

Funding boost kick-starts

Project Torquay

WELCOME to the first of three newsletters highlighting the work of Torbay Council and its partners to deliver a high-quality, welcoming, and vibrant town centre and harbourside in Torquay, where all communities can feel safe and where businesses can thrive.

In this first newsletter, we update you on good work delivered by the Safer Streets project in and around Castle Circus and the harbourside to discourage antisocial behaviour (ASB) and reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Later newsletters will focus on our ambitious plans to improve the look and feel of our public spaces in and around Castle Circus so that people can feel safe whether at home, in the street or at work.

They will also explain how we and our partners will make a night out in Torquay safer and more enjoyable for all, and update you on efforts to tackle complex

‘Creating a vibrant town centre is important to residents and we are listening to what they want’ - Cllr Hayley Tranter

issues associated with homelessness and drug abuse.

“Creating a vibrant Torquay Town Centre is important to residents and we are listening to what they want – a place where they can thrive, feel safe and included,” said Cllr Hayley Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities.

“The Safer Streets



Work carried out by SWISCo on raised beds in Castle Circus has made a huge difference to the area

funding has kick-started the change needed and we are working with partners and communities to manage the complex challenges that exist.

“We have plans to transform Castle Circus and the wider town centre and will keep you informed through these newsletters of how these are progressing.

“We know there are issues that must be

tackled quickly, and we are taking action to do that.

“Our focus is on transforming Torquay into a place that works for us all, bringing investment and regeneration into our town centres and a place we can be proud of.”

Find out what’s been going on with the Safer Street project on pages 2 and 3.

Safer Streets for

IN 2022, Torbay Council was awarded £750,000 from the Government's Safer Streets fund to carry out work and take action to discourage antisocial behaviour (ASB) and violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The work which has taken place since then has been carried out with further match funding totalling over £345,000 from the Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon and Cornwall Police, and Melville Community Group.

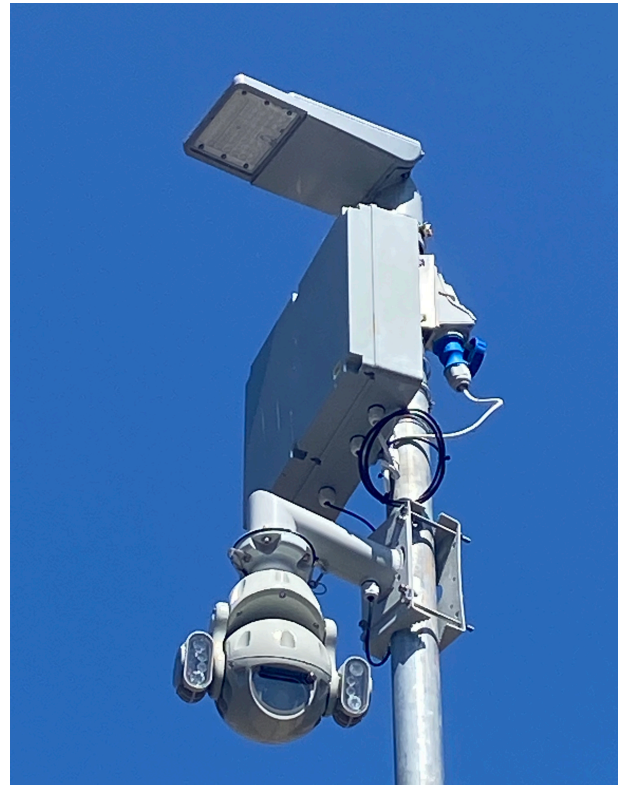
The project area has a resident population of about 8,000 and includes the town centre, harbourside, and key seafront green spaces.

Torquay remains a safe, low crime area, however, the project area is in the top 10% most deprived in the country, there is above national average unemployment and some challenges related to deprivation and substance misuse.

The project uses four approaches to help people feel safer:

- Reducing opportunities to commit ASB and VAWG crimes in key locations. This includes additional CCTV and street lighting and improvements to two town centre car parks. Making changes to neglected public spaces so they are less likely to suffer with antisocial use;
- Deploying teams to increase visibility and enforcement in hotspot locations for ASB;
- Working with pubs, clubs, and restaurants to develop a new local Safety of Women at Night (SWAN) Charter, offering education initiatives including bystander awareness, targeted campaigns and launch of a new accredited safe places network offering safe havens to women and girls who feel unsafe or need help on a night out;
- Work with local community groups to reclaim public spaces through a new community innovation fund.

These initiatives do not operate in isolation but parallel to wider partnership work to change culture and underlying behaviours.



Eye in the sky: One of the new CCTV cameras in Temperance Street

What we've achieved so far

CCTV - Installation of 13 cameras, provision of two re-deployable mobile units and two new monitors for control room, installation of power equipment. The new cameras were chosen to expand coverage of the existing network and incorporate known ASB hotspot. The cameras within the Melville area were identified by the community, with a focus on drug related ASB and fly tipping.

Street lighting - upgraded 45 LED lights and



Clean and green: Photos show before, during and after work carried out in Castle Circus

one and all



Torquay's CCTV control hub has a new member of staff thanks to funding from the Safer Streets project

columns. The system upgrade means there is now through-the-night lighting across the entire Safer Streets funded area.

Car parks – installed 21 new sets of doors at Lower Union Lane car park, which replaced doors which were regularly being vandalised. Eight new window grills were installed to prevent sills being used to prepare drugs. 10 sets of gates were installed at Union Square car park which secured the two misused emergency stairwells.



to make the space more usable for all

Employing a town centre officer

Employing a new CCTV operator

Target hardening of street scene - 22/23 funds went on amending the brickwork and new plants within the established flower beds at Castle Circus.

The aim was to encourage pro-social use and enjoyment and create a better visual environment.

Feedback so far has been positive with a significant decrease in antisocial use of the space.

Additional police resources for two to four shifts a week.

Police VAWG rapid response car - employed for 30 nine hour shifts exclusively deployed in Torquay town centre at night between April and June with similar coverage planned from June to September.

Support for all victims of ASB

DO you suffer from antisocial behaviour (ASB) where you live?

Are you worried about what's going on in your neighbourhood or intimidated by a neighbour's behaviour?

If you're experiencing antisocial behaviour you don't have to cope alone.

Victim Support has experience of supporting people dealing with all sorts of ASB no matter how big or small.

You might think that an incident is small or unimportant to start with but antisocial behaviour can go on for a long time, and become very serious.

Take action

Victim Support can help even if the police are not involved.

So who should you report it to?

You can report to the council at www.torbay.gov.uk/asb-environment-and-nuisance/asb/ or your landlord if you are in a rented property.

Contact the police, if you think a crime has been committed.

For more advice contact Victim Support's helpline on 0808 1689111 or its web chat service is at <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/> - both are available 24/7.

Police thank public for support

ONE OF Torquay's most senior police officers says he will evaluate the results of a month long Safer Streets operation to ensure officers are best used in the town.

Operation Loki ran in Torquay through March and April - a four-week long period of intensification and engagement.

Engagement with local communities was high, with over 4,000 members of the public spoken to over the four weeks,



Proving popular: A 'pop-up cop shop' used during Op Loki attracted lots of interest

ranging from visits to local businesses, police surgeries and chats in the street.

These will be used to inform decisions on neighbourhood policing in the future.

It resulted in 41 arrests and 141 submissions of intelligence, mainly centred around shoplifting, drugs and

public order offences.

Superintendent Ed Wright, who is in charge of local policing and partnerships, said: "Now Operation Loki has ended we will evaluate and reflect on the results - look at how we can be more effective and more visible within the town. "We will work with the

council, public health partners and other partner organisations so we are joined up and work as one to look for long term issues which affect our communities.

"We really appreciate the support we have had from the public and will continue to listen to the concerns of our communities."



Positivity and innovation

THE aim of the Safer Streets community innovation fund is to improve the appearance of areas which leads to a greater sense of responsibility by those who live in and use that area.

The idea is to reclaim spaces through engagement and physical improvements. There is evidence to show this has a positive impact on the crime types covered in the project.

So far the fund has been used by the Unleashed Theatre Company, a social enterprise working with the homeless and recovery communities in Torquay.

The rear of its Abbey Road premises looked run down and badly needed renovating. Unleashed hopes the work will see more public use and encourage creative activity.

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