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Overview and Scrutiny
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Dear Member

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - WEDNESDAY, 13 APRIL 2016

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the Overview and Scrutiny Board to be held on Wednesday, 13 April 2016, the following reports which were circulated at the meeting.

Agenda No	Item	Page
5.	Consultation, Communication and Engagement Strategy	(Pages 2 - 3)
6.	Parking Strategy 2016-2021	(Pages 4 - 11)

Yours sincerely

Kate Spencer
Overview and Scrutiny Lead

Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Task-and-Finish Group

Issue	Membership of Task-and-Finish Group	Scope	Timescales
<p>Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy</p> <p>Issues Arising: The draft strategy is too high level and lacks any action plan.</p> <p>Communication: There does not appear to be a communication protocol between Partner agencies. Torbay Council website is not user friendly and could be used to greater effect.</p> <p>Consultation: There appears to be an inconsistent approach, across business units, to the chronology of the consultation process. (ie. at what point in the process is the decision made to consult and with whom?) There is no internal protocol between business units- as a result consultation documents are issued without being signed off by a central team. There is no protocol in place to keep Members and Officers informed well in advance of forthcoming issues.</p> <p>Engagement: As we no longer have a Viewpoint Panel or KPI's, we cannot measure the effectiveness of our engagement. TC is not communicating effectively the financial challenges ahead.</p>	<p>Councillors Bent (Lead) and Ellery</p>	<p>To review the draft Communication, Consultation and Engagement Strategy and provide feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>The major issue arising from this exercise is the lack of capacity in this Business Unit. This, potentially, has serious implications, not only to the reputation of the Council but also to the risk of a legal challenge, should processes not be followed correctly.</p> <p>Communications: Discuss with Partners (ICO in particular) having a joint protocol in place to ensure that all communications are joint where appropriate. Invest in TC website to make it more “user friendly” and use it more for informing and engaging with residents. Assess the cost of using existing posted communications to residents (ie.Council Tax) as an opportunity to include further literature (list of events etc).</p> <p>Consultation: All Consultation documents should be signed off by a central team. Discuss with Partners having a joint protocol in place to ensure that any proposed service changes are handled efficiently and sensitively. Part of any consultation on service change should be a risk assessment of the possibility of a legal challenge, if the process is not followed correctly.</p>

To have any credibility, we need to find a way of managing the public's expectation of the consultation process. At the moment, the perception is that it appears to be a "box ticking" exercise.

Engagement:

Consider having a limited number of residents KPI's, for example:

1. Residents "well informed"
2. Residents feel the Council provides "Value for Money."
3. Residents feel that the Council is "building a better Torbay"

Members should assist Officers in managing residents expectations about future service delivery.

There should be a Customer Service Training Programme for all public facing officers.

Investigate the feasibility of having an on-line e-View Point Panel using a dedicated website, social media etc.

As this is a Policy Framework document, the final draft should include an action plan(delivery plan) so that its effectiveness can be monitored.

Review of Parking

	Recommendation	Response from Task-and-Finish Group
1	Develop a single high level strategy for the delivery of parking services in Torbay with clear aims and objectives, which will form part of the Council's Policy Framework.	Agreed but that this should form of the overall Local Transport Plan Delivery Plan.
2	Create a single operational policy document and action plan that will deliver the agreed parking strategy and will include clear guidance and protocols to cover parking arrangements during events and parking for volunteers.	Agreed but that this should form of the overall Local Transport Plan Delivery Plan.
3	Off-street parking charges should be simplified and the classification of Beach, Leisure & Town Centre car parks should be replaced with either Long Stay or Short Stay.	Agreed in principle. Short stay should be a maximum of three hours.
4	A schedule of parking tariffs should be agreed that reflect the Council's need to grow income by 3% year on year. Consideration should be given to achieving income growth through increased use resulting from lower tariffs rather than simply increasing the charges.	This recommendation needs to be considered in light of legislation and guidance on the use of car parking income.

5	The policy of promotional winter parking charges should be continued between the beginning of November and the third week of March.	Agreed in principle but to be discussed further at a future task-and-finish group.
6	A selection of revised parking tariff options can be found in Appendix 3.	To be discussed at a future task-and-finish group.
7	All new ticket machines should provide a facility to input vehicle registration number details to avoid the transfer of tickets. The specification of all new machines will be reviewed to ensure that card payment options are available where needed.	Agreed.
8	Pay on Exit car parks are popular and consideration should be given to providing this option at other sites such as Brixham Central, Victoria, Sheddon Hill and Beacon Quay (middle deck).	Agreed in principle but to be discussed further at a future task-and-finish group.
9	Public awareness of the Park Mobile option should be improved through better promotional activity.	Agreed but recommend machines should take card payments and be upgraded as technology and funding becomes available.
10	The charges for reserved parking bays should be set on an area-by-area basis to reflect supply and demand.	Agreed.
11	The 10% discount for vehicles in Vehicle Excise Duty Bands A, B and C be discontinued.	Agreed.

12	A selection of revised parking permit tariff options can be found in Appendix 4.	To be discussed at a future task-and-finish group.
13	The Executive Head of Business Services should review the points of sale for parking permits, where commission is paid to third party operators, so as to maximise the Council's income.	Agreed.
14	Monthly permits should be discontinued once the Direct Debit option is available with weekly or 3-day permits serving the visitor market.	Agreed.
15	Parking Services should consult with tourism industry leaders to keep under review the parking needs of visitors and the availability of suitable parking permits.	Agreed.
16	Only one vehicle registration number to be allowed on any permits and an administration fee to be charged to change any details on a permit.	Agreed.
17	The Executive Head of Business Services will review the options to deliver a more efficient parking permit system, including the potential for shared services and the use of smarter technology.	Agreed.

18	In addition, Torbay should continue to work with neighbouring local authorities to undertake joint tendering and procurement of parking systems, equipment and other appropriate acquisitions.	Agreed.
19	The Executive Head of Business Services will implement different marketing techniques, including the use of social media, to promote the availability of different parking permits in Torbay.	Agreed.
20	Consideration should be given to investment in vehicle branding and advertisement to promote a positive message of the parking service as a whole (including parking enforcement).	Agreed.
21	The Executive Head of Business Services should work with other parking providers within Torbay to explore the opportunity to introduce an integrated/transferable car park pass.	Agree but this is likely to be difficult to deliver.
22	The existing 3-day permit be amended to allow it to be used on three non-consecutive days.	To be discussed at a future task-and-finish group.

23	The Council should become more commercially astute with the online sales of parking services. Available services should be easy to identify and to understand. The tariff system needs to be straightforward and the website functionality should facilitate quick payment options with the ability to follow up active interest by capturing data in the early stages of any online enquiry.	Agreed.
24	The Council should introduce the direct debit option as soon as possible to allow customers to pay for annual permits and spread their costs. A small surcharge should be applicable for this service.	Customer to be given the choice of whether monthly or quarterly and recommend no charge should be administered.
25	The Council should set aside funding to tackle the priority repairs within car parks and embark on a programme of investment in key areas such as painting, lighting, upgraded ticket machines and line marking where appropriate to ensure that the offer remains both safe and attractive.	Maintenance program to be set with time scales commencing with the most utilised car parks in order to ensure first impressions are welcoming. Together with implementation of new signage which clearly define long and short stay car parks. Further, we recommend the introduction of Picnic Areas at the edge of car parks near Beaches and in the Countryside to improve the offer.
26	The signage at all car parks needs to be simplified and refreshed as soon as possible. In particular the backboards behind the ticket machines represent the point of sale and they need to be both informative and attractive so that the service is seen to represent value for money.	Agreed. See comments in relation to 25 above.

27	The Executive Head of Business Services should cancel the Council's membership of the Park Mark® Safer Parking Scheme as a budget saving measure.	Agreed
28	The Executive Head of Business Services should explore all opportunities for further income generation within the Council's car parks as part of wider holistic approach to identifying new income streams.	Agreed.
29	Kilmorie, Meadfoot Beach and Torre Valley car parks earn very little income and could be considered surplus to service requirements. The Council should consider alternative and/or additional use of these assets to maximise potential income.	Maybe lease rather than sell in the first instance. Business case to be made and each to be judged on its own merit, this should include usage and revenue in both summer and winter seasons.
30	The existing coach parking spaces in Sheddon Hill car park should be removed and converted to car parking bays so as to maximise income to the Council.	Agreed given the coach spaces at Lymington Road.
31	The Executive Head of Business Services should review all of the on-street parking meter sites that were not pursued and also identify any new locations. If appropriate and subject to any necessary consultation, additional on-street parking meter sites should be implemented.	Recommend this should be fully costed and only if it demonstrates a good income stream should it be implemented especially where there are already difficulties with on street parking. There should be consultation with Ward Councillors, Community Partnerships Town Council and Businesses. To be discussed further at a future task-and-finish group.

32	The reasons for closing the Eastern Esplanade during the summer months have been reviewed and it is recommended that this entire site should remain open for parking.	<p>Recommend that the safety issues and the reason for not previously opening the Esplanade in the summer needs to be assessed before any decision is mad.</p> <p>To be discussed further at a future task-and-finish group.</p>
33	Paignton Community Partnership should be consulted on a proposal to change the status of the Eastern Esplanade at Paignton such that it is no longer classified as a highway.	See comments in relation to 32 above.
34	A mobile camera enforcement vehicle should be reintroduced in Torbay to improve road safety for children outside school entrances and to reduce the road safety risks presented to public transport users. Strict operating procedures should be applied to any mobile camera enforcement vehicle to ensure that the law abiding motorist is not penalised.	Agreed.
35	Existing arrangements and future options for a Park & Ride facility at Brixham should be reviewed given the uncertain future of the Brixham Central car park and the intended strategic land use of Freshwater Quarry and Oxen Cove.	<p>Priority should be given for a Council run Park and Ride Scheme for the Summer months to be piloted.</p> <p>Recommend investigation in to wider Park and Ride Strategy for Torbay.</p>

36	A set of revised criteria should be introduced to cover the promotion and implementation of a CPZ (including Residents Parking bays). The Council needs to properly manage the realistic expectations of residents who do not benefit from their own off-street parking. Controlled Parking Zones should only be recommended for implementation by professional Council officers. Charging for CPZ parking permits should reflect the whole life cost of any scheme and should aim for full cost recovery (administration, design (including any costs where works may be undertaken by a third party), signs, lines, enforcement, etc.)	<p>Recommend that where CPZs are to be removed or new ones implemented that consultation with Ward Councillors, Community Partnerships, Town Council and Police take place.</p> <p>That an assessment is undertaken of Parking Spaces marked as Disabled Parking in residential areas take place in order to ascertain whether they are still required, especially in areas where parking is limited.</p> <p>To be discussed further at a future task-and-finish group.</p>
37	All existing CPZs should be reviewed and any inappropriate schemes should be revoked.	See comments in relation to 36 above.

Additional recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board:

When Harbour Estates are going to implement changes which effect the existing restrictions on the Highways consultation should be undertaken with Ward Councillors, Town Council, Community Partnerships and Businesses to ensure that issues can be resolved prior to actions being taken. No decision relating to changes in parking should be taken in isolation as per government legislation.

Permits should be better promoted with a new Marketing Strategy.