

2. LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY

Torbay's strategic context

2.1 Torbay is the UK's leading long-stay holiday resort. Its three towns - Torquay, Paignton and Brixham - stretch out around a sheltered bay on the south coast of Devon. It is one of nine unitary authorities in the South West and one of the eleven principal urban areas which are recognised in Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10 - September 2001). Torbay's regional context is illustrated in Plan 2.

2.2 Although tourism dominates Torbay's economy, it has one of the nation's leading fishing ports at Brixham and a strategic concentration of high tech industry, mainly on the edge of Paignton. It has a resident population of around 130,900 (2002 mid-year estimate) which rises to around 200,000 at the height of the holiday season.

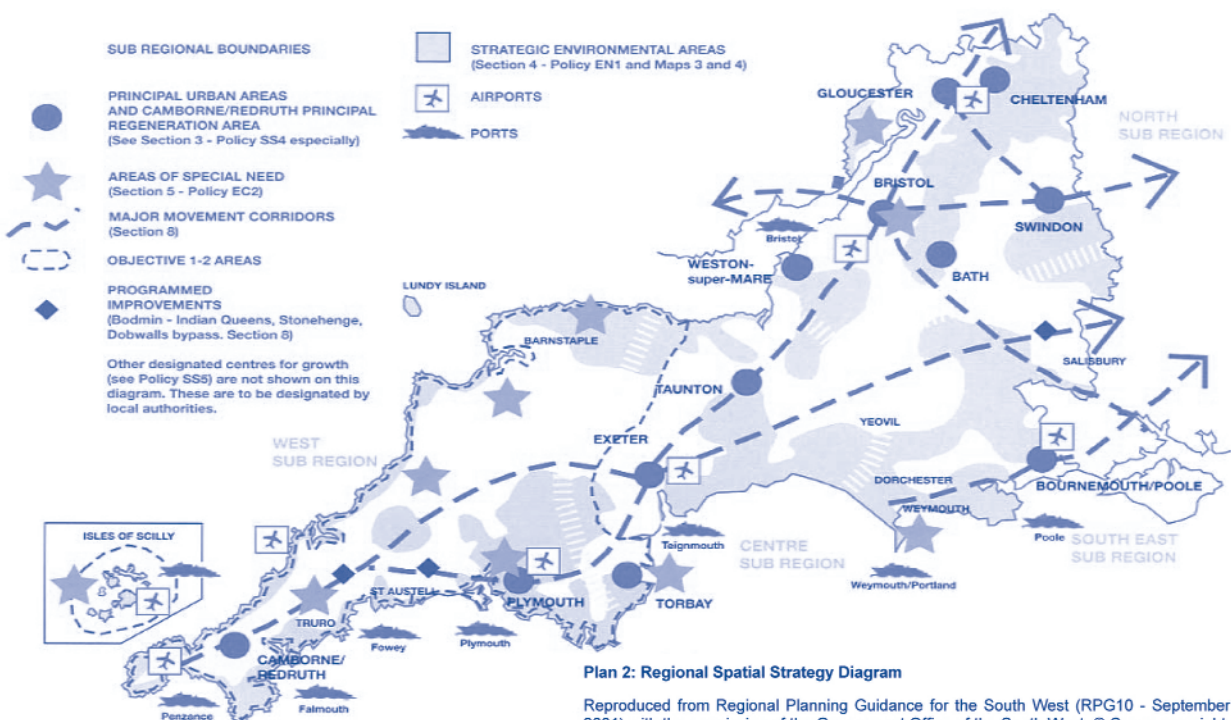
2.3 Torbay and its hinterland are inter-dependent. The South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, centred on Torbay, includes the neighbouring towns of Newton Abbot, Teignmouth and Totnes. It also embraces a large tract of South Devon, as far as Dawlish to the north-east, Dartmoor to the north and Kingsbridge to the west.

2.4 The travel to work and shopping patterns between Torbay's towns and neighbouring settlements are complex, with significant daily trips both into and out of Torbay. The 2001 Census shows that 53,543 people were employed within Torbay, of which around 70% were in full-time employment and 30% were part-time.

2.5 Torbay dominates tourism in South Devon; the 51,510 bed-spaces to be found in its hotels, guest houses, holiday centres, campsites and other forms of holiday accommodation (1999) constitute the basis of the tourism infrastructure for the South Devon sub-region. Torbay is both a touring centre for this wider area and as a result of its concentration of natural and developed attractions and facilities, it attracts holiday makers staying outside Torbay.

2.6 In several respects, Torbay is a microcosm of the South West, enjoying many of the South West's natural advantages, whilst experiencing some of the Region's classic problems. In particular, the following features are common to both Torbay and the South West:-

- Peripheral location, including:-
 - long distances from the main centres of population - Bristol, the largest city in the South West, is 100 miles away



- separation from the national dual carriageway road network and main Plymouth - Paddington railway line. Although Torbay's relative proximity to connections at Newton Abbot makes accessibility less severe than for many parts of the South West, Torbay's local access options are however further reduced by its peninsular location between the sea and the River Dart estuary

■ Attractive coastal environment, with implications for:-

- potential for a high quality of life
- high tourism potential
- heavy development pressure, some of which is generated outside the region
- severe constraints on development especially in coastal locations and in areas affected by national landscape and wildlife designations
- the need to clean up the sea by waste water treatment, to enhance tourism, quality of life, wildlife protection and good stewardship

■ Declining economy in the following sectors:-

- tourism
- fishing
- agriculture
- these problems are especially acute in coastal resorts such as Torbay, where the primary need is for regeneration - in spite of its affluent image Torbay has one of the worst economic profiles in the South West

■ High levels of migration, in particular:-

- pressures for family housing and retirement homes, much of it from outside Torbay and some from outside the region, amounting to two thirds of household growth
- many young people leave Torbay to look for work elsewhere, leading to a 'top heavy' imbalanced age structure

■ Attractive climate (high sunshine, mild winters) for:-

- working
- holidaying
- retiring
- enhancing quality of life
- encouraging inward migration

The strategic agenda

2.7 The Local Plan for Torbay cannot be prepared in isolation. In particular it has regard to:-

- Government and European legislation and planning guidance

- Regional Planning Guidance, including the Regional Transport Strategy, the Regional Development Agency's (RDA's) Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Strategy for the South West Environment 2004-2014
- Devon Structure Plan
- Other local strategies

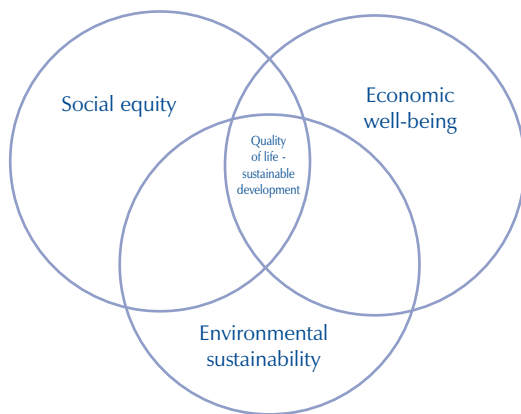
2.8 In some ways the strategic agenda is set by the above considerations, although the distribution of development and provisions for environmental protection and management of land are matters for the Local Plan. Therefore it is appropriate, at the outset, to acknowledge their relevant provisions which help to establish the strategic agenda for the Local Plan.

2.9 Government and European legislation and planning guidance set out the national and international framework which influences strategic options for the Local Plan. Several key strategic themes provide a context for the determination of the strategy and the more detailed policies and proposals in the Local Plan. These can be summarised as follows:-

- The concept of **sustainable development** has arisen from the realisation that human activity, including development, is increasingly damaging the environment, e.g. global warming, loss of wildlife species and habitats, pollution, and the eating away of finite natural resources. The aim of sustainable development is to meet our economic, social and environmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. An important principle of sustainability entails adopting a precautionary approach towards developments whose environmental impacts are uncertain. Planning plays just one part of many in advancing the principles of sustainable development. Individuals and locally based initiatives are at one end of the spectrum, with national and international legislation at the other end. The three main strands of sustainable development can be seen to relate to each other in **Figure 2**, with the maximum sustainable quality of life resulting from the overlap of all three strands. It should be noted that more recent definitions refer to a fourth strand, namely the need to make prudent use of natural resources. It is accepted that there will be times when 'trade-offs' between the different strands will be necessary. The Government's Strategy for sustainable development for the UK, 'A better quality of life' (June 1999) sets out the long-term foundation, nation-wide, for land use planning and transport policy. This is discussed in greater detail in paragraphs 2.26 - 2.48 with reference to

each of the four aims for sustainable development. The Regional Strategy for the South West Environment 2004-2014 'Our Environment: Our Future' will also be a vital reference point for the development of policy in the Local Development Framework (LDF). This is an overarching strategy, which aims to integrate more closely the protection of facets of the built and natural environment, and promote local environmental quality in the decision-making process.

Figure 2: Key strands of sustainable development



■ The Government is committed to **modernising the planning system**. It stresses that participation, openness and fairness should go hand in hand with delivering a fast and efficient planning system which delivers the certainty that the community and business interests need. The Government has signalled that long delays in preparing plans will not be tolerated. Plans should be clear, succinct and easily understood by everyone who needs to know about their policies and development proposals. They should not be over-detailed but limit themselves to:-

- development and use of land
- conservation and amenity
- improvement of the physical environment
- management of traffic

■ As a maritime authority and coastal resort, **the European Waste Water Directive** is especially relevant to Torbay, which is designated as a 'sensitive area'. The principal thrust of this Directive is that the environment must be protected from adverse effects of sewage discharges. The Local Plan has to address this critical area, in order to ensure clean seas and coastlines.

■ **Government Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs)** cover a wide range of subjects. These will

be replaced by Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) over the next few years under the new planning system. The Local Plan has to consider the guidance in the PPGs and apply it in a way which is sensitive to local concerns. In addition to PPG12 'Development Plans' (1999) the most relevant PPGs for the Torbay Local Plan are:-

PPG1	General policy and principles
PPG3	Housing
PPG4	Industrial, commercial development and small firms
PPG6	Town centres and retail development
PPG7	The countryside: Environmental quality and economic and social development
PPG8	Telecommunications
PPG9	Nature conservation
PPG10	Planning and waste management
PPG11	Regional planning
PPG13	Transport
PPG14	Development on unstable land
PPG15	Planning and the historic environment
PPG16	Archaeology and planning
PPG17	Planning for open space, sport and recreation
PPG20	Coastal planning
PPG21	Tourism
PPG22	Renewable energy
PPG23	Planning and pollution control
PPG24	Planning and noise
PPG25	Development and flood risk

2.10 The current **Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)** for the South West - RPG10 - was approved in 2001 and sets out the regional strategic framework to 2016. In particular, it stresses the concept of sustainability, which is described as the cornerstone of the Region's development plans.

2.11 Torbay is recognised in RPG10 as one of the Region's eleven main urban areas. It is also recognised as a sub-regional centre, tourist resort and fishing port, and a popular destination for inland migration. Problems of deprivation and over-dependence on tourism require substantial economic expansion, diversification and regeneration measures. Improved transport links, protection of areas of environmental importance, and avoidance of coalescence of the three towns are identified as important issues. Enhancing Brixham's role as a fishing port is also supported.

2.12 In summary, Policy SS16 of RPG10 states that policies for Torbay should:-

- recognise the need to diversify the economic base and provide investment in appropriate strategic facilities for the development of the tourist industry;
- support social and economic restructuring through regeneration, especially in town centres and at key focal points, and bring forward high quality development land to attract inward investment;
- reduce the adverse effects of a peripheral location by improving transport linkages; and
- ensure a balanced level of development with a housing provision that is consistent with meeting the area's economic objectives.

2.13 When considering the draft version of the latest RPG10, the Panel stated that the Torbay policy is "generally satisfactory in content" and that it "acknowledges the environmental and transport constraints that hinder the physical expansion of the area". The Panel also recommended the inclusion of the A380 Kingskerswell Bypass scheme within the RPG "to regenerate the Torbay area".

2.14 The Government has made it clear that in future, RPG will be the forum to debate the Region's housing figures and determine these for the Region as a whole, whilst the Structure and Local Plans will have the task of distributing that growth. However, under the new planning system Structure Plans will be abolished, placing greater onus on Local Plans / Local Development Frameworks to allocate housing land to meet the need for additional housing. The County will retain an advisory role in this process. As part of this new system, work is underway to prepare a Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which will replace RPG10, to cover the period to 2020.

2.15 The Devon Structure Plan First Review was adopted in February 1999 and sets the strategic framework for this Local Plan. Following Torbay's achievement of unitary status in April 1998, it has been one of four authorities charged with progressing the Devon Structure Plan. The emerging Structure Plan for 2001-2016 is expected to be adopted in Summer/Autumn 2004, i.e. after the adoption of the Local Plan.

2.16 The Structure Plan First Review sets out some important strategic principles and development provision. In the first instance, the RPG10 dwelling target for Devon - 99,000 dwellings over the 20 years

from 1991 to 2011 - was not accepted and following extensive debate at the Examination in Public in September/October 1997, this was reduced, primarily based on environmental constraints, particularly in South Devon.

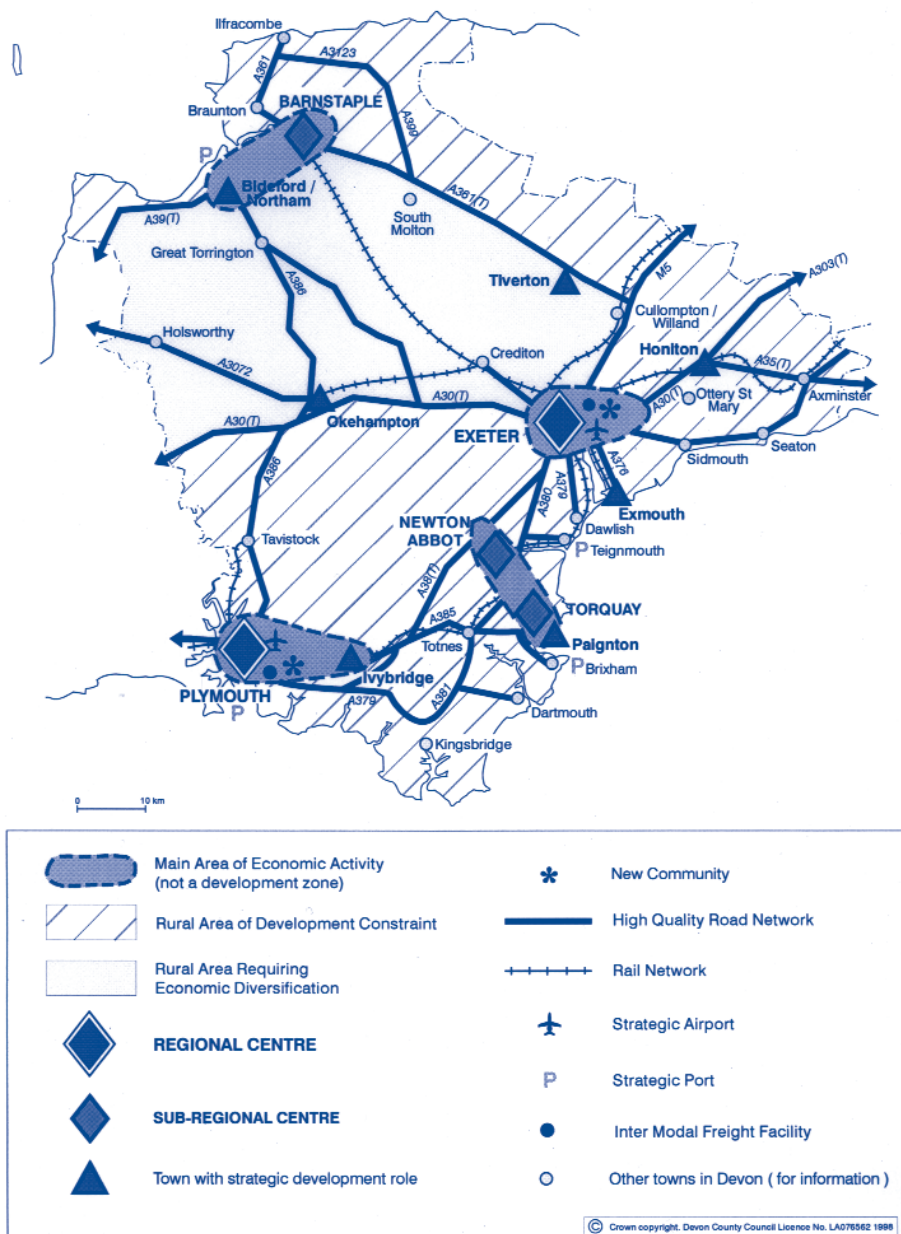
2.17 The constrained housing provision for Devon in the adopted Structure Plan is about 75,800 dwellings compared with the RPG target of 83,000 dwellings over the reduced period of 1995-2011. Torbay's total is set at 6,200 dwellings. The Structure Plan's employment provision is for about 755 hectares in Devon, with the Torbay total at 70 hectares. It also includes prestige sites in the Exeter and Plymouth areas and in Torbay.

2.18 The strategic planning framework in the Structure Plan, as illustrated by Plan 3, includes the following principles:-

- accommodating the bulk of new development in the main urban areas, including Torbay - also a corridor extending from north of Newton Abbot through Torquay to Paignton has been defined as one of the four main areas of economic activity in Devon
- minimising the development of greenfield sites, with an emphasis on brownfield development
- providing adequate infrastructure as an essential requirement of new development
- enhancing distinctive landscapes and townscapes and strongly protecting nationally designated areas, e.g. AONB, SSSIs, National Nature Reserves; County and Local Wildlife sites and important geological sites; also protecting AGLV and coast
- urban regeneration and conservation are key themes
- policies to conserve energy, water and land resources and reduce air and noise pollution
- sustainable public transport, including land use/transport integration, increase use of railways, park and ride and a limited number of highway schemes, including the A380 Kingskerswell Bypass and improvements in the Torbay Ring Road

- development of Brixham as a fishing port
- protection of the main tourist areas in coastal resorts and provision of appropriate new accommodation facilities
- two new communities, within the Plymouth and Exeter areas of influence

Plan 3: Devon Strategy Diagram



Source: Devon County Council. Devon Structure Plan First Review - 1995 to 2011. Explanatory Memorandum (July 1999).

Other local strategies

2.19 Since the granting of unitary status in April 1998, the Council has embarked on a range of new strategies, both statutory and discretionary. Many of these have land use implications for which the Local Plan has to both provide a strategic lead and also take on board, in order to facilitate the Council's corporate aspirations.

Issues the Local Plan has to address

2.20 The Local Plan has to address the various problems and challenges faced by Torbay in the context of the strategic agenda outlined in paragraphs 2.7 - 2.19. The principal issues are:-

■ The Big Picture

The community needs to determine what sort of place it wishes Torbay to become and the Local Plan has a key role in setting a framework for this to happen. Torbay has the opportunity to play its part as one of the principal urban areas in the South West and go for selected development; or it could opt for a more passive position with minimal growth or 'managed retreat'. The danger of the latter course of action is that, whilst it may appeal to those who oppose change and to some environmentalists, failure to meet the area's social and economic needs and Structure Plan provision means that a number of peripheral sites could be vulnerable to development on appeal. The unplanned, appeal-led growth would be less likely to generate the resources which could accrue if the Council, through the Local Plan, set out its strategy in a clear way and laid the foundation for UK, European and private sector funding.

In reality, zero outward growth is not a realistic option, despite recent emphasis on brownfield development. The choice is between plan-led or appeal-led development.

■ Respecting Environmental Limits

Another key issue is deciding how to allow for development to meet Torbay's needs without causing an unacceptable impact. Has Torbay reached the limit of its 'natural' boundaries? Clearly the sea is an absolute constraint, with the exception perhaps of limited land reclamation. But what of the land area? The countryside between the Dart estuary and the coast is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a nationally important designation which the Local Plan cannot

change. The Coastal Preservation Area, which protects the coastline north of Torquay and into Teignbridge, recognises a unique asset which we need to hand on to future generations.

Torbay's importance for biodiversity is reflected in the range of sites protected by national and local designations, including SSSIs and County Wildlife Sites. In addition, Torbay contains habitats of protected species, including cirl buntings, which extend beyond designated sites. Where development affecting areas of biodiversity is unavoidable, any adverse effect on the nature conservation interest must be minimised. Ideally, policies should encourage the enhancement of the natural environment.

What of the remaining countryside? Most of it is locally designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and it has been reviewed as part of the Local Plan preparation. Whilst the Plan recommends, on the basis of this review, that most of the AGLV remains and some additional areas of countryside are included as AGLV for the first time, a few small peripheral areas are identified as areas where urban development could be accommodated without causing an unacceptable impact.

It is equally important to consider the scope for development within the urban areas; this has been done through the Urban Housing Potential Study and a similar process has been undertaken to identify sites for employment areas, schools, retailing and other developments which are necessary for Torbay's future. However, it is also vital to protect and enhance urban amenities and not over-concentrate new development in urban areas to the extent that town cramming occurs. The importance of urban green spaces should be recognised in terms of their contribution to the quality of life for urban dwellers.

■ Enhancing quality of life

If the Local Plan does not set a framework for enhancing the quality of life for everyone who lives, works and visits Torbay, the Plan will have failed. In particular, the Local Plan needs to address:-

- the provision of decent housing 'across the board', including sites for the provision of sufficient levels of affordable housing in line with the proven high-level of housing need in

the Bay, including an appropriate range of housing to attract the business community and inward investment. As a community, Torbay has a wide expectation of housing needs, which need to be met;

- the need to secure full employment, including permanent, full-time jobs which will lead to a real increase in prosperity for Torbay's residents. The views of Torbay's residents, as expressed through the 1,000 strong Viewpoint panel, show extreme pessimism about employment opportunities in Torbay. In particular, they feel that job opportunities for young people are limited and that there are not enough permanent jobs in Torbay. They overwhelmingly agree with the Council's aim to improve and broaden the economic base of the area. This encompasses a thriving tourism industry, diversification into an environmentally friendly manufacturing and business/research sector, a strong retail sector and strategic improvements to the port at Brixham;
- the need for adequate facilities in health, education, sport, leisure, recreation, culture and community sectors;
- the need to recognise the wider determinants of health and well-being including economic factors, lifestyle, environment, crime and disorder, accident reduction and road safety;
- the need to clean up the sea and reduce air pollution, traffic intrusion and danger, especially in residential areas; and
- the need to ensure that the town centres and other focal points are safe, attractive and vibrant.

■ Improving accessibility and ease of movement

- whilst congestion levels in Torbay are quite low in relation to many large urban areas and other more prosperous parts of Britain, such as the South East, there are concerns that need to be addressed, as well as real opportunities for the introduction of sustainable transport solutions
- a key issue is how to plan in such a way that firstly, people will not have to travel as much and secondly, when they do travel, walking, cycling and other alternatives to the car will come more naturally to them. Most of Torbay's trips are local and the solutions will therefore

involve travel plans, cycleways, footpaths and local safety schemes, much of which is addressed in greater detail in the Local Transport Plan (2000)

- however, some schemes may be needed which involve a greater investment in infrastructure. The role of the rail network needs to be considered and the main road bottlenecks, such as the Kingskerswell Corridor, Western Corridor and Coast Route, need to be assessed holistically. Some of the review work has already been carried out and more is in the pipeline. In particular, we need to know whether existing bottlenecks are - or should be - brakes to new development on congestion and safety grounds. Improving access to and within town centres and focal points, especially for pedestrians, is another key issue for the Local Plan to address.

The Local Plan Strategy

2.21 The strategic aim of the Local Plan is ambitious - it is to provide for sustainable development that meets people's needs without harming the environment. It also sets out a resource management framework for Torbay which sits within and reflects appropriate European, national, regional and structure plan policy.

2.22 In essence, this means that the strategy should be capable of delivering the development that Torbay needs, in order to ensure that existing and future residents have access to satisfactory housing, employment, shopping, leisure and other community facilities; that its statutory obligations in relation to education, transportation and waste disposal are satisfactorily discharged; and that other essential aspects of quality of life, such as outdoor recreation and health care are not unduly hindered by the planning process.

2.23 It is of equal importance that the strategy should ensure that the most valuable aspects of Torbay's environment, such as the sea, the coastline, the areas of highest quality landscape and bio-diversity, and the most attractive and historic parts of our towns and villages, should be conserved and protected from inappropriate and harmful development. At the same time, the strategy should seek to enhance all areas, but perhaps especially those which are run down and in danger of becoming eyesores. In addition, it should support those 'flagship' areas which are the key focal points of our community, where enhancement could lead to significant environmental, economic and community benefits for everyone.

2.24 Inevitably, conflicts will arise in a community such as Torbay, with its wide range of needs and potential community agendas and opportunities, set in an extremely attractive environment, in which almost all outward growth will affect at least one environmental designation. The strategy, therefore, in addition to meeting legitimate development needs and conserving the environment, should set a framework where potential conflicts are minimised. This should provide a framework of certainty in which investment decisions and the proper development and management of land and resources can take place without undue hindrance.

2.25 In providing a sustainable land use framework, the strategy is based on the following principles, based on the Government's 'Sustainability Counts' Policy Statement (November 1998), which is reinforced by the 'A better quality of life' policy statement (June 1999):-

- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
- effective protection of the environment
- prudent use of natural resources

Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

2.26 There is an urgent need to respond to Torbay's serious economic problems. The Local Plan therefore makes provision for a wide range of employment sites throughout Torbay. Where possible, small business areas and employment sites are identified in urban areas.

2.27 However, it is necessary to identify some greenfield land within Torquay and Paignton for employment; the area in Paignton has been reduced from the area included in the Local Plan Consultation Draft (July 1996), following the AGLV review and, as a result, the Local Plan employment land provision falls short of the Structure Plan provision (70 hectares) by around 7.9 hectares (1999 figures). The reduced provision includes an allocation for a prestige business park to attract inward investment.

2.28 Provision for new tourism facilities to strengthen Torbay's key industry is considered to be essential. The Local Plan proposes regeneration of Torquay and Brixham waterfront and harbourside areas. The tourism facilities proposed at Beacon Quay have now been completed and land is identified for the expansion of Paignton Zoo at Paignton. It is also vital to secure the protection of the 'shop window' holiday areas from uses which could undermine Torbay's pre-eminence as a tourist resort. However, it is not intended to perpetuate an over-supply of holiday accommodation, particularly where this is sub-standard. To avoid this, the Principal Holiday Accommodation Areas have been reduced in size following a review of their extent, function and character.

2.29 There is a need to improve road and rail access to the national route network, including overcoming the congestion bottleneck through Kingskerswell, to the north-west of Torquay. The Local Plan also sets a framework for improving access within Torbay through a combination of integrated transport measures and the careful planning of land uses in relation to transport. Sustainable transport includes the need to encourage realistic alternatives to the car, and to increase safety and reduce environmental impact of existing and proposed transport links.

Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone

2.30 Social inclusion is vital and it is therefore important for the Local Plan to address the needs of all sections of the community. In particular, the needs of vulnerable sections, including the young, the elderly, the unemployed and those requiring affordable housing have to be addressed. Significant under-provision of the overall housing allocation will push up the value of development land and make the delivery of affordable housing more difficult.

2.31 Affordable housing proposals are included in the Local Plan. It is important to ensure a wide distribution of affordable housing which is fully integrated into the urban scene. The strategy makes provision for this and includes a significant proportion of the new stock in the inner urban areas, although it is accepted that some greenfield development will make an important contribution, provided it is well-related to public transport, schools and other community facilities.

2.32 It is important to ensure the development of mixed communities, with the appropriate provision of social as well as physical infrastructure. Policies to ensure appropriate developer contributions for schools and other facilities are included in the Plan.

Community facilities should be viewed as an integral part of the Local Plan and not as 'add ons' to be considered at a later date.

2.33 Social and economic regeneration is critical to the resort's well being. It includes major educational projects, town centre enhancement, and small business areas. The Council is seeking to set a policy framework for meeting social and economic needs in Torbay through initiatives such as Safer Communities Torbay and the Community Safety Strategy. The Groundwork Trust, in partnership with the Council, works closely with local communities on projects to improve their social and physical environment.

Effective protection of the environment

2.34 Torbay's environment is universally regarded as being of the highest quality. Its magnificent coastal setting is unique and it is protected by several environmental designations.

2.35 The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally designated policy which now has equal status to National Parks in terms of landscape value. Apart from a small area on the fringe of Brixham, much of which has been built on several decades ago, the strategy is to ensure its protection. It is also important to ensure that new development outside the AONB should not adversely impact on the AONB, and this is perhaps of particular importance in relation to the Dart Valley, to the west of Torbay.

2.36 Berry Head is protected under European legislation because of its unique grassland community. It is part of the candidate South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a designation made under the EU Habitat Directive 92/43 intended to conserve natural habitats, fauna and flora, in particular the Greater Horseshoe Bat. Prior to designation, sites will be known as "sites of community importance" and should be treated as designated SACS. Berry Head to Sharkham Point is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

2.37 Berry Head is also of recognised national importance, being a designated National Nature Reserve (NNR).

2.38 The Coastal Protection Area (CPA) is a locally designated policy, but there is increasing recognition that Torbay's coastline is a unique asset; the strategy protects the undeveloped sections from development; the converse to this is make provision for waterfront and tourism developments within the urban area.

2.39 The remainder of the countryside is affected by local landscape protection policies, primarily Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). This has recently been reviewed and overall AGLV coverage is now greater as a result of the review. AGLV is not a policy which necessarily excludes all forms of development, and the strategy seeks to afford some of these areas additional protection for two reasons:-

- the valley system, which includes Cockington Country Park, is seen as a vital green lung within Torbay and has its own unique environment, which merits strict protection from development which is not specifically geared to enhancing the attractions of the park
- Occombe Heritage Farm, with its SSSI and coastward extension to Preston Park, is another important green lung, with potential for increased public access

2.40 The desirability of keeping open areas between the main towns and villages, for townscape reasons and to reinforce their separate identities, is the basis for the Countryside Zone designation; however, it should be stressed that the Countryside Zone is not a statutory green belt and opportunities may well arise where some parts of this designation could be developed without sacrificing the overall strategic thrust of the Countryside Zone.

2.41 It is not seen as desirable to allow residential development to the west of the Ring Road; the Great Parks development was planned for at a time when Stage 3 of the Ring Road was generally accepted as a realistic alternative to the current, substandard road, and a scheme was in the TPP (now Local Transport Plan). The solutions to the problems of the Kings Ash Road section of the Ring Road are now subject to further analysis and debate; however, the basic principle remains that congestion in the area needs to be addressed, especially on Kings Ash Hill. In addition, the impact of a major highway on safety and the environment within the local community also needs to be addressed. Residential development would certainly be resisted on all other sections to the west of the Ring Road, such as in the vicinity of Galmpton.

2.42 Torbay's urban areas also contain environments which merit protection for a number of reasons:-

- the vast majority of the population live in the urban areas - the urban areas are their living, working, educational, shopping and leisure environments; urban amenities, involving open

spaces and facilities, need to be safeguarded, although it is clearly recognised that there is some development potential and a balance has to be struck

- certain parts of the urban environment have an intrinsic quality, based on townscape, wildlife, (including protected sites and species) recreational or amenity considerations, and which is worthy of protection for its own sake

2.43 The strategy aims to locate as much development on previously used or 'brownfield' land within the urban areas as is practicably possible, without causing environmental problems through over-development or town cramming. The windfall potential, based on the Urban Housing Potential Study together with larger urban sites identified as Local Plan housing proposals, has enabled around 65% of Torbay's housing provision for the Plan period to be implemented on previously used sites. This is in excess of the Government's target of 60% and the South West regional target of 50%.

Prudent use of natural resources

2.44 One of the greatest natural resources in and around Torbay - if not the greatest - is the sea. Society's tolerance concerning use of the sea as a repository for untreated waste is running out. Moreover, it is vital that Torbay's success as a holiday resort - and hence success for a huge section of its economy - is not hampered by a polluted sea and dirty beaches. There are also significant public health issues at stake. A key element in Torbay's strategy is the new combined waste water treatment works, which is intended to ensure that the current system of untreated waste being discharged into the sea becomes history well within the Plan period.

2.45 The strategy of meeting Torbay's needs for employment, shopping and other facilities within the Council's area and, where possible, close to housing areas, will reduce the need to travel and thereby reduce the consumption of fuel for, and pollution from, transport.

2.46 The strategy also aims to encourage a modal shift from the current high level of dependence on the private car to alternative forms of transport. This again will reduce fuel consumption and pollution if the strategy is successful.

2.47 Torbay has important terrestrial resources; attractive coastal and inland countryside which is a major factor in drawing people to the resort; important

wildlife resources - Torbay is one of the most diverse parts of the country according to English Nature; and high quality agricultural land. Torbay also contains internationally important geology and archaeology. The strategy aims to protect these areas from development and seeks their enhancement where possible. Planning agreements may be appropriate to achieve nature conservation objectives.

Difficult choices

2.48 In addressing the diverse aspects of sustainable development described above, difficult choices have to be made. Whilst the Local Plan generally constrains development in relation to demand on environmental grounds, there are two main exceptions on social and economic grounds:-

- the provision for affordable housing is in line with the recommendation of the housing needs survey and it is essential to ensure that market pressures do not divert the Plan off course; conversely overall housing provision in the Structure and Local Plan is constrained at around 17% below the demographically implied provision; and
- the provision of employment land, which at 62.10 hectares is about 11% below the Structure Plan requirement.

The Local Plan objectives

2.49 Arising from the strategy, a set of objectives has emerged. These are useful in providing a basis for the environmental appraisal of the Local Plan, which has been prepared alongside the formulation of the Local Plan policies and proposals.

2.50 These Local Plan objectives are set out in Figure 3:-

Figure 3: Strategic statement, aims and objectives of the Local Plan

STRATEGIC STATEMENT

The Local Plan aims to achieve sustainable development that meets the housing, social and economic needs of everyone whilst respecting and protecting the rural, urban, marine and global environment. In this context the Local Plan seeks to provide a framework for a constrained level of growth within the context of sustainability set out in the Devon Structure Plan, Regional Planning Guidance and Government policy advice.

AIM 1: CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

To ensure that the high quality and diversity of Torbay's urban, rural and marine environment is conserved and enhanced for the benefit of existing and future generations.

Objectives:-

1. To secure a sustainable environment for the benefit of existing and future generations.
2. To protect areas of significant wildlife and landscape value from pressure arising from built development, visitors or other sources.
3. To protect the best and most versatile agricultural land and encourage appropriate forms of diversification in the use of lower quality agricultural land, where this would not adversely affect its wildlife value, including the retention of an agriculturally viable urban fringe.
4. To retain the separate identities of the Bay's main towns and villages and contain as much new development as possible within the existing urban areas.
5. To conserve and enhance areas and buildings of architectural and historic interest.
6. To restore unused, degraded and derelict land to beneficial use.
7. To ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to its surroundings and in particular to respect and enhance natural features where possible.
8. To limit urban growth to what is necessary to meet the needs of Torbay and in particular to ensure that no new major residential development is permitted to the west of the Ring Road.
9. To conserve, manage and enhance the natural features, wildlife and habitats of the terrestrial and marine environment for the benefit of current and future generations.

AIM 2: MEETING THE AREA'S HOUSING NEEDS

To provide for an appropriate range of housing to meet the needs of residents.

Objectives:-

1. To offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home and promote social cohesion, well-being and self-dependence by providing a choice of house types, densities and locations.

2. To maximise the re-use of previously developed land and buildings and encourage the retention of older housing stock, as part of a sequential approach of land development to assist regeneration, minimise greenfield development and help reduce the need to travel.
3. To ensure the provision of affordable housing including starter homes, social housing and other specialised accommodation to meet the requirements of residents, including those who would not be provided for by the open market.
4. To require a high standard of design and layout, which provides safe and secure accommodation and meets the requirements of vulnerable groups.
5. To protect residential amenity by resisting inappropriate development in residential areas.
6. To ensure the provision of appropriate levels of open space and the provision of social and physical infrastructure.

AIM 3: IMPROVING ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

To provide the land use framework in which economic prosperity and the employment prospects of the workforce can be developed and improved.

Objectives:-

1. To provide an appropriate level of employment land in accordance with the Structure Plan.
2. To provide for the economic diversification of the local economy from an over-reliance of tourism to include office and commercial development, new technology businesses and appropriately sited business parks, in addition to sites for light industry.
3. To ensure that the maximum potential is secured from designated employment land and to safeguard both existing and proposed employment land and buildings from other uses.
4. To provide for the future of the tourism industry, sustaining the essential base of the tourism infrastructure and ensuring adequate protection of existing hotel stock and other forms of holiday accommodation from change to inappropriate uses, especially within the main 'shop window' areas.
5. To allow for the loss of holiday accommodation in premises which are no longer viable or practicable for continued holiday use, and which are inappropriately located, and to support appropriate changes of use of such accommodation.

6. To sustain and enhance the three town centres as the dominant shopping centres and commercial focal points by a range of improvements to their retail role and services and by ensuring they are not undermined by new shopping provision elsewhere.
7. To support the needs of the fishing industry, in a sustainable manner.
8. To secure satisfactory infrastructure and good road access to serve existing and proposed employment sites.
9. To provide a framework to optimise the benefit from regional assistance and other grants.
10. To recognise the contribution that a high quality natural environment makes to the economy of Torbay, including the agricultural and environmental value of the urban fringe.

AIM 4: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND LEVELS OF SERVICE

To ensure that everyone, including disadvantaged and minority groups, living and working in Torbay in addition to visitors, has access to a range of services and facilities which will improve the quality of life.

Objectives:-

1. To ensure adequate education, health, social, religious and other community facilities to meet the needs of Torbay's population.
2. To encourage provision of facilities for people with special needs, particularly the elderly, the disabled, single parent families, 'care in the community' groups and other special needs groups.
3. To ensure that the impact of new development does not prejudice the amenities of adjoining residents.
4. To identify a range of initiatives and procedures which can be used to implement the 'Designing Out Crime' concept, to secure crime prevention.
5. To secure adequate leisure and recreation facilities to serve the needs of Torbay's population and improve access to the countryside and areas of high quality environment.
6. To improve the quality of Torbay's beaches and coastal zones, including (where appropriate) securing better access and providing for competing demands for water sports in a safe environment.

AIM 5: A SAFE AND CONVENIENT TRANSPORT SYSTEM

To secure an integrated transport system which encourages the safe and convenient movement of people and goods and reduces the dependence on motor vehicles.

Objectives:-

1. To improve accessibility, for all sectors of the community and visitors to Torbay, to goods, services and employment, particularly the town centres and other focal points, including safe routes for access to and from the countryside around Torbay.
2. To reduce the environmental impact of travelling to an acceptable level, whilst maintaining adequate accessibility and mobility.
3. To secure improved integration between transport and land use.
4. To ensure that new development does not cause unacceptable congestion.
5. To support public transport, and to seek integration with the private car through schemes such as park and ride.
6. To ensure the satisfactory provision of off-street parking space especially in town centres and key holiday areas.
7. To maintain and improve the existing highway network to provide the maximum efficiency of use whilst reducing congestion, accidents and environmental impact.
8. To encourage cycling and walking, through the provision of attractive networks of footpaths and cycle routes and the reduction of conflicts with motor vehicles.
9. To ensure movement of freight is adequately controlled and suitable provision made so that penetration of lorries and commercial vehicles into residential areas, pedestrian zones and focal points can be achieved without unacceptable environmental consequences.
10. To improve conditions for pedestrians in residential areas, town centres and other concentrations of pedestrian activity.
11. To seek to reduce pollution from vehicles in pursuit of Aim 6.

AIM 6: ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GLOBAL WARMING

To promote the conservation of energy and the reduction of levels of pollution as a commitment towards reducing global warming.

Objectives:-

1. To encourage development in locations which reduce the need for car journeys and the distance driven, or which permit the choice of more energy efficient public transport, cycling or walking, as alternatives to the private car.
2. To encourage development which:-
 - (i) makes full and effective use of land in urban areas;
 - (ii) is well related to the public transport network;
 - (iii) attracts trips to town centres and other nodal points, and;
 - (iv) minimises car use for journeys to work, school and other local facilities.
3. To encourage:-
 - (i) control of the location of further town centre parking;
 - (ii) appropriate inter-change facilities between major public transport networks; and
 - (iii) facilities to assist walking and cycling.
4. To encourage the conservation of energy and natural resources in the design and construction of buildings. Recognition should also be given to the benefit of retaining older buildings which represent a considerable investment of resources as well as preserving the character of Torbay.

AIM 7: PROVISION OF A SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE

To ensure the provision of a satisfactory and sustainable infrastructure to serve the development needs of Torbay and to reduce terrestrial and marine pollution to an acceptable level.

Objectives:-

1. To establish a framework which allows for developer contributions to ensure the provision of adequate physical infrastructure, including off-site works to serve the expected increase in population and commercial and industrial development.
2. In the event of shortfalls in water supply, sewerage and sewage treatment, to phase development to allow proper time to ensure that the provision of these utilities can be managed and/or augmented in a satisfactory manner.

