



# Budget 2020/21 Consultation Report January 2020

Number of questionnaires returned	
On-line	826
Paper	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>

This consultation was open between 18 December 2019 and 24 January 2020.

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# 1. Summary

The Leader of the Council and his Cabinet published their proposals for their first budget and engaged with individuals, communities and partners to help deliver a balanced budget.

We continue to face financial pressures arising from years of central government austerity measures and increasing demand on high cost services such as social care. We are likely to receive £6.5m of Revenue Support Grant from central government next year - that compares with £42 million in 2013/2014.

We estimate that we need to fill a funding gap of approximately £10.5 million to balance the budget in 2020/2021 and more than £18m by 2022/23. That's on top of the £82m in saving and efficiencies we have made in the last 7 years to achieve a balanced budget.

Approximately £2.5 million of the proposals for 2020/21 require decisions to be made by us and we consulted on these. As part of the consultation, we sought views on a number of proposals which could be implemented in future years.

There was a range of consultation opportunities during January 2020 with the full details available online at [www.torbay.gov.uk/budget](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/budget) and via social media.

Public consultation on the proposals started on 18 December 2019 and closed on 24 January 2020. The Draft Budget proposals were communicated to the Torbay community via a press release to local newspapers and by posts made on Twitter and Facebook. Details about the proposals and supporting information were made available on our website.

A questionnaire was prepared which highlighted the main proposals being put forward in order to contribute to a balanced budget for 2020/21. It was made available as an electronic survey and as paper copies which were made available in the councils' public facing offices and all Torbay Libraries. Posters were put up in all public facing offices and at Torbay Libraries.

For each of the proposals respondents were offered the opportunity to comment. These comments have been grouped into themes with examples shown alongside each proposal. Some comments span a range of themes.

## Stakeholders and Torbay Community

In accordance with the Constitution, the proposals were sent to all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration. The Board established a Priorities and Resources Review Panel to consider a number of the specific proposals and receive representations from organisations and individuals at public meetings. The report from that review has been forwarded to the leader of the council for consideration.

Ward Councillors were briefed and asked to distribute posters at key community locations within their wards. Paper questionnaires were passed to those Councillors who requested them. The consultation was also promoted to all Council staff.

The consultation was promoted to all Community Partnerships and our key stakeholders. They were contacted directly and given information about the consultation, informed how they can get involved in the conversation, and asked to share awareness within their communities. They were offered the opportunity for a Councillor to attend one of their public meetings in order to give more detail about the consultation.

All local residents, business owners and organisations were invited to give their views via the online questionnaire. Over 400 Viewpoint panel members were emailed a link to the questionnaire and asked to complete it.

A #Your TQs (Facebook Live) session was held on 7 January and a drop-in Cabinet Conversation was held on 14 January where members of the public could ask questions about the the Budget, Draft Community and Corporate Plan and the Draft Housing Strategy.

In relation to the hackney carriage and private hire licence fees, a notice was published in accordance with Section 70 (3) of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. One representation was received and is set out at page 43 of this report.

## 2. **Headline Results**

There has been much larger response to the budget consultation than in previous years with a total of 877 completed surveys. There were also 11 written representations received from individuals and organisations in response to the budget proposals. These have been collated, anonymised where necessary and can be found at Appendix 1.

The vast majority of respondents identified themselves as Torbay residents (780). Of these respondents who told us their postcode, 24.2% were from Torquay, 42.5% from Paignton, and 22.2% from the Brixham area.

In the majority of cases, people were in favour of the proposals put forward. There were nine proposals that more respondents were in support of than were not, these are as follows:

- To increase the level of income from our planning service, through an enhanced pre-application service and a new application checking service.
- To establish an environmental enforcement service to improve levels of cleanliness across Torbay, with income generated through contracting with an external provider.
- To invest an additional £0.5 million in public toilet provision at Meadfoot, Broadsands, Goodrington North, Abbey Meadows and Preston Bus Shelter.
- To review how we look after our parks, cut our grass and provide litter and park bins to make sure we make the most efficient use of our resources
- To review further how the council delivers services through standardising and simplifying them, making better use of technology, improving access to services and empowering our communities.
- To work with partners to find alternative funding for illuminations in Torquay and Paignton.
- To review the subsidies and grants provided to our theatres, museums and events.
- To create a single Community Empowerment Fund which includes all community grants.
- To introduce an optional kerbside green waste collection service for which we would charge a fee.

There were four proposals that the majority of respondents did not support, they are:

- To increase the cost of annual car park permits from £365 to £430.
- To introduce a charge for disposal of household DIY waste (such as plasterboard, rubble and asbestos) at the Recycling Centre.
- To encourage more recycling and reduce the amount of recyclable waste placed in wheeled bins by moving to a three weekly residual waste collection.
- To increase Council Tax by 1.99% for general expenditure, and 2% specifically for Adult Social Care.

The majority of respondents were female at 57.5% compared to only 36.9% of respondents identifying as male.

Most people who responded were aged between 55 and 64 (22.0%).

## Social Media

During the consultation 20 Facebook posts (including a Facebook Live) and 15 tweets relating to the budget consultation were posted and they reached a potential audience of 90,000. More importantly, engagement was high across both platforms with a total recorded 10,500 reactions, comments and shares. The engagement percentage rates (the percentage of people reached who liked, shared, commented or clicked on our posts) for both Twitter and Facebook was high, achieving an average of **6.39%** for Facebook and **1.97%** on Twitter. For comparison, the latest figures show the average engagement rate is 0.1% for Facebook and 0.06% for Twitter.

The posts successfully drove people to the consultation - there were 603 direct link clicks from our Facebook and Twitter posts to the Budget and Budget Consultation web pages.

The Ask Us Facebook Live on 7 January reached a potential audience of over 7,200. At its peak it had 76 live viewers and there were a total recorded 3,200 views of 3 seconds or more recorded on 27 January.

Most of the feedback on Torbay Council's social media channels was posted on Facebook.

Torbay Council responded to comments to answer any questions posed, to correct misinformation, to signpost people to the consultation, and to refer comments to relevant departments. In addition, members of the Council joined in the conversations and were able to put their views direct to residents.

Themes of the comments in response to our social media posts are listed below.

- Assets and Investment portfolio.
- Requests for updates on local assets e.g. Crossways, Oldway, Pavillion.
- Maintenance of seafront lights.
- LED street lights.
- Parking charges.
- Disparity between the towns.
- TOR2 missed bin collections & leaving litter.
- Highways repair.
- Charges for public toilets and closure of public toilets, cleanliness, accessibility and safety.
- Improvements to our high streets and attract businesses.
- Improve our tourism offer.
- Volunteering suggestions.
- Cut Staff and councillor salaries.
- Litter and street cleanliness / reduction in bins and frequency of bin emptying, fines for travellers.
- Flowerbeds – sponsorship, empty beds and wildflowers.
- Lack of success of Council contracts.
- We've already made our decision, we don't listen and don't respond to comments.
- Lobby government for more funding
- Re-join Devon.

Torbay Community Development Trust asked representatives to attend a consultation event on the Budget, Draft Community and Corporate Plan and the Draft Housing Strategy on 23rd January, at 6:30pm, at Central Church, Torquay.

A report by CDDT about the event is at Appendix 2.

### 3. Summary of results

- 1) We are proposing to increase the level of income from our planning service, through an enhanced pre-application service and a new application checking service. We are also proposing to reduce the costs associated with the advertisement of planning applications.

These proposals are expected to generate an income of £40,000 in 2020/21.

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	624	71.2%
I disagree with this proposal	187	21.3%
No answer	66	7.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- 1a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.

Theme	Examples of comments
<b>Other (40)</b>	<p><i>"As long as these charges are in line with other authorities."</i></p> <p><i>"Charge more for the application, not for advice on the pre-application. You want people to request advice at an early stage to get applications through planning as easily/quickly as possible."</i></p> <p><i>"If developers get planning permission and fail to complete construction within 5 years, you should impose substantial fines. That would stop demolition sites being left as vacant eyesores."</i></p> <p><i>"Would require environmental consideration be the driving force behind all planning decisions"</i></p>
<b>Costs enough already (21)</b>	<p><i>"This will surely put the cost up for the average person wanting to submit an application and reducing the cost for developers wanting to advertise that they have planning permission on the site they are looking to sell? How is this justifiable?"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't think you should have to pay even more money if your wanting to built on your own property because it doesn't affect anyone else and all were paying for is a yes or no answer from you which is really bad so why should a yes or no answer cost money is the first place let alone how much it actually costs now."</i></p> <p><i>"It's a rip off"</i></p>
<b>Not enough information (18)</b>	<p><i>"To make a valid assessment the precise figures should be available, for example how much are you proposing to reduce the cost of advertising of planning applications? Why dont you put them on a portal anyway?"</i></p> <p><i>"I don't completely disagree but how is one to make a choice without any detail? For example, by how much will this cost people?"</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
Agree as long as clear to find / more simple / cost not too high (15)	<p><i>"This proposal could work well as long as costs are not ridiculous"</i></p> <p><i>"Agreed provided that notifications of planning applications can be found on line and detail of how to find them are clear and easy to find."</i></p>
Planning time to be speed up and department better resourced (9)	<p><i>"I would hope that the Planning team will be better resourced and that these proposals do not increase bureaucracy"</i></p>
Charge larger companies not home owners (4)	<p><i>"This should only be introduced in respect of businesses and not for private dwellings."</i></p>
Additional optional service rather than compulsory (3)	<p><i>"A checking service would be useful as long as it did not build in further delays and as long as it is an optional additional service rather than a requirement designed to generating income"</i></p>

**2) We are proposing to increase the cost of annual car park permits from £365 to £430.**

This proposal is expected to generate an income of £18,000 in 2020/21.

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	302	34.4%
I disagree with this proposal	541	61.7%
No answer	34	3.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**2a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.**

Theme	Examples of comments
Cost too much already / too high an increase (123)	<p><i>"you must get enough money from the amount of parking meters already in place. Annual permits are used by professionals/General public who need to park in and around Torbay and the permit offers convenience to their busy life and professional duty to the public."</i></p> <p><i>"Torbay parking charges are already ludicrous!!"</i></p> <p><i>"Your consultation says this will have minimal impact on residents! I suspect it is only residents that purchase these permits. The increase is over 17% and would make the permit unaffordable for many people who currently have one."</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"Totally disagree. The parking fees throughout Torbay are far too high and are driving people out of the town centres. £1.40 an hour plus 30p admin fee if you pay by card. People in Torbay don't earn London wages."</i></p> <p><i>"20% is too much. I would happily accept 5% as being a necessary evil.."</i></p> <p><i>"Parking is expensive enough as it is! You'd be better trying to generate more income by encouraging people to use your car parks rather than make more people less likely to buy permits. You won't get any income if people no longer buy permits and choose to park on side streets instead!"</i></p> <p><i>"Expensive enough already for people who cannot walk to shops easily."</i></p> <p><i>"That is way above inflation. Stop using motorists as a 'cash cow'. Other places nearby such as Teignbridge don't do this. If you increase the cost less people will buy permits so I question whether you will get more money. Also more people park on nearby roads reducing car spaces for residents."</i></p>
<p><b>Other (65)</b></p>	<p><i>"Probably many will not renew so no major increase in income. Who buys permits? Is it town center employees, if so more shops will go."</i></p> <p><i>"Double yellow line times should be reviewed like the one along Berry Head Road Brixham which does not operate between October and April losing the Council income and causing traffic problems along this narrow road."</i></p> <p><i>"I would more like Tom see a car park permit for beach hut users or..a discount on permits for beach hut users. Could the other permit 3pm to 10am....give you a bit more time? 2pm ? Maybe"</i></p> <p><i>"A difficult thing for me to comment as I use the bus where possible and don't have to work in Torquay. I am sure some people will object if they have to use their cars because of the hours they may have to work and they may not be on a bus route."</i></p> <p><i>"If it's the annual parking fee. I disagree if you are going to put up the off peak parking fee."</i></p>
<p><b>Locals suffering financially (41)</b></p>	<p><i>"Salaries in Torbay are fairly low as it is. While I don't purchase parking permits in Torbay I think it would have a negative effect on people with low incomes. Perhaps an alternative would be a means funded parking permit or permits that cover those who work in Torbay for their working days but not be valid for casual trips to the towns."</i></p> <p><i>"Again only the locals financially suffering. There is just no justification for charging so much to park a car. Double tax already, what do we pay car tax for?"</i></p> <p><i>"This will deter people from working in Torbay. Many people work in the hospitality and tourism industry and are unable to use public transport as not operating early morning/late night. This also a safety issue particularly travelling home late at night"</i></p> <p><i>"This is just a local tax on people parking close to their own homes. Nearly 20% increase when people income has been falling or severely restricted for a decade."</i></p>



Theme	Examples of comments
Will affect footfall in towns (31)	<p><i>"We have lost enough high street shops already due to high car park and on street parking charges. We cannot afford to lose any more. Reduce parking charges!!!"</i></p> <p><i>"The towns are dead as it is... you are literally punishing those that work in the shops. By increasing yet again, shops are simply going to pull out. You should be welcoming people to work in the high streets, help them to help you, not just money grab"</i></p> <p><i>"Every time you increase parking fees it reduces the people coming to Torbay from other areas and diccourages locals from the towns. Some areas have decreased parkung fees and found that it attracts people to their area."</i></p>
Will make people park elsewhere (24)	<p><i>"If you increase charges more people will find alternative parking leaving a hole in the purse common sense should prevail and drop prices so more people use this service bringing in more revenue sometimes common sense needs to be shown to local workers who are on a low wage so think again Torbay council"</i></p> <p><i>"People without parking on their property, often buy a permit so they can park, this could well force them to street park, which would mean loss of revenue to you, and more congestion on our already busy side roads."</i></p> <p><i>"This will lead to more people parking in residential areas"</i></p>
Fair idea (5)	<p><i>"Roughly 2 pound per day for someone working 9 to 5 5 days a week. Good value really when you charge £1.50 per hour."</i></p>
As long as the money spent on carparks / roads (2)	<p><i>"as long as the money is spent on car parks and intown parking"</i></p>

**3) We are proposing to establish an environmental enforcement service which will lead to improved levels of cleanliness across Torbay, with income generated through contracting with an external provider.**

This proposal is expected to generate an income of £70,000 in 2020/21.

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	592	67.5%
I disagree with this proposal	240	27.4%
No answer	45	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**3a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.**

Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>Other (51)</b></p>	<p><i>“Put our unemployed to work 1 day a week Set up a volunteering scheme locally to help with litter, beach clean, bush / grass cutting etc Fining people for a dropped cig butt is nonsense and only makes the external provider richer!”</i></p> <p><i>“You did this before with terrible consequences. Ridiculous fines for dropped ice creams and stolen dropped food from seagulls”</i></p> <p><i>“I am amazed at the number of people who just drop litter and do not pick up or who do not clear up after their dogs.”</i></p> <p><i>“The whole idea of litter police is absurd and unenforceable.”</i></p> <p><i>“As long as they issue tickets and bring in money to the council.”</i></p>
<p><b>Keep in house (39)</b></p>	<p><i>“Why contract with an external provider - one who would, presumably, make a profit from the service they provide. It would be more cost effective - and Council would have more control - to develop the service in-house.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes contracted out services are poor unless strictly monitored”</i></p> <p><i>“Why use outside contracting, thought you had a environment department.”</i></p> <p><i>“Have you not learnt by employing tor2 the service is shocking”</i></p>
<p><b>As long as cleanliness and service is improved (34)</b></p>	<p><i>“Hope this will deal with the high levels of dog poo that are all around the bay!”</i></p> <p><i>“As long as it includes enforcement of the other aspects of the clean neighbourhood and environment act 2005, ie enforcement of illegal on street car sales, illegal advertising Vans etc etc”</i></p> <p><i>“Better cleanliness for the bay is urgently needed.”</i></p> <p><i>“Torbay can be pretty grotty. The place definitely needs to be cleaner.”</i></p>
<p><b>More info needed (34)</b></p>	<p><i>“Presumably money generated by fines? What will the cost be for employing the enforcers &amp; what happens if the fine cannot be paid?”</i></p> <p><i>“It’s a bit Woolly what does this actually mean”</i></p> <p><i>“Not enough detail on how this will be achieved eg are costs for toilet use going up ?”</i></p> <p><i>“More explanation needed. What does the cost cover? How much will it cost?”</i></p>
<p><b>Provide adequate bins and collection service (22)</b></p>	<p><i>“as long as you make sure the tasks are carried out and the money spent in the correct departments, not on palm trees!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”</i></p> <p><i>“Existing waste removal services provided by Tor2 are insufficient and have had high profile issues in recent years. I strongly disagree with an enforcement service while we can’t even run a bin collection service properly.”</i></p> <p><i>“Please just provide a reliable and efficient service. We were previously told that the ‘new’ kerbside recycling service would generate tens of thousands pounds worth of revenue ... did it?”</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
Agree (15)	<i>"About time we had clean streets."</i> <i>"Long overdue, please do not limit this to the town centres."</i>
How will income be generated (15)	<i>"This doesn't sound viable, and if the external provider doesn't provide the income, you will be stuck in a contract you can't get out of."</i> <i>"how will contracting out the service generate income?"</i>
Issue fines to dog owners / fly tippers (12)	<i>"Can this also include extra staff who can issue fines to dog owners who don't clear up mess and also monitor the beaches to keep them dog free in the summer months?"</i> <i>"Introduce on-the-spot fines for littering and fly-tipping and enforce them strictly. CTV cameras would help enormously."</i>
Education is needed (8)	<i>"This sounds like traffic wardens for our refuse. Will the money come from fines? Only a select handful will pay up, just like with parking charges. Education is needed first."</i>
Will lead to fly tipping (8)	<i>"This will lead to an increase in fly tipping due to people being fined for putting excessive rubbish out with their regular collection and therefore an increase in costs for the council when it has to be picked up!"</i>
Litter left after refuse collection (6)	<i>"You can improve the mess on Torbay road by ensuring that you recycling operatives do not leave rubbish that they drop. It is always clear if you drive down the road they have just been collecting"</i>

**4) We are proposing to invest an additional £0.5 million in public toilet provision at Meadfoot, Broadsands, Goodrington North, Abbey Meadows and Preston Bus Shelter.**

**We are already investing in new public toilets at Preston Beach Central. This investment will be funded from the closure of the toilets at Preston (North and South) and Goodrington South.**

**We will also look for a partner to continue to run the toilets at Corbyn Head but if there are no viable proposals, these toilets will also close.**

This is a proposed investment of £0.5 million in 2020/21.

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	518	59.1%
I disagree with this proposal	318	36.3%
No answer	41	4.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

4a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.

Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>Cost / should be free or less (60)</b></p>	<p><i>"Although I am pleased that you are opening new toilets, but not closing them, also the 30p charge us dear - Plymouth is only 20p. Summer opening; used to be from 1st April to 31st October 2018/19 was only 1st May to 30th September. Why?...."</i></p> <p><i>"I do not approve of closing toilets. The pones that need improving be done in an economic way. 30p is too much to expect one to pay. Remember it is the council tax payer who is paying. Of anything I think toilets are the most basic necessity."</i></p> <p><i>"Toilets are a necessity for walkers, children and the elderly. In these days of a developing cashless society too, people often don't have the coins needed and 30p is too expensive anyway. 20p would have been more acceptable."</i></p> <p><i>"Toilets should be free and they are disgusting in torbay"</i></p> <p><i>"Toilets should be free and available to all. Closure will lead to people using doorways, alley ways, etc (imagine the harbour area on a Saturday night!) and become a public health hazard. Families with children on a day out will not pay 30p a pee; this will just deter people from coming to the bay."</i></p> <p><i>"I agree, but only if you don't make anyone pay to use them. People already pay enough as it is and paying to use a toilet is just wrong, but yet those who cannot afford to pay have accidents or do it on the street and they get arrested for indecent exposure. It's not fair on those who cannot afford it or who have little kids"</i></p>
<p><b>Other (60)</b></p>	<p><i>"Long awaited public decency aspects"</i></p> <p><i>"No comment as not affected"</i></p> <p><i>"Not statutory service. Plenty of toilets in Torbay."</i></p> <p><i>"Perhaps this could be funded by a small charge. But please don't outsource it."</i></p> <p><i>"Privatised toilets on Paignton seafront close at 9pm even during the summer while events are running."</i></p> <p><i>"Subcontracting services out never seems to result in improvement and the council relinquish any responsibility for keeping standards high. Most people are furious at being charged to use facilities."</i></p>
<p><b>Stop closing toilets (50)</b></p>	<p><i>"All public toilets need to be kept open."</i></p> <p><i>"As a tourist destination it seems illogical to close both toilet provisions at Preston Beach and replace them with another that is not near the beach....."</i></p> <p><i>"closing further toilets is unacceptable- residents &amp; visitors will be affected. and when the tourists top coming because of shortage of toilets/ cost to use where will the council get its money from then?"</i></p> <p><i>F"ull council agreed that no toilets should be closed, there is a proposal that tobay should be the premiere tourist dstination in england, reducing toilets provission is negative to this aim....."</i></p> <p><i>"There are few enough public toilets in Torbay, please don't close any more, especially near beaches"</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>Will affect tourism / deter visitors (40)</b></p>	<p><i>"The lack of these toilets will drive away the visitors"</i></p> <p><i>"NOT GOOD FOR ELDERLY OR THOSE WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND WILL NOT HELP WITH TOURISM WE WILL BE KNOWN AS THE RESORT WHERE YOU CANNOT PEE."</i></p> <p><i>"I disagree with this proposal on the basis that any closure or for people to have to queue could discourage holiday makers to return thus reducing tourist and income to the area."</i></p> <p><i>"People who have beach huts who pay rent, will have to pay to park and pay to use the toilet. Will drive people away from the Preston sands area"</i></p>
<p><b>Cleanliness (29)</b></p>	<p><i>"I think the public toilet situation is disgusting I suffer from Inflammatory bowel disease and often get the urgent need to go toilet yet I have to scramble around for change to sit in a filthy cess pit that a junky has left its mark"</i></p> <p><i>"Charging for toilets is fine, but when you pay only to find out the toilets are in the most disgusting state, is simply not on. They need to be checked and cleaned more often."</i></p> <p><i>"My experience is that toilets in this country are disgusting. All the toilets should be like the new ones in Goodrington, pay for themselves and hygienic. It shouldn't be difficult in 2020 to have a clean toilet to visit."</i></p>
<p><b>Refurbish / upgrade existing toilets (27)</b></p>	<p><i>"Why build new toilets when have existing ones that can be refurbished? No to "partners", ie privatised!"</i></p> <p><i>"Public toilets are a must for Torbay as a holiday destination with thousands of visitors surely upgrade what we have saving thousands of pounds instead of spending the buildings are there so use them"</i></p> <p><i>"I think the current toilet blocks just need a lick of paint &amp; a tidy, maybe the beach hut community or the kiosk owner could take this on??"</i></p>
<p><b>More toilets not less (25)</b></p>	<p><i>"Not enough toilets. Especially for those with medical issues. I can't walk from Torre Abbey to the beach ones in time. In town there isn't enough working clean toilets."</i></p> <p><i>"More free toilets accessible from bus stops and car parks for disabled. Both Goodrington n and s need free toilets"</i></p>
<p><b>Essential (16)</b></p>	<p><i>"Public toilets should be provided and maintained. I feel that people generally treat facilities like toilets in a manner which they find them. If facilities are clean and well maintained then people tend to look after them better and behave in a more civilised way"</i></p> <p><i>"Seaside toilets are an integral part of life and should not be closed, the council has a duty to care for them, which could be cared for by the new Torbay clean department."</i></p>
<p><b>Better disabled facilities (5)</b></p>	<p><i>"I agree but I have found when taking my learning disabled students out in Paignton that the Paignton seafront toilets are very difficult to use. Disabled toilet was closed so I had to verbally guide my blind student through the 20p barrier in the ladies. So better thought out systems or more disabled facilities."</i></p>
<p><b>Good idea (5)</b></p>	<p><i>"Resources have to be used effectively, if all other avenues have been explored then these changes should be supported. It is difficult to judge if the right choices have been made based on any other than emotion or personal preference without further information. I think this is an opportunity for the council to stand up and say the options have been looked at and though it will adversely impact on some people it is right."</i></p>

**4b) If you or anyone you know is interested in operating the toilets at Corbyn Head, please let us know your name and contact details.**

Any contact details received will be passed to the relevant council department.

**5) We are proposing to review how we look after our parks, cut our grass and provide litter and park bins to make sure we make the most efficient use of our resources:**

**This may involve cutting the grass less often – making it more friendly to bees and insects whilst making sure we are mindful of the places that tourists visit.**

**We will look to prioritise the planting beds which are in tourist areas and work with the community to maintain other planting beds.**

**We will look to remove litter and park bins where there are others in very close proximity.**

This proposal is expected to save £191,000 in 2020/21

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	454	51.8%
I disagree with this proposal	383	43.7%
No answer	40	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**5a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.**

Theme	Examples of comments
Environment / nature (96)	<p><i>"I fully support rewilding areas to support wildlife. Can wildflower seeds be planted in such areas to encourage diversity and look attractive to visitors. General public will need educating as to the benefits of this otherwise they will complain it looks untidy"</i></p> <p><i>"YOU CAN DO BOTH AT THE SAME TIME - WHILST SECURING MICRO-HABITS AND SECURING GRASS!"</i></p> <p><i>"Love to see natural flowers which will increase the birds and insects"</i></p> <p><i>"You could look to setting aside some areas as wild gardens in the public parks - ie some long grass and natural wild flowers need only be mowed once a year. National Trust and others cut paths through the long grass on a number of their estates - it reduces costs and is good for wildlife."</i></p> <p><i>"Why do you not plant a lot more wild flower beds which look after themselves and encourages wildlife"</i></p> <p><i>"I think rewilding areas is a great idea"</i></p>



Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>More bins needed (94)</b></p>	<p><i>“Do you actually walk around Torquay? There is rubbish everywhere!!! Less bins is a crazy thought.you can never have too many bins. Plus keeping areas tidy is a must. Not just for the bloody tourists but for the people who PAY TAXES.”</i></p> <p><i>“Don't reduce bins they are already overflowing”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel believe there is a needfor more litter bins, not less.”</i></p> <p><i>“More bins needed!! Put the unemployed to work by using a volunteer scheme designed to help get people off their backsides and actually helping our community instead of robbing the resources”</i></p> <p><i>“We need more bins not less, save money by sacking the idiot who thought of this.”</i></p> <p><i>“We need more bins, not less. This is completely unacceptable.”</i></p>
<p><b>Appearance (73)</b></p>	<p><i>“You have already cut cutting the grass quite dramatically ,but if you have to do this please maintain the tourist areas ,although in Brixham we are lucky to have Pride in Brixham .”</i></p> <p><i>“The towns already look a mess because of lack of care, yes, the tourists do notice and have passed many comments about it.”</i></p> <p><i>“Why remove bins will make the bay look bad”</i></p> <p><i>“You must present our towns with flora. Mow around the borders of proposed bee areas that at least gives the impression its cared for.”</i></p> <p><i>“Wildflower the grass verges would look stunning!”</i></p> <p><i>“Although not cutting grass in public view makes the area look untidy.”</i></p>
<p><b>Will increase littering (60)</b></p>	<p><i>“I think removing bins from anywhere will end up costing more long term as people are lazy and if there is no bin near litter will be left on the ground.”</i></p> <p><i>“Unfortunately people are lazy and removing bins will cause more litter”</i></p> <p><i>“Litter bins should not be removed as this will only increase the amount of litter dumped within the bay. If bins are to be removed, the existing ones need to be emptied more often.”</i></p> <p><i>“you moan about fly tipping. this will encourage more people to dispose of rubbish anywhere. Bins are a necessity”</i></p> <p><i>“There are already very few bins, if you remove more then there will obviously be an increase in littering! Also it is pure laziness to leave grass uncut “for the bees””</i></p> <p><i>“This will only cause additional littering of our environment”</i></p>
<p><b>Residents need tidy areas too (46)</b></p>	<p><i>“If only the areas tourist visit are attended to what will happen to residential areas. After all we are the people paying for these services the tourist get the benefit.”</i></p> <p><i>“Parks are the life lines for family round paighton”</i></p> <p><i>“After the tourists go home you are left with the locals. Do locals not deserve more consideration and thought that tourists after all it is the locals who help to keep businesses surviving throughout the winter months.”</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>"The part I disagree with is cutting the grass less often..... All public areas must essentially be kept tidy to enhance the lives of all the community, not just tourists and insects. All planting beds must be maintained."</i></p>
<p><b>Tourism (46)</b></p>	<p><i>"Must remain mindful of being attractive to tourists. Bins need to be large enough to accomodate rubbish. Perhaps could instigate a seasonal change situation where we have larger bins in summer, and remove several during the winter months."</i></p> <p><i>"It is important to keep parks pristine as this is a showcase for tourism. Bins are Already often overflowing and to reduce them would be a false economy. We already see in social media that reducing planting has a detrimental effect in tourism."</i></p> <p><i>"Over grown meadows don't attract family holiday makers"</i></p> <p><i>"Be very careful to maintain a pleasant scene. When Folkestone drastically cut its public floral displays, it hastened its rapid decline as a seaside resort."</i></p>
<p><b>Other (39)</b></p>	<p><i>"Removal of any litter bins needs to be carefully considered first."</i></p> <p><i>"An unfortunate but understandable requirement."</i></p> <p><i>"My husband and I saw last Sunday a tractor and mower cutting grass in front of Torre Abbey in very wet and soggy ground. Is it normal for mowers to work on a Sunday, I presume it was council workers."</i></p> <p><i>"Are you crazy"</i></p>
<p><b>Dog bins / waste issues (36)</b></p>	<p><i>"Agree with majority of this however lots of areas have had dog bins removed which then results in people not picking up after dogs or leaving bags behind. Some areas have combined litter/dog waste bins, would this reduce costs if some bins were combined"</i></p> <p><i>"The only element I disagree with is the bins. As a mum of young children, it's disgusting how many green areas have dog faeces and litter everywhere. It would be a shame to see our green areas not maintained but worse to see them dirty"</i></p> <p><i>"Please do not take away any dog poo bins. There is already a dog poo problem. Definitely leave longer grass in some areas and plant plants which will be bee friendly and also look great."</i></p>
<p><b>Volunteers / community (33)</b></p>	<p><i>"I nervously agree with this, that sounds like a lot of money being saved the green spaces need to be protected and valued at all costs. working with community builders could help local areas to engage with more management of their own local green spaces and help to keep costs down to a minimum"</i></p> <p><i>"More bins needed!! Put the unemployed to work by using a volunteer scheme designed to help get people off their backsides and actually helping our community instead of robbing the resources"</i></p> <p><i>"Couldn't volunteer groups help like in Brixham?"</i></p>
<p><b>Cut grass more often (24)</b></p>	<p><i>"Madness. Torbay needs more guns not less. If dogs use the grass to toilet on. The grass needs to be cut."</i></p> <p><i>"Can't see how you want to cut grass less often I normally have to contact you to cut grass in cherry brook as it gets that long I can't see on coming vehicles. Hazard."</i></p>



**5b) If this proposal goes ahead, which planting beds do you think should be prioritised?**

Respondents were able to see a list of beds or leave a comment.

The table below shows how many times each flower bed was mentioned.

		Number
Torquay	Abbey Park Carpet Bed	11
	Babbacombe Downs	25
	Cary Green Planters	4
	Castle Circus Union Street	4
	Clock Tower Bed	7
	English Riviera Bed	32
	Harbourside Planters x 14	9
	Italian Gardens	7
	Prezzo Beds x 4	1
	Princess Gardens Fountain	13
	Princess Gardens Planters	12
	St. Marychurch Planters	10
	Sunken Gardens	5
	Vaughn/Victoria Parade	4
Paignton	Memorial Bed Torbay Rd/Esplanade Road	17
	Paignton Carpet Bed Torbay Rd/Esplanade Road	13
	Paignton Harbour	14
	Palace Avenue	22
	Preston Sea Front	16
	Sea Way Corner Central Reservation	6
	Station Square	16
	Torbay Park	16
	Totnes Road/Winner St Mermaid Planter	3
Brixham	Berry Head Road Memorial Planters	15
	Bonsey Gardens	7
	Brixham Market Raised Bed	12
	Churchill Memorial Gardens	6
	Furzeham	9
	Monksbridge Junction (Boat)	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>

The table below shows the themes of comments in response to question 5b.

Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>Seafront / beach / harbours (63)</b></p>	<p><i>"All those on the sea front in both paignton and torquay."</i></p> <p><i>"I think along the seafront areas should all be kept nice with bedding plants. I think others maybe better seeded with wild flowers?"</i></p> <p><i>"Seafront should take priority. This is a tourist resort"</i></p> <p><i>"We need to prioritise the seafronts"</i></p> <p><i>"All seafront locations"</i></p> <p><i>"All seafront beds in all three towns and all beds at points of high tourist footfall"</i></p>
<p><b>Other (54)</b></p>	<p><i>"All of the beds on the list should be maintained, but please consider more permanent planting rather than annual bedding. Planters are not sustainable."</i></p> <p><i>"'Pride of Brixham' does a wonderful job. Are there similar volunteer groups in Preston, Paignton and Torquay, that could take over some of the tasks?"</i></p> <p><i>"MAKE NEW BEDS!"</i></p> <p><i>"This is not within my expertise so unsure. However, those that will be most hardy and attract the most wildlife would surely be the best choice."</i></p> <p><i>"Why not lease planting beds to local businesses they can pay for the plants and maintenance in return for a small plaque advertising the businesses name and to show they are supporting the local community and environment. Maybe a prize for the business with the best bed like to Chelsea flower show to create competition."</i></p>
<p><b>All (30)</b></p>	<p><i>"All of them"</i></p> <p><i>"All beds should be retained as shows a looked after neighbourhood, where beds have been removed they should be reinstated....."</i></p> <p><i>"All the beds are important. Have you forgotten this is a tourist destination?"</i></p>
<p><b>Tourist areas (19)</b></p>	<p><i>"All beds within walking distance of the main hotel areas must be kept planted all year round."</i></p> <p><i>"Plant everywhere...! Tourists come for the gardens and parks. We don't all want arcades, coffee shops and empty towns. We want clean beaches and beautiful areas to walk in."</i></p>
<p><b>None (10)</b></p>	<p><i>"None. The council wasted over £20,000 on a palm tree several years ago!!."</i></p> <p><i>"None. Grass over flower beds and / or plant Torbay palms which are much cheaper to buy and maintain."</i></p>
<p><b>Town centres (8)</b></p>	<p><i>"..... town centres - they have to be inviting to get locals as well as tourists to shop there"</i></p>
<p><b>Town entrances (4)</b></p>	<p><i>"Areas around the harbour should be maintained, equally areas which are around the main entrances and exits in to Torbay and are highly visible such as Winner Street in Paignton."</i></p>

**5c) If you would be willing to volunteer to help maintain planting beds in your neighbourhood please let us know your name and contact details.**

Any contact details received will be passed to the relevant council department.

Respondents also commented that many of them already volunteer, some cant volunteer and others made suggestions of ways to source volunteers.

**6) We will be reviewing further how the council delivers services through standardising and simplifying them, making better use of technology, improving access to services and empowering our communities.**

This proposal is expected to save £386,000 in 2020/21.

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	685	78.1%
I disagree with this proposal	108	12.3%
No answer	84	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**6a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.**

Theme	Examples of comments
<b>Not enough information (73)</b>	<p><i>"This has explained none of your proposed actions and I can not therefore agree or disagree"</i></p> <p><i>"Need a bit more info on this...?!? The council aren't known for simplifying anything...!"</i></p> <p><i>"More detail needed before I can answer this!"</i></p> <p><i>"Can't comment without more detail on which services and how communities are 'empowered'. Sounds like passing the buck, - hope I'm wrong."</i></p> <p><i>"Depends entirely on which items and how they are "standardized"."</i></p> <p><i>"Bit difficult to respond to when no real info given about this. 'Empowering communities' does this mean relying on more help from volunteers and monetary input and so using our taxes on other things not discussed?"</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>Other (47)</b></p>	<p><i>"Possible streamlining services agreed can save money."</i></p> <p><i>"This agreement is in principal only - need to see more detail. Before you try to empower communities, you need to look extremely hard at council officers attitudes towards those whom they are supposed to serve. There has been no apparent improvement since the community conference, despite it being universally stated that this was a huge problem."</i></p> <p><i>"Need to look at disposals of buildings &amp; assets. Need to look at disposal of expensive "grand" town hall. What is wrong with working from industrial park - far cheaper."</i></p> <p><i>"Great - IF the services are still properly delivered."</i></p>
<p><b>Customer focussed / accessibility of technology (47)</b></p>	<p><i>"This is fine as long as you take into consideration that not everyone has good or even any access to the internet. Families in deprived areas and the elderly will struggle with this the most so this needs to be considered and support and access would need to be made available. It would need to be far more accessible than applying for housing for example as that is a ridiculous site to navigate and the lack of support is shocking."</i></p> <p><i>"Torbay has huge numbers of over 50s that are not technologically savvy how will they access their essential services? will there be training on the technology uses?"</i></p> <p><i>"Standardising and simplifying" is far too often a euphemism for making access to services less helpful and more difficult for many people. What has been written here does not provide any suggestions as to how access to services might be improved or people might be empowered. Already it is the case that people are almost always unable to speak to a human being about housing, council tax issues or many other matters."</i></p> <p><i>"Remember we are not all computer literate .."</i></p>
<p><b>Access to services needs improving (20)</b></p>	<p><i>"Be nice to still be able to speak to real people"</i></p> <p><i>"Update your system so people can buy Parking permits online rather than having to send in a cheque and wait 6 weeks."</i></p>
<p><b>This should be done already / as a matter of course (10)</b></p>	<p><i>"This something which has been proposed nearly every year for over a decade, if services are not running at peak efficiency the heads of departments must carry the can as do football managers. Services are cut to the bone as it is there are no savings to be made only better use if existing resources."</i></p>
<p><b>Job cuts (8)</b></p>	<p><i>"This sounds like you would be putting more people out of jobs and using more volunteers to replace them."</i></p>
<p><b>Website / phones (5)</b></p>	<p><i>"Start with your website. It is a mess with lots of misdirects..."</i></p>

**7) We are proposing to introduce a charge for disposal of household DIY waste (such as plasterboard, rubble and asbestos) at the Recycling Centre. This would bring Torbay in line with Devon County Council's charges.**

This proposal is expected to save £38,000 in 2020/21.

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	376	42.9%
I disagree with this proposal	473	53.9%
No answer	28	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**7a) If you have any comments on this proposal please tell us.**

Theme	Examples of comments
<b>Fly tipping &amp; cost of cleaning up (323)</b>	<p><i>"I believe this will cost the council more (in the long run) in clean up fees than the money saved. It'll result in more fly tipping and illegal burying/tipping of materials."</i></p> <p><i>"If you do this then I hope the money you save goes towards a car for the proposed new environmental enforcement team because there will be a lot of fly tipping. Look at Torquay spotted and start to understand what the real people of the bay are saying"</i></p> <p><i>"There has been a huge increase in fly tipping throughout the country and this will only encourage some people, who currently responsibly take waste to the tip, to dump it because they can't afford to pay..... "</i></p> <p><i>"Again this will increase fly tipping and costs of cleaning it up would become a negative"</i></p> <p><i>"For £38,000 this will probably end up costing the council and residents valuable monies and lead to much higher illegal dumping and fly tipping across the bay on council and private land making the area appear dirty and unappealing...."</i></p> <p><i>"I am concerned this could increase fly-tipping which could result in a higher cost than the proposed savings."</i></p>
<b>Other (65)</b>	<p><i>"I would be in support of a charge if their where measurable improvements in the cleanliness around the bay. ie: rubbish bins overflow on busy days, little on the street, graffiti in places, toilets are disgusting."</i></p> <p><i>"Your trying to save 38k but willing to blow 500k on toilets we don't need"</i></p> <p><i>"Agree, Still think the refuse areas could sustain a recycling shop"</i></p> <p><i>"Would hopefully encourage more recycling."</i></p> <p><i>"Unless can prove on benefits and from own property"</i></p> <p><i>"Councils should be encouraging home improvement not penalising those that do it"</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
Encouragement / increase enforcement / monitoring (30)	<p>"I think in order for people to have an incentive to dispose of rubbish correctly, cost should be lowered.....".</p> <p>"..... Why not have a standard entry charge of £2, easy to administrate and police."</p> <p>"But fines for Fly Tipping need to be doubled."</p>
Council tax already covers this / pay enough as it is (28)	<p>"What exactly do I pay Council Tax for? If you try to charge me, I will just dump in outside the town hall"</p> <p>"No, I pay for services and you should honor this, again another stealth tax...."</p>
Charge should be reasonable (21)	<p>"This would be acceptable as long as you dont make it unaffordable for people otherwise there will be a huge increase in fly tipping."</p> <p>"As long as charges are for such "notifiable" waste &amp; not just regular waste. Will undoubtedly lead to more of this waste being put in normal waste wheelie bins."</p>
Hazard / environmental harm (19)	<p>"Difficult one but if people have to pay to disposes of asbestos they may not which is a potential health /environmental hazard"</p> <p>"This will increase fly-tipping to much larger amounts which will then create hazards to the environment and wildlife."</p>
Asbestos (16)	<p>"Asbestos disposal should be provided for, free"</p> <p>"This will generate more fly tipping and the clear up costs will probably excel the savings. This also risks harmful asbestos being 'hidden' in black bags and deposited in the general waste, as will any other chargeable waste."</p>

Over the course of the next year, we will be working with our communities and partners to look at alternative ways to deliver our services, reduce costs and increase income including;

**8) Working with partners to find alternative means of funding the illuminations in Torquay and Paignton.** Please tell us your thoughts on how this should be progressed (pick one option);

	Number	Percent
The Council should work with partners to share the cost of funding the illuminations	582	66.4%
This is a highly valued service that the Council should continue to fund alone	205	23.4%
The Council should stop funding the illuminations and remove them	61	7.0%
No answer	29	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**9) Reviewing the amount of subsidies and grants provided to our theatres, Museums and events.** Please tell us your thoughts on how this should be progressed (pick one option);

	Number	Percent
The Council should work with partners to share the cost of these services	494	56.3%
These are highly valued services for which the Council should continue to provide subsidies and grants alone	261	29.8%
The Council should stop providing subsidies and grants to these services	93	10.6%
No answer	29	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**10) Creating a single Community Empowerment Fund which includes all community grants.** Please tell us your thoughts on how this should be progressed (pick one option);

	Number	Percent
The Council should create a single Community Empowerment Fund	666	75.9%
The Council should stop providing community grants	147	16.8%
No answer	64	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**11) Seeking to encourage more recycling and reduce the amount of recyclable waste placed in wheeled bins by moving to a three weekly residual waste collection. This will reduce the amount of waste that goes to the energy from waste plant and therefore reduces the disposal cost.**

Town centre areas with black sacks will continue with weekly collections as will all weekly recycling and food waste collection.

	Number	Percent
I agree the Council should move to three weekly wheeled bin collections to encourage recycling and reduce costs	209	23.8%
I don't agree the Council should move to three weekly wheeled bin collections to encourage recycling and reduce costs	653	74.5%
No answer	15	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



**12) Introducing an optional kerbside green waste collection service for which we would charge a fee. Please tell us your thoughts on how this should be progressed**

	Number	Percent
The Council should introduce an optional new green waste collection service	493	56.2%
The Council should not introduce an optional new green waste collection service and all residents can continue to take their green waste to the Recycling Centre	353	40.3%
No answer	31	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**13) We are proposing to undertake a needs assessment so that we can understand what the local community requires from its library services. We will also look to achieve possible savings, whilst ensuring that we still provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.**

Please tell us your ideas of how the library service could operate differently in the future.

Theme	Examples of comments
<b>Additional services / facilities (80)</b>	<p><i>"Use the library for evening classes and weekend clubs"</i></p> <p><i>"Job Centres / Council / Housing Librarys need to be under one roof. More like a one stop shop"</i></p> <p><i>"Have a better collection of children's books I was very disappointed with TORQUAY library's children's section when i went with my daughter. Maybe more mobile library services to reach out to the elderly ."</i></p> <p><i>"Give us back the old fashioned libraries but with children's centres"</i></p> <p><i>"Hub for memory cafes, meeting place for elderly, mindfulness sessions etc"</i></p> <p><i>"Look at hiring out unused rooms or areas for meetings, classes etc at a nominal, affordable fee."</i></p>
<b>Fine as it is (57)</b>	<p><i>"The library service is already operating differently and in a new way and should continue to be supported."</i></p> <p><i>"I think that the services which the libraries provide are very comprehensive already."</i></p> <p><i>"The library service operates exceptionally well in Torbay. All libraries appear well used especially Churston. They are all efficient, well run and the staff are professional and very helpful."</i></p> <p><i>"Why does it need to change? Is this just another way to find an excuse for more cost cutting? Experience shows that council needs assessments usually provide a cover for a decision that has already been made...."</i></p> <p><i>"Leave the library alone"</i></p>



<p><b>Other (51)</b></p>	<p><i>“Need more knowledge of usage and opening times to make any informed decision. One has to question the need for a library at Churston but not sure what the usage is.”</i></p> <p><i>“Reduce the number of libraries - have one fantastic central one”</i></p> <p><i>“Library services are an important cultural provision.”</i></p> <p><i>“Rubbish and outdated”</i></p> <p><i>“More libraries are needed”</i></p>
<p><b>Community resource (51)</b></p>	<p><i>“Libraries need to be hubs for other activities and should be maintained at all cost.”</i></p> <p><i>“Can only speak for Churston library, this is an invaluable community resource, providing courses, information and community projects as well as library services. ....”</i></p> <p><i>“Libraries are an essential community resource. They should not be cut.”</i></p> <p><i>“Libraries should continue to operate the same free and diverse service they have always provided. I don't think they should ever be privatised or their funding cut. At the core of the value that a library offers, for many people, especially those in transition as well as those in poverty this is a vital service, a lifeline and a way to change their lives for the better.”</i></p> <p><i>“The library service has already been pared to the bone, and any furthercuts will be disastrous. Its many aspects are vital to the proper functioning of a truly civil society and a sense of place.”</i></p>
<p><b>Don't use them /don't know / no opinion (46)</b></p>	<p><i>“No opinion. I do not use so unfair to comment. It is however a digital age”</i></p> <p><i>“I dont use the library. Maybe you could advertise what services it provides so more people may use it.”</i></p> <p><i>“Don't need it, the internet is far more powerful and knowledgeable then the library close the you could save ££££££”</i></p> <p><i>“No comment as I prefer to be out on our lovely beaches. I rarely use the library.”</i></p>
<p><b>Increase charges / donation (23)</b></p>	<p><i>“I think a charge of £5 per year would be acceptable”</i></p> <p><i>“It shouldn't have to, but if the council are unwilling to help the libraries then maybe books could be donated from end of the line places from book stores or donated from people who have finished with the books at home and no longer have use or space for them”</i></p>
<p><b>Opening times (20)</b></p>	<p><i>“Remain open all week and encourage schools to attend.”</i></p> <p><i>“Change opening hours so always one or two open at any one time. Not all four.”</i></p>
<p><b>Promotion /publicity / advertise (18)</b></p>	<p><i>“Become more open to going people, actually find out what they want rather than old people deciding for them”</i></p> <p><i>“More people need to be encouraged to join the library's, maybe more reading times...set up by DBS checked volunteers. Get authors in to encourage a wider variety of people into the library.”</i></p>
<p><b>On-line (16)</b></p>	<p><i>“Do we really need libraries anymore? We have the internet. Move on.”</i></p> <p><i>“It could be a digital service where the books are ordered online and then the books are collected. Almost like a takeaway....”</i></p>

<p><b>Volunteers (16)</b></p>	<p><i>“Encourage more volunteers to assist with running the service, especially assisting with computer access for those who have no other online engagement.”</i></p> <p><i>“Isn’t the library service already run by a charity? Cannot they continue to do this and involve volunteers?”</i></p>
<p><b>Close / stop providing (12)</b></p>	<p><i>“Regrettably in this digital age , this is possible a service that could be terminated”</i></p>

## 14) Council Tax

In 2019/20, Torbay's Council Tax charge (including precepts for Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service) for an average band D property is £1,801.84 per year. Torbay's Council Tax rate is currently the lowest in Devon e.g. Teignbridge is £1,853.26.

Government allows local authorities to raise basic Council Tax by 1.99% for general expenditure and an additional 2% specifically to fund Adult Social Care. Increases greater than this require a referendum.

**It is proposed to increase Council Tax by 1.99% for general expenditure, and 2% specifically for Adult Social Care.**

**This means a total increase in Council Tax of 3.99% which equates to £1.15 per week (£59.80 per year) for an average band D property.**

	Number	Percent
I agree with this proposal	386	44.0%
I disagree with this proposal	471	53.7%
No answer	20	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**15) Please use the space below to tell us your ideas for savings or income generation and any views you have on the other proposals within the Draft Budget for 2020/2021 which are not highlighted in this questionnaire.**

There were 27 themes of comments of which the ten most popular are shown in the table below.

Theme	Examples of comments
<p><b>Council Tax (76)</b></p>	<p><i>"That's crafty because if council tax went up by more than 2% for general expenditure then this would have to be approved by Government....."</i></p> <p><i>"Council tax should stay lowest in Devon - we pay more than enough already, and don't get much for it. Stop wasting taxpayers money supporting an airshow which causes enormous and unnecessary noise pollution"</i></p> <p><i>"We are a pro dominantly elderly area with the majority of people on a low income. How are they going to afford this increase. Yes an increase is needed but also consider who will be paying yet again."</i></p> <p><i>"As a retired homeowner who moved into the area 18months ago I find the council tax already at a high level but I appreciate that expenses rise as long as the standards rise in unison too....."</i></p> <p><i>"With the amount of houses being built in Torbay you shouldn't need to increase the rates, or maybe a lot of these new builds are being bought up by councils up country to ease their problems, meaning a lot do not pay full council tax!!!!"</i></p> <p><i>"Agree council tax should increase but I believe a full breakdown of costs should be made available to the public on a monthly basis. This will allow people to see where their money is going."</i></p>
<p><b>Wages / expenses /Councillors / staff (69)</b></p>	<p><i>"Cut the pension contributions for council staff let the staff make up shortfall"</i></p> <p><i>"Cut your staffing budget, stop paying staff full pay for being off sick for months. Start paying staff pay rises based on their individual performances. Approximately, 20% of your staff are outstanding, 50% are average and 30% give a below average performance and would not survive in the private sector."</i></p> <p><i>"Having worked in a large government organisation there is inevitably "dead wood" in the organisation. Would it not be prudent to look closer to home to make substantial savings."</i></p> <p><i>"Pay cuts and no bonuses for those at the top"</i></p> <p><i>"Stop paying counsellors and make it a simply volunteer role that way we might get people who actually care about the bay."</i></p> <p><i>"Sack councillor s mayor there wages would go along why to help they are only a waste of resources."</i></p>
<p><b>Refuse and recycling / litter (61)</b></p>	<p><i>"Regarding bins, where I have lived previously have provided a wheelie bin for recycling waste as well as residual waste. The increased space made recycling more accessible as could fit larger items such as cardboard boxes and was safer from seagulls, wind etc. During summer months fortnightly general waste collection became an issue with maggots, smell etc, particularly when scheduled collections</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
	<p><i>were not made. Three weekly collections would not be feasible, would risk overflowing bins, fly tipping, poor sanitary conditions."</i></p> <p><i>"dry recycle items only need to be collected once every two weeks rather than weekly. the wheeled grey collection should remain as present."</i></p> <p><i>"Waste bins and bin collection. Solar crushing bins would require much less emptying and in the long term be more cost effective. These would be particularly useful in high demand areas such as sea fronts. If more waste was recyclable then the 3 week bin proposal would work, black plastic is a good example."</i></p> <p><i>"Maybe the rubbish collection would be better if it was actually collected properly in the first place"</i></p> <p><i>"Litter enforcement fines"</i></p> <p><i>"Get people to volunteer and large groups to recycle rubbish."</i></p>
<p><b>Other (56)</b></p>	<p><i>"Open a social enterprise cafe that allows people with a learning or physical disability to learn, earn and gain skills. Plough profits back into the community. Encourage small businesses to open up in empty premises in the high street by offering 'start up' business rates."</i></p> <p><i>"Take a week soon where every council member goes to another town which is successful. Look at what type of shops are there . Look at how the town remains busy over the weekend . Draw in the big names . Offer big names trial periods in empty shops . Give them a year reduced rent . The bigger the name the more visitors . Set up volunteer groups for cleaning and painting up the town . So much can be done . All the penny pinching kills towns. Give a lot this year and reap rewards next year ."</i></p> <p><i>"Tax budget hotels more"</i></p> <p><i>"This should be about justifiable needs, not a race to the top of the league table."</i></p> <p><i>"I think it is a real problem ,but it is really difficult when you have worked hard to save for your retirement ,you cannot improve your pension and everything goes up all of the time .I do not have the answer."</i></p>
<p><b>Parking (34)</b></p>	<p><i>"Free parking on a Sunday, to bring more money into the area and help the shops who are really struggling to keep open."</i></p> <p><i>"Make more use of parking attendants especially in Wellswood where people regularly park on zigzags, pavements and no loading areas."</i></p> <p><i>"improve the appeal of the bay to tourists, without charging them more to come. reduce parking charges- e.g 1st hour free, to encourage shopping in towns. this will help to stop their decline. More shoppers = more money. More footfall =less antisocial crime because the areas will stop being 'no go' areas...."</i></p>
<p><b>Spend wisely / improve services (32)</b></p>	<p><i>"Reduce salaries of bureaucrats and fund social care properly. Avoid wasting money on so called expert opinion and do the job the council is paid for."</i></p> <p><i>"This seems fair. As long as the money isn't inefficiently used."</i></p> <p><i>"A lot more needs to be done to stop climate change. Operational savings should be made by reducing waste and cutting unnecessary expenses."</i></p>

Theme	Examples of comments
<b>Social Care / health (28)</b>	<p><i>“Adult social care is a never ending budget - there will never be enough so can't agree to more money going to it.....”</i></p> <p><i>“If the increase goes ahead then the expenditure for adult social care should be published as to where the additional money is being spent and how the service has improved????”</i></p> <p><i>“There should be an insurance to provide care for the elderly so everybody can access it free should they need it. There should be no need for means testing! Social Care Insurance should take the sting out of old age.”</i></p>
<b>Financial struggle / deprivation (24)</b>	<p><i>“I am on a low income being self employed I fail to get any benefits. I already pay more than my neighbours whom are on a lower band in a bigger house. So I do not want an increase.”</i></p> <p><i>“Many low earners already pay too much council tax. I cannot afford to pay £60 p.a. more. Please find another way to deliver services.”</i></p>
<b>Tourism (23)</b>	<p><i>“Improve the appeal of the bay to tourists, without charging them more to come. reduce parking charges- e.g 1st hour free, to encourage shopping in towns. this will help to stop their decline. More shoppers = more money. More footfall =less antisocial crime because the areas will stop being 'no go' areas. have reduced prepaid toilet cards, that can be topped up, for residents/holiday makers, without a time limit on use e.g 20p to pee.”</i></p> <p><i>“Could a tourist 'tax' be introduced to offset some of the costs that residents have to bear? I don't know if it would impact tourism but I have been abroad and paid something similar and it has not put me off or changed my attitude towards the resort. Venice charges adults per day up to a maximum of, I think, 5 days. It's a few euros a day and is reasonable. I think in today's world people will be happy to contribute to the upkeep of places they visit, it's a responsible thing to do.”</i></p>
<b>Contracts and grants (21)</b>	<p><i>“Improve communications and oversight of activities undertaken within the Council to eradicate duplication of effort and wasted resource. Improve contract management functions to ensure tight control on performance and spend. Operate more like a business.”</i></p> <p><i>“Stop sub contracting work out,do it in house like you used to,i.e tor 2”</i></p>

## 4. Respondent Profile

16) Which of the following best describes how you think of yourself?

	Number	Percent
Male	324	36.9%
Female	504	57.5%
Other	>5	~
Prefer not to say	34	3.9%
No answer	14	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

17) Which of the following age groups applies to you?

	Number	Percent
0 – 15	0	0.0%
16 – 24	22	2.5%
25 – 34	123	14.0%
35 – 44	145	16.5%
45 – 54	176	20.1%
55 – 64	193	22.0%
65 – 74	158	18.0%
75+	38	4.3%
No answer	22	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

18) Please enter your postcode:

	Number	Percent
TQ1 (Torquay)	108	12.3%
TQ2 (Torquay)	104	11.9%
TQ3 (Preston/Paignton)	206	23.5%
TQ4 (Paignton)	167	19.0%
TQ5 (Brixham)	195	22.2%
Other areas	>5	~
No answer	94	10.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**19) Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?**

	Number	Percent
Yes	114	13.0%
No	732	83.5%
No answer	31	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**19a) Please tell us how your disability affects you.**

(Respondents were able to select more than one option).

	Number
It affects my mobility	62
It affects my vision	10
It affects my hearing	11
It affects me in another way	157

**20) How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

	Number	Percent
White	706	80.5%
Mixed ethnicity	10	1.1%
Asian or Asian British	>5	~
Black or Black British	>5	~
Chinese	>5	~
Other	15	1.7%
No answer	142	16.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## 5. Appendix 1: Written Representations

I really must protest at the ridiculous idea of cutting back yet again on the planting around Torbay. The lack of planting last year in the Italian gardens was a disaster and was pointed out to \*\*\*\*\* by tourists and Britain in Bloom judges.

Babbacombe Downs, my own area, has already lost two flower beds and those that remain and the areas with sustainable planting are neglected and ill kept. The last phrase of the revamp was never completed, although the money had been set aside. The contractors are not doing the work they are being paid to do. There is still a broken wall outside the Theatre. The few remaining lights along the Downs are damaged. The flags are in tatters and why have so many flag poles been removed? Babbacombe Downs has always had a dozen flag poles all with union flags flown from Easter to Remembrance Day.

Babbacombe Downs is one of the highest seaside promenades in the British Isles, it is something to be proud of and should be kept up to scratch. It has become a no go area after dusk because so many of the lights have been removed, leaving drug dealers and takers to congregate in the darkness and many dog owners to leave their dogs to run free and poo everywhere.

Where is the logic of passing planning applications for five star hotels when the guests will be unable to leave the premises due to the third world footpaths and roads and empty flower beds, along with no lighting at night. They will not return in a hurry.

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I understand the council intend to close both Preston South and North Beach male and female toilets and replace them with four unisex cubicles. This proposal is simply ridiculous. During the height of the summer both Preston North and South are well used and the minimum replacement for the loss of these amenities must be separate toilets for males and females with at least four cubicles in each. In short the proposal for such a small toilet unit to replace the ones you intend to close is completely unacceptable. Please reconsider.

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Response to Torbay's Budget Proposal

Suggestions;

- TCCT
- Remove the additional £20,000 proposed addition to their management charge.
- The TCCT are not farmers so get rid of the whole of the farming operation and the associated staff. Have sufficient Rangers to visit the areas within the TCCT once a week/fortnight and rent out the land to local farmers with the requirement; they must look after the land maintaining the hedges, buildings, gates fences etc to a laid down standard, maintain the rights of way and countryside signs etc.
- This will drastically reduce the cost of this operation and need far less oversight and provide better countryside amenities to locals and visitors alike.



Re examine the whole operation of the company trading as the TDA. Whilst this might be a wholly owned company of Torbay Council it is no longer controlled by the Council or the Councillors and in some peoples view a complete maverick a case of the tail wagging the dog.

All requirements for outside services automatically are offered first to the TDA without gaining alternative competitive quotes. Any profits made by the TDA remain with the TDA thus the residents are not getting value for money and have lost oversight and control of their assets.

- Words come cheap and can seem hypocritical; the Council assert that they want to do all they can to deal with the global warming crisis yet their housing policy seeks to steam roller open landscape and demolish countless numbers of trees in order to lay down fresh layers of concrete. Might I suggest that they redevelop the current built environment thus improving the built environment and saving money. For example, the council offices no longer needed in Paignton, seeing how they want to make best use of the Council property, arrange for this to be converted into affordable housing?
- \* The proposal to no longer advertise planning applications as in the past to save money has its pitfalls so I would suggest that the applicant submitting a planning application should be required to pay for the cost of advertising and administering responses to the planning application.
- \* Too many people have removed trees without consent, up until now they have on occasions only been fined a nominal amount and no further request made of them. To act as a better deterrent I would suggest the cost is considerably increased plus the trees must be reinstated in the same position at the person's own cost. At present developers and some home owners consider that the minimal charge is a worthwhile expense to achieve their objective.
- \* The use of caravans to achieve a way around planning permission converting agricultural land to residential. The cost of issuing an enforcement notice and any further costs incurred in dealing with the situation should be charged to the land owner. Where the land owner cannot pay by any other means then the land should be taken in lieu of non-payment. The land would then be sold to repay the Council.
- \* Torbay has numerous very large vessels anchoring within its sheltered waters, if legal then a charge should be levied on a sliding scale for those anchored up to 3 miles off shore, up to 5 miles off shore and those up to the 12-mile limit. Cruise ships would also be charged but Torbay Council would need to enhance the cruise passengers experience of coming ashore in Torbay. Monies collected from such charges could be used to build out a deep-water arm and facilities for cruise ships thus enabling passengers to disembark straight onto dry land. This would increase this source of revenue.
- \* Home owners and boat owners offering accommodation should be required to register with the Council and then pay an annual fee. They would also be required to ensure their accommodation met with the same safety standards as guest houses etc.

Querying assertions made in the report;

- Poverty is given as a key reason for children being taken into care. Having spoken to a solicitor that used to deal with children being taken into care and others involved in family courts this was not the primary reason. With all the allowances and benefits etc offered to families etc then poverty should be very low on the agenda, keeping a family together wherever possible is far more important and far less expensive. More common I understand

than poverty is the inability of parents to look after their children, in such cases training and guidance may be a less expensive way forward.

- Where children have to be taken from parents with a drug or drink problem underlines the fact that many such individuals are spending hundreds of pounds on their habit so only poor through self imposed poverty.
- For the Council to be contemplating that children taken into care or needing special protection for years ahead in ever increasing numbers points to the fact that the Council have not identified the problems giving rise to the situation and then having a strategy to reduce the demand for children's services.
- The Council should realise that one draw for "poorer" people is the lower rents in Torbay compared with many of the surrounding areas and that increasing the number of properties with affordable rents will actually increase the problem and do nothing to deal with the areas of severe deprivation .
- Torbay's drug policy has meant that surrounding areas are recommending to their addicts that they should come to Torbay. This as a result has resulted in; more drug pushers coming into Torbay, and Torbay are housing more addicts which will lead to more children needing to be taken into care or put on the risk register.

### Question Policy

The proposal to use capital funding and money from 106 agreements in order to maintain the roads is short sighted and not using such funds to improve the environment for longer term gain is not a sound way forward. Maintaining roads is an ongoing management cost. It should also be born in mind that it is often water bubbling up from beneath the surface that cause pot holes and the degradation of the road surface; this in turn is often the result of the removal of trees and the natural environment and replacing it with concrete, this is a direct result of the planning permission being granted for developments being allowed in the wrong places.

- The Councils desire to become the UK's premier tourist Resort; this again goes against a better mix of economy which they should be striving for i.e. Tourist industry predominantly pays low wages; they should be looking to become one of the countries major location for high Tec industries and lessen the weight given to tourism.
- The mix of ideas seem to conflict at every turn; they want to establish an environmental operation that will incur extra cost due to the need for additional staff, the aim is to improve the environment for tourists , yet their policy of increasing costs for disposing of rubbish at the same time as reducing the number of collections in my view is in direct opposition to the aims of this new operation.
- The increase of parking charges is known to have a direct impact on those retailers and restaurant owners struggling to survive in our towns. If this drives more pensionable aged people to use the buses then this will add to the subsidy costs the Council have to pay the bus companies.
- It may make more sense to provide residents of Torbay with a badge that they can put in their car allowing them to pay one rate for parking whilst visitors pay the higher charge. Seeing that according to the figures provided by the Council the average income of residents of Torbay are much lower than those from other areas then such a move would make it more equitable.

\* Is the Council losing sight of why tourists come to Torbay? Part of the attraction to visitors past and present is to come to the sea side and enjoy the country side not visit a metropolis. Therefore,

their environmental policy should be directed into protecting large areas of Countryside whether in private hands or owned by the Council. Torbay is seen by many as being only suitable for the stag and hen party scene and the drive should be to raise the quality of visitors by emphasising the natural beauty, the stunning scenery and the places of special historic interest etc in Torbay. Tourists can visit any large town or city to look at the urban environment. This can be achieved by ensuring developments are within the existing dense built environment. The normal argument is that developers do not want the aggravation

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Good afternoon to you , I have lived in Torbay for 28 years and happily raised our family here while seeing many changes to the areas both good and bad , please do not reduce the toilets and bins , we need more , not less, also during the winter months we have reduced bins and reduced toilet access , why is this ?! Even some toilets once available for using a radar key to have immediate access to toilets for medical reasons is not accessible now due to number codes in place or being padlocked.

I personally suffer a medical condition requiring this service and would think twice about visiting here because of the situation I've come across regarding radar key inaccess.

On a different subject, One point I would like to make is , I feel it would be a fantastic opportunity for the council to make money on the empty go kart site at quay west , the area is perfect for an indoor dog agility facility and pool pawrty for humans and their 4 legged friends to enjoy , All the holiday parks around this area now welcome dogs but offer no facilities for them , we are so limited with where we can use , I have been attending dog agility for many years but the local facility is outdoors and weather dependant , my agility provider is a superb professional of the canine world , she would run this facility to be the crown of the South West , also there is nowhere locally for fun safe swimming with your dog except for the one day a year offered at Shoalstone pool which always has a great turnout and is a good local fundraiser , the only other option being the sea which is not suitable for everyone , Goodrington beach today was like a day out at Crufts as it is many a day even in the quiet season , we all know the high st is changing , people are shopping online and using their free time to enjoy hobbies and make lifestyle changes , the caravan parks offer facilities for humans but nothing for their beloved pets , PLEASE consider this as a possibility , I'd use it all year round , as I'm sure many local fellow dog walkers and visiting holiday makers would too ,

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I write to you in order to register my objection to the latest proposal to site 4 unisex toilets bang smack in the middle of the beach huts on Preston seafront and close the well used existing toilets. Why?

Why spend £500k on 4 new toilets when the existing loos (22 cubicles + 12 urinals) are well used and perfectly adequate (some new soap dispensers and hand dryers are needed).

I am a beach hut owner and I know the community well, I can tell you this is seen as totally unnecessary and wholly inadequate, and in terms of improving the area for visitors a step backwards.

At this late stage I hope pressure can be applied in the right area to reverse this wasteful use of our money.

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Charges for Household DIY: Good idea. Fully supported by me.

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## PRESTON BEACH TOILETS

### 1/ Charging for toilets.

I and my wife, like so many people in Preston, are elderly and in common with many older people with various ailments have to use the toilets frequently. In fact it is not unusual for one or other of us to use the toilet 3 or 4 times in a one or two hour period. Are we really expected to pay to use the toilet every time we go on our daily walk or sit along the sea front? As a Torbay Council tax payer we would not expect to pay anything for this basic human need.

We would also like to quote an extract from an article in 'The Independent' in 2015 by an author who describes the situation far more eloquently than we are capable of:

"For many people, disappearing public toilets, and the fact that many of the remaining ones charge, is a massive problem. Small children don't grasp the small biological cues that tell them to pop to the loo before it's urgent, older people and pregnant women don't have the luxury of a stoic bladder, and disability can wreak havoc on your digestive system. Until you're not in perfect health, it's difficult to imagine the mental energy expended on assessing whether or not finding a toilet in the next two minutes will result in an excruciatingly embarrassing public accident that is out of your control".

The other thing I would add to this is the increased likelihood of public urination. Charging for use of toilets is not popular and some people who do not have loose change or would prefer to not pay will in some cases do it publically (we have seen it elsewhere in Paignton).

### 2/ Inadequate facilities.

The proposal is for 4 toilets.

This is woefully inadequate. Hundreds of people use the beach on a summer's day. There would be queues and as stated previously we sometimes need to use a toilet at a moments notice. What are we supposed to do? In fact I think I can answer that – we simply don't go out if there is risk of a queue! If the council puts us and others in this situation it would be shameful.

### 3/ Beach huts.

Beach hut owners pay a lot for use of their beach huts. It seems unreasonable that they are also expected to pay for toilet facilities. This payment would of course be in addition to the newly introduced parking charges.

Elderly people with walking problems who have beach huts on Marine Parade will have considerably further to walk.

Some beach huts will be directly facing the proposed toilet block. Hardly an improvement on the view for them.

### 4/ Unisex toilets.

We fortunately haven't had much experience of unisex loos but I do know when I had to use one in Market Street, Torquay it was filthy with puddles of water (urine?), excrement etc. Others with more experience of this type of toilet will be able to advise if this is general with unisex toilets.

### 5/ Solution

Simply leave the toilets as they are. They are free, well kept and capable of serving large summer crowds.

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I am writing to express my disgust at the possible closure of more public conveniences in Torbay and at the introduction of charges at others. Are the council deliberately trying to deter visitors and locals. The conveniences are a necessary social amenity and should be free.

We have a beach hut at Preston Sands. The charges for the site go up annually, parking charges are being introduced and now toilet charges. I am sure these published convenience charges will lead to anti social both behind beach huts and in the sea.

My son and family from Exeter often use our beach hut , at least twice a week in the summer, and spend on average some £60 per visit ( ice creams, drinks and a snack at the Boathouse ) and in addition use the shops in Preston. With the parking charges and now public conveniences charges , they have said they will use East Devon beaches instead.

East Devon provides numerous free public conveniences not only in places like Exmouth, Sidmouth And Seaton but also in small villages like East Budleigh and Newton Poppleford . Their car parking charges are lower and numerous car parks in East Devon are free.

I know the council has to balance a budget but the closure of public conveniences and the introduction of more charges is not the right way.

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I read with dismay of the plan to close the two existing toilet blocks at each end of Preston beach, and replace them with a new block of four unisex urinals in the centre of Preston green.

Has the council really thought this through? The two existing blocks, in my experience as a local resident, are well maintained and well used. What will happen to them after closure? Will they just be left to rot and attract vandals like so many other neglected buildings in the bay?

Four urinals to serve the whole of Preston beach will be woefully inadequate, particularly during the spring and summer. What about the Airshow weekend? And to put them in the middle of the green will detract from the overall ambience of the green, much like the eyesore block recently installed at Goodrington. What a welcome that is as visitors approach Goodrington beach!

Your council seems to be on a mission to punish the local residents, and deter visitors rather than enhance their lives. The recent short sighted decision to instigate parking charges on Marine Drive is another example.

I urge the council to think again on this proposal.

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Following the recent publication of the above consultation paper, I take this opportunity on behalf of the Friends of Brixham Library to respond to question 13 relating to the future provision of library services in Torbay.

## Introduction

Recent successive governments have pursued a policy of austerity and year on year all local authorities have as a result seen their overall budgets consistently reduced by ever increasing amounts. This can be seen right across the bay but no more so than its library service. From staffing to infrastructure, from the resources fund to service provision, no area has been unturned in the council's bid to reduce its expenditure. Unlike the larger departments of Education, Adult & Children's Services. When savings have been made, they have saved relatively small amounts of money. Yet the provision of a library service is a statutory duty on the part of the local authority as required by law and to this end it should stand equally along-side these bigger departmental commitments when future resources are being allocated.

## Current Position

On 1 April 2018 libraries in Torbay were contracted out to Libraries Unlimited (LU), a non-for profit making charitable trust that manages the library service through-out the rest of Devon. This was an attempt by the authority to ensure the future continuity of the library service in Torbay. Like Devon, Torbay Council pays an annual premium and any remaining gaps in funding LUN must then try and make up from other funding sources. As LU lies outside traditional local government, it is in a position to apply for funding that the local authority is unable to do so.

We are aware that changes in staffing now mean the benefits of scale with the four libraries being part of a larger organisation have now been realised e.g. integrating staff into the Devon stock team etc.

## Case for investment

In a recent report 'Public Libraries: The Case for Support' [www.librariesdeliver.uk/report](http://www.librariesdeliver.uk/report) published jointly by The Big Issue; CILIP: The Library & Information Association and Overdrive, the case has been made that now is not the time to continue to reduce spending on our libraries but in fact the reverse. Having read the report, I can only implore you to do the same as 'For the first time, this report brings together compelling evidence of the transformative impact of public library services for people, for communities for the cultural, creative and intellectual life of our nation'.

## Brixham Library

Last year considerable investment was made though the spending of section 106 funding allocated to Brixham Library to enable its partial refurbishment. The present building was opened in 1993 and had seen no major works on the building over the last 27 years. Built by Devon County Council, this build was to a very high standard and has stood the ravages of time despite the minimal maintenance that has taken place in recent years.

For over ten years now Brixham Library has benefitted from the support of The Friends of Brixham Library (FoBL) who have raised funds through events and activities to support the library as a whole. Whether it be though the purchase of materials for children's activities; sponsoring children's events or the provision of prizes FoBL has been a positive force for good enabling events and activities to take place for children and young people. The Friends actively promote the library by encouraging the community to support the

exceptionally popularly monthly coffee mornings, this not only raises funds but raises the profile of other fund-raising events. Furthermore, FoBL has provided essential equipment and furniture to replace broken and redundant pieces of that Torbay Council was unable to finance. As part of the refurbishment, FoBL made a contribution of £5,000 towards the refurbishment of the meetings room.

However, the climate of austerity has not been a friend of Brixham Library. With reductions in opening hours over many years by Torbay Council a whole generation has been alienated from using its services. If you work, then it is unlikely you will be free to use the library during the day and there are no longer any hours when the library is open during the evening.

Car Parking: Torbay Councils policy on car parking has had a detrimental effect on the use of Brixham Library. Unlike other parts of the bay there is very little free on-street parking in the evenings so that even if library users wanted to park for free and visit the library they cannot do so.

Brixham Library is a unique building in Brixham in that it is a relatively new building and is also a fully accessible building. As such it is a gem in the Torbay Council building portfolio and yet at no time in recent has the council made any attempt to ensure that it is used to its full potential. Surely, all Torbay Councillors and Officers alike have a duty to see that this building is being used to its full capacity?

Brixham Library is in an ideal situation to be promoted as a community hub, with its central location, proximity to bus stops and car parks. It is a safe welcoming space for all ages which for much of the time is underutilised. To change this surely there is a case to be made for an increase in the grant to LU rather than a reduction.

Brixham Library is one of the few public places that is free at the point of access to all users. Furthermore, as a library service its provision is unique in the sense that it really does provide something for everyone, whether it be young babies or toddlers through children and young people to the all people in their later years. As an open space its value to the unemployed; the lonely and socially isolated; young parents on low incomes or the older person that finds a library a welcoming place, none of these things can be accounted for in financial terms yet their value to those affected is huge.

## Conclusions

I would urge the Cabinet to think very seriously about maintaining the existing library budget in future years. The Council may need to make £10.5 million of savings, efficiencies and income to balance the budget in 2020/21 but taking much needed resources from its library service is not the answer. The Friends of Brixham Library would be happy to work with members and officers to achieve these ends.

The Friends of Brixham Library

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Ref - Your DRAFT Budget 2020/21 Consultation  
As a Council Tax | Resident - from July 2017 -  
I have found the Local Library - Paignton -  
to be of particular Interest

So my Suggestion - in answer to Q(13) - LIBRARY  
Services - are as follows -

The space - in Each Local Library - in Torbay -  
could - (if LARGE Enough) accommodate AN ASSEMBLY  
of Residents - who pay Council Tax - over 55 years -

- The Assembly - Headed By a Council Rep - plus  
Councillor (x1) Police Rep (x1) Fire Brigade Rep (x1)  
Health + Social Care Rep (x1) - In fact - all Service  
providers - making up - (4 OR 5) Reps in total -  
at Each Assembly - to give Information /  
up to Date - and invite Assembled Residents  
to ASK their Questions - On Relevant Issues

- The ASSEMBLY - held Each Quarter / 3 monthly  
- with a Reminder of the next Date / Time -  
- to be sent - in the post - in advance - to  
Each / Registered / member / Council Tax / Resident

- For Example - Paignton Library have some  
large Spaces | Toilet Facilities | Accessibility  
and Rooms - to accommodate / AN Assembly  
I have attended - A Reading Group + 'A  
TALK ON - AGATHA Christie - TEA + Coffee  
Facilities are available



The Assembly - is free of Charge - also my next Suggestion -

- It is necessary for Each person to Register their Contact Details - Residential (Name + Address + Council Tax (Number) to become ELEGIBLE - and Be over 55 years of age -

- Any younger - than 55 years - will Require (Time off WORK) (CHILD CARE) ETC / Domestic Duties So 55 years and over - is my suggestion -

- The LIBRARIES could take on the Role of Registering each person | free of charge | as the LIBRARY STAFF HAVE THE COMPUTERS - to complete Registering (ID) Only Council Tax | Residents (accepted). over 55's.

- The LIBRARIES received 175,000 Copies of THE MATURE TIMES - EVERY MONTH - ISSUE (NO) 137 (January 2020) EVERY LIBRARY receives a Batch - Each month free - of - charge - IN TORBAY - DEVON?

- My Suggestion - FOR TORBAY Council To use THIS PAPER - THE MATURE TIMES - TO CONVEY THE Suggestion - THAT LIBRARIES ARE TO BECOME THE SPACE - WHERE THE Residents Assembly - meet with the TORBAY Council - SERVICE PROVIDERS - Each quarter - So that Effective Services | open and transparent | safeguard our Communities FOR future Generations - Title | suggestion NO-EMPTY-SPACES - 2020 - TO ASSEMBLY →

My next Suggestion is - ASSEMBLY OF STAFF

- The Draft Budget and the Council STAFF -  
- The Leader of the Council - which I was a paid member of Staff - organized an Assembly of the STAFF - who - after an Introduction -  
- the staff could ask Question - ( )

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- I asked the Leader | a Question about Council Tax - £1,740 per month | Family Home - I was aware of the growing number of people coming to work and study | university | in the Borough and - what I was paying for - with Rise in the Councils | population | NOT PAYING Council TAX | non Resident + Students and Employees +

- So I was told | in answer to my Question

- I was getting ~~Free Car~~ REDUCED Cost of CAR PARKING (20p or 30p - per Hour)

- A (staff) from outside of the Borough asked why was she not getting the same reduced car parking and was told -

- Well - If I went to the Borough she lived in - I would NOT Get Reduced CAR PARKING for (20p or 30p) PER Hour although she worked Hard - in one Borough - she paid Council Tax - in her | other | Borough - I am now Retired -

I am writing to object to the proposed increase in licensing fees.

I feel that in Torbay we are struggling to attract new drivers to the trade and I believe that the proposed increase in fees will be detrimental to the acquisition of new drivers and will also be a factor in older drivers taking early retirement, we already experience this with the existing charges. There is already a substantial cost to becoming a taxi driver and increased fees do not help. I understand that Torbay Council is under considerable financial pressure, but I do feel that any shortfalls should not be attempted to be raised through licensing fees, if that is indeed what is happening? I also wonder why there is a need for an increase due to the change from a yearly driver licence to a 3 year licence which surely must have reduced administrative costs, also the move to online applications, again that should have reduced your costs. There are also 2 fewer licensing officers since \*\*\*\*\* left, again this must have reduced the running costs?

The costs to become a PH driver are currently as follows:

1. DBS £67.80
2. Group 2 Medical £90.00
3. DSA test £125.00
4. Knowledge test £35.00
5. 3 year drivers badge £323.00
6. Vehicle Licence £244.00
7. Operator Licence £67.00
8. Disability Awareness course £75.00 ? as yet unknown this is an estimate
9. Vehicle Compliance test £ 75.00 ? as yet unknown this is an estimate
10. Insurance for a new to trade driver £2500 approx

Total: £3,601.80

As you can see the cost to become a driver are very expensive.

## 6. Appendix 2: Event Report TCDT



### ***'That was very constructive – I think'***

**The report of the Engagement Meeting  
held by the Torbay Community Development Trust  
on Torbay Council's  
Community and Corporate Plan, 2020-2021 Budget and Housing Strategy  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Torbay Community Development Trust (TCDT) convened a meeting of interested groups and residents on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 as part of the Council's Consultation period for their Community and Corporate Plan, 2020-2021 Budget and Housing Strategy. Cllrs S. Darling, Cowell and Long were in attendance. There were 40 participants drawn from the TCDT network, including members of the formal voluntary sector, Community Partnership network and Torbay Over Fifties Assembly (TOFA).

The invited Cllrs provided some context to the Plan, Budget and Housing Strategy and discussions took place on themed tables. This followed the main prompts developed by the Council for their online consultations, namely:

- In the draft Community and Corporate Plan:
  - Have they got their ambition, their visions and the priority areas right?
  - Which aspects of the Plan are most important to you?
  - How can they work together with the community to turn the Plan into actions?
- In the proposed budget:
  - Do you agree with the proposals that they are putting forward?
  - How can they work with their communities and partners to find alternative solutions to keep valued services in place if at all possible?
- In the draft Housing Strategy:
  - Have the right strengths, issues and opportunities been identified?
  - Have they got the right objective and priorities?
  - What specific actions do they and their partners need to take to deliver our priorities?

Inevitably participants took the opportunity to raise issues through the discussion in the order that made sense to them.

Each participant had a copy of the summary paper prepared for the 'Cabinet Conversation', the relevant documentation was on each table and paper copies of the Budget Consultation questionnaire were available. There were also themed boards around the room for people to 'park' issues that they might not have had a chance to raise at the tables.

The main discussion points follow in the summary below. The verbatim notes from each table are attached as an appendix.

## 2. Summary

The main areas that attracted comment were the place-based services of the Council, transport, housing, town centre regeneration and working with the community.

### 2.1 Key messages on place-based services

- Voluntary groups could help with likes of grounds maintenance, gardening – could become opportunities to help people with the likes of learning disabilities, mental health problems (used to have services like Pluss – withdrew due to redundancies)
- Missed opportunity – probation services could do work for Council – clear pathways, significant savings, meaningful work. Community groups engage more with pay back
- Older people are an amazing resource in Torbay. Large proportion of ageing people. Start to target wider age groups – connect intergenerational. Joined up thinking is what is required. Bring teenagers together with older people and get motivated – you have something there! Give people a purpose.
- Sport, greenspaces = health and wellbeing – invest in young people.
- Enabling Council – a great idea. Insurance aspect is a hurdle. If council could cover people's insurance, then provides a way for groups to contribute without risk.
- Do something really good with the £200,000 – make sure it counts? Use as one fund or use as seed funding? The challenge is the culture in the Council needs to change to a 'can do attitude' There is so much enthusiasm in the community – but takes a lot of energy to get things moving.
- Young people still have problems over holidays – Summer scheme – Youth Genesis. Not large pots of many – invest and save.
- General lack of enthusiasm for the name Swissco!
- Solar powered bins could save Torbay money – trial in Brixham suggested savings of quarter of costs, was oversold by company, still a good idea?
- Bigger bins needed for large households and flats – pigeons and rats attracted as pests.
- Mixed comments re plans for toilets – appreciation for £500,000 investment, but some key toilet blocks currently closed eg Lymington Rd, Cary Park.
- Criticism of privatising services, where only the profitable ones survive 'v' council's ability to operate services efficiently.
- Oldway Mansion concerns – what's happening with its finances? How can costs of care/maintenance be raised/reduced?
  - Events to fundraise on grounds?
  - Commercial options?

### 2.2 Key messages on transport

- Transport – inconsiderate parking a result of lack of public transport – namely lack of buses
- Lots of older buses have ended up having to be used – noticeable poor emissions
  - Could central government subsidies help?
  - Services like dial-a-bus or bus equivalent of Uber a potential solution?
  - How do you challenge parking violations effectively? Could cheaper parking help?
- Dilemma of people owning more cars per household – taking up more on-street parking
- Encouraging car-pooling, possibly encourage rise use of electric cars, like Exeter? Idea of transport systems like trams, cable cars
  - How will advances in technology affect future transport?
- Request for Council to lobby Stage Coach for bus services in Brixham. Profitable routes are determining factor for Stage Coach, but they will listen to feedback and recommendations.

## 2.3 Key messages on high street regeneration

- Improving town centres for tourism/business
  - New hotels raising tourist accommodation standards – need to match with higher quality of tourist attractions/leisure options
  - Council could help with finances re: leisure options
  - Cross-party, long-term aspiration to make Torbay a more appealing successful location could really help get these accomplished
- Accepting changes in shopping habits, such as online shopping, out of town shopping
- High costs for parking & toilets off-putting
- Encourage start-ups, independent businesses can help encourage more people into towns
- Empty shops. Think innovatively – community repair shops, community facilities, entertainment
- Idea of extending shopping hours
- Could shrink town centres, make way for more residential spaces
- Totnes a good example of championing independent businesses, not high street/chain businesses
  - Relevance to arts as well – promote local art/artists
  - Parking costs could deter business/funding – where does the council source funding after central gov. cuts?
- Towns can be a challenging place for people with mobility issues to navigate
- St. Marychurch (Torquay) and Brixham positive examples of embracing local businesses, attractive high streets
- Paignton regarded as most in need of attention/regeneration
- Possible plan for part of Crossways to become residential space – fears that it'll all become flats
- Eyesore sites like Victoria Square – may be up for regeneration
- What about regenerating/emphasis of attention on Winner Street? (Paignton) – could become like Totnes high street, champion local businesses
- Crossways – 6 week survey – inject life into town of Paignton. Affordable housing and dynamics required for inner city regeneration – anti social behaviour a concern for some based on affordable housing. Concerns over affordable housing and the people it attracts and may not provide 'mixed' groups of tenants. Final scheme not resolved. Council – planning needs to get the mix right. Affordability links to travel – ie inner town centre.
- Victoria car park – old part will be demolished, Garfield Road. Block will become residential. More doctors and schools in area – neighbourhood plan requires schools.
- Brixham – need to regenerate inner town.

## 2.4 Key messages on housing

- Concern for housing areas - too far from towns/amenities
- General support for more affordable housing
- Need for more supported housing for (extra care) older people reducing numbers needing to go into residential care (Torre Marina)
- More accessible (wheelchair) properties not sheltered or assisted
- McCarthy's – Why so many developments allowed?
- Modular housing (Brixham)
- Private rented housing. Older people being evicted as rents too high, or landlords selling properties. Support needed URGENTLY!
- If we are spending thousands on temporary accommodation, why can't we help people afford private rent by helping people with top ups again.
- If people get help paying the extra £100 - £200 month top up instead of £500 - £1000 a month temp accommodation.

- Employ a council officer do inspect all private rental properties before any housing benefit be paid over. If they do not reach a decent standard – No Benefit. This would force rogue landlords to up their game. This happened in TBC 25 years ago and worked! What about using some of the homelessness monies.
- Need for Council owned housing. Local accountability and income generated stays local
- Community self-build schemes should be considered and supported.
- Concern re conservation areas being built on (St Marychurch)

## **Conclusion**

There was a good deal of discussion in the room and willingness to discuss some of the challenges 'One Torbay' faces. The Councillors were praised for their willingness to participate and talk openly. One participant commented 'It is difficult when we keep coming to meetings to discuss the same things and there is no tangible actions', this points to the need for more communication after the consultation period. One participant concluded on her table...'That was very constructive – I think!'

The TCDT have committed to running a follow-up meeting in March 2020 to explore further how the community can help deliver the Community and Corporate Plan and how their potential contribution can be supported by the Council.