

Record of Decisions

Coroners Service - Re-organisation

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 21 November 2023.

Decision

1. That Cabinet approve in principle the merger proposals, to the extent that the proposed changes are cost efficient and will not result in any increase in costs to the authority by way of its recharges; and
2. That the Director of Corporate Services be given delegated authority to progress re-organisation of the new combined service subject to 1. above.

Reason for the Decision

There are opportunities for economies with the merger (in our capacity as a recharge authority for the cost of the service affecting Torbay). The arrangements as to coroner posts and remuneration would be simplified as well as the potential for simplified contractual arrangements with suppliers and Service Level Agreements between the authorities in the delivery of the function. Furthermore, the bereaved in Torbay would also have the option to travel to Exeter rather than Plymouth to attend inquests.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 4 December 2023 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

Torbay Council, as a partner authority with Devon County Council and Plymouth City Council, intend to re-organise the Coroner's Service following the retirement of the Senior Coroner in March 2023, to the extent that the proposed changes are cost efficient and will not result in any increase in costs to the authority by way of its recharges. The re-organisation will also result in a new lead authority responsible for delivering the Coroners Service that affect Torbay and a new combined Coroner area for the County of Devon.

At the meeting Councillor Tyerman proposed and Councillor Billings seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

An alternative option would be to retain the current service arrangements. Whilst this option would result in no impact on or work required to alter the Coroner area, this would be contrary to the guidance of the Ministry of Justice to merge Coroner areas where this may be applicable. This option would not take advantage of potential efficiencies / economies that may also arise from a merger. Therefore, this option was discounted.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

Published

24 November 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet