

Meeting of the Council

Thursday, 6 February 2014

Questions Under Standing Order A13

Question (1) by Councillor Baldrey to the Executive Lead for Highways, Transport and Environment (Councillor Hill)	How is Torbay Council in partnership with TOR2 using the persuasion of ‘pester power’ by children to their parents to promote recycling through Schools? Perhaps families registering to recycle could be entered into a quarterly draw? This could help Torbay achieve our target of 50 percent recycling.
	<p>The following is a factual answer provided by an officer, a full response from Councillor Hill can be found on the audio recording.</p> <p>We have been very proactive over the last 10 years with campaigns in schools. Torbay has a rolling programme whereby we aim to visit every primary school in the Local Authority over a 2/3 year period. When the campaigns are delivered each pupil is given updated recycling box stickers to take home so their parents have the message of what they can recycle refreshed in their minds.</p> <p>This is linked to the National curriculum</p> <p>The Recycling officer Carol Arthur is currently preparing a new campaign with monster face stickers for the food waste bins, to encourage them to feed all the leftovers to the food monster. This links to our wider efforts to encourage recycling across the Bay.</p> <p>We also encourage Torbay schools to apply for the ‘cutting your waste line’ grant funded through DAWRRC (Devon Authorities Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee) and there are learning resources for schools through this organisation and the Don’t let Devon go to waste’ website.</p> <p>Re the Quarterly draw: We recently had a prize draw to win an ipad for those who pledged to recycle ‘just one more thing’ but there was no measurable positive impact for recycling.</p>

<p>Question (2) by Councillor James to the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance (Councillor Mills)</p>	<p>What is the pay difference between genders in the council, especially for those on the lowest level of council pay?</p>
<p>Question (3) by Councillor James to the Mayor and Executive Lead for Employment and Regeneration, Finance and Audit (Mayor Oliver)</p>	<p>Of the people who have had to start paying council tax since 2013 due to the council tax benefit changes, please will you give us updated figures on how many people have missed a payment, how many people are still in arrears in paying their council tax, how many have faced summons and how many have gone to court? Also, has anybody faced a prison sentence?</p>
	<p>The following is a factual answer provided by an officer, a full response from Mayor Oliver can be found on the audio recording.</p> <p>3,699 are in arrears of which 674 have made no payment. 2,138 have received a summons. 1,184 have gone to court. No resident is facing a prison sentence.</p>
<p>Question (4) by Councillor James to the Executive Lead for Children, Schools and Families (Councillor Pritchard)</p>	<p>Recently newspapers have raised this issue of victims of domestic violence losing their children who are taken into care. Could this be considered a punishment? Has Children’s Services done this in Torbay (in cases where the children themselves have not come to any harm) and if so, how many children have been affected?</p>
<p>Question (5) by Councillor James to the Executive Lead for Highways, Transport and Environment (Councillor Hill)</p>	<p>In light of the recent horrendous weather we have experienced, which scientists say we should expect a lot more of in coming years due to man-made climate change, does the Executive Lead for Highways, Transport and Environment agree that tackling climate change is a very important issue and will he be encouraging local people to become as environmentally responsible as possible so we can do our part to help mitigate this very serious threat?</p>
<p>Question (6) by Councillor James to the Executive Lead for Business Planning and Governance (Councillor Mills)</p>	<p>When will the council be announcing its target for employment of apprentices as promised last year to Overview and Scrutiny?</p>

<p>Question (7) by Councillor Stockman to the Mayor and Executive Lead for Employment and Regeneration, Finance and Audit (Mayor Oliver)</p>	<p>The results of the consultations for his budget demonstrate that a majority of those residents who took part were in favour of a 2% Council Tax Rise. Can the Mayor share with us the ECONOMIC basis for not acting upon this, as these funds would have enabled the Council to continue to support the most vulnerable in our Communities whilst seeking new ways of working together.</p>
	<p>The following is a factual answer provided by an officer, a full response from Mayor Oliver can be found on the audio recording.</p> <p>As I stated within the budget proposals which were approved by Council, in addition to the difficulties faced by the Council, I am also conscious of the impact the council tax and any increases to the council tax have upon the amount of disposable income available to local residents and I never underestimating how difficult it will also be for Torbay residents to balance their own household budgets in these difficult times. It is on this basis that I proposed and the Council approved to accept the Government's offer of a council tax freeze grant to ensure the council tax is frozen for the next two years. The economic case is this will lessen the burden on hard working Torbay Council Tax payers and mean they will have more disposable income which they can spend in the Bay to support local businesses and regenerate the local economy which is my number one priority.</p>
<p>Question (8) by Councillor Darling to the Deputy Mayor and Executive Lead for Strategic Planning, Housing and Energy (Councillor Thomas (D))</p>	<p>Are you aware of the following councils that are officially supporting the supermarket levy?</p> <p>Weymouth and Portland Oxford Wyre Forest South Hams Derby Southwark Lambeth Sefton</p> <p>Derby and Lambeth have also taken the decision that they want to submit the proposal for a supermarket levy and are at the engagement stage with local people.</p> <p>Has this new information resulted in any further progress on this matter by Torbay Council?</p>
	<p>The following is a factual answer provided by an officer, a full response from Councillor Thomas (D) can be found on the audio recording.</p>

Yes the Council is aware of the supermarket levy. A number of Councils have joined together to form a pressure group, asking for additional rates to be attached to out of town retail. As such, the supermarket levy is a financial / tax issue, not a planning matter. The supermarket levy is therefore very different from CIL. The Council is watching the national CIL agenda very closely and is not yet convinced it's the right 'tool', in itself, to use. The Government has delayed implementation of pooling arrangements for CIL, but has made it clear CIL is not to be used as a policy making tool and must be based purely on viability.

The Council not yet decided on whether to use CIL, or a combination of CIL and S106. The Council is waiting until there is more certainty about the Local Plan and national requirements re CIL. It would not be a prudent use of resources to plough ahead with CIL, only to find that the national situation changes. In the meantime S106 continues to be used very effectively, allowing for example a pooling of monies over next 12 months to pay for infrastructure such as SDLR. But the Council has done the preparation work for CIL in the form of a comprehensive viability assessment. That assessment concludes that it would be viable to charge £100 per sq mt for out of centre comparison goods floorspace and £400 per sq mt for convenience goods floorspace. This compares to £20 - £70 per sq mt for residential.

The Council is in a good position to consult on its CIL requirements, subject to agreement from full Council, and move forward quickly if it needs to.