

Totnes Town Council Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Our Local Environment			Prioritisation
Strategic Objectives What we are aiming to do	Actions What we will do	Why we will do it	What comes first. Short, medium & long term
To protect and improve access to civic spaces, open spaces, green spaces and blue spaces.	Contribute to and finalise the Totnes Town Council (TTC) Open Space, Sport, Recreation and Wellbeing (OSSRW) review for the Totnes Town Council area.	Although Totnes is surrounded by countryside and estuarial waters, there is a shortage of publicly available open spaces. The results of the OSSRW review will identify the scale of the shortfall to enable protection and future planning.	S Convene a local environment task and finish working group to prioritise actions and review progress.
	Lobby South Hams District Council (SHDC) to redevelop the civic square.	The civic square is in desperate need of upgrading, it is the centre of the town, location of the popular town markets and could be so much more with some much-needed investment.	S/M Continue to lobby SHDC through our district council representatives. High priority
	Support and enable community groups that contribute to this strategic objective through the provision of community grant funding, signposting and partnership working.	Supporting and enabling local community groups that have a passion for delivering change to the local area should give a much greater return than the Town Council trying to deliver too much.	S/M Ensure that the grant prioritisation process reflects this strategy.
	Proactively support local initiatives to safeguard the River Dart as a major asset.		S/M Ensure regular contact and feedback from community groups through updates from link councillors and support through community grants.

<p>Ensure that future development is suitable, sustainable and addresses local needs.</p>	<p>Continue to review and respond to planning applications.</p> <p>Contribute to reviews of the Joint Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure where possible that any new developments address the shortfall in truly affordable homes, protect employment space, have the least impact on the environment and wherever possible improve biodiversity and public access to open spaces.</p>	<p>The Town Council is a statutory consultee to the local planning process, and this gives us an opportunity to represent the views of local residents and businesses.</p> <p>To try and ensure that new developments of all kinds contribute positively to the built environment and are sympathetic to the unique historic qualities of the town centre and setting.</p> <p>To ensure where possible that any new developments address the shortfall in truly affordable homes (either socially/private rented or owned) Protect employment space and represent best practice in sustainable building. These are things that residents have told us they are concerned about.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>
<p>Secure and celebrate heritage assets in our town.</p>	<p>Support and enable community groups that contribute to this strategic objective through the provision of community grant funding, signposting and partnership working.</p>	<p>Totnes has a wealth of historic assets and the potential to make more of them</p>	<p>Convene a forum for heritage groups to explore appetite for collaboration. (also in Local Community strategy)</p>
<p>Ensure that Totnes is a clean safe and attractive place for current and future generations to live work and visit.</p>	<p>To identify risks and issues in our area that need to be addressed and create a plan for how this can be achieved, either.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly by TTC. • collaborating with businesses. • collaborating with and holding to account other authorities like SHDC and Devon and Cornwall police. • liaising with owners of buildings and infrastructure. 	<p>Totnes is generally a safe, attractive, friendly and beautiful place to live, work and visit.</p> <p>However long-standing research tells us that where issues such as poor building maintenance, graffiti, vandalism and anti-social behaviour are not addressed, an area can quickly deteriorate. (often referred to as broken window theory)</p>	<p>S/M</p> <p>Task and finish working group to agree a simple process of recording the issues in Totnes, identifying solutions and reviewing progress.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> challenging poor delivery of services by others supporting community groups. to promote local initiatives that aim to protect the environment address climate change and enhance biodiversity. 	The Town Council has declared a climate emergency and will seek to work on initiatives to address climate change, particularly where there is a positive impact for local people.	
	Create a risk and issues register to ensure that identified issues are logged and where possible addressed or referred to the relevant authority/ provider.	To ensure we can achieve the above aims and to enable us to review the effectiveness of any approach.	S/M See above Task and finish
	Explore the feasibility of installing CCTV in the town centre and/or developing crime prevention networks throughout Totnes and Bridgetown.	To improve community safety and the perception of crime across Totnes and Bridgetown. The cost of CCTV may be prohibitive but needs to be explored.	M Task and finish action
Support a sustainable approach to traffic management throughout Totnes including Links to surrounding towns and parishes.	Use the Totnes Traffic, Transport and Pedestrian Policy to identify suitable schemes and work towards their implementation. Which may include. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking and cycling routes in and around town. Pedestrian crossings, existing and needed. Road safety issues, accident hazards and risks. Air quality impacts. Walking, cycling and public transport links to neighbouring towns and villages. Proactively lobby and challenge when necessary relevant authorities to ensure that issues are dealt with 	Having a single plan that identifies issues and improvements will make it easier to deal with the authorities responsible for making changes and to apply for funding.	S Task the Traffic and Transport Forum with developing the traffic, transport and pedestrian policy into an action plan of identified improvements. Convene a meeting of local parishes and other stakeholders to discuss if/how we can work together for mutual benefit.

	appropriately and in a timely manner.		
	Continue to support the Traffic and Transport Forum.	The Traffic and Transport Forum is an important forum for local people to contribute to plans and raise concerns/solutions to local issues.	S Provide admin support as an interim measure and explore what level of support is needed for medium to longer term.
	Collaborate with residents and businesses to identify options to improve pedestrian safety in Totnes Fore Street and High Street.	To openly address the long-standing problems of pedestrian safety in a town centre not designed for fast moving vehicles and large numbers of pedestrians.	S/M working group to identify a plan of action.
	Seek to more effectively manage access only routes into the High Street.	To support the above aim and prevent the High Street being used as a rat run. There is strong support from residents and town councillors for a different approach to managing traffic in the high street.	See above
	Ensure that inclusive access is included in all plans to improve infrastructure.	Although protected in law, the needs of people with protected characteristics are not always fully considered.	See above
Ensure that section 106 funding is used to greatest effect.	Update our local policies to ensure that any section 106 funding is directed by higher tier authorities towards the right projects and services such as improvements in infrastructure that address identified shortfalls. e.g. pedestrian crossings, road improvements, early years provision, open space & welfare etc.	Section 106 funding is administered by primary authorities who may not understand the specific local issues faced by residents as a result of increasing development.	S/M Ensure that section 106 requirements are identified in all relevant TTC policies.

Local Economy Jobs, innovation and opportunity, Employment land and workspaces, High street & visitors.			Prioritisation
Strategic objective, what we aim to do	Actions, what we can/will do	Why we will do it	What comes first, short medium & long term
Support the local economy to maintain and create new high quality and inclusive job opportunities. Particularly in better paid industries, the environmental sector and highly skilled sectors.	Collaborate with SHDC to develop a realistic and funded sustainable, inclusive economic plan for Totnes.	To seize the opportunity to create a well-defined plan for the economic future of Totnes, that we hope will carry weight in accessing support and funding as well as aligning with a review of the Joint local Plan.	S/M/L Create a local economy task and finish working group to focus on the strategy priorities and review progress. Invite councillors and officers involved in Ivybridge economic development plan to discuss their experiences and learning. Actively engage with businesses and Chamber of Commerce (CoC) to ensure they are involved in the economic plan development.
	Protect employment land and workspaces by ensuring that they are identified in the Joint Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.	Employment land and workspace is limited in Totnes and to ensure that we don't become a purely residential/commuter town, totally reliant on retail, service industries and public sector employment, the existing land needs to be protected and any opportunities to increase it identified.	Ongoing & S Planning committee task and finish to ensure TTC full involvement in the Joint Local Plan review

	Promote Totnes as a great place for innovative, green, high tech and ethical employers, making the most of its diverse community and good transport links.	To increase the opportunities for well-paid work, careers and training for local people. Improving standards of living and reducing the need for travelling longer distances or moving away to find work supporting a move towards a greener and more sustainable economy.	S & ongoing Start to promote ethical local businesses through TTC social media and website.
	Carry out a review of training and skills opportunities offered locally. Find ways to address shortfalls to improve opportunities for local people.	Adult education and training can provide a route to better work opportunities and further education as well as supporting well-being and self-esteem.	M/L identify community organisations already working in this area. (Transition and Mansion)
Ensure the town centre remains vibrant and offers a mix of goods and services as well as a focal point of the community in terms of culture, heritage and the arts.	Continue to support events in the town that are enjoyed by residents and visitors such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas markets and lights • Events and festivals 	The town centre is a huge draw for residents and visitors to Totnes. Without the volume of visitors, it is unlikely that many of the businesses would continue, with Fore Street and High Street becoming another casualty of changing shopping habits.	S/M Review the effectiveness of town events and focus finances on those that provide best value.
	Lobby SHDC to improve the civic square and other civic and open spaces that they are responsible for in the town, or to transfer more assets to the Town Council to ensure they are maintained and protected for the future.	Lobby SHDC through local district councillors to secure investment in the civic square.	S/M/L Actions for District councillors.
	Identify ways to improve the town centre environment, in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour and improving cleanliness.	In addition to the above, the night-time economy is more vulnerable and sensitive to issues around anti-social behaviour.	S/M/L Councillor police advocates to develop relationships with local policing and community safety partnerships, identifying the most efficient routes to improvement.

<p>Ensure all businesses in Totnes have an opportunity to be heard and contribute to future planning.</p>	<p>Collaborate with businesses and the Chamber of Commerce to create a local business forum.</p>	<p>There are a wide range of businesses from many different sectors across Totnes. It is vital that our economic and transport plans have considered and heard any concerns or ideas from them.</p>	<p>S/M Actively engage with SHDC efforts to create a South Hams wide business forum. Convene a meeting for innovative business groups in and around Totnes to generate ideas.</p>
<p>Explore opportunities to develop a circular economy in Totnes. Building on the history of Totnes and making the most of its proximity to Schumacher college.</p>	<p>Use the economic plan development to explore a community wealth building approach with key partners that seeks to redirect flows of wealth, so that workers, residents and consumers benefit from the economic activity happening in their communities. This means better paid more secure jobs and more locally rooted generative businesses that share the wealth they create with workers, consumers and communities.</p>	<p>Since late 2021 there has been a growing crisis in the cost of living fuelled by inflation, soaring energy bills, higher taxation and disproportionate increases in the cost of lower priced goods. The impact of these increases has been to worsen inequalities which could be better addressed by a local economy that retains more wealth locally.</p>	<p>M/L</p>
	<p>Develop a local economic landscape/asset mapping using volunteers and Schumacher students.</p>		<p>M/L Task and finish working group to explore options.</p>
<p>Promote and support local food producing businesses and networks in and around Totnes and promote Totnes as a healthy and sustainable food destination.</p>	<p>Encourage and promote local food producers, networks and events including food markets and festivals.</p>	<p>Local food and drink is a significant asset for Totnes and district and has the potential to enhance economic growth and local employment opportunities, as well as identifying Totnes as a high quality food and drink destination.</p>	<p>S/M Visit Totnes to promote local food suppliers.</p>

Local Community Health & wellbeing, Active communities, Arts and culture, Heritage and history, Regular community engagement and empowerment			Prioritisation
Strategic objectives, what we aim to do	Actions, what we can/will do	Why we will do it	What comes first, short medium & long term
To support a lively, connected community and improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents.	Cross map our strategic objectives and actions against the Marmot review to identify and highlight areas of commonality. Explore how or if Totnes could become a Marmot town/place in order to address health inequalities.	The Marmot review of health inequalities was published in 2010 and looks at the social factors that influence not just life expectancy but how long we live in good health. A review in 2020 showed that health inequalities have significantly worsened between wealthy and deprived areas. The time people spend in poor health has increased and life expectancy has fallen back. In Totnes we have pockets of deprivation, child poverty, poor housing and a lack of job opportunities leading to poor health and wellbeing.	M/L Convene a Local Community task and finish working group to identify collaboration opportunities and prioritise effort and funding. Create a diagram linking strategic objectives to Marmot priorities.
	Collaborate with, convene and support community, voluntary sector and public sector organisations that contribute to our strategic objective of improving health and wellbeing in the Totnes Town Council area.	To ensure we are working effectively with and lobbying as necessary those authorities and groups whose primary focus is health and wellbeing and to ensure that Totnes receives its fair share of investment from public funds.	S & ongoing Lobby SHDC for equal funding for Totnes Leisure centre.
	Work with the VCSE sector and people and communities to better understand community assets, strengths and issues as a benchmark.	To ensure services are not duplicated and that limited funding where available is used to the greatest impact.	S Carry out a service mapping exercise with caring town. (T&F)
Encourage active lifestyles for all.	Support community groups and clubs providing activities, exercise sport and dance for residents. Through grants, signposting to funding opportunities and communication support.	To encourage residents to have active healthy lives improving wellbeing and contributing to ill health prevention.	S/M Grant funding to prioritise strategic objectives.

Support the health and wellbeing of young people.	Support the Totnes skate park scheme. Engage with young people to understand what they want and need in Totnes.	The young people of Totnes are long overdue a new skatepark and we are fully behind the new scheme. Young peoples views are often overlooked in deciding what they want.	Ongoing & S Link councillor to liaise with skatepark group and SHDC. Liaise with Caring Town Totnes who are carrying out an engagement project with young people in Totnes.
	Have representation at the Borough Park users' group	As the main sport and leisure space in town it is important that we are engaged and supporting the local groups clubs and organisations involved.	Ongoing Link councillor feedback to Full Council.
Protect and enhance access to open, green and blue spaces. (access to open, green and blue spaces is also a key objective in our environment strategy)	Create a map showing all open spaces, walking and cycling routes and river access in and around Totnes with clear indication of those routes that are accessible to wheelchairs, mobility scooters and people with restricted mobility or impaired vision.	Active lifestyles don't have to involve organised activities or sports. Just getting out and about on foot, cycling, gardening, being in or on the water, or just enjoying being outdoors contributes enormously to health and wellbeing.	S the outcome of the OSSRW for Totnes will identify areas of improvement needed (T&F)
	Work with SHDC and other owners of outdoor spaces to improve access and increase use by residents. Explore the provision of outdoor activities such as exercise equipment/ table tennis tables.	See above.	S/M See above; task and finish group will identify work required.
	Work towards and lobby for enhanced recreational/green spaces for the Town.	See above	See above
Support access to art and music in Totnes.	Collaborate and support community groups involved in music and arts through grant funding, signposting, partnership working and sharing through social media.	Totnes and its surrounding areas have a rich history of music and arts with lively music venues and festivals a key part of the town culture and calendar and is important for the wellbeing of the community.	S and ongoing Convene a meeting with community arts and music groups and venues in Totnes to explore appetite for collaboration and shared vision

			Collaborate with community groups and businesses involved in music, art and dance to identify ways of supporting provision.
Ensure access to information about local events, activities, opportunities and other community information.	Explore modifying the Town Council website.	To make all Totnes related information easily accessible for everyone our website needs to become easy to navigate with relevant information the shortest number of clicks away and using accessibility standards.	M Identify shortcomings of existing site.
	Ensure that our communications for local people and business are given as much focus and effort as our Visit Totnes brand.	As important as visitors are to the local economy, Totnes is much more than just Tourism. We want to ensure that the town remains a vibrant place to live all year round. Residents have told us this is important to them.	S/M Task and finish group to explore how to broaden our communication offering.
Protect and improve the unique heritage and history of Totnes.	Collaborate with all community groups involved with heritage and history in Totnes to create a shared vision.	The history of Totnes and surrounding areas is amazing and there remains a huge opportunity to protect what we have but also improve for the future.	M/L Convene an initial meeting to explore the appetite for collaboration amongst heritage groups.
Work with the community and other stakeholders on place shaping and community development.	Regularly engaging with the community to understand and listen to needs, to develop trust that TTC is there to help shape the development of Totnes as place and support an active community.		S Make the annual town meeting more interactive.
Short term Up to 12 months		Medium term Up to 24 months	
Long term Up to 48 months			
<u>All areas</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create task and finish groups for economy, community and environment. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review task & finish groups to ensure continued relevance. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the grant prioritisation process to reflect new strategic objectives. • Review return on investment of TTC assets (best value approach) • Lobby SHDC to carry out improvements to the civic square. • Introduce a regular information sharing/ report from link councillors and committee chairs to other councillors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review grant process to identify return on investment! • Review return on investment of TTC assets. 	
<p><u>Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise the OSSRW for Totnes and identify actions needed. • Create an action plan from the OSSRW for Totnes • Identify and diarise review dates for JLP and Neighbourhood Plans. • Planning committee to ensure that local issues are prioritised in the JLP and linked to the Neighbourhood Plan. Priorities for affordable housing, workspace and employment land, traffic and transport. • Convene a forum for heritage groups in Totnes to explore appetite for collaboration. • Create a simple process for identifying & recording issues, tracking actions and reviewing outcomes. • Carry out a quick and dirty audit of Totnes issues to be logged and prioritised. (with evidence) • Engage with Devon & Cornwall Police (DCP) to explore the feasibility and effectiveness of installing CCTV in town and developing crime prevention networks throughout Totnes and Bridgetown. • Councillor advocate to engage with DCP and create an action plan for community safety and crime prevention for Totnes. • Task the Traffic and Transport Forum with developing the Traffic, Transport and Pedestrian Policy into an action plan of improvements. (see strategy for detail) • Convene a meeting of local parishes to discuss how/if we can work together to improve alternative travel methods between areas. 	<p><u>Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review OSSRW action plan and progress. • Ensure completion of JLP and Neighbourhood Plan reviews. • Create a heritage plan for Totnes. • Review effectiveness of issues log and the progress towards completion of actions. • Review community safety and crime prevention plan annually. • Update accessibility and travel maps for Totnes and links to surrounding towns and villages. • Engage with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to identify options to improve pedestrian safety in Totnes Fore Street and High Street. • Formalise regular meetings with neighbouring towns and parishes to build a stronger combined approach to common transport issues. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update our local policies to ensure potential section 106 funding opportunities and options are identified. 		
<p><u>Local Economy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite councillors and officers involved in Ivybridge Council’s economic development plan to discuss their experiences and learning. • Convene a meeting with local businesses to prepare for the Totnes economic development plan and explore appetite for further collaboration. • Proactively engage with SHDC Town economic development planning process and plan generation. • Identify actions from the economic planning process. • Collaborate with SHDC in its efforts to create a SHAMS business forum. • Develop a communication plan to promote Totnes as a great place for innovative, ethical businesses. • Deliver and promote planned town events (Christmas) • Carry out a review of the effectiveness of TTC funded events. • Promote local food producers and suppliers through Visit Totnes and town website. 	<p><u>Local Economy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the outcome and actions of the economic development plan. • Explore options for developing/updating local economic asset mapping. • Review economic activity in Totnes annually with stakeholders and businesses! • Review progress against the economic development plan actions. 	

<p><u>Local community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a simple diagram cross mapping TTC services and objectives to the Marmot priorities. • Collaborate with Caring Town to map service provision across Totnes. • Support Totnes skate park development. Regular updates through link councillor. • Liaise with Caring Town who are carrying out an engagement project with young people in Totnes. • Update green travel maps for Totnes to include blue space access and identify routes that are accessible to wheelchairs, mobility scooters and people with restricted vision or mobility. • Use the outcomes from the OSSRW for Totnes as evidence to lobby for enhanced recreational/green and blue spaces for Totnes. • Convene a meeting with community arts and music providers and venues to explore the appetite for a shared vision and greater collaboration. • Identify shortcomings of existing TTC website in terms of useability and accessibility. • Task and finish group to explore how to broaden our (TTC) communication offering. • Make the annual town meeting more interactive to give residents a route to feedback their ideas and thoughts about Totnes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options/possibility of Totnes becoming a Marmot town. 	
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