

Paragraph 12.02 of Part 4 of the Rules of Procedure contained within the City Council's Constitution provides that a Member of the Council may submit a written question to any Cabinet Member.

This document informs Members of Council of written questions put to Cabinet Members and written replies thereto.

Council is recommended to RESOLVE to note the written questions submitted and corresponding responses.

No	Question from/to	Question	Response
1.	From Councillor Field to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture	I am sure you welcome, as I do, the new Costa in King's Square. Unfortunately for customers, the eyesore Golden Egg building still looms outside the window. Why is it still standing?	I agree that the new Costa Coffee outlet is a positive addition to the Kings Square area. As Councillor Field knows, the former Golden Egg building is owned by Aviva Investors. Although this Council granted Aviva demolition consent in April 2011, that consent has never been implemented. The Council has been engaged in positive discussions with Aviva for some months about this building and future plans for the wider area and we hope to be able to report on progress soon.
2.	From Councillor Field to the Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture	Are we still putting in a bid for European City of Culture in 2017?	<p>We have not chosen to make a bid for City of Culture 2017, and indeed I understand that four cities have been shortlisted and the winner will be announced this year.</p> <p>As previously, it remains the case that both the bidding and the implementation are extremely resource intensive matters and as such bigger cities will always be more likely to succeed.</p> <p>We continue to work with Cheltenham in promotion of major events, while as ever focusing on delivering improvements to the City's cultural offer. As Councillor Field knows through the History Festival, the programme at Blackfriars and the ever improving Guildhall to name but a few, we have made significant strides in recent years.</p>

3.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for the Environment	Do you support the Liberal Democrat policy of a tax on plastic carrier bags?	<p>This Council has always supported ways of encouraging people to change their shopping habits, so as to have less of an impact on the environment. A tax on plastic bags is one such option, but other, more positive, incentives should also be considered, for example we promote the use of bags for life by providing jute bags for our customers through the TIC. However, it is for the Government to decide on issues such as new taxes.</p>
4.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for the Environment	<p>The lack of bins in which people can recycle aluminium cans etc in the city centre is a real problem. How can we expect people to recycle, or we as a council to meet our recycling/landfill targets, when there are so few opportunities to do so?</p>	<p>On street recycling has been tried on a number of occasions within the City Centre. Five bins were installed in 2008, providing different compartments for plastics and cans. However, it was found that on most days there was contamination in each of the compartments and so the bins were subsequently removed in 2009 due to the levels of contamination.</p> <p>We are looking at ways of re-introducing this, and know it would be welcomed, but this must be balanced with the amount of ongoing contamination and associated costs.</p> <p>There are a number of options open to residents which allow them to recycle a range of materials. The current recycling service allows residents to present the following items for doorstep collections –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cans, • Plastic Bottles, • Paper and Light Card, • Glass; and • Domestic batteries. <p>In addition there are a number of Bring Sites located throughout the City where residents can take their recycling. These are located as follows:</p> <p>Tescos – St Oswalds Tescos – Quedgeley Sainsburys – Barnwood Sainsburys – Quays Asda – Bruton Morrisons – Glevum Way</p> <p>Castlemeads Car Park Podsmead – Burns Avenue Hempsted Household Recycling Centre</p>

5.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for the Environment	Apparently there is a new method when it comes to weedspraying of only spraying the weeds as reported by residents/ councillors and leaving any nearby that have not been reported. Is this really the case?	<p>No. There is a comprehensive programme of weed spraying across the city but Amey will also respond to overgrown weeds that have been reported by residents or Councillors where the growth is excessive and warrants being dealt with outside of the programme.</p> <p>As useful background information Members might be interested to know that The Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012 require anyone who uses or permits others to use pesticides to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health and the environment; - the application is confined to the area intended to be treated, ie “the target weed”; and - when used in public spaces that the amount used and frequency of use is as low as is reasonably practicable. <p>Pesticides cannot be sprayed over wide areas anymore and can only be sprayed on the weed itself.</p> <p>Therefore, there is an increased obligation to minimise the use of pesticides and give preference to certain types of products (those classified as least damaging to the aquatic environment). This may include reducing rates and frequencies of application, and the inclusion of other technologies or cultural controls, such as burning, hot foam or increased use of road sweepers. We are therefore working with our Streetcare Partner, Amey, to review the best ways of treating weeds.</p>
6.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure and Cabinet Member for Environment	Does the council, and the related homelessness projects and agencies it supports, make use of the 'Fairshare' organisation in making use of food that would otherwise be thrown away because it is	<p>Firstly all food donated to any project or organisation must be in date and comply with food safety legislation.</p> <p><u>Fareshare Organisation</u> Fareshare is a national UK charity at the centre of food poverty and food waste. They provide surplus fit for purpose products from the food and drink industry to organisations working with disadvantaged people in the community. Any food accepted by FareShare must comply with Food Safety legislation in terms of being fit for human consumption. If it <u>could</u>, in theory, be sold then it can be redistributed. All reasonable care is carried out to ensure that the food</p>

		<p>past its sell-by date? Briefly, which supermarkets etc are participating, and which have yet to join?</p>	<p>supplied is safe and appropriately labeled. Tesco's and Sainsbury's are mentioned as contributors to Fareshare on their website. The nearest regional depot is at:</p> <p>FareShare South West (Bristol) Partner Organisation: Community Initiatives South West Ltd 4 Little Anne Street St Judes Bristol BS2 9EB Tel: 0117 941 4401 (Pete) / 0117 954 2220 (Jacqui) Contact: Pete Wright or Jacqui Reeves Email: fssouthwest@fareshare.org.uk Website: http://www.faresharesouthwest.org.uk/</p> <p>Organisations that work with Fareshare in Gloucester are G.E.A.R, Black Elders, G.A.R.A.S, Taylor House, New Testament Church, St.Hilda's Lunch Club, St Mark's Lunch Club and 7th Day Advent Church.</p> <p>All of the major suppliers to the supermarkets donate food, Sainsbury's have worked with Fareshare since 2007, Tesco more recently.</p> <p>A newsletter is issued on a regular basis which they will send to Gloucester City to ensure we are kept up to date as a number of new projects are being piloted.</p> <p><u>Gloucester City Foodbank</u> Non – perishable and in – date food is donated to the Foodbank by schools, churches, businesses, and individuals. Supermarket Collections are one of the main ways that food is donated and are regularly held throughout the year. This year collections have been held at Tesco's, Sainsburys and Morrison's resulting in 2309.10kg of food since March'13. Frontline care professionals including family support workers in children's centres', schools, health visitors, the city council housing service, Gloucester City Homes, Citizen's Advice Bureau and many other related agencies identify and issue people in crisis with a foodbank voucher. This is redeemed at the Foodbank Centre for 3 days of emergency food.</p>
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7.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Leisure	How many empty properties in the City have been brought back into use in the last year?	<p>Council tax records are used to identify the number of empty homes at any point in the year and according to these records; At the end of September 2012 there were 1766 empty homes (of which 760 had been empty for more than 6 months). At the end of September 2013 there were 1644 empty homes (of which 736 have been empty for more than 6 months).</p> <p>However it is not possible to use these figures to be able to simply say that 122 properties were brought back into use during one year because as some come back into use, others become empty. But it is useful information to identify trends and this indicates that the percentage of empty properties compared with the total number of dwellings in the city is reducing.(3.3 % in Sept 2012 compared with 3.0% in September 2013)</p> <p>The Private Sector Housing Team focus attention on the properties that have been empty for more than four years and the status of these properties is monitored carefully so we are able to confirm that 23 of these long term empty properties have been brought back into use since September 2012.</p>
8.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	<p>Is Gloucester applying for 'Purple Flag' status?</p> <p>https://www.atcm.org/programmes/purple-flag/about-purple-flag</p>	<p>Purple Flag aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town centres at night. Purple Flag is the benchmark for good night time destinations. Town centres that achieve a Purple Flag will be those that are safe, vibrant, appealing, well-managed and offer a positive experience to consumers.</p> <p>The current application period to apply for Purple Flag status is between 1st Oct 2013 and 10 Jan 2014 (However, there are 2 application windows per year). Applicants must complete an application pack – see https://www.atcm.org/programmes/purple-flag/apply-for-purple-flag/apply-for-purple . The application is competitive with strict criteria.</p> <p>For the population size of Gloucester the application fee will be £2,250 with a £750 “top up” every 12 months to maintain status if granted purple flag status- so there are budget considerations.</p> <p>The Purple Flag award is a good idea and worth</p>

			<p>bidding for. In terms of timelines for the submission, we need to have a clearer understanding of what information partners hold on the key assessment criteria, outlined below:</p> <p>Wellbeing: Welcoming, clean and safe Movement: A secure pattern of arrival, circulation and departure Appeal: A vibrant choice and a rich mix of entertainment and activity Place: A stimulating destination and a vital place Policy Envelope: A clear aim and a common purpose.</p> <p>Currently we feel it would be appropriate to use the application document as a basis for future evening economy meetings, gather information from partners and work with them to implement changes, which would enable us to submit a stronger bid in the future once the City Centre Coordinator post has been recruited to. Initial discussions with our night time partners have been very positive and if successful, Gloucester will be the only District in the County to hold Purple Flag status.</p>
9.	From Councillor Field to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture and the Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods	<p>After the success of 'Project Aqua' in 2011/12, is this being repeated?</p> <p>https://www.atcm.org/purple-flag-files/files/72-Case_Study_9</p>	<p>It is true to say that the scheme never ended after the success of the project in 2011/12. Butler's bar, who were the original participants of the project have continued to supply and promote free water coolers for their customers. In addition, Café Rene, Fever and Registry/Elevation all offer free water to customers. Other clubs/bars are providing water in jugs at the end of bars available for free usage. Project Aqua will be progressed by the Police Headquarters Licensing Officer and will be part of the work of the City Safe Coordinator when appointed.</p>