

Meeting of the Council

Wednesday, 6 February 2013

Questions Under Standing Order A13

Question (1) by Councillor Faulkner (J) to the Mayor – Mayor Oliver	How have the Council taken Account of Child poverty during the budget setting process for 2013/14?
Mayor Oliver	Response deferred to the adjourned meeting to be held on 13 February 2013 as it related to the budget setting process.
Question (2) by Councillor Darling to the Mayor	The Council have a duty to conduct access audits for Council buildings. Can you please advise when these were last reviewed and when any monies were last spent to improve access, on a plan by plan basis?
Mayor Oliver	<p>We have a duty to provide DDA access to public services (and employees) and use our reasonable endeavours to achieve this. DDA Access Audits were completed between 2005 and 2007 and organised by the DDA Action Group. The group had a small budget where expenditure was aimed at eliminating all category D barriers to access. The last works that were completed at Torquay Town Hall included the installation of a new chair lift along with an audio visual link to Reception. Signage improvements were also completed at corporate buildings.</p> <p>Always forgotten, the onus is actually on providing access to public services (not necessarily buildings - although the two often go hand in hand).</p> <p>The current % of public buildings which are DDA compliant is 58%. There is little prospect of exceeding this given the age and nature of some of the Council's buildings together with the removal of the central DDA budget in 2009.</p> <p>There are a number solutions to helping staff with disability issues - such as making reasonable adjustments or even relocating the activity to a more suitable location.</p> <p>The Access Audits are still accessible and should further funding become available these works could be reviewed and prioritised.</p>
Question (3) by Councillor Darling to the Fire Authority Representatives – Councillors Brooksbank and	Do you plan to oppose the loss of a Full time fire engine from Torquay fire station?

Mills	
Councillor Brooksbank	Devon and Somerset Fire Service has to make 5.5 million pounds savings over the next 2 years. My prime concern is public safety; there will be no fire station closures and no compulsory redundancies. We are now in a 12 week consultation period and I will consider all responses carefully before making my final decision.
Councillor Mills	The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority are currently consulting on their proposed Draft Plan for 2013/14 to 2014/15. The final report containing the findings from the consultation is due to be presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority in July 2013. I currently have an open mind and will form my decision from the findings of the consultation and any other relevant responses put before me.
Question (4) by Councillor Cowell to Mayor – Mayor Oliver	Can the Mayor explain the rationale behind spending £40,000 on the path at Torre Abbey Meadows?
Mayor Oliver	<p>A report was presented to the Spending Control and Planning Executive In December 2012 to consider funding for a scheme to improve the access from the sea front to the ERCC and Torre Abbey. The project was approved by the Executive and commenced in January 2013.</p> <p>Works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Widening of the path - Tree Planting to form an Avenue - Clearing of hedges to open up the area to feel safer - Repairs and painting to adjacent fences - Crown lifting trees - Removing Ivy - Opening up access to Torre Abbey and RICC - Improved signing, potentially forming a gateway <p>Works are intended as a “spend to save” as this will improve visitor numbers to these establishments as there will now be a clear link from the busy sea front area.</p> <p>The overview and Scrutiny Board were also advised of the project on the 24th January 2013 as part of the capital investment plan. The works carried out to date are estimated to cost £30,000 and are funded from reserve and project contingencies. The project will then be match funded to a value of £20,000 by Torre Abbey and ERCC for improved signage.</p>
Question (5) by Parrott to the Executive Lead for Business Planning	In view of the troubling allegations regarding the 'political charity' Common Purpose - in the national press (including both the Daily Mail and the Sunday Times) during the week Monday, 12 November to Sunday, 18 November - please could you advise Council as to the numbers of

and Governance – Councillor Pritchard	<p>employees of Torbay Council that have received training from Common Purpose over the past municipal 10 years, and within which employment groups and at what levels those employees work (eg) social workers, teachers, communications, human resources?</p> <p>Could you also confirm to the Council that no employees are due to attend such training in the future, and that in view of the seriousness of the allegations, that the Council will put in place a policy precluding any employee training by Common Purpose in the future?</p>
Councillor Pritchard	<p>Common Purpose is an independent charity that says it aims to create better leaders at work and in society. It runs leadership development courses around the UK. Any concerns about the organization would properly be considered by the charity commission not the council.</p> <p>Our HR records show 2 people having attended common purpose courses- one in the TDA and one a head teacher in a school. There are no current plans for staff to participate in courses with Common Purpose. The organization recently facilitated a 2 day event from Parkfield for unemployed young people in the bay and the council supported the event with other agencies by having the young people attend work places for part of the development days.</p>