



Oversight and Governance

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MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: Charlotte Holloway

Date received: 10/24/2022 7:55:31 AM

To the Cabinet Member for: Deputy Leader and Finance and Economy: Cllr Mark Shayer

Question: To ask the Cabinet member for the Economy, what plans the city centre has to remove trees as part of the Armada Way renewal programme, and whether there will be any consultation on these plans?

Answer:

No one here takes the decision to remove trees lightly. Our initial request from the design team was to see how many healthy trees with good longevity could be kept, while creating the best overall plan for Armada Way. We will plant 147 new trees. This, combined with the other habitats being created by the scheme is a significant biodiversity gain of around of 22 per cent. Indeed, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) states that whilst there will be a negative impact in the short term to amenity, the replacement of the trees represents a significant investment in the future long term amenity of Armada Way, most notably increasing the resilience of the urban forest centre to a changing climate.

136 trees will be removed – 47 per cent are causing damage to the built environment and 42 per cent causing either minor or visually identifiable damage – mainly because they are trees unsuitable for an urban environment. They were planted in war time rubble, crushed aggregate and concrete, constrained within the 1980s landscaping which has reduced their lifespan due to lack of access to water and nutrients – this is clear from the heave of footways and landscape features

We had a tree survey undertaken in 2017 which showed that all but one tree in the area covered by the Armada Way scheme were classified as Category C – Low quality. We had an updated survey undertaken in 2021 to gain a fuller, more robust assessment of the trees which went above and beyond the British Standard for tree assessment. This was followed by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA). The figures below are from the latest Arboricultural Impact Assessment by YGS.

Tree category	A High quality	B Moderate	C Low quality	U - Unsuitable for retention- dead or dying
Removal	1	77	45 plus two tree groups	11

Other facts from YGS original tree survey (<https://new.plymouth.gov.uk/armada-way>)

- Only 22 per cent of the trees were considered suitable for long term retention
- 17 category A and B trees will be kept. These include the Sweet Gum trees in the Piazza and the large Tree of Heaven outside of the Cophorne Hotel.
- The planting conditions for these will be improved through a new planting specification.
- The new trees will be mature at planting, approximately 7 to 8 metres tall.
- The new trees will be planted with staggered lifespans to enable future replacement in phases so that large scale replacement in a short period of time will not be needed.
- We will look to reuse the timber from felled trees to create natural play spaces in the centre
- We will look to translocate 17 trees where possible and reuse healthy shrubs in our parks
- We will review locations for mitigation planting elsewhere in the city centre and surrounding areas

There was a public information event held on 29th September to review the plans and discuss the rationale for the tree removal and replacement. Around 200 people attended the event, with the majority of feedback being positive, particularly when the issue of the trees and their replacement in the context of the long-term success and sustainability of trees and the green environment along Armada Way. The written feedback has been added to the Council's website. This information event followed from the extensive 19-day consultation with public, stakeholders and Members which showed an 84% positive response to the Armada Way scheme.

Signed:

Date: 21 November 2022



QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Cllr Coker

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

Question: it states that a renewal of a disabled badge can take up to 12 weeks, currently can you tell me how many are outside of this sla?

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

Plymouth City Council administers the Blue Badge scheme for Plymouth residents on behalf of the Department for Transport who also maintain and own the application process which is only available online. If applicants are not able to apply themselves or access family or friend support, [Citizen's Advice Plymouth](#) or [Age UK Plymouth](#) have experience in helping.

Applicants can access face to face appointments on Thursdays at Central Library by contacting the Customer Hub.

The application process can take up to 12 weeks **once all information required has been supplied**, what we are experiencing is a number of applications where the documentation confirming identification or health conditions is not provided or does not meet the requirements which then causes delays. The PCC webpage messaging did not make this clear and this has now been updated.

Some applicants are automatically eligible due to receiving certain health benefits or confirmed health conditions and upon PCC receiving the correct documentation a Blue Badge can be issued; we are completing this within 12 weeks.

Applicants who are not automatically eligible will need to be further medically assessed and currently PCC refer these applicants to Access Independent, who employ occupational therapists to consider health related eligibility assessments on behalf of local authorities and NHS CCGs. Access Independent will determine from the information provided in the application whether to arrange a desktop assessment, face to face clinical assessment or request further medical information to consider eligibility.

We are currently experiencing delays and have requested to meet with Access Independent to discuss this further. Access Independent are stating delays are due to an increase in applications since the lifting of Covid restrictions and reporting referrals have nearly doubled in September and October compared to previous months and are recruiting additional staff to address this.

Assessment action	SLA	Access Independent (AI) Oldest referral awaiting outcome
Desk-based assessment	5 working day	35 working days – all have been allocated to an assessor
Face to face clinical assessments	15 working days	103 working days – this relates to one referral which is awaiting information from the client The next longest referrals are at is 44 working days of which many applicants have not shown up to planned appointments and AI are following up
Further information	Request to be sent within 5 working days once received, desk-based assessment within 5 working days	90 working days

In addition, we are aware that some applicants receiving their Blue Badge have been impacted by the Royal Mail strikes.

Blue Badge volumes:

Period/Year	Applications received	Referred for assessment	% Referred for assessment	Approved	Declined	% Declined
2022 (18/10/2022)	4876	790	16%	560	230	41%
2021	5225	1454	28%	1142	312	27%
2020	4394	1296	29%	1007	289	29%
2019	5278	643	12%	460	183	40%
2018	5173	2199	43%	1956	243	12%

Signed:



Dated: 15 November 2022

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Cllr Coker

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

Question: i am getting requests from residents that they can have over an hours wait from the call centre, can you tell us the wating times over the last month and why this is happening and what plans are in place to rectify this problem.

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

The Contact Centre within the Finance Service and Customer Hub within the Business Support Service currently offers first point of contact telephone and email enquiries for:

- Enquiry Line
- Waste and Streets
- Adult Social Care
- Children Social Care
- Council Tax
- Housing Benefits
- Corporate Property
- Roads and Pavements
- Community Connection
- Care Billing
- Registration
- Parking and Public Transport
- Public Protection
- Electoral Services
- ACSS Firmstep
- Building Control
- CTAX £150 rebate

Between 1st April 2022 and 31st October 2022 across both teams there were 167,655 calls of which 102,132 (61%) were answered.

The tables below show performance by month and offer between 1st July and 31st October 2022.

The Customer Hub Staff within the Business Support Service support all lines except Housing Benefit and Council Tax lines. 4 years ago, the staff resources were at the level of 30 FTE currently they are now at approx. 15 FTE.

The Service prioritises calls for ASC, Children Services, homelessness, foodbank requests and election calls over non-priority lines such as general enquires, waste and streets etc therefore the overall % of calls answered are brought down by the reduced answer rate for the non-priority lines.

Due to reduced staff resources in the Customer Hub, increase demand and the impact this is having on performance levels, a review of the current operating model has taken place. This review proposes that staff resources are focused on meeting the needs of those needing to access priority/statutory services or customers who are vulnerable and digitally excluded, while supporting those wishing to make payments and promoting online services for all other services.

		Time in seconds	Time in seconds	Time in seconds
Month Starting:	July-2022			

Split/Skill	Answered Calls	% Answered Calls	Avg Speed Ans	Max Wait	Avg Call Time
Totals	13907	56.28	880	11856	322
Enquiry Line	747	29.9	1051	11856	164
Waste and Streets	1003	34.46	1237	10796	223
Adult Social Care	1925	62.64	928	4213	402
Children Social Care	1473	60.69	922	4048	210
Council Tax	2431	55.24	1387	4723	452
Housing Benefits	858	58.61	1202	6543	412
Corporate Property	22	84.62	409	3146	237
Roads and Pavements	311	74.94	359	4739	281
Community Connection	2099	70.11	424	10799	300
Care Billing	264	60.83	1098	4811	401
Registration	112	52.34	618	4335	169
Parking and PubTrans	1022	62.66	604	6379	273
Public Protection	57	59.38	383	3481	333
Electoral Services	223	92.92	121	482	244
Keyham Support	1	100	100	100	60
ACSS Firmstep	25	53.19	295	2383	121
Test Trace Payment	0	0	0	0	0
Building Control	286	60.85	355	2590	233
CTAX £150 rebate	1048	76.66	497	4301	306

Month Starting:

August-2022

Split/Skill	Answered Calls	% Answered Calls	Avg Speed Ans	Max Wait	Avg Call Time
Totals	14538	51.4	1000	11667	332
Enquiry Line	806	25.55	1177	11667	210
Waste and Streets	1369	40.28	1029	11514	325
Adult Social Care	2020	66.36	763	7230	415

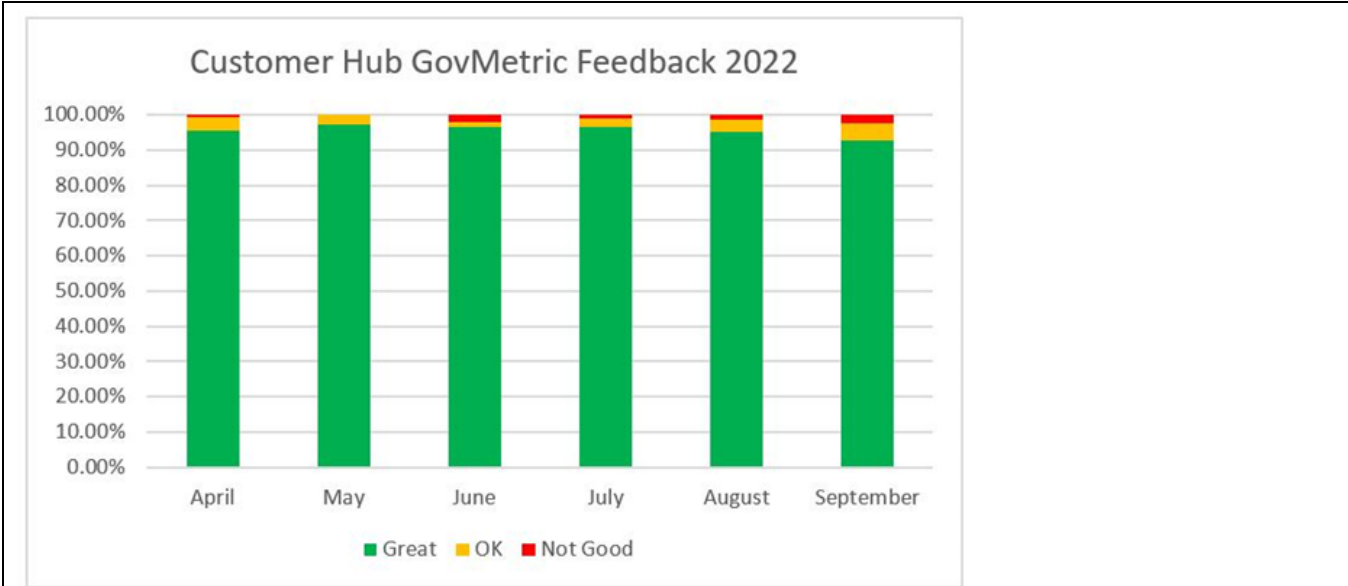
Children Social Care	1210	57.24	868	5573	228
Council Tax	1940	52.47	1631	5671	442
Housing Benefits	757	37.09	2616	8301	459
Corporate Property	2	50	756	1469	119
Roads and Pavements	188	40.17	759	6851	378
Community Connection	1909	59.03	638	9614	339
Care Billing	262	60.23	1123	5246	337
Registration	85	35.42	829	6158	182
Parking and PubTrans	914	41.55	1184	11226	297
Public Protection	58	29.74	877	6506	324
Electoral Services	448	88.54	202	1276	250
ACSS Firmstep	42	36.21	688	6037	126
Building Control	189	34.3	901	7181	333
CTAX £150 rebate	2339	81.05	553	2693	255

Month Starting:	September-2022				
Split/Skill	Answered Calls	% Answered Calls	Avg Speed Ans	Max Wait	Avg Call Time
Totals	11878	55.32	946	10749	335
Enquiry Line	717	29.49	1128	10749	253
Waste and Streets	699	34.47	1128	9484	321
Adult Social Care	1890	67.52	688	4074	390
Children Social Care	1517	60.97	739	3705	207
Council Tax	1580	53.56	1977	5943	464
Housing Benefits	745	44.06	2242	5869	477
Corporate Property	6	46.15	954	2760	188
Roads and Pavements	203	56.39	531	5897	306
Community Connection	2096	73.62	424	7317	337
Care Billing	233	65.08	898	6974	372
Registration	130	51.59	536	4997	119
Parking and PubTrans	1072	58.07	774	7613	273
Public Protection	43	49.43	489	2117	240

Electoral Services	265	89.23	166	1035	255
ACSS Firmstep	31	60.78	419	3085	316
Building Control	239	45.01	686	5202	306
CTAX £150 rebate	412	93.21	169	1718	252

Month Starting:	October-2022				
Split/Skill	Answered Calls	% Answered Calls	Avg Speed Ans	Max Wait	Avg Call Time
Totals	11031	58.26	870	16043	336
Enquiry Line	700	32.65	891	16043	236
Waste and Streets	573	37.4	1075	11155	286
Adult Social Care	1958	74.03	573	4050	364
Children Social Care	1452	68.59	496	3637	215
Council Tax	1508	50.86	2100	5998	495
Housing Benefits	665	44.54	2225	5745	431
Corporate Property	7	77.78	393	839	289
Roads and Pavements	250	67.93	338	3279	351
Community Connection	2002	75.07	318	5117	357
Care Billing	231	68.96	691	7191	326
Registration	120	57.42	645	4250	128
Parking and PubTrans	1091	63.84	664	4629	263
Public Protection	49	60.49	480	4579	316
Electoral Services	195	90.7	124	1033	256
ACSS Firmstep	25	55.56	408	2012	293
Building Control	205	51.38	596	5522	303
CTAX £150 rebate	0	0	0	0	0

Customer Satisfaction Survey: April 2022 – September 2022



Signed:

Dated: 15 November 2022

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

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

Question:

How many prosecutions for fly tipping have been made against individuals in 2020, 2021 and 2022?

Response:

Fly tipping is enforced in a number of different ways, ranging from issuing a legal caution, a fixed penalty notice (FPN) for the unauthorised deposit of waste or prosecution. Prosecution is more appropriate where there are serious offences, or when a person has chosen not to pay an FPN.

Fly tipping can be anything from a single black bag to a large deposit of waste. In Plymouth, most of the issues observed are from 'rear lane' type incidents rather than large-scale commercial fly tipping.

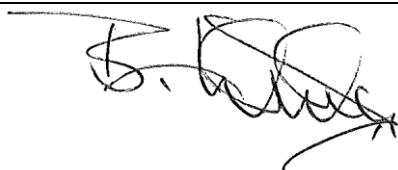
Legislation enables several different types of FPN to be used to tackle waste, and the two most closely associated with rear lane type incidents are for littering and the unauthorised deposit of waste (often referred to as fly tipping). A third type is also used for duty of care offences, either where a householder or a business does not look after their waste appropriately.

Numbers of FPN's issued by Plymouth City Council are published on the webpages, [Number of Fixed Penalty Notices \(FPN\) issued | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

The recipient of an FPN can choose to pay an FPN, in lieu of prosecution, and FPN's are intended to deal with low-level environmental offences.

In relation to prosecutions, the data below includes rear lane incidents for littering and the unauthorised deposit of waste but both types are linked to what we typically call fly tipping. These figures do not include cigarette butt incidents.

Prosecutions for type of offence	2020	2021	2022 to 31/10/22
Littering of waste	3	13	12
Fly tipping	5	9	8
Totals	8	22	20 to 31/10/22

Signed:

Dated: 8th November 2022

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

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

Question:

How many fly tipping events have been collected this year and what tonnage of waste has been collected?

Response:

So far in this calendar year (up to September 30th) the team have recorded 4496 instances where they have collected flytipping. The vast majority are from rear lanes and each location within a lane is treated as an individual incident, so a single visit to a specific lane may result in multiple incidents. This equates to 439 tonnes.

Signed:

Dated: 8th November 2022

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Jonathan Drean

Question:

During the wet weather of the night of 2nd nov' can you tell me how many extra teams of highways workers were used and the additional cost of this operation to clear blocked drains and gullies due to the leaf fall not being swept up?

Response:

The number and cost of call-outs on Wednesday 2 November 2022 is laid out below:

24 call-outs
2x2man team plus van
2x Gulley Pumps each with 2man
1x TM vehicle c/w 2man team
Total Cost - £5909.36

There are a number of reasons why drains may not function correctly – these vary from a build-up of silt, leaf-fall and drains that are ill suited to the current rainfall, which has increased in volume and severity – a situation being experienced nationally, but especially, here in the South West. Furthermore, the night of 2 November was also stormy/windy and it is likely that much of the leaf fall occurred that evening, and could therefore not be swept up in time.

Signed:

Dated:

14/11/2022

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**Question submitted by: Councillor Mark Coker****To Cabinet Member:** Councillor Bill Wakeham**Question:**

Again on the night of 2nd november highways were called to many locations around the city to deal with major flooding issues, almost of these i am told were due to leaf fall.what actions did you take prior to the night to make sure that leaf fall was cleared, were all the hot spots and known flooding areas swept before as in line with the last street scene and highways flooding plan?

Response:

Leaf fall is a major challenge, annually over 150 tonnes of leaves are removed from Plymouth carriageways to help prevent flooding and slip hazards for both vehicles and pedestrians. This is a constant battle over the autumn and early winter period, often areas fully cleansed of leaves and can then be completely covered in leaves within a very short period of time – especially during high winds.

The highways designated flooding hot spot areas were all swept in the lead up to the 2nd November, Monday 31st through to Wednesday 2nd. However, our Highways colleagues have confirmed that some of the locations that flooded were not the usual hotspots. With high winds and rain on the evening of 2 November it's quite likely a large proportion of leaves would have fallen over the course of that evening. Highways and cleansing staff work closely to coordinate resources during times of severe weather, and have since discussed this evening and options to improve our approach in future.

Signed: Councillor Bill Wakeham**Dated:** 18 November 2022

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**Question submitted by: Councillor George Wheeler****To Cabinet Member:** Councillor Jonathan Drea**Question:**

There are three transport schemes currently nearing implementation that are affecting St Budeaux Square; they are the Interchange, the cycle route and the Hub, the latter being a Beryl bike stand in this case. I am pleased that officers are still open to concerns about environmental and other issues so that we may get the best scheme that can be provided, rather than a rushed one that misses opportunities for improvement. However, the bus shelters that used to be on the in-bound side of the Square were removed in August. This has left bus passengers with nowhere to shelter or rest while they wait for their bus and no information system, long before work on the project was ready to begin. Can you tell me why the shelters were removed so early, please?

Response:

Thank you for your query. I apologise for the inconvenience that the absence of shelters at St Budeaux Square is currently causing.

The proposed design will bring new shelters, new signage, improved public realm, new planting and space to accommodate the new Mobility Hub's E-Bikes. We are investing just over £2m on St Budeaux Square to bring some needed modernisation to the heart of St Budeaux and Barne Barton.

It is crucial that the shelters are not in situ when construction begins so that the works can commence and the new shelters can be installed. The dates for the removal works had to be booked in advance as there is a long lead in time of approximately three months with JC Decaux for their removal. The project team's intention had been to start construction shortly after the shelters were removed but the scheme was subsequently delayed due to complications with the site compound location and delays in obtaining utility information.

By the time the project manager understood that there would be a delay to the scheme the shelter had been removed. At present, the programme sees the commencement of construction of the transport improvements early in the New Year.

A temporary shelter is not a viable option because this would take over three months procure and install and a very short time later would need to be removed. In addition, this would be a significant pressure on the scheme funding when external pressures are already being placed on capital projects.

Signed: Councillor Jonathan Drea**Dated: 21/11/2022**

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Holloway

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Richard Bingley, the Leader

Question:

To ask the Leader, (i) if there is a clear action plan on delivering the VAWG Commission's recommendations (ii) which areas the council sees itself as having responsibility for (iii) what resources the council is committing to their implementation and (iv) who is responsible and the timescales for delivery?

Response:

(i) if there is a clear action plan on delivering the VAWG Commission's recommendations

Yes an initial Plan has been drafted providing details about how the specific recommendations will be delivered. The plan outlines the key delivery partners. Safer Plymouth, supported by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board is providing the overall leadership and direction for the co-ordinated city wide delivery of the recommendations. Implementation of the Plan will be co-ordinated through a specific VAWG Strategic Lead post that is currently being recruited to.

(ii) which areas the council sees itself as having responsibility for

The recommendations are for the City and therefore the Council has a responsibility in the delivery of each of the recommendations in its capacity, as an employer; as an organisation; as a commissioner of services; and, as a partner organisation across numerous partnership areas including Safer Plymouth.

A brief example of some of the work currently underway includes:-

- Leading work around an annual programme of communications – including a conference at the end of November
- Re-procurement of specialist domestic abuse services to ensure that women and girls who have been subjected to male violence get the support they need
- Developing a co-ordinated response to men and boys who are violent or abusive and cause harm ensuring that they get the help they need to change their behaviours
- Delivering healthy relationships work in schools to reduce harmful behaviours
- Engaging with businesses and organisations across the city to develop a Violence Against Women and Girls Charter Mark Scheme
- Providing leadership for a Male Allyship Network established to challenge sexist and misogynistic behaviours and cultures

(iii) what resources the council is committing to their implementation

As a statutory partner in the Community Safety Partnership; Safer Plymouth, the council supports specifically across the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence and VAWG agenda with subject matter expert posts in Community Connections, Public Health and Strategic Commissioning supporting delivery across this agenda.

(iv) who is responsible and the timescales for delivery

On recruitment, the VAWG Strategic Lead will work closely with the subject matter experts and take responsibility for the plan and activity driving the commission recommendations forwards. Currently, the existing officers are working with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board to develop the plans and delivery.

Signed:

Richard Bingley

Dated: 10 November 2022

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