

## **Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board**

**9 November 2022**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

Councillors Barrand, Brown, Bye (Vice-Chair), Foster, Johns, Kennedy and Loxton

(Also in attendance: Councillors Cowell, Steve Darling, Law and Long)

---

### **20. Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Atiya-Alla and it was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillor Foster in place of Councillor David Thomas.

### **21. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Board held on 12 and 25 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

### **22. Draft Housing Strategy**

Further to the meeting of the Torbay's Housing Crisis Review Panel held on 25 October 2022, the Board considered the draft Housing Strategy 2022-2030 and the draft report prepared by the Review Panel. They also heard representations from Rick Williams who was a member of the Torbay Strategic Housing Board and TorVista Homes Chairman. The Board discussed the following:

- the evidence base used to inform the strategy and the figures within;
- the number of legal notices served and what action was taken to ensure the landlord complied;
- if incentives were given to landlords to improve energy standards;
- the particular need for more affordable housing not just new housing;
- the need to ensure that action was taken in a timely manner to ensure progress against the Housing Strategy and other key priorities;
- were all Registered Housing Providers on board with the Rightsizing Project and had the incentives been agreed to encourage people to down size e.g. help to move costs;
- if the Council provided grants or support to help people with energy costs;
- issues around rented properties having metres switched;

- the different targets for numbers of new homes required within the various planning and housing strategies and the numbers delivered over the past few years;
- the need to prioritise affordable housing for care experienced young persons, this was a recommendation of the original Torbay's Housing Crisis Review;
- capacity to deliver sufficient housing on brown field sites to reduce the number required on green field sites;
- how we would deliver the aim to improve homelessness through improving housing support;
- the creation of an action plan to support the delivery of the Housing Strategy which would enable more flexibility over the life of the Strategy to react to changes in circumstances;
- when the final Housing Strategy would be approved as it was 2022-2030, it was noted that it was due to be finalised in early 2023; and
- capacity within the Planning department to deliver housing.

The Board requested the Interim Divisional Director for Housing to provide a written update to all Councillors on the progress made in delivering housing in Torbay.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Report to the Cabinet on the draft Housing Strategy be approved and forwarded to the Cabinet to consider as part of the consultation responses on the draft Strategy, subject to the following:

1. changing the date of the Housing Strategy to 2023-2030; and
2. providing a detailed evidence base to support the figures within the Housing Strategy.

### **23. Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy**

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Commissioning and Strategy Lead, Shirley Beauchamp, outlined the submitted draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, Policy Framework document, which was currently out to consultation and responded to questions on the following:

- the need for a cultural change and education from an early age as well as adults so that people can recognise what was good and not good in a relationship;
- what work was being done to listen to the voice of the perpetrator to understand why they have behaved in a certain way, it may have been that they were victims of abuse themselves or have other problems and may need to be supported themselves;
- how close the Domestic Abuse Team worked with the Drugs and Alcohol Team to see if they can recognise victims when working with their clients;
- the need to ensure support for people who have suffered from historic sexual abuse;
- the importance of a supportive approach so that victims know that people will believe them and support them;

- the use of acronyms within the Strategy and the importance of a glossary of terms to help people to understand them; and
- how do we challenge our partners, social landlords and others so that they can learn to spot signs and refer or report the issue to the appropriate agency.

The Board acknowledged that training was provided to Council staff and Councillors on safeguarding, by stander and domestic abuse but felt that more could be done to challenge our partners and our communities to encourage everyone to report any areas of concern.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Cabinet be recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board supports the draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy, subject to the inclusion of a glossary of terms.

#### **24. Budget Monitoring Quarter 2 2022 - 2023**

The Board received an update on areas which were showing as projecting an overspend or issues of concern in respect of the following areas during their previous consideration of Quarter 1 budget monitoring 2022/2023:

Business Improvement Team and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System:

Members noted the submitted paper and the Divisional Director of Corporate Services, Matt Fairclough-Kay, responded to the following questions:

- the timeline and changes for the business improvement and the CRM;
- the change in focus from income generation and savings to cost savings and better value for money;
- how and when customer feedback would be sought to enable this to be used to help shape changes to services and particularly the CRM;
- when would the Liquid Logic implementation conclude; and
- what progress was being made on the future ways of working and review of the Town Hall.

Children's Services:

Members noted the submitted paper and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Councillor Law, and the Director of Children's Services, Nancy Meehan, responded to the following questions:

- what progress had been made regarding the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Written Statement of Action;
- what progress had been made regarding the Family Hubs;
- the impact of the additional hotel which the Home Office have placed asylum seekers, with higher than average numbers claiming to be under 18 years old and the work associated with this;

- the increase in the number of placements out of area and the lack of regulated placements requiring some young people to be placed in more expensive unregulated provision; and
- home to school transport and what was being done to help support families to get their children to school whilst trying to reduce costs on school transport.

Members praised the reduction in the use of agency social workers but were very concerned in respect of the impact the additional asylum seekers who were claiming to be under 18 years old was having on staff and resources within the Council, but acknowledged the action being taken by senior officers and Councillors to work with partners and lobby the Government for appropriate funding and to raise awareness of the impact this was having on a small Unitary Council.

Place operations/commissioned:

The Director of Place, Kevin Mowat, and the Divisional Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure, Alan Denby, responded to the following questions:

- the Council was good at securing grant funding how does it ensure that we spend the money within the deadline;
- the budget for capital projects was reviewed quarterly but does not include the actual date started and anticipated completion, how could the data used to report capital projects be improved;
- does the Council/TDA have sufficient capacity to deliver the capital projects and what was the impact of not delivering schemes e.g. costs transferred to revenue putting additional pressures on the revenue budget; and
- the pedestrianisation of Torbay Road, Paignton was portrayed as a temporary trial but some of the businesses do not support the proposal, could the scheme be amended or changed.

Adult Social Care and Housing:

The Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond provided a verbal update on a request from the Integrated Care Organisation (ICO) and Integrated Care System (ICS) for additional moneys in year. The Council had a series of meetings with the ICO and ICS and rather than a cash injection, we have agreed to work together to review pathways within adult social care and how they can be reconfigured to drive out efficiencies and also to look at decision-making with the ICO to look at the scheme of delegation and who makes decisions to bring in more involvement from Torbay Council. This had resulted in no additional financial exposure within the current financial year.

Members requested the Director of Adults and Community Services, Jo Williams, to provide a written briefing to all Councillors regarding the proposals with the ICO/ICS.

Members asked questions on the following:

- how many people were being cared for in their own homes and how was this care monitored;

- the Council pays a fixed fee for the delivery of social care through the integrated adult social care and health service which is based on benchmarking information; and
- if someone living in their own home needs to go into residential care and they sell their home to fund their placement, who pays if the money from the sale runs out.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board be recommended to review domiciliary care and how this is delivered and monitored. (Note: during the discussion on Torbay Road Councillor Loxton declared a pecuniary interest and withdrew from the meeting, he returned once that scheme had been discussed.)

---

Chairwoman