

Record of Decisions

National Year of Reading 2026

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 17 February 2026.

Decision

That the Cabinet:

1. recognises the benefits of reading for educational attainment, wellbeing and social inclusion and declares its formal support for the National Year of Reading;
2. welcomes the campaign objectives and commits to working with Council partners including local libraries, schools, community groups, literacy organisations and businesses to promote reading across Torbay communities; and
3. request that the Director of Corporate Services completes the online pledge to start the actions that will be taken by the Council.

Reason for the Decision

The National Year of Reading 2026 had a simple but ambitious vision to (re)connect people of all ages with reading as a meaningful, modern, and social activity. Reading was not only a skill for school or work but a practice that brings relevance and joy to everyday life, connecting people with stories and ideas that reflect their cultures, interests, and needs. The ambition was that the National Year of Reading 2026 would make lasting change to the reading habits of the nation to reverse the decline in reading for pleasure and unlock one of the most powerful tools for equity and opportunity: a love of reading that lasts a lifetime.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 2 March 2026 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

The National Year of Reading 2026 had been commissioned by the government and designed as a private/public funded collective action campaign. It was part funded by the Department for Education, with additional funding and support from multi-sector partners including Arts Council England, Julia Rausing Trust, all major and independent book publishers and the Booksellers' Association, Amazon and Spotify, the National Year of Reading 2026 aims to change the nation's reading culture both during the Year and beyond.

As free to access community hubs, libraries were central in the National Year of Reading campaign to engage people of all ages with reading. The Reading Agency has been appointed to work with sector partners to deliver and support public library engagement. The Summer Reading Challenge, which encourages children aged 4 to 11 to keep reading during the summer holidays, and World Book Night, the annual celebration of reading for adults on 23 April, will form key moments for libraries in the National Year of Reading. Throughout the year, The Reading Agency will provide public libraries with resources, toolkits, and print and digital

materials to activate the National Year of Reading. As the statutory duty holder for the libraries service in Torbay, Torbay Council was supporting the National Year of Reading and Cabinet were asked to endorse the initiative, highlighting the opportunities to the public.

At the meeting Councillor Jackie Thomas proposed and Councillor Jackie Bye 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

There were no alternative options considered.

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

20 February 2026

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