

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board **Date:** 11th December 2024

Wards affected: All wards

Report Title: Brighter Bay: 6 monthly Performance Report

When does the decision need to be implemented? No decision – For noting

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Board with relevant information to review the performance and outputs of the Brighter Bay initiative from 1st April 2024 to 31st October 2024.

2. Reason for Report

- 2.1 Torbay Council committed £300,000 as part of the budget setting process for the financial year 2024/2025 to improve the attractiveness of our public spaces and improvements to highways across Torbay. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested a report on the performance of the initiative to review its effectiveness.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider the information contained in this report and provide comments to Cabinet to support the maximisation of performance of the Brighter Bay initiative.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Dashboards

Background Documents

[Budget 2024/25 - Torbay Council](#)

[budget-overview-and-proposals-for-2025-26-draft-1.pdf](#)

Supporting Information

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Operation Brighter Bay is an investment project by Torbay Council in partnership with SWISCo that aims to:
- Improve the cleanliness and appearance of the streets, parks, and public spaces in Torbay.
 - Increase resident and visitor satisfaction levels of our public realm.
 - Support the local economy and tourism by creating attractive and vibrant destinations.
- 1.2 The operation covers various aspects of the public realm, such as grass cutting, line marking, weed control, street cleansing, and highway maintenance. The operation started on 1st April 2024 and is expected to run (subject to budget approval) for at least two years.
- 1.3 The objectives of the operation during 2024/2025 are:
- To increase the frequency and quality of grass cutting of residential verges, final mile routes, parks, and destination parks, using additional staff and machinery.
 - To enhance the floral display of the English Riviera flower bed with an additional planting per year, and to create three new flower beds and install hanging baskets and barrier planters in strategic locations.
 - To improve the road surface and visibility of the markings with a tarmac planer and a line marking team, using in-house and supply chain resources.
 - To boost the street cleansing function in Brixham with 1.5 FTE and a pedestrian sweeper, and to schedule the service for 5 or 7 days per week depending on the season.
 - To control the weed growth with an additional staff and a weed spraying quad, and to schedule the service for 5 or 7 days per week depending on the season.

2. Summary of Performance

- 2.1 This summary highlights the achievements, challenges and performance of the Brighter Bay initiatives. Detailed dashboards are included in Appendix 1.

- The grass cutting service has averaged approximately 90% completion rate for highway grass verge cutting, parks in destination parks, and final mile and prestige routes since April 2024. The service faced some challenges early in the season such as recruitment difficulties and wet ground conditions making the early cuts difficult to complete. Partially off target initially but improved to on target. Performance improved significantly since June.
- The weed spraying service was unable to use vehicle delivery methods in the early months due to mechanical breakdown and as such until July weed spraying was done by pedestrian application slowing progress to target. New vehicles arrived in July and subsequently the service has delivered against target. Under investment and performance over an extended period of years has resulted in established weed growth in many areas of the Bay. To accelerate removal of weeds a mechanical weed ripper has been deployed since September.
- The line marking service has line marked a total of approx. 8000 metres of road and output is increasing month on month. The work has primarily focused on road safety markings and is expected to exceed target.
- The floral display enhancement has seen the creation of four additional planted flower beds and the installation of hanging baskets and barrier planters in strategic locations. The additional planting per year for the English Riviera flower bed has been completed on schedule. These efforts have resulted in a significant improvement in the visual appeal of public spaces, contributing to the overall aesthetic enhancement of the area.

2.2 The table below summarises the main tasks, the progress made, and the challenges faced in the quarter.

Task	KPI	Target	Actual at 30/9/24	On Track for year end target	Commentary
Additional Grass Cut – Highway Verges (increase from 5 – 7 p/a)	% of 7 scheduled cuts completed.	100%	Cuts 1-2 72% Cuts 3 – 6 100%	100% not achievable Forecast year end target 92%	<i>Wet ground conditions delayed some cuts earlier in the season. Resources were redeployed to parks maintenance and shrub management.</i>
Additional Grass Cuts – Final Mile/Premier Routes (increase from 7 – 14 cuts p/a)	% 14 scheduled cuts completed	100%	Cuts 1-5 55% Cuts 6-14 100%	100% not achievable Forecast year end target 84%	<i>Wet ground conditions delayed some cuts earlier in the season. Resources were</i>

Task	KPI	Target	Actual at 30/9/24	On Track for year end target	Commentary
					<i>redeployed to parks maintenance and shrub management.</i>
Additional Grass Cuts – Parks in Residential Areas (increase from 5 to 10 cuts p/a)	% of 10 scheduled cuts complete	100%	Cuts 1-4 63% Cuts 5-10 100%	100% not achievable Forecast year end target 85%	<i>Some cuts delayed due to availability of staff or not required due to wet weather in the early season. First cut discounted, additional cut carried out in September.</i>
Additional Grass Cuts – Destination Parks (increase from 7 to 14 cuts p/a)	% of 14 scheduled cuts completed	100%	Cuts 1-5 52% Cut 6 95% Cut 7-13 100%	100% not achievable Forecast year end target 83%	<i>Wet ground conditions delayed some cuts earlier in the season. Resources were redeployed to parks maintenance and shrub management.</i>
Additional Planting – English Riviera Flower Bed (increase from 2 – 3 p/a)	No of Flower Bed Plantings	3	2	Achieved adjusted Target 2	<i>Agreed not to do this due to weather and good quality plants lasting longer than forecasted. Plants redirected to Torquay Park</i>
Additional Flower Beds (increase from 4-7 planted beds/hanging baskets/ barrier planters)	No of additional flower beds, hanging baskets, barrier planters	7	8	Achieved adjusted target	<i>Adjusted target includes addition of Torquay Park</i>

Task	KPI	Target	Actual at 30/9/24	On Track for year end target	Commentary
Pothole repairs	Number of additional potholes filled and carriageway patches completed	20% increase on 23/24 baseline	Data is reported annually but to date approx 20% increase from last year on potholes and carrigeway repairs	On track for target	<i>Planner purchased and due to be delivered in Dec/Jan. The planner will improve performance in terms of quality – right first time as opposed to quantity</i>
Line Marking (contractor and inhouse team)	Number of additional metres completed	7500	8009	Target exceeded	
Additional Street Cleansing in Brixham	Number of additional hours resources deployed compared to 23/24	2912 (8 hours per day x7 days per week x 52 weeks)	1400	2912 not achievable Forecast year end target 2800	<i>Recruitment process completed, new staff hired and deployed, new machinery purchased and delivered</i>
Additional Weed Control	Number of roads visited twice per year.	<i>Awaiting Data.</i>	Awaiting Data 375 Roads received at least 1 visit.	Awaiting Data	<i>Recruitment process completed, new staff hired and deployed, new machinery purchased and delivered by end May. Spraying commenced in June. Technical machinery issues created delay, foot patrols were deployed and hitting target. Target all Torbay roads visited twice a year.</i>

3. Conclusion and officer recommendations

There are some areas that need improvement or attention. These areas have experienced some delays or difficulties due to wet weather, staff availability and technical issues with equipment.

To enhance performance against targets for the Brighter Bay scheme, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Optimize Grass Cutting Schedule:** Continue to review and adjust the grass cutting schedule and frequency in future years based on weather conditions and demand.
- **Address Unmapped Areas:** Identify and map previously overlooked areas requiring grass cutting. This will ensure comprehensive coverage and prevent any sections from being neglected. Recognise that 7 cuts a year and premiere routes once a fortnight, still some areas that weren't mapped, road closures, not resilience left in the capacity to cope with weather backlogs and disruptions. Additional funding available next year to build resilience and elongate final mile, and public rights of way.
- **Increase Capacity and Resilience:** Allocate additional funding to build resilience and capacity, particularly for handling road closures and weather-related disruptions. This will ensure a more robust response to unforeseen challenges. Additional funding for 25/26 will also ensure grass cutting along final mile can be elongated and public rights of way cutting increased.
- **Utilise New Technologies:** Explore the use of new technologies and innovations in weed control and maintenance. This can improve efficiency and reduce the impact of technical issues on performance.
- **Enhance Training and Development:** Provide ongoing training and development for staff to improve their technical skills and adaptability. This will ensure a competent and versatile workforce capable of addressing various challenges.
- **Community Engagement and Feedback:** Through resident surveys engage with the community to gather feedback on the scheme's performance and areas for improvement. This will help tailor services to meet public expectations and enhance overall satisfaction.