



Oversight and Governance

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MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Friday 28 November 2025

Members' Written Questions

- 1. Completion date for Phase I of the Woolwell to the George Scheme: (Pages 3 - 4)**
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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Chris Wood

To Cabinet Member: Councillor John Stephens

Question: *Would you please provide the estimated completion date for Phase 1 of the Woolwell to the George Scheme? Would you further please provide an estimated commencement date and completion date of Phases 2 and 3 of this same scheme? Would you lastly provide the agreed capital budget, including the sources of funding, for each phase of the scheme and the current estimated final costs?*

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

In line with the press release issued on 26 September, Phase 1 of the Woolwell to The George scheme is still planned to complete this month. Final activities include some surfacing works which are weather dependent, so a precise date is not yet confirmed. The council will share a further update with the public on those details as soon as possible.

The September release can be found here: [First phase of Woolwell to the George work nears completion | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/news/first-phase-of-woolwell-to-the-george-work-nears-completion)

The start date for phases 2 and 3 has not yet been made public so this is shared in confidence and is not for sharing. The team have confirmed that they expect works on Phase 2 will get underway in the New Year and will hold a public information event ahead of the works starting for phase 2. The construction programme for Phase 2 will be approximately 18 months. Phase 3 will follow later in the year, most likely Summer 2026.

The approved capital budget for the Woolwell to The George scheme is as follows:

Funding source	
Levelling Up Fund	£19,923,909.98

Transforming Cities Fund	£5,000,000
S106	£6,957,433
Integrated block	£2,511,000
Corporate Borrowing	£11,365,565
Total (on capital programme)	£45,757,907

The package for the budget is also shared with you in confidence as the contracts are still to be awarded for phases 2 and 3.

- Phase 1 £12.7m
- Phase 2 £31.8m
- Phase 3 £1.2m

Signed:



Dated: 06th November 2025

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor John Stephens

Question:

Please can I have a full breakdown of the cost of the Crossing at Cot Hill and associated works? Residents have been requesting this and deserve a complete breakdown. The works were completed and opened on Friday 21st November for clarity.

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

Thank you for your enquiry and your ongoing support for the scheme. Given the commercial sensitivities of the information requested I can't provide you with a line-by-line account of expenditure but in the spirit of your request I can provide you with an itemised percentage breakdown of costs. This is the current position having paid the majority of invoices (4 of 5). Once the final costs are known the percentages may differ, but this isn't expected to be by much.

Item	Cost %
Site Setup & Compound	4%
Traffic Management	19%
Main Works	49%
SWH Staff, HGV &/or Operatives	7%
PCC Staff	4%
Design/Supervision/Contract Management	5%
Speed Camera	7%
Misc (legal, comms, stats (in part))	5%

Total	100%
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In addition, I can provide the following reassurances around value for money to the Plymouth residents:

- The works completed extend beyond the crossing. We have fixed broken drains, cut back overhanging vegetation, widened pavements, reconstructed the sub-base of the road where needed and we have resurfaced throughout.
- We appointed South West Highways to construct the scheme through the existing Term Maintenance Contract as their rates have been competitively tendered and won on a cost/quality basis.
- Invoices are reviewed externally and then by PCC prior to payment ensuring that any unknowns can be checked and challenged as necessary and in collaboration to resolve as required.
- As a local employer South West Highway salaries (as well as PCC salaries) assist the local economy.
- The social value of this project is estimated to be £74k through a combination of volunteering with the community, local employment, apprenticeships etc.
- The majority of funding (£413k) has been secured externally. If not invested in Plymouth this funding would've been spent elsewhere in the country and Plympton would have lost out.

I trust this provides you with the reassurances sought, should you require any further details please feel free to contact me.

Signed:



Dated: 26th November 2025

MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

Date received: 15 November 2025

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

Question: A FOI request was made recently to Devon and Cornwall Police concerning offences committed of a sexual nature by Taxi drivers. The results are shocking. Do we vet taxi drivers backgrounds to ensure convictions are flagged and the nature of crimes? How behind if at all are the council with this? When it comes to public safety are the taxis in our City safe for vulnerable people to travel in? What measures are in place to ensure Plymouth Taxi drivers meet the standards the public expect and do we have issues like this brought before the licencing committee so that Licences can be revoked?

Answer:

The FOI results have not been made available to officers so I am unable to comment on the numbers, however I would be grateful to receive a copy of the information for consideration.

Do we vet taxi drivers backgrounds to ensure convictions are flagged and the nature of crimes?

Taxi and private hire licensing is a function of the Council and licences are required for any driver, vehicle proprietor and operator to work within the taxi licensing trade within Plymouth. The Council have a policy available on line that sets out the expectations and what checks are made to protect public safety. [Hackney Carriage and private hire licensing policy | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#). The Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards [Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK](#) were considered in the writing and implementation of this policy along with [Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England](#).

1.a

This policy sets out the requirements to ensure that a person can be considered a 'fit and proper' person to hold a drivers licence and a specific part of this are checks on the applicants history of convictions and cautions, as well as other checks such as relevant skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications, spoken and written English, medical fitness, motoring endorsements, an understanding of local byelaws and conditions of licence, enhanced training requirements, the [Code of Good Conduct](#) and any other information thought to be relevant.

If a person is then licenced, regular and routine checks are required, including a 6 monthly submission of an updated enhanced DBS that checks for any new information. There is a specific guidance note [Guidance on Relevance of Convictions and Conduct](#) which should be read in conjunction with the Policy and sets out guidance as to how the Council considers the relevance of a range of different offences.

- 1.a Additional checks are carried out on new applicants against the National Anti-Fraud Network (NR3) Register to determine if an applicant has been refused or revoked a licence by another Local Authority. This register is used by licensing authorities to share information about drivers to mitigate the risk of non-disclosure of relevant information by applicants. If notification of a refused or revoked licence is disclosed, the relevant Council will be contacted to establish when the licence was refused, suspended or revoked and the reasons why. Any information that is disclosed will be taken into account in determining the applicant's fitness to be licensed.

The Council also keep up to date with Department of Transport statutory vehicle standards.

How behind if at all are the council with this?

The Council are not behind with these checks and any licenced driver who has not submitted the required information on time would be reminded to do so, and any subsequent failure to provide the documentation would mean a referral to Taxi Licensing Committee, for consideration of whether the applicant continues to be a fit and proper person. The Taxi committee can take various enforcement actions as highlighted in the policy and guidance on relevant convictions, which could include suspension or revocation of the driver until satisfactory provision of an up to date and acceptable DBS.

When it comes to public safety are the taxis in our City safe for vulnerable people to travel in?

The Council cannot grant a driver's licence unless they are satisfied that the applicant is a "fit and proper person" to hold a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence. Once a licence has been granted, there is a continuing requirement that the driver remains a fit and proper person, and if they fall below the required standard, the licence can be suspended or revoked.

To be a "fit and proper" person means that they must be "safe and suitable" to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle. The overriding consideration for the Council is to protect the public. The licensing regime is intended, among other things, to ensure so far as is possible that those licensed to drive vehicles are safe and suitable persons to do so.

When reviewing a licence at Taxi Licensing Committee, the Committee must apply the Button Test. This is as follows: "...Would you (as a member of the Licensing Board or other person charged with the ability to grant a hackney carriage/private hire driver's licence) allow your daughter or son, granddaughter or grandson, spouse, mother or father, or any other person you care for or any vulnerable person you know, to get into a vehicle with this person alone" (Paragraph 10.21 Button on Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice; Fourth Edition; Ed Bloomsbury Professional). If the answer to this question is an unqualified yes, then a licence should normally be approved. If there are any doubts in the minds of those making the decision, then the licence must be refused, suspended or revoked. It is the responsibility of the applicant or existing driver to satisfy the Council they are a 'fit and proper' person.

What measures are in place to ensure Plymouth Taxi drivers meet the standards the public expect and do we have issues like this brought before the licencing committee so that Licences can be revoked?

The Council require checks to be made on application, and any subsequent application to renew of a licence. In addition as mentioned, 6 monthly checks are made of a drivers DBS record to see if any circumstances have changed.

The Council respond to and investigate complaints made to it about any licence holder, and issues can be reported online. [Taxi complaints and compliments | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#). The Council also follow the Department of Transport statutory guidance in how information is shared or received by other agencies in relation to safeguarding or considering any other issues brought to its attention about anyone with a taxi licence.

The Council have a scheme of delegation in relation to decision making. Whilst officers can make some decisions about licensing applications, the policy and the convictions guidance mentioned above sets out how enforcement actions are carried out. Any suspension or revocation of a licence is considered by Taxi Committee, and officers present reports of their investigations to Committee for a decision to be made. Information about Taxi Committees and delegations can be found on the following link. [Regulatory Committees | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK](#)

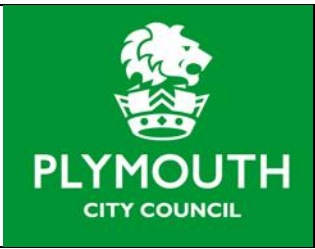
Signed:

Date: 21 November 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Hayden'.

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE

Question:
As the leader of a Labour run council can you tell me if you support your 2 Plymouth MPs who voted in Parliament this week to release 90% of child groomers and 60% of rapist?

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

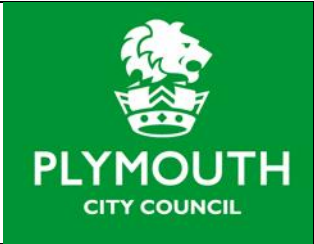
Thank you for your question. You don't say which debate this vote occurred in. I have searched Hansard and can find no reference to a specific vote on this. Therefore, I am unable to comment.

Signed:

Dated: 19th November 2025

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QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Tudor Evans OBE

Question:
The two Plymouth Labour MPs voted in Parliament for the early release of rapist and child abusers so does the leader support his Labour MPs on this topic and does the rest of the Plymouth Labour Group support this?

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

Thank you for your question. You don't say which debate this vote occurred in. I have searched Hansard and can find no reference to a specific vote on this. Therefore, I am unable to comment.

Signed:

Dated: 19th November 2025

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MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

Date received: 19 November 2025

To the Cabinet Member for: tudor.evans@plymouth.gov.uk

Question: I attached two photos that will assist in your answer to me. On the 21st October there was a vote in Parliament on the sentencing bill (divison 320) in which two Plymouth Labour MPs voted to allow the early release of priosoners who had committed rape, grooming child sex abuse. The Labour MPs for for this bill so again I ask my question: Do you as the Labour Leader support your MPs on this vote? Does your Labour group agree this was the right thing to do? The public deserve an answer to a straight forward question.

Answer:

As I said in my previous response there was no vote in Parliament *'for the early release of rapist and child abusers'* as described in your question.

The vote you refer to in this subsequent question on Division 320 of the Sentencing Bill reads:

Amendments made: 2, page 2, line 46, at end insert—

"(ea) the offence, or an associated offence, was committed while the offender was subject to a supervision order,"

This amendment makes clear that the presumption to suspend certain sentences under section 264A of the Sentencing Code (inserted by this clause) does not apply to offences (or offences associated with those offences) committed while the offender was subject to a supervision order (as defined by subsection (7) of that section).

Amendment 3, page 3, line 2, after "constituted" insert

", or occurred in circumstances closely connected with,".

This amendment provides that the presumption to suspend certain sentences under section 264A of the Sentencing Code (inserted by this clause) does not apply to offences (or offences associated with those offences) committed in circumstances which are closely connected with the breach by the offender of a court order or an order or award in proceedings in respect of a service offence.

Amendment 4, page 5, line 7, at end insert—

"(ea) the offence, or an associated offence, was committed while the offender was subject to a supervision order,".

This amendment makes clear that the presumption to suspend certain sentences under section 277A of the Sentencing Code (inserted by this clause) does not apply to offences (or offences associated with

those offences) committed while the offender was subject to a supervision order (as defined by subsection (8) of that section).

Amendment 5, page 5, line 9, after “constituted” insert

“, or occurred in circumstances closely connected with,”.—(Jake Richards.)

This amendment provides that the presumption to suspend certain sentences under section 277A of the Sentencing Code (inserted by this clause) does not apply to offences (or offences associated with those offences) committed in circumstances which are closely connected with the breach by the offender of a court order or an order or award in proceedings in respect of a service offence.

Question put, That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill.

This amendment does not mention the words in your question ‘*priosoners who had committed rape, grooming child sex abuse*’.

The purpose of the Sentencing Bill is ‘*to make provision about the sentencing, release and management after sentencing of offenders; to make provision about bail; to make provision about the removal from the United Kingdom of foreign criminals; and for connected purposes*’. This does not mention the words in your question ‘*priosoners who had committed rape, grooming child sex abuse*’.

Having checked the latest text of the Bill, version HL Bill 142 (as sent from the Commons), to ensure a full answer the words ‘rape’, ‘rapist’, ‘groom’, ‘groomer’ or ‘grooming’ and the terms ‘child sex abuse’, ‘child sexual abuse’, ‘child sex abuser’ or ‘child sexual abuser’ do not appear in the text.

I therefore do not accept the premise of your question as ‘*priosoners who had committed rape, grooming child sex abuse*’ are not mentioned in either the current draft of the Bill or the amendment that was voted on.

Signed:

Date: 21/11/25

Cllr Chris Penberthy, on behalf of Cllr Tudor Evans OBE