



REPORT

Producing the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan

A working draft

October 2012

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Project Groups and Community Partnership Outputs

1. Background

Torquay Neighbourhood Forum is currently producing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Torquay area. At the same time, a new Local Plan for Torbay (*A Landscape for Success – The Plan for Torbay to 2032 and beyond*) is being produced by Torbay Council. Both documents are being formed in parallel with one another. Once adopted, the new Local Plan together with the Neighbourhood Plan will articulate how development will be guided and shaped in the future and will provide the framework within which planning applications are decided.

Neighbourhood Planning is a new process and has been made possible through the provision of the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 which have devolved greater powers for communities to directly shape development in their local areas. These regulations expect Local Plans to set the strategic context for which Neighbourhood Plans operate within, i.e. in Torbay, the Local Plan will set out strategic policies for economic development, new housing and jobs as well as detailed development management policies relating to issues such as transport, sustainable design and construction, heritage, etc. The Neighbourhood Plan will add a large amount of detail to the new Local Plan, including (but not limited to) where new development should and should not be located, how specific sites should be developed and identifying projects the community would like to see come forward.



Figure 1: Map to show Torquay Neighbourhood Plan Area and ward boundaries

The group was formed in October 2011 and since this time has:

- broadened its membership
- constituted itself
- provided input to and influenced the production of the new Local Plan
- carried out SWOT analysis and explored key themes related to Torquay (e.g. housing, jobs, tourism, etc.)
- received guidance and advice from the Prince's Foundation through two separate workshops
- formed two project groups to carry out detailed work within the Town Centre and Torquay Gateway areas
- Community Partnerships have engaged in the process and produced outputs/drafts for their areas

The Prince's Foundation has confirmed further support for the Torquay Neighbourhood Forum which will include further workshops and public sessions that will occur in early December 2012. The focus of these workshops is to work up the detailed aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan, building on what has been achieved so far. This report acts as a summary of work done so far and also including some key areas for future development.

Initial outputs from the project groups and the majority of the Community Partnership areas have now been completed. This report seeks to:

- provide an overview of outputs
- comment on fit with the emerging Local Plan
- suggest areas of work that need more development and could be focused on with the Prince's Foundation's third round of workshops with the Torquay Neighbourhood Forum.

2. Project Groups

The Torquay Neighbourhood Forum identified two key areas which it resolved to focus efforts on working up fine detail for the Neighbourhood Plan; The Town Centre (including harbour and surrounding area) and The Gateway (Edginswell area of Torquay from Hamelin Way to Torre Station). These areas were chosen as being regions of Torquay where considerable change was likely and needed to take place into the future to meet the aspirations for Torquay and therefore the Neighbourhood Forum wanted to focus on affecting the nature of this change.

These two areas were identified prior to the Prince's Foundation workshop in June 2012 which helped to resolve the boundaries of these 'core areas'.

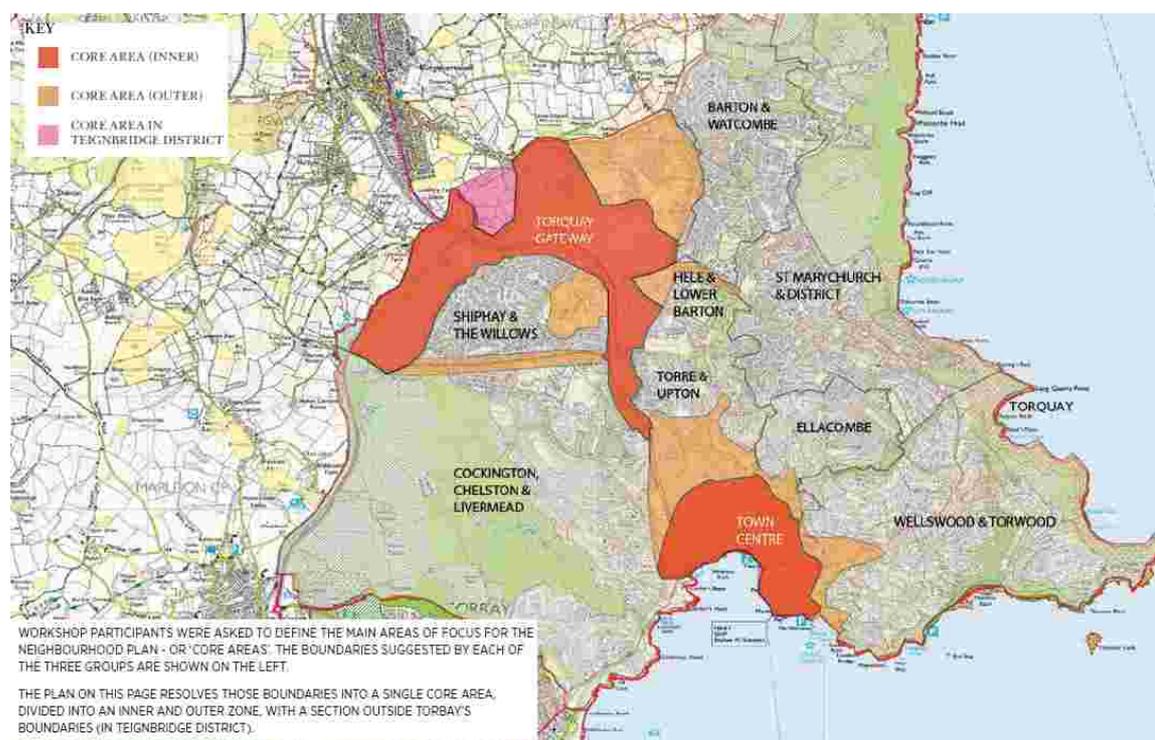


Figure 2: Map from Prince's Foundation workshop (June 2012) to indicate broad ("core") areas of focus for the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan

2.1. Town Centre

The Town Centre Project Group discussed key issues relating to the vision for Torquay Town Centre which included having discussions with Strategic Planning at Torbay Council regarding the emerging New Local Plan and specific policies relating to primary and secondary shopping frontages. The Town Centre group felt that the new Local Plan's aspirations for the Town Centre reflected the Forums views. Policy SDT1 of the draft New Local Plan:

Policy SDT 1

Torquay

Torquay is and will remain the primary commercial centre of Torbay. Harbourside and town centre sites will be developed for appropriate mixed uses, and the re-use of space within buildings for residential accommodation will be supported. The urban areas will be improved and renewed, with strong encouragement for family homes. Torquay is expected to provide sufficient space to enable delivery, on average, of around 375 jobs per annum (Total: 7,500 jobs) and 150–200 new homes per annum (Total: 3 - 4,000 new homes) over the next 20 years or beyond.

Regeneration, comprehensive redevelopment and large scale investment will ensure that the town centre and Torquay Harbour areas evolve as the principal town centre and the centrepiece of a modern, prosperous and sustainable Torbay.

Figure 3: Policy SDT 1 from *A Landscape for Success* (draft)

In terms of affecting change in the town centre of Torquay, to help facilitate 'regeneration, comprehensive redevelopment and large scale investment' the Project Group identified a number of key sites in the town centre which could be the subject of site specific policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Project Group also looked at a number of sub-topic focus areas related to the town centre, including Abbey Road/Melville Hill Area, Transport and Connectivity, Harbour and Night Time economy, Retail and Heart of Torquay.

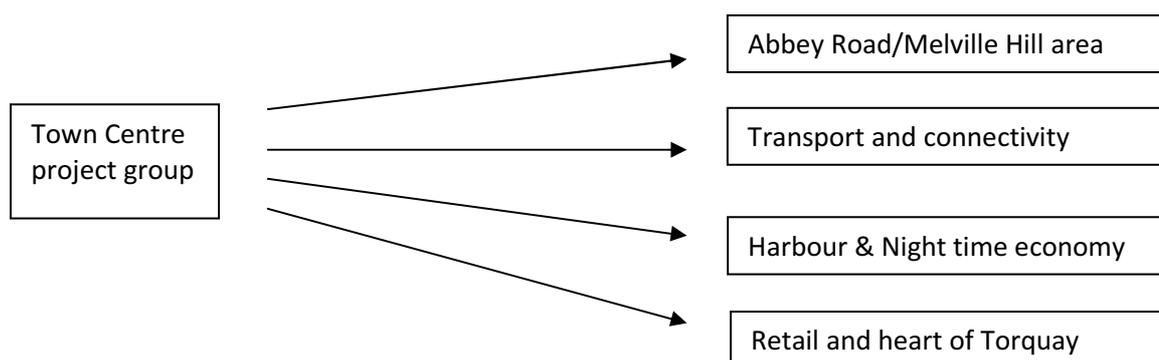


Figure 4: Town Centre Project Group – Sites for redevelopment/rejuvenation

Site	Plan
1. Castle Circus and Town Hall Area	<p>Redevelopment on the Town Hall car park for supermarket/superstore incorporating considerable car parking and some residential use acting as catalyst for regeneration in the wider town centre.</p> <p>Castle Circus area could become a key focal point to match the Harbour area, with quality retail, office, hotel and leisure uses supported within the area should key buildings become available for reuse including Town Hall, Electric House, and Magistrates Court.</p> <p>Regeneration of this area should take account of the need to improve pedestrian flows through the area, suggested wider pavements and more pedestrian priority.</p>
2. Behind Union Street and including Temperance Street area	<p>Potential major redevelopment in this area to take in former works site and multi-storey car park.</p> <p>Suitable uses could be anchor store, leisure facilities such as cinema, indoor sports facilities embracing modernisation of multi-storey car park on Lower Union Lane and could extend to Temperance Street car park and the former BT building.</p>
3. Pimlico	<p>Buildings opposite those which front on to Union Street considered appropriate for redevelopment.</p> <p>Suitable uses could be residential, retail, or related to a transport hub.</p>
4. Former Laundry Site in Rock Road	<p>Residential use would be appropriate also incorporating facilities in the area to aid community cohesion (e.g. community facility).</p> <p>Development would need to improve approach to Fleet Walk car park.</p>
5. Swan Street	<p>Victorian warehouse buildings offer opportunity for redevelopment for residential and other town centre uses (including retail), where possible retaining the exterior appearance of these buildings.</p>
6. The Strand	<p>Aspiration for improvement of this key stretch of Torquay Harbour which could include redevelopment of The Strand buildings, including Debenhams. Combination of luxury apartments, improved retail, hotel, small restaurants would be welcomed, protecting outlook from The Terrace.</p>
7. Amusement Arcade	<p>Potential for high rise development on the site of the current amusement arcade for residential/offices and other town centre uses.</p> <p>Cary Green needs to be protected but consideration should be given to improving pedestrian flows to/from The Pavilion and opening up the views through demolition of the ziggurat and pedestrian bridge.</p>
8. The Terrace Car Park	<p>Potential development site for quality development use as this has the best views of the harbour which are currently not exploited. Retain adequate parking for Harbour area.</p>
9. Princess Theatre Area	<p>Potential to expand/extend/redevelop theatre (without expanding into gardens to their detriment) so that facilities are upgraded for a better quality entertainment and commercial enterprise. For example, theatre expanded to take in larger shows.</p>

Transport and connectivity group

Key objectives:

- Torre station – better signage
- Castle Circus – redevelopment opportunity to improve pedestrian and traffic flows
- Harbour – improve bus stops/bus interchanges
- Fleet Street – pedestrianisation
- Reversal of traffic through Torre

Harbour and Night time Economy Group

Key objectives:

- Careful consideration of the interaction and proximity of **night time uses** (e.g. nightclubs/late night bars) and **residential uses** in the harbour area. It was felt there were opportunities to reduce conflict between these two uses through land use planning, which will be further explored.
- Change of use of nightclubs

Abbey Road/Melville Hill area

Key objectives:

- Design guidance for the conservation area to assist improvement of properties
- No more HMO's/small flats
- Re-enforce frontages, improve facades

Further development of the Neighbourhood Plan

The outputs from Figure 4 could form the basis for site specific policies relating to key sites within the Town Centre. Work regarding developing these site policies needs to be progressed, including an evaluation of whether the sites are appropriate for inclusion, whether there are other sites that need consideration and also how the sites relate to each other. Key information contained within the Retail Study Update 2011 relating to the redevelopment of a number of sites in the town centre could be utilised.

2.2. Gateway

The Gateway Project Group was formed from the recognition that this area of Torquay, being the subject of the interface between the north of Torquay and the, to be constructed, South Devon Link Road, would be a prime area in the emerging new Local Plan for growth in terms of job creation and new residential development.

Policy SDT 1 in the draft New Local Plan, A Landscape for Success, states:

The Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans will bring forward additional housing, employment and leisure provision in new growth areas to the north west of Torquay. Development will be high quality exemplar developments, appropriate to their gateway setting, which respect and enhance the natural and built environment.

The Gateway Project Group formed two separate focus groups to look at residential development and new employment development, concentrating on how specific sites might be delivered.

Figure 5: Gateway Project Group – consideration of employment/residential land

Site	Plan
EMPLOYMENT LAND	
Kerswell Gardens	No change from current plan. Proposed for industrial/warehousing use within classes B1/B8 and is suitable for small business uses. It is a high profile location where high quality, well-landscaped development will be required. On completion of the South Devon Link Road there will be potential to improve road access to the site.
Edginswell Business Park	This high quality business park should be retained for employment land in classes B1/B8 and attempts to locate large retail or superstore should be rejected as per the recent Tesco Planning Application decision. It is noted that a new railway station will be provided in the vicinity of the business park. Exact details are still being considered. It is hoped that this business park will provide well-paid jobs desperately needed in Torquay
Nicholson Road	This area has been fully developed. Parking and congestion is a big issue for businesses located in this road. There was discussion on whether there is an opportunity to make it a through road to Broomhill Way however it is thought that the landscape would prevent this
Broomhill Way	This is a well designed and built business park providing good quality units that are all occupied. There was discussion on whether the site could be extended onto the South End of the former Willows Tip.
Newton Road	This road has a number of motor main dealer premises, hospital support activities and public house all on large sites that could be redeveloped and potentially improved to provide a greater density of employment. There is also the Brunel Pumping Station on the Fruit and Veg wholesale outlet site that is listed.
Woodland Industrial Estate	This site has a complete mix of development some of which needs to be brought up to date and is suitable for redevelopment and improvement to create improved business facilities to support growing and new businesses to Torquay. It is noted that the road network is not adopted and it is considered that this could be reviewed. The properties/land behind Asda it is believed has been purchased by Asda for potential expansion of the retail superstore. This could impact existing employment land. Other potential development land in this area is the bus depot site.
Torre Station Yards	This is a large site on both sides of the railway lines alongside the railway station that is probably underutilised. Much of the site is currently used for storage despite the fact that access to the land on the west of the track is poor. There is the potential for an imaginative development on the site that would provide employment including office accommodation, some retail and potentially some residential.

Holiday Parks – Kingskerswell Road	Parkdean, Barton Hall and the Ski Slope are accessed off Kingskerswell Road and provide holiday accommodation and activities as well as employment. This land sits in close proximity to the Willows residential development and therefore it is an area that would be challenging if existing businesses were to be put on the market. It is likely that any change in use would be controversial however the pressure of housing will always mean difficult choices in and around Torbay due to land constraints.
Moles Lane area	This is an area of land at the top of Hamelin Way that may have potential for employment.
Hele Roundabout/Barton Hill Road/Barton Hill Way	In this area there is a variety of employment and business property on the former British Gas site and surrounding area. There may be opportunity for some redevelopment that would improve the commercial property and employment in this area.
RESIDENTIAL LAND	
Site	Plan
Fields between Barton Stables and Bottompark Lane	Presumption for housing though note steepness of land may limit numbers of units.
Holiday Parks – Kingskerswell Road	Presumption that this will remain in existing use but in the event that they are not viable then this could become housing land but either retain ski slope or relocate.
Existing tip area adjacent to Browns Bridge Road	Currently carries a sports and leisure allocation in existing Local Plan, important that this remains as such
Welsury Covert and Jubilee Plantation	Currently wooded areas and should remain so
Land adjacent to Kingskerswell Gardens	Remain as employment use
Land between Newton Road and Edginswell Lane	There is a presumption that this will be used for employment land
Land bounded by Edginswell Lane, Hamlyn Way & Moles Lane	There is a presumption that this will be housing land. However road infrastructure and access to the area would need to be carefully considered with potentially a new spine road connecting Marldon Road and Newton Road.

Further development of the Neighbourhood Plan

The outputs from the Gateway group, summarised in the above table, need to inform a detailed masterplan for the Gateway area. This should include how specific issues relating to green infrastructure, community space, transport and connectivity are best dealt with through design. These findings need to be considered in the context of the Council's SHLAA and also with the Torbay Development Agency. Site specific policies and allocations within this growth area of Torquay need to be a key part of the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Community Partnerships

Summary of outputs

The Community Partnerships in Torquay were asked to produce some initial ideas for their areas for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each Community Partnership was asked to provide some context for their community's aspirations as well as specifics regarding land and development in their areas. The majority of the Community Partnerships have now submitted their first drafts, the table below attempts to pick a few of the key points raised in their submissions, provide comments on fit with the draft emerging Local Plan and wider Neighbourhood Plan and consider whether the points raised could form policy (delivered entirely by planning system intervention) or projects (where the delivery is wider than planning or perhaps the responsibility is multi-faceted).

Figure 5: Summary of Community Partnerships Outputs

Community Partnership/ Group	Issue	Potential Neighbourhood Plan Policy, Site Allocation or Guidance?	Potential Neighbourhood Plan Project?	Is there a reference to or is it compatible with the draft New Local Plan?	Other Comments
Shiphay and the Willows Community Partnership	Further employment opportunities at Edginswell Business Park. Resist large superstore on this site in preference of B1/B8 (business/storage and distribution) business space.	Further detail can be added by the Neighbourhood Plan, potentially through site allocations/site specific policies (Gateway focus area)	No	SDT3 (Torquay Gateway) TC1 (Town Centres and Retail)	
	Good quality, well paid employment opportunities within the area provided by improvement/extension of existing sites.	Further detail can be added by the Neighbourhood Plan, potentially through site allocations/site specific policies (Gateway focus area)	No	SDT3 (Torquay Gateway), USP, Key Issues and Aspirations	New sites may also be brought forward in the area, perhaps as part of mixed use developments.

St Marychurch and District Community Partnership	<p>Availability of greenfield land for residential development is limited though a potential large site at Hamelin Way could come forward. Other smaller pockets of land are available.</p> <p>Support for new rail halt in the area.</p>	<p>Further detail can be added by the Neighbourhood Plan, potentially through site allocations/site specific policies (Gateway focus area)</p>	No	SDT3 (Torquay Gateway)	<p>Site at Hamelin Way already identified in SHLAA. Could be a potential site allocation for a large mixed use development.</p>
	<p>Lack of dedicated community spaces/halls in the area to provide meeting spaces to properly satisfy local community groups/residents needs.</p>	<p>Include as part of an area plan for the Gateway area.</p>	No	SDT3 (Torquay Gateway)	
	<p>Identifies areas for specific protection from development e.g. Babbacombe Downs, Maidencombe, Tessier Gardens, Cary Park, Haytor Park.</p>	<p>Could potentially include provision of such a facility as part of site specific plans in the area.</p>	Yes	SC1 (Sustainable Communities)	
		<p>NPPF encourages local communities (through Neighbourhood Planning) to afford protection from development to 'demonstrably special' Greenspaces through designation as areas of Local Green Space.</p>	No	EN3 (Urban Landscape Protection Areas) – in respect of Babbacombe Downs.	

	<p>Shopping and retail areas – could be improved through refurbishment and standardisation of street furniture/signs.</p>		<p>Yes – St. Marychurch traders</p>	<p>SDT4 (Babbacombe and St. Marychurch) TC3 (Retail Development)</p>	<p>Local Plan designation of St. Marychurch as a District Centre underlines importance of its function as an important retail centre in Torbay.</p>
	<p>Housing provided for senior residents and a need to focus on redeveloping existing properties for housing.</p>	<p>Suggest that this is already adequately covered in the emerging Local Plan.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>H1 (Housing provision) H3 (Applications for new homes) SDT4 (Babbacombe and St. Marychurch) SC3 (Healthy Bay) H7 (Housing for people in need of care)</p>	

<p>Maidencombe Residents Association</p>	<p>Area has special quality for tourism, recreation (geopark), archaeological and architectural interest as well as landscape value. Concerns that significant development in the area will jeopardise its special qualities.</p> <p>Acknowledgment of Sladnor Park being earmarked for potential residential/tourist development. Taken together with other smaller developments in the area coming forward, concerns of reaching 'saturation' point.</p>			<p>C1 (Countryside, strategic green wedges and the rural economy)</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood Forum may decide that Maidencombe is a 'gem' that requires development being especially limited in this area. This needs to be demonstrated alongside plans for other areas that can grow and change. Taken together this will form the basis of a positive (about change and growth) Neighbourhood Plan. There is acknowledgement that even within Maidencombe there will be some change but that this must be sensitive to the environment.</p>
	<p>Projects highlighted including the restoration of historic cider orchard, assisting the TCCT to improve amenities and proposals to restore the Linhay structure in Rock House Lane for heritage and tourism purposes</p>		<p>Yes</p>		
<p>St. Marychurch and District Action Group</p>	<p>A list of specific spaces for greenspace protection have been suggested.</p>	<p>NPPF encourages local communities (through Neighbourhood Planning) to afford protection from development to be</p>	<p>Yes - potentially as local improvement projects.</p>		

		'demonstrably special' Greenspaces through designation as areas of Local Green Space. The list needs to be considered in this context.			
Torre and Upton Community Partnership	B&Q site in Torre suitable for mixed use development	No			
	Community Centre/Café in Lymington Road coach park	Yes – current project in early stages of development			
	Reconfigure Upton Park to improve quality of facilities for all ages	Yes			
Cockington, Chelston and Livermead Community Partnership	Preserve and improve existing sports facilities – Torre Valley North/South and Armada Park	No		Policy SC2 – Sport, leisure and Recreation. Presumption against loss of existing facilities (where they provide a functional benefit) unless compelling case made for wider benefits and replacement facilities in lieu of exiting provision.	
	Secure important community pubs and improve provision of community facilities	No			Could potentially identify these assets in the plan
	Cockington Country Park/Occombe Farm preserve from new housing	No		Local Plan support enhancement of Cockington Country Park and Occombe. Key green tourism area, no plans for	

Ellacombe Community Partnership	Protect all parks and green open spaces	NPPF encourages local communities (through Neighbourhood Planning) to afford protection from development to be 'demonstrably special' Greenspaces through designation as areas of Local Green Space. Need to identify specific spaces which are locally special.	No	residential development. Cokcington/Occombe falls within rural area and greenspace (C1), development will be resisted in these areas.	
	Market Street potential for residential development	Could be come focus of Town Centre site specific policies	No	Local Plan supports residential development in town centre.	
	Land at Stentiford Hill – potential development			Type of development?	
Wellswood and Torwood Community Partnership	Greenspaces in the area, particularly around the coast, deserve special protection.		No	Policy EN3 (Designated Urban Landscape Protection Areas) - includes Whidborne Copse, Ansteys Playing Fields, Palace Hotel Grounds, Grange Road/Warberry Copse, etc.	Potential for further greenspace to be designated as Local Green Space, though note the need for such spaces to be 'demonstrably special' and not 'extensive tracts of land' as indicated in the NPPF.

	<p>Palace Hotels and Grounds redevelopment, but retain hotel</p>			<p>Site included in 5 year land supply.</p>	<p>There are proposals for much larger scale of development – (SA screening opinion Feb 2012). Any development would have to be exceptionally sensitively designed to be in keeping with surrounding environment.</p>
<p>Small hotels and brownfield sites to be allowed to redevelop for housing whilst preserving building character and local environmental quality</p>			<p>Local Plan supports brownfield development for residential accommodation where appropriate</p>		

Further development of the Neighbourhood Plan

The Community Partnership submissions need to be converted into a common structure which identifies:

- Context for each area
- Convey community’s aspirations in how planning and development can positively contribute to the area
- Include appropriate detail regarding using Local Greenspace designations and identifying opportunities for development

Each Community Partnership will need to take a leading role in providing the detail for their area which will be formalised in conjunction with the wider Neighbourhood Forum.

4. Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan fit

The parallel tracking process which has been undertaken in the development of the new Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan has led to a great deal of correlation. In some aspects the Local Plan has been directly shaped by the recommendations and discussion with the Torquay Neighbourhood Forum. This can be seen in the influence of the SWOT exercises carried out by the Torquay Community Partnerships.

The strategic aspirations of the Local Plan have been broadly welcomed by the Neighbourhood Forum and this has assisted the Forum to make progress in bottoming out some of the general strategic policies in the Local Plan in investigating what they mean at the very local level – that is to say existing sites and new sites for development and how they can best serve the local community.

The Torquay Neighbourhood Forum will continue to work in partnership with Torbay Council in the production of the emerging Local Plan. This is part of a continued process of twin tracking both documents; the new Local Plan and the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan will together form the Development Plan for Torquay. The relationship between the emerging new Local Plan (submission, second draft version) and the emerging Neighbourhood Plan will continue to be important as they evolve. This will include bottoming out the level of detail that needs to be included through site allocations, to satisfy housing trajectory and land supply issues. This will continue to be informed by discussion with the Planning Inspectorate, the Planning Advisory Service and the Prince's Foundation.