

Tuesday, 1 November 2022

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Board** will be held on

**Wednesday, 9 November 2022**

commencing at **5.30 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Meadfoot Room, Town Hall, Castle Circus,  
Torquay, TQ1 3DR

**Members of the Committee**

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

Councillor Atiya-Alla

Councillor Johns

Councillor Barrand

Councillor Kennedy

Councillor Brown

Councillor Loxton

Councillor Bye (Vice-Chair)

Councillor David Thomas

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**Together Torbay will thrive**

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**Teresa Buckley, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR**

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# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD AGENDA

1. **Apologies**  
To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.
2. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 9)  
To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 12 and 25 October 2022.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
  - a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda  
  
**For reference:** Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.
  - b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda  
  
**For reference:** Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.  
  
**(Please Note:** If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)
4. **Urgent Items**  
To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.
5. **Draft Housing Strategy** (Pages 10 - 24)  
To review the draft Housing Strategy (Policy Framework) and make recommendations to the Cabinet.  
  
To also receive any feedback from Housing Crisis Review Panel meeting held on 25 October 2022 on the Strategy.
6. **Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy** (Pages 25 - 48)  
To review the draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy (Policy Framework) and make recommendations to the Cabinet.
7. **Budget Monitoring Quarter 2 2022 - 2023** (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider and make any recommendations to the Cabinet on Budget Monitoring for Quarter 2 2022 - 2023.

The Board to receive briefings from Officers on the projected overspend/issues in respect of the following areas:

- Adult Social Care and Housing
- Children's Services
- Customer Relationship Management System
- Business Improvement Team
- Corporate Services and Executive
- Place Operations/Commissioned

**Meeting Attendance**

Please note that whilst the Council is no longer implementing Covid-19 secure arrangements attendees are encouraged to sit with space in between other people. Windows will be kept open to ensure good ventilation and therefore attendees are recommended to wear suitable clothing.

If you have symptoms, including runny nose, sore throat, fever, new continuous cough and loss of taste and smell please do not come to the meeting.

## **Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board**

**12 October 2022**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

Councillors Atiya-Alla, Barrant, Bye (Vice-Chair), Johns, Kennedy and Chris Lewis

(Also in attendance: Councillors Foster, Cowell, Long and David Thomas)

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### **14. Apologies**

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group and the Independent Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillors Chris Lewis, Ellery and Mills in place of Councillors Barnby, Brown and Loxton respectively.

### **15. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

### **16. Delivery of Capital Projects**

The Board received a dashboard which set out a summary of the progress of 70 Capital Projects within the Council's approved Capital Programme. The projects were all at different phases and with four of the projects due to be considered at the Council meeting on 13 October 2022 where Members were asked to approve additional funding in order for the Council to progress those projects. It was noted that, whilst the Council was being asked to approve additional borrowing, due to the Council's cash reserves it was anticipated that the Council would need to start borrowing next Summer when it was hoped that the financial markets would be more stable and the Section 151 Officer would look at the market to secure the most favourable borrowing rates available at that time.

Members undertook a detailed review into the following projects to understand the likelihood of delivery, any risks and barriers to delivering the projects within budget and on time (e.g. increased costs, supplier or contractor issues), what ongoing discussions were being held with suppliers and contractors and what alternative options had been considered including stopping the project or delivering it in a different way:

- Nightingale Park

- Old Toll House
- Crossways
- Torre Valley North
- Edginswell
- Claylands Cross
- Preston Down Road
- Harbour View

Members acknowledged that further decisions would need to be made on the other projects as they were developed due to the change in circumstances of the markets and increases in costs for Members to determine, once they had up to date costs and business cases, whether or not to proceed on a case by case basis.

Members requested the Director of Place provide further information to the Board on the details of the long stop and termination agreement for the Old Toll House.

The Board recognised the importance of timely communication and engagement on projects and requested that the Director of Place ensured that this was carried out on the capital projects with all Councillors and the community on a regular basis.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Council be recommended to defer consideration of the revised Officer Recommendation in respect of the Harbour View project for further information as detailed in the exempt appendix to these minutes and the Directors of Place and Finance be requested to report the further information to an additional Overview and Scrutiny Board and Extraordinary Council, both meetings to be held by the end of October 2022;
2. that the Head of Legal Services be invited to a future meeting of the Board to consider the inclusion or not of termination provisions in contracts going forward; and
3. that, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board be requested to consider which capital projects they would like to undertake a detailed review upon on at its meeting on 11 January 2023 and that Officers be requested to present key projects to the Overview and Scrutiny prior to Cabinet/Council, where possible, and that the Democratic Services Team Leader be requested to add reviews of capital projects to the Work Programme on a quarterly basis.

(Note: prior to discussion of the Preston Down Road and Harbour View projects the press and public were excluded from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information (as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) was likely to be disclosed.)

## **17. 2022/2023 Budget Pressures Review**

The Board considered the draft Report of the 2022/2023 Budget Pressures Review Panel and the report of the Chief Executive on Governance Oversight of the Capital Spend which the Chief Executive, Anne-Marie Bond, outlined at the meeting. This

report outlined an option that would see the set up of a cross party Cabinet Capital Contingency Fund Working Party (comprising five Members politically balanced, to include the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council) to enable wider consultation in the decision making for the allocation of the Capital Contingency Fund than was proposed in the report to Council which delegated the decision to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Group Leader. The report also suggested a programmed and manageable approach to the wide breadth of matters identified for Overview and Scrutiny and linking these to existing elements already included on the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme, so the Board would have more information from which to decide how they wish to undertake their oversight and scrutiny role.

Resolved:

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board supports the creation of a cross-party Cabinet Capital Contingency Fund Working Party to give transparency and accountability for delegated decisions on the Capital Contingency Fund, to enable cross party oversight whilst also ensuring that the projects progress expediently and use officer resources efficiently;
2. that, it be noted that the Board has received an overview presentation on the Capital Programme and discussed projects of concern in greater detail (including excluding the press and public where needed). The Board has already determined their approach to oversight of the Capital Programme following that discussion (see Minute 16);
3. that the Board noted that it is programmed to review both the Housing Strategy and the TorVista Business Case. The Board are therefore recommended to determine their approach to oversight of housing projects following these discussions;
4. that the Board adds a review of the Council's Investment Properties to its Work Programme at the earliest opportunity, to enable a substantive overview of these properties, and following that overview to determine their approach to continuing oversight of these properties; and
5. that the following recommendations of the 2022/23 Budget Pressures Review Panel be adopted:
  1. that the proposal to approve that the TorVista Homes working capital facility be increased from £1.0m to £1.5m be supported; and
  2. the Interim Report on 2022/2023 Budget Pressures Review in respect of the Capital Budget be updated with the Board's response (as above) and forwarded to the Cabinet/Council on 13 October 2022.

(Note: during consideration of Minute 17, in accordance with Standing Order – Council Meetings A12, Members resolved to continue beyond four hours to consider the 2022/2023 Budget Pressures Review Report as the report was due to be considered at the Cabinet/Council meetings on 13 October 2022.)

Chairwoman

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## **Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board**

**25 October 2022**

**-: Present :-**

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar (Chairwoman)

Councillors Atiya-Alla, Barrand, Bye (Vice-Chair), Ellery, Johns, Kennedy and Chris Lewis

(Also in attendance: Councillors Cowell, Mandy Darling, Steve Darling and Long)

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### **18. Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brown and it was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group and Independent Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillors Chris Lewis and Ellery in place of Councillors Barnby and Loxton respectively.

### **19. Capital Projects Additional Funding**

At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 12 October 2022 (Minute 16.10.22 refers) the Board resolved that the Council be recommended to defer consideration of the revised Officer Recommendation in respect of the Harbour View project for further information as detailed in the exempt appendix to the Minutes and requested the Directors of Place and Finance report the further information to an additional Overview and Scrutiny Board and Extraordinary Council by the end of October 2022. Members considered the submitted report which provided the further information requested in respect of the Harbour View Project (exempt) and details of a proposed increase to the capital contingency budget by £1.4m to a total of £5.4m to be funded from prudential borrowing.

Members noted that the Capital and Growth Board were undertaking a review of all capital projects and officers were also reviewing the reporting mechanism (including to the Overview and Scrutiny Board) on capital spend to provide a more rigorous approach in light of increasing cost pressures.

Resolved:

That the Council be recommended:

1. that the capital contingency budget be increased by £1.4m to a total of £5.4m to be funded from prudential borrowing, with the allocation of the same to be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Capital Contingency Fund Working Party be approved. In increasing the capital

contingency budget Council recognise that the increased costs of schemes may mean that the revised total scheme costs would be outside of the thresholds set for the Economic Growth Fund at the time of approval;

2. that, an additional £6.6m, to be funded from prudential borrowing, be allocated to the Harbour View project; and
3. that the additional ongoing annual cost (approximately £0.6m) for the additional £8m borrowing in recommendation 1 and 2 above be included in future year budgets.

(Note: during consideration of the item in Minute 19, the press and public were excluded from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information (as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) was likely to be disclosed in respect of the Harbour View project and Board then returned to public session to make their recommendation.)

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Chairwoman

# DRAFT Housing Strategy

2022-2030

## **Adding an image**

- Open this template in the desktop version of Word,
- Double click the top of the page to access the 'header and footer section
- Select a suitable photograph - contact the design team for access to the photo library. No clip art please!
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# Introduction

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A home is special to everyone and directly contributes to good health, wellbeing, and life achievement. Having a place to call home is one of life's main goals. It offers warmth and shelter; and is the place where we feel safe, and secure; a place to shape family.

Known as the English Riviera, Torbay comprises of three towns: Torquay, Paignton, and Brixham. Torbay has a population of c. 135,000 and has an increasingly skilled workforce; increasing numbers of small and micro businesses; and a large catchment population. The recent investment in the A380 South Devon link road, directly connecting Torbay with the M5 at Exeter, has significantly reduced travel times locally and regionally making the Torbay area an increasingly attractive place to live and work.

It is a place of huge ambition, and we want it to be the best place for children to grow, for people to live and work and for residents to fulfil their ambitions today and for many years to come.

However, Torbay is facing a housing crisis. There is a shortage of new housing supply and particularly affordable housing.

This strategy sets the vision and approach we will take through our leadership; and by working with partners to 'improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing'.

We have the foundations in place to build more affordable homes through our urban and town regeneration plans; our housing company TorVista and the Torbay Strategic Housing Board.

By working with our partners, we will achieve more, giving more families a home and more children the best possible start in life.

We will prioritise brownfield locations in our towns to reduce the impact on the climate and endeavour to protect our natural environment. We will create jobs and investment to support inclusive economic growth and make safe homes for residents and their families.

Whilst the council and its partners face many significant challenges, we are determined to provide appropriate and affordable homes, particularly for those with the greatest need.

Separate to this Housing Strategy an Action Plan will be developed to deliver our vision for housing in Torbay. The Action Plan will be an agile document, which we will use to monitor progress and it will be overseen by a cross-directorate Housing Delivery Group.

# External influences and local issues

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## Housing needs

Housing needs for Torbay have been objectively assessed in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework guidance, which, taking into account local policy added targets for employment growth, estimate that 615 new homes are required to be provided per year over the Local Plan period. However, as part of the Examination of the Torbay Local Plan, this figure was reduced to 495 homes per year to reflect environmental constraints in Torbay.

Consequently, the adopted Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 identifies land for the delivery of around 8,900 new homes over the plan period and we are reviewing our current Local Plan.

## Our housing ambition

A balanced housing market is essential to sustainable communities, but this will not be achieved without the right level of new housing development, across all tenures. As well as providing desperately needed new homes, house building also delivers substantial benefits and better facilities for the wider community. The affordability and environmental sustainability of homes will be crucial factors in getting the balance right between homes, jobs, the green environment and protecting the climate.

We already know from our community led neighbourhood plans, that protecting the natural environment of Torbay is a priority; along with providing more affordable homes; reducing the impact of climate change and creating a sustainable economy. It will be necessary to strike a balance between competing priorities.

There is little appetite for green field development despite the level of additional homes required. So, we need to be bold, innovative, creative, and sensitive in the delivery of those additional homes.

## The economic challenge

The current economic backdrop provides challenges for us all, including housebuilders and registered providers.

The English Riviera Destination management plan 2022-2030 to make Torbay the UK's premier visitor destination and help boost the local economy was approved at Council in August 2022. The new plan sets out the interventions that can help propel the English Riviera forward, building on the strengths of the destination and the opportunities to achieve a more sustainable and resilient destination.

There has been a huge increase in demand for available properties, both rented and for home ownership. This has pushed up local prices and rents, making it much more difficult for households to afford. Rents are now well above the Housing Benefit rates, and we are seeing an increasing number of households at risk of homelessness.

Families on Housing Benefit struggling due to the mismatch with private rents and the Council continues to lobby government on Local Housing Allowance rates to reflect the challenging rental market specific to Torbay.

Additionally, since the energy price cap was lifted at the beginning of 2022, we have seen heating and electricity costs rise by over 50%, which has come alongside increases in the cost of food, taxes and other everyday expenses.<sup>1</sup>

## Strengths, challenges, and opportunities

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### Strengths

The council has put the foundations in place to kick start delivery of affordable homes in Torbay, as set out in our **Community and Corporate Plan** objective to **'Improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing'**

We will ensure we put our residents and clients first; we continue to tackle climate change and we work in partnership to achieve better outcomes. We will focus on preventing and alleviating homelessness and we will continue to do everything we can to make sure our residents are treated fairly.

We are taking action to improve supply:

- Through the Torbay master plan for town centre and waterfront regeneration to support sustainable, residential communities
- The refreshed English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022-2030 to make Torbay the UK's premier visitor destination and help boost the local economy
- Progressing sites and regeneration identified in the Local Plan growth areas
- Delivering 100+ new homes (maximising affordable homes) on the Preston Down Road site
- Seeking a Strategic Partner to deliver more affordable homes on small challenging sites
- Purchasing up to 37 homes to meet current demand for family Temporary Accommodation (TA), with the option to use these homes for longer term affordable rentals as we tackle and reduce the need for TA
- Delivering new homes through modern construction; such as Modular build pilots currently under consideration for two sites.
- Commissioning two Extra Care homes of 150 units to meet future older people supported housing need
- Investing in property to increase the supply of social rent homes in Torbay.
- By adopting an Empty Homes Policy and recruiting an Empty Homes Officer to help bring empty homes back into use

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<sup>1</sup> Cost of living rises for households: ONS.gov.uk

- By pledging financial support to introduce Interim Management Orders within the private rented sector to raise standards for tenants
- Continuing to make the best use of existing social housing through Devon Home Choice plus our Rightsizing and empty homes project
- TorVista due to deliver new homes

## Challenges

- 42% of CO2 emissions in Torbay are from domestic homes (2019)
- Private rental properties are well above the local Housing Benefit rates (LHA)
- 68% of households renting privately rely on Housing Benefit, higher than national (48%) and regional (44%) averages
- 8% social rented stock in Torbay; 18% national average
- Current delivery of homes built is an average of 343 per year, the Local Plan target is 720
- By 2040 one in three (34%) of Torbay's population will be over 65

We know that, for our residents:

- Housing is unaffordable to many in Torbay. The average house price in Torbay is nine times average annual earnings and house prices have increased significantly post 2020
- Increasing demand for holiday accommodation has reduced the availability of accommodation for local people
- Homelessness in Torbay is over twice the national and regional averages
- One third (34%) of households are being made homeless due to the end of a private rented tenancy
- Homes becoming available through the Housing Register have fallen 6% since 2019

In Torbay:

- Housing need outstrips demand for new affordable homes
- There is not enough brownfield land across the Bay to provide all the homes Torbay needs, and the cost of any site clearance means there is less money to build affordable homes
- The complicated geographic relief of Torbay makes site development challenging
- Our small developments can reduce affordable housing delivery, as units fall below planning obligation thresholds
- Regeneration takes time due to site assembly and financing complexities
- A low growth local Plan to protect the environment can reduce the opportunities to build new homes
- The challenging economic climate is making house building difficult. Financial uncertainty, cost of materials, and labour shortages are delaying housebuilding

## Opportunities

Whilst accepting that there are significant challenges in providing decent homes for all our residents it is important to recognise that there are opportunities that can help us achieve this, including:

- The Government's new Affordable Homes Programme (2021 to 2026) managed by Homes England. By working with Homes England, we hope to deliver more affordable homes through new build, residential led regeneration and purchase and repair of existing stock
- The Torbay Affordable Housing Development Partnership, which was established in 2022 to work more closely with Homes England, registered providers, and other stakeholders to increase the overall provision of affordable housing
- TorVista Homes Limited, which was awarded registered provider status in 2021. As a new registered housing provider, wholly owned by the council; its aim is to deliver a wide range of good quality, affordable and supported housing
- The Council announced a 'climate crisis' in 2021, making a commitment that Torbay will be carbon neutral by 2030
- Our Local Plan is under review and sets out how the need for homes of all types will be delivered together with jobs and infrastructure
- We have created the Torbay Strategic Housing Board to promote our ambitions and actively engage with partners to help increase housing supply and be a critical friend
- We are maximising the use of existing social housing stock through our Rightsize programme and working with owners of empty properties to bring them back into use

## Vision

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The housing vision for Torbay is to:

**Improve the delivery, affordability and quality of housing**

To achieve this vision, we will:

- Work across the Council and with partners to come up with innovative ideas and modern build techniques to increase the delivery of affordable housing for rent and ownership
- Deliver a diverse choice of housing for our residents that meets every stage of life and lifestyle
- Support our communities to improve and maintain their homes; to be safe, warm, fit for purpose and be more environmentally friendly
- Continue to protect homeless households and those threatened with homelessness, whilst putting an end to street sleeping

# Our Priorities

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Our housing priorities are:

- Improve housing supply
- Improve housing quality
- Improve housing support

Our cross-cutting principles:

- Put our customers first
- Tackle climate change
- Work in partnership

These aspirations are underpinned by our community and corporate visions:

- Thriving people
- Thriving economy
- Tackle climate change
- Council fit for the future

Within each priority we have identified key areas of work that we believe will directly contribute to the overall sense of community health and wellbeing in Torbay.

## Improve housing supply

We will:

1. Build affordable homes for rent
2. Build homes for low-cost ownership
3. Build and acquire innovative and specialist homes
4. Make better use of our housing stock

This is important because:

- Need on the Housing Register has increased by 50%, since 2018, with 1,572 applicants now in housing need
- The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (2022) identifies a local need for 721 affordable homes per year: 387 for rent and 334 for low-cost sale
- The Government requirement on Torbay is to build 720 dwellings a year

- Torbay is the corporate parent to nearly 5 times as many children and young people as the England average (302, compared with 62), with a 42% increase since 2011
- There is a distinct lack of larger family homes, both in the private rented and social sectors

We want local households to have access to quality housing that they can afford in a range of tenures. Open market housing is the main route to securing the delivery of affordable housing via S106 planning obligations. However, affordable housing can also be provided using Government grants and the Council's assets, including land. The majority of this delivery is focused in urban areas, yet we recognise the need for smaller development in our less urban communities.

Homes built for rent by registered providers are the only type of homes that remain affordable for the majority of low-income households in Torbay. Traditionally, homes let on social rents are around 60% of the local market rent, but in 2010 the government introduced a new 'affordable rent' at rents on new homes of up to 80% of market rent levels.

Since 2016, we have delivered an average of 343 market homes each year, 47 (14%) of which have been affordable. At the current trajectory, with no additional greenfield allocation, Torbay is likely to only develop up to 50 affordable units a year through the Section 106 developer contributions. To meet the total need on the Housing Register with new builds alone would take 30 years.

Our strategy proposes a mix of Homes England grant and local housing investment, such as Council land and assets, with a view to establishing two thirds affordable homes for rent and one third for low cost ownership. We will also strive to maximise energy efficiency, making our homes more affordable to heat and run.

Torbay Council and our NHS partners want to increase independent living; allowing people receiving social care and support to have a greater choice and control over how, where and with whom they live. Whilst we are commissioning 150 extra care units for people to live well for longer in a home of their own, there is more to do.

There is also an urgent need to create housing stock that provides independent living and move-on accommodation options for our care experienced young people.

To improve housing supply, we will:

- Use Council land and the redevelopment of existing buildings to create new affordable homes and sustainable communities
- Look to establish a strategic housing partnership to progress our affordable home delivery programme
- Maximise opportunities to deliver affordable homes through Homes England's new Affordable Homes Programme (2021 to 2026)
- Work with TorVista, the Council's wholly owned Housing Delivery Company to deliver specialised housing for older people, for those with learning disabilities and autism and for people with enduring mental ill health
- Deliver more homes to improve the outcomes for our care experienced leavers

- Purchase around 37 self-contained properties in the Bay to help accommodate homeless households to help them move-on into more permanent homes
- Work with 'build for rent' developers to investigate funds, suitable land, or property to accommodate a shared housing project
- Bring empty homes back into use, making them affordable to rent where appropriate
- Deliver Torbay Council's 'Right-Sizing Project', to free up much needed larger family homes and developing larger homes if necessary

We will work with our partners to increase supply:

- We will pro-actively build strong partnerships with Homes England, landowners, registered providers, and local communities to improve the delivery of new homes
- Through our Economic partnership work with Home England, neighbouring authorities, NHS, local colleges, local landowners, developers and employers to find solutions to new, existing, and stalled development sites
- Through the Torbay Strategic Housing Board, working in partnership to build stronger relationships to increase the supply of new homes, including affordable and supported housing
- Utilise TorVista to deliver additional homes
- Chase developers to progress sites that have received planning permission, but are not coming forward in a timely fashion
- Look to explore alternative solutions such as self-build and modular build for challenging sites to deliver new homes

To understand future needs/demand, we will:

- Gather evidence to better understand where our unmet housing need is coming from
- Better understand local housing need by regularly reviewing applications on the Housing Register and predicted demand from children's and adults services, local colleges and employers
- Undertake a structured review of planning policies to make sure that they are relevant, joined-up, straightforward and encourage development, particularly on brownfield sites

## Improve housing quality

We will:

1. Tackle conditions in the private rented sector
2. Improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
3. Keep people independent at home

This is important because:

- On average, Torbay Council serves 49 legal notices to remedy disrepair each year
- Nearly 20% of our enforcement work was to remedy poor heating in people's homes
- There is a higher proportion of homes in private rented sector in Torbay (26%) compared to England (19%)

- Three quarters (75%) of Torbay’s housing stock’s energy performance is below band C, for England it’s just over half (54%)

Housing has a key role to play in health and wellbeing. The poor condition of a property can negatively affect the physical and mental health of our residents. Similarly, some people’s physical health needs, particularly for older residents, can restrict their ability to live an independent life without some adaptations to the home.

The expansion of the private rented sector has focused attention on the need to improve conditions in this tenure. The English Housing Survey (EHS) estimates that in 2019, 23% of these homes did not meet the Decent Home Standard. This compares with 18% of owner-occupied and 12% of social-rented homes.

The housing conditions in the private rented sector are worse than for any other, so making sure that the quality and standard of the private rented sector is a priority for us. We also focus much of our work in this sector because tenants have little, or no control over getting remedial works carried out, so we use all the tools available to take action against poor standards.

The main enforcement issues identified relate to poor heating, risk of fire, damp and mould and falls. The Housing Standards Team identified and remedied 578 housing hazards, resulting in a significant cost saving to the NHS and wider society.

A key theme running through our plans is a commitment to become carbon neutral. The carbon emissions from our area will fall as our homes and businesses become more energy efficient. The widespread reliance on gas as an energy source will mean few households will be immune from rising bills. However, homes with poor fuel efficiency will be hit hardest by energy price rises. Households who live in a property they own or rent from a registered provider have the least likelihood of being fuel poor at 8% and 19% respectively. However, households living in privately rented accommodation are most likely to be fuel poor (25%).

The scale of the issues facing the private rented sector are such that the answer does not lie with regulation alone. We must create the right environment to encourage self-compliance by working alongside landlords, property agents and landlord associations.

To improve housing quality, we will:

- Tackle disrepair and poor housing conditions by proactively targeting non-compliant landlords, taking appropriate action where standards are not being met
- Support communities to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and meet our carbon neutral target, tackle fuel poverty, and reduce carbon emissions
- Help households adapt existing homes, so they can remain independent for longer
- Regularly consult with our customers to improve service design and delivery

## Improve housing support

We will:

1. Prevent homelessness
2. Offer intervention
3. Help households sustain accommodation

This is important because:

- Need on the Housing Register has increased by 50%, since 2018, with 1,572 applicants now in housing need
- Typically, households who rent privately spend around 35% of their income on housing costs, compared to 18% for those with a mortgage, or 29% in social housing
- There has been a 92% increase in use and stay of temporary accommodation for homeless households since 2019 [169, 37% families (2022)]
- The most common reasons for homelessness is the loss of a private rented home (34%), family and friends no longer able to accommodate (19%) and domestic abuse (12%)
- Last year the Housing Team received around 13,000 requests. Calls about being 'homeless tonight' increased by 12%
- Around 24 people a month sleep rough in Torbay

Homelessness has a serious and harmful effect on those who experience it. Our approach is to act at the earliest opportunity, before individuals, or families lose their home. We are developing a separate homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that will be published during the life of this strategy.

Our primary focus is upon helping households to remain in their own home, provided that it is safe and suitable for them to do so. There are a number of in-house services available to help households remain in their homes, including: money advice, mediation and partnership work to tackle harassment and domestic abuse.

It is not always appropriate for people to remain in their existing home and sometimes it is not possible to prevent homelessness. Over recent years we have seen a steady rise in demand for temporary accommodation, with many households placed in increasingly costly and sometimes unsuitable accommodation. This is having a significant impact on Council budgets.

Due to the low provision of social homes and new build affordable homes Torbay is reliant upon the private rented sector to meet its homelessness duties. However, recent rental increases have pushed this type of accommodation beyond the reach of low-income households, particularly for families. Additionally, some landlords are converting to the holiday market, both permanently, and across the summer months.

Three quarters of homeless households are re-housed in the private rented sector, more than twice the national average. However, as tenancies in this sector are less secure than other tenure and can create a repeating cycle of homelessness.

The theme throughout this strategy is to make sure that the entire system is working to prevent all forms of homelessness, but also to work across the Council, and with partners to deliver more affordable homes, and work with the private rented sector to promote longer, more secure tenancies.

To improve housing support, we will:

- Continue to improve the Housing Options Service, to make sure that we give residents high quality, accessible advice when they need it
- Work with members, partners, and clients to develop a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy that is fit for purpose and meets statutory and legislative requirements
- Improve engagement with private and social landlords, letting agencies and tenants to promote compliance and the importance of those threatened with homelessness seeking help at an early stage
- Develop a domestic abuse and sexual violence strategy with an emphasis on moving victims to safe and secure accommodation
- Work with partners to create sustainable tenancies through local employment, training, and education

## Measuring success

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We will measure our success through the following indicators

### **Improving housing supply**

- Total additional homes provided
- Number of affordable homes delivered
- Number of households housed through the Housing Register

### **Improving housing quality**

- Number of home hazards remedied
- Number of homes fitted with adaptations to help people remain independent
- Number of homes receiving energy efficiency measures

### **Improving housing support**

- Average number of single households, including couples, in temporary accommodation on any one night per quarter
- Average number of families, including pregnant, in temporary accommodation on any one night per quarter
- Number of new homelessness cases per quarter
- The % of homelessness cases that were taken at the prevention stage
- Number of families in bed and breakfast for longer than 6 weeks

- Number of families where Children's Services have a duty to accommodate in temporary accommodation
- Number of children where Children's Services have a duty to accommodate in temporary accommodation
- Number of rough sleepers per year

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats.  
For more information, please contact [housing@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:housing@torbay.gov.uk)

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# Breaking the Chain Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

2023 - 2030

## **Adding an image**

- Open this template in the desktop version of Word,
- Double click the top of the page to access the 'header and footer section
- Select a suitable photograph - contact the design team for access to the photo library. No clip art please!
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# Foreword

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To be added post public consultation:

Foreword from Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group Chair DASVEG chair, and lead portfolio holder (member) to be added, with reference to the phrase “Breaking the Chain

maximum 1 page

Needs to include reference to all the people with lived experience of domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse who took time to share their experiences and reflect on what would have been better for them, during the DVA strategic review and the Devon wide Sexual Violence Call to Action work that informs this document.

Warning - this document contains references and quotes that may be triggering for some people.

# Introduction

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“it definitely started off completely mental, not physical, but it was just literally putting me down all the time. Keeping me in my place. Making sure I was where I was supposed to be”

Domestic abuse survivor, Torbay

Since our last Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy, which was launched in 2018, there have been a number of significant events and policy changes which have brought the emotive subjects of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and sexual violence (SV) to the forefront of our attention.

Firstly, the Covid-19 pandemic led to an almost overnight change in the way front line domestic abuse and sexual violence services were delivered. Virtual (online) support, which had previously been unthinkable, became the norm. Practitioners and support workers had to develop skills in using unfamiliar technology to ensure they could still see clients face to face and keep them safe. Forensic services for victims of sexual violence had to find ways to continue to safely provide forensic examinations whilst keeping victims and their staff protected from the virus. Strategic partnerships between local authority domestic abuse and sexual violence commissioners, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall (OPCC) health colleagues in Devon and Cornwall Clinical Commissioning Groups, as well as Devon and Cornwall Police, became stronger and more robust. New relationships were forged as together we worked through the pandemic to listen to and learn from our services and communities to ensure victims and survivors of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence were able to access and receive support.

In 2021 the Domestic Abuse Act came into force, and amongst a range of measures - for the first time - a statutory duty was placed upon local authorities to provide support to victims of domestic violence living in what is defined as "safe accommodation" (such as a refuge). Importantly, the Act provides for children to be recognised as victims of domestic violence in their own right.

The same year brought the terrible crimes of sexual violence and murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa, and closer to home of Bobbi-Anne McCleod in Plymouth; and the advent of the "Everyone's Invited" campaign. Ofsted carried out a themed inspection of sexual harassment and abuse in schools. The Home Office produced its End to End Rape Review. Torbay undertook a Multi-Agency Case Audit of harmful sexual behaviour across Torbay.

Through all the events and change of this period, Torbay's Partnership commitment to addressing DVA and SV has remained steadfast with much progress being made in developing and expanding our response. Some key activities have included:

- Expanding number of Independent Domestic Violence Advocate roles, including within Torbay hospital, sexual health services and for LGBTQ community
- Specialist roles within Children's Services

- IRIS pilot established sensitive clinical enquiry enabling identification of domestic abuse and sexual violence in primary care
- White Ribbon re-accreditation
- Standing Tall DASV CVS Partnership developed and delivering support within the community
- Numerous training opportunities and awareness campaigns delivered
- Meeting statutory requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021

In Torbay, the Council has procured a new Alliance of services that will work together - comprising the domestic abuse service, homeless hostel and the adults' drug and alcohol services. These services, which go live in 2023, will work collaboratively with the Council as equal partners to provide trauma informed, integrated and holistic support for people experiencing a range of challenges in their lives. Instead of having to move around between different services and organisations, people can engage with one service that will work with them to address the underlying causes of their issues and support people in the way that best works for them.

"We need services to talk and listen to us rather than talk at us"

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Our understanding of the issues around domestic violence and the partnerships in which we work have matured considerably since the last Strategy was written. Sadly however, the same cannot be said of sexual violence. Sexual violence remains a taboo subject for general discussion, cloaked in discomfort and shrouded in prejudicial myths that are systemically prevalent. We have found there is an inadequacy of support for victims of sexual violence and assault, particularly if a criminal justice response is not wanted or is not successful. The rates for successful prosecution are low nationally and regionally.

In this Strategy we aim to elevate the issue of sexual violence and our systemic response to it so that it becomes equal to that of domestic violence. That is not to say that we will not continue to address and improve our response to domestic violence; instead that we approach this work in the knowledge that those experiencing sexual violence in Torbay receive limited support, unequal to the support received by those who experience domestic violence and abuse.

"It's a cultural thing. As soon as you say: 'I've been in a domestic violence relationship'. 'What did you do to deserve it? Or what did you do to annoy them' as if that makes it all okay"

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

To aid understanding and avoid stigmatisation we look to frame our conversations and language around relationships as this is the enduring context of most domestic abuse and sexual violence.

We fully acknowledge that DVA & SV is perpetrated against women and girls and is rooted in gender based patriarchal, misogynistic, historic and cultural norms. However, we want to make our response as inclusive as possible in consideration of the broader nuances of violence and abuse within relationships and in keeping with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 definition of DVA, as well as gender identity and sexual orientation. As Torbay works to become a more trauma informed Council, we want to consider the impacts of trauma not only on victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence and abuse, but also on those who are causing these harms; whilst still holding them fully accountable for their actions.

This Strategy is aligned to the **Council Fit for the Future** and **Thriving People** objectives set out in Torbay Council's Community and Corporate Plan, working in partnership to promote community resilience, promote good mental and physical health, and protect our children and young people.

## Definitions, framework and headlines

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“...I didn't see that I was in an abusive relationship because it wasn't physical”

Domestic abuse survivor, Torbay

The list below sets out the key legislation, national policies and strategies relating to domestic violence and abuse and sexual violence:

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

National Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2021

End to End Rape Review 2021

Crown Prosecution Service Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Strategy (RASSO) 2020

The Victims Code (2020)

Victim's Bill 2022

Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 - Serious Violence Duty

Serious Crime Act 2015

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)

The Care Act 2014

The Children Act 1989

Police Response to Violence Against Women and Girls Final inspection report -Her

Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (September 2021)

### Definitions

The World Health Organisation defines sexual violence as:

“Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work.”

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic violence and abuse as follows:

Behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse” if:

A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive.

Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of any of the following:

- physical or sexual abuse;
- violent or threatening behaviour;
- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse;

- psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

“Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

- acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
- obtain goods or services.

For the purposes of this Act: A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

## Regional and Local Strategies

The following regional and local strategies are relevant:

Torbay Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 to 2024

Devon Clinical Commissioning Group Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence GP Policy

Devon & Cornwall Police Violence Against Women and Girls Delivery Plan 2022/2023

## National Data on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Sources: Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) 2020; Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2020

- 74% of victims of DVA crimes recorded by police In the year ending March 2020 were female
- In the year 2020 to 2021 unwanted sexual touching was the most common type of sexual assault experienced by both men and women
- Of sexual offences recorded by the police in the year ending March 2020, the victim was female in 84% of cases. This is a prevalence rate of approximately 3 in 100 women and 1 in 100 men (ONS 2020)
- In 57% of all adult rape cases the victim feels unable to pursue the case
- One-third of all female SV victims were aged under 15 years old
- More than half (55%) of all male victims were aged under 15 years.
- Adults with a disability are more likely to have experienced DVA in the last 12 months than non-disabled people (CSEW 2020)
- People from black and minoritised ethnic communities suffer DVA for 1.5 times longer than those with White British or Irish backgrounds (Safelives 2020)
- LGBT+ victims of domestic abuse are more likely to be abused by multiple perpetrators - 15% compared to 9% of non-LGBT+ victims (Safelives 2018)
- Adults are six times as likely to experience rape or assault by a partner or ex-partner than a family member (ONS 2020)

“ ...constantly having to, like, justify everything because your abusers of the same sex, and it’s really, really difficult. Because it’s like ‘oh a woman is capable of doing

that?'. It's like 'yes, they're very capable'. A man is capable, a woman is capable, it doesn't matter. If somebody wants to be abusive, they're going to be abusive"-

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

"we're not just talking about t-shirt sizes, it doesn't fit all, genders don't fit all, religion, doesn't fit all, you know, and trauma doesn't feel, it's all different and we all come out of it differently"

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

## Torbay Domestic Abuse Headlines

- There were **2,005 police incidents** of domestic abuse in Torbay in 2020/21.
- Domestic abuse accounts for **22%** of all crimes in Torbay.
- **217 Marac** referrals in 2020/21
- **72%** of victims reporting to the police over the past 3 years have been female (2018-21)
- **84%** of domestic abuse offenders were male in 2020/21
- **126** Domestic Violence Protection Orders were granted in 2020/21
- Almost a quarter (**24%**) of DVA related crimes are for stalking and harassment.
- **80%** of DVA incidents are assessed as being standard or medium risk.
- **113** Victims of domestic abuse presented as homeless in Torbay in 2020-21
- It is projected that **30% (667)** of referrals to Children's Services in 2020/21 had domestic abuse as a factor. **40%** of these came from the police.
- **164** children became looked after where domestic abuse was a factor over the three years 2018-2021
- Almost half (**47%**) progressed to a Child Protection Plan
- It is estimated that only **33%** of people experiencing DVA in Torbay are known to services

## Torbay Sexual Violence Data Headlines

The data below is sourced from:

First Light Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) service data 2021/22,  
Devon and Cornwall Police data provided to Torbay Council Community Safety Team  
Devon Rape Crisis service data  
Torbay Council online Are You OK survey 2021

- The police received **166** reports of rape in the year ending March 2022
- There were **264** sexual offences reported to the police in 2021/22

- **41.2%** of all ISVA referrals in 2021/22 were from Devon (including Torbay)
- In **81%** of cases, the person causing the harm was known to the victim
- In **43.5%** of cases the person causing harm was a family member, relative, or partner/ex-partner
- In 2021/22 **31%** of referrals to Devon Rape Crisis were self-referrals, **36%** were from mental health providers
- **More than half** of females responding to the Are You OK survey who had experienced sexual abuse/violence, said they had been raped
- **More than half** of both males and females survey respondents who had experienced sexual abuse/violence reported they had experienced inappropriate touching.
- **97%** of those whose drinks had been spiked or thought they probably had been spiked were female
- **41%** of survey respondents did not recognise it as sexual abuse or violence at the time and **13%** were not sure.

Estimated of Proportion of Adults in Torbay who have experienced recent rape and/or sexual assault in the last 12 months, since the age of 16, or in childhood (based on self-reporting module of the CSEW<sup>1</sup> and MYE Population 2019):

Column heading	Males	Females
Since the age of 16	2,085	11,164
Last 12 months	406	1,542
In Childhood	1,655	5,613

“I thought it was you know, husband and wife or living partners. I didn't really think that domestic abuse applied to boyfriend and girlfriend”

Domestic abuse survivor, Torbay

<sup>1</sup> Local Authority Population Estimates MYE 2019 - <https://tinyurl.com/ybzvaomb>

## Developing our strategy

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“So it was controlling, it's like walking on eggshells. You just, you know, something flared up, you kind of try and diffuse a situation as quickly as you can”

Domestic abuse survivor

In 2021 the Torbay Community Safety Partnership commissioned a strategic review of the system response to domestic violence in Torbay. The result was 241 pages of analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and identifiable areas for change across the system's responses. It produced 44 recommendations of how and where improvements could be made, with further recommendations from accompanying reports. This work also incorporated:

- a review of Torbay's Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC),
- the Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment (as required by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021- DAA21)
- a lived experience listening exercise
- analysis of the responses to the Council's online Are You OK? Survey conducted in late 2021.

The findings and recommendations from these activities have been collated to inform the direction and focus of this new Strategy and will be directly referenced in it's Delivery Plan. A summary of the Strategic Review, MARAC review and Listening Exercise is included as an Appendix.

The Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021 (required by the DAA21) sits beneath this Strategy.

Torbay Council also participated in the Call to Action sexual violence project with Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, and the Innovation Unit. This included a mapping exercise of the support available to victims of sexual violence across wider Devon, and a listening exercise with people who have experienced sexual violence and abuse and practitioners working with them. The aim was to develop an understanding of what support victims and survivors want and need to help them recover and make sense of what has happened to them. The findings from this project have provided the strategic direction for sexual violence. In addition data about sexual violence services and demand has been gathered to inform a local position statement on sexual violence in Torbay.

There are some areas of DVA & SV activity which, out of necessity and pragmatism fit more appropriately with, for example, the children's safeguarding arena. This Strategy aims to consider DVA & SV in the context of a whole system response across the life course. The exclusion of some areas of work could lead to fragmentation and poor oversight of the overall strategic response. This risk will be addressed through the oversight and governance structures in place, ensuring connectivity and line of sight between the main DVA & SV strategy and related strategies

or workstreams. Changes to the strategic direction or areas of focus resulting from legislative or policy changes will be incorporated into reviews of the strategy.

The scope of this Strategy includes adult victims of domestic abuse and violence (i.e. those aged 16+) and adult victims of sexual violence (including historic child sexual abuse).

The scope includes children and young people who are victims of domestic violence and abuse and who are occupying safe accommodation with their parent/carer as part of the DAA21 duties, as well as the wider needs of children and families experiencing DVA. They are statutorily defined victims in own right. We know that we need to better understand the profile of children and families who experience domestic violence and abuse to mature the system response.

Issues which are out of the scope of this Strategy are:

- Child Sexual Abuse – this is within the remit of Torbay Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (TSCP)
- Child Sexual Exploitation – this is included in the TSCP Exploitation Strategy
- Child against Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) – this is within the remit of Children’s Services; except for those aged 16 and over which can be raised at MARAC where risk level indicates
- Peer on Peer abuse – this is in the remit of Children’s Services except where both parties are aged 16 and over and there is evidence of coercive control. These will be raised at MARAC where risk level indicates.
- Human Trafficking – this is within the remit of the Devon and Torbay Anti-Slavery Partnership
- Prostitution – this within the remit of the Devon and Torbay Anti-Slavery Partnership.

The draft Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy was published for public consultation from 18th October to 29th November 2022

An overview summary of the review findings document available at: [insert link](#)

“..it takes a while to get into and realise ‘oh I can have a phone. I can wear t-shirt in the sun. I can put makeup on’

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

## What people have told us

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“... people need to be carried. Because you don't have the, just don't have the will to walk anymore. And for some of them, absolute horror, some of them don't have to will to live anymore”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

“We need the voices of children, young people, communities and people with lived experience to inform us about what activity we should take”

Call to Action project participant

People don't always know that what they have experienced is domestic violence or sexual assault. This might be because they are not living together (so it's not “domestic”), it's not physical violence but coercion and control, or a rape took place within marriage. Some said that they did not feel what had happened was sufficiently serious to report to the police, many felt that they would not be believed.

Many described negative experiences of the system when they did report domestic violence or abuse to the Police, and Children's Services becoming involved having been alerted by the Police. Women spoke of feeling that they were being held accountable for the behaviour of the person causing the harm, because they had to take all the responsibility for protecting their children. Meanwhile the person who had harmed them was ignored or “invisible”. Many felt that professionals did not understand how domestic abuse affected their ability to take action, nor of how the Family Court system re-traumatizes the victim survivor and their children and allows the person who caused the harm to continue to exercise control over them.

“... I'd call the police. They said, 'don't open the door', but that's okay when they tell you not to open the door, but what they do is, they report it to social services. And social services then say that you're not protecting your kids. But you tell me how that works, if you phone the police and the police come and you've obviously phoned the police to get them removed and they removed them, how's that not you protecting your kids?”

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

“when you leave the abusive relationship that escalates the domestic violence more. But what people don't understand is it escalates even more four years, five years down the line. They get really, really bitter. And that's when they fight and they'll fight until they're blue in the face”

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

Those people who left their abusive relationships spoke of the difficulties finding somewhere to live and of navigating the rehousing process with the Council.

“the one thing that seems so hard at first was actually housing. It was literally one thing is you have nowhere to go. And first, obviously when I walked down that road, the first day, the hardest bit was walking and realising my children were still there. And so it was ‘where am I gonna go?’”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

People feel guilt and shame about what has happened to them. This is reinforced by the prevailing myths and negative stereotyping surrounding rape and sexual assault, which hold the victim responsible for their attack because they were out late/drinking/of what they were wearing and so on. This is compounded by negative national media about the police – including sexual offences carried out by serving officers – the low conviction rate, the time it takes to progress to court (if the case does go to court), and the re-traumatisation of the court proceedings for what is often an unsuccessful outcome.

We heard that sexual violence is complex, often taking place in an intra-familial context, with patterns of behaviour repeating into the next generation. Victims and survivors of sexual violence suffer trauma long into adulthood – the stories we heard, information from Devon Rape Crisis, and the feedback in the Are You Ok survey show that many victims of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) don't disclose their experiences until many years after the event/s occurred. People are holding years of unresolved trauma that can present in a number of ways – through poor mental health, physical illness, or self-medication in the form of substance misuse for example. When a number of these factors co-exist, we see people who might be rough sleeping, some being coerced into prostitution by drug dealers in order to feed their habit; adding to their sense of shame and poor self-worth.

“some people are so traumatised, that it's hard for them to reach out for help. It doesn't mean that they don't want help, it just means that person is a bit more fragile..... Spend time and I'll open up with you and you'll see that I'm not that person and I need more help than what I ever let onto”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

Practitioners working in a range of support services – not specialist rape and sexual assault services and including the community and voluntary sector – spoke of the challenges in trying to help victims who disclose sexual violence during support. The fragmented funding and commissioning arrangements for sexual violence services mean that there is a “postcode lottery” of support with very limited support in Torbay itself, making it difficult for both victim survivors and practitioners to navigate. The services that exist tend to be in Exeter or Plymouth and have long waiting lists. This sometimes leaves practitioners who are not trained in working with victims of sexual violence and trauma, “holding” the person because there is no specialist support immediately available to them. This is risky for both the practitioner and the individual.

Examples have been provided that demonstrate the “silo” nature of working in the system, with sexual violence victims being referred to mental health services because of their trauma, only to be referred on to a sexual violence service – there is limited recognition of the long term impacts of trauma. As the Chief Executive of Devon Rape Crisis told us:

“people are being referred to [Devon Rape Crisis] if they have any history of sexual violence or abuse, regardless of whether this is causing the most difficulty for them or not”.

When support is obtained, it is often constrained by time or a restricted number of support sessions is available. Victims of sexual violence may not want a criminal justice response and just want to be listened to by someone who understands their experience. Some may want to follow the criminal justice process a period of time after the incident/s, others want to be able to access support at different points of the process but don’t have the choice.

“I think I would have found it easier if I was talking to somebody else who had been through it, rather than somebody who hadn't.”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

There is limited availability of targeted support for victims and survivors of sexual violence in Torbay. Much of what is available is not directly funded or commissioned by statutory agencies and is instead reliant on non- recurrent short term grant arrangements, or in some cases “topped up” with grant funding. This means that the support provision is insecure and therefore unstable.

Finally, loud concerns were voiced around the role of pornography on social media and how this is impacting on the attitudes and behaviours of children and young people. The suggested solutions to this were several and wide ranging – and cannot be solved through the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum in isolation.

We did also hear stories that were positive and complimentary about the support people had received, including praise for individual workers, organisations, and agencies. Those that shared

their stories with us wanted to make sure that their experiences were used to make things better for others.

## Summary of Findings

While some of the quotes below are from survivors of domestic abuse, the underpinning narrative of lack of belief, victim stereotyping and re-traumatisation are equally as applicable to people who have experienced sexual violence:

“...they just need to believe the person that’s sat in front of them. That’s all anybody needed to do for me, and nobody did it. Nobody believed me”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

“You hear this criticism all the time about ‘Oh, why did she go back to him?’ It’s very obvious why women go back, because they’re convinced that it’s their fault, that they deserve to be mistreated and it’s so bloody difficult to get away. It’s so hard”

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

"I was a person that was middle age by that stage. I did have a disability and I was challenged because people often discriminated against me because of my race."

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

“Feels like the system is organised to support perpetrators not victims.”

Call to Action project participant

"The onus is on you to get out and escape, it kind of enables the abuser, doesn't it?"

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

“The whole court scenario is just horrendous. Family court is just the worst experience anyone could ever go through ever. So you go through all this horrible abuse, you try to come the other side and then you have to face family courts, where they tear you and your children apart in front of you...”

From all of the feedback that has been received, there are many consistent messages that have been heard. These can be summarised as follows:

- Victims don't report because they think they won't be believed
- Victims are not always sure that what they have experienced is DVA/SV
- Victims are fearful of repercussions if they report, especially they fear statutory interventions (e.g. having their children removed) because the police inform Children's Services when they receive a report
- Victims who do report have negative experiences
- System focuses on the victim rather than placing accountability on the person who harmed them
- Victims find it difficult to find a safe place to live if they choose to leave
- System responses are not trauma informed - instead they re-traumatise
- Risk management by the MARAC could be more effective
- Culture of victim blaming and myths evident within parts of the system
- Limited or no understanding of the needs of victims from minoritised communities, or those with multiple and intersectional needs
- Lack of consistent and coordinated data recording – the strategic response is not always evidence based
- Response to sexual violence is limited and immature despite having a high public profile
- Voice of victims is unheard in strategic response
- People feel shame, guilt, blame and anger
- Victims and survivors of sexual violence feel let down by those supposed to help them and that their experiences are minimalised or not believed
- People want choice around when and how they access support.

## What needs to change

“...I wasn't listened to, I was belittled. Can you imagine being stood in a dock with no, you've got no legal representation. Yet you've been told by judges and told by social services that the domestic violence isn't an issue now, because you're not in it. Now, my child is now suffering. He has a tracker on his phone when he's with me. So I'm being trapped when my son's with me. There's nothing I can do. I can't afford to go to court and if I could go back in time, I'd stay with him, I wouldn't have left him. I wouldn't. Because there's no ongoing support”

Domestic Abuse Survivor, Torbay

“Our society doesn't want to talk about sex so to talk about sexual abuse and intrafamilial harm is an underlying issue to address - we all need to feel confident to do this.”

Call to Action project

Based on all of the information collected, the following areas for change can be identified:

- We must listen to the voices of those with Lived Experience if we want to design services and responses that will effectively address DASV
- Understanding and addressing Sexual Violence must be brought to the forefront as it is the poor relation to DVA
- We must manage risk more effectively BUT
- We must stop holding the victim responsible for the behaviour of the person harming/who has harmed them
- We must believe victims and validate them to build trust and safety
- The system must stop re-traumatising victims
- We must address the fear of reporting - otherwise we will not address the causal link between high levels of DVA and the fear of statutory interventions
- We must better understand the needs of minoritised groups and those with intersectional needs so we can respond to them
- We need to understand the different drivers and typologies of DA & SV
- Professionals and practitioners must understand the dynamics of power and control - and the power they hold as actors within the system
- We must accept discomfort in order to challenge cultural norms and attitudes in the system
- We must accept that not all victims and survivors want a criminal justice response
- We must collect consistent, meaningful data and use it to inform and develop the system response.

# Our Strategy

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".. So, if you had somewhere where, you know, people that have been victims in the past could help people that were victims now, then that would be amazing because I don't think anybody else would believe it."

Domestic Abuse survivor, Torbay

We know that we need to strengthen the strategic response to domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Torbay and have built a strong base of evidence to inform our work over the life course of this Strategy:

There needs to be trauma-informed support for victims and survivors and their families.

We need to prevent harm in the first place whilst disrupting harmful behaviour and holding those who harm accountable.

We know that victims and survivors don't report because they fear system generated reprisals or do not think they will be believed. We recognise that sexual violence is the poor relation to domestic abuse in terms of the strategic response.

We want to:

**Work in partnership with organisations, communities and individuals to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence in Torbay, to enable our residents to live safe and happy lives.**

In delivering this ambition, we have identified the outcomes that we want to achieve over the short, medium and long term.

## Short term outcomes

- People understand that domestic abuse is not just physical and can occur in any intimate relationships
- People understand consent, and that rape and sexual assault can occur in intimate relationships.
- Victims and survivors know that they will be believed.
- Victims and survivors know how and where to get advice on their options in a range of ways, that responds to what they say they need at the time.
- The response to domestic violence and abuse is designed with victims and survivors, and informed by their lived experiences and needs

## Medium term outcomes

- Victims and survivors receive peer support and advice before, during and after their experiences to help them recover.

- People who harm others by using domestic and/or sexual violence and abuse are identified and disrupted.
- Professionals understand the impacts of DVA/SVA and trauma on victims and survivors and/or their families and the coping mechanisms they use to keep themselves and their children safe.
- Professionals and statutory agencies understand the range of ways that people who harm use and continue to use coercive control and harassment to continue to abuse long after relationship has ended.

## Long term outcomes

- Services and interventions are informed by a developing evidence base supported by robust data and monitoring of trends; including understanding why people who harm do and the typologies of harmful behaviour.
- The strategic system response to sexual violence is prioritised and continually evaluated to achieve parity with the DVA response.

# Delivery of the outcomes

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“Be compassionate and hold people safely when they disclose”

Call to Action Project participant

We will undertake five key activities to meet the outcomes we want to achieve:

1. Embed lived experience and co-production
2. Prevent victimisation and harmful behaviours
3. Identify victimisation and harmful behaviours
4. Disrupt harmful behaviour
5. Develop data and understanding

Across all these activities we will work to the following principles and will proactively encourage and challenge others to do so:

- Connect different parts of the system together to create a coordinated community response to domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Hear and learn from people with lived experience
- Be trauma informed and shame sensitive
- Make the best use of existing resources and assets
- Elevate, develop, and improve our responses to sexual violence.

For each activity an action plan will be developed and will include various workstreams.

## Activity 1 - Embed lived experience and co-production

We will:

- Develop mechanisms to hear and learn from people with experience of DA&SV
- Ensure contributions are recognised, valued, and appropriately reimbursed
- Utilise and build upon existing community assets

## Activity 2 - Prevent victimisation and harmful behaviours

We will:

- Grow the Healthy Relationships Education offer
- Implement the findings from the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Project
- Frame awareness raising and communications in the context of relationships
- Develop the Bystander training offer
- Increase the pool of DA Champions and White Ribbon Ambassadors
- Implement relational approaches across the system

- Challenge cultural norms and attitudes in respect of victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse

### Activity 3 – Identify victimisation and harmful behaviours

We will:

- Exercise belief and let victims know they will be and are believed
- Identify early people who harm others and work with them to address their behaviour
- Develop a skilled workforce that are confident in handling disclosures of DVA &/or SV and know what to do next (competency framework)
- Ensure that people working with victims and survivors of DVA & SV have an understanding of trauma (including judiciary)
- Ensure that services are inclusive and understand how DVA &SV may present differently amongst minority communities
- Establish simple pathways that easily connect services
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements

### Activity 4 - Disrupt harmful behaviour

We will:

- Implement the MARAC review recommendations
- Establish pathways to support for those who harm others
- Ensure effective safety planning and risk management with focus on the person causing the harm
- Ensure a co-ordinated approach to disrupt the person causing harm
- Focus on the person who harms, not the victim
- Develop peer support and recovery options in the community for victims and survivors

### Activity 5 - Develop data and understanding

We will:

- Develop wider understanding of the different types of behaviour and motivations of those who harm to improve our system response to them and better protect victims and survivors
- Establish consistent data collection and monitoring including for protected characteristics and people with intersectional needs
- Establish a baseline dataset and evaluation to check how we are doing
- Consider a systems/case management system to improve reporting
- Develop a quality assurance approach to ensure the system response meets the needs and aspirations of victims and survivors

## Resources

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) will be responsible for strategic oversight of this Strategy and delivery of the action plans. This group also acts as the statutory Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board for the purposes of the Domestic Abuse 2021 Part 4 and the delivery of the associated Safe Accommodation Strategy.

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Operational Group (DASVOG) will be responsible for undertaking the work required in the Delivery Plan. This includes connecting with other agencies and practitioners and involving them in specific workstreams.

DASVEG reports into Torbay Community Safety Partnership, Torbay Children's Safeguarding Partnership, and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## Review

The activity action plan will be kept under review to ensure that we are achieving our outcomes. As part of that review, consideration will be given to whether this Strategy remains fit for purpose. This will include consideration of the impact of any significant change in legislation or policy.

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats.  
For more information please contact **\*\*insert your team email or phone no  
here\*\***

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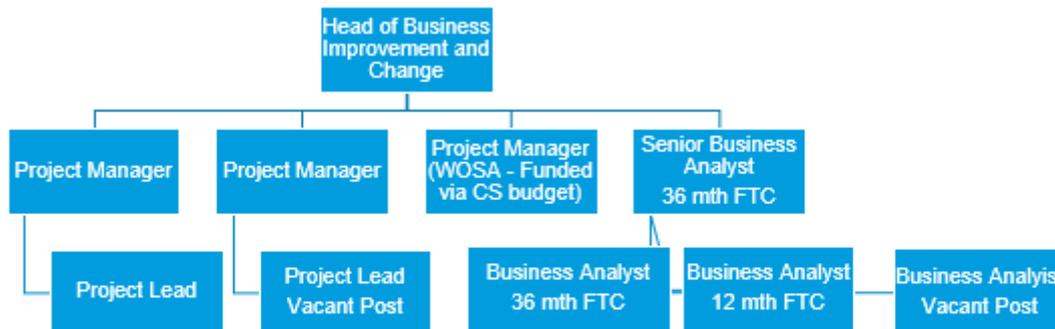
## Budget Monitoring – Q2 – Business Improvement and Change

### Question:

*Business Improvement Team – what are the costs of this and what benefits and cost savings have been delivered by the Team - Matthew Fairclough-Kay/Cllr Carter*

### Response:

The Business Improvement and Change Team structure is set out below:



### Information and Benefits

As a result of a direct recommendation from an LGA Peer Review and using best practice models from other Councils and Local Government Bodies the Council established a Transformation Team in 2016. The original remit of the team was to manage projects and programmes that delivered savings, and/or generated income for the Council. Since its inception the team have enabled multi-million-pound savings for the Council.

In 2020, the Councils 'Transformation Team' was refocused to become the 'Business Improvement and Change Team' - this change took place as it was recognised that the team was being asked to prioritise critical work across the organisation to improve outcomes and service delivery (for example the Children's improvement journey).

As such, the Business and Improvement Change Team's current remit is to strategically manage, lead, and broadcast the delivery of a diverse range of improvement and change initiatives across all departments within the Council.

Examples of the projects that the team are currently managing are as follows:

- Children's Services
  - Improvement Journey
  - Family Hubs
  - Safety Valve
  - Youth Investment Fund
  - Written Statement of Action (WOSA)
  - Liquidlogic reconfiguration
  - Sufficiency Strategy
  - One Children's Services
- Whole Council Redesign
  - Implementation of new CRM (***Please see additional information as below on the CRM programme and the projected benefits of this***)
  - Business Process Re-engineering – being carried out across all services within the Council
  - Future Ways of Working – Including the Town Hall Review
  - Our People Project

- Develop and implementation of an 'Our People Strategy' including an Organisational Development Plan, People Management Framework and Workforce Planning.
- Implement a new Applicant Tracking System
- Implement a new staff onboarding system
- Our Organisation Project
  - Our Offer: Define the services that the Council provides, and those which it does not; empowering and enabling residents, businesses and communities to act.
  - Our System: Streamline and standardise the processes by which the Council delivers cost effective services, becoming digital by default.
  - Our Gateway: Provide an effective, efficient and responsive gateway to Council services and external services.
  - Our Performance: To provide and embed a robust, well understood and well used whole council approach to performance and risk management.
- Our Communities Project
  - Engaging: Drive how the Council acts as a community leader, ensuring that as an organisation and as individuals (both members and officers) we reconnect with our community.
  - Enabling: Enable people and communities to more easily access support, information and influence and to act for themselves.
  - Influencing: Raise the profile of Torbay Council, and Torbay as a whole, by taking our 'seat at the table' and confidently expressing our asks and offers
- Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency – Service of the future project
- Council Structures Review
- Community Safety Case Management System - Procurement and Implementation, or integration into CRM
- Print – Service of the future project
- Corporate Travel Solutions – Procuring and implementing a staff business travel system and community use opportunities

## Budget

The current budget for the Business Improvement and Change Team is **£346,000** (*Please note this budget figure is just for the posts identified in the structure chart above – two other members of Council Staff are also paid for from this cost centre although they are not part of this team, therefore figures published elsewhere will be higher – circa £476,000*).

The current forecasted annualised costs for the Business Improvement and Change Team are:

Staffing (Business Improvement and Change Team only)	£329,900
Agency/Recruitment costs incurred to date (BPR)	£22,120
Miscellaneous costs (mobile phones, expenses etc)	£1,000
Total:	£353,020
Professional Fees	-£10,000 (budget not forecasted to be spent)
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>£343,020</b>

## Savings

Financial Savings for the Business Improvement and Change Team			
Initiative	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>PLEASE NOTE: Savings/Income opportunities are tracked departmentally except for numbers 1, 2 and 3 as below.</b>			
1. CRM Break Even (Saving for project to be achieved over 8 years – total 939,552)	117,444	117,444	117,444
2. Unallocated Redesign Savings	120,000		
3. Transformation Income Target	No Saving		
4. Parking Redesign	100,000		
5. Payments	25,000		
6. Housing Benefit Administration	10,000		
7. Revenues and Benefits	50,000		
8. Revenues and Benefits – Paperless Billing	25,000		
9. Printing (NB Overspend avoidance is £250,000 pa but this cannot be classified a saving as there is no budget to save against)	100,000 target 22/23 62,500	62,500	62,500
10. Cross Council Performance Resources	50,000 – Achieved		
11. New ways of Working (Travel Savings)	106,900		
12. Register of Electors	10,000 – Achieved		

## Budget Monitoring – Q2 – Business Improvement and Change – CRM

### Question:

CRM – there are substantial risks around CRM, what savings are expected – Matthew Fairclough-Kay/Cllr Carter

### Response:

#### Background

Torbay Council, like other councils, continues to face the ongoing challenge of austerity and is rapidly realising that the opportunities for making savings are diminishing. Within this context, the Council has needed to consider bigger and bolder transformation opportunities to build a sustainable operating model for the 21st century, post COVID-19 whilst also delivering a range of financial and non-financial benefits.

As such the Council's transformation plan (approved at Cabinet in September 2020) set out how we will bring a coherent, joined-up approach to change, that meets the council's priorities as set out in our Community and Corporate Plan, and how we would support the delivery of financial targets in the Medium Term Resource Plan – this programme is called the 'Council Redesign Programme'.

The main objective of the Council Redesign Programme is as follows:

To modernise, simplify and standardise how we work so we can support the communities of Torbay and build a resilient council fit for the future.

To enable us to achieve this objective, it was identified that the Council needed to procure an improved Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

A CRM system is an effective and efficient tool which provides an interface with its customers across several delivery channels (face to face, telephone, internet websites, texting and emails). This CRM system will enable customers to receive the same level of service, regardless of how they contact the Council (in person, by phone or by e-mail for example), and it should also mean they do not have to understand the internal workings and structure of the Council in order to get their query actioned. The CRM will include, but not be limited to, delivering an enhanced web portal, a proactive approach utilising a 360 degree view of the customer, a reduction in duplication, and significant improvements in performance reporting.

### **Savings**

The CRM business case was built on a break-even outcome, enabling improvements to customer service without increased cost to the tax payer. It was identified that to break even the CRM project will have to enable **£117,444** of savings per annum (Total to be achieved over 8 years as from 2022– total £939,552).

Savings will come from several areas where the system will provide opportunity, including but not limited to:

- Faster digitalised processes to increase income per year;
- Reduction in resources required for specific processes;
- Ability to detect anomalies and reduction in failure demand costs;
- Reduced duplication cost;
- Fewer licensed software products required to deliver outcomes.

Immediate savings have included £20,000 per annum for iCasework. The current license fee will be replaced by the support and functionality provided to iCasework by the CRM. This represents a £160,000 saving over the 8 year contract duration.

Likewise, £11,100 per annum will be saved for Find My Nearest, totalling £88,800 over the 8 year contract duration.

Other long-term, annual savings will be achieved by retaining or replacing current modules and software, which are to be identified on a case-by-case basis and supported by robust business cases, as approved in the business case.

Our service review activities are identifying and providing us with these opportunities already, even though we are still in BETA discovery. We have identified a potential saving of £200,000 per annum by using the iCasework functionality as a case-management system to replace another case management system currently in use. Civica have confirmed that it is used by some LA's for this purpose – we are currently in the process of exploring this possibility further. This is a prime example of the opportunities that can be found by applying a broad technology capability across our organisation. As can be seen, this saving alone would put us in cost positive position against a break-even business case.

### Children’s Services – Budget Monitoring Update Q2.

Nancy Meehan – Director of Children’s Services

26<sup>th</sup> October 2022

This briefing note has been prepared to provide an update in respect of the projected overspend/issues in Children’s Services.

In totality it is currently forecasted that the Children’s Services budget for 22/23 will be overspent by circa £1.5m.

***The main areas of focus are as follows:***

- Home to School Transport
- Placements
- Agency
- Impact of Asylum Hotel
- Children’s Services Social Care System

Area:	Projected Outturn Position 22/23 (£)	Notes
Home to School Transport	£341,000 over budget	This projected overspend is due to a combination of factors including, fuel increases, lack of competition and sufficiency in the market including lack of multi-seater vehicles, demand for single occupancy taxi’s, struggling to appoint drivers, and re-tendered contracts coming in at increased prices. This is a ‘demand led’ service with more children requiring and being eligible for transport. The current forecast is a 10% increase in spend when compared to 21/22.
Placements	£1.3m over budget	The majority of the pressure within placements relates to residential provision and also additional costs being incurred in unregulated placements. The lack of placement sufficiency nationally also adds to our cost pressures.
Agency	£117,500 under budget	In Sept 21 there were 53 agency workers at a forecast cost of £4.9m, in Sept 22 that was 22 agency workers and a forecast of £2.4m.
Impact of Asylum Hotel	Approx £1.25m over budget (Including on costs) - the forecast variation is an estimate which could significantly vary by year end	One cost which will be closely monitored for the rest of the year will be the costs associated with Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), and in particular those associated with the Asylum Hotel in Torbay. We currently have 27 UASC and are incurring additional costs in connection with the Asylum Hotel, these costs will not be fully

	depending on actual demand, cost and grant.	funded from the grant we are able to claim from the Home Office. We are able to claim £114 per day for cared for UASC (£143 per day if they transfer via the National Transfer Scheme), and £38.57 per day for post 18 care experienced young people.
Re-Implementation of elements of the Children’s Services Social Care System and related performance dashboards	£238,000 over budget	These are costs associated with the re-implementation of certain elements of Liquid Logic.

*Please Note: For awareness – the Higher needs block is forecast £11.8m overspend (22/23) with a projected year on year increase – there is a statutory override in place until 31/03/2023 which is highly likely to be extended beyond this. Torbay Council is presently in talks with ESFA re the Safety Valve Programme which will enable us to deliver a balanced budget by 2026/27 and potentially receive support in reducing the cumulative deficit.*