

City Council

Monday 27 January 2025

PRESENT:

Councillor Tuohy, in the Chair.

Councillor Murphy, Vice Chair.

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Mrs Beer, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Luggar, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, P.Nicholson, S.Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M.Smith, R.Smith, Sproston, Steel, Stephens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Cuddihee, Darcy, Finn, Loveridge, Ney and Stevens.

The meeting started at 2.25 pm and finished at 4.49 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.

54. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 November 2024 and 9 January 2025 were agreed as an accurate record with the two following amendments for the 25 November 2024 meeting:

1. Following review of the replay corrections will be made to the announcement made by Councillor Stephens which concerned cycle delivery drivers rather than all cyclists;
2. A correction to the question posed by Councillor Wood concerning the Electoral Cycle Consultation and associated costs. The question and answer should have read “How much did the Electoral Cycle review consultation and report cost and what amount of people voting for reform would have been sufficient for action from the Leader?” “This was not a referendum, to that extent 180,000 Plymouthians allowed the Council to make the decision on their behalf”.

55. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

56. **Appointments to Committees, Outside Bodies etc**

The Committee agreed to note the changes to appointments to committees, outside bodies etc.

57. **Questions by the Public**

There were two questions from members of the public.

The following question was asked by Grace Strickland	
<p>Question: With Persimmons ready to build Phase 9 on Billacombe Fields, which in 1989 were dedicated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest through the identification of rare flora and fauna, what protection is PCC installing to guard these plants? Remembering the developers ‘accidently’ demolished the initially preserved Plymstock Lime Kiln.</p>	<p>Persimmon Homes have a current pre-application for Phase 9 in with the Council. The reference number is 24/00979/MJR and can be viewed via the Council’s website. The pre-application is still being considered and shows the area of the pre-application to the north of the SSSI and within the quarry walls. The SSSI is located within Billacombe Green and is outside the extent of Persimmon Homes’ original outline consent and Phase 9. Consultation has taken place with Natural Infrastructure officers. The case officer will consider any impacts upon the SSSI as the pre-application enquiry progresses.</p>
The following question was asked by Mr Andrew Hill	
<p>Question: What steps have or are being taken to ensure computer software and hardware in car park machines and the process by which information is transmitted to hand-held devices used by enforcement officers is free of bugs, errors and defects so as to avoid another Bates v POL type scandal?</p>	<p>Response: Thank you for the question. The use of computer software across parking services and parking facilities has been commonplace for over 25 years. Our ongoing commitment to innovation has delivered continuous improvements, where now it is much easier to access services, such as applying for residents permit 24/7 or where, in car parks, you no longer need to display tickets in your car and so remove the worry of receiving a fine for not displaying a ticket correctly. As you highlight, these systems are key to many of the services we deliver, and we need to ensure that they work correctly. To that end, all these systems incorporate various health monitoring, systems that continuously check and show us, 24/7, that they are working correctly. Furthermore, our parking services are subject to annual auditing. As with technology, whilst we have all these</p>

	<p>checks and balances in place, there could be factors that impact service delivery. One such extreme example, in 2024, involved issues with banking systems. Whilst only brief, the Council was impacted along with many shops and businesses in Plymouth; however, aside of some banking payments at this time, all of our core parking systems and services operated without further issue.</p>
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58. **Announcements**

Councillor Tina Tuohy (The Lord Mayor) made the following announcements:

- a) The day marked Holocaust Memorial Day, 80 years since Soviet Forces liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau. A minute of silence was called to remember victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur;
- b) Last Thursday, Claire Chick, a beloved lecturer at the University of Plymouth had her life taken from her. Claire was an energetic and beautiful soul who touched countless lives through her work in nursing education and her international contributions to healthcare teaching across Europe, Africa, and Asia. One minute of silence was called to honour Claire's memory and reflect on the profound impact she had on so many lives;
- c) At a recent ceremony, the Local Council Road Innovation group presented a special life-time achievement award to Councillor Mark Coker. The Councillor had demonstrated unwavering dedication, leadership, and a relentless commitment to improving our community's infrastructure.

Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) made the following announcements:

- d) The Economic Development department had earned for the Authority and its residents: £28.5 million of earned income, £102 million of external grant funding, £280 million of capital investment and £18 million of foreign direct investment. £5.5 billion was in the investment pipeline with major investment into the City and the dockyard to come;
- e) The next few months promised to bring the following £200 million of investments as well as milestones:
 - i. Redevelopment of the Civic Centre and a new partnership with Homes England would kick-start housing development in the City Centre
 - ii. £19.5 million Levelling-Up Funding would be used to unlock the City Centre Blue-Green Skills hub and latest phase of Oceansgate;

- iii. Net Zero ambitions would be fulfilled for Millbay with the provision of Shore Power;
 - iv. A new Economic Strategy would be adopted with the Port Strategy and creative industries plan;
 - v. The Tinside refurbishment would be completed;
 - vi. Mount Batten centre redevelopment will have started;
 - vii. The next phase of works would commence at Brickfields;
 - viii. The one millionth visitor to The Box would be celebrated;
 - ix. £25 million Freeport investment would commence;
- f) After a recent meeting of Cornwall Council on the 21 of January, they had resolved to confirm their full support for the content of a letter seeking greater autonomy and devolution for the County to continue to exist as an standalone political unit;
- g) Due, in part, to the aforementioned position of Cornwall Council, Plymouth were unable to submit an expression of interest in the priority programme which other parts of the country had been;
- h) Some moderate expansion of Plymouth's boundaries would be required in order to attain the requisite additional population and tax base to provide sustainability in the long run.

Councillor Coker (Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport) made the following announcements:

- i) Non-commercial bus routes which were due to finish at the end of March 2025 would now continue for a new three year period;
- j) The number 200 Park and Ride would increase frequency to every 15 minutes, the Number 19, cut during the previous administration, would be reintroduced to service Plymstock and Plympton and the route of the number four bus had been extended to the ridgeway via Sherford.

Councillor Laing (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) made the following announcements:

- k) Plymouth City Council were hosting their second Foster Carer Summit on 7 February 2025 with the support of Dartmoor Zoo who had provided the venue. The Summit would enable Foster Carers to share their experiences of fostering, review of the support available and have the opportunity to co-design of the 2025/2026 Support and Retention offer;

- l) Congratulations was passed on to two retired Foster for Plymouth carers, Dave and Coleen Healy, who received British Empire Medals in the King's New Year's Honour's List;
- m) The "Devonport 200" event had taken place on Saturday 11 January 2025 and Sunday 12 at The Box. 1491 visits were recorded on Saturday and 820 on Sunday which were very good figures. 25 potential acquisitions for the collection had been received including objects, photos and documents and 50 surveys had been completed across the weekend. The event would serve as a model for future "Super Saturdays";
- n) New exhibitions opening at the Box in 2025 included: 'John Lyon's Carnavalesque' on 08 February 2025, 'Windrush in the Far South West' from 18 January 2025 and Osman Yousefzada's 'When Will We Be Good Enough' which was operating until 09 March 2025 and the Jeremy Deller project "The Triumph of Art".

Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure & HR, and OD) made the following announcements:

- o) 'Fit and Fed' funding was confirmed during the preceding week, however exact figures were not available as of yet. During the 2023/24 municipal year, the fund provided enough money for Plymouth Active Leisure to coordinate 85 holiday clubs across the City and 21,000 place for benefit related free school meals.

(Councillor Beer left the meeting at 2.59pm)

59. **Council Tax Base Setting 2025/26 and Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26**

The report was introduced by Councillor Lowry (Cabinet Member for Finance) and seconded by Councillor Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities).

The Council agreed to:

1. The Council Tax Base for 2025/26 of 76,557 equivalent Band D dwellings as set out in the report;
2. The continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme and Exceptional Hardship Scheme for 2025/26.

For (49)

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, P. Nicholson, S. Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M. Smith, R. Smith, Sproston, Steel, Stephens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Absent/Did Not Vote (2)
Councillors Mrs Beer and Tuohy.

60. **Pay Policy Statement 2025/26**

The item was introduced by Councillor Dann (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Sport, Leisure & HR, and OD) and seconded by Councillor Laing (Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications).

The Council agreed:

- I. To approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

For (48)

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Cresswell, Dann, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, P. Nicholson, S. Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M. Smith, R. Smith, Sproston, Steel, Stephens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Absent/ Did Not Vote (3)
Councillors Mrs Beer, Coker and Tuohy.

61. **Committee Calendar 2025/26**

The item was introduced by Councillor Evans OBE (Leader of the Council) and seconded by Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care).

After contributions from Councillor P. Nicholson the Council agreed to note the Committee Calendar 2025/2026.

For (49)

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, P. Nicholson, S. Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Ricketts, Simpson, M. Smith, R. Smith, Sproston, Steel, Stephens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Absent/ Did Not Vote (2)
Councillors Mrs Beer and Tuohy.

(Councillor Ricketts left the meeting at the end of this item)

62. **Motions on Notice**

63. **Strengthening Measures to Combat Youth Vaping**

The item was introduced by Councillor Steel and seconded by Councillor Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care).

The Council agreed:

1. The Leader would write to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention, Andrew Gwynne MP, urging the Minister to expedite consultations and introduce stricter regulations on the advertising and sale of vapes as soon as possible;
2. The Leader would write to Dr Sam Roberts, CEO of the National for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to request that Government consider the development of national guidance on advice, intervention and support that should be available for young people;
3. The Director of Public Health would engage with and influence fellow Directors of Public Health and other relevant stakeholders to prioritise actions to prevent youth vaping. This would include writing to local businesses and national chains to request they voluntarily take action to prevent youth vaping, namely, removing vapes and associated products from shop floors;
4. It would continue its proactive engagement with citywide partners to prevent youth vaping both in and out of school settings;
5. That the existing Health and Wellbeing Board's position statement on vaping would be reviewed to account for the changing use by children.

For (46)

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, P. Nicholson, S. Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Simpson, M. Smith, Sproston, Steel, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Absent/ Did Not Vote (5)

Councillors Mrs Beer, Ricketts, R. Smith, Stephens and Tuohy.

64. **To Call for Auto Enrolment for Free School Meals**

The item was introduced by Councillor Lawson and seconded by Councillor Bannerman.

After contributions from Councillor P. Nicholson, Mrs Bridgeman, Wood, Steel, Laing, Mrs Watkin, Penberthy and Krizanac, the Council agreed that:

- I. That the Leader would write to Bridget Phillipson MP, Secretary of State for Education and Liz Kendall MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, requesting that;
 - i. Auto-enrolment for free school meals be added to the anticipated Children's Wellbeing Bill;
 - ii. Local education authorities would be given the powers necessary to obtain and exchange the information necessary to identify and register all children eligible for FSM;
 - iii. For Plymouth City Council to review the schemes put in place by some other local authorities and consider adopting an opt-out system for 2025/26, in the event that a national scheme has not been delivered.

For (47)

Councillors Allen, Allison, Aspinall, Bannerman, Blight, Briars-Delve, Mrs Bridgeman, Coker, Cresswell, Dann, Dingle, Evans OBE, Freeman, Gilmour, Goslin, Haydon, Hendy, Holloway, Krizanac, Laing, Lawson, Lowry, Lugger, McCarty, McLay, McNamara, Moore, Morton, Murphy, P. Nicholson, S. Nicholson, Noble, Penberthy, Penrose, Poyser, Raynsford, Reilly, Simpson, M. Smith, Sproston, Steel, Stephens, Taylor, Tippetts, Tofan, Ms Watkin and Wood.

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

Absent/Did Not Vote (4)

Councillors Mrs Beer Ricketts, R. Smith and Tuohy.

(At the conclusion of this item there was a 20 minute break)

65. **Questions by Councillors**

#	From	To	Subject
1	Councillor M. Smith	Councillor Dann	Could an update be provided in reference to the recent industrial action which had taken place by care workers within the City?
	Response: A resolution was reached with Unite to cease the industrial action within the Independence at Home Team. The action stemmed from historical working arrangements which were stopped in May 2024. During this period of action, essential services were maintained and the Council worked with NHS and social care partners to minimise impact on the community.		
2	Councillor Bannerman	Councillor Aspinall	Could an update be provided by the chair of the dental task force on local dentistry provision?
	Response: The Dental Task Force were due to meet again on 07 February. The task force started with three aims. One would be coming to fruition quite soon- an announcement about the City Centre Dental Practice. In addition, more schools were getting involved with the toothbrush scheme "Open Wide, Step Inside" and more schools will be encouraged to participate. Finally, encouraging dentists into Plymouth had been challenging and was ongoing, ideally it would require government support.		
3	Councillor S. Nicholson	Councillor Coker	Would Councillor Coker consider the distribution of a leaflet encouraging use of the new bus service between Plympton and Plymstock?
	Response: Yes. This would be coordinated with Councillor Lowry for distribution within Council Tax bills. In addition, leaflets and timetables indicating "use-it-or-lose-it" could be provided to local councillors, if they were to get in contact.		
4	Councillor P. Nicholson	Councillor Evans OBE	Would you be prepared to meet Plympton Councillors for further discussion around the development of Langage Business Park and the inability to cope witnessed at Deep Lane Junction?
	Response: This would most likely be Councillor Coker but yes.		
5	Councillor Wood	Councillor Briars-Delve	Would it be agreed that it is more beneficial for wildlife for the Council to sow wildflower meadows rather than simply allowing the grass to grow unmanaged?
	Response: An additional £300,000 of funding had been requested and was received, allowing for higher quality performance in this area. "Total cuts" were increased from six in 2023. Whilst wildflower meadows were encouraged across the city, it was unrealistic to plant them in every area of Council maintained grass.		
6	Councillor Noble	Councillor Lowry	Will the Single Person Council Tax Discount still apply for Plymouth Residents?
	Response: In essence, yes. There were no proposed changes. It was legislated in Westminster, not at a local level.		
7	Councillor Stephens	Councillor Aspinall	What changes were recently confirmed phase two of investment for the emergency department at Derriford hospital make in respect to ambulance queuing?

	Response: Up to £500 million investment for phase two of the scheme was confirmed. The impacts were estimated to be huge. We would aspire to be hard-pressed in seeing any ambulance waiting.		
8	Councillor Holloway	Councillor Evans OBE	Had any estimates been made towards costings of a proposed direct elected city mayor, including the cost of elections and mayoral office?
	Response: A petition had been submitted for a directly elected mayor, however no date for the referendum was confirmed. These must be held within six months of the date of petition submission. This means that the referendum would be held independently of elections, as those were not due until April 2026. Indicative costings for an operation such as this had been estimated at £410, 000, however a subsequent election would then need to be held and that would cost a further £80,000. The total was estimated at around half a million pounds, without the staffing costs or costs of office. The costs would be drawn from services or balances, which were something at a precarious position. It was fallacious to assume the position would save the Council money.		
9	Councillor Raynsford	Councillor Aspinall	What was being done to encourage residents to take part in the mass consultation on the NHS 10-year plan “Change NHS: Help Build a Health Service Fit for the Future”
	Response: This was promoted through NHS websites, there were local meetings taking place and residents are encouraged to have their say. There was a meeting taking place in the Methodist Central Church on 31 January, the Communications department will be contacted to advertise this.		
10	Councillor P. Nicholson	Councillor Lowry	Council Tax payment arrangements had recently changed and criticism lobbied at local government regarding some residents’ inability to pay resulting in fines and the removal of a 12 month payment scheme, creating further difficulties in paying. Would the arrangements for Plymouth be looked into?
	Response: Some changes had been made a year ago and discussions of spreading costs were had. Happy to coordinate with yourself and various Scrutiny functions to enact appropriate changes.		
11	Councillor Taylor	Councillor Coker	A highway fatality had occurred on Han Drive during the Christmas period. Would officers work with myself, residents and Ward Councillors to improve road safety for children travelling to and from school?
	Response: The Council were aware of the tragic incident which occurred and Officers were already investigating changes made on Ham drive. In addition to suggested Councillors and Officers, Councillor Stephens, the Walking and Cycling Champion, was important to include. The onus was on everyone to keep roads safe. Any fatality on Plymouth Roads cost the Council and its partners £2.7 million, however protecting life was far more valuable than monetary cost. Of course, engagement would be made.		
12	Councillor Poyser	Councillor Briars-	Litter pickers and community groups help to “pick-up” after messes left by the Council on a

		Delve	daily basis. Was there anything that the Council could do to further integrate these groups?
	Response: Happy to listen to any particular initiatives suggested. The recent Plymouth Plan for Nature invited over 100 community organisations to inform the process and give as many people an opportunity to reflect in how the Council look after green spaces.		
13	Councillor Simpson	Councillor Cresswell	What impact would the Children's Well-being in School Bill have on local children and families?
	Response: Firstly, universal free school breakfast clubs which would be rolled out early through 750 schools on an early adopter scheme. This would provide a nourishing breakfast and healthy start to the school day. Secondly, school uniform expenses would be brought down by the introduction of a 3-piece limit on uniform.		

Please note that questions, answers, supplementary questions and supplementary answers have been summarised.