

**Meeting:** Overview & Scrutiny Board     **Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Report Title:** Torbay Place Leadership Board

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 Torbay's Place Leadership Board is maturing with partners becoming better engaged. This is resulting in increased confidence in the Board's role from external agencies. The Place Leadership Board's stewardship of the Torbay Story<sup>1</sup> has considerably aided the relationship with Government departments and others throughout the past eighteen months and equally contributed significantly to our confidence to attend UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum in 2023 and 2024.
- 1.2 More recently the success achieved in winning further government investment results in a need to consider how the role of the Place Leadership Board is furthered, and in doing so deepens Torbay's commitment to the overall place leadership approach.
- 1.3 This report is intended to summarise for Overview and Scrutiny the background to the Place Leadership Board being established, its current way of working and its work programme including some live considerations of issues that the Board is discussing.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://torbaystory.co.uk/our-story/>

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

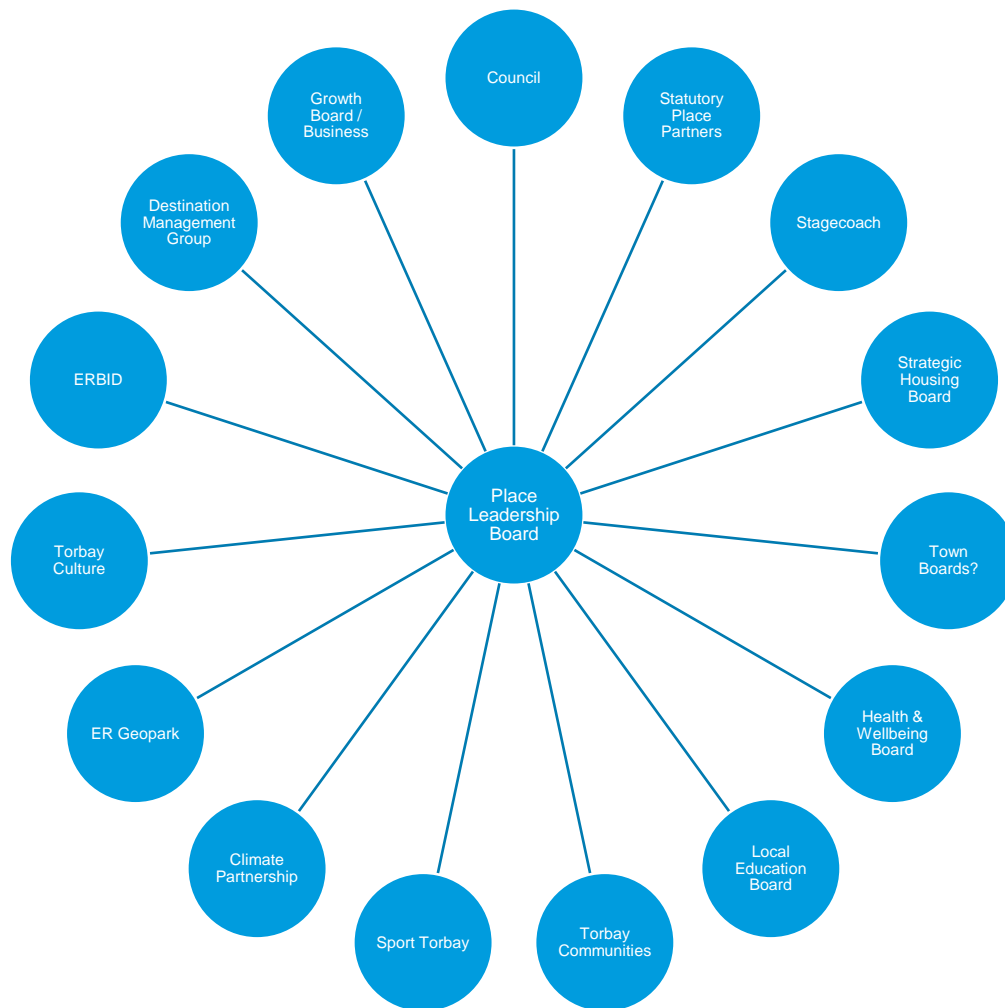
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- 2.1 Until 2017 Torbay, unlike many areas, had not had an active “strategic partnership” in place. An LGA peer review in late 2015 identified that partners across Torbay stood ready to work with the Council and develop a strategic vision. The strategic partnership was reborn and developed an informal way of working which saw some broad principles established for how the partnership would work.
- 2.2 In 2018 having become aware of the Town Deal extended to Grimsby and NE Lincs the Partnership began more active consideration of its core activities. This led to two visits with Government ministers in 2018 to make the case for Government investment in Torbay. While not immediately successful the feedback received informally politically and from officials indicated that there was recognition of Torbay acting in a different way. This supported the partnership in further developing its thinking of how it could support the Council in developing a vision for the place.
- 2.3 Immediately prior to the pandemic examples from Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth had been used to shape the thinking of what is possible. Lessons learnt from these places were about a deep understanding of the issues but critically the importance of the opportunities and assets in your place. Alongside a willingness to plan over a longer period and for relationships to deepen to allow for better partnerships and better inter organisation planning and collaboration. This in turn led to the appointment of Thinking Place to develop “Torbay Story”.
- 2.4 The link to Torbay Story has been provided as a footnote on the previous page. Torbay Story is intended to convey what Torbay could be based on the strengths and the assets that already exist here. It was developed through interviews, workshop sessions and visits by the Thinking Place team and acts to provide a set of messages that can be used to demonstrate the potential of Torbay to investors, potential inward investment businesses, government officials and others.
- 2.5 It has been critiqued and criticised by some for not being an accurate portrayal of the real experience of living in Torbay particularly if you are a resident in some of the more challenged communities within Torbay. This is fair criticism but also represents a misunderstanding of the purpose of the Torbay Story. Its purpose is to provide that wide framework which the Council’s community plan and assorted policy framework plans exist within alongside the potential for the plans of other organisations and partners to be represented there. In doing so this reinforces the central messages of Torbay and the ambition as it has been captured in the Torbay Story for Torbay to build on its high tech

strengths and the wider opportunities for active lifestyles so that Torbay is the premier marine and natural experience.

- 2.6 This as a statement of intent is intended to demonstrate that Torbay is greater than the sum of its parts and that our assets can allow the place to be premier. It is a call to action for partners led through the Place Leadership Board to rally behind with distinctive roles for the three towns again each based on the strengths of the towns as assessed through the Thinking Place work.
- 2.7 Torbay Story has been used to support the messaging for Torbay's attendance at the UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiF) in 2023 and 2024. Attendance in 2023 was pivotal to securing interest in becoming Torbay's regeneration partner with Wilmott Dixon and Milligan appointed in the autumn of 2023. It has also supported the attendance in May of this year and the feedback from local government, potential investors and occupiers to the messaging has been consistently positive. While there is work to do to make the story real for our residents, visitors and businesses there should be no doubt that the development of the Torbay Story and its use has been integral to recent progress with funding and partnership development.
- 2.8 To support the further development and adoption of the Torbay Story Thinking Place also proposed that each of the three towns should have a linking group to the Place Leadership Board. Suggested initially as "Town Boards" Torbay Communities have been exploring the potential here and this work is ongoing.
- 2.9 A Torbay Champions network <https://torbaystory.co.uk/champions/> has been established and has grown to bring together a range of organisations and individuals with an interesting in learning and telling the Torbay Story. Also intended to provide a different type of networking platform to those already in existence in the area the champions network provides access to dedicated marketing materials including images, design toolkit and a pitch pack to help champions promote Torbay. A practical challenge to raising visibility and increasing the number of champions past its current level, over 2400 registered for information, is the officer resource required to do this. This work is underway with the Council's Director of Pride in Place.
- 2.10 Recently Government's decision to withdraw support for the Local Enterprise Partnerships, established by the coalition government in 2011/2012, alongside locally the establishment of the Devon and Torbay County Combined Authority will see the introduction of a growth board model. For Torbay this has seen active consideration of how best to fulfil the growth board responsibilities. Bringing business views through the Place Leadership Board means

that all Place partners have sight of the issues, opportunities and asks emerging from the sector. It also provides place partners with a point to reflect on how other aligned boards might do the same. Those aligned boards include;



2.11 A task for over the summer of 2024 is establishing an agreed way in which the discussions from these boards will feed through to the Place Leadership Board and improve the overall understanding of each partner about the range of place focused activities across Torbay. Doing so should provide ways to improve collaborative approaches which in turn could result for instance in new delivery methods being identified, opportunities for curriculum development at South Devon College or schools, new project ideas which could be developed and generally deepen the commitment to this way of working. It would also provide the Place Leadership Board with a greater structure and a work programme throughout the year.

2.12 There are two disadvantages of such a move, the first is that it may move the board away from a more open discursive model, however this can be mitigated. The second is that as many of these boards are run by or through the Council, the Place Leadership Board becomes (or is perceived as) an additional form of scrutiny or performance management for

the Council. Care would need to be taken to ensure that the Place Leadership Board was clear on why it was receiving reports and ensure that its focus was on how working collectively across the Place Leadership Board partners better outcomes for our communities can be achieved.

### 3 Way ahead










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- 3.1 The terms of reference, Appendix B, have recently, March 2024, been reviewed to ensure that they reflect the ambition and the intended outcomes of place partners. The Place Leadership Board has developed an informal system and function which allows for broad strategic discussions to take place. The review carried out by Thinking Place in 2023 and the informal feedback received from partners reassures that the partnership is developing and maturing with the influence of the Board growing beyond Torbay.
- 3.2 There remains work to be done internally to the area to increase the credibility of the message with the local community and to inspire individuals and organisations to act on that and in alignment with that message. To do this the role of the Champions and the Town Boards continues to be important. This should be a priority action for April – September 2024.
- 3.3 The Board might also consider how the diversity of voices engaged in these civic conversations is improved. Torbay's community is becoming more diverse, the intended "levelling up" of Torbay's economy if delivered successfully will change the dynamic of the local population with a likely increase in the working age population of the area. Ensuring that these voices and the voices of young people, who are often silent in formal consultation and engagement, are developed and heard seems an important area to explore. The board may wish to consider mirroring the introduction of a Future Leaders programme similar to that introduced by Burnley's place leaders <https://burnley.co.uk/future-leaders/>. Aimed at under 30s this programme is intended to create a pipeline of future place leaders and help nurture passion and pride in the place, encourage retention of young talent and encourage personal and professional development. This could align for instance to emerging thinking from secondary school leaders about the Torbay Promise. In Burnley's case funding is from the bondholders, those businesses who contribute to the place branding and marketing in the area, in the absence of a bond holder scheme identifying funding would be a barrier but there may be options available.

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Highlight report template

#### Highlight Report – [Insert Project title here]

<b>Project Sponsor / SRO: (Senior Responsible Owner)</b>		<b>Project Overall Risk Score – Unmitigated:</b>			
<b>Project Manager / Author:</b>		<b>Project Overall Risk Score – Mitigated:</b>			
<b>Reporting Period:</b>		<b>Reporting Date:</b>	dd/mm/yyyy		
<b>Project Status</b> RAG key:  = Major issues identified /  = Minor issues identified /  = On track					
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>
					
<b>Project Manager / Author Summary</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>					
<b>In Period Deliverables (brief overview of progress)</b>			<b>Next Period Deliverables</b>		

1. 2.	1. 2.	
<b>New Risks / Issues</b>		
Description	Priority / Severity	Mitigating Actions
<b>New Key Decisions Required</b>		<b>New Key Dependencies</b>
▪	▪	

## Appendix B – terms of reference

### OUR MISSION:

To be guardians of the Torbay story and brand

To provide a strategic, place led view and leadership for the promotion and development of the place regionally, nationally and internationally

Champion Torbay locally, nationally and internationally to attract Government investment, business investment, tourism and talent

Harnessing and aligning the power of the anchor institutions

### OUR ROLE:

- To champion and provide leadership in developing Torbay's sense of place, promoting an ethos of:
  - Ambition
  - Pace and momentum
  - Investor friendly
  - 'Can do'
  
- To oversee the positioning and promotion of Torbay as:
  - A thriving local community
  - A highly competitive location for business investment (UK and overseas)
  - A destination for visitors and tourists
  - A destination for talent (including students)
  
- To strengthen the lobbying of Government and influencing of Government policy for the benefit of Torbay, ensuring that:
  - Torbay has a clearly articulated voice in any national place orientated debate
  - We continue to attract public sector investment in infrastructure (physical and digital), skills, etc.



- Any emerging devolution proposals for Torbay are supported by a wider landscape of key stakeholders
- On behalf of Torbay, to seek and attract investment, and welcome potential investors as champions for the region.
- To provide leadership, guidance and challenge to the activities of other key stakeholders including local government and LEP, encouraging collaborative place-orientated working across Torbay, especially in relation to key cross cutting drivers of growth including skills, innovation and infrastructure.
- To act as a stakeholder-led, pan-Torbay ‘sounding board’ and ‘critical friend’ for other place related activity and to offer strategic and intellectual input into other place related strategies and plans.
- Be independent champions and spokespeople for Torbay, including undertaking media activity as required, and attend events to sell and tell our story e.g. MIPIM, MIPIM UK and other place related opportunities
- To champion and support our Torbay Together Champions (Ambassadors) programme and encourage other organisations to get involved
- To play a lead role in place led initiatives. To direct, oversee and review the Place Plan.
- To secure necessary funding to ensure the long-term viability of place related activity
- To connect with other local and regional organisations to promote the interests of Torbay
- To utilise the English Riviera and Our Torbay Story brands to promote Torbay

MEMBERSHIP (at 280624):

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Jim Parker (Chair)	Independent Chair	
Dave Thomas	Leader	Torbay Council
Anne-Marie Bond	Chief Executive	Torbay Council
Laurence Frewin	Principal and CEO	South Devon College
Liz Davenport	Chief Executive	Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust
Alan Denby	Director of Pride in Place	Torbay Council
Carolyn Custerson	Chief Executive	English Riviera BID
Chris Hart	Chair	English Riviera BID
Tracey Cabache	Community/Voluntary Rep	Torbay Community Development Trust
Jacob Brandon	Chair	Torbay Culture
Vince Flower	Business Rep	
Glenn George	Business Rep	Hi-Tech Cluster
Kevin Foster	MP	Torbay MP
Anthony Mangnall	MP	Totnes MP (includes Brixham)
Steve Reynolds	Business rep	Torbay Business Forum
Peter Knight	Business Rep	Stagecoach
Rev'd Nathan Kiyaga	Area Dean	Church of England

Alison Hernandez	Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall	OPCC
Ch. Supt. Roy Linden	South Devon Police Commander	Devon and Cornwall Police
Nick Powe	Chair	UNESCO Geopark
Lee Tozer		DWP/Jobcentre Plus
Alistair Allender	Chair	Torbay Strategic Housing Board