NOTES OF THE **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 11th NOVEMBER 2026** AT 7.00 P.M. AT NEWTON'S PLACE.

PRESENT: Councillor: R Buscombe (Chairperson) Presiding
C Parker (Vice Chairperson)

Councillors: L Cooke
A Hall
A Ineson
M Ryan

Councillor Mike Joyce was also in attendance

By invitation: 1 x Representative of Newton Abbot Young Voices
1 x Representative of the Save Torbay Hospital Campaign

Officers In attendance: Linda McGuirk - Assistant Town Clerk & Deputy RFO
Pierre Doutreligne - Assistant Town Clerk - Strategy
Nigel Canham - Communications Advisor

Also, in attendance 1 x member of the public

63. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

A valid reason for absence was received from Councillor L Wood.

Councillor C Davieson did not attend.

64. **INTERESTS**

Councillor Mike Joyce declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item four, the presentation regarding the Save Torbay Hospital Campaign as he is a Governor at Torbay Hospital. Councillor Joyce advised that he would not speak or take part in any vote on the matter.

65. **MINUTES**

The notes of the Community Engagement Group meeting held on 8th July 2026 were received and signed as a correct record.

66. **PRESENTATION – SAVE TORBAY HOSPITAL CAMPAIGN**

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, welcomed a representative from the Save Torbay Hospital Campaign, who delivered a presentation outlining the campaign's aims and concerns regarding the future of services at Torbay Hospital.

The representative provided background to the campaign, explaining that it had initially been established in response to a decision by the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) in March 2025 to suspend weekend cardiac services for an eight-week period.

Chair……..

Following representations from the campaign, the ICB had agreed to pause the decision. However, the representative emphasised that the underlying concerns remained unresolved.

Members were informed that the campaign had since broadened its focus to include concerns about the future of other hospital services, the importance of timely access to emergency and specialist care, and the potential impact on neighbouring hospitals should services be reduced or relocated. The representative highlighted that Torbay Hospital served a population of approximately 200,000 during the winter months, increasing to around 400,000 during the summer.

Concerns were also raised regarding fire safety issues affecting floors four to eight of the hospital's tower block, including the reported absence of a dedicated Fire Safety Officer for a number of years. The representative advised that the campaign was receiving information from whistleblowers within the hospital and that Freedom of Information responses were available on the campaign's website.

The representative expressed concern about the long-term future of Torbay Hospital and the potential implications of further reductions in services.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for the presentation and invited Members to ask questions and provide comments. The following matters were raised:

- clarification on the membership of the Integrated Care Board, including how its members were appointed.
- highlighted the significant financial pressures facing local healthcare services, including longstanding deficits and funding shortfalls.
- the importance of considering the wider healthcare system, particularly the challenges facing primary care, rather than focusing solely on hospital services.
- concern regarding the matters raised and the potential implications for local healthcare provision.

It was suggested that a representative from the Integrated Care Board be invited to attend a future meeting to provide further information and respond to Members' concerns.

The Senior Caseworker for Martin Wrigley MP, who is also a Governor at Torbay Hospital, provided an overview of the work being undertaken by local Members of Parliament. Emphasising that, while challenges remained, work was continuing constructively with the relevant organisations and reassured Members that Torbay Hospital was not going to close.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for attending the meeting and providing an informative presentation.

67. **PRESENTATION – NEWTON ABBOT YOUNG DEVON**

Chair……..

The Chairperson, Councillor Richard Buscombe, welcomed a representative from Young Devon, who delivered a presentation outlining the organisation's work and the services available to young people in Newton Abbot.

The representative provided an overview of the Young Devon YES Centre and the work undertaken by its youth support team, explaining that the organisation supported young people aged 11 to 25, particularly those experiencing difficulties or requiring additional support.

Members were informed that Young Devon provided a range of specialist advice, guidance and support services, aimed at helping young people overcome barriers and access opportunities. This included support for young people aged 16 and over who were not in education, employment or training, although it was noted that some skills-based programmes had been affected by the loss of funding.

The representative emphasised that the YES Centre was not a traditional youth club but provided more targeted support, advice and guidance tailored to the needs of young people.

The presentation also highlighted the importance of encouraging young people's active participation in their communities, including through the Young Voice Group, which provided opportunities for young people to express their views and influence decisions affecting them. The organisation aimed to bridge the gap between young people and local services, ensuring that their voices were heard and their needs better understood.
The Chairperson thanked the representative for the presentation and invited Members to ask questions. The following matters were raised:

- Whether Young Devon was involved with the Teignbridge Youth Support Forum and opportunities for greater partnership working.
- The provision of training and employment support for young people aged 16 and 17.
- Whether there were any plans to reopen the café previously operated by Young Devon.
- The current use of the premises in Queen Street, Newton Abbot.

Members expressed an interest in visiting the YES Centre to gain a greater understanding of the services provided and the challenges faced by young people locally.

It was also suggested that representatives from Young Devon return to a future meeting, accompanied by young people involved with the organisation, to provide an opportunity for Members to hear directly about their experiences and priorities.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for attending and providing an informative presentation. It was agreed that the Council would maintain contact with Young Devon and explore opportunities for further engagement.

Chair……..

68. **HOT TOPICS**

The Chairperson invited Members to raise any matters for future consideration.

Members suggested inviting representatives of South West Water and Read Easy to a future meeting.

69. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday 24th March 2027.

Meeting closed at 20:00

CHAIRPERSON…… Date……

Chair……..