

Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board

24 September 2026

-: Present :-

Lee Baxter, Councillor Nick Bye, Tara Harris, Sarah Lonton, Lincoln Sargeant and Councillor Hayley Tranter

10. Election of Chair for the Meeting

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor David Thomas and the Vice-Chair, Councillor Tranter was elected Chair for the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order H3.2.

11. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor David Thomas, Torbay Council, Simon Tapley, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, Anna Coles, Torbay Council who was represented by Lee Baxter, Nancy Meehan, Torbay Council, Roy Linden, Devon and Cornwall Police who was represented by Nigel Yelland, Paul Phillips, Department for Work Pensions who was represented by Shaun Easterbrook and Pat Teague, Ageing Well Assembly.

The Board also welcomed Sarah Lonton, Strategic Lead for Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay. Sarah has joined the Board following the retirement of Pat Harris. The Board requested to record in the Minutes their thanks to Pat for her tireless work championing patients, carers and communities, and for the relationships and partnerships she had helped build across Torbay and wider Devon.

12. Minutes

The Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 25 June 2026, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13. Declaration of interest

There were no interests declared.

14. Annual Torbay Drug & Alcohol Partnership report

The Board noted the Annual Update Report of the Torbay Drug and Alcohol Partnership (TDAP) for the period September 2025 to August 2026. Members were advised that the Partnership, established in response to the Government's ten-year drugs strategy, continued to provide strategic oversight of activity aimed at reducing

drug and alcohol-related harm across Torbay through a coordinated approach involving health, public health, criminal justice, housing, children's services and community partners.

The Board further noted that, during the previous year, the Partnership had strengthened its governance arrangements, improved oversight of investment through the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant, reviewed the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and established a number of themed workstreams to support delivery of agreed priorities. Enhanced links had also been developed between substance misuse and mental health agendas to strengthen partnership working across the system.

15. Local Government Reorganisation Update

The Board noted a verbal update on Local Government Reorganisation. Members were advised that the reorganisation process had been paused with further information expected from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government expected sometime in October. As an immediate consequence, local elections would proceed based on the existing boundaries for Torbay. It was noted that the pause had created a degree of continuing uncertainty regarding future arrangements.

16. Neighbourhood Health Update

The Board noted a verbal update on the development of Neighbourhood Health arrangements. Members were informed that partnership work continued to progress positively through local partnership meetings. It was noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board would be required to approve the overall strategic plan and discussions had taken place regarding how existing strategies could be adapted into a broader neighbourhood plan.

The Board heard that the Integrated Care Board had committed to working with Local Care Partnerships to support delivery within neighbourhoods. Local Care Partnerships had requested a clearer mandate and practical delivery framework, and work was being undertaken to translate strategic priorities into deliverable plans. It was anticipated that, as responsibilities and budgets were devolved to place-based arrangements, Local Care Partnerships would develop plans setting out how resources would be allocated and utilised.

Members were advised that further work would be required to review the membership of Local Care Partnerships and strengthen alignment with local authority priorities. Plans were also progressing to appoint clinical leads for each of the eight neighbourhoods in the South, with general practices being asked to nominate individuals who could lead multi-disciplinary improvement activity. Appointments were expected by the end of October.

The Board noted that a six-month development programme would focus on testing approaches within neighbourhoods, developing an operating model, and supporting the production of Neighbourhood Health Plans. A public consultation was due to commence across Devon on 25 September 2026, and investment was being made within the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to ensure community

views informed service design. It was anticipated that a final neighbourhood health plan should be presented to the Board for approval in March.

During discussion, Members highlighted the importance of ensuring that mental health and children's voices were reflected within the work and that suitable quantitative measures accompanied feedback gathered from local communities.

17. Health & Wellbeing Strategy spotlight item – Older Adults

The Board received a presentation on the development of the Age Friendly Torbay initiative and its role as a priority within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2030. The presentation highlighted the need to view an ageing population as a community asset and strength, recognising that health, social connections, housing, transport, digital inclusion and attitudes towards ageing all contribute to healthy ageing. The Board was reminded that the creation of an Age Friendly Torbay formed a recommendation from the previous year's healthy ageing work and was now a key strategic priority.

Members heard that an age-friendly community was one that enabled people to age well, remain independent for as long as possible, continue living in their own homes, participate in activities that matter to them and contribute to their communities. The presentation emphasised the importance of creating environments and services that promote rather than limit independence.

The Board received an update regarding the work of the Torbay Citizens Assembly, which provided an independent voice for residents and works with older adults to identify priorities for action. Feedback from residents highlighted the importance of maintaining physical activity, social connections, mental stimulation and creative pursuits in supporting health and wellbeing in later life.

The Assembly's work identified a number of priorities relating to health and care services, including accessible and affordable services, support that promoted dignity and independence, improved communication and engagement, continuity of care, better access to GP appointments, transport improvements and a stronger focus on preventative and enabling services delivered closer to people's communities. Members noted positive developments including the Torquay Diagnostic Centre and the national focus on shifting care from hospitals into communities.

An update was also provided on transport-related activity. Feedback from residents identified buses, trains, personal transport and highways as key priorities. Through the Community Transport Forum, residents, transport providers and the Council had worked collaboratively to influence service improvements including the transition to a largely electric bus fleet, upgraded bus shelters, improved timetable information and the rollout of digital information screens. Further work was planned around passenger feedback, accessibility improvements, age-friendly transport behaviours and digital support sessions to increase confidence in using public transport technology.

The Board heard that housing was another significant priority for older residents. Engagement with residents highlighted the importance of ensuring housing developments were located appropriately, remain affordable and provide access to transport and local services. The Citizen's Assembly had contributed to the review of the Council's Housing Strategy and had worked with planning and regeneration teams to ensure the views of older residents were reflected in future plans.

Members were introduced to the concept of an "All Age Friendly Torbay" approach, bringing together the principles of Child Friendly and Age Friendly communities. This approach sought to create inclusive communities where people could thrive at every stage of life through coordinated work around housing, transport, accessibility, community participation, access to services, health and wellbeing, communication, partnership working and intergenerational opportunities.

The presentation concluded by outlining the next steps for the programme, including measuring the impact of current activities, progressing work across the age-friendly domains, embedding age-friendly principles within neighbourhood health initiatives and encouraging partner organisations to consider how their policies, services, employment practices and volunteering opportunities could better support an ageing population. The Board was invited to reflect on the role of partners in promoting age-friendly communities across Torbay.

Chair