

# Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy – Consultation Results

10 December 2020

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# Introduction

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The report from the 2019 Community Conference recommended that one of the elements required to translate our determination to engage with communities more effectively into real change "on the ground" was a community engagement strategy that could become embedded in the work of all our directorates and departments. It was felt that this (alongside other recommendations) would support the strong desire voiced by conference participants for a change in our culture and mindset.

This draft strategy sets out to our members, staff and community not only our plan of how we will address some of the key themes emerging from the conference but also clear statements about what our offers, commitments and actions will be. It also makes clear what we are asking of the community to support this improvement and build more positive, trusted relationships.

The strategy outlines how we intend to meet its mission to be a Council that works in partnership with its residents, communities and partnerships. It is split into six key domains that outline how we propose to improve our community engagement and how we want to work alongside and empower the community in Torbay. The proposed domains are:

- Working differently
- Keep you informed
- Ask what you think
- Decide together
- Act together
- Support independent community initiatives

The first domain outlines what our offers are to the community to facilitate this approach and what we ask of the community to support. It provides a narrative to explain our new approach and proposals about how a partnership framework would look in Torbay. The subsequent domains make clear statements about what our commitments are and what our planned actions are to meet these.

An online survey was created to gather public views on the details of the strategy. The survey opened on 21 October 2020 and closed at midnight on 20 December 2020. There were 56 responses to the Council's survey.

In addition a second survey which guided respondents through the key points of the strategy was created and promoted by Torbay Community Development Trust (TCDT). There were 161 responses to the TCDT survey.

Results from both surveys are included within this report.

Tables were constructed and percentages calculated using the overall number of questionnaires received as the denominator. Comments have been grouped into themes and are shown in tables in this report. Some comments cover more than one theme.

# Summary

Domain	Yes	%	No	%
<b>1 – Working differently</b>				
Do you agree there are benefits to engagement with public services?	53	94.6%	<5	~
Do you think the purpose of the draft Strategy is clear?	41	73.2%	14	25.0%
Do you think Torbay's 'ladder of participation' is clear?	37	66.1%	18	32.1%
Do you think 'Our Offers' are clear?	41	73.2%	13	23.2%
Do you think 'Our Asks' are clear?	43	76.8%	10	17.9%
<b>2 – Keep you informed</b>				
Do you think 'Our Commitments' are clear?	44	78.6%	11	19.6%
Do you think 'Our Actions' are clear?	42	75.0%	13	23.2%
<b>3 – Ask what you think</b>				
Do you think 'Our Commitments' are clear?	42	75.0%	11	19.6%
Do you think 'Our Actions' are clear?	39	69.6%	14	25.0%
<b>4 – Decide together</b>				
Do you think 'Our Commitments' are clear?	43	76.8%	11	19.6%
Do you think 'Our Actions' are clear?	40	71.4%	14	25.0%
<b>5 – Act together</b>				
Do you think 'Our Commitments' are clear?	42	75.0%	10	17.9%
Do you think 'Our Actions' are clear?	40	71.4%	12	21.4%
<b>6 – Support independent community initiatives</b>				
Do you think 'Our Commitments' are clear?	39	69.6%	14	25.0%
Do you think 'Our Actions' are clear?	38	67.9%	15	26.8%

# Responses

## Domain 1 – Working differently

### Do you agree there are benefits to engagement with public services?

	Number	%
Yes	53	94.6%
No	<5	~

### Do you think the purpose of the draft Strategy is clear?

	Number	%
Yes	41	73.2%
No	14	25.0%

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
It's clear / good.	<p>“The draft strategy is clearly worded, it sets out its aims in a clear and logical way and it's easy to read.”</p> <p>“The draft strategy sounds very positive and recognised the fact that changes need to be made to achieve a more inclusive and collaborative approach to positive change, not just in the VCSE sector but tourism and economy alike.”</p>
More needed in the strategy / not clear.	<p>“Although it is clear, the document seems to link or rely heavily on TCDT which seems limiting”</p> <p>“It's just the usual incomprehensible local governmentese waffle. I'm interested in the subject, and care very much about it, and I'm intelligent, but I still understand hardly any of it. You really need to translate it and tell people in the English language what you're trying to do.”</p>
Sceptical about it being implemented.	<p>“Having read the strategy document I would agree with the approach outlined in it. The purpose is clear and quite detailed and</p>

	<p>comprehensive. However the test will come when it is implemented, I would be concerned about consultation periods and time spent before action is taken The resources used and cost of the whole process in reaching decisions.”</p> <p>“Stating the intention of engaging with the community is very different to ACTUALLY engaging with the community. In 18 months actual engagement has not occurred. Is it your intention to continue stating it is an intention but never ACTUALLY engage?”</p>
There are benefits to working with the community.	“With dwindling resources, it makes sense to tap into those already existing in the community. The proposed way of working together with the community has been an ideal I have held my entire adult life.”
Better engagement / communication with the community is needed.	<p>“Council needs to engage more with ratepayers rather than politically motivated elected members”</p> <p>“Obtaining community feedback is key to building better relationships between the Council and its residents. I do question how activated the community is in reality, and whether those who do engage sit on the polar ends of any spectrum and the fact is that the majority of residents are apathetic to community engagement”</p>
Other	“I had thought that the Strategy would already be in place, obviously not so congratulations on the preparation of the document and now let’s get it implemented.”

**Do you think Torbay’s ‘ladder of participation’ is clear?**

	Number	%
Yes	37	66.1%
No	18	32.1%

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Its clear / good	“There is a clear line that the authority would like to follow that is evident from the ladder's construction.”

	“Yes clear - the diagram is useful”
It’s not clear enough	<p>“Because the language you use, and the structure of the document, make the whole thing impossible for anyone to understand. GIVE SOME CONCRETE EXAMPLES.”</p> <p>“It’s doesn’t mean anything it’s just words to placate.”</p>
Implementation	<p>“As long as the Council leads the debate based on realistic resource availability”</p> <p>“You have stated that you will engage with Community Partnership Forums and yet you are blatantly disregarding the Neighbourhood Plan that unpaid residents spent years of their time formulating and was approved by over 98% of the community.”</p>
Other	“Why is it a ladder - surely you should be supporting community initiatives now, it’s not like you do one to the exclusion of other things”

**Do you think ‘Our Offers’ are clear?**

	Number	%
Yes	41	73.2%
No	13	23.2%

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
They are clear	<p>“A few simple points see to get across quite a few ideas, so yes it is clear. We need a clear strategy going forward to engage with many people from different situations and backgrounds.”</p> <p>“I think it’s a clearly laid out document overall”</p>
They are not clear enough / more is needed	<p>“Not really, the listening part is good but after that it’s a bit muddled as the rest is irrelevant if the first one is adhered to.”</p> <p>“Should be more emphasis on listening.”</p>

Implementation	<p>“As long as they come from a strong unitary base”</p> <p>“There has been no evidence that you wish to ACT on your intentions”</p>
Other	<p>“Torbay Council would like something for nothing. Very unattractive offer.”</p> <p>“Don’t believe a word of it”</p>

### Do you think ‘Our Asks’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	43	76.8%
No	10	17.9%

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
They are clear	<p>“Although wordy and duplicatory with some strange language they aims for both council and community are sound.”</p> <p>“Good emphasis on promoting community cohesion.”</p>
They are not clear enough / more is needed	<p>“It appears a lot of time and resources have been wasted producing this pap. You appear to underestimate the views and cynicism of your local residents.”</p>
Implementation	<p>“Clarity isn't the issue, but rather a genuine commitment to such goals”</p> <p>“Asking the community to believe or trust when there is no evidence of the Council wishing to act on their intentions is too big an ask.”</p>
Other	<p>“It basically says we don’t know how to communicate have no money and need you to do everything.”</p> <p>“What are you asking?”</p>

## Are there any other offers and asks that we should include?

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
No	<p>“It would appear to me that the Asks and Offers are well covered”</p> <p>“No. Let's see how it goes.....”</p>
Ask and listen	<p>“Listen, offer money and trust the community partnerships to make decisions for their wards. If you have a strategy tell us and we will come up with ideas that meet it. Stop telling us why you can't do things and tells us what you can do. Promise or a residents charter, keep streets clean areas cut paths clear etc. Stop telling the few to do everything.”</p>
Collaboration	<p>“Look at collaboration, what about seed funding engagement activities which would target those furthest from community engagement and find out why people don't get involved”</p>
Prove it	<p>“Show the community that you are acting on the intentions you set out 18 months ago but have still not acted on.”</p>
Other	<p>“I think it should also recognise the limits of its ability and capacity to hear from residents that are not interested, or not able to, meaningfully engage.”</p> <p>“I don't understand the question - perhaps that is the issue, if you know what you are talking about, do the people you are talking to understand YOU and what YOU are getting at.”</p>

## Domain 2 – Keep you informed

### Do you think ‘Our Commitments’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	44	78.6%
No	11	19.6%

### Do you think ‘Our Actions’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	42	75.0%
No	13	23.2%

### Are there any other commitments or actions you would like to see?

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Meaningful actions / outcomes are needed	<p>“Commitment is a rhetorical assertion that needs to be backed up with meaningful actions”</p> <p>“Whilst the commitments are clear the actions are not smart and require some form of measurement to demonstrate what success would look like and ideally a timeframe”</p>
Improve communication methods	<p>“Again I would be concerned with the long process in any proposal before adoption or other. I am concerned at the overuse of social media for information distribution. Better and safer by Email and if it can be developed then Zoom forums.”</p> <p>“I think there needs to be significant investment in helping Council representatives to engage with residents in a meaningful way. Not all Councillors or employees are confident or happy with liaising with the public directly and there is a skills gap that will emerge rapidly if that’s not considered and plugged now.”</p>

Other	<p>“Give full support to your ViewPoint Panel and ensure its makeup continues to fully reflect the population of Torbay.”</p> <p>“You must support local business, encourage people to shop locally and encourage people to come to our beautiful county”</p>
Representation	<p>“To make it a required duty for councillors to take an active part in community organisations, e.g., partnerships.”</p>
Climate Change	<p>“Yes! I would like to see a raft of actions and commitments to tackle the Climate Emergency.”</p>

### Domain 3 – Ask what you think

#### Do you think ‘Our Commitments’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	42	75.0%
No	11	19.6%

#### Do you think ‘Our Actions’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	39	69.6%
No	14	25.0%

### Are there any other commitments or actions you would like to see?

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Other	<p>“This feedback sheet and the budget one is so limited as to provide single vector answers, you don’t want a discussion just the correct answer to the question you wanted. Even the framing of the choices is poor and wouldn’t win a plain English award.”</p> <p>“Possibly more individual participation”</p>
No	<p>“Enough already there for the time being.”</p>
Timeframe for action needed	<p>“Community engagement needs a targeted timetable with any project”</p>
Action	<p>“Difficult to tell now. Time will learn the added value of commitments and actions depending on what is possible.”</p>

### Domain 4 – Decide together

#### Do you think ‘Our Commitments’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	43	76.8%
No	11	19.6%

#### Do you think ‘Our Actions’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	40	71.4%
No	14	25.0%

## Are there any other commitments or actions you would like to see?

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Other	<p>“Together only as long as you do what we want.”</p> <p>“To ensure that by encouraging Community involvement the Council does not abrogate its own responsibilities.”</p>
Engage differently / better	<p>“I can help you engage with those of us who are not on Mainstream social media, make use of decentralised networks such as Mastodon to find people who can help in different ways, maybe also reach out to the free and open source software community, going forward there is a lot out there that is really interesting around putting control of information back in to the hands of individual people.”</p> <p>“Again I would be concerned at the length of consultation before decisions are reached”</p>
Plan and measure / deliver actions	<p>“...The best way to measure is to have a clear action plan that the community can follow and participate in early and often in order to assist the plan becoming a success.”</p> <p>“No. Once again, simply that 'decide together' actually has meaning, and isn't just a 'tick box' exercise.”</p>

## Domain 5 – Act together

### Do you think ‘Our Commitments’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	42	75.0%
No	10	17.9%

**Do you think ‘Our Actions’ are clear?**

	Number	%
Yes	40	71.4%
No	12	21.4%

**Are there any other commitments or actions you would like to see?**

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Other	<p>“More active support for youth groups.”</p> <p>“Again trying to dictate what happens into a homogenised mass. This leaves little opportunities for organic growth as you must become part of a stakeholder or partnership group.”</p> <p>“No idea of this, we are always left out”</p>
Resources	<p>“I have a concern about the amount of officer/council worker time engaged in these board/meetings when deciding things as in previous years a small amount of funding has been very costly to distribute due to the amount of staff time involved, and whilst the commitments are clear the actions are not smart and require some form of measurement to demonstrate what success would look like and ideally a timeframe. In addition true ownership comes from the community having actual ownership of facilities and spaces, through community asset transfer - something no longer considered in Torbay. In fact Torbay seeks best value or to sell assets, which community groups then end up renting from commercial landlords, and recharging the costs back for council services, so although at first the council has a little income, over time it has a much higher cost”</p>
Review existing roles	<p>“We have to act together and work collaboratively particularly on the subject of VCSE funding. There needs to be a restructure or overhaul of the Council’s partnership with TDCT in terms of funding as it’s unfair and not impartial. The grassroots organisations are missing out on vital funding for services when TDCT have the monopoly on funding to pay salaries for people ‘coordinating’ rather than doing. I suggest that Torbay Together (or any organisation not in long term partnership or</p>

favoured by TDCT) oversee a fair funding distribution across ALL organisations in Torbay.”

Technology

The Council will hold an online discussion on 12.1. re White Rock 2. Cheeky. Instead of waiting until people physically can attend, they make it difficult. Not all can/ want online discussions. I think it shows that this great draft of Community engagement is already undermined!

## Domain 6 – Support independent community initiatives

### Do you think ‘Our Commitments’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	39	69.6%
No	14	25.0%

### Do you think ‘Our Actions’ are clear?

	Number	%
Yes	38	67.9%
No	15	26.8%

### Are there any other commitments or actions you would like to see?

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Other	<p>“Publicise what you mean.”</p> <p>“Keep things singular from the Unitary top - Torbay Council - you should lead as a single voice.”</p>
Community collaboration	<p>“I’d like the actions to be more specific i.e. exactly how can you support. How will you ensure a more collaborative approach and</p>

	indeed pick up on any concerns the grass roots organisations have about other organisations not working collaboratively.”
Support and listen	“Absolutely essential because it will increase needed support on both sides. Above that it will show the local community that they are important with developing valuable initiatives.”
Review existing roles	“Take TCCT out of the loop for local greenspaces. Just leave them the farmland, footpaths and Occombe Farm.”

**Are there any actions or proposals set out in this draft Strategy that you believe may have an adverse impact on equality of opportunity or on good community relations?**

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
No	<p>“No, but then I have only a limited knowledge of the needs of the various groups in the Bay.”</p> <p>“No, but we can overcome any which might arise, through oversight”</p>
Other	<p>“Equality of opportunity? Are we seriously talking about Torbay?”</p> <p>“If you will not take on board the community wishes there will be no one who bothers to reply”</p>
Act on promises	<p>“Words are meaningless unless your actions support them. Re Inglewood development for example, nobody locally to it wants it, it is not part of the Neighbourhood Plan you promoted so much and you are not working with the local groups to oppose it. So all your documents may look good on paper but unless you act upon the, they are hollow words like most politicians unfortunately.”</p>
It misses groups	<p>“Yes it concentrates on systems which have been around for a long time and have had little impact on moving Torbay out of multiple deprivation. We need something more inclusive that seeks out response from those most vulnerable in our community, and not the vocal few who choose to engage in this manner”</p>

Access to technology	“I do not support the overuse of social media, I suggest other means of communication should be used alongside this method. Facebook and twitter carry a lot of abusive content, I prefer Email and hard copy.”
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**Are you aware of any opportunities to better promote engagement opportunities and community relationships?**

The comments received in respect of the above question have been grouped into themes and a sample of the responses shown:

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Work with groups	<p>“Working alongside churches and local groups of people such a youth groups, sports clubs and scouts to increase things like 'parties in the park', street parties, use of community buildings/church halls for craft fayres etc Days to 'do up the park', or 'paint the town red' etc where volunteers from the local area get together to make it look better”</p> <p>“Yes working with partners to pool resources and gain the widest responses, NHS, DWP, ESFA funded providers, etc”</p>
No	<p>“No, things remain in the hands of a handful of people who are regarded as a safe pair of hands by The Council when it comes to engagement. There is little prospect of this changing, particularly in the current climate of fear over Covid. Well, you did ask!”</p>
Other	<p>“Yes the council need to hold much more contact information of the public as was proved at the start of the covid situation, there was no way of disseminating information out to the public. People don't always listen to the radios and don't read the herald the council were working in a different decade unfortunately.”</p>
Communicate better / listen / improve relations	<p>Research of wishes and needs in the local communities at forehand and select the most important opportunities (not only by considering cost/benefit analysis)</p>
Lack of trust	<p>“I believe Torbay Council has failed to recognise or engage diversity in our community for so long that the failings are institutionalised. I have experienced ethnic discrimination from Torbay Council and</p>

believe it would now be impossible to form 'community relationships' outside of your white middle class ghetto.”

Promotion

“I think that more needs to be done to publicise positive cooperative working between the council and community. There are many examples over the last few years, but few people other than those involved who know about them. If these are lauded, then negative attitudes toward the council might begin to change.”

## TCDT "Light Touch" Engagement on How the Council & Community Can Work Together

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### **1. Keep you informed**

The Council pledges:

#### **Commitments**

We will be open and honest and timely in our communication

#### **Actions**

- We will review and improve the Council's website.
- We will maximise the effectiveness of social media, encourage councillors and senior officers to join the conversation.
- We will ensure that communication between Council departments is effective.

## How is important is this to you?

	Number	%
Not very important	<5	~
Slightly important	8	5.0%
Important	20	12.4%
Quite important	32	19.9%
Very important	96	59.6%

## Your Comments and ideas.

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Communicate and inform	<p>“As well as being important to communicate with the local Community, it should be done well in advance to allow the community the time to take any necessary action.”</p> <p>“... When paid council officers do not bother to communicate or even listen to the community something is very wrong. This lack of communication and understanding creates distrust and an attitude of why bother. Ward councillors have a vital role to play as they are there to support the community but they need to be given time by council officers too....”</p> <p>“It is Critical. No communication is worse than communication saying we don't know anything at present”</p> <p>“Communication is vital...it is important that the Council know just who is doing the on the ground work in their community, therefore a comprehensive database of those that need to be communicated with is something that needs to be built. It should not have to rely on organisations 'finding out' but the council have to be proactive in involving people.”</p>
Clarity / transparency	<p>“Great. As long as the 'communication' is in plain English and not in ' garbled Engagement talk”</p> <p>“How will these actions be implemented? It's fine to say what you are planning to do, but clarification as to how these actions will be carried out would provide some substance.”</p>

	<p>“Be honest about cost savings when cutting or curtailing services, don’t hide behind another reason if it is about money.”</p>
<p>Access to officers / Councillors / Communication at the council</p>	<p>“Council contact is currently very guarded and it is difficult to get a named contact. Knowing who to speak to in relevant departments (in order to effect community action) would be a great start.”</p> <p>“Really important for councillors to join the conversation.”</p> <p>“Improving communication between departments is essential - there is too much "silo" working and defensive behaviour. It is wasting valuable resources.”</p>
<p>Social Media</p>	<p>“It is vital that the residents of Torbay know what is happening and, more importantly, understand WHY it is happening. The fact of the matter is that so much of our lives is now undertaken via social media and digital platforms, so these portals are paramount to clear and concise communication.”</p> <p>“Not only social media, but reach out to those who are not "computer savvy"”</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>“I don’t believe it, just another paper exercise to make themselves feel good”</p> <p>“This is radical and long awaited”</p> <p>“Most Councils already do this why aren't you?”</p>
<p>Website</p>	<p>“Web sites are often confusing &amp; need to be easy to use. Not everyone has or uses a computer so leaflets &amp; personal contact remains very important.”</p> <p>“I am in agreement that the Council's website needs updating and could be more interactive.”</p>
<p>Listen</p>	<p>“It is crucial for the community to feel that the Council is listening to (not just 'hearing') concerns and, very importantly, prepared to act on them positively.”</p>
<p>Actions</p>	<p>“My comment is that actions speak louder than words, this sounds incredible.”</p>

## 2. Ask what you think

The Council pledges:

### Commitments

We will listen, understand, remember, evaluate and feedback to you. We will ensure that our consultation is based on genuine exchange of views that will influence decisions, policies or programmes of action.

### Actions

- We will agree with you on what we consult on the start of each year.
- The Cabinet will hold at least three Cabinet Conversations each year and will host an annual Community Conference.
- There will be regular Ask Us Events online or in venues across Torbay.

### How is important is this to you?

	Number	%
Not important	<5	~
Slightly important	8	5.0%
Important	23	14.3%
Quite important	40	24.8%
Very important	84	52.2%

### Your Comments and ideas.

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Listen to and hear the community / Don't ignore what is said	<p>"I am convinced that our views are frequently listened to and totally ignored when decisions are made."</p> <p>"Please listen to reasoned thoughts, not just those making the most noise"</p> <p>"Really? How does this reflect on the Neighbourhood Plan when you asked for views and opinions and then spent huge sums of money putting it together and ignored what the public wanted? Shameful- don't pay lip service to this and then ignore the answer just because it's inconvenient or not what you wanted to hear. Local councillors</p>

	<p>need to up their game and if they are not representing the community and their views move aside.”</p>
<p>Accessible engagement</p>	<p>“...Without a clear definition of the measurement of these actions it is impossible to see if this will be any better than what there has been before I suspect this will engage the vocal but minority of people who usually take part in such activity, but miss those who face barriers to community engagement”</p> <p>“Will the content and results of these Cabinet Conversations, and the Community Conference be available for everyone to view? Will there be language interpreters at the Conversations, Conferences and Events? Will the Conversations, Conferences and Events be held at a time outside of "normal" working hours so that people won't have to miss work and therefore lose money in order to attend?”</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>“The Council needs to stop doing ‘consultations’ that have such limited options that they are manipulating the answers people can give to suit the Council’s agenda. Staff need training in legitimate research methods, or outside consultants need to be used.”</p> <p>“Look after and maintain what's here at the moment, the shops, public buildings, parks. The beach and facilities are what attract the tourists which bring business to the area.”</p>
<p>Consult / Inform and Communicate</p>	<p>“Anything that can inform the community and get them to take an interest in the decision making process is definitely worthwhile.”</p> <p>“Interaction between the council and the public is essential, so that there is little or no misunderstandings between what the Council aim to do and what the public THINK that the council aim to do.”</p>
<p>Wider engagement</p>	<p>“The first community conference was oversubscribed - showing how important the community consider conversations and communication. More should have been done to facilitate a larger audience or break it down to smaller ward conferences to give local community the chance to make their points.”</p> <p>“It is important that this is meaningful and not limited to those who have the loudest voices or engage with existing forums. This is not representation, listening engagement. Going to meet people where they are and seeking views, especially those least likely to engage with existing and historical forums. As stated, while an improvement still starts with the premise that people will come to the Council on its</p>

	terms. Need broader approaches than this as well. Examples, attending where people congregate or street interactions in town centres.”
Feedback / Show Community influence	<p>“People like to feel they are listened to and that their views can make a real difference.”</p> <p>“The council asks the residents on different things but never get back to the residents of what has decided there hold all these meeting which we put our views what is important to us and the way we want the councillors to get back to us”</p>
Neighbourhood plans	“Your actions in the past do not reflect this. Especially as you have chosen not to observe the Neighbourhood plan. How is this being democratic? What right do you have to do this - ignore the people of Torbay? If Councillors do not listen to the local people they are not fit for their role. They need to resign. You may say you are going to do this but you are not. Shame on you all.”

### 3. Decide together

The Council pledges:

#### Commitments

We will ensure that people are given the opportunity to play an active role by shaping the future of services which may affect them and we will be realistic about our limitations and the need for the council to use reducing resources to best effect.

#### Actions

- We will increase opportunities for you to design services with us and to take responsibility where possible.
- We will provide feedback outlining how your contributions have influenced decisions.

## How is important is this to you?

	Number	%
Not important	<5	~
Slightly important	<5	~
Important	18	11.2%
Quite important	37	23.0%
Very important	94	58.4%

## Your Comments and ideas.

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Engagement with the community	<p>“I haven't seen any evidence of this up till now....there used to be customer panels who were asked their opinion on various aspects of council work -communications, letters forms, access to council services and service delivery.”</p> <p>“The Council needs to ensure that it engages with the community in its broadest sense (not just the loudest voices) and that it works up ideas and options with us, Presenting options which have been drawn up in isolation and then asking out opinion is not engagement or coproduction.”</p> <p>“This needs to be done in a fun, interactive way in order to engage and include as many people as possible. Workshops and vision events could be used. Also, building on the growing confidence with technology it could be good to use something like Zoom to increase participation and engagement.”</p>
Other	<p>“If this happens it will be an improvement on the present situation”</p> <p>“As always it will be a clique of people who get the benefits while having a good life at the taxpayers' expense”</p>
Listen to the community	<p>“Really listen to the public don't just be politically correct and simply ignore the individual Advertise what changes have been made. Explain simply why things cannot be done. Yes vulnerable need help but remember those who pay their council tax in full quietly year after year. Don't forget the quiet people over those who shout the loudest.”</p>

	<p>“We need the council to be more honest with the residents and share their views and then the public will have more to say we feel that we are not listened to and perhaps we will work with the council”</p>
Feedback	<p>“Feedback and reasons for why decisions have been made is important in helping to build an understanding and trust between the council and general public.”</p>
Work together	<p>“The Covid Helpline showed what can be achieved quickly and efficiently, utilising volunteers, with the statutory and voluntary sector working together. The Council's BAME Review is another good example of a proactive Council working with the community and with an elected member taking the lead. We are now hopefully looking at co-design and co-delivery in a new post-Covid and post-austerity Bay.”</p>
Support / Facilitate the Voluntary Sector	<p>“As Volunteers we seem to be bridging the gaps left by the long period of austerity. This now looks as if it will go on for a very long time. The services that affect the vulnerable women we meet are Mental Health, Housing, Homelessness. All need improvement and investment and I suspect encouragement.”</p>
Be honest	<p>“Feedback is important as is being honest and realistic when people will see the changes for themselves. If it will take 2-3 years, say so at the outset.”</p>
Service reduction	<p>“For this pledge to work it has to be more than just the public accepting joint responsibility for cuts and closures, it has to be about genuinely looking at different and innovative ways of achieving similar or better outcomes at reduced costs. The Council need to use the competitive nature of the voluntary sector to find alternative providers for services and outcomes that the Statutory sector can no longer provide at a good price.”</p>
Not clear how this will be achieved	<p>“Nice words but lacking on the "how"”</p>

## 4. Act together

The Council pledges:

### Commitments

We will encourage and support our communities in order to bring about positive change for the good of the whole area.

### Actions

- We will provide a senior officer to each neighbourhood to support councillors in delivering local solutions.
- We will work to engage young people in the work of the Council, including through schools, colleges and sports groups.
- We will strengthen the connections between housing providers and the community.
- We will support capacity building for key community groups and encourage community weekends, festivals and other events

### How is important is this to you?

	Number	%
Not important	8	5.0%
Slightly important	7	4.3%
Important	18	11.2%
Quite important	30	18.6%
Very important	90	55.9%

### Your Comments and ideas.

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Engagement / Involvement / Communication of information	“Having a point of contact that can effectively manage conversations and hold the process helps avoid delays and frustrations where misunderstandings arise.”  “There should be a commitment to Community Partnerships as these can offer an effective sounding ground and focus for actions and communications”

	<p>“Nice idea but I cannot see the community getting on bored with this one for a long time. They barely engage with the councillors and instead use them as council officials, and expect them to deal with anything from ASB, poor housing, parking problems, noisy neighbours, litter, dog poo and council tax bailiffs. It’s so hard to get a response from the council without their involvement in a cc email and I feel local communities do not always want to engage with councillors unless there is a problem....”</p>
Senior Officers	<p>“It will be good to have a person to speak with in our neighbourhood. Face to a name, and who takes responsibility for actions required, not just a nodding dog.”</p> <p>“Yet another layer of people getting huge salaries while doing next to nothing.”</p> <p>“I do not agree with a 'senior officer' to support councillors. It would be better if you provided them with funding for the ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE whilst in office and ask them to find their own officer/support staff. Otherwise you will end up like 'Yes Minister' and the voice of the electorate will be undermined by overpaid unaccountable bureaucrats.”</p>
Other	<p>“Very laudable aspirations, I really hope people will get on-board and help Torbay have a better future.”</p> <p>“It’s important that all Ages are represented and the needs of all are addressed”</p>
Community Groups	<p>“Ok Ja! Let’s have capacity building! Never mind the buses, bin collections, state of the roads... we have capacity building of community groups! Get to grips with what counts.”</p> <p>“Community groups and festival organisers have a wealth of information to input into plans, let's hope they engage....”</p>
Events	<p>“The children's week and sci fi day events are so vital to charities and so much fun. Red tape must be removed to enable these events to go ahead”</p> <p>“Does this mean the support of BMAD that early closed earlier this year despite attracting visitor £ to the Bay for many years and supporting local individuals in special needs?”</p>

Councillors	<p>“Support of Ward Councillors will provide more quality in contacts with our Ward Councillors and this seems important in the rather short communication line with them. However not all actions seems relevant.”</p> <p>“Does a paid councillor really need a senior officer for support? Isn't that just another level of authority to work through?”</p>
Young people	<p>“Engaging with, supporting, and encouraging the youth in the area to stay and develop a good career is the future of Torbay. Without this being a success we will continue to spiral into yet further decline. Communication with them, doing something that they can relate to, is vital so yes, festivals etc are a good idea. Make it happen.”</p> <p>“Community engagement should begin at school.....we need everyone to care about what happens.”</p>
Housing	<p>“...Housing providers should have a better connection with each other as well as with the Community. There should be a VCSE Housing Support partnership that is also able to feed into housing providers plans for housing and service design.....”</p>
Improve the local area	<p>“Spend time on bringing back the care and love of our buildings and gardens make us proud of the area once again”</p>

## 5. Support independent community initiatives

The Council pledges:

### Commitments

We will enable you to do what you want to do in your community, whilst maintaining a duty of care and our legal requirements.

### Actions

- We will work to establish a "space" - potentially as part of [www.torbaytogether.org.uk](http://www.torbaytogether.org.uk) - to celebrate success and connect like-minded individuals who want to improve their neighbourhood.
- We will establish a Community Enablement Fund to provide seed funding for community action.
- We will work with the Torbay Community Trust (TCDT), Torbay Community Builders and others to enable community action and support people who want to volunteer in Torbay.

- We will empower our staff to be more flexible and responsive in engaging with the public and communities, and encourage them to volunteer and share their expertise.

### How is important is this to you?

	Number	%
Not very important	6	3.7%
Slightly important	5	3.1%
Important	24	14.9%
Quite important	27	16.8%
Very important	90	55.9%

### Your Comments and ideas.

General Theme	Sample Extracts
Support / encourage / make it easier	<p>“As before, neighbourhood representatives or volunteers are usually busy people and just want to get on with what they are doing for the community not spending large amounts of time filling in forms and having to attend meetings.”</p> <p>“Volunteers are more important than ever now that there are so many cutbacks. Supporting volunteers, rather than putting obstacles in their way can only enable us to achieve more.”</p> <p>“As the Bay has a high percentage of people over 65 there should be more groups to encourage us to engage together and encourage friendships. I know 11 people this Christmas who will not see a soul and have had a difficult and lonely time this year. I work many hours as a volunteer for Rowcroft, the best decision I made when retiring here in 2010. This I think should be greatly encouraged in all areas of volunteering.”</p>
Other	<p>“Presumably there will be an overall plan and a priority assessment.”</p> <p>“Can't argue with the intent here”</p> <p>“Don't believe you”</p>
Work together	<p>“Council staff have skills we could use in the community if they were supported to volunteer e.g. IT skills that others could benefit from,</p>

mentoring and coaching in specialist areas. Use the workforce itself as a resource for the community so people can see the Council is part of the community rather than just people who sit in the Town Hall.”

“Great idea. Listening to local people, and educating staff to understand the services being delivered and why always helps. Communities are stronger when they work together, the outcomes and directions are clearer for a better future for the next generations.”

“Could this "space" be linked to libraries too?”

Finances / funding

“These sound like fantastic ideas, but I am pessimistic as to whether they can be achieved within strict financial constraints.”

Communication

“Communication is key - I'm sure there are lots of great people doing lots of great work but it is not always easy to find out about it or keep informed.”

## 6. Please could we take your postcode?

	Number
TQ1	44
TQ5	33
TQ2	31
TQ4	22
TQ3	18
Other areas	5

# Social Media Posts & Evaluation

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During the consultation, several social media posts were made on the Council's accounts.

Facebook posts reached 2,465 followers who engaged with the posts at total of 168 times.

Most of the comments were received via Facebook.

- I've filled in your survey but when an option is picked I highlighted all so you are not getting results
- Many people, myself included, feel extremely distant from Torbay Council, we're very much here to be ruled over and not worked with, I actually don't remember a time when there seemed to be such an obvious 'Us & Them' divide on most matters and that's a crying shame.
- The public consultation we had some time back regarding the new cycle path across roselands fields and cutting right through the heart of clennon valley lakes was a waste of time. The plans were already passed so it was just a paperwork exercise to just appease the public. All totally underhanded.
- I have been encouraged by your efforts. Good aspirations and I wish you well. Did you define any tangible outcome measures of success or have I missed them? P
- If you were listening to the residents of the bay, you would be looking at what's happened to union street and try to fix it. But you don't and you won't will you
- Have you re branded this campaign from the original how to make bame lives matter more in torbay??
- This is very good to hear and very positive. However, the proof will be in the pudding as they say.
- At least mistakes are being admitted, I won't hold my breath for people like mr Darling or Cowell to actually work with the local community anytime soon.
- What happened to the prioritising of people based on the colour of their skin.... Are Torbay Council deciding to represent everyone equally now.... The middle class Lib Dems won't be happy... Having to represent the working classes.....

As a result of the Twitter posts there were 1,193 impressions (people who saw the post) but only 12 engagements from a potential audience of 12,000 followers.

The aim of the consultation was to ensure that people were aware of the Draft Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy, and were encouraged to feedback about the how the Council intends to meet its mission to be a Council that works in partnership with its residents, communities and partnerships, to help shape the final version of the Strategy.

In addition to the social media posts promoting the consultation, Viewpoint Panel members were encouraged to take part via email. Torbay Community Development Trust promoted the consultation through their networks and received a larger response to their "light touch" survey. In total there were 217 responses to the surveys.