

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

8 October 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Long (Chair)

Councillors Bryant, Cowell, Douglas-Dunbar, Fellows, Johns, Law, Spacagna (Vice-Chair), Stevens and Tolchard

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, Fox, Chris Lewis and Tyerman)

23. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillor Bryant in place of Councillor Foster.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10 September 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

26. Call-In of Cabinet's Decision on Community Grant Fund - Funding Awards Tranche 1

The Board had before it details of a call-in by five Members of the Council of the decision of the Cabinet regarding the Community Grant Fund – Funding Awards Tranche 1. The Call-in Promoter, Councillor Cowell explained his reasons for the call-in as set out in the submitted call-in notice. Councillor Cowell advised the Board that he was supportive of the Community Grant Fund which provided additional capacity to the community and voluntary sector. However, Councillor Cowell outlined specific concerns over the level of detail within the report to Cabinet on the successful applications and questioned how some of the applications met the objectives of the Policy and the due diligence carried out and the how the fund was communicated.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Chris Lewis, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance, Councillor Tyerman and the Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond responded to the concerns raised through the call-in and by Councillor Cowell. The Board was advised that the Panel comprising Anne-Marie Bond and Malcolm Coe

(Director of Finance) had considered 67 valid applications against the criteria set out in the Community Grant Fund Policy and the Cabinet Members for Tourism, Culture & Events and Corporate Services, Councillor Jackie Thomas and Housing and Finance, Councillor Tyerman had reviewed the detailed applications of those recommended for approval by the Panel and were satisfied with those put forward for Tranche 1. It was acknowledged that more detailed information could have been provided in the report to Cabinet but with two of the Cabinet Members seeing the detailed applications it was felt that this was sufficient. There were several applications that required further clarity and they would be considered as part of Tranche 2. Officers and the Cabinet were satisfied with the level of due diligence carried out on the applications against the criteria and it was confirmed that pre-work had been carried out to work with applicants to provide clarity or further information to enable fair assessment, where necessary. Torbay Communities and the Community Builders had been requested to communicate the Fund. It was noted that successful applicants would be required to sign a funding agreement which would require them to demonstrate how the money would be spent ensuring compliance with the approved Policy.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that no further action be taken in respect of the call-in of the Cabinet's decision on the Community Grant Fund – Funding Awards Tranche 1; and
2. that the Cabinet be recommended to ensure that detailed information on the applications for Tranche 2 be included in the report, with an Appendix setting out detailed information on the successful applications for Tranche 1 and a process for letting unsuccessful applicants know the outcome.

27. Update on Local Government Association Peer Review

The Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond presented the submitted report on the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review which set out how the Council was progressing since the original Peer Challenge and the opportunity to develop continuous improvement via five themes with recommendations arising to form the submitted Action Plan. The Action Plan covered the current financial year and would be used to inform Service Plans.

The Board welcomed the update and significant progress that had been made since the original Peer Challenge, particularly between Members and acknowledged the importance of focussing on the positives Torbay had to offer. Members acknowledged the hard work being undertaken by Senior Officers at a difficult time with the current challenges in respect of Local Government Reorganisation.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Board welcomes the progress made arising from the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review and notes the associated Action Plan; and
2. that a progress report on the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Action Plan be circulated to the Board for

Members to consider at the Overview and Scrutiny Monthly briefing in January 2026 so that they can identify any areas for further scrutiny.

Chair
