

Adjourned Annual Meeting of the Council, Tuesday, 17 May 2022

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

Question (1) from Councillor Douglas-Dunbar to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	Please could the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture explain the rationale behind the method that trees are purchased for Torbay Council. Are they purchased directly by Swisco or by a third party on their behalf. Please include in your response the following details of the purchase contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When was the contract instigated;• Does the contract contain a clause to ensure that where possible trees are sourced from UK growers, if so what percentage of the trees have been bought from Uk growers;• What premium, if any, is added to the cost of the tree purchase by the third party;• What has been the total cost since this practice was established;• Are the trees that have been purchased, British natives, if not why not;• Does the qualified arboriculturist employed by Swisco advise the third party on tree orders• What measures have been taken to measure the carbon footprint of transporting trees from outside the UK.
Councillor Morey	<p>I can confirm that the SWISCO arborist provides advice on our approach to our tree species selection and where possible this is also informed by the wider community as to their ideas for tree species they would like to see.</p> <p>The approach is typically to purchase native trees. Wherever possible we will use native species as the benefits of biodiversity associated with native trees is well known. Although there are exceptions where we will plant non-native trees, but this is only done for landscape or resilience reasons or where a non-native tree offers a uniqueness not found in UK natives.</p> <p>The provision for the purchase and planting of trees is included in the Green Infrastructure Contract that was let in April of this year.</p> <p>There is no specific clause within the contract to specify that trees should be sourced from UK growers, however at the pre-order stage where the trees come from is identified. SWISCO will always ensure that where possible trees are sourced from UK growers – who have grown them from seed in this country.</p> <p>There is no percentage uplift or premium added to the cost of the tree or administration involved in doing so by the third party. As part of the social</p>

	<p>value element of the contract a number of trees have also been planted at no charge by the contractor including some of the Covid tree trail</p> <p>For any trees that are brought from abroad, there are challenges with measuring the Carbon Footprint as when a consignment of trees comes in from the continent it will not just be our trees on the lorry. There will be trees for other nurseries, and other suppliers, and so the carbon footprint is difficult to accurately assess. It is something that does need addressing and quantifying so we are able to show how we can offset the associated carbon footprint.</p>
<p>Question (2) from Councillor O'Dwyer to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing (Councillor Long)</p>	<p>The council secured funding from the Land Release Scheme (LRF) a few years ago for Little Blagdon Farm, Land at Preston Down Road and Garfield Road, Paignton to support the area in providing additional homes to meet the determined need.</p> <p>Please could the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism and Housing provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details from the land Registry of who now owns the identified sites? • How the monies awarded were spent or are still to be spent and when they need to be spent by under the LRF scheme criteria. • Is there planning permission for any of the sites and how many new homes have been built so far and how many are anticipated to be social/affordable homes. • To aid the understanding of the level of homes required and the benefit the development of these sites would bring, could you also provide the current housing land supply in 'years' for Torbay and when will the public's response to the consultation on the five Housing Growth Scenarios be shared with Members.
<p>Councillor Long</p>	<p>The Land Registry details for the sites are set out in Appendix 1. The LRF monies are to be spent, and have been spent, in accordance with criteria agreed with the Cabinet Office. The criteria for complying with LRF terms relates to its release for housing development. The LRF grant does not have a 'spend by' date in its criteria. Preston Down Road was sold in December 2020 and all LRF terms have been complied with. Terms have been agreed for disposal of Collaton St Mary (also known as Little Blagdon Farm) and the land release date has been agreed as February 2023. The Council transferred the Garfield Road site to Torbay Economic Development Company Limited on 28 May 2021.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the planning application for Preston Down Road will be submitted during the summer 2022. Planning consent for the new access road and building demolition at Collaton St Mary was obtained in September 2019 and contractors are currently on site demolishing the buildings. We are anticipating that the developer for Collaton St Mary will submit its planning application for residential development Autumn/Winter 2022.</p> <p>The Garfield Road site forms part of the wider redevelopment proposals for the whole of Victoria Centre and the timings of a planning application is unknown pending a procurement and delivery strategy for the site.</p>

	<p>The current Housing Land Supply figure is below 3 years, these sites would all bring considerable benefit to the supply of homes. The feedback from the first consultation on the Housing Growth Scenarios and the proposal for a further Regulation 18 Consultation, will be considered by Cabinet in due course.</p>
<p>Question (3) from Councillor Kennedy to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>At the Council meeting held on 3 March 2022, I asked the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture a question regarding the LCWIP for which I have yet to receive an answer. Please would you provide the answers required by my residents tonight and numerate the answers as shown below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residents of the Churston with Galmpton Ward were informed that, due to separate funding having been available for some time, the improvements to America Lane for cycling and walking would be one of the first of the walking and cycling route projects in the Bay. Please provide a timeline for these works. 2. Please also provide the date by which the funds provided in a Section 106 for America Lane have to be spent as those details are still not publicly available on our website. 3. Please provide an update with timescales regarding the proposed cycling and walking routes within the Galmpton with Churston Ward and how these will connect up with the routes in the neighbouring Wards.
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>We are not currently able to give a detailed programme for the delivery of the works but reiterate that the proposal is a priority, the residents will have seen the works with wildflower meadow that are part of enhancing this route for all, including for biodiversity. Discussions are taking place between the Council and SWSICO to set a delivery programme and ensure appropriate resources are allocated. This route, in contrast to the other sections of the Beaches Trail has an existing design with which we can work from.</p> <p>There are a variety of Section 106 agreements related to the implementation of walking and cycling improvements between Brixham and Windy Corner, and some of those agreements can also cover other sustainable transport improvements in that area if required. Some of the agreements are currently not fully paid to the Council and some do not have express time limits within the agreement, though we are aware of the need to act responsibly and appropriately in spending these contributions in accordance with the agreements for the purposes set out. This will include spending the money in a timely manner and ensuring it is relevant to the development.</p> <p>As well as Americas Lane, we are working with the Liveable Towns Officer, who is working in partnership with us and Sustrans, reviewing the options to improve routes between Windy Corner and Brixham. This will be reported shortly with community consultation a key part of the next step. The LCWIP further identifies the route along Dartmouth Road to the north, connecting to Paignton, and as we develop our proposals we will move into reviewing schemes in that section of the route. This section is</p>

	noted as a short term delivery timescales in the LCWIP and that remains the intention.
Question (4) from Councillor Chris Lewis to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	Can the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture please provide an update on the position of the North Toilets on Preston Seafront. In particular, can he confirm that no arrangements will be made to give a lease/licence on the green to the south of the toilets before a full consultation has taken place with the local ward Councillors, Community Partnership and the Beach Hut Users Group. Also, will any of the beach huts be moved to accommodate the new development.
Councillor Morey	<p>The redevelopment of the north toilets on Preston seafront are currently at the design stage, although a preferred tenant has been identified and is informing the process.</p> <p>I can confirm that should a lease/licence on the green to the south of the toilets be sought careful consideration shall be given, including consultation with the local ward Councillors, Community Partnership and the Beach Hut Users Group. Currently there are no plans to move any of the beach huts to accommodate the new development.</p>

Second Round

Question (5) from Councillor O'Dwyer to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services (Councillor Carter)	Torbay Council as one of the Bays largest employers is currently offering substantial relocation payments of up to £11k, along with £500 'golden hello's' and £500 refer a friend bonuses for specific jobs within the authority, along with a £2000 annual retention payments for some roles. It is also offering permanent home working to others who can, as well as differing pensions offers across its subsidiary companies. How is the Council currently demonstrating and evidencing job evaluation, equality and fairness within the Council and across its different subsidiary companies in hiring and retaining staff?
Councillor Carter	<p>The Council, as with other employers, is facing increased challenges in recruiting to many positions. In order to ensure that we are able to effectively deliver services for our residents, we need to have the flexibility in our Recruitment and Retention policy to attract and retain employees.</p> <p>Council has in place a robust equality proofed job evaluation scheme and associated pay processes, which apply to Torbay Council and wholly owned companies – including recruitment and retention approaches. In relation to any pay, whether it be basic or additional payments, there are clear and concise policies and procedures have that to be followed to ensure equality and fairness to all.</p> <p>For example, any requests for market supplement, refer a friend and golden hello, all have to be requested by the manager/head of service through a business case with evidence to support the request, the business case in appropriate cases must also supply a genuine material factor defence in terms of equal pay before any payments are agreed. All payments are approved by the Head of HR in conjunction with the Head of Paid Service, taking into account the business case and evidence provided for all organisations.</p>

	HR has also recently had the current processes reviewed to ensure robustness of approach by external legal practice and that indicates that the Council is taking an appropriate approach in relation to pay.
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Third Round

<p>Question (6) from Councillor O'Dwyer to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>Considering the continued struggles of Swisco in delivering waste collection services during these difficult times. Could the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture advise if overtime payments have been made to staff to ease the current service and the current or expected costs of doing so. Please could you provide a per head of population comparison with our statistically equivalent and direct neighbouring local authorities of the cost of waste and recycling services.</p>																																
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>Overtime payments are made to staff to facilitate the completion of the service to both collect and dispose of waste in line with Torbay Councils statutory duty. Any associated costs related to this are managed within SWISCO's overall commissioning fee. Overtime costs in 21-22 for the Collection Team (Residual & Recycling) is circa £195k pa.</p> <p>In respect of comparators, it is important that we do compare with unitary authorities, and the CIPFA comparators are the most appropriate.</p> <p>CIPFA Comparators</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="470 996 1380 1646"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Per Head Of Population 2020/21</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Isle of Wight UA</td> <td>£ 25.52</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sefton</td> <td>£ 26.03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wirral</td> <td>£ 26.36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Somerset UA</td> <td>£ 40.36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Darlington UA</td> <td>£ 53.31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole UA</td> <td>£ 58.82</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Tyneside</td> <td>£ 60.91</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Southend-on-Sea UA</td> <td>£ 61.26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blackpool UA</td> <td>£ 63.89</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Redcar & Cleveland UA</td> <td>£ 65.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North East Lincolnshire UA</td> <td>£ 65.99</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Torbay UA</td> <td>£ 72.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Riding of Yorkshire UA</td> <td>£ 74.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Northumberland UA</td> <td>£ 87.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cornwall UA</td> <td>£ 114.74</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Per Head Of Population 2020/21	Isle of Wight UA	£ 25.52	Sefton	£ 26.03	Wirral	£ 26.36	North Somerset UA	£ 40.36	Darlington UA	£ 53.31	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole UA	£ 58.82	North Tyneside	£ 60.91	Southend-on-Sea UA	£ 61.26	Blackpool UA	£ 63.89	Redcar & Cleveland UA	£ 65.28	North East Lincolnshire UA	£ 65.99	Torbay UA	£ 72.07	East Riding of Yorkshire UA	£ 74.92	Northumberland UA	£ 87.43	Cornwall UA	£ 114.74
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