



Oversight and Governance

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

Wednesday 10 December 2025
1.00 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 - 10)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2025 as a correct record.

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. Plymouth Active Leisure (PAL): (Pages 11 - 28)

6. Commemorations and Celebrations PCC Policy: (Pages 29 - 58)

7. Public Toilets Strategy Review: (Pages 59 - 66)

8. Central Park Ponds: (Pages 67 - 70)

9. Work Programme: (Pages 71 - 74)

10. Action Log: (Pages 75 - 76)

Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel**Wednesday 22 October 2025****PRESENT:**

Councillor Coker, in the Chair.

Councillor Poyser, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allison, Cuddihee, Dingle, P.Nicholson, Penrose and Stevens.

Also in attendance: Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities), Councillor Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport), Andy Sharp (Interim Service Director for Street Scene and Waste), David Irving (Strategic Programme Lead, Housing Standards, Community Connections), Elliot Wearne-Gould (Democratic Advisor), Gary Walbridge (Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities), Jackie Kings (Head of Housing Solutions), Matt Garrett (Service Director, Community Connections), Mike Artherton (Parking, Marine & Garage Manager), Nick Shaw (Public Health Registrar), and Victoria Allen (Chief Executive, PATH).

The meeting started at 2.10 pm and finished at 4.13 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.

9. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Appointment of a Chair and Vice-Chair

Due to the submission of apologies by the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Panel agreed:

1. To appoint councillor Coker as Chair for this particular meeting;
2. To appoint Councillor Poyser as Vice Chair for this particular meeting.

10. Minutes

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

11. Chair's Urgent Business

The Chair welcomed Councillor P. Nicholson to the Committee, who had replaced Councillor Loveridge.

12. **Building Bridges to Opportunity Update**

Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) introduced the Building Bridges to Opportunity update report and discussed:

- a) The Cabinet decision was anticipated for March or June 2026, allowing time for a thorough process rather than a rushed approach;
- b) The framework had grown out of the Child Poverty Working Group's work and aimed to address drivers and impacts of poverty in Plymouth;
- c) A draft framework had been developed using a whole-systems approach, engaging partners across the public sector, other organisations, and communities;
- d) The framework focused on three core aims:
 - I. reducing the risk of falling into poverty;
 - II. enabling people to move out of poverty;
 - III. reducing harm for those living in poverty;
- e) Questions had arisen about why no hard target was set to end poverty in Plymouth; the reasoning was that many factors were outside local control, so the focus was on achievable local actions;
- f) The framework themes included:
 - I. Improving individual outcomes (education, skills, access to benefits and food);
 - II. Maximising community potential (neighbourhood and identity-based communities);
 - III. Optimising infrastructure and environment (green/blue spaces, transport links);
 - IV. Developing an economy that works for everyone;
 - V. Delivering services with communities to meet needs (including healthcare, banking, and postal access);
- g) Principles from engagement included trauma-informed practice, life-course approach, tackling inequalities, asset-based thinking, and upstream prevention;
- h) The framework had been mapped against the Plymouth Plan and aligned with other council strategies;
- i) Work was ongoing to identify outcome measures and metrics, using existing data sources rather than creating new ones;
- j) There was no promise of extra funding; the focus was on optimising current actions and resources;

- k) The approach linked strongly to prevention and upstream work already underway in the council.

Nick Shaw (Public Health Registrar) added:

- l) Engagement highlighted that how actions were delivered was as important as what was done;
- m) The framework would inform service delivery and policy decisions across the system;
- n) Public health would ensure principles were embedded in NHS neighbourhood planning and other strategies.

In response to questions, the Panel discussed:

- o) Concerns about access to banking and NHS services, particularly in deprived wards, and the impact of service withdrawal on communities;
- p) The role of the council in mitigating these impacts, including exploring banking hubs and using libraries as shared spaces;
- q) Transport challenges for outlying communities and the importance of integrated planning;
- r) The need for a strong evidence base to influence national policy and support MPs in lobbying government;
- s) Opportunities for Plymouth to present “oven-ready” projects for government funding;
- t) Advocacy work being undertaken by councillors and officers, including lobbying for consistent increases in Local Housing Allowance and other measures through the LGA and MPs;
- u) The importance of cross-party support and continued advocacy before and after the national budget;
- v) Discussion on abolishing the two-child benefit cap, with reference to Gordon Brown’s proposal to fund this through taxation on online gambling;
- w) Challenges in selecting useful metrics and measures, and the intention to use existing data sources (Economic Strategy, Thrive Plymouth, Culture Strategy, Plan for Homes, Skills Strategy) to avoid creating a research industry;
- x) Plans for a public dashboard to present key indicators and vulnerabilities, alongside confidential data for internal use;
- y) The need for metrics to inform debate and highlight gaps for partnership action.

The Panel agreed:

1. To note the ongoing work as part of the Building Bridges to Opportunity programme;
2. To request that this item be reported back to the Panel before the framework is presented to Cabinet.

13. **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update**

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

- a) The continuing pressure of the housing crisis, particularly at the extreme end of homelessness in the city. The long-term solution was the provision of more permanent and affordable housing through building programmes;
- b) The report highlighted the significant demand on the Housing Solutions team, which managed an active caseload of over 1,000 households at any one time, working closely with partners across the city to maintain temporary accommodation provision and reduce reliance on bed and breakfast placements;
- c) Recent government funding of £868,000 had been announced, to be used over the next 12 months with a strong focus on prevention work and systemic change to reduce reliance on short-term measures;
- d) The importance of trauma-informed and individualised approaches for those experiencing homelessness, including rough sleepers and those in hostels, was stressed as part of a nuanced and complex response.

Jackie Kings (Head of Housing Solutions) added:

- e) Demand for housing continued to grow nationally and locally, requiring creative solutions with partners such as BCHA and PATH to bring additional properties into the system at lower cost to the authority;
- f) Work was ongoing with social housing providers to utilise regeneration properties and deliver interim solutions, alongside strategic planning through the Homelessness Recovery Programme which addressed prevention, recovery, and system support across all cohorts including families, young people, and those with disabilities;
- g) The programme included immediate, medium-term (6–12 months), and long-term actions, recognising that recovery from the current challenges would take at least 10 years.

Victoria Allen (Chief Executive, PATH) added:

- h) Homelessness was a national challenge, and Plymouth partners were working creatively to respond, from street homelessness through to settled housing;
- i) Integration with health services was critical, given the complexity of needs among those presenting, and partnerships with private landlords were being strengthened to improve access to the private rented sector.

In response to questions, the Panel discussed:

- j) Recognition of the efforts of officers and partners in tackling homelessness and the need for government to address barriers to housing delivery, including taxation on brownfield sites and funding for affordable housing;
- k) The importance of long-term investment in public housing and infrastructure, with suggestions for government to increase borrowing for housing and review local housing allowance rates to reflect rental values;
- l) Concerns about scapegoating planning authorities and the need for government to support councils in accelerating housing delivery;
- m) Increasing complexity among those presenting as homeless, including mental health needs and neurodivergence, and the impact of cuts to public services on access to healthcare;
- n) Support for frontline teams, including clinical supervision and integration of health and homelessness services, with new investment enabling recruitment of mental health specialists and occupational therapists;
- o) The significant pressures on staff managing high caseloads and the need for improved facilities and ongoing support;
- p) Trends in homelessness presentations, with the majority from deprived areas and private rented sector tenants affected by Section 21 notices, alongside domestic abuse and family breakdown as leading causes;
- q) Updates on the Royal Building acquisition and subsequent delivery of over 180 temporary accommodation units through external investment and partnerships, with further planning underway for its future use;
- r) Ways in which the public could support homelessness work, including compassion, volunteering, donations to reputable charities (PATH, Shekinah, Plymouth Soup Run), and use of StreetLink for referrals.

The Panel agreed:

- I. To note the report and the progress made in addressing homelessness and rough sleeping pressures;

2. To endorse ongoing actions to address homelessness with compassion, resilience, and impact;
3. To request a future report providing a breakdown of households approaching the Council for housing advice, including geographic and demographic trends;
4. As part of the above report, to receive updates on the implications of the upcoming national budget for housing provision at a future meeting.

14. **City Centre Car Parking**

Councillor John Stephens (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) introduced the City Centre Carparking report and discussed:

- a) The briefing paper provided insights into ongoing efforts and the landscape of city centre parking as Plymouth undergoes significant growth and transformation;
- b) The essential role of car parking services in supporting the delivery of key public services;
- c) Updates on utilisation and the summary outcome of a previous demand and utilisation analysis commissioned from WSP on future growth and demand;
- d) Collaboration with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to develop a detailed master plan for the city centre, assessing the impacts of growth and new homes on the transport network and parking, and informing an integrated transport and parking strategy;
- e) Continued support for public transport viability and events across the city;
- f) Commitment to sustainability and carbon reduction through investment in electric vehicle charging facilities, including updates on EV charger installation and structural assessments of car parks to accommodate heavier electric vehicles;
- g) Customer experience improvements and accessibility initiatives, such as wider parking bays and dedicated spaces for individuals with hidden disabilities.

Andy Sharp (Interim Service Director for Street Scene and Waste) added:

- a) The recommendations sought endorsement for developing an integrated transport and parking strategy, not detailed plans;
- b) The work was linked to a significant opportunity arising from the £4.4 billion defence investment and the creation of 10,000 homes, which would reshape the city centre and waterfront;

- c) External expertise was being commissioned to develop the master plan, and consultation with elected members and the public would be a strong aspect of the process;
- d) The integrated strategy would ensure transport and parking were considered as part of wider redevelopment plans.

Mike Artherton (Parking, Marine & Garage Manager) added:

- e) Car park utilisation trends remained largely consistent with previous reports, with no significant reductions observed;
- f) Some areas were showing growth, and patterns of use reflected the established purpose and visitor types for each car park;
- g) The data included in the report was similar to last year's findings, indicating stability in usage.

In response to questions, the Panel discussed:

- h) Whether lower demand at certain car parks was influenced by public realm improvements and perceptions of disruption due to construction works in the city centre;
- i) Concerns about conflating car parking usage with wider city centre redevelopment and master planning work, and reservations about endorsing a strategy without sufficient detail;
- j) The need for early and meaningful public consultation on master planning principles to avoid perceptions of a "done deal" and ensure genuine engagement;
- k) The scale of proposed redevelopment, including references to media images of high-rise developments, and the importance of understanding potential impacts on existing car parks and retail viability;
- l) The historical context of Plymouth's post-war redevelopment and the need to avoid repeating mistakes by ensuring a vibrant, mixed-use city centre with residential presence;
- m) Officers reiterated that recommendations were for developing an integrated strategy, not approving detailed plans, and confirmed that consultation would be integral;
- n) Members stressed that transport strategy must encompass all modes of travel, including walking, cycling, and public transport, alongside car parking provision;

- o) The importance of cross-panel and whole-council involvement in shaping the redevelopment strategy, recognising that the issue spans housing, transport, environment, and growth;
- p) Agreement that scrutiny should begin with this committee but extend to wider membership and potentially the Scrutiny Management Board to coordinate cross-cutting issues;
- q) Officers confirmed that the Natural Infrastructure and Growth Panel would have a key role given its remit for transport policies and strategies, but acknowledged that housing and delivery aspects also warranted involvement from this committee.

The Panel agreed:

- 1. To note the car parking report for the previous 12 months;
- 2. To refer future scrutiny regarding the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy to the Scrutiny Management Board and Natural Infrastructure and Growth Scrutiny Panel, as appropriate.

15. **Renters Rights Bill**

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

- a) The Renters' Rights Bill represented a major reform of the private rented sector, replacing the previous Renters Reform Bill with only minor wording changes;
- b) The Bill was structured in four parts, with Parts 1 and 4 expected to be implemented first within six months to two years, and Parts 2 and 3 phased in over up to ten years;
- c) Key changes included tenancy reform, abolition of Section 21 evictions, introduction of rent controls, a ban on rental bidding, protection against discriminatory practices, and new grounds for possession that were fairer for all parties;
- d) Enhanced enforcement powers for local authorities were proposed, including civil penalties of up to £7,000 for minor offences and up to £40,000 for serious or repeat non-compliance;
- e) The Bill would introduce a new private rented sector database and landlord ombudsman, extend the Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law to the private sector, and set clear expectations for property safety and quality;
- f) Plymouth City Council had taken a proactive approach, completing a legislative gap analysis, mapping stakeholders, reviewing policies, and establishing a Strategic Programme Lead post to coordinate delivery;

- g) The Council was participating in national and regional workshops, including co-chairing the South West Operational Delivery Forum (Operation Jigsaw), and had begun pilot testing IT systems and developing training programmes;
- h) Challenges remained, including staffing levels falling short of what would be required, uncertainty around new burdens funding, and potential IT system upgrades to meet future reporting requirements;
- i) Despite these pressures, the Council was committed to delivering a robust, fair, and effective implementation that protected tenants, supported responsible landlords, and strengthened public confidence in enforcement;
- j) Good landlords should have nothing to fear from enforcement, but criminal landlords would face tougher action under the new powers.

David Irving (Strategic Programme Lead, Housing Standards) added:

- k) The Bill was already having an impact on the market, with landlords reacting to anticipated changes despite not knowing all details;
- l) National figures indicated that approximately 19% of private rented sector landlords were selling up and leaving the market, which could affect Plymouth, although good landlords were expected to remain.

In response to questions, the Panel discussed:

- m) Support for provisions allowing tenants to request permission to keep pets, noting the positive impact on wellbeing and the importance for those who had experienced long-term homelessness, where pets were often key companions;
- n) The wider implications of pet ownership rights, which would extend beyond the private rented sector to affordable housing, affecting over half of Plymouth's population;
- o) Timeframes for implementation, with Royal Assent potentially within two to three weeks if parliamentary sticking points were resolved, followed by a six-month window before enforcement duties commenced;
- p) The database was expected to be operational approximately two years after Royal Assent, with preparatory work already underway, including pilot registration of landlords and engagement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on communications;
- q) The Council anticipated incremental updates to policies such as HMO licensing, electrical safety, and civil penalties, with executive decisions likely within the next month to enable readiness;

- r) The importance of minimising the risk of judicial review during implementation and the Council's involvement in national pilots to gain early experience;
- s) The commitment to keep members informed through email updates and briefings, with further scrutiny if major new policies were required.

The Panel agreed:

- 1. To note the report and the proactive steps taken to prepare for implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill;
- 2. To receive ongoing updates on progress, including any significant policy changes or implications for enforcement.

16. **Action Log**

The Panel agreed to note the progress of the action log.

17. **Work Programme**

The Panel agreed to request the following items be added to the work programme:

- 1. Central Park Ponds Project Update;
- 2. Plymouth Active Leisure (pre-decision);
- 3. Public Toilet's Strategy Review;
- 4. Allotments.

Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	10 December 2025
Title of Report:	PAL Contract Extension
Lead Member:	Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure and HR and OD)
Lead Strategic Director:	Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health)
Author:	Liz Slater / Kerry Malton
Contact Email:	liz.slater@plymouth.gov.uk kerry.malton@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	N/A
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

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

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

The report recommends extending PAL's existing contract beyond its current end date of March 2032 and providing further financial investment to support its ambitious new strategic plan. This plan envisions a £200 million investment in sport and physical activity across Plymouth over the next 20 years, generating greater social value, improved health outcomes, and new income streams for PCC.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. The Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the proposals to strengthen Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL) financial sustainability, enabling PAL to enhance service provision specifically in relation to health improvement outcomes, whilst ensuring appropriate oversight and risk management by the Council;
2. Scrutiny is asked to review, comment and endorse option 4.5 (below) to retain the services of Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL), noting that in doing so:

- I. To provide further working capital support to PAL, and to agree revised repayment terms for existing loans, as detailed in the 'resource implications' section below;
- II. To extend the existing 10-year contract with PAL (current end of term March 2032), with a break-clause at the point where all working capital loans are estimated to be repaid, noting that the revised contract will contain a number of performance indicators and other provisions to mitigate the Council's financial risk and ensure the delivery of outcomes;
- III. Note that to underpin the growth in income required to repay working capital loans, PAL will bring forward a number of capital investment projects which will be subject to approval through the Council's Capital Programme procedures and governance.

Alternative options considered and rejected

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

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

4.3 Bring the Service Fully In-House -

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

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

4.5 Retention of PAL – Retaining PAL avoids costs and disruption linked to contract termination and procurement and an opportunity to recover debt. Retaining PAL ensures service continuity and political alignment but places risks with PCC. It helps with strong social value impact. There may potentially be higher costs than larger operators but these are unknown unless a full market appraisal is undertaken.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

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

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

HEA1: Addressing health inequalities and improving health literacy

HEA2: Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people, and families

HEA3: Supporting adults with health and social care needs

HEA4: Playing an active role in the community

HEA5: Delivering strong and safe communities and good-quality neighbourhoods

HEA7: Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment

INT1: Implementing Britain's Ocean City

INT5: Celebrating Plymouth's sporting excellence

INT8: Celebrating diverse communities

GRO2: Developing, attracting, and retaining a highly skilled and adaptable workforce

GRO5: Enhancing Plymouth's sporting facilities

GRO7: Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

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

There are more significant implications for the Council's resources arising from the working capital support provided to date, and the proposal to provide further working capital support as part of a contract extension. On the one hand, extending the contract will improve PAL's capacity to grow the business and repay working capital loans (totalling c. £1.6m) owed to the Council to date. On the other hand, further working capital support (of around £0.7m - £0.9m) will be required, alongside capital investment to drive business growth. PCC will consider the detailed terms of additional loan requests from PAL formally at a Cabinet meeting in the new year; The Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the implications and provide any comment.

Financial Risks

Detailed financial modelling indicates that business growth will provide sufficient capacity to repay legacy debt and additional loans over an extended contract term. Whilst there is uncertainty and risk in the modelling, a prudent approach has been taken throughout, with a number of growth opportunities excluded from financial modelling (representing 'upside risk'). The Council's finance team will continue to review the detail of financial modelling, conducting sensitivity analysis which will be presented to Cabinet decision makers. At this stage, the Scrutiny panel is asked to note the following key mitigations:

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

These financial risks need to be considered in the context of the financial risks to PCC of a 'do nothing' option. Not extending the contract or providing further working capital support would leave PAL in a

vulnerable financial position. This in turn places Plymouth's leisure services and key leisure assets at risk; PCC would also face a higher likelihood of PAL defaulting on existing working capital loans.

Legal Implications

A deed of variation to the existing leisure management contract and new leases will be required. As PAL is a Teckal company there are no procurement issues arising and an extension to the existing contract is permitted. Subsidy control must be considered in connection with any loans to PAL.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

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

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

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

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

Background Papers:

For more information on PAL please visit:

[PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE LIMITED overview - Find and update company information - GOV.UK](#)
[Plymouth Active - Leisure Centers Near You](#)

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 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing Report – PAL							

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 1 2A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

Fin	OW. 25.26. 096	Leg	LS/00 0010 75/1/ AC/1/ 12/25	Mon Off	N/A	HR	N/A	Assets	N/A	Strat Proc	N/A
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 01/12/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Sue Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure & HR, and OD) Date approved: 01/12/2025											

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PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE CONTRACT EXTENSION

(Briefing Paper)



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Being physically active is key to living a long, healthier, happier and more independent life. Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd (PAL) was set up to be a city leader in this space, being well placed to support the residents of Plymouth to get and stay active to reduce their risk of lifestyle related diseases including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dementia. PAL was created in 2022 replacing the previous provider Everyone Active. Plymouth City Council (PCC) established PAL quickly to ensure that the residents of Plymouth had a physical activity offer and to support PCC's own corporate agendas including addressing inactivity and other health outcomes.
- PAL has had a strong 12 months seeing improvements across its strategic and operational business functions and has seen its financial position improve year-on-year. PAL also provides a significant social value contribution to the City through increased participation and broader community engagement. PAL is now seeking a long-term platform to make significant new investments across its sites so as to drive better outcomes linked to its new strategic plan. This will allow PAL to deal with its startup costs, reduce its PCC management fee, and invest in facilities management. This report sets out the recommendation to extend the existing contract and provide further financial investment in PAL to support its ambitious new strategic plan to grow and provide a £200m investment into sport and activity into the City over the next 20 years and to provide an increase in social value, outcomes and new income for PCC.
- Alternative options have been considered and are detailed in this report. The Scrutiny panel is asked to note PALs' success to date, to endorse its new strategic plan and to consider an extension to the existing PAL contract, which is currently due to conclude in March 2032. Extending the contract will enable PAL to repay outstanding loan debts over a longer period, provide operational stability, and allow PAL to continue to align its services with PCC's wider corporate priorities and those priorities of the City. This approach supports the reimagining of local public sector leisure services focused on active wellbeing, while maintaining income growth and fulfilling financial obligations to PCC.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. The Thrive Programme

- The Thrive programme in Plymouth was launched in 2014 to address health inequalities in Plymouth with an initial focus on 4-4-54 construct to address four health behaviours (poor diet, lack of physical activity, tobacco use and excess alcohol consumption), contribute to four diseases (coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer and respiratory disease), responsible for 54% of deaths in Plymouth. We also know that mental health indicators have worsened over time, as has obesity, and Plymouth shows high levels of physical inactivity. Our ageing population also presents a likely increased demand for services such as dementia care. Wider issues around community cohesion, safety, housing and poverty remain a challenge for some communities.
- Being physically active can improve all aspects of individual wellbeing and is protective against excess weight, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. It also improves mental health, delays the onset of dementia, and can help prevent falls and fractures. The NHS recommends 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week for adults, and 60 minutes of physical activity per day for children aged 5-18 years. The estimated cost of physical inactivity to the UK is £7.4 billion annually, including £0.9 billion to the NHS. Physical activity levels are known to vary with deprivation, with those in lower socio-economic groups being less likely to meet recommended amounts of activity. 18.4% of Plymouth adults do less than 30 minutes exercise per week; nationally 24% of men and 42% of women are not active enough for good health and 1 in 6 UK deaths are associated with lack of physical activity.
- Plymouth is an ambitious city when it comes to improving the health and wellbeing of its residents, linked to the Thrive and Active to Thrive Programmes. PAL plays a key role in the City to support the residents of Plymouth to improve and maintain their own health and wellbeing to safeguard their health now and into the future. PAL is well placed to provide key opportunities to all our residents to give them access to assets and expertise to help them achieve happier, healthier lives in which they can maintain their independence for longer.

2.2. The Creation of Plymouth Active Leisure

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

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

2.3. Overview of PAL Progression since 2022

- PAL has shown resilience and been proactive in progressing the business since its startup, despite challenging circumstances. The back of house systems have seen improvements including financial reporting and other business critical systems that were failing or not set up correctly. Business KPIs has shown positive progress, for example, membership numbers and income have grown significantly and key projects at the Life Centre (gym) and Tinside (cafe and events space) have been delivered. There have been improvements and investment in the staff to help create a commercial and city focused team who are proud to work for the company. PAL has integrated across professional communities of the City and nationally with key collaborations created with not only PCC departments but also Active Devon, YMCA Plymouth, the NHS, Wolesley Trust, the Royal Navy and more. Nationally PAL has put Plymouth on the map with impressive work with the Local Government Association, UK Active and Swim England, with whom PAL and PCC are about to sign an MOU that puts focus on aquatics in Britain's Ocean City. Plymouth will be the first city to ever sign an MOU like this with Swim England. PAL's Active Lifestyles team was created when PCC's Sports Development Team transferred into PAL in April 2024 giving them a renewed purpose to tackle inequalities and inactivity across the City. Work has been done to upskill this team and they now do impactful work on programmes such as Parkinsons, diabetes, safe cycling, Fit and Fed, SEND, children with excessive weight, mental health and an innovative programme working with Derriford Hospital that has seen once of their community physiotherapy clinics moving into the Life Centre permanently. The jewel in the crown for PAL is the Active Referral scheme that was launched in October 2024 which offers an 8-week free targeted session to those most in need. PAL is scheduled to begin working with Livewell to target residents who are on waiting lists for tier three weight management programmes where there is a pressure of around 2000 on a waiting list and an approximate two year wait for treatment. PAL has proven that it is able to significantly support health services to reduce pressure on them and the healthcare system. PAL has also been able to host events

such as the National Junior Diving championships, with Plymouth Diving still being held in high regard nationally with currently one athlete on course to represent GB at the next Olympics.

- PAL continues to be ambitious with a team structure and Board that shares the same vision. PAL is values driven but will act commercially and with the best interests of the City and its residents at its heart. Some highlights of PALs journey are noted in the table below and detailed in PALs annual report (See appendix 2):

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

3.1. Drivers for Change

- PAL has made a significant impact in a very short time. The initial period of the contract was dominated by the startup phase and dealing with Covid recovery. In the past 24 months the PAL Board, working closely with PCC, has driven a full strategic review of the business and developed a new ambitious strategic plan and new financial model. To deliver the full impact of a new strategic plan, PAL has requested an extended contract for the following reasons.
- The current contract term does not take account of the time needed for handover and start up and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic took longer for the sector to recover from and remains an issue. Coupled with the impact of the Ukraine war on utility costs and the rapid rise in the national minimum wage, these factors mean that additional time is needed for PAL to repay its startup costs - a longer term is required for business cases for investment to allow time for a sufficient payback period. It is likely that, with time and investment, a longer-term contract could generate income and lower net costs for PCC over time.
- Investment in buildings and facilities is required given the age of the assets; a longer-term contract will enable a strategic asset management approach to be taken in partnership between PCC and PAL, with the opportunity to utilise returns on investment to fund improved asset management.
- A longer contract, aligned with the new strategic plan, offers an opportunity for long-term transformation and would enable a significant investment in sports and physical activity for the City.
- It is proposed that PCC extend the contract term. PAL has demonstrated competence and resilience in addressing legacy issues inherited from the previous operator and has delivered improved financial and operational performance over the past two years. Social value outcomes continue to strengthen, with Sport England data confirming a high return on investment for every pound spent. The extension of contract time will enable PAL to repay their startup costs over a longer period and provide assurance that they can continue to trade, enabling them to provide city-focused exciting facilities that align with PCC's wider prevention agendas and opportunities that are centered on active wellbeing, whilst maintaining income growth.

3.2 The New Vision for PAL

- Over the past 12 months, there has been a resetting of the PAL Board, including a new Board Chair and PCC Client lead, two new Board directors and the introduction of two high profile leisure industry non-executive directors. The executive team has also been strengthened with new appointments made to deliver a high-class service. Considerable time has been taken to

ensure that the business plan is robust; a new strategic vision has been established, and financial planning has been done to set PAL on the right path to success for the future.

- The strategic plan is as follows (see appendix I for plan on a page):

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

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

The strategic aims are:

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

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

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

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

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

3.3 Engagement with Consultancy (Strategic Leisure)

- In summer 2025, PCC engaged with an external leisure consultancy company (Strategic Leisure) to assess the proposed business plan for PAL. A summary of their findings is detailed below (the full report is provided in appendix 3):
- When PAL was established in 2022 as a LATCO - the original rationale was based on an options appraisal that suggested a modest net benefit of £12,000 over five years, coupled with significant market uncertainty at the time. In practice, PAL was implemented quickly,

with high start-up costs of around £500,000 and a number of operational considerations overlooked during handover.

- Since its inception, PAL has delivered a range of positive outcomes. These include the opening of a new gym at the Life Centre, increased participation in fitness and aquatics, integration of Active Lifestyles programmes, and a strong community offer. Social value has been quantified by Sport England at £11.7 million, and the agency model has generated VAT savings. However, PAL has also faced challenges: projected savings have not materialized; net costs to the Council have been higher than expected (between £400,000 and £750,000 per annum above projections), and cash flow difficulties have persisted. Market penetration remains limited, with the fitness market share estimated at just 1.9%.
- PAL has requested a long-term contract extension of 20–25 years. This represents a significant commitment for PCC, particularly given that leisure is a non-statutory service. Alternatives have been considered: ceasing the service is politically unrealistic; bringing operations fully in-house would be financially unviable; and establishing an independent trust would replicate existing issues with less PCC control. Outsourcing the contract could deliver economies of scale, access to capital, and some risk transfer, but would involve procurement costs, leave PCC responsible for building liabilities, and prevent recovery of existing losses.

4. OVERVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

<p>Option 1. Cease the Service</p> <p>As leisure provision is discretionary, PCC is not legally required to provide these services. However, the service delivered by PAL is critical to sustaining participation in physical activity and generates significant social value, including measurable socio-economic benefits. It also contributes directly to corporate objectives. Ceasing the service would risk displacement of participation and jeopardize long-term grant funding from Sport England and other bodies which was predicated on service delivery a 21-year term (commencement 2011). This option is not considered tenable.</p>	<p>Option 2. Establish a Fully Independent Trust</p> <p>Creating an independent charitable trust to operate leisure facilities was considered primarily for potential tax savings. However, recent HMRC changes to VAT rules have reduced the financial viability of this model. Since COVID-19, few new trusts have been established, and several existing trusts have experienced financial instability. Transferring operations to a new trust would not resolve current challenges; it would replicate existing issues with reduced PCC control and increased risk. This option is not likely to be viable.</p>
<p>Option 3. Bring the Service Fully In-House</p> <p>Returning the service to full PCC control would</p>	<p>Option 4. Outsource the Contract (like the previous arrangement)</p>

incur substantial additional costs, including NNDR liabilities and enhanced staff terms and pension obligations. Based on market knowledge and an assessment of the situation in Plymouth - independent advice taken has highlighted that there are only two viable options for PCC to consider. **This option is not likely to be viable.**

Advantages and disadvantages are varied. There would be economies of scale and supply chain benefits – Large operators manage multiple local authority contracts and can reduce overheads, access specialist staff, and potentially secure cheaper goods and services such as utilities (though this is not guaranteed). There are national brands – some operators offer recognised health and fitness products, enabling customers to access facilities in other areas, though this may have limited benefit in the West Country. Market recovery – the public sector leisure management market has recovered from COVID-19, unlike in 2021. There is the opportunity to access capital – commercial operators may invest their own capital, but only in schemes delivering a positive financial return during the contract. Capital costs would be built into the financial bid.

Disadvantages of outsourcing are also noted. There would be costs and disruption – breaking the current contract and running a procurement exercise would cost around £200k and take approximately 12 months for a medium-term contract (10+ years) with social value targets and maintenance profiling. There would be no ability to recover debt – PAL is indebted to PCC, and start-up costs would be lost if PAL ceases to exist. There is a possible impact from Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – operators may seek additional assurances

	<p>around contract term due to LGR. There would still be building liabilities – PCC would still retain responsibility for major lifecycle maintenance, which many operators would avoid. At the moment, PAL aligns with the policy making of PCC - large operators with national brands are unlikely to fully align with PCC policies or adapt quickly to new priorities without formal contract changes/costs. There is not enough time – there is not enough time to complete a full procurement before February 2026.</p> <p>The outsourcing option is not recommended at this stage but may be revisited at a future contract break point.</p>
<p>Option 5. Retain the Services of PAL (Recommended).</p> <p>Advantages of retaining the service of PAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less disruption – PAL has shown it can manage the business and overcome challenges, with income and usage trending positively. PCC has already undergone one costly transition; another would incur further expense, significant officer and member time, and disrupt service users. • Political support – the current administration values PAL’s role in achieving corporate objectives and improving quality of life. PAL operates as an extension of PCC, and this support is essential for the partnership to succeed. • Alignment with PCC priorities – PAL was created to deliver PCC’s leisure agenda and corporate objectives. As an arms-length entity, its aims align closely with PCC, whereas outsourcing may not guarantee full alignment to PCC policies. • Social value outcomes continue to strengthen, with Sport England data confirming a high return on investment for every pound spent. • Debt repayment – retaining PAL allows for a long-term approach to repaying existing debt and any additional funding provided to it by PCC. <p>Disadvantages of retaining PAL</p>	

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

For the reasons given above, retaining PAL is recommended.

- Strategic Leisure advised that, on balance, PCC should retain PAL, extend the contract, and agree the requested working capital support loan, see below. Two contractual options are proposed: either confirming the current contract period to 2032 with an option to extend to 2042 or granting a 10-year extension to 2042 with a break clause in 2032. In either case, any extension and loan support should be conditional on quantified and agreed KPIs. These should cover financial performance (income, expenditure, net cost, cash flow, loan repayment), social value (usage by target groups, contribution to health outcomes), and operational delivery (programme development, staff cost ratios, membership metrics).
- PAL has delivered tangible community benefits but remains financially fragile. PCC is asked to commit to a long-term extension and additional loan support, recognizing both the risks and the potential for stabilization and improvement under a more disciplined contractual framework.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- The proposed extension of the current contract offers opportunities for growth and service enhancement, while also presenting financial risks that require robust mitigation. Importantly, PAL has demonstrated an improving financial position, with modelling indicating that this trend will continue under the proposed extension.
- However, PAL will require ongoing support from PCC to recover from a working capital deficit built in the early years of the current contract, which was an impact of COVID and start-up costs. Contract extension would require PCC to commit to providing additional working capital support through an additional loan. Ensuring that all working capital loans are repaid through growth in income will be key to mitigating financial risk. This will be achieved through a robust review of business cases for income generation, the introduction of a KPI framework, and the use of a break clause or similar to provide an opportunity for PCC to review, as lender and parent company, the financial position of PAL across the medium term.

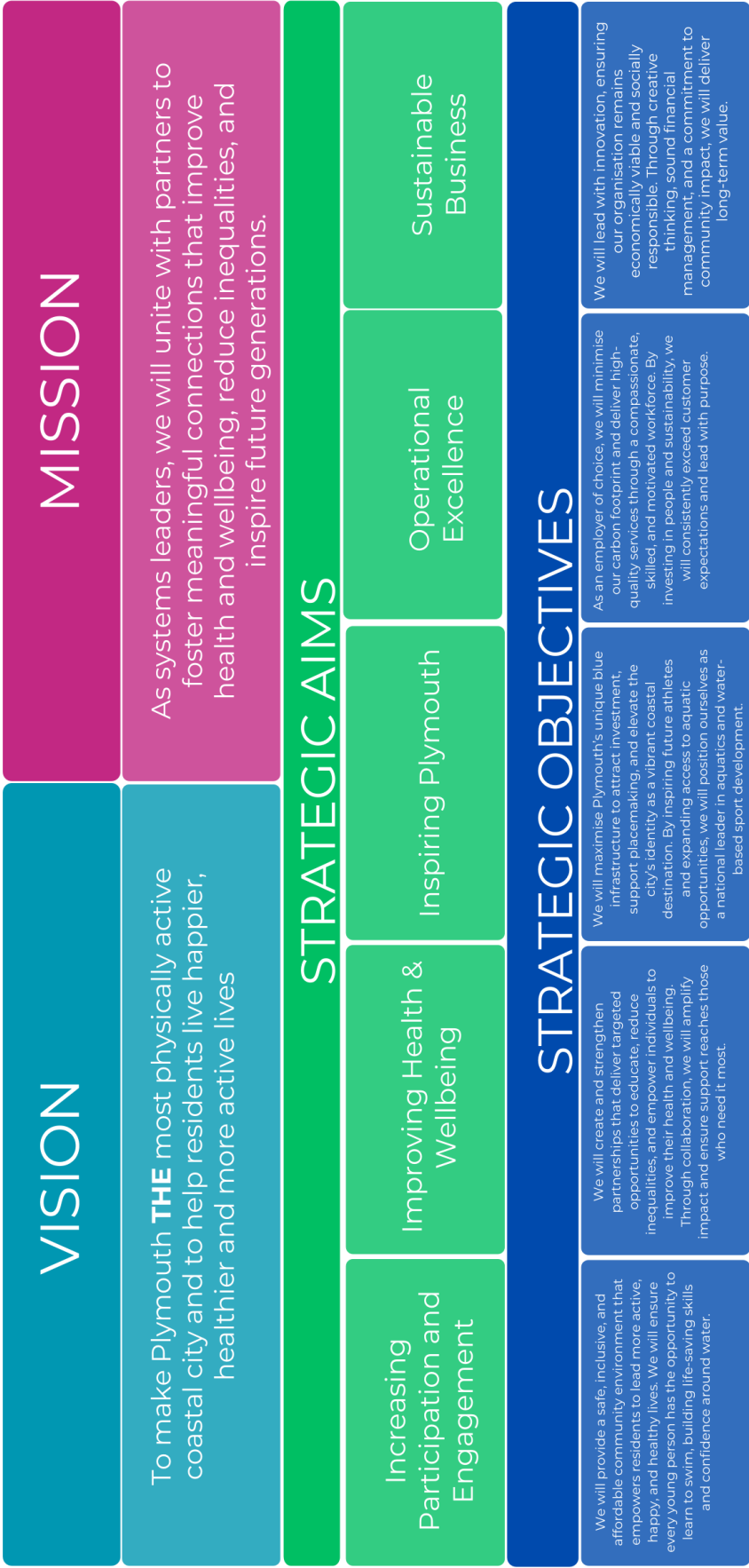
- The financial model underpinning the proposed extension is based on prudent assumptions, including conservative estimates for income growth. It incorporates opportunities to diversify income streams, and there are additional potential projects in the pipeline that are not factored into the modelling giving prospects for future growth.
- As part of the engagement with external consultants; Strategic Leisure reviewed the underlying assumptions made in the modelling and business plan, commenting that it is 'comprehensive and credible' and the assumptions regarding income and expenditure are 'realistic and supportable'. However, it is important to acknowledge that these assumptions carry inherent risk, and actual performance could diverge from the financial modelling.
- The Scrutiny panel is being engaged at a formative stage of the contract extension proposal. Over the coming weeks the financial modelling and risk analysis, including further sensitivity analysis, will be refined and incorporated into final proposals to Cabinet.

6. GOVERNANCE

- PAL has an established Board, chaired by the Service Director of Economic Development. The Board is made up of members that hold formal director positions including the Head of Procurement, Director of communities, a Public Health Consultant and two non-executive directors. The sole shareholder (the client) is PCC and is represented by the Director of Public Health.
- The recommendation to support the future of PAL will be through the Cabinet of PCC, the timeline for governance and oversight of the decision-making process as outlined below:
 - PCC Corporate Management Team – approval to proceed given 25 November 2025
 - Scrutiny Panel – 10 December 2025
 - Capital Programme Oversight Board – 7th January 2026
 - Cabinet – 9th February 2026

Appendix I – PAL Strategic Plan on a page

STRATEGY ON PAGE



Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	10 December 2025
Title of Report:	Commemorations and Celebrations – PCC Policy
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)
Lead Strategic Director:	Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)
Author:	Caroline Marr, Senior Policy Advisor
Contact Email:	Caroline.marr@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	C&C Policy 20251210
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendations and Reasons

1. That the Scrutiny Panel review and provide feedback on the draft Policy.
Reason: To ensure this Policy captures a wide range of views so that it is clear, fair and reflective of our civic values.

Alternative options considered and rejected

1. To not review and produce a new Policy covering the different ways the Council Commemorates and Celebrates significant days or events.
Rejected: The previous Flags protocol was produced in 2016 and had limited use. It did not provide the clarity or process needed to help make decisions when requests were made. Several requests are made by individuals or communities throughout the year – there is currently no consistent approach or process to follow which could lead to unfairness in the decision-making process.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The approach and criteria set out in the Policy fully reflects the Council's values of democracy, responsibility, fairness and co-operation. In addition, one of the key themes running through the Plymouth Plan is the ambition to be a Welcoming City where every citizen feels safe and every person who lives in or visits the city will be treated fairly and with respect. Flying flags or lighting buildings is one way in which the Council commemorates significant events or celebrates the diversity of our city.

It is important that we do this in a consistent, fair and meaningfully full way; one which supports our duty to foster and promote community cohesion.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

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

Financial Risks

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

Legal Implications

The Policy will assist the Council to continue to meet its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

There are no significant implications.

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

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

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Commemorations and Celebrations – PCC Policy DRAFT V3							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

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

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tracey Lee											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 01/12/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: <i>Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities)</i> Date approved: 01/12/2025											

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COMMEMORATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS - PCC POLICY

Chief Executive Department – DRAFT Document



PURPOSE

The Council commemorates or celebrates a significant number of special days every year. Some are associated with well-established events in the Civic calendar. Others are days, weeks or even months designated by organisations and are aimed at stimulating public awareness.

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

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

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

PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

1. FLAGS

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

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

1.3 The government guidance covers the following areas and lists pre-approved flags:

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

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

- Any country's national flag, civil ensign or civil air ensign
- The flag of the Commonwealth, the United Nations or any other international organisation of which the United Kingdom is a member
- A flag of any island, county, district, borough, burgh, parish, city, town or village within the United Kingdom
- The flag of Saint David
- The flag of Saint Patrick
- The flag of any administrative area within any country outside the United Kingdom
- Any flag of His Majesty's forces
- The Armed Forces Day flag

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

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

1.4 The Council respects everyone's individual liberty to fly their flags on their own property. Any flag not identified or covered in list 1 or 2 above requires express consent from the local planning authority before it can be flown.

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

1.6 The Council reserves the right to take enforcement action on anyone raising, flying or painting flags on other people's property, including Council property (buildings and street furniture), in line with Government guidance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.17 Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council consider approving requests for raising guest flags that do not adhere to points a & b in Section 1.16 – this includes national flags of other countries. See section 4 for criteria and process in relation to receiving requests.

1.18 The Council owns and maintains several flag poles across the city. Annex 1 of this Policy lists all Council owned flag poles and their associated flags where relevant. Council owned flag poles are maintained in accordance with best practice and appropriate records retained by Facilities Management 1.19 Council owned flags will be kept at the Council House under the care of the Lord Mayors Office and will be checked to ensure that they are in good repair and are unsoiled. An audit will be undertaken annually to ensure the list of council owned flags is up to date, that all flags are in good condition and that they are being stored appropriately.

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

2. LIGHTING COUNCIL BUILDINGS

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

2.2 In addition to the criteria set out in Section 4, the following specific criteria will be applied when considering requests for lighting, ensuring decisions are fair, consistent, and aligned with the Council's values.

2.3 Lighting may be approved for:

- National days and awareness events featured in the Council's Equalities Calendar (e.g., Pride, International Women's Day, Black History Month).
- National celebrations (e.g., England winning a major sporting event such as the Football World Cup).
- Local civic events or local commemorations (e.g., Plymouth Armed Forces Day, Mayflower commemorations).
- Royal or State Occasions (e.g., Coronations, Jubilees, periods of mourning).
- Charitable or community Campaigns where there is a strong local connection and alignment with Council priorities.

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

3. COMMEMORATION

3.1 The Council will observe:

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

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

4. RECEIVING REQUESTS AND CRITERIA

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 Process for submitting and reviewing requests:

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

5. GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANNEX I – Council Flag Poles

Location	No.	Purpose/Notes
Civic Flagpoles		
Council House car park	1	Permanently allocated to fly the City of Plymouth Flag. Guest flag may be flown with approval
Council House roof	1	Not currently in use for safety reasons. Permanently allocated to fly Union flag once replaced (due end 2025)
Plymouth Civic Square outside the Guildhall	3	Permanently allocated to fly Union flag, Cross of St George and the Council flag. Centre flagpole is known as Drake's Drum. Guest flags can be flown alongside the Union Flag
The Mayflower Steps	2	Permanently allocated to fly the Union Flag and the national flag of the United States of America in recognition of the Pilgrim Fathers
Elliot Terrace	1	Official Guest is in residence
The Box	1	Not currently in use due to safety reasons
Other Council Flagpoles		
The Hoe	18	Display national, regional and local flags, awards flags, Armed Forces flags and flags associated with events taking place on the Hoe. The list varies depending on the summer events programme. List agreed on annual basis. Flags flown typically from Easter to mid-September
The Belvedere	1	Permanently allocated to fly Union flag. Falkland Flag is flown on the Anniversary June
The Hoe front garden	1	Permanently allocated to fly the Green Flag award
Armada Way	8	Permanently allocated to fly Union flag
Ballard House	1	
Parks and gardens		A variety of venues across the city that carry the flag of the Green Flag Award Scheme
Saltash Passage	2	Union Flag/USA related to D-Day memorial
Tamar Bridge	2	Union Flag

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

Flag	Day	Date*	Note
Union Flag	Permanently allocated		See Appendix I for designated days for Flying the Union Flag (2026)
St George's Cross	Permanently allocated		
City of Plymouth Flag	Permanently allocated		Lord Mayor's Choosing and Council AGM
Council Flag	Permanently allocated		
Devon Flag	Permanently allocated		
Britain's Ocean City Flag	Summer Events programme	Easter – Mid-Sept.	Plymouth Hoe Other flags flown on Hoe flagpoles including approved guest flags over the summer period – this is agreed in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder
USA National flag	Permanent in recognition of the Pilgrim Fathers		Mayflower steps Saltash Passage
Holocaust Memorial Day Flag	Holocaust Memorial Day	27 January	Consent required
Commonwealth Flag	Commonwealth Day	March	
Armed Forces Day Flag	Armed Forces Day	June	
Flag of the Falkland Islands	Falklands Day	June	Belvedere
The Red Ensign	Merchant Navy Day	03 September	
The Rainbow Flag and Progress Pride Flag	LGBT+ History Month International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia Pride month	February May June	Progress Pride Flag requires consent

Gdynia Flag	50th Anniversary - Plymouth & Gdynia Twinning	2026	Consent required. Key anniversaries only. Plymouth twinned with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brest in France, since 1963. • San Sebastián in Spain, since 1990. • Gdynia in Poland, since 1976. Plymouth, Massachusetts, since 2001.
Trans Flag	International Transgender Day of Visibility Trans Awareness Week Trans Day of Remembrance	31 March November 20 November	Consent required

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

ANNEX 3 - Approved list for lighting building for commemoration/celebration days

Note: At the time of approval Smeaton's Tower is the only building available to be lit.

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

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

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

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

Please submit at least 2 months before the requested date.

1. Requester Details

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

2. Type of request

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

3. Flag Details

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

4. Lighting building details

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

5. Book or condolence/Moment of Silence details

- **Name or request:**
- **Purpose/significance of commemoration:**
- **Date(s) requested for commemoration:**

6. Event details

- **Name of celebration/commemoration:**
- **Brief description of event, including represented community if applicable:**
- **Is this linked to a significant anniversary or commemoration?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide details:

7. Compliance & Permissions

- **Does the flag comply with Government guidance?**
- **Is the flag party-political?**
- **Does the flag convey any language or symbols that could cause offense?**
- **Will you provide a suitable, well-maintained flag if required?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Community Impact

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

9. Financial Considerations

- **Are you aware that approved requests may incur a charge?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

Declaration

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


Signature:

Date:

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – COMMEMORATIONS & CELEBRATIONS POLICY

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

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

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

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

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

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

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
Article 10 – Freedom of Expression	<p>No implications.</p> <p>The Policy does not prevent freedom of expression by flag flying on personal property. The Council respects everyone's individual liberty to fly their flags on their own property. If a flag is flown that does not have express consent for either the flag itself or</p>	N/A	N/A

	from the land or asset owner, it may be subject to enforcement action in line with relevant Planning legislation.		
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SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

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

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision is made in consultation with the Leader of the Council• Decision is communicated
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Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	10 December 2025
Title of Report:	Public Toilets in Plymouth – Briefing Report
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development, and Communities)
Lead Strategic Director:	Si Bellamy (Chief Operating Officer)
Author:	Ann Thorp
Contact Email:	Ann.thorp@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	AT 24.11.2025
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report sets out the principles that will be used to inform public toilet provision in the City and will guide the next steps in relation to this element of the development of our Strategic Asset Management Plan.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. Members of the Housing and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the principles we are proposing to use and embed.

To meet the Council's priorities, toilet provision needs to link to key areas of focus and the associated locations across the City as follows:

- Good transport links are key to supporting a vibrant economy and helping to support those working in the City have a choice about how they travel to and from their workplace – public toilet provision should be available at key transport interchanges.
- Supporting the tourist industry by being welcoming and providing a clean and tidy city – public toilets should be available in areas of high tourist footfall.
- Encouraging residents and visitors to utilise the green spaces and the foreshore to promote health and well-being therefore reducing health inequalities – public toilets should be available in heavily used green/blue spaces.

To ensure that the provision of toilets is suitable and based on the above, the following principles should be considered:

- Any decision taken in respect of how the corporate estate is managed, linked to the asset management plan and future investment in the City, should consider if access to a public toilet facility is required.

- Council priorities, such as those above should be taken into account during the decision-making process.
- How future provision is funded. If grants or financial support are available as part of the investment into the City and the lifetime costs of any provision taken into consideration
- Partnership working should be developed to ensure that toilet facilities that are available to the public within the City are promoted.
- Council managed public toilets should be reviewed to ensure that they offer value for money and consideration given to future provision as buildings reach end of life or if there is substantial change in the local area.

Alternative options considered and rejected

As this is a briefing paper to guide the next steps for the public toilet provision within the Strategic Asset Management Strategy, there are no direct implications at this time on this report and therefore no other alternative options have been considered.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Providing Quality Public Services;
Spending Money Wisely.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

As this is a briefing paper to guide the next steps for the public toilet provision within the Strategic Asset Management Strategy there are no direct implications at this time in this report.

Financial Risks

The average annual running costs for repairs, maintenance, utilities and cleaning for the current public toilet facilities is £353,402.03 of which on average £48,906.45 is generated from charges for usage. Depending on the Strategic Asset Management Plan around future public toilet provision, the financial commitment to public toilet provision may increase if additional toilets are required.

Legal Implications

Public toilets are not a statutory function and therefore there are no legal implications on the principles proposed.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

As this paper will not make a change to the current public toilet provision there will be no impact on the current 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.*

As this is a briefing paper to guide the next steps for the public toilet provision within the Strategic Asset Management Strategy, there are no direct implications at this time in this report

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

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

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report title							

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)						
	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.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
None							

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: Chris Squire											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 01/12/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Chirs Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities)											
Date approved: 01/12/2025											

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**PUBLIC TOILETS IN PLYMOUTH - BRIEFING
REPORT**
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT - NOVEMBER 2025



Purpose of report

This report sets out the principles that will be used to inform the provision of public toilets in the City and will guide the next steps in relation to this element of the development of our Strategic Asset Management Plan.

Members of the Housing and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the principles we are proposing to use and embed.

Background

Plymouth City Council provides 22 public toilets at various locations across the City. The average annual running costs for repairs, maintenance, utilities and cleaning for these facilities is £353,402.03 of which on average £48,906.45 is generated from charges for usage. Providing public toilets is not a statutory function, however the Council recognises that to deliver its mission; to make Plymouth a great place to live, work and visit, facilitating access to toilets is key.

To inform how the public toilet provision is managed the Council needs a clear approach that sets out the principles for decision making.

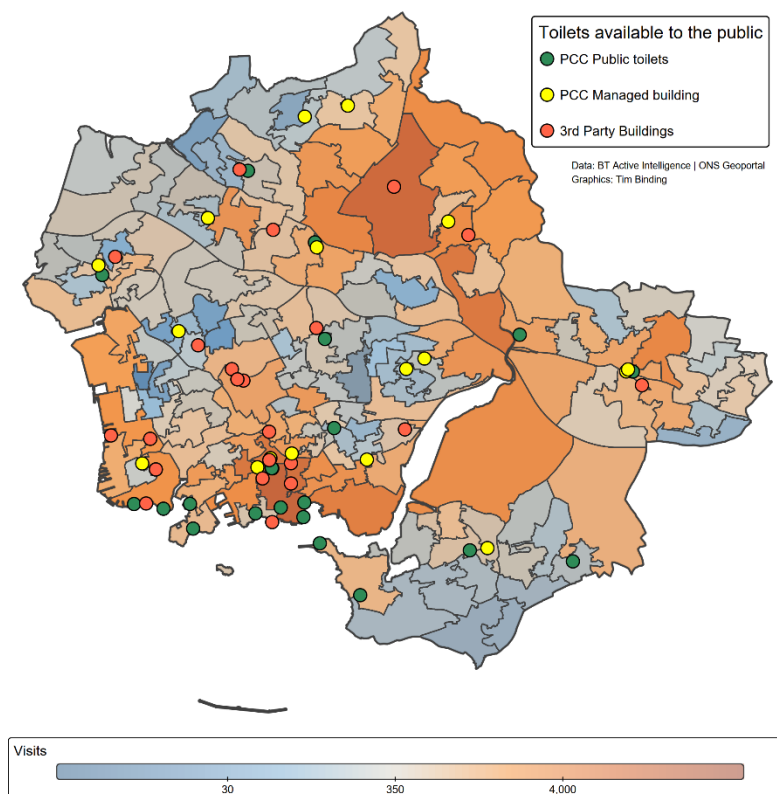
This report sets out the data in respect of the footfall across the City and the public toilet facilities that are available, including the Council's public toilets, toilets available in council operated buildings and 3rd party public toilets. Analysis of this data has been undertaken which provides an insight into the Citywide provision.

Footfall Data

To understand what public toilet provision is required across the City a review of the survey data provided by BT in 2023 was undertaken.

The data provides details about how individuals move around the City and includes those coming into Plymouth from outside the City boundaries. The data for people travelling to and from work within Plymouth was excluded for the purpose of this review as they will have access to toilets in their home or workplace. The data was captured over a standard weekday. Please see map below

Visitor footfall across Plymouth and location of toilets accessible to the public



The map above shows the variations in footfall across the City with the blue areas being the lower end of the visitor movement and the orange areas being the higher levels of footfall. This has been overlaid with the locations of council managed public toilets, customer toilets in council buildings and 3rd party organisations that allow the public to use their toilet facilities. It should be noted that there are other commercial sites in the City that will offer use of their toilets however this level of data has not been captured at this time.

The darkest orange areas, representing the highest footfall during the week, is in the city centre and waterfront areas around the Barbican. These are also the area with the highest levels of tourism and so will see seasonal increases. The north of the city, around Derriford, also has high levels of footfall, however this is unlikely to increase over the summer period.

It should be noted however that the Derriford area houses the major hospital in Plymouth and although has high levels of footfall, this is likely to be for medical emergencies and the hospital has its own toilet facilities which are not included in the map above.

Management Principles

There has not been a holistic approach to public toilet provision across the City for a considerable period. As we develop our Strategic Asset Management Plan this needs to change.

The approach to repairs and maintenance of the council's public toilets has been ad hoc without consideration of wider issues such as a broader perspective of the local area, future changes within the City, or how best the council can support its residents and visitors.

To meet the council's priorities, toilet provision needs to link to the Council's key areas of focus and the associate locations across the City as follows:

- Good transport links are key to supporting a vibrant economy and helping to support those working in the City to have a choice about how they travel to and from their workplace – public toilet provision should be available at key transport interchanges.
- Supporting the tourist industry by being welcoming and providing a clean and tidy city – public toilets should be available in areas of high tourist footfall.
- Encouraging residents and visitors to utilise the green spaces and the foreshore to promote health and well-being therefore reducing health inequalities – public toilets should be available in heavily used green/blue spaces.

These areas of focus can be supported by reviewing the visitors map and public transport provision to ensure that there are sufficient toilets available in the locations that relate to the above.

To ensure that the toilet provision is suitably based, the following principles should be considered:

- Any decision taken in respect of how the corporate estate is managed, linked to the asset management plan and future investment in the City, should consider if access to a public toilet facility is required.
- Council priorities, such as those above should be taken into account during the decision-making process.
- How future provision is funded. If grants or financial support are available as part of the investment into the City and the lifetime costs of any provision taken into consideration.
- Partnership working should be developed to ensure that toilet facilities that are available to the public within the City are promoted.
- Council managed public toilets should be reviewed to ensure that they offer value for money and consideration given to future provision as buildings reach end of life or if there is substantial change in the local area.

Housing and Community Service Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting:	10 December 2025
Title of Report:	Central Park Ponds – Update December 2025
Lead Member:	Councillor Tom Briars-Delve (Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change)
Lead Strategic Director:	Glenn Caplin-Grey (Strategic Director for Growth)
Author:	Kat Deeney (Head of Natural Environment Service)
Contact Email:	Kathryn.deeney@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	251126 Central Park Scrutiny Update Paper
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The report provides an update on the final works for the Central Park Ponds project. This consists of the landscape works, planting and fencing, closing the project and removing the compound off site.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. To note the update on and Central Park Ponds project.
Reason: To ensure that the Scrutiny Panel is kept informed of the progress.

Alternative options considered and rejected

1. To not update on the progress of the project.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

Central Park is an allocation in the Joint Local Plan PLY19.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

No new implications as the project has an approved business plan and this report provides an update on the delivery works.

Financial Risks

No new risks.

Legal Implications

No new legal implications.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

The project is delivering a Sustainable Urban Drainage system to help the city respond to the challenges of climate change, particularly increased rainfall, and improve the biodiversity value of this part of the park. The project will therefore have a positive impact on the environment.

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

**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	251126 Central Park – Scrutiny Update Paper.							

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	N/A	Leg	N/A	Mon Off	n/a	HR	n/a	Assets	n/a	Strat Proc	n/a
Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Tracey Lee (Chief Executive)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 28/11/2025											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Tom Briars-Delve - Approved by email											
Date approved: 28/11/2025											

Central Park Improvements

Housing and Community Service Scrutiny -

Update December 2025



SUMMARY

Since the project was last presented to Scrutiny in September 2025, work on the landscaping has continued with changes to fencing, grass seeding and planting. These works plus, final asset checks, removal of compounds and making good of these areas forms the last phase of the works. A detailed breakdown of these works is provided in this paper. Some areas of the park, particularly the pitch plateaus will remain fenced off after the final works are complete to ensure the landscaping works can embed. All areas will be open to the public as soon as the landscaping is established.

Works Completed Since September

Since the summer there has been a focus on laying meadow and grass seed across Reservoir Field and on the playing pitches. This has now been completed. This area of the park will need to remain closed for a few months to allow the areas to fully establish before it can be used again.

While the metal heras around the playing pitches will remain for the reason stated above the fencing around Reservoir Field has been replaced with wooden chestnut paling. There was then a quieter period as there was a need to wait for the correct time of year for tree planting.

Works Planned – December and January.

The planting that still needs to be completed is as follows:

Northern Sports Pitch Plateau –

- Trees – 16
- Whips – 1067
- Blubs – 500

Northern Pond –

- Trees – 14
- Shrubs – 4087
- Aquatic planting – 21

- Additional trees across the site – 21

The first round of planting is due to start on the sports pitch plateau and Geogrow to Northern Pond during the second week of December. The landscape contractors will then have a site presence throughout Dec and Jan (excluding Christmas break) to complete the landscape planting and fencing works. During this period, new signage will also be installed.

Once the landscaping works and fencing has been completed, there will be final checks to the assets before the project is closed and the compound removed off site.

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	Cllr Dann/Liz Slater
	Public Toilets Strategy Review	3	Motion on Notice from 19 January 2024 meeting of City Council	Cllr Penberthy/Ann Thorp
	Central Park Ponds	3	Requested a written update 22 October meeting following comms release of further delays.	Kat Deeney / Cllr Briars-Delve
	Commemorations and Celebrations PCC Policy	3	Pre-Decision of Commemorations and Celebrations PCC Policy	Glenda Favor-Ankersen – Chris Penberthy
11 February 2026	Anti-social Behaviour			
	Community Cohesion			
	Community Safety			
Items to be scheduled for 2025/26				
2025/26	Building Bridges to Opportunity	(3)	Pre-decision scrutiny. Agreed to return prior to Cabinet Decision.	Councillor Penberthy
2025/26	Housing and Homelessness	(3)	Breakdown of households approaching the Council for housing advice. Geographic and demographic trends. Updates on the implications of the national budget for housing provision.	Councillor Penberthy

2025/26	Renters Rights Bill	(3)	Agreed to receive ongoing updates on progress, including any significant policy changes or implications for enforcement.	Councillor Penberthy
Items to be scheduled for 2026/27				
2026/27	Allotments	(2)	Requested at 22 October meeting	Chris Avent
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

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 15 Renters Rights Bill 22 October 2025	In relation to the Renters Rights Bill, agreed to receive ongoing updates on progress, including any significant policy changes or implications for enforcement.	Officer: Councillor Chris Penberthy and Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health). Progress: On Hold – Item added to work programme for consideration at the appropriate time. Updates will be provided as required.
Minute 14 City Centre Car Parking 22 October 2025	Agreed to refer future scrutiny regarding the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy to the Scrutiny Management Board and Natural Infrastructure and Growth Scrutiny Panel, as appropriate.	Officer: Councillor John Stephens, Mike Artherton & Andy Sharp. Progress: Complete – Item scheduled on the Scrutiny Management Board work programme.
Minute 13 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update 22 October 2025	Requested a future report providing a breakdown of households approaching the Council for housing advice, including geographic and demographic trends; As part of the above report, to receive updates on the implications of the upcoming national budget for housing provision at a future meeting.	Officer: Councillor Chris Penberthy & Jackie Kings. Progress – Oh Hold - Item added to work programme for consideration at the appropriate time. Report being drafted.
Minute 13	Requested a breakdown of the new build housing figures: Net Additional dwellings delivered 2024/25	Officer: Councillor Chris Penberthy, Neil Mawson & Grant Jackson. Progress: Complete - Email sent to members with the data – 03/11/2025

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

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Update 22 October 2025		
Minute 5 Grit Bin Policy Review 16 July 2025	<p>The Panel recommended that the recommended actions within the report had the following <u>amendment</u>:</p> <p>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></p>	<p>Due Date: 25 July 2025</p> <p>Officer: Kevin Northcott/Phil Bellamy</p> <p>Progress: In – Progress. Response received 09/20/2025:</p> <p>“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.”</p>