

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Board** will be held on

Wednesday, 13 April 2016

commencing at **6.30 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Meadfoot Room, Town Hall, Castle Circus,
Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Board

Councillor Lewis (Chairman)

Councillor Barnby
Councillor Bent
Councillor Bye
Councillor Darling (S)

Councillor Stockman (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Stocks
Councillor Tolchard
Councillor Tyerman

Co-opted Members of the Board

Penny Burnside, Diocese of Exeter

A prosperous and healthy Torbay

For information relating to this meeting or to request a copy in another format or language please contact:

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.

2. Minutes

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 30 March 2016.

(Pages 3 - 5)

3. Declarations of Interest

a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)

4. Urgent Items

To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

5. Consultation, Communication and Engagement Strategy

To consider the draft Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy and make any recommendations to the Mayor.

(Pages 6 - 13)

6. Parking Strategy 2016-2021

To consider feedback from the Task-and-Finish Group on the review of parking and to identify any issues to be reported to the Mayor in his preparation of the draft Parking Strategy.



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

30 March 2016

-: Present :-

Councillor Lewis (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Bent, Bye, Darling (S), Stockman, Stocks, Tolchard and Tyerman

(Also in attendance: Councillors Amil, Ellery, Excell, Haddock, King, Mills, Morey, Morris and Parrott)

62. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from the Mayor.

63. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 17 and 29 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

64. Urgent Items

The Board considered the item in Minute 68, and not included on the agenda, the Chairman being of the opinion that it was urgent by reason of special circumstances i.e. the matter having arisen since the agenda was prepared and it was unreasonable to delay a decision until the next meeting.

65. Corporate Plan Delivery Plans 2015-2019

As part of the consultation, the Board considered the Mayor's draft Corporate Plan Delivery Plans 2015-2019. The Deputy Mayor attended the meeting to respond to the points raised by the Board.

The Board had asked a Task-and-Finish Group to review the draft Delivery Plans and the Group's views were reported back to the Board. The feedback included that the Plans took little account of reports and policies (such as the Corporate Peer Challenge, the Ofsted Inspection and the Housing Strategy) which had been prepared after the Delivery Plans had been originally drafted. It was felt that the Plans could be simplified if they made adequate reference to the other plans and strategies of the Council (such as the emerging Economic and Tourism Strategies) and to the Capital Programme Prioritisation Matrix. Further, the Delivery Plans needed to the SMART and identify both deadlines for completion and who would be responsible for delivery.

The Board felt that the aspirations within the Delivery Plans appeared confusing and disjointed. Specific questions were raised about issues such as apprenticeships, corporate parenting, affordable housing and child poverty.

Resolved: (i) that the following response be made to the Mayor as part of his consultation on the draft Corporate Plan Delivery Plans 2015-2020:

The draft Delivery Plans should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan (including the work programme of the Transformation Board) and the Ofsted Action Plan both of which have been prepared since the Delivery Plans were first drafted. In particular, there should be a focus on how the Council will become sustainable over the period of the Corporate Plan in accordance with the recommendation of the Corporate Peer Challenge.

There should be better cross referencing between other Policy Framework documents meaning that there is no need to list actions within the Corporate Plan Delivery Plans which are already identified in the existing Policy Framework.

The Delivery Plans should make clear reference to the Capital Programme Prioritisation Matrix and that proposed capital schemes will be scored using that Matrix.

The Delivery Plans should include specific targets, dates by which these will be achieved and who will take responsibility for delivery.

(ii) that Members of the Board work with the Executive and Senior Leadership Team to redraft the Delivery Plans prior to their consideration by the Council.

66. Parking Strategy 2016-2021

The Executive Head for Business Services presented his Review of the Parking Service which had been undertaken in order to inform the production of a revised Parking Strategy. The Executive Head highlighted a range of the recommendations within the Review and explained that a revised Parking Strategy was due to be considered by the Council in July 2016.

Resolved: that a Task-and-Finish Group be established to provide feedback on the recommendations within the Review of Parking and on the draft Parking Strategy once it is released for consultation.

67. Self Build Affordable Housing

The Executive Lead for Business attended the meeting to provide an update on the proposal to provide self build affordable housing. It was explained that the recently adopted Local Plan included a policy to enable affordable self build, that the Council proposed to release some of its land to support self build and that the

Council had launched its Self Build Interest Register at the beginning of March 2016.

The Register would help the Council to identify the need or demand for self build and the information gathered would be used to develop the qualifying criteria for self build in Torbay.

The Board accepted that the proposals were at the very early stage and requested that the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Lead be kept informed of progress which could then be reported back through the Overview and Scrutiny Monthly Briefings. The Board would wish to review the proposed criteria for self build before a decision was made. However, the Board felt that any scheme should be designed to meet local need.

68. Capital Plan 2016/17 - 2019/20 Prioritisation Matrix

The Assistant Director – Corporate and Business Services presented the report on the proposed Capital Plan Prioritisation Matrix. The report had been reviewed by a Task-and-Finish Group who had felt that the Matrix should be presented in a clearer, more general language.

Resolved: that the Task-and-Finish Group aim to meet with the Chief Accountant with a view to revising the wording of the Matrix before it is considered at the meeting of the Council to be held on 7 April 2016.

Chairman

March 2016

Draft Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy

2016 - 2020

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2 Introduction

Torbay Council is committed to delivering open and effective communication, consultation and engagement. They are fundamental to our success and underpin the work of the entire council.

Regular and reliable information gives residents and other stakeholders an opportunity to play an active role by influencing decisions and shaping the future of services and helps them to understand the decisions that are taken. It supports the work of councillors, strengthens staff understanding about what is required of them and promotes stronger working relationships with our partners. All of this plays a central role in achieving our Corporate Plan ambition for a prosperous and healthy Torbay.

Torbay Council is committed to using reducing resources to best effect, reducing demand through prevention and innovation and taking a joined up and integrated approach. We need to continue to ensure that our communities and stakeholders are involved in the decision making process and are given the opportunity to help find solutions through high quality consultation and engagement. It is also crucial that we communicate the challenges, decisions and future changes in the most effective, inclusive and timely ways possible.

This strategy will guide how we will communicate, consult and engage with all our stakeholders over the next four years.

3 Our stakeholders

Torbay Council has to communicate, consult and engage with a wide range of stakeholders:

- Local people – both generally and as users of specific services.
- Partner organisations within the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.
- Employees.
- Tourists and visitors.
- National opinion formers including MPs, MEPs, ministers and organisations such as the Local Government Association.
- Media organisations, including local, regional, national, digital and specialist.

4 Aims and Objectives

4.1 Aim

Torbay Council is committed to ensuring open and effective communication, consultation and engagement. We want to ensure that people are given the opportunity to play an active role by influencing decisions and shaping the future of services which may affect them.

The aim of this Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy is to set out the principles within which Torbay Council will communicate and involve local people across Torbay.

In engaging with our residents and all stakeholders, we hope to give people a better sense of ownership of the services and activities available to them. Through effective engagement with our communities we also aim to identify any changes which may be required to local services and deliver on our Corporate Plan ambitions of a prosperous and healthy Torbay.

4.2 Objectives

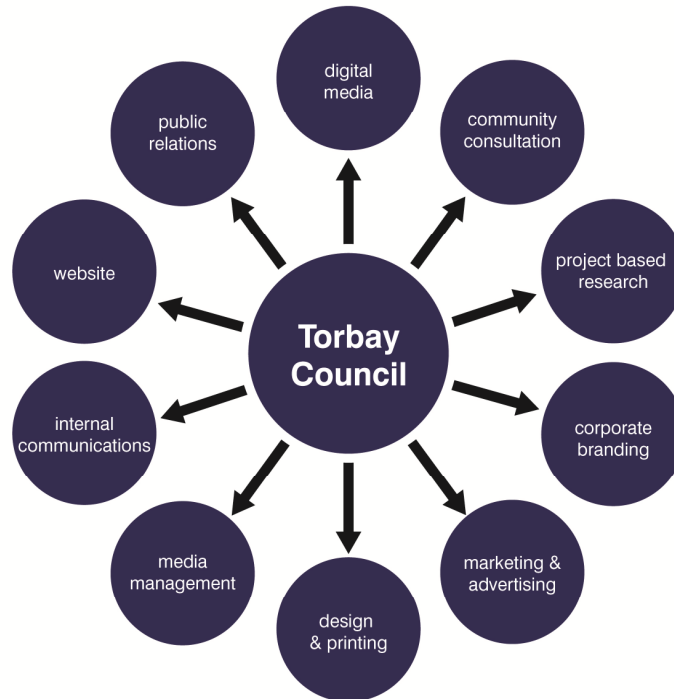
In order to meet these aims we will deliver the following objectives:

- Be open and transparent when communicating with all stakeholders.
- Ensure all communication is two way – listen to stakeholders and communicate back the actions we have taken.
- Use a range of communication methods and channels to provide our stakeholders with information about council activities in order to signpost residents and other stakeholders to the right services and, where appropriate, help them to resolve their own issues to reduce demand on council services.
- Engage and communicate with our communities and stakeholders in a timely way so they are informed and are able to have their say on local decision making issues.
- Be realistic about our limitations and the need for the council to use reducing resources to best effect.
- Use an integrated and joined up approach, both within the council and with our partners, to achieve value for money, to avoid consultation fatigue and to ensure messages are consistent.
- Provide good internal communication, consultation and engagement to improve employee morale, increase performance and to enable staff to understand and demonstrate the council's core values.

5 Definitions of Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Communication, is generally defined as ‘the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing or using some other medium’ and the ‘successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings’.

Torbay Council uses different methods of communication based on target audiences – both internal and external.



Consultation is defined as the process of ‘dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action’. It can involve:

- Passing information and receiving comments.
- Seeking opinions on options before a decision is reached.
- Seeking to involve local people, communities, businesses, voluntary sector organisations and other organisations in important decisions which have an impact on them.
- Listening and learning from local people, communities and other stakeholders.

Engagement can generally be described as ‘developing and sustaining a relationship between public bodies and community groups to help them both understand and act on the needs or issues that the community and work towards a common vision’. Communities, in this sense, can mean groups of people with similar needs or aspirations such as the users of a particular service.

6 Our duties

The duty to inform, consult or involve is set out within the Local Government Act 1999 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

In exercising the general duty under the Local Government Act 1998, local authorities must 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness'

In deciding how to fulfil the general duty the local authority must have 'due regard' for any guidance issued by the Secretary of State and should consult with the following:

- Any person or representatives who are liable to pay any tax, precept or levy in respect of the authority.
- Any person or representatives who are liable to pay non-domestic rates in respect of any area within which the authority carries out functions.
- Any person or representatives who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority.
- Any person or representatives appearing to the authority to have any interest in any area within which the authority carries out functions.
-

The Government's **Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity** provides guidance on the content, style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity.

It states that publicity by local authorities should be based on the following seven principles:

- Lawful - comply with the Advertising Standards Authority's Advertising Codes.
- Cost effective - value for money.
- Objective - politically impartial.
- Even-handed - can address matters of political controversy in a fair manner, but the publicity should not affect support for a single councillor or group.
- Appropriate - refrain from retaining the services of lobbyists. The frequency of council newsletters should be no more than quarterly.
- Have regard to equality and diversity - publicity to positively influence public behaviour and attitudes in relation to issues such as safety and health can be used.
- Issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity - e.g. elections and referendums.

7 Principles for communication, consultation and engagement

To ensure Torbay Council meets its duties as well as the aims and objectives within this policy, all communication, consultation and engagement activity will be developed in line with the following guiding principles:

Clear and concise: We will use plain English and avoid jargon and acronyms in all our communications to ensure messages and purposes are clear, understandable and accessible. When consulting we will only ask questions which are necessary and easy to understand.

Purpose: All our activity will have a clear and defined purpose, linked to our Corporate Plan. We will only consult or carry out marketing and public relations activity if there is an identified objective. Consultation and engagement will be used to influence local decision making.

Timely: All communication, consultation and engagement activity will, when possible, be planned in advance so consistent messages can be used at the right time, in the right way with the right people. We will openly inform, engage, discuss and consult with stakeholders at the earliest possible opportunity, ideally when proposals are being developed or when information is confirmed and becomes available. Due consideration will be given on the lead up to any elections or referendums to whether it is appropriate to launch new campaigns and consultation or engagement activity.

Proportionate timescales: The length of time for consultation and engagement activity will be judged against the nature and impact of the proposal / issue being consulted upon. We will ensure that sufficient time is given for respondents to consider any information provided and that there is sufficient time for them to provide an informed response.

Targeted: We will ensure that all our communications and consultations are targeted at the right stakeholder groups so they are effective and use resources in the best possible way. Where proposals, events or services affect specific individuals or groups, these stakeholders will be made aware of the activity so they can find out more, have their say or become involved. Consultation activity, in particular, will be tailored to meet the needs and preferences of different groups of people across Torbay, ensuring accessibility for all.

Relevant information: We will provide enough information, or signpost stakeholders to where they can obtain more information, to ensure that informed choices can be made. This could include how to access a particular service or how to resolve an issue. It could also relate to specific proposals and include information about how the options have been considered and details of any assessments of costs, benefits and impacts which have been carried out.

Feedback: We will ensure that any internal or external feedback will be conscientiously taken into account and will be considered in any final decision making. With regard to consultations, the results will be used to inform the development of relevant impact assessments. We will publish the results of consultation and engagement activity within eight weeks of the activity, stating how many responses were received and how they have been used in formulating the recommendation.

Forward thinking: We will actively explore and assess how we can best use new technology and other new communication channels to reach and engage as many people as possible.

Corporate identity and style guidelines: All communications involving the council will meet our corporate identity guidelines. This is to protect the brand identity, to maintain the council's professional image and to ensure all council activity is consistent and accountable. This includes use of the Torbay Council logo, images and our house presentation style.

Partnership agreements: As we embrace a stronger integrated and joined up approach it is important that all partners agree in advance how any partnership activity will be carried out and communicated. This is to ensure there are consistent messages and that all communication and engagement protocols and corporate identity guidelines are met.

Responsibility: We acknowledge that communication is a two way process and is the responsibility of everyone. Council employees, elected members and all stakeholders have a role to play in open, timely and effective communication, consultation and engagement with each other.

Monitoring and evaluation: Given the important emphasis on using our resources to best effect, the way in which we communicate, consult and engage should be inclusive and effective. Monitoring and evaluating activity, where possible, will identify if we have met defined goals, areas that need exploring further and activity which can be improved.

8 Feedback

Torbay Council welcomes your comments and suggestions on our Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy and will use any feedback we receive to help further develop these objectives.

Please email consultation@torbay.gov.uk or contact us by mail or telephone.

Torbay Council

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