



Community Governance Review New Town or Parish Councils in Torbay Consultation Report April 2019

Number of questionnaire responses received
585

This consultation was open between Monday 14 January 2019 and Friday 15 March 2019.

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Headline Results	4
3. Summary of Results.....	5
4. Social Media Evaluation.....	20
5. Written Representations	22

1. Executive Summary

Town and parish councils exist in many rural and urban areas and are the most local tier of government in England. Torbay Council is classed as a Principal Authority and therefore has responsibility for deciding whether to create, amend or abolish parish areas within its boundaries and whether to establish councils to serve any of the parishes.

A parish council that serves a town area may call itself a 'town council'.

Town or parish councils do not have statutory responsibility for services such as social care, education or housing but they may decide to provide some local services for their residents. In some cases, they may take over responsibility for services previously or currently delivered by Torbay Council.

The Council decided to undertake a Community Governance Review because town or parish councils could enable services to continue in Torbay which Torbay Council may no longer be able to provide. This is because they are able to raise additional income through their Council Tax precept. Therefore this would mean that, if town or parish councils are established, residents would pay more Council Tax overall.

These local councils can also play a key role in communities by the promotion of community engagement between the Council and residents, and more inclusive local government.

All local residents, business owners and organisations were invited to give their views via an on-line questionnaire. Posters were put up in all the Council's public facing offices and engagement visits were carried out at libraries in each of the towns. The Community Governance Review was publicised in a press release and promoted widely across all Torbay Council's social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn.

Detailed supporting information about the review is available on our website www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr

All feedback will be considered before draft recommendations are made. These will then be published for further consultation between June and August 2019 ahead of a final decision in October 2019. If any new town or parish councils are established they will come into existence no later than April 2020.

A total of 585 completed questionnaires were received. There were also three written representations received. These have been collated, anonymised where necessary, and can be found in section 5.

Respondent's comments have been grouped into themes with examples shown alongside. Some comments span a range of themes. Comments are shown as they were received and have not been altered.

2. Headline Results

The majority of respondents identified themselves as **Torbay residents** (546). Of the respondents who told us their postcode, **42.3%** were from Torquay, **40.7%** from the Paignton, and **13.2%** from the Brixham area.

80.0% of respondents **did not** think that creating town or parish councils would provide more benefits than if the Council developed how we work with the existing bodies.

81.0% of respondents **did not** think that the new town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Torbay Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept.

34.9% of respondents think that there **should** be changes to the area covered by Brixham Town Council, but they were closely followed by the percentage of those that **didn't know** at **33.3%** and those that thought there should be **no changes** to Brixham Town Council at **22.7%**.

41.9% of respondents **didn't know** if there should be any changes to the number of councillors who make up Brixham Town Council. **30.8%** of respondents thought there should be **fewer councillors**.

78.5% of respondents **disagreed** that that town or parish councils should be set up to serve the parts of Torbay that do not currently have them. **14.9%** thought they **should** be set up.

3. Summary of Results

1) Please tell us whether you are a:

(multiple choice)	Number	Percent
Local resident	570	97.4%
Local employee	51	8.7%
Local business person	28	4.8%
Official representative responding on behalf of a community organisation	5	0.9%
Other	>5	~

1a) Please tell us the name of your organisation

Comments
<i>"Brixham Arts & Theatre Society"</i>
<i>"Brixham Town Council"</i>
<i>"Community Health & Welfare Alliance-which includes Torbay & South Devon TUC"</i>
<i>"Torbay Street Pastors"</i>

2) Do you think that creating town or parish councils would provide more benefits than if the Council developed how we work with the existing bodies?

	Number	Percent
Yes	88	15.0%
No	468	80.0%
Don't know	29	5.0%
No answer	>5	~
Total	585	100.0%

2a) Please tell us why you gave the above answer

Theme	Examples of comments
<p>Cost / Tax (208)</p>	<p><i>"If taxes have to be raised to pay for Town Councils projects then why can't Torbay Council raise the equivalent tax to pay for the services it can't afford to run."</i></p> <p><i>"Creating town or parish councils would create yet another tier of bureaucracy and cost the local tax payer even more. Town Councils would need to be set up including a building, offices, lighting, heating, water, toilet facilities and additional officers to administer services. This is just a back door way of increasing the Council Tax!"</i></p> <p><i>"I think that local councils would have a better understanding and commitment in relation to matters appertaining to matters in their area. I would be prepared to pay more in council tax for relevant improvements in local services. Paignton needs a bigger 'voice' in improving the town centre for example which at present is rather shabby and run down."</i></p> <p><i>"It will mean an increase in council tax which is already too high for some of us to manage."</i></p> <p><i>"It would just be another expensive tier in local government that must residents, apart from paying more council tax would not notice any difference."</i></p>
<p>Management of local needs and services / Representation (205)</p>	<p><i>"If you create town councils for torquay and paignton, many people would struggle to understand why we need Torbay Council and why we continue to pay them a monthly amount. Torbay council has been mismanaged for so long it now has a widespread reputation for being incompetent. Outsourcing responsibilities to other organisations whilst still collecting the same amount of tax will do nothing to help that reputation."</i></p> <p><i>"It would allow Town Councils to source additional funding for services such as street cleaning and local projects and initiatives. It would bring the decision making process closer to home. It could also reduce the need for the number of councillors on Torbay Council."</i></p> <p><i>"My area does not have any local body, and instead is lumped in with the larger entity of Torbay with which we have little in common."</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"The more levels of authority/responsibility there are, the more communication and admin is needed. We have 2 local councillors in our area and I can see no reason why they can't continue to liaise with the community partnership directly and get their information 'from the horse's mouth' so to speak."</i></p> <p><i>"Torbay is a relatively small local government area . There is no need for a further level of governance . The costs involved to the council tax payer are not justified . The idea that we can get around central government expenditure / tax raising rules by creating town councils is naive . Government will introduce the same controls for town councils as exist for other levels of local government"</i></p>
<p>Bureaucracy (175)</p>	<p><i>"We do not need another layer of bureaucracy in this area. Elected mayoral position abolished by popular vote. Another layer of government would eat up any benefit more revenue through increased taxes could bring. Please work alongside the existing bodies."</i></p> <p><i>"there is o need for another tied of bureaucracy - this will just cost the residents more in council tax without any improvement is services."</i></p> <p><i>"more red tape, more people to make decisions, more ways of holding up decision making"</i></p> <p><i>"It's a ridiculous idea. Dreamt up by politicians to create more politicians. In business you reduce management layers and involve stakeholders to become more efficient and efficient. This is just increasing cost, reducing effectiveness, increasing bureaucracy and political agendas. In summary it's a waste of money and will decrease effectiveness"</i></p> <p><i>"It should be possible to ensure fairness of resource allocation without an extra layer of bureaucracy."</i></p>
<p>Other ways / Existing bodies (62)</p>	<p><i>"We fought to become a unitary authority to have one strong voice so we should enhance it not destroy it."</i></p> <p><i>"Where is the evidence that Brixham Town Council has delivered benefits for the community that outweigh the costs? Community Partnerships already provide a local vehicle for residents to become involved in improving their neighbourhoods, along with Neighbourhood Plans."</i></p> <p><i>"I believe that the Council could be run more efficiently by a radical re-structure of the way it provides non-statutory services."</i></p> <p><i>"There are already a number of community and voluntary groups in Torbay that could achieve much more locally if they had more funding and support from Torbay Council."</i></p> <p><i>"I see the Community Partnerships as providing a forum to float many random ideas that can create a cohesive local direction but this needs a 'formal' structure into which it can report - the town or parish council in effect becoming the 'civil service' to drive forward adopted ideas with a local interest"</i></p>
<p>Cost effectiveness (50)</p>	<p><i>"I have such a low opinion of Torbay Council that it works be hard for this to get worse. That said, I see little benefit in adding more layers. These things rarely add to efficiency or cost effectiveness."</i></p> <p><i>"I know a lot of people who live in Brixham and none think they have had any benefit since a Parish was formed there. Whilst they initially supported the idea, they feel very disillusioned that all it seems to have done is raise council tax with no clear benefit"</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"too much of the extra money on the tax will be used for Admin and there will be more people involved meaning more red tape and no benefit for the extra money when the current rates already put working people in the middle income bracket in poverty as no help available for this demographic"</i></p> <p><i>"We pay one of the highest council tax in the country as it is. Why pay more when it is wasted . Get town centres sorted first."</i></p> <p><i>"I just think it is creating another layer of government at a much higher cost to residents that will not necessarily be any more effective. Most of the money would be spent on salaries or expenses."</i></p>
Other (40)	<p><i>"It costs too much and it will turn the clock back."</i></p> <p><i>"I feel Torbay council is out of touch"</i></p> <p><i>"Not enough information on pros and cons of each option"</i></p> <p><i>"The conservative members of the council need to approach their fellow party members in government and 'insist' local authorities are properly funded!!!"</i></p>

3) Do you think the new town or parish council(s) should consider delivering some local services that are currently provided by Torbay Council and for these to be paid for by the town council precept?

	Number	Percent
Yes	84	14.4%
No	474	81.0%
Don't know	24	4.1%
No answer	>5	~
Total	585	100.0%

3a) What sort of services do you think town or parish councils could deliver?

There were 80 responses to this question. The 10 most popular answers are listed below.

Theme	Number of comments
Street cleaning / litter collection	29
Grounds maintenance / grass cutting	22
Events	12
Parks	11
Parking rates or permits	11
Bin collection	10
Community Centres / activities	8
Highways	7
Tourism	6
Planning / regeneration	6

3b) Please tell us why you gave the above answer.

Theme	Examples of comments
Cost / Taxes (112)	<p><i>"Again, another level, and additional costs to the already hard pressed taxpayer"</i></p> <p><i>"Because having more Town and Parish councils would not be cost effective."</i></p> <p><i>"This will involve more costs on implementation/staff/offices and less money going where it is needed."</i></p> <p><i>"Torbay council needs to spend more wisely and increase council tax when it has the opportunity, not add a new layer where the precept would get swallowed by the running costs."</i></p> <p><i>"These are all things which would make our area a more attractive environment for both locals and visitors and is sadly lacking at present."</i></p> <p><i>"Just a way to increase taxes"</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
<p>Service provision / A waste (99)</p>	<p><i>“since I moved to the bay some years ago, services have gone downhill, most of the towns are litter strewn and no-one cares what the place looks like, there is little community spirit.”</i></p> <p><i>“the current council can continue to provide their services and if Torbay council were to increase the rates the same as would be needed for a new parish/council then they could improve the services provided.”</i></p> <p><i>“We pay a large amount of money to the council and i cannot aford any more out of my pension to see another collection of councils waste it like the ones do now”</i></p> <p><i>“I would rather any increase in Council Tax was spent on vital services like Mental Health, Schools, Domestic Abuse victims etc. Not to fund extra bureaucracy.”</i></p>
<p>Already paying Torbay for these services / Will be paying twice (77)</p>	<p><i>“The council should run the services If the government cut back are cutting so deep that the council cannot run the services It should lobby government for more money Take on commercial enterprises to raise more money or go bust”</i></p> <p><i>“Torbay Council should do this already!!!! It should be standard with any competent council!!!!”</i></p> <p><i>“We are already paying Torbay Council for these services.”</i></p> <p><i>“Why pay twice if it a council service then the council should supply it,”</i></p> <p><i>“Torbay council are already paid for these services, they do not offer a rebate to tax payers why would anyone want to pay twice.”</i></p>
<p>Representation / Community (68)</p>	<p><i>“Because they won't have the necessary skills to run some of the services that the Council does.”</i></p> <p><i>“A Town Council is a positive attribute to the community. They can facilitate community activities, organise and sponsor events and promote community spirit and inclusiveness. They can provide services such as manage parks and public spaces, markets and organise events that attract visitors and promote their community.”</i></p> <p><i>“People know where these things are needed in their local area and decisions made are not always the right ones for our town.”</i></p> <p><i>“More money to provide more burearcy and more people who think they are important”</i></p> <p><i>“Torbay Council is focused on Torquay. We need a local council focused on Paignton.”</i></p>
<p>Bureaucracy / Administration (56)</p>	<p><i>“It is an unnecessary additional bureaucratic level that we cannot afford locally. If Torbay Council could work more effectively with the voluntary and community sector much more would be achieved than through setting up town councils.”</i></p> <p><i>“We would lose any potential economies of scope or scale. Where county councils are saving money by combining service provision around the country, we are discussing doing the opposite. It will create extra costs for the council tax payer. Given Brexit means we will need to tighten our belts and we will have less money, extra bureacracy is not the way.”</i></p> <p><i>“This will involve more costs on implementation/staff/offices and less money going where it is needed.”</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"It seems a bureaucratic process to create councils, and divide services, when usually (central government / arms length national agencies etc) work on the basis that critical mass = savings, not duplication of functions. Evidence indicates it does not save money or improve service and is a backdoor way to increase local tax."</i></p> <p><i>"waste of money.... more pen pushers"</i></p>
<p>Don't agree with them / Not needed (52)</p>	<p><i>"We do not need a new town or parish council"</i></p> <p><i>"Why would you need to set up another council. If TBC already can't control the costs. Then what hope have we really got? £1300 for council tax is already enough out of a partly £18.5k wage a year. So no thank you"</i></p> <p><i>"Don't agree with splitting down the council that already exists"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't believe the geographical size of the area warrants additional levels of administration."</i></p> <p><i>"No, economies of scale should be exploited; they will be lost in this case. I do not agree with further devolution and I do not believe t9wn councils would be adequately held to account for delivery"</i></p>
<p>Pay enough already (50)</p>	<p><i>"We pay enough already. If the Council were more efficient there is no need. Concentrate on improving efficiency and productivity instead."</i></p> <p><i>"We don't need more costs...they are high enough as they are, and as Torbay has a high percentage of pensioners, we don't need this!"</i></p> <p><i>"we already pay a high council tax and unless you are 'in care' you receive very little for it. why would you pay more when you get poor value already."</i></p> <p><i>"It is of concern that any new costs (precept) will just rise and rise. We already pay for many things in our council tax and appear to see little of what we pay for."</i></p> <p><i>"Because we pay council tax. That should be used to pay for service. Not over paid pen pushers. 50-60 a year would mean families already struggling worse off."</i></p>
<p>Other (46)</p>	<p><i>"I don't understand how it would work."</i></p> <p><i>"Outside the main town centre area the council do not seem to care what happens"</i></p> <p><i>"this would descend into abject chaos"</i></p> <p><i>"Until we know the range of options, what boundaries a town council would cover, which services that council may chose to take on board - no one can offer an informed answer. Your use of the £200 - £300 precept figure is as honest and as misleading as £350m a week for the NHS on the side of a bus!"</i></p>
<p>As before / Previous answer (46)</p>	<p><i>"Same reasons as above."</i></p> <p><i>"See my answer to Q2."</i></p> <p><i>"For reasons already stated"</i></p> <p><i>"For the same reason as last answer and it would mean a further cost to the council tax payer."</i></p>
<p>Works fine as it is (8)</p>	<p><i>"The present system is capable of working out where the priorities lie."</i></p>

4a) Based on where you live, which Torbay town, parish, area or locality do you feel you belong to?

Respondents fed back with a variety of areas, some being individual Torbay wards or singular smaller neighbourhoods such as Broadsands or Wellswood. The most common responses (shown below) were the names of the three towns in the bay. 574 respondents answered this question.

Area or locality	Number or respondents that mention the locality
Paignton	162
Torquay	119
Brixham	70
Torbay	50
Preston	36

4b) What is your postcode?

(We are asking this to understand where you live in relation to the locality you feel you belong to)

	Number	Percent
TQ1 (Torquay)	111	19.5%
TQ2 (Torquay)	129	22.7%
TQ3 (Preston/Paignton)	131	23.1%
TQ4 (Paignton)	100	17.6%
TQ5 (Brixham)	75	13.2%
Other areas	22	3.9%
No answer	291	51.2%
Total	858	100.0%

If you do think that new town or parish council(s) should be created:

5a) What area(s) should it/they cover?

Theme	Number of comments in category
Disagree with them / Don't want them / No / None / NA	210
Their town area	88
Smaller neighbourhoods or wards	36
Torbay / One council / Keep things the same	25
Other comments	15
Do away with Brixham Town Council	5
Don't know	5

5b) What would you name the new town or parish council(s)?

Theme	Number of comments in category
Disagree with them / Don't want them / No / None / NA	142
Name after the town	73
Names should reflect the neighbourhood or ward	35
Other comments	35
Waste of money	17
Refer to previous answer	17
Keep it the same / Torbay	16
Don't know	7

This review is an opportunity for local people to comment on any changes that they might like to suggest in respect of the existence of Brixham Town Council, the area covered by it and its electoral arrangements.

6) Do you think that there should be any changes to the area covered by Brixham Town Council?

	All responses		Brixham responses only*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes, it should cover a larger area	18	3.1%	9	12.0%
Yes, it should cover a smaller area	>5	~	>5	~
Yes, it should be abolished	204	34.9%	33	44.0%
No	133	22.7%	28	37.3%
Don't know	195	33.3%	>5	~
No answer	31	5.3%	0	0.0%
Total	585	100.0%	75	100.0%

*These are respondents who supplied a TQ5 postcode. (291 respondents did not supply a postcode).

6a) Please tell us why you gave the above answer.

There were 384 responses to this question. The top 10 response categories are listed below.

Theme	Examples of comments
Don't live in Brixham / It's for Brixham to decide / Don't know enough about Brixham to comment (117)	<p><i>"As I don't live there I do not feel qualified to answer this question as I have no idea how it currently operates."</i></p> <p><i>"I did not agree with Brixham having. Town Council but up to Brixham Residents to decide whether they want to continue with a town council"</i></p> <p><i>"This is for brixham people to decide - they pay the additional rates."</i></p> <p><i>"nothing to do with me"</i></p> <p><i>"Not clear about the benefits to Brixham of the current model"</i></p>
Works fine / Don't change (48)	<p><i>"Brixham is a great community based town & Brixham Town Council should not incorporate anything other than what it already does"</i></p> <p><i>"It appears to now be working well albeit it took a while for this to happen. "If it's not broke donned change it"</i></p> <p><i>"The current organisation does a effective job within the limited scope and funding provided by Torbay."</i></p> <p><i>"Seems to work well today - if it 's not broke don't change it"</i></p> <p><i>"They are doing fine."</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
<p>Other (44)</p>	<p><i>"Torbay should become under Devon County Council"</i></p> <p><i>"Only does things in Town Centre"</i></p> <p><i>"Not sure of the area they cover presently, but all 3 should about each other so there are no gaps"</i></p> <p><i>"We need to work together on all issues."</i></p>
<p>A single, Torbay wide Council (34)</p>	<p><i>"Bring the whole Bsy under one umbrella"</i></p> <p><i>"Brixham Councillors should represent this area on a whole bay council. We need to improve unity with the bay."</i></p> <p><i>"The recent 'refugee' case showed it to be an out of touch, anti-democratic institution which does not have the best interest of the area at heart. Besides, no part of the bay should be run separately from the rest"</i></p>
<p>Money / Cost (30)</p>	<p><i>"Brixham town council hasn't delivered anything meaningful since it commenced. Lantern parades and pirate festivals are expensive activities for those paying the extra money."</i></p> <p><i>"Brixham is somewhat unique at helping itself. This is something that it can do without the help of elected and no elected officials. Removing the Parish Council would reduce the taxation burden. We should not forget that 40% of the additional tax raised to support Brixham people goes in paying and housing these officials."</i></p> <p><i>"It does not work for nothing so it is an extra expense at a time councils should be cutting back"</i></p>
<p>Don't agree with town councils / Don't believe it works (30)</p>	<p><i>"I do not agree with the Town Council proposal. As brixham exists it should remain the same until it proves it can deliver more for less - or scrapped."</i></p> <p><i>"No parish councils"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't believe Town Councils are the way ahead"</i></p>
<p>Added bureaucracy (25)</p>	<p><i>"Because real decisions are not made by the town council and it has only created more bureaucracy and a larger Council tax bill."</i></p> <p><i>"We need less bureaucracy, not more, it has not improved service in my opinion"</i></p>
<p>Not beneficial / Ineffectual (22)</p>	<p><i>"It has never done ANYTHING useful and never will. I have personally tried to improve matters and have had to give up"</i></p> <p><i>"Because I am not aware of any significant or beneficial difference that Brixham Town Council has made. Do the people of Torbay in general know it exists? Do they care? and would they care if it wasn't there? For that matter how many people in Brixham think the Town council offers significant benefit to them? All a bit cynical I'm afraid but you did ask!"</i></p>
<p>Brixham residents pay more (21)</p>	<p><i>"Why should the residents of Brixham have to pay twice for the same service? Barmey"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't agree with there being a Brixham town council it costs tax payers more money"</i></p>

7) Do you think that there should be any changes to the number of councillors who make up Brixham Town Council?

	All responses		Brixham responses only*	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes, there should be more councillors	11	1.9%	8	10.7%
Yes, there should be fewer councillors	180	30.8%	35	46.7%
No	103	17.6%	24	32.0%
Don't know	245	41.9%	7	9.3%
No answer	46	7.9%	>5	~
Total	585	100.0%	75	100.0%

*Respondents who supplied a TQ5 postcode. (291 respondents did not supply a postcode).

7a) Please tell us why you gave the above answer

There were 329 responses to this question. The top 10 response categories are listed below.

Theme	Examples of comments
As above / Previous answers (54)	<p><i>"All my answers make the reason clear."</i></p> <p><i>"Same as above"</i></p> <p><i>"N/A see 6A above"</i></p> <p><i>"Ditto"</i></p>
Cost / Money (45)	<p><i>"To save money and spend it on things the locals actually need!"</i></p> <p><i>"too small to have any influence. but expensive to run."</i></p> <p><i>"Less councillors would be more cost effective and efficient"</i></p> <p><i>"Less cost to council taxpayer."</i></p>
Don't know (42)	<p><i>"Don't have enough information to comment"</i></p> <p><i>"Don't know who the current councillors are"</i></p> <p><i>"I am not familiar with Brixham Town council, and can therefore not comment on how many councillors it should have."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't know how many councillors there are not or how busy they are."</i></p>
Too many / Fewer councillors / No councillors (40)	<p><i>"No Town Councillors would be the best option. Brixham representatives should sit on the main Torbay Council"</i></p> <p><i>"There are too may Councillors across all of Torbay which is why we end up with so many political arguments."</i></p> <p><i>"More councillors always result in more in-fighting with residents bearing additional costs."</i></p> <p><i>"Too many of our existing councillors are struggling to deliver and are stepping down...we want fewer and more long term councillors that deliver the answers."</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
I don't live there (39)	<p>"Not a Brixham Resident and do not know enough about the present situation"</p> <p>"I don't thankfully live there!!"</p> <p>"I have no experience of Brixham."</p>
Representation (30)	<p>"I do not know how many councillors there are . however there does seem to be something successfully different about Brixham and there is a pride that is reflected around Brixham which cannot be seen elsewhere in the Bay"</p> <p>"Brixham should be properly respesented at Torbay council, with councillors providing a local voice and influencing council policy."</p> <p>"There should be a set number of residents per councillor"</p>
Fine as it is (27)	<p>"Knowing all three councillors over many years, they represent Brixham very well."</p> <p>"They are currently sufficiently accessible. Further members would increase the Bureaucracy and cost"</p>
Abolish Brixham Council (22)	<p>"Brixham Council should be abolished so there is a consistent system over the whole of Torbay."</p> <p>"Brixham council to join Torbay Council."</p>
Other (20)	<p>"It is nothing but a self congratulatory talking shop for self important little people."</p> <p>"all government is unaffordable under the current central govt"</p>
For Brixham to decide (14)	<p>"I do not live in the area and the Brixham residents are the electorate who must be satisfied by their Council."</p>

8) Do you agree that town or parish councils should be set up to serve the parts of Torbay that do not currently have them?

	Number	Percent
Yes	87	14.9%
No	459	78.5%
Don't know	29	5.0%
No answer	10	1.7%
Total	585	100.0%

9) Do you have any other comments on governance issues at the parish/town council level?

Theme	Examples of comments
<p>Efficiency / Services / Representative (123)</p>	<p><i>“As stated before. Too many already over paid councillors who don't already do the job they're paid for. Roads are a disgrace, cutbacks are atrocious.”</i></p> <p><i>“Governance is also about competence and I really wonder about white elderly men spending my money on debate after debate.”</i></p> <p><i>“Residents should be able to hold their elected representatives to account better. Far too often the voice of local people is ignored and decisions past by the current council and out going mayor that does not represent the local population. While we all understand that business and investment is vital to our economy it should not be at the expense of those who actually live here.”</i></p> <p><i>“We don't need another layer of bureaucracy. Torbay Council needs to focus and get on and do its job properly rather than looking for ways out. The Homeless are a great visible problem across the Bay but nothing is done positively to improve matters. The benefits system provided by the Council seeks to put people off making legitimate claims and is not fit for purpose. Food banks! Business support is poor.”</i></p> <p><i>“It is regrettable that it is necessary to think along these lines which should be viewed in the context of the abject failure of Torbay Council to provide the services that our communities have a right to expect. Let's also be honest and admit that the consideration of new parishes is also a means to raise more money in the bay and may be opposed for this reason alone.”</i></p>
<p>No / Not needed / Don't want (76)</p>	<p><i>“I do not agree that town or parish councils are needed in Torbay”</i></p> <p><i>“It time that Torbay treated all it's working parts equally - there are 3 entities - Torquay, Paignton & Brixham and they are all equally important - one town is no more important or worthy than the other. It is not a big enough area to need 3 separate parish councils - that just brings in extra levels of bureaucracy and extra layers of cost for no advantage. Pare it all back, save money & spend that money where it is desperately needed on children & the elderly.”</i></p> <p><i>“Since I don't wish to have them I will not be willing to pay towards them, I would be more willing to go to prison for non payment”</i></p> <p><i>“They are not needed if Torbay Council do their job properly”</i></p> <p><i>“This is a thoroughly bad idea and does not have my support.”</i></p>
<p>Increase in tax / Cost (76)</p>	<p><i>“Do not want to pay anymore council tax for more people to argue and cost more money. The council we have should be able to care for all the community”</i></p> <p><i>“If taxes have to be raised to pay for Town Councils projects then why can't Torbay Council raise the equivalent tax to pay for the services it can't afford to run. If TBC find it difficult to control what service like Tor2 provide then what chance has a small Town or Parish Council got to ensure services of that or similar service continue, will it have back up from Torbay Council.”</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"I do not see how another layer of bureaucracy will change anything, it is just a way of raising more money by getting around the council tax cap. We pay enough already!"</i></p> <p><i>"I would be willing to pay more money through my existing Council Tax to support spending in social care, rather than creating further bureaucracy. It just seems a way of getting round the cap on Council Tax to avoid a referendum. This is the real issue. Why should local government be subject to a referendum (unless you are Northamptonshire!) when they want to increase spending but central government can increase taxes when they want?"</i></p> <p><i>"Council Tax is already too high for most local residents, please do not make the situation worse."</i></p>
<p>Other (55)</p>	<p><i>"Do away with the office of elected mayor. The current incumbent has not been effective."</i></p> <p><i>"Badly worded questionnaire Should have started with the costs first"</i></p> <p><i>"If they exist they should be purely voluntary."</i></p> <p><i>"We already have community partnerships"</i></p>
<p>Bureaucracy (38)</p>	<p><i>"Although Town/Parish Councils are a good idea in principle they are impossible to be effective if the precept is not paid to them, also it is just increasing beurocratic costs before any benifits are forthcoming."</i></p> <p><i>"A waste of money and unnecessary added bureaucracy."</i></p> <p><i>"Although Town/Parish Councils are a good idea in principle they are impossible to be effective if the precept is not paid to them, also it is just increasing beurocratic costs before any benifits are forthcoming."</i></p>
<p>Keep as Torbay (25)</p>	<p><i>"Torquay, Paignton and Brixham to be run by one organisation."</i></p> <p><i>"There should be existing dedicated departments within Torbay Council to serve these areas!"</i></p>
<p>Join with Devon or other authority (17)</p>	<p><i>"I am obviously not if favour of town councils and it was not long ago that we were talking about Torbay joining with Devon to get economies of scale. It is a pity this was not acted upon."</i></p>
<p>Waste of money (17)</p>	<p><i>"I think that there would be too many councillors elected if there were town or parish councils and there would be a huge waste of money setting up the new entities. Money that could be well spent on street cleaning and painted road markings!"</i></p>
<p>Previous answers (13)</p>	<p><i>"No need to repeat my objections again."</i></p>

4. Social Media Evaluation

There were **473 unique page visits** to the community governance review webpage and almost 80% clicked through from social media sites. Over half of these (**241**) were **direct link clicks** from Torbay Council's social media accounts.

The posts on Facebook and Twitter **reached** a potential audience of **32,564**. More importantly, engagement was high with **585 reactions, comments and shares** on the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts. The engagement percentage rate for both Twitter and Facebook was also high (this is the percentage of people reached who liked, shared, commented or clicked on a post). For Facebook this figure was **6.88%** (3.5 and over is good), whilst Twitter achieved a **0.86% engagement rate** (between 0.09% and 0.33% is considered to be high).

The **most effective posts** directly asked people about future council tax payments or referred to the future funding of services. The least effective promoted the public engagement events, suggesting that posts which prompt an emotive reaction are more engaging.

Top line figures

Number of unique page views to the Community Governance Review information web page www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr :	473	
Direct link clicks to website from the Council's Facebook, Twitter, Google + and LinkedIn accounts:	241	
Reach for posts on Facebook and Twitter:	32,564	
Engagement (reactions, comments and shares) on Facebook and Twitter:	585	
Engagement % rate: (number of people reached who liked, shared, commented or clicked on the post)	On Facebook	6.88% (high)
	On Twitter	0.86% (high)

Feedback on social media

Most of the feedback on Torbay Council's social media channels was posted on Facebook. The majority of respondents to the Facebook posts are against setting up town or parish councils either replying "No" or making it clear in their comments that they do not support the introduction of town or parish councils. Common comment themes are; they are already paying too much in Council Tax, they do not want to pay any more Council Tax as they are very dissatisfied with how existing services are being delivered and they want the Council to do something about local problems e.g. road maintenance, street cleansing, homelessness, refuse collection etc. Other comments mention that the Council should work harder with the funding it already has and / or spend it more fairly and wisely in delivering its services. Many commented that they feel the money they pay in Council Tax is being misused or wasted by the Council and that Councillors and staff should take pay cuts.

Posts

Most effective	On Facebook	Would you pay an extra Council Tax payment to fund new town or parish councils so they can deliver services to your local community? Let us know what you think. Find out more at www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr #Torbay	85 link clicks
			15% engagement
			225 reactions, comments and shares
	On Twitter	It's likely we'll be able to provide less services as our funding reduces and pressures on our statutory services increase. So, would you pay more for town or parish councils to provide things like tree planting and traffic calming? Have your say www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr #Torbay	9 link clicks
			1.8% engagement
			18 reactions, comments and shares.

Least effective	On Facebook	Have you got any questions? Should town and parish councils provide local services like tree planting and traffic calming that Torbay Council may not be able to deliver in the future? The first engagement event's at Paignton Library today 10 – 12. www.torbay.gov.uk/communitygr #Torbay	4 link clicks
			4% engagement
			23 reactions, comments and shares.
	and On Twitter		0 link clicks
			0.3% engagement
			2 reactions, comments and shares

5. Written Representations

“As a council tax payer even though I am on long term sick me and my husband do not get any rebate and I don't get any benefits so tell me where we will get another 40-60 a year. Try charging 2nd home owners full council tax and cut wages and crack down on benefit cheats.”

“Not a good idea. Just another body set-up to give their views on certain issues. Can't see the point or the funds needed for it.”

“I am a local resident of 4 years and have begun to understand how the area operates over the summer months; a great deal of resources are diverted to propping up the tourist businesses. This is understandable, but in return the area sees little immediate financial benefit although in the long run I appreciate that without this source of revenue the area would wither. However, in return the restaurants and bed and breakfasts should contribute more so although the small business relief is a national policy places could charge a nominal fee per person for each night stayed and provided this was carefully implemented and managed it would provide income when the town most needs it.

On the matter of additional layers of bureaucracy, those that work in the private sector get told to work harder, have fewer breaks and stop complaining, in other words, get a grip. Please note I am not a serial complainer”

For further information please contact the Corporate Support Team on 01803 207227 or email consultation@torbay.gov.uk

The information used to collate this report has been collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 1998.

Policy, Performance and Review Team

