease and the leaseholder providing the investment, will ensure that pace and quality is maintained at these important locations.
- 2.3 The proposed redevelopment of the former WCs will create in total circa 40+ jobs with established employers who offer training opportunities. The Council's investment in these properties will be repaid from the ongoing rental stream that will be created.
- 2.4 The proposals in this report help us to deliver the Council's ambitions by the creation of 40+ jobs with established employers who offer training opportunities and have links with local colleges. The proposals will also raise the profile of the area and encourage inward investment from other businesses. The proposed redevelopment will be undertaken with consideration given to energy efficiency and the businesses would commit to initiatives such as plastic-free packaging, reduction in food-miles etc.

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

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1. That the use of the Growth Fund is approved to fund up to £1,250,000 for the redevelopment of former public toilets at Corbyn Head and up to £717,500 to fund the redevelopment of former public toilets at Preston, identified by the land edged red at Appendix 1, having demonstrated that the potential rental stream is sufficient to meet the terms of the Growth fund as set out in exempt Appendix 2; with due diligence to be delegated to the Director of Finance, and the Director of Asset Management, Investment and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Tourism, to
  - Agree and finalise the detailed lease terms and to enter into a 25 year lease with the preferred bidders
  - Ensure that the Growth Fund criteria are met as a consequence of the lease terms, including ensuring that the business case meets borrowing costs.

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Indicative Plan of Corbyn Head and Preston Site

Appendix 2 – Financial Summary – Part 2 Confidential

### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 Both buildings are closed to the public and not fit for purpose as WCs. The buildings are both in a reasonable condition, but it is anticipated that they will fall further into disrepair. This may encourage anti social behaviour and does not foster the impression of Torbay being a thriving place to live and visit if buildings in such prominent positions are empty and unused.
- 1.2 Following a marketing exercise in late 2020, the preferred bidders selected for Corbyn Head are WeSup Limited, and for Preston, Pierhead Cafes & Bars Limited. However, if final terms cannot be agreed with the selected bidders, then alternative bidders will be considered.
- 1.3 The proposal will remove the ongoing maintenance liability of these buildings and represents an opportunity to:
  - Create new jobs with training opportunities.
  - Design good quality energy efficient buildings and require the operator to adopt environmentally friendly initiatives which may encourage others to follow suit.
  - Generate a rental income and revenue from business rates. Once the Growth Fund finance is repaid, the asset will be purely income generating.

### 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 Providing the respective bidders with a long lease and then for them to obtain a planning permission and redevelop the site was considered.

Due to a range of reasons including available finance, the interested parties were planning to redevelop the properties in stages over a number of years.

It was felt that the proposed option gives greater certainty to the Council around the delivery timeframe and the quality of what will be produced.
- 2.2 Alternative courses of action may include refurbishing the buildings and leasing them at a peppercorn or use only or as WCs. This would create a revenue pressure on the Council with no identified funding source. This route would also forgo the opportunity to maximise the potential from these spaces and generate income from the buildings and may otherwise result in an ongoing maintenance liability for the Council.



### 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 It is proposed that the cost of the preliminary works/surveys, design, planning consultancy and construction are financed via the Growth Fund.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the cost of servicing the finance will be met through the receipt of a market rent, or higher, for the completed development.
- 3.3 High level concept design drawings have been funded and submitted by the preferred bidders and costed by a quantity surveyor to inform the business case.
- 3.4 Further work is required to better refine and finalise the costs for each project and therefore the build costs figures set out in Appendix 2 are only estimates at this stage. In the event the design or scope of the project alters after liaison with the Planning Authority then the rental figure may alter accordingly. In any event the rent will always be a market rent or a figure sufficient to service the Councils loan repayments, whichever is higher and the total capital expenditure will not exceed the amounts set out in the recommendation.

### 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 None, other than to enter into an Agreement for Lease and then a 25 year lease with the proposed operators.
- 4.2 Please note that the plan at Appendix 1 is currently indicative and is subject to minor alteration. The areas shaded green is a possible area for external leasing and may be dealt with via a separate lease/license and is yet to be determined.

### 5. Engagement and Consultation

---

- 5.1 Since the initial marketing of the opportunity at the end of 2020, the proposed details of the project have only been discussed internally and with Members.
- 5.2 It is proposed to carry out a period of community engagement and consultation during the design stage and via the planning process.

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

---

- 6.1 The Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012, would be considered as part of the process to instruct a construction partner.

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

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7.1 It is proposed that the buildings would be redeveloped to maximise energy efficiency within the available budget. Part of the selection process to identify a preferred potential operator for the proposed new premises, was based on the operator's track record of implementing environmentally friendly initiatives such as plastic-free packaging, reducing food miles, encouraging the use of bicycles etc. These requirements will be set out and formalised in the lease documents.

## 8. Associated Risks

---

8.1 The risk associated with the proposal not being implemented would be that the buildings would fall further into disrepair representing a maintenance liability for the Council. This may also encourage anti social behaviour and create a negative impression of Torbay's ability to attract investment.

8.2 The largest financial risk is linked to the proposed tenant facing difficulties and potentially unable to repay the rent. In this scenario the Council would obtain possession of the building and seek a new tenant to operate the facility. It is considered that due to the location of these properties we would expect to see a good range of interest once the buildings are complete and available for occupation.

## Equality Impacts

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

---

[Click here to enter text.](#)

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Potential to include modern WCs & activities		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact on this group with this proposal.
People with a disability	Potential to include modern WCs with disabled facilities		

Women or men			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
People who are transgendered			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact on this group with this proposal
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Creation of jobs with training opportunities		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			No impact on the health of the population

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

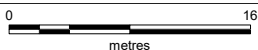
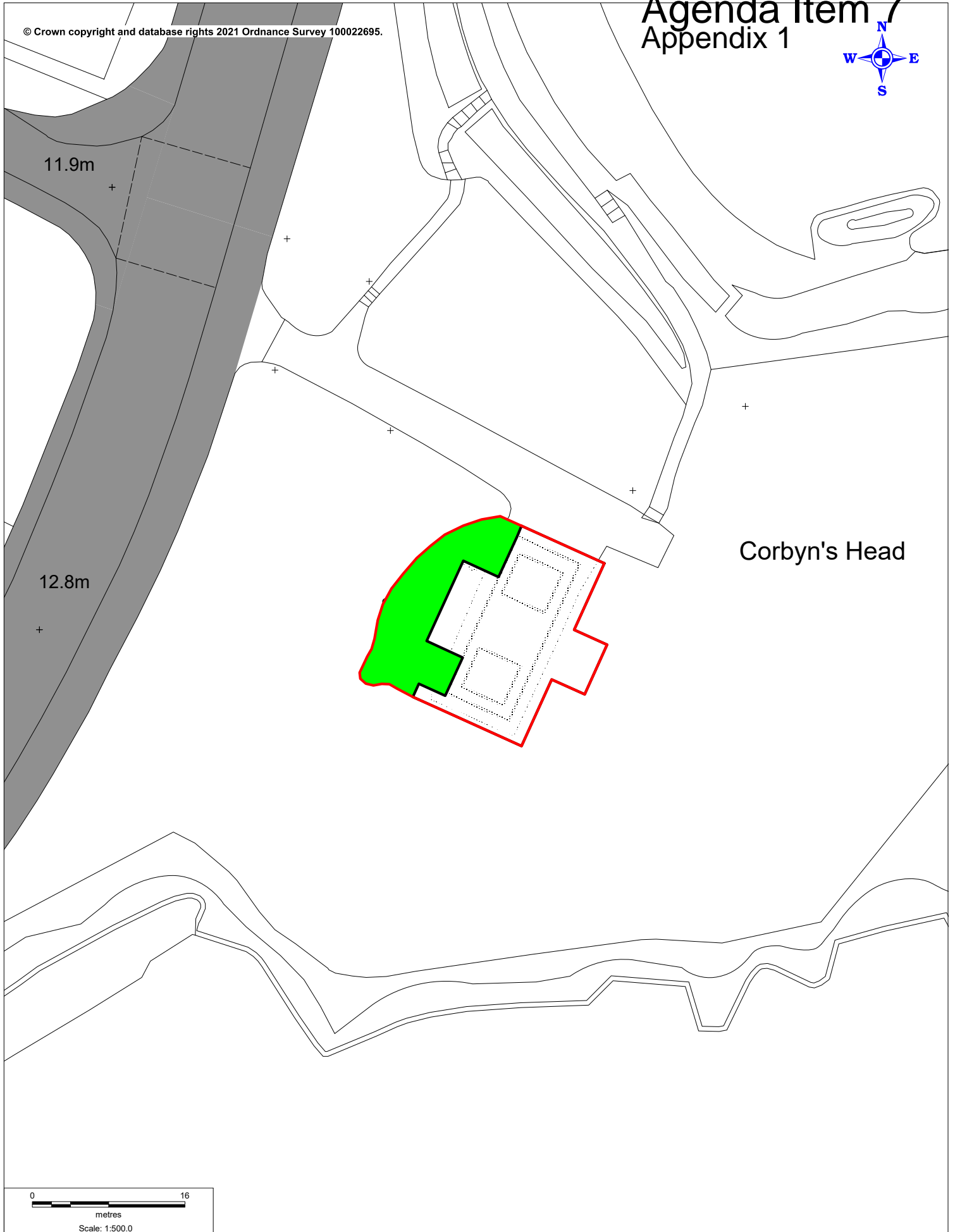
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10.1 None

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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11.1 None



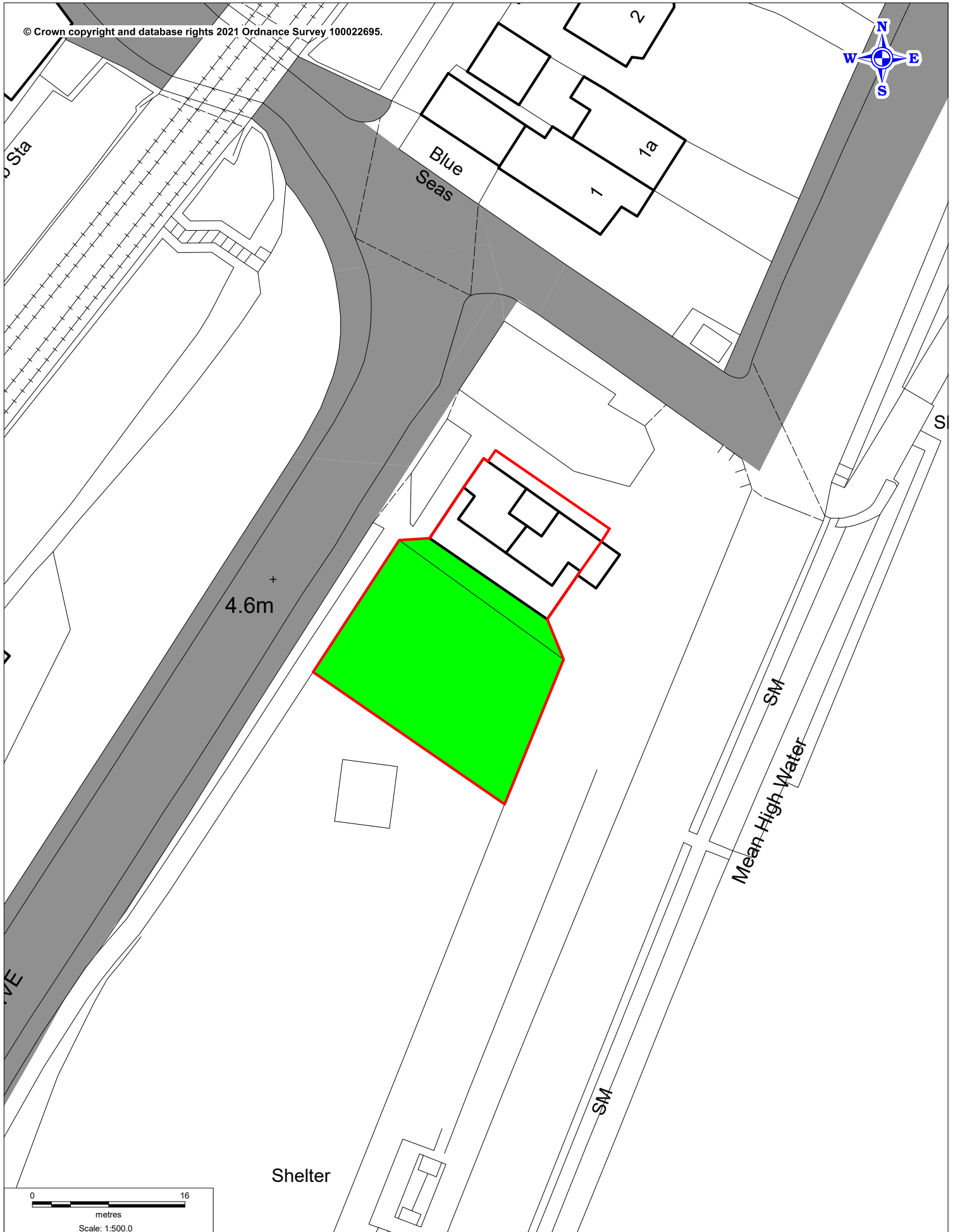
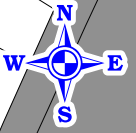
Scale: 1:500.0

EM Plan No: EM3751  
Date: 17th November 2021  
Title: Concept for Corbyn's Head, Torquay.

Asset No: T0245  
LR Title No: DN521785  
Scale: 1:500  
Area: 393.74m<sup>2</sup>

**TORBAY**  
COUNCIL





EM Plan No: EM3752  
Date: 17th November 2021  
Title: Concept Preston Green North, Paignton.

Asset No: P0635  
LR Title No: DN545274  
Scale: 1:500  
Area: 580.27m<sup>2</sup>

**TORBAY**  
COUNCIL



Document is Restricted

**Meeting:** Cabinet **Date:** 14/12/21

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** 4/1/2022

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Councillor Christine Carter - Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services | [christine.carter@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:christine.carter@torbay.gov.uk)

**Director/Assistant Director Contact Details:** Tara Harris – Divisional Director Community and Customer Services | [Tara.Harris@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Tara.Harris@torbay.gov.uk)

## 1. Purpose of Report

---

- 1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires Tier 1 Authorities to undertake an assessment of the support needs of victims of domestic violence and their children in safe accommodation; and to produce a Safe Accommodation Strategy to meet the needs identified.
- 1.2 This report provides a summary of the feedback from the consultation carried out on the draft Safe Accommodation Strategy. This consultation was required by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) before the Strategy is submitted to them on 5th January 2022.
- 1.3 This report seeks formal approval of the Strategy.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

---

- 2.1 The actions recommended by the Safe Accommodation Strategy support the following objectives:
  - We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.
  - We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

- 2.2 The proposals in this report help us to deliver these ambitions by ensuring that victims of domestic abuse and their children can access and receive appropriate support in safe accommodation.

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

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- 3.1 That the Safe Accommodation Strategy and action plan is approved.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 to 2024

## Supporting Information

### 1. Introduction

---

- 1.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires Tier 1 Authorities to undertake an assessment of the support needs of victims of domestic violence and their children in safe accommodation; and to produce a Safe Accommodation Strategy to meet the needs identified.
- 1.2 A draft Safe Accommodation Strategy must be produced and published by 31st October 2021 outlining how the needs identified in the assessment will be met.
- 1.3 The Safe Accommodation Duty commenced on 1st October 2021.
- 1.4 The Safe Accommodation Strategy will sit as part of the new DASV Strategy to be produced next year.
- 1.5 The draft Strategy was published on the Council's website from 1st to 21st November and circulated to DASVEG and DASV Operational Group members for consultation.

### 2. Financial Opportunities and Implications

---

- 2.1 New Burdens monies have been made available from central Government on an annual basis for the first three years, after which time the funding will be included in the Local Government Finance Settlement. For 21/22 we received £308 541, which has been used to undertake the safe accommodation needs assessment; and to increase capacity in the commissioned service including the provision of some additional safe houses for use as temporary accommodation as an alternative to bed and breakfast.



- 2.2 This funding is not ring fenced; however the Authority is required to account for how the monies have been used to address the needs identified in the needs assessment and strategy.

### 3. Legal Implications

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- 3.1 The Safe Accommodation Strategy is a requirement under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

### 4. Engagement and Consultation

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- 4.1 The deadline for the submission of the Safe Accommodation Strategy to DLUHC was moved from 31st October 2021 (as previously reported) to 5th January 2022, to allow for consultation on the draft Strategy.
- 4.2 The timescale for the consultation was necessarily short due to the late change in the requirements from the DHLUC, requiring publication of the draft, revision, and approval of the Strategy by the beginning of January. The draft Strategy was published on the Council's website from 1st to 21st November. and circulated to the multi-agency Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive and Operational Groups for consultation.
- 4.3 The Strategy itself has been directly informed by the voices of 25 people with lived experience of using domestic abuse services in Torbay, who shared their stories and views as part of the needs assessment this summer.
- 4.4 Five questions were posed for the consultation:
- Is the Strategy easy to read and understand?
  - If no, please tell us how it can be improved.
  - Do you agree with the recommendations made?
  - If not, what would you like to see added?
  - Is there anything else you would like to see added or included in the commissioning and action plan?
- 4.5. Only 3 responses were received:
- All said the Strategy was easy to read and understand and no one disagreed with the recommendations.
  - One respondent gave positive feedback on the case studies used and commented that they made the strategy come to life.
  - There was also comment about missing data concerning people experiencing DVA who leave Torbay and whether the reasons for this are captured. This has not been collected to date, however; does form part of a new dataset to be captured by the commissioned service to identify reasons why safe accommodation is not accessed.

4.6 There have been no major changes to the Strategy as a result of the consultation. Some refinements have been made to formatting and an Executive Summary added.

## 5. Tackling Climate Change

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5.1 All work relating to the needs assessment, consultation and development of the Safe Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken electronically and virtually.

## 6. Associated Risks

---

6.1 Failure to act upon the recommendations and actions set out in the Safe Accommodation Strategy will be considered a breach of the Authority's new statutory duty under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

6.2 The DLUHC will monitor our progress against the Strategy by way of an annual report.

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

---

The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment has highlighted a lack of consistent collection of data across agencies in relation to people with protected characteristics and minoritized groups. Improvement in this regard is one of the key actions resulting from the strategy.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Actions to address under representation of older people in domestic abuse services. Consideration of appropriate and affordable pathways for accommodation with support for young		

	people experiencing domestic violence.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No differential impact
People with a disability	Actions to address under representation of people with disabilities in domestic abuse services		
Women or men	Positive impact on males who are under - represented in services		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	Actions to address under representation of people with disabilities in domestic abuse services		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	Ensure understanding of certain cultural practices that are defined as domestic abuse (e.g. Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence) and that victims can seek safe accommodation and support.		
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Actions to address under representation of LGBT+ people in domestic abuse services		
People who are transgendered	Actions to address under representation of LGBT+ people with disabilities		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact – the new definition of domestic abuse incorporates a range of interpersonal relationships.

Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Pregnancy is a trigger for domestic abuse. Increased accommodation and support will have a positive impact for those choosing to leave the situation.		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Better understanding of links between socio-economic factors and the presence of domestic abuse. Improved understanding of trauma by staff working with domestic abuse victims and survivors will aid identification		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			No differential impact as this duty is very targeted at specific groups in safe accommodation.

## 8. Cumulative Council Impact

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- 8.1 The Safe Accommodation duty recognises children as victims in their own right and for those in safe accommodation, requires that the support needs in relation to domestic abuse are identified and met.
- 8.2 Removal of local connection criteria and requirement to accept cross border referrals may result in increased demand for housing and safe accommodation services. Additional safe houses for use specifically as temporary accommodation for domestic abuse victims have been commissioned, as bed and breakfast placements does not constitute “safe accommodation under the Act.

## 9. Cumulative Community Impacts

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- 9.1 The Strategy is overseen by Torbay’s Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group which has taken on the role of the multi-agency Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board that is required under the Domestic Abuse Act. Whilst the Authority holds the duty, the accountability for delivering the Strategy lies with all partner agencies on the Executive Group.

# Domestic Abuse

# Safe Accommodation Strategy

2021- 2024

*Supporting victim survivors and their children to be safe, recover and thrive*



## Version control

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Updated by</b>
<b>06/08/21</b>	First draft	Shirley Beauchamp
<b>13/08/21</b>	Updates to first draft	Shirley Beauchamp
<b>12/09/21</b>	Action plan added	Shirley Beauchamp
<b>24/10/21</b>	Revisions	Shirley Beauchamp
<b>24/11/21</b>	Updated following consultation, executive summary added	Shirley Beauchamp
<b>01/12/21</b>	Amended terminology relating to ethnic minority groups	Shirley Beauchamp

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For more information, please contact [safercommunities@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:safercommunities@torbay.gov.uk)

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## Executive Summary

This Strategy has been developed in response to Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which requires Tier One Authorities to undertake a needs assessment of safe accommodation and support provision for victims of domestic abuse, and their children; and prepare a Strategy to meet the needs identified.

Torbay's Safe Accommodation Strategy will form part of a new Domestic Violence Strategy to be published in 2022, following a comprehensive strategic review which includes a review of the Torbay Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

This Strategy follows the safe accommodation journey of victim survivors in three parts - finding a safe place to stay, getting support in safe accommodation, and moving on to a new, permanent home. It has been informed by:

- A desktop literature review and analysis of local regional and national data
- Data collection across range of agencies - including the commissioned service, the police, homelessness and housing options, and Children's services - with a focus on referrals for safe accommodation, specialist domestic abuse support, and moving on
- Analysis of findings from the Are You OK survey undertaken by Torbay Council earlier in 2021
- Interviews with people with lived experience of domestic abuse using services in Torbay

"the one thing that seems so hard at first was actually housing. It was literally one thing is you have nowhere to go. And first, obviously when I walked down that road, the first day, the hardest bit was walking and realising my children were still there. And so it was 'where am I gonna go?'"

- Victim in Torbay

## Main findings

- Prevalence of domestic abuse in Torbay does not match local demographics- especially regarding older people and minoritised groups
- Inconsistent and inadequate data collection across agencies, particularly in respect of protected characteristics and intersectionality, meaning that we cannot be clear on the needs and demand for "by and for" services and commission to meet those needs
- Victims and survivors consistently tell us that the process for accessing a safe place to stay and applying for housing is daunting and overwhelming

Disturbingly the conclusion drawn from the feedback of people with lived experience is that the system, and the processes within it, are inadvertently contributing to creating increased risk; and undermining efforts to prevent domestic violence and abuse and to support and encourage victims to leave abusive relationships.

## Summary of actions and commissioning plan:

### Supporting victim survivors and their children to be safe, recover and thrive by:

- Increasing safe accommodation capacity
- Increasing safe accommodation accessibility particularly for those under-represented/less visible according to Torbay's demographic profile
- Developing new pathways for safe accommodation support according to the urgency of the victim's situation, with support options tailored to their circumstances
- Adopting aspects of The Whole Housing Approach to prevent victims needing to access safe accommodation, including those experiencing economic abuse
- Developing support in Safe Accommodation and to move on including elements of The Whole Housing Approach
- Developing skills in the workforce including trauma informed approaches
- Working with the Peninsula DASV Commissioners Group to devise a regional commissioning plan to address specialist needs and priorities identified from all the Peninsula safe accommodation needs assessments, including developing cross border referral pathways.

## Introduction

### Purpose of this Strategy

This Strategy sets out how Torbay Council will respond to its statutory duty to provide support to victim survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) and their children in safe accommodation.

The Strategy has been informed by the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment and the voices of those with lived experience of using domestic abuse services in Torbay. We would like to express our thanks to all those who took part in the surveys and lived experience interviews, for sharing their stories and reflections on their experiences. This document could not have been written without them.

The Safe Accommodation Strategy is part of Torbay's wider Domestic Violence Strategy however it is intended that this document can serve as a sub-strategy in support of the wider parent document.

The Needs Assessment has been developed alongside a broad review of the system response to domestic violence and abuse in Torbay, and the operation of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Some findings and recommendations from the Needs Assessment require partnership and/or systemic actions that cannot be achieved in isolation. To this end full public consultation on the Safe Accommodation Strategy and the relevant links to the wider parent strategy will take place once the full strategic review has been completed and the parent strategy drafted. It is expected that this will be completed by Summer 2022.

Consultation on this emerging Safe Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken with:

- Torbay Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Operational Group
- Torbay Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (which holds the function of the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021)
- Torbay Council internal governance procedures (Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet)
- Publication of the draft Strategy on Torbay Council's "Are You OK" website from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 prior to finalising the document for submission to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

**This document supports the Council's strategic aims to “work with partners to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence and its effects” and to Protect and involve children and young people”.**

## Background

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent in April 2021. Part 4 of the Act established a new duty upon Tier 1 local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. This is referred to as the Safe Accommodation Duty, although the duty itself is not a requirement to provide “safe accommodation”, but instead to assess the needs of and provide support to victim survivors and their children within safe accommodation. The Act sets out definitions of what is meant by the terms “safe accommodation” and “support”. These can be found in the section “Finding a Safe Place to Stay” below.

Part 4 of the Act is accompanied by statutory guidance to assist Local Authorities in their interpretation and delivery of the new duty.

## Summary of the Safe Accommodation Duty

- The new duty requires Tier 1 LAs to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. This is the first time that there has been a statutory duty to identify and respond to the support needs of children and victims residing in safe accommodation. The duty includes a requirement to provide accommodation to those seeking support and accommodation from across LA boundaries.
- A Needs Assessment of safe accommodation and support provision across the area must be undertaken every 3 years and refreshed annually. The Needs Assessment should include some specific datasets and must identify the needs of victims accessing domestic abuse safe accommodation from across local authority boundaries.
- The Needs Assessment will inform the development of a Safe Accommodation Strategy setting out how the identified needs will be met and associated commissioning plans.
- The LA must set up a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to oversee the implementation and delivery of the Safe Accommodation Strategy; and to review and evaluate effectiveness of the Strategy. This can be an existing group. Membership should include:
  - the Tier 1 Authority,
  - representative for victims of domestic abuse,
  - representative for children of DVA victims
  - DVA Charities and other CVS organisations
  - Health Care services
  - Policing /criminal justice
  - Housing
- In Torbay the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) has taken on the role and responsibilities of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

## How the Safe Accommodation Strategy will be Used and Monitored

The Strategy will inform commissioning (and de-commissioning – where appropriate) decisions in respect of support and safe accommodation for victim survivors of DVA and their children.

A Safe Accommodation Commissioning Plan will be developed which will include:

- Local commissioning priorities, including joint commissioning opportunities with statutory partners
- Identification of gaps in support and how these will be met
- Regional commissioning priorities – these are services considered to be more viable if co-commissioned regionally, or with one or two neighbouring authorities.
- How the needs of minority communities will be met, including through “by and for” services.

Progress against the Strategy and commissioning plan will be monitored by Torbay’s DASVEG in the first instance, and through annual reporting as prescribed by the DLUHC.

This Strategy and associated Needs Assessment will also inform a Peninsula Safe Accommodation Commissioning Plan, setting out commissioning priorities across the region.

Regional commissioning will be driven by the Peninsula Commissioning Group, which comprises:

- DVA commissioners from Torbay, Plymouth City Council, Devon County Council and Cornwall Council
- Devon Clinical Commissioning Group
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall.

There is regular liaison with the Regional Partnerships and Policy Lead from the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner; providing opportunities for two way communication and feedback on how the new duties are being implemented on the ground.

### Connectivity with Other Strategies

This Strategy will form part of the overall Torbay Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, which will be reviewed and re-launched in 2022. The Safe Accommodation Strategy also links to the following national and local strategies:

<b>National</b>	Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2021
	Victims Strategy 2018 and updated Victim’s Code 2021
<b>Regional</b>	Emerging Peninsula Safe Accommodation Commissioning Plan
	Peninsula Community Safety Partnerships Strategic Assessment 2020-21
<b>Local</b>	Torbay Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy – under review
	Torbay Housing Strategy 2020-25
	Torbay Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25
	Torbay Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2020-21
	Torbay Children and Young People’s Plan 2018-23 (updated Feb 2021)
	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-22
	Torbay Council Community and Corporate Plan 2019-23
	Devon Community Mental Health Framework
	Emerging Standing Tall Community DASV Partnership Community Strategy

## The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment

A Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment, as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, was undertaken by external consultants during the period June to September 2021. The assessment followed guidance set out by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The assessment used a range of sources including the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW), national literature and research and localised data where this was available.

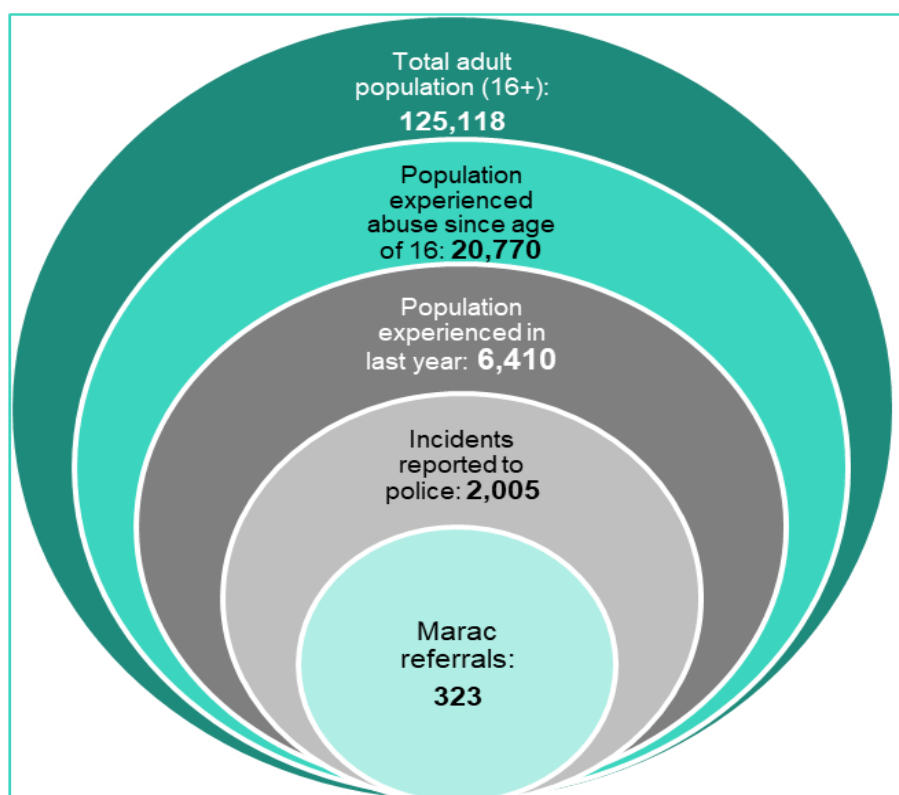
An Executive Summary of the Needs Assessment accompanies this document. Key findings are set out in this Strategy, described in sections that relate to different parts of the Safe Accommodation journey. The Needs Assessment captures and incorporates the voices of those who have experienced seeking and /or staying in safe accommodation in Torbay.

### Demographics and Prevalence

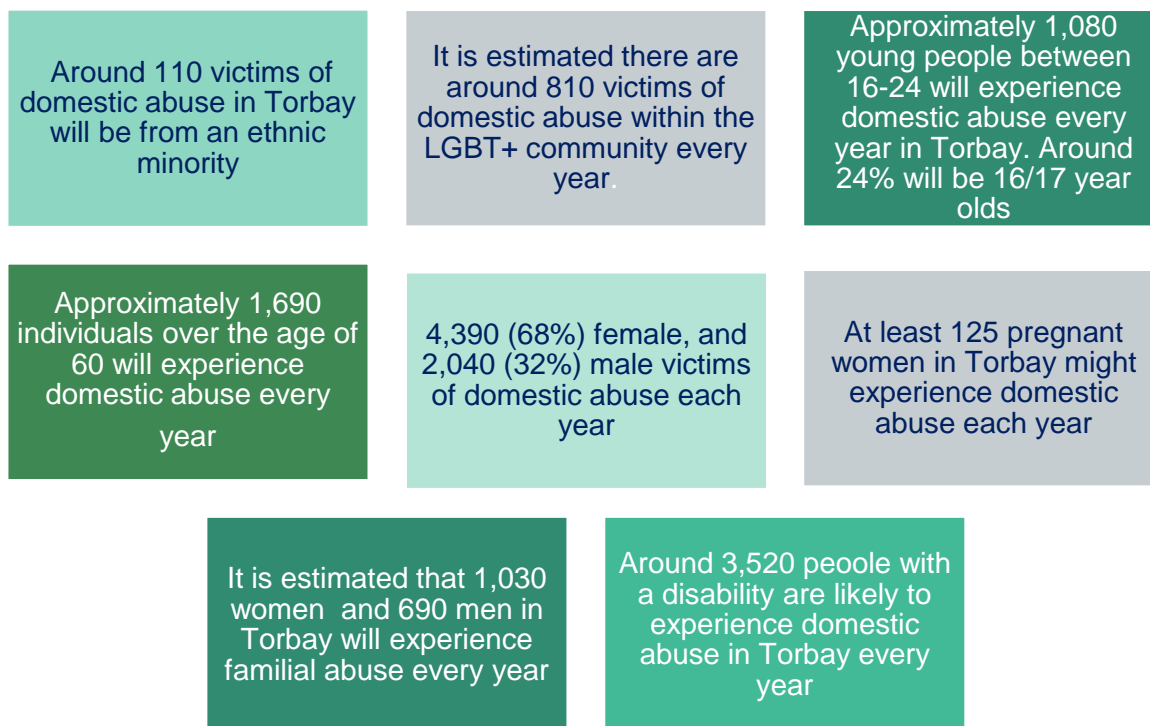
In 2020 Torbay's collective population was 136,2181. There are 125,118 individuals aged 16 or over in Torbay of which we can estimate around 20,770 will have experienced domestic abuse over their lifetime.

On an annual basis, this equates to 6,410 individuals likely to have experienced domestic abuse (both familial and intimate partner violence) of which the majority (n=4,710, 73%) will be intimate partner violence. (Source – ONS 2020 Mid-Year Population estimates and Crime Survey of England and Wales [CSEW] 2020)

**Image 1: overview of domestic abuse prevalence in Torbay**



## Image 2: Protected Characteristics



- The new Domestic Abuse Act (2021) continues to define domestic abuse victims as individuals over the age of 16, however it has also recognised children as direct victims. Authorities therefore need to consider how **young people** under the statutory definition age of 16 might experience abuse and harmful behaviours within their relationships; and how they might access safe accommodation services and support. A study of 13 to 17 year olds by NSPCC suggests this abuse can begin even earlier in adolescence for large numbers of young people. A quarter (25%) of girls and 18% of boys in the study reported having experienced some form of physical violence from an intimate partner. SafeLives Children’s Insights data found that nearly all (95%) of young people experiencing intimate partner violence were female.

**In Torbay in 2020/21, nearly 51% of children who came into the care of the Authority had domestic abuse recorded as a factor in their assessment in the same year or previous two years**

- The CSEW 2020 data shows those **aged 55 to 74 years** were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020 than those in most other age groups. However, the CSEW previously did not capture data on victims of domestic abuse aged over 74, and **older victims** of domestic abuse are ‘hugely underrepresented’ in domestic abuse services.
- A 2019 Women’s Aid Annual Survey found that only around 3.4% of their service users were **over the age of 60**.

**In Torbay very low numbers of older people access the domestic abuse service.**

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that 14% of older people in Torbay live in an area that is amongst the 20% most deprived in relation to income deprivation affecting older people in England. This might be an additional barrier faced by older people in Torbay.
- A considerable number of **men** also experience domestic abuse. Mankind (2021) describe male victims as:
  - invisible,

- often unaware of existing support,
  - not being referred/signposted to appropriate support, and,
  - unable to access dedicated services including accommodation services.
- From their estimates around 300 men across the UK may be rough sleepers due to domestic abuse. Men are less likely to access services with men making up only 4.4% of victims of domestic abuse being supported by local domestic services.

**In Torbay no men accessed safe accommodation in the period 2018 to 2021 service.**

- Crime data for the year ending March 2020 showed that **adults who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse** compared than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed
- It is well known that domestic abuse can escalate in **pregnancy**, putting both the victim and their unborn child at significant risk. Around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy, while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy.

**In Torbay we see very low numbers of pregnant women in safe accommodation.**

- SafeLives (2018) reported that **LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse** are almost twice as likely to have attempted suicide
- LGBT+ victims are more than twice as likely to have self-harmed
- LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse are more likely to be abused by multiple perpetrators (15% compared to 9% of non-LGBT+ victims)
- The ONS (2018) reported that **bisexual women** are nearly twice as likely (10.9%) as heterosexual women (6%) to report partner abuse. Lesbian women are also more likely than heterosexual women to report partner abuse (8% to 6%).

**In Torbay we are unable to identify the number of victim survivors from the LGBT+ community experiencing domestic violence and abuse as the data is not consistently collected.**

- For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed that men and women aged 16 to 74 years with a **disability** were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without. Research has shown that 'disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and are also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape. However, MARAC data shows that nationally only 3.9% of referrals were for disabled victims, significantly lower than the SafeLives recommendation of 16% or higher, (*SafeLives, 2020*). Research shows that the number of disabled people referred into domestic abuse services is also low and this picture is reflected locally.

**In Torbay the number of people with a disability referred into domestic abuse services is low.**

- **Ethnicity-** the CSEW (2020) shows that:
  - those in the Mixed ethnic group were significantly more likely to experience domestic abuse within the last year than those in the Black or Asian ethnic groups
  - White ethnic group, women were significantly more likely than men to have experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2020 (7.7% of women, compared with 3.6% of men).

- Familial abuse was more likely in in the White and Mixed ethnic groups than those in the Black ethnic group.

**In Torbay most victim/survivors accessing services are White or White British. The next largest groups are Black or Black British, Asian, or Asian British and Mixed or Dual Heritage.**

- Torbay experiences very few applications from people with **No Recourse to Public Funds**.
- Current services are not set up to appropriately support victims and survivors who experience **multiple and intersecting disadvantages**. Previous research carried out by AVA and Agenda found that of 173 local areas in England and Wales, only 19 had access to support for women facing multiple disadvantage that could address all the following issues: substance use, criminal justice contact, poor mental health, and homelessness.

**Torbay is already addressing this issue by commissioning homelessness, adult substance misuse and domestic abuse services together as part of a Multiple Complex Needs Alliance. This is expected to go live in early 2023.**

- Research has shown that **socio-economic factors** also play a role in the prevalence of domestic violence and abuse. A comparison of educational qualifications shows that as the level of qualification goes up, so does the disparity between Torbay and the national average.
- The percentage of the Torbay population claiming out of work benefits is slightly higher than the national average but higher than the rest of the South West.
- Poverty and deprivation do not cause domestic abuse however they **set “a context which may create additional vulnerabilities or escalation of abuse”** (Source – *Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment*). Torbay’s ranking as the 38th most deprived upper-tier local authority out of 151 for 2019, and its low wage economy, may therefore contribute in part to the levels of domestic violence and abuse in the area.

In comparison with the estimated prevalence set out above, we see low numbers of older people, those with disabilities and LGBT+ people in domestic abuse services in Torbay. However, this conclusion is based on a lack of evidence as poor and inconsistent data collection makes it difficult to see the full picture.

Similarly, it is difficult to ascertain the numbers of people experiencing multiple disadvantages as many will not have sought help from services. The wider strategic review and resulting DVA Strategy for Torbay will explore this issue further.

## Finding a safe place to stay

“I had to leave my home, I had to leave everything I owned. I had to put my dog with a foster family and it was extremely difficult and then to kind of have to fight for a chance, you know, fight to be able to be just offered like basic housing needs was just awful.”

- Victim in Torbay



## The definition of Safe Accommodation

Under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the following are considered as “Safe Accommodation” for the purposes of the duty:



**Refuges** offer accommodation and intensive support, which is tied to that accommodation, usually comprising several units in one building with some communal areas.

**Specialist safe accommodation** are refuges providing dedicated specialist support to victims from minority ethnic groups, or people with complex intersectional needs such as drug and alcohol abuse and poor mental health. Sometimes the service is led by those sharing the same characteristics, these are known as “By and For” services.

**Dispersed accommodation** is safe (secure and dedicated to supporting victims of domestic abuse), self-contained ‘semi-independent’ accommodation which is not within a refuge.

**Sanctuary Schemes** provide enhanced physical security measures within a home, enabling victims to remain in their home if they wish and it is safe to do so, and the perpetrator does not live in the same accommodation.

**Move-on and / or second stage accommodation** temporarily accommodate victims and their families no longer needing the intensive level of support provided in a refuge, but who require a lower level of domestic abuse specific support before moving on to permanent accommodation

**Other forms of domestic abuse emergency accommodation** give victims an opportunity to spend a short time to consider and make decisions in an environment which is self-contained and safe.

## What there is

Torbay Domestic Abuse Service is the only commissioned domestic abuse service in Torbay, providing 15 units of safe accommodation by way of self-contained properties dispersed across the Bay:

**Table 1: Mapping of Safe Accommodation services in Torbay**

Property Type	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	Notes
Flat	2	5	1	1x 2 bedroom flat is ground floor and can be shared by 2 single people.
House	0	3	2	
Bungalow	0	1	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	15 units as 1x 2 bedroom flat is shared.

An additional seven safe houses (a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom properties) with associated specialist support, are being developed using Safe Accommodation Duty New Burdens monies to act as dedicated emergency safe accommodation with specialist support. This will avoid the use of emergency temporary accommodation for those needing immediate assistance where there is no capacity in the existing domestic abuse safe houses.

Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation is considered as “exempt” accommodation for the purposes of the Spare Room Subsidy (the “Bedroom Tax”) and therefore two bedroom units can be used by single people in receipt of welfare benefits. However, these units might be unaffordable to those who are in low paid work.

Across the Peninsula area there are a total of 98 safe accommodation units (not bedspaces) with a further 12 in the pipeline:

**Table 2: Total Number of Safe Accommodation Units across Peninsula Region**

LA area	Number of units	Gender /specialist
Cornwall	51 plus 5 in development	23 Female only, 12 for women with complex needs, wheelchair accessible
Plymouth	27	11 refuge of which 2 are wheelchair accessible, for women and families. 16 dispersed units for females, males, and families.
Devon	15	Mix of small units for females with complex needs, female only units and self -contained for either gender.
Torbay	15 plus 7 in development	1 wheelchair accessible. Available for females, males, and families.

The provision across the Peninsula is a mix of communal refuges and self-contained accommodation, with varying number of bedspaces. Some cater for specific needs, and some units are female only.

### **Demand for Safe Accommodation in Torbay**

**“The Council of Europe (COE) estimate that one family refuge space is required per 10,000 residents in the community. Based on the number of adults over the age of 16 in Torbay (n=125,118) the total number of refuge spaces required is 12.5 spaces” (Source – Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment).**

The Needs Assessment projects that Torbay requires 12.5 spaces of safe accommodation, based on population and prevalence data; however, this is before taking into consideration the needs of those coming from out of the area. Until the Domestic Abuse Act was introduced, Torbay’s commissioned service operated local eligibility criteria for those assessed as being at medium or standard risk under the CAADA DASH risk assessment. The only cases from outside of Torbay that were accepted into the service were high risk cases (i.e. those discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference [MARAC] and supported by Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs).

The Domestic Abuse Act makes it illegal to operate local connection criteria for safe accommodation and requires Tier 1 Authorities to allow access to safe accommodation to people coming from outside the area, thus facilitating ease of movement for victims from one area to another.

In addition, the priority need criteria relating to victims of domestic abuse under the homelessness legislation was also changed, removing the “vulnerability test” that had to be met to be considered as priority need due to domestic violence.

**Both changes will have an impact on the level of demand for safe accommodation in Torbay.**

The Needs Assessment details the numbers accessing the existing safe accommodation in Torbay; as well as the numbers who have approached the Authority for assistance as homeless, and those who have been placed in temporary accommodation due to domestic violence. Accommodation that is not dedicated for victims of domestic violence and abuse and not self-contained is not considered to be safe accommodation under the Domestic Abuse Act.

**Safe Accommodation/Refuge**

The number of referrals to the safe accommodation in Torbay’s commissioned service has been variable year on year with a substantial but steady decline from 108 in 2018-19 to only 39 in 202-21. The significantly low numbers of referrals in 2020-21 will have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic as safe houses remained occupied. Move on into permanent accommodation from the safe houses slowed whilst landlords were unable to operate normally during lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures. Trends show referrals returning to pre-Covid 19 levels as lockdown has ended and associated economic measures eased (for example the withdrawal of the furlough scheme).

**Table 3: Overview of referrals to Torbay Safe Houses**

	Number of referrals		
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total number of all referrals to safe houses	108	84	39

Most referrals into the safe houses are self-referrals or via the commissioned service’s own outreach team and IDVAs, who will often be engaged in supporting victim survivors before they make the decision to leave. Referrals from some agencies are low, however this could be attributed to agencies advising victims to contact the service direct.

**Out of Area Referrals**

As described above, prior to the Domestic Abuse Act the only out of area referrals accepted into the commissioned safe accommodation were high risk MARAC referrals:

Most referrals from out of area tend to come from neighbouring authorities as shown in table 5 below. However, in 2020/21 this trend changed with an increase in referrals from further afield, possibly because of the pandemic. This trend is expected to increase with the removal of the local connection criteria.

**Table 4: Referrals from outside of Torbay**

	Neighbouring LAs	Other
2018-19	19 (36%)	34 (64%)
2019/20	17 (65%)	9 (37%)
2020/21	0	6 (100%)

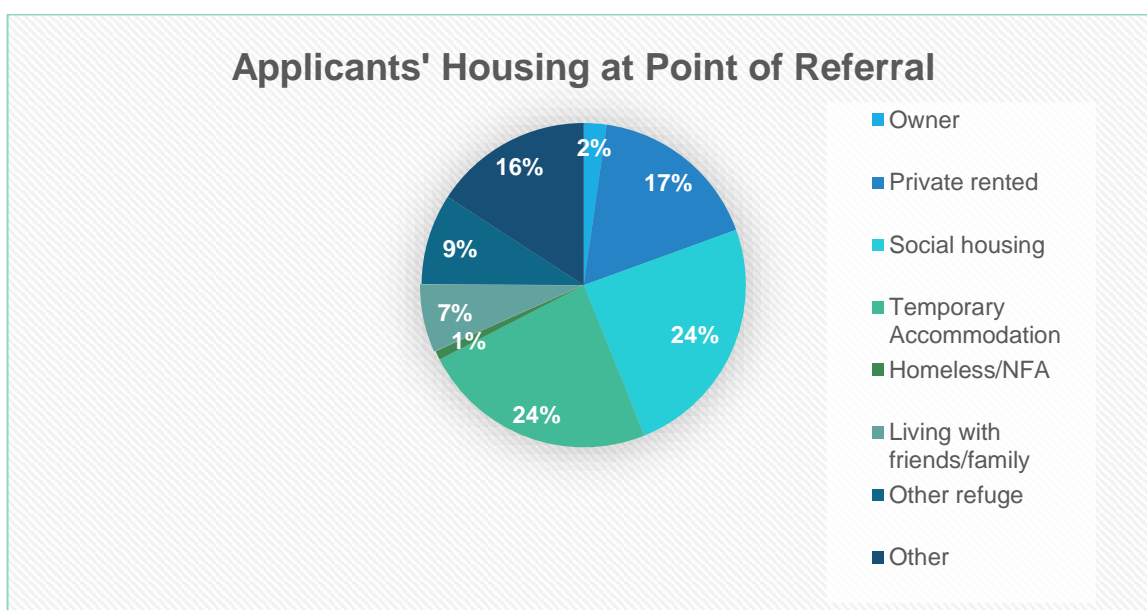
*\*Neighbouring Authorities are Devon and Plymouth*

Some referrals into safe accommodation were refused, most usually due to the now defunct local connection criteria. Other less common reasons relate to the ability of the service to support substance misuse and/or mental health needs, and previous history of violence or arson. This points to increasing levels of complexity experienced by victim survivors, and the need for staff supporting them to have a broad range of skills and experience; as well as the importance of well understood pathways into other services.

Torbay is recommissioning its domestic abuse support and accommodation services alongside adult substance misuse services and the homeless hostel as part of a Multiple Complex Needs Alliance. This will help to strengthen the skills of the workforce, foster real time sharing of information and good practice; as well as improving the service response to people experiencing other vulnerabilities and life challenges including domestic violence and abuse.

The chart below shows the housing status of applicants accessing safe accommodation in the period April 2018 to March 2021. Most applicants come from social housing or from temporary accommodation, and then from private rented accommodation or other domestic abuse safe accommodation. It has not been possible to analyse more socio-economic data such as employment, occupation, education, and income of victims in refuge in line with the MHCLG/DLUHC Needs Assessment template, as these are not routinely recorded.

**Chart 1: Housing at Point of Referral**



Victim survivors previously living in social housing have told us how difficult it was to resolve their housing problems with their landlord, for example:

“they kept kind of like, declining me on the on the grounds of the rent arrears, which to me told me that they valued my money more than my life in a sense, you know. Your money is more important to us than your life is, because, you know, the reality is that he did actually almost kill me and I ended up in hospital with a fractured skull ...”

- Victim in Torbay

The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (<https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/>) provides an accreditation toolkit of standards, policies and procedures that are designed to improve housing organisations’ response to domestic violence and abuse. Adoption of DAHA accreditation by the main Registered

Providers in Torbay could ensure early identification of domestic abuse in a household and facilitate resolutions to avoid the need for victims to leave their homes and seek safe accommodation. DAHA also offers accreditation to local authorities with no housing stock, such as Torbay.

### Unmet Demand – Domestic Abuse and Homelessness

“Numbers of applicants experiencing domestic abuse has remained stable over the past 2 years despite the overall number of [homeless] applicants reducing. This means the proportion of applicants who present due to domestic abuse has increased from 7% of the total number of applicants in 2019/20 to 9% in 2020/21”. (Source – Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment).

This figure may reflect the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is too early to say whether this trend will continue as life returns to some form of normality.

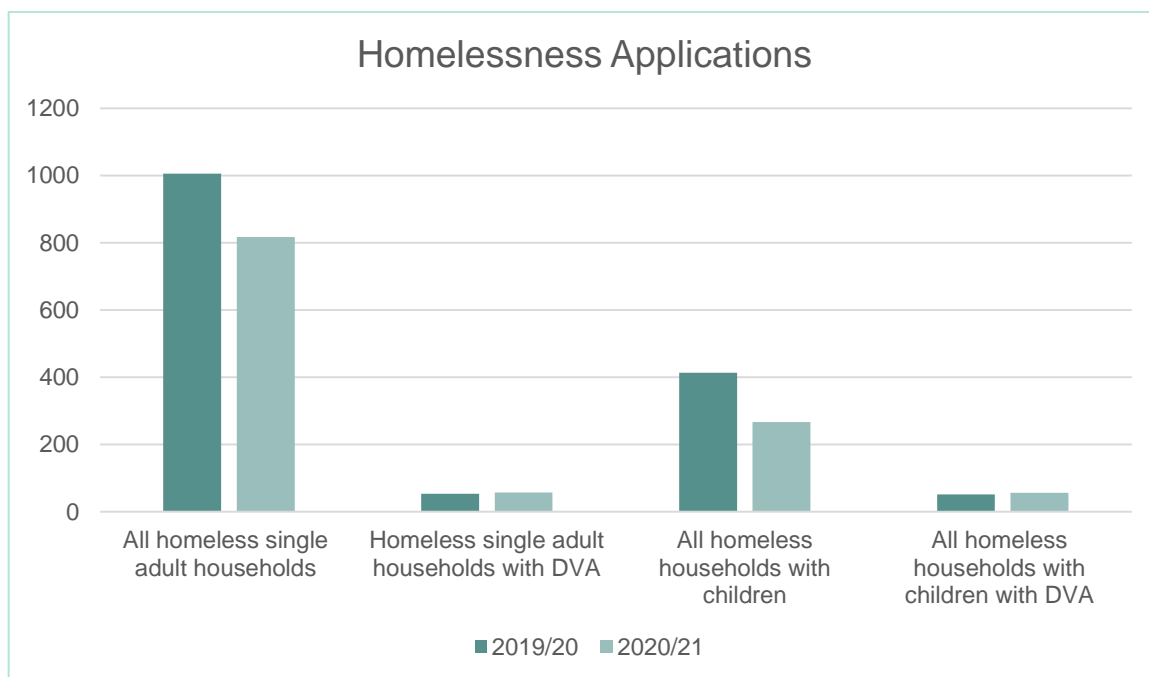
### Statutory Homeless Applications and Domestic Abuse

The Needs Assessment tells us that the overall number of single adult households and households with children that present as homeless due to domestic abuse are very similar. However, households with children presenting due to domestic abuse are a larger proportion of the total number of homeless households.

In the year 2020/21 there was an increase of 8% in family households presenting as homeless with domestic abuse. Single adult households with domestic abuse represented 5.4 % of the total number of homeless single adult households in 2019/20. This increased to 7% in 2020/21.

Most applicants are female and aged between 25 and 44 years of age.

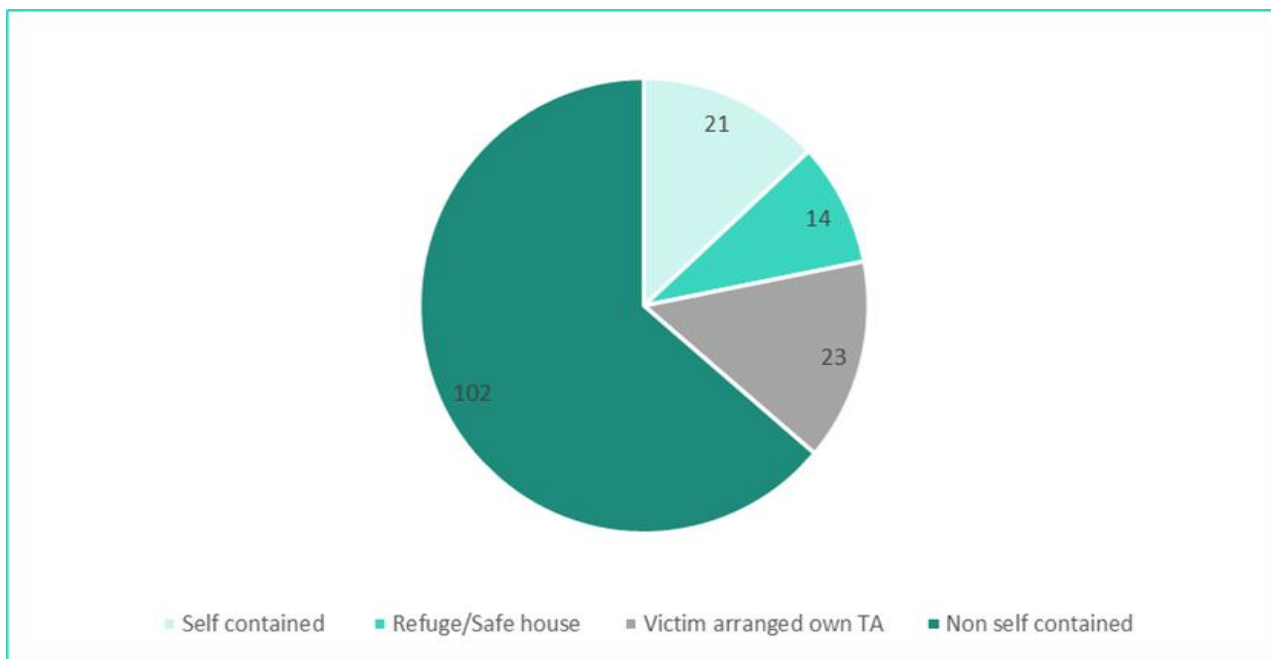
**Table 5: Comparison of Single and Family Households Applying as Homeless**



The most common need for temporary accommodation for victims of domestic abuse are one bedroom properties with 50% of victims presenting requiring a single bedroom, followed by 28% requiring two bedrooms.

The chart below shows the type of temporary accommodation offered. Together with the information in Table 6 Above, it demonstrates the need for a range of safe accommodation and move on housing of different sizes, including for single people.

**Chart 2: Temporary accommodation outcomes for victims requiring temporary accommodation (April 2019 to Sept 2020)**



Non-self-contained units are most commonly hotel accommodation, with some victims being placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) is clear that this is not defined as safe accommodation.

### Meeting the needs of minority communities and intersectionality

Most homeless applicants experiencing domestic abuse reported their sexuality as heterosexual/straight; or “sexual identity unknown” or “prefer not to say”. Research (*Galop 2020*) tells us that LGBT+ people experience individual and interpersonal barriers to seeking help from support services - which are seen to be designed and delivered in ways that make them less inclusive for LGBT+ people.

In 2020/21 the number of domestic abuse victims/ survivors with a disability accessing homelessness services increased by 7 applicants from 18 the previous year, to 25. Recording of applicant’s disability status is unreliable, with very limited numbers each year specifying they did not have a disability and the majority of responses recorded as “unknown”.

In 2020/21 there was an increase in the number of domestic abuse victims/survivors accessing homelessness services who are White or White British. Asian or Asian British victims/ survivors have seen a very small increase since 2019/20, however, numbers are very small. Very small decreases have also been noted amongst those who are Mixed or Dual Heritage and Black or Black British.

The Needs Assessment has identified that some agencies do not consistently record or collect data in respect of protected characteristics, and therefore there is a lack of disaggregated data broken down by age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics. This means that we are unable to accurately determine the accessibility of services, the barriers to

access, the level of demand nor the suitability of existing services in meeting needs to inform future commissioning decisions.

## How Accessing Safe Accommodation is Experienced in Torbay

Services in Torbay are designed to provide support at the point of crisis, and this is reflected in the findings of the Needs Assessment, with victims leaving at the point of escalation and often turning to family initially for somewhere to stay. Some will then approach the domestic abuse service direct, be referred by a statutory agency, or will approach the Council's Housing Options Team for assistance.

“the one thing that seems so hard at first was actually housing. It was literally one thing is you have nowhere to go. And first, obviously when I walked down that road, the first day, the hardest bit was walking and realising my children were still there. And so it was ‘where am I gonna go?’”

- Victim in Torbay

People living in social housing managed by a Registered Provider found that they were not offered preventative support when they disclosed domestic abuse, and therefore had to leave and access temporary or safe accommodation. Options such as management transfers, where a Registered Provider offers a move to an existing tenant in exceptional circumstances, were sometimes not offered unless rent arrears were paid off first; leading to a perception that money was more important than a life.

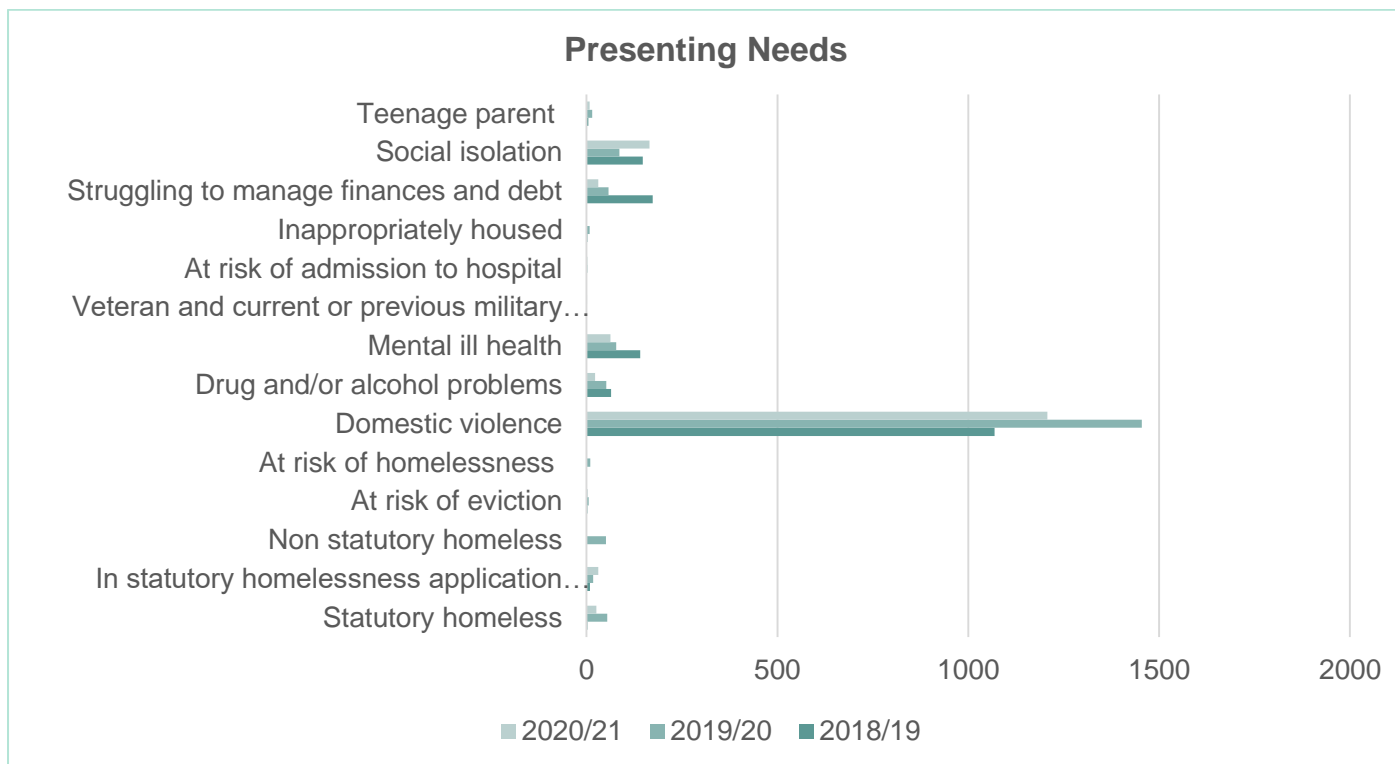
What is apparent from the experiences of victim survivors who have used Torbay services is that the whole process of seeking safe accommodation is challenging and overwhelming:

**“Most of the victims and survivors we spoke to found the initial steps relating to housing daunting, and they often did not feel confident in knowing where to go both physically or to get advice” (Source – Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment).**

Safe houses are located across the Bay however inevitably victims may find they have to travel across the Bay to another town to access their safe accommodation, away from existing networks, work, and children's schools. Safe houses provide wider options in terms of size of accommodation and the ability to accommodate older children, especially boys – than a refuge; as well as more easily catering for specific cultural requirements. Some victims find they can feel isolated as opposed to the peer support that can be available within a refuge. Torbay de-commissioned its refuge in 2018 partly due to widespread knowledge of its location and its unsuitability for larger households or those with older children.

Analysis shows that victims accessing the commissioned domestic abuse service (not just for safe accommodation) will often have other presenting needs. The chart below shows the other needs that some victims have. Poor mental health, reliance on substances, financial issues and social isolation are the most common. These factors correspond closely to the socio-economic profile in Torbay.

**Chart 3: Presenting Needs of Victims Accessing the Domestic Abuse Service**



Source – Torbay Domestic Abuse Service

A small number of referrals each year are declined by the service due to the complexity of need presented and the ability of the service at any time to meet those needs. Some victims might be placed in emergency temporary accommodation or will have been unable to access safe accommodation due to lack of vacancies or suitability of location. Victims placed in temporary accommodation are likely to experience similar challenges around location and isolation as their safe house counterparts, sometimes with additional issues around lack of facilities and quality of accommodation.

Not everyone who is placed into emergency temporary accommodation by Torbay Council moves into a safe house. Furthermore, the experience of approaching the Council for assistance as someone fleeing domestic violence or abuse is not always a positive one.

“...people who work for the council, when you speak to them and they’re kind of a bit emotionless and it kind of sometimes sounds as though they don't really have any sympathy or understanding maybe. And that’s quite upsetting and difficult, you know, and constantly feel like, you know, they want proof, they want statements, they want this and that. You have to prove that what you’re saying actually happened and it’s the truth. Like, they could be a bit more compassionate on that sense I think”.

- Victim in Torbay



## What is needed/missing/would have helped?

- The biggest gap currently in terms of safe spaces are for those with a disability with only one safe unit having mobility access; and increasing capacity for single people.
- There needs to be consideration of the pathways to safe accommodation for young people aged 16 and over, many of whom will not have been in their own accommodation before and may be in low paid employment.
- The Needs Assessment suggests that increasing safe accommodation capacity should be explored, partly due to the current housing landscape and partly due to the level of referrals declined by the service. The dispersed model that is in place is generally seen to be favourable.
- Specialist support to address the needs of minority groups should be considered, for example LGBT+ and those with learning disabilities. This would include services for minoritised groups developed by people with the same needs (known as “by and for”).
- The table below shows the projected safe accommodation requirements according to the demographic profile:

**Table 6: Projected Safe Accommodation capacity requirements for demographic cohorts**

Community	Population	Prevalence p/a	Capacity Requirement (units)	Comment
Young people	12,499	1080	1.2	Age appropriate
Older people	53,018	1690	5.3	Mobility considerations
Disability	30,480	3520	3	Adaptations and accessibility
Men	60,789	2040	6	Single sex
LGBT+	8780	810	0.8	“By and for” need
Ethnicity	3260	110	0.3	“By and for” need
Multiple Complex Needs (MCN)	unknown	unknown	unknown	Specialist or “By and for” provision dependent on needs

- A programme of workforce development is required to enable better support for victims with more complex needs.
- Wider accessibility of safe accommodation is an issue, for example the visibility of and number of older people and disabled people accessing the domestic abuse service are extremely low compared with the demographic profile and projected prevalence of domestic violence and abuse in Torbay. This requires specific focus in the wider DVA strategy in terms of accessibility and addressing cultural and societal stigma around domestic violence and abuse.
- Different pathways into safe accommodation are considered which better relate to the circumstances of the victim, for example those who are planning to leave and those who need immediate accommodation and support.
- Pathways and targeted information about the service are well publicised, easily accessible, and available to practitioners and the public; with more information for victim survivors about what to expect.
- Improve data collection from homelessness and safe accommodation applicants, particularly around ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation to ensure true levels of need are evidenced.
- Consider Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to ensure Registered Providers have policies and procedures in place that support early identification of domestic violence and abuse, and ways to address it without the victim having to leave the property and accessing safe accommodation.

# Getting Support for Victim Survivors and their Children within Safe Accommodation

## What there is

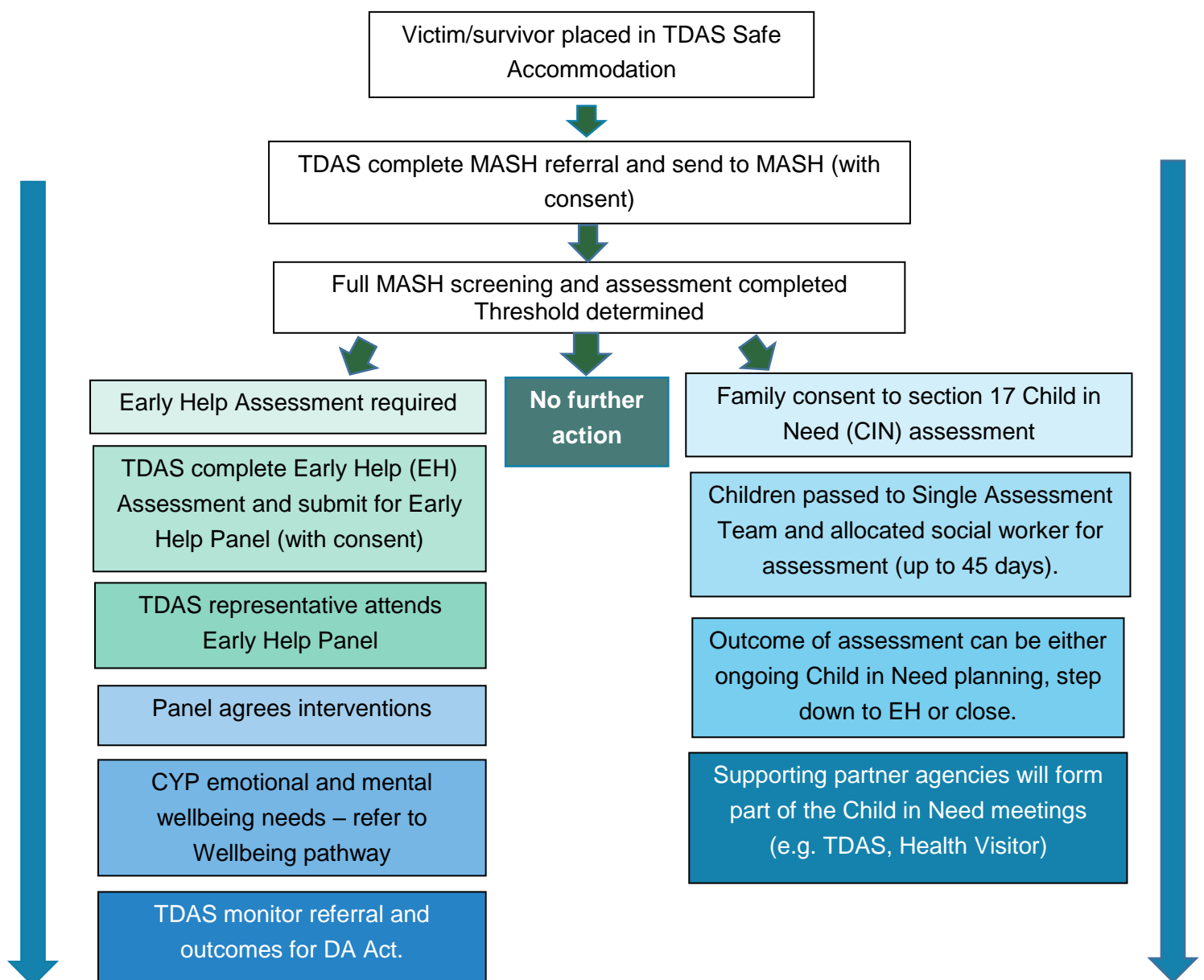
- **Torbay Domestic Abuse Service** provides Accommodation Project Workers who provide support to those occupying the safe houses, in addition to **Independent Domestic Violence Advocates** (IDVAs) who provide support to those at the highest levels of risk.
- **Children’s Workers** deliver play and art therapy (young children) and the **Helping Hands** programme (Key Stage 2 and higher) to the children of those living in the safe houses. Teenagers receive a version of the Recovery Toolkit that has been adapted for the cohort.
- **2 additional FTE emergency safe accommodation project workers** and a part time Children’s Worker have been recruited in 2021 using New Burdens monies. These roles will support victims and families occupying additional new dedicated short stay/crisis safe houses as an alternative to Housing Options emergency temporary accommodation.
- **The Standing Tall CVS DASV Partnership** – a partnership of voluntary and third sector organisations and charities - provides wrap around support such as legal advice, counselling, food parcels and other essential items, a listening ear service, and emotional and wellbeing support groups. They refer into TDAS and vice versa.
- **Children’s Services** – provide individual support to children and young people based on assessed need. A referral to the Children’s Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is made when a child or young person is placed in safe accommodation. This ensures a robust assessment of the child/young person’s needs and how they will be met. The diagram on the next page illustrates the pathway to support for children and young people in safe accommodation.

The table below illustrates some of the engagement between TDAS and the children’s safeguarding process in Torbay:

**Table 7: Overview of TDAS engagement with the safeguarding process**

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Number of child protection incidents reported by TDAS in the year	44	24	13
Number of child protection meetings contributed to by staff (attending or providing sufficient information)	164	86	48
Number of children that the above meetings related to (the meetings that staff contributed to)	383	200	108
Number of clients with children who were placed in a safe house	140	73	37

The diagram below sets out the process for assessing the support needs of children and young people in domestic abuse safe accommodation. *(Safe Accommodation comprises the safe houses provided by the commissioned domestic abuse service (TDAS): and any self-contained, dedicated domestic abuse temporary accommodation units that are provided by TDAS. Housing Options temporary or B&B accommodation does not meet the statutory requirements of safe accommodation).*



Other support that is available in Torbay includes:

- **0-19 Service** - an integrated service supporting children, young people, and their families/carers across Torbay. It brings together health visiting and school nursing with children’s centres and Checkpoint - a service for young people - so that families and young people can access services from pregnancy to adulthood.
- **KOOTH** - a free, anonymous, and safe online mental wellbeing community for young people aged 11-25 years throughout Devon.
- Education Services provide pastoral support in schools. The Police use **Operation Encompass** to notify schools before 9am on a school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening.
- **Imagine This** partnership of community based voluntary organisations collaborating with and supporting children and young people and their families.
- **NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT)** services providing counselling and cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT) for people with anxiety disorders and depression. Access to mental health services is anecdotally difficult for people in safe

accommodation, with many victim survivors reporting that they are told they cannot be supported until they are living in stable accommodation

- **Community Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)** for young people that often has a significant waiting list.

## How Support in Safe Accommodation is Experienced in Torbay

“then we were in the safe house, you know, we were treated really, really well, you know. Because we went there over Christmas and the children's birthdays and, you know, Halloween and all these kind of things. They treated us to parties and, you know, donations from the public at Christmas and things like that. So that was really, really nice”

- Victim in Torbay

Many of the experiences from victim survivors in Torbay refer to experiences in refuge placements that they were in before coming to Torbay, or where they were referred before being housed in Torbay. However, they reveal common experiences of isolation and the need for more emotional support, and several referred to the short term nature of the safe houses and being asked to leave before they felt they were ready.

“There were gaps all around, you know, I just feel I was still on my own but I didn't feel quite so on my own, you know. There were other women I could talk. There were staff I could talk to”

- Victim in Torbay

“The help was there but it was intermittent and it was short-lived. I think they said to me at one point ‘you've been here for long as you can be here”

- Victim in Torbay

Others however commented on the impact on their mental health of waiting a long time before being able to move on:

“I think that the sort of being stuck in that safe house forever or I mean, at one point in time, my only choices that I thought I had were staying in the safe house forever or go back to the property where he knew I was. And that drove me to feeling suicidal .....

- Victim in Torbay

Waiting lists for Freedom and Confidence programmes for victim survivors were significantly impacted by Covid-19 due to the face to face nature of delivery and social distancing restrictions.

One to one support continued by way of telephone or virtual platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft teams, although some people chose to wait for face to face support.

The impact of domestic abuse and homelessness on children’s emotional wellbeing and the disruption to their education are well documented.

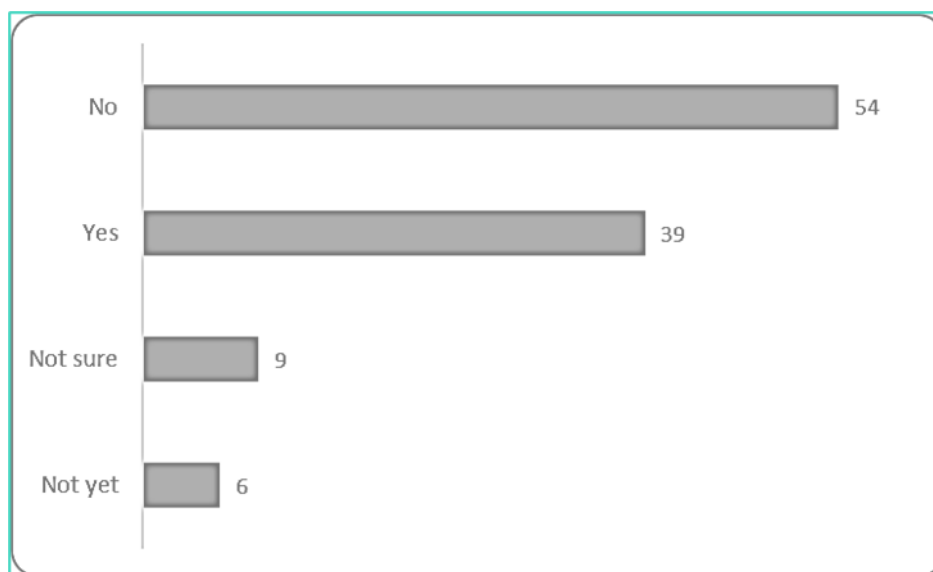
**“..a survey by Shelter on homeless children in temporary accommodation found they missed an average of 55 school days (quarter of the school year) due to the disruption of moving in between temporary accommodation” (Source – Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment).**

The interviews with victims and survivors in Torbay demonstrated a clear need that children required support in their own right. Examples included:

- A child had to remain with the perpetrator as the control was too entrenched and she may have disclosed the safe house location
- A child who had been directly harmed herself by the perpetrator through sexual abuse
- A victim who discussed having to make phone calls to flee in front of her children and potentially upsetting them

Moving home is a significant change for adults, and the affect only compounded for children. Several victims discussed that their child had been referred to non-specialist domestic abuse organisations such as CAMHS or Children’s Services; but overall, most victims stated their children would have needed support and did not get it. This finding mirrors the finding from the Council’s domestic abuse “Are You Okay” survey which asked victims whether their children had received any help or support with the effects of the domestic abuse:

**Chart 4: “Are You Okay” survey results of number of victims who stated children had accessed support**



Some victim survivors find they must move several times once they have left the abusive relationship, perhaps into temporary accommodation and then specialist domestic abuse safe accommodation or refuge, before moving once again into longer term accommodation. Where the victim survivor is pursuing property rights and residency of their children, or seeking right to remain in the UK, they will require ongoing support through legal proceedings, and it may be a significant time before they are finally settled into a permanent home. The Whole Housing Approach outlines support that can be provided for such cases. The Needs Assessment recommends that future commissioning and pathway planning should seek to minimise the number of times victims and their family must move and ensure move on from refuge is secure and stable accommodation.

This is especially important where it is anticipated that longer stays in safe accommodation may be needed. See Case Study “Edna” under the Three Journeys to Safety section below.

### What is needed/missing/would have helped?

- Current programmes of support in safe accommodation do not consistently cover all age ranges and referral processes vary, with a significant number of referrals coming from education settings.
- More emotional wellbeing support is needed for victim survivors and their children in the safe houses. To some extent this is available for adults via the Standing Tall CVS Partnership – but this has only been in place since the Covid -19 pandemic and is reliant on non-recurrent grant funding. The commissioned service also provides a free counselling service to its safe house residents as added value to the contract however this is often oversubscribed.

“think I could have had more, obviously counselling. But I think it would’ve helped me if they talked to me a bit more, but they didn’t talk to me a lot, but they just seemed to understand”

- Victim in Torbay

- The impact of trauma and the uncertainty of navigating an unfamiliar system, combined with worrying about the impact on children as well as what the future holds cannot be underestimated. Many victim survivors talked of the value in speaking to other survivors, and this has been made more difficult during the pandemic as peer support groups have not been able to meet so easily, and recovery programmes could not be delivered due to social distancing restrictions. Peer support and group work should be an essential element of any safe accommodation support. Commissioners should encourage service providers to collaborate closely with the third sector to identify community groups and activities to facilitate peer support and networking for those who do not meet the thresholds for mental health services.
- Support needs tailored to the circumstances of the victim on their journey– with a focus on practical support in the early stages, and emotional and therapeutic support longer term.
- Ensure that all support is trauma informed and sensitive to the context and experiences of the individual.
- Operation Encompass (where notifications to schools are made when children have had to leave their home and go in to safe accommodation) should link to the existing pathway for support for children in safe accommodation.
- Review and improve data collection across agencies in relation to children accessing safe accommodation. This should include identification, agencies signposted to, risk assessment levels, identified needs, outcomes, and demographics to ensure the true needs of children are captured.
- Data on children within safe accommodation should feed in to partnership sub groups across the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence partnership as well as Children’s Safeguarding Board.
- Commissioning of safe accommodation services should include the allocation of a dedicated children’s worker for each child to support and advocate on their behalf. They should continue

to work with the child through to resettlement and ensure appropriate referrals to other agencies are in place for more formalised therapeutic or statutory support.

## Moving On to a New Home

“I also had a social worker, the social worker was from Torbay Council. She stayed with us and she was helpful. You know, she kind of [...] it was a battle I think it was a battle for her, as well as it was a battle for us because we actually thought that we were gonna be stuck in the safehouse forever. So yeah, I mean everybody did as much as they could”.

- Victim in Torbay

### What there is

Nationally the picture for those seeking long term or settled accommodation is challenging, with increasing shortages of social housing, continued residualisation of social housing through “Right to Buy”, the impact of welfare benefit policies and affordability of rents in the private rented sector.

Torbay has a sizeable private rented accommodation sector, as well as a shortage of social housing provision to meet the needs of those seeking accommodation via the local housing register. This leads to increasing numbers of social housing applicants seeking to resolve their housing situation via the private rented market.

Torbay’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-25) describes the challenges of increasing rent levels putting private sector accommodation beyond the reach of local people, and the additional pressures on temporary accommodation as a result.

- Rents tend to be higher than the average local income allows and have been rising steadily in the last 10 years, some beyond Universal Credit/Housing Benefit levels
- Those on welfare benefits or in lower paid work may struggle to afford the costs, or be able to fund the deposits and rent in advance that landlords require
- Landlords are more likely to favour prospective tenants who are financially secure
- The impact of Covid-19 has seen an increase in people from cities and more urban areas seeking accommodation in the private sector in coastal locations including Torbay. This is creating increased demand and forcing up rent levels, making the private sector unaffordable to many, including victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse.
- Landlords are utilising the demand for “staycation” holiday accommodation to offer properties on Airbnb, further reducing the availability of rental properties in the market
- Quality of accommodation can be poor.

The combined effect of these factors means that victim survivors who have left their homes due to domestic violence and abuse face an increasingly uncertain wait in safe accommodation or temporary accommodation:

**“With a lack of suitable, affordable options for people to move onto in Torbay, the [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping] strategy highlights that not only are more people going into temporary accommodation, but they are also finding themselves there longer.”** (Source – *Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment*)

Interventions such as those described in “The Whole Housing Approach” may help to mitigate some of these challenges, through earlier identification and support with housing issues before the need for safe accommodation arises. See the section “The Whole Housing Approach” below.

## How Moving on from Safe Accommodation is Experienced in Torbay

The common theme from the feedback from victim survivors who told us their stories is the difficulty in getting onto the Housing Register, inconsistencies in banding levels for the choice based lettings system Devon Home Choice; and the length of time it took to be housed.

“I only got accepted onto the home choice, register after 10 months of fighting. So I was only accepted onto the register one month before I actually left. And they put me on a band B eventually. But before that they were putting me on a band E, which is no housing need”.

- Victim in Torbay

People are encouraged to seek their own private rented accommodation rather than waiting for social housing however as outlined in the section above, affordability is a significant challenge.

Once people have found a permanent place to live, they are expected to move out of their existing accommodation very quickly; and for victim survivors unaccustomed to making such arrangements this can be another traumatising experience. To some extent the need for speed is due to external factors such as the regulatory pressures on registered housing providers to relet empty properties quickly; and for those in receipt of welfare benefits, the rules restricting the payment of Housing Benefit on two properties. However, the pressure experienced by victim survivors could be significantly reduced if they had access to dedicated resettlement support to help with the moving process and the multiple practical tasks entailed in settling into a new home. Additionally, a move on grant from funding such as the Flexible Funding model described in the Whole Housing Approach could support with the purchase of essential items.

“when I went into the refuge, I was grateful to get away from my own house and then when I left the refuge I needed emergency accommodation then, that was, took a while to get and nobody helped me with that. And I had to do like, on my own. So I had the savings to do that. There was a huge hole in passing from the refuge into safety. I really felt that I was put right back into the danger zone, whilst I was still fighting trying to keep my home and trying to get everybody to save my daughter”

- Victim in Torbay

**“The example above highlights victims’ experiences of lack of clarity and not feeling there was a coordinated plan in place in terms of their journey. The experience in this instance made the victim feel she had no sense of control which mirrored her experiences of domestic abuse with the perpetrator. Additionally, the impact on the children was significant.”** (Source: *Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment*)



Victim survivors who are owner occupiers describe prolonged legal processes, and more experiences of abuse as perpetrators use the system to further exercise coercion and control, for example via child contact proceedings, financial and property arrangements.

## What is needed/missing/would have helped?

“Maybe just a bit of after care for [...] maybe people have settled from other areas and they've left safe houses, and they've come to live in this area, maybe TDAS could like have a support network for people, you know, who have just left safe houses”

- Victim in Torbay

As with earlier parts of the safe accommodation journey, more information about what to expect would provide some reassurance to victim survivors waiting to move on. This would include:

- Clearly publicised pathways
- Better communications and information especially around move on

The experience of accessing the Housing Register could be improved by:

- Increasing safe house provision so that victims can access a safe house in emergency circumstances whilst they are supported to find longer term settled housing
- Ensuring staff assessing homelessness presentations have a good understanding of the dynamics and impacts of domestic violence and abuse, including coercive control. This could be through using dedicated staff who have undergone enhanced training in domestic violence and abuse.

**“An important factor in ensuring that an authority develops a strong and appropriate response to domestic abuse is understanding what domestic abuse is, the context in which it takes place in and what the impacts are on victims; as well as how the impacts may be different on different groups of people. Specialist training for staff and managers will help them to provide a more sensitive response and to identify, with applicants, housing options which are safe and appropriate to their needs”. (Source - *Homelessness Code of Guidance July 2021*)**

- Ensuring that the updated Homelessness Code of Guidance in respect of assessing domestic violence presentations is followed, including limiting requests to “prove” the violence or abuse.

**“Housing authorities should not have a blanket approach toward domestic abuse which requires corroborative or police evidence to be provided”. (Source - *Homelessness Code of Guidance July 2021*)**

- People working with those fleeing domestic abuse understand that victim survivors are at most risk when they leave the abuser and that perceived difficulties accessing safe accommodation might make it more likely that they will return to an environment where they are then at increased risk of harm.
- Consider co-locating a domestic abuse specialist within Housing Options. Ensure that every victim placed within temporary accommodation is allocated a domestic abuse worker who can support them from the point of presentation to start finding longer term housing.
- All staff working with victims of domestic violence and abuse receive training in trauma informed approaches

**“It is vital that all housing related organisations have a basic understanding of domestic abuse and the impact on victims, so they are able to ask questions in a compassionate and trauma informed manner.”** (Source: *Torbay Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment*)

- Improve transparency and consistency in respect of banding decisions
- Availability of peer support networks that meet victim survivor needs
- Develop interventions to enable victim survivors to remain in their own home, including removal of the person exercising the violence/abuse, and other interventions to prevent the need to access safe accommodation (see The Whole Housing Approach).
- Pilot an increase to the length of stay criteria in safe accommodation to 20 weeks in line with Peninsula partners and evaluate whether this a) positively impacts the number of times a victim must move and b) whether it negatively impacts the capacity of the service.
- Ensure Housing options collect data on victims presenting as homeless, placed in temporary or emergency accommodation and the pathway through the banding system to a settled home. This should include length of time at each stage of the pathway, and demographic information to understand how journeys differ for particular groups (e.g. single people, large families, younger people, people with a disability).
- Provision of resettlement support for those leaving safe accommodation to ensure a positive transition into their long term home.
- Commissioned safe accommodation services should work with the Standing Tall voluntary sector partnership and others to ensure community based support is introduced and offered as part of victim and children’s resettlement.

## Three Journeys to Safety

The next pages show three case studies following the safe accommodation journeys of three victim survivors in Torbay who have consented to sharing their experiences. Their names have been changed to protect their identities.

## Case study: Laurel

### A journey to safe accommodation

*"I think a lot of times I would have left sooner had I had some sort of certainty."*



*"My mum lived just around the corner so that was kind of intimidating being that close"*

Laurel lived with her partner and children in a private rented flat. They received housing benefit and universal credit. After years of abuse she decided to leave.

When Laurel fled, she initially went to her mother's house nearby. She didn't feel safe there as he knew where she was and was so close. She also worried about the safety of her mother.

*"The place was filthy, I had to share a double bed which me and my daughter pulled the mattress, the mattress cover off. And it was filthy underneath, it was stained to hell. The furniture smelled bad. There were burns in the carpet where people have been smoking inside and just putting their fags out in the carpet."*



*"[they said] you have 48 hours to pack everything up. They'll ring you with the address'. I was horrified, horrified about what to tell the kids. We've got to go somewhere, we don't know where we're going"*

She was moved into a holiday let as a form of temporary accommodation. It was in a new town which meant she lost her local support networks, and when she arrived she found the property in disrepair.

Laurel called the police who gave her a number for emergency housing. She was moved into a shared space but after a few weeks, required to move again which made her feel uncertain about the future.

*"You feel like you're being shoved from pillar to post and you've got no choice"*

*"The amount of times I burst into tears, because they'd all say 'oh you don't have a guarantor' or 'yeah but you've got DHP'"*



Laurel spent most of her time searching for properties to move into something more secure. She found that she was not high enough priority to bid for properties, and it was a challenge to find private landlords that would accept benefits, or required a guarantor which she did not have.

Laurel had no success in finding a property on her own. She had to ask a previous step father to be a guarantor for her which impacted her mental health and wellbeing. However he did agree and she moved into a private rented property where she currently remains.

*"The only reason I have this house now is because I literally got down on my knees in front of my second step dad and begged him to be my guarantor - I just threw dignity and modesty out the window and I got down on my knees"*

## Case study: Clara

### A journey across Local Authority boundaries

*"[he was] so close that he could even see my front door from his living room window. You know, he could see kind of like who was coming and going".*



Clara had left her abusive partner and lived alone with her two children, including a teenager. The perpetrator continued to abuse her after the separation and moved into a house across the road.



Clara spoke to her housing association about the situation and her need to move. She was in rent arrears at the time so although they tried to arrange a managed move it was declined and there were no other options.

*"When my support worker asked for the appeals procedure, we were told that there was no appeal, that that one decision was final and we weren't allowed to reapply"*

*"He would say to me, you know, if you don't lend me your car, I'm gonna set fire to it. My tires were getting slashed constantly. My windscreen was smashed. So then, yeah, during the first lockdown, he had asked if he could come and move in, back into my house and I kind of agreed. But it was like out of fear".*



When lockdown came into effect, she became increasingly fearful as he would no longer be at the pub or work. The additional time increased the harassment and physical violence. He stated he wanted to move back in and she was too fearful to refuse. At this point a physical incident occurred in which she and her son were injured. The perpetrator was arrested.



Clara continued to experience abuse and so escalated her need to move by writing to the Local Authority and her MP outlining her experience. They were not able to support her in moving.

*"[I] asked if I could just have any help in moving. I didn't have any savings. I didn't have, you know, really anything. I was working but I was kind of just making ends meet type thing. And then they just refused to help me every time"*

*"He had already been arrested for violence. He had already been, you know, arrested for vandalising my car and things like that. If I was given the help then to not be living across the road from him, I don't think the next incidents would have happened".*



Clara and her children were supported by TDAS to move to a refuge in another Local Authority area. Her and her two children shared one bedroom and shared kitchen and toilet facilities with five other families.



In total Clara spent 11 months in the refuge. During that time, she cleared her rent arrears and got legal support from the national charity 'Shelter'. Her housing association offered her a new property where she moved to and remains in now.

*"I think one thing I think if I could wave a magic wand would be that women wouldn't have to spend so long in the safe house".*

*"It was a battle for us because we actually thought that we were gonna be stuck in the safehouse forever"*

## Case study: Edna A journey full circle

*"He worked for the council and his friends were in the police. So, it was quite hard to deal with it and he went into huge denial. And that was just the whole experience, not being believed by authorities".*



Edna had been experiencing abuse from her partner of 20 years. He was also abusive to their daughter. Because of his job he knew a lot of police and people within the council, so Edna was scared to seek help. She anonymously called citizens advice who gave her the TDAS number.



TDAS moved Edna into a refuge. Her daughter couldn't come with her as they feared she was too controlled by the perpetrator and would disclose the address. Edna found the refuge challenging as many of the women would drink. Eventually she was told she had to leave the refuge.

*"The help was there but it was intermittent, and it was short-lived. I think they said to me at one point 'you've been here for long as you can be here'".*

*"They put me in this tiny little room in this horrible place. I walked out, I left. I physically couldn't stay there, I just couldn't cope the claustrophobia, and I have back problems".*



Edna called the council's homelessness department. They placed her in emergency accommodation. However, it was too small for her physical needs due to back pain.



She didn't know where she would stay on the day she left. Upon speaking to a friend, they offered her a place to stay at their caravan. However, after a short time her friend rented the caravan out, so Edna had to move.

*"I fled the refuge with nowhere to go. I was going to go and live in my car and a friend phoned me as I was leaving Torquay. And asked what I was doing, and I told her, and she said, 'come and stay at my caravan'".*

*"I had to do like, on my own. So, I had the savings to do that. There was a huge hole in passing from the refuge into safety. I really felt that I was put right back into the danger zone".*



She decided to move to rented accommodation in the private sector. Her new property suited her needs much better, although she had to spend a considerable amount of her savings to stay there.



During this time, her residency application for her child continued through the courts. The judge told her that she would need to move to a two-bedroom property. So, she moved again.



Finally, Edna won her court battle, and she was able to move back to her owned home. She sold it and used the money to buy a new home where she currently still resides.

*"I owned my house, but my ex was telling everybody that he owned it. So, at one point, he made me live in the shed. So, the whole thing was just so confusing. I might have owned it on paper, but he controlled it".*

## Recurring Themes from What Victim Survivors Told Us

Access to safe accommodation is difficult and in some cases is deterring victims from leaving a violent relationship

Access to longer term housing is challenging and the process can be re-traumatising

There are shortages of suitable, affordable accommodation and waiting times can be lengthy

Some people experience several moves before finding a long term home

Children and young people living with victims not only experience the trauma of witnessing/hearing domestic abuse in the home, but the uncertainty and further trauma of staying in insecure accommodation, disruption in education and supportive relationships when the victim leaves.

There is a lack of preventative housing options and processes to identify housing solutions at an earlier stage

For some victim survivors the focus on the system and processes appears detrimental or secondary to providing a human response to trauma

Poor communications about what will happen next once victim survivors have moved into safe accommodation or temporary accommodation creates uncertainty at a time when victims need to feel secure and that they have made the right choice

Lack of or inconsistent data collection means that levels of demand from minority communities or those requiring by and for services cannot be identified and their needs met.

The narrative of lived experience shows us that the current pathways and challenges to accessing safe and longer term accommodation can lead to victims returning to unsafe situations. We know that victims are at high risk when they choose to leave. The system, and the processes within it, are inadvertently contributing to creating increased risk; and undermining efforts to prevent domestic violence and abuse and to support and encourage victims to leave abusive relationships.

The Domestic Abuse Act places new responsibilities on the Authority in terms of understanding of the specific support needs of children and young people in safe accommodation in relation to domestic violence and abuse. The stories that victim survivors have shared with us reveal the impacts on the emotional wellbeing of their children as they navigate the uncertainties of accessing accommodation and moving from one location to another. However, there is limited local data available to evidence the specific impacts of domestic abuse and staying in safe accommodation on children and young people.

As the implementation of the new duty progresses, trends in the needs of those children and young people will be better understood and any potential commissioning recommendations, particularly around trauma, will be escalated to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for decision.

## How do we want People to Experience Safe Accommodation in Torbay?

**“Victim Survivors and their children are safe, and supported to recover and thrive”**

### Our ambitions

Victim Survivors:

- can access preventative help and advice about their housing situation and the safe accommodation pathway, including before they decide to leave
- know where to seek help
- receive advice and support from a workforce that understands, is empathetic, skilled and trauma informed
- are provided with safe accommodation and support that meets their needs and those of their children
- know what to expect
- are kept informed throughout their journey
- can receive support after they have left safe accommodation if they choose to.

### Key Areas for Action

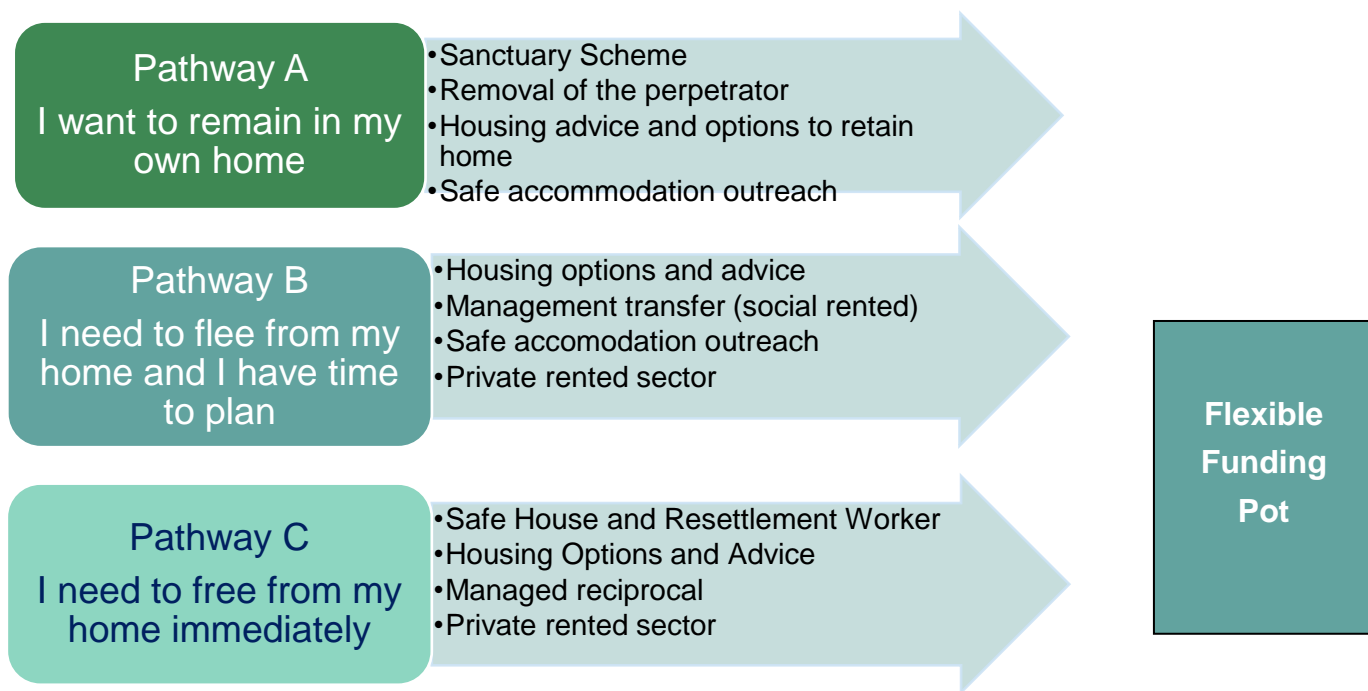
Increase safe accommodation capacity
Increase safe accommodation accessibility particularly for those under-represented/less visible according to Torbay’s demographic profile
Develop new pathways for safe accommodation support according to the urgency of the victim’s situation, with support options tailored to their circumstances
Prevention through adopting aspects of The Whole Housing Approach to prevent victims needing to access safe accommodation, including those experiencing economic abuse
Support in Safe Accommodation and to move on including elements of The Whole Housing Approach
Skills and Workforce Development
Work with the Peninsula DASV Commissioners Group to devise a regional commissioning plan to address specialist needs and priorities identified from all the Peninsula safe accommodation needs assessments, including developing cross border referral pathways.

### Three Safe Accommodation Pathways

Key to providing more tailored safe accommodation support will be the development of three safe accommodation pathways, each with a range of support options designed around the housing circumstances of the individual. The image below sets out an example of how the pathways might look and the type of support that could be provided under each. The Flexible Funding Pot is one of the elements of the Whole Housing Approach (detailed in the section The Whole Housing Approach below) and is used to remove the obstacles to accessing safe accommodation and move on.

Pathways will be co-produced with victims and survivors and key stakeholders.

**Image 3 – Example Safe Accommodation Pathways**



## The Whole Housing Approach

The Whole Housing Approach is a toolkit which:

- Aims to ensure access to a range of tailored housing options and initiatives for people experiencing domestic abuse, giving choice to either relocate or remain in their existing accommodation
- Provides a full suite of housing options enabling agencies and organisations to work together more collaboratively, considering the long-term security of the victim/survivor, as well as managing crisis situations.

The toolkit is organised into three themes:

1. Tenure and Accommodation Type – tenure related interventions and approaches
2. Specialist Domestic Abuse Service Provision – ranging from specialist (non IDVA) advocacy options to a dedicated Housing First model for women experiencing homelessness and domestic abuse.
3. A suite of housing options and initiatives specific to domestic abuse that are responsive to the needs identified for securing safe accommodation.



## Whole Housing Approach Elements

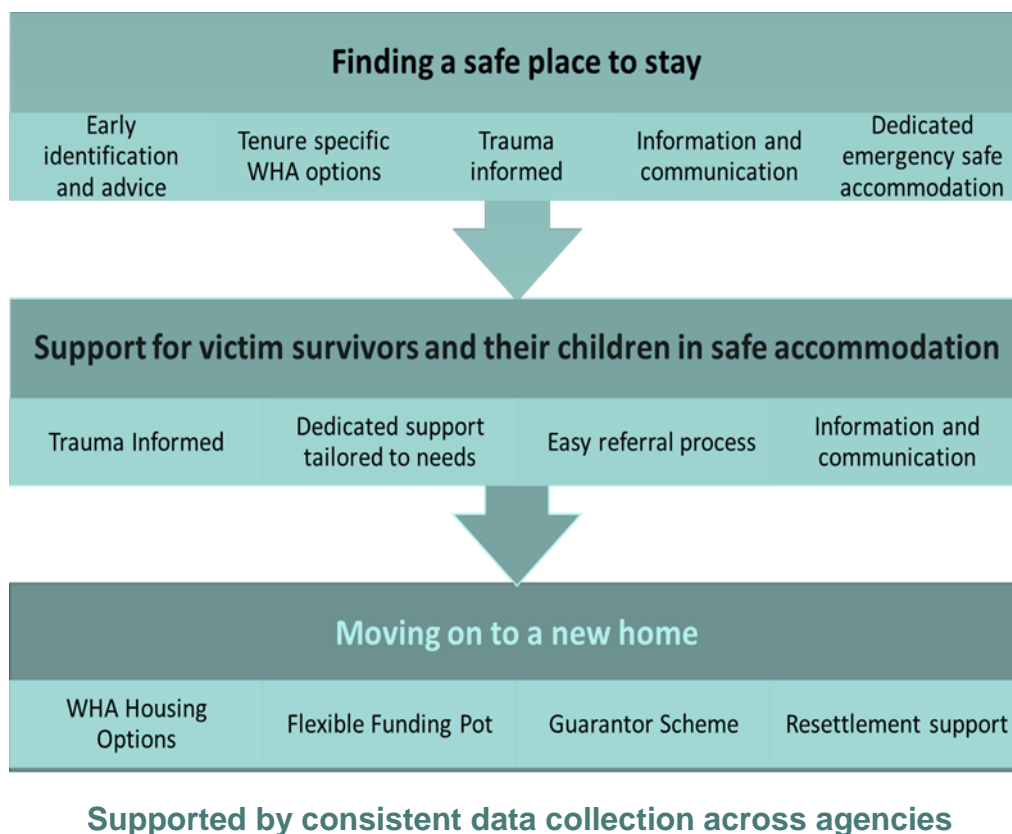
The diagram below shows the twelve elements of the Whole Housing Approach toolkit. Different elements can be selected and used according to local need. The green circles relate to different forms of accommodation including the three main tenure types (social, private rented and private ownership); and temporary accommodation settings (refuge services, supported accommodation). The white circles are the housing options and initiatives designed to support victim/survivors of domestic abuse and provide the choice of remaining in property or relocating to new accommodation.



*Graphic provided with kind permission of Standing Together*

More details on the Whole Housing Approach can be found at: <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/housing-whole-housing> and it will be featured in Torbay's new DVA Strategy.

## Key Elements for Safe Accommodation Pathways and Support



## Funding and Budget

At the time of writing, commissioned domestic abuse support and accommodation is funded as detailed below:

**Table 8: Funding of commissioned domestic abuse service in Torbay**

Service element	Amount	Funding source
Torbay Domestic Abuse Service (existing contract) – IDVAs, community outreach, children’s support worker, recovery programmes and 15 safe houses	£280,000 pa	Torbay Council base budget
7 crisis safe accommodation units (to be used as alternative to B&B) set up costs	£30 000	Capacity Building monies
Additional safe accommodation project staff, managerial and back office staff to manage increased capacity, and repairs costs.	£140,000 pa	New Burdens monies (2021/22)
Ongoing costs for void rent and service charges	-	New Burdens monies (2021/22)
Balance Flexible Funding Pot and development of Whole Housing Approach	£98, 000	New Burdens monies (2021/22)

## Review and Evaluation

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) has adopted the role and functions of the local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board for the purpose of fulfilling the Authority's duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Review of activities will be undertaken as follows:

Performance and delivery of safe accommodation support	Quarterly contract monitoring	DASV Strategic Commissioner Reported to DASVEG as part of performance dashboard
Commissioning and action plan	Bi monthly	DASVEG
Progress and update reports to Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet	Ad hoc as required	DASV Strategic Commissioner
Monitoring and progress report to DLUHC	Annually	DASVEG
Safe Accommodation Strategy	2024	DASVEG

## Consultation

Consultation on the draft Safe Accommodation Strategy was undertaken as follows:

Senior Leadership Team	28/9/21
Informal Cabinet	5/10/21
DASVEG draft sign off (as statutory DA Partnership Board)	12/10/21
Cabinet draft sign off	27/10/21
Publication of draft for consultation	1/11/21 to 21/11/21
Final Cabinet sign off	14/12/21
Final DASVEG sign off	21/12/21
Submission to DLUHC	5/1/22

## Recommendations

The recommendations from the Needs Assessment are set out in the action plan below, following the different steps of the safe accommodation journey.



## Commissioning and Action Plan

“Ensuring victim survivors and their children are safe and supported to recover and thrive”

Recommendations		Action Owner(s)	Year 1 (21/22)	Year 2 (22/23)	Year 3 (23/24)
<b>Finding a Safe Space to Stay</b>					
<b>FSS1</b>	Torbay Council and Registered Providers adopt Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation to ensure policies and procedures are in place to support early identification of DVA and interventions to avoid the victim needing to access safe accommodation and address wider accessibility issues.	SB/TH	Part of wider DVA Strategy		
<b>FSS2</b>	Explore interventions such as management transfers or the removal of the person displaying harmful behaviour to prevent the need for victims and their children to access safe accommodation (see The Whole Housing Approach).	TH	Part of wider DVA Strategy		
<b>FSS3</b>	General increase in safe space capacity to minimum 19 units to account for current housing landscape and withdrawal of local connection criteria.	SB/TDAS	7 new DA Temp Accommodation units in pipeline		Part of MCN Service design
<b>FSS4</b>	Increase safe space capacity for people with a disability and single people including younger adults, including units with mobility access (in partnership with Adult Social Care).	SB & ASC	Work with Peninsula to review no of mobility units		
<b>FSS5</b>	Review pathways and affordability of crisis safe accommodation for young people aged 16 and over who may be in low paid employment	DASVOG	To be tasked		
<b>FSS6</b>	Review length of stay in safe houses (balancing sufficient time to engage in support, not silting up, and use of	SB		Review once new units and workers are embedded	Consider as part of MCN service design

	outreach and resettlement staff to support once moved on).				
<b>FSS7</b>	Develop framework of specialist DVA safe accommodation to call off as required for additional capacity	Housing/Proc/SB	As part of wider TA procurement, include mobility access		
<b>FSS8</b>	Specialist support to address the needs of minority groups should be considered, for example LGBT+, People with Learning Difficulties.	DASVEG	TDAS hosting regional LGBT+IDVA post	Learning from LGBT+ IDVA and other specialised roles across region	
<b>FSS9</b>	Develop Safe Accommodation support pathways that are simple and clearly publicised, consider single access point.	DASVOG	Interim pathway To be tasked	Align with regional pathways	Consider alongside MCN service design
<b>FSS10</b>	Consider Health IDVA in Torbay Hospital to address disclosure and accessibility to safe accommodation support by older people	DASVEG/CCG DASV Lead	CCG DASV Lead funding and business case	Recruitment	
<b>FSS11</b>	Address wider accessibility issues with specific focus on addressing cultural and societal stigma around domestic violence and abuse	DASVEG	Action for wider DVA strategy		
<b>FSS12</b>	Targeted information about the service that is available to practitioners	TDAS	To be tasked		
<b>FSS13</b>	Welcome pack of information for victim survivors about what to expect – developed by and for	TDAS & Housing	Safe Accommodation workers to be tasked		
<b>FSS14</b>	Robust demographic data collection from homelessness and safe accommodation applicants, particularly around ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation to ensure true levels of need are evidenced. Identify common datasets that can be used across the system alongside data required by DLUHC.	DASVEG	To be tasked. MARAC system will contribute in part. LGBT IDVA and Sexual Health IDVA roles to contribute	To be tasked	To be included in MCN reporting as agreed by Alliance

<b>FSS15</b>	Consider co-location of DVA staff within Housing Options team to support assessment of DVA homelessness presentations and develop preventative safe accommodation options for DVA victims as described in the Whole Housing Approach.	TH/SB	2x FTE Safe accommodation workers to be co-located with Housing Options	Review if further co-location required	
<b>FSS16</b>	Review consistency in respect of DHC banding decisions	TH	To be tasked		
<b>FSS17</b>	MCN Alliance to take account to voices of lived experience in designing services that meet intersectional needs	MCN commissioners	Included in MCN service specification	Part of MCN service design	Part of MCN service delivery and oversight
<b>FSS18</b>	Ensure all staff working with victims of domestic violence and abuse understand the requirements of the DAA 21 and follow the updated Homelessness Code of Guidance in respect of assessing domestic violence presentations.	DASVEG	To be tasked	Refresher programme to be put in place	
<b>FSS19</b>	All staff working with victims of domestic violence and abuse receive training in trauma informed approaches and skills that better support victims with more complex needs	DASVEG	TIA training programme in progress across agencies	Part of MCN requirements	Part of MCN requirements

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### Support in Safe Accommodation

<b>SSA1</b>	Ensure age appropriate programmes of support in safe accommodation all age ranges	SB	To be reviewed		
<b>SSA2</b>	Ensure other agencies and practitioners understand the referral processes for support for CYP in safe accommodation	DASVOG	To be tasked		
<b>SSA3</b>	Ensure group work and peer support is included in domestic abuse service offer	SB/TDAS	ongoing		
<b>SSA4</b>	Develop community based emotional wellbeing support for victim survivors in the safe houses.	TDAS/Standing Tall	Ongoing		

<b>SSA5</b>	Commissioners encourage service providers to collaborate closely with the third sector to identify community groups and activities to facilitate peer support and networking for those who do not meet the thresholds for clinical support	SB/DASVOG	Ongoing Standing Tall Community Strategy in development		
<b>SSA6</b>	Availability of peer support networks that meet survivor needs	TDAS and Standing Tall	ongoing		
<b>Moving On to a Permanent Home</b>					
<b>FPH1</b>	Better communications and information around move on	TDAS/Housing	Safe Accommodation workers to be tasked once in post		
<b>FPH2</b>	Provision of resettlement support for those moving on from safe accommodation and ongoing for a period after moving on to prevent re-victimisation.	TDAS	2 x FTE posts being recruited Sept/Oct 21		
<b>FPH3</b>	Establish move on grants from a flexible funding pot (Whole Housing Approach) to facilitate timely move on and avoid “silting up” of safe accommodation, enabling victim survivors experiencing financial barriers to access safe accommodation.	SB/TDAS/Housing	To be tasked - Protocol to be agreed Funding identified in New Burdens monies		
<b>FPH4</b>	Consider a guarantor system for victims of domestic abuse to facilitate access to the private sector.	TH	Part of broader systemic approach in addressing homelessness through working with the private rented sector.		
<b>FPH5</b>	Establish affordable move on pathways for young people who are in low paid work and not be eligible for benefits	Housing and Children’s Services	To be tasked Strategic link to edge of care and homelessness strategies		



<b>FPH6</b>	Peninsula wide or local operational partnership that includes expert advisers in domestic abuse, housing, financial and legal matters to help victims navigate complex economic barriers to access safe accommodation.	SB &/or Peninsula Commissioners Group	Link to wider DVA Strategy. Potential role for CVS.		
<b>Regional Priorities</b>					
<b>RP1</b>	Develop cross border referral pathways and processes	Peninsula Commissioners Group	Peninsula Co-ordinator appointed	Regional plan to be agreed	
<b>RP2</b>	Raise awareness of DAA21 requirements	Peninsula Commissioners Group	Peninsula Co-ordinator appointed		
<b>RP3</b>	Peninsula referral coordination function for refuge/safe accommodation across the region for agencies that operate across the footprint	Peninsula Commissioners Group	Peninsula Co-ordinator pathway mapping	Develop prototype/pilot	
<b>RP4</b>	Development of regional datasets	Peninsula Commissioners Group	Peninsula Co-ordinator appointed	Regional plan to be agreed	
<b>RP5</b>	Peninsula managed reciprocals agreement and protocols	Peninsula Commissioners Group	Peninsula Co-ordinator appointed	Regional plan to be agreed	
<b>RP6</b>	Peninsula safe accommodation joint commissioning plan for specialist requirements and by and for services	Peninsula Commissioners Group	To commence once all Peninsula SA NAs complete		
<b>RP7</b>	Addressing quality issues and disparities between different types of safe accommodation across the Peninsula	Peninsula Commissioners Group		Regional plan to be agreed. Include DAC Office regional lead.	

Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Actions			
PB1	Ensure Safe Accommodation priorities are reflected and to the wider DVA Strategy and other connected strategies and strategic plans.	DASVEG	
PB2	Hold partner agencies to account in considering joint commissioning options and opportunities to pool budgets to achieve strategic outcomes	DASVEG	
PB3	Ensure compliance with recommended quality standards in current and current and future commissioned services	DASVEG	
PB4	Ensure compliance with requirements of Part 4 DAA21	DASVEG	



**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Date: 14th December 2021**

**Wards Affected: All Wards**

**Report Title: Introduction of Updated Transport Asset Management Policy and the publishing of related updated Highway Policies.**

**Is the decision a key decision? No**

**When does the decision need to be implemented? November 2021**

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Cllr Mike Morey Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Environment and Culture.

**Supporting Officer Contact Details:** Tim Northway – Principal Engineer (Network Management) (SWISCo)

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**1. Proposal and Introduction**

1.1 Torbay Council as a responsible highway authority, exercises its highway maintenance functions fully in line with the principles and practices associated with asset management. To demonstrate this, we are presenting the latest versions of our Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy documents to members. This is intended to guide members and customers of how we prioritise our highway maintenance programmes and to give insights into key decisions in this field.

This 'Infrastructure' Asset Management Strategy shares many aims and principles with the recently adopted Corporate Asset Management Strategy but it is wholly aimed at the Highway Asset.

The adoption and publication of these documents is advocated in the current code of practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'. By getting cabinet approval for these and then adding them together with other supporting documents, plans and policies, to the Council website, will allow a greater understanding of this discipline to all interested parties.

By adopting this Strategy and Policy it will also allow the Department for Transport and Peer Authorities, to see how we demonstrate a strategic approach to highways management.

1.2 These revised documents are also required to reflect that the changes in the service delivery model, following the transfer of highway functions to SWISCo, will not change the procedures associated with asset management or alter the commitment of officers delivering this service on behalf of Torbay Council.

- 1.3 The proposed Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy are now amended in line with the aims and goals identified in Torbay Council's Community and Corporate Plan.

## **2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments**

- 2.1 The proposals in these documents outline that effective and efficient management of the existing infrastructure is a key factor in the ability of the Council to deliver its services. The "Highway" which is managed by SWISCo on behalf of Torbay Council, as local highway authority (LHA), forms the largest and most valuable public asset within Torbay Councils control, with a gross value in excess of £0.7 billion.
- 2.2 Local highway authorities have to demonstrate their commitment to meeting the aims and requirements of the principles of asset management practices. Part of this process involves an authority scoring itself on a series of related practices, that are listed by the Department for Transport. The indicative capital funding allocation for highway maintenance is top sliced and authorities are then required to claim and defend their right to a scoring band between 1 to 3. 1 being a poor score and 3 being excellent. Failure to reach and retain the higher overall scoring band results in a loss of part, or all of the subsequent 'incentive fund'. Whilst by training practitioners and adopting other processes, Torbay Council have consistently scored as a Band 3 authority and thus avoided the potential loss of funding, it is required to demonstrate its ongoing commitment in adopting the best practices that may in time require investment in asset management systems and other areas. Hence the need to formally adopt the 'Strategy and Policy' documents formally.
- 2.3 The current level of funding for maintaining the most valuable asset in Torbay is under extreme constant pressure. The management needs to be undertaken in a considered manner, which takes into account maintenance needs and financial resources. These considerations must then be balanced against the potential risks, which include service failure and the subsequent demands on the same public finances for damage and liability claims. There is a current estimated backlog of carriageway maintenance schemes in excess of £21M and a significant £4M backlog for street lighting column replacements. With the successful publishing of these documents, we can show how to best invest what funding is received, to try to arrest any further deterioration of these assets.
- 2.4 There is a clear link demonstrated that shows the correlation between the level of investment in the highway network, versus the expected condition as a whole. Whilst lower cost preventative maintenance is the preferred method of extending the functional life of the highway assets, there comes a time in the life cycle, where an asset requires more extensive and vastly more expensive intervention work, if this asset is to remain as a safe functional resource for the authority. It is now becoming apparent that to avoid an escalating rate of failure of some major roads, together with further need for these costlier interventions, the need to invest in additional life cycle planning techniques should be paramount.
- 2.5 Members should be reminded that as a Highway Authority there are certain absolute duties and responsibilities that an authority has. These include a duty to

keep the highway network in a safe condition for all highway users and a responsibility to ensure that deteriorating infrastructure does not create a potential hazard to public safety. By adhering to the proposed Strategy and Policy documents, you are demonstrating an understanding of the necessity to look after this all too important asset to the best of our ability

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

- (i) That the implementation and publishing of the Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Asset Management Strategy, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the submitted report be approved.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

Appendix 2 – Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

#### **Background Documents**

##### **[Well - Managed Highway Infrastructure by the UKRLG](https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/11915/well-managed_highway_infrastructure_combined_-_28_october_2016_amended_15_march_2017_.pdf)**

[https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/11915/well-managed\\_highway\\_infrastructure\\_combined\\_-\\_28\\_october\\_2016\\_amended\\_15\\_march\\_2017\\_.pdf](https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/11915/well-managed_highway_infrastructure_combined_-_28_october_2016_amended_15_march_2017_.pdf)

Highways Act 1980

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66>

## Section 1: Background Information

### 1. What is the proposal / issue?

The proposal is that Members approve the adoption of the 'Asset Management Strategy' for highways and the 'Infrastructure Asset Management Policy' accompanying this report.

These two documents being the basis of all planning and programming associated with maintaining the Highway Infrastructure within Torbay. They set out the principles of tackling the backlog of maintenance needs and give an overview of the process undertaken to prioritize programmes of work.

These documents are a requirement of the Department for Transport to demonstrate officers and members commitment to maintain the highway infrastructure in a responsible and considered manner.

These documents are also an overview of the remaining plans and policies, that, when considered as a whole, will form the 'Highways Maintenance Manual' which will be a forward-facing set of documents that can be accessed by members and customers alike. For further reference, these supporting documents are:

- Transport Asset Management Plan
- Infrastructure Asset Management Policy
- Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
- Winter Maintenance and Emergency Plan
- Highway Inspection Manual
- Street Lighting Maintenance Manual

The Policy and Strategy documents encompass the key aspects of maintenance within Network Management.

The compliance of these documents are part of Department for Transport's Self-assessment, and contribute to our funding. The intention for these documents is for them to remain as "Live Documents" which are periodically updated in line with required standards.

These documents are aligned with the wider Community and Corporate Plan and the challenges that face Torbay

- An ageing population
- The need for economic and housing growth
- The climate change emergency
- Substantial reductions in central government funding.

<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>What is the current situation?</b></p> <p>The current situation is that in recent years, levels of funding supplied for the purpose of maintaining highway assets has fallen far short of requirements to provide improvement to Network condition. Whilst, so far, no roads have been closed due to lack of maintenance, it has been necessary to delay a number of schemes due to the availability of funding.</p> <p>Currently, some twenty-five percent of streets on the highway network would benefit from some form of maintenance intervention. Whilst main roads and other classified roads carrying greater traffic volumes have received much of the recent funding, other local roads are deteriorating to a point where if not addressed shortly, more expensive surfacing intervention works will then be required. Investment in lower cost preventative maintenance should be funded to prevent losing the opportunity to use these systems on those parts of the local roads network that are still in a fit condition to receive this work.</p> <p>The present backlog of carriageway resurfacing schemes is now in the region of £21,000,000 whereas in a typical year, there will be just over £1,000,000 to address this. The capital funding provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) is also required for other highway infrastructure and similar maintenance backlogs exist with street lighting, where an estimated £4,000,000 is required to replace aging lighting columns.</p> <p>A further requirement to update and continually review plans and policies, is that all highway authorities are required to carry out a yearly self-assessment for the DfT. The scores generated determine a band between 1 to 3 with level 1 being poor and level 3 being excellent. As these reviews have progressed failure to achieve and remain within the top band are penalized and could result in indicative capital funding being reduced by some 30%. Given the current situation with funding being already under pressure this would be a major blow to maintaining let alone improving the condition of our network.</p> <p>With all of the above in mind the revised documents which back up the policy and strategy will be displayed on the Council's website for immediate reference to members of the public.</p> <p>The documents have been changed to reflect the changes to the network, as well as aligning their goals with the Community and Corporate Plan.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p>There are no key options to state as to why these documents are not to be provided. Whilst alternative surfacing treatments can and will be considered as techniques develop and the plans may then be modified to reflect these. These two documents are an essential part of our DfT Self-Assessment and as such, are required to maintain our status as a level 3 authority and to secure the yearly additional funding.</p>



4.	<p><b>What is the relationship with the priorities within the Partnership Memorandum and the Council’s Principles?</b></p> <p>As part of our strategy, policy and plan for Transport Asset Management, it is key that we demonstrate that our goals align with the Corporate Strategy. Torbay Council's opportunities and challenges are as defined in the corporate policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>An ageing population:</b> Ensuring that risk of potential highway defects is correctly assessed to ensure that all users of the highway network can traverse it safely.</li> <li>- <b>Thriving Economy:</b> To maintain an efficient and effective highway network to facilitate future growth.</li> <li>- <b>Tackling Climate Change</b> To reduce carbon emissions associated with street lighting and make more use of recycling techniques when treating highways.</li> <li>- <b>Substantial reductions in central government funding:</b> Intelligently applying the principles of asset management to future capital schemes to ensure that the current asset register is maintained to the highest standard.</li> </ul>
5.	<p><b>How does this proposal/issue contribute towards the Council’s responsibilities as corporate parents?</b></p> <p>The proposal does not directly contribute towards the Council’s responsibilities as Corporate Parents.</p>
6.	<p><b>How does this proposal/issue tackle poverty, deprivation and vulnerability?</b></p> <p>The proposal does not directly tackle poverty. Deprivation and vulnerability</p>
7.	<p><b>How does the proposal/issue impact on people with learning disabilities?</b></p> <p>The proposal does not directly impact on people with learning disabilities.</p>
8.	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with? How will the Council engage with the community? How can the Council empower the community?</b></p> <p>If adopted and approved and successful, the proposal could attract/retain funding, which used properly, will then affect all residents and visitors to the area by improving their journey experience and bettering the well-being of residents by generating pride in their local area.</p>

## Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

<b>9.</b>	<p><b>What are the financial and legal implications?</b></p> <p>Key financial implications are related to the DfT Self Assessment Fund, where authorities are asked to score themselves based on 22 question parameters.</p> <p>As part of this, compliance and publication with Asset Management documents is a key measurement. The failure to agree and publish these new documents would mean that Torbay Council would score slightly lower, which would affect funding.</p> <p>Funding affected by self-assessment can be affected in roughly 30-33% increments, so a reduction from Level 3 to Level 2 would roughly mean a 33% reduction in funding from DfT.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b>What are the risks?</b></p> <p>Key Risks are outlined below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reduction in funding due to self-assessment scoring should these documents not be agreed.</li></ol>
<b>11.</b>	<p><b>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</b></p> <p>Currently, there is no extra expenditure required as part of the publishing of these documents.</p>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</b></p> <p>The documents enclosed are updated versions of previously published documents.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</b></p> <p>No Consultation was required.</p>
<b>14.</b>	<p><b>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</b></p> <p>No amendments have been made to the proposal as a result of initial feedback.</p>

## Equality Impacts

15.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people			There is no differential impact
	People with caring Responsibilities			There is no differential impact
	People with a disability			There is no differential impact
	Women or men			There is no differential impact
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			There is no differential impact
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			There is no differential impact
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			There is no differential impact
	People who are transgendered			There is no differential impact
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			There is no differential impact
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			There is no differential impact

	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)		There is no differential impact
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)		There is no differential impact
16.	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	There is no differential impact.	
17.	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	All public services are reliant on the use of a safe and usable highway network to provide their services	

# Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

2021-2026

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## Version control

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Date	Details	Updated by
04/02/2021	Initial rewrite.	Christopher Lazenby
	Sign-off	
	Sign-off	

## Foreword and Executive Lead Statement by Cllr Mike Morey

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As an elected member, I am often asked questions regarding decisions made on maintaining our highway network. This network is the most extensive and expensive asset maintained by the authority with a gross replacement cost valuation of over £700,000,000. In reviewing this latest published highway asset management strategy document and talking to engineers tasked with delivering this service, I can better appreciate many of the associated issues raised.

I hope that you too will be able to personally appreciate the thought processes and the efforts that are carried out, in order to keep our highway network as efficient and safe as practicable, within the resources available. This Strategy and its sister document Asset Management Policy do provide some of the answers.

I therefore am pleased to acknowledge the adoption of this Strategy in the expectation that it will address many of your questions and to reassure you that the service is being delivered in an appropriate manner by a small but dedicated team of engineers.

Questions will of course continue to be levelled at members and officers frequently and will always receive a response. However, the publication of this 'Strategy' will hopefully address many of issues that may concern you and the reading of these and indeed supporting plans and policy documents on our Torbay Council website are highly recommended.

Cllr Mike Morey



Dated 5th October 2021

# Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy Introduction

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The purpose of Torbay Council's Highway Asset Management Team is to create customer value by operating a sustainable highway infrastructure system in such a way as to optimise the network condition within the available budgets.

Our vision is to be regarded as delivering the best all-round highway infrastructure management service in the United Kingdom. To achieve this our Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy sets out how we will deliver our Asset Management Policy.

Our asset management policy is to develop and maintain safe, efficient, co-ordinated and affordable highway infrastructure systems that sustainably serve the needs of our customers and optimise the long-term benefits for our leaders. We shall comply with all legal, regulatory and environmental requirements placed upon us and will not compromise the safety of our employees, our contractors or the public.

The Asset Management Policy shall be achieved through the operation of a co-ordinated end to end asset management system that:

- Produces an Asset Management Strategy, with objectives and performance targets that are consistent with our business priorities.
- Considers the complete lifecycle of our assets to develop investment plans that are sustainable, efficient and based upon an optimised consideration of cost, risk and performance.
- Develops a resource/training strategy aligned with the requirement of the investment plans.
- Ensures the efficient execution of our plans and fulfilment of our customer promises.
- Tracks delivery of our asset management objectives and targets and reviews the achievement of their intended benefits.
- Integrates with and complements our risk, health and safety, environmental and quality management system requirements; and
- Incorporates regular audits and formal management reviews designed to seek and implement continual improvement.

All members, employees and contractors shall comply with this policy and contribute towards the continuous improvement of the asset management system.

The authority will provide sufficient information, training and resources to enable this to be achieved.

This Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy, whilst sharing many of the processes contained in the Corporate Asset Management Strategy, has been developed wholly to deal with the Highway Infrastructure Asset and should be read with this in mind.

## **UKRLG Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Recommendations**

The 2016 UKRLG Well Managed Highway Infrastructure is the current code of practice and outlines how we should tackle the challenges of Highway Maintenance using Asset Management. In the Code of Practice, there are 36 key recommendations which are described and should be met to ensure that the authority is committing to "best practice"



We have outlined these 36 recommendations throughout this document, their relevance to our practices of Asset Management and how we are compliant with the Code of Practice.

### **Recommendation from Code of Practice - Use of the code**

**This Code, in conjunction with the UKRLG Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance, should be used as the starting point against which to develop, review and formally approve highway infrastructure maintenance policy and to identify and formally approve the nature and extent of any variations.**

We have used the 2016 Well Managed Highway Infrastructure as a guidance in the development of this strategy.

## **Aim of the strategy**

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Torbay Council recognises that effective and efficient management of the existing infrastructure is a key factor in the ability of the council to deliver its key services. The "Highway" which is managed by the service forms the largest and most valuable public asset within Torbay Councils control, with a gross value in-excess of £0.7 billion. This strategy is key to achieving the Asset Management Policies aims of managing the highway asset to the best standard to the budget and ensuring that new infrastructure would meet the needs of Torbay Council and be able to be maintained.

Torbay Council's vision is to be a high performing and adaptable authority with a "fit for future" vision as outlined in the "Community and Corporate Plan". Using the currently allotted resources to secure good public services got all and to be a strong and effective community leader. This vision translates into core values such as:-

- Forward thinking
- People orientated
- Adaptable
- Integrity

The provision, maintenance and management of public infrastructure such as highways, bridges, public rights of way, public open spaces and coastal assets are key drivers in the delivery of these values. The key service provider for Torbay Council's highways service is SWISCO, a wholly owned subsidiary company, which will be providing key maintenance duties for the Highways Authority.

Asset Management is by definition "forward thinking", customer considerations are part of being "people orientated", decision makers looking after this asset need to be adaptable and to exercise integrity with difficult choices.

The current level of funding for maintaining the most valuable asset in Torbay is under extreme constant pressure. The management needs to be undertaken in a considerate manner which takes in account maintenance needs and financial resources. These considerations must then be balanced against the potential risks which include service failure and the subsequent demands on the same public finances for damage and liability claims.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION** The effects of extreme weather events on highway infrastructure assets should be risk assessed and ways to mitigate the impacts of the highest risks identified.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – CARBON** The impact of highway infrastructure maintenance activities in terms of whole life carbon costs should be taken into account when determining appropriate interventions, materials and treatments.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, NATURE CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY** Materials, products and treatments for highway infrastructure maintenance should be appraised for environmental impact and for wider issues of sustainability. Highway verges, trees and landscaped areas should be managed with regard to their nature conservation value and biodiversity principles as well as whole-life costing, highway safety and serviceability.

**Torbay Council is currently in a "Climate Emergency" state and recognises the threat of climate change in the corporate risk register and the Community and Corporate plan.**

This strategy is aligned with the Corporate and Community Plan, which outlines how the company will attempt to tackle the climate emergency. This strategy contributes ideas on how to reduce carbon emissions associated with street lighting and make more use of recycling techniques when treating highways

All stakeholders such as; elected members, managers, decision makers and customers alike need to be fully aware of the conflicting demands on maintaining this asset within the limitations of the existing financial situation.

## Scope

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This strategy is applicable to all public infrastructure that is commissioned by Torbay Council to be managed and maintained by its wholly owned company, SWISCo as part of the Highways, Fleet and Transport service; it also links into other service areas such as public open spaces, street lighting and traffic light systems.

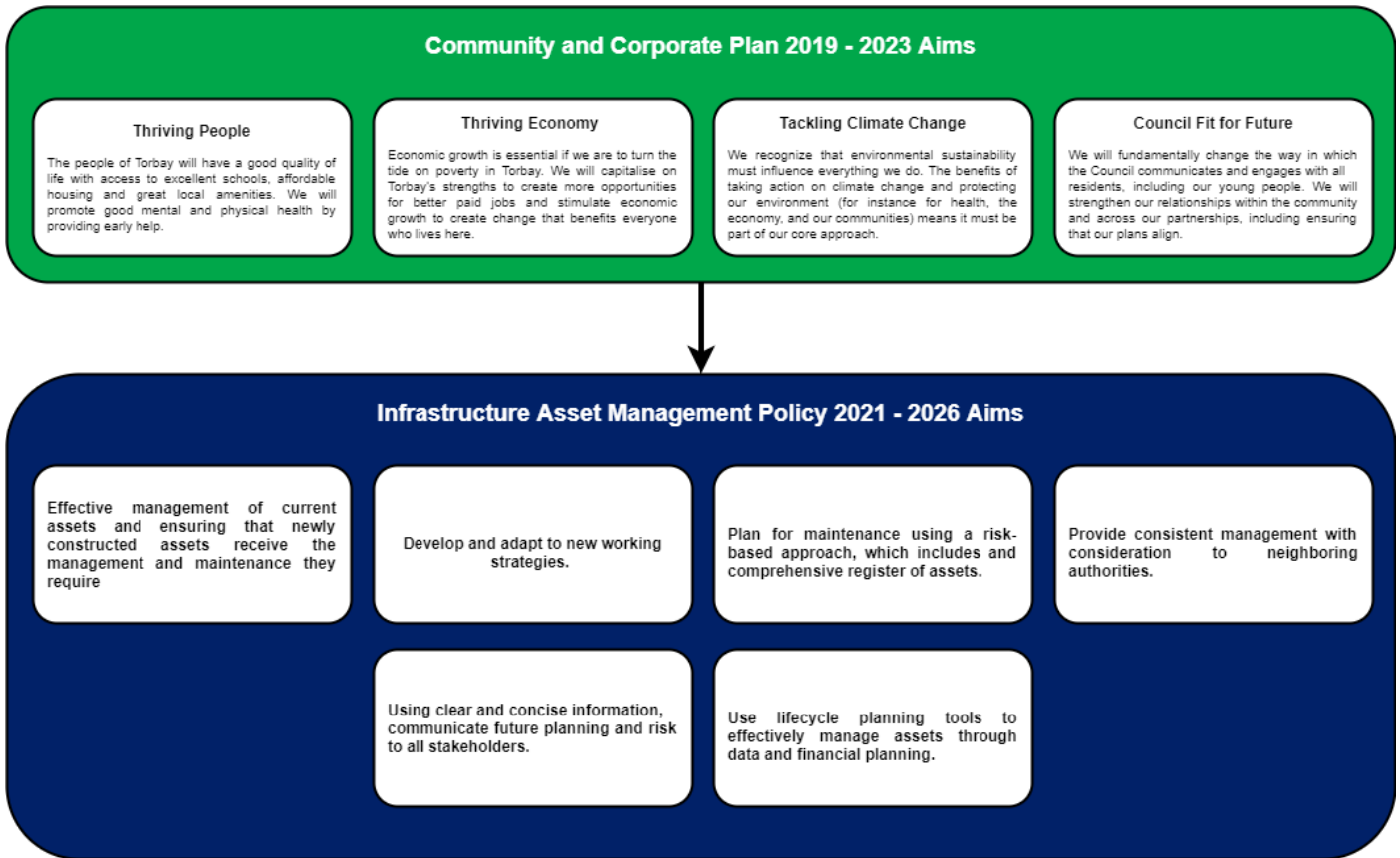
### **Relationship to other documents**

The Asset Management Strategy is just one integral part of a wider set of documents that covers Highways Maintenance.

The Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy are linked by their relationship to the other Highway Manuals and Documents and the wider Council Policies.

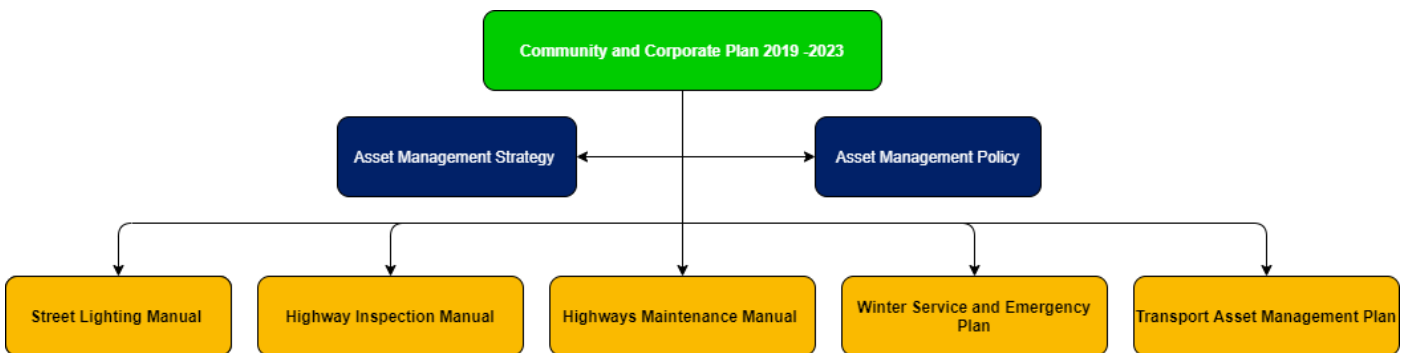
The Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy is aligned with corporate policies and the HMEP Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice.

The joint policy and strategy which encompass our Asset Management Documents will be updated at 3 to 5 year intervals where required. The below diagram explains how we have aligned the aims of the Asset Management Policy with those of the Community and Corporate Plan.



**Recommendation from Code of Practice – ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY**  
**An asset management policy and a strategy should be developed and published. These should align with the corporate vision and demonstrate the contribution asset management makes towards achieving this vision.**

We have developed both an Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy in line with the guidance.



Using the recommendations set out in the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Guidance, we are clearly displaying how our policies and plans are related. The Community and Corporate Plan 2019-2023 sits at the top, as we align our working principles with those found in that document, and then we have our two Asset Management Documents, a Policy and a Strategy, and then our manuals/plans which outline how we undertake maintenance based on the specific asset or service.

# Strategy Statement

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The Council believes that effective asset management is fundamental to the delivery of its services and the delivery of its long-term vision and strategy. Asset Management principles enable informed decisions to be made about investment and maintenance funding; assist in the targeting of resources to where they can be most effective and enables the identification and management of the risks associated with its statutory duties to manage and maintain public infrastructure.

## Strategy Detail

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In adopting an Asset Management approach to the maintenance of our entire infrastructure we will be implementing a methodology which includes:

- A systematic approach which takes a long-term view.
- The consideration of the whole of life costs of maintaining an asset.
- The explicit consideration of customer expectations and defined levels of service.
- The optimisation and prioritisation of works based on assessed needs derived from the defined levels of service.
- The use of lifecycle planning to inform the optimal treatment at each stage of the assets life.

The implementation of a formalised approach enables better decision making, which takes into account the relationship between cost and performance. This in turn allows potential for the delivery of an improved level of service for the resources available, or where owing to budgetary constraints, it can assist in ensuring that the effects of a reduction in the level of service is managed, through the efficient deployment of available resources, such that risks are identified, balanced and mitigated in so far as is possible.

The Council's priorities for maintaining this asset with the current levels of funding will be:-

- Prioritise the A & B road network that carries the higher levels of traffic
- Use preventative maintenance treatments on roads that are still in a condition to benefit from these.
- Maintain modern estate roads in accordance with lifecycle planning guidance with periodic preventative intervention at the optimum times.
- Use allocated DFT funding on preventative treatments of older estate roads to reduce further pothole proliferation and to seal vulnerable unbound road formations.
- Target worst first responses at shorter lengths of affected carriageways pending more suitable funding opportunities.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – INSPECTIONS A risk-based inspection regime, including regular safety inspections, should be developed, and implemented for all highway assets.**

Highways Inspections are an operational priority and provide one of the key aspects of data to ensure service delivery. This data collected during inspection can be used for identifying areas of high reactive works which can be considered for a permanent form of repair or resurfacing.

The recording of low -risk defects can allow future tracking of potential maintenance issues in the future and also be used as a mechanism for the defence of legal claims.

## Communication

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**Recommendation from Code of Practice – ENGAGING AND COMMUNICATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS** Relevant information should be actively communicated through engagement with relevant stakeholders in setting requirements, making decisions and reporting performance.

Torbay Council Highways recognises the need for and importance of stakeholder communication.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – COMMUNICATIONS Severe Weather and Civil Emergencies Plans** should incorporate a communications plan to ensure that information including weather and flood forecasts are received through agreed channels and that information is disseminated to highway users through a range of media

One key aspect of Asset Management planning and strategy is the authority's communication of key information to the relevant stakeholders. Torbay Council operates a Communication Standards Policy, which outlines the use of communication systems within the company. We also have a corporate communications team for Torbay Council and SWISCo, and they may use appropriate forms of communication to relay information to the public or stakeholders.

Communication of information is conducted through several means, policies are published on the Torbay Council website or through Public Announcements, where more reactive information can be communicated through more appropriate means such as email or via social media.

Torbay Council recognises the need to undertake the correct level of communication and complies in the following ways.

- NHT Surveys; These are undertaken bi-annually and are conducted through NHT themselves; the results are collected and are published as part of this document.
- Condition Data: Condition data is collected yearly as part of our contract with WDM to collect and assess the condition of the Highway and allow us to collect and publish this data as required.
- Resurfacing Sites; We collect sites which are in consideration for resurfacing and this list is published as part of this document.
- Yearly resurfacing schemes: Yearly schemes for surfacing are submitted to our streetworks team for scheduling considerations and then published to the public on the website.

This strategy will be made available on the Council's website alongside the other parts of the associated documentation under the Torbay Council Highways Policies section.

Torbay Council recognises the need for communicating with stakeholders, the methods of communication are outlined in Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2016-2020

# Asset Management Framework

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One of the key aspects of delivering the Infrastructure Asset Management Policy is the Framework that is based on the recommendations made within the 2016 "HMEP Well-managed highway infrastructure" code of practice. The framework provides a summary of all the required activities and processes that are necessary to develop, implement and then improve our approach to asset Management.

The Torbay Council Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy document together with its partner document "Infrastructure Asset Management Policy" sits within a wider asset management framework and forms a link between Community and Corporate Plan and objectives and associated service and operational plans such as the Highway Maintenance Manual, Transport Asset Management Plan, Safety Inspection Manual and other similar documents.

## **The responsibility for the delivery of this asset management framework sits within The Place directorate with the services commission from SWISCo as the authority's agent. Context for the Asset Management Framework**

The context for the framework outlines the factors that need to be considered when measuring the council's need for highways services and appropriate delivery. The 5 key factors for defining the context are:-

- National Transport Policy: These policies are created by central and local government and define how we undertake maintenance and some of the larger constraints and aims we are bound to.  
  
Torbay Council Policies: Our corporate policies that help define our goals as a corporate entity
- Stakeholders expectations: What is expected from us, by the stakeholders, and in this case, open communication, safe highway network and abiding by applying the guidance we have been given.
- Financial Constraints: What is expected from us from financing and budgetary standpoints.
- Torbay Council Highways Policies: Our policies which are suited for Highway Maintenance and outline how we undertake delivery of the highway service.

Legal Constraints: What is expected from us from a legal standpoint, what we are duty bound to do by law.

## **Planning**

This defines the key activities that are undertaken by Torbay Council as part of the planning and implement of Asset Management.

## Enablers

"Enablers" can be defined as "a series of activities that support the implementation of the Asset management Policy and Framework" They provide a means of defining leadership and the whole department adoption of asset management culture, developing and implementing the ability to effectively communicate and collaborate with all associated stakeholders; the development of staff, and future CPD implementation and a strategy for use of asset management systems, future benchmarking and measuring continuous improvement.

## Delivery

The delivery aspect of the framework outlines how the highway service will be delivered, this is taking into account Torbay Council's new service delivery company SWISCo.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK An Asset Management Framework should be developed and endorsed by senior decision makers. All activities outlined in the Framework should be documented. (HIAMG Recommendation 1)**

We have developed an Asset Management Framework (below) in line with the HMEP 2013 Guidance. The current 2016 Well Maintained Highway Infrastructure makes no recommendations for framework design, however neighbouring authorities use the templated framework as guidance, and Recommendation 5 of the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice states; "To ensure that users' reasonable expectations for consistency are taken into account, the approach of other local and strategic highway and transport authorities, especially those with integrated or adjoining networks, should be considered when developing highway infrastructure maintenance policies."





# The Asset Management Approach

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The Torbay Council's vision for Asset Management recognises the following themes:

- Scope: The Asset Management Plan is primarily to optimise maintenance of the entire network. The asset encompasses all areas of adopted highway and public rights of way within the boundary of Torbay.
- Strategic approach: a systematic process that takes a long-term view.
- Whole of life: the whole of life / life cycle of an asset is considered.
- Optimisation: maximising benefits by balancing competing demands.
- Resource allocation: allocation of resources based on assessed needs.
- Customer focus: explicit consideration of customer's expectations.

However, in adopting the principles of Asset Management it should be noted that the primary drivers in decision making processes depend on a detailed knowledge of the extent of the highway inventory and in particular its overall condition, but also that customer satisfaction must be considered within the end product.

## Inventory and Data Management

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**Recommendation from Code of Practice – NETWORK INVENTORY** A detailed inventory or register of highway assets, together with information on their scale, nature and use, should be maintained. The nature and extent of inventory collected should be fit for purpose and meet business needs. Where data or information held is considered sensitive, this should be managed in a security minded way. **Current Asset Data:**

The inventory data is contained in the Highway Maintenance Plan and Transport Asset Plan. It includes the following: -

- 530.5 kilometres of roads
- 20 kilometres of green lanes
- 817 kilometres of footways
- 77 kilometres of public footpaths
- 460,000 sqm of grass verges and shrubberies
- 22,000 no. road gullies
- 14,000+ Street Lighting Units
- 4,000+ Associated Lighting Units
  
- Other unmeasured highway inventory assets include:-
  - Seats
  - Shelters
  - Bridges
  - Retaining Walls
  - Unlit Road Signs.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – MINIMISING CLUTTER Opportunities to simplify signs and other street furniture and to remove redundant items should be taken into account when planning highway infrastructure maintenance activities.**

Considerations towards maintenance and lifecycle planning of a mixed range of assets should take into consideration whether an asset not only needs renewal or replacing, but whether an asset is still providing a vital function to the Highway and the users. A common issue as developments take place is that assets become outdated and cost money to maintain and renew. Lifecycle Planning should include a cost-benefit analysis when it comes to replacing expensive assets.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – HERITAGE ASSETS Authorities should identify a schedule of listed structures, ancient monuments and other relevant assets and work with relevant organisations to ensure that maintenance reflects planning requirements.**

Historical or specialist assets should be recorded where possible and include a register of parts which make up the whole asset so that repairs or maintenance can be arranged quickly. These assets should also be taken into consideration when writing maintenance contracts or seeking new suppliers.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – NETWORK HIERARCHY A network hierarchy, or a series of related hierarchies, should be defined which include all elements of the highway network, including carriageways, footways, cycle routes, structures, lighting and rights of way. The hierarchy should take into account current and expected use, resilience, and local economic and social factors such as industry, schools, hospitals and similar, as well as the desirability of continuity and of a consistent approach for walking and cycling.**

Current Hierarchy Database stands at

	2009	2020
A Class	45.2km	46.4km
B Class	8.4km	8.6km
C Class	49.7km	57.1km
U Class	419km	418.4km
Total	522.3km	530.5km

Torbay Council holds information on various assets on a number of different platforms. These asset databases are being logged on a single common platform and will provide individual layers on the Council’s GIS mapping system. Currently Torbay Council operates 3 Key Highways management systems in the form of;

- Symology GIS/QGIS
- Mayrise Highways
- WDM Webservice UKPM and WDM WIP

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – ASSET MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS** Asset management systems should be sustainable and able to support the information required to enable asset management. Systems should be accessible to relevant staff and, where appropriate, support the provision of information for stakeholders.

However, as part of the new service delivery with Torbay Council's new term maintenance contractor, the procurement of a new complete Works/Asset Management system is currently being undertaken. Torbay Council recognises the importance of Data Management and is striving to improve this with the procurement of a new system.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND CLAIMS** Records should be kept of all activities, particularly safety and other inspections, including the time and nature of any response, and procedures established to ensure efficient management of claims whilst protecting the authority from unjustified or fraudulent claims.

Yotta Mayrise Highways is our current Management system for inspections, defect risk recording, reporting and works management.

Whilst most highway inventory data is already recorded in this manner, other infrastructure assets are being assimilated as resources permit.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – AN INTEGRATED NETWORK**

The highway network should be considered as an integrated set of assets when developing highway infrastructure maintenance policies. The Council has comprehensive inspection and survey schedules, tailored to specific assets, taking into account the national guidance and codes of practice. These regimes are documented in the relevant maintenance manuals and will be updated in line with changes in national guidance.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – CROSS ASSET PRIORITIES** In developing priorities and programmes, consideration should be given to prioritising across asset groups as well as within them.

Torbay Council recognises the importance of prioritising asset groups based on priority and future planning, for example, our yearly surface dressing scheme takes sites which are not only deteriorated, but also sites which are reaching the maximum designed lifespan of the material used previously.

## Levels of Service

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Levels of service are a means of describing the standard of service that is provided or required. The development of Levels of Service must reflect organisational constraints. While it may be possible to influence and reduce some of these, many will remain as permanent restrictions. These will include:

- Inadequate or unpredictable financial resources – the desired level of service may not be achievable
- Resource constraints – if financial constraints are removed it still may not be possible to resource short term fixes
- Procurement constraints – again a consideration if finance is not a factor
- Political constraints – this may affect the availability of funding

If whole life costings are to be rigidly implemented, it may lead to the appearance that roads that 'seem to be OK' take precedence over some residential roads that are in serious need of repair.

The actual Levels of Service provided are analysed within the Highway Asset Management Plan. Contributing data used includes, annual condition surveys, bi-annual customer satisfaction surveys, review of structural maintenance schemes within available funding levels and recorded levels of reactive maintenance and customer reports. Taken together, these will allow a direction of travel to be identified.

## Lifecycle Planning

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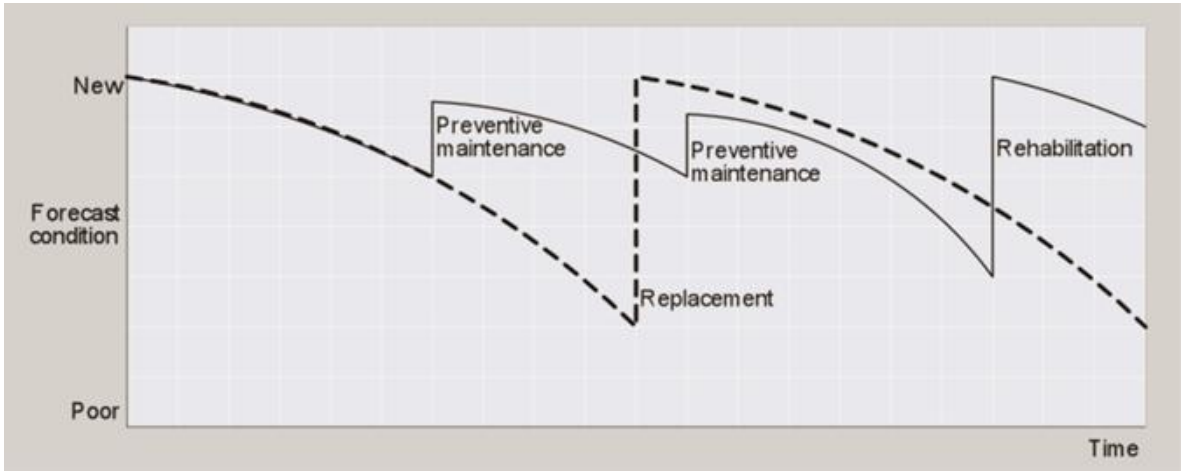
Lifecycle Planning is a mechanism which enables links to be made between a particular asset, levels of service, current condition, maintenance needs and funding provisions.

The diagram below shows the lifecycle of a carriageway comparing condition against time. In this example there is also a direct relationship between the forecast condition and the costs of the suggested treatments. The optimum intervention treatment would be to carry out the lower cost preventative treatments at suitable time intervals thus enabling the carriageway condition to remain in a good stable condition. The worst-case cost scenario is to allow the asset to deteriorate to a point where the only option is an expensive replacement treatment.

### **Recommendation from Code of Practice – CONSISTENCY WITH CHARACTER**

**Determination of materials, products and treatments for the highway network should take into account the character of the area as well as factoring in whole life costing and sustainability. The materials, products and treatments used for highway maintenance should meet requirements for effectiveness and durability**

The best-case scenario requires that adequate funding is available for the optimum treatments at the time that these are still applicable. Missing these preventative treatments due to inadequate funding provision leads to the gradual decline in overall network conditions and this is not sustainable in the long term.



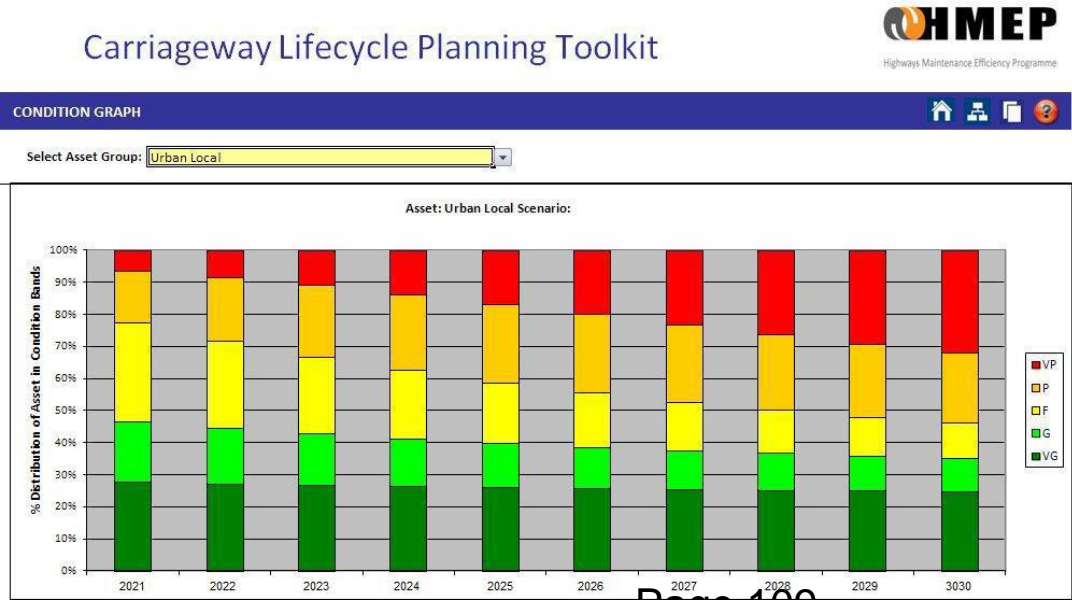
The introduction of Whole of Government Accounts set out in the CIPFA Code for Transport Infrastructure Assets will provide evidence of the need to fund timely maintenance interventions. In the meantime, most highway authorities are limited to seeing a damage limitation approach being applied to their highway assets. Future monetary depreciation of the highway asset will appear in an authority’s financial balance sheet. This will make informed investment strategies and suitable budget allocation even more necessary.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – CONDITION SURVEYS An asset condition survey regime, based on asset management needs and any statutory reporting requirements, should be developed and implemented.**

Condition Surveys are currently undertaken on a yearly scheme, by an accredited surveyor. This data can be used to produce reports on carriageway depreciation and the data can be used for lifecycle planning.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – LIFECYCLE PLANS Lifecycle planning principles should be used to review the level of funding, support investment decisions and substantiate the need for appropriate and sustainable long-term investment.**

Torbay Council’s current predicted trend in the overall condition of their unclassified local road network, based on carriageway data (which is 70% of the entire value of the transport infrastructure) is in the diagram below:-



The diagram is taken directly from the Council's Transport Asset Management Plan and was derived from the toolkit provided within the CIPFA Code for Transport Infrastructure Assets. It is based on the currently predicted budgetary provisions.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – WHOLE LIFE / DESIGNING FOR MAINTENANCE** Authorities should take whole life costs into consideration when assessing options for maintenance, new and improved highway schemes. The future maintenance costs of such new infrastructure are therefore a prime consideration.

Torbay Council recognizes the need for whole life planning, in both the considerations for highway improvements and future housing development.

## Works Programmes

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**Recommendation from Code of Practice – WORKS PROGRAMMING** A prioritised forward works programme for a rolling period of three to five years should be developed and updated regularly.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – FINANCIAL PLANS** Financial plans should be prepared for all highway maintenance activities covering short, medium and long term time horizons.

Works Programming and forward planning is currently difficult to the limited funding announcements. There will be a top 50 or 100 sites listed on the webpage. However, these will be worst first sites, actual programmes depend on other sites being able to receive preventative treatments. These may be identified and recorded but are also reliant on the availability of specialist contractors. Surface dressing sites will be based on SCRIM testing results or if the previous dressing is nearing end of serviceability.

## Risk Management

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Managing risk is an integral part of managing our transport assets. All activities from management, identification and prioritisation of works to the establishment of budgets have risks associated with them. These risks need managing. The assessment of comparative risk is therefore a key asset management tool. It can be used at a tactical level within the asset management process, to assist with option appraisal and selection, via assessment of the comparative risks of:

- Providing differing levels of service.
- Funding works on different assets; or
- Funding network improvements as opposed to maintenance works.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – RISK BASED APPROACH** A risk-based approach should be adopted for all aspects of highway infrastructure maintenance, including setting levels of service, inspections, responses, resilience, priorities and programmes.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – INFORMATION MANAGEMENT** Information to support a risk-based approach to highway maintenance should be collected, managed and

made available in ways that are sustainable, secure, meet any statutory obligations, and, where appropriate, facilitate transparency for network users.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – DEFECT REPAIR A risk-based defect repair regime should be developed and implemented for all highway assets.**

Torbay Council recognises that a Risk-Based approach to all aspects of the Highway Service. This is demonstrated in our other policies and manuals, which have been published on the Torbay Council website, and have been recently updated to meet the new corporate template standard. The key policies and manuals which are referenced here can be found at

**<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/highways/>**

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – RISK MANAGEMENT The management of current and future risks associated with assets should be embedded within the approach to asset management. Strategic, tactical and operational risks should be included as should appropriate mitigation measures.**

High risk assets are collated and recorded in the Torbay Council Corporate Risk Register, which is collected and published every quarter. These risks will be tackled with a degree of urgency, and where required, requests or bids to Central Government may be considered. The first part of reducing risk is to make an asset or structure safe, increase safety and reduce the impact of failure.

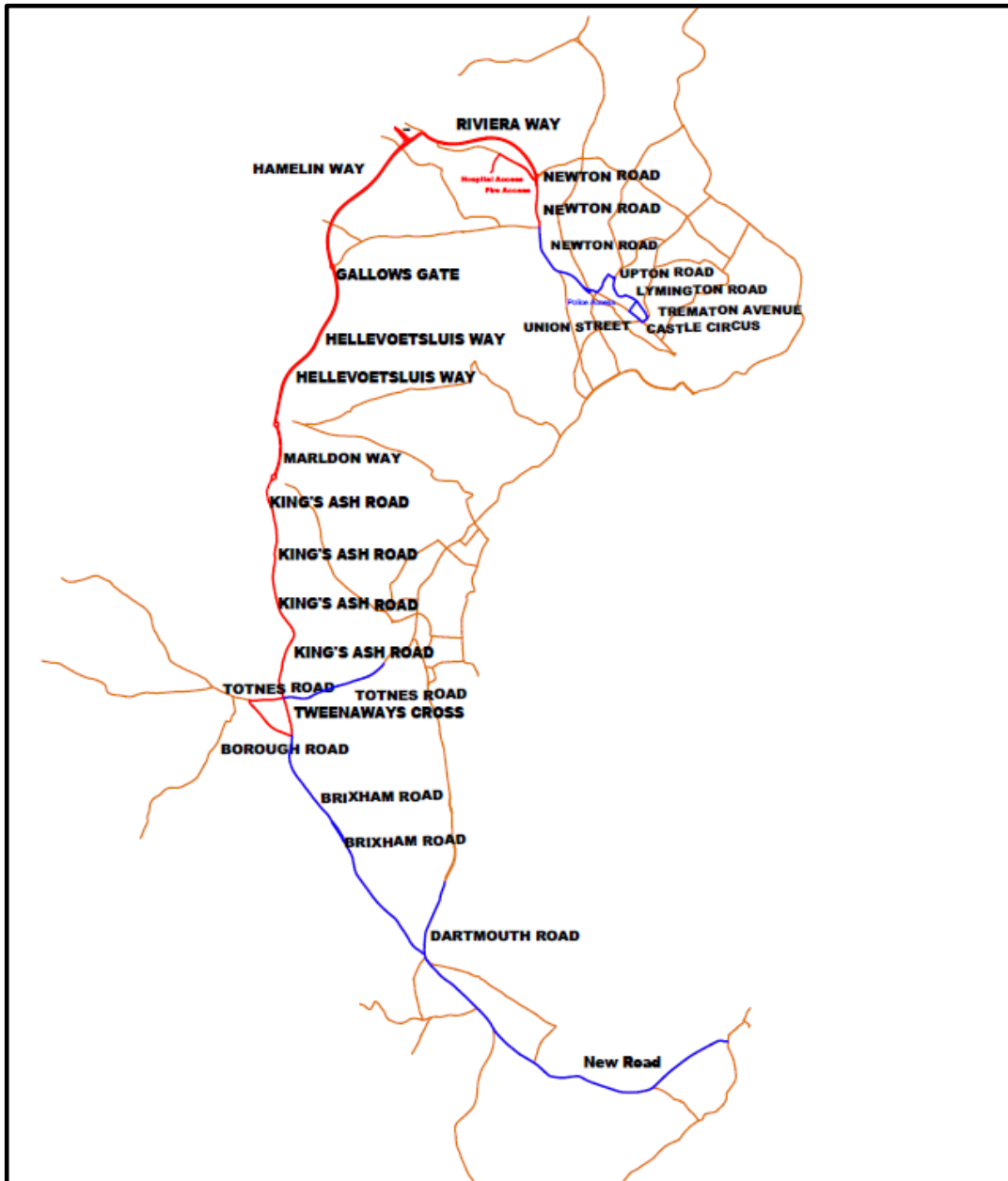
## Resilient Network

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The resilient network was designed as a sub-area or strategic routes of the Torbay Highway Network that are vital to maintaining economic activity and access to essential services during either extreme weather events or major incidents.

The resilient network is comprised of the key A, B and C classified routes, and some linking U Class routes, taking into consideration access for emergency services.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – RESILIENT NETWORK Within the highway network hierarchy a 'Resilient Network' should be identified to which priority is given through maintenance and other measures to maintain economic activity and access to key services during extreme weather.**



**Recommendation from Code of Practice – LEARNING FROM EVENTS Severe Weather and Civil Emergencies Plans should be regularly rehearsed and refined as necessary. The effectiveness of the Plans should be reviewed after actual events and the learning used to develop them as necessary.**

The resilient network is reviewed as part of our winter service pre-season meeting, as the minimum provision route for winter aligns well with minimum service delivery across the network.

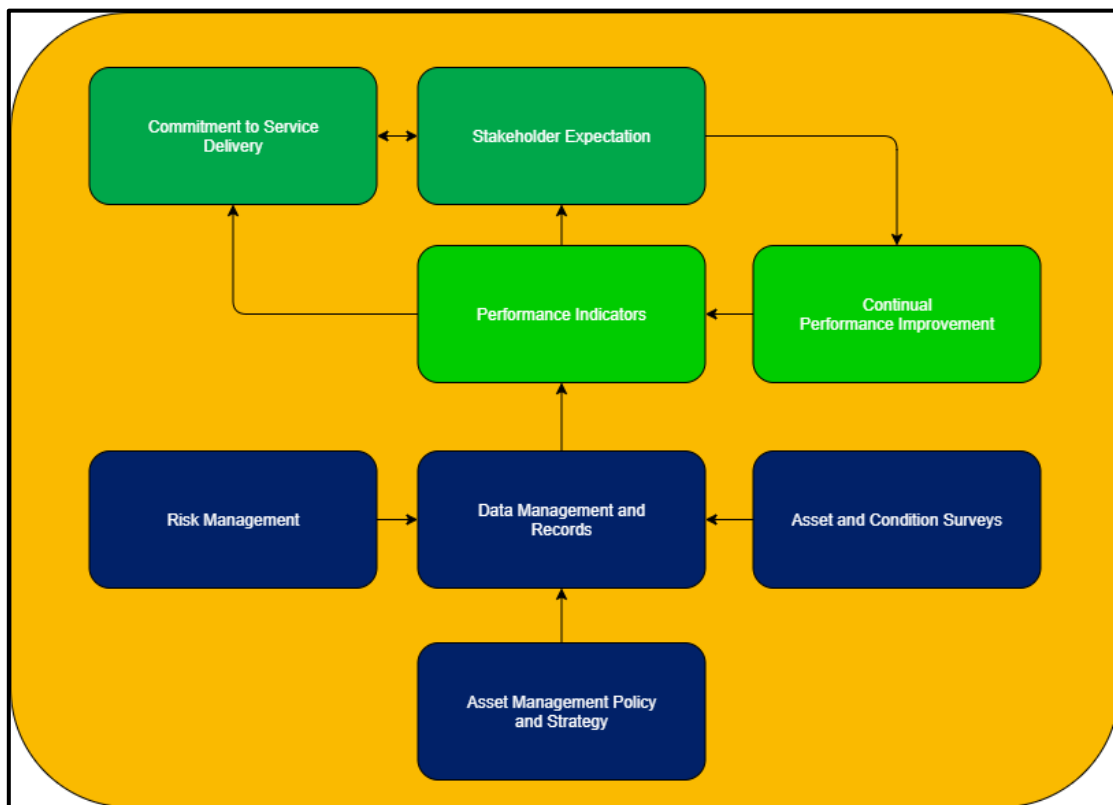


# Performance Monitoring and Strategy Review

The maintenance and management of public infrastructure has been undertaken for many years and in drafting this strategy we have identified and taken note of all likely risks and performance issues.

Torbay Council recognises the need for development, measurement and strives for continually increased performance. Our progress as an authority will be reviewed against the principles outlined in this plan, and formal reviews of this strategy, policy and plan will be undertaken on 3 to 5 yearly intervals.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK A performance management framework should be developed that is clear and accessible to stakeholders as appropriate and supports the asset management strategy.**



The above diagram shows how the key aspects of data management, risk management and the policy and strategy underpin performance management. As an authority we should encourage a culture of continuous improvement, and by understanding what the aims of the service are, and what is expected of us by our stakeholders, we can seek to use quantifiable data to measure and aim for improvement across our assets and services.

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – PERFORMANCE MONITORING: The performance of the Asset Management Framework should be monitored and reported. It should be reviewed regularly by senior decision makers and when appropriate, improvement actions should be taken.**

As part of these reviews, the Infrastructure Asset Policy and Strategy should be circulated to relevant stakeholders, and reviewed by the appropriate Portfolio Holder, Torbay Council senior leadership manager and reviewed by the elected cabinet. This Policy and Strategy was designed with a five year lifecycle in mind, and should be next considered for review in 2026

## Breaches and non-compliance

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Non-compliance with this strategy may leave the Council in a position where it is not able to discharge its statutory duty to maintain and lead to a deterioration of the value and condition of publicly owned infrastructure.

## Information and training

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Further information concerning this strategy may be obtained from the Highways, Transport and Fleet Team within SWISCO. Training should be reviewed at regular intervals or where required in the delivery of the service

**Recommendation from Code of Practice – COMPETENCIES AND TRAINING** The appropriate competencies for all staff should be identified. Training should be provided where necessary for directly employed staff, and contractors should be required to provide evidence of the appropriate competencies of their staff.

As part of our compliance with HEMP Guidance, we currently have two "Institute of Asset Management" Asset Management trained members of staff. All staff are encouraged to request and submit training aspirations, as well as Torbay Council and SWISCO undertaking regular appraisals with staff, whereby managers can identify skill gaps and career development opportunities.

## Evaluation and review

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This strategy is designed with a five-year lifespan in mind, however it may be reviewed at other intervals where legislation, systems and tools are developed.

## Sign Off

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Current Document Status			
Version	1	Approving body	Cabinet Lead
Date		Date of formal approval	

Responsible officer	Kevin Mowat Director	Review date	2 years from approval
Location			
Version History			
Date	Version	Author/Editor	Comments
	1	Chris Lazenby	Final

Equality Impact Assessment Record					
Date	Type of assessment conducted	Stage/level completed (where applicable)	Summary of actions taken decisions made	Completed by	Impact Assessment review date
	Full	Complete	N/A	Tim Northway, Ian Jones	
Corporate Quality Assessment Record					
Date					
Completed by	Tim Northway				

Document retention	
Document retention period	5 years in hard and electronic copies

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats.  
For more information please contact Chris Lazenby - Asset Improvement Officer at SWISCO.

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# Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

2021-2026

# Contents

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## Version control

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Date	Details	Updated by
31/03/2021	Initial Rewrite	Chris Lazenby
	Sign-Off	
	Sign-Off	

## Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

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The purpose of Torbay Council's Network Management Team is to create customer value by operating a sustainable highway infrastructure system in such a way as to optimise the network condition within the available budgets.

Our vision is to be regarded as delivering the best all-round highway infrastructure management service in the United Kingdom. To achieve this:

This asset management policy shall be achieved through the operation of a co-ordinated end to end asset management system that:

- Produces an infrastructure management strategy, objectives and performance targets that are consistent with our business priorities;
- Considers the complete lifecycle of our assets to develop investment plans that are sustainable, efficient and based upon an optimised consideration of cost, risk and performance;
- Develops a resource/training strategy aligned with the requirement of the investment plans;
- Ensures the efficient execution of our plans and fulfilment of our customer promises;
- Tracks delivery of our asset management objectives and targets and reviews the achievement of their intended benefits;
- Integrates with and complements our risk, health and safety, environmental and quality management system requirements; and

- Incorporates regular audits and formal management reviews designed to seek and implement continual improvement.

All members, employees and contractors shall comply with this policy and contribute towards the continuous improvement of the asset management system.

The authority will provide sufficient information, training and resources to enable this to be achieved.

## Community and Corporate Plan 2019-2023

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### Working Differently

As part of our strategy, policy and plan for Transport Asset Management, it is key that we demonstrate that our goals align with the Corporate Strategy.

Torbay Council's opportunities and challenges are as defined in the corporate policy.

Torbay can offer an unrivalled quality of life for individuals and families – its natural environment, clean air, climate, location, excellent schools, growing arts and cultural sector and wide range of outdoor activities means that Torbay can provide everyone with the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilled life. We need to make sure that everyone benefits from these opportunities whilst at the same time meeting the challenges that we and our communities face:

- An ageing population

**Ensuring that risk of potential highway defects is correctly assessed to ensure that all users of the highway network are able to traverse it safely**

- The need for economic and housing growth

**To maintain an efficient and effective highway network to facilitate future growth**

- The climate change emergency

**To reduce carbon emissions associated with street lighting and make more use of recycling techniques and consideration of low carbon materials, emerging technologies and processes when considering treatments for highways**

- Substantial reductions in central government funding

**Intelligently applying the principles of asset management to future capital schemes to ensure that the current asset register is maintained to the highest standard.**

### Four Visions

The Community and Corporate Plan identifies 4 key visions which we can align our goals with

Thriving people

Ensuring our Highway Network is fit for use, by all users will ensure that we encourage the authority's vision of "Thriving People"

A safe and usable highway encourages users to use sustainable means of travel and in turn meeting the following aims:

- Support healthy, physically active lives for all
- Promote good mental and physical health, reducing the occurrence of preventable illnesses

#### Thriving economy

Encouraging economic growth by ensuring that our Highway Network and Assets are maintained to high standard, using our assigned budgets intelligently.

#### Tackling climate change

Through intelligent use of sustainable measures, recycling and procurement, along with the use of emerging technologies, we can encourage a reduction in Torbay Council's carbon footprint.

#### Council fit for the future

Encouraging the use of technology, and data collection methods so that we can use qualified data and information to make better informed decisions that will benefit Torbay.

## Sign Off

All members, employees and contractors shall comply with this policy and contribute towards the continuous improvement of the asset management system.

The authority will provide sufficient information, training and resources to enable this to be achieved.

Current Document Status			
Version	1	Approving body	Member Cabinet
Date		Date of formal approval	
Responsible officer	Kevin Mowat Director	Review date	5 years from approval
Location			
Version History			
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	1	Chris Lazenby	Final
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**Meeting:** Cabinet

**Date:** 14 December 2021

**Wards affected:** All wards in Torbay

**Report Title:** Local Government Association and Local Partnerships : Review of Wholly Owned Companies 2021 – Report and Action Plan

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** Ongoing implementation of action plan

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Councillor Steve Darling, Leader of the Council, [Steve.Darling@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Darling@torbay.gov.uk) and Councillor Darren Cowell, Deputy Leader of the Council, [Darren.Cowell@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Darren.Cowell@torbay.gov.uk)

**Lead Officer Contact Details:** Anne-Marie Bond, Chief Executive, [anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:anne-marie.bond@torbay.gov.uk)

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 This report presents the Local Government's Association (LGA) and Local Partnerships (LP) Report on their review of the Council's Wholly Owned Companies with a primary focus on the TDA. A resulting action plan is also presented and has been prepared based on the LGA's and LP's recommendations to ensure that the opportunities and improvements identified are addressed.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver our Corporate Plan ambitions by ensuring we respond to the LGA's and LP's feedback and the actions proposed enable the Council and the TDA to continue to improve and strengthen its ability to deliver all of the Community and Corporate Plan themes.
- 2.2 The reasons for the decision are to ensure an action plan is in place to embrace the recommendations of the LGA and LP.

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

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1. That the Local Government Association and Local Partnership be thanked for undertaking their review of the Council's Wholly Owned Companies with primary focus on the TDA and their resulting Report (as set out at Appendix 1) be accepted.
2. That the LGA and LP Wholly Owned Companies Review 2021 Action Plan (as set out at Appendix 2) be approved.
3. That the Audit Committee be requested to monitor the implementation of the action plan.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: LGA and LP Wholly Owned Companies Review 2021 Feedback Report (exempt)

Appendix 2: LGA and LP Wholly Owned Companies Review 2021 Detailed Action Plan (exempt)

#### **Background Documents**

None

### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 The LGA provide councils with a variety of support through peer reviews. LP is a joint venture partnership between the LGA, HM Treasury and the Welsh Government.
- 1.2 During the summer 2021, the LGA and LP undertook a review of the Council's Wholly Owned Companies at the request of the Chief Executive with a primary focus on the TDA. The review was undertaken by Martin Forbes, Strategic Director within LP, and Chris West, an associate of the LGA. The review focused on whether the work and structure of the Council's companies provides the Council with maximum value in light of lessons learnt from recent public interest reports into corporate failings of other councils and their wholly owned companies.
- 1.3 The team undertook interviews with Directors, senior TDA management and senior Council officers. At the end of their review, feedback was provided, together with a number of recommendations. The full LGA and LP Review of Wholly Owned Companies Report can be found at Appendix 1. As a result of the work undertaken, they identified a set of recommendations in order for the Council to improve the control, effectiveness and accountability of its wholly owned companies. There are some strategically significant recommendations for the future relationship between the Council and its wholly owned companies, with the remaining addressing operational effectiveness and accountability.
- 1.4 An action plan has also been prepared to respond to the LGA's and LP's recommendations, to ensure the Council embraces the learning and feedback from the review which is set out at Appendix 2. the Chief Executive has also established an Action Plan Delivery Group with key officers in the Council and in the wholly owned companies to ensure the action plan is implemented jointly.
- 1.5 Both the report and the action plan arising are exempt documents on the basis that they deal with the commercial interests of companies.

### 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 Not to accept the LGA and LP Report and resulting action plan – this is not recommended as implementation of the action plan will enable the Council and its wholly owned companies to continue to improve. Alternative or additional actions could be proposed.

### 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 The action plan will be delivered within existing resources and a number of the actions support the Council's future financial planning.

### 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 None.

### 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 The Council's Group Leaders were interviewed as a part of the work undertaken, and also consulted on the LGA's and LP's draft report. The Leadership within the Council's wholly owned companies have also provided feedback on the report and resulting action plan.

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

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- 6.1 Not applicable.

### 7. Tackling Climate Change

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- 7.1 No impact on climate change.

### 8. Associated Risks

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- 8.1 The main risk associated with this report is the failure to respond to the recommendations of the LGA and LP Report. This may result in the Council not responding adequately to its recommendations. The resulting action plan addresses the recommendations by the LGA and LP.

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

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- 9.1 The LGA and LP Report and resulting action plan provides indirect benefits for all its residents through the improvements identified.

### 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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- 10.1 None.

### 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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- 11.1 None.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted



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Title: **Foster Carers Member Champion – Annual Report 2021**

To: **Cabinet** On: **16 November 2021**

Name of Champion Member: **Councillor Mills, FosterCarers Member Champion, Judith.mills@torbay.gov.uk**

### **Introduction**

As well as the Member Champion for Foster Carers, I am also the Corporate Parenting Board strand lead for apprenticeships and have taken the opportunity to include detail on this area of work as well as providing an update in respect of Fostering.

### **Fostering**

#### Recruitment Campaign

In September 2021 the Council launched a 'We Are Family' Torbay Fostering Marketing and Communications Strategy; this involved a number of adverts on popular bus routes across Torbay and in bus stops.

Advertisements were also placed in Torbay Weekly, Primary Times, Police Life, Kings Ash News and on Radio Exe.

The team also attended the Devon County Show in the summer of 2021 with a stand and a live opportunity for prospective applicants to create an initial enquiry.

A Refer an Applicant scheme was also introduced for our existing fostering families in September 2021 (see below).

#### Torbay's Refer a Fostering Applicant Scheme

Word of mouth and the sharing of positive experiences is a recognised way of attracting new customers within the commercial world, fostering can make such a significant impact on a young person and sharing those experiences could encourage other people to also become foster carers. Therefore, the Torbay's Refer a Fostering Applicant Scheme uses some of the commercial world's techniques. If an existing foster carer refers a prospective fostering applicant to the Council, the Council will pay a £250 thank you gift, at the point that the applicants are approved at our Fostering Panel and accept their first placement.

#### Home for Good Coordinator

The Home for Good Co-ordinator role for Torbay has now been filled. The Co-ordinator has begun engagement work within the communities of faith within Torbay, promoting Torbay fostering opportunities.

We now entered into a three year contract with Home For Good, and have entered into the engagement phase with our local families of faith. Peter Clayton delivered a speech to the congregation of St Mary Magdalene's Church in Torquay on the 19th June 2021, and delivered the message about the joint work being undertaken by Home For Good and Torbay to consider fostering as part our faith outworking.

All fostering social workers have received Home for Good Faith Literacy training.

I am delighted that the Home for Good Co-ordinator role for Torbay has now been filled. The Co-Ordinator has begun engagement work within the communities of faith within Torbay, promoting Torbay fostering opportunities.

### Local Businesses

I was delighted to see that our looked after children will be experiencing the Train of Lights again this year also that Paignton Zoo is now happy to issue family annual passes to all our existing fostering families and hopefully new fostering families in the future. The team have developed a Corporate Parenting Offer which details all of the opportunities offered to cared for children, care experienced adults and fostering families provided to us as part of this offer by local businesses and organisations.

### Care Leaves Covenant

In September there was the launch of 'My Voice', Torbay's Care Experienced Drop In at the Foyer in Torquay. This was well attended by young people aged 16 plus also several of their Personal Advisors (Pas). There was a lovely atmosphere and it was clear to see that there was an excellent relationship between the young people and their PAs.

The Covenant provides a number of opportunities for care experienced young people, for example access to exclusive opportunities in terms of careers, mentoring and discounts as well as nationwide opportunities through local business or organised (for example, top football clubs offering free fitness sessions or mentoring). It also provides a way for our care experience team to link in with other Local Authorities, be alerted to opportunities for care experienced young people and share good practice.

### South Devon College

I was keen to find out what provision there was for our care experienced in further education. I was impressed with the response I saw at South Devon College. Indeed, with the care and support that they offer our care leavers and the leaflet given to every one of them has a subtitle of 'everything you need to know about accessing support to reach your goals'. This is extremely user friendly and answers all the questions a new student would need to know or where to go for support and guidance I was also very impressed with the on-site 'Job Shop' where students can find part-time employment/volunteering and connecting with employers.

### Apprenticeships

It is my belief that the apprenticeship situation for our care experienced children has not progressed as quickly as I personally would have liked. An apprenticeship programme for care experienced young people would need funding to be allocated.

I appreciate the work that has been undertaken jointly with HR on a preparation for work scheme, which would support our cared for and care experienced young people in engaging in CV writing workshops, preparation for interview work and other opportunities to develop their skills in line with their education, employment and training support, does in some way attempt to provide employment support.

In addition, the team within Children's Services in conjunction with HR are working on a work experience scheme, drawing on the opportunities that exist across the Council to create a 'menu' of work experience opportunities as well as preparation for work support.

We are also currently working with MIDAS and SWISCO on two bespoke opportunities for care experienced young people to have work experience opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

Having taken the time to set out what I have learnt and undertaken during the last 12 months it has become obvious to me that I have gone beyond that of the Fostering Member Champion role. However, also being the Corporate Parenting Strand Lead for Apprenticeships, coupled with being a Member on the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board has enabled me to develop and gain a greater understanding of the role and work of Children's Services.

### **Recommendation and decision required:**

That cabinet consider the funding of an apprenticeship scheme for a maximum of five care leavers, to be introduced when working in the office fully returns.

### **Cabinet response**

The cabinet welcomes the aspiration of funding an apprenticeship scheme for a maximum of five care leavers, and will consider this in future budget setting when government funding is known.

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Title: **Climate Change Member Champion – Annual Report 2021**

To: **Cabinet** On: **16 November 2021**

Name of Champion Member: **Councillor Atiya-Alla, Climate Change Member Champion, [Jermaine.atiya-alla@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Jermaine.atiya-alla@torbay.gov.uk)**

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Given the restraints we have been under for the last 12 months my work as the Councils Climate Change Champion has continued at apace.

In August 2020 myself and officers from Swisco attended a Low Carbon vehicle demonstration in Cullompton where we got to explore future options for our fleet of vehicles.

In my role as Climate Change Champion I regularly attend events with our public transport partners most recently I attended the GWR Stakeholder conference in Cardiff, where I attended a breakout session on bus back better. This session looked at ticketing arrangements between train and bus operators and how we can have better joined up connectivity and looking at how train travel impacts climate change.

I have also been working with the Climate Emergency Officer and Divisional Director responsible for Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency to shape and develop the council's approach to carbon neutrality by 2030. This approach was approved in March 2021. See [Cabinet paper \(item 9\)](#). We also approved our [one-year initial Torbay action plan](#). Appendix 1 summarises recent progress on this work.

We will also develop a Torbay-wide carbon neutral action plan in 2022 with our communities and businesses and I welcomed the opportunity to give a presentation on Carbon Neutral Torbay at the Climate Community Conference held on 2 November 2021. This will be one of many conversations on climate action.

Over the past 18 months I have developed a strong working relationship with Councillor Morey and look forward to our partnership continuing.

### **Policy Achievements:**

Approved Carbon Neutral Approach for Torbay, including [one-year initial Torbay action plan and development of a Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan](#)

The creation of Torbay Climate Partnership and creation of a Torbay-wide Carbon Neutral Action Plan.

The future development of two solar parks in the bay.

We've installed LED Street lighting throughout the bay which is energy efficient.

There are many more achievements and will be many more to come.

**Recommendation:**

That the report be noted.

### What is the Council doing to tackle climate change?

#### Carbon Neutral Council

- **Creating our own carbon neutral (CN) council action plan by April 2022.** This will look at how we as a council operate and how we can work towards decarbonising our estate, fleet, decision making processes and the way we buy and commission services.
- Created a 40+ **CN Officer Group** to develop and coordinate action across the Council. They will also develop the actions for the CN Council Action Plan and oversee its delivery post April 2022.
- **Rolling out carbon literacy training**, starting with senior staff and Cabinet.
- Final stages of developing a **corporate environment and carbon neutral policy** to help all staff change the way we work.
- We have been **bidding for a range of decarbonisation grants** from government. Most recently we secured £36k to develop plans for how to decarbonise 6 primary schools. We have also secured funding to support homes in fuel poverty to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and £1.8m to decarbonise Torbay Leisure Centre.

#### Carbon Neutral Torbay

Beyond the council's direct operations there are a range of things we can do to influence and reduce carbon emissions across the wider Torbay-area.

- We have an Energy and Climate Change Strategy. See [here](#). It will be refreshed as part of our planned work to **create a Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan in 2022**. We also have a range of other strategies that support carbon reduction. For example, our Local Plan, Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan, waste and recycling and others. These will need to be reviewed to ensure they are in line with our CN ambition by 2030.
- University of Exeter have completed a study on how to achieve net zero for Devon, including Torbay. See [here](#).
- **Created a Torbay Climate Partnership** to help with oversee Torbay-wide action.
- Based on the results of the conference, **hold further conversations on what we should tackle in Torbay**. These will feed into the new Carbon Neutral Torbay Action Plan.
- Continued to work with the **Devon Climate Emergency Partnership** to develop a draft Devon Carbon Plan. Residents of Torbay recently took part in the Devon Climate Assembly. See [here](#) for more details. Our local actions will help to deliver this Plan and vice versa.
- For more visit this [Cabinet paper \(item 9\)](#)

### What immediate action is the Council, with partners, taking this year?

- In March 2021 we adopted a [one year initial Torbay action plan](#) to accelerate action. See [here](#).

Here are some updates on various works/projects within this plan:

#### Solar parks

- We are currently developing two solar farms in Torbay, both are in or just starting their planning process and could be online in 2023. Tor Bay Harbour Authority has installed solar PV panels as well as purchasing an electric forklift truck and installing LED lighting.

#### LED Lighting

- We have installed efficient energy saving LED street lights, together with carrying out a comprehensive overhaul of traffic signal inventories. This has led to significant energy and carbon savings.

#### Cycling and walking

- We are looking at investing £120,000 to various walking and cycling projects in this financial year.

### **Tree planting & open spaces**

- Through our three year, i-tree 2 programme, our plan is to plant 350 of the right trees in the right place and we have just launched our Tree Warden scheme which saw 60 volunteers sign up for. They are currently going through their induction.
- Communities across the Bay are making real, sustainable change by volunteering in parks and green spaces enabling wider engagement with the natural environment leading to real local action to help tackle climate change
- With partners Groundwork South and local communities, we are protecting and enhancing Westerland Valley. This is a 35-acre haven for wildlife, with a rich tapestry of interconnected habitats supporting an abundance of wildlife including many species of both local and national significance.

### **Recycling**

- Torbay has become a Zero to Landfill authority and has run a variety of waste minimisation schemes.
- Our Recycling Officers are now in post and are supporting our residents in recycling more and better. Over the next three year we aim to increase recycling rates from the current 40% to 50%.

### **Reducing carbon emissions at Torbay Leisure Centre by 60%**

- Secured £1.8 million from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to install air source heat pumps to create low carbon heating and hot water and solar panels to generate clean electricity.

### **Electric charging points**

- All new homes, with off street parking, built in Torbay have electric vehicle charging points installed
- We have secured funding for the installation of small banks of charging points in 10 of our off-street car parks. Hope to have some of these in place in 2022.

### **Energy efficiency**

- Working with Devon County Council we have secured some funding from the government to help create warm, energy efficient homes. We also work with Exeter Community Energy to offer homeowners and tenants practical advice and support to save energy and money. They can also offer advice on fuel switching and debt advice.

### **Climate resilience and flood alleviation**

- As our climate is changing, sea levels are rising and more storms are hitting Torbay. With the Environment Agency we will act to rapidly reduce properties at risk from flooding. This will include consulting on the design of [new sea walls along Paignton and Preston sea fronts](#).
- We also are working with the Devon Climate Emergency Partnership to develop a Devon-wide response to climate change. A Devon Carbon Plan is in development. More here [Devon Climate Emergency – Creating a resilient, net-zero carbon Devon – where people and nature thrive](#).

### **Recent government strategy**

- The UK Government is committed to cutting emissions by at least 68% by 2030 on 1990 levels, and reaching net zero by 2050. A new [Net Zero Strategy: Building Back Greener](#) . was published in October. We will need to explore this strategy and the opportunities and implications for Torbay.





## Local Environmental Quality Outline Plan

Report to Cabinet – 14 December 2021

### Background

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 10 November 2021 to the submitted report which provided the five key principles and three workstreams to be developed into the proposed Local Environmental Quality Action Plan. The Interim Chief Operating Officer and Director of Place, Kevin Mowat, responded to questions and received observations from the Board in respect of the following:
  - How would SWISCo engage with the public and also consider local businesses and our tourism sector.
  - How would the complications between ownership of land be managed to ensure that action was taken and people were not passed onto other people or organisations to resolve issues of concern.
  - What zero tolerance would look like and what sort of breaches this would apply to.
  - Issues around fly tipping.
  - Concerns about how the Council/SWISCo dealt with unauthorised encampments, homeless people in tents and visitors pitching up tents due to lack of capacity or other options for holidays.
  - Query about the tone of the wording in paragraph 1.5 'Activity will emphasise that the local environment is not owned by the Council or other agency and that the people of Torbay are its ultimate custodians.' and how this would be perceived by the public.
  - Reassurance that engagement activity would be carried out by officers as well as Councillors.
  - How the work around enforcement would link in with the work of the Enforcement Agency.
  - What action would be taken against owners of holiday lets who had been using domestic waste and recycling collections instead of organising separate commercial waste collections.
  - The adequacy of public bins across Torbay to meet the demands and if they were sited in the most appropriate locations.
  - How to make it easier for the community to take action themselves without legal barriers relating to issues such as insurance if they carry out work on Council owned land.
  - Issues in connection with enforcement and which Law it falls under.
  - Concern over private landowners burning commercial waste and the environmental impact and nuisance of this.

- The outcome of the dual bin trial in Babbacombe – the results of the trial would be shared with all Councillors once finalised.
  - What enforcement measures were proposed in respect of our green spaces.
2. Members noted that the Action Plan would be developed and delivered within finite resources and there would be a need to be open and honest about what could be delivered and to manage expectations working jointly with the public and partners to improve environmental quality within Torbay.
  3. The Board recommended (unanimously):

That the Board endorses the suggested five guiding principles and three work streams identified in the Local Environmental Quality outline proposals and requests that the Interim Chief Operating Officer of SWISCo and the Director of Place consider the feedback highlighted above and raised at the meeting.

**Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Local Environmental Quality Outline Plan**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Cabinet Response:</b>
1.	That the Board endorses the suggested five guiding principles and three work streams identified in the Local Environmental Quality outline proposals and requests that the Interim Chief Operating Officer of SWISCo and the Director of Place consider the feedback highlighted above and raised at the meeting.	The Cabinet accepts the Board's recommendations to develop a Local Environmental Quality Plan based on the five guiding principles and three workstreams suggested and takes account of the detailed points made in its development.

## **Draft Asset Management Plan**

**Report to Cabinet – 14 December 2021**

### **Background**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board met on 10 November 2021 to consider the submitted revised Strategic Asset Management Plan. The Head of Assets and Facilities Management, TDA, Paul Palmer, responded to questions in respect of the following:
  - How many assets were in poor condition and in need of repair.
  - What was happening with the Monastery building?
  - The wording of the Strategy was very technical in places and would benefit from being reviewed to ensure 'Plain English' was used wherever possible or explanations given where more technical wording applied.
  - How many properties were empty and how often this was reviewed.
  - How the Marine Conservation Zone was considered in the Strategy.
  - The use of Oxen Cove Jetty.
  - What action was being taken to consider use of our assets to support accommodation for children and adults.
  - What was happening with the Debenhams site.
2. The Board recommended (unanimously):

That the Cabinet be recommended:

  1. that the wording of the Strategic Asset Management Plan be reviewed to ensure that it is easier to understand using Plain English; and
  2. to request that the lease agreements for assets on beachfronts be reviewed to tighten them up to address their impact on climate change and the type of take away waste they create and how they manage their waste to ensure they are not polluting our sea and beaches.

## Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan

No.	Recommendation:	Cabinet Response:
1.	That the wording of the Strategic Asset Management Plan be reviewed to ensure that it is easier to understand using Plain English.	The wording used in Strategic Asset Management Plan will be reviewed and amended so that it reads clearer and easier to understand. These amendments will be made to the Plan prior to the document being circulated for public consultation as part of budget consultation.
2.	To request that the lease agreements for assets on beachfronts be reviewed to tighten them up to address their impact on climate change and the type of take away waste they create and how they manage their waste to ensure they are not polluting our sea and beaches.	Notwithstanding the contractual nature of leases, discussions will be held with existing tenants in respect of the Council's sustainability policies around the issue of waste generation and disposal. When new leases or lease renewals are being negotiated, we will look to insert specific conditions regarding waste disposal that will place obligations on tenants to ensure waste is removed in a timely and appropriate fashion.