



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department
Plymouth City Council
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CITY COUNCIL – QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Monday 15 September 2025
2.00 pm
Council House, Plymouth

City Council

5. Questions by the Public

(Pages 1 - 26)

To receive questions from and provide answers to the public in relation to matters which are about something the council is responsible for or something that directly affects people in the city, in accordance with Part B, paragraph 11 of the Constitution.

Questions, of no longer than 50 words, can be submitted to the Democratic Support Unit, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth, PL1 3BJ, or email to democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk. Any questions must be received at least five complete working days before the meeting.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

OFFICIAL

Please return your completed question form to Democratic Support, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth, PL1 3BJ or email:

democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk

Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Mr Gregg Black

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: The Leader of The Council Cllr Evans OBE

To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: Full Council

Date: 15 September 2025

Question (to be no longer than 50 words): With the Labour Government cutting funding to the Restoring Your Railway Fund, do you support developing a Plymouth Metro between a new Plympton station and Tavistock to cut carbon emissions and boost public transport use?

Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? Yes but if not, I would like a response sent to me via post.

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

Yes, the Council is 100% supportive of developing a Plymouth Metro. We are currently exploring feasibility funding with government, and the concept is included in the Plymouth Plan and Peninsula Transport. This includes a new Plympton Station and reopening the line to Tavistock.

The adopted Plymouth Plan Policy GRO4 is to use transport investment to drive growth. More specifically the policy states that it will deliver targeted integrated transport measures to help support the sustainable growth of Plymouth including working with partners to promote improved and more resilient local rail services, through developing and communicating the Plymouth / Devon Metro concept, reinstating the Tavistock to Plymouth branch line and investigating the need for new rail stations such as Plympton. Plymouth City Council is a partner within Peninsula Transport, the sub-national Transport Body for the south-west region responsible for setting transport strategy and for communicating agreed major transport priorities to Government. It has also identified as a priority, metro type rail services including the reopening of the branch line to Tavistock and opening a new station in Plympton as credible and deliverable schemes capable of being transformational in transport terms to the Plymouth Travel To Work Area. Plymouth City Council will be working with Peninsula Transport and other key strategic partners in developing these schemes.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Gerry Parmenter
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor Penberthy
To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: City Council
Date: 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): Can you please explain why you have total disregard for local British people when illegal immigrants get everything they want but our own people in Plymouth are homeless? You follow the government like a lost lamb, not caring about the people of Plymouth.
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? No.
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) Thank you for the question, although I would strongly dispute the sentiment it contains. Today I expect to disagree with members in this room on many things but I'm confident in saying that there is not a single elected member sitting here on any of the benches, nor a single officer employed by the Council that, in your words, 'has a total disregard for local British people.' We have multitude of projects and programmes that we run to help vulnerable people across our city. I'm all too aware of the homelessness crisis in this city. You will have heard me talking about it at every opportunity I get. We know that people are suffering because we are the ones who support them. We provide temporary accommodation to families who need it; we are a leading partner in the Plymouth Alliance, supporting rough sleepers with a range of complex needs; we stimulate and support the housing market to build more homes as part of our Plan for Homes; we encourage empty homes back into use; we buy and sell land and assets to fund and enable additional

accommodation across the city; we work with partners and other organisations to accelerate the provision of new homes. All this and much more.

Your insinuation about a lack of care is utterly insulting to Council staff who right now are meeting people at their lowest ebb, desperate for help with their housing situation. Even as we talk, Council officers are providing solutions, options and most importantly, empathy and compassion.

In your question, you use the term 'illegal immigrant', which although is not a recognised term in UK legislation, I am taking to mean that you are referring to asylum seekers.

I want to be absolutely clear once again, the housing and welfare of asylum seekers is not the responsibility of Plymouth City Council. It is the responsibility of the Home Office.

So there is no correlation between local people being homeless and any support that is offered to people seeking asylum because they are reliant on two different systems.

Incidentally, asylum seekers only receive basic living necessities from the state – just £49.18 a week to cover essentials, including sustenance. Not flash cars, phones or homes.

Sometimes charities or organisations may allocate goods, clothes, and food parcels to asylum seekers, many of whom arrive in this country with little or no belongings but this is not something funded by the government or the council. It's misinformation to suggest otherwise.

So thank you again for your question. I hope that this has gone some way to allaying your fears.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC



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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Justin Legg
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Central Park
To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: City Council
Date: 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): <i>The drains in Central Park don't work, resulting in chipping washing out and producing a trip hazard. How much money has been spent on the Central Park improvement project and how much of the park is currently fenced off?</i>
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? No.
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) We are aware there are some issues with the drainage channels when there is a high rainfall event. The delivery of the works against the design is currently underway and this will include a review of the drainage channels and the pipework that connects them into the ponds. We are committed to resolving this issue and will complete remedial action once we have completed the review of the works. The total spend on the Central Park improvement project has been £9,445m. This has included delivery of the ponds project, the new café, play area, events field and community sports hub. Plus, improvements to playing pitches, some of the path network and works for nature. £7,550m has been Council funding and £1,895m from other funding sources. Areas in the Park are still fenced off; this is to enable landscaping to be delivered and establish. This includes a strip either side of the swale on the southern side of the works and the pitch plateau and the area around the pond on the northern side of the works. Keeping these areas fenced is needed while the landscaping works are completed and established and they are expected to be in place until spring next year.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Nigel Cogdell

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Street Services

To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: City Council

Date: 15 September 2025

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

Why is it necessary to waste money removing crosses off of our roundabouts, they are neither dangerous, distracting or offensive. Surely the weather and vehicle tyres will erase them at zero cost and you haven't given credence to the painters and encourage them to paint more.

Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question?

No

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

While we did initially remove painted crosses at two mini roundabouts and a single pedestrian crossing, we are not actively repainting other locations at this point to ensure best value for stretched public finances. If a risk assessment shows any unauthorised painting or graffiti on the highway poses a danger to road users, we will take the necessary action to make it safe.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Mrs M Routley
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Street Services
To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: City Council Date: 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): <i>With the amount of potholes across the city, why can't the highways team use the machine that Vivien Pengelly secured for the city to use, prior to her death? This machine would fill most potholes in a short time and they would be sealed at the edges.</i>
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? No.
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) We believe you are referring to the 'Velocity' machine which has proved very successful and we are continuing to commission this service. For your information Councillor Mark Coker instigated the roadmaster trial and the Velocity machines which we've been using since Labour were elected in 2023. From the 31/03/25 to 31/08/25 Velocity have completed 2321 repairs, within those repairs there were 3705 defects and a total of 119m3 of material has been used covering a total area of 5231m2 . In addition, we are operating a seek and repair team with SWH (led by PCC) where identified defects are being repaired in the traditional manner (where the Velocity process is not suitable) but over an extended area, this fiscal year has seen 32 sites across a variety of city wards delivered. In fact, as a resident of Stanborough Rd, you will have noticed recently that the central part of the road has been repaired from Reservoir Road to Church Road and re-lining the centre of the road

followed this. This was in response to your ward councillors referring the concerns of residents to the Highways team and a site visit with a member of the Highways team.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Mr Mark Warrillow

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Blue Badges

To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: Council Meeting

Date: 15 September 2025

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

How can PCC justify charging £188 for a disabled parking bay in this cost-of-living crisis? The job takes less than 3 minutes and although it is outside my home, anyone with a blue badge can park there. Scope slammed PCC for charging £150 in 2020, but it has increased since.

Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question?

No, but watch live online.

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

The provision of disabled driver parking spaces is not a statutory function of Plymouth City Council; rather, it is a courtesy service aimed at assisting disabled drivers who encounter difficulties in parking near their homes.

The introduction of the fee for marking a disabled drivers parking space was necessary to ensure the sustainability of this service. The cost of marking a bay, which is set at £188 as of April 2025, reflects only a portion of the actual costs incurred by the Council, which totals £582.41 per marking. The fees are subsidised to help maintain this valuable service, and without them, we risk having to discontinue the service altogether.

During the application process the applicant is advised that these white bay markings are advisory only and are not reserved exclusively for any individual. However, most motorists appreciate the purpose of the bays and leave them clear for the people who need them. If we were to make these bays mandatory, legally backed by a Traffic Regulation Order, the cost to the applicant would be significantly more and implementation time can take several months whilst it follows a statutory process.

Therefore, maintaining the current system balances support for disabled motorists with practical considerations of cost and efficiency, ensuring that this important service remains accessible to those who rely on it.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Emma Clarkson

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor John Stephens, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport

To be asked at the next Council meeting.

Date: 15 September 2025

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

In the flash floods on Friday 29th August 2025, I lost my home, my belongings and have been displaced as a result of PCCs complete disregard for maintaining and updating infrastructure.

What is PCC planning to do to effectively manage surface water damage throughout Plymouth and prevent loss to residents?

Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question?

No

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

We are sorry to hear about the experience of residents at this location, and others across the City, during the recent extreme rainfall event. On a general point the rainfall on 29 August was very significant, we saw more than 50 per cent expected rainfall in just 60 minutes and 70 per cent in four hours. It was the second wettest August day on record in Plymouth.

The drainage and sewerage system in Plymouth, a huge amount of which being South West Water's (SWW) responsibility, was not designed to be able to cope with that amount of water.

Additionally, we are aware that SWW have a damaged Surface Water Sewer at this location which is currently being surveyed by their contractor.

The Council regularly inspect the gullies at this location as it is at a known flooding hot spot.

Across the city the Council are leading on a series of schemes to help reduce flooding incidents through more effective surface water management, these include:

Trefusis Park Flood Relief Scheme- This SUDS project, designed to store surface water during heavy rainfall, is currently on site and on programme to complete in April 2026. This project together with SWW's upstream improvements will reduce the risk of flooding in Lipson Vale.

Weston Mill Village Property Flood Protection project- this project will provide flood doors and flood gates to 4 properties in Weston Mill village- property surveys have been completed and the protective works are on track to be installed in October this year.

St. Levan Flood relief project- Ward Cllrs have been briefed on outline design options, including rain garden kerb buildouts, for this SUDS project, designed to store water during heavy rainfall and a Public Consultation is programmed to take place in Oct/Nov this year, ahead of a Business case being submitted to the EA for project funding in 26/27.

Stonehouse Tidal Flood Study- this study aims to assess the increased risk from tidal flooding and climate change impacts and will complete this November, providing evidence for future works and funding.

Arnolds Point Tidal Flood Alleviation scheme Phase 2- this project to provide a new tidal flood defence wall along the Embankment is currently preparing to submit to Planning , with construction programmed to start in Spring 2026.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Danny Bamping
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Cllr Mark Lowry
To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: Date: Council 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): <i>Can Cllr Mark Lowry confirm if he made a formal, recorded, reasoned and published decision as per the law and legislation to change the name of Sir John Hawkins Square (to Jack Leslie Square) in June 2020?</i>
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? TBC
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) As the questioner has previously been informed, Councillor Lowry did not take a decision in June 2020 to rename Sir John Hawkins Square. Following receipt of a request for the renaming of John Hawkins square, Councillor Lowry approved the commencement of the renaming process, in accordance with the Council's published Street Naming and Numbering Policy. There was no decision to be taken at this stage. The renaming process proceeded in accordance with the Policy until it was discontinued following a hearing in the Magistrates Court.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Wendy Wilson
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: Council Date: 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): Can you assure us that any migrants in hotels in Plymouth will not be placed ahead of local people who have been on the Council waiting lists for houses?
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? TBC
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) Thank you. To be clear, none of the hotels in Plymouth are currently accommodating asylum seekers and the Council have not been notified by the Home Office of any plans for this to happen. For clarity, A migrant is anyone who has moved from one area to another. People seeking asylum , or as they are more widely referred to - asylum seekers - are people asking for sanctuary in another country due to persecution but whose application to become a refugee has not yet been concluded. I can give assurances that asylum seekers are not given priority on the local housing waiting list, simply because asylum seekers are not eligible to apply to join. While claims for asylum are ongoing, all accommodation is the responsibility of the Home Office, not the Council. Once an asylum claim has been granted, and that person becomes a refugee, they can apply for housing and at that point, priority and banding is in line with Devon Home Choice policy based on assessed housing need and nothing else.

Refugees do not receive any additional priority or preference for Social Housing through Devon Home Choice.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Sara Nisbet
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
To be asked at the next (Council, Cabinet or Planning Committee) Meeting: Council
Date: 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): Why despite the Denham Close bungalows flooding 7 times due to highways drains, has preventative measures not been put in place. A maintenance schedule including regular cleaning of debris & leaves was supposedly implemented but never adhered. Elderly having to vacate and paddle water in the early hours is unacceptable.
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? No
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) We are sorry to hear about the experience of residents at this location, and others across the City, during the recent extreme rainfall event. On a general point the rainfall on 29 August was very significant, we saw more than 50 per cent expected rainfall in just 60 minutes and 70 per cent in four hours. It was the second wettest August day on record in Plymouth. The drainage and sewerage system in Plymouth, a huge amount of which being South West Water's responsibility, was not designed to be able to cope with that amount of water. With regard to Denham Close, a double letter box gully was installed at the end of Denham Close. Maintenance has been impacted by access difficulties due to parked cars and due to leaf fall preventing surface water to run into Ham Brook, we saw an increase of surface water running into the gully. We have arranged for hatched markings to help prevent parked cars blocking gully access and this location is being placed on a list of locations that will benefit from additional cleansing over and above the standard cyclical cleansing regime we deliver.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

<p>Question submitted by: Nick Crawley</p>
<p>To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor John Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure)</p>
<p>To be asked at the next Council meeting: Council</p>
<p>Date: 15 September 2025</p>
<p>Question (to be no longer than 50 words): With frequent blocked drains causing flooding and disruption — most now choked with weeds — what immediate and long-term steps will you take to improve maintenance, hold contractors accountable, and invest in drainage infrastructure to prevent repeated failures as Plymouth faces increasingly extreme weather?</p>
<p>Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? No</p>
<p>Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)</p> <p>We need to start by explaining that the drainage and sewerage system in Plymouth, a huge amount of which being South West Water's (SWW) responsibility, was not designed to be able to cope with the volume of water we have seen in recent heavy rain events. For example, the rainfall on 29 August was very significant, we saw more than 50 per cent expected rainfall in just 60 minutes and 70 per cent in four hours. It was the second wettest August day on record in Plymouth.</p> <p>Across the city the Council are leading on a series of schemes to help reduce flooding incidents through more effective surface water management, these include:</p> <p>Trefusis Park Flood Relief Scheme- This SUDS project, designed to store surface water during heavy rainfall, is currently on site and on programme to complete in April 2026. This project together with SWW's upstream improvements will reduce the risk of flooding in Lipson Vale.</p> <p>Weston Mill Village Property Flood Protection project- this project will provide flood doors and flood gates to 4 properties in Weston Mill village- property surveys have been completed and the protective works are on track to be installed in October this year.</p> <p>St. Levan Flood relief project- Ward Cllrs have been briefed on outline design options, including rain garden kerb buildouts, for this SUDS project, designed to store water during heavy rainfall and a Public Consultation is programmed to take place in Oct/Nov this year, ahead of a Business case being submitted to the EA for project funding in 26/27.</p>

Stonehouse Tidal Flood Study- this study aims to assess the increased risk from tidal flooding and climate change impacts and will complete this November, providing evidence for future works and funding.

Arnolds Point Tidal Flood Alleviation scheme Phase 2- this project to provide a new tidal flood defence wall along the Embankment is currently preparing to submit to Planning , with construction programmed to start in Spring 26.

Additionally, the Council carry out regular inspections at vulnerable locations (pre-storm events) to ensure drainage is cleared. We also carry out extensive road sweeping in leaf fall areas to manage the amount of leaves on the roads and footways. Weeds are managed through a twice annual treatment by a third party contractor.

A yearly programme of works are delivered to reduce flood risks in targeted areas. This includes gully upgrades, culvert clearance, soak aways, storage crates (16 schemes delivered in 2025/26). Regular CCTV surveys are carried out to ensure damage to existing water drainage systems by 3rd parties are identified for corrective action(s)

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Neal Stoneman
To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council)
To be asked at the next Council meeting: Council
Date: 15 September 2025
Question (to be no longer than 50 words): You explained the £72 million pension deal that was done to the date saved £9 million in interest. Which projects were delayed or cancelled as the money was originally borrowed for infrastructure projects and what is the cost of these delays to date?
Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question?
Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs) I can confirm this money was not borrowed for infrastructure projects – funding for this transaction took place separately from that needed for the delivery of our capital programme, and therefore no projects were delayed or cancelled as a result.

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Question to be submitted no later than 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Question submitted by: Dr John Mahoney

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure)

To be asked at the next Council meeting: Council

Date: 15 September 2025

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

Regarding the Manadon Interchange Scheme – The Issue is the A386 (Outland Road) in both directions. Could this be improved by an on/off a38 slip-road westbound at Honicknowle Lane which would take traffic off outland road, ham drive and St. Peter's Road, being less disruptive and better value?

Will you be attending the meeting in person to ask your question? Yes

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members / Chairs)

Changes to the A38, as part of the Strategic Road Network, would require the involvement and approval of National Highways. Their input would be essential in assessing the technical feasibility, safety implications, and strategic fit of any proposed junction modification and any proposal for a new junction on the A38 would need to comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

While the proposal for a new interchange at Honicknowle would have clear local benefits, the DMRB states that where junctions on all-purpose roads are spaced less than 2km apart, a weaving assessment is required. Preliminary measurements indicate that the distance from the Honicknowle Lane overbridge to both the Manadon and St Budeaux junctions is under 2km. This proximity raises concerns about potential weaving conflicts, which could adversely affect safety and operational performance. Specifically, Note 3 of the DMRB guidance highlights the likely interaction between merge and diverge movements when junctions are spaced closer than 2km and so a proposed new junction at Honicknowle Lane would not meet this requirement.

A further consideration is that a new grade-separated junction between Manadon and Weston Mill would be very expensive and most likely be significantly more costly than the proposed A38 Manadon Interchange scheme. It is considered unlikely, therefore, that a bid for a new junction at Honicknowle would be met favourably by National Highways or the Department for Transport who would need to provide the majority of the funding.

