

Meeting of the Council

Thursday, 6 February 2014

Questions Under Standing Order A13

<p><b>Question (1) by Councillor Darling to the Mayor and Executive Lead for Employment and Regeneration, Finance and Audit (Mayor Oliver)</b></p>	<p><b>During the current budget process more members of the public have become aware of the mayoral system and almost all are shocked that the Mayor has the power to force through his budget with only a one third support of the elected Councillors.</b></p> <p><b>You are on the record as wanting to abolish the Mayoral system However, your rhetoric does not match with reality.</b></p> <p><b>There are record numbers of meetings behind closed doors.</b></p> <p><b>Plans to end the Transport working party resulting in more decisions behind closed doors.</b></p> <p><b>Less opportunity to hold you to account by you ending cabinet meetings.</b></p> <p><b>In light of your professed wish to end the Mayoral system will you forgo your power to force through your budget with only one third of Councillors backing you? This would allow a simple majority on the Council to decide this difficult budget.</b></p>
	<p>The following is a factual answer provided by an officer, a full response from Mayor Oliver can be found on the <a href="#">audio recording</a>.</p> <p>As you will be fully aware, the electorate of Torbay voted in a referendum for a mayoral system of governance. The current arrangements are prescribed in legislation and that is what we have to follow. The legislation provides the opportunity for the budget to be approved by simple majority at the first Council budget meeting. This is the mayoral system which we are required to follow and this cannot change until 2019 when a change of governance could be introduced.</p>
<p><b>Question (2) by Councillor Darling to the Executive Lead for Highways, Transport and Environment (Councillor Hill)</b></p>	<p><b>Due to the catastrophic breach of the Livermead Sea Wall on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 the road was Fully closed for a full month and residents suffered a further three weeks of disrupted use of this highway. At the same quarter Stagecoach saw a 110,000 (6percent) reduction in bus journeys. What impact did the Council's actions have upon the disruption to the bus service?</b></p>

The following is a factual answer provided by an officer, a full response from Councillor Hill can be found on the [audio recording](#).

The road was not fully closed for a month, the full closure ran from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to the 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013 and was then opened for traffic in the Torquay to Paignton direction. The road was opened for the May bank holiday weekend and then fully opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> May. Initially stagecoach diverted buses via the ring road which was a significant diversion but after meeting officers on site changes were made to Underhill Road which allowed the buses to use the seafront diversion which reduce the impact on journey type significantly. We did work closely with Stagecoach who were very understanding of the issue and the hard work that the Council did to deal with the issue so efficiently. However, the reduction in the figures quoted will be due to a number of factors not just the Livermead issue as these figures relate to all the Stagecoach services across the bay. One other factor, for example was that the Paignton Bus Station was closed for repairs at the same time which would have affected passenger numbers.