

City Council

Monday 26 January 2026

PRESENT:

Councillor Ms Watkin, in the Chair.

Councillor Tofan, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Mrs Beer, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Loveridge, Lowry, Luggier, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Ney, P.Nicholson, S.Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M.Smith, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tuohy and Wood.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Bannerman, Cuddihee, Finn, Haydon, R.Smith and Steel.

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.13 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.

54. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 24 November 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

For (43): Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Loveridge, Lowry, McCarthy, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Ney, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M. Smith, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tuohy and Wood.

Against: (0)

Abstain: (1) Councillor P. Nicholson

Absent/did not vote: (7) Councillors Mrs Beer, Goslin, Luggier, Raynsford, S. Nicholson, Tofan and Ms Watkin.

55. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

56. Appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies etc

Council noted the following changes:

- a) Councillor Taylor replaced Councillor Dann as Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure, Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- b) Councillor Dann replaced Councillor Taylor on the Licensing Committee and Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel.

57. **Questions by the Public**

The following question was asked by Mr Surtees to Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, Culture and Communications).

Question: With the announcement made that Plymouth will bid to be UK City of Culture 2029, will you commit to working with and including our diverse communities, from our Black and Ethnic communities to the Disabled community and more, in any and all plans made?

Answer: Thank you for your question and the answer is yes, most definitely. For any bid to succeed we will need to demonstrate meaningful engagement with our residents across the city and that is what we intend to do.

There are several phases to the process. The first phase is to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by 8 February 2026 which doesn’t give us a lot of time. During this phase, meetings are taking place with stakeholders (this includes representatives from culture, sport, education, community, local authority, NHS, community homes, business, social enterprise, natural environment, tourism, leisure, hospitality) and the cultural sector including companies, artists and freelancers. We will also be hosting several community drop-in discussions to garner information from as many people as possible. Please check the Plymouth Culture website and social media platforms for announcements regarding dates.

If we go through to the next phase of the process, we will be able to undertake a deeper dive into community engagement. DCMS has not yet issued a detailed timetable but we think that a bid would need to be prepared between April and late July this year.

The following question was asked by Mr Moore to Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships).

Question: Regarding the decision to withdraw funding for CaterEd what guarantees can you make that the quality and costs of school meals to children in Plymouth will not be affected?

Answer: The planned closure of the school catering company CATERed is not a result of the council withdrawing any funding, and it will not lead to children going without school meals.

CATERed is a cooperative trading company, jointly owned by local schools and Plymouth City Council and was formed in 2015 to provide high quality school meals to Plymouth schools by using a cooperative model designed to provide economies of scale.

As CATERed currently is unable to continue trading beyond academic year 2025/2026, the CATERed Board has taken the decision to cease school meal provision to prevent a situation of wrongful trading, and to give schools time to secure alternative providers. This is a Board of Director decision and not a shareholder decision, Council Member decision or a Plymouth City Council decision.

The supply and provision of school meals (meeting mandatory School Food Standards) is a statutory responsibility that is delegated to school governing bodies and, where appropriate, trusts. Funding for the school meals service comes from the school's delegated budgets. While many schools in Plymouth are part of the CATERed cooperative company that provides school meals, they are free to choose how they provide meals. Some schools already use other providers for children in the city. This means children will still receive their school meals and there should be no gap in provision. Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) will now need to make the decision as to who provides school meals from September 2026. Schools and MATs are still working through this decision, so providers at this stage are not known. Providers must adhere to certain standards of nutritional value and quality. Plymouth City Council has not directly funded CATERed, so has not withdrawn any funding. However, in light of the difficulties the company was facing, the Council offered a one-off package of support (likely to cost Plymouth City Council more than £500,000) to allow the company to keep trading through to the end of the academic year 2025/2026, or until schools make the switch to an alternative provider if that happens sooner. This has given schools the time they need to source and contract an alternative provider. As a council we will continue to support any maintained schools in finding alternative suppliers.

The following question was asked by Mr Bamping to Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities).

Question: How can PCC be serious about applying to become the UK's City of Culture 2029, when under a Labour led council on June 8th 2020, cancelled our own culture and history by removing the Sir John Hawkins Square signs?

Answer: The Council and our partners are extremely serious about our bid to become the UK's City of Culture 2029. This encompasses not only our amazing and complex history, but also the fantastic creative activity within the city.

At no point has the Council cancelled the history of Sir John Hawkins. His life is marked with an exhibit in The Box and in pieces of public art within the city.

The following question was asked by Mr Stoneman to Councillor

Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities).

Question: Can the Leader explain why no planning permission or listed buildings consent was in place for West Hoe Pier, why work was undertaken at the worst time of year (was closed all summer), and what's the estimated extra cost of repairs, now the pier's been destroyed by lack of planning?

Answer: The contractors and surveyors met with heritage conservation officers earlier this year to discuss the proposals for the investigation / strengthening works. Due to the variations in records and the number of past interventions it was agreed that the first phase of work would be carried out without listed building consent and the information gleaned would provide more detailed information about the exact nature of the work needed which would then be submitted for consent. The intention was to complete this investigative stage and before phase 2 to make a listed building consent application with the exact nature of the works.

Procuring work of this type takes time to plan and finance, in addition, work was planned to cause as little disruption to businesses on the waterfront as possible.

In this initial phase we found the pier head is supported on piles with a cast concrete and grout head. However, we found no record of this when we searched past works. We were aware that the grout used previously had reacted to salt water and the grout in the section between the pier head and first set of steps had largely settled in the bottom half of the pier.

Assuming that the grout has reacted elsewhere in the same manner, we believe more piles will be needed, this will need to be confirmed before we apply for listed building consent. The full design will be procured once the mid-section is complete, so we know how this will work structurally as it may affect the phase 2 design.

There has always been an intention to obtain listed building consent. The first phase was exploratory, which was to inform the application prior to works commencing in the second phase.

As some of you may have seen, Plymouth Live contacted Heritage England, who said "Listed Building Consent is not generally required for like-for-like repairs to listed structures. It is the responsibility of the local planning authority, in this case [Plymouth City Council](#), to determine whether consent is required. Swift repairs are needed but Historic England recognises the challenging conditions in which they need to be made."

The estimated extra costs, due to the storm, is estimated to be £150,000 to £200,000.

The following question was asked by Ms Harrison to Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport).

Question: There have been several severe weather alerts resulting in icy roads and pavements and I'm concerned the number of accidents will increase. Could you provide the current number of grit bins across Plymouth, how many were removed after the latest review and would you consider replacing the ones taken away?

Answer: The grit bin review recommendations to the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel were presented on 16th July 2025.

112 existing grit bins were recommended for removal and 81 new locations to be added, resulting in a net reduction from 480 to 449 bins. Following consultation with Ward Councillors these numbers were amended to show a final provision of 452 bins around the City.

The review was accepted by the Scrutiny Panel with the proviso that all Ward Councillors were consulted prior to any changes taking place. The emails were sent to all Ward Councillors on 7th August with a three-week consultation period with responses by Friday 29th August 2025.

We continue to review Grit Bin requests and additional sites will be mobilised for the winter period of 2026/27.

The following question was received by Mr Driver to Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport).

Question: What consultation was undertaken with local residents regarding the removal of 112 grit bins? Scrutiny papers suggest placement was the issue, yet Sutton and Mount Gould appear to have a net loss of six bins. Why were bins removed rather than relocated?

Answer: The purpose of the review was to establish an evidence-based approach to the siting of grit bins and ensure all Councillor green grit bins, were adopted as HMPE, this would allow maintenance costs to be met by Plymouth Highways winter budget.

In addition, it was recognised that several Salt Bins historically located across the city were placed without being in receipt of an engineered assessment. A full City-wide review of our Salt Bin asset was proposed and this process allowed for consideration of Road type, layout, use and special risk. Each location was assessed individually and scores allocated dependant on the hazard(s) identified, these included consideration for:

- HMPE status
- Carriageway Gradient
- Bend Radius
- Road Classification
- Distance to next bin
- Distance to junction

No of premises affected
Schools / Community Centres

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Sutton and Mount Gould had 4 existing bins, all of which were removed due to very low scores, and 2 new bins were placed after scoring highly enough to be considered. This resulted in a net loss of 2 grit bins in Sutton and Mount Gould.

We continue to review Grit Bin requests and additional sites will be mobilised for the winter period of 2026/27.

The following question was asked by Ms Aroori to Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care).

Question: Residents in Barne Barton struggle to access GP services locally, and there is no GP surgery based within Barne Barton itself. What is the Council doing, in partnership with the NHS, to improve access to primary care for people living in Barne Barton and St Budeaux, and will you commit to working with local residents to improve local healthcare provision?

Answer: Plymouth City Council is not responsible for the provision of primary care services, such as GP surgeries, but remains committed to working with local residents to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Barne Barton.

NHS Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB) is the organisation responsible for commissioning primary care services to meet the needs of the Plymouth residents (plus Torbay and Devon).

NHS Devon holds 116 Primary Medical Services contracts with GP practices and works with these practices to ensure that services are accessible, of good quality and meet the needs of their patients. NHS Devon also work closely with other parts of the local health and care system to ensure that care is joined-up, for example hospital services, so people get good experience of care when it is needed.

Barne Barton is served by several GP practices with the closest being Mayflower Medical Group's sites at Stirling Road, Trelawny and Ernesettle, as well as St Levan

Surgery and Oaksid Surgery. People living in Barne Barton can register with a number of practices across the city depending on their preference.

Overall access to GP practice services is very good in Plymouth, as recorded in the [GP Patient Survey](#), and residents can look up a range of feedback about each GP practice on the website. Direct feedback about local NHS services is welcomed and can be submitted directly to NHS Devon via a dedicated Patient Experience team on d-icb.patientexperience@nhs.net. Equally, feedback from residents about their own GP practice can be provided through the practice's Patient Participation Groups (PPG), which offer a route to provide constructive feedback to improve access to local GP services.

NHS Devon has no current plans to establish a new GP surgery within Barne Barton, however NHS Devon and Plymouth City Council have identified a need for a new community pharmacy in the area (see the [Plymouth Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment](#)) and is welcoming applications from pharmacy providers to meet this need.

The recently published [NHS 10 Year Plan](#) focusses on a neighbourhood approach to designing and delivering health and care services. Plymouth City Council, NHS Devon ICB, and primary care, including general practice, will be integral to the development of suitable arrangements for each neighbourhood in the Plymouth. The voice of patients is also being sought to inform this work.

These healthcare efforts will compliment ongoing work in Barne Barton to support the health of residents including all offers in the Barne Barton and St Budeaux Wellbeing Hub, such as mental health support, volunteering opportunities, guidance for long term health conditions, befriending, and employment and debt advice. In addition, city wide offers, such as [One You Plymouth](#) provide opportunities for Barne Barton residents to receive support with health-related concerns alongside more formal healthcare provision.

58. **Announcements**

Councillor Ms Watkin (Lord Mayor) made the following announcement:

- a) The city's annual civic ceremony would be held on 27 January 2026 in remembrance of the holocaust and all subsequent genocides. The ceremony would pay particular tribute to the Holodomor in Ukraine, recognising the suffering endured during that tragedy. The commemoration would feature a moving performance from the choir and will focus on the theme of bridging generations, reflecting on how the stories and lessons of the past must be carried forward by each new generation.

Councillor Ms Watkin (Lord Mayor) presented the following awards:

- b) Best regeneration project at the Inside Housing Awards was awarded to Neil Mawson (Housing Delivery Manager), Andrew Lawrie and Nick Jackson. The award

was given for the work on almost 800 damp and aging homes which were demolished in North Prospect and replaced by more than 1,100 high quality, energy efficient brand new homes. The homes offered a wide variety of house types, sizes and tenures to completely revitalise the community in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes;

- c) Plymouth's crematorium had won building of the year at Devon and Cornwall's Building Forum, recognising the high quality experience for bereaving families in a beautiful, natural setting. The award was given to Graham Smith (Head of Bereavement, Registrations and Coroners Services);
- d) Stirling House had won the best development under 50 homes award at the RTPi awards. Stirling house was a veterans self-build project, a Plan for Homes development of 25 high quality affordable homes (for social rent), including a number of self-build properties for service veterans at risk of homelessness. Delivered in partnership between the Council and Livewest, the project stands out for its collaborative planning and strong partnerships which had produced resilient outcomes that benefited both people and nature, with clear evidence of social capital returned to the economy. Simon Osbourne (Planning Officer) and Neil Mawson (Housing Delivery Manager) received the award;
- e) Transport Operation and Vehicle maintenance won best performance at the APSE awards, recognising the team's outstanding commitment to service improvement and operational excellence from maintaining our vehicle fleet to implementing better systems and processes that keep the council's services running smoothly. Martin Hoar (Fleet Services Manager), Ali Grant (Fleet Compliance and Policy Manager) and Simon Tongue (Fleet and Data Performance Officer) received the award.

The following announcements were made by Cabinet members:

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council), made the following announcements:

- f) Expressed heartfelt thanks to all those who had sent messages of support and well wishes during his recent ill health. Particular thanks was given to the Cabinet, who had stepped in and ensured stability during his absence;
- g) Paid tribute to Councillor Sue Dann following her stepping back from her role as Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure, and HR & OD on 01 January 2026. Councillor Dann had served the city for more than two decades, during which she had led on Human Resources, Economic Development, Transport, Street Scene and Environment, and most recently Customer Experience and Leisure. Councillor Dann's leadership had left a lasting legacy, including:
 - i. The safeguarding of Mount Wise Pools;
 - ii. Delivery of thousands of activity sessions for children through the Fit and Fed programmes;
 - iii. Championed digital transformation to improve services.

The Leader emphasised that Councillor Dann had always put Plymouth's people first, demonstrating dedication, vision and compassion throughout her service;

- h) Welcomed Councillor Taylor back to the Cabinet, who would be taking on the responsibilities previously held by Councillor Dann. Councillor Taylor would bring significant experience, having served as Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care and played a pivotal leadership role during the COVID-19 pandemic. Councillor Taylor's proven leadership and commitment to the city would be invaluable as she undertook her cabinet position responsibilities;
- i) The annual budget scrutiny panel had taken place and the forthcoming year's budget was a challenging budget. Plymouth, along with other councils nationally remained under pressure as demand for services continued to rise. The administration's ambition remained clear that the city must grow and was essential to creating jobs, raising skills, increasing wages, improving housing, expanding opportunities, lifting people out of poverty, improving health, and reducing long-term pressure on services;
- j) The budget proposed to:
 - i. drive economic growth;
 - ii. ensure Plymouth's voice was heard nationally;
 - iii. secure unprecedented levels of investment;
 - iv. create sustainable income;
 - v. raise living standards;
 - vi. reduce long-term demand on services;
- k) Highlighted major achievements secured over the previous year, including:
 - i. A £4.5 billion Defence Deal and a 50-year pipeline for Team Plymouth;
 - ii. National recognition as the UK centre for Marine Autonomy;
 - iii. Helping select Plymouth for its UK manufacturing HQ;
 - iv. Significant new investment commitments from Babcock;
 - v. A £1 billion city centre investment pipeline through partnership with Homes England, alongside £33.5 million in grants for Bath Street and the Civic Centre;
 - vi. A new college campus for blue-green skills;
 - vii. £3.5 billion investment around Derriford;
 - viii. Strong performance in the City of Culture bid;
 - ix. Major progress on Local Government Reorganisation proposals;

- l) Key milestones delivered in 2025 included:
- i. Completion of the £23 million Millbay Port Facilities;
 - ii. Ongoing work on the £9 million Millbay Shore Power project;
 - iii. Topping out of the £32.5 million Community Diagnostics Hub;
 - iv. Approval of CDC2's outline business case;
 - v. Completion of the £19 million Derriford District Centre;
 - vi. £73 million of Freeport investment;
 - vii. £15 million in direct development at Beaumont Way and Oceansgate;
 - viii. Major National Marine Park regeneration at Tinside and the Mount Batten Centre; completion of Phase I of the £22 million Foulston Park scheme;
 - ix. Completion of the £100 million Civic Centre strip-out with planning submitted;
- m) Major works scheduled for 2026, included Bath Street, Mount Edgcombe Garden Battery, Civic Centre development, Derriford Hospital projects, new Homes England housing sites, Babcock enhancements, and completion of Foulston Park, the Community Diagnostics Centre, the Mountbatten Centre and the Embankment Road leisure scheme;
- n) Income diversification remained a key priority to ensure that the Council was not reliant solely on council tax and business rates. The Economic Development team would generate more than £30 million in 2026 which represented an increase of £21 million annually since 2016;
- o) The Economic Development team was delivering £225 million in external grants;
- p) Plymouth's regional and national voice was strengthening as government was listening with real investment and action;
- q) Described Plymouth's position as a once in a generation opportunity, emphasising that the city had spent fifteen years building the foundations for growth;
- r) Thanked Council staff and wider partners for their exceptional work during the major incident in Millbay, known as Operation Fengate. The council had considerable experience in responding to complex and fast-moving incidents, and that with each response it became more coordinated, more confident and more effective. It was stressed that despite the positives, it should never diminish the fact that such incidents were challenging, unpredictable and stressful for both residents and those supporting them.

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) announced the following:

- s) Storms Guretti and Ingrid had caused severe and destructive weather conditions across the South West which had included significant impacts within Plymouth. Experts had been evaluating the damage sustained in Plymouth and assessments included the Council House, West Pier and Tinside. Critical repairs had already been done and other works would be undertaken to remedy damage based on expert advice received.

Councillor Taylor (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD) announced the following:

- t) Commended the staff of Plymouth Active Leisure who had responded to two major medical incidents at the Life Centre within a month of each other. Paramedics attending both incidents had contacted Plymouth Active Leisure directly to praise the professionalism, rapid response, and decisive actions of the staff involved. The attending Operations Commander Paramedic had formally commended the team members and the quality of the training that had been delivered and effectively put into practice. During the post-incident debrief, medical professionals expressed their gratitude for the exceptionally high standard of care provided. The Operations Commander Paramedic, himself a member of the Life Centre, had said it gave him pride and reassurance to witness such a high standard of emergency response from the local facility and concluded that the actions of the staff were a credit not only to the individuals involved but to the Plymouth Life Centre as a whole, exemplifying the highest standards of life-saving practice, teamwork, and public service.

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

- u) Foster for Plymouth had begun the new year with the launch of its fourth Mockingbird constellation. The Mockingbird programme replicated an extended-family model in which hub home carers provided practical help, emotional support, sleepovers, and a sense of community that foster carers described as 'feeling just like family'. The programme had been transformative over the previous 12 months for children, young people, and carers, and that the service was delighted to continue expanding it;
- v) Plymouth held its third annual Foster for Plymouth Summit at Dartmoor Zoo, where more than 60 foster carers had gathered for a morning of celebration, support, and shared learning within the zoo's unique setting. Councillor Laing expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to praise Plymouth's foster carers for the stability and love they provided to children across the city;
- w) Communications were being issued regarding the Council's purchase of its first children's home in many decades, a small home that would offer better value for money and, most importantly, an improved environment for young people through high-quality placements close to Plymouth;

- x) The Box had launched the Beryl Cook exhibition with 5,000 visits to The Box since 23 January 2026, including 1,750 to the exhibition itself. There was a 39% increase in retail sales, an 88% increase in kitchen and bar takings, 16,000 tickets booked and £9,000 in donations. Sculptures of Beryl Cook characters were appearing around the city;
- y) The Portrait of Mai would arrive in Plymouth on 14 February, believed to depict the first Polynesian person to visit Britain. The portrait would travel to New York, after Plymouth.

Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) announced the following:

- z) Informed Members that, as ward councillors, they played an important influencing role regarding the city's bus services. An email on 12 January by Transport officers on behalf of the Plymouth Enhanced Bus Partnership, invited Members to give feedback on bus services within their wards. The Partnership's vision was of a thriving bus network offering services that were frequent, reliable, fast, affordable, safe and clean contributing to Plymouth's ambition to reach net zero by 2030. Members were encouraged to complete the online survey, using both their own insight into local bus services and feedback gathered from residents over the previous 12 months;
- aa) Public consultation on the Manadon A38 Interchange and the Council's response had been published on 22 December 2025, as previously committed. Councillor Stephens expressed gratitude to all stakeholders and members of the public who had responded to the survey and contributed feedback. The next phase would be to draw up a revised design and plan which would be subject to further wide-ranging consultation in the Summer 2026.

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

Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) introduced the item, which was seconded by Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities).

Following contributions from Councillors P. Nicholson and Wood, Council agreed to:

1. The Council Tax Base for 2026/27 of 76,887 equivalent Band D dwellings as set out in the report.
2. The continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme and Exceptional Hardship Scheme for 2026/27 with no updates.

For: (46) Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Blight, Briars-Delve, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Luggier, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, M. Smith, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Ney, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, S. Nicholson, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Tuohy, Wood.

Against: (0)

Abstain: (4) Councillors Mrs Beer, Mrs Bridgeman, Loveridge and P. Nicholson.

Absent/did not vote: (1) Councillors Ms Watkin.

60. **Pay Policy Statement 2026/27**

Councillor Taylor (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure and Human Resources and Organisational Development) introduced the item, which was seconded by Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council).

Council agreed to:

- I. Approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 and the amended NJC Pay structure in place from 01 April 2026.

For: (49) Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Mrs Beer, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Loveridge, Lowry, Luggier, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, M. Smith, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Ney, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, P. Nicholson, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Simpson, S. Nicholson, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Tuohy and Wood.

Against: (0)

Abstain: (1) Councillor Ricketts.

Absent/did not vote: (1) Councillors Ms Watkin.

61. **Extension of Designation of S151 Officer**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the report which was seconded by Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance).

Council agreed to:

- I. Extend the designation of the Council's interim Service Director for Finance, David Northey, as the Section 151 Officer for the Council for the period from 28 February 2026 to 30 April 2026.

For: (48) Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Mrs Beer, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Loveridge, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, M. Smith, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Ney, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, P. Nicholson, Poyser, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, S. Nicholson, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Tuohy.

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

Absent/did not vote: (3) Councillors Raynsford, Ms Watkin and Wood.

62. **Committee Calendar 2026/27**

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) introduced the report which was seconded by Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care).

Council agreed to:

- I. To note the indicative dates for committee meetings to be held in 2026/27.

For: (48) Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Mrs Beer, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Loveridge, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, M. Smith, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Ney, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, P. Nicholson, Poyser, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, S. Nicholson, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tofan, Tuohy, Wood.

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

Absent/did not vote: (3) Councillors Raynsford, Tippetts and Ms Watkin.

63. **Motions on notice**

64. **Motions on Notice - Prioritising Plymouth Residents in Council Housing**

Councillor Ricketts introduced the motion which was seconded by Councillor Ney.

Following contributions from Councillors Loveridge, Penberthy and Reilly, Council did not agree to:

1. That Plymouth City Council will not take part in any government pilot schemes for asylum housing, to ensure that council resources remain focused on meeting local housing demand.
2. To request that the Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-operative Development and Communities communicates this decision by letter to the Secretary of State for the Home Office and for Housing, Communities and Local Government to confirm that Plymouth City Council will prioritise housing provision for local residents.

For: (4) Councillors Loveridge, Ney, P. Nicholson and Ricketts.

Against: (41) Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Blight, Briars-Delve, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Darcy, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Luggar, Lowry, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raysnford, Reilly, Simpson, M. Smith, Sproston, Stephens, Stevens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tuohy.

Abstain: (4) Councillors Mrs Beer, Mrs Bridgeman, S. Nicholson and Wood.

Absent/did not vote: (2) Councillors Tofan and Watkin.

65. **Questions by Councillors**

	From	To	Subject
I	Cllr Noble	Councillor Stephens	The widening of the A386, also known as Tavistock Road, had been long anticipated by local residents. Based on the experience gained during phase one of the project, what lessons had been learned that could help ensure phase two progresses smoothly and was completed efficiently?
<p>Response: Thank you for your question. Like yourself, I attended one of the recent information sessions at the Widewell Community Centre, where the project engagement team and City Council officers outlined how phase two of the A386 widening scheme would develop. The team reported that attendance for this phase was lower than for the initial stage, largely because residents had already experienced phase one and had seen the benefits now that it was complete. Although phase one faced delays, it was ultimately delivered under budget, and its outcomes were helping inform the approach for phase two.</p> <p>A key lesson learned had been the value of maintaining strong and consistent communication with residents in and around the Widewell area. While the works caused considerable disruption, not only for local households but also for those travelling through the area, the engagement process helped ensure that many local concerns were addressed. For example, signalling and traffic-light timings were adjusted, and the traffic management arrangements, such as contraflows, were refined. Initially, cyclists were asked to dismount in a 30-mph contraflow, but following representations from the cycling community, the team agreed that cyclists could safely travel in the same direction of flow as motor vehicles. I am pleased with the responsiveness and adaptability demonstrated by the project team. It has taken many decades to reach this point, indeed, some residents who once looked forward to being able to drive more safely and conveniently through Widewell are now, forty-plus years later, nearing eligibility for their bus passes.</p> <p>Nonetheless, the progress being made was welcome. Phase two was scheduled to commence shortly. I would like to extend my thanks to you and to the</p>			

	residents of Moor View and the surrounding areas for their patience during the works to date. Once complete, the project would deliver substantial improvements for those travelling both north and south across the city. I am also pleased that the Council is continuing to invest in transport infrastructure for the north of Plymouth.		
2	Cllr Dingle	Cllr Laing	I am very pleased about our bid to become the UK City of Culture 2029. Could you outline the sector engagement and community involvement that has taken place so far, as well as what further activity was planned ahead of the expression of interest deadline on 08 February?
	<p>Response: We held two sector briefings, attended by 175 people, and they proved so popular that we would be putting on a third briefing this week, for which 125 people had already signed up. There was also a waiting list. More than 50 people attended the drop-in session at Saltram yesterday, and there were two upcoming sessions: one at the Beacon in North Prospect on Friday, 30 January, from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm and one at Drake Circus this coming Saturday from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm. There has been at least one of these drop-ins in each constituency.</p> <p>In addition, our partners including Scrapstore, the 12 Wellbeing Hubs, Barbican Theatre, Waterfront Partnership, Destination Plymouth, Elder Tree, Park Crematorium Café, Arts University Plymouth, University of Plymouth, Photo Now, and Real Ideas were also holding either drop-in sessions or had information available about how people could share their thoughts about this really, really exciting bid.</p> <p>I very much hope that everybody in the chamber will get behind this bid because it is incredibly exciting, and it could mean a great deal for Plymouth and for Plymothians.</p> <p>Finally, if people are unable to attend any of the sessions, they could email us with their thoughts and ideas at cityofculture.gov.uk</p> <p>Please get behind the bid. Thank you.</p>		
3	Cllr Mrs Bridgeman	Cllr Evans OBE	It was over six months since I last asked about the future of Plymouth Airport. Could you please provide an update on any progress or developments?
	<p>Response: Thank you for your question. Discussions were on-going with all relevant parties regarding the future of Plymouth Airport. However, for the reasons I previously outlined, I am not able to provide details publicly at this stage.</p> <p>What I can reaffirm is that we remain resolute in our position and continue to argue strongly for the return of Plymouth Airport to City Council control.</p>		
4	Cllr Krizanac	Cllr Stephens	Beryl bikes were used widely by the public across the city, but a number of these bikes were being left on

			<p>pavements, where they created safety hazards for pedestrians. What measures is the Council taking to remove those bikes when they were left obstructing pedestrian areas and to ensure the safety of our residents?</p>
	<p>Response: Beryl Bikes were very popular in the city centre, and usage was particularly high during student term times. On average, users travel around one and a half miles per journey. However, at busy times, when riders reached their end destination, there could occasionally be insufficient docking spaces available.</p> <p>To manage this, two operational measures were in place. First, Beryl has a dedicated team that travelled around the city to monitor individual docking stations. Where bikes were present but docking spaces were full, the team would relocate bikes to balance capacity. Second, if bikes required repair, Beryl's maintenance contractor responded promptly to carry out the necessary work. I will follow this up with the company to ensure these operational checks and relocations were continuing as regularly as expected.</p> <p>In addition, each docking station displays both an email address and a phone number through which issues could be reported directly to the Beryl support team. Reporting abandoned or damaged bikes helped ensure they were removed or fixed quickly.</p> <p>I do appreciate that abandoned bikes could be unsightly and create inconvenience, and we would continue to work with Beryl to improve responsiveness and keep our streets safe and tidy.</p>		
5	Cllr Tippetts	Cllr Stephens	<p>The introduction of the 60 mph speed limit through the city has been widely welcomed. However, some concerns have been raised with me that the signage was not always sufficiently clear when approaching the zone. I experienced this myself when returning from the Midlands last night, and even with my awareness of its location as a councillor, I found the transition was not entirely obvious. Could you work with National Highways to improve the clarity of the signage, potentially including 'New Speed Limit Ahead' notices to give drivers additional warning and support them to slow down safely?</p>
	<p>Response: Thank you for your question. I will speak with you after this meeting to identify the specific locations where the signage appears unclear, and I will relay those concerns directly to National Highways. I have also received feedback from residents living nearby. Although we are still awaiting formal data and evidence, many reported that the new speed limit seemed to have reduced noise in certain areas and helped traffic flow more smoothly. Of course, as this is a busy route, occasional congestion will always occur, but overall residents appear to have accepted and indeed welcomed the reduced speed limit. I am happy to discuss your concerns further and ensure they are raised with the</p>		

	appropriate authorities.		
6	Cllr Wood	Cllr Evans OBE	The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry was forecasting an average annual loss of £500,000 over the next five years, which will deplete its remaining reserves. The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee voted unanimously in favour of my proposal for the Joint Chairs to write to our local MPs and the Secretary of State for Transport, requesting that the Government introduce a Devon and Cornwall infrastructure revenue grant of £500,000 per annum to support the Tamar Crossings. Is the administration actively supporting this request?
	Response: This is not strictly a matter for me, though I wasn't aware of the proposal you brought forward. If you would be willing to share the details of the motion you submitted, I would be happy to review it and give it proper consideration. I can say that our local MPs are actively engaging with the Government on Tamar Bridge matters more broadly, and they continue to press for support at national level.		
7	Cllr Nicholson	Cllr Penberthy	Last Wednesday, I became aware for the first time of a City Council press release regarding the disposal of land at West Park Hill, adjacent to the Plympton St Mary ward, for £7.3 million. I had been familiar with this site for many years. In the press release, Councillor Penberthy was quoted, and it stated that the farmland would continue to be used as farmland. Part of the site, however, is not farmland but is used by a resident of the Plympton St Mary ward to keep horses. Could you provide assurance that the existing use of the land, both by the farmer and by the horse owner would be permitted to continue until any development begins under Homes England?
	Response: We are not the owners of the site, and therefore we cannot give any assurances about how Homes England will choose to manage it.		
	Supplementary: Given that the Council's Constitution required openness and transparency, could Councillor Penberthy either inform the chamber or provide a written response to the Plympton St Mary councillors setting out the conditions of sale?		
	Response: I will seek legal advice on whether the conditions of sale could be shared, as those are legal documents and may not be publicly available.		
8	Cllr Loveridge	Cllr Lowry	What was the current total level of Council debt, and how had this figure changed over the past five years?
	Response: All the relevant papers were published last week as part of the budget scrutiny process, and they were also included within the Treasury Management		

	<p>documentation presented to the committee. All this information was publicly available online.</p> <p>From memory, the Council's debt stood at around £709 million. That figure increased in certain years, as the Council made significant investments, including purchasing and building real estate, housing, and business parks over the last five years. We borrowed that money at very preferential rates, in some cases as low as 0.5% and used it to acquire and develop assets.</p> <p>I am extremely proud of what we achieved as a local authority. These investments delivered substantial financial benefits as well as supporting employment. As I have said repeatedly, the Council's debt level was well within the range of comparable local authorities. I described it as good debt because it operated effectively as a mortgage: we were using that borrowing to create jobs and generate revenue for the Council.</p>		
	<p>Supplementary: What is the total amount of interest the Council was paying annually on its current level of debt?</p>		
	<p>Response: That information was available in the documentation published last week and could be viewed online. In comparison with our net revenue budget, the Council was paying in the region of £17 million annually in interest.</p>		
9	Cllr McNamara	Cllr Laing	<p>Could you provide an update on when the Efford Youth Centre was expected to reopen to the public? From the outside it appeared close to being ready.</p>
	<p>Response: Efford Youth Centre, along with the Honicknowle Youth Centre, would hold a soft launch on Friday 06 February. This would be followed by a managed partial opening.</p> <p>From 09 February, small groups of young people would be welcomed into the buildings to complete the essential National Youth Agency and Youth Investment Fund participative feedback work. This process ensured that young people had the final say on the design, layout and operational arrangements before we moved to a full public opening shortly afterwards.</p> <p>I believe everyone would be extremely impressed by the work that has been done, and I want to thank all involved for their patience, we wanted to ensure the centres were absolutely right before opening.</p>		
10	Cllr Raynsford	Cllr Evans OBE	<p>Following the recent, well-attended run organised by Run Like a Girl and This Girl Can to highlight the safety of women running in our city, I want to stress that abuse and catcalling are unacceptable and can be frightening.</p> <p>What actions was the Council taking to improve women's safety, specifically through enhanced street</p>

			lighting and CCTV provision? Too many women and girls do not feel safe and cannot exercise without carefully planning their routes, which was not acceptable. Could you set out the measures in place and any further improvements planned?
			<p>Response: Thank you for your question. The event you referenced, attended by councillors, our MP Luke Pollard, and many residents helpfully highlighted the ongoing work across Plymouth to keep people safe. Since then, councillors and officers continued to engage with the organisers, both to listen to concerns and to promote the wide range of existing safety measures and interventions in place across the city. These included: the Safe Bus, taxi marshals, Help Points, Plymouth City Pastors, Pubwatch, and Best Bar None-accredited venues.</p> <p>Plymouth also achieved Purple Flag accreditation for the sixth year, demonstrating our commitment to safety and management within the evening and night-time economy.</p> <p>Looking ahead, Trevi's annual Reclaim the Night march would take place on 06 February, providing a further opportunity to focus on women's safety and to reaffirm our shared commitment to tackling violence against women and girls.</p> <p>We operated a 24/7 CCTV control centre with close links to the police, supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 31,676 street lights ○ 196 CCTV cameras ○ 13 Safe Space Help Points <p>All new lighting installations were delivered to BS 5489 standards to ensure compliant and effective provision.</p> <p>99% of street lights benefited from LED technology, reducing energy consumption and lowering carbon emissions. Our central management system (CMS) enabled remote fault detection; approximately 33% of the city's lighting stock is currently on CMS to minimise outage duration. Full city conversion to CMS was expected by 2026.</p> <p>Finally, I would highlight the recent Armada Way lighting installations introduced last week, designed quite literally to shine a light in that area and to improve perceptions of safety after dark.</p> <p>We recognise that safety is a basic right. We will continue working with partners, communities, and event organisers to strengthen practical measures, lighting, CCTV, stewarding, and support services so that women and girls can exercise and move around our city without having to meticulously plan their routes.</p>
11	Cllr Taylor	Cllr Laing	I understand that Cllr Ricketts objected, during budget scrutiny, to family homes being purchased in his ward to house some of the city's most vulnerable children.

			What does Cllr Laing think about that position?
			<p>Response: I have to say that there was something quite jarring about hearing Councillor Ricketts earlier assert that local people must be prioritised, given that during budget scrutiny he publicly objected to what he described as family homes in his ward being purchased by this Council to provide family homes for children in our care. These were children for whom he and indeed all of us in this chamber were corporate parents.</p> <p>So his statement that we should put Plymouth people first rings somewhat hollow, unless of course that statement does not extend to children.</p> <p>Supplementary: If we are mentioning corporate parenting, then perhaps Councillor Ricketts and indeed any other councillor who may not fully understand their responsibilities as corporate parents would benefit from a refresher.</p> <p>Response: I think that is a very good point. I am not always sure that all councillors fully appreciate the enormity of the role we carry as corporate parents. It may well be helpful for us to arrange additional training or a dedicated briefing session to ensure everyone was absolutely clear about what those responsibilities entailed.</p> <p>Many councillors in this chamber take their duties as corporate parents extremely seriously, but all of us could benefit from a reminder from time to time. It is an enormously important part of our role as councillors to safeguard and advocate for the children in our care, and we must continue to approach that responsibility with the seriousness it deserves.</p>
12	Cllr Ricketts	Cllr Stephens	Are you data-led when making decisions about traffic flow and the placement of pedestrian crossings in Plymouth?
			Response: Yes, we are. All our decisions were evidence-based. They relied on data held within the City Council's Highways Department, along with evidence gathered and communicated by local councillors. In relation to highways matters, the police also played a significant role, which is why Vision South West was an important partner for us in supporting Devon and Cornwall Police's road safety work. So, in short yes, our approach was data-led.
13	Cllr Wood	Cllr Stephens	I am concerned that, without sensible changes, the Manadon Roundabout project may not achieve the Council's stated aims. In my view, the scheme must be expanded to include coordinated traffic-signal sequencing along Outland Road and Tavistock Road, and a thorough review of the effectiveness of existing junctions. Without a properly joined-up traffic-management approach from Outland Road to Milehouse and along Tavistock Road to Derriford Roundabout, the Council could be putting up to £150 million of taxpayers' money at risk. Scope

			<p>changes between an Outline Business Case and a Full Business Case were common indeed, this occurred when proposals for new traffic signals across Crownhill Road were introduced.</p> <p>Will you now reassess the scheme to ensure it was fit for purpose and evidence-led?</p>
<p>Response: I will give you the same answer I gave at the meeting in Eggbuckland, in case it has slipped your mind. Outland Road and Ham Drive were recognised pinch points, and the volume of traffic moving through those junctions was a concern shared by everyone in this chamber. However, a major intervention at the traffic signals along Outland Road was not within the scope of the current scheme. The funding is specifically allocated for the A38 Manadon Interchange and the immediate surrounding area.</p> <p>That said, the Council is fully aware of the issues you have raised. As I explained previously, Plymouth City Council would review the design of the improvements to determine whether anything could be achieved within scope that would benefit the Outland Road, Ham Drive, and Morrisons junctions. Those locations were very much on the radar of our Highways officers, and this review would form part of that on-going assessment.</p> <p>However, it remained the case that the Manadon scheme funding was strictly tied to that locality and could not be expanded to cover a wider corridor redesign. Nonetheless, we continue to monitor and consider traffic flow both north and south of the interchange to ensure the broader network operated as effectively as possible.</p>			
14	Cllr P. Nicholson	Cllr Evans OBE	<p>Do you believe that all Cabinet Members, where significant matters affected the residents of individual wards, should consult all ward members as a matter of course?</p>
<p>Response: It depended on the scheme.</p>			
<p>Supplementary: In the Plympton St Mary ward, as I mentioned earlier, there was the potential for 500 to 550 new homes to be brought forward, with uncertainty over whether a primary school would be included. Decisions relating to this proposal, decisions for which Councillor Penberthy was quoted in the press last week, were made without any consultation or advance notice to the ward members affected by the potential development. Do you believe this was the right way for Councillor Penberthy to conduct himself?</p>			
<p>Response: The land in question was within South Hams, but was owned by Plymouth City Council. But to address your broader point: are you seriously suggesting that we must consult or effectively hold a referendum on every land sale that took place?</p> <p>There would be an appropriate moment for the voices of residents in your area to be heard when a planning application comes forward. At that stage, I would</p>			

	<p>fully expect there to be clear opportunities for public engagement, and I would expect you, as an experienced former Leader of this Council, to encourage local residents to make their views known. As for the determination of that application, depending on the timing and the outcome of Local Government Reorganisation, it may fall to our planning committee or it may remain with South Hams. The timescales were not yet certain. But when the application does come forward, I would strongly encourage you to ensure your residents participated and made their views clear.</p>		
15	Cllr Krizanac	Cllr Cresswell	<p>My colleagues and I recently visited Compton School in our ward, and the Headteacher praised the local authority for its SEND support. What, specifically, do you feel had been key in bringing about this positive response, especially at a time when we are hearing so much nationally about SEND pressures and challenges?</p>
<p>Response: Thank you, it was genuinely very gratifying to hear that positive feedback from Compton School. As you all know, we recently had a SEND monitoring inspection visit from Ofsted and the CQC at the end of November and beginning of December 2025. Their report would be published on the Ofsted website next week, so I am unable to comment further on that at this stage.</p> <p>However, the positive response you referenced was, I believe, the result of a combination of factors. First, the leadership within the Council's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities service had been strong, and our close working relationship with headteachers, schools, SENCOs and wider partners created a genuinely exceptional partnership across the city. Our work with parents and carers, particularly around co-production, helped to rebuild and strengthen confidence. Tools such as the Graduated Approach to Inclusion, developed by the Council's SEND team, have also been widely welcomed. The targeted funding model, devolved directly to schools, supported provision for around 380 children, enabling strong support to be delivered within mainstream settings wherever possible.</p> <p>Equally important has been a culture of openness and transparency, which helped to foster positive and trusting relationships with schools. Never underestimate the importance of relationships. There was also clear, consistent political commitment to SEND improvement, a commitment I would say was shared across this chamber and we benefited from constructive external support through the SEND Improvement Board.</p> <p>Finally, I wanted to extend my thanks to Compton School and indeed to all our schools. The progress we were seeing is the result of their hard work, day in and day out, alongside the dedication of parents, carers, and Council staff. Improving SEND is a collective effort across the whole city, and I am grateful to everyone involved.</p>			
16	Cllr M.Smith	Cllr Penberthy	<p>Earlier, Councillor Ricketts suggested that the Labour Government reduced the allowance we received for</p>

			homelessness. My understanding, however, is that the Council received an uplift on last year's funding. Could Councillor Penberthy clarify the position for us?
<p>Response: For many years, Budget Scrutiny asked Government to stop providing homelessness funding in small, ad-hoc pots, often without continuity between key grants such as the Homelessness Prevention Grant and the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant. This inconsistency made delivery extremely difficult.</p> <p>Last year, Government provided one-year funding, and added an additional amount which, for administrative ease they placed into the same pot rather than issuing a separate grant. That additional funding amounted to £856,000, for which we said thank you, and which gave us a full year of stability.</p> <p>This year, Government provided three-year funding, and placed that money into our core grant, giving us flexibility within the requirements of the devolved responsibilities. The increase from last year's grant to the coming year's allocation was £47,000. So, our baseline had gone up.</p> <p>No, we did not receive the bonus we received last year for a second time, but you did not get a bonus every year, that is the nature of a bonus. We received extra money last year, and we are grateful for that. I am actually more grateful that we had three years of certainty, meaning we could tell our partners where the money was coming from and they could secure contracts for staff, who would no longer be waiting to find out whether they're on a three-month or six-month arrangement with breaks in between. That instability was not good for services.</p>			
<p>Supplementary: Given that Councillor Ricketts was apparently informed of the correct homelessness funding position at Budget Scrutiny last week, yet has presented it here as a cut, does he perhaps also need to consider undertaking further Code of Conduct training, given that councillors were required to act with integrity and honesty in all that we did? In this instance and possibly in others that did not appear to have been the case. Should this be added to his list of recommended training, alongside the suggested refresher on corporate parenting?</p>			
<p>Response: I think it was extremely important that we were honest and accurate when talking about what the Government was doing, as well as about what is happening here in the city. We should not be creating or spreading misinformation, that helped no one.</p> <p>I also agree that it was important for all of us to be reminded of the Code of Conduct from time to time. With that in mind, rather than singling out any one councillor, it may be more appropriate to arrange refresher training for all members on the Code of Conduct.</p>			
17.	Cllr	Cllr	Thank you for the recent announcement of funding

Holloway	Stephens	<p>for the new pedestrian crossing at the North Hill end of Mutley Plain. Residents had been genuinely delighted by this news. I heard from women, parents with pushchairs, and pupils from Plymouth High School for Girls who welcomed this improvement. This was a clear example of the Council responding to everyday concerns raised by local councillors and aligning with police evidence that this was one of the most potentially dangerous crossings in Plymouth.</p> <p>So my question to Councillor Stephens is when can these delighted residents expect the new crossing to be installed?</p>
<p>Response: Thank you for your question. It was a very good one, and I also appreciate the way you set out the importance of this improvement. I am grateful whoever you are, whatever party you represent because when councillors stand up for their residents, they are doing exactly what they were elected to do. That is what you have done, and what Councillor Holloway, Councillor Penrose, Councillor M. Smith and your MP have all done on this matter.</p> <p>The work undertaken so far had been based on clear observation. I have stood at that crossing with you and have seen first-hand how unsafe it could be, with pedestrians forced to rely on the sequencing of nearby traffic-light changes simply to get across. All the residents you mentioned would benefit from these improvements.</p> <p>Work was now under way on planning, procurement and securing the required equipment. These processes would take time, as you would appreciate, but the intention was to begin installation over the summer holidays, when traffic volumes were lower and the impact of the school run was reduced.</p> <p>I would keep you updated on the precise start date, the expected completion timetable, and the point at which the new crossing would be operational.</p>		
<p>Supplementary: I think that was a completely reasonable concern, particularly for those who did not follow the detailed work the Council had been doing on traffic management and flow in that area. I can absolutely provide assurances that the crossing would be installed in a way that both maximises pedestrian safety and maintains effective traffic flow along what was, as you say, a key arterial route through Plymouth.</p>		
<p>Response: Our Highways engineers were designing the scheme to balance both priorities. As with all such projects, they would assess pedestrian movement, vehicle volumes, signal timings and queuing patterns to ensure that the final installation improved safety without creating unnecessary congestion. This was standard practice across all major junction interventions in the city.</p>		

	So yes, residents could be reassured that the crossing would be delivered in a way that kept people safe and kept the traffic moving.	
18.	Cllr P. Nicholson	<p>Cllr Lowry</p> <p>Since our last Council meeting, we had seen the sad closure of House of Fraser, one of many businesses that folded during the period since the city-centre regeneration works were introduced by the former Conservative administration and then continued under the current Labour administration. Does the Council accept any responsibility for the impact that these regeneration works had on city-centre businesses?</p> <p>While the works may be welcome in the longer term, we are clearly witnessing a continued decline in the city centre's retail offer. Many shops closed, and despite Councillor Laing stating that footfall increased over the Christmas period, the quality of the retail offer in Plymouth was deteriorating. Many residents feel that they were being put off by what they regard as the mismanagement of the city-centre works by the Labour administration.</p> <p>Given this, would he take this opportunity to apologise to the public for the mismanagement of the public-realm works?</p>
	<p>Response: I am actually very proud of what we were doing in the city centre. I am very proud of the progress being made. We were delivering the largest play space in the country in the city centre. We had Armada Way on programme and on budget, Royal Parade was reopening, and New George Street was complete and proving very successful. We were hosting more events, and we had one of the most successful malls in the country operating. Footfall was increasing, and there was much more to come.</p> <p>So no, I am not going to apologise. We were working very, very hard, and the results of that work were already visible to everyone in our city centre.</p>	
	<p>Supplementary: Is Councillor Lowry therefore proud of the fact that the first contractor withdrew, causing delays to the programme? Is he content that the scheme on Royal Parade had taken significantly longer than it should have, and that the planned bus shelters had still not materialised?</p> <p>Will Councillor Lowry reflect on this after the meeting?</p>	
	<p>Response: All those projects were challenging. The city centre was built 80 years ago, and during the works I visited the site almost every week. In several parts of the city centre there were voids large enough to fit trucks, and those had to be addressed. There were also services that were not in the right place, and they</p>	

	<p>too had to be dealt with.</p> <p>We had to manage these projects through COVID, and then through the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis that followed. So yes, it was a very challenging programme but the rewards were now clear to see.</p> <p>We were seeing far more events in the city centre. There had been a 300% increase in events on Old Town Street and New George Street. And you were incorrect in your assertions, which seemed to be a recurring theme in the agenda you and your colleagues were pushing. As you already heard today, Royal Parade was on programme, ahead of schedule, and on budget. The same is true of Armada Way. So I am not quite sure what point you are trying to make, other than to take a swipe at something that most of us recognise has been delivered well.</p>	
	Cllr Ricketts	<p>Cllr Briars-Delve</p> <p>We have previously had discussions about net-zero madness, where you wanted to make residents cold and poor by 2030. At last year's Scrutiny meeting, you stated that you would cycle to all your Council meetings, though you did not say you would stop driving a petrol car altogether.</p> <p>Are you still committed to that pledge to cycle to all your Council meetings?</p>
19.	<p>Response: I do not understand where Councillor Ricketts obtained that notion. He is welcome to look through any minutes or recordings of this Council, I never stated that I would only ever cycle to Council meetings, nor that I would only ever cycle in my personal life. That claim was simply false.</p> <p>This was yet another example of the kind of fake news we heard repeatedly from him today. You also indicated at the start of your question that you see the climate emergency as nonsense, which again reveals your true priorities when it came to nature and the climate, both here in Plymouth and across the globe.</p> <p>You repeated the claim that achieving net zero would make people colder and poorer. In reality, I am proud that this Council was delivering a multi-million-pound retrofitting programme that would make homes healthier, warmer, and reduce people's energy bills, saving them money.</p> <p>For my part, I regularly cycle and walk, I enjoy it, and it saves me money. But have I ever said that I would never step foot in a car? I most certainly had not.</p>	