

Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 23 July 2026

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 Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)

When the Local Education Authority proposed to the DfE to decommission the Hearing Impairment Unit at the Spires & St Margarets Academy Torquay, the Local Authority committed to continuing to fund the support for individual young people as identified in their EHCPs. In light of the decision by the Spires to seek to end the Enhanced Resource Provision for Autism at the Spires, will the Local Authority make a similar commitment as it did with the Hearing Impairment Unit to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Spires College?

Question 2

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

Many residents in St Marychurch and the wider Torquay area have been experiencing delays in household waste collection, in particular recycling over the last month. Many were unable to reach SWISCo through their helpline and the website did not allow missed recycling collections to be reported. What action are SWISCo taking to resolve this problem and improve their communication with residents when delays occur?

Question 3

Councillor George Darling to the Chair of Planning Committee (Councillor Brook)

The Sladnor Park Planning Application was submitted over a year ago yet has not been brought to committee and no date has been set. Will the Chair of Planning inform us why this determination has been delayed and what action he is taking to see this resolved?

Question 4

Councillor Virdee to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)

A business in Torquay Town Centre has reported to me that footfall was affected by the Bay of Lights and Christmas Market last year. How will Torbay Council try to ensure that events it organises benefits Torbay's Town Centres?

Question 5

Councillor Pentney to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)

When will all the 'vertical transport' (lifts, escalators etc) be working at Fleet Walk?

Question 6

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

A number of companies (eg communication/mail etc) have infrastructure boxes on Torbay's pavements with a high proportion of which have attracted graffiti. How is Torbay Council working with those companies to have the graffiti removed?

Question 7

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

How much did it cost converting the Crossways Shopping Centre into a car park, and how much has been collected so far from the car parking charges from the Crossways Car Park?

Question 8

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

A constituent has reported overgrown bushes on a road junction in the Fairisle Close area of the Willows. They have reported this issue for 3 years running and for the first two years the bush has been trimmed back. However, this year the Council has refused to do so. The administration's Brighter Bay initiative is meant to make the "English Riviera more attractive and welcoming" - given the response to my constituent why does this not apply to the Willows?

Question 9

Councillor Penny to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance (Councillor Tyerman)

Councillors and Torbay's MP's have received complaints from residents about difficulties in getting hold of someone to speak to at the Council about their council tax, and also long waiting times on the phone. These concerns have been ongoing for many months. When will it become consistently easier for residents to get hold of someone to speak to regarding their council tax?

Question 10

Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance (Councillor Tyerman)

The Council were willing to sell Occombe Farm direct to a private business, but sold the Polsham Centre at auction despite the interest of a Charity who would provide much social value to Torbay. Why has Torbay Council taken two different approaches to two of its assets?

Question 11

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities (Councillor Tranter)

In January of this year there was a severe winter storm and the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was not implemented. In June there was a Red Alert issued for heat and SWEP was only partially implemented with no accommodation provided for homeless people on the streets to get out of the heat. Charities working with the homeless were not made aware of what actions the council were and were not taking. Will the Council commit to implementing SWEP fully and communicating better with homelessness charities when the next extreme weather event happens?

Question 12

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

Now that Apple taxis have an operating licence in Torbay, what assurances have been put in place to cut back on "cross-border" hiring as has been reportedly happening with Uber, to ensure that Torbay's licensed drivers work is not affected and reduced

Question 13

Councillor Fox to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)

Local residents advise me that it has been ten years that many of them were assured by Cavanna Homes that this land at the end of Darwin crescent on the Willows Estate would be converted to public amenity land. Colleagues have made representations to the local authority repeatedly, and yet another school holiday is set to be upon us with no evidence of a clear way forward. What steps does the council have to make this land publicly accessible?

Second Round

Question 14

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

Residents using the fields off Easterfield Lane, Torquay have reported the fields being misused for motorcycle racing which has presented a danger to walkers and their dogs on the field. What action has the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team taken, and what action is the Council planning to take to prevent further misuse of the fields?

Question 15

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

The area between Walls Hill Car Park and the Babbacombe Cricket ground, in Torquay has become significantly overgrown over previous years. This detracts from the Walls Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest, and was previously used by the community for the fayre. What action is the Council taking to see this area better managed?

Question 16

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

Residents have raised concerns that terraced houses and the challenges parking in areas such as Plainmoor and St Marychurch are creating barriers for residents wishing to use electric vehicles. What action is the Council taking to address this inequity of access?

Question 17**Councillor Pentney to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

Will the administration be compensating those businesses on the upper levels of Fleet Walk who have suffered as a result of lift and escalator repairs taking such a protracted period of time?

Question 18**Councillor Law to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance (Councillor Tyerman)**

A number of Councillors are reporting incredibly lengthy delays in processing payments from Community Ward Funds to the organisations they are destined for. What is being done to speed the process up?

Question 19**Councillor Long to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

What assurances can be provided that the legal and planning issues that East Devon Council have faced with the company that Torbay Council have sold the land at Occombe Farm to, will not also happen here?

Question 20**Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

What assessment was carried out to check what impact the decision on Gadeon House would have on services provided at Torbay Hospital?

Question 21**Councillor Carter to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Please could an update be provided on the delays to recycling collections by Swisco?

Question 22

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

What pro-active action has Torbay Council been taking to eliminate non-authorised traffic flow up and down Fleet Street?

Question 23

Councillor Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)

There is a significant risk of flooding on the section of Dartmouth Road that runs alongside Clennon Valley that could see the pumping station overwhelmed and Paignton town centre flooded. How is the Local Authority prioritising this risk and when does it plan to bring in an alleviation scheme?

Third Round

Question 24

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

The Council in recent years has offered a 'pay for an hour, stay for the day' scheme for car users accessing our town centres during the Christmas period. Will the Council implement a similar scheme to improve equitable access for bus users this Christmas?

Question 25

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

Maidencombe residents requested from SWISCo the provision of bench seating on Maidencombe Green but this has been declined. I am informed one reason quoted was it may make the mowing of the green more difficult. Does the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking believe this is an adequate reason to decline the community a single bench and will he reconsider?

Question 26

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

Several residents have raised concerns that Torbay' RingGo Parking requires residents to stop their parking session. This often leads to overcharging despite parking for shorter periods which creates frustration from our residents. This is out of keeping with many of our neighbouring local authorities who use set times with the opportunity to extend. Will the Council commit to reviewing this practice?

Question 27

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

On the 16th June 2026 Insight Alliance emailed all Councillors concerned about the "narrative and local rhetoric in the political and media space, elevating anxieties and raising safety fears amongst our ethnic minority communities in the Bay". They felt that the local authority does not have "a clear or coordinated approach in addressing these concerns" and could not see how existing strategies translate into meaningful actions. How does the local authority plan to learn from the Racism Review to ensure Torbay becomes an example of inclusive communities informed practice where all residents feel valued, heard and safe?

Question 28

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

Following reconfiguration of the roads around Cary Parade and the Clock Tower, residents have reported severe traffic congestion - particularly outside Golden Palm Arcade, backing up along Cary Parade, and at times extending along the whole seafront, with reports of tailbacks stretching as far as the Grand Hotel.

What action is Torbay Council taking to improve traffic flow during these works?

Question 29

Councillor Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)

A few weeks ago, the Council auctioned off the Polsham Centre in Paignton, despite keen interest from Mencap Torbay in using this facility for their community services. Why did the Council not take account of the potential social value that this use of a former council building could have resulted in?

Question 30

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

Paignton Town Centre has no direct bus route to the main entrance at Torbay Hospital. How are the Council working with Stagecoach to achieve such an outcome?