

Review of Events, Culture and Tourism – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Report to Cabinet on 19 March 2024

Background

1. The Review of Events, Culture and Tourism Task and Finish Group met on 20 November, 6 December 2023 and 11 January 2024 to consider:
 - how we use our cultural assets (e.g. English Riviera Global UNESCO Geopark, Agatha Christie and Torre Abbey etc.) to help them become self-sustaining in the future and ensure they were being maximised for our tourism and culture offer;
 - how the Council uses data to inform decision in relation to use of cultural assets;
 - a review of the Torbay Council English Riviera (Outdoor) Events Strategy 2021 – 2027 (Events Strategy), incorporating delivery to date, and to determine if the objectives had been delivered and were still relevant and to make recommendations;
 - whether the events that the Council supports were contributing towards the delivery of the English Riviera Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2022 – 2030;
 - what the criteria was for enabling, delivering and funding events on Council owned land;
 - how the success of events was measured and evaluated;
 - whether the Council and Destination Management Group have sufficient resources and capacity to deliver the Events Strategy and DMP and what opportunities were there to utilise resources from outside the Council;
 - what data did the Council use and how that data informed decision making in relation to events;

- how the Council engaged and worked with community and voluntary organisations on events;
 - what opportunities there were to facilitate benefits to our care experienced young people and foster families in respect of events; and
 - how to ensure that local business benefits from tourism and culture and how they could help with promotion.
2. The Review Panel comprised Councillors Brook, Carter, Mandy Darling, Fellows, Johns, Law, Maddison, Nicolaou, Jackie Thomas and Twelves (and was Chaired by Councillor Twelves) with support from Carolyn Custerson, Chief Executive of the English Riviera Business Improvement District (ERBID).

(Note: Councillor Brook declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of the English Riviera Business Improvement District Company Board and Torbay Business Forum.)

3. The background papers, including the detailed Scope for the Review and the recordings of the meetings can be found at <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=1946>
4. Key evidence considered by the Panel included:
- Review of Events, Culture and Tourism Scope and Timeline;
 - Torbay Council English Riviera (Outdoor) Events Strategy 2021 – 2027 <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/documents/s112183/Events%20Strategy%20Appendix.pdf#:~:text=This%20strategy%20has%20a%20focus%20on%20outdoor%20events,Council%20and%20by%20the%20Torbay%20Council%20Events%20Team;>
 - English Riviera Destination Management Plan 2022 – 2030 [https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/economic-regeneration/dmp/;](https://www.torbay.gov.uk/council/policies/economic-regeneration/dmp/)
 - Torbay Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 - [Torbay Heritage Strategy - Torbay Council;](#)
 - Enjoy, talk, be, do, a Cultural Strategy for Torbay and its communities 2014-2024 - [Cultural Strategy-document.pdf \(torbay.gov.uk\);](#)
 - Heritage Places Fund - [£200million funding for Heritage Places will boost local economies and pride in place | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) and [Torbay to be included in £200m commitment](#)

[launched by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to help areas across the UK thrive - Torbay Council;](#)

- Torbay Story – [Torbay Story - Home;](#)
- English Riviera Naturally Inspiring - https://www.englishriviera.co.uk/?utm_source=Torbay%20Council&utm_medium=web;
- Torbay Council webpages - [https://www.torbay.gov.uk/leisure-sports-and-community/;](https://www.torbay.gov.uk/leisure-sports-and-community/)
- English Riviera Global UNESCO Geopark webpages - [English Riviera Global Geopark - Homepage \(englishrivierageopark.org.uk\);](https://www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk)
- Torre Abbey webpages - [Torre Abbey \(torre-abbey.org.uk\);](https://www.torre-abbey.org.uk)
- Presentation on Strategic Cultural Partnership and Torbay's Cultural and Heritage Strategies;
- Cultural assets currently within the remit of the Culture and Events team;
- Torre Abbey 2021-2025 business plan reviewed Jan 2022 (Exempt);
- Torre Abbey 3 year budgets - for 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 (Exempt);
- Torre Abbey restoration budget (Exempt);
- Monthly Key Performance Indicator report Torre Abbey (Exempt);
- Marketing spend Torre Abbey 23-24 (Exempt);
- Geopark marketing strategy 23-24 (Exempt);
- Geopark 3 year budgets - for 2021/22 2022/23 2023/24 (Exempt);
- Detail on how critical funding is for UNESCO Geopark, why it is critical and what is the gap. (Exempt);
- Overview marketing plan 2023-24 – a plan of all marketing activity within the department (Exempt);
- Social media data – data from various social media campaigns across the department including Geopark and Torre Abbey (Exempt);
- Geopark Annual Report 2022;
- Budget Digest Culture and Events 2019-20;
- Budget Digest Culture and Events 2020-21;
- Budget Digest Culture and Events 2021-22;
- Budget Digest Culture and Events 2022-23;
- Budget Digest Culture and Events 2023-24;
- Budget Digest overall council budget 2023-24;
- Culture and Events Structure May 2023 (Exempt);
- ECH Budget PB271123 – events, culture and heritage fund budget for the past 3 years inclusive (Exempt);
- Events Strategy suggested updates;

- Events strategy part 2 Evidence base and supporting information;
- Events strategy action plan (Exempt);
- Responses to key lines of enquiry events and Destination Management Plan;
- Events in Torbay a Guide for Organisations;
- Event Notification Procedures and Public Safety Advisory Group; and
- Responses to key lines of enquiry Communication and Engagement.

5. Key Findings

Cultural Assets and Strategy

5.1 How did the Council use our cultural assets (e.g. English Riviera Global UNESCO Geopark, Agatha Christie and Torre Abbey Etc.) to help them become self sustaining in the future and ensure they were being maximised for our tourism and culture offer?

Cultural Asset	How managed	Narrative
Torre Abbey, Torquay	Directly managed by Torbay Council.	The Council have a team that directly manages Torre Abbey for the benefit of the community and visitors to the area. Their focus is on protecting the building and collection care, as well as running a programme to reduce the cost burden on the Council. Also includes, seasonal café offer, walled garden and palm house.
Princess Theatre, Torquay	Managed on behalf of the Council by Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) who are a national and highly rated theatre management and show production organisation. ATG have a long lease.	The Council pays a fee for ATG to run a varied and popular programme of entertainment at Princess Theatre.
Palace Theatre	Leased by Jazz Hands CIC a local community interest company.	Jazz Hands run the theatre and are one of two candidate National Portfolio Organisations in Paignton

Cultural Asset	How managed	Narrative
Torquay Museum	The museum is owned by the museum's charitable trust.	Torbay Council provides a grant each year towards the cost of running the museum.
Brixham Heritage Museum	Brixham Museum building is owned by Torbay Council and leased by the museum charity at no cost. Brixham Heritage Museum was a registered charity.	The Council provides a grant each year towards the running of the museum.
Torbay Leisure Centre	The Leisure Centre is owned by Torbay Council. Lex Leisure who are linked to Parkwood Leisure run the centre on a long lease.	There is no additional cost to the Council as part of the lease.
Riviera International Centre	The Centre is owned by Torbay Council. Lex Leisure, a subsidiary of Parkwood Leisure, run the centre on a long lease.	There is no direct cost to the Council. However, the Council is responsible for repairs under the lease.
Swim Torquay, Plainmoor Torquay	This is a community facility with charitable status. The land is owned by the Council and the organisation built the pool on it. Therefore the centre is now a legal entity leased from Torbay Council.	The Council paid a grant towards running costs in 2023 to support rising energy costs and it is hoped this would continue in 2024/2025.
Admiral Pool, Brixham	This is a community facility with charitable status. The land is owned by the Council and the organisation built the pool on it. Therefore the centre is now a legal entity leased from Torbay Council.	The Council paid a grant towards running costs in 2023 to support rising energy costs and it is hoped this would continue in 2024/2025.

5.2 All other Council owned properties such as Oldway Mansion, Torquay Pavilion etc. were not within scope of the Events and Culture Team's objectives or this review. However, as heritage assets returning them to active use will be supportive of related culture, events and heritage work.

5.3 Torre Abbey is therefore the only cultural asset which the Council's Events and Culture Team has full control over. Torre Abbey is an ancient scheduled monument and Grade I listed building together with the Spanish Barn which

has benefited from Government Funding to help restore sections of the building. The Council is working with The National Lottery Heritage Fund (as UK lead funder for heritage) and Historic England (as the statutory body) to try to secure additional funding to restore the Spanish Barn which would assist in helping Torre Abbey to become more financially stable as it would open up more opportunities to lease the space for different events all year round.

- 5.4 Members noted that it is not currently financially viable to run the café all year round and it had to be moved to the Spanish Barn earlier in the year to enable the current phase of restoration to take place. This resulted in a limited offer due to lack of suitable facilities at the Spanish Barn in respect of a dedicated kitchen, toilets and problems with holes in the roof caused by golf balls going through from the neighbouring pitch and putt course. This will be kept under review and longer-term options developed as part of a bid for additional funding to restore and improve the Spanish Barn as well as looking at how best to maximise the whole site which sits on 18.4 acres of land including Torre Abbey Meadows. Members noted the urgency of resolving this issue as part of providing a sustainable future for Torre Abbey.
- 5.5 It was noted that the Friends of Torre Abbey Group had disbanded but that a Development Foundation Trust is being established to sit alongside Torre Abbey as an independent organisation to help Torre Abbey to be more sustainable in the future. There was a 1196 Club as part of the commercial element of the business which raises money through subscriptions and sales. There was also a new Commercial Manager in post who is looking to increase the number of people getting an annual membership as well as more public events and fairs, and increasing commercial activity such as hiring the Spanish Barn for weddings etc. Whilst there was a recognition that Torre Abbey needed to become more financially secure, the community benefit and social benefit of our cultural and heritage assets was also acknowledged.
- 5.6 Members noted that the ongoing budgets for Torre Abbey did not reflect what was included within the Cultural Strategy or Torre Abbey Initial Business Plan and there was a need for this to be more closely monitored in the future.
- 5.7 Based on the evidence provided and financial information it was unlikely that Torre Abbey would be completely financially independent, but both Members and Torre Abbey staff had a desire to work towards financial stability in the future. Members acknowledged the hard work of the Team working with the Council's partners to try to secure one of Torbay's most loved heritage assets.

- 5.8 The UNESCO Global Geopark was supported by a Geopark Lead Officer who worked with colleagues within the Events and Culture Team and Torbay Culture together with the ERBID to ensure that it was promoted and marketed to a national audience. The ERBID also helped promote other cultural and heritage facilities in Torbay.
- 5.9 Members discussed the exempt documents which related to Torre Abbey and UNESCO Global Geopark budgets, marketing and performance and their deliberations informed the overall content of this report and their recommendations. As part of considering the budgets Members acknowledged the partnership working and match funding for several key events by the ERBID and welcomed the continued relationship between the Council and ERBID as a crucial partner in helping deliver successful events across Torbay. Members noted that the £100,000 match funding from the Council to mirror the funding that the ERBID Company puts towards the delivery of the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan was coming to an end soon and needed to be renegotiated.
- 5.10 It was also noted that the Cabinet's draft Revenue Budget proposals for 2024/2025 included £1m investment in events over the next four years (£250,000 per year) and careful consideration would need to be given to prioritise that funding, having regards to other budget pressures and the evidence contained within this report.
- 5.11 **What was the direction of travel for the revised Cultural Strategy?**
- 5.12 Members noted the opportunity to use culture to improve the quality of life and make Torbay a better place for residents and visitors, helping people learn about their world e.g. UNESCO Global Geopark, working with communities and making improvements in hospitals with projects such as those in the mental health wards. The Cultural Strategy 'Enjoy, Talk, Do, Be – a cultural strategy for Torbay and its communities' was approved in 2014 and runs until 2024 with aims for participation, strategic alignment, natural and built environment and strongly references the potential for Torbay's UNESCO destination.
- 5.13 Torbay Culture, Torbay's Culture Board, was created in 2015 to own the culture strategy and raise awareness of the Cultural Strategy. Supported through TDA initially and working with Torbay Council, Arts Council England and local cultural practitioners it has informed or led development of activities including The Great Places Scheme (2017-2020) was a cultural programme of

lots of activities to develop audiences for the UNESCO Global Geopark and local stories and places (activity and research).

5.14 Members noted what had been delivered to date through the Cultural Strategy:

- **Keep growing – cultural and creative development for our home:** Agatha Christie artwork, Agatha Christie Festival sustainability; Cultural Development Fund (CDF): supporting programme in Paignton, digital skills programme (South Devon College), CDF National Network visit to Torbay (Sep 2022); Hospital Rooms delivery in mental health wards (Nov 2022).
- **Living well – better future for young people:** Supporting interventions (via external opportunities - Literature Works, AC Festival, CDF programme). Evidence and impact – culture health and wellbeing reports; University of Exeter research into creative industries.
- **Encouraging a renaissance for historic places and spaces:** CDF capital investment; Museum Estate and Development Fund Arts Council (MEND) and other funding Torre Abbey; Torbay local heritage grant scheme; Heritage Places.
- **Environment – celebrating our UNESCO Global Geopark:** Active participation in UNESCO revalidation, advocacy and funding advice, supporting programming, participation in the UK National Commission audience development resilience work (underway now).
- **Cultural tourism:** ‘Writers on the Riviera’ and ‘Speed Up and Slow Down’ delivered, continued participation in Destination Management Group (DMG), prioritisation of Agatha Christie as authentic unique selling point (USP).
- **Heritage interpretation framework**, endorsed by National Lottery Heritage Fund 2021.
- **Investment in a new local heritage grant scheme** (Heritage Fund) Bespoke scheme, to be used as inspiration for scheme in Northern Ireland 2023.
- **Capital investment alignment** with national funding – ‘Lightplay’ Royal Terrace Gardens 2021 natural and science heritage as inspiration; CDF2 Paignton Picture House (Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE)) alignment with others (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)); Torre Abbey (MEND etc) focus for investment and transformation, etc 2022.

- **New conservation role** – Principal Historic Environment Officer role (appointed 2023).

5.15 Members acknowledged the following important opportunities for Torbay to maximise:

- **Torbay was among the first ‘Heritage Places’ - closer and deeper collaboration with the Heritage Fund** 10 year funded partnership (£200m across 10 years, one of 20 places), aligned with Fund’s national strategy to 2033, and local opportunities for Torbay.
- **‘Levelling Up Partnership’** DLUHC Levelling Up Partnerships (LUP) (£400m, 10 years, one of 20 places) was a parallel opportunity. Heritage Fund 10 Year partnership to be cross referenced and complementary.
- **‘Levelling Up for Culture Place’** (LUCP) DCMS & ACE listing (2022) resulted in £3.5m DCMS investment = CDF2 - Paignton Picture House and MEND - Torre Abbey.
- **Potential future Arts Council investment in Torbay ACE** investment in Torbay for 2023- 26 was low (comparators N Devon, Torridge, Somerset as other LUCPs; neighbours Exeter, Plymouth, Cornwall). Dialogue ongoing with ACE to address this.
- **‘Torbay Story’** toolkit to tell our USPs, authenticity, relevance and inspirational. Align this and LUP with a Theory of Change model the Heritage Fund want to agree by Dec 2023.

5.16 **How and what data was used to inform decision making in relation to cultural assets?**

The Council used customer data for Torre Abbey to shape and adjust its offer accordingly. There were signed up members (1196 Club) as well as visitors for exhibition, events and general visitors to the Abbey. There was a strong schools programme where the Council encouraged school visits and used the data about those that had and had not visited in line with the national curriculum (Torre Abbey – Key Performance Indicator data, visitor number data and income data). The Spirit of Place document is used as their guiding principle, and there is a project board for the current restoration project. Various decisions were made by the Torre Abbey Leadership Team in relation to the running of Torre Abbey and any key developments, and decisions were taken in consultation with the Service Manager, Divisional Director, Director, Senior Leadership Team and/or Cabinet in line with usual Council protocol.

Events

5.17 **Were the objectives of the Torbay Council English Riviera (Outdoor) Events Strategy 2021 – 2027 still relevant?**

Members acknowledged that the Events Strategy was still relevant but noted the submitted document 'Refresh or Update' which set out a number of proposed minor amendments to ensure that it reflected current practice and had been produced following a partner review meeting with the ERBID. Members noted the elements of the Events Strategy that had been delivered to date as set out in the submitted document 'Responses to Key Lines of Enquiry – Events'. Members acknowledged the impact on the capacity of the Team to deliver events due to sickness and maternity leave, however, they had processed approximately 150 applications for events over the past year. Members also recognised the collaborative working with the ERBID to deliver both the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan.

5.18 **Did the events that the Council supported contribute towards the delivery of the English Riviera Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2022 – 2030?**

Members agreed that the two documents complemented each other and supported mutual delivery but noted that the Events Strategy was written prior to the Destination Management Plan and some of the elements may have been worded slightly differently if the documents had been written the other way around.

5.19 **What were the criteria for, enabling, delivering and funding events on Council owned land and did this prohibit events that the Council may wish to support taking place and how had this been used to determine which events should go ahead?**

The criteria for enabling events to take place on Council land was broad and included considerations as to positive impact on the local economy; whether the event would be good for the local community - of value and interest that would benefit the community; good for raising awareness and quality events that would show the area at its best. The criteria were currently not at all prohibitive. This was set out in the 'Torbay Council Events in Torbay – A Guide for Organisers'. This was mainly via a process on our Events Application System APPLY4 that links in with the area's Public Safety Advisory Council (PSAG). PSAG's remit was to review all significant event

applications in the area from a services co-ordination and health and safety perspective. It was made up of the blue light services including the Coastguard, the Harbour Authority, Torbay Council's Events Team, the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Manager, Licensing Officers, Highways Authority etc. Most events were given the go-ahead unless there were clear issues in the applicant's event management plans, previous poor delivery or operational practices were unacceptable.

- 5.20 Following the development of the Events Strategy, a Monitoring Panel was organised to track the elements of the Events Strategy that needed to be reviewed, and also to review event applications for the seed funding element of the Strategy and any new events. The Panel was made up of the Cabinet Member and representatives from across the community, with the Council's Senior Events Officer and was called Torbay Events Advisory Panel, however, Members noted that this Group had not met since May 2023 due to staffing issues but that some monitoring was carried out by the ERBID and also through the English Riviera Events Collective and Members questioned if the Collective could take over the role of the Panel. The Panel put together an Events Charter which event organisers sign up to when they go through the application process. See <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/leisure-sports-and-community/hold-an-event/english-riviera-events-charter/>.
- 5.21 Other than that described above there was no specific criteria for headline and feature events to link them with the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan and Members felt that this was required to ensure that we were prioritising the right events and encouraging more offer in the shoulder seasons (i.e. early spring, autumn and winter months).
- 5.22 Members felt that some of the information on the website and documents relating to events such as the 'Events in Torbay A Guide for Organisers' and the 'Apply to Hold an Event' system, was not easy to read or follow and suggested that this should be reviewed to make it more accessible.
- 5.23 **How was the success of events measured and evaluated and did this make a difference to future events?**

For 2023 English Riviera Airshow, an economic and social impact study was undertaken. This cost £9,500+vat but the data was worthwhile collecting and showed a net return of £15.56 for every £1 invested by the Council, amongst a lot of other good data about visitors etc.

- 5.24 For larger events, success was measured through a mixture of the benefit to the community - economically and socially; whether there were any issues, i.e. if the event didn't supply the requisite number of stewards/security as promised; didn't follow their Event Management Plan and there were resultant noise issues or issues such as a proliferation of drug use at the event. For medium events a feedback report was requested which would then be reviewed with PSAG and if significant issues with the running of it were identified either the event would not be able to happen again or could happen again (last chance) with a strong change in oversight. It was noted that feedback was not normally obtained for community events so as not to make this an additional burden for the volunteers and dissuade them from organising these events, which were of great benefit to the local community.
- 5.25 An important factor was feedback from the hospitality sector and accommodation sector. If there was a perceived limited benefit to the local economy the Council may advise an event organiser to consider investing in an economic (and/or social) impact study, or other mechanism to prove the value of the event locally (for example, this was done for Electric Bay).
- 5.26 Another success factor was income to the Council. The Events Team had a high income target each year and need events that were prepared to pay a suitable fee and a reinstatement bond each time (excluding community events). Members were advised that the amount of bond for the fair and circus was being reviewed to see if it could be increased to a suitable level to cover the cost of any reinstatement of ground following their use. This year £20,000 of bonds were available and SWISCo (who were responsible for carrying out the reinstatement work) had suggested that reinstatement work was part of the £45,000 fee for making the whole area of the greens good. It was noted that discussions were being held with colleagues to discuss overall funding for maintenance of Paignton Green and Torre Abbey Meadows and which budgets this should be funded from.
- 5.27 Members discussed issues around capacity and increased maintenance costs for our two key events spaces, namely Paignton Green and Torre Abbey and suggested the merit of a feasibility study into the costs of making the areas fit for purpose and considering the possibility of making a permanent show ground space to enable greater use of these assets for events all year round. It was acknowledged that the cost of the feasibility study, resources required and any implementation would need to be considered alongside other budget pressures for the Events Team, but that this was an opportunity to generate more income and improve the offer to our residents and visitors.

5.28 The Events Strategy contained the below six actions which Members had considered and monitored as part of the review but felt that if there had been sufficient resources and oversight of these actions there would have been less of a need for a review.

1. **Shift the strategic focus** to achieving more with the limited resources available and seek out funding and match funding opportunities.
2. **Development of an Events Charter** to set clear expectations from organisers and to cement the actions that are important to local communities in event planning.
3. **Build capacity** in the sector to make the English Riviera a centre of events' excellence across the spectrum of event types and sizes.
4. **Investment in events** in order to develop key sites that meet the needs of quality event organisers that manage events which will have a UK wide audience.
5. **Support the development of local event organisers, producers and promoters** to create high-impact events and enable job skills and job creation.
6. **Support Marketing promotions with partner groups and organisations** to ensure the events offer of the English Riviera is promoted far and wide as a welcoming and vibrant destination, which has a diverse range of appeal.

5.29 **Did the Council and Destination Management Group have sufficient capacity to deliver the Events Strategy and DMP and who else could help deliver this?**

Members determined that there were probably not currently sufficient resources to deliver the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan based on current staffing levels within the Events Team; other responsibilities held by some members of the Team; some temporary funding being used to fund posts and delivery of the English Riviera Airshow coming back in-house. The submitted document suggested that retaining a Senior Events Officer post March, and creating another full-time Events Officer post, and another part-time Events Officer post, should be sufficient to undertake the current commitments of the Events Strategy and the DMP. Without any uplift in staffing support, including administrative support, Councillors would need to make a difficult decision about what events and services to keep and what to drop.

5.30 Members also acknowledged the need for additional capital funding to support future repairs and maintenance of our cultural assets as well as the need to continue to seek further external funding opportunities as well as delivering the projects which had already secured such funding.

5.31 How and what data was used to inform decision making in relation to events?

Information was gathered from event organisers, through the Apply4 system. This largely related to health and safety issues in relation to the Purple Guide for event management. The safety of people attending events came before all other considerations. This was also what was discussed as part of PSAG deliberations. This information formed part of the weekly discussion that the Events Team had with the Culture and Events Service Manager which provided the opportunity to discuss any issues and ask pertinent questions. The Service Manager would then take the discussion (mainly about new events) to the Divisional Director or Members if required.

5.32 New events and events with potential issues would be discussed at PSAG and event organisers were often invited in to present their plans. For all events, but mainly those that were commercial events, the Council would be interested in numbers attending, income to the Council, and ahead of a second year, attendee demographics. The Council was also interested in impact locally on the hospitality and accommodation sectors.

5.33 How were businesses able to engage with and influence tourism and culture activities?

The Council mainly made contact with local businesses in relation to events via the ERBID, who then issued update information to their funding stakeholder organisations.

5.34 For Council run events such as the English Riviera Airshow the Council produced updates that ERBID shared with its funding stakeholder organisations. The Council also tried to make contact with the local businesses to inform them as to what is happening during the planning stage and also a few weeks ahead of the event, to inform about road closures etc. The Events Team also attended meetings run by the Licencing Team for licensed businesses in the area to inform them of these plans. This year's Airshow was being looked at in a different way, where the Council was looking to the community for more involvement and support for the event, so they had

attended a business breakfast to discuss financial support and inform businesses of our plans.

- 5.35 The Events Team also issue regular press/media releases with details about how individuals and organisations/businesses can get involved. They maintain a website of the same information see - <https://www.torbay.gov.uk/event-list/?q=other>.
- 5.36 For the Bay of Lights Illumination Trail, the Events Team took a similar approach to the Airshow – they visited all the businesses enroute and discussed the plans and also issued media releases and worked with ERBID to promote the event to businesses.
- 5.37 Businesses could help provide links to what was happening on their websites. They could engage with and provide feedback either via ERBID or to the Events Team directly or have a key role by investing in the Council and other's events.
- 5.38 **How did the Council engage and work with community and voluntary sector organisations on events?**

Via press/media releases and social media communications with direct engagement where appropriate and also through the ERBID.

- 5.39 **How can the Council maximise opportunities to benefit our care experienced young people and foster families in respect of events?**

The Council already supports our care experienced young people and foster families by giving them tickets to Council run events and putting on events with them e.g. King's Coronation and Queen's Jubilee. The Council supports with enabling an annual event with the fair, providing free tickets for the circus, vouchers for the international market during the summer, enabling the big wheel operator to offer free and discounted entry etc. The Events Team also work in partnership with Children's Services who help to fund tickets to events such as the circus, free and discounted entry to Torre Abbey and to see Father Christmas at Torre Abbey etc. Members also noted the terrific support from local businesses and organisations such as the Dartmouth Railway's Train of Lights, Splashdown and Princess Theatre.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Panel reflected and debated all the information provided to them, both verbal and written. Members acknowledged the significant achievements of the Council and its partners in securing external investment for Torbay's cultural and heritage assets in recent years. The panel also recognised the importance of ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to deliver the Council and the Torbay Story's ambitions as a place and the projects for which funding had been identified. This would require additional investment by the Council as well as working more creatively with its partners, the community, voluntary and business sector to engage more and encourage more collaboration and celebration of the unique selling points around what Torbay has to offer, particularly in relation to the UNESCO Global Geopark. Encouraging businesses to work together to help promote each other and offer incentives for people to visit multiple cultural and heritage sites was also identified as important.
- 6.2 Members commended the work carried out by the Events Team over the past year despite reduced resources due to staff absence and other pressures within the Team, but felt that if Torbay was serious about being a premier destination, investment needed to be made to maintain appropriate staffing levels in order to deliver key events such as the English Riviera Airshow and invest in future infrastructure and explore new ways of working with partners, the community, voluntary and business sector to sell the Torbay Story and encourage more people to visit and stay in Torbay all year round. They also acknowledged the significant pressures on the Team bringing the Airshow back inhouse and that any additional work/investment requested as part of this review would need to be prioritised by the Director of Pride in Place.
- 6.3 Members thanked all those who had taken part in the review, particularly Carolyn Custerson for her expert advice and the members of the public who contributed towards the discussions.
- 6.4 The Panel formed the following recommendation to the Cabinet, which were considered by the Priorities and Resources Review Panel as part of their review of the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2024/2025 and approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 7 February 2024. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared carried unanimously.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Cabinet be recommended:

1. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to review how local businesses can become more involved to help promote cultural activity within Torbay, to ensure that local businesses feel connected into UNESCO Global Geopark Status and cultural assets;
2. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to review the activities around education and raising the profile of the UNESCO Global Geopark, exploring how to maximise opportunities for education, particularly encouraging national geologists to use the Geopark and Devonian Period etc. and to include increased signage and boards with a particular focus on attracting more out of season opportunities;
3. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to review the resource and capacity of the Events and Culture Team, including administrative support, and to explore how the independent, voluntary, community and business sectors could contribute to ensure that there is sufficient capacity and resources to deliver:
 - a. the Cultural and Heritage Strategies;
 - b. projects where the Council has received significant external funding;
 - c. future ambitions of the Council and its key partners, including the continuation of the £100,000 match funding from the Council to mirror the funding that the English Riviera Business Improvement District Company puts towards the delivery of the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan;
4. that the Director of Pride in Place and Chief Executive of the English Riviera Business Improvement District be requested to review the communication around how to advertise events taking place in Torbay through <https://www.englishriviera.co.uk/whats-on>, including signposting approved event's organisers to the website, to ensure greater take up especially of smaller events;
5. that the Director of Pride in Place reviews whether the Torre Abbey pitch and putt contract remains the most appropriate use of the space to meet the Council's cultural and heritage objectives, especially in light

of the ongoing damage and annual repair costs to the roof of the Spanish Barn; how the risk of damage to the Spanish Barn can be reduced in future and explore alternative uses for the area, maximising the archaeological history of the site;

6. that the annual Business Plan for Torre Abbey be reviewed and presented annually to the Overview and Scrutiny Board together with details of performance against the previous plan;
7. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to ask the Destination Management Group to explore options for working more collaboratively with attractions across Torbay to establish how they can work together to encourage and incentivise visitors to multiple attractions to help increase footfall;
8. that Members support the proposed revisions set out in the Events Strategy Suggested Updates document which ensures that it is in line with the Destination Management Plan and consider that the Events Strategy remains relevant;
9. that a report on implementation against the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board to review and monitor performance on an annual basis or earlier if budgetary or capacity concerns are identified, to ensure that delivery of the Strategy and Plan remain achievable;
10. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to develop and implement a criteria and application form for headline and feature events based on the Events Strategy and Destination Management Plan to enable the Council to assess applications against that criteria, particularly during the shoulder seasons to ensure that the events taking place on Council land are compliant with the Events Strategy;
11. that the Director of Pride in Place and the Events Team be requested to assess the effectiveness of the Torbay Events Advisory Panel and whether working with the ERBID and English Riviera Events Collective as an alternative would release capacity within the Team;
12. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to explore the costs of a feasibility study to assess whether Torbay's meadows and green spaces could be utilised as show grounds; and

13. that the Director of Pride in Place be requested to review the information on the Council's website and documents relating to events such as the 'Events in Torbay A Guide for Organisers' and 'Apply to Hold an Event' to make them more accessible.