



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

6 July 2016

-: Present :-

Councillor Lewis (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Bent, Bye, Stockman, Stocks, Tolchard, Tyerman and Doggett

(Also in attendance: Councillors Darling (M), Mills, Pentney, Brooks, Ellery, Excell, Kingscote, Morey and Parrott)

19. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor and Councillor Morris both of whom had been invited to attend the meeting as the appropriate Executive Leads for items on the agenda. They were both represented by the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mills).

20. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 15 June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. Electoral Review to Reduce the Number of Councillors in Torbay

Following a request made at the meeting of the Council held on 10 December 2015, a report containing statistical and benchmarking information was considered in order for the Board to determine whether it should recommend that a review of the current ward boundaries and/or number of councillors should be undertaken.

It was reported that, since the report had been prepared, further discussions had been held with the Boundary Commission. Given the number of new residential developments which had recently been completed in Torbay, the Commission would be adding a review of Torbay's boundaries into its work programme for 2017/2018. The Board was advised that, if the Council requested that a review be undertaken, the Council would have more control over when the work would start meaning that the associated workload could be programmed accordingly.

Resolved: that the Board recommend to the Council that it requests the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake a review of the ward boundaries in Torbay but, at this stage, the Board do not believe there is a need to review the overall number of councillors.

22. Rationalisation of Discretionary Welfare Funds

Following consideration of proposals in relation to the Social Fund during its Review of Priorities and Resources in January 2016, the Board received an update report on the work that had been undertaken for the Council to make best use of discretionary welfare funds.

The Board heard details of the new Deposit Bond and Crisis Support Loan Schemes and how these worked alongside the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme. The Deposit Bond Scheme was due to launch on 1 August 2016 with the Crisis Support Loan Scheme having been operational since 1 May 2016.

It was noted that Children's Services Section 17 payments were still largely made in isolation to the other discretionary welfare schemes. The Executive Lead for Children's Services assured the Board that he would make every effort to remove the duplication around the Section 17 payments. The Executive Head – Customer Services explained that he hoped to make use of monitoring software to avoid duplication of applications although careful consideration would need to be given to data protection.

Resolved: that the excellent response of the Executive Head – Customer Services and his team to reconfiguring the discretionary welfare funds to make best use of reducing resources be congratulated and that a further update report be presented in nine months time.

23. Amendments to the Corporate Asset Management Plan

The Board considered a draft report which was due to be presented to the meeting of the Council to be held on 22 July 2016 on proposals amendments to the Corporate Asset Management Plan. The processes and procedures in place to determine applications for grants in lieu of rent had been reviewed, amendment and consolidated and it was proposed that these should now be included as an appendix to the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan.

Further, a review of the process of granting leases for sports grounds had also been undertaken. It was proposed that an overarching strategy for the granting of such leases also be included as an appendix to the Asset Management Plan.

A representative of Torbay Sports Council attended the meeting and shared the concerns of the Sports Council in relation to the proposals with the Board.

The Board raised questions in relation to how the market value would be assessed, the break clauses available to the Council and its tenants and whether the Executive supported the proposals.

Resolved: that the proposals within the draft report be supported but that officers consider how an appeals mechanism (to councillors) can be included within the process for determining applications for grants to in lieu of rent.

24. Torre Valley North Lease

The Executive Head – Business Services presented his draft report on the proposal to grant a 30 year lease (at less than market rent) of Torre Valley North Playing Field to Torre Valley Sports Group Community Interest Company.

The report also gave details of the potential use of a capital sum of £127,000 which had been transferred from Children's Services to the Council to compensate for Cockington Primary School's encroachment onto Torre Valley North Playing Field when the School was expanded in 2012/13.

A representative of Torbay Sports Council and the Community Interest Company addressed the Board with their views on the proposals.

In response to members questions on the potential use of the capital sum, the Executive Head explained that the wording of the recommendation needed to be amended to make it clear that the facilities at the Playing Field would be reinstated using the monies with any remaining capital then being ringfenced for use to improve sports facilities throughout Torbay.

Resolved: that, subject to recommendation 3.4 being amended as explained by the Executive Head, the Board support the proposals.

25. Screen on the Green

The Board considered a request from Councillors Darling (M) and Pentney for an item to be considered at a future meeting of the Board in relation to "The Screen on the Green".

Resolved: that the Assistant Director – Corporate Services be requested to prepare a report answering the questions identified by Councillors Darling (M) and Pentney plus the following points raised at the meeting:

- What are the implications of the covenant on Torre Abbey Meadows for this attraction and future attractions?
- Was there a business case for the proposal showing the financial and community benefits? If so, can a copy of the Business Plan be shared with the Board?
- What is the decision making process for agreeing to hold such events?

Chairman
