

Torbay Local Plan 2025-2045 Update

A Landscape to thrive – Reg 18 Consultation

Closing date for comments: Monday 2 February 2026

Introduction

The new Draft Local Plan for Torbay (2025-2045) focuses on urban regeneration, climate resilience and aims to deliver a minimum of 400 new homes per annum and 80,000 sq.m. of employment land. Key themes include boosting the economy with job growth, enhancing the natural environment and meeting housing needs with a strong emphasis on using existing urban areas and brownfield land first.

Key themes & priorities include:

- **Urban Regeneration:** Strong focus on utilising previously used land.
- **Housing:** Target of 400 homes per year (2025-2045), with a focus on the delivery of affordable homes and smaller dwellings
- **Economic Growth:** Delivering significant employment land (min 80,000 sq.m) to create jobs and reduce deprivation.
- **Climate Change:** addressing coastal erosion, flooding, air quality and reducing carbon emissions.
- **Environment:** Protecting the natural environment, ensuring green spaces, biodiversity net gain and enhancing public access to nature.

The new draft local plan applies a strategic approach, balancing levels of development with the protection of Torbay's unique character and sensitive landscapes, including the South Devon National Landscape. It aims to focus on previously developed land first with the redevelopment of existing sites and buildings, including the conversion of some hotels to homes. In essence, the plan aims to make Torbay more resilient, sustainable and prosperous, while using land wisely and protecting its significant natural assets.

The plan is currently out for public consultation until 2nd February 2026. This consultation is still at Regulation 18 stage, two previous Regulation 18 consultations were held in 2022: Growth Options (Jan 2022) and Housing Site Options (October 2022).

Previous engagement

SHDC provided comments to the previous Reg 18 consultation on a number of issues including, cross boundary matters, housing need, planned developments, transport and infrastructure, climate change and the environment.

Response to the Draft Local Plan

Strategic Matters

Whilst the Duty to Cooperate has been removed the Council still welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, including Torbay Council, to ensure that cross-boundary and strategic issues are planned effectively. Issues such as housing, transport, infrastructure and environmental impact included in the Draft Torbay Local Plan have cross-boundary implications. One important matter is whether Torbay is able to meet all its housing need and the Council has provided comment on this matter previously, and these comments still stand; if it transpires that there is an unmet need from Torbay that is based on up to date projections, it is highly unlikely that South Hams will be able to accommodate any additional unmet need.

It is the priority of South Hams and West Devon to meet their own joint identified need which is very considerable when applying the Government's new standard method for calculating housing need. It is possible, given the unique characteristics and sensitive landscape of South Hams and West Devon, that we may also be unable to meet all of our own need. Torbay recognise that it would be inappropriate to ask neighbouring authorities to meet any unmet need, suggesting that it would be better addressed in any future Strategic Development Strategy for Devon. We support this approach.

It is noted that one of the strategic growth areas is proposed in the Collaton St. Mary/Totnes Road (A385) corridor where the development of housing sites is already underway. Development at this location will inevitably add vehicles to the main A385 through Totnes and this needs to be properly modelled and considered in terms of transport and alternative modes of transport to the private car should be a requirement of any development scheme. We have previously raised concerns that infrastructure impacts of the proposed sites are properly master planned and to ensure that sustainable travel methods are put in place. Some of the strategic growth areas, specifically the area proposed in the Collaton St. Mary/Totnes Road, is distant from existing services and facilities and could be heavily reliant on private car use. All sites proposed in south Torbay will also add pressure on the A385 corridor as it's one of only two main highway links into Torbay. We support the Vision-led approach to minimising the transport impacts of new development through journey reduction and modal shift.

Strategic Policy L1: Protecting our countryside and rural economy

The draft local plan recognises the importance of the South Hams SAC and other important habitats and that development in the countryside should not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the habitats. It also states that any development should also have regard to the in-combination effects of multiple developments that could affect Greater Horseshoe Bats, calcareous grassland features and the integrity of the South Hams SAC. To mitigate the impact of increased recreational pressure on the South Hams SAC an 8km zone is identified and any development that comes forward within this area would be required to make a financial contribution to the South Hams SAC. This 8km zone extends into part of the South Hams administrative area. We support this approach to help mitigate the detrimental recreational impact and welcome an improved management plan for Berry Head.

Site specific comments

Western Fringe of Paignton

Collaton St Mary/Totnes Road (H2P.3)

Whilst the Council recognises that there is potential for further development in this area, it has previously raised concern that the sites proposed will lead to a linear form of development along the A385 without easy access to local services and facilities. Sustainable transport links will be necessary at this development to provide an alternative option to private car use which is likely to be the dominant mode of transport. As highlighted above, we are concerned that development at this location will increase traffic flows through Totnes and could affect the air quality – which is something that will need to be monitored. The topography of the area is quite complex; however, this means that parts of the growth area is less visually sensitive within the wider landscape. The area also has landscape features which should be retained to help incorporate the development in the wider setting.

Long Road/Yalberton/Inglewood(H2P.4)

The Council considers that there is potential for further growth in this area providing a mixed-use extension to the existing development which includes residential and employment uses. The proposals for new employment land are welcomed, recognising the benefits in providing more job opportunities in the Bay, potentially helping to reduce travel out of the area for work. However, any extension would result in development in the countryside and therefore, requires sensitive master planning. Whilst higher density development may be achievable immediately adjacent to the existing built form, densities should be reduced on the new built edge of any extension to minimise the visual impact from the surrounding countryside.

It also noted that a further extension is proposed at the Inglewood development. Whilst the site proposed for the extension is not so prominent as the main site and is less open to distant views, development of this site will fill the existing rural gap and result in continuous ribbon development along the Brixham Road (A3022) creating a hard edge to the built form, as opposed to being interspersed with pockets of open countryside which would be preferable and easier to assimilate in the wider countryside.

Stoke Road (H3P.3)

The Council does not support the site proposed for approximately 400 dwellings at Stoke Road, west of Yalberton Valley as this would lead to unsustainable development in the countryside. Spatially, the site is in a rural location which is difficult to access and is poorly related to sustainable settlements. It doesn't relate to any existing built form and would be a visual intrusion in the landscape.

Brixham

Monksbridge, Brixham (H3BCG.3)

The large, proposed development site at Monksbridge for 130 dwellings is located at the edge of Brixham town in the National Landscape. The site is highly sensitive in landscape and visual terms. Although the field boundaries provide a degree of containment, any development at this site would be clearly visible to everyone on their approach to the town. We understand that the Council are trying to balance the provision of local housing needs of Brixham with the protection of the sensitive landscape. However, as development in National Landscapes is only supported in exceptional circumstances, it is strongly urged that the Council consider accommodating the growth planned at this site at an alternative location in the Bay outside the National Landscape and in a less sensitive location.

Archery Field, Churston (H3BCG.2)

The medium proposed site for 50 dwellings at Archery Field is outside the National Landscape but it is within the countryside and will be visible within the wider landscape setting. Any development at this site will have a detrimental impact on the rural and open character of this area. We question the suitability of this site for residential development although it is located close to the Railway Inn it does not have access to essential daily community facilities and services. Whilst it is located relatively close to Galmpton Village, the site is separated from the village and its facilities by the South Devon Steam Railway line. Inevitably, residents of this site would be reliant on private car use which would increase traffic flow on the A379/A3022 and pressure on Windy Corner which is already at capacity.

We hope these comments are helpful but please let us know if you have any questions or wish to discuss any matters raised.