

Torbay Strategic Partnership

UPDATE

April 2009



Ten point plan to help beat the credit crunch

Torbay Council has launched a ten point action plan worth over £150,000, designed to help tackle the economic down turn and its local implications.

In December Torbay Council and its partners staged the Bays first 'Credit Crunch Conference'. The conference programme drew experts into an arena for a discussion of how government, public, voluntary and private sector organisations can work together to help businesses and individuals who are struggling financially. The conference was followed by a number of community forums open to the public offering practical advice on how to manage in the current economic climate and addressing questions and concerns from the community.

The resulting plans that have emerged from the work of the conference cover the Bays long term ambitions to improve its economic prospects and a shorter term, ten point plan, designed to offer more immediate help.

The plans which the Mayor will be taking to the Torbay Strategic Partnership for their approval include;

- Investing a sum into the Credit Union Bank, to enable residents to apply for low- cost loans via Torbay Pound, rather than going to loan sharks. The service is also able to offer more general financial advice and encourage savings
- Investing in a 'tell us once' holistic customer service across the statutory, private and voluntary sectors, to deal with all debt issues as well as benefits and council tax
- Allocating funding to the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund to ensure people can meet top –up rental payments, preventing homelessness
- Town centre parking, support the town centres by introducing a parking price freeze for the coming financial year and run a park for a pound price promotion throughout weekends in April
- Continue the council's successful 'Take up' campaign to ensure residents are aware of all the benefits they are entitled to
- Introduce weekly payment options and offer the option to spread council tax and business rate payments over 12 months
- Identify parcels of land suitable for allotments and introduce a community garden scheme working with the Coast and Countryside Trust.



The Mayor and Cabinet Members launch the plan with Steve Opie, Torbay Pound and John Cooper from the Citizens Advice Bureau

Apprenticeships

As part of the drive to improve the economy and prospects in the Bay. The Council and its partners have been discussing how they can develop future apprenticeship programmes.

Torbay's economic strategy includes a theme around skills and in particular identifies a need to provide more opportunities to develop skills within the local labour market. The adoption of an apprenticeship programme is consistent with that aim and would be valuable in informing young peoples choices when they consider university or other forms of relocation.

Work is now underway to establish a Torbay & South Devon Employment & Skills Board. Early consultation with key public sector partners and businesses has shown an appetite for apprenticeship opportunities. Separately, Torbay Council is developing an apprenticeship strategy which it will present to a future TSP meeting. TSP members will be asked to endorse and apply the principles of the apprenticeship strategy to their organisations. In particular to identify if there are specific areas for apprenticeship opportunities or where a more general approach is sensible and also to explore the opportunities for enhanced promotion of apprenticeships in the most deprived wards in Torbay.

TSP to become a Commissioning Partnership

The Torbay Strategic Partnership at its last meeting has made the radical and far-reaching decision to become a Strategic Commissioning Body. This means setting up four Strategic Commissioning Partnerships(SCP's) reflecting each quadrant of the Community Plan's wheel:

What will the SCP's do? each SCP will work together to assess how much public money is being spent in relation to their quadrant of the wheel. They will identify all public investments which are funded by local or national taxation (e.g. council tax and income tax). This will include Torbay Council's £330 million gross budget, the NHS Care Trust's £290 billion budget, Dept of Work & Pensions spending (e.g. state pensions, unemployment benefits, carers allowances, etc) and the other spending in Torbay such as the police authority.

How does this fit in with Torbay Council's Transformation programme?

The partnerships will then "align" these budgets, in effect creating a joint pot of money and work to ensure that the best possible return on this investment is gained. This will ensure that the jointly commissioned services really do make a difference, offer the best value for money and give the best possible results for the Bay family and our local economy.

If you'd like to know more please do contact Sue Lewis (01803 208477, 07760 258898 or sue.lewis@torbay.gov.uk).



Preventing terrorism

At the end of 2008, Government Office South West and Special Branch convened a regional event to discuss how Devon & Cornwall would take forward the issue of preventing violent extremism in their communities.

The Government's 'Prevent' strategy for counter terrorism reflects the recognition that a centrally-driven approach to counter-terrorism will not be effective on its own; there is a need to work in partnerships with local authorities. The term "prevent" refers to the national Prevent Strategy; which provides a framework to stop people becoming or supporting terrorists and violent extremists.

The Government strategy is based around five key objectives: challenging the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices; disrupting those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they are active; supporting individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism; Increasing the resilience of communities to violent extremism; addressing the grievances which ideologues are exploiting.

Through National Indicator 35 'Building resilience to violent extremism' all local authorities work in building resilience to violent extremism will be measured.

It was decided that the TSP be the responsible body for the prevent agenda in Torbay and its delivery and performance monitoring of NI 35 be given the Safer Communities Joint Executive;

The TSP will now support the development of an action plan to engage with our partners and wider community.

Place Survey results

More than 80 percent of the 2,142 local residents who completed a recent 'Place Survey', carried out by Torbay Council, said they are satisfied with Torbay as a place to live. This is up more than 10 percent from the last satisfaction survey carried out in 2006.

Disappointingly, whilst there was an increase in public satisfaction with Torbay as a place to live and with many individual council services, there was a decrease in the satisfaction levels with the local council as a whole (from 40 to just over 30 percent).

The new 'Place Survey' was sent to 5,000 randomly selected people across Torbay in September last year. The new survey replaces the previous user satisfaction survey, and was developed to focus more on residents' views of the area rather than just the performance of the council as it has done in the past.

Partnership working formed a large part of the survey, with nearly 70 percent agreeing that local public services were working together to make the area safer. However, the way in which local residents' concerns were acted on and promoting the interests of local residents were highlighted as areas which needed addressing by partners across the Bay.

The top eight services identified as in need of improvement were:

- 1) road and pavement repairs (35.88%)
- 2) wage levels and cost of living (35.79%)
- 3) the level of traffic congestion (33.92%)
- 4) activities for teenagers - (33.74%)
- 5) clean streets - (32.66%)
- 6) job prospects (30.84%) - the majority of people responding were based in St Marys with Summercombe, Berry Head with Furzeham and Tormohun wards
- 7) the level of crime (26.13%) - the majority of people responding were based in St Marychurch and Sy Marys with Summercombe wards
- 8) affordable decent housing (23.47%) - the majority of people responding were based in Clifton with Maidenway only

Local Area Agreement – Refreshment

Torbay's current Local Area Agreement (LAA) was signed off by the Department for Communities and Local Government at the end of June last year. We have now developed project plans and started to deliver on the agreed targets.

Along with all other areas the Torbay Strategic Partnership has been negotiating a refreshment of the current agreement to take effect from 1 April 2009. Our refreshed Agreement was submitted to Government Office on 27 March 2009.

For further information please visit www.torbay.gov.uk/laa

A big thank you all partners that have been involved in the refreshment process. The next phase is to develop delivery plans to ensure we achieve the maximum reward from central government.

Learning and Skills event

A Learning and Skills Forum was held on 20th March, where Mayor Nick welcomed colleagues across Torbay partner agencies to listen to presentations which covered Torbay Strategic Partnership links with the Children's Trust Board, priorities of the Children and Young People's Plan and Local area Agreement.

There were inspirational presentations from Pat Denham (South Devon College), Piers Smith (Westcountry Housing) and Adrian Leisk (Devon and Cornwall Police) around improving outcomes for Children & Young People, and workshops looking at the role of the TSP and its partners in achieving the best outcomes for children.

Torbay Strategic Partnership - next meeting date

Thursday 28 May 3pm - 5pm Meadfoot Room, Town Hall, Torquay.

For further information, visit our website at www.torbay.gov.uk

or contact Bernard Page, Policy and Partnership Manager, Torbay Council on **01803 207021**.