



Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Wednesday, 25 January 2012

-: Present :-

Councillor Thomas (J) (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Bent, Butt, Darling (Vice-Chair), Kingscote, Parrott, Pentney and Pountney

(Also in attendance: Councillors Lewis, Tyerman, Davies, James, Stringer, Ellery, Morey, Cowell and Stockman)

503 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Penny Burnside (Co-optee)

504 Report on Budget Consultation / Impact Assessments

The Board received a presentation on the Consultation activity, highlighting the need for continued consultation on the Adult Social Care proposals, and the Board's role in monitoring this.

Resolved:

- 1) The Board recommends that Scrutiny be involved in the budget consultation from 2012/13 onwards.

505 Budget Recommendations Report

The Board received two representations from members of the public. The first regarding how the reduction in local housing allowance will affect older people with rents, rents cap is too low.

It was suggested that the Chair write to the Minister regarding the impact of this cut.

The second representation asking for the libraries budget cuts to be thought out more carefully.

The Board considered their recommendations to date and raised their concerns over the budget cuts for Adult Social Care and in particular these 8 points:

1. There has been incomplete consultation and recommended ongoing consultation be monitored to ensure that the potential impact on individual clients is understood and taken into account and followed through.
2. Inflation (Residential & Dom Care).
3. Cuts to back office totalling £500k, could delay delivery of other savings.

4. Annual Strategic Agreement still not agreed.
5. Negotiations over the budget are not entirely complete.
6. There is no budget contingency in place.
7. The ability to absorb this year's overspend.
8. The level of demand for the services.

Resolved:

The board have recommended that they bring their concern to the Mayor's attention.

The Board discussed the subsidy for the Riviera International Conference Centre (RICC). It was noted that the RICC should be provided with an incentive to find savings. More information was requested on the effects an100k cut would have on the centre.

It was requested for future meetings, Business Plans should be given to the Board to allow them to receive further details such as Business Plans for Museums, RICC etc.

It was noted that there is £900,000 volatile contingency which has been added to the Children's Services budget.

The Board suggested that the youth service outreach grant should be part of the overview and scrutiny board work programme for next year. The Board requested a breakdown of where young people are coming from to use Parkfield and that this should be monitored.

Changes to library opening hour's proposals were discussed; there were concerns about the impact on the community. The proposals were based on the consultation results, the board requested more information on this.

The Board questioned if the TOR2 partnership could be reduced but were told this would have to be looked at board level due to the contract we hold.

Members of the Board raised their concerns that the EDC have taken a significant cut and recommended the Mayor to investigate means of funding for employment and development opportunities in relation to the new link road.

It was noted that no Executive Leads or the Mayor was present at this meeting.

The Board considered the outline details setting out where the Supporting People budget is being spent and prioritised including the PLUSS contract. The Board wishes to engage positively with Supporting People and the contract to ensure that appropriate service provision can be maintained.

It was requested that the mayor reconsider the cuts to the out of hours emergency noise service be dropped and that a further sum be provided for a fit for purpose service with improved advertising and a more strategic approach.

It was suggested that all Members come to the Scrutiny Café to put forward their suggestions for next year's work programme.

The Board agreed the final recommendations will be presented to the Mayor:

- 1) The current one year approach to budget building and planning for future financial years was discussed. The Board recommend that the Council gives consideration to using 3 or even 4 year Business Plans, to include strategic and operational information.
- 2) That for future Overview & Scrutiny meetings more financial information should be provided, including business plans (where available).
- 3) The Board recommended that Scrutiny be involved in the budget consultation for 2012 onwards from February this year.

Children, Schools and Families

- 4) That the funding of £100,000 for the Early Years Service is not cut.
- 5) Whilst supporting the principle of increased voluntary sector involvement in delivering youth services the Board expressed concerns about how this would be delivered on the ground. The Board requested that this be monitored to enable it to review the effectiveness.
- 6) To ensure that the Strategic Lead post for teenage pregnancies remains until the Board are satisfied that there is no adverse impact on the work currently being carried out in this area.
- 7) For the Mayor ensure that the reduction in Attendance Improvement Officers does not take place until the Board can be assured that the "Schools Supporting Schools Programme" is in place and the removal of these posts will not have a negative impact.
- 8) The board requests assurance from the Mayor that income to be generated at Park field is not preventing young people from disadvantaged backgrounds from benefiting from these facilities.

Residents & Visitors Services:

- 9) That for future meetings Business Plans should be given to the Board to allow them to receive further details such as Business Plans for Museums, RICC etc.
- 10) That the Mayor considers inflationary issues relating to the TOR2 contract (currently use RPIX rates) and whether it would be possible for this to be more flexible and the partnership representative from the Council be asked to raise this with the TOR2 Board.

- 11) In the absence of some information the Board still have concerns about the impact that the libraries cuts will have on the community.

Business Services:

- 12) No recommendations made.

Finance:

- 13) That the RICC should provide Torbay Council with a subsidy reduction plan for the next 2/3 years once the new Board is established, and requested that the Chairman and Managing director meet with the Overview and Scrutiny Board Quarterly to report on progress in achieving the subsidy reduction plan

Information Services:

- 14) No recommendations have been made.

Commercial Services:

- 15) No recommendations have been made.

Economic Development Company (EDC):

- 16) Mayor to investigate means of funding for employment and development opportunities in relation to the new link road. (300k over 3 years from reserves).

Adult Social Care

- 17) The Board raised their concerns regarding the delivery of the Adult Social Care budget and in particular these 8 points:
1. There has been incomplete consultation and recommended ongoing consultation be monitored to ensure that the potential impact on individual clients is understood and taken into account and followed through
 2. Inflation (Residential & Dom Care)
 3. Cuts to back office totalling £500k, could delay delivery of other savings
 4. Annual Strategic Agreement still not agreed
 5. Negotiations over the budget are not entirely complete
 6. There is no budget contingency in place
 7. The ability to absorb this years overspend
 8. The level of demand for the services

The board have recommended that they bring their concern to the Mayors attention.

Supporting People:

- 18) The Board considered the outline details setting out were the Supporting People budget is being spent and prioritised including the PLUS contract and wishes to engage positively as a board to ensure that appropriate service provision can be maintained.

Harbours:

- 19) No recommendations made.

Spatial Planning & Waste:

- 20) That with regards to concessionary bus fares consideration be given to the knock on effect to other service areas (specifically the impact on Adult Social Care).

Community Engagement:

- 21) That the Mayor considers how much could be saved by disbanding the Torbay Strategic Partnership (TSP).

Community Safety:

- 22) That reconsideration be given to the proposed saving for the out of hours emergency noise service.
- 23) That a review of grants to community, voluntary sector organisations and all other bodies to be undertaken.
- 24) The mayor reconsider the cuts to the out of hours emergency noise service be dropped and that a further sum be provided for a fit for purpose service with improved advertising and a more strategic approach.

Capital Investment Plan 2012/13 to 2015/16

- 25) The Board encourages the Mayor to continue to dispose of appropriate assets bearing in mind those of negative value.
- 26) The agreed proposals for the Community Fund be implemented and outlined in the Capital Investment Plan.
- 27) The LABV is an opportunity to help the local authority in dealing with issues, need to ensure this project continues to progress.
- 28) Where prudential borrowing is proposed the key principles of what a strong business case should look like are developed and circulated.

Council Tax

- 29) The board support the decision to accept the Government's grant for ensuring a council tax freeze for 2012/13.

- 30) The board are concerned that the impact of future cuts included funding for the council tax freeze being available for 1 year only and recommends that the Mayor write to the Chancellor expressing these concerns.