

## **Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 24 July 2025**

### **Members' Questions Under Standing Order A12**

A member may only submit three questions for consideration at each Council Meeting. Each member will present their first question in turn, when all the first questions have been dealt with the second and third questions may be asked in turn. The time for member's questions will be limited to a total of 30 minutes.

#### **First Round**

##### **Question 1**

##### **Councillor Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

A sign at the stream opening onto Torre Abbey Sands reading "Is not recommended to play in the streams that empty onto this beach. The water quality cannot be guaranteed". Why does the local authority have this sign in place?

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##### **Question 2**

##### **Councillor Carter to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

The Clennon Lakes in Goodrington are in desperate need of dredging, especially one of the lakes where the silt has badly built up. The Council have kept delaying doing the work for a long time now, and we are in danger of losing some of our wildlife and birds, and possibly even our friends' group down there if no work is done soon. Please can the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking confirm when this work will take place?

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##### **Question 3**

##### **Councillor Harvey to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)**

Following the Council decision to decommission the St Margarets Academy Hearing Impairment Unit (HIU), several parents have or are planning to request an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment for their child to make sure their educational needs are being met.

How long are children needing assessment having to wait in Torbay for an Education, Health and Care Plan and are those impacted by the St Margarets Academy and The Spires College HIU decommissioning being prioritised?

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#### **Question 4**

##### **Councillor George Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Earlier this year, the Explorer Unit of the 11<sup>th</sup> Torbay Sea Scouts undertook a review of several play parks across Torquay, including Armada, Ellacombe, Victoria and Plainmoor Parks. From this, they identified problems with accessibility, the poor state of play equipment, and a lack of bins leading to increased littering. Could the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking advise what action the Council is taking to address these three specific areas of concern in our Torbay parks?

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#### **Question 5**

##### **Councillor Atiya-Alla to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)**

On Torbay Council, Ofsted stated that, '*Local area leaders have not developed a strategic approach to commission sufficient quality Alternative Provision to ensure placements adequately meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.*'

Considering that Torbay Council will be decommissioning alternative provision in the form of the St Margarets Academy and The Spires College Hearing Impairment Units next month, how can it be confident that children's needs will still be met without this strategic approach?

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#### **Question 6**

##### **Councillor Penny to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)**

Sadly, St. Michael's School, Paignton has suffered two contract financial failures delaying completion of works for some time now. How has the Council supported the Department of Education through these completion struggles?

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#### **Question 7**

##### **Councillor Douglas-Dunbar to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events & Culture and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)**

The Council has implemented a 'Restorative Model' approach in Children's Services, how is the Council progressing this Council wide?

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### **Question 8**

#### **Councillor Long to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events & Culture and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)**

What effect has the introduction of a deposit/bond of between £2,500 and £10,000 (depending on the size of an event) had on the viability of events organised by charities and smaller event organisers?

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### **Question 9**

#### **Councillor Fox to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

Can an update be provided on the Nightingale Solar Farm project?

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### **Question 10**

#### **Councillor Johns to the Leader of the Council (Councillor David Thomas)**

Since the launch of the 'My Bay' discount card to date:

1. How many discount cards have been purchased; and
  2. How many have been issued free to carers;
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### **Question 11**

#### **Councillor Mandy Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

With my mailbox continually filled with messages from residents concerned about unauthorised traffic flow in Fleet Walk, and the police suggesting a barrier system to alleviate this which has also been used successfully in other areas of the country including Cambridge and Bath, would the Council now look to implement this system at the middle of Fleet Walk in order to avoid an accident which I fear is just waiting to happen?

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### **Question 12**

#### **Councillor Virdee to the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities (Councillor Tranter)**

Traders in St Marychurch have reported an increase in petty theft and Anti-social Behaviour over the last year, attributed to the dispersal Public Spaces Protection

Order (PSPO) pushing criminals out of the town centre and into more-peripheral shopping areas like St Marychurch. This was confirmed with an increase in crime seen across St Marychurch in April and May. Will the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities consider expanding the dispersal order PSPO to protect all our local shopping areas and avoid merely pushing crime from one business onto another?

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## **Second Round**

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### **Question 13**

#### **Councillor Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

At the Council meeting on 18 July 2024, I submitted a question to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking regarding the state of repair of the clocks at Old Maids Perch, Torquay Town Hall and St John's Parish Church, Paignton. The response stated; 'The condition of our estate will be brought in front of Cabinet later in the year as the Asset Management Strategy is reviewed and I will ask that officers review the options for funding these works.' Could you please provide an update on these discussions and when these clocks will come back into service?

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### **Question 14**

#### **Councillor Harvey to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)**

Parents have raised concerns that children miss out on Free School Meals due to the Council's Opt-In policy. As part of the Council's review into Free School Meals, will it change to an Opt-Out policy, and maximise the number of children being supported?

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### **Question 15**

#### **Councillor Virdee to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

The 112 open-top bus service has been key to the tourism offering of Torquay and Babbacombe for many years, yet this service has now been cut to only cover Paignton. Why has the Council allowed this, and what action is it taking to see an open-top service return to Torquay and Babbacombe?

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### **Question 16**

#### **Councillor George Darling to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)**

Ofsted recently found that in Torbay, *'Too many children and young people with SEND in Torbay have poor experiences and outcomes due to the lack of access to the right provision and support at the right time'*. St Margarets Academy have made it clear that changes to their Hearing Impairment Unit funding will make it harder to retain specialist staff, making it more difficult for future students to access this support. Considering Ofsted's finding, will Torbay Council now listen to the school and reverse this decision?

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### **Question 17**

#### **Councillor Penny to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

At the same time as the Leader of the Council was assuring Brixham Chamber of Trade that Churston Park and Ride facility would be used when works were being undertaken at the Central Car Park in Brixham, Stagecoach apparently announced it would no longer be using that Park and Ride facility.

How does the Council plan to improve its relationship with Stagecoach to avoid this situation?

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### **Question 18**

#### **Councillor Douglas-Dunbar to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance (Councillor Tyerman)**

The magazine 'Ethical Consumer' has reported recently that Torbay Council, along with a number of other local authorities, has an Amazon business account and spends thousands of pounds with that business. Given that Amazon is criticised for avoiding tax, which could be used to fund public services such as local councils, does Torbay Council plan to switch its spend to other organisations on the Government's Public Sector Procurement Framework who might not so aggressively avoid tax?

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### **Question 19**

#### **Councillor Long to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance (Councillor Tyerman)**

What has been the financial cost to date of the TDA transfer in to the Council to date; and when do the council envisage that the completion of the process will be finalised?

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#### **Question 20**

##### **Councillor Johns to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

What work is the Council undertaking to bring the Old Monastery in Paignton back into use, and could a community centre for the Clifton with Maidenway Ward (which is mainly residential and does not have a community centre) be part of the solution?

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#### **Third Round**

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#### **Question 21**

##### **Councillor Harvey to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events & Culture and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)**

Last year, the state of the Chilcote Memorial was raised by St Marychurch Councillors, with its urgent need for cleaning and repair. Cllr Jackie Thomas at that time stated: 'Officers are currently investigating the costs of cleaning the memorial, and to establish if repairs are required.' Could you please confirm what the outcome of this investigation was?

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#### **Question 22**

##### **Councillor George Darling to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Wooden bollards were placed on St Margaret's Avenue a decade ago to protect Homelands students from cars mounting the footway. The bollards have now reached the end of their lifespan with many becoming rotten or fallen, this has seen a recurrence of vehicles mounting the footway. When will the Council replace these bollards and tackle this problem?

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#### **Question 23**

##### **Councillor Steve Darling to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services (Councillor Bye)**

The recent Ofsted/CQC report into the Torquay SEND local area partnership stated: *"There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about*

*the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently”.*

Yet the Council's statement put out in response to the report failed to acknowledge this. What action has the Cabinet Member for Children's Services taken to address these widespread and/or systemic failings?

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#### **Question 24**

##### **Councillor Penny to the Cabinet Member for Pride in Place, Transport and Parking (Councillor Billings)**

Cornwall Council has a number of blue flag beaches which allow dogs on them at certain times of the day. Is Torbay Council thinking of following suit?

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#### **Question 25**

##### **Councillor Long to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)**

The National Youth Agency have recently visited the Acorn Centre and recommended as part of their Safeguarding checks that lining of the Centre's car parking be re-done and lighting improved outside. This has been refused by the Council on cost grounds. When might the Council be in a financial position to do this work?

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#### **Question 26**

##### **Councillor Douglas-Dunbar to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events & Culture and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)**

With the new harbour development at the Strand, and the additional event space now available, can you advise how many times this space has been booked to be utilised for events during the upcoming summer season?