TORBAY COUNCIL

Report No: **111/2005**

Title: **Review of Primary School Places in Torquay**

To: Executive on 17 May 2005

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1. Purpose

1.1 To report on the public consultation held into options for changing the supply of school places in Torquay.

1.2 So that the Council can decide its approach to managing the supply of places in Torquay.

2. Relationship to Corporate Priorities

2.1 Placing Learning at the Heart of the Community.

3. Recommendation(s)

3.1 That the Executive consider the responses to consultation on the options put forward for changes to the supply of places in Torquay.

3.2 That the Executive consider reducing the supply of school places in Torquay by:
(i) publishing notices to close Upton St James CE Primary School in July 2006.
(ii) reducing the Planned Admission Number at Ellacombe from 60 to 45 from September 2006.
(iii) making no change at St Margaret's Primary School
(iv) reducing the Planned Admission Number at Watcombe from 45 to 30.

4. Reason for Recommendation(s)

4.1 The Council must decide what action it intends to take to manage the present and growing rise in surplus places in primary schools. Vacant places represent a drain on the education budget and can lead to competition for pupils among schools.

4.2 The Council has consulted about two options involving Upton St James, Ellacombe and St Margaret's primary schools. Neither of the options garnered universal support among those consulted. A detailed report on consultation is attached to this report.

4.3 This is a complex matter requiring judgement of elected members The recommendation is that members give consideration to making the changes suggested in paragraph 3.2.

5. Key Risks associated with the Recommendation(s)

5.1 The changes under consideration are significant. If a school closure is pursued the risks include that such a change is irreversible; the local community will be adversely affected; and pupils education could be disrupted.

5.2 There is a risk that the School Organisation Committee may not approve a closure. The matter may be referred to the Adjudicator, who may not approve closure. In this event, the Council would need to develop an alternative proposal if it wished to make changes.

5.3 Considerable risks arise from not making any changes. These surround the inefficient use of Council resources to fund empty places and that the Council is likely to be

criticised for its maintenance of a high number of surplus places. If the Council takes no action , this issue of vacant places will be acute in a few years' time.

Likelihood					
	6	6	12	18	24
	5	5	10	15	X
	4	4	8	12	16
	3	3	6	9	12
	2	2	4	6	8
	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Impact			

Low risk **Intermediate risk** **High risk**

The "x" in the above matrix denotes where the author has assessed the level of final risk to fall

6. Other Options (if any)

6.1 There are a number of other options.

6.2 The Council could decide not to change the supply of school places, accept that the number of surplus places will grow, accept inevitable criticism during inspection and waste scarce resources in maintaining empty places.

6.3 The Council could decide to make changes other than those in the recommendations, though this would require a further period of feasibility work and informal and formal consultation before the matter could be brought for a decision.

6.4 Whilst there is wide scope for making a different set of changes it is unlikely that any permutation of changes would be universally well received. The fact is that proposals to reduce the supply of places are rarely popular or straightforward.

7. Background

7.1 The Council has already taken steps to reduce the number of surplus places in Brixham.

7.2 At its meeting on 11 January 2005, the Executive considered a paper on possible adjustments to the supply of school places in Torquay and Paignton. The Executive agreed that consultation should take place about changes in Torquay and Paignton. There followed a consultation about options for change in Torquay.

7.3 A detailed consultation paper was prepared setting out the issues and options. This paper is attached to this paper (Appendix 1)

7.2 The consultation on changes in Torquay has now been completed. A summary of the consultation process is to be found in Part 4, supported by a detailed report on consultation (Appendix 2).

7.3 The Executive should now consider the responses and decide the way forward.

Terry Connolly
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IMPLICATIONS, CONSULTATION AND OTHER INFORMATION

Part 1

These sections may have been completed by the Report author but must have been agreed by the named officers in the Legal, Finance, Human Resources and Property Divisions.

Does the proposal have implications for the following issues? If "Yes" - give details. *delete as appropriate*		Name of responsible officer
Legal	Yes. The Council may need to follow statutory processes to implement certain changes.	Lorna Lee
Financial – Revenue	Yes. The Council's approach to the issue of surplus places will have implications for schools' revenue budgets.	Lisa Finn
Financial – Capital Plan	Yes. The Council's approach to surplus places may give rise to capital works for which budget provision has been earmarked in the Capital Plan Budget.	Lynette Royce
Human resources	Yes. Falling pupil numbers will have an effect on the size of the workforce with the associated redundancy costs.	Anthony Goble
Property	Yes. The Council's approach to surplus places may give rise to disposals.	Sam Partridge

Part 2

The author of the report must complete these sections.

Could this proposal realistically be achieved in a manner that would more effectively: *delete as appropriate*		
(i)	promote environmental sustainability?	No
(ii)	reduce crime and disorder?	No
(iii)	promote good community relations?	No
(iv)	promote equality of opportunity on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief?	No
(v)	reduce (or eliminate) unlawful discrimination (including indirect discrimination)?	No

If the answer to any of the above questions is "Yes" the author must have addressed the relevant issue/s in the main report and have included a full justification and, where appropriate, an impact assessment.

Part 3

The author of the report must complete this section.

	Delete as appropriate	If "Yes", give details
Does the proposal have implications for any other Directorates?	Yes or No	

Part 4

Is this proposal in accordance with (i.e. not contrary to) the Council's budget or its Policy Framework?		*delete as appropriate* Yes
1.	If "No" - give details of the nature and extent of consultation with stakeholders and the relevant overview and scrutiny body.	
2.	If "Yes" - details and outcome of consultation, if appropriate. The Council consulted on two options. Option One • Closure of Upton St James CE Primary School in July 2006. • Reduction in PAN at Ellacombe from 60 to 45 with effect from September 2006. • No change at St Margaret's Primary School. Option Two • No change at Upton St James CE Primary School. • Reduction in PAN at Ellacombe from 60 to 30 with effect from September 2006. • Reduction in PAN at St Margaret's Primary School from 60 to 45 with effect from September 2006. The Council consulted directly with parents, governors and staff of Upton St James and with the governing body at St Margaret's and Ellacombe. The Council held consultation meetings for parents, governors and staff at Upton St James. The meeting for parents was a public meeting. The Council also consulted with the headteachers and governors of other Torbay schools, Diocesan Authorities and the neighbouring LEA. The response to consultation has been good. A detailed report on consultation is attached (appendix X)	

Part 5

Is the proposal a Key Decision in relation to an Executive function? (i.e. would generate expenditure or savings in excess of £100,000 or 20% of an approved budget OR affect more than 2,000 residents of the Borough.)	*Delete as appropriate* Yes	If "Yes" - Give Reference Number X4/2005

Part 6

Wards

All Torquay

Appendices

Appendix 1	Consultation Paper
Appendix 2	Consultation Report

Documents available in Members' Room

Completed questionnaire returns
Written consultation submissions
Email correspondence
Petition against closure of Upton St James
"Survey of Dissatisfaction"
Pupil Scatter Maps

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

Report to Executive Review of Primary School Provision in Torquay and Paignton (Chi 4/04)