

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 4 December 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Operation Brighter Bay and Town Centres Updated Report

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 improvements in CCTV capability, increased response to ASB case management in addressing both locations and individuals of concern, enhanced partnership and intervention capability, and visible presence to provide reassurance through the Town Centre Officers.. 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.

- 1.7 **Operation Town Centres** has focussed on providing high visibility uniformed presence, robust enforcement of anti-social behaviours, reassurance to members of the public and businesses and coordination of partnership activity towards the same aims.
- 1.8 **ASB powers enforcement** – the ASB Team (3 officers) lead on the use of a wider range of ASB enforcement powers. This supports the more immediate challenge and engagement work of the Town Centre Officers by collating evidence and issuing warnings or progressing legal action. The use of Community Protection Notices (CPN) where necessary has proven in the majority of cases to have had a positive influence on behaviours. This may mean the cessation of anti-social behaviours or the reduction in frequency and impact of them. A minority breach their CPNs to warrant prosecution. In cases where a prosecution is brought a criminal behaviour order (CBO) will usually be sought, but dependent on the circumstances. CBOs tend to be most effective at providing more robust deterrence for ASB as breaching them is an arrestable offence but can pose the risk of moving problems elsewhere.
- 1.9 Community Protection Warnings (CPW) and Community Protection Notices (CPN) are powers under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that enable a structured challenge to ASB. A warning precedes a notice which is then enforceable if not complied with. The following numbers have been issued to date in 2025, CPW – 44 and CPN – 23.
- 1.10 **Enforcement of the town centre PSPOs** started at their commencement in May 2024. One PSPO restricts the consumption of alcohol in the town centre areas of Torquay, Paignton and Brixham and the other enables the dispersal from a specific area within Torquay town centre for ASB. The PSPOs remain a key focus for the Town Centre Officers, which also informs the work of the ASB Team who hold the lead for casework progression on individuals causing persistent ASB.
- 1.11 We have observed a positive impact in terms of a reduction in the visibility of street drinking, most notably during hours that there is a visible presence of uniformed officers. Alcohol consumption patterns and behaviours have adapted rather than ceased but still remain less visibly prevalent. Adaptive behaviours include decanting alcohol into other containers and convening outside the times that uniformed staff are typically present. To the best of our knowledge there is little evidence of displacement as a consequence of enforcing the PSPOs. However, there is anecdotal evidence that suggests there has been a displacement effect in respect of shoplifting primarily from Torquay town centre to other areas which is likely due to the increase of uniformed presence that does challenge shoplifting where appropriate and safe to do so. To what degree displacement takes place and where to is not currently fully understood but would be a reasonable line of enquiry. UKPAC would provide a mechanism to better understand such localised trends but there are insufficient numbers of users at present to help investigate. Given that it is criminality that appears to be being displaced it would be appropriate for police to lead such research.

- 1.12 Both PSPOs can be enforced by Council and Police, the data presented here relates specifically to Council actions. The data will include instances where some individuals have had multiple requests made for the surrender of alcohol within or across months.

PSPO enforcement type	2025
Request to surrender alcohol - Torquay	217
Request to surrender alcohol - Paignton	26
Dispersals (Torquay only)	32

- 1.13 Out of the 217 requests to surrender alcohol in Torquay, there were 51 refusals. Out of the 26 requests to surrender alcohol in Paignton, there were 5 refusals. 3 successful prosecutions have been completed for breaches of PSPOs in 2025.
- 1.14 A summary of 2025 legal actions:
- 8 successful prosecutions have been obtained for breaches of either CPNs or PSPOs
 - An injunction order has been obtained (for someone also successfully prosecuted for breach of PSPO).
 - 5 x Criminal Behaviour Orders have been obtained following the prosecutions – these have contained a range of conditions that include location bans and behavioural restrictions
 - A prosecution was successfully brought under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 resulting in the forfeiture of a dog and the individual receiving an order banning them from keeping further dogs. This was due to the defendant utilising her dog as a weapon in the Torquay town centre area
 - One prosecution was withdrawn due to having already secured a CBO.
 - There have been no prosecutions that have been unsuccessful.
- 1.15 An additional CCTV Operative has been recruited into post enabling the double-crewing of more shifts throughout the week and therefore increasing the capacity for the proactive monitoring of cameras and evidence processing. Torbay's CCTV infrastructure continues to expand which also increases the amount of hardware that needs to be maintained, the maintenance budget has been increased to help meet these demands.
- 1.16 A full team of 6 Town Centre Officers are in place working a shift pattern to accommodate times when our town centres at their busiest, working closely with partners and business.
- 1.17 Taxi Marshalls have been present in Torquay and Paignton night-time economies on a Friday and Saturday night from early summer, additional shifts are provided over the festive period to cover any significant dates not falling on a weekend.

- 1.18 A joint tent protocol is in place with SWISCo and have removed 58 tents in 2025, (Torquay 35, Paignton 22, Brixham 1).
- 1.19 2025 saw a 56% decrease in incidents of Begging in Torquay Town Centre monitored by CCTV Operators compared with the same period in 2024.
- 1.20 There was a 26% decrease in incidents of Aggressive Behaviour in Torquay Town Centre monitored by CCTV Operators compared with the same period in 2024.
- 1.21 Police data demonstrates a reduction in reported crime in Torquay and Paignton town centres in 2025 as compared with 2024. Reporting levels however are being reviewed.
- 1.22 There was a 65% decrease in incidents of Rough Sleeping in Torquay Town Centre monitored by CCTV Operators compared with the same period in 2024. Numbers of people rough sleeping in Torbay however still remains high, with 102 rough sleepers having been accommodated so far in 2025.
- 1.23 Consistent feedback is received that affirms a sustained improvement in experience at bottom end of Torquay Town Centre and Harbourside, increased public satisfaction and reduced ASB.
- 1.24 Town Centres Officers routinely receive positive feedback for their work and presence, the consistent uniformed presence is clearly valued and welcomed. Shift patterns have been implemented to provide a wider presence when people are most likely to be in the area and also at a weekend.
- 1.25 Relevant Council and SWISCo staff have completed Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) training from Devon and Cornwall Police and are awaiting formal accreditation.
- 1.26 Council efforts are integrated within a wider partnership commitment to improving the experience, environment and safety of our town centres.

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 ongoing 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 None

9. Cumulative Council Impact

9.1 Minimal

10. Cumulative Community Impacts

10.1 As above