



Oversight and Governance

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CABINET

Monday 12 January 2026

2.00 pm

Council House, Plymouth

Members:

Councillor Evans OBE, Chair

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair

Councillors Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Cresswell, Haydon, Lowry, Penberthy, Stephens and Taylor.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

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Tracey Lee

Chief Executive

Cabinet

Agenda

Part I (Public Meeting)

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence submitted by Cabinet Members.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cabinet Members will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

3. Minutes

(Pages 1 - 18)

To sign and confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 08 December 2025.

4. Questions from the Public

To receive questions from the public in accordance with the Constitution.

Questions, of no longer than 50 words, can be submitted to the Democratic Support Unit, Plymouth City Council, Ballard House, Plymouth, PL1 3BJ, or email to democraticservices@plymouth.gov.uk. Any questions must be received at least five clear working days before the date of the meeting.

5. Chair's Urgent Business

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

Items for decision

6. Draft Budget Report 2026/27

(To Follow)

7. Commemorations and Celebrations Policy

(Pages 19 - 46)

Items for discussion

8. Care Quality Commission Inspection update

(Verbal Report)

9. Building Plymouth 10 Year Anniversary

(Verbal Report)

Items for noting

- 10. Leader's Announcements**
- 11. Cabinet Member Updates**
- 12. LGA Update:**

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Cabinet

Monday 8 December 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

Councillors Aspinall, Briars-Delve, Dann, Lowry, Cresswell and Stephens.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Haydon and Penberthy

Also in attendance: Si Bellamy (Chief Operating Officer), Mark Braund (BDP), Liz Bryant (Service Director for Legal Services), Glenn Caplin-Grey (Strategic Director of Place Mark Collings (Strategic Commissioning Manager), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Louise Ford (Head of Commissioning), Karlina Hall (Senior Commissioning Officer), James Harrison (Atkins Realis), Rachel Hawadi (Senior Project Manager), David Haley (Director of Children's Services), Martin Hoar (Fleet Services Manager), Camille James (City Centre Regeneration Co-ordinator) (Virtual), Kate Lattimore (Commissioning Officer), Tracey Lee (Chief Executive), Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health), Nick Powell (Aecom), Andy Sharp (Interim Service Director for Street Services), Jamie Sheldon (Senior Governance Advisor), Chris Squire (Service Director HR & OD), Paul Stephens (Senior Performance Advisor), Clare Stirling (Livewell Southwest), Ian Trisk-Grove (Service Director for Finance), Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities) and Emma Wilson (Head of Regeneration and Growth).

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.34 pm.

Note: The full discussion can be viewed on the webcast of the City Council meeting at 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.

61. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

62. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

63. Questions from the Public

There were no questions from members of the public.

64. Chair's Urgent Business

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

65. **Civic Centre**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the Civic Centre update and discussed:

- a) The Civic Centre project had faced delays due to various issues, but these had now been resolved, and the project was progressing positively;
- b) The building was now fully secure, and unauthorised access had been addressed;
- c) Homes England had confirmed funding of £18.4 million to move the project forward;
- d) The first phase of asbestos removal had been completed, enabling surveys and structural assessments to proceed, expected to conclude by February 2026;
- e) New branding had been installed outside the building to communicate the vision for redevelopment;
- f) Extensive public engagement had been undertaken, with feedback to be shared during the meeting;
- g) The building was listed and could not be demolished, making redevelopment essential and exciting for the city.

Emma Wilson (Head of Regeneration and Growth), Mark Braund (Architect Director, BDP) and James Harrison (Designer, Atkins Realis) added:

- a) The design team brought significant experience in delivering award-winning regeneration projects;
- b) Mark Braund had a strong track record in housing and regeneration and was passionate about transforming this landmark building;
- c) James Harrison had extensive experience across multiple sectors and had worked on major Plymouth projects including City College and Devonport Dockyard;
- d) The project aimed to submit a planning application early in the new year, 2026;
- e) The redevelopment would deliver 144 new homes as part of Homes England funding and integrate City College Plymouth facilities;
- f) The design sought to remove unsympathetic additions and restore original modernist principles;
- g) The podium level would house City College spaces, with residential units above and a proposed commercial use on the roof;
- h) The building was classified as high-rise under the Building Safety Act, requiring compliance with gateways and installation of a new lift;

- i) Sustainability was central, with reuse of existing assets and integration of modern ventilation and heat recovery systems;
- j) The design incorporated the Fibonacci sequence and original architectural language to respect heritage;
- k) Proposed homes would be bespoke, space-standard compliant, and include exposed waffle ceilings for loft-style living;
- l) The scheme aimed to create vibrant ground-floor activity and improved public realm;
- m) A new Blue-Green Skills Hub would deliver training for future industries, including offshore wind, sustainable energy, and electric transport;
- n) The hub would offer around 60 courses, supporting 2,000 learners annually;
- o) Design drivers included access, active frontages, community connectivity, and integration with the historic building;
- p) Plans featured large workshop spaces, immersive digital technology rooms, and atrium-linked classrooms;
- q) The ground floor would include a college square, restaurant, and spa operated by the college;
- r) Phase zero (asbestos removal and site security) was complete;
- s) Structural surveys were underway and due to finish in February;
- t) The team was concluding evaluation of the pre-contractor services agreement and progressing through RIBA stages;
- u) Public engagement had attracted 13,000 website visitors, 250,000 social media views, and 207 survey responses;
- v) 66% supported redevelopment, with young people particularly positive;
- w) Concerns included cost, value for money, high-rise homes, affordability, gentrification, structural condition, parking, and timescales.

In response to questions, the Cabinet discussed:

- x) Members expressed enthusiasm for the project and its potential to regenerate the city and deliver economic benefits;
- y) The importance of accessibility, including lift provision to the top floor, was welcomed;
- z) Suggestions included naming the rooftop café “A Room with a View” and ensuring active frontages to engage the community;

- aa) Members praised the integration of learning spaces and the visibility of engineering activities to inspire young people;
- bb) Officers confirmed plans for an open day in January for members, officers, and press to view the building;
- cc) The project was recognised as an exemplar of city living and a catalyst for further development;
- dd) Tribute was paid to the project team for assembling a £36 million grant package and achieving significant progress within nine months.

66. **The Director of Public Health Annual Report: The Health and Wellbeing of Women in Plymouth**

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the report and discussed:

- a) The Director of Public Health had a statutory duty to produce an independent annual report on the health of the population, and the Council had a duty to publish it;
- b) This was the first annual report from Professor Steve Madden, marking his first year in post;
- c) The theme of the report was the health and well-being of women and girls in Plymouth, highlighting that while women lived longer than men, they spent significantly more years in poor health;
- d) The report was a call to action for councillors, partners, and residents to tackle inequalities and help women in Plymouth to thrive;
- e) The Government was expected to commission a similar report focusing on men in due course.

Professor Steve Madden (Director of Public Health) presented the report and highlighted:

- f) Women in Plymouth lived longer than men but spent more years in poor health, making this an issue of equity, dignity, and opportunity;
- g) Female life expectancy in Plymouth was 82.4 years, close to the national average, but healthy life expectancy was only 55.7 years, nearly six years below the English average;
- h) Thousands of women were living long lives but spent up to 27 years in ill health;
- i) The report was structured around the four petals of the Thrive Plymouth programme: Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Places, and Healthy Communities;

- j) Evidence included quantitative data and qualitative insight from 27 Plymouth women who participated in listening circles facilitated by Improving Lives Plymouth;
- k) Key findings included:
 - i. Only 67.6% of women in Plymouth could expect to live in good health compared to 74.5% nationally;
 - ii. Over 36,000 women in Plymouth were likely to experience harassment each year;
 - iii. One in five women were considered disabled under the Equalities Act;
 - iv. 80% of women employed in Plymouth earned below the national median salary;
 - v. 1,330 young women were not in work or education, significantly higher than male peers;
- l) Mental health was a major concern, with nearly 20,000 women estimated to experience common mental health problems;
- m) Violence against women and girls remained a national priority with profound impacts on health;
- n) Women reported barriers to accessing healthcare including long waits for gynaecological treatment, limited menopause support, and difficulty securing GP appointments, often feeling unheard or dismissed;
- o) The report called for action to strengthen trauma-informed services, improve access to screening and contraception, address gender pay gaps, support women into education and employment, and create safer public spaces;
- p) Councillors were asked to consider how their portfolios could contribute to tackling these challenges;
- q) Improving the health of women and girls was a shared responsibility across the Council and partners.

In response to questions, the Cabinet discussed:

- r) Members welcomed the report and emphasised the need for collective action to improve outcomes for women and girls;
- s) It was noted that existing strategies already addressed some issues, including initiatives under the Thrive Active agenda to encourage girls' participation in sport, which had long-term benefits for health and family activity levels;
- t) Work was ongoing with economic development and employers to close the gender pay gap and improve household finances;

- u) The Council had led cultural change initiatives, including the “Man Culture” programme, and supported charities working with women with complex needs;
- v) Members highlighted the importance of access to green and blue spaces for mental health and the role of the Nature Plan in improving this;
- w) Concerns were raised about menopause support and the need for GP and health services to engage more effectively, including offering community-based clinics;
- x) The report’s finding that 13 women each month died from preventable causes was described as shocking and required urgent attention;
- y) Members agreed that progress should be reviewed in 12 months to assess improvements.

The Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the content of the Director of Public Health Annual Report;
2. To consider the final reflections and how they can be supported;
3. To acknowledge the contributions from women in the city and the organisations that support them;
4. To commit to considering what more needs to be done to improve the health and well-being of women and girls in Plymouth.

67. **Corporate Plan Monitoring Report Quarter Two**

Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader of the Council, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) introduced the Corporate Plan and highlighted:

- a) The report covered performance for the second quarter of 2025/26, from July to September 2025;
- b) Public confidence in reporting antisocial behaviour had risen significantly, with 354 incidents reported in Quarter 2 compared to 102 a year earlier, reflecting the success of awareness campaigns and community engagement;
- c) Early intervention strategies continued to prevent escalation of antisocial behaviour issues, supporting safer communities;
- d) Operational delivery on highways maintenance remained strong, with carriageway works consistently achieving 96% to 100% on-time completion rates;
- e) Over 3,750 square metres of pavement improvements had been completed in the six months to September, demonstrating commitment to improving public infrastructure;

- f) Planning performance remained high, with 100% of major applications determined on time and no planning appeals overturned during the period;
- g) Housing delivery had slowed slightly, and unlocking stalled developments remained a priority for the Council;
- h) Educational outcomes continued to improve, with 94% of primary schools and 84% of secondary schools now rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted;
- i) The Council was particularly focused on improving attendance at secondary schools through its place-based working and belonging strategy;
- j) While strong progress had been made in many areas, ongoing challenges remained, particularly around health service pressures, NHS dental access, and housing delivery, which required continued partnership working.

In response to questions, the Cabinet discussed:

- k) The importance of accelerating housing delivery, noting that fewer homes had been built this year than in previous years, making it critical to progress initiatives with Homes England to deliver more homes across the city, including the city centre;
- l) Thousands of people remained on the housing waiting list, reinforcing the urgency of improving delivery;
- m) Members highlighted the positive performance in highways and planning but raised concerns about public perception of street conditions and traffic flow;
- n) It was noted that traffic flow remained a challenge, and members discussed the need to boost public transport and explore behavioural change;
- o) The report was recognised as an honest assessment of successes and areas needing improvement, demonstrating the Council's commitment to transparency and accountability.

The Cabinet agreed:

- I. To note the Corporate Plan Monitoring Report, Quarter Two of 2025/26.

68. **Council Tax Base Setting 2026/27 and Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27**

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the Council Tax Base Setting 2026/27 and Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/27 report and discussed:

- a) The council tax base represented the estimated number of Band D equivalent properties within the city and was a key component in determining the level of council tax for the coming year;

- b) The calculation incorporated assumptions on collection rates and adjustments for discounts and exemptions, including those arising from the Council Tax Support Scheme;
- c) For 2026/27, the recommended council tax base was 76,887 Band D equivalent dwellings, reflecting an increase of approximately 330 properties compared to the previous year's figure;
- d) This growth was primarily attributed to a modest increase in the number of chargeable dwellings and adjustments for long-term empty property premiums;
- e) The calculation assumed a prudent collection rate of 97.5%, based on recent performance and economic conditions;
- f) The council tax base also incorporated discounts and exemptions, including those arising from the Council Tax Support Scheme, which continued to provide vital assistance to households on low income, with around 20% of households currently receiving support;
- g) In addition to the main Council Tax Support Scheme, the Council operated a discretionary Exceptional Hardship Fund to support residents facing severe financial difficulty;
- h) The fund provided temporary help where support did not fully cover council tax liability, offering relief in exceptional circumstances such as ill health or sudden income changes;
- i) Following a review in 2025, the Council decided not to make any changes to either scheme, ensuring stability for residents and maintaining administrative efficiency;
- j) The cost of the overall scheme was expected to remain within the financial envelope, with increased cost driven primarily by the rise in council tax rather than growth in claimant numbers;
- k) The Government had recently completed a consultation on modernising and improving the administration of council tax. Views were sought from the Council and residents, and updates on proposed changes were awaited. The Council would continue to monitor developments and provide updates when announced;
- l) The report would be presented to Full Council in January for approval.

In response to questions, the Cabinet discussed:

- m) Appreciation was expressed to Ian Trisk-Grove (Service Director for Finance) for his diligent and committed work with Cabinet, acknowledging the challenges of the subject matter and wishing him for the future.

The Cabinet agreed:

1. To recommend a council tax base for 2026/27 of 76,887 Band D equivalent dwellings, as set out in the report;
2. To continue the current Council Tax Support Scheme and Exceptional Hardship Scheme for 2026/27 with no changes.

69. **The Food Waste Collection Project**

Councillor Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change) introduced the report and discussed:

- a) Plymouth had historically been behind the curve on food waste compared to regional neighbours, but significant progress had been made to prepare for the statutory requirement announced by Government;
- b) Food waste was currently incinerated at the Energy from Waste plant between Devonport and St Budeaux, which was inefficient because food was approximately 70% water and required more energy to burn;
- c) Separating food waste for processing through anaerobic digestion would create beneficial by-products such as renewable energy, biogas, and fertiliser;
- d) Fun facts were shared to illustrate benefits: nine recycled banana peels could generate enough electricity to charge a laptop, and one caddy load of food waste could power a home for almost an hour;
- e) Plymouth's phased roll-out of food waste collections would begin in March 2026, delivered in five phases, starting with selected areas of Devonport, Plympton, Plymstock, Stoke, Southway, and Whitleigh;
- f) Phase one would cover approximately one-fifth of the city, chosen to represent a diverse mix of property types and communities to maximise learning;
- g) A postcode checker had been developed to help residents confirm whether they were included in phase one;
- h) Plymouth had the simplest household recycling system in the UK, and the new service would only add one small caddy to existing bin days, maintaining the same collection day for convenience;
- i) Residents would receive an outdoor caddy, an optional kitchen caddy, and a starter roll of liners;
- j) A new team of four officers had been appointed to lead recycling engagement with communities, schools, and local groups;
- k) Concerns raised on social media about smell were addressed: food waste would be collected weekly instead of fortnightly, and caddies would have lockable lids to contain odours;

- l) The service would be primarily funded by national Government as a statutory requirement, with three stages of funding:
 - i. Stage 1: Nearly £2 million capital funding for vehicles and containers;
 - ii. Stage 2: Transitional revenue funding of just over £0.5 million for distribution and engagement;
 - iii. Stage 3: New burdens funding for staff, vehicle operating costs, haulage, and disposal, with final confirmation awaited;
- m) Government investment had enabled Plymouth to deliver the service without significant local cost, saving the Council thousands of pounds through early vehicle procurement;
- n) The initiative would increase recycling rates, reduce emissions, and help families save money by reducing food waste.

Rachel Hawaidi (Senior Project Manager) and Andy Sharp (Interim Service Director for Street Services) added:

- o) The project was driven by legislation and mirrored similar initiatives across 170 local authorities in England;
- p) Ten vehicles and containers had already been procured, with containers made from recycled material and recyclable at end-of-life;
- q) Food waste would be processed via anaerobic digestion, producing biogas and electricity, supporting Plymouth's Net Zero Action Plan;
- r) Recycling rates were expected to rise significantly, citing Cornwall's increase from 34% to 44% following similar changes;
- s) Processing food waste via anaerobic digestion was approximately one-third cheaper than incineration at the Energy from Waste site;
- t) Funding assumptions included £600,000 for 2026/27 and £800,000 for future years, against a total forecast cost of £4.2 million over four years, with a slight net improvement against base budget;
- u) Phase one areas were confirmed: Devonport, Plympton, Plymstock, Stoke, Southway, and Whitleigh, selected to reflect varied demographics and property types;
- v) Phase one would begin with container distribution in early 2026, followed by collections starting in March, with subsequent phases running through to November;
- w) Engagement plans included school visits, roadshows, supermarket stands, and a proposed display at The Box, using mascots, games, and props to make learning interactive and fun;

- x) Clear leaflets would be provided to explain what could and could not be placed in caddies, including surprising items such as tea bags and coffee grounds.

In response to questions, the Cabinet discussed:

- y) Schools were already engaged and enthusiastic, with pupils showing strong interest in sustainability;
- z) Missed collections would not be recollected due to cost and environmental considerations; residents could hold waste or use brown bins;
- aa) Clear guidance would be issued on acceptable items, including organic material, peelings, bones, and fish scraps, while discouraging oils;
- bb) Five phases had been planned internally, but only phase one had been published to allow learning and adjustments before subsequent roll-outs;
- cc) Residents would receive significant notice before their phase, including postcards and targeted social media adverts;
- dd) Members praised the imaginative engagement strategy and welcomed the long-overdue introduction of food waste recycling.

The Cabinet agreed:

- I. To approve the Revenue Business Case and associated phased roll out of Plymouth City Council's Household Food Waste Collection service.

70. **Plymouth City-wide All-age Unpaid Carers Strategy 2025 - 2027**

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the report and discussed:

- a) The strategy represented a shared commitment across Plymouth to ensure unpaid carers were recognised and valued for their vital contribution;
- b) The vision was to create a community where carers were acknowledged as essential partners in care, their contributions celebrated, and their needs fully supported;
- c) The strategy was co-produced by Plymouth City Council, Livewell Southwest, University Hospitals Plymouth, St Luke's Hospice, Improving Lives Plymouth, and unpaid carers themselves, ensuring lived experience shaped priorities;
- d) The document was more than a strategy; it was a pledge to work collaboratively to make Plymouth a carer-friendly city.

Louise Ford (Head of Commissioning for Adults and Children's Services) presented the strategy and highlighted:

- e) The strategy covered all ages, including adult and young carers, and reflected the voice of carers throughout;
- f) It set out clear priorities for supporting carers, with an implementation plan and governance through the Carer Strategic Partnership Board.

Claire Sterling (Patient Experience Manager, Livewell Southwest) and Carlina Hall (Senior Commissioning Officer, Plymouth City Council) added:

- g) The strategy aimed to support unpaid carers of all ages and backgrounds, creating an inclusive environment and guiding decision-making;
- h) A carer was defined as anyone, including children and adults, who looked after a family member, partner, or friend needing help due to illness, frailty, disability, mental health problems, or addiction, without payment;
- i) Key facts included:
 - i. Women had a 50/50 chance of providing care by age 46; men by age 57;
 - ii. Plymouth had over 23,000 carers based on the last census;
 - iii. The 2025 school census identified 846 young carers, with a further 516 recorded on Eclipse, totalling 1,299 known young carers;
 - iv. Every day, 12,000 people became unpaid carers, and one in three people would be an unpaid carer at some point;
 - v. 70% of carers had long-term physical or mental health conditions compared to 59% of non-carers;
 - vi. Carer's Allowance remained the lowest benefit of its kind at £83.30 per week (2025/26 rates);
 - vii. Young carers providing 35+ hours of care weekly were 86% less likely to obtain a degree and 46% less likely to enter employment;
- j) Challenges included workforce retention and recruitment issues in social care, insufficient funding, over-reliance on informal carers, and increasing "excessive caring" responsibilities;
- k) The strategy was fully accessible online via Plymouth Online Directory, with full, easy-read, one-page summary, and audio versions available;
- l) Development involved a task-and-finish group, research, statutory guidance review, surveys, and engagement sessions with carers;
- m) The six co-produced priority areas were: Access to Services, Financial Support, Health, Safety, and Wellbeing, Early Identification and Recognition, Improving Information, Advice, and Communication, and Transitions and Changing Roles;

- n) An action plan would be overseen by Carer Strategic Partnership Board, with regular updates and partner-led workstreams for each priority;
- o) Progress would be measured through qualitative and quantitative indicators, including health outcomes, identification rates, and participation in community activities;
- p) A research project was underway to assess impact of the strategy over 12–14 months;
- q) A memorandum of understanding had been signed by multiple partners to ensure coordinated support for young carers and smooth transitions.

In response to questions, the Cabinet discussed:

- r) The importance of schools identifying young carers and supporting them effectively;
- s) Recognition that many carers balanced employment with caring responsibilities, highlighting the need for flexible support;
- t) Personal reflections from members on caring experiences and the value of the strategy in providing support and recognition;
- u) The need for integrated digital solutions and data-sharing platforms to streamline support and avoid duplication;
- v) Links to wider council initiatives, including City Health and Support Strategy and integrated neighbourhood teams;
- w) The importance of clear signposting and accessible “front door” for carers seeking help;
- x) Members praised the strategy as trauma-informed, inclusive, and comprehensive, with strong emphasis on young carers.

The Cabinet agreed:

- I. To endorse the Plymouth Citywide All-Age Unpaid Carer Strategy 2025–2027 and ongoing activity to support unpaid carers in Plymouth.

71. **Plymouth City Council People Strategy**

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure, HR & OD) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) That the People Strategy had been developed following a collaborative development process involving trade unions and extensive workforce engagement (over 300 staff);
- b) The importance of the strategy in positioning the Council as an employer of choice amid increased economic investment in the city and the need for skills to match new

job opportunities;

- c) There was a focus on embracing digital skills, understanding the age profile of the workforce (with many staff over 50), and backfilling with younger people through methods such as extra training and new skills;
- d) Recognition of the breadth of the Council's workforce, including paid employees, subcontractors, and volunteers, and the need for a wide offer that valued all contributions;
- e) A commitment to being a diverse, inclusive and respectful organisation that attracted people and represented Plymouth as a place;
- f) Progress had already been made: 100 staff completed the Level 5 management and leadership development programme over the last year; continued development via the Digital Academy and apprenticeships to attract, equip and retain talent;
- g) There was an emphasis on valuing, developing and supporting staff so they were passionate, innovative and brave in delivering excellent public services;
- h) The strategy aimed to benchmark the Council's position as a leading city employer supporting staff, who often lived locally.

Chris Squire (Service Director for HR & OD) added the following points:

- i) Sustained focus on health, safety and wellbeing across the Council, reflecting the principle that 'health and safety trumps everything', visible in high-vis protective equipment and the 'Work Safe, Home Safe' approach;
- j) The People Strategy document's design aligned with the new city branding, incorporating real photographs of staff (not AI-generated);
- k) Launch of Digital Academy Cohort 2: 40 staff commencing apprenticeships in data and AI, funded via apprenticeship levy transfers from Google and Microsoft; in the past 12 months, nearly £2,000,000 of apprenticeship funding had been spent or committed (including £1.5m attracted via transfers), ensuring full utilisation of the Council's levy;
- l) Pride in presenting an ambitious and supportive People Strategy linking strong people practices and the values required in public service to improved outcomes for the city.

In response to questions, the following was discussed:

- m) Expressed strong support for a strategy that championed officers and aligned with the city's branding;
- n) The need to develop a detailed action plan and to track impacts over time, noting growth in training and organisational support and union satisfaction with the collaborative approach;

- o) Recruitment challenges in specific service areas were acknowledged; induction messages continued to stress the significance of public service to approximately 260,000 residents across Plymouth and the imperative to be a good employer;
- p) It was confirmed that the corporate management team would review progress against the action plan quarterly to ensure delivery.

Cabinet agreed:

- i. To approve the new People Strategy for Plymouth City Council.

72. **Leader's Announcements**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) made a number of announcements including:

- a) A formal tribute to Councillor Dann, who would retire from her Cabinet role (Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure and HR & OD) with effect from 01 January 2026; her two decades of leadership across HR, economic development, transport, street scene and environment, customer experience and leisure were acknowledged, including safeguarding Mount Wise Pools, delivering thousands of free Fit and Fed sessions for children, guiding the city through the cost of living crisis, and advancing digital transformation, and her hard work, advocacy for women in politics and support for colleagues were warmly recognised;
- b) Councillor Taylor would be welcomed back to Cabinet in January 2027 to succeed Councillor Dann, bringing significant prior experience as Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- c) Submission of a joint proposal with Exeter City Council to government for local government reorganisation in Devon, aimed at addressing duplication in the two-tier system;
- d) Continued work with MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) and Homes England on a new towns proposal for 10,000 homes in Plymouth city centre; officials had visited recently and the proposal was being assessed with a decision expected in later Spring 2026;
- e) The Secretary of State John Healey visited Plymouth to open Helsing's first UK resilience factory, set to create hundreds of jobs producing a sub-sea autonomous AI-enabled glider to protect sea lanes and infrastructure;
 - i. Thanks were recorded to the Economic Development and Freeport teams;
 - ii. Inward investment enquiries were at a record high (around one per week), with as much interest in the last three months as in the whole of last year;
- f) Capital programme highlights included: completion of the Derriford district centre; Tinside enhancements; completion of the £23m ABP port improvements; commencement of shore-power delivery; Freeport seed funding fully spent unlocking

£73m of investment; works at the Mountbatten Centre; key demolitions at OceansGate to deliver innovation barns; near-completion of the 15th direct development at Langage;

- g) The Box programme update: a very busy 'Super Saturday' and, since opening, 1.1 million visitors as well as £244m economic impact and £100m health benefits;
 - i. Current exhibitions included the Grayson Perry tapestries;
 - ii. Highlights for 2026 would include the largest ever Beryl Cook exhibition ('Pride and Joy') launching 24 January 2027 (free but ticketed, with over 3,000 bookings already);
 - iii. 'Journeys with My ...' would bring a world-famous Reynolds painting to Plymouth on 14 February 2026 before travelling to New York and the Getty Museum, valued at £50m and jointly acquired by the National Portrait Gallery and the Getty in 2023;
- h) The Park had won Building of the Year 2025 at the Devon and Cornwall Building Forum in November 2025.

73. **Cabinet Member Updates**

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) provided the following update:

- a) Progress at Meadow View: public visits with seasonal activities, positive impressions of the building's scale and the work that was underway.

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure and HR & OD) made the following announcement:

- b) A forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding with Swim England to make the Life Centre the first local authority strategic partner, aligning national aquatics outcomes with local delivery, recognising that safe water access included pools, Tinside lido and open water; signing was scheduled for Wednesday and would showcase local swimmers and the growth of diving in the city.

Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) added:

- c) Simon Lightfoot MP, visited Plymouth ahead of a national grant announcement, seeing Stagecoach's free services on Thursdays and Sundays from Coypool, supporting cost-of-living, as well as visiting Citybus to see the first roll-out of 50 electric buses;
- d) The Department of Transport had cited Plymouth's Enhanced Partnership and analytical granularity as national good practice and would signpost other authorities to Plymouth's approach; commendations were recorded for the Public Transport Team.

74. **LGA Update**

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications):

- a) The Local Government Association's (LGA) response to the autumn budget and council funding: while funding had increased in recent years, it was insufficient to ensure financial sustainability, protect services and support communities;
- b) Significant pressures remained in adult social care, temporary accommodation, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), home-to-school transport and children's placements and homelessness;
- c) These areas would be central to setting a balanced budget for 2026/27;
- d) The Council echoed the LGA stance on tackling child poverty and welcomed the lifting of the two-child benefit cap announced in the budget; the Council had written to the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves MP, urging action to tackle child poverty;
- e) The LGA called for sustainable support across employment, education, housing, social care and health to address root causes of poverty.

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Cabinet



Date of meeting:	12 January 2026
Title of Report:	Commemorations and Celebrations – PCC Policy
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Caroline Marr, Senior Policy Advisor
Contact Email:	Caroline.marr@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	C&C Policy
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet's approval for the Commemorations and Celebrations PCC Policy; this includes lighting buildings, raising flags, moments of silence and books of condolence. The policy sets out the Council's protocol in accordance with the Government's guidance regarding the use of flags and other symbolic gestures in recognition, celebration or sympathy. The application of the principles and criteria set out in the policy aims to ensure the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.

Recommendations and Reasons

- Approve the Commemorations and Celebrations policy for implementation

Reason: The Council receives several requests annually in response to local, national and international events for flag flying or lighting up public buildings. As a welcoming city, flying flags is one way in which the Council commemorates significant events or celebrates the diversity of our city. It is important that the Council is fair and equitable in its decision-making. This policy applies a set of criteria that will enable the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- To not review and produce a new policy covering the different ways the Council Commemorates and Celebrates significant days or events.

Rejected: The previous Flags protocol was produced in 2016 and had limited use. It did not provide the clarity or process needed to help make decisions when requests were made. Several requests are made by individuals or communities throughout the year – there is currently no consistent approach to follow which could lead to unfairness in the decision-making process.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The approach and criteria set out in the policy fully reflects the Council's values of democracy, responsibility, fairness and co-operation. In addition, one of the key themes running through the

Plymouth Plan is the ambition to be a Welcoming City where every citizen feels safe and every person who lives in or visits the city will be treated fairly and with respect. Flying flags or lighting buildings is one way in which we commemorate significant events or celebrate the diversity of our city. It is important that we do this in a consistent, fair and meaningfully full way; one which supports our duty to foster and promote community cohesion.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

There are no significant resource implications. Implementation of the policy will be met within existing staff resources. There is a £5k budget held by the Council's Events Team to assist with buying new or replacing old flags.

Financial Risks

It is not anticipated that the proposed policy will cause negative financial impacts.

Legal Implications

The implementation of a Flag Flying Policy gives rise to a number of legal implications including planning and advertisement control under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulation 2007, matters of equality and discrimination engaged under the Equality Act 2010 and freedom of expression matters under the Human Rights Act 1998. The application of this policy will ensure the Council is adhering to matters of proportionality, equality and the consistent application of appropriate legislation.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

There are no significant implications.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

There are no significant risks associated with the implementation of this policy. The policy sets out a clear and fair process for dealing with requests for flag raising or lighting buildings. The policy will assist the Council to continue to meet its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Commemorations and Celebrations – PCC Policy							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)																												
	<p><i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i></p>																												
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Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 17/12/2025

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)

Date approved: 17/12/2025

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COMMEMORATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS - PCC POLICY

Chief Executive Department



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

PURPOSE

The Council commemorates or celebrates a significant number of special days every year. Some are associated with well-established events in the Civic calendar. Others are days, weeks or even months designated by organisations and are aimed at stimulating public awareness – some of these are set out in the Council's [equality and diversity calendar](#).

The Council marks some of these days by holding events, lighting buildings, with moments of silence or by flying flags. There is set protocol for the flying of the Union Flag, the St George's Flag, the Devon flag and the City of Plymouth flag. However, the Council also receives several requests throughout the year in response to local, national and international events for flag flying or lighting up public buildings. As a welcoming city, flying flags is one way in which we commemorate significant events or to celebrate the diversity of our city. The Council may also choose to commemorate or celebrate significant days or occasions by holding a community event or through communication such as a social media message or a press release.

The Union Flag represents our national shared values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance. The Plymouth flag not only represents our founding constituent towns, but it also carries our city's shared vision of being 'one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone'.

This policy sets out our protocol in accordance with the Government's guidance regarding the use of flags and other symbolic gestures in recognition, celebration or sympathy. The policy will ensure the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.

PRINCIPLES

Under the Localism Act 2011, the council may spend money on any activity, project, or service that benefits the community, if it is not specifically prohibited by law and all other financial, and transparency requirements are met. The council cannot use this power to override existing legal restrictions, or statutory duties, such as:

- **Political neutrality** – the legal basis for political neutrality comes from the Local Government Act 1986 which prohibits the use of Council resources to affect public support for a political party. In the interests of maintaining trust and credibility among all residents, regardless of their political beliefs, the Council must not endorse or promote any political party or viewpoint when commemorating or celebrating events.
- **Inclusivity and Community Cohesion** – the council has a statutory duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, specifically under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This duty requires public bodies, including councils, to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. For the purpose of this policy this includes:
 - Ensuring all communities feel represented and respected, regardless of background or beliefs
 - Actively promoting understanding and positive relationships between different groups
 - Valuing and celebrating the city's diversity through symbolic gestures (like flag flying or lighting buildings) that unite rather than divide
 - Carefully considering the impact of commemorations on all communities, and avoiding symbolic gestures that could be seen as exclusive or inflammatory

- Avoiding actions that could be interpreted as taking sides in foreign conflicts, when this could risk alienating or upsetting sections of the local community with ties to the involved countries.

I. FLAGS

I.1 It is important that there is due consideration about when and why we fly flags or decide to celebrate or commemorate a particular day or event. While this policy sets out the principles and criteria for fair and consistent decision making in relation to how commemorations and celebrations are marked, it remains at the Council's discretion to approve or decline any public requests specifically relating to flag flying.

I.2 The Government and the British Flag Institute issue guidance for flying flags from public buildings. The Council will follow this guidance which can be found in full [here](#). This guidance has recently been updated to encourage more flags to be flown from public buildings, particularly the Union Flag, the flag of the United Kingdom. The Government recognise the Union flag as a symbol of national unity and pride.

I.3 The government guidance covers the following areas and lists pre-approved flags:

- Condition and maintenance of flags
- Relevant permissions (Planning Authority)
- Positioning of flags, restrictions and criteria including a summary of location options

List 1 - The following flags do not need consent to be flown:

1. Any country's national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign
2. The flag of the Commonwealth, the United Nations or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member
3. A flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom
4. The flag of the Black Country, East Anglia, Wessex, any Part of Lincolnshire, any Riding of Yorkshire or any historic county within the United Kingdom
5. The flag of Saint David
6. The flag of Saint Patrick
7. The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
8. Any flag of His Majesty's forces
9. The Armed Forces Day flag

List 2 - The following flags do not require consent as long as certain conditions are met:

1. House flag - flag is allowed to display the name, emblem, device or trademark of the company (or person) occupying the building, or can refer to a specific event of limited duration that is taking place in the building from which the flag is flown (this does not apply to the Flagpoles outside the Plymouth Guildhall as they are separated from the building itself)
2. Any sports club flag - but cannot include sponsorship logos
3. The Rainbow flag - 6 horizontal equal stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet
4. Specified award schemes – Eco-Schools, Queen's Awards for Enterprise and Investors in People
5. NHS flag
6. Certain environmental awards - Green/Blue Award Schemes

I.4 For clarity, the use of the word "country" in (1) and (7) of List 1 above, includes any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and any British Overseas Territory. The flags of St George and St Andrew are recognised as the national flags of England and Scotland, but the flags of St David and St Patrick are listed separately as they do not necessarily fall into the category of a country's national flag.

1.5 Convention states that only one flag may be flown on any one flagstaff. However, regulations allow for the Union Flag to be flown with a guest flag from the same flagpole, provided certain conditions are met.

1.6 In no circumstances may any flag be flown in a superior position to the Union Flag. The superior position is defined as follows:

- The highest flagpole
- The centre flagpole when a number of poles are of the same height
- The left-centre pole when the number of poles is even, when viewed from a position facing the building
- When two flagpoles are of the same height, the Union Flag should be flown on the left-hand side when viewed from a position facing the building

1.7 **The Union Flag** - The Union Flag is normally flown at full mast from a civic flagpole in the Civic Square outside the Plymouth Guildhall and at the Council House every working day of the year. It is also flown at Ballard House and the Mayflower steps. The Union Flag will be flown at half-mast in accordance with national protocols following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign until the funeral. In the case of a death of a member or near relative of the Royal Family or the funeral of members of the Royal Family, the flag will be flown at half-mast.

1.8 The Union Flag may be flown at half-mast on other occasions, either following advice from Government, or based on a local decision made in accordance with this policy. When the Union Flag is at half-mast, other flags on the same stand of poles should also be at half-mast or should not be flown at all. Flags of foreign nations should not be flown, unless their country is also observing a period of mourning.

1.9 **The St George's Flag** - The St George's Flag is normally flown at full mast from a civic flagpole in the Civic Square outside the Plymouth Guildhall every working day of the year. Any flag flown from this flagpole will be lowered to half-mast when the Union flag is lowered.

1.10 **The Devon Flag** - The Devon Flag is normally flown at full mast from a civic flagpole in the Civic Square outside the Plymouth Guildhall every working day of the year. It will be lowered to half-mast when the Union Flag is lowered. It is at the discretion of the Council as to which two other flags are flown alongside the Union Flag on the civic flagpoles. As stated above, it is usual that the St George's Cross and the Devon Flag are flown, however these flagpoles can be used to fly approved guest flags.

1.11 **The City of Plymouth Flag** - The City Flag is flown at full mast from a civic flagpole at the Council House car park every working day of the week and at Elliot Terrace. Upon the death of the serving Lord Mayor, Honorary Aldermen, Honorary Freemen of the City or a serving Councillor, the City Flag will be displayed at half-mast from the announcement until sunset on the day of the funeral.

1.12 **Hoe Flags** – There are 18 flag poles on Plymouth Hoe. The Council's Events Team is responsible for these flagpoles. The pre-approved flags are raised on these flagpoles at Easter and lowered by mid to late September. The list of flags to be flown on Plymouth Hoe are agreed annually with the relevant Portfolio Holder. To mitigate the impact of adverse weather conditions on the appearance of the flags, two sets of the agreed flags will be purchased annually so they can be replaced as necessary.

1.13 Guest flags may be flown on council owned flag poles with the relevant permission, but only in accordance with Government guidance, the protocol set out in this policy and/or with the agreement of the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.

1.14 For the purpose of this policy 'guest flags' means flags not set out in:

- a. Government guidance (lists 1 and 2 above); and
- b. Annex 2 – list of council approved flags

1.15 Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider approving requests for raising guest flags that do not adhere to points a & b in Section 1.18 – this includes national flags of other countries. See section 4 for criteria and process in relation to receiving requests.

1.16 The Council owns and maintains several flag poles across the city. Annex 1 of this policy lists all Council owned flag poles and their associated flags where relevant. Council owned flag poles are maintained in accordance with best practice and appropriate records retained by Facilities Management.

1.17 Council owned flags will be kept at the Council House under the care of the Lord Mayor's Office and will be checked to ensure that they are in good repair and are unsullied. An audit will be undertaken annually to ensure the list of council owned flags is up to date, that all flags are in good condition and that they are being stored appropriately.

1.18 A small budget is allocated to flags on an annual basis. This budget is held by the Events Team and can be accessed to replace any old and worn flags as required. Contact: Venuehire@plymouth.gov.uk

2. PERSONAL HOMES / PROPERTY

2.0 Flag flying is governed by Planning legislation, specifically the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulation 2007. This means that whilst the Council respects everyone's individual liberty to fly flags on their own property, any flag not identified or covered by lists 1 or 2 above will require express consent from the local planning authority before it can be flown. This legislation applies to everyone and covers residential property and public buildings.

2.1 If a flag is flown that does not have express consent it may be subject to enforcement action. The local planning authority will make an expediency assessment taking in to account the matters of amenity and public safety.

2.2 In line with the named legislation, the Council reserves the right to take enforcement action on anyone raising, flying or painting flags, regardless of the consent status, on any property, without the consent of the building or landowner, this includes Council property (buildings and street furniture).

2.3 The easiest way to apply for advertisement consent to fly a flag on your property is through the [Planning Portal](#).

3. LIGHTING COUNCIL BUILDINGS

3.1 Lighting up Council-owned buildings e.g. Smeaton's Tower provides an opportunity to celebrate, commemorate, or raise awareness of significant occasions. Lighting will be used to mark occasions of local, national, or international significance, reflecting Plymouth's civic pride and commitment to equality and inclusion. While this policy sets out the principles and criteria for fair and consistent decision making in relation to how commemorations and celebrations are marked, it remains at the Council's discretion to approve or decline any public requests specifically relating to lighting buildings.

3.2 As of December 2025, only Smeaton's Tower is available for lighting. If other council owned buildings or property become available for lighting, they will also be covered by this policy.

3.3 In addition to the criteria set out in Section 4, the following specific conditions will be applied when considering requests for lighting, ensuring decisions are fair, consistent, and aligned with the Council's values. Annex 3 provides a list of pre-approved days for lighting.

3.4 Lighting may be approved for:

- National days and awareness events featured in the Council's Equalities Calendar (e.g., Pride, International Women's Day).
- National celebrations (e.g., England winning a major sporting event such as the Football World Cup).

- Local civic events or local commemorations (e.g., Plymouth Armed Forces Day, Mayflower commemorations).
- Royal or State Occasions (e.g., Coronations, Jubilees, periods of mourning).
- Charitable or community Campaigns where there is a strong local connection and alignment with Council priorities.

3.5 Approval of a request does not establish a precedent for similar future requests.

4. COMMEMORATION

4.1 The Council will observe:

- The nationally recognised 2-minute silence on Remembrance Day when it falls on a working day.
- Other periods of silence on receiving advice from the Government or with the agreement of the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.

4.2 Books of condolence will be considered in line with guidance in Section 4.

5. RECEIVING REQUESTS AND CRITERIA

5.1 The Council receives several requests throughout the year in response to local, national and international events for flag flying or lighting up public buildings. Public requests in relation to flying flags, commemoration or lighting buildings will be considered in line with national guidance, the protocol set out in this policy and/or with the agreement of the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.

5.2 The Council will exercise its discretion in exceptional circumstances, for example where a decision may be made to show solidarity with – or sympathy for - another nation experiencing a significant loss by flying their national flag.

5.3 In situations where there is internal or external conflict in a foreign nation, the Council will consider the impact the flying of its national flag might have on all communities in the city, and where appropriate, may fly a peace flag instead.

5.4 Any further requests made by a member of the public or a community will be considered on an individual basis. The following **criteria** will be applied:

1. Requests made by an individual or community outside the city will not be considered
2. Appropriate permissions and consent are in place
3. The request/guest flag is not party-political
4. There is alignment with our corporate values and our statutory equality duty, in particular our duty to facilitate community cohesion, i.e. the guest flag does not convey inappropriate language or symbols that have the potential to cause offense, or which might raise concerns about public safety
5. The request/guest flag is meaningful and proportionate in relation to the community it represents
6. There is no undue financial burden to the authority – all requests may incur a charge
7. Requests may be approved if they are linked to a significant anniversary or commemoration for the requesting community and where all other qualifying criteria are met
8. Approval of a request does not establish a precedent for similar future requests, particularly those that may not align with this policy.

5.5 Process for submitting and reviewing requests:

- a. **Submission:** requests to raise a flag or light a building should be made using this [form](#) with a minimum of 2 months' notice (not applicable in exceptional circumstances or upon instruction

from Government). The form should also be used to make a request for a moment of silence or to open a book of condolence. (See *Appendix 2 for example form – form in development*).

- b. **Review:** an advisory group will conduct an initial screening against the government guidance, the pre-approved list and the criteria set out in this policy. The Box is responsible for managing lighting requests. The Box will work collaboratively with the Council's Events Team and the Advisory Group to screen the request and ensure there is no conflict with other civic events, commemorations, celebrations or requests. The Advisory Group will make a recommendation to the Chief Executive and Leader.
- c. **Decision:** the final decision to uphold the request will be made by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council or in their absence, their deputies.
- d. **Notification:** confirmation of the decision will be sent to the requester within 28 working days (included as part of the 2 months' notice period). If the request is declined, the reasons for declining will be communicated in brief to the requester. If approved, and in the case that the Council do not hold the specific flag, the requester will be required to provide a suitable and well-maintained flag.

6. GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

6.1 A small Advisory Group includes officers from the Council's Civic Support Team, Corporate Communications and the Policy Team working closely with The Box, Events Team and Facilities Management Team to ensure compliance with national guidance and this policy and the criteria set out within.

6.2 The role of the Advisory Group is to support decisions and make recommendations when required to the Chief Executive and Leader.

6.3 The Group will work together to review this guidance document and protocol on an annual basis. This includes all related documentation, such as carrying out an annual Flag Audit. Annex 1 and 2 will be reviewed annually.

6.4 To support the annual review and for transparency, the Advisory Group will maintain a log of all requests and the associated outcome/decision.

6.5 This policy will be kept under review for the first 12 months from approval.

6.6 The Council reserves the right to seek approval from the Executive to make amendments to the policy within this 12-month period to take account of feedback on the process and criteria, and to ensure the policy is working to the benefit of all parties.

ANNEX I – Council Flag Poles

Location	No.	Purpose/Notes
Civic Flagpoles		
Council House car park	1	Permanently allocated to fly the City of Plymouth Flag. Guest flag may be flown with approval
Council House roof	1	Not currently in use for safety reasons. Permanently allocated to fly Union flag once replaced (due end 2025)
Plymouth Civic Square outside the Guildhall	3	Permanently allocated to fly Union flag, Cross of St George and the Council flag. Centre flagpole is known as Drake's Drum and is primarily reserved for the Union Flag. Guest flags can be flown either side of the main flagpole.
The Mayflower Steps	2	Permanently allocated to fly the Union Flag and the national flag of the United States of America in recognition of the Pilgrim Fathers
Elliot Terrace	1	Official Guest is in residence
The Box	1	Not currently in use due to safety reasons

Other Council Flagpoles

The Hoe	18	Display national, regional and local flags, awards flags, Armed Forces flags and flags associated with events taking place on the Hoe. The list varies depending on the summer events programme. List agreed on annual basis. Flags flown typically from Easter to mid-September
The Belvedere	1	Permanently allocated to fly Union flag. Falkland Flag is flown on the Anniversary June
The Hoe front garden	1	Permanently allocated to fly the Green Flag award
Armada Way	8	Permanently allocated to fly Union flag
Ballard House	1	A variety of venues across the city that carry the flag of the Green Flag Award Scheme
Parks and gardens		
Saltash Passage	2	Union Flag/USA related to D-Day memorial
Tamar Bridge	2	Union Flag

ANNEX 2 - Approved list of flags and associated commemoration/celebration days

Flag	Day	Date*	Note
Union Flag	Permanently allocated		See Appendix I for designated days for Flying the Union Flag (2026)
St George's Cross	Permanently allocated		
City of Plymouth Flag	Permanently allocated		Lord Mayor's Choosing and Council AGM
Council Flag	Permanently allocated		
Devon Flag	Permanently allocated		
Britian's Ocean City Flag	Summer Events programme	Easter – Mid-Sept.	Plymouth Hoe Flags flown on Hoe flagpoles are agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder
USA National flag	Permanent in recognition of the Pilgrim Fathers		Mayflower steps and as part of 9/11 memorial wreath-laying Saltash Passage
Holocaust Memorial Day Flag	Holocaust Memorial Day	27 January	Consent required**
Commonwealth Flag	Commonwealth Day	March	
Armed Forces Day Flag	Armed Forces Day	June	
Flag of the Falkland Islands	Falklands Day	June	Belvedere
Disability Awareness Flag	Disability Awareness Day	July	
The Red Ensign	Merchant Navy Day	03 September	
The Rainbow Flag and Progress Pride Flag	LGBT+ History Month International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia Pride month	February May June	Progress Pride Flag requires consent**
Flag of Gdynia	50th Anniversary - Plymouth & Gdynia Twinning	September 2026	Key anniversaries only

Flag of Brest Flag of San Sebastián			Plymouth twinned with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brest in France, since 1963. • San Sebastián in Spain, since 1990. • Gdynia in Poland, since 1976. • Plymouth, Massachusetts, since 2001.
Trans Flag	International Transgender Day of Visibility Trans Awareness Week Trans Day of Remembrance	31 March November 20 November	Consent required**
Flag of St Andrew's	St Andrew's Day (Scotland)	30 November	

**Flags will be raised as close to specific date as possible – if a date falls on a Bank Holiday or weekend, the flag will be raised on the last working day and lowered on the next working day.*

***Planning Consent underway (December 2025) – this policy will be updated with the relevant Policy statement once consent is granted.*

ANNEX 3 - Approved list for lighting building for commemoration/celebration days. (At the time of approval Smeaton's Tower is the only building available to be lit).

Day	Date	Colour	Note
16 Days of Action/Activism	November-December	TBC	Taking action against gender-based violence
World Aids Day	01 December	Red	International Day
Covid Day of Reflection	09 March	Yellow	National Day of Reflection
International Women's Day	08 March	YBC	
Armed Forces Day	June	RWB	
National Baby Loss Awareness Day	15 October	Pink	Observed as part of Baby Loss Awareness Week
National Care Leavers' Month	November	TBC	Allocate one day to light up Smeaton's Tower
International Men's Day	19 November	TBC	

Appendix I - Designated Days for Flying the Union Flag (2026)

- 01 March – St David's Day (in Wales)
- 09 March – Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March)
- 17 March – St Patrick's Day (in Northern Ireland)
- 09 April – His Majesty The King's Wedding Anniversary
- 23 April – St George's Day (in England)
- 06 May – Coronation Day
- 13 June – Official Birthday of His Majesty The King (usually second Saturday in June)
- 21 June – Birthday of HRH The Prince of Wales
- 17 July – Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen
- 08 September – His Majesty The King's Accession
- 08 November – Remembrance Day (second Sunday in November)
- 14 November – Birthday of His Majesty The King
- 30 November – St Andrew's Day (in Scotland)

Appendix 2 - Example Firmstep form for making a request. (Add privacy notice if needed)

Note: this form is not to be used to submit a Planning application to fly a flag under the Control of Advertisements regulations.

Please submit at least 2 months before the requested date.

1. Requester Details

- **Full Name:**
- **Organisation/Community Group (if applicable):**
- **Contact Email:**
- **Contact Phone:**

2. Type of request

- Raise a Flag
- Moment of Silence
- Book of Condolence
- Light a building

3. Flag Details

- **Name of Flag:**
- **Purpose/significance of Flag:**
- **Date(s) requested for Flag raising:**

4. Lighting building details

- **Colour of light:**
- **Purpose/significance of lighting:**
- **Date(s) requested for lighting:**

5. Book or condolence/Moment of Silence details

- **Name or request:**
- **Purpose/significance of commemoration:**

- **Date(s) requested for commemoration:**

6. Event details

- **Name of celebration/commemoration:**
- **Brief description of event, including represented community if applicable:**
- **Is this linked to a significant anniversary or commemoration?**
 Yes No
If yes, please provide details:

7. Compliance & Permissions

- **Does the flag comply with Government guidance?**
 Yes No
- **Is the flag party-political?**
 Yes No
- **Does the flag convey any language or symbols that could cause offense?**
 Yes No
- **Will you provide a suitable, well-maintained flag if required?**
 Yes No

8. Community Impact

- **Explain how this request aligns with Plymouth City Council's values and promotes community cohesion:**

9. Financial Considerations

- **Are you aware that approved requests may incur a charge?**
 Yes No

Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is accurate and that I understand the Council's discretion in approving or declining this request.

Signature:

Date:

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – COMMEMORATIONS & CELEBRATIONS POLICY

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Caroline Marr, Senior Policy Advisor	Department and service:	Policy & Intelligence Team	Date of assessment:	25 Nov. 2025
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Tracey Lee, Chief Executive	Signature:		Approval date:	1 December 2025
Overview:	<p>The Council commemorates or celebrates a significant number of special days every year. Some are associated with well-established events in the Civic calendar. Others are days, weeks or even months designated by organisations and are aimed at stimulating public awareness.</p> <p>The Council marks some of these days by holding events, lighting buildings, with moments of silence or by flying flags. There is set protocol for the flying of the Union Flag, the St George's Flag, the Devon flag and the City of Plymouth flag. However, the Council also receives several requests throughout the year in response to local, national and international events for flag flying or lighting up public buildings. As a welcoming city, flying flags is one way in which we commemorate significant events or celebrate the diversity of our city. The Council may choose to commemorate or celebrate significant days or occasions by holding a community event or through communication such social media or a press release.</p> <p>This policy sets out our protocol in accordance with the Government's guidance regarding the use of flags and other symbolic gestures in recognition, celebration or sympathy. The policy aims to ensure the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p>				
Decision required:	<p>For Cabinet to approve the policy and the monitoring and governance arrangements set out within.</p>				

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics?	Yes	x	No	
Potential internal impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	Yes		No	x
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three)	Yes	x	No	
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.				

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
Age	<p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. • 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. • 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. • 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. • 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. • 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64. • 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. <p>(2021 Census)</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated

<p>Care experienced individuals (Note that as per the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).</p>	<p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p> <p>National Care Leavers' Month is included on the pre-approved building lighting list.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated
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Disability	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by the Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated
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Gender reassignment	<p>0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census).</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p> <p>The Trans Flag is included on the pre-approved list to be flown during Trans Awareness Week and on Trans Day of Remembrance.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married.</p> <p>0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census).</p>	<p>No significant impact anticipated</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Pregnancy and maternity	The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.	No significant impact anticipated	N/A	N/A
Race	<p>In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)</p> <p>People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)</p> <p>92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated

Religion or belief	<p>48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census).</p> <p>Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated
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Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion. This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.	The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values. 16 Days of Activism is included on the pre-approved building lighting list.	The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made. The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request is submitted• Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy• Recommendation is made to the CEX• Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council• Decision is communicated
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Sexual orientation	<p>88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).</p>	<p>Communities sharing the same protected characteristic, identity or cultural background may be negatively impacted by a decision to decline a request made by that community to commemorate or celebrate an event, day or special occasion.</p> <p>This impact may include the community not feeling celebrated, listened to or acknowledged, but the Council or wider community. It may also include feelings of disregard in respect of the significance or meaning this occasion has to a particular community and beyond.</p>	<p>The content, principles and criteria for assessing requests set out in the Policy are to ensure that there is a process in place to apply the consistent, respectful, and meaningful use of flags and lighting in line with our civic values.</p> <p>The Pride and Progress Pride Flag are included on the pre-approved list to be flown during LGBT+ History Month and Pride month.</p>	<p>The Policy will be used at the point at which a request is made.</p> <p>The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request is submitted • Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy • Recommendation is made to the CEX • Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council • Decision is communicated
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SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Article 10 – Freedom of Expression	<p>Article 10 may be engaged when requests to fly flags are refused.</p> <p>The Policy provides clear proportionate and justifiable reasoning for how matters relating the flying of flags will be managed. The policy in itself does not prevent freedom of expression by flag flying on personal</p>	N/A	N/A

	property. The Council respects everyone's individual liberty to fly their flags on their own property. If a flag is flown that does not have express consent for either the flag itself or from the land or asset owner, it may be subject to enforcement action in line with relevant Planning legislation.		
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SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Equality objectives	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Work together in partnership to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote equality, diversity and inclusion facilitate community cohesion support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together 	No implications – decisions associated with public requests to commemorate or celebrate an event or special day will be made in accordance with our equality duty and support the delivery of all three of the listed partnership aims.	N/A	N/A
Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Support diverse communities to feel confident to report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.	Decisions to fly certain flags could potentially have an impact on hate crime, and/or community safety and it is important they are inclusive and consistent with the Equality Act and Human Rights legislation.	The impact on public safety, including hate crime would be a legitimate consideration in the decision-making process.	The timescale set out in the Policy is 2 months. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request is submitted

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request is assessed by Advisory Group against the Policy• Recommendation is made to the CEX• Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council• Decision is communicated
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