

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 4th December 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Operation Brighter Bay and Town Centres

When does the decision need to be implemented? None

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Operation Brighter Bay and Operation Town Centre, two key initiatives aimed at improving the street scene and public realm across Torbay. The purpose is to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Board of progress, outline links to the Corporate Plan, and invite comments and advice to Cabinet.

2. Reason for the Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 There are no specific proposals in the report.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That Overview and Scrutiny notes progress against these two areas.

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 Operation Brighter Bay and Operation Town Centre are central to delivering the Council's Community & People and Pride in Place themes within the Corporate Plan. These themes focus on creating safer, clean, attractive, and welcoming environments for residents and visitors in particular in our town centres which in turn supports economic growth and regeneration.
- 1.2 Operation Brighter Bay is principally delivered by SWISCo and concentrates on street scene improvements across the Bay. This includes targeted activities such as weed ripping, grass cutting, and final mile enhancements to ensure that gateways and approaches to key destinations present a positive image. The operation aims to raise standards of cleanliness and maintenance, contributing to civic pride and improving perceptions of Torbay as a vibrant and well-cared-for area.
- 1.3 Operation Town Centre complements this work by focusing on reassurance and engagement within town centres. It addresses concerns raised by residents and businesses regarding the quality and safety of public spaces. Activities include enhanced street cleaning, rapid response to environmental issues, and visible presence to provide reassurance. This operation seeks to foster confidence among businesses and visitors, supporting economic vitality and community wellbeing.
- 1.4 Both operations are aligned with the Corporate Plan themes and underpin the Council's ambition to create thriving, attractive places. By improving the street scene and responding to local concerns, these initiatives contribute to wider objectives such as economic regeneration, health and wellbeing, and community pride. The combined approach ensures that improvements are not only physical but also perceptual, reinforcing Torbay's reputation as a desirable place to live, work, and visit.
- 1.5 Separate dashboards are provided to highlight the progress made under both Operation Brighter Bay and Operation Town Centre since their launch, business plan milestones for these areas have been achieved:

Operation Brighter Bay is all about making Torbay cleaner, greener, and more attractive for residents and visitors alike. Operation Brighter Bay was launched with three clear goals:

- 1. Improve the cleanliness and appearance of our streets, parks, and public spaces.*
- 2. Increase satisfaction among residents and visitors with the public realm.*
- 3. Support the local economy and tourism by creating vibrant, welcoming destinations.*

- To achieve this there has been a focus on key activities such as grass cutting, line marking, weed control, street cleansing, and highway maintenance.

- We've increased cutting frequency from three times a year to every two weeks on key routes and destination parks. New machinery with balloon flotation tyres means we can cut even in wet conditions. Through SWISCo we're also recycling grass cuttings as compost and balancing biodiversity with formal conservation areas. The highway grass verges have increased in cutting frequency on average to more than 8 times a year. Innovation with the installation of five robotic mowers at the entrance to Torbay to enhance the visitor welcome point.
- Enhanced planting at key sites like The Strand has transformed the look of Torbay, returned Seasonal Hanging Baskets and Floral planters not seen in Torbay's Public space for more than 10 years. We've celebrated success with the highest number of Green Flag awards for Torbay, further celebration at RHS Southwest in Bloom for all towns with a GOLD award. National RHS GOLD award for Torquay as one of the best in the UK, the first time in more than 30 years. Many sponsorship opportunities are being explored to sustain this success.
- We have invested in our water features at Princess Gardens and Cary Green with upgraded technology to save water, more regular cleaning regime installed feature lighting and returned the much desired coloured featured lighting back to Royal Terrace Gardens (Rock Walk).
- Brixham has seen a boost with extra staff and equipment, and harbour teams now have permanent crews. We've installed over 40 talking solar compacting bins, reducing litter and improving education. Plus, each town now has an EV wheelbarrow with chemical cleaning capability for a better cleansing offer.
- Despite early challenges, we've sprayed 900 out of 1,900 roads and invested in specialist equipment to improve reliability. Weed management is now backed by a clear plan and upgraded machinery. We have the highest number of Sweeper fleet cleansing our road network in the Southwest with 5 full time sweepers operating daily.
- Safety-critical markings have been prioritized and completed, allowing us to move to a proactive approach. Highway defect repairs now follow a 'right first time' principle, improving response times.
- Residents and councillors are actively using the SWISCo reporting system, and response times for issues like fly-tipping and graffiti have improved dramatically.
- This year we have seen the full benefit of the work with enforcement, improved target hardening, and unauthorized encampments taking less than an average three days

Linked to Operation Town Centre Brighter Bay has seen enhanced street cleaning and rapid response measures have been implemented in town centres, addressing issues raised by businesses and residents. Over 50 environmental concerns, including litter and graffiti, have been resolved promptly.

- 1.6 These achievements demonstrate tangible improvements in the public realm and align with the Brighter Bay theme of the Corporate Plan. Continued monitoring and stakeholder engagement will ensure that progress is sustained and further opportunities for enhancement are identified.

2. Options under consideration

2.1 There are no options under Consideration

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 None from the report.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 No legal implications were identified.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Through the Cabinet member and on going with residents and community groups.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 No implications

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 No Impact

8. Associated Risks

8.1

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people			
People with caring Responsibilities			
People with a disability			
Women or men			

People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			
People who are transgendered			
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)			
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)			

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 Minimal

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 As above