

APPENDIX 1 - Good for Torbay - A Big Society Framework

Introduction by Cllr Alison Hernandez

Executive Lead for Involved and Healthy Communities

Torbay Council is leading by example in working to build a healthy, prosperous and happy Bay. In order to achieve this we have a number of key priorities:

- Developing our economy and responding to the recession
- Increasing opportunities for older people and meeting the challenge of providing services for an ageing population
- Tackling climate change by reducing our carbon footprint and addressing the increased risk of flooding
- Improving the quality of life for the least well off in our society

Our vision is one where the citizens of Torbay are empowered to act, be a part of a growing collective vision and feel civic pride in where they live.

Our Community Plan aims to unlock Torbay's potential and drive forward its economic prosperity to deliver our vision of healthy, prosperous and happy communities with a higher quality of life and improved access to jobs.

In Torbay we know that:

- Torbay is a relatively low crime area; crime rates are falling but fear of crime remains
- Alcohol contributes significantly towards Torbay's night-time economy but also contributes towards localised violent assaults and general night time disorder
- There is a wealth of older and younger people who volunteer

on a regular basis to help shape their local community

- Torbay has a higher percentage of older people compared to other areas of the UK and this creates an opportunity to make sure their wisdom is fully shared
- Torbay is becoming more culturally diverse as a community due to growth in population from Europe and elsewhere.

We want Torbay to be a great place where people want to live, work, study or visit. Civic pride and social action within a Big Society Framework will become the norm, people will feel involved and have a sense of belonging and pride in Torbay. We will make Torbay a place of huge civic pride with a thriving 'civic core.'

Torbay already has a long tradition of civic action. We have some great examples of communities and the public, voluntary and business sectors working together to make a positive difference to people's lives in the Bay.

But in this new world of economically, socially and environmentally limited resources we need to reassess what is important to our communities to create the best opportunities possible for our citizens to flourish.

Our aim is to bring the public, private, community and voluntary sectors closer together to achieve great things in partnership and, most importantly, to create a focus on the *citizen*, not any organisation.

To achieve this Torbay residents need to take an active part in the development of their communities and public services. This programme will recognise and build on the assets that exist in our communities and the strengths of our citizens.

Global students and visitors will have the opportunity to get involved in civic action while they stay for leisure or learning - interacting with our residents and businesses in the process and sharing their skills, experiences and culture. Businesses will encourage the development of new skills and employment opportunities and support people of all ages to develop new and innovative ideas.

The routes to achieve this are not outlined in a government directed step by step process – this Big Society Framework outlines a new way of thinking and operating. It's a reflection of where we are, what we have achieved and our aspirations to achieve in the future.

We know that by working together we can achieve great things and really benefit our citizens. Only with a citizen-focused approach, putting aside “business as usual” approaches, can we realise this vision.

This Big Society Framework outlines some of the work that Torbay Council is currently delivering in partnership with its communities and with other agencies. However, in order to realise the vision and potential of the Big Society we are asking for ideas for progression – what else should we be considering?

By working together we can make Torbay a place with huge civic pride and an active, involved community - truly a vision to aspire to.

We have set out a range of steps we have already taken, and those we will explore over the coming political term of office to develop a broader and more inclusive civic approach in Torbay. It is intended to be a living document that will change as new ideas are developed with our communities.

We look forward to working with you all in the future.

Cllr Alison Hernandez

July 2012

A catalyst for change

Local authorities have an important role to play in developing momentum and to act as a catalyst for change. Torbay Council's vision is that Torbay will be recognised as a place where people want to live, work, study or visit. The Big Society concept is one way to achieve this vision.

It is clear that public services have a part to play in making this happen but such services alone cannot deliver these outcomes.

With the background of significant reductions to the public sector, there is a clear case for change – ensuring that positive outcomes are delivered for our communities and people. In order to achieve this, public services need to

consider the shape of future services and how they are delivered.

Central to the success of a buoyant civic society are the *three principles* which underpin the Big Society Framework, namely:

- Building social capital through social action,
- Transforming public services and creating opportunities
- Empowering communities.

Torbay needs to work with its communities and with the private and third sectors to identify opportunities to realise these ambitions and empower local communities to identify their priorities and manage risks.

The Three Principles

1. Building social capital through social action – Encouraging and supporting people to work together so they can strengthen their own communities.

Developing social capital has been on the political agenda for a number of years. There is now an established infrastructure of national support provided by voluntary organisations and public institutions as well as a desire to develop these further.

Volunteering is, of course, a crucial element in this process - a recent report on community wealth mapped the Big Society against three components:

- Belonging, cohesion and trust
- Civic involvement
- Volunteering

When the South-west region was measured against these components it scored strongly in all. When the three components were combined nationally with equal weighting it suggested that the Big Society is *strongest* in the South-west of England.

Volunteering is not the only means to build social capital, however. *Co-Production*: the involvement of individuals in the design, delivery and evaluation of services has been achieved notably through the work of Torbay Council's Supporting People programme and it is an aspiration for Torbay Council as a whole.

Social action

A recent report highlights the renewed focus on social enterprise, social innovation and the potential of the internet to bring people together to achieve goals. Social innovation is one

way of substituting government action as the public sector budget cuts hit.

Studies have shown that the most popular volunteering activities tend to involve a small investment of time and effort. Volunteers also wish to be clear what their role is and to find it rewarding. Volunteers are interested in numerous opportunities within the public, charitable and voluntary sectors. This includes running libraries, raising funds for local community centres and play groups as well as mentoring young offenders or families.

Here are some examples of how Torbay Council is building social capital through social action:

Our Junior Street Wardens

Torbay Council runs the *JSW Crew* where young people from eight to 16 can volunteer in their neighbourhood under the supervision of our Street Wardens to make a positive difference to their communities. The scheme aims to:

- Improve relationships within communities by bringing children from different backgrounds together
- Break down barriers between generations
- Make the local environment a cleaner and safer place to live by encouraging children and young people to take ownership and responsibility for their surroundings
- Have fun by doing something positive for the community.

For more information on our Junior Street Wardens Scheme email street.wardens@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 208854.

Our Neighbourhood Management Scheme: Hele's Angels

Hele's Angels is a community led initiative delivered through a multi-agency team including public sector partners, churches and the voluntary and community sectors. It brings communities together to identify local issues and solutions. The partnership is operating over a two-year period in Hele and lower Barton. Action to address local issues is taken by both the public agencies and residents themselves.

For information on Hele's Angels please email info@helesangels.org.uk or ring 01803 312808.

Our Neighbourhood Planning Groups

Torbay Council is developing a number of planning groups that bring together service users, Torbay residents, carers and interest groups amongst others that support people with specific needs to ensure statutory services meet these needs effectively. Council teams engage and consult with the planning groups to ensure their views are included when policies, strategies and services are being planned. These groups play a valuable role in informing decisions and the design of services. Torbay Council will continue to work with these planning groups to ensure they influence the services they use.

For information on Neighbourhood Planning Groups please email planning@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 207801.

Our Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships (formerly Ward Partnerships) increase the involvement of local people and communities in the work of the Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP). They are voluntary groups generally based on

the ward boundaries that provide an opportunity for people who live or work in the different parts of Torbay to discuss issues of common concern. They also provide an opportunity for local people to understand and influence the way in which services are provided in their area.

For information on Community Partnerships please email community.partnerships@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 208831.

In addition to these examples, Torbay Council is helping to build social capital and support charities or community groups by considering a range of schemes enabling staff to donate working time or wages to support charities and community groups.

Here is an example of what Torbay Council is planning to deliver in order to building social capital through social action:

Partners and Communities Together (PACT) / 'Have Your Say.'

The PACT process of consultation and resident engagement between the police, Safer Communities Torbay and communities in Torbay has been operational for several years. In 2011 a decision was taken to re-design the process to ensure that community engagement activities relating to community safety in Torbay are consistent, purposeful and co-ordinated. A new PACT process, re-named 'Have Your Say' will be launched in Torbay in 2012 that will enable statutory partners to identify and respond to residents and 'hard to reach' social groups.

For information on PACT / 'Have Your Say' please email vicky.booty@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 841251.

2. Transform public services and creating opportunities – changing the way services are delivered, with an emphasis on increasing the role of the voluntary and community sector and supporting individuals and communities to commission services with confidence.

The Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP) has recently agreed to ensure that voluntary and community organisations have a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services by opening up new markets in accordance with the ethos of the government white paper *Open Public Services*. The TSP will also agree with Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCO's) how outcomes (including those of social, environmental and economic value) will be monitored before a contract or a funding agreement is made.

Torbay Council aims to achieve a cultural change in the way that public services are delivered. We believe that a new approach to delivering public services is urgently needed.

This new way of thinking is summarised in the White Paper *Open Public Services* (Home Office 2011):

'The principles that inform our approach, and the policies we will enact to give it force, signal a decisive end to the old-fashioned, top-down, take-what-you-are-given model of public services. We are opening public services because we believe that giving people more control over the public services they receive, and opening up the delivery of those services to new providers, will lead to better public services for all.'

Here are some examples of how Torbay Council is transforming public services and creating opportunities:

Our Supporting People Programme

Supporting People services in Torbay enable vulnerable people to become or remain independent. Services are provided by community, voluntary and independent sector organisations. They are short term and aim to connect people into local informal support including, good neighbour schemes, local clubs and societies and other community activities, as well as providing formal support from local health and social care services.

For information on our Supporting People programme please email referralhub@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 208729.

Our Community Asset Transfer Programme

The Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (2006), sets out a new relationship between local government and its communities. In the same spirit, the *Making Assets Work* (Quirk Review) sets out the clear benefits to local groups which own or manage public assets – such as community centres, building preservation trusts and community business enterprises. Fundamentally, the review talks about giving local people a bigger stake in the future of their area through this model.

Torbay Council has an active eCommunity Asset Transfer in place which supports the transfer of assets through leases and operational management to the community, for purposes that benefit the communities they serve. This can range from small parks groups to established voluntary sector organisations.

For information on our Community Asset Transfer Programme please email asset.management@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 207921.

Here is an example of what Torbay Council is planning to deliver in order to transform public services and create opportunities:

Our Neighbourhood Youth Provision Programme

A new way of delivering neighbourhood youth provision in Torbay begins in April. The Local Authority's neighbourhood youth centre based work is being replaced with an open grant funding pot to enable local groups, organisations and individuals to deliver services that are needed and required by young people in their communities.

A full time senior youth worker and two part-time staff will work alongside all the new providers to offer help, support and advice. They will also make sure there is high quality of provision, which can be developed in the future.

Torbay Council will be inviting communities to apply for the grant funding pot from April. Applicants can be young people, parents, community members or voluntary sector organisations. Young people will play a key role in deciding how the funding should be used.

For more information please email CSEnquiries@torbay.gov.uk and put the word 'Youth' in the subject line. Alternatively call 01803 201201

3. Empowering our communities – giving individuals and communities greater influence over local decision-making and opening up service providers to greater scrutiny and challenge.

Here are some examples of how Torbay Council is empowering our communities:

Our Children's Volunteering Programme

The *Hand in Hand Volunteer/Mentoring Team* is part of Torbay Council's Children's Services. The volunteers make a big difference to families and young people throughout the Bay by providing vital support, usually within the family's own home or out in the community. Volunteers are required to work with families who sometimes need an extra pair of hands to help make life a little easier and children and young people who need companionship or encouragement. For information on the Hand in Hand Volunteer/Mentoring Team please email volunteering@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 314876.

Our Sort It! Programme

Sort It! is a volunteering programme giving residents the power to resolve minor neighbourhood disputes. Sort It! gives statutory agencies like the council the ability to offer support through other means in cases where it is not appropriate to take formal enforcement action.

Using Community Mediators, Torbay Council supports residents in negotiating through the issues that divide them and reach a mutually acceptable solution. Their role is not to tell residents what to do, but to help them communicate to find their own solutions.

For information on our Sort It! programme please email sortit@torbay.gov.uk or ring 01803 208025.

Our support for Torbay's Street Pastors

Since March 2008 Torbay Street Pastors have provided help and

reassurance to those participating in Torbay's night-time economy activities. The Street Pastors are trained Christian volunteers, who give their own time to patrol the streets every weekend well into the night, often in adverse conditions, seeking to offer help and reassurance to those who need it. They show incredible dedication, resourcefulness and bravery and through their caring non-judgemental approach they seek to diffuse trouble, protect the vulnerable from harm and reduce the levels of crime and fear of crime on the streets of Torbay.

For information on the Street Pastors please email info@streetpastors.org.uk

How will we know if we are being successful?

In order to gauge whether we are being successful in achieving the three principles outlined in this framework it will be necessary to include some measures or yardsticks of our success. We suggest that these could include the following but welcome any further or alternative measures you may like to recommend.

Sense of belonging. In the past Torbay Council has collected information on whether people feel they belong or feel a part of their neighbourhood. We would do this by way of an annual survey to a panel of local residents to get their views and allow us to compare to previous years.

Satisfaction with services. Through surveys Torbay Council can collect levels of satisfaction with its services overall as well as within a particular area.

Volunteering. Through surveys Torbay Council can collect overall numbers of volunteers in Torbay as well as within a particular area.

Over to you

The Big Society is not uniform, so the patchwork of initiatives outlined in this prospectus can provide only a snapshot of our ongoing work to build social infrastructure in Torbay.

We recognise that Big Society cannot be achieved through the delivery of a specific project or programme but through a cultural and social *shift* based upon the three headline areas outlined in this document implemented at local, regional and national level.

Our work to build Big Society will therefore be dynamic and fluid. We will update this framework as our work progresses and we find new ways to empower Torbay communities and build social capital.

The means for you to make contact, both in terms of your suggestions and in regard to the individual projects are included throughout this document.

We have outlined some of the work Torbay Council is currently delivering or planning to deliver in partnership with its communities and with other agencies. However, in order to realise the vision and potential of the Big Society we are asking for future ideas. What else should we be considering?

What do you think?

Please forward your ideas and suggestions to Mark Richards, Project Manager Community Safety and Public Health:

Tel: 01803 207281

Email: mark.richards@torbay.gov.uk

Post: Safer Communities Torbay, Ground Floor, Commerce House, Torquay, TQ2 5PJ

