

ENJOY, TALK, DO, BE...
A cultural strategy for Torbay and its communities 2014-2024

commissioned by Torbay Development Agency, funded by partner Arts Council England

Strategy summary

Why this cultural strategy?

While everyone recognises the developing range and richness of cultural experiences on offer in Torbay, there's also a **desire** to 'do more, different and better' and to involve a greater number and diversity of people to achieve increased positive outcomes and make more lasting impact.

This cultural strategy provides the framework for the **drive** people are showing to work together to make that happen. Covering the whole of the cultural sector, it supports individual strategies through its collective voice and focus on what can be achieved through collaboration. It represents a key opportunity to harness the value of culture and create the conditions in which to address post-recession challenges in imaginative ways.

'There is some fantastic work in Torbay, but there is no overarching theme or plan.'

'The cultural strategy can bring everyone together to do something we're not already doing.'

What we mean by culture...

Culture is an inclusive concept that embraces a wide variety of activities, places, values and beliefs that contribute to a sense of identity and well being for everyone in our communities.

It is about our way of life and our quality of life.

Culture includes the visual and performing arts, built and natural environment, heritage, libraries, media, museums, play, sport, tourism and informal leisure pursuits. Cultural values include shared experiences and memories, our diverse backgrounds and what we consider valuable to pass on to future generations. When people contributing their views to the strategy were asked what they valued about and how they engaged in culture in Torbay, these were just some of the responses:

- connecting with the Global Geopark through the Geoquest project
- walking around the Bay
- organising the Brixham Pirate Festival
- being taken on a guided tour of Kents Cavern
- writing Torquay's 'other history'
- seeing Gormley's *Field for the British Isles* in the Spanish Barn at Torre Abbey
- buying craft at the Ceramics Festival held at Cockington Court
- playing football
- working with artists on creativity
- enjoying Children's Week
- hearing young people perform at the Torbay Schools' Festival of Performing Arts
- taking part in the Quest project with Play Torbay and professional artists, performing at Cockington Court, Greenway and Torquay Museum
- planning for the restoration of the Paignton Picture House
- having a ginger cream tea in Babbacombe

Who this strategy is for

Enjoy, talk, do, be is for anyone who influences, makes or delivers policies or whose work affects the quality of experience for those who live, work in or visit Torbay. This includes individual cultural practitioners and organisations; voluntary, community and social enterprises; the private and public sectors. It's not a Torbay Council strategy, although it's approved by them: as a partner among others, they have a key delivery role. As a 10 year strategy, it's designed to provide a shared vision, direction and way of working that drives sustainable development. Something everyone can get behind to make a positive difference.

Starting points: Torbay's cultural life

Every day developing the strategy, an inspiring story, interesting fact, illuminating experience or innovative way of working was shared about Torbay, where you can find:

- a home to Britain's earliest humans
- valued local heritage assets, some with national and international significance
- museums from the voluntary and public sectors partnering for a sustainable future
- contemporary cultural practices meeting local traditions
- more visitor attractions than any other seaside resort in the UK
- national sporting events on land and at sea
- dedicated volunteering in local sports clubs
- accessible pricing and imaginative marketing encouraging people as 'first time' exhibition visitors and audiences at performances by internationally renowned artists
- a strong community, voluntary and social enterprise sector focused on asset based community development to grow the economy from the local resource
- public, private and voluntary sector providers working together to increase young people's participation and develop their skills
- business investment in cultural activities enlivening town centres to increase footfall

These are all cause for **celebration** – along with the many other distinctive attributes and achievements that make Torbay a special place.

Consultation also evidenced consistent messages about key **challenges**:

- lack of awareness about the existing cultural offer
- low expectations and aspirations affecting engagement, participation and quality
- absent progression pathways for children and young people, particularly those from disadvantaged families and neighbourhoods
- perceived imbalances between provision for residents and visitors
- missed opportunities to share, and learn from, experience
- working approaches such as '*working round "their" way*', '*start stop*' and '*in out*' at times – resulting in isolated programming, one-off or toured in cultural activities offering a great experience in themselves, but not realising all their potential... to make local links; nurture home grown talent; build capacity; and provide for an ongoing legacy of development

People were energised to make **Enjoy, talk, do, be** the **opportunity** to respond to these challenges in a wider context of economic and social needs. They felt empowered to make culture a driver for a better quality of life in the Bay, with these desired **outcomes**:

- increased engagement and participation
- an enhanced and coherent cultural offer
- a resilient and respectful way of working

Strategy format and functions

Enjoy, talk, do, be comprises a shared **Vision**, with **Ambitions, Principles, Aims, Objectives** and **Opportunities**:

- helping everyone see the 'bigger picture' in which they play a part
- informing the prioritising of developments
- evidencing a strategic and sustainable approach

To encourage wide ownership and active use, the **Strategy** focuses on key points drawn from the consultation and research that inform future direction, rather than documenting all current cultural provision. This **Summary** acts as an introduction to the strategy document itself. For more information and detail, you can read the **Three year Delivery Plan** that includes all the strategy **Actions** and also the **Supporting context and evidence report**. These documents are hosted on the Torbay Council website.

OUR VISION

Torbay: a landscape of culture... *quality of life and opportunity enjoyed by all in a 21st century coastal location 400 million years in the making*

OUR AMBITIONS

Enjoy... enabling more people to take pleasure from cultural activities

Talk... encouraging positive exchange to share, reflect on and enhance our cultural offer

Do... inspiring more people to shape and make their own cultural experiences

Be... celebrating the uniqueness of Torbay's cultural past, present and future

OUR PRINCIPLES

People first: residents, visitors, practitioners and businesses all benefitting from and contributing to a vibrant cultural life

Pride of place: caring for our buildings, neighbourhoods, town centres, coast and countryside in the unique environment of the English Riviera Global Geopark

Joined up working: connecting, complementing and collaborating on development and change for a sustainable future

OUR AIMS

One: to increase engagement and participation in cultural opportunities in Torbay, by:

- building from the community as well as bringing in new and diverse experiences
- supporting creative and cultural learning
- harnessing the health and wellbeing benefits of culture

Two: to maximise the distinctive natural and built cultural assets of Torbay, by:

- protecting, enhancing and utilising cultural places and spaces for culture
- developing a year-round season-based rhythm of cultural events
- contributing to safe and sustainable living, working and visiting

Three: to ensure cultural development is a key contributor to economic and social development in Torbay, by:

- strengthening support for the creative and cultural economy and the benefits it brings
- sharing knowledge, skills and resources to diversify and grow the income base
- making links to and culture proofing other policies, strategies and plans

How the strategy will be implemented

A new **Torbay Culture Board**, supported by an executive post, will oversee implementation of **Enjoy, talk, do, be** and the accompanying rolling **Three year Delivery Plan**. The **Delivery Plan** shows how the actions of the Culture Board and partners deliver the strategy aims. It will be reviewed and updated every year, ensuring the overarching strategy ambitions remain relevant in a changing world, not least as different delivery partners may emerge.

The Board will comprise independent members appointed through an open recruitment process and representing key areas and interests, with local and regional policy and funding agencies in attendance.

There'll also be a **Torbay Culture Forum** – open to all with an interest and stake in cultural development in the Bay. This will meet regularly on key cross sector topics, as well as offering networking opportunities and ensuring that the strategy remains grounded, with the Board focused on its work.

Board and Forum members will nominate **Torbay Culture Ambassadors** – enthusiasts and advocates of culture, from taxi drivers to housing officers to local cultural celebrities – to champion culture with their colleagues, customers and communities.

'All working for all of us.'

Imagining the future

With this **Vision**, these **Ambitions** and **Principles**, what could Torbay be like in 10 years' time?

These were some of the views offered during the preparation of **Enjoy, talk, do, be**:

*A happy place where families are joining in...
Cutting edge, innovative, home grown culture...
People trading well, people earning well...
An offer over, above and including, the bucket and spade...
Activities and food making a more attractive, all year round experience...
Harnessing heritage as a force for good...
Taxi drivers enthusing about the Geopark...
Green spaces being valued and cared for...
A warm welcome for everyone, with confidence that the streets are clean and safe...
Great sport developed in the great outdoors...
A constant flow of activity from beach to high street – all joined up...
Open, collaborative and generous working...
Pride and ownership from local people...
The fostering of what's possible...*

Visitors will marvel at the way it is...

Wherever you go in the world, you'll be proud to say you come from Torbay...

Involvement in cultural activities helps us 'be us': knowing and expressing ourselves, experience and understanding people and world around us. Culture can be a powerful driver for development, with community-wide social, economic and environmental impacts. It can also be transformative. As one young Torbay resident taking part in a local cultural project said, 'I've gone from *I can't do this* to **I feel like a superhero.**'