TORBAY COUNCIL

Report title: Torbay Together – Education Strategy 2026 – 2030

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	24 November 2026
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Nick Bye, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Email:	nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk
Lead Director:	Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services
Email:	Nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk or Hannah.baker@torbay.gov.uk
Wards affected:	All

1. Summary of Report:

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval of Torbay Together – Education Strategy 2026 – 2030, which sets out a shared vision and priorities for education across Torbay.

1.2 The Strategy provides a clear framework for the Council, education settings and partners to work together on five shared priorities, with inclusion at its centre. Approval will confirm the Council's support for this collaborative approach and the associated implementation and oversight arrangements.

2. Recommendations and Proposed Decision:

2.1 That the Torbay Together – Education Strategy 2026 – 2030 be approved; and

2.2 That the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, be given delegated authority to make minor presentational or factual amendments that do not change the substance of the Strategy if required.

3. Reasons for Recommendations/Proposed Decision:

3.1 A shared strategic framework is needed so that education settings, the Council and partners can align effort, strengthen collaboration and monitor progress consistently. The

five priorities are early years and school readiness; reading; belonging and attendance; high-quality transitions; and pathways into education, employment and training.

4. Background and Context:

4.1 The Strategy has been developed as a shared education system strategy for Torbay. It describes the diverse education system, the responsibilities of the Council and partners, and a collaborative “Torbay Together” model for delivery. Progress will be overseen through the Future Strategy Group, Education Leaders Forum and priority workstreams, supported by regular progress tracking and annual review.

5. Alternative Options Considered:

5.1 Approve the Strategy. This is the recommended option because it provides a shared direction, clear priorities and proportionate governance for collective delivery.

5.2 Do not approve the Strategy. This would leave no single agreed framework for coordinating the education system’s shared priorities and monitoring collective progress.

6. Contribution to Council Priorities:

6.1 The Strategy aligns with related work including SEND reform, Family First, Best Start in Life and the Council’s wider priorities for children and young people.

7. Consultation and Engagement:

7.1 The Strategy has been shaped through collaborative work with education leaders, settings and partner agencies, alongside engagement with children, young people and families. The resulting priorities reflect shared system challenges and opportunities. Engagement will continue through the Strategy’s delivery and annual review arrangements.

8. Implications:

Financial Implications:

8.1 Approval of the Strategy does not, in itself, commit the Council to additional expenditure. Delivery will be undertaken through existing partnership arrangements and service planning. Any future proposals with additional financial implications will be considered through the Council’s usual governance and budget processes.

Legal Implications:

8.2 The Strategy supports the Council in meeting its education responsibilities, including its duties under section 13A of the Education Act 1996 to promote high standards, fair access to education and training, and the fulfilment of learning potential. It also reflects the wider leadership responsibilities established by the Children Act 2004.

Corporate Parenting/Children and Young People:

8.3 Cared for and care experienced children and young people can face poorer attendance, disrupted learning and transitions, and barriers to education, employment or training. The Strategy should have a positive impact by promoting belonging, stable transitions and inclusive pathways. Corporate parenting principles will be applied, care experienced young people will be involved in delivery and review, and Virtual School and leaving-care insight will inform monitoring.

Associated Risks, Risk Tolerance Level and Mitigations:

A summary of key risks associated with the recommendations in this report is inconsistent engagement, capacity pressures and limited progress against priorities. These will be managed through named accountability, shared progress tracking, termly oversight and annual review.
The principal risk of not approving the Strategy is that partners would lack a single agreed framework for joint action and assurance.

Delivery risks will be managed through named accountability, shared progress tracking, termly oversight and annual review.
Full risks are set out below:

Risk	**Risk score before mitigations (likelihood x impact)**	**Mitigations**	**Risk score after mitigations (likelihood x impact)**	**Risk tolerance**
Partners do not maintain consistent engagement with delivery of the Strategy.	9 (3 x 3)	Clear shared governance, named accountability and regular partnership oversight.	6 (2 x 3)	Low
Capacity pressures delay delivery of agreed priorities.	12 (3 x 4)	Prioritised delivery planning, clear ownership and regular review of capacity and progress.	8 (2 x 4)	Low
Progress against the Strategy's priorities is not sufficiently evidenced or sustained.	12 (3 x 4)	Shared progress measures, termly oversight and annual review of delivery and outcomes.	8 (2 x 4)	Low

Contributions to tackling climate change or achieving carbon neutrality:

(Council or Torbay wide)

8.4 The Strategy is not expected to have a direct adverse environmental impact. Delivery will make use of existing partnership and governance arrangements, including digital communication where appropriate. Any future projects arising from the Strategy will assess environmental impacts through the Council's established processes.

Social Value Considerations:

8.5 The Strategy is expected to support wider social value by strengthening local partnership working, improving educational participation and progression, and helping children and young people develop the skills and aspirations needed to access further education, employment and training. Delivery should, where appropriate, maximise opportunities to use local expertise, strengthen community capacity and reduce barriers for disadvantaged groups.

Procurement Implications:

8.6 There are no direct procurement implications arising from approval of the Strategy.

Other Implications:

8.7 None

9. Equalities 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.	The Strategy is intended to benefit children and young people across the 0–25 age range. Differing needs at each educational stage are recognised through priorities on early years, attendance, transitions and pathways. No adverse age-related impact is anticipated.	Use age-appropriate engagement and information; monitor access, participation and outcomes by age and phase; address any gaps through annual delivery planning.	Children's Services / Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 provided 50 hours or more of care.	Young carers and children in families with caring responsibilities may experience barriers to attendance, participation and transitions. The Strategy's inclusion and belonging focus should support earlier identification and coordinated support. No adverse impact is anticipated.	Work with settings and relevant services to identify and support young carers; provide flexible and accessible engagement; monitor attendance, transitions and outcomes where data permits.	Children's Services / Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.

Care experienced	As of January 2026, there were 277 former care experienced young people aged 18–24 in Torbay.	Cared for and care experienced children and young people can face poorer attendance, disrupted learning and transitions, and barriers to education, employment or training. The Strategy should have a positive impact by promoting belonging, stable transitions and inclusive pathways.	Apply corporate parenting principles; involve care experienced young people in delivery and review; use Virtual School and leaving-care insight; monitor attendance, attainment, transitions and post-16 destinations.	Children's Services, Virtual School and Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.9% of Torbay residents said their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	Disabled children and young people, including those with special educational needs, may face barriers to access, attendance, participation, transitions and suitable pathways. Inclusion and accessibility are central to the strategy and a positive impact is intended, but delivery must remain accessible and aligned with SEND duties.	Use accessible communication and reasonable adjustments; co-produce relevant activity; align with SEND improvement work; monitor attendance, exclusions, attainment, transitions and destinations for children with SEND.	Children's Services, SEND and Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed through relevant governance.
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth.	No differential impact	N/A	N/A

Marriage and civil partnership	Of Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of the 2021 Census, 44.2% were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No differential impact	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Between 2013 and 2024, the rate of live births was 56.0 per 1,000 in Torbay, compared with 53.4 in the South West and 56.3 in England. For 2022 to 2024, Torbay's rate was 44.6 compared with 50.0 in England.	No differential impact	N/A	N/A
Race	In the 2021 Census: 1.6% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh; 0.3% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African; 1.5% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups; 96.1% White; and 0.4% another ethnicity. Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities are more likely to live in areas among England's 20% most deprived.	Children from minority ethnic communities, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and those with English as an additional language, may experience unequal educational outcomes, discrimination or barriers to engagement. The Strategy provides an opportunity to improve inclusion and belonging.	Use culturally responsive engagement, interpretation and translation where needed; strengthen anti-racist and anti-bullying practice; monitor attendance, attainment, exclusions, transitions and destinations by ethnicity where data allows.	Children's Services and Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.
Religion and belief	2021 Census: 48.5% Christian; 0.4% Buddhist; 0.2% Hindu; 0.6% Muslim; less than 0.1% Sikh; 0.1% Jewish; 0.7% another	No differential impact	N/A	N/A

	religion; 43.2% no religion; 6.3% did not answer.			
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male.	Patterns of attainment, attendance, exclusions and progression can differ between girls and boys. The Strategy is intended to benefit all children and young people; delivery should avoid reinforcing stereotypes and respond to evidenced differences in outcomes.	Monitor key outcomes by sex; use targeted, evidence-led action where gaps are identified; ensure curriculum, careers information and participation opportunities challenge stereotypes.	Children's Services / Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.
Sexual orientation	2021 Census: 89% Straight or Heterosexual; 1.7% Gay or Lesbian; 1.1% Bisexual; 0.1% Pansexual; 0.1% another way; 7.4% did not answer.	No differential impact	N/A	N/A
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England had previously served in the UK armed forces; in Torbay the figure was 5.9%.	Children in Armed Forces families may experience mobility, interrupted learning and repeated transitions. The Strategy's focus on high-quality transitions and belonging should support continuity and inclusion. No adverse impact is anticipated.	Identify mobility and service-related needs early; share information promptly between settings; use the Service Pupil Premium and specialist guidance where applicable; monitor transitions and attendance.	Education settings and Children's Services; throughout 2026–2030.
Additional considerations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Socio-economic impacts	Torbay is ranked as the 39th most deprived upper tier local authority in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025.	Poverty, transport, digital access and the cost of participation can affect attendance, attainment and progression. The Strategy has potential for a positive impact through earlier support, stronger belonging and clearer pathways, but unequal access must be actively addressed.	Use deprivation and disadvantage data to target support; consider affordability, transport and digital access in delivery; maximise available funding and monitor attendance, attainment and destinations for disadvantaged cohorts.	Children's Services, Education partners and relevant Council services; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.
Public Health impacts	For 2020 to 2024, there was a six-year life expectancy gap between males in Torbay's least and most deprived areas and a three-year gap for females.	Educational participation, belonging and progression are linked to physical and emotional wellbeing. Improved attendance and inclusive pathways may have positive longer-term health impacts. Delivery should recognise mental health needs and health-related barriers to attendance.	Link delivery with early help, public health and mental health support; use trauma-informed and relational approaches; monitor wellbeing, attendance and exclusion indicators.	Children's Services, Public Health and Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.
Human Rights impacts	Relevant rights include the right to education, non-discrimination, respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and children's right to have their views considered.	The Strategy is intended to advance access to inclusive education and participation. No adverse human rights impact is anticipated. Decisions made during delivery must remain lawful, necessary, proportionate and in the best interests of children and young people.	Embed children's rights and participation in delivery; provide accessible routes to express views and challenge decisions; consider rights impacts when developing actions and reviewing progress.	Children's Services / Education partners; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.

Child Friendly / Children's Rights	The Strategy directly affects children and young people across Torbay and has been informed by engagement with them and their families. Its priorities reflect children's experiences of readiness, reading, belonging, transitions and future pathways.	A positive impact is anticipated by making education more inclusive, connected and responsive. Delivery should continue to consider what matters to children and young people, including those whose voices are less often heard.	Use accessible and age-appropriate participation; involve a diverse range of children and young people in delivery and annual review; explain how their views have influenced action; close the feedback loop.	Children's Services, Education partners and participation leads; throughout 2026–2030, reviewed annually.

10. Cumulative Council Impact:

10.1 No adverse cumulative Council impacts have been identified. The Strategy is intended to align with related work including SEND reform, Family First, Best Start in Life and the Council's wider priorities for children and young people.

11. Cumulative Community Impact:

11.1 No adverse cumulative community impacts have been identified. The collaborative approach is expected to improve coordination across education settings, families and partner organisations.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation:

12.1 Progress will be overseen through the Future Strategy Group, Education Leaders Forum and priority workstreams, supported by regular progress tracking, termly oversight and annual review.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Torbay Together – Education Strategy 2026–2030
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Background Documents:

Torbay Together – Education Strategy 2026–2030

Officer Contact Details:

Name: Hannah Baker

Title: Divisional Director Education and SEND

Email address: Hannah.baker@torbay.gov.uk