

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 21 July 2026

Wards affected: All Wards

Report Title: Torbay Destination Management Plan Review

When does the decision need to be implemented? As soon as possible to launch consultation

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update the council on the Destination Management Plan (DMP) review and to seek approval to launch the public consultation.
- 1.2. To ensure Torbay continues to develop, remain competitive, and respond to an evolving marketplace, the DMP has been reviewed and refreshed. It focuses on maximising Torbay's tourism growth potential through a collaborative, place-based and business-led approach, bringing together businesses, communities, and partners to enhance the visitor experience while embedding sustainable and inclusive practices, supporting its aim as the UK's premier coastal destination.
- 1.3. The DMP provides a single strategic framework for the development and management of Torbay as both a visitor destination and a place. It sets out a collaborative blueprint to maximise Torbay's tourism potential requiring active stakeholder involvement to deliver a vibrant visitor economy that benefits residents and visitors alike. While the English Riviera remains Torbay's visitor brand, the refreshed DMP adopts a place-based approach aligned with the Torbay Story and Corporate and Community Plan. It recognises the visitor economy not as a standalone sector but as a catalyst for wider place-based outcomes, including employment and skills, culture, investment, infrastructure development, and community pride and wellbeing.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1. The DMP will grow Torbay's visitor economy by celebrating its unique heritage, culture, and natural environment. It will reinforce Torbay's position as the UK's premier coastal destination, while enhancing the visitor experience and fostering pride in place.

- 2.2. The plan sets out a more collaborative, business-led, and place-based approach, underpinned by a clear framework. It recognises the visitor economy as a key economic strength and growth sector, supporting jobs, businesses, and inward investment.
- 2.3. It promotes a more sustainable, inclusive, and year-round visitor economy, strengthening Torbay's overall place offer and improving resilience for residents, visitors, and businesses alike.
- 2.4. The refreshed DMP delivery model strengthens leadership and governance through a place and business-led approach. This includes the creation of a Visitor Economy Cluster to align priorities, maximise resources and delivery, and give the visitor economy a stronger voice in decision-making.
- 2.5. The DMP supports the Council's vision of a healthy, happy, and prosperous Torbay by driving economic growth, supporting local businesses and jobs, and attracting inward investment. It reinforces tourism as a key economic specialism, enabling growth while placing the community, destination, and visitor economy at the heart of a refreshed, evidence-based, and collaborative approach to destination management.
- 2.6. The DMP is also part of the Council's approved Policy Framework and is therefore in accordance with Standing Order F4 – Budget and Policy Framework subject to a consultation period six weeks.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That Cabinet approves the refreshed Destination Management Plan (DMP) for a minimum 6-week public consultation.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Torbay Destination Management Plan

Appendix 2: Torbay Destination Management Plan Review Baseline Report (evidence base)

5. Background Documents

- English Riviera Destination Management Plan (2022-30) - [English Riviera Destination Management Plan - Torbay Council](#)
- Torbay Economic Growth Strategy (2022-30) - [Economic Growth Strategy - Torbay Council](#)
- Economic Strategy Evidence Base - [Economic Strategy Evidence Base - Torbay Council](#)

Supporting Information

6. Introduction

- 6.1. A review of the DMP is complete. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the plan remains relevant, responsive to changing market conditions and is fit for the future in its delivery to support a more resilient, productive, and sustainable growing visitor economy as the UK's premier coastal destination.
- 6.2. The DMP is a strategic policy framework sitting beneath the Torbay Economic Growth Strategy and is led by the Destination Management Group (DMG). Delivered through a partnership approach, DMG members take collective responsibility for setting direction, co-ordinating activity and driving outcomes across the destination. As part of the DMP review the governance management structure has also been reviewed.
- 6.3. The current DMP has delivered tangible outcomes to strengthen Torbay's year-round visitor economy. This includes the development of Geopark Discovery Experiences, growth in business tourism through Meet English Riviera, the creation of the SUP Hub positioning Torbay as the UK home of paddleboarding and securing the 2026 SUP World Cup, revitalised events such as Seafood Feast, strengthened cruise tourism, improved event impact reporting, and effective partnership led business support during the 2024 *Cryptosporidium* outbreak.
- 6.4. The DMP review comes at a pivotal time for stabilising and growing Torbay's visitor economy. With significant place development and investment, it's time to reflect on the current DMP and its approach to ensure the plan will support the destination to develop, unlock new opportunities, and remain competitive in an evolving marketplace.
- 6.5. Torbay's future success will depend not only on its ability to showcase its unique assets, but also on the strength of its foundations. The Torbay Story provides a narrative that celebrates the area's rich cultural heritage, locally distinctive food and drink, the South West Coast Path and internationally recognised Agatha Christie and the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark status offer powerful tools for storytelling and attracting new audiences to support year-round tourism.
- 6.6. The refreshed DMP proposes a shift towards a more business-led place-based approach, where businesses play a stronger role in shaping, leading and delivering activity within the priorities. This approach recognises that businesses are best placed to develop sector specific initiatives, build and shape the destination narrative, and respond quickly to market opportunities. The DMP provides the strategic framework within which delivery can thrive, with Torbay Council playing a key enabling role by supporting, coordinating, and feeding into delivery where appropriate, while also strengthening the collective voice of the sector at a strategic level.
- 6.7. Torbay Council plays a vital role in delivering the DMP, providing public services and those place-shaping 'brilliant basics' such as parking, public realm improvements, tackling antisocial behaviour, enabling events, cultural programming, and providing business support. Working collaboratively with place partners, these services are essential to

enhancing the visitor experience, driving footfall, and helping local businesses thrive. By embracing these place-based strengths and focusing on quality, inclusion, and innovation, Torbay can continue to evolve as a vibrant, resilient, and premier coastal destination that benefits both residents and visitors.

- 6.8. Whilst Torbay Council is not solely responsible for delivering the DMP, the review recommends the need for a dedicated role to manage and co-ordinate partnership working and to oversee the effective delivery of the priorities and actions, ensuring the plan's successful implementation and long-term impact.

7. Options under consideration

- 7.1. Continue with the existing DMP, but this is no longer fit for purpose and out of date.
- 7.2. Adopt the refreshed DMP as set out.

8. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 8.1. The DMP review is complete.
- 8.2. The DMP is a partnership framework to support place and develop Torbay's visitor economy and isn't solely for the council to deliver.
- 8.3. The recommendation of a dedicated role to manage the DMP implementation should be viewed as a prioritisation within the existing Economic Development budget and resources rather than an additional requirement. (This is a similar approach already adopted with other growth sector leads as set out in the Economic Growth Strategy).
- 8.4. The DMP priority most relevant to the Council is Priority 7: 'Destination Ready – Strengthening Infrastructure and Accessibility', which relates to public services, the public realm, town centres, and transport. The Plan proposes developing the action plan with relevant leads and key stakeholders, aligning it with existing service planning. This is likely to involve refining current plans or engaging tourism partners, rather than requiring additional resources or creating significant financial implications.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. There are no legal implications with this proposal

10. Engagement and Consultation

- 10.1. Various engagement activities have been undertaken during the development of the DMP review including Destination Management Group and key stakeholder deep dives, online business and stakeholder survey, stakeholder one-to-one interviews and group sessions. These activities enabled wide-ranging input, in-depth discussion of priorities, vision development and identification of stakeholders interested in supporting the ongoing delivery and development of the action plan.
- 10.2. Engagement findings have informed the refreshed DMP, demonstrating strong support for changes to management and governance, and a more business-led approach. Feedback has shaped the Plan by strengthening its focus on sustainability, year-round tourism, and shared ownership. As a result, the DMP better reflects local priorities, has strong business and stakeholder buy-in, and provides a more robust foundation for effective delivery and long-term impact.

11. Procurement Implications

- 11.1. The DMP Review followed a three-quote procurement process inviting local and regional suppliers to submit proposals, aligning to Torbay's commitment to Community Wealth Building. Following this process, Tomorrow's Tourism was appointed to deliver the review and refresh the Destination Management Plan (DMP).
- 11.2. The DMP links to thriving economy in particular the ambition to be the UK's premier coastal destination.

12. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 12.1. The refreshed DMP is aligned to strategy and activity including the Torbay Climate Partnership, A Greener Way for Our Bay, the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark and the assets of our blue and green space within Torbay.
- 12.2. The Plan supports Torbay's sustainability ambitions with sustainability as a key priority, offering the opportunity to think about the approach and actions which will help support Torbay's visitor economy towards becoming more sustainable, environmentally, and economically resilient.

13. Associated Risks

- 13.1. The adoption of the refreshed Destination Management Plan is fundamental in ensuring that Torbay can continue to develop, remain competitive and respond to an evolving marketplace as the UK's premier coastal destination.
- 13.2. The updated Plan focuses on maximising Torbay's tourism potential through a more business-led approach and a new governance structure, strengthening the visitor economy

and Torbay's wider place offer. This supports Torbay's attractiveness as a place to live, work, visit, and invest, contributing to broader economic growth.

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14. Equality 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	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 - Annual Visitor Survey (2024) suggest that out of 832 (aged over 16+), 46% were 65+, 27% were 55-64, 17% 45-54 and 6% between 25-44.¹	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports people of all ages. The DMP includes several priorities which look to support residents and visitors such as skills and employment development, to the creation of innovative visitor experiences and products. The focus on accessibility, also looks to support the destination to be inclusive, accessible and welcoming for all. Actions aligned with the priorities will be developed in partnership with businesses and stakeholders.	NA	NA
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay.	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. By	NA	NA

¹ ERBID (2025) Annual Visitor Survey 2024. Available at [Visitor Survey 2024 | ERBID Company](#). pages 11-14.

	5,185 of these carers provided 50 hours or more of care.	focusing on priorities such as workforce development, business collaboration and improving accessibility, the plan looks to support people from across different backgrounds.		
Care experienced	As of January 2026, there were 277 former care experienced young people aged 18-24 in Torbay.	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. By focusing on priorities such as workforce development, business collaboration and improving accessibility, the plan looks to support people from across different backgrounds.	NA	NA
Disability	- 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. - Annual Visitor survey (2024) responses highlighted that 18% considered themselves disabled.¹	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. One of the key priorities is on accessibility and inclusion, ensuring the destination is inclusive, welcoming and accessible for all. As a key priority (priority 7), accessibility actions will be developed in collaboration with businesses and stakeholders.	NA	NA
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing.	NA	NA

	as their sex registered at birth.	The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.		
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.	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.	NA	NA
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 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).	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.	NA	NA
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as the following:	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing.	NA	NA

	• 1.6% as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh • 0.3% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African • 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. • Annual Visitor Survey (2024) 92% of respondents identified mainly as White British, 3% White Other, 1% Asian/Asian British.¹	The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.		
Religion and belief	The 2021 Census showed that the residents in Torbay 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	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.	NA	NA

	• 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.	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.	NA	NA
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 • Annual Visitor Survey (2024) – 91% respondents described themselves heterosexual or straight, 1% as Gay or Lesbian. ¹	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.	NA	NA
Armed Forces Community	• In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the	NA	NA

	they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9% of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. The DMP focuses on a variety of priorities including workforce and skills development, business collaboration, accessibility, and sustainability to support inclusive economic growth for all.		
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.	The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports both the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. By focusing on workforce development, business collaboration and improved accessibility, the Plan helps create fairer access to employment, skills, services, and opportunities, supporting people across different ages, abilities, backgrounds, and socio-economic circumstances, while positively contributing to long-term economic resilience.	NA	NA
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 Torbay's least and most deprived areas and, a 3-year gap for females.	Providing increased employment opportunities can take households from 'workless' to working. This can provide additional income for families to support a healthier lifestyle. The plan also looks to support the wider place area, improving Torbay's attractiveness as a place to live, work and invest, which could increase civic pride and wellbeing.	NA	NA

Human Rights impacts		The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, placed-based approach that supports the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. There are no human rights impacts anticipated.	NA	NA
Child Friendly		The refreshed DMP takes an inclusive, place-based approach that supports both the visitor economy and Torbay's wider social and economic wellbeing. Through focusing on improving infrastructure, inclusive place-making, and a focus on quality visitor experiences, the DMP supports Torbay as a place that is welcoming and accessible for children and families.	NA	NA

15. Cumulative Council Impact

- 15.1. None identified. Priorities and suggested recommendations described within the DMP should have a positive cross-council impact allowing for a joined-up approach for delivery.

16. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 16.1. None identified, impacts should be positive.