

## **Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 18 July 2024**

### **Members' 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**

##### **Councillor Long to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities (Councillor Tranter)**

According to information revealed in March by the Lib Dem MP for Somerton and Frome, Sarah Dyke in the House of Commons, Compassion in Care's helpline received 486 reports of homophobic abuse in care homes over the past 4 years, yet 481 of the service providers accounted for in those allegations are still rated as good by the Care Quality Commission.

Over that same time period, how many allegations of homophobia have been made against care homes in Torbay, and how many of those care homes are rated as good by the Care Quality Commission?

What work is being carried out in Torbay to end discrimination against LGBTQ+ residents in care homes to ensure they are safe in the care system?

##### **Answer to Question 1 provided by Councillor Tranter**

The Council and its Adult Social Care Partner Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust take their commitment to equality and inclusion very seriously and are committed to ensuring that all service users are treated with dignity and respect. Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust collate complaints about care homes, and this includes those of a discriminatory nature when they are reported. They have not reported any complaints regarding homophobia.

Data taken from the Care Quality Commission care directory, the regulator of care homes, indicates that 78% of care homes in Torbay are rated 'Good' – but it is not possible to correlate this data to complaints regarding homophobia. The Care Quality Commission may also receive complaints directly.

Torbay and South Devon Foundation Trust's Quality Assurance and Improvement Team supports care homes with quality issues and provide ongoing support to address issues arising from concerns and complaints. In addition, Torbay and South Devon Foundation Trust's Adult Safeguarding team monitors enquiries carefully and play close attention to equality, diversity, and inclusion issues.

In addition, Torbay Council, is currently discussing an engagement exercise with the Intercom Trust. This will work with the LGBTQ+ community to consider the issues which they consider to be the most important for Adult and Community Services to work with them to address.

---

## **Question 2**

### **Councillor Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Several clocks for a number of months or years have been out of action. These include Mallock Tower Clock, Old Maids Perch, Torquay Town Hall and St John's Parish Church, Paignton. I have been chasing up on a response about some of these for a number of years now. Last autumn a Project Initiation Document and a costings schedule had been sent by a Senior Building Surveyor at the TDA to a senior officer for his consideration. Can you advise when we can expect these clocks to be working again?

### **Answer to Question 2 provided by Councillor Billings**

In the past the clocks have been maintained on an ad-hoc basis, although no formal servicing and repairs have been undertaken in recent years. The clocks are now in a poor state of repair and require significant repair and conservation to bring them back into good working order.

The Council has over several years made decisions which has prioritised other areas of the Council estate with the limited budget available. The condition of our estate will be brought in front of Cabinet later in the year as the Asset Management Strategy is reviewed and I will ask that officers review the options for funding these works.

I can confirm however that the Mallock clock will be restored as part of the Torquay Harbour public realm project.

---

## **Question 3**

### **Councillor George Darling to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events & Culture and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)**

The Chilcote Memorial in St Marychurch has fallen into a poor state, in need of cleaning and repair. What is being done by this council to protect and maintain our statues and memorials?

### **Answer to Question 3 provided by Councillor Jackie Thomas:**

Officers are currently investigating the costs of cleaning the memorial, and to establish if repairs are required. This will require liaison with Historic England, and consideration for any works next to the highway. There is no budget currently

allocated to the repair of this memorial, and community involvement may be required to raise the necessary funds.

---

#### **Question 4**

##### **Councillor Cowell to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events & Culture and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)**

Can you please confirm that the £100,000 identified during the budget process has now been fully allocated to support the Events Team and what has the full-time equivalent increase of staffing in the Events Team been following the increase in budget, to include job titles and contracted weekly hours?

##### **Answer to Question 4 provided by Councillor Jackie Thomas:**

I can confirm that the funding has gone towards supporting the events team and specifically towards the following roles:

A new Senior Events Officer at 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

- An Events Officer role, with an additional three days (0.6 FTE) to make an existing post up to 1 FTE
- Strategic Lead Culture and Heritage post 0.8 FTE

This means that the Events team now consists of ;

- 1 FTE Senior Events Officer
- 2 FTE Events Officers\*
- 0.6 FTE Events Officer

\*0.8 FTE of this resource supports Civic events, advertising boards and other non-event specific work.

---

#### **Question 5**

##### **Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Many residents are concerned that the Victoria Skate Park won't be replaced please can you clarify if the skate park will be restored?

##### **Answer to Question 5 provided by Councillor Billings**

A recent public event, hosted by the Paignton Community Partnership, has resulted in a passionate group of individuals from the community, the Paignton Community Partnership and Torbay Communities coming together to bring forward proposals for a new skate park in Victoria Park that meets the needs of young children, young people and adult skaters.

The group have committed to leading the fundraising for a new facility, and the council has committed to working with the group to help facilitate their proposals.

---

### **Question 6**

#### **Councillor Nicolaou to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

The Council press release on 'National Go Skateboarding Day' that the skate park at Victoria Park in Paignton will close has come as devastating news to many young people.

Please could the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking advise what consultation was carried out before the closure decision was made; and given that Victoria Park was designed to help tackle anti-social behaviour what effect does the administration think this closure will have on anti-social behaviour in the area?

#### **Answer to Question 6 provided by Councillor Billings**

Consultation was not possible as the situation arose following a RoSPA inspection that directed the need to close parts of the Skate Park facilities in Victoria Park with immediate effect. The largest and most useable elements of the large park were condemned as high risk.

Council officers are working with police partners to track and understand if there is an increase in anti-social behaviour complaints related to the closure of the park. The Council teams continue to work in partnership with other organisations to reduce the impacts of anti-social behaviour in Paignton through local and Safer Street funded initiatives.

---

## **Second Round**

---

### **Question 7**

#### **Councillor George Darling to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities (Councillor Tranter)**

A recent epidemic of graffiti has been seen across Torbay, what is the council doing to support the police in tackling this issue?

#### **Answer to Question 7 provided by Councillor Tranter**

This question has been withdrawn by Councillor George Darling.

---

### **Question 8**

### **Councillor Long to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

Residents of Plantation Way (and surrounding roads) on the Willows have expressed concerns for child safety regarding a play area which has been placed on a significant bend in the road. Residents' concerns are that children crossing the road to access the play area may not see a car coming, and that car drivers may also not see a child crossing the road due to the bend and that the situation is an accident waiting to happen.

Residents would like to see (1) the gate at the entrance to the play park (which is situated right onto the road) moved to the rear of the play park so that children are not immediately stepping onto the road when exiting; and (2) increased signage advising cars to slow down when approaching the play park and also advising children to be aware of cars as they cross the road.

The developer (Cavanna) has been approached regarding these requests by both Councillors and residents, sadly to no avail.

Will the Council insist on these perfectly reasonable measures being put in place by the developer before the land is transferred to the Council?"

### **Answer to Question 8 provided by Councillor Chris Lewis**

The Divisional Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure will be writing to Cavanna Homes to request that the gate to the park is repositioned to improve safety at the play area.

Due to the concerns raised the Council has committed to installing speed warning/play area nearby signage on both sides of the road on the approach to the bend as soon as it practicably possible.

---

### **Question 9**

### **Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Development (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

At the Council meeting on 22 February 2024 Councillor Chris Lewis responded to my supplementary question about the Crossways project and that he would let me know who the end user would be at the end of spring. I am yet to be advised who the end user will be, so ask again for this information?

### **Answer to Question 9 provided by Councillor Chris Lewis**

The proposed (consented) scheme is a mixed use development providing approximately 90 units of extra-care residential accommodation, and commercial

uses on the ground floor. We are in discussions with NHS Primary Care to take some of the ground floor space as a GP surgery.

The scheme is moving forward for delivery with a programme start on site for autumn 2025.

---

## **Third Round**

---

### **Question 10**

#### **Councillor George Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Within the last year the 65 bus route was reduced from 3 to 2 days a week due to a lack of volunteer drivers. With the route becoming a commercial operation rather than voluntary, will the Cabinet be reviewing its subsidy to return the 65 bus route back to 3 days a week?

#### **Answer to Question 10 provided by Councillor Billings**

The route has been reduced gradually over the years that it was operated by the Community Development Trust. This was in part due to driver availability but also passenger numbers not being sufficient to warrant the level of service. Data for the route, since being part of the new contract awards in April this year, continues to show low patronage. Through our partnership with operators and the contract we have in place, officers do continually review service provision across Torbay but there are no current proposals to increase this service.

---

### **Question 11**

#### **Councillor Johns to the Leader of the Council (Councillor David Thomas)**

Why were the Oldway Working Party Group meetings disbanded?

#### **Answer to Question 11 provided by Councillor David Thomas**

Oldway is a significant community asset; this administration acknowledges its importance and is committed to continuing the good work that has been done to date to revitalise the estate. Under the review of the ways we work, the activities of the Oldway Working Party will continue in a Cabinet Working Party. As with all Cabinet Working Parties, the group will report through the Portfolio Holder to Cabinet enabling the work to continue in a transparent, publicly reportable, environment.