



Title: **Good Governance Review Autumn 2011**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Wards Affected: **All wards in Torbay**

To: **Audit Committee** On: **28 March 2012**

Key Decision: **No**

Change to Budget: **No** Change to Policy Framework: **No**

Contact Officer: **June Gurry**
Telephone: **(01803) 207012**
E.mail: June.gurry@torbay.gov.uk

1. What we are trying to achieve and the impact on our customers

1.1 To inform members and the public of the actions resulting from a review of the Council's Governance arrangements. The resulting action plan will contribute to ensuring the Council's governance arrangements are robust, is part of assurance and the production of the Annual Governance Statement.

2. Recommendation(s) for decision

2.1 That the Good Governance Review Autumn 2011 Action Plan be adopted and its progress monitored by Group Leaders via the Leadership Group.

3. Key points and reasons for recommendations

3.1 To make the Good Governance Review Action Plan available to the public and to ensure the good governance of the Council.

3.2 Following the election in May 2011, the Council undertook a review to assess the strength of the Council's new governance arrangements.

3.3 An action plan has been prepared in response to the results of the review.

For more detailed information on this proposal please refer to the supporting information attached.

Caroline Taylor
Director of Adults Services and Resources

Supporting information

A1. Introduction and history

- A1.1 Good governance arrangements are essential and a council can not have effective service delivery without it. The Audit Commission defines good governance as ensuring that the organisation is going the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, open, honest, inclusive and timely manner. It is both the means and the ends; the brains and the central nervous system of an organisation.
- A1.2 The Council reviewed its governance workings following the first 5 months of the new administration following the election in May 2011.
- A1.3 A survey was undertaken of all members and senior officers to gather feedback on the following areas:
- Roles and functions;
 - Good governance through constructive relationships;
 - Taking informed and transparent decisions; and
 - Serving Torbay
- A1.4 The results were presented at a governance workshop held in October 2011 attended by members and senior officers. The workshop used the results of the survey to identify what needed to be changed or improved. The resulting action plan is attached at Appendix 1.
- A1.5 It is proposed the delivery of the action plan is monitored by the Group Leaders via the Leadership Group to ensure cross-party involvement in delivering the improvements identified.

A2. Risk assessment of preferred option

A2.1 Outline of significant key risks

- A2.1.1 The risk is lack of focus on improved governance and assurance. This is mitigated by the Audit Committee's overview of the plan. The actions have been prepared on the basis that they can be delivered within existing resources and have cross-party agreement.

A2.2 Remaining risks

- A2.2.1 There are no remaining risks.

A3. Other Options

- A3.1 Not to adopt the action plan – this is not recommended as the action plan has identified measures to improve the Council's governance arrangements.

A4. Summary of resource implications

A4.1 The action plan will be delivered within existing resources namely officer time and the member development budget.

A5. What impact will there be on equalities, environmental sustainability and crime and disorder?

A5.1 The improvements arising from the action plan will support the Council's governance arrangements which in turn will contribute towards strengthening improvements in each of these areas.

A6. Consultation and Customer Focus

A6.1 All members and senior officers played a key role in the review of the Council's governance and the feedback has informed the resulting action plan. The improvements to the Council's governance will ultimately lead to better outcomes for the community.

A7. Are there any implications for other Business Units?

A7.1 Yes, a number of Business Units are involved in delivering the action plan within existing resources.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Good Governance Review Autumn 2011 Action Plan

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Audit Commission Good Governance Standard Diagnostic