

Meeting: Torbay Council Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

Date of meeting: Thursday 16 July 2026

Name of report: Building a Brighter Future – New Hospital Programme Update

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1. Purpose

This report provides an update to Torbay Council Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board on Building a Brighter Future, our programme to deliver a significant redevelopment of the Torbay Hospital site through the New Hospital Programme and to maintain a safe, viable and modern hospital site in the meantime.

It aims to:

- provide a clear and factual update on the national New Hospital Programme (NHP)
- demonstrate progress and investment on the Torbay Hospital site
- address key areas of local interest and scrutiny, including pathology, Gadeon House and Edginswell
- set this work in the context of wider system planning and financial realities in Devon

The report also highlights the successful implementation of our electronic patient record, one of the most significant transformation programmes delivered through Building a Brighter Future, alongside continued investment in the hospital estate

2. Context and direction of travel

Our ambition is to support every person, family and community we serve to live well.

Across the NHS, there is a continued shift in how care is delivered:

- from hospital to community-based care
- from analogue to digital services
- from responding to illness to prevention

Alongside this, the NHS is operating in a context of significant financial pressure. Devon faces a particularly challenging financial position, and future estate and service development will need to align closely with commissioner priorities and system planning.

Last month we marked 100 years since the foundation stone was laid at Torbay Hospital, this programme is about both:

- continuing that legacy of care for current patients
- ensuring the site is fit for future generations

3. Building a Brighter Future – overall approach

Building a Brighter Future is our programme to deliver a significant redevelopment of the Torbay Hospital site, while ensuring our current hospital site remains safe, operational and able to support modern care until that future is realised.

Our approach is based on four principles:

- the national New Hospital Programme sets the long-term future
- we are investing now to sustain and improve the existing site
- all investment is aligned to a future hospital masterplan
- our plans sit within the wider One Devon context

A critical factor underpinning this work is the condition of our current estate.

We are managing a backlog maintenance requirement of approximately £135 million, reflecting longstanding infrastructure challenges across the site. This includes areas of increasing risk which require active management, including fire safety risks within parts of the tower block.

We secured targeted national funding in 2025–26 to address some of our critical infrastructure risks, allowing us to act now on priority safety issues across the site.

At the same time, the way we deliver care is changing. People are living longer, many with more complex conditions. Treatments are more specialised, and we rely much more on technology to diagnose and treat patients.

Much of our current estate was not designed for this. Space is constrained, infrastructure is ageing and in some areas, it limits how services can safely develop.

We manage these risks carefully, but the reality is clear:

we will not be able to provide the kind of modern, flexible, fully compliant environment patients and staff need without a new hospital.

That is why we are doing both:

- investing in essential improvements now
- and continuing to make the case for the New Hospital Programme

4. National New Hospital Programme

Torbay Hospital remains within the national New Hospital Programme.

Nationally, timelines are longer than originally anticipated. This requires us to balance two priorities:

- maintaining a safe and functional estate in the short to medium term
- progressing our long-term ambition for a new hospital

We are actively advocating for Torbay's position within the programme. While the current indicative timeline extends to 2034, we are:

- positioning ourselves to move at pace should earlier opportunities arise
- ready to progress elements of development, including where phased or partial funding becomes available

Torbay Hospital is a critical part of the local economy and community, acting as:

- a major employer
- an anchor institution supporting health and wellbeing

Continued progress on the New Hospital Programme is vital for both patient care and wider community outcomes.

5. Investment and delivery on the Torbay Hospital site

Alongside the national programme, we are continuing to invest in our current hospital site to maintain safe and effective services, including securing £40m of additional external capital funding from NHS England

Estates Safety Fund £10m award including for Torbay Hospital:

- refurbishment of our old day surgery and eye theatres to modern facilities
- external repairs to the Tower block, including a new roof, with scaffolding now being removed.
- power upgrades including a new substation

Completion of our £14.2m Emergency Department extension and remodelling, enabling us to expand and improve our capacity and the quality of our environments.

Capital projects completed at Torbay Hospital in the past 12 months

- maternity improvements, including expanded maternity triage and The Cove (new birthing pool)
- fire safety improvements
- air handling upgrades, for infection prevention and control
- nurse call upgrades
- new sterile instrument washers, essential lifecycle replacement for theatre instruments
- improvements to staff offices and welfare facilities
- new robot for our inpatient pharmacy, enabling faster processing and prescribing

In addition, we have received £12.1m external grant funding from NHS England for improving productivity including

- expansion and remodelling of our Oral, Maxillofacial department at Torbay Hospital
- reorganisation and expansion of our Surgical Admissions Unit at Torbay Hospital
- an ophthalmology diagnostics clinic which will be based in our Newton Abbot neighbourhood

Capital projects in design and development for delivery for Torbay Hospital in 2026/27 and 2027/28

This year, three significant programmes are underway:

- Refurbishment of cardiac catheter laboratories
 - enabling continued access to specialised cardiac procedures locally
 - supporting timely diagnosis and treatment for patients across Torbay and South Devon
- Aseptic pharmacy refurbishment

- essential to enabling patients to continue to receive chemotherapy and complex medicines locally
- addressing ageing infrastructure and ensuring compliance with required standards
- Cancer Services, LINACs and MRI replacements
 - planning lifecycle replacement of equipment
 - supporting patients to be diagnosed and treated locally

These schemes are critical for local people and reduce the need for patients to travel out of area for care. Additionally, we have continued to develop our multi storey car park design and business case for the Torbay Hospital site alongside purchasing land at Edginswell business park that will enable us to reorganise and expand some of our services near the Torbay Hospital site.

These are not discretionary improvements.

They are essential investments to:

- maintain patient safety
- sustain capacity
- enable modern models of care
- improve patient experience

All investments are aligned to the future hospital masterplan to ensure they support long-term development.

6. Pathology and Gadeon House

We know this is an area people feel strongly about and we want to be clear and factual about what is proposed.

This programme relates specifically to cellular pathology (histopathology) - the part of the service that supports planned and routine diagnostic work.

Why change is needed

Our current facilities on the Torbay Hospital site are no longer fit for purpose in the longer term. They present:

- infrastructure and resilience challenges
- limitations in space and layout
- increasing difficulty in meeting required standards.

This is part of the wider estate challenge we have described earlier in this paper.

What is proposed

The proposal is to move routine histopathology activity into improved facilities at Gadeon House as part of a phased approach.

What is not changing

It is important to be clear:

- time-critical and urgent pathology services will remain on the Torbay Hospital site

- services that directly support urgent care, surgery and inpatient treatment will continue to be based here
- we will not agree to any arrangements that put time-critical services at risk.

There are no changes to where patients receive care.

How decisions are being made

This work is:

- clinically led
- focused on safety and quality
- designed to ensure services remain sustainable for the future

Role of Gadeon House

Gadeon House is helping us to address a real and current infrastructure issue on the Torbay Hospital site.

It enables us to:

- improve the environment for routine diagnostic work
- reduce pressure on constrained clinical space on the main hospital site
- maintain safe and resilient services while we plan for the future hospital

This is not about moving whole services away from Torbay.

It is about using the space we have more effectively while resolving current estate constraints.

Working with partners

We continue to work with partners across the Peninsula Pathology Network to explore how pathology services can be made sustainable for the future. Clinical colleagues in cellular pathology, microbiology and blood sciences are working together across the network to understand demand, share expertise and consider future options. This work is at an early stage and no decisions have been taken.

7. Edginswell

The Edginswell site is an enabling investment supporting both immediate pressures and future development.

Short-term benefit

- Addresses a significant parking challenge for staff and patients

Long-term role

- Supports:
 - site logistics
 - development capacity
 - future hospital planning
- Creates the potential for:
 - wider economic benefit
 - employment opportunities over time

This is a transparent and practical investment aligned to future plans for the hospital site.

8. System context – One Devon Plan

Our work is aligned with the direction of travel set out in the One Devon Plan.

This reflects:

- changing models of care
- future configuration of services across Devon
- a challenging financial environment

We are working with partners across Devon to support the development of future plans, while making sure the needs of our communities and our hospitals across Torbay and South Devon are clearly understood. Any future development will need to align with the direction set by commissioners.

9. Digital and service modernisation

Alongside estate investment, we continue to modernise how care is delivered.

This includes:

- implementation of our electronic patient record (EPR)
- expansion of MY CARE for patient access
- investment in robotics and day surgery

Our new Epic electronic patient record was launched in April 2026 and is transforming how we provide care by giving staff access to all patients' health and care information quickly and securely in one place. We have also signed up over 24,000 people for the MY CARE patient portal, enabling patients to view appointment reminders, test results, visit summaries and much more. Proxy access is available to help families and carers see the information they need to support those they care for.

These developments demonstrate that the Torbay Hospital site continues to evolve and remain clinically relevant as we plan for the future.

10. Conclusion

Building a Brighter Future is about balancing immediate and long-term needs:

- addressing infrastructure challenges and risks on our current site at Torbay Hospital
- continuing to invest in services for our population
- progressing plans for a new hospital

Our focus is on ensuring the Torbay Hospital site continues to serve our communities safely today, while preparing for the future.