

## Community Governance Review of Torbay Communications Master Text

# NEW TOWN OR PARISH COUNCILS IN TORBAY?

## HAVE YOUR SAY

Torbay Council is carrying out a review to decide if any changes should be made to the existing local governance arrangements, including whether or not new town or parish councils should be set up in those parts of Torbay where they don't currently exist.

All local residents and organisations are invited to give their views.

### What is a Community Governance Review?

A Community Governance Review is a formal process involving consultation with local electors and other interested parties on potential changes such as creating new parishes, setting up or abolishing town/parish councils, changing their boundaries or electoral arrangements.

### What are town and parish councils?

Town and parish councils exist in many areas, both rural and urban, and are the most local tier of government in England. Torbay Council as a 'principal council' is responsible for deciding whether to create, amend or abolish parish areas within its boundaries and whether to establish a council to serve any parish.

A parish council that serves a town area may decide to call itself a 'town council'.

Town and parish councils do not have statutory responsibility for services such as social care, education or housing but they may decide to provide some local services for their residents or in some cases to take over responsibility for services previously delivered by Torbay Council.

Town and parish councils also represent their communities. They must be consulted on planning applications within their area and may work with Torbay Council to create a Neighbourhood Plan for development in their area. They may bid to purchase assets of community value or express an interest in running a local authority service.

Town and parish councils are directly elected by local voters and are independent of the other layers of local government. Any new town or parish council, for example in Torquay, would not replace Torbay Council but would exist alongside it.

### **Why is Torbay Council carrying out the review at this time?**

Torbay Council took the decision that a Community Governance Review should be undertaken at this time because it considers that the establishment of town or parish councils, which have the ability to raise income through the precept mechanism, could enable the continued provision of services that Torbay Council itself may no longer be able to provide due to pressure on its resources and increasing demand particularly in the statutory services for Children's and Adults' social care. They may also promote community engagement and effective local government.

In addition, Government guidance is that a Community Governance Review should be carried out every 10-15 years. No review has taken place in Torbay since Brixham Town Council was set up in 2007.

### **What kinds of services could a town or parish council provide and how much would it cost?**

There are almost 10,000 parish and town councils across England, with populations ranging from fewer than 200 to almost 100,000. The range of services provided varies accordingly and each town or parish council decides what, if any, services it will provide. Typically, these can include the provision of allotments (a statutory responsibility, if there is demand); parks and recreation grounds; public conveniences; control of litter; play areas; community centres; crime prevention; festivals and fetes; traffic calming; tourism activities and/or markets. However recently there are examples of different types of services being delegated to councils, for example street cleaning and CCTV in Salisbury, and a library in Charnwood.

As the level of services provided varies significantly between town or parish councils, so does the level of the precept that they charge Council Tax payers. For example, the precept payable in 2018-19 by a Band D Council Tax payer within the Brixham Town Council area is £46.77 per annum. The national average Band D precept of all precepting parish and town councils in the current year is £64.05 per annum and for approximately 30 of the larger councils, some of which have taken on responsibility for a range of services 'devolved' from their principal authority, the Band D figure is between £200 and £300 per annum.

A town or parish council itself decides what level of precept to charge but in the case of any new town or parish councils, Torbay Council would set the precept for their first year of operation based on the estimated cost of the level of activity expected and any services anticipated to be transferred.

### **What area(s) could any new town or parish council(s) cover?**

The Council's initial suggestion was that two new town councils could be set up, to represent Torquay and Paignton respectively. This would mean that, including the existing Brixham Town Council, there would be three town councils, together covering the whole area of Torbay.

However, alternative options are possible - for example there could be a larger number of small town or parish councils representing individual areas, parts of Torbay could remain unparished, or we could simply retain the status quo. Torbay Council wants to know your views.

### **Will Brixham Town Council remain unchanged?**

Brixham Town Council was established in 2007 and covers the wards of Berry Head with Furzeham and St Marys with Summercombe. This review is an opportunity for local people to comment on any changes that they might like to suggest in respect of the existence of Brixham town council, the area covered by it and its electoral arrangements (the number of councillors, wards etc).

In relation to service delivery and the level of precept, just as for any new town or parish councils that might be established elsewhere in Torbay, Brixham Town Council could decide in future to take on additional services of the sort set out above.

### **Issues to be considered by the review**

In arriving at its recommendations the law requires that Torbay Council must have regard to the need for community governance arrangements to:-

- reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area; and
- promote effective and convenient local government.

It must also consider the impact of town or parish councils on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish; and must take into account any other existing or potential arrangements for community representation or engagement in the area.

In coming to decisions on the electoral arrangements for any town or parish council the Council must consider the number of electors in the area(s) under review and any change in the number or distribution of those electors which is likely to occur in the next five years.

Any town or parish council should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and electors should be able to identify with the town or parish in which they live. Any submissions providing evidence of community identity or local linkages will be important considerations in this review.

### **When would any new town or parish council(s) be set up?**

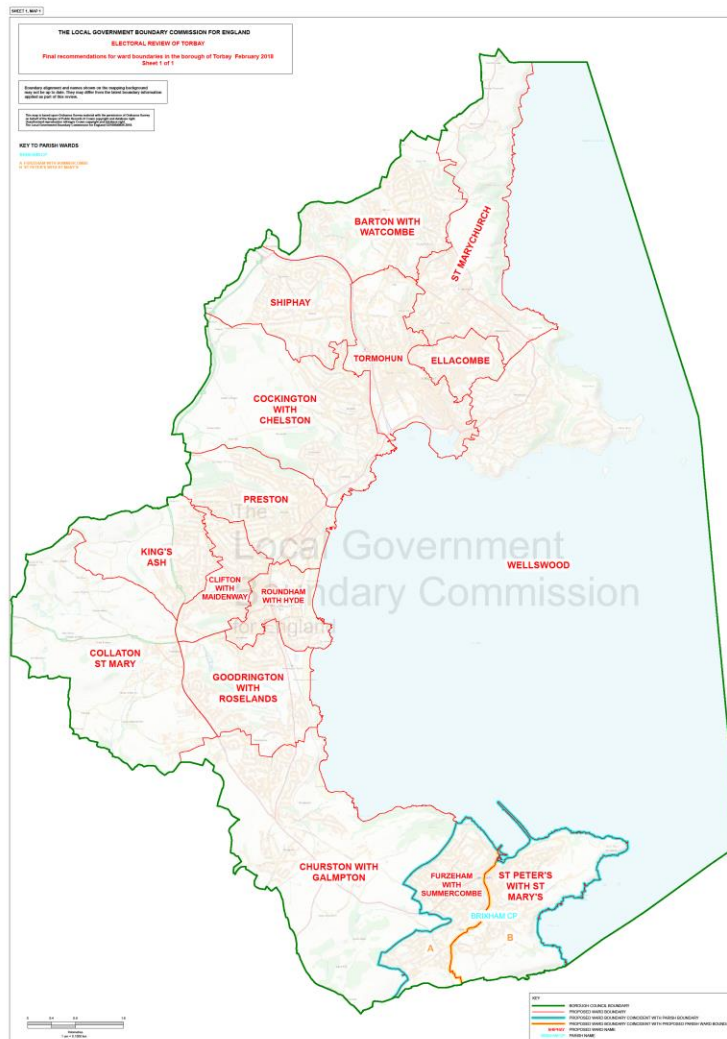
By law the review must be completed within 12 months of starting it. This review started on 14 January 2019, and therefore it has to be finished by 13 January 2020. It is anticipated that if any new town or parish councils were to be established following this review they would come into existence no later than April 2020.

## How to find out more

Full information about the Community Governance Review including the terms of reference and detailed timetable are on the website at [www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr)

## Map

The map below shows the existing Brixham Town Council Boundaries and Wards together with the Torbay Council Wards (revised with effect from May 2019).



## WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS

Please tell us what you think about the matters above or any other issues concerning governance at the town or parish council level by **Friday 15 March 2019**. Torbay Council will consider all submissions received before coming to its draft recommendations, which will then be published for further consultation before any final decisions are made.



## Community Governance Review - Questionnaire

# NEW TOWN OR PARISH COUNCILS IN TORBAY

### INTRODUCTORY PAGE

Torbay Council is carrying out a review to decide if changes should be made to existing local governance arrangements, including whether or not new town or parish councils should be set up in those parts of Torbay where they don't currently exist.

Full information about the review including the terms of reference and a timetable, are on our website at [www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr).

All local residents, business owners and organisations are invited to give their views.

The Council will consider all feedback before making draft recommendations. These will then be published for further public consultation before any final decisions are made.

You can complete this questionnaire online, or download a paper version and return it to Consultation, Town Hall, Torquay TQ1 3DR or hand it in at one of our Libraries, Paignton Library and Information Centre or any Harbour Office.

Alternatively you can tell us your views by e-mailing: [engagement@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:engagement@torbay.gov.uk)

This first stage of the consultation will close on **Friday 15 March 2019**.

**1. Please tell us whether you are a:**

Local resident

Local employee

Local business person

Official representative of community organisation – Please state which one.....

Other (please state) .....

### Town and parish councils

Town and parish councils exist in many rural and urban areas and are the most local tier of government in England. Torbay Council is classed as a Principal Authority and therefore has responsibility for deciding whether to create, amend or abolish parish areas within its boundaries and whether to establish councils to serve any of the parishes. A parish council that serves a town area may call itself a 'town council'.

Town or parish councils do not have statutory responsibility for services such as social care, education or housing but they may decide to provide some local services for their residents.



In some cases, they may take over responsibility for services previously or currently delivered by Torbay Council.

The Council decided to undertake a Community Governance Review now because town or parish councils could enable services to continue in Torbay which Torbay Council may no longer be able to provide. This is because they are able to raise additional income through their Council Tax precept. Therefore this would mean that, if town or parish councils are established, residents would pay more Council Tax overall.

These local councils can also play a key role in communities by the promotion of community engagement between the council and residents and more inclusive local government.

### Community Representation

Town or parish councils represent their communities. They must be consulted on planning applications within their area and they may bid to purchase assets of community value or express an interest in running a local authority service.

Town or parish councils are directly elected by local voters and are independent of the other layers of local government. Any new town or parish council, for example in Torquay, would not replace Torbay Council but would exist alongside it.

There are already a number of bodies in place in Torbay to represent local residents including the Community Partnerships.

**2. Do you think that creating town or parish councils would provide more benefits than if the Council developed how we work with the existing bodies?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text) .....

### Services provided by town or parish councils

The range of services provided by town or parish councils varies with each council deciding what, if any, services it will provide. Typically, these can include allotments; parks and recreation grounds; public conveniences; control of litter; play areas; community centres; crime prevention; festivals and fetes; traffic calming; tourism activities and/or markets. However, recently there are examples of different types of services being delegated to them for example, street cleaning and CCTV in Salisbury, and a library in Charnwood.

As the level of services provided varies significantly between town or parish councils, so does the level of precept they charge Council Tax payers. For example, the Council Tax precept payable in 2018-19 for a Band D property in Brixham is £46.77 per annum.



The national average Band D precept of all town and parish councils in the current year is £64.05 per annum and for approximately 30 of the larger councils, some of which have taken on responsibility for a range of services 'devolved' from their Principal Authority, the Band D figure is between £200 and £300 per annum.

A town or parish council decides what level of precept it will charge but in the case of any new councils, Torbay Council would set the precept for the first year of operation based on the estimated cost of any services to be transferred and the level of activity expected.

**3. Do you think the new town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Torbay Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?**

YES – If yes, what sort of services do you think town or parish councils could deliver?  
NO

Reasons/Comments (free text) .....

**Community Governance**

In arriving at its recommendations the law requires that Torbay Council must have regard to the need for community governance arrangements to:-

- reflect the identities and interests of the community in the area; and
- promote effective and convenient local government

Any town or parish council should reflect distinct and recognisable communities of interest, with their own sense of identity and electors should be able to identify with the town or parish in which they live.

**4. Based on where you live, which Torbay town, parish, area or locality do you feel you belong to?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**5. What is your postcode?**

(We are asking this to understand where you live in relation to the locality you feel you belong to)

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### Areas covered by town or parish councils

Torbay Council's initial suggestion is that two new town councils could be set up, to represent Torquay and Paignton. This would mean that, with the existing Brixham Town Council, there would be three town councils, together covering the whole Torbay area.

However, alternative options are possible - for example there could be a larger number of small town or parish councils representing individual areas, parts of Torbay could remain unparished, or we could simply keep things the way they are now.

**6. If you do think that new town or parish council(s) should be created:**

**(a) What area(s) should it/they cover?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**(b) What would you name the new town or parish council(s)?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

### Brixham Town Council

Brixham Town Council was established in 2007 and covers the wards of Berry Head with Furzeham and St Marys with Summercombe. This review is an opportunity for local people to comment on any changes that they might like to suggest in respect of the existence of Brixham Town Council, the area covered by it and its electoral arrangements.

Just as for any new town councils that may be established, Brixham Town Council could decide to take on additional services from Torbay Council in future.

**7. Do you think that there should be any changes to the area covered by Brixham Town Council?**

YES – It should cover a larger area/It should cover a smaller area/It should be abolished

NO

Reasons/Comments (Free text).....

**8. Do you think that there should be any changes to the number of councillors who make up Brixham Town Council?**

YES – There should be more councillors/There should be fewer councillors

NO





Reasons/Comments (Free text).....

**9. Do you agree that town or parish councils should be set up to serve the parts of Torbay that do not currently have them?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

REASONS/COMMENTS (free text) .....

**10. Do you have any other comments on governance issues at the parish/town council level?**

RESPONSE (free text) .....

**Further consultation**

If you would like to be contacted to take part in the second stage of this consultation, please leave your email details below. We will only use your information to contact you about the second stage of this consultation.

**Name** .....

**E-mail** .....

**Privacy Notice**

Torbay Council will hold this information for the purpose of contacting you about the second stage of this consultation, this information will not be used for any other purpose. We will hold your personal information for no longer than five years.

If you feel any information Torbay Council holds about you is incorrect, or if you wish to see a copy of the information we hold about you, please contact [infocompliance@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:infocompliance@torbay.gov.uk)