



HELP US PRIORITISE PLYMOUTH'S POUNDS

Have your say on how we balance our budget

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We need your views and ideas as we make important decisions about the future of local services in Plymouth.

We want to build Plymouth back better following the coronavirus pandemic and this means looking after the health and wellbeing of Plymouth residents, raising standards in schools, supporting jobs by driving the growth of Plymouth's economy and tackling the climate emergency.

We also want to deliver good, value for money day-to-day services – such as bin collections, grass cutting, tackling litter and potholes and improving safety for Plymouth residents.

THE CHALLENGE

We have a massive challenge ahead as:

- our funding continues to reduce
- demand for services is rising, particularly for high cost social care
- costs from our suppliers increase
- the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect our services and reduce our income.

This means we have to continue to reduce costs and find greater efficiency in order to carry on delivering more than 300 services for Plymouth residents.

Due to these pressures we need to reduce spending by £20 million in order to set a balanced budget for the next year.

We have worked hard in recent years to reduce spending and operate as efficiently as possible. The savings we need to make to balance our budget for next year are in addition to the £25 million that we have already saved over the last three years.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Please help by taking part in this engagement exercise. We want to know what your priorities are and what you think about our proposals to help balance the budget for the year ahead.

You can answer as many of the questions as you wish. We would like to hear your views on matters that important to you.

COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

If you have access to the internet, you can complete this form online at: www.plymouth.gov.uk/budget

If you'd prefer to fill in a paper copy, please ask someone to print you a copy of this form, or visit a library in Plymouth and ask a staff member to print one for you.

You can return completed forms to any library in Plymouth, or send to: Prioritise Plymouth's Pounds, Chief Executive's Department, Ballard House, Plymouth PL1 3BJ.

Section I. Your priorities

We would like to ask your views about the services that are important to you. For each of the themes below we have included the main services that are either provided or funded by Plymouth City Council and we would like you to rank them in order of importance to you.

I.1 Leisure

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 6 being your lowest priority)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sport and leisure facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Libraries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Museums/galleries | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Theatres/concert halls | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Events and tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parks and open spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I.2 Transport

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 6 being your lowest priority)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Improved parking facilities through parking charges | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Subsidies for non-commercial bus services | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Road maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Footway maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cycle path maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Electric vehicle charging points | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I.3 Children and Young People

* we are required by law to provide services which support and protect children and young people

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 4 being your lowest priority)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Support for vulnerable children, children in care or in need of protection | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Support for children with special educational needs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Services for young people, such as youth services, young carers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Early years support, such as child care, children centres | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Your priorities (continued)

I.4 Environment

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 4 being your lowest priority)

- Environmental regulation, e.g. food safety, trading standards, noise control
- Public conveniences
- Initiatives for tackling climate change
- Grass cutting and weed control

I.5 Waste and Recycling

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 5 being your lowest priority)

- Keeping public land clear of litter and refuse
- Refuse collection
- Garden waste collection
- Doorstep recycling
- Local tips/household waste recycling centres

I.6 Growing Plymouth's economy

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 5 being your lowest priority)

- Improving the quality of housing
- Improving the quantity of housing
- Creating and protecting jobs across the city
- Planning the future shape of the city
- Attracting inward investment and supporting businesses

I.7 Health and social care

(Please rank service areas in order of priority with 1 being your highest and 5 being your lowest priority)

- Support for older people to live independently
- Support for mental health services
- Support for people with disabilities
- Preventing homelessness and help find homes for those in need
- Support for preventative health services, e.g. stop smoking clinic

Section 2. Your top three

Providing your views about where we should focus resources within service areas as you have done in the previous section, provides us with valuable information about services that are important to you.

Thinking about the services that are most important to you, please can you write in your top three (3) things you think we need to focus on for the city and our residents in the year ahead.

2.1 Top three priorities

Number one priority:
Second priority:
Third priority:

Section 3. Level of interest in Council finances

3.1 Please can you tell us how interested you are in the Council's finances and how we balance the books?

Very interested

Fairly interested

Not very interested

Not interested at all

Section 4. Our proposals for setting a balanced budget

Please give your views on the following proposals and let us have any ideas of your own.

4.1 Continuously improving what we do to provide better value for money

We aim to continuously improve efficiency and ensure we provide even better value for money in everything we do. Our plans for increasing efficiency and reducing costs next year include:

Cutting out paperwork

We aim to use new digital systems to cut out paperwork and make processes simpler. For example, we are proposing to make further savings next year by cutting out all physical paperwork for Council committees.

Reducing the number of meetings

We aim to increase efficiency and reduce costs by reducing the number of committees and meetings, while still ensuring our decision making remains open and transparent.

Doing more transactions online

We want to ensure residents can access as many services as possible quickly and at times that suit them through our website. Every customer request or query that we deal with over the phone costs a lot more than if the same request is made online. We are proposing to prioritise our telephone contact centre for calls relating to adult and children's social care and public protection services.

Using new technology

New technology can help us reduce costs. For example, we plan to use a new system that can dim street lights, reducing electricity charges.

Improving efficiency

We continuously look for ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency in everything we do. For example, we are currently reviewing our internal business support services and are proposing to further review all management and administrative costs across the organisation. We are reviewing all contracts with external suppliers to ensure that they provide the best possible value for money.

Providing services in new ways

We are investigating whether there are more efficient and cost effective ways of running some services – such as sharing them with other organisations. We have already integrated many of our social care services with NHS colleagues, formed a school meals company in partnership with schools, as well as a shared service with NHS partners to provide our IT services. We are now reviewing all services in our corporate centre and working to set up a new organisation to run Council-owned leisure services in Plymouth, including the Plymouth Life Centre, Tinside Lido, Mount Wise pools, Brickfields and Plympton Pool.

Do you have any comments on our plans to reduce costs and improve efficiency?

4.2 Caring for the elderly and vulnerable adults in our community

A large proportion of our total budget is spent on adult social care and the costs related to residential and nursing care, domiciliary care and providing services to vulnerable adults.

For example, each year we:

- Assess 2,585 people to identify the level of support the need.
- Provide around 610,000 hours of care to help elderly residents to remain living at home
- Provide around 4,700 long term care support packages to residents with a wide range of conditions and disabilities.
- Investigate around 1,700 referrals about the safety of adults.
- We currently spend £88 million in this area, but demand for services continues to rise due to a growing elderly population and the complexity of the needs of the people we provide care for.

We are working hard to provide more joined up care services with the NHS and have been pioneering in combining our adult social care services with the community health services in Livewell Southwest. The aim is to reduce costs and improve the health of Plymouth residents.

We are also working hard to prevent more people from needing care by focusing on services that help people stay healthy and remain independent for longer.

Over the next year we are proposing to reduce costs by reviewing all externally commissioned contracts.

We are also proposing to review the cost of care packages for adults needing care.

The Government has acknowledged the serious strains on council budgets as a result of the rising demand for adult social care services. While it has recently announced additional future funding for social care, this is unlikely to be available to councils immediately as the NHS is being prioritised. To help councils maintain social care services the Government may give them authority to add a one per cent precept to the Council Tax specifically to support these services. This is an option we have to consider in Plymouth as a one per cent precept would raise around £1 million for help to continue providing care for residents.

Do you have any comments on our plans to protect adult social care services while reducing costs where we can?

4.3 Protecting vulnerable children and young people

We are responsible for ensuring children and young people in Plymouth are safe and protected from harm.

Last year this included:

- Working with 3,129 children and young people to identify the type of help and support they needed.
- Providing 618 children with a safe place to live. The average cost of providing this safe environment for the year was £48,900 for each child.
- Helping 239 18 to 20 year-olds prepare for adult life, including working with them to find suitable accommodation, as well as education, training or employment.
- We are currently providing around 2,000 young people with social care support.

We spend around £29 million on providing placements for children in care through foster carers, residential care and secure placements.

We also provide services for children with special needs or a disability.

Services for children also include children's centres, nurseries, school transport and school places. The total spend on services for children is around £54 million.

We focus a lot of attention on early intervention and prevention to try to prevent children and young people needing to come into care and work closely with our partners in health, schools and the police on all of this work.

The coronavirus pandemic has placed further pressures on our budgets due to a rise in the number of children needing support. The cost of care packages for children and young people with very complex needs is also increasing.

We are determined to protect these vital services as best we can. We are proposing to reduce costs by increasing the number of in-house foster carers we use, reducing the need for more expensive placements with external providers.

We are also proposing to deliver savings through further prevention work with families to avoid children needing to be placed in care.

Do you have any comments about our plans to protect services for children and young people while reducing costs where we can?

4.4 Investing in a clean and safe city and reducing our carbon footprint

We want Plymouth to be a clean, green and safe city. Our services that help to do this include providing a refuse and recycling collection service to all households, operating household recycling centres, cleaning streets, removing litter from hundreds of bins, cutting grass in our green spaces and removing weeds, removing graffiti and tackling fly-tipping and litterers by taking enforcement action against them.

Plymouth is fortunate to have many green spaces and we look after more than 950 hectares of parks, green spaces and nature reserves.

We know these services are important to Plymouth residents which is why we aim to protect them as much as possible as we are forced to find savings.

However, the pressures on our budget means we need to focus our limited resources on those services that we must provide while looking for ways of raising income and asking others to help the effort to keep the city clean.

Do you agree with our plans to protect services that keep Plymouth clean and safe?

Would you be prepared to pay more for an improved environment and initiatives that help tackle climate change?

Yes No

If yes, what would you like to see us do?

How much would you be prepared to pay?

No more Up to £50 per year £50 to £100 per year Over £100 per year

Would you be prepared to get involved in local activities that improve the environment and help keep Plymouth tidy?

Yes No Maybe

4.5 Raising income and reviewing fees and charges

We work hard to maximise the external funding we secure to help us deliver services for Plymouth. We aim to attract more grant funding over the next year.

Fees and charges for specific services that are not used by everyone are an increasingly important source of funding.

These include parking charges, some services provided by museums and libraries, cemeteries and crematoria, residents parking permits, boat mooring fees and trade waste disposal.

We aim to set fees that are fair and in line with those paid in other parts of the country and to increase charges in line with inflation.

We are also reviewing how we operate public toilets and investigating whether fees can cover the cost of operating them.

Do you have any comments about our plans to protect services by increasing some fees and charges?

Section 5. Council Tax

5.1 Council Tax

The Council Tax we collect from you provides a proportion of the income we need to deliver local services.

We understand the strains on household finances in Plymouth and do not want to raise Council Tax more than necessary. Plymouth residents continue to pay the lowest average Council Tax in the region and we want to keep it that way.

However, we cannot ignore the impact of rising costs, with inflation currently at over three per cent, as well as the increasing demand for services.

The Government has acknowledged the serious strains on council budgets and allows councils to raise Council Tax by up to two per cent without needing a referendum.

Not raising the Council Tax would mean significant reductions to Council services as each percentage increase in Council Tax raises around £1 million for local services

Do you agree that we should consider an increase in Council Tax to help cover the rising costs and avoid having to make substantial cuts to local services?

Section 6. Further comments

We still need to achieve further savings and we want to hear your suggestions about how we can do this.

6.1 Your ideas and comments

Do you have any suggestions about ways in which the Council can deliver all or some services more effectively to achieve savings?

Section 7. About you

You are not obliged to complete this section, but the information you provide will help us to identify the views of different groups of people. We will keep your information confidential, safe and secure.

7.1 Age

Please can you tell us your age by selecting the most appropriate category?

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15 yrs or under | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 - 19 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 24 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34 yrs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 - 74 yrs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 75 - 84 yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 or over | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say | |

7.2 Sex

Please can you tell us your sex?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|

7.3 Gender identity

Please can you tell us if your gender identity is the same as the sex that you were registered with at birth?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

If no, please use this space to describe your gender identity as you wish.

7.4 Disability

Are your day-to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability, which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, limited a little | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, limited a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--|

7.5 Ethnicity

Please can you tell us your ethnicity?

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British | <input type="checkbox"/> Black, Black British, Caribbean or African | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed or multiple ethnic groups | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other ethnic group | | | |

If not listed or you wish to describe your ethnicity how you wish please use the space below.

7.6 Veterans

Please can you tell us if you have previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

7.7 Dependants

Please can you tell us if you have children under the age of 16 yrs?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

7.8 Caring responsibility

Please can you tell us if you consider yourself as a carer for a relative or friend?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

7.9 Area where you live

Please can you either provide your postcode, ward or the area where you live e.g. St Budeaux, Plymstock, Mount Gould?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return through any Plymouth library or or send to: Prioritise Plymouth's Pounds, Chief Executive's Department, Ballard House, Plymouth PL1 3BJ.