

Overview
& Scrutiny
Confidence in your Council

Review of Priorities and Resources 2015/2016

Report to the Mayor

September 2014



1. Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1 The Mayor published his draft saving proposals for 2015/16 on 4 July 2014 for consultation until 29 August 2014. At this stage, the Board invited all Members of the Council to notify it of any specific proposals they would like to see scrutinised by the Priorities and Resources Review Panel¹ in September 2014.
- 1.2 The Priorities and Resources Review Panel met on 11 July 2014 and determined which proposals it would scrutinise and, at this stage, a “call for evidence” to service providers, service users, partner organisations and the general public was issued.
- 1.3 The Panel then held a series of meetings on 1, 2 and 3 September 2014 to hear the rationale for the proposals from the Mayor and his Executive Leads and to receive representations from a range of organisations and individuals. Due to the short timetable of the Review this report summarises the process carried out and representations received with conclusions and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The recordings from these meetings are available with the agenda documents for each meeting at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/yourcouncil/councillorsdecisions/scrutiny/completereviews/prioritiesandresources1516.htm>.
- 1.4 The Panel also considered the Revenue Budget 2014/15 - Quarter 1 report on the projected outturn position on the Revenue Budget for the current financial year and the Medium Term Resource Plan which looked at future budget estimates.
- 1.5 The findings of the Panel were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 4 September 2014 at which the conclusions and recommendations from the Review were agreed.

2. Budget Reduction Proposals for Information Services - Connections

- 2.1 The Priorities and Resources Review Panel agreed that it would consider all of the proposals in relation to Connections which had been assessed as having a major community impact. The services affected were:
 - Review Connections Offices operating model
 - One centralised Connections Service
- 2.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.

¹ The membership of the Priorities and Resources Review Panel mirrors that of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, subject to substitutions (Councillors Brooksbank, Pountney and Tyerman).

2.3 Councillor Mills, the Customer First Manager (on behalf of the Executive Head of Information Services) and Mayor Oliver outlined the rationale for the proposals and responded to questions.

2.4 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of Connections are set out in paragraph 11.

3. Budget Reduction Proposals for Children's Services

3.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation to Children's Services:

- Restructure of Early Years Services
- Efficiencies within School Transport – post 16 SEN students on SEN courses
- School Transport Review
- Reduction in Action for Children Grant
- Reduction in Children's Centre Contract
- Careers South West – reducing contributions
- Review of Day Care & Domiciliary Service
- Changes to Management Arrangements & refocusing of Youth Provision Parkfield
- Young Carers Review
- Portage Service Review
- Organisational Development – increase charges for Safeguarding training
- Central Costs – review of management functions and Business Support

3.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.

3.3 Prior to the meeting, written representations were received from:

- Lifeworks Charity Ltd - Kool Club
- Citizen's Advice Bureau

3.4 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard a representation from the Citizen's Advice Bureau regarding Quids for Kidz which was read out by the Chairman.

3.5 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and Director of Children's Services. The Executive Lead for Children was unable to attend the meeting and gave his apologies.

3.6 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of Children's Services are set out in paragraph 11.

4. Budget Reduction Proposals for Adult Services

4.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation Adult Services:

Renegotiation of contracts
Review of all existing community care support plans
Care home placement numbers and rates
Equitable application of non-residential charging policy
Community Alarms
Learning Disability Development Fund
Voluntary Sector Block Contracts
Service Redesign – Learning Disability
Service Redesign – Respite Care
Service Redesign – St Kilda's
Delivery Model – Assessment Process
Delivery Model – Emergency Duty Team
Delivery Model – Quality Assurance
Movement of clients from residential homes to Extra Care Housing
Further joint working, shared commissioning, new income and efficiencies
Integrated Families Service
Reaching Out South West

4.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at www.torbay.gov.uk/budget1415.

4.3 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from the following organisations:

- Healthwatch Torbay and Community Development Trust
- Pluss (Transitional Funding)

4.4 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and the Executive Lead for Adult Services. The Director of Adults Services together with representatives from Torbay and Southern Devon Health and Care NHS Trust also attended the meeting in support and to respond to questions.

4.5 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of Adult Services are set out in paragraph 11.

5. Budget Reduction Proposals for Library Services

- 5.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation to Library Services:

Removal of Churston library from Torbay Council's library service provision
Loss of post of Inclusion Services Coordinator (0.51 fte) within Library services
Reduction in Library resources fund

- 5.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.

- 5.3 Prior to the meeting, written representations were received from:

A Brixham Resident (Churston Library)
Friends of Brixham Library

- 5.4 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from Friends of Churston Library.

- 5.5 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and the Executive Lead for Culture and the Arts (who Skyped into the meeting). The Director of Place and Executive Head of Residents and Visitor Services also attended the meeting in support.

- 5.6 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of Library Services are set out in paragraph 11.

6. Budget Reduction Proposals for the English Riviera Tourism Company

- 6.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation to the English Riviera Tourism Company:

Reduction in grant over two years to the English Riviera Tourism Company (ERTC)
Cease subsidy to the English Riviera Tourism Company (ERTC)

- 6.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.

- 6.3 Prior to the meeting, written representations were received from

The English Riviera Tourism Company
The Westgate Hotel
The Bridge Group of Hotels
The Commodore
The Court Prior
The Somerville Hotel

- 6.4 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel received a petition from The Commodore (186 signatures).
- 6.5 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from the following organisations:
- Bridge Group Hotels
 - The English Riviera Tourism Company
 - Outset Torbay
 - Haytor Hotel
 - Nick Bye
 - Martin Brooke
 - Bygones/Chair or English Riviera Attractions
 - Avenue Road B&B
 - Richardson Group of Hotels
 - TLH Leisure Resort
 - Torbay Business Forum
 - Brixham B&B Owner
- 6.6 The Chairman of the Panel read out a letter from Visit England and email from the English Riviera Tourism Company.
- 6.7 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and the Executive Lead for Culture and the Arts (who Skyped into the meeting). The Director of Place and Executive Head of Residents and Visitor Services also attended the meeting in support.
- 6.8 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of the English Riviera Tourism Company are set out in paragraph 11.

7. Budget Reduction Proposals for Museum Grants

- 7.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation to Museum Grants:
- Museums Grants (Savings generated through Future Museums Project)
 - Museums Grants (Further reduction in Museum Grants)
- 7.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.
- 7.3 Prior to the meeting, written representations were received from:
- Brixham Heritage Museum
 - Torquay Museum Future Museums Project
- 7.4 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel received a petition from Torquay Museum Society (886 signatures).

- 7.5 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from the following organisations:
- Brixham Heritage Museum
 - Torquay Museum
- 7.6 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor. The Director of Place and Executive Head of Residents and Visitor Services also attended the meeting in support. The Executive Lead for Culture and the Arts was unable to attend the meeting or Skype due to internet connection issues and gave his apologies.
- 7.7 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect Museums are set out in paragraph 11.
- 8. Budget Reduction Proposals for Community Safety - Street Wardens and Residents and Visitor Services - CCTV and Street Lighting**
- 8.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation to Street Wardens, CCTV and Street Lighting:
- Ceasing to provide the Street Warden Service
 - Corporate Security/CCTV Automated monitoring only
 - Highways Street Lighting
- 8.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.
- 8.3 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from the following organisations:
- Barton & Watcombe Community Partnership
 - Tormohun Community Partnership
 - Hele's Angels
 - Queen Elizabeth Drive Resident
 - Devon and Cornwall Police
- 8.4 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport. The Director of Place, Executive Head of Residents and Visitor Services and Executive Head of Community Safety also attended the meeting in support.
- 8.5 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of Street Wardens, CCTV and Street Lighting are set out in paragraph 11.

9. Budget Reduction Proposals for Subsidised Transport

9.1 The Panel agreed that it would consider the following proposals in relation to Subsidised Transport:

Removal of Council funding for the existing four subsidised bus services in Torbay

9.2 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.

9.3 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from St Micheal's Community Association.

9.4 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport. The Director of Place and Executive Head of Residents and Visitor Services also attended the meeting in support.

9.5 The conclusions and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in respect of subsidised transport are set out in paragraph 11.

10 The Panel agreed that it would also consider the following Proposals:

Fair Trade Budget
Review of waste
Quids for Kids
Medium Term Financial Plan

10.1 The Panel received details of each proposal and (where one was required) the current version of the Equality Impact Assessment. These are available on the Torbay Council website at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget>.

10.2 At its meeting, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel heard representations from the following organisations:

- Fair Trade
- Citizens Advice Bureau

10.3 At the meeting the Panel was able to ask questions of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor & Executive Lead for Strategic Planning, Housing, Energy and Environmental Policy. The Director of Place and Section 151 Officer also attended the meeting in support.

11 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 11.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Board (The Board) recognize and accept that a further £3.8 million of reductions to Torbay Council's budget for 2015/16 must be achieved in addition to the savings already identified and approved by Council on 13 February 2014.
- 11.2 The Board reiterated their priority to protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged within Torbay and feel that sight of these priorities has been lost. Whilst accepting that savings need to be made and that it is desirable to approve the savings in September the Board feel that it may be appropriate to delay some of the savings proposals due to insufficient information and evidence to make informed recommendations, to have full regard to the significant impact on our vulnerable communities of some of the proposals and to allow development of alternative proposals before a decision is made.

Information Services - Proposals 5 and 6 in relations to Connections

- 11.3 The Board feel that the proposals in respect of Connections should be deferred due to the lack of a robust business case and financial information especially in respect of the investment in new IT infrastructure and operational costs of running the remote locations and opportunity for income from the potential lease of the Torquay Connections Office. There was also insufficient evidence on the rationale for locating the centralized Connections Office in Paignton and that the benefits of co-locating or locating the Connections Office near to the Job Centre had not been fully explored, such as Torquay Library.

Recommendation 1 - That the Mayor be recommended to remove Proposals 5 and 6 in respect of Connections from the savings proposals for 2015/16 until such time as a valid business case can be presented to Members.

Children's Services

- 11.4 The Board noted the savings proposals and five year plan in respect of Children's Services.

Recommendation 2 – That the Mayor be recommended to defer the proposals for Quids for Kidz to enable investigation into the impact on the Citizens Advice Bureau and the capacity of the universal services to pick up the slack.

Adult Services

- 11.5 The Board is concerned that the implications of Dilnot and the Care Act are not yet known at this time and there is a risk to the Council that any changes required will not be fully funded by the Government and will therefore lead to additional pressures on local resources.

- 11.6 Members feel that there is insufficient evidence to support the proposed savings for adult services.
- 11.7 The Board was initially concerned that the proposed savings for St Kilda would not be fully achieved as the new build was unlikely to be operational until January 2016 and further savings will need to be identified if full year savings are not realised. Concern was also raised in respect of the impact of short term care on the proposals for St Kilda. Members were reassured by the email from the Director of Adult Social Care read out at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 4 September giving assurance that the savings would be realized in respect of St Kilda.

Residents and Visitor Services - Proposals 40 to 46 in relation to Library Services

- 11.8 Members feel that consideration should be given to using libraries and public buildings for multi use such as coffee shops, Connections Offices and community use to help secure their future viability.
- 11.9 The Board was concerned about the effect the library proposals would have on the elderly if Churston Library closes and in respect of the reduction in services for the blind.
- 11.10 The Board feel that there is a lack of information and detail in respect of the proposals for Churston Library and who, if anyone, is prepared to run the library on behalf of the community. Members feel that the proposals are being rushed through without due thought or proper consideration of the concerns from the community (e.g. the 2,000 signatures on a petition that the representative from Friends of Churston Library referred to). There is a window of opportunity to find different funding solutions. The Board recognise the financial problems will increase in the future and there needs to be further development of ideas. Members are being asked to make recommendations when no firm decisions have been made with lack of detail and business plans.
- 11.11 The Board feel that if a community library is established the Council should agree to provide the transitional funding proposed for 2015/16 and Officers should be requested to explore what level of funding would be required for a manager or volunteer manager to ensure the successful development of the community library and that a grant for this amount be included in the base budget for two years.

Recommendation 3 – That the Mayor be recommended to include further transitional funding of £10,000 for 2016/17 and £5,000 for 2017/18 to the community library at Churston.

Residents and Visitor Services - Proposals 37 and 38 in relation to the English Riviera Tourism Company

- 11.12 The Board feel that there is no justifiable business case to support the removal of funding for the English Riviera Tourism Company (ERTC) when the company provides an award winning destination and marketing service for Torbay and brings in £52 of investment for every £1 spent. Whilst Members acknowledge the amended proposal, highlighted by the Mayor at the meeting of the Priorities and Resources Review Panel, to increase the transitional funding to the ERTC to £350,000, pay the full cost of the Torbay Business Improvement District (TBID) combined retail and tourism bid (£100,000 over 2 years) they feel that, in light of the representations received, funding should remain in the base budget for the next two years with additional transitional funding in 2015/16 to show the Council's support of the good work of the ERTC and enable them to progress the TBID.

Recommendation 4 – That the Mayor be recommended that £250,000 should be retained in the base budget for the English Riviera Tourism Company (ERTC) with an additional £150,000 of transitional funding for 2015/16. ERTC should then be expected to contribute 50% towards the funding of the Torbay Business Improvement Bid (TBID), this will help secure the future funding of the ERTC and mitigate any slippage in the TBID process.

Residents and Visitor Services - Proposals 24 and 25 in relation to Museum Services

- 11.13 The Board welcomes the £30,000 transitional funding pro-rata to Torquay Museum and Brixham Heritage Museum highlighted by the Mayor at the meeting, which will allow a degree of breathing space to the two Museums to explore more joint working, other funding streams/income generation options and an alternative location for Torquay Museum (such as the Riviera International Conference Centre building) linking in with its closer working with Torre Abbey over the next twelve months.

Community Safety - Proposals 4 and 5 in relation to Street Wardens

- 11.14 Members supported the excellent work of the Street Wardens and the valuable services they provide to vulnerable members of the community and the positive impact on the Council and its partners because of the early intervention work they do. Members were concerned about the impact the loss of the Street Wardens would have on the community and the hidden financial costs to other Council and partner services if they no longer provided a service.
- 11.15** The Board does not support the removal of Street Wardens and feels that the proposals should be deferred until Officers have had time to work up alternative options for retention of the service with part funding from external partners and welcomed the Mayor's indication at the meeting of the Priorities and Resources Review Panel that this proposal would be deferred.

Recommendation 5 - That the Mayor be recommended that the proposals for the removal of Street Wardens be deferred until Officers have had time to work up proposals for the retention of the service with part funding from external partners.

Residents and Visitor Services - Proposals 32 and 33 in relation to CCTV

- 11.16 Members acknowledged the need to find different ways of working to deliver a cost effective monitored CCTV service to ensure the service is not lost. It provides a vital role in helping find lost people, protecting vulnerable people, preventing and detecting crime etc.
- 11.17 The Board does not support the removal of monitoring of CCTV and feel that proposals should be deferred until Officers have had time to work up detailed options for retention of the service or part service working with voluntary groups and identifying funding from external partners.

Recommendation 6 - That the Mayor be recommended that the proposals for the removal of monitoring of CCTV be deferred until Officers have had time to work up proposals for retention of the service or part service working with voluntary groups and identifying funding from external partners and income opportunities.

Residents and Visitor Services - Proposals 9 and 10 in relation to Street Lighting

- 11.18 The Board was concerned about the impact the proposals on Street Lighting would have on the vulnerable people of Torbay. The submitted report highlighted that priority would be given to replacing lighting on main roads and junctions but Members feel that lighting around sheltered housing and flats or areas where lack of street lighting could cause additional anti-social behaviour should also be prioritised.

Residents and Visitor Services - Proposals 16 to 19 in relation to Subsidised Transport

- 11.19 The Board welcomed the Mayor's intention, as highlighted at the meeting of the Priorities and Resources Review Panel, to give £5,000 towards the retention of the number 25 bus route and that Officers were working with Local Link to provide a solution to retain a service for this route.
- 11.20 Members were concerned in respect of the lack of evidence regarding the number of students who use Route 22/22E and feel that further investigation is required to ensure that students have alternative provision to get to Dartmouth College from Brixham.

Spatial Planning - Proposal 9 in relation to Fair Trade

- 11.21 The Board supports the work of the Fair Trade Group and feels that reducing their grant by 100% would make Torbay lose its Fair Trade status. Members were encouraged by the Mayor's announcement, at the meeting of the Priorities and Resources Review Panel, that he intended to give Fair Trade a grant of £1,000 for 2015/16.

Waste and Cleaning - Proposal 1 in relation to the Review of Waste

- 11.22 The Board welcomed the review of waste and looking at ways to improve recycling rates but feel that more education and enforcement is required in order to meet the anticipated savings targets.

Other recommendations

- 11.23 The Board is concerned about the various items of transitional funding included within the savings proposals and that if the proposals fail there will be no further consideration by the Council on any alternative solutions and the services will cease from the end of their transitional funding period.
- 11.24 In light of the ongoing budget pressures faced by the Council and the impact on the community Members feel that the Council needs to raise the profile of the cuts and their impact so that people are more aware of the impact on them.

Recommendation 7 - That the Mayor be requested to look at finding more savings partly from a much larger cut on RICC funding (e.g. £100,000) and partly from further reduction in staffing numbers from Resident and Visitor Services where levels in the budget papers feel too high and other services.

Recommendation 8 - That the Mayor be advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider that the information provided to the Priorities and Resources Review Panel by some services was insufficient and that Officers be made aware that if full information is not provided to the Council meeting in September the recommendations may not be approved.