



September 2026 Board Report prepared by Torbay Communities

1. Introduction

At the Torquay Pride in Place Board Meeting in June 2026, it was agreed that the September 2026 Board meeting would be dedicated to a Process Review of 2025/2026. This report will firstly guide you through the updates that have happened since we last met, which will then lead us into the process review and considerations and reflections to support the Board to make decisions that they may consider as improvements to the current process.

We will not, at this meeting, be giving updates on the implementation of the funded projects, those updates will follow in an email at the end of October 2026, in line with our quarterly project monitoring process, and to enable enough time to be spend on the process review.

2. Updates

All but £1,490 of the 2026/27 Pride in Place (PIP) funds have now been allocated across 10 projects. See the summary below.

PROJECTS AWARDED TO DATE (September 2026)

	Capital	Revenue
St Mary Magdalene	£ 3,600.00	£ 34,000.00
Royal Lyceum	£ 141,587.00	
Ellacombe Multi-use	£ 60,000.00	
Barton Recreation Ground		£ 60,000.00
Higher Union Street	£ 10,740.00	£ 8,500.00
Windmill Centre		£ 21,000.00
Melville Community Hub	£ 50,000.00	
Childrens Society Wellbeing Hub	£ 45,833.00	£ 44,694.50
Business-Led Town Centre Improvements	£ 46,750.00	£ 41,805.50
South Devon Creative and Cultural Incubation Space		£ 22,000.00

Total Capital allocation	£ 358,510.00
<i>Total Capital funding available</i>	£ 360,000.00
Remaining funds	£ 1,490.00

Total Revenue allocation		£232,000.00
<i>Total Revenue funding available</i>		£232,000.00
Remaining funds		£ -

% of funds allocated 60.71 39.29

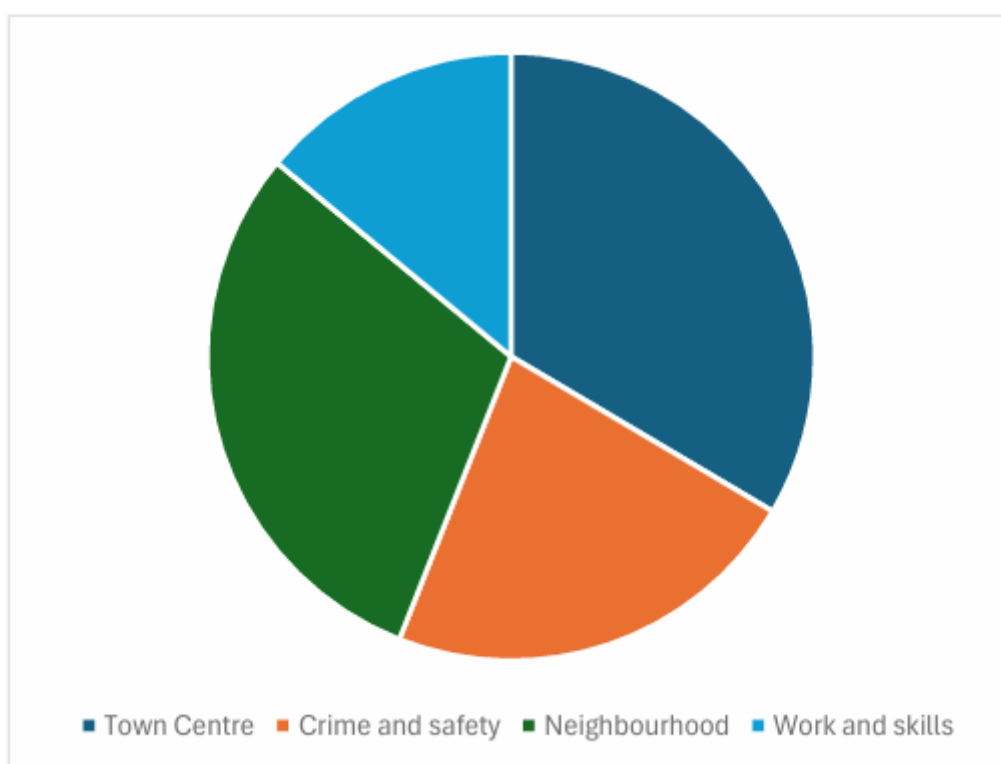
Total allocation	£	590,510.00
<i>Total funds available</i>	£	592,000.00
Remaining funds	£	1,490.00

These funds have spread across the PIP local priorities as follows:

- 33.5% Improving our Town Centre
- 22.5% Reducing Crime and improving safety
- 30% Improving our Neighbourhoods
- 14% Work and Skills

See detailed breakdown below and pie chart below.

Funding by priority area	Town Centre	Crime and safety	Neighbourhood	Work and skills
St Mary Magdalene	50	50		
Royal Lyceum	40	40		20
Ellacombe Multi-use			80	20
Barton Recreation Ground			80	20
Higher Union Street	50	50		
Windmill Centre			80	20
Melville Community Hub		40	60	
Childrens Society Wellbeing Hub	60	20		20
Business-Led Town Centre Improvements	75	25		
South Devon Creative and Cultural Incubation Space	60			40
% allocated (based on current business plans)	33.5	22.5	30	14



In line with the Board's year 1 aspirations a good number of these projects will be physically obvious, enabling us to both demonstrate to the wider community that we have acted on their wishes and to continue to build a Pride in Place momentum.

Of these projects 5 have signed Grant Agreements and 5 have started to receive funds - see table below.

Grant Agreements Signed & Projects Awarded Funding: St Mary Magdalene, Royal Lyceum, Barton Recreation Ground, Higher Union Street, Windmill Centre.

Projects		2026/27			
		Funding			
		Capital, £	Revenue, £	Paid	Date
		Cost centre YKA45	Cost centre L5009		
1	Royal Lyceum Theatre Revitalisation	£141,587	£-	£125,003	07-Jul-26
2	St Mary Magdalene Church Community Provision	£3,600	£34,000	£28,600	16-Jun-26
3	Higher Union Street Regeneration	£10,740	£8,500	£17,200	02-Jun-26
4	Ellacombe Community Multi-Use Facility	£60,000	£-	£-	
5	Windmill Centre and Windmill Hill	£-	£21,000	£19,000	07-Sep-26
6	Barton Recreation Ground Community Hub	£-	£60,000	£42,516	27-Jul-26
7	Melville Community Hub	£50,000	£-	£-	
8	Business-Led Town Centre Improvements	£46,750	£41,806	£-	
9	Children's Society Wellbeing Hub	£45,833	£44,695	£-	
10	South Devon Cultural Incubation Space	£-	£22,000	£-	
Total Received		£360,000	£231,640		
Total Paid		£358,510	£232,000	£232,319	

2.1 Decisions for the Board

At this meeting the Board needs to consider: **How to proceed with**

1. The Transforming Play Spaces application. A revised application focusing on Ellacombe, an area of deprivation, was circulated after the last Board meeting, but we did not get enough responses from Board members to make a decision on an allocation of funding from the 2027-28 funds. The application is attached again here as Appendix A
2. The 6 projects that have been scored but have not been funded. Are these projects to be considered for 2027/28 funds? Is more information needed. Are there some that that the Board feel we need to eliminate? These are the projects in grey below.

The Torbay Creative Exchange has been asked to work with the funded South Devon Creative and Cultural Incubation Space.

	<u>Weighted Score</u>	
56. Windmill Centre and Windmill Hill	81.21	FUNDED
3. Royal Lyceum Theatre Revitalisation	80.47	
4. Business-Led Town Centre Improvements	78.40	
29. Children's Society Wellbeing Hub	77.41	
10. Ellacombe Community Multi-Use Facility	76.32	
27. St Mary Magdelane Church Community Provision	76.21	
57. Transforming play spaces	76.20	
46. Barton Recreation Ground Community Hub	74.00	
17. Melville Community Hub	72.55	
58. Continuation of Focus Forward – Mentoring Initiative	71.84	
7. Complex Needs Navigator (Homeless Hostel)	71.46	
20. Higher Union Street Regeneration	71.37	
19. Steps Cross Redevelopment	70.40	
52. Strand Redevelopment	68.00	
41. Sponsor a Path	66.01	
36. South Devon Creative and Cultural Incubation Space	64.21	
49. Torbay Creative Exchange	58.67	
25. Community Health & Harm-Reduction Hub	53.60	

3. The remaining 9 projects on the long-short list which have not yet submitted business plans. These are:

Shortlisted Projects without a completed Business Case

- | |
|--|
| 37. Connecting Places – Public Realm Activation |
| 44. Hele Village Community Clean-Up |
| 62. Home downsizing – freeing up family homes |
| 63. Support to access affordable housing |
| 61. Support and Wellbeing Hub |
| 47. Town Centre Drop-In for Disabled & Vulnerable People |
| 11. Barton Downs & Acorn Centre Reinvention |
| 60. Development of Upton Park |
| 30. Community Info Bus |

4. The 31 Projects that did not make it to the long- short list. They have so far been told that had not been prioritised for 2026-27 funding. Some have found alternative sources of funding. Now the 2026-27 funds have all been allocated do we now confirm these projects will not receive Pride in Place Funding? These projects are listed in Appendix B
5. How to proceed with applicants who have received Year one funding who wish to be considered for further funding. We need to identify a process for this – do we ask these projects to reapply showing the impact of their initial funding and an updated business case? We ask the Board to note that if the multi-year requests remain at the level identified in the original business cases and the Board are minded to fund these, there is potential that all the capital funding and revenue funding for next year 27/28 would be used for this purpose, with the potential that we could go over our funding allocation by a few hundred thousand pounds, although this is purely based on original business cases and we appreciate time has moved on since those cases were made, and timescales may have changed.

3. Process Review

Following the request for additional funds for the Barton Recreation Ground Community Hub in June 2026 the Board requested a review of the application process, and the

outcomes to be presented at this meeting. We have expanded this review to include other feedback provided by applicants and learning from the Paignton Pride in Place process.

3.1 Learning

7 clear learning points have been identified:

1. Call for proposals was too premature and loose in its criteria (this was an exceptional case and based on the information available last year)
2. A rolling programme of applications will allow for more co-production and collaboration, enabling improved pipeline management, giving more time to develop stronger proposals without the additional pressure of short deadlines.
3. Further support is required for applicants to complete the Business Case Templates, building more developed and stronger cases for consideration. (procurement processes prevented this in 2026)
4. Capital projects need earlier Council technical advice to inform business case submission – including a site visit, and RIBA staged interventions.
5. Response from Council technical panel needs to be clear, with all information available to them, to be assessed at the right time in the process.
6. Applicants have found communication channels confusing, we need to be mindful to channel all communication through one route, removing the confusion of multiple communication channels.
7. Communication to unsuccessful applicants needs to be timely, with a swift referral to Torbay Communities Community Funding Advisor building on the energy and time commitments of the projects.

3.2 Rolling Programme

Our proposal is to have a rolling programme of applications in the future. This will help us manage the pipeline so that the board and technical panel are not swamped by many applications at any one time. This allows projects to be fully thought through prior to application, rather than rushing towards a deadline. This is the normal practice for a lot of the largest funding organisations in the UK eg the National Lottery Community Fund.

Work was done in the 2025-26 application process to bring groups together who have similar aims and project ideas after they had applied. This is better done prior to application, and even better through a process of co-production with the community themselves. A rolling programme will allow for this more effective project development stage particularly if the Board determines more focused application criteria in the future. A rolling programme flow chart follows.



3.3 Earlier Technical support intervention

The Council has been providing essential technical advice and support to the application process, complementing the work undertaken by Torbay Communities. The learning has been that we need more involvement of the capital projects team earlier on in the application process for capital projects, ensuring the costings are as accurate as they can be at application stage. The Council will present a proposal at the meeting for how this can be achieved in the future. If approved a costed proposal will come to the Board's December meeting.

3.4 Paignton Pride in Place shared learning

Board member Lynne Roberts is currently sitting on both the Torquay and Paignton Pride in Place Boards and will share at the meeting some of the learning to date from Paignton.

3.5 Decisions for the Board

- To consider a rolling application process to enable a more effective managed pipeline of proposals.
- To consider Torbay Council's learning with respect to technical support and their request, enabling all parties to be better informed when making future decisions.
- To consider initiating further Torquay Place Leadership Board Development, for example allowing more time for the Board to make decisions together, or the consideration to a move to a Pride in Place funded location for meetings.

4. Next steps

4.1 Time for reflection

Torbay Communities suggests there is a Board reflection on:

- Are our decisions fulfilling the vision and regeneration plan submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government?
- How do we move away from a set of individual schemes and build something that is greater than the sum of its parts?
- How do we use the Pride in Place funding to leverage in additional funds?
- How do we develop an application process that is more targeted at gaps that are undermining our collective delivery and opportunities to maximise impact?

4.2 Continuous Communication

In the next quarter Torbay Communities will be:

- Running a media campaign promoting Torquay Pride in Place sharing information and stories about funded projects.
- Compiling Vox pops on Pride in Place projects (hosted by Board Members)
- Individually updating every resident and group involved in August 2025 engagement
- Opening a Torquay Pride in Place Hub on 77 Union Street – See some internal photos below. This was more recently the location for our Indisposable exhibition as part of Torbay Council's, This is My Circus Project. Or before that the old O2 Store.



- Continually updating the Pride in Place website page
<https://www.torbaycommunities.com/torquay-pride-in-place/>

Appendix A

Introduction and Background

MHCLG has awarded Torbay £270,000 through its national Playground Fund to improve playgrounds in areas of greatest need and strengthen community pride through local investment.

The award comprises £240,000 capital and £30,000 revenue over 2026/27 and 2027/28. The capital funding will support physical playground improvements, while the revenue allocation will support project development, community engagement, consultation, inclusive design reviews and programme management.

For Torquay, this presents a significant opportunity to invest in local play provision, building on existing improvements and aligning national funding with local priorities. High-quality play spaces contribute to children's physical health, mental wellbeing, social development and family life, while also encouraging greater use of parks and green spaces and supporting wider community pride objectives.

The investment also aligns with Child Friendly Torbay, developed in partnership with UNICEF, by supporting safe, inclusive public spaces, improved health and wellbeing, and the active involvement of children and young people in shaping places that affect their lives.

Match funding from the Pride in Place Board would enable a more ambitious programme of improvements and increase the overall impact of the MHCLG allocation. It would also support meaningful engagement with children and young people as part of the design process, ensuring investment is informed by their experiences and aspirations. This approach would maximise the value of the funding available and create a lasting legacy that contributes to both the Pride in Place and Child Friendly Torbay objectives.

Combining the MHCLG allocation with Pride in Place match funding would increase the overall value of the investment by at least 30% above the combined funding total by enabling the works to be delivered as one coordinated programme. This would create economies of scale by reducing duplicated costs for site set-up, mobilisation, ground preparation, procurement, project management and contractor attendance, allowing more of the available funding to be directed towards tangible improvements for children and families.

For example, installing new equipment at the same time as replacement safety surfacing means the site only needs to be established once, avoiding repeated fencing, machinery, welfare facilities and contractor mobilisation costs. It also avoids the need to cut into or repair new surfacing at a later date to accommodate future equipment.

A single larger programme is also likely to be more attractive to suppliers, supporting more competitive pricing and more efficient scheduling of labour, materials and plant across the sites. It would also reduce disruption for local communities by completing works within one planned programme, rather than returning to the same sites repeatedly over several years.

Requirements of Funding

MHCLG has held a webinar and provided recipient authorities with further guidance on the delivery requirements of the Playground Fund. The funding will be released in two phases, with the first allocation expected in October 2026 and the second in April 2027. Torbay (Torquay) has been awarded a total of £270,000, comprising £240,000 capital funding and £30,000 revenue funding. The revenue allocation is intended to support programme development activities, including community engagement, consultation, design work and project planning, leaving £240,000 available for physical improvements to playground facilities.

Funding must be invested across a minimum of three sites and projects will be required to demonstrate how they meet **four** key objectives: addressing an identified local need; targeting areas of deprivation, **with Torquay already meeting this eligibility requirement**; involving communities in the co-design of improvements through meaningful engagement; and delivering enhancements that improve the quality, accessibility, inclusivity and long-term sustainability of play provision.

Throughout delivery, we will be required to submit regular monitoring and progress reports through the MHCLG reporting portal, demonstrating how the programme is meeting the fund's objectives and delivering positive outcomes for local communities. Further information is available within the published Playground Fund guidance for recipient authorities.

Community Consultation

A significant programme of engagement and consultation has been undertaken throughout 2026 to inform investment in play provision across Torbay. This has included visits to primary schools, engagement with more than 2,000 children and young people, discussions with local community groups, and stakeholders.

The engagement programme has been delivered in collaboration with a range of partners, including, Active Devon, Play Torbay and Imagine This, ensuring a broad understanding of local needs and aspirations. Through workshops, site visits and interactive sessions, children and young people have been encouraged to share their experiences of local play spaces, identify barriers to play and physical activity, and suggest improvements that would make parks more attractive, inclusive and accessible. Ward Members have also been actively involved throughout the consultation process, helping to facilitate engagement with local schools, identify priorities within their wards and provide valuable insight into the needs of residents and local park users.

Torbay Council has committed £500,000 of capital funding to replace play equipment that has reached the end of its operational life, as identified through routine playground inspections. This investment programme covers the following sites:

- **Armada Park**, Torquay
- **Exe Hill**, Torquay
- **Shiphay Park**, Torquay
- **Stoodley Knowle**, Torquay
- **Great Parks**, Kings Ash
- **Seacrest**, Paignton
- **Young's Park**, Paignton
- **Furzeham Green**, Brixham

- **Sharkham Village**, Brixham
- **Barton Downs**, Torquay
- **Star Pitten Ballcourt**, Torquay
- **Brewery Park**, Torquay
- **Victoria Park**, Torquay
- **Sherwell Park**, Torquay
- **Victoria Park**, Paignton

The primary purpose of this capital investment is to replace ageing and end-of-life equipment, ensuring that playgrounds remain safe, functional and accessible for local communities. However, the consultation programme has demonstrated that children and young people want more than replacement equipment alone. Feedback consistently highlighted a desire for more inclusive play opportunities, equipment that caters for a wider range of ages and abilities, improved accessibility, better use of open space and environments where children feel safe, welcome and able to spend time with friends and family.

As a result, alongside the physical replacement programme, work has already commenced to improve the overall quality and safety of play environments through site maintenance, environmental improvements and enhanced management of surrounding open spaces. This reflects the priorities identified through both the Child Friendly Torbay engagement programme and wider community consultation, where children and young people highlighted the importance of having clean, welcoming and safe places to play.

Whilst the existing capital programme addresses essential replacement needs, the consultation process also identified Ellacombe Park as a priority location in Torquay where children consistently expressed a desire for additional investment beyond that currently planned. Improvements at Ellacombe Park would deliver significant community benefit and help address gaps in local play provision.

The findings demonstrate both community demand and local need, whilst supporting the MHCLG requirement for meaningful co-design. Investment in Ellacombe Park would therefore respond directly to the aspirations of local children, young people and families, whilst delivering against the objectives of the Playground Fund and Child Friendly Torbay Action Plan.

Funding Request

We are requesting funding from the Pride in Place Board to regenerate and refurbish Ellacombe Park. The request is for **£129,433.29**, which will be topped up with **£12,233.70** of MHCLG funding to support the delivery of the Ellacombe Park scheme. The remaining MHCLG funding will be allocated to two other parks in Torquay, ensuring the programme continues to meet the requirement to invest across a minimum of three sites.

Ellacombe Park

During consultation for capital investment programme, children from Ellacombe Primary School took part in engagement activities and a colouring competition focused on improvements to nearby Brewery Park. Whilst welcoming the planned investment at Brewery Park, pupils and the School Council also highlighted Ellacombe Park as a priority for improvement due to its location on a well-used route to and from school. Children identified the need for more attractive,

inclusive and welcoming play opportunities, providing strong evidence of local need and meaningful engagement in line with the MHCLG co-design requirements.

Ellacombe also aligns closely with the ambitions of the Child Friendly Torbay Action Plan, which identified that children and young people often do not feel safe in public spaces, particularly around town centres, and want access to cleaner, safer and more welcoming places to play. Given its proximity to Torquay town centre and its importance as a daily route for many local children and families, investment in Ellacombe Park presents an opportunity to directly respond to this feedback.

Ellacombe Park is a well-used and valued community play space, regularly used by local children, young people and families. Given its proximity to Torquay town centre and its importance as a local destination for play and recreation, investment in the site presents an opportunity to respond directly to the Child Friendly Torbay priority of creating safe, welcoming and inclusive public spaces where children can play, socialise and feel secure. The existing play area is showing signs of deterioration, with ageing equipment, worn surfacing and infrastructure that no longer fully meets the expectations of local users or modern standards of inclusive play provision.

Finance

The proposed improvement scheme would transform the site through the installation of a range of new play opportunities, including accessible and inclusive equipment, together with replacement safety surfacing and associated site improvements. The total estimated project cost is **£141,699.99**. It is proposed that the scheme is funded through a **£129,433.93** Pride in Place match funding request, to be made up to the full project cost using **£12,233.70** of MHCLG capital funding.

This funding would provide the opportunity to further enhance the site through accessibility improvements, landscaping, upgraded pathways and entrances, and wider environmental enhancements that improve the overall quality and perception of safety within the park. Together, these improvements would create a more attractive, accessible and inclusive space that reflects feedback received from local children, young people and families, whilst supporting the wider ambitions of the Child Friendly Torbay programme.

If this funding is made available in April 2027, we would aim to place the necessary orders promptly and carry out the works during summer 2027.

Conclusion

The proposed project at Ellacombe Park provides a significant opportunity to maximise the impact of available play investment in Torquay by responding to clear evidence of need, meaningful community engagement and locally identified priorities. The project aligns with the Playground Fund's core objectives and supports the ambitions of the Child Friendly Torbay Action Plan by creating a safer, more inclusive and welcoming space for children, young people, families and the wider community.

Project / Funding Element	Total Estimated Cost	MHCLG Contribution	Pride in Place Match Funding Request
Ellacombe Park	£141,699.99	£12,233.70	£129,466.29
Total proposed Ellacombe Park scheme	£141,699.99	£12,233.70	£129,466.29

The total estimated cost of the Ellacombe Park improvement scheme is **£141,699.99**. The match funding request being made to the Pride in Place Board is **£129,466.29**, with the remaining **£12,233.70** to be funded from the MHCLG.



Appendix B

48	Youth Work Experience (Town Centre Cleaning)
50	Start-Up Business and Inclusive Entrepreneurship Hub
51	Heritage Construction Skills
59	Hive to Thrive Project - Torquay Pilot
2	Support for Non-Domestic Energy Efficiency
9	Torquay Station Step-Free Access
12	Wellswood Village Improvements
13	Future Food Forest
15	Green Streets
16	St Martin's Car Park Resurfacing
18	St Luke's Bus Shelter
33	Torbay Road Corridor Improvements
35	Heritage Gardens
63	The Pavilion Restoration
38	Agatha Christie Heritage Trail
43	Mobility Hub at Torre Station
53	Kids play, swings and splash park
54	Coastal Climbs & Zip Lines Family Friendly Attraction
55	Torquay Banjo Area by Princess Theatre - site remodel
14	Torre Repair, Resue and Recycle
5	Mentor in Violence Prevention (MVP) in Schools
6	Torquay Town Centre CCTV Upgrade
8	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
21	Changing Places Facility (Harbour/Strand)
22	Low-Cost Fitness and Wellbeing Centre
23	Astro Turf / 3G Pitch & Ice Rink
24	Wellbeing Workshops
26	New Watersports Slipway
31	Affordable Housing via Bequest
42	Support for Adoptive, Fostering, and SGO Families
45	St Matthew's Community Hub (Chelston)