

Investigation Report

RE: Complaint that junior officers turned away key entertainment events

Date: 14th March 2016

Compiled By: Frances Hughes

**Strictly Private and
Confidential**

Background

Terms of reference

On Wednesday 3rd February 2016 an article appeared on the front page of the Torquay Herald Express reporting claims made by Councillor Richard Haddock that Torbay Council had lost out of hosting the Radio One Big Weekend and Elton John. Cllr Haddock claimed Radio 1 approached the council five or six months ago but 'junior council officers' said they were unable to help because there was no licensed venue in the Bay able to accommodate 25,000 people. He said his claims were "100 per cent guaranteed. No ifs and buts," he said adding that neither the mayor nor councillors were made aware of the approach until after the radio representatives were sent away.

According to Cllr Haddock, the same thing happened after a promoter looking after Elton John and Rod Stewart made an approach to stage two concerts in the Bay, with Clennon Valley in Paignton, being highlighted as a possible venue. That never came to anything either.

<http://www.torquayheraldexpress.co.uk/Look-missed/story-28655330-detail/story.html>

Allegation(s)

- That junior officers turned away high profile events from coming to the Bay namely Radio One
- That elected members and the Mayor were not made aware of the approaches until after Radio one were sent away.
- That junior officers turned away high profile events from coming to the Bay namely Rod Stewart and Elton John

Parties involved

Councillor Haddock alleged that the officers involved in this refusal were xxxxx and xxxxx. xxxxx is currently absent from work on long term sick leave and therefore has not be directly spoken to. xxxxx has been spoken with by xxxxx about the allegations.

In addition, I have spoken with xxxxx as xxxxx line manger to ascertain what occurred.

At the time Elton Johns agent made the approach to the council in 2013 the Head of Service was xxxxx. xxxxx no longer works for the Council and has therefore not been spoken with.

At the time of the Radio One approach xxxxx was the Service Manger responsible for the events team. xxxxx no longer works for the council and has therefore not been spoken with. However, I was the Assistant Director at the time and was not informed of the Radio One approach.

Factual Information

Allegations and responses

The allegation

That junior officers turned away high profile events from coming to the Bay namely Radio One;

That elected members and the Mayor were not made aware of the approaches until after Radio one was sent away.

Response

It is clear that there was email communication between xxxxx from Radio One and xxxxx over the summer 2015. Radio One specifically asked for an events site which could accommodate 25,000 people per day in May 2016. They were looking for a location in Devon/xxxxx, xxxxx or xxxxx. These emails are very informal and exploratory only. Xxxxx from Radio One has worked with Torbay Council previously and is well known to xxxxx and other officers. The emails from xxxxx are positive.

On 29th June 2015 xxxxx emailed Radio One with a possible site in Brixham, which is not in the Council's ownership but appears to be land owned by Councillor Richard Haddock. xxxxx explains that there is not a premises licence in existence on that

site and that a licence would need to be applied for.

Radio One appear not to have followed this up. In September 2015 xxxxx contacts them again and also enquires whether Radio One are interested in helping us with our own music event for 12,000 in 2016 (a candidate for Coastal Communities Funding). There is no response to this.

During that same month xxxxx then goes on sick leave, and to date is yet to return to work

Torbay does not have a recognised event site with a current licence which could accommodate a music event for 25,000 as proposed by Radio One. Whilst it may be possible to identify such a site if required, this is unlikely to be in the Council's ownership. This would then require: landowner permission; licensing application to be made and approved; infrastructure to be provided; event management plans to be resourced by the Council.

If the Radio One approach had been taken further it would have needed a resource decision to be made, as with 4 other Coastal Community Events planned for 2016. This would have required Elected members and the Mayors involvement.

There is no evidence that xxxxx raised this informal approach with Senior Management or Elected Members. However, in the absence of a formal approach for a specific piece of land there would not have been an automatic requirement to do so.

Other witnesses
Any other relevant supporting information

Allegations and responses

The allegation

That junior officers turned away high profile events from coming to the Bay namely Rod Steward and Elton John

Response

The agent for Elton John appears to have made an

approach to the Council in 2013 and was very interested in Clennon Valley sports pitches for a 10,000 seated event. This site does not have a premises licence, or sufficient parking/traffic management in place to host such an event. Anecdotally it appears that xxxxx and xxxxx determined that it was not appropriate to apply for a speculative premises licence for this site at the time. [Note: this was also the time when the Velopark development was progressing for the same site].

Again anecdotally it appears that xxxxx took the agent on a tour of the Bay and the agent subsequently complained to the Mayor and xxxxx that xxxxx was not helpful during this process. Sometime later xxxxx was asked by the Mayor to make another approach, but by that time the decision had been taken to stage the event in Exeter.

Given that this issue is now 3 years old and that xxxxx and several of her management team no longer work for the council it is not possible to investigate this allegation further. However, what is clear is that if the agent complained to the council about the attitude of a member of staff at the time, then there would have been the opportunity for the Head of Service and/or the Mayor to take corrective action. I have no information that any corrective action with the agent was undertaken. There may of course been other considerations which were taken into account at the time eg work commencing at the Velopark in 2013/14 which would have precluded the Clennon Valley site being utilised, however, I can only speculate as to whether or not this was one of the considerations.

Summary

For Radio One: There is no evidence that officers refused this opportunity. In fact the opportunity was never offered; there was only an exploratory email conversation with Radio 1. Torbay did not and does not have an event site capable of hosting a music event for 25,000 people. Despite this, the Officer did offer alternatives.

For Elton John: The issue is over 3 years old and some staff involved are no longer employed by the

Council. The issue of xxxxx attitude was raised at the time and corrective action with the promoter could have been undertaken if it was deemed necessary. It cannot be concluded that the event did not progress to a more formal discussion based on the "junior officers" actions alone, as senior management and politicians at the time had the opportunity to progress the relationship.

Conversation with Cllr Haddock post Press article

During the week following the Herald Express article I approached Councillor Haddock to raise my concerns that he had not spoken to me about the press article before he went to the press. Cllr Haddock told me that he had proof and that he did not go to the Herald, they came to him. I suggested that even if this was the case it would have been prudent for Cllr Haddock to discuss it with me as Assistant Director to check the facts before he spoke to the press. Cllr Haddock told me that it was all true and that if I didn't believe him I should phone the promoter. Richard told me that if members had been advised and involved in these discussions at the time then we would not have lost the events. I told him they were not ours to lose. He then questioned whether I would raise any approaches by promoters with Elected Members in the future. When I told him that would depend on the circumstances, he turned away from me and walked out of the room. At no time has Richard spoken with me about this matter again. (see attachments)

Conclusion

- (i) That junior officers turned away high profile events from coming to the Bay

There is no evidence to suggest that junior officers acting independently have turned away either Elton Johns promoter or Radio One. For Elton John, Senior officers and the Mayor were involved and could have taken corrective action, and may well have done so, but this cannot be verified.

- (ii) That elected members and the Mayor were not made aware of the approaches until after Radio one were sent away.

There is no evidence to suggest that officers turned Radio One away. There is clear communication between an officer and Radio One and

offers sites other than those on council land to the Radio One representative. This was not escalated as there was no formal approach made or any specific piece of land which Radio One came back to the council to ask for further information.

Outstanding Matters

What I have been unable to ascertain is whether or not there was a relationship between xxxxx and Cllr Haddock in relation to the Radio One event. In responding to Radio One the only land offered by xxxxx was private land belonging to Richard Haddock. This may be because it is the only land that was of sufficient size that xxxxx identified, but it is unusual to offer land that is not in the councils control. I asked Internal Audit to seek emails between the two, but these have not provided any information.

Specific Questions

In response to your specific questions:

- 1. Whether the Big Weekend representatives spoke with a junior officer, the questions that were asked and responses provided?**

Yes, there is email correspondence between xxxxx and xxxxx from BBC Radio One. These are attached below.

- 2. Whether following the alleged approach by the Big Weekend representatives, either the Mayor or Councillors were advised of the approach by the Big Weekend?**

The Mayor and Elected representatives were not made aware of the approach.

- 3. Whether Councillor Haddock had spoken to you or other officers in your team to clarify the situation before making the statement to the Herald express?**

No Councillor Haddock did not have conversation with either me or other officers within my team before making the statement to the Herald Express.

Additional information

Email account of FH discussion with Cllr Haddock
Email from xxxxx including emails from xxxxx



Scanned from
XEROX7556_ROE3.pdf



Clr Haddock.msg



Radio 1 Elton
John.msg

Frances Hughes
14th March 2016

Hughes, Frances

From: Hughes, Frances
Sent: 09 February 2016 15:12
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Cllr Haddock

[REDACTED]

Richard Haddock just wandered into the office and asked me if everything was o.k. I took the opportunity to raise last weeks Herald Express article about officers in my area and my disappointment that he had not spoken to me first so that the facts could be established. I told him that it was unfair of him to have gone to the press when the officers have no right of reply and it damages the reputation of the council and my team.

He became agitated and said that he had proof and that he didn't go to the press, they went to him. I advised that even though this was the case he should not have spoken to the press, and all enquiries should have gone through the press office. He claims that we can contact the promoter to verify his claim.

The discussion became quite heated with Richard not giving any ground he alleges that officers are deliberately hiding things from Members and Richard walked out.

Whether or not he is correct in his claim is immaterial. The issue is that he believes it is acceptable to make claims to the press without discussing it with me as the Head of Service before hand and he has no intention of having those discussions.

[REDACTED] fortunately heard the whole thing.

Can we discuss when we next meet.

Thanks

Fran

Frances Hughes
Assistant Director (Community and Customer Services)
Torbay Council
01803 208002

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Hughes, Frances

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 February 2016 17:23
To: Hughes, Frances
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Radio 1/Elton John
Attachments: Scanned from XEROX7556_ROE3.pdf

Hi Fran,

I have found the attached emails from [REDACTED] to Radio 1. Replies from Radio 1 were not received as far as I can see in [REDACTED] emails.

The issue in Torbay is that we did not have the land available to host such a large event which was licensed. This is why I believe Radio 1 went to Powderham as it's a dedicated event space now with a license.

With Elton John, in 2013 the agent desperately wanted Clennon Valley for 10,000 seated. A decision was made by [REDACTED] not to apply for a licence for the site, I believe he had the support of [REDACTED] for not applying for a license but it was a mistake. On the trip the agent had around the Bay with [REDACTED] he expressed concerns to the Mayor and [REDACTED] that we were putting obstacles in the way rather than finding ways to make the event happen and he was critical of [REDACTED]. I was asked by the Mayor to contact the agent again at the end of last year as I was keen to appease the agent and apply for a licence at Clennon Valley but it was too late he had gone to Exeter.

Hope this helps.

Regards,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Community and Customer Services
Torbay Council
Town Hall
Castle Circus
Torquay
Devon
TQ1 3DR
Tel 01803 [REDACTED]
Email [REDACTED]



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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 June 2015 09:52
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Radio 1's Big Weekend

Categories: Event

Mate

What do you think and please keep this one to yourself.

Cheers

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Town Hall
Torquay
TQ1 3DR
[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 June 2015 09:44
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Radio 1's Big Weekend

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for getting back to me, we would be looking for a 25,000 capacity site per day in May.

Are you able to send me a list of potential sites to consider?

[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 June 2015 09:27
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Radio 1's Big Weekend

Hi [REDACTED]

Yes fine thank you and yourself. I see you have been busy again this year and I believe [REDACTED] enjoyed the time at the Big Weekend.

We would love to have you back again and to consider sites what capacity are you looking for and what month?

Best wishes

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Town Hall
Torquay
TQ1 3DR
[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 June 2015 14:26
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Radio 1's Big Weekend

Hi [REDACTED]

I hope this email finds you well?

We are currently shortlisting potential locations for BBC Radio 1's Big Weekend for 2016, currently we have short listed down to 3 areas within the UK these are Devon/[REDACTED]

With this in mind I wanted to enquire as to whether this would be of interest to Torbay Council? What suggested sites would you put forward for consideration?

Best
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

<http://www.bbc.co.uk>

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Further communication will signify your consent to this.

Please note...

[REDACTED]
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 June 2015 11:51
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Event Maps
Attachments: Access Plan.pdf; Site A.pdf; Site Location.pdf

Hi [REDACTED]

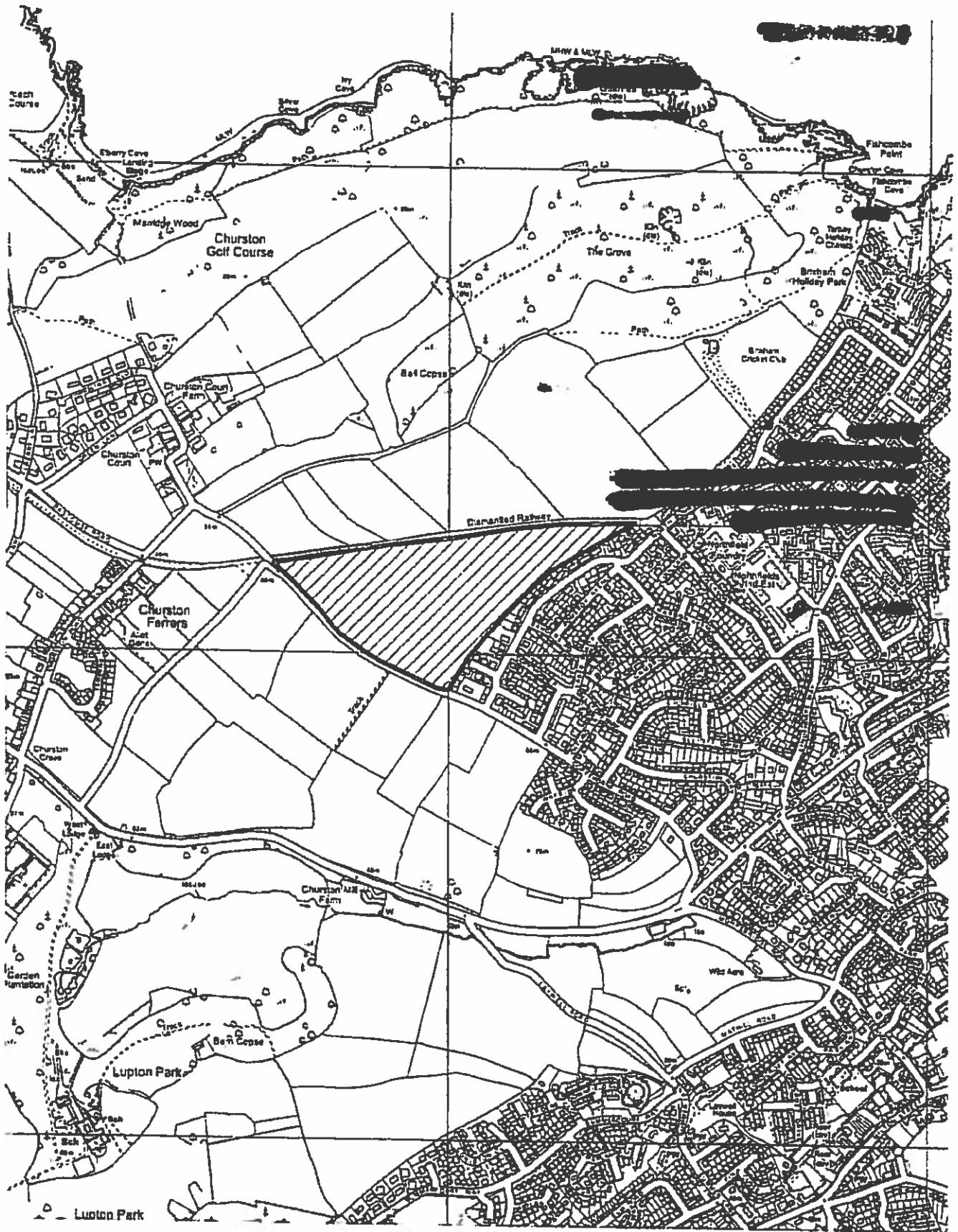
Please find attached maps of an area in Brixham that we would like to suggest. This area is a local farmers field and it does not hold an entertainment licence so a licence would have to be applied for.

Let me know what you think.

Best wishes

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Town Hall
Torquay
TQ1 3DR
[REDACTED]

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Site A 116,000m²
TQ5 0JE

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 September 2015 11:57
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Music Event

Hi [REDACTED]

We are looking to host a music event on Paignton Green in 2016 and we do have a start up fund to assist this but we do have to make the event sustainable. Would you be interested in coming to Paignton to deliver an event for around 12k capacity that fits in with your plans.

Any news on the potential May event as I have heard a whisper that this will be in [REDACTED].

Best wishes

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Lower Ground Floor
Town Hall
Torquay
TQ1 3DR
[REDACTED]

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