

Report Number: TSP/2/11

Closing the Gap Project Update

Torbay Strategic Partnership – Thursday 27th January 2011

1. What are we trying to achieve for our communities?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the TSP on the progress of the Closing the Gap Project, especially in light of October's Peer Review by Government Office South West (set out at Appendix 1) – where the project was assessed in terms of what was working well, what was not and to improve understanding of what more could be done to address the barriers to progress.
- 1.2 In December 2009 the findings of the Comprehensive Area Assessment were published and Torbay was given a red flag on our progress around 'helping the worst off.' In response a 'Closing the Gap' Project Board was reviewed and four action plans established: Neighbourhoods, Health, Economy and Child Poverty. Utilising 2008's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the framework of the Community Plan, the Actions Plans outlined a broad spectrum of work designed to improve overall quality of life and 'close' the inequality gap in specific geographic areas of Torbay. This new approach was underpinned through the principles of first and most – differential investment in those areas of greatest need.
- 1.3 The GOSW Peer Review found a strong commitment across all agencies at all levels to 'close the gap.' They found a strong conviction within Torbay that the principles of neighbourhood management were the right ones to follow. The elected members, officers, frontline staff and residents consulted said future policy interventions need to be responsive to and rooted within an understanding of the disparities that exist within Torbay. However, a number of recommendations were made to improve the project – as a result the Closing the Gap Project Board now aims to work closely with partners and the community to achieve the following:
 1. A re-framed strategy emphasising the overall vision to close the gap in life expectancy. This will include the following objectives:
 - To reduce wider inequalities in society proven to impact on life expectancy with a particular emphasis on the economy and employment.
 - To improve the quality of life of residents in deprived communities.
 - To work with residents to identify their priorities and goals for improving their areas.
 - To foster multi-agency working to optimise the delivery of universal and targeted services to the people of Torbay

2. A refined and simplified Action Plan with a small set of specific targets which focus on targeted support and the employment theme within areas of inequality. For example:

- TDA existing actions on start up businesses and wage levels
- The consolidation and delivery of the Neighbourhood Management Pilot in Hele and Barton
- Raised levels of educational attainment & skills to access new employment opportunities
- Health champions appointed to improve the health of the unemployed in deprived areas.
- Focus on potential cost savings through the process of first and most.

3. Recognition and incorporation of new and existing work-streams that support the Closing the Gap Project:

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|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| i) Locality working | ii) The Big Society |
| iii) Tasking | iv) Child Poverty |
| v) Time-bank | vi) Review of Community Partnerships |

4. Strengthen the role of the Closing the Gap Project Board: affirming membership, structures, decision making pathways and performance management. This aspect is a work in progress and will be presented to the TSP in April.

2. Relationship to Community Plan & Mayoral Vision

2.1 The Closing the Gap Project directly supports two of the four key challenges that have emerged from the refreshment:

- Improving quality of life for the least well off in our society
- Developing our economy and responding to the recession

The Closing the Gap Project Action Plan will include specific targets, outcomes, indicators and measures of success in line with the new structure of the Community Plan. It will also meet the directives of the Mayoral Vision in improving the economy in Torbay. There is a sound evidence base that employment has a positive impact on health and quality of life.

3. Recommendation for decision

3.1 That the TSP endorses the process of strategy review, simplification of action plans, recognition of new and existing work-streams and reviewed Project Board as outlined in Section 1.3

Appendix 1 Closing the Inequalities Gap in Torbay: Peer Review October 2010

Appendix 2 Hele Angels Shop Case Study - Single Parent Mother

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