

Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 25 February 2021

Questions Under Standing Order A12

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.

First Round

<p>Question (1) by Councillor O'Dwyer to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>Could the relevant member please provide up to date figures around planning and local searches please with comparisons for the last year.</p> <p>Numbers of applications this financial year by month.</p> <p>Numbers completed in the relevant timescales depending on type of application including those with or without agreed extensions.</p> <p>Longest, shortest and average time taken.</p> <p>Percentage of delegation also.</p> <p>Appeal numbers won and lost.</p> <p>Costs awarded for and against up to date.</p> <p>Numbers of local searches requests undertaken.</p> <p>Current and comparable times taken to undertake those local searches.</p> <p>Our cost of searches this year and proposed.</p> <p>Along with all of the statutory and local targets and timescales for each answer.</p>																				
	<p>The first 4 items are covered in Appendix 1, the remainder of the information requested is set out below.</p> <p>Land Charges:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">No. of searches received 1/4/2020- 31/1/21</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Average days turnaround time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>April</td> <td style="text-align: right;">26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td style="text-align: right;">230</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td style="text-align: right;">155</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td style="text-align: right;">280</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td style="text-align: right;">290</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td style="text-align: right;">340</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td style="text-align: right;">347</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td style="text-align: right;">310</td> </tr> <tr> <td>December</td> <td style="text-align: right;">200</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No. of searches received 1/4/2020- 31/1/21	Average days turnaround time	April	26	May	230	June	155	July	280	August	290	September	340	October	347	November	310	December	200
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	<p>January 260 Cannot give an average turnaround time as there are too many outstanding</p> <p>No of searches received 1/4/19 31/1/20 Average days turnaround time (up until January so same as above)</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>April</td><td>238</td><td>11 days</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>216</td><td>13 days</td></tr> <tr><td>June</td><td>228</td><td>10.5 days</td></tr> <tr><td>July</td><td>272</td><td>13.1 days</td></tr> <tr><td>August</td><td>221</td><td>12.8 days</td></tr> <tr><td>September</td><td>212</td><td>12.7 days</td></tr> <tr><td>October</td><td>242</td><td>2.4 days</td></tr> <tr><td>November</td><td>221</td><td>14 days</td></tr> <tr><td>December</td><td>116</td><td>16 days</td></tr> <tr><td>January</td><td>164</td><td>15.1 days</td></tr> </table> <p>New Government target for turnaround 10 days</p> <p>Land Charges Fees and Charges See Appendix 2</p>	April	238	11 days	May	216	13 days	June	228	10.5 days	July	272	13.1 days	August	221	12.8 days	September	212	12.7 days	October	242	2.4 days	November	221	14 days	December	116	16 days	January	164	15.1 days
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<p>Question (2) by Councillor Bye to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing (Councillor Long)</p>	<p>Could the relevant Cabinet member please tell me the number of new homes completed in Torbay in 2020 and 2019; if not too much trouble could they please advise the numbers from 2000 and explain what is being done to increase numbers in line with the recently approved Housing Strategy.</p>																														
<p>Councillor Long</p>	<p>Much pro-active work has been taking place with regards to the Priority Sites (Stalled Sites) List, liaison with Registered providers and with Homes England, to help unlock sites. The revamped Housing Delivery Group, made up from Officers across the Authority is regularly meeting and addressing matters on the Delivery Plan with it's own Action Tracker. Further work with the new Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer and with the additional resource in the Future Planning Team will assist with maximising the sites coming forward. The development management officers are then processing applications as quickly and efficiently as possible and getting those larger residential sites in front of planning committees for determination. In addition, TorVista will hopefully be receiving Registered Provider status at the beginning of March and as a result be progressing on sites such as Tweenaway Cross.</p> <p>For statistical information please refer to Appendix 2.</p>																														
<p>Question (3) by Councillor Thomas (J) to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and</p>	<p>Proposed new parking regulations in Foxhole.</p> <p>An order was advertised on 11th November 2020 in the Herald Express and online at Devon Live, the closing date for representations was 1st December 2020. Despite these new regulations affecting many hundreds of residents across the Foxhole</p>																														

<p>Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>area, not a single representation was made - my concern is this is because nobody knew they were being consulted upon. Despite not a single letter or concern, the portfolio holder gave this scheme tacit approval and the scheme is now going ahead. No consultation with the community - a complete surprise and goes against everything that the administration stand for, with no surprises for the community.</p> <p>Now that this has come to light, and is clearly an error, will the portfolio holder put an urgent stop on this and ensure that the proper consultation does take place in order for residents to have a say in any scheme, before it is rolled out.</p>
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>The proposals for a Traffic Regulation Order, which will impact on the Foxhole area, were advertised on 11th November 2020. The public notice was placed in the Herald Express as legally required, with a further advert on the Devon Live site, with full paperwork accessible on the Torbay Council website. Unfortunately, no advertisement was placed on the site in the Foxhole area. Officers were following the current guidelines, which recommended that the placing of local notices, typically on lampposts, should not go ahead during the Covid-19 pandemic to mitigate the potential public health risks both to the staff and the public. This would explain why the community don't feel they have been adequately consulted, albeit that the ward Councillors had been made aware of these proposals.</p> <p>Ward Councillors were sent an email from the Highways department about the proposals for the 20mph zone, including the initial plans for parking restrictions, on 21st November 2019 along with drawings of the proposed scheme. A further email, including drawings, was sent to the ward Councillors on the 21st January 2020, which included extra parking restrictions to overcome access problems for the SWISCo refuse vehicles.</p> <p>Highways officers also contacted the TDCT and dropped copies of the plans to them directly to allow them to discuss with residents. This happened on the 16th January 2020 and we asked for responses by the 7th February 2020 so that we could get on with the works of planning and designing the scheme.</p> <p>In summary, it is clear that community leaders were made aware of these plans over 12 months ago and early consultation took place before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, I do accept that our normal method of consultation was compromised in November last year, which has meant that some in the community don't feel that they were sufficiently engaged in the process. This is an important decision for the Foxhole community and it impacts on road safety and the timely collection of household waste. Given the circumstances and as soon as I became aware that we had departed from the normal process of raising awareness, I paused further progress on this work. I have asked officers to undertake further community consultation, using the normal advertising process i.e. notices on lampposts. However, there is an important role for ward Councillors to play in helping us to explain why these proposals are coming forward and in particular the issue of vehicles blocking access for the waste collection vehicles.</p>

<p>Question (4) by Councillor Atiya-Alla to the Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Mike Morey)</p>	<p>Over the past couple of years myself, the residents of Ellacombe and the Torbay Community Development Trust have been working hard to re-establish the 65 bus service which included Ellacombe, St Marychurch and Hele. Can I be reassured that the new subsidy that the Council is introducing for this forthcoming financial year could be applied to support this bus service in Torquay?</p>
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>The Council has previously supported the reintroduction of this service through a capital grant to TCDT in February 2018, as part of a package to reinstate services in accordance with a business case that the TCDT provided.</p> <p>In respect of the funding allocation for bus subsidies going forward, a needs, demand and accessibility assessment is being undertaken over the whole of Torbay, to provide an evidence base for long term decision making. This process will help us to consider the demand, understand appropriate service levels and where services are needed, but also whether there are alternative service models that we should be considering, and will ultimately inform appropriate procurement processes.</p> <p>However in the interim and pending long term decisions, Officers are progressing the award of a 6 month subsidy for the number 61 and 65 bus services.</p> <p>Finally, we also plan to write a Bus Strategy later this year. The Government are expected to publish their long overdue national Bus Strategy any day now and we intend to build on what it says and apply it locally to our own situation, based on our knowledge gathered from the above mentioned needs assessment.</p>

Second Round

<p>Question (5) by Councillor Bye to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>What thought was given to a Children's Play Facility in Torquay similar to the hugely popular Geo Playpark at Paignton being included as one of the Town Deal projects?</p> <p>Especially given the Council's vision for a Family Friendly Torbay?</p>
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>Some thought has been given to trying to locate a high profile community and tourist resource in Torquay, similar to the Geo Playpark, but unfortunately COVID-19 has delayed progress with this matter. We will of course revisit this opportunity, although it is unlikely to become a Town Deal project as such a proposal was not included in the original bid document.</p> <p>The Geoplay Park on Paignton was largely supported by lottery funding, to the tune of about £700k with the Council adding about another £100k.</p>

	<p>This is the level of capital funding required for this type of project and there will also be significant ongoing revenue costs that need to be considered.</p>
<p>Question (6) by Councillor Atiya-Alla to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>I understand that a new bid is being promoted by the MP's for Totnes and Torbay regarding opening up the rail line between Paignton and Churston to main line train services. Can the local authority advise what representations the MP's may have made in recent weeks around this new bid to the local authority and what does the Council see as the pros and cons around such a bid.</p>
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>The local authority hold regular update meetings with our local MPs and this matter was discussed at the most recent meeting. There is clearly much support for this from our MPs. However the Council has been provided with a copy of the correspondence sent from the Dartmouth Steam Railway and River Boat Company to Anthony Mangnall MP, which clearly sets out many concerns (Appendix 3).</p> <p>The meantime the local authority will continue to work strategically with the main railway stakeholders, including GWR and others, to secure the best provision of rail services both into and out of the Bay</p>