

## Meeting of the Council

Thursday, 30 October 2014

### Questions Under Standing Order A13

The following are factual answers provided by an officer, a full response from the Mayor or Executive Lead can be found on the [audio recording](#).

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| <b>Question (1) by Councillor Baldrey to the Executive Lead for Strategic Planning, Housing and Environmental Policy (Councillor Thomas (D))</b> | <p>Why is it that in the time since the road widening at Tweenaways has been completed has the Council not disposed of the houses adjacent to the junction whose gardens were taken for the work to be carried out?</p>   |
|  | <p>Whilst the main works were completed in 2011 further improvements and remedial works were carried out in 2012 when the site was still being used as a compound. The scheme has reduced the journey time through the junction by 50% but there is a possibility that further improvements may be required in 15-20 years time, therefore to future proof the junction we are intending to hold onto some additional land on this corner. These options had to be considered before the remaining site could be offered for sale. We expect the properties to be sold shortly.</p> <p>Consent to dispose of the site has now been granted and in line with the community asset transfer policy the Council are currently considering expressions of interests from Community Groups. Following this process the site will either be disposed of to a successful group or if the proposals are rejected then the site will be disposed of on the open market.</p> |
| <b>Question (2) by Councillor James to the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance (Councillor McPhail)</b>                          | <p>There were 46 senior council directors and managers on wages of £50,000 to £125,000 in 2013/14, but this compares to only 34 in 2012/13 - an increase of 12 (or 33%). How do you justify this in the face of such unprecedented budget reductions? Despite the brilliant and hard work that they do, do you agree that we need to significantly reduce the top heavy structure of the council in a time when we are contracting fast?</p>  |
|  | <p>Each year the Council approves the Pay Policy Statement, this statement details the salary levels of the posts exceeding £50,000. This is different than the information which is included within the statement of accounts, which details the number of employees whose total remuneration exceeds £50,000, as this will include any staff in the given financial year that</p>   |

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|  | <p>receive redundancy payments, when combined with their salary exceed the £50,000 threshold.</p> <p>For this reason the accurate data when considering salaries is to use the Pay Policy Statement. When this is looked at, this shows that the number of staff earning in excess of £50,000 in 2013/14 is 32.</p> <p>This number has changed from the 22 staff earning in excess of £50,000 in 2012/13 due to,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The transfer into the Council of Public Health. This represents an increase of 4 senior management posts.</li> <li>2) The 1% national pay award that was implemented means that some posts now fall to be reported, whereas previously they were not. This represents 3 posts over this period.</li> <li>3) Restructures and job-redesign will have changed responsibilities for some existing posts, meaning a change to the salary scales. This equates to 3 posts over this period.</li> </ol> <p>Save for the transfer in of the Public Health staff which is a new statutory responsibility for the Council, it can therefore be seen that there has not been an increase in the senior officer structure.</p> |
| <p><b>Question (3) by Councillor James to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Tourism (Councillor Mills)</b></p> | <p>Do you agree with me that spending almost £25,000 on a palm tree is an unacceptable misuse of public money and will you ask for a full investigation by the overview and scrutiny committee into how such misuse could have occurred?</p>   |
|  | <p>Each year the Council approves the Pay Policy Statement, this statement details the salary levels of the posts exceeding £50,000. This is different than the information which is included within the statement of accounts, which details the number of employees whose total remuneration exceeds £50,000, as this will include any staff in the given financial year that receive redundancy payments, when combined with their salary exceed the £50,000 threshold.</p> <p>For this reason the accurate data when considering salaries is to use the Pay Policy Statement. When this is looked at, this shows that the number of staff earning in excess of £50,000 in 2013/14 is 32.</p> <p>This number has changed from the 22 staff earning in excess of £50,000 in 2012/13 due to,</p>  |

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|   | <p>The expenditure of £25,000 was for various items of works and not solely on a Palm Tree as suggested. The expenditure related to improving a roundabout which was a gateway feature and as well as purchasing the tree (£7,000). The cost also relates to making recent alterations allowing the delivery of beams for the South Devon Link Road. The funding was approved as part of the capital budget by SCOPE and the alterations presented in advance to the Ward Councillors and Community partnership.</p>  |
| <p><b>Question (4) by Councillor Darling to the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport (Councillor Excell)</b></p> | <p>Weed Treatment - Over the last two years the regime to tackle weed growth on pavements has changed to only two treatments a year. This has resulted in treatments occurring twice a year with works being conducted in the winter when there is little weed growth. Those wards where treatment occurs in the winter may only get a second visit in the late growing season. To me and many residents this has resulted in a significant failure in the treatment of weeds on pavements. How do you plan to remedy this problem?</p>   |
| <p><b>Question (5) by Councillor Cowell to the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance (Councillor McPhail)</b></p>                   | <p>Is the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance aware that a petition by local residents highlighting their concerns about the Mayor's recent reshuffle, in particular that of the former Deputy Mayor Cllr David Thomas, was rejected by officers. Why?</p>  |
| <p><b>Question (6) by Councillor Darling to the Mayor</b></p>   | <p>Housing benefit delays - The advertised 10 maximum week time in processing Housing benefits is resulting in real hardship and worry for many local residents. Private landlords are less likely to let to Housing benefit claimants. Sanctuary housing are threatening eviction to tenants and families on the breadline are having to make choices between rent and food. What plans do you have to reduce this period to a more appropriate 5 week maximum to</p>  |

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|   | process housing benefit claims?   |
|   | Housing Benefit processing times taken as an average over the past 4 weeks are currently 6 weeks and 1 day for New Claims and 2 weeks and 3 days for Change in Circumstances. This is also reflective of the year to date. The internet figure of 10 weeks refer to a worst case scenario where often we are unable to award a claim due to outstanding information. It is recognised that processing times are not at the low levels of 2012/13 but have taken steps to improve the position by recruiting 2 assessment officer posts and 2 administrative posts. We anticipate improvements over the coming months.   |
| <b>Question (7) by Councillor Cowell to the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport (Councillor Excell)</b> | <p>Can you confirm the additional costs incurred for Tor2 to collect fly-tipped waste from Lymington Road Coach Station since the matter was raised in an e-mail from me to officers on August 14th 2014?</p> <p>Can you also detail any other costs as a result of the fly-tipping?</p> <p>Will you confirm that the garden waste collection service at Lymington Road will continue despite the recent tipping issues?</p>  |
|   | <p>There have been 6 clearances of fly tipped waste from the coach station since Darren Cowell's email of the 14/8/14 at £350 each. The fencing and the new sign cost £527.22 and this is for a period of 8 weeks.</p> <p>In total the cost comes to £2627.22, but during the summer months the authority has to put on additional collections for higher demand of the normal green waste collections at Lymington Road, which do vary in frequency from year to year. Therefore there is a built in contingency for any variance in this budget.</p> <p>There is no plan to stop the twice monthly garden waste service at this site and we can now monitor the area with the CCTV and prosecute any fly tipping offenders.</p> |
| <b>Question (8) by Councillor Darling to the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance (Councillor McPhail)</b>                 | <p>Child Poverty - Additional amendment to the Child Poverty report which was approved at Council on 27 Feb 2014.</p> <p>"A further amendment was proposed by Councillor Darling and seconded by Councillor Faulkner (J):</p> <p>(iv) that in light of the aspirations contained in the Torbay Child Poverty Commission "Torbay Gains" report, the Corporate Plan be revised to ensure that it aligns with the corporate elements of the report and a revised Corporate Plan be presented to the Council in September 2014.</p>   |

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|  | <p>On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared carried.”</p> <p>In light of the above extract from the Full Council meeting in February can you please explain why this has not appeared on a Full Council Agenda to date at either September or October? I have raised this matter with both the Executive Head of Business Services and the Deputy Mayor.</p>   |
| <p><b>Question (9) by Councillor Doggett for the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport (Councillor Excell)</b></p> | <p>On September 30th, I was invited to a meeting of the Transport Sub-Group of the Torbay Business Forum. This has the remit to establish priorities for the Sub-Group to work on. One of the most important points to be raised was how to get the best out of the South Devon Link Road once completed. The feelings of the Group were that we need a Park and Ride Service for Torbay. Overall Strategic thoughts were that there was finite road space, whatever is done. Therefore what assurances can you give me to revisit the possibility of a Park and Ride Service? This will, for example, provide access to the new proposed Edginswell Railway Station, and also Torbay Hospital, and Torquay Town Centre.</p> |
|  | <p>I am pleased to advise that through the Local Transport Board the Council have provisionally been awarded funding of over £10million over the next 4 years to carry out a number of improvements to complement the South Devon Link Road. This includes improvements to the Western Corridor in Paignton and improved access to Torquay Town centre. I can also advise that the Hospital is looking to provide on-site parking and Edginswell station will also have some on-site parking. However, potential park and ride facilities are identified as future schemes within our current Local transport Plan and if funding opportunities arise I can assure you the Council will progress them.</p>                   |
| <p><b>Question (10) by Councillor Darling to the Executive Lead Adult Social Care and Older People (Councillor Scouler)</b></p>                    | <p>Podiatry Service - It has been drawn to my attention that a number of people have started to be discharged from the podiatry service in Torbay. What change in criteria has been enacted? How many people have been affected by such a change and what risks were identified before such a change in service was implemented?</p>   |
|  | <p>The department of podiatry and foot health are commissioned to provide NHS podiatry treatment to patients with medical conditions which may put their feet at risk of developing a foot ulcer, or short courses of treatment for painful foot problems.</p> <p>Podiatry have access criteria that were agreed by the Older People CPG on 27 November 2012 with written notification of approval in early 2013. This criteria brings us in line with other podiatry providers such as Plymouth .Discussions were held to help with the lack of capacity within podiatry to support the increasing caseload of diabetics and high risk patients ulcerated patients.</p>   |

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|   | <p>If a diabetic or non diabetic patient is at low risk of developing ulcers, then skin and nail care is not provided by the NHS. If the patient is unable or chooses not to self-manage their foot care, they should be signposted to a range of private providers for on-going nail and skin care.</p>   |
| <p><b>Question (11) by Councillor Davies to the Executive Lead for Harbours, Culture and the Arts (Councillor Amil)</b></p> | <p>Do you support the redevelopment of Paignton Harbour and how much will the redevelopment cost?</p>  |
|   | <p>As the Chair of the Harbour Committee I clearly support the Council's policy in respect of Tor Bay Harbour which is set out within the Port Masterplan. This Council adopted the Port Masterplan for Tor Bay Harbour as part of our Policy Framework in December of last year. The Masterplan supports the idea of redevelopment at Paignton harbour and a number of proposed schemes are identified within the Action Plan for the short, medium and long term, along with their implementation constraints. We have already started to explore one particular project and I am aware of some ideas that have emerged from the Paignton Town Centre Community Partnership which are already aligned with the Port Masterplan and existing Council policy. The Harbour Asset Review Working Party has agreed to lead on the discussion regarding the development of harbour based assets. A number of ideas are currently being considered in consultation with local stakeholders, including the harbour users. It is too early to say how much any individual project will cost but any redevelopment at Paignton harbour will come as a recommendation from the Harbour Committee for decision by the Mayor and the Council.</p> |
| <p><b>Question (12) by Councillor Pountney to the Mayor</b></p>   | <p>Can the Mayor update the Council on any developments in the terms of the proposed lease of Cary Green and the Pavilion and will he make the full details of any lease available to the public before it is sign?</p>  |
|   | <p>I am pleased to confirm that we are close to agreeing the Lease Heads of Terms with Nicholas James Group for the development and yes, I will ask the Chief Executive of the TDA to make the full details available to elected members and the public before signing. In the interim, I will also ask Mr Parrock to brief the Group Leaders as to the current position.</p>  |
| <p><b>Question (13) by Councillor Morey to the Executive Lead for Harbours,</b></p>   | <p>Will the Executive Lead for Harbours, Culture and the Arts confirm that it is her intention to urge the Mayor to accept that the control and management of Churston Library must remain in local authority control?</p>   |

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| <b>Culture and the Arts (Councillor Amil)</b>   |  |
|   | <p>The Mayor has acknowledged the importance of Churston Library to local people and has supported a review of the original proposal for one off transitional funding. As a result the Mayor has put back the funding in the base budgets so the service can continue. The budget pressures in future year does mean we do have to explore alternative options to help support and sustain the library service in the long term, and we will be working with local residents and other partners to ensure the library service remains an appropriately managed and supported service.</p>  |
| <b>Question (14) by Councillor Cowell to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Tourism (Councillor Mills)</b> | <p>Would the Deputy Mayor agree with me that the value of the English Riviera Tourism Company is more than illustrated by the three years of growth evidenced in the research undertaken by the South West Research Company on behalf of the sector in the South West?</p> <p>Can he also confirm that he is fully committed to the Torbay Tourism and Retail BID and that he will work constructively with the TRTBID task group to achieve the successful delivery of this essential BID?</p>  |
|   | <p>I agree that the evidence provided by the SW Research Company shows that the performance of Torbay within the SW and nationally is showing ongoing improvements and agree that the ERTC have played a significant of the role in achieving this continuing upward trend.</p> <p>The Olympic factor has also has seen significant growth in the international visitors nationally and Torbay has benefited from this. This can only be enhanced further by the developments that are planned for new hotels and particularly welcome the confirmation of the International Geopark Conference coming to the English Riviera in 2016. All partners need to continue to work to improve our tourism offer and we accept all these elements make for a very bright future for tourism.</p> <p><b>BACKGROUND DATA:</b><br/> Despite these factors however, I am delighted to report that there are many positive 2012 tourism statistics for Torbay, which I summarise as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012 saw a 1% uplift in total visitors (trips) to the English Riviera compared to 0% for the whole of Devon</li> <li>• 2012 saw a 16% uplift in total staying visitor spend to the English Riviera compared to 15% for the whole of Devon</li> <li>• 2012 saw a 18% uplift in total overseas visitors to the English Riviera compared to 10% for the whole of Devon</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012 saw a 28% uplift in total day visits to the English Riviera compared to 9% for the whole of Devon</li> </ul> <p>Once again these statistics confirm the huge economic value of the Visitor Economy to Torbay with 2012 top line facts confirming the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total direct value of tourism to Torbay in 2012 was: £427,870,000</li> <li>• Total indirect value of tourism to Torbay in 2012 was: £563,217,000</li> <li>• Total number of jobs provided by tourism in 2012 was: 12,020</li> <li>• 21% of the total population in 2012 were dependent on tourism for employment</li> </ul> <p>I am fully in support to the Torbay Retail and Tourism BID and look forward in being part of the partnership that takes this forward to a successful vote. I have this week been advised that a contract has been issue to the Mosaic Partnership to ensure this work get underway as quickly as possible.</p>  |
| <p><b>Question (15) by Councillor Parrott to the Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport (Councillor Excell)</b></p> | <p>In light of evidence around child sexual exploitation, violent sexual abuse, domestic abuse, rapes and assaults, please could the Executive Lead advise whether women are safe in the Bay?</p>   |
|  | <p>Sexual exploitation, sexual abuse <i>of any kind</i>, domestic abuse, and rape are abhorrent and devastating crimes, the victims of which can be children, women and men. Torbay is predominately a safe place to live, work and visit and whilst crime will unfortunately always take place, our focus will continue to remain on working in partnership to prevent these types of crimes, dealing with perpetrators efficiently and robustly when such crimes do take place, and working with victims to support them through the criminal justice process and beyond. Torbay's Community Safety Partnership and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board continue to identify domestic abuse, child abuse and sexual offences as a priority area for Torbay and as such targets its resources at working to tackle these crimes. This includes our esafety project Virtually S@fe which works to safeguard children and young people from online exploitation, and the recent appointment of a Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator to specifically ensure we can respond proactively and in a coordinated way to these issues. In terms of women specifically, there are a variety of services to support female victims of crime, such as the newly commissioned Integrated Domestic Abuse Service through Sanctuary Housing</p> |



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|   | and Devon Rape Crisis who are a charity working within the Bay.   |
| <b>Question (16) by Councillor Doggett to the Mayor</b> | Through Torbay Council's policies and working with partners, why are the Council and partners promoting additional jobs only and not ensuring that employment development in Torbay is focused on better paid jobs for our Communities?   |
| <b>Question (17) by Councillor James to the Mayor</b>   | It has recently been revealed that the government gives out £85 billion a year in subsidies, grants and tax breaks for big businesses in this country. One year's worth of these subsidies would wipe out the structural deficit and remove the need for any more cuts in public spending, including to this council. Do you agree with me that it is absolutely outrageous that hard working local residents on low incomes, along with the poorest and most vulnerable people in Torbay, are having to suffer while subsidies to big businesses continue untouched? |