

BUDGET SCRUTINY

Top three challenges for delivering within Portfolio budget for 2026/27
Councillor Kate Taylor (Customer Experience, Sport, Leisure,
Human Resources and Organisational Development)



1. CHALLENGE 1 – PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE

To ensure that Plymouth Active Leisure’s financial (PAL) position continues to improve year on year.

1.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 1 – PLYMOUTH ACTIVE LEISURE

- **New strategic business plan** – Strategy plan in place to ensure success of PAL.
- **Cabinet Approvals (Feb 2026)** – Pending robust business cases, seek an extension to PALs contract beyond March 2032.
- **Invest-to-Save Initiatives** – Pending business cases consider supporting improvements to existing PAL assets, including enhancing the catering offer and asset refurbishment, pending successful capital business cases.
- **Income Growth Strategy** – Drive increased revenue for PAL through enhanced facilities and services.

2. CHALLENGE 2 – CYBER SECURITY

Increasing cyber threats and ransomware attacks could compromise Plymouth City Council’s critical systems and sensitive data, leading to service disruption and financial loss.

- This is highest scoring risk on the Council’s risk log and requires both technical investment and continued training and vigilance by staff and Councillors.
- Rising costs of cyber resilience and a shortage of skilled professionals make it difficult to maintain robust security within constrained budgets.

2.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 2 – CYBER SECURITY

- **Continue to invest**, with the support of Delt, in technical defenses with new tools to identify vulnerabilities in our systems.
- **Ensure effective Cyber Security Board** that tracks our risk exposure and the actions taken to mitigate risks.
- **Ensure our “human firewall” is robust.** Building the skills and confidence in our staff and users of our systems to know how to recognise threats and report them.
- **Tracking and mandating compliance** with the cyber security training and, if necessary, remove access rights to our systems where training is consistently being ignored.

3. CHALLENGE 3 – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Delivering improvements to Customer Experience and Business Support model, including AI integration and new ways of working, within reduced resources and rising demand.

- Risk to achieving required savings while maintaining service standards and implementing transformation at pace.

- Increased demand and reduced resources create pressure on Contact Centre, Revenues & Benefits, and corporate customer services.
- Barriers include resourcing constraints, stakeholder engagement, and infrastructure costs for AI and technology adoption.

3.a. MITIGATIONS FOR CHALLENGE 3 – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

- **Customer-Centric Transformation** to prioritise front-door redesign and ensure the customer voice is embedded in service delivery, using data and feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- **Review all relevant programmes** including objectives for each and the value and cost efficiencies to be secured. Ensure robust investment matched to savings and benefits.
- **Embed a budget over MTFP** to allow integration of resource, time and software to make improvements required long-term.