

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

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

Wednesday, 10 September 2025

commencing at **5.30 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Banking Hall, Castle Circus entrance on the left corner of the Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Board

Councillor Long (Chairman)

Councillor Cowell
Councillor Douglas-Dunbar
Councillor Fellows
Councillor Foster
Councillor Johns

Councillor Law
Councillor Spacagna (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Stevens
Councillor Tolchard

A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay

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Governance Support, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk - www.torbay.gov.uk

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

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 August 2025.

(Pages 3 - 10)

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. Overview Report for Safer Torbay (Community Safety Partnership)

To consider a report that provides an update on key work areas for Safer Torbay, covering progress from the last 12 months against statutory functions; and an overview of strategic priority areas and key work areas for the next year.

(Pages 11 - 18)

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

13 August 2025

-: Present :-

Councillor Long (Chairman)

Councillors Atiya-Alla, Cowell, Douglas-Dunbar, Fellows, Foster, Johns, Spacagna (Vice-Chair), Stevens and Tolchard

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, Mandy Darling (virtual), Fox, Chris Lewis, Penny (virtual), David Thomas, Jacqueline Thomas and Tyerman)

12. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Liberal Democrat Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillor Atiya-Alla in place of Councillor Law.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 9 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. Urgent Items

The Board considered the item in Minute 19, and not included on the agenda, the Chairman being of the opinion that it was urgent by reason of special circumstances i.e. the matter having arisen since the agenda was prepared and it was unreasonable to delay a decision until the next meeting.

15. Annual Review of Key Performance Indicators for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Area Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services - Councillor Bye and the Director of Children's Services - Nancy Meehan provided an overview of the Area SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Inspection of Torbay Local Area Partnership Report and responded to questions. The Director of Women and Children's Improvement NHS Devon - Su Smart, the Strategic Lead of Education and SEND - Hannah Baker and the Divisional Director of Safeguarding - Becky Thompson also responded to questions. The Strategic Lead for Social Care NHS Devon - Sadie Hall was also in attendance.

Councillor Bye highlighted that the SEND Inspection in March 2025 which judged partnership working for SEND was disappointing and similar to other South West Councils. The report did include positive highlights such as the family hubs, youth justice, mental health in schools and SEND Family Voice. A number of improvements had been made since March, including the locality model pilot, speech and language support, capital investment in schools and improving attendance and reduced numbers of exclusions and suspensions, with elected home education still being a challenge.

Members raised the following questions:

- Is Parkfield being used for the sixth form for Mayfield?
- Is there a date for the priority action plan submission?
- How often will the Care Quality Commission (CQC) monitor progress?
- Are teachers trained to support SEND or are experienced teachers recruited?
- Why is there no commissioned learning disability partner?
- What is the waiting list situation for ADHD and other diagnoses?
- Are Torbay's waiting lists average or worse?
- Why was the ICB absent from the recent Children's Continuous Improvement Board?
- How many children are in unregistered alternative provision?
- What is being done to improve transition to adulthood?
- Will children waiting for CAMHS (child and adolescent mental health services) be assessed individually?
- Is it too early to assess work on reducing NEETs (not in education, employment or training)?
- How are children and young people involved in shaping services?
- Are NHS pressure affecting SEND progress?

The following responses were provided:

- Mayfield is expanding and part of the provision is moving to Parkfield and Mayfield has been commissioned to provide additional SEND places.
- The Draft Action Plan has been sent to the Department for Education (DfE) with the final submission due by 2 September 2025.
- The CQC have an initial visit on 18 August 2025 with a formal revisit in 18 months and full inspection in 3 years.
- A new Head of Service for Quality Teaching has been appointed who will oversee training and a peer-to-peer support network is being developed.
- Inspectors misunderstood the local delivery model for learning disabilities; professionals are in place but communication needs improvement.
- There were long waits for ADHD and other diagnosis, which was the same nationally; investment is needed in pathways.
- Waiting lists for mental health are improving; neurodiversity and autism wait times are worse than average.
- The ICB was unable to attend the recent Children's Continuous Improvement Board due to restructuring but an extraordinary meeting was held with the ICB to discuss health issues; the ICB remains committed to partnership working.

- The number of children in unregistered alternative provision had reduced from 72 to 36 with a new model commissioned. Quality assurance for the new model would start in September.
- Support for young people transitioning into adulthood starts at age 14; this includes activities such as tenancy management and life skills.
- Children waiting for CAMHS will be assessed individually, focussing on broader emotional wellbeing support whilst they are waiting.
- There were bespoke programmes in place to support people NEET; for example supported internships were showing success, the Council was also providing support itself for young people with SEND and care experienced young people.
- Children and young people's voices were being heard through Torbay SEND Family Voice and the Youth Forum was actively involved; youth voice is a standing item on the SEND Local Area Improvement Partnership Board (SLAIP). Members were encouraged to signpost people to SEND Family Voice ([Family Voice Torbay](#)).
- The NHS is experiencing a lot of pressures; however, SEND is a priority at Executive and Chair level, and they are committed and have an oversight of the work in Torbay and provide assurance that it is a priority.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Overview and Scrutiny Board acknowledges the areas highlighted in the submitted report where the Torbay Local Area Partnership was working effectively but recognises that further action is required in order to meet the needs of our children and young people with SEND;

That the Torbay Local Area Partnership be recommended:

2. to provide assurance that Torbay's specialist provision in education can meet our overarching needs for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) and medical needs through existing provision both within schools and through alternative provision and that appropriate reviews are carried out on alternative providers to ensure that they are meeting the needs of our children and young people;
3. to urgently invest in waiting well initiatives for families who are waiting for formal assessment for their SEND to ensure that they are receiving available support and signposting and communicate this widely, as it is recognised that the Integrated Care Board (ICB) will not be able to reduce waiting lists the short term;
4. that details of the pathway for learning disabilities be communicated to the Members of the Board at the earliest opportunity; and
5. to share their action plan on how and when they will address the areas for priority action and areas for improvement identified in the Report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Area Inspection with all Councillors as soon as it is available and present an update against the action

plan to the Children and Young People' Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board meeting on 19 January 2026.

16. Performance Report 2025/26 - Quarter 1

The Board scrutinised the submitted Performance Report for Quarter 1 2025/2026 which provided an overview of the performance of the Council working towards the ambitions and priorities within the Community and Corporate Plan and the Council Business Plan. 132 performance indicators had been identified and 32 projects.

The Board raised the following questions:

- BP11 – Can you clarify the number of people receiving support via Family Hubs? Will we see accurate figures moving forward?
- Planning performance is still showing red. What are the next steps for monitoring and improvement?
- When do you expect to see a tipping point in performance improvement for Planning?
- Can we have more information on economically inactive people and efforts to get them into work?
- Is youth unemployment the main issue?

The following responses were provided:

- Data collection improvements was underway for Teams to record support via the Family Hubs. The true figure was closer to 11,435. Updated data is expected in Quarter 2.
- Improvements are ongoing within the Planning Service. Enforcement is challenging due to staffing and complex cases with a single case taking up a lot of officer time. The backlog has reduced and more pre-applications have been received. Monthly performance reviews are in place which are showing some improvements. Sustained improvement is expected throughout the year, though there will be some variability (e.g. enforcement).
- UK Shared Prosperity funding has been withdrawn, and it is not clear if this will be replaced in order to support people to get back into work. Work is ongoing with partners such as Eat That Frog and South Devon College. The focus is on NEETs and care-experienced young people. The Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority are prioritising this area.
- In terms of unemployment in Torbay, issues exist at both ends of the age spectrum. This is impacted by seasonal and part-time work dominating the market. There is a need to increase demand and job variety in Torbay.

Resolved (unanimously):

That a detailed report be provided on the performance indicators for the Planning Service for Quarter 3 so that Members can be assured of continuing improvements being made.

17. Budget Monitoring 2025/26 Quarter 1

The Board considered the submitted report which provided a high level summary of the Council's Revenue and Capital Budgets for the 2025/2026 Financial Year. The forecasts were based on information at the end of Quarter 1 and showed a predicted overspend of £0.785m mainly due to children's placements and legal services staffing mitigated by underspends in Adult Services and increased income through Treasury Management. There was a revised forecast of the Capital Investment Plan of £76.643m for the period up to 2027/28 with £52.239m planned spend in 2025/26.

The Leader of the Council – Councillor David Thomas outlined a revised Officer recommendation and update in respect of the grant of a capital loan to SWISCo for fleet modernisation which proposed that this be reduced from £4m to £2.5m restricting the purchases up to 31 March 2028 rather than the original six years proposed as a result of the uncertainty around Local Government Reorganisation.

Members raised the following questions:

- Q1 outturn suggests overspend due partly due to ongoing challenges in recruitment in Legal Services, which is a national issue, what action is being taken to address this?
- The monitoring report was changed to only include approved Capital Projects. If so, why are projects such as Edginswell station included?
- What about visibility of pipeline projects?
- Why is the original budget values for some service areas different from the budget digest? (a written response would be provided.)
- Is the £49k for Edginswell capital or revenue?
- Torre Abbey overspend was due to low café/wedding use – has this improved?
- What is the highways road closure income?
- Adult social care budget is positive – could this be lost with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)?
- What caused the £95k overspend in HR and Payroll?

The following responses were provided:

- Additional money was put into the budget for Legal Services this year but there continues to be challenges which is the same nationally. The focus has been through the sustainability plan focussing upon what needs to be done to recruit and retain staff. The Chief Executive gave assurance that Directors had asked to review this area more quickly than previously planned with an additional lens focussing on where the demand is coming from and assure Directors that the demand is being appropriately managed and mitigated against.
- Edginswell figure is a holding figure as there were certain actions required to keep the Planning permission live.
- Usage may have picked up but the income was still below budgeted levels due to ongoing works at Torre Abbey.
- The highways road closure is income the Council receives when roads are closed e.g. from utility companies.
- The positive results in Adult Social Care was due to tailored packages, the risk of LGR was acknowledged.

- The £95k overspend in HR and Payroll came from small additional staffing costs, occupational health, and a range of projects requiring additional resource, this was being reviewed to see what action can be taken to balance the budget in-year.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Director of Finance be requested to ensure that future Budget Monitoring reports include an appendix of capital pipeline projects so that Members can keep an overview of them.

That the Cabinet be recommended:

1. that the Cabinet notes the forecasted revenue outturn position and amendments made to the published 2025/26 Capital Investment Plan;
2. that, subject to Council approving the additional capital as set out in paragraph 4 below, the Director of Finance be given delegated authority to agree appropriate terms and grant capital loans up to £2.5m to SWISCo for fleet modernisation.

Recommendations for Council

3. that Council approves the revisions to the Capital Investment Plan, set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and
4. that Council approve the additional borrowing of £2.5m to facilitate capital loans to SWISCO to enable them to modernise their fleet.

18. Torquay Town Centre Place Vision

The Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth – Councillor Chris Lewis and the Director of Regeneration – David Carter outlined the submitted report on the Torquay Town Centre Place Vision document which aimed to attract external investment into Torquay and responded to questions.

Julie Brandon made representations welcoming the inclusion of items within the document that had been taken from the Torquay Neighbourhood Plan, which had been previously consulted on and developed by the community. Ms Brandon suggested the merits of including Cary Green as part of the list of green spaces within the document.

Members raised the following questions:

- Why was there no consultation with Neighbourhood Forums and Ward Councillors?
- Will areas outside the Town Centre benefit from the £20m funding?
- Is this a planning document?
- When will Paignton be considered?
- Is retail still viable in town centres?

- Will the vision be published for small businesses?
- Are investors interested in Debenhams?
- Will the Town Centre regeneration discourage investment in areas like Torre and Upton?
- Why was Paignton Harbour referenced if it discourages investment?

The following responses were provided:

- Consultation occurred in various formats with most of the sites previously subject to consultation.
- The Vision is a marketing and investment document and not a planning document and therefore not subject to any statutory consultation requirements.
- The £20m funding was different funding as part of the Plan for Neighbourhoods which was being managed separately by the community via the Torquay Place Leadership Board ([Committee details - Torquay Place Leadership Board](#)).
- Paignton and Brixham Town Centre Vision documents are due in the Autumn 2025.
- It was proposed that the retail footprint would be reduced with focus on quality and sustainability.
- The Vision document will be published as a PDF on the regeneration website, which can then be shared.
- Two investors have visited the Bay so far, and it is planned to seek a decision on this by the end of 2025.
- Plan for Neighbourhoods will allow suggestions for investment in other areas of Torquay.
- Officers will revisit Paignton Harbour with Ward Members; no decision has been made yet on that area.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the Cabinet be recommended:

1. that, subject to the following, the Board supports the document and that Cabinet approve the use of the Torquay Vision document (as set out at Appendix 1) to steer both the delivery of current regeneration sites and the development of future proposals for the sites and areas of public realm identified by the vision as suggested priorities:
 - a. to consider including reference to Cary Green as a green space and that it is a public realm investment opportunity, as well as including the Town Hall, Electric House and Town Hall car park as potential development sites; and
 - b. to consider consulting with the Torquay Neighbourhood Forum prior to sign off by the Cabinet;
- 1.2 that delegated authority be given to the Director of Pride in Place to make minor amendments to the vision in consultation with the Leader of the Council, noting that any proposed substantial amendments will be presented to Cabinet for approval; and

- 1.3 that the Cabinet engage with the Ward Councillors for the emerging Brixham Town Centre Vision and Paignton Town Centre Vision documents prior to them being submitted.

19. Report of the Local Government Reorganisation Task and Finish Group

The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced the submitted report of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Task and Finish Group following their workshop held on 5 August 2025 in respect of an options appraisal for LGR, which was before the Board for sign off.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the report of the Local Government Reorganisation Task and Finish Group summarising the discussions on strengths and weaknesses of the options under consideration be forwarded to the Council's Project Team to help to inform the Council's Options Appraisal.

Chairman

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 10th September 2025

Wards affected: ALL

Report Title: Overview report for Safer Torbay (Community Safety Partnership)

When does the decision need to be implemented? n/a

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Hayley Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities. Email: hayley.tranter@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: Anna Coles, Director of Adults and Community Services Email: anna.coles@torbay.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the O&S Board with an update on key work areas for Safer Torbay, covering progress from the last 12 months against statutory functions; and an overview of strategic priority areas and key work areas for the next year.

2. Strategic Assessment 24/25

- 2.1 The most recent Strategic Assessment 24/25 was carried out to inform decision-making and prioritisation by Safer Torbay. It involves risk assessing and scoring each community safety issue.

The following highlights were identified:

- Overall recorded crime in Torbay increased by 3.4% (compared to the previous year)
- 48% of recorded crime was violent crime (including sexual offences, violence against the person, and robbery)
- 33% of violence against the person offences was flagged as domestic abuse
- The number of sexual offences reported increased by 10% compared to the previous year
- There was an increase in police reported ASB incidents of 7.9% compared to the previous year
- Alcohol and drug related harm continues to present the highest risk to communities.

In addition, community feedback is gathered throughout the year, in the form of structured surveys or more informal intelligence gathering via, for example, community engagement and complaints received. These surveys have identified that antisocial behaviour continues to be a key issue for the local community, particularly in public spaces.

A priority focus for Safer Torbay is to increase our capacity to gather and analyse data from across the partnership to gain a more dynamic understanding of the wider issues facing our communities – and get ahead of emerging risks. This remains an important gap due to the absence of sustainable funding.

3. Key activity 24/25

3.1 Prevent The Prevent Duty was established via the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with the aim of stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Prevent also extends to supporting the rehabilitation and disengagement of those already involved in terrorism. It sits alongside long-established safeguarding duties on professionals to protect people from a range of other harms, such as substance abuse, involvement in gangs, and physical and sexual exploitation. The duty helps to ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are supported as they would be under safeguarding processes.

As part of Prevent, we aim to:

- Increase awareness of the signs of radicalisation
- Intervene early to support people at risk of radicalisation
- Tackle the ideological causes of terrorism. This will help people make informed choices.
- Enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.
- Signpost parents, carers, family and friends to Prevent or other safeguarding services.
- Encourage people to be safe online so that they are less exposed to harm.

Some of the work delivered by the Prevent Partnership the following over the last 12 months has included:

- A localised risk assessment has been produced and scrutiny of partnership self-assessment feedback to identify areas of improvement.
- Review carried out into referrals numbers and processes for primary and secondary care.
- Training Strategy has been updated.
- Initiation of a Task and Finish group to look specifically at the low level of adult referrals into Channel.
- Consideration of how problem-solving approaches work locally with guidance developed to support this process and ensure learning is fed into the partnership.

Home Office Benchmarking for Prevent found that the Local Authority has evidenced that it is exceeding requirements in the core benchmark areas of the multi-agency partnership group, risk assessment, delivery planning, referral pathway and training. Benchmarking for Channel did not take place this year however informal feedback from the Home Office local QA lead is that our Channel Panel is strong and working effectively. There is good engagement in the Torbay Channel by Adult Social Care and Mental Health services.

An internal CONTEST Board for officers across Torbay Council is in the process of being set up to share information and ensure consideration of any risks that may relate the 4 pillars of the government counter terrorism strategy.

Nationally following the Southport murders and subsequent rapid learning review the Home Office took steps to clarify existing policy in relation to Prevent. This included some interim policy changes introduced by CT Policing in relation to repeat referrals and referrals categorised as 'fascination with extreme violence or mass casualty attacks'.

An area that we need to strengthen is how we better gauge community sentiment and emerging themes by sharing intelligence regarding community tensions and understanding local risk levels. With the current global and national political narrative there continues to be the potential for escalation of extreme right-wing rhetoric, with links to anti-immigration sentiment. The result of this was seen in relation to the summer 2024 protests/riots which followed false reporting and deliberate spreading of disinformation relating to the offender. The presence of destabilising violent conflicts in the world and rise of race-centric tensions and intolerances will only serve to increase this risk.

3.2 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced the powers that law enforcement agencies need to pursue, disrupt and bring to justice those engaged in human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. It also introduced a range of measures to enhance support and protection for victims.

The Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance (Home Office, 2020) applies in England and Wales to public authorities with a duty to notify the Home Office when encountering a potential victim and those involved in the identification of and support for potential victims. These individuals and organisations must have regard to the Statutory Guidance, with a view to developing a more consistent response to modern slavery victims to ensure they are identified and receive the available and appropriate support.

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

The governance and primary delivery mechanism for work in this area is via the Devon and Cornwall Anti-Slavery Partnership (ASP). The Partnership provides multi-agency strategic direction and co-ordination in the response to modern slavery and human trafficking (MSHT) across the four local authority areas, with the strategic aim of ensuring modern slavery and human trafficking is considered as daily business.

The responsibilities of the Anti-Slavery Partnership (ASP) are to understand and share good practice working together with Children's Safeguarding Partnerships, Adult Safeguarding Boards and CSPs. It aims to develop a consistent approach to addressing MSHT across the peninsula and use local intelligence and learning from local operations to inform policy and practice.

A requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 is that organisations produce and publish a Modern Slavery Statement which demonstrates the steps they are taking to prevent modern slavery in their business and supply chains. The Statement for Torbay Council has recently been reviewed and updated and is awaiting sign off. It has been broadened slightly from purely a procurement and supply chain focus to include some additional detail on the role the local authority plays in

partnership to address modern slavery. Consideration needs to be given to the scope of the statement for the next annual review, and whether to widen it further as this document could act as the overarching corporate policy in future.

Locally police and partner activity is driven by threat assessment and intelligence submissions, in addition to delivering planned proactive operations as capacity allows.

- 3.3 Serious Violence Duty** The Serious Violence Duty requires ‘specified authorities’¹ to work together to identify and respond to the kinds of violence that occur in their area. Over the last year the focus has been on continuing to deliver the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme and Violence Against Women and Girls, with an emphasis on improving safety on public transport.

Mentors in Violence Prevention programme – funded by the Home Office Serious Violence Duty grant, this project works with primary age children. This is an early intervention peer mentoring programme that aims to create a safe and positive space to encourage positive peer to peer connection to ultimately reduce crime and violence. MVP is a preventative programme where children and young people develop leadership skills to consider their role as ‘active bystanders’, it aims to create safe and supportive learning environments by challenging bullying and abuse, building relationships and creating partnerships. MVP has continued to be delivered in several Torbay Primary schools however was impacted this year by severe delays in the announcement of Home Office funding. Work is ongoing to identify ways in which the project can be continued post 25/26 and potential embedded into wider prevention activity in education or community settings.

SWAN (Safety of Women at Night Charter) – the SWAN charter has been running for several years and is about supporting businesses and organisations to take practical steps together to make Torbay safer at night for women. 150 organisations are currently signed up to the Charter and we have continued to engage with local businesses to increase engagement. For the upcoming year the aim is to strengthen the offer to the network by offering additional bystander training, input from voluntary sector partners to increase awareness of VAWG – and linking more closely with the DA Champions network.

IMABI Safer travel app – with funding from Great Western Railway a project is being developed with the aim of improving safety for women and girls when using public transport, although it’s impact will potentially be much wider. A survey of safety when using public transport identified people were unsure how to report incidents on public transport so the funding has been used to purchase access to the IMABI travel app for a 12-month test and learn project. The app will provide localised mapping and safety tools specific to Torbay – including quick incident reporting to police, Stagecoach and other partners. It was also provide information on local services, safe spaces and useful advice guides which can be edited and changed locally. It offers a method for direct engagement with local users for example for spot surveys, and provides users with virtual tracking and other safety tools.

¹ Torbay Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, Torbay Youth Justice Service, Devon and Torbay Probation Service, Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, Devon Integrated Care Board

4. Safer Torbay – Community Safety Strategy 25/28

- 4.1 A key piece of work for this year has been the development of the new Community Safety Strategy which sets out the priority objectives for Safer Torbay for the next three years. The strategy has been developed against a challenging backdrop, locally, nationally and globally, recognising that the world is changing rapidly and will continue to do so. As a partnership we have recognised that we must have our eyes on the future, to help our communities build resilience and be ready to meet these emerging challenges.

This will need us to acknowledge that as a partnership we must adapt and evolve, experiment and be prepared to take risks, build trust, relationships and stronger collaborations. The strategy has an increased focus on community resilience, challenging dis/misinformation and taking a systemic approach to a complex landscape of needs, highlighting how we need to improve understanding and navigate this complexity to really make a positive difference for Torbay.

The wider context and challenges that have informed the strategy include:

- **Policy and political changes and focus on transformation:** national focus on building efficiency in the public sector with significant change in the NHS; local government reorganisation; and potential reform of policing.
- **The climate emergency and community resilience:** climate related events such as flooding, heatwaves, and infrastructure disruptions can strain emergency services and increase vulnerability, especially in already disadvantaged areas. A lack of community resilience in the face of environmental crisis can undermine social cohesion and amplify the risk of harm.
- **Pace of technical change:** rapid advances in technology including AI, surveillance tools and digital communication create both opportunities and challenges for community safety. Issues such as cyber bullying, online radicalisation, mis/disinformation and fraud – are all evolving challenges.
- **Inequality and economic pressure:** rising poverty, housing insecurity, unemployment and increasing cost of living pressures can lead to increases in acquisitive crime, exploitation and public unrest. Inequality can deepen mistrust in public services and increase isolation and alienation, particularly amongst young people.
- **Trust and legitimacy in public institutions:** declining trust can lead to underreporting, reduced engagement and increase tensions between the community and public bodies. The impact of mis/disinformation is becoming increasingly apparent, from both internal and external sources and bad actors.

The strategy places **vulnerability and complex lives** as critical for the focus for Safer Torbay. People experiencing multiple and intersecting challenges often struggle to access timely, appropriate support. Challenges include, for example, mental ill health, substance misuse, trauma, homelessness and housing insecurity, poverty, and domestic abuse and sexual violence. When these needs go unmet, people can become more susceptible to harm, exploitation, or involvement in criminal and anti-social behaviour. Vulnerable people are at increased risk of exploitation and victimisation, and these crimes are often hidden and underreported. Complex lives can be a driver of offending and antisocial behaviour, with unaddressed trauma, dependency and mental ill health leading people into cycles of offending. Many people with complex lives also fall through the cracks; and with unsustainable pressure on systems, can result in crisis driven, reactive responses.

Visible vulnerability, such as rough sleeping, and public drug use can affect perceptions and increase public fear.

- 4.2 In response to strategic assessment, community feedback and the wider context above, the following strategic priorities have been agreed by Safer Torbay:

Priority 1	Tackling antisocial behaviour in public spaces to increase feelings of safety
Priority 2	Preventing and reducing serious violence
Priority 3	Hate crime, community cohesion; and preventing radicalisation and extremism
Priority 4	Protecting those vulnerable to exploitation
Priority 5	Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence
Priority 6	Reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol

There are also several cross-cutting themes for the partnership:

Reducing reoffending - Reducing re-offending and reducing the harm caused by offenders to members of the public and preventing young people entering the criminal justice system are priorities. Across most priority areas above, there is the cross-cutting theme of reducing reoffending both by adults and young people, through prevention, support, diversion and disruption.

Community engagement and building resilient communities - Working with our communities to understand the issues they are facing and how we can support them to become more resilient. This underpins all priorities within the strategy. We will work to build on the existing engagement mechanisms with a wide range of groups to ensure that communities feel heard and able to actively participate in decision making and priority setting. A resilient community is one that can withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity, whilst maintaining social cohesion and protecting its most vulnerable members. We recognise that as a partnership we have an increasing role to play as part of our community, to draw on all our strengths, to help connect and foster a sense of belonging, collectively address inequalities and build trust.

Communication - To support the delivery of the strategy we will develop a communication plan to raise awareness, encourage engagement and build public confidence. The key messages will be to promote the core priorities and work that is being delivered, particularly highlighting where there has been community involvement. This plan will ensure alignment and coordination across the various partnerships and subgroups to reduce duplication and make the best use of resources. Part of this work will be to grow the Safer Torbay identity and brand and raise awareness of the partnership within the community and amongst other stakeholders.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 To ensure effective delivery of the Community Safety Strategy there will need to be a demonstrated commitment by all partners to the shared principles of the partnership. These have been agreed as:

We collaborate – this means we work together, we support each other, and we share information (where lawful and appropriate) to collectively problem solve and respond. This also means sharing responsibility and pooling resources to achieve our shared goals.

We are trauma informed – this means we recognise the prevalence of trauma in people’s lives and acknowledges the potential effects that this can have on individuals and their families, networks, and communities.

We take a population approach – this means we work to really understand and address underlying drivers of crime and vulnerability rather than focusing solely on symptoms by being evidence based and using data to inform our problem solving.

We are community focused – this means we adopt an inclusive, listening-led, and collaborative approach which recognises the diverse voices, experiences, and needs within our communities.

Key to this will be having a strong governance and accountability framework which feeds into each partners internal governance structures, with the ability to escalate and influence decision making at executive level. Against a backdrop of challenging financial constraints, and complex demand, this is an ambitious strategy.

- 5.2 Next steps for the partnership will be to formally sign off the Community Safety Strategy and develop more detailed delivery plans where needed. This will involve wider engagement with internal and external stakeholders including the community and voluntary sector to identify opportunities for collaboration.

In addition, further work is needed to finalise a performance monitoring and assurance framework for the partnership. This will include:

- Tracking crime, ASB and health data from police and other partners.
- Gathering feedback from the community and partners through regular consultation and informal engagement including assessing fear of crime.
- Conducting qualitative assessments of interventions.
- Maintaining an overarching risk register against delivery of this strategy.
- Conducting focussed assurance activity based on risk.
- Carrying out ‘deep dives’ into emerging issues or areas of concern.
- Producing quarterly and annual performance reports.
- Carrying out an annual ‘health check’ on how we are doing as a partnership against our stated principles.

To effectively deliver the strategy, we need much better access to and understanding of the issues we are addressing and have highlighted that Safer Torbay is an outlier with regards to analytical capability compared to other CSPs in the South-West. Work is underway to identify and secure potential funding to fill this gap including exploring opportunities for a joint resource with other partnerships.

A programme of reporting on progress into Overview and Scrutiny framework and DOM is also being finalised for the next 12 months.

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