

Pride in Place Torquay Vision Submission

Section 1: Local Context

Torquay is a town with a proud heritage and a resilient spirit. Our story is one of transformation, shaped by our stunning coastline, generous communities, and a tradition of working together. As one of three towns that make up Torbay, Torquay's identity is rooted in its people and the stories that have shaped the town into what it is today, along with the hopes for the future that lies ahead. The Torbay Story is one of revival. It is based around community lives and our future distinctiveness: tech by the bay, active adventurers, and a premier marine and natural experience. The town centre has already seen good recent progress through initiatives including the Torquay Town Investment Plan. Hopes are high around building this next chapter through Pride in Place.

Torquay's population is circa 69,000 with a median age of 47 - older than the England average. Our neighbourhoods are diverse, and many truths are masked by the English Riviera destination image of microclimate and palm trees. Significant parts of the population face challenges in everyday life: over half are among England's most deprived, and life expectancy is lower than the national average. Community engagement reveals a strong sense of pride but also some frustration at the pace of change, being overlooked and unheard, and the importance of inclusive growth. As one resident put it, 'We want to see real change, not just promises. Everyone should feel part of Torquay's future.'

Section 2: Spatial Targeting

The boundary for this programme covers the whole of Torquay, as recognised by our community. Spatial targeting data was used to help identify areas to initially consult in Torquay, especially where engagement is traditionally low. The premise was to physically go out to those areas to meet communities. The response from that significant engagement work has given the Board their wider geographic area of Torquay, but also key areas of deprivation to focus on. Having reviewed all data, the Board will focus on interventions in the town centre including the nearby residential area, plus Ellacombe, Hele, Barton and Watcombe, and other small neighbourhoods identified through engagement and data analysis as having the greatest need. These areas reflect both the challenges and opportunities for regeneration, and interventions will be targeted to maximise impact.



Section 3: Vision for the Future

Torquay is transforming. Our communities are part of a once-in-a-generation transformation journey and this Pride in Place funding will help bring some of the tangible changes our communities have asked for. Our vision is for a town where everyone feels pride, belonging, and opportunity - a place that is welcoming, safe, and full of possibility. Over the next decade money through Pride in Place will physically transform our town centre and neighbourhoods. Some will make people feel safer, some will expand life opportunities, some will improve quality of life. All will have come about from a community or partnerships already working to try to deliver meaningful change. Change will be delivered through collaborative projects, many of which will be co-produced, that reflect public priorities and build on our strengths and Torquay's unique identity.

Short Vision Statement:

Torquay will be a place where its community sees progress and change through quick wins, medium term stewardship and delivery of long-term projects. Now is the time for change and for Torquay's changemakers to work together to make it happen. Our town centre will become more vibrant and welcoming, our neighbourhoods who are worst off will see tangible impact. We'll work together across politics and people and draw together all expertise and voices through the Torquay Place Leadership Board. Pride in Place funding allocation will be different by definition and will help tackle some sticky issues traditional methods haven't. By working together, we will build a future that honours the heritage of people living in Torquay, embraces innovation and change for the future, ensuring that Torquay remains a place to be proud of for generations to come.

Vision for Torquay

Torquay envisions a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive future, celebrating its rich coastal heritage while evolving into a dynamic hub for innovation, culture, and wellbeing. We see a town where residents, businesses, and visitors thrive in harmony with the natural environment, and where our stunning seafront, historic charm, and diverse communities are revitalised and enhanced.

Our future Torquay will be a place of opportunity for all: a town where young people are inspired to build their futures, entrepreneurs are supported to grow bold new ideas, and creative industries, sustainable tourism, and green technologies flourish. The town centre will be reimagined as a lively, accessible destination, blending culture, retail, and public spaces in ways that reflect the spirit and aspirations of our community. Our communities will have Pride in Place.

Success will be judged by tangible improvements in quality of life.

We will measure success by ensuring residents feel secure. Progress will also be evident in the physical transformation of some of our communities and having more activities and life choices for families and young people. Torquay's town centre will have transformation that is clear to see. Additionally, we will focus on expanding work and skills opportunities, addressing economic inactivity, supporting access to well-paid jobs, and creating pathways for young people to thrive.

Above all, Torquay's vision is rooted in a shared commitment to progress which honours our past, responds to the present, and shapes a better tomorrow. Together, we will create a Torquay that is proud, prosperous, and prepared for the future.

Resident hopes:

“We want safer streets, more opportunities for young people, and a town centre we can be proud of.”

“Torquay should be a place where everyone feels they belong and can succeed.”

Section 4: Strategic Case for Change

Torquay faces acute and persistent challenges that are well-evidenced by both local and national datasets:

- **Deprivation:** Over 50% of Torquay’s Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the top 20% most deprived in England for employment. In fact, 28.2% of LSOAs are in the top 10% most deprived nationally for employment, and 20.5% for crime. Child poverty is a significant concern, with 25.8% of under-16s living in relative low-income households—4.5 percentage points above the England average.
- **Economic Inactivity:** 14,000 working-age residents are economically inactive, with the highest rates among those aged 25–49. This is compounded by a lack of well-paid jobs and limited opportunities for young people, especially outside the seasonal hospitality sector.
- **Crime and Safety:** Torquay’s recorded crime rate is 98.3 per 1,000 population, significantly higher than the England average of 76.7. Anti-social behaviour is also elevated at 28.4 per 1,000, compared to 14.8 nationally. Violence and sexual offences are 56.0 per 1,000, nearly double the national rate.
- **Housing:** The 2021 Housing and Economic Needs Assessment identified a need for 720 affordable homes per year, but delivery is constrained by limited viable land, environmental protections, and flooding risks. High rents, lack of social housing, and homelessness remain persistent issues. Torbay’s MP Steve Darling, a Board member, has highlighted affordable housing as the primary concern of his constituents.
- **Skills and Employment:** Apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities are limited, with barriers for SEND and neurodivergent residents. Level 3+ qualifications lag behind national averages, and digital exclusion is a concern.

Alignment to Objectives

Thriving Places

- The top three priorities identified by 1,204 residents in the July/August 2025 engagement (with a 92–98% confidence level) were: physically improving the town centre, reducing crime and improving safety, and regenerating neighbourhoods including affordable housing. These accounted for 51% of all community ‘votes’.
- Projects such as Torquay town centre redevelopment, town centre CCTV upgrades, and public realm improvements are designed to address neglected spaces, increase vibrancy, and tackle visible disorder.

- The need for 720 affordable homes per year is being met through a brownfield-first strategy, intensification of underused sites, and the Hotels to Homes programme, alongside active homelessness prevention. This fund will allow for further schemes to be progressed.

Stronger Communities

- The engagement process reached marginalised voices, with 26% of respondents identifying as disabled (vs. 23.6% of the population) and 4.7% as BME (vs. 3.8% population), ensuring interventions are inclusive. Their ideas around stronger communities will be brought forward.
- Social trust in Torquay is -5% (2023), below the national average, and 56% of residents feel they cannot influence local decisions. The programme's governance model is designed to rebuild trust and participation through transparent, community-led decision-making.
- Interventions brought forward by the community around crime prevention through environmental design, community hubs, and multi-use facilities in targeted areas with the highest deprivation and safety concerns will help create stronger communities.

Taking Back Control

- The Torquay Place Leadership Board operates as a partnership neighbourhood board, with cross-party representation, independent chair, strategic and operational Board Members, and with delegated authority for funding decisions, ratified by the Council's Chief Finance Officer. It is tackling trust issues head on.
- Residents and stakeholders have direct input into project prioritisation, with 769 people expressing interest in ongoing involvement and 63 community-led proposals submitted for funding.
- Participatory budgeting, co-production workshops, and ongoing engagement ensure that power is devolved as close to communities as possible. The Board adopted an iterative decision-making process around interventions which is on track to see first interventions from April 2026. Torquay's neighbourhoods will see 'you said we did' change from the outset, leading to a sense of taking back control.

Intended Use of Powers

- **Statutory Powers:** The Board uses delegated authority to allocate funding, approve interventions, and manage procurement, following Torbay Council’s Standing Orders and Nolan Principles. Conflict of interest declarations and open papers ensure transparency.
- **Community Co-production:** Powers are exercised through co-production, with community representatives actively involved in designing, delivering, and monitoring projects. This includes targeted engagement with groups such as the Imagine Cultural Group, Islamic Centre, Disability Support, and Learning Disability Champions.
- **Investment Appraisal:** All projects are scored against a weighted matrix for impact, deliverability, and alignment with priorities. This ensures resources are directed to interventions with the greatest evidence-based need and potential for long-term change.
- **Additional powers:** The board will be further exploring additional powers in 2026, further opportunities for independence and self-sustainment.

Priority Area	Why Focus Here?	Evidence/Engagement
Physically improving our town centre	High public concern about neglected public realm, crime, and lack of vibrancy	“We need a town centre we can be proud of.”
Reducing crime, improving safety	Residents feel unsafe, want more police and visible deterrents	“More police presence, more CCTV, safer streets.”
Physically improving neighbourhoods, including affordable housing	Deprivation, poor housing, lack of activities for families and young people	“Support for families, better housing, more things to do.”
Work and skills	Economic inactivity, lack of well-paid jobs, limited opportunities for young people	“We need more jobs, not just in hospitality.”

Section 5: Alignment with Other Programmes and Investments

This programme complements the emerging themes from the Torbay Employment and Skills Strategy, Torbay Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024–2030, Torquay Town Centre Vision along with work already done through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Torquay Town Deal Investment Plan. It will be triangulated with a host of Torbay Council strategies aimed at benefiting people and VCSE initiatives already underway. Torquay has a thriving voluntary sector and Pride in Place will only succeed through a coordinated approach where everything from opportunities to collaborate, existing masterplans or funding streams are utilised to maximise impact and avoid duplication.

Section 6: Match Funding and Leveraged Investment

The Board will maximise opportunities for private, public, and philanthropic match funding and investment. Existing commitments include support from charities, local businesses, statutory partners, and community organisations. Future support will be sought through collaborative bids, joint ventures, and engagement with regional and national funders. Plans include leveraging Council funding, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England and other sources to ensure co-ordination and sustainability which will maximise the value of interventions.

Torquay's programme is underpinned by a robust approach to attracting and maximizing match funding and leveraged investment.

Over £110 million in grant funding has already been secured for the wider Torbay area through the Torbay Story and Torbay Place Leadership Board, including:

- **£21.9 million Town Deal Funding for Torquay**
- **£13.36 million Future High Streets Funding for Paignton**
- **£1 million Brownfield Land Release Funding**
- **£20.25 million Levelling Up Partnership**
- **£20 million Levelling Up Funding for Brixham Fish Quay Expansion and Technology Production Park**
- **£1.76 million UK Shared Prosperity Fund**
- **£3 million from the County Combined Authority for housing and skills.**
- **National Lottery Heritage Fund:** Torbay is one of nine areas nationally to benefit from a share of £200 million over 10 years, with an initial £250,000 confirmed for the Development Year. This partnership will support heritage-led regeneration, audience development, and capacity building.
- **Arts Council England:** Torbay is identified as a Levelling Up for Culture area, with capital funding supporting cultural infrastructure and programming.

- **NHS and Health Partners:** Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, University of Exeter, NHS Integrated Care Board, and Devon Partnership NHS Trust are engaged in collaborative projects, including health and wellbeing hubs, with funding and in-kind support for community health initiatives. NHS colleagues are part of both the Torbay and Torquay Place Leadership Boards.
- **Willmott Dixon and Milligan:** Regeneration partners appointed by Torbay Council, bringing expertise and investment to accelerate growth and delivery of major capital projects.
- **English Riviera BID Company, Torbay Business Forum, Devon Chamber of Commerce, Stagecoach South West:** Active partners in business-led town centre improvements, public realm activation, and transport initiatives. Financial contributions and sponsorships are being negotiated for specific projects.

Types of Support and Funding Mechanisms

- **Direct Grants:** Confirmed government allocations.
- **Collaborative Bids:** Joint ventures with charities and businesses to unlock additional funding streams (e.g., Arts Council England, National Lottery, private sponsorship).
- **In-Kind Support:** Volunteer hours, professional expertise, venue provision, and discounted services from community organisations and local businesses.
- **Philanthropic Investment:** Engagement with regional and national funders, including charitable trusts and foundations, to support targeted interventions.
- **Participatory Budgeting:** Community-led allocation of funds for grassroots projects, ensuring local ownership and accountability.

Future Support

The Board will continue to seek:

- **Additional match funding** from regional and national sources (e.g., National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, NHS, private sector).
- **Collaborative bids** for major capital projects, leveraging anchor institutions and regeneration partners.
- **Joint ventures** with local businesses to maximize economic and social impact.

Section 7: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Government seeks: Outline of how the community and stakeholders are involved, including methodology, statistics, and inclusion of marginalised voices

Engagement Methodology and Statistics:

Torbay Communities has been commissioned by the Torquay Place Leadership Board to lead on the community and stakeholder engagement. Torbay Communities is a local community development charity and is the infrastructure organisation for the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector locally. Over the past 10 years it has built up a strong network of local groups, particularly those who work with the most marginalised in our community and it has a team of community builders working at the grassroots level in the 16 different neighbourhoods of Torquay.

In early 2025 Torbay Communities ran an open process to identify 5 further community representatives to join the stakeholders on the Torquay Place Leadership Board, with a particular focus on marginalised groups and areas of deprivation. Both the community representatives and the stakeholders have a responsibility to cascade information from and to the Board.

At the outset of the Pride in Place process it was agreed to conduct a public engagement to identify the main priorities for the first 4 years of the funding. This was to supplement previous engagement exercises and community prioritisation initiatives e.g. the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan. 1,204 members of the public were involved in this engagement. (The target figure for responses was 1,051 based on a 95% confidence level and a +/- 3% confidence interval, therefore the opinions expressed have a 92%-98% possibility of being true of the wider population of Torquay.)

The methodology was 3-fold – reaching out through existing networks, through groups that work with marginalised communities and via a public media campaign and street-based conversations by the community builders.

The targeted engagement for marginalised voices is via Imagine Cultural Group, Islamic Centre, Community Builder (asylum seekers, refugees, Ukrainian guests), Torbay Pride, Disability Support, Abbey Hall Deaf Group, Learning Disability Champions, Space, Turning Heads, Mencap, Torbay Assembly (older people), Imagine This partnership (children, young people, families), Unleashed Theatre, Shekinah (recovery and homelessness).

This combined methodology worked well with a good geographical spread and representative response in terms of age ranges (except under 12s who were not targeted with this engagement).

Notably we had over-representation in the responses from the black and minority ethnic (BME) community (4.7% of respondents described themselves as not White British

compared to the 3.8% overall population figure) and the disabled community (26% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability compared to the overall 23.6% of population figure).

From this engagement we also had 769 people who indicated they wanted to be actively involved in the Plan for Neighbourhoods as it progresses. Alongside the engagement a call for proposals was also made leading to 63 applications, 90% of which came from the community. The next stage of our process was 3 interactive workshops gathering 54 representatives from community, voluntary sector, business, and statutory sector. and stakeholders to look at the public priorities and the proposals received to identify a long list of initiatives to be prioritised for investment. This was supplemented by one-to-one meetings with those unable to attend. The outcomes from this were communicated to the Torquay Place Leadership Board.

Moving forward our methodology will be to continue to use VCFSE networks and have on-going communication and engagement, including creative engagement activities in and around the Pride in Place investment sites, and co-production with target groups for funded services. This activity is also to be supplemented with a team of volunteer community researchers based in a VCFSE organisation.

Examples of Inclusion:

“We made sure to reach out to groups who don’t always have a voice—people with disabilities, refugees, young people, and those in recovery.”

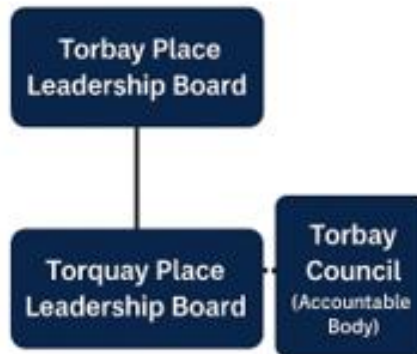
“Everyone should feel part of Torquay’s future, not just those who usually get asked.”

Future Engagement

Having engaged well with communities, the board has stressed the importance of keeping up communication. This will be spearheaded as part of a long commission of a trusted community group to hold sector to sector conversations. It will continue to be supported by expertise from Torbay Council’s communications and engagement team. There will be 12-month communication and engagement plans to come before the board for annual review. Co-producing workshops will continue, along with attending community events rather than simply being in ‘broadcast mode’. One of the gaps identified are around young people, and the board wishes to explore commissioning Sound Communities to create and develop podcasts and social media around Torquay, their values, and the ambition for change.

Section 8: Governance

Government ask: Outline of roles, responsibilities, governance structure, transparency, Nolan Principles, and investment appraisal.



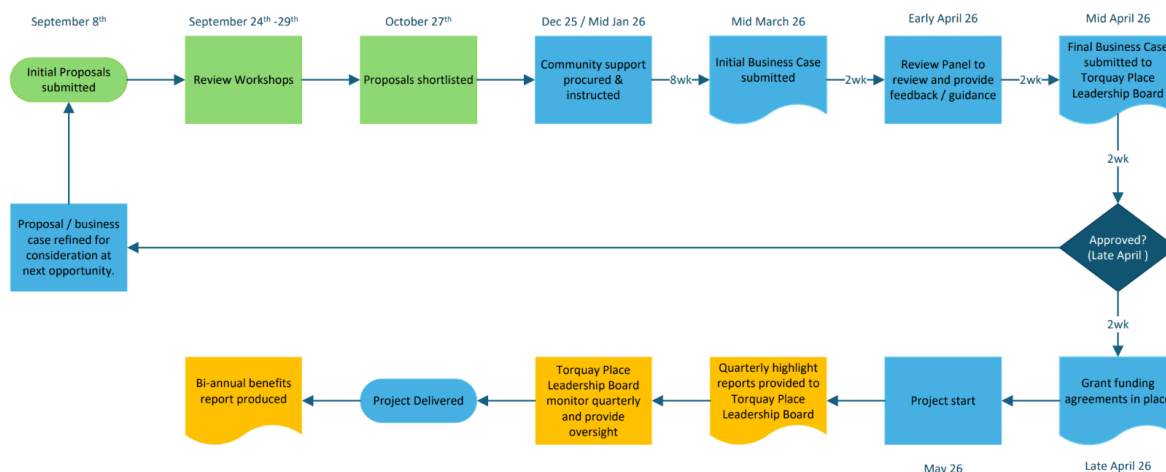
Governance Arrangements:

- The Torquay Place Leadership Board acts as a partnership neighbourhood board, working with Torbay Council as the accountable body.
- Terms of Reference [Torquay Place Leadership Board Terms of Reference and Operation.pdf](#): The Board creates and delivers a bespoke 10-year Regeneration Plan, Investment Plan, and allocates grant funding ratified by the Council's Chief Finance Officer.
- Operation: Quarterly meetings, independent Chair, published agendas and minutes, open papers, conflict of interest declarations, and adherence to Standing Orders.
- Dispensation: Members may speak and remain in meetings but not vote on applications made by themselves or their organisations.
- Nolan Principles and Managing Public Money standards are embedded in all processes.
- Investment appraisal uses a matrix agreed at Board meetings, scoring projects for impact, deliverability, and alignment with priorities.

Section 9: Assurance

Government ask: High-level description of how the programme will be delivered in line with Best Value and Managing Public Money.

Assurance Delivery Framework Committee draft process.



Assurance Processes:

- Monitoring of delivery reviewed at fortnightly meetings between Torbay Communities and the Place Manager.
- Comprehensive reporting, stakeholder consultation summaries, and presentation of findings to the sector and stakeholders.
- Adherence to MHCLG guidance, Standing Orders, and the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- Programme assurance follows precedent from legacy growth funds, with lines of defence including Board oversight, accountable body checks, external audit and external evaluation.
- Public reporting of expenditure: quarterly high level financial report presented to the Board and shared as part of public papers.

2025 Pride in Place timeline for the Torquay Place Leadership Board

Action	Date
Torquay Place Leadership Board meeting. Agreement to timeline and initial capacity spend to meet timeline and objectives.	23 June 2025
Dedicated procurement officer established. Procurement, conflict of interest and approval processes agreed.	3 July 2025
Indicative capacity spends, likely engagement and procurement routes outlined to MHCLG.	4 July 2025
Torbay Champions event. Outlining Plan for Neighbourhoods opportunities.	18 July 2025
Facilitated Torquay Place Leadership Board workshop for the Board to further explore engagement, data and prioritisation. Light touch draft business case template, scoring matrix and business case support to be discussed. Outcomes to be incorporated into the engagement plan.	28 July 2025
Initial community to community engagement. Explanation of the aims and objectives, community sector organisations to proactively co-ordinate and hold community conversations and events to inform the vision and draw out initial interventions across series of summer events. Premise around taking engagement to communities – plus a transparent open call. Targeted piece of youth engagement work.	29 July to 24 August 2025
Officer analysis of initial business cases against impact matrix. Preparation of documents for Board.	25 to 28 August 2025
Torquay Place Leadership Board. First review of initial business cases. Actions to be agreed to help support and develop emerging interventions.	8 September 2025
Engagement update and public communications. Work begins with communities and groups on to bring business cases together.	9 September 2025

Preparation of final draft business case for the Board.	13 October 2025
Extraordinary Torquay Place Leadership Board – examination of final draft proposals.	27 October 2025
Work on any revisions to the final draft document.	4 to 11 November 2025
Updated communications around final plan and submission to MHCLG.	12 November 2025
Torquay Place Leadership Board to approve scoring criteria for intervention funding and 2026 timetable for processing applications.	15 December 2025