

Tuesday, 6 October 2026

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

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

Wednesday, 14 October 2026

commencing at **5.30 pm**

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

Members of the Committee

Councillor Long (Chair)

Councillor Bryant

Councillor Cowell

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar

Councillor Fellows

Councillor Johns

Councillor Law

Councillor Spacagna (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Stevens

Councillor Tolchard

A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay

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Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.
2. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 September 2026.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

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

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

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)
4. **Urgent Items**
To consider any other items that the Chair decides are urgent.
5. **Water and Flooding** (Pages 13 - 14)
To undertake an annual review on water and flooding.

(Note: A representative from South West Water will be in attendance for this item.)
6. **Cockington Court Update on the Review of the Operating Model** (Pages 15 - 22)
To consider the Cockington Court update on the review of the operating model.
7. **Torbay Heritage Strategy** (Pages 23 - 112)
To consider the revised Torbay Heritage Strategy and make recommendations to the Cabinet.

8. Local Government Reorganisation

To receive a verbal update on the progress of Local Government Reorganisation.

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Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

9 September 2026

-: Present :-

Councillor Long (Chair)

Councillors Cowell, Douglas-Dunbar, Fellows, Fox, Law, Spacagna (Vice-Chair),
Stevens, Tolchard and Twelves

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas and Tranter)

20. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group and Liberal Democrat Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillors Twelves and Fox in place of Councillors Bryant and Johns respectively for this meeting only.

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 12 August 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

23. Urgent Items

The Board considered the item in Minute 27, and not included on the agenda, the Chair being of the opinion that it was urgent by reason of special circumstances i.e. the matter having arisen since the agenda was prepared and it was unreasonable to delay a decision until the next meeting.

24. Safer Communities Torbay Annual Review

The Board considered the annual review of Safer Communities Torbay, which outlined partnership activity across community safety, antisocial behaviour, serious violence, domestic abuse, Prevent and safeguarding activities. It was noted that the Police and Probation were unable to attend the meeting and written responses would be sought where appropriate.

Members heard that the review was informed by the strategic assessment of crime and disorder across Torbay and highlighted activity undertaken to address areas of greatest risk and harm. It was noted that antisocial behaviour data was currently affected by data capture issues within Police recording systems and should be treated with caution until corrected.

The Board was advised of ongoing work relating to the Prevent duty, particularly in response to learning emerging from the Southport Inquiry, including work around the identification and management of individuals fixated on violence, community engagement and communication regarding hate crime.

Members were informed of work undertaken through the antisocial behaviour night-time economy group, youth antisocial behaviour initiatives, the Serious Violence Duty, and awareness raising around domestic abuse and community safety.

Members asked questions in respect of the following:

- What types of weapons were being carried and what action was being taken to address weapon possession?
- What impact had Prevent-related communication and engagement activities had on community safety outcomes?
- What support exists for people aged over 25 in relation to serious violence interventions?
- What conclusions could be drawn from antisocial behaviour data where recording methods may distort trends?
- What is the "Adults Stand Back" initiative?
- How was youth antisocial behaviour being addressed in Paignton?
- What can be learned from longer-term crime trends rather than single-year comparisons?
- How were changes in antisocial behaviour recording impacting other data sets such as harassment statistics?
- How was the partnership monitoring the growing impact of cyber crime?
- How much of recorded harassment may relate to online activity?
- Who receives Active Bystander training and could it be made available to schools?
- How do banks share intelligence relating to cyber crime and how was that information used?
- Were individuals fixated on violence becoming more prevalent, and how were they identified and supported?
- Could the "Adults Stand Back" initiative be expanded across Torbay?
- Was activity delivered through Operation Town Centre reflected within the report?

The following responses were received:

- Current weapon possession activity includes targeted operations addressing knife carrying in clubs and other locations. A written breakdown of weapon types and action being taken would be provided by the Police.

- Prevent activity focuses on identifying individuals at risk, supporting reporting routes, strengthening workforce awareness and building community relationships. Local referral numbers remain relatively low.
- Serious Violence Duty funding was primarily directed towards those aged 25 and under. Other services, including domestic abuse work, support adults affected by violence.
- Antisocial behaviour statistics were currently affected by recording issues and further clarification from Police was required before firm conclusions could be drawn.
- “Adults Stand Back” was an emerging initiative that will give young people opportunities to lead discussions and events on antisocial behaviour and related issues, with adults supporting rather than directing the process.
- Multi-agency work involving Police, Youth Justice and other partners was targeting persistent antisocial behaviour in Paignton, including issues within the town centre, Parkfield and beach hut areas etc.
- It was agreed that crime data should be viewed over multiple years rather than relying solely on year-to-year comparisons and this was done by the partnership.
- Further clarity was required from the Police regarding the harassment figures, specifically what this data includes and whether it relates to ASB. This may help explain the decrease in ASB and the corresponding increase in harassment figures.
- Cyber crime was recognised as an emerging challenge and forms part of broader partnership discussions around technological change and risk.
- Online activity may contribute to harassment figures, although data would require further analysis to verify this.
- Active Bystander training was being offered to SWAN (Safety of Women at Night Charter) signatories, Council staff and Councillors, and there was potential to extend delivery to schools through a train-the-trainer approach as it was being delivered in-house.
- Additional information on the sharing and use of cyber crime intelligence from banks will be provided in writing from the Police.
- Concerns regarding individuals fixated on violence have increased alongside technological change and online influences. Partners were reviewing thresholds and approaches to ensure risks were appropriately managed.
- The “Adults Stand Back” initiative will initially be piloted through a single event before wider roll out was considered.
- Activity delivered through Operation Town Centre contributes to antisocial behaviour and community safety work already being reported.

Resolved (unanimously):

That future Safer Communities Torbay annual reports include a detailed breakdown of crime and community safety trends covering the previous three years to provide greater context and support trend analysis.

25. English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - Terra Firma

The Board considered an update on the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - Terra Firma project and proposals to strengthen the future sustainability and governance arrangements for the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark.

Members were advised that work had continued on proposals to establish a Community Interest Company (CIC) and secure funding through the Torbay Heritage Programme to provide additional strategic capacity, develop funding bids, generate new income streams and formalise governance arrangements.

Members asked the following questions:

- Could Local Government Reorganisation affect Geopark boundaries?
- How extensive was current engagement with schools?
- How were links being developed with universities and colleges?
- What were the anticipated costs of future place-making, interpretation and signage improvements?
- When will the new Geopark website be available?
- How will governance operate under a Community Interest Company model?
- How will the Council influence and oversee the CIC?
- What size would the CIC Board be?
- How will stakeholders and partner organisations continue to influence decision-making?

The following responses were received:

- Maintaining the existing Geopark boundaries would be preferable as changes could require a new designation process with no guarantee of retaining UNESCO status.
- Engagement with schools was currently limited by capacity and resources, with the proposed CIC intended to strengthen educational outreach.
- Universities and colleges were represented within discussions around future development opportunities, educational programmes and interpretation.
- Future ambitions include enhanced signage, wayfinding and place-making, largely funded through external sources, with only limited Council match funding potentially required.
- The new website was expected to be available within six to eight weeks.
- The proposed governance model centres on a Community Interest Company supported by a strategic lead officer and annual reporting arrangements.
- Council influence was expected to be exercised through representation on the CIC Board, likely through an Officer appointment.
- The proposed CIC Board would comprise approximately four to six members.
- Stakeholder engagement arrangements will form part of the future governance and operating model and will be developed further by the strategic lead.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board supports the creation of a Community Interest Company (CIC) for English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - Terra Firma and request that they report annually with details of their Business Plan and finances; and
2. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to give consideration as to how the Strategic Lead will involve and engage with businesses linked to Geopark for example the previous associate members in the new CIC.

26. Interim update on Torquay and Paignton Place Leadership Boards

The Board considered the annual review of the Torbay, Torquay and Paignton Place Leadership Boards.

Members were advised that the Torbay Place Leadership Board continued to provide strategic leadership, whilst the Torquay and Paignton Boards were responsible for overseeing Pride in Place funding and local delivery priorities. The Council continued to act as the accountable body for the various funding streams.

Members raised the following questions:

- What progress has been made by the various Place Leadership Boards?
- Which projects have received funding so far?
- What were the advantages of the Community Interest Company model being pursued by Paignton?
- How flexible was Government guidance regarding investment outside designated boundaries?
- Could investment opportunities be developed to generate future income streams beyond Government funding?
- How will transparency and accessibility of Board information be improved?
- How could community projects access future funding opportunities?

The following responses were received:

- Torbay Place Leadership Board provides strategic oversight, Torquay was progressing funded delivery projects and Paignton was in its early phase and currently focused on engagement and development of its ten-year plan. A copy of the Torquay ten-year plan would be circulated to all Members after the meeting.
- Torquay approved several capital and revenue projects, although funding limitations required prioritisation. The papers can be found at [Browse meetings - Torbay Place Leadership Board](#), [Browse meetings - Torquay Place Leadership Board](#) and [Torbay Story - Paignton Pride in Place](#).
- The Community Interest Company model offers greater operational independence but also introduces new governance and accountability considerations.
- Government guidance permits some investment outside designated areas where clear benefits can be demonstrated for the target community.

- Other areas nationally have explored investment opportunities capable of generating income beyond the life of Government funding programmes.
- Efforts were underway to improve websites, digital engagement and public accessibility of information and minutes.
- Community groups will be able to apply through funding processes established by the respective Boards.

Members requested future update reports provide tables for the Torquay and Paignton Boards showing the funding approved for projects and any relevant updates to the implementation of those projects.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the progress made by the Torbay Place Leadership Board, Torquay Place Leadership Board and Paignton Place Leadership Board, including the steps taken to strengthen governance, transparency and delivery assurance; the emerging role of the Torbay Board in considering the implications of local government reorganisation; and Paignton's proposed phased move towards greater operational independence, subject to legal, financial and governance assurance;
2. that given the independence of the Boards and Torbay Council's important, and sometimes statutory, role in supporting them, the Overview and Scrutiny Board requests an interim update if there are material changes to Government guidance, the funding profile or Board arrangements. Otherwise, the next annual review will be presented in line with the established annual reporting cycle; and
3. to include copies of the Torquay and Paignton ten-year plans as part of Annual Review.

27. Update on Local Government Reorganisation

The Director of Corporate Services, Matthew Fairclough-Kay provided a verbal update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Members were advised that the Government had requested that implementation work on the proposed four-unitary model across Devon cease while a review was undertaken by the Government. Discussions continued between Councils and Government, although no clear indication had been provided regarding future arrangements or timescales. In the meantime, the Council was reprioritising its resources to focus on key priorities of the Council.

The Board noted that funding commitments for local government reorganisation work remained in place, but further clarification from Government was awaited. Members also heard that the Government's focus had shifted towards devolution work while awaiting further direction.

Members asked the following questions:

- What preparatory work has been taking place despite the current pause?

- How quickly could work recommence if Government decided to proceed?
- Will Councils seek reimbursement or access to available Government funding?
- How have staff responded to the latest developments?

The following responses were received:

- Government has paused implementation activity while wider options are considered. No firm timetable has been provided, but any future proposals would require further Government and Parliamentary approval.
- Existing Government funding commitments remain available, although further clarification was awaited.
- Staff responses have been mixed, with further feedback expected through ongoing engagement with senior management and staff groups.

The Board requested that Local Government Reorganisation remain a standing item on future agendas until greater certainty was available.

Chair

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Water and Flooding Response to Key Lines of Enquiry from South West Water

- Annual update on SWW activities, including storm overflows – **please find a link to the EDM Annual Returns here: [Event Duration Monitoring - Storm Overflows - Annual Returns - National Data Library](#)**. This are submitted every calendar year and published by the Environment Agency in March. The latest set of data is for 2025 (published March 2026). This data will be an update to that provide in October last year which would have been based on 2024 data returns).
- Why have there been storm overflows over the summer when there have been no storms? – **WaterFit Live provides near real time data for all our storm overflows, this shows whether the overflow is active and for how long. This information helps customers and stakeholders understand how the wastewater network is operating and supports greater transparency around storm overflows. We are required to provide data in near real time, and we are currently not able to validate this before it is published. This means occasional false readings can be published. These false readings may occur due to factors such as leaves, twigs, bubbles, or foam. These can all trigger an Event Duration Monitor (EDM) and indicate an overflow is operating when it is not. A full validation is undertaken on a monthly basis, and the data is amended to reflect these false readings. In addition, in some circumstances, illegal connections are made to our network which can cause storm overflows to operate in dry weather. Ultimately, we are required under the Storm Overflow Action Plan to reduce spills from storm overflows to no more than 10 spills on average (as defined by the Environment Agency's spill methodology) by no later than 2050. Our plans are more ambitious and we aim to achieve this by 2040. All storm overflow target dates are included within the WINEP here: [Water Industry National Environment Programme \(WINEP\) | Engage Environment Agency](#) and National Storm Overflow Action Plan here: [National Storm Overflows Plan | Water UK](#)**
- SWW has been labelled as the worse water company for Environmental Issues, what action is SWW taking to address this? **We recognise that our performance is not where it needs to be and we are investing significantly over this current 5 year period to reduce storm overflows and pollutions. We have produces a Pollution Incident Reduction Plan which sets out how we will tackle pollutions. This plan is submitted to the Environment Agency and is now a regulatory requirement.**

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Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 14 October 2026

Wards affected: Cockington with Chelston, with wider implications for Torbay's visitor economy, cultural and heritage offer

Report Title: Cockington Court: Update on the Review of the Operating Model

When does the decision need to be implemented? Not applicable. This is a scrutiny and assurance update. No decision on the future operating model is requested through this report.

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Chris Lewis, Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth

Director Contact Details: Alan Denby, Director of Pride in Place

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the new operating model for Cockington Court. It explains the financial and operational reasons for the review, the options considered and the work underway to develop a more sustainable operating model for the site.
- 1.2 It also updates the Board on staff consultation, tenant engagement, interim site-management arrangements and marketing for a potential longer-term operator.
- 1.3 This is an update and assurance report: the Board is not being asked to approve a change to the operating model or make a formal decision on Cockington Court's future management. The report, subject to staff consultation, distinguishes the current position from proposals, interim arrangements, longer-term options and matters that may require a later formal decision.

2. Reason for Proposal and Benefits

- 2.1 Cockington Court is a much loved and important heritage, visitor and business destination. It provides accommodation for artists, makers and other craft style businesses and forms part of the wider visitor offer at Cockington.
- 2.2 The Council intends to retain ownership of Cockington Court. The current work is focused on identifying a more effective and sustainable way of managing and operating the site. No preferred external operator has been identified.
- 2.3 The review was initiated because the current operating model is financially unsustainable and has not delivered sufficient strategic or economic benefit to justify the continuing level of Council subsidy. Previous activity to increase income has included room hire, weddings, visitor

activity, events and the Visitor Welcome Point. While there have been successes, these have not closed the financial gap.

- 2.4 The July 2026 options appraisal reported an estimated operating deficit of £58,500 based on 2025/26 figures. This was based on expenditure of £190,000 and income of £131,500. These figures excluded some relevant costs, including salary costs held within the Economic Development budget and certain repairs and maintenance expenditure held elsewhere.
- 2.5 The appraisal stated that full occupation of the commercial units could generate rental income of approximately £172,000 a year. At that time, seven units were vacant, representing estimated foregone income of approximately £35,000 a year.
- 2.6 The café made an operating loss of £21,000 in 2025/26. A forecast for 2026/27 anticipated a net profit of £8,000. On the assumption that this forecast was achieved, the combined no-change position was estimated to be an annual deficit of approximately £50,500.
- 2.7 The estimated repairs and maintenance backlog for the Mansion House and wider building envelope falls outside of the deficit figures. The exact level, timing and funding of future works will need to be kept under review.
- 2.8 The proposed direction is a phased approach. Subject to staff consultation and confirmation of safe and workable interim arrangements, the Council would reduce its direct day-to-day operational functions. The elements of activity linked to the tenanted property, not already with the Asset team, will pass to them under an agreed schedule of responsibilities.
- 2.9 Alongside this, the Council intends to market for a partner to operate Cockington Court under a long lease. The operator would need to demonstrate the capability to manage the site, work with tenants, respect its heritage and establish a sustainable operating model.
- 2.10 The emerging operator framework currently identifies 1 April 2027 as the intended date for a successful operator to assume responsibility. This remains dependent on the market process and any necessary Governance approvals.
- 2.11 If a suitable operator is not identified, alternative arrangements could include separate leasing of the café, stables, visitor hub and other suitable areas, alongside management of the remaining tenanted estate by the Council.
- 2.12 The proposed approach is intended to reduce the Council's ongoing financial exposure; place the interim responsibility for the tenanted estate within a property and asset-management arrangement; provide clearer management and reporting routes for tenants; retain Council ownership; test whether a capable partner can operate and improve the site sustainably; protect its heritage significance; and retain flexibility if a suitable whole-site arrangement cannot be secured.

3. Current Position and Interim Arrangements

- 3.1 Formal staff consultation has been initiated in relation to the proposed changes. The detailed employment implications are being managed through the Council's change-management process and are not set out in this public report.
- 3.2 The change proposal would end the day-to-day Economic Development operation at Cockington Court, including operation of the Visitor Welcome Point, once consultation,

communications and interim arrangements are complete. It would transfer the tenanted property to the Council's Assets function under an agreed responsibility schedule.

- 3.3 The change would not be implemented until responsibilities for tenant management, health and safety, building inspections, facilities, public areas, security and incident response had been confirmed as workable and properly resourced.
- 3.4 The current proposals do not involve selling Cockington Court. Existing tenants will continue under their current leases and access arrangements unless formally advised of a change.
- 3.5 The café is expected to remain open to the public. Visitors will continue to be able to visit artists' and makers' studios. The use of Cockington Court as the Council's principal venue for weddings and other ceremonies is expected to continue unchanged under the current proposals.
- 3.6 A tenant handbook is being developed to provide contact details, clarify responsibilities and set out routes for raising or escalating issues. It is expected to cover landlord matters, facilities, health and safety, security, and emergencies.
- 3.7 The interim arrangements will be documented and agreed before any operational change. They will cover tenancy and lease matters, building inspections and compliance, health and safety, facilities management, security and emergency response, opening and access arrangements, repairs and maintenance reporting, and escalation routes.

4. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the financial and operational position at Cockington Court and the reasons for changing the current operating model.
- 4.2. Notes the progress of staff consultation, tenant engagement and work to confirm safe and workable interim management arrangements.
- 4.3. Notes the options considered and the work underway to develop a more financially sustainable arrangement while retaining Cockington Court in Council ownership.
- 4.4. Notes the proposed marketing to establish a whole-site operator under a long lease, with separate leasing arrangements retained as a possible alternative if a suitable whole-site arrangement cannot be secured.
- 4.5. Notes that any future arrangement will need to address financial viability, heritage stewardship, tenant management, operational capability, building responsibilities and the experience of residents and visitors.
- 4.6. Requests a further update following the conclusion of the relevant consultation and market-testing work.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 None

6. Background Documents

6.1 None

7. Options under consideration

Option 1: Retain the current operating model

This option would retain the Council's existing direct operational role, including the current management structure and Visitor Welcome Point. It would provide continuity and avoid immediate operational change. However, it would not address the underlying financial deficit, the level of Council subsidy or the need for a more sustainable long-term arrangement.

Excluding any staff costs, the July options appraisal estimated a combined annual deficit of approximately £50,500 under a no-change scenario, assuming that the café achieved its forecast £8,000 profit for 2026/27. The appraisal also identified costs and liabilities that were not fully reflected in that figure. For these reasons, maintaining the current arrangements without change is not the preferred direction.

Option 2: Revised Council operating model and market for a new operator

This is the preferred direction currently being developed. Subject to staff consultation and completion of interim arrangements, the Council would reduce its direct day-to-day operational role. The tenanted parts of Cockington Court would be managed through the Council's Assets function, with clearly allocated responsibilities.

At the same time, the Council would market for a whole-site operator through a long lease. The Council would retain ownership of Cockington Court. This provides an opportunity to reduce operating exposure while retaining flexibility and testing whether another organisation can offer the capability, investment and commercial approach needed to develop the site sustainably. If no acceptable whole-site proposal is received, separate leasing of individual facilities and spaces would remain available as a fallback.

7. Financial Opportunities and Implications

7.1 Excluding staff costs, the options appraisal reported 2025/26 expenditure of £190,000 and income of £131,500 for Cockington Court, giving an estimated deficit of £58,500 t.

7.2 Potential rental income at full occupation was estimated at approximately £172,000 a year. Seven vacant units represented estimated foregone income of approximately £35,000.

7.3 The café recorded an operating loss of £21,000 in 2025/26. Its forecast for 2026/27 anticipated a net profit of £8,000.

7.4 Future responsibilities for planned maintenance, reactive repairs, compliance work and capital investment will need to be clearly allocated in any lease or operating arrangement.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 Legal advice will be required on the form and terms of any long lease, including the extent of the site, existing occupational arrangements, heritage restrictions, repair responsibilities, access rights and protections for the Council.

- 8.2 Existing leases and contractual arrangements must be identified and reflected in the proposed structure.
- 8.3 The Council will need to be clear that it is offering a property opportunity through a lease rather than purchasing defined services and outcomes from an operator. If the Council specifies services or outputs that it is buying from the operator, then a procurement is required.
- 8.4 Employment implications are being managed through the Council's formal consultation and change-management arrangements.
- 8.5 Legal advice and completion of the necessary Governance arrangements will be required before any binding commitment is made to a preferred operator.

9. Engagement and Consultation

- 9.1 Staff consultation is being undertaken through the formal change-management process. The outcome has not been predetermined.
- 9.2 Tenants were invited to a meeting to explain the proposed business plan, the reasons for the review and anticipated next steps.
- 9.3 Tenant engagement will help develop practical arrangements for reporting issues, security, access, events, marketing, visitor information and emergency response. Feedback will also inform the tenant handbook and market-testing process.
- 9.4 The Council will continue engaging tenants as proposals develop, including providing clear written information for those unable to attend meetings.
- 9.5 Communications will continue to make clear that Cockington Court is not being sold under the current proposal; the Council intends to retain ownership; the cafe will remain open, no preferred partner has been selected; staff consultation remains underway; current tenant arrangements remain in place unless formally changed; and interim responsibilities will be confirmed before implementation.

10. Procurement and Property Implications

- 10.1 Work is underway to define the opportunity for a potential operator and the proposed area to be included in any lease.
- 10.2 The emerging framework seeks proposals from organisations with the vision, capability and commercial approach to operate and develop Cockington Court as a financially sustainable destination.
- 10.3 Before marketing, the Council will need to agree the site and property included, legal route, required, financial due diligence and governance route.
- 10.4 No preferred operator has been identified. The marketing exercise will set out the proposals that any potential operator has for the site.

11. Protecting our Naturally Inspiring Bay and Tackling Climate Change

- 11.1 Cockington Court is part of a sensitive historic and natural environment. Any future arrangement should protect the character and heritage of the site and take account of the surrounding landscape.
- 11.2 Any future operator will be encouraged to consider energy and water use, waste, sustainable travel, biodiversity, the environmental impact of events and visitor activity, building resilience and the requirements of heritage buildings.
- 11.3 Proposals should demonstrate how any required investment will be funded.

12. Associated Risks

- 12.1 Financial sustainability: The operating deficit may continue if the transition is delayed or an operator cannot be identified. Savings may also be lower than forecast if the Council retains property, compliance, facilities, security or emergency-response responsibilities. Financial assumptions and retained costs will be refreshed before implementation. Indicative status: to be monitored.
- 12.2 Market interest: No suitable whole-site operator may come forward, or proposals may not be financially viable. Separate leasing of suitable areas remains a fallback option.
- 12.3 Building condition: The maintenance backlog creates a risk of unplanned costs, disruption and reduced attractiveness to operators. Up-to-date condition information and clear repair obligations will be required. Indicative status: to be monitored.
- 12.4 Interim management: Unclear accountability during transition could affect tenants, health and safety, security, inspections, public access or emergencies. No operational changes are proceeding until responsibilities are documented, assigned and resourced.
- 12.5 Tenants and businesses: Uncertainty may affect confidence, business planning and relationships. Regular communication, a tenant handbook, named contacts and transparent updates will help manage this.
- 12.6 Heritage and reputation: Changes to access, management or events may attract public and media interest. Communications should explain the reasons for the review, the intention to retain ownership and the safeguards for tenants, heritage and public use.
- 12.8 Programme and capacity: The work requires input across Council services. A coordinated programme, named responsibilities and clear governance has been required.

13 Equality Impact Assessment

- 13.1 A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared in relation to the proposed change. It will be reviewed and updated as the operating arrangements and any effects on access become clearer.
- 13.2 The assessment should consider potential effects on disabled visitors and tenants; older people and people with limited mobility; people who rely on accessible information or support; people without digital access; families and carers; people using the Court for ceremonies, events or community activity; tenants, workers and volunteers; and residents and visitors affected by changes to opening or access.
- 13.3 The proposed restriction of general public access to parts of the main house may affect groups differently. These effects should be considered alongside arrangements for the café, studios, ceremonies, events, toilets, parking, paths and other public areas.
- 13.4 Mitigation should include clear and accessible information; maintaining accessible routes wherever reasonably practicable; consulting affected tenants and users; providing more than one way to contact the Council or operator; considering equality and accessibility when assessing proposals; and reviewing the assessment before any material change.
- 13.5 The Equality Impact Assessment will remain a live document during consultation, market testing and implementation.

14. Cumulative Council Impact

14.1 The proposed change affects Economic Development, Assets, Finance, Legal, Procurement, Human Resources, Communications, Facilities Management and Health and Safety. The reduction of one operational function may create additional responsibilities elsewhere. These impacts must be identified and resourced so that savings are not overstated or achieved by transferring unfunded responsibilities to another service. Any future arrangement should be considered alongside the Council's wider work on culture, heritage, the visitor economy, asset management and financial sustainability.

15. Cumulative Community Impacts

15.1 Cockington Court supports tenants, artists, makers and visitor-facing businesses. Changes may affect footfall, events, visitor information and the way businesses receive support or report issues. There may be wider effects on the Cockington visitor offer, neighbouring organisations and businesses, and Torbay's cultural and heritage profile. A sustainable operator could improve all of these, create opportunities for investment, stronger programming, collaboration and improved use of the site. These benefits cannot be assumed and will need to be tested through the market process.

Report title: Updated Torbay Heritage Strategy for adoption

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 14 October 2026

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Chris Lewis,
Cabinet Member for Place Development and
Economic Growth and Deputy Leader of the Council

Email: chris.lewis@torbay.gov.uk

Lead Director: Alan Denby, Director of Pride in Place

Email: alan.denby@torbay.gov.uk

Wards affected: All

1. Summary of Report:

- 1.1 The purpose of the strategy is to clarify Torbay Council's approach to heritage, and to enable the Council to confirm and develop plans for specific locations. The new documents set out statutory requirements (e.g. Listed Buildings, Conservation Area Appraisals, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and non-designated heritage assets). The aim is also to ensure accessibility to a wide readership.
- 1.2 The Torbay Heritage Strategy has been revised and updated to reflect the progress made since 2021 and to reaffirm our commitment to putting Torbay's fascinating history and rich heritage at the heart of the area's economic, cultural and social life.

2. Recommendations and Proposed Decision:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet:

- 2.1 That, the Heritage Strategy (2026-2031), as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 to the submitted report, be adopted.
- 2.2 That delegated authority be given to the Director for Pride in Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth to approve any necessary minor amendments or typographical corrections to the documents.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Proposed Decision:

- 3.1 This is an overarching document that focuses and co-ordinates a number of key recommendations including; a clear set of objectives for managing and protecting heritage assets, it is a tool to involve and inspire key partners and stakeholders, attract visitors and support our economy and respond to climate change whilst recognising our wide ranging internationally recognised heritage.
- 3.2 The recommendations contained in this report do not commit the Council financially, other than within existing budgets. Due consideration will be given to the financial impacts of each aspect of the Heritage Strategy as individual decisions are progressed.
- 3.3 The Strategy will underpin the delivery of Torbay Heritage Place programme for the whole period of the document. It provides the framework that enables the Council to identify, prioritise and develop projects which have a strong chance of securing external funding and contribute to achieving the Council's policy objectives.

4. Background and Context:

- 4.1 The existing Heritage Strategy was adopted in November 2020 and covered a period of 5 years from 2021 to 2026. Since 2021, the Strategy has contributed significantly to our ability to attract grant funding, develop positive relationships with key partners such as Historic England and support the local heritage sector. It's now time to build on this foundation and set out our ambitions for the next five years.
- 4.2 In recent years, the profile of our distinctive built, cultural and natural heritage has continued to rise. In 2024, Torbay was given Heritage Place status by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with Torbay Council as the local lead organisation. This gives the Council and our communities a golden opportunity to attract investment from the Heritage Fund that increases pride in place and connects residents and visitors with heritage.
- 4.3 We know that there are many competing priorities for limited resources, so this strategy considers how to prioritise heritage, including assets on Historic England's Heritage at Risk

Register. The heritage review was conducted by our Heritage and Design team with input from partners and stakeholders.

- 4.4 This strategy will sit alongside and complement a new five-year cultural strategy for Torbay that is currently in development following a cultural infrastructure review that took place in 2025. It is aligned with the existing Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 and the draft Torbay Local Plan 2025-2045, the Torbay Community and Corporate Plan, the English Riviera Destination Management Plan, the Torbay Economic Strategy, and the UNESCO Global Geopark Management Plan 2023-2033.
- 4.5 Caring for our outstanding historic assets and sharing our stories will maximise the potential for heritage to bring social, cultural and economic benefits to all parts of the Bay. In line with the Local Plan, heritage will be key to driving the visitor economy as Torbay attracts new audiences seeking distinctive experiences.
- 4.6 We recognise that our built, natural and cultural heritage are essential to Torbay's sustainable growth. This approach does not prevent development or regeneration, but encourages a responsible approach, balancing heritage and local need for the benefit of all our communities, now and for future generations.
- 4.7 The Torbay Heritage Strategy sets out a clear and focussed agenda for elected Council members and officers at Torbay Council to follow until 2031. It is also a tool to involve and inspire developers, building owners, heritage organisations and voluntary groups.
- 4.8 There is enormous interest in local heritage among Torbay residents, and this strategy encourages opportunities for all our communities to understand, enjoy and share our history. It provides protection for the historic environment and highlights our museum and archive collections. It encourages new development that respects and finds inspiration in the distinct characters of our towns and countryside.
- 4.9 Attracting new and younger visitors and lengthening the tourist season are fundamentally important to Torbay's future economy. This strategy puts heritage at the centre of our visitor offer.
- 4.10 Torbay Council owns and manages a range of historic sites, and we support the wider heritage sector across the Bay. This strategy aims to strengthen the sector and explains our priorities for key locations.
- 4.11 The climate emergency affects every area of our work so this strategy considers both the risks to historic assets and how we can decarbonise the way we work at and visit heritage sites.

- 4.12 The international significance of our geology and the environment, heritage and culture associated with it is recognised in the English Riviera's designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark. This strategy supports the Global Geopark as an overarching framework within which the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of conserving our heritage are fully utilised to build a thriving future.

5. Alternative Options Considered:

- 5.1 An alternative option is to not update the existing Heritage Strategy; however, this would result in an outdated document which does not reflect the current situation and would put the Council at a disadvantage and without a clear and focussed agenda for elected Council members and officers at Torbay Council to follow until 2031 for the management of our local historic environment.

6. Contribution to Council Priorities:

- 6.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver the ambitions within our Community & Corporate Plan through:

- Thriving people; access to heritage and culture can contribute to improved health and wellbeing. The strategy will contribute to creating positive places.
- Thriving economy; there is significant change in the strategic funding context. The strategy will support key funding bids. Attracting new and younger visitors and lengthening the tourist season are fundamentally important to Torbay's future economy. This strategy puts heritage at the centre of our visitor offer.
- Tackling climate change; this strategy considers both the risks to historic assets and how we can decarbonise the way we work at and visit heritage sites.
- Council fit for the future; Torbay Council owns and manages a range of historic sites, and we support the wider heritage sector across the bay. This strategy aims to strengthen the sector and explains our priorities for key locations.

7. Consultation and Engagement:

- 7.1 This document updates the Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026. It takes into account progress made and issues that have arisen since 2021 along with changes to the local and national policy framework. It will sit alongside and complement the new five-year cultural strategy that is in development.

- 7.2 Torbay Council commissioned an independent heritage consultancy, Heritage Arts and People (HAP), in January 2020 to produce the previous version of this document. The approach was to consult widely both internally and externally at the start of the process and to develop our Strategy in response.
- 7.3 There was an online residents' consultation that received 745 responses. It found that local people care deeply about special places and are enthusiastic about opportunities for greater engagement as visitors, volunteers and event attendees. The results showed an enormous interest in heritage among local residents. 99% of respondents said that experiencing the heritage around them was important to their quality of life, with 77% saying it was very important. Many respondents were keen to participate in more active care of heritage assets.
- 7.4 The huge public interest in the future of iconic buildings such as Oldway Mansion, Torquay Pavilion and Paignton Picture House shows that local people are passionate about protecting much-loved sites. Groups devoted to Torbay's heritage on social media attract thousands of followers and contributors. Our residents are eager to engage with local history and there is great potential to involve more people in collective efforts to care for and promote our heritage. This strategy was created in response to the priorities, concerns and ideas raised by this consultation.
- 7.5 There was also a stakeholders' gathering for heritage sector organisations, in addition to individual meetings, and many local heritage organisations kindly contributed their expertise and views. Stakeholders were also invited to contribute their views to the revision of the Strategy in 2026 which has informed this final draft.

8. Implications:

Financial Implications:

- 8.1 The proposal contained in this report do not commit the Council financially.
- 8.2 There is no direct budgetary implication with the preparation of the Strategy itself, however, it does set out a timetable and resource implications.
- 8.3 The Strategy can be used as a tool to unlock potential for external grant funding for heritage related projects which can have great benefits to local communities and businesses both directly and indirectly, especially through the Torbay Heritage Place Programme being delivered in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This can be seen as a clear financial opportunity which can use the historic environment as a catalyst to enhance local areas and the local economy.

Legal Implications:

8.4 No legal implications.

Corporate Parenting/Children and Young People:

- 8.5 A principal objective within the Strategy is for “everyone in Torbay, including looked-after children, people with support needs and deprived communities, can access, experience and enjoy heritage” (Objective SEC01).
- 8.6 The Strategy encourages opportunities for learning, creativity and enjoyment through heritage at all stages of life, recognising that engaging with local heritage helps children and young people develop a stronger sense of place, identity and belonging, as well as providing access to rich educational resources outside of the classroom.
- 8.7 Research in 2025 as part of the development of Torbay Heritage Place identified potential to significantly grow the market for heritage-driven tourism, especially among younger audiences and through amplifying the connection between heritage and wellbeing. This Strategy directly supports the delivery of the Torbay Heritage Place Programme of which children and young people and their access to heritage is a clear strategic priority.
- 8.8 The Strategy underpins the delivery of the Torbay Heritage Place programme which prioritises projects that benefit children and young people.

Associated Risks, Risk Tolerance Level and Mitigations:

- 8.9 A summary of key risks associated with the recommendations in this report are:
1. Strategic reputational and operational risk if deliverable projects or programmes associated with the Strategy are not properly aligned with the established priorities of the Community and Corporate Plan– mitigated through the objectives of the Community and Corporate Plan being incorporated into all projects at planning stage and throughout delivery. Monitored by the relevant Project Manager for each project or programme.
- 8.10 The risks of not approving the recommendations include having an outdated document which does not reflect the current situation and would put the Council at a disadvantage and without a clear and focussed agenda for elected Council members and officers at Torbay Council to follow until 2031 for the management of our local historic environment. Overall risk exposure is assessed as acceptable within the Council’s risk tolerance appetite.

Full risks are set out below:

Risk	Risk score before mitigations (likelihood x impact)	Mitigations	Risk Score after mitigations (likelihood x impact)	Risk tolerance
Projects or programmes associated with the Strategy not aligned with Community and Corporate Plan	8	Ensure that all projects and programmes make clear reference to the Community and Corporate Plan at the planning stage and throughout delivery	4	Acceptable

Contributions to tackling climate change or achieving carbon neutrality:

8.11 Climate change has been considered as part of the Strategy and is included in the vulnerabilities section. Climate change threatens Torbay's historic buildings, landscapes and archaeology in a number of ways:

- Coastal flooding as the sea level rises
- Increased coastal erosion from wave action
- Changes to habitable ranges of invasive vegetation, fungus and pests
- Damage from increased rainfall
- Soil instability and chemical changes
- Different planting necessary in parks, gardens and farmland

8.12 A key objective within the Strategy is to ensure heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.

Social Value Considerations:

8.13 Heritage is at greatest risk of being lost if it is not experienced and valued by local people. A particular problem for areas that have long-established tourism industries is that residents can feel shut out of key sites that are focussed on attracting visitors. The Strategy seeks to address this by encouraging residents to understand, enjoy and share Torbay's unique history which strengthens local identity and civic pride and creates a shared sense of place and belonging.

- 8.14 It generates significant social value by strengthening community identity, supporting lifelong learning, improving wellbeing, increasing volunteering and cultural participation, promoting inclusive access to heritage, and safeguarding Torbay's historic environment for future generations. By connecting people with the Bay's unique cultural, natural and historic assets, the strategy helps build stronger, more resilient and more engaged communities. It recognises and seeks to enhance how the historic environment can be used to benefit everyone who live, work and visit Torbay.

Procurement Implications:

- 8.15 None

Other Implications:

- 8.16 There are no significant implications associated with the proposals. The objectives of the Strategy can be progressed using existing Council resources in partnership with local communities and relevant stakeholders. Where necessary, additional resource may be sought through existing relationships with external funders, specifically the National Lottery Heritage Fund through the Torbay Heritage Place Programme.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age Page 31	18% of Torbay residents are aged under 18 years old. 55% of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27% of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	There are potential barriers to the ability for some people to be able to access the document online for those who are unable or have difficulty accessing the internet.	The document is produced as a pdf and can printed off as a hard copy if required. The document has been written to be as jargon free and simple to use as possible. We are working with the graphic design team to ensure that a range of users can access the information using assistive	Heritage & Design Team with Graphics Design Team

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
			technology where necessary.	
Carers	- At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these carers provided 50 hours or more of care.	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a
Care experienced	As of January 2026, there were 277 former care experienced young people aged 18-24 in Torbay.	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Disability Page 33	In the 2021 Census, 23.9% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	There are potential barriers to the ability for some people to be able to access the document online for those who are unable or have difficulty accessing the internet. There is also a need to consider how accessibility requirements can be sensitively achieved within the historic environment.	The document is produced as a pdf and can printed off as a hard copy if required. The document has been written to be as jargon free and simple to use as possible. We are working with the graphic design team to ensure that a range of users can access the information using assistive technology where necessary.	Heritage & Design Team with Graphics Design Team

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Page 34			Officers need to be aware of the importance of reasonable adjustments and the needs of people with disabilities and learning disabilities. Accessibility requirements within the historic environment can be addressed through individual projects.	
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth.			
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a
Pregnancy and maternity	Between 2013 and 2024, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 56.0 per 1,000) than the Southwest (53.4) and	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Page 36 Race	broadly in line with England (56.3). For the period 2022 to 2024, rates in Torbay (44.6) have been significantly below England (50.0).			
	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as the following: 1.6% as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh 0.3% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	Potential barriers for those who are unable to access the internet or engage with the document because English is not their first language.	The document is produced as a pdf and can printed off as a hard copy if required. The document has been written to be as jargon free and simple to use as possible. We are working with the graphic design	Heritage & Design Team with Graphics Design Team

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Page 37	1.5% as being of Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups 96.1% as White 0.4% described their ethnicity another way. - Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.		team to ensure that a range of users can access the information using assistive technology where necessary	
Religion and belief	The 2021 Census showed that the residents in Torbay	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Page 38	identify their religion and/or belief as the following; • 48.5% are Christian • 0.4% are Buddhist • 0.2% are Hindu • 0.6% are Muslim • Less than 0.1% are Sikh • 0.1% are Jewish • 0.7% have another religion • 43.2% have no religion • 6.3% did not answer			
Sex	• 51.3% of Torbay's population are female. • 48.7% of Torbay's population are male.	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, residents described their sexuality as follows; • 89% as Straight or Heterosexual • 1.7% as Gay or Lesbian • 1.1% as Bisexual • 0.1% as Pansexual • 0.1% described their sexuality another way • 7.4% of people didn't answer the question	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a
Armed Forces Community	• In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces.	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	In Torbay, 5.9% of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
Additional considerations:				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)	Torbay is ranked as the 39th most deprived upper tier local authority in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025.	There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	For the five-year period 2020 to 2024, data shows there is a 6-year life expectancy gap between males who live in	There are proven beneficial links with engagement with the historic environment on mental health and wellbeing.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	Torbay's least and most deprived areas and, a 3-year gap for females.			
Human Rights impacts		There is no differential impact, however all officers need to be aware of the Human Rights Act 2010 Section 149.	n/a	n/a
Child Friendly (Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) considerations): <i>Summarise the CRIA considerations for this proposal, including which groups of children and young people may be affected (e.g., care experienced children/young people, care</i>		There is no differential impact.	n/a	n/a

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
<i>leavers, children with SEND), how their rights and best interests have been considered, and any engagement undertaken with children/young people and/or their representatives. Set out any mitigations to address identified adverse impacts and how these will be monitored.</i>				

10. Cumulative Council Impact:

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impact:

11.1 None

12. Monitoring and Evaluation:

12.1 The Strategy draws out a series of stories that make Torbay special and develops a set of objectives around them. The list of objectives is set out in full at the conclusion of Part One, on pages 16-19. Some of these objectives will be fully achievable by 2031, while others will progress as part of a longer-term process.

12.2 In Part Two, each story is explored in more detail, and its main historical assets are listed. Key sites are presented in order of priority for action, using a 'traffic light' system. A table shows the objectives associated with each story and lists how we will know if we are on course to achieve them. The strategy does not set out individual tasks – these are set in a complementary Annual Heritage Action Plan. This will be monitored and evaluated by the Principal Historic Environment Officer in collaboration with the Service Manager for Development Management.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Torbay Heritage Strategy 2026-2031 Part 1

Appendix 2 – Torbay Heritage Strategy 2026-2031 Part 2

Background Documents:

None

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Torbay Heritage Strategy 2026 – 2031 Part One

Adopted DATE

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Foreword

The Torbay Heritage Strategy has been revised and updated to reflect the progress made since 2021 and to reaffirm our commitment to putting Torbay's fascinating history and rich heritage at the heart of the area's economic, cultural and social life.

Since 2021, the Strategy has contributed significantly to our ability to attract grant funding, develop positive relationships with key partners such as Historic England and support the local heritage sector. It's now time to build on this foundation and set out our ambitions for the next five years.

In recent years, the profile of our distinctive built, cultural and natural heritage has continued to rise. In 2024, Torbay was given Heritage Place status by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with Torbay Council as the local lead organisation. This gives the Council and our communities a golden opportunity to attract investment from the Heritage Fund that increases pride in place and connects residents and visitors with heritage.

We know that there are many competing priorities for limited resources, so this strategy considers how to prioritise heritage, including assets on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The heritage review was conducted by our Heritage and Design team. Our thanks to the team and to all our partners and stakeholders who contributed to the process.

This strategy will sit alongside and complement a new five-year cultural strategy for Torbay that is currently in development following a cultural infrastructure review that took place in 2025. It is aligned with the existing Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 and the draft Torbay Local Plan 2025-2045, the Torbay Community and Corporate Plan, the English Riviera Destination Management Plan, the Torbay Economic Strategy, the Torbay Story, and the UNESCO Global Geopark Management Plan 2023-2033.

Research consistently shows that built, cultural and natural heritage have significant positive impacts on economic and social development. We hope that this strategy provides a pathway towards fully realising the benefits of our unique heritage for everyone in Torbay, and acts as a tool for positive regeneration and economic growth.

Signatories:

Introduction

Vision

We envisage heritage at the heart of the cultural and creative development of Torbay, making our home – the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - a better place in which to live, work, learn and visit.

Caring for our outstanding historic assets and sharing our stories will maximise the potential for heritage to bring social, cultural and economic benefits to all parts of the Bay. To do this, we will develop better understanding of the risks to historic places and of the diverse meanings of heritage to different people. In line with the Local Plan, the Community and Corporate Plan and the Torbay Story, heritage will be key to driving the visitor economy as Torbay attracts new audiences seeking distinctive experiences.

We recognise that our built, natural and cultural heritage are essential to Torbay's sustainable growth. In Torbay, heritage is a key economic driver that supports tourism, regeneration, investment and place-making. The bay's historic buildings, conservation areas, archaeological assets and cultural landscapes contribute to a distinctive identity that attracts visitors, businesses and residents. By conserving and enhancing these assets, this strategy will support sustainable economic growth, strengthen town centres, create skilled employment and reinforce Torbay's position as a unique coastal destination.

Purposes

The Torbay Heritage Strategy enables our vision to be realised by setting out a clear and focussed agenda for elected Council members and officers at Torbay Council to follow until 2031. It is also a tool to involve and inspire developers, building owners, heritage organisations and voluntary groups.

There is enormous interest in local heritage among Torbay residents, and this strategy encourages opportunities for all our communities to understand, enjoy and share our history. It provides a focus for the historic environment and highlights our museum and archive collections. It encourages new development and diversification of use that respects and finds inspiration in the distinct characters of our towns and countryside.

Attracting new and younger visitors and lengthening the tourist season are fundamentally important to Torbay's future economy. This strategy puts heritage at the centre of our visitor offer.

The climate emergency affects every area of our work so this strategy considers both the risks to historic assets and how we can decarbonise the way we work at and visit heritage sites.

All of Torbay's human stories have their roots in the land and the sea. The international significance of our geology and the environment, heritage and culture associated with it is recognised in the English Riviera's designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark. This strategy supports the Global Geopark as an overarching framework within which the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of conserving our heritage are fully utilised to build a thriving future.

Approach

This document updates the Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026. It takes into account progress made and issues that have arisen since 2021 along with changes to the local and national policy framework. It will sit alongside and complement the new five-year cultural strategy that is in development.

Torbay Council commissioned an independent heritage consultancy, Heritage Arts and People (HAP), in January 2020 to produce the previous version of this document. The approach was to consult widely both internally and externally at the start of the process and to develop our Strategy in response.

There was an online residents' consultation that received 745 responses. It found that local people care deeply about special places and are enthusiastic about opportunities for greater engagement as visitors, volunteers and event attendees. This strategy was created in response to the priorities, concerns and ideas raised by this consultation.

There was also a stakeholders' gathering for heritage sector organisations, in addition to individual meetings, and many local heritage organisations kindly contributed their expertise and views. Stakeholders were also invited to contribute their views to the revision of the Strategy in 2026.

From this process, we drew out a series of stories that make Torbay special and developed a set of objectives around them.

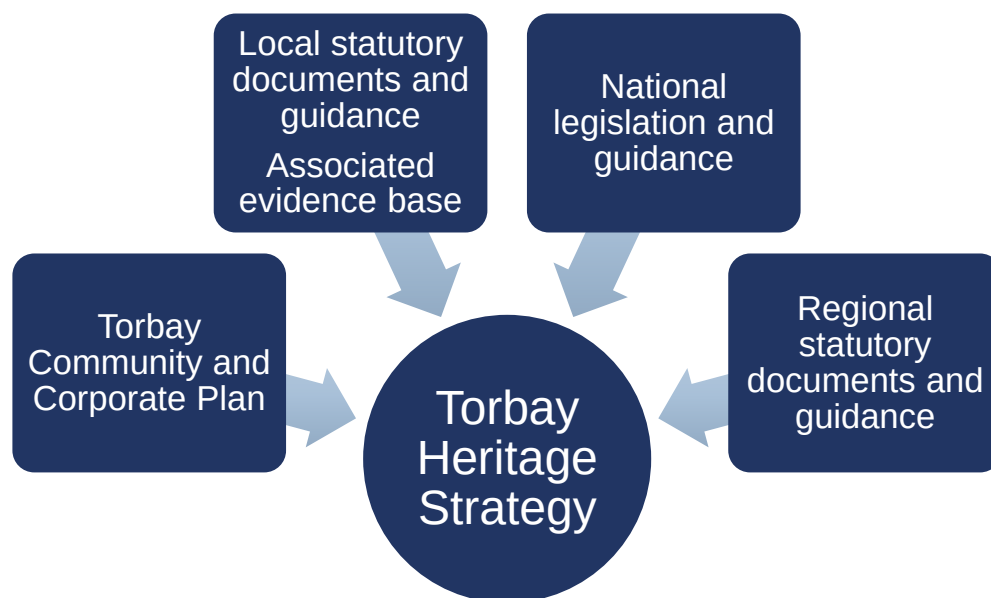
The list of objectives is set out in full at the conclusion of Part One, on pages 16-19. Some of these objectives will be fully achievable by 2031, while others will progress as part of a longer-term process.

In Part Two, we explore each story in more detail and list its main historical assets. Key sites are presented in order of priority for action, using a ‘traffic light’ system. A table shows the objectives associated with each story and lists how we will know if we are on course to achieve them. The strategy does not set out individual tasks – these are set in a complementary Annual Heritage Action Plan.

In addition to the main stories, we examine cross-cutting issues and consider how heritage relates to wider public services in ‘Heritage sector and services’.

Policy context

The Torbay Heritage Strategy does not exist in isolation; it supports and is supported by a series of interlocking policy documents. As heritage interacts with so many aspects of life, this strategy complements Torbay Council’s approach to a wide range of policy areas and functions within the context of national and local planning.



Policy Framework Diagram

National

[The National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) was revised in August 2026. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It states very clearly the importance of the conserving and enhancing the historic environment and a wide range of heritage assets. Both the NPPF and the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) are material considerations in relevant planning applications.

Torbay

[Torbay Council's Community and Corporate Plan 2023-2043](#) articulates at a strategic level the ambitions of the Council and the principles within which the Council will operate. It sets out the ambition for a healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay for all, within themes of people and community, pride in place and economic growth.

This strategy will help us deliver these ambitions through:

- Thriving people: access to heritage and culture can contribute to improved health and wellbeing. This strategy will contribute to creating positive places.
- Thriving economy: there is significant change in the strategic funding context. This strategy will support key funding bids. Attracting new and younger visitors and lengthening the tourist season are fundamentally important to Torbay's future economy. This strategy puts heritage at the centre of our visitor offer.
- Tackling climate change: this strategy considers climate change and its impact on heritage assets and how they can be used to support decarbonisation.
- Council fit for the future: Torbay Council owns and manages a range of heritage assets and is a leading organisation within the Bay which supports the wider heritage sector. This strategy aims to strengthen the sector and explains our priorities for key locations.

[The Torbay Local Plan Update \(2025-2045\)](#) and the three adopted (made) Neighbourhood Plans for Torquay, Paignton and Brixham Peninsula together provide the basis for planning decisions within Torbay. It aims to maximise heritage and cultural opportunities for the enjoyment and benefit of residents and visitors.

A revised and updated five-year cultural strategy for Torbay is in development at the time of writing.

[Torbay Council's Economic Growth Strategy](#) recognises that the visitor economy is fundamental to economic growth and sets the framework for capitalising upon our heritage.

[The English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-2030](#) identifies heritage and culture as one of six 'signature experiences' that make up the visitor experience in Torbay.

The [Urban Design Guide](#) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in 2007 to guide the general form and design of future development. New guidance is likely to result from the Local Plan review process that will need to enhance consideration of Torbay's unique environment, townscape character and urban form and heritage. Brixham Neighbourhood Plan includes supporting bespoke design guides with historic references to the distinctive character areas.

The [Greenspace Strategy](#) (to 2026) is a SPD which outlines how Torbay Council and the community intend to deliver and maintain high quality green spaces which enable equal access and opportunity for all, as well as protecting and enhancing the local environment. A refresh of the Greenspace Strategy is likely to emerge as part of the Local Plan review process.

Torbay Council's Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was adopted in 2021. It includes heritage assets in the assessment of trip generators and attraction. Heritage considerations and opportunities will be considered in future updates to the Torbay LCWIP and within the strategic design and development of the Council's pipeline of walking, wheeling and cycling projects.

Torbay Council's [Strategic Asset Management Plan](#) sets out our approach to the strategic management of the assets that we own. It forms part of a suite of key strategic documents for the Council's vision for the built environment which have been developed in consultation with the community, including the Torbay Heritage Strategy.

[Torbay Story](#) promotes the area and highlights its positive aspects and potential. The aim is to attract external investment and to support economic growth and development for Torbay. There is potential for heritage to have a greater presence in the Torbay Story in the coming years.

Local

[South Devon National Landscape Management Plan](#) commits to conserving and enhancing the National Landscape's historic features and distinctive vernacular buildings as part of a living and working landscape. Ten special qualities summarise the unique 'natural beauty' for which the South Devon National Landscape is designated as a nationally important protected landscape. These include, 'A landscape with a rich time depth and a wealth of historic features and cultural associations'. The current Plan is due to be reviewed in summer 2026.

[Torquay, Paignton, Brixham Neighbourhood Plans](#) all aim to protect and enhance local identity and the historic environment. Brixham Neighbourhood Plan includes supporting bespoke design guides with historic references to the distinctive character areas in the Peninsula.

There are 24 Conservation Areas in Torbay. During the period until 2031, we intend to roll out a programme of reviewing and updating our [Conservation Area Appraisals](#) and developing Conservation Area Management Plans in collaboration with local communities.

Torbay's history in brief

The foundation of Torbay's exceptionally long human story is its geology. The sea carved out the Bay from the soft red sandstone, leaving the limestone headlands at Hope's Nose and Berry Head. Torbay's geology has fascinated scientists for centuries and is the source of the name used around the world for the period in which these features formed: the Devonian. More recently, over the last two million years, rainwater seeping through cracks and fissures slowly dissolved the limestone to form caves such as Kents Cavern in Torquay and Windmill Hill Cavern in Brixham. Discoveries in the caves have revealed human occupation going back half a million years, making Torbay internationally important for Palaeolithic archaeology. There is evidence here of three of the four human species ever to have lived in Britain.

Later, Neolithic and Bronze-Age farmers left signs of their passing at Wall's Hill and Broadsands tomb. Evidence of an early Iron Age settlement was recently uncovered at Churston. This was the beginning of the small-scale farming and fishing that were the way of life for generations of Torbay people who shaped the landscape we see today.

A picture of Torbay in the Roman period has started to emerge from digs in an around Torbay in recent years. Archaeologists have found varying amounts of Romano-British material at these sites, suggesting that communities here embraced 'Romanisation' in differing ways.

In the Middle Ages, Torquay developed around the Saxon hamlet of Torre (from 'tor' meaning hill or craggy peak). Torre Abbey, one of the most important historic buildings in the Bay, was the base for the monks who controlled much of the Bay and are credited with building the first fishing quay. Paignton appeared in the Domesday Book in 1086 as Peinton. The earliest settlement is believed to have taken place around 700 AD – the name means 'the farm of Paega's people'. Meanwhile, Brixham evolved from the Saxon 'Briseham'. Higher Brixham was originally a rural settlement while in Lower Brixham fishing was the main activity.

The harbour at Brixham grew due to the safe anchorage created by the shape of the Bay. William of Orange, later King William III of England, landed with his army there in 1688. It was used by the naval fleet during times of crisis, prompting the construction of the Berry Head Forts during the Napoleonic Wars.

Napoleon himself was an early tourist attraction on a prison ship anchored off Torquay, while the families of naval officers came to settle in the area. Torbay became famous for its mild climate and beauty and a resort began to grow at Torquay. From the Georgian period and accelerating in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the grand villas and mansions that give much of the town its distinct

character were built for visiting gentry. The town's prosperity was reflected in fine civic buildings such as the Town Hall. Agatha Christie was born in Torquay in 1890 and spent much of her early life in Torbay.

As mass tourism became a possibility with the development of the railways, so new structures sprang up in Torquay and Paignton, including promenades, parks and gardens, theatres, picture houses and dance halls.

Brixham in the nineteenth century was a thriving fishing port and shipbuilding centre. It was here that deep sea trawling was pioneered, a development that had a profound impact on all the sea fishing communities of Northern Europe.

In the twentieth century, Torbay played an important role in the First and Second World Wars, as a site for war hospitals, training and troop billeting, and an embarkation point for the D-Day landings. Refugees from Belgium found sanctuary in the Bay during both wars, particularly in Brixham.

In the post-war period British tourists took advantage of new cheap ways to travel abroad and Torbay as a resort (the English Riviera), felt the effects of a decrease in the popularity of seaside holidays. Torbay became a popular retirement and relocation destination for people from other parts of the UK, in particular the English Midlands. Being coastal, Torbay has always welcomed overseas travellers, and in the twenty-first century it became home to a new Polish community, among others.

The thread that runs throughout our history is the coastal landscape. The richness of the sea and the land and the mild climate have attracted people for millennia and continue to do so. Countless generations have left their mark here, shaping the rural and urban landscapes that we know today. These layers of history are an essential part of Torbay's unique character and the foundation of a dynamic, inclusive heritage for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

Heritage assets and designations

A heritage asset is defined in Annex B: Glossary of the NPPF (2026) as:

‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes but is not limited to designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’.

When producing this strategy, we undertook a detailed assessment that rated Torbay’s designated assets according to their significance, vulnerability to climate change and other threats, their potential for viable use and their accessibility. The types of designation included are listed below. The information about the designated status of sites was taken from the National Heritage List for England, March 2026.

In addition, we believe that although they are not part of the planning system, artefacts and archives profoundly enrich our understanding of places and should be cherished and understood in tandem with them. Torbay holds collections of enormous interest, including items of international importance. Therefore, these types of asset are also listed in relation to the places and stories they illuminate.

Listed buildings are considered to be of national importance and are therefore protected. Listed buildings come in three categories of significance:

- Grade I for buildings of the highest significance
- Grade II*
- Grade II

There are currently 864 listed buildings in Torbay. 96% of these are Grade II listed. In the limited space of this strategy, we consider Grade I and Grade II* buildings individually while Grade II listings are largely considered collectively as part of Conservation Areas. Occasionally a Grade II listed building is considered individually where it is of particular relevance.

Conservation Areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place. There are some extra planning controls and considerations in place to protect them. Torbay currently contains 24 Conservation Areas. There are 16 in Torquay, four in Paignton and four in Brixham.

Scheduled Monuments are important historic buildings or sites that are not used as dwellings or for worship. There are 11 Scheduled Monuments in Torbay with a further two on the border with the South Hams.

Registered Parks and Gardens are planned open spaces such as private gardens, town squares, parks and cemeteries. There are currently six Registered Parks and Gardens in Torbay. Full definitions of these designations can be found on the Historic England website:

[What is Listing? | Historic England](#)

Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets. They are identified through the conservation area review process and through the production of a local heritage list. The need for a list is a requirement of the 2026 NPPF, Policy HE1 e.

Environmental designations

Many heritage sites in Torbay also have high environmental value and so have multiple designations. This strategy complements Torbay Council's work on green infrastructure and we believe that our approach to heritage and the environment must be co-ordinated. Therefore, this strategy takes account of environmental designations where they apply to heritage sites. These include:

- National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- Public Right of Way (PRoW)

Assets beyond Torbay

There are some heritage assets beyond the boundary of Torbay that are intrinsically connected to our heritage and are therefore included in this strategy. All of the sites in this category are in the South Hams and are managed by the National Trust. We intend to work closely with colleagues at South Hams District Council and the National Trust to ensure that we develop a connected and consistent approach to these important places.

There are no known Protected Wrecks within the boundary of Torbay Council's remit as a planning authority, which extends as far as the low water mark. Beyond this, responsibility for heritage assets at sea lies with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The Lyme Bay and Tor Bay marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is overseen by Natural England. We intend to maintain a close working relationship with the MMO and Natural England on matters related to maritime heritage in Torbay.

Vulnerabilities and opportunities

Vulnerabilities

Climate emergency

Climate change threatens Torbay's historic buildings, landscapes and archaeology in a number of ways:

- Coastal flooding as the sea level rises
- Impact of extreme weather events such as intense storms and drought
- Increased coastal erosion from wave action
- Changes to habitable ranges of invasive vegetation, fungus and pests
- Damage from increased rainfall
- Soil instability and chemical changes
- Different planting necessary in parks, gardens and farmland

Unsuitable development

Heritage assets in both urban and rural areas can be vulnerable to development that detrimentally changes their character. This type of threat can range from large new developments that overwhelm the historic character of a whole area to small changes to individual buildings. Over time, the incremental effect of these changes can erode the qualities that make a place special. However, positive development management can use the historic environment to promote high-quality development and a better sense of place.

Lack of investment in historic fabric

Over many decades, under-investment in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham town centres was a significant issue. While a transformative programme of town centre regeneration is now underway in Torbay, risks to heritage assets remain. Linked to the unviable and unsustainable uses, a lack of appropriate maintenance that can lead to an 'unloved' appearance eroding the special sense of place, and more serious problems with the fabric and structure of buildings, has arisen.

Lack of local access

Heritage is at greatest risk of being lost if it is not experienced and valued by local people. A particular problem for areas that have long-established tourism industries is that residents can feel shut out of key sites that are focussed on attracting visitors.

When we asked for suggestions to help local people better engage with heritage in our 2020 heritage survey, the most popular suggestion (25% of all answers) was better and more easily

accessible information. There was also a strong feeling that inadequate or expensive parking was a barrier. When combined with our commitment to decarbonising Torbay, it is clear that better access to heritage sites by walking, cycling and public transport is needed.

Heritage crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour

Heritage crime is any offence which harms the value of heritage assets and their settings. However, other crimes such as theft, criminal damage, arson and anti-social behaviour offences can also damage and harm heritage assets and interfere with the public's enjoyment and knowledge of their heritage.

Opportunities

Torbay Heritage Place

In 2024, Torbay was awarded 'Heritage Place' status by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Heritage Places is a long-term, strategic investment in up to 20 different places across the UK that will last until 2033. As the lead organisation for Torbay Heritage Place, Torbay Council is coordinating a programme of heritage projects with our partners and communities. We will also support local organisations to apply for funding under the Torbay Heritage Place umbrella. Torbay Heritage Place will seek to deliver the objectives set out in this Strategy

Torbay Culture and Heritage Forum

Since the previous version of this strategy was adopted, the Torbay Culture and Heritage Forum has been established, facilitated by the Council's Culture and Events team. This is a very positive development that will nurture opportunities for collaboration and mutual support between different culture and heritage organisations.

Heritage assets

Torbay boasts an extraordinary range of heritage assets spanning millennia of human activity. Our collections, monuments, landscapes and buildings connect us to stories of international significance. The popular perception of Torbay as a seaside holiday destination has obscured the area's fascinating history and now is the time for its importance to be more widely recognised.

English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

All of human history in Torbay has been shaped to some extent by the underlying geology. The UNESCO Global Geopark designation, therefore, can be used as a catalyst for funding, tourism,

education and outdoor activity and offers an umbrella under which all aspects of heritage can be explored and celebrated.

Local engagement

The Torbay Heritage Survey 2020 showed an enormous interest in heritage among local residents. 99% of respondents said that experiencing the heritage around them was important to their quality of life, with 77% saying it was very important. Many respondents were keen to participate in more active care of heritage assets.

The huge public interest in the future of iconic buildings such as Oldway Mansion, Torquay Pavilion and Paignton Picture House shows that local people are passionate about protecting much-loved sites. Groups devoted to Torbay's heritage on social media attract thousands of followers and contributors. Our residents are eager to engage with local history and there is great potential to involve more people in collective efforts to care for and promote our heritage.

New tourist audiences

Research in 2025 as part of the development of Torbay Heritage Place revealed that heritage (including natural, built and cultural heritage) was an attracting factor for 67% of visitors to Torbay, and that almost all will engage with at least one heritage site in some way during their trip. The total value of heritage tourism to Torbay was estimated at £249 million in 2024. The researchers identified potential to significantly grow the market for heritage-driven tourism, especially among younger audiences and through amplifying the connection between heritage and wellbeing, and then utilising this growth to maximise the revenue income of these sites.

Development and reuse

Torbay's heritage can inspire new development that enhances our historic environment and makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Meanwhile, historic buildings can be restored and protected for the future by finding appropriate new and viable uses. Torbay Council encourages the use of traditional materials for all development and refurbishment proposals where it is appropriate and viable to do so, including those materials that are locally sourced. This benefits the local economy by supporting local businesses and encouraging the development of conservation skills.

The historic environment can be used to support Torbay Council's regeneration programme which will bring economic and social benefits across local communities within the Bay. This strategy will

seek to support this regeneration programme and the positive enhancement of the local historic environment.

Sites formerly managed by Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust

Torbay Council has recently taken over the management of outdoor heritage sites which were previously managed on the Council's behalf by Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, after the Trust went into administration. These include Berry Head, Walls Hill and the grounds of Cockington Court. This presents an opportunity for Torbay Council to protect and enhance historic assets and biodiversity on these sites, while enabling residents and visitors to enjoy their heritage.

South West Coast Path

The South West Coast Path (SWCP) National Trail will mark its 50th anniversary in 2028 – an opportunity to celebrate and promote the section through Torbay. In March 2026, the King Charles III England Coast Path (ECP) National Trail was opened, following the route of the SWCP in Torbay. In addition to providing additional funding to improve the route of the SWCP, the establishment of the ECP also delivers new open access rights around the coast including around the whole of Torbay, helping connect people with the natural and cultural heritage of the landscape.

Objectives

ID	Objective
SEC01	Everyone in Torbay, including looked-after children, people with support needs, and those who face barriers to participation and opportunity, can access, experience and enjoy heritage.
SEC02	Torbay attracts more visitors seeking a heritage destination.
SEC03	Torbay's heritage sector is strong, connected, inclusive and collaborative.
SEC04	Heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.
SEC05	The special and distinctive characteristics of Torbay's Conservation Areas are, where appropriate, preserved and enhanced.

SEC06	Building owners, retailers and developers are encouraged and equipped to enhance the built environment in historic areas.
SEC07	Public spaces in historic areas are easy to navigate and, if possible, enhanced by appropriate street furniture and signage.
SEC08	Walking and cycling to Torbay's heritage sites and in the historic environment is easy, enjoyable and popular.
SEC09	Collections related to Torbay within the Devon Archives are secure, well managed and where appropriate, easily accessible.
SEC10	Torbay's Historic Environment Record is comprehensive and well managed.
SEC11	National and international visitors are attracted to the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (ERUGGp). Visitors and residents experience, enjoy and understand the Geopark through easily accessible, high quality and consistent information and opportunities for engagement at multiple sites.
SEC12	The UNESCO Global Geopark designation is secure for the future and the work of the ERGO is sufficiently resourced to deliver its aims.
SEC13	Historic assets in the care of Torbay Council are in good condition, sustainably managed and safeguarded for the future.
GEO01	Natural sites where underlying geology is most accessible and visible are in excellent condition.
GEO02	Local stone worked features in churches and other historic buildings are in excellent condition.
HMN01	Torbay's story of early human evolution and migration, and the role of archaeological pioneers here, is widely known, valued and celebrated.

HMN02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's internationally important prehistoric sites and collections at multiple locations.
HMN03	Ashhole Cavern is managed appropriately and protected for the future.
HMN04	The chambered tomb at Broadsands is managed appropriately and protected for the future.
MED01	Torre Abbey, including its grounds and collections, is conserved and enhanced, and its future is secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site, accessible open space and high-profile event venue.
MED02	The special character of Old Paignton Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced
MED03	The Bishop's Palace is managed appropriately and protected for the future
AGR01	The special character of Torbay's agricultural landscape is understood, preserved and enhanced.
AGR02	Access to and around rural areas is easy and enjoyable by public transport, walking and cycling.
AGR03	Walls Hill ancient field system is managed appropriately and protected for the future.
AGR04	Rural sites with significant historic assets are in Countryside Stewardship where appropriate.
NPL01	Battery Gardens is appropriately managed, maintained and protected for the future, and visitors are encouraged to engage with the site's heritage.

NPL02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's Napoleonic heritage at multiple locations.
TRW01	The special character of Brixham Town Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.
TRW02	<i>Vigilance</i> is functioning as a high quality, popular heritage asset for Brixham, engaging residents and visitors with trawling history and natural heritage.
RST01	Oldway Mansion, including its outbuildings, gardens and pleasure grounds, is where appropriate, conserved and enhanced, and its future is viable, sustainable and secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site and accessible open space.
RST02	Torquay Pavilion is conserved and where appropriate enhanced, with a viable and sustainable commercial use.
RST03	Lupton House is conserved and where appropriate enhanced, and its Italianate garden is restored and maintained.
RST04	Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens are maintained and protected for the future
RST05	The special characters of Roundham and Paignton Harbour and Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas area preserved and where appropriate enhanced.
RST06	Babbacombe Cliff Railway is recognised as a heritage asset and is protected for the future.
LIT01	Paignton Picture House is fully restored, is well used by the community and is an anchor heritage site within a regenerated town centre.

LIT02	People seeking an Agatha Christie experience are attracted to Torbay in significant numbers.
LIT03	Visitors and residents experience, enjoy, understand and contribute to Torbay's literary heritage.

Acknowledgements

Our thanks to the staff and volunteers of the following organisations who gave their time and expertise to help produce the Torbay Strategy 2021-2026 and were invited to comment on the updated strategy for 2026-2033.

Brixham Town Council
Devon Gardens Trust
English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark*
Friends of the Vigilance
Historic England
Kents Cavern
Lupton Trust
National Lottery Heritage Fund
National Trust
Paignton Heritage Society
South Devon AONB Partnership (now South Devon National Landscape Partnership)
South West Coast Path
South West Heritage Trust
Torbay Civic Society
Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust (no longer in existence)
Torbay Community Development Trust
Torbay Culture (no longer in existence)
Torquay Museum
Torre Abbey

Our thanks also to the staff and volunteers of the following organisations who gave feedback on the revised Strategy in 2026:

Brixham Heritage Museum
Devon County Council
Paignton Picture House Trust

*A full list of Geopark partners can be found on the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark website at www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats.
For more information please contact heritageanddesign@torbay.go.uk





Torbay Heritage Strategy 2026 – 2031 Part Two

Adopted DATE

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Cover image: Torre Abbey

Introduction

This part of the Torbay Heritage Strategy expands on the objectives set out in Part One. It is organised around a set of stories from the past that are particularly special to Torbay. In each section, we list the places and objects that embody the story today and consider how they should be prioritised and cared for. We also look at the Council services that underpin and interact with heritage in the Bay and acknowledge areas where we hope new understanding will emerge in the coming years.

Heritage services and sector

English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

Covering the area of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham, the UNESCO Global Geopark designation is the highest level of international recognition an area can be awarded for its extraordinary geology, and linked environment, heritage and culture. It is managed by the English Riviera Geopark Organisation (ERGO) which is made up of a range of agencies including Torbay Council and supported by a wider network of members who share its vision. Torbay Council hosts the ERUGGp Co-ordinator.

UNESCO Global Geopark designation is subject to review every four years. The English Riviera was successfully revalidated in 2023, meaning that the area, provided it continues to adhere to the UNESCO International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme Statutes and Guidelines, retains the status until 2027.

Spatial planning

The Spatial Planning Team plays a key role in protecting and enhancing Torbay's historic and natural environment. This principle has shaped strategic decisions on the location and scale of development and informed the preparation of placemaking, design and heritage policies that safeguard and encourage investment to improve the Bay's distinctive character. As the Local Plan is reviewed and updated, the Spatial Planning Team will continue to ensure that growth is planned sensitively and that development within historic and environmentally sensitive settings is appropriately guided. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining sufficient expertise and resources to support this function.

Conservation Area Appraisals

An appraisal defines the characteristics of a Conservation Area and evaluates what makes it special. It enables developers, Council members and planning officers to assess the impact of a proposed development and it is a key tool in managing change within historic urban areas. Torbay has 24 Conservation Areas with a high concentration (16) in Torquay, many of which are adjoining. Thanks to Torbay Heritage Place, Torbay Council has embarked on a programme of updating our CAAs and developing Conservation Area Management Plans (CAMPs) to provide up-to-date tools for today's development context, to engage building owners and to foster pride in local areas. We are developing a new, collaborative approach to producing CAAs and CAMPs with the active participation of local communities and intend to continue the programme throughout the period of this Strategy.

Museums

Torquay is home to three accredited museums: Torre Abbey, Torquay Museum and Brixham Heritage Museum. Paignton Heritage Centre has also recently been established at Paignton Library. Between them, they house collections of impressive range and richness, and every year they welcome thousands of local visitors and tourists to exhibitions and events. The Quarternary Caves Collection and Archive held at Torquay Museum has been recognised by Arts Council England as being of national and international significance. Torre Abbey is owned by Torquay Council while Torquay Museum, Brixham Heritage Museum and Paignton Heritage Centre are run by independent organisations.

Archive and local studies services

Local authorities are required to provide an archive service that acts as a place of deposit for all official records. They are also treasure troves of documents, photographs and recordings relating to local people and places. Archive collections are the cornerstone of historical research and maintaining access to them is fundamentally important to a dynamic understanding of our past. Archive collections relating to Torquay have always been integral to Devon Archives and continue to be held at Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter. The service is managed by the South West Heritage Trust under a contract with Torbay Council. The arrangement means that material relating to Torbay is cared for to the highest standard and remains at the heart of the county's written record. A service introduced in 2020 allows local people to pre-order documents from Devon Heritage Centre to be viewed at Torre Abbey in quarterly sessions, an initiative supported by Torbay Council.

In addition, extensive local studies records are held at Torbay's public libraries, managed by Libraries Unlimited, and local independent museums. These collections offer a wide range of

resources such as rare books, parish registers, newspapers and census information to local historians and family history researchers. At the time of writing, Torquay Museum is pursuing UNESCO Memory of the World status for its archive collections.

Historic Environment Record

Historic Environment Records (HER) bring together information relating to landscapes, buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and archaeological finds within local authority areas. The Torbay HER provides essential information to inform planning decisions and it is available for public enjoyment, benefit and use. It is currently managed by the Historic Environment team at Devon County Council under a contract with Torbay Council. The administrative history of Torbay's HER has led to a backlog of entries accumulated in past years that is not covered by this arrangement. Torbay Council is committed to finding a solution to avoid historical and archaeological information being missed in the planning process.

Heritage destination marketing

As set out in Part One, there is clear potential to grow the audiences for heritage-led tourism in Torbay. We intend to build on our relationship with ERBIDCo and the private sector to achieve this as part of our ambition to reposition the English Riviera as the UK's premier holiday resort of the future.

Heritage sector development

A thriving heritage sector depends on a mutually supportive network of diverse organisations that can share information and work together. The recent establishment of the Torbay Culture and Heritage Forum, facilitated by the Council's Culture and Heritage team, is a very positive development.

Integrated heritage

Experiencing, enjoying and caring for heritage can bring a huge range of social, cultural, economic, health and environmental benefits. We believe that our approach to heritage must be integrated with across all aspects of Torbay Council's work.

Climate emergency

In 2019, Torbay Council declared a climate emergency. Torbay Council is a partner of and supports the work of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, which is aiming to help us get to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest and prepare Devon for the necessary adaptation to infrastructure and services required to respond to climate change. As described in

‘Vulnerabilities’, heritage assets are at risk from a changing climate and have a role to play in decarbonising.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
SEC01	Everyone in Torbay, including looked-after children, people with disabilities and/or support needs, and those who face barriers to participation and opportunity, can access, experience and enjoy heritage.	Torbay Council heritage site managers and colleagues in social care and social services work together to identify opportunities to benefit service users. Our interpretation and communication of heritage reflects and gives voice to diverse audiences. Visitor data from our sites shows increasingly diverse visitor profile. Organisations in the wider heritage sector are supported to improve inclusivity.	Local community, health and heritage organisations
SEC02	Torbay attracts more visitors seeking a heritage destination.	Heritage features in bay-wide destination marketing and campaigns. Online visitor information specific to heritage is easily accessible and high profile. Key heritage attractions promote links to other heritage sites. Increase in percentage of visitors citing heritage as a reason for visiting.	English Riviera BID
SEC03	Torbay’s heritage sector is strong, connected, inclusive and collaborative.	The Torbay Culture & Heritage Forum is established and self-sustaining, and includes organisations of all sizes.	Local heritage organisations

		Increased numbers of volunteers and voluntary opportunities across the sector. Partnership projects are successful in working strategically and attracting external funding.	
SEC04	Heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.	New flood defence schemes recognise local distinctiveness in design and materials and take into account relationship to heritage assets. All Torbay Council owned heritage assets are managed to take into account climate issues including flood risk, rainwater and heat protection, effects on building fabric, underlying stability, suitable planting, pests and invasive vegetation. Updated Conservation Area Appraisals assess risks from climate change. Guidance for building owners includes reference to mitigation and/or carbon reduction measures. Sustainable transport to all key heritage sites is encouraged and supported.	Transport and community partners
SEC05	The special and distinctive characteristics of Torbay's Conservation Areas are, where appropriate,	All Conservation Area Appraisals and Conservation Area Management Plans are reviewed, updated and adopted where necessary. Building owners and managers in Conservation Areas feel supported.	Building owners, developers and local communities.

	preserved and enhanced.	Proposals that enhance heritage assets or their setting are supported, subject to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies.	
SEC06	Building owners, retailers and developers are encouraged and equipped to enhance the built environment in historic areas.	Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal the architectural heritage of their setting are supported. Shop front design guides for Torquay, Paignton and Brixham are published and promoted. New design guidance Building owners and communities are supported to enhance their local historic environment.	Building owners, managers and developers
SEC07	Public spaces in historic areas are easy to navigate and, if possible, enhanced by appropriate street furniture and signage.	Unnecessary street furniture and signage is removed. Design of all new and replacement street furniture references and enhances the architectural heritage of its setting. Wayfinding in the public realm clearly and consistently aids navigation to key heritage sites and around the historic environment without unnecessary visual intrusion.	
SEC08	Walking and cycling to Torbay's heritage sites and in the historic environment	Key heritage sites are integrated into the new Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.	Local heritage organisations

	is easy, enjoyable and popular.	Promotion of walking and cycling is integral to all heritage site visitor information.	
SEC09	Collections related to Torbay within the Devon Archives are secure, well managed and where appropriate, easily accessible.	The current service is maintained. Projects to enable further conservation, cataloguing and research of Torbay collections are supported. Torbay residents are actively engaged in archive research and enjoy easy access to the collections.	South West Heritage Trust
SEC10	Torbay's Historic Environment Record is comprehensive and well managed.	The current service is maintained. The backlog of entries is added.	Devon County Council
SEC11	National and international visitors are attracted to the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (ERUGGp). Visitors and residents experience, enjoy and understand the Geopark through easily accessible, high quality and consistent information and opportunities for	All ERUGGp partners are consistently and actively promoting the ERUGGp as part of their own activities. There is an increase in visitors citing the ERUGGp as a reason for their trip. There is an increase in understanding and engagement among residents. ERUGGp has up to date, well maintained and effective communications tools. English Riviera Geopark Organisation (ERGO) is delivering high quality education and outreach outcomes.	All ERGO members and partners

	engagement at multiple sites.	Wayfinding and interpretation of geology is consistent, high quality and widely available across partner sites and in the wider landscape. Building owners and site managers are well supported to interpret and promote their assets within the ERUGGp brand.	
SEC12	The UNESCO Global Geopark designation is secure for the future and the work of the ERGO is sufficiently resourced to deliver its aims.	Torbay Council is a key ERUGGp partners and are providing the most appropriate hosting for staff. All members of ERGO, their organisations and staff are actively contributing to and supporting the ERUGGp at the same or higher level than in previous years.	All ERGO members and partners
SEC013	Historic assets in the care of Torbay Council are in good condition, sustainably managed and safeguarded for the future.	The social, economic and environmental benefits of Torbay Council's historic assets are being realised for local people. Torbay Council maintains and repairs assets in line with best conservation practice. There is a consistent approach to management across the Council's estate of historic buildings, gardens, landscapes and monuments.	

Our stories

Sites key

High priority for action
Medium priority for action
Low priority for action
Outside Torbay

Geology

As well as creating the tapestry of valleys, ridges, cliffs and beaches that give Torbay its unique character, geology has always shaped human activity here, as we can see in the harbours, farmland, settlement patterns and building materials. It also supports rare habitats for many important plant and animal species.

Torbay is famous for its limestone cliffs and rich, exposed geological heritage, from Devonian reefs to Pleistocene caves. The arms of the Bay are formed by massive limestone headlands at Hope's Nose and Berry Head, while softer Permian sandstone forms the lower lying land. The famous red cliff exposures can be seen around the coast of Preston and Paignton from Corbyn's Head to Roundham Head and beyond. Over many millennia, the action of water on the limestone created caves such as Kents Cavern.

The geology of Torbay was first mapped in the 1830s. Geological pioneers Roderick Murchison and Adam Sedgwick realised that fossils found in the limestones at sites in Torbay, such as Lummaton Quarry, gave vital evidence of what was happening to the Earth 409-363 million years ago. They named this geological period the Devonian, the term which is still used globally today.

Torbay's limestone and sandstone were extensively quarried and can be seen in many buildings such as Torre Abbey and Torquay Town Hall. Quarries also sprang up where the limestone had metamorphosed into marble. In the nineteenth century, Torbay marble was crafted into exquisite interior features, art and jewellery for wealthy customers. Marble objects from this period can be seen in many churches and grand houses in Torbay.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Ashhole Cavern, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	Y
Coast/beaches	n/a	In parts: National Landscape, PRoW, SSSI, LNR, NNR, SAC	Multiple owners	
Windmill Hill Cave, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	
Kents Cavern, Torquay	Scheduled Monument	SSSI	Private owner	
Grade I listed churches: Church of All Saints; Church of St John the Evangelist; Roman Church of Our Lady, Help of Christians and St Denis, St John the Baptist Parish Church, Paignton	Grade I listed building		Diocese of Exeter	

Grade II* listed churches: Church of St Luke, Torquay; Church of St Mary Magdalene, Torquay; Church of St Mary, Collaton St Mary; Church of St Matthew, Chelston; Church of St Matthias, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Barton Road Cemetery, Torquay	Registered Parks and Gardens		Torbay Council	
Devonian type locality, Lummaton	n/a	SSSI	Private owner	
Bishops Walk	ProW		Torbay Council	

Other assets

- Exceptional fossil and geological specimen collections and an extensive Victorian geological library at Torquay Museum. The collections include thousands of specimens of Devonian fossil corals and creatures and local minerals. The museum maintains strong links with the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark.
- The UK's only substantial collection of South Devon and Torbay marble objects, held at Torquay Museum. This includes extremely fine and rare work such inlaid pictures and platters, tables, vases and jewellery. There are also marble samples used at the factories and a selection of photographs of the industry.
- Marble objects in the collections of Torre Abbey

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
GEO01	Natural sites where underlying geology is most accessible and	In determining planning applications regard is given to impact of proposals on the condition and public accessibility and	ERGO, local landowners, land managers and developers

	visible are in excellent condition.	interpretation of natural geological features. Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal natural geological features are supported. Torbay Council and Natural England are working together to encourage and support site managers and private owners in the conservation and enhancement of natural geological features.	
GEO02	Local stone worked features in churches and other historic buildings are in excellent condition.	In determining planning applications relating to historic buildings, regard is given to the significance of existing local stone features. Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal the significance of worked local stone within the historic setting are supported. Torbay Council and Historic England are working together to encourage and support building owners in the conservation and enhancement of historic local stone features and the sourcing of local stone. Torbay Council is conserving and enhancing worked stone features in all historic buildings in our care.	Historic England and building owners including Diocese of Exeter

Early humans

Torbay is home to collections and sites of international importance in the story of human evolution and migration.

At Kents Cavern there is evidence of three of the four human species known to have lived in Britain. Finds at the site include a fragment of jawbone dated to the period between 44,200 and 41,500 years ago, when a brief warm spell between ice ages made this part of Britain temporarily habitable. Scientific dating in 2011 revealed the true age of the fragment and established it as the oldest direct evidence of modern humans in Northern Europe. It has changed how we understand the interaction between modern humans and Neanderthals on the very edge of the habitable world.

The jawbone was originally found in 1927 by Arthur Ogilvy, curator of Torquay Museum. The find came towards the end of a remarkable period of discovery in Torbay's caves that began in the early nineteenth century. A series of explorers were drawn there, most notably the archaeologist William Pengelly who excavated Kents Cavern over a period of 15 years. His finds included tools, animal bones and hand axes from humans who lived over 450,000 years ago. The meticulous methods he developed in Torbay laid the foundation for all modern cave archaeology and his diaries offer fascinating insights into his life and work.

Ashhole Cavern in Brixham was excavated in the nineteenth century and evidence of occupation from the Neolithic to the Roman period was discovered.

Windmill Hill Cave, also in Brixham, is a system of galleries and smaller chambers lying mostly beneath a house in Mount Pleasant Rd. William Pengelly's excavations here in the nineteenth century revealed a rich assemblage of animal remains and flint tools that provided the first evidence for extinct animal species and humans co-existing.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Ashhole Cavern, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	Y

Chambered tomb at Broadsands	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Windmill Hill Cave, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	
Kents Cavern, Torquay	Scheduled Monument	SSSI	Private owner	
Two bowl barrows at Beacon Hill	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	

Other assets

Torquay Museum holds over 32,000 specimens relating to the quaternary period in South Devon and a unique related archive. This collection is designated by Arts Council England and is of national and international significance. Its highlights are numerous and include:

- KC4 human maxilla, the jawbone that provides the earliest evidence of anatomically modern humans in North West Europe.
- William Pengelly's Windmill Hill Cave and Kents Cavern notebooks, documenting the first excavations to unlock the true antiquity of humans anywhere in the world.
- The oldest bifacial tools discovered in the UK, over 525,000 years old.
- Very early specimens of cave lion and ancestral bear *Ursus deningeri*.
- A selection of Neanderthal tools including very rare leafpoints.
- Unique evidence for cannibalism in the Mesolithic and surviving human DNA in 9,000-year-old bones.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
HMN01	Torbay's story of early human evolution and migration, and the role of archaeological pioneers here, is widely known, valued and celebrated.	The early human story and its discovery is a key feature of all bay-wide tourism marketing and Global Geopark communications.	ERGO, ERBID, key heritage sites and schools.

		Schools and community groups in Torbay are supported and encouraged to engage with prehistoric sites and collections. Torquay Museum is adequately resourced to conserve and interpret its early human collection to a level appropriate to its importance. A higher proportion of visitors are aware of and actively seeking to engage with the early human story when choosing Torbay as a destination.	
HMN02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's internationally important prehistoric sites and collections at multiple locations.	The links between locations and collections is integral to all key sites' communications and interpretation. Key sites successfully attract funding through local partnerships to create excellent public engagement opportunities.	ERGO and key heritage sites
HMN03	Ashhole Cavern is managed appropriately and protected for the future.	A Conservation Management Plan agreed between the landowner, Torbay Council and Historic England, and condition is monitored. A scheme to improve access and interpretation is implemented. Ashhole Cavern is removed from the Heritage at Risk Register. The potential for a wider Monument Management Scheme (MMS) for Torbay is explored.	Historic England and private landowner

HMN04	The chambered tomb at Broadsands is managed appropriately and protected for the future.	A Conservation Management Plan agreed between the tenant, Torbay Council and Historic England, and condition is monitored. A scheme to improve access and interpretation is implemented. The potential for a wider Monument Management Scheme (MMS) for Torbay is explored.	Historic England
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Monastic and medieval

Medieval Torbay was the location of some significant religious sites including Torre Abbey in Torquay and the Bishop's Palace in Paignton, a residence of the Bishops of Exeter for 500 years. Local landowning families also built fine country homes. Outside these impressive buildings, the area was sparsely populated, although it is thought that the extent of settlement may have been under-estimated as evidence is likely to have been obscured by later buildings in the urban areas. New developments in our towns may reveal archaeology that adds to our understanding of this period.

By far the most important building in medieval Torbay was Torre Abbey. It was founded in 1196 and built from stone quarried from Corbyn Head. The Abbey became enormously wealthy and influential, controlling much of the land and activity in Torbay. It is believed that the monks built the first fish quay, giving Torquay its name. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, Torre Abbey passed into private ownership until 1930, when it was acquired by Torquay Council.

Today Torre Abbey houses a museum, art gallery, event venue and gardens, Torbay Council has secured funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a major initiative called New Beginnings: Chapter One. It is an ambitious two-part project to reset Torre Abbey in its landscape. The goal is to make the entire site more accessible, sustainable, and financially secure so it can be enjoyed for generations to come. The project will reconnect people with the abbey's rich heritage through creative interpretation of its hidden archaeology and open up Torquay's largest green space, enhancing wildlife habitats and biodiversity, and making the site more resilient to climate change. Chapter One focuses on the Spanish Barn, the former Pitch and Putt, the South Lawn, and the ground immediately around the Spanish Barn. These improvements will allow year-round use, better community access, and essential conservation of the Grade I listed building.

There are also several listed medieval churches in Torbay, the most significant of which is the Church of St John the Baptist in Paignton. It was founded in the twelfth century and has many elaborate and interesting features, including the most spectacular chantry chapel in Devon outside Exeter Cathedral.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Torre Abbey Chapel	Grade I listed building		Torbay Council	Y
Old Paignton	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Bishops Palace, Paignton	Grade II* listed building Scheduled Monument		Diocese of Exeter	Y
Spanish Barn, Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building		Torbay Council	
St Michael's Chapel, Chapel Hill	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Cockington village	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Higher Brixham	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Church of St John the Baptist	Grade I listed building		Diocese of Exeter	

Grade II* listed churches: Church of St Andrew, Torquay; Church of St George and St Mary, Cockington; Church of St Mary the Virgin, Brixham; Church of St Mary the Virgin, Churston Ferrers	Grade II* listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Ilsham Manor Oratory	Grade II* listed building		Private owner	Y
Blagdon Manor, Paignton	Grade II* listed building		Private owner	
Kirkham House, Paignton	Grade II* listed building		English Heritage	
Compton Castle	Grade I listed building Scheduled Monument		NT	

Other assets

- The Cary family archive collection is held at Devon Heritage Centre and includes nearly 8000 documents from the thirteenth century onwards. In 2024, the collection was fully catalogued thanks to funding from The National Archives and is now available to researchers.
- Medieval artefacts in the collections of Torre Abbey, including suits of armour, decorative tiles and stonework.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
MED01	Torre Abbey, including its grounds and collections, is conserved and enhanced, and its future is secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site, accessible open space and high-profile event venue.	Torre Abbey is financially self-sustaining as an attraction and commercial event venue with integral café. Torre Abbey's setting is well-maintained and connected to wider walking and cycling routes. The public is consulted on the future of the grounds. Local communities use the open space extensively for outdoor recreation. Volunteers are actively engaged in a wide range of roles. Visitor numbers to all parts of the site continue to increase.	Local communities
MED02	The special character of Old Paignton Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced	Design of new sea defences protects the Conservation Area from flooding while recognising its distinct character (see SEC04). Further loss of locally distinctive and historic fabric is discouraged. A Conservation Area Management Plan is developed and adopted.	Building owners, developers and local communities.
MED03	The Bishop's Palace is managed appropriately and protected for the future	No immediate risk of decay. All interested and responsible parties are supported in carrying out an ongoing management plan. The Bishop's Palace is removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.	Historic England and Diocese of Exeter (or any future owner).

Agricultural life

Torbay's combination of fertile soil, sheltered coast and mild climate has enabled people to feed their families well for thousands of years. Small scale farming and fishing were the main occupations of communities here for most of Torbay's past and have created the rural landscape we know today. The agricultural countryside within the South Devon National Landscape is recognised a historic asset of national importance.

Settled farming began in the Neolithic period. Traces of these early farmers are evident in a chambered tomb near Broadsands and burial mounds at Beacon Hill and Barton Pines. Later Iron Age field patterns can be seen at Walls Hill. The local Dumnonii people cultivated the land in their own style throughout the Roman era and beyond, until Anglo-Saxon settlers brought with them an open field system. In later centuries, land ownership was consolidated into manors and estates in the hands of local gentry and religious houses. By the sixteenth century, the land was largely enclosed. It was at this time that the characteristic pattern of small, irregular fields and high Devon hedges emerged. Torbay was productive enough to feed its own population and provide victualling to Navy and merchant ships in its harbours.

People in rural Torbay lived on dispersed farmsteads or in small villages. Cottages and farm buildings were built of local stone and cob and were often thatched. Cockington is the most well-known historic village in Torbay and is cherished for its air of timelessness. Agricultural tools and domestic objects held at local museums, in particular the extensive collection at Torquay Museum, have great potential to connect us to past generations.

Other historic features of the rural landscape include sunken lanes, hedgerows, orchards, ancient trees, village greens and traditional signage. These features create the distinctive character of rural Devon, provide vital habitats for wildlife and give structure to transport routes and green spaces. The rural landscape positively contributes to the setting of many individual heritage assets such as listed buildings.

The semi-natural countryside offers simple and low-cost opportunities to improve physical and mental wellbeing through outdoor exercise, a sense of peace and space, and a connection to the shared past. It is also a working landscape, managed by farming communities whose long heritage continues into a living modern culture.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Prehistoric field system at Walls Hill	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	Y
Spanish Barn, Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building		Torbay Council	
Conservation Areas: Churston Ferrers, Cockington and Galmpton	Conservation Area			
Conservation Areas: Maidencombe and Shorton	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Occombe Farm	n/a	LNR, SSSI	Torbay Council	
Two bowl barrows at Beacon Hill	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	
Two prehistoric hilltop enclosures, a ditch system and four bowl barrows, Marldon	Scheduled Monument		Private, multiple owners	
Agricultural landscape including field patterns, orchards, hedgerows, soils	Grade II listing of buildings	In parts: National Landscape, SSSI, NNR, LNR	Multiple owners	

Manor Farmhouse, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		Private owner	
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Other assets

- Torquay Museum houses one of the most important regional folk life collections in the UK. It contains hundreds of rare, pre-industrial rural life objects such as tools and furniture, many in a uniquely Devonian style.
- Relevant archive collections held at Devon Heritage Centre include tithe maps and apportionments, manorial documents, farm account books, sale catalogues, diaries and early photographs of rural life.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
AGR01	The special character of Torbay's agricultural landscape is understood, preserved and enhanced.	Historic agricultural features such as orchards and hedgerows are key assets in the new Torbay Green Infrastructure Plan. Traditional and local materials are used in new developments in rural areas. Proposals that enhance the rural landscape are supported, subject to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies. Regard is given to the impact of proposals on views of and from designated protected areas within Torbay.	Local communities and farmers
AGR02	Access to and around rural areas is easy and enjoyable by public transport, walking and cycling.	Connectivity to and within rural areas is increased through the delivery of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Torbay.	Torbay Council

AGR03	Walls Hill ancient field system is managed appropriately and protected for the future.	A management plan is agreed between Torbay Council, Historic England and Natural England that explores opportunities under current and future Stewardship schemes, and an ongoing review process is in place. There is no inappropriate furniture on site. Invasive vegetation is under control. Measures have been taken to address erosion and increase understanding and engagement. Walls Hill is removed from the Heritage at Risk Register.	Historic England and Natural England
AGR04	Rural sites with significant historic assets are in Countryside Stewardship where appropriate.	Torbay Council, Natural England, Historic England and landowners work together to identify sites where Stewardship could be beneficial.	Natural England, Historic England and local landowners

Napoleonic era

Torbay's rapid development in the nineteenth century owed much to the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon Bonaparte himself even became the Bay's first star attraction.

The wars prevented wealthy Britons from travelling to mainland Europe, so they began to look for destinations closer to home. At this time, the natural harbour of Tor Bay was frequently used as an anchorage for the Channel Fleet that was protecting England from invasion by Napoleon. The families of high-ranking naval officers visited Torquay, further enhancing the town's reputation. Brixham was an important victualling port, where navy crews could stock up on fresh vegetables, meat and water. Meanwhile, all along Torbay's coast, business boomed for local smugglers of French brandy.

The fear of an attack on England by the French led to a decision to strengthen the coastal defences at Berry Head with a new fort and redoubt to protect the existing batteries. The remains there today represent an exceptionally well-preserved survival from the Napoleonic era that offers great insight into strategic military thinking of the time. The site is managed by Torbay Council for the enjoyment of all, and there is great potential to extend the interpretation of its history.

After the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Napoleon was captured by the British and held on the warship HMS *Bellerophon*. It anchored in Torbay for two days and caused a sensation. Crowds flocked to glimpse him from the shore and even hired boats to get closer to the celebrity prisoner. He was soon removed to St Helena but by now Torbay was on the map.

In subsequent decades, local landowner Sir Lawrence Palk drove the development of Torquay after being inspired by the Italian architecture he saw on the Grand Tour. Torbay's mild climate and beautiful coastline made it an ideal location to import Italian design ideas, so Palk and local dignitary William Kitson commissioned villas and crescents that recreated a Mediterranean atmosphere. New, exclusive residential areas such as the Warberries and Lincombes became fashionable.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Battery Gardens, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Brixham Town	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Berry Head Forts and complex	Grade II* listed building Scheduled Monument	NNR, National Landscape, SSSI, SAC	Torbay Council	

Other assets

- A letter signed by Napoleon from the collections of Torquay Museum, on display at Torre Abbey.
- A contemporary watercolour painting showing tourists in boats trying see Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*, at Torquay Museum.
- An important collection work by Napoleonic prisoners of war in Dartmoor Prison, at Torquay Museum.
- Paintings, prints and engravings in collections of Torre Abbey showing portraits of Napoleon and his family, battles and his imprisonment on the *Bellerophon*.
- Copy of the death mask of Napoleon in the collections of Torre Abbey.
- A walking stick believed to have been carved by Napoleon when he was a prisoner of war, on display at Brixham Heritage Museum.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
NPL01	Battery Gardens is appropriately managed, maintained and protected for the	Scheduled structures are free from vegetation.	Historic England and local volunteers

	future, and visitors are encouraged to engage with the site's heritage.	A management plan is agreed between Torbay Council and Historic England, and an ongoing review process is in place. Both Napoleonic and WW2 heritage is interpreted and accessible on site.	
NPL02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's Napoleonic heritage at multiple locations.	Napoleonic heritage is well interpreted at key sites (Battery Gardens, Berry Head and Brixham Harbour) and links between sites are highlighted. Greater engagement with Torbay's Napoleonic heritage among visitors and residents.	Historic England and local volunteers

Trawling

This story is specific to Brixham, although its influence has been felt in fishing communities around Britain and northern Europe. In the late eighteenth century, motivated by dwindling catches, Brixham fishermen and boat builders set about creating faster boats that could fish in deep water. The design they developed was known as a Brixham trawler. It was a wooden sailing trawler, about 18-24 metres in length, with a long, straight keel. Its sleek underwater profile and tall rig gave it the speed fishermen needed to reach remote fishing grounds towing a large trawl and return in relatively short time.

The sails of the Brixham trawlers were dyed a distinctive red colour with local ochre to give them extra protection – another example of the influence of Torbay's geology.

To maximise the time spent fishing the rich waters of the North Atlantic, some Brixham men began to spend seasons in the north of England, at Grimsby and Hull. Soon this led to the permanent migration of many fishermen. The design of the Brixham trawlers was copied around the British coast as new ports sprang up to take advantage of the deep-sea grounds that were opening up to faster boats. Brixham retains a shared history with Grimsby, Hull and other deep-sea fishing ports, which arguably have closer cultural links with the town than Paignton and Torquay. By the end of the nineteenth century there were more than 3000 sailing trawlers based at British ports, with a fleet of 400 at Brixham.

Today, Brixham's trawling heritage is evident in the distinctive setting of the harbour and the historic buildings and infrastructure of the town. It is still a busy port with a living cultural heritage of fishing. Trawler design has undergone many changes and only a handful of the original sailed boats survive. *Vigilance* is looked after by a team of volunteers and has recently been undergone a two-year programme of restoration thanks to funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. *Vigilance* could be a focus for hands-on heritage skills learning and interpretation of trawling history. She has the potential to offer trips along the Torbay coast that would open up not only fishing and maritime stories, but also natural history and a new view of the UNESCO Global Geopark.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Brixham Town	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	

Other assets

- The 1926 Brixham trawler *Vigilance*, managed by voluntary group Friends of the *Vigilance*.
- Fishing and ropemaking exhibition and photographic collection at Brixham Heritage Museum.
- Extensive shipping records relating to the Port of Brixham held at Devon Heritage Centre.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
TRW01	The special character of Brixham Town Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.	Further loss of natural, local slate roofing is discouraged and its use is supported in new buildings and restoration works. Creative interpretation of Brixham's distinctive heritage is accessible in the public realm.	Building owners, developers and local communities.
TRW02	<i>Vigilance</i> is functioning as a high quality, popular heritage asset for Brixham, engaging residents and visitors with trawling history and natural heritage.	Excellent programme of public engagement and permanent interpretation on and around <i>Vigilance</i> is planned and supported.	Friends of the <i>Vigilance</i>

Golden age of the resorts

The modern characters of Torquay and Paignton have been shaped in large part by their history as seaside resorts. As we have seen, tourists began visiting in large numbers in the nineteenth century, starting an explosion of development and a 'golden age' of prosperity that lasted until the Second World War. The architectural heritage from this period includes large numbers of villas, civic buildings, shops, churches, entertainment spaces, public gardens and tourist infrastructure. In Torquay, the town's former wealth is evident everywhere in the grand style of its historic buildings and open spaces. The maintenance of this heritage presents particular challenges in an area tackling deprivation today.

The scale of development during this period means that late Georgian, Victorian and early twentieth century architecture is prominent in both towns and makes up the majority of the built environment. This is where most interaction with Torbay's heritage happens, as people move through the urban environment, rather than during intentional visits to historic sites. Many of these buildings are listed and fall within Conservation Areas.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the resorts' buildings, gardens and artefacts is the influence of Italianate design. It was consciously imported and reimagined in an effort to create a Mediterranean-style resort in a northern European setting – an 'English Riviera'. It inspired the Italianate garden at Lupton House, which is now at serious risk of decay. Recognising this style, protecting surviving examples and taking new inspiration from it are essential if we are to retain and enhance the special qualities of our resorts.

Wealthy people first came here for their health, particularly to escape cold winters in the rest of Britain. This heritage of healthcare and relaxation has many parallels with today's interest in wellbeing. Later tourists came for summer holidays and entertainment. New theatres and concert venues attracted the most prestigious acts from London for the summer season. The most iconic of these buildings is the Pavilion in Torquay. It is currently vacant and funding is being sought for its full restoration and active re-use. As an emblem of Torbay's special entertainment heritage and a unique landmark, it is imperative that a commercially viable new use is found for the building.

Many wealthy families who were attracted to Torbay settled and built large homes here. The most well-known and extravagant of these is Oldway Mansion near Paignton, built by the American sewing machine manufacturer Isaac Singer. Later in its life, the building was used as offices for Torbay Council, which still owns it. Oldway Mansion has been empty since 2013 and is now in urgent need of substantial investment for its restoration and re-use. Torbay Council has a Masterplan for Oldway and elements of phase one are currently being delivered.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Oldway Mansion (house)	Grade II* listed building		Torbay Council	Y
Torquay Pavilion	Grade II listed building		Torbay Council	
Paignton Picture House	Grade II* listed building		Paignton Picture House Trust	Y
Lupton Park	Registered Parks and Gardens		Lupton House Trust	Y
Oldway Mansion (grounds)	Registered Parks and Gardens		Torbay Council	Y
Lupton House	Grade II* listed building		Lupton House Trust	Y
Roundham and Paignton Harbour	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Torquay Harbour	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Conservation Areas: Abbey Road, Babbacombe Downs, Barton, Belgravia, Cary Park, Chelston,	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	

Lincombes, Maidencombe, Polsham, St Marychurch, Tormohun, Torre, Upton, Warberries, Watcombe Park				
Cockington Court	Grade II* listed building		Torbay Council	
Hesketh Crescent, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		Private, multiple owners	
Watcombe Park and Brunel Manor	Registered Parks and Gardens		Part owned by Torbay Council	
Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens	Registered Parks and Gardens		Torbay Council	Y
Coast/beaches	n/a	In parts: National Landscape, PRoW, SSSI, LNR, NNR SAC	Multiple owners (Shoreline Management Plan)	
Babbacombe Cliff Railway	Within CA but no designation of assets		Torbay Council	
Grade II* listed buildings: 1-15 Wellswood Park Road, Torquay; 163 Newton Road, Torquay; Aylmer, Brixham; Beacon	Grade II* listed building		Private owners	

Terrace, Torquay; Hatley St George, Torquay;				
Little Theatre, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		TOADS Theatre Company	
Bishops Walk	n/a	PRoW	Torbay Council	
Castle Tor	Registered Parks and Gardens		Divided, private owners	
Coleton Fishacre (house)	Grade II listed building		NT	
Coleton Fishacre (park and gardens)	Grade II* listed building		NT	

Other assets

- Extensive archive collections documenting the growth of the resorts held at both Torquay Museum and Devon Heritage Centre.
- Social history artefacts including shop signs and costumes from the period at Torquay Museum.
- The Seaside Fun gallery at Torre Abbey which includes several contemporary paintings of fashionable visitors and locals enjoying the resorts in the nineteenth century.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
RST01	Oldway Mansion, including its outbuildings, gardens and pleasure grounds, is where appropriate, conserved and enhanced, and its future is viable, sustainable and secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site and accessible open space.	Short term grant funding is successfully secured to stabilise the building(s) and works complete. Medium to long term programme of fundraising for delivery of Oldway Masterplan is in place and works in progress where funding allows. Local communities use the grounds extensively for outdoor recreation.	Historic England and local communities
RST02	Torquay Pavilion is conserved and where appropriate enhanced, with a viable and sustainable commercial use.	The building is safe to access, further decay has been halted and a programme of restoration is in place. Appropriate long-term management of the building in line with its cultural and historic value is agreed. Proposals which conserve and enhance the building and find appropriate new uses for it will be supported.	Historic England and all interested parties
RST03	Lupton House is conserved and where appropriate enhanced, and its Italianate garden is	There is ongoing constructive engagement between all interested parties including Torbay Council, Lupton House Trust and Historic England.	Lupton House Trust and Historic England

	restored and maintained.	A management plan is agreed and operational, and Lupton House Trust are appropriately supported to deliver it. The building is secure and deterioration is halted. The Italianate garden is in a programme of restoration.	
RST04	Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens are maintained and protected for the future	The Gardens continue to be maintained to a high quality. The Gardens are removed from the Heritage At Risk Register. Historic parks and gardens are key assets in the new Torbay Green Infrastructure Plan.	Local communities
RST05	The special characters of Roundham and Paignton Harbour and Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas area preserved and where appropriate enhanced.	Further loss of historic fabric is discouraged. Walking and cycling in these areas is encouraged. A Conservation Area Management Plan is developed and adopted.	Building owners, developers and local communities.
RST06	Babbacombe Cliff Railway is recognised as a heritage asset and is protected for the future.	Babbacombe Cliff Railway is appropriately managed and conserved	Babbacombe Cliff Railway CIO.

Agatha Christie and writers on the Riviera

Torbay has a rich literary heritage, with world famous novelist Dame Agatha Christie as its figurehead.

Agatha Christie was born in Torquay in 1890. She began writing crime stories while volunteering as a nurse and dispenser at the Torquay Town Hall Red Cross Hospital during the First World War. It was here that she gained her knowledge of poisons. Her characters from this time were based on people she observed on the Torquay tram. She also met some of the Belgian refugees who sought sanctuary in Torbay, and from them she took the inspiration for her most famous detective, Poirot.

She was a keen cinema goer and she had a favourite seat at the Paignton Picture House, which will re-open to the public in 2027 thanks to significant investment and work in recent years . Locations in her novels are often inspired by local places, for example Kents Cavern. Her beloved holiday home, Greenway, above the River Dart, provided the setting for several fictional murders. The house is now run by National Trust and houses an important collection of Christie artefacts.

Greenway is a place of pilgrimage for Agatha Christie fans, but other sites associated with her are not yet fully integrated into Torbay's tourism offer. In 2025, a statue of her by artist Elisabeth Hadley was unveiled in Torquay as part of the town's harbourside improvements. It has the potential to be a focal point for further developing tourism themed around Christie and her stories.

While Agatha Christie may be Torbay's most famous daughter, many other writers stayed and produced work here, where the beauty and sea air was believed to be restorative and inspiring. They included Oscar Wilde, Mary Shelley, T.S Elliot, and many others.

Torbay is within the area covered by Exeter's UNESCO City of Literature status, and indeed links with Agatha Christie are among the reasons for the designation. We intend to fully explore opportunities resulting from the status that could further promote our literary heritage and support a vibrant culture of writing in the Bay.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Paignton Picture House	Grade II* listed building		Paignton Picture House Trust	Y
Kents Cavern, Torquay	Scheduled Monument	SSSI	Private owner	
Church of All Saints	Grade I listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Greenway	Grade II* listed building	National Landscape	NT	

Other assets

- The UK's only museum collection of Agatha Christie ephemera and memorabilia, held at Torquay Museum. Its 1,000 items include books and first editions, costumes from television adaptations, a set from ITV's Poirot and a large collection of souvenirs, film and theatre programmes, film posters and fan items.
- Almost 21,000 items at Greenway, collected and treasured by the Christie family over several generations.
- The Agatha Christie Potent Plants Garden at Torre Abbey, featuring poisons used in her books.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Partners
LIT01	Paignton Picture House is fully restored, is well used by the community and is an anchor heritage site within a regenerated town centre.	The restoration of Paignton Picture House is complete and there is an ongoing programme of maintenance and conservation. Paignton Picture House Trust is well managed and sufficiently resourced to deliver the business plan and manage its ongoing use. Paignton Picture House is integrated into the programme of wider town centre regeneration.	Paignton Picture House Trust and Historic England.
LIT02	People seeking an Agatha Christie experience are attracted to Torbay in significant numbers.	A strong relationship with the National Trust integrates Greenway into Torbay's Agatha Christie offer. Greenway is included as a key destination in sustainable transport planning in Torbay. The Agatha Christie Festival is appropriately supported and promoted and continues to thrive. Collaboration between sites and organisations that have Agatha Christie collections or associations is supported and encouraged. Visual links to Agatha Christie in the public realm are clearly marked and celebrated. Increase in visitors citing Agatha Christie connection as a reason for visiting.	ERBID, the National Trust and other key sites

LIT03	Visitors and residents experience, enjoy, understand and contribute to Torbay's literary heritage.	Torbay's literary heritage is promoted and celebrated. Schools and community groups in Torbay are supported and encouraged to engage with literary heritage in creative ways. Literary heritage is a foundation for supporting new work by local writers.	Local creative arts organisations and communities
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Emerging stories

Our understanding of Torbay's past evolves constantly as new discoveries are made and the preoccupations of our own time change. Torbay Council encourages activities that uncover historical evidence, listen to unheard voices or re-evaluate established stories through new lenses.

Over the next five years, we expect to understand more about a range of topics, including:

Romans and Romano-British Torbay

Until recently, little was known about Torbay during the Roman occupation of Britain. Archaeological finds at Ipplepen, just outside Torbay, have revealed that official Roman involvement in our region, on the fringes of the Roman Empire, could be greater than previously thought. The finds have recently been accessioned to Torquay Museum. In recent years, excavations at two Romano-British farmstead enclosures in Torbay have shown a marked difference in the abundance of Romano-British material, which possibly indicates very localised variations in how local communities embraced 'Romanisation'. There is much still to be learned about Roman-era Torbay and we hope that archaeology will continue to enrich our understanding in the coming years.

Marble industry

Research by the team at Torquay Museum has shed new light on Torbay's marble industry, a significant story that had been almost forgotten. In the nineteenth century, Torbay had a natural supply of high-quality marble and plenty of wealthy customers eager to buy luxury fittings for their new villas and mansions, fashionable marble jewellery and exclusive souvenirs. Many local people were employed in the industry, as quarrymen, engineers, designers, masons, craftsmen and retailers. Torquay marble can be seen in most grand houses and churches of the period in Torbay, including Oldway Mansion.

Torquay Museum holds a collection of impressive artefacts but more work is needed to identify Torbay marble features and objects as local marble is often mislabelled. To better understand the history of the industry and its potential for public engagement, it is also necessary to establish the condition and accessibility of quarry sites and to track down relevant archive material.

Smuggling

The success of Brixham's annual pirate festival offers an opportunity to engage a wider audience with the town's real and more complex history through related maritime topics. Smuggling has a long history in Brixham with social, economic and cultural impacts. The smuggling exhibition at

Brixham Heritage Museum is a way into the subject that could be extended via more research to establish and connect relevant sites in the town.

Recent decades

Torbay Council believes that recent history should be recognised, recorded and valued, and that all our communities should have the opportunity to contribute to our shared narratives. Therefore, we encourage new research and interpretation of the Bay's twentieth and twenty-first century heritage. Since the Second World War, many people have settled in Torbay from elsewhere, particularly from other parts of the UK and Eastern Europe. Their experiences enrich our culture and are part of Torbay's story.

We recognise that priorities may emerge relating to these or other topics during the life of the Torbay Heritage Strategy, and it must have the flexibility to incorporate new objectives and actions accordingly.

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