



## Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Wednesday, 21 September 2011

-: Present :-

Councillor Thomas (J) (Chairman)

Councillors Addis, Barnby, Bent, Darling, Kingscote, Parrott, Pentney and Stringer

(Also in attendance: Councillors Thomas (D), Davies, Tyerman, Pritchard, Excell and Cowell)

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### 279 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 28 July 2011 and 9 August 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 280 Productivity Improvement Programme (PIP) - RIO (Revenue Income Optimisation)

The Board considered a report providing information on the Revenue Income Optimisation (RIO) project, including how each of the business cases would be progressed. The Business Change Manager indicated to the Board that the final draft of each business case could be provided to Overview and Scrutiny if requested. The Executive Lead Member for Governance advised the Board that the RIO business cases were not finalised or decided and were subject to consultation.

In response to questions, the Board was advised that the proposals within each business case had originated from officers within the relevant area and that wider consultation was necessary for some proposals. The Board was informed that total consultancy costs for three pieces of work, including the RIO project, were approximately £425,000 and that savings identified totalled £18 million over five years. With specific reference to the RIO project, the Board was advised that a target of £3 million of new or increased income had been identified over the next three years. The Board was advised that a yearly breakdown of the £3 million figure could be provided to members.

In reply to questions, the Board was informed that a bed tax had not been considered, that schools might be charged for support for individual children, and that the current proposal to charge for pre-application planning advice would not apply to householders but might be extended in future.

Members questioned the practicality of enforcing charges for damage by cars to the highway and grass verges. In response, the meeting was advised that charges would apply to residents that had made informal access to their own property.

Members suggested a fall in income from the ending of wedding bookings at Oldway Mansion should be recognised and that a non-returnable bookings charge be introduced. In reply to questions concerning a reduction in wedding bookings income, the Board was advised of a reduction in availability of the Spanish Barn, Torre Abbey, Torquay.

Members asked for details of the consultation process for each business case and clarification of the consultation strategy. The Board was advised that the consultation strategy and details of the process were available from the Consultation Research Manager.

**(Note:** Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 280, Councillor Barnby declared a personal interest as a regular supporter and temporary worker of Torquay United Football Club.)

**(Note:** Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 280, Councillor Parrott declared a personal interest as a supporter of Torquay United Football Club.)

**(Note:** Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 280, Councillor Pentney declared a personal interest due to her granddaughter receiving support from Children's Services.)

**(Note:** Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 280, Councillor Stringer declared a personal interest as a shareholder in Torquay United Football Club.)

## **281 Torbay Swimming Strategy 2011 - 2026**

The Board considered a report detailing the draft Torbay Swimming Strategy for the period 2011-2026. Members were advised that Council support for swimming pools within the Bay had been on an ad hoc basis and that a more strategic approach was required. The Board was advised that the draft strategy was currently a facilities swimming strategy and that swimming as a whole merited more inclusion. The Board was informed the final draft strategy would be subject to consultation and would be considered by full Council in December 2011.

The Board was advised that provision of community swimming facilities within Torbay was greater than many other local authority areas. Members requested benchmarking information for Torbay against other local authorities and were advised that funding had been provided to benchmark costs per swim against other councils. In response to questions, the Board was informed that information relating to subsidies for Torbay Leisure Centre and for the Riviera Centre would be provided.

Replying to questions, the Executive Head, Residents and Visitors Services, indicated that Plymouth was the regional swimming facility funded by Sport England and Torbay was designated a local facility. The Board was advised that the swimming strategy needed to address barriers to a wider take-up of swimming in the Bay. Members were advised that the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) was helping to improve timetabling in Torbay pools.

Members questioned the progress of preparing the draft strategy and the lack of consultation with users. The Board was informed that once drafted a core document would be consulted upon.

**Resolved:** that the Mayor, the Executive Lead Member for Safer Communities and Transport, and the Executive Lead Member for Tourism and the Environment ensure:

- (i) that full consultation with users occur in relation to Torbay's Swimming Strategy, 2011-2026;
- (ii) that the strategy is owned by the community; and
- (iii) that the strategy include proposals for increasing usage of swimming facilities in the Bay.

(**Note:** Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 281, Councillor Addis declared a personal interest as a non-voting Board member of Swim Torbay.)

## **282 Affordable Housing Scrutiny Review – position statement**

The Board considered a position statement monitoring the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Scrutiny Review that were agreed by the Mayor. The Board were advised that the Affordable Housing Review Action Plan was agreed by the Mayor in February 2011.

The Board was informed that the Housing Core Strategy document was due to be published by 24 October 2011 for consultation. The Board was informed that the consultation period would be a minimum of six weeks.

In response to questions, the Executive Lead Member for Strategic Planning, Housing, and Energy indicated that a Devon-wide strategy on affordable housing would be brought to full Council within the next four or five months.

Members questioned how to encourage tenants to downsize and were advised that incentives such as assistance with removal costs had been used. In response to questions, the Affordable Housing Co-ordinator agreed to contact all within current housing stock to ascertain those with an interest in downsizing. With reference to maintaining stable communities, Board members discussed the adverse affects of downsizing.

The Board questioned the measures available to ensure private sector landlords meet their responsibilities, including the Torbay Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Members suggested that the current economic climate afforded an ideal time to

address private sector landlord issues. The Board was advised that there were a range of incentive-based measures to work with private sector landlords. Members suggested legal enforcement measures might be appropriate and used more often than currently. Members were advised that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) had become easier to establish following central government action and that the economic and social costs, including anti-social behaviour, were due to a small number of families in a few localities.

### **282.1 Exclusion of press and public**

The Board considered whether the transaction of business was likely to involve disclosure of exempt information and the possible need to exclude the public from the meeting for the remaining items on the agenda.

**Resolved:** that the press and public be formally excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the remaining three items involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information concerned.

### **283 Revenue Income Optimisation Project (RIO) - Implementation Proposed Business Case for Beach Hut Development**

Members were advised that proposals concerning beach hut development had originally been due for consideration by full Council on 29 September 2011 and were now re-scheduled for the October 2011 meeting of full Council.

**Resolved:** that the implementation of the proposed business case for beach hut development not be considered by the Board at this time.

### **284 Delivering Regeneration Through Joint Ventures - Update to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Board considered an update report on the above matter. Members discussed progress and questioned the Chief Executive Officer, Torbay Economic Development Company, and the Deputy Mayor.

The Chief Executive Officer, Torbay Economic Development Company, agreed to provide further information to Board members, including information relating to officer costs.

**Resolved:** that the Deputy Mayor convey to the Mayor the views of the Board on this matter.

### **285 Office Rationalisation Project (ORP) Implementation Plan**

The Board considered a report outlining the implementation plan for the Council's Office Rationalisation Project (ORP). The Executive Lead Member for Business

Planning, Governance, and Member Development summarised the ORP to the Board.

With reference to the Council's Policy Development Groups, Board members questioned the decision-making powers of such meetings.

Board members questioned aspects of the implementation plan, including agile working, staff reductions, contingency planning, timescales, and delays in implementation.