

Putting people at the centre of decision making

1. Executive Summary

Putting People at the Centre of Decision-making: A Torbay Together Involvement Strategy Executive Summary

This strategy aims to put people at the centre of decision-making by combining the resources of a number of organisations in Torbay including, Torbay Council, Torbay Care Trust, probation and the police. This will ensure information 'COUNTS' (is collected once and used numerous times) making it simpler for people to influence all aspects of service delivery and planning in Torbay.

A number of commitments have been developed with local people for the Torbay Strategic Partnership and this strategy sets out how these **partnership commitments** will be delivered, monitored and reviewed.

The 5 Partnership Commitments:

- Be efficient in the use of **all** resources (for example, money, people, equipment & skills)
- Make involvement accessible for **all** people
- Be honest, open and transparent in our involvement and when things can't be delivered explain why
- Allow enough time for opportunities for involvement from the very start and provide feedback on actions taken throughout the decision-making process
- Continuously improve and increase opportunities for involvement

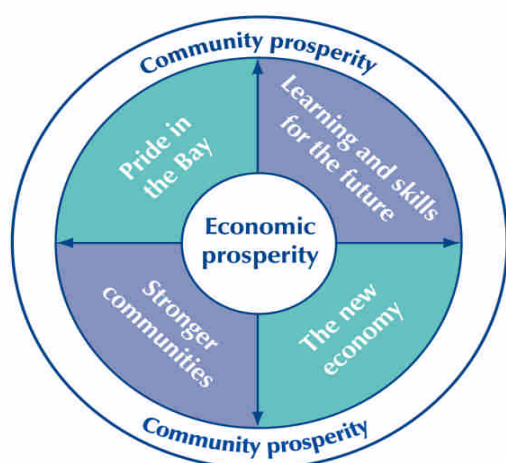
Central government has encouraged local politicians and public bodies, through guidance and legislation, to bring decision-making closer to the people they serve so they have a real say in the shape of their local area. The Coalition government introduced the idea of the '**Big Society**' as an alternative to what has sometimes been described as 'big government' (where public officials are viewed as having too much control over the way in which people lead their lives). The Government is committed, through structural reform, to put patients and public first. The white paper '**Liberating the NHS**', published in July 2010, promises to put patients at the heart of the NHS, through an information revolution and greater choice and control.

In Torbay we know that not enough people feel they can influence decisions in their local area and people tell us they would like to be

more involved in decision-making (Place Survey June 2009). We need to increase opportunities for involvement and let people know how their involvement has shaped Torbay. We have foundations in place to build strong involvement, including **Torbay Voice, Quest, LINKs** (Local Involvement Networks), **TULIP** (Torbay User Led organisations in Partnership) and **community partnerships**.

True involvement extends beyond consultation surveys, questionnaires and focus groups to involving people in all key decisions about their local area. It extends to **all** people, Individuals and communities, offering a variety of opportunities for people with different needs, aspirations and experiences to choose the way in which they want to be involved.

Torbay Strategic Partnership (Torbay Council, Care Trust, the Police, South Devon Healthcare Trust, Fire service and Community Voluntary Action Torbay) is developing **commissioning boards** to help them deliver the outcomes in the **Community Plan** wheel.



The suggested commissioning boards:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Stronger Communities Board
- Sub Regional Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- TSP Executive Board

The Boards will agree the type of services Torbay will commission for the local area. To be really effective the design and evaluation of services must be influenced by the experience of local people, as well as an assessment of need and performance.

To meet these commitments Torbay Strategic Partnership acknowledges the structure and way in which public bodies currently work will need to change. A **Torbay together action plan** has been developed to describe how all organisations in Torbay will work together to meet the commitments through:

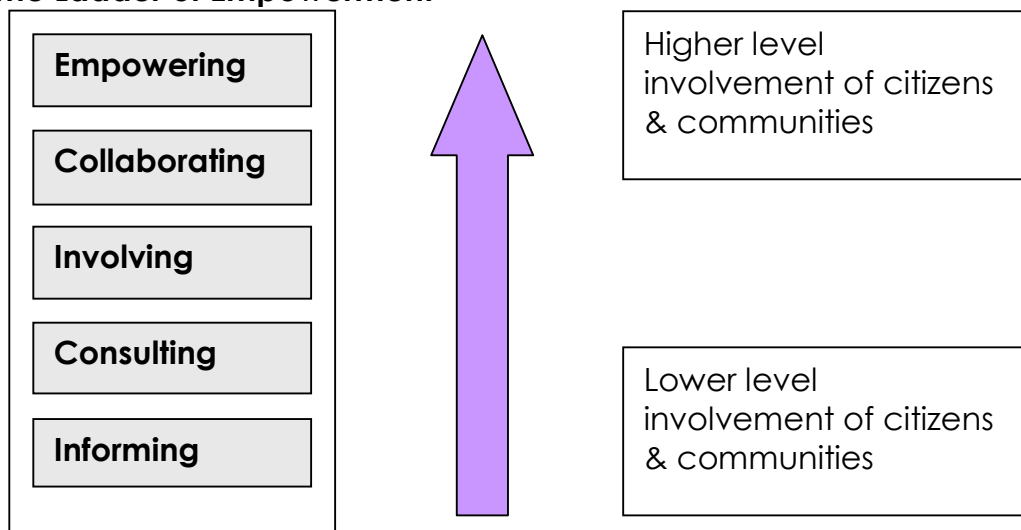
- Sharing resources
- Making the information resulting from involvement available to all organisations to improve the area and services for the people of Torbay
- Moving away from conventional meetings in Council and public sector offices

- Supporting people to come up with creative solutions to issues in their communities with more choice and control about how they do this
- Feeding back to people on the results of their involvement
- Providing clear information on issues affecting Torbay and the key decisions in which people can be involved
- Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and complicated processes
- Streamlining the number of meetings and being clear about the outcomes meetings will deliver
- Spreading good practice
- Offering learning and development opportunities for people who want to be involved and for elected members, public sector staff and third sector organisations so they can support people to become more involved.

What we mean by Involvement

Involvement is listening to, and acting on, the voice of the expert by experience. More than simply consultation and engagement, it means involving people in a whole process, from start to finish. True involvement is empowering. It is not just about asking for opinions, but working with people on an equal basis sharing information, setting outcomes, monitoring performance and designing services or solutions to problems. This is sometimes referred to as **co-production**. Co-production turns consumers into producers and changes the relationship between service users and public servants. The **Ladder of Empowerment** (below) illustrates the different levels of involvement.

The Ladder of Empowerment¹



¹ Every Voice Counts 2008

Where the result will be better decisions and more efficient use of resources, responsibility for managing budgets should be devolved to individuals, community groups or to local neighbourhoods.

People can become involved in every aspect of decision-making affecting their services and their community. They will be engaged by members of staff in their daily work, as well as in focus groups and forums, to find out what they think about the local area and the way services are provided, what works well and what could be improved. Consultation will still take place in a variety of ways such as, questionnaires, public meetings, surveys, one-to-one interviews and through interactive web sites.

Who we want to involve

The Torbay Strategic Partnership is committed to **involving people in making major decisions** about the future of Torbay including, the process of **commissioning** services and planning for the local area. This means anyone who lives in, works in, or visits, Torbay and anyone who uses, or has used, services in Torbay. This includes a wide range of people with different interests and backgrounds including:

- People who use services
- Patients
- Carers
- Elected representatives
- Community voluntary services
- Communities of interest including, local neighbourhoods and businesses
- Special interest groups including, community partnerships, faith groups, people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups, lesbians, gay men and transgender people
- People who work in Torbay
- Visitors to Torbay

Consultation questions

1. Are we aiming to involve the right people? Have we missed anyone out?

Please see above

2. Do you have any comments about the commitments?

In the yellow box

3. Which type of decisions do you think people would like to get involved with?

- Setting budgets
- Planning
- Design and monitoring of services
- Health & care
- Children & families
- Transport
- Social care
- Safer communities & crime
- These are some examples are there other areas that would be of interest

4. How do you think people would like to be involved?

Get involved for a few minutes

- Just pick up phone, comment or query
- Join a telephone panel
- Suggestion box – write, phone or email
- Surveys & questionnaires

Get involved for a few hours

- Regular meetings
- Consultations
- Focus groups
- Face to face interview

Are there other ways you would like to be involved?

5. Action plan headings

- a. Efficient streamlined & shared resources.
- b. The numbers of meetings are reduced & the outcomes from these meetings are easily understood by all.
- c. People always receive feedback on the results of their involvement & good practice is spread.
- d. The area and services in Torbay are improved because information resulting from involvement is made available to all organisations.

- e. People are supported to come up with creative solutions to issues in their communities (co-production).
- f. Unnecessary bureaucracy & complicated processes are reduced.
- g. Increase learning & development opportunities for community members & people who use services.
- h. The role of members as community leaders is understood by all people.
- i. There are learning & development opportunities for people who want to be involved.
- j. There is clear information on the issues affecting Torbay and the key decisions in which people can be involved.

If you think anything is missing or you could contribute to the actions from the plan please let us know?

Please give us your name and contact details if you would like to be involved, please state if you are member of the public or your job role and organisation.

Thank you for giving up your time to give us feedback, the results of the feedback will be available on www.torbay.gov.uk/supportingpeople if you would like in another format please ring 01803 208729.