



## Good Governance Review Autumn 2011

### Action Plan (Version 3 – 15 March 2011)

#### Purpose:

The Council undertook a review of its governance arrangements following the local elections and the first five months of the new administration. The purpose of the review was to assess the strength of Torbay's new governance arrangements. It focused on the roles and behaviour of elected members and senior officers and how the new decision-making arrangements were performing.

This action plan takes forward the issues raised in the survey and the work of the Governance Away Session held on 19 October 2011.

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
<b>1. Roles and Functions</b>				
1.1 Ensuring consistent chairing of meetings.	Feedback/mentoring to be offered to Chairs and constructive feedback to be provided by Independent Members of Standards Committee when invited to observe.	April 2012	Member Development and Standards Committee	
1.2 Some members have asked for clarity on the extent of delegated powers and the roles of the Mayor, members with special responsibilities and senior officers.	Good Governance Information Pack to provide overview, with signposting to relevant parts of the Constitution, including job descriptions.	January 2012	Anthony Butler and June Gurry	Complete

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
1.3 Some felt that the roles of senior officers and the members needed better defining.	Good Governance Information Pack to be provided to senior officers and included as part of officer induction. Plus 'understanding political perspectives' training for Senior Leadership Team.	'Understanding political perspectives' training – April 2012  Information pack – January 2012	Elizabeth Raikes, Anthony Butler and June Gurry, plus member input	Complete
1.4 Some members requested clarity on scrutiny arrangements in light of emerging legislation.	Review of scrutiny arrangements in light of the Localism Act and NHS reforms (including Health and Wellbeing Boards and Public Health becoming a statutory responsibility for local authorities).	May 2012	Mark Bennett, Anthony Butler, June Gurry and Kate Spencer	
<b>2. Good Governance through Constructive Relationships</b>				
2.1 There are no rules for maintaining confidentiality to allow open and honest discussions at private meetings.	Agreement to be reached with Mayor and Group Leaders that, except where specifically agreed, members and officers should be able to express their views frankly in the expectation that they can debate freely in private. This must be clearly communicated to all members.	December 2011 Leadership Group	Mayor and Group Leaders at Leadership Group	Complete
2.2 Some concerns were raised about Group Leaders role in addressing inappropriate behaviour in light of the emerging changes to the standards regime.	Agreement to be reached across all group leaders as to how to address inappropriate behaviour in light of the new standards regime.	Pending, subject to the introduction of the new standards regime	Group Leaders, Anthony Butler and Chairman of Standards Committee	On hold and awaiting introduction of new standards regime

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
<p>2.3A There is a perception by some that members' requests for information are not being adequately responded to by officers.</p> <p>2.3B It is considered by some that a number of members do not take a strategic overview and become involved in too much detail.</p>	<p>2.3A Members have a right to information if they have a need to know. Therefore, senior officers to be reminded of their duties to all members. The requirements of the Member/Officer Compact to also be communicated widely.</p> <p>2.3B to be addressed at 'Members and Officers working together' facilitated workshop</p>	<p>2.3A 'Understanding political perspectives' training – April 2012</p> <p>2.3B 'Members and Officers working together' facilitated workshop – May 2012</p>	<p>Elizabeth Raikes, Anthony Butler and June Gurry, plus member input</p>	
<p>2.4 Instructions to officers are not always clear.</p>	<p>Officers need to be encouraged to raise these issues with the members concerned or where they feel unable with the appropriate officers who can then raise the issue with the member – include in officer training.</p>	<p>'Understanding political perspectives' training – April 2012</p>	<p>Elizabeth Raikes, Anthony Butler and June Gurry, plus member input</p>	
<p>2.5 Some feel member/member and member/senior officer relations could be stronger.</p>	<p>'Members and Officers working together' facilitated workshop and reinforce Member/Officer Support Compact</p>	<p>Facilitated workshop – May 2012</p>	<p>Elizabeth Raikes, Anthony Butler and June Gurry, plus member input</p>	

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
<b>3. Taking Informed and Transparent Decisions</b>				
3.1 With the inclusive style of governance introduced by the Mayor, it should no longer be necessary for officers to brief individual political Groups.	Officers no longer attend individual group meetings and should any group ask for a briefing all members be invited to such. Such an approach (followed where necessary by an e mail confirming the issues from the officer who provided the briefing) will ensure consistency. Member/Officer Support Compact and Local Protocol of Member and Officer Relations to be updated to reflect this practice.	April 2012	Teresa Buckley to update Member/officer compact  Anthony Butler to update Constitution	
3.2 Notes of PDGs are not circulated to all members and members need to be aware that they have an open invite to attend any PDG.	Subject to all members accepting that all or some parts of PDGs are to be confidential and members be made aware of this.	January 2012	Agreement on confidentiality at PDGs first, then Governance Support Team	Complete
3.3 It is considered there is a risk of duplication between PDG and O & S and impact on officers' workload.	Clarification of the work plan as expressed in Community Plan in line with capital and revenue resources.  Scrutiny Officers to receive PDG documentation.	April 2012	Mark Bennett, Bernard Page, Paul Looby and Kate Spencer	

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
<p>3.4 Members consider, even where an urgent decision is required, full information should be provided to them and as much time as possible to is given to consider that information.</p>	<p>Review of report format with input from members.</p> <p>Officers who require urgent decisions to be made provide cross party briefings in addition to the report. Where necessary the briefing sessions to work through the report.</p> <p>Protocol to be developed and adhered to for late reports for report officers – at present officers have to inform the Executive Lead.</p> <p>Member/Officer Support Compact to be updated to reflect this.</p>	<p>May 2012</p>	<p>Teresa Buckley to lead on report format/Senior Leadership Team</p>	
<p>3.5 There was disagreement as to whether PDG meetings should be public or private.</p>	<p>Agreement has been reached with PDG Chairs that elements of PDG meetings should be public when required. It was also agreed that the Monitoring Officer's suggested protocol be adopted for all PDG meetings.</p>	<p>Complete – review in 6 months (June 2012)</p> <p>Item for PDG meeting</p>	<p>Governance Support Team</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>3.6 Some members required clarity on the role of PDGs.</p>	<p>Good Governance Pack to include Monitoring Officers' protocol on PDGs for all members which includes the roles of PDGs.</p>	<p>January 2012</p>	<p>Anthony Butler and June Gurry</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>3.7 Some consider too many decisions are being made at Council meetings, as it is felt minor decisions could be made by Mayor or officers outside of the Council meeting.</p>	<p>No problems currently being experienced as all business is being considered in a timely manner, but this to be kept under review.</p>	<p>Keep under review</p>		

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
3.8 Greater clarification required on the consultation arrangements between Executive Leads and officers on officer decision-making.	Officers to be reminded at Senior Leadership Team and to be picked up at 'Members and Officers working together' facilitated workshop	January 2012 – SLT May 2012 – workshop	Caroline Taylor Elizabeth Raikes	Complete
3.9A Reports prepared by officers should be uniform.  3.9B There is a perception by some members that irrelevant information is provided in reports.	New detailed report templates to be produced with member input. Members to be encouraged to express their dissatisfaction with officer reports before meetings.	May 2012 – new template  July 2012 – evaluate new template with members	Teresa Buckley for report template	
<b>4. Serving Torbay</b>				
4.1 Consultees involvement needs to include the private sector as well as the public sector.	a. Implementation of the new and evolving neighbourhood planning process includes private sector representation.  b. Increased use of social media to be investigated.  c. Council website to be updated to ensure links to Torcom and therefore access to up to date information.	a. 18 month process  b. By December 2012  c. May 2012	Pat Steward/ Tracey Brookes  Claire Barrow/ Bernard Page/Jenny Rayner  Tracey Cabache/ Patsy Mellor	Ongoing  Trial with Community Safety due to be held using social media as a consultation and engagement trial.  Complete

Issue	Response/Action	Target Date	Resources	Update
4.2 Greater awareness of the role of Community Partnerships and Councillors and how the two interact.	Community Partnerships to develop a summary sheet of what they do and don't do.  Meetings to be publicised on the Town Hall and Connections notice boards.	April 2012  April 2012	Community Partnerships Management Forum/ Tracey Cabache	
4.3 There is a perception of a lack of joint working between Councillors and officers on community issues at Community Partnership meetings.	Chair of community partnerships steering group to work with Executive Lead for Involved and Healthy Communities to review the operation of community partnerships  Governance review of Community Partnerships to be undertaken.	April 2012  Summer 2012	Chair of Community Partnerships and Cllr Hernandez  Anthony Butler and June Gurry	
4.4 Some consider that Community Partnership meetings are not sufficiently publicised.	Explore increasing the use of social media to encourage attendance at Community Partnership meetings, including identifying best practice.	Ongoing	Community Partnerships Management Forum	
4.5 Some consider public participation in Council business could be greater.	Review of current use of social media at Council meetings and explore greater use of social media, including identifying best practice with appropriate safeguards.	March 2012	Claire Barrow/ June Gurry/ Jenny Rayner	Complete, councillors are actively using social media and guidance on social media has been published on the Council's website.

**Reporting process:**

Leadership Group (December 2011)

Overview and Scrutiny Monthly Briefing

**Adopted by: Audit Committee – 28 March 2012**

**Progress monitored by: Leadership Group**