



**Oversight and Governance**

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## **MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Friday 25 July 2025

## Members' Written Questions

- 1. Parking Machine Screens:** (Pages 3 - 4)
- 2. Royal Parade Bus Shelters:** (Pages 5 - 6)
- 3. Service Pupil Premium:** (Pages 7 - 8)

## QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



**Question submitted by:** Cllr Terri Beer

**To Cabinet Member:** Cllr John Stephens

**Question:**

Since the introduction of a previous Conservative administration we have suffered many complaints as councillors about the issue with parking machines in our local shopping centre car parks. Screen steam up in the winter and sun on screens in the Summer making it difficult to confirm you have entered details. Even when people have pressed the green button twice they still receive tickets. Photo proff or video proof isn't accepted on appeal. Making proving an issue a major problem. Fault has often been directed at users. What are you doing to remedy this situation? What measurers are you putting in place to ensure screens are covered by all weathers? will you apologise to residents for blaming them?

**Response:** ( for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

Thank you for your feedback. I'm sorry to hear that you believe there is an issue with the parking systems in Plympton.

As you mentioned, the current parking system was introduced under a previous administration in May 2023. At that time, the maximum stay in Plympton's short-stay car parks was extended from 2 to 3 hours, alongside the introduction of a requirement to register for a free parking session. These changes were made to encourage fair use of the free parking and to help ensure availability for those visiting local shops and businesses. Across the city's district car parks, there had been issues with overstaying, which made it difficult for others to find parking in short-stay areas.

We understand that parking can be a sensitive topic, and there are many perceptions around it. That's why we rely on facts and data. There are over 70 of these machines in operation across the city, and they've been in use for more than two years. In Plympton alone, over 10,000 motorists register free parking sessions each week.

While we acknowledge your concerns, we have not received customer complaints about the screens being illegible, and the systems are functioning as intended. Of course, mistakes can happen—people may forget to register or accidentally enter an incorrect registration. We take a balanced approach in these cases. While we cannot cancel fines for unregistered sessions, we do cancel fines on a first occasion if we can see that a session was registered but the registration number was entered incorrectly. All sessions are logged, allowing our Parking Team to investigate any queries.

It's also worth noting that fines issued in Plympton car parks account for less than 0.0009% of users, which suggests that the system is working effectively.

If need be, I would be happy to discuss your concerns further when we meet, as mutually arranged, on Friday 11 July.

**Signed:**



**Dated:** 08<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**

**Question submitted by:** Cllr Dylan Tippetts

**To Cabinet Member:** Cllr John Stephens

**Question:**

*Question is actually for Cllr John Stephens - [john.stephens@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:john.stephens@plymouth.gov.uk) In response to a Freedom of Information Act request earlier this year, as reported in the Herald in March, the council confirmed that the conversion of the three shipping containers being used as bus shelters on Royal Parade came to £46,802. It also confirmed an eight-week cleaning and maintenance contract had been entered into, adding £3,267.20, plus an allocation of £1,100 for additional ad hoc cleans. Can the cabinet member confirm (a) whether any of the £1,100 set aside for ad hoc cleans was spent; (b) given that more than eight weeks has now passed since their installation, whether a new cleaning contract has been entered into, and, if so, what the costs and terms of that are; (c) whether there has been any additional expenditure relating to the shelters not otherwise covered in these questions; (d) by what date the council expects the new permanent shelters to be installed and, if you do not, by what date do you expect to know; and (e) what the plan is for the future life of the shelters, and what is the expected cost to the council of their removal and future use?*

**Response:** ( for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

Answer:

Can the cabinet member confirm

- a. whether any of the £1,100 set aside for ad hoc cleans was spent;
  - *No ad hoc cleans were required so the £1,100 was put towards the cost of extending the cleaning and maintenance checks . This involves power washing, cleaning and checking solar panels, carrying out health and safety check on the shelter and ramps and carrying out any repairs.*
- b. given that more than eight weeks has now passed since their installation, whether a new cleaning contract has been entered into, and, if so, what the costs and terms of that are;
  - *£4,367.2 was allocated for cleaning starting 17/03/25. This was all used on weekly cleaning, with no additional (ad hoc) cleaning required (as above).*
  - *The purchase order was increased by £4,618 in June 2025 to continue until maximum date of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025.*
  - *The terms are to continue with a weekly clean and maintenance check on three shelters*
- c. whether there has been any additional expenditure relating to the shelters not otherwise covered in these questions;
  - *No additional expenditure incurred*
- d. by what date the council expects the new permanent shelters to be installed and, if you do not, by what date do you expect to know; and
  - *The permanent bus shelters will be installed as part of the Royal Parade Bus Improvement scheme. This scheme is scheduled to be open to the public in April 2026*
- e. what the plan is for the future life of the shelters, and what is the expected cost to the council of their removal and future use?
  - *No decision has been made on the future use of the shelters at this point but suitable options and any associated costs will be considered when they are no longer required for Royal Parade.*

**Signed:**



**Dated:** 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025

# MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: Cllr Dylan Tippetts

Date received: 30 June 2025 8:50:42 PM

To the Cabinet Member for: sally.cresswell@plymouth.gov.uk

**Question:** Department of Education figures suggest that the number of Plymouth children registered as the children of Armed Forces Personnel and therefore gaining access to the Service Pupil Premium is at its lowest in five years and the amount of money received by Plymouth schools is at its lowest for that period too. What action has the council taken over the past 12 months specifically to encourage parents who are members of the Armed Forces and who have one or more children attending a state school in Plymouth, or who might otherwise have children eligible for the Service Pupil Premium, to notify those schools of their status, enabling the schools to access the extra funding for those pupils through the Service Pupil Premium?

Answer:

## REDUCTION IN SERVICE PUPIL PREMIUM UPTAKE

### Department for Education (DfE) data:

DfE intelligence indicates a slight but consistent decline in Service Pupil Premium (SPP) uptake over the past five years (a 6% decrease locally, compared to a 4-5% decline nationally).

### Several factors may explain this trend:

- **Demographic Shifts:** Fluctuating pupil numbers in Plymouth schools mirror national patterns. DfE data shows 59,600 fewer pupils enrolled across England this year, with total numbers just over 9 million.
- **National Trends in Armed Forces Mobility and Eligibility:** Decreased mobility among Armed Forces families, changes in eligibility criteria (e.g. shorter service periods, transitions out of active duty) and improved data accuracy and school reporting practices.
- **Local Military Context:** Plymouth remains a major military centre, home to HMNB Devonport, the largest naval base in Western Europe. However, increased use of civilian defence staff may also impact the number of pupils eligible for SPP, in line with national trends.

### Plymouth School Census Reporting:

The Plymouth School Census, undertaken tri-annually (October, January, May), formally began capturing service pupil data from October 2023. A 2.8% year-on-year reduction in uptake was observed in 2025. While this decrease may be linked to how schools engage with this reporting framework, emerging patterns are being monitored.

**In summary,** Service Pupil Premium uptake, in Plymouth, aligns with national trends, though the city continues to have a comparatively higher concentration of service pupils.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION TO PROMOTE SPP AWARENESS**

The Local Authority actively supports service families and schools in understanding and accessing Service Pupil Premium funding. Parents and carers receive targeted information through military, community, educational, and city council channels. Key activity includes the provision of guidance to schools and regular support issued prior to each School Census cycle and further engagement of schools, partners and service families through the 'Armed Forces Covenant Children, Young People and Families Network'. Service Pupil guidance is also shared as part of the School Admissions process. Additionally, service family engagement opportunities are utilised across the Local Authorities range of services, ranging from SEND, Youth Participation and Inclusion to Health and Wellbeing activity.

**School & Service Family Support (Past 12 Months).** The Local Authority...:

- Delivered CPD and practical guidance, via the 'Young Carer & Service Family Lead's Hub', specifically regarding Service Pupil Premium.
- Worked in partnership with the [Children's Society](#) (Local Authority commissioned service) to utilise Local Authority intelligence for targeted school support.
- Completed a city-wide review of SPP use, identifying best practice in Plymouth schools. The findings were shared nationally by the [SCiP Alliance](#).
- Is responding to new [DfE/MoD 'Non-Statutory Guidance'](#) (April 2025), by reviewing current practice and developing a three-year strategic action plan, which will enhance city-wide coordination of resource and further promote of the seven principles set out in the Thriving Lives Toolkit whole school development tool ([Thriving Lives Toolkit](#): 7 Principles: 1. A Clear Approach, 2. Supported Wellbeing, 3. Maximised Achievement, 4. Effective Transition, 5. Children Heard, 6. Parents Engaged, 7. Well-Informed Staff).

**In summary**, the Local Authority continues to support service children, their families and schools in Plymouth by the coordination of collaborative advantage and the targeting of resource. This support, including raising awareness of Service Pupil Premium continues to develop to meet the needs of service families within the city.

Signed:



Date: 08.07.2025