

Minutes of the Torquay Place Leadership Board

8 September 2025

-: Present :-

Jim Parker (Chair)

Tracey Cabache, Hayley Costar, Steve Darling MP, Vince Flower, Alison Hernandez, Councillor Cordelia Law, Steve Reynolds, Councillor David Thomas, Kirsty Brodest
Tracey Cabache, Hayley Costar, Steve Darling MP, Vince Flower, Alison Hernandez, Councillor Cordelia Law, Steve Reynolds, Councillor David Thomas, Kirsty Brodest

Also present: Simon Bellamy, Teresa Buckley, Anne-Marie Bond, Jon Paul Hedge

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Chris Balch and Richard Marsh

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Torquay Place Leadership Board held on 29 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

The following statement was read out, confirming the arrangements and nature of disclosable interests in future meetings:

The Torquay Place Leadership Board will be making decisions regarding the prioritisation and allocation of Government Funding for Plans for Neighbourhoods. Board Members are required to follow the Model Code of Conduct which requires them to disclose any pecuniary interests, which includes interests relating to your employment, and not take part in any discussions or decisions where you have a pecuniary interest and to leave the meeting room. The Government's Guidance on Plan for Neighbourhoods puts a requirement for ensuring an inclusive and representative selection of people from across the local community being members of the Board and therefore implies that they should be able to be involved in how the Grant Funding from the Government is allocated to meet the needs of the people of Torquay. In light of this and on the basis that there will be an agreed prioritisation matrix applied to all business cases to ensure fairness, openness and transparency, the Monitoring Officer has agreed in those circumstances to grant a dispensation to all Members of the Torquay Place Leadership Board to enable them to disclose their pecuniary interest when issues relating to prioritisation of topics, approval of a prioritisation matrix and where approval of Grant Funding is being discussed, to remain in meetings of the Torquay Place Leadership Board and take part in

discussions but **not to vote on any application made by themselves or their organisation.**

It was confirmed by the Interim Place Manager that this meeting will relate to wider themes and not individual proposals or applications for funding. On this basis, there were no interests declared.

4. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items

5. Plan for Neighbourhoods

The Interim Place Manager presented the report as published. Along with Tracy Cabache, Community Development Manager at Torbay Communities, there was a wider discussion on the themes emerging from the public consultation. It was noted that the public's main priorities are physical improvements to the town centre, crime reduction and physically improving neighbourhoods. These three themes attracted over half of the votes in the public consultation. Contrasting with these findings, government data and guidance shows that disorder, town centre underperformance and deprivation, trust and disempowerment are the key themes. Work and Skills proved a low priority for the public, though it should be noted that a higher performing workforce could be a long-term driver of growth and wider improvement. It was noted that Torbay has a significantly higher commercial vacancy rate than the national average. In combining these findings, it was proposed that the four key areas of focus when allocating funding would be –

- Physically improving our town centre
- Helping reduce crime and making people feel safe
- Physically improving our neighbourhoods
- Improving life chances through new work and skills opportunities

It was also noted that empowerment, and enabling people to be heard should underpin all of the four main priorities.

Board members questioned why social and affordable housing was not included as a theme. It was noted that housing provision could form part of a number of projects favoured by the themes suggested. The board members expressed a general feeling that housing provision should be more strongly addressed in the projects' key themes, and it was agreed that consideration of the provision of affordable housing would form part of the themes going forward.

There were further questions on specific areas of the theme wording, but the board was generally comfortable with the proposed themes, provided that affordable housing provision also forms a part.

There was then a discussion on the selection criteria for project proposals, and also how the impact of any project may be measured post-completion. The Interim Place Manager confirmed that central government had shared some documentation showing matrices which allowed impartial assessments of potential project, but that

their version may be too complicated. The board also requested that other methodologies, such as passporting funds to those areas most in need was explored. It was noted that applications from all areas of the town would be considered and encouraged.

There was a discussion on the issue of inclusivity, and ensuring that everyone has a chance to participate. Identifying gaps, existing provisions, and other funding options will be key to ensuring initiatives are comprehensive and equitable.

ACTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Interim Place Manager and Torbay Communities will now:

- Begin the process of exploring simple ways to score projects based on both viability and impact. Proposals will be brought to the next meeting.
- Arrange co-design sessions, beginning the process of collaborative outreach to partners and stakeholders, ensuring the collective expertise is fully harnessed.
- Explore possibilities in relation to allocating funds to areas most in need as an alternative to project-based allocations.
- Explore potential options to assist where projects are rejected, ensuring unsuccessful bids are signposted to alternative funding sources.

6. Finance Update

There was a brief overview of the Financial Update as published, showing that £391,699 capacity funding remains

Chair