



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department
Plymouth City Council
Ballard House
Plymouth PL1 3BJ

Please ask for

T 01752 668000

E

democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk

www.plymouth.gov.uk

Published 30 September 2022

MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Members' Written Questions

- 1. Weed Treatments: (Pages 3 - 4)**
- 2. Drains: (Pages 5 - 6)**
- 3. Weston Mill: (Pages 7 - 8)**
- 4. Blue Badge Renewals: (Pages 9 - 10)**
- 5. Disability Emergency: (Pages 11 - 12)**
- 6. Plympton Library Services: (Pages 13 - 14)**
- 7. Cleaning of A38: (Pages 15 - 16)**
- 8. Weeding and vegetation: (Pages 17 - 18)**
- 9. Taxi Livery: (Pages 19 - 20)**
- 10. Payslip: (Pages 21 - 22)**
- 11. Unauthorised Encampments: (Pages 23 - 24)**
- 12. Ticket Machines: (Pages 25 - 26)**
- 13. Tarmac Costs: (Pages 27 - 28)**
- 14. Flytipping Drake Ward: (Pages 29 - 30)**

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Bill Wakeham, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene

Question:

What areas of the city this year have received x1 weed treatments?
What areas of the city year has received x2 weed treatments?
What areas of the city have received now weed treatments at all this year?
Please give ward specific answers.

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

All HMPE within Plymouth wards have received a single spray. The second Citywide spray is due to commence in the next 2 weeks.

HMPE within the City Centre and Waterfront areas have had at least 2 sprays this year. The third spray is underway in these areas.

There are two locations in the City where we have agreed with residents that we would not spray on the basis they would maintain weed growth in a defined area. There are Little Ash Road (St Budeaux ward) and Fortescue Place (Compton ward).

These answers refer to the spraying of weeds with chemicals. Manual weed removal and the use of mechanised weed rippers have also been used across the City. Teams are currently working in Devonport and Drake wards.

Signed:

Dated: 30 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Jonathan Drean, Cabinet Member for Transport

Question:

As we enter the winter season, how many drains and gulleys are outstanding and waiting for cleans, can this be given in the following areas, cyclical and hot spot areas. Of the plus 38k drains and gullies we have how many have been cleaned this year?

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

Based on our 2 yearly rolling programme a total of 7,108 gullies have been inspected (2022/23 financial year), 4,071 required clearance, Of these, 3,257 received clearance, with a total of 469 found to be inaccessible (parked cars etc), these we now have 344 outstanding which will receive a 2nd visit (Devonport Ward).

To date (2022/23) we have raised 356 reactive work orders for blocked or flooded gullies - single cleans, multiple cleans or whole roads, and do not include emergencies.

52 gully hotspot sites are inspected after heavy rainfall or before predicted heavy rainfall in accordance with our drainage intervention policy. All gully's found to be blocked or compromised are issued for cleansing and we have achieved 100% timely intervention - within 24 hours.

Signed:

Dated: 30 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Bill Wakeham, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene

Question:

The recycling centre at Weston Mill is not open Tuesday to Thursday, despite promises to open this full time what are the future plans for this site?

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

The Household Waste Recycling Facility at Weston Mill will remain closed on Tuesday to Thursday for the foreseeable future. An analysis of waste streams has shown that most of the waste deposited in the past, has occurred at weekends and bank holidays. Therefore, in a drive to reduce unnecessary cost, the current opening hours will continue, but will be reviewed again at the end of November.

Signed:

Dated: 29 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Pat Patel, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure and Sport

Question:

Why is it taking so long for people to renew their blue badges? Residents are being told 12+ weeks. Some people have badges out of date and this is affecting ability to go out

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

The national performance standard for Blue Badge renewals is 12 weeks from the point we receive an application.

Where an applicant indicates they are on certain benefits we use a DWP online checker to confirm customer's entitlements, however there have been delays with DWP updating customer entitlements. If a case becomes urgent, we make contact with DWP by telephone but this can take an officer up to 45 minutes to get through, so we use this process as a last resort.

For applications where a medical assessment is required, we use an external company who are experiencing delays with appointments due to a recent surge in applications. This has been mainly due to the impacts of Covid, especially those who have been 'shielding' as they have started to feel confident about leaving their homes again and therefore are applying for Blue Badges.

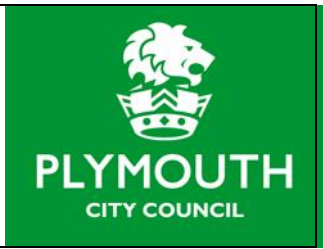
Finally although hopefully not ongoing, there has been disruption with dispatch of blue badges due to Royal Mail industrial action.

Signed:

Dated: 27 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Charlotte Carlyle, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Children and Young People

Question:

Have we in Plymouth got a disability emergency in Plymouth? And if so what are you doing to address this?

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

Thank you for your question. We do not have any evidence that we have an emerging disability emergency in Plymouth. If there is a specific area that you are interested in or are concerned about please feel free to contact me and I can assess this further.

Signed:

Dated: 23/09/2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Ian Poyser

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Pat Patel

Question:

FTAO Cllr Patel The question is in relation to correspondence that I have received from a Plympton Chaddlewood resident following the receipt of information via an FOI request, also attached. The resident is happy for me to share his correspondence with you on your request as it cannot be attached using this online form. Given the enormous financial challenges the council faces in the coming years, please can you confirm that Plympton residents will be given sufficient consultation on the future of its library services should service reductions or closures be proposed i.e. anything less than pre-pandemic service levels. Will an impact study be completed so that wider social, environmental and economic implications can be considered before undertaking consultation with the community?

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

The current opening schedule of Plympton Library is not connected to Covid19, nor is it related to the various ways that services were provided at Plympton Library during the pandemic, including at times being closed, offering a Select and Collect service, and operating strict social distancing and other Covid health and safety protocols. Rather, Plympton Library opens now, in the main without Covid-related restrictions, according to available staffing resources.

When formulating and delivering library service strategies, in addition to the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964), by which local authorities are obligated by statute to 'provide a comprehensive and efficient library service' to all people who live, work or study in the area, councils have other legal obligations in respect of, for example, equalities and best value legislation. With this in mind, the most recent Plan for Libraries strategy, from which the last great change (including six closures) to library service in Plymouth took place in 2017, was carried out in accordance with the Council's statutory duties and involved an analysis of evidence around local needs and comprehensive public consultation. I am pleased to say that any future plans that include major changes to library strategy, which might concern, for example, alternative delivery models and changes to library locations, will be undertaken in the same way: according to various legal obligations; in consultation with communities; and through analysis of evidence-based local needs.


Signed:

Dated: 16/09/2022

This page is intentionally left blank

MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question Mark Coker
Date received by Chief Exec's Business Support: ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk
To the Cabinet Member for street scene and waste
Question the gateway to Plymouth the A38 is full of waste, rubbish when was it last cleaned and when is the next scheduled clean?
Answer: The Council are responsible for the cleansing of litter along the A38 section within the Local Authority boundary. This poses a significant challenge due to the safety implications for our staff. Earlier this year the Council completed a series of litter picks on section of the A38 including some of the slip ways working at times when lanes were closed for other works. In April a Highways company was commissioned to undertake the litter pick on our behalf to cover all remaining areas; this involved a series of overnight lane closures. This approach meant that our staff were free to focus on scheduled day work whilst the operatives undertaking the litter pick were fully trained highways workers and familiar with working in that environment. The full litter cleanse was completed in April 2022. A further litter pick was scheduled for late October / November 2022 with a view to take this approach every 6 months. However, as litter volumes are currently relatively low the Service are currently reviewing whether to postpone this to ensure value for money.
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 40%;"> <p>Signed: </p> </div> <div style="width: 40%; text-align: right;"> <p>Date: 16/09/2022</p> </div> </div>

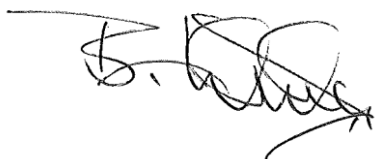
Written questions:

- must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer via the Chief Exec's Business Support
- will be replied to within 10 working days
- will be published on the last Friday of each month
- The completed form should be sent to ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk or by post to Chief Exec's Business Support, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ

This page is intentionally left blank

MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question Mark Coker	
Date received by Chief Exec's Business Support: ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk	
To the Cabinet Member for street scene and waste	
<p>Question</p> <p>Can you confirm that the contract to provide weed and vegetation is on target and confirm that all areas of the city have had their first sprays and the second is on schedule.</p>	
<p>Answer:</p> <p>The Council contracted a third party provider to undertake 2 x Citywide weed sprays in 2022. Unfortunately, the contractor secured substantially less staff than committed. This is a UK wide recruitment challenge with high vacancy rates across a number of sectors. Additionally, the very hot summer has had an impact as the extreme heat drastically reduces the impact of chemical treatment. Therefore, the first spray was only completed at the end of August.</p> <p>In order to bolster the spray a further contractor has been commissioned to undertake the second spray. This will mean up to 4 x the amount of operatives out spraying across the city and should significantly expedite the completion of the second spray. As both sets of contractors are paid on a per metre basis there is no duplication of cost.</p> <p>The second contractor will commence within the next 4-5 weeks, at which time we will be able to more accurately forecast the completion of the second spray. Albeit, please bear in mind wet weather will delay any spraying.</p> <p>In addition to chemical treatment, the Council also tackles weeds through manual removal, the use of our road sweepers and most recently the investment in 2 x mechanised weed rippers which are tackling larger weed growth in lanes and on footways across the city. The Council have also trialled various technologies such as burners and hot foam treatments – however, so far there is no reasonable alternative to chemical that provides a good balance of effectiveness, cost, staff resource and carbon emissions.</p>	
Signed:	Date: 16/09/2022
	

Written questions:

- must be submitted to the Monitoring Officer via the Chief Exec's Business Support
- will be replied to within 10 working days
- will be published on the last Friday of each month
- The completed form should be sent to ChiefExecutiveBusinessSupportUnit@plymouth.gov.uk or by post to Chief Exec's Business Support, Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Governance, HR, IT & Community Safety

Question:

Given that we are facing a cost of living crisis and our taxi drivers are already struggling with higher fuel cost are you still going to force through your policy on changing taxi livery? How are you going to support this cost? And do you consider the cost of the fact finding undertaken by Cllr Riley as good value for money?

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

The Taxi Fares (Taxi Tariff) for Hackney Carriages are set by the Council and this has been reviewed by Members at the Taxi Licensing Committee on 1.9.22. As a result, the table of fares will be updated and come into effect from 19 September. This is the second time this year that the tariff has been increased to ensure it considers the cost of living crisis and supports Plymouth's taxi trade to make a viable living.

The Council have found some funding towards the livery and this will be communicated to all Hackney Carriage Vehicle owners shortly.

I am not aware of any fact-finding costs incurred by Councillor Riley. A 12-week consultation was undertaken to ensure that everyone could comment on the proposed changes.

The white and green design of the livery is bright and easily identifiable and it is hoped this will improve customer safety especially in the evening and night-time economy. A liveried fleet assists members of the public to identify a hackney carriage that can be flagged anywhere. Customers will be reassured that they have hired a proper cab and not someone posing as a cab driver. The Council's CCTV department have also advised that at night, a clear defined taxi colour such as the white and green proposed, will help with identification, and will support clearer CCTV images.

The livery will therefore enhance public safety and security as customers can be confident that the taxi is properly licensed and meets the necessary safety standards especially vulnerable clients transported at night.

Signed:

Dated: 15 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Mark Shayer, Deputy Leader of Plymouth City Council

Question:

For 2 1/2 + years I have been unable to access my payslip. I've been sent links which don't work. I've reported this so many times and still nothing happens. The council are breaking the law by withholding payslips so what are you going to do to resolve this?

Response:

All employees and elected members have access to their payslips and notification of their allowances via the council's payroll provider system. Members are sent links to access the system by email. The council and payroll provider are unaware of links not working.

Guidance is being added to the 'Councillor Toolkit' area of the intranet and further training will be provided on how to access payslips via the system either virtually or face to face for anyone who requires it.

As a council we are committed to the corporate reduction plan which aims to be carbon neutral by 2030 and the non printing of payslips and for postage contributes to this ambition.

Signed:

Councillor Richard Bingley
on behalf of Councillor Mark Shayer

Dated: 23 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**Question submitted by: Councillor Terri Beer****To Cabinet Member:** Cllr Rebecca Smith, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Homes and Communities**Question:**

What are YOU going to do to protect Plympton Castle and other areas around the City from travellers? How much funding will you dedicate to the protection of Community spaces from travellers? When will YOU work towards getting a legal transit site for Plymouth to avoid huge clear up cost which City taxpayers have to pay?

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

Officers are arranging site meetings with Ward Councillors following an Unauthorised Encampment in their Ward. These meetings enable Cllrs alongside Community Connections and Street Services to discuss feasible options for further protecting the land. It also allows Officers to discuss funding with Ward Councillors and potential use of Community Development grants for this purpose.

Target Hardening measures are currently a shared cost between Corporate Property to repair damage done to entrance/exit points, Street Services where existing target hardening measures require replacing, Community Connections if further measures are identified and required.

It should be noted that target-hardening measures do not guarantee there will be no subsequent UE's at any site but work to mitigate the risk where we can.

Regular monitoring and review of appropriate land for a temporary stopping place is ongoing with Officers.

Signed:**Dated:** 7 September 2022

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Cllr Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Jonathan Drean, Cabinet Member for Transport

Question:

What is the cost of putting ticket machines into district car parks which will have a 2 hour restriction? What will it cost to change insisting machine to reduce time limits ie Mutley Plain? What will be the annual cost of tickets to fill the machines? Has it been costed to how much staff travel to car parks to enforce parking restrictions? Do we have enough staff to cover this or will recruit new staff and what will that costs? What cost impact will additional fuel to get staff to car parks cost?

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

The cost of a new parking machines through our existing suppliers are £3900 each installed, these can vary slightly based on the make and model chosen and the infrastructure onsite, the machine are all solar powered so require no expensive installation/energy costs. We would however also consider using our existing surplus stock and therefore reduce this to installation and configuration at approximately £230 per machine.

Plymouth City Council introduced a new parking machine supplier in 2018, this supplier allows officers to design and amend the tariffs of our machines and thus reduce our ongoing costs. These machines are used in the two Mutley Plain Car Parks, Whilst we cannot provide accurate costings due to fluctuations in materials, the signage changes would cost £130per car park and the staff time for configuration £52 (based on two hours to complete). Our current Mobile Phone Payment contract allows us to request a number of free amendments per year.

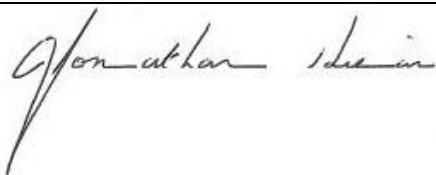
The intention is to be ticketless in these machines, this would therefore negate any costs for this aspect,

Plymouth City Council currently enforce both on street and off street parking in the district areas across our city, therefore there are regular patrols in these locations, the officers currently have to use maps and photographs of tyre valve markings to enable us to enforce in areas of limited waiting where there are no machines, this is costly and inefficient, it can take an officer over 2 hours to patrol a large car park, by using machines this will reduce the time significantly as the officer will only need to walk and scan each vehicle to ensure it has not overstayed,

Plymouth City Council have sufficient capacity within the Civil Enforcement Team to undertake these additional car parks, and whilst we are currently recruiting 5 new officers, this is to backfill vacant posts caused by retirement and relocation.

Plymouth City Council Parking Service drive a new fleet Electric Vehicles to support our commitment to the Climate Change Challenge, the cost for charging these cars is less than £1 per day.

Signed:



Dated: 5 September 2022

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

To Cabinet Member: Cllr Jonathan Drean, Cabinet Member for Transport

Question:

The tarmac industry is reporting a cost increase of 35% on materials. Is Plymouth suffering from this and what measures have been taken to reduce our costs and what impact does that have on our programme?

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

Whilst taking advantage of a group purchasing discount arrangement through our TMC, we have seen cost increases across a range of materials used in road maintenance. Some indicative increases are detailed below:

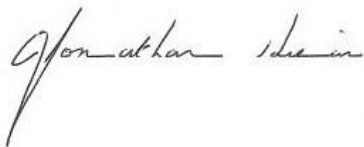
PAFI Works Category	Uplift to 2022/23 rates from previous year excluding any impact of Red Diesel Legislation*
01: Routine, Cyclic and Time-charge Works	4.67%
02: Renewals and Construction Works	9.03%
03: Professional Services	3.96%
04: Machine Surfacing	11.22%
05: Hand Surfacing / Patching	8.68%
06: Surface Dressing	20.61%
7: Road Markings	5.12%

As we are unable to purchase tarmac in advance we have introduced a variety of measures designed to offset or delay the impact of these increases, Surface Dressing and Micro-Asphalt road treatments use far less material than the traditional resurfacing techniques, and these two processes are being used in areas where such treatment is suitable.

Where storage has been available, Iron Work and Concrete products have been purchased in advance. We have pre-ordered 5000 street lighting columns to secure current price offering.

We continue to seek alternative treatments. We are receiving demonstrations of a 'Velocity' spray injection mobile unit that uses forced air, aggregate and emulsion to treat Highways defects. This should enable a speedy repair whilst using cold application – reducing costs and Carbon emissions, if successful in demonstration, we intend to trial this procedure.

Signed:



Dated: 5 September 2022

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**Question submitted by: Councillor Holloway****To Cabinet Member:** Cllr Bill Wakeham, Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene**Question:**

To ask the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene, how many cases of fly tipping have been reported in Drake ward for each month over the past year, and the status of those cases?

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

We do not hold flytipping data on a ward by ward basis. However, the team have looked at the raw data of the total number of reports received by Street Services in the PL4 postcode which include Drake Ward and other central parts of the city. Please be aware these are the raw reports from the public and therefore many of them will include waste on private land which we are not responsible, instances where not enough information is given to identify the location and also duplicates of the same flytipping where more than one resident will have reported it.

Please also be aware that of the 23 cases showing outstanding, it is likely a number of these have been resolved but not yet closed on our system. Whilst we can individually assess them, I'm always conscious of balancing the limited time our frontline team leaders have with their various duties.

Total reports in PL4 from June 2021 to May 2022 = 918 (23 are showing as open)*

**Data was pulled on 11 August 2022.*

Signed:**Dated:** 5 September 2022

This page is intentionally left blank