

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

15 March 2023

-: Present :-

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

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

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

39. Opening of meeting

Members observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect in memory of Councillor Jane Barnby, who sadly passed away on 26 February 2023. Councillor Barnby was a valued member of Overview and Scrutiny.

40. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrant and Kennedy and it was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Liberal Democrat Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillor Dudley in place of Councillor Atiya-Alla.

41. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

42. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Area Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services – Councillor Law, the Divisional Director for Education Learning and Skills – Rachael Williams and the Chief Nurse Officer from the Integrated Care Board presented the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Strategy which set out a shared vision that had been co-produced with SEND Family Voice, children, young people and partners centred around the following five key priority areas:

- Priority 1: SEND is everyone's business - embedding our values through education, health and social care, changing culture and reforming our workforce.
- Priority 2: Identify and act on children's needs at the earliest opportunity, through valuing lived experience and expertise.

- Priority 3: Understand the needs of our children, young people and families and make sure joint commissioning supports service delivery and we make best use of all resources.
- Priority 4: Make sure that all early years' providers and mainstream educational settings support an inclusive approach to education.
- Priority 5: Improve transition planning for young people moving into adulthood.

The Board asked the following questions:

- How do we ensure buy in from all schools.
- Would each school be required to sign up to the Strategy.
- What was being done to ensure identification of needs happens at an early stage and what was being done to ensure that those who had previously slipped through the system are supported later in their life.
- The date on the draft Strategy says 2022 should this be 2023.
- Have the views of young adults been taken into account in developing the Strategy.
- How was the Strategy going to be communicated with all partners, health, social care and education etc. to ensure that SEND is addressed across all partners and agencies.
- Did the Strategy cover helping people to access financial support and benefits such as Disability Living Allowance.
- How can the role of the community and voluntary sector be referenced more within the Strategy or emerging action plan.

Mike Cook, Imagine This Partnership and non-voting co-opted Member of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board took part in the discussions and supported the proposals put forward by the Board.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Cabinet be recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board supports the priorities in the draft Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Area Strategy subject to:

1. making clearer the work and engagement with the voluntary and community sector within Priority 1 and making sure this is also reflected in key performance indicators (KPIs) and Action Plan;
2. including a KPI as a measure to ensure all schools are signed up to delivering the Strategy to ensure a consistent offer to all children for SEND;
3. including a KPI around ensuring that social care and health is in place as well as educational support;
4. the Key Performance Indicators being reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board before they are finalised; and
5. performance against delivery of the Key Performance Indicators for the SEND Local Area Strategy to be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Board

annually so that they can see what a difference to people with SEND and their families has been made as a result of implementing the Strategy.

43. Torbay Place Leadership Board and the Torbay Story

The Leader of the Council – Councillor Steve Darling, Chair of the Torbay Place Leadership Board – Jim Parker and Torbay Place Manager – Mark Hammett gave a presentation on the Torbay Story and work of the Torbay Place Leadership Board which was a strategic partnership comprising key partners from the public, voluntary, community and business sectors. The aim of the Torbay Story was to promote Torbay as a place and encourage inward investment. Members noted that there were currently 1423 Torbay Champions and the aim was to encourage as many people in Torbay as possible to become champions. The role of the champions was to:

Promote
Learn
Advocate
Connect
Engage

More information on the Torbay Story and how to become a Torbay Champion can be found at <https://investintorbay.com/invest/torbays-story/>.

The Board was advised that Torbay had been named as one of 20 local authorities in the Government's Budget proposals for new Levelling Up Partnerships providing over £400m and bringing the collective power of Government to provide bespoke place-based regeneration in areas most in need of levelling up over 2023 and 2024-2025. This was an important opportunity for Torbay and the Director of Pride in Place and Chief Executive were working up proposals to see what opportunities there were to maximise this offer.

Members asked the following questions:

- What engagement has been carried out with young people and schools on the Torbay Story.
- How has the Torbay Story been promoted in the community.
- Have copies of the Torbay Story been shared with relevant organisations across Torbay to raise awareness and encourage wider engagement, including the Community Partnerships.
- Does the Torbay Place Leadership Board carry out the work previously done by the Local Strategic Partnership.
- How does the Torbay Place Leadership Board ensure day to day partnership working to deliver key outcomes.
- How could it be ensured that the Torbay Story is owned and led by younger people who were the future of Torbay.
- Torbay Hospital was one of our largest employers in Torbay - what was being done to ensure that we were getting the most out of funding opportunities for our hospital.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Torbay Place Leadership Board be requested to ensure that they engage with young people and encourage them to become an integral part in taking forward the Torbay Story.

44. Budget Monitoring Quarter 3 2022/2023

The Board considered and noted the submitted budget monitoring report which provided a high level budget summary of the Council's forecasted revenue and capital income and expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023. The report was based on figures as at the end of Quarter 3 which predicted a break even position by the end of the financial year.

The Deputy Leader of the Council – Councillor Cowell responded to the following questions:

- What was the reason for having the purchase of Union Square as Phase 1 of the project.
- What was the total budget for Torre Abbey.
- Would the additional funding for Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust ensure its stable future.
- What was being done to publicise non-commercial information in respect of our investment portfolio.
- What was the reason for the Polsham Centre Development scheme being cancelled (Note: it was agreed that a written response would be provided on this by the Divisional Director of Education, Learning and Skills).
- The totals for Capital Schemes had gone up by £43m, it would be helpful if future reports could include a column showing the original cost and date of a scheme and the next column showing the current scheme costs.
- What was the reason why there were no costs against Devolved Formula Capital and Education Review Projects.
- How does the Council balance its books regarding grants and borrowing and how long was the borrowing for.
- The Capital Budget contains 114 projects, how many would be delivered in the next five years and was there likely to be some abortive costs during that time.
- If the costs of a project increased after initial borrowing could the lender be approached with a view to borrowing more money.

The Board noted that this was the Director of Finance, Martin Phillip's last meeting before he retires and thanked him for all his hard work overseeing the Council's finances and reporting to the Board. Members also welcomed Malcolm Coe who had been appointed as the new Director of Finance.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Director of Finance be requested to ensure that future Budget Monitoring reports include a column within the Capital Plan appendix showing the original date of the scheme and amount and the second column to show the latest scheme cost.

45. Levelling Up Round 2 Outcome

The Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing – Councillor Long and the Director of Pride in Place – Alan Denby provided feedback on the Levelling Up Round 2 Bids which had been unsuccessful as set out in the submitted report. The Board noted that the submissions had been supported by our local Members of Parliament but a key factor in their rejection related to concerns over capacity to deliver the proposed projects. It was noted that discussions had also been held with key Civil Servants on the bids and it was expected that they would have raised concerns if the proposed bids did not meet the criteria. Prior to the meeting the Board received copies of the bid submissions. Members asked questions in relation to the following:

- How did the submissions fit into the three published criteria for bids.
- When will Government announce the criteria for Levelling Up Round 3.
- What was the reason for choosing the two projects when there were other projects in Torquay and Paignton that would have fit the published criteria.

The honesty and openness of the feedback was appreciated by Members of the Board which also highlighted where the Council was in terms of resources and insufficient capacity to deliver large capital projects, this had been picked up as an area of weakness previously by the Board.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Director of Pride in Place be requested to review the Levelling Up Round 3 criteria and ensure that the proposed submitted projects meet the criteria with focus on the poorest areas of Torbay.

Chairman/woman