

**Greenspace Strategy**  
Supplementary Planning Document

---

**Sustainability Appraisal**

Draft Adoption Version

Non-Technical Summary

**Health • Social inclusiveness • Accessibility  
• Heritage • Biodiversity • Economy  
Education • Culture • Resources • Safety  
Community • Environment • Health • Social  
inclusiveness • Accessibility • Heritage  
Biodiversity • Economy • Education •  
Culture • Resources • Safety • Community  
Environment • Health • Social inclusiveness  
Accessibility • Heritage • Biodiversity**

**This leaflet summarises a sustainability appraisal report for the Greenspace Strategy SPD (Regulation 19 Adoption Version). This report aims to identify any potential social, economic and environmental impacts that the Greenspace Strategy may have.**

**To view a full version of the sustainability appraisal please visit [www.torbay.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/ldf), or request a copy from the Strategic Planning Group (01803 208804).**

## **What is the Greenspace Strategy?**

The Greenspace Strategy will form a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) for Torbay. It will outline how the Council, in association with community intends to deliver and maintain high quality green spaces which enable equal access and opportunity for all, as well a protecting and enhancing the local environment.

### **Greenspace Strategy objectives:**

1. Improving appearance of green space
2. Improving accessibility, especially for the disabled
3. Challenging peoples perceptions of green spaces as areas to visit and use more often
4. Improving facilities and attractions
5. Increasing the number of events/entertainments
6. Develop opportunities for using green spaces for learning
7. Promoting and protecting heritage assets of Torbay's green space
8. Promotion of green spaces as drivers for economic activity
9. Recognise, protect and enhance the biodiversity value of green space

## **What is a Sustainability Appraisal?**

Under the new planning system Local Authorities must produce a sustainability appraisal alongside any Development Plan Document (DPD) or Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) within the Local Development Framework. The Greenspace Strategy is an SPD so requires a full sustainability appraisal.

The aim of the appraisal process is to ensure that full consideration is given to the social, environmental and economic impacts of the Greenspace Strategy. This will assist in ensuring that the resultant plan falls within the central areas of the diagram above right addressing social, economic and environmental needs. This document summarises the work carried out far for the sustainability appraisal of the Greenspace Strategy.

### **Stages involved in a Sustainability Appraisal:**

Stage A: Production of a scoping report.

Stage B: Test each plan option for sustainability. Provide a detailed sustainability appraisal of the chosen option.

Stage C: Compile a report on the findings of the detailed appraisal exercise in Stage B (including outlining mitigation and monitoring).

Stage D: Consult on the detailed appraisal of the chosen option alongside the draft DPD/SPD. Appraise significant changes from representations. Make decisions and provide information

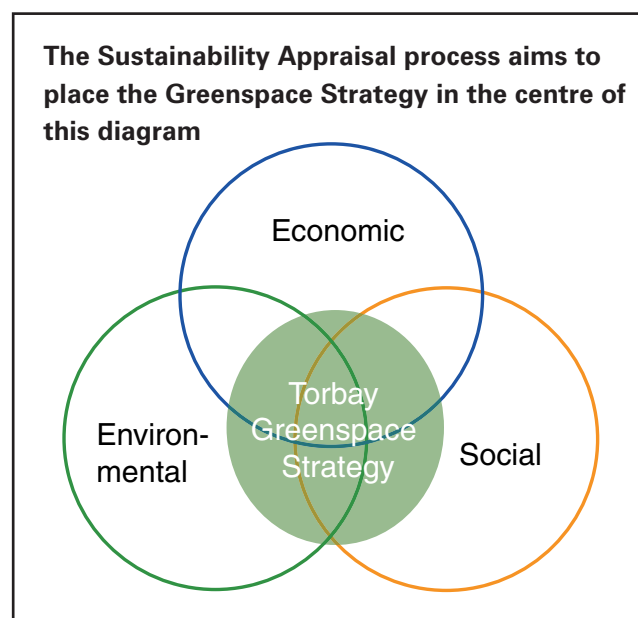
Stage E: Monitor the effects of implementing the DPD/SPD. Respond to any adverse effects.

## Sustainability Appraisal Methodology:

The Sustainability Appraisal process feeds into various stages in the plan's development, ensuring continual consideration of sustainability issues throughout plan production. This summary sheet relates to the findings of Stages A- D of the appraisal process as outlined shown at the foot of page 2.

### Setting the context

The groundwork for the sustainability appraisal is carried out at the early scoping stage and provides the context upon which to build the appraisal. The work involved in this stage is detailed in a scoping report (available online) and is summarised in points 1-3 below. This scoping work is carried out at the beginning of the process and formulates a framework by which to test the plan. It also identifies sustainability issues which should be considered as the plan is developed.



The key areas of work involved in the scoping stage are outlined in the shaded boxes below:

**1) Identification of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework** by which to test the plan with at a later stage (see 'Objectives' section).

**2) Identification of existing social, environmental and economic issues within Torbay** which should be considered during plan formulation (see 'Torbay Specific Issues' in table overleaf).

**3) A review of plans, policies and programmes** which identifies sustainability objectives which should be considered within the appraisal framework (see 'Broad Sustainability objectives' in table overleaf).

### Objectives:

37 objectives have been selected to test each of the LDF documents (including the Greenspace Strategy) for sustainability. They are grouped under the following 6 broad headings:

1. Improve health.
2. Support communities that meet people's needs.
3. Develop the economy in ways that meet people's needs.
4. Provide access to meet people's needs with least damage to communities and the environment.
5. Maintain and improve environmental quality and assets.
6. Minimise consumption of natural resources.

For a full list of the detailed objectives under these broad titles please see the full report.

The table overleaf provides a summary of some of the key local issues and sustainability objectives which were considered in appraising the Greenspace Strategy. These sustainability considerations may come from a broad national, international policy (e.g. policy on renewable energy or nature conservation) or may identify locally specific assets to be retained or problems to be addressed (social, economic or environmental). The table is divided into social, economic and environmental issues and includes only those issues of greatest relevance to the Greenspace Strategy.

Torbay Specific Issues	Broad Sustainability Objectives
<b>Social</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Torbay has pockets of severe deprivation</li> <li>● Poor access to green spaces for the disabled</li> <li>● Poor provision of facilities and activities for the elderly in green spaces</li> <li>● Although Torbay has comparatively low crime rates fear of crime is a significant issue</li> <li>● Torbay experiences high suicide rates and mental health issues ( links to social interaction and reducing depression)</li> <li>● Obesity is a concern in Torbay</li> <li>● Torbay is experiencing high levels of population increase</li> <li>● Torbay has high population density</li> <li>● Torbay has a high proportion of elderly compared to national and regional averages</li> <li>● Lack of social provision in new housing estates</li> <li>● Approximately one quarter of households in Torbay do not have access to a car</li> <li>● Torbay has a high number of voluntary groups however there is a lack of resources to assist in capacity building</li> </ul>	<p>Promote, recognise and address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fairness and equality of opportunity in the provision of services between all groups to address social exclusion and economic disadvantage</li> <li>● Importance of ability of people to be able to live in attractive, well-kept towns and cities which use buildings and spaces well.</li> <li>● Cultural needs of all our community (access and participation)</li> <li>● Community involvement and social inclusion</li> <li>● Fear of crime issues through appropriate design measures</li> <li>● Access to physical activity to help address obesity</li> <li>● Opportunities for learning about the natural environment</li> <li>● Management of playing pitches in a way in which increases their accessibility to the general public, in particular with regard to school facilities</li> <li>● Access to public rights of way</li> <li>● Address health inequalities and related issues</li> <li>● Provide infrastructure to encourage routine daily exercise</li> <li>● Improve mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>● Recognise the social, environmental and economic value of open spaces</li> <li>● Ensure sufficient infrastructure to meet the needs of the projected increase in population</li> </ul>

Torbay Specific Issues	Broad Sustainability Objectives
<b>Economic</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor local job opportunities and low income levels with deprivation noted in a number of wards</li> <li>● Tourism is a focus of Torbay's economy</li> <li>● Appearance of green spaces has a strong influence over success of Torbay's tourism sector</li> <li>● New trends are emerging towards tourism relating to history and ecology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A recognised need to balance tourist-related developments with protection of natural resources</li> <li>● New trends in tourism emerging surrounding healthy lifestyles, arts, regional culture, history and tradition</li> <li>● Protect Torbay's heritage and direct it towards economic, social and environmental regeneration</li> <li>● Reduce vulnerability of the coasts to climate change</li> <li>● Assist in regeneration of disadvantaged communities providing people with tools with which to increase income levels and improve their local environment.</li> </ul>

Torbay Specific Issues	Broad Sustainability Objectives
<b>Environmental</b>	
<p>Torbay has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High quality landscape much of which is protected</li> <li>● A large number of sites of nature conservation interest many of which are designated (including a Special Area of Conservation at Berry Head)</li> <li>● A high proportion of SSSIs in good condition</li> <li>● Limited amount of high quality agricultural land</li> <li>● A good standard of air quality with concern limited to a small number of roadside locations</li> <li>● A number of buildings at risk including in green spaces</li> <li>● Heritage features which require protection including Historic Parks and Gardens and Scheduled Monuments</li> </ul> <p>Torbay has a number of environmental issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Decline in tree population</li> <li>● Degradation of a number of Torbay's nature conservation areas by excessive recreational pressures</li> <li>● Loss/ reduction in size of some Local and County Wildlife Sites</li> <li>● A predicted decrease in summer precipitation flagging up a future need for water conservation</li> <li>● Increase pressure on green spaces as a result of increased temperatures through climate change</li> <li>● Need for incorporation of new shading in association with climate change</li> <li>● A need to develop means of recycling waste from public open spaces</li> <li>● A number of barriers exist to sustainable transport, e.g. cycling</li> <li>● Torbay has a history of flooding in a number of areas</li> <li>● Torbay is likely to experience sea level rise and increasing overtopping</li> <li>● Recognised need for creation of public spaces for cultural activities</li> <li>● Lack of interpretation boards available</li> <li>● Little is known of water quality in green spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sufficient protection of both designated and nondesignated areas of nature conservation required.</li> <li>● Recognition of the importance of functional floodplains where water flows or is held at time of flood in mitigating the effects of floods and droughts</li> <li>● The need to safeguard natural resources (e.g. water and soil) from pollution</li> <li>● The need to protect and enhance the quality and diversity of the natural, cultural and built environments maintaining local distinctiveness</li> <li>● Improve accessibility by cycling or walking mode to minimise the need for private car use.</li> <li>● Educate local communities and tourists of the value and management requirements of the natural environment</li> <li>● Treatment of waste to follow waste hierarchy</li> <li>● Importance of partnership working to address opportunities and challenges of the historic and natural environment</li> <li>● Protection of woodlands</li> <li>● Improve management and maintenance of the historic environment and encourage positive re-use of redundant historic buildings</li> <li>● Recognise the threat of sea level rise</li> <li>● Recognise the need for renewable energy and generate discussion on how this can be achieved</li> <li>● Promote water efficiency and protect water resources</li> <li>● Strike a balance between the demand for all mineral resources and the need to protect the environment.</li> </ul>

## Stage B: Which elements of the plan have been tested?

There are a number of key questions to ask when seeking to determine if a plan is sustainable or not:

- **Will the plan provide an improvement on the current situation in Torbay?** A comparison was made of the sustainability implications of implementing the plan against a continuation under the current situation (see below).
- **Is the overall direction of the Greenspace Strategy sustainable?** To determine this, the overarching Greenspace Strategy objectives were tested (see page 8).
- **Is there sufficient detail in the draft Strategy to address sustainability issues in Torbay?** The detail of the draft plan and related Action Plan was tested at the Regulation 17 stage and the findings fed back into the Adoption Version (Regulation 19).

## Will the plan provide an improvement on the current situation in Torbay?

In order to ensure that the Strategy will improve the situation which would exist if there were no SPD, a comparison of sustainability implications of the 'plan' versus 'no plan' option has been carried out. The findings of this analysis are included in Appendix F of the main report and are summarised below.

**Plan Option: Implications of implementing the Greenspace Strategy (as outlined in the Regulation 17 Draft).** *(Please note that many of the negative impacts have since been addressed in the subsequent Regulation 19 document).*

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
✓ Improved attractiveness of green spaces could encourage more people to use green spaces and hence have benefits for health and wellbeing	✗ Concerns raised over the potential to exclude certain social groups where there are cost implications of using green spaces (this will depend on the activities being promoted in these spaces)
✓ Addresses areas of deficiencies (quality and quantity) ensuring provision of local, accessible green spaces to all social groups	✗ The Greenspace Strategy makes no reference to coastal management
✓ Creation of attractive greenspaces will assist in encouraging people to walk and cycle	✗ Lack of recognition for the potential for Greenspaces to provide a function for flood water storage.
✓ Action proposed to address crime issues in greenspaces (e.g. vandalism, fly tipping, graffiti)	✗ Little mention in the Strategy of water efficiency within Greenspaces which is a concern given the predicted future reduction in summer precipitation
✓ The Strategy is very proactive in encouraging community involvement which will assist in creating strong and vibrant communities	✗ Possible increase in waste generated/ requiring disposal in associated with additional events/ attractions.
✓ Recognises the potential for cultural activities and proposes a number of actions to encourage such provision (e.g. through writing of an events strategy, publicity, sport, promotion of public art)	
✓ Provision of good quality local greenspaces advocated under this strategy will reduce the need to travel to meet local need.	
✓ Possibilities exist to promote local businesses through events and attractions	
✓ The creation of more attractive green spaces through the strategy will assist in strengthening the tourism economy and assist in diversifying it into new areas such as ecological, historic and cultural tourism.	
✓ The strategy includes actions to provide interpretation and information boards. These have the potential to provide information on for example, heritage, culture, and biodiversity. This could help raise the profile of these assets and afford them more protection by local communities. It could also assist in providing new niche markets to diversify the economy	

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
✓ The Strategy recognises the need for biodiversity issues to be given due consideration. The extent to which this will occur depends largely upon the extent to which biodiversity is integrated into the management plan, the extent of staff training and provision of interpretation boards.	
✓ A Torbay - wide Design Code is proposed, which, coupled with the forthcoming Urban Design Guide could help to ensure due consideration is given to the design of open spaces to maintain local distinctiveness.	
✓ The strategy includes an action to review the waste recycling and minimisation	

**No Plan Option: Continuation of the existing situation without the Greenspace Strategy:**

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
✓ This No Plan' option, unlike the plan option will not encourage more people into greenspaces thus will not worsen the existing problem of over-intensive use. However neither will it provide opportunities by which to manage existing problem areas.	✗ Continued decline in quality of green spaces with limited opportunities for recreation and relaxation and potential links to mental health issues
	✗ Continued under provision/ poor quality of leisure/ recreational spaces in deprived areas such as Roundham with Hyde
	✗ Continued concern over dog problems, teenage anti-social behaviour, litter, vandalism and poor lighting
	✗ Continued lack of community involvement will not encourage strong and more vibrant communities
	✗ Continued under provision of cultural infrastructure in Torbay and missed opportunities to use greenspaces for such purposes
	✗ A continued trend of poor quality local free spaces means either disadvantaging those without (or unable to afford) transport forcing them to use local poor quality spaces or do without.
	✗ Missed opportunities in green spaces to promote culture, history and ecological tourism in parallel to declining quality of green spaces
	✗ Continued higher proportion of seasonal and part time work
	✗ Continued low quality of local provision forcing many to travel further afield to reach facilities they need
	✗ Continued lack of awareness and appropriate action to maintain and enhance biodiversity assets
	✗ Continued possible lack of consideration of local distinctiveness in works carried out in green spaces
	✗ Continued under provision and lack of awareness of cultural and historic assets
	✗ Continued fragmentation of open spaces and woodland
	✗ Lack of consideration for the need to minimise water consumption of green spaces
	✗ Continuation of waste from green spaces going to landfill rather than being recycled.

## **Is the overall direction of the Greenspace Strategy Sustainable?**

Having determined that the plan will indeed provide an improvement on the current situation, it is important to determine if the Greenspace Strategy objectives which set the overall tone of the whole strategy are sustainable.

For this purpose a sustainability appraisal matrix has been formulated to test the Greenspace Strategy Objectives (listed on page 3) against the SA objectives to identify any conflicts with sustainability. An appraisal of the initial set of 8 Greenspace Strategy objectives was carried out as part of the Scoping Report and identified a deficiency in consideration for biodiversity. To address this issue an additional Greenspace Strategy objective has been developed (see objective 9 on page 2). This exercise also highlighted the need to re-word objective 7 to avoid the previous use of the word 'exploit' as this implies that heritage assets will be promoted with little regard to any negative impacts. This has now been amended to 'promote and protect'.

The initial appraisal of the objectives indicated that they were all largely sustainable. However this broad appraisal highlighted the need for further detailed appraisal of the draft plan and Action Plan to determine more clearly how those overarching objectives would be implemented. This in turn would determine the extent and nature of the impacts. This is discussed further below.

## **Is there sufficient detail in the draft Strategy to address sustainability issues in Torbay?**

The appraisal of the overarching Greenspace Strategy Objectives above indicated that further detailed appraisal was needed to ensure that very specific sustainability issues were considered. A detailed appraisal of the draft (Regulation 17) Strategy indicated the following sustainability issues which either had not been considered or required further emphasis in the detail of the Action Plan or main report:

- Biodiversity (in particular the management requirements of Special Area of Conservation at Berry Head)
- Water management (Flooding, water consumption and coastal management)
- Waste management
- Facilities for the elderly
- Climate change (need for additional shading)
- Accessibility (cycling/ walking)
- Recognition of heritage assets (e.g. Buildings At Risk)
- Clearer links to obesity and mental health
- Disturbance of biodiversity and cultural heritage in maintenance and crime prevention work
- The need for staff training to raise awareness of biodiversity and cultural heritage assets and their management requirements
- Potential for renewable energy
- Fragmentation of habitats.

The wording of the Greenspace Strategy has been amended to provide greater emphasis on these issues.

## **How have potentially negative impacts been avoided?**

It is important as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process to set out measures to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects of implementing the SPD. The issues raised in the above appraisal work have been addressed by the following changes to the wording within the final Adoption version (Regulation 19):

- The addition of an extra overarching Greenspace Strategy Objective to ensure due consideration is given to biodiversity and re-wording of the objective on heritage.
- Refining of the Action Plan and main report to account for concerns raised in the appraisal of the Regulation 17 document (see bullet points on previous page)

These textual changes are designed to strengthen coverage of sustainability issues and help avoid potentially negative impacts identified throughout the appraisal. Having dealt with these areas of concern, the sustainability appraisal process indicates that the Greenspace Strategy is unlikely to have any significant adverse impacts. It is anticipated that the monitoring programme proposed will track the effectiveness of above amendments in addressing sustainability issues, as well as identifying any unpredicted effects.

#### **Timetable for monitoring:**

November 2006	SPD due for adoption by Council
March 2007	Ensure mechanisms are in place to start collecting the first years' data on the SA indicators
April 2008	End of first year's data collection.
Sept 2008	Report data in the AMR in September to be published in December 2008

### **How will we know what effect the plan is actually having once adopted?**

It is important that the sustainability appraisal process does not stop once the plan has been adopted. Instead, the impacts of the plan should be monitored using a set of indicators (as set out in the full sustainability appraisal document). This is an important part of the sustainability appraisal process enabling identification of any predicted or unforeseen impacts of the plan at an early stage providing opportunities for remedial action.

Monitoring of the Greenspace Strategy will be based around a broad set of indicators listed within the SA Framework supplemented by a set of indicators specific to the Greenspace Strategy (see section 8 of the full report and further information on monitoring). These indicators may be reviewed over time for their appropriateness particularly in regard to measuring expected and unpredicted effects.

### **How has the Greenspace Strategy been improved as a result of the sustainability appraisal process?**

The sustainability appraisal carried out in parallel to the Greenspace Strategy has been beneficial in strengthening existing sustainability issues covered and highlighting a number of new issues for consideration as outlined above.

- The early scoping work has been beneficial in identifying the key local issues which are relevant to the plans development. This highlighted the need to consider greenspace management issues relating to local biodiversity, cultural and heritage assets, water (consumption, flooding and coastal management), crime levels, social provision, obesity, mental health, social deprivation and emerging trends towards historical and ecological tourism.
- Overarching Greenspace Strategy objectives have been amended and added to, giving further attention to biodiversity through the formation of an additional objective and by giving greater consideration to heritage.
- Amendments to the Action Plan and main text to highlight a wide range of previously lacking and highly relevant sustainability issues has been considered in the detail of the Action Plan and in the main text. The decision to outline the issues which should be covered in the Management Plan in the main document has helped to ensure that a number of sustainability issues are considered on a site by site basis. This in turn will help to draw up long term plans for each of the sites recognising management requirements that may arise from, for example a changing climate and which recognises the assets within the site (in particular biodiversity, cultural and heritage assets.)

## What happens next?

An important part of the appraisal process is to ensure that the impact predictions made in this document are accurate and that any unexpected adverse effects of implementing this document are identified and addressed as soon as possible. It is for this reason that a monitoring programme has been set up to provide a checking mechanism. It is anticipated that this data will be collected on an annual basis where possible and will feed into any future review of the SPD or its related Action Plan.

## Further Information:

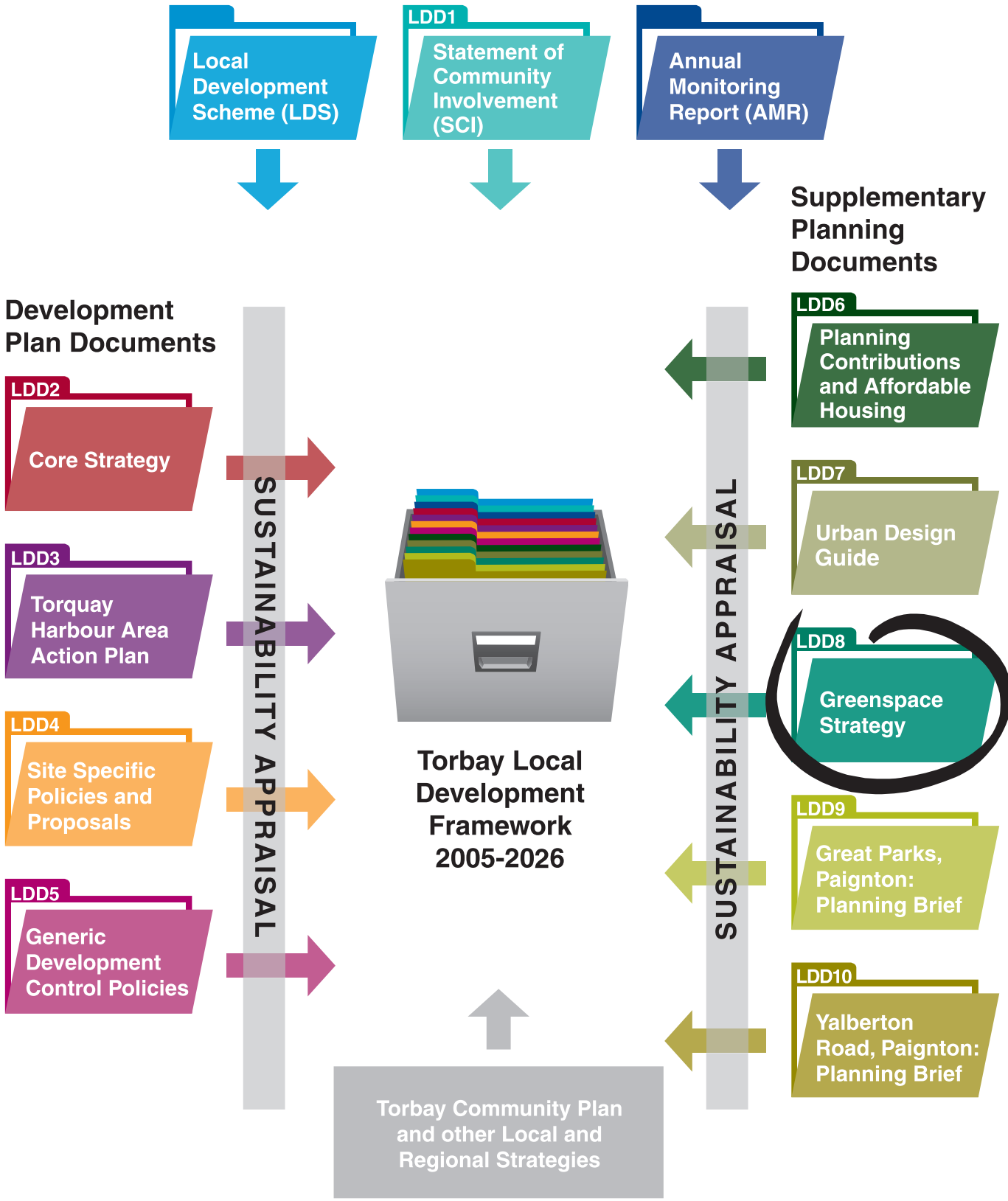
For further information on this, or to get involved in the process please contact

**Strategic Planning Group  
Environmental Policy Section,  
Community Services  
Torbay Council  
3rd Floor Roebuck House  
Abbey Road  
Torquay  
TQ2 5TF  
November 2006**

Telephone **01803 208804** or e-mail **sa@torbay.gov.uk**

A full version of this report is available at **www.torbay.gov.uk/ldf**

# The structure of the Local Development Framework



This document can be made available in a range of languages,  
on tape, in Braille, large print and in other formats.  
For further information please contact 01803 208804.

