



## **Review of Electoral Arrangements - Submission by Torbay Council on Council Size**

### **1. Introduction**

This submission sets out the response from Torbay Council to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) invitation to put forward a recommendation on future Council size.

The review has been triggered because of electoral imbalances of the number of electors per Councillor across some of the Wards in Torbay. For example the Shipway with the Willows Ward has 30% more electors per Councillor than the average. The Council recognises the importance of electoral equality to a fair democratic process by ensuring that each vote carries the same value, whilst at the same time it must ensure that the governance of the Council is maintained at a level which can best serve the electorate.

The Council's submission has been developed with the Mayor and Group Leaders' Group, consisting of the elected Mayor, the Council's three Group Leaders and the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator. The Group Leaders have also carried out consultation on the proposals with their respective group members. **The Council's recommendation on Council size was unanimously approved by full Council so enjoys the cross party support of all Members (to be updated after the Council meeting).**

### **2. Overview of Council Size Submission**

The Council's submission addresses the three broad areas contained within the LGBCE's technical guidance on governance arrangements, scrutiny functions and the representational role of Councillors within their local communities.

The last review of electoral arrangements in Torbay was in 2001/2002, when the number of Councillors was retained at 36, spread over 15 Wards.

Based on the 1 December 2016 electoral register, the current Local Government elector to Councillor ratio is 2,767. The electorate forecasts developed as part of this exercise suggest that by 2023 the ratio for the Council's recommended number of Councillors will be an average of 2,872 electors per Councillor.

#### **Summary of the Council's submission**

The approach adopted when considering Council size has been to follow the LGBCE's guiding principles and address them both in terms of current arrangements and likely future trends and plans. This has taken into account the change in Governance arrangements that will occur in 2019.

The number of Councillors required to enable the anticipated governance arrangements to function are broadly the same as the existing number, namely nine Executive Members and twenty-seven Overview and Scrutiny Non-Executive Members, totalling 36 members. Therefore the number of Councillors recommended by this Council would enable continued and sufficient support of the Council's important governance and decision making functions, whilst ensuring it can provide proper scrutiny, meet its regulatory responsibilities and maintain a proper level of representation on local bodies and partnerships.

After considering all of the relevant factors, the Council's recommendation is that its current level of 36 elected Members should be retained so that the Council can ensure it continues to:

- provide an effective decision making process;
- provide effective arrangements for the management and delivery of its business, responsibilities and regulatory functions;
- support extensive and effective involvement in community representation and continue to develop Members' roles as community leaders; and
- respond to the challenges facing Torbay and its local communities, as the population continues to grow.

### **Summary of Justification**

A summary of the Council's justification for the submission is set out below:

Torbay Council is a small unitary authority responsible for delivering over 1,000 local services including children's and adult social care, road maintenance, leisure facilities and refuse collection with a population of circa 131,000. The Council's ambition is to create a Council fit for the challenges of the future, focusing on creating a prosperous and healthy Torbay, which is reflected in the Corporate Plan and its delivery plans.

Whilst the economy of Torbay is amongst the weakest in England, it is showing signs of recovery from the recession, with recent statistics pointing to a more rapid rise in salary rates than elsewhere in the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership area. This has been assisted by the actions taken by the Council and its partners to encourage investment in growth from businesses. The South Devon Highway opened in December 2015 and will assist in improving Torbay's economy and lead to higher value employment and wider benefits through providing improved transport links to the region.

The Torbay Local Plan has been adopted and provides over the next 18 years for Torbay to grow by 9,000 homes and 5,500 jobs.

The Council continues to face significant budget pressures and is exploring new and innovative ways to deliver services and maximise value for money. It will build on the service specific partnerships already in place, such as: the Torbay and Southern Devon Health and Care NHS Trust (ICO); economic development through the Torbay Development Agency (TDA); the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust; TOR2 (a joint venture company between Torbay Council and Kier Group for direct services); and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The Council is also working with the Heart of the South West partnership on a proposed

Devolution deal with the government.

The Council currently operates an elected Mayor and Executive model of governance, but following a governance referendum held on 5 May 2016 will be moving to a Leader and Cabinet style system with a Leader and Executive from May 2019.

Our governance arrangements provide a system whereby Non-Executive Members hold Executive Members to account and ensure that regulatory functions are delivered to meet the demands of Torbay's economy and demographic. This will continue with the new Leader and Cabinet system.

Technological advancements since the last electoral review and changes to the way we all communicate, means there are far more channels of communication now available between Members and their constituents. This has created 24 hour access and an expectation that responses will be instant. Members see that their workloads have increased since the last review and believe this trend will continue as its population grows and the Council works to meet its commitment to deliver new housing and encourage economic growth. Such technological changes however have also supported Members' ability to manage the demands upon them. The Council has moved to a self service model of customer support with most of the information customers require being available via the Council's website so they can access it at any time. It is for this reason and making best use of its resources that the Council does not feel it appropriate to increase the number of Councillors above 36. The Council will not have an Elected Mayor from May 2019 and this work will become additional work for one of the 36 Councillors who will become the Leader of the Council. The Council did operate successfully pre-2005 with 36 Councillors within a Leader and Cabinet model of governance and whilst there has been an increase in population since that time, new ways of working will make this number of Councillors effective in 2019 and onwards.

The Council has given serious consideration to reducing the number of Councillors to between 30 to 33 but believe that this would weaken the role of overview and scrutiny as it would reduce the number of non-executive Councillors available for overview and scrutiny. It would also reduce the overall number of Councillors available to serve on outside organisations and other Council committees, sub-committees and working parties, which would add to the workload of the remaining Councillors.

The Council wants to ensure that it can continue to deliver value for money services and address the needs of its residents, whilst being able to fully engage and support its partners, communities and voluntary bodies spread across the geographic area. Torbay has some of the most deprived wards in England and has an ageing population, with high levels of overweight and obese children and adults. Because of its diverse demographic the Council believes that it would not be in the interests of the wider community to reduce the level of Member representation.

## Review of the Electoral Arrangements for Torbay Council - Submission by Torbay Council on Council Size

### 1. Governance and decision making – how does the Council manage its business and take decisions across its full range of responsibilities?

#### Leadership

##### 1.1 What kind of governance arrangements are in place for the authority?

Following a governance referendum on 5 May 2016, the Council will be moving to a Leader and Cabinet style system with a Leader and Executive. It is anticipated that the Council will operate a “strong Leader” model whereby the Executive is appointed by the elected Leader (which is the same model operated in Torbay before we became a Mayoral authority in 2005) with the Leader being appointed by the Council.

The Executive will consist of between 2 and 9 members namely the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and up to 7 Executive Members. It is anticipated that all the Executive Members will be Portfolio Holders and the Council’s main representatives and spokespersons on their nominated areas of responsibility.

The Executive will carry out all of the local authority’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the authority and are within the budget and Policy Framework (i.e. the strategic plans and strategies of the Council such as the Corporate Plan and Local Development Plan) approved by the Council.

Based on previous arrangements, there will be approximately 11 formal meetings of the Executive per year and 11 informal Executive briefings.

<p>1.2 How many portfolios are there?</p>	<p>There are currently 8 portfolios; 1 held by each member of the Executive, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Elected Mayor – Executive Lead for Finance and Regeneration</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Health and Wellbeing and Corporate Services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive Lead for Planning, Transport and Housing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive Lead for Tourism, Culture and Harbours</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive Lead for Community Services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive Lead for Adults and Children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive Lead for Business</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive Lead for Environment</li> </ul> <p>It is anticipated that this will be reviewed by the new Authority from 2019 to align with the officer structure in place at the time. There is likely to still be between 7 and 9 Members of the Executive.</p>
<p>1.3 Describe how a portfolio holder carries out his/her work on a day to day basis.</p>	<p>Portfolio Holders monitor performance, hold regular meetings with the respective area Directors/Assistant Directors and Heads of Service and work with them to deliver the corporate objectives. There are monthly planned progress meetings with supplementary daily or weekly contact with individual officers, depending on the workload.</p>

<p>1.4 To what extent are decisions delegated to portfolio holders or are most decisions taken by the full Executive?</p> <p>What is the volume of decisions taken?</p> <p>How many decisions are taken by officers?</p>	<p>It will be up to the Council in 2019 to determine if they wish to have individual decision making, collective decision making or an advisory Executive with the decisions being made by the Leader. Torbay currently operates with an advisory Executive with all Executive decisions taken by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.</p> <p>The Council has an extensive officer scheme of delegation whereby the majority of decisions are delegated to officers in consultation with the relevant Executive Lead. For example contracts up to £50,000. It is anticipated that the officer scheme of delegation would remain at similar levels or may be increased to enable the efficient running of the Council.</p> <p>Over the past 12 months there have been approximately 50 Executive decisions taken by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor. In light of the extensive officer scheme of delegation, the number of decisions by officers are not held centrally, with only key officer decisions published on our website. Therefore, the number of officer decisions is not readily available.</p>
<p>1.5 Do Executive (or other) Councillors serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional or national bodies?</p>	<p>Members do serve on other bodies. This includes approximately 54 'Outside Bodies' which are appointed after each election at the Annual Council meeting for the next four years and include decision making partnerships, internal working groups, sub-regional, regional and national bodies. 32 of the current Members serve on these bodies (8 Executive Members and 24 non-executive Members).</p>

<p>1.6 Is the role of the Executive Councillor considered to be full time?</p>	<p>It is estimated that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor currently spend between 50 and 60 hours per week on Council business. The other six Executive Leads' time commitments vary (often depending on the service area for which they are responsible). However, the average Executive Lead is estimated to spend between 30 to 45 hours per week on Council business.</p> <p>It is anticipated that these levels will be similar for the Leader and Executive under the new system of governance in 2019.</p>
<p>1.7 In relation to licensing, planning and other regulatory responsibilities, to what extent are decisions delegated to officers?</p>	<p>In relation to licensing, all decisions are delegated to officers, with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relevant policy review and development;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 'Fit and proper' assessments for specific Hackney Carriage License applications; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Those applications which have received objections.</li> </ul> <p>In relation to planning, the overwhelming majority of applications are determined by officers, unless they are major applications (e.g. 10 dwellings or more), or receive a lot of objections and are referred by the Planning Officer to Committee. Such applications are referred to the Development Management Committee for determination.</p> <p>As a guide, officers estimate that currently 96% of planning and 98% of licensing applications are determined through officer delegation.</p> <p>The Council has a detailed officer scheme of delegation which is regularly reviewed by the Council's Monitoring Officer.</p>

<p>1.8 How many Members are involved in Committees?</p>	<p>The decision-making bodies of the Council consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Council – 37 Members (this includes the current elected Mayor)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Executive – 8 Members (this is currently set up as two Policy Development and Decision Groups, but would be expected to be one single Executive meeting from 2019)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overview and Scrutiny Board – 9 Members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Scrutiny Review Panels – 5 Members (drawn from 29 Non-Executive Members)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Priorities and Resources Review Panel – 9 Members (comprising the 9 Board Members)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Task and finish groups – no limit to membership (any interested Non-Executive Member)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Audit Committee – 6 Members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development Management Committee – 9 Members (this level was set to achieve political balance across the Council, but could be reduced)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Licensing Committee – 15 Members (this is set at this level to enable a trained pool of three Members to be drawn to serve on the weekly Licensing Sub-Committee and should remain the same)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Harbour Committee – 9 Members (this is a Council function under local choice and could become an Executive function or could be reduced to 7 or 8 as this was set at this level to achieve political balance)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Employment Committee – 5 Members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appeals Committee (School Transport) – 7 Members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Civic Committee – 7 Members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Standards Committee – 7 Members</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Investment Committee – 6 Members</li> </ul>
<p>1.9 Is Committee Councillorship standing or rotating?</p>	<p>Committee membership is standing, with appointments being made at the Annual meeting of Council each May, although Group Leaders may change their membership during the year if they wish.</p>



1.10 Are meetings ad hoc, frequent and/or area based?

The Calendar of Meetings is set annually, but there is the ability to convene meetings ad-hoc in certain circumstances (e.g. special meetings of Council / Executive to consider urgent matters). In addition, there are a number of meetings which are called on an ad-hoc basis to respond to business demand – as indicated in the list below.

From the Calendar there is provision for:

- Council – 10 meetings per Municipal Year (including 2 adjourned meetings)
- Executive – 11 per year (currently 22 for the two Policy Development and Decision Groups, but would be expected to be 11 for the Executive meeting from 2019)
- Overview and Scrutiny Board – 11 per year
- Scrutiny Review Panels – 5 Members drawn from 29 Non-Executive Members (ad hoc task and finish groups)
- Priorities and Resources Review Panel – 15 (including private meetings to review the budget)
- Task and finish groups – (ad hoc usually 1 to 3 meetings per topic)
- Audit Committee – 6 per year
- Development Management Committee – every 4 weeks
- Licensing Committee – 2 meetings of the Committee per year (with the Licensing Sub-Committee scheduled every week in case there needs to be a hearing - 9 meetings held between January 2016 and January 2017)
- Harbour Committee – 3 per year
- Employment Committee – ad hoc
- Appeals Committee (School Transport) – 8 per year scheduled but cancelled if not required
- Civic Committee – ad hoc
- Standards Committee – once per year, plus ad hoc
- Investment Committee – scheduled fortnightly but cancelled if not required

	<p>We do not currently have any area based meetings. Meetings are either held in the Town Hall, Torquay or the Riviera International Conference Centre in Torquay. Site visits for Development Management Committee are held on the day of the Committee throughout Torbay.</p>
<p>1.11 What level of attendance is achieved? Are meetings always quorate?</p>	<p>Generally a good level of attendance is achieved and meetings are normally quorate.</p> <p>Between January 2016 and January 2017 we only had one meeting which was not quorate due to a Member declaring an interest but another Member joined the meeting to ensure that it was quorate and could continue.</p>
<p>1.12 Does the council believe that changes to legislation, national or local policy will have influence on the workload of committees and their Members which would have an impact on council size?</p>	<p>It is not considered that there are any changes on the horizon which would result in less work for Members. They may have an additional role to play if the Heart of the South West Devolution deal goes ahead in terms of serving on joint committees for the region.</p>

<p>1.13 Has the Council defined the role of Councillors?</p> <p>Has the Council adopted arrangements for training and developing Councillors and supporting them in their role?</p>	<p>The Council has Member Job Descriptions to cover the role of Councillor and each of the key posts such as Executive Member, Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Chairman etc. Each newly elected Member receives a copy of the Job Description as part of their induction.</p> <p>The Council has an extensive Member Development Programme which includes an intensive induction and is regularly reviewed by the Mayor and Group Leaders' Group. There is mandatory training for areas such as the Code of Conduct and interests, licensing and planning. Ongoing support and confidential personal development plans are provided to each Member if they wish. The Mayor (for Executive Leads) and Group Leaders undertake Councillor development one to one discussions on an annual basis to also inform the Member Development Programme.</p>
<p>1.14 Has the Council assessed how much time Councillors spend on Council business?</p>	<p>The Council has carried out assessments in the past as part of the review of Members' Allowances. Responses varied greatly from Member to Member depending on their role and personal circumstances. For example a working Councillor would have less time available for Council business and may only sit on one Committee.</p>
<p>1.15 Do Councillors generally find that the time they spend on council business is what they expected?</p>	<p>The majority of Members comment that they had underestimated the amount of time they spend on Council business before they were elected.</p>

<p>1.16 What is the extent of Councillors representational role on, and appointment to, outside bodies?</p> <p>How many are involved in this activity and what is their expected workload?</p>	<p>A total of 32 Members (including the elected Mayor, with some Members representing the Council on more than one outside body) are appointed to serve as representatives of the Council on outside bodies. Members liaise with these organisations directly and the Council has little input other than to administer the appointment process.</p> <p>Workload varies greatly depending on the outside body. Members are expected to feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Board/Council with regards to work being undertaken by the outside organisation, especially where it may impact on the work of Torbay or highlight areas for collaborative working.</p>
<p>1.17 Does the Council have difficulty in retaining Councillors or attracting new candidates?</p>	<p>The Council holds full elections every 4 years and all 36 seats have always been contested, usually by the two main political parties in Torbay (namely Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) with other political parties putting up candidates for some of the seats as well as some independent representatives standing. However, the Council does struggle to attract prospective candidates who reflect the demographic profile of the Borough (e.g. a proportion on young residents).</p> <p>Since 2006 there have only been 3 Borough by-elections. One was caused by a death of a serving Councillor, one as a result of a resignation and one as a result of a candidate being elected as Mayor.</p>
<p>1.18 Have there been any instances where the Council has been unable to discharge its duties due to a lack of Councillors?</p>	<p>There have been no such instances.</p>

<p>1.19 Do Councillors have an individual or ward budget for allocation in their area?</p> <p>If so, how is the system administered?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>2. Scrutiny of the Council, outside bodies and others.</p>	
<p>2.1 What's the structure? How does it operate?</p>	<p>The Council's has one Overview and Scrutiny Board. In addition various task and finish groups and review panels are established as and when required which are Chaired by one of the following four Scrutiny Lead Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joint Commissioning – Children's and Adults</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joint Commissioning – Health, Wellbeing and Public Health</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joint Operations – Commercial and Business Services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joint Operations – Community and Customer Services</li> </ul> <p>The Council appoints an Overview and Scrutiny Board to discharge the functions conferred by Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000. It is appointed in accordance with the statutory requirements to achieve political balance.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator (the Chairman of the Board) is appointed at the Annual Council meeting and the Vice-Chairman is appointed at the first Board meeting each Municipal Year (May to April). The 'scrutiny' function acts as a 'watchdog' and monitors the decisions and performance of the Executive. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator and Scrutiny Leads are expected to agree arrangements to ensure that each of the Executive</p>

	<p>Portfolios is shadowed, in order to provide expertise in these areas to the Board when a call-in, review, or performance monitoring is undertaken.</p> <p>In addition to scrutiny, ‘overview’ work is carried out which provides Councillors with an opportunity to review how the Council and other partners are delivering services, similar to how a parliamentary select committee would operate.</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny looks at policies on behalf of the Council to ensure they are fit for purpose’. It also examines wider issues of community interests/concern. The Councillor input to review and develop policy can be significant.</p> <p>Formal review panels are made up of the relevant Scrutiny Lead plus four other Members (which can be any of the 29 Non-Executive Members). There are also informal task and finish groups which comprise interested Non-Executive Members with no limit on membership, lead by the relevant Scrutiny Lead. Due to limited officer resources task and finish group meetings are held without a central support officer and the lead Councillor then provides feedback to inform the conclusion of their review.</p>
<p>2.2 What is the general workload of scrutiny committees?</p> <p>Has the Council ever found that it has had too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively?</p>	<p>There is a meaningful workload across a number of subjects.</p> <p>There have been occasions when the Council has found that there have been too many active projects for the scrutiny process to function effectively. However, the work is now more focused on ‘things that matter’ taking into account the Principles of Overview and Scrutiny as agreed by Council on 26 February 2015 set out below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council as a whole, and therefore overview and scrutiny, need to focus on the issues that really matter. There are no longer any easy decisions to make. The luxury of looking at the more marginal issues has long passed. It is important that there is an “all Council” approach to tackling the challenges now being faced.</li> <li>2. “Holding to account” must continue as a vital role of overview and scrutiny. But “policy</li> </ol>

	<p>development” is of equal importance. And national experience has shown that this is where the contribution of the non-executive members can be most effective.</p> <p>3. The Forward Plan should be seen as a key tool for managing the decision making process throughout the Authority. There needs to be more informal discussions about what is coming forward for decision in the coming months.</p> <p>4. Overview and scrutiny should be seen as an important element in delivering good, sound decisions. The relationship between overview and scrutiny and the executive should not be adversarial, but rather of seeking to complement one another.</p> <p>5. There should be the ability for all councillors to have the opportunity to help shape policy decisions at an early stage.</p>
<p>2.3 How is the work programme developed and implemented?</p> <p>How many subjects at any one time?</p> <p>What’s the time-span for a particular study?</p>	<p>The workload is set by local issues, review of the Mayor’s Forward Plan and the Council’s Corporate Plan and delivery plans. The Board also receives requests to undertake work from the Executive.</p> <p>The rationale for task and finish groups is that they can respond to issues quickly, meaning that there may be a number operating at any one time but they may only meet once or twice to conclude their work.</p> <p>The length of formal reviews tends to depend on external consultation processes which can be from six weeks to three months.</p>
<p>2.4 Are Councillors involved in scrutinising external issues?</p>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny at Torbay has a statutory requirement to carry out health scrutiny as well as scrutiny of flood protection and the Community Safety Partnership. The Council’s Constitution also enables the Board to scrutinise any issue affecting the local area.</p>

<p>2.5 When not in scrutiny meetings what activities are Councillors expected to undertake?</p>	<p>Councillors are required to attend Committees, read relevant committee papers and reports, conduct research, attend working groups, training events and briefings with officers, attend local groups and conduct site visits.</p> <p>In addition to what they are expected to undertake, Councillors also carry out their constituency work and regularly attend Town Council and Community Partnership meetings within their wards.</p>
<p>2.6 How will the role of the scrutiny Councillor change?</p>	<p>Since the adoption of the Principles of Overview and Scrutiny the role has changed to ensure that the process is more Member led and focused on the issues that will make a difference to Torbay Council.</p>
<p>2.7 What kind of support do scrutiny members receive?</p>	<p>The Council currently has one Scrutiny officer. In addition to supporting the Overview and Scrutiny function this officer also provides support on a number of Corporate Issues such as Devolution and budget development.</p>



### 3. Representational Role: Representing electors to the Council

3.1 Has the representational role of Councillors changed since the council last considered how many elected Councillors it should have?

Council size was last considered during the 2001/2002 review when the number of Councillors remained at 36.

Members have indicated that their constituents are now likely to contact them more often due to the wider use of e-mail, blogs, websites and social media, which they feel has had a significant impact on their constituency workloads. However, the recent introduction of a centralised casework system has assisted members with dealing with their casework with automated tracking via the Council's complaints software system.

<p>3.2 In general terms, how do Councillors carry out their representational role with electors?</p> <p>Do members mainly respond to casework from constituents or do they have a more active role in the community?</p>	<p>Many Councillors are proactively involved within their Wards as opposed to simply responding to case work and consider that they play an active part within their communities. The approach they take varies, but a number of Councillors are involved in some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> holding surgeries – dealing with queries, providing advice and engaging with their constituents face-to-face;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> attending consultation events;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> working with, facilitating and/or offering support, to community groups and local organisations;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> attending Brixham Town Council meetings;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> maintaining blogs and/or websites and social media;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> dealing with written or e-mailed correspondence (using the Council’s e-casework system);</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> taking telephone calls;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> making ward visits;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> representing the interests of their wards;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> sitting on outside bodies and attending partnership meetings; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> representing the Council within the wider community.</li> </ul>
<p>3.3 How Councillors engage with Constituents?</p> <p>Do they hold surgeries, public meetings, use IT etc?</p>	<p>All Councillors are issued with an iPad to assist them with their role and have a Torbay Council e-mail address. In addition to this, a number of Councillors engage with their constituents via social media and hold surgeries.</p> <p>Most members appreciate that a high profile and active presence within their local community is the key to building a successful relationship with their constituents. Some produce newsletters and hold open public meetings. They are all members of the local Community Partnerships which meet regularly to engage with their communities.</p>

<p>3.4 How do Councillors generally deal with casework?</p> <p>Do they pass on issues directly to staff or do they take a more in depth approach to resolving issues?</p>	<p>It mainly depends on whether the Member concerned has the necessary level of experience, skill and expertise to deal directly with an issue themselves, or whether they need to refer more technical or sensitive matters directly to an officer via the centralized casework system (referred to in 3.2 above) or to political colleagues.</p>
<p>3.5 What support do Councillors receive in discharging their duties in relation to casework and a representational role in their ward?</p>	<p>The Council has introduced a centralised casework system where Members can log their casework via the Council's corporate complaints system which is then passed to the relevant Council officer for a response and provides automated tracking.</p>
<p>3.6 Has the Council put in place any mechanisms for Councillors to interact with young people, those not on the electoral register, or minority groups or their representative bodies?</p>	<p>No, however, a number of Councillors engage with young people and minority groups as part of their community leadership role and encourage and assist people to get them registered.</p>

3.7 Are Councillors expected to attend meetings of community bodies such as parish councils or resident associations?

What is the level of their involvement and what role do they play?

There is an expectation that Members will attend such meetings, but there is no statutory requirement.

Torbay has one Town Council, namely Brixham Town Council. A number of Torbay Councillors are also Brixham Town Councillors and therefore attend these meetings and feedback relevant issues to Torbay Council. Other Torbay Councillors from the Berry Head with Furzeham and St Marys with Summercombe Wards also sometimes attend the Town Council meetings.

Each Councillor is a member of their local Community Partnership (CP) which comprises all the residents and businesses within the CP area. These usually meet monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly.

#### 4. The Future

4.1 What impact do you think the localism agenda might have on the scope and conduct of council business and how do you think this might affect the role of Councillors?

The Localism Act has provided further opportunities for Councillors to become involved in neighbourhood planning. There are currently three neighbourhood plans being developed.

4.2 Does the Council have any plans to devolve responsibilities and/or assets to community organisations, or does the Council expect to take on more responsibilities in the medium to long term?

Some assets have been transferred to local communities in accordance with the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy. At the same time the Council is taking on larger profit generating assets as the Council pursues financial self-sufficiency as part of its Transformation Programme. These initiatives will require Member involvement and scrutiny through the Investment Committee.

4.3 Have changes to the arrangements for local delivery of services led to significant changes to Councillors workloads? (For example, control of housing stock or sharing services with neighbouring authorities)

Whilst the following services have been commissioned, the Council is still responsible for service delivery and therefore Councillors are still involved in dealing with issues relating to these services:

- TOR2 (maintenance of highways, grounds, parks, car parks, buildings, Council's fleet, management of household waste & recycling centre and waste transfer stations, out of hours call centre support, street and beach cleansing, waste & recycling collections);
- Integrated Care Organisation (adult social care and health);
- Countryside Management (Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust);
- Devon Audit Partnership;
- Torbay Development Agency (affordable housing & planning, asset management, business services, economy, investment & enterprise, facilities management, project management, property services, South West business centres);
- English Riviera Tourism Company (destination management organisation, visitor information points);
- Careers South West Ltd (careers advice, information & guidance, support services for young people); and
- The PLUSS organisation Ltd (employment services, support for enterprises).

A number of schools have become academies and the Local Authority is now only responsible for 2 voluntary controlled, 4 community and 2 special schools (e.g. 8 schools) with the remaining 34 schools being responsible for their own governance and admission arrangements.

As Torbay Council is part of the Integrated Care Organisation for the delivery of Adult Social Care and Health, the Executive Lead for Adults and Children provides a key role in this area.

The Council is reviewing the delivery of its Children's Services social care function with a view to moving to an alternative delivery model. It is anticipated that the Executive Lead responsible for Children will provide a key role to this work.

	<p>There is a Devon Building Control Partnership with Member representation from each authority involved.</p> <p>There is a Devon and Somerset Trading Standards Partnership with Member representation from each authority involved.</p> <p>Devolution – The Heart of the South West LEP area – Devon and Somerset is currently holding negotiations with government – the outcomes are currently not yet finalised.</p>
<p>4.4 Are there any developments in policy ongoing that might significantly affect the role of elected members in the future?</p>	<p>Members have stated that they could not foresee anything on the horizon which would lead to a dramatic increase (or decrease) in their workloads.</p>
<p>4.5 What has been the impact of recent financial constraints on the Council's activities?</p>	<p>The allocation of available resources has become more challenging and is open to more public involvement and comment, which includes the work of elected Councillors. Councillors are now required to manage the public's expectations on services and act as facilitators in their communities to assist with delivering reduced services in different ways.</p>