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Dear Member

PRIORITIES AND RESOURCES REVIEW PANEL 2023/24 - MONDAY, 30 JANUARY 2023

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the Monday, 30 January 2023 meeting of the Priorities and Resources Review Panel 2023/24, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item	Page
3.	Thriving Economy Budget Question Plan Questions and Answers 2023 2024 Thriving Economy and Tackling Climate Change	(Pages 2 - 7)

Yours sincerely

Clerk

Priorities and Resources - Budget Question Plan Questions and Answers 2023 2024 - Meeting 2 – 30 January 2023

Thriving Economy

1. Increased income from highways works – are cost analyses on current major developments where S38 agreement applies available, at least, for the next financial year? Are practical completion dates available for those developments together with dates as to when payment can be expected?

It is generally not possible to provide accurate cost analyses or forecasts on major development schemes with any level of confidence due to fact that the key decision as to when to bring forward a development rests with the developer and not the Council.

Fees are paid ‘up front’ at Agreement stage and are for a 2-3 year period in most cases and not on completion or in instalments. Whilst this ensures income is received by the Council at approval stage it does then leave the practical completion date in the hands of the developer and the many influencing factors that are faced by them in terms of timescale.

The levels of fees are based on a percentage of the value of the works and therefore each Agreement will generate a bespoke fee value and these values vary significantly between different developments, depending on their size and complexity, which is often unknown until the Technical approval process is undertaken following planning approval of the scheme.

In view of the timescales surpluses have traditionally been carried forward into reserves, as this takes account of the timescale of the Agreement, but also takes account of the fact that we tend to have peaks and troughs in terms of agreements coming forward. It can be the

case that some financial years will generate very little income and this process is intended to overcome this by drawing back from reserves.

2. £100k Investment in Torbay as a Premier Resort – what initiatives will this money be applied against? How will it be apportioned and on what basis?

Meetings of the preseason workshop are planned for the first quarter of the year to review preparation for the summer season and to identify areas where investment may be required. Likely areas for investment include beach facilities (painting / signage / larger capacity bins / lighting), parks and green spaces (potential for further hardening measures to protect spaces, temporary bins) with officers making recommendations through to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Tourism & Housing.

3. Reduced costs associated with the marketing of Torbay as a cruise ship destination – what are the projected savings versus the loss of income generation? If the saving on the cost of marketing is small and the impact of loss of income could be much greater?

The marketing of Torbay as a cruise ship destination will continue with Tor Bay Harbour Authority working alongside the English Riviera BID Company. Although this represents a £6,000 saving to the Council's general fund, the ring-fenced harbour account will now co-finance the necessary marketing resource, with the BID company. Income from cruise ship visits is variable in any event, but an ongoing marketing commitment, albeit from a different source, should ensure that average income and cruise visitor spend is maintained.

4. Increased income within the Culture and Events Team – has there been any research/engagement with the public to establish what sort of events would be popular and therefore more likely to be well supported? How has the marketing plan for events been developed?

The events plan has been developed on the basis of the Cultural Strategy, Destination Management Plan and the English Riviera Tourism BID Business Plan. The first two are Council plans and the recent agreement of the Destination Management Plan received comments from the public as part of its development and consultation phases. Events which have been developed include for instance Electric Bay and the Bay of Lights including the Illumination Trail located in Torquay and funded through the Town Deal grant. These have been very popular events in their first year, 2022, and plans are advancing to build on that first year's success in the next twelve months. The Council has agreed to work alongside the ERTBID in the development of its events plan and in addition to these events others include the Walking Festival which is being expanded to include a second week in 2023, English Riviera Airshow, the Seafood Feast and the Agatha Christie Festival with the intention being to develop these events so that our residents and our visitors know the signature events that will take place in Torbay. Marketing is a shared activity across partners with the Council having direct responsibility only for the English Riviera Airshow. The other events being supported are either being delivered through the ERTBID or through third parties.

Tackling Climate Change

5. Reduced costs associated with the disposal of residual waste – how are we engaging with the public to encourage further improvement in recycling rates? How realistic is this target when figures suggest 39.8% recycling rate as of January 2023, with the Waste Strategy proposing a target of 50% by March 2023?

From June 2022 Recycling collections began to stabilise and currently over 98% of households are collected on time, this has led to the public having a greater degree of confidence in the service and generally being more receptive to positive recycling messages.

The Right Stuff Right Box Campaign was rolled out between July and October 2022 and introduced the Blue Bag for paper to all households in the Bay. Not only did this campaign raise the profile of the recycling message for the first time since Covid it also led to a huge reduction in contaminated boxes and therefore a more efficient collection service.

The Kerbside Garden Waste collection service was introduced in October 2022 and even during the winter months has already seen nearly 4,000 garden waste bins being collected every two weeks diverting garden waste from the HWRC and saving the travel to the site or from the residual waste stream.

Torbay Council, via SWISCo now delivers and efficiently operates every best practice method of recycling collection and from an operational and infrastructure point of view can cope with a recycling rate that exceeds 50%.

Behaviour change of the residents and communities of the Bay is now the sole remaining factor to see further increases in the recycling rate and SWISCo have been working in conjunction with the Council's Communications Team to plan and deliver a series of initiatives to bring about the required behaviour and attitude change attitude in 2023, these include:

- A food waste campaign to encourage the use of the weekly collection service as well as reducing the amount of waste being thrown away. Currently, 70% of the food waste within the residual waste is avoidable and could have been used.**
- A project to improve recycling for residents who live in flats, this will include new signage where necessary, new guidance and information for residents and will allow for additional recycling to be collected.**

- **Continue the Right Stuff Right Box message and engage with residents to reduce the number of incorrect items being left for recycling. Residents have embraced the change to the recycling collections.**
- **Tagging of individual boxes to celebrate good recycling and also enforce correct sorting and non-contamination from persistent offenders.**
- **Continuing to engage with residents at community events, school visits and other public events. These include Go Green Week at South Devon College, community partnership meetings and library drop-in sessions.**
- **Encouraging visitors to the recycling centre to use the right containers and expand the number of materials that can be recycled, such as hard plastics.**
- **The garden waste collection service, which has been requested by a lot of Torbay's residents over the years, will expand this year and help to increase the recycling rate.**
- **Monitoring of localised recycling rates by the Recycling Coordinators and if required follow up proactive education and engagement with target communities.**

For several reasons beyond the control of Torbay Council it is unlikely that the 50% target set in 2020 will be achieved by the end of 2023, however moving forwards the Council is in the best position operationally and can be confident that with the engagement initiatives planned the sole remaining factor, human behaviour will be addressed and changed to deliver increasing recycling rates.

6. Climate change invest to save – where is the evidence to substantiate potential savings and what happens in respect of meeting borrowing costs if these savings are not achieved?

The potential savings are based on the known costs of energy and operation of the different assets and services where savings have been identified. If the anticipated savings are not achieved then the Council would need to review service delivery or earn further income to meet those borrowing costs.