

Adjourned Meeting of the Council, Wednesday, 29 March 2023

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.

At the meeting of the Council held on 7 March 2023, Questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 were referred to the next meeting in the absence of the responding Member. The outstanding questions have therefore been included for consideration at the Adjourned Meeting of the Council on 29 March 2023 (the question number has been retained as that previously published on the agenda for Council on 7 March 2023).

First Round

Question (1) from Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	With regards to the three consultations undertaken with the traders and the public last year on the pedestrianisation of Torbay Road what channels did the council use to raise the profile of the consultations with the public so they could have their say?
Councillor Morey	<p>Public consultation ran between 7 and 27 February 2022. The following awareness activity took place during this period.</p> <p>Face-to-face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Events held in Paignton Library, Geoplay Park and at Paignton Chamber of Commerce meeting. The events in Paignton Library and Geoplay Park were publicised through social media.▪ As part of Paignton Library event, team members went out into Torbay Road to talk to shoppers and got them to complete a paper copy of the questionnaire. <p>Email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ One Torbay resident's newsletter on 11 and 25 February, approx. 9,000 subscribers.▪ Update to key partners and education providers on 14 February asking them to share information through their own channels.▪ Staff News on 10 and 24 February, approx. 1,000 staff.▪ Members' update on 8 February <p>Media / online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dedicated page on council's website, which had 1,034 page views.▪ Press release issued on 7 February was run by Herald Express (front page), Devon Live (online), Torbay Weekly (print and online), PJA news (online), Planet Radio / Greatest Hits Radio (online). Devon Live also posted on their own social media account about the consultation. <p>Print</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A4 and A5 flyers distributed to Torbay Road / nearby businesses.▪ Flyers left in Paignton Library.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplies left at Paignton Chamber of Commerce meeting for attendees to take and distribute through their own networks. Leaders' column feature in Herald Express and Torbay Weekly. Paper questionnaires left in Paignton Library <p>Social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook organic reach 10,625, Twitter organic reach 94,181, LinkedIn organic reach 1,162. Total of 304 clicks on link to consultation webpage. Link to consultation was shared 47 times. Torbay Council has approx. 10,000 followers on its Facebook page. Target social media posts ran between 14 and 25 February. Aimed at 16-54 years living in the Paignton area. Generated 325 clicks to the consultation webpage. <p>At the end of our formal consultation period, the Paignton Town Centre Community Partnership ran their own consultation event. Their consultation voted in favour of full pedestrianisation.</p> <p>Consultation with businesses</p> <p>Posted letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2022 – Preparing for a trial of full pedestrianisation of Torbay Road. Included a link to a webpage which had a comprehensive guide on how businesses should start preparing. 21 June 2022 – Come and talk to us about the Torbay Road pedestrianisation. Invitation to drop-in session on Tuesday 28 June. 14 October 2022 – Update on implementation of Torbay Road pedestrianisation scheme. <p>Face-to-face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 June 2022 – Paignton Library drop-in session for businesses. Invited via a posted letter with support from Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association. 16 November 2022 – Traders meeting at the Paignton Club. Invited via Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association. <p>Direct / email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up note to traders after 16 November meeting via Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association. Invitation to complete survey. Details circulated via Chair of Torbay Road Traders Association and via a Traders Facebook group. <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paignton Projects newsletter launched in August 2022. Continued promotion through social media to encourage sign-ups. Currently has 2,462 subscribers. Newsletter is issued monthly. Your Say Torbay webpage which set out details of the project and allowed visitors to the page to leave comments and take part in a poll. Awareness of Paignton Projects newsletter and Your Say Torbay webpage was displayed on an A-Frame trailer that was in place at Station Square between Oct 22 and Jan 23. Press releases on milestones / key updates. All press releases are complemented by a social media post on the council's corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn).
Question (2) from Councillor Bye to the Cabinet Member for	<p>Why was there an extensive consultation regarding the closure of Brixham Road if there is no alternative to closing the road to allow development to take place, why wasn't the decision to close the road</p>

Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	made in public by the Cabinet when it could have been incorporated into the December Cabinet meeting and who, exactly, made the decision to close Brixham Road?
Councillor Morey	<p>The engagement activity we undertook in November 2022 was expressly undertaken in order to gather evidence in respect of the envisaged impact of the proposed works. It was important to gather this evidence for two reasons, firstly so that we could provide detailed impact information to Counsel who was providing us with specialist legal advice, and secondly so that we could use it in our discussions with the developer, in order to minimise as far as possible, the extent of the impact, and resulted in changes to the works programme. In addition, the Council has received other representations including from Anthony Mangnall MP, Brixham Town Council, Brixham Chamber of Commerce and Brixham Trawler Agents Ltd as well as a petition.</p> <p>The decision was taken in accordance with the Officer Scheme of Delegation by the Divisional Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure on 20 December 2022 following consultation with the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture.</p>
Question (4) from Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	Following my question to Council in December 2022, would the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture give me an update of the spending of the Extra £600,000 (£570,000 plus £30,000) that was added to Torbay Council Highways budget for 2022 – 2023 since his answer in December?
Councillor Morey	<p>To date, £320,000 has been spent and committed, plus £30,000 for the road safety campaign, the remainder will be taken forward in 2023/24. Examples of the activities undertaken are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Safety Campaign – Implemented by Communications and Engagement Team - £30,000 • Additional footway reconstruction works £100,000 • Additional Carriageway Surface Dressing works £130,000 • Advertisements for Barton 20mph Scheme £2,214 • Advertisements for parking restrictions for Fore Street Barton £800 • Measures to Improve Weed control on the highway £20,000 <p>The following items are also committed for expenditure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of new Weather Monitoring Station on the A380 £30,000 • Signage and Markings for Fore Street Barton 20mph scheme £16,000 • Adverts for Ilsham Marine Drive Overnight Parking restriction £1,000 • Signage and Markings for Ilsham Marine Drive scheme £5,000 • Consultancy costs for Queensway and Fisher Street 20mph schemes £15,000
Question (6) from Councillor Jackie Thomas to the Cabinet Member Infrastructure, Environment and	Could the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture please inform me, how much the Council spent thus far on the Torbay Road pedestrianisation scheme. Please include officer time, consultation, road signage/markings, street furniture, barriers, etc.

Culture (Councillor Morey)	
Councillor Morey	<p>The costs to implement the first trial closure and pedestrianisation of Torbay Road was £66,708 which includes SWISCO and Officer fees, traffic management costs, TROs, advertising and the physical costs including supply chain; lining, kerb lining, signage (removing conflicting signage and new signage), wider signage for example on the Esplanade, traffic separators; bus stop alignment, planters and planting. Following the first trial, Torbay Council made revisions to the scheme to implement a partial pedestrianised option and the total to make such modifications were £9,682. Costs were primarily limited to SWISCO management time to make the necessary changes around lining and signage (all the existing materials and street furniture either stayed in-situ or were relocated/re-used in the scheme). The costs quoted do not allow for design and professional fees for designing the spatial arrangements, access and movement plans and whilst these form part of the wider design costs for developing a permanent scheme the costs directly attributed to both the trial pedestrianised schemes are £14,000 and £3,000 respectively.</p>
Question (7) from Councillor Pentney to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)	<p>It is great news that Torbay Council have been shortlisted by the Local Government Chronicle for Most Improved Council of the Year. How can Torbay become stronger, fairer and safer by building on these foundations?</p>
Councillor Steve Darling	<p>It is indeed great news that the progress we are making as a Council is being recognised on the national stage.</p> <p>In 2015 a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review highlighted the extent of our challenges, including financial viability, core leadership and governance issues, as well as ‘deep rooted and long standing’ challenges in Children’s Services.</p> <p>We have come a long way since then, putting in place solid foundations to improve services in order to achieve long term and sustainable success. It was essential that our first priority to collectively focus upon was Children’s Services, and our success in that respect is well known with the Council being recognised as Good. It was also essential that we focussed upon stabilising our financial position, which again we have achieved.</p> <p>The solid foundations across all services are starting to pay dividends, with a focus on performance and risk, creating a culture of openness and honesty about where we are and what we need to do at every level to drive change through improved service planning.</p> <p>Our focus is now building upon the solid foundations, ensuring that services across the Council are the best that they can be.</p>
Question (8) from Councillor Dudley to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)	<p>Section 215 under the Town and Country Planning Act gives councils the power to take steps requiring land to be cleaned up when its condition adversely affects the amenity of the area. What activity has occurred in recent weeks to use such powers?</p>
Councillor Morey	<p>A number of sites within Torbay have been identified which we think have an adverse effect on the amenity of the area and since mid-January we</p>

	<p>have focussed our resource into trying to secure improvements on these sites.</p> <p>The powers within Section 215 are very useful in many cases, but they cannot be used to facilitate development which is usually what is required. The common trend seems to be prominent sites that have an extant permission which has yet to be implemented, or that a planning application is about to be submitted. Unfortunately, this does not solve the short-term problem of the appearance of a site and there is little appetite of some developers to spend money securing improvements in the intervening period.</p> <p>However, the Council has been able to secure improvements to one site recently and work is on-going there, and we are in dialogue with other developers trying to get them to do the works. In the last few weeks, we have issued Requisition for Information Notices on two sites so as to identify those having an interest in the land, with a view to issuing Notices compelling them to carry out certain works. There is a right of appeal against those Notices. One other site was inspected, and it was found there was actually little that could be done to improve the site – it just needed to be developed, with an extant planning permission already in place. Another site is a unique set of very complex situations involving the Liquidator and many leaseholders, but which hopefully is coming to some form of conclusion soon.</p> <p>There are also numerous smaller domestic untidy land issues amongst officers' normal caseloads which are progressing.</p>
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