

A Greener Way for Our Bay - Consultation Report

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Executive Summary

From 30 November 2023 to 31 March 2024, Torbay Climate Partnership (TCP) ran its consultation – ‘A Greener Way For Our Bay.’ This is TCP’s plan to make homes more energy efficient, protect the natural environment, support businesses to become more sustainable, and make sustainable and public transport (like walking, cycling and taking the bus) more accessible and affordable.

We used a wide range of methods to engage with local people and to ensure there was a representative response. There were three main surveys, a short version, a longer version and

one for those who disagree with the proposals put forward. The long version of the survey was available both online and as a paper version in libraries.

In addition, Tonic Creatives were commissioned to run a series of interactive engagement activities with local groups between December 2023 and March 2024.

Across the three online surveys there were more than 600 responses in total and a few paper responses, and through Tonic's work they engaged with 1263 people, including 1063 face to face engagements.

Across all three surveys, a total of 70% of respondents said they were either concerned or very concerned about climate change.

In terms of the ten priorities outlined in A Greener Way for Our Bay, the overall survey responses were:

- 75% agreed we should help more people live and work in homes and buildings that are energy efficient.
- 75% agreed we should make sustainable and public transport more accessible and affordable.
- 75% agreed we should ensure that roads and paths are safer and more accessible for cyclists and walkers.
- 77% said we should reduce waste and increase recycling.
- 78% said we should enjoy and protect our marine and natural environment.
- 76% said we should help green our businesses and create new jobs with the environment at their heart.
- 73% agreed we should ensure the community is at the heart of local action.
- 76% agreed we should monitor progress and set up initiatives that celebrate success.
- 76% agreed we should help everyone understand why change is needed and how sustainable choices make a difference.
- 74% of respondents agreed we should work with nature and the local community to prepare for a changing climate.

Tonic Creatives also provided a separate report based on feedback from the series of engagement events they held between December 2023 and March 2024. Based on that feedback, 96% of the people Tonic engaged with were supportive of the overall plan. Of these, 32% said natural environment and green spaces was the highest priority.

The 4% who were not as supportive didn't necessarily disagree with the plan but felt climate issues should not be prioritised over other important community issues such as tackling poverty, crime, antisocial behaviour and social inequality.

Tonic Creatives also did a 'Marble Run' exercise where they asked participants to vote for their top three issues. As a result of this exercise, 19% of respondents said protection of marine and natural environment should be the top priority for the climate plan; 15% said we should prioritise reducing waste and increasing recycling; and 13% said we should help more people live and work in homes and buildings that are safer and more accessible for cyclists and walkers.

Summary of responses received

From the Torbay Climate Partnership surveys, there were 606 responses in total. Of these responses, 185 people completed the long survey online, 17 did the paper version of the long survey that was available in libraries and other venues; 295 did the short survey online, and 109 did the 'Disagree' survey.

In addition to the surveys, Torbay Climate Partnership also commissioned Tonic Creatives to carry out a series of engagement events on its behalf. Tonic Creatives completed a total of 1263 engagements, including 1063 face to face engagements.

Summary of free text responses

At the end of each survey there was an option for free text comments to allow respondents the opportunity to write down any comments they had in addition to the set questions. Not everyone who responded to the surveys added a free text comment but a significant number of people did add comments. In the short survey, 172 respondents added a free text comment, while in the long survey 137 respondents added a comment, and on the 'disagree' survey, 83 people added comments.

Themes in the free text responses included the need to protect our natural environment in particular our coastline, the need to listen to residents, communicate clearly to encourage behaviour change, and to be transparent about our plans. There were also a significant volume of comments relating to active travel and encouraging more cycling, and the need to make public transport more affordable and accessible.

As well as the themed comments there were a variety of comments both in favour of the A Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan, and also against it, with some questioning the existence of man made climate change altogether. Clearly many of these opposed to it are in the responses to the 'disagree' survey but some negative comments and responses were also in both the other surveys. We have included a few examples of comments in the survey responses section later in this report and you can see more in the reports in the appendices.

In addition, due to the qualitative, face to face nature of the engagement exercises carried out by Tonic Creatives, there are also a significant number of comments they received and you can read them in more detail in Tonic's separate report in the appendices.

Introduction

Members of the Torbay Climate Partnership wanted to consult on a new Framework and Action Plan for tackling climate change, and a new approach was needed to improve engagement and ensure responses were more representative.

Although there has been ongoing consultation and engagement over the past three years, including the Torbay Council Community Conference in 2021 which led to the Climate Partnership being formed, a series of themed Climate events across the summer of 2022 with key stakeholders and members of the public, a Business Questionnaire and an initial Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan consultation which ran from December 2022 to March 2023, partners wanted to ask Torbay residents for their input into the new Plan.

The Partnership wanted to simplify the consultation this time around to make it more engaging and as part of this it was named it 'A Greener Way For Our Bay'. Tonic Creatives were also brought in to help with outreach engagement to ensure we get a more representative response from the community.

We also recognised from the first attempt at consultation that as well as the more general engagement work needed, some more specific and targeted work is needed to bring on board key audiences such as local businesses and schools/children and young people.

In addition A Greener Way For Our Bay reflects priorities outlined in the Council's Community and Corporate Plan including:

- Working in partnership we will continue to address the climate emergency so as to create a sustainable future
- Protect and enhance our lived, built and natural environments, including our green spaces
- Sustainable transport use
- People have better transport and digital connections to jobs and amenities.
- Improve transport links to and within Torbay.

How the consultation was carried out (methodology)

The 'A Greener Way For Our Bay' consultation was launched on 30 November 2023 and ran until 31 March 2024.

There were three main surveys, a short version, a longer version and one for those who disagree with the proposals put forward. The long version of the survey was available both online and as a paper version in libraries.

In addition, Tonic Creatives were commissioned to run a series of interactive engagement activities with local groups between December 2023 and March 2024.

Newsletters

The consultation was promoted through a number of the Council's Govdelivery newsletters, including One Torbay residents newsletter (Subscriber numbers vary but the highest number of subscribers during the consultation was 11,611 and the consultation was featured in five separate editions of One Torbay), the Members Briefing for councillors (they were sent one at the start of the consultation and one towards the end) and the Torbay Council Staff News (two editions) and in total across nine of these newsletters, there was 27131 unique opens, and they generated 353 visits to the A Greener Way For Our Bay webpages.

Press releases

Torbay Council issued three press releases on behalf of Torbay Climate Partnership during the consultation, one in November, another in February, and a final one in March.

You can access the press releases via our website here:

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr9032/>

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr9066/>

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/news/pr9087/>

The press releases were covered in a number of other local outlets including:

Torbay Weekly: <https://www.torbayweekly.co.uk/news/home/1369860/have-your-say-on-a-new-green-masterplan-for-english-riviera.html>

Brixham Town Council website: <https://www.brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk/2023/12/a-greener-way-for-our-bay-have-your-say/>

Brixham Chamber of Commerce website: <https://brixhamchamber.co.uk/a-greener-way-for-our-bay-have-your-say/>

South Devon College website: <https://www.southdevon.ac.uk/news/2024/01/12/a-greener-way-for-our-bay>

Social media channels

On Facebook there were a total of 40 posts throughout the consultation by a range of partners, with 11 posts by Torbay Council and other partners sharing the consultation multiple times. Here is a list of all the partners who shared the consultation on Facebook:

South Devon College
 Brixham Town Council
 Churston Library
 Libraries Unlimited
 Torbay Communities
 Youth Hub Torbay
 We Are South Devon
 Orchard Forest School
 Devon Climate Emergency
 Tonic Creatives

Torbay Council's Facebook posts were shared 9 times and generated 16 visits to the A Greener Way For Our Bay website.

There were a number of comments on Torbay Council's Facebook posts in relation to the consultation, and here are the main themes:

Theme	Number of comments
Do something about litter	7
Greenwashing/box ticking	4
Criticism of the survey itself	4
Waste of money	4
Stop cutting down trees	4
All talk, no action	3

In addition to Facebook, the consultation was promoted via the Council's other social media channels including NextDoor, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Tonic Creatives held a series of targeted events throughout the consultation to ensure there was engagement with a wide range of demographics. Events included:

- Go Green week event at South Devon College, talking to students and staff
- Joint event with Taleblazers at Treacle Valley Campsite
- Interactive event at Lucky 7 Club
- Joint consultation event with Torbay Pride
- Valentine's Day Swim and consultation event with wild swimmers at Goodrington Sands
- Joint consultation event with Groundwork South and South Devon College
- Future Proof consultation event at Paignton Library
- Consultation event with Orchard Forest School and Weird Sticks CIC
- Joint consultation event with Indigos Goes Green Play and Ecology Centre

Consultation responses

Across all of the A Greener Way For Our Bay surveys from Torbay Climate Partnership, there were 295 positive responses, 109 negative, and 202 long responses. In addition to the surveys there were six individual submissions to the consultation. These came from Devon County Council, Torbay Labour Party, The National Grid, 7 Concerned Citizens, an email from a resident and a message from a local Neighbourhood Forum.

Tonic Creatives engagement work – Total of 1263 engagements, including 1063 face to face engagements.

96% of the people Tonic engaged with were supportive of the overall plan. Of these, 32% said natural environment and green spaces was the highest priority.

The 4% who were not as supportive didn't necessarily disagree with the plan but felt climate issues should not be prioritised over the other issues such as more important community issues such as tackling poverty, crime, antisocial behaviour and social inequality.

Marble run exercise – 19% of respondents said protection of marine and natural environment should be the top priority for the climate plan. Participants voting in the marble run were asked to vote for their top three issues.

Responses to individual survey questions

Because there were three different surveys (one of which has 50 questions) we have just highlighted some of the key findings in this report – the full reports (redacted to remove any personal information) are included in the appendices. For this reason only a selection of questions are included in this report, mainly around attitudes to climate change, what people value most about Torbay, and then whether they agree or disagree with the ten key actions outlined in the A Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan.

There is also a separate appendix showing the amalgamated responses across the three surveys.

There is also a separate report from Tonic Creatives about findings from their engagement activities.

Question	Amalgamated result (across the three surveys)	Response from long survey	Response from short survey	Response from 'Disagree' survey
How concerned are you about climate change?	Very concerned – 40% Concerned – 30% Don't know – 5% Not concerned – 10% Not at all concerned – 5% Other – 10%	Very concerned – 54% Concerned – 26% Don't know – 4% Not concerned – 8% Not at all concerned – 6%	Very concerned – 40% Concerned – 39% Don't know – 6% Not concerned – 6% Not at all concerned – 7%	Very concerned – 24% Concerned – 18% Don't know – 7% Not concerned – 49%
What do you value about Torbay?	N/A	Our natural environment including beaches, parks, the sea and our coastline – 83%	Our natural environment including beaches, parks, the sea and our coastline – 60%	Our natural environment including beaches, parks, the sea and our coastline – 34%

		<p>Our built environment, including town centres and quality places for people to live and work – 5%</p> <p>Our local communities and networks – 4%</p> <p>Leisure facilities that can be enjoyed by both residents and visitors – 3%</p> <p>Our rich cultural history – 2%</p> <p>Educational opportunities that encourage young people to stay in the Bay – 1%.</p>	<p>Our built environment, including town centres and quality places for people to live and work – 8%</p> <p>Our local communities and networks – 4%</p> <p>Leisure facilities that can be enjoyed by both residents and visitors – 13%</p> <p>Our rich cultural history – 0%</p> <p>Educational opportunities that encourage young people to stay in the Bay – 8%</p>	<p>Our built environment, including town centres and quality places for people to live and work – 8%</p> <p>Our local communities and networks – 15%</p> <p>Leisure facilities that can be enjoyed by both residents and visitors – 18%</p> <p>Our rich cultural history – 16%</p> <p>Educational opportunities that encourage young people to stay in the Bay – 6%</p>
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Levels of support for the 10 key actions outlined in the A Greener Way for Our Bay Framework and Action Plan

To simplify things for the purpose of this report, we have summarised where people either agree or strongly agree as 'Agree' and where people have responded that they either disagree or strongly disagree as 'Disagree'. The full detailed responses from the individual surveys are included in the separate reports for each survey in the appendices.

In addition, the headline actions here in the long survey are broken down into a number of specific actions but here are the amalgamated responses for each action area.

Question	Responses
Do you agree we should: Help more people live and work in homes and buildings that are energy efficient.	Agree – 75% Don't know – 3% Disagree – 22%
Do you agree we should: Make sustainable transport and public transport more accessible and affordable.	Agree – 75% Don't know – 3% Disagree – 22%
Do you agree we should:	Agree –

Ensure that roads and paths are safer and more accessible for cyclists and walkers.	Don't know – Disagree –
Do you agree we should: Reduce waste and increase recycling.	Agree – 77% Don't know – 3% Disagree – 20%
Do you agree we should: Enjoy and protect our marine and natural environment.	Agree – 78% Don't know – 2% Disagree – 20%
Do you agree we should: Help green our local businesses and create new jobs with the environment at heart.	Agree – 76% Don't know – 3% Disagree – 21%
Do you agree we should: Ensure the community is at the heart of local action.	Agree – 73% Don't know – 5% Disagree – 22%
Do you agree we should: Monitor progress and set up initiatives that celebrate success.	Agree – 76% Don't know – 3% Disagree – 21%
Do you agree we should: Help everyone understand why change is needed and how sustainable choices will make a difference.	Agree – Don't know – Disagree –
Do you agree we should: Work with nature and the local community to prepare for a changing climate.	Agree – 74% Don't know – 4% Disagree – 22%

Individual comments

There is more detail about comments in the appendices but here is a selection of (general) positive and negative comments we received in the consultation:

Positive comments	Negative comments
<p>This sounds like a great project and makes me feel happy that something is being done</p> <p>I am delighted that there is a plan and will look forward to hearing about it being implemented over time.</p> <p>Excellent idea which needs to be carried through.</p> <p>Good ambitions but will need funding and support from all partners and public to work.</p>	<p>I will not be complying with any of it and never will. There is NO man-made climate change.</p> <p>It's a con, don't say it isn't. It's to tax the poor. The wealthy will still fly, etc. Ignore the MSM and government imposed restrictions on Humans</p> <p>A "greener way" is a waste of money which could be far better spent</p>

In addition to these more general comments there were also a number of comments about specific issues, a selection of which are included below.

Free text comment theme – Active travel

- Massively encourage cycling - with the greater availability of e-bikes, hills are no longer a problem. Cycling is not only sustainable, but provides massive health benefits, and a healthier population is more productive and less of a drain on the public purse.
- Road safety and active transport needs to be a priority as this will improve the bay not only for residents but for tourism also.
- Public transport is key, the train station at edingwell is good but needs to be connected to other areas of Torquay.
- Electric affordable and accessible public transport to be implemented with multiple service routes and times.

Free text comment theme – Communication

- Effective communication of the plan, of progress, of help and advice etc is a real challenge. Engagement with widest possible range of existing community groups (churches, WIs, coffee groups , cycling groups) plus ideally a shopfront in each of the Bays towns a few days a week might help to increase awareness which currently feels very low.
- Communication is key -- use every method available to get the message out as early. Successful change management will be key. People hate change and they need to be properly managed through it..
- All decisions must include public consultation and transparency. Residents must know and understand what is planned, when it will happen and why.
- Climate change is a con.....end of. There needs to be some open debate, clearer communication for the residents.

Free text comment theme – Blue and green focus

- We need to safeguard our natural environment.
- Protect our natural green areas and coastline and encourage a greener and more sustainable way forward.
- Put the natural world first when considering any changes, improvements, etc.
- Put nature based solutions to climate change at the heart of all decision making in the Bay.

Demographics of who took part

The full breakdown of demographics in each survey is included below, but overall across the Torbay Climate Partnership's surveys, there were 289 female respondents and 283 male respondents, with 35 respondents preferring not to say their gender identity. The survey also reflected Torbay's ethnic make up with the vast majority of respondents (542) identifying as White British, with the next biggest group (24) identifying as mixed race.

As with many of our consultations there was a large number (311) in the over 55 categories, though there were 112 respondents across all the surveys who were in the 24 or under groups, so this is an improvement on previous surveys. Of those 112, a total of 81 in that age group were responding to the short survey. This suggests the shorter survey format is preferred by this age group, and it is also worth noting that one of the pieces of feedback Tonic Creatives had through their engagement work that some of the children and young people that participated in the consultation found some of the descriptions /actions in the plan difficult to understand.

This is something we should bear in mind for future consultations particularly if we want to engage younger people, with an example quote being: "Many of the children didn't understand some of the concepts of community and greening businesses, monitoring progress and having community at the heart of action."

In terms of the Tonic events, 39% of those taking part were families and mixed age groups, 25% were Torbay residents aged 18 plus, 25% were Torbay residents under the age of 18, and 11% were Torbay businesses.

Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity? Tick one only

Short survey

Type of survey	Female	Male	In another way	Prefer not to say
Short survey	147	142	0	10
Long survey	104	86	0	9
'Disagree' survey	38	55	0	16

Which of the following age groups applies to you? Tick one only

Long survey

0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 plus
8	22	9	18	27	62	58	13

Short survey

0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 plus
52	29	12	33	43	49	58	0

'Disagree' survey

0-15	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 plus
0	1	5	8	24	31	33	7

Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? Tick one only

Long survey

White	Mixed ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Other ethnic group
181	6	0	0	0	2

Short survey

White	Mixed ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Other ethnic group
277	10	3	4	3	0

'Disagree' survey

White	Mixed ethnicity	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese	Other ethnic group
84	8	1	4	1	0

Employment Status - Tick one only

Long survey

Working full-time in Torbay	Working full-time elsewhere in Devon	Working part-time elsewhere in Devon	Self-employed – full - or part-time	Student	Looking after Family/Home
39	11	7	21	7	1

Temporary Sick	Long-Term Sick	Retired	Unemployed	Other	
0	9	73	0	2	

Short survey

Working full-time in Torbay	Working full-time elsewhere in Devon	Working part-time elsewhere in Devon	Self-employed – full - or part-time	Student	Looking after Family/Home
61	21	7	28	75	2
Temporary Sick	Long-Term Sick	Retired	Unemployed	Other	
2	5	78	8	7	

'Disagree' survey

Working full-time in Torbay	Working full-time elsewhere in Devon	Working part-time elsewhere in Devon	Self-employed – full - or part-time	Student	Looking after Family/Home
14	10	6	32	1	3
Temporary Sick	Long-Term Sick	Retired	Unemployed	Other	
0	3	30	2	0	

Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way? Tick one only

Long survey

Yes	No
34	166

Short survey

Yes	No
39	259

'Disagree' survey

Yes	No
21	88

If you answered "Yes", please tell us how it affects you. Tick as many as apply

Long survey

It affects my mobility	It affects my vision	It affects my hearing	It affects me in another way
19	3	2	13

Short survey

It affects my mobility	It affects my vision	It affects my hearing	It affects me in another way
24	7	7	0

'Disagree' survey

It affects my mobility	It affects my vision	It affects my hearing	It affects me in another way
16	4	4	0

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Tonic Creatives engagement report

Appendix 2 – Long survey report (redacted)

Appendix 3 – Short survey report (redacted)

Appendix 4 – Survey for those who disagreed report (redacted)

Appendix 5 – Presentation giving overview of all the surveys