

## **Review of Priorities and Resources 2015/2016**

### **Report to the Mayor**

#### **January 2015**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Torbay Council agreed a set of savings proposals for 2015/2016 at its meeting in October 2014. Those agreed savings have been used to inform the proposed revenue budget for the Council for 2015/2016 the draft of which was published for consultation in November 2014.
- 1.2 Whilst the Priorities and Resources Review Panel met in September 2014 to consider the draft savings proposals, the Panel met again in January 2015 (in accordance with the Constitution) to discuss the draft budget focusing mainly on those issues that had either been allocated transitional funding to enable more detailed proposals to be developed or issues which had not been fully developed at the time that the savings proposals were agreed.
- 1.3 The Panel invited Executive Leads, Directors and Executive Heads to answer the Panel's questions and to discuss some of the outstanding issues relating to the agreed savings. The findings of the Panel were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 28 January 2015 at which the conclusions and recommendations were agreed.

#### **2. Library Services**

- 2.1 When Library Services were discussed in September 2014 there was a proposal to remove Churston Library from Torbay Council's library service provision with the possibility of the library being handed over to the community for future delivery. At that stage, the Priorities and Resources Review Panel felt that there was "a lack of information and detail in respect of the proposal" and that the "proposals were being rushed through without due thought or proper consideration of the concerns of the community". The Panel identified that there was a "window of opportunity to find different funding solutions".
- 2.2 Whilst the Panel, in September 2014, recommended that further transitional funding be applied towards the development of a community library at Churston, the Mayor removed this proposal from the savings proposals he presented to the Council and therefore no saving associated with Churston Library has been agreed by Council.
- 2.3 However, Torbay Council still faces significant financial pressures and the Panel sought clarification from the Executive Lead for Harbours, Culture and the Arts, the Director of Place and the Executive Head – Residents and Visitors on the work that was continuing on ensuring that Torbay has a "comprehensive and efficient library service" into the future. The Panel heard that discussions were continuing about developing shared services with other authorities and that the library management structure was being reshaped in line with the overall restructure of Residents and Visitor Services and the Place Directorate. The priority for 2015 would be to encourage volunteering within the Library Service as part of supporting opening hours. The Council would also be maximising the use of other funding streams both

within the public sector and the voluntary and third sector. The Executive Head also referred to the national Independent Library Report for England which had been commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

- 2.4 The Panel is concerned that there is a lack of a route map for the long term viability of the library service.

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.5 A strategy for the future of the library service be developed taking account of expected future usage and service delivery models be developed. Such a strategy should include linkages to the Ageing Well project being undertaken by the Community Development Trust together with a clear action plan of how the strategy will be implemented.
- 2.6 In developing the strategy, the Needs Assessment for Library Services should be reviewed to ensure that the Council fully understands the age profile of its current and future users and the current and future demand for the service.
- 2.7 The Council should acknowledge that the development of a shared service with Devon County Council is likely to be challenging and therefore other options for future service delivery need to be explored including the possible use of schools.

**3. Road Safety**

- 3.1 The impact of the agreed budget saving of £19,700 within road safety is that almost no road safety activity will be delivered in schools and within the community. Instead, most road safety education will be delivered online or using national campaigns. The Panel sought assurance from the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport, the Director of Place and the Executive Head – Residents and Visitor Services on what road safety work would be delivered and how the outcomes of the reduced service would be monitored.
- 3.2 It was confirmed that whilst social media would be utilised, direct intervention would cease. The road safety function was due to transfer to the Community Safety Business Unit as at 1 April 2015 and it was hoped that this would enable a more joined up approach given the reducing resources. However, it was acknowledged that the outcomes for children and young people would probably not be as effective as they had been in previous years.

**It is recommended that:**

- 3.3 The £19,700 budget saving be reinstated with, given the proposed move of the service to Community Safety, a proper assessment being made of whether the same outcomes as previous years can be achieved with a lower level of funding.
- 3.4 Regardless of where the function sits within the Authority, the Panel believe that there should remain a physical interface with the public and that options for sharing the delivery of road safety training with other local authorities or organisations such as RoSPA or the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

#### **4. CCTV**

- 4.1 £25,000 of transitional funding was applied to the CCTV budget for 2015/2016 to enable options for the future delivery of the service to be explored. The Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport, the Director of Place and the Executive Head – Community Safety explained to the Panel that further non-recurrent funding had been identified meaning that the a monitored CCTV service would continue to run for 2015/2016. Work had started on an options appraisal for the future of the service and this would be available in the summer. The Panel did, however, question what progress had been made in utilising volunteers as had been identified during the discussions on the savings proposals in September 2014.

##### **It is recommended that:**

- 4.2 A formal letter be sent to the Tourism and Retail Business Improvement District for inclusion of CCTV in ballot.
- 4.3 As part of the development of the options appraisal, proper consideration should be given to an invest-to-save project to take advantage of modern technology (such as wireless/wi-fi) to reduce costs and increase the commercial opportunities.
- 4.4 Given the assurances made in September, a clear timeline for training and using volunteers to supplement the service with an increase in pace should be developed.

#### **5. Connections**

- 5.1 The conclusions and recommendation from the Priorities and Resources Review in September 2014 in relation to Connections were:

*The Board feel that the proposals in respect of Connections should be deferred due to the lack of a robust business case and financial information especially in respect of the investment in new IT infrastructure and operational costs of running the remote locations and opportunity for income from the potential lease of the Torquay Connections Office. There was also insufficient evidence on the rationale for locating the centralized Connections Office in Paignton and that the benefits of co-locating or locating the Connections Office near to the Job Centre had not been fully explored, such as Torquay Library.*

*That the Mayor be recommended to remove Proposals 5 and 6 in respect of Connections from the savings proposals for 2015/16 until such time as a valid business case can be presented to Members.*

- 5.2 At Council in October 2015, the proposal for a centralised Connections office at Paignton Library and Information Centre was agreed but with £102,000 of transitional funding being applied in 2015/16 to enable further work to be undertaken to review the Connections operating model and having a centralised office.
- 5.3 The Panel questioned the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance, the Executive Director and the Executive Head – Information Services on the progress that had

been made in developing the business case for a centralised Connections office and how non-executive members would be involved in its future development.

- 5.4 The Panel noted that a report on the financial viability of centralising Connections in Paignton had been prepared for the Mayor for his consideration. In the meantime, the Council's website was being re-designed with online forms and back office processes being developed to improve the self-service offer.

**It is recommended that:**

- 5.5 As the Priorities and Resources Review Panel has had no further information on the proposal for a centralised Connections office since September, that the proposal cannot be supported.

**6. Car Parking**

- 6.1 The Panel sought the views of the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport, the Director of Place and the Executive Head – Tor Bay Harbour on the impact of the changed enforcement regime in respect of car parking in Torbay and the winter car parking promotions. The Panel heard that off-street and on-street car parking income was on track as per the agreed budget however the enforcement income was projected to have a shortfall of £291,000. £91,000 of this shortfall related to non-use of the camera car. A recovery plan was in place whereby £30,000 of additional income was planned to be clawed back through an increase in the number of enforcement officers. Income from the winter parking promotion was in line with last year and therefore on target.

**It is recommended that:**

- 6.2 The financial implications which result from in-year changes to policy decisions need to be articulated and understood by decision makers more clearly in the future.
- 6.3 A full review of on- and off-street (paid) car parking in Torbay be carried out including the associated issues for the Council, residents and visitors with all members being asked to input into the scope of the review. Such a review to gather the views of stakeholders.

**7. Adult Social Care**

- 7.1 The Director of Adults Social Services (together with colleagues from Torbay and Southern Devon Health and Care NHS Trust (the Care Trust)) presented the draft Annual Strategic Agreement (ASA) between the Council and the Care Trust which had been jointly developed with the South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The ASA set out a number of ambitious savings plans which, whilst still being developed in some cases, would be delivered during 2015/2016.
- 7.2 In addition, the Panel noted that the Council and the Care Trust were also working to ensure that both organisations met the requirements of the new Care Act which would come into force from April 2015. It was further noted that the acquisition process of the Care Trust by

the acute trust was also continuing with the Integrated Care Organisation hopefully in place shortly after the General and Local Elections in May 2015.

- 7.3 The Panel questioned the Director on the likelihood of achieving £1.566 million of savings which were identified as coming from “further joint working, share commissioning, new income and efficiencies to be explored with the NHS and others”. The Director explained that there was optimism locally that the health and social care system could be further transformed, especially through the Pioneer programme, that programme was over five years and, given the other pressures on the system and staff within the system, there was a risk that that saving would not be found (or fully found) within the coming financial year. The deliverability of any additional savings on top of the £1.566 million would also need to be considered.
- 7.4 It was also noted that, whilst there was confidence that part year savings associated with the proposal to move clients from residential homes to Extra Care Housing could be achieved, there was a high risk that the full year effect (£500,000) would not be achieved.

**It is recommended that:**

- 7.5 There is no viable solution to deliver saving proposal 15 – further joint working (£1,566,000) within 2015/2016 and there is a high level of risk associated with saving proposal 14 – Extra Care Housing (£500,000). Therefore these two items should be removed as savings proposals and the Council needs to consider how this gap will be met.
- 7.6 There is limited evidence of how the Integrated Care Organisation will be an “agent for change” that the Council needs it to be and a demonstration of how change will be achieved, from within the Business Case, is required.
- 7.7 The Director of Adult Social Services and the Executive Lead for Adults prepare a forward and structured plan for training volunteers in a manner that is appropriate to the level of skills that will be required for the tasks they will be undertaking.