

**Oversight and Governance**

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## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – SUPPLEMENT PACK**

Wednesday 21 January 2026: 9.30 am

Thursday 22 January 2026: 9.30 am

Wednesday 28 January 2026: 5.00 pm

Warspite Room, Council House

**Members:**

Councillor Coker, Chair

Councillor Finn, Vice Chair

Councillors Allison, Blight, Freeman, Gilmour, Holloway, Murphy, Poyser, Ricketts and Steel.

Please find enclosed additional information in relation to Item 6.a. Cabinet Member Risks and Mitigations Briefings.

**Tracey Lee**

Chief Executive

## **Scrutiny Management Board**

6.1. Cabinet Member Risks and Mitigations Briefings

**(Pages 1 - 30)**

## BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council)



### 1. CHALLENGE 1 – ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Economic Development and wider Council budgets are predicated on continuing to secure economic growth in the medium to long term. Growth will see new investment, job creation and underpin wage growth for all our communities. A more prosperous city delivering inclusive growth will enable residents to have good homes and better jobs, reducing those who are not economically active. It is well understood that people with access to work and quality homes, in general, are much better able to support themselves and their families, making healthy choices. In this way the long-term demand for Council social services can be reduced. Our main risks to securing this long-term economic growth, beyond global headwinds, are linked to skills, housing and maximising the opportunities for defence-led growth.

#### 1.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 – ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Council has adopted a new economic strategy with 5 pillars: Productive Growth and High Value Jobs, Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Growth, Civic Pride and Regeneration and Skills. Our current forecasts show a £9b investment pipeline across the City Centre, Derriford and Devonport and a 25,000 jobs pipeline by 2025. The Economic Development team remain very focused on enabling economic growth focusing on major interventions including New Towns, Civic Centre, City of Culture, National Marine Park, Foulston Park and Derriford City Centre. In 2025 the department secured £225m of grant income to support our ambitions and is delivering/enabling £395 of capital investment. This ambitious agenda, which is jointly led by the Plymouth Growth Board and private sector, will create significant opportunities for the city to realise its potential and transform outcomes for residents in the decade ahead.

### 2. CHALLENGE 2 – REGIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY

Plymouth has benefitted from large scale investment from central government and government bodies over the past decade. This has underpinned our economic growth by supporting delivery of critical interventions such as the Box, Oceansgate, Freeport and Plymouth Science Park. There are significant national changes underway to the Economic Development landscape that will change the way funding is allocated to local government and how Local Governments' voice is heard. This includes devolution, local government reorganisation and the end of government support for pan regional partnerships such as the Great South West. In order for Plymouth to deliver its economic strategy, it must continue to benefit from government growth, investment, skills and regeneration funding. It must also have a strong voice to ensure that Plymouth and the far Southwest's economic development opportunities and funding requirements are fully recognised. If this does not continue then the City's growth ambitions may need to be scaled back.

#### 2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 - REGIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY

Plymouth City Council has been extremely successful in articulating the economic opportunity for the city and the region of Defence led growth and the associated £4.5bn investment in HMNB Devonport. This has led to the city being named as the UK's national Centre for Marine Autonomy, signing a new MOU with Homes England to build 10,000 homes in the City Centre, named in the shortlist for a New Town designation, receiving £33.5m of Homes England grants for the Civic Centre and Bath Street and

to receive one of only 4 Defence deals with a share of £250m. Our LGR proposal, if agreed, will secure Plymouth as an ongoing authority with an exciting new opportunity for growth.

### **3. CHALLENGE 3 – INCOME GENERATION AND CAPITAL GRANTS**

Economic Development is a largely non-statutory service and is under pressure, like all other non-statutory services, from the growth in the big 4 demand led services. This is a national issue and has led to many economic development departments being hollowed out or removed all together across the country. This leads to a reduction in ambition, stagnation and ultimately no long-term solution to a city where deprivation is in many cases, behind the rising cost of social care services. The Economic Development team cannot expect any increase in Council funding and must therefore exploit new and more diversified income streams to ensure that this critical function can continue to drive the strategic outcomes of the Council.

#### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 - INCOME GENERATION AND CAPITAL GRANTS**

The Economic Development department will generate £31.5m income in 2025 and have a similar target in 2026. This has been a huge strength from the Council with the ED department driving income from £9m in 2016 to £21m in 2020 and over £31m today. This has been driven by innovation and creativity within the department across a diverse property portfolio, Property Regeneration Fund and large-scale grant funding in every area of the business. This allows staff to be capitalised and funded by grants reducing core costs. The net cost of the ED team to the Council is zero, with the department making a £1.5m surplus after covering all its costs. The department is continuing to look at other innovative methods of income generation and accessing grants.

## BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27

Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet member for Finance)



### 1. CHALLENGE 1 – STAFFING BUDGETS ACROSS THE FINANCE SERVICE

The first area of risk and challenge concerns **staffing budgets across the Finance Service** (including the Accountancy (Finance), Revenues and Benefits and Procurement functions). It is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff in these specialist areas, which are all operating under increasing pressure in a competitive labour market. This leads to pressure to fund higher, market-level salaries to attract permanent candidates, or the use of agency / interim staff which is more costly. Balancing the need for sufficient staff with appropriate capabilities, skills and experience against the funding available is difficult. We continue to deliver efficiency savings each year through better use of technology and training and upskilling staff to improve productivity and have ongoing recruitment for key positions.

#### 1.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 - STAFFING BUDGETS ACROSS THE FINANCE SERVICE

Ongoing recruitment through national campaigns that highlight the benefits of working in Plymouth is the principle mitigation to avoid the use of agency / interim appointments as far as possible. Staffing budgets are closely monitored, and we have an ongoing drive to innovate and improve the use of technology to support productivity.

### 2. CHALLENGE 2 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT BUDGET

The **Treasury Management budget** (with a gross value of £56m in 2026/27) represents an area of relatively high risk and challenge in every year and this is particularly so in 2026/27. The Treasury Management budget is exposed to interest rate movements, which are more difficult to forecast in the current year as a result of uncertainty and risk globally and in the UK economy. In this uncertain context, the council will be undertaking a relatively high level of re-financing and borrowing to finance the Capital Programme and a growing Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.

#### 2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – TREASURY MANAGEMENT BUDGET

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy sets out the framework for managing risk in the Treasury Management budget. The Council receives specialist advice on the management of risk in its borrowing and investment activities from Arlingclose, complementing a small team of specialist officers who work within the Accountancy team. Senior officer and Cabinet oversight is provided by an internal Treasury Management Board, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Finance and attended by the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

### 3. CHALLENGE 3 - PROPERTY REGENERATION PORTFOLIO (PRF) INCOME

The **Property Regeneration Portfolio (PRF) income** budget represents a final area of challenge and risk. This portfolio of assets supports employment and economic growth in the City and also delivers a valuable income stream for the council, through rental income with a net value (after financing costs) of £12.5m annually. The sustainability of this income stream could be impacted by tenant default, which in turn is more likely in adverse economic conditions. A further risk is the impact of forthcoming

regulations to increase the minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) standards for rental buildings – the timing and nature of this change is uncertain.

### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 - PROPERTY REGENERATION PORTFOLIO (PRF) INCOME**

The Council holds specific earmarked reserves to mitigate against the risk of tenant default and voids, with a 'sinking fund' arrangement recycling a proportion of rental income into capital reserves to fund essential capital investment, where this is required to ensure the long-term sustainability of individual PRF assets. The financial risks of holding the portfolio are monitored by a specialist team of professional commercial surveyors, overseen by a Performance Review Board comprising senior finance and land and property staff, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Finance.

## BUDGET SCRUTINY

**Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27**  
**Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader; Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications)**



### I. CHALLENGE I- PLACEMENT COSTS

Placement costs continue to rise nationally, with central Government recognition that private providers are profiting due to high demand. Legally, the Local Authority must place children in Ofsted-registered settings. For those children with challenging behaviours or complex needs the Local Authority often struggle to find placements because providers fear losing their registration under strict inspection rules. As a result, some homes are non-compliant (unregistered) which is costly and we are currently paying nearly £25k per week for one child. Managing this budget is very challenging due to limited placement options nationally and escalating costs. Additionally, health funding does not always cover accommodation or full care packages for children with complex health needs, further increasing Local Authority placement costs. We are aware of the significant financial pressures of the ICB and we do not yet know how this might further impact the Local Authority.

#### I.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE I – PLACEMENT COSTS

The Family Homes for Plymouth Children has eight work streams to reduce the number of children in care, to increase placement availability closer to Plymouth and reduce cost. The eight work streams range from increased capacity for early help and prevention to acquiring our own Children's Home provision. Part of this is that we were successful in securing funding for a specialist new build home in Plymouth that will enable placements for children with the highest cost needs. We have a programme to buy and run our own Children's Homes in Plymouth, for up to three children each, and have purchased our first home to open in the Summer.

We have a dedicated 'Steps Programme' to support children and young people move from a residential home to foster care or 16+ supported accommodation. This is supported by an innovative commissioned service called 'Re-connect' that is helping us find foster families and support young people in their move from residential accommodation. Invest to save proposals have been put forward in the 26/27 budget proposals that will enable us to provide a more enhanced edge of care offer through a 'No Wrong Door' programme and a trauma informed therapeutic offer for foster carers to reduce placement breakdown, support carers care for children with complex and challenging needs and increase our recruitment of foster carers. We anticipate these will be in operation for the start of the financial year 2026/27. We have implemented a new and improved fostering marketing campaign to recruit more foster carers and have significantly improved the offer to Plymouth Foster Carers.

Our longer-term ambition is to focus on earlier help and prevention because this is in the best interest of children and families, to provide support and meet their needs early, and financially this costs less than working with children and families at a higher level of intervention. Therefore, we are aligning the Families First Social Care Reform Programme to focus on family networks, working in neighborhoods with partners and facilitating more interventions with a wider range of qualified or experienced staff.

For those children who need placements we continue to recruit in-house foster carers and will be working with the regional care cooperatives to better manage provision. Work is being undertaken to improve placement costs for children with health needs, jointly with the ICB, and challenging the local arrangement of the 20% contribution cap for children with continuing health needs.

The Portfolio Holder is actively lobbying and meeting Government Ministers to challenge the national crisis and escalating, un-regulated cost of children's placements.

## **2. CHALLENGE 2 – PERMENANT AND STABLE WORKFORCE**

Due to our geographical location and cost of living within the City it is a challenge to recruit qualified social workers on a permanent basis. This often means we must pay high agency costs to ensure statutory functions can be safely met. This could further be a challenge post April 2026 to even recruit agency staff with nationwide price caps set by the Reforms and implemented locally. Often agency staff come from out of area and require additional rates to enable the cost of accommodation and travel. We are yet to see what the national impact will look like when this goes fully live in April. Here in Plymouth, we have asked locally for an exemption due to the high number of uncovered vacancies and the inability to recruit agency social workers at the capped fee.

The Social Care reforms do require additional requirements for Local Authority's to implement in 2026-2027 and while grant money is allocated it is not going to cover the full costs, for example of a new role identified as Lead Child Protection Practitioners.

### **2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 - PERMENANT AND STABLE WORKFORCE**

The significant national social care reforms and legislative amendments will enable a greater range of work with children and families to be undertaken by staff with alternative qualifications to being a qualified social worker. To support this, we require an organisational structure that facilitates more integrated interventions and prioritises early help, with the aim of reducing the volume of child protection cases and children coming into the care of the Local Authority and allowing more children to remain within their family networks. We are working towards implementing the required structure from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 which is dependent on having the resources to achieve it.

The Service is working with HR colleagues to re-focus our efforts on permanent social worker recruitment, both from an agency to permanent recruitment programme and a national recruitment campaign. The conditions to attract staff, for example manageable caseloads, succession planning for career progression and a strong learning development offer are all in place. Creative strategies are being used to encourage permanent staff relocation, including changes to the relocation policy and practical support. We have a determined focus on recruitment and to promote Plymouth as an excellent place to live and work over the next four months.

The recruitment process for the permanent Service Director is progressing, which will allow additional resources to be dedicated exclusively to advance social care reforms and restructure implementation.

## **3. CHALLENGE 3 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL CARE REFORMS**

As set out in the other risks the national social care system wide reform set by the DfE is due to be implemented in 2026-2027. While some additional Government grant funding has been provided to deliver the reforms, this hasn't adequately covered the cost to fund the breadth of the change or the Council to facilitate such significant reform which requires corporate resourcing from HR, Business Intelligence, comms, commissioning team, to support the implementation of the reforms. Further challenges are being presented by partners who are integral to these reforms and have not been provided with funding. The DfE expects the Local Authority to support Partners from our grant allocation and we are having to agree a phased implementation from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 to enable partners to source additional capacity.

### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL CARE REFORMS**

The Current Interim Service Director has worked in a successful Pathfinder Local Authority that tested and implemented the reforms on behalf of the DfE and brings that experience to support, grip and provide pace to the implementation of the reforms in Plymouth. This has been acknowledged by the DfE in our recent Q3 review as to the good progress and plans we are



implementing in Plymouth. The appointment of a permanent Service Director will provide greater resource and capacity to accelerate implementation.

We have set out the transformation requirements and the requirements of the corporate team to deliver the reforms programme, including the restructure, and are identifying ways to progress the work.

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## BUDGET SCRUTINY

**Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27**  
**Councillor Sally Cresswell (Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)**



### **I. CHALLENGE I - UNPRECEDENTED INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCP'S) AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THIS INCREASED DEMAND**

In line with national trends, Plymouth has continued to see a significant rise in the numbers of requests for EHCPs, with around 45 new EHCP plans issued each month. All Special School places in the City are full and children who are now identified as needing specialist education provision, beyond what mainstream schools can provide, are requiring more costly specialist education, often outside of the City. Currently, 364 children have places in Independent Special Schools at a cost of £20.5 million for this year.

In each of the past 2 financial years Plymouth City Council committed an additional £770K to enable additional capacity in the team that processes EHCPs to address the volume of requests. The ongoing rise in requests has meant that the team is on track with the recovery work but cannot keep pace with the new requests. It is understandably challenging in the context of our settlement to invest further in this team, but the consequences will be that our meeting of statutory timescales for the issuing of plans will deteriorate, we will have more children's needs determined at tribunal and more complaints escalating to the Ombudsman with costs attached. There is a risk that the relationship and trust and confidence that has been built with parents and carers of children with SEND, that has improved significantly since the inspection in June 2023, will be put under pressure. Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND will be a significant challenge.

#### **I.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE I - UNPRECEDENTED RISE FOR DEMAND IN EHCPs**

Plymouth Local Area SEND Partnership has significantly shifted culture, with a stronger focus on earlier intervention and prevention, enabling us to identify and meet needs earlier. A particularly strong model of this is found through the three targeted funding models, currently making good provision for 380 children in mainstream schools in the City. This has prevented the need for these children to have an EHCP because their needs are well met within mainstream school. This is maximizing the use of the resource we have available to support children with SEND. Evaluation shows improved attendance, increased parent / carer satisfaction and improvements in pupils feeling a sense of belonging in their school. The Local Authority plans to provide further targeted funding to more mainstream schools as the programme develops. This is being seen by the DfE as an exemplar way of approaching the provision for children with additional needs.

The Plymouth GATI is now a widely used resource to enable schools and settings to ensure there is provision for every child that meets their needs at the earliest point. This is supported by Universal Services within the Community, for example through Family Hubs, and more specialist services, for example, speech and language support.

There are more robust school to school transitions in place for children thanks to a portal, utilised by all settings and schools, to enable enhanced transitions for pupils who will need extra help. This means that when children attend a new setting, their needs are well identified and understood.

Our health colleagues are reducing waiting times for diagnosis and treatment and offering families better support whilst they wait.

The strength and impact of the Partnership Place Based Plan has enabled fewer children at SEN Support level and those with EHCPs experiencing poor outcomes. Attendance has improved and exclusions have reduced.

The Ofsted Framework for schools now judges inclusion in every area of inspection, offering schools an additional incentive to be inclusive of every child, in every single lesson. In addition, the new national curriculum, to be introduced in September 2026 will enable every teacher to be a teacher of SEND, with an emphasis on a curriculum that enables every child to thrive in education. This will be further strengthened by our Pre-16 education strand of Team Plymouth, seeking for every child to Belong in education and to Belong in Plymouth.

The above improvements will require continued investment across the Partnership to be sustained. They are impressive changes but will need continued attention and focus to ensure children's needs are met, when appropriate, without the need for an EHCP.

The forthcoming SEND white paper is highly likely to underpin the need for early identification of need and inclusive practice, with a strong focus on the early years and The Best Start in Life.

These mitigations aim to both assess and meet the needs of children and young people at the earliest opportunity to prevent the need for an EHCP. With the month on month increase in demand for EHCP assessments and plans, we have not got the resource or capacity to maintain our positive trajectory of meeting our statutory 20 week deadline.

## **2. CHALLENGE 2 - SEND SUFFICIENCY**

Due to some of the elements described in Risk 1, the extent of need in Plymouth was historically not well understood or accounted for. This meant that in our data returns to the DFE we were not highlighting the need for increased specialist provision in the City. As such, Plymouth was not awarded a Free School or other specialist provision. Even in Local Authorities where the identification of need was well known, the increase in need has been such that many Local Authorities are struggling with sufficient places.

As a result, many of our children are now having to travel outside of the city to independent special schools, at high cost to the high needs block element of the DSG.

Analysis of our children's needs demonstrates that we require an additional 396 places in the city, to meet the whole spectrum of current and future needs. This covers the entire range of needs, from Targeted provision for pupils with SEN support through to highly specialist places.

### **2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 - SEND SUFFICIENCY**

Thanks to this analysis of need, we are developing a revised SEND sufficiency strategy at pace.

We are working with our education community proactively to identify potential sites for satellite specialist provision, building on the success of an existing satellite in the City and using this as a model of good practice.

We are also in discussion with schools for further resourced provision to be developed on their sites, especially where they have high levels of need and space to expand the school or utilise empty classrooms.

One of our special schools needs replacing and we have some High Needs Capital Grant (£12.940 million) remaining, which can be allocated towards a new school.

An announcement of £3bn capital investment for inclusion in mainstream schools has been announced. This will come to Local Authorities to develop capital projects in exactly the way we have described. It is yet to be announced how much of this capital investment will be allocated to Plymouth.

We are also undertaking a comprehensive review of our alternative provision in the City to ensure an emphasis on prevention of children needing provision as well as return to mainstream schools where appropriate, as part of our wider drive for whole system inclusion.

### **3. CHALLENGE 3 - HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

As the numbers of EHCPs has risen, so has our need for Home to School Transport. We have managed to stay in budget this year, thanks to previous growth and a tightly held plan. The current year budget is £10.958 million.

As needs and plans continue to rise, alongside related costs, this remains an area of significant risk.

#### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 - HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

The 0 – 25 team and the home to school transport team now work much more closely, with bi-weekly meetings in place to enable forward planning as EHCPs are processed.

We continue to deliver a comprehensive plan, which has undergone audit to ensure we are doing all we can to manage risks.

The more inclusive we are as a City, the more likely it is that our children will attend a local school, reducing the mileage covered, especially to schools outside of the City. Therefore, all the actions to mitigate risks 1 and 2 above are also mitigations for Home to School Transport.

We have undertaken a comprehensive route review and have utilised software to ensure we are as efficient as possible in our route planning and route optimisation.

We train children, when appropriate, to travel independently and we have a focused plan on increasing the uptake of this training to enable more young people to travel independently, as part of their preparation for adulthood.

Wherever possible, we utilise minibuses and encourage shared transport. We are revisiting a previous business case to see if it is cost effective to have our fleet of mini-buses for home to school transport.

We are undertaking a review of the Home to School Transport Policy, with a particular critical focus on post 16 provision, to bring it in line with many other Local Authorities.

We are reviewing how we induct, support and employ passenger assistants to improve recruitment and retention rates and our independent travel training programme.

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## BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27  
Councillor Aspinall (Health and Adult Social Care)



### I. CHALLENGE 1 - PUBLIC HEALTH RING-FENCED GRANT

In recognition of the broader financial challenges across the organisation, it is proposed that during 2026-27, the Public Health Grant will be used to support a portion of the Environmental Health Team, whilst keeping in line with the terms and conditions of the Public Health Grant (environmental hazards protection and infectious disease surveillance and control). The risk is that the level of funding from the Public Health Grant does not meet the overall Office of the Director of Public Health delivery targets for 2026/27 resulting in financial pressure.

#### I.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 - PUBLIC HEALTH RING-FENCED GRANT

- Monitor budgets across whole directorate
- Continuation of flat rate contracts from procurements for Public Health Contracts
- Review all roles critically if vacancy arises
- Review of non-essential spending and non-statutory services.

### 2. CHALLENGE 2 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE: RISING DEMAND AND COMPLEXITY OF CARE

Forecasts locally and nationally show continued growth in demand for adult social care assessments and support from care services e.g. domiciliary care, bedded care and supported living. Plymouth's aging population and increasing complexity in need are significant drivers. Plymouth's 65+ population is expected to increase by 31.6% between 2021 and 2043 (from 50,000 to 64,000). This increase in population and numbers of people accessing health services is already creating higher demands for adult social care. 2025/26 is already experiencing increased pressures particularly bedded care and supported living. Assumptions for 2026/27 remain elevated despite mitigation plans. Increasing complexity places, along with inflation changes, are putting pressure on market capacity. This makes it more difficult to provide the right care for people in the right place and at the right time.

#### 2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE: RISING DEMAND AND COMPLEXITY OF CARE

- **Prevention, Early Intervention & Reablement:** As part of the councils' initiative to reduce costs and maximise independence, a strength-based reablement approach will be introduced before any new long-term domiciliary care package is set up. Evidence from 2025/26 in hospital discharge pathways show that 69% of clients who received reablement required no further funded social care.
- **Pipeline Demand Management:** Ongoing assessment of demand trends and fee levels in residential care to stabilise growth assumptions. Manage demand through the front door, ensuring better information and advice is available and target reviews for people at the porch / pre front door. This will link to the City-Wide Help and Support programme across the council.
- **Strong governance and monitoring of mitigation activities and savings plans:** Regular oversight of all key saving and mitigation activity allowing for regular assurance or additional interventions to be created as required throughout the year.

### 3. CHALLENGE 3 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE: MARKET SUSTAINABILITY

Provider failure and the Community Equipment Service (CES) contract pressures have impacted the 25/26 budget. Provider viability issues national and locally are being experienced, with risks of contract hand backs and service closures from workforce sufficiency or fee rates do not keep pace with costs. If providers exit the market or reduce capacity, the council may face emergency placements at premium rates, worsening budget pressures. Furthermore, there will be a reliance on out of area placements.

Robust contract management arrangements are essential in mitigating challenges around provider failure and maintaining a stable market.

#### 3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 – ADULT SOCIAL CARE: MARKET SUSTAINABILITY

- **Workforce:** A sustainable and robust workforce will ensure continuity of care to those who need it most. Working with Caring Plymouth and our providers to attract, grow and retain the adult social care workforce is key to our focus on market sustainability.
- **Risk-Based Reviews:** Implement targeted reviews of care packages to contain costs and prevent unnecessary escalation.
- **Care Home Framework and Extra Care Framework:** implementation of a framework for both care home and extra care packages will ensure that placements are made at published and agreed Plymouth City Council rates.
- **Domiciliary Care Framework:** developing and implementing an optimised approach to the provision of domiciliary care will create capacity and reduce costs through a collaborated approach to the delivery of care.
- **Contract Management:** increasing the focus of contract management on the financial position of providers will enable early identification and intervention around financial challenges which may lead to provider failure.



## BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/7

Councillor John Stephens (Strategic Planning and Transport)



### I. CHALLENGE 1 - CONCESSIONARY FARES

Since the introduction of primary legislation in 2007, the City Council is required to provide free off-peak travel on buses to elderly and disabled residents. This is a legal entitlement and cannot be revoked or restricted by the City Council. It is a demand-led service, being provided to an aging population, with associated budgetary implications. All eligible residents can apply for an electronic smartcard which is then presented to the ticket machine each time they board a bus which records a journey. Bus operators are then reimbursed for a flat fee for each recorded journey. This fee is calculated using a formula based on current fares, historical fares, and average journey lengths. Recent patronage data is demonstrating a sustained rise in the numbers of people eligible for this reimbursement, creating pressure on the concessionary fares budget.

#### I.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 – CONCESSIONARY FARES

The expenditure on concessionary fares is robustly managed by the Public Transport Team with forecasting based on historical trends. There is continual detailed monitoring of data to mitigate any potential budget impacts with wider risks assessed on a regular basis. It is a mandatory requirement that the draft concessionary fares scheme for 2026/2027 was published on the Council's website and issued to the bus operators participating in the scheme on 01 December 2025. This then opened the negotiation period with the bus operators. The final scheme needs to be published on 03 March 2026, for implementation from 01 April 2026. If a rate cannot be agreed between the City Council and each operator by the 01 April 2026 then the operator can appeal the proposed rate to the Secretary of State. The Public Transport Team are in on-going discussions with the bus operators who provide services in the city to review the appropriate rates for 2026/2027.

### 2. CHALLENGE 2 – PLYMOUTH LOCAL PLAN 2026-2050

On 16 December 2025, the Government published its new National Planning Policy Framework and together with the Planning & Infrastructure Act 2025, which received Royal Assent on 18 December 2025, this heralds the need for a fundamentally different approach to the preparation of the next Local Plan for Plymouth. The Local Plan, which will need to look ahead to 2050, will have to be produced within a prescribed period of 30 months, meet the new plan-making policies of the NPPF, and address how Plymouth's growth agenda will be delivered. Specifically, this will include challenges in relation to Local Government Reorganisation; the implications arising from devolution - in particular a South West Mayoral Strategic Authority preparing the new Spatial Development Strategy; the Defence Deal (Team Plymouth); how to support Plymouth as the national centre for marine autonomy; and the "Town in the City" initiative for the city centre.

#### 2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – PLYMOUTH LOCAL PLAN 2026 – 2050

In February 2025, the City Council published its Local Development Scheme setting out an initial timetable for preparation of the plan. From 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025 a series of ward councillor workshops have been held to begin the process of highlighting key planning, housing and infrastructure issues that the next Local Plan will need to consider. On 03 December 2025, a report was presented to the Natural Infrastructure and Growth Scrutiny Panel providing an update and

setting out the potential scope and timetable for the next Plymouth Local Plan. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Transport is currently considering the detailed requirements of the NPPF in order to develop a more detailed programme for the preparation of the next Local Plan. This will include further consideration of how to continue to engage ward councillors, as well as other community and key stakeholders. Preparations are underway for establishing the necessary governance for the Local Plan which by its very nature and wide scope will impact on every aspect of the City Council's functions.

### **3. CHALLENGE 3 - REACTIVE VS PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**

Plymouth's highways network is a critical asset underpinning economic growth, public safety, and the city's regeneration ambitions. However, the network is ageing and under increasing pressure from rising demand with proliferation of extreme weather events, and inflation constraining budgets and adding to the maintenance challenge. It's important to strike a sustainable investment model which prioritises preventative maintenance as opposed to reactive. There are significant implications for cost, safety, and operational efficiency should a reactive working methodology prevail, this includes: unplanned downtime giving rise to traffic congestion and failure of critical assets; increased costs as emergency repairs typically cost more due to using unplanned human resources; safety Risks as sudden failures can endanger road users and maintenance crews; and asset life reduction as running to failure often shortens their lifespan, leading to more frequent replacements. Reactive work also disrupts planned schedules, pulling crews and equipment from other tasks.

Reflecting this challenge is the Government's new traffic light rating system for local highway authorities which measure how well local authorities are maintaining their local road network, the Department for Transport (DfT) promote a 75/25% ratio in favour of planned/preventative maintenance and are recognising this as 'Good Practice'. This new rating system will influence future grant allocations to Local Authorities from the DfT.

#### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 - REACTIVE VS PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE**

We are currently developing a multi year asset management plan that schedules regular inspections, routine maintenance, and timely interventions before failures occur, using data-driven asset condition monitoring technologies with informed allocation of resources to planned resurfacing, drainage improvements, and structural repairs to extend asset life and reduce emergency interventions.

Adoption of a risk-based maintenance approach based on criticality to economic activity, safety, and traffic volumes with reference to climate resilience measures such as flood defenses and heat-resistant materials to mitigate extreme weather effects. In addition:

- Advocate for sustainable multi-year funding streams that ensure consistent investment in planned maintenance rather than short-term fixes.
- Explore public-private partnerships or innovative financing mechanisms to supplement constrained budgets.
- Use the Government's traffic light rating system as a benchmark to demonstrate the value of planned maintenance in securing funding.
- Trained maintenance crews in preventative techniques and early fault detection.
- Communicate transparently with the public about maintenance plans and benefits to build support for necessary works.

- Collaborate with local businesses and emergency services to coordinate works and minimize impact on economic activity and safety.
- Use predictive analytics to forecast maintenance needs and prioritize interventions.
- Implementation of smart traffic management systems to manage congestion during maintenance and emergency repairs and explore sustainable materials and construction methods to reduce environmental impact and improve durability.

By embedding these mitigation measures, Plymouth safeguard its highways network as a vital economic and social asset while aligning with best practices for sustainable infrastructure management. This approach transforms challenges into opportunities for resilient, future-ready transport infrastructure.

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## BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27

Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Environment and Climate Change)



### 1. CHALLENGE 1 – PLAY INFRASTRUCTURE

It's important to ensure a sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality play network across Plymouth, where children and young people of all ages and abilities can be active, have fun, and learn through play. Our aim is for everyone using our play spaces to feel safe, confident, and excited, promoting healthier lifestyles and stronger connections to local nature. The challenge however is safely maintaining a significant play estate of 121 equipped play areas, much of which was installed in concentrated programmes and so is aging and reaching end of life at the same time. The required weekly inspections continue to identify health and safety concerns that sometimes lead to equipment removal. Investments in new asset management digital systems and their use by inspectors has dramatically improved the data we have available which has helped identify the scale of the challenge and a better grip on asset lifecycles. There is a legal requirement to ensure playgrounds are fit for purpose. Current revenue budgets are too small to manage the large number of play areas, which are expensive to maintain or rebuild.

#### 1.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 – PLAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Work to review how to deliver and maintain a sustainable play estate that meets the needs of children across the City is underway and the first action proposed is that the budget allocation for repairs to play equipment be doubled from 25/26 (£50k) to 26/27 (£100k) to provide additional resource for the maintenance of play equipment year on year. Additionally, work is underway to assess options for bringing forward a new ambitious investment programme to develop a long-term delivery plan (5–10 years) for sustainable play site development and maintenance. The team will deploy these monies alongside seeking opportunities through developer contributions and other external options to fund replacement equipment, repair and other creative options to extend the life of assets.

### 2. CHALLENGE 2 – FOOD WASTE

The Council is preparing the implementation of a brand-new, citywide, weekly food waste collection service with the first phase commencing in March 2026. This long aspired for service is required by legislation set out in the Environment Act 2021 and is anticipated to have a positive impact on our overall recycling rate. The waste is disposed of through an anaerobic digestion (AD) process which is environmentally advantageous, creating renewable energy in the form of electricity and biogas. The key challenges sit with ensuring household participation is as high as possible and matching resources for collection rounds, vehicles and staff, to the level of demand. The disposal cost per tonne of food waste through an AD plant is notably lower than that paid for residual waste disposed of through our energy from waste plant. Therefore, the new service creates a virtuous dual incentive to drive environmental benefits through increased recycling and also keep the cost of overall Council waste disposal as low as possible. The Government has further indicated that future income received by Councils through Extended Producer Responsibility requirements may be directly linked to recycling performance in future.

#### 2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – FOOD WASTE

Crucial to the success of the new citywide service will be ensuring a high-quality communications, resident engagement and behavioural change campaign. Residents will be given clear information on when services commence, where and how to present waste, and crucially what can and can't be placed

in food waste caddies. Utilising social media, leaflets, digital systems and letters. Residents who share communal collections such as those who live in flats will be given bespoke information and materials to provide additional clarity. This will be supported by a wider programme of engagement across schools, events and targeted door knocking to remove barriers, myth bust and encourage participation. A key enabler will be the reintroduction Recycling Officers in the city. The benefit of the phased approach will mean that resources can be adjusted and designed using the latest intelligence and experience to forecast demand for services, this will ensure services are efficient and costs are kept to a minimum.

### **3. CHALLENGE 3 – ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

The City Council provides services across a number of buildings in its corporate estate. With capital investment there is a significant opportunity to deliver invest to save measures that will substantially reduce our energy bills. Additionally, by investing further in capacity to proactively monitor and manage energy and water usage in a coordinated way we will be able to yield even greater energy and utility cost savings across the whole estate. Through collaborative cross-departmental working between Facilities Management and Strategic Planning & Infrastructure on capital projects already delivered, savings on utility bills of around £500,000 per annum are being achieved. However, left unchecked utilities are projected to be around £100,000 per annum more expensive than at present primarily due to the addition of new buildings to the City Council's corporate estate. Furthermore, with a more proactive energy management regime, over time we would expect to yield a further saving of over £1 million per annum.

#### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 – ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

By realigning existing staff resources to create an Energy and Infrastructure Planning Team a proactive approach can be taken to deliver a more joined-up corporate energy and water management service which can deliver significant future savings on the City Council's utility bills. Existing specialist expertise will be focused on working with Finance and other departments to identify where utilities spend occurs; identifying where unnecessary spend is taking place; ensuring that utilities spend only occurs in relation to actual use; tracking spend against forecasts; identifying and advising on budget risks; ensuring that feed-in-tariff income is received and appropriately accounted for; and continuing to seek external grant funding to support upgrades in the energy infrastructure within City Council buildings. At a strategic level, this new approach to energy management will be overseen by a Corporate Utilities Management Board who will ensure long-term value for value for money, supported at an operational level by a Corporate Utilities Working Group.

## BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27  
Councillor Penberthy (Housing, Cooperative Development & Communities)



### I. CHALLENGE I - HOMELESSNESS

Nationally and locally homelessness has increased significantly over the last few years. The continued impact of the recovery from COVID 19, cost-of-living crisis, rising interest rates and inflation, oversubscribed health, and wellbeing services, including the lack of affordable housing across all housing tenures has resulted in increased demand for housing services and temporary accommodation.

Wider legislation changes beginning in the last parliament with the Renters Reform Bill have had an impact on the housing market. The Renters Rights Act will end the use of section 21 “no fault” evictions and improve overall standards in the private rented sector. Over the last five years in the run up to these changes we have seen an increased proportion of landlords who are leaving the sector as they are not able to meet the requirements and associated costs. Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation improvements through the Domestic Abuse Act have increased our responsibilities. These combined legislation changes place further pressure on the availability and affordability of the private rented sector.

All these factors are combining to mean that more households are becoming homeless and needing to seek support from the Local Authority.

#### I.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE I - HOMELESSNESS

Deliver the Homelessness Transformation Plan. This will deliver a number of improvements that will holistically reduce demand for services. Programmes include:

- **Multiple Disadvantage** - Reduction in all forms of homelessness and rough sleeping by offering bespoke personalised and trauma informed interventions through a new Homelessness and MD Strategy and Action Plan
- **Prevent and Reduce Family Homelessness** - To prevent and reduce family homelessness by identifying risk early and coordinating support across housing, early help services such as family hubs, schools, and health
- **Prevent and Reduce Homelessness for Children and Young People** - strengthening early identification and a coordinated approach between Community Connections and Children’s Social Care to prevent homelessness amongst children, young people and care experienced young people
- **Domestic Abuse** - This programme will expand and maintain safe accommodation in Plymouth so that victim/ survivors can access specialist supported temporary accommodation when needed. It aims to increase the quality and standards of refuge provision, shared housing and safe houses as well as monitoring take up of the Sanctuary Scheme in order that PCC can meet its statutory duty under Part 4 of the DA Act.
- **Increasing Temporary Housing Supply** - To expand and optimise the use of supported and temporary accommodation for people who experience homelessness, Working with partners to increase the flow of additional, appropriate units ensuring that the provision is low cost to PCC and reduces the reliance on B&B and other nightly paid accommodation.
- **Private Rented Sector** – Working with Landlords agencies we continue to support Private landlords by offering advice, support and training as we work through an implementation plan

to prepare the city for the Renters Rights Act. We continue to work on the safety, quality and availability of Private Rented Accommodation.

- **Increasing Affordable Housing Supply** – Continue to review the work of the Housing Sites Task Force which has looked at all potential housing sites across the city, that will feed into the new Local Plan. We have recently launched a Housing Market Recovery Plan to help stimulate the market and unlock allocated and stalled sites. Continue the future identification and release of surplus Council owned sites and where possible bid for Brownfield Land Release Funding to help unlock the sites for new housing. Engage with developers on market led schemes to secure affordable housing through planning gain. Continue to work with the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership (PHDP) and Homes England to maximise the new Homes England funding for affordable housing. Ensure affordable housing delivery is a significant part of the overall delivery of new homes as part of the regeneration of the city centre and New Town proposal.

## 2. CHALLENGE 2 – CORPORATE ESTATE

Challenge to maintain statutory areas of compliance across an ageing corporate estate due to FM capacity, skills shortages, and recruitment challenges.

The estate requires remedial actions to meet compliance standards (fire safety, asbestos, M&E testing) as part of the delivery plan.

Current FM team is not at full substantive staffing and has reliance on agency staff for critical roles (e.g., Asbestos Appointed Person).

Recruitment and skills difficulties for specialist roles (Fire Safety Advisor, surveyors, engineers) and retention risks due to market pressures exacerbate vulnerability.

### 2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – CORPORATE ESTATE

- **Develop and delivery of FM Asset Management Strategy**  
Asset Management Strategy will be commissioned to provide a clear framework for optimising the use, maintenance and investment in property and assets to support service delivery and financial sustainability. Outcome is to ensure assets are safe, efficient and aligned with strategic priorities.
- **Deliver FM Improvement and Recovery Plan**  
Shift from reactive revenue spend to planned capital investment where possible.  
Align funding with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to ensure sustainability.  
Ensure capacity to respond to unplanned needs / events.
- **Improve Contract Delivery and Management**  
Strengthen governance through the Commercial and Contracts Manager role.  
Challenge contractor performance and costs; introduce KPIs for compliance and quality.  
Use term contractors for interim fire safety advice and explore strategic partnerships to address skills gaps.

## 3. CHALLENGE 3 - NHS FAIRSHARES FUNDING

Potential for reduction in NHS Fairshares funding – currently set at £800k would result in being unable to deliver existing community empowerment programmes

### 3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 - NHS FAIRSHARES FUNDING



- **Secure ICB Funding Commitment** – Confirm verbal agreement to maintain £800k Fairshares funding for 2026/27.
- **Finalize Budget Breakdown** – Complete and submit full budget for ICB approval before year-end.
- **Manage VCSE Contract Risk** – Work closely with providers on annual contracts to mitigate redundancy risks during 2026/27 budgeting.
- **Maintain CE Management Funding** – Ensure team remains fully supported by the Public Health Grant.

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## **BUDGET SCRUTINY**

**Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27**  
**Councillor Kate Taylor (Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure, Human Resources and Organisational Development)**



### **1. CHALLENGE 1 – PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE**

To ensure that Plymouth Active Leisure’s financial (PAL) position continues to improve year on year.

#### **1.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 – PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE**

- **New strategic business plan** – Strategy plan in place to ensure success of PAL.
- **Cabinet Approvals (Feb 2026)** – Pending robust business cases, seek an extension to PALs contract beyond March 2032.
- **Invest-to-Save Initiatives** – Pending business cases consider supporting improvements to existing PAL assets, including enhancing the catering offer and asset refurbishment, pending successful capital business cases.
- **Income Growth Strategy** – Drive increased revenue for PAL through enhanced facilities and services.

### **2. CHALLENGE 2 – CYBER SECURITY**

Increasing cyber threats and ransomware attacks could compromise Plymouth City Council’s critical systems and sensitive data, leading to service disruption and financial loss.

- This is highest scoring risk on the Council’s risk log and requires both technical investment and continued training and vigilance by staff and Councillors.
- Rising costs of cyber resilience and a shortage of skilled professionals make it difficult to maintain robust security within constrained budgets.

#### **2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – CYBER SECURITY**

- **Continue to invest**, with the support of Delt, in technical defenses with new tools to identify vulnerabilities in our systems.
- **Ensure effective Cyber Security Board** that tracks our risk exposure and the actions taken to mitigate risks.
- **Ensure our “human firewall” is robust.** Building the skills and confidence in our staff and users of our systems to know how to recognise threats and report them.
- **Tracking and mandating compliance** with the cyber security training and, if necessary, remove access rights to our systems where training is consistently being ignored.

### **3. CHALLENGE 3 – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Delivering improvements to Customer Experience and Business Support model, including AI integration and new ways of working, within reduced resources and rising demand.

- Risk to achieving required savings while maintaining service standards and implementing transformation at pace.

- Increased demand and reduced resources create pressure on Contact Centre, Revenues & Benefits, and corporate customer services.
- Barriers include resourcing constraints, stakeholder engagement, and infrastructure costs for AI and technology adoption.

### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BUSINESS SUPPORT**

- **Customer-Centric Transformation** to prioritise front-door redesign and ensure the customer voice is embedded in service delivery, using data and feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- **Review all relevant programmes** including objectives for each and the value and cost efficiencies to be secured. Ensure robust investment matched to savings and benefits.
- **Embed a budget over MTFP** to allow integration of resource, time and software to make improvements required long-term.

## BUDGET SCRUTINY

**Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27  
Councillor Haydon (Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries  
and Crematoria)**



### I. CHALLENGE I – BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

The growing preference for lower cost direct cremations is placing increasing financial pressure on our service.

Families are choosing simpler, cheaper options, often with fewer or no mourners present, which directly reduces income from traditional funeral services we offer. This financial challenge is further intensified by the opening of a new private crematorium in the north of the city, increasing local competition and further diluting our market share.

The trend is also that there are fewer deaths being registered than our forecasting predicted. The Park's cremation numbers have remained consistently lower this financial year, at an average of 204 cremations (-14 under budget) per month.

These changing trends highlight the need to reflect carefully on our costs and the services we deliver and continue delivering high-quality Bereavement Service within a tightening budget.

#### I.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE I – BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

The 2026/27 Fees and Charges for cremations will remain unchanged to ensure we stay competitive with other providers in Plymouth and the wider region. Holding our prices steady reflects both the financial realities facing local families and the need to protect our market position within an increasingly competitive environment.

Following discussions with Funeral Directors, the Bereavement Service revised its Direct Cremation offer in August 2025. This change has proved successful, supporting families who seek a dignified but more affordable option during what can be an emotionally and financially challenging time. To further help residents make informed choices, leaflets have also been produced explaining what a Direct Cremation is and promoting the services of local funeral directors—an area highlighted during last year's Budget Scrutiny.

The Bereavement Service management team and staff have continued to adopt a proactive approach in raising the profile of the service at The Park. Over recent months, staff have visited libraries across the city to speak directly with residents about direct cremations and the memorial options available locally. Engagement work is also ongoing with St Luke's Hospice, including participation in Compassionate Schools events and contributions to the Six Steps Programme. Through this work, our team is helping community partners better understand and advocate for the facilities and compassionate support that the Bereavement Service provides.

The team are in the early stages of planning a Funeral Fayre at The Park, likely on a Saturday in April or May. The idea is to invite residents from Plymouth and the surrounding areas to learn more about the services offered by Funeral Directors, officiants, celebrants, monumental masons, and other key partners. The vision is to transform The Park and ceremony rooms into exhibition spaces

where stakeholders can showcase their services. It's an opportunity to come together with stakeholders and highlight the incredible work we all do with local residents.

These efforts not only strengthen community understanding but also play an important role in supporting the long-term financial sustainability of the service—ensuring that residents continue to receive high-quality care at some of the most difficult times in their lives.

## **2. CHALLENGE 2 – LIBRARY SERVICES**

For the 2026/27 financial year, the Library Service's stock fund has been reduced to £166,000—a decrease of £20,000 compared to 2025/26. Since 2022/23, the fund has faced an overall reduction of 40%.

This stock fund is essential for purchasing all physical and digital resources, including books, eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, and eNewspapers. It also covers the cost of online subscriptions to specialist resources, which library users access both in branches and remotely. Additionally, the fund supports the delivery of the high-profile Summer Reading Challenge and finances replacement furniture, stationery, and other necessary items such as library cards and cataloguing tools.

### **2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – LIBRARY SERVICES**

The challenge of reducing the stock fund is expected to be addressed over time through the implementation of the Future Libraries Plan (FLP). However, delivering the FLP will require investment, which will further limit the funds available for purchasing physical and electronic stock.

Library managers will ensure that all stock acquisitions are carefully targeted toward high-demand and popular titles to maximize value for money, a practice already embedded within our stock policy.

We recognise that the wider corporate financial challenges are complex and have no easy solutions, and we are committed to playing our part. Despite reduced funding, we remain confident in our ability to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” statutory library service.

## **3. CHALLENGE 3 – HOLDING PLACE FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Plymouth's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) receives no direct or ring-fenced funding despite statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, and Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This creates significant pressure as levels of violence and vulnerability continue to rise locally, with Plymouth recording 84 crimes per 1,000 residents in 2025, including 12,392 violence and sexual offences, and high volumes of ASB.

The CSP's workload is further intensified by increasing Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) and Domestic Abuse-Related Death Reviews (DARDs), especially as guidance now includes suicides where domestic abuse may be a factor. This broadening scope adds complexity to information-sharing and review coordination across statutory agencies without the necessary core funding to support delivery.

### **3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 – HOLDING PLACE FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY**

To manage these pressures, enhanced training is being delivered to all staff and partner agencies involved in DHRs and DARDs to strengthen statutory compliance, improve review quality, and

support safe, consistent information-sharing. Concurrently, requests are being made to statutory partners to establish a shared funding model that reflects collective responsibility for CSP functions and the growing complexity of review obligations, ensuring a sustainable and legally compliant approach to future demand.

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