

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

11 May 2022

-: Present :-

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

Councillors Barrand, Brown, Bye (Vice-Chair), Mandy Darling, Loxton and Mills

(Also in attendance: Councillors Cowell, Chris Lewis and David Thomas)

52. Apologies

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

53. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 April 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

54. Turning the Tide on Poverty

The Director of Public Health presented the submitted report which provided an update on the actions arising from the workshops held around four inter-dependent themes, namely Best Start; Fair Employment; Ill Health Prevention; and Healthy Standards of Living which had been developed following the overview and scrutiny review on Turning the Tide on Poverty. The Director of Public Health and Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance responded to the following questions:

- What action was being taken to support people in villages who were cut off and do not have their own transport and may have limited access to bus services and need access to supermarkets and other services.
- What was being done to encourage people with limited income to change from shopping at expensive local convenience stores, having prepaid energy and not having access to lower rents and better banking opportunities.
- It was noted that Torbay was above average for numbers of people in rented and social accommodation but many private landlords were selling their properties. What was being done to address this to ensure that there were sufficient suitable properties for everyone in Torbay.

- What was the impact on one-third of children not ready for school and what was being done to address this.
- What was being done to raise awareness of the support and advocacy services available and how would we ensure that these were joined up.
- What were the intended timescales for implementation of the actions.
- What action was being taken to address the cost of living crisis.
- Was the Council applying for all appropriate grants to provide additional funding for projects within Torbay.
- What was being done to learn from community projects such as Making Melville Marvellous and roll out similar schemes and initiatives in other vulnerable communities.
- What action has been taken to support children who had become withdrawn or suffered with their mental health due to the impact on Covid-19.
- What was the length of time for referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). The Board agreed that this would be a topic for further discussion at the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board and requested that it be added to their work programme.
- Torbay Council has high suicide rates, what was the cause of this and what action was being taken to help reduce rates. Action: The Director of Public Health was requested to review the statistics around online use and the impact on mental health and wellbeing and share this with the Board. (It was noted suicide prevention would be explored in more detail at a future meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board.)
- What was the impact on crop spraying on people's health.
- How was ill health prevention going to improve as this has been a priority for a long time and it does not feel like it has been addressed sufficiently.

Resolved:

That the Cabinet be recommended:

1. that priority be given to identify and implement the actions which can be taken immediately to address the cost of living crisis with a specific emphasis on housing;
2. to ensure that the 13 priority actions set out in the submitted report are addressed within the following strategies and/or their associated actions plans and that a joined-up approach is taken where actions cross different key Council Strategies and Policies:
 - Economic Strategy;
 - Destination Management Plan;
 - Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
 - Children and Young People's Plan;
 - Corporate Parenting Strategy;
 - Children's Improvement Plan;

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Written Statement of Action; and
 - Housing Strategy.
3. to identify any additional resources required to take forward the 13 priority actions and to prioritise the actions and resources to implement the changes which can be made quickly and have positive outcomes for the benefit of those who need support the most; and
 4. to agree a timeline for delivery of all the actions.

Chairwoman