



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department
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CABINET

Monday 9 February 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 - 14)

To sign and confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2026.

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 from scrutiny

6. Budget Scrutiny Recommendations (To Follow)

Items for decision

7. Cabinet Response to Budget Scrutiny Recommendations (To Follow)

8. Proposed Revenue and Capital Budget 2026/27 (To Follow)

9. Plymouth Active Leisure Contract Extension (Pages 15 - 56)

10. Re-procurement and Renewal of School Transport Contracts (Pages 57 - 78)

11. Finance Monitoring Report Month 9 (To Follow)

Items for discussion

12. Local Area SEND Inspection Report Outcome (To Follow)

Items for noting

13. Leader's Announcements:

14. Cabinet Member Updates:

15. LGA Update:

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Cabinet

Monday 12 January 2026

PRESENT:

Councillor Evans OBE, in the Chair.

Councillor Laing, Vice Chair.

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

Apologies for absence: Councillors Stephens.

Also in attendance: Si Bellamy (Chief Operating Officer), Julia Brown (Service Director for Adult Social Care), Liz Bryant (Service Director for Legal Services), Glenn Caplin-Grey (Strategic Director of Place), Tom Cleverly (Plymouth Argyle), Martin Daw (Operations Director, JEM Scaffolding), Michelle Dawson (Plymouth Community Homes), David Draffan (Service Director for Economic Development), Rebecca Filmore (Newly Qualified Social Worker), Louise Ford (Head of Commissioning), David Haley (Director of Children's Services), Hannah Harris (CEO, Plymouth Culture), Emma Hewitt (Skills Lead), Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health), Sam Morcumb (Business Development Bid Manager SW, BuildX), Kevin Nancekivell (Plymouth Argyle), Gill Nicholson (Head of Innovation and Delivery), David Northey (Interim Service Director for Finance), Jamie Sheldon (Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Service Manager), Helen Slater (Assistant Head of Finance), Kadus Smith (Theatre Royal Plymouth), Chris Squire (Service Director for HR & OD), Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities) and Helen Wilde-Archibald (Devon Chamber of Commerce).

The meeting started at 2.12 pm and finished at 5.01 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.

75. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

76. **Minutes**

The Cabinet agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 08 December 2025 as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

1. Councillor Tudor Evans OBE to be recorded as 'apologies';
2. Councillor Jemima Laing to be recorded as 'Chair'.

77. **Questions from the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public.

78. **Commemorations and Celebrations Policy**

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) introduced the report and discussed:

- a) The Council had a long-standing tradition of marking significant days through events, lighting buildings, and flying flags, as well as civic duties such as opening books of condolence and organising moments of silence;
- b) The existing flags protocol dated back to 2016 and was the only written guidance used internally to navigate government advice on flag flying. It was not a published policy and lacked a clear process for officers when requests were made regarding flags, lighting, or commemorations;
- c) A review was initiated approximately a year ago to ensure the system was open, clear, and accessible to the public, avoiding ad hoc arrangements and ensuring fairness and equity for residents and communities;
- d) The draft policy had been widely consulted upon, including engagement with the Home, Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Committee in December, and updates were made following feedback. Public comments were also considered to clarify and improve the policy;
- e) Flying flags was governed by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, which applied nationally, including to the Council. Most Council flags were pre-approved under government guidance, but some required express consent. A planning application had been submitted to ensure compliance and allow flexibility for flags such as the Progress Pride flag or Holocaust Memorial Day flag;
- f) The policy established two core principles: political neutrality (no party-political or campaigning flags) and inclusivity, fostering community cohesion by reflecting all parts of Plymouth's community;
- g) The policy summarised government guidance, listed permitted flags, and set out local criteria for requests to fly flags, light buildings, hold moments of silence, or open books of condolence. It included clear processes and notice requirements, while allowing discretion for exceptional circumstances such as sudden tragedies or major sporting achievements;
- h) The overarching aim was to improve accountability, transparency, and resource management, creating a single comprehensive document for the first time. Thanks were extended to Caroline Marr and the team for coordinating work across multiple departments and portfolio holders;

- i) The Council predominantly flew the Union Flag, St George's Cross, and the Plymouth City Council flag, reflecting pride in Plymouth, England, and the United Kingdom, alongside other community flags. The policy was not about diminishing patriotism but celebrating diversity and unity.

The Cabinet agreed:

- I. To approve the Commemorations and Celebrations Policy for implementation.

79. **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader welcomed representatives from Plymouth Culture, Plymouth Community Homes, Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, Theatre Royal Plymouth, and Plymouth Argyle Football Club, and discussed:

- a) Plymouth would be bidding for UK City of Culture status for 2029, which represented a major opportunity for the city given Plymouth's cultural heritage and ambition;
- b) The bid would be led by Plymouth Culture, with support from partners across the city. It was emphasised that this would be a whole-city endeavour, not just a Council initiative;
- c) The benefits of City of Culture status were highlighted, including national and international profile, economic growth, civic pride, and community cohesion. The Leader referenced the transformative impact on previous winners such as Bradford, Hull, Coventry, and Derry;
- d) Plymouth's cultural credentials were outlined, including the Theatre Royal, The Box, TR2, Market Hall, National Marine Park, and three universities, alongside its rich heritage and creative sector. The Leader stressed that culture was central to Plymouth's identity and future growth;
- e) The bid would build on recent achievements such as Mayflower 400, British Art Show, and major housing and regeneration deals. The bid would act as a catalyst for Plymouth's ambitions, complementing investments in housing, jobs, and infrastructure;
- f) The Leader called for city-wide support, urging partners and residents to 'be loud and proud' and to share Plymouth's story confidently. The bid was seen as an opportunity to unite communities and showcase Plymouth as Britain's Ocean City.

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

- g) The bid represented an exciting opportunity to celebrate Plymouth's strong cultural assets and creative leadership;

- h) Outlined the scope of the UK City of Culture programme, which included arts, heritage, sport, design, gaming, and natural environment, and confirmed Plymouth had a compelling story of ambition and transformation;
- i) Highlighted the role of culture in driving economic growth, innovation, and community engagement, and stressed the importance of involving residents and young people in shaping the bid;
- j) Confirmed that Plymouth Culture, led by Victoria Pomery and Hannah Harris, would coordinate the bid process and engagement activities.

Victoria Pomery (CEO, The Box) added:

- k) Welcomed the announcement and emphasised culture as a vital ingredient for civic pride, health, education, and economic development;
- l) Outlined the bid process and timeline: Expressions of interests were required by 08 February 2026, and would be longlisted by March 2026 and would be shortlisted and visited later in 2026;
- m) Confirmed £10 million funding for the winning city and opportunities to leverage further investment;
- n) Stressed the importance of community input and collaboration to make the bid inclusive and representative of Plymouth.

Hannah Harris (Chief Executive Officer, Plymouth Culture) added:

- o) Reinforced that the bid was part of a long-term cultural strategy published in 2021;
- p) Highlighted opportunities to address gaps in cultural provision and improve accessibility;
- q) Confirmed plans for sector and community engagement sessions and described culture as 'who we are and what we do';
- r) Positioned Plymouth 2029 as a chance to showcase the city's identity and ambition nationally.

Michelle Dawson (Executive Director, Plymouth Community Homes) added:

- s) Supported the bid as a way to strengthen pride, partnership, and place;
- t) Emphasised opportunities to involve residents and celebrate regeneration projects;
- u) Highlighted Plymouth's strong partnership culture and the role of housing in shaping communities.

Helen Wild-Archibald (CEO, Devon & Plymouth Chamber of Commerce) added:

- v) Presented the economic case for the bid, citing examples from Hull and Coventry where City of Culture status generated hundreds of millions in investment and thousands of jobs;
- w) Stressed benefits for business visibility, inward investment, and cross-sector collaboration;
- x) Highlighted the creative economy multiplier effect and its potential to boost hospitality, retail, and transport sectors.

Kadus Smith (Director of Public Engagement, Theatre Royal Plymouth) added:

- y) Focused on sustainability, accessibility, and youth voice as priorities for the cultural programme;
- z) Emphasised the importance of empowering grassroots organisations and showcasing local talent;
- aa) Highlighted opportunities to engage young people and platform their ideas.

Tom Cleverly (Manager, Plymouth Argyle) and Freeman Kevin Nancekivell (First Team Plymouth Argyle) added:

- bb) Expressed strong support for the bid, citing Plymouth's passion and pride;
- cc) Highlighted the role of sport in cultural identity and community cohesion;
- dd) Stressed the importance of creating opportunities for young people and attracting visitors to Plymouth.

In response to discussion, the Leader concluded:

- ee) The bid would enhance Plymouth's reputation and unlock further potential for growth and investment;
- ff) The Council had continued to invest in culture despite financial pressures because of its belief in local talent and creativity;
- gg) The bid was described as "our time to shine" and an opportunity to make Plymouth's cultural strengths nationally recognised.

80. **Chair's Urgent Business**

The Leader welcomed Councillor Kate Taylor to the Cabinet. Councillor Taylor now held the portfolio for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure & HR, and OD, and had last served in the Cabinet in 2021.

81. **Draft Budget Report 2026/27**

The item was presented by Councillor Mark Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) who highlighted the following key items:

- a) The draft revenue budget for 2026/27 was presented, totalling £318.075 million, which represented a significant increase on previous years. The increase was primarily due to the Government's decision to roll several former standalone grants into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The RSG was expected to rise from approximately £12 million to around £69 million;
- b) It was highlighted that the introduction of a three-year financial settlement allowed for more effective long-term planning. Previously, annual settlements had severely limited planning capability across services. The new approach would strengthen the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
- c) Pressures within four major statutory service areas were outlined as continuing to rise significantly. These areas were Children's Services, Adult Social Care, Homelessness, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Demand within these service areas continued to grow at a rate that exceeded increases in government funding and council tax;
- d) The budget identified approximately £25.8 million of financial pressures arising from these statutory areas. To help mitigate this, the Council had identified £17.4 million in savings and efficiencies, with further work continuing to reduce projected overspends;
- e) A number of strategic programmes were noted as essential to addressing long-term demand pressures, including proposals to develop Council-owned residential property for children's placements, strengthening of prevention programmes, implementation of a "No Wrong Door" approach to reduce adolescent entries to care, and an increased focus on reablement within Adult Social Care. Further national guidance was awaited through the forthcoming SEND White Paper;
- f) Alongside the revenue budget, a five-year Capital Programme of £319.725 million was presented;
- g) The document remained a draft budget, subject to amendments pending receipt of the final Local Government Settlement. Ongoing discussions were being held with government ministers to address irregularities within the settlement figures. The draft would be submitted to Budget Scrutiny for detailed examination over two days before returning to Cabinet;

David Northey (Service Director for Finance) added:

- h) The draft budget demonstrated a balanced position, although significant and difficult decisions were required to reach this stage;

Helen Slater (Assistant Head of Finance) added:

- i) The importance of using the new multi-year settlement to drive long-term sustainability rather than short-term decision-making was emphasised. It was noted that many officers had become accustomed to working within 12-month financial horizons and that practice would need to evolve;

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- j) Broader economic developments and regeneration activity within the city were highlighted. Footfall in the city centre had increased by 6%, significantly above the national average, and vacant retail units had reduced substantially. Plymouth was increasingly attracting attention for investment, including through emerging sectors such as marine autonomy and cultural initiatives;
- k) It was noted that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was expected within the next two years. While this was unlikely to fundamentally change the Council's financial envelope, it was anticipated to strengthen the city's influence within the wider region;
- l) The issue of council tax was considered. It was noted that Plymouth remained one of the lowest-charging authorities in the South West, with the average council tax bill approximately £250 lower than Cornwall. The priority remained to keep council tax as low as practicably possible while maintaining high-quality services;
- m) The statutory pressures faced by top-tier local authorities nationally were discussed, particularly in relation to the growing proportion of the budget being directed towards statutory services. It was noted that discretionary services continued to shrink as a proportion of overall spending;
- n) The forthcoming scrutiny sessions were expected to provide detailed challenge, with the associated papers to be made publicly available;
- o) Cabinet acknowledged the substantial work undertaken by officers and members to produce the draft budget under complex and demanding circumstances. The draft remained subject to change pending the final settlement and the outcome of scrutiny.

Cabinet agreed to:

1. Note the report and acknowledged that it is subject to change in line with any Final Settlement adjustments and further changes required as proposals are developed;
2. Endorsed the recommended 5-year Capital Programme of £319.725m;
3. Agreed to present the draft budget report to the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee for consideration when full savings proposals highlighted in the report had been developed further.

82. **Care Quality Commission Inspection update**

Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care) introduced the item to Cabinet and highlighted the following key point:

- a) It was reported that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection process had begun in January 2025, with an on-site inspection taking place over three and a half days in June 2025. The final report was published in December 2025. The overall rating awarded to Plymouth was Good, which was described as a significant achievement and a reflection of the sustained effort of staff across the service, partner organisations including Livewell Southwest, voluntary sector colleagues, and those delivering care in the community;

Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities), Julia Brown (Service Director for Adult Social Care) and Louise Ford (Head of Commissioning) gave a presentation to Cabinet and highlighted the following key points:

- b) The Committee heard that over 300 documents and submissions had been provided to the CQC during the inspection process, together with 50 anonymised case files. During the on-site visit, inspectors undertook 45 formal interviews, involving over 180 individuals from across the system, including frontline staff, partners, voluntary sector representatives and service users;
- c) In addition to the overall Good rating, Plymouth achieved an Outstanding rating for Equity of Experience and Outcomes, placing it among only a small number of authorities nationally to do so. This was regarded as a major success and reflected the authority's proactive approach in engaging seldom-heard groups, tackling inequalities and tailoring support to individuals' needs;
- d) In relation to access to services, the inspection acknowledged strong performance, including the resolving of around 90% of calls at first contact. Improvements were also highlighted in waiting list management, and frontline teams had been supported through work led by the Principal Social Worker to embed strength-based practice;
- e) Under the theme of supporting people to live healthier lives, the inspection recognised strong partnership working across the prevention and early-intervention landscape, particularly with VCSE partners and Public Health. Improvements since inspection were reported, including better outcomes and ongoing work to improve the occupational therapy offer and waiting times;
- f) With regard to equity and experience, it was noted that Plymouth had achieved its highest scoring in this area. Strong engagement with seldom-heard communities and a clear commitment to addressing inequalities were highlighted. Future improvements included expanding cultural competency work and developing improved recording of diversity within care management systems;
- g) Under care provision, integration and continuity, the inspection recognised the strength of joint work with Public Health on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the use of intelligence to inform commissioning priorities. Positive use of lived experience and engagement with the voluntary sector were highlighted as strengths.

Members were updated on the publication of the city's Carers Strategy, ongoing development of the market, and work to launch the extra care framework on 01 May 2026 to support improved transparency and innovation in care provision;

- h) In relation to partnerships and communities, the work of Plymouth's Local Care Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board was commended. The meeting was informed that Plymouth had recently been selected as one of 45 health and wellbeing board areas nationally to participate in Better Care Fund work on Integrated Neighbourhood Teams;
- i) Under the theme of safe systems, pathways and transitions, strengths were recognised in crisis support, mental health contingency planning, and multidisciplinary work for people with learning disabilities. Improvement work continued in relation to transitions from children's to adults' services, supported by collaboration between service areas;
- j) The theme of safeguarding was discussed. While the overall score was lower than desired, strengths were identified including strong partnership working and above-average training compliance in the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. Work continued to improve compliance levels and ensure all legal requirements were met;
- k) The inspection highlighted governance arrangements, acknowledging stable leadership, clear roles, and a positive learning and improvement culture. The effectiveness of performance management and the use of data to drive decision-making were noted. Workforce capacity challenges within adult social care were recognised, and work continued with the Caring for Plymouth partnership to support recruitment and retention;
- l) The Learning, Improvement and Innovation theme highlighted strong collaboration with Livewell Southwest and the Principal Social Worker, including support for newly qualified social workers through the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). Continued work was planned to further upskill the workforce, including in areas such as Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards;
- m) The Committee was informed that, although the outcome was very positive, the service would continue to maintain a formal Improvement Plan to ensure progress continued.

In response to questions raised it was reported that:

- n) Members expressed the need to focus not only on the areas of high performance but also on those that required strengthening. It was requested that the action plan be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting;
- o) The meeting reflected on the journey undertaken by the service in the previous 18 months, noting challenges such as the reablement crisis and industrial action, and recognised the substantial progress achieved collectively since then. Congratulations were extended to all staff involved, and it was noted that such outcomes were hard-earned and should be publicly celebrated;

- p) It was suggested that the Council should do more to highlight the positive outcome publicly, including through photography and by displaying the inspection banner outside the Council House. It was agreed that public recognition was important given the scale of improvement in adult social care, children's services and SEND over recent years;
- q) It was noted that adult social care activity continued to generate substantial benefits for the wider health and social care system, including reducing pressures on the NHS. The need for strengthened financial contribution and partnership support from NHS partners was highlighted, with a view to ensuring shared responsibilities were met fairly;
- r) The Committee formally noted the positive outcome and reiterated the importance of maintaining improvement momentum, ensuring that areas requiring development continued to be progressed at pace.

Cabinet agreed to

- 1. Note the report;
- 2. Request that an Adult Social Care CQC Inspection Action Plan be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting for consideration.

83. **Building Plymouth 10 Year Anniversary**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) Building Plymouth had been established in 2015 and was celebrating its 10th anniversary as an award-winning council-led sector skills partnership with the construction and built environment community;
- b) The partnership had driven skills, training and employment, facilitated social value, acted as a united industry voice, and underpinned delivery of the city's ambitious capital build programme and the transition to a net-zero carbon economy;
- c) The initiative had inspired the next generation (e.g., Mission Mammoth/Steamfest at The Box with Arts University Plymouth), celebrated construction apprentices, and made strong progress with the Adopt-a-School programme, with extensive voluntary time from industry partners;
- d) Building Plymouth had a substantial and a breadth of cross-city support;

Emma Hewitt (Skills Lead), Martin Daw (Operations Director, JEM Scaffolding) and Sam Morcumb (Business Development Bid Manager SW, BuildX) added:

- e) Over the past decade the partnership had delivered a coordinated action plan to build a skilled workforce aligned to a growing construction pipeline with more than 70 partners now contributing annually;

- f) The programme had attracted additional resources (including two full-time construction coordinators funded via the Department of Work and Pensions) and established a trusted cross-system infrastructure spanning clients, consultants, main contractors, the supply chain, training providers and Jobcentre Plus;
- g) The partner base included major clients such as University Hospitals Plymouth, Babcock, University of Plymouth, Plymouth Community Homes and Plymouth City Council (PCC);
- h) Building Plymouth had received multiple awards for corporate social responsibility (CSR), apprenticeships, and people & culture, and had informed the Council's wider skills approach;
- i) Workstreams covered:
 - i. demand forecasting (forward programme, risks/opportunities, transparency for local firms);
 - ii. supply (attracting/retaining/progressing the workforce);
 - iii. provision (ensuring local training aligned to employer needs);
 - iv. pipeline (early inspiration with children and young people);
- j) Employment & skills plans were enforced on major sites, maximising those sites for careers engagement;
- k) A client group improved visibility of the forward workload;
- l) Economic Development had asked Building Plymouth to lead a new Construction Task Force;
- m) The partnership coordinated in-kind support to resolve the Keyham garden recovery (following the discovery and extraction of a World War II bomb), leveraging relationships to deliver £40,000 of works without direct funding;
- n) The programme aligned with Skills Launchpad Plymouth and "Connect to Work" to reach jobseekers and economically inactive residents, service leavers (with the Career Transition Partnership at HMS Drake), and those in the criminal justice system, offering coordinated attraction, training, retention and in-work progression;
- o) JEM Scaffolding had experienced historic challenges retaining new labourers, and how a Launchpad "hard-hat ready" event transformed outcomes. Of 18-20 candidates, 11 were hired and seven retained;
- p) Recruitment of prison leavers had been a major success; one former prisoner had progressed to a trusted supervisor running a large contract;
- q) Further sessions were planned (including apprentices on 20 January and outreach at HMP Channings Wood). The company had upskilled its entire workforce (c. 50

courses in two years), feeding talent bottom-up and preparing for the city's pipeline;

- r) There was an explore, encourage, empower, equip, employ pathway from Key Stage I to sustained employment;
- s) Evidence showed visible role models strongly influenced career choice, and employer encounters/work experience improved attainment;
- t) Activities included: Key Stage I literacy/bug-house builds (with Kier), a spring community project to renovate a PCC garden at zero cost, Mission Mammoth, careers fairs, work experience weeks, expanded;
- u) Adopt-a-School had 21 schools matched to industry partners;
- v) There had been an increase in nominations for the Ron Simmons Apprentice of the Year Award;
- w) Inclusion efforts included the Learning Support Fund, Disability Confident awareness and Connect to Work.

During the discussion, the following was covered:

- x) Praise for the collaborative Team Plymouth ethos, noting the projected high number of jobs in the city over the next decade and the need to raise awareness of modern construction careers, to grow talent and encourage people to learn, live and work in Plymouth;
- y) Skills Launchpad Plymouth provided weekly impartial information, advice and guidance, with drop-ins, booked appointments, remote access advice, training mailers, and route-planning for all ages and circumstances, acting as a one-stop shop for construction skills, training, education and jobs;
- z) It was noted that Building Plymouth was engaged with the Growth Board and had contractor/consultant representation on the Employment & Skills Board;
- aa) Cabinet members urged further public communications beyond the sector to share the partnership's success and opportunities.

84. **Cabinet Member Updates**

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

- a) The launch of the fourth Mockingbird constellation, replicating an extended family model with a highly experienced hub home carer supporting eight fostering/kinship households, improving resilience and outcomes;
 - i. The transformative impact of Mockingbird over the last 12 months and its contribution to stabilising placement costs by growing in-city foster care;

- ii. The value of Mockingbird was reiterated as a key enabler for foster carer recruitment and retention, complementing an active “Foster for Plymouth” campaign;
 - iii. The small-home residential model was designed to support step-down to family settings where possible, keeping children close to communities and services in Plymouth;
- b) Acquisition of the Council’s first council-owned, council-run children’s home for decades; a small family home model that would receive minor improvements, provide better value for money, recruit staff, register with Ofsted, and open in summer 2026;
 - c) The inaugural kinship Christmas party, generously sponsored by Wales & West Utilities, with 19 kinship families (25 carers; 34 children) attending; the donation also enabled ongoing social activities, including a new kinship youth group at Poole Farm;
 - d) Beryl Cook: Pride and Joy exhibition at The Box was opening 24 January 2026; extensive national coverage; free but ticketed entry, with a call for residents to book.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-operative Development and Communities) highlighted:

- e) North Prospect had won Best Regeneration Project of over 500 homes at the Inside Housing Awards, with judges praising long-term community engagement, partnership delivery and tangible impacts on safety, education and wellbeing, reflecting the strong partnership working of Plymouth City Council (PCC) and Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) over many years;
- f) Stirling House, a veterans’ self-build project, a Plan for Homes project with LiveWest had won Best Development (Less than 50 homes) at the RTPi (Royal Town Planning Institute) Awards, recognised for collaborative planning, resilience, benefits to people and nature, and social capital;
- g) The continuing role of Plan for Homes in convening partners and deploying gap funding to maximise delivery of high-quality, affordable homes that met diverse needs;
- h) Expressed thanks to all involved in these projects.

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) gave the following updates in Councillors Stephens’ (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) absence:

- i) The Royal Parade bus improvement scheme was near completion;
 - i. Overnight closures in January–February 2026 for resurfacing with diversions via Western Approach and Coburg Street;
 - ii. Courtney Street car park to remain open but motorists might experience delays—drivers were advised to consider parking elsewhere during works;

- iii. Project was running to schedule and to budget;
- iv. Full re-opening, including bus stops, was expected on Monday 23 February 2026;
- v. Safety and accessibility improvements were central to the design;
- vi. An official opening was discussed, subject to schedules and weather conditions;
- vii. The scheme was contextualised within the wider city-centre improvements (e.g. The Civic, Armada Way), with a further update to follow at the next meeting.

85. **LGA Update**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the item and highlighted:

- a) The LGA's cross-party success in securing three-year funding settlements to support medium-term financial planning in local government;
- b) Noted the significance of the appointment of Shama Tatler (Head of the LGA Labour Office) had been elevated to the House of Lords as a Baroness in the New Year Honours;
- c) The retirement of Dennis Skinner from the LGA after decades of service; the Leader proposed sending a letter of thanks from the Council.

Cabinet



Date of meeting: 09 February 2026

Title of Report: **Plymouth Active Leisure Contract Extension**

Lead Member: Councillor Kate Taylor (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport and Leisure and HR and OD)

Lead Strategic Director: Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health)

Author: Liz Slater and Kerry Malton

Contact Email: Liz.Slater@plymouth.gov.uk / Kerry.Malton@plymouth.gov.uk

Your Reference:

Key Decision: Yes

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL) was established in 2022 by Plymouth City Council (PCC) to lead the city's physical activity agenda, replacing the previous provider Everyone Active. Its purpose is to help residents live healthier, more independent lives by reducing risks of lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and dementia. PAL also supports PCC's wider corporate priorities around tackling inactivity and improving health outcomes.

Over the past year, PAL has strengthened its strategic and operational functions, improved its financial position, and delivered significant social value through increased participation and community engagement. Building on this success, PAL now seeks a long-term commitment from the Council to invest substantially in its facilities and services. This will enable PAL to manage legacy startup costs, reduce reliance on PCC's management fee, and enhance facilities management.

The report recommends extending PAL's existing contract beyond its current end date of March 2032 and providing further financial investment to support its ambitious new strategic plan. This plan envisions a £160 million investment in sport and physical activity across Plymouth over the medium term, generating greater social value, improved health outcomes, and new income streams for PCC.

These proposals aim to:

- Strengthen PAL's financial sustainability
- Enhance service provision, particularly in delivering improved health outcomes
- Generate greater social value and create new income streams for the Council in the medium term
- Ensure robust oversight and risk management for the Council

Recommendations and Reasons

1. Approve a cashflow loan of up to £975,000 to PAL.
Reason: The support from PCC is to cover the working capital deficit built up across the current contract period to date, which was largely a result of start-up costs and the impact of COVID: restoring working capital balances will provide PAL with a sustainable platform to grow and thrive.
2. Approve the reprofiling of two existing loans to PAL to increase the repayment term by three years, including utility costs of £565,983, and start-up loan of £365,000, totalling £930,983 plus accrued interest.
Reason: Extending the contract will enable PAL to repay outstanding loan debts over a longer period, provide operational stability, and allow PAL to continue to align its services with PCC's wider corporate priorities and those priorities of the City.
3. Approve an extension of 10 years to the existing contract with PAL to conclude in March 2042, including the provision of a break clause in 2035/36.
Reason: Extending the contract provides operational stability, whilst a break clause, provides a mechanism for managing the financial risk for the authority.
4. To support feasibility studies and the submission of capital funding business cases through the Council's capital governance process for enhancements to facilities.
Reason: capital investment supports income growth and will increase participation by wider audiences.
5. Note the following contract amendments:
 - a. The drafting of new KPIs (appendix B)
 - b. An annual performance update to the Housing Scrutiny Panel*Reason: Noting the feedback from the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2025 to enhance the oversight and risk management of the contract and to ensure robust monitoring of KPIs, financial and contract performance.*
6. Note the positive impact of the Agency Model, as approved by Cabinet on 10 March 2025, and the generation of VAT savings, which have been included in the PAL financial model.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cease the Service (reject)- Leisure provision is discretionary, but the service delivered by PAL is vital for sustaining physical activity, generating significant social and economic value, and supporting Council objectives. Ending the service would risk reduced participation and jeopardize long-term Sport England funding, making this option untenable.

Establish a Fully Independent Trust (reject)- Creating an independent charitable trust was explored for tax benefits, but HMRC VAT changes and post-COVID financial instability have made the model unviable. Transferring operations would replicate existing challenges, reduce Council control, increase risk, and incur high set-up costs, so the option has been rejected.

Bring the Service Fully In-House –(reject)

Returning the service to full Council control would incur substantial additional costs, including NNDR liabilities and enhanced staff terms and pension obligations. This option is not likely to be viable and has been rejected.

Outsource the Contract (reject)- Engaging a national leisure management company could provide economies of scale, but it would not resolve existing debt, risks misalignment with Plymouth's priorities, and leaves PCC with legacy asset issues. With high procurement costs, lengthy timelines, and uncertain revenue benefits, outsourcing is not recommended now, though it may be reconsidered at a future break point.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Public sector leisure is undergoing a significant transformation, moving from traditional service delivery models toward a focus on wellbeing outcomes. PAL plays a key system leadership role in this transition, recognising the critical contribution of leisure facilities and active wellbeing services to physical and mental health across communities. This evolution embeds physical activity within health pathways such as social prescribing, rehabilitation, and preventative care, positioning public leisure as a cornerstone of active health initiatives and wider prevention strategies.

The proposed project supports the financial sustainability of PAL—a wholly owned company of the Council—while delivering against the following objectives:

- HEA1:** Addressing health inequalities and improving health literacy
- HEA2:** Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people, and families
- HEA3:** Supporting adults with health and social care needs
- HEA4:** Playing an active role in the community
- HEA5:** Delivering strong and safe communities and good-quality neighbourhoods
- HEA7:** Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment
- INT1:** Implementing Britain's Ocean City
- INT5:** Celebrating Plymouth's sporting excellence
- INT8:** Celebrating diverse communities
- GRO2:** Developing, attracting, and retaining a highly skilled and adaptable workforce
- GRO5:** Enhancing Plymouth's sporting facilities
- GRO7:** Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The extension of the contract and provision of further working capital support is not anticipated to have any impact on the Council's revenue budget over the next three years of the Council's MTFP cycle. The (separate) introduction of an agency model – meaning PAL acts as an agent for the delivery of some services, resulting in an improved VAT recovery position – will have some implications for PCC's revenue costs. These implications have been analysed in detail, and are not likely to be significant. Over the medium to longer term, financial modelling indicates that business growth within agency services is likely to have a beneficial impact on the Council's revenue position, with the potential opportunity to re-invest surpluses to meet asset management costs, or to release an MTFP saving.

There are more significant implications for the Council's resources arising from the working capital support provided to date, and the proposal to provide further working capital support as part of a contract extension. On the one hand, extending the contract will improve PAL's capacity to grow the business and repay existing loans (totalling c. £1.6m) owed to the Council to date. On the other hand, further working capital support (of £975,000) has been requested by PAL, alongside capital investment to drive business growth.

Detailed financial modelling indicates that business growth will provide sufficient capacity to repay legacy debt and additional loans over an extended contract term. (Appendix C PAL Financial Model) Whilst there is uncertainty and risk in the modelling, a prudent approach has been taken throughout, with a number of growth opportunities excluded from financial modelling (representing 'upside risk'). The Council's finance team has undertaken sensitivity analysis (see Appendix D attached).

These financial risks need to be considered in the context of the financial risks to PCC of a 'do nothing' option. Not extending the contract or providing further working capital support would leave PAL in a vulnerable financial position. This in turn places Plymouth's leisure services and key leisure assets at risk. PCC would also face a higher likelihood of PAL defaulting on existing working capital loans

- Separate business cases for capital investment will be scrutinised through PCC's Capital Programme governance, with contractual terms designed to ensure that assets revert to PCC if PAL's contract is terminated.
- Additional governance to monitor the financial performance of PAL (e.g. a financial sub-committee) is proposed, together with the introduction of financial KPIs in a refreshed, extended contract, designed to provide additional control and assurance over financial risk.

Financial Risks

Financial Exposure to PCC:

Extension of the contract requires PCC to provide further working capital support to address deficits arising from COVID period impacts and initial startup costs. There remains a risk that projected income growth may not fully materialise, which could affect PAL's ability to repay loans.

- **Reliance on Financial Modelling Assumptions:**
Although external consultants consider the financial model to be comprehensive, credible, and underpinned by realistic assumptions, all forecasts carry inherent uncertainty. Divergence in income, costs, or delivery of planned projects could result in financial underperformance.
- **Income Growth and Delivery Risk:**
The financial plan depends on PAL delivering new income generating initiatives supported by strong business cases. Failure to achieve these targets, or delays in implementation, increases the risk to PCC regarding loan repayment and overall financial sustainability.
- **Opportunities Outside the Current Model:**
There are further opportunities for growth not included within the financial modelling. If realised, these have the potential to bolster financial performance and provide additional mitigation against risks of underperformance. However, as they are not modelled, they cannot currently be relied upon as part of the core financial position.
- **Medium Term Sustainability:**
The extended contract term will support a significant reduction in the PCC subsidy (from £493,000 currently to a modelled position of £55,000 by 2035/36) and is forecast to deliver a budget surplus. However, these outcomes are contingent on prudent assumptions and continued operational improvement.
- **Requirement for Strong Oversight:**
Ongoing risk mitigation will rely on strengthened performance monitoring, implementation of a KPI framework, and use of contractual mechanisms (e.g., a break clause) to allow PCC, as lender and parent company, to intervene if financial performance diverges materially from forecast.

Legal Implications

A deed of variation to the existing leisure management contract and new leases will be required. As the contract with PAL is an in-house (Teckal) exempted contract there are no procurement issues arising and an extension to the existing contract is permitted provided that the Council maintains controlling influence and PAL continues to undertake more than 80% of its activities for the Council. Subsidy control must be considered in connection with any loans to PAL.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

PAL have committed to sustainability to drive their business. Over the lifetime of the contract PAL will continue to work to improving their environmental sustainability across all their sites and share their successes and innovation with PCC.

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.*

PAL has strong practices around equality and discrimination to allow for all voices to be heard and strive to eliminate bias in decision making and provide inclusive and accessible facilities for all. The nature of PAL is to seek out and challenge inequalities across our communities. As a company owned by PCC PAL is committed to PCC's principles of promoting equality of opportunity, challenging discrimination, promoting good relations across all members of our community and ensure the requirements are communicated to undertake business in line with the Equalities Act.

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	Cabinet Briefing Paper							
B	PAL KPI's							
C	PAL's Financial Model							
D	Financial Sensitivity Analysis							
E	PAL Vision							
F	Equality Impact Assessment							
G	Climate 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) <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

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health)

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

Date agreed: 28 January 2026

Cabinet Member approval:



Date approved: 28 January 2026

PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE CONTRACT EXTENSION



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Being physically active is key to living a long, healthier, happier and more independent life. Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL) was set up to be a city leader in this space, being well placed to support the residents of Plymouth to get and stay active to reduce their risk of lifestyle related diseases including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dementia. PAL was created in 2022 replacing the previous provider Everyone Active. Plymouth City Council (PCC) established PAL quickly to ensure that the residents of Plymouth had a physical activity offer and to support PCC's own corporate agendas including addressing inactivity and other health outcomes.

PAL has had a strong 12 months seeing improvements across its strategic and operational business functions and has seen its financial position improve year-on-year. PAL also provides a significant social value contribution to the city through increased participation and broader community engagement. PAL is now seeking a long-term commitment to make significant new investments across its sites to drive better outcomes linked to its new strategic plan. This will allow PAL to deal with its startup costs, reduce its PCC management fee, and invest in facilities. This report sets out the recommendation to extend the existing contract and provide further financial investment in PAL to support its ambitious new strategic plan to grow and provide a £160m investment into sport and activity into the City over the medium term and to provide an increase in social value, outcomes and new income for PCC.

Extending the contract will enable PAL to repay outstanding loan debts over a longer period, provide operational stability, and allow PAL to continue to align its services with PCC's wider corporate priorities and those priorities of the City. This approach supports the reimagining of local public sector leisure services focused on active wellbeing, while maintaining income growth and fulfilling financial obligations to PCC.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Thrive Programme

The Thrive programme in Plymouth was launched in 2014 to address health inequalities in Plymouth with an initial focus on 4-4-54 construct to address four health behaviours (poor diet, lack of physical activity, tobacco use and excess alcohol consumption), contribute to four diseases (coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer and respiratory disease), responsible for 54% of deaths in Plymouth. We also

know that mental health indicators have worsened over time, as has obesity, and Plymouth shows high levels of physical inactivity. Our ageing population also presents a likely increased demand for services such as dementia care. Wider issues around community cohesion, safety, housing and poverty remain a challenge for some communities.

Being physically active can improve all aspects of individual wellbeing and is protective against excess weight, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. It also improves mental health, delays the onset of dementia, and can help prevent falls and fractures. The NHS recommends 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week for adults, and 60 minutes of physical activity per day for children aged 5-18 years. The estimated cost of physical inactivity to the UK is £7.4 billion annually, including £0.9 billion to the NHS. Physical activity levels are known to vary with deprivation, with those in lower socio-economic groups being less likely to meet recommended amounts of activity. 18.4% of Plymouth adults do less than 30 minutes exercise per week; nationally 24% of men and 42% of women are not active enough for good health and 1 in 6 UK deaths are associated with lack of physical activity.

Plymouth is an ambitious city when it comes to improving the health and wellbeing of its residents, linked to the Thrive and Active to Thrive Programmes. PAL plays a key role in the city to support the residents of Plymouth to improve and maintain their own health and wellbeing to safeguard their health now and into the future. PAL is well placed to provide key opportunities to all our residents to give them access to assets and expertise to help them achieve happier, healthier lives in which they can maintain their independence for longer.

2.2 The Creation of Plymouth Active Leisure

In August 2021, PCC approved the creation of PAL, a local authority trading company (LATCo), to manage its leisure facilities under an initial 10-year contract. PAL began operation in April 2022 following the end of the Everyone Active contract. At the time, procuring a new operator was not viable because the leisure sector was severely impacted by COVID-19 and no operators were bidding. The decision aimed to align leisure services with PCC priorities, particularly reducing health inequalities, supporting vulnerable communities and collaborating to maximize opportunities around the National Marine Park (NMP).

PAL is a Teckal company, wholly owned by PCC but governed by an independent Board. It manages sites including the Plymouth Life Centre, Plympton Pool and Gym, Tinside Lido, and Mount Wise Outdoor Pools, and works to embed physical activity into health pathways such as social prescribing and rehabilitation. PAL has established strong partnerships with organisations such as the NHS Trust, Swim England, YMCA Plymouth, and NMP. PAL delivers key city initiatives such as Fit and Fed and Let's Ride. Using Sport England's Moving Communities platform, PAL's social value is estimated at £11.7

million, highlighting its role in improving health, wellbeing, and community outcomes. Under the current leases, PAL has tenant maintenance responsibilities.

2.3 Overview of PAL Progression since 2022

- PAL has shown resilience and been proactive in progressing the business since its startup, despite challenging circumstances. The back of house systems have seen improvements including financial reporting and other business critical systems that were failing or not set up correctly. Business KPIs have shown positive progress, for example, membership numbers and income have grown significantly and key projects at the Life Centre (gym) and Tinside (cafe and events space) have been delivered. There have been improvements and investment in the staff to help create a commercial and city focused team who are proud to work for the company. PAL has integrated across professional communities of the city and nationally with key collaborations created with not only PCC departments but also Active Devon, YMCA Plymouth, the NHS, Wolseley Trust, the Royal Navy and more. Nationally PAL has put Plymouth on the map with impressive work with the Local Government Association, UK Active and Swim England. PAL's Active Lifestyles team was created when PCC's Sports Development Team transferred into PAL in April 2024 giving them a renewed purpose to tackle inequalities and inactivity across the city. Work has been done to upskill this team and they now do impactful work on programmes such as Parkinsons, diabetes, safe cycling, Fit and Fed, SEND, children with excessive weight, mental health and an innovative programme working with Derriford Hospital that has seen one of their community physiotherapy clinics moving into the Life Centre permanently. The jewel in the crown for PAL is the Active Referral scheme that was launched in October 2024 which offers an 8-week free targeted session to those most in need. PAL is scheduled to begin working with Livewell to target residents who are on waiting lists for tier three weight management programmes where there is a pressure of around 2000 on a waiting list and an approximate two year wait for treatment. PAL has proven that it is able to significantly support health services to reduce pressure on them and the healthcare system. PAL has also been able to host events such as the National Junior Diving championships, with Plymouth Diving still being held in high regard nationally with currently one athlete on course to represent GB at the next Olympics.
- PAL continues to be ambitious with a team structure and a Board that shares the same vision. PAL is values driven but will act commercially and with the best interests of the city and its residents at its heart. Some highlights of PALs journey are noted in the table below and detailed in PALs annual report

<p>Fitness membership growth of 48% since 2022 (49,415 unique users)</p> <p>Swim School growth of 31% since 2022.</p> <p>Income growth of 29% (vs 22/23)</p> <p>Fitness income increase of 40%</p> <p>Swim School income increased 49%.</p> <p>Overall cost base increased by only 12% since 2022</p> <p>Payroll increased by 36% (NMW/NI)</p> <p>Profit and Loss improvement of 80% since the first year</p> <p>£11.7m of social impact from attendances per year</p> <p>Annual attendances of 1.4m forecast 25/26</p> <p>2453 young people attended youth nights at Tinside as part of NMP sessions</p> <p>668 children took part in Swim safe which is the largest campaign in England</p> <p>Active Lifestyles team secured £1,072,399 of funding in 24/25</p>	<p>The Sports Delivery Unit transferred over to become the Active Wellbeing Team – focusing on inactivity and inequalities.</p> <p>Collaborations with health services including Derriford Physiotherapists</p> <p>SEND and excessive weight programmes work is being done.</p> <p>Active Referral was launched to tackle inequalities in collaboration with partners.</p> <p>Improved exec team, governance, and structure of board</p> <p>National recognition – contributing to national agendas. Plymouth ‘on the map’.</p> <p>2025 Finalist Swim England Award for Innovative Pool Operator</p> <p>2024 PAL 2nd for National Employers for Gender Equality in Sport</p> <p>Staff Survey 2025 – 76% state they are proud to work for PAL</p> <p>Employed six leisure apprentices</p> <p>Improved the Looked After Children's and Care Leavers offer (best practice LGA) - 801 attendances in 24/25</p>
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3. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS

3.1 Drivers for Change

PAL has made a significant impact in a very short time. The initial period of the contract was dominated by the startup phase and dealing with Covid recovery. In the past 24 months the PAL Board, working closely with PCC, has driven a full strategic review of the business and developed a new ambitious strategic plan (appendix E) and new financial model. To deliver the full impact of a new strategic plan, PAL has requested an extended contract for the following reasons:

- The current contract term does not take account of the time needed for handover and start up, and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic took longer for the sector to recover from and remains an issue. Coupled with the impact of the Ukraine war on utility costs and the rapid rise in the national minimum wage, these factors mean that additional time is needed for PAL to

repay its startup costs - a longer term is required for business cases for investment to allow time for a sufficient payback period. It is likely that, with time and investment, a longer-term contract could generate income and lower net costs for PCC over time.

- Investment in buildings and facilities is required given the age of the assets; a longer-term contract will enable a strategic asset management approach to be taken in partnership between PCC and PAL, with the opportunity to maximise returns on investment to fund improved asset management.
- A longer contract, aligned with the new strategic plan, offers an opportunity for long-term transformation and would enable a significant investment in sports and physical activity for the City.
- It is proposed that PCC extend the contract term. PAL has demonstrated competence and resilience in addressing legacy issues inherited from the previous operator and has delivered improved financial and operational performance over the past two years. Social value outcomes continue to strengthen, with Sport England data confirming a high return on investment for every pound spent. The extension of contract time will enable PAL to repay their startup costs over a longer period and provide assurance that they can continue to trade, enabling them to provide city-focused exciting facilities that align with PCC's wider prevention agendas and opportunities that are centered on active wellbeing, whilst maintaining income growth.

3.2 The New Vision for PAL

Over the past 12 months, there has been a resetting of the PAL Board, including a new Board Chair and PCC Client lead, two new Board directors and the introduction of two high profile leisure industry non-executive directors. The executive team has also been strengthened with new appointments made to deliver a high-class service. Considerable time has been taken to ensure that the business plan is robust; a new strategic vision has been established, and financial planning has been done to set PAL on the right path to success for the future.

The strategic plan is as follows:

The Vision -To make Plymouth the most physically active coastal city and to help residents live happier, healthier and more active lives

The Mission - As systems leaders, we will unite with partners to foster meaningful connections that improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities, and inspire future generations.

The strategic aims are:

Increase participation and engagement - PAL will provide a safe, inclusive, and affordable community environment that empowers residents to lead more active, happy, and healthy lives.

PAL will ensure every young person has the opportunity to learn to swim, building life-saving skills and confidence around water.

Improving health and wellbeing – PAL will create and strengthen partnerships that deliver targeted opportunities to educate, reduce inequalities, and empower individuals to improve their health and wellbeing. Through collaboration, we will amplify impact and ensure support reaches those who need it most.

Inspiring Plymouth - PAL will maximise Plymouth's unique blue infrastructure to attract investment, support placemaking, and elevate the City's identity as a vibrant coastal destination. By inspiring future athletes and expanding access to aquatic opportunities, we will position ourselves as a national leader in aquatics and water-based sport development.

Operational Excellent - As an employer of choice, PAL will minimise our carbon footprint and deliver high-quality services through a compassionate, skilled, and motivated workforce. By investing in people and sustainability, we will consistently exceed customer expectations and lead with purpose.

Sustainable Business - PAL will lead with innovation, ensuring our organisation remains economically viable and socially responsible. Through creative thinking, sound financial management, and a commitment to community impact, PAL will deliver long-term value.

3.3 Engagement with Consultancy (Strategic Leisure)

In summer 2025, PCC engaged with an external leisure consultancy company (Strategic Leisure) to assess the proposed business plan for PAL. A summary of their findings is detailed below:

- When PAL was established in 2022 as a LATCO - the original rationale was based on an options appraisal that suggested a modest net benefit of £12,000 over five years, coupled with significant market uncertainty at the time. In practice, PAL was implemented quickly, with high start-up costs of around £500,000 and a number of operational considerations overlooked during handover.
- Since its inception, PAL has delivered a range of positive outcomes. These include the opening of a new gym at the Life Centre, increased participation in fitness and aquatics, integration of Active Lifestyles programmes, and a strong community offer. Social value has been quantified by Sport England at £11.7 million, and the agency model has generated VAT savings. However, PAL has also faced challenges: projected savings have not materialized; net costs to the Council have been higher than expected (between £400,000 and £750,000 per annum above projections), and cash flow difficulties have persisted. However, the financial position is improving with minimal losses in 2024/25 (although aided by a utility rebate). Market penetration remains limited, with the fitness market share estimated at just 1.9%.

- PAL has requested a long-term contract extension of 20–25 years. This represents a significant commitment for PCC, particularly given that leisure is a non-statutory service. Alternatives have been considered: ceasing the service is politically unrealistic; bringing operations fully in-house would be financially unviable; and establishing an independent trust would replicate existing issues with less PCC control. Outsourcing the contract could deliver economies of scale, access to capital, and some risk transfer, but would involve procurement costs, leave PCC responsible for building liabilities, and prevent recovery of existing losses.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

<p>Option 1. Cease the Service</p> <p>As leisure provision is discretionary, PCC is not legally required to provide these services. However, the service delivered by PAL is critical to sustaining participation in physical activity and generates significant social value, including measurable socio-economic benefits. It also contributes directly to corporate objectives. Ceasing the service would risk displacement of participation and jeopardize long-term grant funding from Sport England and other bodies which was predicated on service delivery a 21-year term (commencement 2011). This option is not considered tenable.</p>	<p>Option 2. Establish a Fully Independent Trust</p> <p>Creating an independent charitable trust to operate leisure facilities was considered primarily for potential tax savings. However, recent HMRC changes to VAT rules have reduced the financial viability of this model. Since COVID-19, few new trusts have been established, and several existing trusts have experienced financial instability. Transferring operations to a new trust would not resolve current challenges; it would replicate existing issues with reduced PCC control and increased risk. This option is not likely to be viable.</p>
<p>Option 3. Bring the Service Fully In-House</p> <p>Returning the service to full PCC control would incur substantial additional costs, including NNDR liabilities and enhanced staff terms and pension obligations. Based on market knowledge and an assessment of the situation in Plymouth - independent advice taken has highlighted that there are only two viable options for PCC to consider. This option is not likely to be viable.</p>	<p>Option 4. Outsource the Contract (like the previous arrangement)</p> <p>Advantages and disadvantages are varied. There would be economies of scale and supply chain benefits – Large operators manage multiple local authority contracts and can reduce overheads, access specialist staff, and potentially secure cheaper goods and services such as utilities (though this is not guaranteed). There are national brands – some operators offer recognised health and fitness products, enabling customers to access facilities in other areas,</p>

though this may have limited benefit in the West Country. Market recovery – the public sector leisure management market has recovered from COVID-19, unlike in 2021. There is the opportunity to access capital – commercial operators may invest their own capital, but only in schemes delivering a positive financial return during the contract. Capital costs would be built into the financial bid.

Disadvantages of outsourcing are also noted. There would be costs and disruption – breaking the current contract and running a procurement exercise would cost around £200k and take approximately 12 months for a medium-term contract (10+ years) with social value targets and maintenance profiling. There would be no ability to recover debt – PAL is indebted to PCC, and start-up costs would be lost if PAL ceases to exist. There is a possible impact from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – operators may seek additional assurances around contract term due to LGR. There would still be building liabilities – PCC would still retain responsibility for major lifecycle maintenance, which many operators would avoid. Currently PAL aligns with the policy making of PCC - large operators with national brands are unlikely to fully align with PCC policies or adapt quickly to new priorities without formal contract changes/costs. There is not enough time – there is not enough time to complete a full procurement before February 2026.

The outsourcing option is not recommended at this stage but may be revisited at a future contract break point.

Option 5. Retain the Services of PAL (Recommended).**Advantages of retaining the service of PAL**

- Less disruption – PAL has shown it can manage the business and overcome challenges, with income and usage trending positively. PCC has already undergone one costly transition; another would incur further expense, significant officer and member time, and disrupt service users.
- Political support – the current administration values PAL's role in achieving corporate objectives and improving quality of life. PAL operates as an extension of PCC, and this support is essential for the partnership to succeed.
- Alignment with PCC priorities – PAL was created to deliver PCC's leisure agenda and corporate objectives. As an arms-length entity, its aims align closely with PCC, whereas outsourcing may not guarantee full alignment to PCC policies.
- Social value outcomes continue to strengthen, with Sport England data confirming a high return on investment for every pound spent.
- Debt repayment – retaining PAL allows for a long-term approach to repaying existing debt and any additional funding provided to it by PCC.

Disadvantages of retaining PAL

- PAL is wholly owned by PCC, meaning all financial and operational risks remain with PCC, as well as landlord maintenance and building replacement responsibilities. As a single-contract entity, PAL cannot access the economies of scale available to larger national operators, although this can only be confirmed through a full procurement exercise.
- Retaining PAL offers continuity, political support, and alignment with PCC priorities, but also places all financial risk with PCC and leaves staff costs high. Outsourcing presents opportunities but would require breaking the current contract and carries its own risks.

For the reasons given above, retaining PAL is recommended.

Strategic Leisure advised that, on balance, PCC should retain PAL, extend the contract, and agree the requested working capital support loan. Two contractual options were proposed: either confirming the current contract period to 2032 with an option to extend to 2042 or granting a 10-year extension to 2042 with a break clause in 2032. In either case, any extension and loan support should be conditional on quantified and agreed KPIs. These should cover financial performance (income, expenditure, net cost, cash flow, loan repayment), social value (usage by target groups, contribution to health outcomes), and operational delivery (programme development, staff cost ratios, membership metrics).

PAL has delivered tangible community benefits but remains financially fragile. PCC is asked to commit to a long-term extension and additional loan support, recognising both the risks and the potential for stabilization and improvement under a more disciplined contractual framework.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

The proposed extension of the current contract offers opportunities for growth and service enhancement, while also presenting financial risks that require robust mitigation. Importantly, PAL has demonstrated an improving financial position, with modelling indicating that this trend will continue under the proposed extension.

However, PAL will require ongoing support from PCC to recover from a working capital deficit built in the early years of the current contract, which was an impact of COVID and start-up costs.

Contract extension will require PCC to commit to providing additional working capital support through an additional loan. Ensuring that all working capital loans are repaid through growth in income will be key to mitigating financial risk. This will be achieved through a robust review of business cases for income generation, the introduction of a KPI framework (appendix B) and the use of a break clause or similar to provide an opportunity for PCC to review, as lender and parent company, the financial position of PAL across the medium term.

The financial model underpinning the proposed extension is based on prudent assumptions, sensitivity analysis including conservative estimates for income growth. It incorporates opportunities to diversify income streams, and there are additional potential projects in the pipeline that are not factored into the modelling giving prospects for future growth.

An extended contract term is likely to reduce the level of operational subsidy required over time, and could ultimately generate a budget surplus for the Council.

As part of the engagement with external consultants; Strategic Leisure reviewed the underlying assumptions made in the modelling and business plan, commenting that it is 'comprehensive and credible' and the assumptions regarding income and expenditure are 'realistic and supportable'. However, it is important to acknowledge that these assumptions carry inherent risk, and actual performance could diverge from the financial modelling.

Governance

PAL has an established Board, chaired by the Service Director of Economic Development. The Board is made up of members that hold formal director positions including the Head of Procurement, Director of communities, a Public Health Consultant and two non-executive directors. The sole shareholder (the client) is PCC and is represented by the Director of Public Health.

PAL Vision 2035
To make Plymouth THE most physically active coastal city and to help residents live happier, healthier and more active lives

PAL Mission 2035
As systems leaders, we will unite with partners to foster meaningful connections that improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities, and inspire future generations.



Aim	Objective		Outcomes	Ref	KPIs	Measuring method
Increasing Participation and Engagement	We will provide a safe, inclusive, and affordable community environment that empowers residents to lead more active, happy, and healthy lives. We will ensure every young person has the opportunity to learn to swim, building life-saving skills and confidence around water.	1	We are committed to fostering a diverse and engaged community, where individuals from all backgrounds and age groups are actively encouraged to participate in health and wellbeing programmes throughout every stage of life.	1	Annual attendances (by demographics & % occupancy)	Gladstone Reporting
		2	We will increase the number of young people equipped with life-saving swimming skills, leading to improved water safety and greater confidence around aquatic environments.	2	Number active/fairly active (Moving Communities data)	Moving communities
				3	Unique (individual) users.	Gladstone Reporting
				4	Number of children achieving KS2 in school swimming	Moving Communities
				5	Membership numbers (fitness/L2S/L2D)	Gladstone Reporting
Aim	Objective		Outcomes	Ref	KPIs	Measuring method
Improving Health & Wellbeing	We will create and strengthen partnerships that de	1	We will support improved community health outcomes and actively tackle health inequalities, with measurable progress in areas such as physical activity participation, access to preventative services, and wellbeing across underserved populations.	1	Individual users (as above)	Moving Communities
		2	We will be recognised as a vital community asset and trusted connector that links individuals to collaborative health and wellbeing programmes, strengthens local networks and enhances opportunities.	2	Attendance (demographic breakdown)	Gladstone Reporting
				3	Number of Active Health scheme participants and number continuing	Gladstone Reporting
				4	Number of additional individuals engaged in community outreach activities	Gladstone Reporting
Aim	Objective		Outcomes	Ref	KPIs	Measuring method
Inspiring Plymouth	We will maximise Plymouth's unique blue infrastructure to attract investment, support placemaking, and elevate the city's identity as a vibrant coastal destination. By inspiring future athletes and expanding access to aquatic opportunities, we will position ourselves as a national leader in aquatics and water-based sport development.	1	We will actively contribute to Plymouth's vision by increasing engagement with blue and green spaces, enhancing the city's profile as a vibrant, active destination. Through inclusive programming and strategic partnerships, we will help position Plymouth as a host for regional and national events that celebrate nature, wellbeing, and community.	1	Attendance at Tinside Lido and Mount Wise Pools	Gladstone Reporting
		2	We will expand access to training, coaching, and resources for young athletes in Plymouth, providing increased support for talent development and creating a clearer, more inclusive pathway to athletic success.	2	Number of regional/national events hosted.	Events booking team
				3	Number of young athletes enrolled in diving talent development programmes.	TDC/British Diving/Head of Aquatics
Aim	Objective		Outcomes	Ref	KPIs	Measuring method
Operational Excellence	As an employer of choice, we will minimise our carbon footprint and deliver high-quality services through a compassionate, skilled, and motivated workforce. By investing in people and sustainability, we will consistently exceed customer expectations and lead with purpose.	1	We will minimise our environmental impact and actively promote sustainable travel, positioning our organisation as a leader in environmentally responsible practices and a catalyst for greener, healthier communities.	1	Energy consumption per facility (kWh)	Laser/Bills/Meter reads/Head of Op's
		2	We will be recognised as a top employer by fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusion, and excellence. Through co-creation with our customers and investment in our people, we will build a high-performing workforce that delivers outstanding experiences and drives long-term success.	2	Employee NPS score (Proud to work for PAL, annual survey)	Annual staff Survey
				3	Customer NPS score (Fitronics)	Fitronics/Insite
Aim	Objective		Outcomes	Ref	KPIs	Measuring method
Sustainable Business	We will lead with innovation, ensuring our organisation remains economically viable and socially responsible. Through creative thinking, sound financial management, and a commitment to community impact, we will deliver long-term value.	1	We will maintain consistent financial health while increasing our social value output ensuring that our operations remain profitable, resilient, and purpose-driven, with measurable benefits for the communities we serve	1	Income/Expenditure and P&L targets	P&L/Audited accounts
		2	We will implement net growth strategies that drive economic self-sustainability,	2	Social value generated (Moving Communities calculator)	Moving Communities

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FINANCIAL MODELLING

The following financial model shows the projected operational position for PAL over 5 years and for the total of the contract, with the impact to PCC revenue budgets also shown

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	TOTAL 2026 to 2031	TOTAL 2026 to 2042
Operational							
Income	(7.569)	(7.973)	(8.412)	(8.674)	(8.966)	(41.593)	(157.605)
Expenditure (incl depreciation)	8.184	8.477	8.688	8.895	9.103	43.345	159.330
Operational (surplus)/deficit	0.615	0.504	0.276	0.221	0.137	1.752	1.725
Enhancement of Facilities	0.046	0.193	0.122	0.026	(0.007)	0.381	(1.510)
Other							
Agency charge to PCC	(0.553)	(0.491)	(0.348)	(0.259)	(0.191)	(1.842)	(2.907)
(Surplus)/Deficit	0.108	0.207	0.050	(0.012)	(0.061)	0.291	(2.692)
Cost to Plymouth City Council							
Agency charge to PCC	0.553	0.491	0.348	0.259	0.191	1.842	2.907
PCC service borrowing costs	0.000	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.167	0.557
	0.553	0.533	0.390	0.301	0.233	2.009	3.464

It shows the subsidy required over the term, with the financial modelling indicating that business growth within agency services is likely to have a beneficial impact on the Council's revenue position, with the potential opportunity to re-invest surpluses to meet asset management costs, or to release an MTFP saving.

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Appendix D – Financial Sensitivity Analysis**1. PURPOSE**

This Appendix summarises the sensitivity analysis undertaken in respect of the proposed extension of the contract between Plymouth City Council and **Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL)** a company wholly owned by the Council.

The analysis aims to assess the potential impact on the Council's revenue position and group financial exposure should key assumptions vary over the proposed extension period, and to provide assurance regarding affordability and financial risk.

While the contractual arrangement sits between the Council and the company, financial risks ultimately remain with the Council as shareholder. The proposed contract extension is therefore considered not only from a commissioning perspective, but also in terms of its potential implications for PAL.

2. KEY FINANCIAL SENSITIVITIES CONSIDERED

Sensitivity analysis has focused on areas where changes could materially affect either the cost to the Council or the financial stability of PAL. The results are presented per year over the next five years, together with a cumulative position across the full term of the proposed contract.

Inflation and cost pressures – Price increases have been assumed to rise in line with inflationary and wage-related pressures, and a small contingency has been included within the cost base. As price uplifts are expected to broadly offset underlying cost increases, no separate inflation sensitivity has been modelled.

Additional opportunities – A number of potential income and efficiency opportunities have been identified but not yet included in the model, pending further detailed work. These represent possible future mitigations should adverse financial impacts arise.

The sensitivity assessment therefore focuses on the following key areas:

- **Total Income/Total expenditure** – This sensitivity models a sustained decline in overall usage across services, without recovery, while still allowing for targeted areas of income growth. As agency services account for approximately 85% of PAL's total income, this scenario poses the greatest potential impact for PCC. A corresponding reduction in expenditure has also been assumed to reflect cost-mitigation measures.
- **Existing services growth** – Income growth from existing services is a core component of the business plan. Sensitivities test the impact of growth falling short of targets, as well as upside potential if targets are exceeded.
- **Growth as a result of capital investment** – Income increases linked to new or expanded services dependent on capital investment. This includes the risk of underperformance against targets, scenarios where performance exceeds expectations, and the possibility that planned projects do not proceed.

2.1 Impact of Individual Sensitivities

Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate the estimated impact of changes in each key assumption. The columns set out the effect across the first five years of the contract, followed by the cumulative impact over the full duration of the proposed extension.

Table 1: Impact on PAL's annual surplus or deficit position and total for the contract – *figures show change compared to modelled base position*

Sensitivity	Illustrative Change	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total over contract
Existing services growth + capital investment growth	-10%/+10% change	0.000	0.001 to (0.001)	0.010 to (0.010)	0.020 to (0.020)	0.024 to (0.024)	0.432 to (0.432)
Total Income	10% reduction	0.100	0.103	0.112	0.123	0.128	2.261
Total Expenditure	7% reduction	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.077)	(0.078)	(0.079)	(1.403)
Capital projects do not proceed	All	(0.052)	(0.218)	(0.153)	(0.056)	(0.022)	1.183

If the investment projects do not proceed, there will be an initial saving as the upfront expenditure required to enable future income growth would not be incurred. However, over the medium to long term this results in a net reduction in surplus, as the associated income streams would not materialise.

Table 2: Impact to PCC in relation to the Agency charge – *figures show change compared to modelled base position*

Sensitivity	Illustrative Change	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Total over contract
Existing services growth + capital investment growth	-10%/+10% change	0.013 to (0.013)	0.028 to (0.028)	0.037 to (0.037)	0.045 to (0.045)	0.053 to (0.053)	0.830 to (0.830)
Total Income	10% reduction	0.585	0.613	0.645	0.670	0.695	12.244
Total Expenditure	7% reduction	(0.439)	(0.451)	(0.464)	(0.477)	(0.491)	(8.690)
Capital projects do not proceed	All	(0.016)	0.047	0.049	0.052	0.054	0.943

A reduction in income from agency services would have a proportionately larger impact on PCC, as the Council would need to fund the resulting shortfall to maintain delivery of those services.

2.2 Combined Impact – Scenario Analysis

Scenario analysis has also been undertaken to assess the cumulative impact of multiple adverse factors occurring simultaneously. Table 3 below sets out PAL's total modelled annual profit and loss position over the first five years of the contract, as well as the cumulative position across the full term of the proposed extension for different scenarios. The total financial impact for PCC (arising from agency model services) is presented in Table 4, illustrating the total net cost to PCC under different scenarios.

Table 3: PAL Profit and Loss (surplus)/deficit – figures show total modelled position for each scenario

Scenario	Illustrative Change	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Financial outcome over contract term
Improved case	10% additional growth	0.108	0.205	0.040	(0.032)	(0.085)	(3.123)
Base Case		0.108	0.207	0.050	(0.012)	(0.061)	(2.692)
Adverse Case	10% reduction in growth	0.108	0.208	0.060	0.007	(0.038)	(2.259)
Severe Case	Total reduction in Income of 10%, reduction in cost base of 7% + capital projects do not proceed	0.133	0.234	0.150	0.179	0.158	1.231

Table 4: PCC agency cost – figures show total modelled position for each scenario.

Scenario	Illustrative Change	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m	2030/31 £m	Financial outcome over contract term
Improved case	10% additional growth	0.553	0.520	0.362	0.264	0.188	2.632
Base Case		0.553	0.533	0.390	0.301	0.233	3.464
Adverse Case	10% reduction in growth	0.553	0.545	0.418	0.338	0.278	4.294
Severe Case	Total reduction in Income of 10%, reduction in cost base of 7% + capital projects do not proceed	0.699	0.676	0.609	0.535	0.479	7.811

The adverse case models a 10% reduction in growth for existing services and projects compared with the base case. Even under these conditions, PAL is projected to retain a cumulative surplus over the contract term, and PCC would continue to experience a positive impact on its overall revenue position.

In the severe case, the model applies a 10% reduction across all income streams and a 7% reduction in costs, alongside the assumption that planned capital projects do not proceed. Under this scenario, PAL is likely to face significant financial pressures that may require mitigation through contract variations, operational adjustments, or, if not resolved, shareholder intervention. The scenario would have direct implications for the Council, as increased agency charges would erode the financial benefits of the contract and instead create an additional budgetary pressure.

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3.0 GOVERNANCE, RISK AND MITIGATIONS

The following mitigations are in place to manage the identified sensitivities:

- Formal client and shareholder oversight through contract management and shareholder governance arrangements.
- Regular monitoring of the subsidiary's financial performance and cash position.
- Clear separation of client and shareholder decision making roles.
- Contract review points and termination provisions, where applicable.
- Ongoing assessment of compliance with Teckal exemption requirements.
- Prudent financial modelling
- Additional opportunities for income growth not included in the modelling work that are being explored

These arrangements help ensure that the subsidiary operates transparently, efficiently and in a manner consistent with value for money principles.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Sensitivity analysis confirms that the proposed contract extension with the Council's wholly owned subsidiary is affordable under current assumptions and presents a lower operational and financial risk than alternative delivery options at this time. The analysis also indicates that the financial model has sufficient resilience to absorb a degree of adverse variation without compromising overall viability.

However, as with all wholly owned company arrangements, financial risk ultimately rests with the Council. Approval of the extension should therefore be viewed in the context of continued strong contract management, shareholder oversight and regular financial review throughout the extension period.

Plymouth Active Leisure

KPI Framework Summary

Aligned with Sport England's "Uniting the Movement" Strategy and Plymouth City Council's Plymouth Plan and Thrive strategies.

[Uniting the Movement | Sport England](#)

[The Plymouth Plan | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

[Physical activity | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

Purpose

This document provides a clear overview of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) mapped to Plymouth Active Leisure's five strategic aims, objectives and outcomes ensuring alignment with local & national priorities for tackling inequalities, improving health, and creating sustainable, inclusive opportunities for physical activity. It will be reviewed monthly at PAL board meetings and annually in the PAL annual report.

PAL 2035 Vision

*'To make Plymouth **THE** most physically active coastal city and to help residents live happier, healthier and more active lives.'*

PAL 2035 Mission

'As systems leaders, we will unite with partners to foster meaningful connections that improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities, and inspire future generations.'

Strategic Aim: Increasing Participation and Engagement

Strategic Objective

We will provide a safe, inclusive, and affordable community environment that empowers residents to lead more active, happy, and healthy lives. We will ensure every young person has the opportunity to learn to swim, building life-saving skills and confidence around water.

Strategic Outcomes

1. We are committed to fostering a diverse and engaged community, where individuals from all backgrounds and age groups are actively encouraged to participate in health and wellbeing programmes throughout every stage of life.
2. We will increase the number of young people equipped with lifesaving swimming skills, leading to improved water safety and greater confidence around aquatic environments.

KPIs:

- Annual attendances (by demographics and % occupancy)
- Number active/fairly active (Moving Communities data)
- Unique (individual) users.
- Number of children achieving KS2 in school swimming
- Membership numbers (fitness/L2S/L2D)

We will also look to capture participation among a spotlight priority group, decided annually between PAL & PCC.

Strategic Aim: Improving Health & Wellbeing

Strategic Outcome

We will create and strengthen partnerships that deliver targeted opportunities to educate, reduce inequalities, and empower individuals to improve their health and wellbeing. Through collaboration, we will amplify impact and ensure support reaches those who need it most.

Strategic Objectives

1. We will support improved community health outcomes and actively tackle health inequalities, with measurable progress in areas such as physical activity participation, access to preventative services, and wellbeing across underserved populations.
2. We will be recognised as a vital community asset and trusted connector that links individuals to collaborative health and wellbeing programmes, strengthens local networks and enhances opportunities.

KPIs:

- Individual users (as above)
- Attendance (demographic breakdown)
- Number of Active Health scheme participants and number continuing
- Number of additional individuals engaged in community outreach activities

We will continue to collaborate and work with other partners in the health and wellbeing system in the city.

Strategic Aim: Inspiring Plymouth

Strategic Outcome

We will maximise Plymouth's unique blue infrastructure to attract investment, support placemaking, and elevate the city's identity as a vibrant coastal destination. By inspiring future athletes and expanding access to aquatic opportunities, we will position ourselves as a national leader in aquatics and water-based sport development.

Strategic Objectives

1. We will actively contribute to Plymouth's vision by increasing engagement with blue and green spaces, enhancing the city's profile as a vibrant, active destination. Through inclusive programming and strategic partnerships, we will help position Plymouth as a host for regional and national events that celebrate nature, wellbeing, and community.
2. We will expand access to training, coaching, and resources for young athletes in Plymouth, providing increased support for talent development and creating a clearer, more inclusive pathway to athletic success.

KPIs:

- Attendance at Tinside Lido and Mount Wise Pools
- Number of regional/national events hosted.
- Number of young athletes enrolled in diving talent development programmes.

Through collaboration with partners we will increase opportunities for physical activity in blue and green spaces.

Strategic Aim: Operational Excellence**Strategic Outcome**

As an employer of choice, we will minimise our carbon footprint and deliver high-quality services through a compassionate, skilled, and motivated workforce. By investing in people and sustainability, we will consistently exceed customer expectations and lead with purpose.

Strategic Objectives

1. We will minimise our environmental impact and actively promote sustainable travel, positioning our organisation as a leader in environmentally responsible practices and a catalyst for greener, healthier communities.
2. We will be recognised as a top employer by fostering a culture of collaboration, inclusion, and excellence. Through co-creation with our customers and investment in our people, we will build a high-performing workforce that delivers outstanding experiences and drives long-term success.

KPIs:

- Energy consumption per facility (kWh)
- Employee NPS score (Proud to work for PAL, annual survey)
- Customer NPS score (Fitronics)

We will continue to obtain relevant industry standards such as Quest entry for all facilities, Swim England Water Wellbeing accreditation and the Active Standard (UK Active).

Strategic Aim: Sustainable Business**Strategic Outcome**

We will lead with innovation, ensuring our organisation remains economically viable and socially responsible. Through creative thinking, sound financial management, and a commitment to community impact, we will deliver long-term value.

Strategic Objectives

1. We will maintain consistent financial health while increasing our social value output ensuring that our operations remain profitable, resilient, and purpose-driven, with measurable benefits for the communities we serve.

2. We will implement net growth strategies that drive economic self-sustainability, delivering lasting value to both residents and the council.

KPIs:

- Income/Expenditure and P&L targets
- Social value generated (Moving Communities calculator)

Alignment with Sport England

These KPIs directly support Sport England's priorities:

- Tackling inequalities in participation
- Embedding physical activity in health pathways
- Creating positive experiences for young people
- Building sustainable, inclusive environments
- Using data and insight for continuous improvement

Alignment with the Plymouth Plan


- HEA1: Addressing health inequalities and improving health literacy
- HEA2: Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people, and families
- HEA3: Supporting adults with health and social care needs
- HEA4: Playing an active role in the community
- HEA5: Delivering strong and safe communities and good-quality neighbourhoods
- HEA7: Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment
- INT1: Implementing Britain's Ocean City
- INT5: Celebrating Plymouth's sporting excellence
- INT8: Celebrating diverse communities
- GRO2: Developing, attracting, and retaining a highly skilled and adaptable workforce
- GRO5: Enhancing Plymouth's sporting facilities
- GRO7: Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change

Alignment with Active to Thrive

- Active for Health
- Active Communities
- Active Environments
- Active Facilities
- Active Travel
- Active Children and Young People

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE – CONTRACT EXTENSION

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Liz Slater	Department and service:	Public Health	Date of assessment:	22 January 2026
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Steve Maddern	Signature:		Approval date:	28 January 2026
Overview:	<p>Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL) was established in 2022 by Plymouth City Council (PCC) to lead the city’s physical activity agenda, replacing the previous provider Everyone Active. Its purpose is to help residents live healthier, more independent lives by reducing risks of lifestyle-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and dementia. PAL also supports PCC’s wider corporate priorities around tackling inactivity and improving health outcomes.</p> <p>Over the past year, PAL has strengthened its strategic and operational functions, improved its financial position, and delivered significant social value through increased participation and community engagement. Building on this success, PAL now seeks a long-term commitment from the Council to invest substantially in its facilities and services. This will enable PAL to manage legacy startup costs, reduce reliance on PCCs management fee, and enhance facilities management.</p> <p>The report recommends extending PAL’s existing contract beyond its current end date of March 2032 and providing further financial investment to support its ambitious new strategic plan. This plan envisions a £200 million investment in sport and physical activity across Plymouth over the next 20 years, generating greater social value, improved health outcomes, and new income streams for PCC. The scope of the service includes the management of the Plymouth Life Centre, Plympton Swimming Pool and Gym, Tinside Lido, Mount Wise Outdoor Pools and Active Lifestyle programmes targeting inequality and inactivity.</p>				

	<p>PAL has strong practices around equality and discrimination to allow for all voices to be heard and strives to eliminate bias in decision making and provide inclusive and accessible facilities for all. The nature of PAL is to seek out and challenge inequalities across our communities. As a company owned by PCC, PAL is committed to PCC’s principles of promoting equality of opportunity, challenging discrimination, promoting good relations across all members of our community and ensure the requirements are communicated to undertake business in line with the Equalities Act.</p>
Decision required:	<p>Approve a cashflow loan of up to £950,000 to PAL. Reason: <i>The support from PCC is to cover the working capital deficit built up across the current contract period to date, which was largely a result of start- up costs and the impact of COVID: restoring working capital balances will provide PAL with a sustainable platform to grow and thrive.</i></p> <p>Approve the reprofiling of two existing loans to PAL to increase the repayment term by three years, including utility costs of £565,983, and start-up loan of £365,000, totalling £930,983 plus accrued interest. Reason: <i>Extending the contract will enable PAL to repay outstanding loan debts over a longer period, provide operational stability, and allow PAL to continue to align its services with PCC’s wider corporate priorities and those priorities of the City.</i></p> <p>Approve an extension of 10 years to the existing contract with PAL to conclude in March 2042, including the provision of a break clause in 2035/36. Reason: <i>Extending the contract provides operational stability, whilst a break clause, provides a mechanism for managing the financial risk for the authority.</i></p> <p>To support feasibility studies and the submission of capital funding business cases through the Council’s capital governance process for enhancements to facilities. Reason: <i>capital investment supports income growth and will increase participation by wider audiences.</i></p> <p>Note the following contract amendments: The drafting of new KPIs An annual performance update to the Housing Scrutiny Panel Reason: <i>Noting the feedback from the Scrutiny Committee held on 10 December 2025 to enhance the oversight and risk management of the Contract and to ensure robust monitoring of KPIs, financial and contract performance.</i></p> <p>Note the positive impact of the Agency Model, as approved by Cabinet on 10 March 2025, and the generation of VAT savings, which have been included in the PAL business case model.</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		No	X
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		No	X
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.	The report is requesting an extension to the existing Leisure Management Contract, so no negative impacts are anticipated.			

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
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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>City Survey 2022</p> <p>The proportion of those stating their health was good or very good decreased with age: 81% (under 45); 67% (45-54); 66% (55-64); 57% (65-74) and 48% (75+).</p>	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	
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<p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(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>No adverse impact anticipated.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
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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>City Survey 2022</p> <p>The proportion of those respondents 'limited a lot through a health problem/disability' considering their health as bad or very bad was 53% , significantly higher than those 'limited a little' (7%), which in turn was significantly higher than among those with 'no health problem/disability' (1%).</p>	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	
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>	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	
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>	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	

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 adverse impact anticipated.	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>	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	
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>	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	
Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	

Sexual orientation	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).	No adverse impact anticipated.	N/A	
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SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
	No implications.	N/A	

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	Sport is widely seen as a way for people of different backgrounds to interact and integrate by taking part, volunteering and spectating. PAL’s admissions policy promotes equality by providing: - <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Disabled people and people with health conditions can access subsidised or discounted membership▪ Students and older people can access a discounted membership.	PAL will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- work with others to provide enhanced support to protected characteristic groups to overcome barriers to attending and taking part.- develop and promote a range of opportunities that enable people to exercise independently.- ensure staff are suitable qualified and trained.	Louise Kelley – Head of Active Wellbeing and Sport

	Children aged 11-15 years can access the gym if accompanied by an adult or attend a supervised session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve our offer to existing customers as well as targeting those who are not already active through PAL's Active Health initiatives and the work of the Active Lifestyles Team 	
Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.	PAL currently allow free access for Care Leavers plus one friend/ relative and this policy will not change.		
Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.	PAL's current recruitment policy and Disability Confident Committed status demonstrates their commitment towards this.	PAL will continue to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review its policies. - meet its obligations towards the Disability Confident Committed status. 	Jess Hogben – People Impact and Engagement Manager
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.	N/A		

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Plymouth Active Contract Extension

Project details

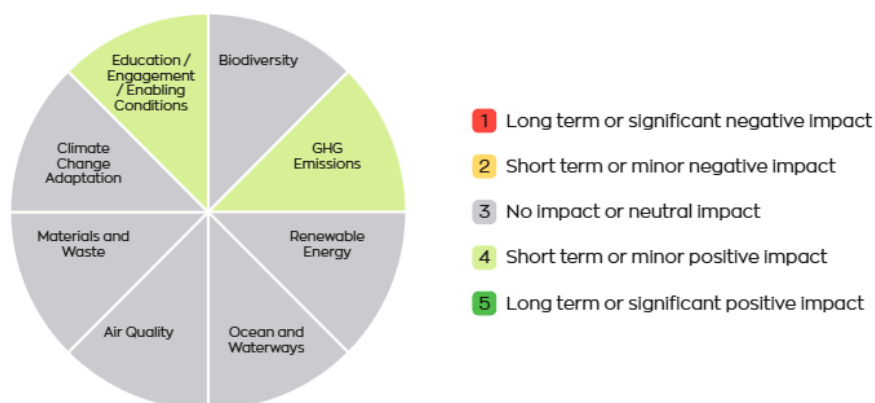
Assessment author

Liz Slater

Project summary

Extension of the existing contract to enable long term planning to enable contact to become profitable

Summary of assessment



The outputs of this assessment indicate that the contract extension will have minimal direct environmental impacts. There are no anticipated increases in greenhouse gas emissions, waste, water use, air pollution, or flood risk, and no changes to habitats, biodiversity, or urban heat islands. Renewable energy and green infrastructure impacts are limited, though the project supports future opportunities for energy efficiency and active travel.

The positive outcomes—such as encouraging walking, cycling, and healthy habits—depend on the continued engagement of residents and facility users. No significant environmental consequences are expected beyond 2030, and ongoing benefits will be realised through routine operations and adherence to existing environmental management practices, including waste reduction, energy monitoring, and support for council initiatives.

Assessment scores

Biodiversity

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

There is no change to facilities that will effect the the biodiversity. The project will not lead to degradation, removal or improvement of existing habitats as there are no changes in the levels of noise, pollution, proximity to people or other factors that might cause problems

GHG Emissions

Score

(4) Short term or limited positive impact

Score justification

The project is not anticipated to create a one-off increase or decrease in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. No construction activities, soil disturbance, or temporary changes to traffic patterns are proposed as part of this contract, and therefore no short-term emissions impacts are expected.

The project is also not expected to result in an ongoing increase or decrease in GHG emissions. The facilities within the scope of the contract will not undergo changes that would increase emissions, such as the creation of new homes, premises, roads, or significant changes in resource use. Existing operations will continue as currently managed. However, utility consumption will continue to be monitored, and opportunities to improve resource efficiency and reduce GHG emissions will be identified and implemented where feasible through the adoption of new technologies and changes to customs and practices.

The project will not actively sequester carbon from the atmosphere, nor will it remove existing carbon sinks. There will be no changes to land use, vegetation, or canopy cover, and no removal of mature trees or other carbon-sequestering assets is proposed.

Renewable Energy

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

The project will not result in an immediate increase or decrease in the provision of renewable energy or the use of waste energy in Plymouth. No new renewable energy or waste energy infrastructure will be installed as part of the current scope of works.

However, the contract extension will support and facilitate future investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures. In particular, it will allow for the potential extension of photovoltaic (PV) installations across the Plymouth Life Centre site. It will also support measures aimed at reducing overall energy demand and lowering reliance on electricity supplied from the national grid through improved energy efficiency, changes in operational practices, and the adoption of new technologies where feasible

Ocean and Waterways

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

The contract extension will not have a direct impact on water quality. No construction works, changes to land use, or

alterations to drainage or wastewater systems are proposed, and therefore no changes to surface water, groundwater, or coastal water quality are anticipated.

The project will not create new marine or aquatic habitats, nor will it remove, damage, or otherwise affect existing habitats. There are no activities within the scope of the contract that would impact coastal, marine, or freshwater environments.

The project will not affect the volume of water requiring treatment as sewage. There will be no increase in water consumption or wastewater generation beyond existing levels, and current wastewater infrastructure is sufficient to manage ongoing demand. As no new drainage or development is proposed, no additional mitigation measures such as sustainable drainage systems are required.

The contract extension will not lead to an increase in pollutants such as litter, plastics, or chemicals in the environment. Instead, it will continue to support reductions in waste generation and increases in recycling rates through engagement with both staff and facility users. The project will also support existing council initiatives aimed at protecting Plymouth's coastal and marine waters.

Air Quality

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

Proposed revised response

The project will not lead to any temporary or permanent changes in the amount or length of vehicle journeys, including car, van, bus, or HGV movements. As no changes to access, transport arrangements, or site operations are proposed, there will be no impacts on travel patterns. The project does not introduce new transport infrastructure but continues to support existing arrangements for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport.

The project will not result in an increase in air emissions or particulate matter from plant or operational activities. There will be no changes to heating systems, no installation of new plant, and no activities such as construction, manufacturing, or demolition that could generate additional air emissions.

The project will not improve or degrade indoor air quality within homes or workplaces. There are no changes proposed to the facilities, building fabric, ventilation systems, or operational practices that would affect indoor air quality.

The project does not incorporate new green infrastructure, as there is limited available land surrounding the facilities where additional vegetation could be implemented. As a result, there will be no change to local air quality arising from green infrastructure measures.

Materials and Waste

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

The project will not create or reduce waste volumes in the city in either the short or long term. As the project is a contract extension with no construction works or changes to service delivery, no one-off or ongoing increases in waste generation are anticipated. Waste volumes associated with the facilities will remain consistent with existing operations, and there will be no impact on the public realm through increased littering or pollution.

The project will continue to make use of existing resources, infrastructure, and equipment, thereby avoiding unnecessary waste. Where consumables or materials are required as part of normal operations, existing procurement practices will be followed, which prioritise waste reduction, reuse, and recycling where possible. Opportunities to source recycled or lower-carbon materials will continue to be considered in line with council policies and best practice.

Whole-life waste management impacts have been considered and are not expected to change as a result of this project. Current waste management arrangements, including segregation, recycling, and responsible disposal, will remain in place, and ongoing efforts to reduce waste and improve recycling performance will continue through staff and user engagement.

Climate Change Adaptation

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

No formal assessment of climate change vulnerability will be conducted for this project, as the contract extension does not involve works or activities that would be affected by climate-related hazards.

The project will not contribute to making Plymouth more or less resilient to the anticipated effects of climate change. Existing operations and infrastructure will continue without changes that would influence climate resilience.

The project will not lead to any changes in flood risk, as there are no alterations to land use, drainage, or built structures.

The project will not contribute to the formation of urban heat islands. There are no new developments, materials, or infrastructure that would increase local temperatures.

Education / Engagement / Enabling Conditions

Score

(4) Short term or limited positive impact

Score justification

The contract extension will help engage and encourage residents and users of the facilities to adopt healthier lifestyles, which includes increased participation in physical activity such as walking and cycling. By promoting these activities, the project indirectly supports climate-friendly behaviours by encouraging active travel and reducing reliance on motorised transport.

While the project does not directly provide education on the climate or biodiversity emergencies, or fund climate adaptation measures such as green infrastructure or flood prevention, it contributes to building capacity for climate-friendly behaviours through increased opportunities for active travel and healthy habits.

Overall, the project supports the long-term adoption of low-carbon behaviours by helping more people incorporate walking, cycling, and physical activity into their daily routines.

Cabinet



Date of meeting:	09 February 2026
Title of Report:	Re-procurement and renewal of School Transport Contracts
Lead Member:	Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships)
Lead Strategic Director:	David Haley (Director for Children's Services)
Author:	Beverley Kerswell
Contact Email:	Beverley.Kerswell@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	BK 08/01/2026
Key Decision:	Yes
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The report sets out the procurement options we have considered and recommendations for the future commissioning and management of contracted Home to School Transport (HTST) services over the next eight years. The review has been undertaken to ensure the Council adopts a procurement route that is legally compliant, financially sustainable, operationally robust, and capable of supporting long term service resilience. Each option has been evaluated against key criteria, including operational practicality, compliance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Authority's Contract Standing Orders, value for money, administrative impact, and overall sustainability. Following this assessment, the recommended strategic approach is to establish a formal framework agreement, through which all Home to School Transport routes including Social Care transport routes which is commissioned through the Home to School Transport team will be procured for the full eight year period, providing a consistent, transparent, and efficient mechanism for securing high-quality transport services.

Recommendations and Reasons

That Cabinet agrees to:

1. Adopt an internally managed Open Framework as the procurement route for all contracted Home to School Transport services including Social Care transport routes which is commissioned through the Home to School Transport team for the next eight years.

Reasons: This approach builds on the previous Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) model, providing the most robust balance of cost efficiency, operational efficiency, supplier flexibility, long-term resilience, and compliance with the Procurement Act 2023. It also removes the need for repeated due-diligence exercises required by Contract Standing Orders, as suppliers are vetted once at framework admission. Through scheduled reopenings, the Local Authority can maintain competitive tension and support local market development, while mini-competitions ensure competitive pricing and quality standards throughout the 8-year term.

Alternatives Options Considered

The Traditional Closed Framework was explored and ruled out. This approach means we cannot refresh suppliers mid-term, which weakens competition and risks price inflation as the framework ages. There is also a need to re-procure sooner than an Open Framework.

The Outsourced Open Framework option has been explored and ruled out. This introduces avoidable delay and additional cost through the initial procurement of the framework operator and embeds ongoing management fees without a commensurate improvement in outcomes over an internally managed model. It also reduces the Local Authority's direct control over call-off design and supplier development, which is central to tailoring solutions for local needs and ensuring continuous improvement. This model creates long-term dependency and exit risks, whereas an internally managed Open Framework maintains institutional knowledge, preserves agility, and delivers stronger overall value for money for the Council's mainly sub-£50k route portfolio.

The Single Supplier Contract option was excluded based on previous experience of this Contracting model which caused high dependency and resilience risks and the loss of competitive tension during the contract term.

The Multiple Supplier (Lotted) Contract was not considered suitable because of its substantial administrative workload and lower efficiency compared to using lots within an Open Framework.

Multiple Spot Contracts were dismissed due to the unsustainable administrative burden created by Contract Standing Orders, repeated due-diligence requirements, and the loss of economies of scale.

If there is a change in circumstances and the recommended procurement route cannot be undertaken or no longer represents best value for the Council, any subsequent procurement route will be undertaken will be in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Law.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The proposal helps to meet the corporate plan through the following:

DEMOCRACY

We listen to families and make fair, transparent decisions about school transport eligibility based on clear criteria set out in Plymouth City Council's School Transport Policy. We ensure every application is assessed consistently, whether it relates to distance, low income, special educational needs, or exceptional circumstances.

RESPONSIBILITY

We understand the impact that transport decisions have on a child's education and daily life. We take our statutory duties seriously under the Education Act to provide transport for eligible children, offering the safest and most appropriate travel arrangements - whether that is a minibus, taxi, bus pass, or mileage allowance - only where no feasible alternative exists.

FAIRNESS

Every child deserves equitable access to education. We ensure that children who qualify through distance, low income, or special educational or medical needs receive the support they are entitled to. Eligibility

for transport always prioritises the nearest suitable school and is assessed individually to ensure fairness for all families.

COOPERATION

Working together leads to better outcomes. We collaborate with parents, schools, transport providers, and Passenger Assistants to deliver safe, reliable school transport. Families help by ensuring children are ready on time and by communicating changes promptly, while our School Transport Team coordinates routes, equipment, and support to meet children's needs.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The Home to School Transport service is funded entirely from revenue, with a total budget allocation of £10.958m for 2025/26. Over recent years, significant collaborative work between the service, Finance, and the SEND team has ensured robust budget monitoring and accurate forecasting of growth pressures arising from increased Independent Special School Placements (ISP).

The forecasted annual expenditure on external transport providers for 2025/26 is £7.797m (see table below). This figure incorporates part-year costs for routes that have ceased, costs for the current 254 operating routes transporting 1,066 pupils daily, and projected growth for the final quarter of the year.

	2022/23 Actuals	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Actuals	2025/26 Forecast
Fixed (minibuses)	£1.505m	£1.486m	£1.765m	£1.979m
Volatile (taxis)	£2.965m	£4.451m	£4.930m	£5.817m
Total cost	£4.470m	£5.936m	£6.696m	£7.797m
Pupils (year-end)	803	903	968	1,180
Routes (year-end)	219	262	239	280

Financial Risks

The financial impact of implementing a new Open Framework for procuring transport services cannot be fully quantified until new route contracts are awarded and operational. While no savings are anticipated from the routes, the transition is essential due to the expiry of the current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) in January 2026, which cannot continue under the Procurement Act 2023. All routes remain operational under the current contractual arrangement which allows them to continue past the date of the DPS expiration. Further procurement is undertaken through a traditional procurement model until the new Open Framework is agreed. Savings will be made on time compared to the traditional procurement model.

Moving to an Open Framework is critical for legal compliance, service continuity, and alignment with updated procurement legislation. It will enable competitive tendering for new transport contracts, ensuring flexibility to meet rising demand. Although no adverse budgetary impact is expected, there remains a risk of cost escalation associated with market volatility and the introduction of new procurement arrangements. These increases and variables would be seen regardless of the procurement method as these relate to numbers of eligible children, their needs and the market.

By converting to an Open Framework, Plymouth gains access to a broader, dynamic provider marketplace, improving cost effectiveness and innovation. However, rigorous financial control,

procurement governance, and operational planning will be critical to manage cost escalation, compliance risk, and potential overhead increases.

Legal Implications

The proposed procurement route is compliant with the Procurement Act 2023 and the adoption of an internally managed open framework is a lawful and appropriate response to the expiry of the previous DPS and ensures that the Council can continue to meet its statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 for home to school transport.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

The statutory duty to provide Home-to-School Transport inevitably generates carbon emissions which will be procured through the agreed framework, as vehicle use remains integral to maintaining service delivery. Low-carbon transport technologies continue to develop, and the service has implemented measures to reduce emissions where practicable. Electric and hybrid vehicles are deployed on taxi-contracted routes in accordance with the Taxi Licensing Emissions Policy, supporting wider corporate objectives on environmental sustainability.

However, the operational requirement for larger vehicles such as minibuses, combined with the longer distances involved in certain journeys, continues to limit the feasibility of fully transitioning to low-carbon fleet options at this stage. The service will continue to monitor technological developments and assess opportunities for further emission reductions as they become viable.

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

Includes health and safety, safeguarding and equality duties within specifications and contract monitoring.

** 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.*

All children who meet the requirements under the statutory and Plymouth School Transport policies including the Post-16 policy and the Post-19 policy are in need of transport to access education will be provided with Home to School Transport and the necessary Passenger Assistant support. Additionally, the Home to School Transport team support children who live with Foster Carers outside of the city to travel to their schools. This is also arranged and tendered for through these contracts.

In order to ensure the Health and Safety of all:

- All children are assessed and issued with the relevant child car seat to ensure children travel safely.
- All wheelchair users have their wheelchairs assessed, passported and specialist equipment supplied with Drivers being trained on their application.
- Passenger Assistants are all trained and receive additional training for very complex medical needs to ensure the needs of the children are met.
- All minibuses are checked by PCC prior to undertaking a contract and on-going spot checks are undertaken on all vehicles and drivers to ensure compliance throughout the contract.

Risk Management:

- Under the contracts operators must provide replacement vehicles in the event of breakdown to ensure continuity of service.

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	Briefing report title							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							
C	Climate 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) <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

Sign off:

Fin	OW. 25.26. 123	Leg	LS/0 0001 312/ 2/AC /26/1 /26	Mon Off		HR		Assets		Strat Proc	PW/PS/81 4/CP/0126
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Haley (Director for Children's Services)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 29/01/2026											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Sally Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) Date approved: 19/11/2025											

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RE-PROCUREMENT AND RENEWAL OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONTRACTS

Transport and Allowances



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report recommends that the Local Authority adopt an internally managed Open Framework as the procurement route for all contracted Home to School Transport services. This would include Social Care transport, commissioned through the Home to School transport department, for the next eight years.

This change is essential due to the expiry of the existing Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

An interim arrangement will operate from January 2026 to August 2027. On approval of the Open Framework approach, we will be able to progress with the design, development, and implementation of the Framework, enabling approved Suppliers to participate in procurements for individual routes, with all current routes expected to transition by August 2027. Home to School Transport services will continue without interruption during this period. Students' access to school will not be affected.

2. BACKGROUND

The current DPS has been in place since January 2016. This enabled open market competition, ensuring competitive pricing and preventing monopolies. This approach has supported to minimise cost increases and has allowed new companies to join at any time, thus promoting competitive pricing and supporting local businesses.

The DPS expired on the 3rd of January 2026. Under the Procurement Act 2023, there is no direct replacement for the DPS model. The Home to School Transport contracts are currently working under an interim arrangement ensuring all Home to School transport routes remain operational. Tendering arrangements also remain in place for new routes to secure the operational requirements of the service.

The DPS was a procurement system that allows suppliers to join at any time to form pre-qualified contractors for purchasing goods, services, or works, providing ongoing access to competitive quotes and up-to-date contract opportunities. It offered flexibility to tender routes where needed instead of the more traditional methods of procurement, whilst ensuring all standards were maintained to the terms and conditions of service.

Prior to the DPS, the previous framework only had four operators and did not allow for the addition of new contractors to the framework until its expiry or early termination, limiting opportunities for savings and retendering when required. This created a closed market with limited competition increasing prices at the time.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES AND REASONS

It is recommended that the Local Authority adopts an internally managed Open Framework as the procurement method for all contracted Home to School Transport services for the next eight years. This approach builds on the previous Dynamic Purchasing System model, providing the most robust balance of cost efficiency, operational efficiency, supplier flexibility, long-term resilience, and compliance with the Procurement Act 2023. It also removes the need for repeated due-diligence exercises required by Contract Standing Orders, as suppliers are vetted once at framework admission. Through scheduled reopenings, the Local Authority can maintain

competitive tension and support local market development, while mini-competitions ensure competitive pricing and quality standards throughout the term.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- **Do nothing**

This would mean that Plymouth would not fulfill the statutory obligation to provide Home-to-School Transport

Strategic Options (Approach to procuring and managing all contracted routes)

- **Traditional Closed Framework**

A Traditional Closed Framework is created for a fixed period, typically four years, with no route for admitting new suppliers once the framework is awarded. All due-diligence takes place at the outset, and subsequent route awards are competed only among the suppliers initially appointed.

How it Works:

Suppliers apply once at the start of the process, and those judged to meet the necessary standards are appointed to the fixed supplier list for the life of the framework. All route-level competitions are then carried out within this limited pool of suppliers until the framework expires. Once the term concludes, the Local Authority must undertake a new framework procurement.

Advantages:

A closed framework is straightforward to manage once in place because all supplier checks and documentation are completed at the outset. The model also provides predictable pricing and a stable supplier base during its four-year term, which can make contract administration easier.

Disadvantages:

The inability to add new supplier's mid-term means competition weakens as the framework ages. If suppliers leave the market or reduce capacity, resilience is diminished and route coverage becomes more difficult. The shorter four-year term also means the Authority must carry out more frequent re-procurements, increasing administrative and operational costs.

Value for Money Considerations:

Value for money is strongest early in the framework's life but gradually reduces as competition erodes. Additionally, the Local Authority must procure a new framework more often, overall administrative costs increase compared to longer-term, more flexible options.

- **Outsourced Open Framework**

Under a fully outsourced model, the Local Authority commissions an external organisation to design, establish, operate, and continuously manage the entire Open Framework for Home to School Transport on its behalf. The third party becomes responsible for all framework governance activities over the term, including market engagement, drafting and maintaining the framework documentation, onboarding and re-admitting suppliers at scheduled re-opening

points, verifying supplier legal, financial and technical credentials, setting and updating standard contract terms, and administering all route-level call-off competitions, direct awards and Contractual awards. Day-to-day interactions with suppliers, performance monitoring methodologies, KPI dashboards, and issue resolution processes are owned and delivered by the outsourced provider, with the Authority retaining a client role focused on strategic oversight, policy direction, and assurance.

How it Works:

The Local Authority first undertakes a competitive procurement to appoint the outsourced framework operator for the full framework term. Following award, the operator conducts market engagement and establishes the Open Framework, including all entry criteria, compliance checks, and standard terms. Suppliers apply directly to the operator for admission; those passing due diligence are placed onto the framework. When transport requirements arise, the operator runs route or package-level mini-competitions, evaluates bids against pre-agreed criteria, makes award recommendations, and issues call-off documentation under delegated authority or for Authority sign-off, depending on the governance model agreed in the appointment contract. The operator is also responsible for supplier performance monitoring, KPI reporting, rectification plans, and contract variations, and for delivering scheduled re-openings to refresh the supplier base, while the Authority receives periodic assurance reports and conducts proportionate audits to confirm probity and compliance.

Advantages:

A fully outsourced approach can significantly reduce internal workload during both set-up and steady-state operations, since the external provider supplies specialist framework, governance and transport procurement expertise and runs the end-to-end process at scale. The model can accelerate market engagement and supplier onboarding if the provider has an established network and tested processes, potentially broadening participation, including SMEs. The Authority benefits from standardised documentation, mature systems for supplier due diligence and performance management, and the continuity of a dedicated delivery team focused entirely on running the framework.

Disadvantages:

The model requires a separate procurement to appoint the outsourced operator, which introduces additional time and cost before any benefits are realised. It also embeds ongoing management fees for the duration of the framework and creates a structural dependency on a third party for a core statutory enabling function. There is an inherent risk of misalignment between the provider's commercial drivers and the Authority's service outcomes, particularly around local social value priorities, market development choices, and nuanced operational decisions (for example, balancing SEN route complexity with broader network efficiency). The Local Authority's direct control over call-off design, evaluation nuances, and supplier development can be diminished, and changes to process or documentation may require contractual change control with the provider, slowing responsiveness. Knowledge and data may sit primarily with the provider's systems, increasing exit and transition risk at contract end.

Value for Money Considerations:

While outsourcing can substitute some internal costs with external capability, the provider's fees and the preliminary competition to appoint them reduce net financial benefit against an internally managed Open Framework. Any efficiency gains from specialist processes must outweigh management fees, profit margins, and contract administration overheads to deliver better value in aggregate; in practice, for a portfolio of predominantly sub-£50k routes, those

gains are unlikely to exceed the cost of outsourcing. Moreover, the additional procurement step defers the point at which the Authority can begin calling off under the framework, delaying savings and operational improvements. Over the medium term, reduced agility and the cost of change controls can further erode value, especially where frequent adjustments to route packaging, evaluation approach, or KPI sets are needed to optimise outcomes.

Operational Options (Approach to Procuring Individual Routes)

- **Single Supplier Contract**

A Single Supplier Contract involves procuring all Home to School Transport routes under one consolidated contract awarded to a single provider.

How it Works:

Following a single competitive tender process, the Local Authority would award a contract to one supplier who would then deliver all contracted Home to School transport services. All route planning, operations and performance management would be carried out under this sole contractual relationship.

Advantages:

This approach simplifies contract management, performance monitoring, and communication because there is only one supplier to oversee. It can also offer economies of scale if the successful supplier has significant capacity and can deliver the service efficiently.

Disadvantages:

Awarding all routes to a single supplier creates a high-risk dependency, meaning any disruption or performance issue would affect the entire service. Competitive pressure declines once the contract is awarded, reducing incentives for continued innovation or cost efficiency. The model is also inflexible in adjusting to changes in demand or route requirements.

Value for Money Considerations:

Although initial bid prices may be competitive, long-term value is weakened by reduced competition, increased risk exposure, and the lack of flexibility to adjust service models cost-effectively.

- **Multiple Supplier Contract (Lotted Approach)**

The lotted approach divides routes into logical groups, such as by geography or transport type, with separate procurements and contracts for each lot.

How it Works:

Each lot is subject to its own competitive process, and suppliers submit bids for the lots that match their operational capability. Successful suppliers then deliver only the routes in their awarded areas, resulting in multiple concurrent contracts for the Authority to manage.

Advantages:

This approach can encourage SME participation and enables tailored service delivery models that reflect the specific needs of different groups of routes.

Disadvantages:

Managing multiple procurements substantially increases administrative effort and demands additional contract management capacity. Service standards may vary between lots, and coordinating multiple suppliers can be challenging. Due to the specific nature of school transport in Plymouth—including the complexity of student needs and the requirement for a single contractor per school—this approach is not feasible for our local market.

Value for Money Considerations:

Although each lot may achieve good competition, the increased administrative workload and contract fragmentation reduce the overall financial benefits compared to the more streamlined Open Framework approach.

- **Multiple Spot Contracts (Route-by-Route Procurement)**

Under this approach, each route is procured individually following the Local Authority's Contract Standing Orders. Since historically most Home to School Transport routes fall under £50,000, each route requires between one and three written quotes and individual due-diligence checks.

How it Works:

For every route, the Authority must gather the required number of quotations, conduct legal, financial, and technical assessments for each prospective supplier, evaluate submissions, and issue a standalone contract. This process is repeated each time a route expires, changes, or requires replacement.

Advantages:

This approach encourages engagement with small, very local operators and enables hyper-tailored solutions for individual routes.

Disadvantages:

This is the most administratively burdensome model, as due-diligence and quotation processes must be repeated for every route, often multiple times per year. There is no mechanism to leverage economies of scale or standardise contracts, leading to inconsistent pricing and service quality. The workload is unsustainable over the eight-year period.

Value for Money Considerations:

Although individual routes may appear competitively priced, the overall cost of administering repeated procurements and due-diligence checks is high. The lack of aggregation significantly reduces strategic value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISK

The Home to School Transport service is funded entirely from revenue, with a total budget allocation of £10.958m for 2025/26. Over recent years, significant collaborative work between the service, Finance, and the SEND team has ensured robust budget monitoring and accurate forecasting of growth pressures arising from increased independent special school placements.

The forecasted annual expenditure on external transport providers for 2025/26 is £7.797m (see table below). This figure incorporates part-year costs for routes that have ceased, costs for the

current 254 operating routes transporting 1,066 pupils daily, and projected growth for the final quarter of the year.

	2022/23 Actuals	2023/24 Actuals	2024/25 Actuals	2025/26 Forecast
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Pupils (year-end)	803	903	968	1,180
Routes (year-end)	219	262	239	280

Financial Risks


The financial impact of implementing a new Open Framework for procuring transport services cannot be fully quantified until new route contracts are awarded and operational. While no savings are anticipated, the transition is essential due to the expiry of the current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) in January 2026, which cannot continue under the Procurement Act 2023.

Moving to an Open Framework is critical for legal compliance, service continuity, and alignment with updated procurement legislation. It will enable competitive tendering for new transport contracts, ensuring flexibility to meet rising demand. Although no adverse budgetary impact is expected, there remains a risk of cost escalation associated with market volatility and the introduction of new procurement arrangements.

By converting to an open framework, Plymouth gains access to a broader, dynamic provider marketplace, improving cost effectiveness and innovation. However, rigorous financial control, procurement governance, and operational planning will be critical to manage cost escalation, compliance risk, and potential overhead increases.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – RE-PROCUREMENT AND RENEWAL OF SCHOOL TRANSPORT CONTRACTS

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

Author(s): The person completing the EIA template.	Beverley Kerswell	Department and service:	Transport and Allowances	Date of assessment:	26/11/2025
Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director.	Victoria Whitman	Signature:		Approval date:	20/01/2026
Overview:	Re-procurement and renewal of School Transport Contracts for the next 8 years using the agreed preferred framework				
Decision required:	Adopt an internally managed Open Framework as the procurement route for all contracted Home to School Transport services including Social Care transport routes which is commissioned through the Home to School Transport team for the next eight years.				

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		No	x
If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.	Criteria has been reviewed and there is only one relevant section to take into account. Disability is to			

be considered due to the cohort of students accessing Home to School Transport.

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>	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		

<p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(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>We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group</p>		
<p>Disability</p>	<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>Limited operator availability may restrict student travel if sufficient tenders are not secured, and the lack of new market entrants could further constrain service capacity. This could happen if the wrong tendering process is selected.</p>	<p>Recommendation of internally managed open Framework for to replace Dynamic Purchasing system</p>	<p>August 2027</p>

Gender reassignment	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).	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		
Marriage and civil partnership	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. 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).	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		
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.	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		

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>	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		
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>	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		
Sex	<p>51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).</p>	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		
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>	We do not believe there will be an adverse impact on this group		

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department

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			
Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.			
Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.			
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.			

Re-procurement and renewal of School Transport Contracts

Project details

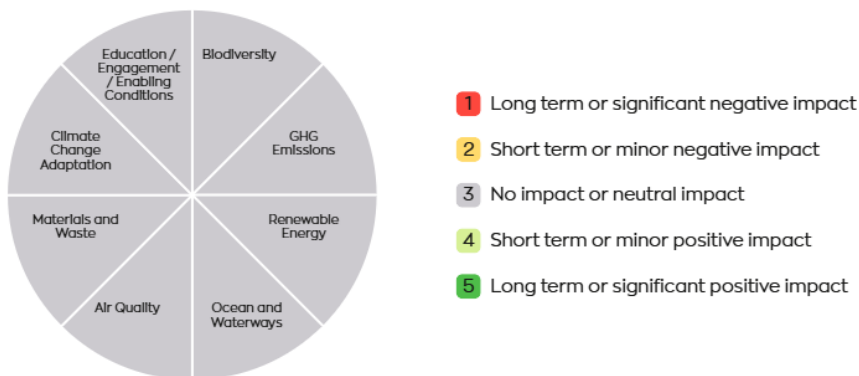
Assessment author

Beverley Kerswell

Project summary

strategic approach of setting up an agreed framework under which all routes will be procured for the next 8 years

Summary of assessment



Assessment scores

Biodiversity

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

There are no anticipated impacts on biodiversity, and the project is not located in an area where such effects are expected.

GHG Emissions

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

Our statutory responsibility to transport students which will be procured under the agreed framework to and from school inherently contributes to the carbon footprint, as vehicle usage remains essential to maintaining service delivery. While low carbon alternatives are continuing to develop across the transport industry, we have taken proactive steps to reduce emissions where feasible. Electric and hybrid vehicles are utilised on taxi contracted routes in line with the Taxi Licensing Emissions Policy, which supports our efforts to minimise environmental impact. However, the use of larger vehicles such as minibuses, combined with the longer distances involved in some journeys, presents ongoing challenges in fully adopting low carbon options at this stage.

Renewable Energy

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

The project will have no impact on the provision or use of renewable energy

Ocean and Waterways

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

No impact to Ocean and Waterway areas which may be effected

Air Quality

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

Our statutory responsibility to transport students which will be procured under the agreed framework to and from school inherently contributes to the carbon footprint, as vehicle usage remains essential to maintaining service delivery. While low carbon alternatives are continuing to develop across the transport industry, we have taken proactive steps to reduce emissions where feasible. Electric and hybrid vehicles are utilised on taxi contracted routes in line with the Taxi Licensing Emissions Policy, which supports our efforts to minimise environmental impact. However, the use of larger vehicles such as minibuses, combined with the longer distances involved in some journeys, presents ongoing challenges in fully adopting low carbon options at this stage.

Materials and Waste

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

This project will not create or increase waste volumes within the city. As it involves the procurement and delivery of student transport services rather than construction or material based activity, there are no processes that generate one off or long term waste streams. The project does not involve the supply of goods, single use packaged items, or other materials that might contribute to increased littering or pollution in the public realm

Climate Change Adaptation

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

Our statutory responsibility to transport students which will be procured under the agreed framework has no anticipated climate related impact. The project does not affect Plymouth's resilience to the effects of Climate change, nor does it lead to any change in flood risk or contribute to urban heat island effects, as it only relates to operational transport arrangements once the framework is agreed.

Education / Engagement / Enabling Conditions

Score

(3) No impact or neutral impact

Score justification

This project is focused on ensuring the smooth and reliable delivery of Home to school transport, and while that remains its primary purpose, it does not currently create opportunities to introduce measures linked to climate mitigation or adaptation

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