TORBAY COUNCIL

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 3 December 2026

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Operation Town Centres and Operation Brighter Bay Annual Report 2026

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 Town Centres, aimed at tackling ASB and increasing feelings of safety and Operation Brighter Bay which is all about making Torbay cleaner, greener, and more attractive for residents and visitors alike. 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 areas.

Supporting Information

1. Background

1.1 Operation Town Centres is 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 Town Centres is in its 3rd year of delivery and has a strong enforcement and visibility focus. It addresses concerns raised by residents and businesses regarding the experiences of ASB in our town centres, most notably Torquay and Paignton.

1.3 Whereas Operation Town Centres is a Council initiative, it is embedded within a wider framework of partnership activity that endeavours to tackle ASB and improve the experience of living, working in and visiting Torbay's town centres. Safer Torbay (Community Safety Partnership) has ASB as one of its strategic priorities and is in the process of finalising new governance arrangements with an update ASB Action Plan having been consulted upon with key partners. Delivery will begin in early 2027.

1.4 Dashboards are provided on a quarterly basis to highlight the key outputs such as numbers of legal actions, use of PSPO enforcement powers and numbers of users of the Storenet / Nitenet radio systems. Police report data is also provided for Torquay and Paignton town centres. Some of this data is provided later in the report.

1.5 Key elements of Operation Town Centres are the provision of high visibility uniformed presence, robust use of ASB enforcement powers, maximising the utility of Torbay's CCTV system and providing reassurance to members of the public and businesses. All of these activities involve our partners also.

1.6 The ASB and CCTV Teams are in regular liaison with our nominated Communications Officer to provide information on key updates and successes to be shared with the public and businesses. To help make information more easily and readily available we have reviewed the content of relevant Council webpages and will be implementing changes in the new year.

1.7 **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 2026.

Power	2026	2025 (for comparison)
CPW	27	44
CPN	16	23

1.8 5 successful prosecutions have been completed for breaches of CPNs in 2026, criminal behaviour orders were obtained on the back of all of these court actions. There is a reduction in numbers of CPWs and CPNs from 2025 in 2026 which was anticipated given these powers stay with individuals for as long as is required. Hence a number of people who will have received either in 2025 will still be bound by the requirements into 2026 and possibly beyond.

1.9 **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. 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	2026	2025
Request to surrender alcohol - Torquay	384	217
Request to surrender alcohol - Paignton	71	26
Dispersals (Tqy only)	18	32

1.10 In comparison to 2025 there was both a significant increase in the use of these powers and in compliance with them, which accounts for why there were no prosecutions for PSPO breaches in 2026 so far.

1.11 A summary of 2026 enforcement actions:

- 5 successful prosecutions have been obtained for breaches of CPNs

- 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. Two people have since received custodial sentences for breaches of their CBOs.
- 1 closure order was obtained for a property in Paignton town centre
- There have been no prosecutions that have been unsuccessful
- 18 youth ASB warning letters have been sent with 13 resulting in no further complaints

1.12 **ASB powers enforcement –** the ASB Team 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 the powers are robust yet proportionate. There are many examples of successful results that the team have achieved, but in tackling the nature of issues in our town centres enforcement is but one element of a multi-faceted approach. A particular and brief trend towards the end of the summer involved an increase in reports of youth ASB, with large groups of young people in particular. This received a swift partnership response and deployment of additional youth outreach capacity as well as warnings where necessary, resulting in a cessation of further issues. Attention is currently on Parkfield whereby a multi-agency response is being convened for ongoing issues involving both young people and adults at the site.

1.13 **Town Centres Officers -** 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. It is now the 3rd year of enforcement of the Orders implemented in May 2024, a review of which will be necessary in the new year ahead of the end of their 3 year lifespan and consideration given to future requirements. The Town Centres Officer team now with 6 x FTEs extended their patrol days to include Saturdays this year, providing a Monday – Saturday service. The team provide regular patrols in key locations and assist the wider enforcement efforts with provision of intelligence and service of legal documents where necessary. Uniformed presence had been enhanced throughout 2026 until September when funding for Street Marshalls ended, save for a bespoke provision that started in Brixham with a direct award from the OPCC. The Hotspot policing initiative funded by the Home Office via the OPCC has finished after several years of supporting targeted patrol activities. The funds were used in Torbay primarily to extend uniformed patrols into the evening including ENTE, this has now ceased and no further funding foreseeable. This means that the Town Centres Officers are again the mostly routinely visible presence and responsive to real time issues that arise. There have been multiple incidents that the Officers have been first to respond to involving medical emergencies and escalating violence that warrant an internal review of ensuring the correct expectations and boundaries for the role are in place given that they are Council staff with very limited powers and not emergency workers.

1.14 Torbay's CCTV system is a key asset in the delivery of Operation Town Centres, coordinating real-time responses, collating evidence, gathering and providing evidence and

contributing to crime reduction measures. CCTV is used to monitor any restrictive orders such as CBOs or CPNs that have been obtained or served by the ASB Team or Police. Equally the service also manages a large number of safeguarding incidents as well.

1.15 Between 1 January 2026 and 15 November 2026, CCTV Operators monitored a total of 2,992 incidents across Torbay. Many incidents occurred within Torquay (2,264 incidents), accounting for approximately 76% of all monitored activity. Paignton recorded 646 incidents, whilst Brixham accounted for 82 incidents.

1.16 Specific incidents for Torbay's town centres in 2026 include:

Incident type	**Torquay**	**Paignton**	**Brixham**
Retail theft	390	69	3
Concern for welfare	144	23	3
Breach of CBO	129	5	0
ASB	108	50	6
Aggressive behaviour	94	39	2
Breach of CPW	37	0	0
Breach of CPN	21	9	0
Dispersal Notices	15	n/a	n/a
Illegal tobacco sellers	6	4	1

1.17 Proactive CCTV surveillance contributes to a number of arrests across Torbay's town centres also:

Arrest reason	**Torquay**	**Paignton**	**Brixham**
Aggressive behaviour	12	12	0
Wanted on warrant	53	7	4
Fighting	8	5	4
Criminal damage	11	3	1

1.18 Members of the ASB Team and Safer Communities attend the refreshed Retail Partnership Meeting, alongside a member of the Communications and Engagement Team and the

Neighbourhood Police Inspector. This enables a direct connection between representatives of town centre retailers and our operational response teams to ensure we can best address concerns raised that may not have come through formal channels. There is also a now well established ENTE Group led by Safer Communities that looks at making safety improvements in the ENTE, often with a focus on tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG).

1.19 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.

1.20 Town Centres Officers routinely receive positive feedback for their work and presence – the consistent uniformed presence is clearly valued and welcomed.

1.21 Relevant Council and SWISCo staff completed Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) training from Devon and Cornwall Police in 2025 and were formally accredited in 2026.

1.22 The core Council operational teams delivering the majority of Operation Town Centres work on a daily basis have received internal recognition at the Staff Awards. The CCTV and Corporate Security Team were highly commended in 2025. This year the Town Centres Officers won a team award with two individual members were also highly commended, both an ASB Investigator and our ASB Lawyer were shortlisted for awards and both the Tor Hill House concierge in the Corporate Security Team and the Head of Service of all these teams won an award each also.

Brighter Bay

1.23 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 intended outcomes:

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

1.24 The Council is refining the commissioning and service level approach with SWISCo to ensure that these outcomes are properly reflected within the governance arrangements that apply for SWISCo. The key activities that were the original focus of Brighter Bay, such as grass cutting, line marking, weed control, street cleansing, and highway maintenance continue to be delivered at the increased frequencies as agreed last year. The agreed frequencies as listed below have been achieved by SWISCo this year.

- Highway Grass Verge Cutting – average 8 cuts per year
- Grass cutting on key routes and destination parks – every 2 weeks
- Brixham Street Orderlies – Daily

- Weed Ripping – Annually
- Weed Spraying – minimum twice per year
- Highway Line Marking team – deployed daily

1.25 2026 has seen additional activities incorporated into the Brighter programme following feedback from residents, communities and Members.

1.26 The prolonged hot and dry weather over the summer had various impacts on the grounds, parks and street scene operations which required operational adjustments. In respect of weeds, mechanical weed ripping continues to play a major part in the weed removal programme but over the last 12 months has been supported by significant levels of hand weeding. This has become apparent in areas where due to high levels of on street parking there is not the room or opportunity to carry out the work mechanically. The seed bank of weeds is significant and as such in many areas additional treatments are required. SWISCo has worked hard to identify these areas and take appropriate action. Weed removal remains a major priority and the programme will continue at pace in 2027.

1.27 Increased Graffiti Cleaning. Response times for removal of reported and offence graffiti remain at within 24hrs alongside which, as part of the street scene improvement programme, SWICSo have begun a programme of proactively cleaning graffiti in town centres and residential areas, with particular focus on utility boxes. So far in 2026 there have been over 200 proactive cases of graffiti removal. High pressure steam cleaning equipment was purchased to allow removal of heavy graffiti on porous or delicate surfaces, the equipment is working well and allowing previously impossible to remove paint to be cleaned. The equipment has allowed the graffiti along Rock Walk to be successfully removed. The need for the removal of graffiti was a major theme in resident and Member feedback to SWISCo and has made a significant improvement in the quality of our street scene.

1.28 Road Sign and Street Name Plate Cleaning. All street name plates in the Bay have now been cleaned and condition assessed. Many are beyond cleaning due to failure of the reflective material but a replacement programme, beginning with the 60 most deteriorated is now underway. Long reach mobile equipment has been purchased and a programme of cleaning the huge number of road signs is now underway. This work has been virtually impossible up to this point due the lack of specialist equipment that enables cleaning at height on highway land where the use of ladders is not possible. In many cases these signs have never been cleaned, had become dull, dirty and covered in residue and or algae. The improvement is striking and has been commented on significantly by passers-by and residents who have noticed the work taking place.

1.29 As of October work has begun in various residential areas to bring together all the Brighter Bay elements in residential areas. The blitzing programme will continue over the winter

months and aims to create noticeable improvements which will allow more efficient management at a higher standard during the summer months.

1.30 Leafing and Highway Gully emptying operations have been combined this year and as a result a far more effective and efficient service is being delivered with more sustainable results. By clearing leaf litter and debris from gullies and pavements in one operation issues with blockage related flooding over the winter should be reduced.

1.31 The Play improvement programme continues at pace following a succession of coordinated engagement events working alongside partner organisations. Works are complete in 6 sites (Stoodley Knowle, Seacrest, Huntacott Way, Kitson, Starpitten and Exe Hill) and in progress for the remaining 8 (Great Parks, Barton Downs, Youngs Park, Brewery Park, Victoria Park TQY, Furzham Green, Sharkham Village, Victoria Park Paignton) and are due to be complete by Easter 2027.

1.32 Delivery during 2026 was affected by prolonged hot and dry weather and by wider operational pressures across SWISCo. Reduced grass growth allowed some resources to be redirected to targeted public-realm improvements, while grounds-maintenance staff also supported essential waste and recycling operations during periods of service pressure. The programme will be reviewed for 2027 to ensure that service frequencies remain deliverable, resources are directed to the locations of greatest need and benefit, and reporting provides a clearer connection between expenditure, activity, condition and public satisfaction

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

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Operation aimed at improving feelings of safety in town centres. Surveys confirm this as a particular concern of both older and younger people.		
People with caring Responsibilities			No identified impact
People with a disability			No identified impact
Women or men	Evening and night time economy work has a strong gendered focus addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG)		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No identified impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No identified impact

People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			No identified impact
People who are transgendered			No identified impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No identified impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			No identified impact
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Creating and maintaining safe public spaces positively influences the likelihood of people engaging with them, bringing economic benefits to Torbay.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Feelings of safety are positive for people's sense of community and connection to place. Interventions are also considerate of vulnerability of some of the client group the teams interact with, ensuring that safeguarding and support are integrated with approaches and partnership work.		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 Minimal

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 As above