

**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 signature.

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