

Liberal Democrat Group Notice of Motion

Cabinet

16 December 2025

Fair Prices for Memorial Benches

The current charges for memorial benches in Torbay are significantly higher than those in neighbouring authorities, with exclusive benches costing up to £12,000 for 25 years in premium locations.

With the current 5-year sponsorship model not reflecting the lasting nature of memorial benches, which families expect to endure for a meaningful period.

Neighbouring and national councils offer more affordable schemes without zoning distinctions:

- South Hams: £1,680 for 10 years (bench, plaque, and maintenance).
- Teignbridge: £1,795–£1,885 for installation and maintenance, with repainting every 4–6 years.
- Cornwall: £2,125 for 20 years (garden bench and plaque).
- Westminster City Council: £1,625 for 10 years in prime London locations.

By contrast, Torbay's current pricing of £8,000–£12,000 for 25 years depending on "Zone 1" or "Zone 2" is far above regional and national comparators and introduces an unnecessary two-tier system.

To ensure that memorial benches remain accessible to residents across Torbay. The Cabinet are requested to instruct the Director of Pride in Place:

- 1) to review the memorial bench policy and introduce a standard 15-year sponsorship model, with consultation at the end of the term for renewal or maintenance;
- 2) to abolish the current zoning system and adopt a single, fair pricing structure across Torbay, in line with neighbouring authorities;
- 3) that the Director of Finance be requested to set revised charges that are affordable and reasonable, while covering installation and maintenance costs.
 - Suggested benchmark: £2,200–£2,400 for a 15-year exclusive bench sponsorship (single rate across Torbay).
 - Shared plaques to be priced at £600–£650 per plaque.

Promoter Councillor Long
Supporter Councillor Mandy Darling