

# City Council

Monday 27 February 2023

## PRESENT:

Councillor Dann, in the Chair.

Councillor Penberthy, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Mrs Beer, Bingley, Mrs Bowyer, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Carlyle, Churchill, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Darcy, Deacon, Drear, Evans OBE, Finn, Goslin, Harrison, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Hulme, Kelly, Laing, Loveridge, Lowry, Lugger, Dr Mahony, McDonald, McLay, Murphy, Nicholson, Noble, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Poyser, Reilly, Rennie, Riley, Shayer, Singh, Smith, Stevens, Stoneman, Tippetts, Tofan, Tuffin, Tuohy, Wakeham, Ms Watkin and Wheeler.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Salmon and Vincent.

The meeting started at 2 pm and finished at 5.37 pm.

*Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at [www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk). At a future meeting, the Council will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

## 53. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 24 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

For (52)

Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bowyer, Carlyle, Churchill, Darcy, Deacon, Drear, Finn, Harrison, Mrs Loveridge, Lugger, Dr Mahony, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Shayer, Smith, Stoneman, Tofan, Wakeham, Ms Watkin, Mrs Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Laing, McDonald, Murphy, Noble, Penberthy, Reilly, Rennie, Stevens, Tippetts, Tuffin, Tuohy, McLay, Poyser, Wheeler, Mrs Beer, Hulme, Kelly, Nicholson and Singh.

Abstain (1)

Councillor Lowry.

Against (0)

Absent/Did Not Vote (2)

Councillors Allen and Mrs Bridgeman.

## 54. Declarations of Interest

Ross Jago (Head of Governance, Performance and Risk) advised Members that the Monitoring Officer had agreed a dispensation in respect of the agenda item Revenue and Capital Budget and Proposed Council Tax Levels For 2023/24

The following declarations of interests were made by Councillors.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Minute Number</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Haydon	57	Board Member of Plymouth Community Homes.	Private
Councillor Stevens	57	Employed by Devon and Cornwall Police.	Private

Councillor Pat Patel put forward a motion to suspend the Rules of Debate on the length of speeches of the Leader of the Council and the leader of the largest opposition political group in respect of the substantive motive in relation to the Revenue and Capital Budgets and Proposed Council Tax Levels for 2023/24. This was seconded by Councillor Eddie Rennie. This was passed:

For (53)

Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bowyer, Carlyle, Churchill, Darcy, Deacon, Drear, Finn, Harrison, Mrs Loveridge, Luggar, Dr Mahony, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Shayer, Smith, Stoneman, Tofan, Wakeham, Ms Watkin, Mrs Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Murphy, Noble, Penberthy, Reilly, Rennie, Stevens, Tippetts, Tuffin, Tuohy, McLay, Poyser, Wheeler, Mrs Beer, Hulme, Kelly, Nicholson and Singh.

Abstain (0)

Against (0)

Absent/Did Not Vote (2)

Councillors Allen and Mrs Bridgeman.

#### 55. **Questions by the Public**

There were two questions from member of the public:

The following question was submitted by Grace Strickland and answered by Councillor Charlotte Carlyle (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People):

<p><b>Question:</b> Seven Special Educational Needs schools exist in Plymouth, also serving parts of South Hams and Cornwall. Economic growth means the numbers of places are at crisis point. Acute shortages from foundation year upward means pupils are offered residential places further afield. What are the council intentions to resolve this issue?</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> Overall there are 2668 pupils with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) in Plymouth. The majority of these pupils are educated in Plymouth mainstream schools who receive additional funding per pupil. A number of pupils are also educated in early years settings and the post-16 providers such as Plymouth City College.</p> <p>There are seven special educational needs schools in Plymouth. The schools currently provide places for 748 pupils.</p> <p>The seven special schools are very largely at capacity and we foresee that we will need to expand this provision. We have commissioned an external evaluation and forecast of what provision will be needed for the coming ten years. We expect this report in late March and will then set out a strategy as to how to shape current and future provision to meet the forecast need.</p> <p>In the shorter term one of the special schools is due to increase its capacity by 16 places through the addition of two modular classrooms which are due to be installed towards the end of 2023. The funding for this has been allocated by Plymouth City Council from our national allocation for increasing the number of places for pupils with high needs.</p>
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The following question was submitted by Mr Mike Sheaff and answered by Councillor Chris Penberthy (Chair of Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee):

<p><b>Question:</b> City council data show £1,377,429.56 spent using Government Procurement Cards in 2019. In 2020 the council revised its GPC policy, but in 2021 Internal Audit found “significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance”. 2022 GPC spending was £2,595,783.53. How has Overview &amp; Scrutiny ensured there is sound justification for this 88.45% increase?</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> The Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which I Chair is responsible for scrutinising the finances of the Council.</p> <p>The use of Purchasing Cards are just one of the ways Council Officers pay for goods and services and generally are limited to minor expense and where the supplier requires payment at the point of purchase. The reason for the increase in expenditure in 2022 is due to the huge increase in needing to place families into Emergency Accommodation approximately around £1M.</p> <p>The Annual Audit Report 2020-21 was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee in July 2021 and provided an overall opinion of “Reasonable Assurance”.</p> <p>Page 10 of that report highlights that an internal audit survey of cardholders found there had been –</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some non-compliance with policies and procedures:</li> <li>• that a few cardholders continued to split purchases to circumvent their transaction limit;</li> <li>• valid VAT receipts were not always obtained or attached to the BSM system:</li> <li>• and that more than one member of a team used the Purchasing card.</li> </ul> <p>Because of these findings, an Internal Audit opinion of Limited Assurance was issued.</p> <p>In response it was reported to the Audit and Governance Committee that -</p> <p>Management has taken decisive action in response to our findings and the Purchasing Card policy updated, clearly stating the consequences of failure to comply. The policy and has been communicated to staff via Staff Room. The audit also identified that transactions are not always approved on a weekly basis, this will be monitored with cards being suspended if transactions remain outstanding.</p> <p>Whilst it has not been necessary to undertake scrutiny of this issue in the 2022/23 municipal year, I will ensure that the matter is put forward for consideration as part of the planning for the 2023/2024 scrutiny work programme.</p>
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56. **Announcements**

The Lord Mayor made the following announcements:

- a) It had been a year since Russia escalated their illegal invasion of Ukraine and it was painful to see the devastation and loss that people continue to suffer as a result of the attack on their country and it was important to continue to stand with the people of Ukraine;
  - i. Over 12 months, Plymouth has welcomed over 180 Ukrainian people with open arms;
  - ii. The Council would continue to offer support in weeks and months ahead, working in partnership to help people access education, jobs and local services;
  - iii. Ukraine had enjoyed freedom and democracy for decades and The Council could not and would not look away and expressed its collective message of hope;

- iv. A minutes silence and quiet reflection had been held on Friday 24 February 2023;
- b) With great sadness, reported to Council;
- i. The death of former Lord Mayor Ralph Morrell who had been elected in Jun 1961 and served for over 30 years;
  - ii. The sad passing of former councillor Derek Ackland who was elected to Plymouth City Council from 1982-1987;
  - iii. The Council expressed heartfelt condolences to the families and a minutes silence was held in memory.

Councillor Jonathan Drean (Cabinet Member for Transport) made the following announcements:

- a) Platinum Way, part of the Forder Valley link road project, would open later that evening on 27 February 2023 as the final part of the scheme had been completed by Persimmon Homes with the aim of reducing journey times to and from key locations;
- i. The project had been achieved despite global pressures;
  - ii. Expressed thanks to local residents and commuters for their patience;
  - iii. Thanked the Highways and Planning teams, as well as the main contractor for the project, Balfour Beatty and their partners;
  - iv. The project had been completed with a workforce of who 85% lived in a Plymouth postcode;
  - v. 455 weeks of training had been provided for students through apprenticeships and NVQ's;
  - vi. 14,5000 trees had been planted and new bird boxes had been installed;
  - vii. The stream that runs underneath the roads had been completed with otter shelves to allow wildlife to cross in free flowing water;
  - viii. There were Wildlife Ponds and retention ponds, adding to resilience against the risk of flooding;
  - ix. Additional capacity had been created at Leigham Roundabout.

57. **Revenue and Capital Budget and Proposed Council Tax Levels for 2023/24**

*Councillor Mrs Bridgeman arrived at 2.31 pm  
Councillor Allen arrived at 2.45 pm*

Councillor Richard Bingley, Leader of the Council introduced the item and highlighted:-

- a) To balance a local authority budget totalling around half a billion pounds was never an easy task and the challenge, this time, was on a scale not previously experienced;
- b) National factors had impacted the Council like never before with rocketing inflation, the impact of the war in Ukraine on energy bills and the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, which added to a rise in demand pressures and costs, particularly in social care services;
- c) The challenge had been to close a £37.6 million gap in resources to set a balanced budget for 2023/24, whilst tackling the In-year shortfall;
- d) It was treated as an emergency crisis and was acted on quickly and proactively with spending reviews undertaken to look at every line in every department;
- e) A budget recovery programme had been instigated, focusing on modernisation and investment, generating income, reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of everything the Council did and making difficult decisions to change, pause or stop activities, whilst protecting statutory services;
- f) Officers and members had worked extremely hard to identify ways to reduce costs, whilst delivering on the administrations ambitions for Plymouth;
- g) The Leader thanked all Cabinet members and members of the council for their ideas and Plymouth residents for their contribution to the public consultation in November and December;
- h) The Leader also expressed thanks to the three-day scrutiny panel Chaired by Councillor Lee Finn and organised by Councillor Chris Penberthy and Councillor Mark Shayer, who had worked extremely hard with the finance and economy in his Cabinet portfolio;
- i) Over £20 million of savings had been identified that had to be delivered, with the understanding that the same financial pressures the Council was facing with rising bills, was also being faced by every household in Plymouth;
- j) There is pride that a balanced budget could be proposed when other Councils had effectively gone bankrupt, had required Government intervention, resulting in large Council Tax increases;
- k) Work had been conducted cross-party to ensure sustainable improvements and stability that result from the 2023/24 budget for whoever comes next;
- l) The ambition throughout had been – and would continue to be – to ensure both the Council and city emerged from the latest economic situation stronger, greener and

more resilient for the future;

- m) Despite the huge financial challenge, the administration had continued to deliver upon core priorities for Plymouth they set out in their strategic delivery plan in June 2022, which was described by a global government review as an example of excellent strategic practice which other local authorities could and should learn from namely to deliver higher value jobs, affordable green homes, better education and access to good health care;
- n) They had mobilised the Plymouth and South West Devon Freeport – which was expected to bring more than 1,000 new jobs in the following two years, with the first investor having been announced;
- o) They had also commissioned a Ports Strategy to ensure Plymouth reached its full potential as a major international port and supported a new Masterplan for Millbay with port partners;
- p) The Smart Sound Control Room had opened and the marine-based 5G network had launched with Plymouth vying with the world's largest international cities to be the marine autonomy capital of the world;
- q) The UK's first national marine park had been progressed demonstrating that cross party working for a united city worked;
- r) Major land partnerships had been made, including securing a new M&S food hall at Derriford and Hilton Hotel on the Hoe, as well as the direct development of Barrack Court at Plymouth International Business Park;
- s) Plymouth had seen a highly successful year of events with SailGP, pop concerts, fireworks and Christmas lights switch-ons, all of which helped position the city as a destination for shopping and for safe and diverse entertainment and The Box had welcomed the prestigious British Art Show (BAS9) to the city;
- t) Plymouth City Council was benefiting from £77m external funding from over 50 sources including, including Heritage Lottery Horizons Fund, the Freeport Capacity funding, the High Streets Fund, Arts Council National Portfolio Funding, the Environment Agency and One Public Estate and the Leader thanked the Economic Development Team, led by David Draffan for working tirelessly to bid for funding and to deliver projects successfully;

- u) The administration was ambitious and had ‘no reverse gear’ and made no apology for creating a budget paper for the future vision for Plymouth;
- v) The administration was committed to putting resources into opening a city airport for the residents of Plymouth and 5.5m visitors;
- w) Within the following three years the city centre and commercial districts would be a source of pride, and that the city centre deserved to be shown in its best light, not just for residents and business, but also for tourists, veterans, students and potential overseas investors;
  - i. The second phase of the Old Town Street and New George Street improvement scheme had got underway in 2022 and improvements for bus transport in Mayflower Street were progressing well;
  - ii. Further engagement on the Armada Way proposals had been held and work had started to reinvigorate the Civic Square, thanks for funding from Historic England;
  - iii. The Forder Valley Link Road had been completed, as well as preparatory works being underway on the Woolwell to the George scheme with the aim of easing congestion in the North of Plymouth;
  - iv. The launch of Connect Plymouth was imminent which would encourage more people to walk, cycle and use public transport to get around with electric car and bike hire available from many locations across the city;
- x) The Council had continued to take an innovative and proactive approach in driving housing delivery through the Plan for Homes and had established a placed based partnership with Homes England, which would see the Council make best use of council owned land, with 50 sites already having been released for housing and a further strategic land review being undertaken to build a strong pipeline for housing delivery over 5 years;
  - i. Nearly £2.5 million from the Government’s land release fund had been secured to help de-risk delivery of 15 council owned sites and work had been done in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes on plans for a new eco-friendly neighbourhood in Millbay, which would offer more than 140 new affordable, energy-efficient homes to rent and buy;
  - ii. Outline planning consent had been given for a Council-owned site in Kings Tamerton for 70 affordable, net-zero carbon homes and the first phase of the Stirling Project in Honicknowle has been completed, which has seen nine service veterans in housing need involved in the construction of 25 self-contained affordable homes to rent;
  - iii. A new City Council Direct Homes Programme was being delivered with a start on site at the first scheme at Broadland Green, Plymstock, to complete



10 high quality, energy efficient homes by the end of 2023;

- y) Along with all other authorities the Council was seeing rising demand pressures and costs in both adults and children's social care which were having a significant impact on budget pressures as together these statutory services accounted for 73 per cent of the total revenue budget;
  - i. The adult social care service provided essential support to some of the most vulnerable people in Plymouth, supporting more than 4,700 adults and 2,000 carers but the service was under unprecedented pressure due to the longstanding issues of growing complexity of need, which had been compounded by dealing with the COVID19 pandemic and the significant challenges within the NHS;
  - ii. One of the biggest challenges was the workforce shortage and work on this had included the successful Make a Difference recruitment campaign;
  - iii. Another big challenge had been ensuring people were not having to stay longer in hospital than necessary and so the Venton Centre had been opened as well as a 40 bed Care Hotel and plans for a brand new care facility on Outland Road were underway;
- z) There was no greater responsibility than safeguarding young people and the pressures on Children's services were also severe and being experienced nationwide, including workforce challenges and rising costs of complex care and placements;
  - i. There were 492 packages of care and while many are in stable placements and foster care, there are a small number of high value and complex residential placements;
  - ii. Work was being done to tackle budgetary challenges by reducing the number of agency staff and working on an in house recruitment and retention strategy;
  - iii. A Care Leavers Covenant had been agreed and Plymouth organisations and businesses were being asked to do what they could to support care experienced young people;
- aa) Safety and security had continued to be a high priority in Plymouth with work being undertaken with key partners in the city to launch a multi-agency Violence Against Women and Girls Commission to review what was being done across the city to educate, prevent and deter these types of crimes and consider what support is available for victims;
  - i. An experienced lead had been employed to take forward the Commission's recommendations;

- ii. More street marshals were out on Plymouth's streets at weekends and in May Plymouth's Safe Bus was extended to help make night time passengers safer;
  - iii. New CCTV cameras had been installed in and around the city centre, as well as new help points in and around the city centre, Barbican and Mutley;
- bb) Plymouth had provided a place of safety for families fleeing the illegal war in Ukraine and as a welcoming city, the Council supported the Homes for Ukraine scheme through providing safeguarding checks for host households welcoming refugees and ensuring that they were able to access services such as health, education and financial support as soon as possible;
- i. In the first six months the launch of the scheme, 177 Ukrainian families were welcomed to Plymouth and placed with a local family or resident willing to open their home;
  - ii. The support was overseen by a task force to coordinate the support for families arriving in the city under the Homes for Ukraine scheme;
  - iii. Thanked Councillor Penberthy for leadership at the helm of the cross-party Ukraine task force;
- cc) Plymouth's response to the national cost of living crisis had been a team effort with the Council leading a task force to coordinate city-wide efforts to support those most impacted;
- dd) Work was being done to achieve the ambition to be a carbon neutral city by 2030;
- i. £1.5 million had been secured for investigating and installing 5<sup>th</sup> generation heat networks;
  - ii. £3.3 million home upgrade grants for retrofitting 160 fuel poor homes 2023 to 2025;
  - iii. £25 million had been secured to date across 18 district low carbon projects with a potential pipeline of £37 million for six future projects;
  - iv. The Climate Emergency Investment Fund has supported eight decarbonisation projects worth £1.6 million;
  - v. Nearly £3.5 million of section 106 money was being invested to help develop district heat networks in the city and further low carbon interventions;
  - vi. Plans for a community-owned solar farm were being developed on the former landfill site at Chelson Meadow with a partnership with Plymouth Energy Community (PEC); it would be a 13 Megawatt solar farm generate enough energy to power 3,800 homes a year;
  - vii. Energy efficient heat pumps had been installed in a number of Council owned buildings and the number of electric vehicles in the Council's fleet had been

increased;

- viii. There were 48 projects supporting net zero over the following five years in the capital programme;
  - ix. Other new projects making a real difference included the opening up of Derriford Community Park, the Plymouth Natural Grid project and the Blossom project at Devils Point;
  - x. 2022 had seen many hundreds of trees planted in Plymouth, many as part of the new Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest;
- ee) A capital programme to take the Council from 2023/24 to 2026/27 of £591.5 million was included in the proposals and would continue to deliver massive improvements that made a difference to businesses and the lives of Plymouth residents;
- ff) No increase in Council Tax would ever be welcome and the proposal for an increase was done reluctantly but it was needed to achieve a revenue budget of £217.4 million that would enable the Council to deliver services that residents valued most and to protect the most vulnerable residents in Plymouth;
- gg) The pressures facing Plymouth City Council were no different to other local authorities, however, Plymouth had one of the lowest average tax levels in the South West;
- hh) It was important for Councillors to re-establish Britain's Ocean City as a substantial international city that enjoyed higher value jobs whilst also protecting its ocean environment;
- ii) Plymouth had been experiencing an extremely tough time but stood on the threshold of a magnificent new era, with cross party working underpinning a successful way forward for the city.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE gave a speech highlighting s:-

- jj) Important to remember everyone touched by the Ukrainian invasion but also the thousands of people affected by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria and Plymouth should be ready to take its place on the world stage for economic and social development;
- kk) A huge amount of work was done by the last Labour Council to get Plymouth to the position it was at with a number of initiatives mentioned by The Leader, being initiatives of the last or previous Labour administration;
- ll) The opposition was struggling to see the ambition The Leader had outlined in his budget and Plymouth needed an ambitious plan for growth;

- mm) It was not a statutory function that local Council's play a role in their areas' Economic Development but it was a priority of Plymouth City Council;
- nn) The National Framework of Government, and its accountability, had become fractured with a patchwork of unitary authorities, Mayor-led cities and local councils, which had created a mixture of regional variations, each with a new direction for change;
- oo) Government had 40-50 competitive funding streams that used money that had previously been allocated to Council's based on need;
  - i. Cornwall Council had received £150m of Future Prosperity Funding from Government, whilst Plymouth had received £4m;
- pp) Plymouth had worked in partnership with businesses, inward investors, on roads factories and planning grants to drive economic and social growth with construction, culture and creativity to earn its place on the world stage;
- qq) The current administration had only achieved 50% of its capital programme;
- rr) Plymouth works in partnership with investors and has a long standing city bid master plan for the city with a £500m investment pipeline, much of which was underway;
- ss) Plymouth was hosting a Freeport which would rely on powerful partnerships which had already built the international credibility needed to succeed;
- tt) Labour had worked cross-party to deliver The Box and the National Marine Park, and had huge plans for the creative sector, visitor economy and construction;
- uu) Government had asked for a range of economic development plans from local authorities before abandoning plans, even though hard work had gone into preparing them;
- vv) The Local Government financing model needed to change from being a burden for local Council taxpayers;
- ww) Public understanding and support were needed to drive economic planning to develop a city to be proud of and to feel safe in, but policing numbers had been cut, and so Labour had introduced mobile and fixed CCTV to be the 'eyes on the ground';
- xx) Nationally, one of Labours aims was to train more doctors, nurses and dentists as well as implementing a place to reduce ambulance response times, and there was a role for local government to play in this by investing in local health hubs;
- yy) Citizen's advice were warning that the number of people who could not afford their energy bills would double to 1 in 5;

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE proposed the following amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Mark Lowry.

Council notes:

1. Over a decade of Tory austerity has seen the government cut sixty pence in every pound of our Revenue Support Grant. This is about £1,000,000,000 of funding the Council has not been able to spend in Plymouth. It is impossible for the Council to deliver income that replaces this. We need a Council that stands up for a better Plymouth;
2. In May 2022 the Government published the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill which included proposals aimed at addressing the negative impact of second homes on the supply of homes for local people. The Bill is likely to become law from April 2024 at the earliest and allow for a 100% premium to be applied to the base Council Tax level. It is estimated that on the current numbers across the city this could generate a minimum additional council tax of £1m per annum from 2024/25 if these provisions were adopted before the end of this fiscal year;
3. That we are living in the middle of a Cost of Living Crisis;
  - a. Alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 19th December 2022, the Government announced £100m of additional funding for local authorities to support the most vulnerable households in England. Recognising the impact of rising bills, the Government has allocated Plymouth the sum of £607,135 of new grant funding in 2023-24 to support economically vulnerable households in their area with council tax payments. This funding is to allow for a reduction in the council tax charge for current working age and pension age Local Council Tax Support claimants by up to £25;
  - b. One-off tinkering with the Council Tax Support Scheme for working age households is not an appropriate way of managing finances for the Council or for recipients, (the vast majority) of whom are in-work. The Council has not undertaken a substantive review of our scheme since before COVID and acknowledges that this is overdue given the marked detrimental changes in the national economy, many of which have been caused by actions of the government;
  - c. That there is not full take up of financial support available from the Council to local families and residents, such as Council tax Support and Free School Meals. In the past we have seen the take up levels rise when we have reviewed processes and looked at how to target communications to those who are missing out;
  - d. That there is now almost no access for residents to talk face-to-face with Council Officers about Council services, especially those linked to impacts

of cost of living. Our libraries were meant to be providing this access and are now closed for many more hours than they are open;

- e. That there are existing cross sector partnership structures in place to address child poverty and the Cost Of Living Crisis that can be built on to help the Council tackle these issues;
4. That there is a current housing crisis in Plymouth;
    - a. Our homeless numbers are at record levels; we lack appropriate supported housing for local residents who need it, leading to expensive out of city placements; the private rented sector is overheating; and our new housing pipeline is collapsing;
    - b. The award winning Plan for Homes introduced and updated by previous Labour administrations has driven a wide range of actions to improve Plymouth's housing stock and address our housing need;
    - c. That, despite support from the Cabinet Member, the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee decided not to recommend lobbying for an increase in the Local Housing Allowance to support those most in need of help;
  5. That more work needs to be done to support the wellbeing and safety of Plymouth residents:
    - a. Work has begun to tackle violence against women and girls and needs to be accelerated;
    - b. The City Centre Health Hub is a stalled project, this facility is urgently needed to address some of the worst health outcomes in the city (found in Stonehouse) and provide substantial relief to the pressures facing Derriford Hospital;
    - c. That poor health outcomes in the north of Plymouth need to be addressed;
    - d. That a recent OFSTED report identified that domestic abuse services in the city need to be improved to ensure that the needs of children and young people who are victims of domestic violence, or who witness it in their homes, are properly supported;
    - e. Safety in car parks continues to be a concern to many residents, especially women;
    - f. The impact of noisy vehicles on residents and businesses can be unacceptable and in some parts of Plymouth can now be described as persistent anti-social behaviour;
    - g. St Budeaux has needed replacement public toilets for many years. A scheme was developed and Labour ward Councillors made substantial

allocations from the Community Grants to enable new toilets to be provided. The work has been stopped and the St Budeaux community been denied access to both the toilets they need and the benefit of Community Grants that they are entitled to;

6. The planet is facing a Climate Emergency, Plymouth City Council is taking action, but needs to do more and do it faster:
  - a. Wildflower meadows are important for biodiversity and support pollinators, but they need good management. Whilst we have seen an increase in our local wildflower meadows the management to support these is not fit for purpose;
  - b. At the last taxi licensing review Council agreed to take action on decarbonising the city's taxi fleet and bring forward the next review by 30 months in order to review progress. Since that time no substantive work has been undertaken to address this commitment;
7. Plymouth is a growing city and needs to keep people moving on roads that are in good condition:
  - a. There have been recent losses of whole bus routes in the city. Some services have seen shortening of operating times, others have seen reductions in frequency;
  - b. Increasingly planning permission for new housing assumes availability of bus services and therefore does not provide for any or much parking;
  - c. Plymouth does not have a coherent strategic plan for the development of a citywide sustainable mass transit system;
  - d. Plymouth residents continue to complain about potholes. Last year a budget amendment provided resource for innovation in tackling potholes more effectively – this work has not been delivered;
8. Historically we know that Plymouth's growth is underpinned by Council investment which supports local businesses to thrive:
  - a. The Council has substantial corporate estate and commercial holdings within the City;
    - i. The commercial estate is well managed although some parts need investment in order to become greener;
    - ii. The commercial estate supports job creation and skills development, but more could be done;
    - iii. The corporate estate is not managed with the same degree of entrepreneurship. During the 2022/23 budget process a scrutiny recommendation to have a scrutiny review of the corporate estate

was agreed by Cabinet and Council, this has yet to happen;

- iv. The Council needs to ensure that it 'milks its assets' in order to support services for the people of Plymouth;
- b. Tourism is a key business sector for the city.
  - i. The Box is proving a hit; we are seeing more cruise liners visiting Plymouth; Brittany Ferries is currently celebrating 50 years of operation from Millbay and wishes to market Plymouth as a short break destination;
  - ii. We need to encourage more cruise ships to visit;
  - iii. We need to do more to sell Plymouth as a short break destination;
9. During the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee comments were made that the Council had not done much to celebrate. The plans for the Coronation of King Charles III are similar and have no budget behind them. As a proud city we should ensure that we celebrate this important time in the life of the nation;

Council therefore agrees:

1. Subject to it receiving Royal Assent by the 1 April 2023, that the Council introduce as of 1 April 2024 the proposed Council Tax Premium for dwelling occupied periodically (often referred to as empty or second homes) for all such properties in its administrative boundaries;
2. To implement the maximum Council Tax charge on empty properties for the Financial Year 23/24;
3. Should the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Assent, Plymouth City Council commits to immediately explore the draw down a maximum of £500,000 from the Investment Property Voids Allowance Reserve in the 2023/24 Budget on the basis that it is replenished in 2024/25 from the additional income generated in by the Council Tax Premium in 2024/25, subject to any further statutory guidance. It is proposed this maximum allocation will be allocated;
4. To provide relief for local residents suffering because of the Cost Of Living Crisis by:
  - a. Subject to the implementation of 3 above, making an additional provision of £500,000 in 2023/24 in the revenue budget for the Council Tax Support Fund, recommending to Cabinet that it:
    - i. Undertake a full review of the Council Tax Support Scheme during 2023/24 for implementation in 2024/25; the review to develop costed options for public consultation and a detailed examination of final proposals by the Scrutiny Committee. This will have no



additional resource requirements in 2023/24;

- ii. Use the Government Council Tax Support Funding to ensure that a payment of £25 is made per eligible working-age household. Such support should be directed towards those who are in work and also in receipt of Universal Credit;
    - iii. To further use the allocation of £500,000 set out above to provide a further discretionary local payment of up to £25 per eligible working-age household. Such support should be directed towards those who are in work and also in receipt of Universal Credit;
  - b. Recommending to Cabinet that it seek to enhance access to Council services through libraries and review which of our other buildings can support this activity. This should form a key strand of the Plan for Libraries review utilising government grant funding to increase opening hours where appropriate to include later closing times. This review, including public consultation and member scrutiny, should be undertaken and implemented during 2023/24 using existing resources. The ensuing report will identify ongoing resource requirements and how these will be met from within the approved revenue budget for 23/24;
  - c. Making an allocation of £25,000 in the revenue budget to support the work of the Cost of Living Working Group. It is recommended to Cabinet that this should be used to build on the existing Cost of Living Crisis webpage to ensure that all available financial support is clearly signposted. Additionally the mechanisms for supporting local residents through the Cost Of Living Crisis through practical support and campaigning should be reviewed;
  - d. Making an allocation of £25,000 in the revenue budget to support the work of the cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group on Child Poverty and recommend to Cabinet that this fund be used to allow Plymouth City Council to build on its existing active commitment to tackling child poverty;
5. To address the housing crisis by:
- a. Making an allocation of £500,000 from Right-to-Buy receipts which shall be allocated so as to be utilised to enhancing the Plan for Homes Housing Investment Fund to enable £10m capital fund to accelerate delivery of new homes on PCC owned land allocated for housing;
  - b. Making an allocation of £125,000 in the revenue budget and recommend to Cabinet that is it utilised to provide additional resource and support to accelerate Plan for Homes implementation;
  - c. To recommend to the Leader that they lobby Government for an increase in Plymouth's Local Housing Allowance to more accurately reflect the strength of the rental market and recognise that many Plymouth residents

struggle to find appropriate rented accommodation within the limits set by the valuation office;

- d. To recommend to Cabinet that it launch a commission on the cost, quality and availability of local supported accommodation for children and adults across the city, with work to be undertaken during 2023. The Commission's report should seek to propose a delivery timetable; define revenue and capital resource requirements; and identify how these will be met. The cost of undertaking the work of the Commission will be met from existing resources;

6. To support local residents' wellbeing and safety by:

- a. To recommend to Cabinet that it launch a review of domestic abuse services to improve access, availability and delivery of provision with work to be undertaken by October 2023. The resulting report should identify ongoing resource requirements and how these will be met. The costs of the review will be met from existing resources;
- b. Making an allocation in the revenue budget of £25,000 to be allocated to support action on Violence Against Women and Girls;
- c. Recommend to Cabinet that it will support and enable, in partnership with the NHS, to undertake a feasibility study for the provision of a health hub in the North of Plymouth;
- d. Allocating £20,000 from the revenue provision for pipeline capital projects for works to St Budeaux public toilets and recommending to Cabinet to ensure their reinstatement as a matter of urgency;
- e. To recommend to Cabinet that it seek to increase our CCTV provision by adding up to 10 cameras to enhance the current car park coverage and to include the funding for a noise camera to address vehicle related anti-social behaviour. The revenue cost to fund an estimated £100,000 capital investment to be met from the revenue provision for pipeline capital projects;

7. To tackle the Climate Emergency by:

- a. Making an allocation of £2,000,000 for the creation of a Green Investment Fund within the capital programme to ensure the PCC commercial estate meets minimum energy efficiency standards thereby protecting existing income streams and jobs. The fund will allocate spend on the premise of business cases demonstrating that the investment will at least cover the borrowing costs. All surpluses delivered through this programme will be reinvested in the fund for future environmental/green initiatives within our commercial estate;
- b. Making an additional allocation of £10,000 to the wildflower meadow maintenance budget;

- c. Recommending to Cabinet that it commence a project, working with experts and the trade, to undertake a review of revenue and capital resources required to decarbonise the city's taxi fleet and inform the 24/25 budget. The cost of the review will be met from existing resources;
8. To keep Plymouth moving by:
- a. Recommending to Cabinet that it urgently undertake a challenge review of the existing highways re-instatement programme specifically looking at using modern technology and kit to reduce costs and increase efficiency of the existing methodology. This recommendation is that this process be completed by the end of summer of 2023 with a report to Cabinet in the autumn;
  - b. Making provision within the Capital Budget for a £500,000 allocation to be ringfenced for pothole repairs within the City;
  - c. Committing to ring-fencing revenue and capital resources freed up by the review in 8a to the Pothole Repair Fund established in 8b;
  - d. Making provision within the Revenue budget for an allocation of £115,000 to support reconfiguration of non-commercial bus routes to support residents without access to a bus service;
  - e. Making provision within the revenue budget for a £25,000 allocation and recommend to Cabinet that the funds are used to commission a review to ensure a deliverable plan is developed to ensure that Plymouth has a sustainable mass transit system which includes public transport;
9. To invest in Plymouth's future by:
- a. Creating headroom in the Property Regeneration Fund to support job creation by accelerating delivery on PCC owned land assets such as the Language Freeport site and City Business Park;
  - b. Recommend to Cabinet that it urgently prioritises taking actions to unlock investment opportunities within the corporate estate to support job creation and skills development. This will include the vacation of Windsor and Midland Houses by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023;
  - c. Recommend to Cabinet that it seek to build upon Plymouth's Ocean City brand to promote the city as a tourist destination using new digital marketing methods and building on our relationship with Brittany Ferries to promote the city as an international destination;
10. To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III by making provision within the revenue budget, for an allocation of £25,000 to cover costs of road closures, arrange a screening of the ceremony, dressing the city and support community volunteering activities;

11. To amend recommendation 1 of the report so as to read that Council approved a budget of £218.440m (increased by £1m from £217.440m);
12. That Council approve the drawdown of £1.000m of reserves;
13. Council are also asked to note the resulting amendments to appendix 9 of the report as set out with this amendment and highlighted yellow.

The impact of this amendment on the Budget figures as set out in the main report will be:

- 1) Cost neutral in 2023/24 with Resources increasing by £1,000,000 and Expenditure increasing by £1,000,000 (or 0.046%)

And for future years:

- 2) Minimum additional council tax resources of £1m from April 2024.

Proposal	Additional Resources / income	Additional Costs	Comment
	£m	£m	
<b>2023/24</b>			
Drawdown Investment Property Reserve	1.000		one-off drawdown 2023/24 only
Enhance Government's Council Tax Support Fund 2023/24		0.500	<b>one-off cost 2023/24 only; subject to legislation</b>
Cost of Living Working Group		0.025	one-off cost 2023/24 only
Child Poverty		0.025	one-off cost 2023/24 only
Violence Against Women and Girls.		0.025	one-off cost 2023/24 only
Health Hub feasibility study with NHS		0.025	one-off cost 2023/24 only
Creating a £2,000,000 Green Investment Fund		0.100	one-off allocation; projects to generate surpluses to repay / future investment
Wildflower meadow maintenance		0.010	recurring cost
Bus subsidy		0.115	recurring cost
Commission to ensure that Plymouth has a sustainable mass transit system		0.025	one-off cost 2023/24 only
Coronation of King Charles III		0.025	one-off cost 2023/24 only
Additional allocation to Plan for Homes		0.125	one-off for 2023/24
<b>Use of reserves to be replenished</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	
Plan for Homes		0.500	from RTB receipts
Right to Buy (RTB) receipts	0.500		release current receipts
St Budeaux public toilets		0.020	one-off to supplement sums set aside by Ward Councillors
Revenue financing of pipeline capital projects	0.020		
Establishing a ringfenced Pothole Repair Fund - existing capital funds £500k			one-off for 2023/24
Increase our CCTV provision by adding up to 10 cameras £100k	0.005	0.005	revenue cost for capital investment from existing resources
<b>Existing Resources</b>	<b>0.525</b>	<b>0.525</b>	
<b>2024/25</b>			
Council Tax Second Homes Premium	1.000		on-going resource; subject to legislation
Replenish Investment Property Reserve		1.000	one-off charge
	<b>1.000</b>	<b>1.000</b>	

## Appendix 9 Amendment

### Council Tax Resolution

#### Implications of the proposed council tax for each band of properties

To note that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall and The Isles of Scilly has issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of

dwelling in the Council's area, reflecting a Fifteen pounds (£15.00 or 6.08%) increase for 2023/24 for a band D property.

To note that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority precepts have been confirmed reflecting a Five pounds (£5.00 or 5.45%) increase for 2023/24.

To use the Council Tax base for 2023/24 as 74,891 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 is £131,299,650.

To note a contribution of £1,000,000 from reserves in order to balance the 2023/24 Council budget.

To agree that the following amounts are calculated for the year 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- a) £556,753,539 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act (Gross Expenditure and Transfers to Reserves).
- b) £425,453,889 being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act (Gross Income and Transfers from Reserves).
- c) £131,299,650 being the amount by which the aggregate at 9.5(a) above exceeds the aggregate amount at 9.5(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in section 31B of the Act).
- d) £1,753.21 being the amount at 1.4(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1.3 above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

Financial Implications – S 151 Officer's Budget Robustness Statement:

The proposal to introduce and maximise the Council's resources base with the additional Council Tax Premium for dwellings occupied periodically is welcomed, with a conservative estimate of £1m income each year. It must be noted that this is subject to it receiving Royal assent by the 1 April 2023 and that the additional income would commence from April 2024.

The majority of the amendments are reliant on this income becoming available. The proposal to enhance the Government's grant for those in receipt of council tax support has to be, as stated, implemented only on the basis the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill receives Royal Assent. Without this, the proposal will not proceed. This negates any risk of allocating this sum of money.

Given the level of review into the Council's reserves, this would not appear to be the best timing in terms of drawing down £1m from our balances. That said, as stated above, £500,000 is dependent on the necessary legislation passing into law. Without this, the proposal will not proceed in its current form. This leaves a further £500,000

to be “borrowed” in 2023/24. The reserve that is being used was subject to additional allocations in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the possible implications on our ability to meet our commercial property letting income targets. The drawdown of this amount will leave the reserve with an adequate balance. The proposal states a commitment to refund the £500,000 to the Investment Property Reserve, however any decision on the best use of the additional income will be considered as part of the 2024/25 Budget setting process.

The remaining proposals costed at £525,000 are recommendations on the reallocation of existing resources and ensure the overall budget remains in balance.

In the context of the above, the Section 151 Officer considers the proposed budget amendment as sound and that the resultant level of reserves are adequate for the next financial year given a clear understanding of the commitment to repay the monies in 2024/25.

*The meeting was adjourned from 3.05 pm to 3.46 pm for members to consider the amendment.*

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE spoke on the amendment and highlighted the following points:-

- zz) The amendment anticipated movement from the Government on levying council tax on second homes and the amendment sought to use funds from this to be invested in public services, which would amount to £1m;
- aaa) The amendment was budget neutral;
- bbb) The amendment would ensure funding was put towards Council Tax Support for 20,000-30,000 people;
- ccc) The amendment included proposals for 500 new homes;
- ddd) Funding would be put towards the work of VAWG Commission;
- eee) Funding for climate emergency and support pollinators and invest in green economy jobs.

There was a discussion on the amendment with contributions from Councillors Haydon, Briars-Delve, Holloway, Goslin, Reilly, Tuohy, Smith, Tippetts, Mrs Aspinall, Wheeler, Nicholson, Cresswell, Harrison, Finn, Mrs Beer, Stevens and Singh.

At this point, Councillor Patel moved a motion to move to the vote which was seconded by Councillor James Stoneman. This was passed.

For (21)

Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bowyer, Carlyle, Churchill, Darcy, Deacon, Dreaan, Finn, Mrs Loveridge, Luggar, Dr Mahony, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Shayer, Smith, Stoneman, Tofan, Wakeham and Ms Watkin,

Abstain (24)

Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Murphy, Noble, Penberthy, Reilly, Rennie, Stevens, Tippetts, Tuffin and Tuohy,

Against (9)

Councillors McLay, Poyser, Wheeler, Mrs Beer, Hulme, Kelly, Nicholson, Singh and Mrs Bridgeman.

Absent/Did Not Vote (1)

Councillors Harrison.

*Councillor Murphy left the meeting at 3.43pm.*

Councillor Mark Lowry spoke as the seconder to the amendment and The Council then voted to agree the amendment to the Revenue and Capital Budget and Proposed Council Tax Levels for 2023/24 paper.

For (44)

Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bowyer, Carlyle, Churchill, Darcy, Deacon, Drean, Finn, Harrison, Luggar, Dr Mahony, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Smith, Stoneman, Tofan, Wakeham, Ms Watkin, Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Noble, Penberthy, Reilly, Rennie, Stevens, Tippetts, Tuffin, Tuohy, McLay and Poyser.

Abstain (5)

Councillors Dann, Mrs Beer, Kelly, Nicholson and Wheeler.

Against (3)

Councillors Hulme, Singh and Mrs Bridgeman.

Absent/Did Not Vote (3)

Councillors Murphy, Loveridge and Shayer.

*The meeting was adjourned at 5 pm until 5.30 pm.*

*Councillor Mrs Bowyer did not return to the Chamber following the adjournment.*

Councillor Pat Patel moved a motion to move to the vote on the substantive motion which was seconded by Councillor Mark Shayer. This was passed.

For (19)

Councillors Bingley, Mrs Bowyer, Carlyle, Darcy, Deacon, Drean, Finn, Mrs Loveridge, Luggar, Dr Mahony, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Smith, Stoneman, Tofan, Wakeham and Ms Watkin,

Abstain (23)

Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Noble, Penberthy, Reilly, Rennie, Stevens, Tippetts, Tuffin and Tuohy,

Against (8)

Councillors McLay, Poyser, Wheeler, Mrs Beer, Hulme, Kelly, Singh and Mrs Bridgeman.

Absent/Did Not Vote (5)

Councillor Murphy, Mrs Bowyer, Churchill, Harrison and Nicholson.

The Council agreed:

1. To approve the proposed net revenue budget requirement for 2023/24 of £218.440m;
2. To approve Council Tax levels for 2023/24, including an Adult Social Care Precept as detailed at Appendix 9;
3. To approve the specific savings proposals as set out at paragraph 2.17 of the report;
4. To approve the Capital Budget of £591.504m for 2022 to 2027 as detailed in section 3 of the report;
5. To note that the precept to the Council issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area, has been confirmed;
6. To note that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority precepts have been confirmed for 2023/24;
7. To note the Section 151 Officer's statement on the Budget as set out in this report;
8. To approve the annual Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Financing Strategy 2023/24 (incorporating the authorised limits, operational boundaries and prudential indicators) as detailed in Section 4;
9. To approve an adjustment of £1m to the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), as an amendment to the Capital Financing Strategy, and as set out in this report within the Treasury Management Strategy and detailed under the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement section;
10. To note the response to the recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee and the Cabinet response to those recommendations (Appendix 6);
11. To note the consultation feedback as set out at Appendix 5;
12. To approve the use of flexible capital receipts to fund revenue costs for transformation project, as set out in Section 3 the Capital Programme paragraph 9.16;
13. To delegate responsibility for any technical accounting changes which may arise after the Budget to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Council noted:



14. Over a decade of Tory austerity has seen the government cut sixty pence in every pound of our Revenue Support Grant. This is about £1,000,000,000 of funding the Council has not been able to spend in Plymouth. It is impossible for the Council to deliver income that replaces this. We need a Council that stands up for a better Plymouth;
15. In May 2022 the Government published the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill which included proposals aimed at addressing the negative impact of second homes on the supply of homes for local people. The Bill is likely to become law from April 2024 at the earliest and allow for a 100% premium to be applied to the base Council Tax level. It is estimated that on the current numbers across the city this could generate a minimum additional council tax of £1m per annum from 2024/25 if these provisions were adopted before the end of this fiscal year;
16. That we are living in the middle of a Cost of Living Crisis;
- a. Alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 19th December 2022, the Government announced £100m of additional funding for local authorities to support the most vulnerable households in England. Recognising the impact of rising bills, the Government has allocated Plymouth the sum of £607,135 of new grant funding in 2023-24 to support economically vulnerable households in their area with council tax payments. This funding is to allow for a reduction in the council tax charge for current working age and pension age Local Council Tax Support claimants by up to £25;
  - b. One-off tinkering with the Council Tax Support Scheme for working age households is not an appropriate way of managing finances for the Council or for recipients, (the vast majority) of whom are in-work. The Council has not undertaken a substantive review of our scheme since before COVID and acknowledges that this is overdue given the marked detrimental changes in the national economy, many of which have been caused by actions of the government;
  - c. That there is not full take up of financial support available from the Council to local families and residents, such as Council tax Support and Free School Meals. In the past we have seen the take up levels rise when we have reviewed processes and looked at how to target communications to those who are missing out;
  - d. That there is now almost no access for residents to talk face-to-face with Council Officers about Council services, especially those linked to impacts of cost of living. Our libraries were meant to be providing this access and are now closed for many more hours than they are open;
  - e. That there are existing cross sector partnership structures in place to address child poverty and the Cost Of Living Crisis that can be built on to help the Council tackle these issues;
17. That there is a current housing crisis in Plymouth;

- a. Our homeless numbers are at record levels; we lack appropriate supported housing for local residents who need it, leading to expensive out of city placements; the private rented sector is overheating; and our new housing pipeline is collapsing;
- b. The award winning Plan for Homes introduced and updated by previous Labour administrations has driven a wide range of actions to improve Plymouth's housing stock and address our housing need;
- c. That, despite support from the Cabinet Member, the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee decided not to recommend lobbying for an increase in the Local Housing Allowance to support those most in need of help;

18. That more work needs to be done to support the wellbeing and safety of Plymouth residents:

- a. Work has begun to tackle violence against women and girls and needs to be accelerated;
- b. The City Centre Health Hub is a stalled project, this facility is urgently needed to address some of the worst health outcomes in the city (found in Stonehouse) and provide substantial relief to the pressures facing Derriford Hospital;
- c. That poor health outcomes in the north of Plymouth need to be addressed;
- d. That a recent OFSTED report identified that domestic abuse services in the city need to be improved to ensure that the needs of children and young people who are victims of domestic violence, or who witness it in their homes, are properly supported;
- e. Safety in car parks continues to be a concern to many residents, especially women;
- f. The impact of noisy vehicles on residents and businesses can be unacceptable and in some parts of Plymouth can now be described as persistent anti-social behaviour;
- g. St Budeaux has needed replacement public toilets for many years. A scheme was developed and Labour ward Councillors made substantial allocations from the Community Grants to enable new toilets to be provided. The work has been stopped and the St Budeaux community been denied access to both the toilets they need and the benefit of Community Grants that they are entitled to;

19. The planet is facing a Climate Emergency, Plymouth City Council is taking action, but needs to do more and do it faster:

- a. Wildflower meadows are important for biodiversity and support pollinators, but they need good management. Whilst we have seen an increase in our local wildflower meadows the management to support these is not fit for purpose;

- b. At the last taxi licensing review Council agreed to take action on decarbonising the city's taxi fleet and bring forward the next review by 30 months in order to review progress. Since that time no substantive work has been undertaken to address this commitment;

20. Plymouth is a growing city and needs to keep people moving on roads that are in good condition:

- a. There have been recent losses of whole bus routes in the city. Some services have seen shortening of operating times, others have seen reductions in frequency;
- b. Increasingly planning permission for new housing assumes availability of bus services and therefore does not provide for any or much parking;
- c. Plymouth does not have a coherent strategic plan for the development of a citywide sustainable mass transit system;
- d. Plymouth residents continue to complain about potholes. Last year a budget amendment provided resource for innovation in tackling potholes more effectively – this work has not been delivered;

21. Historically we know that Plymouth's growth is underpinned by Council investment which supports local businesses to thrive:

- a. The Council has substantial corporate estate and commercial holdings within the City;
  - i. The commercial estate is well managed although some parts need investment in order to become greener;
  - ii. The commercial estate supports job creation and skills development, but more could be done;
  - iii. The corporate estate is not managed with the same degree of entrepreneurship. During the 2022/23 budget process a scrutiny recommendation to have a scrutiny review of the corporate estate was agreed by Cabinet and Council, this has yet to happen;
  - iv. The Council needs to ensure that it 'milks its assets' in order to support services for the people of Plymouth;
- b. Tourism is a key business sector for the city;
  - i. The Box is proving a hit; we are seeing more cruise liners visiting Plymouth; Brittany Ferries is currently celebrating 50 years of operation from Millbay and wishes to market Plymouth as a short break destination;

- ii. We need to encourage more cruise ships to visit;
  - iii. We need to do more to sell Plymouth as a short break destination;
22. During the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee comments were made that the Council had not done much to celebrate. The plans for the Coronation of King Charles III are similar and have no budget behind them. As a proud city we should ensure that we celebrate this important time in the life of the nation.

Council therefore agrees:

23. Subject to it receiving Royal Assent by the 1 April 2023, that the Council introduce as of 1 April 2024 the proposed Council Tax Premium for dwelling occupied periodically (often referred to as empty or second homes) for all such properties in its administrative boundaries;
24. To implement the maximum Council Tax charge on empty properties for the Financial Year 23/24;
25. Should the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Assent, Plymouth City Council commits to immediately explore the draw down a maximum of £500,000 from the Investment Property Voids Allowance Reserve in the 2023/24 Budget on the basis that it is replenished in 2024/25 from the additional income generated in by the Council Tax Premium in 2024/25, subject to any further statutory guidance. It is proposed this maximum allocation will be allocated;
26. To provide relief for local residents suffering because of the Cost Of Living Crisis by:
- a. Subject to the implementation of 3 above, making an additional provision of £500,000 in 2023/24 in the revenue budget for the Council Tax Support Fund, recommending to Cabinet that it:
    - i. Undertake a full review of the Council Tax Support Scheme during 2023/24 for implementation in 2024/25; the review to develop costed options for public consultation and a detailed examination of final proposals by the Scrutiny Committee. This will have no additional resource requirements in 2023/24;
    - ii. Use the Government Council Tax Support Funding to ensure that a payment of £25 is made per eligible working-age household. Such support should be directed towards those who are in work and also in receipt of Universal Credit;
    - iii. To further use the allocation of £500,000 set out above to provide a further discretionary local payment of up to £25 per eligible working-age household. Such support should be directed towards those who are in work and also in receipt of Universal Credit;
  - b. Recommending to Cabinet that it seek to enhance access to Council services through libraries and review which of our other buildings can support this

activity. This should form a key strand of the Plan for Libraries review utilising government grant funding to increase opening hours where appropriate to include later closing times. This review, including public consultation and member scrutiny, should be undertaken and implemented during 2023/24 using existing resources. The ensuing report will identify ongoing resource requirements and how these will be met from within the approved revenue budget for 23/24;

- c. Making an allocation of £25,000 in the revenue budget to support the work of the Cost of Living Working Group. It is recommended to Cabinet that this should be used to build on the existing Cost of Living Crisis webpage to ensure that all available financial support is clearly signposted. Additionally the mechanisms for supporting local residents through the Cost Of Living Crisis through practical support and campaigning should be reviewed;
- d. Making an allocation of £25,000 in the revenue budget to support the work of the cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group on Child Poverty and recommend to Cabinet that this fund be used to allow Plymouth City Council to build on its existing active commitment to tackling child poverty;

27. To address the housing crisis by:

- a. Making an allocation of £500,000 from Right-to-Buy receipts which shall be allocated so as to be utilised to enhancing the Plan for Homes Housing Investment Fund to enable £10m capital fund to accelerate delivery of new homes on PCC owned land allocated for housing;
- b. Making an allocation of £125,000 in the revenue budget and recommend to Cabinet that is it utilised to provide additional resource and support to accelerate Plan for Homes implementation;
- c. To recommend to the Leader that they lobby Government for an increase in Plymouth's Local Housing Allowance to more accurately reflect the strength of the rental market and recognise that many Plymouth residents struggle to find appropriate rented accommodation within the limits set by the valuation office;
- d. To recommend to Cabinet that it launch a commission on the cost, quality and availability of local supported accommodation for children and adults across the city, with work to be undertaken during 2023. The Commission's report should seek to propose a delivery timetable; define revenue and capital resource requirements; and identify how these will be met. The cost of undertaking the work of the Commission will be met from existing resources;

28. To support local residents' wellbeing and safety by:

- a. To recommend to Cabinet that it launch a review of domestic abuse services to improve access, availability and delivery of provision with work to be undertaken by October 2023. The resulting report should identify ongoing resource requirements and how these will be met. The costs of the review will be met

from existing resources;

- b. Making an allocation in the revenue budget of £25,000 to be allocated to support action on Violence Against Women and Girls;
- c. Recommend to Cabinet that it will support and enable, in partnership with the NHS, to undertake a feasibility study for the provision of a health hub in the North of Plymouth;
- d. Allocating £20,000 from the revenue provision for pipeline capital projects for works to St Budeaux public toilets and recommending to Cabinet to ensure their reinstatement as a matter of urgency;
- e. To recommend to Cabinet that it seek to increase our CCTV provision by adding up to 10 cameras to enhance the current car park coverage and to include the funding for a noise camera to address vehicle related anti-social behaviour. The revenue cost to fund an estimated £100,000 capital investment to be met from the revenue provision for pipeline capital projects;

29. To tackle the Climate Emergency by:

- a. Making an allocation of £2,000,000 for the creation of a Green Investment Fund within the capital programme to ensure the PCC commercial estate meets minimum energy efficiency standards thereby protecting existing income streams and jobs. The fund will allocate spend on the premise of business cases demonstrating that the investment will at least cover the borrowing costs. All surpluses delivered through this programme will be reinvested in the fund for future environmental/green initiatives within our commercial estate;
- b. Making an additional allocation of £10,000 to the wildflower meadow maintenance budget;
- c. Recommending to Cabinet that it commence a project, working with experts and the trade, to undertake a review of revenue and capital resources required to decarbonise the city's taxi fleet and inform the 24/25 budget. The cost of the review will be met from existing resources;

30. To keep Plymouth moving by:

- a. Recommending to Cabinet that it urgently undertake a challenge review of the existing highways re-instatement programme specifically looking at using modern technology and kit to reduce costs and increase efficiency of the existing methodology. This recommendation is that this process be completed by the end of summer of 2023 with a report to Cabinet in the autumn;
- b. Making provision within the Capital Budget for a £500,000 allocation to be ring-fenced for pothole repairs within the City;

- c. Committing to ring-fencing revenue and capital resources freed up by the review in 8a to the Pothole Repair Fund established in 8b;
- d. Making provision within the Revenue budget for an allocation of £115,000 to support reconfiguration of non-commercial bus routes to support residents without access to a bus service;
- e. Making provision within the revenue budget for a £25,000 allocation and recommend to Cabinet that the funds are used to commission a review to ensure a deliverable plan is developed to ensure that Plymouth has a sustainable mass transit system which includes public transport;

31. To invest in Plymouth's future by:

- a. Creating headroom in the Property Regeneration Fund to support job creation by accelerating delivery on PCC owned land assets such as the Language Freeport site and City Business Park;
- b. Recommend to Cabinet that it urgently prioritises taking actions to unlock investment opportunities within the corporate estate to support job creation and skills development. This will include the vacation of Windsor and Midland Houses by 1st October 2023;
- c. Recommend to Cabinet that it seek to build upon Plymouth's Ocean City brand to promote the city as a tourist destination using new digital marketing methods and building on our relationship with Brittany Ferries to promote the city as an international destination;

32. To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III by making provision within the revenue budget, for an allocation of £25,000 to cover costs of road closures, arrange a screening of the ceremony, dressing the city and support community volunteering activities;

33. That Council approve the drawdown of £1.000m of reserves;

34. Council are also asked to note the resulting amendments to appendix 9 of the report for the amendment highlighted in yellow.

For (23)

Councillors Bingley, Carlyle, Churchill, Darcy, Deacon, Drean, Finn, Harrison, Mrs Loveridge, Luggar, Dr Mahony, Partridge, Patel, Mrs Pengelly, Riley, Shayer, Smith, Stoneman, Tofan, Wakeham, Ms Watkin, McLay and Poyser.

Abstain (24)

Councillors Allen, Mrs Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Coker, Dr Cree, Cresswell, Dann, Evans OBE, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Laing, Lowry, McDonald, Noble, Penberthy, Reilly, Rennie, Stevens, Tippetts, Tuffin, Tuohy and Wheeler.

Against (6)

Councillors Mrs Beer, Hulme, Kelly, Nicholson, Singh and Mrs Bridgeman.

Absent/Did Not Vote (2)  
Councillors Murphy and Mrs Bowyer.