



# **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**

## **Annual Report 2022/23**

**Published January 2024**

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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 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 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.

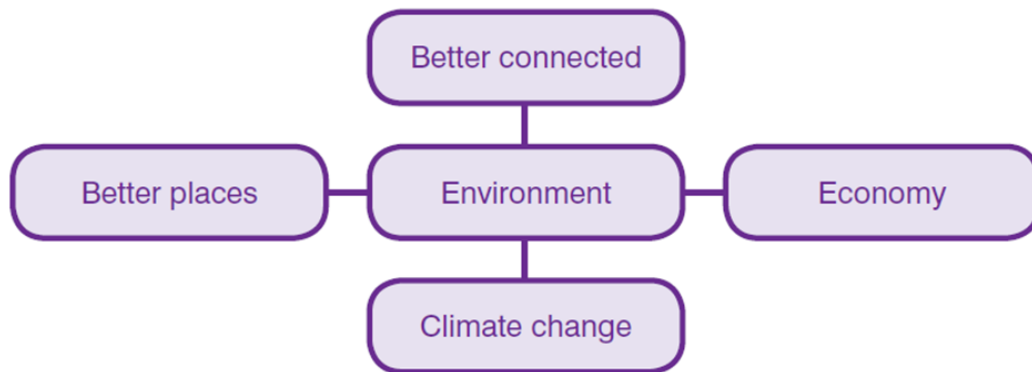


Figure 1.1: Local Plan aspirations with the environment at the heart

- 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.
- 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.

## Age Profile

**2.1.1** Torbay has an older age profile than the England and Wales average, with 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, compared to an increase from 39 years to 40 years for England and Wales.

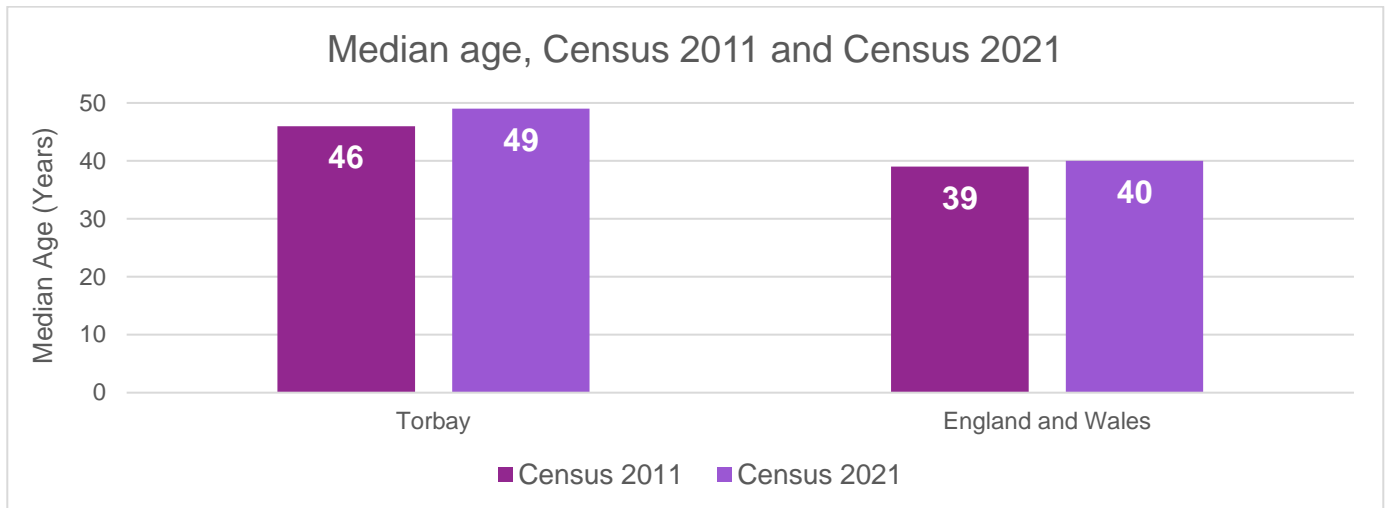


Figure 2.1: Change in median age from Census 2011 to Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

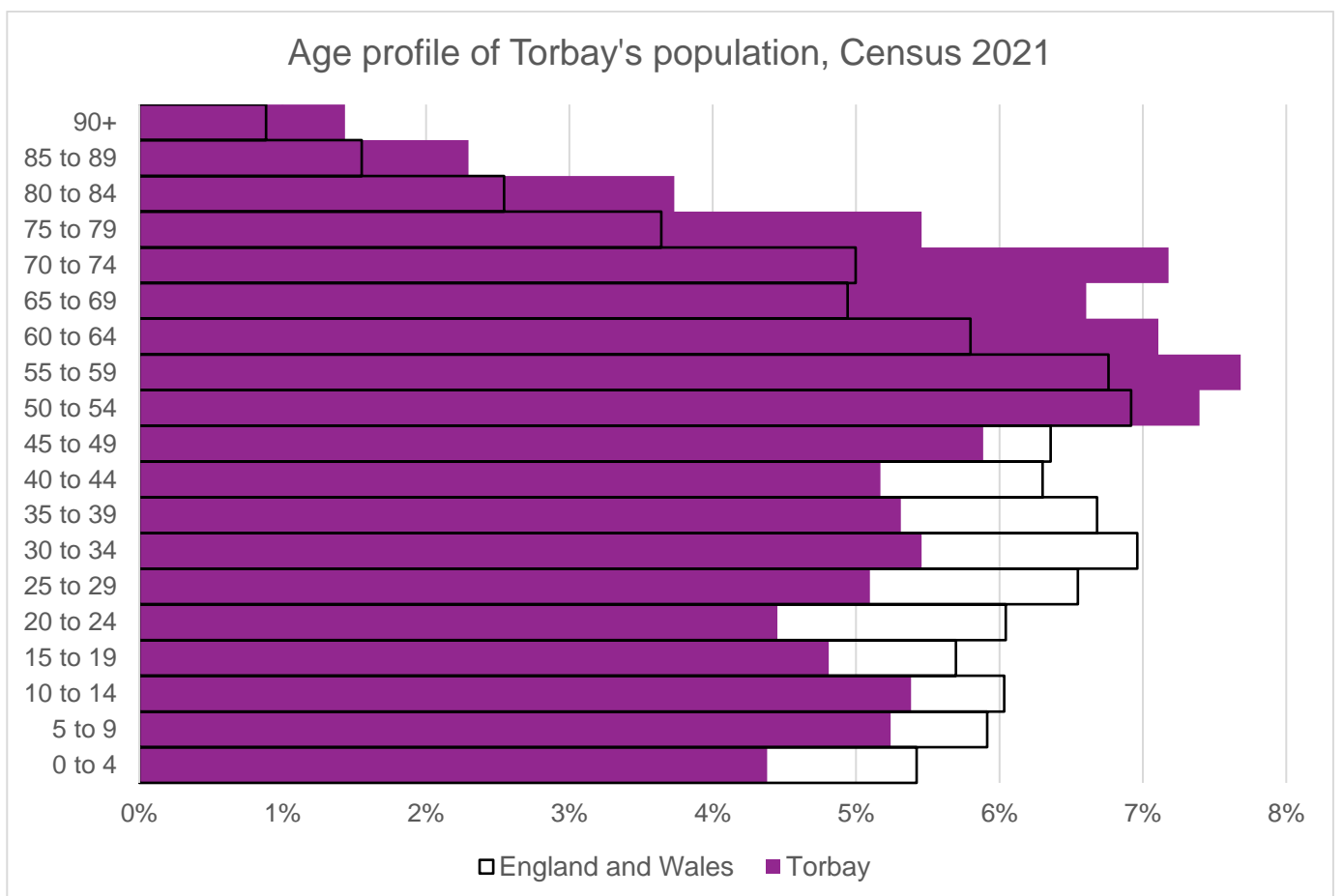


Figure 2.2: Age profile of Torbay's population, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>1</sup>)

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

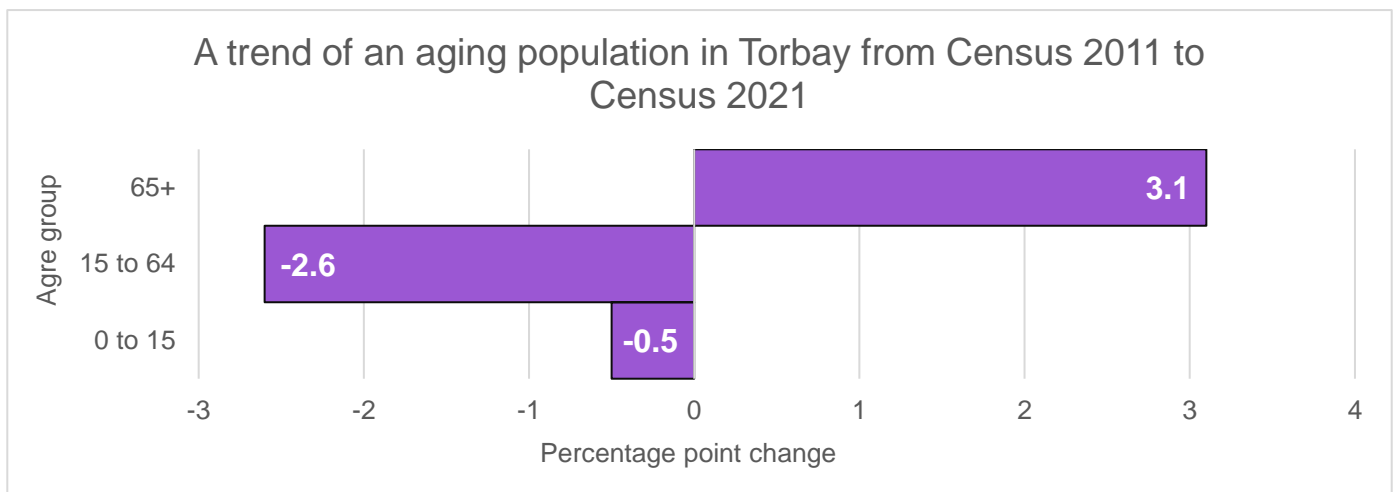


Figure 2.3: Change in the age profile of Torbay's population from Census 2011 to Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

- 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, this age group increased from 16.5% in Census 2011 to 18.6% in Census 2021.
- 2.1.3** The proportion of Torbay's population aged 0 to 15 decreased from 16.5% in Census 2011 to 16.0% in Census 2021, while the working age population (aged 16 to 64) decreased from 59.9% to 57.3%.
- 2.1.4** From a social perspective an older age profile with an aging population is not necessarily a concern, however these trends do present challenges for the long term economic prospects of a place. Increasing and diversifying employment opportunities in Torbay will help retain more college leavers and graduates within the bay. Similarly, housing delivery also appears to correlate with a younger age profile as shown below.

## The relationship between housing delivery and age profile

- 2.1.5** In the areas of Torbay where more housebuilding has occurred, the age profile is younger and the trend of an aging population is weakened compared to areas with less housebuilding. The graph below shows the age profile of the two Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs)<sup>2</sup> which had the highest level of housebuilding between Census 2011 and 2021 (namely Blatchcombe & Blagdon and Shiphay & the Willows<sup>3</sup>), and compares this with the age profile of the rest of Torbay.

<sup>2</sup> Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs) are local areas comprising between 2,000 and 6,000 households with a usually resident population of between 5,000 and 15,000 persons. They are designated primarily for statistical purposes as a way to provide demographic information at a more localised level.

<sup>3</sup> As a way to measure the level of housing growth in each of Torbay's MSOAs, we have worked out what percentage of the current postcodes were newly added in the time between Census 2011 and Census 2021. Blatchcombe & Blagdon had the highest housing growth (18.09% new postcodes) followed by Shiphay & the Willows (16.97%), compared to 3.29% for the rest of Torbay.

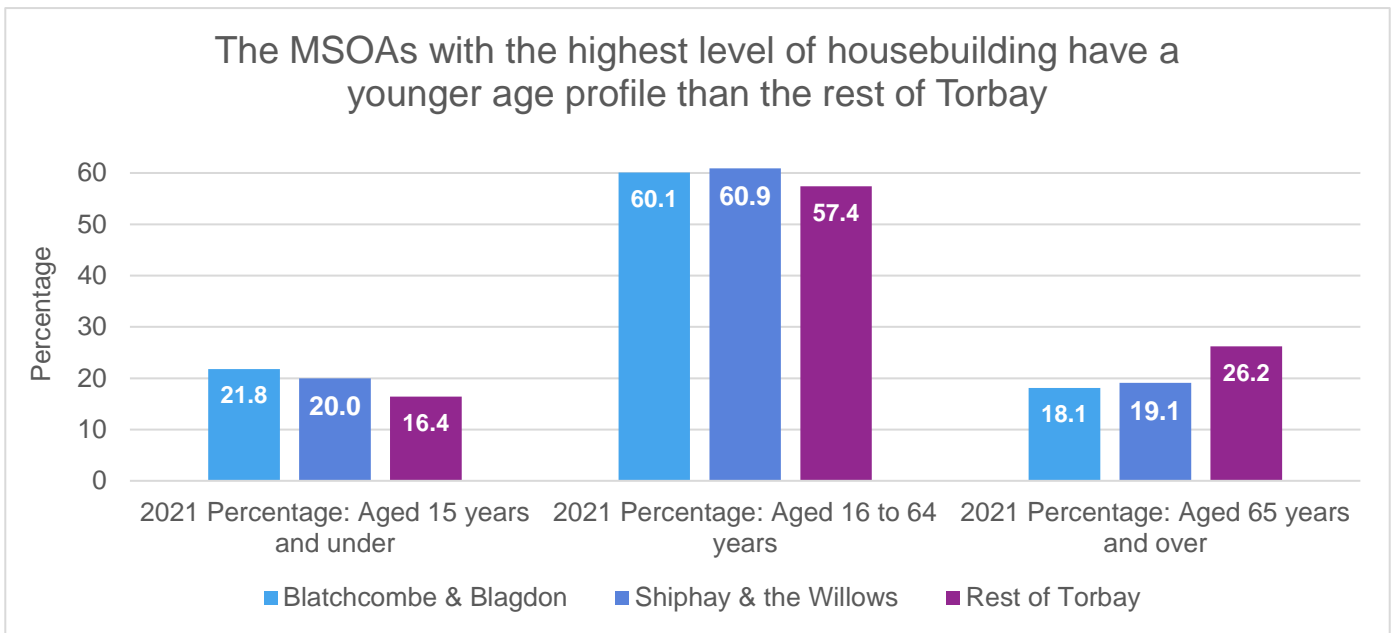


Figure 2.4: The Census 2021 age profile of the two Torbay MSOAs with the highest level of housing growth compared with that of the rest of Torbay (ONS, 2023)

- 2.1.6** The two MSOAs with higher levels of housing growth have a greater proportion of under 16s, a greater proportion of working age residents (aged 16-64), and a notably lower proportion of over 65s.
- 2.1.7** Furthermore, in the two MSOAs with higher levels of housing growth, the trend of an aging population is weakened, strongly so in the case of Blatchcome & Blagdon (where housebuilding has occurred more recently) and to a lesser extent in the case of Shiphay & the Willows (where housebuilding occurred early in the plan period).

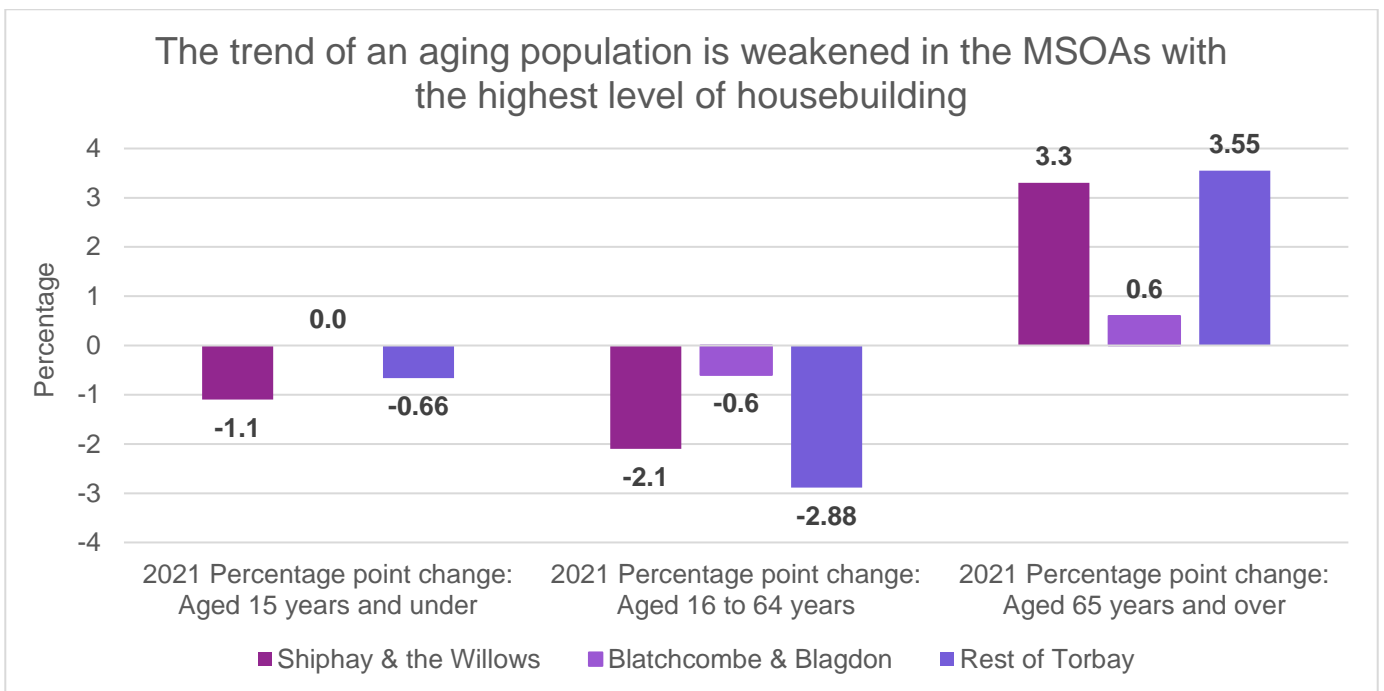


Figure 2.5: The change in the age profile from Census 2011 to Census 2021 for the two Torbay MSOAs with the highest level of housing growth compared with that of the rest of Torbay (ONS, 2023)

## Employment

**2.1.8** Unemployment in Torbay has decreased over the plan period, although with annual fluctuations. Torbay has seen a steady reduction in unemployment for each of the last three monitoring years, from 5% in 2019/20 to 1.7% in 2022/23. The unemployment rate is now lower in Torbay than in the South West (2.8%) and the United Kingdom (3.7%).

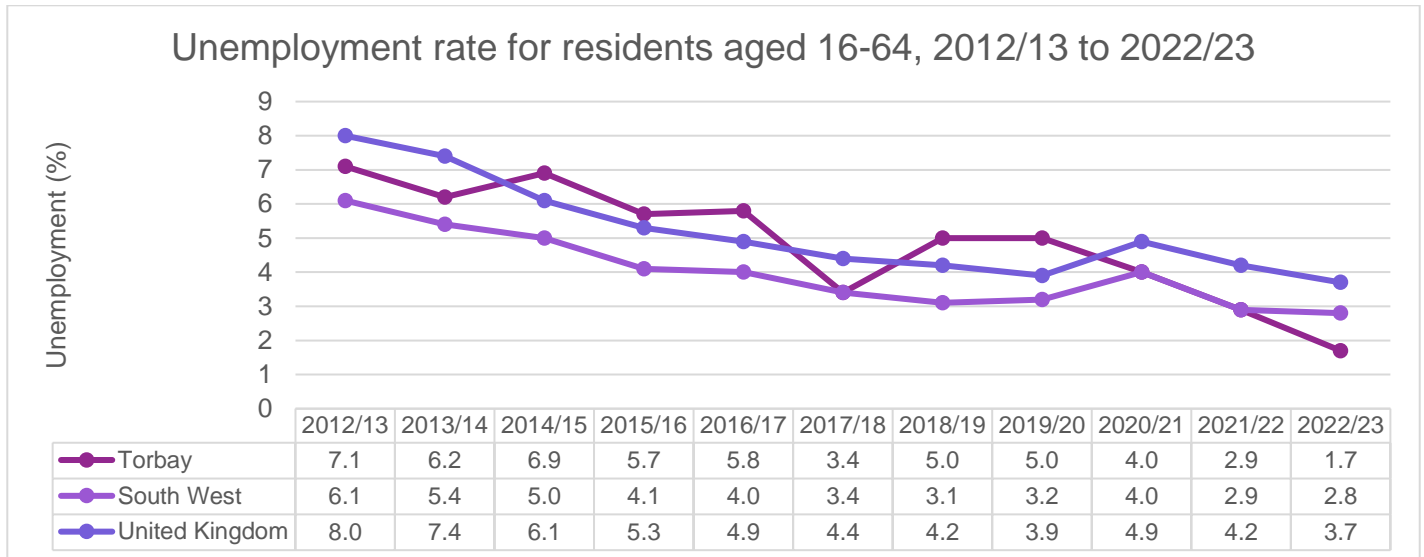


Figure 2.6: Unemployment rate for working age residents, 2012/13 to 2021/22 (ONS, 2023<sup>4</sup>)

## The Number of Jobs

**2.1.9** 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 over the plan period, job density in the South West and in Great Britain steadily increased up to 2019, after which there has been a reduction due to the impacts of the Covid pandemic.

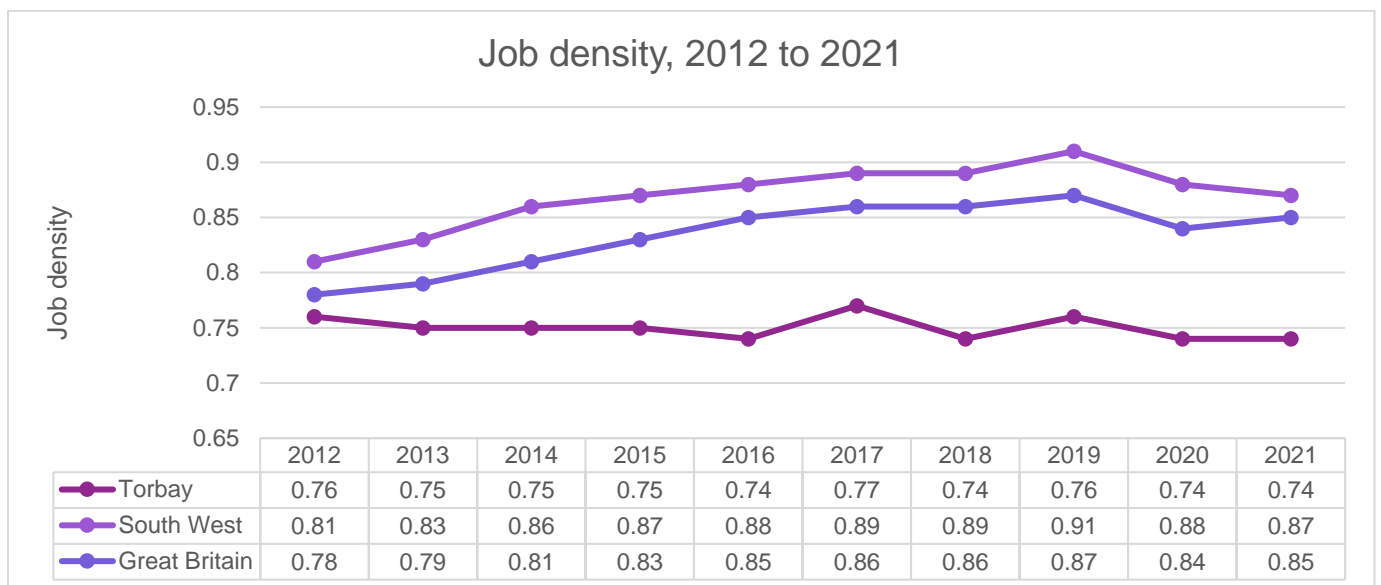


Figure 2.7: Job density (ratio of jobs to working age population) in Torbay, 2012 to 2021 (NOMIS, 2023<sup>5</sup>)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&dataset=17&version=0>

<sup>5</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)



**2.1.10** Figures 2.8 and 2.9 below respectively show (i) the change in the number of jobs in Torbay, and (ii) the change in the number of Torbay residents who are employed (regardless of where the job is located).

**2.1.11** While the number of Torbay residents who are employed has increased slightly over the plan period, the number of jobs within Torbay has remained relatively static. This may suggest a potential increase in the number of people out-commuting for work, and/or an increase in the number of residents working remotely for an employer that is based elsewhere.

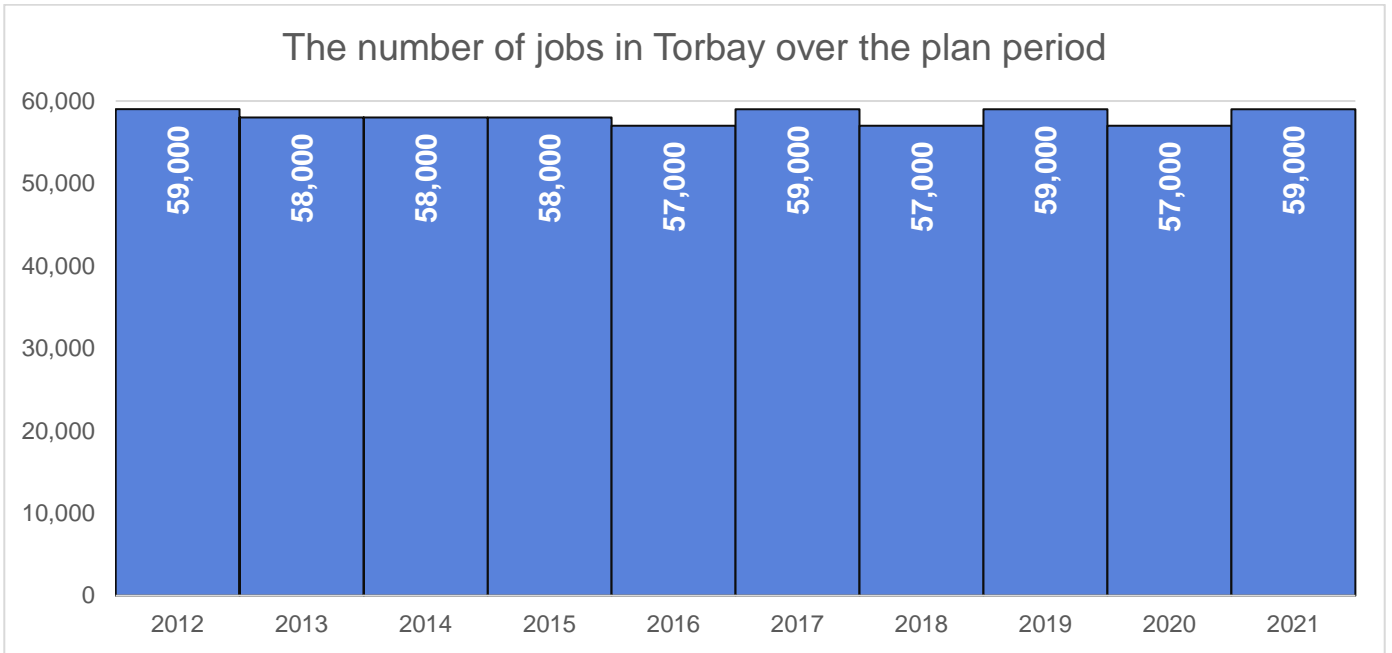


Figure 2.8: The number of jobs in Torbay over the plan period (NOMIS, 2023)

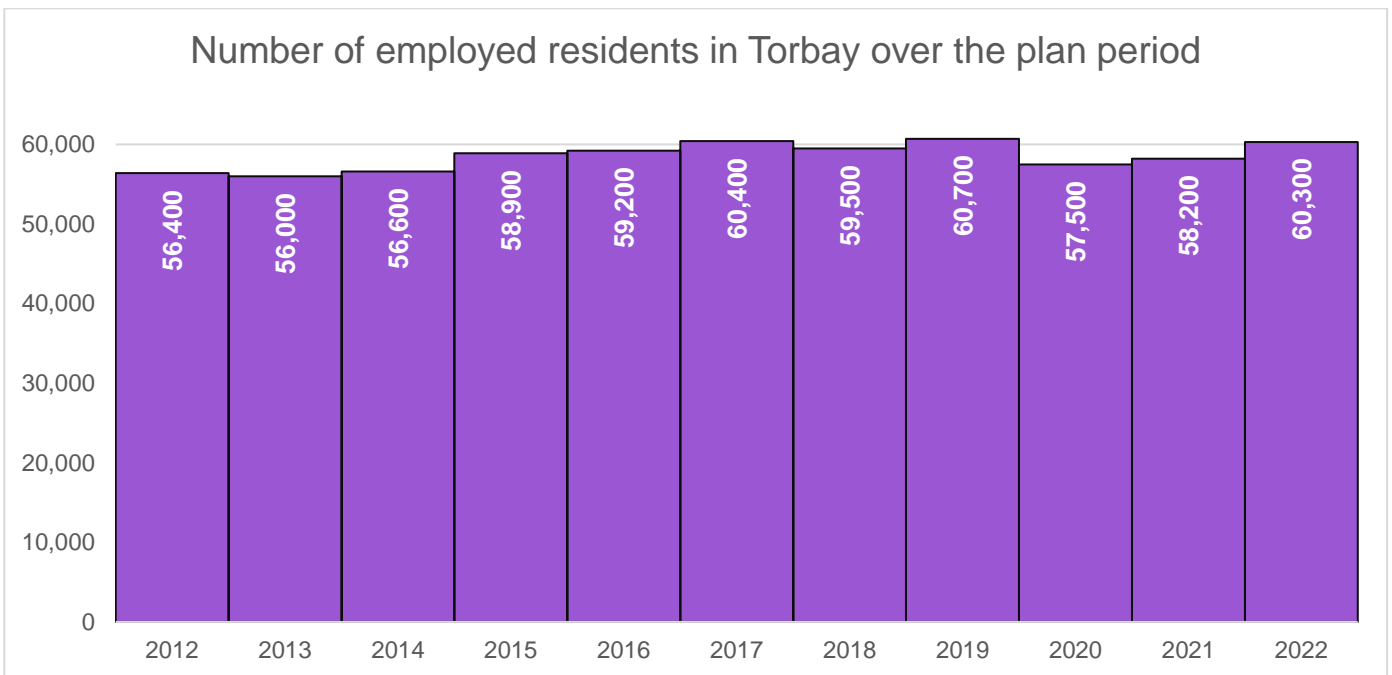


Figure 2.9: The number of employed residents in Torbay over the plan period (NOMIS, 2023)

## Labour Productivity

**2.1.12** 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 2021 (which is the latest available year for this dataset), Torbay was placed 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest out of 374 local authorities in the ONS dataset for GVA per job filled, and 5<sup>th</sup> lowest for GVA per hour worked.

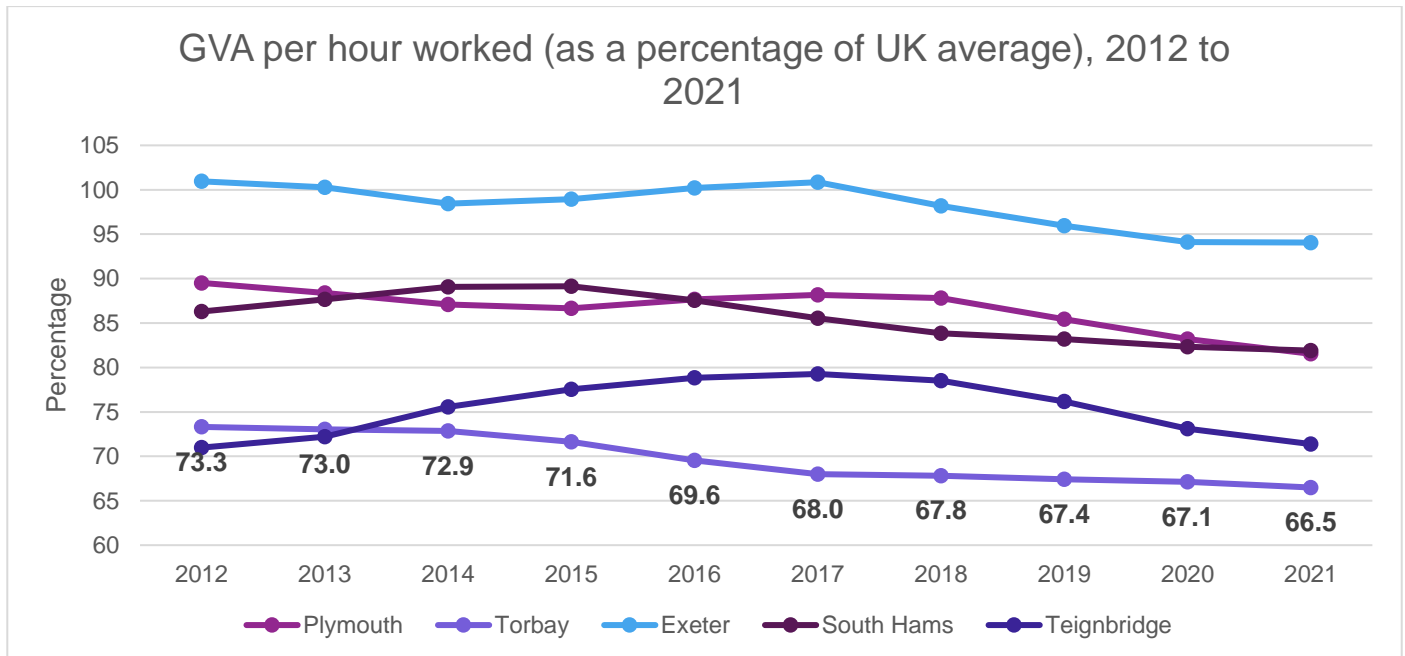


Figure 2.10: Labour productivity (GVA per hour worked) as a percentage of the UK average, 2012 to 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>6</sup>)

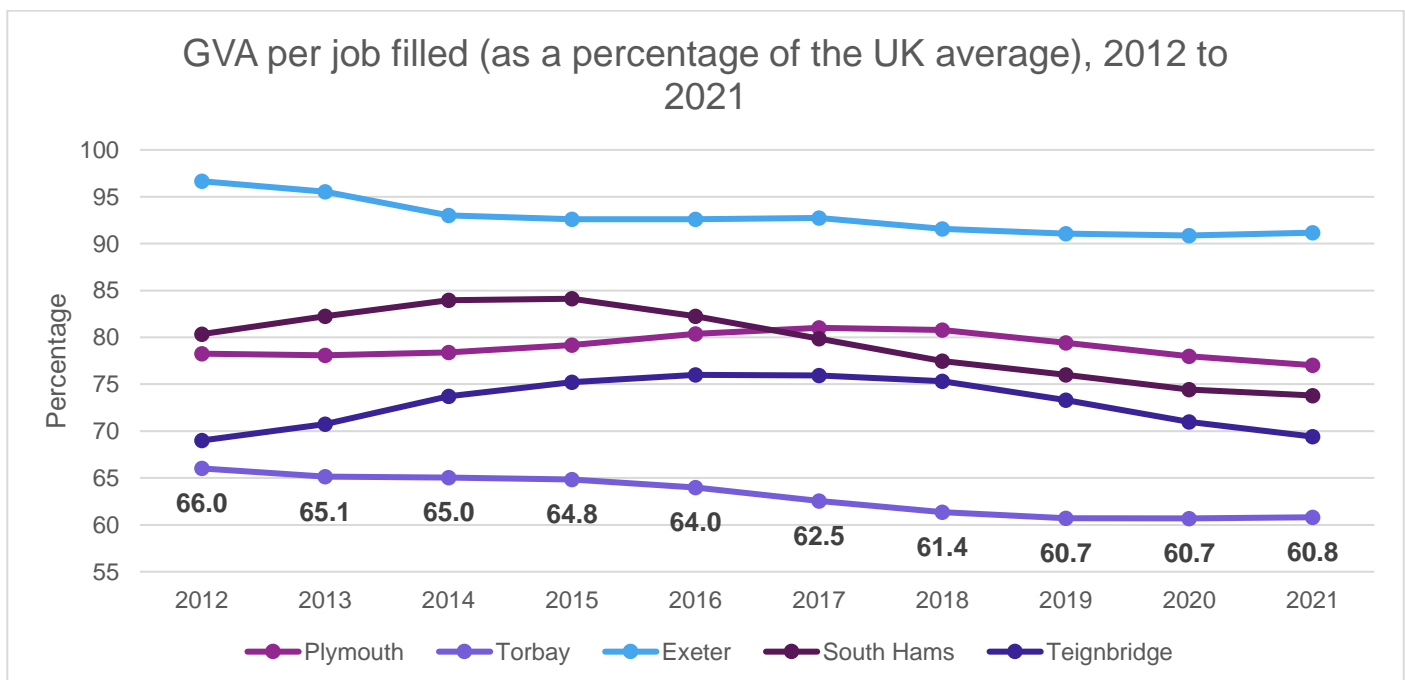


Figure 2.11: Labour productivity (GVA per job filled) as a percentage of the UK average, 2012 to 2021 (ONS, 2023)

<sup>6</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/datasets/subregionalproductivitylabourproductivityindicesbylocalauthoritydistrict>

## The Types of Employment Opportunities in Torbay

**2.1.13** Figures 2.12 and 2.13 below show the nature of employment opportunities in Torbay using Census 2021 data (ONS, 2022<sup>7</sup>). In terms of the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification<sup>8</sup> (Figure 2.12), 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.

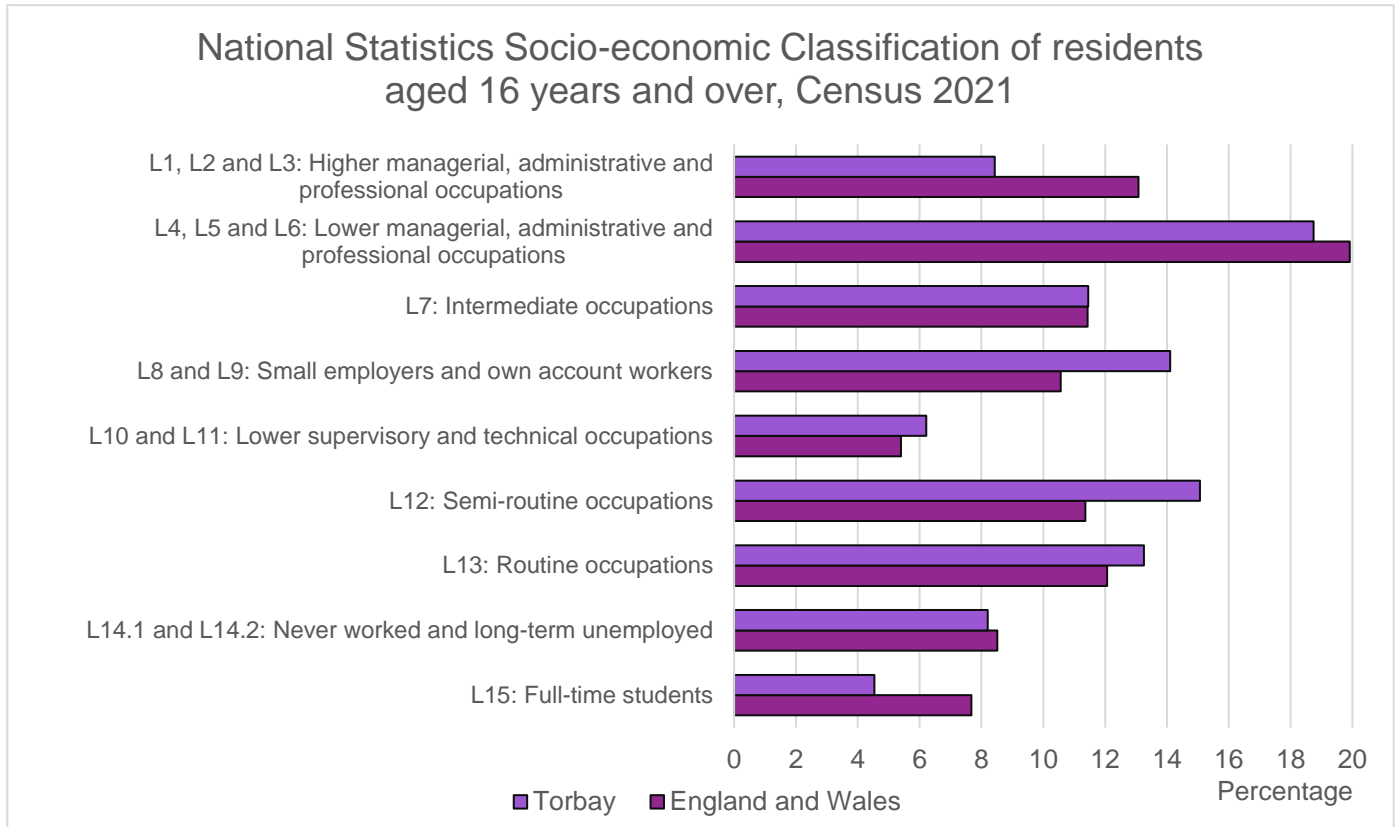


Figure 2.12: Employment in Torbay in terms of socio-economic classification, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

**2.1.14** Similarly, in terms of occupation categories (Figure 2.13), 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.

7

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

<sup>8</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/thenationalstatisticsocioeconomicclassificationssoc2010#category-descriptions-and-operational-issues>

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

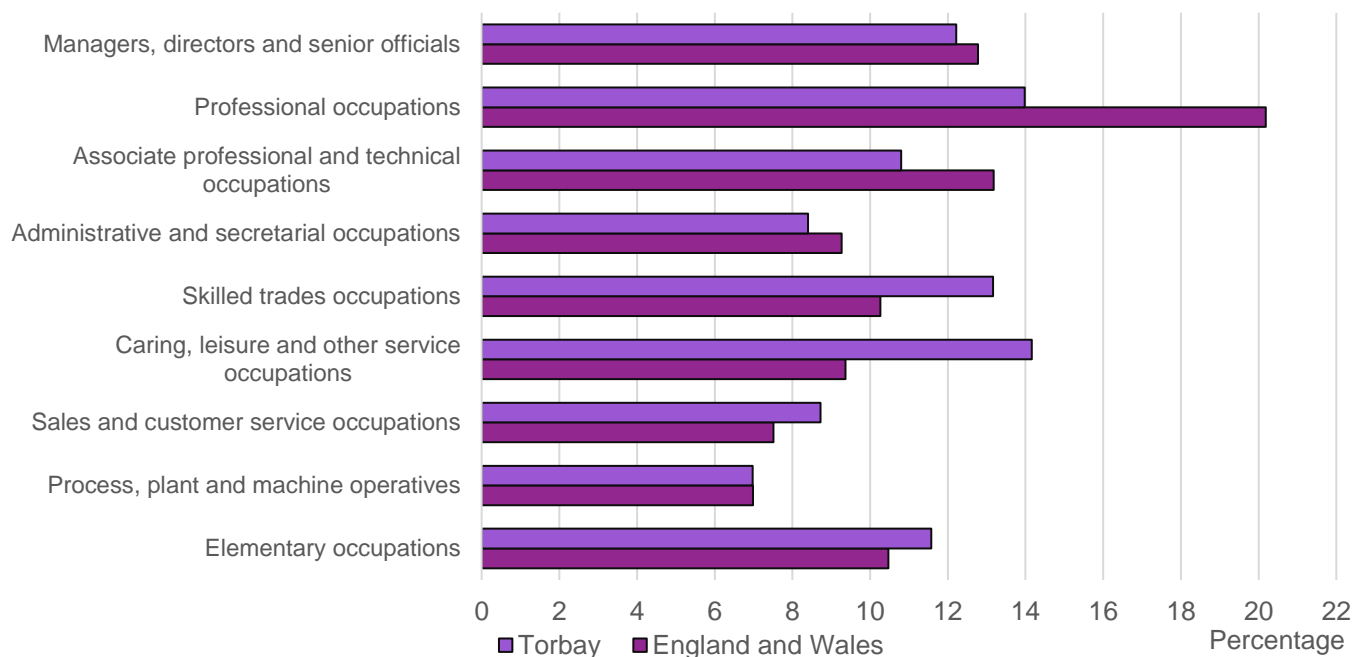


Figure 2.13: Employment in Torbay in terms of occupation categories, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

## Full-time and Part-time Employment

**2.1.15** Although unemployment is relatively low, a key challenge for Torbay remains that of increasing access to full-time (as opposed to part-time) jobs and higher value employment. In 2021, 59.2% of the jobs located in Torbay were full-time, compared to 65.0% for the South West and 68.1% for Great Britain. (2021 is the latest year available for this indicator.)

### Full-time jobs as a percentage of total jobs, 2015 to 2021

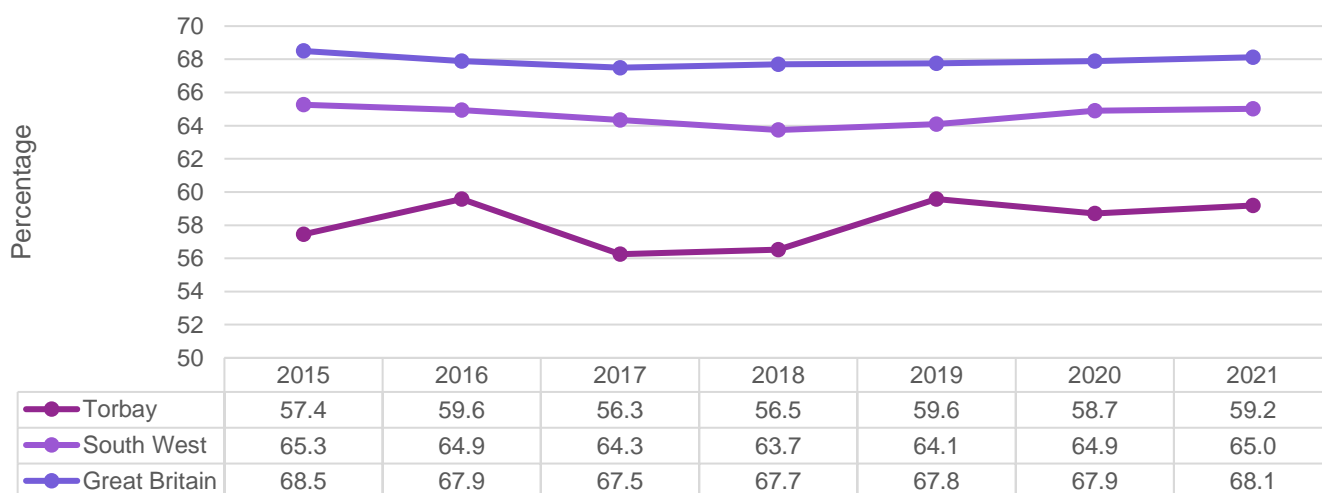


Figure 2.14: The lower proportion of full-time jobs in Torbay, 2015 to 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>9</sup>)

**2.1.16** For Torbay residents aged 16 and over and in employment (i.e., regardless of where the job is located), 64.1% were working full time (31 hours or more per week) and 35.9% were working

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157356/report.aspx#tabjobs>

part time (30 hours or less per week) as at Census 2021. Torbay has a notably higher percentage of part time workers (30 hours or less per week) than Plymouth, Exeter, and England and Wales, and has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest percentage out of 331 lower tier local authorities.

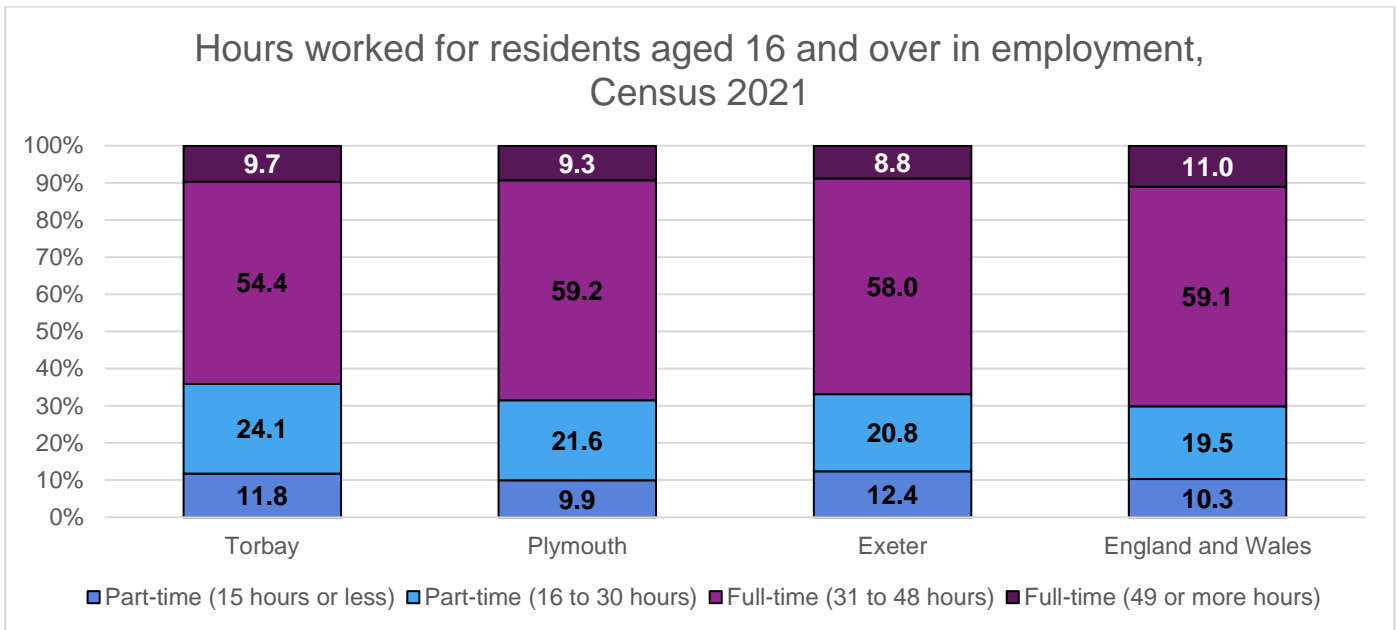


Figure 2.15: The higher proportion of part-time workers in Torbay, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>10</sup>)

## Income

**2.1.17** Average gross weekly pay for full-time employees in Torbay (£543) is low compared to the South West (£651) and Great Britain (£683). Gross weekly pay in Torbay has increased by 31.5% over the plan period compared to an increase of 39.4% for the South West and 34.4% for Great Britain. Over the same period, inflation was 33.8% according to CPIH (and 53.7% according to RPI).

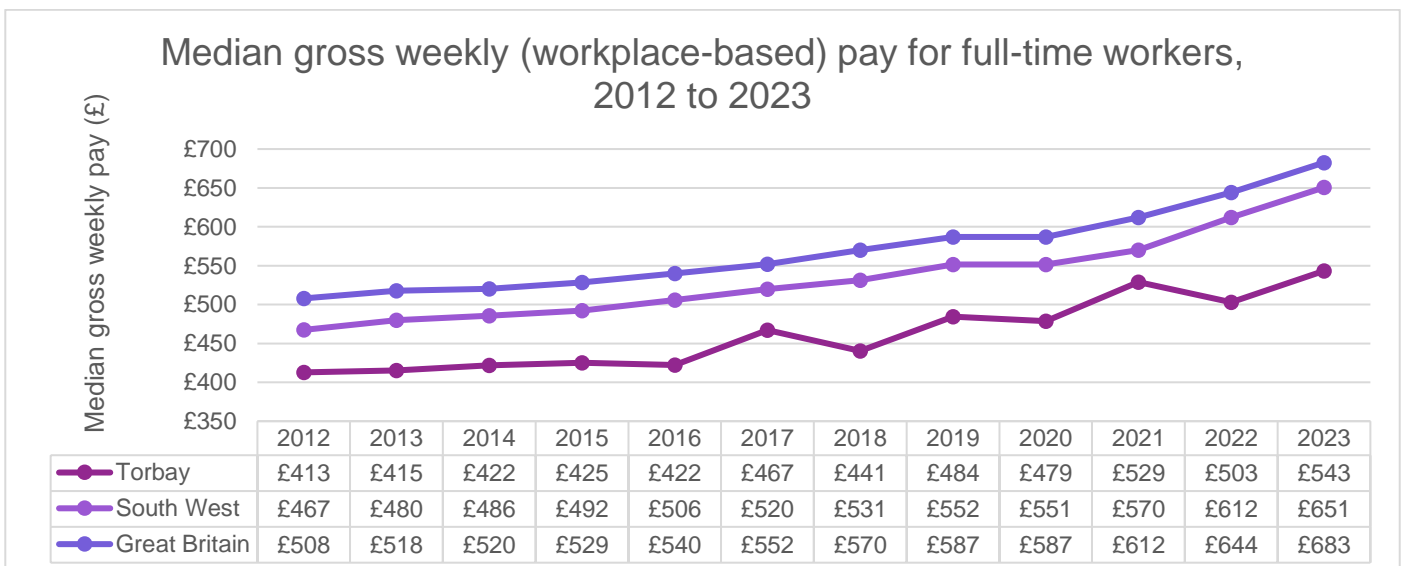


Figure 2.16: Median gross weekly (workplace-based) pay for full-time employees, 2012 to 2023 (ONS, 2023<sup>11</sup>)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS059/editions/2021/versions/1>

<sup>11</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?)

**2.1.18** While wages in Torbay have increased overall over the plan period, they have increased from a low base and at less than inflation. 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 2021.

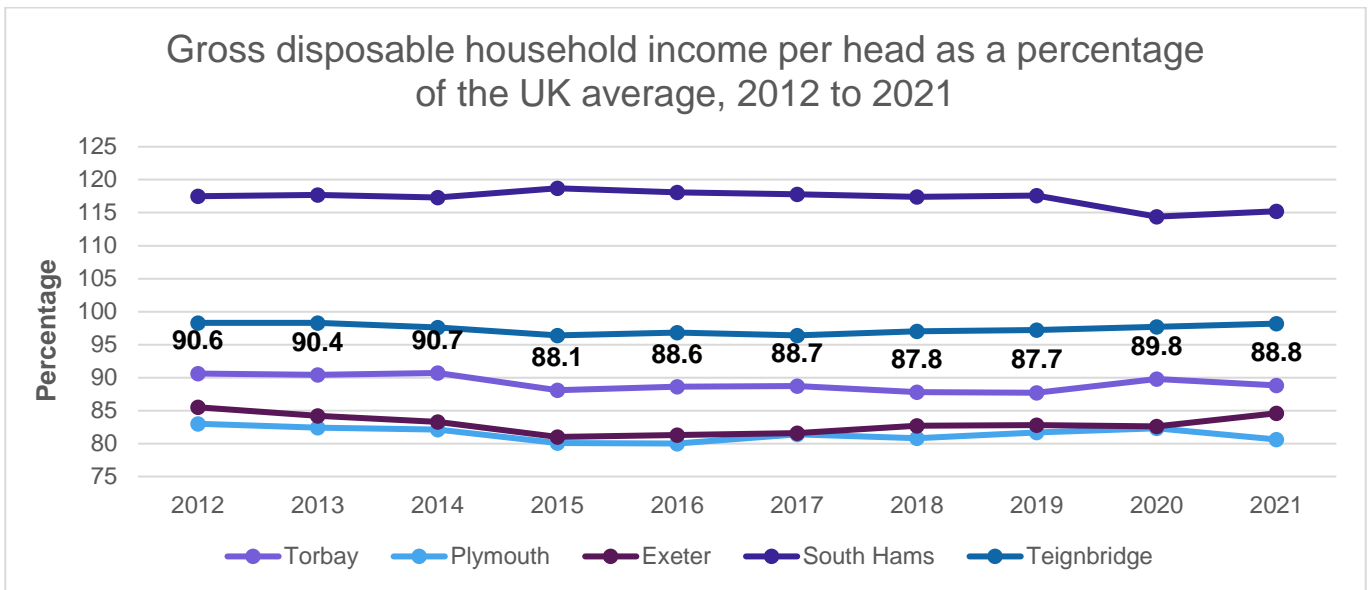


Figure 2.17: Gross disposable household income (ONS, 2023<sup>12</sup>)

**2.1.19** In the years leading up to the Covid pandemic, Universal Credit (UC) 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 caused a significant increase in UC claimants in Torbay to a high of 8.1% in May 2020, although there has been a strong recovery post Covid to below that of the average for Great Britain since July 2021.

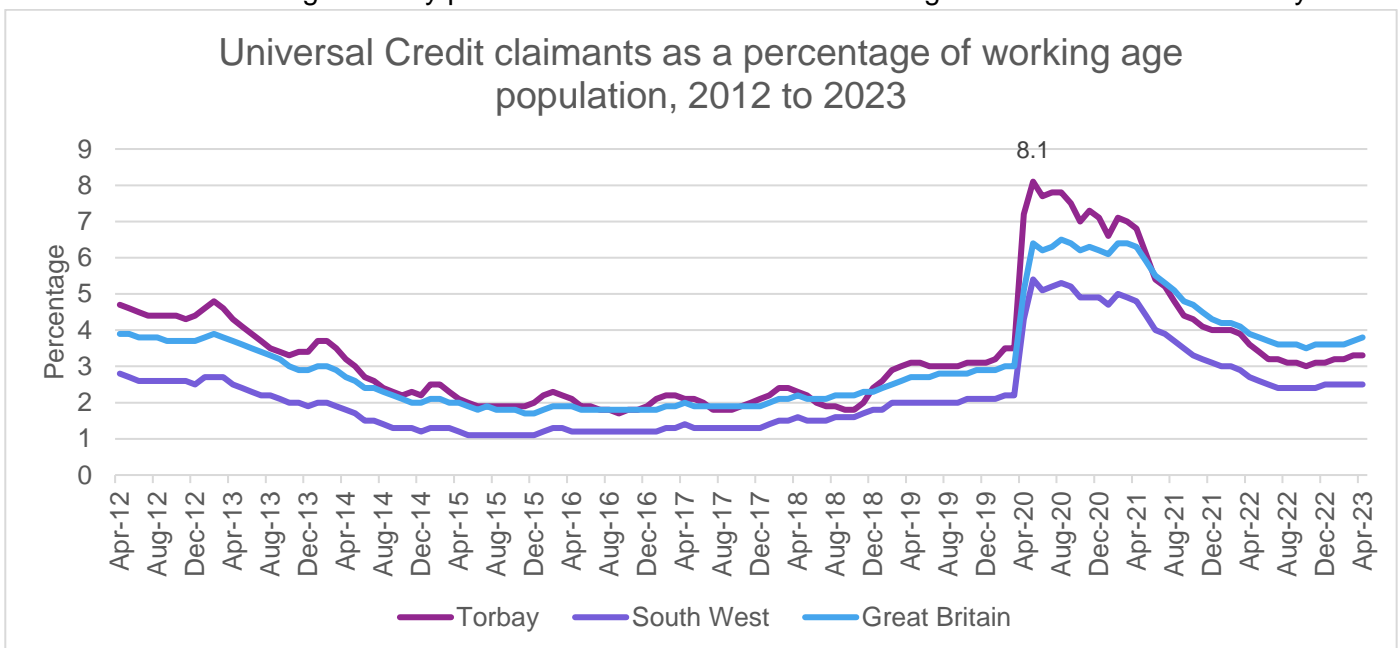


Figure 2.18: Universal credit claimants as a percentage of working age population, 2012 to 2023 (ONS, 2023<sup>13</sup>)

<sup>12</sup>

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

<sup>13</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)

## Tourism

**2.1.20** 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.

**2.1.21** 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.
- 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.

**2.1.22** 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.

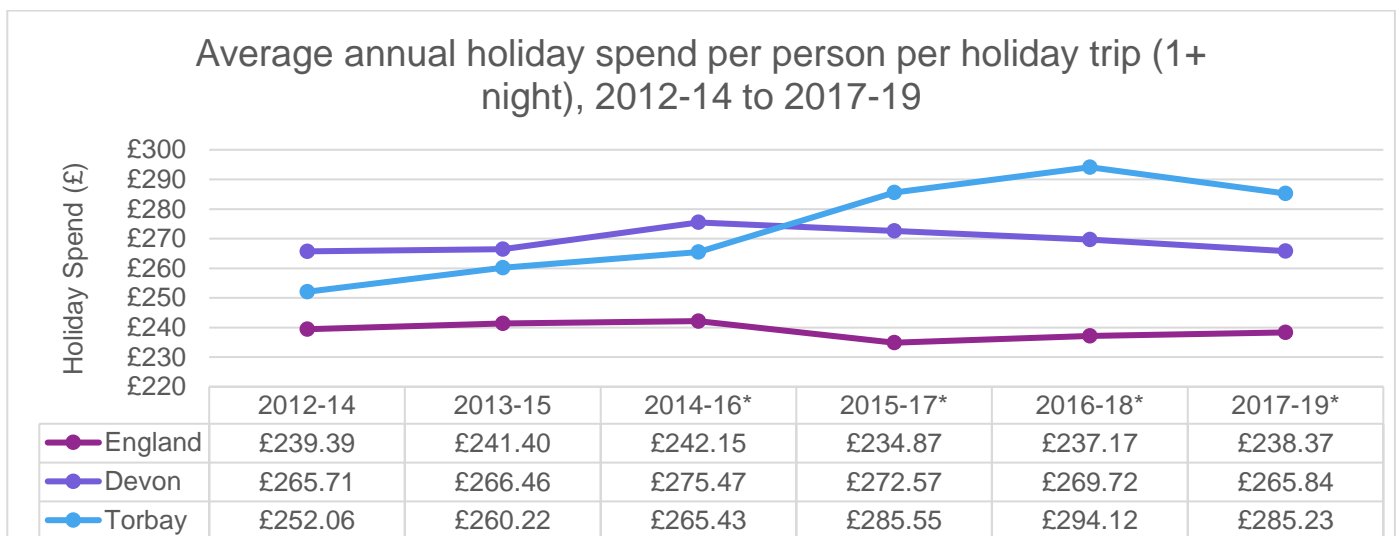


Figure 2.19: Average holiday spend per person per holiday trip, 2012-14 to 2017-19 (Visit Britain<sup>14</sup>)

## Economic Growth Strategy

**2.1.23** 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 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.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.visitbritain.org/destination-specific-research>

- Maximising economic value of natural capital.

**2.1.24** 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.

**2.1.25** 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.

## Regeneration

**2.1.26** 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. To this end, the Council has set up a new public and private sector partnership to accelerate economic growth and regeneration, with Willmott Dixon and Milligan having been [appointed as development partners](#) in November 2023.

**2.1.27** A brief summary of some of the key projects is provided below, and more detail is available at: <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/regeneration/>

**2.1.28** Torquay regeneration projects:

- [The Strand: Harbour Public Realm](#): A contractor has commenced works to deliver public realm improvements to Torquay harbourside including 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. Specialist survey work to look at the inner core of the building has taken place to help provide a greater understanding of the condition of the building.
- [GPO Roundabout](#): Consultations were carried out between 8 December 2022 and 8 January 2023 on concept proposals for public realm improvements funded by the Towns Fund.
- [Lymington Road](#): Works to construct a number of small business premises adjacent to the coach station are in advanced stages, with completion anticipated in early 2024.

**2.1.29** 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. Demolition works are well advanced and nearing completion.



- 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. Following a series of consultations and trials during 2022 and 2023, a [revised scheme](#) is being implemented which seeks to balance the needs of all users.
- Seafront Public Realm: Improvements to sea defences and open spaces. Multiple phases of consultation around design proposals have been carried out in the lead up to the submission of a planning application for the scheme.
- 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). Demolition work has commenced.
- Oldway Mansion: National Lottery Heritage Funding has been secured to help develop a resilient future for Oldway. Following consultation carried out between 1-30 June 2023, the [Council's Cabinet received](#) a "Developing a Resilient Future for Oldway – Masterplan" in December 2023 which will be used to guide further work to secure funding and investors.
- Torbay Business Park: Following the completion of Unit E which provides eight new high quality light industrial units, Levelling Up Funding has been [secured](#) towards proposals for a new Electronics & Photonics Production Park in the same area of Torbay Business Park.

#### 2.1.30 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: Levelling Up Funding has been [secured](#) towards 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.

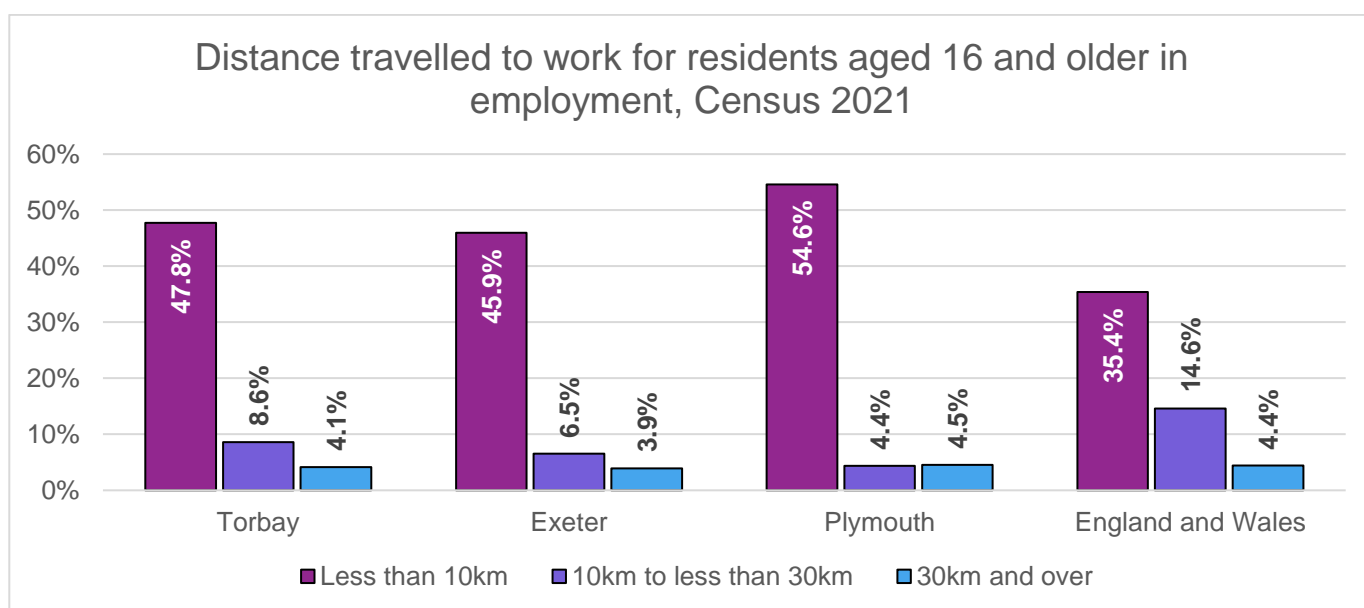


Figure 2.20: Comparative distances travelled to work, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023)

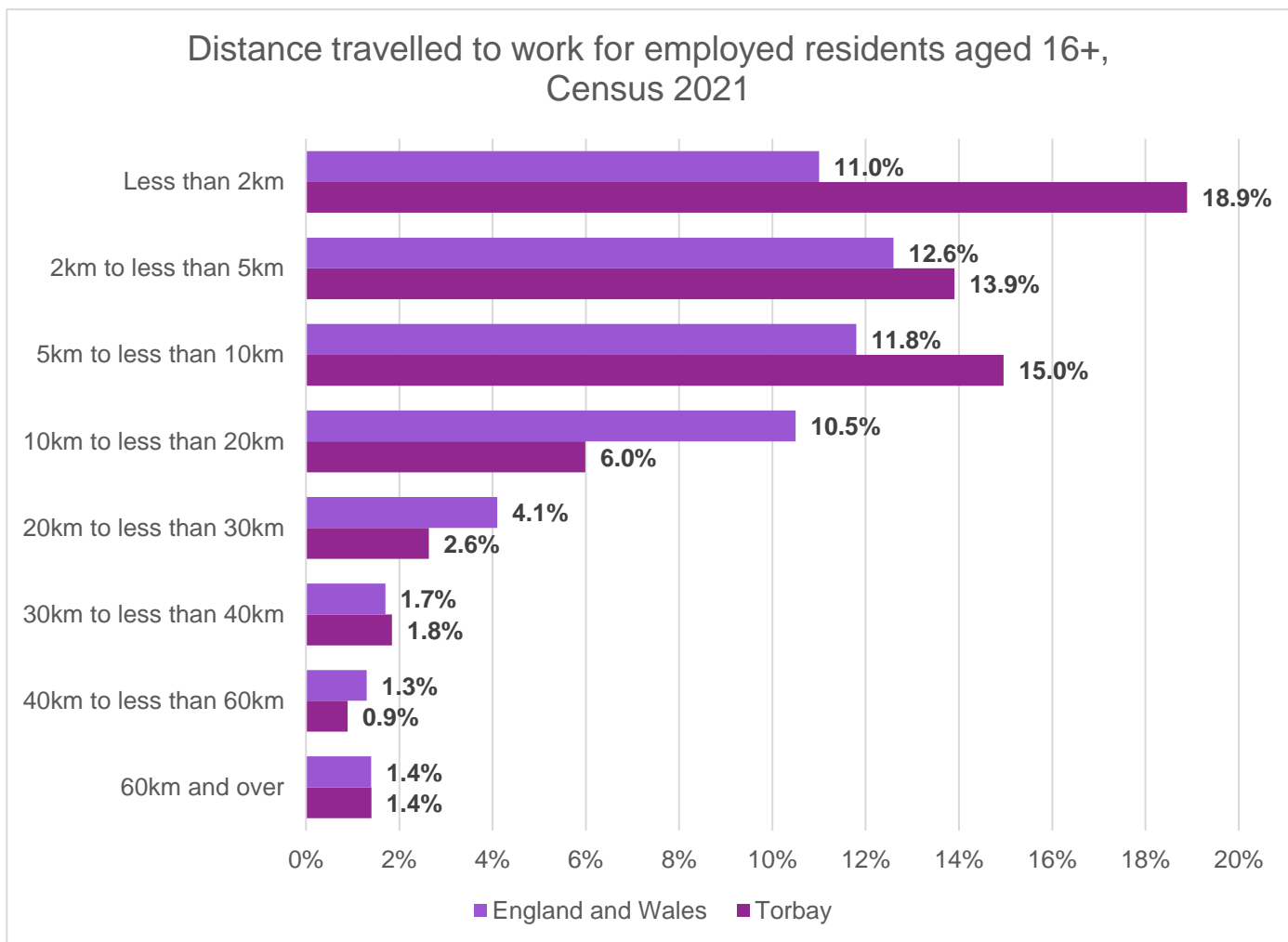


Figure 2.21: Distance travelled to work for residents aged 16 and older in employment, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>15</sup>)

**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>15</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS058/editions/2021/versions/2#version-history>

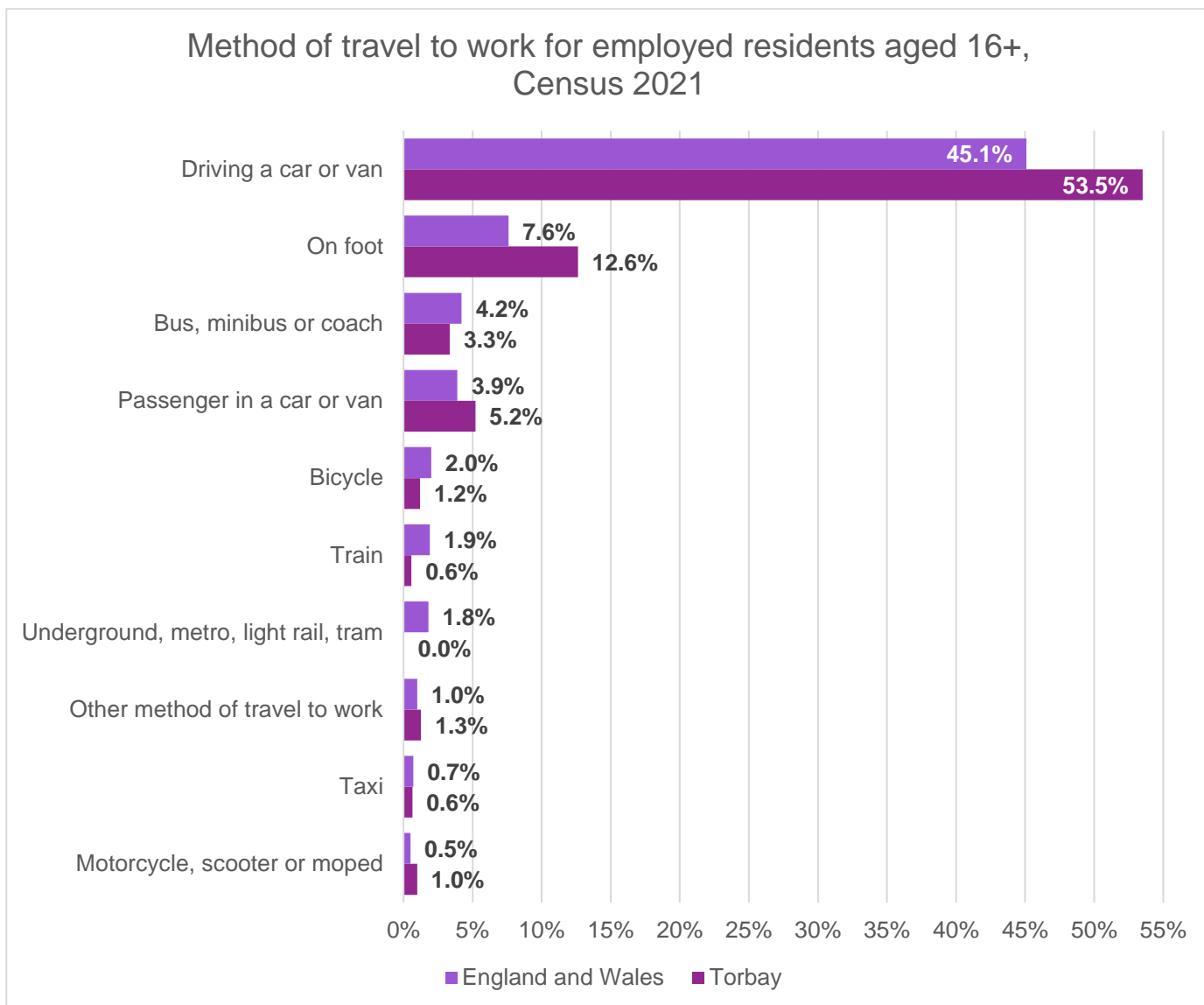


Figure 2.22: Method of travel to work, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>16</sup>)

- 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. 2023 saw a new Wickes store built and opened at Edginswell Business Park and a new Aldi supermarket built and opened off Torquay Road, both conveniently located at the Torbay end of the South Devon Highway.
- 2.2.5** Plans for the development of a [new railway station at Edginswell](#) in Torquay are progressing. The latest planning application (P/2023/0708) for the railway station, including two platforms, a fully accessible lift and footbridge with an elevated walkway, and associated infrastructure, was [approved by the Planning Committee](#) in November 2023, subject to the receipt of satisfactory comments from the Environment Agency regarding flood resilience. The site has also been

16

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

successful in a funding bid. The project is currently going through Network Rail approval processes.

**2.2.6** Following a significant reduction in rail station usage in Torbay (and throughout Great Britain) in 2020/21 due to Covid restrictions, there has been a considerable recovery in usage in 2021/22 and 2022/23 as shown in the figure below. In 2022/23 the number of entries and exits at Torbay stations has returned to 98.8% of 2018/19 levels (i.e., the last full year without any Covid restrictions); a 94.1% recovery at Paignton station, a 94.2% recovery at Torquay station, and a 118.0% recovery at Torre station. The post-Covid recovery in passenger rail usage is therefore notably stronger in Torbay than in the South West (89.4% of 2018/19 levels) and in England and Wales (78.0% of 2018/19 levels).

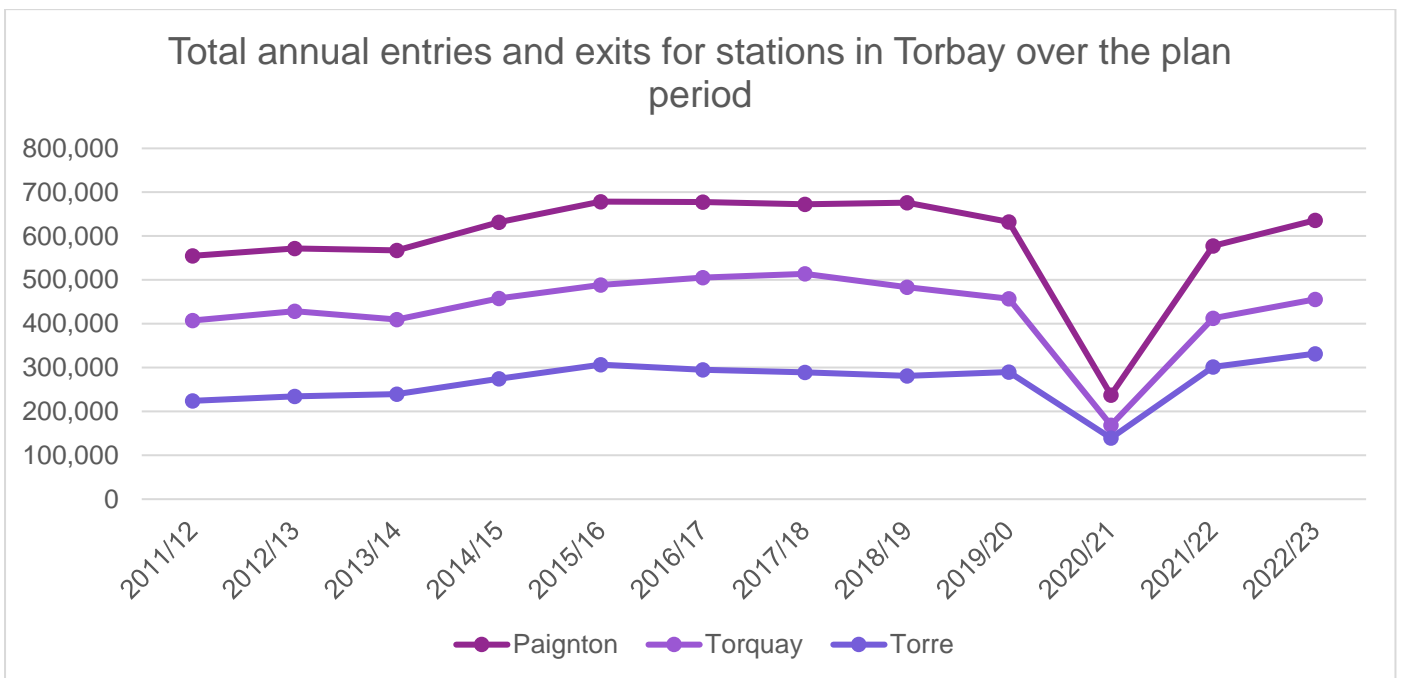


Figure 2.23: Estimated rail station usage for Torbay stations over the plan period (Office of Rail and Road, 2023)

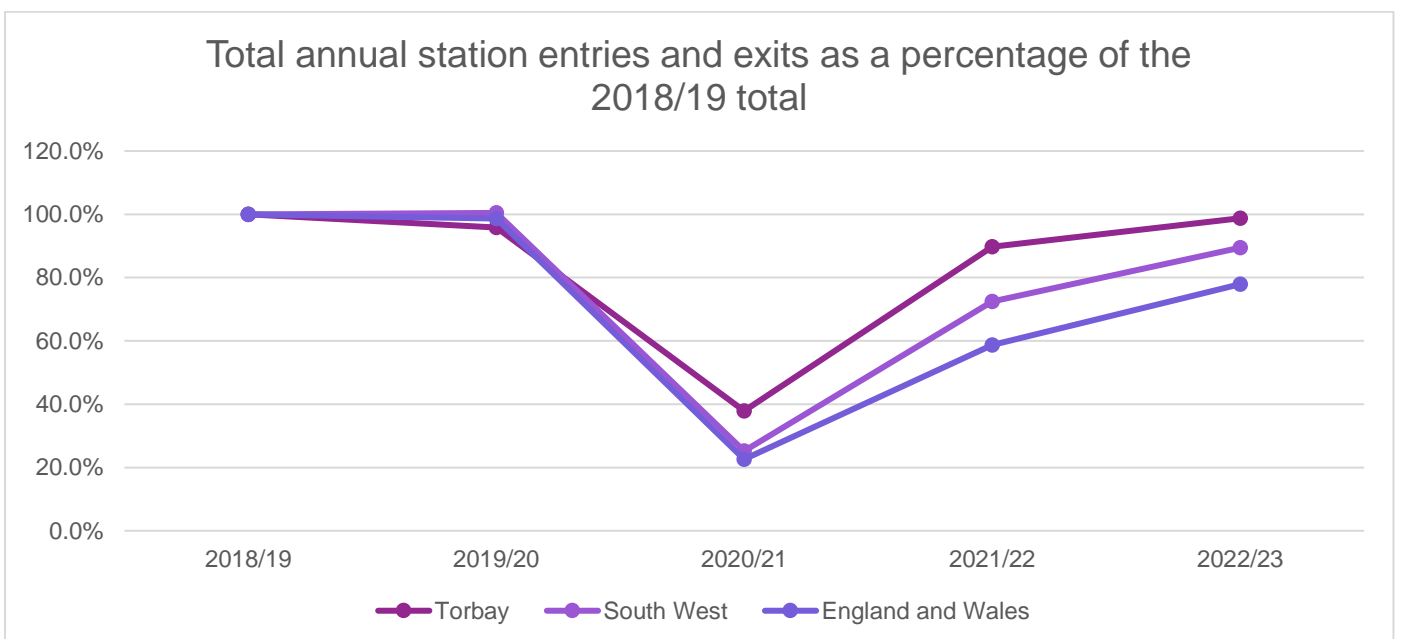


Figure 2.24: Estimated rail station usage as a percentage of the 2018/19 total (Office of Rail and Road, 2023)

The total number of station entries and exits in 2022/23, expressed as a percentage of the 2018/19 total

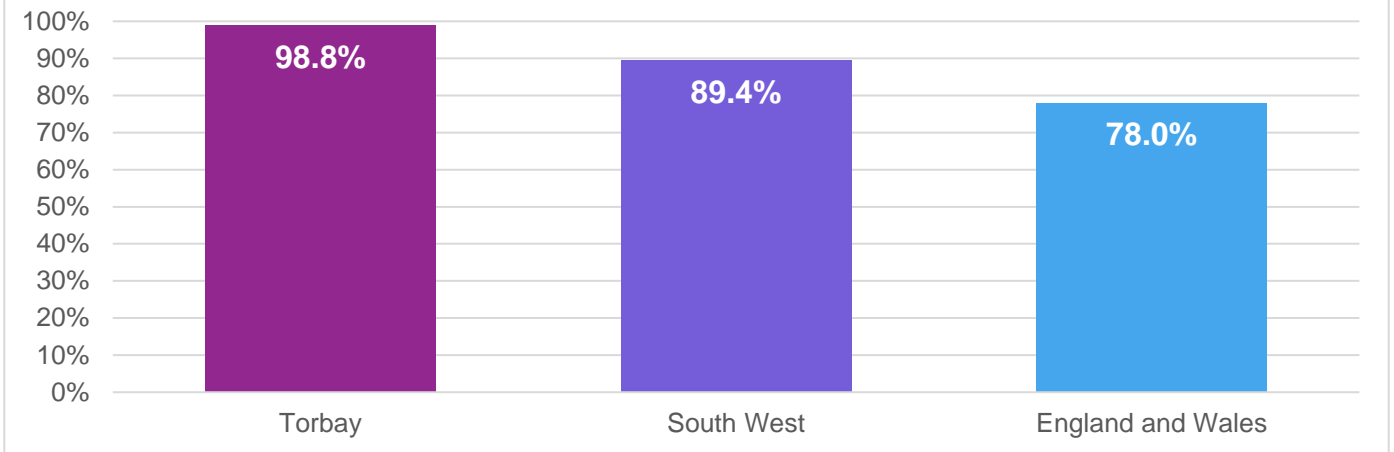


Figure 2.25: Total station entries and exits in 2022/23 as a percentage of the 2018/19 total<sup>17</sup> (Office of Rail and Road, 2023)

**2.2.7** 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). Post-Covid, the number of bus passenger journeys in Torbay has recovered to 74.4% of the 2018/19 total (compared to 72.8% for the South West and 78.5% for England).

Total concessionary and non-concessionary bus passenger journeys per year over the plan period

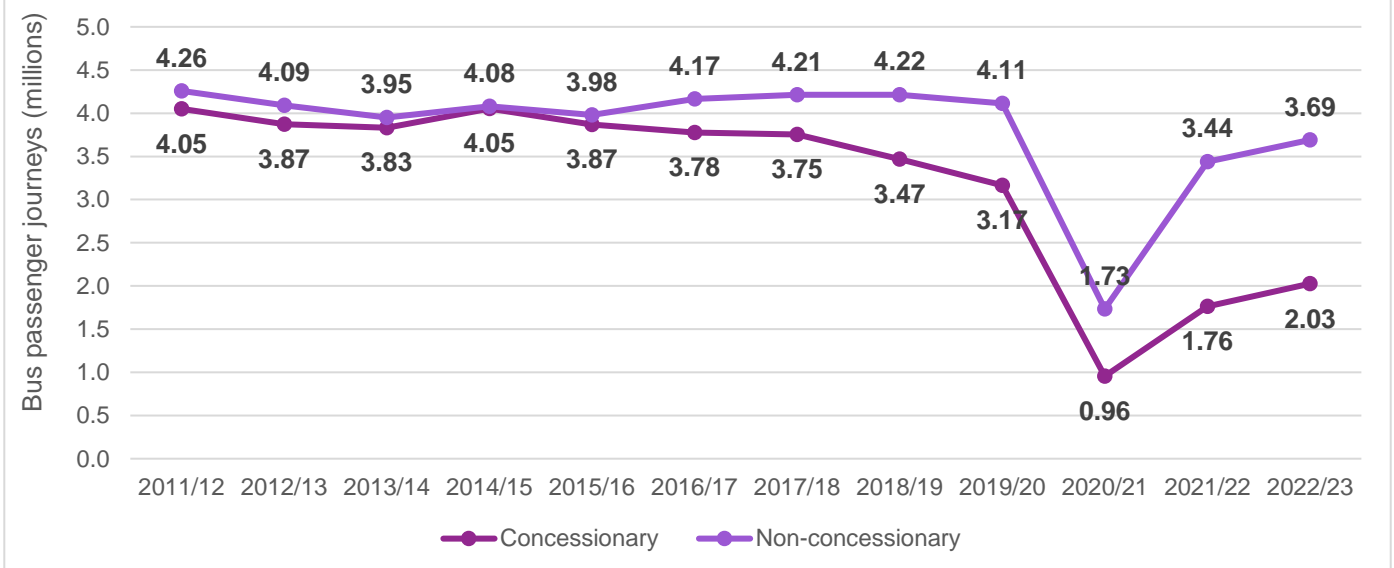


Figure 2.26: Concessionary and non-concessionary bus passenger journeys (DfT, 2023<sup>18</sup>)

<sup>17</sup> Note that any stations for which there was no data for 1 or more of the years between 2018/19 and 2022/23 have been omitted from the dataset for the purposes of this graph.

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

The total number of bus passenger journeys in 2022/23, expressed as a percentage of the 2018/19 total

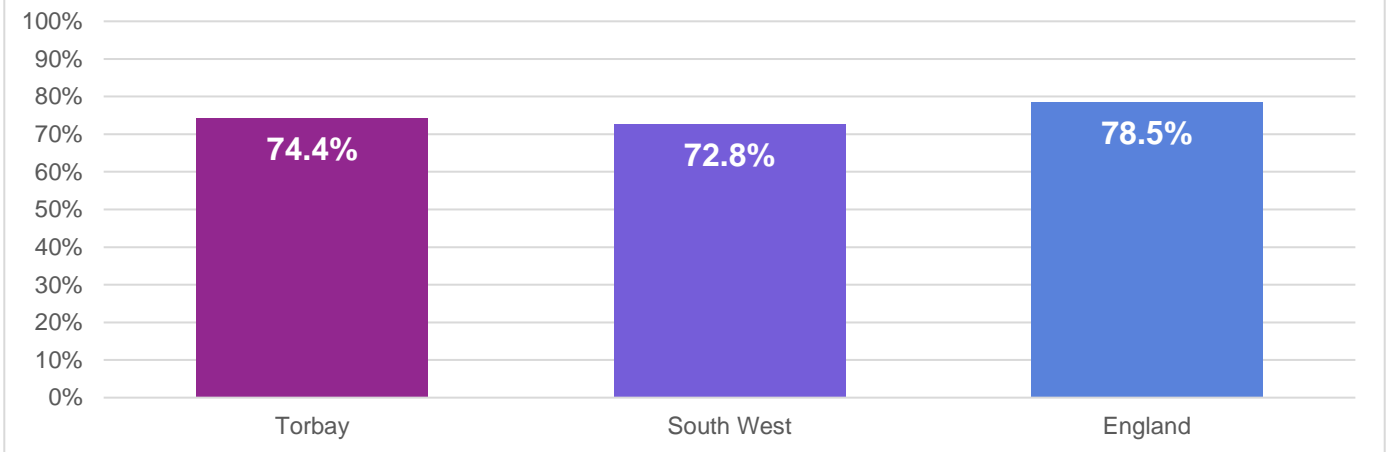


Figure 2.27: Total bus passenger journeys in 2022/23 as a percentage of the 2018/19 total (DfT, 2023)

**2.2.8** It is interesting to note that the recovery in the number of non-concessionary journeys in Torbay (to 87.4% of the 2018/19 total) has been much stronger than the recovery for concessionary journeys (to only 58.5% of the 2018/19 total).

**2.2.9** In 2018/19 concessionary journeys comprised 45.1% of the total bus passenger journeys in Torbay, whereas in 2022/23 concessionary journeys comprised only 35.6% (a slight increase from 33.9% in 2021/22).

The proportion of concessionary and non-concessionary bus passenger journeys in Torbay over the plan period

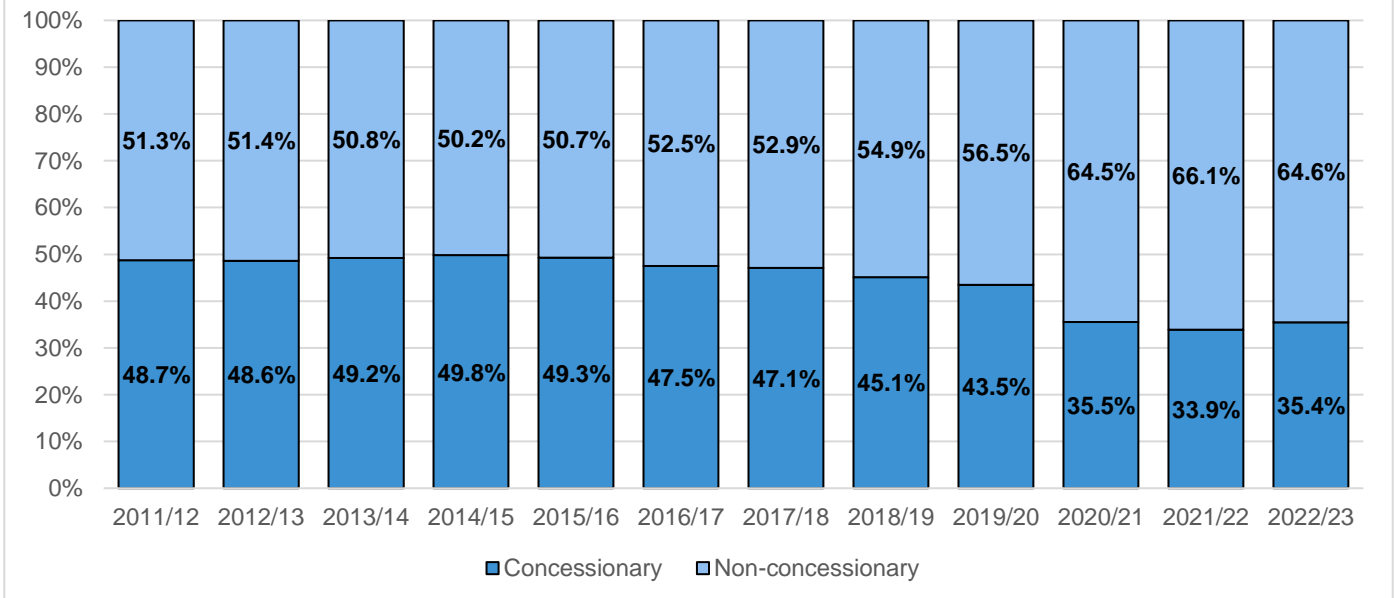


Figure 2.28: Proportion of concessionary and non-concessionary bus passenger journeys per year over the plan period (DfT, 2023)

**2.2.10** On average, residents use the bus more frequently in Torbay than in Devon and the South West, but less frequently than in Plymouth and in England.

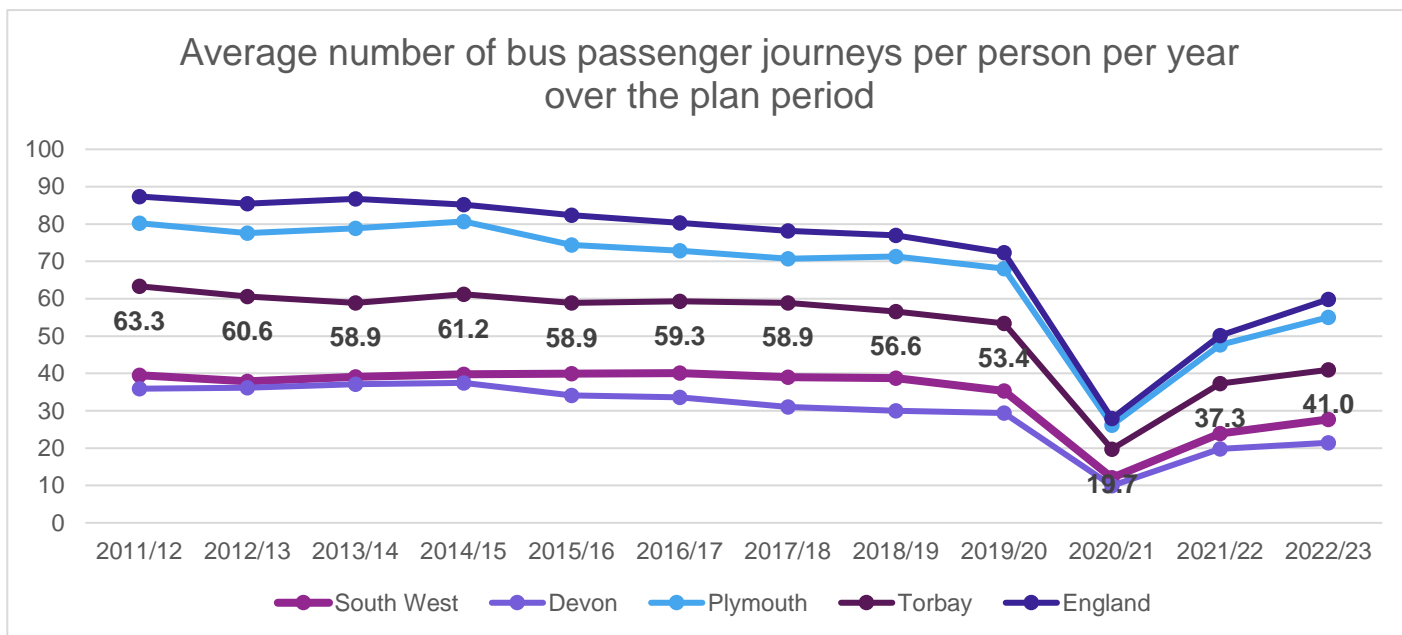


Figure 2.29: Average total bus passenger journeys per person per year over the plan period (DfT, 2023)

**2.2.11** Figure 2.30 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 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 95.4% of what it was in 2018 (which was the last full year without Covid restrictions), which is slightly less than for the South West (96.0%) and for Great Britain (96.9%).

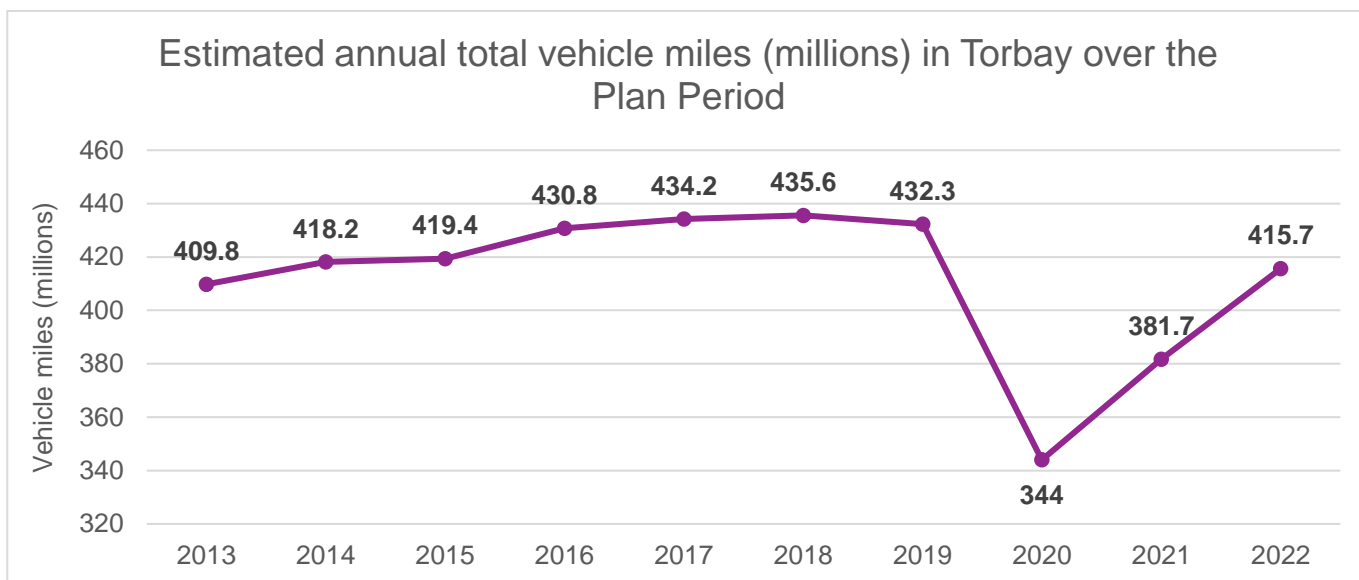


Figure 2.30: Estimated annual total vehicle miles (millions) in Torbay over the plan period (DfT, 2023)

**2.2.12** Whereas all motorised modes of transport decreased notably in 2020 due to Covid restrictions, it is interesting to note that cycling increased over the same period, continuing an increasing trend between 2017 and 202. (This is based on average estimated traffic counts taken at 27 locations on the road network.) In the two years since the height of the Covid pandemic, the number of bicycles has subsequently decreased again to just below pre-pandemic levels.



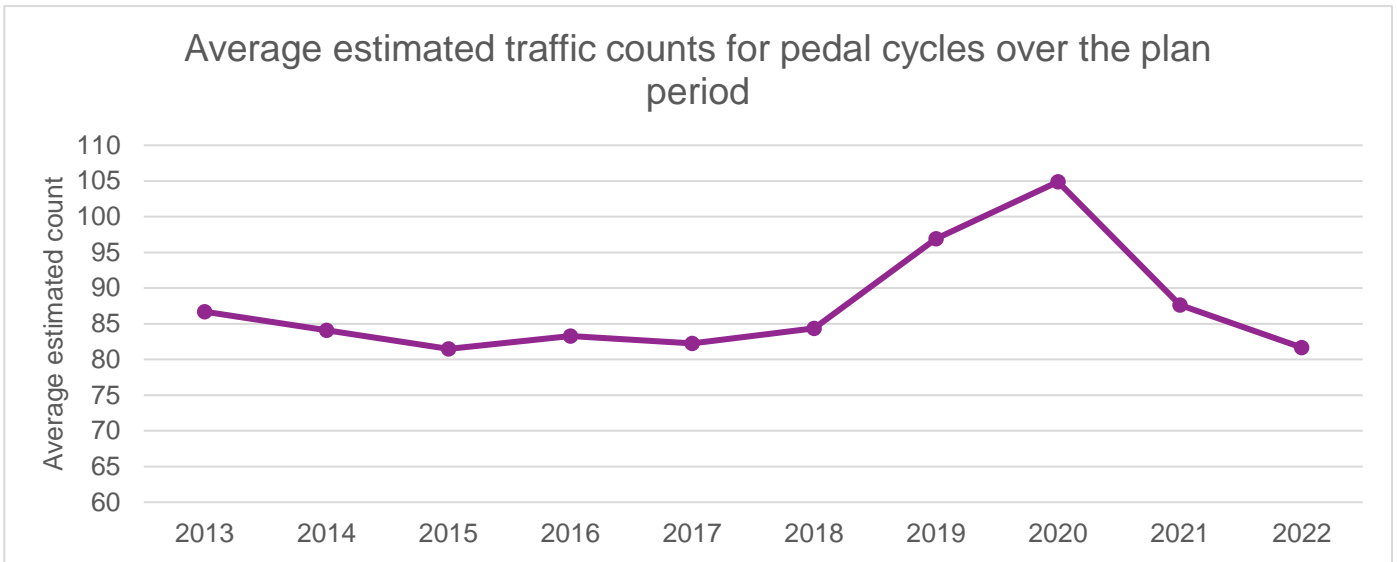


Figure 2.31: Average traffic count for cycles over the plan period (Department for Transport, 2023)

- 2.2.13** 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.
- 2.2.14** The Council is committed to facilitating the use of various modes of sustainable transport, and is working with partners to improve the walking and cycling network in and around the Bay for residents and visitors alike.
- 2.2.15** 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. May 2023:

| Area   | Full fibre | Gigabit broadband availability (% premises) | Superfast broadband availability (% premises) |
|--------|------------|---|---|
| Torbay | 75.6%      | 82.8%                                       | 96.5%   |
| UK     | 52%        | 75%   | 97%   |

Figure 2.32: Broadband availability (Ofcom, 2023<sup>19</sup>)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/infrastructure-research>

## 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.

### Natural Environment

- 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).
- 2.3.2** First designated in 2007, 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. Following a successful visit during August 2023, UNESCO has renewed the English Riviera's designation as a UNESCO Global Geopark for a further 4 years (2023-2027).



Figure 2.33: Boundary of the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark

- 2.3.3** In line with the requirements of the Environment Act 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.
- 2.3.4** In 2021 Torbay Council became a member of the [Devon Local Nature Partnership](#) and has contributed towards developing a [Devon Wide Nature Recovery Network Map](#). Phase 1 of the map has been included as a layer on the [Devon County Council Environment Viewer](#). The Nature Recovery Network map shows priority areas for protecting and restoring our natural capital to get the best gains for wildlife, people and the climate. This will be used to, amongst other things, help target funding from sources such as net gain, carbon offsetting, and flood mitigation.

**2.3.5** Torbay Council is a Supporting Authority towards Devon County Council’s development of a Devon Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This joint strategy for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay is expected to be published in Summer 2024. The LNRS will be produced in accordance with [statutory guidance](#) published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on 23 March 2023.

**2.3.6** Torbay Council is also partnering with Devon County Council and The Woodland Trust towards the development of a Devon Tree and Woodland Strategy. This strategy will provide baseline mapping of existing tree and woodland cover, opportunity mapping for future tree planting, and wider guidance. The strategy will support the Nature Recovery Network and will feed into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

## Historic Environment

**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 2023 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   |           |
| Ilsham Manor Oratory, Ilsham 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 2.34: Heritage At Risk Register, 2023 (Historic England, 2023)

- 2.3.8** In November 2020 Cabinet adopted a new [Heritage Strategy 2021-2026](#) for Torbay. The Heritage Strategy was “Highly Commended” by the RTPI at the RTPI South West Awards for Planning Excellence 2021. Through partnership working with Torbay Culture and other local and national partners, the heritage strategy is helping to secure funding and advance heritage-led regeneration of a number of key heritage sites across Torbay. Some recent milestones are set out below:
- 2.3.9** The Arts Council England named Torbay as one of 109 ‘Levelling Up for Culture Places’ which will be a focus for additional engagement and investment from 2022 to 2026.
- 2.3.10** Torbay Council [successfully secured](#) £3.5 million of funding through the Cultural Investment Fund which is administered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England. The funding includes:
- A ‘Cultural Development Fund’ (CDF) component which is funding (along with funding through the Future High Streets Fund) capital works to the Paignton Picture House as well as a transformative 3-year programme of skills development opportunities, apprenticeships, and community engagement, delivered in partnership with Torbay Culture, the Paignton Picture House Trust, South Devon Collage, the Agathe Christie Festival and other local partners.
  - A ‘Museum Estate and Development Fund’ (MEND) component which is funding (along with funding through the National Heritage Memorial Fund) major conservation works which are being carried out at Torre Abbey.
- 2.3.11** During Summer 2023 the first round of the [Torbay Local Heritage Grant Scheme](#) was carried out, made possible through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with [12 local projects receiving grants](#) of up to £5,000 each. These range from visitor improvements for both the historic Brixham Battery and Torquay Museum, and community projects in Paignton; to literary inspired murals, podcasts, heritage days and innovative projects exploring our geological history across the English Riviera’s UNESCO designated environment. A second round of grants will open in January 2024.
- 2.3.12** In October 2023, the National Lottery Heritage Fund [named Torbay](#) as one of the first 9 Heritage Places to be receiving strategic funding over the next 10 years towards heritage-led regeneration.

## Empty Homes

- 2.3.13** The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) publishes annual figures on empty homes<sup>20</sup>. In Torbay, the number of empty homes peaked at 3,038 in 2018 and decreased each year to a figure of 2,215 in 2021, before increasing again to 2,598 in 2022 (of which 1,232 were long term empty). Torbay has a notably higher proportion of empty homes (3.73%) than the figures for the South West (2.52%) and for England (2.69%). 1.77% of homes in Torbay were long term empty homes in Torbay, compared to 0.81% for the South West and 0.99% for England.

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<sup>20</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”.

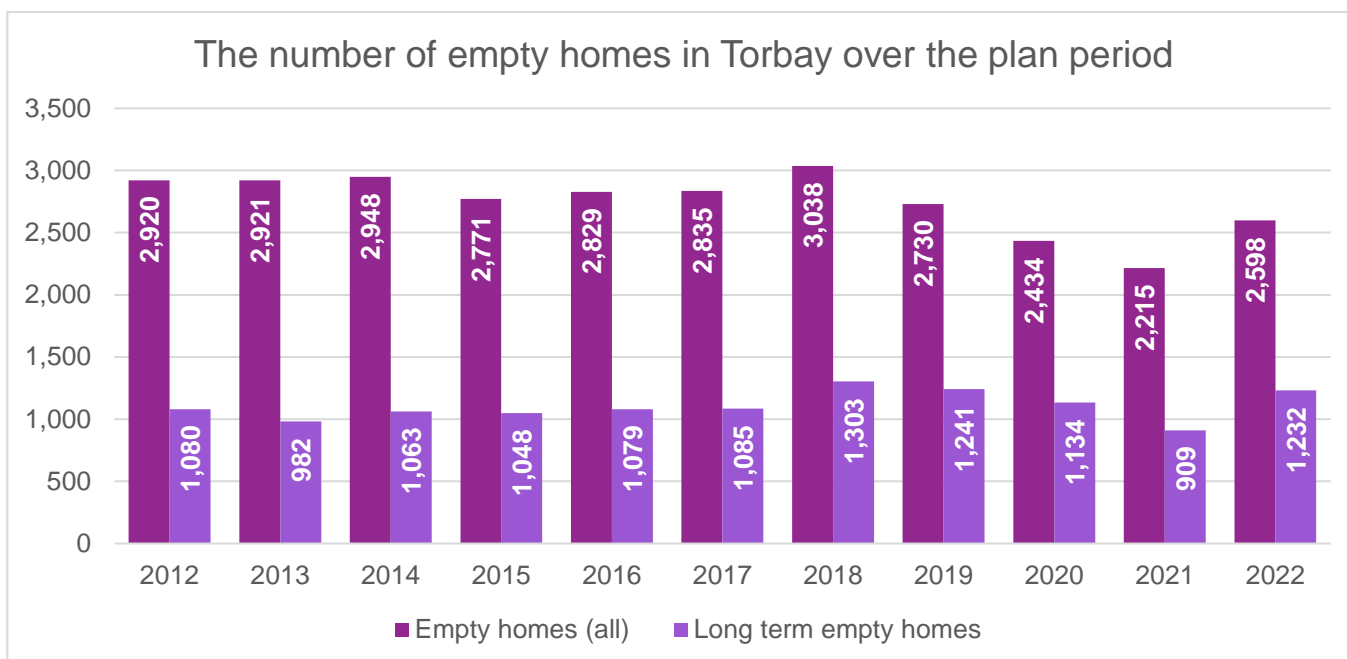


Figure 2.35: The number of empty homes in Torbay over the plan period (DLUHC, 2023<sup>21</sup>)

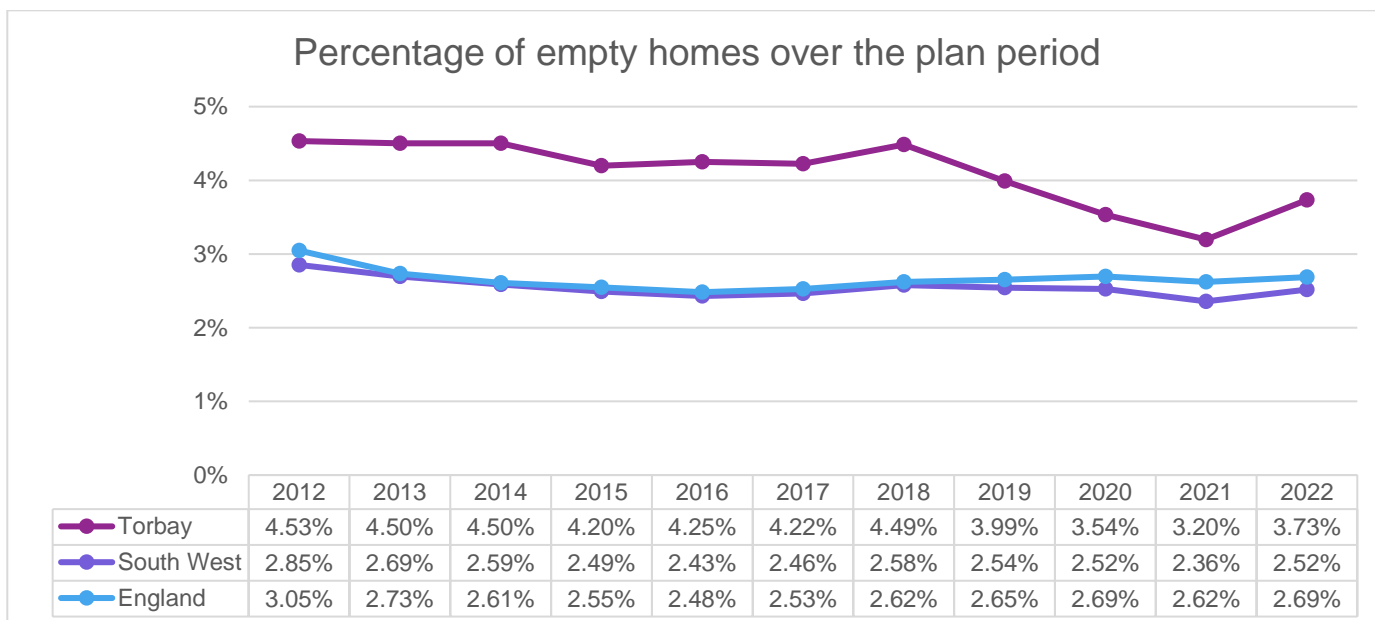


Figure 2.36: Empty homes as a percentage of the total housing stock (DLUHC, 2023<sup>22</sup>)

<sup>21</sup> Live Tables 615 and 125 from DLUHC: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>

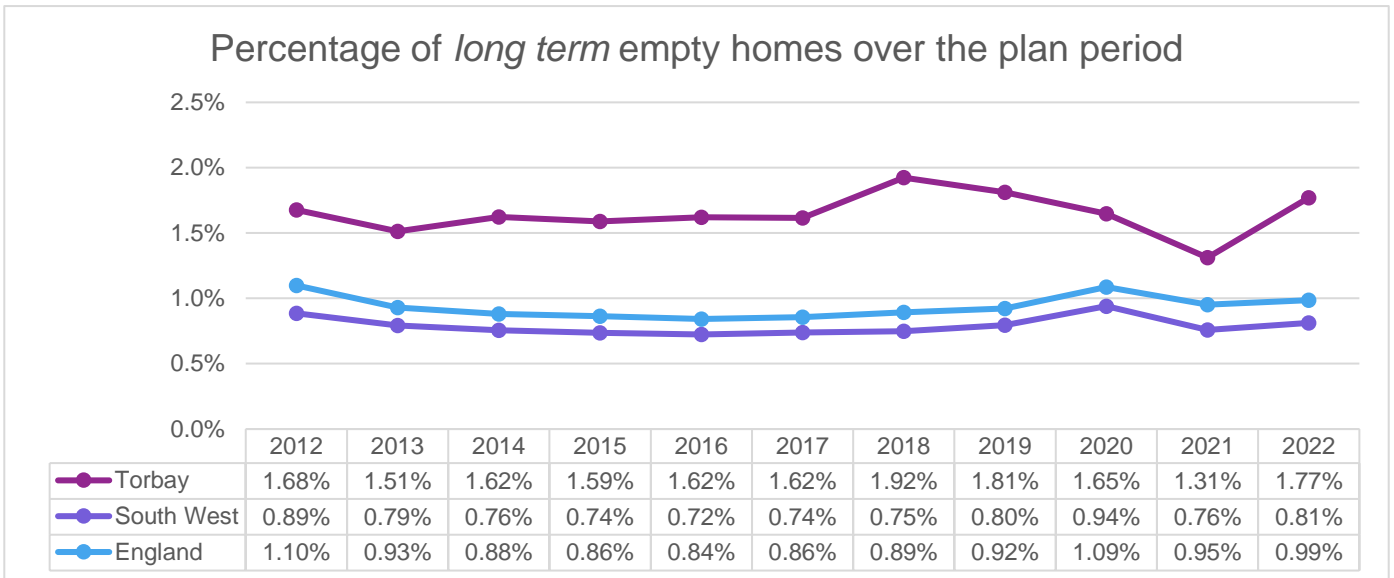


Figure 2.37: Long term empty homes as a percentage of the total housing stock (DLUHC, 2023)

## Air Quality

**2.3.14** 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.

## Beaches and Bathing Water

**2.3.15** Torbay’s coastline offers an array of beaches and coves which are popular amongst residents and visitors.

**2.3.16** The [Blue Flag Award](#) is an international award given to beaches based on criteria including (i) environmental education and information, (ii) water quality, (iii) environmental management, and (iv) safety and services. Six of Torbay’s beaches (Breakwater Beach, Broadsands, Meadfoot Beach, Oddicombe Beach, Preston Sands and Torbay Abbey Sands) were awarded Blue Flag Status in 2023. This is the same number as in 2022, and an increase from five beaches in 2021 and two beaches 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.

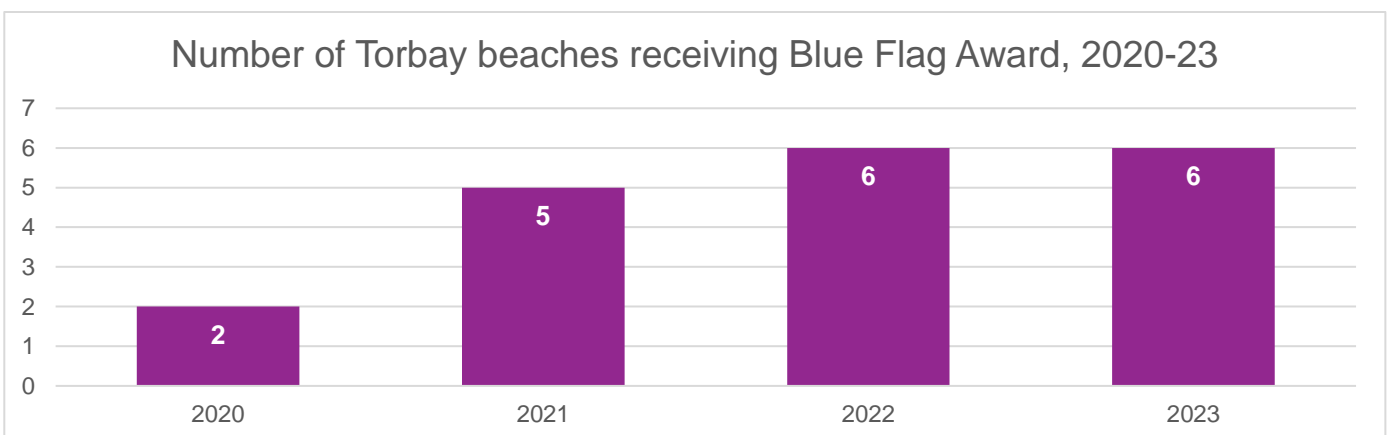


Figure 2.38: The number of Torbay beaches receiving Blue Flag Award, 2020-23

**2.3.17** The Seaside Awards is a national award given to the best beaches in England, where visitors are guaranteed to find clean, safe, attractive and well-managed beaches. Ten of Torbay's beaches (Breakwater Beach, Broadsands, Meadfoot Beach, Oddicombe Beach, Maidencombe Beach, Goodrington Beach, Paignton Beach, Preston Sands, Torre Abbey Sands and Ansteys Cove) received Seaside Awards in 2023.

**2.3.18** The table below shows bathing water quality at fifteen Torbay beaches from 2016 to 2022 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. Apart from Goodrington which was rated sufficient, bathing water quality across all Torbay beaches was rated either good or excellent in 2023. There have been noteworthy improvements in water quality at Torre Abbey, Preston Sands, Paignton Sands, and Broadsands during the plan period. Goodrington has fluctuated between sufficient and good.

| Beach            | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       | 2020 | 2021      | 2022      | 2023       |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Maidencombe      | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Watcombe         | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | -         | -         | -          |
| Oddicombe        | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Babbacombe       | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Anstey's Cove    | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Meadfoot         | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Beacon Cove      | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Torre Abbey      | Good       | Good       | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Hollicombe       | Excellent  | Good       | Good       | Good       | -    | Good      | Good      | Good       |
| Preston Sands    | Good       | Good       | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Paignton Sands   | Sufficient | Good       | Good       | Good       | -    | Good      | Good      | Good       |
| Goodrington      | Good       | Sufficient | Sufficient | Sufficient | -    | Good      | Good      | Sufficient |
| Broadsands       | Good       | Good       | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| Breakwater Beach | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |
| St Mary's Bay    | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | Excellent  | -    | Excellent | Excellent | Excellent  |

Figure 2.39: Water quality at Torbay beaches, 2016 to 2023 (Environment Agency, 2023<sup>23</sup>)

## Brownfield and Greenfield Development

**2.3.19** 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.

**2.3.20** Over the plan period as a whole, approximately 2,395 homes (64.2%) have been built on brownfield land and 1,335 (35.8%) on greenfield land.

<sup>23</sup> <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>



A strong majority of the housing delivered over the plan period has been on brownfield land

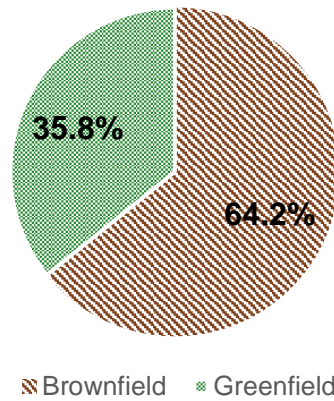


Figure 2.40: The proportion of brownfield and greenfield housing delivered over the plan period

**2.3.21** In the monitoring year 2022/23, 50% of the homes built were on brownfield land. This is less than 56% in the previous year, due to the relatively high completions this year on greenfield sites in Paignton in particular. The graph below shows the annual brownfield/greenfield split of housing delivered each year over the plan period.

Percentage of dwellings on previously developed land in Local Plan period to date

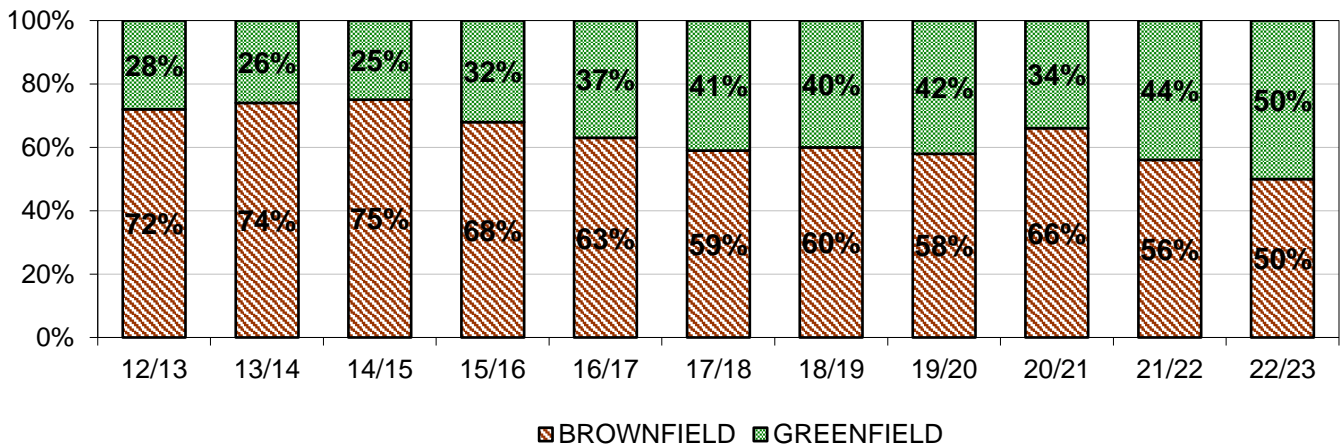


Figure 2.41: Percentage of new dwelling on previously developed land in the plan period

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

### Self and Custom Build Housing

**2.3.23** 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 increased (10 this year compared to 3 in the previous year), although 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                           |
| Base Period 6 (31.10.20 – 30.10.21) | 10                           |
| Base Period 7 (31.10.21 – 30.10.22) | 3                            |
| Base Period 8 (31.10.22 – 30.10.23) | 10                           |
| Total (as at October 2023)          | 62                           |

Figure 2.42: Self build register

## Planning Application Statistics

**2.3.24** The following table summarises planning decisions issued during 2022/23:

|   | Total | Granted |       | Refused |       | Decided in time (incl. EOT) |       |
|---|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| <b>Major</b>                                    | 22    | 20      | 90.9% | 2       | 9.1%  | 21                          | 95.5% |
| <b>Minor</b>                                    | 222   | 142     | 64.0% | 80      | 36.0% | 161                         | 72.5% |
| <b>Other</b>                                    | 628   | 491     | 78.2% | 137     | 21.8% | 515                         | 82.0% |
| <b>Listed building consent (incl. in Other)</b> | 32    | 23      | 71.9% | 9       | 28.1% | 24                          | 75.0% |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | 872   | 653     | 74.9% | 219     | 25.1% | 697                         | 79.9% |

Figure 2.43: Planning performance 1st April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

**2.3.25** The overall number of applications determined decreased slightly from 899 in 2021/22 to 872 in 2022/23. The percentage of applications decided in time has remained broadly consistent with the previous reporting year, with major applications having particularly strong performance in terms of timeframes. 95.5% of majors were decided in time compared to 86% nationally, 72.5% of minor applications were decided in time compared to 83% nationally, and 82.0% of 'other' applications were decided in time compared to 87% nationally (DLUHC, 2023<sup>24</sup>).

**2.3.26** 74.9% of planning decisions in 2022/23 were approvals, which is a lower percentage than any of the preceding five years. Torbay's five-year average for planning approvals is now 81.0% compared to the national five-year average of 88%. 2017/18 was the last year in which the percentage of applications approved in Torbay was higher than the national average.

<sup>24</sup> [Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Planning Application Statistics: Interactive Dashboard](#)

Percentage of applications decided in time (incl. with EOT),  
2017/18 to 2022/23

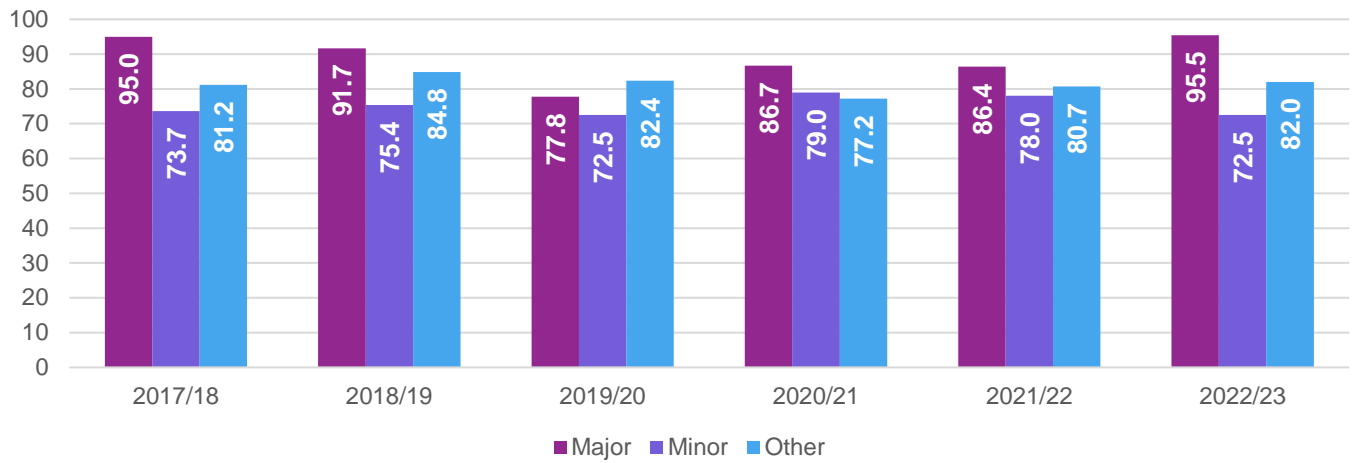


Figure 2.44: Percentage of applications decided in time (incl. with EOT), 2017/18 to 2022/23

Number of applications approved and refused, 2017/18 to  
2022/23

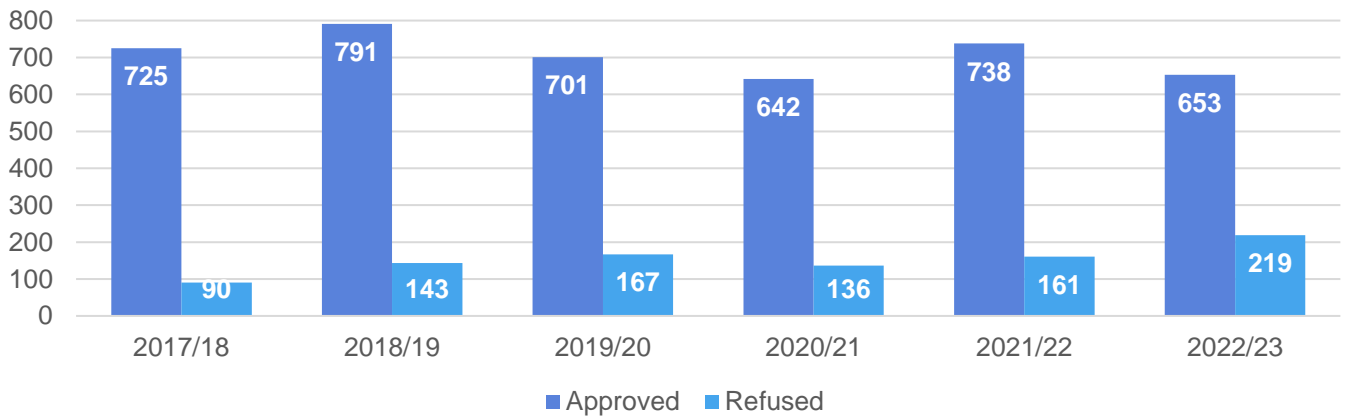


Figure 2.45: Number of applications approved and refused, 2017/18 to 2022/23

Percentage of applications approved and refused, 2017/18 to  
2022/23

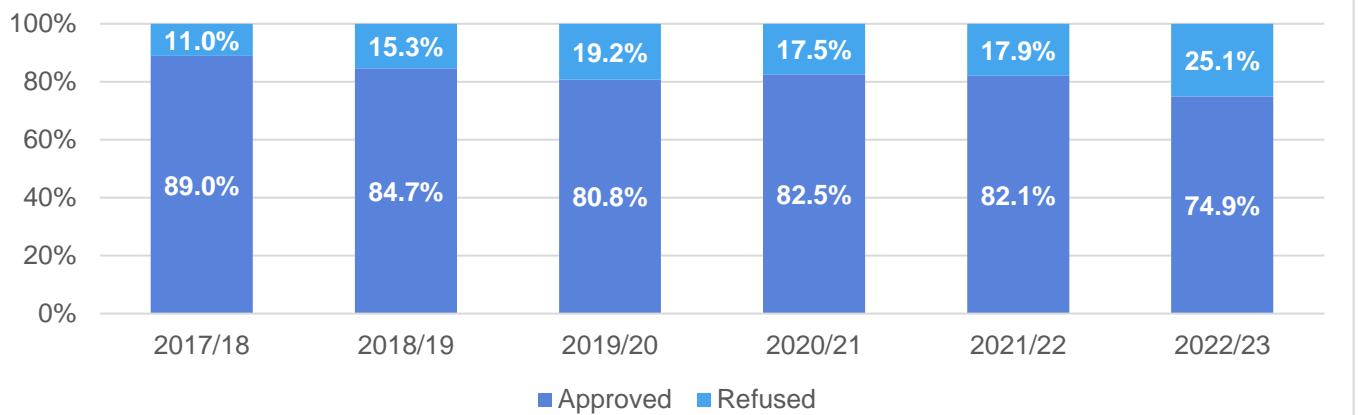


Figure 2.46: Percentage of applications approved and refused, 2017/18 to 2022/23

**2.3.27** Figure 2.37 shows appeal decisions<sup>25</sup> over the last five years. In Torbay, 32.7% of the 52 appeals decided in 2022/23 were allowed by the Planning Inspectorate. This is lower than the percentage of appeals allowed in 2021/22 (38.9%) and in 2020/21 (37.8%).

**2.3.28** Over the last five years, 31.8% of appeals in Torbay were allowed by the Planning Inspectorate. This is very similar to, albeit slightly higher than, the national five-year average of 29.4% of appeals being allowed.

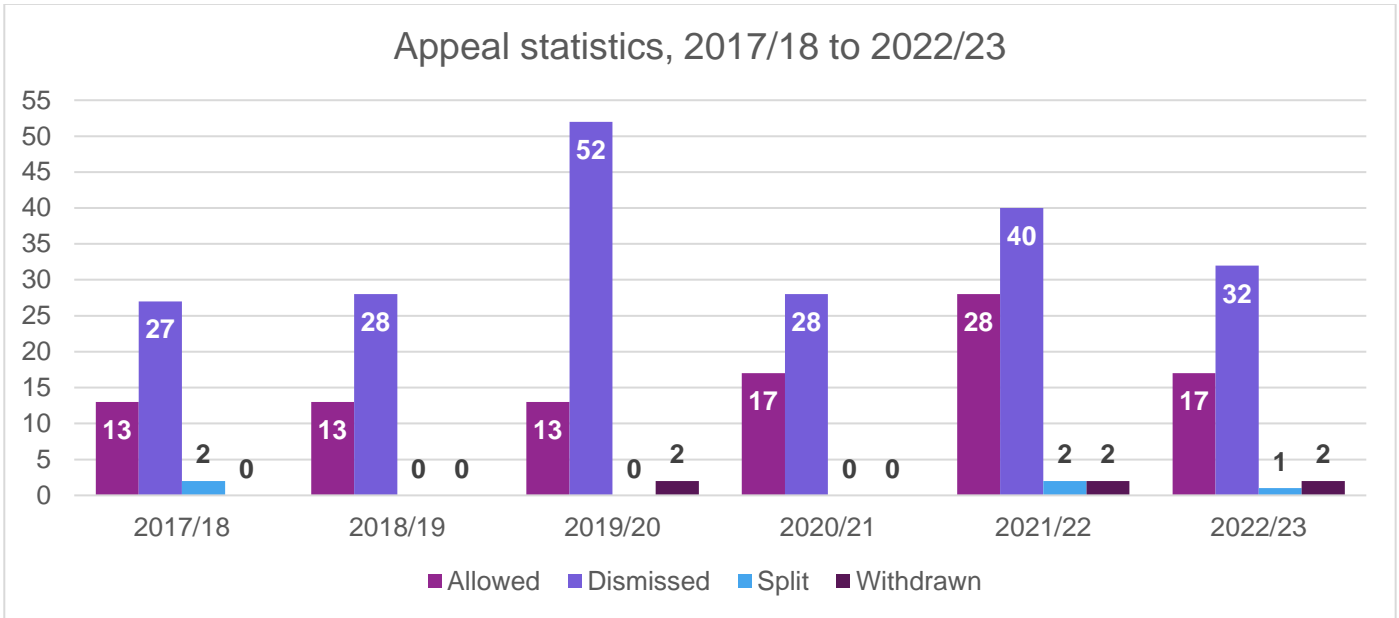


Figure 2.47: Appeal Statistics, 2017/18 to 2022/23

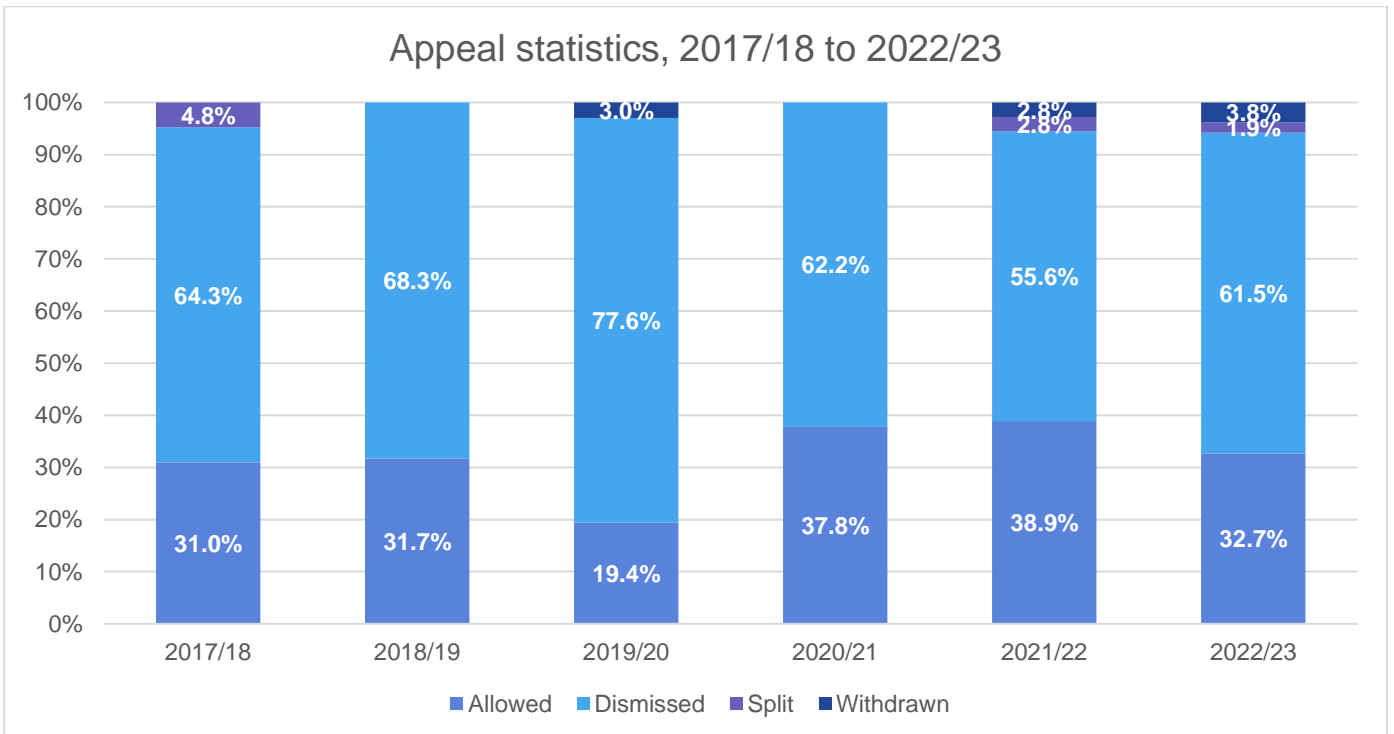


Figure 2.48: Appeal Statistics, 2017/18 to 2022/23

<sup>25</sup> The appeal statistics include householders, planning applications, lawful development certificates, listed build consents and advertisement consents, but exclude enforcement notices and other appeal types not relating to development management.

## 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.

## Housing Permissions

**2.4.1** The Council granted planning permission for 389 new homes<sup>26</sup> across 65 sites in Torbay over 2022/23. This follows a particularly strong year for housing permissions in 2021/22 which saw 807 new homes receiving planning permission across 98 sites.

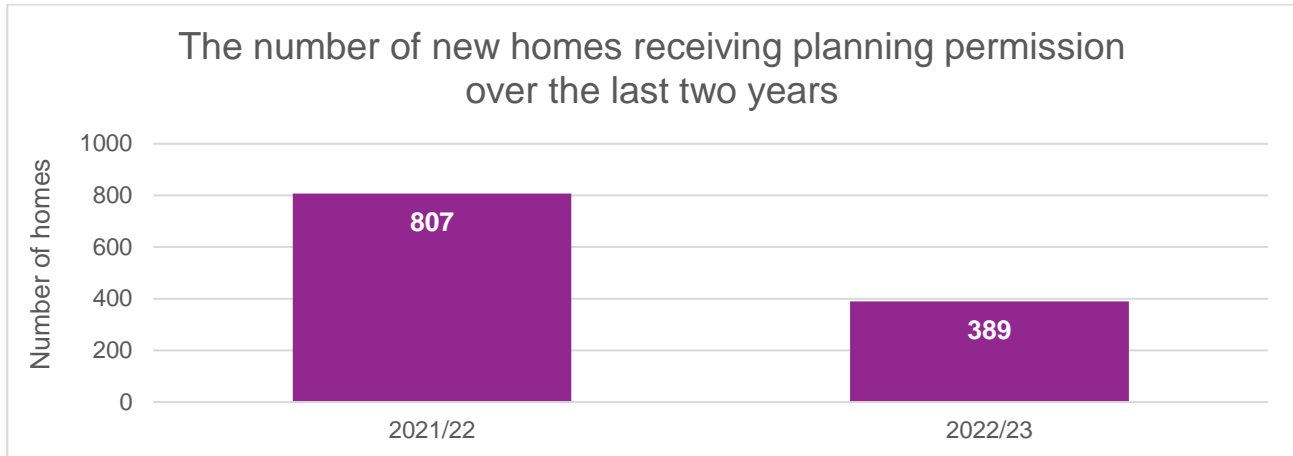


Figure 2.49: The number of homes receiving planning permission in the last two reporting years

**2.4.2** In each of the last two years, planning appeals contributed to the housing permissions figure, with 188 homes (48.3% of the annual total) being granted on appeal at Sladnor Park in 2022/23 and 373 homes (46.2% of the annual total) being granted on appeal at Inglewood in 2021/22.

**2.4.3** The housing permissions figure in 2021/22 was higher due to the Inglewood appeal but also due to planning permissions being granted for a number of other larger developments including 100 homes at Land North of Totnes Road, Collaton St Mary (P/2019/0281) and 90 homes at Stoodley Knowle, Torquay (P/2019/1330). In contrast, while there were a few developments of 10+ homes approved in 2022/23, none of these were larger than 20 homes.

## Housing Completions and Housing Land Supply

**2.4.4** 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

**2.4.5** 3,730 homes have been built over the period from 2012/13 to 2022/23. This is an undersupply of 1,300 homes against the eleven-year target of 5,030. This undersupply has increased significantly since 2018/19 (when the cumulative undersupply was 271 homes) due to low completions in recent years.

<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.

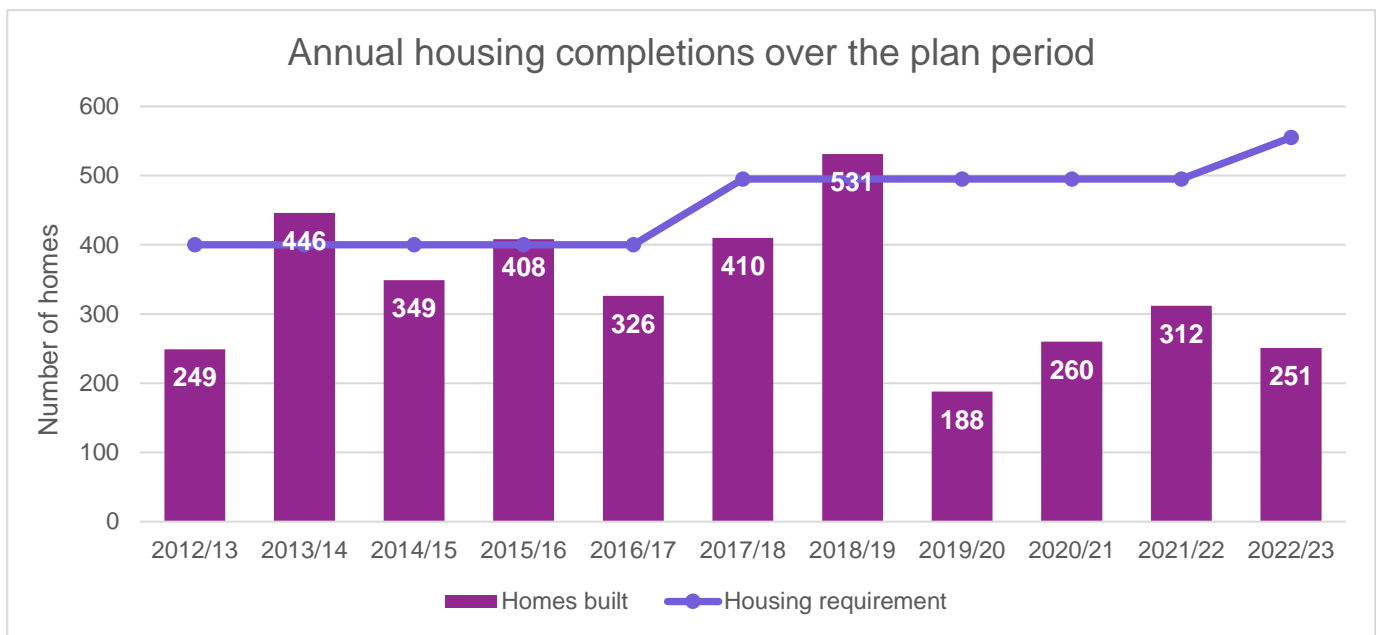


Figure 2.50: Annual housing completions over the plan period

- 2.4.6** Since December 2020, which was the 5th anniversary of the Local Plan’s adoption, Torbay’s housing land supply figure has been based upon the Standard Method calculation (600 dwellings a year in 2022).
- 2.4.7** In the 2022 Housing Delivery Test, Torbay’s housing delivery over the years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 amounted to 760 homes, which is 55% of the required total of 1370 homes. In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the presumption in favour of sustainable development therefore applies due to Torbay’s Housing Delivery Test result being less than 75%. Furthermore, an additional 20% buffer is required for the housing requirement figure. This makes the annual housing requirement  $600 \times 120\% = 720$  dwellings a year.
- 2.4.8** As of April 2023, Torbay has 2.17 years’ worth of deliverable housing sites (1,574 homes against a target of 3,630).
- 2.4.9** Paragraph 226 of the NPPF (December 2023) states that authorities which have an emerging local plan that has either been submitted for examination or has reached Regulation 18 or Regulation 19 (Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) stage, including both a policies map and proposed allocations towards meeting housing need, are only required to demonstrate four years’ worth of housing as opposed to five years. Given that the emerging Torbay Local Plan 2022-2040 has reached Regulation 18 stage and includes a draft housing allocations policies map, Torbay is required to demonstrate four years’ worth of housing land. Notwithstanding this, the current housing land supply of 2.17 years falls short of this target and, regardless, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies as a result of the Housing Delivery Test result.
- 2.4.10** Torbay’s housing land supply has fluctuated year on year, but with a decreasing trend over the plan period (aside from a particularly strong year in 2015/16). The most deliverable sites were built out in the earlier phases of the plan, and some of the more complex regeneration schemes have not yet been delivered. The NPPF definition of ‘deliverable’ has also become narrower over the years.

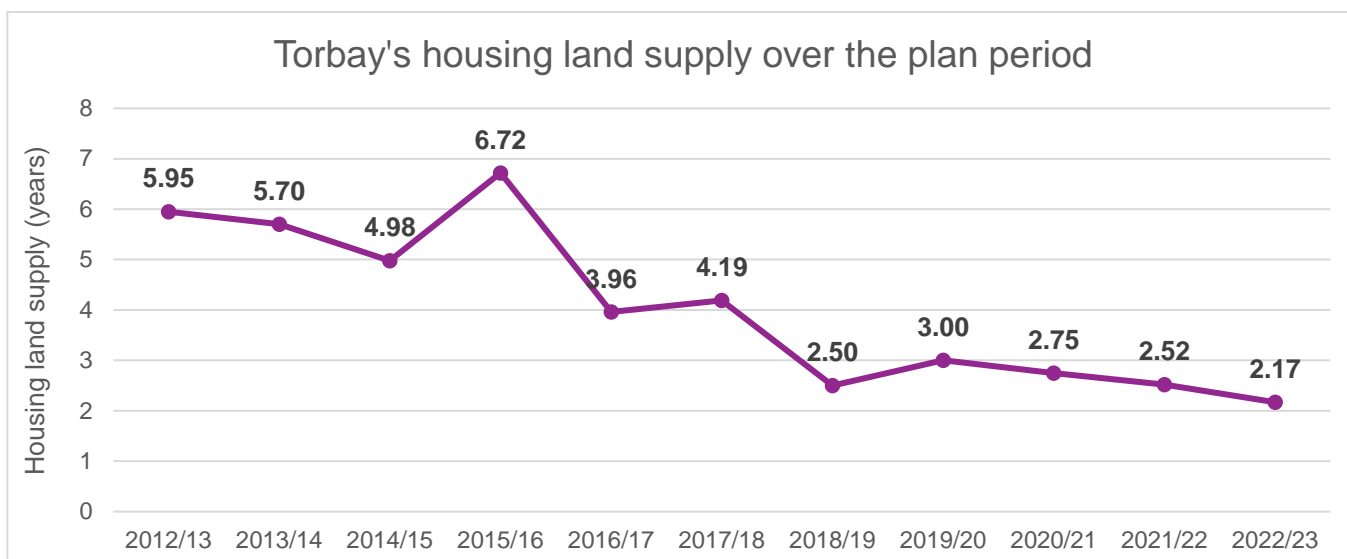


Figure 2.51: Torbay's five year housing land supply over the plan period

## Affordable Housing Completions

**2.4.11** The number of affordable homes built in recent year years has been low, with 19 affordable homes built in 2020/21 and 22 in 2021/22<sup>27</sup>. (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.

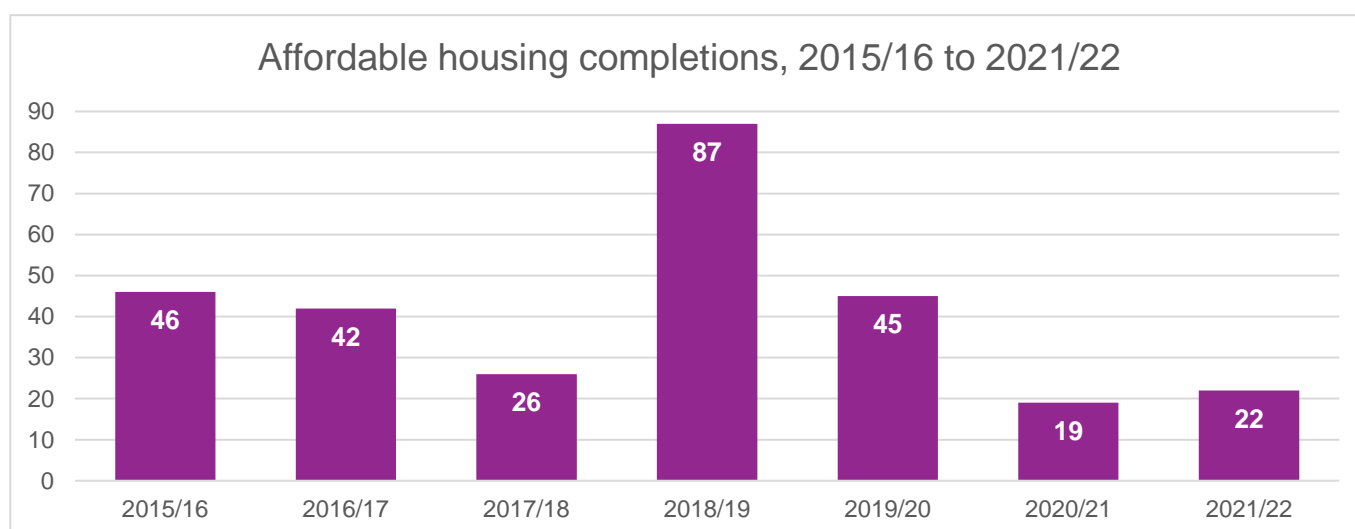


Figure 2.52: Affordable housing completions per year from 2015/16 to 2021/22

## Housing Affordability

**2.4.12** Housing affordability remains a significant challenge in Torbay. Over the reporting year, the average house price in Torbay increased by 4.3% from £247,694 in April 2022 to £258,339 in March 2023 ([Land Registry: UK House Price Index](#)). The average house price increased month-on-month to October 2022 where it peaked at £268,530, before decreasing in response to economic instability with significant rises in mortgage interest rates. This follows a period of

<sup>27</sup> A figure for 2022/23 was not available at the time of publishing this Authority Monitoring Report.



significant house price increases in Torbay over the Covid pandemic, with the average house price increasing by 28.13% from April 2019 to March 2022, outstripping both the South West (23.92%) and the UK (21.21%).

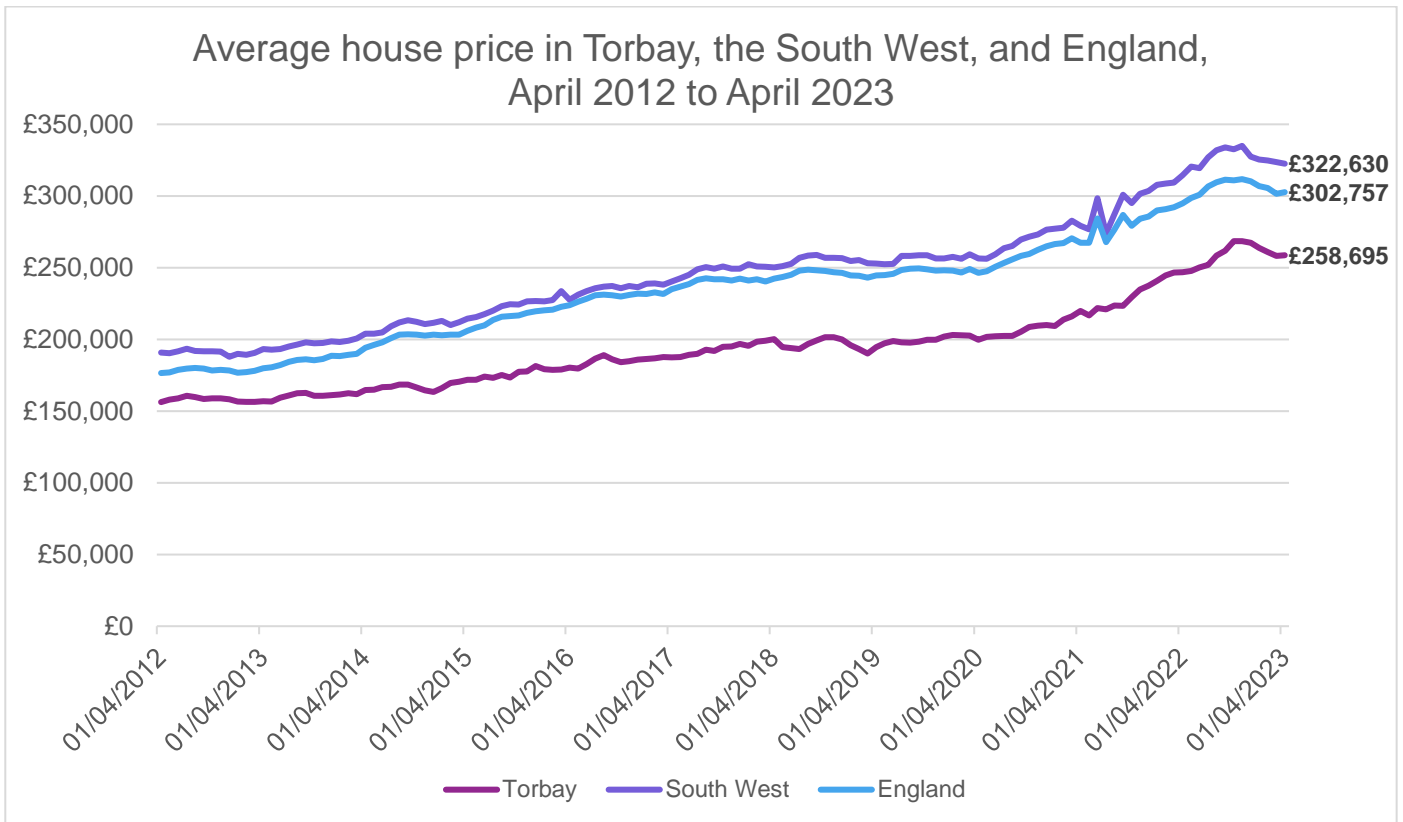


Figure 2.53: Average house price in Torbay, the South West and England over the plan period (Land Registry, 2023<sup>28</sup>)

**2.4.13** In total over the plan period (from April 2012 to March 2023), house prices in Torbay have increased by 65.3%, compared to a 69.5% increase in the South West and a 70.8% increase in England. With inflation having been 32.2% according to CPIH (and 51.4% according to RPI), this amounts to a considerable real terms increase in house prices. Conversely, average weekly wages for full-time employees in Torbay have increased by 31.6% over the plan period to April 2023, amounting to a real terms decrease compared to CPIH.

**2.4.14** The median house price to median earnings ratio was 9.63 in 2022. This is 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. For the first time since 2014, Torbay’s affordability ratio is now higher than that of the South West (9.41) and England (8.28).

<sup>28</sup> <https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi?lang=en>

### Ratio of median house price to median gross annual workplace-based earnings, 2012 to 2022

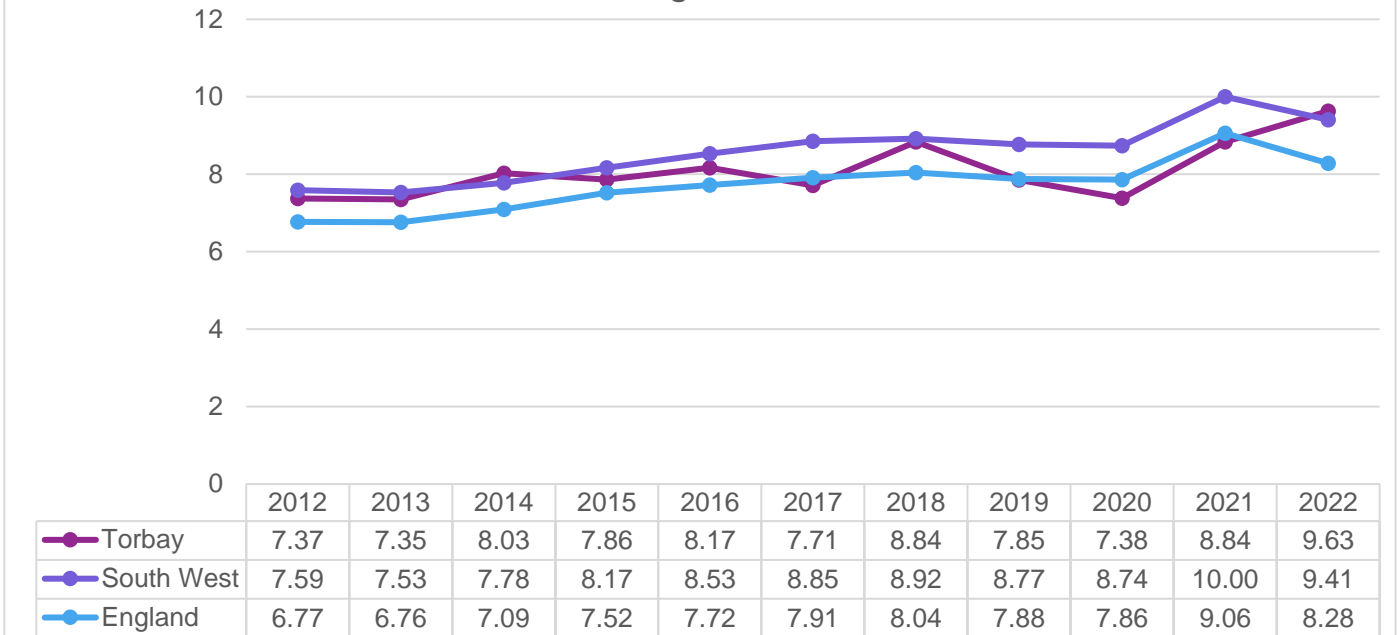


Figure 2.54: Housing affordability ratio in Torbay, the South West and England over the plan period (ONS, 2023<sup>29</sup>)

**2.4.15** The median monthly rental price in the private rented sector is lower in Torbay (£675) than it is in the South West (£825) and England (£825). Despite this, affordability within the private rented sector in Torbay remains a challenge due to lower local earnings. (The median monthly rent in Torbay is 81.8% of that of the South West, whereas the median pay for full-time workers in Torbay is 83.4% of that of the South West.)

### Median monthly private rental price, 2019/20 to 2022/23

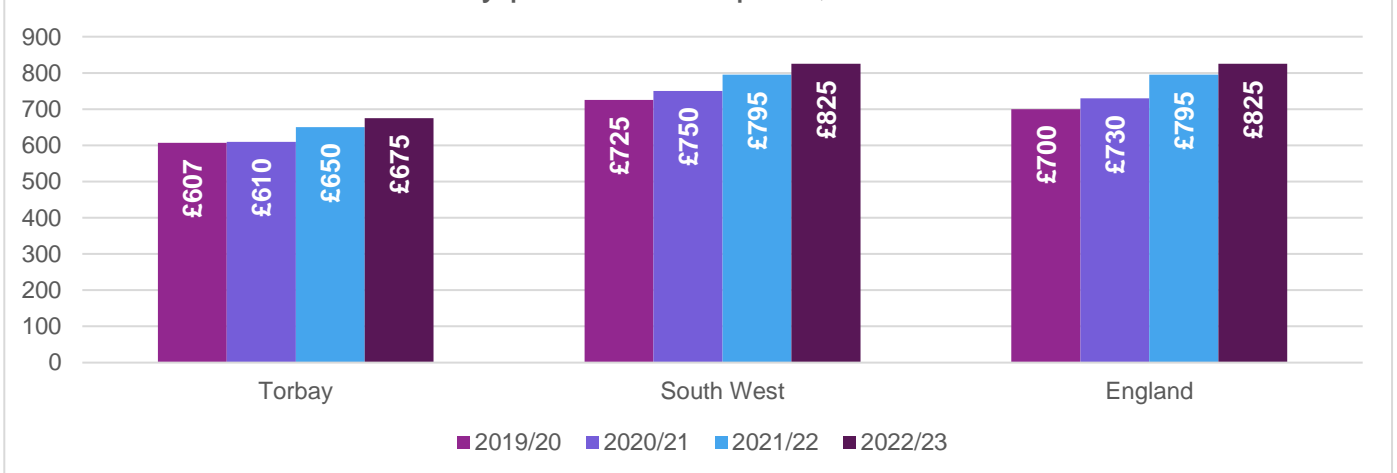


Figure 2.55: Median monthly rental price (VOA and ONS, 2023<sup>30</sup>)

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearninglowerquartileandmedian>

<sup>30</sup> Valuation Office Agency and Office for National Statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland/april2022tomarch2023>

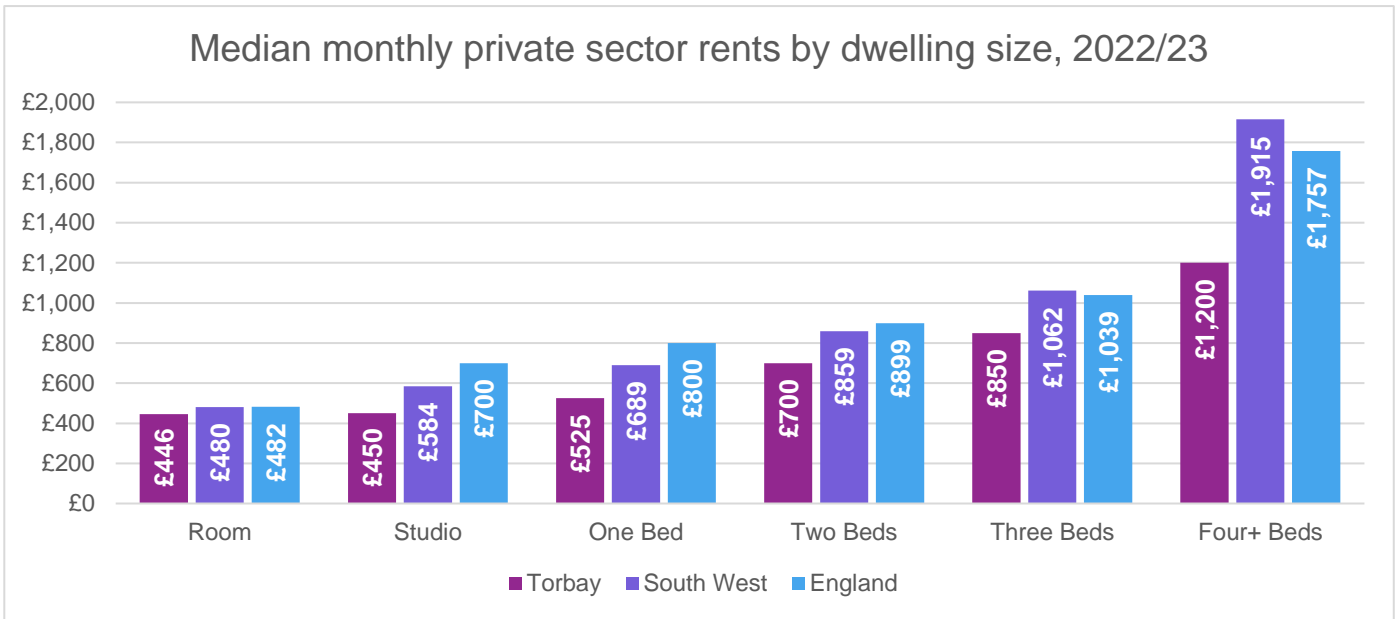


Figure 2.56: Median monthly private sector rents by dwelling size for Torbay, the South West and England in 2022/23 (VOA and ONS, 2023<sup>31</sup>)

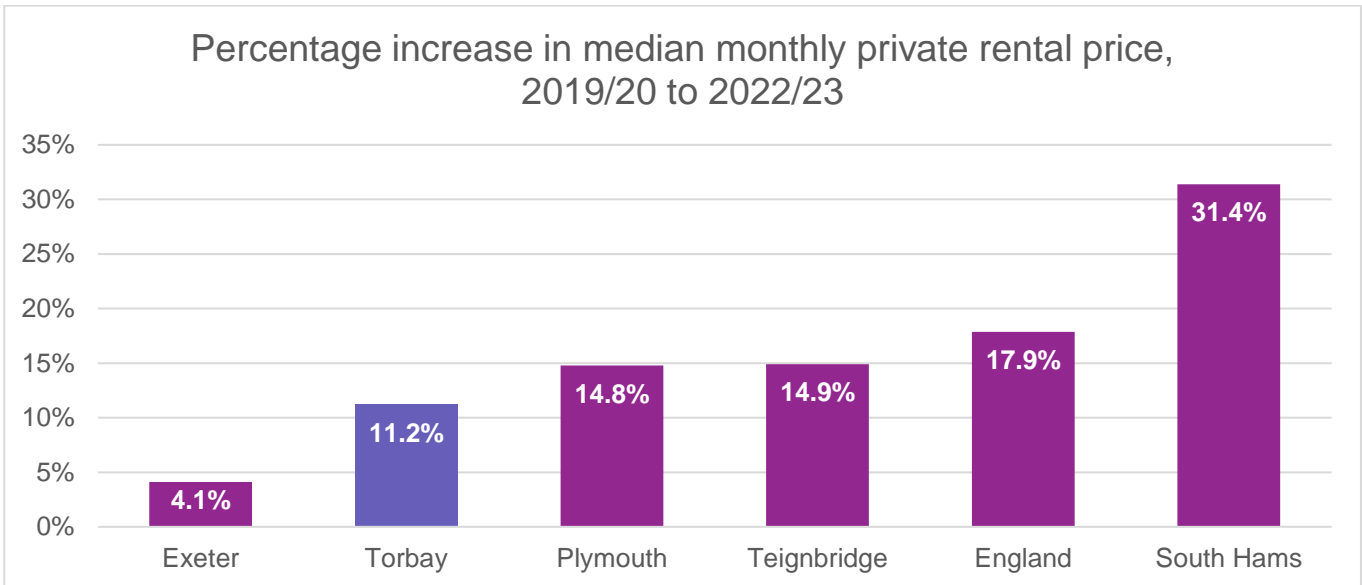


Figure 2.57: Percentage increase in median monthly rental price (VOA and ONS, 2023)

**2.4.16** 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).

**2.4.17** 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

31

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland>

decreased from Census 2011 to Census 2021 while the proportion of households in the private rented sector has increased.

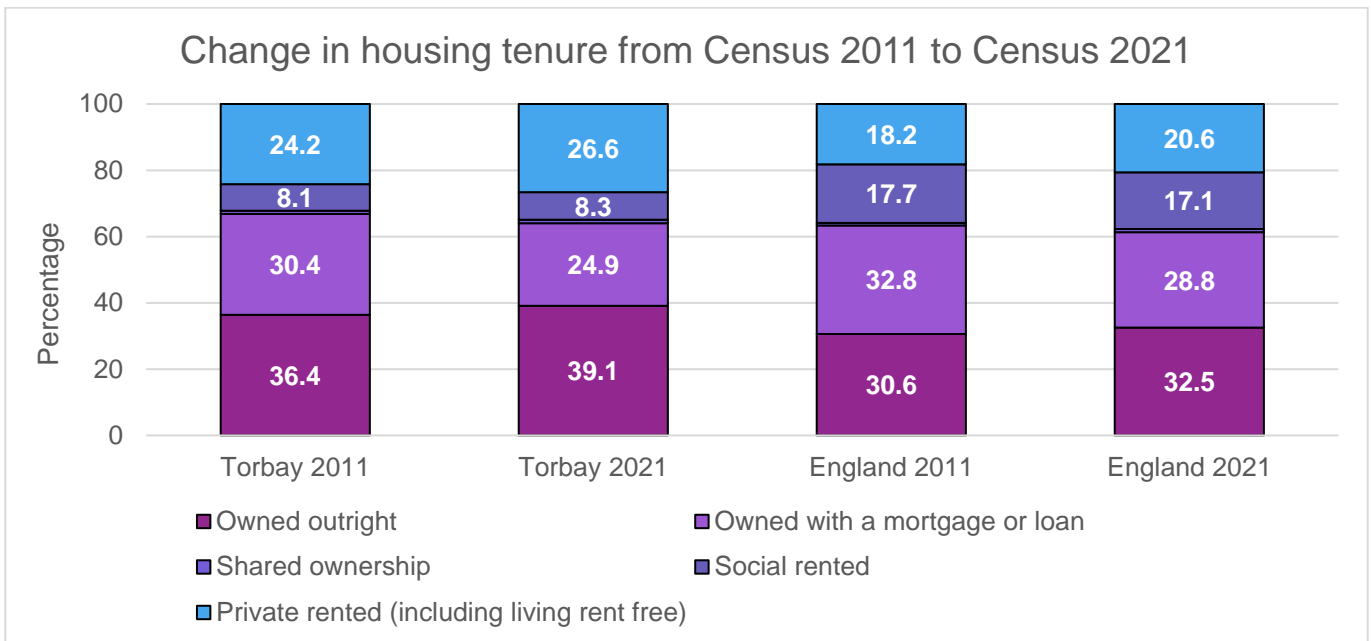


Figure 2.58: Change in housing tenure from Census 2011 to Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>32</sup>)

**2.4.18** 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 7.5% from 1,570 on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 1,688 on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. This compares to an increase of 2.2% for Devon over the same period.

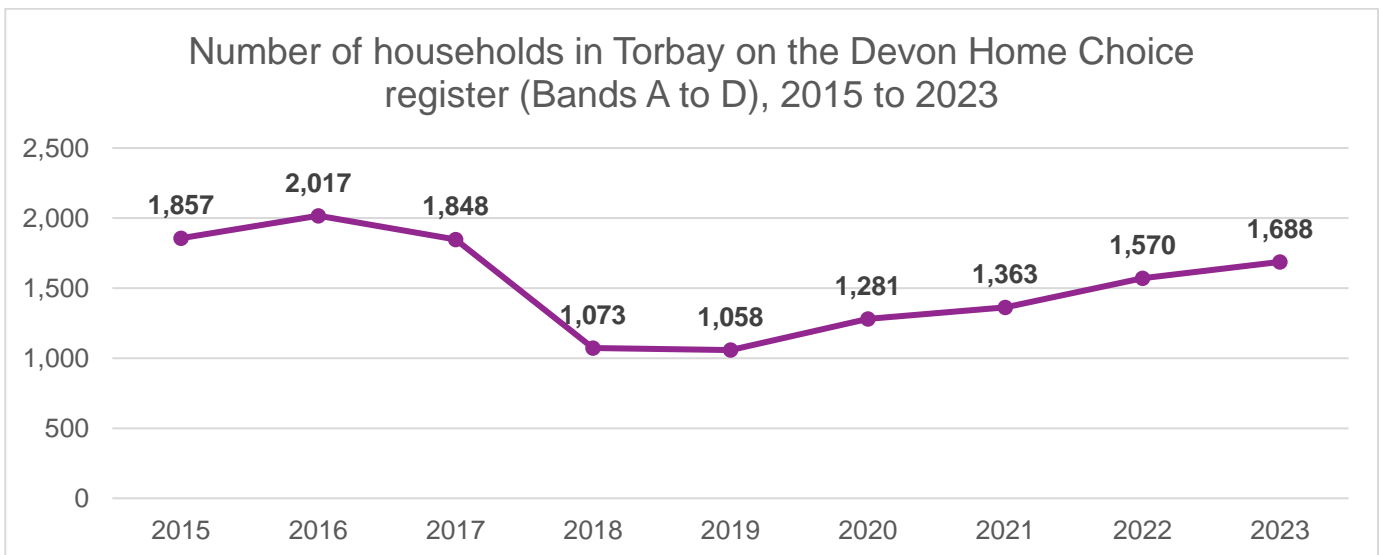


Figure 2.59: Households on the Devon Home Choice register (Bands A to D), 2015 to 2023 (Devon Home Choice, 2023<sup>33</sup>)

<sup>32</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>

<sup>33</sup> Devon Home Choice Quarterly Monitoring Reports: <https://www.devonhomechoice.com/useful-information-2>

**2.4.19** While the need for affordable homes has been increasing throughout Devon, the increase in affordable housing need in Torbay since 2019 has been particularly significant. The number of households on the Devon Home Choice register for Devon as a whole has increased by 14.7% since 2019, whereas in Torbay the increase over this time has been 59.5%. This is a greater increase than all other Local Authorities in Devon except for Torridge for which the increase has been 60.4%. It is possible therefore that the Covid pandemic may have had a particularly severe impact on affordable housing need in Torbay.

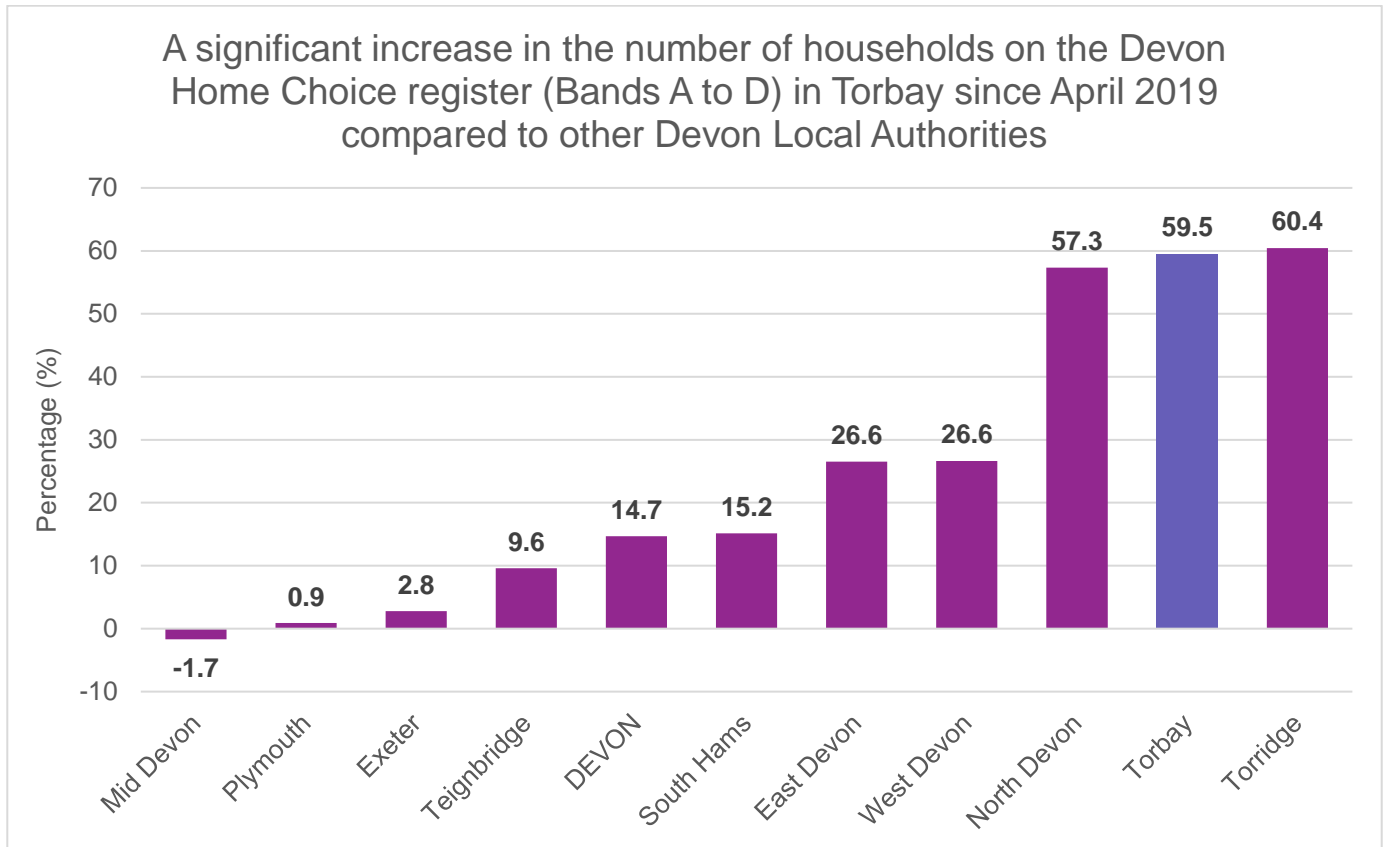


Figure 2.60: Percentage increase in the number of households on the Devon Home Choice register (Bands A to D) from April 2019 to April 2023 for Devon local authorities (DHC, 2023)

**2.4.20** The majority of households on the register fall within Band D (i.e., less severe need), followed by Band C, then Band B, and finally Band A (most severe need). Torbay and Devon have the same distribution in this regard, although Torbay has a marginally higher proportion of households in Band D and Devon has a marginally higher proportion in Band C. That being said, it is important to note that from April 2022 to April 2023 the number of Torbay households in Band A increased from 1 to 4, while the number of households in Band B increased from 321 to 332.

|        | Band A |     | Band B |      | Band C |      | Band D |      | Total  |
|--------|--------|-----|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|
|        | No.    | %   | No.    | %    | No.    | %    | No.    | %    |        |
| Torbay | 4      | 0.2 | 332    | 19.7 | 435    | 25.8 | 917    | 54.3 | 1,688  |
| Devon  | 30     | 0.1 | 3,956  | 19.7 | 5,537  | 27.6 | 10,566 | 52.6 | 20,089 |

Figure 2.61: Number of households in housing need (Bands A to D) as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 (DHC, 2023)

**2.4.21** In terms of the size of affordable homes required, in both Torbay and Devon the greatest need is for 1-bedroom homes, followed by 2-beds, then 3-beds, and then 4+ beds. When compared to Devon, Torbay has a marginally lower need for 1-beds and a marginally higher need for homes with two or more bedrooms.

|        | 1 Bed  |      | 2 Beds |      | 3 Beds |      | 4+ Beds |     | Total  |
|--------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|---------|-----|--------|
|        | No.    | %    | No.    | %    | No.    | %    | No.     | %   |        |
| Torbay | 871    | 51.6 | 401    | 23.8 | 273    | 16.2 | 143     | 8.5 | 1,688  |
| Devon  | 11,013 | 54.8 | 4,488  | 22.2 | 3,051  | 15.2 | 1,537   | 7.7 | 20,089 |

Figure 2.62: Bedroom need of applicants in housing need (Bands A to D) as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 (DHC, 2022)

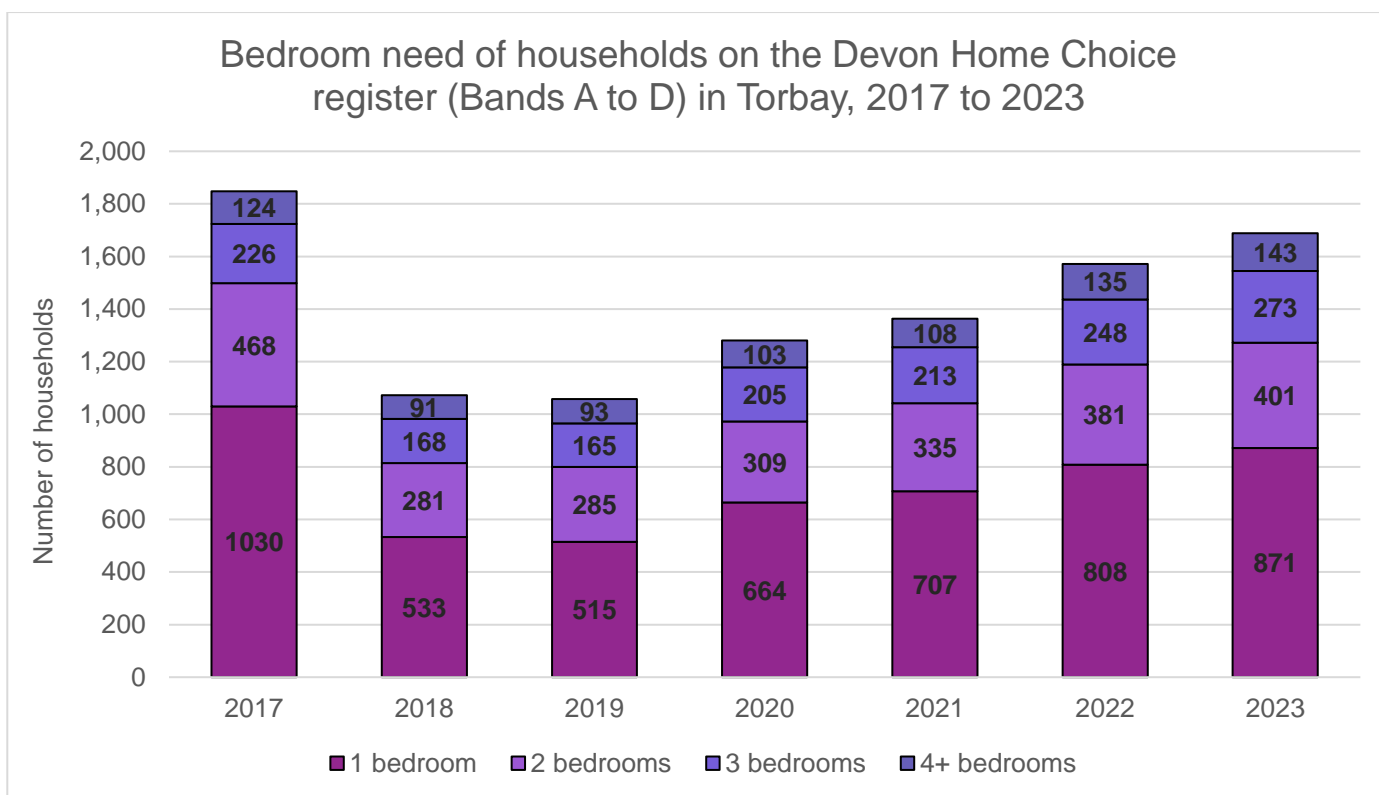


Figure 2.63: Bedroom need of applicants in housing need (Bands A to D), 2017 to 2023 (DHC, 2023)

**2.4.22** Since 2019, which was the year with the fewest households on the register, the need for 1 bedroom homes has increased by 69.1%, compared to a 40.7% increase for 2 bedroom homes, a 65.5% increase for 3 bedroom homes, and a 53.8% increase for 4+ bedroom homes.

## Deprivation

**2.4.23** 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.

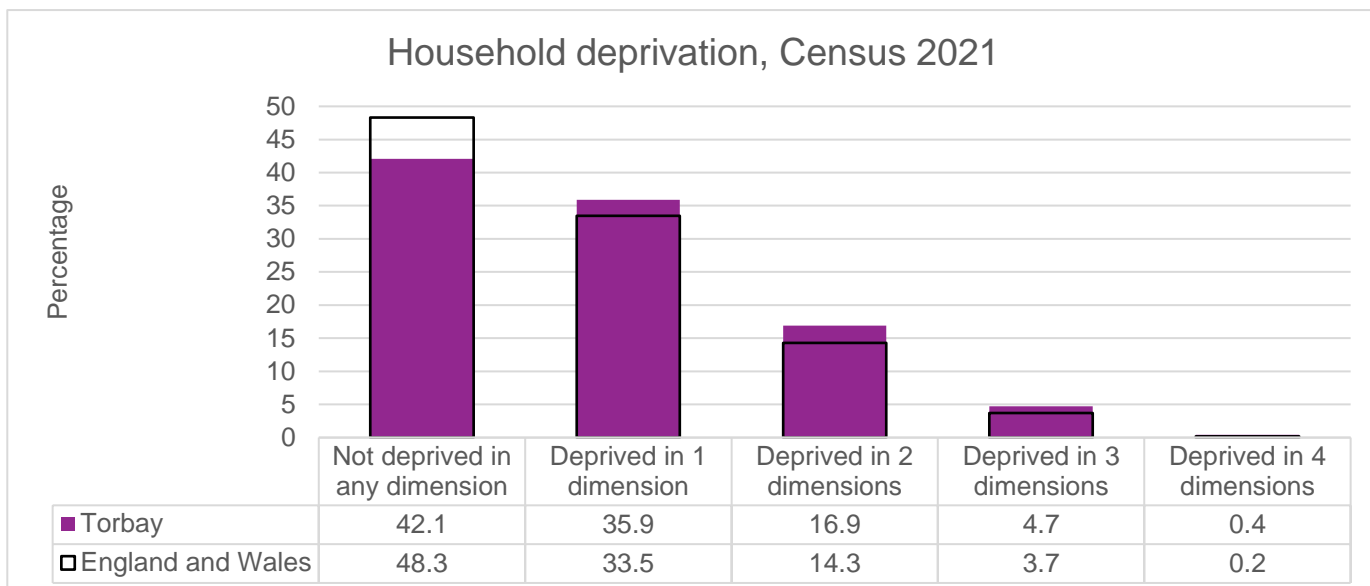


Figure 2.64: Levels of household deprivation, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022)

- 2.4.24** 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.
- 2.4.25** Torbay was ranked 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'. Deprivation in Torbay is therefore principally driven by economic factors.
- 2.4.26** The highest levels of deprivation occur within the town centre areas of Torquay and Paignton, as shown in the IMD 2019 map below.

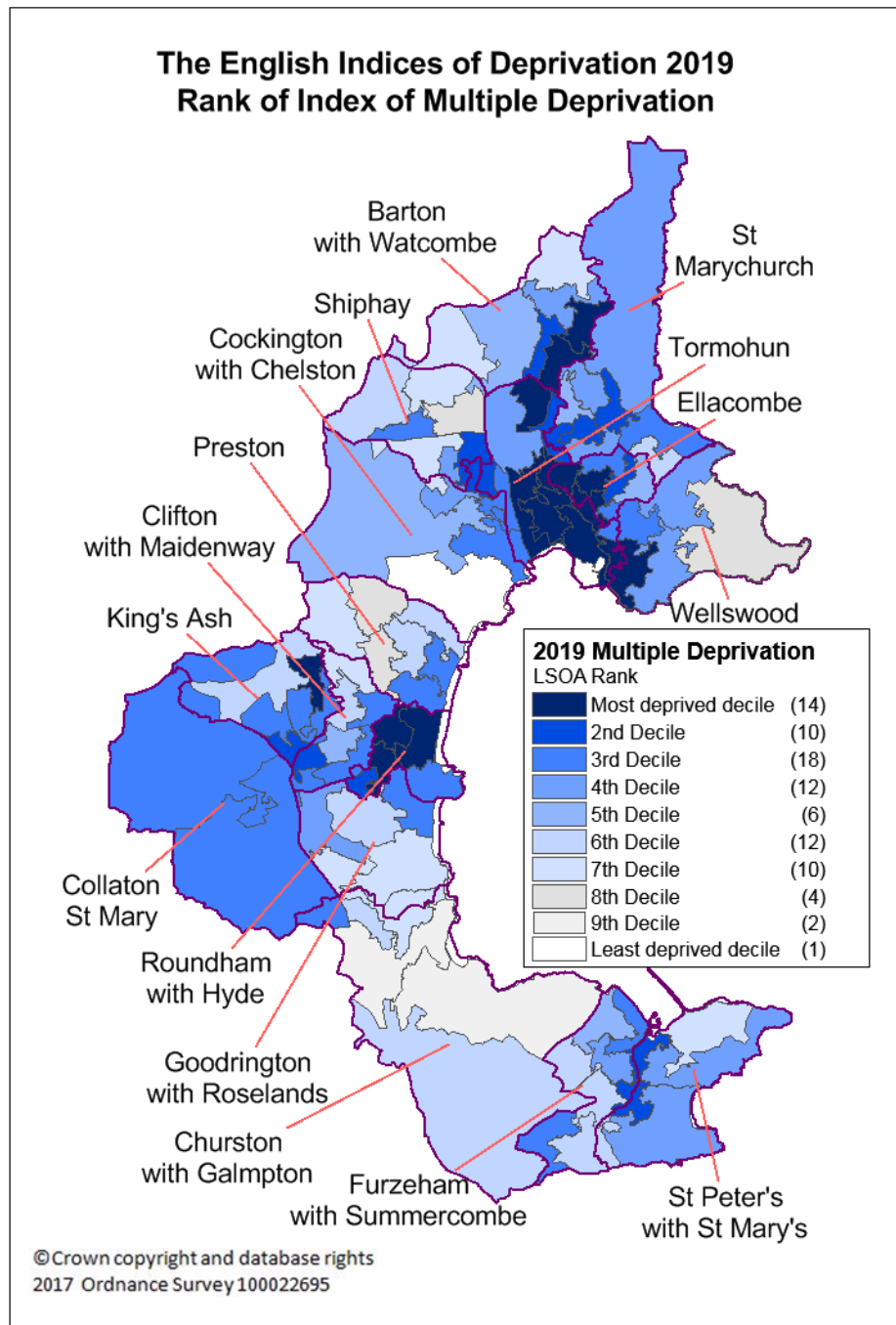


Figure 2.65: Levels of deprivation within Torbay (IMD 2019)

## Life Expectancy and Health

**2.4.27** 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.



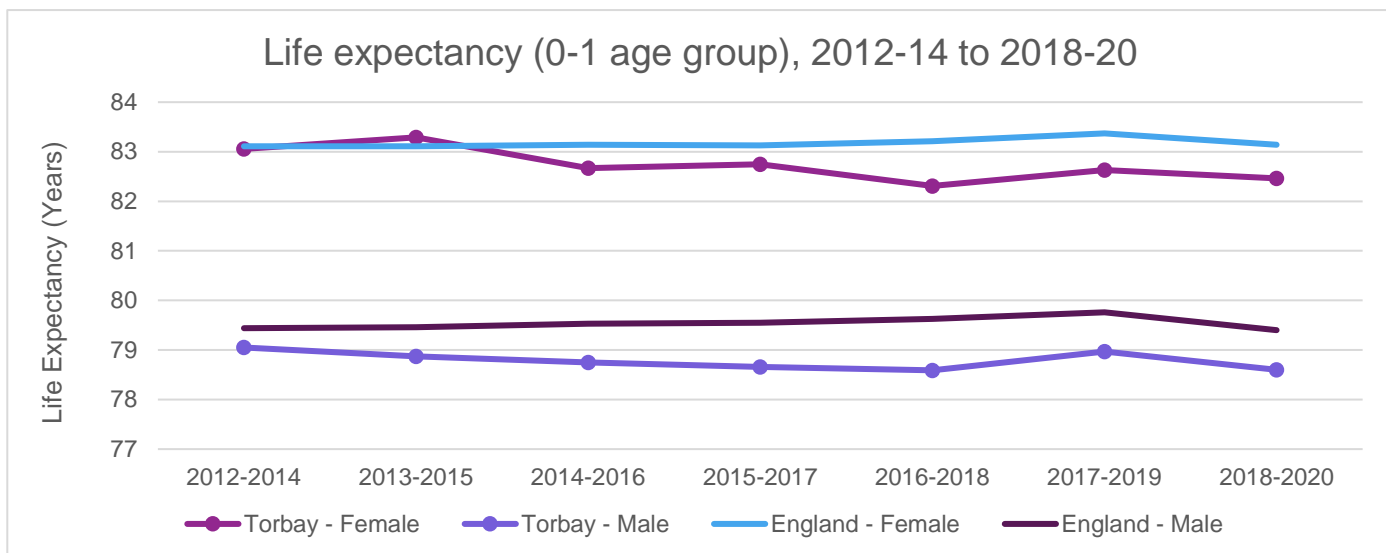


Figure 2.66: Life expectancy for 0-1 year olds, 2012-14 to 2018-20 (ONS, 2022)

**2.4.28** The 2021 Census includes self-reported data on general health and disability. The data has been age-standardised to allow for comparisons between different populations. 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).

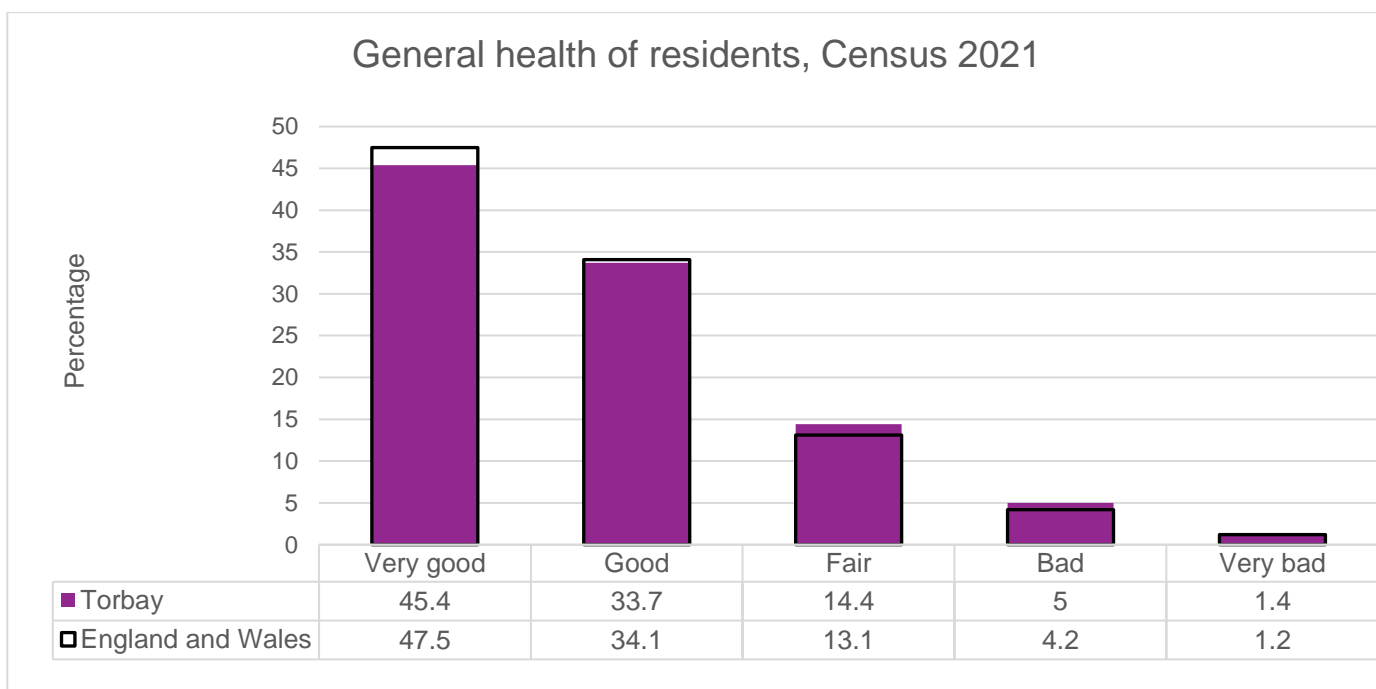


Figure 2.67: General health of residents, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>34</sup>)

**2.4.29** 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.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS037ASP/editions/2021/versions/1>

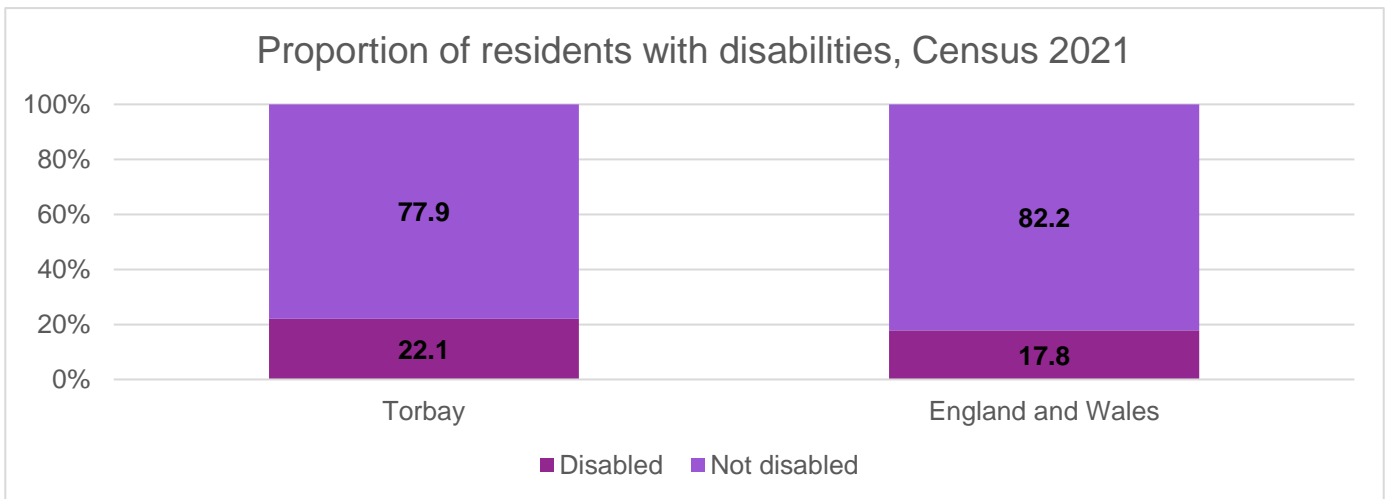


Figure 2.68: Proportion of residents with disabilities, Census 2021 (ONS, 2022<sup>35</sup>)

## Child Poverty

**2.4.30** 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. The percentage of children living in poverty in Torbay is higher than the averages for the UK, the South West and for Exeter, and relatively similar to the average for Plymouth.

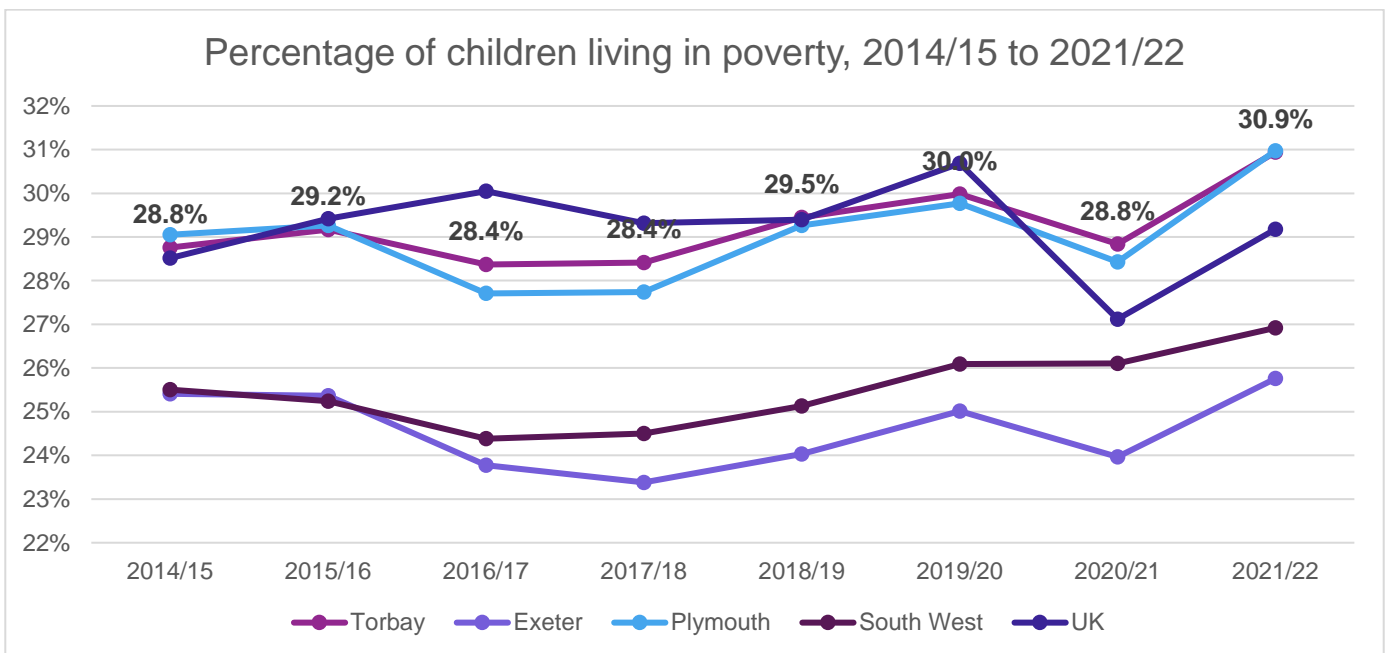


Figure 2.69: Percentage of children living in poverty (End Child Poverty Coalition, 2022<sup>36</sup>)

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS038ASP/editions/2021/versions/1>

<sup>36</sup> <https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/child-poverty/>

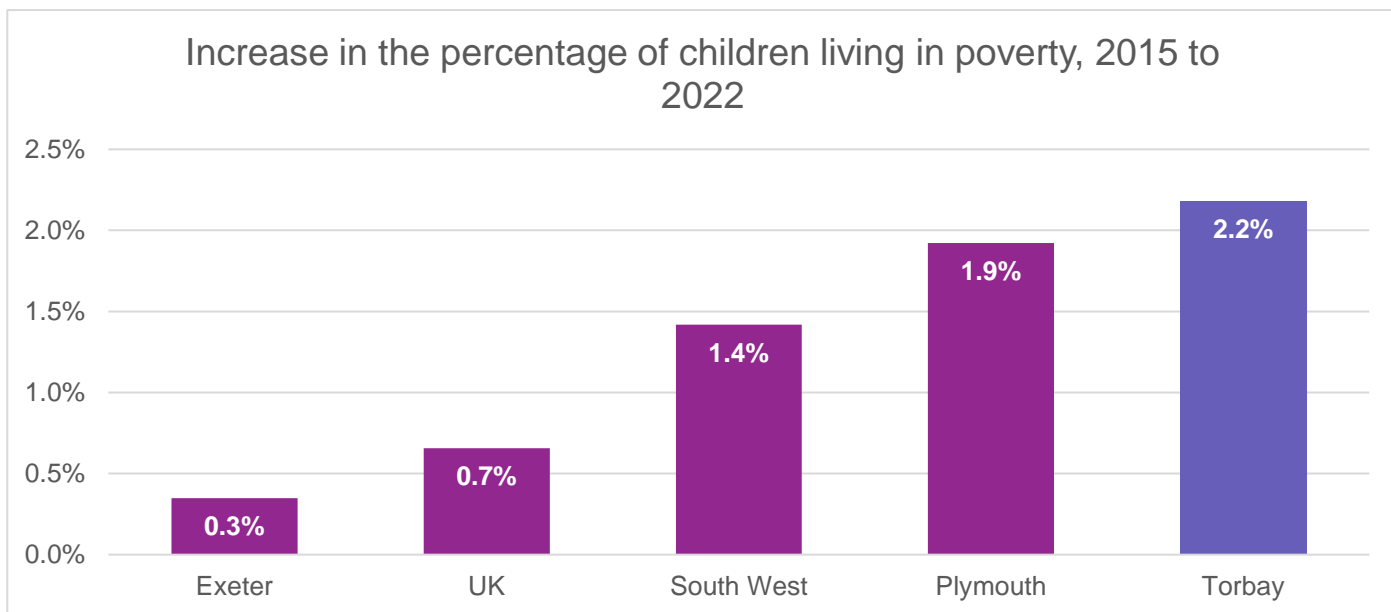


Figure 2.70: Increase in the percentage of children living in poverty, 2015 to 2022 (End Child Poverty Coalition, 2023)

### Qualifications

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

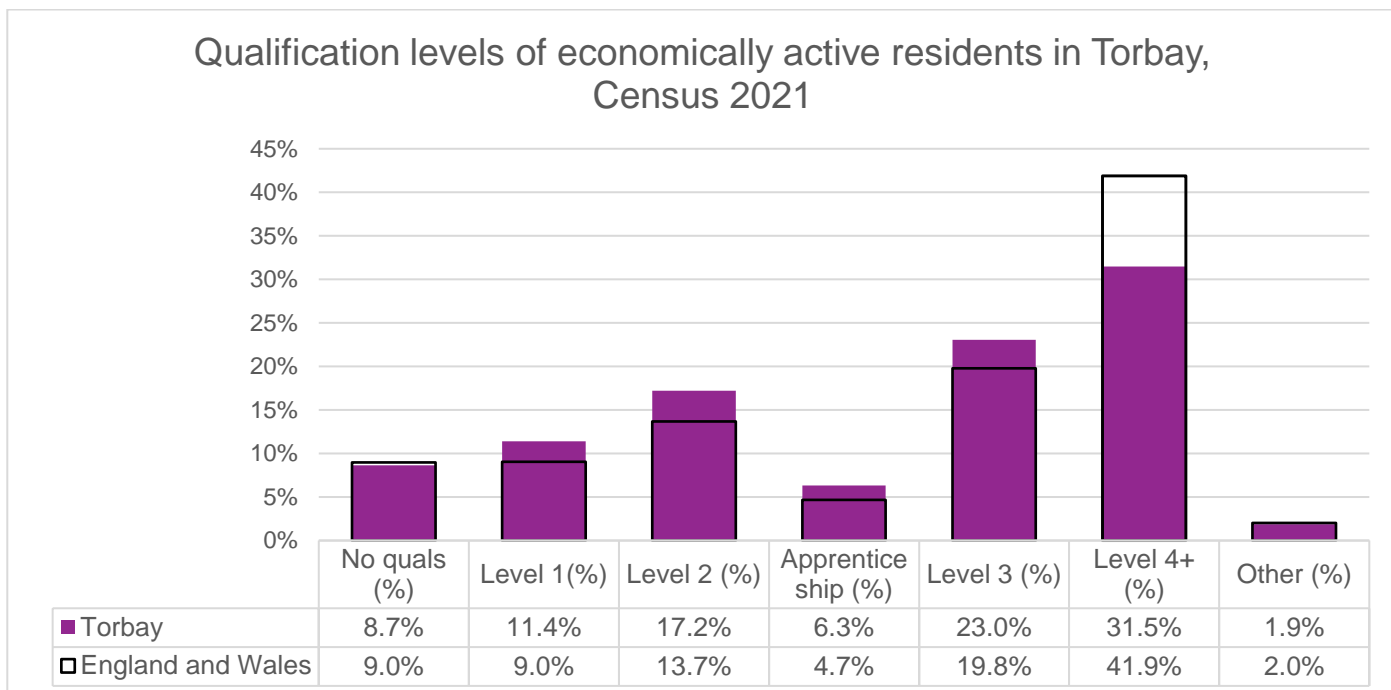


Figure 2.71: Highest level of qualification of economically active Torbay residents, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>37</sup>)

<sup>37</sup> Source:

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

## 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 work towards a carbon neutral Council and Torbay. In October 2023 the team expanded with two new Climate Strategy and Project Officers. We have taken the following key actions in recent years as we work to respond to climate change:
- 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.
- 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.
- Following a series of consultation events held in 2022/23, we have published a draft 'Greener Way for Our Bay' Framework and Action Plan which is currently the subject of public consultation running from November 2023 to March 2024.

## Carbon Emissions

**2.5.4** Carbon dioxide emissions per capita are lower in Torbay than in the South West and the UK and overall have decreased since measurements began in 2005. Carbon emissions per capita increased from 2020 to 2021, however this is attributable to the easing of Covid restrictions. It is also important to note that overseas emissions attributable to the consumption of goods and services have increased at a faster rate.

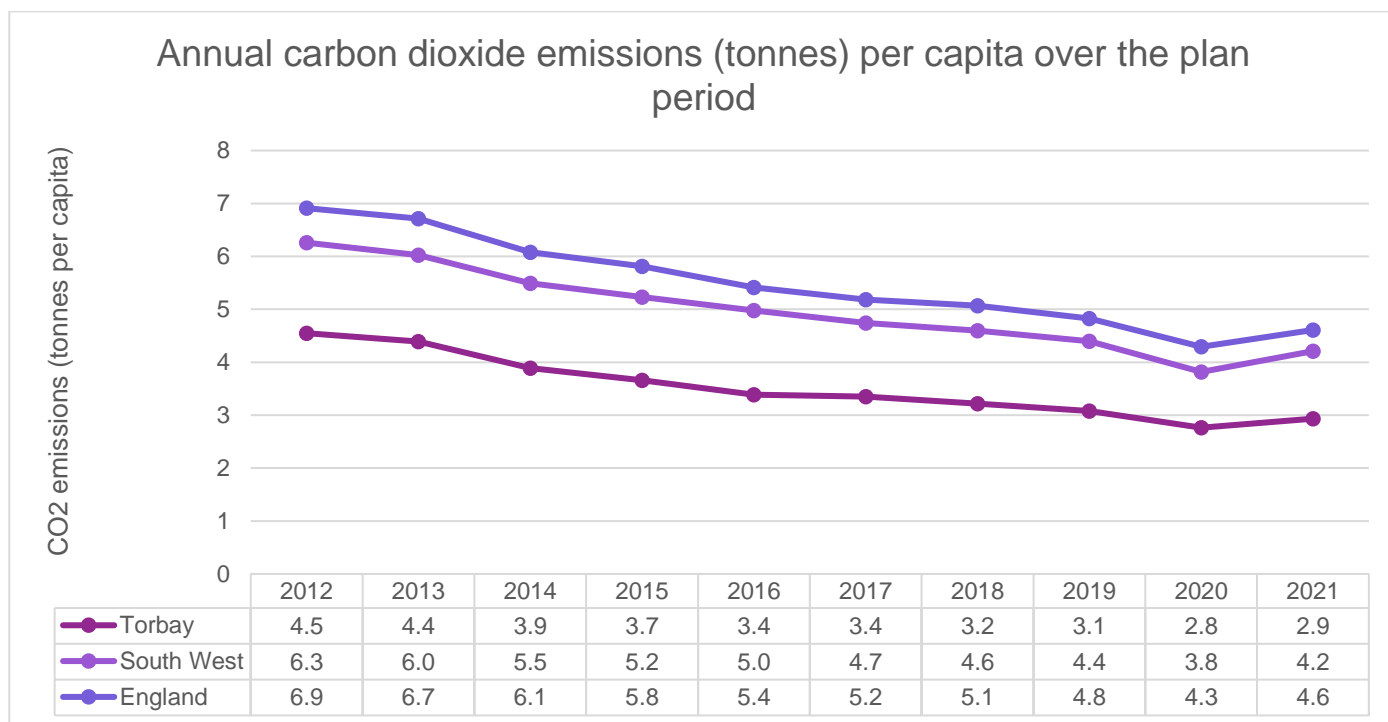


Figure 2.72: Annual carbon dioxide emissions per capita over the plan period (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023<sup>38</sup>)

**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 2021, domestic carbon emissions reduced by 36.1% whereas transport carbon emissions reduced by 17.6%. 2020 saw a significant reduction in emissions due to

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

transport, however this has since increased again in 2021 since the easing of Covid travel restrictions.

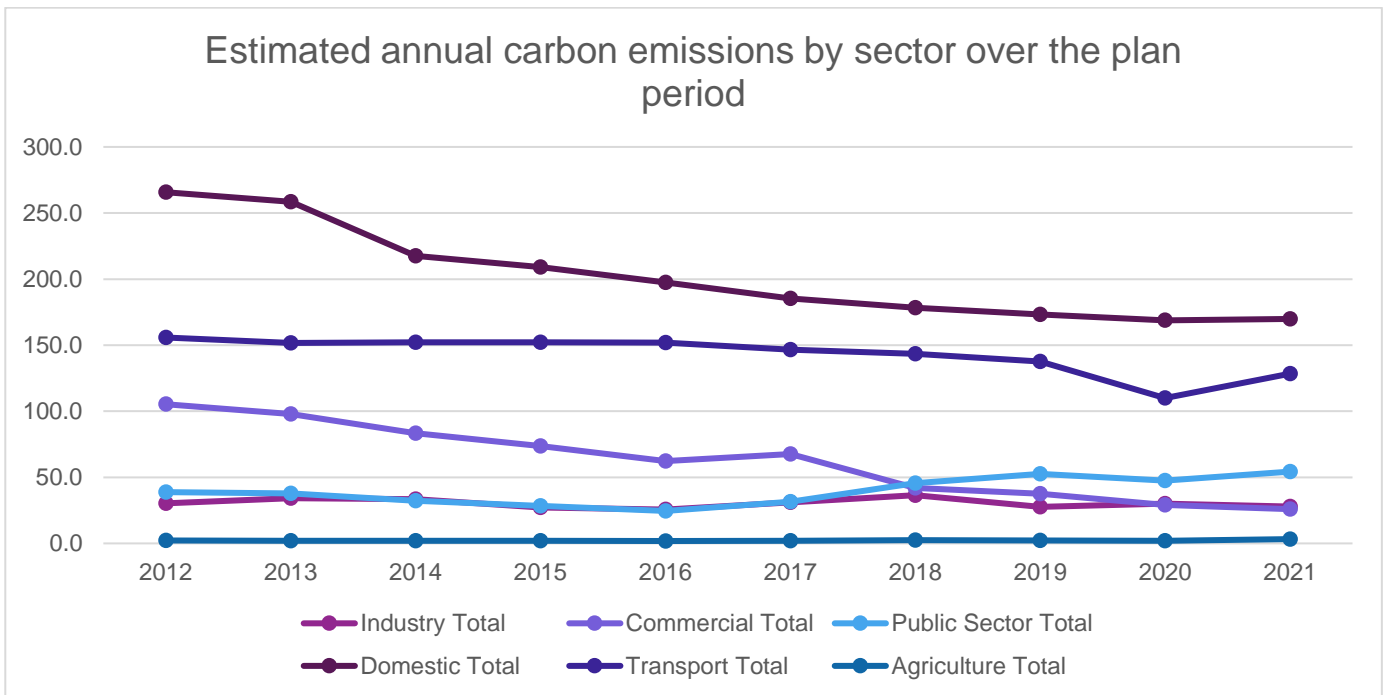


Figure 2.73: Annual carbon emissions by sector over the plan period (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023<sup>39</sup>)

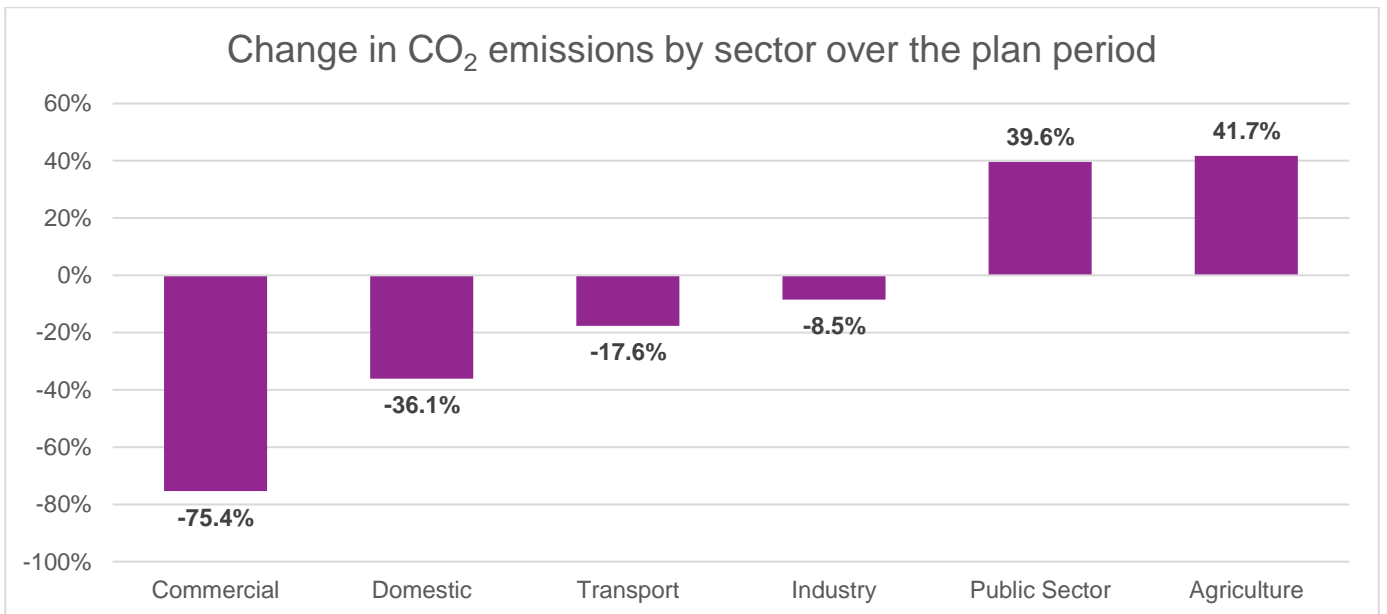


Figure 2.74: Change in carbon emissions by sector over the plan period (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

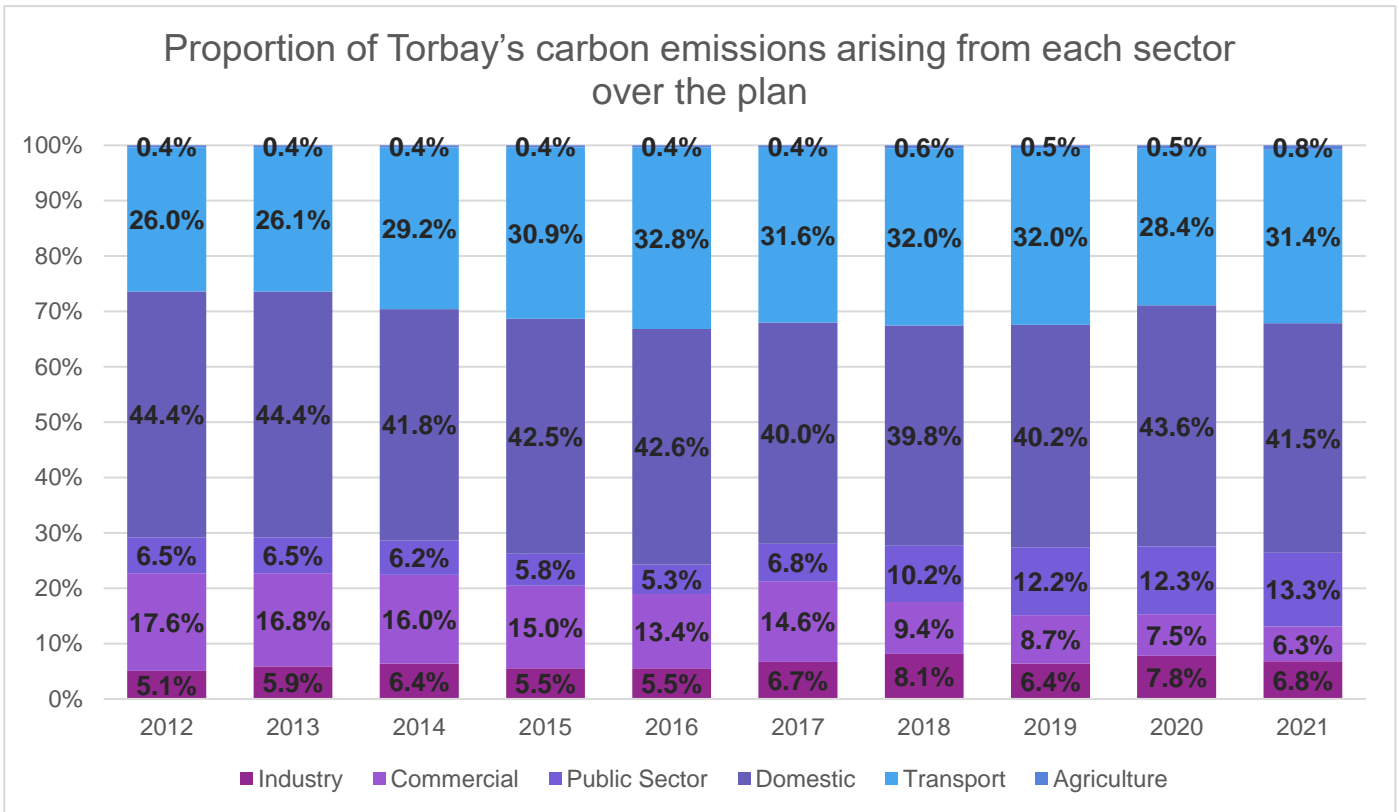


Figure 2.75: Proportion of Torbay's carbon emissions arising from each sector over the plan period (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2023)

**2.5.6** The subsections below give more detail on heating sources and energy efficiency, both of which contribute to higher domestic carbon emissions.

### Renewable Energy

**2.5.7** 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 (0.47% of households) compared to the England and Wales averages (0.94% and 0.89% respectively).

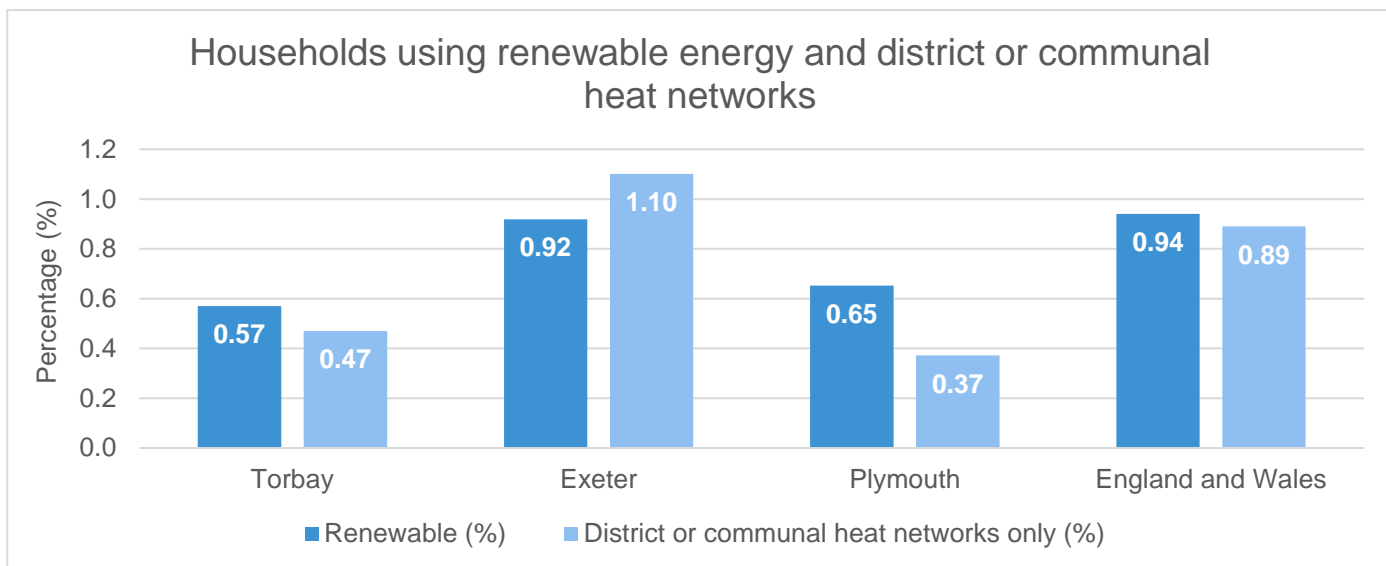


Figure 2.76: Proportion of households using renewable energy (alone or in combination with other heat sources) and district or communal heat networks for central heating, Census 2021 (ONS, 2023<sup>40</sup>)

## Energy Efficiency

**2.5.8** 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 68 for the South West and 68 for England (DLUHC, 2023<sup>41</sup>). Torbay is ranked equal 268<sup>th</sup> out of 331 local authorities for median EPC rating. See Chapter 3 of Torbay's [Housing Needs Assessment](#) (May 2022) for more detailed analysis on EPC.

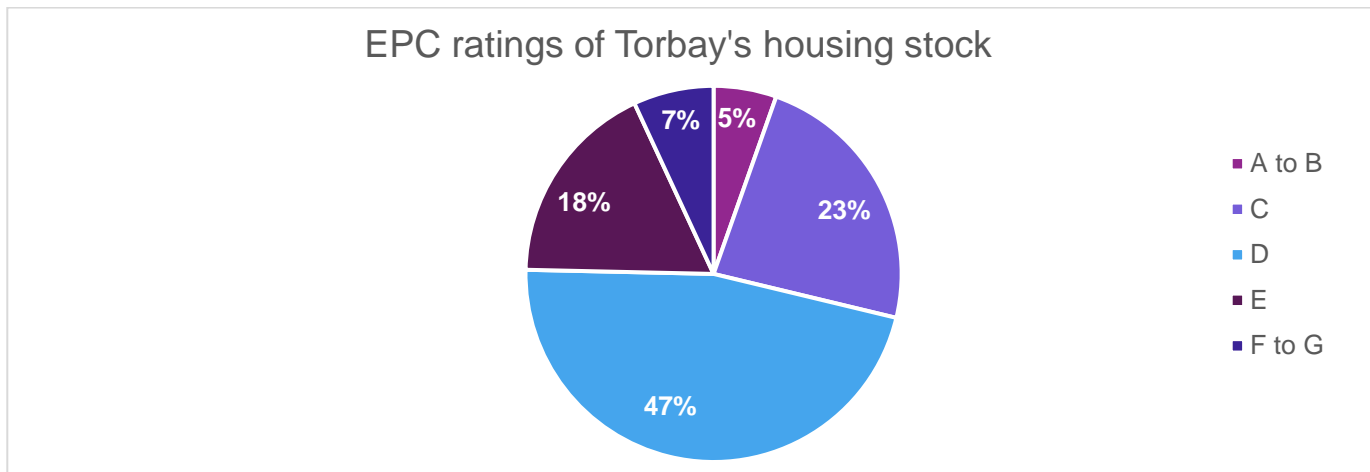


Figure 2.77: EPC ratings of Torbay's housing stock (Energy Savings Trust, 2021)

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/TS046/editions/2021/versions/2>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/medianenergyefficiencyscoreenglandandwales>



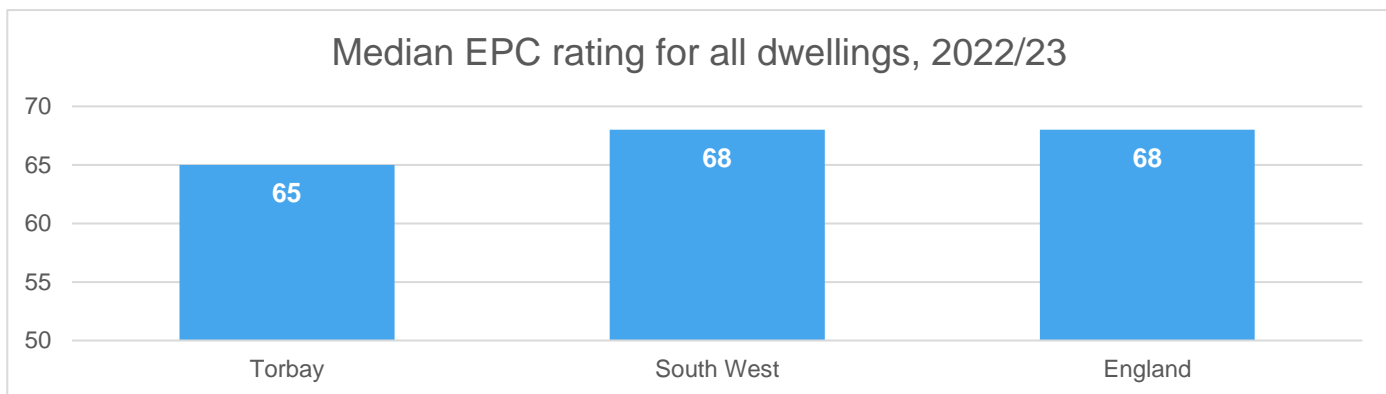


Figure 2.78: Median EPC rating for all dwelling, 2022/23 (ONS, 2023<sup>42</sup>)

**2.5.9** Housing typology is an important factor impacting on EPC rating, with flats performing considerably better than other house types. While this is indeed the case for Torbay, it is interesting to note that flats in Torbay perform worse than those in England as a whole (68 compared to 73). This is likely to be due to there being fewer purpose-built flats in Torbay and more flats provided through conversions of existing buildings. 29.8% of households in Torbay live in flats or maisonettes, compared to 22.2% of households in England. It is also interesting to note that detached houses in Torbay perform slightly worse than the England average (63 compared to 66).

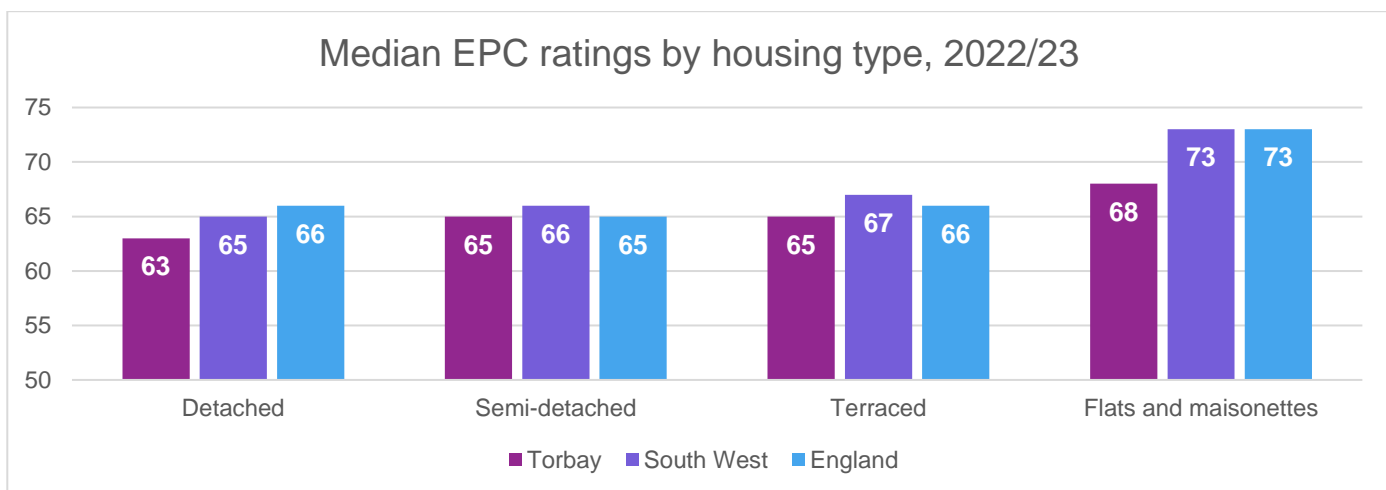


Figure 2.79: Median EPC ratings by housing type, 2022/23 (ONS, 2023)

**2.5.10** Housing tenure also impacts on EPC, with social and affordable rented homes performing better than private rented homes and owner-occupied homes. This is the case in Torbay. It is important to note that Torbay has lower rates of social and affordable rented housing, with only 8.3% of households in Torbay living in this housing tenure compared to 17.1% of households in England. This may be a contributing factor towards Torbay’s lower median EPC.

42

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/medianenergyefficiencyscoreenglandandwales>

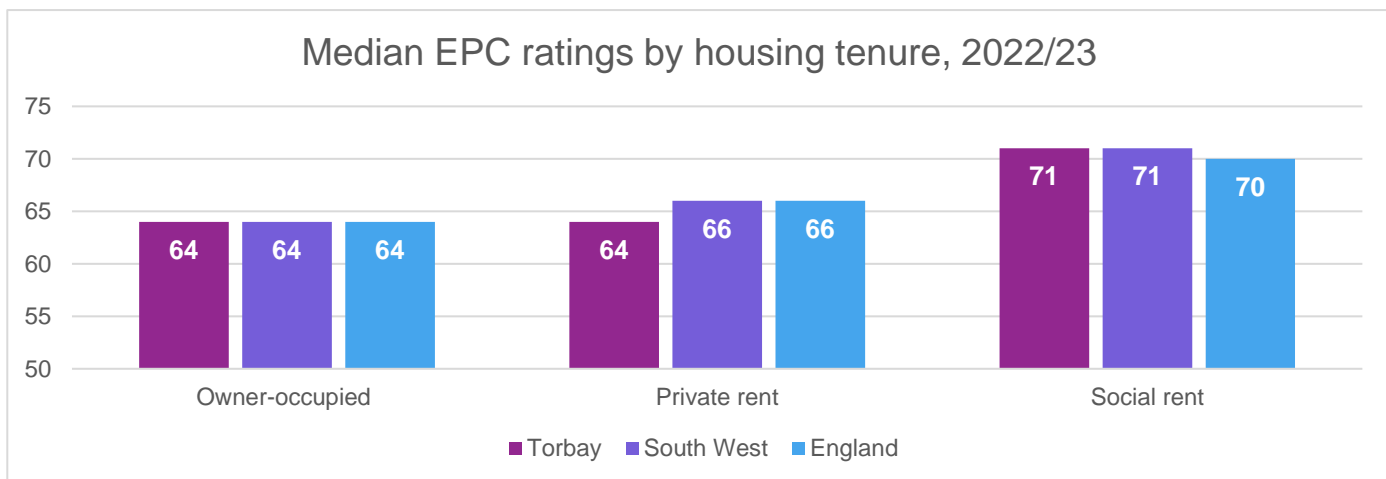


Figure 2.80: Median EPC ratings by housing tenure, 2022/23 (ONS, 2023)

**2.5.11** Finally, the age of buildings has a significant impact on EPC rating, with older buildings performing worse. The high number of older Victorian properties in Torbay is likely to be an important factor contributing to Torbay's lower median EPC.

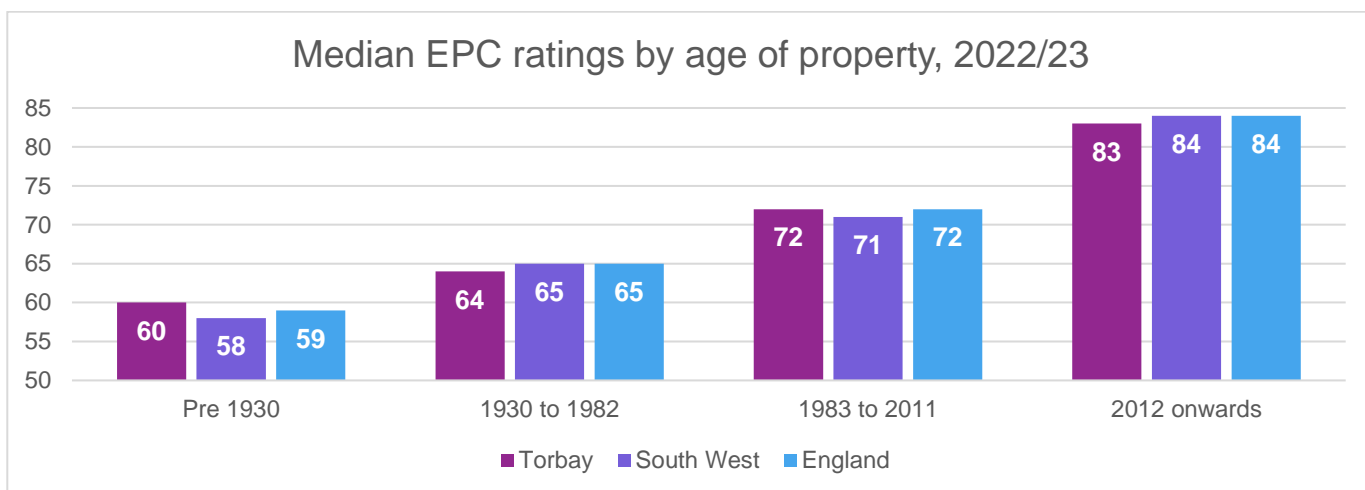


Figure 2.81: Median EPC ratings by age of property, 2022/23 (ONS, 2023)

## Flood Risk

**2.5.12** 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.

**2.5.13** 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.

**2.5.14** The Council has been working with the Environment Agency to rapidly reduce properties at risk from flooding. Plans for new sea walls along Paignton and Preston sea fronts are progressing. Consultations on design were carried out during 2023, and a major planning application (P/2023/0905) is live at the time of writing, with the consultation period running from 8-31 January 2024.

## Waste and Recycling

**2.5.15** 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.

**2.5.16** 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.

**2.5.17** Torbay's household recycling rate at year end 2022/23 was 38.2%. This is an increase of 1.1% compared to the previous year, but falls short of the target of 50% set out in the Waste Management Strategy and remains higher than pre-Covid levels. The Covid pandemic had a notable impact on recycling levels, with households spending more time at home, doing more home cooking, and receiving more home deliveries.

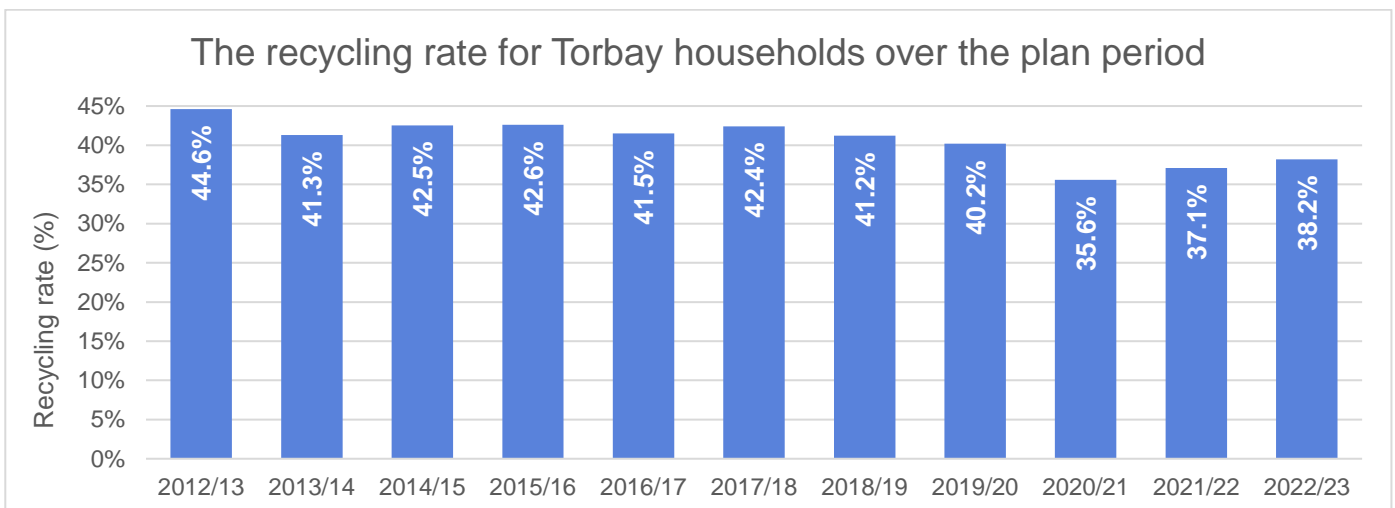


Figure 2.82: Recycling rates for Torbay households

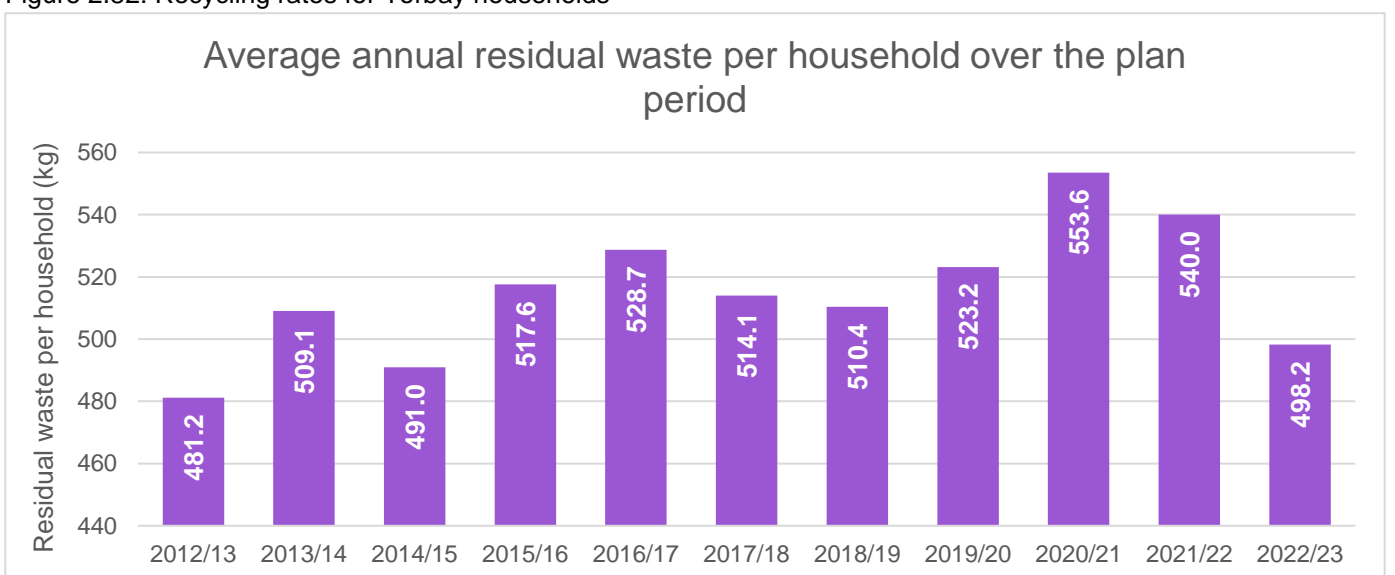


Figure 2.83: The amount of residual waste arising per household

# 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.

**3.1.3** Torbay Council is in the process of reviewing and updating the Community and Corporate Plan. A public consultation on a draft corporate plan was carried out from September to October 2023, and further consultation on a revised draft is expected during early 2024.

## 3.2 Torbay Local Plan

**3.2.1** The [Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030](#) was adopted in December 2015.

**3.2.2** Five years after adoption, 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. The following consultations have been carried out:

- March to May 2021: A Regulation 18 'Call for Evidence' focusing on (i) housing need, (ii) environmental and market capacity, and (iii) suitable housing and employment sites.
- January to February 2022: A Regulation 18 'Growth Options' consultation seeking views on five potential housing growth options.
- October to December 2022: A Regulation 18 'Site Options' consultation seeking views on specific proposed housing sites and draft housing policies.

**3.2.3** During this time, we have also worked on 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 local elections on 4 May 2023 brought about a change in political control for Torbay Council. In the context of widespread uncertainty regarding potential changes by Government to the

planning system<sup>43</sup>, the incoming political administration requested that the Local Plan Review conducted in November 2020 be revisited and reconsidered with a particular focus on the relationship between job growth and housing delivery over the plan period to date. This work is ongoing. We are also continuing work on Evidence Base including an Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA), a Local Plan Viability Assessment, a Landscape Character Assessment, an Agricultural Land Study, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and various other studies.

- 3.2.6** In accordance with the directive in the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement on 19 December 2023, we will be publishing an updated local plan-making timetable by 12 March 2024.
- 3.2.7** 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** Neighbourhood planning bodies are designated for periods of five years. Following the expiry of the status of the Torquay Neighbourhood Forum in December 2023, an application for the re-designation of Torquay Neighbourhood Forum was [approved by Council on 7 March 2023](#). Given that the Paignton Neighbourhood Forum has exceeded this five year period and no application for renewal of the designation has been received, the PNF has therefore ceased to exist. However, this does not affect the status of the Adopted Paignton Neighbourhood Plan which remains in force.
- 3.3.5** Paragraph 14(a) of the updated NPPF (December 2023) includes amendments which provide neighbourhood plans with protection from the presumption in favour of sustainable development for the first five years after adoption<sup>44</sup>, provided that the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement. This is an increase from two years in the previous version of the NPPF. This protection therefore applies to the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan and the Brixham Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan until June 2024<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Including, amongst other changes, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (now Act), which progressed through Parliament during 2022/23 and received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023, and changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, which were consulted on in December 2022 and published in December 2023.

<sup>44</sup> See Paragraph 11 of the NPPF (December 2023).

<sup>45</sup> The Paignton Neighbourhood Plan, which does not allocate housing sites, does not benefit from this protection.

Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that the presumption in favour of sustainable development nevertheless still applies to planning decisions and plan-making in Torbay as a result of Torbay's result in the 2022 Housing Delivery Test.

- 3.3.6** The Neighbourhood Plans remain vitally important as part of the Development Plan, and the policies they contain are material considerations for all planning decisions. 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 adopted, and the 2017 LDS is now outdated.
- 3.4.2** Following a period of uncertainty regarding potential Government changes to the planning system, as well as a change in local political administration following local elections in May 2023, the timetable for local plan-making is under review. In accordance with the directive in the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement on 19 December 2023, we will be publishing an updated local plan-making timetable by 12 March 2024.

## 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](#), which was approved in July 2019, 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 on planning applications across the five Local Planning Authorities including: land owners, developers, planning agents, ecological consultants, Council Members and other organisations. 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
- 3.8.3** The calcareous grassland is also an important feature of the SH SAC designation and the [Berry Head recreational impacts reports \(2014, 2015 & 2016\) by Footprint Ecology](#) supplement the main Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Torbay Local Plan.

## 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 2022/23 amount to £443,014.48. This is less than the total of £630,191.92 in 2021/22.
- 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 due to be updated on an annual basis and will be 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.
- 3.12.4** 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.
- 3.12.5** The SA reports are available to view at the [Local Plan Update webpage](#).
- 3.12.6 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.
- 3.12.7** Ecological Screening Assessments have been carried out for many of the sites put forward for development in the 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 in later stages of local plan-making.

### 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 simplifies 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 National Landscape Management Plan

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

**3.15.2** Following the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) 2023 receiving Royal Assent, and the consequent amendments to the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) have been re-branded as 'National Landscapes'. The 'duty of regard' in Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000 has been revised, and authorities now face a more active and enhanced duty whereby they must "seek to further:

*"(a) the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty, and*

*"(b) the purpose of increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty".*

## 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. Spatial planning 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 local 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, the 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 (Dec 2023), it needs to seek agreement from neighbours about how any unmet need can be accommodated. No decision has been made about Torbay's final housing 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 by its neighbour authorities. While it is noted that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which received Royal Assent on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023, provides for the replacement of the Duty to Cooperate with an 'alignment test', details are yet to be published and will need to be brought forward through secondary legislation. The Duty to Cooperate remains as a requirement in the updated NPPF (Dec 2023) and is likely to remain 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 signed Duty to Cooperate Statements of Common Ground (SOCG) in January 2023 on general matters and addressing Torbay's unmet housing need. 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, Teignbridge 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. After a follow up meeting between Torbay Council and Teignbridge District Council at Forde House on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Torbay Council has provided an officer level comment confirming that the SOCG signed in January 2023 remains relevant.

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