

**Oversight and Governance**

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Wednesday 22 October 2025
2.00 pm
Warspite Room, Council House

Members:

Councillor Finn, Chair

Councillor Gilmour, Vice Chair

Councillors Allison, Coker, Cuddihee, Dingle, Freeman, P.Nicholson, Penrose, Poyser and Stevens.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf. This meeting will be webcast and available on-line after the meeting. By entering the Warspite Room, Councillors are consenting to being filmed during the meeting and to the use of the recording for the webcast.

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Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for non-attendance submitted by Councillors.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillors will be asked to make any declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2025.

4. Chair's Urgent Business

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

5. Building Bridges to Opportunity Update: (Pages 7 - 12)

6. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update: (Pages 13 - 30)

7. City Centre Car Parking: (Pages 31 - 38)

8. Renters Rights Bill: (Pages 39 - 48)

9. Action Log: (Pages 49 - 52)

10. Work Programme: (Pages 53 - 56)

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 16 July 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Finn, in the Chair.

Councillor Gilmour, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allison, Coker, Cuddihee, Freeman, P.Nicholson (Substitute for Councillor Loveridge), Penrose, Poyser, Simpson (Substitute for Councillor Dingle) and Stevens.

Also in attendance:

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships), Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport), Andy Sharp (Interim Service Director, Street Services), Hannah Chandler-Whiting (Democratic Advisor), Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning (Virtual)), Kevin Northcott (Highways Maintenance Manager), and Phil Bellamy (Head of Plymouth Highways).

The meeting started at 2.02 pm and finished at 3.50 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the Panel 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.

1. Appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair

The Panel noted the appointment of Councillor Finn as Chair, and Councillor Gilmour as Vice Chair for the 2025/26 municipal year.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Chair's Urgent Business

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

5. Grit Bin Policy Review

Councillor John Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) introduced the Grit Bin Policy Review report and discussed:

- a) Grit bins were intended to support communities in managing icy conditions on public roads and pavements not covered by primary gritting routes;
- b) Bins were typically located on unclassified roads with steep inclines, sharp bends, or near schools and elderly care homes;
- c) The importance of strategic placement to mitigate ice formation and ensure cost-effective maintenance;
- d) A citywide review had been undertaken to assess current bin locations and identify areas requiring provision.

Phil Bellamy (Head of Plymouth Highways) discussed:

- e) The aim was to determine bin locations based on engineering principles, while allowing for subjective considerations;
- f) All bins should be recorded, stocked, and maintained under Highways ownership;
- g) The review had been undertaken using a set methodology and rationale however, the team welcomed feedback.

Kevin Northcott (Highways Maintenance Manager) discussed:

- h) The review was prompted by an unprecedented number of grit bin requests following an unusually cold winter in December 2022;
- i) A formal scoring system had been developed to assess new and existing bin locations rather than relying on subjective case by case assessments;
- j) The winter gritting period ran from 01 October to 31 March each year, but was monitored beyond these dates if required;
- k) Grit bins were not a statutory duty and were intended for public highway use only;
- l) Green bins (councillor requested) were not maintained unless specifically requested, while yellow bins were maintained by Highways;
- m) The review included 480 known bins, with 25 requiring ownership clarification;
- n) Following discussions with other authorities as part of the Southwest Regional Winter Services Group, the team had developed a criteria to assess existing provision and future requests for grit bins;
- o) Criteria included road gradient, proximity to junctions, accident history, nearby premises, the location of other grit bins, and vulnerable populations;

- p) The review recommended retaining 368 bins, removing 112, and adding 81 new bins;
- q) It was proposed that all bins would be standardised as yellow, with a numbering system for reporting;
- r) Ownership of bins on non-highways land would be reviewed further;
- s) A separate review would be conducted for city centre bins;
- t) The process would be dynamic and allow for ongoing updates.

In response to questions, the Committee discussed:

- u) The need for ward councillor involvement in reviewing bin locations and communicating changes to residents;
- v) The importance of local knowledge in assessing bin necessity, especially in areas with vulnerable populations;
- w) Climate adaptation considerations and the unpredictability of future cold snaps. Gritting routes were reviewed on an annual basis, and there were three weather monitoring stations in the city;
- x) The cost implications of bin relocation and maintenance, with an annual maintenance budget of £4,000–£5,000, potentially rising to £10,000–£20,000 for the current year;
- y) The rationale behind the scoring threshold of 125 and the flexibility to consider bins below this score;
- z) The need for clear communication and labelling to avoid reputational damage;
- aa) A proposal to consult ward councillors within a three-week timeframe regarding bin removals and relocations in their wards;
- bb) The importance of transparency and community engagement in implementing the policy;
- cc) The significant work that had been undertaken by officers to assess existing provision, consult with other authorities and design an engineering-based policy.

Action: Highways officers to consult ward councillors within three weeks regarding proposed grit bin removals and relocations, and to provide ward-level breakdowns of bin locations.

The Committee agreed:

1. To support the proposals outlined in the report with the following amendment to 'Recommended Action 4':

Those grit bins where ownership is in question (not on Highways Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) land) will be resolved and retained or removed from the network as appropriate, following consultation with all ward councillors;

2. To recommend that all ward councillors be given a set time period (three weeks) to consult with their communities and provide feedback on proposed bin removals, relocations, or additions for grit bins located on Highways Maintainable at Public Expense (HMPE) land.

6. **Central Park Ponds Project - Scrutiny Update Report**

Councillor Cresswell (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Apprenticeships) introduced the Central Park Ponds project update report and discussed:

- a) Councillor Briars-Delve had sent apologies due to a pre-arranged commitment;
- b) Fish within the central park ponds, although not part of the original plans, had proven popular with families and provided a learning opportunity for children and young people;
- c) Delays to the project had occurred due to extremely wet weather in March 2024 and the need to change contractor earlier in 2025;
- d) Councillors were understanding of the frustrations caused by delays to the project and of the valuable community asset that the park offered;
- e) A new contractor was now on site, with soil movement and playing pitch completion expected before the end of summer, followed by landscape works including field seeding and tree planting at the appropriate time of year;
- f) Following the Panel's previous recommendations, monthly communication updates were now provided on the Council's website, with QR codes placed in the park to direct users to the latest information, which had been tested and found accessible;
- g) Additional updates had been shared with local community stakeholders and councillors;
- h) A comprehensive communications plan was now possible due to the availability of a detailed construction programme, which was summarised in the report;
- i) New signage had been installed in the park and project milestones would be shared in line with the construction programme;

- j) The project had faced challenges, but key issues such as weather and contractor changes were outside of the Council's control;
- k) The project was now back on track for completion by the end of summer and updates would continue to be provided.

Kat Deeney (Head of Environmental Planning), Phil Bellamy (Head of Plymouth Highways) and Andy Sharp (Interim Service Director for Street Services) added:

- l) A 12-week construction programme was in place and the contractor had already been on site for several weeks. The project remained on track for an end-of-summer finish, with only tree planting scheduled beyond that period;
- m) Field seeding would follow the completion of works, and tree planting would take place in autumn to ensure success;
- n) The drainage issue at the bottom of Ford Park Road was part of a separate programme, likely caused by utility works, and options were being reviewed. A report had been received outlining options for managing water in that area, and further updates could be provided at a later date;
- o) A specific construction phase plan was in place, compliant with CDM regulations, and included welfare facilities, diversion routes and notification extensions;
- p) A formalised programme of work was being delivered and officers were happy to share the construction phase plan with the Panel.

In response to questions, the Panel discussed:

- q) Concerns were raised regarding contract management and the lack of a clear schedule, with calls for greater transparency, accountability and inclusion of risk planning;
- r) The public perception of the Council's handling of the project was poor, with reputational damage noted;
- s) The need for a clear schedule of works with key milestones was emphasised, including earthworks and final tree planting;
- t) Challenges keeping to schedule had been caused by uncontrollable variables including adverse weather and the loss of a contractor;
- u) The park had already seen positive public engagement with the ponds and wildlife;
- v) The scheme had received cross-party support;
- w) The need to ensure lessons were learnt and the importance of contract clauses in future projects;

- x) The potential to include tree information and planting schedules in the park's educational signage and existing QR code resources.

Action: Officers to provide a schedule of works with key milestones, including landscaping and tree planting timelines, and respond to public questions raised during the meeting.

The Panel agreed:

1. To note the report and the update on the Central Park Ponds project;
2. To request that a schedule with key milestones be provided to members.

7. **Work Programme**

Lee Finn (Chair) introduced the work programme item and discussed:

- a) A new approach was proposed whereby each future meeting would include a “hot topic” subject for focused discussion;
- b) The October meeting would begin with a discussion on city centre car parking capacity, in light of the relocation of 4,000 Babcock staff to the area and the redevelopment of the Civic Centre;
- c) The aim was to ensure scrutiny remained responsive to emerging issues and community concerns.

Members discussed:

- d) The need to manage time effectively and prioritise previously identified items such as the public toilets review and the bus shelter contract;
- e) The public toilets item had been requested and was awaiting scheduling;
- f) The need to ensure pre-decision scrutiny across Council committees. This would be raised at the next Scrutiny Management Board meeting.

8. **Action Log**

Hannah Chandler-Whiting (Democratic Advisor) introduced the action log and discussed:

- a) Democratic Services would liaise with officers to confirm when the Public Toilet Strategy and Bus Shelters Contract would be ready for consideration;
- b) The three items currently marked “to be scheduled” would be circulated in an updated work programme to members ahead of the next meeting.

The Panel agreed to note the action log.

Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	22 October 2025
Title of Report:	Building Bridges to Opportunity
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)
Lead Strategic Director:	Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health)
Author:	Nick Shaw
Contact Email:	nick.shaw@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To update the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel regarding the progress of the Building Bridges to Opportunity programme.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. For the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel to note ongoing work as part of the Building Bridges to Opportunity programme and for this to be reported back to the panel before the framework is presented to Cabinet.

Reason: Low risk plan to develop a framework to explore current PCC policies, strategies, and services through the lens of poverty and child poverty. Taking a measured approach with sufficient engagement will ensure holistic and system wide involvement and increase the chances of a successful outcome and create wider awareness of the work being undertaken

Alternative options considered and rejected

1. Not consider this report - Rejected as the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel requested to be kept informed of the programmes development prior to Cabinet consideration.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Building Bridges to Opportunity directly reflects the Plymouth Plan's core principles including providing opportunity for the people of Plymouth, as well as supporting the Corporate Plan's vision of everyone in Plymouth enjoying an outstanding quality of life.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

No current or predicted implications to medium term financial plans or resources

Financial Risks

No current or predicted financial risks associated with this programme.

Legal Implications

No current or predicted legal implications associated with this programme.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

No current or predicted impact on the Council's carbon footprint.

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.*

The framework describes local system action against poverty, including child poverty in Plymouth with the aim of strengthening current action.

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	Building Bridges to Opportunity - Update to Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel							

Background papers:

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	N/A	Leg	LS/0 0001 075/ 1/AC /13/1 0/25	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Professor Steve Maddern											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 08/10/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities) Approved by email											
Date approved: 08/10/2025											

BUILDING BRIDGES TO OPPORTUNITY

Update to Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel - October 2025
Office of the Director of Public Health



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- We are co-developing a whole system framework for Plymouth which describes what actions should be taken to tackle poverty and its effects and how this should be done.
- This has strong links with policies from the whole breadth of the Plymouth Plan supporting the work we are already doing as a council to improve the lives of people living in our communities and with strategic documents linked to the Plymouth Plan developed by both the Council and city partnerships.
- This was developed with partners and stakeholders from across the system with opportunity to input at phases across the development of the project. We linked with existing groups and communities to understand their lived experience and perspectives on poverty.
- The core outcome for this whole system approach to poverty is creating an environment where people do not fall into poverty, are able to lift themselves out of poverty, and experience less harm from poverty.

Building Bridges to Opportunity is about setting an environment where people...



and seeing our strategies and plans through these lenses

- Six themes were identified which describe what we as a system should be doing to achieve this outcome and nine themes were identified which describe the principles we should be working to as a system to tackle poverty.
- Next steps before submitting to Cabinet for approval are to:
 - Complete the mapping the Council's existing policies, plans, services and commissioned activity against the framework and identify where there are already action plans/activities contributing to this
 - Identify areas where there is potential for added value by linking these

- Review relevant developing government policy and initiatives in order to ensure that there is read across and future proofing built in
- Identify the measures and/or metrics will best help us understand how we are progressing towards this as a system
- Begin the development of a city and system-wide action plan to pull together all of the work that is happening in this area
- Develop an understandable, and potentially interactive, method for communicating the framework, action plan and metrics
- Sense check progress with people and partnerships involved in the process so far
- Return to Scrutiny for a further discussion
- Take each of these pieces of work to the Cabinet Advisory Group on Child Poverty

2. BACKGROUND

Plymouth City Council has a clear ambition to tackle poverty in the city and to raise the living standard of its residents. This is evident from commitments in the Plymouth Plan and other core council strategies. Whether it's the cost-of-living crisis that continues to persist, supporting residents and communities through the COVID pandemic or the ongoing impact on children living in poverty, the Council and its partners don't just respond, they are proactive in the work they undertake to support residents and communities and to ensure that every resident, young or old, has the opportunity to thrive, to fulfil their potential and ambitions, and be a positive contributor to society. The impact on and experience of children in the city remains a key driver of this work however we also recognise that poverty is a generational issue and action across the life-course is needed to address child poverty.

Plymouth City Council is deeply committed to improving the lives of Plymouth residents. We know the profound effect poverty has on people – it impacts everything from life expectancy to employment opportunities. Too many people are struggling, and this has been magnified by the current rising costs of essentials such as food and energy bills. We recognise that no one person or organisation holds all the levers to address poverty, so it is more important than ever that we work together with our partners to take tangible action and break down barriers to tackle poverty across the city. The core objectives for this system wide action against poverty are to create an environment where people are less likely to fall into poverty, more likely to be able to lift themselves out of poverty, and experience less harm when living in poverty. We recognise that the risks of poverty are also strongly linked to wider social context including the role of national government policy, as such these objectives were chosen to represent what we can achieve as a local system.

To maximise our opportunities this programme of work seeks to capture how current strategies, services, and initiatives are addressing poverty, identify areas of excellence and gaps in provision, and share learning across the organisation and with partners. To facilitate this, we have co-developed a whole-system framework with our partners and our residents which describes what action against poverty should look like in the city and how it should be done. This will be used to better understand where attention is already focussed and where there are opportunities to optimise and to work together better.

3. DRAFT FRAMEWORK

The framework has been developed using a co-design approach with engagement from organisations and individuals from across the wider Plymouth system, including partners from the VCSE and commercial sectors, and members of our communities.

The outcome from the engagement and system sense making sessions is a framework with six themes which describe what as a system we should be doing to address poverty in Plymouth. These themes are broad and describe a wide range of activities which we all can contribute towards in our personal and professional lives. Importantly the engagement work also clarified nine themes describing how these activities should be done to have the positive impact on poverty we would like to see. These have clear overlap with some of the principles of the programme identified by the Child Poverty Cabinet Advisory group but have been expanded to capture specific concerns and experiences raised during the engagement.

Draft Framework

Objectives – Set an environment where people...	Actions	Principles
Don't fall into poverty	Maximise individual potential	Trauma informed and compassionate approach
	Support individuals and families	Asset based
		Prevention focussed
Can lift themselves out of poverty	Maximise community potential	Driven by insights and meaningful measures of success
	Manage infrastructure and the environment	Working with communities of place, interest, and identity
		Life-course approach
Experience less harm from poverty	Develop an economy which works for residents	Co-production in a whole systems approach
	Deliver services with communities	Sustainable
		Address inequalities in experience and outcome

4. PLAN

Next steps before submitting to Cabinet for approval are to:

- 4.1. Complete the mapping the Council's existing policies, plans, services and commissioned activity against the framework and identify where there are already action plans/activities contributing to this
- 4.2. Identify areas where there is potential for added value by linking these
- 4.3. Review relevant developing government policy and initiatives in order to ensure that there is read across and future proofing built in
- 4.4. Identify the measures and/or metrics will best help us understand how we are progressing towards this as a system
- 4.5. Begin the development of a city and system-wide action plan to pull together all of the work that is happening in this area
- 4.6. Develop an understandable, and potentially interactive, method for communicating the framework, action plan and metrics
- 4.7. Sense check progress with people and partnerships involved in the process so far
- 4.8. Return to Scrutiny for a further discussion
- 4.9. Take each of these pieces of work to the Cabinet Advisory Group on Child Poverty

We expect this work to be complete in Spring/early summer 2026.

Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	22 October 2025
Title of Report:	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update (Sept 2025)
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)
Lead Strategic Director:	Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities)
Author:	Jackie Kings
Contact Email:	Jackie.Kings@Plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

During Budget Scrutiny 2024/25, it was recommended: 'That 6 monthly updates are provided to the relevant scrutiny committee on delivery of planned savings within homelessness services, where £0.724m additional funding has been required. This report provides an overview of the coordinated response to homelessness and related challenges, for the information and consideration of the Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations and Reasons

To note the progress made in addressing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures;
To endorse ongoing actions to address homelessness with compassion, resilience, and impact.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not consider this report – Rejected, as this report responds to a recommendation from Budget Scrutiny 2024/25, and was endorsed by Cabinet.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

- Plymouth Plan Policy HEA8 - "Focusing on the tackling and prevention of homelessness, including rough sleeping, and its wider impact."
- Also relates to the following in the Corporate Plan: Minimise the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and build more homes – for social rent and affordable ownership.
- Keep Young People, Children and Adults Protected/ Focus on Prevention and Early Intervention/ Reduced Health Inequalities and Helping People Feel Safe in Plymouth

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The use of B&B and holiday lets to meet the Council's statutory homelessness duties continues to place financial pressure on revenue budgets. This has been managed within the MTFP and uplifted Grant will support this.

Financial Risks

An increase in demand for temporary accommodation for statutory homeless households could increase the use of expensive nightly paid accommodation and place additional financial pressure on revenue budgets. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

(Provided by Alison Critchfield AC)

As this is an update there are no legal implications arising from this report.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None

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.*

Access to good quality and suitable temporary accommodation supports the health and wellbeing needs of homeless households and those rough sleeping

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

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		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report: Homelessness & RS Update							

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. 25.2 6.08 8	Leg	LS/0 0001 075/ 1/AC /10/1 0/25	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Matt Garrett											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 07/10/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Chris Penberthy. Approved by e-mail Date approved: 07/10/2025											

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HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING UPDATE (SEPT 2025)

Community Connections



1. INTRODUCTION

This paper provides a six-monthly update on Plymouth City Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping response, evidencing the significant progress made in responding to rising demand.

Despite national and local challenges, the Council has delivered a strategic, coordinated response that prioritises prevention, expands temporary accommodation, and strengthens support for vulnerable groups.

2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN TACKLING THE RISE IN HOMELESSNESS

Through strong partnerships, innovative service design, and data-driven decision-making, Plymouth continues tackle homelessness with compassion, resilience, and impact.

Key achievements include the delivery of over 130 new temporary accommodation units for families, individuals, and couples, the launch of centralised assessment hubs, and the implementation of targeted early help services projected to save over £700,000 annually.

2.1 Increase in Temporary Accommodation Provision for Homeless Families

Eighty-two temporary accommodation family properties have been delivered since May 2023 and is set to increase by up to 43 temporary homes during 2025/2026

New temporary accommodation for homeless families	Forecasted number of units (Pipeline)
BCHA, in partnership with a private landlord	20 homes (fully delivered)
BCHA and PATH are to acquire properties utilised the capital funding from the Local Authority Homes Fund (LAHF)	BCHA - 8 homes (to be delivered by March 2026) PATH - 3 homes (to be delivered by March 2026)
Plymouth Community Homes Regeneration Stock	10- 20

Also, Plymouth City Council funds BCHA to provide a support service for families living in temporary accommodation.

2.2 Increase in Temporary Accommodation provision for single people and couples

Since October 2023, 55 temporary accommodation bedspaces for single people and couples including some self-contained units have been delivered

The number of temporary accommodation bedspaces and self-contained units available for single people and couples is set to increase by an additional 114 units by March 2026.

New temporary accommodation for homeless individuals and couples	Forecasted number of units (Pipeline)
The 'Sleep Safely' Night Shelter provision is now open throughout the year	12 bed spaces
Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) new supported housing delivery	PATH have acquired, set up and let 2 houses (12 bedspaces) for individuals and couples with medium to high support needs
	YMCA and Young Devon – 47 x self-contained supported flats for young people with support needs. Extensive building work underway and ready to let anticipated by April 2026.
	BCHA have acquired, set up and let 11 x accessible self-contained supported homes for people with support and mobility needs
	Young Devon 4 x flats for young people with medium to high support needs. One unit is ready and the other three to be ready by November 2025.
PATH are leasing additional provision	During August 2025, PATH increased their temporary accommodation provision by 25 bedspaces and have plans in September to further increase their bedspaces by 15.

2.3 Implementation of the new Assessment and Placement Hubs

In January 2025, two centralised assessment, placement and letting Hubs were set up for Temporary Supported Housing to focus the lettings of supported housing vacancies on those with the greatest need for this type of provision.

- Plymouth City Council and BCHA jointly operate a centralised Assessment and Placement Hub for single homeless adults and couples.
- Plymouth City Council and Live West jointly operate a centralised Assessment and Placement Hub for homeless children and young people

2.4 Annual Grant funding for Homelessness

Plymouth City Council continues to benefit from sustained investment through the ring-fenced Homelessness Prevention Grant, provided by central government via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This funding underpins vital work to prevent homelessness and support those at risk.

In addition, the Council has consistently secured annual funding through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) since its first successful application in 2018. This forms part of the national strategy to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping, enabling local authorities to enhance services and deliver meaningful change for individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Through close collaboration with the Plymouth Alliance, the Council has developed and delivered a holistic, person-centred response to homelessness prevention and relief. Over the years, service delivery has evolved and strengthened, maintaining a consistent core offer while adapting to emerging challenges and opportunities. This flexible, responsive approach has allowed services to grow in line with funding availability and the changing needs of the community.

Funding Stream	24/25 Award £	25/26 Award £
Rough Sleeper Initiative *	1,959,279	1,976,631
Winter pressures	Tranche 1 89,000 Tranche 2 188,000	

*Includes Accommodation for Ex offenders (AFEO), and Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)

In April 2025, the RSI grant was renamed the Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG), with Plymouth City Council receiving a similar level of funding as the previous year.

2.5 Strategic and Co-ordinated Response

Plymouth City Council continues to have a strong and sustained commitment to addressing the housing crisis. The Housing Taskforce, a strategic body co-chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities and the Chief Executive provides high-level oversight and coordination of housing initiatives across the city.

The Homelessness Recovery Programme is delivering activity to prevent and relieve homelessness under the four pillars of Prevention, Intervention, Recovery and Systems Support.

Oversight by the Plymouth Alliance and the Homelessness Recovery Board has enabled a strategic, data-driven approach to service delivery. The Homelessness Programme is guided by targeted delivery plans aimed at improving outcomes for homeless households while delivering significant financial efficiencies across the system.

Established in April 2019, the Plymouth Alliance was formed to provide a coordinated response for homeless individuals with support needs, including those facing multiple disadvantages. This integrated commissioning model spans services such as homelessness prevention, temporary accommodation, supported housing, advice and support, substance misuse, alcohol services, and mental health provision. Plymouth City Council is one of eight core partners within the Alliance.

Supported temporary accommodation is delivered through a combination of commissioned housing providers and non-regulated private supported housing providers. In response to increasing demand, there has been a strong cross-departmental focus on expanding cost-effective, affordable temporary accommodation. A Housing Development Action Plan has been implemented and is regularly reviewed by the Alliance Accommodation Subgroup, which brings together providers and key stakeholders to drive progress.

To address the homelessness emergency, the **Homelessness Recovery Programme Board** was established. This Board brings together strategic partners and operational leaders to oversee the delivery of the Homelessness Programme. Its core purpose is to:

- Maintain a focused, coordinated multi-agency response.

- Manage costs, benefits, risks, and dependencies across the programme.

2.6 Targeted Support for Specific Groups

- **Youth and Care Leavers:** Provision of dedicated supported housing and training flats.
- **Domestic Abuse Survivors:** Delivery of safe accommodation aligned with statutory duties.
- **Accessible Housing:** Development of homes for individuals with mobility and support needs.
- **Women Rough Sleepers:** Targeted support and ongoing monitoring.

Monthly data snapshots and detailed tracking of rough sleeping trends, temporary accommodation usage, and social housing demand and allocations inform strategic decision-making and guide resource allocation across the homelessness system."

The Board also oversees the implementation of recommendations from the PCC Housing Task Force, including the development of business cases and decision reports to support delivery within the Strategic Homelessness Recovery Programme.

The programme is structured around **seven dedicated delivery plans**, each designed to prevent homelessness and provide housing and specialist support services:

- Children and Young People
- Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness
- Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Whole Housing Response
- Homeless Families
- Housing Development (within Plan for Homes 4)
- Supported Accommodation Review
- Long-Term Vision and Sustainability

2.7 Strategic Partnerships and Long-Term Planning

- **Housing Development Plan** delivers increased numbers of Supported and Temporary Accommodation
- A key partnership with **Plymouth Community Homes (PCH)** supports initiatives to reduce homelessness.
- The **Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy** ensures the provision of safe housing for survivors of domestic abuse.
- **Plan for Homes 4** provides a comprehensive framework addressing homelessness, housing supply, regeneration, and climate action.
- The **System Development Plan** focuses on continuous improvement and performance management across the homelessness system.

2.8 The Homelessness Recovery Programme Overview

Homelessness Delivery Plans	Key Objectives / Activities
Children and Young People (CYP) Delivery Plan	<p>Delivery of additional CYP specific supported accommodation with new Youth Hub placement arrangements</p> <p>Updating the Joint Protocol around CYP Homelessness</p>

	<p>Review of current plan with the Children, Young People Partnership</p> <p>Joint initiatives with stakeholders to reduce homelessness e.g. PCH and PCC collaboration around implementing training flats</p> <p>Delivery of a support service to work with those in B&B to swiftly source suitable accommodation.</p> <p>Delivery of dedicated temporary supported accommodation through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP)</p>
Rough Sleeping and Single Homeless Delivery Plan	<p>Delivery of Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) supported housing - to meet the need of single homeless and rough sleepers:</p> <p>Increase the level of suitable additional temporary accommodation to meet needs of those who are Single Homeless / Rough Sleeping, including those with accessibility needs.</p> <p>Develop innovative approaches to reduce long-term rough sleeping</p> <p>Delivery of a homelessness/ health/ bespoke housing pilot</p> <p>Delivery of a B&B resettlement/ move on team to support individuals and couples to swiftly move out of B&B into affordable housing.</p>
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation and Whole Housing Response Plan	<p>Meet all duties under safe Accommodation - Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 4 Duty)</p> <p>Deliver suitable additional temporary accommodation and support by ensuring that Homeless Families provision meets the Safe Accommodation legal definition</p>
Homeless Families Delivery Plan	<p>Actively work with providers to increase the supply of temporary, supported housing</p> <p>Deliver suitable additional temporary accommodation using a short-term leasing model</p> <p>Delivery of a family support service</p> <p>Delivery of an early help service to prevent families from becoming homeless</p>
Accommodation Development Plan (contained within Plan for Homes 4)	<p>Increase affordable housing supply in Plymouth, including supported housing and leased temporary housing for individuals and couples and families</p>
Supported Accommodation Review Plan	<p>Improve standards of provision and delivery of services to individuals with support needs, financial viability of the sector and pivoting supported provision to local need</p>

System Development and Support Plan	Cross-departmental priorities and tasks to advance continuous improvement and performance management across the Homelessness System
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2.9 Delivery and Actions

Plymouth continues to face a lack of social housing and high competition for often expensive private rentals, bringing increased reliance on expensive nightly paid provision to meet temporary accommodation demand for those experiencing homelessness and in priority need.

Between July 2024 and June 2025, statutory homelessness rose significantly, with temporary accommodation use increasing by 90% over four years. In response, the Plymouth Alliance has expanded temporary housing provision, delivering 82 family units and 55 bedspaces for individuals and couples, with further developments underway.

The continued rise in households needing temporary accommodation has placed increasing strain on services and budgets. The Council is responding with a clear and phased plan to reduce reliance on expensive emergency accommodation and improve outcomes for homeless families, couples and individuals.

Immediate actions (0–6 months) include:

- Launching new early help services to prevent homelessness before it happens, aiming to divert up to 12 families per month from entering costly B&B accommodation.
- Introducing dedicated housing support officers to help 8 single people per month move on more quickly from B&B placements.
- These measures are expected to save around £65,000 per month, totalling £325,000 over five months, while improving the experience for those in crisis.

Medium-term actions (6–12 months) focus on increasing the supply of temporary and supported housing:

- Leasing additional properties and using capital grants such as the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) to acquire homes.
- Around 100 new units will be delivered in phases, helping to reduce demand on emergency accommodation and saving over £400,000 annually.

Alongside these actions, the Homelessness Programme, through its seven dedicated plans, is delivering:

- Dedicated and tailored support and supported accommodation for care leavers, young people with support needs, as well as those who experience chronic homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Centralised Assessment and Placement Hubs to improve access and prioritisation to supported housing services
- Joined-up service delivery and data-driven decisions.

Social Housing Prioritisation of Homeless Households

- **Devon Home Choice:** 50% of weekly lets prioritised for statutory homeless households.
- **Increased Allocations:** 45% of lets in 2024–25 went to homeless households.

3 DEMAND: HOW THIS YEAR COMPARES WITH LAST YEAR

3.1 Homelessness Services Demand

The Housing Option's Team continues to see a high demand from households requiring homelessness advice, prevention and placement services.

However, the service has been relentless in trying to meet the needs of those who approach the Homelessness Front Door and there has been improved Service Delivery and Outcomes through

- ✓ Enhanced Engagement
- ✓ Improved Case Management
- ✓ Reduction in backlog and better tracking of homelessness cases.

Successful Interventions:

- ✓ 449 households prevented from becoming homeless.
- ✓ 319 supported within 56 days.
- ✓ 335 supported out of homelessness.

The overall number of cases being actively managed fell from 1,282 to 1,034, reflecting the team's concerted efforts to reduce the backlog of homelessness decisions. However, the number of cases where the Council owes a statutory duty to provide housing, known as the "main duty owed," rose from 258 to 309, indicating a growing level of statutory homelessness across the city.

2024-25 Monthly data	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Number of households approaching for housing advice	396	405	402	296	421	383	448	392	390	405	435	394
New Applications	131	107	98	110	108	105	116	101	106	103	250	169
Number of new prevention cases (households at risk of homelessness within 56 days)	66	71	68	47	62	66	61	82	81	63	79	44
Number of new relief cases (already homeless)	50	52	50	57	48	68	66	75	86	66	68	41
2024-25 1 st Month Snapshot	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Total number of current cases held - all duties	1092	1047	990	950	933	998	960	1003	1046	1034	1058	1101
Total number of prevention (homeless within 56 days) cases held	314	308	291	269	248	252	276	276	285	279	289	268
Total number of relief (homeless) cases held	160	143	150	156	141	155	207	177	176	177	168	187
Total number of main duty owed (duty decision taken) cases held	288	280	272	275	271	289	285	307	301	309	318	323

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3.2 Demand for Temporary Accommodation (TA) has increased

Where homelessness and priority need is established, there is a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation. As the commissioned temporary accommodation is often full, households are placed into B&B. It is a statutory duty for Plymouth City Council to place statutory homeless households.

- Between June 2021 and June 2025, the number of households in temporary accommodation rose from 221 to 419, which is an increase of approximately 90%

Over the course of the year, the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased:

- Total households in TA rose from 379 in July to 419 in June.
- The number of families with children or expected children in TA also increased steadily, from 196 in July to 237 in June, representing a 21% rise over the year.

2024/2025 Snapshot as at 1 st of month	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Number of households in temporary accommodation (all forms of temp)	347	358	357	370	365	377	401	398	413	419	445	443
Number of households with children/expected children in temporary accommodation	196	194	193	197	196	203	209	218	230	237	241	239
Total number of households in holiday lets/other nightly paid	37	36	34	42	34	42	45	43	44	46	50	47
Number of Households in B&B	162	174	176	166	176	166	143	179	199	194	216	214
Number of households with children/expected children in B&B	24	32	31	17	7	17	20	25	34	40	45	41
Number of households with children/ expected children in B&B_for MORE than 42 days	3	9	9	6	0	1	2	5	8	12	18	17

The increased reliance on nightly paid (B&B) options highlights the lack of capacity within the city's commissioned temporary accommodation, which has become increasingly "silted up."

3.3 Rough Sleeping and those at Risk of Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute form of homelessness, often driven by trauma and multiple disadvantage. There is a growing number of individuals experiencing rough sleeping who experience multiple disadvantage and have support, care and health needs. The availability of suitable housing solutions and tailored support for this group can be limited.

The PATH Rough Sleeper Team carry out a monthly snapshot of the number of rough sleepers seen on a single night. Long term rough sleeping, with complex lives has increased and reflects the increased homelessness demand and the challenges people are facing. Despite this, there have been some improvements and positive outcomes:

- ✓ **Improved Outreach:** The number of individuals identified in single night snapshots increased from 25 in December to 38 in August, reflecting enhanced outreach and identification efforts.
- ✓ **Effective Rehousing:** A total of **97 individuals** were successfully moved into housing over the nine-month period, reflecting the impact of coordinated rehousing strategies.
- ✓ **Support for Women:** There has been a focus on female rough sleepers
- ✓ **Progress with Long-Term Rough Sleepers:** The number of long-term rough sleepers dropped to a low of 22 in June, indicating successful engagement and transition efforts for those with entrenched homelessness.

Included in these figures are those with no recourse to public funds and those with no local connection. While these numbers are relatively low, teams work with individuals to sign post to relevant support and reconnect, where appropriate to their local authority area.

Month 2025	Single Night Snapshot	Seen Over Month	Long-Term Rough Sleepers	Women Rough Sleeping	Moved into Housing
Dec	25	54	32	12	10
Jan	23	50	26	13	10
Feb	24	59	26	17	9
March	28	83	26	22	19
April	36	66	33	13	9
May	38	74	36	14	9
June	35	72	22	15	11
July	36	71	38	15	11
Aug	38	58	34	17	9

The number moved into accommodation from January to April reflects the new single Homeless Accommodation Programme provision coming online. PATH and BCHA have brought on a total of 23 bedspaces of new supported housing provision funded through the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme. Eleven of these are self-contained, accessible homes.

The Council's Homelessness service works closely with all organisations delivering services to rough sleepers. Two dedicated Community Outreach Workers and the Rough Sleeper Team meet with rough

sleepers in a range of locations and co-ordinate a multi-agency response with access to day Shekinah and wider day services at Stonehouse Creek.

3.4 Winter Arrangements for Those Rough Sleeping

An all-year Night Shelter called Sleep Safely based at Hamoaze reopened in November 2024 following planning permission being granted and is now open all year round and accommodates 12 individuals nightly. Additionally, PATH have been working with several churches in Plymouth to provide additional night shelter during this winter.

During very adverse weather where there is an amber weather warning, and/ or three consecutive days of below zero degrees, PATH and PCC lead on the delivery of SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) with organisations working with rough sleepers. During periods of SWEP, the approach is to ensure that each rough sleeper has an offer of accommodation.

- Devonport House can accommodate an additional eight individuals and George House an additional ten individuals.
- Cold weather provision is also delivered where the weather may affect wellbeing but there has been no weather warning or low temperatures forecast

3.5 Social Housing

All social housing in Plymouth is let through the Devon Home Choice scheme. Up to 50% of all properties each week are advertised with a 50% preference to Statutory homeless households from Plymouth.

There is high demand for social housing and there has been a steady increase in the number of active applications from 6801 in May 2024 to 8155 in June 2025. The use of 50% homelessness preferences is continuing to increase the number of allocations to homeless households.

The table below captures the Band B housing needs for social housing properties of all sizes. (this includes households who are Band B for reasons other than homelessness e.g. overcrowding, high health and well-being needs)

Housing Need by Band and Bedroom (2/06/2025) active Plymouth household information

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	Total
Band A	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	7
Band B	728	423	225	147	65	9	1	1598
Band C	397	517	548	184	15	2		1663
Band D	2179	408	96	16	2	0	0	2701
Band E	1113	746	286	36	5	0	0	2186
Total	4419	2097	1157	383	87	11	1	8155

Lets to Plymouth based households	Total Lets	Monthly average
April 19 to March 20	1160	97
April 23 to March 24	874	73
April 24 to March 25	1040	87

- 466 out of the 1040 lets were made to homeless households, which represents c45% of all lets in Plymouth through Devon Home Choice

Despite the increase in homeless households taking up social housing, the ongoing shortage of social housing in Plymouth is evident in the limited number of Devon Home Choice allocations available, which falls significantly short of meeting the needs of households seeking/requiring social or affordable housing

4. NATIONAL CHALLENGES

Homelessness is continuing to increase both nationally and within our local area. This upward trend is largely driven by the sustained cost-of-living crisis, persistent inflationary pressures, a lack of affordable and social housing, and growing demand for health, care and support services.

Family homelessness in England has risen 11.8% over the past 12 months, with over 83,150 families, including a growing number of single-parent households, living in temporary accommodation (MHCLG, Statutory Homelessness in England, 31st July 2025).

Single person homelessness has increased and over the past 12 months, rough sleeping in England has surged by 27%, with nearly 4,000 individuals found sleeping on the streets on a single night, many facing severe mental health challenges, trauma, and substance dependency, and increasingly trapped in cycles of chronic homelessness due to a lack of housing and support services. (Crisis, 2024).

The table below sets out the comparative drivers of homelessness for individuals and families:

Structural Drivers	Single Homelessness	Family Homelessness
Housing Supply	Lack of PRS affordable housing and decline in social housing stock	Same issue, with added pressure for larger, child-appropriate homes
Economic Pressures	Rising poverty, unemployment, and cost-of-living crisis	Same, but often compounded by childcare costs and single-income households
Welfare & Benefits	Changes to welfare provision, legacy benefits transferring, delays in Universal Credit, benefit sanctions	Same, as well as previous changes and ongoing impact of these in benefits to families
Evictions	No-fault evictions (Section 21) disproportionately affect single renters	Families are also heavily impacted, especially in private rented sector
Health & Wellbeing	Mental health issues, substance misuse, and trauma are prevalent	Mental health and domestic abuse are key drivers, especially for women with children
Leaving Institutions	Leaving prison, hospital, or care without housing plans	Less common, but care leavers with children may be affected
Relationship Breakdown	Leading cause of rough sleeping, especially among men	Also, a major factor, often linked to domestic abuse
Access to Services	Fragmented support systems and lack of coordination	Families may face delays in accessing housing, education, and social care services
Hidden Homelessness	High among young people, women, and LGBTQ+ individuals	Families staying informally with friends and family

Impact on Children	n/a	Disruption to schooling, health, and development; long-term consequences for child wellbeing

There is a growing policy shift to prevention and early intervention in response to homelessness as these approaches aim to reduce the number of households experiencing the often traumatic and destabilising effects of homelessness, while also demonstrating significantly greater cost-effect.

Also, national legislative changes continue to influence the housing landscape. The Labour Government is currently progressing the Renters' Rights Bill, which began under the previous administration and is now under consideration by the House of Lords. A key component of this legislation is the proposed abolition of Section 21 "no fault" evictions, which remain a leading cause of homelessness.

The Bill aims to improve tenant security and raise standards within the private rented sector. However, there are concerns that a greater number of landlords may exit the market due to the increased regulatory requirements and associated costs. This could further reduce the availability and affordability of private rented housing, placing additional strain on Plymouth's already overstretched housing services.

The challenge is recognised nationally, with a focus on the development of affordable housing, as well as reform of the private sector and annual funding such as Homelessness Prevention Grant via the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Furthermore, supported housing in England is facing a complex set of challenges that could affect both the quality and availability of provision. While the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 aims to improve standards and tackle exploitation by rogue providers, its implementation has exposed significant financial pressures.

Local authorities, already stretched by funding constraints, are set to be tasked with licensing, inspecting, and developing long-term strategies for supported housing, often without the necessary resources. At the same time, providers are grappling with uncertainty around future regulation, rising costs, and the risk of losing Housing Benefit eligibility if they fail to meet new standards.

There is also concern that potentially burdensome regulation could drive supported housing providers out of the sector, reducing the already limited supply of supported accommodation. These challenges are compounded by a lack of clarity around definitions of care and support, and the need for substantial capital investment to meet growing demand. There is concern that the sector in Plymouth risks becoming less stable and less able to meet the needs of local people who rely on it.

5. LOCAL CHALLENGES

Plymouth is facing increasing pressure on its housing and homelessness services. Rising levels of homelessness are being driven by a lack of affordable housing, intense competition in the private rented sector, and a local shortage of social housing. These challenges are resulting in longer stays in temporary accommodation, greater reliance on bed and breakfast (B&B) placements, and mounting strain on local resources and homelessness prevention efforts.

Homeless households in Plymouth encounter significant obstacles when trying to secure private rented accommodation. Some properties attract up to 80 applicants, with landlords often prioritising those who can offer higher rents or pay several months in advance. This leaves low-income households at a clear disadvantage and limits their ability to access stable housing.

The availability of social housing in Plymouth has declined sharply, with the number of lets falling by 36% over the past five years. This reduction has led to prolonged stays in temporary accommodation and fewer opportunities for individuals to move on from supported housing into permanent homes.

Due to the shortage of affordable housing options, more homeless households are being placed in B&Bs for extended periods. This includes families, single individuals, and couples with low support needs who are unable to access appropriate move-on accommodation. The use of B&Bs as a stopgap measure is becoming increasingly common and unsustainable.

There is a notable lack of specialist longer-term supported accommodation for individuals and couples, as well as a shortage of accessible housing for those with specific needs. These gaps further restrict housing options and contribute to longer stays in unsuitable temporary settings.

Historically, single people and couples could access affordable one-bedroom homes in the private rented sector. However, the current limited supply has forced many into shared housing arrangements, which may not meet their needs or expectations, particularly for those seeking privacy or stability.

The growing reliance on B&B accommodation has significantly increased costs for the Council, placing additional pressure on already stretched budgets. This financial strain makes it more difficult to meet statutory homelessness duties and deliver effective support to those in need.

6. CONCLUSION

The Council remains committed to tackling homelessness through early help and prevention of homelessness, increased temporary accommodation provision, and working closely with households in B&B to find affordable housing solutions. The relentless and unyielding focus is on actions that reduce financial pressure while delivering better outcomes for individuals, couples, and families experiencing homelessness.

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Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	22 October 2025
Title of Report:	City Centre Car Parking Update – October 25
Lead Member:	Councillor John Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport)
Lead Strategic Director:	Glenn Caplin-Grey (Strategic Director for Growth)
Author:	Mike Artherton
Contact Email:	mike.artherton@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To provide Members an update on the Councils current City Centre parking provision, covering demand and utilisation, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and challenges.

Recommendations and Reasons

The Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel:

1. Endorses the work with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) leading to the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy, supporting work around how, where and when 10,000 new homes could be delivered in and around the city centre.
2. Is assured that assessments undertaken confirm the current use of EV vehicles within the multistorey car parks to be safe.
3. Request a future update be provided in respect of plans over the next 5 to 10 years, informed and integrated with the work to develop an integrated transport and parking strategy.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not consider this report – Rejected as this was requested by the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This update report relates to services linked to the delivery of strategies and policies that the Council has adopted and will be key in helping the city meet its Corporate Plan priorities, and growth agenda.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

There are no implications associated with this update report

Financial Risks

There are no financial risks associated with this update report

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this update report

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

There are no Environmental implications associated with this update report

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.*

None

Appendices

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	City Centre Parking Update – October 25							

Background papers:

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	N/A	Leg	N/A	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Andy Sharp, Interim Service Director, Street Services											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 08/10/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor John Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport)											
Date approved: 10/10/2025											

BRIEFING PAPER
CITY CENTRE CAR PARKING UPDATE - OCTOBER 2025**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report provides the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel with an update on City Centre Car Parking, along with key developments since the last report in November 2024. This includes:
 - 1.1.1. An assessment of growth impacts on the transport network and parking demand/supply.
 - 1.1.2. An update on electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and future plans.
 - 1.1.3. An update on the current challenges facing the city centre car parks.
- 1.2. This report focuses on the Council's Off Street parking provision within the area of the City Centre, which includes Mutley Plain, Millbay and Bretonside.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The City Council operates 19 public car parks within the city centre, offering a total of 3077 parking spaces (see appendix 1). There are 9 short stay car parks (397 parking spaces, 13%) and 10 long stay car parks (2680 parking spaces, 87%).
- 2.2. Most of the city centre car parking is provided by 5 multi-storey car parks, which account for 2365 parking spaces (or 77%) of all the Council's off-street parking spaces.

3. CAR PARK UTILISATION AND DEMAND**Financial Summary**

- 3.1. The parking Service is budgeted to generate a net income of £5.382M in 2025/26, which is critical for supporting the delivery of key services, including the provision of Highways service.

Public Transport Partnership and Collaboration




- 3.2. The council's parking service maintains a long-standing collaborative partnership with public transport providers. We work with bus operators to enforce bus-lane compliance, supporting punctual and reliable services. We are also working with bus operators on opportunities to enhance the use of city-centre car parks hosting shuttle services for concerts, football matches, and other events, working to ensure seamless connections between parking and public transport.

Current Utilisation and Demand

- 3.3. Current assessment indicates that car park utilisation remains consistent with the November 24 update. Figure 1.1 below outlines the parking demand status in the

city centre car parks, indicating which car parks frequently experience parking demand greater than availability, occasionally exceed demand, or have availability greater than demand.

Figure 1.1 – Car Park Utilisation Summary

Utilisation		Car Parks
Demand regularly exceeds availability		Exchange Street, Guildhall and North Hill
Demand can exceed availability		Derry's Cross, Cornwall Street East, Cornwall Street West, and Mayflower House Court, Mutley Barracks
Demand lower than availability		Colin Campbell Court, Courtney Street, Marks and Spencer, Mayflower East, Mayflower West, Napier Terrace, Plymouth City Market, Regent Street, St Andrews Street, Theatre Royal and Western Approach

Future Utilisation and Demand

- 3.4. In August 2024 the Council commissioned WSP to undertake an assessment of city centre parking demand and utilisation over the next 10 years, which factored in modelling data derived from the Plymouth Highway Assignment Model (HAM3) to project future growth in journeys and demand for City Centre parking alongside any known changes in parking supply over this period. The outcome of this study was not received in time to summarise within the November Scrutiny meeting.
- 3.5. The study determined that long stay parking is expected to have sufficient supply during weekdays; however, many areas are expected to experience increased demand and reduced capacity by 2034, resulting in short stay parking being over capacity on Saturday afternoons.
- 3.6. The 2024 demand and utilisation study did not include details around housing growth demands as this was not known at the time; however, it is important to review the opportunities for parking to support such growth; however, we need to understand what demand we may expect. Therefore, Plymouth city council is working with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to commission a development framework to set out how, where and when 10,000 new homes could be delivered in and around the city centre. The commission includes a more detailed delivery masterplan for the city centre core area and supporting work on infrastructure and delivery. Once appointed, the consultant team will work closely with the Councils retained transport consultants (WSP) to consider the impacts of growth on the transport network and parking demand/supply, and to prepare an integrated transport and parking strategy for the area. All of the work will be subject to extensive public and stakeholder engagement.

4. EV CHARGING

- 4.1. A total of 38 EV chargers is installed at city centre car parks, as summarised in Figure 1.2 below:

Figure 1.2 EV Chargers City Centre Car Parks

Car Park	Chargers	Charger Capacity (kW)
Western Approach	8	7
	6	22
	4	100
Theatre Royal	2	7
	2	100
Regents Street	4	7
Derry's Cross	2	100
St Andrews Street	2	100
Mayflower Street West	6	100
Mayflower Street	2	200
Total	38	

- 4.2. There are currently no plans to install further EV chargers within the city centre car parks; however, this will be reviewed as part of the work around the city centre masterplan and integrated transport and parking strategy.

EV Vehicle Loading

- 4.3. There has been much focus on the increased weight of EV cars and of the potential implications for this on car parks that were built long before the introduction of EV cars. Plymouth is no exception to this where the Council's multistorey car parks were constructed between 1966 to 1980.
- 4.4. The council's car parks undergo regular structural and condition surveys. The November 2024 scrutiny report detailed how previous inspections guided a £2 million investment to secure continued operation of the car parks for the next 15–20 years, subject to ongoing routine maintenance. Since those earlier surveys did not specifically address the increased loading from electric vehicles (EVs), the council commissioned additional assessments of all five multistorey car parks (Western Approach, Theatre Royal, Regent Street, Mayflower Street East, and Napier Street) to evaluate EV-specific loading impacts.
- 4.5. Those assessments confirm that all five multistorey car parks are currently safe for EV use. They also indicate that structural strengthening may be required over the next five to ten years. These future requirements will be built into the scope of work for the next structural and condition surveys, due to be commissioned in 2026. The upcoming surveys will identify any further works needed and their associated costs.

5. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage

5.1. The November 2024 report updated the council on anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in city-centre car parks. Since then, we have achieved significant reductions in such incidents, including a 50 % drop in reported cases at Theatre Royal car park and an overall decline in criminal damage. This progress reinforces our commitment to delivering a positive parking experience. We are confident of maintaining this trend through the following measures:

- Completed a major upgrade to the CCTV system in Western Approach car park.
- Continued enhanced cleansing across all car parks to ensure clean, safe facilities and a positive customer experience.
- Cabinet has approved Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), empowering authorised officers to remove non-users from car parks and prohibit alcohol consumption.

5.2. While we have made significant progress, we occasionally face challenges from a small minority of individuals. Our swift response means that such incidents now occur far less often than they did in November 2024.

Accessibility

5.3. Over 400 wider parking spaces have been introduced across several car parks (Mayflower East, Regent Street, Theatre Royal, Western Approach, Napier Street, and Colin Campbell Court). These wider bays make parking easier for motorists, acknowledging that many of today's vehicles are longer and wider than in the past. Figure 1.3 shows the locations of these bays.

Figure 1.3 – Extra Wide Parking Bays

Car Park	Extra Wide Bays
Wester Approach	127
Regent Street	63
Theatre Royal	84
Mayflower East	82
Napier Terrace	75
Total	431

5.4. A recent initiative aimed at providing further support for individuals living with disabilities has involved the introduction of six additional disabled parking spaces on level two of the Theatre Royal car park, as well as the creation of the first 'hidden disabilities' spaces on level four. These hidden disability spaces are intended for people with non-visible disabilities who do not require a standard Blue Badge-only parking space. There is no requirement to display a Blue Badge in these bays, which are marked with the nationally recognised sunflower logo.

6. SUMMARY

- 6.1. The parking service generates net income to the Council, income that is critical to support the delivery of key services.
- 6.2. The Council has successfully installed 38 EV chargers in city centre car parks. Further reviews will assess additional infrastructure needs as part of the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy.
- 6.3. The Council has successfully responded to challenges related to anti-social behaviour through improved security measures, such as the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and the upgrade of CCTV systems, contributing to a safer parking environment.
- 6.4. Over 400 wider parking bays have been introduced across several car parks to improve accessibility and accommodate the increasing size of modern vehicles.
- 6.5. Additional support for individuals with disabilities has been provided through the introduction of six new disabled parking spaces and the city's first 'hidden disabilities' bays at the Theatre Royal car park.
- 6.6. Looking ahead, the Council is collaborating with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to develop a comprehensive integrated transport and parking strategy, which includes planning for the delivery of 10,000 new homes within the city centre.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1. The Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel:
 - 7.1.1. Endorses the work with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) leading to the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy, supporting work around how, where and when 10,000 new homes could be delivered in and around the city centre.
 - 7.1.2. Is assured that assessments undertaken confirm the current use of EV vehicles within the multistorey car parks to be safe.
 - 7.1.3. A future update can be provided in respect to plans over the next 5 to 10 years, informed and integrated with the work to develop an integrated transport and parking strategy.

Appendix I – City Centre Car Parking

Car Park	Surface / Multi- Storey	Parking Provision	Long Stay / Short Stay
Bretonside B	Surface	5	Short stay
Bretonside C	Surface	16	Short stay
Colin Campbell Court*	Surface	155	Short stay
Cornwall Street East	Surface	52	Short stay
Cornwall Street West	Surface	13	Short stay
Courtney Street	Surface	30	Short stay
Derry's Cross	Surface	71	Long stay
Exchange Street	Surface	18	Short stay
Guildhall	Surface	42	Long stay
Marks and Spencer	Surface	19	Short stay
Mayflower East	Multi-storey	292	Long stay
Mayflower House Court	Surface	75	Long stay
Mayflower West	Surface	81	Long stay
Napier Terrace	Multi-storey	299	Long stay
Mutley Barracks	Surface	24	Short Stay
North Hill	Surface	35	Long stay
Plymouth City Market	Surface	65	Short stay
Regent Street	Multi-storey	268	Long stay
St Andrews Street	Surface	11	Long stay
Theatre Royal	Multi-storey	505	Long stay
Western Approach	Multi-storey	1001	Long stay
Total		3077	

Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	22 October 2025
Title of Report:	Renters Rights Bill
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)
Lead Strategic Director:	Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities)
Author:	David Irving
Contact Email:	David.Irving@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	RRB/25
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To respond to a request from the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the Council's preparedness ahead of the introduction of the Renters Rights Bill.

Recommendations and Reasons

- I. That the Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel note the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected

- I. No other options have been considered as this is an update report for the Committee.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This report relates to the Plymouth Plan Policy HEA8 – 'Targeting intervention and resources to improve the standard, quality and management of private sector housing'.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

It is anticipated that initial recruitment will be funded by new burdens funding. The Renters Rights Bill stipulates that money received from civil penalties will be ringfenced and retained by the council. Ringfenced money will be used to fund members of the team going forward.

Financial Risks

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

Legal Implications

(Provided by Ian Wills)

The Bill will introduce new legislation which Plymouth City Council must be compliant with.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

It is not anticipated that the proposed actions will cause negative environmental impacts.

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.

N/A

Appendices

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	Renters' Rights Bill Briefing Paper							

Background papers:

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	N/A	Leg	CM 29.09. 2025 5254	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Matt Garrett											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 06/10/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities), <i>approved by email</i>											
Date approved: 07/10/2025											

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE SCRUTINY PANEL - RENTERS' RIGHTS BILL BRIEFING PAPER

Community Connections



Renters' Rights Bill Overview

The Renters' Rights Bill aims to reform the rental market, strengthening protection for tenants while introducing new obligations for landlords. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 11 September 2024 and is in its final stages of becoming an act. The bill is structured into 4 parts and is not significantly different from the proposed predecessor, the Renters' (Reform) Bill.

It is anticipated that The Bill will gain Royal Assent in November 2025 with secondary legislation being formed at a later date. Whilst The Bill is being finalised, we can be certain of a number of things:

1. We can expect early implementation of Part 1 and 4, and with this an expectation on Councils to be enforcing the commitments on eviction and tenant security straight away, using the considerable new powers to do this without delay. Relevant secondary legislation is anticipated 6 months post Royal Assent.
2. Coupled with the Government's determination to meet their election promises, there is a significant expectation, from the voluntary and not for profit sector organisations who support tenants, that Councils will universally use their new powers, and fulfil their new obligations, from day 1.

The Labour government's Renters' Rights Bill will:

- **Abolish section 21 evictions** - Moving to a simpler tenancy structure where all assured tenancies are periodic, providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rental increases without fear of eviction. This will be implemented in one stage, giving all tenants security immediately.
- **Ensure possession grounds are fair to both parties** - Giving tenants more security, while ensuring landlords can recover their property when reasonable. The bill introduces new safeguards for tenants, giving them more time to find a home if landlords evict to move in or sell, and ensuring unscrupulous landlords cannot misuse grounds.
- **Provide stronger protections against backdoor eviction** - Ensuring tenants are able to appeal excessive above-market rents which are purely designed to force them out. Landlords will still be able to increase rents but only to market price for their properties and an independent tribunal will make a judgement on this, if needed.
- **Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman** - Providing quick, fair, impartial and binding resolution for tenants' complaints about their landlord. This will bring tenant-landlord complaint resolution on par with established redress practices for tenants in social housing and consumers of property agent services
- **Create a Private Rented Sector Database** – Helping landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance (giving good landlords confidence in their position), alongside providing better information to tenants to make informed decisions when entering into a tenancy agreement. It will also support local councils, helping them target enforcement activity where it is needed most. Landlords will need to be registered on the database in order to use certain possession grounds.
- **Give tenants strengthened rights to request a pet in the property** – The landlord must consider and cannot unreasonably refuse. To support this, landlords will be able to require pet insurance to cover any damage to their property

- **Apply the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector** - Giving renters safer, better value homes and remove the blight of poor-quality homes in local communities.
- **Apply ‘Awaab’s Law’ to the sector** - Setting clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards.
- **Make it illegal for landlords and agents to discriminate against prospective tenants in receipt of benefits or with children** – Helping to ensure everyone is treated fairly when looking for a place to live.
- **End the practice of rental bidding by prohibiting landlords and agents from asking for or accepting offers above the advertised rent** - Landlords and agents will be required to publish an asking rent for their property, and it will be illegal to accept offers made above this rate.
- **Strengthen local authority enforcement** - Expanding civil penalties, introducing a package of investigatory powers and bringing in a new requirement for local authorities to report on enforcement activity.
- **Strengthen rent repayment orders** - Extending them to superior landlords, doubling the maximum penalty from 12 months’ rent to 24 months and ensuring repeat offenders have to repay the maximum amount.

Imminent Powers and Responsibilities

Part 1 – Tenancy Reform

The Renters’ Rights Bill will introduce a tenancy system, ending the threat of arbitrary section 21 evictions, which uproot renters from their homes with little notice and minimal justification. The new tenancy system will provide tenants with greater security and stability and empower them to challenge bad practice without fear of retaliatory eviction. Landlords will also benefit, with more straightforward regulation, and clearer and expanded possession grounds.

Under Part 1 it becomes a **duty** for Housing Authorities to enforce provisions around:

1. The abolition of assured shorthold tenancies and other changes to assured tenancies
2. Changes to grounds for possession, including the abolition of section 21 evictions
3. New controls on rent increases and other rent issues
4. The pet provisions
5. A suite of new duties on landlords and contractors to give information
6. Changes to tenancy deposit requirements and tenant fees
7. The ban on discrimination relating to children
8. The ban on discrimination relating to benefits status
9. Soliciting rent above the advertised figure, including a ban on rental bidding
10. Limiting the amount of an annual rent increase

Part 1 also introduces amendments made to the Protection from Eviction Act 1977

- Financial penalties introduced as an alternative to prosecution, and the maximum penalty is £40,000

It also applies Awaab’s Law to the private rented sector, however, MHCLG are currently assessing how to introduce this into the private rented sector and as such this will be introduced at a later stage. Awwab’s Law will:

- Set timescales within which landlords must make homes safe when they contain serious hazards and empower tenants to challenge unsafe conditions.

Part 4 – Enforcement

Through the Renters' Rights Bill it becomes the **duty** of every local housing authority to enforce the landlord legislation in its area.

*Renters' Rights Bill
Part 4 – Enforcement
Chapter 2 – Enforcement authorities*

107 Enforcement by local housing authorities: general duty

- (1) It is the duty of every local housing authority to enforce the landlord legislation in its area.
- (6) For the purposes of this Part, a reference to taking enforcement action is a reference to –
 - (a) imposing a financial penalty, or
 - (b) instituting proceedings against a person for an offence, under the landlord legislation.

The Renters' Rights Bill will be underpinned by an effective, consistent and proportionate enforcement framework. Changes being brought in will extend Plymouth City Councils' powers to collect and retain ringfenced revenue for future enforcement work from financial penalties against landlords who flout the rules. To achieve this Councils, get a significantly increased suite of powers to impose Financial Penalties (Schedule 5), and Clauses 12-14 of Schedule 5.

Initial or minor non-compliance will incur a civil penalty of up to £7,000 and serious, persistent or repeat non-compliance a civil penalty of up to £40,000, with alternative options of a criminal prosecution.

Further, councils will get a range of new investigatory powers:

- Power of local housing authority to require information from relevant person
- Power of local housing authority to require information from any person
- Business premises: entry without warrant
- Power to seize documents following entry
- Suspected residential tenancy: entry without warrant
- Powers of accompanying persons
- New Offences of Obstruction

Part 4 will introduce mandatory quarterly reporting. Plymouth City Council are currently undertaking voluntary pilot returns to test system capacity to answer and are part of a working group to refine the questions to ensure their suitability. To date no reporting has been required regarding the management of the private rented sector. It is anticipated that mandatory quarterly reporting will commence in July 2026.

Parts 2 and 3

Parts 2 and 3 cover the Private Rented Sector Database and the Decent Homes Standards. These will be introduced later than Parts 1 and 4. It is currently anticipated that the Private Rented Sector Database is anticipated to have a phased roll out from the first quarter of 2027. A consultation on a new Decent Home Standard closed on 10th September 2025, which the Council provided a response. As the consultation focused on the quality of accommodation, the Housing Standards teams largely put together the response. Housing Solutions also contributed to the response due to the proposal the new Decent Home Standard will affect temporary accommodation. The consultation proposed a timeline of 2037 for its implementation.

Community Connections are one of a small number of Authorities in a working group supporting the development of the database. Plymouth has encouraged the inclusion of accessibility being a factor for landlords to include in their property details, this will support the development of an understanding into how our private rented sector is ready for an aging population with more people living with comorbidities. Additionally, we have been working with MHCLG on how data captured from landlords would support enforcement activity.

Local, Regional and National Engagement

Implementation of the Act will be far from easy, but we hope that working collaboratively nationally, regionally and locally it will support the additional burdens the Renters' Rights Bill presents in the planning, policy development, systems change, and new processes required.

Local - Community Connections are working with South West Landlords Association and Plymouth Homes 4 Lets (PH4L) to ensure we are maximising our engagement with the leading accreditation programme group in the region. Information is being shared throughout their members and non-members in respect of the Bill's progress, Plymouth City Council's progress in the planning and implementation and as the Bill progresses. Further training for landlords will be provided to ensure that they are up to date with the expectations placed on them. The Plymouth's plan section of this paper also details that there is a want for this engagement to grow with wider stakeholders, ensuring that we are working with landlords and tenant support groups.

Regional - Operation Jigsaw has been a funded national programme of work bringing together professionals from Housing Standards and Trading Standards. Meeting regionally the forum has become focused on the Renters' Rights Bill and its implications. Plymouth and Torbay have agreed to co-chair the regional meetings. The span is from Cornwall to the Forest of Dean. Community Connections are also a member of the Devon Private Rented Sector Forum bringing together key individuals from regions teams responsible for the private rented sector.

National - Community Connections are on one of the working groups in MHCLG focused on the development of the Property Portal and data collection refinement. Further they are engaged with MHCLG on other elements of the Bill's implementation.

Funding

New Burdens

There remains uncertainty surrounding what New Burdens Funding will look like (despite continual national requests being made). To date we have been informed that New Burdens Funding will arrive in 2025/26, and 2026/27, to fund the preparations and initial growth to meet the new duties. It is likely that this will come in a highly specified Section 31 grant.

Income

Provision for significant financial penalties for people breaching the provisions of the Act will be ring fenced for use in enforcing the Act or sent to the Government if not used for that purpose.

- a. This income will be problematic to manage as it will not normally arrive within the same Financial Year as it is levied.
- b. MHCLG will need to hear from local Finance teams.

Provision for funding for our enforcement duties will arrive at a later date, derived from a portion of the Database registration fees, which are being passed over to us by the Database provider.

Plymouth's Current Delivery

There is no provision within the Bill that instructs Councils which team or department will be expected to enforce any of its parts.

At the moment PCC generally have:

Housing Standards Team dealing with enforcement of much of the Housing Act 2004 as it relates to standards of living accommodation in the private rented sector.

Trading Standards Team dealing with property agents, redress schemes and client money protection.

Housing Solutions Team provide advice to tenants facing eviction and harassment but currently do not take legal action under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

Legal Team provide advice, support tribunals and court hearings, and where nonpayment of Civil Penalties occurs, work with the Housing Solutions Team to take action through the court for recovery.

Public Trust and Confidence

To maximise public trust and confidence consideration should be given to 2 principal areas:

- a. Civil action from tenant support bodies over a council's failure to effectively support their clients, and
- b. Publicity in relation to the information contained in mandatory reports to the Government which could highlight a council's lack of enforcement activity.

Overview of the Impact

The implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill extends beyond the current scope of existing structures, and resourcing levels, requiring a comprehensive and coordinated approach to ensure compliance and effective delivery. The scale and complexity of the legislative changes, ranging from tenancy regulations and enforcement mechanisms to landlord obligations and tenant protections, demand dedicated resource to oversee implementation, which should not be delayed pending new burdens announcements. Without a focused approach, there is a significant risk of inconsistent application, operational bottlenecks, and gaps in enforcement, which in turn will impact residents, landlords and interested parties further increasing the risk of tribunals and judicial review.

Scope and Current Resourcing

The Plymouth Report details that the private rented sector represents 22.7% of the 122,813 dwellings in the city, equating to approximately 27,878 dwellings.

Resources specifically focused on the management of housing standards is as follows.

1 x Housing Improvement Manager
2 x Technical Lead (Housing Improvement)
4 x Senior Community Connections Officer (HMO Licencing) – 100% funded via licencing fees.
4 x Senior Community Connections Officer (PRS)
1 x Community Connections Officer

Renters' Rights Bill – Plymouth Plan

A system-based approach is required to ensure that legislative changes are effectively embedded into operations with minimal disruption thus reducing the gap for errors to occur.

This following plan, whilst it will require development along the implementation pathway, provides a structure focused on preparation, cross-departmental collaboration, stakeholder engagement, resource growth, training, IT system readiness, and process change to enable a smooth transition and long-term sustainability of the new legal framework. The plan will initially focus on Parts 1 and 4 however it will be reviewed against parts 2 and 3 in time.

The Council have adopted a collaborative approach to the planning and implementation of The Bill with the Housing Standards team taking the lead. Communication and planning is underway with the Housing Solutions

team and Legal to establish their roles, processes and standard operating procedures to ensure the teams are ready and are compliant with the legislation from day 1. Further, we are leading the way regionally and nationally with our engagement with Trading Standards. Trading Standards recognise that there is space within The Bill in which they will operate. The Council are working with them to identify these areas and establish a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Phase 1 Progress

Workstream	Task	Update
Strategic Preparation	Engage leadership to secure buy-in and funding	Strategic buy-in confirmed through CMT.
	Establish Legislative Change Taskforce	Communication with Housing Solutions, Legal, Finance and Trading Standards is ongoing.
	Map affected stakeholders	Complete.
Legislative Impact Assessment	Conduct a Gap Analysis comparing current policies and processes against new legal requirements.	Gap analysis complete. Work is ongoing to update existing policies, map new processes for new duties, resource levels are being assessed, IT systems are being reviewed, and a training programme is being devised.
	Develop an implementation framework with key milestones	Complete.
Resource Planning & Budgeting	Establish a new role in Community Connections Housing Standards – Strategic Programmes Lead – initial funding to be at risk pending new burdens announcement.	Complete. Strategic Programme Lead has been in place since June 2025.
	Define wider resource requirements. Gold standard has been set at 1 x Private Rented Sector Officer per 800 relevant properties. This equates to 34.4 officers, or 850% growth on the current operational resources focused on the management of the Private Rented Sector. We do not believe the current PCC budget, short term new burdens, and increased enforcement will see our resourcing figure achieve anything close to this level.	On hold – Resource levels are dependent on New Burdens Funding (currently unknown) and reserve budget.
	Consider new burdens allocation, Civil Penalty income, against resource requirements, training and new IT systems.	Ongoing – New Burdens Funding currently unknown.
	Establish a new Housing Standards – Private Rented Sector reserve budget to ensure monies are spent according to legislative requirements.	Complete

Phase 2 Progress

Workstream	Task	Update
IT Assessment	Audit existing IT systems for compatibility, compliance gaps and mandatory reporting requirements (of the 65 required reporting fields current assessments show only 6 are recorded in a reportable way currently).	Ongoing – System readiness is being managed throughout the Delta reporting pilot.

	Identify system updates, changes or replacements needed.	On hold – Dependent on above work.
	Ensure considerations are maintained throughout regarding data security, reporting, and automation enhancements.	On hold – Dependent on above work.
Training Strategy	Develop role-specific training programs to address regulatory requirements.	Ongoing – Some training needs have been identified to meet new duties, while others will come later The Bill gains Royal Assent.
	Use a mix of e-learning, specific external training, and workshops, whilst working with neighbouring authorities to ensure regional consistency and shared costs.	Ongoing – PCC have access to training resources and materials through Operation Jigsaw, which is being disseminated across the teams. Further training will be required once The Bill has gained Royal Assent.
Communication & Engagement	Establish a dedicated change management team comprising of Operational Managers and technical leads from affected teams.	Ongoing talks are being held with the relevant teams and staff
	Utilise existing external platforms to provide updates and seek feedback such as Staff Room, South West Landlords Association, Facebook, X, to keep people informed.	Comms on hold pending Royal Assent
	Work with MHCLG to ensure national communications are shared appropriately and tailored to local approach where required	Ongoing talks are being held with MHCLG to align with national comms that can be tailored locally
	Establish new ways of understanding and hearing tenant voice by working with Changing Futures and Community Builders.	Ongoing communication has been established.
	Strengthen relations with tenant voice groups to understand the changes in the Private Rented Sector.	On hold – Commencement to begin early 2027. This gives time for the Act to be established.
	Establish new relationships with city agents to understand their practices and approach to embedding changes.	On hold – Engagement with city agents will commence once Royal Assent occurs.
New Policy & Process Rollout	Adapt, update or where required create new policies and processes aligned to the legislative gap analysis.	Ongoing – The Civil Penalty, Electrical Safety and HMO Standards policies have all been reviewed and are being reviewed for an Executive Decision. These will need to be reviewed again upon The Bill receiving Royal Assent.
	Create clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) reflecting legislative updates.	New processes and procedures are being developed.
	Implement dashboards for real-time tracking and reporting.	On hold – Pending final Delta data reporting points.

	Build in Policy and process review periods to ensure that intention has aligned with implementation, and to consider outcomes such as tribunal findings.	Regular reviews will be held following Royal Assent and lead in time.
Process Change Implementation	Pilot new processes in controlled environments with teams prior to full rollout.	Ongoing – Taking part in pilots.
	Automate compliance checks and reporting where possible, utilising new technologies, AI and Power BI.	Ongoing – A member of staff is currently undertaking an apprenticeship in AI and Data Insights for Business Decisions.
Performance Monitoring & Compliance Audits	Redefine Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to align to new Delta requirements.	On hold – Pending final Delta data reporting points.
	Work with Devon Audit Partnership to complete compliance reviews.	Early engagement complete.
	Build in reviews to the service plan to ensure continual development.	Ongoing.
Community Impact	Review monthly the level of people presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness to understand presentation reasoning.	Ongoing – Figures will need to be reviewed regularly over an extended period of time once the Act is in force to understand if it is having a positive impact on reducing homelessness in the city.

Key Risks & Mitigation Strategies

The current Key risk is that we have a significant level of change pending in the management of the private rented sector however we have no defined budget or timeline to work towards, other than parts 1 and 4 are imminent.

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
New Burdens Uncertainty	MHCLG have continually been asked to confirm new burdens funding to permit the preparation process to begin.
Implementation Time Line	No clear timeline has been given for the implementation. However, it is anticipated that there will be a 6 month lead time following Royal Assent
Resistance to change	Strong communication, stakeholder engagement, and leadership support
IT system failures	Early testing, phased rollouts, ensure that any new contracts come with support and update options.
Compliance gaps	Continuous monitoring, internal audits, and external reviews
Income	Continual review, Justice for Tenants providing legal capacity where required to ensure fines are recovered, reserve budget,
Resourcing	Widen the recruitment, understanding that all LA teams will be competing for resource, develop a comprehensive training programme.
Trading Standards	Trading Standards legislation is largely unchanged thus a thorough review of their involvement in the management of the private rented sector is required to ensure that all areas of legislation are monitored and acted upon.
Training period	Resource training, both internal and external can take 6-8months before an officer is qualified and competent

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Action Log 2025/26

Key:	
	Complete
	In Progress
	Not Started
	On Hold

Minute No.	Resolution	Target Date, Officer Responsible and Progress
Minute 6 Central Park Ponds Project 16 July 2025	The Panel recommended the officers provided Panel Members with a schedule of works with key deliverable milestones between then and the end of the project in its totality.	Due Date: 31 July 2025 Officer: Kat Deeney Progress: COMPLETE - Response received 31 July 2025. Response shared with Panel members via email 04 August 2025.
Minute 6 Central Park Ponds Project 16 July 2025	A list of the trees that were due to be planted including number, species and planting times, would be provided to Panel Members.	Due Date: 31 July 2025 Officer: Kat Deeney Progress: COMPLETE - Response received 31 July 2025. Response shared with Panel members via email 04 August 2025.
Minute 6 Central Park Ponds Project 16 July 2025	Questions raised to Councillor Finn in a visit to the park would be responded to by officers which included: 1. Where did the spoil come from? Were alternatives considered, if not, why not? 2. Had anyone been held to account for the issues experienced? 3. Were there implications on other projects?	Due Date: 31 July 2025 Officer: Kat Deeney Progress: COMPLETE - Response received 31 July 2025. Response shared with Panel members via email 04 August 2025.

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Action Log 2025/26

	4. Would officers be looking at what had gone wrong for learning for future projects?	
Minute 6 Central Park Ponds Project – Scrutiny Update Report 16 July 2025	Officers would provide an update on the flooding issue that was being experienced at the edge of Central Park where Central Park Avenue met Ford Park Road to Panel members.	Due Date: 31 July 2025 Officer: Kat Deeney Progress: COMPLETE - Response received 31 July 2025. Response shared with Panel members via email 04 August 2025.
Minute 7 Work Programme 16 July 2025	A previous report and the minutes of the meeting, where an item on city centre car parking had been discussed at the Panel would be shared with current membership.	Due Date: 31 July 2025 Officer: Hannah Chandler-Whiting Progress: COMPLETE - Information sent via email 17 July 2025.
Minute 5 Grit Bin Policy Review 16 July 2025	The Panel recommended that the recommended actions within the report had the following <u>amendment</u> : 4. Those grit bins where ownership is in question (Not HMPE land) will be resolved and retained or removed from the network as appropriate, <u>following consultation with Ward Councillors.</u>	Due Date: 25 July 2025 Officer: Kevin Northcott/Phil Bellamy Progress: In – Progress. Response received 09/20/2025: “We did not have enough time this year prior to the commencement of the Winter season on 01/10/2025 to review all of the grit bins where ownership is in question. For this season they have all been retained and are being refilled as we speak. The intention is to check ownership prior to next Winter season on 01/10/2026 and then consider if they are for Highways to maintain or if any adjustments need to be made. We will consult with the relevant ward councillors prior to any actions being taken. The details of these bin locations were included in the reports that went to all Ward Councillors as part of point 2 below.”

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Action Log 2025/26

<p>Minute 5</p> <p>Grit Bin Policy Review</p> <p>16 July 2025</p>	<p>The Panel recommended that, in relation to the Grit Bin Policy:</p> <p>6. All Ward Councillors would be given three weeks to consult with their communities and to give feedback on suggested removals, moves or additions of grit bins under HMPE ownership.</p>	<p>Due Date: 25 July 2025</p> <p>Officer: Kevin Northcott/Phil Bellamy</p> <p>Progress: COMPLETE - Response received 09/20/2025:</p> <p>“A full report of all proposed grit bin amendments (including removal, retain, check ownership, and add new) was emailed to all ward councillors with full details and numbers of each for their respective wards, on Thursday 7th August, following the outcome of the Scrutiny meeting. Councillors were all given until Friday 29th August to feedback any comments they had, and these were all taken on board and responded to. Most councillors were happy with the proposals with a few queries over the process we had used to score the bin review. We received some form of response from 14 of the 20 wards with no response from the remaining 6. As a result of the consultation, we noted 2 extra grit bins we were not previously aware of, which have been recorded and are being filled for this season, and retained 1 extra grit bin that was previously due to be removed.”</p>
<p>Minute 31</p> <p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update Jan 2025</p> <p>05 February 2025</p>	<p>Request from Panel Members to receive an overview and definition of ‘local connection’ in line with national guidance.</p>	<p>Due Date: ASAP</p> <p>Officer: Ruth Tune-Holmes</p> <p>Progress: Chased 10/10/25. Update to be provided at next meeting.</p>
<p>Minute 29</p> <p>Improved Public Connectivity with Plymouth City Council</p>	<p>Request from Panel Members to receive the Contact Centre data from the past five years.</p>	<p>Due Date: ASAP</p> <p>Officer: Peter Honeywell</p> <p>Progress: Chased 10/10/25. Update to be provided at next meeting.</p>

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05 February 2025		
Minute 7 Serious Violence Duty Action Plan & Funding Proposal 26 July 2024	The Panel would be provided with the Annual Strategic Crime Data which would detail the priorities for the Community Safety Partnership for the following 12 months.	Date Due: ASAP Officer: Tracey Naismith/ Devon and Cornwall Police Progress: COMPLETE – That data is available within Safer Plymouth Strategic Assessment, available here: Safer Plymouth PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel
Work Programme 2025/26



Please note that the work programme is a 'live' document and subject to change at short notice. The information in this work programme is intended to be of strategic relevance.

For general enquiries relating to the Council's Scrutiny function, including this Committee's work programme, please contact Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor).

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Prioritisation Score	Reason for Consideration	Responsible Cabinet Member/Lead Officer
16 July 2025	Grit Bin Policy Review	3	Following planned changes to Grit Bin provision / policy	Cllr Stephens/Andy Sharp
	Central Park Ponds Project	4	Amanda Pannell (petition author) has emailed to say the actions haven't been completed. Item was added to work programme for re-consideration in 2024/25.	Cllr Tom Briars-Delve/Kat Deeney
22 October 2025	Building Bridges to Opportunity Update	4	Report to be brought back to Scrutiny prior to being presented to Cabinet	Cllr Penberthy/Steve Maddern
	Homelessness Services Update - Planned savings in homelessness services	3	Action from Budget Scrutiny	Councillor Penberthy/Jackie Kings
	City Centre Car Parking	3	Added at the 16 July 2025 meeting	Cllr Stephens/Mike Artherton
	Renters Rights Bill	3	Changes in renters rights	Cllr Penberthy/Matt

			through new bill/law	Garrett/Dave Ryland
10 December 2025	Plymouth Active Leisure	3	Pre-decision scrutiny	Cllr Dann/Liz Slater
11 February 2026				
Items to be scheduled for 2025/26				
2025/26	Public Toilets Strategy Review	(3)	Motion on Notice from 19 January 2024 meeting of City Council	Cllr Penberthy/Ann Thorp
Items to be scheduled for 2026/27				
2026/27				
2026/27				
Items Identified for Select Committee Reviews				

Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool

		Yes (=1)	Evidence
P ublic Interest	Is it an issue of concern to partners, stakeholders and/or the community?		
A bility	Could Scrutiny have an influence?		
P erformance	Is this an area of underperformance?		
E xtent	Does the topic affect people living, working, or studying in more than one electoral ward of Plymouth?		
R eplication	Will this be the only opportunity for public scrutiny?		
	Is the topic due planned to be the subject of an Executive Decision?		
Total:			High/Medium/Low

Priority	Score
High	5-6
Medium	3-4
Low	1-2

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