

## **Notice of Motion - The Future for Torbay Council – Council 4 December 2014 (Mayoral)**

### **Council notes:**

- a) The ongoing reduction by the Government to the funding provided to support local services. Over the past four years the Council has made budget reductions of over £30 million with £14m planned for 2015/16. Although no figures have yet been announced for 2016/17, it is expected that the rate of annual reductions in local government funding will continue until 2020;
- b) That the Mayor has previously held discussions with other south west authorities about local government reorganisation in the south west;
- c) The strong and enthusiastic participation shown by the people of Scotland in a remarkable democratic process leading to the Referendum on 18 September 2014; and
- d) The resulting increased discussion on the devolution of powers from central government in Westminster and Whitehall.

### **Council believes:**

- 1. That the long term viability of the current structure and funding arrangements for Torbay Council is unstable due to the continuing financial constraints placed on it by central government;
- 2. That debates on the future of local government should be conducted in an open and transparent manner and led by our local communities;
- 3. That power should be devolved to the people in all parts of the United Kingdom;
- 4. That England is currently ruled by an over-centralised state that fails to reflect localities and regions; and
- 5. That concentrating more power to English MPs in Westminster is not the answer for English devolution and that passing power down to local areas of England is essential.

### **Council therefore calls for:**

- i) engagement in a continuing dialogue with our communities for what form of local government reorganisation will best ensure the long term sustainability for local services, which includes accountability and openness in local government; and
- (ii) Torbay's MPs, the Mayor and Group Leaders to lobby for urgent major devolution of power, including tax raising and spending, from central government to the regions, counties, boroughs and districts and cities of England.

And that such lobbying should emphasise:

- That the devolution of powers and finance to English Councils be carried out in ways that enhance and strengthen local democratic bodies. This must include agreement that it shall be for local people and communities to decide their form of democratic leadership without having a specific model imposed (for example directly elected Mayors) in return for more powers; and
- A recognition that English devolution must include both large cities and county areas, as the many Councils not within city regions must also gain greater powers and finance in order to build successful and prosperous futures.

Proposed by Councillor Darling

Seconded by Councillor Pountney