

Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 20 September 2018

Questions Under Standing Order A13

A member may only submit three questions for consideration at each Council Meeting. Each member will present their first question in turn, when all the first questions have been dealt with the second and third questions may be asked in turn. The time for member's questions will be limited to a total of 30 minutes.

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| <p>Question (1) by Councillor Sanders to the Executive Lead for Children and Housing (Councillor Stocks)</p> | <p>How many meetings of the South West Councils' Children's Services Portfolio Holders Group have been held in the past three years and how many have you attended?</p> |
| <p>Councillor Stocks</p> | <p>As the Executive Lead for Children's Services since the beginning of August this year there have been no South West Councils Children's Services meetings for me to attend. I have been unable to establish how many meetings there have been in the last 3 years through the website but I am sure that as the Liberal Democrat top up representative on the South West Councils Councillor Sanders can access this information himself.</p> |
| <p>Question (2) by Councillor Carter to the Executive Lead for Community Services (Councillor Excell)</p> | <p>In previous years the Paignton seafront road has been closed to traffic and parking from May to September, and in those years the green was not invaded by travellers. However this year, as part of the seafront was open during the summer season, we have had at least three encampments by travellers, the latest one appearing to cause the local residents to retaliate by also parking on the green for free. Can you tell me why the seafront has been partially open, and if this is a good idea given the events that have happened and health and safety issues, also what permanent action is in place to stop any reoccurrences of encampments in future on the seafront.</p> |
| <p>Councillor Excell</p> | <p>Parking restrictions were amended in December 2014 so that that the northern arm of the Eastern Esplanade was only closed for the period of 21st July to 7th September, each year, with the southern arm still remaining closed for the longer period from May to September. These closure periods have been in operation for the summer periods during 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. There are no plans to re-instate the gate at the entrance to Pier Approach as resources to control permitted access are not available.</p> <p>There are no immediate plans to protect the green further as it is a fine balance between user access, event use and grounds maintenance efficiency. Furthermore, there is currently no budget available to progress any works. Officers are investigating the opportunity to reinstate bollards either side of Pier Approach and sea defence work in future years will hopefully prevent vehicular access to the Green from the seaward perimeter.</p> <p>The Council has received more attention from travellers this year on our seafront public open spaces, as surrounding sites within Torbay are now better protected and such measures have caused this activity to be displaced.</p> |

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| | <p>During the recent encampment on Paignton seafront, Torbay Council followed due process and the legislative requirements associated with the removal of any unauthorised encampments.</p> |
| <p>Question (3) by Councillor Darling (M) to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Planning and Waste (Councillor Mills)</p> | <p>With the development of the Pavilion in limbo, are you confident that MDL Ltd are maintaining the building in accordance with the terms of the lease?</p> |
| <p>Councillor Mills</p> | <p>There is a major planning application for comprehensive redevelopment of the Pavilion and adjacent marina car park pending, which is still “live” and waiting for additional information from the developer before it can be considered by the council as Local Planning Authority. If approved and implemented this would see the Pavilion extensively repaired as part of the redevelopment.</p> <p>In the interim, the Council continues to monitor the condition of the building regularly, and only recently carried out another inspection. I can confirm therefore that MDL are carrying out routine maintenance and we are keeping a close eye on its condition.</p> <p>If no deliverable redevelopment is approved and implemented then the Council has a number of remedies and actions it can take if necessary in consultation with the tenant to bring the property back up to a standard to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> |
| <p>Question (4) by Councillor Darling (S) to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Planning and Waste (Councillor Mills)</p> | <p>I understand that the developers have up to six months to respond to the legal proceedings that found the planning decision in respect of the Pavilion deficient. What encouragement is the Council bringing to bear on the developer to either provide the relevant method statement or come up with alternative proposals to develop this sadly neglected Torquay treasure?</p> |
| <p>Councillor Mills</p> | <p>See answer to question 3 above.</p> |

Second Round

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| <p>Question (5) by Councillor Sanders to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Planning and Waste (Councillor Mills)</p> | <p>Why was no substitute sent to attend in his place at either of the two South West Councils’ meetings this year that he has missed.</p> |
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| Councillor Mills | I attended the March meeting and intend to be present at the October meeting. The Chief Executive attended the July meeting and an officer from Human Resources attends some meetings. I am fully briefed if I miss a meeting. |
| Question (6) by Councillor Darling (M) to the Executive Lead for Community Services (Councillor Excell) | At a community meeting held on 3rd September 2018 you informed those present that Torbay Council received monies for re-settling former prisoners in Torbay. Can you please explain this? |
| Councillor Excell | Torbay Council does not receive any direct payments for resettling former prisoners. It has however been successful in receiving government grant funding and additional support from the OPPC, through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in funding for a Prison Link work. They work directly with the prison to assist prisoners that are due to return to Torbay to gain accommodation prior to their release to reduce homelessness and hence assist with reducing reoffending. This is provided through direct grant funding. |
| Question (7) by Councillor Darling (S) to the Executive Lead for Adults (Councillor Parrott) | I understand that almost 1,000 older people a day are needlessly admitted to hospital amid social care crisis. A pensioner is readmitted to their local hospital every 90 seconds, with emergency admissions to hospital more than doubling in the last 13 years, according to new research by Age UK. The report also said the rate of avoidable admissions had increased by 63 per cent since 2003, citing that pensioners living alone are at greatest risk and that the care system fails to help an ageing population. Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the LGA's Community Wellbeing Board, said: "With people living longer, increases in costs and decreases in funding, the system is at breaking point and is ramping up pressures on unpaid carers who are the backbone of the care system'. With Torbay's higher than average numbers of older people what assurance can you give around how Torbay Council are managing this crisis? |
| Councillor Mills (on behalf of Councillor Parrott) | <p>During the eight year period between 2009/10 and 2017/18 an increase in emergency admissions of 25% for the over 65 population was experienced, 13.4% across all age groups. The over 65 population in the catchment area increased by 18.8% in the same period. After adjusting for the increasing number over 65 in the population emergency admissions increased by 6.2%.</p> <p>It is not clear from the question if the Age UK analysis took population growth into account.</p> <p>The local model of care continues to supporting people at home and avoiding admission where appropriate and possible, however all NHS and social care services are under significant pressure.</p> <p>We have continued to support our services for carers: We believe that all carers are important. We want to actively support and work in partnership with carers, to get the best outcomes for both them and the</p> |

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| | <p>person for whom they care. Our commitment to this is in our carers' policy, and in our action plan which will help us to achieve this.</p> <p>We have a carers' register; the carers' emergency card; free education courses; a quarterly newsletter; discounts in local shops and free hospital parking. Carers are offered support, and assessment, by Carers Support Workers who are based in GP surgeries. They are also supported by locality teams, who support them by offering assessments and support jointly with the person they care for. This support includes direct payments and access to replacement care.</p> <p>The estimate is there are 17,000 Carers in Torbay at present (16,107 in 2011 Census plus increase for population size and allowance for an ageing population) compared to the 4,282 on the Carers Register currently. This means we have identified just above 25% of Carers we believe to be active in Torbay. We continue to work on supporting more people to join the register. Carer Support Workers are also aware of 6,269 Carers who are registered as such at GP practices within Torbay (37% of the Carers in Torbay).</p> <p>Torbay is managing relatively well compared to some areas and via the LGA recent green paper and via ADASS we will lobby to support the continuation of IBCF scheme to ensure more money is available for adults social care, and that long term government solutions are agreed- as adult social care needs some national agreement to support it in a sustainable way given the national demographic pressures we are all familiar with.</p> |
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Third Round

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| <p>Question (8) by Councillor Darling (M) to the Executive Lead for Community Services (Councillor Excell)</p> | <p>Over recent months I have noted increasing anger from constituents over the failure of adequate resourcing of the Police in Torquay Town Centre. Earlier this summer, at a meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny board, the Conservative Police and Crime commissioner for Devon & Cornwall and Chief Constable gave the clear impression that after an 80% decrease in PCSOs in Torquay local residents could expect an increase in numbers. When will this happen?</p> |
| <p>Councillor Excell</p> | <p>The Police have undertaken a review of PCSO numbers and the allocation per area. This has also included the changes recently implemented of the formation of new BCU incorporating Torbay. The exact allocation has yet to be announced. A couple of PCSO however have voluntary moved to Torbay as any permanent arrangements require contractual discussions.</p> |
| <p>Question (9) by Councillor Darling (S) to the Mayor and Executive Lead for Assets, Finance, Governance and Corporate Services, Economic Regeneration and</p> | <p>On the 1st of August 2018, due to the severe financial pressure that the Council faces, Torbay Council introduced a moratorium on non-essential spending for all parts of the Local Authority. Since then what meetings have you held with the two MPs who represent Torbay to put pressure on the Government to adequately fund the Council?</p> |

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| Transformation (Mayor Oliver) | |
| Elected Mayor Oliver | I contacted both MPs to request a meeting to discuss Torbay's finances as a matter of urgency. I met with Sarah Wollaston MP on 30 August 2018, however, Kevin Foster MP has declined to meet with me. |