



**Oversight and Governance**

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## **MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Friday 30 January 2026

## **Members' Written Questions**

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**QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**

**Question submitted by:** Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

**To Cabinet Member:** Councillor Chris Penberthy

**Question:**

*What are your plans for the Royal building in Plymouth that was purchased to house homeless people and families? How many years will this building remain empty and maintained by City tax payers?*

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

As I reported to Budget Scrutiny this week, the latest of our regular six-monthly reports to the Housing and Communities Services Scrutiny Panel which we presented on 22<sup>nd</sup> October clearly demonstrates a substantial amount of work being undertaken by Council officers as well as staff and volunteer in our partners organisations, most of whom are charities and social enterprises. To assist you to understand the scale of this work here, once again, is the link to the work set out in our Scrutiny Report:

<https://democracy.plymouth.gov.uk/documents/s156208/Scrutiny%20Report%20-%2022nd%20October.pdf>.

Since we purchased the Royal building, several things have happened that have changed the landscape of temporary housing provision in Plymouth.

With our partners, we were successful in bidding for a total of **£6,436,016** capital money from the Local Authority Housing Fund 3 and the Supported Housing Accommodation Programme with an additional **£2,867,185** of revenue funding to support residents living in these.

- LAHF 3 supported the delivery of 11 temporary accommodation units
- SHAP is supporting the delivery of 74 temporary accommodation units

At the same time, we have supported partners to deliver an additional 70+ units of temporary accommodation at no cost to the Council

All of these schemes needed to be delivered on tight funding timescales, this meant we had to balance priorities to ensure successful completion.

Whilst doing all of this we have also developed our recently announced Housing Partnership with Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA) which will deliver 22 units of temporary accommodation as well as 39 general needs homes. This will bring a forecast

£18,300,000 of external investment into the city at a cost to the Plan For Homes capital programme of £1,000,000.

In total this is over 180 additional temporary accommodation units now being delivered or in the pipeline with over **£9,000,000** of investment from sources outside the Council in addition to the agreement with BCHA. This is an amazing achievement by our officers and partners,

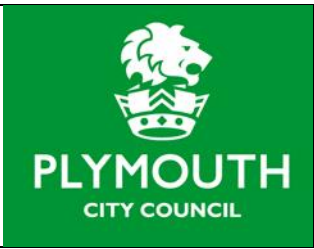
In the meantime, we have been working through building surveys and looking at the standard of the Royal building with partners. We are also sense checking the priority accommodation mix that is now needed in the light of all of this additional activity. We are now ready to move forward with development of proposals for the building and look forward to being able to say more in due course.

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Robertson', with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

**Dated:** 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR



**Question submitted by:** Councillor Carol Ney

**To Cabinet Member:** Councillor Chris Penberthy

**Question:**

*I'm requesting an update from the cabinet member for housing about what's happening with the planned housing Development of 125 new build homes on land adjacent to Aldi on Clittaford Road, Southway. Work was planned to commence in Autumn 2025 with completion of the first houses in late summer 2026. Having looked at the site today 14/01/2026, nothing appears to be happening on there and given the housing crisis in Plymouth at present, several residents have asked for an update.*

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

I am pleased that our Plan for Homes has encouraged Registered Providers and partners to undertake development of affordable homes in the city that is not dependent on the Council providing land; doing land assemblage; undertaking pre-development land clearance and remediation; or providing grant assistance. The former Southway paper mill is a good example of this.

In order to answer your question, I asked Council officers to follow up the issue with Plymouth Community Homes, who will be the landlord of the completed affordable homes at this location. Officers have now received a response.

It is acknowledged that a start on site was originally expected during the Autumn of last year, however before construction work could formally begin the pre-commencement conditions relating to the land remediation strategy, required by the planning consent first had to be discharged.

I am informed that notice of this discharge was received by the contractor/developer Vistry, on the 15<sup>th</sup> December which has meant a delay in the build contract between Plymouth Community Homes and Vistry being signed. Plymouth Community Homes has said that the contract is now in the process of being finalised by their respective legal teams and it is expected that the completed agreement will be in place within the next few weeks. A formal start on construction can then be made.

In the meantime, I can assure you that all parties including the Council are eager to resolve these final matters and make the earliest possible start. It is not yet possible to give you an exact date for when this will be, but we will maintain pressure on both Plymouth Community Homes and Vistry to minimise any further delays.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miss Penelope", with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end.

Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026

# MEMBER'S WRITTEN QUESTION



Member submitting the question: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

Date received: 1/14/2026 8:53:41 AM

To the Cabinet Member for: mark.lowry@plymouth.gov.uk

Question: Can you tell me how our bid for the City of Culture is being funded and what budget are the funds coming from?

Answer:

The City of Culture winner gets £10m prize in recognition of the fact that Local Authorities are unable to fund this scale of activity. This will then be used to match fund from various funding sources such as Arts Council and the National Lottery. Shortlisted places will also receive £60,000 towards the development of their BIDs. At this stage we are simply expressing an interest with no financial commitment. Plymouth has invested significantly in cultural infrastructure over the past decade meaning that no large new capital projects are required.

Signed:

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025

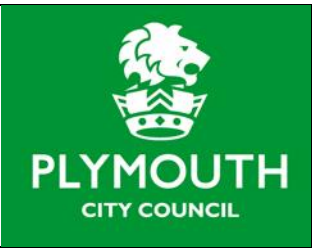
Written questions:

- will be replied to within 10 working days
- will be published on the last Friday of each month

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**QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**



**Question submitted by:** Councillor Carol Ney

**To Cabinet Member:** Councillor Tom Briars-Delve

**Question:**

*Could we have an update from the cabinet member on when the electric vehicle charging points are to be installed on Southway Drive, Southway. They were scheduled and stated by email, to be installed by September 2025. many residents have contacted me and asked what's going on. They were originally meant to be installed in April 2025.*

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

Thank you for your question regarding the electric vehicle charging points that are due to be installed on Southway Drive.

The contractor has had supply chain issues which are causing the delay. They are now hoping to have chargers delivered by March 2026 to start the install in Q2. We apologise for the delay and appreciate your community's enthusiasm for the transition to electric vehicles.

**Signed:**

**Dated:** 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026

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**QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR**

**Question submitted by:** Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

**To Cabinet Member:** Councillor John Stephens

**Question:**

How many gritting lorries were out over this cold snap gritting roads in the evening and overnight? Were all grit bins filled for residents in Plympton Erle? Bus routes to keep Plymouth moving, were these done in time? Just how prepared was the council for this demand? Some roads on the red list were never gritted why?

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

Since Christmas Eve and up to Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January, Highways have been out gritting a total of 16 times; the first 3 of which were Primary routes only but the last 13 have all been Primary and Secondary routes. Many of these have been double visits in the same day, in the afternoon/evening and again in the early hours as below:

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December @ 7pm (Primary only)  
 Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December @10pm (Primary only)  
 Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December @7pm (Primary only)  
 Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December @7pm (Primary and Secondary)  
 Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December @2pm (Primary and Secondary)  
 Thursday 1st January @ 4pm and again @ 10pm (Primary and Secondary)  
 Friday 2nd @ 2pm followed by 2am on Saturday 3rd (Primary and Secondary)  
 Saturday 3rd @ 2pm followed by 1am on Sunday 4th (Primary and Secondary)  
 Sunday 4th @ 1pm followed by 1am on Monday 5th (Primary and Secondary)  
 Monday 5th @ 1pm followed by 1am on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> (Primary and Secondary)  
 Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> @3am (Primary and Secondary)

**N.B.** Most of these shouts have been for Primary and Secondary routes at higher than normal spread rates due to the predicted temperatures.

All grit bins (Throughout the City) were filled in October/November prior to the first gritting treatment of the season on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025. We started to receive requests to refill grit bins around New Year and rather than respond to individual sites we have now ordered a second full City-wide grit bin refill, which has commenced this week.

All gritting routes have been completed on time, although timings of treatments are carefully made to be in advance of predicted freezing road surface temperatures but after any predicted rainfall as much as possible. It should be noted that it is not always possible to

avoid rainfall and inevitably any significant rainfall after completion of gritting routes can still cause some wash-off of salt and allow ice to form even where routes have been gritted.

The Council was as prepared for the cold snap as it can be. Salt stocks were 1100 Tonne at the start of the season, but this has reduced to 400 Tonne following this cold spell. More salt has now been ordered and is expected to arrive later this week or early next week. Crews and Winter Decision makers were on call 24 hours throughout Christmas and New Year, and all decisions were made following close scrutiny of weather forecasts. Live surface temperatures and rainfall volumes were also monitored as much as possible where the temperatures were more marginal. It can still take time to mobilise in response to changing weather conditions and salt is less effective during rainfall.

All routes have been completed over this period and over the whole season, so we are unaware of any roads on the "red list" not being gritted. Any specific locations can be shared with the team and tracking records from the vehicles can be checked.

**Signed:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Steyn', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

**Dated:** 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026