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Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026



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Foreword

The Torbay Heritage Strategy is the result of a significant review of heritage in the Bay. The review was conducted over several months. It involved consultation with local residents, partner organisation, elected Council members, officers and services, and consideration of the changes in local and national plans and policies. It took place during the global Covid-19 pandemic and at a time of great change in the strategic funding context.

Throughout the process we have been keen to ensure this strategy is rooted in the needs and aspirations of Torbay and its residents. Whilst the focus is on cultural heritage and the historic environment, the wider context has been important and shaped this work. Torbay has a fascinating history and rich heritage. The entire area is internationally recognised as the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark, and our inshore coastline is a Marine Conservation Zone. Torbay is home to part of the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) along with multiple Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens, historic sailing vessels and outstanding museum and archive collections. We also know there are many competing priorities for limited resources. Part of this process was to consider how to prioritise heritage, including assets on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

The heritage review was conducted by lead consultant Katherine Findlay at Heritage Arts & People, on behalf of Torbay Council, with advice and support from Council officers, TDA and Torbay Culture. Our thanks go to Katherine for her excellent work on the review and report; and to all the people who responded to questions, attended consultations, and shared their thoughts during the process. This strategy sits alongside the wider cultural strategy 'Enjoy, Talk, Do, Be' – a cultural strategy for Torbay and its communities 2014-24. It is aligned with the Torbay Local Plan and will inform its upcoming review, the English Riviera Destination Management Plan, the Torbay Economic Strategy, and the UNESCO Global Geopark validation.

Heritage is not only about looking to the past, preserving and conserving. It is about the people and the places of today. Progress, enterprise and economic development need not happen at the expense of cultural heritage or the historic environment and in the same way we should not see our heritage as a barrier to change. Singapore - often cited by world leaders as an example of economic progress - has recognised this. Lee Kuan Yew, founding Prime Minister of Singapore, said about his nation's heritage plan in 2005:

'Heritage is not something static, lying hidden to be discovered, admired and conserved. It is a part of the lives of people, and it shapes the ways a people meet new challenges and helps them adapt to survive'

We hope this new strategy provides a pathway for Torbay's fascinating and significant heritage. The coronavirus pandemic resulted in profound challenges for all of us, including the heritage and culture sectors. But we know that holding true to a good vision can improve the quality of life for people in the Bay. Heritage has a major role to play in that.

Signatories

Leader of the Council/Deputy Leader/Council officer/Torbay Culture

Part 1

Introduction

Vision

People in Torbay can actively engage with and contribute to our built, natural and cultural heritage at all stages of life. Heritage assets are integrated into services for all, providing opportunities for learning, creativity, enjoyment and volunteering. Heritage sites are protected and enhanced to make the most of their historic, environmental and cultural value. Locally and nationally, Torbay is perceived as a heritage destination with a rich and unique history. Heritage attractions are thriving within well-maintained historic townscapes and landscapes. Historic buildings are reused in sustainable and imaginative ways and new developments find inspiration in a distinctive past.

Purposes

The Torbay Heritage Strategy enables our vision to be realised by setting out a clear and focussed agenda for elected Council members and officers at Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture to follow until 2026. It is also a tool to involve and inspire developers, building owners, heritage organisations and voluntary groups.

There is enormous interest in local heritage among Torbay residents and this strategy encourages opportunities for all our communities to understand, enjoy and share our history. It provides protection for the historic environment and highlights our museum and archive collections. It encourages new development that respects and finds inspiration in the distinct characters of our towns and countryside.

Attracting new and younger visitors and lengthening the tourist season are fundamentally important to Torbay's future economy. This strategy puts heritage at the centre of our visitor offer for the first time.

Torbay Council and TDA own and manage a range of historic sites and we support the wider heritage sector across the Bay. This strategy aims to strengthen the sector and explains our priorities for key locations.

The climate emergency affects every area of our work so this strategy considers both the risks to historic assets and how we can decarbonise the way we work at and visit heritage sites.

All of Torbay's human stories have their roots in the land and the sea. The international significance of our geology and the culture associated with it is recognised in the English Riviera's designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark. This strategy supports the Global Geopark as an overarching framework within which the social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of conserving our heritage are fully utilised to build a thriving future.

Approach

Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture commissioned an independent heritage consultancy, Heritage Arts and People (HAP), in January 2020. The approach was to consult widely both internally and externally at the start of the process and to develop the Torbay Heritage Strategy in response.

There was an online residents' consultation that received 745 responses. It found that local people care deeply about special places and are enthusiastic about opportunities for greater engagement as

visitors, volunteers and event attendees. This strategy was created in response to the priorities, concerns and ideas raised by this consultation.

There was also a stakeholders' gathering for heritage sector organisations, in addition to individual meetings, and many local heritage organisations have kindly contributed their expertise and views.

From this process, we drew out a series of stories that make Torbay special and developed a set of objectives around them.

The list of objectives is set out in full at the conclusion of part 1, on pages 12-13. Some of these objectives will be fully achievable by 2026, while others will progress as part of a longer-term process.

In Part 2, we explore each story in more detail and list its main historical assets. Key sites are presented in order of priority for action, using a 'traffic light' system. A table shows the objectives associated with each story and lists how we will know if we are on course to achieve them. The strategy does not set out individual tasks – these are set in a complementary Annual Heritage Action Plan.

In addition to the main stories, we examine cross-cutting issues and consider how heritage relates to wider public services in 'Heritage sector and services'.

It should be noted that the latter stages this work were undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic, in unprecedented conditions. The demands on local authorities and the availability and focus of external funding in the coming months and years is unknown at the time of writing, so the objectives in this documents will need to adapt to the future context. The role of heritage in Torbay's recovery is considered in more detail in the 'Emerging stories' section.

Policy context

The Torbay Heritage Strategy does not exist in isolation; it supports and is supported by a series of interlocking policy documents. As heritage interacts with so many aspects of life, this strategy complements Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture's approach to a wide range of policy areas and functions within the context of national and local planning.

National

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It states very clearly the importance of the conserving and enhancing the historic environment and a wide range of heritage assets.

Torbay

[Torbay Council's Corporate Plan](#)

The Corporate Plan articulates at a strategic level the ambitions of the Council and the principles within which the Council will operate.

[Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030](#) provides the basis for planning decisions within Torbay. It has five overarching aspirations, including the protection and enhancement of a superb environment. It requires that new development sustains and enhances historic features that make an important contribution to Torbay's built and natural setting and heritage.

[Enjoy, talk, do, be: a cultural strategy for Torbay and its communities 2014-24](#) recognises that involvement in heritage activities provides a sense of connection that helps maintain social capital in a time of significant change.

[Torbay Economic strategy 2017-22](#) identifies tourism as a key sector and recognises the value of local heritage assets to growing the visitor economy

[English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2017-21](#) states that cultural tourism can and should be increased in Torbay.

The [Urban Design Guide](#) Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in 2007. A new document is expected as part of the Local Plan review. It will be to guide the general form and design of future development within Torbay, with consideration to Torbay's unique environment, townscape character and urban form and heritage.

This [Greenspace Strategy](#) outlines how Torbay Council and the community, intend to deliver and maintain high quality green spaces which enable equal access and opportunity for all, as well as protecting and enhancing the local environment.

In May 2020 WSP were commissioned to produce a Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Torbay. As part of the data gathering for this process, heritage assets will be included in the assessment of trip generators and attraction.

Local

[South Devon AONB Management Plan 2019-2024](#) commits to conserving and enhancing the AONB's historic features and distinctive vernacular buildings as part of a living and working landscape.

[Torquay, Paignton, Brixham Neighbourhood Plans 2019](#) all aim to protect and enhance local identity and the historic environment.

[Policies diagram and adoption process flowchart](#)

Torbay's history in brief

The foundation of Torbay's exceptionally long human story is its geology. The sea carved out the Bay from the soft red sandstone, leaving the limestone headlands at Hope's Nose and Berry Head.

Torbay's geology has fascinated scientists for centuries and is the source of the name used around the world for the period in which these features formed: the Devonian. Over millions of years, the action of the sea on the limestone created a number of caves such as Kents Cavern in Torquay and Windmill Hill Cavern in Brixham. Discoveries in the caves have revealed human occupation going back half a million years, making Torbay internationally important for Palaeolithic archaeology. There is evidence here of three of the four human species ever to have lived in Britain.

Later, Neolithic and Bronze-Age farmers left signs of their passing at Wall's Hill and Broadsands tomb. This was the beginning of the small-scale farming and fishing that were the way of life for generations of Torbay people who shaped the landscape we see today.

We currently know little about Torbay during Roman times, but new discoveries in other parts of Devon are transforming our understanding of the period and we hope to find more local evidence in the coming years.

In the Middle Ages, Torquay developed around the Saxon hamlet of Torre (from 'tor' meaning hill or craggy peak). Torre Abbey, one of the most important historic buildings in the Bay, was the base for the monks who controlled much of the Bay and are credited with building the first fishing quay. Paignton appeared in the Domesday Book in 1086 as Peinton. The earliest settlement is believed to have taken place around 700 AD – the name means 'the farm of Paega's people'. Meanwhile, Brixham evolved from the Saxon 'Brioc's Ham'. Higher Brixham was originally a rural settlement while in Lower Brixham fishing was the main activity.

The harbour at Brixham grew due to the safe anchorage created by the shape of the Bay. William of Orange, later King William III of England, landed with his army there in 1688. It was used by the naval fleet during times of crisis, prompting the construction of the Berry Head Forts during the Napoleonic Wars.

Napoleon himself was an early tourist attraction on a prison ship anchored off Torquay, while the families of naval officers came to settle in the area. Torbay became famous for its mild climate and beauty and a resort began to grow at Torquay. From the Georgian period and accelerating in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, the grand villas and mansions that give much of the town its distinct character were built for visiting gentry. The town's prosperity was reflected in fine civic buildings such as the Town Hall. Agatha Christie was born in Torquay in 1890 and spent much of her life in Torbay.

As mass tourism became a possibility with the development of the railways, so new structures sprang up in Torquay and Paignton, including promenades, parks and gardens, theatres, picture houses and dance halls.

Brixham in the nineteenth century was a thriving fishing port, and it was here that deep sea trawling was pioneered, a development that had a profound impact on all the sea fishing communities of Northern Europe.

In the twentieth century, Torbay played an important role in the First and Second World Wars, as a site for war hospitals, training and troop billeting, and an embarkation point for the D-Day landings.

In the post-war period British tourists took advantage of new cheap ways to travel abroad and Torbay's resorts felt the effects of a decrease in the popularity of seaside holidays. Torbay became a popular retirement and relocation destination for people from other parts of the UK, in particular the English Midlands. Being coastal, Torbay has always welcomed overseas travellers, and in the twenty-first century it became home to a new Polish community, among others.

The thread that runs throughout our history is the coastal landscape. The richness of the sea and the land and the mild climate have attracted people for millennia and continue to do so. Countless generations have left their mark here, shaping the rural and urban landscapes that we know today. These layers of history are an essential part of Torbay's unique character and the foundation of a dynamic, inclusive heritage for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

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Heritage assets and designations

Historic England defines a heritage asset as:

‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority.’

When producing this strategy, we undertook a detailed assessment that rated Torbay’s designated assets according to their significance, vulnerability to climate change and other threats, their potential for viable use and their accessibility. The types of designation included are listed below.

In addition, we believe that although they are not part of the planning system, artefacts and archives profoundly enrich our understanding of places and should be cherished and understood in tandem with them. Torbay holds collections of enormous interest, including items of international importance. Therefore, these types of asset are also listed in relation to the places and stories they illuminate.

Listed buildings are considered to be of national importance and are therefore protected. Listed buildings come in three categories of significance’:

- Grade I for buildings of the highest significance
- Grade II*
- Grade II

There are currently 865 listed buildings in Torbay. 96% of these are Grade II listed. In the limited space of this strategy we consider Grade I and Grade II* buildings individually while Grade II listings are largely considered collectively as part of Conservation Areas. Occasionally a Grade II listed building is considered individually where it is of particular relevance.

Conservation Areas exist to manage and protect the special architectural and historic interest of a place. There are some extra planning controls and considerations in place to protect them. Torbay currently contains 24 Conservation Areas. There are 16 in Torquay, four in Paignton and four in Brixham.

Scheduled Monuments are important historic buildings or sites that are not used as a dwellings or for worship. There are currently 13 Scheduled Monuments in Torbay.

Registered Parks and Gardens are planned open spaces such as private gardens, town squares, parks and cemeteries. There are currently six Registered Parks and Gardens in Torbay.

Environmental designations

Many heritage sites in Torbay also have high environmental value and so have multiple designations. This strategy complements Torbay Council’s work on green infrastructure and we believe that our approach to heritage and the environment must be co-ordinated. Therefore, this strategy takes account of environmental designations where they apply to heritage sites. These include:

- UNESCO Global Geopark
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- National Nature Reserves (NNR)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- Public Right of Way (PROW)

Assets beyond Torbay

There are some heritage assets beyond the boundary of Torbay that are intrinsically connected to our heritage and are therefore included in this strategy. All of the sites in this category are in the South Hams and are managed by the National Trust. We intend to work closely with colleagues at South Hams District Council and the National Trust to ensure that we develop a connected and consistent approach to these important places.

There are no known Protected Wrecks or other maritime heritage assets within the boundary of Torbay Council's remit as a planning authority, which extends as far as the low water mark. Beyond this, responsibility for heritage assets at sea lies with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). We intend to maintain a close working relationship with the MMO on matters related to maritime heritage in Tor Bay.

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Vulnerabilities and opportunities

Vulnerabilities

Climate emergency

Climate change threatens Torbay's historic buildings, landscapes and archaeology in a number of ways:

- Coastal flooding as the sea level rises
- Increased coastal erosion from wave action
- Changes to habitable ranges of invasive vegetation, fungus and pests
- Damage from increased rainfall
- Soil instability and chemical changes
- Different planting necessary in parks, gardens and farmland

Unsuitable development

Heritage assets in both urban and rural areas can be vulnerable to development that changes their character. This type of threat can range from large new developments that overwhelm the historic character of a whole area to small changes to individual buildings. Over time, the incremental effect of these changes can erode the qualities that make a place special.

Lack of investment

English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2017-21 identified under-investment over many decades in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham town centres as a significant issue. The risk to heritage assets is a lack of appropriate maintenance that can lead to an 'unloved' appearance, eroding the special sense of place, and to more serious problems with the fabric and structure of buildings.

Lack of local access

Heritage is a greatest risk of being lost if it is not experienced and valued by local people. A particular problem for areas that have long-established tourism industries is that residents can feel shut out of key sites that are focussed on attracting visitors.

63% of respondents to the Torbay Heritage Survey 2020 offered suggestions on how to help local people better engage with heritage. The most popular suggestion (25% of all answers) was better and more easily accessible information. Responses showed many people support some form of financial benefit for residents to enable greater access to heritage sites.

There was also a strong feeling that inadequate or expensive parking was a barrier. When combined with our commitment to decarbonising Torbay, it is clear that better access to heritage sites by walking, cycling and public transport is needed.

Sector fragmentation

The heritage sector in Torbay is currently fragmented, with few opportunities for collaboration and mutual support between different types of heritage organisations. These range from large attractions to small voluntary groups and individual researchers. This has an impact on the ability of the sector to co-ordinate funding bids, share knowledge, manage joint projects, produce consistent visitor information and attract volunteers.

Opportunities

Heritage assets

Torbay boasts an extraordinary range of heritage assets spanning millennia of human activity. Our collections, monuments, landscapes and buildings connect us to stories of international significance. The popular perception of Torbay as a seaside holiday destination has obscured the area's fascinating history and now is the time for its importance to be more widely recognised.

English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

All of human history in Torbay has been shaped to some extent by the underlying geology, so our UNESCO Global Geopark designation offers an umbrella under which all aspects of heritage can be explored. The designation presents an opportunity to celebrate Torbay's geological heritage and use it as a catalyst for tourism, education and outdoor activity. Recent research for the English Riviera Destination Management Plan showed a significant increase in awareness of the designation since 2013 and highlighted the potential to further define and promote it.

Local engagement

The Torbay Heritage Survey 2020 showed an enormous interest in heritage among local residents. 99% of respondents said that experiencing the heritage around them was important to their quality of life, with 77% saying it was very important. Many respondents were keen to participate in more active care of heritage assets. Anecdotal evidence from heritage site managers suggests relatively low levels of volunteering at some sites, so this suggests that more people would volunteer with the right encouragement and communication.

The huge public interest in the future of iconic buildings such as Oldway Mansion, Torquay Pavilion and Paignton Picture House shows that local people are passionate about protecting much-loved sites. Groups devoted to Torbay's heritage on social media attract thousands of followers and contributors. Our residents are eager to engage with local history and there is great potential to involve more people in collective efforts to care for and promote our heritage.

New tourist audiences

The [English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2017-21 evidence base](#) revealed that among tourists who had considered Torbay as a destination and decided to go elsewhere, 64% cited 'history, heritage and culture' as being very important to their choice. In contrast, just 14% of visitors to Torbay said that they intended to visit a historic site. This indicates that there is a very large, untapped and younger market of holidaymakers that could be attracted by Torbay's outstanding heritage.

Development and reuse

Torbay's heritage can inspire new development that enhances our historic environment and makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Meanwhile, historic buildings can be protected for the future by finding new and viable uses consistent with their conservation. Torbay Council encourages the use of traditional materials for all development and refurbishment proposals where it is appropriate to do so, including those materials that are locally sourced.

Objectives

ID	Objective
SEC01	Everyone in Torbay, including looked-after children, people with support needs and deprived communities, can access, experience and enjoy heritage.
SEC02	Torbay attracts large numbers of visitors seeking a heritage destination.
SEC03	Torbay's heritage sector is strong, connected, inclusive and collaborative.
SEC04	Heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.
SEC05	The special and distinctive characteristics of Torbay's Conservation Areas are preserved and enhanced.
SEC06	Building owners, retailers and developers are encouraged and equipped to enhance the built environment in historic areas.
SEC07	Public spaces in historic areas are easy to navigate and enhanced by appropriate street furniture and signage.
SEC08	Walking and cycling to Torbay's heritage sites and in the historic environment is easy, enjoyable and popular.
SEC09	Collections related to Torbay within the Devon Archives are secure, well managed and easily accessible.
SEC10	Torbay's Historic Environment Record is comprehensive and well managed.
GEO1	National and international visitors are attracted to the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (ERUGGp). Visitors and residents experience, enjoy and understand the Geopark through easily accessible, high quality and consistent information and opportunities for engagement at multiple sites.
GEO2	The UNESCO Global Geopark designation is secure for the future and the work of the English Riviera Geopark Organisation (ERGO) is sufficiently resourced to deliver its aims.
GEO3	Natural sites where underlying geology is most accessible and visible are in excellent condition.
GEO4	Local stone worked features in churches and other historic buildings are in excellent condition.
HMN01	Torbay's story of early human evolution and migration, and the role of archaeological pioneers here, is widely known, valued and celebrated.
HMN02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's internationally important prehistoric sites and collections at multiple locations.
HMN03	Ashhole Cavern is managed appropriately and protected for the future.
MED01	Torre Abbey, including its grounds and collections, is conserved and enhanced, and its future is secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site, accessible open space and high-profile event venue.
MED02	The special character of Old Paignton Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.

MED03	The Bishop's Palace is managed appropriately and protected for the future.
AGR01	The special character of Torbay's agricultural landscape is preserved and enhanced
AGR02	Access to and around rural areas is easy and enjoyable by public transport, walking and cycling.
AGR03	Walls Hill ancient field system is managed appropriately and protected for the future.
AGR04	Rural sites with significant historic assets are in Countryside Stewardship where appropriate.
NPL01	Battery Gardens is appropriately maintained and protected for the future, and visitors are encouraged to engage with the site's heritage.
NPL02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's Napoleonic heritage at multiple locations.
TRW01	The special character of Brixham Town Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.
TRW02	<i>Vigilance</i> is restored and functioning as a high quality, popular heritage asset for Brixham, engaging local residents and visitors with trawling history and natural heritage.
RST01	Oldway Mansion, including its outbuildings and grounds, is conserved and enhanced, and its future is secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site and accessible open space.
RST02	Torquay Pavilion is conserved and enhanced and in sustainable commercial use.
RST03	Lupton House is conserved and enhanced, and its Italianate garden is restored.
RST04	Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens are maintained and protected for the future.
RST05	The special characters of Roundham and Paignton Harbour and Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas area preserved and enhanced.
RST06	Babbacombe Cliff Railway is recognised as a heritage asset and is protected for the future.
LIT01	Paignton Picture House is restored and converted to new use. It is well used by the community and is an anchor heritage site within a regenerated town centre.
LIT02	People seeking an Agatha Christie experience are attracted to Torbay in significant numbers.
LIT03	Visitors and residents experience, enjoy, understand and contribute to Torbay's literary heritage.

Part 2

Heritage services and sector

Spatial planning

Conserving and enhancing Torbay's distinctive qualities, including our rich built, historic, marine and natural environment, is one of the Local Plan's Strategic Aspirations. During its emergence, this guiding principle influenced strategic decisions about where future development can happen and where large development allocations have been located. It has helped to shape detailed placemaking and design policies. This link is set to continue through the Local Plan Review and future iterations of the Plan.

Conservation Area Appraisals

An appraisal defines the characteristics of a Conservation Area and evaluates what makes it special. It enables developers, Council members and planning officers to assess the impact of a proposed development and it is a key tool in managing change within historic urban areas. Torbay has 24 Conservation Areas with a high concentration (16) in Torquay, many of which are adjoining. At the time of writing, the most recent CAA was undertaken almost a decade ago, and more than half are at least 15 years old. There is a clear need for all CAAs to be reviewed to provide up-to-date tools for today's development context, and the case for amalgamating some Conservation Areas in Torquay should be considered. Updated CAAs should provide a clear and accessible tool for communicating with building owners.

Historic Environment Record

Historic Environment Records (HER) bring together information relating to landscapes, buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and archaeological finds within local authority areas. The Torbay HER provides essential information to inform planning decisions and it is available for public enjoyment, benefit and use. It is currently managed by the Historic Environment team at Devon County Council under a contract with Torbay Council. The administrative history of Torbay's HER has led to a backlog of entries accumulated in past years that is not covered by this arrangement. Torbay Council is committed to finding a solution to avoid historical and archaeological information being missed in the planning process.

Archive service

Local authorities are required to provide an archive service that acts as a place of deposit for all official records. They are also treasure troves of documents, photographs and recordings relating to local people and places. Archive collections are the cornerstone of historical research and maintaining access to them is fundamentally important to a dynamic understanding of our past. Archive collections relating to Torquay have always been integral to Devon Archives and continue to be held at Devon Heritage Centre in Exeter. The service is managed by the South West Heritage Trust under a contract with Torbay Council. The arrangement means that material relating to Torbay is cared for to the highest standard and remains at the heart of the county's written record. A service introduced in 2020 allows local people to pre-order documents from Devon Heritage Centre to be viewed at Torre Abbey in quarterly sessions, an initiative supported by Torbay Council.

Heritage destination marketing

The English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2017-21 identified the need for a better link between culture and tourism. It emphasised the opportunity for heritage to attract new audiences and extend the season. Research for this strategy showed that heritage was not promoted as a

feature of visiting Torbay and that information about historic sites was difficult to find. There is a clear need for partners to work together to develop Torbay’s heritage offer.

Heritage sector development

A thriving heritage sector depends on a mutually supportive network of diverse organisations that can share information and work together. At the time of writing, there is no structure in Torbay to facilitate this, leading to the issues described in ‘Vulnerabilities’. Opportunities to set up a Torbay heritage forum or similar networking mechanism should be explored for the benefit of the whole sector.

Integrated heritage

Experiencing, enjoying and caring for heritage can bring a huge range of social, cultural, economic, health and environmental benefits. We believe that our approach to heritage must be integrated with across all aspects of Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture’s work.

Climate emergency

In 2019, Torbay Council declared a climate emergency. Torbay Council is a partner of and supports the work of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, which is aiming to help us get to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest and prepare Devon for the necessary adaptation to infrastructure and services required to respond to climate change. As described in ‘Vulnerabilities’, heritage assets are at risk from a changing climate and have a role to play in decarbonising.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
SEC01	Everyone in Torbay, including looked-after children, people with support needs and deprived communities, can access, experience and enjoy heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torbay Council/TDA heritage site managers and colleagues in social care and social services work together to identify opportunities to benefit service users. Our interpretation and communication of heritage reflects and gives voice to diverse audiences. Visitors with a wide range of physical and sensory needs feel welcome at our heritage sites. Visitor data from our sites shows increasingly diverse visitor profile. Organisations in the wider heritage sector are supported to improve inclusivity. A sector-wide initiative to offer benefits to local residents is developed. 	Torbay Council, TDA, Torbay Culture and partner organisations
SEC02	Torbay attracts large numbers of visitors seeking a heritage destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage is a key feature of bay-wide destination marketing and the subject of specific campaigns. Online visitor information specific to heritage is easily accessible and high profile. 	Torbay Council and TDA in partnership with the

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key heritage attractions promote links to other heritage sites. • Large increase in percentage of visitors citing heritage as a reason for visiting. 	English Riviera BID
SEC03	Torbay's heritage sector is strong, connected, inclusive and collaborative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regular heritage forum for Torbay is established and self-sustaining, and includes organisations of all sizes. • Increased numbers of volunteers and voluntary opportunities across the sector. • Partnership projects are successful in working strategically and attracting external funding. 	
SEC04	Heritage assets in Torbay are protected from the effects of climate change and carbon reduction is central to their management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New flood defence schemes recognise local distinctiveness in design and materials and take into account relationship to heritage assets. • All Torbay/TDA managed heritage assets with on-site staff review working practices to minimise energy and fuel consumption. • Conservation practices at Torbay/TDA managed heritage assets are reviewed to take into account climate issues including flood risk, rainwater and heat protection, effects on building fabric, underlying stability, suitable planting, pests and invasive vegetation. • Updated Conservation Area Appraisals assess risks from climate change and all guidance for building owners includes reference to mitigation and/or carbon reduction measures. • Sustainable transport to all key heritage sites is encouraged and supported. 	Torbay Council, TDA, Torbay Culture and partner organisations
SEC05	The special and distinctive characteristics of Torbay's Conservation Areas are preserved and enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Conservation Area Appraisals are reviewed, updated and adopted where necessary. • Building owners and managers in Conservation Areas feel supported. • Proposals that enhance heritage assets or their setting are supported, subject to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies. 	Torbay Council in partnership with building owners, developers and local communities.

SEC06	Building owners, retailers and developers are encouraged and equipped to enhance the built environment in historic areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal the architectural heritage of their setting are supported. Shop front design guides for Torquay, Paignton and Brixham are published and promoted. Updated Urban Design Guide and Residential Design Guide. 	Torbay Council in partnership with building owners, managers and developers
SEC07	Public spaces in historic areas are easy to navigate and enhanced by appropriate street furniture and signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unnecessary street furniture and signage is removed. Design of all new and replacement street furniture references and enhances the architectural heritage of its setting. Wayfinding in the public realm clearly and consistently aids navigation to key heritage sites and around the historic environment without unnecessary visual intrusion. 	Torbay Council
SEC08	Walking and cycling to Torbay's heritage sites and in the historic environment is easy, enjoyable and popular.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key heritage sites are integrated into the new Torbay Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Promotion of walking and cycling is integral to all heritage site visitor information. 	Torbay Council
SEC09	Collections related to Torbay within the Devon Archives are secure, well managed and easily accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current service is maintained. Projects to enable further conservation, cataloguing and research of Torbay collections are supported. Torbay residents are actively engaged in archive research and enjoy easy access to the collections. 	Torbay Council and South West Heritage Trust
SEC10	Torbay's Historic Environment Record is comprehensive and well managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current service is maintained. The backlog of entries is added. 	Torbay Council and Devon County Council

Our stories

Sites key

High priority for action
Medium priority for action
Low priority for action
Outside Torbay

Geology

As well as creating the tapestry of valleys, ridges, cliffs and beaches that give Torbay its unique character, geology has always shaped human activity here, as we can see in the harbours, farmland, settlement patterns and building materials. It also supports rare habitats for many important plant and animal species.

Torbay is famous for its limestone cliffs and rich, exposed geological heritage, from Devonian reefs to Pleistocene caves. The arms of the Bay are formed by massive limestone headlands at Hope's Nose and Berry Head, while softer Permian sandstone forms the lower lying land. The famous red cliff exposures can be seen between Hollicombe Head and Corbyn's Head. Over many millennia, the action of water on the limestone created caves such as Kents Cavern.

The geology of Torbay was first mapped in the 1830s. Geological pioneers Roderick Murchison and Adam Sedgwick realised that fossils found in the limestones at sites in Torbay, such as Lummaton Quarry, gave vital evidence of what was happening to the Earth 409-363 million years ago. They named this geological period the Devonian, the term which is still used globally today.

Torbay's limestone and sandstone were massively mined and can be seen in many buildings such as Torre Abbey and Torquay Town Hall. Mines also sprang up where the limestone had metamorphosed into marble. In the nineteenth century, Torbay marble was crafted into exquisite interior features, art and jewellery for wealthy customers. Marble objects from this period can be seen in many churches and grand houses in Torbay.

English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

The English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark exists to raise the profile of the English Riviera through its geological heritage. It is managed by the English Riviera Geopark Organisation (ERGO) which is made up of a range of agencies including Torbay Council and TDA and supported by a wider network of members who share its vision. Torbay Council hosts the ERUGGp Co-ordinator.

UNESCO Global Geopark designation is subject to review every four years. In 2020, the UNESCO Global Geoparks Council decided to renew the English Riviera's status following an assessment in 2019. This success was testament to the work of all the partners who worked together to support the designation, in line with the ten year cultural strategy.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Coast/beaches	n/a	In parts: AONB, PRoW, SSSI, LNR, NNR, SAC	Multiple owners	
Ashhole Cavern, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	Y
Windmill Hill Cave, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	
Kent's Cavern, Torquay	Scheduled Monument	SSSI	Private owner	
Grade I listed churches: Church of All Saints; Church of St John the Evangelist; Roman Church of Our Lady, Help of Christians and St Denis	Grade I listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Grade II* listed churches: Church of St Luke, Torquay; Church of St Mary Magdalene, Torquay; Church of St Mary, Collaton St Mary; Church of St Matthew, Chelston; Church of St Matthias, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Barton Road Cemetary, Torquay	Registered Parks and Gardens		Torbay Council	
Devonian type locality, Lummaton	n/a	SSSI	Private owner	
Bishops Walk	ProW		Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	

Other assets

- Exceptional fossil and geological specimen collections and an extensive Victorian geological library at Torquay Museum. The collections include thousands of specimens of Devonian fossil corals and creatures and local minerals.

- The UK's only substantial collection of South Devon and Torbay marble objects, held at Torquay Museum. This includes extremely fine and rare work such inlaid pictures and platters, tables, vases and jewellery. There are also marble samples used at the factories and a selection of photographs of the industry.
- Marble objects in the collections of Torre Abbey

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
GEO01	National and international visitors are attracted to the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark (ERUGGp). Visitors and residents experience, enjoy and understand the Geopark through easily accessible, high quality and consistent information and opportunities for engagement at multiple sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ERUGGp partners are consistently and actively promoting the ERUGGp as part of their own activities. • There is an increase in visitors citing the ERUGGp as a reason for their trip. • There is an increase in understanding and engagement among residents. • ERUGGp has up to date, well maintained and effective communications tools. • English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark Organisation (ERGO) is delivering high quality education and outreach outcomes. • Wayfinding and interpretation of geology is consistent, high quality and widely available across partner sites and in the wider landscape. • Building owners and site managers are well supported to interpret and promote their assets within the ERUGGp brand. 	All ERGO members and partners
GEO2	The UNESCO Global Geopark designation is secure for the future and the work of the ERGO is sufficiently resourced to deliver its aims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torbay Council and TDA are key ERUGGp partners and are providing the most appropriate hosting for staff. • All members of ERGO, their organisations and staff are actively contributing to and supporting the ERUGGp at the same or higher level than in previous years. 	All ERGO members and partners
GEO03	Natural sites where underlying geology is most accessible and visible are in excellent condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In determining planning applications regard is given to impact of proposals on the condition and public accessibility and interpretation of natural geological features. 	Torbay Council, TCCT and ERGO in partnership with local landowners,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal natural geological features are supported. Torbay Council and Natural England are working together to encourage and support site managers and private owners, including Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, in the conservation and enhancement of natural geological features. 	land managers and developers
GEO04	Local stone worked features in churches and other historic buildings are in excellent condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In determining planning applications relating to historic buildings, regard is given to the significance of existing local stone features. Proposals for new developments which enhance or better reveal the significance of worked local stone within the historic setting are supported. Torbay Council and Historic England are working together to encourage and support building owners in the conservation and enhancement of historic local stone features. Torbay Council and TDA are conserving and enhancing worked stone features in all historic buildings in our care. 	Torbay Council, Historic England in partnership with building owners including Diocese of Exeter

Early humans

Torbay is home to collections and sites of international importance in the story of human evolution and migration.

At Kents Cavern there is evidence of three of the four human species known to have lived in Britain. Finds at the site include a fragment of jawbone dated to period between 44,200 and 41,500 years ago, when a brief warm spell between ice ages made this part of Britain temporarily habitable. Scientific dating in 2011 revealed the true age of the fragment and established it as the oldest direct evidence of modern humans in Northern Europe. It has changed how we understand the interaction between modern humans and Neanderthals on the very edge of the habitable world.

The jawbone was originally found in 1927 by Arthur Ogilvy, curator of Torquay Museum. The find came towards the end of a remarkable period of discovery in Torbay's caves that began in the early nineteenth century. A series of explorers were drawn there, most notably the archaeologist William Pengelly who excavated Kents Cavern over a period of 15 years. His finds included tools, animal bones and hand axes from humans who lived over 450,000 years ago. The meticulous methods he developed in Torbay laid the foundation for all modern cave archaeology and his diaries offer fascinating insights into his life and work.

Ashhole Cavern in Brixham was excavated in the nineteenth century and evidence of occupation from the Neolithic to the Roman period was discovered.

Windmill Hill Cave, also in Brixham, is a system of galleries and smaller chambers lying mostly beneath a house in Mount Pleasant Rd. William Pengelly's excavations here in the nineteenth century revealed a rich assemblage of animal remains and flint tools that provided the first evidence for extinct animal species and humans co-existing.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Ashhole Cavern, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	Y
Windmill Hill Cave, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	
Kent's Cavern, Torquay	Scheduled Monument	SSSI	Private owner	

Other assets

Torquay Museum holds over 32,000 specimens relating to the quaternary period in South Devon and a unique related archive. This collection is Designated by Arts Council England and is of national and international significance. Its highlights are numerous and include:

- KC4 human maxilla, the jawbone that provides the earliest evidence of anatomically modern humans in North West Europe

- William Pengelly’s Windmill Hill Cave and Kents Cavern notebooks, documenting the first excavations to unlock the true antiquity of humans anywhere in the world.
- The oldest bifacial tools discovered in the UK, over 525,000 years old
- Very early specimens of Cave lion and ancestral bear *Ursus deningeri*
- A selection of Neanderthal tools including very rare leafpoints
- Unique evidence for cannibalism in the Mesolithic and surviving human DNA in 9,000-year-old bones.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
HMN01	Torbay’s story of early human evolution and migration, and the role of archaeological pioneers here, is widely known, valued and celebrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The early human story and its discovery is a key feature of all bay-wide tourism marketing and Global Geopark communications. • Schools and community groups in Torbay are supported and encouraged to engage with prehistoric sites and collections. • Torquay Museum is adequately resourced to conserve and interpret its early human collection to a level appropriate to its importance. • A higher proportion of visitors are aware of and actively seeking to engage with the early human story when choosing Torbay as a destination. 	Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture in partnership with ERGO, ERBID, key heritage sites and schools.
HMN02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay’s internationally important prehistoric sites and collections at multiple locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The links between locations and collections is integral to all key sites’ communications and interpretation. • Key sites successfully attract funding through local partnerships to create excellent public engagement opportunities. 	Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture in partnership with ERGO and key heritage sites
HMN03	Ashhole Cavern is managed appropriately and protected for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A management plan is agreed between Torbay Council, TCCT and Historic England, and an ongoing review process is in place. • Ashhole Cavern is removed from the Heritage at Risk Register. • The potential for a wider Monument Management Scheme (MMS) for Torbay is explored. 	Torbay Council, TCCT and Historic England

Monastic and medieval

Medieval Torbay was the location of some significant religious sites including Torre Abbey in Torquay and the Bishop’s Palace in Paignton, a residence of the Bishops of Exeter for 500 years. Local landowning families also built fine country homes. Outside these impressive buildings, the area was sparsely populated, although it is thought that the extent of settlement may have been underestimated as evidence is likely to have been obscured by later buildings in the urban areas. New developments in our towns may reveal archaeology that adds to our understanding of this period.

By far the most important building in medieval Torbay was Torre Abbey. It was founded in 1196 and built from stone quarried from Corbyn Head. The Abbey became enormously wealthy and influential, controlling much of the land and activity in Torbay. It is believed that the monks built the first fish quay, giving Torquay its name. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, Torre Abbey passed into private ownership until 1930, when it was acquired by Torquay Council.

Today Torre Abbey houses a museum, art gallery, event venue and gardens. It is entering the final phase of an extensive programme of renovation made possible by grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, English Heritage and the Friends of Torre Abbey. Torre Abbey is the jewel in Torbay’s medieval story and has the potential to be the focal point and engine of the Bay’s arts and heritage offer. However, its future depends on its sustainability as a profitable venue. The Torquay Neighbourhood Plan includes an aspiration to transform the area in front of the Abbey to become a green space for summer festivals, music and events.

There are also several listed medieval churches in Torbay, the most significant of which is the Church of St John the Baptist in Paignton. It was founded in the twelfth century and has many elaborate and interesting features, including the most spectacular chantry chapel in Devon outside Exeter Cathedral.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Old Paignton	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Bishops Palace, Paignton	Grade II* listed building Scheduled Monument		Diocese of Exeter	Y
Spanish Barn, Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building		Torbay Council	
Cockington village	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	

Higher Brixham	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Church of St John the Baptist	Grade I listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Grade II* listed churches: Church of St Andrew, Torquay; Church of St George and St Mary, Cockington; Church of St Mary the Virgin, Brixham; Church of St Mary the Virgin, Churston Ferrers	Grade II* listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Ilsham Manor Oratory	Grade II* listed building		Private owner	Y
St Michael's Chapel, Chapel Hill	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Blagdon Manor, Paignton	Grade II* listed building		Private owner	
Kirkham House, Paignton	Grade II* listed building		English Heritage	
Compton Castle	Grade I listed building Scheduled Monument		NT	

Other assets

- The Cary family archive collection is held at Devon Heritage Centre and includes thousands of documents from the thirteenth century onwards. It is currently awaiting cataloguing.
- Medieval artefacts in the collections of Torre Abbey, including suits of armour, decorative tiles and stonework.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
MED01	Torre Abbey, including its grounds and collections, is conserved and enhanced, and its future is secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site, accessible open space and high-profile event venue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 3 funding application to NLHF is successful and progress of the project is on schedule. • Torre Abbey is financially self-sustaining as an attraction and commercial event venue with integral café. • Torre Abbey's setting is restored, with well-maintained grounds extending to the seafront, 	Torbay Council and TDA

		<p>connected to wider walking and cycling routes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities use the open space extensively for outdoor recreation. • Volunteers are actively engaged in a wide range of roles. • Visitor numbers to all parts of the site continue to increase. • The Cary family archive collection is fully catalogued and research is encouraged. 	
MED02	The special character of Old Paignton Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of new sea defences protects the Conservation Area from flooding while recognising its distinct character (see SEC04). • Further loss of natural, local slate roofing is discouraged and its use is supported in new buildings and restoration works. • Traffic in the Conservation Area is reduced. 	Torbay Council in partnership with building owners, developers and local communities.
MED03	The Bishop's Palace is managed appropriately and protected for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No immediate risk of decay. • All interested and responsible parties are supported in carrying out an ongoing management plan. • The Bishop's Palace is removed from the Heritage at Risk Register. 	Torbay Council, Historic England and Diocese of Exeter



Agricultural life

Torbay's combination of fertile soil, sheltered coast and mild climate has enabled people to feed their families well for thousands of years. Small scale farming and fishing were the main occupations of communities here for most of Torbay's past and have created the rural landscape we know today. The agricultural countryside within the South Devon AONB is recognised a historic asset of national importance.

Settled farming began in the Neolithic period. Traces of these early farmers is evident in a chambered tomb near Broadsands and burial mounds at Beacon Hill and Barton Pines. Later Iron Age field patterns can be seen at Walls Hill. The local Dumnonii people cultivated the land in their own style throughout the Roman era and beyond, until Anglo-Saxon settlers brought with them an open field system. In later centuries, land ownership was consolidated into manors and estates in the hands of local gentry and religious houses. By the sixteenth century, the land was largely enclosed. It was at this time that the characteristic pattern of small, irregular fields and high Devon hedges emerged. Torbay was productive enough to feed its own population and provide victualling to Navy and merchant ships in its harbours.

People in rural Torbay lived on dispersed farmsteads or in small villages. Cottages and farm buildings were built of local stone and cob and were often thatched. Cockington is the most well-known historic village in Torbay and is cherished for its air of timelessness. Agricultural tools and domestic objects held at local museums, in particular the extensive collection at Torquay Museum, have great potential to connect us to past generations.

Other historic features of the rural landscape include sunken lanes, hedgerows, orchards, ancient trees, village greens and traditional signage. These features create the distinctive character of rural Devon, provide vital habitats for wildlife and give structure to transport routes and green spaces.

The semi-natural countryside offers simple and low-cost opportunities to improve physical and mental wellbeing through outdoor exercise, a sense of peace and space, and a connection to the shared past. It is also a working landscape, managed by farming communities whose long heritage continues into a living modern culture.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Prehistoric field system at Walls Hill	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	
Agricultural landscape including field patterns, orchards, hedgerows, soils	Grade II listing of buildings	In parts: AONB, SSSI, NNR, LNR	Multiple owners	
Spanish Barn, Torre Abbey	Grade I listed building		Torbay Council	

Conservation Areas: Churston Ferrers, Cockington and Galmpton	Conservation Area			
Conservation Areas: Maidencombe and Shorton	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Occombe Farm	n/a	LNR, SSSI	Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	
Two bowl barrows at Beacon Hill	Scheduled Monument		Private, multiple owners	
Two prehistoric hilltop enclosures, a ditch system and four bowl barrows, Marldon	Scheduled Monument		Private, multiple owners	
Chambered tomb, 630m north west of Elberry Farm	Scheduled Monument		Private owner	
Manor Farmhouse, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		Private owner	

Other assets

- Torquay Museum houses one of the most important regional folk life collections in the UK. It contains hundreds of rare, pre-industrial rural life objects such as tools and furniture, many in a uniquely Devonian style.
- Relevant archive collections held at Devon Heritage Centre include tithe maps and apportionments, manorial documents, farm account books, sale catalogues, diaries and early photographs of rural life.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
AGR01	The special character of Torbay's agricultural landscape is preserved and enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic agricultural features such as orchards and hedgerows are key assets in the new Torbay Green Infrastructure Plan. • Traditional and local materials are used in new developments in rural areas. • Proposals that enhance the rural landscape are supported, subject to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies. • Regard is given to the impact of proposals on views of and from 	Torbay Council in partnership with local communities and farmers

		designated protected areas within Torbay.	
AGR02	Access to and around rural areas is easy and enjoyable by public transport, walking and cycling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectivity to and within rural areas is integrated into the new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Torbay. • Increased use of walking and cycling routes in rural areas. • The needs of rural communities are appropriately served by public transport. 	Torbay Council
AGR03	Walls Hill ancient field system is managed appropriately and protected for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A management plan is agreed between Torbay Council, TCCT and Historic England, and an ongoing review process is in place. • There is no inappropriate furniture on site. • Invasive vegetation is under control • Measures have been taken to address erosion. 	Torbay Council, TCCT and Historic England
AGR04	Rural sites with significant historic assets are in Countryside Stewardship where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torbay Council, Natural England, Historic England and landowners work together to identify sites where Stewardship could be beneficial. 	Natural England in partnership with Torbay Council and local landowners

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Napoleon

Torbay's rapid development in the nineteenth century owed much to the Napoleonic wars. Napoleon Bonaparte himself even became the Bay's first star attraction.

The wars prevented wealthy Britons from travelling to mainland Europe, so they began to look for destinations closer to home. At this time, the harbours of Torbay were frequently used as anchorage for the Channel Fleet that was protecting England from invasion by Napoleon. The families of high-ranking naval officers visited Torquay, further enhancing the town's reputation. Meanwhile, all along Torbay's coast, business boomed for local smugglers of French brandy.

The fear of an attack on England by the French led to a decision to strengthen the coastal defences at Berry Head with a new fort and redoubt to protect the existing batteries. The remains there today represent an exceptionally well-preserved survival from the Napoleonic era that offers great insight into strategic military thinking of the time. The site is managed by the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust for the enjoyment of all, and there is great potential to extend the interpretation of its history.

After the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Napoleon was captured by the British and held on the warship HMS *Bellerophon*. It anchored in Torbay for two days and caused a sensation. Crowds flocked to glimpse him from the shore and even hired boats to get closer to the celebrity prisoner. He was soon removed to St Helena but by now Torbay was on the map.

In subsequent decades, local landowner Sir Lawrence Palk drove the development of Torquay after being inspired by the Italian architecture he saw on the Grand Tour. Torbay's mild climate and beautiful coastline made it an ideal location to import Italian design ideas, so Palk and local dignitary William Kitson commissioned villas and crescents that recreated a Mediterranean atmosphere. New, exclusive residential areas such as the the Warberries and Lincombes became fashionable.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Battery Gardens, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Torbay Council	
Brixham Town	Conservation Area – incomplete CAA and mapping		Private, multiple owners	Y
Berry Head Forts and complex	Grade II* listed building Scheduled Monument	NNR, AONB, SSSI, SAC	Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	
Two bowl barrows at Beacon Hill	Scheduled Monument		??	

Other assets

- A letter signed by Napoleon from the collections of Torquay Museum, on display at Torre Abbey.
- A contemporary watercolour painting showing tourists in boats trying see Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*, at Torquay Museum.
- An important collection work by Napoleonic prisoners of war in Dartmoor Prison, at Torquay Museum.
- Paintings, prints and engravings in collections of Torre Abbey showing portraits of Napoleon and his family, battles and his imprisonment on the *Bellerophon*.
- Copy of the death mask of Napoleon in the collections of Torre Abbey.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
NPL01	Battery Gardens is appropriately maintained and protected for the future, and visitors are encouraged to engage with the site's heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled structures are free from vegetation. • A management plan is agreed between Torbay Council and Historic England, and an ongoing review process is in place. • Both Napoleonic and WW2 heritage is interpreted and accessible on site. 	Torbay Council and Historic England in partnership with local volunteers
NPL02	Visitors and local people experience and enjoy Torbay's Napoleonic heritage at multiple locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Napoleonic heritage is well interpreted at key sites (Battery Gardens, Berry Head and Brixham Harbour) and links between sites are highlighted. • Greater engagement with Torbay's Napoleonic heritage among visitors and residents. 	Torbay Council, TDA, Torbay Culture and TCCT in partnership with local volunteers

Trawling

This story is specific to Brixham, although its influence has been felt in fishing communities around Britain and northern Europe. In the late eighteenth century, motivated by dwindling catches, Brixham fishermen and boat builders set about creating faster boats that could fish in deep water. The design they developed was known as a Brixham trawler. It was a wooden sailing trawler, about 18-24 metres in length, with a long, straight keel. Its sleek underwater profile and tall rig gave it the speed fishermen needed to reach remote fishing grounds towing a large trawl and return in relatively short time.

The sails of the Brixham trawlers were dyed a distinctive red colour with local ochre to give them extra protection – another example of the influence of Torbay’s geology.

To maximise the time spent fishing the rich waters of the North Atlantic, some Brixham men began to spend seasons in the north of England, at Grimsby and Hull. Soon this led to the permanent migration of many fishermen. The design of the Brixham trawlers was copied around the British coast as new ports sprang up to take advantage of the deep-sea grounds that were opening up to faster boats. Brixham retains a shared history with Grimsby, Hull and other deep-sea fishing ports, which arguably have closer cultural links with the town than Paignton and Torquay. By the end of the nineteenth century there were more than 3000 sailing trawlers based at British ports, with a fleet of 400 at Brixham.

Today, Brixham’s trawling heritage is evident in the distinctive setting of the harbour and the historic buildings and infrastructure around it. It is still a busy port with a living cultural heritage of fishing. Trawler design has undergone many changes and only a handful of the original sailed boats survive. *Vigilance* is looked after by a team of volunteers who aim to secure significant funding for her restoration and use as a floating heritage asset. The work would take two years and could provide a valuable attraction and learning opportunity for the town. Once back in the water, *Vigilance* could be a focus for hands-on heritage skills learning and interpretation of trawling history. She has the potential to offer trips along the Torbay coast that would open up not only fishing and maritime stories, but also natural history and a new view of the UNESCO Global Geopark.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Brixham Town	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	Y

Other assets

- The 1926 Brixham trawler *Vigilance*, managed by voluntary group Friends of the *Vigilance*.
- Fishing and ropemaking exhibition and photographic collection at Brixham Heritage Museum.
- Extensive shipping records relating to the Port of Brixham held at Devon Heritage Centre.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
TRW01	The special character of Brixham Town Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further loss of natural, local slate roofing is discouraged and its use is supported in new buildings and restoration works. • Creative interpretation of Brixham's distinctive heritage is accessible in the public realm. 	Torbay Council in partnership with building owners, developers and local communities.
TRW02	<i>Vigilance</i> is restored and functioning as a high quality, popular heritage asset for Brixham, engaging local residents and visitors with trawling history and natural heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local site is agreed for two-year programme of restoration, with a programme of public engagement with the works. • Stage 1 application to NHLF is successful and leads to successful Stage 2. • Excellent programme of public engagement and permanent interpretation on and around <i>Vigilance</i> is planned and supported. 	Friends of the <i>Vigilance</i> in partnership with Torbay Council and local communities

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Golden Age of the resorts

The modern characters of Torquay and Paignton have been shaped in large part by their history as seaside resorts. As we have seen, tourists began visiting in large numbers in the nineteenth century, starting an explosion of development and a ‘golden age’ of prosperity that lasted until the Second World War. The architectural heritage from this period includes large numbers of villas, civic buildings, shops, churches, entertainment spaces, public gardens and tourist infrastructure. In Torquay, the town’s former wealth is evident everywhere in the grand style of its historic buildings and open spaces. The maintenance of this heritage presents particular challenges in an area tackling deprivation today.

The scale of development during this period means that late Georgian, Victorian and early twentieth century architecture is prominent in both towns and makes up the majority of the built environment. This is where most interaction with Torbay’s heritage happens, as people move through the urban environment, rather than during intentional visits to historic sites. Many of these buildings are listed and fall within Conservation Areas.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the resorts’ buildings, gardens and artefacts is the influence of Italianate design. It was consciously imported and reimagined in an effort to create a Mediterranean-style resort in a northern European setting – an English Riviera. It inspired the Italianate garden at Lupton House, which is now at serious risk of decay. Recognising this style, protecting surviving examples and taking new inspiration from it are essential if we are to retain and enhance the special qualities of our resorts.

Wealthy people first came here for their health, particularly to escape cold winters in the rest of Britain. This heritage of healthcare and relaxation has many parallels with today’s interest in wellbeing. Later tourists came for summer holidays and entertainment. New theatres and concert venues attracted the most prestigious acts from London for the summer season. The most iconic of these buildings is the Pavilion in Torquay. Today it is empty and requires investment to restore. As an emblem of Torbay’s special entertainment heritage and a unique landmark, it is imperative that a commercially viable new use is found for the building.

Many wealthy families who were attracted to Torbay settled and built large homes here. The most well-known and extravagant of these is Oldway Mansion near Paignton, built by the American sewing machine manufacturer Isaac Singer. Later in its life, the building was the offices of Torbay Council, which still owns it. Oldway Mansion has been empty since 2013 and is now in urgent need of substantial investment to restore and re-use. Oldway is greatly loved by residents and consultation for this strategy showed clearly that its future is a matter of great concern to local people. The Oldway Mansion Trust was set up in 2019 in partnership with Torbay Council.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Oldway Mansion (house)	Grade II* listed building		Torbay Council	Y

Torquay Pavilion	Grade II listed building		Torbay Council managed by private leaseholder	
Torbay Cinema (Paignton Picture House)	Grade II* listed building		Paignton Picture House Trust	Y
Lupton Park	Registered Parks and Gardens		Lupton House Trust	Y
Oldway Mansion (grounds)	Registered Parks and Gardens		Torbay Council	Y
Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens	Registered Parks and Gardens		Torbay Council	Y
Lupton House	Grade II* listed building		Lupton House Trust	Y
Roundham and Paignton Harbour	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Torquay Harbour	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Coast/beaches	n/a	In parts: AONB, PRow, SSSI, LNR, NNR SAC	Multiple owners	
Babbacombe Cliff Railway	Within CA but no designation of assets		Private owner	
Conservation Areas: Abbey Road, Babbacombe Downs, Barton, Belgravia, Cary Park, Chelston, Lincombes, Maidencombe, Polsham, St Marychurch, Tormohun, Torre, Upton, Warberries, Watcombe Park	Conservation Area		Private, multiple owners	
Cockington Court	Grade II* listed building		Torbay Council (managed by TDA)	
Hesketh Crescent, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		Private, multiple owners	
Watcombe Park and Brunel Manor	Registered Parks and Gardens		Part owned by Torbay Council	

Grade II* listed buildings: 1-15 Wellwood Park Road, Torquay; 163 Newton Road, Torquay; Aylmer, Brixham; Beacon Terrace, Torquay; Hatley St George, Torquay;	Grade II* listed building		Private owners	
Little Theatre, Torquay	Grade II* listed building		TOADS Theatre Company	
Bishops Walk	n/a	PRoW	Torbay Council (managed by TCCT)	
Castle Tor	Registered Parks and Gardens		Divided, private owners	
Coleton Fishacre (house)	Grade II listed building		NT	
Coleton Fishacre (park and gardens)	Grade II* listed building		NT	

Other assets

- Extensive archive collections documenting the growth of the resorts held at both Torquay Museum and Devon Heritage Centre.
- Social history artefacts including shop signs and costumes from the period at Torquay Museum.
- The Seaside Fun gallery at Torre Abbey which includes several contemporary paintings of fashionable visitors and locals enjoying the resorts in the nineteenth century.

Objectives

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
RST01	Oldway Mansion, including its outbuildings and grounds, is conserved and enhanced, and its future is secure. Local people and visitors experience and enjoy it as a key heritage site and accessible open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term grant funding is successfully secured to stabilise the building(s) and works complete. • Medium to long term programme of fundraising for ongoing conservation and enhancement is in place and works in progress where funding allows. • Oldway Mansion Trust is well managed and appropriately supported. • Upper floors are converted for commercial tenancy where 	Torbay Council, Oldway Mansion Trust, TDA, and Torbay Culture in partnership with local communities

		<p>financially possible and long term tenants found.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower floor and grounds are accessible to the public. • A high quality visitor experience is enabled by appropriate facilities, including refreshments offer, and creative interpretation subject to funding. • Local communities use the grounds extensively for outdoor recreation. • Volunteers are actively engaged in a wide range of roles. • Commercial uses for outbuildings fully explored. 	
RST02	Torquay Pavilion is conserved and enhanced and in sustainable commercial use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building is safe to access, further decay has been halted and a programme of restoration is in place where financially possible. • There is ongoing constructive engagement between all interested parties. • Appropriate long-term management of the building in line with its cultural and historic value is agreed. • Proposals which conserve and enhance the building and find appropriate new uses for it will be supported. 	Torbay Council, Historic England and interested parties
RST03	Lupton House is conserved and enhanced, and its Italianate garden is restored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is ongoing constructive engagement between all interested parties including Torbay Council, Lupton House Trust and Historic England. • A management plan is agreed and operational, and Lupton House Trust are appropriately supported to deliver it. • The building is secure and deterioration is halted. • The Italianate garden is in a programme of restoration. 	Lupton House Trust in partnership with Torbay Council and Historic England
RST04	Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens are maintained and protected for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gardens continue to be maintained to a high quality. • The Gardens are removed from the Heritage At Risk Register. • Historic parks and gardens are key assets in the new Torbay Green Infrastructure Plan. 	Torbay Council
RST05	The special characters of Roundham and Paignton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic in the Conservation Areas is reduced. 	Torbay Council in

	Harbour and Torquay Harbour Conservation Areas area preserved and enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further loss of historic features is discouraged. • Walking and cycling in these areas is encouraged. • Further loss of natural, local slate roofing is discouraged and its use is supported in new buildings and restoration works. 	partnership with building owners, developers and local communities.
RST06	Babbacombe Cliff Railway is recognised as a heritage asset and is protected for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCMS confers listed building status. 	Torbay Council and Historic England

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Agatha Christie and writers on the Riviera

Torbay has a rich literary heritage, with world famous novelist Dame Agatha Christie as its figurehead.

Agatha Christie was born in Torquay in 1890. She began writing crime stories while volunteering as a nurse and dispenser at the Torquay Town Hall Red Cross Hospital during the First World War. It was here that she gained her knowledge of poisons. Her characters from this time were based on people she observed on the Torquay tram. She also met some of the Belgian refugees who sought sanctuary in Torbay, and from them she took the inspiration for her most famous detective, Poirot.

She was a keen cinema goer and she had a favourite seat which survives at the Paignton Picture House. Locations in her novels are often inspired by local places, for example Kents Cavern. Her beloved holiday home, Greenway, above the River Dart, provided the setting for several fictional murders. The house is now run by National Trust and houses an important collection of Christie artefacts.

Greenway is a place of pilgrimage for Agatha Christie fans, but most other sites associated with her are not currently exploited for tourism. The English Riviera Destination Management Plan recognises that Agatha Christie provides a useful cultural offer that is currently under-developed, while the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan includes a community aspiration to develop new visitor opportunities around the connection with her.

While Agatha Christie may be Torbay's most famous daughter, many other writers stayed and produced work here, where the beauty and sea air was believed to be restorative and inspiring. In 2019, Torbay Culture produced *Writers on the Riviera*, a guide to sites in Torquay associated with 15 of the greatest British and Irish writers of all time. They include Oscar Wilde, Mary Shelley, T.S Elliot, and many others.

Key assets

Sites

Asset	Heritage Designation	Environmental designation	Ownership	Heritage at Risk Register
Torbay Cinema (Paignton Picture House)	Grade II* listed building		Paignton Picture House Trust	Y
Kent's Cavern, Torquay	Scheduled Monument	SSSI	Private owner	
Church of All Saints	Grade I listed building		Diocese of Exeter	
Greenway	Grade II* listed building	AONB	NT	

Other assets

- The UK's only museum collection of Agatha Christie ephemera and memorabilia, held at Torquay Museum. Its 1,000 items include books and first editions, costumes from television adaptations, a set from ITV's Poirot and a large collection of souvenirs, film and theatre programmes, film posters and fan items.
- Almost 21,000 items at Greenway, collected and treasured by the Christie family over several generations.
- The Agatha Christie Potent Plants Garden at Torre Abbey, featuring poisons used in her books.

ID	Objective	Measures of success	Responsible
LIT01	Paignton Picture House is restored and converted to new use. It is well used by the community and is an anchor heritage site within a regenerated town centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future use is agreed by all interested parties and a plan for conservation, conversion and ongoing management is in place. • Paignton Picture House Trust is well managed and sufficiently resourced to deliver the management plan. • Works are on schedule to achieve community access and use. • Paignton Picture House is integrated into the programme of wider town centre regeneration. 	Paignton Picture House in partnership with Torbay Council, TDA, Torbay Culture and local communities
LIT02	People seeking an Agatha Christie experience are attracted to Torbay in significant numbers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong relationship with the National Trust integrates Greenway into Torbay's Agatha Christie offer. • Greenway is included as a key destination in sustainable transport planning in Torbay. • The Agatha Christie Festival is appropriately supported and promoted and continues to thrive. • Collaboration between sites and organisations that have Agatha Christie collections or associations is supported and encouraged. • Visual links to Agatha Christie in the public realm are clearly marked and celebrated. • Increase in visitors citing Agatha Christie connection as a reason for visiting. 	Torbay Council, TDA, Torbay Culture and ERBID in partnership with National Trust and other key sites
LIT03	Visitors and residents experience, enjoy, understand and contribute to Torbay's literary heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers on the Riviera promotion continues and expands. • Schools and community groups in Torbay are supported and encouraged to engage with literary heritage in creative ways. 	Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture in partnership with local arts groups

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literary heritage is a foundation for supporting new work by local writers.	and communities
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DRAFT

Emerging stories

Our understanding of Torbay's past evolves constantly as new discoveries are made and the preoccupations of our own time change. Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture support activities that uncover historical evidence, listen to unheard voices or re-evaluate established stories through new lenses.

Over the next five years, we expect to understand more about a range of topics, including:

Romans and Romano-British Torbay

Recent archaeological excavations at Ipplepen, just outside Torbay, have revealed the Roman influence in our region to be greater than previously thought. The site is unique to South West England and finds there are changing our understanding of life on the edges of the Roman Empire. There is a strong possibility that there is important Roman-age evidence within Torbay waiting to be discovered. A rectangular enclosure recently identified in cropmarks at Burrow Down near Paignton, for example, is a possible Romano-British site.

Marble industry

Research by the team at Torquay Museum has shed new light on Torbay's marble industry, a significant story that had been almost forgotten. In the nineteenth century, Torbay had a natural supply of high-quality marble and plenty of wealthy customers eager to buy luxury fittings for their new villas and mansions, fashionable marble jewellery and exclusive souvenirs. Many local people were employed in the industry, as miners, engineers, designers, masons, craftsmen and retailers. Torquay marble can be seen in most grand houses and churches of the period in Torbay, including Oldway Mansion.

Torquay Museum holds a collection of impressive artefacts but more work is needed to identify Torbay marble features and objects as local marble is often mislabelled. To better understand the history of the industry and its potential for public engagement, it is also necessary to establish the condition and accessibility of mine sites and to track down relevant archive material.

Smuggling

The success of Brixham's annual pirate festival offers an opportunity to engage a wider audience with the town's real and more complex history through related maritime topics. Smuggling has a long history in Brixham with social, economic and cultural impacts. The smuggling exhibition at Brixham Heritage Museum is a way into the subject that could be extended via more research to establish and connect relevant sites in the town.

Recent decades

Torbay Council, TDA and Torbay Culture believe that recent history should be recognised, recorded and valued, and that all our communities should have the opportunity to contribute to our shared narratives. Therefore, we encourage new research and interpretation of the Bay's twentieth and twenty-first century heritage. Since the Second World War, many people have settled in Torbay from elsewhere, particularly from other parts of the UK and Eastern Europe. Their experiences enrich our culture and are part of Torbay's story.

Covid-19 (coronavirus)

This strategy has been written in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, a global crisis that will come to be seen as a major historical event. From our perspective in 2020, we cannot predict exactly how

Torbay will be affected but there will be a significant impact on our communities. As we recover, heritage will be essential in a number of ways:

- **Recording**
It will be important to bear witness to the experiences of Torbay's people and create an account of what happened here for future researchers.
- **Community**
We predict that heritage sites will become valuable places of gathering and reconnection when societal restrictions are lifted.
- **Learning**
Once free movement is reinstated, we may see a surge of interest in experiential learning through visits to sites and engagement with collections
- **Health**
Sickness, grief and isolation are likely to lead to significant physical and mental health issues for many people. We must explore the role that heritage sites can play in our collective healing through access to beauty, tranquillity, open space and voluntary opportunities.
- **Economy**
At this stage we do not know how long travel restrictions will be in place but there is likely to be a significant impact on Torbay's tourism industry. Attracting new visitors and extending the season will be central to our economic recovery and it is imperative that heritage is a key component in Torbay's tourism offer.

Objectives

We recognise that priorities may emerge relating to these or other topics during the life of the Torbay Heritage Strategy, and it must have the flexibility to incorporate new objectives and actions accordingly.

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Kents Cavern

Lupton Trust

National Lottery Heritage Fund

National Trust

Paignton Heritage Society

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership

South West Coast Path

South West Heritage Trust

Torbay Civic Society

Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust

Torbay Community Development Trust

Torbay Culture

Torquay Museum

Torre Abbey Museum