



Meeting: Council

Date: 24 September 2015

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Review of Policy Framework Documents

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented?

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1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting of Council held on 23 July 2015 the Council approved a motion requesting the Executive Director of Operations and Finance to undertake a review of the Council's Policy Framework and report back to Council in September. The review was to include recommendations for additional plans/strategies and removal of any plans/strategies which are no longer required together with timescales against each policy for Council approval.
- 1.2 The current list of Policy Framework documents is set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution. It currently contains 28 key plans and strategies. A Policy Framework document is an important strategic document which is approved by the Council and sets the direction for the delivery and operation of Council services within the Council's approved budget. Any subsequent decisions by the Mayor or Council officers under the Council's Officer Scheme of Delegation, has to be in accordance with the Policy Framework.
- 1.3 It is important that the Policy Framework is not overly complex, with Members, Officers, Partners and the public being able to view the Council's policy on any given subject in one place, rather than having to refer to a number of documents to understand the same. Policies being held in many disparate documents also runs the risk of conflict and confusion between the same.
- 1.4 Learning lessons from elsewhere, the Sir Bob Kerslake review of Birmingham City Council in 2014 said inter alia that they had a multiplicity of strategies and plans which lead to unnecessary complexity and confusion. The recommendation flowing from this was of the need for the whole organisation to be tightly focussed on a small number of priorities, with the Council developing a simplified Policy Framework.

- 1.5 As part of the review the Executive Director of Operations and Finance consulted the Senior Leadership Team and Senior Manager's Forum and asked them for their views on what the Policy Framework should look like, what plans are of strategic importance for their service area, what should be removed and what is missing. A benchmarking exercise was also carried out with other local authorities on what documents they include in their Policy Framework. The results of the review are attached at Appendix 1.

2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 To ensure good governance of the Council it is important that there are open and transparent rules and procedures for approving the Council's key policies (these are set out in the Council's 'Standing Orders - Budget and Policy Framework' which is currently under review as part of a review of the Council's Constitution) and that the list of key policies is reviewed and kept up to date. In undertaking a review of the Council's Policy Framework documents the Executive Director of Operations and Finance has had regard to relevant legislation, current working practices and benchmarking information from other local authorities.
- 2.2 The outcome of the review will ensure that the Policy Framework is strategic, joined up and covers the Council's key priorities.
- 2.3 Reducing the number of the documents within the Policy Framework will enable a more focussed approach to the Council's strategic planning and more efficient use of resources and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That the review of the Council's Policy Framework (as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report) be approved and the Policy Framework be updated to comprise the following documents:
- a) Communication, Engagement and Consultation Strategy;
 - b) Corporate Plan incorporating Equalities Objectives;
 - c) Economic Regeneration Plan incorporating Tourism Strategy; and Cultural Strategy;
 - d) Housing Strategy incorporating Homelessness Strategy; and Housing Allocations Policy;
 - e) Gambling Act Policy/Statement of Principles;
 - f) Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy incorporating the Children's and Young People's Plan; Older Persons Strategy; and Supporting People Strategy;
 - g) Licensing Policy;
 - h) Local Transport Plan incorporating the Parking Strategy;
 - i) Plans and Strategies which together comprise the Development Plan incorporating the Port Masterplan; and
 - j) Strategic Agreement between Torbay and Southern Devon Health and Care NHS Trust and Torbay Council /Torbay and South Devon Clinical Commissioning Group; and
 - k) Waste Management Strategy.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Table proposing changes to the Council's Policy Framework

Background Documents

Article 4 – The Council

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/documents/s24395/06%20Article%204%20-%20The%20Council.pdf>

Standing Orders – Budget and Policy Framework

<http://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/documents/s24650/27%20Standing%20Orders%20-%20Budget%20and%20Policy%20Framework.pdf>