



Oversight and Governance

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CITY COUNCIL – PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Monday 26 January 2026
2.00 pm
Council House, Plymouth

Please see questions from members of the public and responses overleaf.

City Council

5. Questions by the Public

(Pages 1 - 14)

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Question submitted by: Saahi Aroori

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Health

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

Date: 26 January 2025

Question: Residents in Barne Barton struggle to access GP services locally, and there is no GP surgery based within Barne Barton itself. What is the Council doing, in partnership with the NHS, to improve access to primary care for people living in Barne Barton and St Budeaux, and will you commit to working with local residents to improve local healthcare provision?

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

Plymouth City Council is not responsible for the provision of primary care services, such as GP surgeries, but remains committed to working with local residents to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Barne Barton.

NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB) is the organisation responsible for commissioning primary care services to meet the needs of the Plymouth residents (plus Torbay and Devon).

NHS Devon holds 116 Primary Medical Services contracts with GP practices and works with these practices to ensure that services are accessible, of good quality and meet the needs of their patients. NHS Devon also work closely with other parts of the local health and care system to ensure that care is joined-up, for example hospital services, so people get good experience of care when it is needed.

Barne Barton is served by several GP practices with the closest being Mayflower Medical Group's sites at Stirling Road, Trelawny and Ernesettle, as well as St Levan Surgery and Oakside Surgery. People living in Barne Barton can register with a number of practices across the city depending on their preference.

Overall access to GP practice services is very good in Plymouth, as recorded in the [GP Patient Survey](#), and residents can look up a range of feedback about each GP practice on the website. Direct feedback about local NHS services is welcomed and can be submitted directly to NHS Devon via a dedicated Patient Experience team on d-icb.patientexperience@nhs.net. Equally, feedback from residents about their own GP practice can be provided through the practice's Patient Participation Groups (PPG), which offer a route to provide constructive feedback to improve access to local GP services.

NHS Devon has no current plans to establish a new GP surgery within Barne Barton, however NHS Devon and Plymouth City Council have identified a need for a new community pharmacy in the area (see the [Plymouth Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment](#)) and is welcoming applications from pharmacy providers to meet this need.

The recently published [NHS 10 Year Plan](#) focusses on a neighbourhood approach to designing and delivering health and care services. Plymouth City Council, NHS Devon ICB, and primary care, including general practice, will be integral to the development of suitable arrangements for each neighbourhood in the Plymouth. The voice of patients is also being sought to inform this work.

These healthcare efforts will compliment ongoing work in Barne Barton to support the health of residents including all offers in the Barne Barton and St Budeaux Wellbeing Hub, such as mental health support, volunteering opportunities, guidance for long term health conditions, befriending, and employment and debt advice. In addition, city wide offers, such as [One You Plymouth](#) provide opportunities for Barne Barton residents to receive support with health-related concerns alongside more formal healthcare provision.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Question submitted by: Mat Surtees

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Deputy Leader

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

Date: 26 January 2025

Question: With the announcement made that Plymouth will bid to be UK City of Culture 2029, will you commit to working with and including our diverse communities, from our Black and Ethnic communities to the Disabled community and more, in any and all plans made?

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

Thank you for your question and the answer is yes, most definitely. For any bid to succeed we will need to demonstrate meaningful engagement with our residents across the city and that is what we intend to do.

There are several phases to the process. The first phase is to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by 8 February 2026 which doesn't give us a lot of time. During this phase, meetings are taking place with stakeholders (this includes representatives from culture, sport, education, community, local authority, NHS, community homes, business, social enterprise, natural environment, tourism, leisure, hospitality) and the cultural sector including companies, artists and freelancers. We will also be hosting several community drop-in discussions to garner information from as many people as possible. Please check the Plymouth Culture website and social media platforms for announcements regarding dates.

If we go through to the next phase of the process, we will be able to undertake a deeper dive into community engagement. DCMS has not yet issued a detailed timetable but we think that a bid would need to be prepared between April and late July this year.

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QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC



Question submitted by: Byran Driver

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Transport - Cllr John Stephens

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

Date: 26 January 2026

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

What consultation was undertaken with local residents regarding the removal of 112 grit bins? Scrutiny papers suggest placement was the issue, yet Sutton and Mount Gould appear to have a net loss of six bins. Why were bins removed rather than relocated?

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

The purpose of the review was to establish an evidence-based approach to the siting of grit bins and ensure all Councillor green grit bins, were adopted as HMPE, this would allow maintenance costs to be met by Plymouth Highways winter budget.

In addition, it was recognised that several Salt Bins historically located across the city were placed without being in receipt of an engineered assessment. A full City-wide review of our Salt Bin asset was proposed and this process allowed for consideration of Road type, layout, use and special risk. Each location was assessed individually and scores allocated dependant on the hazard(s) identified, these included consideration for

- HMPE status
- Carriageway Gradient
- Bend Radius
- Road Classification
- Distance to next bin
- Distance to junction
- No of premises affected
- Schools / Community Centres

The grit bin review recommendations to the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel were presented on 16th July 2025.

112 existing grit bins were recommended for removal and 81 new locations to be added, resulting in a net reduction from 480 to 449 bins. Following consultation with Ward Councillors these numbers were amended to show a final provision of 452 bins around the City.

The review was accepted by the Scrutiny Panel with the proviso that all Ward Councillors were consulted prior to any changes taking place. The emails were sent to all Ward Councillors on 7th August with a three-week consultation period with responses by Friday 29th August 2025.

Sutton and Mount Gould had 4 existing bins, all of which were removed due to very low scores, and 2 new bins were placed after scoring highly enough to be considered. This resulted in a net loss of 2 grit bins in Sutton and Mount Gould.

We continue to review Grit Bin requests and additional sites will be mobilised for the winter period of 2026/27.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Question submitted by: Alex Moore

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Schools – Councillor Cresswell

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

Date: 26/01/2026

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

Regarding the decision to withdraw funding for CaterEd what guarantees can you make that the quality and costs of school meals to children in Plymouth will not be affected?

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

The planned closure of the school catering company CATERed is not a result of the council withdrawing any funding, and it will not lead to children going without school meals.

CATERed is a cooperative trading company, jointly owned by local schools and Plymouth City Council and was formed in 2015 to provide high quality school meals to Plymouth schools by using a cooperative model designed to provide economies of scale.

As CATERed currently is unable to continue trading beyond academic year 2025/2026, the CATERed Board has taken the decision to cease school meal provision to prevent a situation of wrongful trading, and to give schools time to secure alternative providers. This is a Board of Director decision and not a shareholder decision, Council Member decision or a Plymouth City Council decision.

The supply and provision of school meals (meeting mandatory School Food Standards) is a statutory responsibility that is delegated to school governing bodies and, where appropriate, trusts. Funding for the school meals service comes from the school's delegated budgets. While many schools in Plymouth are part of the CATERed cooperative company that provides school meals, they are free to choose how they provide meals. Some schools already use other providers for children in the city.

This means children will still receive their school meals and there should be no gap in provision. Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) will now need to make the decision as to who provides school meals from September 2026. Schools and MATs are still working through this decision, so providers at this stage are not known. Providers must adhere to certain standards of nutritional value and quality.

Plymouth City Council has not directly funded CATERed, so has not withdrawn any funding. However, in light of the difficulties the company was facing, the Council offered a one-off package of support (likely to cost Plymouth City Council more than £500,000) to allow the company to keep trading through to the end of the academic year 2025/2026, or until schools make the switch to an alternative provider if that happens sooner. This has given schools the time they need to source and contract an alternative provider.

As a council we will continue to support any maintained schools in finding alternative suppliers.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

Question submitted by: Danny Bamping

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Cllr Penberthy

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

Date: 26/01/2026

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

How can PCC be serious about applying to become the UK's City of Culture 2029, when under a Labour led council on June 8th 2020, cancelled our own culture and history by removing the Sir John Hawkins Square signs?

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

The Council and our partners are extremely serious about our bid to become the UK's City of Culture 2029. This encompasses not only our amazing and complex history, but also the fantastic creative activity within the city.

At no point has the Council cancelled the history of Sir John Hawkins. His life is marked with an exhibit in The Box and in pieces of public art within the city.

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QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC



Question submitted by: Neal Stoneman

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Leader of the Council – Cllr Tudor Evans

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

Date: 26/01/2026

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

Can the Leader explain why no planning permission or listed buildings consent was in place for West Hoe Pier, why work was undertaken at the worst time of year (was closed all summer), and what's the estimated extra cost of repairs, now the pier's been destroyed by lack of planning?

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

We always try to plan to avoid storms and bad weather as much as practically possible. Weather events are increasingly more frequent and of greater intensity, making timing works more and more difficult. Procuring work of this type takes time to plan and finance, in addition, work was planned to cause as little disruption to businesses on the waterfront as possible.

The works to the West Hoe Pier were split into two phases, with the first phase planned to take place at the end of the summer and into the autumn for exactly that reason. Unfortunately the volume of material requiring excavation was more than had been anticipated and took additional time to remove from site, this delayed the programme and the timing of pouring concrete. When the first storm hit, the pier was at its most vulnerable point and caused the damage that occurred. The focus then has shifted to recovery and we are working closely with contractors and consultants flexibly and rapidly to mitigate the damage.

Heritage conservation officers were consulted earlier this year on the proposed works to the Pier. Due to the variations in records and the number of past interventions it was agreed that the first phase of work would be carried out without listed building consent and the information gleaned from the initial excavations and investigations would provide more detailed information about the exact nature of the work needed which would then be submitted for consent. The intention was to complete this investigative stage and before phase 2 to make a listed building consent application with the exact nature of the works. This is still the case and we continue to liaise closely with the Heritage Officers.

There has always been an intention to obtain listed building consent. The first phase was exploratory, which was to inform the application prior to works commencing in the second phase.

As some of you may have seen, Plymouth Live contacted Heritage England, who said “Listed Building Consent is not generally required for like-for-like repairs to listed structures. It is the responsibility of the local planning authority, in this case [Plymouth City Council](#), to determine whether consent is required. Swift repairs are needed but Historic England recognises the challenging conditions in which they need to be made.”

The estimated extra costs, due to the storm, is estimated to be £150,000 to £200,000. The main works are funded from an approved capital budget for repairs and maintenance which included suitable contingency allowances for unseen events such as this, therefore the increased costs can be absorbed within that contingency without impacting other projects or budgets.

QUESTION BY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC



Question submitted by: Natalie Harrison

To the Cabinet Member or Chair for: Cabinet Member for Transport – Cllr John Stephens

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

Date: 26/01/2026

Question (to be no longer than 50 words):

There have been several severe weather alerts resulting in icy roads and pavements and I'm concerned the number of accidents will increase.

Could you provide the current number of grit bins across Plymouth, how many were removed after the latest review and would you consider replacing the ones taken away?

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

The grit bin review recommendations to the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel were presented on 16 July 2025.

112 existing grit bins were recommended for removal and 81 new locations to be added, resulting in a net reduction from 480 to 449 bins. Following consultation with Ward Councillors these numbers were amended to show a final provision of 452 bins around the City.

The review was accepted by the Scrutiny Panel with the proviso that all Ward Councillors were consulted prior to any changes taking place. The emails were sent to all Ward Councillors on 7th August with a three-week consultation period with responses by Friday 29th August 2025.

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