

Budget Proposals 2014/15 and 2015/16: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - Acorn Centre Grant

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Executive Lead(s):	Cllr Robert Excell	Date:	6th February 2014

The council and its partners are facing a significant challenge in the savings it needs to make over the next couple of years. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed as a tool to enable business units to fully consider the impact of their proposals on the community. As a council we need to ensure that we are able to deliver the savings that we need to make while mitigating against any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups across our communities.

This EIA will evidence that the Council have fully considered the impact of the proposed changes and has carried out appropriate consultation on those changes with the key stakeholders. This EIA and the evidence provided within it will allow Councillors to make informed decisions as part of the decision-making process regarding the council's budget.

Executive Lead / Head Sign off:

Executive Lead(s)	Cllr Robert Excell	Executive Head:	Sue Cheriton
Date:	6th February 2014	Date:	6th February 2014

Summary from Overall Budget Proposals:

Proposals – Outline	Savings for 2014/15 and 2015/16		Implementation Cost <i>Include brief outline + year incurred</i>	Delivery <i>When will this proposal realise income / savings</i>	Risks / impact of proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential risks</i> • <i>Impact on community</i> • <i>Knock on impact to other agencies</i> • <i>If statutory service please state relevant legislation section and Act together with any statutory guidance issued.</i> 	Type of decision		
	Income £ 000's	Budget reduction £ 000's				Internal	Minor	Major
Acorn Centre Grant Cessation of funding	0	51,500	None	2015/16	<p>There is the potential risk that should the centre not source alternative funding services will be reduced at the centre.</p> <p>To mitigate against the reductions, the Council has established a reserve of £25,000 for the Acorn Centre, which can be drawn upon in 2015/16. This reserve has been established so as to provide additional funding to enable the Centre to move forward with its plans of increasing its revenue so as to alleviate the impact of the long term loss of the Council funding.</p>			X

Section 1: Purpose of the proposal/strategy/decision

No	Question	Details
1.	<p>Clearly set out the purpose of the proposal and what is the intended outcome.</p>	<p>The proposal will cease the grant paid to the Acorn Centre in 2015/16. This is a historic grant which has been paid at least for ten years and was originally for the Acorn Centre to provide a salary for the manager to ensure the venue could support predominantly sports use. This is significantly more than any other standard community centre grant aided in Torbay. Since the Acorn Centre was set up other departments have in the past also funded the centre including Children Services for specific services provided. This level of reduction may make the Acorn Centre less viable as a sports location in the future. They have been in receipt of lottery funding for sports facilities and any closure may affect this agreement.</p> <p>To assist the Acorn Centre having a sustainable future the authority are exploring the option to lease the outside sports pitches and car park to enable this to provide income to the centre. It is however recognised that in the short-term the income will be insufficient to replace the funding withdrawn on the grant.</p>
2.	<p>Who is intended to benefit / who will be affected?</p>	<p>This is a local facility for the Barton and Watcombe area – which are areas of deprivation. Local people could lose the facility if the grants removal made the centre unviable and as a result had to close. Local residents use the facility as a community space and for badminton/dry side sports. There is a car park which could be charged for by the centre to increase their revenue to support the loss of the grant. Some local agencies including Children Services use the centre for running sessions and activity programmes. These agencies could also be affected if the centre became unviable. If the centre closed then under the covenants and lease this would revert back to Torbay Council (as defined in the lease dated May 1965 with various additions in area leased in 11/1988, 1/1993 and 12/1999). The facilities were leased originally as a ‘youth club’ and support of young people still forms a key priority for the centre.</p>

Section 2: Equalities, Consultation and Engagement

Torbay Council has a moral obligation as well as a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The **Equalities, Consultation and Engagement** section ensures that, as a council, we take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty at an early stage and provide evidence to ensure that we fully consider the impact of our decisions/proposals on the Torbay community.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

No	Question	Details
3.	Have you considered the available evidence?	<p>There is little statistical analysis for the Acorn Centre held by the Council. They are not required to provide any performance data to show the use of or the outcomes of the activity taking place. Originally (from 1993) the Council ran the extension which was a designated sports hall, but this is now managed by the Acorn Centre itself.</p>
4.	How have you consulted on the proposal?	<p>There were two surveys undertaken as part of the consultation. The first comprised of a question within the general questionnaire, as to whether there was support for the ceasing of the grant to the Acorn Centre in 2015/16.</p> <p>A further online survey was made available, which was specifically relating to the Acorn Centre. Respondents were able to give their views on the budget proposal to reduce the grant to the Acorn Centre in the next financial year 2015/16 and it sought wider views on the development at the site or the leasing of additional facilities to help support the sustainability of the centre in the longer term.</p> <p>The consultation opened 11th December and closed on 16th January.</p> <p>Consultation also took place with the Chairman of the Acorn Centre through telephone discussions and both he and the Manager at the centre presented their views to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting for priorities and resources on this budget item.</p> <p><i>Please see appendix one for results from the consultation.</i></p>

No	Question	Details
5.	Outline the key findings	<p>For the first general survey on whether the public supported the proposal there were 409 responses. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 225 supported the proposal • 139 did not support the proposal • 45 did not give a response. <p>Comments that were received against the proposals fell into the following broad categories: That respondents believed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it was an essential community resource • That the centre supported an area of high deprivation • Provided facilities that supported health and sport agendas <p>On the second survey which included looking at alternative income streams through the leasing and developing the facilities, there were 239 in total responses. Consultees were asked whether they agreed with the proposal to cease the budget or not – 234 said they did not agree with the reduction and 4 said they did agree and 1 person gave no response.</p> <p>The majority of responses came from females (57.7%). The age groups were fairly spread with the least responses from those under 24 years and over 74 year of age. 33 of those who responded lived outside Torbay with the majority residing in Torquay postcode areas.</p> <p>For those who did not support the service reduction they identified the following reasons for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss to the Community (including youth from the local area) = 35 • Loss of the amenity and activities provided at the centre = 24 • Acorn Centre could not survive without grant aid = 11 • Financial implications (other) = 9 • Other = 4 <p>Additional questions were asked :</p> <p>Those who supported the proposal to transfer the sport fields and car parking to the Acorn Centre and further development of the facility:</p>

No	Question	Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 responded – YES to the question • 199 responded – NO to the question • 2 provided no response <p>For those who did not support the proposal identified the following as their reasoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who thought they could not make the income needed from other sources = 12 • Those who felt that Council should fund this facility = 8 • Other reasons = 19 <p>Consultees were asked for suggestions about ways they thought that could save money – the responses are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who felt that funding should be diverted from other areas of Council expenditure to support the Acorn Centre = 14 • Those who felt that it could be more commercially run to increase income = 16 • Save the money and support others = 6 • Other =12
6.	What amendments may be required as a result of the consultation?	There are no amendments required as a result of the outcome of consultation.

Positive and Negative Equality Impacts

No	Question	Details		
7.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people		Loss of sports, youth and community centre to their local area	
	People with caring responsibilities		Loss of facilities for local children who are in care	
	People with a disability		Loss of facilities for local disabled people	
	Women or men			No differential impact
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)			No differential impact
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No differential impact
	People who are transgendered			No differential impact
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No differential impact
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)		The loss of the centre if this was to be unviable would impact on a deprived area of Torbay. Those on low incomes due to cost of transport may not be able to access other facilities elsewhere.	
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the		The Barton area has higher deprivation level of inequalities for health and wellbeing. The loss of the centre if this	

No	Question	Details	
	population of Torbay)		became unviable would affect those living locally
8a.	Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)		
8b.	Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)		

Section 3: Mitigating action

No	Action	Details
9.	Summarise any negative impacts and how these will be managed?	There may be opportunities for other uses, better use of the café facilities and more commercial rates could be levied to improve the income of the centre. This would offset the implications of the reduction in Council funding. The leasing of the car park and sports fields could also provide additional income streams.

Section 4: Monitoring

No	Action	Details
10.	Outline plans to monitor the actual impact of your proposals	The impact will be monitored by regular meetings with the manager and the Chairman of the centre. A fast transfer of assets – sports fields and car park needs to take place to maximise the benefit to the centre.

Section 5: Recommended course of action –

No	Action	Outcome	Tick ✓	Reasons/justification for recommended action
11.	State a recommended course of action	Outcome 1: No major change required - EIA <i>has not identified any potential for adverse impact in relation to equalities and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken</i>		
		Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers – <i>Action to remove the barriers identified in relation to equalities have been taken or actions identified to better promote equality</i>		
		Outcome 3: Continue with proposal - Despite <i>having identified some <u>potential</u> for adverse impact / missed opportunities in relation to equalities or to promote equality. Full justification required, especially in relation to equalities, in line with the duty to have ‘due regard’.</i>	✓	Whilst there is some potential for adverse impact, in light of the savings that need to be identified by the Council, the Council has to prioritise its statutory responsibilities. This grant is not statutory. The impacts will be mitigated as far as possible by the Council working closely with the Acorn Centre to seek alternative income streams.
		Outcome 4: Stop and rethink – EIA has <i>identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination in relation to equalities or adverse impact has been identified</i>		

APPENDIX ONE:

Consultation Data: Acorn Centre Grant

1. Acorn Centre Service Users

1.1 Methodology

An online survey was developed to ask respondents their views on the budget proposal to reduce the Acorn Centre Grant by 100% (£50,300) in the financial year 2015/16.

The online survey opened 11th December 2013 with a closing date of 16th January 2014.

A total of 239 responses were received.

1.2 Results

The following tables show the consultation results of the online survey, for which the link was sent to the Acorn Centre who forwarded it to users of the service for a response. The responses have been grouped into themes with examples of any comments made.

The proposal is to cease funding of The Acorn Centre Community and Sports Centre in 2015/16. This is expected to save £50,300.

Q1. Do you support the proposed reduction to the Acorn centre Grant?

	Number	Percent
No	234	97.9%
Yes	4	1.7%
No response	1	0.4%
Total	239	100.0%

Q2. If you do not support the proposal, please tell us why.

Theme	Examples of comments
Community (35)	<i>"This centre provides and invaluable service to the whole community, it needs supporting for all the good work it does for all ages."</i>
	<i>"This is at the centre of the community they have been a massive support to myself and many others. It's all in the news about community spirit being non-existent and this is why the closure of so many local support networks. Keep children off the streets and many fantastic workshops and classes. A huge plus for a local community."</i>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>“Having to explain or justify the significant important social and community contribution such a centre makes is not only short sighted but extremely unfair and narrow in perspective. If we are to encourage and maintain a social inclusive policy that enables local people to work together and improve their health, education, community and environment then the amount of funding should be increased not reduced or cut completely. There is little doubt that such a small short term saving is nothing more than long term false economy which will have far reaching consequences not only in financial terms but in the negative impact to the overall quality of life for the whole community.”</i></p>
Activities/Amenity/ Service (24)	<p><i>“The Acorn Centre is a valuable source for education, sport and recreation in the Barton and Hele area of Torquay. Kids are always told they need to find somewhere to be to keep them off the streets and out of trouble and if the Acorn was to close, the streets are exactly where they would go. The amount of clubs and sports organisations that use the Centre would lose their training/meeting point.”</i></p>
	<p><i>“Lots of people use the Acorn Centre from the very young to the old. It has helped a lot of children who have problems not only in families but children with behaviour problems as well. Something going on all the time and you are always made welcome.”</i></p>
	<p><i>“The Acorn Centre provides an amazing cross-sectional facility. Such a wide range of different activities for all ages. I would have been totally stuck without the centre for childcare in the holidays. Both my boys loved it and the staff are all fantastically dedicated. I see it as an essential part of the community. To provide such opportunities for local children that they would be otherwise unable to obtain is priceless.”</i></p>
Support (11)	<p><i>“The reduction of grant support will not only impact on the loss of much needed community support but also mean likely loss of jobs for Acorn staff. The Acorn Centre sits within some of the most deprived wards in Torbay, Watcombe, Hele, Barton and supports thousands of individuals, most of which are on low income and rely on the support provided by the centre.”</i></p>
	<p><i>“It is a vital support to the community in Watcombe Barton and Hele. They have over a thousand people a week in and it's not just seen as a community centre. Are you cutting leisure centres budgets that probably don't do the work that Acorn Centre does? Probably not but this centre does more.”</i></p>
Financial (9)	<p><i>“The Centre needs longer to realise its ambitions to redevelop the buildings and increase its earned income. Tapering the grant would enable this to happen.”</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<i>"Because with the amount of cuts the council are making £50,300 is a drop in the ocean. Other job positions and funding allocation has been kept that I do not feel benefit Torbay as a community as much as The Acorn Centre does. Why not take the 50 thousand of Parkfield's budget as it is so massively under used for a building that size."</i>
Other (4)	<i>"Where will all the local children go?"</i>

To enable the Acorn Centre to become self funding, Torbay Council also propose to transfer the associated fields and car park areas under lease to the Acorn Centre.

Q3 Do you support the proposal to enable the Acorn Centre to become self funding?

	Number	Percent
No	199	83.3%
Yes	38	15.9%
No response	2	0.8%
Total	239	100.0%

Q4 If you do not support the proposal, please tell us why.

Theme	Examples of comments
Other (19)	<i>"Because your version of self funding isn't the right version. Help them with their new build so they can become a new greener, cleaner, self funding centre."</i> <i>"It would be heart breaking to think my children won't have this place to go to growing up, as I did when I was. It was great and is a place I still talk about with friends from years ago, Its memories. Please don't, it would be stupid!"</i>
Income Issues (12)	<i>"If they do go self funding it is possible that they may not survive and we would lose the most welcomed facility."</i> <i>"The Acorn Centre does not have the funds to provide the upkeep for the fields and car parks especially as the car parks need work."</i>
Council funding (8)	<i>"The council should fund local centres to help with keeping children off the streets, so they can have fun with friends, meet new friends, and build confidence and discipline."</i>

Q5 If you have any other suggestions about possible ways to save money for The Acorn Centre please tell us below:

Theme	Examples of comments
<p>Increase income (16)</p>	<p><i>“Use and run the building much more as a business to bring in revenue. Place community workers and support workers at the centre rather than in other offices so as they are in the heart of the community they are working in and more accessible. Much more partnership working with other agencies for example Play Torbay and people that actually have money. Review program and fill it up with activities that benefit everyone and that more internal funding can be accessed for. Do a needs analysis around the surrounding area to provide activities and support that people will want and use.”</i></p>
	<p><i>“Give them the freedom to tender for services. Ask them - surely those involved are in the best position to say.”</i></p>
<p>Divert Funding from elsewhere (14)</p>	<p><i>“Yes stop giving Tax payers money to businesses like Riviera Centre and give more to the Acorn which is a charity.”</i></p>
	<p><i>“Re-direct funds from non-essential projects.”</i></p>
<p>Other (12)</p>	<p><i>“Rather than take away the funding all together the council should continue to provide the funding and only consider reducing/removing it once the Acorn Centre IS self funding. The idea to transfer the fields and car park to the Acorn Centre is a good idea as this would help them increase their income and consequently improve the facilities for the communities use. Removing the funding in a big bang approach could result in the Acorn centre closing and that would be a great loss for Torbay.”</i></p>
	<p><i>“Invest more into the local community.”</i></p>
<p>Save money (6)</p>	<p><i>“There is a lot of smaller groups for children and the Acorn Centre is a lot bigger than most, maybe take the cuts from smaller groups and get other groups to work with the centre then instead of cutting all different groups, it's funding with just one big Acorn Centre which covers all aspects of family support already.”</i></p>

Q6 Are you male or female?

	Number	Percent
Male	97	40.6%
Female	138	57.7%
No response	4	1.7%
Total	239	100.0%

Q7 Which of the following age groups apply to you?

	Number	Percent
0 - 15	5	2.1%
16 - 24	15	6.3%
25 - 34	40	16.7%
35 - 44	52	21.8%
45 - 54	35	14.6%
55 - 64	51	21.3%
65 - 74	34	14.2%
75 - 84	6	2.5%
85 +	0	0.0%
No response	1	0.4%
Total	239	100.0%

Q8 What is your home postcode?

	Number	Percent
TQ2	95	39.7%
TQ1	60	25.1%
Outside of Torbay	33	13.8%
TQ3	24	10.0%
TQ4	6	2.5%
TQ4	5	2.1%
No response	16	6.7%
Total	239	100.0%

Q9 Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?

	Number	Percent
No	215	90.0%
Yes	15	6.3%
No response	9	3.8%
Total	239	100.0%

Q10 Please tell us how your disability affects you (*respondents could tick more than one answer*).

	Number	Percent
Mobility	11	47.8%
Another way	9	39.1%
Vision	2	8.7%
Hearing	1	4.3%
Total	23	100.0%

2. Mayor's Budget Consultation Results:

2.1 Methodology

A questionnaire was produced and was distributed, in hard copy, to all Connections offices and libraries – this was open to all members of the public to complete.

An online version was made available on the Torbay Council website on 22nd November. The questionnaire was advertised via posters and the local media. The survey had a closing date of 16th January 2014. A total of 409 responses have been received.

The following question was asked within this questionnaire regarding the Acorn Centre Proposal:

Acorn Centre Grant

The proposal is to cease funding of the Acorn Community and Sports Centre in 2015/16. This is expected to save £51,500 over two years.

Do you support this proposal?	Number	Percent
Yes	225	55.0
No	139	34.0
No response	45	10.8
Total	409	100.0

124 respondents made comments related to the proposal. These have been summarised into themes below:

Category	Examples of comments – where respondents said 'No' above
Essential community resource	<p><i>"This is important to the local community."</i></p> <p><i>"The Acorn Centre is one of the most active and progressive centres in the Bay, and has been providing valuable support to its local area for many years with the support of committed voluntary workers."</i></p> <p><i>"Young people in particular need sports venues and a community centre is vital for informal education and personal development and gives residents a sense of community."</i></p>

Category	Examples of comments – where respondents said ‘No’ above
Supports an area of high deprivation	<p><i>“The Acorn centre is a brilliant local resource in a highly deprived area.”</i></p> <p><i>“Provides a valuable service to an area of high deprivation.”</i></p> <p><i>“The service is highly valuable to people in one of our most deprived areas.”</i></p>
Health & sport	<p><i>“Community and sport needs more not less governmental support.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is little provision within this area for sporting activities.”</i></p>
Other	<p><i>“It could be reduced but not by as much. Does an important job.”</i></p>