

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor Penberthy

Question:

As you failed to answer my previous question I ask again. The Royal Building purchased for homeless people in this City, is it going to be used for homeless families and when? Its been 12 months now and nothing has happened to reduce homelessness in Plymouth, why not?

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

I totally reject your suggestion that nothing has been done to reduce homelessness in Plymouth over the past 12 months. The latest of our regular six-monthly reports to the Housing and Communities Services Scrutiny Panel which we presented on 22nd 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>. I feel that your suggestion that they have all been doing no work is a massive denigration of their service and one you should withdraw.

If you watch the webcast of last week's Scrutiny Panel meeting you will see that I provided Members with an update on the Royal. I am happy to also provide this publicly available information to you in writing.

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 by the end of the year.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Poulter', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dated: 29th October 2025