

This year Torbay Council approved its largest ever capital programme of more than £160 million, giving the Bay's economy a massive, welcome investment.

The four-year programme includes successful projects already completed and started in the last 12 months. It will help deliver better schools, improve housing and adult social care facilities, new leisure and cultural facilities, better access for customers, initiatives to tackle traffic congestion, and new seafront illuminations in areas of the Bay. The funds come from a number of sources, including land sales, planning agreement contributions from developers, loans, lottery grants, special government funding and a share of householders' council tax bills.

The council has budgeted to spend approximately £69 million on capital projects this financial year alone (2009-10).

Here are just some examples of the exciting projects which are underway or have been completed:

PRIDE IN THE BAY

New community library and information centre in Paignton

Funding from the council's capital programme = £4.05million for 2009-10

Torbay Council's vision for a new state of the art community library and information centre in Paignton is coming to fruition. After the council successfully bid and won an additional £2 million from the Big Lottery Fund's Community Libraries Programme, this project is being managed by the Torbay Development Agency and is one of a number of Mayor's Vision projects.



Construction is now well underway with steelwork rising from behind the hoardings. The project is now visible to people walking along Great Western Road and it is possible to view the emerging construction from road level. The main contractors, BAM, have provided 'portholes' onto the hoarding, which will enable pedestrians to view this project taking shape.

The completed 2,245 square metre building will house a modern new library, a reading garden, a

multi-purpose meeting space, a café, a media suite and toilets, including a changing places facility. There will also be centralised facilities for a number of agencies, including community police, Connections, tourist information, adult & community learning and Surestart offices.

As a community project, the team prides itself in the number of local consultations that have taken place. This has included a consultation caravan, presentations to local groups, surveys, displays and the creation of the Community Library Steering Group. Successive versions of the plans have been adapted to incorporate the community 'wish list'.

The new Paignton Community Library and information Centre is due to open in September 2010.

You can keep up to date with what is happening by viewing the latest plans and designs on the library web pages at www.torbay.gov.uk/libraries, or by taking a look at the display in Paignton library.

Restoring Rock Walk (Royal Terrace Gardens) to their former glory

Funding from the council's capital programme = £2.1million for 2009-10

Restoration work to the Royal Terrace Gardens is now being carried out following the successful completion of major stabilisation works at Rock Walk in June 2009.

The stabilisation works involved de-scaling the rock face as well as installing soil nails, rock bolts and rock netting.



Restoration works started in the summer. This included rebuilding dry stone walls, repairing railings, installing street lighting as well as resurfacing and repair work to Rock Walk footpath. The main construction work for the new footpath, bridges and viewing platform starts in the November and the whole project is expected to be finished in June 2010.

Outcomes:

- The gardens will be enhanced and made safe for public use.
- The importance of the geology of the gardens recognised as part of the International Geopark status.
- Royal Terrace Gardens recognised as being of great significance to Torbay's economic by increasing the tourism experience.
- The stabilisation works have minimised the risks to all users of Torbay Road, which is the main through route for both residents and visitors.
- Increase the number of visitors to the area which will benefit local businesses.

More information on progress at Rock walk can be found at www.torbay.gov.uk/rockwalk

Ellacombe Road DIY streets initiative

Funding from the council's capital programme = £ 40,000 for 2009-10

Work on a £60,000 community project in the Ellacombe Road area of Torquay started in September.

Local residents have played a key part in the project, led by the national transport charity Sustrans.

Ellacombe Road was nominated by the Ellacombe Community Partnership and Torbay Council's Working Party to help resolve issues raised by residents regarding parking and traffic speeds. It was selected as one of 11 pilots in the charity's DIY Streets programme.

The scheme is based around a one-way system with echelon parking, making changes to parking, and adding planters, greenery and artwork.

Other features will include informal crossings to improve links to the park, improved access for people with disabilities, and a gateway feature at the lower end of the street.

Work on the scheme is due to be completed on Friday 30 October.

Katherine Rooney, Sustrans Senior Project Officer for Liveable Neighbourhoods, said: "The residents have been really enthusiastic about tackling speeding traffic and other anti-social problems in their road throughout this pilot project. I'm sure this enthusiasm will make the construction phase a success, and help create a more sociable street where people can enjoy chatting to one another and children can play safely."

Improving car parks

Funding from the council's capital programme = £375,000 for 2009-10

Torbay Council owned car parks are being given a huge makeover. Most of the work on the £1.2 million scheme was completed in 2008 – 09.

Work has recently been finished at Lower Union Lane multi storey car park in Torquay town centre. It aims to make the car park safer and more user friendly for customers as well as to secure its long-term future.



The work undertaken at Lower Union lane car park includes:

- £400,000 invested to provide a complete replacement of the four lifts, bringing in new technology to reduce waiting time and enhance reliability. The lifts all have internal CCTV to reassure passengers and to deter vandalism. Audio message systems and lower controls have been installed for less able customers. This investment not only improves the service but reduces maintenance costs that were escalating annually due to the age of the lifts previously in service.
- £100,000 invested to waterproof the top decks of the car park which now protects all of the floors beneath. The waterproofing has allowed for the use of coloured treatments to the surface at no additional cost allowing pedestrian and vehicle areas to be clearly designated.

- £64,000 invested in new perimeter barriers and remarking the parking spaces to provide wider customer friendly spaces.
- £20,000 invested in general structural repairs including concrete joints and fittings.
- £45,000 invested to replace the sprinkler system that provides protection in the event of a fire at this site.

Work has also been carried out at Victoria car park in Paignton. This includes concrete repairs, new customer lifts and waterproofing of the top deck.

There have been other structural works completed at Beacon Quay, Roundham and Harbour Car Parks.

Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Transport and Planning, Councillor Chris Lewis said: "I'm delighted people in Torbay are starting to benefit from our commitment to upgrade car parking facilities. Wider parking bays in the Lower Union Lane multi storey car park should make it easier for motorists. CCTV in the lifts should also reduce vandalism and make people feel safer.

"The council has given a high priority to the maintenance and refurbishment of its car parks because they're critical to supporting the regeneration of the local economy."

Torre Abbey phase two

Funding from the council's capital programme = £50,000 for 2009-10

Torbay Council has allocated £50,000 from its 2009 -10 Capital Programme in order to prepare a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid to secure funding for the second phase of renovations to Torre Abbey.

The stage one HLF application for £2.95 million has now been completed and submitted. The application will be assessed and the council will find out if it has been successful in November.

The bid was prepared by the Torbay Development Agency (TDA) with assistance from the multi disciplinary team, which successfully completed Phase 1. The work involved the preparation of an outline design, cost estimates, revised business plan and a written report.

If the bid is successful, the TDA will start work immediately on the detailed stage 2 bid application, which is likely to be funded by the HLF. This will involve the submission of the detailed design and costings for the restoration, new museum spaces and new education suite.



In 2004 the HLF awarded a substantial £4.9 million towards the £6.56 million first phase of works, which has transformed the main parts of the Abbey. Since opening in July, visitor numbers have exceeded predictions and income is well above target.

This second phase of works will cost about £5 million. It involves restoring the south range

of the Abbey, particularly the leaking mid 18th century lead roof and the rotten lintels over the south elevation windows and doors.

Some elements of ruins behind the mansion, which contain important archaeological information, will also be repaired. At least two arches are close to collapse and the east wall of the cloister is fenced off because it's shedding stone.

During this second phase of works some of the period rooms will be furnished and there will be more information provided in the form of touch screen guidebooks, audio guides and museum panels. This will transform the quality and standard of interpretation at the Abbey.

Cabinet Member for Community Services, Councillor Dave Butt, said: "The continued restoration of Torre Abbey is one of the largest heritage projects in the whole of the Westcountry and it will allow this important site to continue to play a significant role in promoting tourism and creating a sense of local identity.

LEARNING AND SKILLS

Kings Ash School

Funding from the council's capital programme = £1.493 million for 2009-10

Kings Ash School, which replaces the old Foxhole infants and junior schools, opened its brand new building in June. The new facility provides a 21st century learning environment for pupils in Paignton with excellent learning suites and an ultra modern design.

A public consultation and stakeholder consultation helped shape the new school project so that it became a wider regeneration project. In the next 9 months regeneration will continue with a rebuilt community centre with sports changing, new community play area, and improved community sports field.

The council applied successfully for the scheme to become a pathfinder for the Primary Capital Programme (PCP). This resulted in an advance payment of £6.5million to ensure the project could proceed quickly. The project also released the Infant school site for disposal for affordable housing.

The scheme has galvanised the Community Association into submitting a bid for external funding to provide the sports pitch improvements.



Torquay Community College



Funding from the council's capital programme = £16.86 million for 2009-10

Construction at Torbay Community College is progressing well and the first phase is due for completion at the end of 2009 when the pupils can move into the core of the new buildings. The second phase will be completed by autumn 2010.

The £28 million scheme involves replacing worn out buildings with brand new, state of the art, purpose built environments. Engaging the local community, pupils and staff in extensive consultation has continually

shaped the plans for the new buildings, which have been designed to offer a wider range of services.

The new Torquay Community College is designed to incorporate a series of small schools of around 200 pupils each, which will help ease the sometimes difficult transition between primary and secondary school. As the students move up the school they will also be able to study in a vocational skills centre for pupils aged 14 to 16 years.

The new school will have an adult learning centre for the community, a library and a crèche which will massively increase the potential for community involvement.

Shiphay School and Orchard Nursery

Funding from the council's capital programme = £820,000 for 2008 - 09

Shiphay School & Orchard Nursery opened their doors for the first time in September to new entrants who will benefit from the new 'Wave' building. The new development has four new classrooms, a staffroom, training suite, specialist therapy room, disabled toilet and shower. Essentially the building is a two-wing linking development with extensive external decking, a large overhanging roof structure and small integral courtyards.



Internally the new open plan classrooms have direct patio door access to semi-sheltered external play space under the roof overhangs, together with adjoining resource rooms for role play, craft activity and general quiet area.

Staff can now also enjoy break times in a designed space, which was previously accommodated within a detached portable modular building. This area connects through to a training suite, which will also be used by parents, carers and the wider community.

The therapy room has a wide range of functions including physiotherapy, floor exercises and general personal care, and is fully fitted out with overhead ceiling hoisting to assist users.

Perhaps the most rewarding achievement to this project was to satisfy a challenging brief to ensure equal access from all areas of the school to these facilities. This now ensures immediate benefit to existing users and the school can more effectively provide for the needs of future pupils with physical disabilities.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Play areas

Funding from the council's capital programme = £563,000 for 2009-10

Torbay Council is transforming 22 playgrounds across the Bay.

It has been awarded more than £1.1 million by the Department of Children Schools and Families for its Playbuilder programme to improve play spaces in the Bay over the next two years.

Young people and the wider community have now been consulted on how it should be spent.

The Torbay Playbuilder programme will address key themes in the Torbay Play Strategy to provide more challenging and exciting facilities, make better use of the natural environment and have longer term appeal to a variety of ages.

Torbay Council has given the go ahead for the first eleven parks to be improved over the next 12 months and work has now started on them. The second round of parks will be announced this autumn after further assessment.

Torbay Council's Cabinet Member for Community Services, Councillor Dave Butt, said: "Play is vital to a healthy and happy childhood, so we are creating quality outdoor play areas throughout the Bay. This will provide local children with safe and exciting facilities to help their physical, social and educational development. We are looking for your ideas on how we can provide the best opportunities for children and young people to benefit from the Playbuilder programme."

The first eleven parks to be improved are:

Hill Rise Galmpton

Rowan Way, Brixham

Great Parks, Paignton

Queen Elizabeth Drive, Paignton

Wills Avenue, Preston

Armanda Park, Chelston

Salisbury Avenue, Barton

St. Michael' Recreation Ground, Paignton

Pendennis, Hele

Redwell Road, Foxhole

Cary Park, Torquay

Brixham Pool Refurbishment

Funding from the council's capital programme = £350,000 for 2008-09

A £1 million major refurbishment has been completed at Brixham Indoor Pool and was officially declared open on Wednesday 20 May by International Swimmer Chris Walker-Hebborn. The refurbishment was made possible by the local community raising over £120,000. As a consequence the project attracted funding of £550,000 from the Amateur Swimming Association and a £350,000 Capital Grant from Torbay Council.

As well as the major structural repairs and a new roof, the pool now benefits from modern changing facilities, including a dedicated disabled changing room, a new community room, reception area and office.

The successful delivery of the project was due to the TDA project team, the customer, community, consultants and prime contractor working together in partnership.

Dunboyne

Funding from the council's capital programme = £620,000 for 2009-10

This exciting new development will provide a 45 apartment Extra Care Scheme on the site of a former care home owned by the council. This alternative to residential care will offer an integrated package of housing, support and care to meet the needs of both frail and more able bodied older people.



It is being funded in partnership through the Department of Health, Torbay Council and the Homes and Communities Agency.

There are a number of existing sheltered housing schemes (both rented and leasehold) and a significant older person population within the area. Discussions have already begun with local older people about how facilities and services available at the scheme can compliment their existing housing and services they already receive and act as a community hub. This might include computer access points, recreational and social activities, fitness classes, access to medical services and use of support facilities like laundry and assisted bathing. A café / bistro may also be developed as a social facility offering local older people healthy, affordable dining options to include snacks and lighter meals.

Neighbours within the community will have access to services and activities that are focused on helping them reduce social isolation with a corresponding reduction in the likelihood of mental health problems.

THE NEW ECONOMY

Brixham's new state of the art fish market building, restaurant and offices

Funding from the council's capital programme = £5.056 million for 2009-10

Brixham's new fish market is taking shape as part of the town's multi-million pound transformation. The ambitious plans aim to rejuvenate the town's economy and provide fishing and non-fishing related jobs for people in Brixham.

Phase 1 works have already been completed, providing a new extended quay deck, employment units, infrastructure and associated services such as power and water supplies.

Contractors Dean and Dyball started work on phase 2 of the scheme at the end of June 2009. This phase includes the construction of the new fish market, restaurant and office facilities. These works

will take approximately sixty weeks and are due to finish in August 2010.

The value of the first two phases is approximately £19 million and is being funded by Torbay Council, the South West RDA (Regional Development Agency), the European Regional Development Fund and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance.

The work follows many years of planning and negotiation by Torbay Council, its regeneration arm the TDA and Brixham 21, the council's community partner. It represents the first stage of the wider regeneration of Brixham which includes a multi-million pound food store and mixed-use regeneration scheme for Brixham town centre, with Tesco already announced as the preferred developer. There are also proposals for new developments at Oxen Cove and Freshwater Quarry and a Northern Arm Breakwater.

The new town centre development is expected to generate around 200 local jobs.



The Civic Hub project

Funding from the council's capital programme = £5.7 million for 2009-10

A planning application for a multi-million pound scheme to help regenerate Torquay Town Centre, bring council services under one roof and bring major savings, has now been approved by Torbay Council's planning committee.

The project, which is being managed by the TDA, involves bringing the majority of employees together in Torquay Town Hall, Electric House and Tor Hill House to make the council more efficient and to enable members of the public to access council services in one area. Council office staff currently operate out of 16 locations across the Bay in buildings that are not fit for purpose.

Torquay Town Hall will be completely refurbished. The whole of the ground floor will be opened up for public access and will include a new café, a much larger Connections area and a suite of meeting rooms, open during evenings and weekends for members of the public. There will also be an improved assembly hall and six new open plan office floors to house council office staff.

Work is expected to start on the Town Hall later this year and will finish in 2011.



The £36 million Hub project also involves creating up to 40,000 square feet of new office space on the Town Hall car park to attract more businesses, jobs and inward investment to Torquay. The council will invest in face lift grants to help improve the appearance of buildings in the top part of Union Street and promote the buildings the council vacates to other businesses.

The whole project has a solid business case and is expected to save the council over £1 million a year.