

Meeting of the Council, Thursday, 1 February 2024

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 Mandy Darling to the Cabinet Member for Tourism, Culture & Events and Corporate Services (Councillor Jackie Thomas)

The Rifles Regiment hold the Freedom of Torbay and for a number of years they have wanted to formally reaffirm their Freedom of the Borough by holding a parade. Torbay Council have been in discussion with the regiment regarding an appropriate commemorate tribute to them as part of Torbay's parks and gardens offer. Can you please update the council on progress on these two interlinked projects?

Answer: to Question 1 provided by Councillor Jackie Thomas

A scheme to redesign and improve the planting scheme of the Rifles Gardens is underway. Once the scheme design is finalised key community stakeholders with an interest in and experience of planting design will be consulted with, and ward members will be informed of when the works will progress. The scheme is likely to be completed by July 2024 to coincide with the proposed Freedom of the Borough Parade.

For the Rifles Regiment to hold a parade to reaffirm their Freedom of the Borough the organisation will need an event licence. The events team is following up with the regiment and will support them through the Council's event application process if there continues to be interest in a parade.

Question 2

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

The Garfield Road multi storey car park, has been, and still is, experiencing anti-social behaviour. The anti-social behaviour happens mainly in the evenings with car drivers, meeting up in the car park, then racing up and down the car park floors and also racing out of the entrance at great speed into Garfield Road. There has been damage to cars in Garfield Road and a great deal of noise from the vehicles, but there is also a concern for the safety of pedestrians in the area from these vehicles.

The police are aware of this situation and do patrol the area but cannot be there all the time.

Could the Council see how they could mitigate this anti-social behaviour maybe by putting a barrier on the exit of the car park so that cars have to stop and wait for the barrier to go up before exiting from the slope out of the car park?

Answer: to Question 2 provided by Councillor Billings

This issue has been discussed at a multi-agency meeting focussed on reducing anti-social behaviour in Council car parks. The team are exploring costs and impacts associated with shutting the majority of levels of the Garfield Car Park in the evening from level 1 as a way to address the issue.

Question 3

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

I am pleased to see that Crossways has been successfully demolished and would like to know if the Council have a new end game for that piece of land?

Answer: to Question 3 provided by Councillor Chris Lewis

Following with the recent appointment of Wilmott Dixon, supported by Milligan, as our Regeneration Partner we are reviewing the development options for the site. The partner's preliminary feedback is that the consented scheme is not viable and alternative proposals are likely to be required. The Council expects to receive the partner's proposed business plan, with an updated recommendation on Crossways, later in the spring.

Question 4

Councillor Maddison to the Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth (Councillor Chris Lewis)

As the Cabinet Member responsible for economy, please advise what our administration has done to support local businesses since May 2023?

Answer: to Question 4 provided by Councillor Chris Lewis

Since the 2023 election the administration has;

Approved funding for the Airshow 2024 and Pirate Festival which provides a range of benefits to the local community and local businesses.

The Council has actively engaged in the Devon and Torbay devolution deal which will oversee responsibility for the Growth Hub, providing businesses with a range of advice services.

The council provides a wide range of services across departments that support business in Torbay since May 2023 these include but are not limited to delivering the UKSPF funded business support programme including:

- Business start-up programme;
- Innovation focused support programme;
- Social Enterprise Support Programme;
- Decarbonisation support programme;
- Secured funding to deliver a creative industry focussed business support programme; engagement underway and will start in 24/25;
- Convening a Digital Torbay business group to support collaboration and growth;
- Continue to manage EPIC supporting the growth of businesses in the hi tech sector;
- Supporting the Torbay Hi Tech Cluster;
- Delivered a Jobs Fair supporting over 40 employers;
- Supporting delivery of the Destination Management Plan that aims to drive up visitor numbers and visitor spend helping business in the visitor economy; and
- Secured funding from Local Spark to provide bid writing training to voluntary and community-based businesses

Continued investment into our Heritage Assets to increase footfall in Torbay. Successful revalidation of Torbay's UNESCO Geopark status to ensure the profile remains high as a premier visitor location, research hub and place to invest.

Services within the Council also offer advice to businesses on food hygiene, licensing, funding and trading standards further information can be found here: [Business and licensing - Torbay Council](#)

Second Round

Question 5

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

Please could you explain why the Clifton with Maidenway Community Ward Fund from 2022 has still not been actioned especially as the neighbouring ward, Kings Ash, were able to submit their 2024 ward fund within 24 hours of a public announcement on the Foxhole Community Centre closing?

Answer: to Question 5 provided by Councillor Jackie Thomas

The application for the Clifton with Maidenway Community Ward Fund for 2022/23 was for a seesaw in Primley Park. There have been ongoing discussions with SWISCo about funding the shortfall in this application and these have only recently been resolved.

The Engagement and Communications Team have been in contact with both Ward Councillors over recent weeks in order to discuss how the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024

Community Ward Fund can be allocated. The applications for the 2023/2024 Fund have now been approved.

In terms of the speed in which decisions are made for other applications to the Community Ward Fund, grants to organisations can be signed off and actioned much more quickly than applications for equipment and maintenance which involve discussions with and quotes from SWISCo.

Third Round

Question 6

Councillor Maddison to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance (Councillor Tyerman)

What is the totality of the cost to the council of our response to homelessness and rough sleeping? This should include inter alia the cost of all services, associated staff costs (including on-costs) accommodation provision, health and associated monitoring, related town cleansing, liaison with police and agencies (including charities), communications and town centre staff related to homelessness and rough sleeping?

Answer: to Question 6 provided by Councillor Tyerman

The revenue budget for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping for 23/24 is net expenditure of £1.430m (including the costs of direct staffing). However, we have regularly reported a projected year end overspend of £995k across temporary accommodation and prevention. So total direct spend of £2.425m for the current financial year. The Hostel cost is net nil for 23/24 as rental income is top sliced to fund Council staff working at the Unit. In terms of indirect costs, these are difficult to quantify as staff/services do not record their time at that level of granularity – for example SWISCo clean our streets, but would not be able to distinguish additional costs, (if any), that are directly linked to rough sleeping. Therefore, in ballpark terms, it is reasonable to assume that overall spend in this area is in the range of between £2.5m and £2.8m for the 2023/24 financial year.
