

Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 26 September 2019

Questions Under Standing Order A13

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.

<p>Question (1) by Councillor Chris Lewis to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)</p>	<p>Can the Leader of the Council please confirm the time taken for Members enquiries to be responded to? I understand the time has been changed from 5 to 10 days. If this is the case when will it return to 5 days?</p>
<p>Councillor Steve Darling</p>	<p>The timeframe for response to Members enquiries was temporarily increased to 10 days as a result of significant staff shortages. However, I am pleased to advise that as of 16 September the response period for Member enquiries has reverted back to 5 days.</p>
<p>Question (2) by Councillor Foster to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture (Councillor Morey)</p>	<p>Will the portfolio holder responsible for waste and recycling collections please give an update on proposed improvements for regular collections in Maidencombe.</p> <p>Some residents have had a six week period this summer of no collections for recycling and many Maidencombe residents often have missed collections on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Councillor Morey</p>	<p>I understand that the issues with collections at Maidencombe are now resolved following the intervention of the Managing Director of TOR2, and the access issues that were thought to be the problem were in fact misunderstandings by the crews of Health and Safety instructions. The collections should now be on a regular basis, but if that is not the case we would ask residents to please email the council with the details at Waste&Recycling@Torbay.gov.uk and this will be investigated with possible performance deductions issued to TOR2 for any late collections.</p>
<p>Question (3) by Councillor O'Dwyer to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)</p>	<p>In the town council press release Cllr Steve Darling has stated 90% of town council monies will be spent on services, based on the Brixham model, how can this be accurate? Could the Leader of the Council please show the evidence he has to substantiate this claim.</p>

<p>Councillor Steve Darling</p>	<p>Based on a £90.00 Council Tax precept for a Band D property the following sums would be raised:</p> <p>Paignton £1.47m Torquay £2.09m</p> <p>From these figures, administration costs would be incurred. Brixham Town Council currently spends approximately £180,000 per year on general administration. If this were taken as an average administration charge for parish/town councils, this would mean that in Torquay a little over 8% of the budget would be spent on administration, in Paignton this would be 12% therefore meaning that in Torquay 92% would be spent on delivering local services that would otherwise be ended or reduced, and in Paignton 88%, resulting in an average of 90% being spent on delivering local services.</p>
<p>Question (4) by Councillor Bye to the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services (Councillor Carter)</p>	<p>The 'Your town, your voice – New Town Council's Consultation' implies a decision has not been made already by the partnership. Could the portfolio holder for Corporate and Community Services inform if this is genuine or just for information and propaganda?</p>
<p>Councillor Carter</p>	<p>No decision has been made. The Council is currently consulting on the proposed options to ascertain community views on creating new town councils in Paignton and Torquay in accordance with the decision of Full Council and the requirements for a Community Governance Review. The outcome of the consultation and development of final proposals, informed by the consultation, will be considered by the Community Governance Review Working Party, Cabinet in November with Full Council making a final decision in December.</p>
<p>Question (5) by Councillor Hill to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)</p>	<p>What would happen should residents not want new town councils as with the 80% not wanting them in the last consultation. Does the Leader of the Council and the partnership have any other ideas?</p>
<p>Councillor Steve Darling</p>	<p>As you are aware the Council is facing significant budget pressures in year and over the next few years. The Partnership has already started conversations with the community to see how we can work together for the benefit of Torbay. The most recent example of this was the community conference held on 11 September 2019 which demonstrated a great willingness from the community and local organisations to work in partnership with the Council. The creation of two new town councils is just part of this work. If the decision is ultimately not to create Town Councils, I fear that Torbay Council will have no option other than to cease providing some of its services as it will not be able to afford them given demand pressures in statutory services.</p>

Second Round

<p>Question (6) by Councillor Chris Lewis to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)</p>	<p>Can the Leader of the Council please outline how enquires from Members are prioritised. For example how are they dealt with if they are urgent compared to non-urgent subjects.</p>
<p>Councillor Steve Darling</p>	<p>Casework is logged and assigned based on date of receipt, oldest cases are dealt with first. The case is then assigned to the relevant department who undertake their own assessment based on the information provided. If the Information Compliance team consider there is an urgent, health and safety or safeguarding risk to an individual, this is raised immediately with the relevant department for them to handle and respond.</p>
<p>Question (7) by Councillor O'Dwyer to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Steve Darling)</p>	<p>The Leader of the Council states that the cost of all the Town Council's will be only £1.73 per week in year one but with no such guarantees for future years. Can he and his partnership state now what they are budgeting for the following years or expects this to increase by as they cut further future services and assumes town councils will take them on.</p>
<p>Councillor Steve Darling</p>	<p>The cost for a Band D property will be £1.73 per week, but over 70% of our residents will pay less than this. Torbay Council is responsible for setting the initial precept for the new town councils. It will be up to the new town councils to determine what services they will provide in future years and consequently what their future precepts will be.</p>
<p>Question (8) by Councillor Bye to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance (Councillor Cowell)</p>	<p>Can the portfolio holder for finance please inform us which services currently financed by Torbay Council are budgeted to be stopped in year two of Town Councils?</p>
<p>Councillor Cowell</p>	<p>The Partnership will be publishing its budget proposals for 2020/21 for consultation on 15 October 2019. The budget proposals will set out the services that are proposed to be ceased in the event that services are not transferred to Town Councils. However it is likely that it would be non-statutory services that would be ceased such as those listed in the Cabinet report on 6 July 2019. In future years the Council and the Town Councils would make decisions as to the transfer or cessation of services.</p>