



# **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**

## **Annual Report 2021/22**

**Published February 2023**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1** The [Authority Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) monitors the effectiveness of planning policies in the Torbay Local Plan and reports on the progress of development plan preparation. It is a statutory document produced on an annual basis. This AMR focuses on the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, but also tracks the performance over the Local Plan period as a whole.
- 1.1.2** The first half of the AMR assesses the performance of the Adopted Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030. Various indicators are used to monitor progress against each of the five aspirations within the Local Plan:
1. Secure economic recovery and success;
  2. Achieve a better connected, accessible Torbay and essential infrastructure;
  3. Protect and enhance a superb environment;
  4. Create more sustainable communities and better places;
  5. Respond to climate change.

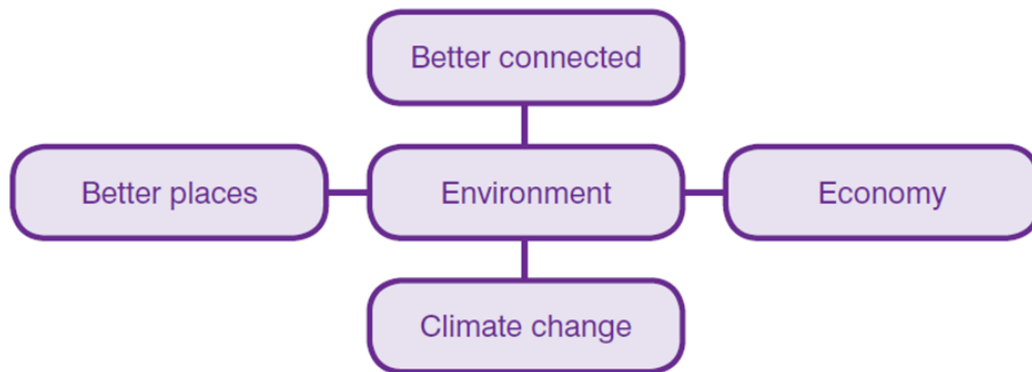


Figure 1.1: Local Plan aspirations with the environment at the heart

- 1.1.3** The second half of the AMR briefly sets out all the policy documents that together make up the development plan, providing links to each document and reporting on any updates or milestones where applicable. It also reports on progress made with any new policy documents, strategies and action plans that are in development. Key to this is the ongoing work on an updated Torbay Local Plan 2022-2040.
- 1.1.4** The final part of the AMR reports on any key activity with Neighbouring Authorities relating to the Duty to Cooperate.

# 2 LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING

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This section of the report presents data and reports on progress against each of the five aspirations within the Local Plan:

- 1: Secure economic recovery and success;
- 2: Achieve a better connected, accessible Torbay and essential infrastructure;
- 3: Protect and enhance a superb environment;
- 4: Create more sustainable communities and better places;
- 5: Respond to climate change.

## 2.1 Aspiration 1: Secure economic recovery and success

### **Aspiration 1: Secure economic recovery and success**

*To achieve economic growth and deliver new jobs and housing, in order to promote equality, reduce disadvantage and poverty and increase Torbay's competitiveness. This will be achieved by meeting the following objectives:*

- 】 To provide sufficient, varied full-time employment and increase earning potential.
- 】 To broaden the economic base in the Bay.
- 】 To promote higher value uses and activities.
- 】 To support and enhance traditional industries and jobs.
- 】 To ensure a balanced provision of housing and employment
- 】 To ensure the English Riviera achieves its potential as a premier tourist resort by continued investment in existing facilities, waterfront areas and marine environment, and the provision of new attractions.
- 】 To cater for changing holiday demands and expectations to attract new visitors, investment in high quality facilities and the improvement of existing product and services
- 】 To remove the obstacles to business growth and investment.
- 】 To drive forward regeneration schemes and provide sufficient land and co-ordinated infrastructure to achieve sustainable growth.
- 】 To retain college leavers and graduates within the Bay.
- 】 To provide a range of goods, services, events and facilities that make Torbay a leading destination of choice for people with money to spend, particularly new and improved provision in the town centres.
- 】 To strengthen Torquay town centre as the largest retail centre in Torbay and as a commercial, social and cultural focal point; Paignton and Brixham town centres to develop their role, on a proportionate basis, focused on meeting the needs of their own residents and tourists.
- 】 To reduce dependency on the state to provide jobs and address local needs.

**2.1.1** Torbay’s population is characterised by a higher proportion of older residents and a lower proportion of working age residents. Torbay’s median age increased from 46 years in Census 2011 to 49 years in Census 2021. For England and Wales, the median age increased from 39 years in Census 2011 to 40 years in Census 2021.

**2.1.2** The proportion of Torbay’s population aged 65 or older increased from 23.6% in Census 2011 to 26.7% in Census 2021. For England and Wales, the proportion aged 65 years or older increased from 16.5% in Census 2011 to 18.6% in Census 2021.

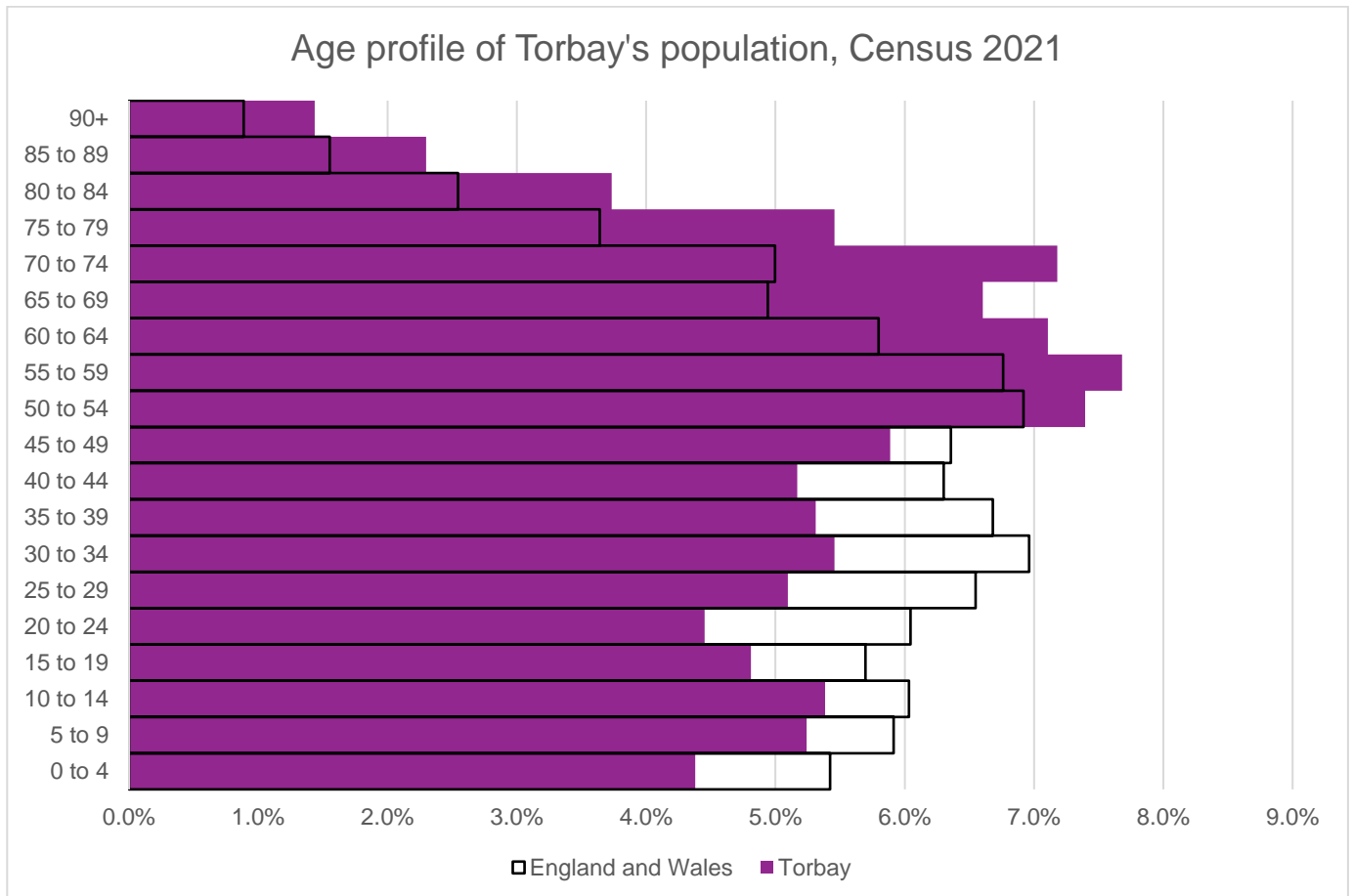


Figure 2.1: Age profile of Torbay’s population, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>1</sup>)

**2.1.3** From Census 2011 to Census 2021, Torbay’s age profile has seen a decrease in the proportion of younger adults (ages 15 to 44) and an increase in the proportion of older residents (aged 65+). Increasing and diversifying employment opportunities in Torbay will help retain more college leavers and graduates within the bay.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS007/editions/2021/versions/2>

### Change in the age profile of Torbay's population from Census 2011 to Census 2021

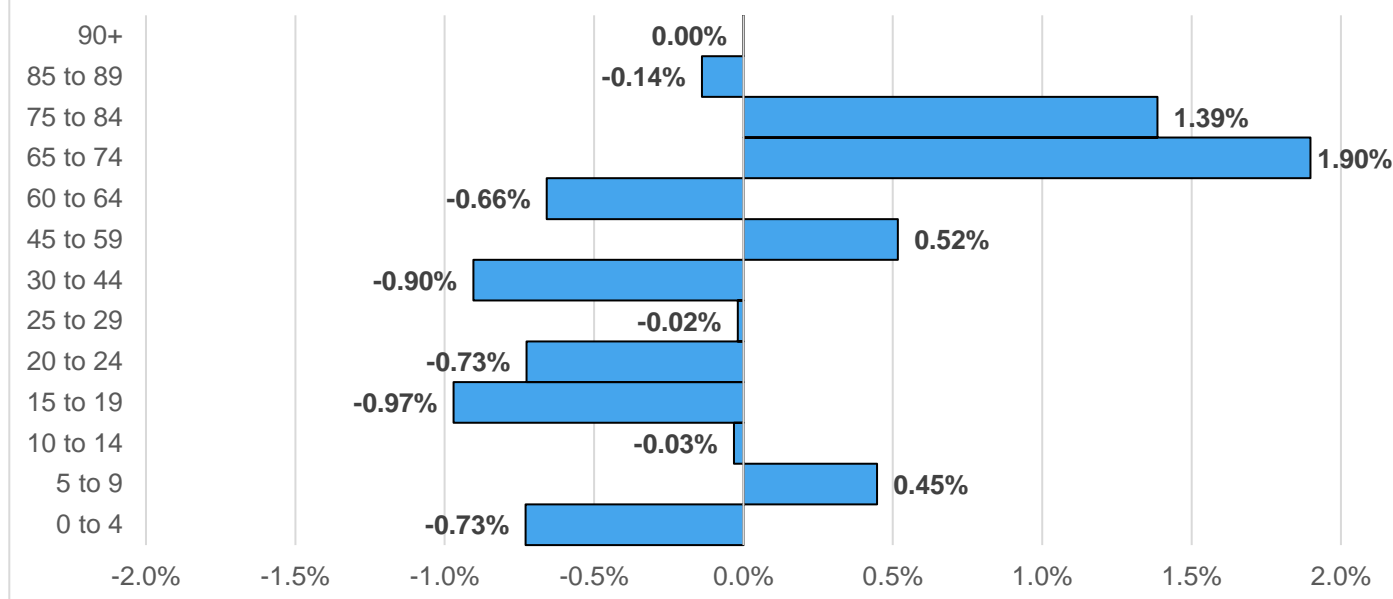


Figure 2.2: Change in the age profile of Torbay's population from Census 2011 to Census 2021

**2.1.4** Unemployment in Torbay has decreased over the plan period, although with annual fluctuations. For 2021/22, unemployment in Torbay (2.9%) is consistent with that of the South West (2.9%) and notably better than the UK average (4.2%).

### Unemployment rate for residents aged 16-64, 2012/13 to 2021/22

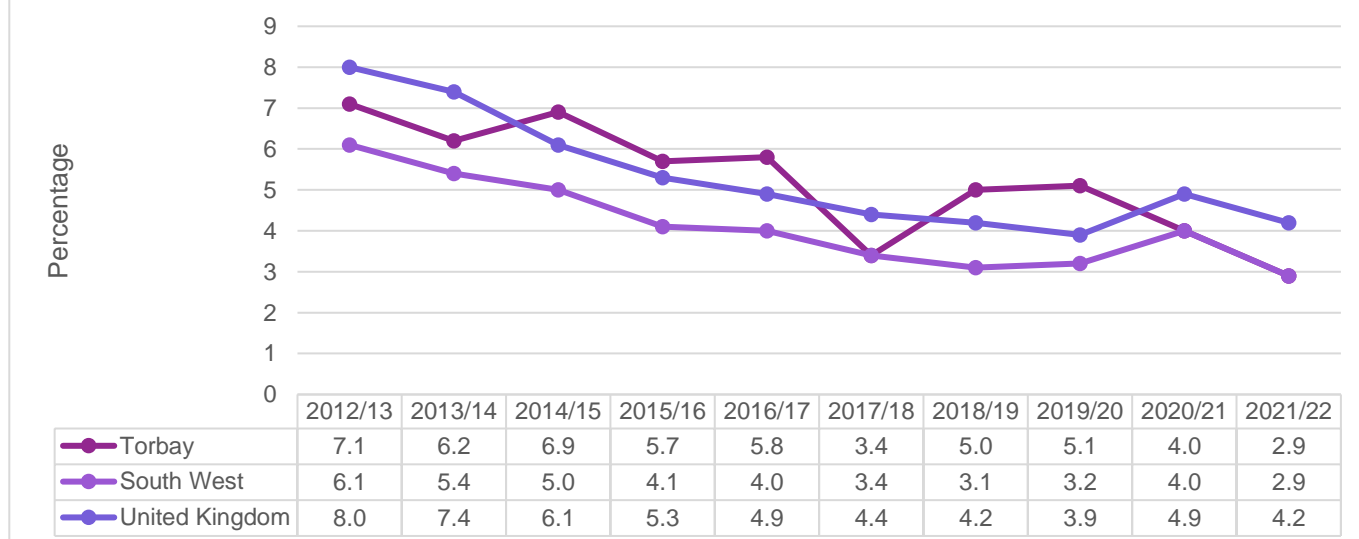


Figure 2.3: Unemployment rate for working age residents, 2012/13 to 2021/22 (ONS, 2022<sup>2</sup>)

**2.1.5** Job density (the ratio of jobs to working age population) is notably lower in Torbay than in the South West and Great Britain. While Torbay's job density has remained steady at or around 0.75

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&dataset=17&version=0>

over the plan period, job density in the South West and in Great Britain has steadily increased. Covid caused a reduction in job density in Torbay, the South West, and Great Britain.

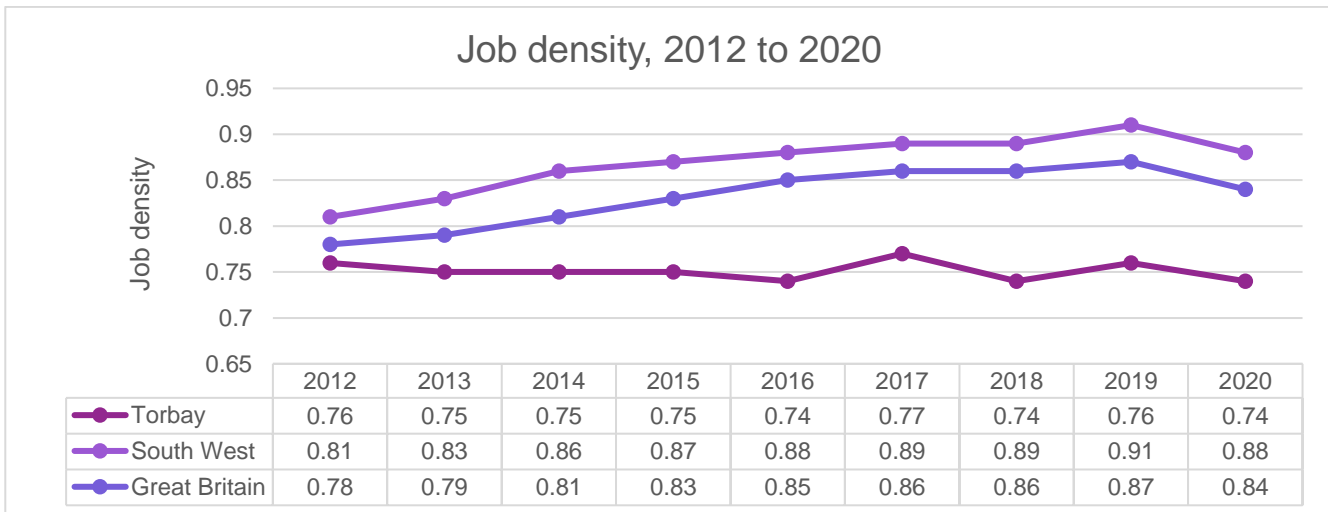


Figure 2.4: Job density (ratio of jobs to working age population) in Torbay, 2012 to 2020 (ONS<sup>3</sup>)

**2.1.6** Labour productivity in Torbay is low and has worsened relative to the UK average over the plan period both in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked and GVA per job filled (ONS, 2022). For 2020, Torbay was placed 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest out of 374 local authorities in the ONS dataset for GVA per job filled, and 9<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 363 local authorities for GVA per hour worked. It is worth noting that GVA per hour worked has shown some slight improvement from 2018 to 2019, and from 2019 to 2020. (2020 is the latest year available for this indicator.)

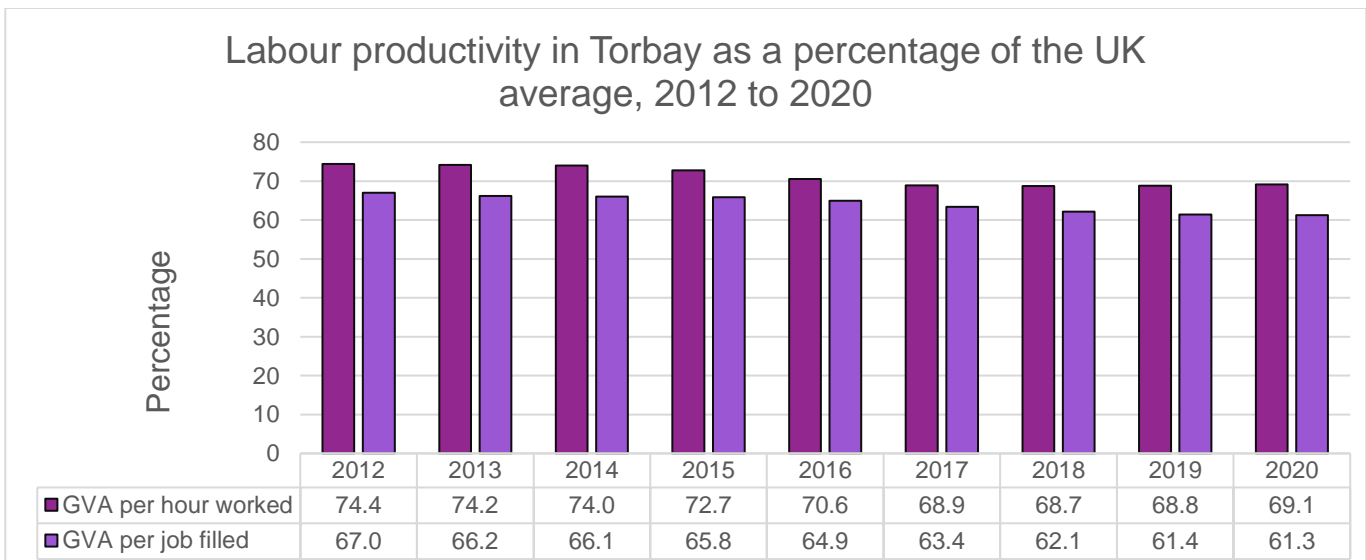


Figure 2.5: Labour productivity (GVA per hour worked and GVA per job filled) in Torbay as a percentage of the UK average, 2012 to 2020 (ONS, 2022<sup>4</sup>)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/subreports/jd\\_time\\_series/report.aspx](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/subreports/jd_time_series/report.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/datasets/subregionalproductivitylabourproductivityindicesbylocalauthoritydistrict>

**2.1.7** Figures 2.6 and 2.7 below show the nature of employment opportunities in Torbay using Census 2021 data (ONS, 2022<sup>5</sup>). In terms of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification<sup>6</sup> (Figure N), the proportion of residents who have never worked or who are long-term unemployed is broadly consistent with that of England and Wales, but Torbay has a lower proportion of managerial and professional occupations, and a higher proportion of more routine occupations and self-employment.

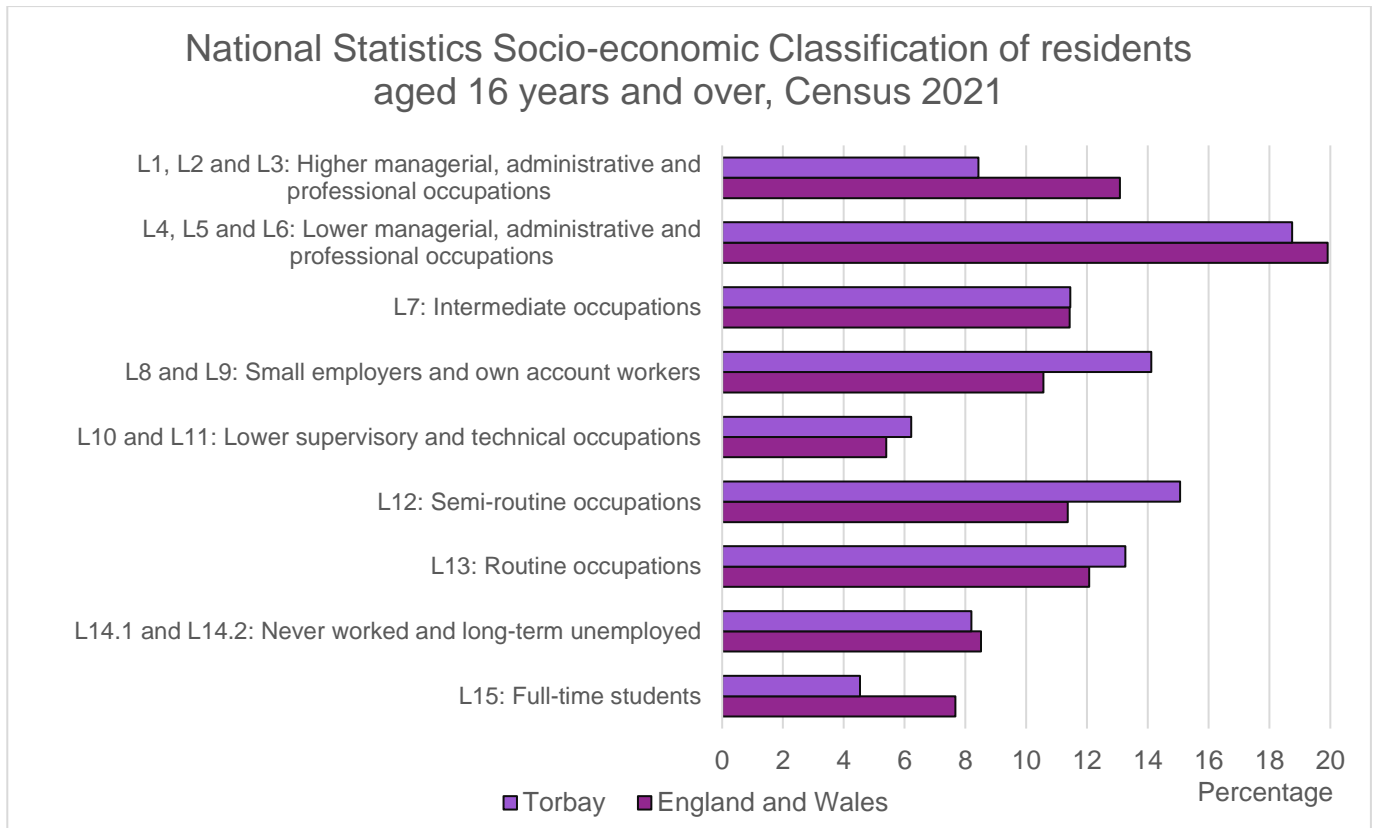


Figure 2.6: Employment in Torbay in terms of socio-economic classification, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

**2.1.8** Similarly, in terms of occupation categories (Figure 2.7), Torbay has a notably lower proportion of managers, directors, senior officials, professional and technical occupations, and a higher proportion of skilled trades, caring, leisure and other service occupations, sales and customer service occupations, and elementary occupations. Out of 331 lower tier local authorities, Torbay is ranked 300<sup>th</sup> for the proportion of residents in professional occupations, and 3<sup>rd</sup> for the proportion of residents in caring, leisure and other service occupations.

<sup>5</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/industryandoccupationenglandandwales/census2021>

<sup>6</sup> For an explanation of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification and a description of the various categories, see:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatisticsocioeconomicclassificationnssecbasedonsoc2010#category-descriptions-and-operational-issues>



## Occupations of residents aged 16 years and over, Census 2021

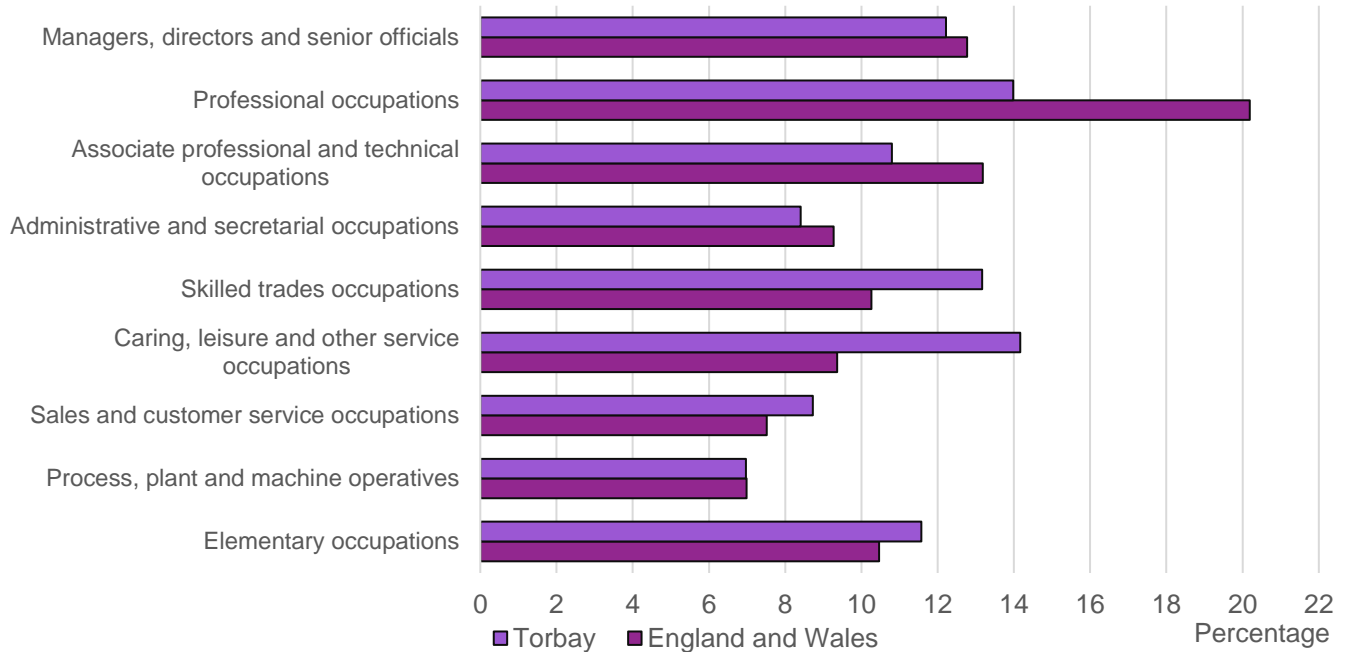


Figure 2.7: Employment in Torbay in terms of occupation categories, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

**2.1.9** Therefore, while unemployment is relatively low, a key challenge for Torbay remains that of increasing access to full-time (as opposed to part-time) and higher value employment. In 2020, 58.7% of jobs in Torbay were full-time, compared to 64.9% for the South West and 67.9% for Great Britain.

## Full-time jobs as a percentage of total jobs, 2015 to 2020

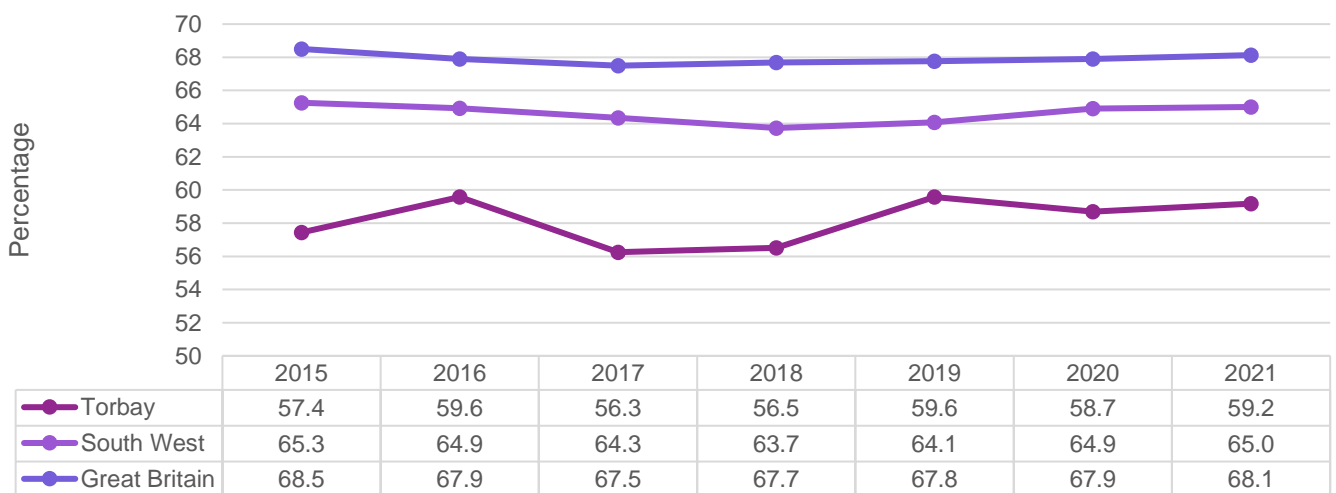


Figure 2.8: The lower proportion of full-time jobs in Torbay, 2015 to 2020 (ONS, 2021<sup>7</sup>)

**2.1.10** For Torbay residents aged 16 and over and in employment, 64.1% were working full time (31 hours or more per week) and 35.9% were working part time (30 hours or less per week) as at Census 2021. Torbay has a notably higher proportion of part time workers (30 hours or less per

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/report.aspx#tabjobs>

week) than Plymouth, Exeter, and England and Wales, having the 8<sup>th</sup> highest percentage out of 331 lower tier local authorities.

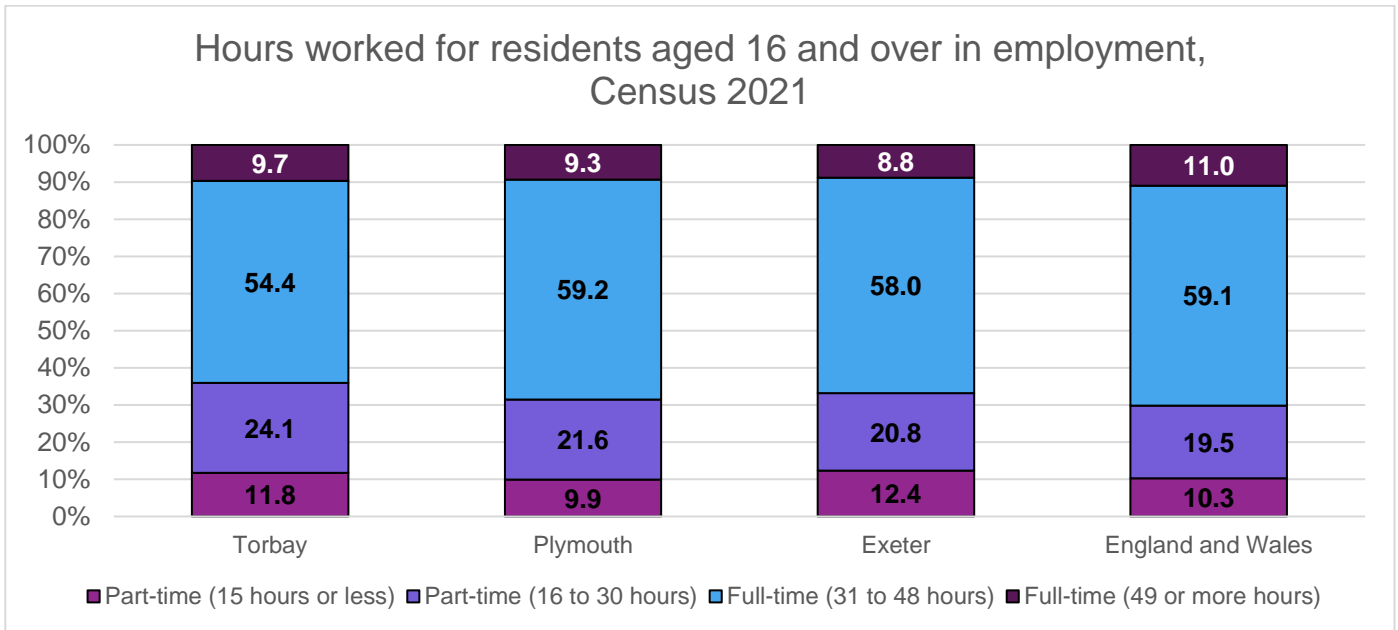


Figure 2.9: The higher proportion of part-time workers in Torbay, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>8</sup>)

**2.1.11** Average gross weekly pay for full-time employees in Torbay (£493) is low compared to the South West (£611) and Great Britain (£642). Gross weekly pay in Torbay has increased by 19.4% over the plan period compared to an increase of 30.8% for the South West and 26.4% for Great Britain. Over the same period, inflation was 21.5% according to CPIH (and 33.4% according to RPI). The data shows some volatility in wages in Torbay in recent years, with a strong improvement from 2020 to 2021 but a significant decrease from 2021 to 2022.

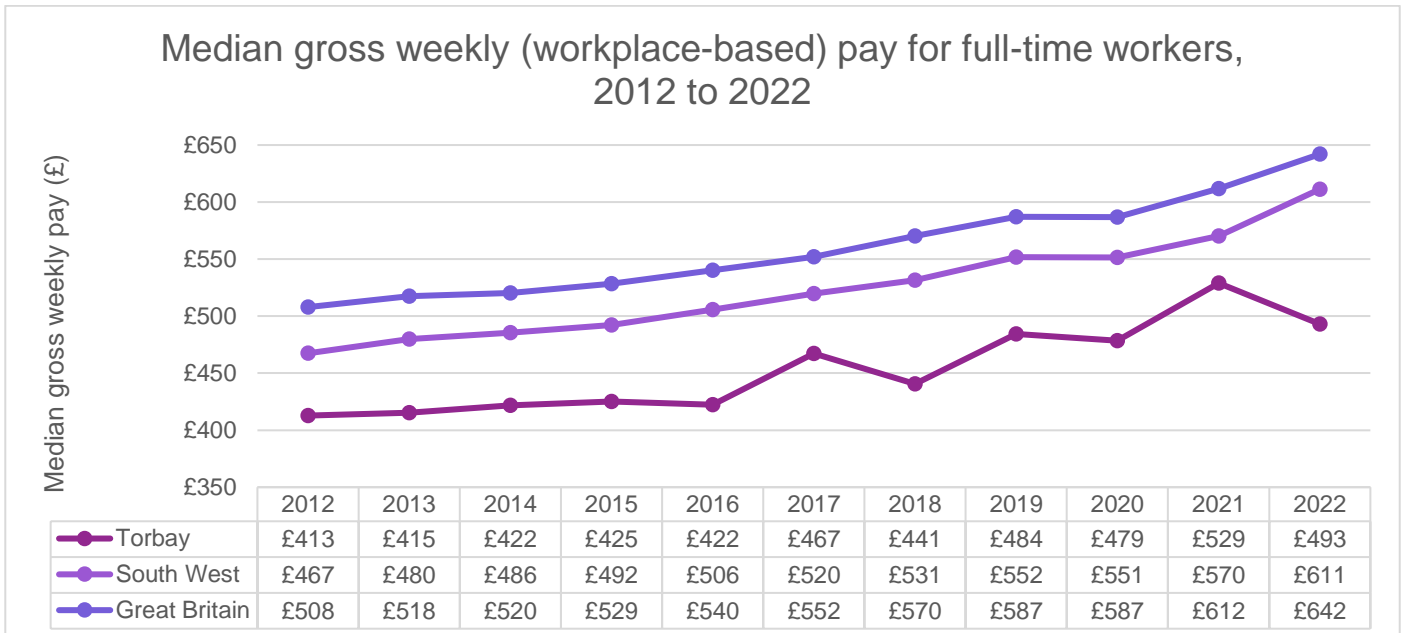


Figure 2.10: Median gross weekly (workplace-based) pay for full-time employees, 2012 to 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>9</sup>)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS059/editions/2021/versions/1>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/subreports/ashew\\_time\\_series/report.aspx?](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/subreports/ashew_time_series/report.aspx?)

**2.1.12** While wages in Torbay have increased overall over the plan period, they have increased from a low base. With a higher proportion of residents only being in part-time employment, combined with the rising cost of living, gross disposable household income for Torbay residents has decreased relative to the UK average over the plan period to 2020.

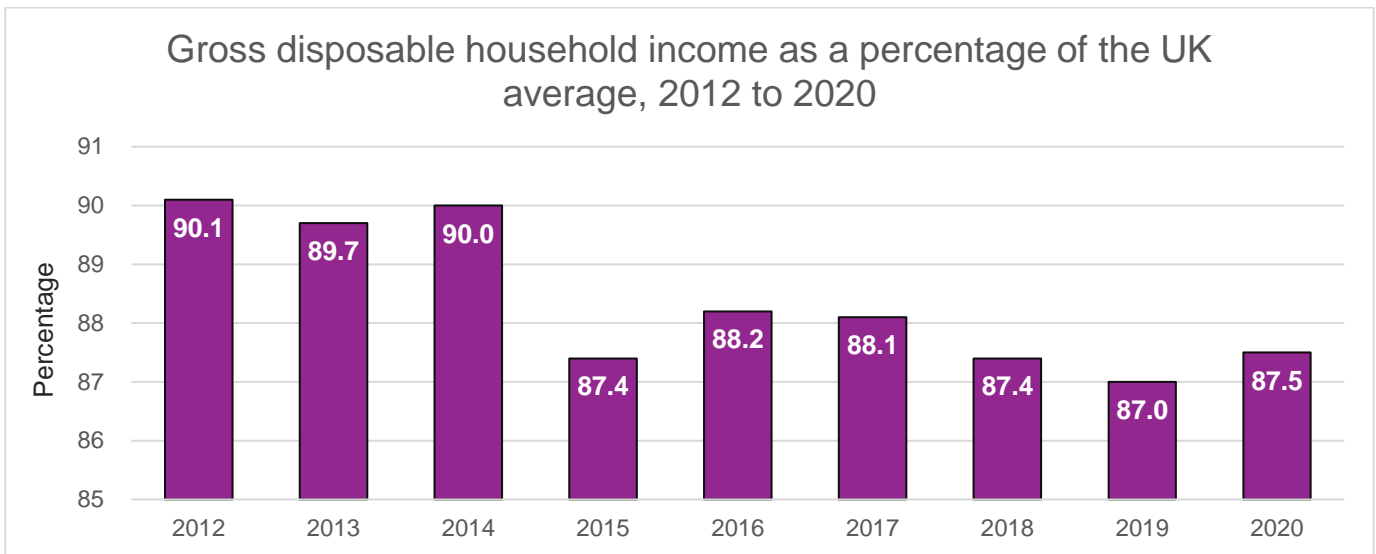


Figure 2.11: Gross disposable household income (ONS, 2021<sup>10</sup>)

**2.1.13** Universal Credit claimants as a percentage of the working age population in Torbay has been higher than the South West and broadly consistent with (or marginally higher than) Great Britain over the plan period. Covid's impact on Torbay's local economy is evident with a notable increase in UC claimants to a high of 8.1% in May 2020, although it is encouraging to see the strong recovery post Covid to below that of the average for Great Britain.

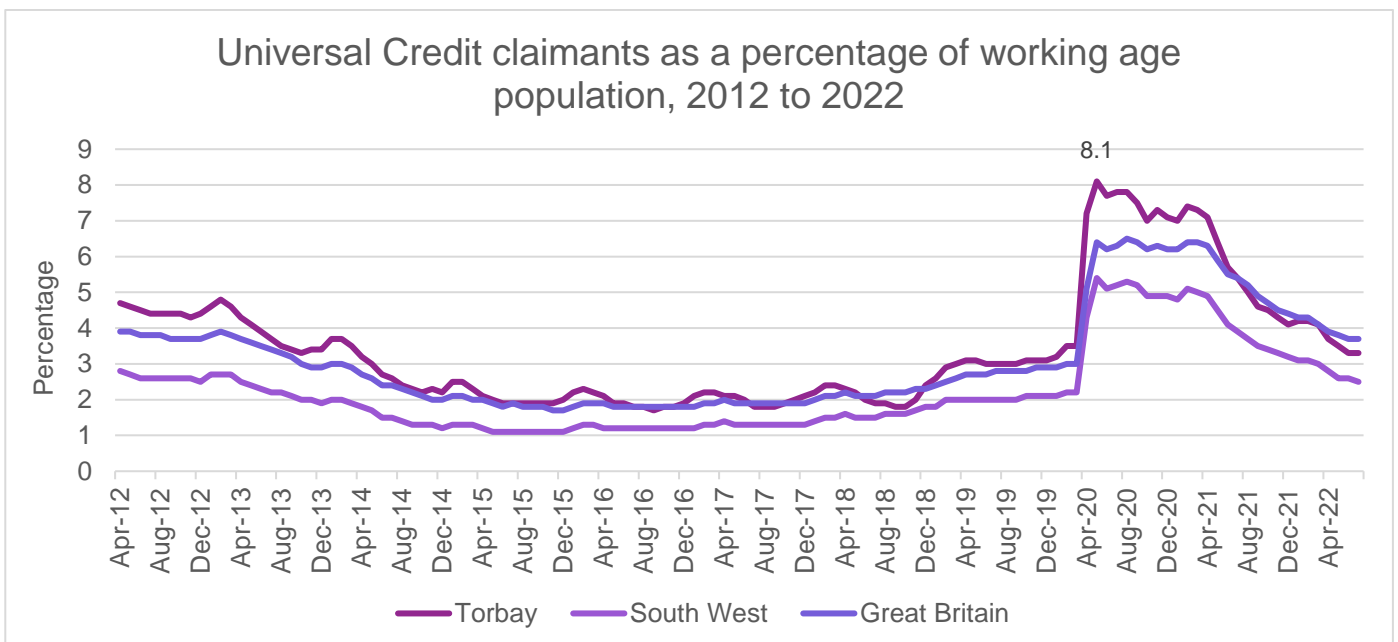


Figure 2.12: Universal credit claimants as a percentage of working age population, 2012 to 2022 (ONS, 2022<sup>11</sup>)

<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/regionalaccounts/grossdisposablehouseholdincome/datasets/regionalgrossdisposablehouseholdincomelocalauthoritiesbyit1region>

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/subreports/cc\\_time\\_series/report.aspx](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/subreports/cc_time_series/report.aspx)

**2.1.14** An article from the BBC<sup>12</sup>, using data from Ordnance Survey, provides a snapshot of the changes that have occurred to high streets in Torbay and elsewhere from March 2020 to March 2022. In Torbay's high streets, there has been:

- An 8% decrease in the number of banks, compared to an 8.1% decrease for the South West and an 8.1% decrease for Great Britain.
- A 3.5% increase in beauty services, compared to a 4.8% increase for the South West and a 5.9% increase for Great Britain.
- An 8.7% increase in the number of fish and chip shops, compared to a 3.5% increase for the South West and a 2.6% increase for Great Britain.
- A 3.6% increase in public toilets, compared to a 0.5% decrease for the South West and a 2.3% decrease for Great Britain.
- A 10.5% increase in supermarket chains, compared to a 1.7% increase for the South West and a 2.5% increase for Great Britain.
- A 15.8% increase in the number of tattoo and piercing studios, compared to a 7.9% increase for the South West and an 8.2% increase for Great Britain.

**2.1.15** Changes in the number of retail shops from March 2020 to March 2022:

- Torquay town centre<sup>13</sup>: Increased by 2% from 188 to 191 retail shops.
- Paignton and Brixham town centres<sup>14</sup>: Decreased by 5% from 186 to 176 retail shops.
- Great Britain: Decreased by 3%.

**2.1.16** Changes in the number of eating and drinking establishments from March 2020 to March 2022:

- Torquay town centre: Increased by 3% from 129 to 133 establishments.
- Paignton and Brixham town centres: Increased by 3% from 147 to 151 establishments.
- Great Britain: Increased by 4%.

**2.1.17** The [Council approved](#) the new [English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-2030](#) on 13 October 2022, following public consultation which was held from 24 May to 5 July 2022. The Destination Management Plan sets out the vision, objectives, key actions and outcomes needed to take the English Riviera forward as a tourism destination.

**2.1.18** Some of the headline statistics from the Destination Management Plan (using data from the Great Britain Tourism Survey 2019 and the English Riviera Visitor Survey 2021) are provided below:

- 78% of visits to Torbay were for holidays compared to 47% for England as a whole.
- Torbay received the accolade of being TripAdvisor's Number 1 Staycation Destination for 2021.

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<sup>12</sup> Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-63799670> using data from Ordnance Survey: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/products/points-of-interest> and <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/newsroom/insights/the-geography-of-britains-highstreets>

<sup>13</sup> This includes the following Torquay high streets: Vaughan Road, The Strand, Victoria Parade, Fleet Street, Torwood Street, Abbey Road, Market Street, Union Street, Tor Hill Road and Lucius Street.

<sup>14</sup> This includes the Victoria Street, Hyde Road, Palace Avenue, Winner Street and Torquay Road in Paignton, and The Quay, Middle Street, Fore Street and Bolton Street in Brixham.

- Torbay has an impressively high return visitor rate of 89%.
- Satisfaction levels are high for return visitors, but lower for first-time visitors.
- 71% of visitors to Torbay were aged over 55.

**2.1.19** The figure below shows, for overnight visitors travelling for holiday purposes, how much each visitor spends on average per trip. In the early part of the plan period, the average holiday spend per trip for visitors to Torbay was lower than the England average, however this has increased steadily over the plan period and has exceeded the England average in more recent years.

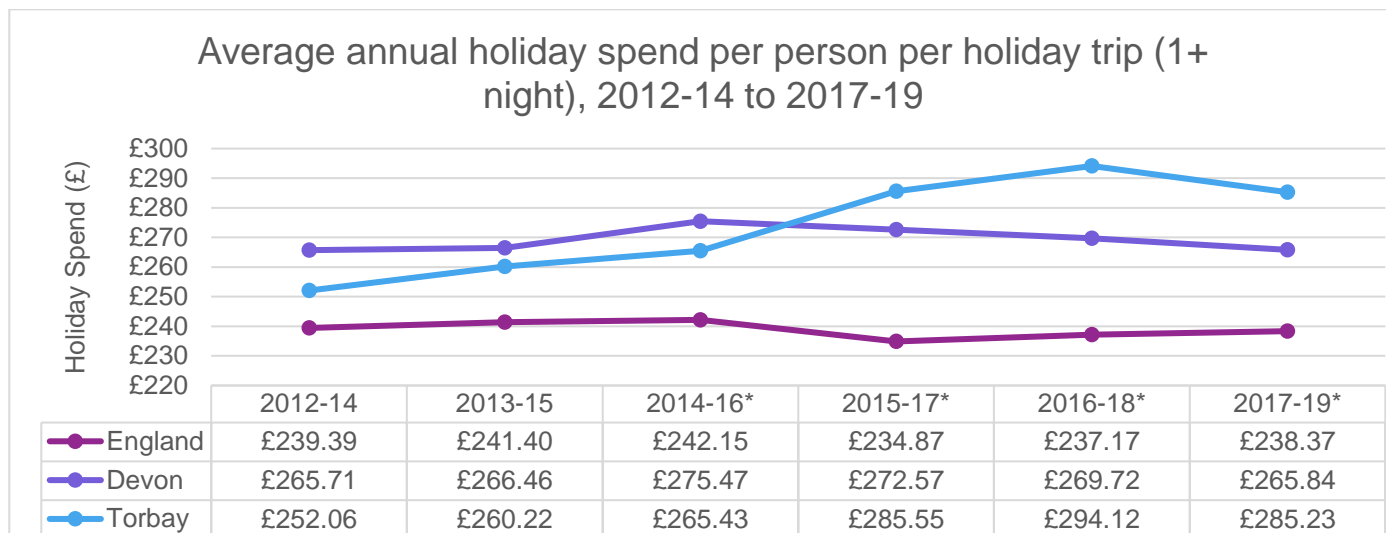


Figure 2.13: Average holiday spend per person per holiday trip, 2012-14 to 2017-19 (Visit Britain<sup>15</sup>)

**2.1.20** The [Council approved](#) a new Torbay Economic Growth Strategy 2022-2030 on 8 December 2022 following public consultation which ran from 18 July to 2 October 2022. Informed by a detailed Evidence Base document, the Economic Growth Strategy sets out the following four priorities:

- Supporting innovators, entrepreneurs and business owners.
- Building on our economic specialisms (photonics and micro-electronics, tourism and fishing).
- Helping our community and residents to reach their economic potential and build an inclusive economy.
- Maximising economic value of natural capital.

**2.1.21** The Economic Growth Strategy seeks to deliver on the following key outcomes:

- Creating more full-time job opportunities for Torbay residents and providing good work for all.
- Reducing our impact on, and increasing resilience to, climate change.
- Increased Gross Value Added per worker, average worker income and productivity; addressing our current position of one of the areas with the lowest GVA per capita in England.
- Improvement in educational attainment and workforce skills; increasing the number of residents qualified to deliver the jobs needed by local business.

**2.1.22** The Council's [Cabinet approved](#) the Torbay Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan on 10 January 2023. The Action Plan sets out the key actions needed to deliver the priorities and outcomes of the Economic Growth Strategy.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.visitbritain.org/destination-specific-research>

**2.1.23** The Council and the TDA are working with local communities to plan and deliver a number of regeneration projects that will revitalise our town centres. A brief summary of some of the key projects is provided below, and more detail is available at:  
<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/regeneration/>

**2.1.24** Torquay regeneration projects:

- **The Strand: Harbour Public Realm:** Consultations have been carried out on a proposal providing expanded areas for pedestrian movement, seating, and outdoor dining, with high quality surface materials, lighting, street furniture and landscaping. The improvements will include a bronze tribute to Agathe Christie which was selected through a public vote.
- **The Strand: Debenhams:** Planning permission has been granted for a scheme to redevelop the vacant former Debenhams site to provide 5 ground floor commercial units with 16 residential apartments above, and with additional complementary public realm.
- **Pavilion:** The Council is leading on work to restore and bring the Grade II listed building back into use. Listed building consent was granted in January 2022 for repairs and investigative works.
- **GPO Roundabout:** Consultations have been carried out on concept proposals for public realm improvements funded by the Towns Fund.

**2.1.25** Paignton regeneration projects:

- **Crossways Shopping Centre:** The Council [obtained a Compulsory Purchase Order](#) to enable the redevelopment of this derelict site for approximately 90 extra care and sheltered housing units and ground floor commercial space, with planning permission granted in February 2021.
- **Victoria Centre:** A significant redevelopment opportunity in the heart of Paignton, with funding from the Land Release Fund and Future High Street Fund. The Council will work with potential investors to develop residential-led, mixed-use redevelopment proposals for the site.
- **Torbay Road and Station Square:** Community-led improvements to reduce traffic and pollution, and to provide better pedestrian areas, public realm, and social spaces, using £3m from the Future High Streets Fund. Consultation and trials for the pedestrianisation of Torbay Road have been ongoing.
- **Seafront Public Realm:** Improvements to sea defences and open spaces. Multiple phases of consultation around design proposals are ongoing.
- **Paignton Picture House:** Working with Torbay Culture and the Paignton Picture House Trust to restore the Grade II\* listed picture house, as envisioned in the Torbay Heritage Strategy, using funding from the Future High Streets Fund and the Cultural Development Fund.
- **Garfield Road Car Park:** Funding has been secured for the demolition and redevelopment of the multi-storey car park (with the adjacent Victoria Car Park to be retained).
- **Oldway Mansion:** National Lottery Heritage Funding has been secured to help develop a resilient future for Oldway. The Council will work with Oldway Trust to explore longer term options and develop a Masterplan and Conservation Management Strategy.

**2.1.26** Brixham regeneration projects:

- **Central Car Park:** Funding was [secured](#) from the Land Release Fund towards redevelopment, including building up to 70 affordable homes without the loss of any car parking spaces.
- **Fish Quay and Market:** Proposals for improvements and expansions to provide additional quayside, landing space for fishing vessels and auction halls to increase capacity and deliver jobs.

## 2.2 Aspiration 2: Achieve a better connected, accessible Torbay and essential infrastructure

### Aspiration 2: Achieve a better connected, accessible Torbay and critical infrastructure

To ensure that Torbay has excellent accessibility and connectivity within the Bay and elsewhere. This will be achieved by meeting the following objectives:

- 】 To increase accessibility throughout the Bay and beyond with fast, frequent, reliable and sustainable travel, giving people real choice as to how they make their journeys.
- 】 To improve road, rail links, cycling and walking routes, to reduce congestion and environmental impact.
- 】 To encourage active travel to promote health and environmental sustainability.
- 】 To promote water-based transport in the Bay, for both work and leisure.
- 】 To deliver an integrated transport system, providing a choice of transport and supporting walking, cycling and public transport.
- 】 To ensure the safe and convenient movement of people and goods.
- 】 To minimise the length of journeys for employment, shopping and other activities by the careful siting of development and through the detailed planning of the mix of uses in growth locations.
- 】 To provide next generation broadband connections.

**2.2.1** Torbay has a greater proportion of residents travelling shorter distances to work compared to the averages for England and Wales. 47.8% of employed residents in Torbay travel less than 10km to work, compared to 35.4% of residents across England and Wales.

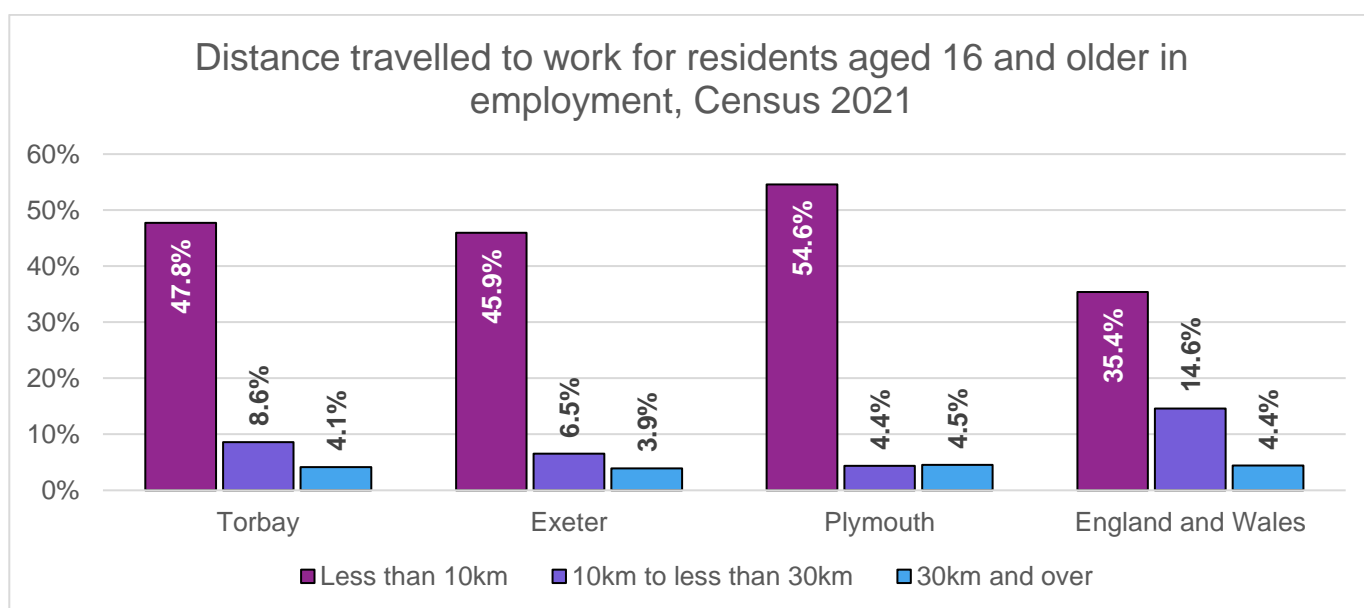


Figure 2.14: Comparative distances travelled to work, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023)

### Distance travelled to work for employed residents aged 16+, Census 2021

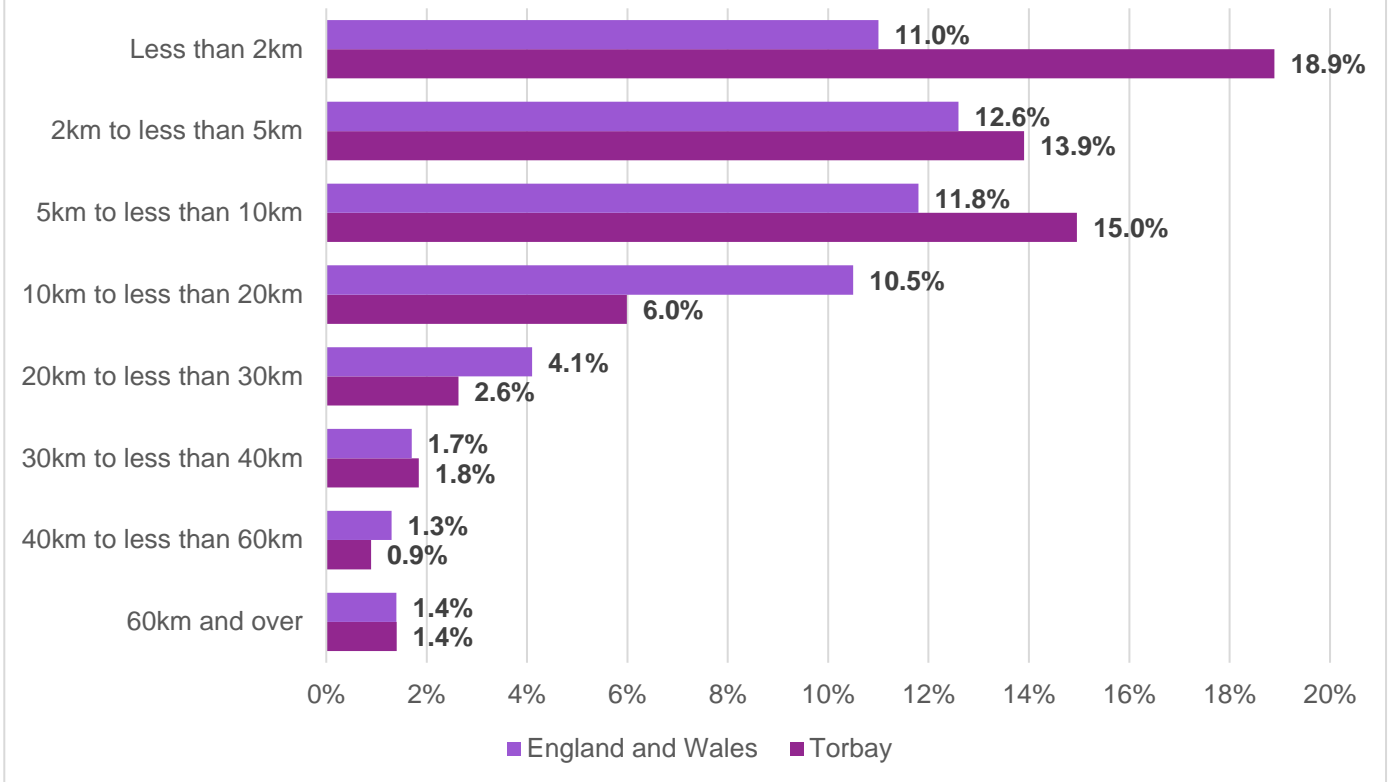


Figure 2.15: Distance travelled to work for residents aged 16 and older in employment, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>16</sup>)

**2.2.2** In terms of method of travel to work, a greater proportion of employed residents in Torbay travel to work by car or van (whether as a driver or as a passenger), on foot, and by motorcycle/moped when compared to the averages for England and Wales. A lower proportion of employed residents in Torbay travel to work by bus, by bicycle, by train, by the underground/light rail, and by taxi.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS058/editions/2021/versions/2#version-history>



### Method of travel to work for employed residents aged 16+, Census 2021

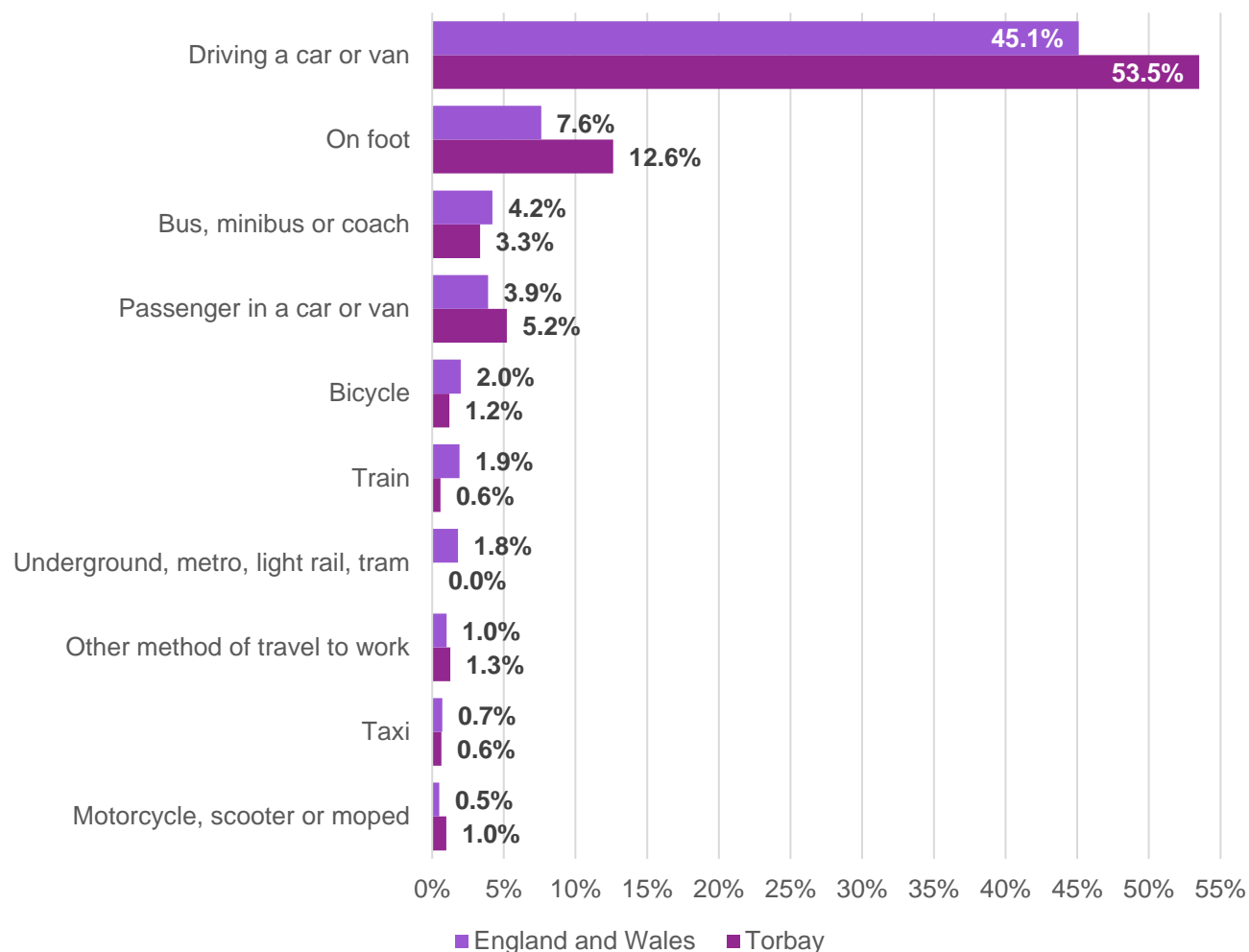


Figure 2.16: Method of travel to work, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>17</sup>)

- 2.2.3** In line with Policy SS6 ‘Strategic transport improvements’, Torbay is investing in improvements to the strategic transport system to enhance the connections between the three towns and ‘open up’ development sites to encourage inward investment.
- 2.2.4** Torbay has greatly benefitted from the opening of the South Devon Highway in December 2015, reducing journey times and encouraging further investment in Torbay. 2017 saw a new Eden Vauxhall motor dealership built and opened at Edginswell Business Park, conveniently located at the Torbay end of the South Devon Highway.
- 2.2.5** Other improvements to major routes in Torbay have included road widening works on the main route into Paignton (Kings Ash) and to accommodate new development within Future Growth Areas off Brixham Road. All of this work was completed by the end of 2019.

17

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/traveltoworkenglandandwales/census2021>

- 2.2.6** The Torquay Gateway scheme was on site in early 2021 for the final phase, with works at Gallows Gate, Scott's Bridge and an active travel route from Torbay Hospital to Avenue Road all completed previously.
- 2.2.7** The site for a new railway station at Edginswell in Torquay was granted planning permission and has since been successful in a funding bid. The project is currently going through Network Rail approval processes and is expected to be operational in 2024.
- 2.2.8** Pedestrian improvements at Torre station were completed as part of Great Western Railway's (GWR) Customer and Communities improvement Fund (CCIF). It included improvements to the station entrance, with an improved pedestrian walkway and replacement signage.
- 2.2.9** Following a significant reduction in rail station usage in Torbay (and throughout Great Britain) in 2020/21 due to Covid-19 restrictions, there has been a considerable recovery in usage in 2021/22 as shown in the figure below. Entries and exits at Torbay stations have returned to 89.7% of 2018/19 levels (i.e., the last full year without any Covid-19 restrictions); an 85.5% recovery at Paignton station, an 85.3% recovery at Torquay station, and a 107.4% recovery at Torre station. This is broadly similar to the 86.7% recovery for Devon, and considerably higher than the 49.0% and 58.9% recoveries for the South West and Great Britain respectively.

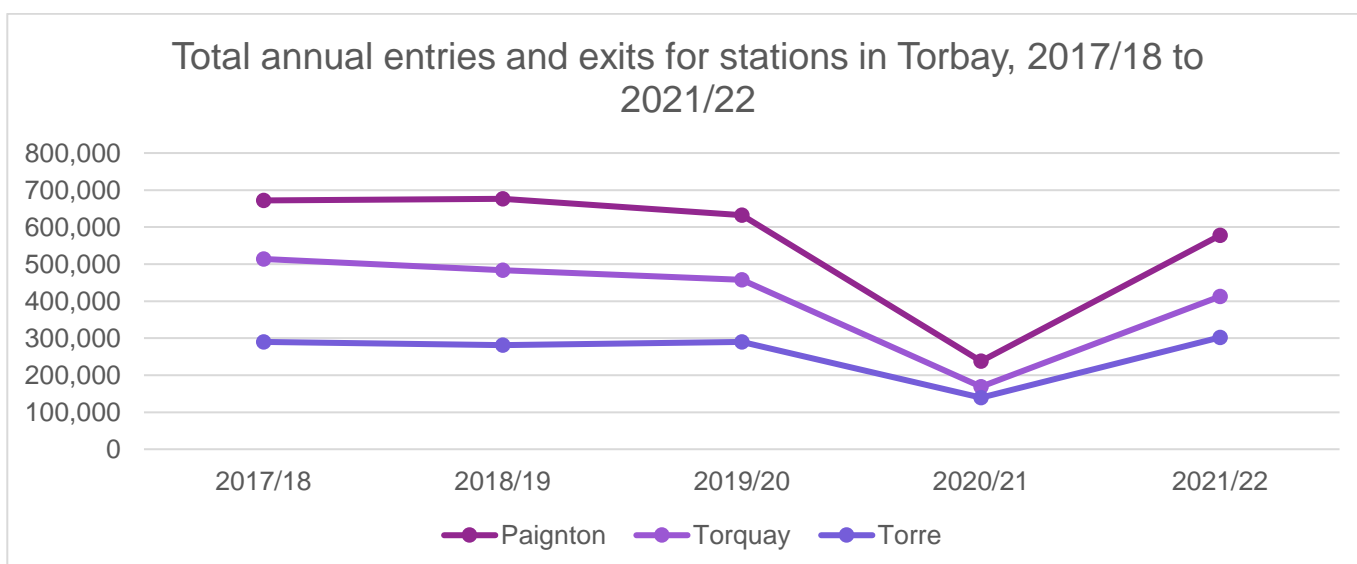


Figure 2.17: Estimated rail station usage, 2017/18 to 2020/21 (Office of Rail and Road, 2022)

- 2.2.10** Bus travel in Torbay was also heavily impacted by the Covid pandemic, with the number of bus passenger journeys in 2020/21 reducing to only 34.9% of the total in 2018/19 (compared to 31.8% for the South West and 36.3% for England). In 2021/22, bus passenger journeys in Torbay have recovered somewhat to 67.6% of 2018/19 levels (compared to a 63.5% recovery for the South West and a 66.0% recovery for England).
- 2.2.11** It is interesting to note that the recovery in the number of non-concessionary journeys in Torbay (to 81.5% of the 2018/19 total, compared to 67.5% for the South West and 68.1% for England) has been much stronger than the recovery for concessionary journeys (to only 50.8% of the 2018/19 total, compared to 53.5% for the South West and 58.3% for England). Put differently, in 2018/19 concessionary journeys comprised 45.1% of the total bus passenger journeys in Torbay, whereas in 2021/22 concessionary journeys comprised only 33.9% of the total (compared to 23.6% for the South West and 19.5% for England in 2021/22).

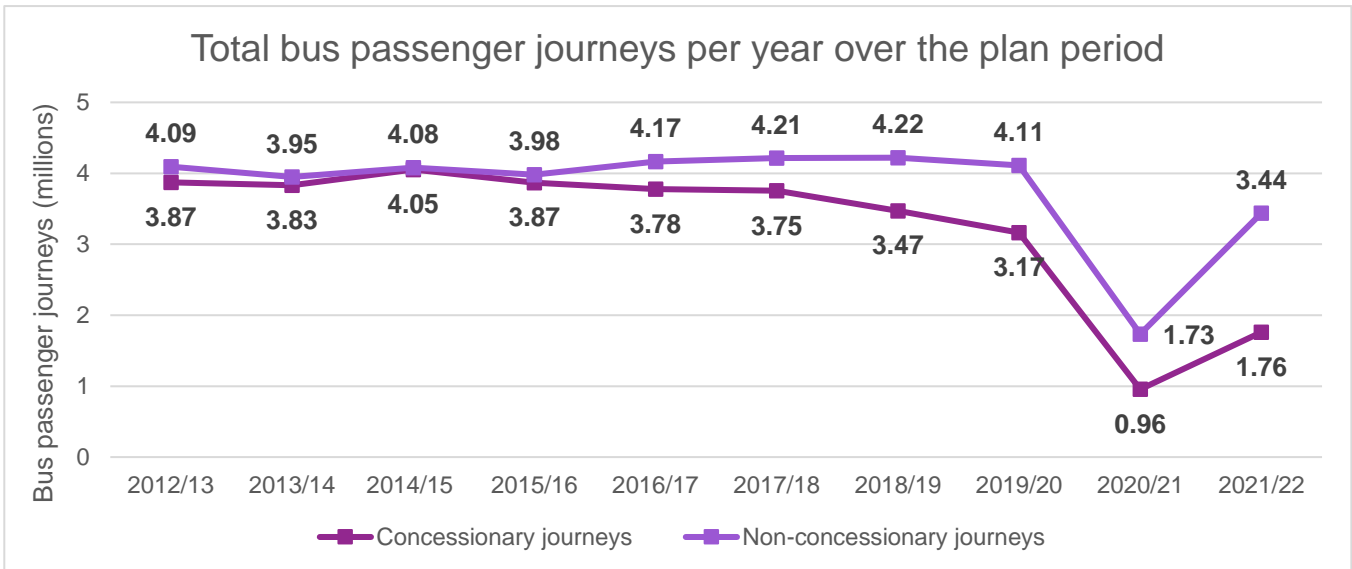


Figure 2.18: Concessionary and non-concessionary bus passenger journeys (DfT, 2023<sup>18</sup>)

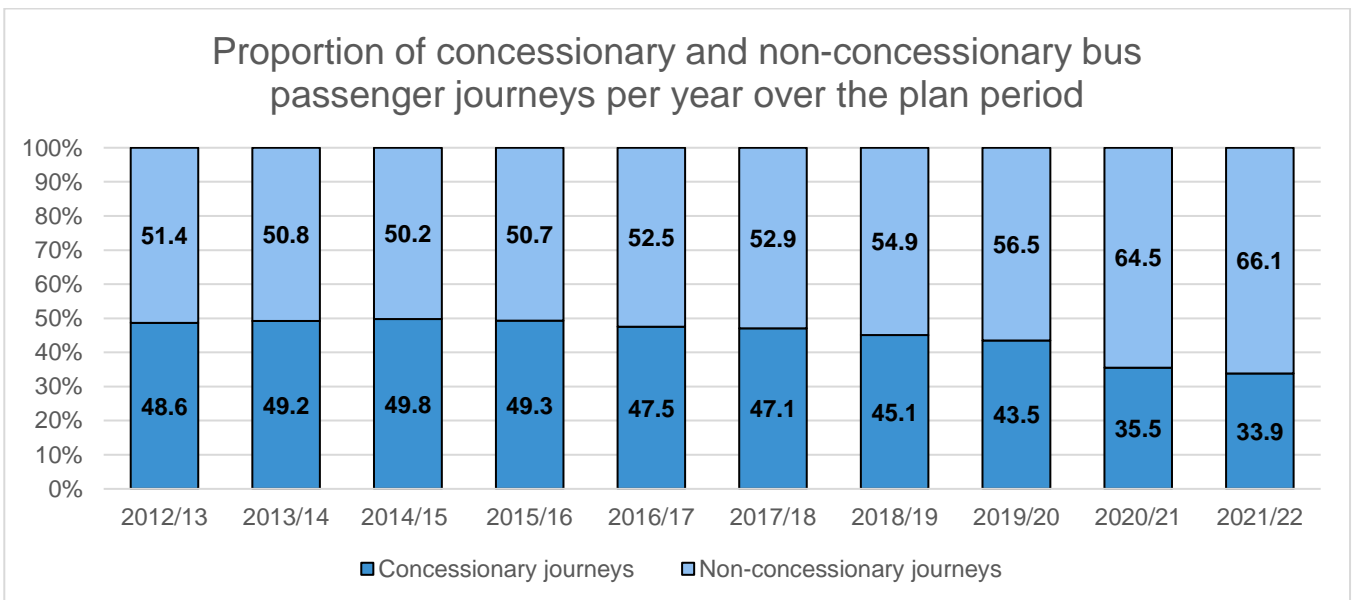


Figure 2.19: Proportion of concessionary and non-concessionary bus passenger journeys per year over the plan period (DfT, 2023)

**2.2.12** On average, residents use the bus more frequently in Torbay than in the South West as a whole, but less frequently than in Plymouth and in England as a whole.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus-statistics-data-tables#local-bus-passenger-journeys-bus01>

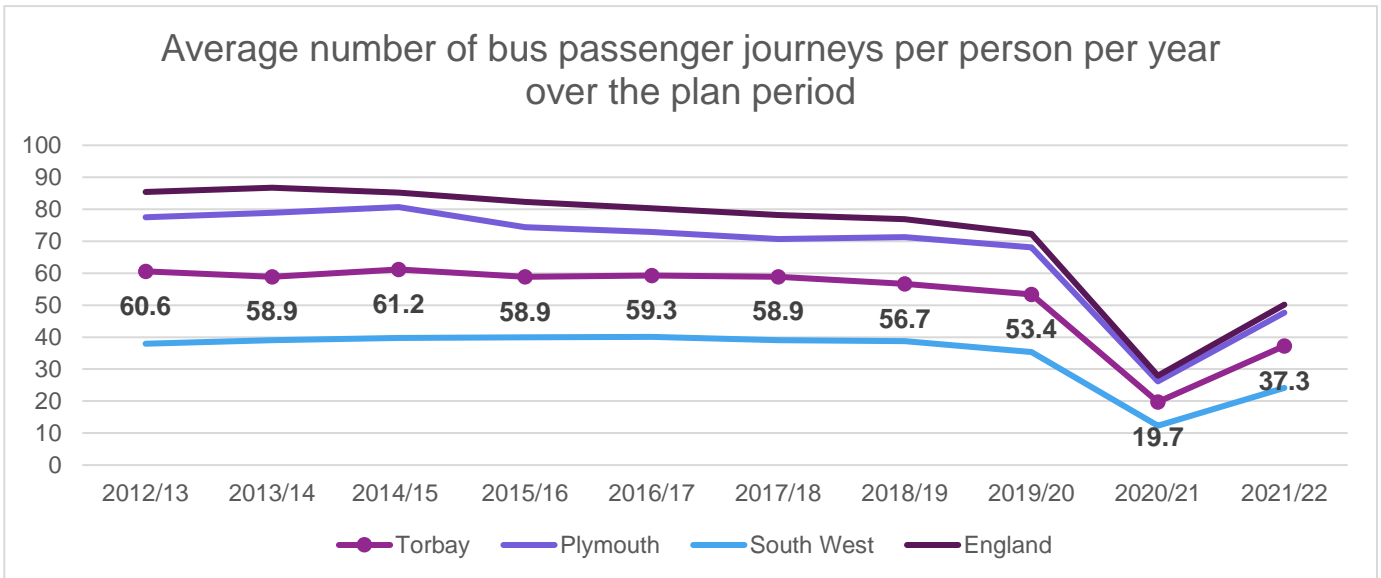


Figure 2.20: Average total bus passenger journeys per person per year over the plan period (DfT, 2023)

**2.2.13** Department for Transport statistics on total bus miles provide an indication of the extent of local bus services. In general terms, annual bus miles in Torbay remained relatively constant from 2013/14<sup>19</sup> to 2018/19, during which time bus services appear to have been reduced slightly year on year elsewhere. Annual bus miles in Torbay reduced significantly from 2018/19 to 2020/21, before a strong recovery from 2020/21 to 2021/22. Overall, annual bus miles in 2021/22 were 108.4% of the total in 2013/14.

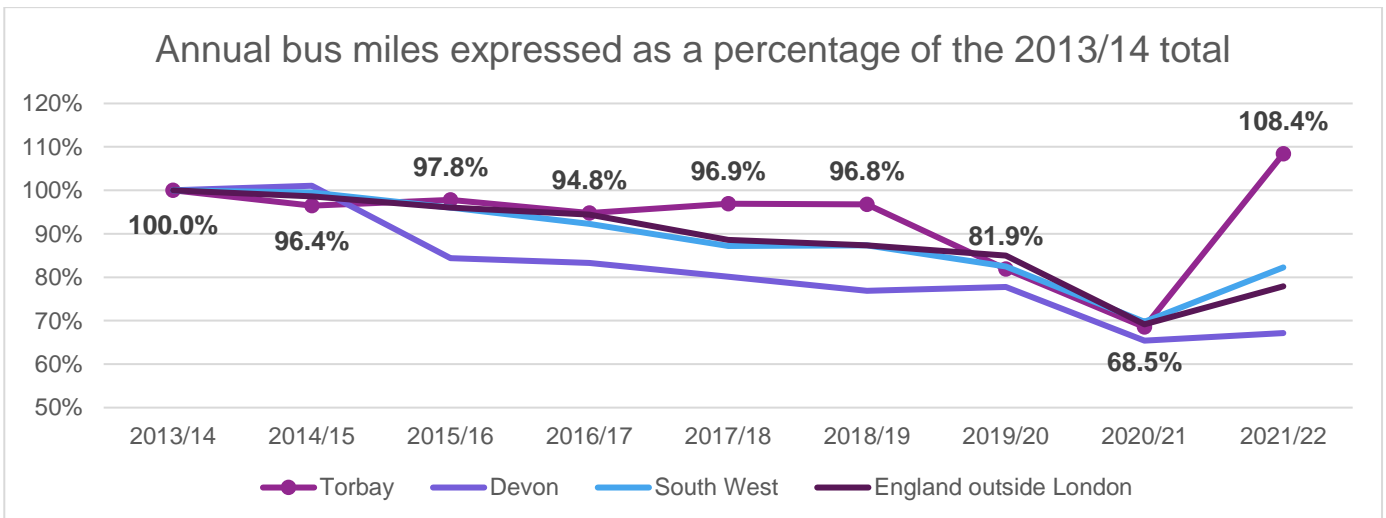


Figure 2.21: Change in total annual bus miles over the plan period (DfT, 2023<sup>20</sup>)

**2.2.14** Figure 2.22 below shows estimated annual traffic for all motor vehicles in terms of the total number of vehicle miles each year. Over the plan period up to 2018 there was a slight increase in traffic by this measure year on year, which then plateaued in 2019, and then fell considerably by 20.5% in 2020 with the onset of Covid-19 restrictions (compared to a 23.0% decrease in the South West and a 21.3% decrease in Great Britain). Traffic in Torbay has since increased to

<sup>19</sup> 2013/14 was the earliest year available for this indicator.

<sup>20</sup> Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/search/all?keywords=%22annual+bus+statistics%2C+year+ending%22&order=relevance&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-transport>

87.6% of what it was in 2018 (which was the last full year without Covid restrictions), which is slightly less than for the South West (89.5%) and for Great Britain (89.0%).

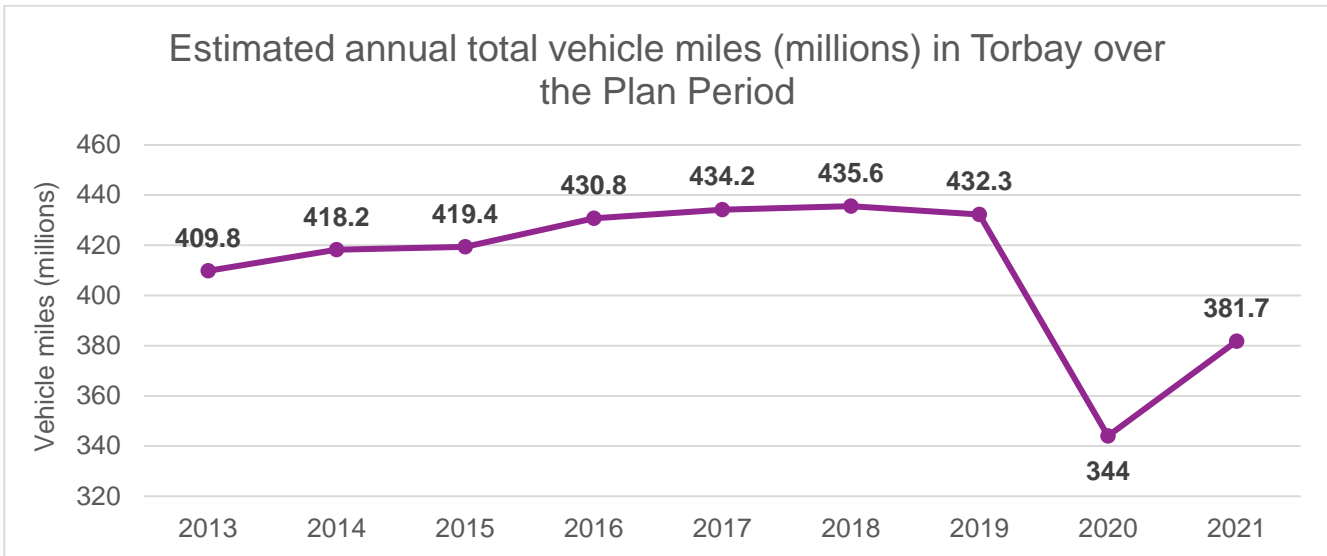


Figure 2.22: Estimated annual total vehicle miles (millions) in Torbay over the plan period (DfT, 2022)

**2.2.15** Whereas all motorised modes of transport decreased notably in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions, it is interesting to note that cycling increased over the same period, continuing an ongoing increasing trend since 2017. (This is based on average traffic counts taken at 28 locations on the road network.) 2021 has seen a subsequent reduction in cycling as car traffic has increased, although the number of cyclists continues to exceed pre-pandemic levels.

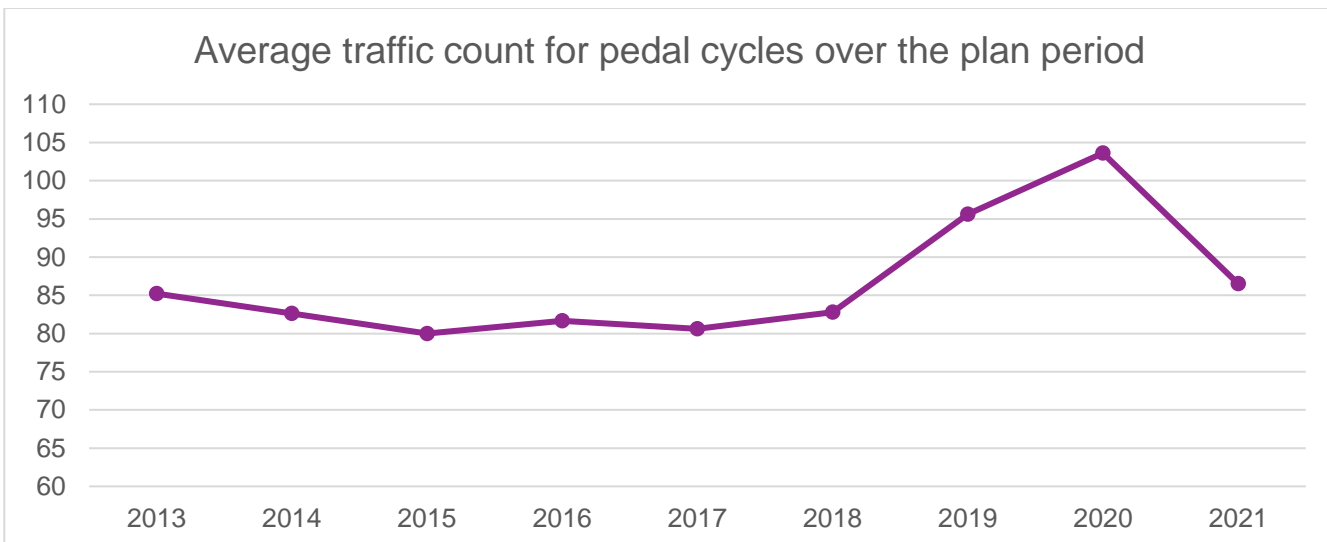


Figure 2.23: Average traffic count for cycles over the plan period (Department for Transport, 2022)

**2.2.16** The [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) (LCWIP) was adopted on 20 April 2021. The LCWIP provides a long-term and evidence-led approach to investing in local cycling and walking networks in Torbay.

**2.2.17** The Council are part of on-going discussions with Sustrans, South Devon AONB and South West Coast Path Association (SWCP) to improve the walking and cycling network in and around the Bay. The SWCP is a valuable tourism, recreation, health and wellbeing asset.

**2.2.18** Torbay is committed to facilitating the use of various modes of sustainable transport, which will prove attractive to both residents and visitors alike. Within the monitoring period projects continued on walking and cycling improvement schemes on Babbacombe Road in Torquay, Totnes Road, Goodrington to Broadsands and Clennon Valley in Paignton, and Americas Lane in Brixham.

**2.2.19** A better connected Torbay must also include widespread access to high capacity broadband. The table below shows the percentage of residential and business premises for which ultrafast (at least 300Mbit/s) and superfast (at least 30Mbit/s) broadband is available. Access to broadband in Torbay is broadly consistent with national averages.

Area	Full fibre	Ultrafast broadband availability (% premises)	Superfast broadband availability (% premises)
Torbay	47%	77%	95%
UK	28%	65%	96%

Figure 2.24: Broadband availability (Ofcom, 2021<sup>21</sup>)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research/connected-nations-2021/interactive-report>

## 2.3 Aspiration 3: Protect and enhance a superb environment

### Aspiration 3: Protect and enhance a superb natural and built environment

*To conserve and enhance the richness and diversity of the built, historic, marine and natural environments, which provide Torbay with its unique setting and important economic benefits. This will be achieved by meeting the following objectives:*

- 】 To safeguard heritage assets including those at risk in a manner appropriate to their significance, having regard to their ability to deliver economic regeneration, express local identity, reveal social histories and narratives and increase the connection of communities with place.
- 】 To ensure new development makes a positive contribution to local character and identity, including the wider landscape character, river corridors, open spaces, country parks and natural areas, and setting of proposals.
- 】 To avoid mediocre design by the application of clear design standards, including the use of Torbay's Design Review Panel to maintain quality development that is well integrated in its surroundings and responds successfully to local character.
- 】 To require conversions and extensions to positively enhance the existing building, especially in Conservation Areas, removing unsympathetic extensions and rectifying poor quality alterations where necessary.
- 】 To safeguard existing and maximise opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in and around developments to deliver a net gain for biodiversity.
- 】 To encourage the re-use of empty homes and businesses, including bringing back historic buildings into beneficial use.
- 】 To make the most of the English Riviera's status as the world's first internationally recognised Urban Geopark in recognition of its geological, historical and cultural heritage and sustainable tourism value.

**2.3.1** Torbay has a natural environment of international importance in terms of its biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape beauty. It has a high concentration of designated conservation sites, including two Special Areas of Conservation, a National Nature Reserve and twelve Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The English Riviera is the only urban Global Geopark designated by UNESCO, recognizing Torbay's varied and internationally significant geology across a range of geological periods.



Figure 2.25: Boundary of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

- 2.3.2 SWISCo (a company wholly owned by Torbay Council) was set up in April 2020 and the Council’s Natural Environment Services department was moved to operate under this company. The planning department, SWISCo and the GeoPark are working on plans to improve open spaces and green infrastructure, including through new policy documents or strategies where necessary.
- 2.3.3 In line with the requirements of the Environment Bill, which became law in November 2021, the planning department have been striving to ensure that all major planning applications provide a 10% biodiversity net gain through the use of the national biodiversity metric. A Devon-wide



Biodiversity Net Gain guidance document is being produced and is expected to be in place by early 2022.

- 2.3.4** In 2021 Torbay Council became a member of the Devon Local Nature Partnership and has contributed towards work to develop a Devon Wide Nature Recovery Network map. The Nature Recovery Network map will show priorities for protecting and restoring our natural capital to get the best gains for wildlife, people and the climate. This will be used to help target funding from sources such as net gain, carbon offsetting, and flood mitigation. The map should be finalised in early 2022.
- 2.3.5** Planning permission was approved in August 2020 for Clennon Valley – Green Link, a walking and cycling route between the Torbay leisure centre, the velopark around Clennon Lakes to Roselands school. The Local Plan makes specific reference to a landscape and green infrastructure-led design approach to ensure the conservation of a strategic green corridor linking Goodrington’s beaches with the top of the valley. It goes on to say that an east-west link should be promoted between South Devon College and Goodrington Sands. Delivery of the project should start in 2022 and will include wider improvements to our walking and cycling network.
- 2.3.6** A second active travel scheme is in development to create a similar ‘Green Link’ connecting Churston Manor with Brixham Battery Gardens via Americas Lane. Consultation took place during 2020 as well as extensive ecological and landscape assessment.
- 2.3.7** Torbay has a rich urban heritage with 6 Grade I Listed Buildings, 29 Grade II\* Listed Buildings and 24 designated Conservation Areas. Torbay has eleven sites and buildings on the 2022 Heritage At Risk register. Brixham Town Conservation Area was removed in 2020 and has remained off the list.

Site	Heritage Category	Grade	Condition	Trend
Lupton Park, Kingswear	Registered Park and Garden	II*	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems	Stable
Oldway Mansion, Paignton	Registered Park and Garden	II	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems	Declining
Princess Gardens and Royal Terrace Gardens, Torquay	Registered Park and Garden	II	Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems	Stable
Ashhole Cavern, Brixham	Scheduled Monument		Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems	Declining
Prehistoric field system at Walls Hill, Torquay	Scheduled Monument		Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems	Declining
The Bishop's Palace, Tower Road, Paignton	Scheduled Monument		Poor	
Church of St Mary the Virgin, Drew Street, Brixham	Listed Building	II*	Poor	
Lupton House (Gramercy Hall School)	Listed Building	II*	Poor	

Ilisham Manor Oratory, Ilisham Road, Torquay	Listed Building	II*	Poor	
Torbay Cinema, Torbay Road, Paignton	Listed Building	II*	Poor	
Church of St Mary Magdalene, Upper Union Street, Torquay	Listed Building	II*	Poor	

Figure 2.26: Heritage At Risk Register, 2022 (Historic England, 2022)

- 2.3.8** In November 2020 Cabinet Members adopted a new [Heritage Strategy 2021-2026](#) for Torbay. At the beginning of 2020, we joined in partnership with Torbay Culture and TDA commissioned an independent heritage consultancy, Heritage Arts and People (HAP), to update the local area's heritage strategy. The Heritage Strategy was "Highly Commended" by the RTPI at the RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence 2021.
- 2.3.9** 2021 has seen the first phase of the implementation of the Heritage Strategy, enabled by funding from the Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage to Torbay Culture. This has included the preparation of a [Heritage Interpretation Framework](#) and a series of site-specific reports by HAP Consultants. The first phase of renovation of the Paignton Picture House has been completed, and listed building consent has recently been granted for repairs to the Torquay Pavilion. Further work to implement the Heritage Strategy will continue in 2022 including through the establishment of a heritage forum, and continued dialogue with national agencies including Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- 2.3.10** In March 2017 Torbay Culture received £1.2 million from the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund's Great Place Scheme. Torbay's Great Place Scheme aims to grow and celebrate the local area as a great place to live, work and visit. Torbay Culture ran a series of projects during 2020 as part of its work to put arts and heritage at the heart of the Bay's bright future. They involved local residents, businesses, cultural organisations and creative practitioners from Torbay and around the world. They have partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The work is focused on four themes: shaping place, changing lives, engaging audiences, and building resilience across the cultural sector. As part of the shaping place theme, artists and creative practitioners have been involved with The Strand public realm, Paignton Town Square public realm, Paignton and Preston flood defence scheme, Westerland Valley and more recently as part of the successful Town Deal bid.
- 2.3.11** The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) publishes annual figures on empty homes<sup>22</sup>. In Torbay, the number of empty homes peaked at 3,038 in 2018 and has since decreased each year to a figure of 2,215 in 2021, of which 909 have been empty for more than six months. Torbay has a notably higher proportion of empty homes (3.29%) than the figures for the South West (2.36%) and for England (2.63%), although the gap has closed in recent years. The Covid pandemic may well have had an impact on the number of empty homes in 2020 and 2021.

<sup>22</sup> DLUHC defines empty homes as "empty properties as classified for council tax purposes and including all empty properties liable for council tax and properties that are empty but receive a council tax exemption". Long term empty homes are defined as "properties liable for council tax that have been empty for more than six months and that are not subject to Empty Homes Discount class D or empty due to specific flooding events".

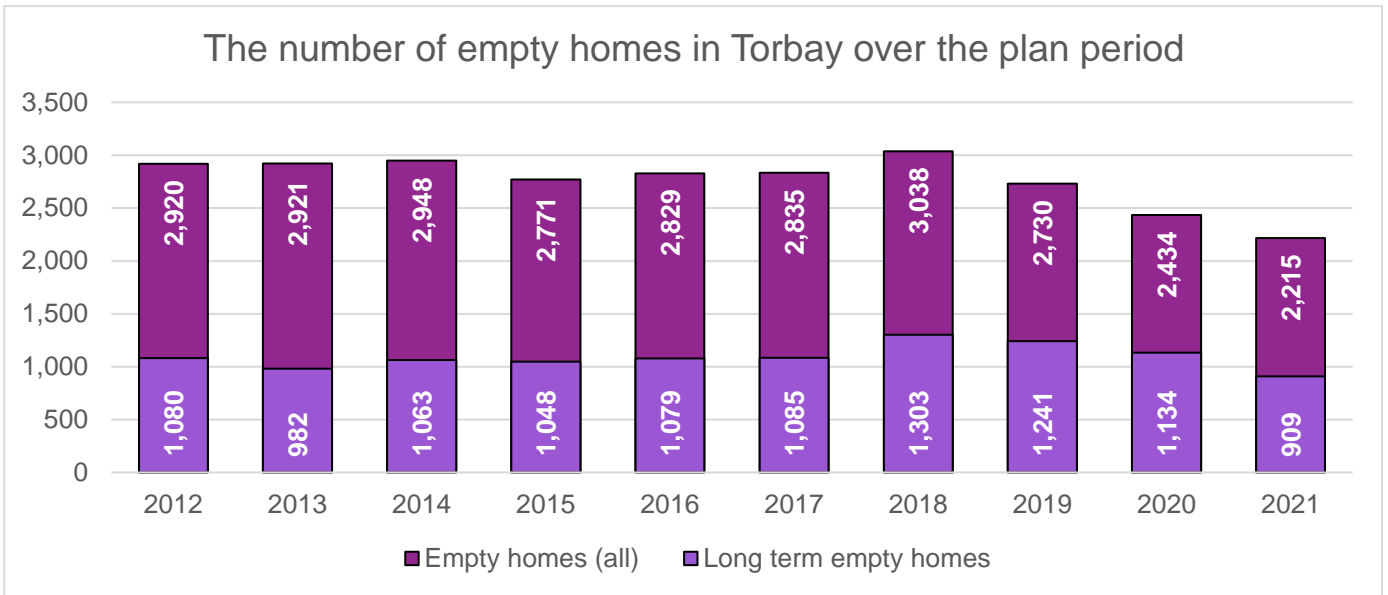


Figure 2.27: The number of empty homes in Torbay over the plan period (DLUHC, 2022<sup>23</sup>)

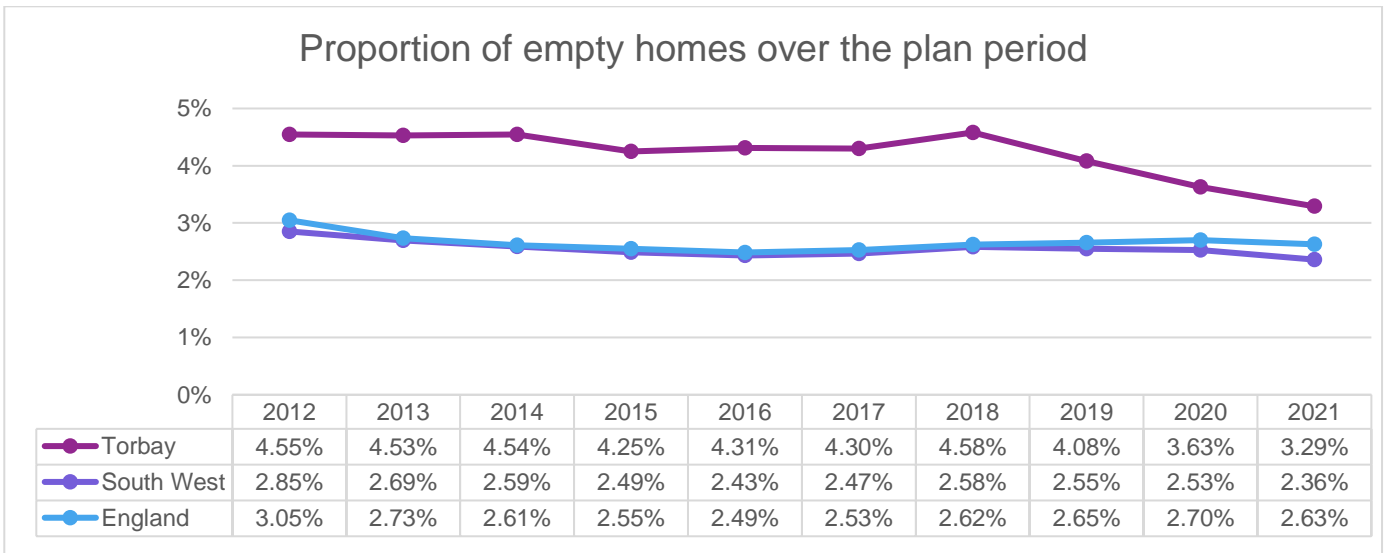
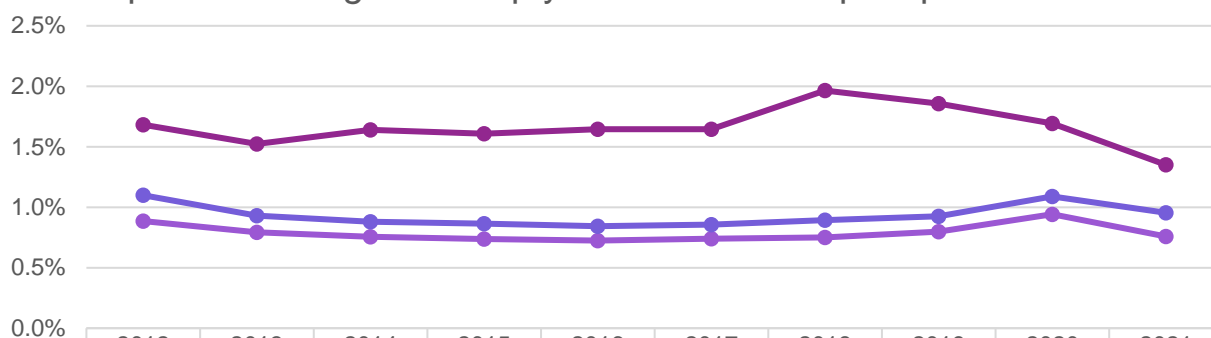


Figure 2.28: Empty homes as a percentage of the total housing stock (DLUHC, 2022)

<sup>23</sup> Live Tables 615 and 109 from DLUHC: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

### Proportion of *long term* empty homes over the plan period



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Torbay	1.68%	1.52%	1.64%	1.61%	1.65%	1.65%	1.96%	1.86%	1.69%	1.35%
South West	0.89%	0.79%	0.76%	0.74%	0.72%	0.74%	0.75%	0.80%	0.94%	0.76%
England	1.10%	0.93%	0.88%	0.86%	0.84%	0.86%	0.89%	0.93%	1.09%	0.95%

Figure 2.29: Long term empty homes as a percentage of the total housing stock (DLUHC, 2022)

**2.3.12** There are two declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Torbay – Hele Road in Torquay and New Road in Brixham, declared in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Works are ongoing to alleviate emissions in these areas and there are clear signs of improvement. Torbay Council’s Environmental Health department published an [Air Quality Management Annual Status Report](#) in June 2021.

**2.3.13** Torbay’s coastline offers an array of beaches and coves which are popular amongst residents and visitors. Six beaches (Breakwater Beach, Broadsands, Meadfoot Beach, Oddicombe Beach, Preston Sands and Torbay Abbey Sands) were awarded Blue Flag Status in 2022; an increase from five beaches (Breakwater Beach, Broadsands, Preston Sands, Oddicombe Beach and Torre Abbey) in 2021 and two beaches (Meadfoot and Oddicombe Beach) in 2020. Oddicombe Beach is one of only two beaches to have been awarded Blue Flag Status every year since the award was established in 1987.

**2.3.14** The table below shows bathing water quality at fifteen Torbay beaches from 2016 to 2021 as reported by the Environment Agency. Classifications were not made for the 2020 season due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the sampling programme. Bathing water quality across all Torbay beaches was rated either good or excellent in 2021. There have been noteworthy improvements in water quality at Torre Abbey, Preston Sands, Paignton Sands, Goodrington and Broadsands during the plan period.

Beach	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Maidencombe	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Watcombe	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	-
Oddicombe	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Babbacombe	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Anstey's Cove	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Meadfoot	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Beacon Cove	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Torre Abbey	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Hollicombe	Excellent	Good	Good	Good	-	Good
Preston Sands	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent

Paignton Sands	Sufficient	Good	Good	Good	-	Good
Goodrington	Good	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient	-	Good
Broadsands	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
Breakwater Beach	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent
St Mary's Bay	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	-	Excellent

Figure 2.30: Water quality at Torbay beaches, 2016 to 2021 (Environment Agency, 2021<sup>24</sup>)

**2.3.15** Appropriate and most effective use of land is important in Torbay because of the limited amount of land available for development, due to environmental constraints. Historically, Torbay has been good at re-using brownfield land. This will continue as land is (re)developed as part of the town centre regeneration programmes/masterplans and site allocations in neighbourhood plans.

**2.3.16** In the monitoring year 2021/22, 56% of the total units built were on brownfield land. This is less than 66% in the previous year, due to the relatively high completions this year on greenfield sites in Paignton in particular. The average over the plan period is 65% on brownfield land.

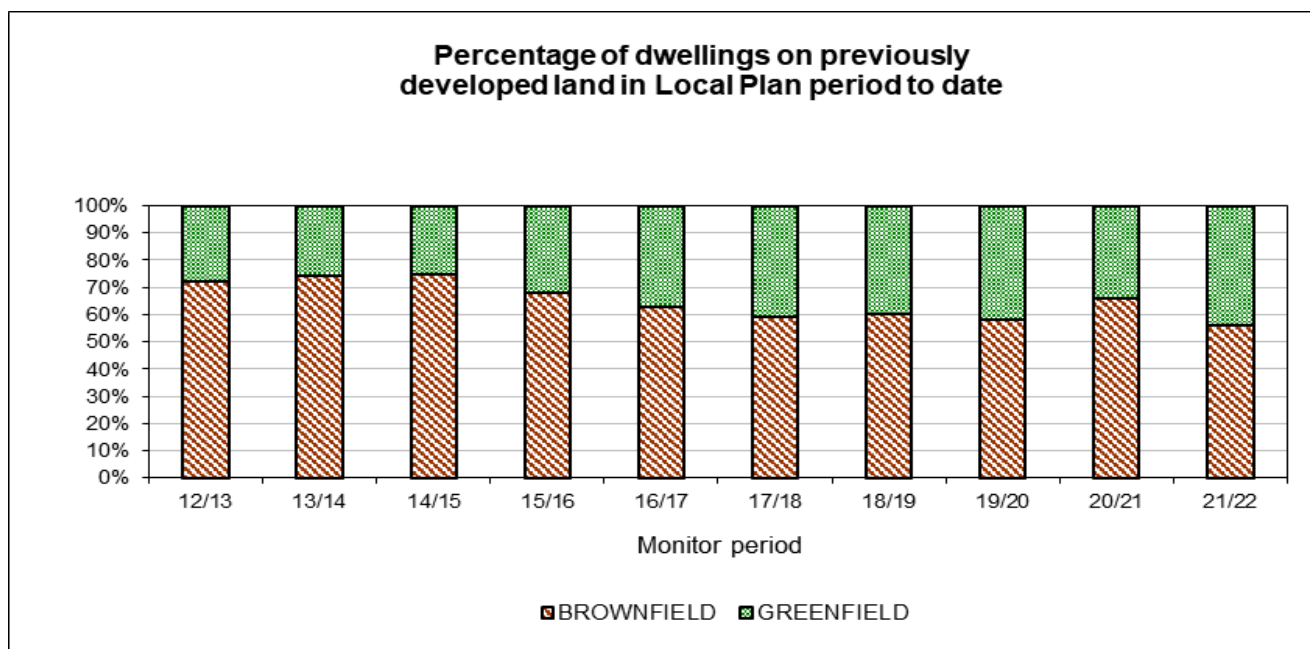


Figure 2.31: Percentage of new dwelling on previously developed land in the plan period

**2.3.17** The Council has published its [Brownfield Register](#) in accordance with legislation.

**2.3.18** Torbay's [Self and custom build register](#) has played a part in housing delivery within the Bay. The number of people registering in this monitoring period has dwindled (3 this year compared to 10 in the previous year) and the total remains relatively low overall.

Self build register period	Number of entries (per year)
Base Period 1 (up to 30.10.16)	7
Base Period 2 (31.10.16 – 30.10.17)	7
Base Period 3 (31.10.17 – 30.10.18)	4
Base Period 4 (31.10.18 – 30.10.19)	11
Base Period 5 (31.10.19 – 30.10.20)	10

<sup>24</sup> <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>

Base Period 6 (31.10.20 – 30.10.21)	10
Base Period 7 (31.10.21 – 30.10.22)	3
Total (as at October 2022)	52

Figure 2.32: Self build register

**2.3.19** The following table shows planning performance during 2021/22:

	Total	Granted		Refused		Decided in time (incl. EOT)	
<b>Major</b>	22	20	90.9%	2	9.1%	19	86.4%
<b>Minor</b>	218	163	74.8%	55	25.2%	170	78.0%
<b>Other</b>	659	555	84.2%	104	15.8%	532	80.7%
<b>Listed building consent (incl. in Other)</b>	37	32	86.5%	5	13.5%	24	64.9%
<b>Conservation Area consent (incl. in Other)</b>	1	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	899	738	82.1%	161	17.9%	721	80.2%

Figure 2.33: Planning performance 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022

**2.3.20** The overall number of applications determined increased from 778 in 2020/21 to 899 in 2021/22. The percentage of applications decided in time has remained broadly consistent with the previous reporting year, with major applications having the strongest performance in terms of timeframes. 86.4% of majors were decided in time compared to 86% nationally, 78% of minor applications were decided in time compared to 80% nationally, and 80.7% of 'other' applications were decided in time compared to 85% nationally.

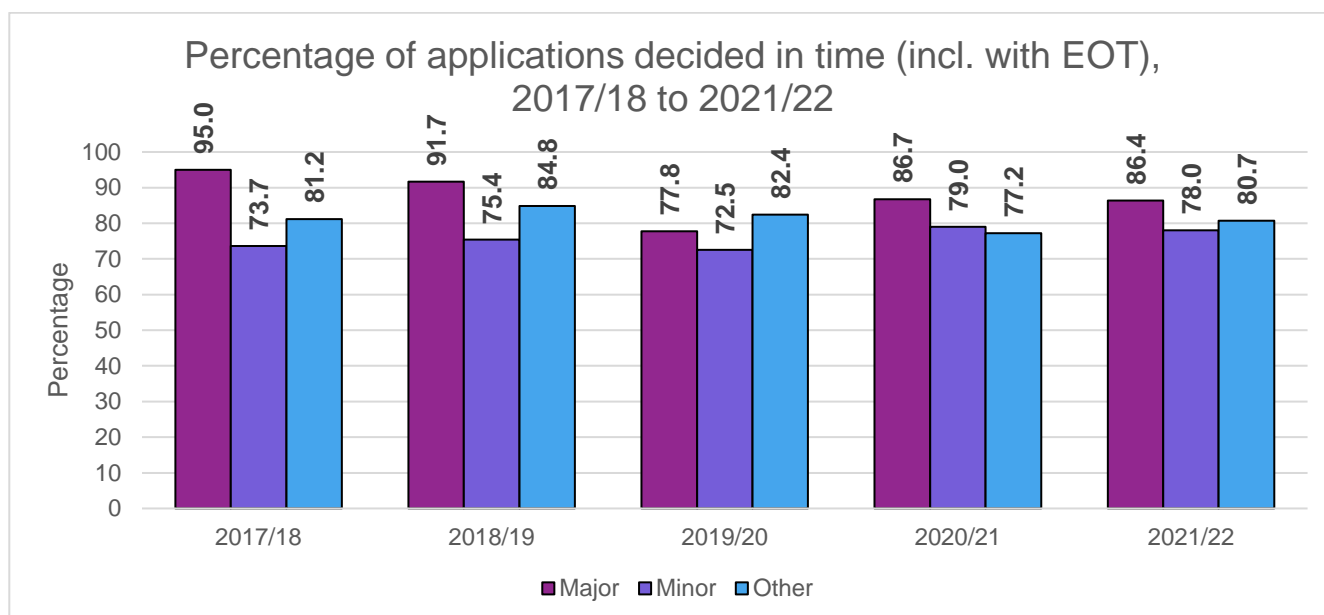


Figure 2.34: Percentage of applications decided in time (incl. with EOT), 2017/18 to 2021/22

**2.3.21** The figure below shows the percentage of applications approved and refused each year for the last five years. 83.8% of applications in Torbay were approved over this period, compared to 88% nationally. 2017/18 was the last year in which the percentage of applications approved in

Torbay was higher than the national average (which has consistently been 88% for each of the last five years).

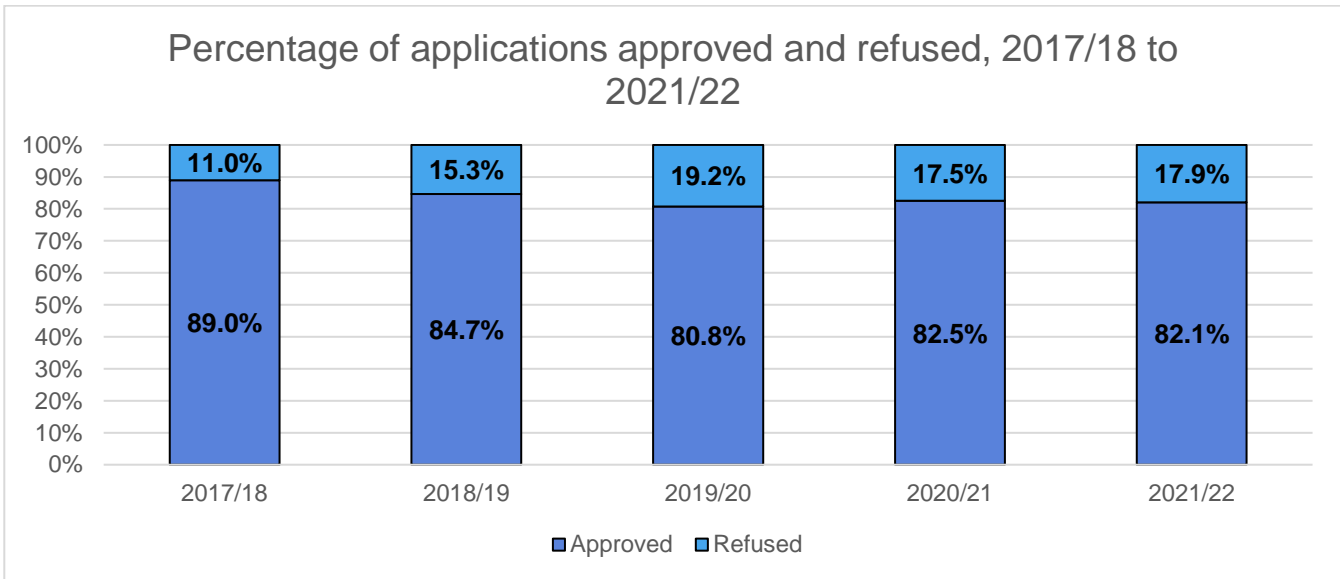


Figure 2.35: Percentage of applications approved and refused, 2017/18 to 2021/22

**2.3.22** Figure 2.37 shows appeal decisions<sup>25</sup> over the last five years. 38.9% of the 72 appeals decided in 2021/22 were allowed by the Planning Inspectorate, with this being broadly similar to the percentage for 2020/21 (37.8%) and slightly higher than the percentages for 2017/18 (31.0%) and 2018/19 (31.7%). 2019/20 was an unusual year with a larger number of appeals received and a notably lower percentage of appeals being allowed. Nationally, in the region of 28% of appeals over the last five years were allowed (Planning Inspectorate, 2021).

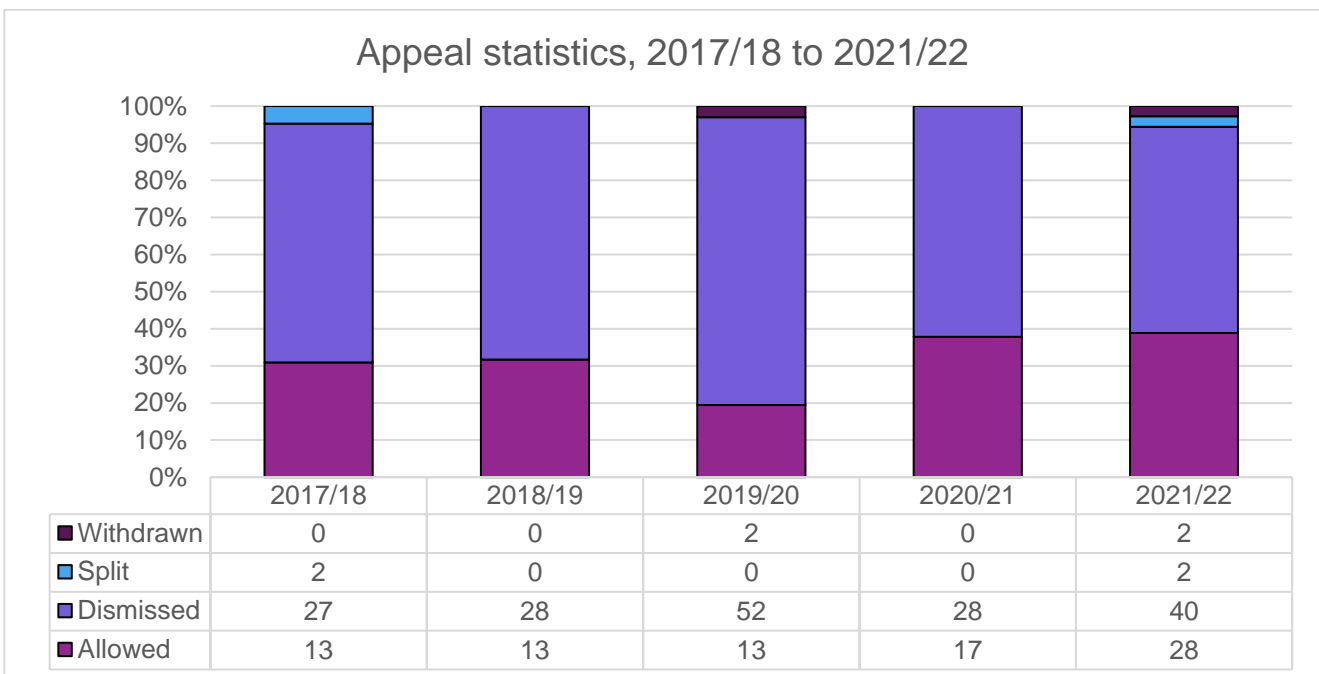


Figure 2.36: Appeal Statistics, 2017/18 to 2021/22

<sup>25</sup> The appeal statistics include householders, planning applications, lawful development certificates, listed build consents and advertisement consents, but exclude enforcement notices.

## 2.4 Aspiration 4: Create more sustainable communities and better places

### Aspiration 4: Create more sustainable communities and better places

*To meet the needs of Torbay's residents, including disadvantaged and minority groups, and to provide everyone with a full range of opportunities in life. This will be achieved through meeting the following objectives:*

- 】 To build enough houses to give everyone a chance of a decent home.
- 】 To end the cycle of deprivation linked to substandard accommodation and resist inappropriate conversions and poor design where this may exacerbate disadvantage and deprivation.
- 】 To resist inappropriate out-of-centre retailing which would harm the vitality and viability of town centres, undermining their status.
- 】 To diversify the leisure and cultural offer in the town centres, particularly the evening and night time economy in Torquay.
- 】 To create a more enjoyable, creative built and natural environment using heritage assets, public art and revitalisation of the public spaces to attract events, exhibitions and festivals that celebrate and enhance the culture of Torbay.
- 】 To allow tall buildings in appropriate locations where this secures wider regeneration benefits and does not harm the Bay's assets.
- 】 To provide a suitable and sustainable range of physical and community infrastructure to promote economic prosperity and social cohesion and contribute towards higher aspirations and achievement, particularly amongst the young.
- 】 To support the expansion of existing educational establishments, especially South Devon College, and plan positively for new education and lifelong learning.
- 】 To use planning tools such as Local Development Orders and Article 4 Directions to facilitate improved living standards.
- 】 To provide more freedoms for local communities to determine their future direction, eg. by supporting preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 】 To help tackle hotspots of child poverty, multiple deprivation, high levels of crime and unemployment in Tormohun, Ellacombe, Roundham with Hyde and Watcombe, and pockets of deprivation and poverty in Blatchcombe and St Mary's with Summercombe.
- 】 To support new and enhanced recreational, play and leisure facilities, to promote health and social well being for all, including young people.

**2.4.1** Local Plan Policies SS12 'Housing' and SS13 'Five year land supply' set out a housing trajectory of 8,900 new homes over the plan period 2012-2030 (including an allowance for windfall sites) as set out below;

- 400 homes per year for the period 2012/13 – 2016/17
- 495 homes per year for the period 2017/18 – 2021/22



- 555 homes per year for the period 2022/23 – 2029/30

**2.4.2** 3,479 homes have been completed over the period from 2012/13 to 2021/22. This is an undersupply of 996 homes against the ten-year target of 4,475. This undersupply has increased significantly since 2018/19 (when the cumulative undersupply was 271 homes) due to low completions particularly in 2019/20 and 2020/21. Annual completions are shown below.

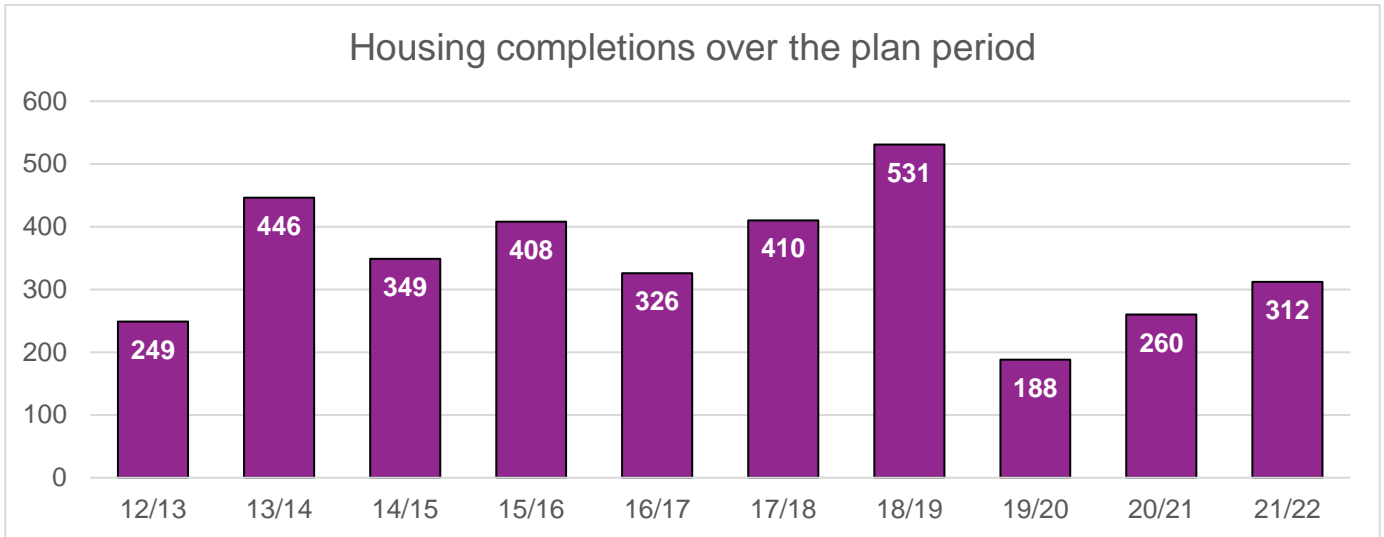


Figure 2.37: Annual housing completions over the plan period

**2.4.3** Since December 2020, which was the 5th anniversary of the Local Plan’s adoption, the five year supply figure has been based upon the Standard Method calculation (600 dwellings a year in 2022). The 2021 housing delivery test dictates an additional 20% buffer. This makes the annual housing requirement  $600 \times 120\% = 720$  dwellings a year.

**2.4.4** As of April 2022, Torbay’s five year housing land supply was 2.52 years’ worth of deliverable sites (1,816 homes completed against a target of 3,600 homes). Torbay’s housing land supply has fluctuated year to year, but with a decreasing trend over the plan period (aside from a particularly strong year in 2015/16). This is due to the most deliverable sites being built out in the earlier phases of the plan period with some of the more complex regeneration schemes not having been delivered, combined with the Local Plan’s stepped housing trajectory. The NPPF definition of ‘deliverable’ has also become narrower over the years.

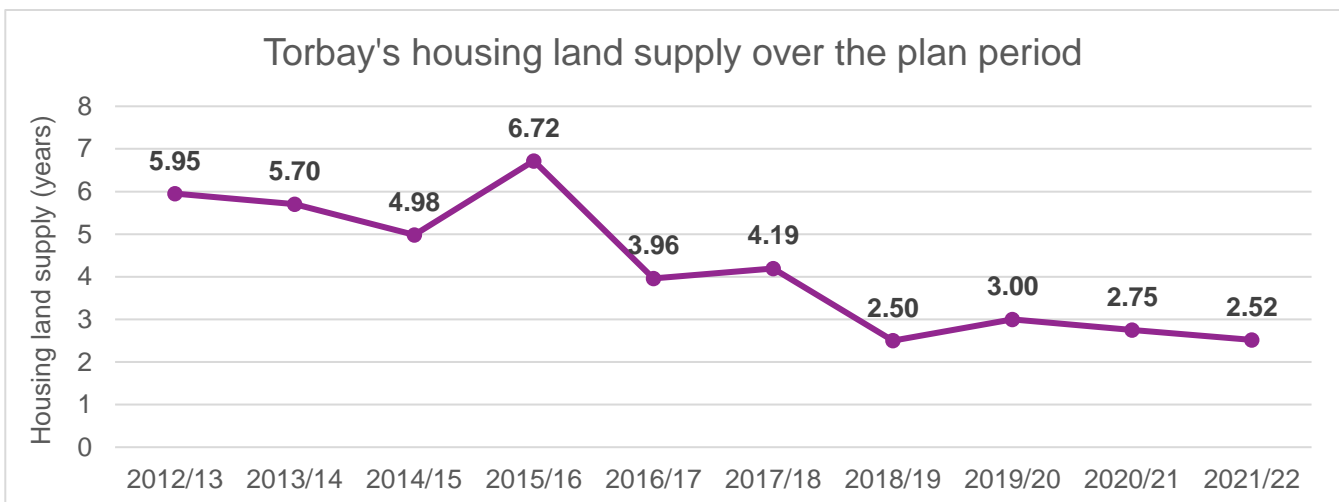


Figure 2.38: Torbay’s five year housing land supply over the plan period

**2.4.5** Despite completions having been low, 2021/22 saw permission for 807 new homes being granted across 98 sites in Torbay<sup>26</sup>. This includes 373 homes granted on appeal at Inglewood (P/2017/1133), 100 homes at Land North of Totnes Road, Collaton St Mary (P/2019/0281) and 90 homes at Stoodley Knowle, Torquay (P/2019/1330).

**2.4.6** The number of affordable housing completions has been very low over the last two years, with 19 affordable homes built in 2020/21 and 22 in 2021/22. (This excludes ‘off the shelf’ purchases in which market homes are purchased by Torbay Council for use as affordable housing.) Policy H2 ‘Affordable housing’ seeks affordable housing on a sliding scale, up to 30% of dwellings on qualifying sites, with a strong preference for on-site delivery for developments comprising 15 dwellings or more.

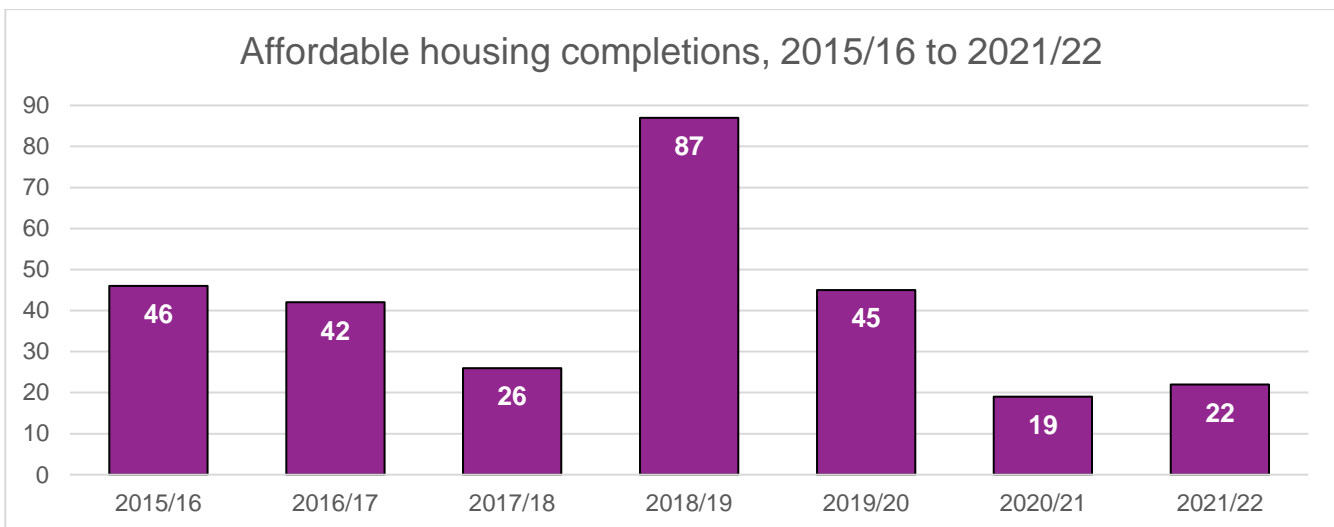


Figure 2.39: Affordable housing completions per year from 2015/16 to 2021/22

**2.4.7** The TDA has established a registered housing provider, TorVista Homes, to assist the Council in maximising the supply of affordable housing in Torbay. TorVista aims to secure around 360 new affordable homes in its first 4 years, and then to double this figure in years 5 to 10. This is in addition to the Council working with wider registered provider partners and adds another delivery option which will help meet the Bay’s wider strategic housing needs.

**2.4.8** Housing affordability remains a significant challenge in Torbay. The average house price in Torbay increased by 13.35% from £219,889 in April 2021 to £249,255 in March 2022 ([Land Registry: UK House Price Index](#)). This now amounts to a 28.13% increase from April 2019 to March 2022, with this increase outstripping both the South West (23.92%) and the UK (21.21%). This is likely to reflect the ‘race for space’ and increased demand in coastal towns during the Covid pandemic.

<sup>26</sup> This figure includes planning applications (full as well as outline), variation of conditions (where this results in a net increase in the number of homes permitted), prior approvals and certificates of lawfulness, but excludes reserved matters.

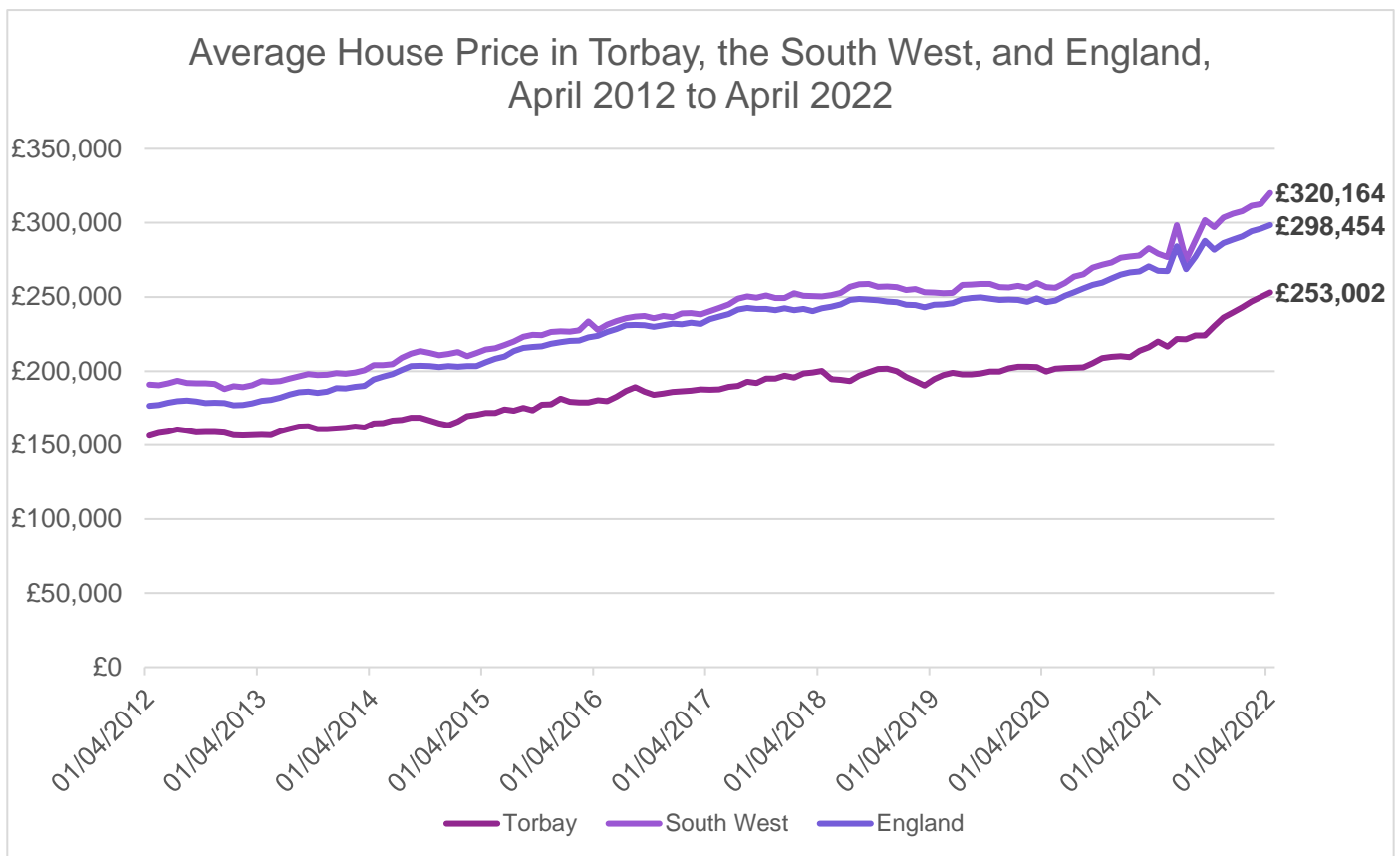


Figure 2.40: Average house price in Torbay, the South West and England over the plan period (Land Registry, 2022<sup>27</sup>)

**2.4.9** In total over the plan period (from April 2012 to March 2022), house prices in Torbay have increased by 61.9%, compared to a 67.7% increase in the South West and a 69.0% increase in England. With inflation having been 21.5% according to CPIH (and 33.4% according to RPI), this amounts to a considerable real terms increase in house prices<sup>28</sup>. Conversely, average weekly wages for full-time employees in Torbay have increase by 19.4% over the plan period, amounting to a real terms decrease compared to CPIH.

**2.4.10** The median house price to median earnings ratio was 8.9 in 2021, compared to 9.97 for the South West and 9.05 for England. While the affordability ratio for Torbay has been lower than that of the South West and England for each of the last 3 years, it increased by 20.6% from 2020 to 2021 compared to a 14.1% increase for the South West and a 15.1% increase for England. Torbay’s affordability ratio is now the highest it has been at any point in the plan period and remains far higher than the typical bank mortgage lending ‘rule-of-thumb’ of 4.5 times annual income, reflecting the significant barriers of entry into homeownership.

<sup>27</sup> <https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi?lang=en>

<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that this report covers the year up until the end of March 2022, and therefore the increase in mortgage interest rates and knock-on effects on house prices that has occurred in the months since then are not discussed. Housing affordability will continue to be monitored and reported on in the AMR 2022/23.

### Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings, 2012 to 2021

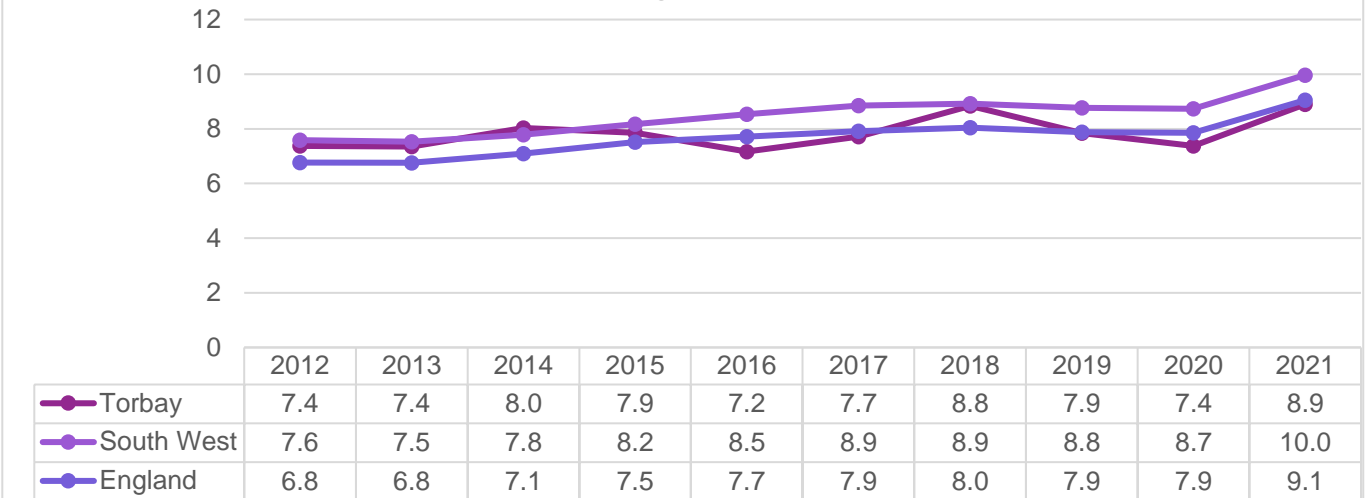


Figure 2.41: Housing affordability ratio in Torbay, the South West and England over the plan period (ONS, 2022<sup>29</sup>)

**2.4.11** In terms of housing tenure, Torbay has a notably higher proportion of households in the private rented sector (26.6%) and in ownership (65.1%), with a significantly lower proportion living in social/affordable rented accommodation (8.3%). Out of 331 lower tier local authorities, Torbay has the 10<sup>th</sup> lowest proportion of households in social/affordable rent and the 44<sup>th</sup> highest proportion of households living in the private rented sector (or 21<sup>st</sup> highest excluding the London boroughs).

**2.4.12** The lack of affordability and the barriers of entry into homeownership are reflected in the fact that, for Torbay as well as for England and Wales, the proportion of households in ownership has decreased and the proportion of households in the private rented sector has increased from Census 2011 to Census 2021.

### Change in housing tenure from Census 2011 to Census 2021

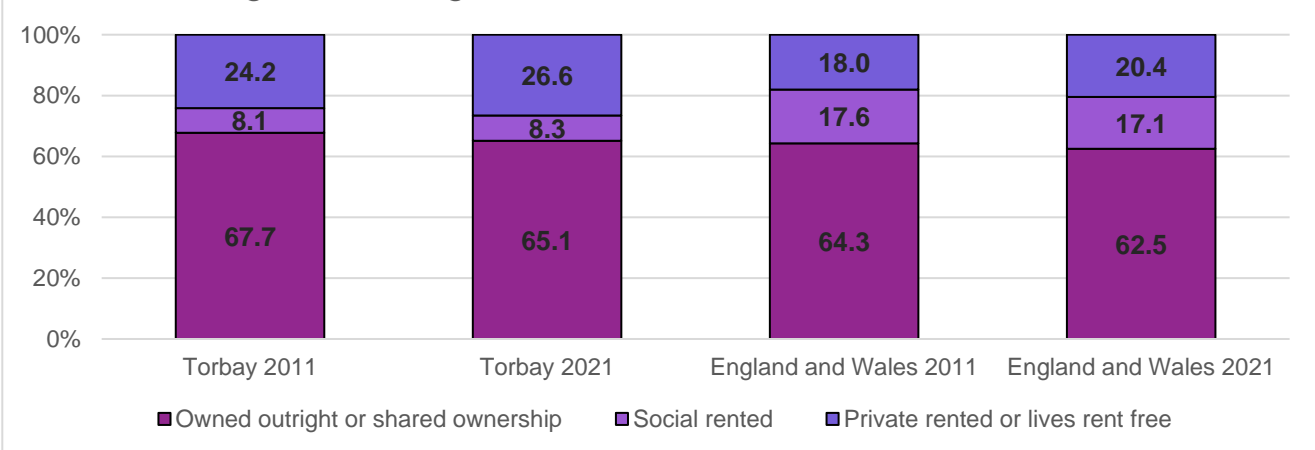


Figure 2.42: Change in housing tenure from Census 2011 to Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>30</sup>)

<sup>29</sup>

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearning\\_slowerquartileandmedian](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearning_slowerquartileandmedian)

<sup>30</sup> Census 2021 housing tenure data: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS054/editions/2021/versions/2>

Census 2011 housing tenure data: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks402ew>

**2.4.13** The figure below shows the fluctuations in the number of households on the Devon Home Choice register in Torbay since 2015. While there are fewer households on the register than at the peak in 2016, there has been a steady increase in the number of households seeking affordable housing since 2019. Over the reporting year, the number of households on the register in Torbay increased by 15.2% from 1,363 on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 1,570 on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. This compares to an increase of 14.4% for Devon over the same period.

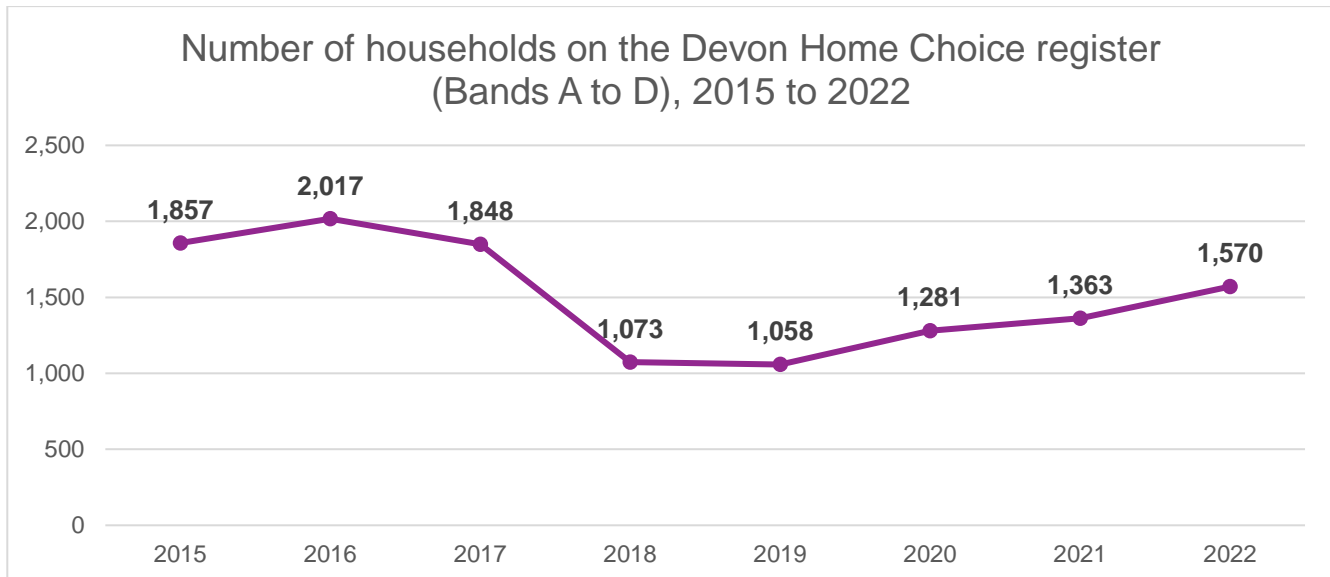


Figure 2.43: Households on the Devon Home Choice register (Bands A to D), 2015 to 2022 (Devon Home Choice, 2022<sup>31</sup>)

**2.4.14** The majority of households on the register fall within Band D (see Figure 27), and the greatest need is for one bedroom properties (see Figures 28 and 29). When comparing housing need in Torbay with Devon the distribution is very similar, although the proportion of households on the register that fall within Bands A, B and C (i.e., more severe need) is marginally higher, as is the proportion of households needing properties with two or more bedrooms.

	Band A		Band B		Band C		Band D		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Torbay	1	0.1	321	20.4	441	28.1	807	51.4	1,570
Devon	24	0.1	3,450	17.6	5,505	28.0	10,670	54.3	19,649

Figure 2.44: Number of households in housing need (Bands A to D) as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 (DHC, 2022)

	1 Bed		2 Beds		3 Beds		4+ Beds		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Torbay	808	51.4	381	24.2	248	15.8	135	8.6	1,572
Devon	15,974	54.6	7,496	25.6	4,145	14.2	1,621	5.5	29,236

Figure 2.45: Bedroom need of applicants in housing need (Bands A to D) as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 (DHC, 2022)

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.devonhomechoice.com/useful-information-0>

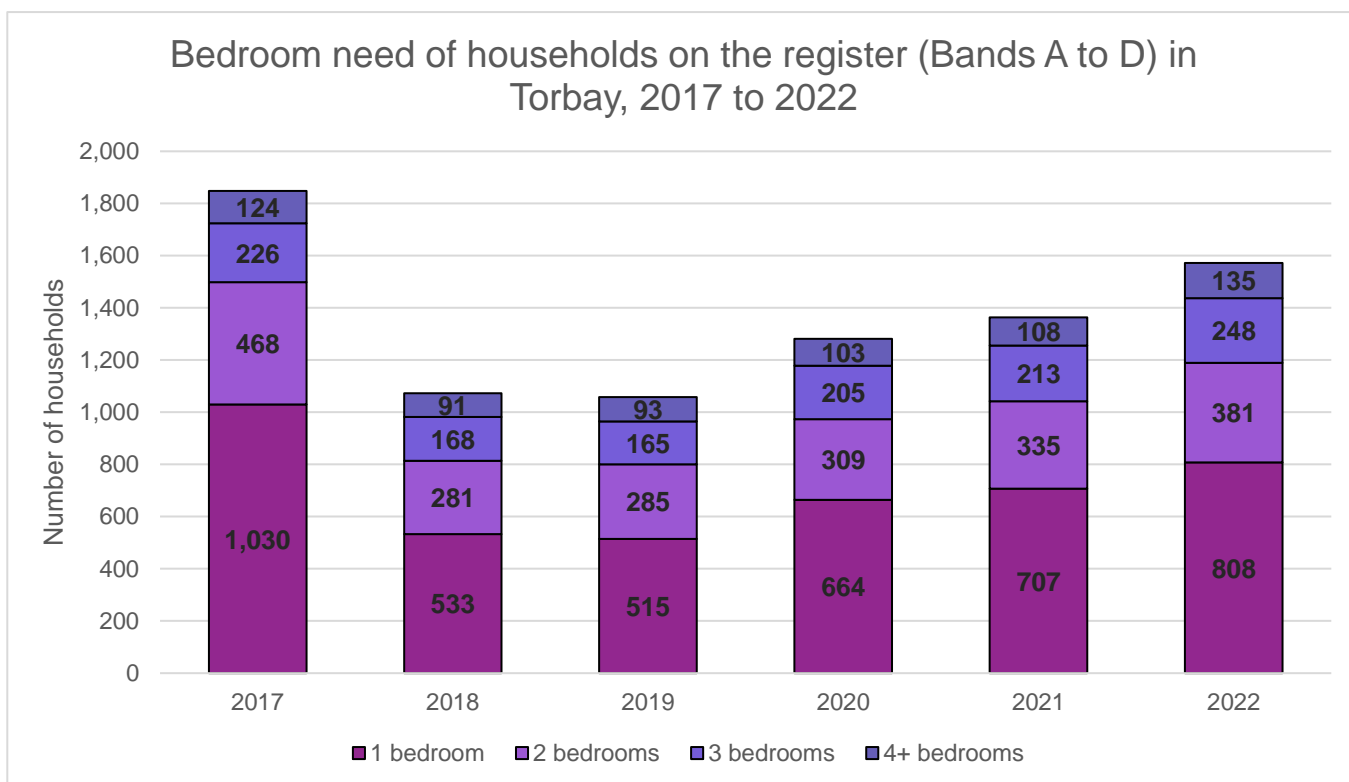


Figure 2.46: Bedroom need of applicants in housing need (Bands A to D), 2017 to 2022 (DHC, 2022)

**2.4.15** Since 2019, which was the year with the fewest households on the register, the need for 1 bedroom homes has increased by 56.9%, compared to a 33.7% increase for 2 bedroom homes, a 50.3% increase for 3 bedroom homes, and a 45.2% increase for 4+ bedroom homes.

**2.4.16** The figure below shows Census 2021 data on levels of deprivation in Torbay in terms of four dimensions; education, employment, health and housing. Torbay has higher levels of deprivation with 57.9% of households being deprived in terms of 1 or more dimension, compared to 51.7% of households in England and Wales.

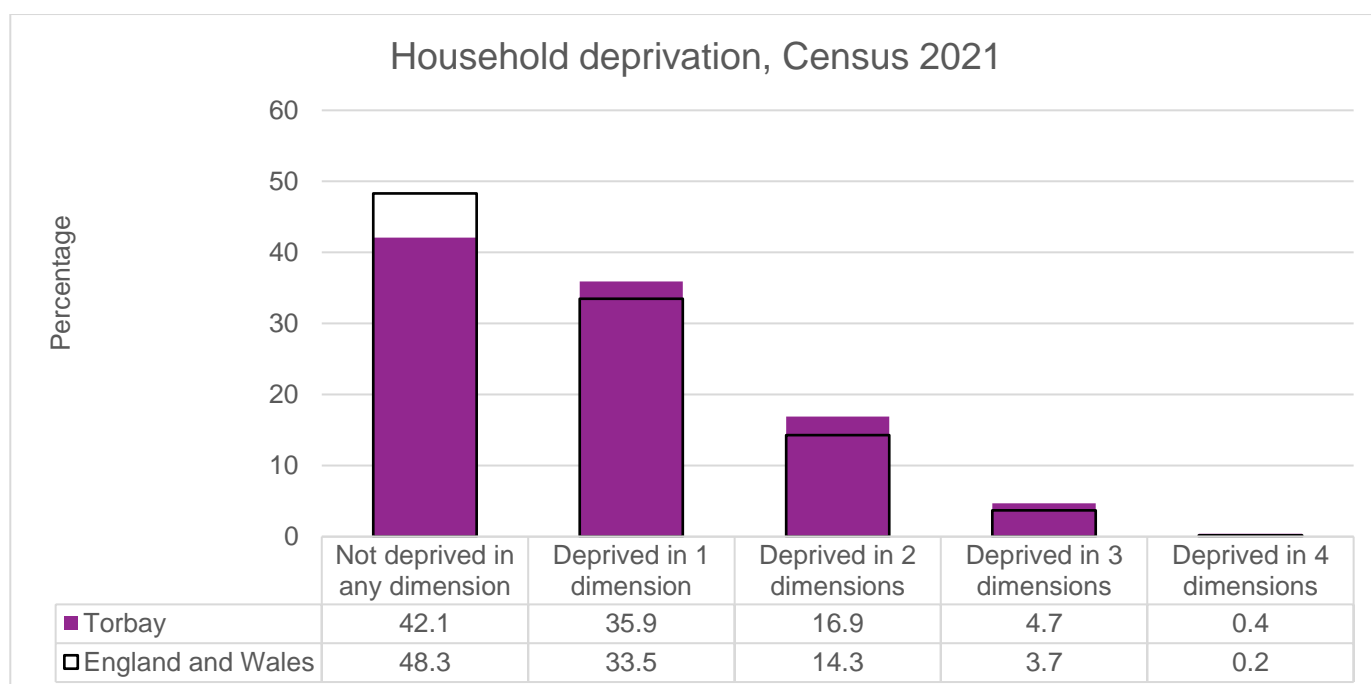


Figure 2.47: Levels of household deprivation, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

**2.4.17** In terms of the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), 27% of the LSOAs in Torbay (comprising approximately one third of the population) fell within the 20% most deprived LSOAs nationally, while 3.4% of the LSOAs in Torbay fell within the 20% least deprived. This placed Torbay as the 48<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority district out of 317, and the most deprived upper tier local authority out of 15 in the South West.

**2.4.18** Torbay was ranked as the 15<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority district nationally for employment and the 27<sup>th</sup> most deprived for income, compared to 126<sup>th</sup> for crime, 134<sup>th</sup> for 'living environment', and 166<sup>th</sup> for 'barriers to housing and services'.

**2.4.19** The highest levels of deprivation occur within the town centre areas of Torquay and Paignton.

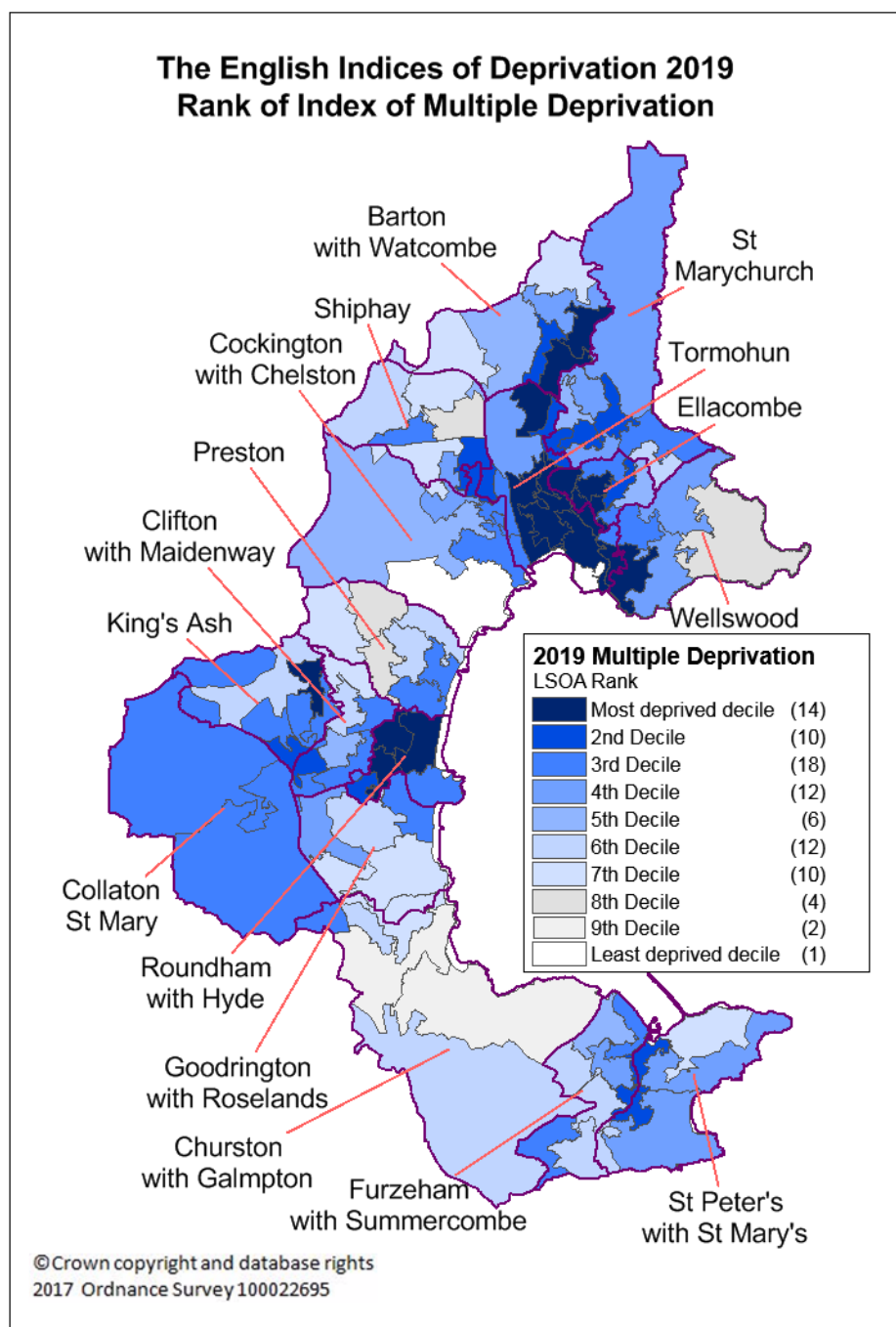


Figure 2.48: Levels of deprivation within Torbay (IMD 2019)

**2.4.20** Public consultation on a new Playing Pitch Strategy was carried out during winter 2022/23. Once adopted, the strategy will play a vital role in ensuring that there is a good supply of high quality playing pitch facilities to meet the current and future needs of the area’s residents.

**2.4.21** Life expectancy in Torbay is slightly lower than the England average. Over the plan period, life expectancy in Torbay has decreased by 0.7% from 83.1 to 82.5 for females, and by 0.6% from 79.1 to 78.6 for males. The Covid pandemic may have had an impact on life expectancy calculations in recent years.

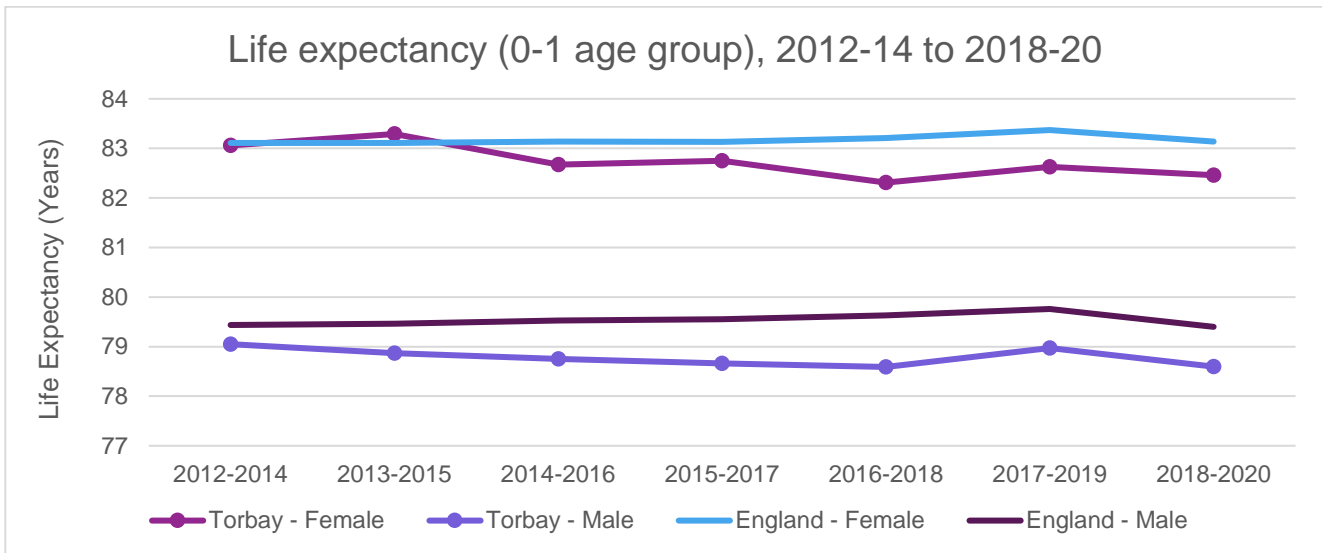


Figure 2.49: Life expectancy for 0-1 year olds, 2012-14 to 2018-20 (ONS, 2022)

**2.4.22** The 2021 Census includes self-reported, age-standardised data on general health and disability. The general health of the Torbay population is slightly worse than the England and Wales population, with 79.1% describing their general health as good or very good (compared to 81.6% for England and Wales) and 6.4% describing their general health as bad or very bad (compared to 5.4% for England and Wales).

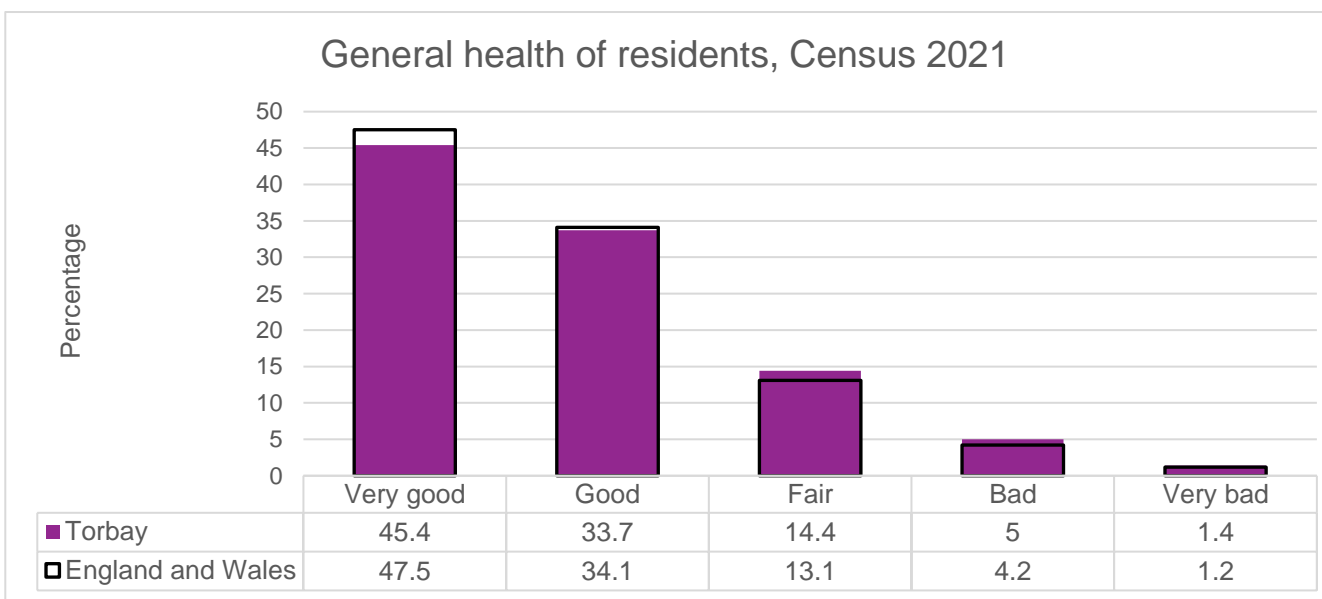


Figure 2.50: General health of residents, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>32</sup>)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS037ASP/editions/2021/versions/1>



**2.4.23** Compared to the England and Wales population, a slightly higher proportion of Torbay residents reported living with disabilities that affect their day-to-day activities either a little or a lot.

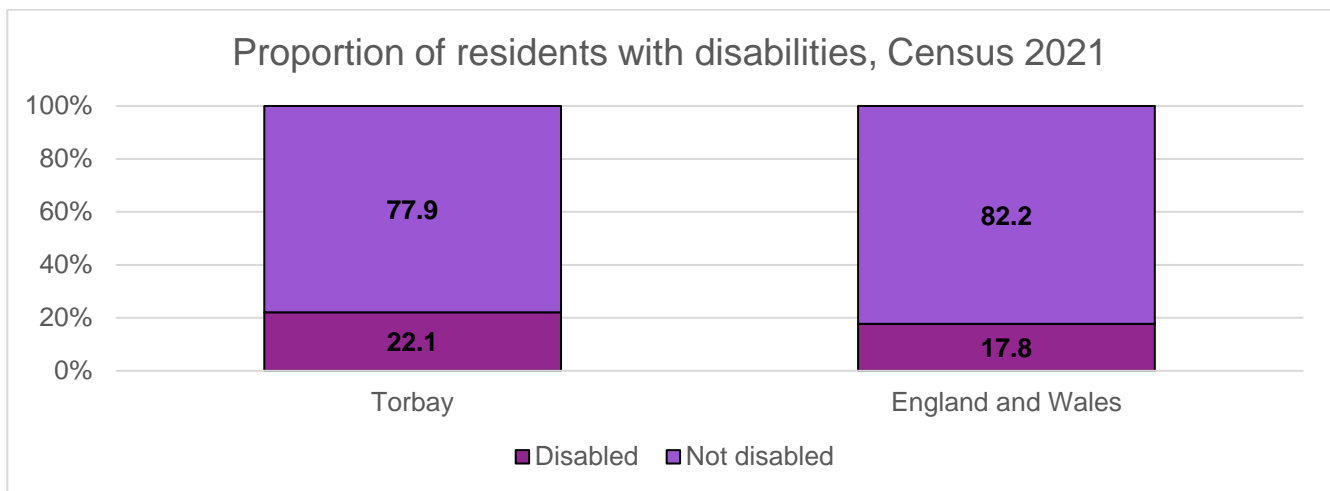


Figure 2.51: Proportion of residents with disabilities, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>33</sup>)

**2.4.24** The Campaign to End Child Poverty publishes data on the proportion of children living in poverty in the UK, using data from the Department for Work and Pensions on children in low income families and adjusting for housing costs. Child poverty in Torbay is higher than the averages for the South West and for Exeter, and relatively similar to the averages for the UK and for Plymouth. Over the plan period, child poverty in Torbay has fluctuated at around 29%.

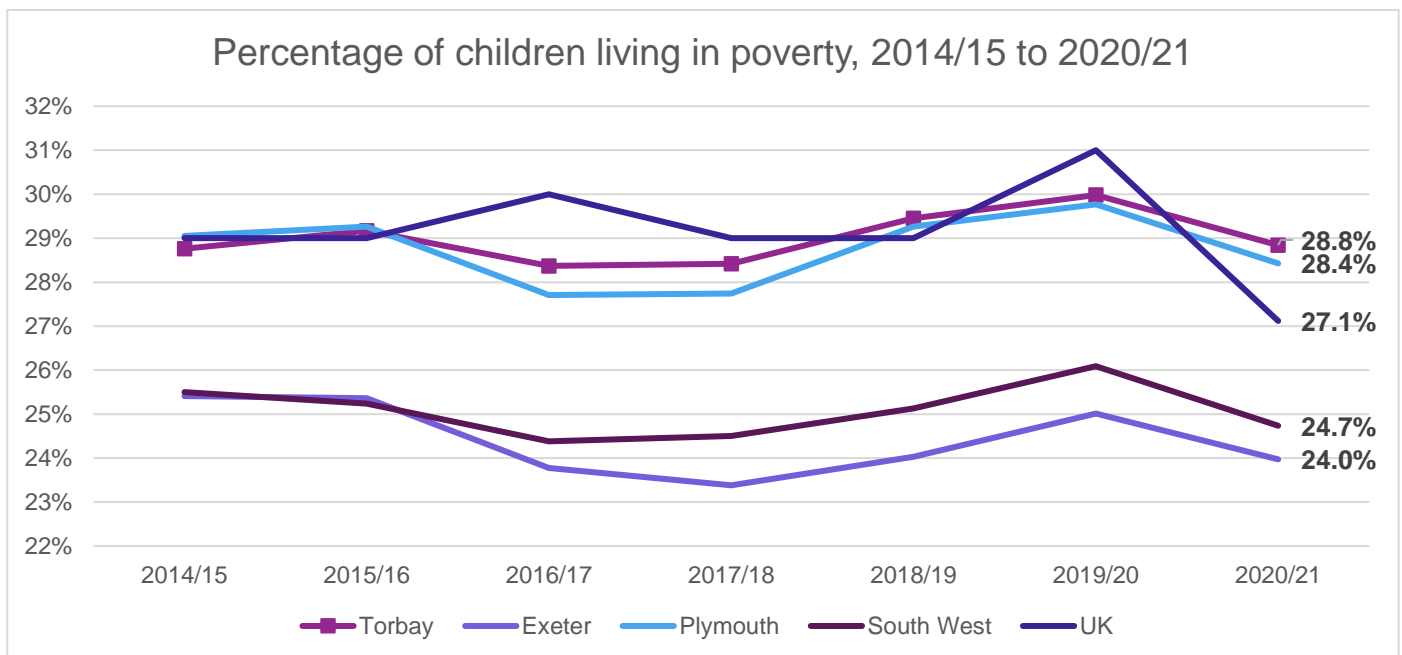


Figure 2.52: Percentage of children living in poverty (End Child Poverty Coalition, 2022<sup>34</sup>)

**2.4.25** Torbay’s workforce has lower levels of qualifications than that of England and Wales. 31.5% of Torbay’s economically active residents have qualifications at NVQ Level 4 and above, compared to 41.9% for England and Wales. Conversely, 8.7% of Torbay’s economically active residents have no qualifications, compared to 9% for England and Wales. According to the ONS’

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS038ASP/editions/2021/versions/1>

<sup>34</sup> <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty/>

'composite education score', Torbay is ranked 256<sup>th</sup> out of 331 local authorities in England and Wales for workforce qualification levels.

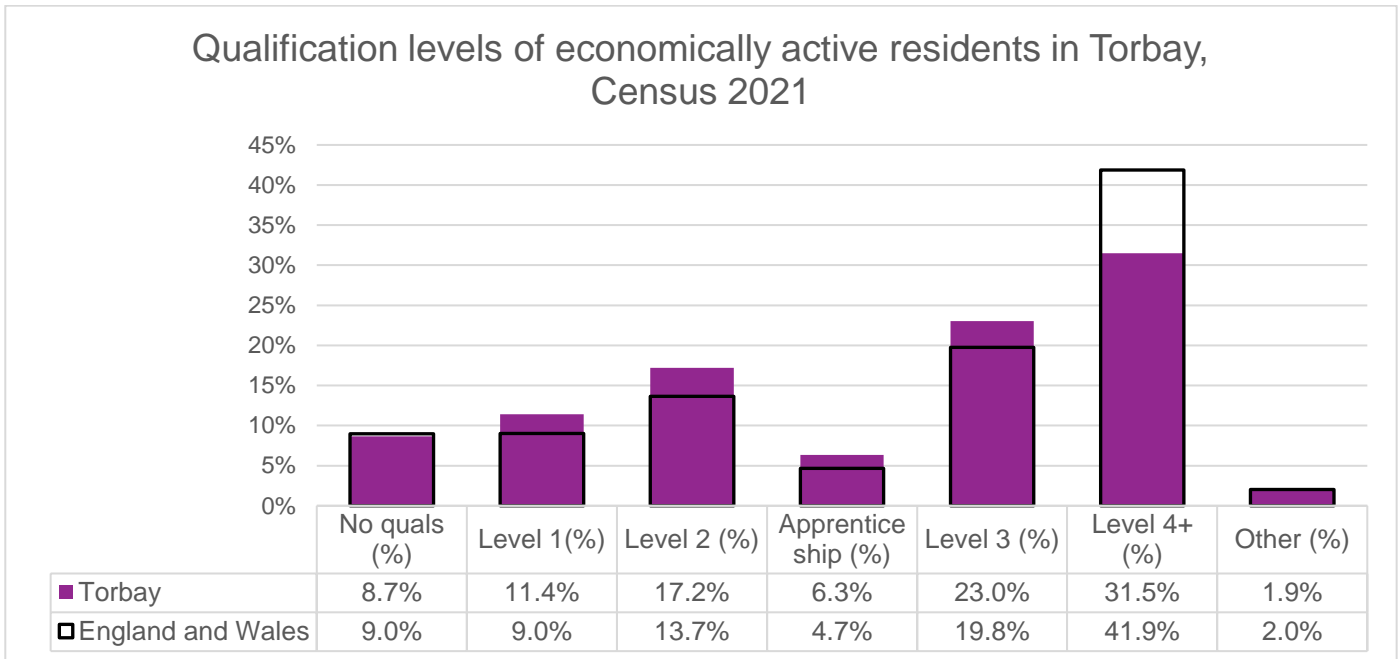


Figure 2.53: Highest level of qualification of economically active Torbay residents, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>35</sup>)

**2.4.26** The ONS publishes experimental statistics<sup>36</sup> on the frequency (Figure 2.54) and severity (Figure 2.55) of crime. Given that there tends to be more crime in urban areas than in rural areas, we have compared Torbay with Exeter and Plymouth below. According to this data, crime in Torbay appears to be as frequent but less severe than in Plymouth. Compared to Exeter, crime in Torbay appears to be more frequent and of a similar severity.

<sup>35</sup> Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/educationandchildcare/datasets/workforcequalificationlevelsacrossenglandandwalesdatacensus2021>

<sup>36</sup> Experimental statistics are official statistics from the ONS that are in the testing phase and are not yet fully developed. They may therefore have a wider degree of uncertainty. More information on the appropriate use of experimental statistics is available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologytopicsandstatisticalconcepts/guidetoexperimentalstatistics>

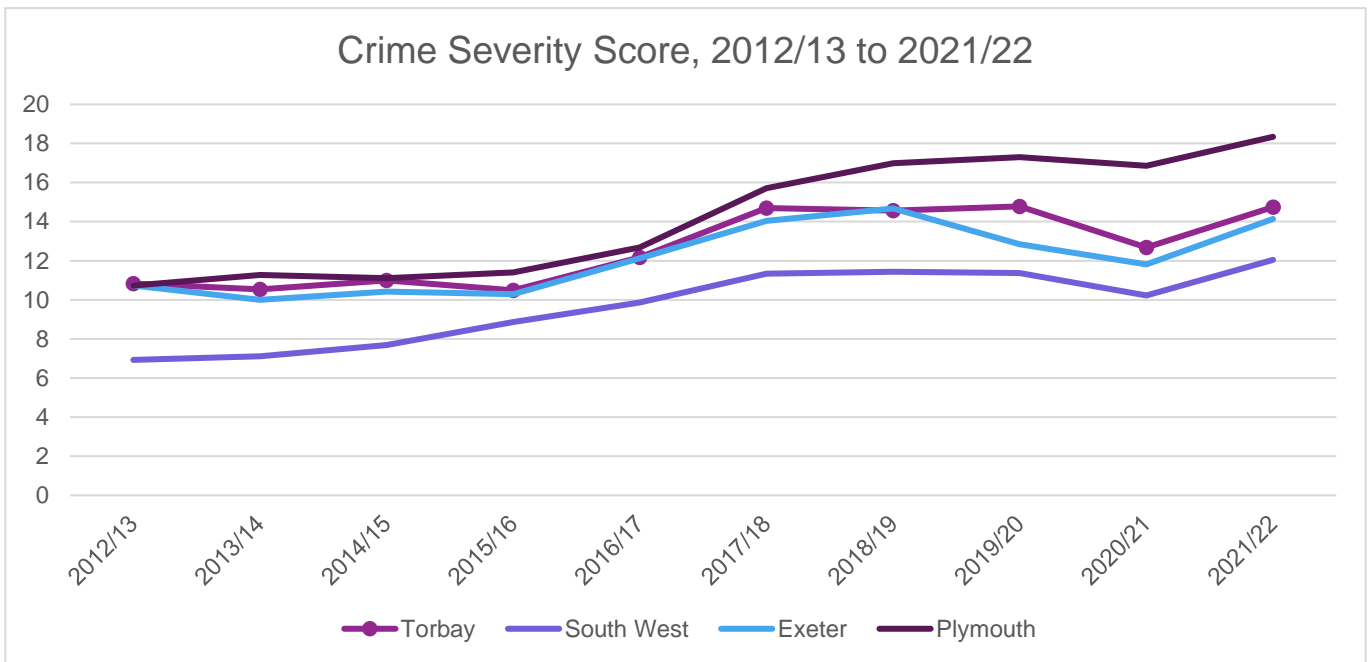


Figure 2.54: Crime severity score for selected community safety partnerships (ONS, 2022<sup>37</sup>)

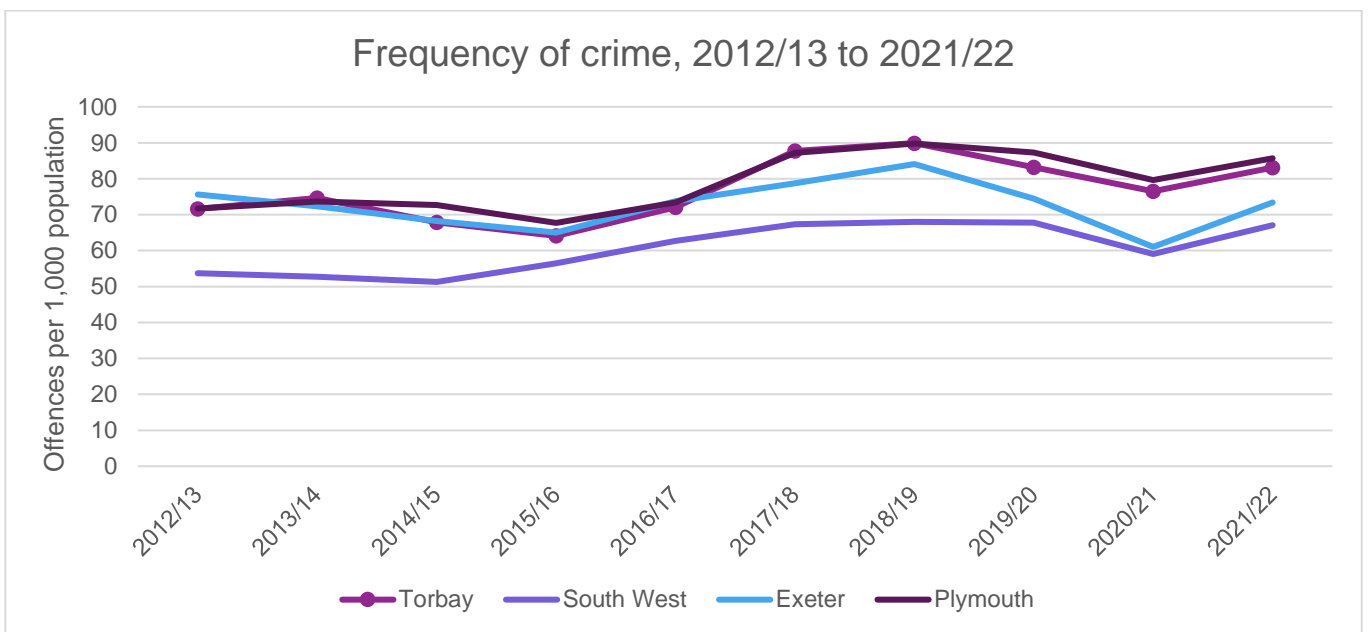


Figure 2.55: Frequency of crime for selected community safety partnerships (ONS, 2022)

37

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentalstatistics>

## 2.5 Aspiration 5: Respond to climate change

### Aspiration 5: Respond to climate change

*To ensure the use of energy and natural resources, the sensitivity of the natural environment and public health needs are taken into consideration when planning new development. This will be achieved through meeting the following objectives:*

- 】 To support the development of ‘green collar’ businesses in the Bay.
- 】 To promote the installation of low carbon and renewable technologies.
- 】 To improve the energy efficiency of developments to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and the impact of rising utility bills on poverty.
- 】 To help deliver ‘invest-and-save’ projects to allow scarce resources to be channelled to the most productive use.
- 】 To become resilient and adaptable to climate change.
- 】 To minimise flood risk to new and existing development by incorporating climate change factors such as run-off, sea level rise, increased storminess and unpredictable weather.
- 】 To recognise the multiple benefits provided by open spaces, biodiversity, green infrastructure such as green corridors/wedges, rural landscapes, beaches and the Bay itself, having regard to their statutory significance and value to the community over the lifetime of development.
- 】 To minimise the generation of household, business and construction waste and reduce its negative impacts upon the environment by focusing on the prevention, re-use and recycling of waste as set out in the waste hierarchy and prevent pollution.

- 2.5.1** Tackling climate change is central to achieving sustainable development. The local climate is changing, and the South West is predicted to experience warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. Extreme weather events are predicted to become more frequent and more intense.
- 2.5.2** The Local Plan seeks to mitigate and adapt to climate change locally through opportunities including renewable energy provision (Policy ES2), low carbon development (Policy SS14), local food production (Policy SC4), an enhanced eco-tourism offer and wise use of water in new development (Policy ER2).
- 2.5.3** The Council is monitoring and taking action to reduce the environmental impact of our own service delivery and operations. On 24 June 2019, we declared a ‘Climate Emergency’ and in December 2020 the Council appointed a Climate Emergency Officer to help create a carbon neutral Council and Torbay by 2030. We have taken the following actions during the reporting year to progress towards this goal:
- Set up a new cross directorate Carbon Neutral Council Officers’ Group in 2021 to accelerate and coordinate action across the Council.
  - Developed the [Carbon Neutral Council Action Plan 2022 to 2024](#) which sets out a series of actions the Council will take to reduce carbon emissions across our estate, operations and services. The Council’s Cabinet approved the Action Plan on 22 March 2022.

- Established the [Torbay Climate Partnership](#) (TCP) in 2021 to accelerate Torbay-wide climate actions. The TCP brings together key organisations from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to all work together towards a carbon neutral Torbay by 2030.
- Through the TCP we have developed a draft Torbay Climate Emergency Action which identifies a range of actions to make Torbay carbon neutral by 2030. The draft Torbay Climate Emergency Action has been co-designed with local communities, including through a series of [Climate Conversations](#) events held in May 2022 and a public event in July 2022, and was the subject of public consultation from December 2022 to February 2023.
- Worked with the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group to produce the [Devon Carbon Plan](#) which sets out a road map for how Devon can reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The Council's Cabinet endorsed the Devon Carbon Plan on 13 December 2022.

**2.5.4** Carbon dioxide emissions per capita are lower in Torbay than in the South West and the UK and have decreased since measurements began in 2005 (see Figure 31 below). It is important to note however that overseas emissions attributable to consumption of goods and services have increased at a faster rate.

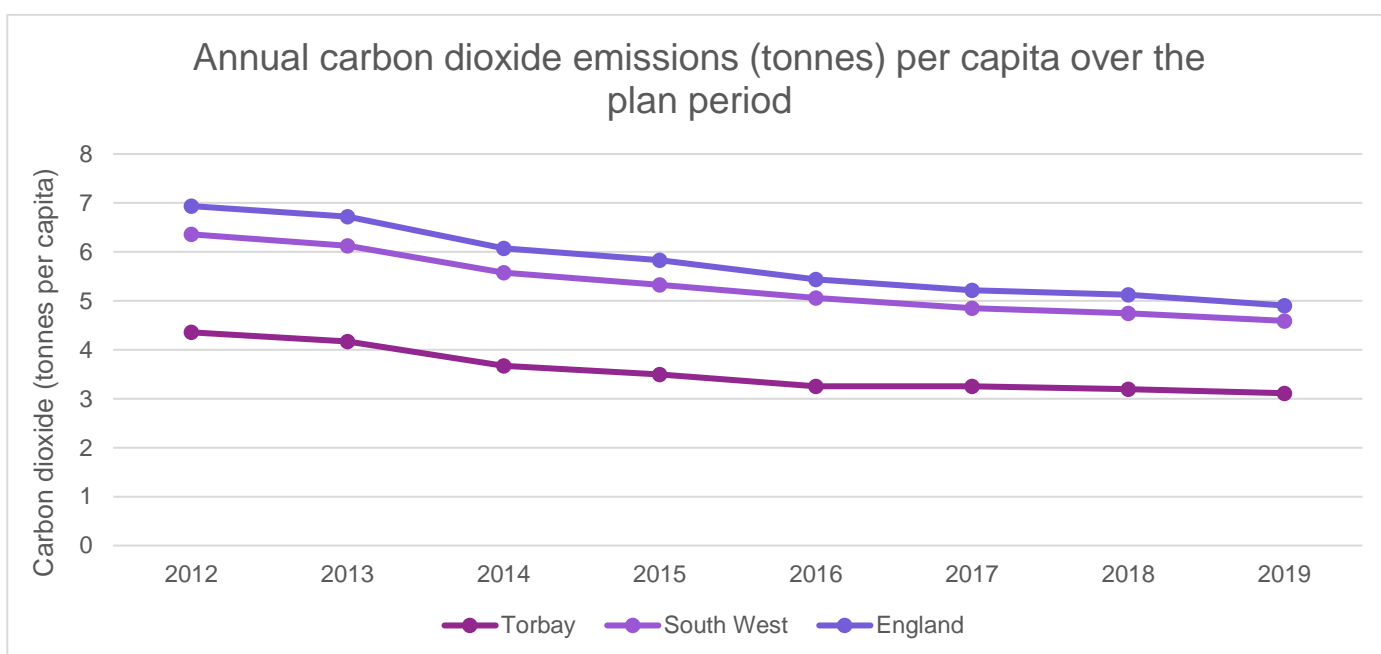


Figure 2.56: Annual carbon dioxide emissions per capita over the plan period (DBEIS, 2021)

**2.5.5** The transport and domestic sectors are the greatest contributors to carbon emissions in Torbay (Figure 32). Domestic carbon emissions have reduced steadily over the plan period (with the shift by energy providers towards cleaner energy sources being an important factor), but there is still significant work to be done to reduce emissions, particularly for emissions arising from transport. From 2012 to 2019, domestic carbon emissions reduced by 35.1% whereas transport carbon emissions reduced by 9.1%. 2020 saw a significant reduction in emissions due to transport, however this is likely to be a temporary impact from travel restrictions during Covid (with travel having increased again during 2022).

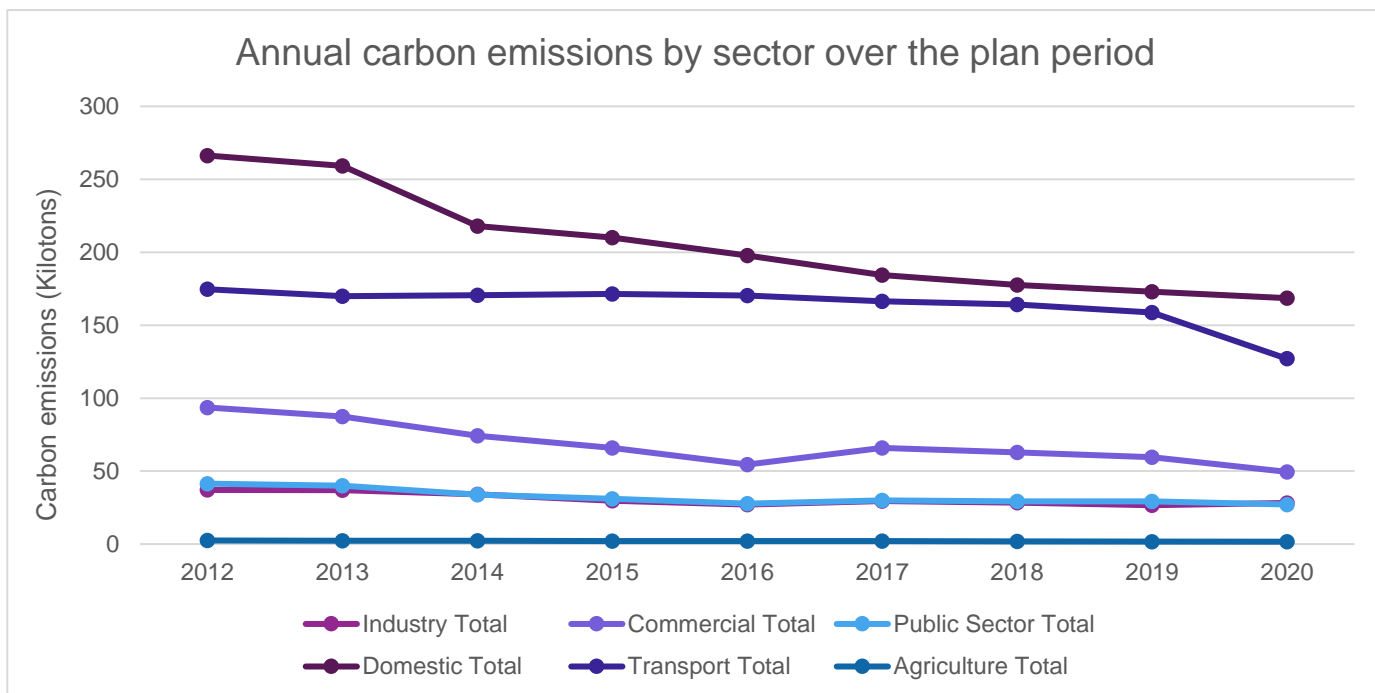


Figure 2.57: Annual carbon emissions by sector over the plan period (DBEIS, 2022<sup>38</sup>)

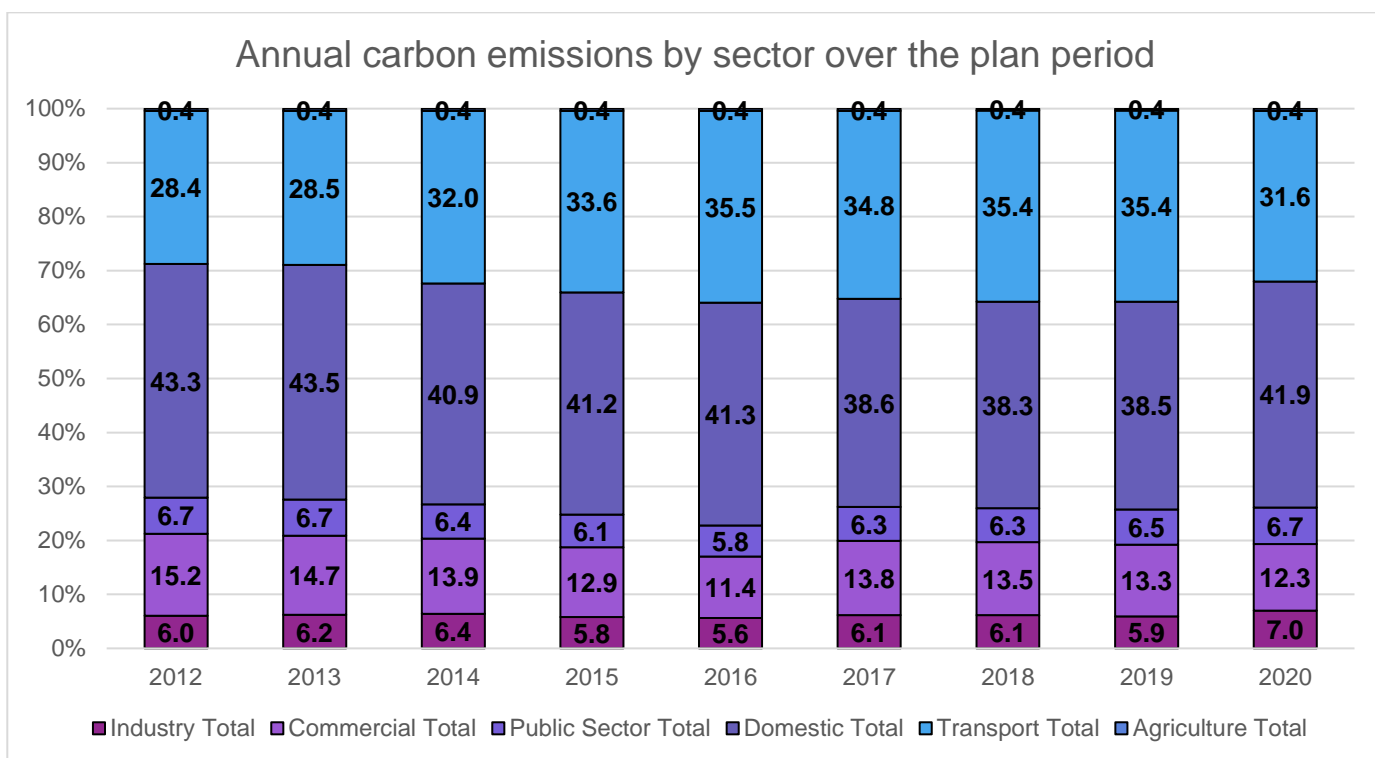


Figure 2.58: Proportion of Torbay's carbon emissions arising from each sector over the plan period (DBEIS, 2022)

**2.5.6** Figures 2.60 and 2.61 below give more detail on heating sources and energy efficiency, both of which contribute to higher domestic carbon emissions. According to Census 2021 data on energy sources for domestic central heating, Torbay has a lower proportion of households making use of renewable energy (0.57% of households) and district or communal heat networks

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

(0.47% of households) compared to the England and Wales averages (0.94% and 0.89% respectively).

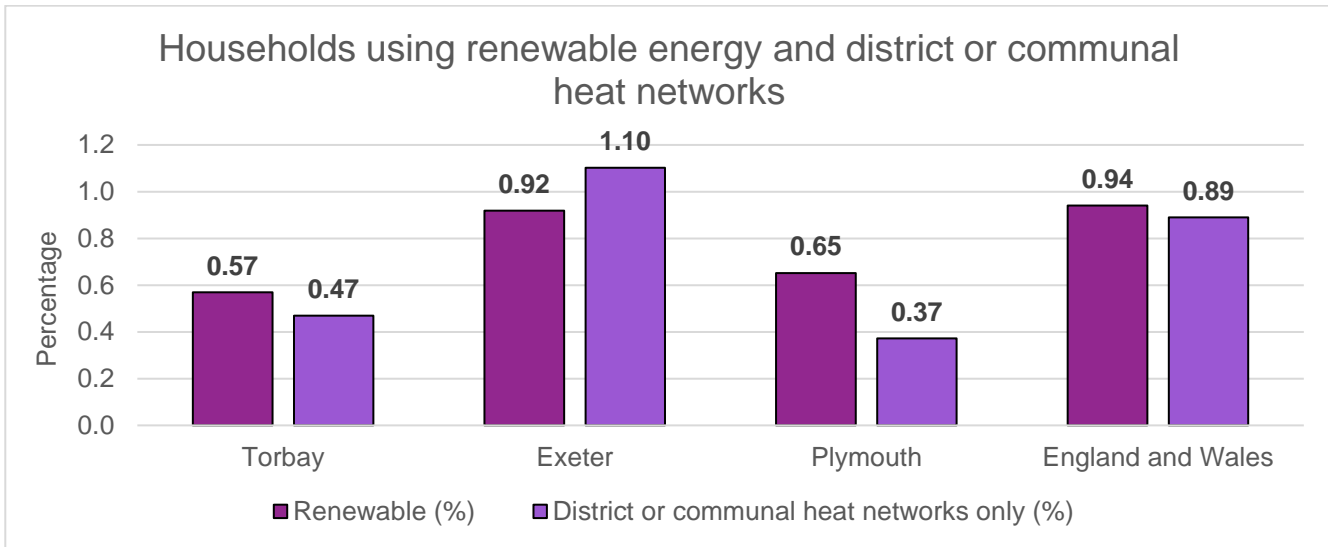


Figure 2.59: Proportion of households using renewable energy (alone or in combination with other heat sources) and district or communal heat networks for central heating, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>39</sup>)

**2.5.7** The energy efficiency of homes in Torbay remains slightly worse than the England average. The median EPC rating for homes in Torbay is 65, compared to 67 for England (DLUHC, 2022<sup>40</sup>). Torbay is ranked equal 237<sup>th</sup> out of 331 local authorities. The age and tenure of Torbay’s housing stock are important factors, with Torbay having a higher proportion of older properties (which tend to have lower EPC ratings) and a lower proportion of social housing (which tends to have higher EPC ratings)<sup>41</sup>.

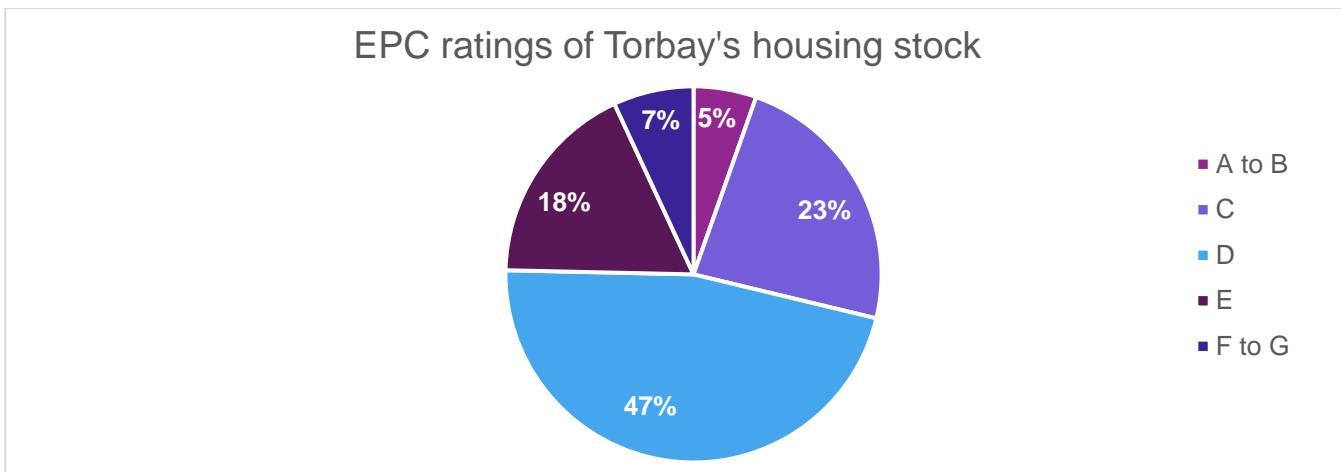


Figure 2.60: EPC ratings of Torbay’s housing stock (Energy Savings Trust, 2021)

**2.5.8** Protecting Torbay’s communities, businesses and infrastructure from flooding is a precondition for sustainable growth. An assessment of the Bay’s coastal defences and assets to consider the implications of future sea level rise is planned.

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS046/editions/2021/versions/2>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/energyefficiencyofhousinginenglandandwales/2022>

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 3 of Torbay’s [Housing Needs Assessment](#) (May 2022) for more detailed data on EPC.

- 2.5.9** 5,100 residential properties in Torbay are at risk from surface flooding more than 0.3 metres deep from a 1 in 200 year rainfall event. It is anticipated that this figure will increase without remedial action due to climate change.
- 2.5.10** The Council has been working with the Environment Agency to rapidly reduce properties at risk from flooding. This includes consulting on the design of new sea walls along Paignton and Preston sea fronts.
- 2.5.11** The Council's [Cabinet approved](#) the [Resource and Waste Management Strategy 2020-2023](#) in February 2020. This strategy seeks to increase the recycling rate through improving the performance of the household recycling and food waste collection service. The strategy will contribute towards meeting the national targets of 55% recycling by 2025 and 60% by 2030.
- 2.5.12** SWISCo has weathered significant pressures on the waste and recycling service brought on by the pandemic and the national driver shortage. The amount and composition of recycling and waste has changed as a result of the pandemic (for example, cardboard has increased due to an increase in online shopping). Covid also resulted in a period of closure at the Recycling Centre, as well as an uplift in residual waste as people spent more time at home.
- 2.5.13** Torbay's household recycling rate at year end 2021/22 was 37.1%. This is an increase of 1.5% compared to the previous year but remains lower than pre-Covid levels.

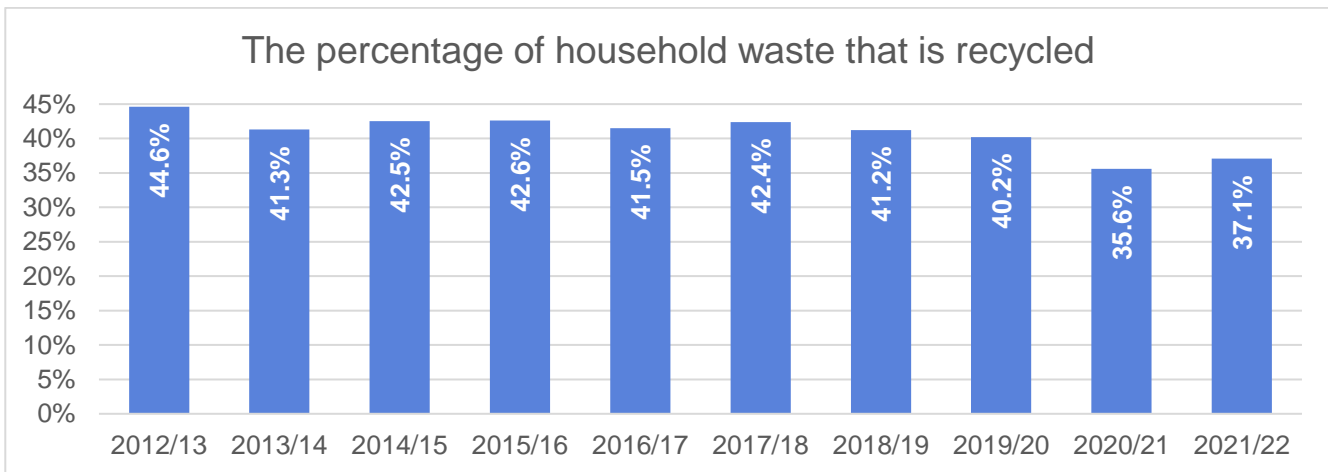


Figure 2.61: Recycling rates for Torbay households

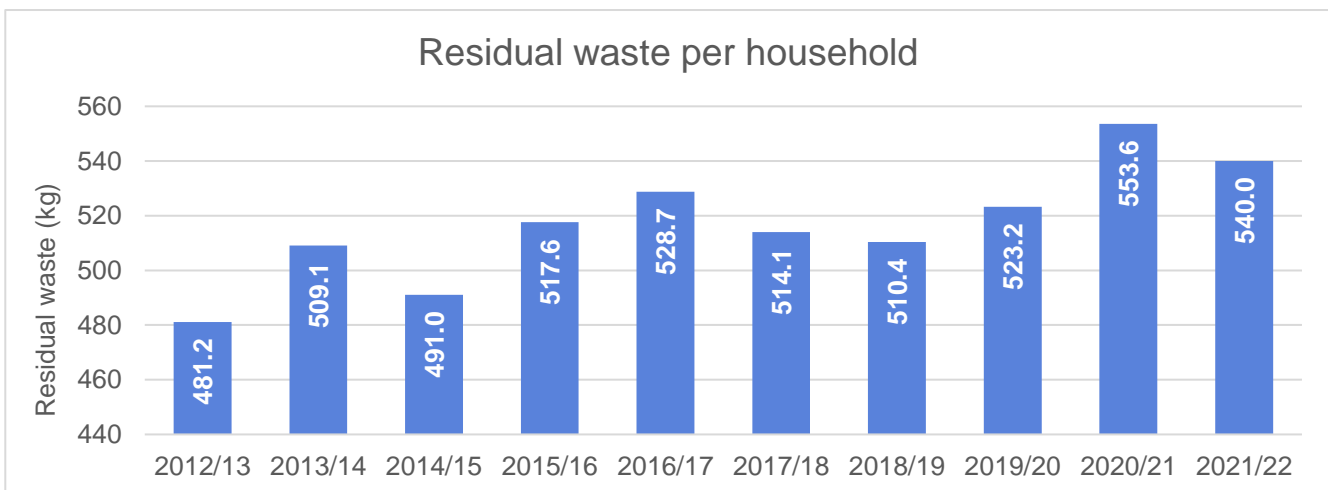


Figure 2.62: The amount of residual waste arising per household



# 3 DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREPARATION

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## 3.1 Torbay Council Community and Corporate Plan

**3.1.1** The Council's [Community and Corporate Plan](#) identifies four visions, each with a number of priority areas. The visions are:

- Thriving people
- Thriving economy
- Tackling climate change
- Council fit for the future

**3.1.2** In particular, the Plan prioritises improving the delivery, affordability and quality of housing.

## 3.2 Torbay Local Plan

**3.2.1** The [Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030](#) was adopted in December 2015. The Council [reviewed the Local Plan](#) in November 2020 and [resolved](#) to update the Local Plan with the policies for the supply of housing being the main focus.

**3.2.2** On 18 February 2021 [Cabinet resolved](#) to test the feasibility of the Standard Method Local Housing Need as the Government's expected approach to calculating housing need (although concerns about this method were noted), and to proceed with a Regulation 18 'Call for Evidence' consultation. In this consultation, held from March to May 2021, we sought views on (i) the suitability of this housing need figure and any alternative methods of calculating housing need in Torbay, (ii) whether there is sufficient environmental and market capacity to meet this housing need, and (iii) which sites might be suitable for housing or employment.

**3.2.3** We have been working to update the evidence base underpinning the Local Plan Update. A [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment \(HELAA\)](#) was carried out in-house during 2021. The HELAA included two 'Calls for Sites', as well as a series of three HELAA Panel Sessions held in July 2021 involving developers, agents, the Neighbourhood Forums, planners from Neighbouring Authorities, and other stakeholders.

**3.2.4** A Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) was also carried out by a housing specialist during 2021/22. This document looks at the housing market in Torbay and calculates how many affordable homes are needed, as well as the size, type and tenure of homes.

**3.2.5** The HELAA and the responses received as part of the Regulation 18 'Call for Evidence' consultation informed five housing growth options which were the subject of a Regulation 18 'Growth Options' consultation held from 10 January to 28 February 2022. A summary of this consultation is available [here](#) and a summary of the responses received is available [here](#).

**3.2.6** Following this consultation, [on 12 July 2022 Cabinet resolved](#) (amongst other things):

- (i) To carry out an alternative approach to the Government's standard method of calculating housing need,
- (ii) To undertake a Regulation 18 consultation on site options,

- (iii) To expand the scope of the Local Plan Update to also including updating policies on the Climate Emergency, infrastructure, employment and the Strategic (“SS”) policies in the Local Plan, and
- (iv) To extend the plan period to 2040 and beyond.

**3.2.7** We then carried out a Regulation 18 ‘Site Options’ consultation from October to December 2022. This consultation sought feedback on specific housing sites being considered for allocation, as well as views on draft policies relating to housing. Responses to this consultation are currently being reviewed.

**3.2.8** A final Regulation 18 consultation is expected to be undertaken in summer 2023, before a full draft of the new Local Plan is publicised as part of a Regulation 19 ‘Preferred Option’ / ‘Pre-Submission’ consultation. Subject to Full Council approval, this is expected to be in winter 2023/24.

**3.2.9** The Local Plan Update webpage will be kept up to date with consultation documents and evidence base being made available at [www.torbay.gov.uk/local-plan-update](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/local-plan-update).

## 3.3 Neighbourhood Plans

**3.3.1** The [Torquay Neighbourhood Plan](#), the [Paignton Neighbourhood Plan](#), and the [Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan](#) were made (adopted) by Full Council in June 2019 after being supported by the community at a referendum in May 2019. They form part of the Development Plan, alongside the Local Plan.

**3.3.2** The Neighbourhood Plans were prepared by the Neighbourhood Forums through their steering groups and topic groups, in the context of the adopted Torbay Local Plan and in order to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy SS1.

**3.3.3** In addition to the Neighbourhood Forums for Torquay, Paignton, and Brixham Peninsula, a new Neighbourhood Area and Forum comprising the villages of Broadsands, Churston and Galmpton and surrounding areas was [approved by Full Council on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021](#). This also involved an adjustment to the Neighbourhood Area boundaries.

**3.3.4** Given that more than two years have passed since the Neighbourhood Plans were made, the additional protection provided by Paragraph 14(a) of the NPPF is no longer applicable. Notwithstanding this, the Neighbourhood Plans remain vitally important as part of the Development Plan. It is understood that the Neighbourhood Forums intend to carry out a review and update of the respective Neighbourhood Plans in the near future.

## 3.4 Local Development Scheme (LDS)

**3.4.1** The [LDS](#) was adopted in March 2017, superseding the previous 2014 version. Since then, several drafts of an updated LDS have been prepared but not yet adopted. When the Local Plan was reviewed in November 2020, Cabinet resolved that a partial update of the Local Plan’s housing figures (“Option 1” of three Local Plan Review options) was necessary. A provisional timeline for the Local Plan Update was drafted for this option at the time of the decision, shown in the Gantt chart below.

**3.4.2** While the Regulation 18 ‘Call for Evidence’ consultation was held from March to May 2021 broadly in accordance with the timeline in the 2017 LDS, the process for the Local Plan Update has since been revised as follows:

- A Regulation 18 ‘Growth Options’ consultation, carried out from 10 January to 28 February 2022.
- A Regulation 18 ‘Site Options’ consultation, carried out from 7 October 2022 to 5 December 2022.
- A Regulation 18 consultation on non-housing policies expected to be carried out in summer 2023.
- A Regulation 19 ‘Preferred Option’ consultation, expected to be carried out in winter 2023/24 (subject to Full Council approval).

## 3.5 Adopted Local Development Documents

**3.5.1** The following [Local Development Documents](#) have been adopted by Torbay Council and are a formal part of the Torbay Local Development Plan (formerly the Local Development Framework):

- LDD1 Statement of Community Involvement DPD (Adopted 2014) (an updated SCI will be prepared in due course);
- LDD6 Planning Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD (Adopted December 2022);
- LDD7 Urban Design Guide (Adopted February 2007);
- LDD8 Greenspace Strategy (Adopted December 2006).

## 3.6 Masterplans

**3.6.1** The Council has adopted a number of [Masterplans](#) as SPDs to guide the development of areas identified in the Local Plan. These are listed chronologically below:

- Great Parks, Paignton - Planning Guidance, November 2013 (Supported by the Development Plan through the Paignton Neighbourhood Plan)
- Torquay Town Centre - adopted as SPD, June 2015
- Paignton Town Centre - adopted as SPD, June 2015
- Torquay Gateway (Edginswell) - adopted as SPD, December 2015
- Collaton St Mary - adopted as SPD, February 2016

## 3.7 Healthy Torbay SPD

**3.7.1** The [Healthy Torbay SPD](#) adds additional guidance to the key related policies in the Local Plan (in particular, Policy SC1 Healthy Bay and SS11 Sustainable Communities) which are fundamental to supporting the objective for new development to create a ‘Healthy Torbay’. The issues that this document covers include Health Impact Assessment, healthy food environments, and the role of planning in tackling deprivation and reducing health inequalities. This will help developers to better understand how they can meet the Council’s Local Plan requirements and provides development management planning officers with further guidance to aid effective decision-making based on local evidence and need.

**3.7.2** The SPD was adopted in April 2017 and has since been used to inform the development and decision-making regarding a number of development proposals at a variety of different scales, including perhaps most significantly in terms of Health Impact Assessment. The impact of the guidance will continue to be monitored.

## 3.8 South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Guidance

- 3.8.1** The [South Hams SAC Greater Horseshoe Bat Habitat Regulations Assessment Guidance](#) provides guidance on the implementation of policies relating to the South Hams SAC, specifically on the population of Greater Horseshoe Bats for which the site is (in part) designated. It covers five Local Planning Authority areas; Torbay Council, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Devon County Council, South Hams District Council and Teignbridge District Council.
- 3.8.2** The Guidance updates and replaces the South Hams SAC Greater Horseshoe Bat Consultation Zone Planning Guidance published by Natural England in 2010. It is aimed at those preparing to submit and those determining and commenting upon planning applications across the five Local Planning Authorities including: land owners, developers, planning agents, ecological consultants, Council Members and other organisations. The Guidance was approved in July 2019 and is a useful tool to aid decision making and development proposals.
- 3.8.3** The South Hams SAC steering group also published an additional [guidance note on Maintaining Dark Corridors Through the Landscape for Bats](#) in January 2022. This guidance, currently in beta format, is applicable to all planning applications in Devon.

## 3.9 Planning Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD

- 3.9.1** The [Planning Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD](#) sets out the Council's approach to planning obligations. It provides additional detail to deliver the Local Plan as set out in Policy SS7 (infrastructure, phasing and delivery) and paragraph 4.3.35-36 of the Plan and Policy H2 (Affordable Housing).
- 3.9.2** The latest version of the Planning Contributions and Affordable Housing SPD was [adopted in December 2022](#) following consultation on draft updates in early 2020 and in 2022. The updated SPD reflects the costs of infrastructure at 2022 prices and includes revisions to reflect the changes to planning legislation and national planning policy that have occurred since the 2017 version of the SPD. The updated SPD applies to all planning applications submitted on or after 1 January 2023 (with the previous 2017 SPD continuing to apply to applications already submitted prior to the end of 2022).
- 3.9.3** Planning Obligations should be considered in conjunction with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), as detailed in the section below.

## 3.10 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 3.10.1** Torbay Council resolved at Full Council in February 2017 to adopt its [CIL Charging Schedule](#) and, as Charging Authority, has levied CIL on developments granted permission on or after Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017.
- 3.10.2** CIL is a non-negotiable charge on certain types of development. It is charged at different rates depending on the proposal and its location within Torbay. The Council has charged CIL for the following development:
- Open market residential dwellings, and

- Retail development.

- 3.10.3** CIL is payable on qualifying developments whether they require planning permission or are permitted under the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) (as amended), Prior Approval or Local Development Orders (LDOs).
- 3.10.4** CIL Regulations require that, where there is a neighbourhood plan, 25% of CIL funding be retained as neighbourhood funding to be spent on local infrastructure projects or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area. For developments within the parished area of Brixham, this will be paid directly to Brixham Town Council.
- 3.10.5** Total CIL receipts for 2021/22 amount to £630,191.92.
- 3.10.6** Local authorities are required to produce an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which provides a summary of both financial and non-financial developer contributions relating to Section 106 (s106) Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The IFS replaces the previous requirement for CIL Reports. Torbay's [2019/20 Infrastructure Funding Statement](#) was published in December 2020. The IFS is updated on an annual basis and is available at: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/cil/>.

## 3.11 Brownfield Register

- 3.11.1** In accordance with the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Torbay's [Brownfield Register](#) is published on the Council's website as a tool to help provide certainty for developers and communities and encourage investment in local areas. The Brownfield Register is kept up-to-date and reviewed at least annually (by 31 December).
- 3.11.2** The Brownfield Register does not affect the status of sites that already have planning permission. The inclusion of other sites on the Brownfield Register (Part 1) does not give them any formal status or grant permission in principle. Planning applications on these sites will be considered on their merits in accordance with the Local Plan, neighbourhood plans, national policy and any other material considerations. To be considered suitable for inclusion on the Brownfield Register, sites must meet the definition of brownfield land and be:
- Available (willing landowner);
  - In a suitable location for housing (in accordance with policies in the adopted Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 and the NPPF) and free from constraints that cannot be mitigated;
  - Viable and capable of being delivered within 5 years or developed later on (e.g., between 6 and 10 years);
  - Capable of supporting five or more dwellings or more than 0.25 hectares.

## 3.12 Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 3.12.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** is a systematic and iterative process that seeks to predict and assess the economic, environmental and social effects that may arise from a plan, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts where appropriate.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local development documents to be prepared with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development (Section 39).

- 3.12.2** The SA Scoping Report, which represents the first stage of the SA process, was published in January 2021. It sets out the context of the SA and provides information on the sustainability framework and sustainability issues in Torbay. The SA of Reasonable Alternatives, which represents the second stage of the SA process, was published in March 2021. Its role is to assist with the identification of the most appropriate option, in sustainability terms, to predict implications for sustainable development and put forward recommendations for improvement where necessary.
- 3.12.3** The Council published a Regulation 18 “Growth Options” consultation in January 2022. Five growth options, based on the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), have been developed. The SA assessed the performance of each option against the SA framework. A further Regulation 18 “Issues and options stage” consultation SA was published in October 2022. The SA assessed the seven alternative Future Growth Areas (FGA), Neighbourhood Plan Areas Policies as well as the draft updated housing policies.
- 3.12.4** The SA reports are available to view at the [Local Plan Update webpage](#).
- 3.12.5 Habitats Regulations Assessment.** The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) [the Habitats Regulations] require that all statutory land use plans in England and Wales are subject to HRA. The aim of the HRA process is to assess the potential effects arising from a plan (including in combination with other plans and projects) against the conservation objectives of any site designated for its nature conservation importance. The HRA process should be subject to consultation with the statutory nature conservation body, i.e., Natural England.
- 3.12.6** Ecological Screening Assessments have been carried out for many of the sites put forward for development in Regulation 18 consultation for the Torbay Local Plan Update that was published in October 2022. This ecological assessment represents an evidence base to the HAR screening and appropriate assessment reports that will be produced parallel to the Local Plan Update Regulation 19.

## 3.13 Local Development Orders (LDO)

- 3.13.1** The [LDO at South Devon College](#) was adopted in August 2016 and provides a positive framework for growth and change on the site over the following 15 years. It will simplify the planning process over the college site in order to help deliver flexibility and confidence for the College to implement an expansion program and to develop and adapt its facilities, helping to unlock educational and employment benefits. The College has seen construction of a Sports Centre and Hi-Tech and Digital Centre since the LDO came into force.
- 3.13.2** No other Local Development Orders are currently proposed.

## 3.14 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- 3.14.1** The LTP Strategy 2011-26 (Devon and Torbay) remains valid and current with regard to its aims and objectives. Following consultation in February-March 2021, the [Local Transport Action Plan](#)

[2021-2026](#) was adopted on 20 April 2021. The Action Plan forms the third and final implementation plan for the LTP Strategy 2011-2026 and sets out upcoming investments in transport to deliver against the Strategy.

- 3.14.2** The [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) (LCWIP) was adopted on 20 April 2021. The LCWIP provides a long-term and evidence-led approach to investing in local cycling and walking networks in Torbay.

## **3.15 AONB Management Plan**

- 3.15.1** The updated [South Devon AONB Management Plan 2019 to 2024](#) has been adopted by Torbay Council. This plan is prepared on our behalf by the AONB partnership which is jointly funded by Local Authorities across the AONB. The partnership also delivers against that management plan.

## 4 DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

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- 4.1.1** In economic, social and environmental terms, Torbay functions as part of a much wider area. Inevitably, this involves tackling issues that don't always conform to administrative boundaries; geographic markets for new homes and jobs, for example. Looking after the needs of the Bay's unique landscape and wildlife requires a 'cross-border' approach and there are examples of strategic infrastructure that cannot be delivered locally. Retail centres also depend on wider than local expenditure. Where spatial planning has influences beyond Torbay, there is a need to work with adjoining and nearby local authorities, statutory bodies and other relevant organisations.
- 4.1.2** In previous rounds of plan making, it has been accepted that Torbay largely forms a separate housing market area (HMA) and Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) from the Greater Exeter and Plymouth Joint Local Plan areas. The Greater Exeter HMA comprises Teignbridge, Exeter City, East Devon and Mid Devon; whilst the Plymouth Joint Local Plan Area comprises Plymouth City Council, West Devon and South Hams. Torbay is in contact with these authorities about a range of matters including likely housing numbers, climate emergency and transport. There is currently no formalised system of larger than local planning, however Torbay is working with its neighbours under the "Duty to Cooperate" to discuss the need for and location of future development, and to ensure that evidence is prepared in such a way that findings are comparable and compatible.
- 4.1.3** Torbay Council has advised its neighbours that it is unlikely to be able to meet the number of homes required by the "Standard Method Local Housing Need" and under paragraphs 11(b), 35(a) and 61 of the NPPF (2021) it needs to seek agreement from neighbours about how any unmet need can be accommodated. It is stressed that no final decision has been made about Torbay's final numbers, and meeting Torbay's objectively assessed need within Torbay as far as possible will assist with the pressing need for affordable housing in the area. The main driver of population growth is domestic in-migration, which needs to be addressed across the sub-region rather than solely be its neighbour authorities. It is also noted that immediate changes to the Test of Soundness are being consulted on in the forthcoming (2023) NPPF, with more far reaching changes to the Duty to Cooperate being proposed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. However, the current Duty to Cooperate is likely to be in place for some time.
- 4.1.4** Torbay Council held Duty to Cooperate Meetings with neighbours on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (online) and 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (hosted at Forde House, Newton Abbot) in relation to Torbay's housing need. This is a matter for ongoing discussion between Torbay Council and the authorities in the two adjoining housing market areas. Teignbridge District Council published its Regulation 19 "Proposed Submission" Local Plan in January 2023. Torbay attended Teignbridge's Duty to Cooperate meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and has signed Duty to Cooperate Statements of Common Ground (SOCG) on general matters and addressing Torbay's unmet housing need (January 2023). In the SOCG on Torbay's unmet need, Torbay undertakes to carry out a review of its HELAA to identify the potential of currently discounted sites, and to objectively assess how unmet need could be addressed across the adjoining HMAs. In order to future proof the Teignbridge Local Plan, it undertakes to consider bringing forward unallocated (departure) sites in sustainable locations, based on the extent that unmet need is identified in the review of the Torbay Local Plan. Such sites must be consistent with the environmental and other policies in the Teignbridge Local Plan.



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