



Oversight and Governance

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MEMBERS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS AND COUNCIL ACTIONS

Members written questions and actions following Motions on Notice at Council Meetings are published on the last working Friday of every month.

For further information on attending Council meetings and how to engage in the democratic process please follow this link - [Get Involved](#)

Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

Members' Written Questions and Council Actions

This document is updated on the last Friday of every month

I. Council Actions following Motions on Notice: (Pages 1 - 14)

MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There are no Members Questions to be published this month.

COUNCIL ACTIONS 2020/21



The table below summarises actions taken in regards Motions on Notice (MoNs) passed at Council meetings. Some MoNs passed by full Council in 2018/19 municipal year are also included where actions remain to be undertaken.

Items which are greyed out have been completed. Hyperlinks to the original motions and any letters already published are included below. Democratic Support publish an update to Council Actions in relation to Motions on Notice on the last Friday of every month.

Date	COUNCIL MOTIONS	LEAD OFFICER	PROGRESS
Council Actions from Motions on Notice			
14/09/20	<p><u>Flooding</u></p> <p><i>Motion amended and approved by Council as per below.</i></p> <p>The City Council resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ask Cllr Sue Dann to be even more proactive in taking the lead in protecting our City from further flooding, by continuing to complete preventative and routine work alongside partner agencies in a timely fashion, to protect and safeguard residents and business from the distress and anxiety caused by such flooding and lobbying the government to take the urgent decisions needed to respond to the climate crisis Ask Cllr Sue Dann to write to the government to ensure that the funding and planning for flood defence is a priority and to increase funding to local authorities and the Environment Agency flood defence schemes to safeguard residents, businesses and infrastructure. 	Strategic Director for Place	COMPLETE
14/09/20	<p><u>Grass Cutting and Weed Control throughout Plymouth</u></p> <p><i>Motion amended and approved by Council as per below.</i></p> <p>The City Council resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To urge Cllr Sue Dann to take urgent action most importantly securing additional funding from government to properly cut the City 	Strategic Director for Place	COMPLETE

	<p>Council's grass and remove weeds from our streets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ask the Leader of the Opposition Group to write to the Leader of his party requesting that they restore cuts to the Council budgets and fully reimburse the Council's COVID-related costs. 		<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Councillor Nick Kelly sent email to the Prime Minister 27 September 2020</p>
14/09/20	<p><u>Covid-19 funding</u></p> <p>The City Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Write to the Secretary of State again to ask him to honour his pledge to fund councils fully. Sign up to the Unison Campaign "Back the #10BillionBailout for local services" (see https://action.unison.org.uk/page/63837/petition/?locale=en-GB) Campaign for a decent and fair settlement for local government in the forthcoming Spending Review Do everything we can to limit the potential for compulsory redundancies and services reductions as a result of the crisis. 	Service Director for Finance	<p>COMPLETE</p>
14/09/20	<p><u>Conservative Proposals to Remove Residents' Voices from the Planning System</u></p> <p>We request the Cabinet to respond to the Government accordingly and Plymouth's three Members of Parliament to vote against these disastrous, undemocratic proposals.</p>	Strategic Director for Place	<p>COMPLETE</p>

16/1 1/20	<p><u>A New Police Station for Plymouth</u></p> <p>Council agrees that the Leader of the Council:</p> <p>Will write to the Police and Crime Commissioner to request that the police estate requirements for the city and for its provision of significant force-wide capabilities are prioritised and given full consideration in the future police estate strategy. The purpose is to ensure Plymouth can meet its policing needs most cost-effectively and sustainably into the future.</p> <p>Will offer every assistance to the Commissioner to help coordinate and establish proposals for any new police building(s) in Plymouth. It will be vital to ensure that any proposals are integral to the wider programme of capital investment underway to drive our economic development, public safety, and sustainable future.</p>	Assistant Chief Executive	ONGOING
16/1 1/20	<p><u>Commonwealth Veterans Support</u></p> <p>Council resolves that;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our Armed Forces Champion and Lead Officers are made aware of the difficulties experienced by Commonwealth Veterans and work to help ensure that any from Plymouth who are currently experiencing difficulties are not disadvantaged whilst their applications are ongoing. 2. The Leader of the Council will write to Kevin Foster (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Borders and Immigration) and Johnny Mercer (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence People and Veterans) outlining this Council's support for all Commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years to be granted automatic Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK free of charge, and for any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically offered UK Citizenship. 	Assistant Chief Executive	COMPLETE

16/1 1/20	<p><u>COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payments</u></p> <p>Council therefore instructs the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to review the discretionary element of the COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payments scheme, and provide additional grant funding as necessary to ensure it continues to support those in need. • Chief Executive to write to Plymouth's MPs raising these concerns and asking them to campaign for a review of the discretionary element of the COVID-19 Test and Trace Support Payments scheme and additional grant funding as necessary in order to support their constituents on low incomes, zero-hours contracts and who are self-employed that are required to self-isolate. • Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative development to work with the Director of Public Health to ensure that the Council does all it can to provide support to people on low incomes, zero-hours contracts and who are self-employed that are required to self-isolate. 	<p>Director of Public Health/ Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services</p> <p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Director of Public Health</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Letter sent by Councillor Chris Penberthy 22 October 2020 to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>COMPLETE</p>



Rebecca Pow MP
DEFRA
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Councillor Sue Dann

Cabinet Member for Environment and
Street Scene

Plymouth City Council
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Date 16th November 2020

Dear Rebecca Pow MP

FUNDING AND PLANNING FOR FLOOD DEFENCE

In the shadow of climate change, it is widely accepted that the South West is at the forefront of changing weather patterns that hit our shores, arriving in from the Atlantic. During the last 10 years, the increase in rainfall and rising tides is contributing to an upsurge in incidents of flooding and our aging infrastructure is struggling to cope without major re-engineering and investment, a situation further exacerbated by years of austerity and a reduction in funding to local government.

It will come as no surprise to you that the Local Resilience Forum bases a significant number of their scenarios for major incidents on flooding. Excellent partnership working and response with the Environment Agency is tried and tested, but we are limited in what we can achieve without further investment in prevention. We are doing all we can and it is heart-breaking to see the real affect that this has had on people's lives, especially those who live in constant fear of seeing their homes ruined and their lives placed at risk. I can honestly say that in all my years as a councillor, I have never seen it as bad, with no signs of things improving.

We ask that you urgently work with the EA and ourselves to significantly increase funding and plan on sustainable investment in our infrastructure to prevent further unnecessary costs of doing nothing. Climate change is very real to us in the South West and we need to act now.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Dann".

Councillor Sue Dann

Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene

CC: Luke Hall MP
Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Rebecca Pow MP
DEFRA
House of Commons
London
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Councillor Sue Dann

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Date 16th November 2020

Dear Rebecca Pow MP

GRASS CUTTING AND WEED CONTROL THROUGHOUT PLYMOUTH

It is widely accepted that due to a temperate climate, mild and wet winters with minimal frost damage, controlling growth (especially weeds) in our city has become a significant problem. Benchmarking with other local authorities would also suggest that whilst it is particularly problematic in the South West, other areas of the UK are experiencing a similar challenge in controlling weed growth.

Moreover, extensively reported concerns on the use of herbicides containing glyphosates have also led to a reduction in its use and a return to the more traditional – but resource intense – manual removal. During the last few years, we have experimented with a variety of alternatives to keep weeds under control, which have included trialling a range of innovative equipment – some of which is excellent – but costly. We have also had periods where we have simply allowed weeds, grass and wild flowers to flourish, especially in areas that attract insects, thus creating a more diverse ecosystem. However, there are areas where weeds especially will proliferate and cause damage to our highways, pedestrian ways and cycle paths as well as creating a dangerous hazard for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.

So, you cannot fail to see that we are doing all we can and we now ask government to play their part in securing our critical green infrastructure and provide the funding that is so urgently needed. Each year, tackling problem areas creates huge pressure on our budget and we are forced to make difficult decisions, especially at a time when our green space has become so central to our residents' health and wellbeing. If the last 6 months has taught us anything, it is just how important our green spaces are, especially to those more vulnerable in our society and those not able to jump in the car and head off to the countryside.

Many years of austerity and a reduction in funding from government has further exacerbated the situation and I fear that this is no longer sustainable – which will lead to a terminal decline. If government fails to act now, the cost of addressing the deterioration to our infrastructure will create further, unmanageable pressure elsewhere. I now urge you to provide additional funding, which can be earmarked to address the growing problem with weeds and help us maintain our green spaces and maintain our critical infrastructure.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sue Dann". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Sue Dann

Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene

CC:

Luke Hall MP

Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA



Mr Robert Jenrick
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities
and Local Government
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Councillor Mark Lowry
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Date 16th November 2020

Dear Mr Jenrick,

It is recognised that the Covid-19 Pandemic has been one of the most challenging periods this country has had to face in recent times. Local Government is one of a number of public bodies which has been at the forefront of responding to the pandemic whether it be supporting our local community through the provision of vital services, working with partners to ensure a co-ordinated response to the pandemic or distributing grants to local businesses or vulnerable members of our community. As you will be aware Plymouth has risen to this challenge and has successfully supported our local community and businesses during these difficult times.

We recognise the support and action your Government has undertaken at a national level and the financial support allocated to date. As a council we have been actively monitoring our budgets and assessing the impact of Covid-19 and ensuring we continue to deliver value for money services to local residents and manage all of the additional responsibilities and costs that have been incurred.

We also recall the following statement you made to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee on Monday 4 May 2020:

"We will stand behind councils and will ensure they receive the funding they need to deliver the responsibilities that we are asking of them. So those things that we are asking councils to do in response to Covid-19 which do involve significant extra costs, we will ensure that Councils are fully compensated for those"

We welcomed this statement as you clearly recognised that this national crisis needed a national co-ordinated response which was fully funded at a local level. As we have moved into a second national lockdown we now urge you to ensure this statement is backed up with a guaranteed funding package, not just in the current financial year but also for future years where Covid 19 will continue to impact upon the provision of local services.

As an example Plymouth incurred significant costs for the provision of a temporary mortuary which we believe should be funded separately from the main Covid-19 Emergency Grant allocated to date.

The Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience made a decision that additional mortuary capacity was required. Plymouth was the location for this facility and the council incurred additional costs which amounted to £1.5m. It is understood that different arrangements have been used by other

statutory bodies and other regions may have responded differently e.g. in some areas NHS bodies have taken the lead and financed the provision, in others the military has been asked to give support.

In terms of funding the picture across local authorities is also quite varied with some councils taking a lead and being reimbursed a share by neighbouring councils and others footing the cost themselves. At present I suspect the most councils have used their Emergency Covid-19 grant to finance costs.

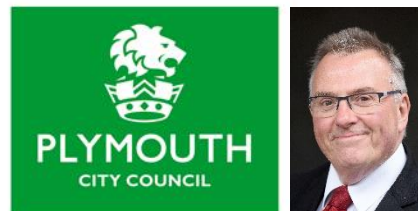
We are also disappointed with the Income Compensation Scheme you have set up. We believe full compensation should be provided as these are real unavoidable losses that we cannot recovery. We also worried about the ongoing impact of income losses and ask this is addressed as part of the overall funding settlement for local government.

We will continue to provide details of the additional costs and losses we have incurred arising from Covid-19. I am sure you will agree that as a Council we have responded as you would have expected – protecting our communities and businesses in a professional and effective way. As we enter the second national lockdown we will continue maximise our efforts and ask that you keep to your promise that Plymouth will receive full funding so we can beat Covid 19.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lowry', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Councillor Mark Lowry
Cabinet Member for Finance



Sent via email

Johnny Mercer MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Defence, People and Veterans

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader of Plymouth City Council
Labour Councillor for Ham Ward

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16 December 2020

Dear Minister

Commonwealth Veterans Support

I write concerning the above following a Motion at the City Council's recent meeting, which received unanimous support.

As a proud military city, Plymouth recognises that Commonwealth veterans have a long and proud history of service in the British Armed Forces. From conflicts during the Second World War to recent campaigns in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan, Commonwealth veterans have served with distinction alongside their UK-born compatriots, yet when their service is complete many face uncertainty and significant charges to remain in the UK.

Commonwealth veterans are eligible to receive Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK, yet many veterans report that the service authorities failed to inform them that they needed to make an application to the Home Office after their service was complete. Many believed incorrectly that the process was automatic.

Since 2015 the cost for an individual application for ILR has increased by around 127% from £1051 to £2381 with a family of four having to pay close to £10,000 to remain in the UK. Some Commonwealth veterans who have struggled to make retrospective visa applications have also had to pay legal costs which has led to significant debt. While their applications are ongoing these veterans are unable to seek employment or claim benefits and are liable for the cost of NHS treatment. The uncertainty of their immigration status and the real threat of deportation on top of financial worries for these veterans and their families is unacceptable.

In consideration of the above, on behalf of Plymouth City Council and our proud Armed Forces Community I write to you to ask that Government remove visa charges for Commonwealth UK Armed Forces personnel and their immediate families when applying for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). Further, that you support all Commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years

to be granted automatic Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK free of charge, and for any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically offered UK Citizenship.

I hope that you will liaise with Kevin Foster MP to jointly address this vital issue, and very much look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tudor Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Tudor Evans OBE
Leader, Plymouth City Council

cc.

Kevin Foster MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Borders and Immigration

The Rt Hon. Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and
Social Care
Department of Health and Social
Care
39 Victoria Street
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Councillor Chris Penberthy
Cabinet Member for Housing and
Co-operative Development

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22 October 2020

Dear Secretary of State

I am writing to you to update you on our progress with the discretionary element of the Test and Trace Support programme.

We have been part of the national working group to implement both the national and discretionary schemes. Concerns were expressed by many Local Authorities during those calls about the level of discretionary funding allocated. We were advised that there would be no additional funding forthcoming, and that the estimates had been based on the scheme running until 31 January 2021.

In the first two full weeks of the scheme, we received 22 discretionary applications which were valid pending final verification. In the first three days of week three the volume of applications rose sharply as infections in the city increased; 43 applications were received in those three days which were eligible pending final verification.

Our funding allocation provides for 154 working people in Plymouth to receive support if they are instructed to self-isolate and lose income as a result. That equates to an average rate of 8.5 valid applications per week for the duration of the scheme. In the first two weeks, the average application rate was 11 per week so if all things remain equal our discretionary funding is exhausted by the end of December, a month before the scheme is due to end. If you include the first three days of week three, the average weekly rate of eligible applications increases to approximately 26 per week, which would result in the discretionary scheme ending due to lack of funds in mid-November.

Plymouth is in a Medium risk area with one of the lowest number of COVID19 infections in the country. Our cases are rising sharply and our testing capacity has recently increased with the introduction of two new local testing sites which means it is extremely likely that the rate of valid applications for the discretionary scheme will also rise and we will exhaust our funding even sooner.

The funding arrangements for the national scheme are such that if the initial allocation is insufficient, additional funds will be made available so that all eligible applicants will be supported for the duration of the scheme. This discrepancy between national and discretionary funding methods will result in otherwise eligible, working, low income residents being refused financial support whilst they are trying to comply with the legislation, protect their community and self-isolate. It also unfairly places apparent blame on Local Authorities as we will be seen as 'refusing' applications rather than the Government funding being insufficient to support the scheme.

I am certain that Local Authorities in areas of higher infection rates will exhaust their funding even sooner than Plymouth, which will create a postcode lottery across the country at a time where working residents need consistent support. Ultimately this scheme is a public health incentive and in your letter to Local Authorities on 20 September 2020, you stated that the government *'is providing funding for a new Test and Trace Support Payment scheme for people on low incomes who are unable to work while they are self-isolating because they cannot work from home'*. This is not actually the case as the Government are not providing funding for all eligible applications, should no further discretionary funding be made available.

We ask that you reconsider the funding approach for discretionary payments to bring them in line with the national scheme. Aligning the funding approach will support all low income working people who will experience a drop in income as a result of the legal requirement to self-isolate when instructed to do so by the Test and Trace system, and not solely those already in receipt of a means tested benefit.

Kind regards



Councillor Chris Penberthy
Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development

cc.

Luke Pollard, MP for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport
Sir Gary Streeter, MP for South West Devon
Johnny Mercer, MP for Plymouth Moor View