

## Section 2

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# Understanding Torpoint

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This section of the Vision sets the scene. It describes Torpoint in context and outlines its community and socio-economic profile. It also describes strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and outlines the results of extensive public consultation.



### Project programme



## Understanding Torpoint

The Vision has been developed out of an understanding of some of the key issues that affect the fortunes of the town. In particular, reference has been had to existing and emerging planning policy, transportation initiatives, socio-economic considerations and other technical considerations.

The consultant team assisting the town in formulating the Vision has visited extensively at different times of the day and year – including guided visits by steering group members, regular project update sessions with the Town Council and numerous one to one meetings with important stakeholders in the town. The team has also undertaken its own analysis and review of Torpoint.

In addition to this technical assessment of the town, extensive engagement with

residents and businesses has taken place throughout the project - providing a uniquely informed local perspective on what works, what **does not** and how things could be improved.

Consultation has included – a web-based questionnaire; a participatory event at the Town Carnival; a public exhibition day in the town hall; consultation event at the Jetty with local business representatives; website and social media communications; posters throughout the town; posting of 3,500 leaflets to local residents; and a road show taking the Vision to various locations throughout the town including schools and the library.







## Understanding Torpoint

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Stakeholder sessions have included – Cornwall Council officers (planning, community, estates); the Head Teacher of Torpoint Nursery and Infant School; local landowners; a Ministry of Defence representative; The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee representatives; Devon and Cornwall Constabulary; Antony Estate; Rame Neighbourhood Plan representatives; Rame parish councillors; the local Member of Parliament; and local councillors.

In summary some of the key issues to be identified include:

- People like Torpoint – there are many positive things about the town including the local community that people want to hold onto;
- Improving the bottom end of town – the redundant post-war public buildings currently let the image of the town down at an important gateway;
- Making the waterfront better – the waterfront is a unique asset of the town that needs to be improved and have a bigger role;
- Enhancing the town parks particularly Thanckes Park – another major asset that could be significantly enhanced;
- Building on existing leisure and sports facilities – whilst generally well placed for facilities there is a strong desire to see an all weather pitch, a swimming pool and new rugby facilities;
- Developing shopping choice – many people shop out of town and there is a strong voice amongst residents for a new food store and better general shopping variety;
- Providing more housing to meet the needs of local people – there is a

general acceptance that more housing needs to be provided in the town both to house local people and support local infrastructure (schools, shops, community facilities etc);

- Creating employment opportunities – ensuring that jobs are available for local people is crucial to the balance of life in the town;
- More efficient transport – Torpoint and the Rame Peninsula are isolated from main transport arteries in Devon and Cornwall this makes it even more important that water transport, road, public transport, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure are efficient and of the highest quality to keep the local economy moving;
- Walks around the waterfront and into wider countryside – these are a great asset that need to be looked after and improved where possible;
- Supporting Fore Street – this is the main shopping street for Torpoint and the wider peninsula and local shops need as much support as possible to survive and thrive;
- Improving the overall image of the town for residents and visitors – a revitalised civic pride is necessary to improve the quality and appearance of the town environment.

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60% 

of residents do their food shop outside of Torpoint

From responses at the Town Carnival

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The Carew Pole family still reside at Antony House.



The UK's main Navy training centre at HMS Raleigh



## About Torpoint



260,000

Plymouth

Torpoint (Penntorr) is a small Cornish town on the Rame Peninsula with a population of 7,717 according to the 2011 census.

The town is remote from the main road and rail routes into South East Cornwall and this has contributed towards the peninsula itself becoming known as 'the forgotten corner' of Cornwall. The population of Rame as a whole is approximately 13,000 – including smaller village settlements such as Sheviock, Millbrook (the biggest village in Cornwall – population 2,278), Crafhole, St John, Antony, Wilcove, Kingsand and Cawsand.

The City of Plymouth lies on the other side of the Tamar River from Torpoint. It has a population of approximately 260,000 plus a wider hinterland creating a catchment population of in the region of 400,000. The Torpoint Chain Ferry links the town with Plymouth. The ferry is the biggest of its type in the world and carries over 1 million vehicles per year.

Historically, Torpoint has always had very close ties with Plymouth. Its original purpose was very much related to the fortunes of the dockyard in Plymouth. The grid of streets forming the distinctive centre of Torpoint was laid out in the Eighteenth Century to a town plan commissioned by Reginald Pole-Carew in 1774. The Carew Pole family – still reside at Antony House.

Today the strong ties with Plymouth remain. Whilst Torpoint has its own independent community infrastructure, many residents rely on Plymouth for jobs, shopping, education, leisure and recreation and the use of the wide range of other facilities that are available in the city. The UK's main Navy training centre at HMS Raleigh, and the fuel storage depot at Wilcove mean that there are direct operational connections between Torpoint and the Dockyard.





Trevol Business Park



An older than average population



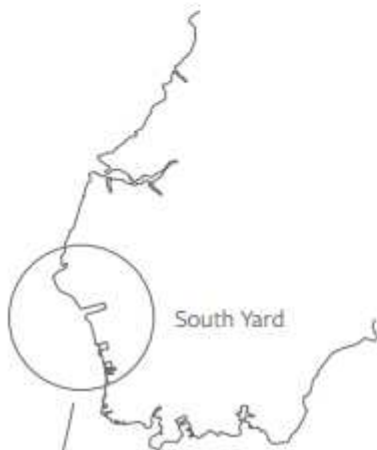
The UK's main Navy training centre at HMS Raleigh



Enterprise Court



## Context – Economic



Torpoint's proximity to Plymouth offers a number of significant economic opportunities into the future



The Torpoint Ferry generally provides a more direct, regular and efficient way of reaching the peninsula



Relatively low skills base and a limited supply of appropriate and easy to develop sites

'The town centre is a key issue – if regenerated it could provide an attractive high quality centre of local shops and services, mixed-use development with suitable premises for modern business services. It has the potential to be competitive and attract businesses that serve Plymouth and the Rame Peninsula from an attractive waterfront.'

Cornwall Towns Study - 2006

Relative to other settlements in Cornwall, Torpoint has a small local centre that includes a range of retail and other services.

There are some local employment sites including Trevol on the northwest edge of the town and Enterprise Court in the centre on the waterfront. HMS Raleigh is the major local employer.

The economic make-up of Torpoint is influenced by its close proximity to parts of Plymouth, its role serving the wider catchment of the Rame Peninsula and its relative inaccessibility to the rest of Cornwall. Currently a significant proportion of the local labour force commute to work in Plymouth.

The town centre currently feels tired and portrays a poor image for the town as a whole – this requires particular attention. The creation of an attractive and lively town centre that relates well to the waterfront could play a major role in securing better fortunes for the town and as a result develop better employment prospects, and improve the quality of retail and other services for local residents.

Other key constraints include an older than average population, a relatively low skills base and a limited supply of appropriate and easy to develop sites on the waterfront and in the town centre.

The remote location and constrained access of Torpoint contribute in some ways to its economic characteristics. In part its geography has a bearing on fewer local job opportunities – one of the factors influencing an older than average age profile.

Whilst road access is possible it is somewhat convoluted – involving doubling back on oneself if the journey is into Cornwall from Devon across the Tamar Bridge. The Torpoint Ferry generally provides a more direct, regular and efficient way of reaching the peninsula, although its passage can be disrupted from time to time by weather, mechanical issues, and seasonal fluctuations in demand.

Torpoint's proximity to Plymouth offers a number of significant economic opportunities into the future – including those associated with the Dockyard and the Plymouth City Deal. If Torpoint can position itself in the right way by establishing a stronger town centre and civic identity there is potential for significant benefits.



Carbeile Junior School



Thanckes Park

Torpoint Community College

Torpoint Nursery and  
Infant School



a shopping focus around Fore  
Street in the town centre.

## Context – Community



Falls short of affordable housing and employment opportunities

64%

of the overall population was of working age in 2011



Over a quarter are employed in 'Education' locally



Public transport is a particular concern to residents

Torpoint has a strong and active local community that is interested in the fortunes of the town.

It also has a good range of local community facilities including high quality schools (Torpoint Nursery and Infant School, Carbeile Junior School and Torpoint Community College), a range of local leisure facilities, great town parks – most notably Thanckes Park, a new health complex at Trefol, and a shopping focus around Fore Street in the town centre.

Whilst Torpoint does have a wide range of community facilities it falls short in relation to the availability of affordable housing, employment opportunities for local people and public transport coverage and regularity – this is of particular concern to residents in connecting the town with the new community facilities at Trefol. Parts of the town have also been identified as having significant socio-economic deprivation indicators.

Approximately 64% of the overall population was of working age in 2011 and there were in the region of 335 employers in the Torpoint area. The main sectors for business types were 'Retail' and 'Accommodation and food services'. In terms of actual numbers employed locally over a quarter are employed in 'Education'.

According to the 2001 census about half of those employed worked in Torpoint itself and around a third of the total commuted to Plymouth. There was also evidence to show that a significant number of people commute into Torpoint to work.





## Context – Planning

Torpoint enjoys a stunning waterfront location on the River Tamar and is a gateway into Cornwall.

The wider Rame Peninsula, within which the town is located, has a beautiful natural environment and includes two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Mount Edgumbe Country Park and the Antony Estate. Rame also has a rich historic and cultural legacy, fabulous beaches including Whitsand Bay, historic fishing villages such as Cawsand and Kingsand and attractions including the South West Coastal Footpath.

For planning purposes the town falls within the Cornwall Gateway Network Area – one of a series of 'Network' areas identified in the emerging Cornwall Local Plan.

The wider Network area had a population of 32,750 in 2011 and includes the larger settlements of Liskeard and Saltash. The emerging Cornwall plan has identified that 350 new homes need to be developed in Torpoint during the local plan period.

At the local level, neighbourhood plans are emerging for the five parishes outside of Torpoint on the Rame Peninsula, and for Torpoint – for which this Vision forms an important part of the evidence base. These plans will form an integral part of the suite of local Development Plan documents that have a relationship with the Cornwall Local Plan.







## Context – SWOT

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### Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Torpoint has strengths that mean it is unique in a number of ways.

Most notably the town has a stunning waterfront setting, is close to Plymouth, has a beautiful hinterland, is a gateway to Cornwall and benefits from the Torpoint Chain Ferry. By building upon these unique characteristics Torpoint will be better placed to set itself apart.

At present there are a number of weaknesses that are working against the prospects of the town. These include the image of the town centre and the waterfront, a lack of job opportunities, tired appearance, and the lack of visibility of the centre.

Opportunities exist to address some of these weaknesses by building upon the strengths of the town. For example, by delivering projects that improve the waterfront, the 'bottom end of town' and Fore Street and create a better relationship between them.

If it is not possible to realise some of the opportunities identified and begin to generate improved socio economic fortunes there are a number of threats to the future. These include – a lack of investment, a worsening in the number and quality of shops and services, an undersupply of affordable housing, a decline in the image of the town to visitors and as a result a reduction in the confidence of potential investors, fewer jobs for local people and an on-going reduction in the quality of the town environment.

It is essential that the town will be stimulated into positive change – emphasis on quality, establishing a new civic pride and regenerating the town centre needs to underpin this. This way the change can be transformational.



Proximity to Plymouth



A strong community



Historic buildings... as assets



A rich historic legacy...



A waterfront location



A beautiful hinterland



The Torpoint Ferry



Green assets



## Strengths

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Proximity to Plymouth – a population of 260,000 and a wider hinterland

A strong local community – nearly 8,000 people

A stunning waterfront – views onto the Tamar Estuary

The Torpoint Chain Ferry – over 1.2 million vehicles per year

A beautiful hinterland – the Rame Peninsula

A rich historic legacy – buildings, history and town plan

HMS Raleigh – the Navy’s main training centre

A gateway to Cornwall – the hidden corner of Cornwall

Community infrastructure – schools, parks, green spaces and facilities



A gateway to Cornwall



Road dominates



General tired appearance



Town centre and ferry separate



Disconnected from waterfront



Waterfront potential not realised



Where is the town centre?



Town centre split by Harvey Street



Public facilities out of date

## Weaknesses

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The image of the town – a poor appearance at the gateway to Cornwall, Rame and Torpoint

A tired appearance – a lack of civic quality

The bottom end of town – tired and in need of redevelopment

Waterfront – a big asset that needs to be realised

Lack of visibility of the town centre – 1.2 million vehicles pass through per year

Waterfront and town centre separate – they could support one another

Harvey Street – a poor image for Torpoint along the main route

Shopping quality and variety – many people do their weekly food shop out of Torpoint/Fore Street needs to be better

A lack of affordable housing – a need for more housing for locals

Employment opportunities – for local people



Poor image and first impression



Providing housing for local people



A better waterfront - making the most of the unique asset



Feeling part of Rame



Redevelopment - bottom end of town



The 'hidden corner'



Improving the gateway to town



Better connections to Plymouth

## Opportunities

A better waterfront – making the most of the unique asset

Redevelopment at the bottom end of town – ensuring a high quality area

Improving the gateway into town – improving the experience and quality of the environment

Enhancing Harvey Street – the main spine through town

Parking – make it easier for people to park in and around the centre

Connect the waterfront and the town centre – a more joined-up place

Better connections to Plymouth – water transport

Feeling part of Rame – a new civic quality

Providing housing – for local people

An entrance to Rame and Cornwall – make more of this

Benefit from investment in Plymouth – proximity to a big population and the City Deal

The ‘hidden corner’ – make the most of the remote geography



Connect the waterfront and the town centre



Social-economic deprivation



Lack of investment



Decline in the quality of the town



Young people continue to migrate away



Fewer jobs for local people



Existing community facilities become unviable



Decline in the number of shops

## Threats

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Lack of investment

Decline in the number and quality of shops and services

Under supply of affordable housing

Worsening of the image of the town to visitors

Reduction in confidence of potential investors

Fewer jobs for local people

On-going decline in the quality of the town environment

Worsening of socio-economic deprivation

Negative impacts on wider Rame Peninsula

Existing community facilities become unviable

Young people continue to migrate away from the area



Worsening of the image of the town to visitors





## What do local people think?

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Left  
Selection of photographs  
from consultation events  
during 2015.

The Vision has been developed out of a good understanding of what the people of Torpoint think about their town.

Extensive consultation has included: a web-based questionnaire; a participatory event at the Town Carnival; a public exhibition day in the town hall; consultation evening at the Jetty with local business representatives; website and social media communications; posters throughout the town; posting of 3,500 leaflets to local residents; and a road show taking the Vision to various locations throughout the town including schools and the library.

In addition there have been a variety of stakeholder meetings throughout the period in which the Vision has been developed.

What Torpoint residents think about the town?



Open space



Leisure facilities



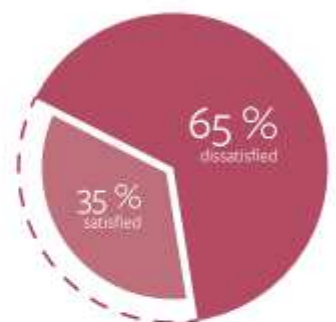
Community facilities



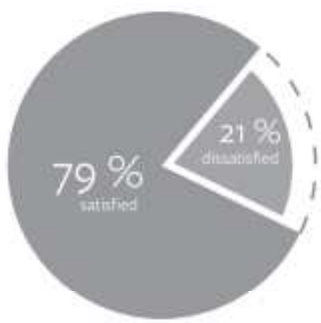
Renewable energy



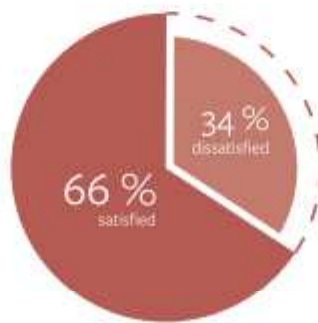
Housing



Transport



Education



Wildlife



The waterfront

## What do local people think?

### A questionnaire

During the summer of 2015 volunteers from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group prepared a questionnaire for local people to respond to.

The questionnaire was posted online and residents of Torpoint were invited to tell the Group what they thought about the town and how it might be improved.

The response from the community was fantastic. Over 1,500 questionnaires were completed. This enabled the project team to understand some of the key issues for people in the town.

The questionnaire asked some general questions but also asked specifically what people thought about: open space, leisure facilities, community facilities, renewable energy, housing, transport, education, wildlife and the waterfront.

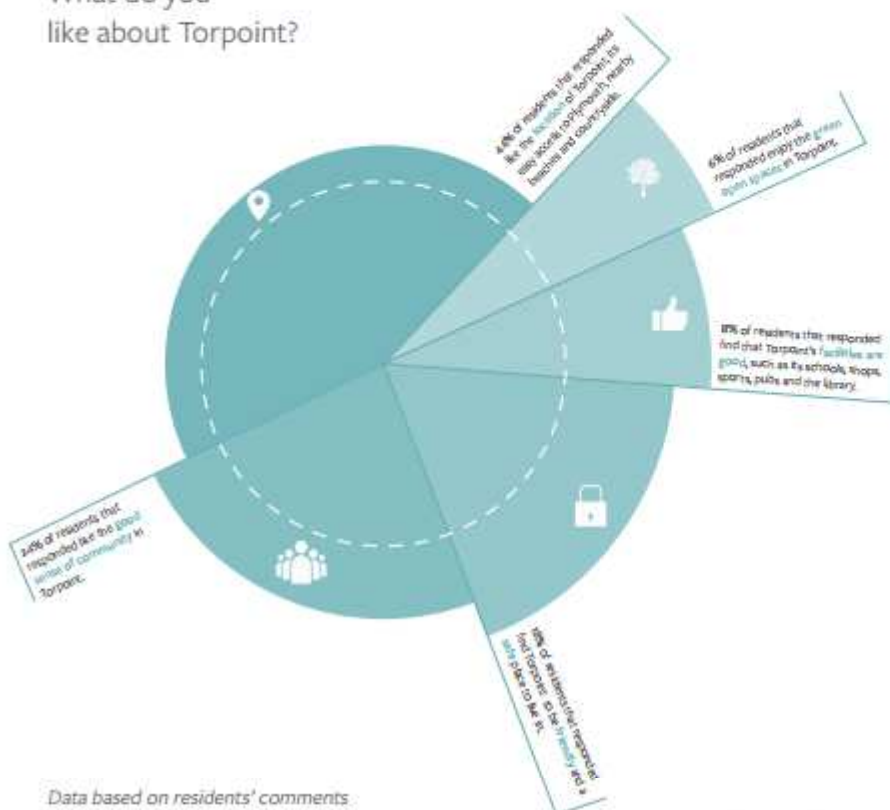
Whilst many ideas came forward as part of this exercise it is not possible to deliver all suggestions. An important role of the Vision is to identify those things that can be delivered and would be of benefit to the overall quality of Torpoint and those that are more difficult to achieve. The Vision identifies key projects within an overall strategy so that they can influence the nature and quality of change and build a momentum – it does not attempt to identify everything that might happen in the future.

Some of the most common themes that came through from community responses to the questionnaire include:

Improving the bottom end of town; making the waterfront better; enhancing the town parks – particularly Thanckes Park; building on existing leisure and sports facilities - including a new all weather pitch and town swimming pool (a very difficult challenge due to running costs); developing shopping choice; providing more housing to meet the needs of local people; creating employment opportunities; more efficient transport – buses, the ferries, pedestrian and cycle routes and parking; walks around the waterfront and into wider countryside; supporting Fore Street; improving the overall image of the town for residents and visitors.

A summary of responses to the questionnaire is in Appendix 4.

What do you like about Torpoint?



Data based on residents' comments in the initial questionnaire (Torpoint Neighbourhood Development Plan Initial Questionnaire Detail, data date: 09.07.15).



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## What do local people think?

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Below  
Image of the carnival  
consultation and the  
stickers used for members  
of the public to highlight  
the parts of the town they  
think could be improved.

### Torpoint Carnival

The town Carnival took place at Cambridge Field on 12th September 2015. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was present to invite people to share their views about the future of the town.

People were invited to complete a form asking how they thought the town could be improved. They were also invited to place topic-based stickers onto a large plan of the town. This helped to build a picture of where people thought that changes could be instigated in the town.

Improvements to: the town waterfront, shopping facilities, Fore Street, parks and

open space, bus services, the bottom end of town through redevelopment and leisure facilities – including consideration of a town swimming pool – were all clear messages from this exercise. In many ways reinforcing the results from the summer questionnaire.

About 130 forms were completed and it is estimated that 350 people visited the Neighbourhood Plan tent. People were also asked where they do their weekly food shop – 60% of respondents said that they shopped outside of Torpoint.

A summary of responses to the Carnival questionnaire is in Appendix 6.





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## What do local people think?

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### Public exhibition

On 21st November 2015 a public exhibition took place at the Town Hall giving local people the opportunity to view and ask questions about emerging ideas for the Vision.

The emerging Vision was presented to the audience on three separate occasions during the day, by members of the project team. Exhibition panels were available for people to read, view and ask questions about – members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and consultant team were on hand to explain the process and answer questions.

Approximately 130 people attended the event and around 80 feedback forms were completed. The presentation was recorded and subsequently uploaded onto the Neighbourhood Plan website.

Attendees were invited to take away leaflets about the emerging ideas and subsequently a further 3,500 leaflets were circulated throughout the community. This generated further feedback resulting in refinement of the Vision ideas.



‘The town centre is a key issue – if regenerated it could provide an attractive high quality centre of local shops and services, in mixed-use development with suitable premises for modern business services. It has the potential to be competitive and attract businesses that serve Plymouth and the Rame Peninsula from an attractive waterfront.’