

Meeting: Leader of the Council Decision

Date: On or around 19 May 2020

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Co-operative Councils Innovation Network

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? As soon as possible

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Christine Carter, Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, Christine.carter@torbay.gov.uk

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1. Proposal and Introduction

1.1 This report sets out a proposal for the Council to join the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network. The background on the Network and the benefits which the Council could gain from membership set outlined below.

2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments

2.1 Joining the Network would provide further support to the Council as it works to become better engaged with its communities and moves towards its ambition of being an enabling Council.

2.2 The proposals contained in this report will commit the Council financially in respect of:

£5490 per annum – subscription fee

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

(i) That Torbay Council becomes a member of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network.

Appendices

None

Background Documents

None

Section 1: Background Information

1.

What is the proposal / issue?

It is proposed that Torbay Council joins the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network for an annual subscription fee of £5490.

The network is a collaboration between local authorities who are committed to finding better ways of working for, and with, their local community. It is a non-party-political active hub for co-operative policy development, innovation and advocacy which is action-focused - a vehicle for helping councils translate co-operative policy and principles into practice.

The principles of the network are:

1. Social partnership
2. Democratic engagement
3. Co-production
4. Enterprise and social economy
6. Maximising social value
7. Community leadership and a new role for councillors
8. New models of meeting priority needs
9. Innovation
10. Learning

2.

What is the current situation?

The Council's Community and Corporate Plan sets out clearly that the Council will support, enable and empower its residents, communities and partnerships. We have committed to working differently:

- Changing the culture in the Council and its communities
- Building trusted relationships
- Improving communication; and
- Celebrating Torbay.

There is no fixed approach or methodology that we can use in order to become an 'Enabling Council'. Rather, the Council needs to set out a clear plan of how we will support local communities to do more for themselves, and have greater influence and control over their local environment and the services that are provided.

This plan will be developed through the refresh and adoption of our Communication, Engagement and Consultation Strategy. As part of the refresh the Strategy will be renamed and refocused as the Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy.

'Enabling' is not a political philosophy or set of legislative rights. It is about embedding a particular culture and approach to working with local people to deliver more with communities, and the best way to empower people is to

	<p>make the area where they live or work, into the place they want it to be - asking them what they want to do and helping them to achieve it.</p> <p>We have a number of tools that we can use in order to support this work including the already established Asset Based Community Development approach and the Place Standard Tool which can be used to help understand the issues which matter to individual communities.</p> <p>Working as part of the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network will provide us with additional support including an initial peer review to develop an action plan. Membership also includes attendance at their annual conference and within the member and officer networks which operate at both a national and regional level.</p> <p>Other opportunities will include positioning Torbay Council as an innovator, helping to influence policy thinking at a national level as well as being able to share examples of projects and initiatives, learning from others and co-producing tools and techniques to support the development of cooperative approaches.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>What options have been considered?</p> <p>As set out above, we are currently in the process of developing our Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy and a range of workstreams are already underway within the Council which aim to improve community engagement, enablement and empowerment. All of this work is being drawn together through the Our Community project within Council Redesign Programme.</p> <p>There are a number of tools available to the Council as we move towards our goal of being an enabling authorities. Membership of the Network would be a further tool and would help to increase our capacity to move forward.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>What is the relationship with the priorities within the Partnership Memorandum and the Council's Principles?</p> <p>Membership of the Network would support the Council's principle of enabling our communities.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>How does this proposal/issue contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?</p> <p>We would seek the support of the Network to ensure a co-operative approach to delivering our corporate parenting responsibilities.</p> <p>See case study from Salford: www.councils.coop/case-studies/route-29-supporting-young-people-salford/</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>How does this proposal/issue tackle poverty, deprivation and vulnerability?</p>

	<p>We would seek the support of the Network to ensure a co-operative approach to tackling poverty, deprivation and vulnerability.</p> <p>See case study from Plymouth: www.councils.coop/case-studies/four-greens-community-trust-plymouth/</p>
7.	<p>How does the proposal/issue impact on people with learning disabilities?</p> <p>We would seek the support of the Network to ensure a co-operative approach to tackling poverty, deprivation and vulnerability.</p> <p>See case study from Knowsley: www.councils.coop/case-studies/internships-knowsley/</p>
8.	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with? How will the Council engage with the community? How can the Council empower the community?</p> <p>The aim is for the whole community to be positively impacted by Torbay becoming an enabling council. However, the decision whether to join the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network does not need to be subject to consultation.</p>

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

9.	<p>What are the financial and legal implications?</p> <p>The annual subscription fee (based on the Council's revenue and capital budget and its population) is £5490.</p> <p>There are no legal implications.</p>
10.	<p>What are the risks?</p> <p>There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.</p>
11.	<p>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
12.	<p>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</p> <p>An initial discussion has taken place with the Membership Officer of the Network. This followed ongoing discussions which officers have been having with members of the Cabinet about how to move towards becoming an enabling council – as set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.</p>

13.	What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out? A positive discussion was held with the Membership Officer. This included discussing how any peer review could be undertaken and the action plan which would be developed thereafter. In addition, explanation was provided about the support which could be provided for specific projects – this year’s focus is on health and social care.
14.	Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions Not applicable.

Equality Impacts

15.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact	
Older or younger people	Through taking a co-operative approach, the aim would be to have a positive impact on this group of people.			
People with caring Responsibilities	As above			
People with a disability	As above			
Women or men	As above			
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>	As above			
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	As above			
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	As above			
People who are transgendered	As above			
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	As above			

	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	As above		
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	As above		
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	As above		
16.	Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	The co-operative approach would be used alongside other mechanisms for ensuring the Council enables and empowers its communities.		
17.	Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Not applicable.		