



**Meeting:** Council

**Date:** 26 February 2015

**Wards Affected:** All

**Report Title:** Principles of Overview and Scrutiny

**Is the decision a key decision?** No

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** As soon as possible

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## **1. Purpose and Introduction**

1.1 This report presents the findings from the work undertaken by the Council as a Scrutiny Development Area with assistance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

## **2. Proposed Decision**

2.1 That the principles of overview and scrutiny set out in section 5 of Appendix 1 of the submitted report be adopted and included within the Constitution of Torbay Council.

2.2 That the principles be used to provide a framework for a wider review of the governance structure which will inform the induction process following the elections in May 2015 and that the Executive Director of Operations and Finance and the Monitoring Officer use the proposals set out in section 6 of Appendix 1 of the submitted report as the basis for discussions with the incoming Mayor and Council on the future governance arrangements for Torbay Council.

## **3. Reason for Decision**

3.1 To enable the wider involvement of a wider group of councillors within the ongoing transformation of Torbay Council.

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## **Supporting Information**

### **4. Position**

- 4.1 Torbay Council was selected as one of twelve councils to become a Scrutiny Development Area for 2014/2015 by the Centre for Public Scrutiny. The aims and objectives of the project were:
- To identify and act on those areas where scrutiny can add most value on transformation within the council's existing governance arrangements;
  - To identify ways in which a broader group of members can be actively involved in the council's plans for transformation;
  - To identify ways in which the community can be actively involved in the council's plans for transformation.
  - To provide a framework for a wider review of the governance structure to create a set of principles which will inform the induction process following the elections in May 2015.
- 4.2 The Council has been working with John Cade from the Centre of Public Scrutiny and the Mayor and all councillors and the Senior Leadership Team have inputted into the work undertaken. A high level evaluation of the current governance structure was carried out and a set of principles for the future operation of overview and scrutiny have been developed and discussed. Further, a proposal for reconstituting the Policy Development Groups has been put forward.
- 4.3 The report giving all the details of the review is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.4 Given that the mayoral and local elections are due to be held in May 2015, it is recommended that the proposals form the basis of discussions on the future governance arrangements of the council in the immediate post election period.

### **5. Possibilities and Options**

- 5.1 The Council may choose not to adopt the principles for the operation of overview and scrutiny or the framework for future governance arrangements. However, the bid to become a Scrutiny Development Area was made following a recognition that the role of overview and scrutiny in Torbay in the current governance arrangements is not fully understood or fully utilised. Given the challenges facing the Council in the coming months and years, the current overview and scrutiny arrangements are not sustainable.

### **6. Fair Decision Making**

- 6.1 The Mayor, all Councillors and the Senior Leadership Team have had the opportunity to contribute to the discussions on the current and future overview and scrutiny arrangements. The Community Development Trust also provided input into the work.

## **7. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

7.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 does not apply to this decision.

## **8. Risks**

8.1 The risk associated with the proposal not being implemented is that overview and scrutiny will not have a useful role within the governance arrangements of the Council.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Report from the Scrutiny Development Area review